

# 1

## PLANNING CONTEXT

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This chapter gives the background of the Oakland General Plan. It explains the conditions and process that led to the development of the Land Use and Transportation Element. There is also a brief history of how Oakland has developed over time and how those changes affect the planning context today. Finally, this chapter presents a summary of the challenges that face Oakland as we look to the future and describes how the Land Use and Transportation Element responds to them.

### Chapter Contents

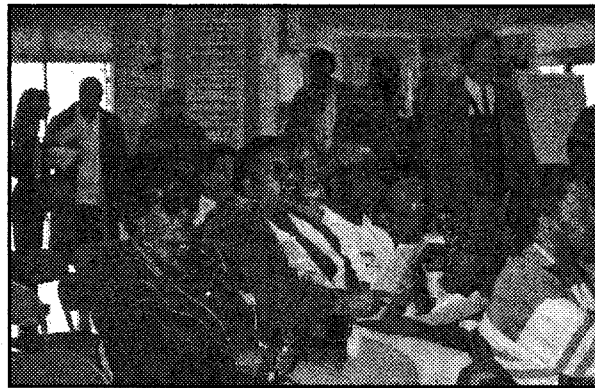
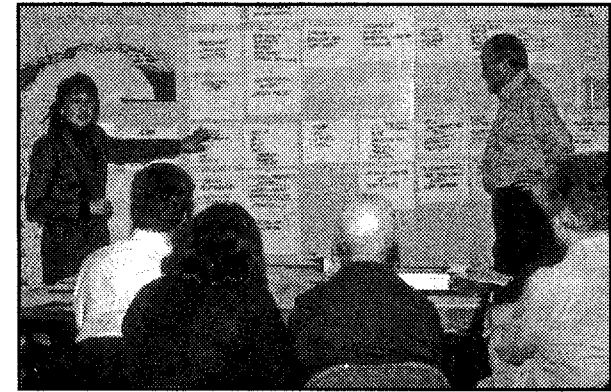
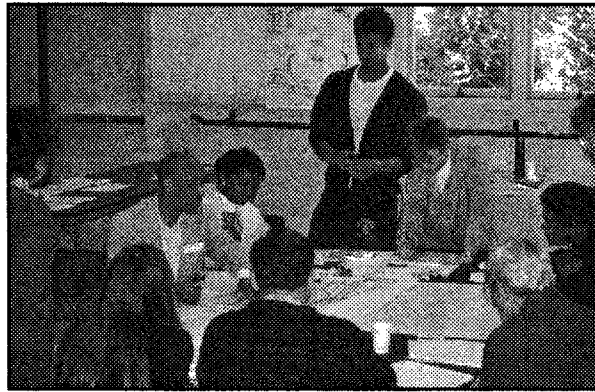
#### **CREATING THE LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT**

#### **A BRIEF HISTORY OF OAKLAND**

#### **CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES**



## CREATING THE LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT



Oakland's approach to preparing the Land Use and Transportation Element was based on a commitment to a General Plan that:

- ◆ Is by and for the Oakland community
- ◆ Emphasizes integration of planning, economic development, and implementation
- ◆ Balances citywide and neighborhood perspectives

## A Plan By and For the Oakland Community

To guide development of the Element, the Mayor and City Council appointed the 30+ member General Plan Congress to provide policy and map direction, gather and reflect community input, and ensure that the desires of the Oakland community are expressed in the Plan. The Congress, a diverse mix of energetic and committed individuals representing neighborhood groups, business associations, not-for-profit organizations, and City commissions, participated in an innovative three-phase process for completing the Plan. In addition, an aggressive public participation and education program of 18 community workshops drawing a total of over 1,000 citizens, encouraged grassroots participation from the broader community.

*“The Plan should guide and balance the competing interests of economic development and conserving neighborhoods. We should try and define the role of Oakland as a city, as part of the East Bay, and as part of the world.”*

*-Peter Smith, General Plan Congress, 1993*

The General Plan Congress conquered the great array of issues to be addressed in the Element by organizing into five working groups, each focusing on a geographic or subject area of concern. The Policy Framework in Chapter 2 of the Element is the direct result of their efforts and organization into working groups addressing:

- ◆ Waterfront
- ◆ Downtown
- ◆ Industry and Commerce
- ◆ Neighborhoods
- ◆ Transportation and Transit-oriented Development

This organization resulted in comprehensive policies specific to areas, or area issues. These five topic areas also had the key advantage of offering a “visual sense” of the City; that is, a person could imagine the Waterfront, Downtown, and Neighborhood areas, while seeing the Transportation network linked with Industry and Commerce as the framework upon which the city rests or moves. This picture of the City inspired by the General Plan Congress’s Vision and Policy Framework is the basis of the City Structure Diagram presented in Chapter 2.

