

Existing Objectives, Principles, and Feedback to Date

LAKE MERRITT STATION AREA PLAN KEY OBJECTIVES

In 2008, the City of Oakland applied for a Planning Grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to prepare the Lake Merritt BART Station Area Plan. The objectives identified in the planning grant (and subsequent Request for Proposals issued to hire a consultant to create the plan) include the following:

- Provide for community development that is equitable, sustainable, and healthy.
- Increase use of non-automobile modes of transportation.
- Increase the housing supply, 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.

NINE GUIDING PRINCIPLES (2009 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT)

In November 2008, the City of Oakland partnered with Asian Health Services (AHS), the Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce, and the Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN) to begin community outreach for the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan. Four well-attended community meetings were conducted from 2008 to 2009 and a 19-question survey which garnered 1,100 results was conducted in March and April 2009. Community priorities and goals were summarized from the comments received at the community meetings and survey results, and are provided below.

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Create safe public spaces.
 - Increase foot traffic and create job opportunities by attracting small businesses.
 - Create a friendly, safe, and transit oriented environment with better lighting and pedestrian improvements to enhance Chinatown and Laney College.
 - Strengthen linkages to key destinations within the area, including Oakland Chinatown and Laney College.
- Promote safer streets.

- Reduce traffic throughout the neighborhood.
- Improve and maintain sidewalks.
- Ensure cleanliness and safety of streets and intersection crossings.
- Improve community police services.
 - Establish a police sub-station by the Lake Merritt BART Station.
 - Include violence prevention programs and policies.

JOBS

- Increase the number of good jobs that match the community profile.
 - Ensure the jobs will have living wages and benefits.
 - Emphasize jobs in green industries.
- Provide a job training center in the neighborhood and partner with local institutions to establish effective programs.
 - Incorporate green job training opportunities.

HOUSING

- Prevent the loss of existing affordable rental (including senior) housing.
- Prevent involuntary displacement of residents due to housing costs or redevelopment activity.
 - Provide special protections for immigrants with limited English.
- Develop new rental and for sale housing within the project area for individuals and families of all sizes and all income levels (from extremely low to above moderate).
 - Ensure a housing mix that meets current and projected needs of families with children, and disabled and senior residents.
 - Provide a variety of incentives and subsidies to ensure the financial feasibility of affordable housing.
- Promote healthful homes that are environmentally friendly and that incorporate green building methods.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND OPEN SPACE

- Preserve and improve existing parks and recreation centers.
- Ensure access to parks and open space for youth and seniors.

- Increase the number of safe parks and open spaces available to the community.
- Establish a community garden.
- Create a multi-use recreational facility to serve both youth and seniors.
- Build new neighborhood parks and athletic fields/areas for cultural activities, such as tai chi.
- Promote library programs for youth, families, and seniors.
- Ensure adequate capacity of school and recreation facilities.

BUSINESS

- Promote new grocery stores, farmers markets and restaurants that sell nutritious and affordable food to community members and that generate new jobs in the food sector.
- Seek to attract new businesses, including needed pharmacies, banks, and bookstores.
- Extend Chinatown business uses in the direction of the Lake Merritt BART Station to expand and reinforce existing businesses.

TRANSPORTATION

- Preserve and strengthen the neighborhood's good public transit and walkability.
- Reduce truck and car traffic in order to reduce noise and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Expand modes of transportation serving the neighborhood.
- Ensure pedestrian safety with improved sidewalks and intersection crossings.
- Ensure compatibility of pedestrians, cyclists, and autos with street improvements that reduce traffic volume and speed.
- Improve parking serving Chinatown and the BART station.

CULTURAL PRESERVATION

- Ensure that public services and spaces proposed preserve and reflect the cultural history and aspects of Chinatown's historic geography.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Ensure opportunities for effective community participation by Chinatown residents and organizations in the further development of the Specific Plan.

- Enable the community to monitor implementation of the Specific Plan.

HEALTH

- Improve air quality as a public health measure.
- Increase health and medical services available to the community.
- Cleanup air, soil and water contamination (including trash on the streets).
- Reduce noise levels.
- Ensure the cleanliness of public outdoor places.
- Provide public bathrooms and trash containers.
- Conduct anti-litter campaigns.

KEY THEMES, IDEAS AND VISIONS FROM WORKSHOP #1

The first community workshop for the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan was held on April 14, 2010. Approximately 250 people were in attendance. The meeting began with a brief presentation by Dyett & Bhatia, the lead consulting firm preparing the plan, providing a summary of key topics from the Existing Conditions and Key Issues Report. Small group break-out sessions were held to discuss a range of topics. The main issues and ideas from the first community workshop are provided below.

ISSUES AND IDEAS

Transportation

- Improve pedestrian and bicycle access and connections:
 - Improve safety: improve lighting, slow traffic, address dangerous intersections
- Streetscape and design:
 - Reflect community identities, i.e. brand station Chinatown or Chinatown/Laney
 - Green, complete streets
- Improve access to transit, increase LOS, reduce costs
- More parking, for free/ low rate

Housing, Businesses and Jobs

- High density mixed use – complements existing diversity of uses
- More commercial activity = more pedestrian activity = safer

- New businesses: grow Chinatown & new businesses near Laney / BART
 - Wide range of businesses desired, focused on local/ small business
 - Later hours; possibly a night market
- Attract people to the area by establishing an entertainment/ cultural/ tourist attraction that builds on existing assets
- More jobs and job training; especially green jobs
- Affordable and mixed-income housing for families, seniors, and students
 - Avoid displacement & preserve historic housing
 - Green design

Community Facilities, Open Space, and Cultural Preservation

- More multigenerational, multicultural, multi-use community facilities
 - Recreation or community center
 - Flexible, programmed parks and open space (for diverse needs)
 - Youth center
- More child care services, schools, and other educational centers
- Maintain cultural identity, urban texture, esp related to Chinatown
 - Public space, public art, and street design reflect community identity

Public Safety and Health

- Address public safety related to crime and traffic: improve lighting, calm traffic, activate streets
- Improve community health: air quality, noise, provision of services, cleanliness

VISIONS

- Safe
- Economically Vibrant
- Affordable
- Multimodal Transit Center
- Pedestrian-Oriented
- Well Connected
- Vital with a Range of Activities and Attractions

- Tourist Destination
- Dense
- Diverse
- Highlights the Cultural and Historic Resources of Chinatown
- Healthy
- Sustainable