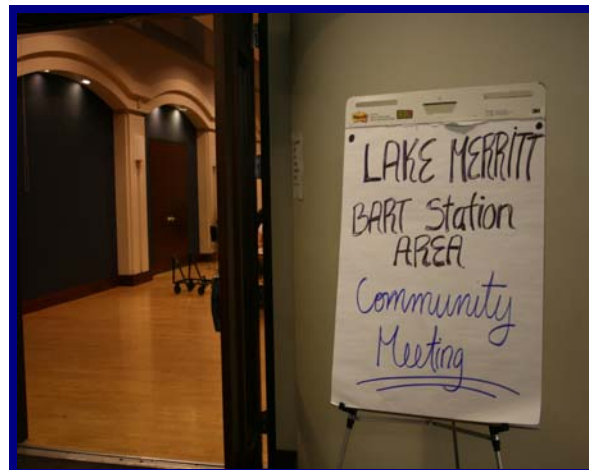


Lake Merritt BART Station Area Community Engagement Final Report

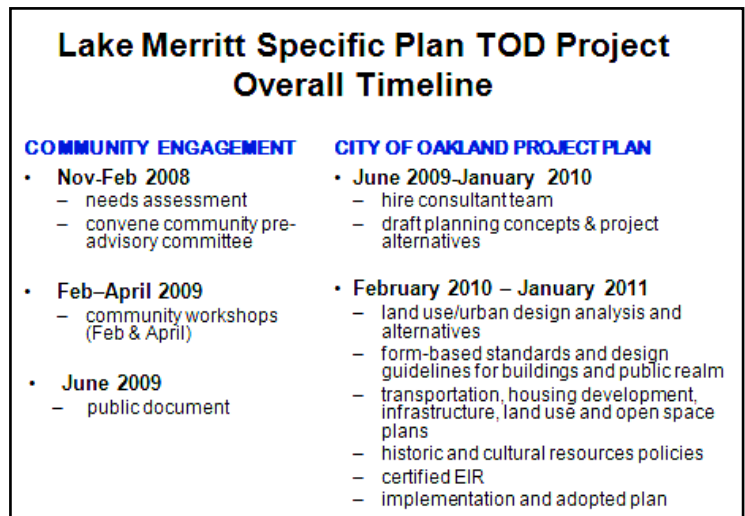


Asian Health Services
Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce
City of Oakland

June 2009

I. INTRODUCTION

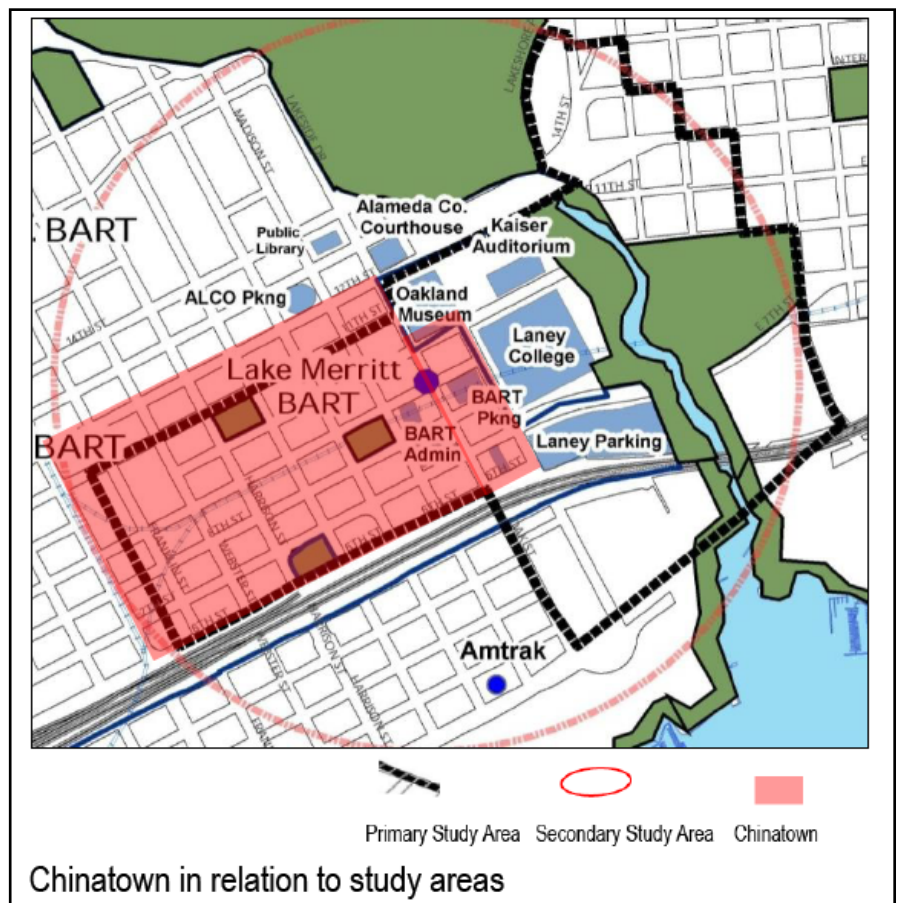
The City of Oakland has begun the process of creating a Specific Plan for “transit oriented development” (TOD) in the Lake Merritt BART Station (LMBS) area. The partnership between the City of Oakland, Asian Health Services, and the Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce has completed the initial Community Engagement phase of this two-year planning effort. Together they have reached out to more than a thousand people living, working, operating businesses, visiting, going to school, and using transit in the immediate vicinity of LMBS. Participants have shared their concerns and suggestions for the future of the community by responding to surveys and speaking out at public meetings.



