



PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION
City of Oakland
Wednesday, December 14, 2011 4:30 P.M.
Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, CA

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER:
2. ROLL CALL:
BELCHER, FINLINSON, HAMMOCK, MATIS, MILLER, MONTAUK, PETERSON, RICARDS,
TAYLOR, WONG, WU
3. DISPOSITION OF MINUTES:
 - A. Minutes of November 9, 2011
4. SPECIAL ORDERS:
5. PRAC PENDING LIST:
None
6. MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGENDA:
7. CONSENT NEW BUSINESS:
None
8. NEW BUSINESS:
 - A. **Request the Park and Recreation Advisory Commission accept the informational report on the Park and Open Space chapter of the Lake Merritt Station Area Preferred Plan.**
The City of Oakland Strategic Planning Division of CEDA, community members, BART, and the Peralta Community College District are developing the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan (Area Plan) and would like to solicit preliminary input on the Lake Merritt Station Area Preferred Plan (Preferred Plan) which contains proposals related to parks and open space from the PRAC.

9. CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS:
None
10. COMMUNICATIONS:
11. PRAC COMMITTEE REPORT:
12. ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORTS:
13. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:
14. COUNCIL REFERRALS:
15. OPEN FORUM:

16. DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- A. January Retreat Update
- B. Mobile Food Vending Pilot Program

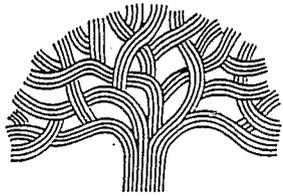
17. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

18. ADJOURNMENT:



This meeting is wheelchair accessible. To request materials in alternative formats, or to request an ASL interpreter, or assistive listening device, please call the *Office of Parks and Recreation* at (510) 238-7532 or TDD (510) 615-5883 at least three working days before the meeting. Please refrain from wearing scented products to this meeting so attendees who may experience chemical sensitivities may attend. Thank you.

Next Meeting: *Wednesday, February 8, 2012; 4:30 p.m.*
Lakeside Garden Center
666 Bellevue Ave, Oakland, CA



CITY OF OAKLAND

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION

City of Oakland

Wednesday, November 9, 2011 4:30 P.M.

Lakeside Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland, CA

Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER:

A meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission was held on Wednesday, November 9, 2011 at the Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Avenue, Oakland. Co-Chair Commissioner Hammock convened the meeting at 4:35pm. Audree V. Jones-Taylor, OPR Director, conducted the roll call:

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Wade Finlinson, Michael Hammock, Howard Matis, Barry Miller, Susan Montauk, Brad Ricards, Jeffrey Taylor, Ellen Wu,

Late Arrivals: Judy Belcher 4:37pm, Calvin Wong 4:43pm, Marsha Peterson 5:05pm

Staff: Audree V. Jones-Taylor, Gail McMillon, Diane Boyd, Mark Hall, Cynthia Armstrong, Martin Matarrese

3. DISPOSITION OF MINUTES:

A. Minutes of October 12, 2011

Motion: Commissioner Montauk entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 12, 2011.

Moved by: Commissioner Hammock, **Seconded by:** Commissioner Miller, **Motion:** Passed.

Abstention: 3.

4. SPECIAL ORDERS:

None

5. PRAC PENDING LIST:

Commissioners' Report Update:

Commissioner Taylor reported that the document was sent to Parks and Recreation Fiscal Manager, Jason Mitchell today for the inclusion of budgetary information. Director Jones-Taylor will follow-up with staff.

6. MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGENDA:

Motion: Commissioner Montauk entertained a motion to move Open Forum before Consent New Business – Item 7.

Moved by: Commissioner Wu, **Seconded by:** Commissioner Taylor, **Motion:** Passed - Unanimous.

7. CONSENT NEW BUSINESS:

A. Request From Acta Non Verba: Youth Urban Farm Project for Permission to Fundraise and Collect Fees at a Community Event on Saturday, December 17, 2011, at Tassafaronga Recreation Center and Park: The Office of Parks and Recreation (OPR) has received a request from Acta Non Verba: Youth Urban Farm Project (ANV) for permission to allow fundraising activities at a community event on Saturday, December 17, 2011 at Tassafaronga Recreation Center and Park. Net Proceeds of various sales and vendor fees will benefit the Tassafaronga Community Garden and Youth Urban Farm. The event is being organized in partnership with the Tassafaronga Recreation Center.

B. Request From Berkeley Bamyan Education Foundation for Permission to Collect On-site Admission Donations and Hold an Auction and Collect Monetary Donations from Donated Items at Leona Lodge on Saturday, February 25, 2012. The Office of Parks and Recreation has received a request from Berkeley Education Foundation (BBEF) for permission to collect on site admission donations and hold an auction and collect monetary donations from donated items at their event on Saturday, February 25, 2011. The purpose of the event is to raise funds to build a permanent school on land recently donated in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Motion: Commissioner Montauk entertained a motion to approve the consent items as recommended by staff.

Moved by: Commissioner Hammock, Seconded by: Commissioner Wu, Motion: Passed - Unanimous.

8. NEW BUSINESS:

An informational Report on Negative Impacts Occurring in Joaquin Miller Park and the Friends of Joaquin Miller Park Redwood Committee's Recommendations to Mitigate the Problems: The Board of Directors of the Friends of Joaquin Miller Park (FoJMP) formed its Redwood Committee to research and address impact on the redwood areas in the park. Problems to be addressed include denuded understory, erosion, and increasing numbers of bootleg (illegal) trails. City of Oakland Staff serves as ex-officio members of the Board and has been active on the committee. Tree Division staff partner with logging entities for the purpose of collection logs to define trails and paths.

Commissioner Miller recommended that all PRAC Commissioners visit the site and suggested the park needs as Master Plan and recommended the Tree Division work in partnership with the University of California and offered to make introductions.

