



CITY OF OAKLAND

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**AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

Date: May 12, 2022  
To: Oakland City Council  
From: Councilmember Loren Taylor  
Subject: Lake Merritt Parking Management Plan

Colleagues on the Council:

Being born and raised in Oakland has given me so many fond memories of spending time at Lake Merritt as both a child and an adult. Those memories were made possible because of the easy and free access that I and other Oaklanders had to the lake. Lake Merritt – often referred to as the “Crown Jewel of Oakland” – is where I would bike around the lake as a child and then as an adult with my own children. It is also where I worked print screening t-shirts at Festival at the Lake and led my Eagle Scout project removing graffiti from the green monster and sifting the sand at the surrounding beach to remove broken glass.

Many Oakland residents have voiced justifiable concern that adding parking meters around the lake to areas that had previously hosted free parking could serve as a barrier to access for those Oakland residents who are not wealthy enough or fortunate enough to live within walking distance of Lake Merritt. I share this concern, but also recognize the need for improvements that encourage turnover, reduce overcrowding and increase access to Lake Merritt for all Oaklanders and visitors. Therefore, I am proposing an amendment to the City Administrator’s proposed parking management program that ensures continued free access for Oakland residents.

I propose that every Oakland resident be granted 2 hours of free parking at Lake Merritt per day as part of the new Parking Management program. After discussions I had with a mobile parking management vendor, I understand that it is technically feasible to have Oakland residents register their vehicles and license plates with the City of Oakland and upon doing so, establish a mechanism whereby the first two hours of parking each day is free. This proposed solution is a win-win that addresses the both-and goals of encouraging turnover and ensuring equitable access for all Oakland residents.

While it is important to create a reasonable plan, we must also balance the goal of ensuring that any plan does not create prohibitive barriers for Oaklanders enjoying the Lake. In an effort to



reduce potential barriers I am proposing the following amendments to the Resolution proposed by City staff that would allow Oakland residents to enjoy the Lake for two hours for free:

**WHEREAS**, Lake Merritt is recognized as a central feature of Oakland often referred to as the “Crown Jewel of the City” and the Council prioritizes equitable access to Lake Merritt for all Oaklanders; and

**WHEREAS**, the objectives of the Lake Merritt Parking management program are to increase equitable access to Lake Merritt and the provision of free parking for a reasonable duration is an important mechanism for ensuring equitable access for all Oaklanders; and

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Oakland City Council directs the City Administrator to establish a mechanism whereby every Oakland resident with a vehicle registered through the California Department of Motor Vehicles with an Oakland residence shall be granted two hours of free parking at Lake Merritt per day through the Lake Merritt Parking management program as a means of continuing to provide no-cost access to Lake Merritt for all Oakland residents; and be it

I respectfully request your support in amending the City administrators proposed parking management program to provide free parking for every Oakland resident while still implementing a parking management system that will improve the experience of Oaklanders visiting lake Merritt and/or living around it and ensure equitable access to Lake Merritt for all Oakland residents.

Yours in service of Oakland,

Loren Taylor  
Councilmember District 6