

Lake Merritt Station Area Plan

Adoption Hearing

City of Oakland Planning Commission
October 8, 2014



Agenda

- Overview of the Plan and Planning Process
- Key Issues
- Next Steps
- Public Comments

Lake Merritt Station Area Plan

Overview of the Plan & Planning Process

Planning Area



Lake Merritt Station Area Plan

Background and Policy Guidance

The Station Area Plan helps to implement various policies contained in the City of Oakland's General Plan, including the LUTE, the OSCAR, the Historic Preservation Element, the Estuary Policy Plan, the Bicycle and the Pedestrian Master Plans, along with other Plans for the area, such as the Lake Merritt Master Plan and the Revive Chinatown Plan.

Example Policies

- D3: Create a Pedestrian-friendly downtown.
- N8: Direct urban density and mixed use housing development to locate near transit or commercial corridors, transit stations, the Downtown...
- OS 11.1: Provide better access to attractive, sunlit open spaces for persons working or living in Downtown.
- Policy 2.1: The City will use a combination of incentives and regulations to encourage preservation of significant older properties...
- OAK-3.1: Create a system of public open spaces that connects Lake Merritt Channel to the Estuary.

Lake Merritt Station Area Plan

Specific Plan Process

The Specific Plan process provides an opportunity to create a more detailed vision for a specific geographic area.

Key Elements

- Distribution, location, and extent of land uses of land, including open space.
- Distribution, location, and intensity of essential facilities, such as transportation, water, drainage, and energy.
- Standards and criteria by which development will proceed.
- Program of implementation measures including regulations, programs, public works projects, and financing measures

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Community Participation

Plan outreach began in 2008, led by the Asian Health Services and other community-based organizations, and guided by a Community Stakeholder Group (CSG), composed of merchants groups, advocacy groups, service providers, public agencies, and other community members.

Community Meetings

- 2008-2009: Four community meetings
- 2009: Community survey of over 1,000 people
- 2010-2012: Five community workshops, attended by over 100 people each
- 2010-2011: Four focus groups, Families, Laney College, Merchants, Youth
- 2010-2013: Thirteen meetings, Community Stakeholder Group




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Plan Vision

A well-connected, economically diverse, and vibrant neighborhood and destination that builds off the area's assets: BART, Chinatown, Laney College, the Oakland Museum, Eastlake Gateway, historic buildings and districts, and connections to open space and Jack London Square

- A vibrant and safe district
- Transportation options
- Diverse housing
- Job creation
- An enhanced Chinatown
- Historic preservation and reuse
- Services and retail options
- Expanded open space and recreation opportunities
- Equitable, sustainable and healthy development




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Future Growth Projections

The Development Program estimates the maximum amount of growth that is reasonably foreseeable, based on potential redevelopment of opportunity sites. The analysis looked at market demand for various uses; broader regional economic and market conditions; backlog of approved or planned projects in the vicinity; recent development and business investment in the area; and landowner intentions for their properties.

- 4,900 new residential units
- 1.3M sf of new office space
- 404 ksf of new retail space



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Plan Development & Public Review

Draft Preferred Plan

November 2011

- January and February 2012: Landmarks Board, Planning Commission
- March 2012: Community & Economic Development Committee
- April 2012: City Council

Public Review Draft

December 2012

- January 2013: Landmarks Board, Planning Commission
- March 2013: Design Review Committee
- May 2013: Zoning Update Committee

Final Plan

July 2014

- August 2014: Landmarks Board

Key Issues

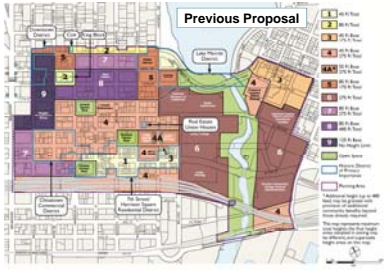
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Height and Intensity Limits

Although there is general support for high density transit oriented development, a number of concerns were expressed about the Height Proposal in the Draft Plan, which included height limits ranging from 45 ft to no height limit. The vast majority of the Planning Area was proposed for a 275-foot height limit.

