

# Waterfront Action

P.O. Box 11456, Oakland CA 94611

April 17, 2003

The Honorable Barbara Lee  
1724 Longworth HOB  
Washington D.C. 20515

sent via facsimile (202) 225-9817

re: Federal Appropriations for Oakland capital projects

Dear Congresswomen Lee:

Waterfront Action is writing to ask for your support in obtaining three earmarks for projects totaling \$4.6 million in the FY 2004 appropriations legislation. The appropriations will supplement funds from the City of Oakland's *Clean Water, Safe Parks and Open Spaces Trust Fund*.

We have an opportunity to enhance our waterfront and the city's park system at a time of critical growth and change. Citizens of Oakland recognized the value of these open spaces, and in November 2002 more than 80 percent voted to authorize the City to issue up to \$198.5 million in General Obligation bonds. Those of us who worked on this bond initiative realized that completion of these projects would require finding matching funds from other sources. We are asking you to match \$4.6 million with a federal appropriation for three projects.

Details for spending of federal dollars requested in FY2004 are as follows:

- Union Point Park. \$2 million will be spent to remove metals, PCB's, PAH's, and petroleum hydrocarbons, arsenic and lead from a nine-acre Brownfields site that will become Union Point Park. The creation of Union Point Park will provide Oakland's densely populated, low income community of color with its first major public access point on the waterfront. With receipt of this appropriation, clean up of the site will begin in October of this year and will be completed by January 2004. Landscaping and construction would then get underway with \$4 million from the Trust Fund, California Coastal Conservancy and State of California grant funds to complete the project. All work will be completed by October 2004 at which time Union Point Park will be open to the public.
- 12<sup>th</sup> Street area, Lake Merritt. \$1.6 million will be spent to carry out a preliminary engineering and design study of the proposed changes to 12<sup>th</sup> Street area, which abuts Lake Merritt, the channel to the estuary, the Alameda County Court House, Oakland Art Museum, Henry Kaiser Convention Center, and Laney College. (This study would begin in November of this year and be completed by June 2004.) Key components of this project include

*The Aliveness of a city depends on the bond between its water and its flow of dreams.*

*Gaston Bachelard, Water and Dreams*

- 1) Improving water quality through enhanced tidal flushing from Lake Merritt to the Oakland Estuary;
- 2) Rebuilding/realigning the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Street approaches to the area to create a tree-lined, 6 lane boulevard (reduced from 12 lanes) to improve pedestrian/bicycle accessibility and enhance traffic flow;
- 3) Building a bridge for the boulevard to carry autos, pedestrians and bicyclists over the channel and bicyclists and pedestrians under the channel;
- 4) Re-claiming five additional acres of park land on Lake Merritt;
- 5) Adding lighting, landscaping and public art throughout the area.

The entire project is scheduled for completion by January 1, 2011 at a cost of \$47.2 million (2002 dollars). Oakland taxpayers via the new Trust Fund will provide \$43 million of those funds.

- 7<sup>th</sup> St. Area/Flood Control Structure. \$1 million will be spent to complete preliminary engineering and design studies to create a construction and remediation plan for Oakland's 7<sup>th</sup> Street corridor leading to Lake Merritt. Key goals of this \$26 million project include
  - 1) Relocating and re-designing the present flood control structure on the Lake Merritt channel from 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Street to improve water quality by increasing tidal flushing
  - 2) Providing unimpeded, safe pedestrian and bicycle access to Lake Merritt from the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor.

This appropriation will be used to complete the first phase of the necessary studies by June 2004. The Trust Fund will provide \$17 million of the overall \$26 million cost of the project.

In conclusion, Oaklanders will spend nearly \$69 million of their own money for these projects, and we believe that commitment justifies additional earmarks beginning with \$4.6 million in the FY 2004 federal budget. On their behalf, I ask for your support to obtain them.

Waterfront Action, Inc can be reached at (510)339-9233 if you wish to speak with me personally. We very much appreciate your consideration and support for these requests.

Sincerely,

Sandra Threlfall  
Executive Director

cc: Mayor Jerry Brown  
Oakland City Councilmember, Danny Wan  
Oakland Councilmember, Jane Brunner  
Oakland City Manager, Robert Bobb  
Kerry Jo Ricketts-Ferris, City of Oakland  
Lucy Gikovich, Platinum Advisors

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