



WEST OAKLAND SPECIFIC PLAN Final Plan

8. Cultural Assets

- 8.1 Neighborhood Enhancement**
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June 2014



8: Cultural Assets

A key element of the West Oakland Specific Plan is the identification of important cultural assets, an acknowledgement of their critical importance, and inclusion of strategies to ensure their retention. Cultural assets exist both within West Oakland’s storied neighborhoods areas as well as within its Opportunity Areas which have transitioned greatly from the various early periods depicted in **Figures 8.1** through **8.4**. In the midst of the desire for growth and intensified development of the Opportunity Areas, the existing Plan Area-wide assets for which this Plan sets forth objectives and strategies to ensure retention and preservation include:

- **Residential Neighborhoods:** Preserving West Oakland’s residential neighborhoods, which need only enhancement of their existing strengths;
- **Historic Preservation:** Preserving Oakland’s oldest and most historic neighborhoods and industrial areas, ensuring their legacy of cultural, educational, aesthetic and inspirational benefits for future generations; and
- **Arts & Culture:** Fostering West Oakland’s fully-emerged arts and culture movement.

This Specific Plan highlights and discusses these important assets.



Fig 8.1: Historic View of Mandela and West Grand in Opportunity Area 1



Fig 8.2 Historic View of 7th Street in Opportunity Area 2



Fig 8.3: Historic View of 3rd Street in Opportunity Area 3



Fig 8.4: Historic View of San Pablo Avenue in Opportunity Area 4

8.1: Neighborhood Enhancement

For West Oakland’s mostly residential neighborhoods, the focus of this Plan is on preserving and enhancing these neighborhood’s existing characteristics. Consideration of these neighborhoods, and an awareness of how these neighborhoods may benefit from the Plan, as well as may be affected by the growth and change as envisioned for the area’s industrial and commercial Opportunity Areas, is critical.

WEST OAKLAND’S RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

West Oakland’s neighborhoods are a mix of beautiful and well-preserved Victorian homes interspersed with vacant lots, blighted properties, and homes in jeopardy of foreclosure. When reported on by the popular media, the entirety of West Oakland is often uniformly stereotyped with mostly negative reports of poverty and crime. In those portions of individual neighborhoods that were already dealing with problems of crime and relatively weaker housing markets, many of these same areas are now also plagued by a combination of high rates of subprime lending, high foreclosure rates and high risk of abandonment as homes remain vacant and unsold for many months. However, it is also just as likely that down the block or around the corner, a significant number of homes originally built before the end of the 19th century have been beautifully restored and are well-maintained, that many newly constructed infill housing units are selling well, and that most residents maintain a sense of pride and care for their neighborhood.

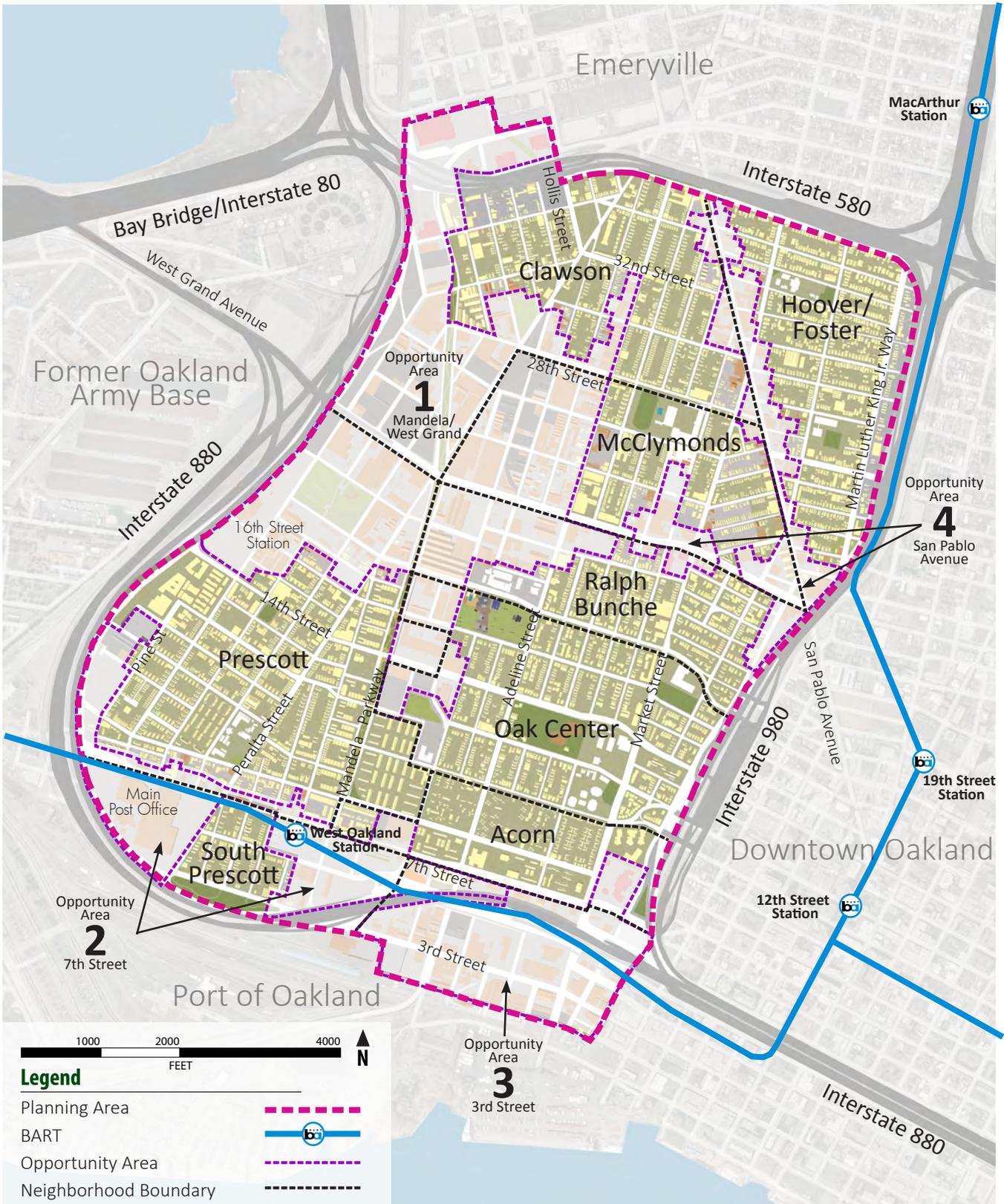
West Oakland Neighborhoods

West Oakland is a large and diverse district and contains several individual neighborhoods. Although several new neighborhood identifications have sprung up in recent years, they have not been universally accepted or

endorsed by community stakeholders. For this reason, the Specific Plan acknowledges the traditional, longstanding neighborhood designations which were originally associated with the area’s school districts (see **Figure 8.1.1**):

- Prescott
- South Prescott;
- Acorn;
- Oak Center;
- Clawson
- McClymonds
- Ralph Bunche; and
- Hoover/Foster

Fig. 8.1.1: West Oakland Neighborhoods



Prescott & South Prescott Neighborhoods

The Prescott and South Prescott neighborhoods are located in the southwesterly portion of West Oakland, nearest to the Port, the West Oakland BART station and the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. Generally, residences in these neighborhoods are centered between Mandela Parkway to the east and industrial uses to the north and west, but often the residential and industrial uses are within very close proximity. The Prescott neighborhood (generally north of 7th Street) is currently home to over 5,600 residents in approximately 1,750 dwellings. Over 90% of these homes and apartments are renter-occupied. The southern portion of the Prescott neighborhood nearest to 7th Street is a residential area of Victorian homes, many of which have undergone significant rehabilitation (see **Figure 8.1.2**).

It contains an emerging commercial hub with an emphasis on the area's black cultural roots. Several community organizations and businesses which serve the community are based in this portion of the neighborhood including City Slicker Farms, Bikes 4 Life, Mo Better Foods, and Mandela Foods Cooperative.

The smaller South Prescott neighborhood, separated by the overhead BART tracks along 7th Street, is home to approximately 1,100 residents in approximately 335 dwellings. Most of these homes (about 65%) were built in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and about 60% are renter-occupied.



Fig. 8.1.2: View of South Prescott Neighborhood

Acorn Neighborhood

Centered along 7th Street between Mandela Parkway and I-980 (which separates this neighborhood from the adjacent downtown Oakland), the Acorn neighborhood is one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city, containing numerous beautiful old Victorian homes, and was one of the city’s first Redevelopment Areas. Between mid-1950s to the 1980s, many existing single-family houses in this neighborhood were demolished and traditional neighborhoods were reconfigured to create new, dense multi-family rental housing. More recent rehabilitation of this neighborhood has resulted in an updated, lower-density, integrated mixed-income community known as the Town Center and Courtyards at Acorn (see **Figure 8.1.3**).

This revitalized property now includes a Town Center with a recreational center, a community building, tot lots, a pool, and three basketball courts, as well as a Computer Learning Center. HUD honored the Acorn Town Center project with a 1999 Best Practices Award. The primary commercial activity center in this neighborhood is the Jack London Gateway.

The Acorn neighborhood has a population of approximately 3,200 people, with approximately 1,160 housing units.



Fig. 8.1.3: View of Acorn Neighborhood

Oak Center Neighborhood

The Oak Center neighborhood is generally located between 10th and 18th Streets, and between Mandela parkway and I-980. The Oak Center neighborhood is the center of West Oakland and is a well-preserved Victorian residential neighborhood with several large parks (including the historic DeFremery Park and DeFremery House, which is on the National Register of Historic Places) and school sites scattered through the neighborhood. The neighborhood has 108 separate Local Historic Register properties representing Oakland's prosperous garden suburbs of the late 19th and early 20th century (see **Figure 8.1.4**).

The Oak Center neighborhood has a population of approximately 4,200 people and approximately 1,750 dwelling units, most of which are single-family homes generally over a century old.



Fig. 8.1.4: View of Oak Center Neighborhood

Clawson, McClymonds and Ralph Bunche Neighborhoods

The Clawson, McClymonds, and Ralph Bunch neighborhoods are generally bordered by San Pablo Avenue to the east, I-580 to the north, Peralta Street and Mandela Parkway to the west, and 18th Street to the south. Within these neighborhoods, residential areas are interspersed throughout industrial areas, and commercial and auto-related uses are concentrated along the major arterials. McClymonds High School is located within the center of these neighborhoods. A subarea within the Clawson neighborhood (generally bounded to the south and east by 28th Street and Adeline Street) has undergone a rapid transition from former industrial uses to newer live-work and other residences (see **Figure 8.1.5**).

These three neighborhoods are home to well over 7,300 people within approximately 2,500 dwelling units, most of which were built in the 1940s or before.



Fig. 8.1.5: View of Clawson Neighborhood

Hoover/Foster Neighborhood

The Hoover/Foster neighborhoods are generally bounded by San Pablo Avenue, I-580 and I-980. These neighborhoods are predominately residential, but commercial and institutional and government-owned uses also have a noticeable presence. The Hoover/Foster neighborhood shares a common border of San Pablo Avenue with the Clawson and the McClymonds neighborhoods, and San Pablo Avenue serves as a major connecting arterial road through this area. The Hoover /Foster neighborhood is strongly overshadowed by the overhead freeway systems of I-580 to the north and I-980 to the east.

The Hoover/Foster neighborhood currently contains around 2,400 households (see **Figure 8.1.6**).



Fig. 8.1.6: View of Hoover/Foster Neighborhood

NEIGHBORHOOD ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES

The neighborhoods of West Oakland are a vital and important community asset. The West Oakland Specific Plan seeks to create no new land use incompatibilities or development strategies that will adversely impact these neighborhoods, and also seeks opportunities to heal and restore neighborhoods at the edges of Opportunity Areas.

Defined Residential Edges

Intent: Establish a well-defined industrial/residential edge between West Oakland’s residential neighborhoods and its growing industrial base.

Historically, the lack of a defined residential/industrial edge in West Oakland has allowed heavy truck traffic with its associated noise and fumes into residential areas, and has permitted container storage uses along residential streets. These conditions are not conducive to maintaining a stable residential neighborhood.

Residential Edge-1: Create a clearly defined boundary between West Oakland’s industrial and commercial Opportunity Areas (areas in need of transformative growth and change), and West Oakland’s Residential Areas (areas not needing major changes). One of the first steps in this Specific Plan process was to identify such a boundary. The identified border between the industrial and intensive commercial business areas and the Residential Areas provides a clear and intentional boundary. The mix of land uses within the Opportunity Areas is envisioned as being new and revitalizing. The uses envisioned in the Residential Areas are envisioned as compatible infill of similar types and densities.

