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## 4 projects that will change Oakland

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These four major projects will transform Oakland. Here's a look at where they stand.

### **HENRY J. KAISER CONVENTION CENTER**

**Developer:** Emerville-based Orton Development Inc.

**Location:** 10 10th St.

**Cost:** \$65 million

**Background:** Formerly known as the Oakland Auditorium, the 1915 Beaux-Arts-style building is located in Oakland's Civic Center neighborhood overlooking Lake Merritt. Oakland began an RFP process to redevelop the site — vacant for over a decade — just months before the Covid-19 pandemic sent the country's economy into lockdown. The building, designated as a World Heritage site in 1979, features a 1,500-seat theater, ballrooms and an 80,000-square foot arena with office space, as well as classrooms, rehearsal rooms and music studios. While



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The Kaiser Convention Center in Oakland

Orton is responsible for the adaptive reuse development and operation, the city will remain the structure's owner.

**Status:** While the pandemic threw a wrench in the project — and resulted in increased costs — construction began in July of this year. The site will now be known as Oakland Civic.

**Quote:** “This is a real opportunity to serve Oakland’s art and culture organizations and to create a place where Oakland residents can come together to gather and build community,” said Nikki Fortunato Bas, the city council member whose district includes the auditorium.

— *Diana Murphy*

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## **A'S BALLPARK**

**Developer:** Athletics Investment Group LLC

**Cost:** \$6 billion, including ancillary development

**Location:** Howard Terminal

**Background:** No proposed A's ballpark in Oakland has made it this late in the game. For the past two decades, the A's have threatened to leave Oakland — once for Fremont, another time for San Jose — and four years ago were struck out by community opposition to a ballpark on Laney College property near Lake Merritt. But in early 2018, the A's unveiled plans for a 35,000-seat, privately financed Howard Terminal ballpark — long a favored site of Mayor Libby Schaaf — 3,000 residential units, 1.5 million square feet of office and commercial space, up to 400 hotel rooms, a 3,500-seat performing arts center and 18 acres of parks and open space.

**Status:** Negotiating development agreement with the city, including community benefits, and awaiting final environmental impact report. The timeline for coming to terms on a development agreement is anyone's guess, given that the A's put out their own terms in April and the City Council approved a distinctly different non-binding term sheet in July. The final EIR is likely to arrive in the next couple of weeks. Even then, the A's face a public relations rebuild after buying Alameda County's 50% stake in the Coliseum complex, which could stall redevelopment there if the city ultimately chooses a different proposal, and actively courting Las Vegas as an alternative ballpark site.

**Main remaining challenge:** The development agreement and community benefits, including how many affordable housing units will the A's be responsible for setting aside or subsidizing. Another touchy issue, a special tax district that would collect "but for" taxes on the site itself — nonexistent tax revenue today that would be available in the future because of the development — to pay for infrastructure in and around the site. Also ahead are votes by key commissions, such as the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, which is charged with protecting and endorsing responsible use of the bay, and the Port of Oakland.

**Quote:** "The team belongs in Oakland. As long as (a new stadium is) in Oakland, I'm good with that." — now-former A's Manager Bob Melvin in 2017.

— *Ron Leuty*

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## **BROOKLYN BASIN**

**Developer:** Signature Development Group

**Cost:** At least \$2 billion

**Location:** Oakland waterfront east of Jack London Square

**Background:** By most measures Oakland's largest-ever housing project at 3,100 units, Brooklyn Basin won its approvals in 2009 after a 10-year effort. Now Signature has upped the ante by proposing changes to the 65-acre site that would add 600 more units, plus (somewhat more controversially) an expanded marina on its waterfront abutting a new park, Township Commons, that opened this year.

**Status:** Signature is developing some of the housing itself, but it has also parceled out plots to other developers. The first buildings began leasing in 2019. Construction is at various stages on several others. An eight-story, 378-unit apartment building by Los Angeles developer Cityview was the latest to break ground.

**Main remaining challenge:** Signature's proposed changes are significant enough that those portions of the project need to go back before the city of Oakland for approval, expected sometime in 2022. The marina, which would replace an existing one, can probably expect to face opposition on the grounds it obstructs view of the waterfront.

**Quote:** “Township Commons functions for us in real estate terms as an anchor tenant,” Ghielmetti told the San Francisco Chronicle. “We’ve been at this 20 years. We won’t screw up.”

— *Jim Gardner*

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## LAKESIDE

**Developer:** TMG Partners

**Cost:** \$264 million

**Location:** 300 Lakeside

**Background:** Developer and landlord TMG Partners getting ready to welcome PG&E as the newest corporate resident of downtown Oakland. TMG bought the 1 million square foot property from owners Rockpoint Group and The Swig Company for \$450 million; it was simultaneously negotiating a lease with the utility giant to move its headquarters there from San Francisco. The utility initially will lease 600,000 square feet, with plans to eventually occupy the entire 950,000-square-foot office complex. The company has an option to purchase the building in 2023 for \$892 million. Located on Lake Merritt, the project was initially developed for Kaiser Industries back in 1960. including a seismic upgrade, facade cleaning and significant upgrades to its mechanical plant and fire and life safety systems, TMG said in its statement.

**Status:** Renovations including a seismic, mechanical and fire and life safety upgrade and facade cleaning are underway; PG&E expected to take first occupancy in first half of 2022.

**Quote:** “We believe the new Oakland location will be a big improvement for our employees in terms of workspace and layout. It gives us the chance to design our workplace with an open canvas, to incorporate our best thinking on collaborative spaces and, importantly, to design for all of our health and safety needs in a post-Covid-19 environment,” PG&E said in a statement.

