



AICP COMMUNITY PLANNING WORKSHOP

Lake Merritt Station Area

Downtown Oakland, CA

Summary Report



**American Institute
of Certified Planners**

Creating Great Communities for All

■ The American Planning Association provides leadership in the development of vital communities by advocating excellence in planning, promoting education and citizen empowerment, and providing the tools and support necessary to effect positive change.

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More information on the Community Assistance Program:

Community Planning Workshops | <http://www.planning.org/communityassistance>
Community Planning Assistance Teams | planning.org/cpat

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Cover photo: Open space and recreational areas are an important part of Oakland Chinatown's vision. Source: Lake Merritt Station Area Plan (2014)

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The Purpose of the Community Assistance Program

The purpose of the Community Assistance Program is to serve communities facing limited resources by helping them address planning issues such as social equity and affordability, economic development, sustainability, consensus building, and urban design, among others. By pairing expert urban planning professionals from around the country with residents and other stakeholders from local communities, the program seeks to foster education, engagement, and empowerment.

Guiding Values

APA's professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), is responsible for the Community Assistance Program. Addressing issues of social equity in planning and development is a priority of APA and AICP. The Community Assistance Program was created to express the value of social equity through service to communities in need across the United States.

Community assistance is built into the professional role of a planner. One principle of the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct states that certified planners shall aspire to "seek social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration." Another principle is that certified planners should aspire to "contribute time and effort to groups lacking in adequate planning resources and to voluntary professional activities."

Program Background

In recognition of the key role urban and regional planners play in shaping vibrant, sustainable, and equitable communities, the APA Board of Directors established the Community Planning Team initiative in 1995. This initiative resulted in a pro bono

effort to assist an economically struggling African American community in Greensboro, North Carolina. APA has continued to develop a pro bono planning program that provides assistance to communities in need, including the annual Community Planning Workshop in the host city of the APA National Planning Conference.

In 2005, program efforts were increased after Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Coast region to include a number of initiatives, including planning assistance team projects in the affected cities of Henderson Point, Mississippi, and Mandeville, Slidell, and New Orleans in Louisiana. Another Gulf Coast recovery project included the Dutch Dialogues, which brought American planners together with Dutch experts to transform the way that Louisiana relates to and manages its water resources.

AICP broadened the scope of what is now called the Community Planning Assistance Teams (CPAT) program with its 2009 project in Buzzard Point, a neighborhood in Southwest Washington, D.C. Completed projects since the CPAT program's official relaunch in 2011, including Matthews, North Carolina; Story County, Iowa; Unalaska, Alaska; La Feria, Texas; Lyons, Colorado; Saginaw, MI; and others, including the first international project in the Yarborough neighborhood of Belize City, Belize, are all important landmarks in the development of the CPAT program as an ongoing effort. The CPAT program and the annual Community Planning Workshop are an integrated part of APA's service, outreach, and professional practice activities.

APA's Recovery Planning Assistance Teams, a subset of the CPAT program, bring volunteer planners to communities rebounding in the wake of natural disasters.

Learn more about the CPAT program here: planning.org/cpat

If you know of a community that may be interested in the CPAT program, we encourage you to let them know or contact program staff: CPAT@planning.org

INTRODUCTION

Planners from around the country and abroad attended the American Planning Association's 2019 National Planning Conference (NPC19) in San Francisco, April 12-15. APA offers a wide range of education sessions, mobile workshops, orientation tours, and many other professional networking and development opportunities throughout the conference. Since 2001, APA's professional institute, the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP), has organized the Community Planning Workshop in the host city of the conference. The workshop allows planners attending the conference the chance to assist and work with a community on a focused planning issue.

Local members of APA's NPC19 Committee reached out within their Bay Area networks to identify this year's project in downtown Oakland. APA, the city of Oakland, BART, East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation, and local planners worked together with area stakeholders, civic groups, and others to organize a workshop to focus on specific issues and goals related to establishing, financing, and sustaining a community benefits district in one of the last urban-infill neighborhoods in Downtown Oakland. The workshop pulled planners and other professionals from around the country together with residents and area stakeholders to discuss district-based models under consideration in the community.

