

HISTORIC OAKLAND



1899 view of Lake Merritt at Holy Names College

In the early 1800s, Lake Merritt was a broad tidal estuary known as Laguna Peralta, where fresh water from tributary streams mixed with salt water from the bay. The shoreline of Laguna Peralta extended northward to where the Grand Lake Theater now stands and it was connected to San Antonio Creek (Oakland Estuary) by a wide, shallow, slough channel surrounded by tidal marsh and mud flats. Laguna Peralta was home to abundant wildlife and native vegetation. In 1869, Oakland Mayor Dr. Samuel Merritt donated money to build a dam at the 12th Street bridge, creating "Merritt's Lake." "Reclamation" of wetlands for urban development confined the slough channel to a narrow corridor, and limited the exchange of tidal waters in the newly-formed lake. The U.S. Congress declared Lake Merritt a National Wildlife Refuge in 1870, the first in North America.



OAKLAND 1883

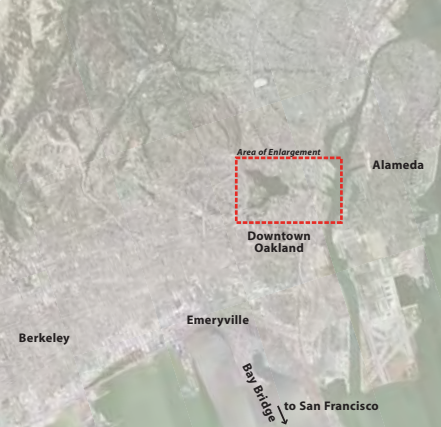


Filed in the office of the County Recorder of Alameda County Cal. April 23rd A.D. 1883 by 10 06 at the Request of W. F. Boardman J. S. Kanda County Recorder By W. B. Hamilton Deputy



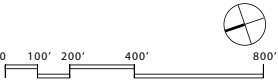
AREA-WIDE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CIRCULATION





LEGEND

- Multi-Use Path in Project Area
- Multi-Use Path
- On-Street Bikeways
- Bay Trail
- Major Pedestrian Linkage
- Project Area



Improvements at Lake Merritt Channel

Project Background

Lake Merritt Master Plan



MISSION STATEMENT:

Lake Merritt should continue to be a park for all of Oakland. Its green space, water area, playgrounds, and attractions should serve the widest audience of Oakland citizens and visitors. From the programs we should learn about the park as a natural resource – a unique ecology within our urban city. The needs of human users must be carefully balanced with goals for improving habitat value and water quality. Our City's youth should take their first sail and grow comfortable in a kayak on this water. We should be free to explore our park in all modes of transport. The grand perimeter roads should be made grand for bikes and pedestrians too. The rich botanical collections should be made inviting and in keeping with their famed status. As our Park ages with each generation, we must make the needed repairs that maintain the glory of Lake Merritt.



Lake Merritt Master Plan Overall Illustrative Plan

Project Background

Lake Merritt Master Plan



The planned improvements at Lake Merritt Channel include a new bridge at 10th Street and improvements at the 7th Street Flood Control Station, which build on concepts and principles presented in the Lake Merritt Master Plan (LMMP) and the Lake Merritt Channel Feasibility Study. The LMMP was adopted by the City of Oakland and will act as a guide for improvement projects in the years to come.

LMMP guiding principles include:

Ecology: to manage and enhance the park as a refuge for people and wildlife. Natural resources in ecological zones are given the highest priority for use by wildlife.

Education: to reveal the natural processes, botanical interests, culture, and history of Lake Merritt and its surrounding community through organized youth programs, art, signage, and overall park design.

Recreation: to improve the park as a place of informal, outdoor recreation. Oakland's youth should especially benefit from the lake's resources.

