

RESTORE OAKLAND



By early spring of 2016, rents for East Bay office space were starting to get seriously high. Fortunately, for community organizations in the area, the East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC) was aware of the effects it was having on local nonprofits and conceived a solution. Working closely with the Northern California Community Loan Fund, farsighted EBALDC staff searched for properties that could be purchased and converted into an anchor institution with community-oriented functions.

From the start, Restore Oakland generated a lot of excitement. Clearly, its location on International Boulevard in the heart of the Fruitvale district had potential benefits for the surrounding community. Not surprisingly, the project attracted an interesting and strong group of collaborators.

It soon gathered support as a joint initiative between the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights and the Restaurant Opportunities Centers United (ROC United). ROC United planned to create an employment training center as well as meeting spaces for community advocacy and restorative justice meetings. Each organization had something important to offer the



neighborhood. Together with EBALDC, the tenant-partners contracted with Designing Justice + Designing Spaces, a social justice-oriented architectural startup based in Oakland.

With these pieces in place, the project had promise. But the timeline was very tight, and the renovation complex. The development team decided to work closely with Alternative Technologies on a design/build basis.

With our experience in nonprofit partnerships, sensitivity to budgets, renovations of older buildings, and skills in creating community-facing public spaces, Alternative was able to draft a detailed set of drawings for computer and telephone cabling infrastructure including WiFi networks, security cameras, conference rooms, and server closets. The drawings met the needs of other contractors, project timeframes, and strict budgets.

We're proud of the work we have done helping to fulfill the promise of this visionary project. For more information, visit Restore Oakland's website at <http://restoreoakland.org/>.