Residential Edge-2: Rezone selected properties to reinforce the residential edge. Within certain portions of West Oakland, the

boundary between the Residential areas and the surrounding more industrial land use character is not entirely clear. This Specific Plan seeks to clarify this edge through inclusion of a limited number of carefully selected zoning and general plan changes intended to more firmly establish this boundary within existing residential neighborhoods. Limited amendments to the General Plan land use designations and zoning provisions are proposed at specific locations that are at the edges of existing residential and industrial areas, where a change from industrial to housing and business mix would be compatible with adjacent neighborhoods and adjacent public parks. These sites are:

- Opportunity Site # 28 also known as the ‘Phoenix Iron Works’ Site: This site is located on the west side of Pine Street between Shorey Street and 9th Street. It is a long-vacant property remaining from a prior industrial use, with ongoing surface storage of large steel pipes. Rezoning a portion of this site to enable live/work infill uses along the Pine Street frontage would result in promotion of densities and massing similar to that existing in the surrounding residential area, and would better define the residential/industrial edge along this portion of the neighborhood (see **Figure 8.1.7**).
- Opportunity Sites # 8, and # 12, also known as the ‘Roadway’ Site: This site consists of the two blocks bounded by 17th Street, 18th Street, Wood Street and Campbell Street, the adjacent south block face on 17th Street between Willow Street and Campbell Street, and the two south blocks bounded by 17th Street, Wood Street, 15th Street, and Willow Street. Allowing live/work infill development compatible in scale with adjacent residential uses at this location would establish a solid residential edge around Raimondi Park and reduce potential incompatibilities associated with adjacent industrial uses (see **Figure 8.1.8**).



Fig. 8.1.7: Site proposed for rezoning along Pine Street 8th to 9th – Opportunity Site #28



Fig. 8.1.8: Site proposed for rezoning at 18th and Campbell – Opportunity Sites 8 & 12

- **Adeline Street:** The area generally bound by 26th Street to the north, Magnolia Street to the west, West Grand Avenue to the south and Chestnut Street to the east. The area between Chestnut Street and Magnolia Street contains a mixture of business/industrial, residential and live/work uses. Retain this mix of land uses, which act as a buffer between the business/industrial uses to the west and the residential uses to the east. Amending the Zoning and General Plan land use designations for this area would more clearly define the boundary between industrial and residential uses.
- **Properties on Ettie Street at 28th Street:** Amending the Zoning and General Plan land use designations of these properties would more clearly define the boundary between industrial and residential uses. The specific zoning and/or General Plan amendments necessary to reinforce the defined residential edges are presented in Chapter 4: Land Use.

Transitions in Density

Intent: Ensure that new, higher density development in West Oakland provides an appropriate design transition, merging well with the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Density Transition-1: The West Oakland BART Station’s planned Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is envisioned as a densely developed village. This TOD is also located immediately adjacent to the historical South Prescott neighborhood and newer development projects (Mandela Gateway) immediately across 7th Street (see **Figure 8.1.9**).

- Encourage the creation of an open, green area between the existing residential areas in the South Prescott neighborhood and the new West Oakland BART Station TOD.
- The nearest new buildings at the West Oakland BART TOD, nearest to the South Prescott neighborhood, should step

down in scale toward the 1- and 2-story single family homes in this neighborhood.

- Ensure that new development projects along 7th Street are of compatible height and mass as the existing, newer developments within Mandela Gateway.

Re-Knitting Neighborhoods Where Possible

Intent: Use new development as a means to create better physical connections to and within residential neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Re-Knit-1: The 7th Street corridor can and should be returned to its prominence as an important community-serving commercial corridor, knitting back together the previously physically separated Prescott and South Prescott neighborhoods.

- Seek to retain existing historic buildings while providing for appropriately-scaled residential and commercial mixed-use infill development of the 7th Street corridor as a cultural center, containing new commercial, lodging and entertainment uses (see **Figure 8.1.10**).

Neighborhood Re-Knit-2: If the Oakland Main Post Office on 7th Street ever becomes available for redevelopment, the site should be developed with alternative use(s) that support the community, such as compatibly-scaled, urban-infill residential homes.

- Seek to reestablish internal streets south of 7th Street similar to pre-Post Office configuration.



Fig. 8.1.9: Transit Oriented Development at West Oakland BART station (5th and Center Streets in foreground), with open space buffer between BART TOD and South Prescott neighborhood, TOD building height steps down adjacent to South Prescott neighborhood



8.1.10: Existing historic building at 7th & Peralta Streets

Neighborhood Re-Knit-3: Promote a revitalized mixed-use development concept along the San Pablo Avenue corridor that focuses on ground-floor neighborhood-serving commercial uses (see **Figure 8.1.11**).

- Encourage mixed-use projects with residential activities above ground-floor and neighborhood-serving commercial uses along the West Grand Avenue corridor.
- Encourage higher intensity residential use on the sites at the corners of San Pablo Avenue and West Grand Avenue.

- Enhance the San Pablo Avenue streetscape and increase retail uses to activate the street, increase pedestrian activity and enliven the neighborhood.
- Renovate St. Andrews Plaza to remove blight and to serve as a neighborhood amenity.

Neighborhood Re-Knit-5: Encourage new commercial development along San Pablo Avenue, including grocery stores, that contributes to a cohesive neighborhood form rather than to ‘strip centers’.



Fig. 8.1.11: Mixed-use Development Along San Pablo Corridor (West Grand Avenue at left, San Pablo Avenue in foreground, potential street closure in yellow)

Retaining the Objectives of the 2003 West Oakland Redevelopment Plan

As of February 2012, the City of Oakland's Redevelopment Agency ceased to exist as a result of state-wide changes in Redevelopment Law. A new Redevelopment Successor Agency, housed within the City of Oakland's Office of Neighborhood Investment, was created to wind down and complete the activities of the former Redevelopment Agency. Although the Successor Agency no longer has access to the former Redevelopment Agencies' tax increment and other financing mechanisms, or the other planning tools previously available to implement the West Oakland Redevelopment Plan, the key goals and objectives of the West Oakland Redevelopment Plan specific to neighborhoods and neighborhood stability remain valid and important.

Intent: The West Oakland Specific Plan reiterates and supports the following, previously developed goals of the 2003 West Oakland Redevelopment Plan that are specifically directed towards improving conditions in West Oakland neighborhoods.

Redevelopment-1: Continue to seek new sources of funds and creative implementation strategies to enable achievement of West Oakland Redevelopment plan's key goals and objectives:

- Provide streetscape improvements, utility undergrounding, open space and community facilities to enhance neighborhood quality and foster economic and neighborhood vitality.
- Support recreation, education, healthcare and programs for all members of the community, especially youth, seniors and disabled persons.
- Improve public safety for people living and working in the area.
- Restore blighted properties.
- Assist neighborhood commercial revitalization, and attract more uses that serve the local community including neighborhood- serving retail.
- Facilitate economic development by improving and rehabilitating substandard buildings and targeting infill on vacant lots on commercial corridors.
- Minimize/eliminate environmental hazards.
- Improve infrastructure, transportation, and public facilities.
- Incorporate ongoing community participation in the neighborhood planning process so residents of all income and wealth levels, geographic areas, language groups, and ages have opportunities to learn about and participate in the decision-making process.
- Promote equitable development that benefits residents and minimizes the displacement of current residents and businesses.
- Maintain the mixed-use character in a manner equally beneficial to both businesses and residents.
- Preserve and enhance existing residential neighborhoods and core industrial and commercial areas.
- Support and recognize the benefit of new residents and incomes that can be encouraged through market-rate development and done without
- Improve the quality of housing by assisting new construction, rehabilitation, and conservation of living units.
- Maintain and improve the condition of the existing very low, low, and moderate income housing.
- Increase opportunities for homeownership.
- Develop renter stabilization strategies that encourage and assist renters to remain.
- Mitigate and reduce conflicts between residential and industrial uses.

displacing existing residents or businesses or destroying the existing cultural assets.

- Encourage the rehabilitation of historically significant properties to avoid demolition or replacement.
- Do not concentrate any very low-income housing as stand-alone, high-density projects, but rather as infill projects on scattered sites and/or as mixed-income projects.
- Improve street configurations on main arterials and their relationship to the surrounding neighborhoods; implement urban design-based street improvements such as center dividers, bulb-outs, tree planting, and landscape improvements.
- Establish ongoing communications with the Oakland Housing Authority concerning its role and responsibility to see that scattered sites undergo design upgrades, reconstruction, and improved general maintenance.
- Promote sustainable development and “green building” practices.

cost housing, and may also help many residents better afford their mortgage.

Neighborhood Economics -2: Modify existing Zoning regulations to ease home occupation restrictions in West Oakland.

- Encouraging more home-based businesses could help incentivize the preservation of historic homes in West Oakland.

The neighborhood enhancement strategies in the West Oakland Specific Plan are primarily focused on ensuring an awareness of how West Oakland neighborhoods may be affected by, and can benefit from changes within the Opportunity Areas. The Plan does not include detailed recommendations or new policy direction applicable to the West Oakland residential neighborhoods, nor is different policy direction for these neighborhoods viewed as necessary.

New Policies to Help Strengthen and Stabilize West Oakland Neighborhoods

Intent: Create new economic opportunities for West Oakland residents through the easing of restrictions on the addition of secondary units and the approval of home-based businesses.

Neighborhood Economics -1: Ease secondary unit restrictions in West Oakland by modifying existing Zoning regulations that make it difficult for many homeowners to gain City approval. Potential Secondary Unit Code modifications include current requirements related to parking, accessory structures, and the rear yard setback.

- Allowing more homeowners to add a secondary unit will facilitate easier access to this important form of lower

8.2: Preservation of Historic Resources

“The preservation of [our] irreplaceable heritage is in the public interest so that its vital legacy of cultural, educational, aesthetic, inspirational, economic, and energy benefits will be maintained and enriched for future generations.”

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended

West Oakland includes Oakland’s oldest and most historic neighborhoods. Accordingly, each building in West Oakland has been researched, evaluated, and documented by the City of Oakland’s Cultural Heritage Survey project, with photographs, construction data, survey rating, and background information on early builders, owners, and occupants. About 1,500 of the most significant buildings and districts in West Oakland have been documented on forms filed with the State Office of Historic Preservation. Even this large number of buildings is only a portion of the existing buildings in West Oakland which still reflect its early history, especially in residential neighborhoods which retain remarkably intact period character.

As indicated in the quote above from the National Historic Preservation Act, the preservation of the historic resources in West Oakland is a worthy goal unto itself. However, historic preservation is also a fundamental economic development tool for strengthening the community, providing affordable space for small business incubation and affordable housing, creating and promoting sustainable development, stabilizing neighborhoods, creating jobs, and promoting the arts and culture.

The Historic Preservation Element (HPE) of the City of Oakland General Plan contains policies and programs for the protection and enhancement of the City’s historic resources. These policies and programs are supported by numerous regulations in the Oakland Planning Code. Under the West Oakland Specific Plan,

both the Historic Preservation Element and the Planning Code will continue to apply to all historic properties in West Oakland.

The West Oakland Specific Plan supports the goal of historic preservation in a number of ways. Those portions of West Oakland identified in this Plan as Opportunity Areas, or areas of transformative change and development, do not overlap with or encroach into historic areas or adversely affect individual historic properties. Important historic structures within West Oakland are individually identified in this Plan for adaptive reuse. Furthermore, this section of the Specific Plan identifies additional strategies to protect, preserve and enhance historic properties and districts within West Oakland.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

“It is notable that most of West Oakland, both residential and industrial, is first-generation development.”

Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey, in West Oakland Redevelopment Plan DEIR, 2002

West Oakland encompasses approximately the western third of what was the original Oakland town layout of the 1850s. At that time, West Oakland was almost a peninsula surrounded by the Lake Merritt tidal slough, the San Antonio Estuary, the Bay and a northern marsh. The estuary in its natural state was a shallow, marshy channel used for water transportation to San Francisco (see **Figure 8.2.1**).



Fig. 8.2.1: West Oakland Historic Map, Thompson & West 1878

To provide for passenger transportation and shipping, a railroad pier was built out over the shallow bay floor to deeper water in 1862-63. When the transcontinental railroad arrived in 1869 and made West Oakland its western terminus, a wharf was extended almost two miles out into the estuary to accommodate larger ferries and ships. Beginning in 1874, the Oakland estuary was dredged to become a harbor, and the dredged material was used to fill the estuary shores, expanding the area of land in West Oakland. Most of what exists in West Oakland today can be traced to this historic development pattern. Today's residential neighborhoods are generally located on the historic dry land, whereas current industrial areas mark almost exactly the outline of the old marsh.

The Railroad Era: Prescott & South Prescott Neighborhoods

When West Oakland became the western terminus of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, it became a powerful economic base for the city and the San Francisco Bay region. The

Central Pacific rail yards were located at Oakland Point and expanded out over the surrounding marsh. The rail yards were headquarters for most of the railroad's Northern California maintenance, construction and shipbuilding operations, and were a major source of employment. Residential development to accommodate rail workers in the Oakland Point area (today's Prescott and South Prescott neighborhoods) was so rapid that the area was solidly built up by the end of the 1870s. In the Prescott and South Prescott neighborhoods of today, over half the buildings were constructed in the 1880s or earlier, with smaller and larger versions of fairly standard Italianate, Stick, and Queen Anne designs on uniform small lots. Both of these neighborhoods survive remarkably intact today.