No vote was taken on this item as this was an information report.

9. CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS:

None

10. COMMUNICATIONS:

Commissioner Montauk provided information from OSCAR stating that Frank H. Ogawa Plaza (FHOP) was designated as Open Space Special Use. Parks and Recreation appeared before PRAC on June 9th, 2004. Hours for FHOP were set for 6:00am – closure at 10:00pm. Overnight camping in not allowed in Oakland unless by special permit issued thru OPR. Standard park hours are set at 6:00am – 10:00pm.

11. PRAC COMMITTEE REPORT:

None

12. ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORTS:

None

13. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

14. COUNCIL REFERRALS:

None

15. OPEN FORUM:

Moved before Item 7

16. DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

A. Director Jones-Taylor asked the Commissioners for their thoughts and comments regarding Occupy Oakland:
These are their comments

- Sadden to see Oakland portrayed in a bad light. Appeared to be miscommunication on both sides on October 8th. Hopes Oakland can regain its reputation.
- Current actions show that Oakland knows how to screw things up. Now afraid to go to Downtown Oakland. It is impossible to tell what is happening with the group at night. Hopes Oakland's leadership will have the opportunity to sit down with the group. This is very embarrassing for the City. What is the win win? Hope there is an agreeable measure to determine another venue.
- Ready for them to go - have issues with outsiders coming to Oakland causing problems. They are hurting the 99% they are supposed to be helping. They are creating fear and leaving a negative impression. They are confused.

- In favor of waiting to see approach. Good people. Many are professional. The violence is not representative of the whole group. This is an exceptional time. A moment in time. Visited the camp – glad it happened in Oakland. The City should facilitate the location of another site.
- Believe situation could be managed better. Systemic problems such as housing and pay inequity should be addressed - those who are disenfranchised and displaced should be considered. These are very complicated issues. Without resolution protests will continue.
- It looks like one group of people has taken over. Some of the sympathy went away with the fires and broken windows. Hopes the violence does not spread to personal or public property. Concerned about open space – where is the balance with the use of public space. The message of the movement is not a reason to defy the rules. Camp should be moved to the Army Base.
- People among protesters have other focused agendas. The issue is not going to go away. Communities across the country are receiving different messages. Visited the plaza on Saturday and spoke with some of the people. Businesses were closed did not see anything that caused fear. Violence is unacceptable. Damages minimal.
- Sympathize with some of the ideas. Visited the site and did not feel welcome. Would like to see who could right the ship. Would like to see Frank Ogawa as “Face of the City”. Would like to a marketing strategy/fix.
- There are so many voices with this group. No negotiations. The group feels autonomous. No matter what happens everyone supports the message. This is a no win situation. Have no suggestions. Feels it is not going to be good.
- Things are out of control. There is a way to demonstrate. Visited the site on October 31st. The camp was unsanitary; there were dogs and no clean water. Someone needs to make a decision.
- **Commissioner Belcher:** This is a no win situation. Believes the situation will escalate if the leadership tries to move them out. Occupy Oakland will be the symbol of protest. Participated in the march to the Port. Proud of Oakland for being part of the movement for social justice.

B. Commissioners' Retreat:

Retiring Commissioners will be invited to the retreat to take place on either January 7th or 21st.

~~Director Jones-Taylor is seeking input for the agenda from the Commissioners.~~

Suggests the training and retreat should be held on separate days including a tour of parks and recreation centers. Outstanding items should be added to the agenda.

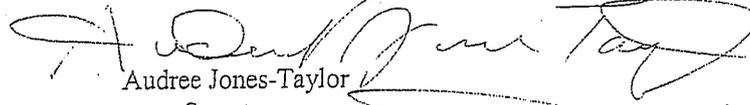
C. The Golf Report will be addressed at the December.

17. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

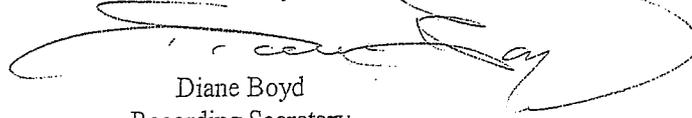
18. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Audree Jones-Taylor
Secretary



Diane Boyd
Recording Secretary

Next Meeting:

*Wednesday, December 15, 2011; 4:30 p.m.
Lakeside Garden Center
666 Bellevue Ave, Oakland, CA*

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CITY OF OAKLAND
Interoffice Memorandum

Office of Parks and Recreation

TO: Michael Hammock, Co-Chair, Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
Susan Montauk, Co-Chair, Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
FROM: Ed Manasse, Strategic Planning Manager, CEDA
DATE: December 14, 2011
SUBJECT: Request the Park and Recreation Advisory Commission accept the informational report on the Park and Open Space chapter of the *Lake Merritt Station Area Preferred Plan*

SUMMARY

The City of Oakland Strategic Planning Division of CEDA, community members, BART, and the Peralta Community College District are developing the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan (Area Plan) and would like to solicit preliminary input on the Lake Merritt Station Area Preferred Plan (Preferred Plan) which contains proposals related to parks and open space from the PRAC.

The Preferred Plan has been developed with the community during the last two years, and suggests long range improvements and future development in the neighborhoods (including Chinatown) which are within a half mile of the Lake Merritt BART station: improvements to parks and public open spaces, streetscapes, land uses, buildings, housing, circulation, BART and AC Transit. The Area Plan will identify actions the City and the other public agencies should take to improve the area and increase transit ridership, and it will establish regulations for development projects on private property. It is a long-term document consisting of written text and diagrams that expresses how the Station Area community should develop, and is a key tool for influencing the quality of life. The Area Plan is a basis for development project review and other decision-making by policymakers such as the Planning Commission and the City Council, as well as a guide to prioritizing public improvements in the area that all city agencies will need to follow.

