

Appendix D: West Oakland Walk

by Philip Banta, AIA with Norman Hooks, AIA

WEST OAKLAND WALK ¹

The *West Oakland Walk* is an urban design concept intended to leverage existing city assets into a “social circuit” for walking, biking, organic gardening, exercising and socializing, all activities that build sustainable communities.

The West Oakland Walk would knit together the parks and public places of Central and West Oakland by improving a 4.5 mile loop of existing city streets and sidewalks into an urban greenway, running East – West from Lake Merritt at the center of the city to Central Station (16th Street Train Station area) at its western edge (see **Figure D-1**).

Along this greenway loop are 23 parks, the downtown, many of the city’s most significant historic buildings, four BART stops and seven freeway entrances and exits. The parks, the building and the streets exist now, so there is no significant capital investment needed for this idea to take shape. The West Oakland Walk (W.O.W.) is a “found” design that is intended to help transform the way people see and use Oakland by capitalizing on the unification of substantial in-place public and private infrastructure with a single large-scale geometric stroke.

Starting at the western perimeter of the city, the West Oakland Walk travels eastward along 14th Street, across Freeway 980 until it reaches Lakeside Drive, then a short leg up to 19th St. where it continues westward, jogging down to 18th St., back across 980 and onto the final short leg of Wood St. where it reconnects with 14th. Few downtown cores are endowed with the

particular combinations of public park space, public service structures and historical legacies as those enjoyed by the city of Oakland, and fewer still have them arranged in patterns that can be so easily linked. The parks have been long established; the civic and institutional buildings have been serving the city for decades; and the streets that connect these assets exist now. In other words, no significant capital investment or private property condemnation and compensation is required for the idea of the West Oakland Walk to take shape. Along its pathway all the elements that make a city great are in place waiting to be laced together through a simple process of giving identity to the route.

The West Oakland Walk would bring inter-related benefits to the city by:

- Reuniting West and Central Oakland across the 980 Freeway divide,
- Reinforcing the Community with an urban design event that celebrates the history and place of each neighborhood it passes through,
- Redefining Oakland to itself and to the rest of the world as a coherent network of Parks, Places and People.

Parks

The Parks Map of the West Oakland Walk (see **Figure D-2**) identifies the most visible public open spaces that touch the Walk or are within its orbit. These spaces include:

- improved multi-sport athletic fields at the 10-acre Ernie Raimondi Park,
- the swimming pool and tennis courts of the 9.5-acre DeFremery Park,
- the baseball diamonds of the 8.75-acre Lowell Park,

¹ Project description and graphic information for The West Oakland Walk provided by Philip Banta, AIA with Norman Hooks, AIA, copyright BETA, Inc.



overview

West Oakland Walk
 by Philip Banta, AIA with Norman Hooks, AIA
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I-580
 I-80
 (to Berkeley & Napa)

I-80
 (to San Francisco)

Central Station

Wood St.

West Oakland

West Oakland BART

18th St.

14th St.

City Hall

Jack London Sq.

19th St. BART

12th St. BART

Uptown Oakland

Downtown Oakland

Lake Merritt

Lakeside Dr.

Lake Merritt

10 ac.

14 ac.

10 ac.

2 ac.

10 ac.

1.8 ac.

0.8 ac.

1.5 ac.

1.5 ac.

1.5 ac.

1.5 ac.

1.5 ac.

16 ac.

15 ac.

23 ac.

4 ac.

0.7 ac.

Lakeshore Ave.

Harrison St.

27th St.

30th St.

W. Grand Ave.

San Pablo Ave.

West St.

Broadway

20th St.

Telegraph Ave.

I-980

I-880

I-880

I-880

3rd St.

Embarcadero

Jack London Sq.

10th St.

7th St.

10th St.

12th St.

Willow St.

Wood St.

Peralta St.

Mandela Pkwy.

Adeline St.

Market St.

Martin Luther King Jr.

14th St.

14th St.

Lakeside Dr.

