



MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 15, 2019
TO: Christine Daniel, City Manager
FROM: Charles S. Bryant, Community Development Director
SUBJECT: **Resolution Of The City Council Of The City of Emeryville Accepting The Highest And Best Use Of Curb Toolkit And Directing Staff To Consider The Toolkit When Reviewing Streetscape Projects And Conditions Of Approval Of Private Development Projects**

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council accept the “Highest And Best Use Of Curb Toolkit” (“Toolkit”) and direct staff to consider the Toolkit when reviewing streetscape projects and conditions of approval of private development projects.

BACKGROUND

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) administer the Priority Development Area (PDA) Technical Assistance Program. The objective of the PDA Technical Assistance Program is to support projects that will advance implementation of PDA-related plans in support of regional and local goals. Customized consultant assistance is provided to local jurisdictions seeking to overcome specific policy or planning challenges to the implementation of PDA-related plans. On February 20, 2018 the City Council approved an application to MTC for \$65,000 in technical assistance to assist staff with a project titled “*Developing the Highest and Best Use of the Public Curb - an Innovative Strategy to Enhancing Multimodal PDA’s and TODs in PDAs Throughout the Region.*”

The application to the PDA Technical Assistance Program was successful, and on January 2, 2019 MTC entered into a contract with planning consulting firm PlaceWorks, Inc. for the following scope of work for development of the Highest and Best Use of Curb Toolkit:

- *Formation of a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).* The TAC included staff from the City’s Planning, Building, and Economic Development and Housing Divisions of the Community Development Department; the Environmental Services and Engineering Divisions of the Public Works Department; and the Community Services Paratransit manager. Outside agencies represented on the TAC included Alameda County Fire, AC Transit, and the Emeryville Transportation Management Association, which operates the Emery Go-Round. The TAC was advised by a Stakeholder Group which included Bike East Bay, MTC, Caltrans, Waste Management, Gig, City Car Share, Bay Waves Bike Share, and E-scooters.

- *Matrix of Curb Use Compatibility and Conflict.* Compatibility and conflicts between potential uses of curbside space were addressed by evaluating temporal differences in curb uses and consideration of combining uses in a possible designation of a *Flexible Curb*, which would accommodate multiple uses.
- *Specifications for Curb Uses.* Both the minimum width and length (expressed as a number of standard parking spaces) were provided for each curb use. Just over 50 curb uses were considered and characterized before sorting by the following categories:
 - Activation
 - Mobility
 - Access for People
 - Access for Commerce
 - Greening
 - Storage
 - Infrastructure
- *Analysis of Best Practices for Curb Uses.* The relative value of each curb use was ranked by:
 - People throughput
 - Greenhouse Gas Emission
 - Geographically-specific policy support derived from:
 - Area types, as designated by the General Plan and Emeryville Design Guidelines
 - Street Type, as defined by the General Plan
 - Building use type
- *Corridor Case Study.* Two different segments of Hollis Street were analyzed using the Toolkit.
- *Development Project Case Study.* A theoretical development project located at the southwest corner of 45th Street and Hollis Street was analyzed to compare the Toolkit's inputs and outputs on cross streets versus the primary frontage and to test the need for calibration of the toolkit by staff to balance the variety of needs specific to these street frontages.
- *Toolkit for Best Practices for the Curb.* Using the Toolkit, any block of Emeryville can be assessed for high-priority streetscape improvements, and the Toolkit facilitates sensitivity testing for variations in area type, street type and/or building use type.
- *Draft Conditions of Approval.* The City's Standard Conditions of Approval already include language requiring certain improvements of the streetscape as part of private development projects. Use of the Toolkit is anticipated to allow staff to consider additional improvements consistent with a development's specific needs.

- *City Council Policy.* Acceptance of the Toolkit and staff's use of the Toolkit will further the City's existing Policy for Complete Streets, with the Toolkit offering staff assistance in differentiating relative priorities among different settings. The Toolkit can also highlight areas and circumstances in which Flexible Curbs may be desirable, subject to development of a Flexible Curb policy in the future.

DISCUSSION

The Toolkit has been completed and, as a result, staff can quickly review the compatibility, applicability, and policy alignment of nearly 50 different curb uses categorized by seven broad categories. Attachment 1 includes the matrix depicting the array of curb uses evaluated by the Toolkit.

The various factors and policies that inform the Toolkit's output include:

People Throughput - People throughput is assigned a value of 0-100 (use categories such as Storage, Access for Commerce, Greening, and Infrastructure are assigned a zero value as these uses do not contribute to people throughput). Uses in the transit, cyclist and support of pedestrian thruways categories have the highest people throughput values, with variations based on capacity of each specific use.

Area Specific Policy Support – The Toolkit incorporates the policies and priorities applicable to curb uses as described in the Emeryville Design Guidelines for:

- Regional Retail Overlay
- Pedestrian Priority Zone/Neighborhood Retail Overlay
- Greenway/Green Streets
- Eastern Neighborhoods
- Transit Hubs

The design guidelines priorities among these Overlays and Districts is included in staff's Use Manual for the Toolkit.

Street Type Policy Support – The Toolkit also incorporates policy objectives derived from the Design Guidelines and General Plan Transportation Element for:

- Local Streets
- Connector Streets
- Transit Street
- Bikeways (Bike Boulevards, Paths and Routes)
- Truck Routes

Building and Use Type – The Toolkit’s output is informed by priorities added to curb uses that relate to development-specific variation of building and use types, including:

- Mixed use
- Office
- Industrial
- Residential

Flexible Curb - The Toolkit allows users to determine if a setting and the future policy environment allows Flexible Curb to be considered for application, which allows for co-location of two or more curb uses, as appropriate. See Attachment 2 for an example.

The application of the Toolkit to a case study of Hollis Street is included as Attachment 3. This includes a plan view of the representation of what might result from staff’s analysis of the Toolkit’s output, where the streetscape would be designed based on staff’s consideration of site constraints and opportunities.

The toolkit affords staff an analytic approach for implementing existing Complete Street policies and expanding the possible combinations of streetscape elements for an incremental approach to defining the potential highest and best use of curb, thereby maximizing the value achieved from a historically undervalued resource.

FISCAL IMPACT

Use of the Toolkit has no fiscal impact.

STAFF COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC

The Toolkit was presented to the Public Works and Transportation Committees on September 12, 2019. The Committee recommended that the City Council accept the Toolkit and direct staff to consider the Toolkit in developing Conditions of Approval for private development projects and the inclusion of improvements in streetscape design sponsored by the City.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There are no conflicts of interest.

CONCLUSION

The Highest and Best Use of Curb Toolkit incorporates existing Complete Street and General Plan policies for curb uses and assists staff in incorporating additional complimentary uses with streetscape designs while narrowing all possible improvements to those with site-specific value. This Toolkit has immediate utility to streetscape planning underway on both Hollis Street and San Pablo Avenue and can be applied to both large and small scale development projects. Staff internal coordination meetings can use the Toolkit to further the options considered.

PREPARED BY: Amber Evans, Community & Economic Development Coordinator II

**APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO THE
CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EMERYVILLE:**



Christine Daniel, City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

- 1. Toolkit
- 2. Flexible Curb
- 3. Case Study Applying the Toolkit
- Draft Resolution