Workshop Schedule

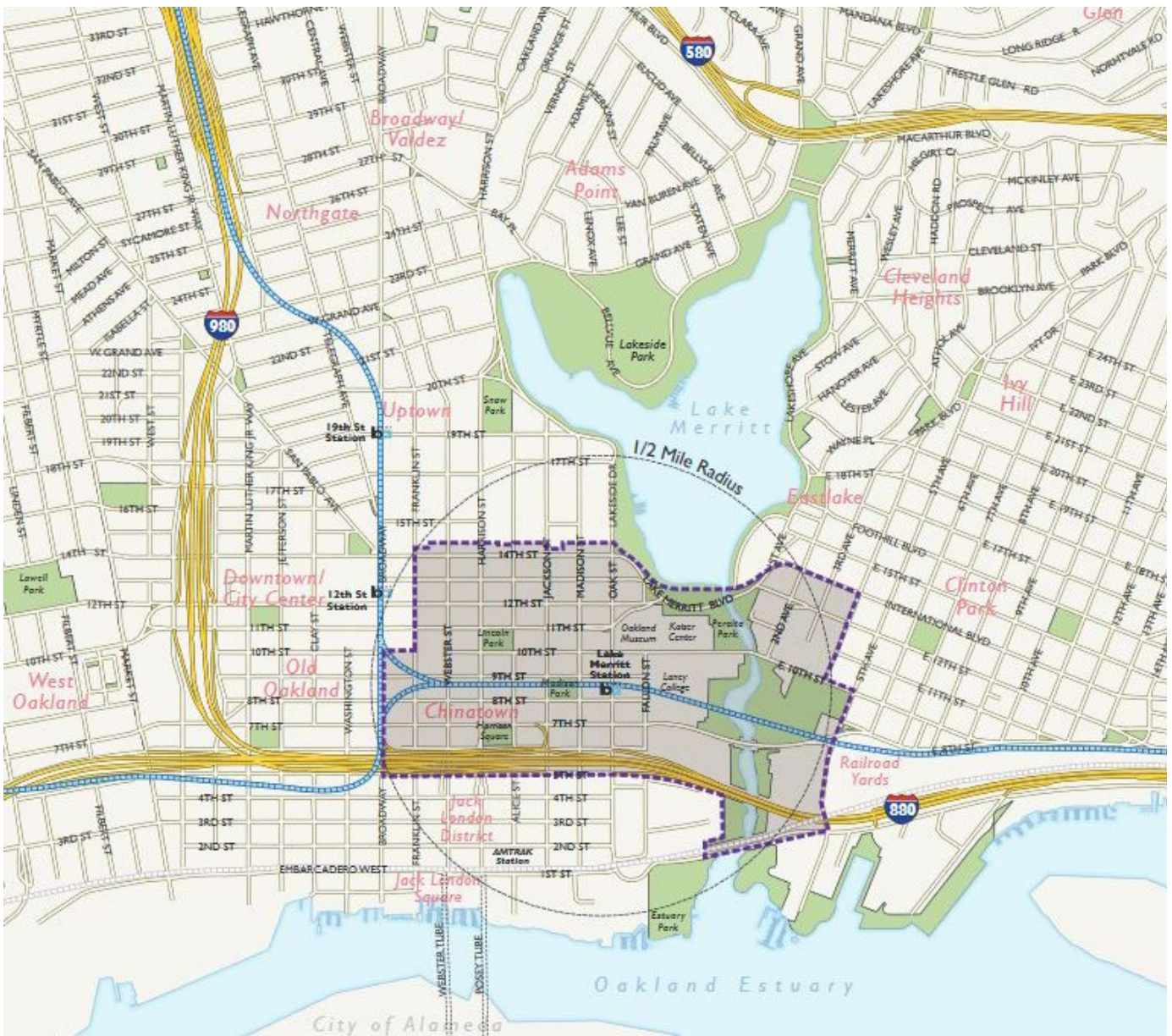
10:30 – 11:30 am
Tour of study area
11:30 – 11:45 am
Opening speakers & lunch
Alessandra Davidson Lundin Workshop organizer Welcome and introductions
Justin G. Moore, AICP AICP Commissioner Chair, Community Assistance Planning Services Committee Welcome and thanks
11:45 am – 1:00 pm
Topic Area Speakers – “TED Talks”
Dara O’Byrne, AICP City Planner, City of Oakland Speaker introductions
Ener Chiu Associate Director of Real Estate Development, East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation Public spaces, BART station TOD proposal, and BIDs/CBDs
Chris Iglesias CEO, The Unity Council Oakland Fruitvale District / cultural districts
Nadine Fogarty Principal and Vice President, Strategic Economics District-based financing tools
Kevin Diep Program Analyst, City of Oakland Parking benefit districts
Carla Hansen Assistant to the City Manager, City of Walnut Creek, CA Demand-based parking program
1:00 – 3:45 pm
Breakout sessions Participants self-selected among four breakout groups, divided by topic: (1) financing tools; (2) cultural districts; (3) parking benefit districts; and (4) business improvement districts.
3:45 – 4:15 pm
Group Report Outs
4:15 – 4:45 pm
Group Discussion

Background on Study Area

Out of the great recession, rising fast amid the current economic cycle, Oakland is experiencing rapid growth and development much like the rest of the San Francisco Bay Area. Rents in Oakland quickly rose out of reach for many native Oaklanders and the rate of displacement increased. The lack of effective planning tools and affordable housing policies exacerbated the situation for the community as development encroached around them.

