

**Mills College Public Policy Program**

# Initial Steps to a Specific Plan

**Laurel District Association**

Carla Austin Hansen  
Master of Public Policy Candidate 2011  
05/02/2011

## Executive Summary

The Laurel District commercial corridor offers a strategic location serving both the upper and lower hill neighborhoods of Oakland with ready freeway access. Capitalizing on this strategic location requires a development plan and guidelines to make the commercial corridor a distinctive neighborhood location with economically viable businesses and appealing aesthetics.

A specific plan can streamline the Laurel District's residents, business and property owners' interests into one planning document for easier negotiations with developers. Developing a specific plan requires funding, existing conditions analysis and a vision for the corridor. These initial steps can be completed in a timely manner with a proper work plan.

The following study explores how other commercial corridor jurisdictions developed their specific plans including how the plans were funded, types of existing conditions analysis completed and what methods jurisdictions used to develop their visions.

The main findings include:

- The Laurel BID's monetary commitment to developing a specific plan can aid other fundraising efforts including grants from state agencies
- The Laurel District has the advantage of using previously completed analyses (by Mills College students, City of Oakland and Laurel Village Association) to aid the completion of an entire existing conditions analysis. The findings from these analyses could be compiled and used as data for future consultants to develop alternative strategies for the corridor.
- Mills College students can help complete the remaining existing conditions analyses through two class projects and two thesis projects
- Because of its small size and regular participation from stakeholders the Laurel District can explore different methods of developing a vision including surveys, focus groups and student or community member directed visioning workshops

The following Table ES-1. Summary of Laurel District Specific Plan Work Plan, briefly outlines the next steps the Laurel District could take in developing their specific plan.

Table 1 ES 1. Summary of Laurel District Specific Plan Work Plan

<b>Category</b>	<b>Completed by</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Start date</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
<b>Funding</b>	LDA	Explore Strategic Growth Council Community Planning Grant	08/11	10/11
		Explore Caltrans Transportation Planning and Community- Based Grants	01/12	03/11
<b>Existing Conditions Analyses</b>	Mills College Students	Traffic and Circulation Analysis	8/11	12/11
		Land Use and Development Patterns Analysis	08/12	12/12
		Economic Analysis of Toxic Parcels	01/12	05/12
		Economic Analysis of Bus Stops	01/12	05/12
<b>Vision</b>	Community volunteers or students	Conduct surveys, focus groups or visioning workshops	01/13	04/13
<b>Alternative Development</b>	Consultants	Use existing conditions analysis and vision to develop alternatives	04/13	06/12
<b>Corridor Strategy</b>		Develop strategy based on feasibility of alternatives	07/13	09/13
<b>Complete Final Plan</b>		Finalize Specific Plan	10/13	12/13

The work plan estimates the time each project (by month and year) will take and when the specific plan could be completed. This work plan is not official and is subject to change. The schedule presents the projects in chronological order beginning with the solicitation periods of the two possible grants. The student projects are broken down by the two projects that could be completed by the Local Planning and Management class and the two thesis projects. After existing conditions and vision are completed the work plan suggests that consultants could be used to develop alternatives and a corridor strategy to complete the plan. Using this work plan the Laurel District specific plan could be completed by December 2013.