LAKE MERRITT BART STATION

Final Summary Report

FUNDING PROVIDED
BY CALTRANS

March 2006

Prepared by
MIG

LAKE MERRITT BART STATION
FINAL SUMMARY REPORT

Prepared for: California State Dept. of Transportation
Community-Based Planning

March 2006

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is a compilation of work conducted by the Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) and its consultant team through a grant funded by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) through its Community-based Transportation Planning grant program. This report lays the groundwork for future planning efforts at the Lake Merritt BART station.

This report documents the work performed by the consultant team, Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc. (MIG) and its subcontractors, Bay Area Economics, Corey, Canapary and Golanis, and Wilbur Smith Associates. In addition, BART contracted with two community-based organizations, the Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce (OCCC) and Asian Health Services (AHS), to advise the project and to conduct focus groups among residents, business owners and users of the BART Plaza.

In addition to the consultant team, BART relied on the knowledge and understanding of key stakeholders to help inform the process. For this effort, a Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) was created to provide overall project guidance. The PAC was comprised of:

- Carole Ward Allen, BART Board of Directors
- Pat Kernighan, Oakland City Council
- Bill Withrow, Peralta Community College Board of Directors

Many agency staff and local leaders also assisted this effort by contributing their time and expertise as members of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). These partners are listed below:

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INTRODUCTION

PROJECT OVERVIEW AND GOALS

The Lake Merritt BART Station Plan, jointly funded by BART and Caltrans, was initiated as a component of BART's station area planning program. The objective of this project was to develop a community-based vision for the station area, based on information developed through an existing conditions analysis, a market analysis, a station access survey, a land use conceptual design study, and with input from the many local governmental, cultural, and educational interests that impact the station area. It was intended that this plan would form the basis of BART's Lake Merritt Comprehensive Station Plan.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, BART was unable to conduct the community planning tasks within the timeframe of the grant. Without the community input, no conceptual designs were created. Instead, Caltrans allowed the remaining grant funds to be used to conduct a traffic analysis within the station area. In spite of the redirection of this project, the work incorporated into this final summary will inform future planning efforts at the Lake Merritt BART station.

As part of this planning effort, BART and its partners created a Policy Advisory Committee (PAC), consisting of elected officials representing the City of Oakland, the Peralta Community College District and BART. At its first meeting, the PAC established the following key goals for the study:

- Encourage high-density development and/or station access improvements that increase BART ridership
- Create a sense of place that bridges the mix of land uses surrounding the station
- Create vibrant public spaces that:
- Accommodate existing plaza users
- Contribute to the public well-being and quality of life; and
- Improve public safety
- Increase pedestrian and bicycle traffic
- Accommodate BART's long-term facility needs

- Consider the financial feasibility of any development
- Identify opportunities for shared parking in the station area
- Support the educational needs of Laney College students and faculty

In 1999, the City of Oakland launched a major initiative to attract new residents to downtown Oakland, the "10K Downtown Housing Initiative." This effort aims to attract 10,000 new residents to downtown Oakland by encouraging the development of 6,000 market-rate housing units. Even though the City has surpassed its goals, this planning effort seeks to build upon the momentum and desire of the community to revitalize its downtown core.

The success of any future planning efforts at the Lake Merritt BART Station will depend largely on the active participation of key stakeholders: the City of Oakland, BART, the Peralta Community College District, Laney College, Alameda County, the Oakland Unified School District, Caltrans, and most certainly, the surrounding community. Developing and executing a community-based outreach program to solicit the input and ideas of local residents, businesses, students and employees is key to creating a plan that will create a vibrant, livable station area.

INTRODUCTION

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The Final Summary Report is comprised of three main sections: the Existing Conditions Report, the Focus Group Summary and the Better Streets Concept Study.

The Existing Conditions section provides a detailed analysis of existing conditions in the area surrounding the Lake Merritt BART Station. Analysis includes existing land uses and built form, transportation, demographics, and an economic and market analysis. The land use and built form analysis focused on a quarter-mile radius of the station. The transportation network is examined at both a regional and local scale.

The Existing Conditions section also includes results of a BART patron survey, conducted May 25-26, 2005 by Corey, Canapary & Galanis. This survey gathered information about patrons who use the Lake Merritt BART Station and their mode of access to the station. Survey results are discussed in both the Demographics and Local Transportation subsections. Information from this survey is also compared to that of BART's 1998 BART Station Profile Survey.

This section of the report closes with a preliminary discussion of some of the key planning and design challenges to address. Potential changes will be explored in greater detail in the coming years as funds are identified to conduct a community process.

The Focus Group Summary section provides key findings from four focus groups conducted as a part of this project. Focus group participants provided interesting and thoughtful ideas about the future of the Lake Merritt BART station area.

The Better Streets Concept Study includes a traffic analysis conducted by Wilbur Smith Associates. The consultant team tallied traffic on key streets and intersections and evaluated whether local streets are below, at or over capacity. These findings will help future planners and key stakeholders determine whether there is opportunity to alter the lane configurations to accommodate development and/or to make improvements to encourage a walkable environment.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

STUDY AREA CONTEXT

As shown on the following page, the Lake Merritt BART Station is located in downtown Oakland about a half-mile southeast of Broadway. Several distinct neighborhoods surround the station, including Chinatown to the northwest, Clinton Park to the east, Lakeside to the north, and the emerging Waterfront neighborhood to the southwest.

Currently the focal point for this neighborhood is the Lake Merritt BART Station. Although BART no longer occupies its offices atop the underground station, there remains much neighborhood activity. Each morning – in both good and inclement weather -- dozens of local residents gather to exercise, and practice Tai Chi and line dancing.

BART Administration Building

In addition, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) occupy the Metro Center building across the street, and many public meetings are held there both during the day and in the evening. Laney College, located within one block of the BART station, has a population of approximately 10,000 part-time students and hundreds of faculty, many of whom use BART and local bus to access the College.

Oak and Madison streets are key cross-town connectors to the I-880 freeway. Oakland's vibrant Chinatown is just over one quarter mile northwest of the station. Significant loft and other residential development have taken place near the waterfront, and more development is in the planning stages. Alameda County administration offices, the Kaiser Convention Center, the courthouse, and the Oakland Museum draw visitors, including many students on field trips. And, Lake Merritt is a beautiful urban lake with many recreational amenities.

Despite these key destinations and attractions, the station area remains underutilized and poorly connected to the surrounding community. The station area feels outdated and is perceived as unsafe, especially at night.

There is little signage directing residents and visitors to the BART stations or to local destinations.

The challenge for future planning efforts is to create a plan that accommodates development in keeping with the unique nature of the neighborhood while stimulating new activity and amenities in the area that promote a safe and vibrant community.

Lake Merritt BART Station Area

LAND USE

EXISTING USES

The quarter-mile area surrounding the Lake Merritt BART Station has a diverse and fine-grained mix of land uses, including detached single- and multi-family homes and apartment buildings, office buildings, key civic and governmental institutions, and some light industry. Madison Square Park lies directly west of the station, and there is open space along the Lake Merritt Estuary.

Historic Single Family Homes and Apartments

Residential

Approximately 6,000 housing units exist within a one-half mile radius of the Lake Merritt BART Station. Much of the housing is historic, with a third having been built before 1939. Unfortunately many of the surrounding houses are poorly maintained, an indication that homeowners and/or landlords may have limited financial resources.

In the immediate vicinity of the station, detached housing is mostly 2-3 stories in height and apartments are 3-5 stories. Most apartment buildings in the immediate station area have 100 percent lot coverage, or nearly so. No high-rise apartments have been built in the immediate vicinity of the station, although 8-10 story buildings were recently constructed closer to the waterfront and other areas within a half-mile of the station.

Office Buildings

Two large office buildings dominate the landscape: the former BART administration building above the BART station, and the MetroCenter building across the street. Both buildings were built after the BART station was constructed in the early 1970s. MetroCenter houses several hundred employees, and regularly hosts public meetings during the day and in the evenings.

BART staff is currently exploring the feasibility of dismantling its administration building due to earthquake safety concerns. The below-ground BART station and BART control-center functions will remain. Staff is developing a project plan, including a community outreach process, budget and schedule. BART is also working with the Federal Emergency

Management Agency (FEMA) to secure a $3.0 million grant. A timetable for the dismantling has not yet been determined.

In addition, a study is underway to compare the feasibility of preserving BART property at the Lake Merritt station for a future office building with other long-term strategies. The outcome of this feasibility study may affect future development of these sites.

Institutions

Several key institutions are located in the vicinity of the station. Laney College, with approximately 10,000 students, is across Fallon Street from the BART parking lot. The Oakland Museum of California is at the corner of 10th and Fallon, and the Kaiser Convention Center is adjacent to the Museum on 10th Street. The Alameda County Courthouse is slightly further to the north.

Retail

There is little retail within a quarter mile of the station. One small convenience store is located at the corner of Oak and 8th streets (see photo at right), a dry cleaners is located on this block, and two small cafes are within the area. The opportunity for additional retail, especially local serving retail, is discussed in the Economic Analysis and Market Conditions section of this report.

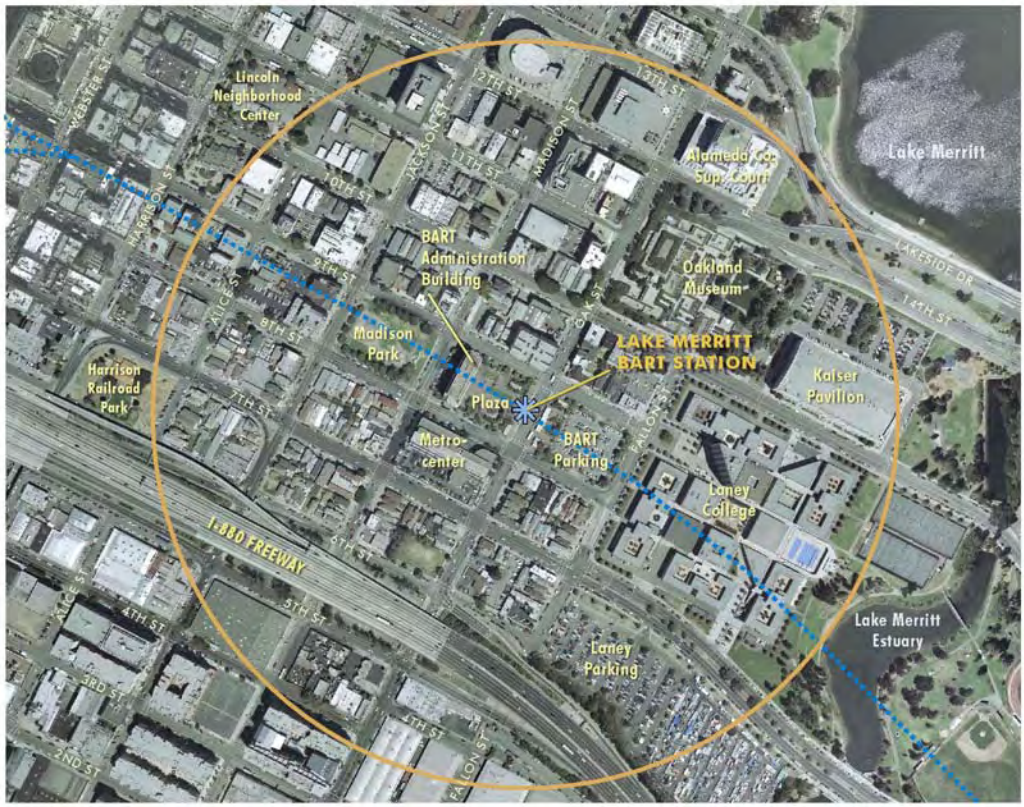
Oakland Chinatown, located within a half-mile of the station, has a rich diversity of shops and restaurants. Despite its proximity to the station, strategically located and designed retail at the station site could be successful, especially since Chinatown is more than a quarter mile from the station and thus has a somewhat distinct market area.

Retail market at 8th and Oak streets

MTC MetroCenter

Entrance to Laney College

Figure 2:
Lake Merritt Station
QUARTER-MILE RADIUS



BART Alignment (underground)

1/4 Mile Radius from Station

0' 125' 250' 500'

LAND USE

OPEN SPACE

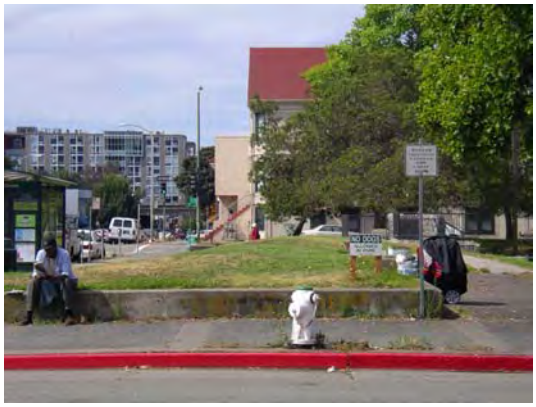
BART Plaza

Each morning, dozens of people, mostly local residents, meet at the BART Plaza (see Figure 2 for location) to practice Tai Chi or line dancing. This daily ritual is both exercise and an important social activity. The plaza appears to work well for Tai Chi because it is paved and is large enough to allow smaller groups to practice or meet independently. Planning for the transformation of the station area should recognize and accommodate this vital community activity.

Tai Chi

Madison Square Park

Madison Square Park, directly to the west of the BART headquarters building, is currently an underutilized urban park. Initially celebrated for its unique design features, the park is rarely used for recreational purposes. Local residents and employees in the area avoid the park due to the presence of homeless people. Most neighborhood children play at the small park adjacent to Lincoln Elementary School (a few blocks away) rather than Madison Square Park.



Madison Square Park

Lake Merritt Estuary

The Estuary is a defining boundary for the Lake Merritt BART station area, and includes playing fields and access to the estuary itself. Although the Estuary currently limits access to the station from the Clinton Park neighborhood, it is simultaneously an asset for both areas as it provides recreation and a more natural respite from the surrounding urban environment.

Other

Entrances such as those in front of Laney College and the Oakland Museum are also key public open spaces. Because these areas do not provide inviting places for people to sit and watch activity on the street, there is an opportunity to create a more lively setting that encourages vibrant street activity and presents a more welcoming entrance to these important community assets.

Laney College frontage

LAND USE

BUILT FORM

The difference in scale between the newer institutional buildings and the older houses, apartments, and other buildings is dramatic. The older buildings are largely human-scaled, with windows looking onto the street, small setbacks and stoops. Residents and visitors to these buildings are close to and connected to the street outside.

Comparatively, most of the institutional buildings are monolithic. They are much larger, tend to be set back from the street much further, and have long blank facades with windows that do not open and have reflective glass. Entrances are not well marked, nor particularly welcoming. The separation of occupants of these buildings from people on the street is distinct. These buildings contain important public agencies and institutions, but their presence is not inviting to the public or integrated with the surrounding community.

Blank façade of MetroCenter building

TRANSPORTATION

REGIONAL CONTEXT

BART is a key component of the Bay Area's regional transportation system, carrying over 310,000 passengers each weekday. BART hopes to increase ridership and provide service to more Bay Area residents by encouraging higher-density "Transit-Oriented Develop-ment" (TOD) near many of its stations. Residential development, combined with local retail, is particularly feasible given the persistent demand for housing throughout the Bay Area. An ongoing challenge is to balance the desire to intensify development within the station area and provide adequate station parking for patrons who live further away. BART wants to retain these patrons by providing sufficient parking or a viable alternative mode of access to the system.

Figure 3 – BART System Map

Eight BART stations serve the City of Oakland. Two stations are centrally located in the downtown, at 12th and 19th streets. Two others, Rockridge and Fruitvale stations, are located at the center of vibrant neighborhoods. Fruitvale Station is considered to be a model for future TOD at other BART stations. The four other Oakland stations are all opportunity sites for TOD: West Oakland, MacArthur, Coliseum, and Lake Merritt. Planning for such development is underway at each of these stations.

In July 2005, the BART Board of Directors adopted a new Transit-Oriented Development Policy that had two major policy recommendations. First, BART should pursue TOD, not joint development. Joint development, which focuses only on BART property, is just one component of successful transit-oriented development. BART should work proactively with cities and communities to plan for development over a larger area around its stations that is both supportive of transit service and maximizes the value of the land. Second, is to shift BART's approach to station access. Developers, cities and funding agencies view BART's application of a 1:1 parking replacement practice as a significant barrier to TOD. Refining this replacement practice and developing alternative implementation approaches will enhance

development opportunities. The Policy directs staff to use a new access methodology to identify and evaluate opportunities to adjust replacement parking at specific stations and then consider using ground lease revenues to provide for an access modal mix to optimize ridership. Essentially, development combined with targeted access improvements and place-making elements should be considered as an integrated package of investments to enhance the station area and to increase transit ridership.

TRANSPORTATION

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Automobiles

Automobile traffic is well accommodated on the streets surrounding the Lake Merritt BART station. When regional freeways were built in the 1950s, many local streets throughout Oakland were widened considerably and converted to one-way, to support an anticipated significant increase in traffic volumes.

In the immediate vicinity of the Lake Merritt BART Station, four streets carry most traffic: 7th and 8th are one-way couplets, as are Oak and Madison. Yet, these streets do not appear to be operating at or near capacity. Both 9th and Fallon have very low traffic volumes, especially considering the width dedicated to automobiles.[1]

Some earlier planning efforts have recommended restoring the local streets to two-way operation. This concept is explored further in the Better Streets Concept Study section of this report.

A key advantage of effective TOD would be to accommodate additional residents at a location that provides access to high quality public transit, as well as to destinations within walking distance. Such a development would mitigate a potentially large increase in automobile traffic from the increased population in the area.

Parking

Limited commuter parking and an insufficient drop-off area currently limit automobile access to the Lake Merritt BART Station. The BART parking lot, located between the BART headquarters building and the Laney College entrance, and the small lot behind the Metro Center have a combined total of 206 parking spaces. This is the second lowest number of spaces in the system, of stations with parking. There is also a very large lot on 7th Street, with over 900 parking spaces for

[1] A notable exception is the block of Fallon between 7th and 8th, which carries traffic headed towards downtown to 8th from the bi-directional section of 7th to the southeast.