The area around the Lake Merritt BART station, which includes Oakland's Chinatown, is one of the last urban-infill

neighborhoods in downtown Oakland. Residents want to ensure that as development occurs, tools are put in place to mitigate against displacement and respect the history and unique culture of the neighborhood. They wish to stay inclusive and keep the multiculturalism long associated with the area. Amid the reinvestment occurring around them, they also want to find ways to build wealth and ownership among long-time residents and businesses. To do that, however, many recognize the need for a sustainable funding mechanism to support the growing needs of the community.



The study area identified in the Specific Plan covers a roughly one-half mile radius around the Lake Merritt BART station in Downtown Oakland. Source: Lake Merritt Station Area Plan (2014)

Oakland Chinatown is an important cultural hub for the region that attracts Asian residents from across the East Bay who regularly patronize the neighborhood's businesses, and other religious, social, and health resources. With a neighborhood history that goes back to the 1850s, displacement is not new for Chinatown. Urban renewal claimed large parts of Chinatown with eminent domain for the freeway and BART in the 1950s. Entire blocks were razed. They lost cherished sites and important cultural resources. Yet the neighborhood then, as now, remains resilient.

The City of Oakland, community members, BART, and the Peralta Community College District worked together over four years (2010–2014) to develop the Lake Merritt Station Area Plan. The specific plan looks to add 4,900 new housing units, 4,100 new jobs, 404,000 square feet of additional retail, and 229,000 square feet of office uses to the neighborhood. The plan also proposes park and recreational facilities improvements and new open spaces throughout the area. Increased pedestrian connectivity and wayfinding signage are also part of the plan as are various economic development strategies to support and maintain infrastructure.

The plan's implementation strategy includes a broad menu of mechanisms for implementing the vision. Phase I mechanisms include those that can be undertaken directly, such as developer incentives and agreements, and grants and

loans. Phase II mechanisms, such as an impact fee program or formation of an assessment district, require additional studies or actions such as voter approval.

Oakland's city council voted for a new affordable housing impact fee program in 2016, and Oakland has long had anti-displacement policies such as rent control and just cause eviction in place. Developers now pay a fee for every market-rate housing unit they build. Voices within Chinatown, however, think the fees and current policies may not be enough to combat displacement and preserve the character of the neighborhood.

The idea of forming some form of community improvement district for Chinatown is gaining steam among community leaders as a way to reinforce the Chinatown cultural district and address programmatic issues and needs such as activation and maintenance of civic spaces. Ten other business improvement districts (BIDs) or community benefit districts (CBDs) already exist in Oakland, including the neighboring Fruitvale BID, Downtown Oakland Association, and the Jack London Improvement District. Many models exist in the state of California and the Bay Area region, and around the country. They offer lessons and ideas on what/approach may work best for Chinatown. Amid the community beginning to explore ideas, the 2019 AICP Community Workshop focused on the topic of improvement districts.

THE WORKSHOP

Introduction

Visiting planners boarded a bus at the Moscone Convention Center in San Francisco and travelled across the bay. Ener Chiu, a representative of EBALDC and Oakland resident, and Andrew Matsas, another EBALDC representative, provided background information on some of the current context involving the study area and guided the planners through a windshield tour of Oakland Chinatown.

The bus ended the tour at the workshop location – a building owned by BART next to the Lake Merritt station. The planners and local participants already inside grabbed lunches prepared by a local Downtown Oakland restaurant and sat down at tables. As participants finished their lunches, workshop organizer, Alessandra Lundin, welcomed everyone and provided details about the organization of the workshop. She introduced AICP Commissioner, Justin Moore, who thanked attending planners, the workshop organizers, and explained the intent of the annual workshop to learn from and assist a local community in the host city or region of APA's National Planning Conference.

Topic Area “TED Talks”

Following welcomes and introductions, the day began with a series of informational presentations on several topics intended for discussion during the workshop. City of Oakland planner, Dara O'Byrne, introduced each of the presenters.