This report has translated the community’s feedback into guidelines that will inform the goals and objectives of the Specific Plan. By initiating the process with a robust outreach program, Oakland has built a strong foundation for the Plan.

Although the report marks the successful conclusion of the Community Engagement phase, public participation will of course continue to play an important role in what will necessarily be an iterative planning process.

This report summarizes the rich detail of the community’s carefully recorded feedback. There are no big surprises. Opinions varied, as they do in every community, but almost all participants highly value their community and expect to remain a part of it as it undergoes change. They also want the problems that universally undermine the health and enjoyment of urban environments to be addressed in



their neighborhood, including crime, unemployment, bad air, traffic, and unaffordable housing.

One of the most important insights provided by the people who took the time to answer survey questions and attend public meetings is that the strongly held view that *the LMBS neighborhood is Chinatown*. That opinion is supported by the data; Chinatown is...

- the only residential neighborhood in the Primary Study Area;
- the neighborhood with direct access, unimpeded by highways, civic structures, and the Merritt channel;
- still impacted by the loss of land used to build the BART station and headquarters; and
- a crowded, lower income community that has many needs that sensitive planning could address.

II. THE SETTING

Long before TOD emerged as a 21st century answer to global climate change, air pollution, and dependence on foreign energy sources, Chinatown exemplified the concept. Largely built before cars overwhelmed cities, Oakland Chinatown continues as home to people who walk to work, shopping, school, and recreation. It is a neighborhood with a mix of uses, developed at densities that support public transit and pedestrian accessibility. It is also a neighborhood heavily impacted by through traffic generated by trips that originate and end elsewhere.

This dense, mixed used neighborhood was shaped by a century of discrimination. First recruited to work California gold mines and then forced out in the 1870s, Chinese workers relocated to cities, including Oakland. Oakland Chinatown covered a dozen blocks in the 1880s when Chinese immigration was restricted by Chinese Exclusion laws, reinforced forty years later by the Walter-McCarran Act. The concentration of the Chinese population in a small area was enforced by a segregated school system (until 1947), California's Alien Land Law (that prohibited Asian immigrants from owning land or property until 1949), and enforceable covenants against the Chinese (among others) that prevented them from living in other city neighborhoods.

The time of World War II had been a period of prosperity for Chinatown, elevating many families into the middle

Oakland's Chinatown - 1882



Oakland's Chinatown - 1960



Oakland's Chinatown - 1973



class. As one historian remarked, “The Chinese community seemed on the verge of steady and sustained growth. The community was becoming increasingly prosperous, no longer subject to constant harassment, and finally beginning to be accorded the equal treatment it deserved.”

However, as military industries began to decline after the war and families began to move into the suburbs, Chinatown, like the rest of Oakland, began to stagnate. The City undertook major transportation and civic redevelopment projects in attempts to reverse its decline, with Chinatown shouldering many of the costs and few of the benefits from these efforts.