Oakland Point was connected with central Oakland by the local rail line, which ran along 7th Street with stations at Wood, Center, Adeline, and Market Streets. The entire length of west 7th Street was a major commercial, lodging, and entertainment center, which

survives today only in fragments such as the Arcadia Hotel, the site of the Lincoln Theater, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters Headquarters, and Esther's Orbit Room. Peralta, 8th, and 14th Streets also became significant transit streets with commercial nodes.

An early railroad station was constructed at 16th and Wood Streets. When the grand 16th Street Station was built in 1910-13, a few new hotels and stores were added and two still exist, conveying this part of the area's history.

Garden Suburb: DeFremery / Ralph Bunche / Oak Center Neighborhoods

Another very early settlement pattern in West Oakland was established around the James DeFremery house which still stands at 16th and Adeline Streets at the innermost extension of the old marsh. A residential neighborhood of San Francisco commuters and professionals developed surrounding the DeFremery property. Houses and lots were generally large in size and developed individually as custom homes and as an extension of the downtown. This area is generally now known as the Ralph Bunche and Oak Center neighborhoods. The DeFremery family sold their house and its immediate surroundings to the City as a park in 1906.

Much of the marshland to the west of these neighborhoods was eventually filled in and developed as industrial areas and became a major employment center of West Oakland in the 20th century, with new industrial plants owned by such businesses as Shredded Wheat, Carnation, and Coca Cola.

Northwest Oakland: Watts Tract / Clawson Neighborhoods

The northwesterly portion of West Oakland in the 19th century was mostly an undeveloped, marshy area separating the 16th Street Station area from the next rail stop to the north, at Watts Station. By the time this area was developed in a semi-rural way, it had partly adopted the Emeryville street grid, and was within easy reach of Emeryville's early ironworks, stockyards, and racetrack, and is still influenced today by its relation to the Emeryville economy. This area grew through

residential infill in the 1900s and 1910s, and is now known as the Clawson neighborhood.

Streetcar Suburbs: Hoover / MacArthur / McClymonds

In the early 1890s, electric street railways spread rapidly throughout Oakland, joining outlying towns into one large city, and promoting residential development all along the lines. Occasional early commercial nodes and apartment buildings still mark the transit stops. The 1906 earthquake accelerated this development. In the Clawson, McClymonds, Bunche, and Hoover-Foster neighborhoods, well over half the buildings are pre-1910, as evident in the concentrations of Queen Anne and Colonial cottages in the Clawson and McClymonds neighborhoods and in the substantial Colonial Revival and Craftsman houses and flats that line Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, West Street, and their cross streets in the Hoover and McClymonds neighborhoods.

Later Industrial Development

The northwest marsh began to be developed in the 1920s in part because of advances in building technology, in part because truck transportation made it feasible to locate industry and warehousing away from railroad lines, and in part because of fill resulting from Outer Harbor development. By the mid-1930s, prominent industrial landmarks existed, though much of the area was still vacant mudflats. In 1941, the Army took over the entire Outer Harbor and filled the area between Maritime Street and the tracks, land-locking the West Oakland marsh. The vacant blocks quickly filled with war-related industry and temporary housing for defense workers. A postwar building boom completed this northern industrial area's development, with more businesses centered on heavy industrial uses such as metals, construction materials and motor freight.

Later Evolution of Residential West Oakland

In 1936-38, City and federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) studies were undertaken to site a federal low-rent housing project in Oakland. Two West Oakland sites, Peralta Villa just east of what was then known as Cypress

Street (now Mandela Parkway) and Campbell Village in the heart of Oakland Point, were selected for redevelopment, despite the protests of residents who insisted that they had a healthy neighborhood of sound, owner-occupied houses, strong neighborhood spirit, and a large African-American community whom the authorities were suspected of targeting for removal. By the time these projects were completed, the U.S. was in World War II and both sites were converted to defense worker housing. The Moore and Bethlehem shipyards greatly expanded, and large numbers of both white and black workers from the South arrived to fill these jobs. Oakland’s African-American population more than quintupled during the war years, and many of the newcomers settled in the established community in West Oakland.

In the mid-1950s, West Oakland was cut in half by the Cypress Freeway (later, Interstate 880). In the following decades, several more housing projects were built in West Oakland including the Acorn and neighboring projects south of Oak Center, Westwood Gardens in Prescott, and Chestnut Court in McClymonds. Between 1969 and 1972, construction of the new main United States Post Office and West Oakland BART Station destroyed most of the 7th Street commercial strip. Later, the construction of Interstates 580 and 980 separated West Oakland from Emeryville, North Oakland, and Downtown. In the case of Interstate 980, care was taken to submerge the freeway in order to minimize the visual impact as well as lessen noise impacts. Unfortunately this was not the case with Interstate 580, where construction of what was originally called the Grove-Shafter freeway replaced one side of formerly quiet residential streets in the Hoover neighborhood with unattractive landscaped embankments and the towering and noisy “MacArthur Maze.”

In 1989, the Loma Prieta earthquake, besides damaging buildings, caused the collapse of the Cypress Freeway. Land-use conflicts were lessened when Interstate 880 was relocated to establishing a more logical boundary between West Oakland’s mostly fine-grained residential/commercial uses and heavy trucking/port activities. Instead of the Cypress

freeway bisecting West Oakland, its replacement with the Mandela Parkway reunited West Oakland with a beautiful landscaped median. New developments since relocation of the 880 freeway include new residential construction, the adaptive reuse of former industrial buildings to art studios and residences, as well as new restaurants and other businesses.

DEFINING HISTORIC RESOURCES

There are many different programs and categories for recognizing historic value, at national, state, and local levels. It is important to recognize that categories often overlap and are always somewhat fluid. Properties can lose or regain integrity, new information may come to light about any individual property or an entire context, younger properties may become “historic” with the passage of time, or a “fair argument” may indicate that a property should be considered significant.

Policy 3.8 of the City of Oakland’s Historic Preservation Element provides a definition of historic resources for environmental review under CEQA, and Policy 1.2 defines a broader category of local resources called Potential Designated Historic Properties (PDHPs). The West Oakland Specific Plan does not change these City definitions.

City of Oakland Historic Property Classifications

Chapter 3 of the Oakland General Plan’s Historic Preservation Element is titled “Identifying Historic Properties.” The Oakland Cultural Heritage Survey (OCHS) is the City’s comprehensive citywide inventory of historic buildings and districts. Since 1979, the OCHS has created and maintained an inventory of historic resources throughout the City. Every property in Oakland has been at least preliminarily surveyed and rated, and thousands have been researched and evaluated in detail.

Survey ratings provide guidance to city staff and property owners in design review, code compliance, and similar ongoing city activities,

under policies contained in Chapter 5 of the Historic Preservation Element. Ratings provide a baseline description that is subject to being confirmed or modified, since a property's physical condition or perceived significance may have changed over time.

- Individual property ratings range from "A" (highest importance) to "E" (of no particular interest), plus "*" (unrated, usually recent or heavily modernized).
- Some properties have lower-case contingency ratings for possible future circumstances, for example, "Ca" for a building now of secondary importance ("C") that might be an "A" if it were to be restored.
- Ratings also include a number, 1, 2, or 3, representing an assessment of the significance of the area or district in which the property is located.
- Areas of Primary Importance (API) are historically or visually cohesive and possess National Register-level significance and integrity.
- Areas of Secondary Importance (ASI) are cohesive and distinctive but likely not eligible for the National Register, usually because they are less intact or less unique than APIs.
- Sample ratings using this system include:
 - C1+ secondary importance (C), contributes to an API (1+)
 - Db+3 minor importance (D), potentially major importance (B+) if restored, not in a district (3)
 - E2- of no particular interest, in an ASI but does not contribute
 - *a not rated (*), potentially highest importance (A) when 50 years old or if restored.

Potential Designated Historic Properties

Potential Designated Historic Properties (PDHPs) are defined in the Historic Preservation Element Policy 1.2 as any properties that have an OCHS rating of at least a contingency "C," or that contribute or potentially contribute to a

primary or secondary historic district. These properties warrant consideration for possible preservation. PDHPs are a large group - a fifth to a quarter of all buildings in Oakland. They are intended to be numerous enough to significantly influence the City's character. The inclusion of contingency-rated properties as PDHPs is intended to highlight their value as restoration opportunities. District contributors and potential contributors are classified as PDHPs to promote preservation of Oakland's distinctive neighborhoods.

While most PDHPs do not appear obviously eligible for the National Register or California Register and therefore (in the absence of Heritage Property designation or some other formal action) may not meet the CEQA definition of "historic resources," they are recognized and protected under the Historic Preservation Element of the Oakland General Plan for their contribution to Oakland's character. The Historic Preservation Element contains extensive policies and actions for the protection and enhancement of PDHPs.

The appropriate potential designation for most PDHPs is likely to be Heritage Property for individual properties and S-20 for districts.

CEQA Definitions

In the City of Oakland's environmental review thresholds of significance, an Historical Resource is defined for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as a resource that meets any of the following criteria:

- A resource listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places or the California Register of Historical Resources;
- A resource included in Oakland's Local Register of Historical Resources (see below);
- A resource identified as significant in a historical resource survey recorded with the State Department of Parks and Recreation, unless the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that it is not "significant," i.e. eligible for the California Register (see below);

- Any resource which the Oakland City Council determines to be historically significant, provided the determination is supported by substantial evidence; or
- A resource that is determined by the City Council to be historically or culturally significant, even though it does not meet the other four criteria listed here.

This is the minimum set of historic properties which must be given consideration during CEQA environmental review.

Local Register of Historical Resources

Policy 3.8 of the Historic Preservation Element defines the City of Oakland’s Local Register of Historical Resources for CEQA purposes:

- All Designated Historic Properties - those formally designated as Landmarks, Heritage Properties, Study List properties, or in S-7 or S-20 Preservation Combining Zones (historic districts); and
- Potential Designated Historic Properties (PDHPs) that have an existing OCHS rating of “A” or “B,” or are located within an Area of Primary Importance (API).

Approximately three percent of Oakland’s buildings are on the Local Register.

- PDHPs in the State Inventory: A number of West Oakland PDHPs and ASIs were recorded in the State Historic Resources Inventory between 1988 and 1995 as of local interest though not appearing eligible for the National Register. These are properties whose ratings do not place them on the Local Register. However, subsequent changes to classification systems mean that these properties may require additional evaluation if demolition or other adverse effects are proposed.

HISTORIC RESOURCES IN WEST OAKLAND

In West Oakland, roughly 3,500 out of 5,000 total buildings meet some definition of “historic” under the Preservation Element (inclusive of the 1,420 designated properties on

the Local Register). The proportion of historic properties in West Oakland (70%) is much higher than in the city overall (20% to 25%). West Oakland also has a large share of the city’s most elite resources such as City Landmarks and properties on the National Register (see **Figure 8.2.2**).

Most of West Oakland’s historic properties are houses on small lots, and the Local Register group includes two very large residential districts, Oakland Point and Oak Center. Rather than attempting an individual list of all these properties, this Specific Plan lists currently recognized CEQA-level resources and provides a summary of the types of properties in West Oakland that are considered to be historic.

