

TO: Public Art Advisory Committee

ATTN: Kevin Chen and Nick Dong, Co-chairs

FROM: Alicia Parker, Planner, Bureau of Planning and Kristen Zaremba, Acting Cultural Arts Manager

DATE: March 7, 2016

SUBJECT: Downtown Oakland Specific Plan – Plan Alternatives Overview

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## **SUMMARY**

The Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) has been asked to review and comment on the Downtown Oakland Specific Plan Alternatives Report. This memo presents concepts contained in the Plan Alternatives Report related to arts and culture. Feedback from this body will be incorporated into the Preferred Plan which will be publicly vetted.

## **BACKGROUND**

Downtown Oakland is the cultural, business, government, and entertainment hub of the East Bay with excellent transit service, including three Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) stations, multiple Alameda County (AC) Transit bus lines, Amtrak train service, and ferry service.

In July 2015, the Planning Department initiated the preparation of a specific plan for Downtown Oakland. The plan, which will take approximately two years to complete, is intended to ensure continued growth and revitalization to benefit both Downtown residents and the larger community. The plan will provide sound policy guidance on development, linking land use, transportation, economic development, housing, public spaces, cultural arts, and social equity.

The Downtown specific plan will incorporate recommendations from a number of policy efforts already underway or completed, including the recently completed specific plans adjacent to downtown, the Mayor's Housing Cabinet, the Mayor's recent Task Force on Affordable Artist Housing and Workspaces, the Downtown Oakland Parking Supply Study, the Complete Streets Implementation Plan and the City's current impact fee study, as well as other studies.

This report discusses the preliminary recommendations regarding arts and culture contained in the Plan Alternatives report, and provides a general summary of the complete report.

## **Community Engagement**

Over the last six months, the Downtown Plan team has undertaken an intensive community engagement process, which will be ongoing until the project is complete. A design charrette in the fall was the centerpiece of the public participation process with tours, stakeholder meetings, surveys, and community workshops that provided opportunities for group brainstorming and input. The charrette was advertised in local newspapers, electronic newsletters, and via flyers posted in local businesses, community centers, residential hotels, and other public venues. Well over 200 people attended each of the following initial public meetings held before and during the charrette including: the project kick-off meeting, the hands on design workshop and the work in progress presentation. During the 10-day charrette, the city and its consultant team welcomed the public into an open studio housed in a temporary storefront on Broadway that allowed community members to have one-on-one conversations with members of the consultant team

as draft ideas were being explored. Surveys were available throughout the charrette, allowing anonymous written feedback for the team. Finally, a virtual “town hall” was created on the Speak Up Oakland website to facilitate participation from anywhere, any time of day. Last fall’s charrette kicked off the specific plan’s public engagement efforts. Community comments from the charrette are available on the project website at [www.oaklandnet.com/plandowntownoakland](http://www.oaklandnet.com/plandowntownoakland), see the “past meetings”, “charrette” section.

The ongoing Specific Plan engagement process has been designed to encourage authentic participation by both traditionally well-organized groups, such as local business improvement districts, property owners, community based organizations and developers, as well as traditionally underrepresented lower-income, renter communities, small businesses and arts and culture organizations. A youth engagement component is also underway, with a youth summit is scheduled for March 16th. City staff has attended over 10 neighborhood group/coalition meetings (see notes from these meetings available on the project webpage at [www.oaklandnet.com/plandowntownoakland](http://www.oaklandnet.com/plandowntownoakland), see the “community input” section) and continues to meet with stakeholder groups. General feedback received (via email transmission or hard copy surveys left at the Plan Downtown display in the lobby of the Planning Department) are also available on the project website.

Another public workshop was held on February 1, 2016, at the Malonga Casquelourd Center for the Arts to introduce the Plan Alternatives. This public event was attended by over 300 people. In addition to presenting the Plan Alternatives, the new “Streetwyze” mobile mapping platform was unveiled. Launching of the web-based Streetwyze application is meant to provide a culturally responsive method for engaging the community, particularly those who would not otherwise engage using traditional engagement processes such as city-sponsored public meetings or city-hosted online survey tools. Community comments from this meeting are available on the project website at [www.oaklandnet.com](http://www.oaklandnet.com), see the “past meetings” section.

Specific Plan process is also supported by a project Community Advisory Group (CAG) was formed that is comprised of professionals from a variety of fields who provide technical knowledge on issues such as urban design and real estate development, feasibility, as well as larger housing organizations and business improvement districts. Additionally, the group includes representatives of the local neighborhood groups, artist community, as well as youth, health and advocacy organizations to help direct the policies and decisions of Plan Downtown.

The community feedback described above has informed the Plan Alternatives Report that is the subject of this report.

## **PLAN ALTERNATIVES**

The Plan Alternatives Report includes a summary of background information, a summary of the community vision for Downtown Oakland (to date), and a series of plan options and scenarios. The plan alternatives are reflective of the community vision and goals that have emerged through a series of small group meetings, large public events, and a 10-day public interactive design charrette. These working concepts and goals are grouped into the following categories:

- Affordability & Equity;
- Arts & Cultural Heritage;
- Built Environment, Preservation & Housing;
- Open Space & Recreation;
- Environmental Sustainability;
- Connectivity & Access; and

- Economic Development.

