ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: A NEGOTIATED LANDSCAPE: PLANNING, REGULATION, AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF SAN FRANCISCO S WATERFRONT, 1950 TO THE PRESENT

Matthew Jasper Rubin, Doctor of Philosophy, 2003

Dissertation directed by: Professor Charles Christian
Department of Geography

This is a study of a landscape, in particular, San Francisco s urban waterfront landscape. Landscape is taken to be both the physical, visible aspects of an area and the often invisible processes that shape it; landscapes both reflect and shape forces of transformation. The analysis is rooted in an historical treatment of the waterfront, covering the period from 1950, when the Port of San Francisco began to experience pressures that would cause a serious and lasting decline in shipping activity, to the present, which is witness to a waterfront very different from early visions for its revitalization.

The discussion is placed in the top-down and bottom-up framework sometimes used to characterize forces that effect change. Because this simple dichotomy is not always satisfactory, the study proposes a modified version that better

captures the complexity of the interplay of forces, how their relationship changes over time, and the dual roles that some actors and agencies play.

Much research has focused on the effect of larger, external forces on places. This study argues that while such forces have affected the waterfront, especially its decline, local forces evolved that strongly influenced the pace and nature of its transformation. One of the most important ways that local, or bottom-up, power is wielded is through the control of land use. This is a case study, then, of how the evolution of land use policy and regulation, and generally the planning process, has affected this physically and symbolically important part of San Francisco.

In presenting a history, the study reveals that the relationship between planning and waterfront transformation moved through four stages. The stages progress from a period characterized by an absence of plans wherein modernist proposals for massive development were proffered, to the current stage characterized by a mature set of policy documents that have encouraged development that is more respectful of the public domain. Each stage is characterized by different aspects of the interplay among top-down and bottom-up forces with different results for the waterfront s morphology. This study concludes that various forces, mediated through a maturing planning process, have produced a negotiated landscape.

A NEGOTIATED LANDSCAPE: PLANNING, REGULATION, AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF SAN FRANCISCO S WATERFRONT, 1950 TO THE PRESENT

by

Matthew Jasper Rubin

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Advisory Committee:
Professor Charles Christian, Chair/Advisor
Professor Alex Chen
Professor Martha Geores
Professor Michael Kearney
Professor John R. Townshend

DEDICATION

For Rebecca, without whom I would be blank pages, and little Adrienne, who is helping to fill them up. To Leonard and Mitzi, without whom these pages would be blank and, finally, to Professor Dan Doeppers, for the inspiration to fill them with geography.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADL	Arthur D. Little, Inc.
BCDC	Bay Conservation and Development Commission
BSHC	Board of State Harbor Commissioners
CAC	citizen advisory committee
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CWC	Citizen s Waterfront Committee
FWAP	Fisherman s Wharf Action Plan
NEWAC	Northeastern Waterfront Advisory Committee
NEWP	Northeastern Waterfront Plan
NWP	Northern Waterfront Plan
OSH	Ocean Shipping Handbook
PFEL	Pacific Far East Lines
PSF	Port of San Francisco
RA	San Francisco Redevelopment Agency
SAP	Special Area Plan
SFC	*San Francisco Chronicle*
SFPA	San Francisco Port Authority
SFPD	San Francisco Planning Department
SFT	San Francisco Tomorrow
SLC	State Lands Commission

SPUR	San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association
TDP	Total Design Plan
WTC	San Francisco World Trade Center Authority
WTPO	Waterfront Transportation Projects Office

Chapter 1: Introduction

San Francisco is not the city that it used to be. Its port is no longer a thriving center for shipping. Many of the myriad industries that once flourished have relocated or closed shop and blue-collar workers have all but disappeared with them. A skyline has shot up and tourism has become the city's primary money-generator. Even at this writing, the city is changing: a new baseball park has been built; a huge 300-acre section of land known as Mission Bay is being developed; and a multi-billion dollar expansion of its light rail system is underway. The city is also going through a housing crisis that is having profound impacts on its people and culture and, moreover, it is now coping with the bust that followed the dot-com boom at the turn of the millennium. As with many cities in the United States over the past three or four decades, San Francisco's very core has been and is being re-shaped.

Dramatic urban change is evinced in many elements of physical urban structure and at many scales. At the metropolitan level, the last few decades have witnessed the growth of the poly-nuclear metropolis of 'edge cities' and 'technoburbs' dotted with flourishing office parks and splotched with a patchwork of super-regional malls anchoring postsuburban consumer Meccas. At a smaller scale, the older, traditional urban centers have been selectively resuscitated by inner-city neighborhood gentrification, downtown revitalization, adaptive re-use of warehouses, and heritage tourist districts. Together, these evolving elements of the built environment signal more than basic changes in land use, they reflect the spatial reordering of urban

economies and of socio-cultural phenomena. Thus, they also represent new ways of living, not just because we move among these different forms and make use of them, but because the processes that created them infuse our lives.

Some contemporary analysis sees the evolution of the built environment as interwoven with larger social, economic, and cultural processes producing a 'postmodern urban landscape,' a landscape deeply etched by consumption and new forms of production (Soja 1989; Harvey 1990; Zukin 1991; Knox 1993, 1991; Clarke 1997; Dear and Flusty 1998). Globalization, a process and condition enabled largely by technological advances in transportation and communication, and marked by an economic restructuring powered by advanced capitalism, is also identified as the source of a current of change with which cities struggle (Castells 1989; Shatkin 1998; Sassen 1991, 2000; Samers 2002; Audirac 2003)

When explaining urban transformation, however, the attention can be so concentrated on new forms of capitalism, globalization, and other grand overarching forces that the local seems to be powerless, rendered little more than a spatialized instance of those larger forces. Indeed, individual places seem further reduced in significance as they succumb to homogenization resulting in part from the separation of market and place, a separation intensified by globalization and the predominance of consumption expressed in space (Zukin 1991). While the importance of "local" has been overlooked in much recent geographic, especially urban, research, it has not been dismissed (see Massey 1984, Smith 1996, Cox 1997, Hayden 1997, Herod 2001). In

particular it resides in the discipline's concern with place and landscape, both inherently local. As Walker (1995, 33) reminds us:

> ... local difference is of more than parochial interest...Local differences may provide clues to unevenness within larger geographies of capitalist development...they can bear witness to resistance against the whirlwinds of capitalism...and to the persistence of oblique ideas and ways of life in the face of homogenizing forces of modernization.[1]

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that local power matters, that urban change is the result of an interplay of forces not always sufficiently addressed in geographic research. Forces from beyond city and county lines interact with indigenous ones; both respond to local conditions and imperatives to reconstitute place. One common way to characterize what affects how and why places change is to use the simple framework, discussed below, of 'top-down' versus 'bottom-up' forces. The former include international and national policies and organizations, technological shifts, or changes in capitalism, while the latter include local powerful actors or agencies, for instance, elected officials or grassroots organizations, and land use control. In fact, one of the most important ways that local power is wielded is through land use planning policy and regulation, rooted in many cases in police powers or even the power of eminent domain.

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[1] This is a mini-theme in some of Walker's recent work. In a 1996 piece he states that "in seizing upon fashion, we ought not to lose sight of the dialectics of the local and the global and of the importance of place. Local studies still have much to teach us" (p. 60).

This is a case study, then, of how the evolution of land use policy and regulation, and generally the planning process, have affected a physically and symbolically important part of San Francisco - its waterfront. While the particular focus of the analysis is thus on bottom-up forces, it is also necessary to address the most critical top-down forces which have affected San Francisco's waterfront. With a few notable exceptions (see Mollenkopf 1983, DeLeon 1992; Walker 1995, 1996, 1998; Godfrey 1997; Brook et al. 1998; Brechin 1999; and Hartman 2002). San Francisco has been overlooked in urban literature, particularly geographic work, and waterfronts, especially of U.S. cities, fare not much better. This lack of attention resonates particularly strongly for the City by the Bay because, as was recognized years ago, the story of San Francisco is the story of its waterfront (Work Progress Administration 1947). The specific questions which guide the analysis are :

- Why and how did the Port decline, especially with regard to its role as a center for shipping?
- Why did it take so long for revitalization to take root and what determined the nature of that revitalization?
- More specifically, how have top-down and bottom-up forces affected the redevelopment over time of San Francisco's urban waterfront landscape?
- What have been the changes in the nature and interplay of these forces? Particularly, how has change been influenced and resistence undertaken by local forces and conditions?

- What has been the role of planning policy and regulation and how have they related to top-down and bottom-up forces?

To answer these questions requires an historical approach. As Holdsworth (1997, 55) has pointed out, the historical record can help "to make visible, to bring out of concealment, what is not visible in today's landscape." This study begins in 1950, just as San Francisco's dominance in Bay Area and West Coast shipping began to fade, creating possibilities for new forms and functions of waterfront land. It ends at the turn of the new millennium, as the effects of new waterfront planning and development initiatives began to coalesce, signaling the emergence of a new and much revitalized waterfront. In tracing this history, the study will demonstrate that the evolution of planning and regulation, and their relationship to the waterfront, has moved through four stages. The stages progress from an initial period characterized by an absence of plans wherein modernist proposals for development were put forth, to the current stage characterized by a mature set of policy documents that have encouraged development that is more respectful of the public domain. Each stage is characterized by different aspects of the interplay among top-down and bottom-up forces with different results for the waterfront's morphology.

Various actors, agents and agencies and their roles in the processed described will be introduced. They include governmental agencies such as the Port and the city's Planning Department, Mayors and members of the Board of Supervisors, Port Directors, neighborhood organizations, activists, and advocacy groups like San

Francisco Tomorrow. Of course, not all important actors and agencies are brought into the analysis - only the most critical to the task at hand. Other than the Port and its main representatives, the study does not focus on or follow a particular person, group, or agency through the entire history; rather, they may vary across stages and each is brought into the discussion as appropriate to the context.

Two points should be made before continuing. First, the purpose of this study is not to enter into the debate on the role of planning, which is dealt with in depth elsewhere (see for instance Fainstein and Fainstein 1979, Klosterman 1985, Stone and Sanders 1987, and Beauregard 1989). However, it is worth noting that when planning is mentioned in relation to landscapes or urban geography, generalizations abound about planners and the development process (as distinct from the planning process). Typically, planners are subsumed into the apparatus of the state, or even described as "bucket carriers" for capitalism (Short 1989, Zukin 1991, Knox 1993a). While it would be ridiculous to argue that planners are not often constrained by, or even actively perpetuate, conditions which have served interests other than the public good and the creation of democratic space, one must also recognize planning as a process largely defined by and deeply embedded in the community in which it functions. The successes of planning can be hard to see, especially when in the form of extractions or negotiated benefits - but even they are successes nonetheless! One cannot discern the office tower that did not get built, or easily perceive design features enforced to protect light and air or to prevent shading of public parks. Nor is it simple to pick out the

affordable housing units required as part of a new development complex, or recognize patterns of height limits designed to protect public views.

Second, to reveal the interplay of top-down and bottom-up forces, to show the complexity of the latter and maintain a sense of place, to articulate what a landscape looks like, can require smaller-scaled analysis. This is a matter of practicality as much as anything else. Urbanists documenting the 'sweep of urban change' of larger areas - from entire cities to metropolitan regions - can sweep away too easily the places they are describing, especially as part of analyzing broad, underlying forces or in making attempts to evoke postmodern landscapes, as mentioned earlier. One result is that urban landscapes are often reduced to a few photographs or generalized maps, if any are used at all!. The central city, once carefully scrutinized, is now often either just a blob in the fractured city, or comprised of simple, nearly a-spatial, generalized functional areas, such as gentrified neighborhoods or festival market locations. This study attempts to orient the reader and evoke a sense of place by using maps and photos liberally.

The remainder of this chapter discusses what has been the general approach to studying waterfronts in urban literature, especially geography, and provides the context for a discussion of top-down and bottom-up forces. It ends with a few brief concluding remarks about the built environment and landscapes.

WATERFRONT TRANSFORMATION

In this study, "waterfront" refers to an area characterized by port and port-related activities, including shipping and boat-repair, as well as to other developed activities, such as planned recreation areas, commercial development, and industry which is indirectly related to port activities or which benefits from a waterfront location - such as food processing plants and warehousing. Thus, the geographic scope of this study is determined by the Port of San Francisco's jurisdictional boundary, roughly a seven mile stretch of San Francisco on its Bay side running from Fisherman's Wharf on the northern waterfront to India Basin on the southern waterfront, whose inland limits (Figure 1).

Studies of San Francisco's waterfront are virtually non-existent. A chapter in the National Research Council's *Urban Waterfront Lands* (1980) and a chapter in Richard DeLeon's *Left Coast City* (1992) stand out. And, when reference is made to San Francisco's waterfront in more general discussions, it is unfailingly a reference to the tourism-oriented Fisherman's Wharf (particularly Ghirardelli Square) - a small part of, and only one of many uses, found along San Francisco's waterfront. More generally, ports have been studied from a range of perspectives, from the historic (Hilling 1988, Minca 1995, Lawton and Lee 2002) to policy-based examinations (Tunbridge 1988; Merrifield 1992; Gordon 1997, 1997a; Doig 2001). Much effort has been devoted to establishing reasons for and results of decline, in particular the affect of new shipping technology on older ports and, more recently, on forms and process of

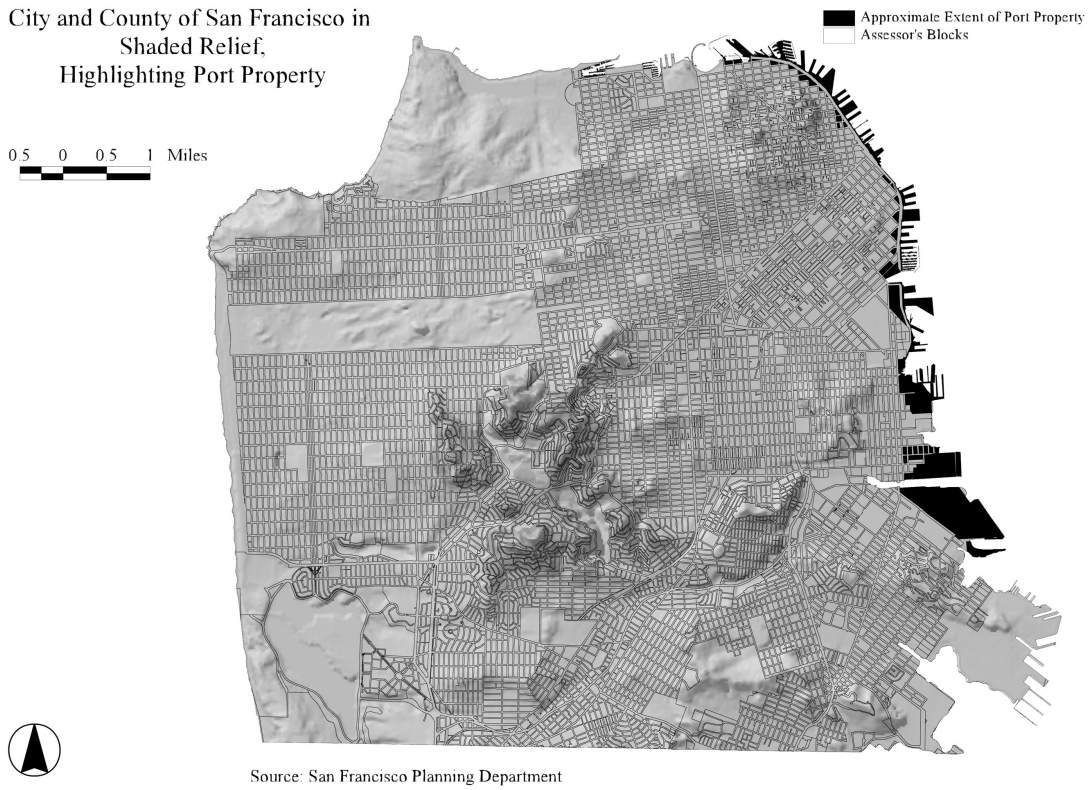

Figure 1 Map of City and County of San Francisco showing Port land. Source: San Francisco Planning Department.

revitalization. Such studies are usually presented as short case studies of physical changes in particular places, with particular attention paid to architecture and design.

Waterfront Decline and Revitalization

Reasons for the decline of urban waterfront shipping activities are well established (Richardson 1986, Hoyle et al. 1988, Riley and Shurmer-Smith 1988, Craig-Smith 1995). Most ports, including San Francisco, that began to flounder did so in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when containerization revolutionized the shipping

industry.[2] Site and situation, as pointed out by Riley and Shurmer-Smith (1988), played a major role in whether or not ports could adopt the new technology and remain competitive. One of the biggest factors was the need for extensive tracts of flat land to develop containerized facilities and associated backlands. Even if a port authority or other relevant entity could absorb the tremendous capitalization costs to provide facilities for shipping lines, they often simply did not have the space available. And, because container ships require deep channels, ports found themselves having to pay for dredging - an expensive project, and today a very sensitive environmental issue.

A host of corollary problems arises from trying to convert old port facilities to new ones, the most salient being that urban infrastructure adjacent to old ports usually cannot absorb the additional activity, particularly truck and rail traffic, associated with containerization. New technology and its requirements has thus rendered the older port morphology of finger piers and storage sheds obsolete. While focusing on containerization as the source of port decline is logical because of the dramatic impact it has had, it is not necessarily the first or only reason. As this study will show, San Francisco began to languish as a working port before the advent of the new shipping technology, partly in response to land use changes that occurred in relation to the city's economic transformation.

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[2] Although there has been a decline in passenger traffic since the advent of transnational airlines, jet planes are only part of the explanation. Federal regulations contained in the 1920 Jones Act require, essentially, that foreign flagged vessels make only one U.S. port of call. Since all major cruise lines are now foreign-owned, many U.S. cities have lost passenger-based business.

Starting at the beginning of the 1960s, and coming into full force by the early 1980s, cities around the world have made efforts to re-use the land at the water's edge. By the late 1970s waterfront revitalization in the U.S. had become such a common urban issue that federal and national agencies began to produce guides and reports to address the trend (see for example National Resource Council 1980). Revitalization appears in many forms and at many scales and can include: the upgrade of shipping and maritime-related facilities; the growth of new industry that is not necessarily water-related; mixed use commercial development; and residential development. Generally, individual revitalization projects have been fairly well documented. The fields of planning and architecture have probably contributed the most in this vein. Breen and Rigby (1996), for instance, provide a notable overview of waterfront revitalization projects world-round, especially in their urban design and architectural aspects, and the periodicals *Urban Land* and *Landscape Architecture* regularly include case studies of waterfront development.

Some of the more striking initial plans for redevelopment of waterfront areas were for mammoth mixed-use projects. More recently, public agencies and developers have capitalized on the easily-romanticized history of ports and the cultural penchant for appreciating pretty panoramas - a powerful combination - to help transmute disused waterside areas into places of concentrated consumption of everything from souvenirs to condominiums with a view. Of this kind of waterfront renewal, perhaps the most common, and often at the forefront of broader discussion of urban redevelopment, are tourism-related 'festival' and 'heritage' developments (Mullins

1991, Sieber 1991, Britton 1991, Craig-Smith and Fagence 1995, Urry 1995, Goss 1996, Hoyle 2002).

Along with tourist developments, a new post-industrial economy has led to vast tracks of unused land being reused to support a "Manhattan-like development style adopted all around the world" (Minca 1995, 225). Such projects mix and match office towers, passenger terminals, apartment or condominium blocks, retail development, and new, primarily non-industrial commercial ventures. Examples include New York City's Battery Park City, London's Canary Wharf, and Toronto's Harbour Square. However, as demonstrated by Gordon's (1997) study of New York's Battery City, it could take years before such projects reached the implementation stage and decades before being fully built, suffering delays and changes because of shifts in local planning and development policy. Large projects could also be altered in response to a mixture of politics and development cycles, as seen in the development of London's Canary Wharf (Merrifield 1992, Daniels and Bobe 1993).

Less common in revitalization schemes is the provision of open spaces and expansive areas for passive and active recreation along waterfronts. Access to the waterfront, though, is important to attracting visitors, not all of whom want to spend their time on or near the waterfront just shopping. Yet, in some areas where access to the water or to waterside recreation is provided, designs employed in new waterfront residential enclaves have a way of discouraging their use by the general populace (Meyer 1999). The range of activities underscores the conflict, as Tunbridge (1988)

points out, of social versus commercial goals of revitalization - of use versus exchange value.

Another theme that one can distill from the literature, parallel to discussions of the impact of globalization, is that waterfront revitalization is a process of homogenization. The same kinds of development appear along waterfronts world-wide. There is certainly an element of truth in this. One can quickly point to the 'Rousification' of waterfronts, and the important role that a few large international development and architectural firms play, for instance Canada's Olympia and York, in Minca's (1995) "Manhattanization." Tweedale (1988) states that part of the similarity in land uses found in waterfront redevelopment schemes across international borders can be explained, at least partly, in that only the most profitable developments are constructed. The purpose of this dissertation is not to provide a comparison, world-wide or for the nation, of waterfront development. It is suggested, however, that contentions that waterfront redevelopment has been and is taking on similar forms and functions everywhere, and that this occurs despite local conditions, are somewhat facile. Not all waterfronts are redeveloped in the same way. To suggest otherwise implies that processes (such as development dynamics associated with the rise of post-industrial cities) have the same impact, at least in the form and function of the built environment, on every place. In forwarding the idea that waterfront revitalization (indeed, urban change in general) is homogenous, there is an explicit rejection of the role of local conditions as important in the spatial restructuring of waterfronts, or that localities function and react to change in the same way everywhere. To repeat, using

San Francisco as an example, this study asserts that the local does matter, and that waterfront redevelopment can take on many forms, even in the same city.

Top-Down and Bottom-Up Forces Affecting Waterfronts

Less common than research addressing reasons for port decline and forms of revitalization is analysis that looks more deeply into the nature of the process of waterfront redevelopment. Most of it is characterized by broad-based discussions of

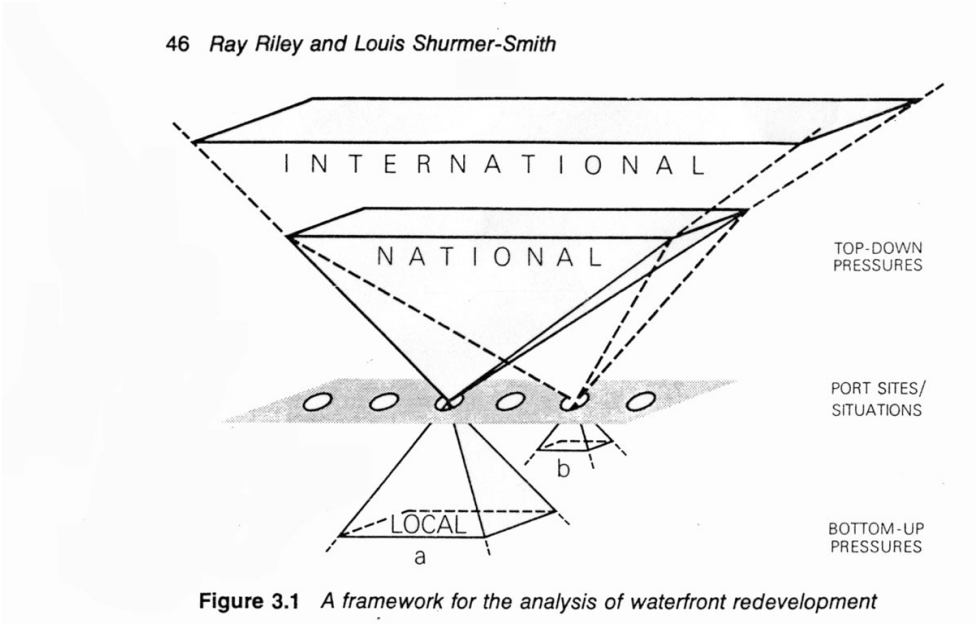

Figure 2 Top-down and bottom-up forces. Source: Riley and Shurmer-Smith, 1988.

the role of technology, the political and development processes, and the whims of capitalism as the pre-eminent backdrop of change. Riley and Shurmer-Smith (1988) suggest, however, that discussion of waterfront redevelopment is best framed in analysis that takes into account both top-down forces and bottom-up forces, as seen in

Figure 2, below (see also Hoyle 2002). A discussion of their approach provides a way to make some general points about what is a useful but overly-simplified framework for analysis.

Top-Down Forces

The decline of ports is generally due to the influence of top-down forces on waterfronts. In particular, changes in transportation technology and other large-system factors such as various forms of economic restructuring have had degenerative effects on some, especially older, waterfronts. For instance, Riley and Shurmer-Smith (1988) identified general international cycles of growth and recession and the influence of political-economic groups such as the EC as important to the fates of ports. But they do not detail the impact of these forces or how they interrelate with local conditions. In generally, the literature addresses such issues only tangentially. Globalization is something of an exception. Globalization is evinced by reorganized world trade patterns that subsequently redirect shipping routes and therefore affects shipping lines' choices for home ports (Riley and Shurmer-Smith 1988). As national economies have gained strength in parts of Asia, Bay Area ports, for instance, have found themselves in stiff competition with more northern ports in Seattle and Portland which are at the end of shorter routes from the east or which have better access to inland destinations. Given the massive and frequent relocation of production facilities by transnational corporations, it is easy to imagine resulting shifts in the world web of shipping lines.

Shipping lines are by nature international; as such, they may react to national policy formation in one place by redirecting services and operations to another.

The discussion of globalization does invoke some consideration of the changes in capitalism inherent in economic restructuring and thus the role that capital plays in the decline and revitalization of waterfronts. As Tweedale (1988) suggests, in seeking to minimize variable capital (labor, as distinct from capital that is 'fixed' in the production process, such as factories) corporations promote both the internationalization of the labor pool and encourage the introduction of labor-saving technology into the workplace. Furthermore, industrial capital is invested overseas to take advantage of cheap labor, various economic incentives to build production facilities (such as foreign trade zones), and lax pollution regulation. Waterfront areas thus become de-industrialized as productive infrastructure is relocated and waterfront communities become generally derelict as the workforce is marginalized.

Riley and Shurmer-Smith generally conceive of top-down forces as evinced in international or national events or conditions that have an impact on waterfronts. They tie this conception to Massey's (1984) thesis that spatial patterns are not entirely the result of spatial variables; rather, local events, outcomes, and patterns can be determined by a-spatial factors, such as economic and policy decisions, at the national and international level. As the authors note, such a structuralist approach, in conjunction with theoretical postulations about the 'imperatives of capital', leaves little room for 'bottom-up' pressures generated by local actors, including local governmental agencies.

It has already been suggested that 'top-down' pressures have played an important role in the *decline* of waterfronts, particularly ports, and Riley and Shurmer-Smith include technology and shifts in world trade patterns as factors under this heading (see also Marcus et al. 1980). But 'top-down' pressures can also exert a significant impact on the *revitalization* of waterfronts.[3] For one, some waterfronts have benefitted from changes in shipping technology as much as others have suffered because they may have such advantages as deep-water channels or ample backlands. This implies that the impact of top-down forces can depend on local conditions, including basic geographical differences pertaining to site and situation.

Of course, and it is a major theme in the wider literature of urban restructuring, capital has had a tremendous impact on waterfront redevelopment. In general, the role of capital in contemporary urban structuring is often tied to the advent of the post-industrial economy; it is flexible and globalized and is responsible for uneven development patterns. Minca (1995), for instance, posits that the success of waterfront redevelopment projects can be tied to increasingly service-oriented economies. The expansion of post-industrial economies requires new built spaces, and derelict waterfronts can provide the much needed acreage in what are otherwise built-up urban cores. Similarly, there has been a movement of capital flows involved in the production process to investment in fixed assets, especially the built environment;

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[3] One gap in the literature is a lack of research that investigates whether there are various forms or spatial characteristics of waterfront redevelopment that can be associated with 'top-down' versus 'bottom-up' forces.

waterfront redevelopment is in part a response to economic cycles that encourage businesses to switch capital into the secondary circuit; (Harvey 1985, Feagin 1987, Beauregard 1991). Many urban waterfronts are now bejeweled with dockside office towers for the service and information labor force, up-market housing for the increasing ranks of the well-heeled, and wharves of distraction for global tourism. The transformation of San Francisco's urban waterfront, while it now has some of these features, has been slower and has produced a somewhat different morphology: the Port has no office towers, housing has been built in only one place, hotels are absent, and there has been an emphasis on public access to and movement along the waterfront. While this study is not a comparison of port developments, the point to be made here is that, as will be shown, while faced with similar top-down forces, San Francisco has produced a notably different redevelopment pattern as a result of particular local conditions and bottom-up forces.

Riley and Shurmer-Smith also include the state, or nation, as a top-down force. Their discussion focuses on national governments and the geographical impacts (theoretically, anyway) of a-spatial political party ideologies. One of their examples was the fear in Britain of having to rely on Middle Eastern oil, which sparked financial support for the construction of oil refineries in Britain in the early 1980s. In the U.S., Federal funding for highway construction and programs such as ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, now TEA-21) influence the geography of transportation infrastructure which translates into advantages for those port cities

whose inter-modal connections improve. Also, Federal grants have been awarded directly to port authorities.

Federal real estate policy is also an important issue in waterfront development planning, for instance when military bases and other Federal holdings are slated for transfer to local authorities. Abernathy and Roth (1980) have analyzed local and regional waterfront planning as it relates to the transfer of federal real estate to non federal use in the San Francisco Bay Area. They focus on the interrelationship between regional legislation regarding the use of San Francisco Bay and the role of Federal out-leasing and surplusing procedures in the re-use of Federal land. Federal interpretation of public interest can differ from that articulated by local agencies or groups, significantly affecting the potential for and character of revitalization. This analysis will not consider Federally-generated influences because, for the most part, they have not been essential to the basic changes along San Francisco's waterfront.[4]

Individual states can exert top-down influence as well through acts of the legislature, fiscal policy, and the governor's office. This has been of particular importance in California, where for many decades the state controlled the Port of San Francisco. In concluding their discussion of top-down forces, Riley and Shurmer-Smith (p.44) state

[4] Two of the most important influences have been naval base closure and the 1920 Jones Act. The former has affected ship repair activities and the latter has restricted San Francisco's cruise passenger market.

> ...that much of the refurbishment recently effected in the old ports has been undertaken by an amalgam of property companies, construction groups, financial consortia and manufacturing firms diversifying their portfolio, rather than by port authorities, simply underlines the crucial contemporary role of capital in waterfront redevelopment.

This broad assertion, however, is at odds with the contention that 'bottom-up' pressures also influence development, a contention they themselves make (as seen below).

Bottom-up Forces

The local scale is the realm of 'bottom-up' pressures. Still framing their discussion in Massey's terms Riley and Shurmer-Smith (1988) suggest that since localities have evolved differently, and react differently to events and conditions generated by government, capital, and society, unique areas are created, and so bottom-up forces vary from port to port. They state that "local decision-makers are not always *reactive*, the meek recipients of other's policies. Rather, they are capable of being *proactive*, influencing and possible directing the nature of change" (p.45), and they suggest that local decision-makers can be "waterfront gatekeepers." Nevertheless, if they conceive bottom-up pressures more as the ability of local power to bargain with 'top-down forces' and other local actors, including unions and port authorities, rather than as originators or controllers of change.

Tweedale (1988) also ascribes only limited powers to localities. For him, local authorities or community groups may win "planning gains" such as the inclusion of

affordable housing or community facilities, but this represents only some local variation in otherwise common forms of redevelopment. Desfor et al. (1988) in an analysis of Toronto's Harbourfront find a somewhat stronger role for local actors: "details of the market-driven redevelopment of the waterfront, such as its pace, extent, and composition, are mediated by the particularities of the local political system" (p.110). Sieber (1991) stresses the power of the elite, who can be deeply involved in initiating redevelopment because of they have access to and can manipulate significant sources of capital and financing mechanisms.[5] Generally, however, as will be argued in this study, these accounts do not adequately define the nature and extent of the power of local actors and agencies, who can initiate development and *control* the nature of waterfront revitalization, both in form and location.

Several policy-based accounts of waterfront redevelopment have been fairly sensitive to 'bottom-up' pressures, though they are not necessarily referred to as such by their authors. Gilliam (1980) has suggested that the 'mystique' of San Francisco Bay has galvanized both the general population and local political agencies to combat development. Merrifield (1992) concludes an analysis of the failure of London's Canary Wharf project by saying that, in the end, it is through local people and local, progressive politics that the power to generate alternative development is found. On yet another tack, Gordon (1997a) suggests that because waterfront development

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[5] The elite represent a problem for the simple dichotomy of top-down and bottom-up. Without fairly in-depth analysis, it is difficult to place them in the framework: they are local, working for their own parochial interests, and they can be the localized points of contact for larger forces.

projects occur over long periods of time, they are especially sensitive to changes in the political environment, requiring continued public support to survive. Gordon argues that there is a convergence in development politics which "over the past two decades is a result of globally mobile investment capital and local attempts to use increasingly scarce public funds to maximize leverage in attracting private investment" (p. 65). Office development is a major aspect of all four of Gordon's case studies and as he points out, the rationale for development is based on the unmitigated need for economic success. Gordon's point is supported by Beauregard (1991) and Merrifield (1992) who maintain that office construction is often associated with successful development, and is an indicator of global capital investment. The implication is that there is a homogenization of form and function in waterfront development that results from global economic trends that respond to similar local needs. This study will demonstrate that for San Francisco this has not been the case, and the difference is in the role and power of local actors, agents, and structures.