Public spaces, BART station TOD proposal, and BIDS/CBDs

Ener Chiu, Associate Director of Real Estate Development for EBALDC, provided historical background and explained some of the current development context in Chinatown. Many of Chinatown's public spaces need revitalization. Madison Square – or Dragon Park – was once a beautiful and well-maintained space. The park is now in a state of disrepair. How did this happen and continue to happen amid the current era of abundant and rampant new wealth?

Between 2018 and 2020, the area has approximately 5,000 new apartments coming online, 96% of which are market rate. Only 4% are below market. Chinatown is surrounded by growth. There is a tendency to give more attention and resources to newly envisioned public spaces that will serve the new residents. In turn, less attention is paid to prioritizing operations and addressing the deferred maintenance of

existing neighborhood parks. Some also think new residents won't use the public domain and will instead use the gyms and other private resources offered by the new residential buildings.

EBALDC, along with Strada Investment Group, submitted a successful proposal to redevelop parcels owned by BART around the Lake Merritt station in the heart of Chinatown. BART's Board approved the proposal in 2018, and EBALDC, Strada, and BART are working to advance a large, mixed-use, mixed income development on two city blocks adjacent to the station. The goal of the development proposal is to reconnect the historic residential Chinatown to the core commercial Chinatown area.



The draft conceptual design for the BART Lake Merritt Station includes 519 residential rental units with 226 of those dedicated below-market affordable residents; 517,100 square feet of office space with 92,100 square feet dedicated below-market users, and 27,400 square feet of ground-floor commercial space dedicated to small business incubation and community-serving uses. Source: EBALDC and Strata Proposal for the Redevelopment of Lake Merritt BART station (Approved by BART Board September 2018)

The proposal focuses on affordability for residents, non-profits and new startup entrepreneurs. An estimated 44% of the units will be below market rate, which is more than 10 times the rate of the downtown. The proposal also envisions a three-block linear open space that would help reconnect the residential area to commercial Chinatown to the west.

Attracting investment and building nice things is not the problem. The big questions are: How to make something nice without adding to displacement pressure? How do we sustainably resource long term oversight, programming, management, and maintenance of public parks, plazas, and streets?

No city in the San Francisco Bay Area has successfully addressed the continued displacement problem, but in some locations, the nonprofit sector has stepped up to create BIDs and CBDs. The Uptown Downtown Community Benefits District in Oakland is a good example. The district's boundaries include around 82 square blocks. Their 2019 budget is \$3.4 million. "Clean and Safe" is their main program, funded at around \$2 million.

Progress has been made towards piloting a benefits district, led by Oakland resident Tommy Wong who started the [Chinatown Improvement Initiative](#) (CII) with support from Asian Health Services (a community health clinic), the Chinatown Chamber of Commerce, and EBALDC. The CII was established as a prototype BID to show local property owners the value from having this kind of organization. Tommy Wong is an artist with some major art installations in Chinatown. Mr. Wong also led the Montclair BID before coming back to focus on Chinatown again.

The CII has four program areas: (1) Chinatown Clean; (2) Chinatown Beautiful; (3) Chinatown Community; and (4) Chinatown Grow. The CII street team, which does a lot of the cleaning and trash pickup, is staffed mostly by men and women who come out of the Asian Prisoners Support Committee. The partnership has been a success. The program offers opportunities to felony-offenders committed to a rehabilitative process but have limited options. Business owners and other community members recognize the difference they make in keeping the streets cleaner and safer and have embraced them. The CII has been self-funded, with periodic assistance from small grants. They do not have a recurring source of revenue.

The work of BIDs/CBDs poses some challenges. BIDs and CBDs are only supposed to do work that is supplemental to the city's baseline services. The Public Employees Unions fight hard to keep as much of that scope in their purview as possible and can sue if nonprofits like BIDs start doing their work. Unfortunately, there often isn't enough budgeted for city employees to do their job adequately, which ratchets up the desire for BIDs.

As an example, CII filed dozens of requests to clean up a simple box on the street over the course of a month. They received no response. So, the street team bought some paint and cleaned it up on their own one afternoon. A city employee saw them and issued a citation. Many examples of similar situations demonstrate the issue whereby the BID doesn't know



The CII street team was cited by the city for cleaning up a mailbox even though no one was stepping up to do it. Photo courtesy EBALDC

how far it can go. Yet, no one else is stepping up to do the work. The organization often proceeds until the city reprimands them, or the Union threatens to sue them.

Oakland Fruitvale District and Cultural Districts

Chris Iglesias, CEO of The Unity Council, presented information about his organization's history and work in Fruitvale. [The Unity Council](#) (TUC) is a nonprofit social equity development corporation with a 50-year history in the Fruitvale neighborhood of Oakland. The Unity Council is the umbrella organization of several related subsidiaries such as a social enterprise and job-training program, development corporation, and property management for three low-income senior HUD properties. There is also a Fruitvale BID comprised of over 350 locally owned businesses and property owners.