Key Concerns

- Protection of historic resources
- Compatibility with existing scale of development
- Meeting demand on transportation, open space and other community facilities.
- Landbanking that discourages redevelopment



New Height/Intensity Proposal

The Final Plan reduces that reduce height limits to encourage a scale of development that is sensitive to existing heights and building character while still encouraging high-density, TOD.

Lowest Intensity – 45'

- 7th Street Residential API

Medium Intensity – 85'

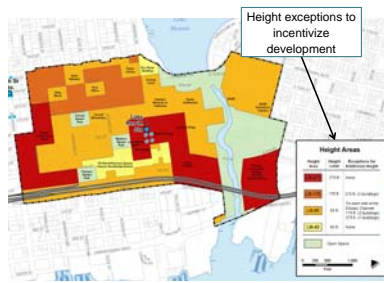
- Chinatown
- Historic Landmarks
- Eastlake Neighborhood

Medium High Intensity – 175'

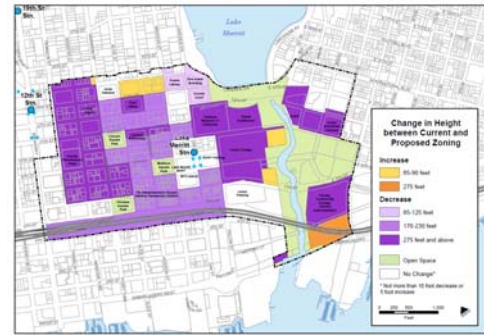
- Larger lots and existing context

Highest Intensity – 275'

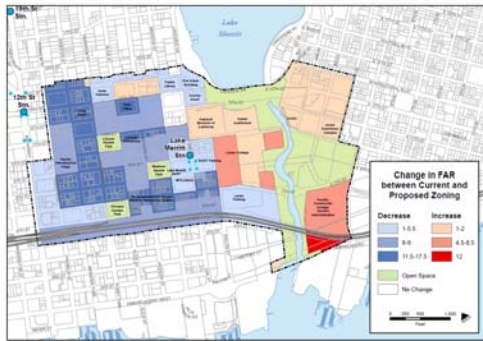
- Lake Merritt BART
- Broadway Corridor
- I-880 Freeway Buffer



Change in Height Limits – Existing and Proposal



Change in FAR – Existing and Proposal



New Height/Intensity Proposal

The Final Plan and zoning also reduces the FAR and proposes massing regulations that create more slender towers.

	EXISTING	PROPOSED
Maximum FAR	16	12
Maximum Height Limit	NO LIMIT	275 feet
Maximum Tower Elevation Length	195 feet	140 feet
Maximum Tower Diagonal Length	210 feet	180 feet
Tower setback requirements	NONE	New, varies

Historic Resources

The Plan was updated to reflect the Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey's reevaluation that occurred during the environmental review phase.

Major Updates

- Upgrade from C to B rating for the County Parking Garage and Oakland Unified School District properties (CEQA Historic Resources)



Historically Sensitive Design

Design Guidelines

- New Chapter describes character-defining features of historic buildings

Design Standards

- Height Limits

Incentives for Reuse

- Reduced parking and open space requirements

Emphasize Cultural Heritage

- Chinatown Gateway
- Wayfinding systems
- Describes interest in reconsidering the name of the BART Station

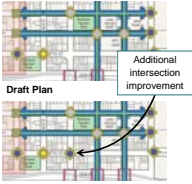


Transportation and Circulation

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Traffic safety, particularly safety for pedestrians was a key issue throughout the planning process. The Plan recommends transportation improvements in the Plan Area that focus on establishing interconnected and safe travel for people walking, riding bicycles, taking transit, and driving.