Fig. 8.2.2: Historic Resources Map

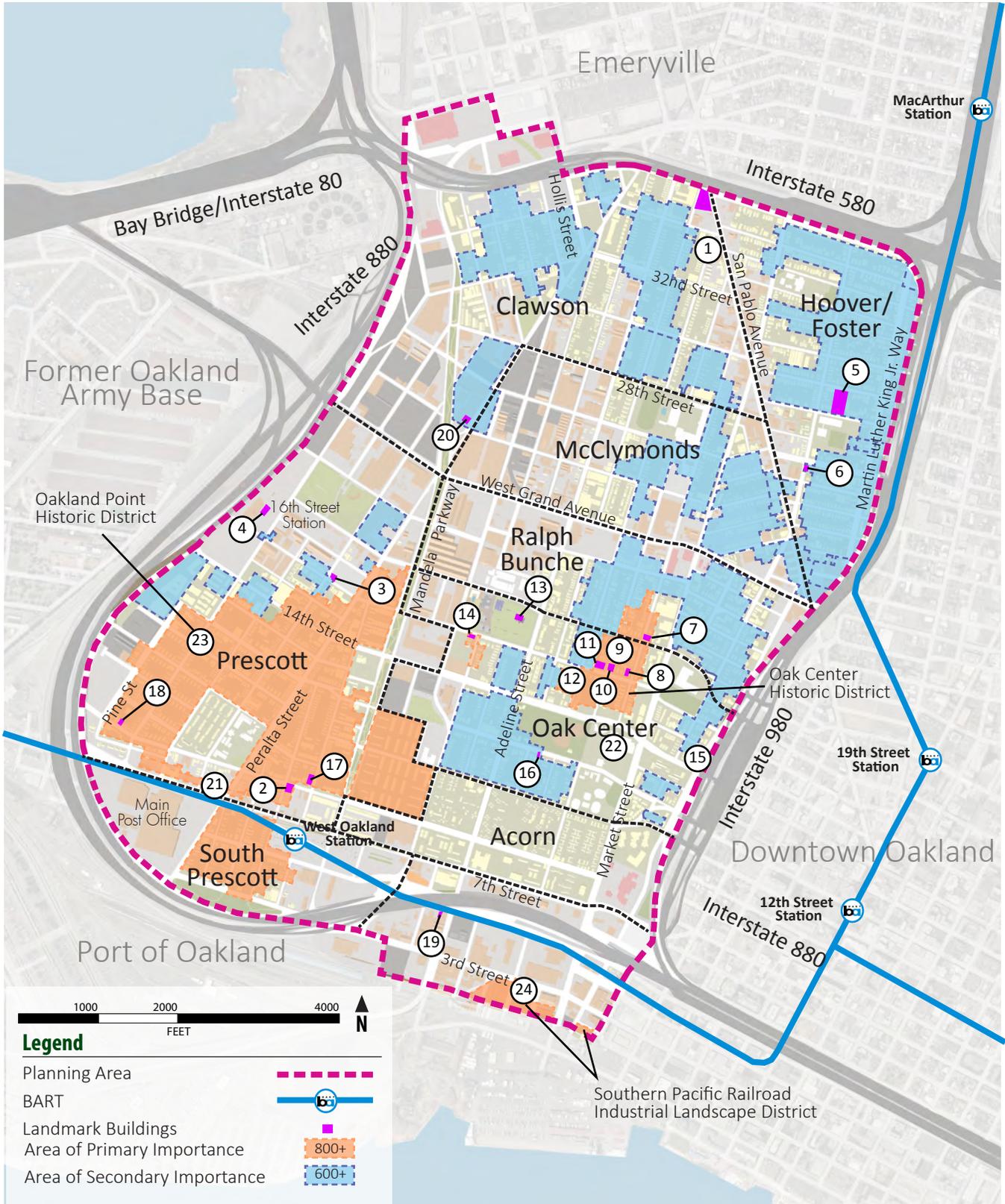


Table 8.2-1: Legend for Figure 8.2.2: Historic Resources Map

National Register Buildings	
1 California Hotel, 3501 San Pablo Avenue	14 Davison House, 1527 Union Street
2 Western Market Building, 1485 8th Street	15 Metcalf House, 750 14th Street
3 Oakland Mazda Lamp Works, 1600 Campbell St.	16 Cordes-Hoover House, 1079-81 12th Street
City Landmarks	
4 Southern Pacific Station, 16th and Wood St. *	17 Samm-Dalton-Cooper House, 1454 8th St.
5 Oakland Laundry Company, 730 29th Street	18 Shorey House, 1782 8th Street
6 St. Augustine’s Mission, 2624 West Street	Determined Eligible for National Register
7 Hume-Wilcutt House, 918 18th Street	19 Wempe Bros.-Western Paper, 1155 5th Street
8 Holland-Canning House, 954 16th Street	20 Merco-Nordstrom Valve Co., 2401 Peralta St.
9 Gladding-Chickering House, 970 16th Street	Districts Locally Designated
10 Reed-Henshaw House, 974 16th Street	21 7th Street (1600 block) S-7
11 Quinn House, 1004-06 16th Street	22 Oak Center S-20
12 Campbell House, 1014 16th Street	Districts Eligible for National Register
13 DeFremery House, 1651 Adeline Street	23 Oakland Point-Prescott Neighborhood
	24 Southern Pacific Industrial Landscape
	* - also determined eligible for National Register



Fig. 8.2.3: California Hotel

National Register and California Register Properties

Properties in West Oakland currently listed on the National Register are:

- the California Hotel, 3501 San Pablo Avenue (see **Figure 8.2.3**).
- Liberty Hall (Western Market–Father Divine's Peace Mission building), 1485-87 8th Street (see **Figure 8.2.4**)
- the Oakland Mazda Lamp Works, 1600 Campbell Street is being listed in connection with a historic tax credit project (see **Figure 8.2.5**).

Additional properties formally determined eligible for the National Register in 1991 during environmental review for the I-880 freeway replacement include:

- Merco-Nordstrom Valve Co., 2401 Peralta Street
- Southern Pacific Station and Tower, 16th and Wood Streets
- Wempe Bros.–Western Paper Box Co., 1155 5th St.
- Southern Pacific Industrial Landscape District, 3rd Street to Embarcadero, Castro to Chestnut Streets
- Oakland Point Historic District (residential), 8th to 16th Streets, Mandela Parkway to Pine Street.

The Southern Pacific Yards & Shops buildings and four other resources were also determined eligible at that time, but no longer exist or have lost their historic integrity.

Properties on or formally determined eligible for the National Register are automatically also on the California and Local Registers.

Oakland Point Historic District

The Oakland Point Historic District (aka. the Prescott neighborhood) is a locally-identified Area of Primary Importance (API) of about 47 city blocks bounded on the south by the 7th Street commercial strip, on the east by Mandela Parkway, and on the west and north by the industrial areas of the former West Oakland

marsh. The Oakland Point API is one of the largest and most intact Victorian neighborhoods in California, with close to 850 buildings, the majority dating from the 1870s and 1880s. Predominant architectural styles are Italianate, Stick and Queen Anne, intermingled with Colonial, shingle, Craftsman, 19th century vernacular (minimally Greek revival or Gothic). National Register eligibility determination applies to this district and all its contributing properties.

Southern Pacific Railroad Industrial Landscape District

The Southern Pacific Industrial Landscape District, determined eligible for the National Register, is a small group of historic industrial buildings along the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks and 3rd Street, from Castro Street to Chestnut Street. Its contributing buildings include the prominent Standard Underground Cable building (Linden Street Brewery) and Del Monte Cannery and Label Plant buildings. National Register eligibility determination applies to the district and all its contributing properties.

S-7 and S-20 Preservation Combining Zone Properties (Locally Designated Districts)

The S-7 Preservation Combining Zone and S-20 Historic Preservation District Combining Zones are the City's historic preservation zoning districts. Areas eligible for S-7 Zone designation are those having "special importance due to historical association, basic architectural merit, or the embodiment of a style or special type of construction, or other special character, interest, or value." The S-20 Zone is similar to the S-7 Zone but is designed for larger areas often with a large number of residential properties that may not be individually eligible for landmark designation but which as a whole constitute a historic district.

West Oakland has a small S-7 Zone along the 1600 block of 7th Street and a large S-20 Preservation Combining Zone in the Oak Center area.



Fig. 8.2.4: Liberty Hall



Fig. 8.2.5: Mazda Lamp Works Factory

Oak Center District

The Oak Center District is a locally designated S-20 Preservation District whose boundaries coincide with the Oak Center Redevelopment Area established in the 1960s, generally bounded by 10th and 18th Streets, the Interstate 980 freeway, and Mandela Parkway. Oak Center is a well-preserved Victorian residential neighborhood, with industries on the former marsh at the west edge and several large parks and school sites scattered through the neighborhood. The neighborhood has outstanding examples of Italianate, Stick, Queen Anne, Colonial, and Shingle architecture representing Oakland's prosperous garden suburbs of the late 19th and early 20th century. Several houses were individual City Landmarks even before residents achieved district designation for the whole neighborhood of 600-plus properties in 2002.

Historic neighborhood character extends north of the redevelopment area border at 18th Street, where an additional 30 properties are part of a locally identified Oak Center Area of Primary Importance (API).

Designated Historic Properties and Other Individual Local Register Properties

In addition to the National and California Register properties and districts described above and shown on Figure 8.2.2, individual Local Register properties in West Oakland include about 25 properties formally designated by the Landmarks Board (City Landmarks Preservation Study List, and Heritage Properties) and about 62 others on the Local Register by virtue of "A" (Highest Importance) or "B" (Major Importance) survey ratings.

Additional Properties of Historic Value

Approximately 2,500 additional properties in West Oakland are classified as Potential Designated Historic Properties (PDHPs), individually or as part of about 13 identified Areas of Secondary Importance (ASIs). Although these properties and areas do not generally meet the CEQA definition of "historic

resources," they are recognized as contributors to West Oakland's historic context and are accorded protections under the Historic Preservation Element and Planning Code. The term Potential Designated Historic Property indicates that these properties may be eligible for Heritage Property designation, and several such designations have been sought in recent years in order to qualify for Mills Act contracts (see Incentives, below).

Also, a number of West Oakland PDHPs and ASIs recorded in the State Historic Resources Inventory between 1988 and 1995 fall under one of the City's CEQA thresholds and may need further evaluation if demolition or other adverse effects are proposed.

It is important to recognize that the "list" of PDHPs is always somewhat fluid. Properties may have been restored or have lost integrity since they were surveyed, new information may have come to light, or they may have gained additional interest as they have become older. Historic status should always be verified when a project is contemplated involving an older building or area.

Table 8.2-1: West Oakland Historic Properties

	Number of Properties
West Oakland buildings meeting some definition of historic	+/-3,500 out of +/-5,000 (70%)
National Register Listed	3
National Register Eligible	5
Oakland Landmarks/Heritage Properties/Preservation Study List	23
Oakland Point API Contributors	721
Oak Center API Contributors	84
Southern Pacific Railroad Industrial API Contributors	7
7th Street S-7 Preservation Combining Zone Properties	3
Oak Center S-20 Preservation District Properties	634
PDHPs rated "A" (Highest Importance) or "B" (Major Importance)	62
Other Potential Designated Historic Properties	+/-2,500

HISTORIC PRESERVATION STRATEGIES IN THE PLAN

The Specific Plan’s Opportunity Areas are drawn so that they: 1) do not promote changes incompatible with historic districts, and 2) avoid impact on individually significant properties. Adaptive reuse and respect for neighborhood character will be encouraged throughout. Given West Oakland’s large historic building stock, it is important to recognize that preservation through rehabilitation and reuse is

itself a major economic development opportunity. This is true of top-rated landmark buildings but also of smaller, less distinguished, but serviceable older buildings that can provide valuable space for small businesses and startups.

Existing City policies, programs and regulations intended for the protection and preservation of historic resources will apply to all properties located within the Specific Plan’s Opportunity Areas.

Residential Areas

As shown on Figure 8.2.2, the identified Opportunity Areas have little or no overlap or encroachment into nearby historic neighborhoods such as Oakland Point and Oak Center. Therefore, the growth and change envisioned under the Specific Plan is not expected to have any direct adverse effects on these historic resources.

CITY-WIDE HISTORIC PRESERVATION POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

The policies and programs in the Historic Preservation Element (HPE) of the Oakland General Plan and the Oakland Planning Code, which already apply to these neighborhoods, will continue to apply. A brief overview of these existing policies and programs follows.

The Historic Preservation Element (HPE)

Chapter 4 of the Historic Preservation Element (HPE) addresses preservation incentives and regulations primarily for Designated Historic Properties (DHPs); chapter 5 of the HPE addresses preservation and on-going city activities applicable to all PDHPs as well as DHPs; and chapter 6 of the HPE addresses information and education.

The HPE Policies particularly relevant to West Oakland include the following:

- HPE Policy 2.6 recommends a menu of preservation incentives (some not yet in place), including financial incentives (e.g., Mills Act contracts, conservation easements,

development assistance from historic preservation grants or historical rehabilitation bonds, fee waivers or reductions for City permits); use of the State Historical Building Code to provide more flexible construction standards; a broader range of permitted or conditionally permitted uses, and transferable development rights.

- HPE Policy 3.1 states that the City will make all reasonable efforts to avoid or minimize adverse effects on the character-defining elements of historic properties which could result from private or public projects requiring discretionary City actions.
- HPE Policy 3.2 directs that City-owned or controlled historic properties will be preserved.
- Policy 3.3 requires local designation as a condition for financial assistance to projects involving historic properties.
- Policy 3.4 allows the City to consider acquiring historic properties, by eminent domain if necessary, where all other means of preservation have been exhausted. This policy proposes limited acquisition powers for extremely important properties in dire situations.
- HPE Policy 3.5 establishes design review findings for alterations and demolitions of Heritage Properties and PDHPs, applicable to both public and privately sponsored projects. The demolition findings have been developed in detail and incorporated in the Planning Code (below).
- HPE Policy 3.6 recommends that City-sponsored or assisted projects involving historic properties be selected and designed to avoid adverse effects and to promote preservation and enhancement. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties are used as one criterion for avoiding adverse effects. This policy extends the protections applied to federally related projects under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) to non-federally funded City projects and to City projects that involve historic properties that are not on or eligible for the National Register.
- HPE Policy 3.7, for discretionary projects involving demolition of historic properties, requires that reasonable efforts be made to relocate the properties to an acceptable site.
- HPE Policy 3.8 defines the Local Register and mitigations that might be required in environmental review.
- HPE Policy 3.9 states that zoning should be consistent with existing or eligible preservation districts and that area and specific plans should include a preservation component.
- HPE Policies 3.10 through 3.13 require attention to historic preservation disaster, seismic retrofit, code enforcement, and similar situations.
- HPE Policy 3.14 supports priority for commercial revitalization efforts in historic areas.
- HPE Policy 5 series addresses Information and Education because "a historic preservation program is most effective with broad community support and basic technical historic preservation knowledge among property owners, developers and City staff."
- In addition, the HPE's introduction cites "Benefits of Historic Preservation" relevant to the West Oakland Plan: urban revitalization, employment, affordable housing, economic development, community identity and image, cultural values, and tourism.