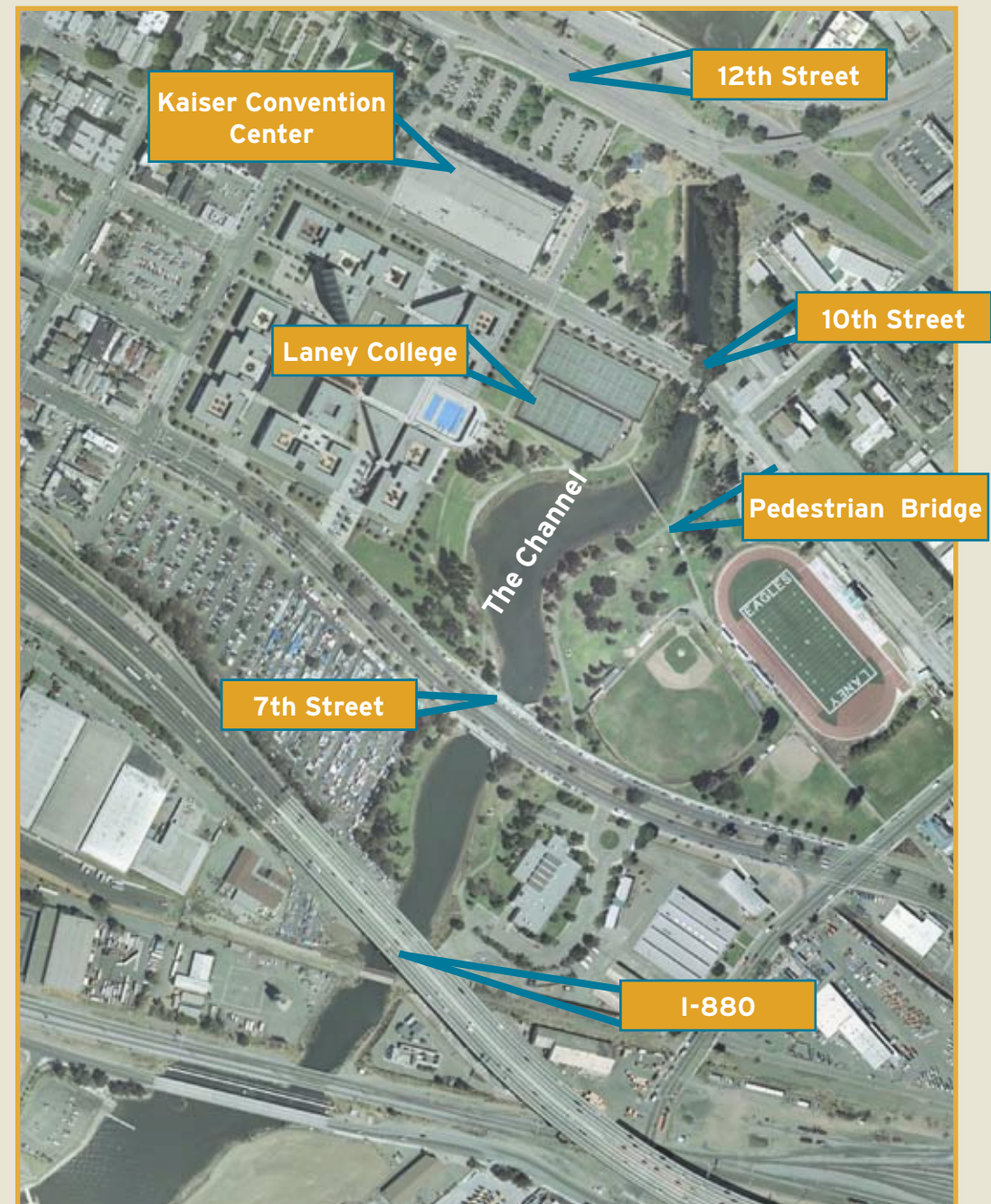
Culture: to reflect the unique culture of Oakland, its diverse peoples, neighborhoods, built form, history, and natural environment. Art elements are one way of exploring cultural factors.