The Plan Alternatives Report contains the “Big Ideas” that the city and consultant team have heard from the community to date, and are discussed as goals on pages 4.2-4.25 of the Plan Alternatives Report. The big ideas and goals will continue to be refined and edited throughout the planning process.

The entire Plan Alternatives Report, **Attachment B** to this report, is available on the project webpage: [www.oaklandnet.com/plandowntownoakland](http://www.oaklandnet.com/plandowntownoakland).

## **ARTS IN THE PLAN ALTERNATIVES REPORT**

The importance of arts and culture to Oakland in general and Downtown in particular has been one of the central themes discussed during public meetings. A short list of feedback received includes:

- Arts and cultural institutions downtown are well used by residents and visitors; they are an historic part of the city and need to remain in the community.
- Affordability of artist space and artist's housing is of great concern as is the threat of displacement
- Creative, artistic sidewalk amenities and furniture, including garbage storage areas, are needed
- Create rotating art installations in downtown
- Map existing arts communities & cultural institutions to track retention & growth
- Treat arts as an industry and support youth pathways to arts industry jobs
- Designate an arts zone all over Oakland
- Reestablish an arts commission with sufficient staff to get federal funding and other grants for arts
- Include environment, architecture, and nature to create art

The Alternatives report contains vision and goals statement specific to arts and culture are as follows:

- Foster creative culture and arts in Downtown Oakland by providing artist and maker work spaces and galleries that serve burgeoning and independent artisans as well as established ones.
- Foster creative culture and arts in Downtown Oakland by providing community gathering spaces where art walks are organically occurring.
- Preserve and celebrate the historic buildings and civic spaces that have played a significant role in Oakland's history and culture.

In addition, key concepts related to arts are included in the Plan Alternatives Report. The KONO and Lakeside neighborhoods include the following recommendations related to art. The KONO alternatives include various strategies for protecting gallery and “maker” space in and around the 25<sup>th</sup> Street Garage District such as creating an Industrial/Maker designation (that permits work-live spaces while also encouraging or providing incentives for preserving industrial buildings), as well as adopting standards and regulations for historic designations that preserve the artists and maker building fabric. The Lakeside district explores the concept of the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Black Arts Movement and Business District to celebrate the contributions of African Americans to Downtown Oakland.

The Existing Conditions section of the report includes figures depicting a preliminary cultural asset map and an arts and entertainment map. Both of these maps will be further defined as the planning process continues, in addition to identifying ways to support the identified businesses, institutions and activities.

Additionally, the Plan Alternatives Report proposes circulation and streetscape improvements to better connect, identify and reinforce the arts districts in Downtown through unified, distinct signage, public art, and cultural markers.

Potential policy recommendations to explore for maintaining the existing, and growing new, arts and cultural places in Downtown Oakland, include the following:

- Identify which warehouse clusters should remain light industrial and “maker” space, versus which areas can transition to work/live, office and commercial space.
- Recommend an initiative or study in the Specific Plan that seeks to restore the Arts Commission, with accompanying staff and funding support.
- Define, envision and illustrate an arts district in Downtown, which might include a series of arts districts within specific neighborhoods, that are well- connected and coordinated with one another.
- Connect arts and cultural districts with local transit accommodations, a comfortable pedestrian experience on the streets that travel between centers of activity, and a unified marketing theme.
- Coordinate programming and activities between arts districts to refine how the unique neighborhoods that comprise Downtown can become a coordinated arts district.
- Coordinate the preservation of the arts and cultural institutions with strategies for affordability.
- Offer a density bonus or other zoning incentives for arts or cultural uses in new development projects.
- Encourage the implementation of the recommendations of the Mayor’s Artist Housing and Workspace Task Force, including real estate acquisition and leasing, financial assistance and technical assistance for artists.
- Help to visualize how arts and culture can remain a part of the city fabric through a menu of building types in the Specific Plan that accommodate artists and cultural organizations.
- Create a campaign to celebrate Oakland’s cultural history, such as plaques, sidewalk art and themed street amenities.
- Support entertainment, cultural and nightlife uses by requiring new residential development work with existing venues to minimize sound and other conflicts.

## **SUMMARY OF OTHER KEY IDEAS IN THE ALTERNATIVES REPORT**

Based on community ideas and feedback to date, a series of draft alternative scenarios for the future of downtown’s neighborhoods have been created and analyzed. They are intended to illustrate ways to achieve the community’s vision for an improved public realm that serves residents better while accommodating both growth and preservation. Basic circulation improvements are assumed to apply regardless of the specific alternatives chosen that prioritize pedestrians, bicycles, and transit including: all streets are re-designed to be complete streets and traffic calming techniques will be applied where appropriate; working with AC Transit, transit infrastructure is enhanced such as transit shelters/platforms and dedicated transit lanes and signage; policy options that result in two-way restoration of as many

downtown streets as is feasible; a strategy to green the streets with bioswales, trees and other natural elements; in partnership with the Downtown Parking Supply Study, a parking strategy will be developed that accommodates current and future demand and balances on-street and off-street options. Additionally, in partnership with the Freeway Access Project, all freeway access points will be evaluated and modified where necessary to ensure that pedestrians and cyclists feel comfortable and safe.