Oakland Planning Code

The Oakland Planning Code addresses Design Review, including specific Preservation Element-based findings for alteration and demolition of DHPs and PDHPs.

- Planning Code Section 17.136.060 provides that design review in the S-7 zone or on a designated Landmark site is referred to the City's Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board for its recommendations to the Director of City Planning.

- Planning Code Section 17.136.070 requires that alterations and new construction may not adversely affect the exterior features of a City Landmark, or the special character, interest, or value of the Landmark or its setting. All projects involving Landmarks should conform, if possible, with the Design Guidelines for Landmarks and Preservation Districts as adopted by the City Planning Commission and/or the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.
- Planning Code Section 17.136.075 codifies regulations for approval of demolition or removal permits. With the exception of structures declared to be a public nuisance, demolition or removal of an historic property shall only be approved after the Regular Design Review of a replacement project at the subject site has been approved. Demolition findings for Category I, II and III properties (according to degree of significance) must be made, addressing such concerns as the condition of the property, quality of the proposed replacement, and economic feasibility of reuse.

Green Building Ordinance

The Green Building Ordinance (2010) promotes conservation of resources, use and reuse of natural materials, and prevention of waste generated by demolition. Furthermore, it establishes requirements specifically tailored to historic buildings and Oakland’s distinctive building stock, referencing appropriate LEED and Build It Green standards.

CEQA

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires lead agencies in California to consider the effects of proposed actions on historic resources. Measures appropriate to mitigate significant effects to a historical resource may include modification of the project design to avoid adversely affecting the character defining elements of the property, or relocation of the affected historic resource to a location consistent with its historical or

architectural character. If the above measures are not feasible, then other measures may be considered.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION STRATEGIES

The following specific strategies are recommended to protect and preserve historic resources in the West Oakland Opportunity Areas. The City, its Landmarks Board, and its citizens are encouraged to conceive and initiate additional strategies throughout the life of the Plan, in both public and private sectors.

Preservation through Adaptive Reuse

Intent: Protect and preserve historic and architecturally and structurally significant structures by adaptively reusing these buildings when the original use is no longer viable.

Reuse of existing historic buildings is a cost-effective strategy, recognizing the capital investment that has already been made in these buildings and acknowledging the architectural character and historical significance that many of these buildings possess. The State Historical Building Code can often facilitate reuse projects. Reuse further respects green building goals and conserves embodied energy. A large number of non-residential facilities throughout the West Oakland Opportunity Areas are used by industry and other business, but not always to their full potential.

This Specific Plan encourages innovative reuse of existing buildings with a focus on incubator space for specific industry groups, adaptable space for artisans and craftspeople, and flexible small spaces where start-up businesses can share facilities and equipment. Smaller non-landmarked industrial buildings as well as officially designated historic buildings both provide reuse opportunities and are considered important assets of the neighborhood. Reuse can take various forms, illustrated by the examples in the following paragraphs.

Adaptive Reuse-1: Promote catalyst adaptive re-use projects. Several high-profile historic reuses in West Oakland offer examples for other re-use projects:

- The Del Monte Cannery and Label Plant and Standard Underground Cable buildings in the 3rd Street Opportunity Area are large concrete, brick and timber structures that are part of the Southern Pacific Industrial Landscape District. These buildings have long been converted to offices and small manufacturing uses including the Linden Street Brewery.
- The Oakland Mazda Lamp Works at 1600 Campbell, is currently under rehabilitation for live/work lofts in the three-story historic structure. Additional live/work units may be added on the site in the future and should complement the historic architecture and support further revitalization of this area near Raimondi Park .

Adaptive Reuse-2: Partial Replacement: It may be appropriate to replace less significant structures or portions of structures on a large site, while retaining the most significant or character-defining elements.

- The former Coca-Cola Plant at 14th and Mandela is an example envisioned by this Specific Plan as retaining the character-defining Moderne building on the northern portion of the site under the current or similar use, while the remainder of the property could potentially be redeveloped.

Adaptive Reuse-3: Intensification: The National Register-eligible Merco-Nordstrom Valve building at 24th and Peralta Streets is an example of a building that could accommodate a higher level of light industrial or business mix uses.

- Planned improvements to this area pursuant to the Peralta Streetscape Plan should market this building's distinctive contribution to the economic history of West Oakland through streetscape

design, signage and as a gateway to a historic industrial district.

- The eventual reuse of the Southern Pacific 16th Street Station, along with surrounding uses, offers an opportunity to create a higher intensity node which leverages this important historic asset.

Adaptive Reuse-4: Infill. Areas with missing or scattered historic features can be strengthened by compatible new construction. A primary example is the 1600 block of 7th Street, a small S-7 district of remaining fragments of the historic 7th Street commercial district.

- The Specific Plan envisions continued use of the remaining historic structures at each end of this block, with compatible new development on the Lincoln Theater site, e.g. multi-family residential development targeting 7th Street entrepreneurs as an incentive for the revitalization of that district.
- The City could partner with a non-profit entity to pursue grant funding to further activate the area as a Cultural District through development of a performance venue.

Adaptive Reuse-5: Standards: Adaptive reuse of historic West Oakland structures will be subject to the following:

- Renovations or improvements necessary for reuse of Local Register buildings may make use of the State Historical Building Code, which can provide for more flexible construction standards as long as the basic intent of the code – life safety and accessibility - is met.
- Any exterior alterations necessary for the adaptive reuse of Local Register properties shall rely upon the City's Design Guidelines for Landmarks and Preservation Districts and/or the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties to ensure that alterations do not remove or materially alter the character-defining features of the buildings. The Secretary's Standards may also address preservation

of significant interior features, especially in federal tax credit projects.

- Development on the former Lincoln Theater site (or other infill in a designated historic district) will be subject to City Design Review including referral to the Landmarks Board, pursuant to the S-7 Preservation Combining Zone regulations.
- Alterations to non-Local Register historic properties will be subject to PDHP provisions of the Preservation Element and Planning Code, and applicants will be encouraged to consider Heritage Property designation to qualify for Mills Act and State Historical Building Code.
- Where appropriate, extend code flexibility similar to the Historical Building Code to non-Local Register reuse projects through the Building Department’s Alternative Methods and Material Request or similar process.

7th Street Cultural District

Intent: Establish a Cultural District along 7th Street, from Wood Street to Chester Street, in the 7th Street Opportunity Area.

The 7th Street corridor, from Wood Street to Chester Street and beyond, was once a thriving commercial, lodging, and entertainment center and community focal point for the surrounding neighborhood. Surviving fragments of this commercial corridor include the Arcadia Hotel and the Flynn Saloon/McAllister Plumbing building in the one-block S-7 district, and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters Headquarters and Esther’s Orbit Room at the west end of the street. This corridor should once again be a community commercial and cultural focus.

Prospective developments within the 7th Street Cultural District would be selected for compatibility with the historic character of the 7th Street district and the surrounding Prescott and South Prescott neighborhoods, as a means of honoring the past.

Cultural District-1: Continue implementation of the adopted Seventh Street Urban Design Plan (Walter Hood Design, Caltrans Environmental Justice grant, 2004).

Cultural District-2: Extend historic district designation to the entire length of 7th Street between Wood and Chester Street, to retain existing historic buildings and provide for the infill and redevelopment of this corridor with compatible commercial, lodging and entertainment uses. The revitalization of 7th Street can be aided by the streetscape improvements already completed, the envisioned Transit Oriented Development on the south side of 7th Street, mitigation measures to reduce noise from BART, possible funding from grants, and Mills Act contracts for historical buildings.

Cultural District-3: Work with community groups to install educational and interpretive signs, artwork, and landscaping which highlights the historical and cultural features of this corridor. Sponsorship from the entertainment and cultural community may further the work of the Blues Walk of Fame, an adopted goal within the Seventh Street Streetscape improvements.

Cultural District-4: Maintain consistent style and design for the 7th Street streetscape, e.g., the historic Oakland luminaire style, and pursue funding for the implementation of additional lighting.

Cultural District-5: Investigate installing the historic railroad catenary poles (currently housed at the American Steel property) along the length of 7th Street as a streetscape design element to mark this historic district.

Maximize Financial Incentives for Historic Preservation

Intent: The City, together with private development entities, should continue to pursue all available federal, state and local grants, loans and other funding and tax benefit strategies to enhance the economic viability of preserving and reusing historic buildings.

The elimination of Redevelopment resulted in the loss of most of the funding for the City's very effective Commercial Facade and Tenant Improvement Program, which provided free architectural assistance and 50% matching grants to property and business owners in designated areas of the City, including West Oakland. As new funding becomes available, the Program should be used as before for rehabilitation of historic facades, exterior repairs, windows, painting, cleaning, signs, awnings, exterior lighting, improvement or removal of security grilles, fencing, and landscaping. Reinstatement of the City's Commercial Facade and Tenant Improvement Program should be a high priority.

The Mills Act program is a State-enabled incentive which can provide a reduction in property taxes on historic properties if the owner obtains historic designation and signs a contract with the City of Oakland to use any tax savings on a ten-year work program to repair and maintain the historic character of the property. It is a revitalization tool and catalyst for neighborhood improvement and can increase marketability since the lower tax rate is passed on to future owners.

There are two federal investment tax credit programs for rehabilitation of existing buildings - a 20% credit for rehabilitation of National Register properties, closely reviewed by the State Office of Historic Preservation and the National Park Service, and a 10% credit for rehabilitation of pre-1936 non-residential buildings. Both programs require a "substantial rehabilitation," equal in cost to the owner's adjusted basis in the building.

The following City-initiated Historic Preservation incentives are recommended:

Financial Incentives-1: Increase Mills Act participation by reaching out to owners of historic properties, with assistance from private individuals who already participate and are willing to advocate for the benefits of Mills Act contracts.

Financial Incentives-2: To limit potential revenue losses, the City's current Mills Act program has limits on the number and/or dollar amount of contracts in any given year. To further the benefits of this program, consider increasing the limits within West Oakland as was done in the Central Business District.

Financial Incentives-3: Determine how to restore funding for the commercial Facade Improvement and Tenant Improvement matching grant programs and expand the program to industrial properties.

Financial Incentives-4: Investigate establishing a residential Facade Improvement grant program, building on the experience of a program piloted in the Eastlake district several years ago.

Financial Incentives-5: Publicize existing federal investment tax credit programs for income-producing properties on the National Register and pre-1936 commercial and industrial buildings.

Financial Incentives-6: Publicize existing City residential rehabilitation loan programs (and possible future State programs) and their applicability to preservation-related work.

Financial Incentives-7: Implement the building relocation assistance program set forth in HPE Action 3.7.3, whereby the City would facilitate moving of buildings displaced by development projects through such assistance as loans, permit streamlining, and/or identifying land for temporary or permanent siting of buildings.

Financial Incentives-8: Seek additional funding to assist low-income property owners of

historic properties to preserve and maintain the property's historic status.

Financial Incentives-9: Work with the Building Department to make use of the State Historical Building Code less complicated and more predictable.

Financial Incentives-10: Support legislative efforts to establish a State Historic Tax Credit program in California as other states have done, and promote use of the credits if adopted.

Public Education

Intent: Increase the public's awareness of the economic, environmental, and cultural benefits of historic preservation.

Public Education -1: Encourage and educate owners and residents about appropriate rehabilitation, particularly owners of recently-purchased older properties; publicize online availability of the historic rehabilitation guidebook, *Rehab Right*.

Public Education -2: Review and publicize design review and permitting procedures for small projects so that existing preservation standards can be better enforced, particularly within the residential areas of West Oakland.

Public Education - 3: Work with West Oakland business organizations, neighborhood associations, library and senior center, etc. as forums for disseminating preservation information.

Public Education - 4: Promote awareness of West Oakland's historic resources and heritage through existing and new plaque or marker programs (HPE 5.1.1), walking tour programs (HPE 5.1.6), and similar activities. These activities could include special signage that identifies West Oakland's formally designated historic neighborhoods as well as other neighborhoods and could involve a public process in designing the elements.

