

## **COMMENTS**

### ***Public Review Draft – Lake Merritt Station Area Plan***

(Comments received at and following the Draft Plan Community Open House held on December 15, 2012 as of January 18, 2013 when this staff report was finalized)

# LAKE MERRITT STATION AREA PLAN

## Public Review Draft Plan Open House Summary

December 2012

### 1 Introduction

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The City of Oakland, Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), and the Peralta Community College District, through a grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), have come together to prepare a Station Area Plan for the area around the Lake Merritt BART Station. The Plan looks at ways in which streets, open spaces, and other infrastructure in the area can be improved, and establishes regulations for development projects that further the area's vitality. The Plan considers a wide range of topics, including land use, urban design, historic preservation, circulation, streetscape improvements, parks, and community facilities. A comprehensive Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is underway, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The Planning Area encompasses a one-half mile radius around the Lake Merritt BART Station, including Chinatown, Laney College, civic buildings of Alameda County and the City of Oakland, and the channel connecting Lake Merritt to the estuary. Many diverse residents, merchants, workers, and students make up the community in this area, and Chinatown functions as a citywide center for the Asian community.

Note that previous reports also provide significant insight and community feedback, including:

- *Lake Merritt BART Station Area Community Engagement Final Report* - completed by Asian Health Services, Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Oakland in June 2009.
- *Stakeholder Interviews Report* and *Community Workshop #1 Report* - completed by Dyett & Bhatia and the City of Oakland in May, 2010.
- *Summary of Community Feedback* - completed by Dyett & Bhatia and the City of Oakland in April 2011.
- *Emerging Plan Open House Summary* –completed by Dyett & Bhatia and the City of Oakland in October 2011.

Ongoing participation by the Community Stakeholders Group (CSG) has also been a crucial component of the development of the Plan. The CSG has driven the development of the Plan through participation in a series of ongoing working meetings. These meetings started with community feedback from public workshops detailed in the reports outlined above, developed the framework, and refined the content of the Draft Plan through an iterative process between CSG members, City staff, and consultant work.

## 1.1 Next Steps

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Staff is currently working on Zoning and General Plan amendments – these will translate plan concepts and policies into specific regulations. The Draft EIR is also underway – this will analyze environmental impacts of the proposed Plan.

Public Hearings to discuss the Plan and zoning will begin in January/February. The Zoning Update and Design Review Committees of the Planning Commission will discuss the proposed zoning ordinance and design guidelines. At the end of February/early March, we expect to publish a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). Later in March, the Planning Commission, the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (along with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee and the Parks and Recreation Commission) will review and provide a formal recommendation on the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan, Design Guidelines, new Zoning, General Plan Amendments and DEIR.

A final Plan and final EIR will then be completed by end of 2013 that reflect all the remaining feedback received. These documents will be reviewed and then adopted by the Planning Commission and the City Council

## 1.2 Open House Summary

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The Draft Plan Open House was held on December 15, 2012 from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm at the Laney College Student Center/Cafeteria, 900 Fallon Street, Oakland, CA. The meeting opened with a presentation by Dyett & Bhatia, City of Oakland Project Manager, and BART, followed by a group question and answer period. Questions asked included clarification on the process for selecting a BART developer, request for details on how community benefits will be incorporated, how affordable housing is addressed in the Plan, the process for completing zoning regulations, air quality and greenhouse gas effects of the Plan, how bicycle lanes are dealt with in the Chinatown core, how the BART Station will be renamed, how sufficient community facilities were included, among others.

Following the question and answer, participants were encouraged to explore the various stations on different plan components. Materials and information on key Draft Plan components, as well as zoning and general plan concepts were presented in English, Chinese and Vietnamese at six stations. The open house format allowed participants spend as long or as little time with the material as they felt necessary.

The Stations included:

1. Welcome, Vision, and Next Steps
2. Land Use and Open Space
3. Circulation and Streetscape
4. Design Guidelines
5. Zoning and General Plan Amendments

## 6. Implementation

A staff person was available at each station to answer questions and facilitators for Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese speakers led tours of participants through the workshop. Participants were encouraged to provide comments on the concepts presented at each station by writing comments on sticky notes and posting the notes to the note pads on the easels at each station. Participants were also encouraged to provide comments at upcoming public hearings and to submit comments via email if they preferred.

The Draft Plan is available on the project webpage and will continue to be available for public review at the following locations:

- Lincoln Square Recreation Center (250 10th St)
- Oakland Asian Cultural Center (388 9th Street, 2nd floor)
- City of Oakland Planning Department (250 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Suite 3315)

## **SUMMARY OF COMMENTS RECEIVED AT OPEN HOUSE STATIONS**

Written comments received at the open house are organized generally by topic.