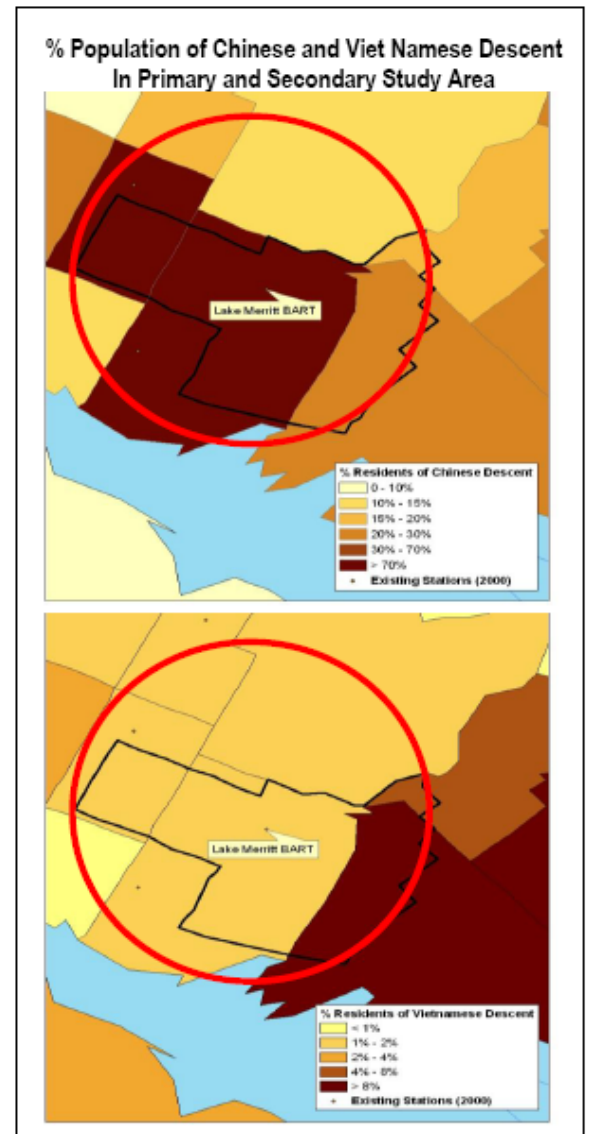
Chinatown itself was not a direct target for redevelopment, but because of its proximity to the city center, it provided the land for downtown expansion. Between 1960 and 1970, Chinatown lost 13% of its residents and 20% of its housing units. County buildings north of Chinatown and redevelopment projects on the west combined with other projects to block community growth. Public works projects undertaken during this decade cleared nine blocks within Chinatown.

Projects included construction of the Webster street tube, the Lake Merritt BART Station, the BART administration building, BART parking, and the Oakland Museum. Important community institutions were lost to these projects that targetted benefits to the wider region rather than the immediate neighborhood.

The new freeway caused Chinatown to end at Sixth and Seventh Street, instead of continuing down to second and third, and cut it off from the bay. The Chinatown community that was devastated by these projects had no voice in either their planning or implementation.

Demographics

Although Chinatown today continues to be home to a high proportion of Chinese residents, it is also a pan-Asian community. Its generally accepted boundaries of Broadway, 14th Street, Oak Street and Laney College, and I-80 encompass almost all of the population of the Primary Study Area of the LMBS TOD Specific Plan. The enlarged area that encompasses the Secondary Study Area, much of it non-



residential in character, is also populated by a higher percentage of people of Asian descent than the city generally.

The 2000 Census, the most recent detailed data available, indicates that Asian residents comprised 12% of the Study Area population, while only 4% of Oakland as a whole. Almost half the 14,537 people living in the secondary Study Area (approximately four census tracts) were Asian, compared to about an eighth for Oakland. The average size of families living in the Study Area was significantly smaller than for Oakland, and there were proportionally many fewer families with children headed by women. The population was older, especially in the very center of Chinatown, where almost a fifth of the population was older than 65. And proportionally many more residents were renters.

GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS	Oakland	LMBS Study Area	Study Area as % of Oakland
POPULATION			
- Total population	399,484	14,537	3.6%
- Asian population	60,851	7,435	12.2%
FAMILIES			
- Average family size	3.4	2.5	
- % Female headed	17.3%	9.2%	
- % Asian families	15.8%	60.5%	
AGE			
- % 9 and under	14.6%	9.4%	
- % 65 and over	6.2%	18.2%	
HOUSING TENURE			
- Owner-occupied	62,489	1,044	1.7%
- Renter occupied	88,301	5,702	6.5%
- % Renter occupied	58.6%	84.5%	

Poverty within the Study Area was concentrated in the central Chinatown census tract, where the rate was significantly higher than for the Study Area or the city. The disparity was greater for seniors; the Chinatown poverty rate was more than twice the citywide rate.

POVERTY LEVELS	Heart of Chinatown	LMBS Study Area	Oakland
% Population below poverty level	21.6%	15.6%	19.4%
% over 65 in poverty	26.0%	17.6%	12.6%
% women over 65 in poverty	30.7%	21.0%	14.5%

Almost a third of older women in Chinatown fell below the poverty level.

III. CHINATOWN PLANNING

The current project to create a Specific Plan for the LMBS area follows decades of city planning efforts, both by the City and by community leaders that have affected Chinatown and its surroundings.

1950s

- Oakland began city-wide urban renewal efforts
- Major public works projects led to acquisition and disposition of primarily residential properties within Chinatown. Projects included construction of the Nimitz Freeway and Laney College.

1960s

- *Oakland Chinatown Redevelopment Project, a Proposal.* Warren W. Jones & Associates
- *Peralta College-Chinatown General Neighborhood Renewal Plan, California R-117 (GN).* Oakland Redevelopment Agency

- *Central District Urban Renewal Plan* adopted. Oakland Redevelopment Agency. (contains provisions for a Chinatown Project Activity Area)
- Additional public works projects led to further acquisition and disposition of residential properties within Chinatown. Projects include construction of the BART Lake Merritt Station, the BART administration building, and the Oakland Museum.

