

# SPUR

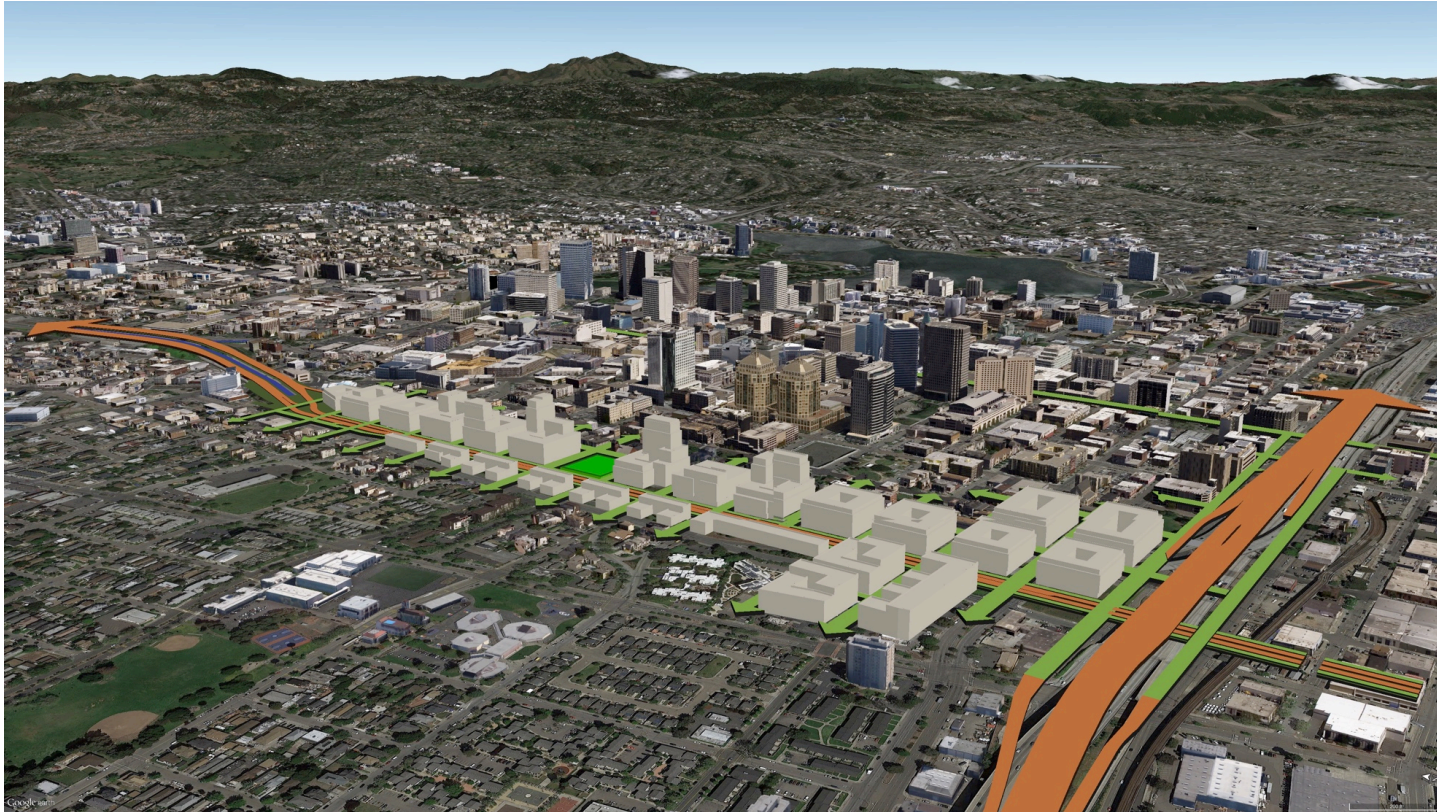
**Ideas + Action for a Better City**  
learn more at [SPUR.org](http://SPUR.org)