Laney College students. On-street metered and some non-metered parking is available within the station area.

The BART parking lots fill to capacity each morning, with spillover parking anecdotally reported as far away as the loft district. There are 66 reserved parking spaces, 20 mid-day parking spaces and no carpool spaces. BART patrons are required to pay 25 cents to validate their use of the parking space. This system discourages use of the lots by non-BART users, such as Laney College students and local employees. The 2005 BART patron survey found that only 12 percent of patrons who use the Lake Merritt BART Station drive alone, while 16 percent carpool or are dropped off.

Currently, there is one passenger drop off point on the west side of Oak Street just north of 8th Street, without any clear signage. Cars frequently use the curbside parking area just north of the bus stop on the east side of Oak Street to drop off passengers. Given the proximity of the Lake Merritt BART Station to the I-880 Freeway and the City of Alameda, clearly designated drop off areas should be identified in developing a plan for the station area.

Figure 4 - Parking Lots in the Vicinity of the Lake Merritt BART Station

Transit

Four AC Transit routes serve the Lake Merritt BART Station. Frequencies vary, with some buses running at 20 minute frequencies during peak times and others routes only once per hour.

The recently conducted station access survey determined that 11 percent of Lake Merritt BART patrons take transit to the station. Although this is lower than the system average, local transit is still an important mode of access, particularly for patrons coming from Clinton Park and other neighborhoods to the east.

Figure 5 – AC Transit Bus Routes near the Lake Merritt BART Station

Route	Peak Frequency	Off-Peak Frequency	Hours Mon–Fri	Hours Sat–Sun
11-Harrison	20 min	30 min	6:00a –7:00p	7:00a – 7:00p
59-Piedmont	60 min	60 min	6:00a – 7:30p	8:00a – 6:30p
62-San Antonio	20 min	30 min	6:00a – 12:00a	6:00a – 12:00a
88-Market	20 min	20 min	5:30a – 12:30a	5:30a – 12:30a

There are two bus stops at the Lake Merritt BART Station – one on Oak and one on 8th Street (see map at right). The bus stop on Oak has a large concrete shelter, whereas the bus stop on 8th does not have a shelter, though there is a concrete bench to sit on. There is also a bus stop on Madison between 8th and 9th Streets, with a new AC Transit bus shelter.

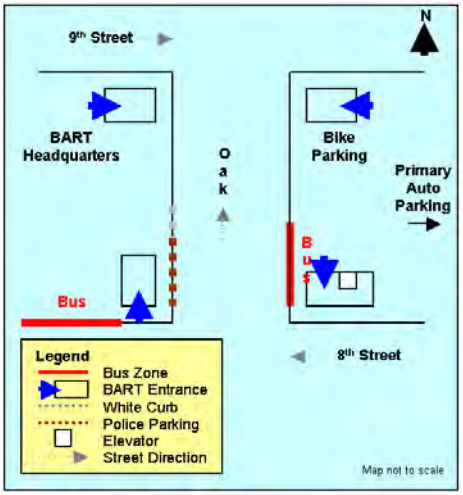


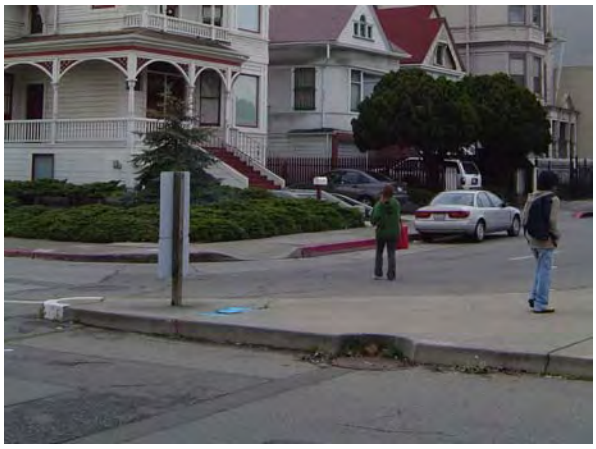
Figure 6 – AC Transit Bus Stops near the Lake Merritt BART Station

Bicycles

Given the location of Laney College, the relatively flat terrain and the wide street network, the Lake Merritt BART station is a natural bike destination. Currently, there are 36 bike lockers and 56 bike racks at the station entrance on Oak and 8th Streets. The lockers and racks are filled to capacity each weekday, and many more bicycles are locked to utility poles. New bicycle racks have been installed in front of the Metro Center building.

Bicyclist on 8th Street

No streets in the area have dedicated bike lanes, yet quite a few BART patrons use bicycles to access the station. Six percent of BART patrons currently ride a bicycle to the station, a figure that is significantly higher than the system average of 2 percent. It should be noted that according to the "Bikes on BART" rules, bicyclists cannot use the 12th or 19th Street stations during peak hours. Therefore, the Lake Merritt BART station is a key access point for bicyclists, and the bicycle access mode share at this station is higher than at surrounding stations.



Students crossing Fallon and 8th streets without a crosswalk

Given this, and the fact that the bicycle facilities fill to capacity each weekday, more attention needs to be given to improving and accommodating bicycle access to this station. The City of Oakland Bicycle Plan recommends dedicated bike lanes on Oak, Madison, 7th, and 8th streets. The *Revive Chinatown!* Plan further recommends bi-directional bike lanes on 9th Street, if it were converted to two-way vehicular operation, as an alternative to 7th and 8th streets.

Pedestrians

Pedestrians do not fare as well within the station area. When the streets were widened for automobiles in the 1950s, sidewalks were narrowed and many street trees were removed and have not been replaced. Because of the street widening, intersections are more difficult to cross and some do not have crosswalks. No intersection in the station area has count-down signals and crossing times are often too short for slower moving pedestrians. Street lighting is auto-oriented – focused on the street rather than the sidewalks – so that sidewalks appear dark and foreboding at night. Local residents have expressed the need to improve safety for pedestrians in the station area. This need has been reiterated in several recent plans, including the *Revive Chinatown!*

Students crossing Fallon at crosswalk

Community Transportation Plan and the *Lake Merritt BART Station Access Plan*.

Freeway underpass at 6th and Oak

Despite these limitations, there is significant pedestrian activity in certain areas, particularly in the immediate vicinity of the station. More than half (53%) of BART passengers walk to the station, and a vast majority (88%) of passengers coming from within a half-mile radius walk. Despite this high walk rate, pedestrian activity is very low at night. People have noted that the lack of activity in the area further discourages them from walking there.

Pedestrian Connections to Adjacent Neighborhoods

Several distinct boundaries surround the station area and act as barriers to the station from nearby neighborhoods. Lake Merritt lies to the northeast, with the Lake Merritt Estuary flowing east past the station. Several bridges cross the Estuary, but improvements are needed to make them more accessible and safe for pedestrians and bicyclists.

An elevated section of the I-880 Freeway passes between the station and the Oakland waterfront, where many new residential units have been constructed. Passage beneath the freeway is unsafe – due to both conflicts with traffic entering and exiting the freeway as well as the dark, unkempt, noisy and isolated nature of the area.

Despite these conditions, the 2005 BART patron survey found that many people are walking under the freeway to access the station.

Point of Origin for Trips to Station

Table 1 summarizes the distribution of trips, by mode of access, to the Lake Merritt BART Station for 2005 Survey respondents.

Table 1: Mode of Access to the Lake Merritt BART Station (2005)

Mode of Access	All Passengers	1/2 Mile Radius
Walked	53%	88%
Dropped Off or Carpool	16%	3%
Drove Alone	12%	4%
Transit	11%	1%
Bike	6%	4%
Other	2%	0%
TOTAL:	100%	100%

Source: *Survey Conducted May 25-26, 2005 (see **Appendix A** for more information).*

The points of origin for pedestrian and bicyclist trips to the station, as determined by the 2005 survey, have been mapped in Figures 8a and 8b.[2] There are distinct patterns for pedestrian origins – many come from the new loft district to the south, along Oak Street from the north, and from Laney College to the east. Although the 12th Street BART Station is the primary station for residents of Chinatown, the map demonstrates that Chinatown residents and visitors also use Lake Merritt BART Station.

More than half (52 percent) of survey respondents were using BART to go to/ from work. Significant but much smaller proportions (16 percent) were heading to/from school or conducting other business (12 percent). Visiting friends and family, shopping, personal business, and other various activities were reasons given for the remaining proportion of trips.

The points of origin of bicyclists are distributed more widely. Many come from near the station, including the loft district, and others come from the neighborhoods to the east of Lake Merritt and the Estuary.

[2] Sufficient data was not available to be able to map transit and auto-access trips.

1998 Lake Merritt BART Access Survey

Prior to the 2005 Survey, BART conducted a similar survey in 1998. The results of that survey are shown below, and are compared to the 2005 survey.

Table 2: Mode of Access to the Lake Merritt BART Station (1998)

Mode	Percentage
Walk	52%
Drive Alone	17%
Transit	12%
Drop-Off or Carpool	14%
Bike	5%
Other	<1%
	100%

Source: *1998 Customer Profile Survey, BART (Trips with Lake Merritt as Origin Station)*

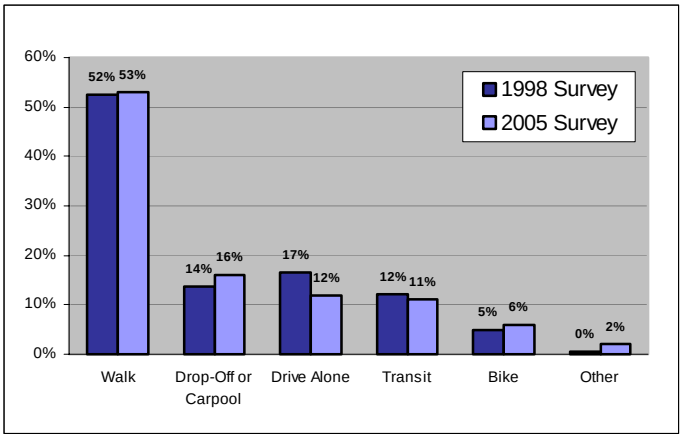


Figure 7 – Mode of Access to Lake Merritt BART Station

One significant change since 1998 is the decrease in percentage of patrons driving to the station. This may be due to the overall increase in patronage at the station, combined with a relatively fixed supply of parking.

City of Alameda

The Lake Merritt BART Station is the closest station for many residents of the City of Alameda. However, the recent survey found that only 4 percent of patrons at the Lake Merritt BART Station came from Alameda. Opportunities to improve transportation connections between the City of Alameda and the Lake Merritt BART Station could generate increased ridership.

Figure 8a:
ORIGIN OF TRIPS to BART STATION - Pedestrians

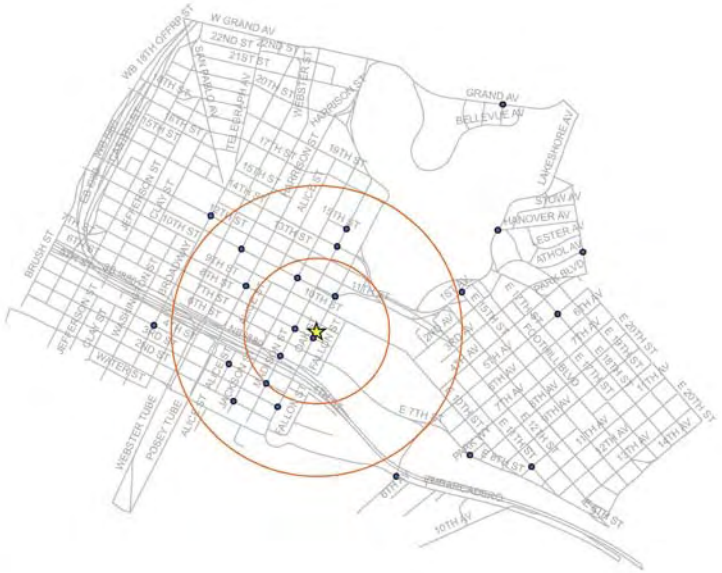
Number of Patrons*

- 1 - 2
- 3 - 5
- 6 - 15
- 16 - 30
- 31 - 45

* Nearest Intersection to Origin
Circles represent 1/4 and 1/2 mile radii

Data Source: Survey conducted on Station Platform May 25-26, 2005

Figure 8b:
ORIGIN OF TRIPS to BART STATION - Bicyclists



Number of Patrons*

- 1 - 2
- 3 - 5
- 6 - 15
- 16 - 30
- 31 - 45

* Nearest Intersection to Origin
Circles represent 1/4 and 1/2 mile radii

Data Source: Survey conducted on Station Platform May 25-26, 2005

DEMOGRAPHICS

A demographic analysis was conducted for the Census blocks within a one-half mile radius of the Lake Merritt BART station, as shown in the figure at right, and subsequently referred to as the "Census Area."[3] The one-half mile radius extends approximately to Broadway and downtown Oakland on the west, 17th Street and Lake Merritt to the north, beyond Laney College to 4th Avenue in the Eastlake area, and south to the Estuary. Census data is available down to the block level, and census blocks that best match the one-half mile radius were analyzed, as shown in the shaded area. Data for the Census Area extends to approximately 20th Street on the north and Jefferson Street to the west, while a small portion of the Eastlake area is left out.

Figure 9 – Study Area for Demographic Analysis

Demographic data for the Census Area for 1990 and 2000 was compiled from the US Census, and 2004 projections using the same geography were obtained from a private data provider. This data was then compared with data for the entire City of Oakland as well as Alameda County in order to provide a basis for comparison. Some data for local residents was also compared to the results of the 2005 survey of Lake Merritt BART patrons.

[3] A similar area was used for the Economic Analysis and Market Study, described in the next section of this report.

Population and Household Characteristics

The Census Area in 2004 is projected to include 10,861 persons living in 6,002 households, for an average household size of 1.8 persons (compared to an average household size for the City of Oakland of 2.6 persons and Alameda County of 2.7 persons).

The average annual population growth from 2000 to 2004 was projected to be 1.9 percent per year, a relatively high rate of growth (compared to the 0.3 percent rate for the City and 0.7 percent rate for the County).

The Census Area contains a relatively small proportion of family households, at 37 percent (compared to 57 percent for the City and 64 percent for the County). Homeownership rates are very low in the Area, at only 15 percent (compared to 41 percent for the City and 65 percent for the County).[4]

Age distribution in the Census Area is distinctly different from the City. As shown in Figure 10, there are many more seniors and much fewer children compared to the City as a whole. The proportion of residents who are 18 to 24 and 25 to 34 years old is similar to the rest of the city, suggesting that there is no clustering of students near Laney College.

Age groupings from the 2005 BART patron survey are not directly comparable to Census data, but there are clear differences, with a much higher proportion of patrons in their 20s and 30s. Note that the indicated percent of patrons under 20 years old is not accurate, as children under 18 were not surveyed.

Income Distribution

Projected 2004 annual median household income in the Study Area was very low at $24,500 (compared to $44,400 for the City and $64,800 for the County). While smaller households in the Census Area will result in lower household incomes, even for a one-person household this figure is less than 50 percent of Area Median Income (AMI) for Oakland in 2004. The large proportion of seniors in the area may also be a factor in lower household incomes.

Figure 10 – Age Distribution of Station Area Residents vs. City of Oakland

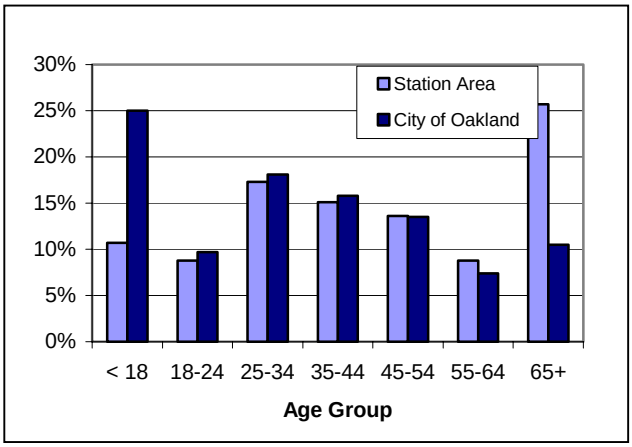


Figure 11 – Age Distribution of Lake Merritt BART Patrons

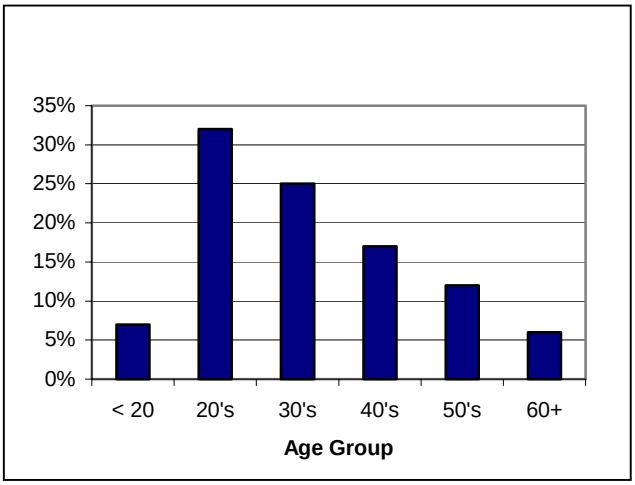
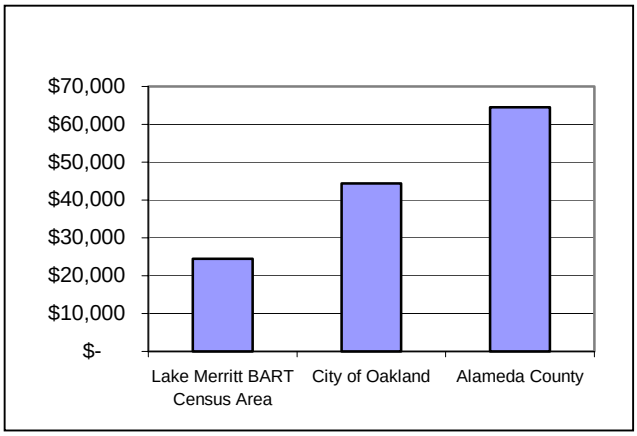


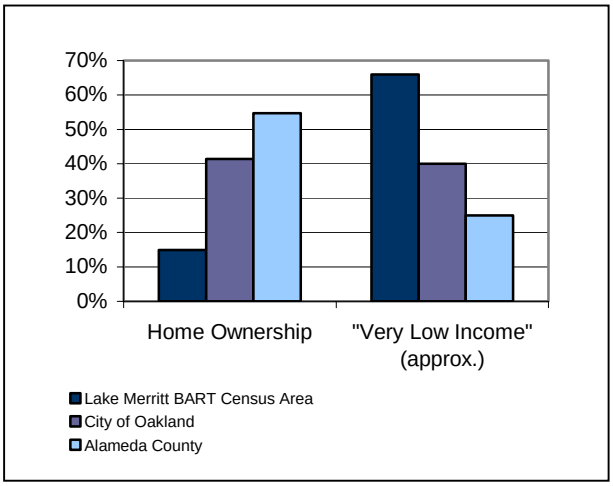
Figure 12 – Median Household Income



[4] Home ownership rate is from 2000, the most recent year with available data

The distribution of incomes in the Census Area is also skewed to the lower end of the range. For example, the 50 percent AMI figure in 2004 for Oakland for a two-person household (median household size in the Census Area is 1.8 persons) is $33,100. Although the nearest Census category for households income goes to $35,000 the income distribution suggests that somewhat near two-thirds of the households in the Census Area fall into the very low income category (compared to under 40 percent for the City and likely less than one-quarter for the County).