Staff is presenting the "Open Space and Recreational Facilities" Chapter of the Preferred Plan to PRAC at this hearing (see Exhibit A, Chapter 5 of the Preferred Plan). Staff will also be presenting the Preferred Plan to a meeting of the Landmarks and Preservation Advisory Board, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board and at public hearings of the Planning Commission, and City Council. When the City Council adopt the Preferred Plan, it will become the draft Area Plan for which an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared to identify possible impacts to the environment.

The Preferred Plan supports improvements to the current parks of Chinatown: Lincoln Square, Madison Square and Chinese Garden Park, as well as the creation of new open space being developed as part of Measure DD construction around the Lake Merritt Channel. The Preferred Plan also proposes innovations such as parklets and temporary street closures to increase open space options. The Preferred Plan proposes a new regulatory scheme whereby a certain percentage of land in a large new development would be dedicated to new public open space.

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The Preferred Plan also proposes a new mechanism (an open space in-lieu fee) through which developers of new housing could contribute to create parks and open space improvements on-, or off-site.

The entire Preferred Plan is available for review on the project webpage at:
<http://www.business2oakland.com/lakemerrittsap>, under the "Reports" section.

FISCAL IMPACT

While the fiscal impact to the Office of Parks and Recreation of adopting the Area Plan has not yet been determined, it is the *intention* of the Area Plan to not increase OPR's maintenance and operations costs in Chinatown's parks. The reverse is true: the Area Plan will propose a program that includes funding for some form of maintenance district and/or "in lieu" fees, to be collected with the new development of residential buildings; these fees will go to improvements and expanded programming at the current parks and open space in the plan area. Any new publically-accessible open space created on private property will be the responsibility of the owner of that property to maintain.

BACKGROUND

Specific plans cover land use, development density, circulation and infrastructure, and have legal authority as a regulatory document. The Area Plan will combine a detailed specific plan approach for some areas with a more conceptual approach to others, depending on the key issues for each part of the planning area and community feedback. Specific Plans have certain requirements according to State law. California Government Code (Section 65450) states that planning agencies may prepare specific plans for the systematic implementation of the general plan for all or part of the area covered by the general plan. A specific plan shall include a text and a diagram or diagrams which specify all of the following in detail:

- The distribution, location, and extent of the uses of land, including open space, within the area covered by the plan.
- The proposed distribution, location, and extent and intensity of major components of public and private transportation, sewage, water, drainage, solid waste disposal, energy, and other essential facilities proposed to be located within the area covered by the plan and needed to support the land uses described in the plan.
- Standards and criteria by which development will proceed, and standards for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources, where applicable.
- A program of implementation measures including regulations, programs, public works projects, and financing measures necessary to carry out the proposed improvements.

KEY ISSUES AND IMPACTS

During the two years of public participation in the crafting of this Preferred Plan, with four public workshops, business surveys, five focus group meetings, and 12 stakeholder meetings, staff consistently heard a desire to improve the open space and recreation opportunities in Chinatown. Oakland Parks and Recreation (OPR) is already meeting this demand, at Lincoln Square Recreation Center (Prop. 84 grant funds have been applied for), and with the four acres of new parks and recreation space being built as part of Measure DD. Staff would like to understand from the PRAC its opinion and preferences on some of the alternatives to creating

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open space opportunities. The Preferred Plan proposes two ideas which are current in other cities: adding parklets, and temporary street closures (the City has begun a Parklet pilot program, but with no sites in Chinatown). If the PRAC has suggestions for other innovative open space ideas, staff is amenable to considering them.

In the Preferred Plan, the City is proposing an expectation that on large lots which get developed, that ten (10) percent of the lot area be used for publically-accessible open space. While this new open space would not be owned or maintained by the City, hearing from the PRAC on the viability of such a regulation would be useful for staff. The Preferred Plan supports the goals and mission of the OPR, and the intention is to build upon initiatives that OPR already has underway for improving the open space and recreational opportunities to area residents and visitors.

NEXT STEPS

The City is currently soliciting feedback from a number of public advisory bodies, including:

- Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board
- Planning Commission
- Community and Economic Development Committee
- City Council

Based on input from these bodies, the City will refine the Preferred Plan, including proposed financial programs to improve existing publically-owned parks and open space, as well as methods to develop new publically-accessible open space on private property, reflective of community and City priorities, including input from the PRAC.

The next public workshop will be held in 2012, when key elements of the draft Area Plan will be presented for public input and the environmental review process will begin. The public review draft Area Plan and EIR are anticipated to be presented to the PRAC and other City advisory bodies for review and comment beginning in June of 2012. Based on this input, a revised public review draft Area Plan will be prepared and circulated in October and following inclusion of public and City comments, the Area Plan will be finalized and Area Plan and EIR adoption hearings will be held.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Consider the proposals for open space and recreation in the Preferred Plan, and identify areas of potential concern and additional opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,



Ed Manasse
Strategic Planning Manager, CEDA

Attachments: Exhibit A – Open Space and Recreational Facilities Chapter of Lake Merritt
Station Area Preferred Plan

5 Open Space and Recreational Facilities

Parks, public spaces and natural areas are important community assets for both social cohesion and interaction, and for physical health. Open spaces are even more essential in high intensity areas, such as the Planning Area, in order to provide a respite from the activity and noise associated with urban living.

5.1 Existing Open Space and Recreational Facilities

The Planning Area has 34 acres of public spaces that are designated as open space, including Lincoln Square Park, Madison Square Park, Harrison Square Park (Chinese Garden), Peralta Park, Lake Merritt Channel Park and a portion of Lakeside Park/Lake Merritt. These parks, along with a description of their open space zoning designation and their size, are listed in Table 5.1 below (see Figure 5.1 for a map). They are also described in more detail in the *Lake Merritt Station Area Existing Conditions Report*. The open space and recreational facilities in these parks are key assets in the Planning Area and important contributors to quality of life in this dense urban neighborhood. In addition to serving residents and workers these spaces draw users from throughout the city and the region, because of high quality programming, Chinatown's role as a center for Asian culture, and their linkage to regional open space systems.

