

**CITY OF OAKLAND**  
Interoffice Memorandum



**Office of Parks and Recreation**

**TO:** Jeffrey Taylor, Chair, Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission  
**FROM:** Audree V. Jones-Taylor, Director  
**DATE:** April 2, 2009  
**SUBJECT:** Request from 10,000 Steps to Place One or More Medallions in Each of the Four Squares: Lafayette, Jefferson, Lincoln and Madison Square Parks.

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SUMMARY

The Office of Parks and Recreation (OPR) received a request 10,000 Steps for a community park project to draw attention to four historic parks in downtown Oakland through on-site stewardship and a self guided walking tour. The tour will be marked with 12-50 (pending funding) permanent sidewalk medallions in downtown spanning west to east of the four squares: Lafayette, Jefferson, Lincoln and Madison Parks. We are seeking PRAC's endorsement of the project. The final plans for any medallions that are within the boundaries of the parks would be brought back to PRAC for final design approval.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact to the Office of Parks and Recreation. The community groups will be maintaining the medallions and there is additional funds set aside if any of the medallions need to be replaced at a later date.

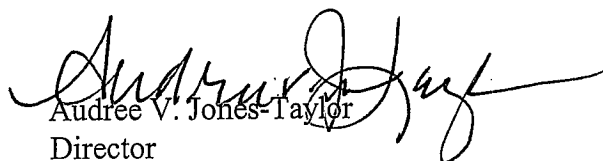
BACKGROUND

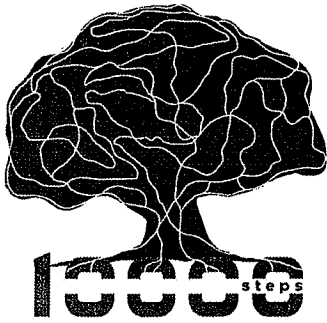
10,000 Steps, initiated in 2006, promotes and raises awareness of downtown Oakland's historic parks. 10,000 Steps has successfully completed its first phase of on-site nomadic stewardship of Jefferson, Lafayette, Lincoln and Madison Square Parks. Face-to-face conversation among Oakland residents during park clean-ups, plantings and bench construction as well as participation in citywide events has provided our project's most significant material. We have received letters of support from many community groups including: Old Oakland Neighbors, Swan's Co-Housing and The Chinese American Citizens Alliance. The walking tour will be an organic and growing reflection of Oakland's changing cityscape.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee approve the request for 10,000 Steps community park project to draw attention to four historic parks in downtown Oakland through on-site stewardship and a self guided walking tour. The tour will be marked with 12-50 (pending funding) permanent sidewalk medallions in downtown spanning west to east of the four squares: Lafayette, Jefferson, Lincoln and Madison Parks.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Audree V. Jones-Taylor  
Director



**marksearch team**  
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510.655.0341  
marksearch@sbcglobal.net

[www.10000stepsoakland.org](http://www.10000stepsoakland.org)

**TO:** Jeffrey Taylor, Chair, Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission  
**FROM:** Sue Mark + Bruce Douglas, Coordinators, 10,000 Steps Community Parks Project  
**DATE:** March 18, 2009  
**SUBJECT:** Overview of the 10,000 Steps walking tour to link downtown historic squares

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### **SUMMARY**

The 10,000 Steps community parks project, a unique multi-year collaboration with Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation (FoPR), Oakland Public Works Department, Oakland's Parks and Recreation Department (OPR) and neighborhood groups, draws attention to four historic parks in downtown Oakland through on-site stewardship and a self-guided walking tour. The tour will be marked with 12-50 (pending funding) permanent sidewalk medallions in downtown spanning west to east from Jefferson to Madison Streets and North to South from 11<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> Street. We may place one or more medallions in each of the four squares: Lafayette, Jefferson, Lincoln and Madison Square Parks. We are seeking PRAC's endorsement of the project. The final designs for any medallions that are within the boundaries of the parks would be brought back to PRAC for final design approval.

We are in the process of designing the medallions. We aim to install the medallions July-August, 2009. We will write a resolution to City Council in order to gift the medallions to the city. We will also create 2,500 free printed copies of the walking tour map and 5,000 information cards giving the download website for the PDF map. This walking tour will reveal the hidden cultural history of the downtown area surrounding these parks, encourage local stewardship and ecotourism, and promote a different and accessible way to engage with public green space. We will launch the project with a special exhibit at the Oakland Art Gallery, 9/09-10/09.