Figure 13 – Home Ownership and Household Income



Educational Attainment and Occupations

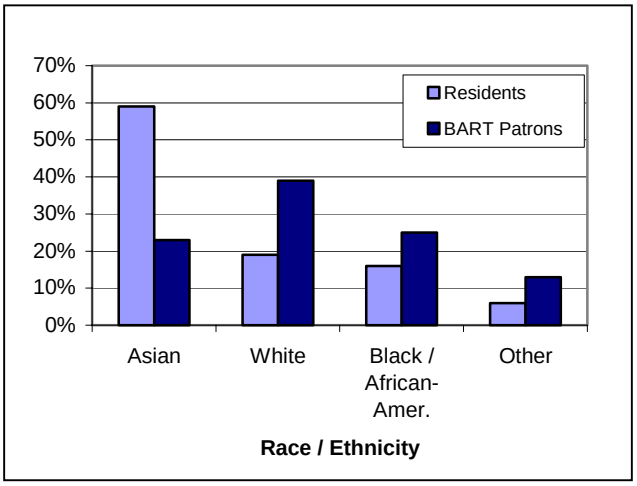
Educational attainment, as measured by possession of an AA degree or higher, is 34 percent in the Census Area (compared to 36 percent for the City and 42 percent for the County). There are more residents in the Station Area working in sales and service occupations (48%) compared to residents of the City and County as a whole (41 percent and 38 percent respectively). There are fewer residents in management, business, and professional occupations that reside in the Census Area than in the City or County.

Race and Ethnicity

As shown in Figure 14, the residential population surrounding the Lake Merritt BART Station is racially and ethnically diverse. Approximately 50 percent of residents are of Chinese decent, 20 percent are White, and just over 15 percent are Black / African-American. Approximately 50 percent of residents speak English "less than very well." Cantonese is the most commonly spoken language, after English.

The race and ethnicity of patrons at Lake Merritt BART Station is also diverse, but different from the surrounding population. There are more Whites and Blacks/African Americans, and much fewer Asians using the station (note that the survey did not distinguish between Chinese and non-Chinese Asians).

Figure 14 – Race and Ethnicity of Residents vs. Lake Merritt BART Patrons



Demographics – Conclusions

The demographics of residents in the approximately one-half mile radius of the Lake Merritt BART Station are characteristically different from the rest of the City of Oakland in several ways:

- There are many more senior citizens and many fewer children, most residents are renters, and households have considerably lower income levels
- More than 50 percent of residents are ethnically Chinese, but there is also a high proportion of African-American and White residents, as well as a significant population of other Asians and non-Asians
- Nearly two-thirds of households in the Census Area have Very Low Incomes (50 percent AMI). This is significantly higher than the City (less than 40 percent) and the County (less than 25 percent).

The demographics of local residents also differ from that of patrons using Lake Merritt BART Station, based on the 2005 Survey:

- A significantly higher proportion of BART patrons are either White or Black/African-American, and fewer Asians (Chinese or otherwise) using the station
- The age distribution of BART patrons is significantly younger compared to local residents.

Housing

The market for new for-sale residential development in nearby areas is very strong, spilling over into the Market Area[5] surrounding the Lake Merritt BART Station. Median sale price of a condominium in the Market Area in 2004/2005 was $425,000, with 143 units sold during the past year. Assembling large enough sites for new projects may be more of a constraint on development than market conditions.

The demand for new for-rent residential development is not as strong as the demand for for-sale housing, but will likely increase in the medium-term as rents in nearby Jack London Square and the Waterfront areas increase.

As indicated in the demographic analysis, many households in the Market Area have low incomes. Thus only a limited number of current residents would be able to afford new market-rate development in the area. Furthermore, there is a possibility of displacement for current residents if existing rental units are converted to ownership units. Measures to reduce the potential for displacement should be considered during this planning process, to ensure the long-term stability of current residents in the area. This may include provisions to preserve existing rental units, as well as opportunities to provide new housing at below-market-rate rents and sale prices.

Office

Office demand is improving slowly in the downtown area, but is likely to remain more oriented towards public agencies and single tenants in the Market Area. This area will likely remain a secondary office submarket in Oakland.

The County of Alameda is interested in expanding its office footprint and acquiring property in the area, but is constrained by its fiscal situation. Furthermore, current

[5] The Market Area is approximately equivalent to the Census Area, delineated by the Census blocks included in a one-half mile radius of the Lake Merritt BART Station.

expectations are that the County would need only 30-50,000 square feet of space.

Laney College occupies a large site in the Market Area, and the Peralta Community College District has considerable holdings immediately adjacent to the Market Area. The District is currently undergoing a master facilities planning process and it is likely some time will pass before clear plans are delineated for the use of its property for development.

Retail

Adding local retail in this area is very challenging because of area demographics – residents have limited disposable income. New development could provide the needed support for additional limited and focused local-serving retail. A significant amount of retail in this neighborhood is likely only with substantially more residential development occurring beyond the BART station property.

Please see Appendix B: Detailed Economic Analysis *for more information.*

DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND OPPORTUNITIES

EXISTING PLANS AND PROJECTS NEARBY

Several infill development and streetscape improvement projects near the Lake Merritt BART Station are in various stages of planning and development.

Laney College Parking Lot

Laney College and the Peralta Community College District have recently considered a proposal for a mixed-use project on its large parking lot adjacent to the I-880 freeway. The proposal preserved the current parking supply in a multi-level structure thereby freeing space for additional uses. Future development of this property as well as the adjacent property, which houses the District's administrative offices, will be determined as part of the District's master facilities needs planning process, currently underway.

Oak to 9th Avenue Project

The "Oak to 9th Avenue" project is located along the waterfront to the southeast of the Estuary. Approximately 3100 residential units are planned on 60 acres, with approximately 200,000 square feet of retail space and 27 acres dedicated to open space. Improving connections between this development and the Lake Merritt BART station are necessary to make it more accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists. The Oak to 9th developer is also in discussions with AC Transit to augment service to the station. A Draft Environmental Impact Report for the project was released in August 2005.

Oakland's 10K Plan

In 1999, the City of Oakland initiated a plan to attract 10,000 new residents to the City of Oakland. This plan – dubbed the "10K Downtown Housing Initiative" – aims to attract 10,000 new residents to downtown Oakland by encouraging the development of 6,000 market-rate housing units. To date, the City has surpassed its goals, but the desire to attract additional housing and revitalize its neighborhoods remains.

Connections across the Estuary

In July 2002, the City of Oakland completed its Lake Merritt Park Master Plan (LMMP). This plan recognizes

the vital role the restoration of Lake Merritt plays in the City's renaissance, serving as a focal point for many neighborhoods within the City. The plan includes a detailed implementation plan to improve the connections to and from surrounding neighborhoods including key improvements to the Estuary. Currently, several bridges cross the Estuary, but do not provide effective pedestrian and bicycle connections between the station and neighborhoods to the east.

DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND OPPORTUNITIES

OPPORTUNITY SITES

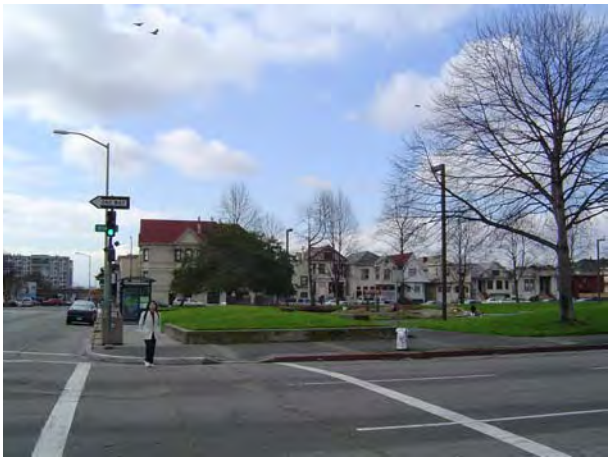
BART Administration Building and Plaza

As noted earlier, BART will be dismantling its Administration building above the Lake Merritt BART station and is currently evaluating its future office needs. The redevelopment of this central site will be a tremendous opportunity to improve the urban landscape in the vicinity of the station.

The BART Plaza currently serves as an important community space. A key priority must be to preserve this space, either here or in combination with a redesigned Madison Park (see below).

BART Parking Lot

The BART parking lot above the station presents a key opportunity for infill development that could generate significant BART ridership. One scenario to be explored with the community and current users of the station through this planning process is the elimination of BART parking at this station. Other scenarios include a one-for-one replacement of the existing spaces in a future development or at a remote lot, and shared parking with other institutional uses in the area.



Madison Square Park

Madison Square Park is a key open space amenity adjacent to the Lake Merritt BART Station. The original location of the park is the site where the BART Administration building is currently located. BART and the City agreed to relocate the park to its current location when the Lake Merritt BART Station was built in the late 1960s, early 1970s. City of Oakland staff is open to ideas about how to improve the park, and may consider a proposal to relocate it to one of the adjacent publicly owned blocks, assuming there is no net loss of park space.

Lake Merritt Station
OPPORTUNITY SITES

1 **Publicly Owned City Blocks:**
BART Admin. Building and Plaza
BART Parking Lot
Madison Park
MTC MetroCenter

2 **Fallon Street**

3 **Freeway Underpasses**

4 **Laney College Parking Lot**

Lake Merritt BART Station

BART Alignment (underground)

1/4 Mile Radius from Station

Open Space

Parking Lots

0' 125' 250' 500'

Fallon Street

Very little automobile traffic travels along Fallon Street between 8th and 9th directly in front of Laney College. Although streets are not often thought of as open space, this section could be a beautiful community asset, providing a comfortable and safe transition between the BART station and the west entrance to Laney College. One idea to explore through this planning effort is whether this section of street could be transformed into an open space, a plaza, or a large and welcoming entrance to Laney College. Such a concept, along with needed pedestrian improvements could be explored in combination with development proposals for the adjacent parking lot.

Freeway Underpass

New residential development continues to occur along the Oakland Waterfront. The 2005 BART patron survey demonstrated that many people are already walking underneath the I-880 Freeway along Oak and Madison to access the Lake Merritt BART Station. These underpasses are dark, dirty, and unsafe pedestrian environments. Improving the space under the freeway would be a tremendous benefit to existing pedestrians, and encourage more people to feel safe and comfortable walking from the Oakland Waterfront to the Lake Merritt BART Station.

FOCUS GROUPS

KEY FINDINGS

In Winter 2005, BART's consultant team conducted four focus groups to provide input into this project. The focus groups were designed to elicit comments about future development and access improvements and issues at the Lake Merritt BART station.

The Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce, (OCCC), a community-based organization, conducted a focus group (in Chinese) with local business owners. Asian Health Services, (AHS) another local non-profit agency, conducted two smaller focus groups in Vietnamese, one with local residents and employees, and another with local business owners. AHS also conducted a full focus group with users of the BART Plaza, in Cantonese.

The focus group facilitators used a set of prepared questions and recorded the answers of the participants. The full questionnaires and the answers by group can be found in Appendix D.

Among the focus group participants, there is a general appreciation for the Lake Merritt BART station as an amenity to the community. Many residents use BART on at least an occasional basis. These residents primarily access the Lake Merritt BART station by walking, getting a ride, or by paratransit. Residents were mainly concerned about safety in and around the station area, and recommended more security, better lighting, landscaping and benches, in particular, to improve the area.

Local business owners and employees were less likely to use the Lake Merritt BART station, or BART at all, choosing to drive into the area instead. Business owners repeatedly stated the need for additional parking in the area to serve their customers. It was felt that the potential elimination of the 100+ parking spaces at the Lake Merritt BART station would exacerbate the parking situation in the neighborhood.

The BART Plaza Users provided a lot of insight into the use of the open area on the site of the former BART

Headquarters building. Specific questions were asked to discover why this location was so popular, what types of activities people engaged in, and what other amenities people would like to see in a future park space either on that site or close by.

BART Plaza Users appear to utilize BART more frequently than do the other groups interviewed. Their primary concerns regarding the BART station were improving the safety and security of the area, and having both station agents and security personnel who could speak Cantonese and/or other Asian languages.

The BART Plaza is used by hundreds of people each day (including weekends) for Tai Chi, line dancing, Chinese checkers, mahjong, chi gong, and other activities including the Moon Festival and Lunar New Year parties. Focus group participants noted that people came from all over the world to participate in this vibrant culture.

The attractions of the site for Tai Chi and other activities were numerous: proximity and familiarity; the Plaza's history as a meeting site; the site is clean, safe and sunny; bathrooms are close by at Metro Center; the area is flat and has numerous smaller, separate areas; there is some shelter from the rain. Focus group participants unanimously appreciated the hard surfaces for performing their exercise and other activities.

When asked about the use of Madison Square Park as a site for Tai Chi and other activities, the focus group participants were willing to consider this **only** if numerous improvements were made to the site – relocating the homeless population, adding restrooms and electrical outlets, providing flat surfaces, hardscape and shelter. Many participants recommended that the park be dedicated to Tai Chi and several recommended an indoor facility or community center for ping-pong, dances and other community events.

Most importantly, the BART Plaza Users felt that their presence and cultural activity provide a great benefit to BART and the surrounding community. Tai Chi and other activities draw people into the area and add to the local economy. The activity near the BART station provides a sense of safety as well.

Throughout all four focus groups, participants were very concerned about the number of homeless people in the neighborhood especially in Madison Square Park. Few local residents, business owners and employees used Madison Square Park except as an area to cross through or pass on their way to or from their destination. Many participants felt that the presence of homeless people made the area unsafe, and several local residents said they no longer travel to the BART station or exercise at the BART Plaza out of concern for their safety. In addition, the presence of homeless people near or at the bus stops appears to discourage local residents and others from using the bus service.

Nearly all participants in the four focus groups agreed that better pedestrian access and safety are key needs in the neighborhood. Suggested improvements were better lighting and longer signals at crosswalks.

On the question of new development in the area, many participants of the four focus groups were amenable to higher density, mixed-use development. Many recommendations were provided for the types of development residents and local business owners would like to see in the area. Some participants would accept a development in the 20-story range as long as amenities were included such as parking, a childcare center, school-related facilities, sports facilities, entertainment venues, and a police sub-station or increased police patrols. Most participants felt that the neighborhood was in need of improvement and that a well-designed, mixed-use development would bring people – and new customers – to enliven the area.

BETTER STREETS CONCEPT STUDY

INTRODUCTION

Previous community outreach and planning efforts in the vicinity of Lake Merritt BART Station have identified a distinct need to improve the streetscape for pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit users. Certain streets in the area serve as important access routes for vehicles traveling to and from I-880 and other regional freeways. Improving multi-modal access to Lake Merritt BART Station will be key to maintaining and increasing BART ridership, especially as infill development brings new residents and visitors to the surrounding area.

Improving the streetscape for all modes of access requires an understanding of detailed conditions in the vicinity of the station, such as right-of-way width, presence and absence of key amenities for pedestrians and bicyclists, vehicle traffic volumes, and an understanding of the relationship between the area surrounding the station and the greater Bay Area transportation network. The Existing Conditions Report included a broad evaluation of these issues. The Better Streets Concept Study looks in greater detail at transportation-related conditions in the more immediate vicinity of the station. The study area includes all streets adjacent to the BART Station and Madison Square Park, and one block further northeast towards Lake Merritt and southeast towards the freeway (see Figure 1).

The Lake Merritt Better Streets Concept Study begins with a review of previous studies and plans near the station, including the Revive Chinatown! Community Transportation Plan and the City of Oakland's Bicycle Master Plan. Both plans include proposals for changes to street configuration in the vicinity of the Lake Merritt BART Station.

This review is followed by a detailed site assessment of street dimensions and features, including key pedestrian infrastructure such as crosswalks and curb-ramps (Figure 2). Traffic flow was analyzed throughout the study area, based upon previous traffic counts from August 2005 and new data collected in March 2006 (Figures 3 and 4).

The study concludes with a brief discussion of the opportunities presented by the detailed site analysis for streetscape improvements that benefit pedestrians, bicyclists and public transit users while still accommodating vehicular traffic.

Key changes evaluated are:

- Narrowing of travel lanes to provide right-of-way for bicycle facilities, wider sidewalks and other street enhancements
- Reducing the number of vehicle lanes to provide further right-of-way for these amenities
- Pedestrian safety enhancements, including opportunities for traffic calming and travel speed reduction
- Conversion from one-way to two-way traffic flow operation.