This section presents the draft key ideas from each neighborhood with considerations demonstrating how the envisioned concepts could be achieved. For a complete review of the draft alternatives, see pages 5.2-5.50 of the Draft Alternatives Report.

**Koreatown Northgate (KONO)**

*Urban Design*

New development in Downtown’s KONO neighborhood should focus on vacant, surface parking lots and underutilized lots. Preserving the smaller, early 20<sup>th</sup> century production buildings will help maintain the industrial character of the neighborhood by introducing minimal changes to these buildings such as openings, awnings, signage and building lighting. Large- to medium-scale building types are envisioned on transit-rich Telegraph Avenue and 27<sup>th</sup> Street. A network of open spaces such as a mid-block pedestrian paseo within the blocks along 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, and 26<sup>th</sup> Streets could be linked by tree-lined streets and rain gardens that filter stormwater. Streets would share the use of curbs for passenger loading zones and mobility hubs that accommodate bike share, on-street car share and ride share. Implementation of the Telegraph Avenue Complete Streets Plan, including a separate cycle track provides comfortable path for cyclists of all experience levels.

*Development Potential*

The development potential for the two alternatives is summarized below:

	Alternative 1*	Alternative 2
Total new units	1,368 units	1,721 units
Total new commercial space	187,653 square feet	196,465 square feet
Total office space	-- square feet	261,896 square feet
Total new parking area	96,750 square feet	111,150 square feet

\*Alternative one would prohibit residential near the core of 25<sup>th</sup> Street.

*Getting There: Plan Considerations*

**An Industrial/Maker designation (that permits work-live spaces while also encouraging or providing incentives for preserving industrial buildings) could be implemented to help preserve existing artist and production spaces and introduce new artist and maker spaces within the Garage District between Telegraph Ave. and Broadway.** Standards and regulations for historic designations may need to be examined and revised to preserve the artists and maker building fabric, as well as potentially identifying any additional buildings to add to the historic building survey. A Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program could occur between this area and other properties Downtown. This would enable needed housing to increase in another neighborhood, while maintaining the historic buildings and uses in KONO and providing incentive for KONO landlords to maintain their properties and provide community benefits. Affordable work/live units could be achieved by implementing a workforce housing policy that incentivizes units that house residents who meet specific income or occupational requirements (such as artists and makers). Alternatively, affordability could also be achieved by design with creative housing models. For example, small yet high- quality work-live units could be designed above shared a

commercial space at the ground level.

## **Uptown**

### *Urban Design*

The Plan Alternative’s vision for Uptown includes an improved public realm, strategic infill and the re-purposing of underutilized and historic buildings to meet current needs —such as incubator space for small businesses. There are a variety of building types in Uptown, including several parking garages. One idea for the future involves retrofitting parking garages at the ground level into commercial spaces the depth of an individual parking bay. This would add commercial space in Uptown, repair damaged street frontages, and re-purpose underutilized portions of parking structures. Along 20th and 21st Streets, a paseo is envisioned to add a pedestrian connection along this very long City block. A “road diet” (road narrowing) is already being implemented for Telegraph Avenue; the new street design includes separated bike lanes in each direction, narrowed travel lanes, the addition of drought tolerant street trees, and a central street space that accommodates cars and buses which collectively make the center of Uptown more walkable and bikeable to reduce traffic congestion, support business and create a more livable public realm. A redesign of the section of Broadway in the Uptown neighborhood could better prioritize pedestrians, cyclists and transit users, and provide better connections to City Center.

### *Development Potential*

The development potential for Uptown is summarized below:

	Alternative 1
Total new units	1,228 units
Total new commercial space	38,076 square feet
Total office space	19,302 square feet
Total new parking area	39,404 square feet

### *Getting There: Plan Considerations*

New design guidelines can be implemented to ensure that storefronts are inviting to the pedestrian. For example, minimum transparency on the first floor, signage that is visible to the pedestrian, and the presence of awnings, can result in a more comfortable and inviting experience. **Additionally, programs can be implemented that encourage existing blank walls to be transformed by local artists into murals or art installations. This will help to establish continuity between active storefronts. Programs can also be created to encourage incubator spaces and pop-up retail, like shipping containers or food trucks, to occur on underutilized sites. These temporary solutions can catalyze permanent change within a neighborhood.**

Height allowances within the Uptown neighborhood already permit tall buildings; buildings in this Plan alternative are at least 7 stories tall, and become as tall as 12 to 15 stories along Broadway and Telegraph. This would accommodate at least 689 new housing units, as well as additional retail and office space at the heart of the City. Several options could be pursued to target more affordable housing in this scenario, including the City allocating an impact fee for subsidy and allowing more creative housing models such as “Micro Living Quarters” (very small units which are more affordable by design).