Overview of Planned Improvements

THE PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

AT LAKE MERRITT CHANNEL build on concepts in the Lake Merritt Master Plan and the Lake Merritt Channel Feasibility Study. Key project elements include:

- » **Channel Improvements:** Restore wetlands and enhance the bicycle and pedestrian paths and green space along the Channel
- » **10th Street:** Replace the 10th Street culverts with a clear spanning bridge over the Channel
- » **7th Street:** Improve bicycle, pedestrian, and small boat access, aesthetics and safety at the 7th Street pump station



Project Background

Goals



Key goals of the planned improvements at Lake Merritt Channel:

- » **Improve bicycle, pedestrian, and small boat access**
- » **Enhance multi-use paths along the Channel**
- » **Improve water quality and the habitat for fish and wildlife**
- » **Restore wetlands along the Channel**

Project Background

Benefits of Tidal Wetlands



GENERAL BENEFITS OF TIDAL WETLANDS

- » Wetlands act as a natural buffer zone and improve the flow of water where tidal movement occurs
- » Wetlands provide a unique environment for wildlife, fish and plant life
- » Wetlands recycle nutrients such as nitrogen and help reduce algal blooms and associated water quality problems
- » Wetlands release carbon to the Estuary to support a wide and diverse food chain
- » Wetlands sequester sediment reducing estuary turbidity and improving the wider environment for filter feeders such as oysters
- » Wetlands improve water quality by reducing bacteria associated with any unclean waters such as urban run-off



SPECIFIC BENEFITS OF RESTORED WETLANDS IN THE CHANNEL

- » Restored wetlands will improve the tidal circulation between Lake Merritt and the Estuary
- » Habitat along the fringe of the Channel is where many of the ecological and biogeochemical processes take place which are important to sustaining the wider health of Lake Merritt and the Estuary
- » An enhanced Channel wetland habitat will improve nursery and feeding areas for young fish
- » Tidal wetlands along the Channel provides habitat for endangered species such as the locally endemic and rare Clapper Rail and the Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse
- » The unique wetland environment can serve as a natural laboratory for students and faculty



Project Funding

Measure DD: The Oakland Trust for Clean Water & Safe Parks



The Lake Merritt Channel Projects are elements of the City of Oakland Bond Measure DD which was approved by over 80% of Oakland voters in the November 2002 general election. The Measure authorized the City of Oakland to issue \$198,250,000 in bonds to create the Oakland Trust for Clean Water and Safe Parks.

The primary purpose of Measure DD is to fund a variety of parks, clean-water protection and youth recreation projects in the following five categories:

- » **Lake Merritt restoration and water quality improvements**
- » **Estuary waterfront access parks and clean up**
- » **Lake Merritt-to-Oakland Estuary connection (Lake Merritt Channel)**
- » **Youth and public recreation facilities**
- » **Creeks and waterways restoration and acquisition**

Measure DD will dedicate funds for the design and construction of these projects.



Other Related Projects

LAKE MERRITT MASTER PLAN PROJECTS

- » **12th Street Reconstruction Project:**
Consolidate the existing 12-lane expressway into a six-lane, tree-lined boulevard with bicycle lanes and create a park along the lakeshore and Channel wetlands
- » **Extension of the pathway system to the Oakland waterfront trail and the Estuary**

Next Steps

Targeted Schedule & Project Information



2006

2007

2008

2009

**Concept Development
& Community Input**

Design & Engineering

**Environmental
Coordination & Permitting**

Construction

For information about the progress of the planned improvements at Lake Merritt Channel please visit www.oaklandpw.com.

Overview of Planned Improvements

Public Art Enhancements



In 1989 the City of Oakland adopted a Public Art Ordinance plan which authorizes the allocation of 1.5% of municipal capital improvement project costs for commissioning of public artwork. These monies are set aside in the Public Art Program Fund.

MEASURE DD PUBLIC ART PLAN PROJECT GOALS

- » Identify key sites where public art will have greatest impact
- » Create interesting, innovative artwork integrated into reconstruction projects
- » Celebrate the magnificence of Lake Merritt, the Channel and Estuary; elevate experience of users; enhance positive sense of place

LAKE MERRITT CHANNEL PUBLIC ART: DESIGN TEAM APPROACH

Design team artists help create the character of our infrastructure and our public places by narrating the site's story, building community, creating identity, and including artwork in unexpected, thoughtful ways.

For the Lake Merritt Channel Projects, the artist team of John Roloff & Lewis deSoto is collaborating with the design team to identify artistic enhancements to the urban design plans and to design public art elements along the Channel.