## Emphasize Integration of Planning, Economic Development, and Implementation

Early in its work, the Congress realized the need for a Plan that would spur a great commitment to action, with the Element serving as the ongoing policy guide regarding physical development for the City. The result is that an innovative, integrated, and powerful planning, economic development, and implementation program are key aspects of this Element. These programs implement the City’s 1997 Economic Development Strategy as well as the General Plan. Both the

*Oakland has more economic potential, more potential to change the lives of its citizens, than any other American City. This will only happen when its diverse community decides to work together*

*- James Servais, Congress member, 1997*

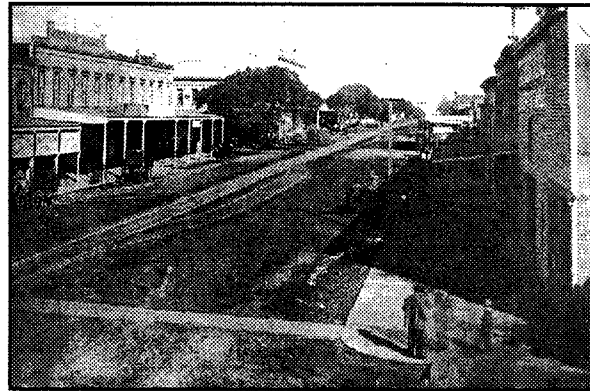
Strategy and the Elements emphasize the importance of activities that provide jobs and revenue for Oakland residents, and highlight Oakland's function as an economic engine for the Bay Area. The districts that have the greatest importance in the regional economy -- those forming a crescent around the Bay -- are highlighted as Showcase Districts in the Element, and are the focus of policies and implementation programs. "Target industries", those emerging businesses that the Economic Development Strategy is focussed upon attracting and retaining, have guided the development of General Plan Land Use classifications such as Business Mix and General Industry/Transportation. These classifications were designed to support and attract the target industries to specific, business-compatible locations within Oakland.

The Implementation Program (in Chapter 4) consists of two parts: a Priority Implementation Agenda, and a local implementation section called Area Views. The Implementation Program focuses on near term activities -- those to be undertaken in the five years following Element adoption. The Area Views focusing on each of six parts of Oakland, link Plan policies and resolution of specific neighborhood concerns, and target areas for public investment.

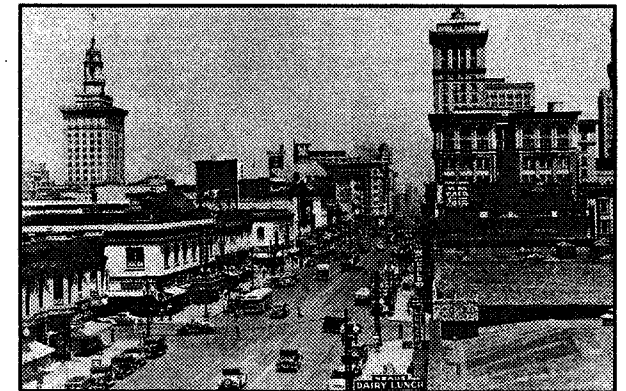
### **Balance Citywide and Neighborhood Perspectives**

The Land Use and Transportation Element balances citywide and neighborhood perspectives by presenting a Citywide View in the Vision, Policy Framework, and Land Use and Transportation Plan, complemented by a discussion of the expected impacts and benefits of the policy framework for each neighborhood area in Oakland in the "Area Views" in Chapter 4. Successfully balancing Oakland's citywide and neighborhood-specific needs during creation of the Element required repeated and ongoing efforts to communicate Plan policy and intent. The Congress and public participants exhibited a very high level of sophistication and commitment in crafting policies and actions to achieve this balance. The efforts made by the Congress and the Oakland community have been truly outstanding and unique.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF OAKLAND