## City Center

### *Urban Design*

Broadway, the “main street” of downtown Oakland, travels through the core of City Center. Improvements suggested for this historic street in the Plan Alternative Report include the addition of transit-only lanes, bike infrastructure, street trees, to help to connect the Civic Center to Uptown and facilitate successful ground-floor commercial businesses. A distinctive characteristic of Broadway is that its many small, well-loved, and unique retail businesses are located here. Improving the sidewalk and street space will encourage pedestrian traffic to support them while making public spaces more comfortable and secure. The restoration of a streetcar system could also energize Broadway by adding another mode of transit to this busy corridor. The return of the streetcar to Oakland would complement other improvements, such as - extended bus service along the corridor, the implementation of dedicated bike lanes, and generous sidewalks. These improvements would not preclude car traffic, but would add more and different modes of transportation to Oakland’s iconic “main street.” The City Center could be infilled with mid-sized buildings with retail on the ground floor and residences above to create more activity beyond weekday office hours, boosting safety and the local economy. To improve walkability along streets with exposed parking garages, small retail units could be introduced on the ground floors of parking garages, providing usable space along the street. These “liner” units would face the street, providing activity and security.

### *Development Potential*

The development potential for the City Center is summarized below:

	Alternative 1
Total new units	240 units
Total new commercial space	10,071 square feet
Total office space	12,000 square feet
Total new parking area	19,250 square feet

### *Getting There: Plan Considerations*

One of the key concepts for implementing this new vision for City Center is a redesign of Broadway as it travels through the core of Downtown. The envisioned street retrofit includes a transit priority lane to accommodate the forthcoming BRT route that will pass through this portion of Broadway. The proposed street design could include car travel lanes in each direction, dedicated and separated bike lanes, and large sidewalks adjacent to retail storefronts. On street parking could be removed in some areas, and while not recommended for every street, given the importance of this segment of Broadway as a multi-modal center of the City, the benefit of increased bike and transit facilities could outweigh the impact from the lost parking. **A program could be implemented that encourages local artists to partner with property owners to add murals to existing large blank walls at the ground level. Adding temporary mural art or other art installations on blank or covered up frontages along Broadway will help to establish continuity from Uptown to the City Center and from the City Center to the Jack London neighborhood.**

## Lake Merritt Office District

### *Urban Design*

New high-rise towers on vacant, surface parking and underutilized lots are envisioned to join those already located in the Lake Merritt Office District. New high-rises would be encouraged to have “tower” forms, which are more slender and have less impact on views and light. Regularly spaced street trees, rooftop gardens and green roofs would create an urban canopy. Pocket parks, plazas and

courtyards would add to the quality of life for new and existing residents. Improvements to the street frontages of existing buildings are also proposed, allowing local businesses to expand and reinvest in the area to provide goods and services to new and current residents and workers, while streets provide pedestrian-oriented places throughout the day and into the night. Connections to Lake Merritt and other downtown districts would be improved as pedestrian and bicycle routes are enhanced and more people commute to work by transit or bicycle. Key connections in this neighborhood include 20th Street and Grand Avenue. 22nd Street could be re-made with decorative paving and special lighting (such as a “necklace of lights”) between Telegraph Avenue and the Kaiser/Cathedral plaza to create an intimate, plaza-like street corridor through Downtown to Lake Merritt. The former section of Valdez Street between 22nd Street and Grand Avenue is also envisioned to re-open to auto traffic to better connect the Lake Merritt Office District to the future retail corridor along Valdez Street north of Grand Avenue.

*Development Potential*

The development potential for the Lake Merritt Office District is summarized below:

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Total new units	598 units	1,288 units
Total new commercial space	74,512 square feet	104,512 square feet
Total office space	1,395,586 square feet	1,565,600 square feet
Total new parking area	143,617 square feet	188,617 square feet

*Getting There: Plan Considerations*

New development should provide a variety of housing types, including one-, two-, and three-bedroom units. Coupled with an adjusted zoning ordinance that incentivizes a variety of unit types, the Lake Merritt District can offer opportunities for much needed housing supply and affordability. Additionally, policies to incentivize shared office and commercial spaces at the ground floor should be included to implement the vision for this district. In both alternatives evaluated, the overall vision is met; however, the second alternative includes no additional parking for the added development. A lower parking requirement in this transit-rich neighborhood would give developers more options to achieve more units with a variety of development types in the same footprint.

