



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Memo to the Planning Commission

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**Community Vision for San Francisco's Northeast Waterfront**  
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*Recommendation:* **Informational. No action is requested at this time.**

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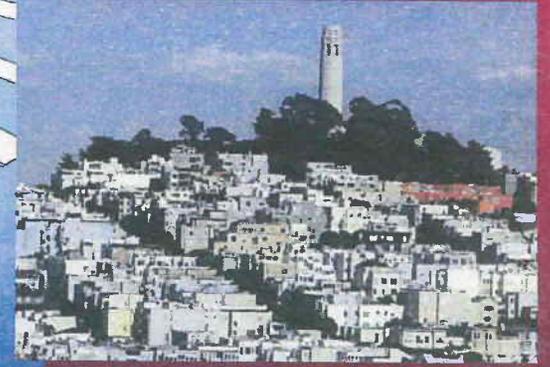
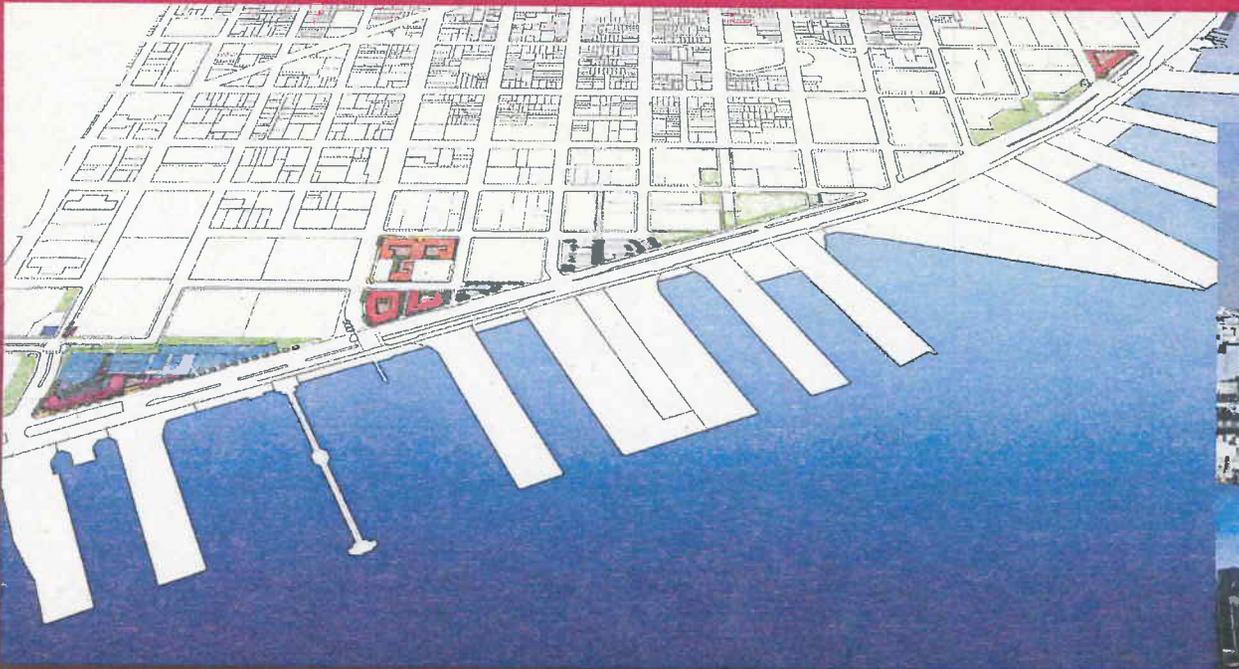
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In February 2009, Supervisor David Chiu urged the Port of San Francisco to engage the Planning Department to lead a planning analysis of the Port's surface parking lots north of Market Street. This work began in May 2009 and was completed in May 2010. Entitled 'The Northeast Embarcadero Study', the study aims to guide the development of properties along the west side of The Embarcadero. The study's main goal was to articulate appropriate development along the Northeast Embarcadero and to create a strong public realm that connects the city to the waterfront and strengthens the linear promenade on the west side of The Embarcadero.

On July 8, 2010 the Planning Commission acknowledged the work of staff in completing the Northeast Embarcadero Study and recognized the design principles and recommendations of the study for public realm improvements and new development in the area. The Commission also urged the Port of San Francisco to consider the principles and recommendations of the Northeast Embarcadero Study when considering proposals for new development in the study area and when considering public infrastructure improvements in the study area.

Separately, a citizens group prepared its own study entitled "A Community Vision for San Francisco's Northeast Waterfront", and has requested that they be given the opportunity to present their work to the Commission. It is this group's study that is the subject of this informational presentation.

**REQUIRED COMMISSION ACTION:** Informational. No action is requested at this hearing.



## A Community Vision for San Francisco's Northeast Waterfront

Prepared by  
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February 2011

## acknowledgements

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# A Community Vision for San Francisco's Northeast Waterfront

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*"Let's make no mistake about this:  
The American Dream starts with the  
neighborhoods. If we wish to rebuild  
our cities, we must first rebuild our  
neighborhoods. And to do that, we  
must understand that the quality of  
life is more important than the  
standard of living..."*

*~ Harvey Milk*

*"I don't know of any other city where you can walk through so many culturally diverse neighborhoods, and you're never out of sight of the wild hills. Nature is very close here."*

*~ Gary Snyder*

### Background

In early 2009, Supervisor David Chiu called for a planning study to look at the comprehensive issues raised by the prospect of development pressures on the publicly-owned Seawall Lots along the Northeast Embarcadero waterfront. Various public meetings were held, and community response solicited, but many members of the community, in particular residents of the adjacent neighborhoods, did not feel the planning process was adequate regarding either their concerns or the comprehensive nature that they expected from a city planning process.

This alternative community planning process grew out of widespread frustration with the Planning Department's current efforts that focus primarily on justifying private development proposals on the Port's seawall lots. The Port's Design & Access Element states:

*In the past, many development projects proposed for the waterfront were met with well-organized, citizen opposition. While often justifiable, this opposition has led some developers to view the waterfront as a risky place for development because of the lack of a consensus about the appropriate type and amount of development... (page 8)*

It was clear from the direction and results of the Planning Department's process that, rather than starting from a consensus based on community input and the principles guiding the existing Waterfront Land Use Plan, new proposals around heights and land uses were being developed to respond to developer interests and needs.

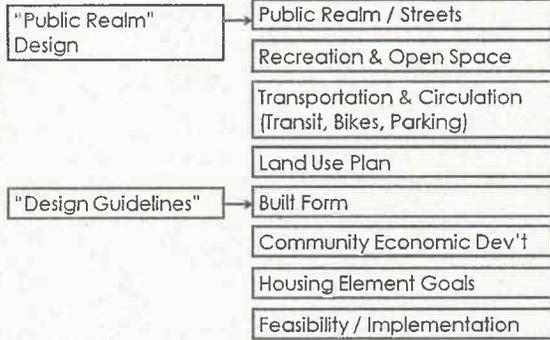
Over the Summer and Fall of 2010, residents, youth and seniors, local merchants, and tenant and neighborhood organizations, worked together to create an alternative community vision for the Northeast Waterfront, one that fulfilled

Supervisor Chiu's original request. For our purposes, the Northeast Waterfront extends from the Ferry Building to North Point, and from the Embarcadero back to the neighborhoods of Golden Gateway, Chinatown, North Beach, and Telegraph Hill along major thoroughfares such as Clay, Washington and Broadway. Community members, through a Northeast Waterfront Steering Committee representing four of the largest neighborhood organizations, engaged Asian Neighborhood Design, to lead an alternative public visioning process not influenced by developer interests. The project team held three public workshops from June to September 2010 to formulate a community vision as well as a strategy for implementing the vision.

The recommendations that follow, the Northeast Waterfront Community Vision, come from community member's desire for a comprehensive plan that addressed issues not emphasized by the official Planning and Port process, and that incorporates transit, affordable housing, community infrastructure and a funding plan and timeline. The Northeast Waterfront Community Vision is intended to guide the use, character and design of future developments in ways that build towards the community vision articulated in this process.



**Planning "Study"      Community Alternative**



Begin with People and Place...

From the outset, we sought to balance revenue generating, open space and active recreation uses across **all** seawall lots in order to produce a plan that is both financially and politically feasible. We believe this will yield more revenue than the Port's one-at-a-time approach to building on seawall lots.

As the Waterfront continues to develop, it is critical that the cultural character and resources that make the waterfront special be identified, maintained and enhanced. At the root of San Francisco's explosion into a major metropolis of the Pacific coast, the Waterfront's cultural and historical resources continue to play a significant role in the history of San Francisco and the region.

Major transportation improvements, new development and land use changes are already proposed and being considered for the Waterfront; these investments must be leveraged sensitively to strengthen the Waterfront's role linking the neighborhoods to the Bay. These changes will have major impacts on a changing neighborhood, including more people living, working and visiting near downtown and the Northeast Waterfront:

1. The new Exploratorium, Cruise Ship Terminal, Ferry Building improvements and farmers market.
2. Ferry service increasing to 12 lines, as well as new water taxi service.
3. Seawall Lot development proposals.
4. Affordable housing along Broadway.
5. Approximately 11,000 housing units planned for Rincon Hill, Mission Bay and Transbay neighborhoods.
6. Capacity for 60,000 more workers downtown
7. America's Cup facilities.
8. Sea Level Rise adaptation infrastructure.

There is now a great opportunity to transform the often-negative results of previous changes to the neighborhood's physical fabric into "people-oriented" streets, plazas and parks that serve residents and visitors alike. The Northeast Waterfront Community Vision builds on and is complementary to previous Waterfront planning efforts, specifically, the Port's Waterfront Land Use Plan and its Waterfront Design & Access Element, the Northeastern Waterfront Area Plan of San Francisco's General Plan, the Northeast Waterfront Historic District and BCDC's the Port Waterfront Special Area Plan, efforts that many of the same community members participated in. In addition, this document is informed by the comment letters on the Planning Department's study presented by FOGG, the Golden Gateway Apartment Association, Telegraph Hill Dwellers, Transportation for a Livable City and others.

The Community Vision suggests how the area might evolve over time; however, it is a living document. The community members involved in this process do not see this plan as a final product, but as a work-in-progress which they will continue to work to implement until the city addresses the needs of the area as a comprehensive whole and as a living place. It is the community's hope that many of these recommendations will be adopted by these decision makers as key initiatives for future efforts by relevant agencies.

**The Community Vision:**

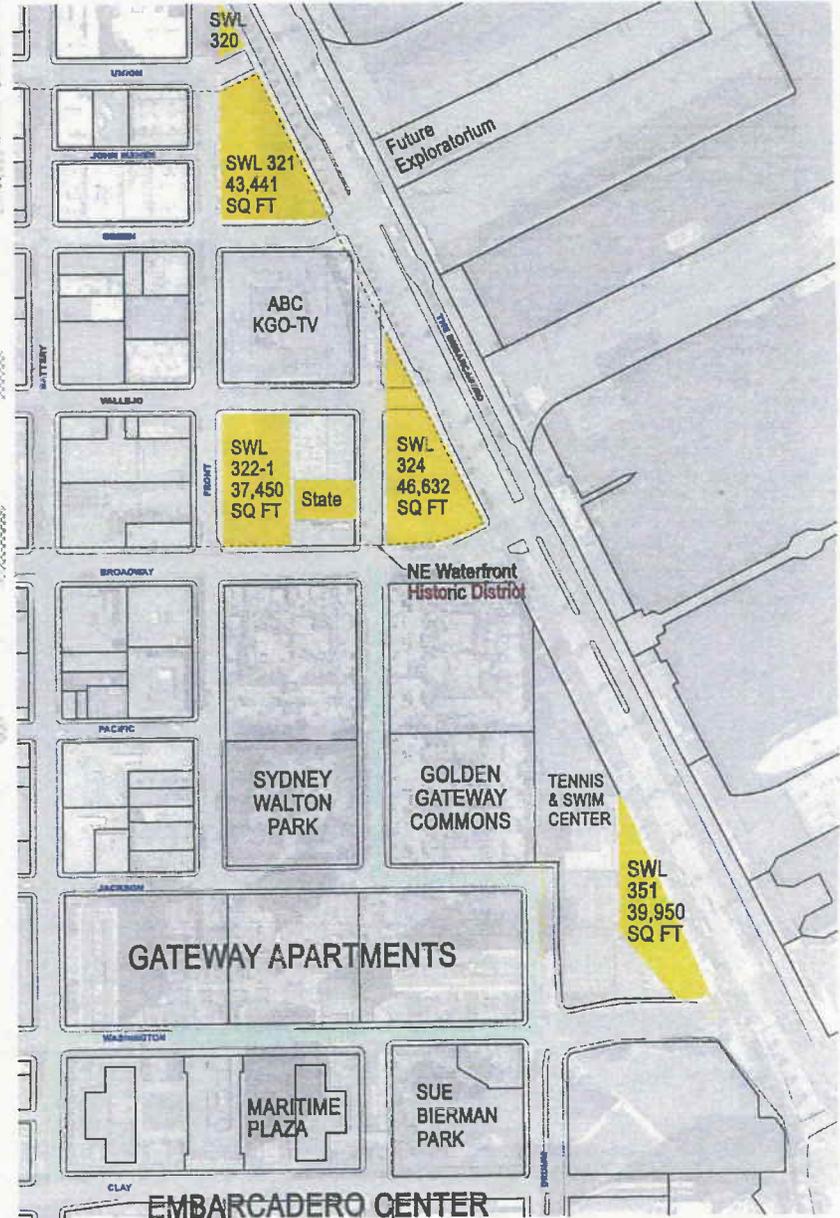
1. Begins with **People and Place**, not abstract planning "concepts." **Sense of place** is defined by the people who live, work and play in a particular place.
2. Takes a comprehensive look at planning for people, including **Transit, Parking,**

**Recreation, Economics, and Equity issues.** It is not a “study” that will gather dust on a shelf, but a Plan to be implemented in step with new development.

- Looks at Land Use and feasibility for **the Waterfront as a Whole**, not just priorities for developers.
- Reaches **Consensus** from a wide range of stakeholders representing the interests of residents, visitors and downtown workers.

### Study Area

The Northeast Waterfront study area is located in the northeast of San Francisco. The residential neighborhoods adjacent to The Embarcadero form an integral part to the area’s overall identity and character. The study scope includes publicly-owned parcels along the Embarcadero, including the Port-managed seawall lots, which are held in “**public trust**” for all the people of California and lots owned by the State of California, as well the street right-of-way. This report describes the state’s **Public Trust Doctrine** and the uses allowed on public trust land (page 38), which includes all seawall lots, piers and bulkhead buildings. In general, uses that directly promote or are related to maritime commerce or fishing are permissible public trust uses. **Hotels, restaurants, and waterfront-related recreation and cultural uses are considered to be trust uses**, because they draw large numbers of people to the waterfront. **Neither housing nor general office use** are considered trust uses, because they are viewed as “privatizing” trust lands with no corresponding trust benefit (e.g. promotion of maritime commerce or public use and enjoyment of the waterfront).





### **Community Planning Process**

The community alternatives process was sponsored by the following community organizations: Friends of Golden Gateway (FOGG), the Golden Gateway Tenants Association (GGTA), the Telegraph Hill Dwellers (THD) and the Barbary Coast Neighborhood Association (BCNA), four of the largest and oldest stakeholder groups in the area. Together, these four organizations represent a membership of over 8,000 people. Besides members of FOGG, GGTA, THD and BCNA, the workshops were attended by tenants of Chinatown Community Development Center's Broadway Family Apartments, homeowners from Golden Gateway Commons, members of the North Beach Merchants Association, and additional residents from Chinatown, North Beach, Russian Hill, and Telegraph Hill.

A first workshop was held on May 13, 2010, at Broadway Family Apartments, and a second workshop held June 9 at Channel 7 (KGO), at 900 Front Street. A separate focus group in Cantonese was held on May 6, 2010 at the Chinatown Community Development Center's planning offices on 667 Clay Street with about 15 Chinatown residents, and two mini-workshops were held with steering committee members in August to fine-tune the recommendations. A final public workshop was held on September 13 at KGO. The workshops were facilitated by Asian Neighborhood Design staff. Each of the three workshops was well attended (see photos at left and following page) by people, representing a wide diversity of the adjoining neighborhoods and cross-section of residents.



Workshop 1: May 13, 2010



Workshop 2: June 9, 2010



Workshop 3: September 13, 2010

## Document Overview

This document sets forth a Community Vision for the neighborhoods along the Northeast Waterfront, from the Ferry building to North Point. It looks more at the neighborhood side of the Waterfront, as a majority of the Port's efforts have been directed to the Bay side but recognizes the need to plan for an fully integrated waterfront in terms of transportation, recreation, open space, complimentary uses, etc.. The recommendations contained here articulate the community's vision for both public improvements and private development and describe how it should integrate with and contribute to existing neighborhood fabric along the Northeast Waterfront.

The goal of the community alternatives process was to create a comprehensive plan for improving the Northeast Waterfront that addressed a much wider range of issues than the official Planning Department process. The Northeast Waterfront Vision is intended to provide the overall community vision of the area as well as summarize the community's recommendations and strategies to achieve the vision.

This community vision document is guided by four principles, developed by community members at the first community workshop. These include:

1. **Begin with people and neighborhoods.**  
The waterfront is not just a destination, but also part of neighborhood fabric of Golden Gateway, Chinatown, North Beach, and Telegraph Hill. Strengthen neighborhood connections, including the cultural/ethnic relationship between Chinatown and waterfront.

2. **Plan for a harmonious, socio-economic and ethnically diverse waterfront.**  
Development should be accessible to all, not just developed for a few. This includes residents, visitors and those who work nearby. Affordable housing should be a priority, for both families and seniors.
3. **Enhance and preserve the community's recreation opportunities,** especially the recreation, education and cultural performance needs of Chinatown and North Beach youth; and preserve the Gateway's recreation center as the community resource it was designed to be.
4. **Plan for the future of the NE Waterfront as a whole.** By looking at all of the Seawall Lots, we can create a politically and economically feasible plan that balances public uses and revenue-generating development.