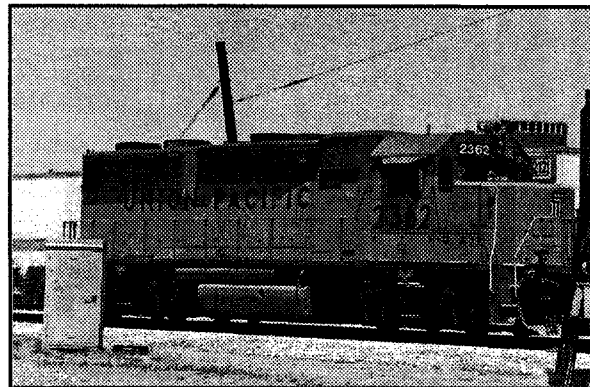


**Oakland Streets, 1850-1869**

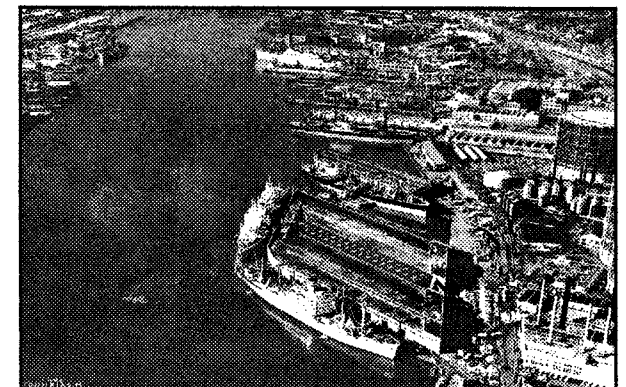


**North on Broadway from 9th, 1930**

*This history section was written and illustrated through the efforts of many contributors, including Christopher Buckley, Monica Lamboy, Bill Sturm, Kathleen Di Giovanni, and Betty Marvin. Additional information may also be found in the Area Views of Chapter 4.*



**Union Pacific Railroad Car, 1996**



**Oakland Harbor, 1901**

Natural and built environments, world wars and global economic trends have all shaped the physical and the social history of Oakland. The City's land use policies, although they came into effect after much of the City's urban pattern was well-established, have also contributed to change within Oakland. Understanding these historic forces provides a basis for an understanding of contemporary Oakland.

### **Native American Period**

The East Bay's earliest known inhabitants are now usually called Ohlones. They inhabited the area which is now Oakland for at least 3,500 years. They lived mainly along the creeks and shorelines, where today's names Temescal (sweathouse) and Shellmound recall their presence. Today's Native American population of Oakland (about 1,800) though small, is probably larger than the local Ohlone population ever was.

### **Early Development by European Settlers**

In 1820 the King of Spain granted Don Luis Maria Peralta approximately 44,800 acres containing all of the present-day cities of Oakland, Piedmont, Berkeley, Emeryville, Alameda, Albany, and part of San Leandro. The Peraltas raised cattle along the hills and grasslands, and shipped hides and tallow from what is now the foot of 14th Avenue. By the mid-1840's the redwoods in the Oakland hills had also attracted a lumber industry that used the estuary for transportation.

The California Gold Rush, beginning in January 1848, rapidly escalated development. In 1850, Horace Carpentier, Edson Adams, and Andrew Moon laid claim to the Peralta grant that today encompasses the area from the Estuary to 14th Street and from Lake Merritt West. In 1852, they incorporated the town of Oakland. An active waterfront, homes, schools, hotels, and saloons soon filled the area.

To the east, the settlements of San Antonio and Clinton, were linked with Oakland in 1856 when a bridge was erected over what is now Lake Merritt Channel. Ferry service to San Francisco was initiated in 1854, and the San Francisco and Oakland Railroad began operations along Railroad Avenue (7th Street) by 1863. To reach the ultimate terminals in San Francisco, the Central Pacific operated ships and shipyards as well as trains. Entire loaded freight cars were ferried across the bay from the long wharf - an early form of container service. Rail and water transportation supported intense private industrial development as well: planing mills, shipbuilders, brickyards, foundries, breweries, and many more. The great victorian residential neighborhoods of West Oakland and San Antonio still bear witness to this boom period.

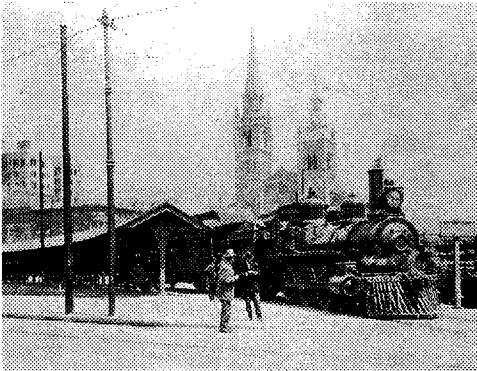
### **Transcontinental Railroad**

Completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869, through the significant efforts of Chinese laborers, raised Oakland to national significance. Temescal and Chabot dams were also constructed



by Chinese workers in the late 1890's. By 1880, Oakland housed 34,555 residents. The regional railroad yards and shops in West Oakland employed thousands of people. The Pullman company's porters became the core of Oakland's large, early, and influential African American community.