**Lakeside**

*Urban Design*

**The Plan Alternative’s vision for the Lakeside neighborhood would preserve existing high-quality buildings and cultural centers, including the Malonga Casquelourd Cent for the Arts, while integrating new infill development and civic spaces that support and enhance local cultural institutions.** Infill development would focus on vacant, surface parking and underutilized lots to accommodate additional residential development, as well as supporting arts, office, entertainment, and retail uses. The planned intensity would allow large-scale buildings between Broadway and Harrison, as well as fronting 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Lake Merritt and 19<sup>th</sup> Street, to encourage an increase in the supply of housing. Contextually sensitive small-, medium- and large-scale buildings could fill in the residential portion of the Lakeside District. **The Black Arts Movement and Business District designation along 14th Street would be celebrated with improved streetscapes, distinct signage, and other visual and architectural cues that reinforce the character and significance of this area to Oakland’s culture and history.** A network of great public spaces, including a shared space (plaza-like streets with a priority on the pedestrian, designed to eliminate the separation between pedestrians and car traffic) along 15th Street, pocket plazas, and greens, could be linked by shaded, tree-lined streets to trails along Lake Merritt and Snow Park. Both 14th and 17th Streets are key links between neighborhoods as is Lakeside Drive as it meanders

around Lake Merritt. The unifying elements of these corridors will include generous sidewalks and transparent shopfronts along the street edge that establish comfort for the pedestrian, street trees, dedicated bike and transit infrastructure, and memorable architecture.

*Development Potential*

The development potential for the Lakeside is summarized below:

	Alternative 1
Total new units	2,147 units
Total new commercial space	236,163 square feet
Total office space	588,000 square feet
Total new parking area	165,062 square feet

*Getting There: Plan Considerations*

As in other Downtown neighborhoods, including workforce housing is a priority; several policies could be considered to achieve plan goals including incentives with new development, or design approaches that incorporate a diverse range of housing types, including smaller affordable-by-design units or cooperative housing. Infill will be encouraged to occur at the scale of the building and lot, and not by entire city blocks. This will help retain the existing neighborhood character and scale. **The proposed vision for improvements to public spaces in the Lakeside District should be created and implemented in partnership with the community to ensure improved streets, plazas and shared spaces meet community needs for celebration of arts and cultural heritage. Establishing institutional leadership, such as an arts commission, or partnering with existing community groups, to work in conjunction with the City in establishing priorities, defining specific projects and detailing designs could be a first step.**

**West of San Pablo**

*Urban Design*

Street-oriented infill will help to better define both 17th Street and 20th Street, which are gateways to Downtown. Streetscape improvements and traffic calming along these streets could also make them more welcoming gateways. Replacing the I-980 Freeway with an at-grade boulevard would help to re-connect West Oakland to Downtown and this neighborhood (see further description on the I-980 proposal on page 11 of this report). Improvements to 17<sup>th</sup> Street (including narrowing the street, adding a planted buffer between the new protected bike lane and auto travel lanes) could catalyze private investment in the area (as the public realm improves) and improve the gateway appearance of this importance entrance to Downtown. Shared street features on San Pablo at 17<sup>th</sup> Street and 15<sup>th</sup> Street could provide additional plaza amenities.

*Development Potential*

The development potential for the West of San Pablo is summarized below:

	Alternative 1
Total new units	537 units
Total new commercial space	86,559 square feet
Total office space	77,849 square feet
Total new parking area	47,798 square feet

*Getting There: Plan Considerations*

The West of San Pablo neighborhood is uniquely situated adjacent to Interstate 980, the City Center, and parts of Old Oakland. Many of the lots are small and have housing that is similar to the housing in West Oakland. These historic homes should be preserved and re-purposed as needed. Local

incentives to preserve and re-use historic structures, such as a transfer of development rights system, could be used to help maintain the buildings. Public and private partnerships between the City and civic organizations are another option. I-980 could have transformative impacts, and high associated costs, however the costs may be offset by the potential for new public land and improved connections to West Oakland and Old Oakland.

**Old Oakland**

*Urban Design*

Vacant or underutilized lots could be built out with small, context-sensitive buildings that contribute to the public realm. Underutilized parking garages could be adapted and reused as micro-housing units or incubator retail space. Ninth Street can be transformed from one-way into two-way, as well as reconfigured with head-in diagonal parking converted to back-in diagonal parking. The addition of textured paving would help to increase safety for bicyclists because it signals to motorists to drive slower and more cautiously. New street trees could be added to fill in the tree canopy, making the street more comfortable and inviting for pedestrians. Respecting the existing and historic buildings, new development can complement the character of Old Oakland. At the west edge, the transformation of I-980 into a surface boulevard enhances the neighborhood by creating a better experience on Castro Street.

*Development Potential*

The development potential for the Old Oakland is summarized below:

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
Total new units	467 units	1,107 units
Total new commercial space	33,323 square feet	157,823 square feet
Total office space	64,052 square feet	291,552 square feet
Total new parking area	--	--

*Getting There: Plan Considerations*

A TDR (Transfer of Development Rights) program to assist preservation efforts Downtown can be studied and implemented. Rehabilitated buildings in Old Oakland should be protected by carefully crafted and enforced historic design guidelines. Additional historic designations should encourage Local Register or National Register, etc. to provide additional protections and incentives

**Jack London District**

*Urban Design*

Maintaining the existing character of the Jack London District by preserving historic warehouse structures is a community priority; these can be repurposed for work/live uses that increase the vibrancy and mix of uses in the district. There are opportunities for infill on underutilized lots, appropriately-scaled to fit with the surrounding context. These new buildings can repair gaps in the pedestrian network by introducing continuous, interesting building facades that line and activate sidewalks, creating a memorable and comfortable experience. New streets and development could be extended in the “Victory Court” area between Oak Street and the Lake Merritt channel.

