

Final Vision and Goals for the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan

VISION

The following vision for the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan updates the plan objectives based on input received at CSG and TAC meetings and the Community Workshop #1.

- Create a financially feasible, implementable plan that is the result of an authentic community engagement process and is inclusionary of all community voices.
- 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.
- 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.

GOALS

The following goals for the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan include all the major goals within the Nine Guiding Principles identified in the 2009 Community Engagement process, which have in some cases been condensed, or expanded to include additional community comments. In addition, two major goals that came out of additional community input have been added.

1. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Ensure opportunities for effective community participation by all stakeholders, including residents, property owners, businesses, students,

employees, and organizations in the further development and implementation of the Plan.

2. PUBLIC SAFETY

- Create safe public spaces by increasing foot traffic, improving lighting, and strengthening linkages.
- Promote safer streets with traffic calming, improved lighting, improved signage, improvements that address the needs of non-English speaking residents and visitors, and improved sidewalks and intersections.
- Improve community police services.

3. BUSINESS

- Strengthen and expand businesses in Chinatown, through City zoning, permits, marketing, redevelopment, infrastructure improvements, and other City tools.
- Attract and promote a variety of new businesses, including small businesses and start-ups, larger businesses that provide professional-level jobs (e.g., engineers, attorneys, accountants, etc.), and businesses that serve the local community (such as grocery stores, farmers markets, restaurants, pharmacies, banks, and bookstores).
- Promote more businesses near the Lake Merritt BART Station to activate the streets, serve Chinatown, Laney College, and the Oakland Museum of California, and increase the number of jobs.

4. JOBS

- Attract development of new office and business space that provide jobs and promote economic development for both large and small businesses.
- Increase job and career opportunities, including permanent, well-paying, and green jobs; ensure that these jobs provide work for local residents.
- Support the provision of job training opportunities. Ensure that local training opportunities (including vocational English as a second language opportunities) exist for jobs being developed both in the planning area and the region, particularly those accessible via the transit network. Coordinate with Laney College to provide job training opportunities.
- Employ local and/or targeted hiring for contracting and construction jobs for implementation of the plan (i.e., construction of infrastructure).

5. HOUSING

- Accommodate and promote new rental and for sale housing within the project area for individuals and families of all sizes and all income levels (from affordable to market rate housing).
- Prevent involuntary displacement of residents.

- Maintain, preserve, and improve existing housing in the project area and prevent loss of housing that is affordable to residents (subsidized and unsubsidized), and senior housing. Promote healthful homes that are environmentally friendly and that incorporate green building methods.

6. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND OPEN SPACE

- Improve existing parks and recreation centers, including improving access to existing parks; and add new parks and recreation centers to serve higher-density housing and increased number of jobs.
- Ensure all parks are safe, accessible to all age groups, clean, well maintained, and provide public restrooms and trash containers.
- Create a multi-use, multi-generational recreational facility, either in addition to or including a youth center.
- Provide space for community and cultural programs and activities, such as multi-use neighborhood parks, athletic fields, areas for cultural activities such as tai chi, community gardens, and expanded library programs for youth, families, and seniors.
- Work with the Oakland Unified School District to ensure adequate capacity of school and children's recreation facilities.

7. TRANSPORTATION

- Expand, preserve, and strengthen the neighborhood's access to public transit, walkability, and bicycle access.
- Ensure safety and compatibility of pedestrians, cyclists, and autos through improvements that calm traffic, improve sidewalks, improve intersection crossings, and improve traffic flow and pattern, including reevaluating one-way streets, considering narrowing streets, and reducing speeds. In particular address the flow of traffic using the Posey and Webster tubes.
- Improve connections between existing assets and destinations, including between Chinatown, Lake Merritt, the 12th Street and 19th Street BART stations, Alameda County facilities, and Laney College and between the BART Stations and the Jack London District, including improving the I-880 undercrossings.
- Develop a parking strategy that includes shared parking and allows access to the area, and particularly to local retail, while also promoting non-auto modes of transportation and makes best use of available land.
- Increase walk bike, and transit trips.
- Preserve and reinvest in transit services and facilities to make sure operators can continue to provide reliable services.

8. COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL ANCHOR AND REGIONAL DESTINATION

- Establish a sense of place and clear identity for the area as a cultural and community anchor and a regional destination, building on existing assets such as Chinatown, the Oakland Museum of California, Laney College, the Kaiser Convention Center, Jack London Square, and Lake Merritt and the Lake Merritt Channel.
- Preserve, celebrate, and enhance the historic cultural resources and heritage of Chinatown as a regional anchor for businesses, housing, and community services, and highlight cultural and historic resources in the planning area through signage (both wayfinding signage and by developing sign regulations that allow the display of items in store windows), historic walks, and reuse of historic buildings. Ensure that public services and spaces proposed preserve and reflect the cultural history and aspects of Chinatown's historic geography.
- Promote a more diverse mix of uses near the BART Station, such as cafes, restaurants, music venues, retail stores, nightlife, etc., that activate the area as a lively and vibrant district.
- Preserve existing designated historic resources per all federal, State, and City regulations, and encourage restoration of designated historic structures that would achieve priority Chinatown and/or City goals.
- Consider a cultural heritage district or related tools for preserving, enhancing, and strengthening Chinatown.
- Make connections to the Historic Jack London Warehouse District as a key asset in the Planning Area.

9. HEALTH

- Establish the area as a healthier place to live and work, through a range of strategies including:
 - Promoting health awareness and education.
 - Improving environmental quality, including improving air quality as a public health measure.
 - Ensuring access to healthy food and housing.
 - Increasing health and medical services available to the community.
 - Cleaning up air, soil, and water contamination (including trash on the streets).
 - Reducing noise levels where permitted noise levels are exceeded.
 - Providing clean and well maintained public outdoor places that provide public restrooms and trash containers.

10. REDEVELOPMENT OF KEY PUBLICLY OWNED BLOCKS NEAR BART

- Establish a long-term plan for redevelopment of the four publicly owned blocks, including the two BART blocks, the MTC/ABAG block, and Madison Square Park to meet identified plan goals, including accommodating improved open spaces, new housing development, more jobs, more retail, and improved BART access.
- Recognize, incorporate, and reflect Chinatown's historic role in the redevelopment of the four publicly owned blocks, including the two BART blocks, the MTC/ABAG block, and Madison Square Park.

11. GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DESIGN

- Establish high quality, distinctive, and green urban design proposals, standards, and/or guidelines for new private development and public infrastructure, that are place-based and include building design, street design, and park design.
- Build on the existing urban fabric and further promote high density and mixed use building design that promotes active and safe spaces.
- Promote green and sustainable design in concert with the City's Emerald City initiative.
- Identify landmarks and views at key locations such as the Lake Merritt BART station plaza, and promote improvements such as lights and public art, etc., and consider preservation of key views as new development is proposed (e.g., along 14th Street to Lake Merritt).
- Promote active and safe public spaces and streets by ensuring that design activates the public realm and increases the safety of streets and pedestrian crossings.
- Identify and enhance gateways between the planning area and other neighborhoods, such as on 12th/14th Street, which connects the planning area to the East Lake neighborhood.