From the earliest activity centers along the waterfront, the original City grew to the north and east. In 1872, the area from 22nd Street to 36th Street was annexed, as was the town of Brooklin, east of the lake. Farther east, the official neighbors of Fruit Vale, Melrose, Fitchburg, and Elmhurst grew as independent settlements. Oakland's Chinatown was located in the 8th Street and Webster area by the late 1870's and grew rapidly after the San Francisco earthquake and fire in 1906. Other annexations took place in 1891 and 1897, thanks in part to the invention of electric street railways that suddenly made it possible to travel "everywhere for a nickel". By 1903 these local railways had been collected as the Key System by Francis Marion "Borax" Smith. The construction of Oakland's first skyscraper in 1903 and the election of progressive mayor Frank Mott also signaled Oakland's arrival as a modern metropolis.



14th and Franklin

### San Francisco Earthquake

In the immediate aftermath of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire, over 150,000 people fled to Oakland and camped throughout the city. Many individuals, organizations, and businesses provided food, shelter, and clothing, and many displaced San Franciscans chose to stay. Oakland's population increased from 66,960 in 1900 to 150,000 in 1910, more than doubling in that ten year period. The pre-earthquake infrastructure was ready for this expansion, and the post earthquake boom saw the development of vast new residential neighborhoods east of the Lake, the modern downtown centered on 14th and Broadway, and civic improvements, of which City Hall is only the most notable. In 1909 Oakland annexed the entire hill area and East Oakland from Fruitvale to the present San Leandro border, nearly tripling the city's area. In 1910, after decades of litigation, the City won control of the waterfront from Southern Pacific, and embarked upon Port improvements.

World War I also increased the amount and type of industry in Oakland, especially along the waterfront. In the three years ending in January 1920, the Moore Dry Dock Company produced thirty ships for the war effort. Other plants produced chemicals, canned fruit and vegetables, textiles, and metal products. In 1916 the Chevrolet plant opened in East Oakland, and Oakland began promoting itself as the "Detroit of the West". In Oakland as elsewhere, the 1920's saw an unprecedented boom in industry, commerce, and real estate. The Port undertook major

expansions, and in 1928, the Port of Oakland became an official port of entry to the United States, independent of San Francisco customs officials. The Port also developed Oakland Airport, nationally famous home to aviation pioneers. Prosperity was manifested in factories, movies, palaces, and thousands of new bungalows built in East Oakland. Commercial activity in the downtown was vibrant with I. Magnin, Capwell's, and other prominent businesses. Like the rest of the country, Oakland suffered from the great depression of the 1930's; federal public works projects included Woodminster Amphitheater and the Country Courthouse. In keeping with the social planning of the era, Oakland was first comprehensively zoned in 1935.



**Oakland Streets, 1940-1949**

### **World War II**

During World War II, business activity and population within Oakland reached historic highs. The waterfront was active 24 hours a day with shipbuilding, cargo loading, and military transport. Canned food, clothing, and equipment plants expanded and worked overtime. Oakland's established African American community, living mostly in West Oakland, increased about five fold with the migration of shipyard workers from the south. Several housing projects were built, and later Campbell Village, Peralta Village, and Lockwood Gardens, were converted for military personnel as were thousands of private buildings throughout the city. Oakland added nearly 100,000 residents between 1940 and 1945, a boom unprecedented in the City's history.

### **Post War Urban Transformations**

The end of World War II brought a brief economic boom in the late 1940's and then a decline in both manufacturing activity and population. Post-war housing demand coupled with Federal highway projects spurred suburbanization and the decline of Oakland and many older central cities. Economic and technological changes contributed to the decline of traditional industries that continues to the present. Large-scale changes in retailing as well as freeway construction weakened the business districts along the local arterials.

During the 1960's and 1970's, publicly-sponsored redevelopment projects that displaced thousands of residents and businesses particularly in West Oakland San Antonio and downtown. West Oakland in particular, suffered from the construction of BART and the freeway system, even though these projects provided the foundation for the reemergence of Oakland as the transportation hub of the East Bay. Meanwhile, the hill areas, which had been rural prior to World

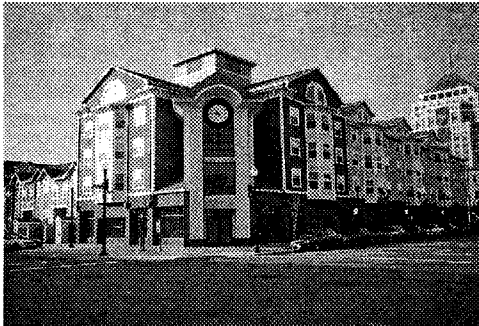


War II, rapidly developed with ranch-style and hillside homes. Construction of the BART system in the 1970s improved links to the rest of the region, and provided development opportunities that have been realized in some locations but not others.