The community's shared **vision** for the Northeast Waterfront reflects these principles. Community members see the development of the Northeast Waterfront as *a necklace of intimate green spaces, between a low-rise mix of commercial, residential, cultural, and recreational uses that honor the Waterfront's history and topography, connected back to the City's neighborhoods through strong pedestrian friendly streets.*

Guided by these values, community members developed suggestions for: a) creating better connections between Chinatown, North Beach and the Embarcadero, b) better utilizing the existing parking capacity, c) preserving and expanding the neighborhood's active recreation

space, parks and playgrounds, d) improving pedestrian, bicycle and transit access along major streets, and e) creating economically and politically feasible alternatives for the Port's seawall lots that would generate real community support. All of these topics are interrelated and define the Northeast Waterfront as we know it today. The following recommendations serve as guidance for future actions by San Francisco public agencies, including Planning, the Port, Rec & Park, Muni, DPT, and DPW. The following chapters address each topic in more detail, drawing on what makes the Northeast Waterfront special and how to maintain and enhance its strengths for generations to come. The remainder of the Northeast Waterfront Community Vision consists of the following chapters:

**Chapter Two: The Waterfront and its Neighborhoods,** provides the background of the area, and synthesizes existing physical, infrastructure & economic conditions, reviews the area's local, regional and historical context, and identifies key assets, challenges and opportunities.

**Chapter Three: The Community's Waterfront Vision,** describes the community's key values that should guide both public and private development in the future, and summarizes the 10 major recommendations and objectives.

**Chapter Four: Neighborhood Connections,** presents recommendations for improving the public realm, namely streetscape, sidewalk, and pedestrian safety improvements.

**Chapter Five: Social Infrastructure,** outlines a vision for the network of small open spaces along the neighborhood side of the Embarcadero, and

related programmed recreation activities and facilities.

**Chapter Six: Transportation and Parking**, addresses two critical issues for community members, the lack of transit access between the neighborhoods and the Waterfront, and the over-emphasis on new parking facilities on the part of the Port and developers.

**Chapter Seven: Economic Development**, acknowledges that the challenges of preserving and enhancing vibrant neighborhoods aren't just questions of public infrastructure and private development, but involve intentional efforts to maintain and enhance the area's small businesses and commercial corridors.

**Chapter Eight: Land Uses, Built Form, and the Waterfront's Character**, gets at the controversial issues of what should be encouraged to be built, and where, and at what scale. While acknowledging the importance of economic feasibility, the emphasis of this report is on ensuring that development on the waterfront will respect the character and scale of the surrounding neighborhoods and the iconic topography of the city.

**Chapter Nine: Implementation**, outlines the "next steps" to move the project forward. It is the community's hope that public agencies, in particular the Planning Department and the Port of San Francisco, will begin taking the lead in executing the implementation actions. Community members desire projects that design and plan for future long-term sustainability. There should be continued dialogue between the community, developers and the Planning Department as well

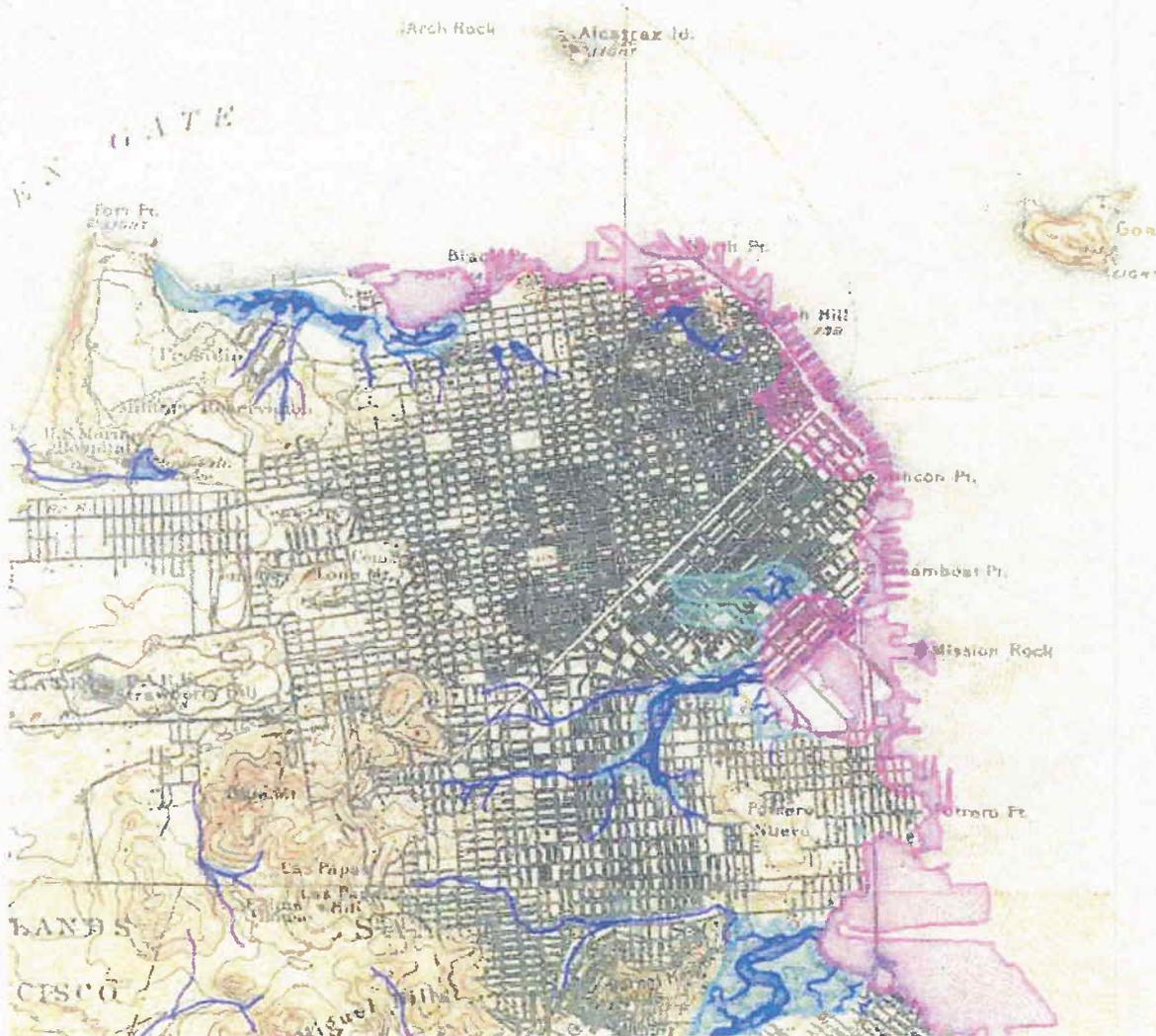
as other City agencies to provide continued accountability for the Plan's implementation.

**Chapter Ten** offers a few concluding thoughts from the community steering committee of Northeast Waterfront activists and organizations.

*"Once I knew the City very well, spent my attic days there, while others were being a lost generation in Paris, I fledged in San Francisco, climbed its hills, slept in its parks, worked on its docks, marched and shouted in its revolts... It had been kind to me in the days of my poverty and it did not resent my temporary solvency."*

*~ John Steinbeck*

## THE WATERFRONT AND ITS NEIGHBORHOODS



Original shoreline before building of Seawalls

The Northeast Waterfront, as defined in this community-based plan, extends from the Ferry Building to North Point, and from The Embarcadero back to the neighborhoods of Golden Gate, Chinatown, North Beach, and Telegraph Hill along major thoroughfares such as Clay, Washington and Broadway. The Northeast Waterfront Community Vision aims to enhance the uniqueness of the Waterfront and its neighborhoods by building on its assets, as well as addressing challenges. To understand the origin of the recommendations contained here, we begin with a look at the history of the Waterfront and its relationship to the neighborhoods.

### **Natural Context**

One of the strongest assets of the Northeast Waterfront is its physical landscape. Its identity is defined by the prominence of Telegraph Hill, and its craggy dynamited face to the west, and views of the Bay Bridge and Treasure Island to the east. The entire area, including, by definition, the Seawall Lots, is built on fill. In the future, the area will face tremendous pressures due to the projected Sea Level rise. Current projections of a 55" rise by end of the century, if left without mitigations, would bring the high tide mark back to the original shoreline (shown at left).

## Historical Context

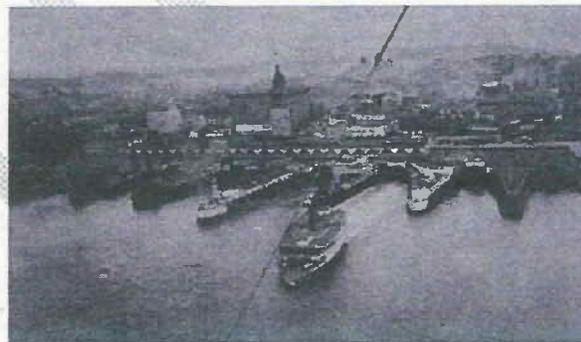
San Francisco's history is rooted in its waterfront, where one can read the story of the city's growth and change. It was not only a place where freight was transferred to and from ships and rail, but also where people first arrived or disembarked from points around the globe. As a port city, many of San Francisco's most important historical highlights occurred in and were defined by its waterfront: waves of migration to California and the West, San Francisco's emergence as a major commercial center, the development of international trade routes, including the opening of the Panama-Pacific Canal, its role in expanding American influence in the Pacific and Latin America, and World Wars I and II.

The **1849 Gold Rush** attracted hundreds of ships from around the world to the city, leading San Francisco to become an "Instant City." Between 1852 and 1908, an explosion of shipping and trading activity led to the development of a major harbor and supporting warehouse district, and the building of an initial seawall in the Northern Waterfront. A state commission was created in 1863 to improve and manage the harbor. **By 1908, twenty-eight piers were in operation.** The area adjacent to the waterfront along Jackson Street became known as the **Barbary Coast**, an area of brothels, dance halls, and saloons, until a series of regulations and campaigns starting in 1911 closed it down.

Between 1908 and 1931, the Port undertook major harbor improvement and "beautification" projects. A second, longer seawall was completed, and new "finger" piers and bulkhead buildings were constructed.



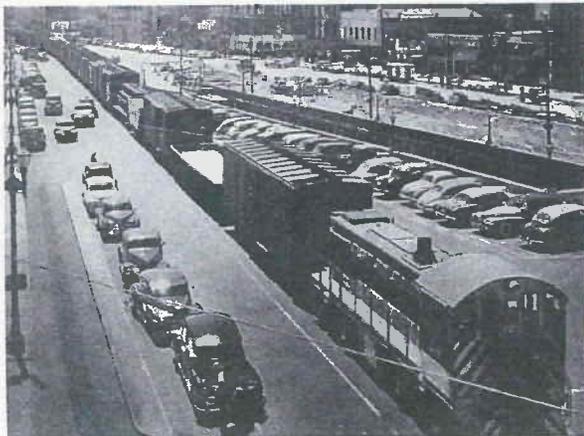
Broadway Piers, 1863



Embarcadero, 1912



Foot of Market, 1900s



Beltline Railroad, 1950s



The Produce Market, 1950s and 60s

**The Beltline Railroad Roundhouse (1918)** was built to service the waterfront warehouse and shipping district. Began as the State Belt Railroad in 1889, a terminal switching railroad with locomotives dedicated to moving boxcars directly alongside cargo vessels, its tracks eventually covered 70 miles of waterfront—from Islais Creek in the south, through Fort Mason tunnel, to the Presidio. Four tracks, using half the width of The Embarcadero extended more than a hundred spur tracks out on to the piers. It was vital in connecting the Port and its many docks to the industries and warehouses adjacent to the waterfront. The railroad ceased operation in 1993.

**By 1931, forty-nine piers and twenty-one ferry slips were operating along the waterfront.** Through the end of World War II, the Port of San Francisco was the dominant West Coast shipping port. The bulkhead buildings that extend along The Embarcadero served as office space and as entrances to the piers. As contributors to a design plan initiated during the “City Beautiful” era, the bulkheads’ purpose was to beautify and bring a sense of grandeur to the waterfront, as befitting a major seaport. The building program spanned more than two decades and included a variety of architectural styles—beginning with simple Mission Revival bulkheads south of the Ferry Building and continuing with the eight monumental Neoclassical bulkhead buildings to the north, built before 1936. These bulkhead buildings, and the “connector buildings” extending between them, establish a strong architectural edge to The Embarcadero. These buildings were officially recognized in 2005 with the listing on the National Register of Historic Places of the Port’s *Embarcadero National Register Historic District*, which encompasses a 3-mile stretch of the northern waterfront from Pier 45 to Pier 48, including 30

individual historically significant buildings and structures on the Bay side of The Embarcadero

On the inland side of The Embarcadero, the buildings in what is now the **Northeast Waterfront Historic District** were developed to serve maritime activities from the 1850’s to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The handsome brick (pre-1906) and concrete (post 1906) buildings which remain today vary in height from approximately 6 stories (at the foot of Telegraph Hill) to a maximum of four stories (at The Embarcadero), and are characterized by large building bulk, minimal architectural detailing, and repeated vertical window and door openings. Landmark buildings include the **Beltline Railroad Roundhouse**, **Italian Swiss Colony Warehouse Building** and **Gibb-Sanborn Warehouse**. Streets leading toward the dynamited face of Telegraph Hill turned into stairway walks, including the famous **Greenwich and Filbert steps** which stairways lead up into the **Telegraph Hill Historic District**. Because of its proximity to the waterfront, this area on the east side of Telegraph Hill became a community of waterfront workers—longshoremen and stevedores—housed in modest homes. Intact groupings of these buildings remain and comprise the largest concentration of pre-1870 structures in the city. This city Historic District was established in 1985. Maps of each historic district are in Appendix B.

**The produce markets** in San Francisco faced an explosive growth. Goods from the Central Valley and other areas arrived in San Francisco via ship and, later, truck. The old produce market became the heart of the Italian community in San Francisco. The more popular produce markets were located in the area near the docks stretching northward from the Ferry Building.

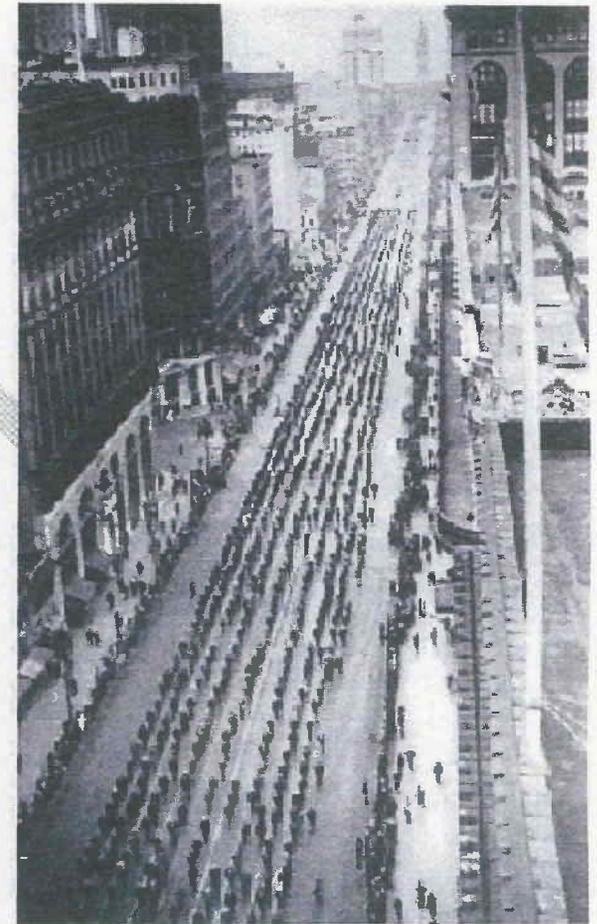
After the huge **surge of growth in the 1920s**, San Francisco was deeply affected by the worldwide **Great Depression** at the beginning of the 1930s. Shanty-towns and soup kitchens for unemployed seamen and warehouse workers, sprang up along the waterfront. The “White Angel Jungle” was a huge soup kitchen located on The Embarcadero near Filbert Street. Lois Jordan served as many as 2,000 men a day and depended solely on unsolicited donations of food and money. The waterfront was also the site of the San Francisco General Strikes of 1934, which defined San Francisco as a labor town for generations to come. With the unemployment rate of the Great Depression, thousands of unemployed workers were not only willing to work at any wage, but were also willing to work in any condition. The horrendous working conditions led to the San Francisco and Oakland **General Strike of 1934**.

On May 9, the strike of the Bay Area Longshoremen along the west coast and Hawaii began. Since the shipping companies refused to negotiate, tensions rose dramatically. The industrial association had tried to open the port further which led to major violence and hostility between strikers and the police. On July 5, 1934, known as “**Bloody Thursday**”, police fired into a crowd of protesters and killed two strikers.

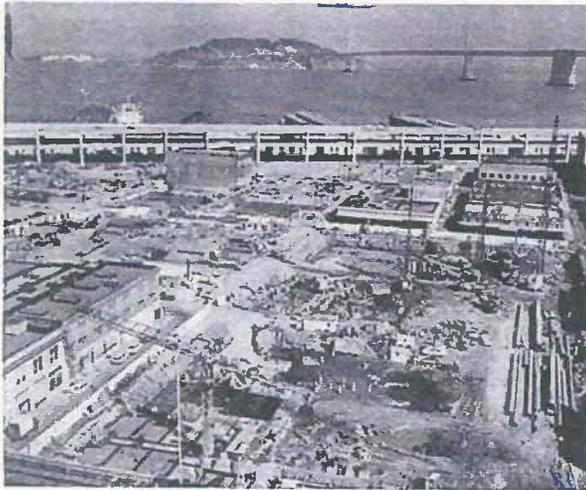
The **Bay Bridge** and **Golden Gate Bridge** were completed in 1936 and 1937, respectively. During WWII, the waterfront became a military logistic's center. Almost every pier and wharf was involved in military activities, with troop ships and naval vessels anchored all along The Embarcadero. But the bridges led to the start of a decline in activity at the waterfront as the Bay Area's shipping center began moving to Oakland, with goods carried across the bridge by truck.



Dorothea Lange's famous portrait of an out-of-work longshoreman, taken at the White Angel Jungle.



The funeral for the two dead strikers marches down Market Street during the 1934 General Strike.



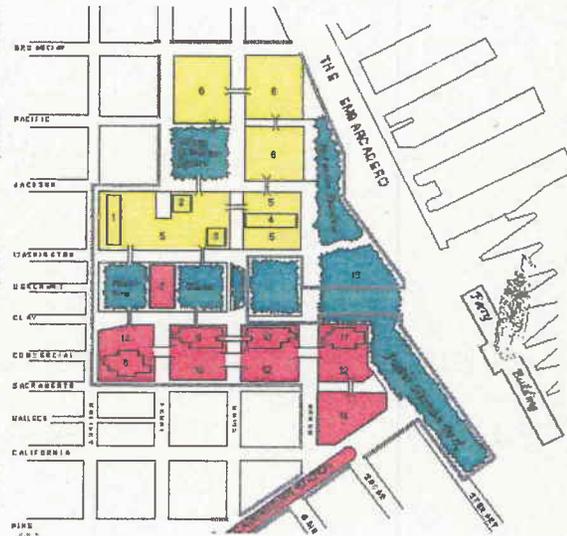
**The Embarcadero Freeway**, built in 1959, not only provided access into the city, but it also connected San Francisco neighborhoods such as Chinatown to developing residential areas where younger generations began moving. As constructed, the Embarcadero Freeway, with exits at Broadway Street, and later, Main and Washington Streets, further cut off the waterfront and Ferry Building from the rest of the city.