16th Street Station

Intent: Support rehabilitation of the 16th Street Station such that it becomes the centerpiece of the surrounding neighborhood

The Southern Pacific 16th Street Station is located on the far west edge of the Plan Area at 16th and Wood Streets. It is probably the most significant West Oakland landmark in need of preservation and reuse, and is of enormous symbolic importance to the image and fortunes of West Oakland. The 1910-12 Beaux Arts station has a long and rich history, but was closed by Amtrak in the 1980s and suffered damage in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake. The station and the lands around it were purchased in 2005 by BRIDGE Housing, which is working in partnership with the community nonprofit RAILS (Restoration Association for Improving the Landmark Sixteenth Street Station). Long-term plans call for the Station to become the centerpiece of the surrounding neighborhood, with more than 1,200 homes planned around it. Attracting adjacent supportive commercial establishments will be difficult if the Station itself is not rehabilitated; uses contemplated at the time of writing this Specific Plan include event space, commercial kitchen, food service (cafeteria and/or restaurant, and as a public gathering space. Additionally, reuse of the old signal tower as a marker for the surrounding neighborhood may facilitate development; the small structure might be restored and serve as a beachhead in a manner similar to the way the marquee on the Fox Oakland Theater lent hope and a visible focus for the revival of the Uptown area. Redevelopment of the Train Station and surrounding area is reflected in the 'Mandela West Grand Opportunity Area Development discussion (refer to Section 4.2-1 of this Plan for more details).

16th Street Station-1: Provide City staff expertise from Economic Development, Historic Preservation, Marketing, and other relevant departments to work with RAILS and BRIDGE to develop a list of potential

uses for the Station and grounds, and seek to market and achieve reuse.

16th Street Station-2: Given the scale of the 16th Street Station’s needed rehabilitation and redevelopment efforts, including eventual seismic retrofitting, recognize that the property will likely be developed using a phased approach over many years.

- Encourage interim site development, e.g., an exhibition of new building forms such as green modular units (rehabbed shipping containers) , which can be relocated at the time of permanent development.

16th Street Station-3: Support and seek festivals, street fairs and special events which showcase the 16th Street Station by offering an interim city permit which details conditions for interim events that are compatible with the community and activate the site prior to full redevelopment.

16th Street Station-4: Ensure that in future development of the surrounding area, the Station is a community focal point or destination which serves to strengthen the neighborhood character.

16th Street Station-5: Improve pedestrian and transit access to the 16th Street Station both within the immediate vicinity and in relation to the rest of Oakland, as a means of supporting revitalization efforts and fostering the Station as a community focal point.

Designation for Eligible Properties and Districts

Intent: Seek to increase the number of designated historic resources in West Oakland by encouraging owners to apply for Landmark, Heritage Property, S-7, or S-20 status for historically important buildings and districts.

Historic Preservation Element Policy 3.3 proposes that City-assisted historic properties be required to apply for local designation, and

many of the incentives in the Preservation Element are tied to designation. Designation is almost always at property owners’ initiative. District designation in practice requires unanimous owner consent and therefore requires a time-consuming public education process. The Historic Preservation Element recommends actions to “enhance the publicity and prestige” of Landmark, Heritage Property, and district designation.

Historic Designation-1: Work with neighborhood residents to encourage S-20 district designation of the South Prescott and Oakland Point neighborhoods, portions thereof, and/or other identified districts throughout West Oakland, following the example of Oak Center neighborhood.

Historic Designation-2: Collaborate with owners of significant individual properties to seek designation as Heritage Properties or City Landmarks, following the recent example of the Shorey House at 1782 8th Street.

Historic Designation-3: Educate the public to appreciate the incentives and benefits of designation and dispel fears of over-regulation.

Historic Designation-4: Consider a yet broader zoning overlay of Conservation Districts or Neighborhoods that might promote preservation of neighborhood character with less exacting eligibility standards and regulations.

Development Adjacent to Historic Resources

Intent: New development should be of high quality and designed in a manner that provides for compatibility and enhancement of adjacent historic resources.

Although the boundaries of the Specific Plan’s Opportunity Areas do not overlap with or encroach into West Oakland’s historic neighborhoods, new growth and development envisioned under the Plan could still indirectly affect historic structures or districts. The

following design considerations are recommended:

Historically Compatible Design-1: Infill development projects (both residential and commercial/business mix) should be designed so that heights, densities and building envelopes form compatible transitions to historic neighborhood context.

Historically Compatible Design-2: For large projects like the West Oakland BART Station Transit Oriented Development (TOD) project, build upon and respect design characteristics of surrounding areas.

Historically Compatible Design – 3: Design characteristics of each of the Specific Plan’s Opportunity Areas are summarized as follows:

- Opportunity Areas 1 and 3: Infill and large projects should include the following characteristics in order to best relate to existing industrial buildings:
 - ✓ Build to edge of sidewalks to reinforce the existing street wall.
 - ✓ Mass larger buildings as rectangular shaped blocks that are not more than 2 levels taller than existing nearby buildings.
 - ✓ Use setbacks to create gentle transitions to existing nearby buildings.
 - ✓ Use regularly spaced openings, particularly on lower levels, either punched or skeletally articulated, similar to existing nearby buildings.
 - ✓ Encourage use of industrial materials such as poured concrete and brick to relate to any existing nearby industrial context.
 - ✓ Employ decorative materials such as brick or tile near major entrances or on corners.
- Opportunity Areas 2 and 4:
 - ✓ On major commercial arterials such as 7th Street and San Pablo Avenue,

build to edge of sidewalk and using continuous storefronts with transom windows over display windows and bay windows for upper level residential that relate to existing storefronts in area.

- ✓ On side streets employ small porches and stoops as well as small gardens to better relate to small scale neighborhood buildings.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE STUDIES AND PLANS

Preservation in Historic Residential Areas

West Oakland’s history includes not only the blues entertainment addressed in the 7th Street Cultural District concept, but also political action, the Sleeping Car Porters, the Black Panthers, and the many prominent citizens that have lived in the area.

An important follow-up would be to develop preservation strategies that would specifically apply to the residential areas and throughout the Specific Plan Area.

Incentives for owners to improve the conditions of their historic structures could include:

- Monetary Incentives: In addition to the federal 20% investment tax credit for certified rehabilitation of National Register buildings, there is a less-known 10% federal credit for rehabilitation of pre-1936 commercial buildings;
- The City can support legislative efforts to establish a State Historic Tax Credit program in California as other states have done, and promote use of the credit if adopted;
- The Mills Act tax reduction program for Designated Historic Properties requires an approved work program for rehabilitation and maintenance; several West Oakland properties now participate, and hundreds would be eligible;
- The City’s Housing Department. has various housing loans and grants for homeowners;

- Policy 3.12 of the City’s Preservation Element proposes City actions to promote rehabilitation of “substandard or public nuisance properties.”
- Mills Act and federal 20% tax credit require rehab work to maintain historic features, but other programs and day-to-day project review do not. Owners and agencies can benefit from information on how to improve the condition of historic buildings and repair deferred maintenance without losing historic character.

8.3: Fostering the Creative Economy & Cultural Arts Community

Industrial arts and artists in West Oakland represent a vibrant and growing sector of the “creative economy”. These businesses and industries are actively involved in the sophisticated execution of usually singular objects and fine art, performance art including music theater and dance, associated with intellectual property and original expression, “making” creative products - making art, making objects, making technology, and making cultural experiences.

Arts-related businesses in West Oakland are diverse and include traditional ethnic-based cultural groups, youth groups, individual artists, and most notably a large community of industrial artists who often occupy older and physically-challenged or underutilized buildings due to need for lower rent structures and who, contribute industry and creativity to the area. These clusters of arts activities are hubs of innovation and creativity, and spur cultural production. They contribute as an economy of their own in wages resulting from commissions and grants, and contribute to the local economy in purchases of goods and services (supply chain). Precisely because this cultural district of West Oakland was not planned from scratch but instead has grown from the self-organized efforts of local participants, this pioneering industrial arts movement deserves recognition and regulatory assistance and support from the City in the form of a business-friendly permitting structure. The arts economy in West Oakland deserves a spirit of cultivation to help these businesses grow and flourish without snuffing out the spark that makes it distinctive.

WEST OAKLAND ARTISTS

Oakland is home to thousands of artists, arts and culture-related community based organizations, as well as educational institutions that support the arts. “Oakland has over 10,000 artists - more per capita than anywhere in the nation besides Greenwich Village.”

former Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown

According to a study conducted by Americans for the Arts, there were more than 5,500 arts-related businesses employing approximately 21,500 people throughout Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

- The Oakland Partnership’s “Taking Stock of Oakland’s Economy” reports that the arts, design professions and digital media are considered one of Oakland’s primary economic “clusters”.
- The City of Oakland’s Economic Development Division lists the arts and digital media sector as one of Oakland’s “key Industries”, noting that Oakland ranks 23rd in the country for the number of artists as a percent of the workforce.
- According to the report “Artists in the Workforce 1990-2005”, there are over 8,600 designers, 3,400 architects, and nearly 2,700 fine artists, art directors and animators living and working in Oakland.

Clearly, Oakland’s art community is strong and is growing. This can be evidenced in the increasing number of art galleries, the popularity of the monthly First Friday Art Murmur art walk in Uptown, the popularity and success of the Crucible as an industrial arts center, and the scores of digital media startups (e.g., Pandora Music) emerging in downtown.

From site tours and area observations, it is clear that arts activity in West Oakland represents a

significant part of Oakland’s lifestyle and community, and that there is a considerable population of artists and “arts-adjacent” lifestyle residents in West Oakland. Specific Plan analysis has estimated that working artists occupy roughly 1,000 to 1,200 residential and live/work units in West Oakland. Many “live/work” units are not occupied by artists, although this was the sector which originally spurred the architectural type formation. Still, whether inhabited by artists or not, new live/work construction has spurred tremendous economic development through the infusion of new residents, construction and local spending.

There are three main groups of resident artist stakeholders in West Oakland:

- Those who reside in West Oakland housing units;
- Those who work in West Oakland studios, primarily former industrial space such as American Steel; and
- Those who occupy live/work space in West Oakland, such as the Peralta Lofts.

There are several notable live/work projects in West Oakland developed by artists specifically for artists, including the residential studios on Lewis Street between 5th and 3rd Street, and the Peralta Studios at Peralta and West Grand Avenue (rented exclusively to practicing artists). Most artists who live in West Oakland are renters. Some West Oakland artists live in live/work conversions of formerly underutilized industrial spaces which are unpermitted, due to their lack of knowledge of the regulatory system or due to the low rent scales of such facilities.

Many of these are minimally improved for live/work use (may include only floors, stubbed utilities, and walls between units), and where residents undertake the final improvements to the units on their own. West Oakland also attracts an “arts-adjacent,” lifestyle segment that is attracted to the artists and their surroundings. These artists’ communities are often in interesting places, such as former manufacturing facilities and yards, which are ripe for discovery and which fuel creativity. Some of these arts-adjacent residents are

employed in related fields such as alternative energy and urban farming and there is a natural synergy between environmental innovation and arts.

Demographics

The increase in artists and alternative lifestyle residents in West Oakland represent a highly visible change in the area’s population. The artists and arts-related community include residents of all ethnicities, and thus contribute to the area’s growing ethnic diversity.

The nonprofit group Support Oakland Artists (SOA) conducted an Art Census in order to take inventory and assess the economic and community impact of the arts in Oakland. Out of the 623 members of the SOA community, 317 have completed the Art Census.

Preliminary findings indicate that Oakland’s arts-related income and revenue is over \$12.7 million, with an additional \$11.2 million of indirect economic impacts created by art-related expenses for activities. These arts-related activities also produce considerable sales tax revenues for the City.

The artists now in West Oakland form a distinct community. Over the years, artists have been attracted to West Oakland by the large volume of low-cost space. Some of the first artists moved into the area in the late 1970s and early 1980s. These included individuals who purchased properties and built arts-related compounds and institutions. Another wave of artists moved to the area during the post dotcom boom, making smaller-scale acquisitions such as LoBot Gallery and Black Dot Artists Collective.

West Oakland Arts Typology

The industrial arts and artists in West Oakland represent a vibrant and growing sector of the “creative economy”, which also includes notable performance groups such as Attitudinal Healing, the Prescott Circus, Project Bandaloop, Trapeze Arts and Kinetic Arts Center. The Prescott Joseph Center is associated with theater performers. Recently the historic Continental Club has re-opened as a comedy club, and the 20-year+ Soundwave

Studios recently obtained its planning permits to open as the Wood Street Music Hall.