Analyses which consider local factors in waterfront redevelopment, such as Gordon's, sometimes suffer from a lack of clear definitions of the entities involved, from unclear descriptions of land ownership, and from abstracted discussion of relevant policy. Without a clear picture of such local conditions, it is difficult to portray their importance to the revitalization process. This is especially important because not only do different cities and regions have different political structures, but within a given locality priorities, goals, methods, and powers, vary greatly among political entities. Variations in planning priorities and policy goals can influence the

nature of redevelopment projects, which underscores the local role in promulgating or restricting waterfront change - a major point of this study

Furthermore, there are a host of local actors and agencies, including individual gatekeepers, such as agency heads or commissioners, activists, neighborhood organizations, environmental and business organizations, and other special interest groups that comprise local or bottom-up forces. Not only are these actors and agencies part of the local power structure that contends with outside pressure, but they struggle with one another over development issues; some may even be a point of focus for external agents. Their collective nature and roles can be kaleidoscopic. To identify and parse them in a fashion sufficient to understanding the planning and development process requires analysis of details and, as will be argued here, a historical approach to the subject.

It is important to recognize the variations on how top-down and bottom-up forces interact. First, they are not always in opposition, though frequently portrayed as such. For instance, if any development is to proceed, it requires both willing developers and the availability of capital (or substantial public funding). Second, their relationship can vary over time. A top-down force may create a condition to which local actors take some time to react, and some local conditions develop which require top-down forces to adjust. Starting from an earlier point in time and working forward reveals both shifts in balances between forces - one or the other may be prevalent at any given time, or different elements of either may be the 'force of the moment.' Thus, to understand the varying nature of their interactions requires an historical

perspective. Third, some actors or agencies may be both top-down and bottom-up, making it difficult to adhering rigorously to the duality expressed in this framework.

WATERFRONT/BUILT ENVIRONMENT/LANDSCAPE

The major goal of this dissertation is to describe and explain the interplay of various forces in some detail and to show how they interact over time to create San Francisco's waterfront landscape. Particular attention is paid to the complex role of local actors and agents; the devil, they say, is in the details. This discussion, and the remainder of the study, is based on observations of top-down and bottom-up forces that show them to be more complex than Riley and Shurmer-Smith envisaged them in their model (Figure 2, p. 14). A framework that represents this complexity is proposed here and is illustrated in Figure 3. This model attempts to capture the relationships that exists among top-down and bottom-up forces, their interaction with local conditions, and the changes that may occur over time. At any point, one particular top-down or bottom-up force, or combination of forces may have the most sway. Both top-down and bottom-up forces contend with local conditions, for instance site and situation. But local conditions include more abstract elements as well, such as the general political, cultural, and social characteristics that differentiate places. More specifically, San Francisco's history as a politically progressive city, its status as a charter city, its strong-mayor form of local government (less strong after recent initiatives), its cultural cache, its ability to produce innovation, and its strong identification with its neighborhoods, are examples of local conditions that influence

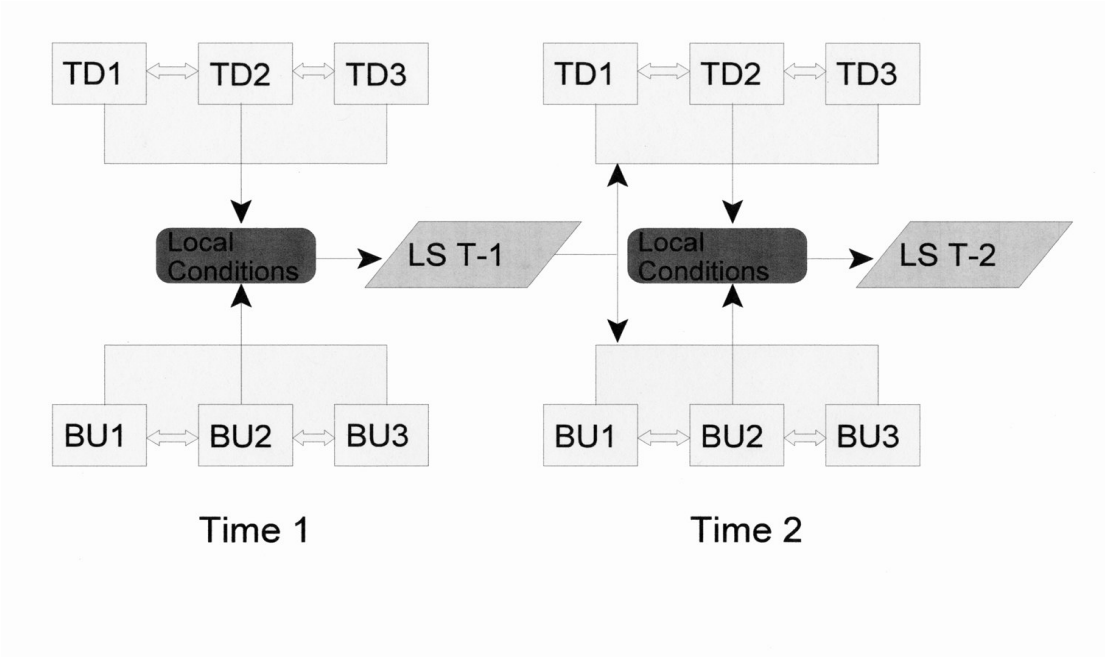

Figure 3: Alternative framework for top-down, bottom-up analysis. TD = top-down, BU = bottom-up, LS = Landscape at different times. Source: author.

various forces. Changes in the relationship among forces are reflected in the landscape, which itself influences how forces and their interplay may resolve themselves. Landscape thus becomes an important concept because it embodies both the physical thing observed - the built environment - and the processes involved in its creation.

Insofar as this is a study of the interplay among sets of forces that results in material change to a built environment, which in turn has implications beyond material manifestation, it is also a study of the transformation of a landscape. At one level, as John Fraser Hart (1995) has said, a landscape is what one sees. Here, that means the built environment. A waterfront is comprised of finger piers, buildings, formal open space, pathways, container terminals, and other physical or material elements. Over

the last several decades, urbanists have generated a substantial literature on the built environment, which is conceived of variously as architecture, statistics regarding buildings, and the mass of artifacts that comprise a city. To a degree, in-depth discussion of the built environment has been left to architects and planners, but sociologists and geographers have become more keenly interested in linking discussion of the built environment to urban theory, taking into account social relations and economic systems, and thereby relating the built environment to 'invisible' processes and so enfolding it more completely within general urban research, and more particularly the landscape concept.

Ball, for instance, (1986) has suggested that the built environment has been restricted to specialized areas within urban studies, and argues that it is far too important to be allowed to remain so isolated. Ball states (1987, 447):

> The most obvious way that people know they are in a city or town is that buildings are everywhere...It is difficult to see how the creation of the built environment can be avoided when examining housing provision; the cyclical patterns of office development...and in comprehending the very shapes and forms of cities and towns.

In this particular piece, Ball's own attempt to link the built environment to urban theory was to develop an understanding of the social relations of building provision. In an not entirely dissimilar observation, Ford (1994, 3) has suggested that architects, planners, and geographers have in essence been talking past one another, that "space must be fleshed out with architecture if we are to develop meaningful models of the real world."

The built environment has become more imbued with urban theory in a number of ways. Some have brought semiotic analysis of buildings into their attempt to understand urban forms (Goss 1993, Gottdeiner 1995). Related to this have been studies of skylines, from which forms of power relations, the political economy, or signs of cultural and economic change are 'read' (Plotnicov 1987, Domosh 1988, Ford 1992). New built forms are also held to 'embody' changes in social relations or reflect social and economic divisions (Short 1989a, Sorkin 1992, Mosher et al. 1996). Others examine the built environment for evidence of changes in economic systems and suggest that capital restructuring, for instance, will result in the development of certain urban forms such as office developments or chain-store anchored malls (Ducatel and Blomley 1990, Beauregard 1991, Feagin 1998). Such treatment of the built environment has led to a more satisfying kind of discussion, with the result of making it a more significant part of examining and explaining urban structure (see Edward Relph 1987; Sharon Zukin 1988; Jon Goss 1988, 1993, 1996; David Harvey 1992; and Larry Ford 1994).

However, many investigations into the built environment have not properly considered bottom-up forces or their relation to top-down forces (Knox 1991, 1993). In particular, geographers who work to meld urban theory and analysis of the built environment often give the role of planning and the local character of development dynamics short shrift. This is puzzling as the planning process is one of the most important sources of local power and serves to mediate conflict over land use. It is

essential to urban physical development, and even to issues of social justice and equality.

The study of built environments invigorated by analysis that goes beyond the material surface leads one quite directly to a more complex idea of landscape than, for instance, Hart's. The built environment is the physical, visible aspect of an urban landscape. But a landscape is more than the physical characteristics of an area, it is imbued with economic, social, and cultural processes. As Jakle and Wilson (1992, xvii) have said, "landscapes simultaneously structure and reflect human endeavor. They are recipients of forces whose implantation reproduces and rearranges society. Landscapes thus symbolize and construct...."

This study posits that landscapes both influence the character of, and are created by, the interaction of external forces with local agents and agencies. Thus, "top-down" forces such as change in technology and economic restructuring do not act as unchecked powers; they must contend both with local conditions, such as site and situation, and "bottom-up forces," ranging from local government to neighborhood activism. It is the confluence of these sets of forces that generates urban transformations and determines the nature of change; a landscape is negotiated. Approached in this fashion, landscape in this study can been understood as a form of dialectical landscape, which Don Mitchell (2002, 383) argues is "crucial to understanding how the landscape *works*."

The next chapter begins with a brief history of the Port and then describes the Port as it is today by discussing its physical features, something of its nature as a

bureaucracy, and by making some observations about the Port as a place. Describing the Port's current built environment serves as a starting point for this study. Chapter Three begins the historical analysis by discussing the Port as it was just after World World II. Together, Chapters Two and Three create an inverted before and after framework that reveals how the waterfront's morphology, the visible landscape, has changed. The remaining chapters describe and explain the process of that change.

Chapter 2: Introduction to the Port

INSTANT CITY/INSTANT PORT

The City and Port of San Francisco can attribute much of their success to a basic geographic quality - site. San Francisco occupies the head of a dramatic peninsula at the mouth of an expansive bay, and the port, which stretches for seven

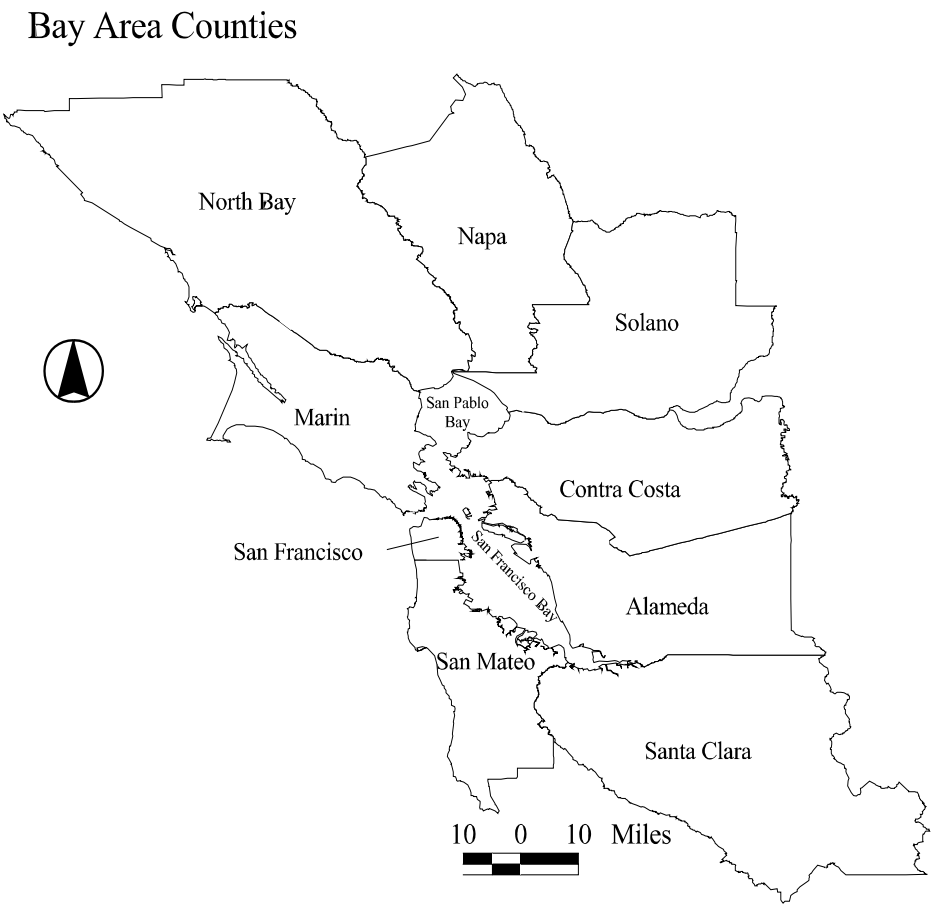

Figure 4 San Francisco Bay Area counties. Source: San Francisco Planning Department

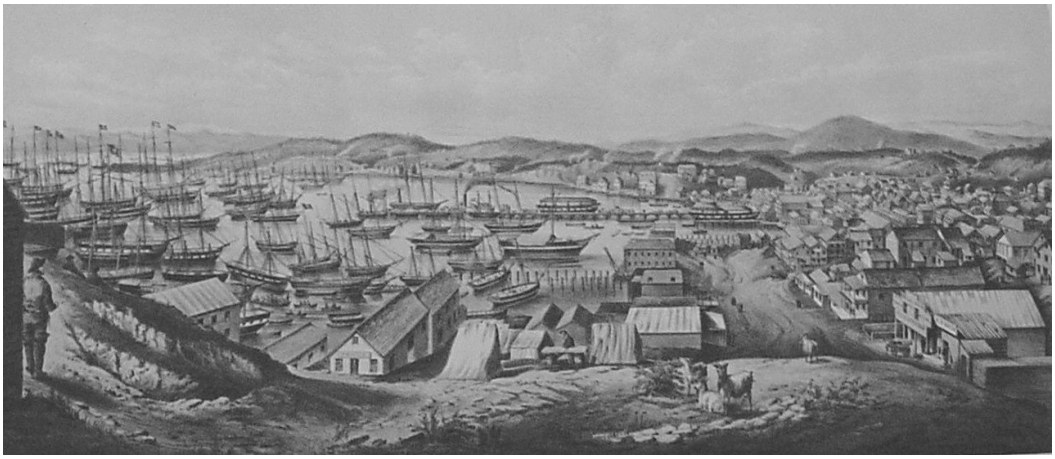

Figure 5 San Francisco 1850. View is southward over Yerba Buena Cove, what would become downtown San Francisco. Image donated to the public domain by Ron S. Filion, http://www.zpub.com/sf50/sf/hgviews.htm.

miles along the northern and eastern sides of the city, is blessed with one of the deepest natural channels in North America (Figure 2). The American flag was raised over the customs house in 1846 and the first public pier to jut out from shore into bay water was constructed in 1848, just one year before the Gold Rush (Page 1977). The port and city's phenomenal growth began the next year; in fact San Francisco has been called an 'instant city' (Barth 1980, Godfrey1997), and that description fits the port equally well. Not only did they grow quickly, but as with most port-cities, their relationship was umbilical. The first piers were built at the ends of east-west streets and the city itself grew from the waterfront area and spread inland. Part of what makes the city's physical patterns distinctive is that the street grid terminates in piers arranged along a curved waterfront. This physical connectivity was foundational, both literally and figuratively:

> During the first years of the Gold Rush, most ships entering the bay were deserted by their crews and anchors were dropped, and the vessels were then either beached or allowed to remain at anchor indefinitely. Wharves were extended to these ships and cross streets were built on piles; these piers and streets enclosed blocks of water lots and the abandoned ships...Eventually the water lots were filled in with earth and developed for commercial activities." (Bolles 1968, p.19)

For the next hundred and twenty years the destinies of port and city would be closely tied. "The waterfront has been San Francisco's principle link to the Bay Area, the nation, and the world - it was the City's "front door" (Bolles 1966, 22)

Not long after the port was established, when the city admitted it could not afford to build a needed bulkhead, it was learned that officials had been skimming from freight revenues (Riesenberg 1940). In 1863, corruption and graft led to an extended struggle over waterfront property ownership which ended in the Port being brought under the authority of the Board of State Harbor Commissioners by the Oulton Law; the Board acquired control of all waterfront properties by 1871 (Page 1977). The Board of State Harbor Commissioners would retain authority over the Port until 1969. The Port of San Francisco has been the only port in the state of California not directly administered by and responsible to the local jurisdiction.

For many decades after the Gold Rush, the growth of San Francisco and its port were synonymous, and much as the Gold Rush was responsible for San Francisco's instantaneousness, the port itself has been integral to San Francisco's longer-term growth. However, their two fates have not always been completely entwined. For instance, while the city was all but destroyed by the earthquake and

conflagration of 1906, the port sustained little damage, and the often militant ILWU strikes of the 1930s were significant particularly for the port. Nevertheless, brimming with activity, port and city together reached the early post-WWII years as a metropolis of international significance.

If the initial rise of San Francisco and its port were instant, the Port's decline, beginning in the early 1950s and accelerating in the 1960s, was equally fast. As the hubbub of activity and the various sights, sounds, and smells that had piqued imaginations fast dissipated, so did rotting piers dispel romantic notions of the port. New methods of shipping and competition from other bay area ports, especially the Port of Oakland, rapidly revealed the disadvantages of a waterfront located at the edge of a hilly peninsula. The destiny of the port began to uncouple from that of the city. Site and situation became a curse for the port, but a blessing for the city. The city managed to build, literally and symbolically, on its various physical features, and to take advantage of its stunning location. San Francisco's self-defined function of being the 'gateway to the Pacific' became linked to its financial and cultural character, and not the port. While the port struggled to adjust to changing conditions, the city successfully connected itself to the world in new ways, signaled dramatically by a surge in downtown growth. By the 1970s, San Francisco had become a post-industrial city, partly through processes associated with globalization, while the port stagnated, nearly dispossessed of its historic and once romanticized ties to the world. Ironically, part of downtown San Francisco's transformation was rooted in the growth of the

financial and insurance firms which had begun by serving the many, once thriving, maritime and related industries. The city became known more for finance, cable cars, and counter-culture than for the port that established it.

The twin processes of port decline and the city's economic reorientation resulted in a physical disconnection between the city, especially the downtown, and the port, represented most notably by the construction of the Embarcadero Freeway in the 1950s. Moreover, new growth, especially downtown, actually began to eat away at the maritime fabric of areas on and near the waterfront. A decade later, high-rise construction would begin to wipe out many old maritime and maritime-related businesses, from hiring halls to salvage companies to the city's produce market. Waterfront and port would no longer be synonymous, especially in parts of the northern waterfront where the city began to move closer to the water's edge in the 1960s. The disconnection between city and port was more than just economic, it was both functional and physical, that is to say, morphological.

The period between 1950 and the present was characterized by a struggle to find a new role for the Port - a struggle that, because of the power of a complex web of regulatory and planning agencies, has so far forestalled the kind of change other ports around the world have embraced. Only recently have the Port and city been able to reconnect in other than a piecemeal fashion, their fates once again becoming entangled. This was largely due to Proposition H, passed in 1990, which resulted in a port agency with a publically-informed mandate and a set of new development

policies, some of which have been implemented, likely to help San Francisco cement the dubious distinction of being a world-class city. Yet, the waterfront's role in this regard may yet not be as the site of massive development projects, finding its re-connection with the city as just an extension of downtown. Rather, the Port may evolve into a place still oriented to the water, a place of public access, recreation, and perhaps for living, and a place emphasizing residents over tourists. The struggle over waterfront development in San Francisco embodies a key issue that the Port and city face (as do other cities around the world) - who is it for? Residents or tourists, convention-goers or the working residents of the city, commerce and industry or consumption?

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The remainder of this chapter will be concerned with a description of the port today. The intent is to provide a level of detail that will serve to orient the reader, enable comparison with descriptions of the port in earlier times, and communicate a sense of place. The chapter will also serve as a simple glossary, introducing some of the basic elements of the waterfront and familiarizing the reader with the regulatory background that is crucial to the Port's functioning and, therefore, to the character of the waterfront. So, two main reasons to begin with a description of the port today are first, that it thoroughly defines the object of study and, second, that it generates the primary question that drives the study - why is the port as we see it today?

The purpose of subsequent discussion of the Port in the 1950s is not just to recreate a past landscape or describe past events, but to find clues that will explain the origins of the Port's current contours. Again, the hypothesis is that the Port's present waterfront is rooted in and manifests certain elements (visible and invisible - material and process) of its past. This is not intended as a postmodern snub of traditional linear narrative, rather it is to emphasize that a landscape is both past and present, and to a degree, a foreshadowing of its own future.

THE PORT OF SAN FRANCISCO TODAY

San Francisco's urban waterfront, as distinct from areas long devoted to beaches or open space, is the domain of the Port of San Francisco. In this document, references to the Port and the waterfront are essentially equivalent. When the term waterfront is used to mean more than just Port property, the context will clarify the usage. The Port is a city agency responsible for seven and a half mile stretch of waterfront that outlines that part of the city that curves from Aquatic Park in the north to India Basin in the south. The Port controls about 730 acres of land which includes all piers, pier-related structures, bulkhead buildings, all seawall lots, and the Embarcadero and other roads within Port jurisdiction (SFPD 1997, 110). [1] Port lands comprise a thin band, extending inland at most several blocks, and then in only a few places. Its largest parcels are either fill or piers. Nevertheless, Port lands include

[1] Recent transfers to Catellus, the developer of the Mission Bay redevelopment project, have reduced the total.

some of the most valuable real estate in California, if not the country. Along with its piers, one of the Port's most notable features is the Embarcadero Roadway, a 200 foot-wide public access roadway that runs along the northern half of the Port's waterfront. In this study, the term 'waterfront' refers to areas within Port jurisdiction as well as nearby, inland blocks.

The Port maintains a wide variety of activities on its property, including maritime, warehousing, commercial, restaurants, shops, and other retail. The port uses several, somewhat overlapping terms to describe these activities:[2]

Maritime: A general term used to describe industrial, commercial, or recreational activities related to waterborne commerce, navigation, and recreation, including but not limited to: cargo shipping, ship repair, ferries and excursion boats, cruises, recreational boating, historic ships, fishing industry, berthing.

Maritime Office: Administrative and business functions for any maritime industry including but not limited to: import/export businesses, legal and professional services.

Maritime Support Services: Ancillary functions needed to support maritime activities including but not limited to: tug and tow operations, bar pilots, ship chandlers, associated parking and maintenance, equipment storage, repair and warehouse facilities, environmental services, Foreign Trade Zone and Port maintenance.

Water-Dependant Activities: Activities, businesses or industries which depend on a waterfront location to function, such as cargo-related activities, berthing of historic, ceremonial or other ships, ferry and excursion boat operations,

[2] All definitions are from the Waterfront Land Use Plan (PSF 2000, 207-209)

> fishing industry uses, maritime support uses, recreational boating and water use, ship repair, and water-taxis.

Cargo shipping uses also include terminals, berths, rail and truck access, warehouses, and other, related support services. The term 'maritime-related' is also used herein, and refers to both maritime support services described above, but also to salvaging companies, sail-makers, water-related organizations (such as seamen's homes or the ILWU), stevedoring companies, cargo-handling equipment manufacturers and retailers. To some degree, the kinds of activities or businesses captured by the terms 'maritime support' or 'maritime-related' depends on the time period to which they pertain.

The range of the Port's operations are reflected by the agency's internal organization, which includes a number a number of divisions: maritime, real estate, engineering and maintenance, operations, and planning and development.[3] The Port does not run its facilities; all commercial and industrial facilities and their operation, from warehouses to restaurants to container cranes, are leased to private firms (the Port purchases equipment, such as container cranes, but they are operated by stevedoring companies or the shippers that lease the pier and its facilities). The Port does provide maintenance and police and fire protection.

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[3] A planning function was not started until in the early 1980s. Soon after being hired in 1989, Port Executive Director Michael Huerta reorganized the agency and created the Planning and Community Affairs Division, later renamed the Planning and Development.

The Port's functions are essentially spatially polarized. Most of its commercially leased space (especially restaurants), its cruise ship and historic boat moorings, and commercial fishing facilities are located in the northern part of the waterfront, while industrially-oriented maritime activities, including most cargo-handling, are located in the southernmost area of the waterfront. The central part of the Port's waterfront is in a state of flux, dominated by Mission Bay, a massive 315-acre redevelopment project coextensive with Port property. As this and other projects are implemented, the central waterfront will change.

The Port was transferred to the city from the state in 1969, an event of much import to be discussed later. The 'Port of San Francisco' is the name of the city agency and also refers to land in its jurisdiction; the Port Commission is its governing body. Before the transfer, Port of San Francisco's governing body was called then the Board of State Harbor Commissioners (BSHC), and later the Port Authority. In this study, the 'Port of San Francisco' refers to the entire entity - the agency, its land, and its governing body. The Port of San Francisco is not a typical San Francisco city agency in that it is quasi-independent. It does not receive any money from or contribute any money to the City's general fund. Rather, it depends on revenues from shipping and shipping-related activities, commercial leases, and other income-generating activities to continue its operations (including recent increases in revenues derived from filming activities). The Port's fiscal separation from the city has often translated into more general separatist inclinations. For instance, in a measure of

connectivity only recently of any meaning, Port staff e-mail addresses are "sfport.com" not "sfgov.org" - the standard citywide employee address.

The Port's decision-making body is the five member Port Commission. Members are appointed by the mayor and subject to approval by the Board of Supervisors. But the Port Commission does not have an entirely free hand. The Board of Supervisors approves its budget and any leases that would generate more than one million dollars if the term of the lease is for more than 10 years.[4] The full extent of the Board's authority over the Port is unclear and has been subject to City Attorney opinions and occasional court cases. The San Francisco Planning Commission has some regulatory authority over Port lands through the San Francisco *General Plan* and *Planning Code*[5]. If a proposed use or development or other activity requiring approval is maritime, sanctioned by the State's doctrine of public trust (explained below), or is in an industrial zone, the Planning Commission generally does not become involved. Otherwise, the Planning Commission has three methods of regulating Port property: first, non-maritime uses require a conditional use permit; second, the uses in question must comply with land use designations (zoning); and third, building height and bulk

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[4] While it cannot reduce the Port's budget, it can prevent funds from being used.

[5] The *General Plan* is the city's primary collection of planning policies and objectives. It is organized into 'Elements' that address issues citywide in scope such as Residence, Transportation, and Recreation and Open Space, and 'Area Plans' that focus on particular parts of the city. The *Planning Code* is an oft-amended document containing the specific rules and regulations intended to implement many of the policies set forth in the *General Plan*. Changes to the *General Plan* are approved by the Planning Commission and ultimately by the Board of Supervisors.

must comply with the Planning Department's Height and Bulk Districts, as indicated in the Zoning Map.[6] However, as a practical matter of co-ordination, the Planning Department and other city agencies are involved in policy review, design analysis, and implementation of Port projects.

The Port Commission cannot be directly affected by a city voter initiative except where such an initiative would call for approvals from entities other than the Port Commission. That is, if the initiative called for another agency with some jurisdiction over the port to do something that would impact the Port, then the initiative would affect the port (SFPD 1997, 76). For instance, Proposition H, mentioned earlier, required that the Board of Supervisors request the Port to initiate a planning process. Port activities are also constrained by various regional, state, and federal agencies.

THE BURTON ACT, THE PUBLIC TRUST, AND THE PORT

Port administration and control were transferred from the San Francisco Port Authority (a state agency) to the city (via the Port Commission) by the 1968 Burton Act and accompanying Transfer Agreement. The transfer took affect in 1969. The City was thereby required to create its own Port Commission "to use, conduct, operate, maintain, manage, regulate, improve and control the Port within the requirements of State law" (SFPD 1997, 4) The Burton Act required that all revenue generated by Port

[6] Technically, the requirement for a conditional use permit for non-maritime uses is through the establishment of Special Use Districts as defined in the *Planning Code*.

facilities be used only for Port purposes, protecting it financially from the reach of city officials and thus helping to ensuring that the Port would not serve solely the purposes of the city.

This is important because most of the land under Port jurisdiction is still owned by the state, which has retained the right to revoke the transfer. Port land is, therefore, actually held in trust for the people of California and is under the jurisdiction of the State Lands Commission (SLC). When California joined the Union in 1850, it became the owner of all land underlying navigable waterways, including tidelands, to be held in trust by the state for the benefit of the people of California. Port land consists primarily of tidelands that were filled in by the state to build docks, wharves, and what ever else was needed to promote commercial activity in San Francisco's harbor. The SLC is the agency which regulates the use of trust lands, which again include most of the Port's property, and it regulates them according to the public trust doctrine, which is part of the California Constitution. In turn, public trust doctrine defines the allowable uses of submerged land and tideland areas. Thus, as will be seen later, public trust doctrine plays an important role in how the waterfront has and has not changed.[7] The discussion will now turn to a description of these lands and the various basic elements of the Port's physical infrastructure.

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[7] The Port of San Francisco is not the only one subject to the SLC and the public trust requirements. It is perhaps the only, once major, port struggling on the west coast, and thus the only one that might benefit from being able to develop some of those uses precluded by the SLC and public trust.

THE PORT'S PHYSICAL WATERFRONT

Piers and Seawall Lots

Port land consists primarily of piers, roads, and seawall lots. The continuous, curving edge that characterizes the Port's waterfront was established by the construction of an extensive seawall, completed in 1916. Seawall lots are formed by the intersection of the seawall and the city's street grid. Piers include not just the traditional long wharves (finger piers) that extend into the bay, but also "marginal wharves" that run parallel to the shoreline or seawall, usually designated by '½ ' as in Pier 1 ½. Many of the wooden finger piers that for so long characterized San Francisco's waterfront, fewer and fewer of which remain, were built between 1912 and 1930, primarily to service ferryboat and break bulk shipping activities. Technically, piers are pile-supported structures. Thus, while the modern facilities in the southern waterfront are designated by pier numbers, for instance Pier 96, they are not really piers because they are essentially concrete slabs built primarily on fill. The Port currently has about 58 named or numbered piers, including finger piers, marginal wharves, and modern terminals, which range in size from the 6,000 square-foot Pier 23 ½ to the 2.8 million square-foot Pier 80. Waterside property, which includes piers and bulkhead buildings, comprises fifty-five percent of Port land (SFPD 1997, 111).

Most of Port property on the landside, that is most anything that is not a pier or bulkhead building, consists of seawall lots and roads. The Port's seawall lots are primarily bay fill, that is, they are parcels of land created as the City was extended into

the Bay with a mixture of dredged material and earth and rock taken from nearby hills[8]. Fill was used purposely to extend the city's land mass, solidify the waterfront, and to dispose of excavation materials. Seawall lots are designated both by Port-assigned numbers as well as city Assessor's Block numbers. They range in size from 2800 square feet to 2.1 million square feet and, in the northern waterfront particularly, are triangular or oddly-shaped because they are formed where the end of the rectangular street grid meets the curvature of the Embarcadero roadway.

Structures

There are many different structures on Port land, including piers, container cranes, grain elevators, and some 270 buildings, including warehouses and the Ferry Building. Some of the most impressive structures are pierhead and bulkhead buildings. Pierhead buildings demarcate the entrance to a pier, much like a portcullis, and bulkhead buildings span the area between piers or pierhead buildings. Once, these buildings contained maritime businesses or supported maritime activities. Now many are used primarily as maritime office or by architects and other professionals. Covered sheds or warehouses are found on many piers, with and with out pierhead buildings. About twenty percent of Port land is covered by buildings (SFPD 1997, 111). Buildings are typically one to three stories tall (roughly 10 to 30 feet); pierhead and

[8] The first seawall was built in 1869. Its serrated edge caused silt to become trapped, so a new seawall was completed between 1878 and 1916. This old seawall is now underground and runs along the Embarcadero (Bolles 1968, 3)

bulkhead structures generally about 50 feet tall and pier sheds generally reach 33 feet.

Figure 6 Bulkhead buildings north of the Ferry Building. Photograph by author.