### **Land Use and Parks**

- Parks improvements.
- There needs to be a policy for developers to contribute \$ for community benefits.
- More recreation centers for youth after school programs.
- Job training.
- Small business assistance center with Asian language capacity.
- Reiteration of community benefits:
  - Affordable housing for families.
  - Community youth center and seminars.
- This newly created parcel is considered by city as “development site.”
- Will these be high value jobs that reflect area standard wages?
- Fire alarm building parcel shown also as “open space” opportunity site – keep as open space site.
- Air quality filters?
- More affordable housing for families.
- Community and youth center.
- Keep/increase open space and more recreation centers.
- Trees should be increased in Madison Park to increase shade. Note: increased heat (temperature) with global heating.
- With these designs and the planned population increase over the course of 25 years, what measures will the city take to ensure public safety?

## Circulation Comments

- How will this plan improve the circulation between Alameda and Oakland via Posey/Webster tubes? (pp. 6-4, 44).
- Will it reduce cross-estuary congestion and improve connectivity between Oakland and Alameda?
- Alameda's cross-estuary shuttle lands at LM BART. Please fund it (BART? Oakland?) 7 days/week and expand address connectivity cross-estuary with LM BART.
- Roundabout concept (residential scale, i.e. Seattle) to help traffic calm.
- Pedestrians-oriented street lighting.
- Pedestrian scramble intersections.
- New traffic signals.
- Lake Merritt BART station name needs to be changed to "Chinatown/Laney BART" stations (2 notes).
- Vietnamese community doesn't want to change the name of Lake Merritt BART to "Chinatown."
- BART Station name change
  - Would likely occur concurrently with new Warm Springs Station; otherwise cost of changing all signage is prohibitive (over \$100k)
  - Stakeholders need to work together to get consensus on new name
- Need more parking (i.e., lot, garage, off-site for residents/businesses).
- The city should abolish all mandatory un-funded parking mandates and allow market to determine parking supply. Instead, mandate transit passes for new development.
- Remove LOS for city standards and replace with vehicle trips created.
- Very long-term, coordinate Oakland Broadway and Alameda point BRT/Streetcar plans to link systems through Chinatown and reduce Webster tube traffic.
- Where did the bike lane go? (In Phase II illustration).
- Class IIIA facilities in Chinatown need to be explicitly identified as temporary pending a better bikeways solution, both in the plan and on the map.
- Bicycling in Chinatown
  - Page 6-16, it's incorrect to say that biking in Chinatown is "unsafe"
  - adding a bike lane at this time, when double parking is still a problem would create an unsafe situation
  - Add next steps for dealing with loading/double parking issue in core of Chinatown (for example additional studies, etc) - add in Transportation and Implementation Chapter
- What exactly are next steps for safe bike access in core of Chinatown?
- Improve the connection to Jack London area – specifically under the freeway.
- How will bicyclists have access through and across Webster/Franklin/Broadway and the main areas of Chinatown? Bike access is critical to reducing congestion.

- How will implementing this circulation plan affect congestion on both sides of the estuary from 880/Broadway/Webster Tube/Posey Tube? Will it help reduce congestion on both sides?
- Better bikeway signage for tricky merges in spurs.
- Consider closing off roadway between International and 15 Street.
- Use parking under I-880 toward proposed parking demand. Caltrans airspace is valuable!
- Freight truck routes impacts.
- Something green in underpasses.
- Page 6-25, need to articulate the connections for possible reduction in parking ratios
- Requiring Green Trips certification could be a way to help with enforcement of demand management strategies (ex. transit passes)

### **Design Guidelines**

- Design guidelines are “silent” on treatment of freeway underpasses.
- Consider trees for streetscapes; need to be limited to native species that will survive and maintain (less leaf cleanup).
- Encourage mix of unit types in residential buildings, including ground floor townhouses

### **Implementation Related Comments**

- How will preservation be funded?
- There is a need for high value jobs with area standard wages. The private sector construction would benefit from using State-approved apprenticeship programs to train local residents.
- How will it impact tax payers? Will property tax go up?
- Implementation – what is the process for creating a BID? Is it outlined in the plan? Or a community benefits district? Provide information in Plan.
- Present state “bonus” incentive has not been found practical in Oakland. Seriously doubt that “incentive” option is viable.
- Explain in future meetings how plan leads to implementations of improvements (plan/process – funding – project delivery).
- Clarify any mitigations for demolition or other impacts to historic resources.
- Look at TOD specific inclusionary zoning for city (add to implementation)

### **Zoning and General Plan Amendments**

- How to address safety concerns (Sprint store on lakeshore and Verizon are good examples of decorative roll-up doors)? Large windows can be broken.
- Re: tying community benefits to density: make the trigger for benefits very low (2.5 FAR) and remove all height limits. But make the tower profiles thinner.
- Consider for areas that require ground-floor retail allowing residential if space is designed to convert to retail space.