Table 5.1 does not include the other public spaces that are not specifically zoned as open space, including the BART plaza and courtyards at Laney College; additional public spaces that have some access limitations include the playing fields of Laney College and the gardens in the Oakland Museum of California. These are also valuable public space resources within the Planning Area. The bustling sidewalks in the Planning Area also serve as important public spaces for informal social gatherings and interaction.

Nearby designated open space areas, just beyond a ½ mile radius from the Lake Merritt BART Station, include the Estuary Waterfront Park and the Bay Trail, Clinton Park in Eastlake, Athol Plaza on East 18th Street and the pathways and parks associated with Lake Merritt.

Table 5-1: Existing Land Zoned as Open Space in the Planning Area¹

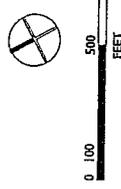
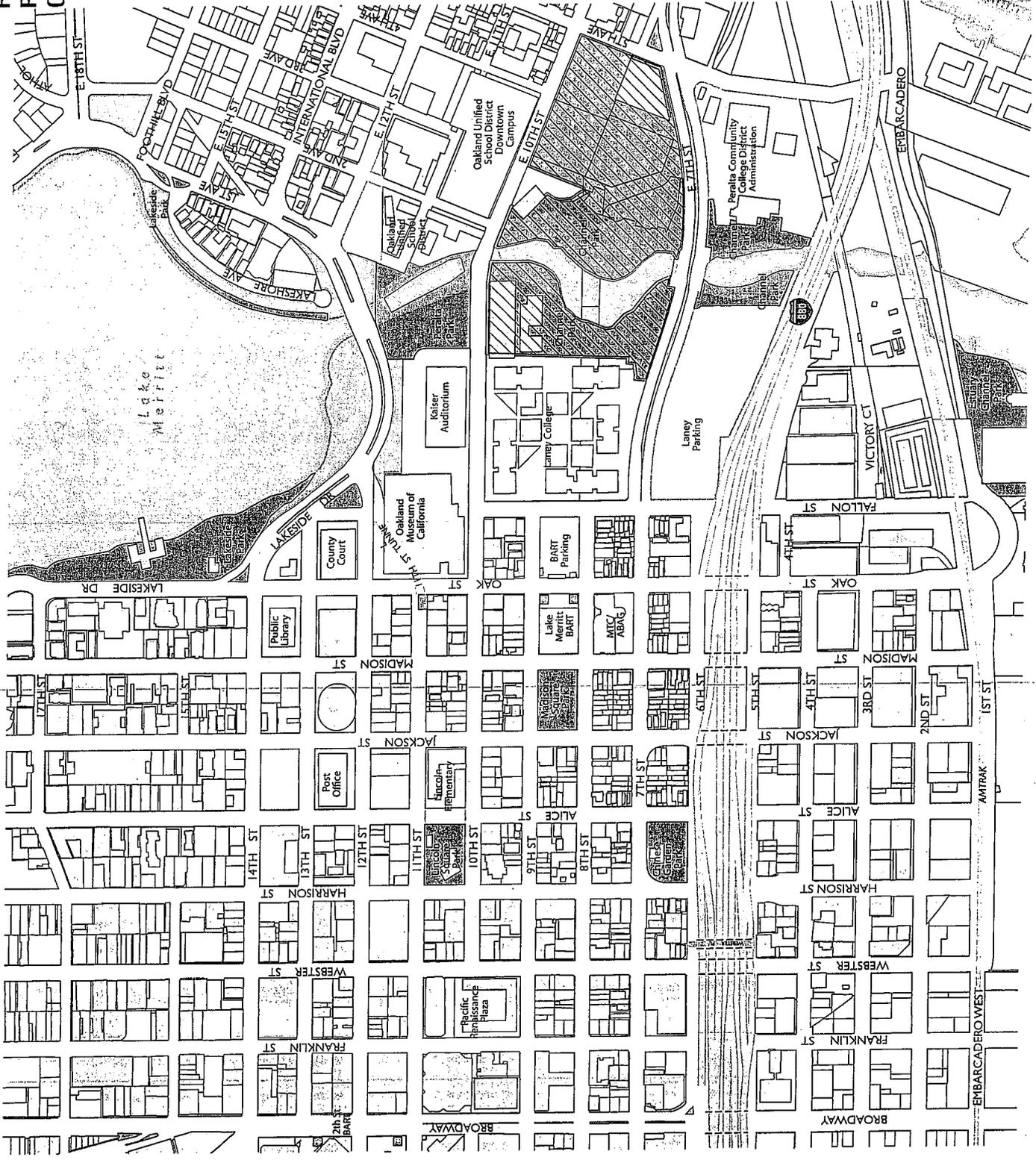
| <i>Name</i> | <i>Zoning</i> | <i>Definition¹</i> | <i>Acreage²</i> |
|---|-----------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Chinese Garden Park (Harrison Square) | Special Use Park | Areas for single purpose activities, or historic or aesthetic sites | 1.3 |
| Madison Square Park | Special Use Park | Areas for single purpose activities, or historic or aesthetic sites | 1.4 |
| Lincoln Square Park | Neighborhood Park | Located in a residential area; located adjacent to elementary schools | 1.4 |
| Lakeside Park (Lake Merritt) ³ | Region-Serving Park | Large recreation areas with diverse natural and man-made features | 6.5 |
| Estuary Channel Park | Region-Serving Park | Large recreation areas with diverse natural and man-made features | 5.1 |
| Peralta Park ⁴ | Linear Park | Provides linear access to a natural feature such as a creek or shoreline | 2.9 |
| Channel Park ⁵ | Linear Park | Provides linear access to a natural feature such as a creek or shoreline | 8.6 |
| | Resource Conservation Areas | Purpose is to protect the natural environment; Resource Conservation Areas are areas zoned OS (RCA) within existing Peralta and Channel Parks, along the east bank of the channel. | 7.4 |
| TOTAL EXISTING ACREAGE | | | 34.6 |

