

PREFACE

COMMUNITY PROFILE: GOLDEN GATE NEIGHBORHOOD

Surprisingly, since the early 1990s, several generations of UC Berkeley urban planning students have studied the Golden Gate neighborhood. Every ten years or so, a fresh crop of researchers explores this neighborhood, convenes community meetings and analyzes the area's assets and challenges. These reports, filled with government statistics and anecdotal reflections, offer a detailed snapshot of the neighborhood. Sadly, this rich material lacks wide distribution.

In 1993, a group of eager students undertook the ambitious task of evaluating this neighborhood. At the time, the Golden Gate was a hotspot for Oakland's crippling crack epidemic. According to a study by the independent research nonprofit Rand Corporation, between 1980 and 2000, Oakland ranked seventh out of 232 American cities suffering from devastating crack problems. Recalling this period, one neighbor confessed that she didn't know if she needed "a machete or a machine gun" to navigate her drug-riddled street. The urban planning students' optimistic goal was to "provide tools for the neighborhood in its attempt to create a vision of its own future."

The *Community Profile: Golden Gate Neighborhood* report came to me via local historian Don Hausler and his research trove. During his nearly three-decade tenure as coordinator for the Emeryville Historical Society, he has amassed an unparalleled collection of materials about the Golden Gate neighborhood. While the area has changed in many ways since the 1990s, some challenges persist, especially rising housing costs that make the neighborhood unaffordable for many longtime residents, a struggling commercial district along San Pablo Avenue and areas of violent crime. Unfortunately, Hausler's copy of this report has a glaring deficit: pages 24 through 44 are mysteriously absent. Though several neighbors remember participating in meetings and recall seeing the report's distinctive yellow cover, no one could lay their hands on a complete original copy.

Where do reports like this wind up and how do they move beyond their academic case-study status to benefit the community? With these questions in mind, we launched the Golden Gate Library Local Collection to freely circulate documents like this one. As the

neighborhood grows and changes, it's essential that longtime neighbors know that their experiences are preserved and that new neighbors have resources to learn about their new home.

In 2013, I was honored to be part of Kala Art Institute's inaugural iteration of *Print Public*, a new program that "...[provides] a platform for artists to work on interdisciplinary projects with digital or print media while animating public space, reaching new communities, building local partnerships, and deepening neighborhood ties." Initially a collaboration with UC Berkeley's College of Environmental Design, *Print Public* paired artists with urban planning students to broaden their capacity. Kala also became a client of IN-City, the College's summer pre-masters urban planning program. Teams of planners researched Kala's environs, including North Oakland, South Berkeley and Emeryville, to analyze the potential impacts of art initiatives such as *Print Public*. Kala has generously given permission for us to include these reports in this Golden Gate Library Local Collection volume. In the spirit of sharing, Robin Freeman, a longtime Golden Gate neighbor, environmental planner and educator, has allowed us to re-print a 2013 neighborhood vision statement generated from community engagement meetings he organized through Merritt College.

In contrast, obtaining re-printing permissions for the *Community Profile: Golden Gate Neighborhood* report was not a simple task. Through emails with staff at UC Berkeley's School of Environmental Design, I learned that this report is an 'orphan document.' Since it was written by a group of students as a class project, no one owns it. I was advised to contact Professor Edward Blakely, a renowned urban planning scholar and practitioner who taught the 1993 community development class. In addition to holding academic leadership positions in several university urban planning departments, Professor Blakely was the so-called recovery-czar for post-Katrina New Orleans. The now octogenarian professor emeritus at the University of Sydney in Australia did not respond to my emails. Determined to legitimately daylight this document, I continued to pursue permission via the University of California's Intellectual Property & Research Alliances. Many emails and phone calls later, I received this satisfying response from Kate Lewis, Associate Director of the Industry Alliances Office and Laleh Shayesteh, Licensing Officer of the Office of Technology Licensing:

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I'm pleased that through the Golden Gate Library Local Collection, the community can now access this report alongside other valuable neighborhood studies.

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