STUDY AREA

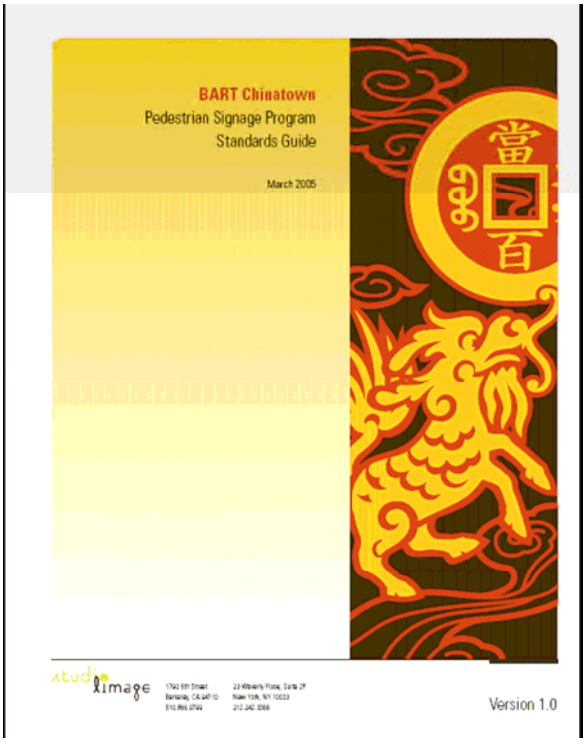
Lake Merritt BART Station
Better Streets Concept Study

BETTER STREETS CONCEPT STUDY

RELATED TRANSPORTATION PLANS

Revive Chinatown! Community Transportation Plan
This study focused on the core of Oakland's Chinatown in an area bounded by 7th Street to the south, 10th Street to the north, Franklin Street to the west and Harrison Street to the east. Although this study area is located several blocks to the west of Lake Merritt, proposed improvements may affect traffic and circulation around the Lake Merritt BART Station, in particular changes to the one-way street system. The key issues of the Revive Chinatown study include:

- Pedestrian Safety and Access
- Chinatown's Appearance
- Traffic Issues
- Parking Issues



The study found that traffic congestion in core Chinatown was caused by two types of problems:

- Heavy traffic on Webster Street caused by trips to and from the City of Alameda; and
- Localized traffic congestion caused primarily by double parking and the one-way street pattern.

The proposed improvements, which could directly impact traffic circulation in the Lake Merritt BART area, are:

- Convert 10th Street between Harrison and Madison Streets from one-way to two-way traffic flow and add diagonal parking. 10th Street is currently two-way east of Madison Street and so would not be affected by this modification. (Short-term project)
- Convert the current one-way streets to two-way flow in the area bounded by 14th Street, Broadway, I-880, and Oak Street. Although the Revive Chinatown Plan shows that this alternative might be feasible, implementation of this project would require more detailed operations and safety analysis and a CEQA document. The east-west streets (7th, 8th, and 9th Streets) in the Lake Merritt BART study area would be affected by this proposal. (Medium-term project)

- Create additional diagonal parking on streets just outside the Chinatown core. This improvement would increase the parking supply. (Medium-term project)
- Extend streetscape improvement projects proposed for the Chinatown core including banners, street trees, street furniture and pedestrian-level lighting along 8th and 9th Streets to connect with the Lake Merritt BART Station. (Medium/long-term project)
- Extend pedestrian improvement projects proposed for the Chinatown core to the area east. These improvements might include scramble intersections with bilingual signage, intersection bulb-outs, high-visibility or decorative crosswalks, and/or pedestrian countdown signal heads. (Long-term project)

City of Oakland Bicycle Master Plan (adopted 1999, reaffirmed 2004)

In the study area, the current bicycle plan identifies bicycle lanes for the Oak/Madison Street one-way couplet between Harrison Street and Embarcadero and for the 7th/8th Street one-way couplet between West Oakland and Oak Street.

An update of the Bicycle Master Plan is currently underway. As part of this update, the Oak/Madison one-way couplet will be retained for north-south bicycle access. The selection of roadways for east-west access through this area is yet to be decided; bicycle facilities are being considered for 10th, 9th, 8th, and/or 7th Streets. However, bicycle lanes on the 8th/9th Street one-way couplet are the most promising for both traffic and access reasons as a potential modification to the 1999 plan. These streets provide access from Downtown, through Chinatown to Lake Merritt BART and Laney College. 10th Street is less desirable as it provides limited connection to the west by terminating at Webster Street and is located relatively close to bicycle improvements proposed as part of the Lake Merritt/12th Street improvements. Although 7th Street provides good connection to areas both east and west of the study area, it also provides vehicular access to/from I-880 and as such operates with high volumes and speeds.

Changes to the one-way street system in the Downtown-Lake Merritt BART area as proposed in the Revive Chinatown Community Transportation Plan would, of course, affect the location of bike lanes in the study area. The Chinatown Plan has recommended 9th Street bike lanes if the one-way to two-way conversion is implemented. The bicycle plan update will address the issues of bicycle access between Lake Merritt BART and Downtown including consideration of alternative alignments to the bike lane network should the Chinatown improvements occur.

BETTER STREETS CONCEPT STUDY

EXISTING TRAFFIC FEATURES

The roadways in this area of Oakland are designed in a typical grid system with relatively short blocks measuring approximately 220 feet on the north-south face and 320 feet on the east-west face. Road widths vary from 44 feet along some sections of Madison Street to 60 feet on some blocks of Oak and 7th Streets. The typical road width ranges from 52-58 feet. At a few intersections along Jackson and Madison Streets, the corner radius is indented approximately 5 feet from the curb line. Presumably, this was done to accommodate the drainage inlets. Consequently, the distance that pedestrians are required to walk to cross the street in the crosswalk is greater than the crossing width at a mid-block location. Indentations might also confuse those with visual impairments.

Direction of travel is typically one-way with the exception of a few blocks of Fallon, 10th and Jackson Streets. Most intersections are controlled with traffic signals, with pedestrian signal heads at the crosswalks. One pedestrian countdown signal is found in the area at the 8th/Jackson Street intersection. Details of this roadway network including number and direction of lanes, lane widths, location of bus stops and curb ramps and types of traffic control devices can be found on Figure 2.

7th, 8th and 9th Streets provide the best connection to the west with 7th Street having continuous access to the Port of Oakland. Through connections on 8th and 9th Streets are severed by the I-980 and I-880 freeways; 10th Street terminates at Webster Street in Downtown. 7th and 10th Streets provide connection to the east. 8th and 9th Streets terminate at Fallon Street and Laney College.

In the north-south directions, Oak, Madison, and Jackson Streets all provide connection between Lake Merritt/Uptown and the area south of I-880. Oak is the only street that connects to Embarcadero. Access to/from I-880 is available via Madison and Oak Streets.

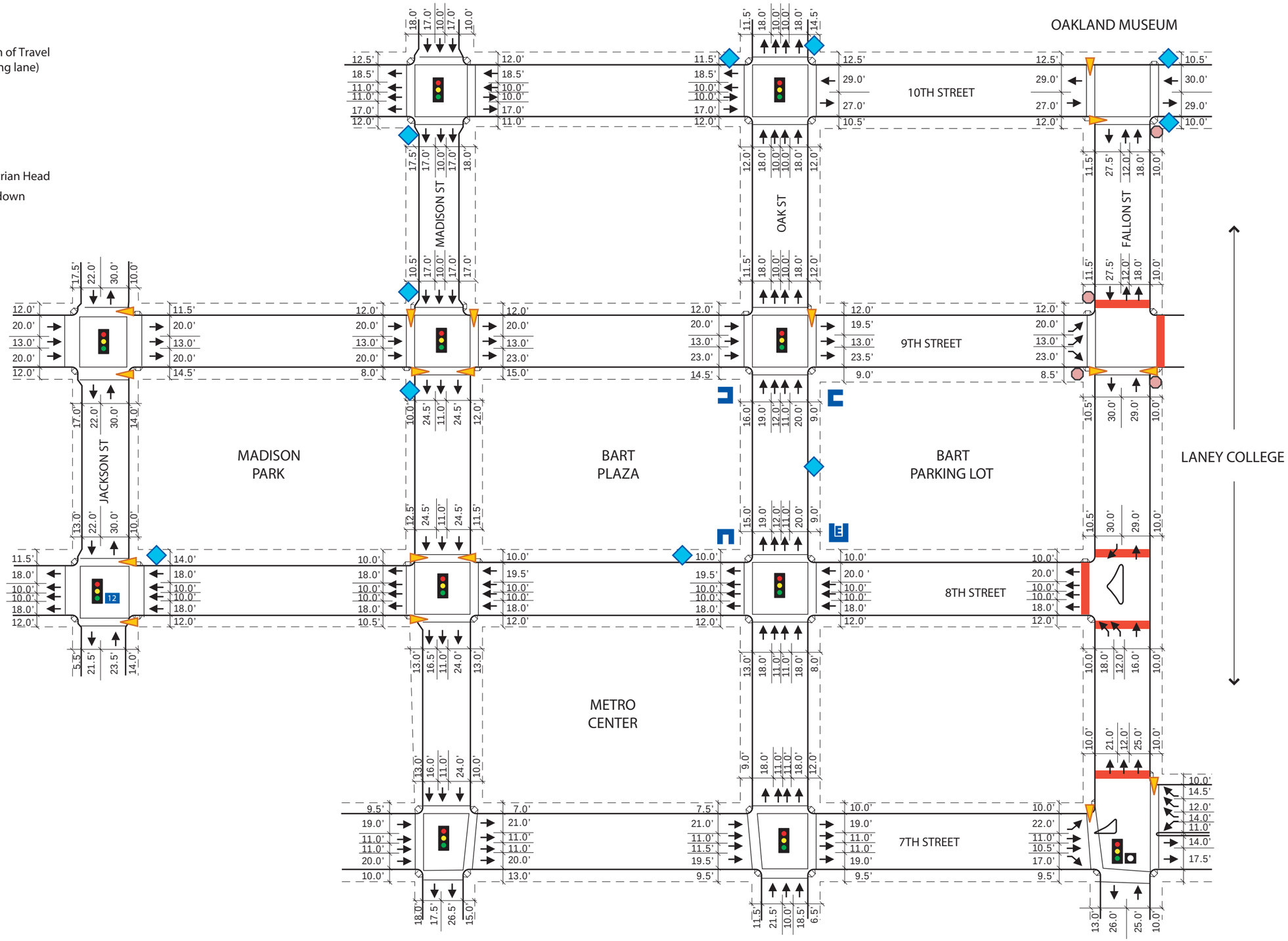
Traffic volumes in the study area are relatively low with intersections operating under acceptable conditions with

most intersections at Level-of-Service (LOS) A or B. The existing AM/PM peak hour traffic volumes used in the

LEGEND:

- Travel Lane and Direction of Travel (curb lane includes parking lane)
- Sidewalk
- Curb Cut
- Bus Stop
- Stop Sign
- Traffic Signal with Pedestrian Head
  - 12 Pedestrian Count-down
  - Actuated
- **NO** Crosswalk Present
- **NO** Direct Curb Ramp
- BART Entrance

NORTH
NOT TO SCALE



EXISTING ROADWAY AND LANE DETAILS

MIG
Wilbur Smith Associates

LOS analysis at key intersections were collected from traffic counts conducted for this study or were taken from the Oak to Ninth Avenue Project DEIR. Existing AM/PM peak hour volumes are included in Figure 2; existing LOS and delay are presented in Table 3, below.

Table 3
Existing Intersection Level of Service (LOS) and Delay (seconds/vehicle)

Intersection	Traffic Control	AM		PM	
		LOS	Delay	LOS	Delay
7th Street and Madison Street (1)	Signal	B	12.9	B	14.3
7th Street and Oak Street (1)	Signal	B	12.5	B	14.0
7th Street and Fallon Street (2)	Signal	C	31.8	C	34.3
8th Street and Jackson Street (1)	Signal	B	16.5	B	14.2
8th Street and Madison Street (1)	Signal	A	8.9	A	9.4
8th Street and Oak Street (1)	Signal	B	16.6	B	16.0
9th Street and Madison Street (2)	Signal	A	5.6	A	6.1
10th Street and Oak Street (1)	Signal	A	9.4	A	9.6
10th Street and Fallon Street (2)	Stop at Fallon	A	4.6	A	5.7

Source: (1) Oak to Ninth Avenue Project DEIR, Fehr & Peers Transportation Consultants, Aug 2005. (2) Wilbur Smith Associates, March 2006.

LEGEND:

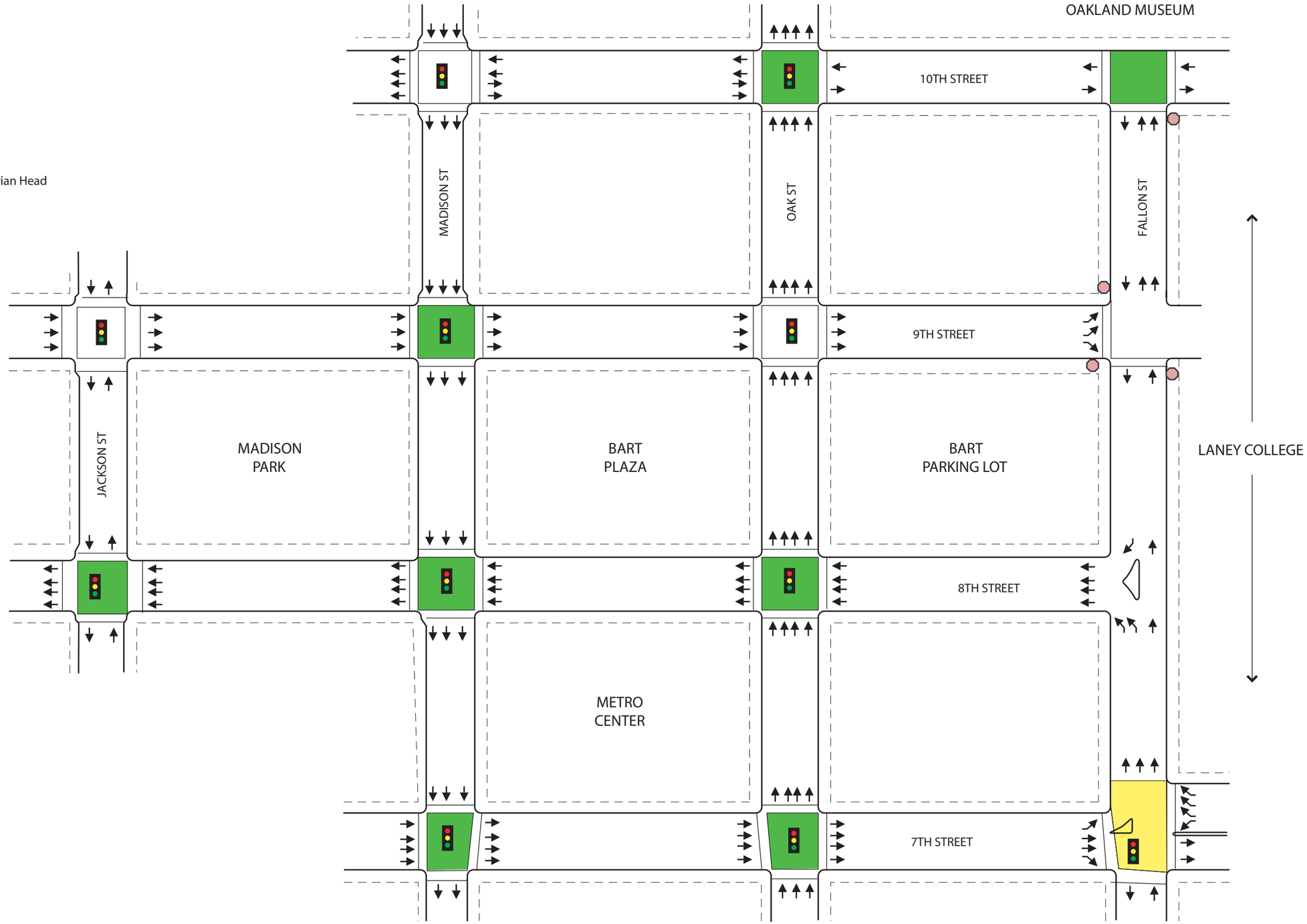
Intersection Level-of-Service:

- LOS "A" or "B"
- LOS "C"
- *not available*

Traffic Controls

- Stop Sign
- Traffic Signal with Pedestrian Head

NORTH
NOT TO SCALE



STUDY ISSUES

Narrowing Travel Lanes

Some of the traffic lanes in the Lake Merritt Area are quite wide. Normally, 11 foot wide lanes are adequate for inside travel lanes and 13 foot wide lanes are adequate for lanes adjacent to curb parking. If bicycle lanes (width of 5 feet) are added to the street cross section, the width of adjacent traffic lanes can be reduced from 13 to 11 feet. Widths of curb parking lanes in this section of Oakland are generally 8.0 feet. Thus, narrowing traffic lanes to allow for bike lanes or enhanced streetscaping seems doable on some streets.

For example, two lane, three lane and four lane one-way streets with curb parking on both sides need to be 42 feet, 53 feet and 64 feet wide curb to curb respectively. A 5-foot bicycle lane on one side of the one-way street would add another 3 feet to these curb to curb dimensions. Two-directional streets with curb parking on both sides of the street, generally should be 52 feet wide for two lanes, and 74 feet wide for four lanes, including allowance of 10 feet for left turn pockets. Five-foot bicycle lanes on both sides of the street would add another 6 feet to these dimensions. Thus, the width requirement for two-way streets with bike lanes is substantially greater than for one-way streets. Variances from City of Oakland street standards would require approval from the City.