By 1969, the number of piers was reduced to 45, as some “finger” piers were combined into larger piers to meet modern warehousing and shipping needs. The ferry slips at the foot of Market Street were removed as **commuters abandoned ferries for the car**, crossing on the Bay Bridge and the Embarcadero Freeway. Waterfront activity declined still further with the advent of containerized shipping, as the center of Bay Area shipping moved to Oakland.

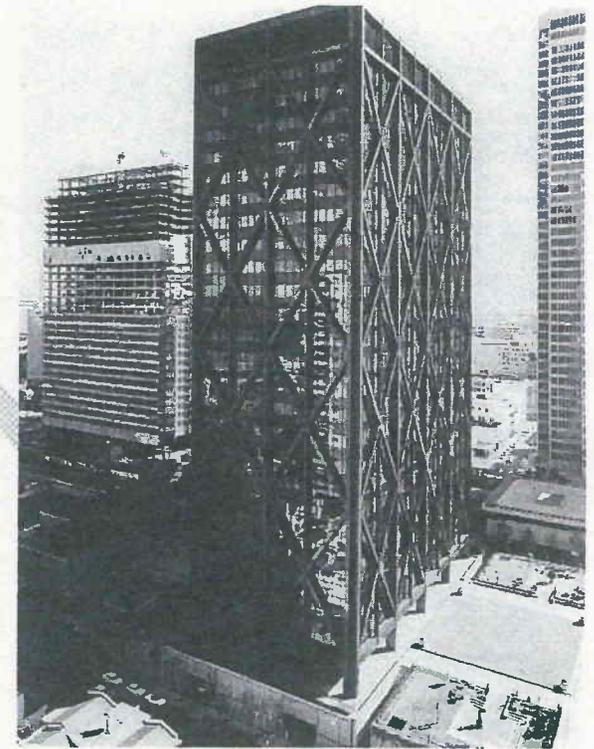
**The San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission** was created in 1965 as a permitting authority along the San Francisco Bay shoreline responsible for granting or denying permits for all bay filling, dredging or substantial change in use of land, water or structures in the Bay or on the shoreline. Today, it also enforces and amends the *San Francisco Waterfront Special Area Plan (SAP)* and develops climate change adaptation policies to mitigate the rise in sea level.

The wave of postwar “redevelopment” that destroyed many inner cities in the U.S. affected this area as well. The **Golden Gateway Redevelopment Project** was established and adopted on October 14, 1958. The plan included “slum clearance” and redevelopment activities “for the elimination and for the prevention of the development or spread of slums and blight.” The entire produce market was cleared, and its operations moved to the Bayview and San Mateo. The plan led to the construction of 1,400 new housing units at **Golden Gateway**, 3.5 million square feet of office space at the **Embarcadero Center and Maritime Plaza**, an 840-room hotel, and open space and recreation facilities, including **Justin Herman Plaza**, **Sue Bierman Park/Ferry Park**, **Sydney Walton Square**, and the **Golden Gateway Tennis & Swim Club**. Golden Gateway is the second largest rent-controlled apartment complex in the city.

Like **Sydney Walton Square**, the **Tennis & Swim Club**, constructed in 1968, and used as a health and recreation club both by immediate residents and the general public, was the result of a requirement by the Redevelopment Agency for community space. Now that the Redevelopment Area has expired, the Planning Department claims “any and all covenants and land use restrictions... no longer apply.” However, letters from Mayor/Senator Feinstein (1984/2003) and Robert Rumsey (1990), Deputy Director of Redevelopment at the time the Golden Gateway Redevelopment Project was approved and built, clearly state that Sidney Walton Square and the Tennis & Swim Club were supposed to remain in their current uses in perpetuity as part of the original entitlement agreement.



Original Redevelopment plan, showing the Golden Gateway's community recreation center





Later waterfront projects include **Levi's Plaza**, with a park designed by Lawrence Halprin, which created a peaceful oasis away from the congestion of the freeway and railroad.

On **October 17, 1989**, the Loma Prieta earthquake struck San Francisco. The effects of the earthquake were devastating, from severe damage to injuries and deaths. The Embarcadero Freeway was greatly damaged, and after much dispute, the freeway was finally demolished in 1991 under the leadership of Mayor Art Agnos. The demolition of the Embarcadero Freeway helped reconnect the city to its waterfront, bringing the Ferry Building and bulkhead piers to new prominence.

Over the past thirty years, the number of historic "finger" piers was further reduced as some were demolished or redeveloped to make way for a recreational retail center at Pier 39, the Pier 7 public access pier, and a marina in South Beach. The northern waterfront today contains a mix of maritime support, passenger cruise, fishing, ferry and excursion, office, and retail uses. Most cargo operations that remain moved south to modern cargo terminals at Piers 80 and 90-96. Pier uses today include the City's cruise ship terminal at Pier 35 and industrial cargo warehouse and cargo support operations on Piers 15-23. A mix of commercial and maritime uses, offices, restaurants, and public access exists on other piers and within the bulkhead buildings. Across The Embarcadero, the Port's seawall lots are used primarily for commercial uses and parking.

In 1990 the **Waterfront Land Use** plan was created by citizen initiative, and was adopted by the Port Commission in 1997. It reserves the Public Trust lands to maritime operations, and

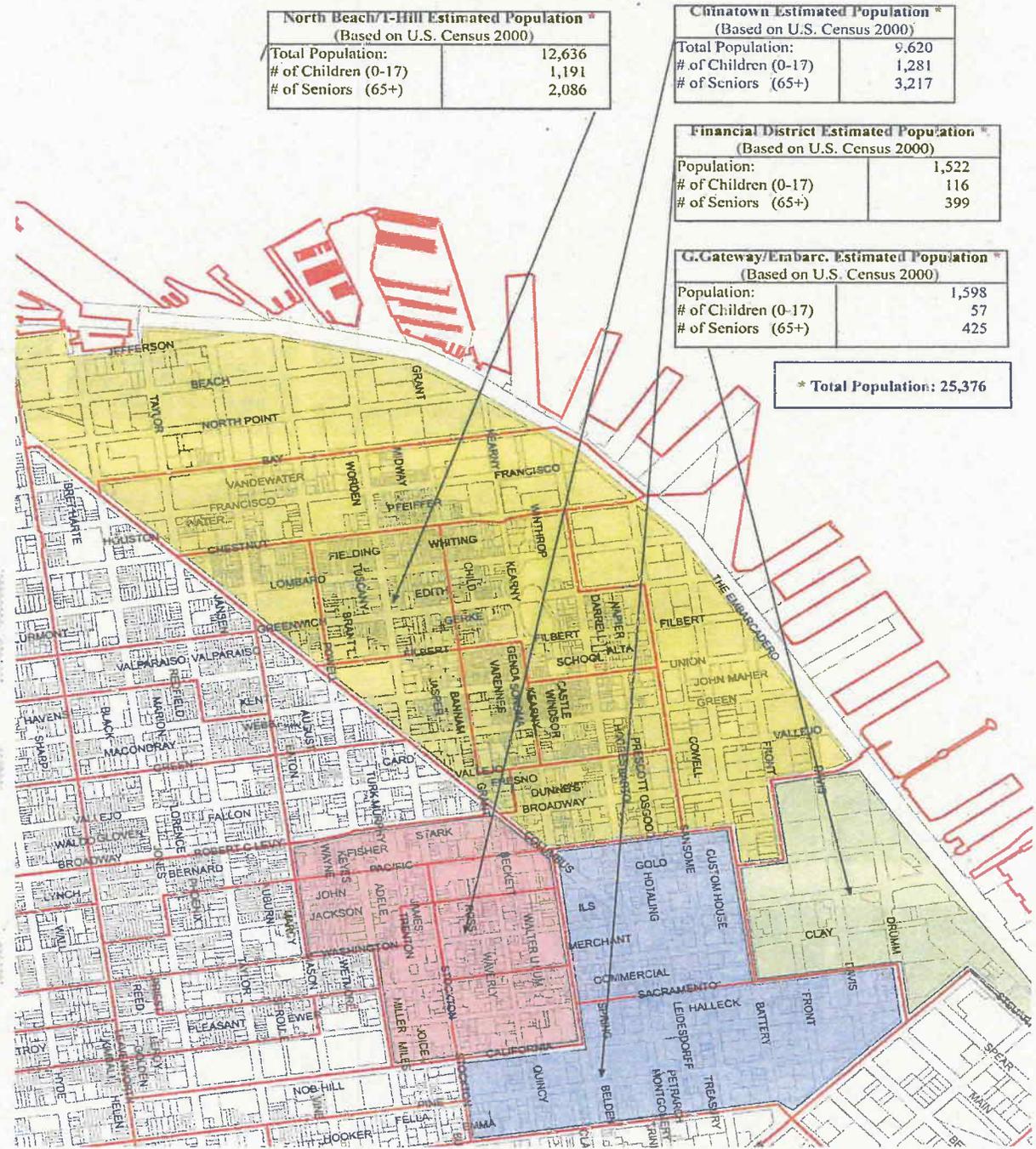
encourages the creation of new public access, recreation and open space along the Bay.



## The Neighborhoods

The Northeast Waterfront is characterized by a passionate and active community composed of many neighborhood and community groups. The neighborhoods closest to the Northeast waterfront include the area around the Golden Gateway Apartments, Jackson Square, Telegraph Hill, the Barbary Coast, and on into North Beach and Chinatown, then Russian Hill and Nob Hill. Each neighborhood enjoys a distinct identity.

However, we recognize that the Waterfront is a lot of different things to different people. While this community vision emphasizes its role in connecting San Francisco's neighborhoods to the Bay, it is also a regional destination which draws residents from all over the City and brings a range of visitors and locals. This plan is partly about finding a balance between these roles.





Broadway



Jackson Street



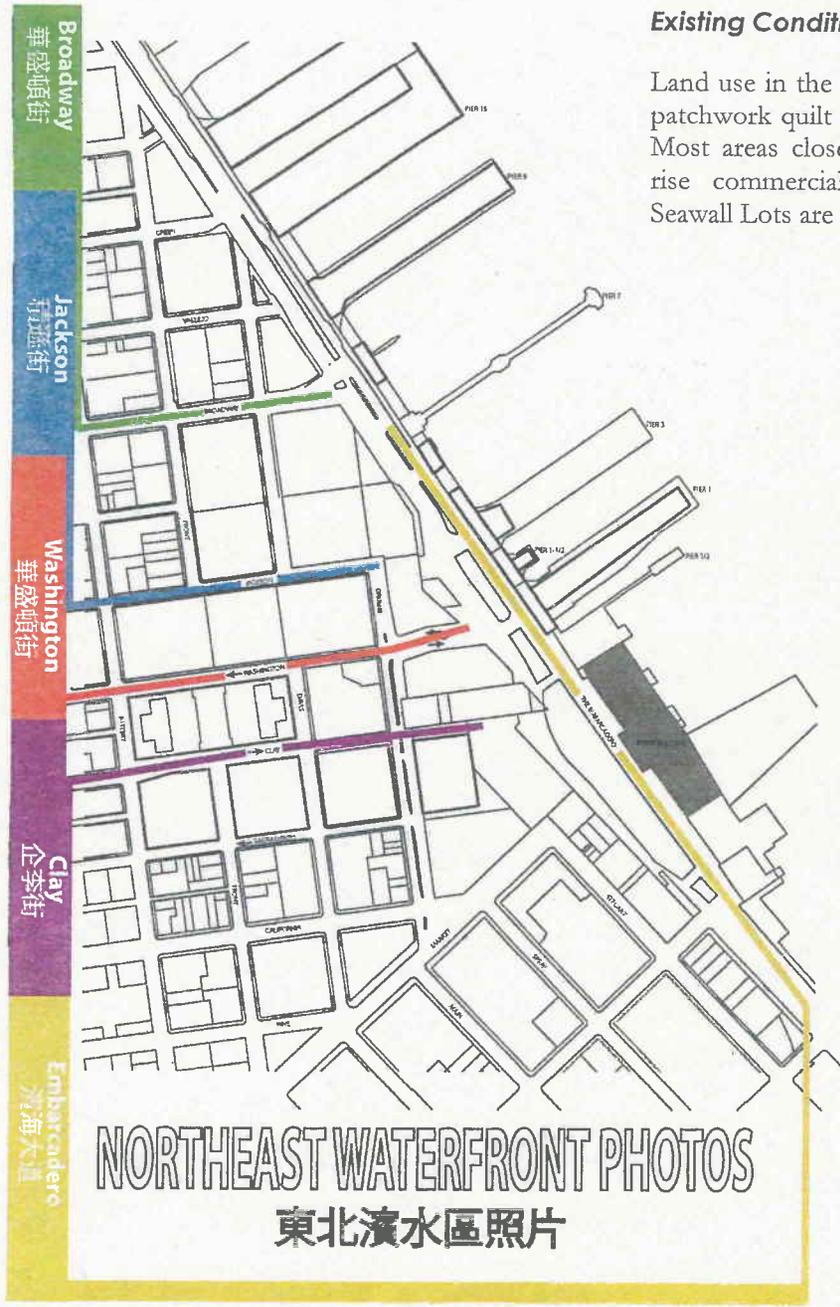
Washington Street



Clay Street



The Embarcadero

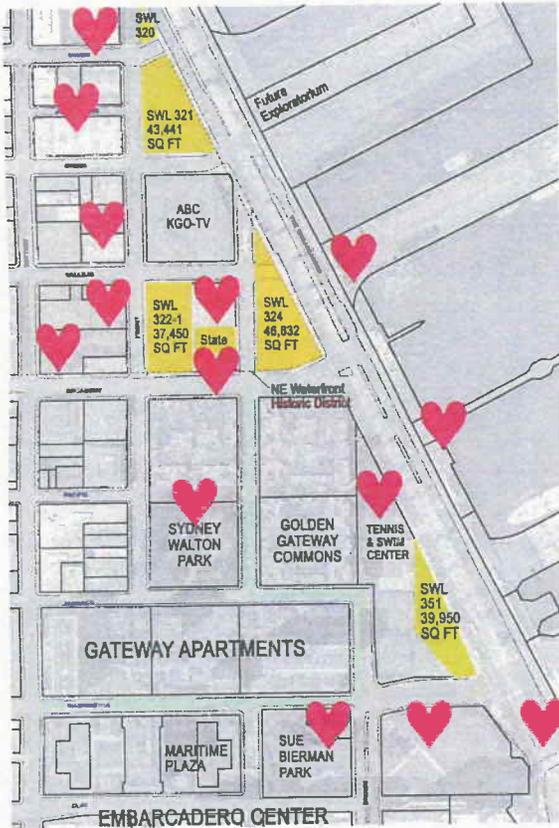


**Existing Conditions**

Land use in the Northeast Waterfront area is a patchwork quilt marking its various evolutions. Most areas closest to the waterfront are low-rise commercial buildings, under 40'. The Seawall Lots are generally surface parking lots.



# THE COMMUNITY'S WATERFRONT VISION



Community Sacred Places map

## Sense of Place: People and Sacred Places

We began the workshop discussion by asking participants to identify places within the Northeast Waterfront area that they considered sacred and that should be preserved and strengthened. Participants placed red hearts on a map of the area, highlighting the critical locations that gave it a real “sense of place,” centered on people uses. Among the places identified were:

1. The parks, including Sue Bierman Park, Sidney Walton Square, Levi’s Plaza gardens, especially public access to the parks.
2. The Gateway’s community recreation center, including its tennis courts and swimming pools, as part of the active recreation uses of the waterfront.
3. The historic waterfront, including Ferry Building, the bulkheads and piers.
4. Public access to the water down the piers, the fishing pier, etc.
5. The views: views of the Bay along the waterfront, views back to Coit Tower.
6. The Historic Districts and neighborhoods.
7. The waterfront is part of the neighborhoods, a place for exercise, walking, bringing visitors, running, fresh air, walking with kids.

## Guiding Principles

Participants in the first workshop were also asked to think about general goals and principles that should guide development of the waterfront. One group summarized these goals as follows: “Waterfront planning & development goals should create a harmonious city; not just plan and develop for a few; we should plan for a socio-economic and ethnically diverse waterfront.” The Northeast Waterfront area, over its various neighborhoods, is a very inclusive and diverse area. Residents embrace a diversity of cultural identities, from its historic connections to San Francisco’s beginnings as a city, to its connections to the adjacent Chinatown neighborhood.

Consistent with the Port’s Design & Access Element, these recommendations are based on a process of identifying waterfront resources and evaluating policies and future actions based on how they:

- **Preserve** the existing resource;
- **Enhance** the resource where appropriate; and
- **Create** new resources where needed... (p. 18)

The **four guiding principles** represent the summation of our first workshop discussion. The principles provide a set of community values to guide planning and development, which can be used to assess each decision along the way and to measure success. The community must be committed to a sustained effort in promoting these values as development and investment

decisions are contemplated by City agencies and private developers.

1. **Begin with people and neighborhoods.** The waterfront is not just a destination, but also part of the neighborhood fabric of Golden Gateway, Chinatown, North Beach, and Telegraph Hill. Strengthen neighborhood connections, including the cultural and ethnic relationship between Chinatown and the waterfront.
2. **Plan for a harmonious city, a socio-economic and ethnically diverse waterfront.** Development should be accessible to all, not just develop for a few. Affordable housing should be a priority, for both families and seniors.
3. **Enhance and preserve the community's recreation opportunities,** especially recreation, education, and cultural performance needs for Chinatown and North Beach youth, and preserve the Gateway's recreation center as a community resource.
4. **Plan for the future of the NE Waterfront as a whole.** By looking at all of the Seawall Lots, we can create a politically and economically feasible plan that balances public uses and revenue-generating development.

## **A Comprehensive Vision for Development**

The vision of Northeast Waterfront in the future is an area that reflects these principles.

*The Northeast Waterfront is characterized by a necklace of intimate green spaces, between a low-rise mix of commercial, residential, cultural, and recreational uses that honor the Waterfront's history and topography, connected back to the City's neighborhoods through strong pedestrian streets.*

Drawing from the values stated above, participants identified a range of activities, land uses, and public and private improvements, far beyond the limited "urban design" goals explored by the Planning Department process, and also identified a number of issues that called for collaboration of different agencies (Planning, Port, Muni, DPT, DPW, Rec & Park) to create a comprehensive plan for the future of the Waterfront.

