

Rethinking the Benicia Business Park ...

Green Gateway Business Community

A 21ST CENTURY POSSIBILITY



Prepared by Benicia citizens
organized as the Green Gateway Group

September, 2008

(9/21/08: this version includes all material from the Addendum of 9/1/08)

Disclosure

The Green Gateway Group fully believes that the Benicia City Council has sufficient data, facts, information, and legal opinion from numerous sources to fully deny the current project as proposed by Discovery Builders.

This document is not intended and shall not be used as grounds for the Benicia City Council to deny the current project as proposed.

We are simply formulating possibilities, based on our research and discussion with visionaries in the industry. We are not presenting an Alternative Project. We are simply taking a positive step in presenting a framework for a 21st Century vision.

Green Gateway Group
September, 2008

GREEN GATEWAY BUSINESS COMMUNITY

A 21st Century Possibility

CONTENTS

Disclosure	p. 2
Introduction and Summary	p. 4
Context and Framework under which this development model was prepared	p. 5
Benicia General Plan	p. 5
California Assembly Bill 32	p. 7
A definition of Sustainability	p. 10
The Green Gateway Business Community - Basics for a 21st Century plan	
Transportation is the key to air quality	p. 11
Protection of habitat, streams	p. 12
A profitable development that serves the City of Benicia	p. 12
Guidelines / Goals / Types of Companies and Businesses	p. 13
<i>(Additional material from the Addendum of 9/1/08)</i>	p. 14
Comparison: Seeno and the Green Gateway Vision	p. 15
Sample Sustainability Report Card (Checklist)	p. 16
Maps and Drawings (description)	p. 20
Google Earth Map <i>(Revised version, from the Addendum of 9/1/08)</i>	p. 21
Google Earth – Additional 3-D Views <i>(from the Addendum of 9/1/08)</i>	p. 22
Map of Key Constraints	p. 26
Clean Technology – Green Innovation for 21 st Century Challenges	p. 27
Overview	p. 27
Green Gateway	p. 27
Green Innovation Zone	p. 27
The Case for Clean Technology	p. 28
Components of the Green Innovation Zone	p. 30
Implementation Strategy <i>(from the Addendum of 9/1/08)</i>	p. 31
Photos of Campus-Style Projects	p. 33
Advantages for All Parties	p. 38
A Rough Timeline for Development	p. 38
Advocating that Benicia Undertake Development of a Specific Plan	p. 40
Appendices	
A. About Specific Plans	p. 41
B. About the possibility of a Citizen Sponsored Referendum and Ballot Initiative	p. 42
C: Cleantech Opportunities and Issues – by Amalia Lorentz	p. 43
D: Hopeful Cleantech Hubs Proliferate Around the Bay	p. 45
E: Reports and Charts on Cleantech Industry	p. 47
F: Inventory of California's Green Industry Firms	p. 48
G: A list of types of green-collar jobs	p. 50
H: Charts on current and projected growth in cleantech investment	p. 51

Introduction and Summary

Visionary 21st Century Planning based on a City-Sponsored Specific Plan

Benicia's Green Gateway Group proposes an achievable visionary business community in contrast to the current proposed project for Benicia Business Park. We believe the best way to achieve this goal is to exercise our right as citizens to encourage a Specific Plan. A Form-Based Code would provide the basis for a LEED-ND certified campus-style business community, with mixed-use retail/commercial, research and development, and light industrial uses.

We join our voices with a chorus of local citizens and professionals who have advised a vote to deny the current Seeno plan, which is archaic, unsustainable and unsuited to the future. We believe that Benicia needs a 21st Century alternative that would be forward-looking and specific in its vision. We also recognize that a developer needs to be advised clearly by the citizens as to what we would require, what we want, and what would and would not be acceptable.

To do this, the City Council must deny the current project and direct staff to seek input from all parties, including the public, in the writing of a Specific Plan (a sub-set of our City's General Plan, written for a specific bounded section of the city). When adopted by our City Council, a Specific Plan would make all conditions of approval legally binding according to State of California law, and it would enable the City to conform to "AB32," the California "Global Warming Solutions Act," now approved and codified as Division 25.5 (commencing with Section 38500) of our California Health and Safety Code.

Industry Standard Sustainable Development

Our Green Gateway Business Community example follows current industry standards, calling for sustainable, profitable, green development. It envisions an environmentally sustainable and highly profitable research park, having its uses and activities guided by an overarching concept and focus on the emerging field of clean technology. There should be protections against grading slopes beyond 20% incline (a common development standard), a richer mixed-use layout, road alignment that will encourage greater walking and biking accessibility, an emission-free electric or low-emission hybrid public transit system to serve the entire city of Benicia, and Form-based code to guide the development of a livable and sustainable business *community*.

To make this visionary possibility more tangible in the minds of the public and our City Council and City staff, we plan to present an example of a Site Plan (map) and other illustrative documents, that show the topography and the proposed grading of the current proposed project as it contrasts with our recommended Green Gateway Business Community. And we will present still images of what a new project could look like with the least disruption to the site topography. Finally, we hope to present a rough example of a Specific Plan, showing how a community like Benicia, in partnership with a landowner and developer, can take charge of the direction in which local projects like this one move forward.

Good for the Community, Good for the Owner/Developer, Good for the World

We are hopeful that this work will help to create a profitable 21st Century sustainable development for our beloved town and our beautiful rolling hills. We ALL will be affected by whatever happens to the 527 acres of land at East Second and Lake Herman Road. The community will benefit in the development of a forward looking, campus style business community that will enhance and strengthen our economy and make us all proud of what we can do here in Benicia.