

Lake Merritt Boulevard & Estuary Channel Walking Tour

Objective:

The ultimate goal for the "**Lake Merritt Boulevard Walking Tour**" is that the tour -- now tested and refined -- be accepted and incorporated into the official walking tour program of the City of Oakland. The tour would be "free" to participant walkers.

Possible Task to Develop "Script":

For each "tour stop," applicable research, and an explanatory "script" might be developed to standardize the presentation for varying volunteer docents, and for possible insertion in the City's "Walking Tour Guide" and/or as a handout to participants. The handout would include a location map, "points of interest," appropriate illustrations, and a brief summary of "Lake Merritt Boulevard." Handout could be on light card stock.

Suggested Graphics and Illustrations:

- >> Aerial photo of Amphitheater area taken during the dedication of LM Blvd.
- >> Aerial photo of Amphitheater area taken during the 2015 Warriors Celebration
- >> Diagram of Bay Trail connecting Lake Merritt and the Estuary
- >> Historical illustration of stream systems that drain to Lake Merritt.
- >> Colorful area map, designated with "tour stops."

The Walking Tour:

Assembly point for the tour is the entry plaza of Lake Chalet Restaurant, product of "adaptive reuse" of the city's Municipal Boathouse, now located at water level below.

Welcome & Introductions: Brief introduction of Measure DD and "Necklace of Lights."

Nearby items of interest: (1) "LEED" Bronze rating of the Boathouse renovation; (2) "Green" roof of the storage building; (3) Bio-swale adjoining the parking lot; (4) "Gondola Servizio," authentic Venetian boating on the Lake.

1. **Camron-Stanford House:** Last of numerous "vacation houses" that circled the Lake after 1906 SF Earthquake (tours available); Remnant of former Boathouse foundation. Filtration of water runoff . *Foliage: "Monkey Puzzle" Tree*
2. **"View" Stop:** Explain crosswalks and importance of North-South connection made possible by LM Blvd. Nearby landmarks: (1) Alameda County Courthouse -- built in 1934; (2) Oakland Museum of California; (3) Laney College; (4) HJ Kaiser Convention Center (Oakland Municipal Auditorium).
3. **Amphitheater:** New 4-acre park. Site of 2013 LM Blvd dedication & naming ceremony. Site of mass events, such as "2014 Sustainability Festival;" "Annual Eastlake Music Festival;" "2015 World Champion Warriors Victory Celebration." Dual paths around stage avoid interruption during events. Popular "people-watching" location. *Foliage: "Corkscrew Willows"*

4. **New Pedestrian-Bicycle Bridge:** New travel-way where almost none previously existed. Removed former restrictive “barrel culverts” which restricted water flow. Opened up and increased Estuary Channel width from 40 ft to 100 ft. Increased water flow 50%. *Foliage: "Flowering 'Archaes' Shrubbery"*
5. **New 12th Street Vehicle Bridge:** Overcrossing was reconfigured to be perpendicular to the widened Channel. New multi-use paths along each side of Channel. 10 ft wide opening in the Bridge provides day-lighting for the under-Bridge area. Art installations are provided by mandatory 5% Measure DD project inclusion. When the Channel projects are completed, the dual pathways will continue from the Lake to the Estuary.
6. **New Tidal Marsh:** Filters drainage water before entering Channel and mixes fresh water inlets with sea water. The marsh is popular with birds and waterfowl. All native plantings. *Foliage: "Saltgrass, jaumea, marsh heather, pickleweed, gumplant, sea lavender, and sea arrowgrass" in wire cages until established.*
7. **New 10th Street Bridge:** Upon completion, will replicate the features of the 12th Street Bridge. Site of historic Peralta “Playland for Kids” complete with quarter scale train and play equipment. New play structure. View to abandoned OUSD Administration Bldg. *Foliage: "Canary Island Pine," "Trident Maple," "Buckeye Tree"*
8. **Henry J Kaiser Convention Center:** (Oakland Municipal Auditorium -- Constructed 1915; vacated since 2005). Currently being planned for adaptive reuse. Seven (7) exquisitely sculpted two-story high niches facing the Lake, by Sterling Calder (father of Alexander Calder, celebrated artist of mobile installations), while coincidentally in Bay Area for the 1915 Pan-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco and Treasure Island. Deserving of up-close viewing
9. **Oakland Museum (of California):** Award-winning design by famed Architects Eero Saarinen (1910-1961) and Kevin Roche, completed in 1969. Completely renovated and expanded between 2009 - 2013 by Architects Mark Cavagnero and Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM). Intentionally one-story high maximum and built into landscape to not detract from the adjacent historic and iconic Alameda County Courthouse. Recently installed graphic panels on the Museum's outer walls appear to have slowed ubiquitous graffiti markings
10. **New Lake Merritt Boulevard & New Pedestrian / Bicycle Crossings:** A new 6-lane, tree-lined boulevard replaced the world's shortest freeway -- a 12-lane convergence of former 11th - 12th – 13th - 14th Streets with confusing fast traffic over and under roadways and 3 dreaded tunnels -- before being closed - all impenetrable to pedestrians and bicyclists. Three (3) new pedestrian-controlled intersections enable pedestrian & bicycle crossings between the lakeside district to the north and the civic-cultural institutions to the south and west. 14th Street was formerly a portion of the Lincoln Highway system that traversed the country from the East Coast to downtown Oakland.

Tour participants might find this link informative of the struggle waged by the community to achieve the Lake Merritt Boulevard that exists today:

<http://www.waterfrontaction.org/dd/archive/LMB-BriefCALMHistory-JV-18My13.pdf>

11. Alameda County Courthouse: Bust of Abraham Lincoln: The small bust, directly opposite the official Courthouse Entrance, honors the roles of women in the Civil, Spanish American, and World Wars I & II.

END OF TOUR

Participants are encouraged to visit, at their leisure, the Calder niches, the Oakland Museum, and/or the Camron-Stanford House.