## Public Review Draft Plan Open House Summary

- height and bulk tower separation is too little, and tower diagonal is too big.
- At what height is a setback required?
- Please limit tower height buildings in Chinatown.
- 4-5 stories for basic requirement. Build higher should kick into community benefit. Height should be around existing heights, especially in Chinatown.
- Need to eliminate mandatory parking minimums by right. Improve requirement to buy transit passes for residents/workers instead.
- Remove minimum parking requirements to facilitate the feasibility of affordable housing construction/inclusion.
- Height zone 4 cannot buffer 7th Street from the freeway when landscaping setback, tower setback, and scaling back to height zone 1 are all taken into account.
- Any bonus on proposed development on Lake Merritt BART Station should have some direct benefit to Madison Park.
- Density Bonus – Emeryville has just adopted something

### **Other**

- Post notices about public meetings in businesses and public bulletin boards!
- In future presentations, need to better emphasize the value of the Specific Plan:
  - Better position for funding, or may be requirement for pursuing funding (like One Bay Area Grant)
  - Helps us prioritize projects



# EAST BAY BICYCLE COALITION

*Working for safe, convenient and enjoyable bicycling for all people in the East Bay*

January 9, 2013

Ed Manasse  
Strategic Planning Manager  
250 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Suite 3315  
Oakland, CA 94612

Re: Public comment on the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan

Dear Ed Manasse:

Thank you again for the work of your staff to include within the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan all of the bikeway projects called for in the 2007 Oakland Bicycle Master Plan. We are supportive of moving forward on the priority bikeway projects in the Plan and as soon as the bike access issue for the core of Chinatown can be worked out, moving forward on making the busy streets in central Chinatown safe for the people who ride there every day.

We have two specific points to add to our earlier letters of March 10, 2012 and December 15, 2011.

1. We ask that this Plan make it clear that this Plan is consistent with the Oakland Bicycle Master Plan and that it will be consistent with the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan for the City to move forward with implementation of bikeways in this Plan and the Bicycle Master Plan. In other words, this Plan precludes no bikeway improvements that are developed as part of implementation of the Oakland Bicycle Master Plan; and
2. The language of the paragraph on page 6-63 of this Plan, which states:

*“At the time of the writing of this Plan, the City is not pursuing implementation of bikeways in the core of Chinatown because of community concerns. The City will need to examine these issues carefully and, in consultation with Chinatown stakeholders and bicycle advocates, review options for how to move forward. In the meantime, implementation of bikeways outside of the core of Chinatown will be prioritized.”*

should be revised as follows:

*“ At the time of the writing of this Plan, the City is not pursuing implementation of any streetscape improvements in the core of Chinatown because of community concerns. The City will conduct further study of the truck loading/unloading issues, as well as double parking issues, and recommend options to make the streets in the core of Chinatown work in a safe and inviting manner for all users of the roadway.”*

This revised language is consistent with Oakland’s new complete streets policy, as well as the complete streets policies that govern almost all funding sources that the City will tap in order to implement the streetscape improvements included in the Plan. These funding sources include Measure B, Measure F, One Bay Area Grant Program, as well as any monies that are explicitly for bike/ped improvements.

Thank you again for incorporating these concerns into the Plan and for working to improve an area of Oakland the much needs it. We look forward to the day when the Lake Merritt Station Area reaches its potential as one of Oakland’s best neighborhoods.

Dave Campbell  
Program Director



January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Ed Manasse  
City of Oakland  
Community and Economic Development Agency, Planning  
250 Frank Ogawa Plaza, Suite 3315  
Oakland, CA 94612

**Re: Lake Merritt Station Area Plan – Comments on Public Review Draft**

Dear Mr. Manasse,

This letter expresses the Chinatown Coalition’s comments on the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan Public Review Draft. The Chinatown Coalition, comprised of the organizations and stakeholders listed below, have reviewed the Plan, and found both positive changes and places where our previous comments have still yet to be incorporated.

### **Chapter 4 – Land Use**

- Figure 4.4: the height limits still aren’t based on common sense, in that they are out of context with the existing neighborhood, and do not at this time act as a trigger for community benefits. They have improved in that the height limit for BART parcels is now equal to the height limit for the rest of the surrounding neighborhood. However, a more common sense approach would be to lower the community benefit trigger down to 2.5 FAR to match the context for the majority of the existing neighborhood, and then allow the very tall proposed height limits to any building that participates in the community benefits policy.
- Section 4.5, page 4-19: some of the data is out of date. Housing market bottomed out in 2010, and has rebounded since. Rents have gone up by 10% in each of the last two years, and home prices are up year on year thus far in 2013.
- Section 4.5, page 4-23: targeting 15% of new units to be built as affordable in the Planning Area. Does a “target” really mean anything?
- The study does not ask the basic question regarding what would encourage families to move into Planning Area? What amenities are attractive to families? Our feeling is that the Plan misses this discussion: livable units (in terms of size, and sound transmission), affordability, schools, and safety. We think that we could get a lot of agreement with other community perspectives on development if we focused on this question, rather than focusing on heights, etc.
- We agree that it makes sense to relax some development standards for affordable housing, including a reduction in parking requirements
- Policies section:
  - LU-9: define what are festival streets.