During the 1960s, Chinatown experienced both significant out migration (to the suburbs) and in migration (from Hong Kong). Existing institutions were unable to provide services for the increasing number of new immigrants or the diverse needs of the community which included a growing number of seniors as well as an increase of women and families. Although community leaders grappled with the changing needs of the Chinatown population, City redevelopment plans did not focus on these needs. As in many communities, urban renewal was a source of conflict.

While the business community was concerning itself with redevelopment, other leaders in Chinatown successfully organized the community to address pressing social and economic needs. The Oakland Chinese Community Council was formed in 1968 in an effort to organize the community around the needs of new immigrants. In 1969, Doh On Yen, a senior housing development opened its doors and the Lincoln Children's Center began to provide childcare for Chinatown's low-income working families.

The Community Organized

The Oakland Chinese Community Council (OCCC), Inc. began in 1968 as a volunteer-operated, Chinese-language information and referral service. The OCCC became Family Bridges, Inc. which now houses two adult day health care centers and a drop-in senior center.

In February 1970, the East Bay Chinese Youth Council (EBCYC) began to offer community services such as youth programs and adult English language programs. EBCYC later evolved into the East Bay Asians for Community Action (EBACA). Members of EBCYC and EBACA later helped to institutionalize community based organizations such as Asian Health Services, Asian Law Caucus, and the East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC). EBALDC's first project was the rehabilitation of a deteriorated warehouse in Oakland's Chinatown into the Asian Resource Center, a multi-service center and commercial facility.

Asian Community Mental Health Services (ACMHS) began in 1972 as a demonstration project and in 1974, both ACMHS and AHS became independent non-profits. The Elderly Nutrition Program was initiated at the Chinese Presbyterian Church and other senior service programs.

The Asian Branch Library began in 1972 as a small collection of Chinese language books in the Park Boulevard Branch Library. In 1980, the Oakland Public Library gathered enough funds to purchase a new facility for the library in the City Center Tower Condominium facility. It currently is housed in the Pacific Renaissance Plaza located in the heart of Oakland Chinatown.

Established community leaders provided the momentum for these first projects, but in 1970, students from UC Berkeley, San Francisco State, and other colleges created the East Bay Chinese Youth Council to establish community programs that included youth centered activities.

1970s

- *Chinatown Offering I*. Oakland Redevelopment Agency.
- *Economic Market Analysis and Transient Housing Study: Chinatown NDP Project Area*. Oakland Redevelopment Agency (prepared by the Urban Economics Division of Larry Smith & Company and Willis Research)
- Academic interest in the efforts to redevelop Oakland's Chinatown included two studies:
 - Maria Amelia Fabbiani, *An Urban Design Proposal for Oakland Chinatown*. (dissertation)

- Willard T. Chow, "Reviving the Inner City: the Lessons of Oakland's Chinatown." *Public Affairs Report*, Bulletin of the Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 16(4).

The liberalization of immigration policies and the end of the Vietnam War brought an influx of new immigrants who were not connected to existing residents through family ties. People arrived from other Asian countries such as Korea, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Thailand, as well as rural parts of China. Many of these new immigrants began to settle in Chinatown.

Until the formation of the Chinatown Citizens Project Area Committee (PAC), planning was top-down by city officials whose primary interest was downtown development and who hoped that Oakland would become a regional commercial center. Because Chinatown itself was a mixture of older established residents and new immigrants, youth and elderly, residential and commercial uses, and loyalties divided by nation of origin, familial and fraternal affiliations, and political orientation, it is not surprising that the community did not speak with a single voice when it was finally given an opportunity to influence decisions.

In 1974 the Oakland Redevelopment Agency released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the first block of the Chinatown Redevelopment Area. It listed the following major projects surrounding Chinatown that were either planned or currently in development: the 25-story Clorox building (the second structure in the city's \$200 million City Center Redevelopment project) and the 328-unit Sun Yat-Sen condominium tower on Broadway adjacent to the Chinatown Neighborhood Development Project. The RFP also reported that the City was looking into the feasibility of a major convention center and a commercial area known as Victorian row across Broadway from the redevelopment area.

The RFP clearly signaled that Chinatown's needs were secondary to downtown redevelopment. While the City acknowledged the contributions of Chinatown's commercial uses to the city, it considered the neighborhood's housing to be a liability rather than an asset.

1980s

- *Chinatown Redevelopment Project EIS/EIR Drafts and Final Document*. (Renaissance Plaza project which included the Oakland Asian Cultural Center.)
- *Oakland's Chinatown: Report on Findings*. East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (prepared by class members, City Planning 210, Department of City and Regional Planning, University of California, Berkeley)
- *Harrison Park: Low and Moderate Income Housing*. Kazumori Mori Hatsushi (dissertation)
- "Chinatown Commercial District." *Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey*. Oakland City Planning Department.