In particular, the concentration of industrial arts businesses and individual studios in West Oakland are increasingly being known as “Makers” in association with Maker Faire, Burning Man and other festivals which feature such work. Oakland Industrial artists are known internationally for such activities, yet are under-recognized within the local area as a collective. Therefore, the City has sponsored the creation of an “Oakland Maker” initiative, (www.oaklandmakers.org) to further brand, support and engage the community in alliance with key industrial companies. The Oakland Maker initiative helps to foster the “Industrial Commons”, a shared and more tangible platform for recognition and appreciation of the need for maintenance of Oakland’s industrial land stock, which currently is less than 3 percent of the total land supply in Oakland, per the General Plan designations (about 5% if the Port of Oakland lands are included). Such companies are increasingly using innovation in their work, and thereby also share needs for stable industrial facilities which increasing their use of technology.

Industrial arts however are but one of the vibrant “creative economy” business types in West Oakland. Several arts typologies and arts-adjacent / arts-related businesses exist within West Oakland:

- industrial arts
- visual arts
- digital arts
- music, film and video
- performance arts
- culinary arts
- publishers and literary arts
- architects, landscape architects and engineers
- urban farms and gardens
- industrial design
- audio visual, and film
- video and photographic arts
- fashion & textile design

There is also a variety of business types that support art- and arts-related businesses, including art supplies, arts transporters, arts education and institutions, exhibition space and retail sales, and wholesalers/distributors.

West Oakland’s Arts-Specific Development

Arts facility types include galleries, temporary installations or “pop-up” art showings, and live/work facilities. Several West Oakland developments have targeted the arts community as either living or work space tenants. Oakland architectural expertise in this arena has flourished since the early 1980s, when the state declared a relaxation of regulation in its Building Code to allow for such development. The City of Oakland followed with innovative regulation of its own in 1981.

Oakland’s Live/Work facility types include “Work/Live” with strict adherence to a 2/3rds work occupancy and floor plan, and a limitation of 1/3rd of the square footage for the residential portion. Another “Live/Work” facility type was introduced into the Planning Code in the mid-2000s to address the “lifestyle loft” form of architecture and design, which was prevalent especially in the “Housing & Business Mix” (HBX) zoning districts. There are also Work/Live facilities which are designed with “commons” - a form of Open Space communally shared (indoors or outdoors) in spaces which would otherwise not offer any real outdoor shared space, due to their historic footprint “lot line to lot line”. These developments have capitalized on low cost land, and undervalued and/or disinvested, and thereby cheaper, industrial facilities to create projects designed specifically for the arts segment. Essentially, the lack of competition for residential and work spaces has created a vacuum filled by artists.

There is a considerable amount of both small- and large-scale arts users of industrial space in West Oakland. Large-scale users (over 25,000 sf. to 250,000 sf.) include, but are not limited to, The Crucible off of 7th Street, American Steel Studios at Mandela/Grand, the Bruce Beasley Studio in South Prescott, Mark Bulwinkle studio and work space in the north Clawson

neighborhood, and Trapeze Arts, Inc. near Pine and 8th Street. Many industrial artists create large-scale art pieces to be displayed at such places as Burning Man. The Chiodo Art Development, which created the *Remember Them Monument* for the Uptown district of Oakland, is located in an industrial building in West Oakland. American Steel Studios is a workspace for artists and innovation workers that grew out of a single temporary rental to one artist. Since then, a master lease covering 200,000 square feet of the American Steel building and the adjacent Poplar Warehouse building is now in effect. There are 70 tenants in the American Steel Studio, including industrial artists and non-artist science and technology innovation companies. Leaseholds range between 1,000 to 6,000 square feet.

Additionally, there are smaller work and storage spaces averaging 100 to 300 square feet in the Poplar Warehouse. The property's history as a heavy industrial facility is a major attraction to potential tenants, who use the 18-ton bridge cranes and drive-through truck access for large-scale fabrication and industrial arts projects. The facility is used for production work, shows and exhibits (in the Poplar Warehouse), and some large-scale community events. This existing industrial arts community has attracted industrial artists from around the country and the world, fueling a new Industrial Arts Movement seated in West Oakland. This movement is being documented and celebrated by the global press, but remains largely unrecognized locally.

There are limited retail, food and beverage establishments in West Oakland that cater to the arts and arts-oriented segments. Most of this economic energy is captured in the Uptown district. One exception is the popular Brown Sugar Kitchen at 2534 Mandela Parkway, which generates strong sales and a loyal customer base that endures long waits for tables in peak periods and attracts patrons to West Oakland from around the region.

Some arts establishments, such as American Steel, LoBot Gallery, and others, are also social entrepreneurs, hold special activity events and small scale art "openings" and soirees. These

activities provide a patron draw that attracts people to West Oakland and expose them to the vast array of arts enterprises occurring in the district. For example, The Crucible has regular events that attract up to 1,000 people.

ARTS AND CULTURAL DISTRICTS

"Natural cultural districts" is a term that is both descriptive and analytical. Descriptively, a natural cultural district simply identifies a neighborhood that has spawned a density of assets- organizations, businesses, participants, and artists- that sets it apart from other neighborhoods. Analytically, these districts are of interest because of the side-effects of the density of these assets. Economic developers note that clusters encourage innovation and creativity—a spur to cultural production. At the same time, a cluster of cultural assets often pushes a neighborhood to a re-generation tipping-point, attracting new services and residents.

Cultivating "Natural" Cultural Districts, Mark J. Stern and Susan C. Seifert

Nationally, a number of publications have been released on the topic of Arts as a revitalization strategy; arts and the formation of cultural districts, arts and their role in community development, and arts and the creative economy, particularly recognized the linkage between economic stimulation, business attraction and concentrated districts of creative activity and enterprise development. The American Planning Association has released technical guides for land use planners to recognize the importance of arts as a neighborhood catalyst. Combined, the energy of concentrated artist districts, including non-downtowns such as West Oakland, have spurred interest from funders and private foundations in the linkage between community development and arts' investment in communities.

The University of Pennsylvania's Social Impact of the Arts Project, which has been conducting research on the role of the arts and culture in urban neighborhoods for the past 15 years, has identified the existence of 'natural cultural districts': geographic areas in which a variety of

cultural assets - organizations, businesses, participants and artists- are clustered.

West Oakland can be clearly defined as a cultural and arts district, given its many existing clusters of arts-related activities (see **Figure 8.3.1**).

The Benefits of Arts and Cultural Districts

Financial Benefits – a National Perspective

On a national level, the Americans for the Arts “*Arts & Economic Prosperity III*” report has found that the arts and culture industry generates \$166.2 billion in national economic activity annually.

“This spending supports 5.7 million full-time jobs in the United. Because arts and culture organizations are strongly rooted in their communities, these are jobs that necessarily remain local and cannot be shipped overseas. The industry also generates nearly \$30 billion in revenue to local, state, and federal governments every year. By comparison, the three levels of government (national, state and local) collectively spend less than \$4 billion annually to support arts and culture, a 7:1 return on investment.

Whether serving the local community or out-of-town visitors, a vibrant arts and culture industry helps local businesses thrive. Cities around the world are competing to attract new businesses as well as our brightest young professionals. International studies show that the winners will be communities that offer an abundance of arts and culture opportunities. As the arts flourish, so will creativity and innovation, the fuel that drives our global economy.”

Social Benefits

Natural cultural districts are important for several reasons in addition to direct dollars:

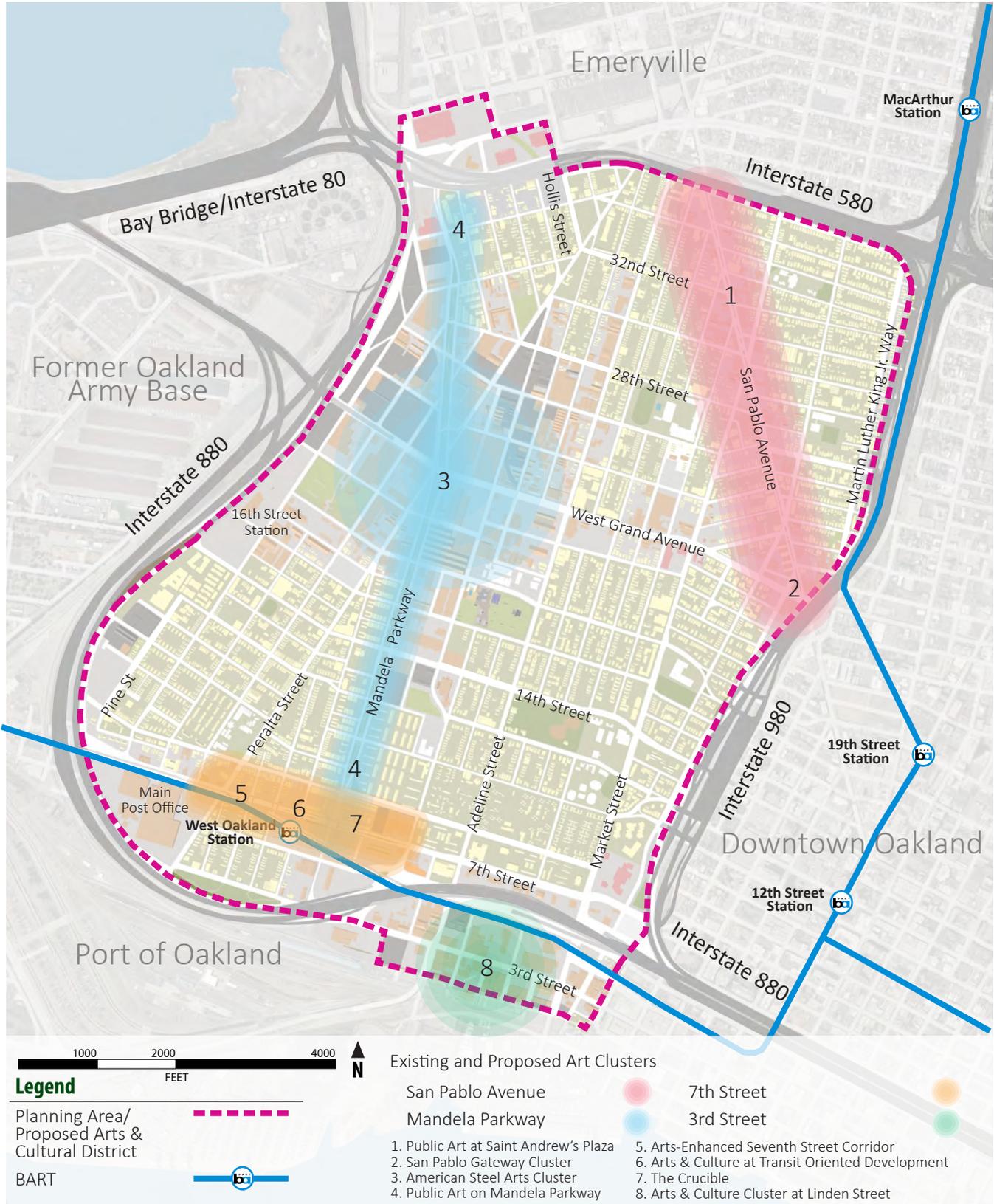
- The districts have a positive impact on cultural production. Artists and other cultural entrepreneurs interact, learn, compete, and test out their ideas on one another.

- Cultural districts contribute to group efficacy within neighborhoods and bridge social and ethnic groups, using culture to revitalize cities without creating greater divisions between classes.
- The side effect of a cluster of arts activities is innovation and creativity, which spur cultural production and can help neighborhoods on the verge of revitalization by attracting new services and residents.
- Cultural districts can offer the best balance of costs and potential benefits because they are already burgeoning areas, ripe for strategic interventions to increase their success, offer opportunities for profitable investment, and have the ability to produce considerable spillover effects on less dynamic parts of the City.
- Cultural districts revitalize cities by building geographically-defined social networks that translate cultural vitality into economic dynamism.

Local Benefits

Arts-related businesses in West Oakland occupy many formerly vacant buildings, contributing industry and creativity to the area. They make products and provide programs that have a strong customer-based demand. This vibrant creative context in West Oakland spurs positive, sustainable growth which is less likely to be subject to economic downturns or to cause displacement of existing businesses and residents.

Fig. 8.3.1: Existing Art Clusters



Challenges in Maintaining a Cultural District

Artists' Housing

Most artists who live in West Oakland are renters. This is significant since renters are more likely to be displaced than owners if land prices and rents increase. Thus, art-related developments are more likely to be negatively impacted by rising area rents and a change in property assets to higher value uses.

Arts & Cultural Program Building Space

The arts community is price-sensitive. Arts-related uses have been generally priced out of San Francisco by development pressures arising from that City's prosperous economy, and that phenomenon risks repeating in West Oakland due to economic changes. This also suggests that higher-cost, new development projects are unlikely to be occupied by price-sensitive arts uses. To keep the arts community in West Oakland, the inventory of inexpensively remodeled industrial buildings needs to remain available at low prices. In addition, it has been precisely the stock of vacant or underused industrial structures that has attracted large-scale industrial artists to West Oakland neighborhoods.