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- LU-27: We believe that all projects that significantly increase density should contribute to support public quality of life amenities that benefit the project in question as well as the surrounding neighborhood.
- LU-33: Have others said they want planned activities under the freeway? That doesn't sound realistic. We believe that people want safe and well-lit passages under the freeway, rather than necessarily having activities there.

## Chapter 5 – Open Space

### 5.00 Parks and Community Facilities

**The coalition strongly supports the proposal of a Lake Merritt Area planning area Quimby Act program that would fund improvements through developer fees that would go specifically to serve local residents needs identified in the OSCAR.**

#### 5.2 Community Needs Assessment

The Chinatown Coalition appreciates the acknowledgement of both the current deficit in local serving parks and recreational facilities, as well as the community prioritization of Parks and Recreation Centers as the number one aspect to making the area a healthy place to live, work and do business.

#### 5.3 Proposed Park Improvements and New Open Space

Identifies three strategies:

1. Making the most out of existing spaces
2. Partnering with Oakland Unified School District and other schools
3. Expanding the amount of new park and open space acreage and recreation facilities
4. Improvements to Other Publicly Accessible Open Spaces

The Chinatown Coalition supports the strategy of improving and enhancing our existing facilities, as well as expanding the amount of new park, open space and recreation facilities. But takes issue with the proposal to Partner with Oakland Unified School District and other schools.

#### Joint use Agreements

Laney College/Peralta College facilities are designed and programmed to run through multiple cycles through the morning, day and evenings, these are teaching facilities and unlike their open space, are not appropriate for general public access. Laney and Peralta Colleges facilities management staff had said that joint use agreements are not something they would consider. At best, access would be through organizations (coordinating events at the college similar to the planning process) which is public access for special events, but not community access for public use.

The strategy of partnering with Oakland Unified School District does not recognize that our existing park facilities are being used by Charter Schools vs. the public using school facilities.

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The Oakland Unified School District is developing a space that addresses the needs of La Escuelita Education Complex, but at this time does not address the needs of all school facilities, specifically charter schools, within the area, much less serving the public.

**This chapter fails to address existing charter school needs/demand in the project area.** The Chinatown coalition requests stronger regulations for the provision of open space in the development/permitting of charter schools, pre-schools etc. and the development of a fee for these schools/facilities that contribute to the ongoing operations and maintenance of neighborhood open space and recreation centers, should they use as part of their day to day programming for physical education.

### **Improvements to Other Publicly Accessible Open Spaces**

While the coalition supports the idea of plazas and public spaces with paving and landscaping to generate activity, **maintenance and operating standards** for these spaces is what differentiates a space that “provides better access to attractive, sunlit open spaces for persons living in downtown Oakland. “ from blight. The plaza of the Alameda County building which is a homeless encampment when the offices are closed and the fence that surrounds the landscaped areas of the main Post Office are two examples of underutilized open space opportunities. New Open Spaces and Recreational Facilities.

### **Extension of DD Channel Improvements:**

The Chinatown Coalition would like to make clear that the station area plans recommendations for the Lake Merritt Channel greenway or linear park are specific requirements that would be put on developments along the Channel or as planned uses for Measure DD funds.

The link under the I-880 and south to the Estuary waterfront via pedestrian bridge has been consistently opposed since the beginning of the planning process by neighborhood groups.

The Chinatown Coalition asks that fees or monies derived from development in the planning area NOT be used for the extension of the DD channel, but be utilized for community identified neighborhood park and recreational facility priorities. The Lake Merritt channel proposal advocated for by staff, does not meet the OSCAR deficits, is not close enough to the Chinatown area to be considered as neighborhood serving, and it is not ACTIVE open space identified as a priority in the OSCAR.

The Chinatown Coalition supports the recommendation that all new development of half a block in size be required to provide on site publically accessible open space amounting to 10 percent of the total site area and establishing in – lieu fees. The Chinatown Coalition would like to see these fees directed towards the creation of neighborhood serving parks, recreational facilities and sports fields in the planning area, as identified as a priority in the community planning process.

### **Prioritization of Improvements**

While staff has consistently pointed to the “need to balance citywide” goals, an analysis of the operating budgets and number of registered participants per recreation centers citywide would

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help to understand the differing demands that are put upon existing facilities, and how they relate to the current distribution of park and recreation resources.