*tweet about this event:*  
*@SPUR\_Urbanist*  
*#ReenvsionI-980*



IDEAS AND ACTION FOR A BETTER CITY  
a member-supported nonprofit organization

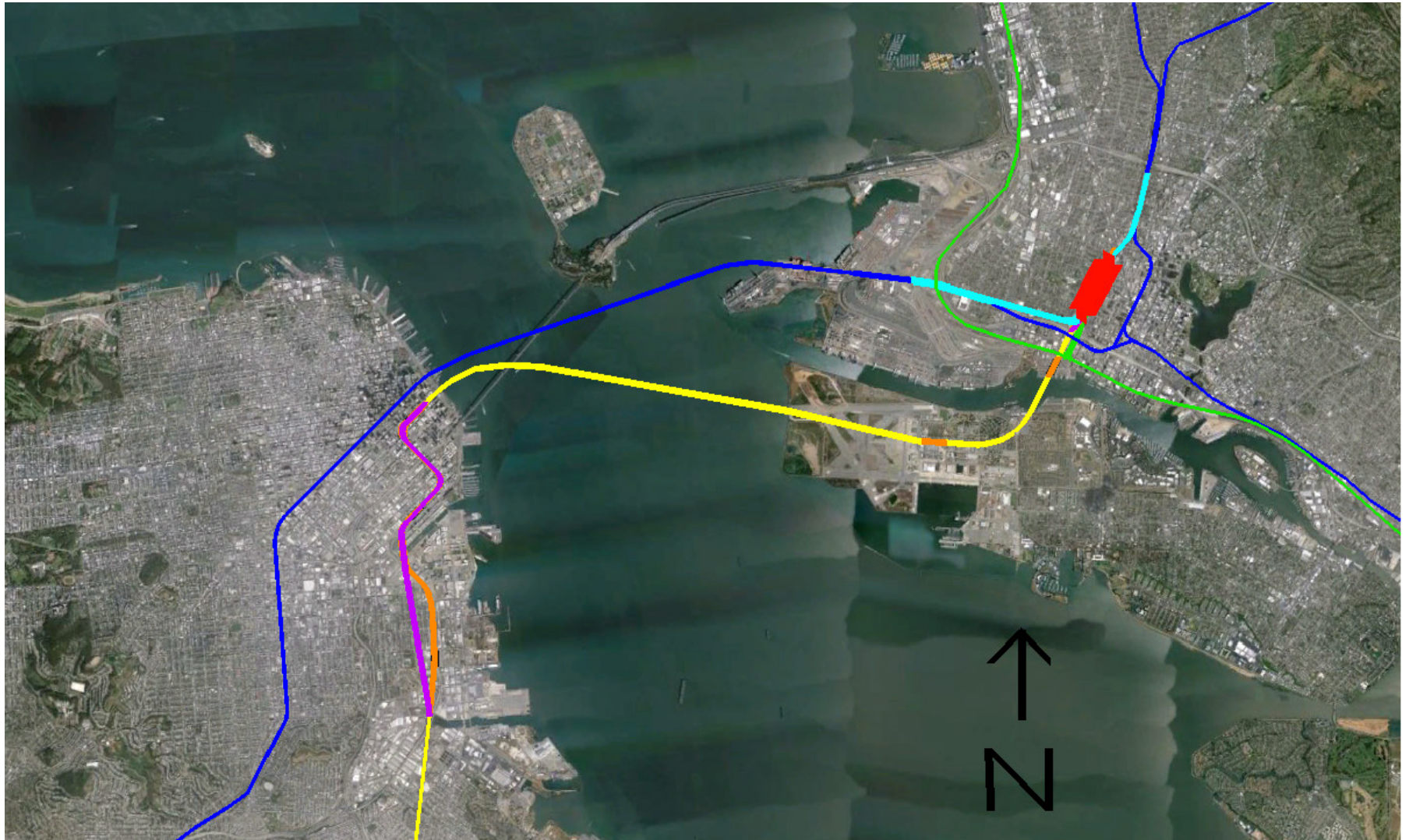
## RE-ENVISIONING I-980



- + **Matt Nichols** / City of Oakland Mayor's Office
- + **Greg Riessen** / SFMTA
- + **Chris Sensenig** / Connect Oakland

