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Celebration marks transformation of Oakland's historic Latham Square

Oakland, CA – The \$7 million transformation of Latham Square by the City of Oakland has nearly quadrupled the size of this public gathering space in the heart of downtown Oakland where Broadway and Telegraph intersect. As part of the project, water will flow in the Latham Fountain for the first time in 75 years. This public investment complements investment by the private sector that continues to transform downtown Oakland.

To introduce the public to the new Latham Square, the City of Oakland is partnering with the Downtown Oakland Association to host a **Grand Re-Opening Celebration** from 5 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, July 28. This free, public event will feature live music, local eats & libations and promotions by area merchants.

“As we continue to further reshape downtown Oakland to ensure continued growth and revitalization, we’ve seen first-hand the positive impact it’s having on our community,” said Oakland Mayor Schaaf. “Latham Square is the most recent example of Oakland’s commitment to building infrastructure and creating open space that encourages social connection, while supporting neighborhoods, mobility, economic development and healthy living.”

DJ Aebledee will be spinning between live performances by JAX and headliner RUBaDUB POSSE featuring Kimiko Joy. JAX is a Haitian-American band based in Oakland featuring siblings between the ages of 10 and 15. Headlining will be RUBaDUB POSSE featuring singer-lyricist Kimiko Joy as the group pays tribute to the greatest reggae legends with music to up lift your soul.

There will be free food provided by several local restaurants, arts & crafts activities and retail vendors drawn from the immediate neighborhood. A special retail passport will encourage revelers to explore the merchants surrounding Latham Square.

Playing off the Latham family’s long-standing care of animals, the East Bay SPCA and Oakland Animal Services will be on hand to provide information on animal adoption and other animal welfare services.

The Latham Square Grand Re-Opening Celebration is sponsored by HighBridge, Paramount Property Company and Graham Street Realty.

For more information on the celebration, please visit lathamsquare.org.

Project Background

The **Latham Square Streetscape Improvements** project was funded from various sources, including \$1.4 million from a Proposition 1C grant for streetscape improvements in the downtown/uptown areas; \$3.8 million from Measure B, the half-cent transportation sales tax approved by 82 percent of

Alameda County voters and administered by the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC); \$700,000 reimbursable utility expenses; \$500,000 from other sources such as ACTC Vehicle Registration Fund and ACTC Measure BB Local Streets and Roads; and \$600,000 from Central District Redevelopment project funds. Together, these funds were invested to improve safety, support economic development and provide a usable and vibrant space for all to enjoy.

This public investment complements the significant private investment in the area with the renovations of the nearby Latham Square building and the former Roos Brothers department store at 1500 Broadway.

Specific components of the Latham Square Streetscape Improvements project include:

- **Realignment of Telegraph Avenue** to intersect with Broadway at 15th Street in a more traditional configuration. This realignment improves the vehicular and pedestrian safety and circulation at this location.
- **Enlargement of Latham Square** by almost four times. The new square was designed to create a larger functional space for both daily and special event uses. The new space uses brick, black basalt and granite stone to create a vibrant, inviting environment.
- **Highlighting and restoring the Latham Square Fountain.** The historical landmark was cleaned and restored by a professional conservator, missing pieces replaced and the fountain was re-plumbed with a recirculating system. Originally installed in 1913, the fountain has not had running water since before 1941.
- **Specialty lighting features** brighten the new space with string lighting and uplighting at the fountain and trees.
- **Landscaping to help buffer the square** from adjacent roadway traffic and create a space that is enjoyable on a daily basis, not just for special events. The landscaping along Broadway doubles as a rain garden to improve stormwater quality.
- **Informational display panels** depicting historical facts and photos of the surrounding area.
- Concrete roadway pavers were incorporated into the design for the adjacent, one-block of Telegraph Avenue to encourage permitted special events to use the **roadway as an extension of Latham Square**. This feature was a request from the community during the planning and design process.
- **New/upgraded traffic signals** at four intersections – Broadway & 15th Street/Telegraph Avenue; Broadway & 16th Street; Telegraph Avenue & 16th Street; Telegraph Avenue & 17th Street. The project also provided signal interconnect (fiber optic) cables to connect the new signals and prepare for connection of signals up Telegraph Avenue to the City's Traffic Management Center.

- **New roadway pavement** for Broadway from 14th to 17th streets, Telegraph Avenue from Broadway to 17th Street, and 16th Street from Telegraph Avenue to San Pablo Avenue.
- **Utility upgrades** included 720 linear feet of new water distribution pipes to replace infrastructure from 1894 and the replacement of two unreinforced brick telecommunication vaults installed in 1905 with new modern vaults.

Project Team

Construction of the Latham Square Improvements began in 2013 and was managed by Oakland Public Works. This project was designed by Bottomley Associates Urban Design & City Planning, with engineering design by Kimley-Horn. McGuire and Hester, Inc. was the construction contractor.

The Oakland Public Works project team included Nick Cartagena, Diane Tannenwald, Alan Chiang and others, working closely with staff from the City's Economic & Workforce Development and Planning & Building departments.

Community Involvement during Pilot Project

Construction of the pilot project was approved by the Oakland City Council in April 2013 and began with the closure of the two vehicle traffic lanes on Telegraph Avenue between Broadway and 16th Street on July 15. On September 28, the south-bound lane of Telegraph Avenue was re-opened from 16th Street to Broadway as Phase II of the pilot project. City staff evaluated both phases of the pilot through community feedback, traffic data collection, field observations, staff and community stakeholder steering committee meetings, community meetings and an online survey. This valuable insight gained during the pilot project allowed the City to create an inviting gathering place that will be used for decades.

For more information on the construction project that transformed Latham Square, please visit oaklandnet.com/lathamsquare.

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