## Chapter 6 – Streetscape and Circulation

### 6.1 Visioning and Phasing

#### Building on Recent Plans

- The impetus for the *Revive Chinatown Plan* was to improve pedestrian safety. This should be clearly stated in the Lake Merritt Plan’s goals statement for Chapter 6.

#### Streetscape Vision

- In the “Make the area a destination” section, this could also be accomplished by naming the Lake Merritt BART station to the Chinatown Station.

#### Phasing Concept

- Addition of pedestrian-oriented lighting and bulbouts as a Phase I improvement is a positive.
- Did the environmental review for the Bicycle Master Plan specifically evaluate the traffic impact of reducing travel lanes on streets in Chinatown?

#### Figure 6.2 Phase I Circulation Improvement Strategy

- Addition of Phase I Bulbouts and Phase II Pedestrian scrambles at 10<sup>th</sup> and Webster, 9<sup>th</sup> and Harrison, and 8<sup>th</sup> and Harrison, is a positive.
- The Plan includes a bulbout, lane change, and sidewalk widening at 7<sup>th</sup> and Harrison Streets. Given the speed of cars along this street, a bulbout is not sufficient to improve pedestrian safety. Instead, this intersection should have a Flashing Pedestrian Sign.
- Addition of Bulbouts at 9<sup>th</sup> and Jackson, and 8<sup>th</sup> and Madison, is good to increase safety of residents utilizing Madison park.
- Addition of Bulbouts and Flashing Pedestrian Signs is a positive at 7<sup>th</sup> and Alice
- Question the viability of bike lanes on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> streets that require lane reduction. Has EIR been done for this with the Bicycle Master Plan?

### 6.2 Circulation Improvements

- In addition to using traffic calming measures to improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation (safety), a more effective approach would be to reroute a significant amount of vehicular traffic along the periphery of Chinatown. Has this been studied?
- In the Sidewalk Vendor Displays section, how does the plan propose to enforce the sidewalk display setback standards?

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### Figure 6.3 Phase II Circulation Improvement Strategy

- Added pedestrian scrambles at 10<sup>th</sup> and Webster, 9<sup>th</sup> and Harrison, and 8<sup>th</sup> and Harrison. This is good.
- Plan changed two-way conversion of Harrison Street Between 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> streets from low difficulty to high difficulty. We reiterate the importance of reverting the Core of Chinatown to two-way streets to improve pedestrian safety. As mentioned in our previous letters, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, Harrison, Webster, and Franklin Streets need to be reverted to two-way.
- What criteria was used to make the determination of what is considered low difficulty and high difficulty in terms of two way street conversions?

### Figure 6.6 Priority Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements

- The legend shows a pink designation for the Chinatown Commercial Core Area. However, on the map, Chinatown is not marked.
- Bicycle lanes should not be implemented in the core of Chinatown (the Plan currently shows them along 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> streets as well as Webster and Franklin Streets. Residents who live in Chinatown and customers who shop in Chinatown primarily do not utilize bikes for transportation. The addition of Bike Lanes through the Chinatown core would only serve to further congest streets as bikers will use them to travel through Chinatown, rather than to Chinatown. Bike Lanes should instead be put around the outskirts of Chinatown.

### Transit Preferential Streets (page 6-18)

- 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets as well as segments of Webster and Harrison Streets between 8<sup>th</sup> street and the tube access points are designated as Transit Preferential Streets. This would result in increased “through traffic” rather than “destination traffic.” As articulated in our previous comment letters, actions need to be taken to improve Chinatown as a destination. Chinatown, which already suffers from significant gridlock of “through traffic”, should not be a thoroughfare for vehicles traveling to other destinations.

### **6.3 Parking and Loading**

- The Plan states that the Lake Merritt BART Station is in a similar urban context to the 12<sup>th</sup> Street/Oakland City Center and 19<sup>th</sup> Street Stations in Oakland, as well as Embarcadero and Montgomery Stations in San Francisco. We disagree with this statement. None of these BART stations cited above have the strong residential character near them that the Lake Merritt BART Station does. Lake Merritt is more similar to adjacent stations of Rockridge and Macarthur which both provide lots of parking.

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- Page 6-25 (Parking Enforcement Program) – There is also a problem with trucks parked in loading zones all day. This encourages truck double parking to unload goods. This needs enforcement.

#### Shared Parking (Page 6-26)

- Plan adds possibility of using institutional parking lots which are typically underutilized on nights and weekends for use by the general public. This is good.
- The Plan adds to this section the concept of “Parking Benefit District” (page 6-26). We agree that Parking Benefit Districts could be a good idea to help fund improved pedestrian access, streetscape improvements, and promoting cultural activities.
- Inclusion of “back-in” angled parking in the area is positive.