### Recent History

Population growth and business activity revived in the 1980's, a trend that is continuing. Immigration of Asian Americans and Latino populations have breathed new life into commercial areas in the East Lake district and Fruitvale. Chinatown has grown and expanded across Broadway toward Old Oakland, and east toward Lake Merritt. As a result, overcrowding has occurred, primarily in the San Antonio and Fruitvale areas, partly due to larger family sizes and partly due to a lack of adequate housing.

Population and investment have grown despite the negative effects of two of the largest natural disasters ever experienced in California -- the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake and 1991 East Bay Firestorm. Over 1,000 single room occupancy units were lost in downtown due to the earthquake, while over 2,700 dwellings were consumed by the fire. Oakland's recovery from these catastrophes is largely complete, with some rehabilitation of historic buildings still in process in the downtown area.



Old Town Square, 1998

### The Environment for Planning

Oakland's physical form and social and economic history have bequeathed modern Oaklanders a remarkable variety of working and living environments. Downtown high-rise buildings adjoin well-preserved Art Deco, Beaux Arts, and Victorian designs. Neighborhoods, too, offer variety: urban environments, single-unit and mixed neighborhoods, almost rural lots, and distinctive spaces crafted by artists and adventurers in the industrial areas of the city. While Victorian and Craftsman style homes are often considered the gems of the neighborhood, they are just samples of Oakland's architectural offerings. Other distinctive housing types include bungalows, ranch houses, period revival cottages and mansions, high rise luxury apartments, and critically acclaimed post-modern homes.

The city's economy, though still offering many challenges for planning and economic development, is as diverse as its population and its built environment. Business size varies greatly, from a single person to startups to manufacturing and health corporations employing thousands. Industrial

areas house businesses from food processing to printing, machine shops, and wholesalers, while extreme industrial districts uniquely tailored to transportation-dependent businesses surrounding the Port and Airport. Business, personal, and health services are located throughout the City and an increasing number of communications and high technology businesses are entering Oakland. Feeding the growth and restructuring of Oakland's services is a network of education and training centers founded on nurturing talent and making direct links to local business. This business diversity is an important stabilizer of the local economy, making it possible for downturns in one sector to be offset by improvements in another.

A more detailed Oakland history focusing on significant buildings and districts is included in the 1994 Historic Preservation Element.

## CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

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The tools to meet the challenges that face the city lie in Oakland's history, the diversity of its people and places, its economy and labor force, and its commitment to sustainable use of resources. It is the opportunity to apply those tools in a systematic manner that defines the underlying value of this document. The Land Use and Transportation Element of the General Plan presents policies, land use designations, transportation initiatives and implementation strategies that makes this plan unique to Oakland and the challenges it faces in the early decades of the 21st Century.

The four sections that follow demonstrate how the Land Use and Transportation Element responds to those challenges.

- ▶ **ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT**
- ▶ **POPULATION AND HOUSING**
- ▶ **TRANSPORTATION**
- ▶ **A LIVABLE OAKLAND**

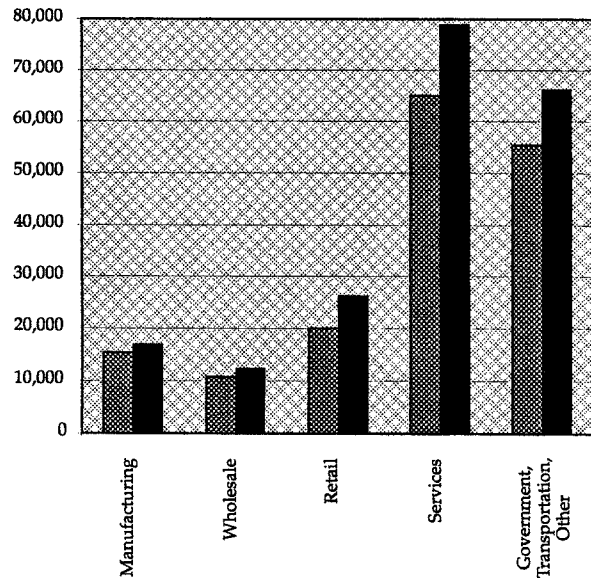
## ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