Clarifications



Parking

- Reduced requirements for Residential
- Additional reductions for affordable housing and historic resources
- In-lieu fee to provide additional flexibility and fund improvements in Plan Area

Downtown Circulation Plan

- Study circulation patterns in larger Downtown
- Consider conversion of one-way to two-streets
- Kick-off in November 2015

Affordable Housing

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The Station Area Plan facilitates development of new housing at a range of densities and for a range of incomes, in a neighborhood that is very well-served by transit and is proximate to major employment centers.

Housing Needs Assessment Updated

- Cost of Housing has increased
- Need for Affordable Housing has increased

Incentives for Development of Affordable Housing

- Reduced parking for senior housing no longer requires a Conditional Use Permit (CUP)
- Reduces parking requirements for the provision of affordable housing
- Reduces open space requirements for both senior and affordable housing

Citywide Approach

- The provision of affordable housing choices is a concern and goal for the City of Oakland as a whole and must be addressed comprehensively, on a citywide basis.
- Impact Fee
- Housing Overlay Zone

Open Space and Recreation Improvements

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The Station Area Plan recognizes the need for neighborhood-serving and active open spaces in the Plan Area. The open space strategy in the Plan strives to do this by (1) first, making the most out of existing open spaces; (2) encouraging partnerships with the Oakland Unified School District and other schools and public agencies, and (3) expanding the amount of new open space and recreation facilities.

Identifies Additional Improvements to Harrison Square

- Freeway sound barrier
- Improved pedestrian crossings

Additional Funding Mechanism

- Open Space In-lieu fee

Clarifications to Final Station Area Plan

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- Confirmation of "childcare facilities" as a community amenity as described on Page 4-13 of the Plan (inadvertent omission occurred in FEIR)
- Include additional data about estimated number of "Extremely Low Income" (30% of Annual Median Income) Households in the Planning Area, in discussion of Affordable Housing Needs Assessment, page 4-20 (in addition to other Income Categories)

Environmental Review

Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

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- Air Quality, Toxic Air Contaminants:
 - AQ-3 (plan and project levels),
 - AQ-4 (project) and AQ-5 (cumulative)
- Cultural Resources
 - CUL-1 (project), CUL-5 (cumulative)
 - OUSD Administration Building, Ethel B. Moore Building (OUSD)
- Transportation
 - 24 study intersections
 - 2 roadway segments
 - mostly in Year 2020 and 2035

Streamlining Review of Future Projects

The City intends to use the streamlining/tiering provisions of CEQA to the maximum feasible extent, so that future environmental review of specific projects are expeditiously undertaken without the need for repetition and redundancy

- Action's environmental effects were fully disclosed, analyzed, and as needed, mitigated within the LMSAP EIR;
- Action is exempt from CEQA;
- Action warrants preparation of a (Mitigated) Negative Declaration; or
- Action warrants preparation of a supplemental or subsequent focused EIR limited for certain site-specific issues.

Recommended Action

Recommended Action

- Adopt the CEQA findings for the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan (LMSAP) in **Attachment A**, which include certification of the EIR, rejection of alternatives as infeasible, and a Statement of Overriding Considerations;
- Adopt the Standard Conditions of Approval and Mitigation Monitoring Reporting Program (SCAMMRP) in **Attachment B**;
- Recommend the City Council adopt the LMSAP, Design Guidelines and General Plan and Planning Code Amendments based, in part, upon the LMSAP Adoption Findings in **Attachment C**; and
- Authorize staff to make minor ongoing revisions to the adopted Design Guidelines for the Lake Merritt Station Area and to make non-substantive, technical conforming edits to the Planning Code that may have been overlooked in deleting old sections and cross-referencing new sections to the new Lake Merritt Station Area Plan District Zone Regulations (which are essentially correction of typographical and/or clerical errors) and to return to the Planning Commission for major revisions only.

Next Steps

Tentative Upcoming Hearing Dates

October 28 – City Council, CED Committee

November 5 – City Council First Reading

November 18 – City Council Second Reading