



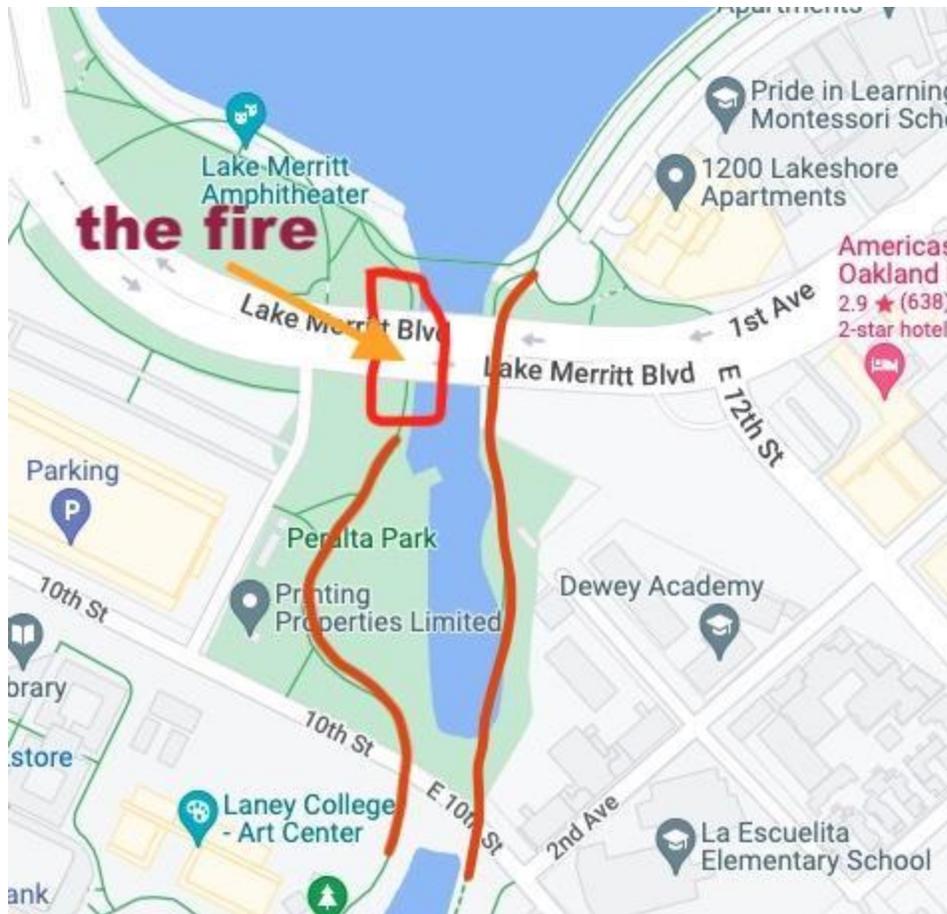
Oakland Measure DD Trust for Clean Water and Safe Parks Community Coalition

August 26th, 2022

A recent, disastrous fire under the Lake Merritt Boulevard Bridge on April 28th, 2022 exposed a serious threat to public health and the visiting public: to homeless encampments illegally occupying the passageways; to harmful pollution of the Estuary Channel; to the bridge structure itself; and to the Measure DD funded artwork that adorned the passageway. This letter addresses multiple concerns of the Community Coalition and offers recommendations for needed and attainable solutions.

The Measure DD Community Coalition, an open alliance of Oakland residents and organizations with broad community-wide interests, was sanctioned in 2003 by the Oakland City Council to monitor the projects and expenditures of the \$198 million 2002 Clean Water & Safe Parks Bond Election. The Coalition coordinates with City staff on status updates, monitoring, and reviewing the 56 Measure DD projects specified in the Bond Measure. \$32 million of this bond (plus additional funds) were spent on the creation of these paths, reconfiguration of the streets, and the nearby Amphitheater.

The walkways on the east and west side of the channel, that go underneath Lake Merritt Blvd and E 10th Street, provide car free passageways along the Estuary Channel from the Lake Merritt shoreline and the Amphitheater of Lake Merritt to the Bay. These passages are components of the developing Bay Trail, and are pedestrian and bike routes to Laney College, the Laney College Flea Market, Oakland Roots and (in the future) Souls games, and the Kaiser Auditorium.



The current encampment policy (<https://cao-94612.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/Encampment-Management-Policy-88341-CMS.pdf>) considers these areas “High Priority” as they are right next to the Lake Merritt Channel. In addition to the waterway proximity, there is also a “tot lot” in Peralta Park, and schools: Dewey Academy, and La Escuelita Elementary. As far as we know, none of these encampments along the channel have received exemptions from City Council.

It seems the city is in agreement with this assessment, as recent encampment closures at Peralta Park and 12th street Estuary (rear of Dewey Academy) are marked as High Priority.

The Coalition strongly urges the Administration to develop plans and implement protocols that will:

- Remove all homeless encampments and related paraphernalia from the west and east pedestrian passageways, under both the Lake Merritt Blvd Bridge and the Bridge at E 10th Street, and from the banks of the Lake Merritt Channel above and adjacent to these passageways. We note that, as of the date of this letter, tented homeless encampments are present in the east underpass beneath the Lake Merritt Blvd bridge and re-encampments have appeared in the west underpass beneath the 12th St. bridge. There is

also a tented encampment on the bank of the Channel above the north end of the east underpass beneath the 10th St. bridge.

- Repair, reinstall, and restore the damage to the art installation, ceiling, walls, and pedestrian walkway. Most of the damage from the fire occurred in the west underpass beneath the Lake Merritt Blvd bridge. We commend the City for its having accomplished the complete removal from the west underpass of all combusted debris. At present soot and carbon deposits remain on the wall and ceiling of this underpass. In addition, the neon art installation in the west underpass remains non-operational.
- Install signage that clearly prohibits re-establishing encampment at these locations as well as Lake Merritt, the Estuary Channel, and contiguous marshlands, parklands, and walkways. The City has recently accomplished the removal of most of the encampments in the vicinity of the Lake Merritt Blvd and 10th St. bridges in the Peralta Channel Park. However, as of the date of this letter, 3 tented encampments remain in the Peralta Channel Park. Existing signage in the Lake Merritt Blvd underpasses prohibits blockage of "driveways." This reference should be changed to "underpasses."
- Establish monitoring, implementation, and enforcement systems and protocols to ensure that the designated areas remain permanently free of encampments.
- Establish a schedule for implementation.

The Measure DD Coalition is aware that performance of these requests will not be easy or immediate given the complexity and pervasiveness of the issue and the need for treating people humanely and fairly. However, given the importance of recapturing these assets for the safety and enjoyment of many who visit the Lake, the Coalition further asks that these requests be acknowledged with a written response indicating the anticipated period for their performance.

On Behalf of the Measure DD Community Coalition
The 2022 Agenda Committee
Adrian Cotter
John Bowers
Myra Redman