1. Open Space Conservation and Recreation Element (OSCAR) of Oakland General Plan, pg. 4-5.
2. Only includes land specifically zoned as open space.
3. Acreage only includes land within the Planning Area and excludes the water body.
4. Acreage does not include water, or land zoned as "resource conservation area"
5. Channel Park is from East 10th Street east, to I-880. Acreage does not include water, or land zoned as "resource conservation area."

Source: City of Oakland Parks Shapefile, clipped to 1/2 mile radius around Lake Merritt BART, and excluding water.

Figure 5.1:
PUBLIC PARKS AND PUBLIC
OPEN SPACES

- Existing Parks
- Future Parks
- Resource Conservation Areas
- Laney Recreational Area
- Public Open Space Owned by Peralta



5.2 Community Needs Assessment

There have been a number of opportunities for the public to convey its suggestions for open space and recreation improvements as part of the Area Plan process. A summary of this feedback, below, serves as a tool to understand the parks, recreation and community amenities needs of those who live, work, own businesses, or visit the Station Area.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS SURVEY

In 2009, as part of the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan's Community Engagement Process, a survey was conducted of approximately 1,500 residents, visitors, business owners and Laney College students. The answers to the survey questions about parks and open space show a strong desire of the public for improved facilities and opportunities for new activities and recreation in the area.

A summary of the results shows that:

- Those who live in the study area, children¹, and seniors² ranked "parks and recreation centers" the number one aspect (out of eighteen other criteria) making the area a healthy place to live, work and do business.
- Children and seniors ranked "Insufficient parks and recreation centers" number 4 (out of sixteen other criteria) for the aspect that makes the area an unhealthy place to live, work and do business.
- "Access to parks and open space" was ranked number three (of ten criteria) by visitors and children; and all respondents (residents, business owners, employees, Laney Students and BART patrons) ranked it in the top five of the areas "urgent needs."
- When asked what the most urgent needs were for parks and open space, residents, business owners and visitors ranked "athletic fields/tai chi areas" as the number one need, while employees in the area, and BART patrons said "neighborhood parks (trees, meadows, surfaced creeks)" was the number one urgent need.

LAKE MERRITT STATION AREA PLAN PROCESS

Public input during Lake Merritt Station Area Planning process (including at workshops and open houses, and also at community stakeholder group meetings) has indicated that community members would like to have improved park and open space access. However, feedback did not produce a consensus about community desires for improving open spaces in the Plan Area, nor for the method by which new parks land can be acquired. Of the community comments, some asserted:

¹ Children were defined as those under 17 years old.

² Seniors were defined as those between 65-74 years old.

- Madison Square Park should be remain primarily as open space, without a new community center
- The Plan should include creative strategies for improving current recreation opportunities and creating new parks and open spaces.
- In Chinatown, service providers are constrained for recreational facilities.
- There is an unmet need for youth recreation.

LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS FOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The City of Oakland has a citywide level of service standard of four (4) acres of local-serving parks per 1,000 residents.³ The *Station Area Plan* considers this target, and will attempt to address the open space and recreation needs of current residents, and the expected new residents in the years to come.

However, the Plan Area must share limited resources with other neighborhoods in City of Oakland, with their own parks deficiencies. For example, the OSCAR notes that “the greatest (parks and open space) deficiencies are in Fruitvale and Central East Oakland.”⁴ These existing deficiencies in other neighborhoods in the City affect the Plan Area: many users of the Recreation Center are from Central and East Oakland/Fruitvale, as the City learned during the focus group and stakeholder interviews, so residents of those neighborhoods, if they were better-served in local facilities, might not need to travel to the Plan Area for recreational purposes alone.

5.3 Implementation Strategies

As new development takes place and the residential population increases, improved access, maintenance, and usability of existing parks, as well as development of new parks, will be essential to ensure a high quality of life in this increasingly dense urban setting.

A main objective of the OSCAR, which still remains City policy, is reducing deficiencies in parks acreage and recreational facilities in the most equitable, cost effective way possible.⁵ The general strategy of the Area Plan is to continue to implement that objective, first by making the most out of existing spaces; secondly, by partnering with the Oakland Unified School district and other schools, and third, by expanding the amount of new parks acreage and recreation facilities.

³ OSCAR, pages 4-9 and following, and Table 15, page 4-40.

⁴ OSCAR, page 4-10.

⁵ OSCAR, Objective REC-3: Parkland and Park Facility Deficiencies, pg. 4-39.

OPEN SPACE ZONING

Parks, open space, and land used for recreation are regulated by the Oakland Planning Code, specifically, the Open Space Zone. The Planning Code regulates activities which take place in parks, and some activities require a permit process, with review by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) before they operate in an area zoned for Open Space. For example, to put a new community garden, or a new tot lot in a park requires a Conditional Use Permit (CUP); a full service restaurant in a park also requires a CUP. This means that some activities to improve parks may require a CUP application --payment of the fees, presentations at public hearings, and the time needed for staff review of the proposal. Also, some activities are outright prohibited, depending on the type of open space zoning.

MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE EXISTING SPACES

These sections describes Plan recommendations for how to make the most out of existing open space and recreational facilities in the Planning Area, including ideas for improved access, expanded programming or physical improvements.