Planning Areas

The division of the waterfront into geographical sub-areas is a little inconsistent. The city's *General Plan*, authored and maintained by the Planning Department, contains three Area Plans that break the waterfront into the Northeastern Waterfront, the Central Waterfront, and South Bayshore. The Port also divides the waterfront into three sections, northern, central and southern. The division of the waterfront into the three areas is based on the physical and functional differences between them; and they are readily demarcated by notable features: the Bay Bridge separates the northern waterfront from the central waterfront which is itself separated from the southern waterfront by the Central Basin. The recently adopted Waterfront Land Use Plan created the five sub-divisions used in this study: Fisherman's Wharf, the Northeast Waterfront, the Ferry Building Waterfront, South Beach/China Basin, the Southern Waterfront (see Figure 8). The real difference between the two Departments' schemes is that the General Plan's waterfront-related Area Plans include land outside of Port jurisdiction. The following description of the waterfront moves from north to south, using the

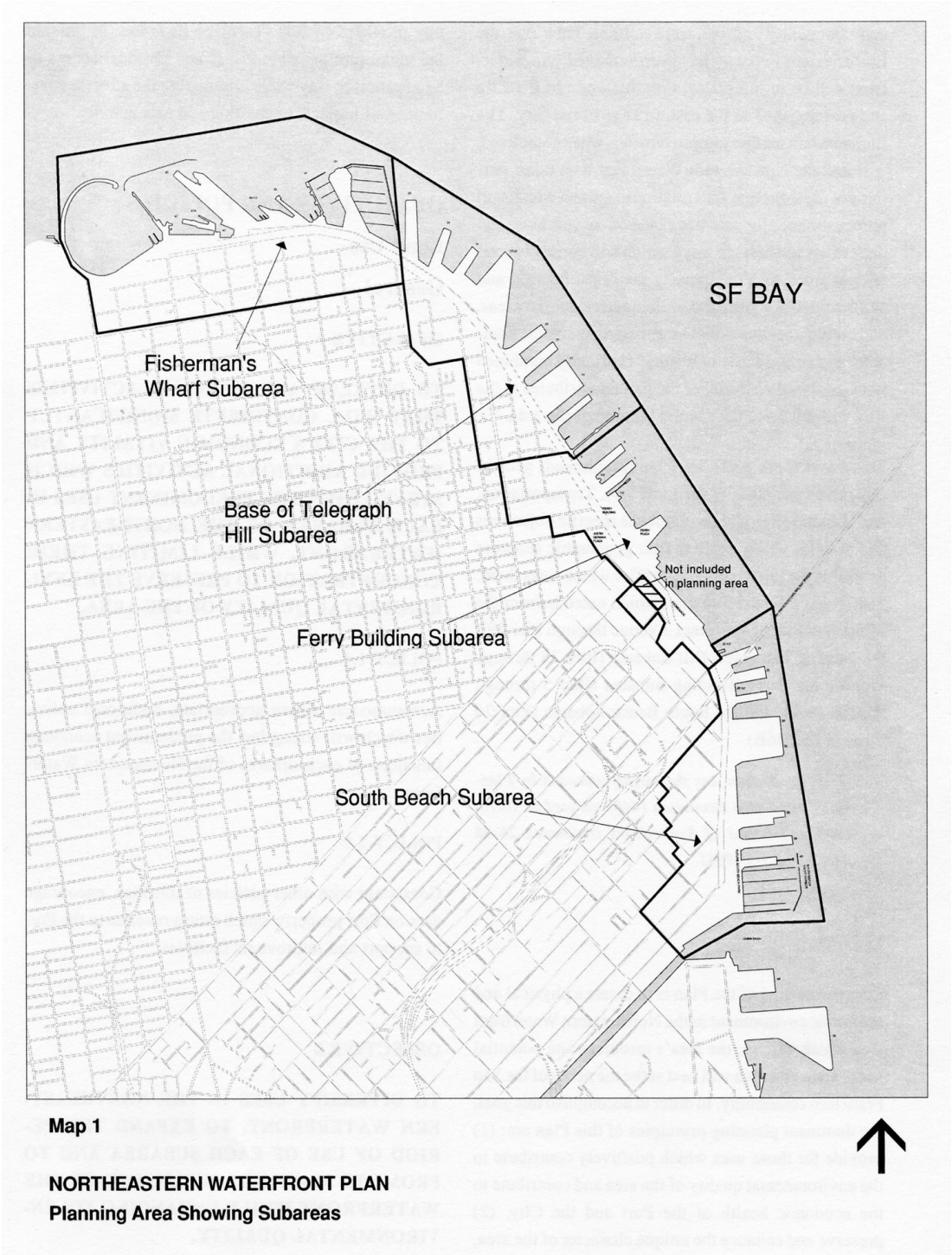

Figure 7 Subareas of the northern waterfront. Source: San Francisco Planning Department.

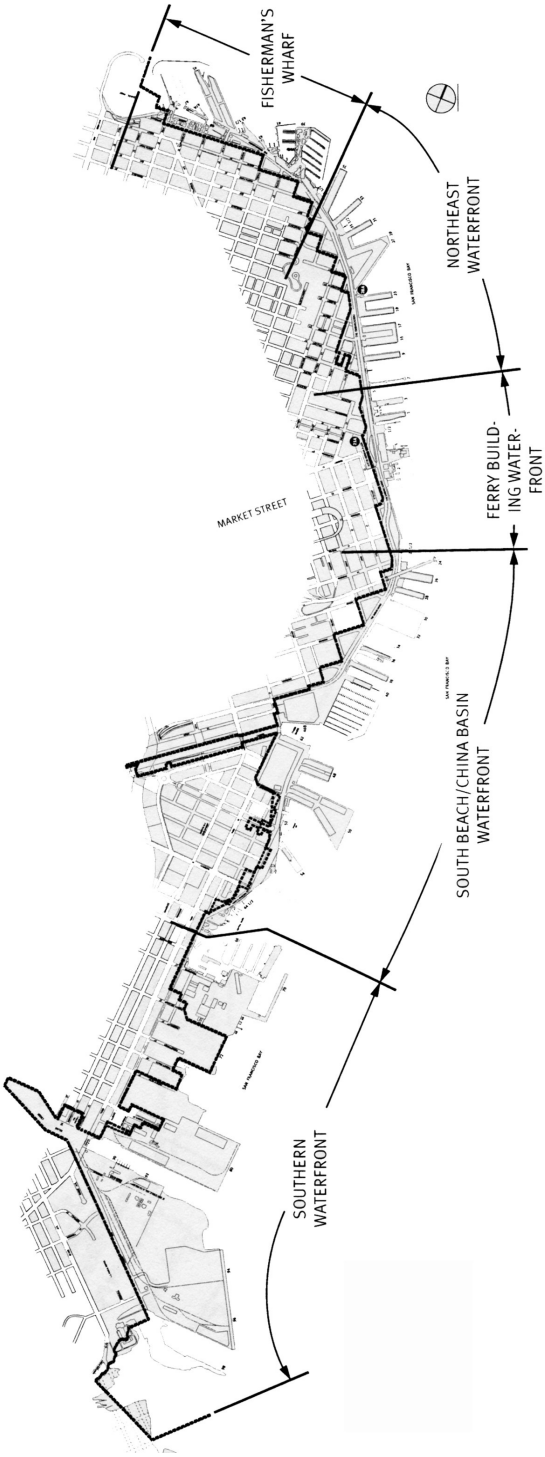

Figure 8 Waterfront Land Use Plan sub-areas. The solid line indicates the extent of Port Property. Source: Port of San Francisco.

Waterfront Land Use Plan sub-areas as organizational units, and takes some factual information from the plan.

The Northern Waterfront

The northern waterfront extends from Fisherman's Wharf to the Bay Bridge. This area served as a beachhead for men seeking their fortunes in the goldfields, and the commerce that grew to support the Gold Rush sparked the early growth of the port. The first permanent pier was constructed in 1847 at what is now the corner of Broadway and Battery Streets (now a number of blocks inland, near the heart of the financial district) and soon thereafter the area became the focus of shipping, fishing, other maritime-related activities, and industry (Bolles 1968, 3). Today, the northern waterfront is most known for tourist attractions at the wharf, the Ferry Building, which still stands as a beacon to residents, visitors, and ferry commuters, and the Embarcadero Roadway. The Embarcadero is now the alignment for an extension of the city's light rail and historic street car lines, and is bedecked with $30,000 palm trees selected form Los Angeles neighborhoods.

Fisherman's Wharf

The Fisherman's Wharf area, which extends a little under a mile from just inside Aquatic Park on the north to Pier 39 on the south end (Figure 6), is characterized by recreation, tourism, and the activities of the fishing industry. One can

arrive here by cable car and leave by ferry to get to Alcatraz and Sausalito. Overall, Fisherman's Wharf is a cluttered, busy place, which, while very oriented to the Bay, manages to make the water somewhat difficult to approach in many places.

Aquatic Park is run by the City's Recreation and Parks Department; adjacent Port property is home to several water-oriented clubs. The Port's northern-most pier, the Hyde Street Pier, is home to the San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park, which has the largest concentration of historic ships in the U.S.. Moving south, one finds a collision of tourists and the still active fishing industry. Restaurants, shops, and art galleries spread along Jefferson Street, beneath which is the seawall, which running parallel to the Bay, and creep up the streets that lead away from the water. Street performers, artists, and homeless people line the sidewalks.

On the Bay side of Jefferson, nestled between the Hyde Street Pier and Pier 45 is the fishing fleet itself - once hundreds of boats strong. Tourist attractions and throngs of visitors hide the presence of the fish loading, packing, and processing that occurs in the sheds on Pier 45 and in Fish Alley, the historic center of the fishing industry at the Wharf. According to the Port, Pier 45 houses the largest concentration of commercial fish processors and distributors on the West Coast. Some of the buildings are in poor condition and in need of modernization, signs that the industry has seen better days. Still, the facilities here serve fishermen from well beyond the Bay - about eighteen million pounds per year of crab, salmon, herring, shrimp, squid, abalone, mackerel, and halibut, go through Fisherman's Wharf (SFPD 1997, 121).

The last significant feature of the area is Pier 39. It is a 'festival mall' built partly from the remains of adjacent piers. It attracts more visitors per year than any place in California, Disney Land excepted. Pier 39 is also home to a small-boat marina, and provides public access to the water and some open space. Other public areas include Waterfront Park, which runs between Piers 41 and 35, and fishing spots at the Pier 41 breakwater.

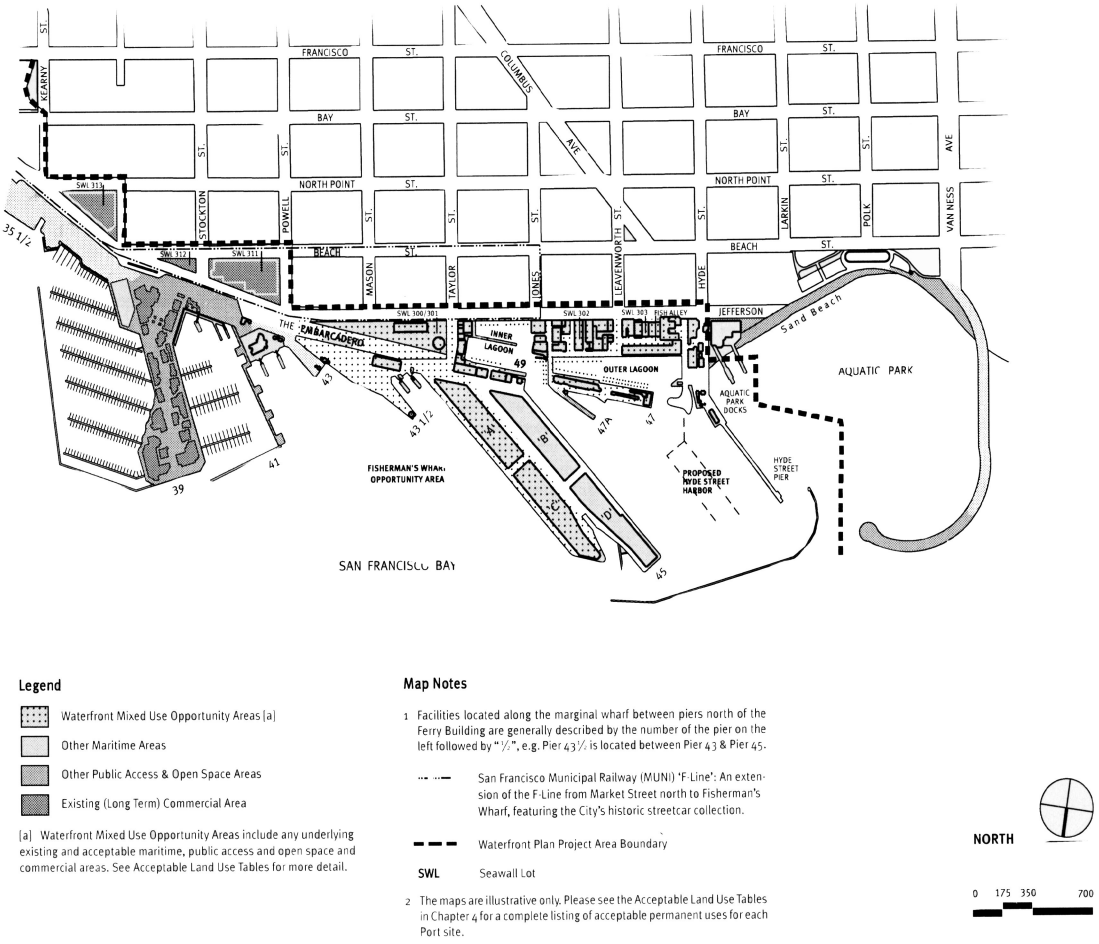

Figure 9 The Fisherman's Wharf Sub Area. Source: Port of San Francisco 2000, *Waterfront Land Use Plan.*

Though not within Port jurisdiction, the Cannery, once a Del Monte cannery, and Ghirardelli Square, an old mustard and chocolate factory, are in this area. Both are now indoor-outdoor malls poured into the shells of old industrial buildings as 'adaptive re-use.' They have formed a symbiotic relationship with the waterfront. Other nearby land uses include numerous hotels and motels, some housing, and scattered commercial and maritime business.

Northeast Waterfront

Gazing down from the wealthy aeries atop Telegraph Hill, one can see nearly all of the Northeast Waterfront sub-area, which for the most part lies sandwiched between the base of the hill and the Bay. The area curves for about 3/4 of a mile east and south from Pier 35 to Pier 7. The Northeast Waterfront is an area still in transition, though at the last stages of its metamorphosis. The Embarcadero Freeway ended here abruptly, touching down at Broadway until the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake led to its removal. Port property here contains a mix of open space, maritime activity, offices, various water-dependent activities, and a few maritime-related offices and warehouses.

At Pier 35 giant white cruise ships birth occasionally, disgorging passengers into the Port's passenger terminal. The next pier over, Pier 33, operates as a warehouse; its associated bulkhead building houses maritime and general offices. Pier 31 ½ , provides space for excursion boats - mostly for day trips or floating restaurant

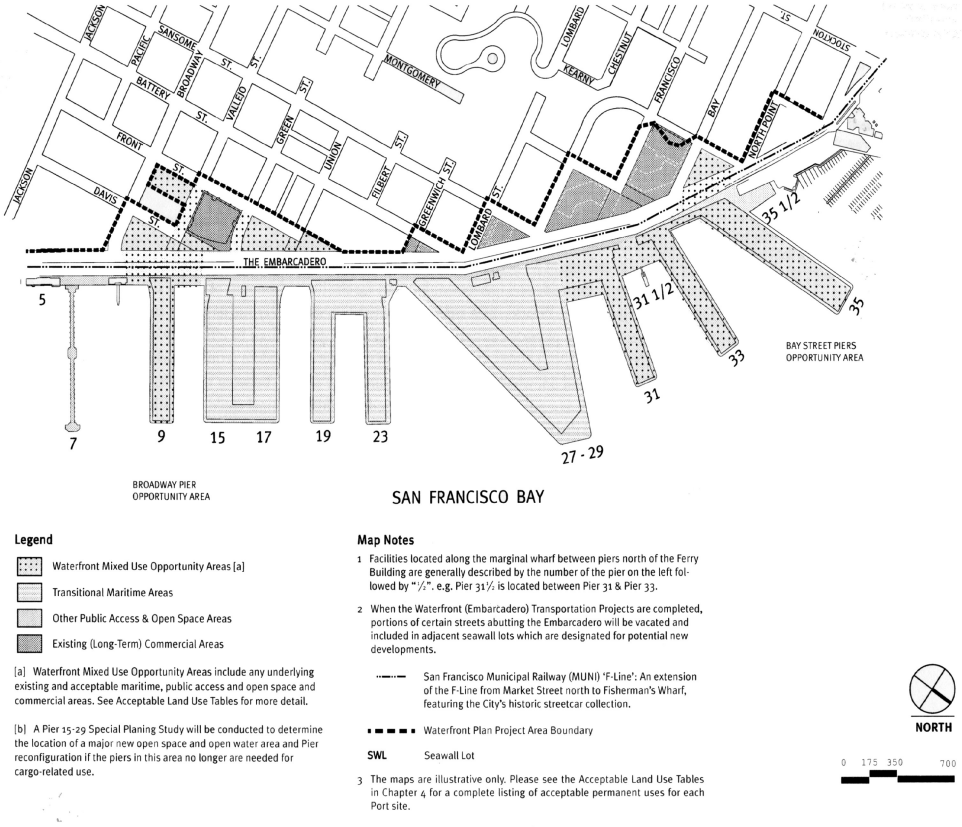

Figure 10 Northeast Waterfront Sub Area. Source: Port of San Francisco 2000, *Waterfront Land Use Plan.*

cruises. The remaining piers in the area still recall something of the industrial waterfront and more closely assume the form and function of a traditional finger pier waterfront than does Fisherman's Wharf. Massive rolls of newsprint, were, until very recently, unloaded at Pier 27-29. Piers 19-23 is currently the Port's Foreign Trade Zone and Piers 15-17 are also used for cargo-support warehousing and transhipment. Tug and tow boats are docked and maintained at Piers 13-15, and the San Francisco Bar Pilots Association has its headquarters at Pier 9.

This area is striking for the series of bulkhead and pierhead buildings that run its length, from Pier 35 to Pier 9. These structures, some architecturally significant, together with the extant maritime activities found here, lend to the area a sense of what it was once like. The last Pier in the area is Pier 7, an award-winning 900-foot public strolling and fishing pier dedicated in 1990. Recreational activities are in fact probably more noticeable to the casual observer than any remaining maritime-related uses. Skaters, strollers, and bikers pass in front of the piers along the Embarcadero on the Herb Caen Promenade in a steady stream between Fisherman's Wharf and the Bay Bridge (and beyond), particularly on the weekends. On the other side of the Embarcadero, facing the piers, the Port has a notable amount of land in seawall lots. Across from Piers 33 and 31, the Fog City Diner occupies Seawall Lot 319 (and for a while a spot in VISA commercials). Seawall Lot 318 is the site of the old Roundhouse, which used to serve the Beltline (or Belt Railway), the switching and spur system that linked the piers to the major rail company lines. The Belt Line Roundhouse, a 1913 landmark building, was converted into an office building in1985. Commercial buildings and parking occupy much of the rest of the area.

Adjacent to Port land are Levi Plaza, a significant retail and office development, and several residential enclaves, including the northern part of Golden Gateway. These developments, extending several blocks inland, form part of a nearly complete neighborhood of condominiums and brick warehouse spaces converted to office use where once much maritime-related industry and commerce thrived.

The Ferry Building Sub-Area

The Ferry Building waterfront is the smallest of the sub-areas, extending about 2/3 of a mile from Pier 5 (in earlier plans, Pier 7) to the base of the Bay Bridge (Figure 8). Almost all of the Port property here is over water (other than the Embarcadero roadway itself). Pier 5 is just a stub, but still has its bulkhead building, and Pier 3 provides a mooring for the historic ferry boat *Santa Rosa.* Until recently, Pier 1 was used for little more than ferry and excursion boats, and its large shed was used for parking. It has been rehabilitated, however, and is now home to the Port's offices.

The heart of the waterfront, symbolically if not quite geographically, is the Ferry Building itself. In fact, those piers to the north of the Ferry Building area are odd-numbered, and piers to the south are even-numbered. The towered, neo-classical, Beaux Arts building has been a beacon on the waterfront for 100 years. Originally called the Union Depot and Ferry House, it is an imposing structure, consisting of a 600-foot long, 160-foot wide base centered on a 240-foot-tall clock tower, prominently placed at the foot of Market Street, the main artery through downtown. Of all the waterfront, the Ferry Building area is probably the most disconnected from its past. The Ferry Building once saw 170 ferries a day and 150 million passengers a year. Now only about three million commuters pass through (SFPD1997, 134). The downtown presses close to the water here, where nearby office towers mark a process of 'creative destruction' that has erased the intense maritime character of the area.

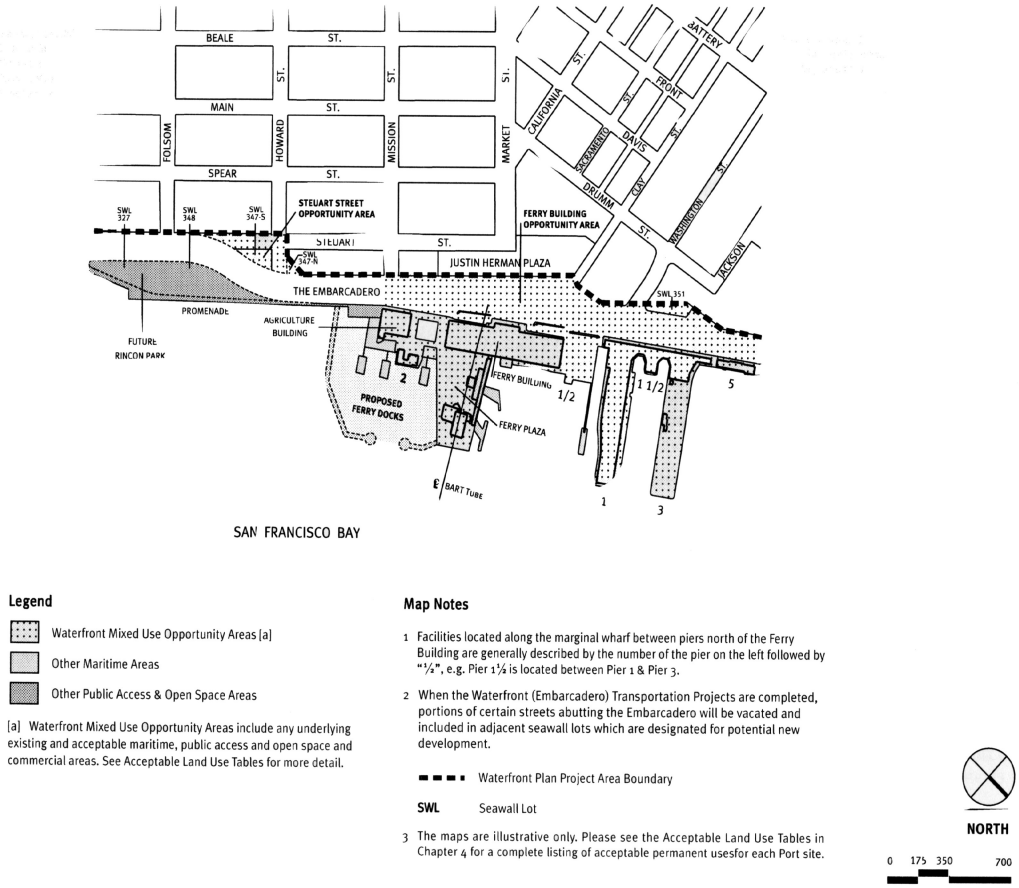

Figure 11 Ferry Building Sub Area. Source: Port of San Francisco 2000, *Waterfront Land Use Plan.*

The Ferry Building is currently undergoing an historic transformation, including a restoration of its magnificent interior atrium and walk-through. It had been devoted to office space primarily for Port staff and the World Trade Center. The latter will remain, and a mix of other uses is planned for the new space. Just to the south, the adjacent former U.S. Agriculture Building is used for offices. Both buildings are architecturally significant, and the pierhead and bulkhead structures that line the Embarcadero from Pier 5 to the Ferry Building are highly rated by local

preservationists. The Ferry Building is a City landmark, and with the former U.S. Agriculture Building, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Behind the Ferry Building is a large slab of concrete that covers the Bay Area Rapid Transit tube. It is used as open space and for fishing, and was the site of Gabbiano's Restaurant, the fate of which is uncertain. Other uses of Port property in this area include the Promenade, an area of public access/open space along the water between the Ferry Building and the Bay Bridge, and several seawall lots that have recently been converted into Rincon Park, an open space to be maintained by the Gap as part of its agreement with the Redevelopment Agency and the Port; the retailer's new headquarters are located across the Embarcadero.

The Central Waterfront (South Beach/China basin)

The central waterfront sub-area is nearly as large as all of the northern waterfront, extending roughly 2 miles(Figures 9, 10). It is best described in two parts: the area between Pier 22 ½ and the China Basin Channel, called South Beach, and the remainder of the central waterfront, below China Basin Channel to Seawall Lot 345, near 18th Street, generally known as China Basin. The central waterfront still contains a number of active piers; if not used for cargo, they support varied maritime-related activities.

In South Beach, from the Bay Bridge to China Basin Channel, the Embarcadero is still the primary roadway along the waterfront, though beyond the Bay

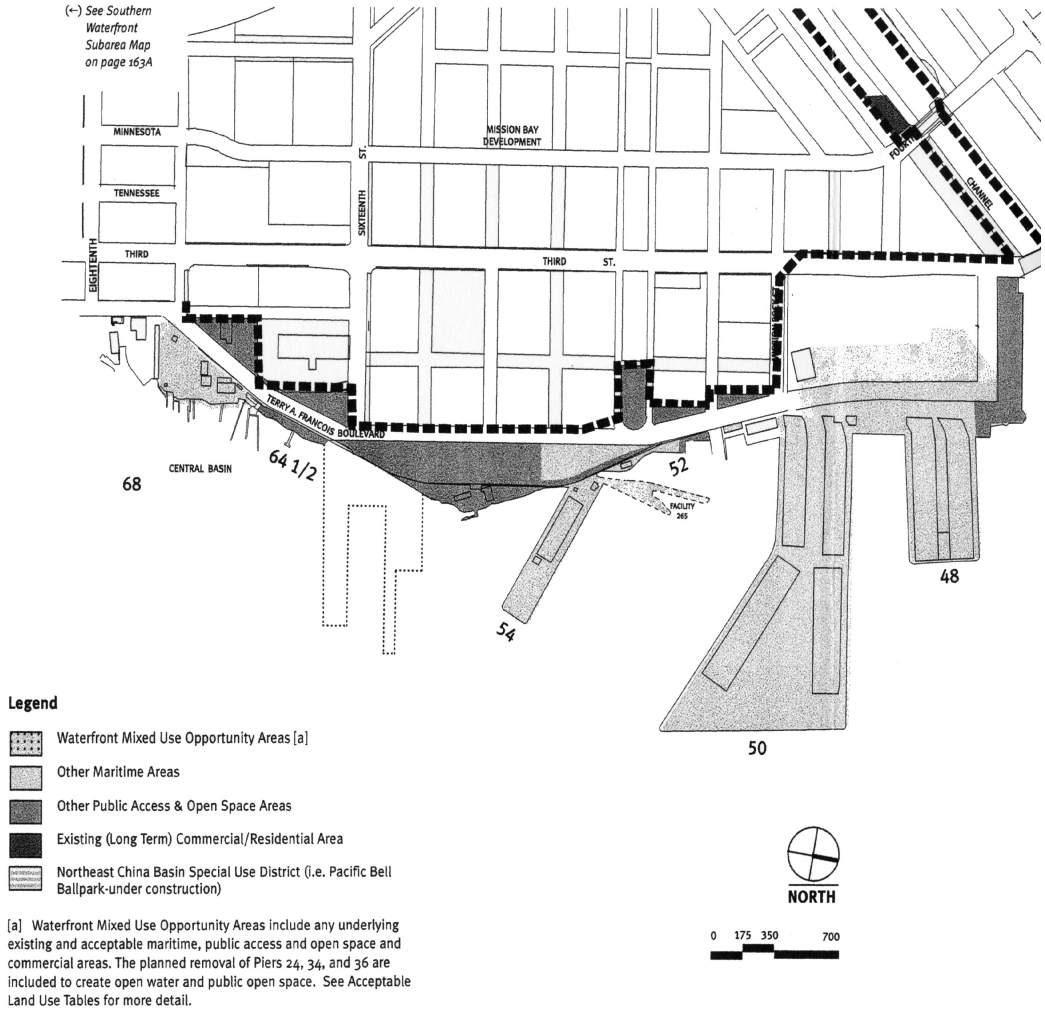

Figure 12 Central Waterfront Sub Area, southern section. Source: Port of San Francisco 2000, *Waterfront Land Use Plan.*

Bridge the traffic is more mixed with trucks and is a little less commuter-oriented. The first pier in the area is Pier 22 ½ , home to Fire Engine #9 and two fireboats, the Guardian and the Phoenix. Pier 24 is condemned, as are Piers 34 and 64. Pier 28 is used for fish handling operations. Piers 30-32, a 12-acre double pier with truck access down the middle, provides layover berthing facilities and Pier 36 is used for

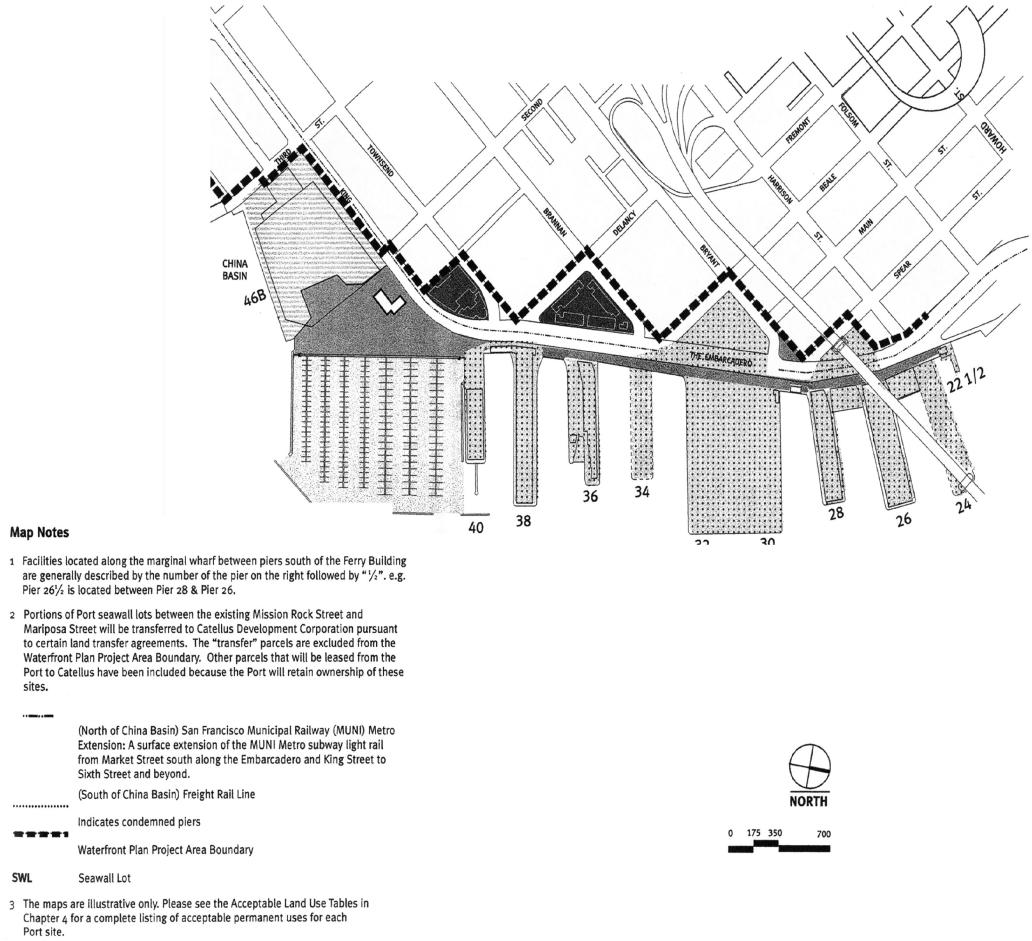

Figure 13 Central Waterfront Sub Area, northern section. Source: Port of San Francisco 2000, *Waterfront Land Use Plan*.

warehousing. Maritime support services, including divers, underwater construction and emergency-spill cleaning companies, are located on Piers 26 and 38. Pier 46B is used by the Port for its maintenance operations and to provide servicing for tug and tow boats. Even with this activity, Piers 30-32, 36 and 38 are underused, and even are partly vacant, simultaneously echoing the past and foreshadowing the future. For

instance, the Port is in negotiations to convert Piers 30-32 into a new cruise terminal and mixed-use project.

Between Piers 40 and 46 is the South Beach Harbor for pleasure craft, built in 1986 by the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency as part of its Rincon Point - South Beach Redevelopment Plan. That plan also resulted in the development of an extensive residential area, now nearly complete, that will contain about 2500 residential units. The project incorporated three Port seawall lots across from Piers 36 and 40. Seawall Lots 331 and 332 are home to Delancey Street, a non-profit rehabilitation center, and the Steamboat Point Apartments, an affordable housing project, occupies Seawall Lot 333. These two developments constitute the only housing on Port property and were possible only because the state adopted legislation in 1987 that declared Seawall Lots 331-333 'surplus' to public trust requirements - a long and difficult process.