TUC serves the Fruitvale and East Oakland community, one of the most historically repressed areas in Oakland, which has a high share of low-income Latino and African American families. TUC focuses on social equity and offer a holistic set of services including early childhood education, youth mentorship and leadership development, employment services, career readiness training, housing and financial stability, senior citizen services, and affordable housing and neighborhood development.

Beyond that, TUC also organizes arts and cultural events that are important to the community. Their Día de Los Muertos Annual Festival, a free, outdoor festival in the heart of Fruitvale, attracts over 100,000 people from across California. People come to experience and enjoy the family-friendly atmosphere that celebrates Latin American culture. The event offers an opportunity to showcase local artists, musicians, dancers and other forms of cultural expression and share it with others both inside and outside the community. The event is a large economic boost to the neighborhood. The festival was also inducted into the U.S. Library of Congress by Congresswoman Barbara Lee as a "Local Legacy" for the state of California.



The Unity Council's successful Día de los Muertos Festival brings over 100,000 people from the region to the Fruitvale neighborhood in East Oakland. Photos courtesy The Unity Council and Tom Hilton



District-based Financing Tools

Following the presentations on current conditions and best practices, several presenters explored the various funding and financing mechanisms that could sustain such a district. Nadine Fogarty, principal and vice president for Strategic Economics, presented about financing tools. A BID is a type of special assessment district but can go by different names, such as a community benefits district.

The definition of a BID or CBD is:

- A district wherein the city levies an assessment against businesses or property owners to fund services or improvements
 - Services or improvements are designed to benefit the businesses or property owners who pay the assessment
 - BIDs are usually managed by a non-profit organization under contract to the city
 - Establishment of the BID requires majority approval by property owners; votes are weighted by the proposed assessment
 - BIDs may also receive grants or donations from the city or other entities

Common BID/CBD activities include:

- Maintenance and sidewalk cleaning
- Capital improvements (e.g., lighting, parklets, plazas)
- Business marketing and promotion
- Business recruitment and retention
- Safety and security
- Parking, transit and transportation management
- Festivals and events
- Community services

Boundaries are set to reflect the areas that will receive special benefit from the services or improvements. BIDs may

include zones that receive different benefits. Overall assessments are structured based on budgeted costs. Individual property owner or business owner assessments must be directly proportional to the “special benefit” received. Assessments may vary by property or business type.

A community facilities district (CFD), often referred to as Mello-Roos, are another kind of special district established by local governments in California as a means of obtaining additional public funding. The name Mello-Roos is derived from the co-authors of the Community Facilities Act (Senator Henry J. Mello and Assemblyman Mike Roos), a law enacted by the California State Legislature in 1982. Current California constitutional law (since 1996) requires two-thirds voter approval to form a CFD.

Enhanced infrastructure districts (EIFDs) were created after California governor Jerry Brown eliminated redevelopment agencies in the state, which also eliminated the ability for cities to use tax increment financing (TIF). A unique feature of an EIFD is that the defined area of the district is not required to be contiguous. In other words, areas separated geographically could form an EIFD if they share a common infrastructure goal, such as a major transportation corridor, for example.

When setting up any of the various kinds of assessment districts, boundaries should be set very carefully. They need to reflect the areas that will receive special benefit from the services or improvements.

Parking Benefit Districts

Kevin Diep, a program analyst for the city of Oakland, presented information about parking benefit districts (PBDs) including a few case studies. PBDs are defined geographic areas in which revenues generated from parking meters is used to fund services or events to enhance the district and boost commercial activity. Reasons to create a PBD include the following:

- A parking management strategy focuses on ensuring adequate and convenient parking availability with the goal of 15% parking vacancy at all times.
- A PBD ties the economic benefits of pricing parking directly to improving the quality of life in the managed area.
- It helps encourage use of alternative transportation options in the district.
- It helps reduce traffic congestion because drivers spend less time searching for parking spaces.

Ten years ago, Oakland’s city council voted to extend the parking meter hours. Outcry from area merchants, however, led to the city council reversing the action.

Old Pasadena, California, which became known as the city’s Skid Row by the 1970s, created one of the first PBDs in the country in 1993. One of the reasons for the area’s success is that it decided to preserve the district’s historic architecture. The unique look and feel of the nationally registered historic district eventually helped attract new businesses. The 22-block district now has more than 300 shops and restaurants, and more than half are one-of-a-kind businesses, which they promote with the slogan “Only in Old Pas.”