The PAC continued to be the primary voice and advocate for the Chinatown community as the four block redevelopment project imagined in the 1960s grew into the \$300 million Trans-Pacific project.

The City of Oakland conducted a historical assessment of Chinatown as part of its Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey. Its findings were published in the report, “Chinatown Commercial District.” While the study found that many of the historically significant buildings in the neighborhood had been destroyed, they argued that the community itself was historically significant.

New groups continued to form within the community, although at a much slower rate than the 1960s and 1970s. The Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce was founded in 1985 by a group of local business people who wanted to promote business in the Asian community and provide a forum for the discussion of government policies.

1990s

- *Renaissance Plaza project was built*
- *Chinatown Master Plan*
- *Oakland Asian Cultural Center lawsuit*
- *Completed/updated City of Oakland planning documents :*
 - Housing Element of the General Plan
 - Historic Preservation Element of the General Plan
 - Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation (OSCAR) Element of the General Plan
 - Land Use and Transportation Element of the General Plan

The Renaissance Plaza project was completed in the early 1990s. In addition to condominiums and retail establishments, it includes the Oakland Asian Cultural Center and the Asian Branch of the Oakland Public Library

The Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN) was formed in 1995 to organize low-income Asian and Pacific Islander (API) communities for environmental and social justice.

2000s

- *Bus Rapid Transit Project DEIR/EIS. AC Transit*
- *Lake Merritt BART Station Final Summary Report. BART.*
- *Regional Transportation Plan 2030. Metropolitan Transportation Commission.*
- *Alameda County Congestion Management Agency Draft 2007 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and Adopted 2004 CIP*
- *Five Year Implementation Plan for Central District Redevelopment Area. CEDA, City of Oakland.*
- *Central City East Redevelopment District established*
- *Revive Chinatown: Community Transportation Plan. CEDA, City of Oakland.*
- *Oakland Chinatown Pedestrian Scramble: an Evaluation, Allyson K. Bechtel*
- *City of Oakland Planning Documents (completed/updated):*
 - Safety Element of the General Plan
 - Bicycle Master Plan
 - Pedestrian Master Plan
 - Lake Merritt Master Plan (LMMP)
 - The Lake Merritt Channel Feasibility Study

– The Oakland Waterfront Trail: Bay Trail Feasibility Study and Design Guidelines

Transportation has emerged as a dominant issue in the current decade. Problems caused by the use of Chinatown as a thoroughfare led to the *Revive Chinatown: Community Transportation Plan*, which yielded pedestrian safety improvements. Transportation planning affecting Chinatown is under way by BART (Lake Merritt Station), MTC, AC Transit, and the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency.

Many of the public agencies located within and near the Study Area have been planning improvements and changes, creating a unique opportunity for areawide changes that a specific plan could coordinate. Abandonment of BART's administration building has injected a sense of urgency and competition, since there are many more community needs than this potentially available large public space will realistically be able to accommodate.

In the Pipeline

- Alameda County owns a number of buildings in the planning area, concentrated in the area between 12th and 14th Streets and Jackson Street and Lake Merritt. The County is developing a Master Plan for its properties in the area.
- BART is currently preparing a station capacity analysis for the Lake Merritt Station.
- The Oakland Unified School District Administration campus is located within the Planning Area. District leaders have looked at opportunities to consolidate administrative uses in the area and options for additional development in the area.
- The City of Alameda in partnership with the City of Oakland and the Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority (ACTIA) is pursuing improved connections between I-880 and the Posey and Webster tubes.
- The Oak to Ninth Project was approved by the City Council.

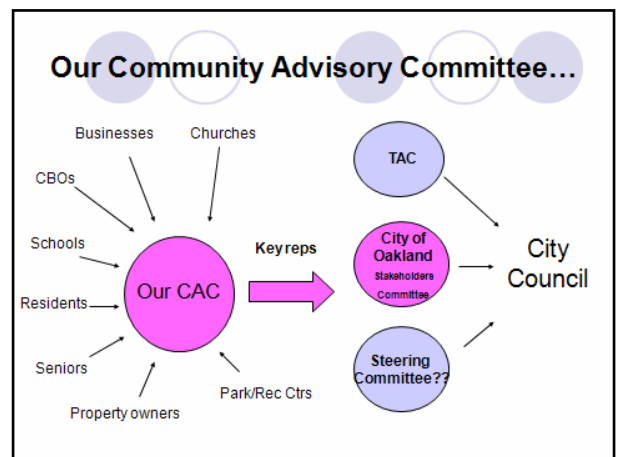
IV. METHODOLOGY OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Community Partners