The area between the Bay Bridge and King Street, going several blocks inland from the Embarcadero, is changing into a mixed residential and commercial neighborhood. Completion of the new Pac Bell Park (the San Francisco Giant's new baseball stadium) on Port property between Third and King Streets has cemented the recasting of this entire section of the waterfront, and with it, part of San Francisco. The area is home to the current offices of the International Longshoremen Workers Union (ILWU) on seawall lot 334, and also parking.

After crossing the Lefty O'Doul Bridge at 3rd Street and passing by the houseboat community in the China Basin Channel, the main Port road becomes the much less formally designed Terry A. Francois Boulevard. Formerly China Basin Street, it was renamed for the City's first African-American member of the Board of Supervisors. Generally, the maritime activities here are a little more industrial and cargo-related than the primarily support-oriented maritime activity found north of China Basin Channel. The major piers in this area are Piers 48, 50, and 54. Pier 48 is a cargo warehouse and ferry maintenance facility, Pier 50, a massive 20.5 acre facility, supports ship repair and coffee warehousing, and Pier 54 ½ houses tug and tow services. Recreational uses encroach even here; Pier 50 ½ is home the Mariposa Hunter's Point Yacht Club. Port property inland contains a long stretch of land, from China Basin Channel nearly to Mariposa street, though some of this is being transferred to the Redevelopment Agency and the Catellus Corporation as part of the 315-acre Mission Bay Redevelopment Project. This project will utterly transform the old Southern Pacific rail yards and vacant land across from the Port into a mixed-use development containing thousands of housing units, an extension campus for the University of California-San Francisco, office and commercial space intended for bio-tech firms and other cutting edge industries, retail space, and a major hotel.

It is in this part of the waterfront that the absence of buildings becomes notable. Port property in the northern waterfront includes numerous structures. Around here, a little further from the downtown core, open storage and marshaling

areas replace piersheds and bulkhead buildings. In this somewhat out-of-the-way part of the waterfront is the Port's only public boat launch, next to Pier 52. Seawall lots are used by a paper recycling facility, small offices, warehouses, and small industrial facilities. Near the end of this sub-area, below condemned Pier 64, there is also an unlikely little park, Agua Vista Park. Nearby to the south, one can sit outside at the two restaurants located next to a small boat repair place and still see ships in dry dock.

The Southern Waterfront

Until China Basin Channel, the waterfront has a definite spine, that is, it is connected to the Embarcadero which feeds into Terry A. Francois Boulevard (Figures 14, 15). South of the central waterfront, however, Terry A. Francois runs into Illinois Avenue, and the water's edge begins to recede. The southern waterfront, which extends for several curving miles from 18th Street and Illinois at the Central Basin and across Islais Creek, is irregular and disorienting. It is a place of open backlands, marshaling yards, container cranes, and scattered, aging industrial structures, all cordoned off by Third Street, a major trucking thoroughfare that in places is just a block from Port land. There are few piers here and their sheer size seems to make them seem part of the land mass; the city and its waterfront are not as intimately pressed together in this far reach of San Francisco.

The southern waterfront is not entirely moribund, however. Many San Franciscans are not aware that there are, in fact, substantial modern container facilities

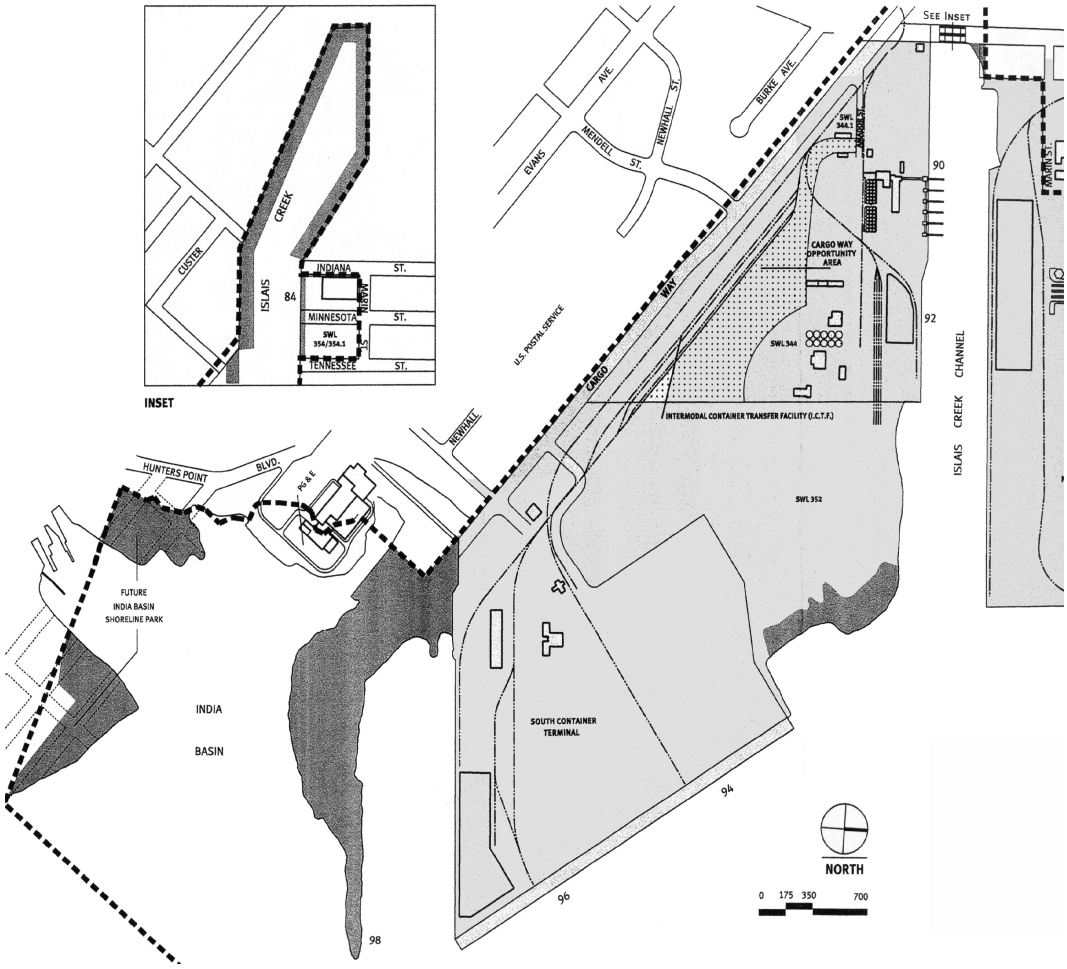

Figure 14 Southern Waterfront Sub Area, southern section. Source: Port of San Francisco 2000, *Waterfront Land Use Plan*.

in the City, and that some measure of cargo still moves through the Port. Unfortunately, the container facilities operate at only a fraction of their capacity. Still, almost all shipping and cargo handling is located in the southern waterfront. Port lands here are also home to a number of maritime and industrial businesses, including American Storage, Breda Transportation (an Italian light-rail car manufacturer), Saint Francis Marine Center, and Tidewater Sand and Gravel. Nearby businesses inland of

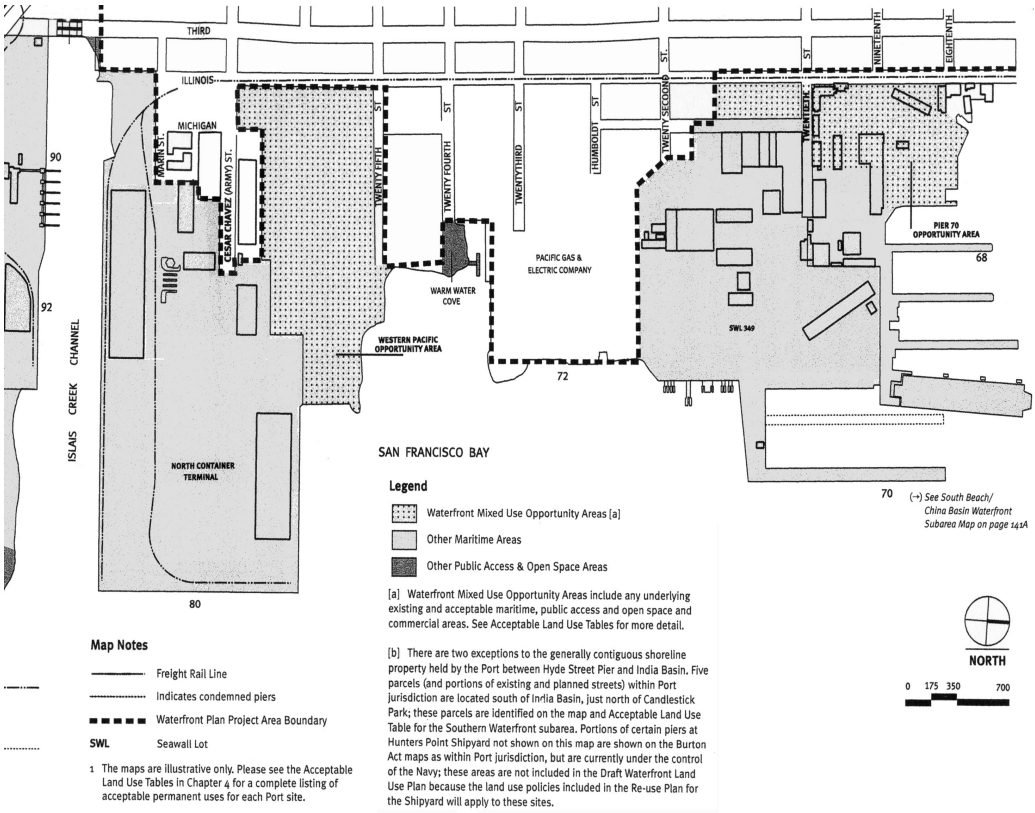

Figure 15 Southern Waterfront Sub Area, northern section. Source: Port of San Francisco 2000, *Waterfront Land Use Plan*.

Port property also help lend the area its industrial character. They include Borman Steel, Royal Hawaiian Fish Company, and various printers and construction support companies. Pier 70, a large, splintered, combination of piers and seawall backlands, is the northern most facility in this area. Part of the pier is used by the City to store impounded vehicles. Originally used for ship building, most of its drydocks are now used for ship maintenance; recent world events have increased cruise ship visits to this facility. Its current tenant, San Francisco Drydock, is one of only two remaining year-round ship repair firms serving the Port (the other is Pier 50's Service Engineering

Company). It is the oldest continually operating civilian shipyard in the U.S.. Until the end of World War II, this was the Union Iron Works/Bethlehem Steel Yard; nearby, outside of Port land, several buildings dating to 1900 or so still stand. Some consider Pier 70 to be the site of the most significant concentration of historically important industrial structures in the city. Recent attempts to develop a "mixed-use opportunity site" at Pier 70 have been unsuccessful.

Only Pier 72 separates Pier 70 and Pier 80 (the Army Street Terminal). It is occupied by a major power plant and also contains 30 acres of abandoned Western Pacific rail yards, recently leased to MUNI (the Municipal Railway) to house its new Metro East rail car maintenance and storage facility. It will serve the new line being constructed along Third Street. Pier 80 houses the Port's North Container Terminal, its only active container facility. Piers 94-96, across Islais Creek from Pier 80, are the site of the Port's other modern container terminal (the South Container Terminal), and at 95 acres, is the largest facility within the Port. With on-dock rail, Piers 94-96 are the only Northern Californian facilities that can support intermodal cargo handling on the piers themselves. Both container terminals can accommodate ro-ro (roll on, roll off) and breakbulk cargo, and can load and transload containers.[9] Not long ago, however, the port consolidated its cargo operations at Pier 80, rendering Piers 94-96 inactive. Recent gains in cargo business may reactivate them. Piers 94-96 are most notable, and probably most noticeable, for the giant grain elevator and copra terminal

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[9] Breakbulk cargo is loose or placed on pallets, not in containers. Transloading is moving freight from one container to another.

that stand next to Islais Creek - unabashedly big and vertical in the era of horizontal industry. Now they are use to store shipments of fly ash, which is used in the production of concrete.

A considerable amount of pier space and backland is underused or vacant, and even the modernized terminals see little use. The Old Copra Tower on upper Islais Creek has accumulated decades of rust. And there are the old Union Steel Ironworks at 20th and Illinois, near Pier 70, mentioned above. Part of the first wave of heavy maritime industry to settle in San Francisco, the ironworks opened in the 1880s to build steamships and men-o-war. Thus, this is the mostly ghostly part of the waterfront; it has slipped into a time stream of dereliction. Past uses have faded away, leaving empty buildings and piers, and the new facilities that have supplanted them have little life of their own (although there has been a recent increase in containers moved through the port).

There is another quality about the southern waterfront that seems to derive partly from its disconnection from more vibrant parts of the city (which is a bit ironic as such separation is needed for modern cargo operations). Even were the port to experience a dramatic increase in cargo business, container facilities do not have the same intimate link to the city as finger piers, and moving containers is qualitatively different from handling goods in crates or sacks. Goods moved by containers are not packed and unpacked at dockside, or sent to nearby processing plants. They hide their

contents and are often just moved onto to their final destinations; they do not help to create the same intimate sense of place.

SUMMARY

The contemporary port is made up of a diverse array of activities, though clearly it has passed its heyday as a cargo destination. It is now most recognizable for the commercial and tourist activities that thrive in Fisherman's Wharf. Other parts of the northern waterfront have been recently transformed, and some still seem to be waiting for some change to happen, some new opportunity. The Embarcadero Roadway improvements are an obvious sign that the most urban section of the waterfront has not been forgotten; but palm trees and historic street cars are far and away different from the mixed-use developments that grip the water's edge in other port-cities in order to capitalize as much as possible on the benefits that accrue to such a location. With a few exceptions, newer office and housing developments are all on the inland side of the Embarcadero and not on port property. Some cargo operations remain and miscellaneous maritime industrial activities in the central and southern waterfronts, so it cannot be said that San Francisco no longer has a working waterfront.

There is an irony to be seen in the Port's spatial distribution of activities. Where the port is most connected to the city is where it least serves its original purpose, to move cargo, which is the activity that so intimately connected it to the

earlier San Francisco, physically and functionally; where most of the cargo passes through the port today is an area of the waterfront least connected to the city, and has become a place in San Francisco's backwater (though perhaps not for much longer). In the northern waterfront, at Fisherman's Wharf particularly, San Francisco's global connection is through the national and international flow of tourists and money - completely different from the southern waterfront, where the global connection is more traditional - as the destination of ships moving goods along sea lanes from far away places.

Chapter 3: A Sea Change - The Port in the 1950s and 1960s

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: first, to orient the discussion of 40 years of change in the built environment of the Port by describing the Port as it was in the 1950's, when it was dominated by the maritime industry; second, to begin the description and analysis of the forces that would create change. It is important to characterize this change, describe its context and circumstances, and identify where it occurred because it is through the Port's transformation that land became available for reuse. It is the struggle over development of this land that contributed to, and was reflected in, evolving planning policy and regulation.

Top down forces predominated during the period covered in this chapter: three are highlighted. First, there is the state control of the Port through the Board of State Harbor Commissioners (BSHC), a commission appointed by the Governor, with fiduciary responsibility to Sacramento. Next is relocation of industry out of the city and the contemporaneous shift in San Francisco's economy to the service sector. Together these changes transformed land uses across from the waterfront, creating conflicts with Port activities. And last is the advent of containerization, essentially a one-time shift in technology that impacted San Francisco in a fairly immediate fashion. Initially, local reaction to these top-down forces was limited, partly because the Port itself maintained a somewhat cavalier attitude towards change and some interested parties did not see clearly what was at hand. And, as will be seen in following chapters, the actors and agencies that would become the sources of countervailing

bottom-up forces had not yet organized, although development proposals across from the waterfront would begin to galvanize the public. The landscape that would result from the interplay of forces discussed in this chapter was one of decline, though as will be seen later not without bold schemes to revitalize San Francisco's decaying waterfront.

THE WATERFRONT ON THE EVE OF DECLINE

As with the rest of the nation, San Francisco reacted jubilantly to the end of World War II and to the promise of post-war growth. The city had been a major base for deployment and a center of industrial activity during the war, roles which seemed to mature the port, relegating to the past its sometimes frontier-like nature and a darker history which included kidnaping, corruption, crime, union struggles, and grueling, often dangerous work. Indeed, the post-war period was a time when the port could be easily romanticized. Then, the port was a place where one's senses and imagination could be led from the immediate and mundane to the distant and exotic:

> Pick out by the street light the names of the pier sheds. "Java," they say, and "Singapore" and "Hong Kong" and "Pago Pago." Repeat them and look to the dark west and know that all America is at your back. You're at the end of the continent, and the water you hear whispering under the wharf has whitened the sands of Tahiti and tossed the ice floes in the Bering Sea. The spices you smell are from Cathay. (O'Brien 1948, 5)

The ships were not the only thing that lent themselves to the feeling of being somewhere unusual, almost dreamlike. In the late 1940s, the Embarcadero, the public

road and rail right-of-way that paralleled the port, was lined by pier sheds on the water side, and by warehouses, cold storage, and places to buy everything from grappling hooks to accordions on the other. There would have been a mix of noises from fog horns, locomotives, passenger ships, ferries, stevedores, and the smell of copra, coffee, and salt water. Such an engagement of the senses would have been joined by a mass of movement:

> Even before the eight o'clock wail of the Ferry Building siren, the Embarcadero comes violently to life. From side streets great trucks roll through the yawning doors of the piers. The longshoremen, clustering in groups before the pier gates, swarm up ladders and across gang-planks. The jitneys, small tractor-like conveyances, trailing long lines of flat trucks, wind in and out of traffic...Careening taxis, rumbling underslung vans and drays, and scurrying pedestrians suddenly transform the water front into a traffic-thronged artery. (Work Projects Administration 1947, 260)

Although a new era was beginning, San Francisco's urban waterfront still pulsed with activity in the 1950s. The finger piers that lined the waterfront from Fisherman's Wharf to China Basin Channel were well used, though many were in need of repair. Stevedoring companies and chandlers had plenty of business, and warehouses and grain elevators were full. The Belt

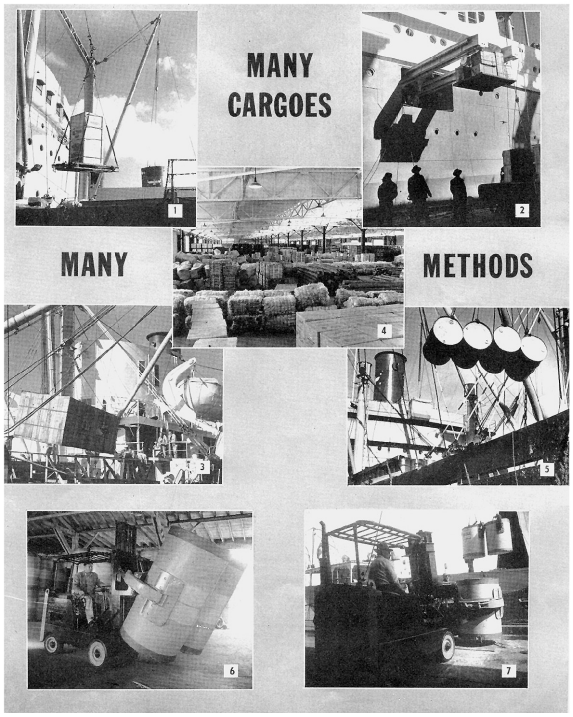

Figure 16 The working waterfront as the Port advertised it. Source: Port of San Francisco: *The Progressive Port* 1950.

Figure 17 Aerial view of finger piers. Source: Board of State harbor Commissioners, *The Progressive Port of San Francisco* 1954.

Line Railroad still ran the length of the Embarcadero, connecting the port to four major railway lines. Many contract trucking firms also operated in and around the Port, adding to the bustle of the waterfront. The port of the 1950s was unmistakably a working port. Yet, freeways, aging docks, and other signs of change were appearing. Although World War II generated a flurry of activity and the early post war years were ones of general economic growth, San Francisco and other Bay Area ports did not recover the levels of shipping they enjoyed during the height of the pre-war years.[1] A new era was beginning which would re-align the hierarchy of ports in the Bay Area,

[1] The San Francisco Bay Area ports are: San Francisco , Oakland, Richmond (North Bay), Benicia (North Bay), and Redwood City (South Bay).

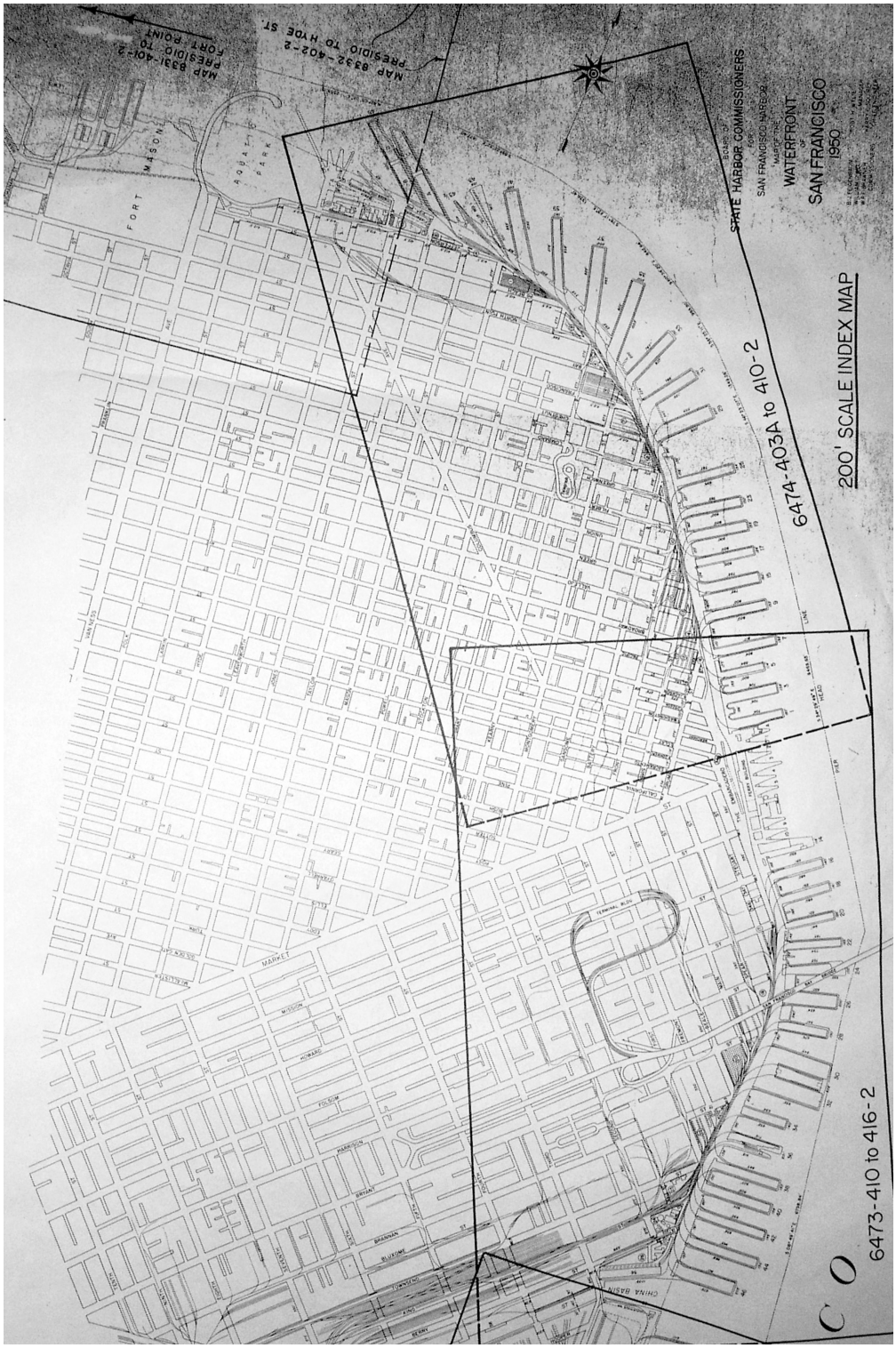

Figure 18 Section of a 1950 Port map, focused on the northern waterfront. Note the absence of a jurisdiction line. Source: Port of San Francisco.

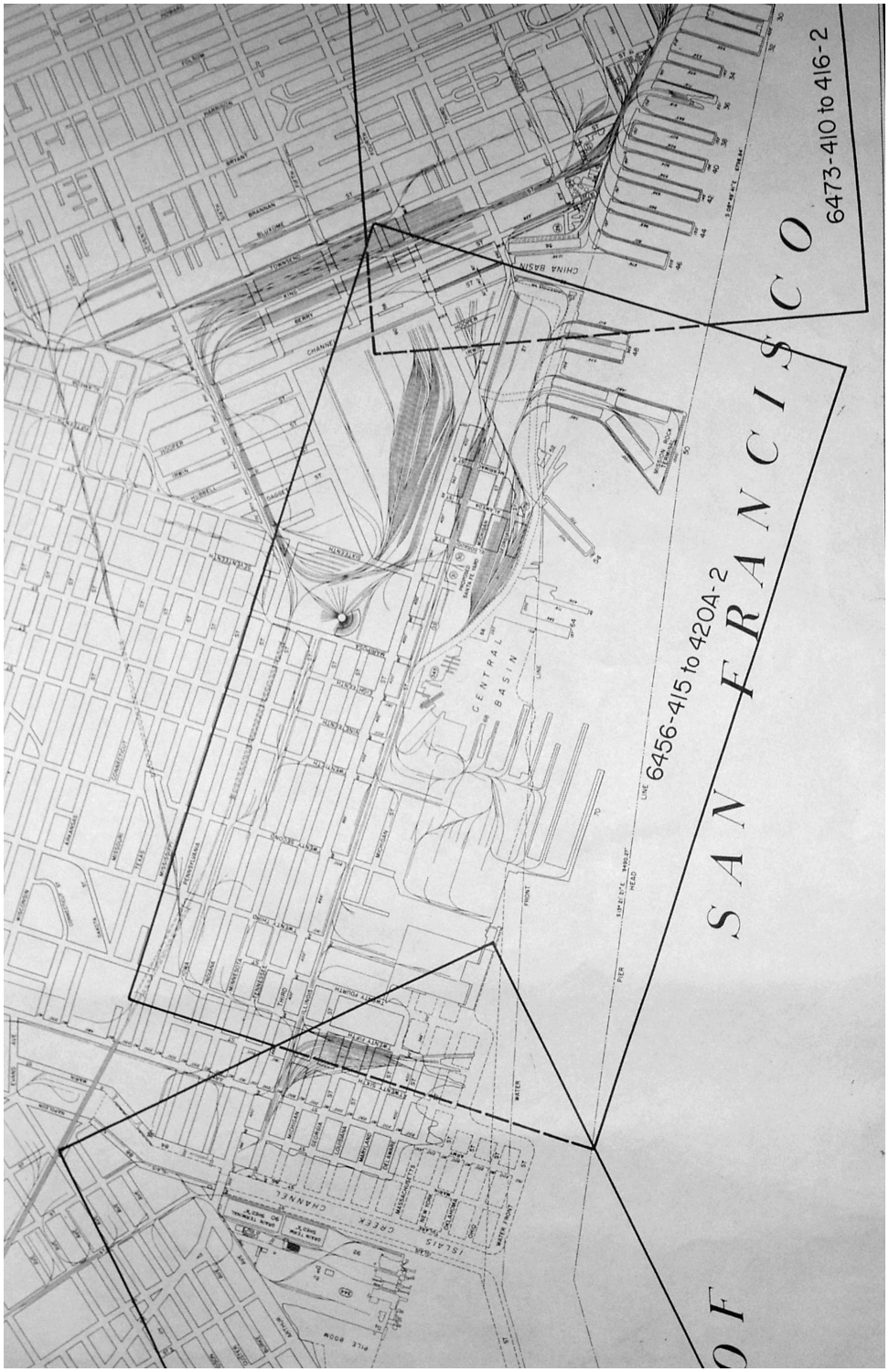

Figure 19 Section of a 1950 Port map, showing the central waterfront and the most developed part of the southern waterfront. Source: Port of San Francisco.

and begin to reshape San Francisco's port morphology, even before containerization was to become an essential force of change at the end of the 1960s.

Perhaps the Port's most identifiable feature was its collection of aging but still well-used finger piers. About 42 piers and 28 docks and wharves, almost all public, extended out into the bay and created a comb-like edge along the waterfront from Fisherman's Wharf to China Basin Channel (Figure 14). South, beyond China Basin Channel, the finger piers gave way to a more chaotic and less evenly developed waterfront, where most of the privately held docks and piers were located. None of the 20 or so private docks were used for moving general cargo; most of the private wharves were owned and operated by oil companies or other industrial businesses

Figure 20 Bulkhead buildings along the Embarcadero in the northeastern waterfront, 1953. Source: courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

(State of California 1951, 114). Most of the port's seawall lots were used by the State Belt Line Railroad, a terminal switching service with six diesel engines owned by the state and operated under the auspices of the Board of State Harbor Commissioners. The Belt Line tracks ran along the 200-foot wide Embarcadero from Fisherman's Wharf down to China Basin Channel. The Belt Line provided switching services to four major rail lines: the Southern Pacific; the Western Pacific; the Atchison; and the Topeka & Santa Fe (the latter two would later merge). Only the Southern Pacific had direct connection to the Belt Line; the other railroads had connections via railcar ferry barges. Other port property was devoted to warehouses (a total of 17 dry cargo and

Figure 21 State Belt Line engine moving cars along the Embarcadero near the Ferry Building. Source: Board of State Harbor Commissioners, *The Progressive Port of San Francisco* 1954.

two refrigerated) and miscellaneous goods-handling facilities, including cold storage, a grain elevator, and a copra terminal. Bulkhead buildings were leased either to shipping lines assigned to the related pier or to offices of maritime businesses and associations, for instance the Bar Harbor Pilots Association and various chandler companies.

Northern Waterfront

Fisherman's Wharf

Perhaps more than any other, Fisherman's Wharf in the 1950s was an area in transition. Though still focused on commercial fishing and fish processing, it was also a place that derived charm from being caught in two worlds and two times. The lagoon at Fisherman's Wharf itself berthed hundreds of vessels, and nearby businesses provided services for the fishing fleet[2]. By 1950 gasoline powered boats were common, but a few remaining lateen-rigged sail boats recalled a not quite bygone era. In the late 1940s Fisherman's Wharf was not yet a tourist attraction, as can be easily gleaned from descriptions of "walks and plankings...often plastered with nets drying in the sun (Work Projects Administration 1947, 250) and of "oldsters of the crab fleet

[2] In 1947, there were 300 boats and 2000 fisherman according to O'Brien (1948).

Figure 22 Looking southeast across Pier 45 and the fishing fleet. Source: Port of San Francisco *Shipping Handbook* 1958.

(who) still sit cross-legged, mending their nets by hand with long wooden needles (O'Brien 1948, 161).[3] In 1959, the ILWU union moved its hiring hall to nearby quarters. A longshoremen later said of the area "I guess you really could say it was a 'fisherman's wharf.' And because we respected and enjoyed *their community*, we were always made welcome by our neighbors (Wellman 1995, 38 emphasis added)." The 1950s brought more restaurants and gift shops, but Fisherman's Wharf was not yet the world-renowned destination for tourists that it soon would be. It was still working, industrial, and commercial (Fig 19).

[3] Indeed, the descriptions of Fisherman's Wharf and the many other areas covered by the 1947 WPA guide are completely without the word 'tourist.' Restaurant go-ers in Fisherman's Wharf were referred to only as "diners."

While the wharf, of course, was most recognizable as the home of the fishing fleet and fish processing and related activities, it was also home to traditional piers and bulkhead buildings, which served a variety of general cargos, such as newsprint. The Port also provided berths here for foreign flagged vessels that wished to make use of the Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) at Pier 45. Pier 45 was one of four such zones in the U.S.. Established in San Francisco in 1948, it expanded from two of the pier's imposing sheds to all four in 1953; by 1959, though, the FTZ was relocated to the central waterfront, and over the following decades would make several more moves. Until they were entirely replaced by trucks, river boats carrying agricultural products from inland areas used the wharf, and passenger ships and ferries made regular stops. The Port's seawall lots and other inland property were devoted either to rail spurs and rail car storage for the Belt Line or to commercial space primarily in what was referred to as Fisherman's Basin, later Fish Alley.

Beyond Port jurisdiction, land use around the wharf was not dominated by hotels, restaurants, and shops, as it is today, but by a mix of warehouses, light manufacturing, and various commercial and maritime businesses. However, as the 1950s moved on, maritime commercial uses at and near Fisherman's Wharf gave way to more general commercial uses, and by the 1960s, to tourist activities; its industrial days were soon to be over. Across from Fish Alley, just beyond the Port property line on the south side of Jefferson Street, is where many of the tourist-related stores, restaurants, curio shops, and places of entertainment would later collect.