The historic produce market in the Jack London District provides a useful hub for commerce, but there may be an opportunity to develop a better equipped facility for the produce market in a more appropriate location, while taking advantage of the current market’s historic buildings for adaptive reuse. Oakland’s produce market buildings could then be revitalized to become a unique destination similar to the French

Quarter in New Orleans (with the appropriate relocation of the existing produce businesses to a suitable location).

The Webster Green is an envisioned a new linear greenway that could be constructed over the alignment of the Webster Tube, and connect to additional open spaces in Chinatown and near the estuary waterfront. The waterfront would be improved with better lighting, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and open space amenities. Connections between the Jack London District and the rest of Downtown would also be improved by enhancing the I-880 under-crossings with new lighting, wider sidewalks, and public art. In the near-term, the impact of the rail line on the Embarcadero could be significantly reduced through implementation of a “quiet zone”. To implement a quiet zone, intersection and other safety improvements must be installed to allow trains to travel across streets without having to blow their horn. The plan also considers developing a new transit hub near Howard Terminal that could serve Jack London, West Oakland and Downtown.

Howard Terminal is no longer utilized as a container shipping terminal by the Port of Oakland; however, the land continues to support Port operations through accessory activities such as truck parking and cargo and container storage. A visionary long-term plan for Howard Terminal that lays out a phased transition to other uses could bring new energy to the Jack London District and Downtown. Numerous jurisdictions have regulations applicable to the property. Despite the complicated system of approvals, there is still optimism over the range of future development possibilities. The Plan Alternatives Report contains three scenarios for the reuse of the site: stadium scenario, transit oriented development scenario and combined scenario. The development potential of each scenario is presented below.

*Development Potential*

The development potential for the Jack London District is summarized below:

		<b>Total new units</b>	<b>Total new commercial space (square feet)</b>	<b>Total new office space (square feet)</b>	<b>Total new parking area (square feet)</b>
<b>Alternative 1</b>	Jack London	1,219	320,524	68,000	61,575
	Howard Terminal	--	509,884	571,129	49,465
<b>Alternative 2</b>	Jack London*	1,219	320,524	68,000	61,575
	Howard Terminal	578	228,329	582,679	49,465
<b>Alternative 3</b>	Jack London*	2,347	610,049	1,075,800	186,900
	Howard Terminal	895	347,749	900,995	42,099

\*This alternative explores options for infill and revitalized sites that surround the I-880 Freeway and the BART line.

*Getting There: Plan Considerations*

The Jack London neighborhood includes a variety of historic warehouse and industrial buildings, which should be preserved and re-used. East of Broadway the area has already been extensively redeveloped with live/work conversions of existing buildings and new construction at a much larger scale. West of Broadway and in the Produce Market much more original building stock remains. A Transfer of Development Rights system would

support preservation. Redevelopment of the Howard terminal site, either as a stadium or transit oriented development, would dramatically change Oakland’s waterfront, yet is a costly investment. However, the Howard Terminal site is large enough to accommodate a stadium, a vast waterfront park, and other new development. Together, the mix of uses on the site may help to offset a portion of the infrastructure costs. If I-980 is removed in the future, the new housing and commercial opportunities that could be created in its place would further strengthen connections to the Howard Terminal site.

**Interstate 980**

*Urban Design*

Approximately 15 blocks long and cutting through several neighborhoods, the I-980 is an existing barrier between West Oakland and Downtown and only carries a fraction of the traffic it was originally designed for. A “big idea” in the Plan Alternatives Report is to eventually replace the swath of land that is currently I-980 with an attractive, walkable and bikeable surface boulevard that accommodates the former I-980 traffic, but takes up a fraction of the land. The remainder of the land could be used to reconnect the downtown street grid to West Oakland, and thereby create a new set of blocks for both public spaces and appropriately scaled development with a mix of market and affordable housing.

*Development Potential*

The development potential for the I-980 is summarized below:

	<b>Alternative 1</b>	<b>Alternative 2</b>
Total new units	1,010 units	1,150 units
Total new commercial space	379,900 square feet	337,700 square feet
Total office space	242,200 square feet	988,050 square feet
Total new parking area	29,715 square feet	29,715 square feet

*Getting There: Plan Considerations*

The potential for new development around the envisioned multi-way boulevard replacement for I-980 is great; attention will need to be given to the details, such as specifying the urban form (defining areas of intensity, as well as areas where buildings should step down to meet the scale of surrounding neighborhoods) and including provisions for affordability, mix of housing types, and variety of uses.