Reducing the Number of Travel Lanes

Typically a lane of traffic should be capable of accommodating 500 vehicles per hour at an acceptable level of service (LOS C). The capacities of traffic lanes are very dependent on the efficient loading of intersection approach lanes. One-way streets typically provide efficient loadings for intersection approaches compared to two-way streets. Traffic on two-way streets with short block lengths tends not to efficiently load intersection approaches. Upstream traffic signals limit the amount of vehicles that can pass through downstream intersections. These inefficiencies tend to increase the number of vehicles that need to be "stored" on the approaches to intersections. With short block lengths, this translates into more traffic lanes.

Based upon the comparison of peak roadway traffic volumes to number of travel lanes as shown in Table 4 below, the streets in the study area are operating well below the 500 vehicles per hour for an acceptable level of service (LOS C). With the exception of Madison Street, reducing the number of travel lanes by 1 lane would not adversely affect traffic operations. The additional right-of-way could be used for widening sidewalks or providing bike lanes.

Table 4 Comparison of Number of Travel Lanes to Existing Traffic Volumes				
Street	# of Lanes	Peak Hour Volume	Volume per Lane	Volume per Lane with Reduction of 1 Lane
East-West				
7th Street	4	1,400	350	467
8th Street	4	600	150	200
9th Street	3	400	130	200
10th Street	2	500	250	n/a
North-South				
Oak Street	4	1,200	300	400
Madison Street	3	1,200	400	600
Jackson Street	2	500	250	n/a

As shown in Table 4, traffic volumes in the Station Area are relatively modest. As long as efficient traffic loading of intersection approaches can be maintained, opportunities seem to exist to reduce the number of traffic lanes. "Upstream" traffic signals can often prevent traffic from fully loading an intersection approach, negatively impacting intersection and lane capacities. Upstream constraints are particularly a problem when intersections are closely spaced (as is the case at Lake Merritt). The current one-way operation attempts to ensure the efficient loading of intersection approaches via signal timings for progressive traffic flow. The signal timing coordination seems to emphasize Oak and Madison progression more than 7th, 8th, 9th and 10 Street progressions. This probably reflects the shorter block lengths for Oak and Madison Streets.

The only congestion observed in the area was on Jackson Street during the afternoon commute period. The heavy demand towards I-880 northbound on-ramps during this time period was observed to stack traffic on Jackson Street back to 8th Street. The congestion on Jackson

Street likely becomes more acute when I-880 becomes congested.

Two-way versus One-way Streets

The benefits and disadvantages of one-way versus two-way streets have been extensively debated within the traffic engineering community and within the general community. The benefits largely are defined by multimodal transportation and community planning objectives, functional requirements, and traffic circulation resources. It is useful to approach this discussion from the individual perspectives of pedestrians, bicyclists, bus riders and operators, truck/service vehicle drivers, motorists and the neighborhood stakeholders.

Pedestrians – As sidewalks provide two-directional travel, one-way streets do not add to pedestrian walking distances. Pedestrians are benefited in several ways by one-way streets, particularly due to the elimination of left turn conflicts with opposing traffic:

- shorter traffic signal cycle lengths minimize delay for street crossings
- crossing distances are reduced because right-of-way is not required for left turn pockets, and
- pedestrian safety is increased due to fewer traffic conflicts at crosswalks.

It is possible under certain conditions that vehicles will travel at higher speeds on one-way streets. It is important to mitigate against this to ensure that pedestrian safety is not compromised. Traffic calming and accurate signal timing (see below) are two effective measures to achieve this objective.

Bicyclists – One-way streets increase travel distances for bicyclists. Bicyclists may choose sidewalks for contra-flow travel, but this is generally not a preferred path, especially as sidewalks are relatively narrow in the study area. However, the relatively short block lengths in the study area would mitigate increased travel distances on one-way streets, and one-way streets might also provide more space for dedicated bike lanes. Accommodating turning movements for bicyclists, while simultaneously ensuring protection from turning vehicles, is an important operational challenge that

would need to be addressed with either one-way or two-way street operations.

Transit Riders and Buses – The Lake Merritt BART Station area has relatively short block lengths, which minimize transit stop access walking distances for buses operating on adjacent parallel one-way streets. One-way streets are generally less desirable for bus passengers as they tend to increase bus stop access efforts, but with the short block lengths near the Lake Merritt BART Station, this would not be a negative factor. Short two phase traffic signal cycles would benefit bus running times and the one-way street operation also makes turning large vehicles easier.

Trucks and Service Vehicles – One-way streets tend to be better for trucks and service vehicles as they generally provide more lanes and the needed road width to bypass double parked vehicles and make easier turning movements.

Parking – Most motorists prefer to parallel park on two-way streets as the normal practice is to parallel park on the right side of the street. Parallel parking on the left side of the street is in many ways easier, but it is a less practiced maneuver. One possibility that may be considered is angled parking on just one-side of the one-way street, which can be a more efficient use of right-of-way (without reduction in parking spaces) and an easier method of parking. Back-in angled parking would be preferable to conventional angled parking in that it reduces the potential for collisions with bicyclists.

Traffic Circulation – One-way streets are more attractive to most motorists as they tend to minimize traffic conflicts (left turns) and minimize stop delay at traffic signals (shorter signal cycles and coordinated signal progression). It should be noted that coordinated traffic signal timing to minimize stop delays (progression timing) does not inherently lead to increased speeds. In fact, signal timing progression strategies can be used to control traffic speeds. A key traffic circulation issue regarding one-way streets is how they transition from one-way to two-way. While going from one-way to two-way circulation tends to be easier, any conversion of Chinatown Streets to two-way operations might create transition challenges for the Lake Merritt BART Station streets.

Key issues for the Lake Merritt BART Station Area are the interface with its neighboring street operations and the short block distances. The latter complicates traffic signal progression timing for two-way streets, which also increases traffic queue length requirements at intersections. Lake Merritt's street system needs to provide seamless interfaces with streets in adjacent neighborhoods. The current one-way operations somewhat confuses motorist as the one-way segments are short and discontinuous. This pattern increases turning movements, which raises safety concerns. However, conversion to two-way streets would make efficient traffic progression impossible and therefore increase queuing requirements and traffic lane needs.

Implementation - Conversion of a street system from one-way to two-way operations and vice versa is not inexpensive. Pavement striping, signal displays and detectors, traffic and parking signage, and parking meters all need to be reoriented. Public notices and outreach strategies to inform the public of upcoming street conversions can consume significant staff time and effort.

Urban Design and Commercial Considerations – Numerous studies have attempted to define the commercial implications of one-way versus two-way traffic operations on businesses. Results have been mixed, suggesting that many factors are important to business success aside from traffic operations. There is clearly a public perception, however, that one-way streets are a highway capacity solution, rather than a livability solution. One-way streets tend to be very visible traffic features. As indicated above there are many non-traffic benefits associated with one-way streets and there are many good examples of successful one-way livable streets.

Traffic Calming and Speed Reduction –
Efforts to slow traffic speeds and to improve pedestrian and bicycling facilities are often referred to as traffic calming. Widening and enhancing sidewalks, narrowing traffic conflict zones at intersections and provision of improved pedestrian crossing features, can improve pedestrian facilities in the area. Many of the intersections in the area could also use ADA upgrades.

Traffic can be slowed by narrowing lanes and by use of traffic control devices. STOP sign controls are best for pedestrians, but can be a problem for bicyclists. Traffic signals that allow for slow speed progression also can help control speeds. The very short 45 second traffic signal cycle is very good for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit and even for motorists. Longer signal cycles would worsen traffic queue overflow problems. It might be possible to further shorten the traffic signal cycles if street widths are reduced either by narrowing lanes or eliminating lanes. To better manage speeds, the City should consider eliminating phase skipping at the Seventh Street Fallon Street signal.

Pedestrian facilities can be enhanced via:

- Extensions of the sidewalk into the curb parking lane area at intersections ("sidewalk bulbs");
- Widening sidewalks, security and streetscaping measures;
- Narrowing traffic conflicts zones via bulbing, lane narrowing and/ or lane elimination;
- Provision of pedestrian countdown displays;
- Avoidance of push button actuation pedestrian phase equipment; and
- Upgrading sidewalk and crosswalk facilities to ADA requirements.

It should be noted that sidewalk bulbs need to be sensitive to bicycling needs, although this is typically not a problem for streets with curb parking. Bulbs also need to be sensitive to truck loading and bus stop needs. Observation of traffic in the Study Area did not identify any current significant truck loading activity, but the area does have a number of bus stops. Bus operators prefer to stop at a bulbout in the traffic lane as long as the stop does not involve a layover. Where traffic capacity allows, bulbing bus stops should be considered.

Shortening pedestrian crosswalk lengths would improve safety and pedestrian delay at signalized intersections. For example, 9th Street at Fallon Street near Laney College currently has three wide lanes and curb parking. The crosswalk length (road width) is 56 feet. By eliminating one of the three lightly used approach lanes, narrowing them to 14 feet each and installing bulb-outs at the intersection, crosswalk length could be reduced to 28 feet and opportunities for enhanced streetscape would be provided.

Other

The street lighting in the area is designed for traffic and not for pedestrians. Consideration should be given to improved lighting for pedestrians.

The discontinuous one-way and two-way street systems must confuse some motorists. Improved wayfinding signage should be considered, along with simplification of the circulation system.

BETTER STREETS CONCEPT STUDY

CONCLUSIONS

Conditions on streets surrounding BART stations can have a major impact on patronage of the system. The streets surrounding the Lake Merritt BART Station, while serving vehicular through-traffic well, do not serve pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit users nearly so well. Opportunities to improve safety and access to the station for pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit users must be balanced with the need to continue to provide adequate local and regional access for vehicles.

This study measured and evaluated the current configuration of streets in the vicinity of the Lake Merritt BART Station, as well as existing vehicular traffic volumes and street capacity. The study found that existing conditions would allow for significant improvements to pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit facilities through reduction in vehicle lane widths and perhaps in the number of lanes. Opportunities for conversion from one-way to two-way operation were also evaluated, though such changes would require significantly more technical analysis and consideration of costs and benefits for all modes of travel. An important consideration is that rather dramatic improvements appear quite feasible without the need to pursue more complex and costly changes to street directionality.

Specifically, this analysis concluded that:

- The average width of the one-way streets in the study area at 58 feet is more than adequate to add bicycle lanes and widen the sidewalks while maintaining two lanes of travel. Two-way streets with two lanes, curb parking and bicycle lanes on both sides of the street may make it difficult to significantly widen sidewalks for pedestrians.
- The short block lengths and the relatively short traffic signal times are beneficial for both pedestrians as well as motorists.
- The one-way street configuration provides many benefits to pedestrians including shorter traffic

signal cycle lengths, reduced crossing distances, and fewer traffic conflicts at crosswalks.

- The one-way street configuration also provides some benefits to bicyclists because these streets could more easily accommodate bicycle lanes.
- Two-way streets are perceived as less confusing to motorists and provide benefits to bicyclists because they cut down on travel time.
- Utilizing traffic calming measures such as narrowing the streets, timing the signals accurately, widening sidewalks and adding bulb outs will mitigate against high speed traffic on one-way streets.
- The cost of converting one-way to two-way streets may be prohibitive compared to the advantages afforded by the current street network.

Future planning efforts should consider implementation of a variety of streetscape improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transit users, especially if infill development opportunities are also explored. Infill development could both increase activity in the vicinity of the Lake Merritt BART Station as well as serve as a funding source for such improvements. Though additional analysis of traffic impacts will be necessary, especially due to potential future development near the station and elsewhere in the City of Oakland, this study indicates that opportunities do exist for significant improvements to local streets. Most important will be the pursuit of these improvements concurrently with other opportunities to reduce local and regional traffic by increasing accessibility via other modes of travel.

CONCLUSIONS

Much change is already underway near the Lake Merritt BART Station, including new high-density residential development along the Oakland Waterfront and access improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists along East 12th Street. The recent decision by BART to consider dismantling its Administration Building above the station may present an exciting opportunity in the future to redevelop the site, along with the adjacent park and parking lot, to achieve multiple goals for the station area. New infill development on public land could:

- Provide new housing near the station, which will generate BART ridership, mitigate potential traffic impacts of population growth, and support local-serving retail;
- Improve open space;
- Improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety and access to the station and within the surrounding area; and
- Generate revenue for BART through the leasing of land above the station.

A key focus of future planning efforts should be to improve both pedestrian and bicycle access to the station area. It was noted earlier that more than half of current BART passengers walk to the station despite the lack of amenities for pedestrians and, in some cases, clear barriers to access. In addition, BART riders are three times more likely to access the Lake Merritt by bicycle than those systemwide, despite the absence of bicycle lanes and the high demand for bicycle facilities at the station. Relatively minor pedestrian and bicycle improvements at the station and within the station area could greatly increase the numbers of riders accessing the station by modes other than single occupant vehicles.

New development and streetscape improvements could also combine to develop a stronger identity and urban cohesion for the area surrounding the Lake Merritt BART Station, one which contains a rich diversity of residents, land uses, public open space, and key civic institutions.

APPENDIX A: ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Prepared by Bay Area Economics July 2005

KEY FINDINGS

BAE prepared a demographic analysis as well as a real estate market overview for a Local Market Area within the one-half mile radius from the Lake Merritt BART Station. Key findings include:

- There were an estimated 10,861 persons in the Local Market Area in 2004, living in 6,002 households, with an average household size of 1.8 persons.
- The local area population differs considerably from the City of Oakland as a whole, with much lower annual median income, estimated at $24,500 in 2004.
- There are far fewer family households at only 37 percent in the Local Market Area, with an even lower rate of homeownership at 15 percent of all households.
- There are many more seniors than the City, comprising 25 percent of the population in the Local Market Area, while there are considerably fewer children, at 11 percent.
- Only a limited number of current residents will be able to afford new market-rate development in the area. There may be a significant displacement risk for existing residents.
- The market for new for-sale residential development in nearby areas is booming, and now spilling over into the Local Market Area. Assembling large enough sites for new projects is likely to be more of a constraint on development than market conditions.
- Demand for new rental residential development is softer, but likely to strengthen in the medium-term as rents in nearby Jack London Square and Lake Merritt areas increase.
- Office demand is likely to be more oriented towards public agencies and single tenant buildings. This area will likely remain a secondary office submarket in Oakland.
- Retail is very challenging because of area demographics, with only a limited amount of

additional potential for retail even as new development occurs.

- Alameda County is interested in expanding its office footprint and acquiring property in the area, but is constrained by its fiscal situation. Laney College's plans are unknown.

The following pages provide additional explanation and supporting tables for these findings.

PURPOSE

This market overview was prepared for the Lake Merritt BART Vision, which seeks to engage the community surrounding the BART station, the City of Oakland, Laney College, and other stakeholders in identifying opportunities for further Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in the area. This market overview presents background information on the population demographics of the immediate area as well as current real estate market conditions, and discusses potential near- and long-term development opportunities. It is intended to inform the public charrette workshops as well as ongoing planning efforts.

A market overview provides summary information on current market conditions, however, it does not provide the quantified demand estimate that is part of a more extensive market feasibility study. Future work by BAE, following the public charette, will analyze the financial feasibility of prototype projects that meet community and City goals, to determine potential returns and the extent, if any, to which public assistance may be needed for certain types of projects to occur.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The demographic characteristics of the local market area were analyzed because it typically represents the primary source of purchasers and renters for new residential development, as well as customers for new retail uses. It can also help identify housing and other needs that may not be met by typical market-rate development.

Local Market Area

For this analysis, the Local Market Area was defined as the area approximately within a one-half mile radius of the Lake Merritt BART station as shown in *Figure 1*.

Figure 1: Local Market Area

The one-half mile radius extends approximately to Broadway and downtown Oakland on the West, 17th Street and Lake Merritt to the north, beyond Laney College to 4th Avenue in the Eastlake area, and south to the Estuary. Census data is available down to the Census block level. BAE selected those Census blocks that best match the one-half mile radius, as shown in the shaded area. This means that the data for the Local Market area extends to approximately 20th Street on the north and Jefferson Street to the west, while a small portion of the Eastlake area is left out.

Demographic data for the Local Market Area for 1990 and 2000 was compiled from the U.S. Census, while 2004 projections using the same geography were obtained from Claritas, a private data provider. This data was then compared with data for the entire City of Oakland as well as Alameda County in order to provide a basis for comparison.

Population and Household Characteristics

Table 1 (all tables are appended to this memorandum) shows that the Local Market Area in 2004 is projected to have had 10,861 persons living in 6,002 households, for an average household size of 1.8 persons (compared to an average household size for the City of Oakland of 2.6 persons and Alameda County of 2.7 persons).

The average annual population growth from 2000 to 2004 is projected to be 1.9 percent per year, a relatively high rate of growth (compared to the 0.3 percent rate for the City and 0.7 percent rate for the County).

The Local Market Area is striking for the relatively small proportion of family households that it contains, at 37 percent (compared to 57 percent for the City and 64 percent for the County). Homeownership rates in 2000, the most recent year with available data, was very low in the Local Market Area, at only 15 percent (compared to 41 percent for the City and 65 percent for the County).

Another striking aspect of the Local Market Area is its age distribution, as shown in Table 2. Nearly 25 percent

of its population is 65 years or older (compared to 11 percent for the City and 10 percent for the County. Conversely, less than 11 percent of the Local Market Area's population is less than 18 years of age (compared to 25 percent in both the City and County). The distribution of other age ranges in the Local Market Area is similar to the City and County, including 18 to 24 years, suggesting that there is no clustering of Laney College students within the area adjacent to the school.

Income Distribution

Projected 2004 annual median household income in the Local Market Area was very low at $24,500 (compared to $44,400 for the City and $64,800 for the County), as shown in Table 3. While smaller households in the Local Market Area will result in lower household incomes, even for a one-person household this figure is less than 50 percent of Area Median Income for Oakland in 2004. The large proportion of seniors in the area may also be a factor in lower household incomes.

The distribution of incomes in the area is also skewed to the lower end of the range. For example, the 50 percent AMI (very low income) figure in 2004 for Oakland for a two-person household (median household size in the Local Market Area is 1.8 persons) is $33,100. Although the nearest Census category for households income goes to $35,000 the income distribution suggests that somewhat near two-thirds of the households in the Local Market Area fall into the very low income category (compared to under 40 percent for the City and likely less than one-quarter for the County).