Along the Embarcadero, community members thought it important to acknowledge that while The Embarcadero should be planned as an integrated whole, it has two different sides, one facing the Bay and one facing the City's neighborhoods. The Port's Design and Access Element refers to the fact that The Embarcadero has two sides: a Bay side, and a *neighborhood* side:

- *Neighborhood Character: On the land side of The Embarcadero, the character of new development will reflect and enhance the developed character of the adjacent City neighborhoods.*
- *Waterfront Character: On the water side of The Embarcadero..., the character of new development will reflect its unique location at or over the water. (p. 59)*

**The Bay side is more about tourism and recreation:** creating a Walk of Fame to remind folks of local stars and heroes, bringing exercise stations to the sidewalks, creating safe bike lanes to get bicycles off the sidewalk. **The City side** is part of neighborhoods: preserving the existing resources, widening the sidewalks on inner side, make more pleasant along the Gateway recreation center fence, eliminate or "green" the existing parking lots, and bringing development uses that are accessible to a range of users and which respect the existing Public Trust restrictions and neighborhood character.

**Along Washington Street,** community members developed a design to change parking orientation to expand sidewalk along the north (sunny) side, to create stores on corners, especially on the north side at the Gateway and Drumm, to narrow the street where Washington meets Embarcadero, and to bring temporary vendors along Washington. On **Jackson Street,** community members wanted to reinvest in existing small retail spaces. On **Broadway,** community members developed ideas to create mural opportunities along the street, to install benches, trash cans, etc.

**Transit was a key issue for residents (and visitors),** particularly for seniors from Chinatown and North Beach. They asked to bring back the Number 10 and Number 12 bus or other bus link to the waterfront; bus could go down Broadway and turn around at Embarcadero, to increase number of F-line cars, very crowded with tourists, and suggested shuttle buses are a possibility – change shuttle route to go from Alcoa garage down Washington to The Embarcadero, loop back along Broadway to Stockton in Chinatown (and planned transit infrastructure).

**Parking** was a major issue of discussion, especially because it seemed that the desire for multi-story underground (underwater) parking garages was a key driver of development proposals. We found **an excess of parking capacity in adjacent garages**, and suggested providing wayfinding signage to available parking, and creating web-based real-time parking capacity, with public electronic signage on major streets to direct drivers to available spaces (similar to signage at Fifth & Mission Garage); see City of Santa Monica and San Antonio for examples.

The community was united in the importance of keeping **Sue Bierman Park** public, not wanting to see further privatization of public space (e.g., the “Peter Pan” tent). On the Bay side of the park, suggestions included removing the existing berms to improve visibility; bringing back active uses, like soccer, Frisbee, etc. On the City side of the park, people wanted to see the tranquil refuge for the Telegraph Hill parrots preserved, but also suggested that the park needed a children’s play structure, exercise structures (pull up bars, etc.); and other passive recreation; removal of the pedestrian bridge to the Alcoa Bldg. which would open up public space and improve visibility and safety; in the long term, take out SFPUC pumping station structure and park staging grounds (these uses could be moved to Alcoa building garage). At **Justin Herman Plaza**, removing stepped berms and improving the path behind Villaincourt Fountain, were key factors to increasing visibility and connections between Ferry Building and Embarcadero parking.

Preservation of the **Gateway recreation center** as a community resource was a major topic of discussion. Participants suggested creating more

transparency, such as glass or bamboo enclosures, creating a view at the end of Jackson Street, and improving walkability by creating new green pathways along Drumm Street and Washington to the Embarcadero. As a long-term solution, community members suggested that the City should facilitate the transfer of this property into private or nonprofit ownership, tied to commitments to providing more affordable access to the public as well as residents of Golden Gateway, making the facility more aesthetically pleasing and incorporating deed restrictions to limit future use to recreation.

Finally, we asked participants to discuss more deeply options for new land uses at the Port-owned **Seawall lots**, most of which are currently used for parking. Participants identified as priorities for uses at the Seawall parking lots:

a.) **open space and recreation opportunities**, including a state-of-the-art bike center, such as at Chicago’s Millennium Park; b.) a limited number of **hotels**, particularly small boutique hotels that accommodate 100 rooms each; c.) **cultural and performance uses**, addressing the City’s identified need for more theaters and performance space<sup>1</sup>; d.) **youth center**, with multi-service, performance spaces to attract youth from the neighborhoods to the waterfront; e.) **affordable housing** on the state owned lot or sites nearby and connected back to resources in North Beach and Chinatown; and f.) **small neighborhood parks** on all of the small triangular Seawall lots and “paper streets”.

<sup>1</sup> A recent survey by Theater Bay Area of over 100 local performing arts groups indicates there is significant unmet demand downtown for performing arts and rehearsal space.

At **Washington and Embarcadero (Seawall Lot 351<sup>2</sup>)**, participants kept returning to the idea of recreation, bicycle, transit and youth-oriented activities that would complement the existing Gateway recreation center, and create synergies with the proximity to the nearby Ferry Building and ferry terminal. One option was a waterfront bike and transit center, with active uses at the corner with Washington, such as a restaurant or café. Above that, some people thought a small car-free hotel might be a good complement to bike center, but community members were emphatic that nothing should be constructed on this Seawall Lot that would obscure views from the Ferry Building of Telegraph Hill’s topography (see massing study on page 40). The hotel idea later proved to be financially infeasible.

At **Broadway and Embarcadero (Seawall Lot 324)**, community members suggested an arts and performance center, possibly with a restaurant or café at ground level, that would attract City residents as well as visitors to the Waterfront, benefit the prominent location, and be compatible with the Public Trust doctrine. Community members emphasized that any building(s) on this site must respect the 40’ height limit and, due to its location within the Northeast Waterfront Historic District, must be divided at midblock to reflect the scale and bulk of the historic buildings in the District while creating visual and pedestrian connections between the City and its Waterfront. In conjunction with the arts center, a hotel with limited parking was mentioned as a possibility, as long as 40’ height limit is respected. Community members proposed that the small triangular Seawall Lot (Seawall Lot 323) located just north of

<sup>2</sup> See page 5 for map with Seawall Lot numbers.

Seawall Lot 324 be developed as open space/recreational use as a part of a larger network of public open spaces and green spaces along The Embarcadero.

At the **upper Broadway Lot** located at Front Street (**Seawall Lot 322-1**), community members felt that this site was best suited for hotel use given its 65' height limit. Others saw a natural synergy with the adjacent Broadway Family Apartments, initially suggesting affordable family or workforce housing on the site, thinking that this may be the one Seawall Lot where the Public Trust restrictions might be lifted to allow for a clear community benefit use. However, given concerns that promoting any legislation to create exceptions to the Public Trust would openly promote developers' desires for further exceptions, our feasibility analysis (and final recommendations) focus only on a hotel use at this Seawall Lot, especially since the existing 65' height seemed appropriate.

Chinatown residents, in particular, wanted to see a youth center on one of the seawall lots; one offering ping pong, music, dance, computer/media classes, gym, basketball courts (in and outdoor); the youth center could also be linked to other youth opportunities on the Bay (rowing, sailing, etc.). Based on financial and Public Trust considerations, the State-owned lot adjacent to Seawall Lot 322-1 (not subject to Public Trust restrictions), appears best suited for a large youth center targeted to underserved Chinatown and North Beach youth. To make it work, bus service back to Chinatown /North Beach would be key.

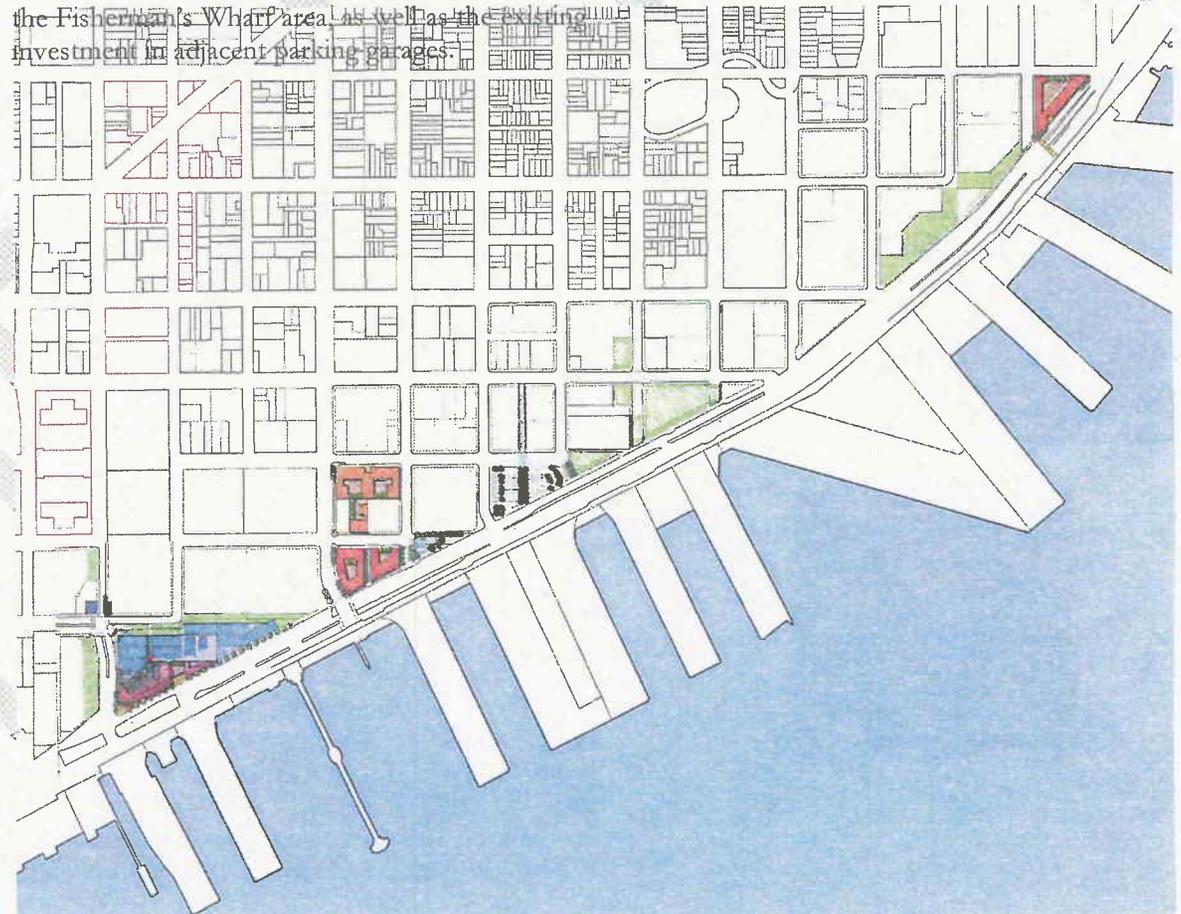
At **Embarcadero and Green (Seawall Lot 321)** currently a parking lot, community members noted the 16 year lease to the Exploratorium, but

proposed a permeable parking lot, green edge along Embarcadero, preserving views to historic buildings, and creating pedestrian access to extend the historic Commercial/John Maher way. Some people wanted to see the Port commit to retaining this lot as permanent open space upon termination of the parking lot lease.

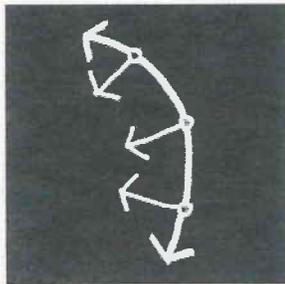
Finally, at **Embarcadero and Bay Street (Seawall Lot 314)** the northernmost Seawall Lot, community members thought the site would be an ideal location for a small boutique hotel, with the immediate access to the tourist infrastructure of the Fisherman's Wharf area, as well as the existing investment in adjacent parking garages.

*"San Francisco itself is art, above all literary art. Every block is a short story, every hill a novel. Every home a poem, every dweller within immortal. That is the whole truth."*

*~ William Saroyan*



## NEIGHBORHOOD/WATERFRONT CONNECTIONS: THE STREETS AND SIDEWALKS



### Pedestrian Connections and Wayfinding

Neighborhood connections was a central theme of all three community workshops. “Reuniting the city with its waterfront” is a consistent theme throughout the Port’s Design and Access Element:

*One of the greatest public concerns about the Port’s future is how the waterfront will interface with the City both visually and functionally. Thus the overarching vision of the Waterfront Plan is “the City reunited with its waterfront.” (Page 5)*

The waterfront as an integral part of the city’s northeast neighborhoods. Our vision is to preserve and enhance a waterfront that is for everyone, which not only meets the needs of the diverse populations fronting the waterfront, but also attracts tourists, commuters and visitors from Chinatown and North Beach. A livable Northeast Waterfront area allows community members to walk comfortably and safely at all times of the day. **The Embarcadero** has numerous pedestrian conflicts, including street widths, insufficient cross times, poor signage, and bicycles on the Bay side sidewalk.

The Northeast Waterfront’s public realm should celebrate the Waterfront’s rich historic and cultural character. **Streetscape and wayfinding improvements** should strengthen the sense of place, by emphasizing the major east-west streets that link the neighborhoods to the Bay, especially **Washington** and **Broadway**, through sidewalk

widening, lighting, landscaping, vendor kiosks, weekend and night markets, and outdoor seating opportunities.

Looking at **Washington Street**, **Clay Street**, and **Jackson Street**, it is clear that portions of these streets are not very pedestrian friendly, faced with blank parking garage and podium walls. The following recommendations look at ways for improving these streets, which involve not only “public realm improvements,” but also comprehensive economic development and façade improvements, such as encouraging small business economic development along **Jackson Street** (see the chapter on Economic Development).

**Washington Street** and **Broadway** should be prioritized for streetscape improvements, with interpretive signage and wayfinding, transit shelters, bike parking, public art, street trees, trash cans, pedestrian lighting, and public seating on streets connecting to the Waterfront.

Developments and improvements should create active, attractive and safe sidewalks and crosswalks, and other amenities that will benefit the pedestrian environment. Encourage socially-engaging sidewalk design adjacent to active uses, including flexible outdoor seating, landscaping, and display of goods, and strategically place bulb outs and widened sidewalks to create new plazas, outdoor dining areas, and small public gathering spaces. Use creative, low-maintenance pavement materials in the crosswalks.

**Recommendation 1: Improve neighborhood and pedestrian connections between the waterfront and the adjacent communities of Golden Gateway, Chinatown, North Beach, Telegraph Hill, Russian Hill, Polk Street and Nob Hill.**

**1.1: Clay Street, remove berms and visual barriers and create pedestrian path at Justin Herman and Sue Bierman Park.**

**Reduce Clay Street in width between Battery and Drumm streets.** Clay Street is excessively wide between Battery and Drumm Streets, another legacy of its former role as a freeway feeder. Reducing the street in size would calm traffic, allow for wider sidewalks and sidewalk plantings, and foster activation of the north edge of Embarcadero Center and the southern edge of Maritime Plaza, currently rather dead and uninviting.

**Establish a strong Clay Street pedestrian promenade between Drumm Street and the Ferry Building:** A stronger Clay Street pedestrian promenade leading to the Ferry Building would improve safety and amenity for walkers, and link the Ferry Building to the underground parking in Embarcadero Four, which is physically closer to the Ferry Building than Seawall lot 351 parking.

**Eliminate the u-turn pocket at Clay and Embarcadero and strengthen the Clay Street crossing.** The U-turn pocket at Clay and Embarcadero is seldom used, but makes the pedestrian crossing from the end of Clay Street to the Ferry Building less safe and amenable. The pocket should be eliminated, and the Clay Street crossing and the walkway to Clay and Drumm streets straightened, widened, and better lit.

**Remove or improve the back wall of the Vaillancourt Fountain.** The Vaillancourt Fountain was built with an overhead freeway and its ramps as a backdrop, and has a pronounced back and front. Now that the Freeway is gone, the back of the fountain blocks views of it from the Embarcadero and Clay street pathway, and make both the Clay Street and Embarcadero pedestrian paths feel less safe. Removing the fountain's back wall would allow the fountain to be viewed from all sides, and make the Clay Street pathway in particular feel safer and more inviting. This will not be easy given that Vaillancourt Fountain (like the fountain at UN Plaza) is considered a work of art. But efforts should be made to improve this pedestrian/view corridor.

**Remove the pedestrian bridge over Davis Street.** The pedestrian bridge from Maritime Plaza to Sue Bierman park across Davis Street blocks views from the Park onto Davis Street, and makes Davis Street unsafe for pedestrians. Removing the bridge and redesigning the park would improve the safety and image of the entire area.

**1.2: Narrow Washington Street at The Embarcadero; change parking orientation, expand sidewalk on sunny side.**

**Remove travel lanes on Washington Street.** Make Washington Street two-way between Battery and Embarcadero. One-way Washington Street is a legacy of the Embarcadero Freeway, when Washington and Clay served as freeway-feeding traffic sewers. Washington is now a neighborhood-serving street connecting the Embarcadero to Chinatown. Making Washington two-way would calm traffic, improve neighborhood circulation, and allow cyclists to use

it in both directions between the Embarcadero, Columbus Avenue, and Chinatown.

**Reduce Washington to two lanes between Drumm and Embarcadero.** Washington Street could be reduced from four lanes to two between Drumm and Embarcadero, which would calm traffic, shorten crossing distances, allow for wider sidewalks and bicycle lanes, and enlarge the open space to the south and/or the developable parcels to the north.

**Establish bicycle lanes along Washington in both directions.** Washington Street, if made two-way, would be an excellent bicycle connection between the Embarcadero, Columbus Avenue, North Beach and Chinatown for residents, commuters, and visitors.



*Encourage sidewalk seating and activities at corner locations.*



*Extend Broadway street improvements and public art to the Embarcadero.*

**1.4:** Along the Gateway recreation center, extend pedestrian corridor on Drumm, create a termination for Jackson with more transparency into the recreation center.

Reduce Drumm Street from four lanes to one lane in each direction with a left turn lane, and add bicycle lanes. Drumm Street is much wider than it needs to be, and a road diet could provide room for bicycle lanes, wider sidewalks, sections of wider planted median, or all three. PUC is planning to replace the sewer on this street, which provides an excellent opportunity to reduce the oversized roadway.

**1.6:** On Broadway, extend Broadway Streetscape Plan to Embarcadero. Broadway is currently neither pedestrian nor resident friendly. Narrowing the street at intersections, adding more landscaping, art work and murals, and improving transit connections to the waterfront would all help. One idea that was mentioned, but not explored in detail, involved running a motorized cable car shuttle back and forth from Columbus or Montgomery to The Embarcadero.