Lake Merritt and Lake Merritt Channel

Lake Merritt, the Estuary Waterfront, Peralta Park and Lake Merritt Channel Park provide additional open space and recreation opportunities in the Plan area. Completing improvements along the channel to the Estuary is a priority of the *Lake Merritt Master Plan*, and the *Estuary Policy Plan*. Access to these parks is currently constrained from the Planning Area due to visual and physical obstacles, as well as perceived distance from the current center of commercial and residential activity. An important strategy in the *Station Area Plan* will be to improve the accessibility of these resources, through targeted streetscape improvements, (as outlined in Chapter 6), thereby improving walkability and visibility of these areas. This will implement the *Estuary Policy Plan*, which calls for linking the Estuary to Lake Merritt by enhancing the Lake Merritt Channel.⁶ The *Station Area Plan's* recommendations for new land use development (outlined in Chapter 4) will help to extend the commercial and residential activity closer to the parks. In addition, Measure DD improvements currently underway will improve access to these assets.⁷

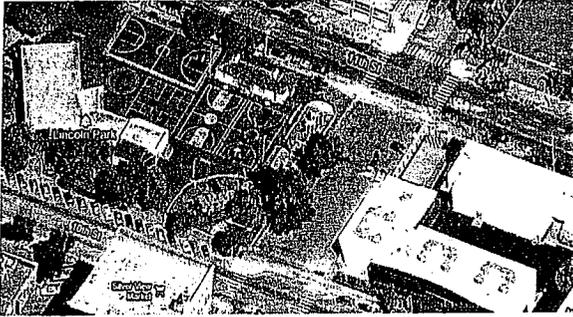
Measure DD improvements include:

- 12th Street Redesign and creation of a *new*, four acre park on the southern edge of Lake Merritt, in the Planning Area.
- 10th Street Bridge (Clear Span Bridge, removing culverts to allow waterflow).

⁶ See, specifically, actions "OAK-3.1: Create a system of public open spaces that connects Lake Merritt Channel to the Estuary" and "OAK-3.2: Work with public agencies in the area to extend the open space system inland from the Channel."

⁷ Measure DD was passed by Oakland voters in 2002, allowing the City to generate \$198 million in bond financing to develop parks, trails, bridges, recreation facilities, historic building renovations, land acquisition and creek restoration.

- 7th Street Flood Control Pump Station.
- Lake Merritt water quality improvements and amenities renovations.



Lincoln Square Park

Lincoln Square Park is heavily used by hundreds of people during the day and evening. Community members want to maintain the uses and activities at this location and ensure continued maintenance as the neighborhood continues to grow. The OSCAR states: “This urban space is the most popular park in Chinatown and receives very heavy use.” A recent focus group by the City’s Office of Parks and Recreation revealed users wanted more trees and greenery, shading, a computer lab with updated equipment in the Recreation Center, and a “multi-level building with full sports/fitness facilities.”

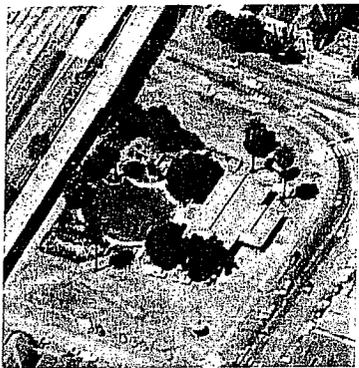
Since the publication of the *Lake Merritt Station Area Plan Existing Conditions Report*, some improvements have been made to Lincoln Recreation Center to expand the amount of land dedicated to recreational use. This summer (2011), construction was completed on the transformation of a surface parking lot between Lincoln Elementary and the Recreation Center into additional recreational area with four-square courts, artificial turf areas for playing, and perimeter landscaping to enhance the look and feel of the park.

Additionally, the City has placed the expansion of the Lincoln Square Recreation Center, and improvements to the Park on the 2009-2011 Capital Improvement Projects list. The City has also applied for California State Proposition 84 funds for the same Park improvements and the on-site expansion of the Lincoln Square Recreation Center; decisions on Prop. 84 are expected from the state in spring, 2012.⁸

~~Making improvements to the Planning Area’s other parks will provide alternative recreation resources and relieve overcrowding.~~

Harrison Square Park (Chinese Garden)

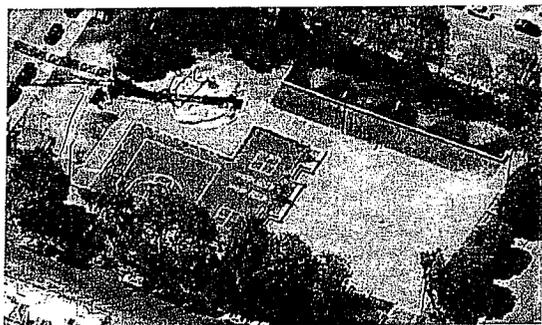
⁸ The proposed expansion will add an approximately 6400 s. f. new two-story addition to the recreation center, to serve the community of Chinatown and nearby residents. In addition, the park improvements will create additional greenery spaces, outdoor deck area, enhance lighting for evening activities, improve pedestrian pathway and access, and address storm-water treatment using bio-swale filtration and landscaped retention area.



Chinese Garden Park provides important cultural amenities, senior center programming⁹, and a community garden that is well used by residents in the Planning Area. However, access is constrained and safety a concern given the high volumes of traffic and vehicle speeds on surrounding streets, especially 7th Street. The OSCAR notes, “a Chinese Community Center was recently constructed in this historic park, dramatically changing its character. Access improvements across 7th Street are now needed to ensure pedestrian safety and the usefulness of the Park.” The current route from Alameda to I-880 utilizes the portion of 7th Street bordering this park, along with other city

streets, as a part of the highway approach.