The PBD wasn’t the only ingredient to Old Pasadena’s transformation and success, but it played a significant role. Before 1993, Old Pasadena had no parking meters. Employees occupied most of the convenient curbside parking. Parking for patrons attempting to do business in Old Pasadena was limited. Merchants finally agreed to introduce meters only if instead of going into the general fund, the money from the parking meters stayed in Old Pasadena. Over time, the money improved streets, sidewalks, alleyways, and provided many other amenities to beautify the public realm of the entire district.

The PBD is governed by the Old Pasadena Management District. They receive input on parking policies and spending priorities from the Old Pasadena Parking Meter Zone (PMZ) Advisory Board, which is comprised of property and business owners. In 2016, they collected \$1.64 million in parking meter revenues that were used to improve the district.

Building support through public communication has been an important part of the program’s success. As an example, all parking meters include stickers that remind users how the money is spent.

Another example is the West Campus District in Austin, Texas. In 2006, Austin put in a density bonus program to create high-rise student housing. Increased housing added pressure on the parking supply as students parked their cars for long intervals.

Out of a temporary, federally-funded pilot PBD program that neighborhoods could opt into came the city’s **Parking and Transportation Management District** (PTMD) program. As defined on the city’s website: “A PTMD is a defined geographic area that may include a mix of retail, entertainment, commercial, medical, educational, civic and residential uses in which City Council finds that traffic flow on public streets requires a higher level of management than commonly provided



Stickers on meters in Old Pasadena let people know that the parking fees help the neighborhood. Photo by Mike Linksvayer

and determines that parking meters will facilitate traffic flow objectives.” The program promotes alternatives to driving (and parking). The PTMD in the West Campus District generates around \$300,000 of revenue per year that fund improvements such as sidewalks, crosswalks, transit shelters, bike lanes, curb ramps, and street trees.

Other examples mentioned included Washington, DC whose program was piloted in four neighborhoods, but is now defunct. Ventura, CA created a PBD to fund homeless services and police patrols. Pittsburgh is using PBD revenues to manage traffic in overflowing nightlife district and for police training. In Houston, revenue ended up being lower than anticipated. They discovered people were willing to walk longer to avoid paying. And Arlington, MA implemented a PBD with shockingly little opposition.

In 2014, Oakland started a pilot **Flexible Parking District** in Montclair Village. The city charges different rates based on public demand. Prices are higher at the most popular and crowded places to park, and lower further from the center of Montclair Village, where there are more unused parking spaces. The pilot program is also a PBD. There is an agreement with local business owners and residents whereby the city spends fifty percent of any net increased revenues for street and sidewalk improvements.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution for communities. Key takeaways from a look at other PBDs across the country include:

- Communication and outreach are essential to success. Most cities with PBDs were adding meters in areas that didn’t have them.
- Additional thought is needed for areas that already have meters (e.g., pairing with dynamic pricing).

- Equity concerns are paramount and must be analyzed. For example, Austin limits its projects to a finite large list to make sure one district isn't unfairly funded while others languish.
- Where should improvements go? Do they stay within the transportation realm or can a community address other issues with the revenues (e.g., housing and homelessness)? In any case, improvements should roll out quickly to demonstrate the usefulness of the program.
- There is always the possibility of funding being moved to the city's general fund.
- Administration of the program makes a difference. One must consider the legislation, governance/oversight, revenue baseline and staffing, along with the qualifications and requirements to control and expend funds. Key questions to consider may be:
 - What is the process to develop and implement a PBD?
 - What goals and metrics will be used to measure success?
 - What are the boundaries or geography of the PBD?
 - What entity has fiscal oversight?
 - What is the governance structure? What is the role of BIDs, PBIDs, CBDs or Advisory boards?
 - How are neighborhood improvements selected?
 - How will PBDs function with other existing programs such as Residential Permit Parking (RPP)?
 - What is the impact of transportation network companies (TNCs) on parking and curb management? What about autonomous vehicles in the near future?

Demand-based Parking Program

Walnut Creek assistant city manager Carla Hansen presented information on her city's demand-based parking program. The city of Walnut Creek, California, with a population of around 70,000, is another Bay Area city known for its vibrant downtown shopping, entertainment, and dining scene. There's a BART Station located within half-mile of the downtown. The area is becoming more of a suburban urban city as more high-density housing is built.

The city welcomes its problems with downtown parking and traffic because it means they are a desirable destination. There are 10,000 parking spaces overall in the downtown. 3,000 spaces are owned and managed by the city. The other 7,000 spaces are privately owned and managed in various lots and garages.