### **BACKGROUND**

10,000 Steps, initiated in 2006, promotes and raises awareness of downtown Oakland's historic parks. 10,000 Steps has successfully completed its first phase of on-site nomadic stewardship of Jefferson, Lafayette, Lincoln and Madison Square Parks. Face-to-face conversation among Oakland residents during park clean-ups, plantings and bench construction as well as participation in citywide events has provided our project's most significant material. We have received letters of support from many community groups including: Old Oakland Neighbors, Swan's Co-Housing and The Chinese American Citizens Alliance. The walking tour will be an organic and growing reflection of Oakland's changing cityscape.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

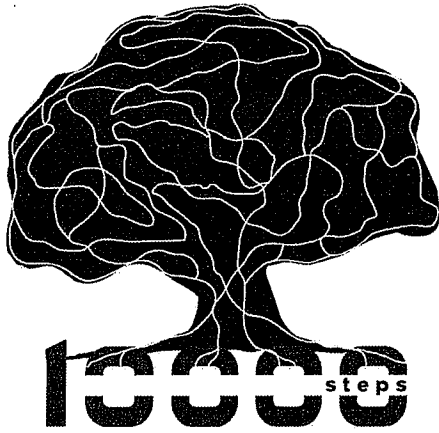
There is no fiscal impact to the Office of Parks and Recreation.

Fundraising Activities include:

1. We have already received \$35,000 from the Creative Work Fund
2. We will receive \$1,500 from community donations (promised)
3. Pending grants: Oaklandish, \$5,000; Black Rock Foundation, \$6,000; FoPR, \$2,000
4. We will continue to seek donations from local corporations and businesses

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Mark + Bruce Douglas  
10,000 Steps Project Coordinators



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Sue Mark or Bruce Douglas  
marksearch@sbcglobal.net  
Kathy Raymond  
Friends of Oakland Parks & Rec  
510-465-1850

### Dynamic Duo Highlights Downtown Oakland's Green Gems

Maybe you've seen the pair walking down Ninth Street clad in their sturdy work aprons pushing a large-wheeled green cart reminiscent of traditional gardeners or street sweepers. Or perhaps you've witnessed them digging in the dirt, planting native plants in Lafayette Square Park or talking to people at the Old Oakland Farmers' Market. These unusual workers are not new city employees: they are actually marksearch, a team of cultural researchers and this is their latest hybrid community art project.

#### UNIQUE COLLABORATION

Under the moniker of 10,000 Steps, marksearch (Sue Mark + Bruce Douglas) has initiated a unique collaboration with the Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation, City Public Works and neighborhood groups to beautify and draw attention to green urban public space. In this two-year stewardship project, marksearch is working with the neighbors and community groups that surround four historic parks in downtown Oakland: Jefferson, Lafayette, Lincoln and Madison Square Parks. During their stewardship initiated in Spring, 2008, they have invited locals to help with cleanings and plantings, as well as share park stories: 10,000 Steps wants to know why urban green space is important to Oakland residents. These stories, as well as images, historic photos, gps tracks and maps are chronicled on their website, [www.10000stepsoakland.org](http://www.10000stepsoakland.org), an-ever growing record of the plights and triumphs of these parks.

#### WHY THESE PARKS AND 10,000 STEPS?

"Many people who come to downtown Oakland are unaware that there are amazing historic parks right in their own backyard," comments Douglas, a green building engineer by trade. "By being out on the streets in and near the parks, we want everyone to know that these parks are here for us to enjoy." 10,000 Steps serves as a link between local citizens and City bureaucracy. People have a lot to say about their relationship to urban parks and marksearch is there to listen and share their stories. "When Jerry Brown was mayor, he wanted to bring 10,000 new residences to downtown: it's a major construction zone now. We want everyone to take advantage of these downtown green spaces. They are our community commons and we need to take care of them," explains Mark, who has worked with citizens and cities worldwide. She adds, "We're trying to tend to both the physical and ephemeral qualities of these four distinct parks." Over the course of several months (from Spring to Fall 2008), 10,000 Steps has conducted detailed assessment surveys, met with long-time residents, held picnics and planting parties in each of the four parks. Be on the look out for 10,000 Steps at Oakland's Art & Soul Festival (Labor Day weekend). And they plan to create several native plant and butterfly friendly gardens with the Chinatown community in September. A detailed 10,000 Steps itinerary is on their website: [www.10000stepsoakland.org](http://www.10000stepsoakland.org).

The parks, part of the original 1852 Oakland city plan, span from Chinatown to Old Oakland. The history of the parks represents a condensed archeology of the city and its transformations: Jefferson Square Park used to be the center of Oakland's Latino community prior to the Fruitvale District. And Madison and Lincoln Square Parks are critical to the Asian community. On any given day, more than three hundred people will gather in the early morning to practice Tai Chi and Qi Gong in Madison Square Park.