The challenges to Oakland's economy and economic base relate to

- retention and attraction of businesses
- preparing the local work force for evolving employment opportunities
- providing sites and services suitable for both traditional and emerging economic activities



### Comparison of Jobs by Employment Sector, 1995-2015



**Table 1**  
Projected Employment, Increases, 2015

	Jobs	% increase
Manufacturing	17,560	+13%
Wholesale	12,810	+20%
Retail	27,920	+40%
Services	81,910	+26%
Other	68,600	+24%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>208,820</b>	<b>25%</b>

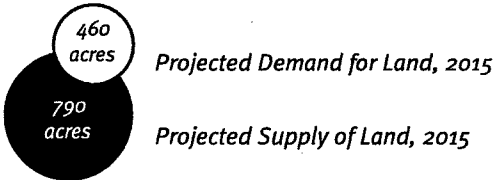
- See Area Views in Chapter 4 for details, definitions and sources.

# ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

## Challenges

- I Support Growth in Industry. Support the growth of the Seaport and the Airport; transportation, utilities, and communications. Land demand for these type of industrial activities in Oakland is projected to be 4,182 acres, including the airport and seaport.
- I Creation of Flexible Business Areas. Address the region (and nationwide) decline in traditional high wage industrial jobs, with resulting land and building vacancies, and aging infrastructure. Accommodate new industries in which 19% growth is expected in Oakland within the next 20 years (from 37, 939 jobs in 1995 to 45,769 jobs in 2015).
- I Accommodate Downtown Employment. Accommodate projections for a 20% increase in server sector employment (health, business, and legal in Downtown Oakland, from 65,050 jobs in 1995 to 81,910 jobs in 2015).
- I Attract Large Scale Commercial Development. Target, attract, and accommodate growth in entertainment, recreation, amusement, hotels, restaurants, and related activities. Capture more local retail dollars by developing a minimum of 251 acres of region-serving shopping areas.
- I Revitalize Local Commercial Areas. Support “Community Commercial” and “Neighborhood Mixed-Use” shopping areas that serve local needs and act as activity centers for Oakland’s diverse neighborhoods.

### General Industry, Transportation, and Business Mix Land Supply



## Responses

### Designating Sufficient Land Supply

Land supply for Industry is projected by the plan to be 4,720 acres, all of which is located near rail, sea, freeway, and other distribution points near the Port areas. Since Oakland is a built-out City, redevelopment and reuse of underutilized industrial acreages is critical for continued growth.

### Building Flexibility

Designate 1,660 acres of land with a flexible “Business Mix” classification to accommodate conversion of aging general industry and to embrace emerging industries such as telecommunications, computers, multimedia, environmental technology, and bio-science. Facilitate spin-off, reuse, and reinvestment activities as part of the Seaport and Airport expansion plans.

### Support Economic Development Policy

Capitalize on Oakland’s role as the East Bay office and governmental center by designating the entire Central Business District (555 acres) as the highest intensity, most flexible development district, taking advantage of a wide range of transportation access options, including bus, BART, freeway, and intercity rail.

### Defining Commercial Opportunities

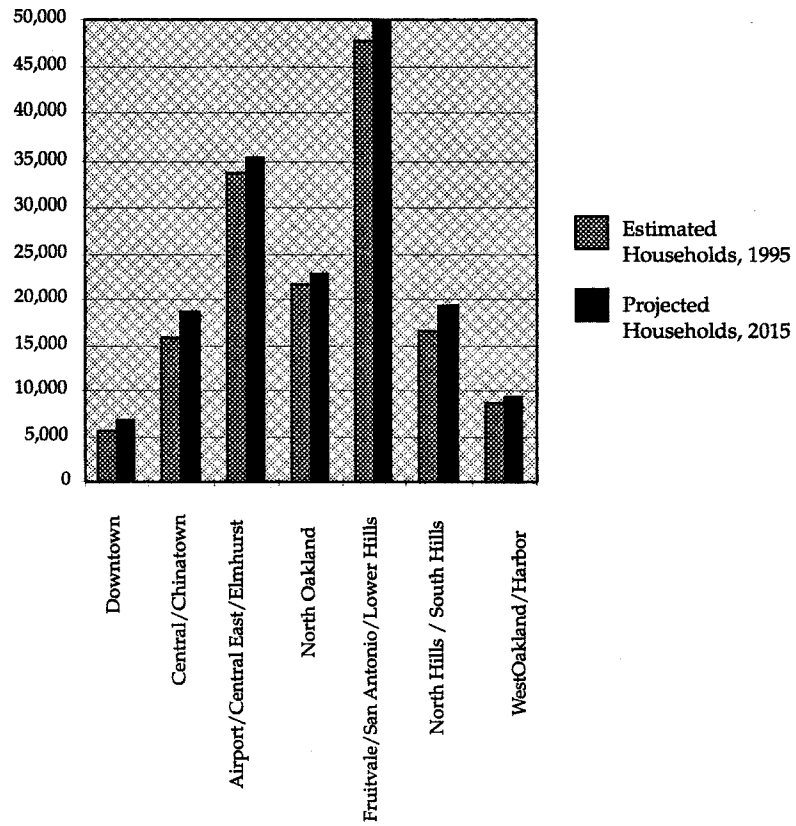
Designate 861 acres that have the highest visibility to the “Regional Commercial” land use classification, which targets regional commercial development by smaller retail shops, office, entertainment, hotels, restaurants, and other uses. Identify waterfront locations which can also serve this purpose through the Estuary Plan