In 2009, the city formed a downtown parking task force. Through a process of task force meetings, studies, and community surveys, the task force submitted recommendations to the city council. Approved by the council, the city created the Parking Management Plan (PMP) including the following six strategies.

1. Effective use of garages and improvement of garage experience
2. Successful employee parking management
3. Effective inventory management (85% occupancy model)

4. Effective communication about parking options through signage, marketing and outreach
5. Improve resident experience
6. Effective alternative modes of getting around town

Using the agreed upon strategies, the city developed a demand-based parking ordinance. Staff must complete a parking study annually to determine the strategy is meeting the target of 85% peak parking occupancy. The Transportation Commission can adjust parking fees and hours of operation to achieve the target.

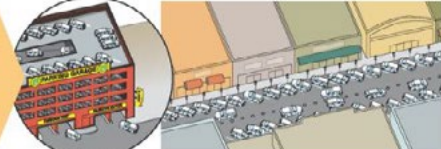
The city also has "purple pole" meters located outside the downtown core that encourage people to park outside the areas of highest demand. The purple poles have lower parking rates and no time limits in some areas.

All revenue from municipal parking meters, citations, and garages goes to a city enterprise fund that helps to pay for parking operations and equipment. The fund also assists in providing for services benefiting downtown such as the downtown trolley, public safety, downtown landscaping, and downtown events. The fund's revenues are currently around \$8.5 million per year.

Introducing long-term street parking

City seeks to balance downtown parking demand, by offering nearby long-term parking.

THE PROBLEM: During peak times in the downtown core, street parking and garages are filled to capacity, while parking options a block or two away have ample space available.

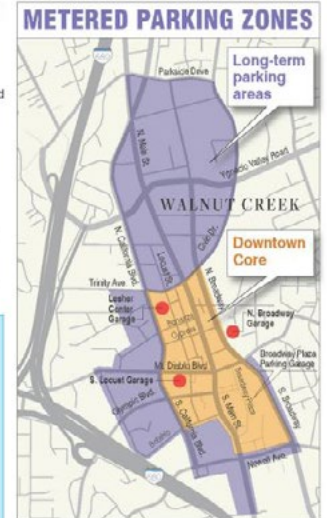


Parking statistics:
 10,000 Total parking spaces
 70% privately managed parking and 30% managed by the City.
 3,000 City managed parking spaces in Walnut Creek
 1,500 Metered parking spaces
 1,500 Parking spaces in three City-owned garages

Where your parking dollars go
 Money is reinvested in a healthy, vibrant downtown and goes to:
 ■ Public safety
 ■ Keeping downtown clean
 ■ The Free Ride Downtown Trolley

ParkMobile makes it easier to stay longer
 The ParkMobile App makes it easier to stay longer. Download the app to pay for parking. Get a notification when your time is running out, and extend your time without returning to the meter.
 * Note that cars may not park in the same on-street spot for more than 72 hours.

METERED PARKING ZONES



THE SOLUTION: Removing metered time limits in underutilized areas near downtown starting Sept. 15. Look for purple meter poles.

Long-term parking areas:
 ■ Meter time limits removed*
 ■ \$1 per hour
 ■ Look for purple color coded meter poles
 Tip: Use the ParkMobile app to add time to your meter.

Downtown Core:
 ■ 2 hour time limit
 ■ \$2 per hour on parking meters

Parking Garages:
 ■ First hour free
 ■ 50¢ per hour parking at Leshes Center and Broadway; \$1 per hour at South Locust

Ever-changing world of Parking Management
 As parking demand in the Downtown changes, the strategies to manage the demand will as well. Stay in the loop for updates
www.walnut-creek.org/parking

Walnut Creek has long-term parking designated by "purple pole" meters outside the core downtown area to spread parking to those underutilized areas. Photo courtesy City of Walnut Creek

The city is working on a strategic transportation plan, called Rethinking Mobility, with the stated objective of setting a vision for how to reduce automobile trips, manage parking demand, and support a variety of mobility options by leveraging new technologies. More information and a framework discussion of their current parking strategy is included on the [Rethinking Mobility website](#).

Report Outs from Breakout Groups

Following the topic area “TED talk” presentations, the workshop participants divided into four breakout groups. Each group discussed one of the four topics: (1) financing tools; (2) cultural districts; (3) parking benefit districts; and (4) business improvement districts. Facilitators remained in place for each topic. Attendees switched once allowing them to participate in two different topic discussions. Facilitators and record keepers tracked the discussions with flip charts and notebooks. Below is a summary account of those notes for each topic.