Educational Attainment and Occupations

Educational attainment, as measured by possession of an AA degree or higher as shown in Table 4, is slightly less than 34 percent in the Local Market Area (compared to 36 percent for the City and 42 percent for the County). There are more residents in the Local Market Area working in sales and service occupations at nearly 48 percent (compared to 41 percent for the City and 38 percent for the County) as shown in Table 5, while there are fewer residents in management, business, and professional occupations at nearly 35 percent (compared to 39 percent for the City and 42 percent for the County). Although the Local Market Area lags the City and County on these measures, this is not enough to explain the wide discrepancy in incomes.

Conclusions from Demographic Analysis

The Local Market Area in the approximately one-half mile radius around the Lake Merritt BART station, is quite different from the City of Oakland as a whole. It has smaller households that mostly consist of unrelated individuals, many more senior citizens, many fewer children, relatively few homeowners, and considerably lower income levels. Interestingly its population is not nearly as distinct in terms of educational attainment and occupations.

This demographic profile means that a very small proportion of current Local Market Area residents would be able to purchase new market-rate housing in the area. More than half would likely be unable to afford even new market-rate rental housing. Residents for new market-rate residential units will largely come from outside the area. The current low area incomes will make it very difficult to attract retailers to this area until there is a significant rise in incomes or population density. The combination of low rates of homeownership and low incomes means that potential conversion of existing rental housing to for-sale units could result in significant displacement of existing residents.

REAL ESTATE MARKET CONDITIONS

The Local Market Area as shown in Figure 1 is also an appropriate unit for evaluating development activity and the types of new product that would be most competitive in the Lake Merritt BART station area. Jack London Square to the south, Downtown to the west, and the Lake Merritt / Grand Avenue area to the north have proven to be strong new markets, particularly for for-sale multifamily residential. New development in an emerging Lake Merritt BART area will need to position itself relative to these areas in order to be competitive.

For-Sale Residential

Only multifamily for-sale residential units were studied as an appropriate TOD product type. Table 7 summarizes data from the FARES data service for recorded condominium unit sales in the Local Market Area from May 2004 through May 2005, with a total of

143 full and verified sales with a median sale price of $425,000. The average sale price per square foot ranged from $424 for one-bedroom units, to $387 for two-bedroom units, and $367 per square foot for three-bedroom units.

The Local Market Area, as well as the adjacent Jack London Square and Downtown areas are undergoing a housing boom, concurrent with an extremely strong regional market for all types of new for-sale residential units. Selected comparable recently completed and currently selling projects are shown in Table 8. Most recently, the Chinatown area at the western edge of the Local Market Area has demonstrated strong market interest. Franklin 88, an 88-unit mixed use project that includes 7,000 square feet of ground floor retail, had a 1,000 person waiting list before selling out at its opening, with one-bedroom units starting at $289,000 and two-bedroom units at $480,000. Another project in the Local Market Area is Jackson Courtyard, a 45-unit project that is under construction at Jackson and 14th Streets, projects selling prices for one-bedroom units at $275,000 and two-bedroom units at $400,000.

Another emerging location is the Uptown area, north of Downtown, that has been a focus of City efforts as part of its 10K program to attract 10,000 new residents and 6,000 new housing units to the central city area of Oakland. The Telegraph Gateway project at 24th Street and Telegraph Avenues is a 45-unit project entirely consisting of studios and 1-bedroom units, with 1-bedroom units starting at $270,000 and up.

Projects in more established nearby areas are achieving higher sale prices. Market Square at 8th and Clay Streets is a 202 unit project that recently sold out, with studios at $295,000; one-bedroom units at $380,000 and up; and two-bedrooms at $490,000 to $579,000. Sale prices are even higher at Jack London Square, although much of the product in that area is loft-style units that are larger and more expensive than condominiums, and not necessarily comparable to what would be built in the Lake Merritt area.

Information from the City of Oakland indicates that in the Local Market Area as many as 300+ units of market-rate and below-market rate housing are in the development pipeline. Based on current market activity

and the demonstrated ability of nearby existing individual projects to sell 15 to 20 units or more per month, this supply will be rapidly absorbed. There is strong potential in the Local Market Area for a significant number of new for-sale residential units, with one-bedroom sale prices for market-rate units likely to move into the low $300,000 range and for two-bedroom units into the low to mid-$400,000 range.

Rental Residential

While the market for new market-rate rental residential units has been soft in the Bay Area (and most of the U.S.), Oakland has experienced new rental residential development over the last several years, unlike most of the Bay Area, with most of this activity concentrated at the Jack London Square area, and targeted to the higher end of the market.

Table 9 provides information on selected comparable rental projects. While most of these are in the Jack London Square Area, the Regency Towers is at the east end of the Local Market Area. It was purchased by the Essex Property Trust REIT, who also developed the Essex high-rise on Lake Merritt. The comparables show that these rental properties are able to generate rents of $1.60 per square foot to $2.00 per square foot per month or more and operate at low vacancy rates.

As rental rates increase for newly developed units, developer interest will be stimulated. Most of this interest will likely be directed at Jack London Square, perceived as a hip new urban environment with entertainment options that is attractive to upscale renters. Locations near or within the Local Market Area where it is possible to build high enough to get substantial Bay and San Francisco views will be desirable, such as Essex Property Trust's newly announced 22-story rental project at 100 Grand Avenue near Lake Merritt. Other sites within the Local Market Area are likely to see new market-rate residential development once rental rates increase enough for projects to cover the cost of development while still being priced less than Jack London Square or adjacent to Lake Merritt areas. This is likely to occur over the medium-term in the next several years.

Office

Oakland's office market continues to improve as rental rates increase and vacancy rates decrease. Based on First Quarter 2005 data from Cushman & Wakefield, the overall vacancy rate for Oakland office space continued to decline and finished the quarter at 18.4 percent.

The downtown Oakland office market absorbed 107,221 square feet of office space, according to BT Commercial Real Estate's Fourth Quarter 2004 data, while vacant rates ended at 17 percent and average asking rents at $1.95 per square foot per month, full service gross. This same source reported that the Lake Merritt submarket's vacancy rate was 11 percent and the average rental rate was $1.84 per square foot per month, full service gross. Table 10 presents information on selected office buildings near the Local Market Area, showing rental rates that are primarily in the range of $2.00 to $2.50 per square foot per month, full service gross. New office development is not financially feasible at these rental rates, particularly if it requires structured parking. This explains the low level of new office development in recent years, aside from single-user buildings.

As demand for space increases, Oakland may experience constraints on new supply. CB Richard Ellis' First Quarter 2005 Office MarketView notes that land once entitled for office use has been shifted to residential development due to the strength of that market, and many of downtown Oakland's parking lots have been purchased by residential developers.

The Local Market Area's location on the periphery of Oakland's two main office submarkets, Downtown and Lake Merritt, means that it is likely to remain a secondary location for new privately built speculative office development. Development potential is likelier to occur in the medium-term in the next several years.

Retail

Previous retail market studies conducted for the City have noted a substantial retail leakage of spending by Oakland residents into nearby communities, particularly for comparison goods that are primarily sold at more regional-serving location. The primary clusters of retail within the Local Market Area are in Chinatown, and nearby in Old Oakland and City Center serving those

areas. A regional entertainment and dining retail cluster has emerged in the Jack London Square area.

Aside from Chinatown, which is its own retail submarket, there is a relatively modest amount of retail in the Local Market Area. The available space is mostly occupied, with few vacancies. Table 11 provides information on comparable retail properties in surrounding areas. Retail rents that are not on the primary commercial corridors appear to be in the $2.00 to $2.50 per square foot per month range, triple net.

The Local Market Area has neither the regional visibility nor location for larger scale projects such as the Jack London Square area or the Coliseum area, and is therefore unlikely to attract retailers of comparison goods that draw from a large trade area.

As noted in the previous section on demographics, the current population and its household income level will interest few retailers, aside from those that can draw from a much larger area, or serve local workers, including BART commuters. This is unlikely to change until there is a significant addition of population to the Local Market Area and/or a change in the composition of its residents.

As new types of mixed-use development occur around the Lake Merritt BART station, a small amount of convenience-oriented and service ground floor retail can be supported that is oriented towards BART patrons and new residents. It is likely, however, that retail will continue to be challenging in the near- and medium terms.

INSTITUTIONAL USES

Alameda County

Alameda County owns a number of buildings in the Local Market Area, concentrated in the area between 12th and 14 Streets and Jackson Street and Lake Merritt. The County began to formulate a Master Plan for its properties in the area, however due to budget issues that planning effort was set aside. The County's long-term goal is to own its property rather than continuing to lease office space.

The County is interesting in purchasing the parking lot that is across from the downtown Post Office (the block bounded by 13th, Alice, 14th, and Jackson Streets) and/or the old Wells Fargo building at Madison and 12th Streets. This would allow it to site a new parking facility that would permit removal of the circular parking structure at 12th and Madison Streets and its replacement with new office space. The owner of this block across from the Post Office is currently unwilling to sell because he would like to develop the property for residential use.

The State of California is taking over county court facilities, and Alameda County desires the State to assume ownership over 100 percent of its courts, however it acknowledges that the State is unlikely to do so because of seismic retrofit costs. The historic courthouse on Oak Street will most likely be taken over by the State, even though it requires a seismic retrofit, and will continue in its current use as a courthouse.

Laney College

Laney College occupies a large site in the Local Market Area, between 7th and 10th Streets and across Fallon Street from BART's Lake Merritt station parking lot. The College has been considering opportunities for public/private partnerships that might allow a developer to construct facilities the College needs at no cost to it, in return for the right to develop on a portion of its lands. This type of development has the potential to be dense and TOD-supportive. The College is currently evaluating how to proceed, and a detailed development program has not been publicly announced.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Market-Rate

Based on market conditions, there is currently substantial potential for new market-rate for-sale residential development in the Local Market Area. This product is most likely to take the form of residential over podium parking, with some potential for mid-rise development of up to six to eight stories if zoning permits. A limited number of even taller buildings may be possible at sites that permit direct access to Lake Merritt, or extensive Bay and San Francisco views.

The bigger challenge to new for-sale residential development will be site assembly. Although a detailed site inventory has not been undertaken, conversations with City staff confirm that for the most part ownership patterns in the Local Market Area are fragmented, with numerous small parcels. Developers are generally unwilling to undertake land assembly because of the risks and effort involved, which means that this may constrain the amount of new residential development that can occur more than market conditions. The City may be able to mitigate this by working to assemble parcels.

The owner of the full block across the street from the downtown Post Office is interested in residential development, and this site likely represents the single biggest project that could be developed in the near term in the Local Market Area, excluding the Jack London Square area.

New market-rate rental residential has more potential in the medium-term, particularly as the market strengthens.

Office development is most likely to occur by public agencies, such as expansion of County offices, or single-user owner-occupants. Retail will continue to be a challenge, with only a limited amount possible as ground floor uses, even as new residential development comes online.

Below Market-Rate

Although a study of housing need in the Local Market Area is beyond the scope of this effort, given the demographic profile of the area and current market-rate rents, there is likely substantial unmet demand for affordable housing for area residents.

The Local Market Area lies within a redevelopment project area, which means that 15 percent of new housing developed there must include below-market rate units (30 percent for projects supported by the City's Redevelopment Agency). Redevelopment housing set-aside funds (20 percent of the increase in property taxes from new development collected by the Agency) are pooled by the City and awarded to affordable housing developments through periodic Notices of Funding Availability.

The extent to which existing rental buildings can be converted to ownership units, an assessment that is not part of this market overview, will determine the likely risk and amount of displacement that may occur as development increases in the Local Market. Measures to reduce the potential for such displacement should be considered during the vision planning.

Table 1: Lake Merrit Area Population and Household Trends, 1990-2000

Local Market Area (a)	1990	2000	Average Annual Change 1990-2000	2004	Average Annual Change 2000-2004
Population	8,869	10,090	1.3%	10,861	1.9%
Households	5,043	5,708	1.2%	6,002	1.3%
Average Household Size	1.70	1.74	0.2%	1.79	0.7%
Household Type					
Families	31.6%	35.0%	1.0%	36.5%	1.1%
Non-Families	68.4%	65.0%	-0.5%	63.5%	-0.6%
Tenure					
Owner	11.2%	14.9%		N/A	
Renter	88.8%	85.1%		N/A	
City of Oakland					
Population	372,242	399,484	0.7%	404,344	0.3%
Households	144,521	150,790	0.4%	152,164	0.2%
Average Household Size	2.52	2.60	0.3%	2.62	0.2%
Household Type					
Families	58.0%	57.3%	-0.1%	56.9%	-0.2%
Non-Families	42.0%	42.7%	0.2%	43.1%	0.2%
Tenure					
Owner	41.6%	41.4%		N/A	
Renter	58.4%	58.6%		N/A	
Alameda County					
Population	1,279,182	1,443,741	1.2%	1,487,301	0.7%
Households	479,518	523,366	0.9%	536,281	0.6%
Average Household Size	2.59	2.71	0.5%	2.73	0.2%
Household Type					
Families	64.4%	64.8%	0.1%	64.4%	-0.2%
Non-Families	35.6%	35.2%	-0.1%	35.6%	0.3%
Tenure					
Owner	53.3%	54.7%		N/A	
Renter	46.7%	45.3%		N/A	

Notes:
(a) Local Market Area consists of Census block groups intersecting a 1 mile radius around the Lake Merritt BART station

Sources: 1990, 2000 U.S. Census; BAE, 2005.

Table 2: Lake Merritt Area Age Distribution, 2000

Age	Local Trade Area (a) Number	Local Trade Area (a) Percent of Total	City of Oakland Number	City of Oakland Percent of Total	Alameda County Number	Alameda County Percent of Total
Under 18	1,081	10.7%	99,759	25.0%	354,572	24.6%
18-24	883	8.8%	38,791	9.7%	138,416	9.6%
25-34	1,748	17.3%	72,315	18.1%	241,073	16.7%
35-44	1,523	15.1%	63,310	15.8%	248,706	17.2%
45-54	1,375	13.6%	53,865	13.5%	200,518	13.9%
55-64	887	8.8%	29,656	7.4%	112,865	7.8%
65+	2,593	25.7%	41,788	10.5%	147,591	10.2%
Total	10,090	100%	399,484	100%	1,443,741	100%
Median Age			**33.3**			

Notes:
(a) Local Market Area consists of Census block groups intersecting a 1 mile radius around the Lake Merritt BART station

Sources: 2000 US Census; Bay Area Economics, 2005.

Table 3: Lake Merritt Area Household Income Distribution, 2004

	Local Trade Area (a)		City of Oakland		Alameda County	
Estimated Income	**Number**	**Percent of Total**	**Number**	**Percent of Total**	**Number**	**Percent of Total**
Less than $15,000	2,198	36.6%	27,817	18.3%	59,830	11.2%
$15,000 to $24,999	849	14.1%	16,306	10.7%	40,358	7.5%
$25,000 to $34,999	882	14.7%	17,263	11.3%	45,230	8.4%
$35,000 to $49,999	843	14.0%	22,025	14.5%	65,385	12.2%
$50,000 to $74,999	668	11.1%	25,040	16.5%	96,591	18.0%
$75,000 to $99,999	278	4.6%	16,168	10.6%	76,514	14.3%
$100,000 to $149,999	214	3.6%	14,841	9.8%	82,252	15.3%
$150,000 to $249,999	47	0.8%	8,882	5.8%	51,454	9.6%
$250,000 to $499,999	21	0.3%	2,616	1.7%	13,154	2.5%
$500,000 and over	2	0.0%	1,206	0.8%	5,513	1.0%
Total	6,002	100%	152,164	100%	536,281	100%
Median Household Income	**$24,453**		**$44,368**		**$64,840**	

Notes:
(a) Local Market Area consists of Census block groups intersecting a 1 mile radius around the Lake Merritt BART station

Sources: Claritas, 2005; BAE, 2005.

Table 4: Lake Merritt Area Educational Attainment for Population 25+ Years of Age, 2000

	Local Trade Area (a)		City of Oakland		Alameda County	
Education Level	**Number**	**Percent of Total**	**Number**	**Percent of Total**	**Number**	**Percent of Total**
Less than 9th Grade	1,505	18.8%	34,762	13.3%	76,513	8.0%
9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma	997	12.4%	33,335	12.8%	91,768	9.6%
High School Graduate	1,289	16.1%	46,164	17.7%	181,668	19.0%
Some College, No Degree	1,524	19.0%	51,942	19.9%	206,013	21.6%
Associate Degree	565	7.0%	14,422	5.5%	64,800	6.8%
Bachelor's Degree	1,428	17.8%	47,077	18.0%	202,586	21.2%
Graduate or Prof. Degree	707	8.8%	33,700	12.9%	130,368	13.7%
Total	8,015	100%	261,402	100%	953,716	100%

Notes:

(a) Local Market Area consists of Census block groups intersecting a 1/2 mile radius around the Lake Merritt BART station

Sources: 2000 U.S. Census; BAE, 2005.

Table 5: Lake Merritt Area Residents by Occupation, 2000

Occupation	Local Trade Area (a)		City of Oakland		Alameda County	
	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total
Management occupations, except farmers and farm managers	327	7.4%	16,126	9.2%	75,005	10.8%
Farmers and farm managers	0	0.0%	29	0.0%	213	0.0%
Business and financial operations occupations	261	5.9%	8,631	4.9%	37,758	5.4%
Professional and related occupations	939	21.2%	43,679	25.0%	180,336	26.0%
Service occupations	843	19.1%	27,570	15.8%	82,773	11.9%
Sales and office occupations	1,269	28.7%	43,913	25.1%	182,205	26.3%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	15	0.3%	338	0.2%	1,065	0.2%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	173	3.9%	12,885	7.4%	51,816	7.5%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	597	13.5%	21,572	12.3%	81,662	11.8%
Total	4,424	100%	174,743	100%	692,833	100%

Notes:
(a) Local Market Area consists of Census block groups intersecting a 1 mile radius around the Lake Merritt BART station

Sources: 2000 U.S. Census; BAE, 2005.