**1.7:** Develop signage and exhibits about TV and Radio History

Better signage and wayfinding can highlight the area's historical and cultural sites and resources. Mark the waterfront's street with historical and environmental markers, and neighborhood Orientation Signs. Integrate Interpretive Signs with Public Art. Design and install pavement materials, art and wayfinding signage that express the historical characteristics of the area. Create more murals by local artists on blank walls (but not historic building facades). Consider themes such as area's maritime history,

it's pivotal role in radio and television development, it's Italian immigrant produce markets, and its connection to immigration from China and other parts of Asia. Explore strategies for increasing commercial uses on sidewalks, including street vendors and performers. Work with the Department of Public Works to explore organizing and issuing permits and schedules for public performance spaces. Incorporate a strong sense of artful, expressive and multifaceted historical design elements with gateway features, art and landscaping. Explore rotating art pieces in public spaces to provide a more dynamic display of art as well as to allow opportunities for artists in the area to show their work.

Neighborhood connections are also enhanced through references to history and place. The Port's Waterfront Land Use Plan envisions "an evolving waterfront, mindful of its past and future," which will "continue to serve as a repository for memories of past events, while also providing a stage for new experiences." (page 51)

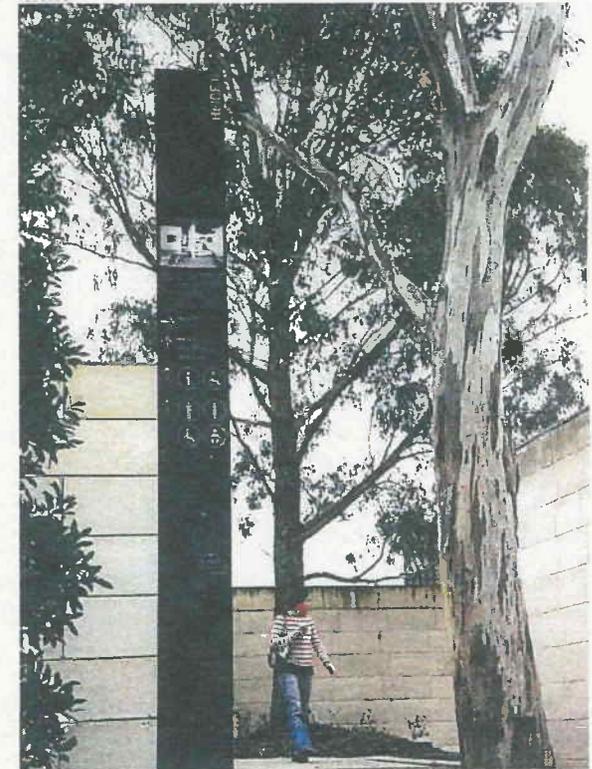
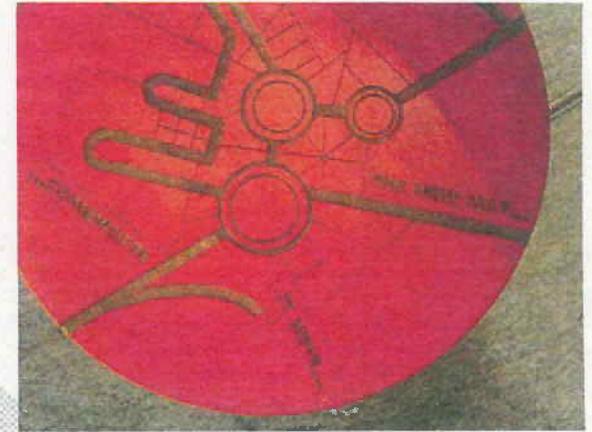
Working maritime activities and the rich history of the waterfront are interesting stories just waiting to be told. Interpretive programs, signage, informational displays, and public art should be developed throughout the adjacent waterfront neighborhoods, appealing to a broad range of ages, interests, and ability to understand interpretive information.

### **An Embarcadero for Everyone**

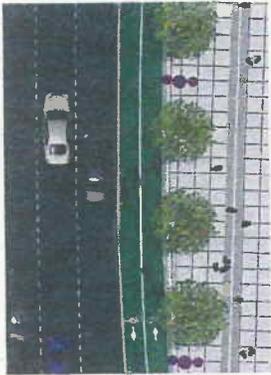
While the demolition of the Embarcadero Freeway and subsequent urban design investments have created visual and aesthetic connections between the City and the Bay, the Embarcadero, as the remnant of the Embarcadero Freeway, still carries an enormous amount of traffic. The Embarcadero's width and distance between crosswalks creates a significant barrier between the neighborhoods and the Bay, making it a hazard to cross. Pedestrians have a little sense of refuge or protection in crossing the street. Along the Embarcadero, we looked at several important nodes – at Washington, at Broadway, at the Fishing Pier and at the new Exploratorium – and how we could take advantage of these potential activity locations.

**Public improvements need to acknowledge that the Embarcadero has two different sides, one facing the Bay and one facing the City, while emphasizing the need to coordinate improvements along both sides to create a fully integrated plan.** The Bay side is more about tourism & recreation: create a Walk of Fame to remind folks of local stars and heroes, bring exercise stations on the Bay side, create safe bike lanes to get bicycles off the sidewalk, bring more greenery along waterfront side.

**The City side is part of the neighborhood:** widen sidewalks on inner side, make more pleasant along the Gateway recreation center fence, eliminate or "green" the existing parking lots, bring in new development uses where appropriate that are accessible to a range of users.

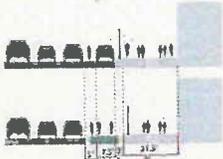


*Examples of wayfinding and interpretive signage*



Condition 3 occurs primarily in the stretch of the Embarcadero between the Ferry Building and Broadway, one of the busiest in urban San Francisco. The Embarcadero is a narrow, one-way street with a high concentration of cars, bicycles, and pedestrians alike. With a constant flow of cars stopping and starting in front of the Ferry Building, this area is particularly problematic for cyclists.

Like condition 1, most of the width of the 15-foot path comes from the 8 feet of existing bike lane and 7.5 feet of parking lane. Especially in the area, making the path the full 15 feet width is critical with the large number of commuters, recreational cyclists, and tourists who frequent the area. It is crucial that they have enough room to pass one another as well as to ride safely and. Shown at right, in front of the Ferry Building, the full 15-foot width can be achieved due to the wide existing curb area and the setback of the right-of-way.



Embarcadero redesign proposal from SPUR's "Embarcadero" Plan (above), and art and signage from the Hong Kong waterfront that inspired many Chinatown participants (below)

**Recommendation 2: Create improvements along the City side of the Waterfront that move it toward a truly pedestrian and bike-friendly Embarcadero Promenade.**

**2.1: On City side of Embarcadero, create wider sidewalks and more transparency along the Gateway community recreation center.**

Improve crossings of the Embarcadero by adding corner bulb-outs on land side streets. In order to shorten pedestrian crossing distances and improve pedestrian safety and visibility, corner bulb-outs should be built along the land side of The Embarcadero to extend sidewalks out to the east edge of the bicycle lane.

**2.2 Create directional signage for parking and destinations.**

Use signage to improve efficiency and availability of existing parking facilities.

**2.3: On both sides of the Embarcadero, create exercise stations along waterfront.**

**2.4: Incorporate recommendations of SPUR's "Embike-adero" Plan, to make street safer for bikes, get bikes off sidewalk, and create more bicycle facilities along the Embarcadero.**

Create a bi-directional bicycle path on the water-side of the Embarcadero: Widen Herb Caen Way into the current parking zone and bicycle lane on the east side of the Embarcadero, creating a bi-directional bicycle path along the esplanade which is separated from traffic.

**2.5: Long-term, plan for reduction of Embarcadero car lanes and curb cuts as new transit infrastructure comes online, and potential sea-level rise infrastructure is incorporated.**

Provide bulb outs and extended public spaces within the public right-of-way, particularly on major connecting street off of the Embarcadero. Reduce the length of pedestrian crossings via bulb outs and pedestrian refuges. Prioritize Pedestrian Safety and Accessibility at Key Intersections. Integrate what the Port is doing on the Bay side with the City side.

In describing the above recommendations, the terms "City side", Bay side" and "both sides" of The Embarcadero are used to help the reader locate proposed actions. To be successful, however, the proposed changes on either side of The Embarcadero must be carefully coordinated and integrated to create a smooth, graceful transition from one side to the other.

## SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE: OPEN SPACE AND ACTIVE RECREATION

### Network of Open Spaces

The Bay side of the Embarcadero Promenade serves as an important public open space for visitors. While local residents use the Bay walk as a place to walk and exercise, it is clearly a civic space intended for visitors from near and far.

Drawing from the existing pattern of development punctuated with green spaces, from Sue Bierman Park to Levi's Plaza, **a top priority for the community is to have more public open spaces that are safe, lively and accessible for all.** The community envisions a stronger network of public spaces, including new parks along the Embarcadero's undevelopable small triangular Seawall Lots that provide much needed play spaces for children and opportunities for gathering.

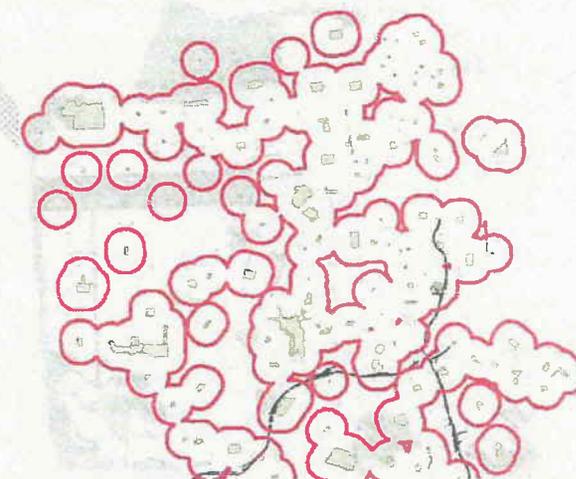
**Public open spaces and green spaces in the Northeast Waterfront area should be programmed and well-maintained.** A network of open spaces offers important gathering areas for large or special events that bolster community identity. Design and Construct a series of small parks and playgrounds on the minor Seawall Lots to complement the existing necklace of open spaces (Sue Bierman Park, Gateway recreation center, Levi's Plaza)

**Explore the improvement of public spaces to create sufficient visual surveillance necessary to maintain a safe environment.** Public space improvements should incorporate structures for active uses, such as a cafés, newsstands, or temporary vendors, and provide “eyes on the street” to help ensure the vibrancy and maintenance of the plaza. Encourage multiple public programs such as farmers' markets, public gatherings, festivals and performances in the area's plazas and open spaces (see also Economic Development Chapter, page 36).

**Sue Bierman Park and the Pump Station building were also areas of particular concern.**

### Playgrounds

0.25 MILE BUFFER



This map from the City's Open Space and Recreation Element clearly shows the lack of playgrounds in the Northeast Waterfront area. Note that the map does not differentiate by age-group playground needs.



Active recreation opportunities for children and seniors.

**Recommendation 3: Create an Open Space Plan for the NE Waterfront that meets local and city needs, and that draws neighborhood residents, downtown workers and visitors to the waterfront.**

**3.1: Meet neighborhood and City need for a multi-age playground on one of the small Seawall lots**

Reserve small seawall lots as either public open spaces, or for uses which enhance the adjacent public open spaces. Small seawall lots, in particular the small triangular lots bounded by Vallejo, Davis, and Embarcadero, and by Union, Front, and Embarcadero, should either be retained as small open spaces, or leased as small restaurants, cafes, or other public uses that will enhance the public use of the surrounding paper street public spaces.

**3.2: Create exercise stations along the both sides of the Embarcadero to meet recreation needs of youth & seniors from adjacent neighborhoods**

**3.3: Prohibit privatization of public parks, including at Sue Bierman Park.**

Community members noted that the legislation that transferred Sue Bierman Park to Rec & Park prohibited structures on the park's surface, including things such as the "Peter Pan" tent. Moreover, the Prop K protection of parks from shadows need to be enforced throughout.

**3.4: Provide space for civic celebration and for active recreation uses at the Bay side of Sue Bierman Park.**

Washington Square Park was cited as a good model of a park that would allow art shows, volley ball, picnics, and outdoor concerts.

**3.5: Remove and relocate pump station at Sue Bierman Park. Provide childrens' and senior uses in park.**

The existing Pump Station structure, once it is vacated, could be made available for community uses such as a senior center, upon further study.

**3.6: Maintain existing "paper streets" as public rights-of-way and open spaces.**

The Port's "Paper Streets" that meet The Embarcadero, including Vallejo, Davis, Green, Front, Union, and Greenwich streets, should be transformed into public open spaces that preserve important view corridors.

## Active Recreation

Community members envision services for people of all ages, household sizes, and income levels. Residents wanted to see the development of waterfront-oriented activities, especially for youth and seniors, which connect the neighboring communities with the recreation potential of the Bay. This also helps with the Public Trust Doctrine, which requires recreation uses to be maritime related and available to the public. For example, take advantage of America's Cup infrastructure, to develop rowing and sailing opportunities that engage multilingual Chinatown, North Beach and Tenderloin communities.

**Recommendation 4: Provide not just passive open space, but opportunities for programmed active recreation that meets neighborhood and City needs.**

### **4.1: Preserve the existing Gateway community recreation center.**

While all participants had a clear goal of preserving the existing Gateway recreation center, they also insisted that its edges, as well as the termination of Jackson Street, could be greatly improved. Removing the incentive to redevelop this site, and looking at how a private or nonprofit management company could instead be incentivized to buy the site and run it as a recreational opportunity in perpetuity, would greatly improve the chances that its aesthetics would also be improved.

### **4.2: Locate youth recreation/education/cultural performance center.**

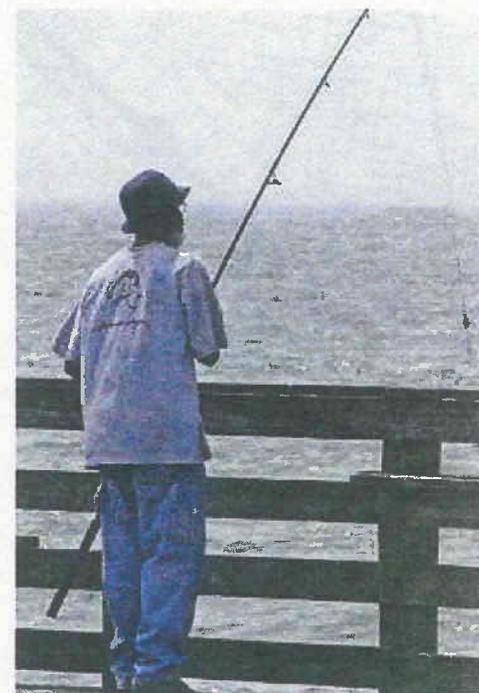
The ground floor of the state owned lot on Broadway is ideal for such a use, connecting city youth, in particular from Chinatown and other low-income communities, to the waterfront. It allows the center to target San Francisco youth without running afoul of Public Trust restrictions. A theater or performing arts center on the SWL-324 ground floor would be Public Trust compliant, as it draws a general audience, but it could also engage local youth in cultural activities.

### **4.3: Develop multilingual waterfront programming.**

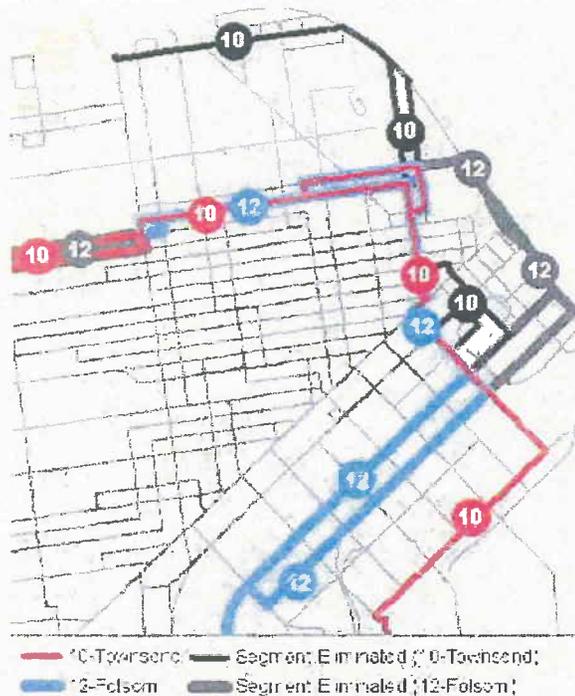
Community members felt it important for the city to proactively connect neighboring communities and the general public with the recreation potential of the Bay, such as rowing and sailing, through multilingual programming to attract residents of all ages and ethnicities to the waterfront.

### **4.4: Promote ground floor uses that relate to the waterfront's water related recreation potential.**

For example, on Lot 351, locate a **Waterfront Bike and Transit Center** (bike storage, showers & lockers, bike repair, café, recreation related retail, etc.) adjacent to the Gateway community recreation center and Ferry Building, encouraging more people to commute to work by bicycle and transit, including ferries.



## GETTING AROUND: TRANSPORTATION AND PARKING



Service cuts to Muni Lines 10 and 12, previously serving the Northeast Waterfront.

**Recommendation 5: Develop and implement a comprehensive Transit Plan for the Northeast Waterfront that connects neighborhoods to the waterfront and visitors to existing parking resources.**

**5.1: Increase transit service serving the Waterfront and its neighborhoods.**

Revisit recent elimination of Muni 10 and 12 lines to Embarcadero in terms of connecting neighborhoods to the Waterfront, and **expand F-Line frequency and hours**, to serve local residents and workers as well as visitors. Note also plans for future water taxis, how transit connects to these.

**5.2: Expand local shuttle service loops to serve the Wharf, Cruise Ship Terminal, Exploratorium, and Ferry Building, to Chinatown, North Beach, and to parking garages.**

Improve shuttle service between parking resources and destinations. Explore opportunities for shared bus stops with private vanpools and shuttles.

**5.4: Provide additional bicycle parking in all sidewalk improvements.**

**5.5: Implement bi-directional bicycle lanes along the Bay side of the Embarcadero. (see Recommendation 2.3)**

### Parking Management

Residents in the community process expressed a concern that the Port’s development proposals were being driven by a desire for increased parking, when, in fact, the area is well served by underutilized parking garages. Explore **parking management strategies** for public parking, such as parking pricing plans and a shared validation program for merchants. Explore the conversion of existing on-street parking space for car-sharing services as well as for use in shuttles/vanpools. The city should work to prioritize visitor parking over long-term commuter parking, by increasing daily and long-term parking rates and thus encouraging garages to free up hourly spaces for shoppers and visitors. Coordinate with SFpark Programs in Northeast Waterfront. A parking management plan may include pricing on-street parking meter rates to meet demand, determining the feasibility of a parking benefit district to capture increased meter revenue.

Acknowledging that some seawall lots were likely to remain surface parking for a time, these should be turned into “**green parking lots.**” Increasing surface permeability through landscaping and permeable materials eases stormwater pressure on the city’s infrastructure while also offering additional opportunities for plants to soften the urban landscape for residents and visitors alike. Use permeable paving on sidewalks and parking lots, and incorporate stormwater retention basins where possible. Use native plantings that are capable of thriving in an urban environment.