January 21, 2016





+ Greg Riessen



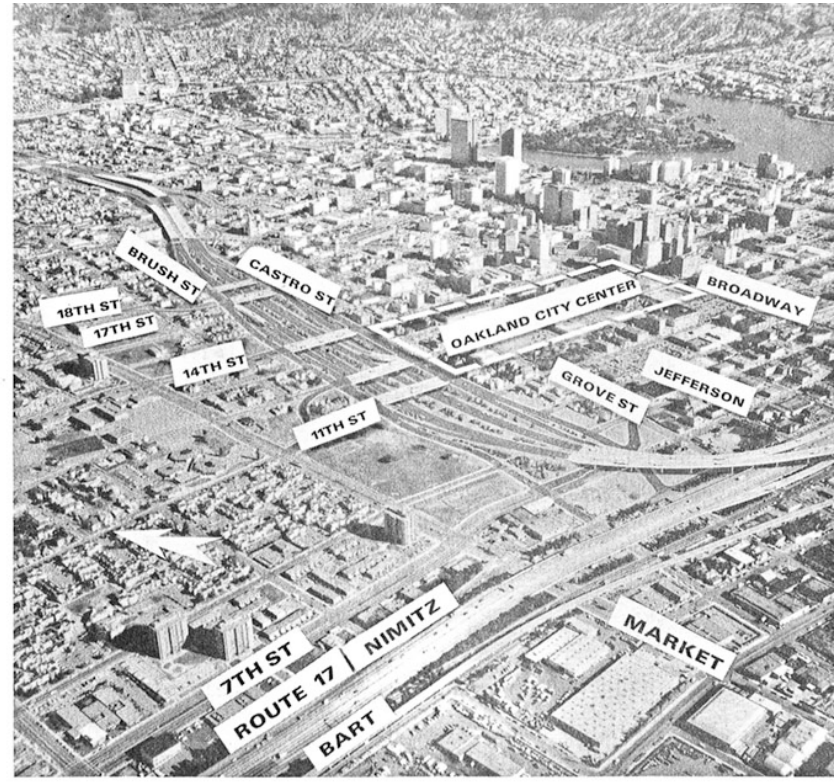


+ Greg Riessen



# CONNECT OAKLAND

A vision to reconnect neighborhoods and connect cities



DECEMBER 2015

# PURSuing AN IDEA

Mike Linksvayer 2011

## Occupy 980

I'm in agreement with Timothy B. Lee's posts a month ago that urban freeways are **not needed** and **harmful**, but whether any particular urban freeway ought be actively taken down **depends**. (Of course no more ought be built and nearly all existing ought not to have been built.)

Lee's posts got me thinking about which of Oakland's freeways ought be torn down first.



© OpenStreetMap contributors, CC-BY-SA

The map above gives a pretty good idea of Oakland freeways. Clockwise from the top there's **80/580** going north into Berkeley, **24** into a tunnel through the hills, **580** and **880** continuing on for a long way to the southeast and into San Leandro (there's also **13** in the hills connecting **24** and **580**, the only segment completely off-map), and **80** across the bay to San Francisco. Then there's **980** connecting **24** and **880**. **980** is the obvious segment to go:

- » **Traffic volumes** on **980** are less than any of the others (excepting **13**).
- » **980** cuts **West Oakland** off from **downtown**, and causes the former to be completely encircled by freeways.



@mlinksva

2012-2014



## Vibrant Bay Area

One hundred one cities, nine counties, one region

by Christopher Sensesing, December 30th, 2013 18 comments

**DURABLE GROWTH, TRANSPORTATION**  
**Tear down 980 to transform Oakland's geography**

As a practicing urban designer, I'm not that different than any other person in the Bay Area in that I constantly think about how to improve my surroundings. I wouldn't want to live anywhere else, but we need to make some big changes so we can preserve what we love about living here. And in order to preserve, I believe we need to start by tearing down.

There are two nagging questions that continue to haunt me about urban development in our region: 1) Why not Oakland? While the rest of the Bay Area booms, it smolders. 2) Why can't supply keep up with demand?

Dismantling an unneeded freeway could be one part of the answer. The John B. Williams Freeway, better known as the I-880, connects the I-880 to Route 24 and I-580 while creating a gap through Oakland, separating West Oakland from downtown. Mike Linksvayer has made an excellent case that the Bay Area doesn't need the I-880, the most underutilized freeway in the region. Linksvayer's post, "Occupy 980," inspired me to think more about the many ways the I-880 corridor could be transformed into something more useful to Oakland and region overall. Tearing down the I-880 could be just the right kind of catalyst to finally let Oakland take advantage of its location at the center of the Bay Area.



