



Oakland Measure DD Community Coalition

June 8, 2015

Members of the Oakland City Council
City of Oakland
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza
Oakland, CA 94612

RE: Agenda Item 12, DDA for 12th Street Remainder Parcel

Dear Council Members:

On behalf of the Oakland Measure DD Community Coalition, I am writing to make two key points related to Agenda Item 12 of the June 16 Council meeting:

1. Procedure. The Coalition urges you to assert your control over the CED Committee recommendation of March 14, 2015, which has been "hijacked" by staff:

The CED committee meeting action on the Remainder Parcel DDA, ended with a motion to approve. At that point, 1hr:49min into the video transcript, there was a question from Patrick Lane about what percentage of the sales proceeds should be specified for "Measure DD" (meaning a Lake Merritt maintenance fund). Rebecca Kaplan then stated (verbatim from transcript): **"I would suggest that we move forward to full Council the 25% for affordable housing and the 25% for "Measure DD" which we can edit if we gain different information."** There was consensus that that summed up the sense of the motion, which allowed for the full Council to adjust either of these special allocations during the first reading. Motion approved.

This motion did not request or authorize staff to develop its own alternate recommendation, present it in supplemental #2, and suggest it orally under item 17 of the June 2, full Council meeting, but that is exactly what occurred. Supplemental #2 included this language:

ALTERNATIVE STAFF RECOMMENDATION Although the CED Committee approved a motion for 25 percent of net land sales proceeds from this transaction be used to fund the maintenance of Lake Merritt Measure DD improvements, the motion also allowed for staff to propose an alternative solution to address this issue. The use of one-time funds from the sale of this property for ongoing maintenance purposes is not recommended per the City's fiscal policy. Rather than allocating one-time funds from this property sale or incremental funding from interest earned on these one-time funds, the Administration has included \$400,000 of ongoing funds in the FY 2015-17 Proposed Budget for additional Lake Merritt parks maintenance beginning in FY 2016-17, after the plant establishment period ends (May 20 16).

Effectively, staff substituted its own recommendation for the CED Committee recommendation. On June 2, Council did not reconsider, "edit", or even discuss the proposed 25% allocation for a parks maintenance fund.

We urge you not to allow staff to control this matter. When the DDA is again heard by the Council, please consider the CED Committee recommendation as approved on March 14.

2. **Substance.** As you discuss the CED Committee recommendation and the need for special action in support of maintenance and protection of Measure DD improvements, you may wish to consider the following points:
 1. The alternative staff recommendation cautions against using one-time funds for an ongoing expense, but that is not what the Measure DD Community Coalition has proposed. Instead, we have asked that 25% of the proceeds be invested in a permanent fund restricted to augmented maintenance of Measure DD improvements around Lake Merritt. This is exactly analogous to the proposed investment of 25% of the proceeds in the City's fund for affordable housing.
 2. The alternate staff recommendation mentions the Administration's proposed \$400,000 of ongoing funds for additional Lake Merritt parks maintenance. We also endorse that concept and support Councilmember Guillen's version of this proposal, which calls for \$400,000 for each of the two budget years 2015 to 2017. An immediate budget augmentation is needed because the "plant establishment period" has already ended for many DD projects and is phasing out soon for others, including the 12th Street project. Moreover, parks maintenance and protection entails more than mere plant management.
 3. Since 2013, the Coalition has been advocating constructively for enhanced maintenance for Measure DD improvements. We sent such letters to council on the following dates: [March 25, 2013](#), [January 27, 2015](#), [May 4, 2015](#), [June 3, 2015](#). In 2013, we both wrote to and held meetings with the Public Works Director to discuss our concerns and options for action. To date, no progress has occurred. The following verbatim excerpt from pages G64-65 of the proposed 2015-2017 City Budget highlights the problem:

*"Bonds and former Redevelopment funds are restricted to supporting the creation of a park or other facility, and are not available to fund staff or materials for ongoing maintenance. **No funds have been budgeted to maintain these newly constructed parks.** Park maintenance staffing levels for fulltime staff was reduced nearly 50% in 2008. **These reductions have impacted the maintenance; resulting in a look and feel that Oakland parks are unkempt and have increased risk to the City.**"*
 4. Citizens who approved Measure DD by 80% and are investing nearly \$200M in its projects will likely be distressed to read the above budget excerpt. They surely expect the City to protect, care for, and maintain their investment.
 5. It is clear that **special action** is needed to correct this disgrace, and the sale of the "remainder parcel" created by Measure DD presents a unique opportunity for such special action. The Coalition urges you to seize that opportunity.

W. E. Threlfall

William Threlfall,
Administrator for
The Oakland Measure DD Community Coalition