Northeastern Waterfront

The northeastern section of the waterfront also bristled with piers, and across the Embarcadero, warehouses, mills, and light industry choked the base of Telegraph Hill. Only the incline of the hill itself separated the residences perched on it from the commercial and industrial activity below. On the inland side (out of Port jurisdiction), near the Ferry Building area, was the Produce Commission District, or simply the Produce Market. It was a lively place of narrow streets, roofed sidewalks, and low buildings. Most of the activity in this area was related to river boats which carried fruit, vegetables and other agricultural produce to the dozens of wholesalers who sold their wares to restaurants and groceries throughout the city, and beyond. The piers, bulkhead buildings, and pier sheds in this section of the waterfront were used for many of the same kinds of general, break-bulk, cargo-related activities as in

Figure 23 View of finger piers near Telegraph Hill (bottom right). Belt line shunting tracks can be seen at the center of the photo; the Produce Market is just beyond. Source: San Francisco Planning Department, 1956.

Figure 24 Apartment buildings above piers at Telegraph Hill, 1952. Source: courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Fisherman's Wharf. Seawall property was also devoted mostly to Belt Line rail spurs. The Roundhouse, which was used for turning and maintaining trains, was an area land mark (now it is an historic one) located at the foot of Lombard Street, at the Embarcadero.

Ferry Building Area

Extending from Pier 7 south to the Bay Bridge, the part of the waterfront perhaps the least devoted to shipping and maritime activity was the Ferry Building area. Completion of the Bay Bridge in 1935 reduced ferry traffic to a trickle, so much so that by 1958 most of the Ferry Building was converted to office use. Aside from the Ferry Building, this area contained the Agriculture Building (still there), which was

Figure 25 Looking south over the Produce Market and the Front @1954. Source: San Francisco Planning Department.

operated by the California State Department of Agriculture and various shipping offices. A number of the finger piers here were either in poor condition or condemned. Across from the Ferry Building area, between the produce market and Market Street was 'the front' - a rough and tumble area of maritime character named for Front Street. The ILWU hiring hall was here until its move to Fisherman's Wharf, as were salvage companies, other maritime business, and Hills Brothers Coffee. Much of the area would change, along with the adjacent Produce Market, when projects associated with the Golden Gateway Redevelopment Area were initiated in the early 1960s by the Redevelopment Agency (see p. 108). But until land was razed for the

Golden Gateway, the Ferry Building area's remaining general maritime businesses and working character helped to created an unsettled mix of waterfront-related uses and downtown offices.

Central Waterfront (South Beach/China Basin)[4]

In the central waterfront, maritime and related industrial activities were able to break free of the constraints of topography and the growing downtown - there were no hills or dense collections of buildings to hamper the spread of industrial activity. While land under the jurisdiction of the port was still limited to piers, wharves and some inland seawall lots, warehouses, marshaling yards, and storage facilities were no longer restricted to a ribbon of land defined by the Embarcadero. The pattern of finger piers ended at China Basin Channel, and the Port's edge became more irregular. Between the Bay Bridge and China Basin Channel, piers were used for general cargo shipment and by the FTZ, which was relocated from Pier 45 to Pier 46 in 1959.

South of China Basin, piers were used for trucking, shipment of petroleum products, ship repair, and berthing. Two of the most important of the Port's specialized facilities were here: the refrigeration terminal, which occupied a large two-story, concrete building adjacent to China Basin Channel, and the Banana Terminal on

[4] This description does not separate South Beach and China Basin, as these areas in the 1950s were not nearly as differentiated.

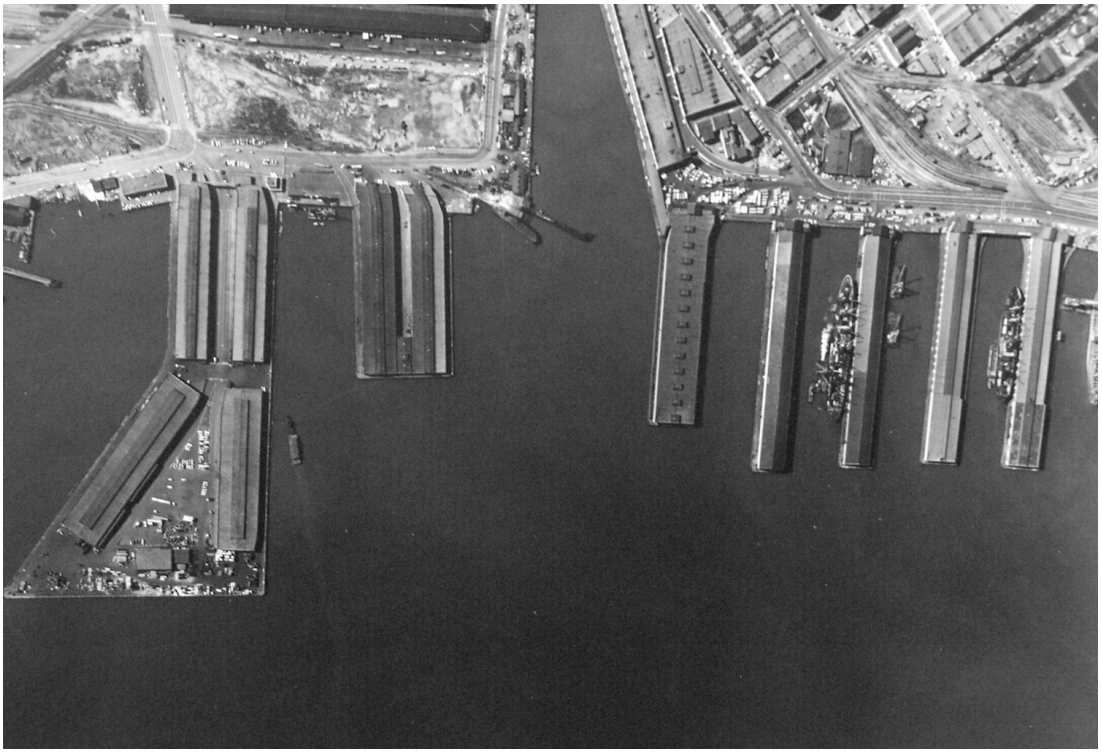

Figure 26 1956 aerial view of a portion of the central waterfront. Pier 50 is on the left and China Basin Channel is in the center. Source: San Francisco Planning Department

south side of the channel at Pier 60 (which operated equipment provided by the United Fruit Company). Most of the Port's seawall lots in the central waterfront were leased to Southern Pacific and the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe railroad companies. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, the central waterfront was also the focus of many of the Port's pier improvement and development projects, the largest of which was the new Mission Rock Terminal at Pier 50, completed in 1950. At 29 acres and housing two (later four) large, and for the time, modern concrete and steel sheds, it was the centerpiece of shipping on the waterfront: "the facilities for receiving trucks

were designed to be one of the most efficient and modern facilities for receiving and delivering cargo by truck." (State of California 1951, 115). By and large, the non-Port inland area was devoted to Southern Pacific and Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe rail yards, open storage, and warehouses, which helped to make this part of the waterfront both messy and busy, that is, industrial.

The Southern Waterfront

Between the Central Basin and Islais Creek, much of the waterfront, both port property and non-port property was devoted to fields of warehouses and open storage, massive rail yards, and swaths of undeveloped or vacant land. Pier 70 was home to the Union Iron Works/Bethlehem Steel Yard and drydock, in operation from 1880 to the end of World War II. The drydock continued to repair and maintain ships, and eventually came to be operated by the current tenant, San Francisco Drydock. A number of piers and docks down on this end of the waterfront were privately owned and

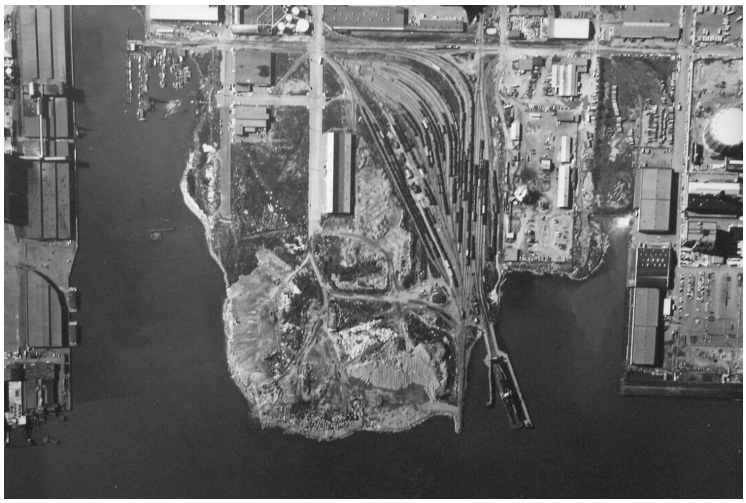

Figure 27 1956 aerial view of a portion of the southern waterfront. Islais creek is on the left and the future site of the Army Street Terminal (Pier 80) is in the center. Source: San Francisco Planning Department.

run. Union Oil, for instance, owned and operated Pier 66 and Pacific Gas and Electric maintained facilities at Pier 72.

The Port's facilities in the southern waterfront concentrated at Islais Creek, which was packed with heavy, maritime-industrial uses. The grain, copra, and cotton terminals that loomed along the creek were among the Port's most important assets. Land alongside Islais Creek was also used for petroleum delivery, an automobile terminal, and as a lumberyard. Other uses included: fish processing, canning, and distribution; railroad car switching and storage; grain storage; gas and oil storage; and scrap metal processing. A radio station reached its listeners from a tower rising above what was surely a mess.

The Port in Muddy Waters

As has been mentioned, the Port of the 1950s was a state agency governed by the Board of State Harbor Commissioners. The Board was comprised of three members appointed by the Governor and approved by the state Senate. By the end of the decade two ex-officio members, the governor and the mayor of San Francisco, were added. San Francisco's was the only port in California to be run directly by the state, the impacts of which will be discussed in later chapters. The BSHC's legally defined jurisdiction was the same then as the Port of San Francisco's is now, although some changes to the amount of physical property under port jurisdiction have occurred

over the years, particularly through the construction or decommissioning of piers and other structures, and occasional land transfers.

The BSHC and its port reached the 1950s in a troubled fashion. Observers noted that a sort of complacency with its status as the most important harbor in the Bay Area, if not the Pacific coast, had settled over the port shortly after the end of World War II. It was suggested, for example, that

> San Francisco, long dominant as a port, has found it difficult to overcome the lethargy which gradually settled upon her as a successful "old port". Realization that other ports could take cargo from her was slow to bring about a counter-reaction.... (Mott 1951, 197)

The BSHC was struggling to rid itself of the specter of past labor troubles and was in charge of a harbor beginning to look a bit worse for the wear. Chief among the port's problems though, was the post-war drop in cargo moving through the port. In 1949, at 5,090,000 short tons, shipments of dry cargo moving through the Golden Gate were 2,600,000 short tons lower than they were in any year between 1925-1940, when the average was about 7,690,000 tons (State of California 1951). Much of this decline could be accounted for by the drop in tonnage of coastwise and inland waterway cargo.[5] Trucks, proving a much cheaper alternative to boats, were primarily responsible for this shift, and most pacific coast ports shared in this decline.

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[5] 'Coastwise' refers to cargo moved along or between U.S. coasts and 'inland waterway' refers to river or canal-borne cargo.

Competition, though, affected San Francisco directly and particularly.[6] Oakland and Stockton, for instance, captured much of the canned goods and dried fruit cargo, partly because food processing plants opened or relocated near their facilities (San Francisco Chamber of Commerce 1950). Liquid cargo, most of which was petroleum, actually accounted for most of the total cargo moving through the Golden Gate. Most oil went to privately run facilities as opposed to public piers, and San Francisco had never really served the petroleum market, especially refining, so changes in it were not significant for San Francisco.

Despite the notable decrease in tons of cargo moving through San Francisco in the early 1950s and the concomitant increase at the Port of Oakland, the value of the cargo moving across San Francisco's piers was among the highest in the nation (State of California 1951, 241).[7] Perhaps in light of this, the Port's officials and various analysts remained positive, and the general feeling throughout the decade was that with a little work, the Port could be busy and prosperous for years to come. It was suggested that "few ports attract more diversified cargo or have a better general traffic balance than San Francisco. This factor alone puts the port into a favored position to continue to attract such commerce" (Mott 1951, 195). Bolstering the general feeling

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[6] The impact of Port Oakland's growth and its ability to compete with the Port of San Francisco is addressed further in the section describing containerization; however, the history of Oakland and the other Bay Area ports are beyond the scope of this study.

[7] The value of that tonnage only decreased a little, a point made much of by consultants 15 years later (ADL 1966).

of optimism was the argument that manufacturing in the region was increasing and that world trade patterns would favor the Bay Area. In fact, the attitude of some concerned parties was that it should be left to the Port of San Francisco to take a leadership role in attracting more commerce to the Bay Area, with the expectation that there would be enough business, even with competition, for San Francisco to get its

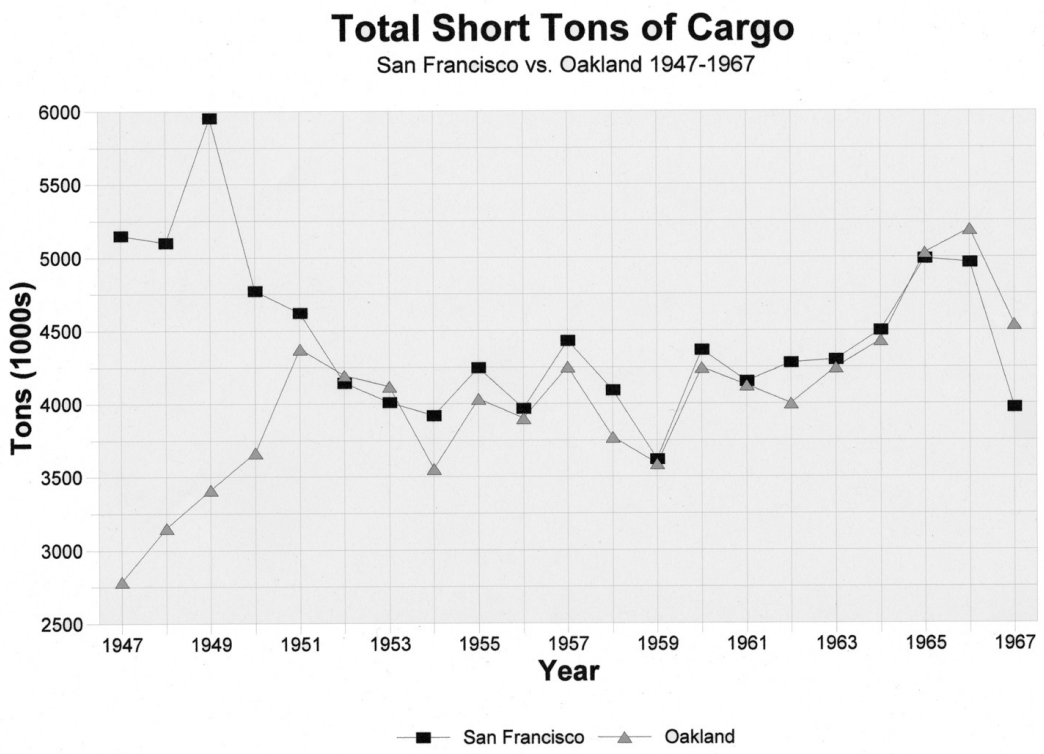

Table 1 Source: U.S. Corps of Engineers *Waterborne Commerce*

share. According to observers at the time, particularly the Chamber of Commerce, the port had only to do a few key things in order to tap into this potential: maintain a competitive and balanced rate structure (for things such as wharfage and demurrage

fees and truck and rail subsidies), handle labor issues properly, and modernize piers (for instance by providing better truck access).[8]

Promoting the port, however, took center stage. In testimony at a state Senate Port Authority hearing, representatives of the Ship's Clerk Union and the ILWU, among others, attributed what some felt to be a loss of a competitive position to a "smugness in the 'city that knows how'"exhibited by groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, that were apparently just not active enough in seeking out new business; in fact there was a general "lack of go-getting" (SFC 28 November 1950). Perhaps in response, in 1950, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce organized a committee around the issue of publicity, which quickly published a report entitled the "Promotion and Improvement of the Port of San Francisco."

The Chamber of Commerce argued that as recent labor problems had been dealt with (or so they believed) and rate structures were being adjusted to be competitive, one of the most import remaining issues was the "formulation and execution of coordinated solicitation, publicity, advertising and other promotion activities." (San Francisco Chamber of Commerce 1950, 1).[9] Placing the port more centrally in the public mind would help to create a sort of grass roots business base, it was thought. The Chamber of Commerce saw itself as key in this regard. It suggested

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[8] Demurrage is a fee paid for time spent beyond schedule departure of a ship that is loading or unloading cargo at dock.

[9] Labor disputes and strikes were not restricted to the 1930s. As mechanization evolved, waterfront labor fought to prevent job loss. Labor's efforts culminated in the refusal to handle containers when that technology was first adopted by San Francisco.

that an agency be created within the Chamber itself as a department whose role would be "to revitalize and promote the welfare and progress of the port" (San Francisco Chamber of Commerce 1950, 7); its committee would be appointed by the President of the Chamber. This attempt by a local group to include port activities within its purview hinted at the looming debate over whether or not the port should remain a state entity. Taking up the cry a year later, a state senate committee report optimistically suggested that to be competitive Bay Area ports needed only to improve "...traffic promotion, trade development, and rate protection..." (State of California 1951). Four years later, promotion was still a hot-button issue. In an analysis of the port's financial and organizational structure, the California Department of Finance suggested that the Port establish an office with the purpose of educating the public and selling the port abroad (California Department of Finance 1955).

The Board of State Harbor Commissioners and other observers felt that it was more than possible to ensure the Port of San Francisco's role as *the* "general cargo port of the west" and even more grandly, that it could "fulfill its destiny as one of the world's great ports," a sentiment that lasted throughout the decade (San Francisco Chamber of Commerce 1950, 1). A forecast by consultants projected growth in the amount of cargo moving through San Francisco after 1962, both in absolute tons and in revenue. The forecast was based on "the influence of new facilities which are projected to be in operation at that time" and the recapture of "the coastwise and intercoastal traffic as a result of the institution of some form of roll-on roll-off

technique" (Ebasco 1959, 79). Revenues from bulk and general cargo were projected to continue to increase until 1980 (Ebasco 1959a, 7).

So, the obvious route to achieving these predictions was thought to be to continue to invest in facilities and 'modernization'. To this end, the BSHC continued its promotional efforts through the decade, hoping especially to build on their previous success in securing bond money. The Port was so eager to raise money that to bolster support for new bonds, it asserted that: "the Port Authority's plan for future development is based on its conviction that world trade through the Golden Gate will continue its already spectacular growth—a growth that over-shadows even the gold rush era which first gave the Port of San Francisco its place among the world's greatest harbors." (SFPA 1958, no page).

Many of the capital projects aimed at 'modernizing' the port and continuing its dominance in general cargo shipping were financed with money derived from bonds issued in 1949, while others were longer-term projects. As part of the push to advertise itself, the Port published a series of promotional documents that announced recently completed facilities and projects under development. The Port boasted the completion of its 'ultra-modern' Mission Rock Terminal at Pier 50 in 1950, proudly announced an expanded Foreign Trade Zone 3 at Pier 45 in 1953, and continued to make other improvements and capital investments, such as the expansion of the Islais Creek grain terminal (built in 1949), construction of the cotton terminal, and improvement of a number of piers. With such projects the port styled itself as 'The

Progressive Port of San Francisco" (BSHC 1954). Other major projects included construction of a bulkhead wharf shed with platforms at Piers 31/33, the reconfiguration of Piers 15 and 17 into one larger pier, the reconfiguration of Piers 30 and 32 into a single large modern pier, and construction of a bulkhead wharf and transit shed at pier 62 (State of California 1951; California Department of Finance 1955; Mott 1951). The BSHC undertook a few other 'improvements' as part of its public relations efforts, including a name change to the San Francisco Port Authority (a recommendation of the California Department of Finance's 1955 report, which suggested that such a title was more 'user-friendly'), and an expansion of the commission from three to five members to include more local input.

While the BSHC and organizations with an interest in the Port had a kind of quixotic attitude towards the fate of the port at the time, they were not altogether indifferent to or ignorant of changing conditions that were beginning to affect it at fundamental levels. And it was acknowledged that some of these forces of change originated outside the of the port, and were beyond their ability to control. Chief among these were, for instance, shifting world trade routes (although as mentioned earlier, it was felt that this could possibly benefit San Francisco), competition from other West Coast ports, especially Seattle and Los Angeles/Long Beach, and the rise in prominence of the truck. These issues meant that, even though at some level officials were convinced that local conditions and efforts could overcome just about any

difficulty, there was no escaping the port's problems in the 1950s. In fact, they would increase during the 1960s.

The reality was that the port's financial condition was weak. As early as 1951, a state committee suggested that without the boost provided by World War II, the Port, which had been operating at about a break-even level, might have been in even worse shape.[10] So while cargo operations were still going strong, they were not generating as much income as they once had - due largely to fee structures and labor costs. The Port was also encumbered by debt incurred to fund its various improvements. Even the Belt Line railway had been losing money for years. At the end of the decade, although its income was increasing, the Port was healthy only on paper because it was leasing out land for non-Port functions, including restaurants, parking, and miscellaneous commercial activities - foreshadowing its future. While 1960 would bring the Port its greatest profit in 5 years, by 1963 Port Authority President Cyril Magnin would warn of "major fiscal problems" that lay ahead (Portside News August 1960; Portside News January 1963). He nevertheless continued the positive attitude which had characterized Port management during the last decade by stating "I an confident we can keep the port solvent, modern and progressive in the years ahead." (Portside News January 1963, 4) Although its history of debt repayment was very good, its debt obligation would become a hindrance with the advent of the 'container age', when entirely new kinds of facilities would be needed.

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[10] Note that the Port did not derive any direct benefit from the value of cargo moving across its piers.

EARLY CAUSES OF DECLINE

The confidence expressed by the Port of San Francisco and the sanguine attitudes of various interests such as the Chamber of Commerce did not, however, lead to complete complacency. Everyone was well aware of the economic importance of the port, especially its contribution to the city's general economic base; even in later, harder times estimates suggest that 1 in 10 jobs in San Francisco could be traced to port or port-related activity.[11] So, the decline in shipping was troubling not just to the Port, but to city leadership and commercial interests in general. Thus, through the 1950s and into the 1960s, the Port and its operations became the subject of a number of reports and analyses that attempted to suggest solutions to various problems.[12]

Concern for the Port prompted the City and County of San Francisco to submit a request to the state legislature through then-Mayor Elmer E. Robinson and the Board of Supervisors to establish a Senate-fact finding committee. They were joined by similar requests form the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco, the San Francisco Bay Area Council, Inc., and the San Francisco Junior Chamber of Commerce. The state agreed that the issue was important and established a committee in 1950. The

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[11] Port activities created 23,000 jobs plus 52-67,000 indirectly created jobs, constituting 11-14% of San Francisco's employment at the time (ADL 1966). One estimate calculated 1 of 3 San Francisco wage earners could trace their livelihood to the city's maritime industry (Portside News May 1959, 5).

[12] For instance: "A Report on Inter-coastal Shipping with Special Reference to the San Francisco Bay Port Area" San Francisco Bay Ports Commission, State of California 1953 and "Presentations on San Francisco Port Study 1962" National Academy of Science and National Resource Council 1962.

resulting state-led inquiry produced in 1951 one of the earliest and most comprehensive examinations of the status of shipping in the Bay Area. Starting with some of the conclusions of this report, the following sections discuss the main difficulties faced by the Port in keeping current shipping lines and attracting new ones during the decade and a half before containerization. The difficulties included infrastructure and operational problems, problems associated with state ownership, and land use changes in the northern waterfront.

Infrastructure and Operations Problems

> Worn out facilities? Yes, we have to modernize our port—but let's remember that many very busy ports today are doing well with facilities just as old and overcrowded as San Francisco's. Cyril Magnin, quoted in Portside News (January 1958, 7).

One of the Senate committee's basic findings was that the decrease in shipping was related to infrastructural and operational problems which caused "the harbor, as composed of the various ports located along its shores, [to be] not fully competitive with other major United States harbor regions" (State of California 1951, 20). Operational problems resulting from labor disputes were important in all Bay Area ports, but affected San Francisco in particular. The report asserted that "a long record of tie-ups [labor-related] has done much to shake the confidence of shippers in the harbor's ability to move cargoes without interruption of services." Strikes had a definite impact on the levels of San Francisco's tonnage in the late 1940s. Sailors

struck in 1946, longshoremen in 1948, and there were two major strikes by warehousemen in 1949 (San Francisco Chamber of Commerce 1950). Note the Port of San Francisco's effort to point out willing, productive, and content-looking workers to prospective shippers (Figure 28). As indicated earlier, the Chamber of Commerce supported the Port's positive spin on labor issues by maintaining that such problems were truly of the past. However, labor unrest continued to affect the port through the 1950s and would again become prominent with the introduction of containerization.

Figure 28 The inset says "Getting the job done." Source: San Francisco Port Authority, *Shipping Handbook* 1958.

Although the Port implemented a few projects to modernize and maintain some of its facilities, as described a few pages ago, such sporadic improvements could not comprehensively deal with the general state of disrepair of its infrastucture. Many of the port's facilities were in poor physical condition; a number of piers were outmoded, in need of repair, or had pier sheds with internal support columns that hindered the movement of goods. A 1959 survey of the Port's facilities noted that 29 of its 37 finger piers were (at the time of the report) 40 years old, and that the newest was 22 years old (Ebasco 1959). Such old piers were not designed to accommodate modern

equipment. Many of its piers had narrow aprons designed to accommodate rail access, which made maneuvering trucks quite problematic. Yet, the senate committee found that after World War II, trucks accounted for 75-80% of the movement of goods once off-ship, and this was in addition to the impact trucks had on coastwise and inland waterways shipping.[13] That trucking had eclipsed rail was a real problem for the Port of San Francisco. Still another difficulty was that, even before the arrival of giant containerships, general cargo ships were themselves getting bigger. Many of San Francisco's piers were not large enough to accommodate the newest ships, and sheds had insufficient floor space to handle the larger shipments that came with bigger ships, and they could not easily accommodate large mobile cranes and heavier forklifts (Piers 30-32 and 50 were notable exceptions). Moreover, larger ships required more dredging, an expensive task which, later, was recognized as environmentally undesirable.

Other problems that hindered the port's ability to compete for trade included: longer waiting time at docks; loss of the pallets used to convey goods between ship and shore; and the hesitation of drivers to incur additional wear on their trucks from driving over the hills in and south of San Francisco, as opposed to more direct or flatter routes in the East Bay. Pilferage of cargo was also of much concern to shippers (SFC 29 November 1950). Operational problems did not stop with the port's facilities. The port was so in need of organizational upkeep that retail magnate Cyril

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[13] Eighty percent according to Ebasco (1959).

Magnin, then president of the BSHC, requested that the California Department of Finance perform a detailed survey of management practices, resulting in, among other things, separation of the fiscal and non-fiscal office sections of the port (Portside News May 1955; California Department of Finance 1955).

In its final analysis of Bay Area ports and cargo handling, aimed especially at San Francisco, the senate committee concluded that:

> ...the committee's staff has deviated from the usual emphasis of port studies in that it places stress on the value of effective port operations and on harbor-wide community support of water-borne commerce rather than on the extent and conditions of physical facilities. *Other factors being equal, the human elements of port organization, management, and promotion appear somewhat more significant in the modern picture of maritime commerce and world trade than modern facilities*.
>
> Today the primary tests of successful port operations appear to be competitive shipping and cargo-handling costs; regular and uninterrupted schedules for steamship services; and efficient , economical delivery of cargoes from shipper to consignee. Without minimizing the value of up-to-date port facilities, modernization of such facilities becomes an important factor only insofar as costs of freight movement are affected by outmoded piers, wharves, and loading equipment.
> (State of California 1951, 23 emphasis added)

In an age of grand designs and visions of futuristic efficiency and simplicity, such conclusions seemed oddly out of tune. They reveal a failure to conceive that modernization could so impact the cost of cargo movement and so alter the nature and spatial requirements of facilities as to become the determining aspect of Port cargo operations, and thereby of its ability to compete, and thus its future economic viability. In only seven years, containerization would initiate a new era in world trade.

The State-Owned Port

While state ownership had been an issue debated over the years, even as late as 1950, not everyone was convinced that such an arrangement was the primary source of the Port's trouble. For instance, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce stated

> ...the Committee believes questions of legal control in the operation of the Port are of secondary importance and that the primary concern is the active development of the Port through improvement, promotion, expansion of service, and the like, regardless of what the controlling entity may be. (San Francisco Chamber of Commerce 1950, 21)

In 1958, President of the (newly named) Port Authority, Cyril Magnin, decided to speak out on the issue:

> There is the matter of state vs. city port ownership, for example. I have talked to few shippers over the country who know —and fewer yet who care— who owns the port facilities, as long as they can expect efficient and economical service from the port and its related maritime industries in San Francisco. And I think that it is safe to say that in the recent past, relationships between the city and port administrations have been harmonious and productive. (Portside News January 1958, 7)

Nevertheless, during the 1950s state ownership became increasingly controversial, and the state was criticized for a lackadaisical approach to its role in port affairs. Not all the blame could be placed on the BSHC, however, because as a state agency it operated under certain restrictions. When the Board decided that some function should be developed, it usually had to be approved by the California State Legislature, which also approved its budget. Until 1951, the Board had no authority to tax or

issues bonds. When the BSHC was finally given the ability to issues bonds, they could only be general obligation bonds, which are issued through the state legislature and subject to voter approval at a general election. State ownership thus put the Port of San Francisco in a position quite different from any other California port. Most importantly, it was difficult for the port to make needed repairs to piers, to widen aprons, and perform general maintenance. There was a disincentive for voters outside of San Francisco to approve bonds for a port that might be competing with their own. Proposition 4, passed in 1958 as the State Harbor Bond Issue, was a testament to the perceived difficulties of getting such bonds passed. The San Francisco Port Authority was so concerned with this proposition that it released what amounted to campaign literature - a document that took pains to explain the Port's untarnished financial record and that the bond would be paid for by revenue from the harbor, not costing the public a cent. The document also included a section of quotes from 'leading Californians' like Governor Knight and Attorney General Edmund G. Brown, and newspapers including the Los Angles Examiner and the San Francisco Examiner that expressed support for the proposition. Notably, it was subtitled the *state* harbor bond issue - of the $63 million dollars requested by the legislature, $50 million was earmarked for San Francisco.

Getting a bond passed was not the only problem. Further difficulties derived from the fact that the Board had to service those bonds through rates and fees it charged for the use of its facilities. This created a catch-22 for the port. As the cost of

moving freight was considered one of the most significant factor in routing goods, there was pressure to maintain or reduce rates charged by the Port for wharfage, handling, and so on, so as not to create further incentives for shipping lines to avoid San Francisco. Yet, the port had to rely on these fees to pay its debt. Any other funds had to be obtained directly from state coffers, money often hard to come by. When revenues were low, port management had to defer maintenance. So, the budgeting system imposed by state ownership effectively hindered upkeep.[14] Additionally, employees of the Board were handicapped by state legislation in their ability to solicit traffic - a rather conflicted situation as the Board was charged with promoting the port (San Francisco Chamber of Commerce 1950, 42). Such was the legacy of state-ownership that even in 1978 city officials sought to deflect blame for continued decline onto the previous stewardship, arguing that "the decrease of useful maritime uses has been caused by obsolescence since there was a lack of capital reinvestment in the maritime piers on the part of the State of California..."

[14] Other ports were not so constrained, and a number of municipally-owned ports, in the Bay Area and elsewhere, benefitted from tax subvention or other local sources of income, for example Long Beach/Los Angeles received royalties from petroleum production on harbor property (San Francisco Chamber of Commerce 1950, p. 31).

Land Use Changes in the Northern Waterfront[15]

> It is not, however, the docks, wharves, and terminals that make a harbor but what is behind those facilities. A port must have a hinterland to produce and
>
> move to dockside the goods and commodities shipped outbound, and it must have a market for incoming shipments. (State of California 1951, 29)

Beginning in the 1950s, two important developments led to dramatic changes in land uses near port property along the northern waterfront: first, new methods of production, fabrication, and goods distribution and second, the rise of a service sector economy and the birth of a 'post-industrial' San Francisco. The following discussion outlines some of the local effects of such larger forces. As officials began to think about alternative uses for Port property in the northern waterfront, land-side transformation of the built environment suggested possibilities for new urban forms over the water.

As mentioned earlier, the post-war increase in Bay Area manufacturing and industry was seen as a good sign for Bay Area ports. However, as industrial activity increased it shifted location within the Bay Area. Industry, particularly heavy industry and activities relying on material brought through the port, began to abandon San Francisco. This had the effect, slowly at first, then more rapidly by 1960, of eroding the Port's connection to nearby inland areas. Traditionally, production plants were multi-storied and located near inputs - that is, raw materials or food stuffs requiring

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[15] This discussion considers only the northern waterfront because areas below the Bay Bridge were not affected by land use changes in the same way until later.

processing and or packing. But businesses had begun to abandon their waterfront locations in order to take advantage of cheaper suburban sites - cheaper because changes in production and warehousing made multi-story facilities obsolete. Instead efficiency was found in horizontally configured structures. To a large degree, industrial relocation was enabled by the explosion in trucking, which was in turn tied to the expansion of the nation's highway system. Trucks eradicated the cost advantage of being located near inputs, which was in any case minimal compared to the savings in efficiency from new facilities in suburban sites. Additionally, raw, unrefined, or pre-production cargo was beginning to be replaced by manufactured items (for example electronics and machinery began to displace fruits, spices, coffee, and sugar). The result was that few, if any, processing plants were needed near the waterfront and fewer manufactured or processed goods were being exported through the Port of San Francisco. Naturally, many warehousing and distribution firms also abandoned their waterfront area locations.