**The next section presents an overview of how arts and culture have been addressed in previous specific plans and current City initiatives related to public art and artists.**

**ART IN PREVIOUS SPECIFIC PLANS AND CURRENT CITY ARTS INITIATIVES AND PROGRAMS**

The City's previous specific plans took various approaches to incorporating arts into the planning work as described below. Also presented below is an overview of the City’s existing Cultural Arts programs, the new Public Art in Private Development Ordinance and a brief overview of the Mayor's Artist Housing and Workspace Task Force.

### **Lake Merritt Station Area Plan**

Investment in public art is recommended as a key strategy for creating high-quality and distinctive urban design that is reflective of the local character of the neighborhood in the Lake Merritt BART Station/Chinatown area. Public art is included as policy as a way to improve the streetscape and celebrate the culture and history of the area. The Webster Green (a proposed linear park running from the waterfront to 7th Street,), a concept being further developed in the Downtown Oakland Specific Plan, was described as a way to significantly improve the connection between the Jack London District and Chinatown, with a key feature being the installation of public art. Development around the Lake Merritt BART station, a major opportunity for transit oriented development, is proposed to be enhanced through public art. The design guidelines developed for the area recommend the use of public art for emphasizing gateways, addressing blank walls, adding interest to corner buildings, enlivening the streetscape, improving the 880 freeway undercrossings, and enhancing wayfinding elements to reinforce connections between neighborhoods.

### **Broadway Valdez District Specific Plan**

Public art is cited as a component of improvements to the public realm at gateways, plazas, and as a key element of activating the envisioned shopping district by serving as the visual cue to lure pedestrians from adjacent commercial areas and neighborhoods. Additionally, public art is recommended, along with lighting, to improve the 580 freeway underpass. The implementation section of the plan suggests that a near-term action should be to concentrate investments in the ‘Valdez Triangle’ (defined by Broadway, 27<sup>th</sup>, Harrison, and Grand Avenue), and connect to the nearby 25<sup>th</sup> Street Garage District/ “Art Murmur Gallery District”, by enhancing the physical character/attractiveness of the area through improvements such as public art. The design guidelines developed for the Broadway Valdez area recommend that all public realm improvement projects should explore the integration of public art into the design, with specific guidelines around using local interpretive art (for increasing awareness of the area's history); creating a unified design identity; and siting for maximum public viewing and safety. The guidelines include provisions for public art being integrated into the design of buildings and streetscape elements (e.g., plazas, paving, street furniture, transit shelters, lighting, bike racks, wall murals, etc.). The Public Art Program and the Public Art Advisory Committee would evaluate proposals for public art on public property or receiving public funding, and projects would have to comply with the City of Oakland Public Art Ordinance.

### **West Oakland Specific Plan**

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. The Plan contains numerous strategies to foster West Oakland’s fully-emerged arts and culture movement. The Plan provides a detailed assessment of the West Oakland artists and West Oakland arts typology (which includes performance art, industrial art, visual art, among others operating at various scales). An assessment of the benefits of arts is detailed including financial (nationally, arts and culture is a multi-billion dollar industry; arts and culture organizations are rooted in their community and provide a source for local jobs), social (bridging social and ethnic groups) and local benefits (arts-related businesses in West Oakland occupy many formerly vacant buildings, contributing industry and creativity to the area). A map of existing and proposed arts clusters is included in the plan along with detailed strategies for cultivating West Oakland's arts and cultural districts such as including locally made furniture and art in all city-sponsored streetscape projects; incorporating art into new development using the City's new 1% Public Art Ordinance; educational and interpretive signs highlighting West Oakland's cultural features; implementation of the Seventh Street Streetscape and Blues Walk of Fame, enhanced through facade and or window treatments by neighborhood-serving commercial establishments that enliven the street; expedited permitting of festivals, street fairs and special events; maintenance of the existing anchors of the arts in West Oakland, and creation of new anchors for an arts; creation of arts leadership to advance key

arts-related objectives such as financial resource procurement, education, long-term planning and asset mapping. Finally, the plan includes implementing supportive regulatory programs to enable artists to legally create in their homes (i.e., work/live conversions, etc.).

### **Central Estuary Area Plan**

This Plan blends its natural waterfront setting, historic industrial architectural character and presence of unconventional artwork into the artistic framework for the plan. The vision statement celebrates artists and artisans and discusses relying on the picturesque waterfront setting (including significant portions of the San Francisco Bay Trail), arts and cultural institutions and varied character to draw visitors to the area, including residents from the Fruitvale and East Oakland neighborhoods. The changing character of the area from its early industrial employment base to artistic elements bringing in adaptive reuse, live-work and installation of novel, decorative public art, followed by artisanal industries and the development of several open spaces and the extension of the Bay Trail contribute to the area's character-defining features. The area's artist and artisan community and the waterfront provide ready themes and inspiration for a higher level of design. The design guidelines developed for the area include the natural and architectural features of the Central Estuary to help designers understand the context of the area and to encourage creative design solutions that reinforce the desired waterfront-oriented, creative, contemporary industrial aesthetic. Guidelines are included for encouraging artistic creativity in the design of screens, walls, fences and landscape buffers throughout the Central Estuary, and maritime-related designs at the waterfront; including public art in the construction of waterfront access including both iconic sculptures as well as functional pieces; building articulation guidelines reference the use of art and sculpture as a potential enhancement strategy; artistic elements such as murals and public art reflective of their context and the area's history and industrial heritage are encouraged for the treatment of blank walls; articulation of building facades with art is encouraged as is artful signage.