## **SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOURS**

During 2008-09, marksearch will use information collected from the community to create self-guided walking tours to these four parks. The tours will be designated with permanent sidewalk medallions that promote parks, stewardship and the community. Printed multilingual map-guides of the tours, with images and stories collected from on-site conversations, will be distributed to downtown residents and will be available at local library branches and other public venues. 10,000 Steps advocates for the preservation of urban public green space through vital use.

## **FUNDING**

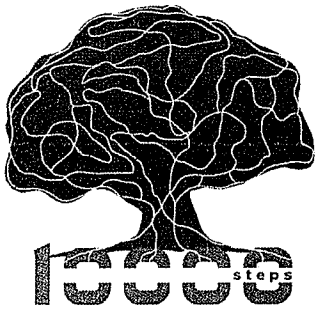
10,000 Steps is generously funded by the Creative Work Found, The Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation and Pro Arts Gallery. The project has also received in-kind support from local businesses, community groups and neighbors.

## **THE MARKSEARCH TEAM**

This Oakland wife-husband team has been creating community art projects since 2000. In their unique brand of interdisciplinary art, marksearch creates interactive projects inviting people to reflect upon their local communities and increase their awareness of the natural environment within the urban fabric. These ecologically and socially-based projects rely on an accessible format based on daily life. Conversation guides their urban investigations that push the boundaries of how community-based art can influence public policy.

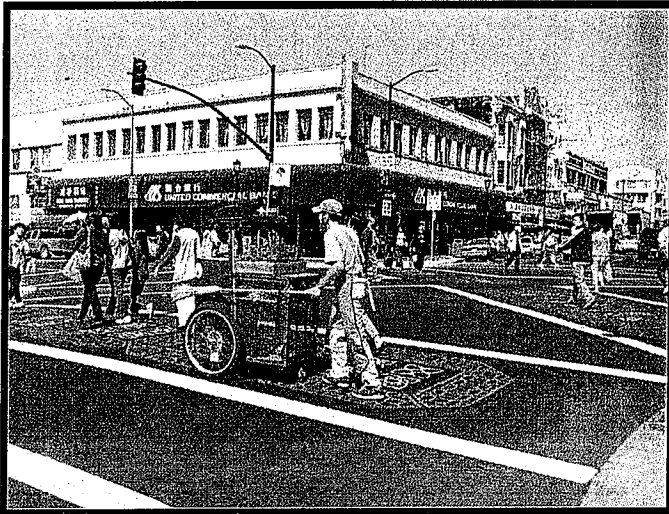
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For more information about **10,000 Steps** and **marksearch**, please contact Sue Mark or Bruce Douglas by calling 510.655.0341, or e-mail at [marksearch@sbcglobal.net](mailto:marksearch@sbcglobal.net).

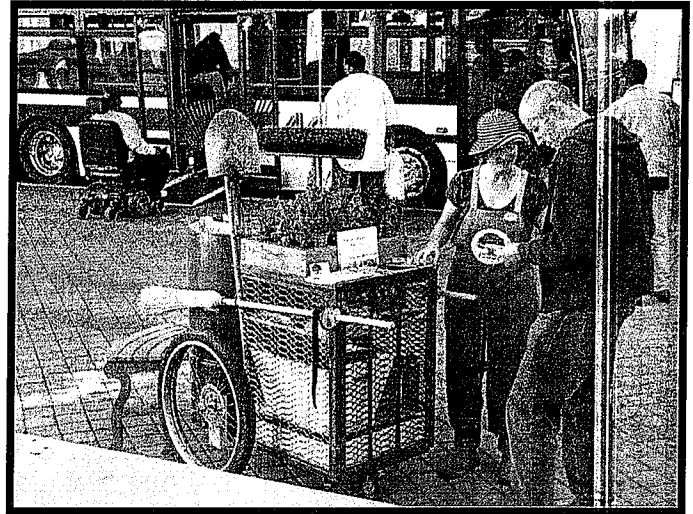


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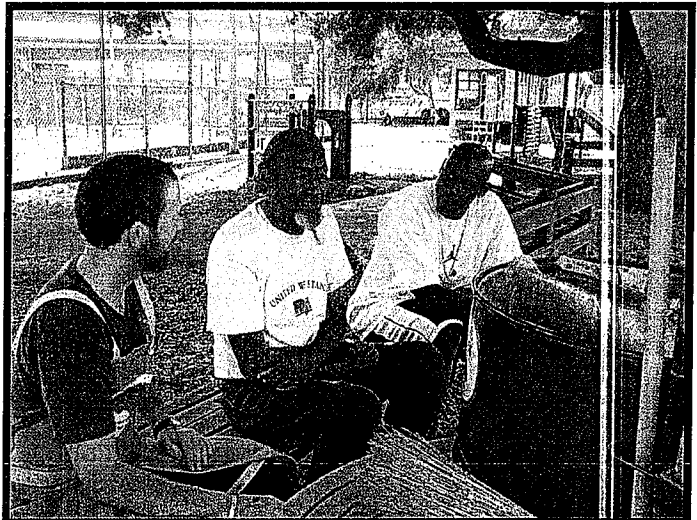
Walking through Chinatown with our garden work cart