#### **6.4 Recommendations for Key Streets**

- Page 6-28 (Phase II) – What specific criteria were used to determine feasibility? The Plan should list and explain.

#### 10th Street (West of Madison Street)

- Has the City indicated that is in a financial position to maintain proposed new planting/street trees/water gardens? Otherwise, maintenance may be the responsibility of the adjacent property owner. This comment applies throughout the plan where new planting/street trees/water gardens are proposed.

#### 9<sup>th</sup> Street Chinatown Core (West of Harrison Street)

- We support footnote 3 on page (6-36) that bike lanes through Chinatown will not be pursued by the City at this time, and that bikeways outside the core of Chinatown will be prioritized.
- Figure 6.14 – Where are truck loading areas for businesses on 9<sup>th</sup> street?

#### 7<sup>th</sup> Street West of Fallon Street

- The Plan should recommend how to reduce traffic volumes. Isn't most of the traffic coming from Alameda, heading to Highway 880?

#### Webster Street

- Figure 6.19 – There needs to be an illustration of option A on page 6-46 for two way conversion. This is very important.

#### Fallon Street (8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> Streets)

- We support expanding the “festival street” from two streets in the previous Plan (8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>) to three streets in this Plan (8<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> streets).

#### Webster Green

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- Plan includes special wayfinding highlighting the Webster Green. The Plan does not specify if these wayfinding signs will be multi-lingual. If they are not, they should be.

## **Policies**

### Pedestrian Improvements – Pedestrian Safety, Crossings and Traffic Calming

- C-17 Streetscape improvements for safety and character: Way-finding signage and cultural markers throughout the Planning Area should be multi-lingual to fit the linguistic needs of the surrounding population.
- C-23 Traffic signals and timing coordination: we support the addition of right-on-red restrictions within the Plan.

### Sidewalks and Street Vending

- C-28 Clear Pedestrian access shows the minimum clear sidewalk width is 5.5 feet. In C-29 Sidewalk vending there is proposed a minimum of six feet of clear space.

### Bicycle Improvements

- C-32 Bike lanes and routes: The Plan shows that Class 2 bike lanes can be placed on Webster and Franklin Streets north of 8<sup>th</sup> Street. However, that is in the Core of Chinatown. Please clarify that placing bike lanes in these areas is not a priority and that bike lanes outside the core of Chinatown will be considered priority. The note at the bottom of the page (6-63) may need an inserted footnote.

### Transit Access Improvements

C-34 Transit Streets: We would like to reiterate that streets within the Core of Chinatown should not be utilized as “through streets” but rather as “destination” streets. By designating these streets (7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, Broadway) as transit preferential streets, this Plan is encouraging traffic through the Core of Chinatown. This can have health impacts resulting from increased air pollution as well as increased incidence of pedestrian-vehicle accidents.

## **Chapter 7 – Community Resources**

We were pleased to see that this draft did include more of the community’s suggestions in the Community Facilities and Education Facilities sections.

### **7.1: Historic Resources**

Height Limits - to ensure compatibility of new development, height limits should be established that corresponds to this existing heights or densities (2.5 FAR), as outlined in our comments on Chapter 4.

### **7.2 Cultural Resources**

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## **Improvements to the Built Environment that Encourage Street Life**

- Pedestrian Connections - Connectivity between cultural assets to increase safety.
  - Hotspots:
    - *Fallon, 8th, and 9th Streets* – recommends way- finding signage, lighting, and streetscape elements
    - *I-880 freeway under-* crossings connectivity to Jack London District
    - *Chinatown Commercial Core* - corner bulb-outs and traffic calming measures along 7th Street, will promote pedestrian access and safety to Chinese Garden Park (Harrison Square). Also improve traffic calming efforts through Alameda Tubes.
- Wayfinding and Signage - Multilingual signage will help enhance the pedestrian experience and is an important cultural service for existing and emerging immigrant populations in the Planning Area.
- Active Streets - Ground-floor development and land uses along 8th and 9th Streets
- Community Gathering Spaces - Madison Square Park, Pacific Renaissance Plaza, along planter edges at the Lake Merritt BART Station, and along steps or stairs. The Plan recommends streetscape and open space improvements to accommodate and enhance these spaces in order to support community gathering and socializing. Additional amenities such as shaded areas and sidewalk seating areas are recommended.
- Festivals, Events, and Night Markets – Current festivals and events include: Streetfest, Lunar New Year Bazaar, Obon Festival, and other summer Night Markets in Chinatown and at Oakland Museum. Increasing events will help activate the streets.

**Asian Branch Library** - is the second busiest branch in the Oakland Public Library system after the Main Library. We support maintaining adequate funding to meet the increased demand for services, materials, and space for reading, storage, and circulation. Can expansion within the Pacific Renaissance Plaza be considered?