Arts Institutions

As of the writing of this Specific Plan, Black Rock Arts Foundation LLC, which organizes the annual Burning Man festival and is currently a West Oakland cultural arts business, plans to relocate its headquarters into office space in the mid-Market district of San Francisco. They are also proposed as a master tenant for San Francisco's historic Pier 70 building. This indicates that, while there might be a demand for more institutional arts uses that can afford higher rents, to date that segment has chosen San Francisco locations.

STRATEGIES FOR CULTIVATING WEST OAKLAND'S ARTS & CULTURAL DISTRICTS

Cultural districts present a challenge to those interested in neighborhood and business revitalization. What can policy-makers do to encourage these districts without snuffing out the spark that makes them distinctive? Because cultural districts are not planned from scratch but rely instead on the self-organized efforts of local players, they require tender-care and a light hand. Cultural districts must be cultivated.

Including Art as an Integral Component of New Development

Intent: Include arts development programs in major public and private development projects as a means to: a) maintain the West Oakland "brand", character and identity; b) continue to attract arts visitors; and most importantly, c) support local artists by increasing their patron base.

Include Art-1: Encourage the use of locally made street furniture and art in all City-sponsored streetscape improvement projects. Incorporate locally made art into the pedestrian network by using street medians, intersection bulb-outs, pocket plazas, and wide sidewalk spaces as display areas.

- Install public art along Mandela Parkway and any other significant streetscape improvement projects (e.g., 7th Street, Adeline Street, etc.).
- Use locally-contracted art made in West Oakland to enhance and identify important community "gateways" into West Oakland neighborhoods.
- Support the installation of gateway art at major entry locations into West Oakland, partnering with youth non-profit local groups to do so.

Include Art-2: Use the City's 1.5% Public Art Ordinance funds, and seek additional funding sources to support the

incorporation of art in publically-sponsored development projects, specifically in West Oakland.

- Incorporate public art within the development of major new institutional, private, and non-profit developments (e.g., labs, hospital, educational) or private business campuses.
- Incorporate public art at the West Oakland BART Station and within its associated Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) project.
- Develop goals for historic and/or cultural public artwork installations that include, among other facets, an objective that artwork be installed on a semi-permanent basis, and be tied to West Oakland infrastructure improvements, such as roundabouts, curb bulb-outs, pedestrian corridors, bike paths, boulevard medians, and similar locations, and which define neighborhood boundaries.

Include Art-3: Work with community groups to install educational and interpretive signs, artwork and landscaping that highlight West Oakland’s historic and cultural features.

- Seek creative funding sources to provide interim or temporary art installations, performance art, and other arts and cultural programs in highly visible locations of West Oakland.

Layering of Arts and Cultural Components

Intent: Develop, foster and enrich the multi-cultural diversity of West Oakland. Restore and preserve cultural assets and historic buildings, and maintain the community fabric that makes West Oakland unique.

Arts districts are complex entities and so too are the qualities and types of arts programming that make each district successful. For example, many arts and cultural districts employ art in storefront projects. Temporary art installations and cultural events, scaled appropriately and relevant to the local

community, have the potential to engage both the local community and draw visitors from across the region. The following strategies are intended to assist the West Oakland arts community continue to build its own unique portfolio of arts by layering both physical elements and programmatic event to help catapult West Oakland’s public perception as an arts district.

Art and Culture-1: Within the 7th Street

Opportunity Area, new development along 7th Street is envisioned as bringing back the historic role of this area as a vibrant neighborhood center, beginning with the implementation of the Seventh Street Streetscape and Blues Walk of Fame, enhanced through facade and or window treatments by neighborhood-serving commercial establishments.

- Emphasis should be placed on prioritizing the types of commercial uses that enliven the street and can help to revitalize 7th Street as a celebration of West Oakland’s cultural history of music, art and entertainment.
- Art galleries, exhibit space, retail sales of locally-made products, and night clubs which revitalize this corridor with daytime and nighttime activities are specifically encouraged.
- New commercial uses along 7th Street and within any new development around the nearby West Oakland BART Station could help re-connect the surrounding neighborhoods by physically filling in gaps and connecting residential edges of the surrounding neighborhoods to the 7th Street corridor.

Art and Culture-2: Establish a more activated

streetscape along San Pablo Avenue by encouraging new commercial activities that serve the social and cultural needs of residents from the adjacent neighborhoods.

Arts and Culture-3: Acknowledge the arts as economic development catalysts.

- The City should support dedicated and expedited permitting of festivals, street fairs and special events. Encourage and

celebrate the arts as a basis of social and economic activity.

- Hold special events that promote West Oakland’s digital media, software, and information technology business start-ups, seeking to better attract and fill vacancies in co-working, incubator, and studio spaces.

Arts and Culture-4: Coordinate with Oakland’s historic advocacy groups to better integrate the exploration of West Oakland’s physical historic resources with its cultural roots and its arts-related culture.

- The layering of art, historical resources and cultural walks can help stabilize the West Oakland community by creating pride of place, connecting people more deeply to the district's assets, and providing opportunities for engaging new audiences.

A Unique and Authentic Brand

Intent: Establish a West Oakland Arts District with an identity and ‘brand’ that is unique and authentic to the place.

An environment of innovation and entertainment will draw creative residents, innovative businesses or visitors seeking a new experience. Within West Oakland, a “maker” brand identity is underway, which will eventually produce branding or logo identification for Oakland. It is imperative to use such positive branding to dispel the current media perception and reality of West Oakland as an unsafe and blighted community.

Arts “Brand”-1: Build marketing strategies to support the existing arts and cultural businesses in West Oakland, and to attract more of these businesses.

- Grow and enhance the current www.westoaklandworks.com website as a tool for arts and culture business retention, attraction and to encourage consumer access to local arts products.

- Support the growth and branding of www.Oaklandmakers.org, which has a dominant presence by West Oakland artists, artisans and creative enterprises. Use the West Oakland creative economy to further brand a Made in Oakland label, out of that movement to help grow enterprise in West Oakland.

Large-Scale Development Projects (or ‘Anchors’) as Development & Community Builders

Intent: Maintain the existing anchors of the arts in West Oakland, and create new anchors for an arts and cultural district, such as institutions, shared tenancy projects (i.e., American Steel), and natural “clusters” of various arts industries to help catalyze the arts in West Oakland, and help create and maintain a district identity.

Large anchors that employ community outreach efforts through community-focused programs play an important role in establishing and maintaining a cultural district. They are not only catalytic to the creation of the district, but also helpful in forging meaningful partnerships with diverse arts, cultural and social development organizations.

Art Anchors-1: The West Oakland Transit Village/ BART development should be curated to include artistic invention and innovation, and to layer uses such that market-rate users in tech or R&D-type creative spaces will augment and support the rental rates, demonstrating the types of creative economy that is present in the rest of the district.

- Insure that the commercial uses at the West Oakland BART Transit-Oriented Development do not “sap energy” and create its own competition to the revival of Seventh Street as a local commercial neighborhood featuring local goods and or ownership by local residents.

Art Anchors-2: The American Steel building and the adjacent Poplar Warehouse building

currently house American Steel Studios - an “industrial commons” and with individual rental work space for artists and innovation workers. There are currently 70 tenants in the Studio, including industrial artists and non-artist science and technology innovation companies. Such a large group of artists in one space provides the makings of an “arts anchor” for the West Oakland community.

- In the short- and mid-term timeframe, use of this building as home to the American Steel Studio represents a valuable, productive and integral cultural arts use, providing a financially viable and unique use of this unique space.
- As discussed further in the Land Use Chapter (Chapter 4 of this Specific Plan), the American Steel site is envisioned as a future higher-intensity business location. In the long-term, this site could be enhanced with development of an integrated arts institution with classrooms, community cultural events space, outreach programs and administrative support space.

Art Anchors-3: Support development of a full-service, state of the art film and television production facility in West Oakland. Due to Army Base redevelopment activities, the 30+ tenants of the Oakland Film Center were displaced. Many have since relocated out of Oakland. However, West Oakland remains an attractive location for the film community, due to its central location and proximity to San Francisco, which continues to draw and support production on-site shoots. West Oakland’s creative economy and the presence of industrial artists and facilities is also a key factor for them.

- The City should work to re-establish a fully-staffed Film Office which can then support such business location in West Oakland.
- Steps should be taken in the near future to long term to attract and re-establish film facilities, perhaps as part of future development at the West Oakland BART

Station and/or Mandela/West Grand Opportunity Area.

- Support the return of the Oakland Film Center and attract other film businesses by associating them as an essential component of the West Oakland Creative Economy. Work to help co-locate such users in future facilities where the presence of “industrial commons” and facility compatibility will allow them to grow, thrive and expand.
- Support a plan to develop a full-service, state-of-the-art film and television production facility in West Oakland.

Art Anchors-4: The 3rd Street Opportunity Area should retain and enhance important arts-related businesses, such that it forms a “clustered anchor” of arts-related business activity.

The 3rd Street Opportunity Area contains a large number of creative-economy businesses and industries. It is home to new food and beverage users (Linden Brewery, Urban Legends Wine, Allied Poultry, Lehar Foods and coffee wholesalers) as well as creative print & media, education and professional design services (Lonely Planet, Galileo Science Camps). These businesses have established the 3rd Street Corridor as an active industrial district centrally located and in proximity to Jack London Square’s retail amenities. The historic older brick buildings and warehouses in this portion of the City are exciting and unique spaces, well suited to the needs of these types of businesses.

Private Sector Leadership & Supporting Organizations

Intent: Foster a strong public/private partnership in support of West Oakland arts. Private sector leadership is essential. While city departments and elected officials play key roles at strategic moments, such as providing funding for the public realm improvements or implementing key zoning changes necessary to spur desired development, private sector leaders are critical to the development and success of an arts district.

Arts Leadership-1: Expand and develop new revenue streams for Oakland’s multicultural arts citywide, benefitting West Oakland in its concentration of arts organizations.

- Consider expanding the percentage requirement for the arts under the City’s capital improvement projects, include private development requirements, and investigate opportunities to leverage Port of Oakland investments.
- Develop greater foundation, philanthropic and donor-based financial support for the arts.
- Secure corporate giving, such as the local sponsorships of the East Bay Symphony.
- Promote public/private partnerships for cultural enhancements
- Create an endowment for “Oakland Arts”.
- Work to generate greater funding opportunities through grants and support initiatives.

Arts Leadership-2: Support creation of an Oakland Arts Master Plan, including a specific Arts Education Master Plan. Incorporate current successful programs, such as Prescott Circus, Art Esteem, Destiny Arts (North Oakland but serving many West Oakland kids) and other such youth programs. The most creative and innovative educational programs help to maintain

school attendance, which counters attrition rates and raises academic achievement. Arts education also encourages higher education endeavors, regenerates local leadership and establishes qualitatively healthier livelihoods. There has been shown to be a direct correlation between increased cultural awareness and education, and with a decrease in the degree of violence and safety in the West Oakland schools.

- Work with West Oakland artists, city and school employees and private developers, to harness the economic and transformative potential of local artistic talent.

Arts Leadership-3: Support West Oakland Cultural Arts Resource Mapping as part of a citywide Arts Planning effort. Create a comprehensive directory, using the local Oakland “Wiki” or other publically-accessible media site, to gather and define, assess, and document the economic impact of the arts sector.

- Create a recurring survey to gather information on individual West Oakland artists, cultural facilities and service organizations.
- Distribute such information through the westoaklandworks.com website, City of Oakland Facebook and other media sites (Oakland Local, etc.). Make the survey information available to all sectors of the community, to government agencies and to visitors in order to increase civic participation and make these vital resources available and better realized.
- Establish the City’s Cultural Arts & Marketing office as the “go to” conduit for resourcing various artist organizations within the City.
- Create a dynamic map of West Oakland’s arts and cultural resources, which can be easily updated to ensure accuracy and distributed in various formats.

Regulatory Controls

Intent: Foster a business-friendly approach to regulations affecting local West Oakland artists, supporting the local artist economy while requiring the submission of necessary business licenses. Such an approach could further recognize the ‘creative economy’ in West Oakland.

Arts Regs-1: The City should consider holding an “amnesty” on a one-time basis, and offer pro-active assistance to owners to bring arts-related live/work facilities into code conformance, such as was done for unreinforced masonry buildings after the Loma Prieta earthquake.

- Such a strategy may alleviate some of the fear on the part of the artist residents that required improvements will allow landlords to justify steep rent increases, and thereby be a natural eviction process. This would enable a safer, healthier stock of facilities and also discourage poor landlord behaviors, which often hold West Oakland back by retaining poor building stock and poor conditions.

Arts Reg-2: The Specific Plan Area should take advantage of the natural clustering of artists in studios and residences. Zoning regulations for home occupancy permits should be relaxed throughout the residential neighborhoods in the Plan Area, offering expanded self-employment opportunities and relaxed regulations about on-site sales. Locations throughout the Plan Area that currently allow Home Occupations should be designated for such “business-friendly” regulations.