**Recommendation 6:** Develop and implement a comprehensive Parking Plan for Downtown and the NE Waterfront areas that meets the needs of commuters and tourist businesses, and takes advantage of existing underutilized parking resources.

6.1: Incorporate existing parking structures into a comprehensive plan for meeting parking demand

6.2: Incorporate electronic real-time information to inform car-users of parking availability and location

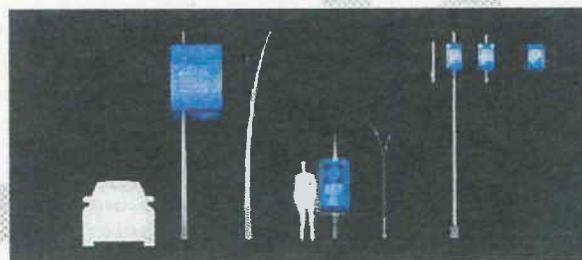
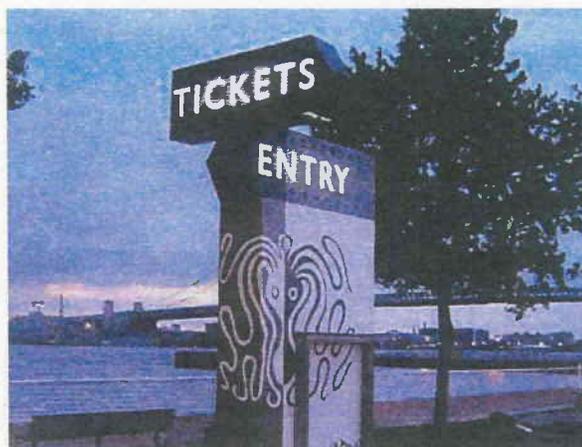
6.3: Incorporate transit and shuttle services to move people from parking structures to destinations

6.4: Develop wayfinding and signage system to connect existing parking to Ferry Building and waterfront

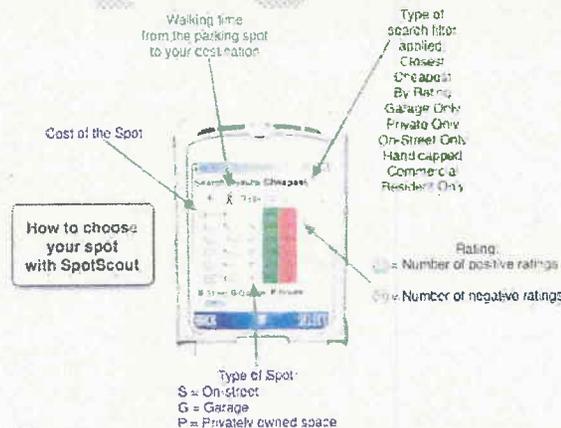
6.5: Improve pedestrian pathways from the Embarcadero Center/Clay Street to the Ferry Building (see Recommendation 1.1)

6.6: At Exploratorium, require permeable landscaped “green” parking lots, opportunities for food vendors, perimeter landscaping and seating, and the visual extension of John Maher Way through the lot using a different paving material. At the Exploratorium parking lot, encourage design and programming tools to make the space more inviting and used by the local community.

6.7: Set requirements for new development to provide CarShare and secure bicycle parking in off-street parking areas.



“Green” parking lots, with permeable paving and water retention strategies.



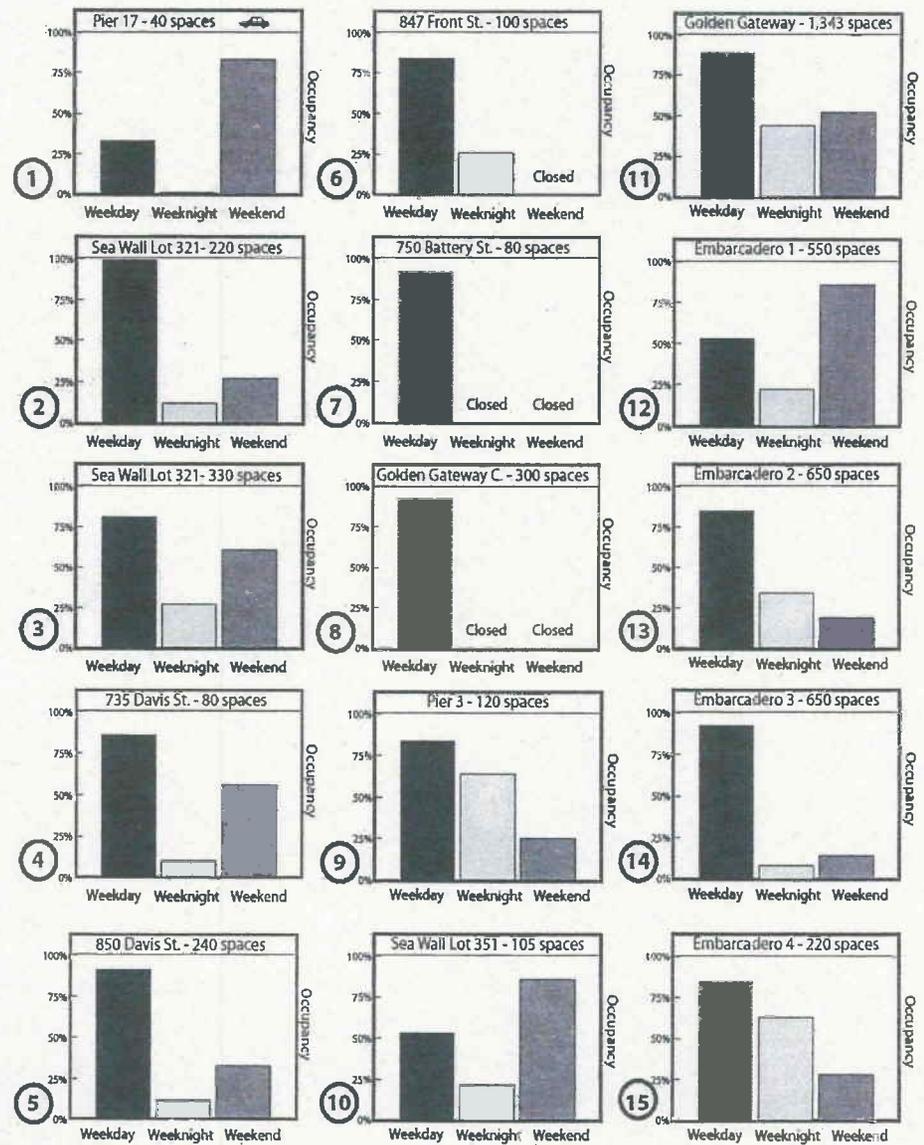
Examples of wayfinding signage (above), and real-time parking information, below.

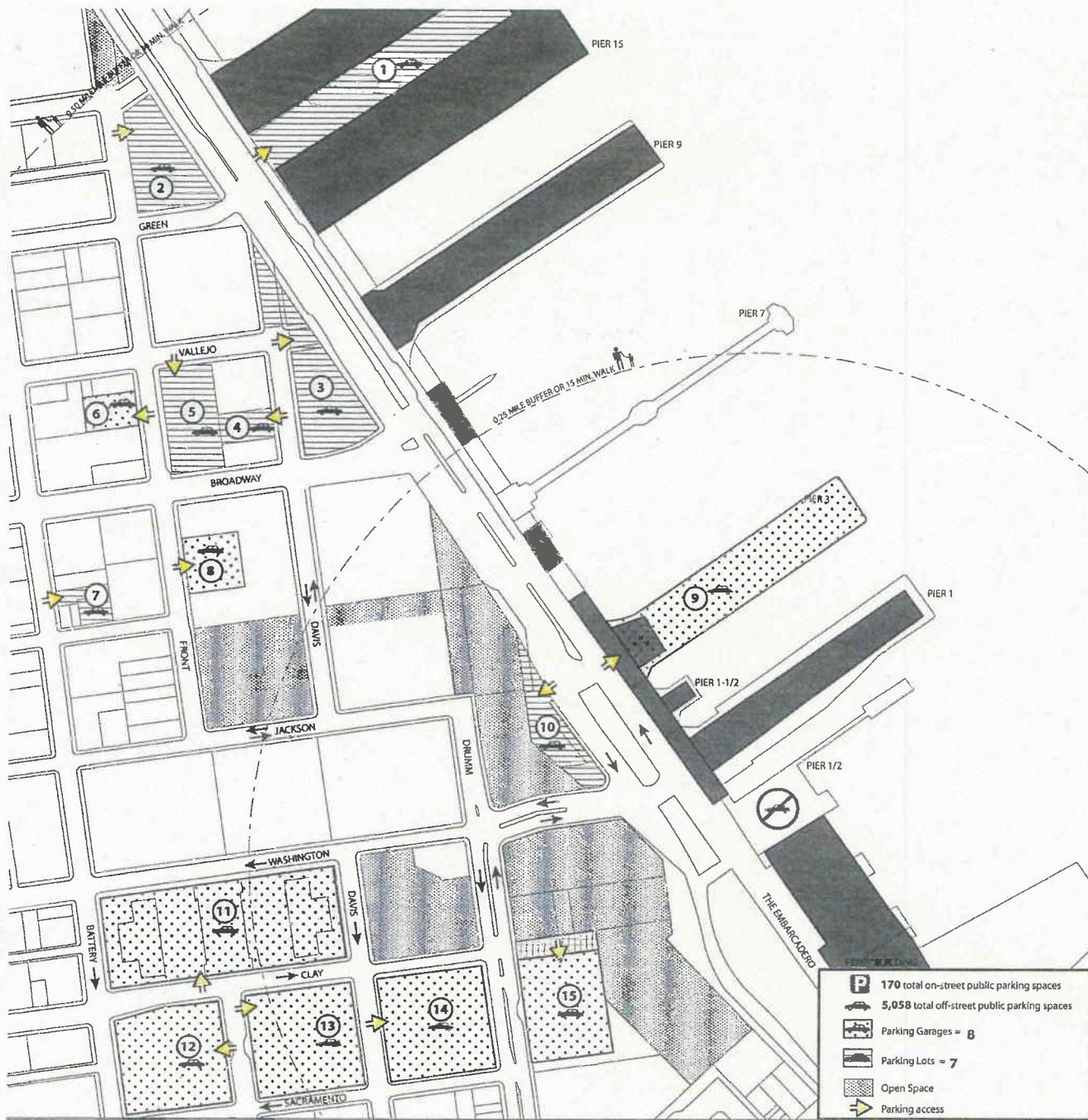
AND reviewed existing parking studies from 2005 & 2006, both done by Wilbur Smith (the former study also with Nelson-Nygaard). Both confirm that there is more than enough space on weekday evenings and weekends at the four Embarcaderos and at Alcoa, though the reports vary about week daytime capacity. While current conditions may have changed due to the economic downturn the 2005/2006 studies may be a good conservative source to gauge the demand that can be expected if/when the economy picks up again. The Embarcadero 4 Parking Garage, for example, is closer to the Ferry Building than any of the Seawall Lots. While the data showed that there was excess parking in the garages, the locations are not very visible from the waterfront (see illustration below).

### Embarcadero parking



Visibility of the closest parking garage from the Ferry Building is blocked by berm.





Numbered parking lots at left refer to corresponding bar graph charts on the previous page that show how much remaining parking capacity there is at each parking lot on Weekdays, Weeknights and Weekends.

- P** 170 total on-street public parking spaces
- 5,058 total off-street public parking spaces
- Parking Garages = 8
- Parking Lots = 7
- Open Space
- Parking access

## STAYING OPEN: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A key piece of the community discussion was an acknowledgement that **intentional economic development policies have to be an integral part of a plan:** just because one talks about “active ground floors” or colors it on a map does not mean it will happen. And active retail was not just about what happens in new buildings, but about economic development and improvements to the existing urban infrastructure.

Residents supported a range of different businesses, and a balance of visitor and local uses, but were concerned about the limited retail opportunities in existing economic climate. A key piece of any plan for development has to be how to **bring in the City’s resources through it’s Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD), to keep businesses thriving.** It is the neighborhood’s small commercial districts that define the cultural, social, and economic lifspring of a community. Economic development support may include analysis of retail demand and “gaps” in neighborhood and regional-serving businesses, absorption rates for new commercial spaces; and review of strategies such as **business attraction programs, tenant improvement loans, rent write-downs, marketing assistance, and visibility consulting.**

**Recommendation 7: Bring economic development/active street uses to existing infrastructure, not just new development.**

**7.1: At NW corner of Washington & Drumm, create opportunities for corner retail** by turning some parking spaces into commercial spaces. Requirements for active street fronting uses, should be extended into the Gateway Apartments and Maritime Plaza, so that active ground-floor uses would be required if the large ground-level garages are substantially renovated or replaced.

**7.2: Create opportunities for temporary vendors,** especially food vendors, along Sue Bierman park and northern (sunny) side of Washington, offering affordable food/drink to downtown workers and families from Chinatown, North Beach and Tenderloin. Recognizing street vendors are an important part of our food culture, City is currently revising street vendor regulations.

**7.3: Along Jackson, from Drumm Street to Columbus, bring OEWD support for struggling retail businesses** and to attract new businesses to vacant storefronts. Make intersection of Jackson and Columbus more pedestrian friendly for families and seniors coming to waterfront from Chinatown and North Beach, and for tourists and visitors from all over California to get from the waterfront up to Chinatown and North Beach (along Columbus Avenue).



*The pedestrian experience along Washington and Clay could be greatly improved by opening the corners of parking garages into small retail.*



*The Chinatown night market is an example a successful street vendor program.*

# LAND USES AND THE WATERFRONT'S CHARACTER

## Respect City Form

Respect City form by stepping new buildings down toward The Embarcadero or other waterfront roadways.



## Embarcadero Scale

Use strong and bold building forms and detailing on new buildings to reinforce the large scale of The Embarcadero.



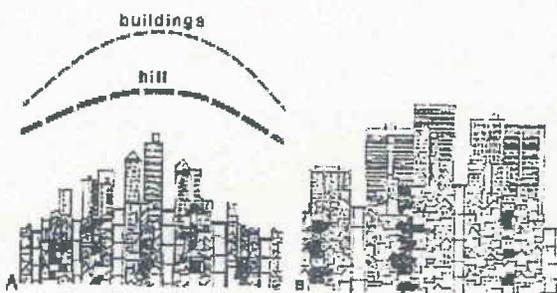
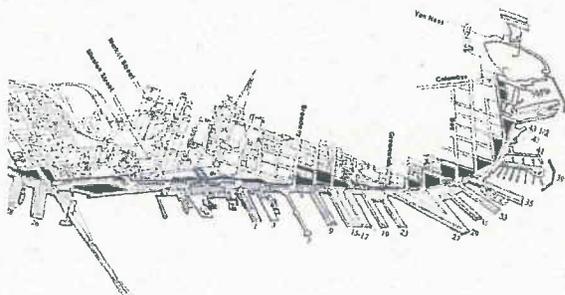
## Neighborhood Scale & Character

New buildings should respect the scale and architectural character of adjacent neighborhoods.



## City Street Views

Maintain City street corridor views shown on the City Street View map in Chapter 3.



Development guidelines from the Port's Waterfront Design & Access Element (above), and the Urban Design Element of the City's General Plan (below).

## Land Use & Development Opportunities

The opportunity sites reviewed here include the Seawall Lots North of Market Street, plus a State-owned former freeway parcel, all currently in use as parking lots. The seawall lots are generally located on the City side of the Embarcadero, which were created when the seawall was built. According to the Port's own Design & Access Element, "Development of the seawall lots must be consistent with the Public Trust, and should be compatible with the...City neighborhoods that begin at the waterfront..." (page 63).

This plan looks at how development could happen more rationally on the publicly-owned Seawall Lots within the context of existing neighborhoods. The controversial proposal for Seawall Lot 351 and the adjacent recreation center is of what brought many participants into this community process. Participants were adamant that they were not against development at Lot 351, but that it should not disrupt the Gateway's recreation center, and that it should respect the Port design guidelines calling for views back to the city from the Ferry Building. Some participants were willing to envision development extending into the southern part of the community recreation center, perhaps with a one story or half-under garage (if that was a key necessity of development) with the three southern tennis courts rebuilt above it, while others argued that we had elsewhere identified adequate existing parking resources, and opposed any underground parking garage on the site.

From the Port's Waterfront Design & Access Element:

Most of the Port's property consists of former tidelands which are held in "public trust" for all the people of California. As trustee of the property since 1969, the Port is required to promote maritime commerce, navigation and fisheries, as well as to protect natural resources and develop recreational facilities for public use. The Waterfront Plan therefore provides for the long-term land use needs of each of the Port's maritime activities - cargo shipping, ship repair, passenger cruises, fishing, ferries and excursions, recreational boating, etc. - by reserving approximately two-thirds of the Port's property for these uses. For properties not needed exclusively for water-dependent activities, the Waterfront Plan identifies other uses which provide public benefits and can thrive in a setting where maritime use, open space and public access also occur. In these locations, the Waterfront Plan strongly encourages new waterside commercial uses which bring day and nighttime activities to the waterfront, such as assembly and entertainment, retail, restaurants and museums. (Page 4)

Thus, uses that directly promote or are related to maritime commerce or fishing are permissible trust uses. **Hotels, restaurants, and waterfront-related recreation and cultural uses are considered to be trust uses**, because they draw large numbers of people to the waterfront. Neither housing nor general office use are considered trust uses, because they are viewed as "privatizing" trust lands with no corresponding trust benefit such as the promotion of maritime commerce or public use and enjoyment of the waterfront. Restrictions have been lifted in the past, primarily where a greater public good or community benefit was evident, for example the affordable housing built by Delancey Street in the South Beach area, but this required specific state legislation.

**Economics has to be a major consideration in developing a sustainable land-use plan** – finding a balance of community benefits for adjacent neighborhoods, tourism attraction, and revenue generation. Appendix A presents our initial feasibility analysis of the overall plan.

**Given the current market, it is likely that housing construction is quite feasible.** Noting the Trust restrictions as well as desire for economic feasibility, the community looked closely at housing proposals and where such would be most appropriate (e.g. adjacent to but not on Port seawall lots). **Retail uses seem moderately feasible**, given both the success of the Ferry Building, and new developments at the Exploratorium and Cruise terminal that will bring shoppers, but also the current downturn that is affecting the Embarcadero Center and the Jackson Street commercial corridor. **New construction of office space may be feasible, but not likely** given the Public Trust restrictions on maritime office uses only. **Smaller boutique**

**hotels seem very feasible for three of the Seawall lots**, noting the new small hotels built in the Fisherman's Wharf area over the last two decades, as well as the new Hotel Vitale near Ferry Plaza (see Appendix A). The city also faces a critical need for cultural, educational and recreation facilities, and new construction for those uses may be feasible with public or grant funding as part of a larger, mixed-use proposal.