### **Cultural Funding Program**

The City of Oakland Cultural Funding Program supports Oakland-based art and cultural activities that reflect the diversity of the city for citizens of and visitors to Oakland. The highly competitive program, funded by a portion of the General Fund and the Hotel Tax\*, provides grants to Oakland-based, non-profit arts organizations and individual artists through an annual call for proposals in the Spring.

### **Municipal Public Art Program**

The Public Art Program commissions original works of art for public spaces throughout Oakland which enrich the city's visual environment, integrate the creative thinking of artists into public construction projects, and provide a creative means for citizens and visitors to enjoy and experience Oakland. City funded Public Art projects are generated through a one and one-half percent (1.5%) allocation from all eligible City of Oakland capital improvement and grant-funded projects.

### **Walking Tours**

The Oakland Tours Program offers free walking tours year round to school groups, private adult groups and members of the public. The guided tours offer information on Oakland's changing downtown skyline, with emphasis on both historic landmarks and examples of new development, art and public spaces.

### **Film Office / Permits**

The Oakland Film Office promotes filmmaking in Oakland to advance economic development and civic pride and to increase awareness of Oakland as a beautiful and culturally diverse place to create film, television and other visual productions.

## **Special Events**

The city's special events department is responsible for organizing and supporting a wide range of community and cultural events and festivals throughout the City, including: the city's major annual street festival, Art + Soul Oakland, each summer, and dozens of street festivals.

## **Public Art in Private Development**

The City recently adopted an ordinance requiring a percentage of the cost of development to produce public art. Nonresidential development must contribute at least one percent (1%) and residential development must contribute at least .5 percent (0.5%) of building development costs, based on Building Permit valuation, for publicly accessible art and/or new cultural facilities. Contribution can be satisfied in several ways: public art on the development site, in-lieu fees or through the provision of cultural space such as galleries.

## **Mayor's Artist Housing and Workspace Task Force**

In late 2015, the Mayor convened a task force to study and formulate strategies for creating and preserving affordable housing and workspaces for artists in Oakland. Informed by a survey of more than 900 artists and the affordable housing work being done by the Mayor's larger Housing Cabinet, the task force's work resulted in a greater focus on workspace affordability. The top three strategies that garnered the strongest and broadest support from task force members are listed below. Implementation of these recommendations is moving forward. The complete memo can be viewed [here](#).

- Strategy 1 Real Estate Acquisition and Leasing
  - a. Create a property acquisition program, modeled on the Community Arts Stabilization Trust (CAST) in SF, to create permanently affordable space for arts organizations in collaboration with foundations and other partners
  - b. Lease City or other publicly-owned property for arts uses at affordable rates, modelled on Spaceworks in New York City
  - c. Purchase properties via community land trust to create or maintain permanently affordable housing and workspaces for artists
  - d. Create affordable temporary art spaces in private developments in existing vacant or underutilized buildings poised for future redevelopment
  - e. Incentivize private developers to provide permanently or long-term affordable artist spaces in mixed-use developments through zoning tools
- Strategy 2 Financial Assistance
  - a. Provide direct financial assistance to help artist groups/arts organizations avoid or cope with displacement
- Strategy 3 Technical Assistance
  - a. Establish a robust portfolio of technical assistance programs to support and help artists strengthen their businesses and art practice and stay in Oakland
  - b. Improve the City's internal infrastructure to support artists and arts organizations in Oakland including increasing staff in the City's Cultural Arts Unit and considering the reactivation of an Arts Commission, with clear purview, once additional staff is in place to support it.

## **NEXT STEPS**

City staff is currently soliciting feedback from a number of bodies including:

- Public Art Advisory Committee (March 7)
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (March 9)
- Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (March 14)
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (March 17)
- Planning Commission (April 6)

Based on input from these advisory bodies and Planning Commission the Preferred Plan will be prepared and publicly vetted at a community workshop and meeting of the Community and Economic Development Committee of the City Council. The draft Specific Plan will then be prepared including proposed design standards and guidelines and supportive policies reflective of community and City priorities. Once the draft Specific Plan is prepared, it will be presented to the advisory bodies and Planning Commission for comment (anticipated in winter 2016).

The next public workshop will be held in the summer of 2016, when key elements of the Preferred Plan will be presented for public input. The public review draft Specific Plan is anticipated to be circulated in fall/winter 2016 and will be presented to the LPAB and other City advisory bodies, Planning Commission and City Council for review and comment. Development of the EIR will begin after the preferred alternative is selected. Once the Specific Plan and EIR are complete, adoption hearings will be held (anticipated for late 2017).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Receive any feedback from interested citizens; provide feedback on art and culture in the Plan Alternatives Report for consideration by the Oakland Planning Commission.