A new, multi-modal boulevard in place of a freeway. Image by the author, on Sketchpad.

Tearing down 980 from 7th Street to West Grand Boulevard and replacing it with a beautiful multi-way boulevard that could easily handle the traffic load and flow of 980 would transform the area and reconnect West Oakland to downtown. In addition to the five streets that currently cross the I-880, an additional street could be reconnected. Eleven new city blocks could be created, providing approximately 17 acres of new development. These reasons alone should be enough to convince most that it is time for the John B. Williams Freeway to become John B. Williams Boulevard.

But there is even more potential for the corridor. Such a project could ultimately make possible the expansion of BART and the addition of a second Transbay

**Top Posts**

- Alameda
- Contra Costa
- Marin
- Napa
- San Francisco
- San Mateo

**Transportation**

- Checking for support on the freeway - Part two
- Checking for support on the freeway - Part one
- There are better ways to be kind
- To pay the piper again and again

**Durable Growth**

- Tripping across the political spectrum in search of a home
- Checking for support on the freeway - Part two
- Checking for support on the freeway - Part one
- Environment
- Ooh, ooh, ooh, call on me, Mr. Kotler, I have an answer
- Info to urbanism, part 4: Energy matters
- Petaluma's Measure G: The arguments roll in

**Education**

- There was a time when even the Bay Area's elite may have been considered zealots
- CNU 22: Best moments from the plenary sessions
- CNU 22: Techno

December 2014



## connect OAKLAND

**The Existing Condition:**  
 Interstate 980, adjacent city streets and on-ramps currently create an 18 lane, 550 ft wide barrier dividing West Oakland and Downtown. Only 6 city streets connect over 980 between 6th St. and San Pablo Avenue, a 3/4 mile stretch.

**The Idea:**  
 From 6th Street to West Grand Boulevard, transform 980, one of the Bay Area's least used freeways, into a multi-way boulevard to reconnect West Oakland to Downtown.

**The Benefits:**  
**Reconnect West Oakland to Downtown**  
 (6 new street connections)  
**Create a new "Front Door" to Downtown**  
**Improve walkability of West Oakland**  
**New land for development**  
 (17+ acres, 11+ new city blocks)  
**Increase land value on edge of Downtown and in West Oakland**  
**Opportunity for new BART line**  
**New connections to Howard Terminal**



Existing condition aerial of 980, from Google Imagery

John B. Williams Boulevard (previously I-880)