The City of Oakland partnered with Asian Health

Planning Area Projects Recently Completed and Currently Underway

- Central Business District Zoning Update
- Lake Merritt Master Plan Implementation
- Lake Merritt Channel Improvements
- Lake Merritt BART Station Final Summary Report
- Oak to Ninth Mixed Use Development
- "Revive Chinatown" Community Transportation Plan
- BART – Lake Merritt Administration Building
- Oakland Unified School District – Facilities Master Plan
- Lake Merritt Cultural Trail
- Oakland Waterfront sections of the San Francisco Bay Trail
- Oakland Museum of California Entry Improvements
- Interstate 880 Seismic Improvements (11th Avenue to Madison)
- ACTIA Access Study (Improved connections between Interstate 880 and the Posey and Webster Tubes)
- Laney College - Campus Master Plan
- Alameda County – Oakland Facilities Master Plan



Services and the Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce to engage the broader community in the creation of the LMBS Specific Plan. That community includes a wide variety of stakeholders – Chinatown residents and businesses foremost, and also institutional players: BART, Laney College (Peralta Community College District), AC Transit, Oakland Museum, the Oakland Library, and MTC.

The engagement process tapped into an additional layer of support by working with numerous local community based organizations, churches, youth groups, tai chi exercise members, property and business owners, schools, and the Asian Pacific Environmental Network. Technical support has been provided by the University of California Berkeley Center for Community Innovation, Policy Link, Arc Ecology, TransForm, Human Impact Partners, and Reconnecting America.

Public Participation Opportunities

Two-way communication has been the essential ingredient of the Community Engagement Process. Four well-attended public meetings provided participants with information about the City's planning process, area history and demographics, and TOD concepts. The format of the meetings enabled the public to ask questions, voice concerns, and offer their opinions, warnings, advice, and praise. Simultaneous translation was provided in Cantonese and Mandarin. Spanish and Vietnamese were also offered, but were not needed.

What is Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)?



- Sustainable / Green
- Walkable / Compact / Infill
- Mixed Use
- Diverse (income, ages, family size)
- Healthy

Considers:

- Population growth
- Demographics
- Global warming
- Water supply
- Health services
- Transportation Infrastructure



In addition to the public meetings, a 19-question survey recorded the views of 1,161 residents, workers, visitors, students, businesses and BART users about the advantages and problems of the LMBS area.

V. COMMUNITY MEETINGS

November 20 2008

Presentations

- Overview of the community engagement process
- Explanation of the specific plan
- Introduction to transit oriented development
- Area demographics



Feb 19 2009

Concerns

- General development impacts (e.g., crowding, adequate schools, open space)
- Participation in the planning process; requests for specific information (e.g., about BART building, Specific Planning process)
- Specific development issues (e.g., Madison Park, approval during the planning process),
- Neighborhood safety

Visions for the future

- Updated demographic data
- More affordable housing
- Healthier community
- More open space
- More small business, foot traffic
- Mini-Renaissance Plaza
- Shuttle service
- Youth center
- Recreation facilities
- Attractions for young families
- Extend Chinatown night life to LMBS
- More parking for LMBS

February 5 2009

Presentations

- Recap and elaboration of November topics
- Explanation of the LMBS Specific Plan
- Demographics
- Transit oriented development
- LMBS Planning History

Concerns

- Need to recognize Chinatown's unique stake in outcome of the planning process
- Involvement of the schools
- Historic building preservation
- Neighborhood poverty, need for jobs and education
- Grassroots outreach
- Parking

屋崙華埠聯盟 亞健社及屋崙華商:美麗湖捷運站社區會議

四月二十五日

各界社區代表:

亞健社, 屋崙華埠商會繼續與屋崙市政府一起展開美麗湖捷運站地區計劃發展過程, 我們邀請您出席這個五月十四日的會議。請看以下細節:

日期: 星期四, 五月十四日

地點: 聯合灣區政府大樓, 一樓中心觀眾席

地址: 101八街, 屋崙

時間: 晚上六時十五分至八時

我們將提供具體更新計劃過程和談論屋崙美麗湖捷運站區域評估調查報告, 包括與1100名居民, 業主, 工作者, 學生, 商人和捷運站乘客的調查結果, 以保證這個計劃在過去社區會議上的意見和調查明確地反映社區的真正需要及恰當地處理未來發展目標。因此我們希望您能出席這個五月的會議(有小點提供)。

我們重視您的看法和希望您的寶貴意見和需要能反映在美麗湖捷運站地區發展計劃。如果您能出席或者有任何問題(在星期五, 五月八日前)請電郵 jliou@ahschc.org 或電 510-986-6830 ext.267 我們邀請您參加在五月十四日的社區會議。

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF CHINESE AMERICANS



- Air quality
- 40 years without development in Chinatown
- Crowded recreation services
- Shutdown of Tai Chi exercise area
- Crime

Visions for the future

- Youth leadership development
- Welcome new immigrants
- A place for all cultures and ages
- Attract tourists

February 19 2009

Presentations

- Review of projects in the LMBS area
- BART relocation
- Benefits of transit oriented development
- Health impacts of land use decisions
- Distribution of survey

Concerns

- Representation of local businesses; need for Chinatown to be on the Steering Committee
- Costs of transit oriented development infrastructure improvements
- Building heights
- Displacement
- Affordable housing
- Public safety