As industrial activities relocated, they were replaced by new uses. Tourist-related retail and general commercial uses moved into the Fisherman's Wharf area, replacing maritime and maritime-related businesses such as boat repair shops, chandlers, food processors, and warehousing. In particular, the creep of motels along the wharf signaled its transformation from a place of production to one of consumption. The first motel did not appear in the wharf area until 1954, a second was built in 1959, and two more appeared by 1963 (SFPD 1963). The most significant

and symbolic of these early changes were the adaptive reuses of Ghirardelli Square and the Cannery. By the end of the 1960s industry, especially manufacturing, warehousing, and maritime-related uses in areas inland of the wharf had ceased to dominate the built environment.

Reconfiguration of industrial plants was also occurring at a time when land values were increasing, land in central cities was becoming too expensive to accommodate horizontal industrial structures. So, the flight of industry from San Francisco's northern waterfront, and from the city generally, especially in areas closer to downtown, was encouraged by rising land values resulting from the expansion of the financial district and its hunger for office space - one of the key components of the realignment of many urban economies. Between 1946 and 1950 there were five permits to construct new downtown buildings, 11 between 1951 and 1955, and 12 between 1956 and 1961 (SFPD 1963a, 47). Of the total office space constructed in San Francisco between 1929 and 1962, 22 percent of it (about 2.5 million square feet) was built between 1960 and 1962 (Planning Department 1963a, 4). By the mid 1950s, the downtown, in particular the financial district, needed to expand beyond its traditional boundaries, in the process changing the "highest and best use" of adjacent land from warehousing, distribution, and industry to office high rises. The rapid shift in San Francisco's economy that would generate such dramatic change is outlined in Tables 2 and 3.[16]

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[16] While numbers in Table 3 are for San Francisco as a whole, a majority of the City's jobs were, and still are, found in the greater downtown.

Number of Downtown Establishments in Selected Sectors, 1953-1961			
	1953	**1961**	**% Change**
Manufacturing	310	215	-30.3
Wholesaling	2363	1961	-16.6
Eating and Drinking	843	904	+7.2
Financial Services	1641	1853	+12.9

Table 2 Source: San Francisco Planning Department (1963a)

These tables show San Francisco's economic transformation, both downtown and for the city as a whole, and they make clear the impact of such transformations on the built environment; that is, changes in the type and number of businesses, and thus labor force and customers, and the infrastructure necessary to support them, in turn result in real changes in the cityscape.

San Francisco's shift from away from industrial activities to a more service-sector economy affected the Port directly by changing the physical, built environment near it. Not only did high-rise office buildings emerge as part of the skyline, but they brought with them significant increases in both automobile traffic and the need for mass transit, and they create demand for retail and commercial businesses to serve a growing and changing downtown working population. This created the conditions for classic land use conflicts. In general, older maritime and industrial uses did not jibe

San Francisco Employment and Establishments for Selected 2-Digit SICs, 1953 and 1968					
		1953	1968	Difference	% Change
Manufacturing	Employment	69479	57592	**-11887**	**-21%**
	Establishments	2141	1667	**-474**	**-28%**
Transportation and Utilities	Employment	44955	54236	9,281	21%
	Establishments	662	552	**-110**	**-20%**
Wholesale	Employment	49249	43573	**-5676**	**-13%**
	Establishments	3028	2694	**-334**	**-12%**
Retail	Employment	60269	58152	**-2117**	**-4%**
	Establishments	6110	4884	**-1226**	**-25%**
Services	Employment	48299	89448	41149	46%
	Establishments	6602	7286	684	9%
FIRE*	Employment	40522	59864	19342	32%
	Establishments	2433	2848	415	15%

Table 3 Source: U.S. Census, County Business Patterns
* FIRE = Finance, Insurance, Real Estate

well with new commercial and tourist-related activities; it became operationally and economically difficult for the former to compete with the latter. For instance, trucks maneuvering from northern waterfront piers onto nearby roadways were faced with traffic congestion and ever growing masses of pedestrians. Maritime supply companies and other maritime-related businesses could not afford to pay increasing rents. As logistics became harder to manage, and the commercial businesses that

served maritime activity and industry relocated or closed, it became more difficult for shipping lines to justify using the Port of San Francisco. Such problems contributed significantly to the reduction or elimination of calls made shipping lines to the Port of San Francisco.

This did not go unnoticed. For example, one reason that a raised freeway was built along the Embarcadero was to try to separate through traffic from the remaining working piers in order to ease the conditions along a section of the waterfront being strangled by a growing downtown. Nevertheless, construction of the Embarcadero Freeway (which in 1958 was halted at Broadway Street by a citizen's revolt) had a tremendous impact on the morphology of the Port's northern waterfront, and was a harbinger of the Port's changing role in the decades to come. The freeway severed the downtown from the waterfront, emphasizing the City's shift away from its historical

Figure 29 The Embarcadero Freeway at the Ferry Building, @1960. Source: Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

maritime origins as it moved into its service sector future. Streets had originally been laid out to end in the piers, and this historical aspect of the city's grid design was disturbed, if not destroyed, by construction of the freeway.

One of the most dramatic changes to non-Port land in the northern waterfront that would affect the port, and that serves as an example of both top-down and bottom-up pressures, was the relocation of the produce market during the 1950s and the subsequent construction of the Golden Gateway in the1960s, a landmark mixed-use development. In a maritime-oriented area known as 'the Front', the Produce Market was a somewhat worn and jumbled collection of warehouses and rolling door storefronts that were home primarily to fruit and vegetable wholesalers who distributed their wares to restaurants and grocers throughout San Francisco and the Bay Area. The market derived its maritime character from various other businesses located there, including ship chandlers, import-export firms, union halls, various

Figures 30 and 31 Two views of the Produce Market; left is @ 1950, right is 1952. Source: San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

storage facilities, and hotels (often serving ship's crews). Located across

from the Ferry Building and adjacent to the financial district, and thus the heart of downtown, the produce market occupied increasingly valuable land.

In the first part of the 1950s, a mix of powerful local executives and urban elites decided that the 'best' use of the land occupied by the Produce Market was to accommodate expansion demanded by the newly energetic downtown; their efforts helped to galvanize the Golden Gateway redevelopment project. This can been seen in two ways: as an example of the local actors working to capitalize on larger conditions to satisfy their own locally-based interests and as the inevitable filtering of top-down forces to the agents who channel them and ultimately affect the landscape. This conflation of forces is another example of the complexity that belied by the simple top-down/bottom-up dichotomy.

To forward their agenda, the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee, formed sometime around 1952, launched a campaign to relocate the Produce Market and construct a huge mixed-use project using the city's newly acquired redevelopment powers. Zellerbach was the founder of the Crown-Zellerbach Company and Blyth was a financier. The committee consisted of local business magnates who described themselves as "just a group of fellows devoted to San Francisco" (Hartman 1984, 9). In fact, nearly every one of the members was on the executive board of the Bay Area Council, an organization made up some of the West's most powerful corporations, including U.S. Steel, Bechtel, and the Bank of America (Hartman 1984). Responding to suggestions that the produce market should be relocated, the Planning Department

published an official proposal for doing so in 1953, followed in 1954 with a report recommending designation of a redevelopment area to include the Produce Market. But the efforts of the Blythe-Zellerbach Committee and the Planning Department's would not be fruitful until the end of the decade, when the influence of Port Commission President Cyril Magnin and eventually of the visionary Justin Herman would help to assure success for the first redevelopment project in the downtown area.[17] As will be seen later, Magnin's interest in the northern waterfront was not necessarily as a working waterfront; relocating the ProduceMmarket would advance his vision of a new 'Embarcadero City'. In order to leverage the power of the Redevelopment Agency and speed up the process of redevelopment, the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee joined the San Francisco Housing and Planning Association to form the San Francisco Urban Renewal Association (SPUR) in 1959. One of the early requirements for redevelopment was that a citizen's organization be formed to advise the Redevelopment Agency and act as a liaison between the city and the Agency. SPUR was formed to take on this role. The Planning Department delineated the new redevelopment area and provided arguments for declaring it to be blighted: the

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[17] Justin Herman, appointed executive director of the Redevelopment Agency by Mayor George Christopher in 1960, was the first to fully understand and effectively wield his agency's power in San Francisco. Christopher replaced Eugene Riordan at the urging of the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee and the newly formed San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal SPUR, which complained that redevelopment was moving along too slowly. While the Redevelopment Agency, its powers, and the process of redevelopment are beyond the scope of this discussion, it should be understood that in order to exercise eminent domain, the Agency must declare the area of interest to be 'blighted', both economically and physically. This declaration is a critical and often controversial step.

area in and around the produce market was described as run down, a fire hazard, unhealthy, and inefficient. To support these contentions, reports were produced from the Department of Public Health, which stated that there were "many potential dangers to the public health" (but which also said no acute problems existed), and the Fire Department, which noted 119 fire code violations and commented that the narrow and congested streets were "a deterrent to the efficient operation of this department" (SFPD 1954, iii).

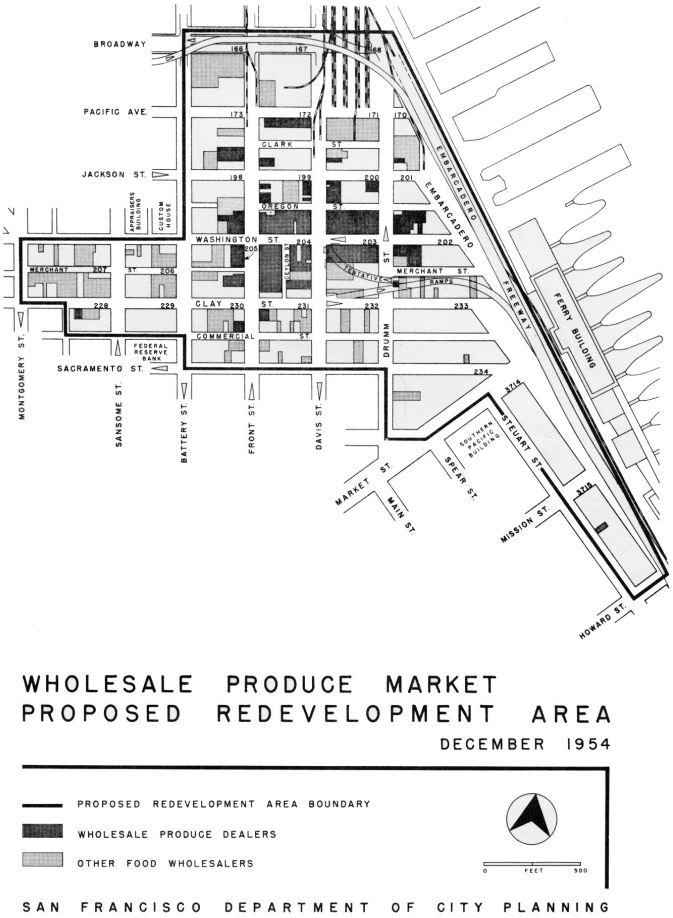

Figure 32 Map of the Produce Market. Source: San Francisco Planning Department, "A report recommending designation of two redevelopment areas under provisions of the California Community Redevelopment Act" 1954.

Once the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee, SPUR, and Justin Herman were able to establish a legal redevelopment area and declare it blighted, not much could stand in the way. The affected business owners initially fought very hard against the proposal but were in the end powerless and shifted their strategy to getting the best possible

facilities at their new site in the southern waterfront. The Planning Department then retained Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM) to prepare the plan, called Area E. The plan was approved, and a design competition was held for specific proposals for what would become the Golden Gateway. In 1960, during a design competition won by Perini-San Francisco Associates, the site was cleared. Construction was started on the 44 acre site in 1961 and ended in the early 1980s with the completion of the Embarcadero Four office tower. The produce market was relocated to a site near Islais Creek, in the southern waterfront, where it remains today.[18]

The Golden Gateway development completely recreated the area, and thus its impact on the Port was not a matter of simply supplanting maritime-related uses that supported Port activities. The project created land use conflicts which exacerbated operational problems affecting the Port's industrial and maritime activities. Private automobiles and pedestrians created a crowd that interfered with trucks and the flow of goods, as opposed to melding in with it. Apartments, condominiums, and later offices replaced landside uses that once interacted with and were of a similar nature to, Port uses. And the remaining maritime activity and Embarcadero Freeway served to create a disjointed physical and not entirely welcoming physical for the inhabitants of the new residential enclave and office development. Land use changes in areas adjacent

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[18] As an example of the often incestuous relationships in the development and planning world, Owings, of SOM, earlier had been engaged by Zellerbach to design his company's new Market Street headquarters. Also, Perini's proposal was co-sponsored by the Fleishhacker Company. Mortimor Fleishacker became heavily involved in northern waterfront issues, and would by the mid 1960s become a member of the City Planning Commission and later a member of the Board of Supervisors.

Figure 33 Model of the Golden Gateway redevelopment project. Source: Perini-San Francisco Associates/San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, no date (@ 1960.)

Figure 34 Golden Gateway as seen today through the palm trees that now line the Embarcadero. Photograph by author.

to the Port's northern waterfront, though not all as abrupt and sweeping, would accelerate during the 1960s and beyond.

Urban economic transformations characterized by new methods of production and distribution, new kinds of work, and changes in the nature of labor constitute what are sometimes referred to as 'underlying' or 'top-down' forces that are reflected in the changes to the local built environment that they cause. But the peculiarities of local conditions and policy-making influence the extent and character of such forces - their spatial imprint. The story of the Golden Gateway development is important not just as

an example of the impact of land use change on the Port, but more generally as counterpoint to the idea that dramatic urban transformation and related land uses changes result from outside' powers (again, the essence of 'top-down' forces).[19] Indeed the term 'forces' in this context suggests something placeless, a power generated or issuing from somewhere other than the site being studied. As is clear from even this brief project history, there are strong local forces that can effect the transformation of place. Production of the Golden Gateway may represent larger power of capital to transform a place, but its creation and success came from local actors using the powers of the Redevelopment Agency implemented in a local setting and under local conditions.

The Golden Gateway redevelopment project points to the difficulty in categorizing forces as top-down or bottom-up - they are reflexive. This also underscores the fact that capitalism, often presented as faceless or discussed in the abstract, is carried out by actors and agencies manipulating the world around them, and that perhaps most importantly, these actors can often be local government agencies and 'gatekeepers', not just corporations and their executives. So, the forces of change described in this section are both 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' - but the 'bottom-up' forces (local government in the case of Golden Gateway) are not simply reactive, they are proactive and even anticipatory. While the top-down/bottom-up aprroach is useful in capturing the kinds of forces at work in changing cities, it does not necessarily

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[19] In the vein of discussion by urbanists regarding the power of capital to form and reform the urban landscape.

capture how these forces work together or reveal the 'direction' of those power lines accurately.

THE CONTAINER REVOLUTION

The final, insurmountable problem generating decline in San Francisco's shipping activity was heralded by the departure of the first containerized freighter from San Francisco Bay, Matson Line's *Hawaiian Merchant*, in 1958. While it was not until 1966 that the first regularly scheduled containership was employed in international trade by Sea Land, based in New Jersey, Bay Area ports experienced a steady increase in sailings of containerships at the end of the 1950s. By the mid 1960s, American President Lines, a major New York shipper with a substantial Bay Area presence, had developed plans for full containership services to the Far East (ADL 1966). The impact of containerization was probably not fully felt by San Francisco until 1967, the year that the Port of Oakland soared ahead of San Francisco in total short tons handled (see Table 4).

The rush to containerization was fueled primarily by two factors. First, expanding levels of trade world wide and the increase in ship size necessitated increased efficiency in the movement of goods. Though bigger cargo vessels were putting pressure on ports to upgrade facilities and dredge channels even before containerization became the standard, containers required a whole new level of accommodation. Second, time at dock as a percentage of total costs for shipping

goods via standard, general cargo, break-bulk ships increased from 30% of the total costs in the 1930s to up to 75% in the 1960s - an increase attributed to steadily rising labor costs (ADL 1966)[20]. Naturally, this created a tremendous economic incentive to find a way to reduce cargo handling time. Break-bulk cargo is generally handled four times: moving the goods from their point of origin to shipside, loading them onto the ship, unloading them, and then moving them to their destination (Marcus et al. 1980).

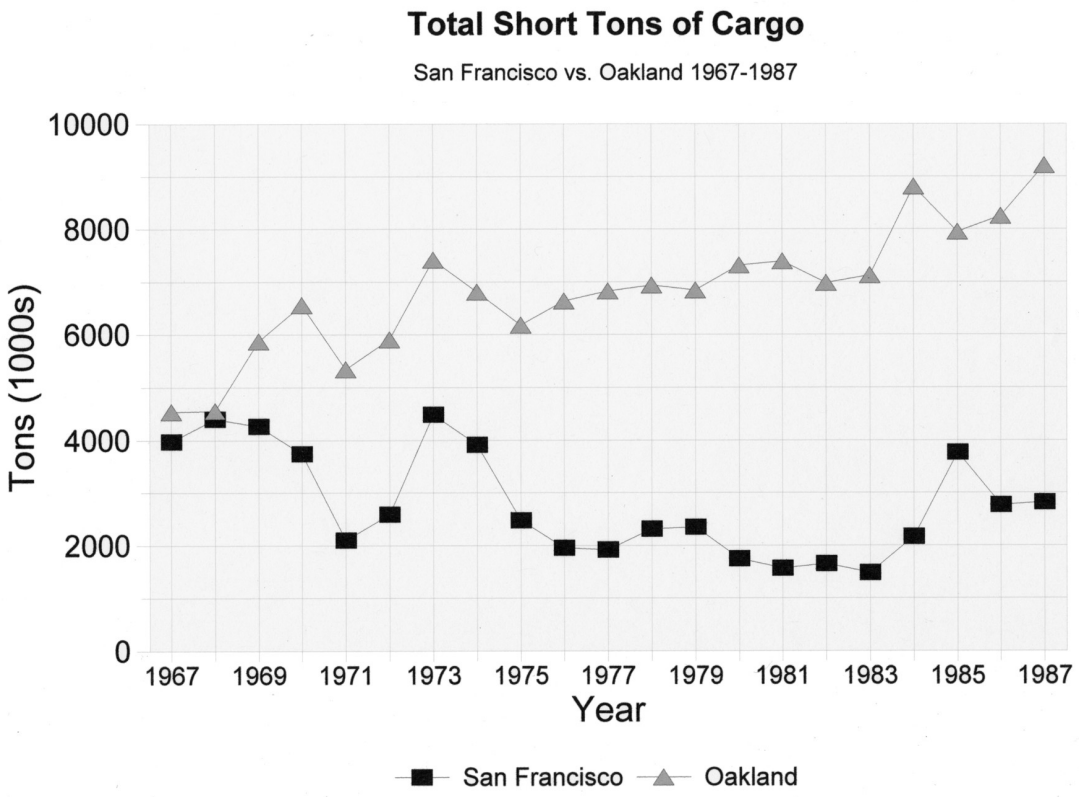

Table 4 Source: U.S. Corps of Engineers, *Waterborne Commerce.*

[20] Especially for San Francisco, which had particularly high labor costs because it was state owned and didn't join in the general contract that other ports had? -check SPUR etc

Figure 35 Breakbulk cargo @1958. Source: Port of San Francisco *Ocean Shipping Handbook* 1958.

Figure 36 Container cargo, 1968. Source: Port of San Francisco, *Ocean Shipping Handbook* 1966.

Furthermore, break bulk goods have to be hand-sorted. Containers allowed the entire process to be mechanized and in so doing increased loading and unloading rates from 25 tons per hour per gang to up to 600 tons per hour (Marcus et al. 1980). This had the commensurate effect of dramatically reducing the amount of time spent at port, which in turn could reduce dockage and wharfage fees. Containerization also solved other problems associated with break-bulk: "pilferage, loss and damage, and...exposure to the elements" (Marcus et al. 1980, 163). Of course, by reducing labor costs, containerization resulted in the loss of thousands of stevedoring and longshoreman jobs.

The switch to containerization created difficulties for many ports because the economies of scale and efficiency realized by the new transportation technology had two major requirements. First, to develop facilities for handling containers meant a significant capital expenditure for cranes and other marshaling equipment. Second, because containerships carry a tremendous amount of freight which can be unloaded very quickly, 12-30 acres of 'backland' are need to sort and stack containers - space many ports, especially older ones, did not have.

Containerization, then, presented three problems for San Francisco. First, San Francisco had an extensive shipping-related infrastructure already in place. The cost of containerization comes not just with purchasing new equipment, but in altering existing facilities. Finger piers are useless to containerships, and must be removed or substantially enlarged and altered; rail lines and truck access must often be re-configured and improved, and surrounding land, which may have been devoted to other uses, must be acquired to provide space for the appropriate infrastructure and to store, sort, stack, and prepare for moving goods on to their final destinations. Second, San Francisco had few areas where sufficient, flat, backland was available. Of the 7.5 miles of waterfront within the port's jurisdiction, only the southern section could be used readily. Third, San Francisco was vulnerable to loss of business to ports with container facilities because 70% of the cargo it handled from foreign trade was "suitable for containerization" (ADL 1966).[21]

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[21] Note that not all goods can be containerized. Scrap metal, newsprint, bulk grains, automobiles, for instance, must be moved traditionally. So, there has been and

The challenge of maintaining shipping activity was complicated for San Francisco by several other factors. First and foremost was the transformation of the Port of Oakland from a minor port of call to what would by the 1980s become one of the busiest ports in the country. The Port of Oakland's metamorphosis was due initially to improvements made as part of the war effort in the 1940s.[22] Later, though, it was the ability of its director and the mayor of Oakland to secure Federal economic development grants. Oakland of the 1950s and early 1960s was a city beset by many problems, one of which was unemployment - and unemployment was the basis for receiving certain Federal grant monies. With the promise of jobs that would be created by a more active port, Oakland acquired $30 million dollars in capital improvement funds to redevelop derelict land and expand its infrastructure (Mayor's Economic Advisory Council 1978). The money would have done little were it not for important advantages that the Port of Oakland had when compared to San Francisco in the 'container age'. The Port of Oakland's facilities were not as extensive as the Port of San Francisco's and there was plenty of flat land to transform into backlands suitable for marshaling. Thus, with a significant source of capital, plentiful space

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there will continue to be a need for break-bulk and other, non-container facilities. San Francisco has also captured 'special shipment' business, which includes transhipment of art exhibits and large scientific and research equipment.

[22] The Army base and WWII demands contributed hugely to the development of the Port of Oakland's physical infrastructure, including piers, wharves, sheds (see State of California 1951, 116).

unburdened by extensive facilities, and management eager to adopt new technology, the Port of Oakland could build container terminals quickly.

Between 1968 and 1973, the Port of San Francisco lost at least five major steamship lines to the Port of Oakland.[23] The loss was so significant that in a report to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, the City of San Francisco suggested that the decline in shipping from 5.3 million tons in 1964 to 1.7 million in 1977 could be "directly attributable to Federal subsidies to the Port of Oakland" (Mayor's Economic Advisory Council 1978, 10). Furthermore, the report stated that "the Port of Oakland's rapid rise to dominance in oceanborne shipping" resulted in a decline in the number of jobs in San Francisco related to waterborne commerce from 23,000 in 1964 to 11,000 in 1978 (Mayor's Economic Advisory Council 1978, 27). The Federal subsidies, the report argued, were also responsible for generally increasing the attractiveness of the Port of Oakland, encouraging steamship lines to move from San Francisco to their other facilities, ones not built directly with those Federal funds.

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[23] These included the American President Line (APL), mentioned earlier as the first to plan regular containership sailings, K Lines, Matson Navigation, NYK Lines, and Pacific Australia Direct (Mayor's Economic Advisory Council 1978). According to Don DeLone, former Director of Public Relations, the Marine Terminal Comapny, which handled APL, "spent a lot of time going back and forth between Ben Nutter, the Oakland Port Director, and Rae Watts..., in effect playing off one side against the other.." Oakland got the contract for a number of reasons, including better lease terms because of lower construction costs (Letter from Don DeLone dated 5 April 2001). According to DeLone, Watts was an aggressive director, who hated to see any business move across the Bay.

The Port of Oakland had another advantage when compared to San Francisco - its geographical situation. Not only was San Francisco's once enviable site no longer a boon, but its location relative to the rest of the Bay Area, and to the whole country, became problematic. Even though by the 1950s trucking supplanted rail as the primary way to move goods to the interior, rail access was, and still is, an important consideration for steamship lines. At its height, the Port of San Francisco boasted four major rail lines and itself operated the Beltline Railway (Map_)[24]. Compared to Oakland, though, San Francisco's location at the head of a peninsula added distance and time to distribution routes, making them more costly. To save time, all but one of the private rail lines maintained railroad car ferry service to the East Bay, but this arrangement and its cost were difficult to justify considering that the Port of Oakland's four rail lines all had direct service to the interior. Even if arguments could be made that using railroad car ferries was not burdensome (an argument made in 1966 by Arthur D. Little, a Port consultant), rail activity had been decreasing in San Francisco since the early 1960s as a result of industrial relocation, although it has been suggested that on piers, rail activity had actually increased a little (ADL 1966). Nevertheless, it became hard for the private rail lines, already experiencing difficulties due to competition resulting from the expansion of trucking, to maintain operations in San Francisco. To make matters worse, even truck access to San Francisco was more

[24] The rail lines were: The Southern Pacific, Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe, and the Western Pacific (Mott 1951). By the mid-1970s, mergers, splits, and failures ended with the following: the Southern Pacific, Santa Fe, and Western Pacific lines.

difficult because of traffic and limited highway access. This was yet another pressure on the ability of the Port to provide competitive service.[25]

Containerization is an example of technological innovation acting as a top-down force. But as this discussion indicates, that force was able to affect San Francisco so fundamentally in large part because of the city's site and situation - characteristics that, along with the dynamics of land use change, illustrate the link between local conditions and bottom up forces which may enable or inhibit the impact of top-down forces; this study looks at planning, a local condition, as an inhibitor of topdown forces.

Sunk by Indecision

As stated earlier, the Port of San Francisco's decline in shipping activity was not solely the result of pressures from external, top-down forces, like new technology and more competition. Even though San Francisco found, as many ports across the country did, that its site and situation were not advantageous with regard to the new technology, it reacted slowly to the trend toward containerization when in fact it did have some choices. As mentioned above, the southern section of the Port's property could (and now does) support containerization; San Francisco at least had some of the

[25] Another issue was that a tunnel through which trains heading south from San Francisco had to travel lacked sufficient clearance to allow double-stacked containers to pass, substantially limiting capacity and thus efficiency.

the necessary space where some Ports did not. So, what prevented San Francisco from adopting the new technology at the earliest opportunity?

The initial attitudes towards containerization and the strategies that prevailed at the port were not pro-active, and certainly there was a lack, if not of foresight, then of willingness to take the moderate risks necessary to embrace an emerging technology. As Don DeLone, former Director of Public Relations, points out:

> Everybody was talking about containerization in those days, and the industry publications were full of reports about the design and construction of container ships, so people were fully aware that the new vessels were coming in line. (Letter from Don DeLone dated April 5 2001)

Clearly the port was limited in its view of containerization. Conflicting signals came early on. For instance, the consulting firm Ebasco reported two opposite reactions to containerization in the same report. On the one hand, they acknowledged that shipping executives were of the opinion that container ships offered the best way to counter the increasing expense of handling break-bulk cargo. On the other hand, in response to a questionnaire administered by the consultants, it turned out that steamship company executives were not quickly abandoning older methods and switching to containers. Perhaps this contradiction contributed to the lack of urgency the consultants expressed in their advice regarding the construction of container facilities:

> Finally, even though significant amounts of cargo may be diverted to container ships...the great majority of vessels calling at San Francisco for a number of

> years will be conventional general cargo ships, which will likewise require more effective facilities. (Ebasco 1959, 132)

However, in their own analysis, Ebasco did suggest, albeit in an almost off-handed way, that a terminal which could service container ships be considered. A year later, Director Rae Watts indicated that a container terminal at Pier 80 was not likely, and that no shipping line had come forward to commit to such a terminal (letter from Don DeLone , 5 February 2001). In 1966, eight years later, the Port was advised by its new analysts, Arthur D. Little (ADL), that "while we do not know the rate at which Port foreign trade will become containerized, recent trends indicate that a new facility will be needed in the early 1970s" (ADL 1966, 119).

So, most major investments made by the Port in its facilities during the 1950s and 1960s were not in the constructing cutting-edge terminals, even though the Port liked to think that they were. The expansion of Pier 27 in the northern waterfront was described as being "designed and constructed as a vital part of the Port of San Francisco's long-range improvement program" (OSH 1968, 17). Piers 27 and 50 were both included in a section on containerization in the Port's 1966 Shipping Handbook, and were described as "excellent facilities for container cargoes" apparently because they both contained sizeable storage and marshaling areas. In addition, Pier 27 was equipped with a deck that could support 'the largest containers.' As neither pier could ever really hope to handle containers as quickly and efficiently as a container terminal (for starters, neither was equipped with gantry cranes), the Port's description of these

facilities now seems somewhat delusional. That the Port seemed overly conservative, perhaps even recalcitrant, did not go unnoticed. Board of Supervisors member Bill Blake was a vocal critic, and, calling attention to the lack of modernization, would say "they still have signs on piers down there that say 'walk your horses.'" Herb Caen, the long-time Chronicle columnist, also took shots at the port. "What's going on down at the Port? Zzzzzzzzz."[26] Later, a different Port consultant tried to explain the early lack of perspective: "since [San Francisco] had a large existing base there was no need to attempt to introduce innovation in order to take cargo away from somebody else" (Gruen 1970, 17). This rather unsatisfactory statement nevertheless seemed to hit home, given that the Port had two chances to strike while the containerization iron was still hot, or moderately so anyway, and missed with both.

The Army Street Terminal and LASH

Part of the $50 million of debt incurred through passage of the 1958 bond was earmarked for an entirely new facility. The Port, relying largely on Ebasco's recommendation, decided to construct a large new terminal at Army Street. Dedicated in August 1967, the terminal was, in effect, a modern break-bulk facility . Even though consultants suggested that it be designed to accommodate containerships, it was not dedicated to that technology, having only a limited ability to handle containers. This configuration

[26] Quotations from Mr.Don DeLone, Public Relations Director for the Port 1953-1960, and later Manager of Trade Development. Letter dated 1/8/01.

Figure 37 Army Street terminal (Pier 80) before containerization @1966. Source: Port of San Francisco *Ocean Shipping Handbook* 1966.