Table 7: Lake Merritt Condominium Sales in Local Market Area, May 2004 through May 2005(a)

	ALL UNITS (b)	ALL UNITS	ONE BEDROOM	TWO BEDROOM	THREE BEDROOM
	Number of Units	% of Total	Number of Units	Number of Units	Number of Units
Less than $299,999	29	20.3%	23	1	-
$300,000 to $349,999	6	4.2%	5	1	-
$350,000 to $399,999	25	17.5%	16	9	-
$400,000 to $449,999	32	22.4%	24	7	-
$450,000 to $499,999	12	8.4%	7	3	-
$500,000 to $549,999	17	11.9%	-	17	-
$550,000 to $599,999	10	7.0%	-	9	1
$600,000 to $649,999	10	7.0%	1	8	1
$650,000 to $699,999	2	1.4%	-	1	1
$700,000 +	-	0.0%	-	-	-
Total	143	100%	76	56	3
Median Sale Price	**$425,000**		**$389,000**	**$519,000**	**$610,500**
Average Sale Price	**$421,416**		**$362,743**	**$505,330**	**$606,833**
Avg. Square Feet (c)	**1,050**		**856**	**1,319**	**1,737**
Avg. Price per SF (c)	**$410**		**$424**	**$387**	**$367**

Notes:
(a) Represents all full and verified condominium sales in Local Market Area from May 3, 2004 to May 11, 2005
(b) Totals will not add due to lack of bedroom count data for 8 out of 143 total records.
(c) Does not include records for which information on square footage was unavailable.

Sources: First American Real Estate Solutions, 2005; Bay Area Economics, 2005

Table 8: Lake Merritt Comparable Current Projects

Project Name & Location	Project Type	Sales Began	Unit Mix	Square Feet	Asking Price	Price per SF	Monthly Absorption (a)	Amenities/Comments
Market Square	condos	Oct-04	studios	547	$295,000	$513	20	Landscaped courtyard, rooftop sun
801-27 Clay Street			1BR / 1BA	602 - 970	$379,800 - $398,800			steamroom, business center with c
			2BR / 2BA	993 - 1247	$489,800 - $578,800			key building access. Currently sold
			202 Total Units					
The Essex	condos	Oct-04	studio	640 - 670	$200,000	n/a	40	24 hour attended lobby, full service
on Lake Merritt			1BR / 1BA	700 - 800		n/a		spa, clubhouse, business center, c
One Lakeside Drive			2BR / 1BA	1000 - 1350		n/a		underground parking, "extraordinar
			lofts	1,000		n/a		cable/satellite tv, high speed intern
			penthouses	1350 - 1550	$1,000,000	n/a		out May 2005
			270 Total Units					
Telegraph Gateway	condos	May-04	1 - studio	599	$240,000	$401	45	Mixed use five story development v
24th St & Telegraph Ave			2 - studios	534 - 627	$245,000 - $268,000	n/a		neighborhood serving retail on the
			3 - 1BR / 1BA	628	$280,000 - $295,000	n/a		parking spaces within parking struc
			17 - 1BR+ / 1BA	645	$270,000 - $315,000	n/a		
			7 - 1BR+ / 1BA	838 - 880	$330,000 - $360,000	n/a		
			8 - 1BR+ / 1BA	923 - 933	$335,000 - $375,000	n/a		
			45 Total Units					
Franklin 88	condos	Sep-04	40 - 1BR / 1BA	533	$289,000 - $351,000	n/a	15	7,000sf ground floor retail, parking
900 Broadway			24 - 1BR / 1BA	612 - 642	$305,000 - $365,000	n/a		landscaped courtyard, high ceilings
			8 - 2 BR/ 2BA	920 or 926	$490,000 - $549,000	n/a		appliances, washer and dryers in e
			8 - 2BR / 2BA	976	$480,000 - $530,000	n/a		sold out in 2005.
			4 - 2BR / 2BA	1,119	$610,000 - $630,000	n/a		
			4 - 2BR / 2BA	1,560	$541,000 - $600,000	n/a		
			88 Total Units					
Jackson Courtyard	Condos	Jul-05	22 - 1BR / 1BA	600 -935	$275,000	n/a	n/a	Landscaped courtyard, granite kitcl
Condominiums			23 - 2BR / 1 or 2BA	789 -1000	$400,000	n/a		parking garage, fitness center, con
Jackson and 14th Street			**45 Total Units**					will be completed 11/05. Preselling July 2005. There is currently a wait

Notes:
(a) Absorption/Month calculated in May 2005

Sources: BAE, 2005.

Table 9: Lake Merritt Comparable Rental Properties

Project Name & Location	Project Type	Building Opened	Unit Mix	Square Feet	Monthly Rent	Price per Sq. Ft.	Vacancy Rate	Parking
Allegro at	Market Rate	2001	1BR / 1BA	1,126	$1,800	$1.60	4%	underground
Jack London Square	Apartments		1BR / 1BA	624	$1,295	$2.08		parking
240 3rd Street			1BR / 1BA	878	$1,575	$1.79		
			2BR / 2BA	1,126	$1,850	$1.64		
			2 BR / 2BA	1,079	$1,795	$1.66		
			310 Total Units					
The Landing - Legacy	Market Rate	2001	studios	553	$1,230 - $1,360	n/a	n/a	
99 Embarcadero	Apartments		1BR / 1BA	771	$1,395 - $1,850	n/a		
			2BR / 2BA	1,077	$1,595 - $2,150	n/a		
			2BR / 2BA	1,052	$1,595 - $2,295	n/a		
			282 Total Units					
Regency Towers	Market Rate	1975	34 - 1BR / 1BA	800	$1295 - $1670	n/a	4%	paid, secure,
1130 Third Ave	Apartments		144 - 2BR / 1BA	1,033	$1415 - $1880	n/a		above ground
			178 Total Units					parking
								structure
1200 Lakeshore	Market Rate	1968	1BR / 1.5BA	965	$1,800	$1.87	1%	1st, 2nd, 3rd
	Apartments		2BR / 2BA	1,240	$1,950	$1.57		floors include
			2BR / 2BA	1,310	$2,100	$1.60		parking. Each
			2BR / 2BA	1,350	$2,150	$1.59		unit has one
			2BR / 2.5BA	1,265	$2,200	$1.74		space.
			2BR / 2.5BA	1,440	$2,450	$1.70		
			3BR / 2.5BA	1,700	$2,850	$1.68		
			172 Total Units					

Sources: First American Real Estate Solutions, 2005; BAE, 2005.

Table 10: Lake Merritt Office Space Comparables

Name & Address	Total Space	Available Space	Occupancy Rate	Monthly Lease Rates	Rent Type	Parking
Latham Square Building 1601 Telegraph	110,327	8,330	90%		NNN	paid, valet, on-site subterranean
Madison Square Professional Center 212 9th Street	40,000	15,000	n/a	$1.65		
Jackson Center One 1111 Jackson St	140,800	32,820	80%	$2.08	Gross	underground 70 spaces
Kaiser Center 300 Lakeside Drive	753,000	2,844		$2.15 - $2.35		
Lake Merritt Plaza 1999 Harrison St	461,063	55,826	90%	$1.50 - $2.50	Gross	paid parking structure

Source: BAE, 2005.

Table 11: Lake Merritt Comparable Retail Properties

Name & Addess	Year Built	Total Square Feet	Available Square Feet	Montly Lease Rate (NNN)	CAM Charges	Parking	Occupancy Rates	Anchors	Comments
Latham Square Building 1601 Telegraph	1927	110,327	3,732		$5.46/sf/yr	paid, valet underground	0%	n/a	Office 90% occupied
Old Oakland Washington & Broadway 8th & 10th streets	1868	200,000	15,000	$2/sf	$9.24 - $11.91	2 lots	80%	Starbucks, Smart & Final, Chicago Title, Air Lounge, Boxed Foods	
Lake Merritt Plaza 1999 Harrison St	1985	10645	2100	$2 - $2.50	--	1 parking space for each tenant	80%	Starbucks, Allstate Insurance, Sandwich Express	

Source: BAE, 2005.

APPENDIX B: LAKE MERRITT BART STATION PASSENGER SURVEY

Details:

Purpose	= to collect behavioral and demographic information about passengers boarding BART at the Lake Merritt station
Technique	= mostly interviewer administered intercept interviewing with some (very few) mail-back questionnaires
Sample size ("n")	= 894
Margin of error =	plus or minus 3.28% at the 95% confidence level
Field dates	= Wednesday May 25 and Thursday May 26, 2005
Interviewing hours	= 6:30am – 10:00 pm
Qualified respondent	= passengers boarding the train at BART's Lake Merritt Station
Non-qualified	= passengers under 13 years of age and passengers who are transferring from another BART train
Weighting	= By time period to reflect actual ridership.
Client	= Moore Iacofano Goltsman (MIG) Inc. Berkeley, CA./BART
Research company	= Corey, Canapary & Galanis, San Francisco, CA.

Findings:

- Seven in ten (71%) currently use BART three or more days a week.
- About half (53%) were coming from home.
- A majority (53%) indicate that they walked all the way in getting to the Lake Merritt station: Over one in four (28%) arrived by car and one in ten (11%) took transit.

	%	
Walked all the way ..	53	
Drove Alone …….	12	*> less than half (43%) of these parked in BART lot*
Carpool …….	4	
Dropped off by car …	12	
	28%	
Bus/Transit ……..	11	*> most (90%) of these took AC Transit*
Bicycle ……	6	*> most (71%) of these took bike on train*
Taxi …….	1	
Motorcycle …….	<1	
Skateboard ……..	<1	

- Over eight in ten (86%) came from Oakland before getting to BART.

Findings (continued):

- The work commute is the major trip purpose named by passengers boarding at the Lake Merritt station:

	%
Commute to/from work ……	52
School ……..	16
Other business …….	12
Visit friends/family ……..	5
Shopping ……...	3
Personal Business ……	2
Medical/Dental …….	1
Sports Event ……	1
Theater or Concert ……...	1
Restaurant ……	1
Recreation/Exercises ……	1
Airport ……...	1
Sightseeing ……..	<1
Other ……	<1

Demographics:

- The survey found an equal number of men and women.

	%
Male …….	50
Female …….	50
	100%

- Almost two-thirds of the passengers boarding at Lake Merritt are younger than forty.

Under 20 ……	7
20's ……	32
30's ……	25
40's ……	17
50's ……	12
60's or more ……..	6
No answer/refused ……	1
	100 %

- About six in ten classify themselves as minorities.

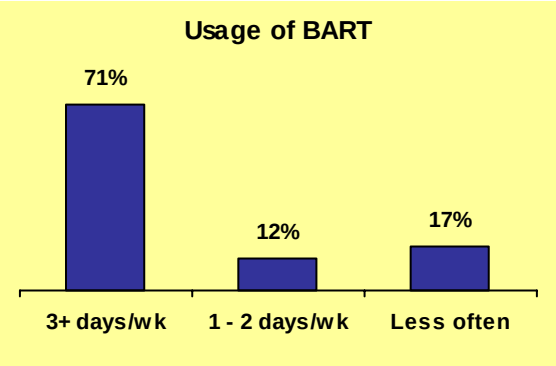
White …….	39
Black/African American ……	25
Asian/Pacific Islander ……	23
Spanish/Hispanic/Latino ……	9
Filipino/a ……	1 *
Native American or Eskimo ……..	1
Other ……..	3
No answer/refused ……	1

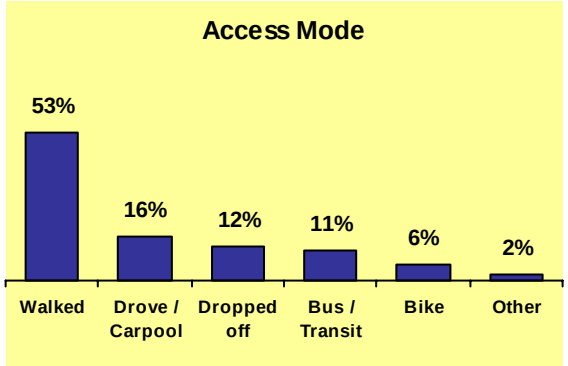
* The Asian/Pacific Islander category also includes passengers of Filipino descent by reason of self classification.

Lake Merritt – Charted Snapshot

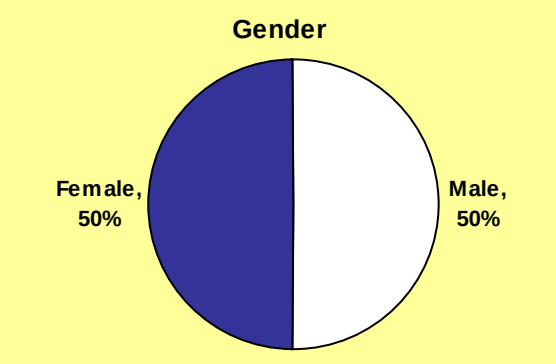
(Field Dates: May 25 – 26, 2005. Total Sample Size: 894)

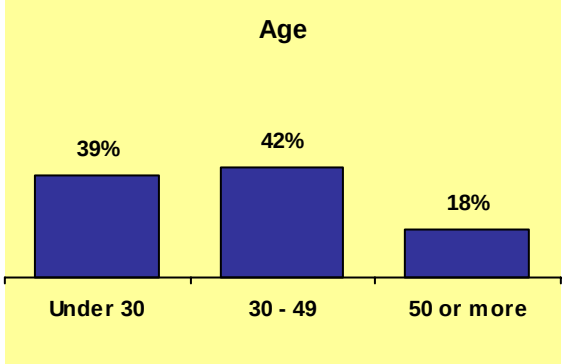
Usage and Access

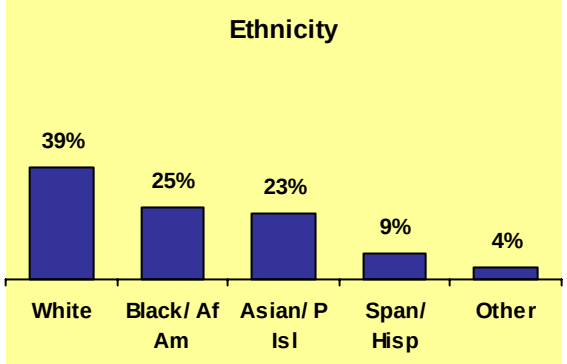




Demographics







APPENDIX C: EXISTING PLANS AND POLICIES

- **Loft District Development**: This new neighborhood south of the Lake Merritt station includes approximately 1,050 units if infill housing, hundreds of which are within walking distance of the station.
- **Oak to Ninth Development**: This proposed development includes over 3,000 residential units, 200,000 square feet of commercial space and 27 acres of open space along the waterfront, between Oak and 9th Streets.
- **Fleet Industrial Supply Center property**: This proposed development in the City of Alameda will include 500 residential units and 1,300,000 square feet of office space.
- **Alameda Point Property**: Another proposed development in Alameda, this will include 1,900 residential units and 4,000,000 square feet of office space.
- **City of Oakland General Plan**: The City actively promotes transit-oriented development around the station and residential growth in the Central/Chinatown areas. The plan envisions the area around the Lake Merritt station as a walkable, bicycle-friendly, educational, cultural, and institutional center near downtown with a strengthened identity and transportation linkages between the waterfront, City Center, Financial District, and BART.
- **Central City East Redevelopment Plan**: The Lake Merritt Station Area is included in the extreme northwestern tip of the Central City East Redevelopment Area. The Plan is a broad framework for redevelopment over the next 30 years. Its main intent is "to alleviate the physical and economic burdens caused by blighted conditions in the area." Implementation programs include property and infrastructure improvement programs, assistance in the redevelopment of specific properties, and provision of additional affordable housing opportunities.
- **Lake Merritt Park Master Plan**: This plan highlights the park's role as Oakland's central park. The plan calls for the re-opening of the estuary and connections to an enhanced Channel Park, the replacement of 12th street with a more pedestrian- and bicycle- friendly "Lake Merritt Boulevard" to connect the areas surrounding the BART station with the lake and Clinton Park, and other enhancements.
- **Revive Chinatown Community Transportation Plan**: This plan aims to enhance the pedestrian, commercial, and transportation environments of Chinatown through pedestrian/traffic safety improvements, bilingual wayfinding signs, potential bike lanes, streetscape improvements, and traffic circulation improvements.
- **City of Oakland Estuary Policy Plan**: This plan proposes redevelopment from the 9th Street terminal to the mouth of the Lake Merritt Channel through a system of inter-connected open spaces connecting the shoreline to Lake Merritt, linked bike lanes and paths, entertainment and mixed uses extending from the waterfront to the city center, and the redesign of Broadway, Webster, and 5th Streets to promote clear, safe access.
- **City of Oakland Streetscape Master Plan**: This plan promotes significant changes to 9th and Webster Streets to decrease pedestrian-auto conflicts and increase safety throughout Chinatown. The plan also proposes to narrow Oak Street and add a bike lane while enhancing the street's function as a major gateway to BART, Oakland Museum and other cultural centers, Lake Merritt, and downtown.
- **City of Oakland Bicycle Master Plan**: This plan aims to increase linkages with transit centers and has funded or plans to fund a Lake Merritt Channel Path bikeway, Lakeshore Avenue bikeway (around the lake), Downtown Bikeways (on 7th, 8th, and Harrison Street/Oakland Ave to Oak/Madison), and increased secure bicycle parking at BART.

- **City of Oakland Pedestrian Master Plan**: This plan aims to support existing pedestrian activity. The Chinatown and Lake Merritt areas are designated "Pedestrian Districts" and the city is promoting "Safe Routes to Transit" by proposing designated pedestrian routes that radiate out from the BART station.
- **Alameda County Bicycle Plan**: Similar to the City of Oakland, this plan recommends increased bicycle parking or a bike station at Lake Merritt BART, and proposed an Oakland-Alameda spur route as a high priority project.
- **Lake Merritt BART Access Plan**: This recently-completed access study recommends support of the existing Lake Merritt Park and Revive Chinatown plans and recommends transit-oriented development around the station, a safe network of pedestrian and bicycle paths around the station and to new developments, enhanced station security, potential shuttle opportunities, enhanced drop-off areas, and plans to address the demolition of BART headquarters.