**Madison Square Park** – We support whole-heartedly efforts to physically improve this park, and add programming to enhance its role in the community, provide more consistent usage, and accommodate future activities in the space.

### **7.3 Community Facilities**

Specific amenities desired by the community include clinic/exam and counseling rooms to support additional health services, administrative office space, medium to large meeting spaces,

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commercial kitchen, computer lab, recording studio, and a permanent site for The Spot Youth Center. We support the direct inclusion of these uses at the BART site, which is appropriate in that the site is public, so there is the opportunity to create a development agreement.

#### **7.4 Educational Facilities**

Depending on the type of future development, student enrollment in the Planning Area will likely increase. Actual demand will depend on the rate and level of build-out of the Plan, as well as the demographic makeup of units and the possibility that schools outside the Planning Area will improve causing less demand from schools within the Planning Area. It is likely that the projected population growth will include new immigrants. Schools in the area should be culturally attuned to meet the needs of these immigrant communities.

What the plan does not address is how education drives housing decisions. Great schools attract families and raise property values. The Coalition shares a goal with the Chinatown Chamber of Commerce, and with City officials that a complete and strong neighborhood must attract families with residential choices. And the strongest actions we can take to ensure that families want to come to this area is to strengthen and expand great schools and reduce crime the perception of the neighborhood as unsafe.

#### **Higher Education**

The Coalition identified a desire by community members for Laney College to offer a broader range of classes and programs targeted to the Planning Area community, such as job training programs for immigrants, and expanded job-training opportunities in growth sectors, such as green industry.

### **Chapter 8 – Economic Development**

1. To make Chinatown economically competitive as a regional center for the East Bay, we must improve the circulation, access and parking so that destination traffic does not conflict with through traffic, i.e., the re-conversion of the one-way streets to two-way traffic. The parts of 7th and 8th Street, Webster and Harrison Streets, which run through the core of Chinatown need to be removed from being a "transit corridor" servicing Alameda. (page 6-17)
2. "Connecting with Laney College and OUSD" (page 8-6) should include ensuring that any future development on the BART blocks is a catalyst but does not become a barrier between Chinatown and Laney, both physically and operationally.

### **Chapter 9 – Infrastructure and Utilities**

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Comments to the Administrative Draft Policy statement on Stormwater Capture & Treatment have resulted in design guidelines categories on Green Roofs, Bio-Retention, Bio-Filtration, Infiltration; and Permeable Paving in the Design Guidelines document.

One outstanding comment from July has not been addressed. There are no reference benchmarks provided on Stormwater Runoff and the chemical pollutants that are carried into adjacent water bodies. The July comment was seeking to identify acceptable benchmark levels of chemical pollutants as determined by the State Water Resources Control Board, or other water quality regulatory bodies.

## Chapter 10 – Implementation

### Section 10.2

- Under the section on Implementation Mechanisms, Phase I, should clarify that Development Agreements can be required for publicly owned parcels.
- Should note that IFDs are currently being considered by the State Legislature for implementation in redevelopment areas.
- What is the difference between CFDs and IFDs and SADs? They all appear to raise revenue through parcel taxes.
- Under the section on Phasing for Plan Projects, it states that a nexus study will be required for Open Space. We were under the impression that Quimby Act fees could be collected with a Council action, but without a nexus study because the OSCAR minimums had not been met. Is this true?

### Table 10.1

As a comment about the overall table, it is curious that there is no column under Funding Mechanisms and Eligibility for the City General Funds or City Reserves for any of these projects. Many of these desired amenities are the responsibility of the City to provide under its charter (for instance adequate park space). There should be funds allocated to at least some of these quality of life issues already in the City's annual budget, and these should be called out.

A second comment is that the table should say specifically whether the incremental and total costs listed are annual costs or total capital costs. It is not clear in many of the specific action steps. Comments on the specific action steps are below:

- Community and Youth Rec and Wellness Center: \$1,000/SF for new construction and \$500/SF for renovation seems astronomically expensive.
- Public Rec Center (similar to Lincoln Rec Center): \$1,000/SF for new construction and \$500/SF for renovation seems astronomically expensive.