Figure 38 Drawing of Army Street terminal after its upgrade to containerization. Note that the ship at dock is t drawn as a hybrid breakbulk-container ship Source: Port of San Francisco *Ocean Shipping Handbook* 1966.

was considered necessary to consolidate existing break-bulk and palletized cargo operations away from the northern waterfront, as suggested by both Ebasco and later, by Arthur D. Little. Nevertheless, it was described as the most advanced ocean shipping facility on San Francisco Bay (ADL 1967, OSH 1966). In his account of the history of containerization in San Francisco, Fitzgerald (1986) suggests that it is understandable that the Port decided to stick with what it knew best - non-specialized general cargo-handling, instead of taking the risk of trying something new. But, as he also points out, by the time the Army Street Terminal was in the design

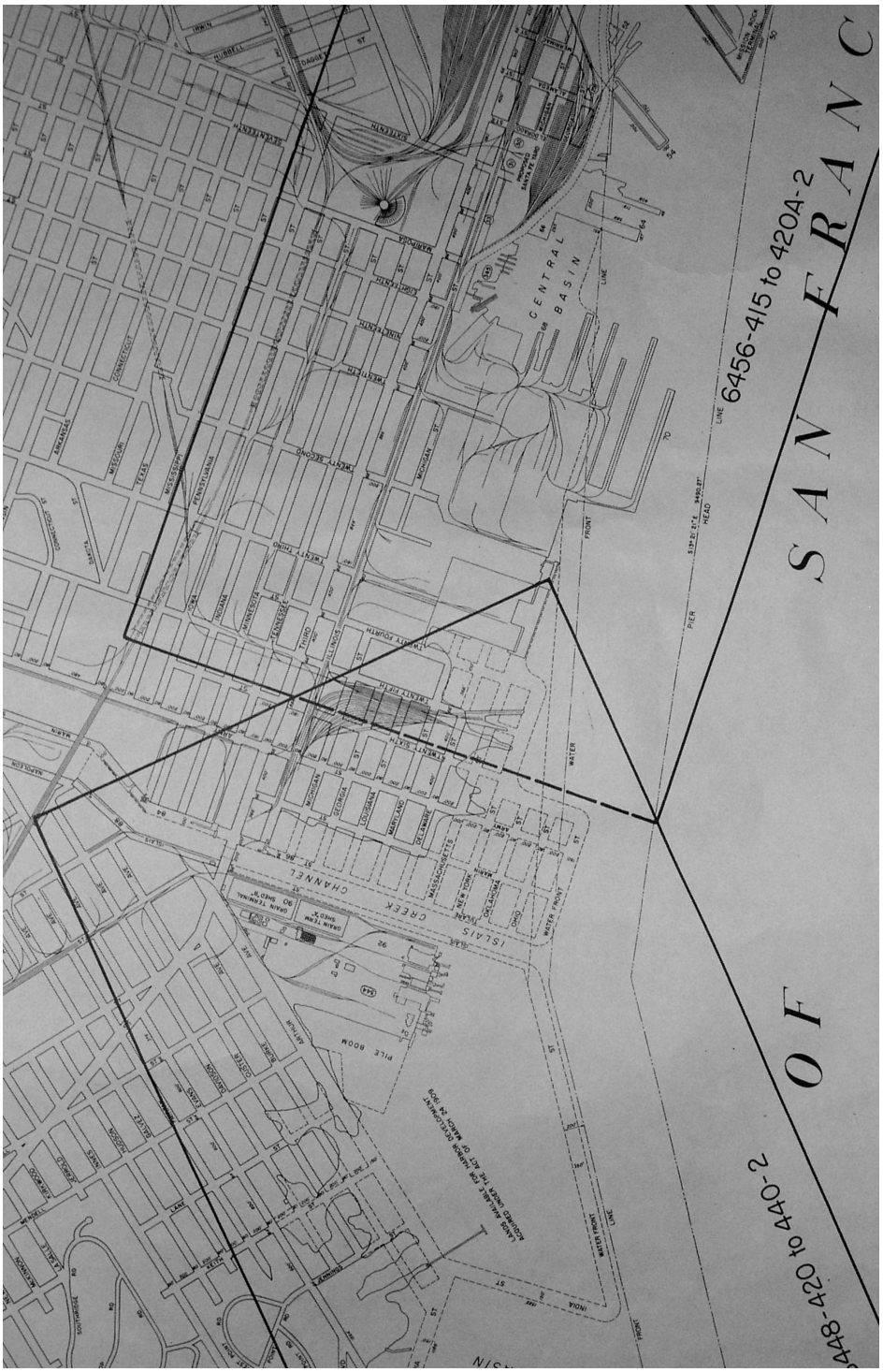

Figure 39 1950 Port map showing undeveloped site of the Army Street Terminal north of Islais Creek. Dotted lines indicate "paper" streets and parcels that are unimproved or are submerged. Source: Port of San Francisco

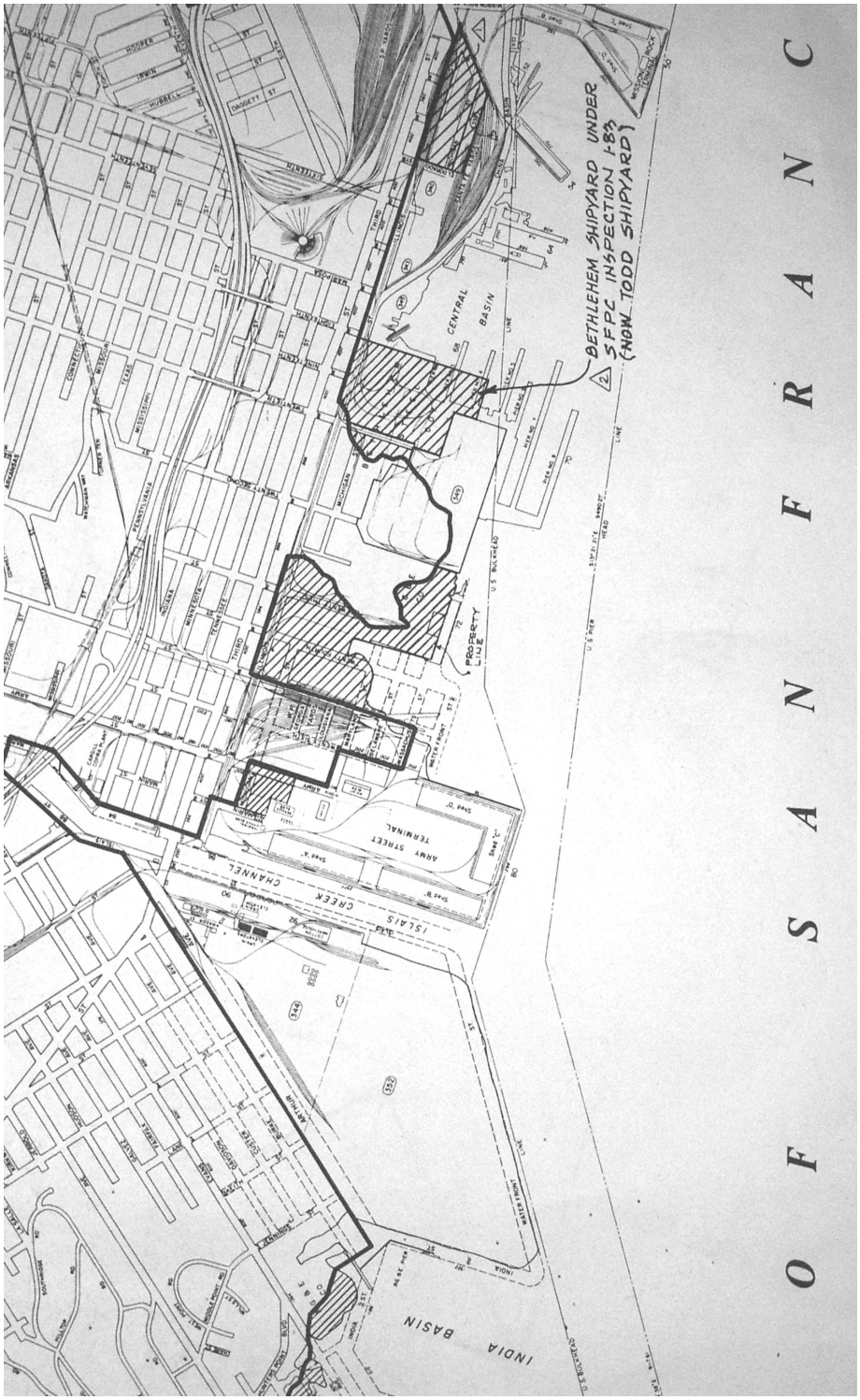

Figure 40 1969 Port map showing the Army Street Terminal/Pier 80. The dark line is the Port jurisdiction line. The LASH terminal (see p. 131) was located at India Basin. Source: Port of San Francisco.

phase, the Port of Oakland already had a container facility and a major shipping line, Matson, using it for container ships on the Hawaii route.[27] It is arguedhere that the latter observation suggests that the Port and its consultants indeed suffered from a certain lack of vision.

In the same year the Army Street Terminal was inaugurated, ADL would shift gears. In a second study commissioned by the Port Authority, this one entitled *San Francisco's Maritime Future, Revolution and Response*, the consultants expressed the urgent need to meet the challenge of containerization. They open the report by stating that "it will not be possible for the Port to maintain the allegiance of container-carrying steamship companies without providing special container facilities." (ADL 1967, 1). ADL argued that if the Port did not respond positively to the challenge posed by adopting new technology, its "failure to build a new, advanced cargo-handling terminal would mean the eventual loss of one-half or more of the Port's future revenues from trade" (ADL 1967, 29) and that this could impact the growth of the entire Bay Area. On the other hand, if the Port acted quickly and surely, it could maintain its traditional position as nothing less than a "prime mover in the successful development of the West" (ADL 1967, 3).

In justifying the investment in a new facility so soon after the dedication of the Army Street Terminal, ADL asserted that the characterization of the Port as a dying

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[27] Only two years after dedicating Army Street Terminal at Pier 80, the Port of Oakland would soar ahead of San Francisco in the amount of cargo moving across its docks. That year, 1969, would be a watershed one for the a second reason - it was the first year of the City of San Francisco's newly reacquired jurisdiction over its port.

one was a myth. They pointed out, for instance, that the Port Authority derived more than four times the direct revenue from its trade operations than did the Port of Oakland, and that for the last two years cargo volumes had increased. They dismissed many of the issues typically raised regarding the disadvantages San Francisco faced in developing container facilities and competing with other ports. For instance, ADL did not consider San Francisco's site and situation a hindrance:

> Concern about San Francisco's future as a major port does not stem from an basic flaw in location, but rather whether the Port can and will build facilities demanded by the new containership technology. (ADL 1967, 1)

They also continued to assert that ferrying rail cars to the other side of the Bay was an insignificant cost and refuted the idea that traffic congestion would hinder the Port's growth because the I-280 freeway was about to open, and would almost directly serve the southern waterfront. Finally, they pointed out that the Port offered the advantages of a plethora of shipping-related services (FTZ, banking, insurance, customs brokers, fueling, and so on) at its doorstep. So, ADL argued that the Port could continue to be competitive if it were to build the right facilities before the competition could lure away shipping lines. Thus, the consultants recommended that a new "100% container" facility be built as quickly as possible at India Basin. They admitted, however, that exactly what kind of facility to build was difficult to determine because maritime technology was still in a state of flux. For instance, a standard for container size had not yet been adopted and other technologies were still competing with

containers, for instance lighter-aboard-ship (LASH). In fact, the Port's second new facility would be devoted to that abortive technology.

LASH technology was a system developed from military systems and was emerging at about the same time as container ships. LASH was intended to allow ships to anchor offshore, thus allowing vessels to serve shallow water ports, or ports with limited facilities. Lighters would be floated by tugs from ship to port facility. The LASH system quite quickly failed, out-competed by the far more flexible and efficient container system. The failure of LASH and the reasons why the Port decided to take a risk with an unproven shipping method (when the Port previously seemed averse to risk) are for the most part beyond the scope of this study, but have been well-documented by Donald Fitzgerald in his 1986 dissertation. Suffice it to say that the Port made its bid in large because Pacific Far East Lines (PFEL), an up and coming shipping firm, decided to adopt the technology. San Francisco began construction of its India Basin LASH terminal in 1970, and it was opened in 1972 as the first terminal of its kind. Fate was not kind to PFEL (which was acquired in 1974 by Freighters, Incorporated, a firm headed by John Alioto, Mayor Joe Alioto's son (Fitzgerald 1986). LASH was not working well, and PFEL had invested a lot of money purchasing ships deigned for the new technology. Eventually, PFEL went bankrupt, and the Port had an unusable LASH terminal.

Even had the Port, in a flash of foresight, taken a different route and immediately invested in containerization when the opportunity arose, it is difficult to

say whether it would have been able to compete successfully with Oakland. The on-the-ground reality was that the problems of site and situation, rate structures, rail and truck access, and the location of industry would still have seriously hindered container operations. Thus, the Port's ability to retain shipping lines as they rapidly switched to containers would anyway have been gravely limited. As will be seen in the next chapter, because most modern facilities could only be accommodated in the southern waterfront, where truck access was better and land was both available and for the most part free of the pressures of intense urban growth, pursuit of commercial development of disused Port land was focused in the northern waterfront. The Port's activities would quickly become polarized, functionally and thus spatially. And the Port itself would evolve into an agency with two purposes: to advance its financial position through real estate development and to maintain and support its maritime functions, in particular, to prevent the disappearance of its cargo operations.

To summarize, operational and logistical deficiencies, problematic physical infrastructure, the hamstringing effect of state ownership, and land uses changes which created a functional rift in the northern waterfront between a growing downtown and the industrial activities of a working port had serious repercussions on the Port's ability to attract shipping lines and to sustain cargo handling activities during the 1950s.

One result was that the Port of Oakland could effectively and successfully vie for business even before containerization became the standard (see Figure 1). The

second stage in the decline of shipping was introduced with containerization in the 1960s, and it brought another set of pressures on the arrangement of the Port's physical assets. The Port responded to these challenges with some capital improvements, but they were not enough to stem the rising tide. In the Port's northern waterfront, difficulties were beginning to make themselves apparent in the significant changes to cargo operations and in the character of maritime or maritime-related activities found on Port property. A number of piers were condemned or in poor shape. Some of the Belt Line tracks were removed from service. The Port converted Piers 43 and 45 into moorings for the sailing ship *Balclutha* and a WWII U.S. submarine in the early 1950s. The Free Trade Zone was summarily relocated from Pier 45 to Pier 46 (not its last move).

The door was being opened for new development in the northern waterfront, but it opened onto a waterfront envisioned as the paragon of modern urban living and corporate success built on the efficient movement of automobiles and new methods of air transportation, all as if there were no consciousness of the water at the waterfront. And, as Chronicle writer Michael Harris described it, with San Francisco's airport moving 100 passengers to every one brought by sea liner, the Port seemed to be confronted with the jet age. There was a certain nostalgia and feeling of displacement in his comment that "it is sad to realize that with the passing of the ferries there are thousands in this sea-faring city who have never set foot in a boat" (SFC 13 February 1967). And, with heliports and STOL (short take off and landing) ports, office towers

and apartment complexes all a part of the vision for the Port, it really had entered the 'jet age'. The next chapter will describe some of the giddiest ideas for re-using the northern waterfront, in a time before planning for and regulation of Port property had developed.

In the decline of shipping at the Port of San Francisco, external factors were of major importance: shifting patterns of industrial location or trade routes; the introduction of new technology; and state ownership of the Port. State ownership was reflected in decisions regarding the maintenance, improvement, and construction of facilities. However, local conditions deeply influenced when, where, and how these factors contributed to the Port's declines. San Francisco's site and situation presented perhaps the most insurmountable obstacles. But the impact on the Port of top-down forces, including operational problems, run down or outmoded physical infrastructure, and land use change, was also met by as a certain attitude (ever positive) held both by the Port and its consultants and boosters. When containerization hit, the Port's conservative reaction may have prevented it from competing better with Oakland.

Here is another instance when trying to classify an actor or agent as either top-down or bottom becomes difficult. While the Port was a state agency, and was influenced by state-level decisions and political processes, its administrators are, theoretically, vested in the Port's success, a goal that is important to local interests and which is tied the local political, social, and economic context. Furthermore, the Port's functions are tied to its location in space and it is made up of physical things with

material purposes. So, when invoking 'local', it is important to be mindful that the term refers more than to 'locale'. It also refers to the character of the 'insiders', here for instance, influential individuals or groups and Port commissioners and staff. So, even as a state agency, the Port is itself part of the what constitutes 'local' and is perhaps the ultimate insider of the waterfront landscape.

The attitude towards the Port's fate at the time reveals a misplaced optimism and lack of foresight on the part of decision makers and boosters. Though perhaps understandable given the changing times, it was a situation that may have unnecessarily stymied the Port. The decision to pursue LASH technology instead of constructing a standard container facility was one decision in particular that took the Port in the wrong direction.[28] It is difficult to make informed, or at least directed, decisions regarding new development and upgrades without reference to a long-term strategy, as expressed either in a facilities plan or a policy document, and the Port had neither, relying instead on consultant advice and the aspirations of its most visionary representative, Cyril Magnin.

CONCLUSION

Traditional reviews of port decline have focused almost entirely on containerization as the prime agent of change. Typically, a port's decline is associated

[28] However, in his dissertation, Fitzgerald (1986) describes the Port as having one foot stuck in the past while it looked to the future, and argued that its conservative approach to adopting new technology was understandable.

with its inability to develop container terminals, primarily for reasons of site and situation or land use issues. Ports that are unimpeded by factors affecting the 'old' port are able to take advantage of the new technology and out-compete the old port. The newly successful ports can be existing small ones that had been in the shadows of the old port, but found that the new technology gave it advantages. Sometimes, the rising port is further afield - for instance Baltimore's port was bypassed for Newport-News. This chapter presented two sets of explanations for the Port's decline and argued that San Francisco's demise as a cargo shipping port was set in motion before containerization: first were the 'early factors' of decline which hampered the Port's ability to compete with other Bay Area ports, in particular the up-and-coming Port of Oakland; second was the advent of containerization. With regard to the latter, the Port's inability to capitalize early on the new technology can be seen as a mixture of an institutionally conservative approach, and the unfortunate decision to go with LASH .

True, containerization has been the single most dramatic influence on shipping activity in many, especially older, ports, but focusing on containerization can stifle discussion of important influences on the timing and character not just of a port's decline but of its further evolution. After describing how older ports have been eclipsed, literature on urban waterfronts seems to jump forward to the time when those old ports are able to engage in revitalization projects that occur perhaps years after the winds of change brought by new shipping technology have died down. But the time between a port's decline and the advent of revitalization can be a tremendously

critical, formative period because policies and development projects that materialize later are often developed during that fallow period.[29] This has certainly been the case with San Francisco.

A broader view of what influences how and when a port revitalizes should also include the impact that the city has on its port. A city may enable or restrict shipping and influence the way moribund or vacant land, idle piers, and other disused facilities may be reused. Actions taken by cities are influenced by changes in its economic and political conditions, and by land use policies and regulation (or lack thereof). As was seen here, for instance, economic changes catalyzed downtown office growth that severely affected the Port's ability to continue cargo operations in parts of the northern waterfront.

The remainder of study will address responses to the Port's decline. These responses were formulated and carried out in, and contributed to, a fallow period before revitalization commenced. There were essentially two categories of such responses: first were attempts to invigorate shipping activity at the Port, especially through modernization, and second were proposals for development of land no longer

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[29] In this and following discussion, 'revitalization' refers not to a port regaining shipping activity, but rather to a port finding other uses for its land. In fact, the big battles are over the character of that reuse - large commercial development, especially office and tourism-related, as opposed to open space, recreation, and more restrained mixed use developments.

needed for shipping. It is the latter which calls into play the role of planning policy and regulation, and which will be the focus of examination.[30]

[30] Attempts to improve the Port's shipping and cargo handling facilities were concentrated in the southern waterfront where such activities were most feasible. There was little discussion or debate over modernization plans.

Chapter 4: In the Absence of Plans - Grand Schemes of the 1950s and 1960s

This chapter will describe and explain the first round of attempts to reform San Francisco's northern waterfront, to create something new out of the old; it is the first stage in the relationship between waterfront change (or lack thereof) and the evolution of planning policy and regulation, key bottom-up forces. What characterizes this stage is that there was no such relationship. The mammoth schemes that typified this period were proposed in the absence of plans and regulation, but, because of their nature, helped to generate a response that would initiate the second stage, wherein local power would coalesce to stave off development. Therefore, this chapter begins with a discussion of the policy and regulatory vacuum within which the Port functioned. Next it examine the character of the 'grand schemes' as well as the first two major consultant reports that, before plans and regulations were established, served as the Port's only source of formal thinking with about the use of its land and, in general, about its future.

The details of these proposals, who supported or opposed them and what happened to them reveals the top-down responses to potential for reuse, as well as how the vicissitudes of general top-down forces affect even particular top-down actors and agents. Also addressed are two important conflicts over landside development that would prefigure struggles over the control of the waterfront to be discussed in later chapters. During the time covered by this chapter, the Port had something of a dual

nature. It functioned as a local agency in that its jurisdiction was, and some of its commissioners were from, San Francisco. However, as pointed out in the last chapter, it was a state agency and its commissioners were appointed by the governor. Thus it responded to, or was even an agent of, external pressures.[1] As will be shown, the Port actively sought to involve outside parties - agents of top-down forces such as the state and investors - to transform the waterfront.

The combination of a modernist, futuristic vision pushed hard by Cyril Magnin and the Port Authority's consultants and the need to finance new maritime activities (especially after the Port was returned to the city, as discussed in Chapter Five) produced a series of 'grand schemes' or 'grand plans' for development in the 1950s and 60s in areas no longer critical to shipping, almost all of which where north of the Bay Bridge. This would, in turn, focus the construction of modern maritime facilities on the southern waterfront. What resulted were ideas for a bold new urban waterfront for living, tourism and office work but not for making or moving. These schemes were different from the kinds of projects that would be proposed later, once formal, concerted planning was established and comprehensive plans and regulations were developed, a process that began in the mid 1960s but that did not and culminate until 1997. The differences can be characterized in terms of scale, approach, appropriateness to context, level of public benefit, and influence on the role of the city

[1] Later, after the Port was transferred to the city, the agency would become more attuned to and more a part of its local context. However, it would still retain something of its dual nature in its continued attempts to attract development, albeit of a different kind from the schemes described in this chapter.

(that is, to whom or what the proposal was geared - tourists, business, maritime activity, residents, commuters, and so on). The 'grand plans' evaluated in this chapter included massive structures that, had they been realized, would have greatly privatized the northern waterfront, creating a more exclusive realm for a select part of the population. In doing so, even more of the surface of the bay would have been paved over by modern urban advancement.

THE ABSENCE OF PLANS

In San Francisco, the years between decline and a real resurgence in waterfront development were certainly not fallow years during which little or nothing happened while the port merely waited for the market to take notice of a supply of unused land that could serve as a site for investment via the 'second circuit of capital'. From the first stages of decline in the late 1940s and on into the 1960s, projects that would reuse port property as part of commercial and office development ventures were proposed, and not just by outside businesses, but by Port officials and, in at least one case, by an existing tenant. Many of these proposals presented a striking alternative to traditional uses of the waterfront, so in and of themselves have helped to stir up grass-roots neighborhood activism and to galvanize the development of planning policy and regulation. As will be shown in proceeding chapters, by the late 1960s, local planning policy, the birth of a regional regulatory agency (the Bay Conservation and

Development Commission), and the doctrine of the public trust would begin to combine into a complex policy framework, dramatically altering the playing field.

During the period discussed in this section, from the end of World War II until the late 1960s, the activities of the Port of San Francisco were not guided by comprehensive policies or plans, and much of the regulatory structure now associated with the use of its land had yet to be formulated, or at least had not matured.[2] What did exist were development programs for physical improvements, whether as maintenance or as investment in new facilities. Such programs were not a response to policy, but were decisions on how to spend money outside of a larger framework or context. Most of the Port's regular revenue stream, which derived from wharfage and dockage fees and rent from commercial leases, was dedicated to maintenance, salaries, equipment and supplies, and other non-capital projects. When the Port decided to add to or alter its physical infrastructure in significant ways, it sought the necessary funding through the state legislature in the form of general obligation bonds placed on the ballot, and then it spent the money if the bond measure was approved.

This 'process' was attuned to operational needs but not to the development and implementation of a policy intended to guide the Port in the use of its lands or to meet new pressures and compete in a changing environment. The primary concern was 'what kinds of facilities do we need to keep the present roster of shipping lines and to

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[2] This is not to say that there were no regulations on the Port's activities - federal and state laws regarding health, safety, the practice of commerce, and how the Port functioned as a legal entity were in place.

attract new ones, and how can we promote the port?' The result, essentially, was a somewhat sporadically implemented capital improvement program. According to the State's 1951 analysis, the BSHC took its "first steps toward establishing a master plan for development and modernization of the Port of San Francisco at a 1951 meeting" (State of California 1951, 115). By 'master plan' the authors really meant a set of projects with some promise of implementation. It was a facilities plan, or an act of capital project planning, and not a policy plan. As such, the 'master plan' initiated projects to repair and upgrade piers, construct sheds and other buildings, and expand facilities. It was a program of limited scope geared to respond to a limited set of forces and was hardly a real "master plan for development." Later in the decade, when the issue of the potential for commercial development of Port property rose to the surface, a policy framework to guide decisions was missing, and there would be none until the end of the 1960s.

Not only was the Port without its own set of formal policies regarding the long-term use of its property, but because it was a state agency, it was beyond the jurisdiction of the city. This was an invisible but effective form of spatial divide, and a source of not a little frustration for city officials and various agencies. In fact, the Planning Department openly lamented its inability to respond to Port proposals for development for its northern waterfront facilities:

> In effect, the Port Authority may allow anything on its property while city property is governed by the over-all provisions of a zoning code and often

> more restrictive provisions that apply to specific redevelopment projects. (SFPD1961, 5)

At least two outside observers noted the potential problems associated with lack of coordination between the two agencies. First, in a 1955 review, the State Department of Finance found that it was important for Port staff to develop a better working relationship with other agencies involved in planning. The prevailing attitude of the Port was essentially that since Port property was beyond the jurisdiction of the Planning Commission, the Planning Commission could be ignored. Even state analysts, fairly removed from the every day workings of local agencies, recognized that this stance was "...unwise and does a disservice to the Port of San Francisco. The future development of the Port depends not upon the efforts of the Board alone but upon mutual cooperation among several organizations" (California Department of Finance 1955, 56). Second, a few years later, Ebasco would comment that:

> The absence of a well-coordinated plan for the water front leads to the danger of conflicts of interests and opposing objectives. Any carefully prepared long-range development plan for an area inures to the benefit of the entire community and should not subordinate the interests of one group in favor of another group. There is a record of misunderstanding between the officials of the City and County of San Francisco and the San Francisco Port Authority. (Ebasco 1959, 133)

This kind of bureaucratic dysfunction served to perpetuate inaction. This had particularly important implications in the northern waterfront area, where the once strong connection between the form and function of Port land and adjoining city land

was weakening (see Chapter Three). While the city's Master Plan and Zoning Code could not influence the Port directly (until the Port was transferred to the city in 1969), they could and did influence what happened adjacent to Port property. Determinations regarding height limits and zoning could have an indirect impact on the Port by encouraging land uses that might conflict with the maritime and related industrial uses of Port land. And insofar as they encouraged businesses with no connection to the Port to locate nearby, they helped to create a functional disconnection between city and waterfront.[3] Such controls could also affect the feasibility and character of any potential commercial projects that the Port wished to pursue.

Notably, not long before the Port was returned to San Francisco, a softening of the 'hard line' between the Port and the city occurred in the mid 1960s, when Port Commissioner Cyril Magnin and Mayor Shelly cooperated to persuade the state legislature to increase the city's influence over the Port. The legislation made the port subject to city zoning ordinances where the Port's land was no longer required for shipping activity; but if the Port found the city's zoning objectionable, unlike private property owners, it could appeal to the state's Planning Advisory Committee (SFC 6 December 1966).[4] Objections were raised that the Port would be able to avoid height limits with its power to appeal them to another state agency. In a rather crafty response, Magnin offered that the Port would be happy to refer matters to the city's

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[3] An example is increased height limits which encourage office buildings to replace structures home to chandler's offices or marine supply companies.

[4] This would no longer be the case after the Port was transferred to the city.

Board of Permit Appeals, if the legislature approved. The Board of Permit Appeals was described at the time as being the "most lenient agency in California" (SFC 14 February 1967). In any case, the jurisdictional separation was real at an administrative level to be sure, but in practical reality, what happened on one side of the line affected the other, in a way mirroring the overall history of the relationship between the city and its port.[5] To this day, the vacillating relationship between Port and Planning staffs impacts waterfront development and helps to form the kind of local condition that alters the impact and even character of 'top-down' forces.

One source of the regulation of land use that did exist was the doctrine of the public trust, described briefly in Chapter 2.[6] Lands that are held in public trust by grantees (local jurisdictions or particular agencies such as the present-day Port, or the state itself) are restricted in their use and purpose. More specifically, any use that would obstruct or restrict public access to any navigable waterway is not permitted. Eventually, interpretations of this doctrine lead to banning housing and office uses because they are both private development. As such, they can block a citizens' ability to reach (and enjoy) a bay, harbor, inlet, estuary, or any other navigable waterway, and can prevent them from being used in ways that benefit a wider public. Uses that support public trust are typically open space or maritime commerce and navigation,

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[5] This essentially reciprocal relationship raised the hackles of Port officials, espcially Magnin, who felt that the Port's independence was critical and needed to be maintained at all costs. Magnin would eventually change his tune, when the Port's transfer to the city became inevitable.

[6] The discussion here relies heavily upon Wilmar (1999).

and their attendant activities. The rationale behind supporting maritime commerce is that any land used for such purposes is being used in a fashion that directly benefits the public good. A hotel could be an acceptable use because it brings people to the waterfront and provides the means to enjoy the water or shoreline. However, the doctrine of public trust can be interpreted to preclude nearly any form of development.

Yet, the nature of the public trust makes it difficult to apply it in any consistent or methodical fashion, and the legal foundation that has more recently helped provide for more systematic interpretation and implementation had not yet developed in the 1950s and 60s. The public trust is based in common law, whereby determinations regarding the application of public trust goals to land uses are made in a case-by-case fashion by common law judges. The public trust is not codified, and there is no statute to provide guidance. Decisions about whether a proposed land use meets public trust requirements is based on previous court decisions and on the trustees of public trust land themselves (in this case, the State of California, later the Port itself). The State Attorney General and the State Lands Commission (SLC) oversee local administration of trust land, and will intervene if "they believe trust lands or the revenues from trust lands are being used for purposes inconsistent with the trust..." (Wilmar 1999, 4). So, even without some of the decisions that were to come later and which would solidify the role of the public trust in influencing development on the San Francisco waterfront, the public trust was in place. In essence, much as state control of the port, the public trust functions as a 'top-down' force; the doctrine of public trust is formed

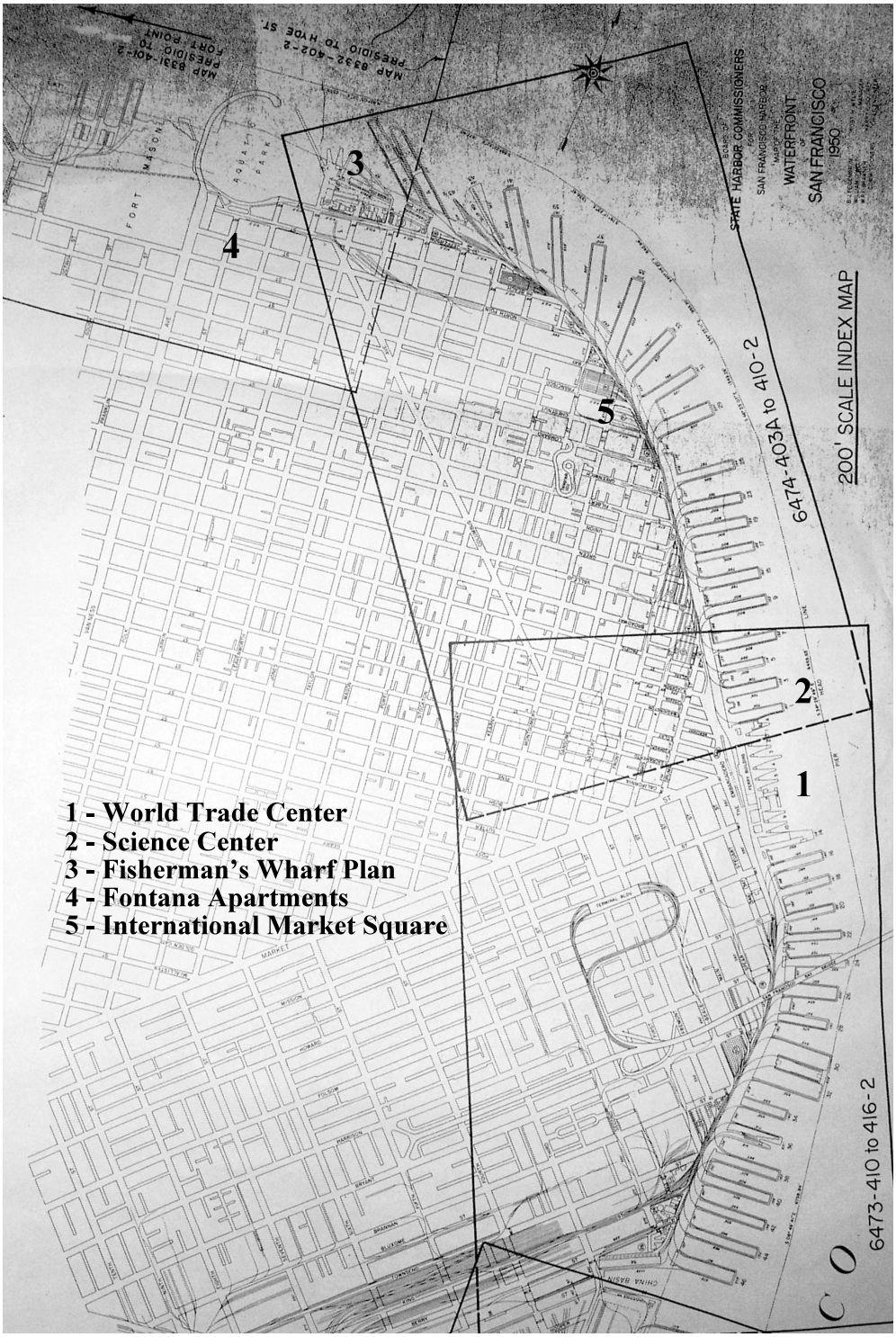

Figure 41 1950 Port map of the northern waterfront indicating projects discussed in this chapter. Comparing this map with the 1969 and 1998 maps found on pages_ and _ reveals some of the changes that have occurred along the Port's northern waterfront. Source: Port of San Francisco.

largely at the state level and applies to land within the jurisdiction of the SLC throughout California.[7]

All of this produced something of a vacuum, creating an environment which made decision-making difficult for the Port. The Port was having trouble maintaining its throughput of cargo and setting a course for reusing facilities no longer needed for those operations. These functions would require more than a catch as catch can system of development and operational adjustments. Without policy documents of any kind, the Port had no mechanism for responding to, let alone anticipating, pressures to develop new and different land uses generated by economic restructuring and technological innovation. Furthermore, one of the most important parts of creating policy is vetting it with the public. A planning document reflects some level of involvement by the public, other agencies, citizens, interest groups. Thus, if one can demonstrate that a proposal complies with established policy, the process can be less contentious. Policy documents provide an important framework for publically-informed decision making and evaluation, making them an essential part of the democratic process.