Visions for the future

- Incorporation of Chinatown history and culture
- Recovering “lost” Chinatown blocks
- More businesses to serve Laney College students
- Shuttle buses

May 14 2009

Presentations

- Assessment Survey results
- Summary of guiding principles
- Community dialogue
- Next steps and updates

Concerns

- Gentrification/displacement
- Crime
- Open space

COMMUNITY IDEAS EXPRESSED AT PUBLIC MEETING

- Community Garden
- Multi-level multi-use facility
- Youth center in combination with senior and recreation services
- Preserve the cultural aspects of the neighborhood
- Extend the Chinatown nighttime business environment to increase night life/foot traffic near the BART station
- Preserve and create green space
- Build a space for cultural activities including Tai Chi
- Bring in a mix of young and old populations
- Healthy homes and more health services
- More businesses to increase foot traffic and job opportunities
- Return 3 blocks back to Chinatown
- Affordable housing to welcome other low-income immigrant members
- Mix of affordable and market-rate housing
- Development that balances the interests of small and large businesses and public service needs

COMMUNITY CONCERNS EXPRESSED AT PUBLIC MEETING

- Lack of capacity of current schools and recreation center
- Too much housing
- Lake Merritt BART Station neighborhood area is not safe
- Lots of seniors and there will be more seniors
- Increased traffic to area if new houses and buildings are developed
- TOD should not be the starting point, but rather, the communities needs
- Not enough parking
- Displacement of current limited English speaking immigrant community
- 3 blocks owned by BART used to be part of the Chinatown neighborhood
- Chinatown community is the most affected and impacted community--needs to be central in this planning process and on Steering Committee

- Business viability

Visions for the future

- Restored Chinatown
- Mix of affordable and market rate housing
- Safe streets

VI. SURVEY

With input from the Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce, Asian Pacific Environmental Network, Health Impact Partners, and TransForm, Asian Health Services developed a five-page survey, including versions in Chinese and Vietnamese. In general, survey responses mirrored views expressed in the public meetings.



Participants

In March and April 2009, over 1,100 members of the community responded:

- 59% are residents of the area;
- 37% use the Lake Merritt BART Station; and
- 28% work in the area.

As in the study area, respondents tended to be older (40% were 65 or over). An unusually high proportion walk to work (31%) and unusually low proportion drive (25%). Businesses owned/operated by participants are small: 68% have fewer than five employees and primarily serve the neighborhood.

Health Issues

Many of the specific concerns cited have significant impact on community health. Crime and violence (cited by 64% of the respondents), air pollution (38%), unsafe public spaces (32%), noise (27%), and insufficient parks and recreational facilities (20%) are conventionally viewed as health hazards. Almost half voiced the desire for additional parks, athletic fields (including space for tai chi) and public indoor recreational facilities.

Almost a third of the respondents have a serious or chronic health condition. It was not surprising, therefore, that 35% identified the need for additional health and medical services as one of the top three needs for services, and the 38% are concerned about air pollution. An even larger number identified a need for healthful restaurants.

Other needs can also be viewed through a public health lens. For example, employment opportunities, affordable housing, access to healthful foods, and good transit services also contribute to exercise, balanced household budgets, good diet, and stress reduction that are the building blocks of a healthy, active, and engaged life.

Transportation

Many of the community's transportation-related issues reflect a pedestrian perspective. The highest ranking transportation improvements desired are for better sidewalks (67%), reduction of trucks and auto traffic (59%), and better pedestrian street crossings (50%), with another third calling for traffic speed reduction and improved transit stops. Nonetheless, improved street conditions and more parking also were identified as needs by 69% and 56% respectively.

Priority Needs

About half the survey respondents prioritized the need for safety from crime and jobs. About a third selected housing, environmental quality, access to services, and recreation and open space. In contrast to the priorities of car-dependent communities, only 13% identified parking among the top three needs of the community.

<i>What are the THREE most urgent needs to be addressed for your community?</i>	
Safety from crime	53.7%
Jobs (number of jobs, wages and benefits, job training, etc.)	50.0%
Housing (condos to buy, apartments to rent, quality of existing housing, etc.)	36.9%
Environmental quality (air quality, noise, litter, etc.)	34.6%
Access to services (adult education, schools, childcare, medical care, etc.)	30.3%
Access to parks and open space (playgrounds, recreation centers, athletic fields, etc.)	29.1%
Pedestrian/bicycle safety (motor vehicle collisions, workability, traffic, etc.)	19.0%
Access to goods (nutritious food, retail stores, etc.)	15.8%
Parking	12.9%
Feeling alone/socially isolated	3.6%
Other Urgent needs:	1.1%

VII. COMMUNITY GUIDELINES FOR THE SPECIFIC PLAN

The values and priorities expressed by the Chinatown community process provide the foundation for the Lake Merritt BART Station Specific Plan. As the process unfolds, these values should guide choices among alternative development visions and inform planning and design standards.

