

May 9, 2014

California Transportation Commission
c/o Diane Tannenwald, Project Manager
City of Oakland
Oakland Public Works Department
250 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Suite 4314
Oakland, CA 94612-2033

RE: Support for the City of Oakland's application to the California Transportation Commission for the Lake Merritt to San Francisco Bay Trail Gap Closure Project

Dear Members of the California Transportation Commission:

Waterfront Action is an Oakland-based volunteer non-profit whose mission is to promote public access to the Oakland-Alameda Estuary and Lake Merritt through using public awareness, education, and direct action. Our members place high value on the region's waterfront as a vibrant economic, recreational, and natural resource.

I am writing to encourage the California Transportation Commission to fund the Lake Merritt to San Francisco Bay Trail Gap Closure Project, which will provide a safe connection between the Lake Merritt Trail system and the San Francisco Bay Trail system.

The State and region's concept of connecting the paths around Lake Merritt to the Estuary is well conceived and has been in various plans for decades. With the Lake Merritt reconstruction complete, the 10th Street project in construction and the 7th Street project in design, this project will address the very last gap that needs to be closed to finally connect the two trail systems.

The project will enhance safety as well as access. The massive I-880 corridor and the Union Pacific railroad tracks divide the two attractive and extensively utilized trail systems. Unfortunately, since it is the most direct route between Lake Merritt/Laney College and the waterfront, people trade their personal safety for expediency, dodging trains, large trucks and cars, to cross illegally from one side to the other.

In addition, the proposed bridge will allow local and regional users to safely connect to public transportation such as BART, AC Transit, Amtrak Capitol Corridor, and the Alameda-Oakland Ferry. Students at Laney College and the Jack London Aquatic Center along with other pedestrians and bicyclists will be able to reach developing areas such as the Brooklyn Basin, Jack London Square and the proposed Lake Merritt BART Station Transit village.

Please do not hesitate to contact our office at 510.336-1824 or info@waterfrontaction.org if you have any questions concerning our endorsement of this project.

Sincerely,

Sandra Threlfall

Sandra Threlfall
Executive Director