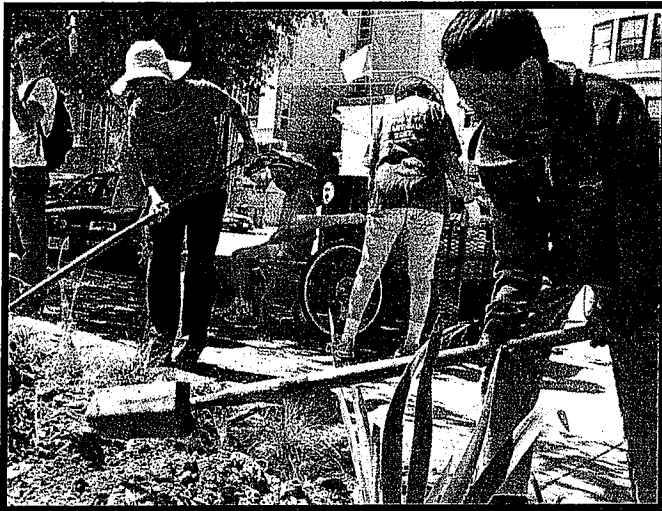
Speaking with passerby about parks in downtown Oakland



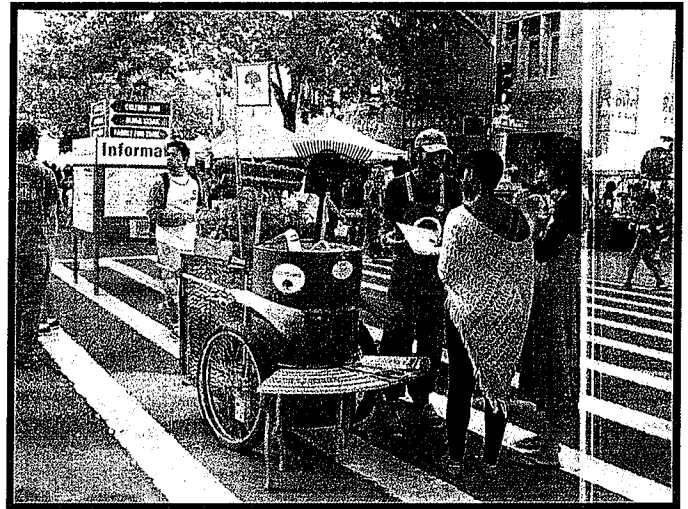
Building park benches with Lincoln Recreation kids



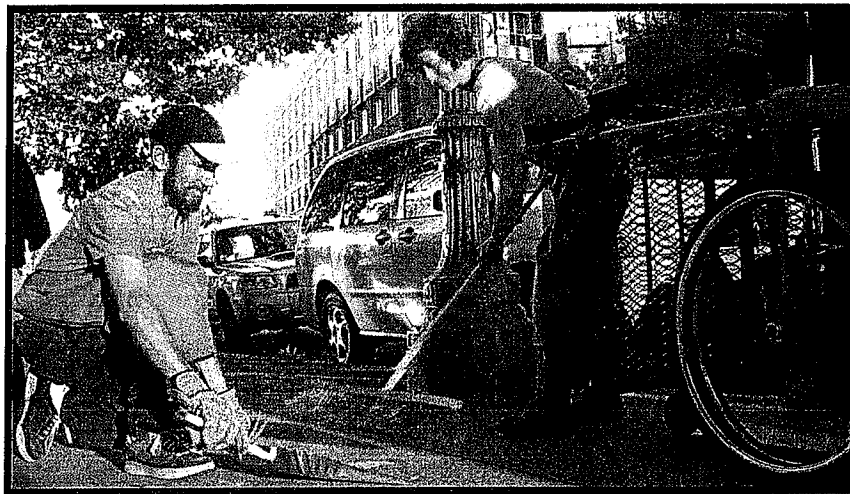
Collecting stories from long-time basketball mentor at Jefferson Square Park



Community garden work day at Lafayette Square Park



Sharing information at Oakland's Art + Soul Festival



Tending to downtown sidewalks and street trees



Darlene, our project facilitator at Lincoln Square Park