Raimondi Park



Mandela Pkwy



DeFremery Park



Marston Campbell



Frank Ogawa Plaza



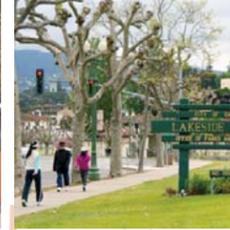
Snow Park



Fairy Land



Lakeside Park



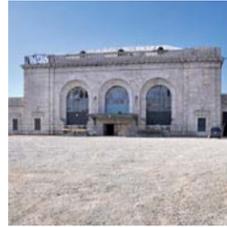
Splash Pad Park



Lake Merritt



Peralta Park



Central Station



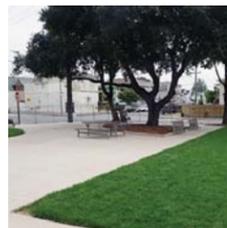
Willow Park



Memorial Park



Wade Johnson



Bertha Port Park



Lowell Park



South Prescott



Lafayette Square



Jefferson Square



Lincoln Square



Harrison Square



Estuary Park



Madison Square



parks

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- the connection to the Bay Trail along the richly landscaped Mandela Parkway linear park,
- the Frank H. Ogawa Plaza at the heart of Oakland's civic center,
- the numerous recreational and botanical options of the 75-acre Lakeside Park encompassing the historic Lake Merritt and its wildlife sanctuary,
- the children's Fairyland, Splash Park and the Bonsai and garden center Japanese gardens, and
- the majestic trees and putting green of the 4.2-acre Snow Park.

Within the vicinity of the West Oakland Walk are the original five squares of Oakland - Lafayette, Jefferson, Lincoln, Madison, and Harrison (the Chinese Garden Park) - in addition to Peralta Park that connects to the Oakland Estuary Park. This extraordinary collection of open spaces, providing both passive and active recreational activities represent the "green living rooms" of the city of Oakland.

Places

Equally impressive as the list of parks is the registry of public and private buildings (see **Figure D-3**), many of them designated as historical landmarks including:

- Central Station Terminal,
- the DeFremery House,
- The West Oakland Senior Center,
- Lafayette, Lincoln and Prescott Elementary Schools,
- West Oakland Middle School,
- Preservation Park,
- Oak Center,
- the First Unitarian Church,
- the African American Museum and Library,
- Oakland City Hall,
- the State and Federal Buildings,
- the Rotunda Building,
- the Cathedral Building
- the Central Library,

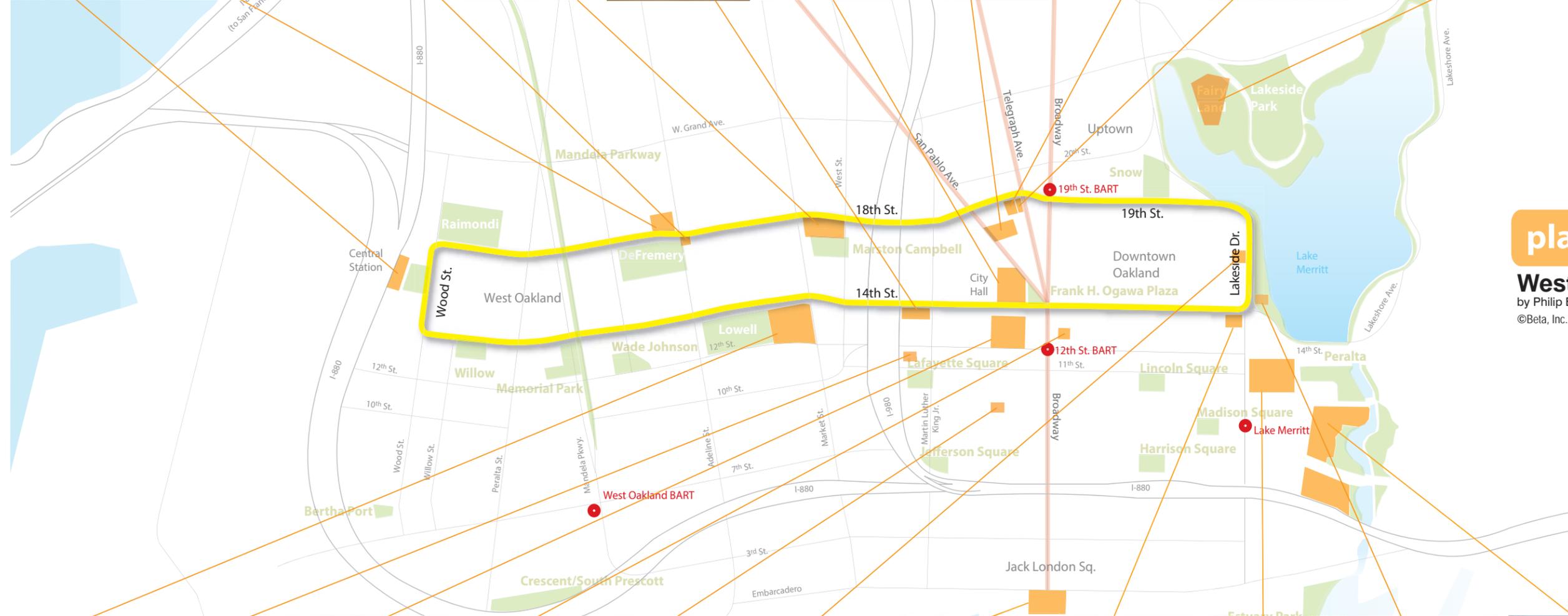
- the Alameda County Superior Court Building
- the Chinese Presbyterian Church,
- the Oakland Museum of California,
- the Scottish Temple,
- the Camron-Stanford House,
- the Cathedral of Christ the Light,
- the Fox Theatre,
- the Oakland Ice Center,
- the Paramount Theatre, and
- the Grand Lake Theatre.