APPENDIX D: Focus Group Questionnaires and Responses

Focus Group Facilitation Guide – Vietnamese Residents and Employees (two focus groups)

Lake Merritt BART Station Area Community Vision Plan

For Questions 1-5, please take a hand tally, and record specific comments as well. Questions 6-11 are intended as starting points for more informal discussion.

1. In what areas do you live?
   Residents: 9th St and Madison, 11th St and Harrison, 7th St and Madison, Alice and 12th St

2. In what areas do you work?
   Employees: 8th and Franklin, 8th and Harrison, 9th and Franklin

3. How long have you lived near the Lake Merritt BART Station?
   - X Less than 1 year (one person)
   - X 1 year – 5 years (four people)
   - X 5 years – 10 years (five people)
   - X More than 10 years (two people)

4. How often do you use BART? How often do you use the Lake Merritt BART Station?
   - X Every day (1 person)
   - X Several days a week (1 person)
   - X Several days a month (3 people)
   - X Every once in awhile (3 people)

5. When you use the Lake Merritt BART Station, how do you get to/from the station?
   - X Walk all the way (6 people)
   - ❑ Bicycle
   - ❑ AC Transit
   - X Paratransit (2 people)
   - ❑ Drive myself
   - X Get a ride / take a Taxi (1 person)

6. How often do you use the Plaza above the Station? What kinds of activities do you do there? How could the Plaza be improved?

   Only a few used the Plaza above the station. Some used to go several times a week to do tai chi or just walk around, but they do not go anymore out of fear for safety. Most of the participants just pass the plaza since they usually walk by on the way to work.

7. How often do you use Madison Park? What kinds of activities do you do there? How could Madison Park be improved?
   **Rarely (5) **A few times/week (4) **Walking for exercise (5)
   **Never (2) **Almost everyday (1)

   Those who did use the park simply used it for walking around to get out of the house for fresh air.

8. How could the BART system and Lake Merritt station work better for you (e.g., more service on weekends, better lighting in station area, information in Chinese, etc.)?
   *All of the above
   *The BART Station at Lake Merritt should have much more parking space. Some do not use it often because they can't park there at any time.

9. How do you think the station could be better connected to the community (e.g., plaza area near entrances, destination information in station, better lighting at entrances, etc.)?

   *Most everybody felt that the neighborhood needed to be improved. People expressed the sentiment that if the neighborhood is improved, then the BART station could easily attract more people. Many felt that the entire neighborhood is currently "too shabby and poor" and feels very unsafe. Even simple things such as street cleaning would help.

   *Many also commented that better lighting was a priority as well as information and machines that display in the appropriate Asian languages both in the station and near the entrances.

   *Some commented that in order to make the neighborhood look better, the city should impose new regulations for neighborhood improvement. For instance, as one commented, "….the streets are dirty with all kinds of waste and trash, homeless people wander around or sleep or lie down even in broad daylight in Madison Park and along 8th Street." They commented that even neighbors in the area have front yards and fences that are not taken care of, and clothing is hung out in the front for everyone to see. It has a reputation of being a "bad" unsafe neighborhood, so people try to avoid walking around and drive instead.

10. In the future BART may consider high-density development above the station. What sort of development would you like to see? What is the tallest (that is, number of stories) building you would be willing to accept at the station area? Could the look, design, or bulk of a taller building make it more acceptable to you? And could the presence of certain uses (retail, community-services, etc.) make a taller building more acceptable to you? How could the development best be integrated and enhance the community surrounding the station?

    *Five participants mentioned that they a tall building up to five stories high (no higher) would be acceptable.
    *Five participants commented that it'd be important that the building be of mixed Asian architecture design, so that it would more easily connect with the Chinatown neighborhood.
    *Seven participants felt that retail offices are acceptable and should be included in any new development.
    *Ten felt that parking should be a priority.

11. One option that BART is considering is the elimination of the 100+ parking spaces in the lot across from Laney College. Would the lack of parking at the station affect you:

    X Not at all (1 person)

    X Some (5 people)

    X Very much (the rest of the participants—they commented that the BART parking spaces at Lake Merritt can't meet enough of the needs of its users. So many BART users have to give up taking the Lake Merritt BART because there is not enough parking.

12. What other improvements would you like to see to the area surrounding the station?

*more trees
*more decorations/banners on lamp posts
*lighting at night
*need to address the homeless population issue. The homeless are seen at the Lake Merritt Station all day long.

13. Any other comments?

Focus Group Facilitation Guide – Local Business Owners

Lake Merritt BART Station Area Community Vision Plan

For multiple-choice questions, please take a hand tally, and record comments as well. Other questions are intended as starting points for an informal discussion – please record key points made by individuals, and note whether there is general agreement or varying opinions within the group.

1. How long have you operated a business near Lake Merritt BART Station?

0	Less than 1 year	**4**	5 years – 10 years
2	1 year – 5 years	**7**	More than 10 years

2. What type of business do you operate?

1	Restaurant / Cafe	**0**	Auto repair
2	Retail	**2**	Property owners
8	Services (Laundry, Tailor, etc.)		

3. How many employees do you have?

13	Less than 5	**0**	25-100
0	5-25	**0**	More than 100

4. How do you and your employees usually get to your business?

1	Walk and/or bicycle	**1**	BART-Sometimes
1	Bus - AC Transit	**10**	Drive

5. Are your customers

7	Mostly local neighborhood
5	Some local, some regional (City of Oakland and Bay Area)
1	Mostly regional
0	From beyond the Bay Area

6. Do you feel that there is sufficient parking for your customers?

0	Yes	**11**	No
2	Sometimes.		

Please describe:

Sometimes:

- **Customers come in at different times throughout the day, and many choose to come during times that aren't busy (Floral shop)**

No:

- **There is a college nearby, and students take up all the parking spaces. As a result, BART users don't even have enough space to park, much less our customers. If street parking were eliminated, the condition would be even worse.**
- **Because of people dining out, Church services and the Flea Market, it takes up to 20 minutes to find parking even on the weekend.**
- **Homeowners of Franklin 801 (Zhong Shan building) have rented their own parking spaces, but park on the street as well.**
- **Many people abuse their handicap parking permit and park on the street for a whole day.**
- **Cars with a handicap permit sometimes occupy the 20-minute parking slots for the whole day, making the 20-minute zone meaningless. Participants have seen people with a handicap permit who were neither handicapped nor dropping off any handicapped people.**

7. One option that BART is considering is the elimination of the 100+ parking spaces in the BART lot across from Laney College. Would the lack of parking at the station affect you:

1 Not at all **(This business is located on 12th street.)**
3 Some
9 Very much

8. Would you be open to the idea of your employees and/or customers sharing parking with BART users? What time(s) of day do most of your employees and customers need parking?
No (13 participants). They need parking the whole day.

9. How often do you use BART? How often do you use the Lake Merritt BART Station?

❑ Every day	**7** Several days a month **(5 use the L.M. Station)**
❑ Several days a week	**6** Every once in awhile

10. To the best of your knowledge, do your customers and employees use the Lake Merritt BART Station?

5 Many use Lake Merritt Station	**4** Very few of them
2 Some of them	**2** Unknown

11. In the future BART may consider high-density development above the station. What sort of development would you like to see? What is the tallest (that is, number of stories) building you would be willing to accept at the station area? Could the look, design, or bulk of a taller building make it more acceptable to you? Could the presence of certain uses (retail, community-services, etc.) make a taller building more acceptable to you? How could new development help support your business?

They would like to see a mix-used development with underground garage or roof-top parking, including retail spaces.

Tallest building they would be willing to accept at the station area:

No more than 20 (voted by 12 participants)
Above 20 (voted by 1 participant)

Could the look, design, or bulk of a taller building make it more acceptable to you?
Does not matter: 3
Want to see the design first: 10

To make a taller building more acceptable, they would want to see 1) parking; 2) services related to school because there are schools nearby; 3) child-care center; 4) sport facility, spa; 5) open space; 6) cultural related things; 7) cinema; 8) entertainment; 9) something like the plaza in Emeryville.
The new development can help support their business by concentrating on public safety, including police station; adding more lightings; avoid any dark blind spots/ corners; and take care of the bus station problem because many homeless occupy chairs in the station.

12. What are your thoughts on Madison Park? How could it be improved?
Thoughts:
-A participant used the Lake Merritt BART Station a few months ago and found that there were many homeless people around Madison Park. Many of them stayed in the nearby bus shelter at night, which forced people waiting for the bus to stand outside.
-If there are new mix-use developments nearby, it would create a better environment by bringing in more residents, police sub-stations, a better environment, and less homeless.

-Homeless issues affecting the community should to be looked at closer, as it seems there is little being done currently. Homeless occupying the bus shelters are creating situations where people are beginning to demand a police presence. In addition, sanitation and lighting issues inside the station should be addressed.

13. Better pedestrian access and safety has been expressed as a key need in the neighborhood. Do you agree? What improvements would you, your employees, and your business like to see (e.g., wider sidewalks, better lighting, better crosswalks)?

    Agree: all participants
    Improvements they would like to see:
    -lighting: because some people got into accidents due to darkness
    -sidewalk is okay for now, unless there will be more people in the future
    -crosswalk: the countdown system is good, but we are hoping to see a longer signal light for seniors and a wider sidewalk for handicap people.

14. How else do you feel the Lake Merritt BART Station Area could better support your business?
    Develop apartment buildings that will bring more people to the city.
    Create a drop off point for drivers to avoid parking tickets, and also encourage people to come and shop.
    -Mobile restrooms to help sanitation on the street.

15. What other improvements would you like to see to the area surrounding the station?
    Public restrooms; patrol; security; more police; homeless problem to be looked into; lighting; beautifying; gardening; water fountain; open space area; Chairs and benches that are made strictly for sitting purposes only.

16. Any other comments?

More road signs in both Chinese and English, especially to where Chinatown is located, and other important areas; teach people how to get from point A to point B, promoting Chinatown at the same time, give directions, provide a shuttle to go around some major points of interest such as Chinatown, Jack London Square, Port of Oakland and bus stops, etc. (going circular)

-Create more parking spaces and promote BART station

-BART station should provide signs to show the closest exit to a designated area, example to Chinatown, Laney College, Oakland Museum, Jack London Square ,etc.

-Put a big electronic billboard ad next to Freeway

-Build a shopping center like the one in SF

-underground cross street to avoid traffic

-Give priority to the retail and businesses that are closest to BART

Lake Merritt BART Plaza Users Focus Group Summary

December 8, 2005
9:30-11:30 AM

A total of 20 BART Plaza Users were in attendance. The focus group was conducted in Cantonese.

1. What activities do you participate in at the Plaza?
   - Tai Chi (18 prs.)
   - Line-dancing (10 prs.)
   - Chinese Checkers, Mahjong, etc...
   - Chi Gong (5 prs.)
   - Other: (2 prs.)

Comments: On the weekend, there are 20-25 groups that conduct activities on the Lake Merritt BART plaza totaling to almost 200 people who participate in these activities. Activities range from Chi Gong, Tai Chi to Ballroom/Line Dancing, martial arts, Kung Fu, Dragon Dancing, and meditation. About 150 people participate in the Chi Gong and Tai Chi groups. About 90% of the participants are Chinese, however, there are other Asian ethnic groups that participate as well. A Sifu (master) travels once a month from Sacramento to lead a Kung Fu group. There are many different types of Tai Chi groups that participate. For example, there are Fan, Ball, Pole, and Sword Tai Chi groups. On the weekdays, the Falun Gong meditation group also uses the plaza. The plaza is also used for Moon Festival and Lunar New Year parties. In fact, there were some BART employees who donated food for the festival celebrations held on the BART plaza. People come from all over to be a part of this vibrant culture—there are people from Oregon, San Diego, and Hong Kong who visit and participate on a regular basis.

The BART Plaza activities started in 1978. Some of these folks have been utilizing the space for over 25 years!

2. What times of day do you use the Plaza?
   - Morning (20 prs.)
   - Mid-day (2 prs.)
   - Afternoon (1pr.)

Evening

Comments: The people who play Chinese Checkers and other games play in the late afternoon or late morning and on weekends.

3. How do you get there? From where do you come? (nearest intersection, if in Oakland)
   Walking (7 prs.)
   Bus (3 prs.)
   BART (5 prs.)
   Car (drive yourself or get a ride?) (11 prs.)

Comments: Some of the users combined different modes of transportation depending on the day of the week.

4. Why do you go to the Plaza instead of somewhere else, such as Madison Park?
   - Proximity and familiarity.
   - The plaza is clean, safe, and sunny. It can provide shelter from the rain.
   - Everyone goes there.
   - Madison Park is not big enough, it's not safe, no shelter available, it's not clean, and there are no bathrooms.
   - The BART plaza is an excellent location because of the environment and it has easy access to restroom facilities at MTC. The people who attend are great!! At Madison Park, there are a lot of homeless people, which deters us from wanting to go over there.
   - The BART plaza is a convenient place to meet and get together.
   - The BART plaza has a history-people know it's at the BART station and that it's for people to exercise and improve their health. It is really a social environment to meet other people, so people are familiar with the plaza and many have heard about the plaza from all over the United States.
   - The plaza is very convenient compared to the park because it's big enough and it's kept clean. We also help to maintain the cleanliness too! In fact, we help to take care of the plants there!
   - We are very use to having our activities at the BART plaza.
   - Most of the time, I have attended everyday for almost 18 years.
   - The plaza is a big space—enough for even more and more people to keep coming and getting together.
   - It's convenient for transportation and lots of people go there and feel safe. Lots of people go because of the nice people who attend.
   - Madison Park is not safe and too many homeless.
   - Madison Park is not flat.

5. What improvements would you suggest to make the Plaza better?
   Is there enough space?
   * Need large space or No (4 prs.)
   - Enough or Yes (11 prs.)
   - Don't know (5 prs.)

Do you like having multiple spaces, or would you prefer one larger space?

- One large space (
- Yes to both. (8 prs.)
- Does not matter

Comments: Good design for multiple spaces is important for the different groups who participate there. Need more space, more plants, electrical outlets would be nice to have.

Does the hard surface work well?

- Yes (19 prs.)

Are there enough places to sit?

- Yes (10 prs.)
- No (6 prs.)
- Have no opinion (4 prs.)

Would you prefer a different location?

- No (13 prs.)

Comments:

- It is important to be as close to the BART station as possible.
- Does not matter
- Maybe—as long as it's convenient, safe, and considered as an activity center.

What if Tai Chi was moved to Madison Park?

- I wouldn't go (6 prs.)
- Does not matter. (3 prs.)

Comments:

- I'd drop out after 14 years.
- I'd only move if the place had some cover and was flat.
- If they remodeled, then I might consider going there. The park would definitely need to be safer, cleaner, and have flatter land
- I'd go ONLY if the Park was redesigned and strictly dedicated to Tai Chi.
- Yes, I'd possibly go if multiple improvements were made.

6. How could Madison Park be improved?
   - If there was more concrete and flat land provided as well as shelter to provide coverage during the rain. Also, if the place was made more safe and provided restroom facilities (8 prs.)
   - Needs to be cleaner. (2 prs.)

   Other comments:

   - Madison Park should have both indoor and outdoor facilities in addition to restroom facilities.
   - The park could be redesigned to be a Tai Chi Park that could include opportunities for people to play badminton and ping pong. Right now, the community recreation center (Lincoln) has activities, but it's perceived more as a teenage center rather than a community center. It's also too small, so something new at Madison Park would be great!

7. Do you use BART? How often?
   - Yes, 6/7 times per year.(2 prs)

- Yes, My husband uses everyday. (1 prs)
- Yes, every day. (3 prs.)
- Twice a week.(2 prs)
- Yes, 2/3 times per week for going to S.F. airport. (1 prs)
- Yes, 1/2 times per day. (2 prs.)
- Yes, sometimes. (4 prs.)
- Yes, couple times per month. (1 prs)
- Yes, once in a blue moon. (3 prs.)
- No, I live close by (1 prs)

8. Do you use Lake Merritt BART Station? How often?
    - Yes, every morning. (7 prs.)
    - Yes, (2 prs.)
    - Sometimes. (2 prs.)
    - Yes, once a week. (2 prs.)
    - Yes, twice per day (1 prs.)
    - Yes, once to ten times per month (6 prs.)

9. How could BART be better connected with the local community?
    - If there were a better system of security at the Lake Merritt BART station, people would feel safer and would use it more often.
    - More security is needed particularly at night.
    - The staff and security should be able to speak different languages.
    - With all the different groups of participants that come use the BART plaza on a daily basis, it's almost 750 people that come for morning/afternoon exercise/games/etc. It would be great if BART would support a "Tai Chi Park". People already come from afar to the plaza to do Tai Chi—there's a lady from Oregon, another participants from San Diego, a Dentist from Ohio, and a PhD Psychobiologist who works out of the governor's office in South Carolina who came by. All these people come to the Plaza when possible. A Tai Chi Park might serve to put bring more people to Chinatown to shop as well.
    - We think having an indoor facility about 5,000 sq. feet to be used during bad weather would be ideal. The facility can be used for dancing, Tai Chi, Chi Gong, Lion dancing, Ping Pong, Chinese Chess, parties, performances. A further suggestion is that the facility be operated by Pacific Renaissance Plaza and used by local community groups.
    - BART can be connected by recognizing and supporting the community needs.
    - BART should realize that most of the Chinese people coming from different countries are use to public transportation to exercise, shop in Chinatown. People come from Fremont , Castro Valley, Albany, San Leandro. BART and the City of Oakland need to keep the current participating population coming here. If this BART Plaza group disappeared, Chinatown would lose people who come shopping regularly and the economy would decrease.