Madison Square Park



Madison Square Park has been identified by the community as a key asset that is vital to the physical and mental health of the community, particularly for the Tai Chi community. It has also been identified as a public space that could use significant improvements. Issues currently limiting use of the park include inadequate lighting and feeling unsafe.

As part of the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan process, community members have suggested improvements that would increase use of the park, and potentially bring more people in to use the park at all times of the day:

- New exercise equipment for adults, play structures for kids, community garden, gaming tables; memorial or cultural structures.
- Additional amenities: seating, public restrooms, trash cans, shade and shelter.
- Provide new programming: multipurpose, multigenerational, multicultural; festivals, exercise classes.
- Regulate use and open hours: encourage people to clean up after pets by posting ordinance and fine information. Deter homeless by instituting and posting hours of operation.
- “Activate” the park: vendors, food services, music and performance; day and evening activities;
- Improve linkages: Connect to Lincoln Square Park and other parks in the planning area through physical routes and shared programming to create a network of open spaces.

- To improve visibility into the park (and thus improve safety), remove visual barriers, such as the landscape berms along 8th and 9th Streets and the perimeter wall along Jackson Street.

During initial stages of the planning process, some stakeholders had also expressed the desire to see a community center or senior center here, but since then, community feedback has been overwhelmingly in favor of preserving as much open space (free of permanent structures) as possible in the park.

JOINT USE AGREEMENTS

The OSCAR recognizes that schoolyards are an underutilized open space resource and it directs the City to work collaboratively with Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) to make schoolyards more accessible and attractive.¹⁰ The current joint use agreement between the City of Oakland's Lincoln Recreation Center and OUSD's Lincoln Elementary is a very successful model for making existing schoolyard facilities more accessible to the larger community.

The following are potential additional opportunities for joint use agreements with other public entities that have recreational facilities in the Plan Area:

- The Oakland Unified School District "La Escuelita Education Complex" at Second Avenue and East 10th Street, on the southeast corner of Lake Merritt. This 5.5 acre development, under construction in 2011, will add new schools, a public playing field and basketball courts.
- Laney College's sports fields at Third Avenue and East 10th Street include baseball, football and track and field facilities, along with a swimming pool. While class registration fees are very affordable and Laney has special programs to increase access to its swimming pool, in particular, general public access to these facilities is somewhat limited to Laney students.

NEW OPEN SPACES AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The Preferred Plan also includes recommendations for new parks and open spaces:

Required as Part of New Development

The Preferred Plan recommends that all new development over half a block in size be required to either provide on-site open space or pay in-lieu fees equivalent to having provided that space. However, this requirement would not apply to individual, smaller parcels. The Preferred Plan is recommending that larger new development provide ten (10) percent of lot area to publically-accessible open space¹¹. To meet community benefit obligations (see Chapters 8 and 9), there will be an additional contribution of either: five (5) percent of the lot

¹⁰ OSCAR Policy OS 2.2

¹¹ Earlier iterations of this plan had a higher percentage of publically accessible open space.

area for publically-accessible open space, or a contribution to an in-lieu fee. There will be design guidelines written for the Station Area Plan which will address the location, placement and usability of this new open space.

The Station Area Plan acknowledges that different types of open space and recreational facilities are needed to meet the various needs of present and future residents, workers and visitors. Therefore, different types of development that serve different types of users may have different requirements. For example, new office buildings could be required to provide on-site pocket-parks with landscaping while new residential development might be required to provide in lieu fees for an off-site athletic facility, based on the different needs of office workers compared to residents. Requirements may also be different for private landowners, compared to public landowners that are in the business of providing services to the public.

Innovative Park Typologies

In addition, the Preferred Plan also encourages innovative and lower-cost ideas to expand open space availability:

- Parklets – These are the temporary use of space in the public right-of-way (such as curbside parking spaces), for public uses such as seating, passive recreation, or landscaping. In the fall of 2011, the City of Oakland started a pilot program to encourage the development of up to eight “parklets” on commercial streets.

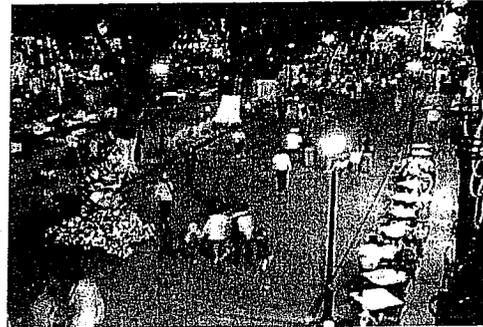


San Francisco parklet

- Temporary street closures – Festivals or regular events like farmers markets or night markets can convert street space into a recreational space. Fallon Street (with the potential improvements described in Chapter 6) and some of the low-traffic side- street blocks in the heart of Chinatown would be good locations for these types of activity.



Night market



Street Fair

Lake Merritt Improvements

The Preferred Plan recommends a new greenway or linear park along the east side of the Lake Merritt Channel. Measure DD improvements will already create a pedestrian and bicycle pathway between Lake Merritt, the Estuary waterfront, and the Bay Trail along the east side, but the Preferred Plan recommends creating new open space if the public properties along this edge redevelop.

As noted on page 5 of this chapter, Measure DD is creating a new four-acre park along the northern edge of the Planning Area, along with other significant open space improvements.

5.4 Park Guidelines

Along with the amount of parkland, the quality and accessibility of park and open spaces are important elements to ensuring a healthy community and a network of open spaces. Public spaces should be distributed throughout the Planning Area so that they are accessible to all users. As will be described further in *Chapter 6: Streetscape Character* and *Chapter 7: Circulation, Access, and Parking*, overall walkability and pedestrian safety in the Planning Area are expected to improve through implementation of the Station Area Plan. Adequate sidewalks, safe crossings, and active streetscapes aim to encourage walking to parks and other public spaces. The City has a number of objectives, policies and actions in place to govern the creation of new parks (see “Existing Policies” below); in addition there are a number of best practices which the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan can promote for the construction of new parks.