In addition, there is a host of private structures of significant historical interest, both commercial and residential, that can be found throughout the entire circuit of the West Oakland Walk, along with numerous modern structures of architectural note. These "places" serve a full gamut of political, cultural, educational, business, entertainment and spiritual interests for the community.

People

One dimension not normally accounted for in the establishment of any urban design improvement is the history of the people who come from the contiguous communities. The recognition of notable individuals and groups originating among the communities which the circuit passes would be an integral part of establishing the identity of the West Oakland Walk. Oakland has been the place of origin, education and practice for numerous well-known contributors to all walks of life, and the West Oakland Walk presents an opportunity to celebrate their lives as a record for current and future residents and visitors to Oakland, a record of the human potential of the community.

The maps flag special persons recognizable to both immediate and wider communities, state-wide, national and, in some cases, even global (see **Figure D-4 and -5**). The method of recognition can vary from traditional brass plaques to GPS triggered biographies delivered on the spot to smart phones.



places
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Lowell Middle School Pardee House City Center Tribune Building Museum of Children's Art Scottish Rite Temple Jack London Sq. Oakland Central Library Oakland Museum Camron Stanford House Laney College

Frederick G. Cottrell (1877-1948)
An American physical chemist, inventor and philanthropist. Best known for electrostatic precipitator invention. Native of Oakland.



Don Budge (1915-2000)
An American tennis champion and World No. 1 player from 1937-1942. Born and raised in Oakland



Ernie Raimondi (1919-1945)
A World War II hero and baseball player for the Minor Leagues. Played for the San Francisco Seals and the Oakland Oaks.



Black Panther Party
An African American revolutionary socialist organization active from 1966-1982. Founded by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale in Oakland on October 15, 1966.



Julia Morgan (1872-1957)
An American architect and first female architect licensed in California. Born and raised in West Oakland.



Lionel Wilson (1915-1998)
An American political figure and first African American mayor of Oakland. Also a professional baseball player for the Oakland Larks.



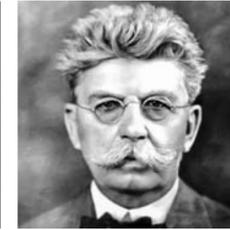
Delilah L. Beasley (1871-1934)
An American historian and columnist for the Oakland Tribune. The first African-American woman published regularly in a major metropolitan newspaper.



Joseph R. Knowland (1873-1966)
Served as a member of the United States House of Representatives from California. Owner, editor, and publisher of the Oakland Tribune.