Given current Public Trust restrictions, this study does not propose housing on any seawall lots. However, community participants recognize the need for housing in San Francisco, particularly in Chinatown, North Beach and surrounding areas.

To meet that need, the study supports housing on the vacant State-owned freeway parcel on Broadway—which is not subject to the Public Trust—as well as the creation of new workforce and affordable housing on appropriate properties in the larger study area. Participants also emphasized the need to preserve existing housing within the district, such the Gateway's 1,200 rent controlled apartments.

During workshops, participants identified appropriate housing sites such as the parcel on corner of Broadway and Battery where Chinatown Community Development Center is developing 75 units of family housing, diagonally across from its Broadway Family Apartments. To encourage more affordable housing, we recommend all new inclusionary housing impact fees generated by new development in the study area (e.g. hotels on seawall lots), be used to support affordable housing development in immediately adjacent areas.

Finally, participants want to see more affordable-by-design market rate housing, both rental and

for sale, to serve the needs of middle class and working families in the community. They feel this is a far better use of our limited land than high-end condos that often serve as second (or third) homes for people who live elsewhere.



*A world-class bicycle facility, such as this bike center in Chicago's Millenium Park, would be an ideal addition to the Waterfront.*

**Recommendation 8: Create development opportunities for publicly-owned lots that balance revenue-generation with community benefits, and which respect neighborhood character.**

**8.1: Retain the Seawall lots as Public Trust lands.**

The Port properties east of The Embarcadero are held in public trust, and the Port of San Francisco should retain stewardship of these lots in perpetuity. These lands should either remain public open spaces, or be leased to complementary private uses that support the public trust purposes of the Port through rents.

**8.2: Pursue hotel uses for larger Seawall lots within existing height and Public Trust constraints.**

Hotel uses are quite feasible at the upper Broadway lot (see Appendix A) at Broadway and Battery (only seawall lot with a 65' height limit) and at the Embarcadero and North Point lot (adjacent to Fisherman's Wharf), particularly for niche market, boutique hotels with minimum parking. This study envisions no more than two such hotels on the three seawall lots north of Broadway. Developers we spoke to told us SWL 351 was too small to accommodate a hotel.

**8.3: Explore potential for cultural and recreation facilities on the Seawall Lots at Broadway and at Washington.**

Promote active uses that relate to the Northeast Waterfront's potential for an arts and performance center (Broadway & Embarcadero) as well as related retail and cultural uses that benefit local residents, youth and visitors alike. If

one of the two preferred sites for a small hotel (see above) does not work out, the Broadway site (SWL-324) could accommodate a hotel that would include Trust compliant performance and cultural uses on the ground floor. A major ground floor Youth Recreation Center at the state owned lot on Broadway (free from Public Trust restrictions regarding who it serves) could strengthen the connections back from Chinatown and North Beach along Broadway to the Waterfront. At SWL-351, a recreation use such as a waterfront bike and transit center could complement the existing recreation uses at the Gateway, and create synergies with the Ferry Plaza across the street. Connect local nonprofits whose philosophies align with community priorities with developers in the Northeast Waterfront area, to initiate dialogues about how they can partner in new mixed-use development.

**8.4: Residential uses adjacent to Seawall lots need to consider housing for all income levels, and uses where everyone is welcome.**

**8.5: Pursue workforce housing at State-owned lot on Davis and Broadway.**

This small lot which is not subject to "Public Trust" restrictions, would be a viable candidate for development of small "affordable-by-design" units in a car-free building that would generate revenue for the City and inclusionary housing fees for nearby affordable housing.

**8.6: Update the C-2 zoning designations along the Northeast Waterfront.**

The commercial C-2 zoning designation is an outdated zoning category that should be updated to better reflect the mix of uses and neighborhood character of the area.

**North Point Seawall Lot (SWL-314):** 40' small boutique hotel related to nearby Fisherman's Wharf area, with corner restaurant

**Levi's Plaza green space,** existing community resource

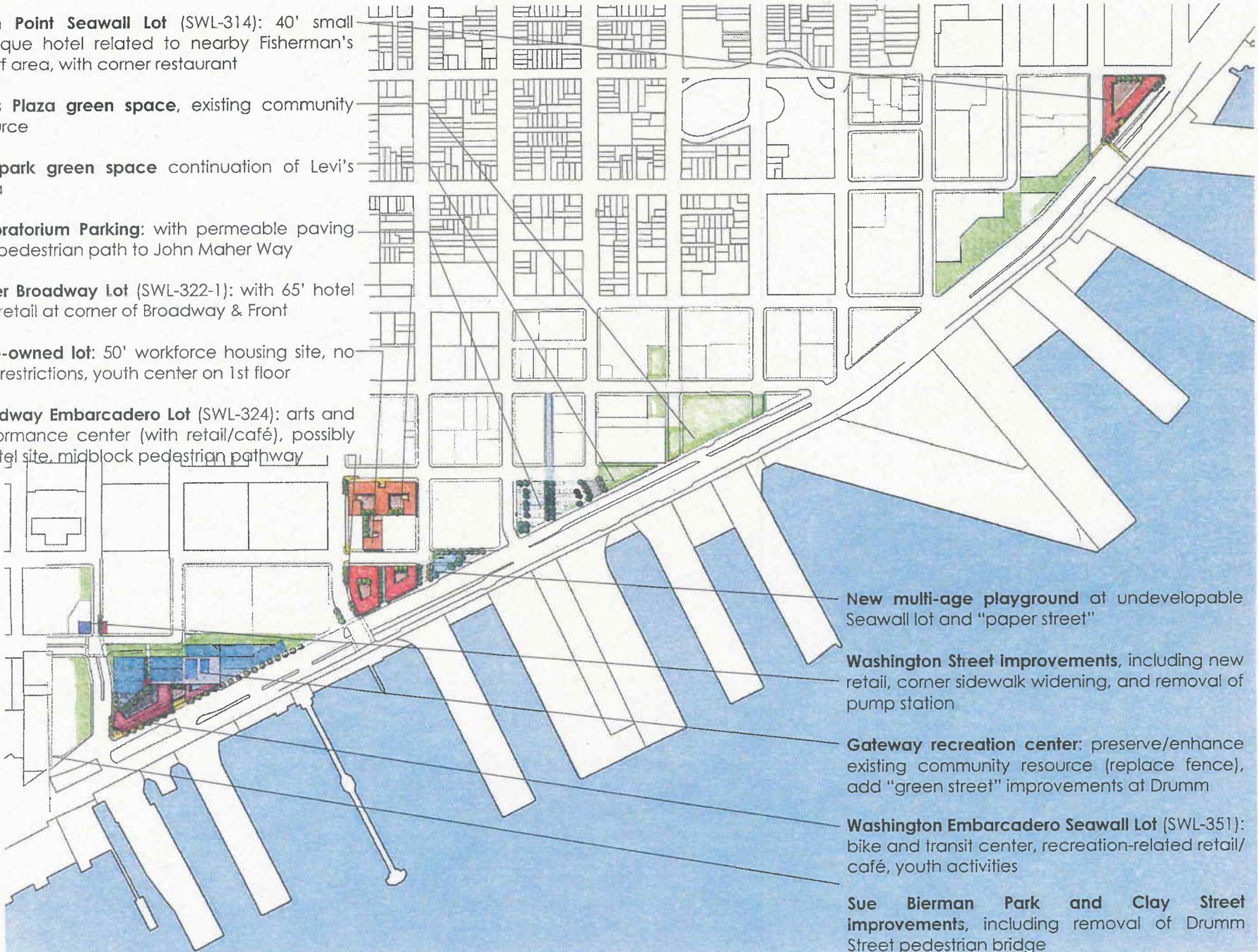
**Mini-park green space** continuation of Levi's plaza

**Exploratorium Parking:** with permeable paving and pedestrian path to John Maher Way

**Upper Broadway Lot (SWL-322-1):** with 65' hotel and retail at corner of Broadway & Front

**State-owned lot:** 50' workforce housing site, no Trust restrictions, youth center on 1st floor

**Broadway Embarcadero Lot (SWL-324):** arts and performance center (with retail/café), possibly a hotel site, midblock pedestrian pathway



**New multi-age playground** at undevelopable Seawall lot and "paper street"

**Washington Street Improvements,** including new retail, corner sidewalk widening, and removal of pump station

**Gateway recreation center:** preserve/enhance existing community resource (replace fence), add "green street" improvements at Drumm

**Washington Embarcadero Seawall Lot (SWL-351):** bike and transit center, recreation-related retail/café, youth activities

**Sue Bierman Park and Clay Street improvements,** including removal of Drumm Street pedestrian bridge



Above: examples of new construction at 40' heights along the South Beach Waterfront. As Planning Dept. showed on their September 30, 2009 presentation, heights significantly above 40' will disrupt legibility of city's hills and landmarks. If development is to preserve a sense of City's topography, it cannot go above these heights at the Embarcadero.

The massing study for "8 Washington" project at right shows (top to bottom): 1) an 'as is' view of Telegraph Hill from the Ferry Building, 2) the same view, but with a 40' structure on the proposed site, 3) the view from the Ferry Building with a 65' structure on the site and, 4) the developer's current proposal for '8 Washington' with heights up to 136' that would require an upzoning.



1.



2.



3.



4.

### Built Form & Neighborhood Character

Urban design recommendations, building character, and height and massing, should begin by responding to the surrounding context and human scale. A cardinal rule of planning should be to plan for the long-term needs of the larger community, and, while remaining cognizant of development feasibility, not letting developer needs rule. In this case, because the development opportunities are all on publicly-owned land, the City and Port have a wider leeway in promoting appropriate development.

The Northeast Waterfront has a range of land uses and architectural styles that reflect the neighborhood's history. Public improvements and new development should integrate with historic buildings and respect the scale and mixed-use design character of traditional San Francisco neighborhoods, conveying a sense of original yet contextual design. Careful attention to building design, including design that enhances the ground-level experience, and mid-block pedestrian connections within larger blocks, are essential in creating a livable neighborhood.

Respecting the City's topography is a key issue. From the City's General Plan **Urban Design Element**: Objective 3, Major New Development: "OBJECTIVE 3 (1.D): Low buildings along the waterfront contribute to the gradual tapering of height from hilltops to water that is characteristic of San Francisco and allows views of the Ocean and the Bay. Larger buildings with civic importance, as evidenced by a vote of the people, providing places of public assembly and recreation, may be appropriate along the waterfront at important locations"

**Recommendation 9: Develop building guidelines to respect neighborhood character.**

**9.1: Maintain existing height limits that range from 40' at the Embarcadero and rise to 65' on Seawall Lot 332-1 (see map page 5) and state owned freeway parcel next to it.**

**9.2: Limit heights at the block bounded by The Embarcadero, Washington and Drumm to no more than 40'.**

Maintain 40' heights along the City side of The Embarcadero to respect views and a sense of topography, in accordance with the goals of the General Plan Urban Design Element and Port Waterfront Guidelines to “respect form and preserve views.” Increased heights eliminate views of Telegraph Hill from the Ferry Building, iconic views of San Francisco enjoyed by millions of tourists, residents and workers each year.

**9.3: Require step backs and maximum heights for all elevator, stair, and mechanical penthouses.**

Roof structures, including elevator, stair, and mechanical penthouses, should be no more than 9' above the height limit, and should be located minimum of 15' away from property lines. Where possible, they should be minimized and incorporated into the structure.

**9.4: Require Mid-block Pedestrian Connections.**

**9.5: Activate major intersections with ground-floor commercial and wider sidewalks.**

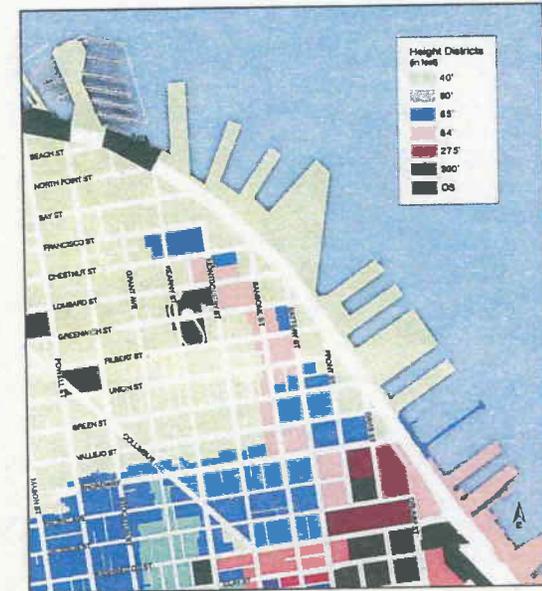
Improve streets frontages with required ground floor commercial uses, and promote street life with outdoor activity areas. Design elements should include inviting socially-engaging ground floor commercial storefronts, as well as upper story designs that offer more “eyes on the streets.”

**9.6 Improve the design and aesthetics of the interface between the Gateway community recreation center and the surrounding community.**

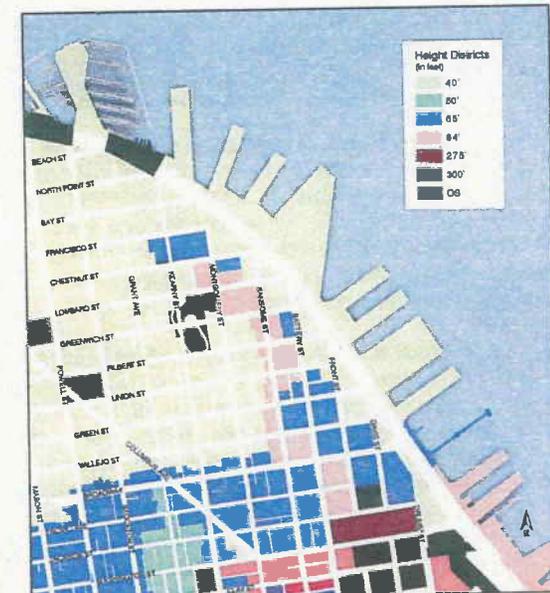
Develop a combination of more attractive and transparent fencing and additional landscaping, (e.g. using glass or bamboo enclosures, ‘living’ fences, etc.) as well as extending the pedestrian corridor on Drumm Street in front of the Gateway recreation center by removing the eastern most lane of traffic on Drumm, making it one lane in each direction.

**9.7: Limit parking.**

Eliminating minimum parking requirements for existing and new buildings is appropriate in dense mixed-use, neighborhoods, and will facilitate the preservation and reuse of the neighborhoods’ historic buildings. New zoning in much of San Francisco now dictates maximum parking requirements, acknowledging the transit density in these areas. Limiting parking, however, has to work hand-in-hand with increasing transit service. The recent elimination of a number of MUNI lines serving the Waterfront has had the opposite effect.



Height Districts  
**EXISTING HEIGHTS**



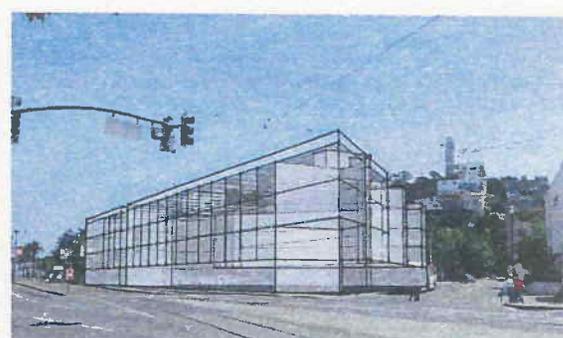
Height Districts  
**PROPOSED HEIGHTS**



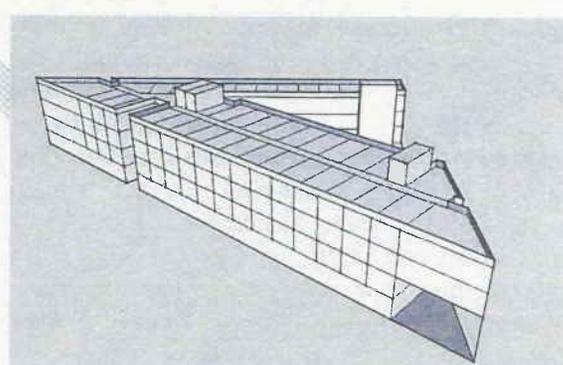
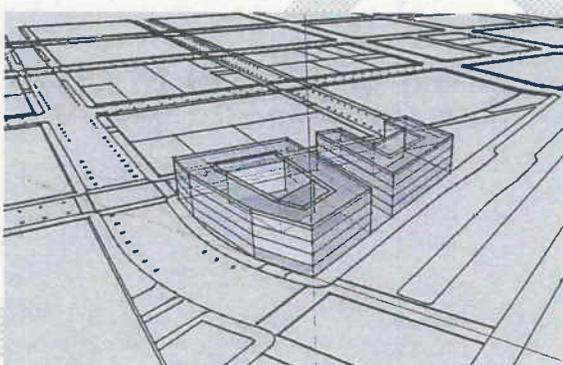
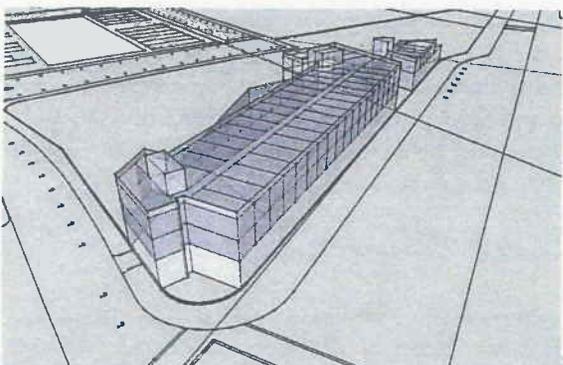
Massing study for Seawall Lot 351, at 35' with a ground floor Bike and Transit Center, recreation related retail and a café (done by AND staff).



Massing study for the Broadway Embarcadero Lot at 40' height, with midblock pedestrian pathway



Massing study for the North Point Seawall Lot, with 40' high hotel and two-story corner restaurant.



## IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation component of this Plan outlines the “how to” steps for achieving the community’s goals for the Northeast Waterfront. The strategy includes steps needed to pursue the public infrastructure improvements and suggested actions for neighborhood residents and community organizations. **For the community’s vision to be fully implemented, there needs to be a substantial effort by all parties involved to continue this collaboration.** Agencies with jurisdiction over various improvements, such as Planning, the Port, Rec & Park, MTA, and DPW, will need to incorporate projects into their future-year work programs. Decision makers will need to pursue funding sources for design, environmental review and implementation of improvements.