Accordingly, the guidelines below translate the community values into preliminary goals and objectives to launch the Specific Plan. Although the guidelines are expressed as separate topics, they are interdependent facets of a single vision of community. While acknowledging current problems, they respect and reinforce the strengths of the Chinatown community. The guidelines establish a platform for the Specific Plan that will attract new members to the community precisely because it expands opportunities for the existing community.

Public Safety

1. Create safe public spaces
 - Increase foot traffic and create job opportunities by attracting small businesses.
 - Create a friendly, safe, and transit oriented environment with better lighting and pedestrian improvements to enhance Chinatown and Laney College.
 - Strengthen linkages to key destinations within the area, including Oakland Chinatown and Laney College.
2. Promote safer streets.
 - Reduce traffic throughout the neighborhood.
 - Improve and maintain sidewalks.
 - Ensure cleanliness and safety of streets and intersection crossings.
3. Improve community police services.
 - Establish a police sub-station by the Lake Merritt BART Station.
4. Include violence prevention programs and policies.

Jobs

1. Increase the number of good jobs the match the community profile.
 - Ensure the jobs will have living wages and benefits.
 - Emphasize jobs in green industries.
2. Provide a job training center in the neighborhood and partner with local institutions to establish effective programs.
 - Incorporate green job training opportunities.

Housing

1. Prevent the loss of existing affordable rental (including senior) housing.
2. Prevent involuntary displacement of residents due to housing costs or redevelopment activity.
 - Provide special protections for immigrants with limited English.
3. Develop new rental and for sale housing within the project area for individuals and families of all sizes and all income levels (from extremely low to above moderate).
 - Ensure a housing mix that meets current and projected needs of families with children, and disabled and senior residents.
 - Provide a variety of incentives and subsidies to ensure the financial feasibility of affordable housing.
4. Promote healthful homes that are environmentally friendly and that incorporate green building methods.

Community Facilities and Open Space

1. Preserve and improve existing parks and recreation centers.
2. Ensure access to parks and open space for youth and seniors.
3. Increase the number of safe parks and open spaces available to the community.

4. Establish a community garden.
5. Create a multi-use recreational facility to serve both youth and seniors.
6. Build new neighborhood parks and athletic fields/areas for cultural activities, such as tai chi.
7. Promote library programs for youth, families, and seniors.
8. Ensure adequate capacity of school and recreation facilities.

Business

1. Promote new grocery stores, farmers markets and restaurants that sell nutritious and affordable food to community members and that generate new jobs in the food sector.
2. Seek to attract new businesses, including needed pharmacies, banks, and bookstores.
3. Extend Chinatown business uses in the direction of the Lake Merritt BART Station to expand and reinforce existing businesses.

Transportation

1. Preserve and strengthen the neighborhood's good public transit and walkability.
2. Reduce truck and car traffic in order to reduce noise and greenhouse gas emissions.
3. Expand modes of transportation serving the neighborhood.
4. Ensure pedestrian safety with improved sidewalks and intersection crossings.
5. Ensure compatibility of pedestrians, cyclists, and autos with street improvements that reduce traffic volume and speed.
6. Improve parking serving Chinatown and the BART station.

Cultural Preservation

1. Ensure that public services and spaces proposed preserve and reflect the cultural history and aspects of Chinatown's historic geography.

Community Engagement

1. Ensure opportunities for effective community participation by Chinatown residents and organizations in the further development of the Specific Plan.
2. Enable the community to monitor implementation of the Specific Plan.

Health

1. Improve air quality as a public health measure.
2. Increase health and medical services available to the community.
3. Cleanup air, soil and water contamination (including trash on the streets).
4. Reduce noise levels.
5. Ensure the cleanliness of public outdoor places.

6. Provide public bathrooms and trash containers.
7. Conduct anti-litter campaigns.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

Completion of the initial Community Engagement phase of the planning process for the Lake Merritt BART Station Specific Plan has laid a solid foundation for redevelopment actions that can both preserve and enhance the existing community. Successful outreach by Asian Health Services, the Oakland Chinatown Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Oakland has demonstrated that the people who currently make up the community – residents, businesses, employees, students, and visitors – are eager to participate in shaping its future. They bring many concrete, feasible ideas to the planning process, as well as an intimate knowledge of the community's assets and liabilities. They are protective of the rich community life that they now share, and are also ready to embrace changes that will bring long needed improvements.

The challenge facing institutional stakeholders in the planning process, including the City of Oakland, BART, Laney College, the Oakland Museum, MTC, and CalTrans, is to benefit fully from this community resource as planning and then implementation moves forward. Chinatown has always been a major source of the city's social and economic vitality, despite past intrusions and neglect. With active community participation, Chinatown can retain and build on the features that make it so special while it grows and develops to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.