### Concentrating Commercial Activities

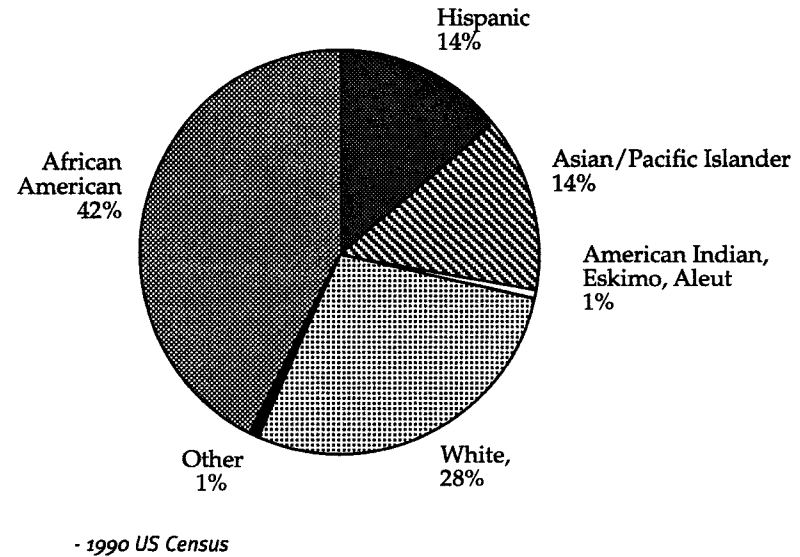
Concentrate local retail and shopping areas into “Activity Centers” along major travel corridors such as International Boulevard, San Pablo Avenue, and MacArthur Boulevard, as shown on the Structure Diagram. Refer also to the Area Views of Chapter 4

## POPULATION AND HOUSING

Growth in Total Households, 1995-2015



Ethnic Profile, 1990



- For sources and detail, see Area Views in Chapter 4



## POPULATION AND HOUSING

### Challenges

- | Oakland’s population will increase from 387,950 people in 1995 to 413,170 in the year 2015 (a 6.5% increase).
- | Recent growth in population has not been accompanied by a comparable level of housing construction, contributing to overcrowding and increased household sizes.
- | Nearly 1,000 single room occupancy (SRO) hotels and other structures were rendered uninhabitable by the 1989 earthquake, and over 2,770 residences were destroyed in the 1991 hill area firestorm.
- | While additional housing is needed in Oakland, established residents tend to challenge most proposals for new or infill housing development near neighborhoods. Similarly, while new or expanded community services, including youth services, elder care, medical facilities, and home care facilities are needed to serve Oakland’s increasing population, these types of services are many times unable to find community support for development or expansion.

**Table 2**  
**Population and Households, 1995 and 2015**

	1995	2015	Change
Population	387,950	413,170	6.5%
Households	144,030	156,075	8%
Ave. Household Size	2.65	2.59	2%

### Responses

#### Direct Growth

The Land Use Element designates over 18,745 acres of residential land for a wide range of housing types and styles. However, most of the 11,200 new households projected to be added in the city of Oakland through the year 2015 will be located on the city’s corridors, in Downtown, in Transit-Oriented Districts near BART stations, along the Waterfront, and through infill projects that respect established neighborhood character.

#### Accommodating Population Increases

In 1995, 151,230 housing units existed, which is projected to increase to 163,880 units by the year 2015 (an 8% increase). Also average household is projected to decrease over the life of the Elements. The plan supports addition of an average of almost 600 housing units per year through 2015, compared with about 400 units per year added from 1980 to 1995.