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- Fire Alarm Building reuse: very high cost for a Feasibility Study.
- Pocket open space/rooftop gardens: \$30/SF seems extraordinarily low. Rather than create a new Parks Impact Fee which requires a Nexus Study, why not use the Quimby Act, so that it is just a Council action?
- Community Gardens: \$10/SF. Rather than create a new Parks Impact Fee which requires a Nexus Study, why not use the Quimby Act, so that it is just a Council action?
- Local hire/recruitment and outreach: \$300,000 to \$1M seems to be a very high estimate. Actually, City of Oakland's Contract Compliance office is already doing a pilot program with this goal. We would want to ensure that there is staffing to help Cantonese/Mandarin speakers. Oakland Housing Authority also has a local hire program focused on its residents, which would be a good example for fine tuning the City's policy. Not sure why this requires a Nexus.
- Ensure a percentage of permanent jobs go to Oakland residents: City's Contract Compliance office is already doing this.
- Small Business Innovation Fund: Can be housed at OBDC. We would want to ensure that there is staffing to help Cantonese/Mandarin speakers.
- Creation of an Enterprise Development Program: Does a program like this already exist as part of the Federal Enterprise Zone program? We believe that parts of East and West Oakland benefit from EZ opportunities, but are not certain if the Lake Merritt BART Station area is also included.
- Public art around the LM BART station: there are many grants to support this work as well.
- Public art at unique destinations throughout the Planning Area: there are many grants to support this work as well.
- Historical markers: there are many grants to support this work as well.
- Renaming BART Station: please note in the report that BART has already committed to this
- More joint programming for youth and seniors: please note that the cost is \$100,000 to \$300,000 per year.
- Transit passes such as AC Transit EasyPass: this could be required as part of the expansion of institutional uses. This program seems to work best with large institutions with captive fixed pool of constituents.
- Pedestrian-Oriented Street Lighting: why are not all of the funding mechanisms checked here? This item should be eligible for all sources.
- Under crossing special lighting and/or screen walls: why is this not part of the existing eligible uses of the LLAD parcel tax? Why is this not eligible for the IFD funding mechanism?
- Redevelop City-owned remainder site: Should include SCA, Developer Contributions and Grants as part of the eligible funding mechanisms. It is a City-owned site, and should

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therefore be subject to a developer agreement. The City could write off the cost of the land in exchange for desired benefits.

- Nexus Study: the estimate of \$600,000 to \$800,000 seems high. How many nexus studies would we need to perform?
- Local Economic Development Strategy: \$150,000 to \$250,000 seems high.

### **Section 10.3**

The Public Review Draft provides a more comprehensive description of the various mechanisms to fund future infrastructure. Additions to the July Administrative Draft are:

- Standard Conditions of Approval
- Developer Contributions including Impact Fees; Developer Incentive Program; Public-Private Partnerships

Development Agreements are also a potential funding mechanism. It is discussed a bit in 10.2, but only as an implementation mechanism that could not be required (which we disagree with on public property).

### **Section 10.4**

- Per our previous letters, the Development Incentive Program trigger should be set at a density that corresponds to the existing conditions of the neighborhood (estimated to be 2.5 FAR). Any development proposals that exceed this density would trigger a set of development contributions to community benefits, as well as developer benefits (e.g. reduced parking requirements, etc.)
- On page 10-32, report states that “...there is no local funding dedicated to this purpose. [affordable housing]”. Actually, the City of Oakland still distributes HOME funds for affordable housing. Also, this statement should be amended to state that there are no redevelopment funds currently. However, there will likely be a source to replace at least part of this funding stream under future programs being considered currently at the State legislature.
- On page 10-32 under the subsection on State-mandated density incentive program, we believe that this program is not actually an incentive because the density allowances under the current zoning plan are too liberal. The triggers are not effective. Thus our conclusion that a trigger must be set low enough (at 2.5 FAR) to have an actual influence on development. In this program, the density incentive is too minimal, and the affordability targeting is too aggressive. As a result, no units have been produced.
- On page 10-33 under the subsection to Incentivize the provision of affordable housing, you can relax development standards and lower the cost of building affordable housing by controlling the permitting costs and controlling the impact fee costs (e.g. EBMUD) for urban development in general.

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- On page 10-33 under the subsection on Citywide Housing Policy, is there a pending case regarding a nexus study for this?
- This chapter does not mention the desire for a youth center or public recreation center, two-way reconversion of streets, small business assistance, or cultural markers even though they are all listed in Table 10.1. Perhaps it could just be made clear that this section just discusses in more depth a subset of the desired community benefits laid out in Table 10.1.

## Design Guidelines

The Design Guidelines for the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan for the most part is conceptually comprehensive but completely fails to address the prescriptive standards of Table 17.58.04 found in the adopted 2010 Zoning Code. The Coalition has repeatedly advocated for revisions to that supposed placeholder table in order to be in correlation with the stated design principles now in the guideline. Revisions are necessary to achieve the goal (DG-22 and DG-23) of limiting the impact of towers to existing neighborhoods by being slender and spaced sufficiently apart. The Coalition has offered specific standards adopted by other cities (i.e., Vancouver and San Francisco) in our June 11, 2012 comment letter that strive to achieve the goal of creating high density and livable neighborhoods.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments for inclusion in the revised plan. If you have any questions, please contact Vivian Huang at 510-834-8920 x 304 or Ener Chiu at (510) 287-5353 x 338.

Sincerely,

The Chinatown Coalition

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