Future configuration of 980 as a multi-way boulevard

Christopher Sensesing | Urban Designer | sensesing77@gmail.com

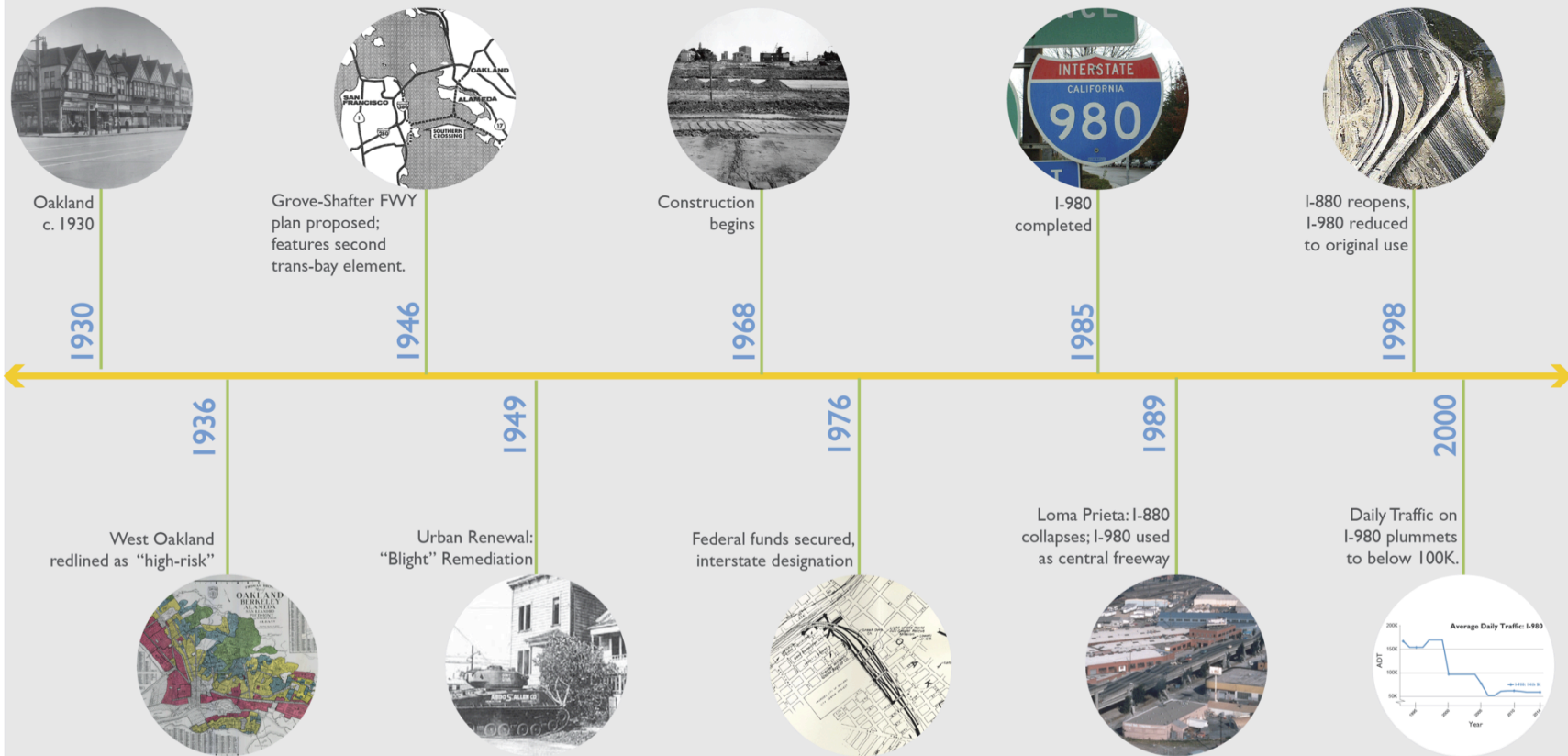
# CONNECT OAKLAND

A vision to reconnect neighborhoods and connect cities

Dec. 2013 VibrantBayArea.com



# I-980 Development Timeline



## The Cost of Building I-980



**42** acres



**503** houses



**155** trees



**4** churches



**22** businesses



**142** jobs

**1968**





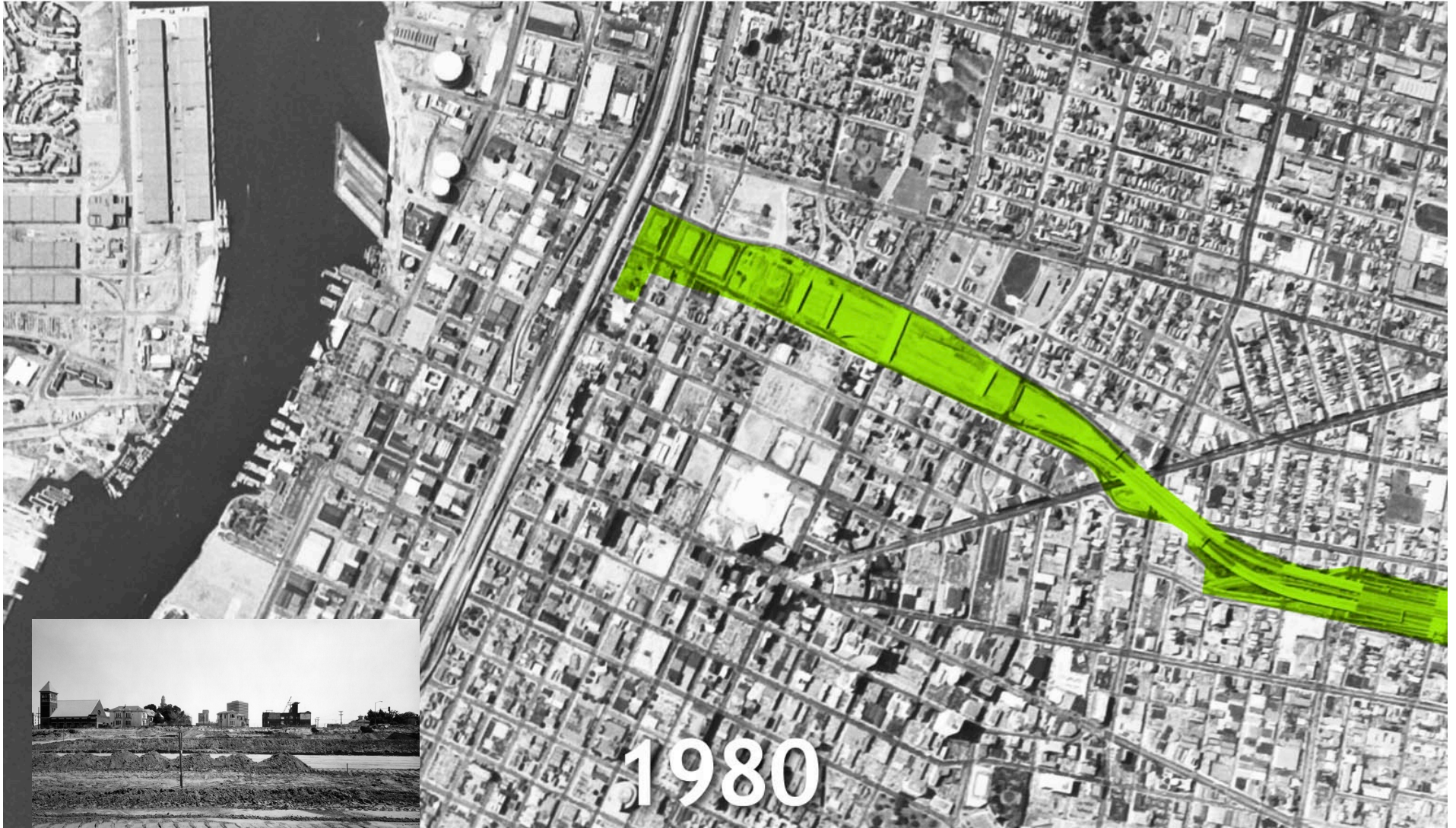
