



Oakland Measure DD Community Coalition

June 3, 2015

Dear Oakland City Council Members:

We write to urge your active support of the emerging plan to provide “\$400,000 ongoing funds for supplemental Lake Merritt area maintenance”¹. It is vital, however, that this augmentation begin in FY 2015–16, not after a one-year delay.

Several of the plant establishment periods, including areas at Lakeshore Ave. El Embarcadero, Municipal Boathouse, and 18th Street Pier, have already ended, at varying dates by project. Although the establishment period for 12th St ends next June, establishment alone, given the severe budget cuts in recent years, is insufficient to provide the various forms of needed supplemental protection and maintenance.

In 2002, 80% of Oakland voters passed Measure DD, the bond measure focused on waterfront improvements at Lake Merritt and the Estuary. Voters assumed their investment of \$198 million would be maintained and protected by the City. They likely would be surprised and angry to read this verbatim excerpt from the proposed 2015-2017 City Budget:

“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.**”²

Your urgent action is needed to correct this disgrace. Please support a budget that provides \$400,000 *ongoing* funds for supplemental Lake Merritt area maintenance—beginning in *FY 2015–16*.

The Measure DD Coalition continues to support allocation of 25% of the proceeds of the sale of the 12th St. remainder parcel, as recommended by the CED committee. The Coalition has consistently requested maintenance funding for the last year and a half.

At this time, however, we strongly support Councilmember Guillen's proposal of a budget allocation for increased maintenance of Lake Merritt area improvements of \$400,000 for each of the two budget years 2015 to 2017, with the condition that this amount be expressly additional to any public works/park maintenance funding already in the budget, and that this allocation be identifiable with a unique account number so that its use can be monitored.

The Coalition appreciates the City Council’s support of this maintenance funding, as park use is sharply increased, a result of the improvement efforts put in place by the people of Oakland.

Sincerely,

Naomi Schiff

for the Measure DD Community Coalition Maintenance Funding Committee

Notes:

1. DDA for 12th St Remainder Parcel Supplemental Report #2, May 22, 2015, page 6.

2. FY 2015-2017 Proposed City Budget, April 29, 2015, pages G64-G65.