#### Responding to Specific Housing Needs

The Element offers and encourages wide flexibility for housing in the Central Business District, and identifies increased housing development and mixed use objectives for the Downtown area. The hill areas are well into the rebuilding process, and will continue to be supported to rebuild at the densities already established.

#### Conserving Neighborhoods While Allowing Growth

Conservation of Neighborhoods is a top priority. Land uses, densities, and transportation systems have been planned to support increased development along the corridors, in the downtown, and along the waterfront, while conserving the character of established neighborhoods. These policies show consistency with the Housing Element, the Consolidated Housing Affordability Strategy, and the Historic Preservation Element. Also, the Element commits to establishing and maintaining consistency between the City’s General Plan and its Zoning Regulations.

## TRANSPORTATION

### Challenges

- | Accommodate dramatic increases in shipping and distribution activities in Oakland over the next twenty years.
- | Meet the travel needs of 25% of the Oakland population who have no access to automobiles.
- | Influence and ensure effective coordination of the operations and programming efforts of the Oakland area’s major transportation providers, including the Port of Oakland, Railroads, BART and AC Transit, and Caltrans.
- | Discourage truck operators from parking, loading, and driving on local neighborhood streets.

*“Promote sensible and environmentally and socially responsible planning.”*

*- Community Workshop Participant, 1996*

### Responses

#### Improving Transportation

Designate the Airport, Seaport, and Coliseum shipping and distribution areas as “Showcases” to highlight their importance to the City’s economy. Support key infrastructure and transportation improvements along the I-880 corridor and at the Airport, Seaport, and to and from the Coliseum area that enable efficient regional and worldwide transportation to occur.

#### Creative Alternative Travel Options

As a built-out City, Oakland must strive for sustainable land use and transportation patterns, provide opportunities for intermodal facilities and new transit operations such as light rail or trolley on regional transit streets, and target and carry out key infrastructure improvements that accommodate carpools, bicycles, and pedestrians.

#### Ensuring Coordination

Develop a comprehensive transportation program with strategies and staffing to link the efforts of outside agencies and operators to meet Oakland’s needs, including planning for local traffic needs, supporting economic development objectives, increasing opportunities for multi-modal access, and collaboration on creative funding packages.

#### Controlling Truck Impacts

Increase safety and improve everyone’s environment by locating businesses which require heavy truck access near established truck routes, in “Business Mix” or “General Industrial/Transportation” areas. Work with the Port and other businesses that employ major truck operators to re-route trucks out of residential neighborhoods.

# A LIVABLE AND SUSTAINABLE OAKLAND

*“Development should be responsible and contribute to the general welfare and well being of the City.”*

*- Planning Commissioner Linda Bytof, 1996*

Economy and employment, housing and population issues are central to planning decisions and planning documents. But during the course of work on the Land Use and Transportation Element, many more topics were addressed in order to confront the full range of challenges for the City’s future. These include transportation, public services, institutional and civic activities, urban design and more. Overall, the Element’s response to the challenges facing the City is to offer the General Plan as a Guide for a Livable Oakland that facilitates social, economic and environmental sustainability.

## Social Sustainability + Environmental Justice

- Fair Treatment** The Plan strives to assure the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, incomes and educational levels with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of laws, regulations, and policies.
- Access** This includes affirmative efforts to inform and involve civic, environmental and community groups in the early stages of planning. Key principles in this Plan encourage development that respects and supports the distinctive neighborhood orientation of Oakland and everyone’s need for access to jobs, housing, services, and recreational areas.
- Diversity** Diversity in the built environment that is home to all of Oakland’s people and cultures is desired and supported by this Plan as one of the key qualities that makes Oakland special, attractive, and livable.

## Economic and Environmental Sustainability

- Managing Growth** Take advantage of opportunities for infill and transit-oriented development, while conserving established residential neighborhoods, adequate infrastructure, and public services.
- Attracting Sustainable Business** Promote development of distinctive, enjoyable and secure neighborhood centers and revitalization of commercial areas and corridors that are economically depressed but have the potential to serve the community’s needs for local goods and services.  
  
Offer a high quality working environment to attract emerging and pro-active industries to Oakland, and pursue clean-up of existing emitting industrial operations.
- Achieving Environmental Quality** Expand the network of open space opportunities, as the Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Element of the General Plan directs, to promote conservation of natural resources, improvement of air quality, enhancement of recreation and open space opportunities, assurance of environmental justice and a healthful living environment.