EXISTING POLICIES

The Oakland General Plan guides the creation of new parkland and recreation areas in the City. The *Station Area Plan* will, to the extent feasible, implement the objectives and policies from the *Open Space Conservation and Recreation Element (OSCAR, 1996)*, and the *Estuary Plan (1999)*. Selections of these are:

OSCAR objective REC-2: Park Design and Compatibility of Uses

- REC 2.2: Conflicts between park uses: “site park activities and facilities in a manner which minimized conflict between park users.”
- REC-2.3: Environmentally sensitive design: “Protect natural areas within parks.”
- REC-2.4: Off-site conflicts: “Manage park facilities and activities in a manner which minimizes negative impacts on adjacent residential, commercial or industrial areas.”
- REC-2.5: Park Visibility: “Plan and design parks in a way which maximizes their visibility, while minimizing conflicts between pedestrians, bicyclists and automobiles.”
- REC-2.6: Historic Park Features (applicable to Lincoln Square): “Respect historic park features when designing park improvements or programming new park activities.”

Oakland Estuary Policy Plan

- Objective SA-2: Punctuate the shoreline promenade with a series of parks and larger open spaces: “Expand Estuary Park.”
- Objective SA-5: Enhance natural areas along the shoreline: “There are significant opportunities along the Estuary shoreline and Lake Merritt Channel to enhance remnant tidal marshes and other natural areas.” Some of this is part of the current Measure DD projects, such as a new tidal wetland being created between 10th and 12th Street on the west side of the Channel.
- OAK-2.1: Expand Estuary Park. Encourage aquatic sports within the mouth of Lake Merritt Channel.
- OAK-2.2: Create a major new park on the east side of the mouth of the Lake Merritt Channel, at the Estuary.
- POLICY OAK-3: Link the Estuary to Lake Merritt by enhancing the Lake Merritt Channel.
- OAK-3.1: Create a system of public open spaces that connects Lake Merritt Channel to the Estuary.
- OAK-3.2: Work with public agencies in the area to extend the open space system inland from the Channel. (Such as the new four acre park being built as part of the 12th Street reconstruction).

PARK REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES

As part of the Station Area Plan process, the Oakland Planning Code will be amended to write new zoning designations for the Plan Area. This will be an opportunity to include updated park standards to apply to parks and open space in the Planning Area. For example, to meet the goals of the Preferred Plan, revised parks zoning in the Plan Area could relax the current requirement of a Conditional Use Permit for improvements, such as community gardens or tot lots. In addition, policies will be developed that reflect the following best practices and shoreline guidelines.

Best Practices

Other suggestions and guidelines to create and maintain high-quality public spaces include:

- **Site parks to maximize sun access and minimize wind and shadows:** Locate open space along the east, west, or south side of blocks to maximize exposure to the sun, especially from the southeast, while protecting from wind. Tall buildings should be slender in order to minimize the casting of large shadows; middle and upper stories should taper or step back, as outlined in Chapter 4.
- **Maximize visibility from the street:** Design open space to be physically and visually accessible from the street and designed for public use (e.g. highlight views of the park, install signage, etc.). Design open space that fronts the sidewalk to be primarily open and free of walls or other obstructions (not including trees, lights, and steps). Use landscaping strategically to identify pedestrian entrances and articulate edges for plazas and courtyards.
- **Facilitate maintenance and maximize sustainability:** Facilities in the Plan Area are well-used, and require regular maintenance. “Sustainability” includes low-maintenance landscape materials that are climate appropriate, drought-resistant, and require minimal irrigation (See Alameda County’s Bay-Friendly Landscaping guidelines). Use of high-quality, durable materials are cost-effective in the long-term. ~~To the extent feasible, standardize park amenities (e.g. benches and trash cans), and~~ incorporate technology (e.g. solar trash compactors, moisture-sensing sprinklers) to minimize costs and make maintenance and repairs more efficient.
- **Design culturally appropriate amenities and programs:** Provide public art, and programming that reflect the culture of the community (e.g. inter-generational and multi-cultural activities). Provide amenities and programs for a variety of users (e.g. seniors, children, and teenagers) at different times of day and evening.
- **Maximize comfort:** Ensure that parks are clean and well-maintained. Provide ample seating, which can be comprised of benches, seating walls, and moveable seating. Provide trees, landscaping, shaded and sheltered areas, in addition to areas with full sun access.

- **Design for active and passive use:** Encourage a variety of activities, programs, and events in open spaces to promote active uses, such as kiosks for private businesses and food vendors. Also, provide opportunities for quiet passive recreation.

Shoreline guidelines

The following shoreline design guidelines will help ensure that new open spaces along the Lake Merritt Channel are publicly accessible:¹²

- Ensure safety and security.
- Design for a wide range of users and relate to adjacent uses.
- Design, build, and maintain in a manner that indicates the public character of the space.
- Provide public amenities, such as trails, benches, play opportunities, trash containers, drinking fountains, lighting and restrooms that are designed for different ages, interests and physical abilities.
- Maintain and enhance the visual quality of the shoreline and adjacent developments by providing visual interest and architectural variety in massing and height to new buildings along the shoreline.
- Ensure that new public access areas are clearly connected to public rights-of-way, such as streets and sidewalks, are served by public transit, and are connected to adjacent public access or recreation areas.
- Employ appropriate siting, design and management strategies (such as buffers or use restrictions) to reduce or prevent adverse human and wildlife interactions.
- Balance the needs of wildlife and people on an area wide scale, where possible.

¹² San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, "Shoreline Spaces: Public Access Design Guidelines for the San Francisco Bay, April 2005.