Good Morning! First of all, we would like to thank Laney College, in particular Elnora Webb and Marco Menendez, for hosting this workshop. Welcome to the West subarea workshop for the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan. Today we’ll be focusing on the area that includes the greater Chinatown area. Last Saturday we had a workshop that focused on the area east of the BART Station. These two workshops will provide you with an important opportunity to help shape a plan for the future of this area over the next twenty years.

We are going to give you a brief overview of the project, what has been accomplished so far, and what we are here for today, before we break into our small groups. But first, we’d like to acknowledge the diversity of the community in this room and thank all of our multi-lingual facilitators for helping us conduct this meeting.

Good development starts with good planning. For this reason, the City of Oakland has been engaged with the community for over 2 years in a planning process for the neighborhoods and districts within ½ mile radius of the Lake Merritt BART station. The resulting Lake Merritt Station Area Plan will consider the types and locations of buildings and activities, guidelines for how development of the area should take place, and the other types of improvements that are needed to support development. The goal of this process is to develop an intentional way forward, rather than letting accidental changes shape the neighborhood. It will be a chance to understand the wide range of needs and desires of people that share an interest in making this area a better place, and to create lasting partnerships.

The plan will look 20 years into the future, so keep in mind that big changes can happen over time. Think about how you want this neighborhood to grow over the long term, specifically focusing on the built environment and physical changes, like types of buildings, streets and sidewalks, public spaces, and transportation. Also keep in mind that funding will have to be secured for public improvements and much of the plan will ultimately be implemented privately, so economic feasibility matters. Ultimately, as a community, we will need to establish priorities for changes in the area, and then identify the right methods for implementing change, such as zoning and land use controls.

The process of creating a plan for “transit-oriented development” in the neighborhoods and districts surrounding the Lake Merritt BART station began in fall 2008 with a Community Engagement
phase that concluded in June 2009 with a report and set of guiding principles that have informed the goals and objectives of the area plan. Next, a Community Charette process took place in summer 2009 that generated ideas for the type of development that should occur on the blocks owned by BART. The city consultant team began work in fall 2009, and conducted the first community workshop in April 2010. Over this initial planning period, the community has generated many ideas, expressed several concerns, and importantly, identified the overarching vision and goals for the project.

The vision established by the community for this area is to:

- Create a more active, vibrant, and safe district to serve and attract residents, businesses, students, shoppers and visitors;
- Provide for community development and economic development that is equitable, sustainable, and healthy;
- Increase use of non-automobile modes of transportation;
- Increase the housing supply to accommodate a diverse community, especially affordable housing and housing around the BART station;
- Increase jobs and improve access to jobs along the transit corridor;
- Provide services and retail options in the station area;
- Identify additional recreation and open space opportunities;
- Celebrate and enhance the heritage of Chinatown as a cultural asset and a regional community destination; and
- Establish the Lake Merritt Station Area as a model with innovations in community development, transportation, housing, jobs, and businesses and environmental, social, and economic sustainability, and greenhouse gas reductions.

A Technical Advisory Committee and Community Stakeholders Group have been established to help guide the development of this plan, and will consider the range of ideas set forth at this workshop. The ideas and suggestions generated at this workshop will also be reviewed by City staff and the consultant team for their feasibility and cost. The project team will then pull all the feedback received into a draft framework for the station area plan.

We will hold another community workshop in June 2011, when we will focus in on the top priorities of the draft framework and try to resolve outstanding issues. In the fall, the project team will again check in with the community to make sure we’ve got it right. This rough draft, or preferred plan, will be the basis for the Station Area Plan, which will take about another year to complete, finishing in the end of 2012.
Today’s workshop is an opportunity to work together to create a map that shows the changes and improvements the community would like to see in the Lake Merritt Station area over the next 20 years. Each table will be guided through three discussion sessions of 40 minutes each. The first topic will be **major streets and improvements**. The second topic will be **buildings and services**, also called land use. The last topic will be **parks and community facilities**. During your small group discussion, you will be making recommendations on a map of the area, using markers, stickers and photo examples of improvements to express your ideas for the future. **These are your maps, so please draw and write on them.** Your facilitator will help walk you through each table activity in more detail.

After the tables have discussed all three topics, we’ll come back together into a larger group, and the table facilitators will share each group’s top 3 priorities for changes and improvements in the area. We would also invite you as individuals to fill out the feedback forms **<show form>** at the end, and include on that form your personal top 3 priorities – that way we make sure we hear from everyone here. Please complete it after you’ve had the chance to work through the topics with your group.

Now we will begin our small group exercises. If you have any questions, the facilitators at each of your tables will be able to help you out.