**1968**



**1968**



# 1980



1978 – PHOTOGRAPH BY CATHERINE WAGNER



# TODAY



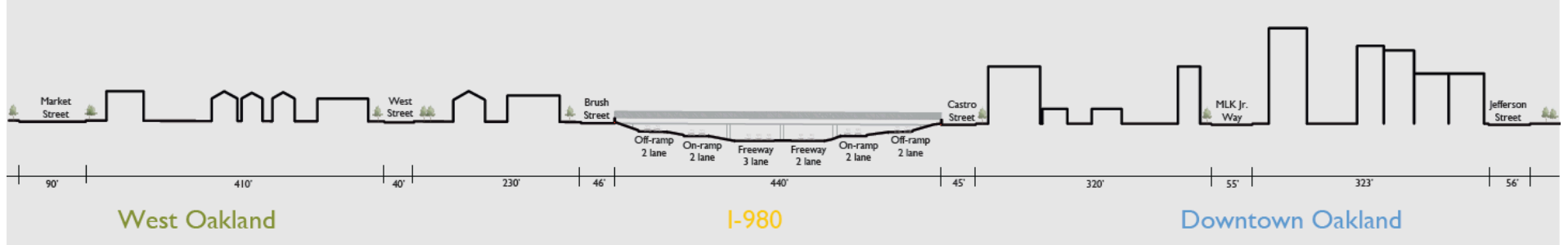


# TOMORROW?





# THE PRESENT CONDITION







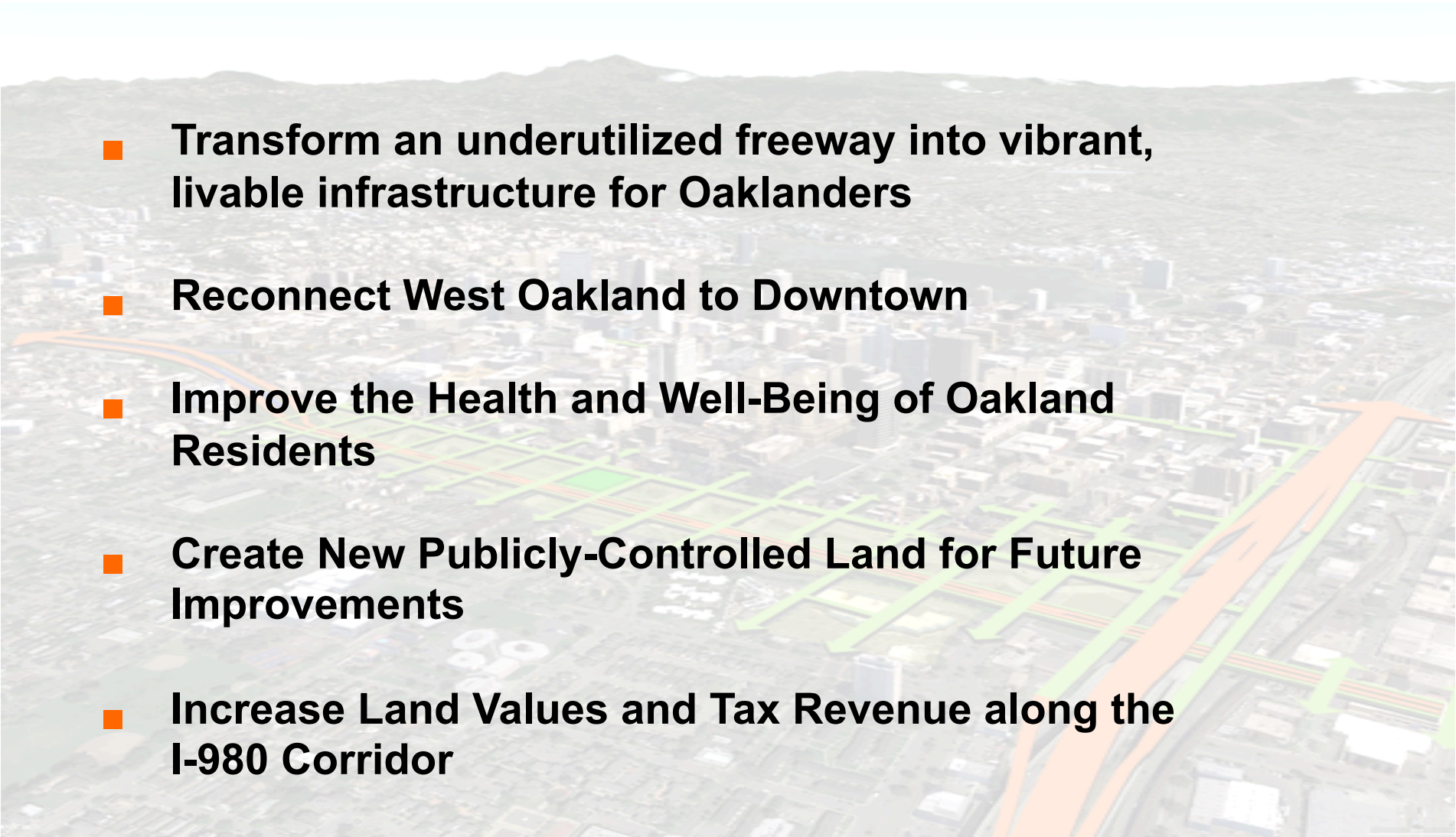


# VISION | RECONNECTING NEIGHBORHOODS





# **VISION | RECONNECTING NEIGHBORHOODS**

- 
- An aerial photograph of Oakland, California, showing the city's urban layout and surrounding hills. A proposed transit corridor is highlighted in orange, running from the downtown area towards the west. Green lines indicate potential future developments or land use changes along this corridor. The image serves as a background for the vision statement.
- **Transform an underutilized freeway into vibrant, livable infrastructure for Oaklanders**
  - **Reconnect West Oakland to Downtown**
  - **Improve the Health and Well-Being of Oakland Residents**
  - **Create New Publicly-Controlled Land for Future Improvements**
  - **Increase Land Values and Tax Revenue along the I-980 Corridor**