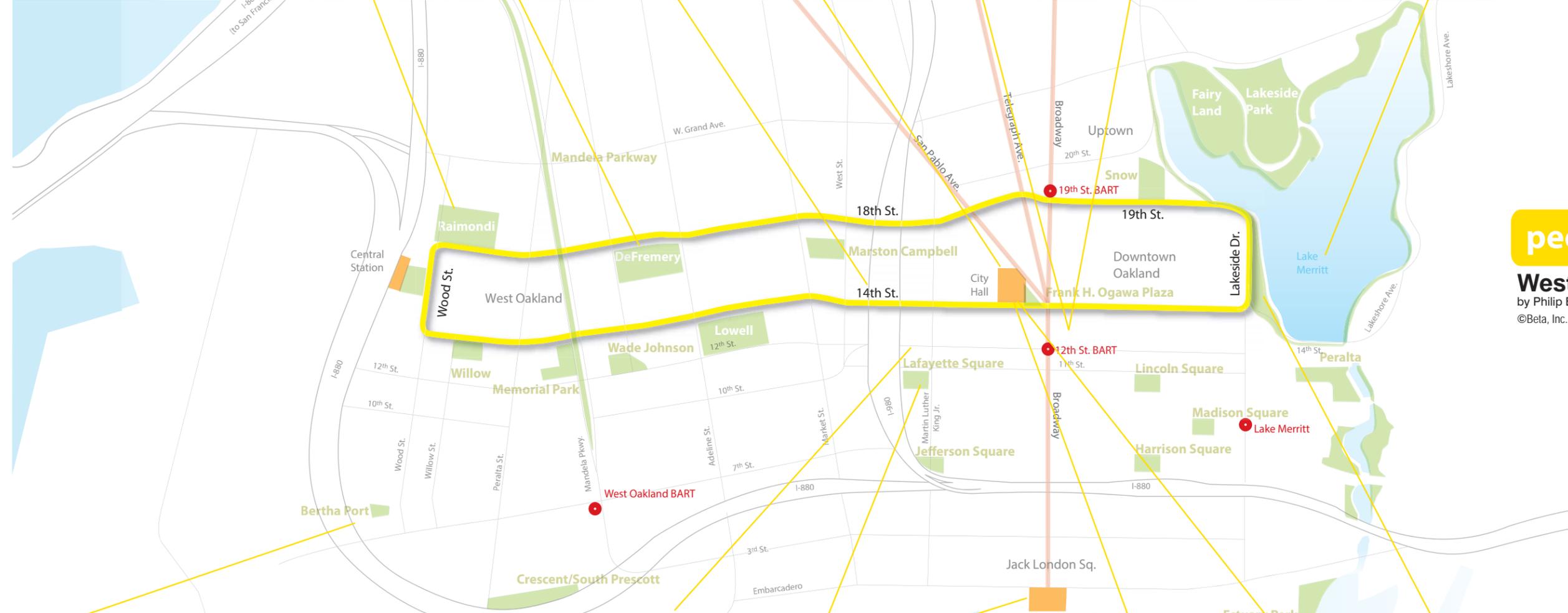
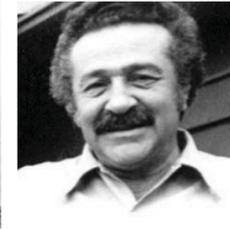
Francis M. Smith (1846-1931)
Known as "Borax Smith" and "The Borax King". An American miner, business magnate and civic builder in Oakland.



Samuel Merritt (1822-1890)
The 13th mayor of Oakland from 1867-69. Donated 155 acres of dammed tidal water which later becomes known as Lake Merritt.



Nathan Oliveira (1928-2010)
A painter, printmaker, and sculptor born in Oakland. Distinguished professor at California College of the Arts and Stanford University.



people 1

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William T. Shorey (1859-1919)
The first African American whaling ship captain of the west coast. Served as Special Police Officer on the Oakland docks.



Ida Louise Jackson (1902-1996)
The first African American public school teacher in California. Taught and lived in Oakland.



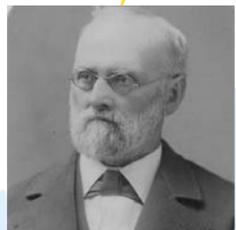
Eddie Anderson (1905-1977)
An American comedian and actor born in Oakland. The first African American with a regular role on nationwide radio.



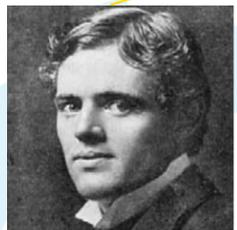
Ansel F. Hall (1894-1962)
Chief Naturalist and Forester of the US National Park Service. Established the Easy Bay Regional Park District in Oakland.



George C. Pardee (1857-1941)
An American doctor of medicine and politician. The 21st Governor of California and the 29th Mayor of Oakland.



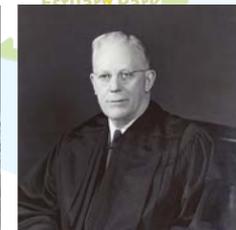
Anthony Chabot (1813-1888)
A businessman and entrepreneur known as the Water King. Developed hydraulic water systems for Oakland and the Bay Area.



Jack London (1876-1916)
An American author, journalist, and social activist. Lived in Oakland and gave socialist speeches in the Oakland City Hall Park.



Frank H. Ogawa (1917-1994)
Civil rights leader and the first Japanese American to serve on the Oakland City Council. Served from 1966 until death in 1994.



Earl Warren (1891-1974)
A jurist and politician who served as the 14th Chief Justice of the United States and the 30th Governor of California.



William W. Camron (1843-1890)
Real-estate dealer and land-owner. VP of the Oakland Bank of Savings and appointed to the Oakland City Council in 1877.



George Stevens (1904-1975)
An award-winning American film director, producer, screenwriter, and cinematographer. Born in Oakland.