**Public infrastructure:** Many recommendations included in this Plan will require a combination of funding sources to bring them to fruition. Funding sources will vary depending upon the background and purpose of the project. It is important that implementation of **intersection improvements, streetscape, and open space** proposals be viewed as a package that creates a consistent experience. A sidewalk bulb-out on one street or a few new trees alone will not solve the problems of speeding traffic and dangerous intersections, but when implemented together as a series of improvements, these become spatial and visual cues that give precedence to the pedestrian, enhance bike & transit movement, and slow traffic.

**Recommendation 10: Create an Implementation Plan, with identified infrastructure costs, potential funding streams, lead agencies and timelines, to carry out this work in step with private development.**

**10.1: Convene an interagency coordinating task force to develop an implementation plan.**

An Agency coordinating task force would include relevant City agencies including Planning Department, the Port of San Francisco, SFMTA (Muni to develop transit plan and DPT to develop parking plan), DPW, OEWD (to develop small business strategies), Rec & Park (to develop playground / open space, programmed recreation, and youth center strategy), as well as private entities such as the parking and shuttle operators, the Exploratorium, and the Embarcadero Center, Ferry Building and Farmer’s Market operators. The agency coordinating body should develop the program of projects, and prioritize them based on community priorities.

**10.2: Implementation plan should coordinate with other potential impacts.**

The implementation plan and agency coordination needs to work in tandem with other developments, such as the America’s Cup, the new water taxi system, and future sea level rise infrastructure.

**10.3: Establish impact fees for private development in the Waterfront to help finance**

**a program of neighborhood infrastructure improvements.**

The nexus study for the Eastern Neighborhoods fees could be used to establish an impact fee for projects in these neighborhoods, which could be used to pay for a program of infrastructure improvements. While impact fees alone may not be sufficient to pay for the needed improvement, they would provide a local source for leveraging additional funds.

### Impact of America’s Cup

Staging of the America’s Cup in San Francisco was never substantially discussed in any of our community workshops. There should now be additional community meetings to discuss the impacts/opportunities an event of this magnitude creates. Recommendations from those meetings will be included in later versions of this plan.

San Francisco’s hosting of the America’s Cup will focus public attention on this study and the broad consensus reached on its recommendations for better integrating the waterfront with the northeast section of the city, particularly those recommendations regarding improving pedestrian, transit and bicycle access, open space, signage, design and more efficient use of existing parking. It should also accelerate implementation of many of the recommendations in this consensus plan.

## Next Steps – Ongoing

The community's continued support will be critical to implementing the plan. Many of the recommendations of the plan require large scale and long term projects that will involve the City of San Francisco and its implementing agencies, or private developers with large-scale projects. However, there are many critical steps that neighborhood organizations and individuals can take to support these recommendations.

1. Convene Planning, Port, DPT, Rec & Park, shuttle operators, garage operators, Ferry Building, Exploratorium, to develop scope for **Parking Access Plan**; develop schematic design for pedestrian connections to parking garages.
2. Convene Planning, Port, Muni, Shuttle operators, Water taxi operators, Exploratorium, to develop **Transit Access Plan**.
3. Convene Planning, Port, DPW to develop a **Community Infrastructure Timeline and Funding Strategy** for public realm improvements.
4. Convene Planning, OEWD, Gateway management, to develop **Neighborhood Economic Development Plan**.
5. Convene Planning, Port, Rec & Park, Chinatown and other neighborhood youth organizations, to develop scope for **Recreation Plan**.
6. Convene Planning, Port, MOH, affordable housing developers, to develop an economic feasibility analysis for possible housing development on the Broadway Seawall Lot.
7. Develop **Land Residual Analysis** for various revenue uses on Seawall Lots to calculate potential lease revenue to Port.

## CONCLUSIONS

### Will the North East Waterfront Plan...

1. Strengthen neighborhood fabric and pedestrian/transit connections?
2. Promote a socio-economic and ethnically diverse waterfront?
3. Enhance and preserve community recreation opportunities?
4. Create a politically and economically feasible plan that balances public uses and revenue-generating development?

This is our vision for the North East Waterfront. We welcome the Planning Department's efforts to create urban design guidelines for development along the Embarcadero, but without an overall plan, including in-depth discussion of interdepartmental challenges, building of

community infrastructure, recognition of the adjacent low-income neighborhoods and their needs, and a comprehensive land use and economic plan, we don't think it can garner the necessary community support to be a realistic plan. This effort is the first step in identifying a set of comprehensive needs and steps that need to be taken to develop the NE Waterfront in its neighborhood context, as a whole, living place, not just a destination for visitors.

### Conclusions:

1. Planning Department "Study" is constrained by narrowness of focus, does not reach consensus, and has not undergone environmental review of its recommendations
2. Planning Department, in partnership with Port, should lead a comprehensive plan to

3. We have already started doing it...  
knit the neighborhoods with the waterfront, to meet real needs, and to address feasibility of development across all Seawall lots, either as a single process or in incremental steps

We want to reiterate that we, the undersigned organizations, support development on these sites, within an overall community plan.

**Lee Radner** – Chair, Friends of Golden Gateway (FOGG)

**Vedica Puri** – Telegraph Hill Dwellers

**Phil Ryan** – President, Golden Gateway Tenants Association

**William Sauro**, President, Barbary Coast Neighborhood Association

## DEVELOPMENT FEASIBILITY

### Financial Feasibility of Consensus Driven Development on Port's Seawall Lots

From the outset, we sought to balance revenue generating, open space and active recreation uses across **all** seawall lots in order to produce the financial and political feasibility necessary to entitle projects in San Francisco. This will yield more revenue for the city than the Port's current one-at-a-time approach to development on seawall lots.<sup>3</sup>

What if, instead of spending a lot of time and money putting together a real estate deal, then trying to "sell" it to the community, the community got together **first**, vetted ideas for all the seawall lots, agreed on which uses to support on which lots and **then** the Port issued RFPs based on broad community support. Wouldn't that make more sense? People we spoke with—residents, property and business owners, developers, etc.—all felt this approach would improve the Port's revenue outlook.

After completing a what-the community-would-support analysis, we set out to test the financial feasibility of these agreed upon uses with developers. Our methodology was simple. We

<sup>3</sup> While a few projects (e.g. Exploratorium) have garnered enough community support to make it through the entitlement process in recent years, a larger number of projects have not and have failed (e.g. the Broadway/Embarcadero hotel, both the Mills and Shorenstein proposals for Pier 17, Pier 30-32 Cruise Ship Terminal).

showed them the seawall lots the community deemed appropriate for development, along with detailed as-is zoning and height maps, and asked them: a) would they be interested in building projects that aligned with the community's preferred uses, and if so, b) how much would they be willing to pay the Port in rent.

Brad Paul, a development consultant working on the community plan, spoke with a several developers experienced in building hotels, housing and retail in California and beyond. He explained that the community preferred Public Trust compliant uses on the seawall lots in question (e.g. primarily hotels, restaurants, cafes, related retail). We learned several important things from Brad's conversations, including:

- *Hotels are a viable use at these locations, even in this economy;*
- *Developers are willing to build within the current height limits of 40'- 65';*
- *Developers would make significant lease payments for the right to do so.*

Let's look at each of these assumptions one at a time.

A. **Hotels are a still viable use:** We've been told by several hotel developers that downtown hotels are weathering the current downturn fairly well and hotels on or near the Embarcadero are doing quite well. The Hotel Vitale, for instance, is one of the most successful in San Francisco, which makes sense when you analyze it.

Downtown hotels in and around the Financial District do well during the week due to business travelers, but not so well on the weekends. Hotels along the waterfront pick up the same business travelers during the week but also appeal to local/regional residents looking for a romantic weekend getaway with great views/amenities. For these reasons, several developers we spoke with told us they'd be very interested in responding to Port RFPs for hotel projects on seawall lots at Broadway/Embarcadero (SWL 322-1, State Lot, and SWL 324) as well as northern most Seawall Lot 321.

B. **Developers are willing to build at the current height limits of 40' to 65':** At our community workshops, we brought up SPUR's idea of raising heights on seawall lots from 40' to 45' to create "more graceful" lobbies and retail spaces. Participants rejected the idea, arguing current 40' height limits already translate to 50'-52' when you add in numerous stairway enclosures, elevator towers and "equipment" on roofs. At the same time, developers felt 4-6 stories with 10' floors would work for the type of hotels they had in mind. Ground floors are used for lobbies, meeting rooms, retail and off-street parking and there are ways to create higher lobbies without sacrificing too many rooms above. One developer suggested a 55' on upper Broadway where 65' is allowed to keep the stairways, elevator towers and "equipment" on the roof at or under 65'.

**C. What would developers pay the Port to lease each of these Seawall Lots:**

We asked several developers to create pro formas for each Seawall Lot identified by the community as appropriate for hotel use and come up with a range of lease payments they would be willing to make for each site. So far, we've heard back from one developer, and are awaiting results from several others. Some may question the validity of these numbers, but they are easy to verify if the Port were to issue an RFP for one of the largest hotel sites (e.g. Seawall Lot 322-1). This would quickly establish how accurate these numbers are, as well as the level of developer interest and community support. Following are the numbers we've received to date. We will continue to refine the numbers as we hear from other developers and begin implementing this plan.

<b>Sites (north to south)</b>	<b>Annual Lease Payment (as a range) for 66 years</b>		<b>66 year total</b>	<b>Net Present Value</b>
<b>Seawall Lot 314:</b> (North Point)	\$ 95,000	to \$ 115,000 per year	\$ 6,930,000	\$ 1,470,000
<b>Seawall Lot 322-1</b> (Upper Broadway)	\$ 182,000	to \$ 245,000 per year	\$ 14,190,000	\$ 3,000,000
<b>State-owned Lot:</b> (At Broadway and Davis St.)	\$ 80,000	to \$ 100,000 per year	\$ 5,940,000	\$ 1,260,000
<b>Seawall Lot 324<sup>4</sup>:</b> (Broadway Embarcadero)	\$ 75,000	to \$ 95,000 per year	\$ 5,610,000	\$ 1,210,000
<b>Seawall Lot 351:</b> (Washington/Embarcadero)	\$ 40,000	to \$ 60,000 per year <sup>5</sup>	\$ 3,300,000	\$ 400,000
<b>Total:</b>	\$ 475,000	to \$ 615,000 per year	\$ 35,970,000	\$ 7,340,000

<sup>4</sup> This plan envisions no more than two of three potential sites (SWL-314/SWL-322-1/SWL-324) developed for hotel use, SWL 314 and SWL 322-1 are preferred.

<sup>5</sup> 8 Washington proposes paying \$0 to \$120,000/yr. depending on how big a rent credit it asks for and receives. The Community Vision for this site calls for a *Waterfront Transit & Recreation Center* that includes a large bicycle center with bike storage, repair, rentals and showers, a café and restaurant, a car share station, taxi and bike rickshaw stands, recreation related retail, youth activities, etc. Groups supporting this plan endorse these uses (and oppose the 8 Washington uses).

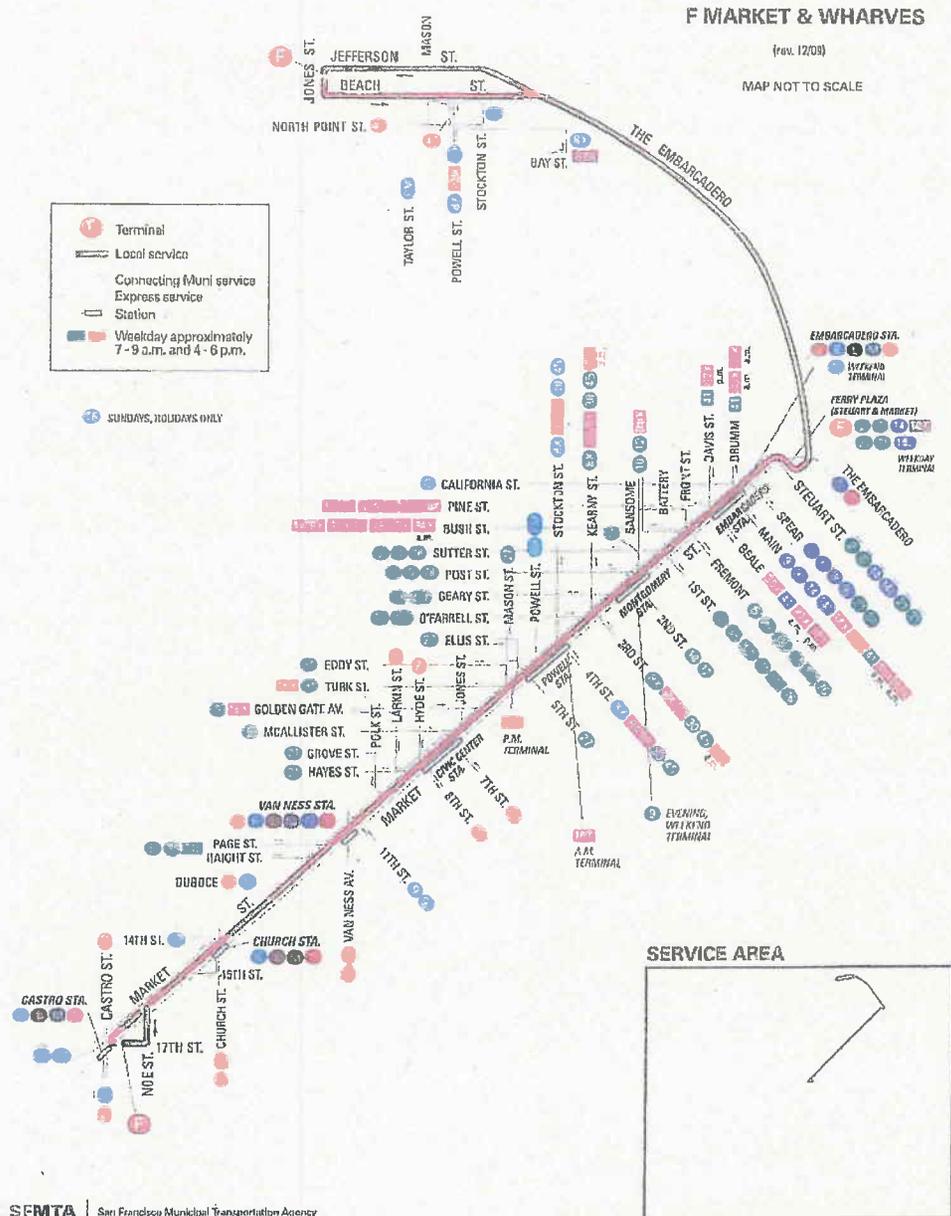
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appendix B

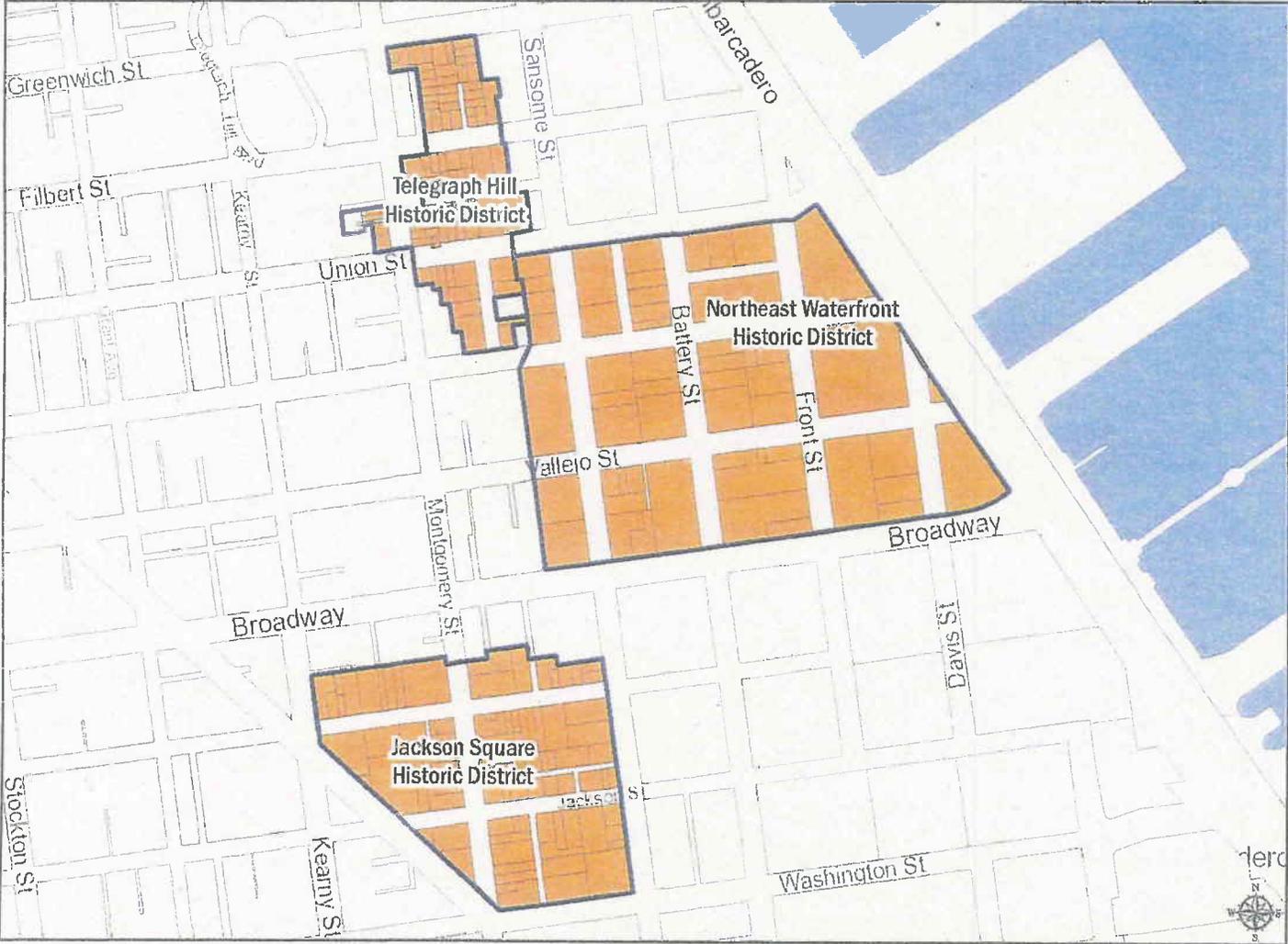
# MUNI F-LINE CONNECTIONS

SF Municipal Transportation Agency map showing the "F" trolley line and abundance of connections along Market Street, and the lack of cross-town connections along the Embarcadero.



# HISTORIC DISTRICTS IN THE NORTHEAST WATERFRONT AREA

## San Francisco Article 10 Historic Districts



San Francisco Planning Department