Financing Tools

Financing tools can't be discussed in isolation. The parameters of the discussion are important. The goal of a financial district is a public-private partnership that maintains, operates and programs the public realm (streets, plazas, parks, and open spaces). A district should proactively leverage opportunities in the area, attract new development, and draw new foot traffic. It should also build on the work of the CII.

There are capital needs but finding other possible funding sources for the operating and maintenance costs is the focus. A CFD is city led and more often for capital. An assessment district is a good option in that it can define the uses included – businesses, but not residential. All efforts should be community led and always consider and weigh equity implications. Determining the boundaries of the area is of critical importance. Should the financing district be based on property owners or business owners? Deciding which can heavily influence the process.

Foundations and philanthropy are another consideration. Parks maintenance foundations exist. It's worth forming a 501(c)3 to collect funds and pursue private grants. There are, however, public agency concerns about maintenance costs associated with capital improvements. And foundations don't want to sustain ongoing costs in the long term. Could a “put to work” strategy be more compelling in the long term for philanthropy?

There should also be a focus on aspects of the process. Considerations may include the following:

- Demonstrate benefits to merchants through a pilot (as CII is doing).
- Process may vary depending on whether property-based or business-based.

- Voting requirements
- Big property owners
- Messaging on what the district would do.
 - Responding in the face of rapid change
 - Business resiliency
- Spectrum of strategies
 - Immediate deliveries (early wins)
 - Longer-term projects
 - Build ownership
- Consider how 4,000+ new units will change the composition of area.

Cultural Districts

Why start a cultural district? Culture is:

- Roots, generational history
- Diversity
- Dynamic
- Food, sights, sounds
- Specific, distinct
- Brings humanity
- Bottom-up

A cultural district should make sure people in the community are benefitting from the changes occurring. Whose responsibility is it? Public agencies shouldn't be in charge, but they need to be a part of allowing the self-determination of the community. Collaboration between the two entities is important when it comes to seeking resources. Efforts must be grounded in the neighborhood and remain true to the community.

Culture is dynamic and changing. The community includes people of different backgrounds and identities. The idea behind any cultural district must continue to be forward-thinking in this regard.

Culture feels organic. People want culture to be in and around them, e.g., the Mission District. Culture doesn't (and shouldn't) feel contrived. There are examples of public spaces and programmed events that demonstrate the differences. There should be efforts to preserve the organic elements of culture; and to think sustainably. Emphasis should be on celebrating the people who make the culture – and not commodifying culture.

The “Lake Merritt” station name is not representative of the community. There should be consideration of changing the station name to or adding Chinatown to the name in some way.

Business Improvement Districts

The breakout group focused on benefits and challenges to BIDs. Trust-building is critical. Trust is a big challenge to establishing a BID, and integral to its success. The triangle of trust includes, the community, the BID, and the city.

Data collection is a key role of a BID. Data can be used to establish baseline services and to prove a BID's impacts. Data is also an important part of transparency, which goes back to trust.

Important roles for a BID include advocacy, baseline services, clean and safe programs and ambassador programs.

The question of who benefits from a BID is an important one to continue to reconsider. Have there been any unintended consequences as a result of any actions? Are renters and owners being affected differently? Has the rate of, or reasons for, displacement increased or changed in any way?

Parking

There's a need for data. What is the current parking situation in the study area? Supply? Demand? What is the target goal?

Communication is essential for any parking program. It's the key to implementation. Looking at the lessons learned from other places will help find the right approach and implementation strategy.

A parking program should benefit and encourage other forms of mobility, i.e., walking, biking, public transit, etc. Looking beyond parking to curb management in general will be an important consideration for a parking district. How do TNCs fit in? Pedestrians, bikes, and public transportation are all a critical part of a parking district. Safety and thinking about how all

modes come together is an important part of the conversation. A comprehensive approach is key.

What would support the Chinatown core area and where would the funds go? Could you use the parking benefit to support a cultural district?

What are the policies regarding raising prices? What are the equity considerations, e.g., with area employees who need parking?

Next Steps

Following the workshop, BART, EBALDC, and TransForm will develop a plan for district managed parking in the Lake Merritt/Chinatown area. EBALDC and TransForm will conduct a community workshop in September discussing the TOD, parking management strategies, and transportation demand management strategies. BART, EBALDC, and TransForm will also conduct targeted outreach to existing community stakeholders in the Lake Merritt station area. Additionally, TransForm will inventory parking studies and plans that are in place for areas within a half-mile radius of the BART station to build a baseline understanding of the current landscape.