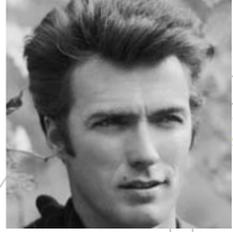
Angela Davis (1944-)
An American political activist, feminist, scholar, and author. A leader of the Communist Party USA and founder of Critical Resistance.



Ellen Wyrick-Parkinson
A long-term West Oakland resident and community activist who spearheaded the creation of the Oakland Center Historic District.



Clint Eastwood (1930-)
An award winning American film actor, director, producer, and politician. Attended Oakland Technical High School.



Kamala Harris (1964-)
The 32nd Attorney General of California. First female African-American and Indian American attorney general in California. Born in Oakland.



Ronald Dellums (1935-)
45th Mayor of Oakland and member of the US House of Representatives from California. Born and raised in Oakland.



Elihu M. Harris (1947-)
46th Mayor of Oakland, member the California State Assembly, and Chancellor of Peralta Community College District.



John George
A Californian politician and the first African-American elected to the Alameda County Board of Supervisors. A long-time leader in the local Anti-Apartheid Movement.



Paul Cobb
Publisher of The Oakland Post, the largest African-American weekly Newspaper in Norther California, founded in 1963.



Donna Hanover (1950-)
An American journalist, radio and television personality, producer, actress, and First Lady of New York City. Born in Oakland.



Tom Hanks (1956-)
An American actor, producer, writer, and director. His films have grossed \$8.5 billion. Lived in Oakland and attended Skyline High School.



Barbara Lee (1946-)
The US Representative for California's 13th congressional district; first woman to represent the 13th district. A hero in the anti-war movement.



people 2

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Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (1925-)
The first labor organization led by blacks to receive a charter in the American Federation of Labor. Launched in 1925.



Amy Tan (1952-)
An award-winning American writer whose most well-known work is *The Joy Luck Club*. Born in Oakland.



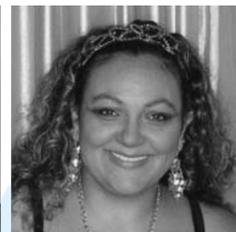
Mitchell Baker (1857-)
Chairperson and former Chief Executive Officer of the Mozilla Foundation. One of the 100 most influential people from *Time* magazine. Born in Oakland



The Pointer Sisters
An American R&B recording girl group from Oakland that achieved mainstream success during the 1970s and 1980s. Inducted onto the Hollywood Walk of Fame.



Mc Hammer (1962-)
An American rapper, entrepreneur, spokesman, actor, and hip hop icon. considered a pioneer and innovator of pop rap. Born and raised in East Oakland



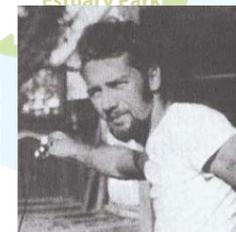
Sunshine Becker (1972-)
An award-winning American singer who performs backing vocals for the band, Further. Born and raised in Oakland.



Keyshia Cole (1981-)
Grammy-award nominated American R&B singer-songwriter, actress, and record producer. Born in Oakland.



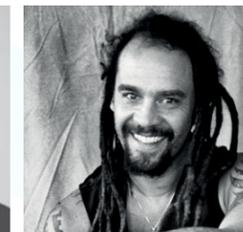
En Vogue
An American female R&B vocal group assembled by producers Denzil Foster and Thomas McElroy. Assembled in Oakland in 1989 and one of the most successful female groups.



Sonny Barger (1938-)
A founding member of the Oakland Chapter of the Hells Angels Motorcycle Club. A prominent figure and author of four books.



Jerry Brown (1938-)
An American politician and 39th Governor of California since 2011 and Mayor of Oakland from 1999-2007.



Michale Franti (1966-)
An American poet, musician, and composer. An outspoken supporter of social justice issues. Born and raised in Oakland.

Events of the Walk

The West Oakland Walk, once defined and improved to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, automobiles, and busses along its entire loop becomes, by definition, a natural circuit for an East-West bus line, for community races of all types (bicycle, electric car, footraces), for parades, for special and annual celebrations, for tours and for farmers' markets. The connected open spaces offer the opportunity to create a sequence of specialized gardens including: vegetable gardens, flower gardens, exotic plant gardens, indigenous specimens gardens, etc. The various civic buildings along the circuit could become permanent or seasonal locations for high school mentoring, college fairs, job fairs and company recruitment events. In short the West Oakland Walk could become an opportunity event for the youth of the city of Oakland, a recognized multi-nodal meeting place for young people and those who could help them achieve their potential.