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Update on The Poplar Development Process (10/17/25)

In August 2025, the Housing Authority (AHA) started voluntary community outreach meetings about the proposed affordable housing project located at 2615 Eagle Avenue, known as The Poplar. The goal was to provide information and garner very early feedback on the project prior to key development decisions being made.

AHA held 3 meetings thus far and has received considerable community feedback. Over 35 community members attended, and many others have accessed information on the Poplar website (<https://www.islandcitydevelopment.org/project/the-poplar/>). Staff provided an overview of its goals for the redevelopment of the site as affordable homes, design opportunities, the pre-existing environmental conditions from the former use as a corporation yard, and remediation options for those conditions. AHA purchased the property in order to create a family-oriented development that could be financed with the typical affordable financing available in California, which entails some additional requirements of sustainability, density, and size.

Earlier this year, AHA completed extensive environmental testing and submitted a draft Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to the Water Board (WB), proposing mitigation options from no action to remediation (to meet residential standards, with a recommendation of soil removal and a vapor barrier installed). Environmental documents are available to the community on Geotracker <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/>. This information has also been discussed, and subject matter experts have been at each meeting to answer questions. The Water Board joined the third meeting to explain its role and provide information.

Real estate development, especially affordable development, takes time and new information and new regulations can affect the final design and development. These 2025 informational meetings are the beginning of an ongoing conversation with both neighbors and other interested parties regarding this development.

Community Feedback

Community members, especially those living in the immediate neighborhood, provided significant valuable feedback on the project itself, including:

- The density of 50-60 units is too high and has increased over time
- A building of 5 stories is too tall, leading to privacy concerns
- A desire to see a vehicular exit on to Tilden Way
- Concerns about traffic implications for the neighborhood, especially during school drop-off hours
- Concerns about the interplay between the Tilden Street improvements and the new Poplar development
- Concerns about street parking and the amount of proposed parking on site
- Request for more information about trucking routes and mitigation impacts during remediation and construction
- A desire to see more teachers housed at this site
- Impacts to the Alameda Unified School District of housing more families in this neighborhood
- Concerns about operations of the property including specifically about the use of FPI Management.
- Positive feedback was received about the proposed removal of 3 feet of soil and the proposed vapor mitigation barrier.
- Concerns about the interplay between the existing condition as a brownfield site and streamlined entitlement review (e.g. SB35).
- Concerns about approx. 190 square feet within the property lines but outside the currently proposed building footprint, located behind a fence and not accessible without neighbor cooperation.
- Other neighbors, local employees, potential residents and agencies, offered support of the project citing the need for affordable housing, and an understanding that this site is currently underutilized and along a public transit corridor, making it a good candidate for redevelopment.

AHA very much appreciates the time and effort that the community has put in to providing feedback. AHA is taking this information and working with its consultants and architect to review possible changes to the project, while still considering a range of factors needed to obtain the necessary affordable housing finance plan and feasibility. The following information is provided in response to community feedback.

Design issues

AHA revisited the issue of a Tilden Way exit with the City after the first meeting, and Public Works participated in the second meeting to hear concerns and explain the City's reasoning. City staff has responded to the neighborhood directly that they do not recommend an exit option on to Tilden. An exit onto Tilden Way is not being considered by AHA at this time.

AHA has asked the architect firm, TWM, to review options for adding parking onsite and to review different height and density options as well as building layouts. Updated design information is not yet available for review but will be prepared to provide to the community for review at a future meeting.

SB35 Streamlined Approvals

This site is included on the Cortese list based on an underground storage tank that was removed. The property achieved a no further action decision in the 1990s, prior to AHA ownership, after the tank removal. AHA has not submitted a SB35 (aka SB 423) application and will not until a Cortese List exception is received or another path for eligibility is identified.

AHA is considering various entitlement paths. One path is to obtain a conditional clearance letter from the Water Board (WB). In this scenario, AHA would obtain regulatory approval of the CAP (now in draft form with the WB), selecting a mitigation method that achieves residential levels, and, hopefully, get the WB's contingent confirmation that once the CAP was implemented, the site would be suitable for residential use. This would allow an earlier SB35 design process, contingent on CAP implementation.

Another path is to complete the remediation and then apply for SB35 after that, using the exception provided in the law for cleared sites. A third option would be that AHA could also pursue a standard development application/process. All options are under consideration at this time.

Fence Alignment

Outreach to the adjacent owner on fence alignment has started. Approximately 190 square feet of the .93-acre parcel (less than 0.5%) is located behind a fence, and it appears it has been so since the 1960s. AHA has been aware of this issue since purchase in 2022.

Some neighbors have expressed concern regarding this area, and whether it should be tested or not. All existing testing has been performed under the monitoring of the Water Board. There was no legal requirement to test the entire site, this area was not anticipated to be within the building footprint, and there is data from very close to this area. The

proposed building footprint starts more than 19 feet away from the fence, and this area does not affect the density calculation. In addition, the testing samples that move from the center of the site towards this fence showed less concentration of toxins.

Additional testing

Additional testing close to the fence will be conducted and the results will be published on Geotracker and will be available for review by the Water Board and the public. AHA is awaiting pricing and timing on these additional tests.

Mitigations during Remediation and Construction

AHA is also working with its consultants to provide the community with information regarding hauling and trucking routes, as well as hauling and construction mitigation measures for the neighborhood.

Property Management

As with AHA's other family sites, a social service coordinator, a maintenance/janitorial worker and community manager will work onsite. One employee will live on site and be responsible for emergencies. A 24/7 live answering service is also provided for emergencies. AHA is unable to say who will be the third-party operator for The Poplar as construction completion is several years out. AHA rebids its property management contracts regularly.

New Dates for Community Meetings

These additional steps outlined above mean AHA will be cancelling the planned October 29 and November 12 meetings and will return to meet with the community at a later date(s). These dates will be determined after receipt of the additional testing.

A notice will go out to the community via the Poplar newsletter and signs will be posted at the meeting locations of the cancellations. As always, the best way to receive updates regarding the Poplar development is to sign up for the newsletter at <https://www.islandcitydevelopment.org/project/the-poplar/>

AHA commits to providing at least 2 weeks' notice for any future meeting. The slides and agenda will be posted at least 12 hours in advance. AHA will continue to provide a hybrid meeting option to encourage participation as well as live captioning. Information on the meetings will be sent via the email newsletter (above) and by USPS to the neighbors within 500 feet of the site.

If you have further questions, or need a reasonable accommodation or translation to participate in a meeting or the community process, please contact:

Poplar@alamedahsg.org or 510-747-4360 (Sarah Raskin)

AHA continues to welcome the entire community's interest and participation in this project. AHA has directed its development team to see where responses to concerns can be made that will still allow Poplar to fulfill its purpose, which is to provide much-needed affordable homes in Alameda for Alamedans, AUSD staff and others working on the island, and for future lower income residents.