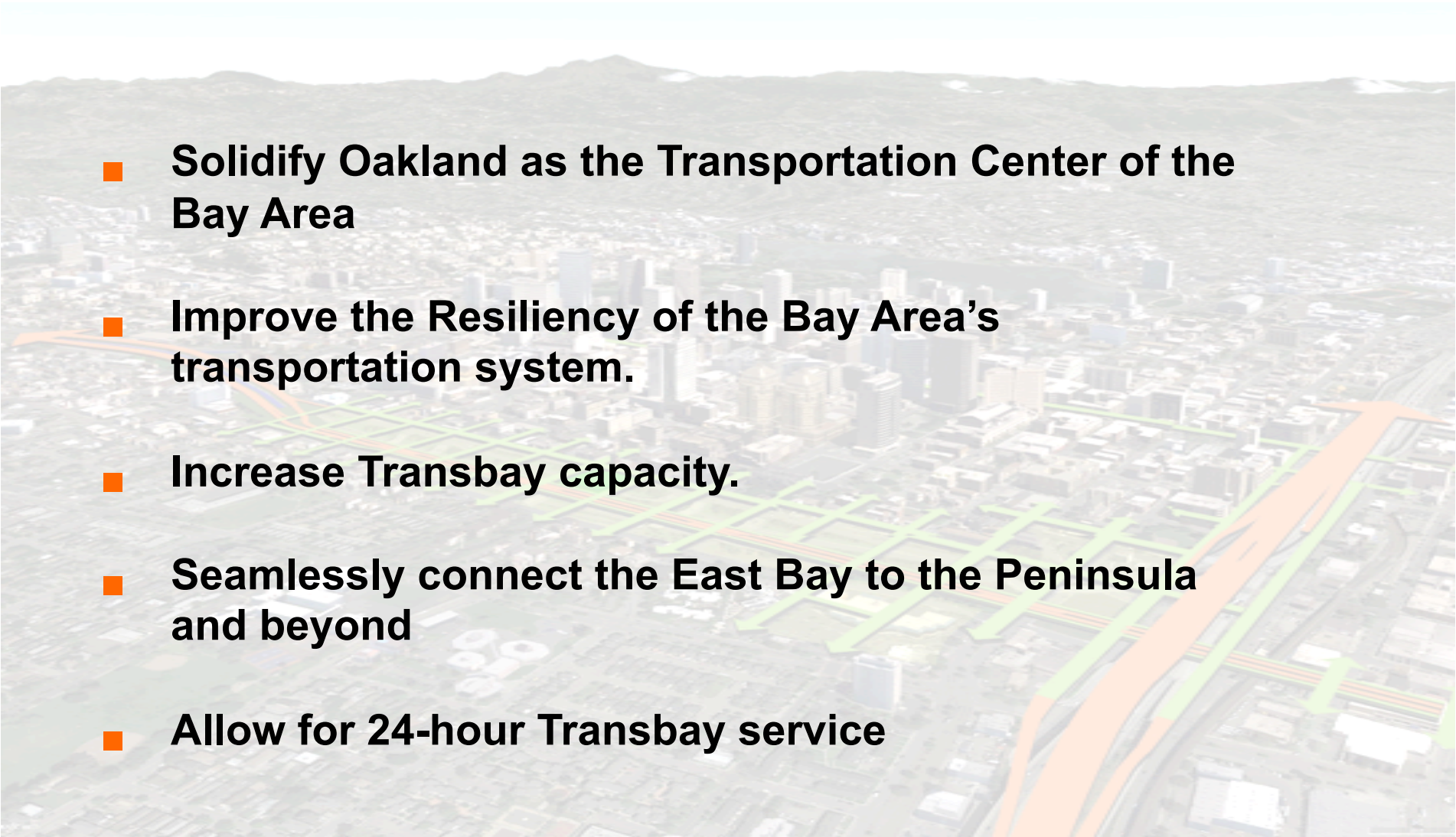


## VISION | CONNECTING THE REGION





## **VISION | CONNECTING THE REGION**

- 
- An aerial photograph of the San Francisco Bay Area, showing the city of San Francisco, the Golden Gate Bridge, and the surrounding hills. Overlaid on the image are various transportation planning elements: a network of green lines representing transit routes, orange lines indicating major corridors or highways, and a grid of green arrows pointing in different directions, likely representing transit service patterns. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.
- **Solidify Oakland as the Transportation Center of the Bay Area**
  - **Improve the Resiliency of the Bay Area's transportation system.**
  - **Increase Transbay capacity.**
  - **Seamlessly connect the East Bay to the Peninsula and beyond**
  - **Allow for 24-hour Transbay service**