New and different land uses would, of course, result in significant impacts on the form and function of large sections of the Port and city. The major analyses

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[7] Indeed, local actors, particularly the Port, the City Attorney, and other officials, have had many engagements with the SLC and the state over defining, adhering to, and challenging, the public trust. While beyond the scope of this study, these actions represent another aspect of the complex nature of and interplay between local agency and external pressures within the context of development dynamics and the transformation of place.

conducted of and for the Port, a State Department of Finance management survey, and studies by consultants Ebasco and Arthur D. Little, would not produce the policy documents that the Port needed - partly because they were not asked to. The result was a proliferation of 'grand plans'- ill-considered schemes for development of incautious proportions, based on ideas for radical changes to Port land uses. It was a period characterized by giddy "anything goes" attitudes and modernist visions of the future city, all of which came to a head in the battles over development smack-dab next to the venerable Ferry Building.

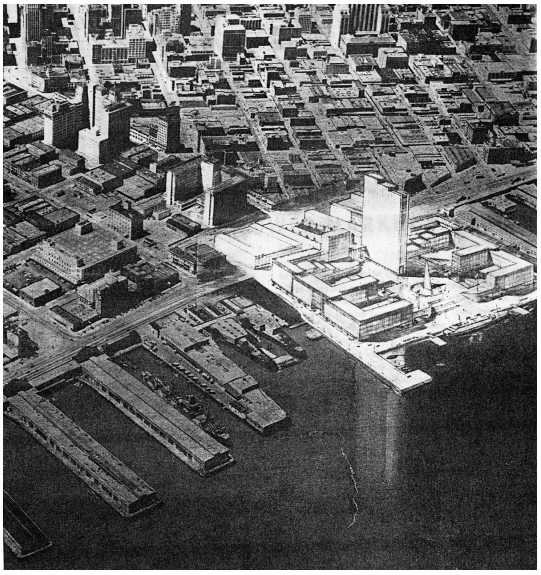
FROM THE FERRY BUILDING TO THE FUTURE: THE WORLD TRADE CENTER PROPOSAL

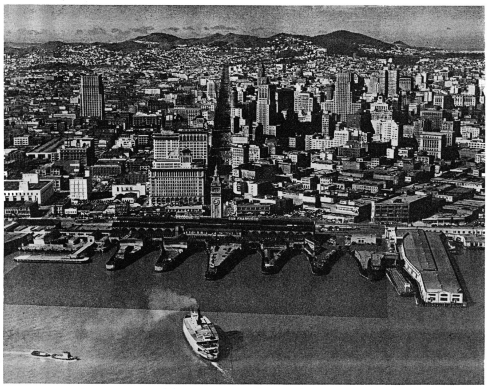
Despite real and potential woes, the Port in 1950 had not yet reached the point of determining what facilities it should perhaps give up to other uses; the idea of pursuing commercial development of northern waterfront property as a way to fund modernization of maritime facilities had not yet fully formed - with one major exception. A sister state agency, the country's first World Trade Center (WTC) organization, was eager to leap dramatically into the second half of the century. The state deemed it appropriate that the two agencies should work together to embark on a major trade development project on San Francisco's waterfront. After all, the BSHC and various boosters were attempting to make the Port of San Francisco into the western gateway to a new world of commerce. As the BSHC had no land use or general development policy, let along a planning staff, the decision to initiate a

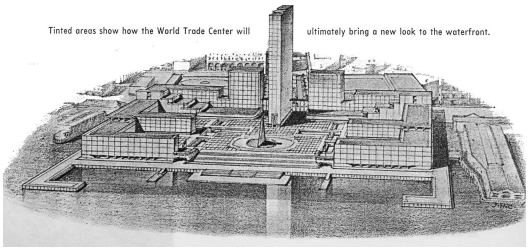
commercial project or policy was an administrative and political one. And, without plans or policy to guide or restrain decision making, the determinations made by individuals and the appropriateness of any given vision were difficult to evaluate. Thus, the first 'grand plan' called for a dramatic change to the Ferry Building area.

Once the world's second busiest passenger terminal, after London's Charring Cross, by 1950 commuters passing through the Ferry Building constituted a mere trickle. As noted earlier, the opening of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge in 1936 caused the first of the Port's maritime activities to succumb to change, and so it was that a massive new development was proposed to completely replace the Ferry Building and several other nearby structures and piers (see Figures 42 and 43). The perception of some observers in the late 1940s and early 1950s was that the Ferry Building was of the past, and could be sacrificed to the future. A San Francisco Chronicle editorial admitted that there would be "sentimental objections raised to the WTC Authority's bold proposal" but that all San Franciscans should give "careful and favorable consideration to the new kind of monument the Authority has proposed." It was the editorial board's feeling that the project should begin as soon as possible, and that the Embarcadero Freeway, then still just being contemplated, should be integrated into the project (SFC 24 January 1948).

The first location considered for the project was the Produce Market but the potential difficulties of acquiring the site and the lengthy condemnation procedures







Figures 42 and 43 Drawings of the World Trade Center Proposal. Source: San Francisco World Trade Center Authority, *Prospectus: San Francisco World Trade Center* 1951.

seemed especially troublesome when compared to the benefits of placing the WTC at San Francisco's front door.[8] The 1951 World Trade Center project prospectus offered a "preview to wonderland," but it is not a wonder that it was never completed. The idea was broached in 1948 by the World Trade Center Authority, a newly minted state agency (created by a 1947 act of the state legislature) with offices in the existing Ferry Building. The governing boards of the Port and the WTC were joined by two common members, B.J. Feigenbaum and Thomas C. Coakly (who was a member of the WTC

[8] They had neither the Blythe-Zellerbach Committee nor the Redevelopment Agency to help. Nevertheless, Coakley suggested that "We could still move the (commission) district and develop that area into an extension of the financial district or a shopping center." (SFC 23 January 1948).

authority and then president of the BSHC), yet conflict of interest was only brought up in evaluating the legality of one state agency selling property to another and, in turn. leasing it (SFC 22 January 1948). By 1951, WTC Authority chairman Leland Cutler was seeking tenants, and had hired famed San Francisco architect William Gladstone Merchant to design the landmark project.

It was to be a 3,000,000 square foot development (though it was to begin at a modest 217,000 square feet) centered on a 30 story tower. Proclamations of greatness gushed from many officials, including Governor Earl Warren, San Francisco Mayor Elmer E. Robinson, the Secretary of Commerce, and even Nelson Rockefeller (World Trade Center 1951). Yet, the high modern design which incorporated "international" restaurants, a reference library, shops, offices and "sheltered plazas" was not to be. There was of course public outcry, and early on Board of Supervisors member Marvin Lewis exclaimed that "they might as well tear down the Eiffel Tower in Paris or the Statue of Liberty in New York " (SFC 23 January 1948). By 1955, support for the revenue bonds that were required to fund the project evaporated and attention was directed to the plans for the Embarcadero Freeway, which were close to implementation. A double decker freeway structure running through the site would certainly have made Merchant's design impossible; so, Merchant was ultimately

limited to renovation work (Woodbridge 1990).[9] The Ferry Building could now add speculation to the list of things it had survived.

About the same time that the WTC project was being drawn up, and scaled back, the California Department of Finance (DoF), at the request of Magnin and the BSHC, was performing a management survey of the port which was published in 1955 (referred to in Chapter Three). Buried amongst 109 suggestions for improving port operations was the suggestion that "facilities not needed and not economical to maintain should be eliminated unless other revenue-producing uses can be found" (California Department of Finance 1955, 48). The report also included a section entitled "Property Management" which stated that "there is a need for broader and more complete *long-range planning* of physical improvements and land use, for development of written policies and procedures.." (California Department of Finance 1955, 53, emphasis added). The authors pointed out that it was impossible to create a clear picture of how the Port made decisions to take on projects, or how those projects were prioritized. They also recognized that the "complexity of economic factors affecting (the Port's) operation make the existence of a sound master plan essential to good management" (California Department of Finance 1955, 54). This 'master plan' should contain an analysis of the Port's economic and shipping status, a system of

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[9] A battle to build the freeway underground was started by the Blyth-Zellerbach Committee, probable because they felt that otherwise it could jeopardize their pet project, clearing the produce market to make way for Golden Gateway. Afterwards, various proposals and citizen initiatives to create park space near the Ferry Building (one of which included partial demolition of the Ferry Building) were put forth and rejected by committee or ballot box.

maps, project folders, and a description of capital outlay. However, it would be fifteen years before planning would become a major and effective tool to be used by local actors and agents in adjusting to external, economic pressures on the landscape.

So, while this was not the kind of long range policy and decision-guiding document that is the foundation for true planning, it was probably the first official utterance regarding the Port's need to develop some kind of land use and development policy. The DoF placed the responsibility of developing such a plan directly in the lap of the Director and his staff; there was no mention of establishing a planning section, which would be several decades in coming. The analysis also suggested:

> ...that when the Board is considering large capital outlay expenditures for projects which depend for their success upon complex economic factors, it should at the same time examine the advisability of obtaining expert advice and consultation...The Port of San Francisco should have the benefit of such analysis before committing itself to large expenditures for capital improvements. (California Department of Finance 1955, 54)

So while the DoF study did not outline plans or generate potential project schema, it did suggest obliquely a path to take: identify old and uneconomical facilities, determine other revenue-generating uses for them, prepare a "master plan for development," and, when capital is available to fund projects, engage consultants to advise the Port on a course of action. All of these steps would be taken in just a few years, in the process of conjuring Embarcadero City out of the planks of old piers.

DREAMING UP THE WATERFRONT OF THE FUTURE: EMBARCADERO CITY AND THE FISHERMAN'S WHARF PLAN

The decline that began to creep through the port in the 1950s, especially in the northern waterfront, was fully realized by the mid-1960s, and it created a fertile place for development of urban land. Decrepit piers, vacant sheds, and seldom-used Belt Line rail spurs were potential development opportunities, and on a huge scale. In February 1959, just a few months after voters approved a $50 million self-liquidating bond, the Port Authority unveiled its audacious plan for Embarcadero City, a proposal for "sweeping changes in the direction of San Francisco's future waterfront development" (Portside News February 1959, 1). Cyril Magnin was not a successful retail magnate for nothing; he saw opportunity all along 'his' northern waterfront. Embarcadero City was a monumental vision, a grand concept plan sketched into the realm of the possible by John S. Bolles and Ernst Born, (Figure 42).[10]

The Embarcadero City scheme was the fabrication of unrestrained modernist dreams. It was a panorama of apartment buildings, hotels, shopping plazas, offices, large restaurants, theaters, hotels, arenas, boat harbors, and convention halls stretching from Aquatic Park to the Ferry Building, that would "make San Francisco the most beautiful city in the world" (SFC 3 February 1959). At its unveiling in early 1959, Magnin described it in even more unrestrained terms as "a new frontier within the city

[10] Bolles was the president of the San Francisco Art Association, an organization that had contacted the Port about the possibility of expanding onto one of the piers north of the Ferry Building (SFC 30 January 1959; SFC 3 February 1959).

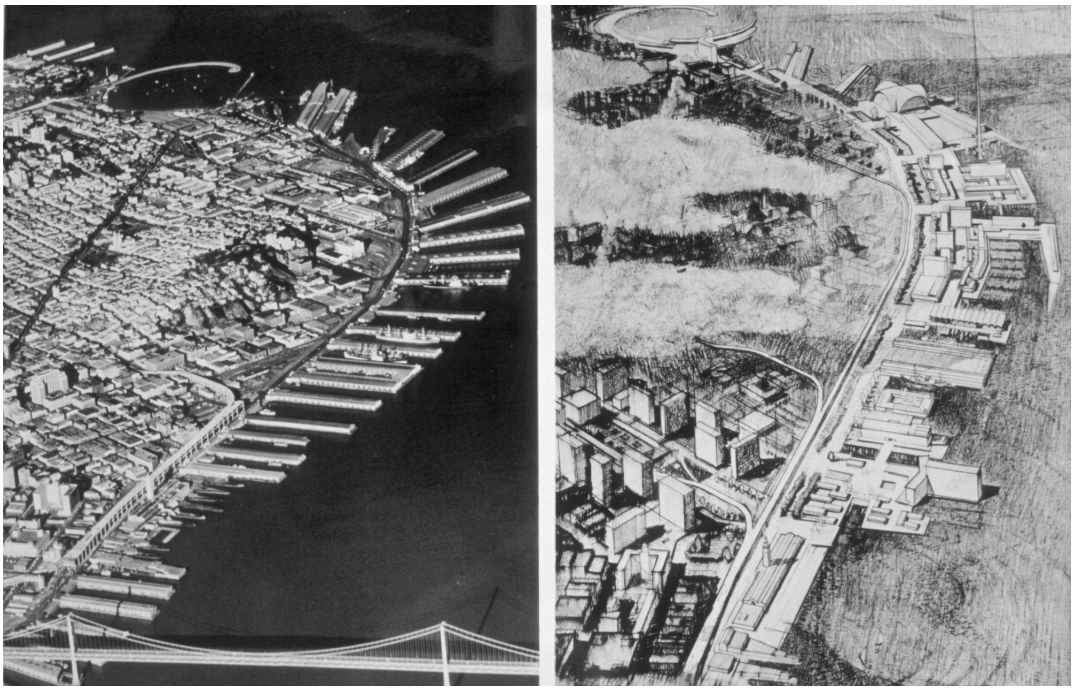

Figure 44 What the future could look like - Embarcadero City compared tothe waterfront @1960. Source: courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

that can help San Francisco grow into the greatest metropolis in the world" (Portside News February 1959, 1). The plan elicited gushing praise, and Governor Brown, also present at the unveiling, described it as "...bold and imaginative, the type of thinking we need in California" (Portside News February 1959, 8). State Senator McAteer described it as "the greatest forward step in San Francisco's history since the rebuilding of the city after the 1906 earthquake-fire" (Portside News June 1959, 8).[11] Reaction to the project from the Chronicle's editorial board revealed a feeling of trust in the Port that had yet to subside, lending the project perhaps more credence than it deserved: "...here is a waterfront project which derives not from some dream-center,

[11] Senator McAteer would, along with Senator Petris, author the bill which later established the Bay Conservation and Development Commission - an agency charged with preserving the Bay - quite a turnaround!

but one which is brought forward by the San Francisco Port Authority itself..." (SFC 4 February 1959). The ultra-modern project, also supported by Mayor Christopher, was to commence in two years.

Figure 45 Cyril Magnin (left) and Governor Brown pointing the way to the future. Source: courtesy San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Magnin was careful to stress that Embarcadero City would be realized by private investors and developers; in fact, he stated publically that the 1958 $50 million dollar bond was to be spent on southern waterfront projects, disassociating those funds from Embarcadero City. The resulting development would, he further argued, guarantee that the Port would always be self-sustaining.[12] But ultimately, despite the stance taken by the Chronicle's editorial board that the City should do everything possible to bring it to fruition, the Embarcadero City would fade away (SFC 4 February 1959). The plan was too general, too unformed, and relied entirely on private impetus to invest capital without a structure or project prospectus, or any real development program. That the Port's own consultants would not endorse it as a plan for action probably helped to stymie it.

[12] The Port's financial self-sufficiency was, and is still, a critical issue. Having to win voter approval for much of the money needed for capital projects subjected the port to the uncertainties of the political process.

Nevertheless, two pieces of legislation important not only to the project but to future of the Port came out of the bid for Embarcadero City. In June 1959, Governor Brown signed two bills brought to him by state Senator Eugene McAteer. The first remedied restrictions on the Port's commercial leasing abilities by allowing the Port to enter into 99 year leases with developers and future tenants, extended from the 40 years then permitted, something considered critical for launching the Embarcadero City concept. The second measure, "Waterfront City," allowed creation of an 80-block area wherein the Port would be able to combine existing commercial and navigational uses with privately financed retail, restaurants, apartments, marinas, and myriad other uses (Portside News May 1959). Although they were just enabling bills, they were important steps in generally confirming (if not establishing in reality), the right of the port to develop its property for non-maritime uses.

The concept of Embarcadero City also brought to light the Port Authority's thinking about their waterfront. Magnin, in describing the vision for Embarcadero City, recognized that the northern waterfront was not capable of accommodating new methods of cargo handling. For the first time, it was made clear that the Port's intent was, as much as possible, to devote the southern waterfront to shipping activities. This new idea resulted in a financial scheme reflected in a spatial pattern; rents and leases from commercial development of the northern waterfront would be used to support further enhancement and modernization of shipping facilities in the southern waterfront, essentially creating what would become a polarized waterfront. The financial linkage between commercial development and maritime activity would

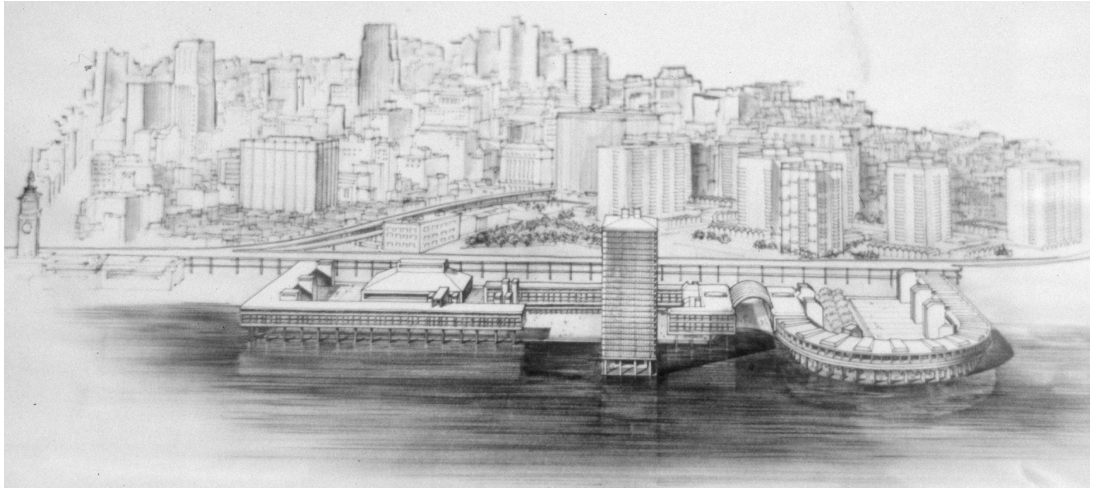

Figure 46 An early, perhaps the earliest, proposal to come out of the Embarcadero City concept. The 1961 sketch is an idea for the development of a Science Center just north of the Ferry Building. The proposal seems never to have gotten beyond its appearance as a drawing in the San Francisco Daily Telegraph. Source: Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

become particularly critical after the port was returned to the city. So, while it did not succeed as a project, Embarcadero City did advertise the possibilities of a new, ultra modern waterfront, and gave the public a first sample of (unwritten) Port land use policy.

With bond money in one hand and architectural sketches in the other, the Port Authority took the DoF's advice and engaged Ebasco Services, Inc., a well known New York-based engineering and business consulting firm, to perform a thorough analysis of the port, "to see if future pier construction and the Embarcadero development was [sic] 'pointing in the right direction'" (Magnin quoted in Portside News February 1959, 7). The 1959 study was entitled *Facilities Improvement Survey for the San Francisco Port Authority*. The heart of the report was a pier by pier, lot by lot survey of the Port's facilities and an evaluation of their condition, general

usefulness, and their contribution to the Port's income. But while the report was primarily a technical document, along with several specific recommendations pertaining to operations and facilities, it made one very important general recommendation - that the Port concentrate its cargo-handling facilities south of the Bay Bridge and that it promote commercial development north of the Bay Bridge[13].

Ebasco argued that the Port could remain an important cargo port, but over time cargo operations would eventually abandon the northern waterfront, either because the facilities were or would be outmoded and not worth upgrading, or because land use changes and congestion would impair the efficient movement of goods. The report suggested configurations for potential new facilities in the southern waterfront and evaluated the potential for various commercial developments on Port property in the northern waterfront. The latter was considered with a 20-year horizon in mind for phasing out most cargo operations, the typical time span covered by contemporary planning policy documents. Figure 47 is a map showing the consultant's take on what parts of the northern waterfront could be used for various commercial developments. The report stated that:

> ...the solution to the Port's need to (a) provide more effective facilities for shipping and (b) improve its operating profit rests in constructing new facilities, and in eliminating all of the expenses associated with over-aged, ineffective properties, including elimination of certain operations, such as, possibly, the Belt Line Railroad. It is also clear that some of the properties

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[13] The report also suggested that existing cargo operations in the northern waterfront should be maintained as long as possible, and while new commercial activities should be encouraged, they should not be developed by the Port itself - instead, they advised that the Port should maintain ground leases.

> which may be no longer needed by the Port Authority for shipping activities can be used for other purposes on a profitable basis. (Ebasco 1959, 168)

Ebasco recognized some of the constraints that accrued to development on Port property, for instance, the cost of having to drive deep piles and provide other expensive sub-structure associated with developing the land. Thus, the report observed that the value of the land would be best taken advantage of with dense uses.[14] Therefore, some of the possibilities outlined in the report included: constructing 400,000 square feet of office space near the Ferry Building; providing substantial amounts of parking; leasing some structures on an interim basis to light industry, and indeed that south of Market Street any Port land "not needed for present or future marine operations may be leased suitably for industrial purposes" (p.167) - a suggestion even now under debate; development of a hotel and restaurant in the Fisherman's Wharf area; apartments in the area between Fisherman's Wharf and Redevelopment Area E-1 (site of the future Golden Gateway project); and a new marina in Fisherman's Wharf.

Clearly their analysis paralleled Magnin's vision for the northern waterfront, hinting at some level that the consultants may have been ghost writing for him, as evidenced in this expression of enthusiasm with the general idea:

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[14] The value of land for development is also a local condition that external forces react to. Land is valuable because it is on the water, has views, is accessible etc.. Land value and use are filtered through a socio-economic prism that reflects both top-down and local factors.

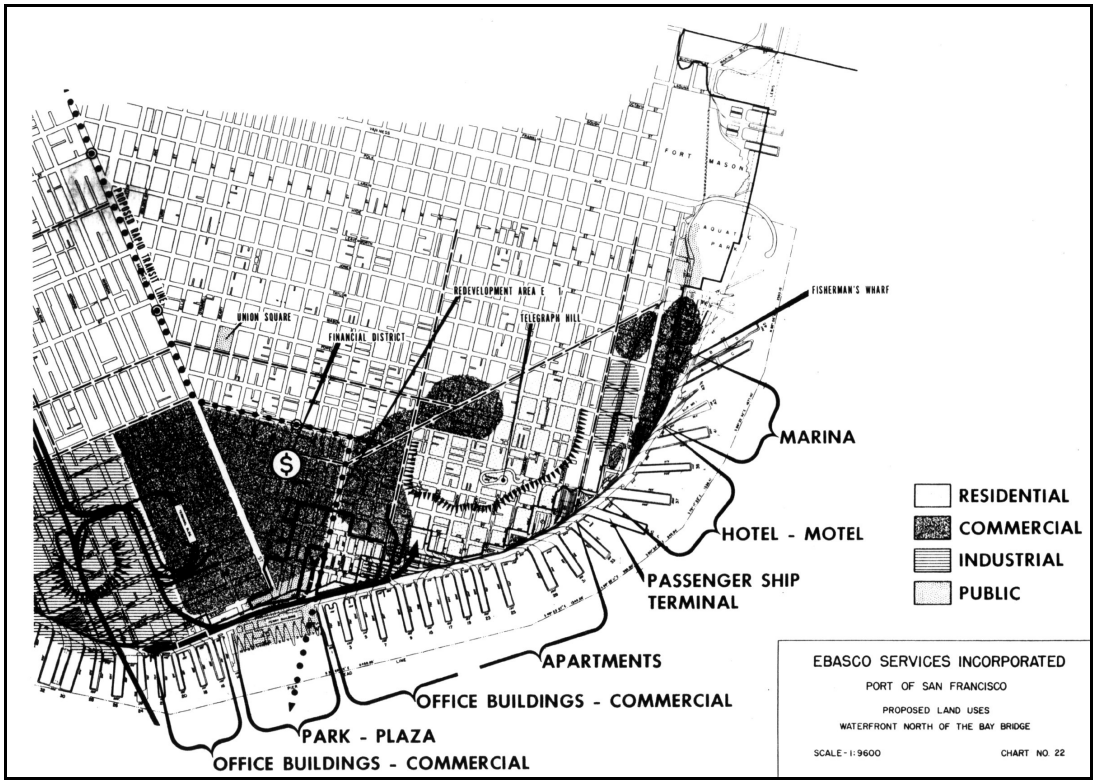


Figure 47 Land uses proposed by Ebasco. Source: Ebasco (1959).

> There can be no doubt that if water-front properties not needed for shipping activities can be consolidated in one or more contiguous areas or strips, an opportunity is afforded to San Francisco to create one of the finest water-front developments in the world. The natural harbor, the international status of San Francisco, the ethnic mixtures of the City's peoples, and San Francisco's position as the "gateway" to the Far East all compound to provide a rare opportunity to make San Francisco a truly famous city among the great cities of the world. (Ebasco 1959, 134)

and

> With the possible exception of the appearance of the Embarcadero Freeway structure itself, no significant barrier exists to limit the most effective development for the water-front area *after* provision has been made for shipping activities. (Ebasco 1959, 141, emphasis added)

That the port should support other than strictly industrial/maritime activities was accepted as perfectly reasonable by the press. But Ebasco never evaluated the Embarcadero City concept or even referred directly to 'Embarcadero City.' In fact, the only direct reference to plans for the northern waterfront was in the 1959 Summary Report of their analysis, wherein Ebasco described the Bolles plan for Embarcadero City as "the seed upon which private capital will come forward with interesting approaches to the utilization of the area" (Ebasco 1959a, 36). Furthermore, their support for rebuilding the northern waterfront was not unqualified; Ebasco noted that some facilities in the northern waterfront were still productive and should be maintained to serve the shipping needs of the port. While they suggested that commercial development of the northern waterfront was appropriate, they also stated quite plainly that:

> The absence of an up-to-date development plan for the San Francisco waterfront area makes it difficult to establish the most effective base which the San Francisco Port Authority should use to develop long-range plans of its own, particularly plans concerned with alternate uses of existing properties. (Ebasco 1959, 133)

This statement also helps to put their comments regarding the 'Bolles Plan' in context: 'Embarcadero City' was not itself taken seriously as a plan for development.

The report's suggestions regarding development of cargo facilities, keyed to the 1958 $50 million dollar bond, were more serious, setting forth some guidelines and actual design suggestions for proposed new facilities. The report laid out a number of steps to be taken, included removing or repairing piers, and building the new Pier 80

terminal at Army Street (described in the last chapter). Ebasco's report was important primarily because, for the first time, a Port document included suggestions that amounted to land use policy - a long-term vision of the form, function, and spatial arrangement of the Port. Of course, there are crucial differences between Ebasco's suggestions and actual policy. Consultant reports are advisory documents and do not carry the weight of policy or a plan. Planning policy is generally broader in scope, undergoes evaluation and modification by staff, is subjected to some form of public and inter-agency review, and is adopted by an official public body and has legal standing. Also, the process of developing policy involves legal issues stemming from its relation to other policy, administrative requirements, the city's charter, and so on. Ebasco even wrote that it was impossible to come up with a final plan for the Port's unused land because such a plan would depend on the unpredictable interests of private capital - something policy planning does not address, at least not so directly (Ebasco 1959a, 23).[15] Their assertion also pointed to the weakness of the Embarcadero City concept. Ebasco's analysis directed the Port Authority toward cargo handling and other maritime projects, but it did not deeply investigate commercial development, include land use policies to help guide decisions, describe implementation strategies, or even develop pro-forma programs for commercial

[15] Theoretically, policy goes beyond preparing the ground for capital investment or the maximization of development potential for a given piece of land to consider the public good, and to respond to other societal values not embodied by the market and its mechanisms. Furthermore, urban design considerations and architectural guidelines may be included.

development. A number of years would pass before the kinds of strategies alluded to in the Ebasco report would be formulated into a planning policy documents.

Concerned that none of the money from the 1958 bond had been targeted for their corner of the waterfront, Fisherman's Wharf merchants pushed for a study. To their eventual chagrin, that got what they wanted. Hot on the heels of Embarcadero City, the Port Authority once again called on none other than John S. Bolles and Ernest Born to conceive a mater plan for Fisherman's Wharf. Published in 1961, it was entitled simply *A Plan for Fisherman's Wharf*, and was indeed much more of a plan than Embarcadero City (which did not get much beyond that most seductive of architects' carrots - the scale model). But, while it was a much more geographically focused endeavor than Embarcadero City, it still fitted the modernist mold of 'bigger and bolder is better' (Figure 48), and it presented an eagerness, a feeling that something grand was at hand:

> The Embarcadero is always changing. What is the future of this legendary water site in the next score of years? The clue lies in Fisherman's Wharf, the first of the Port Authority properties to be planned for redevelopment and for new uses under the guidance of the San Francisco Port Authority (Bolles and Born 1961, 6)

The 'plan' (it was really a development prospectus in plan clothing) called for relocating the fishing fleet and fish processing and packing facilities to a new pier, constructing a 'Palazzo Del Pece' that would serve wholesale dealers and shippers, and to contain a retail fish market that would host cooking demonstrations and exhibitions related to fish and fishing. The plan, ever grandiloquent, stated that,

"through brilliant and imaginative design, the fish market could be the most spectacular and popular feature at the Wharf - except for the fishing boats...(and it would be) a fusion of carrousel and palace." (Bolles and Born 1961, 13). To complete the vision "a great convention hall to serve the entire Bay area and northen California" was proposed (p.7). The plan included city property as well, for which it proposed a mix of parking garages, lecture halls, museums, pedestrian malls (soon to be all the rage in downtown revitalization across America) and other commercial uses.

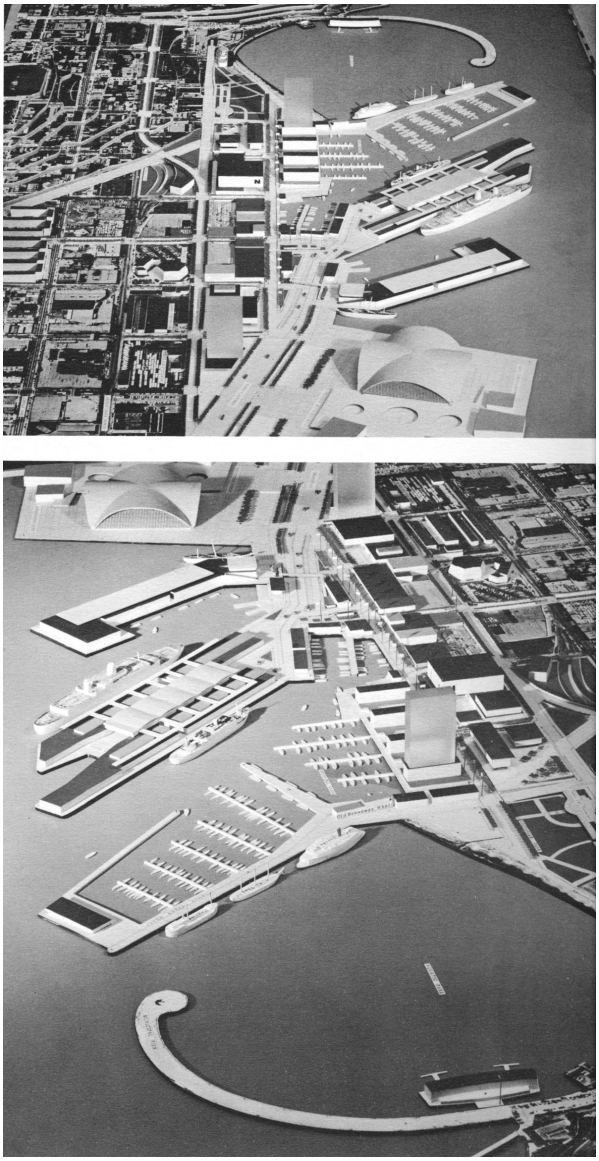
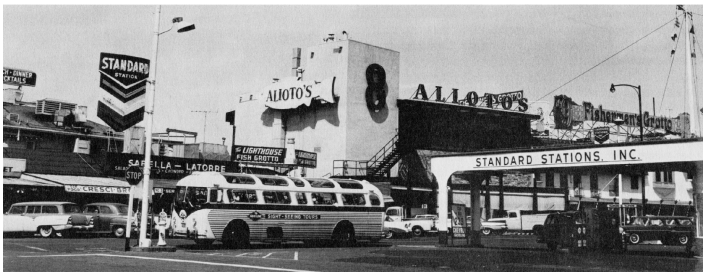
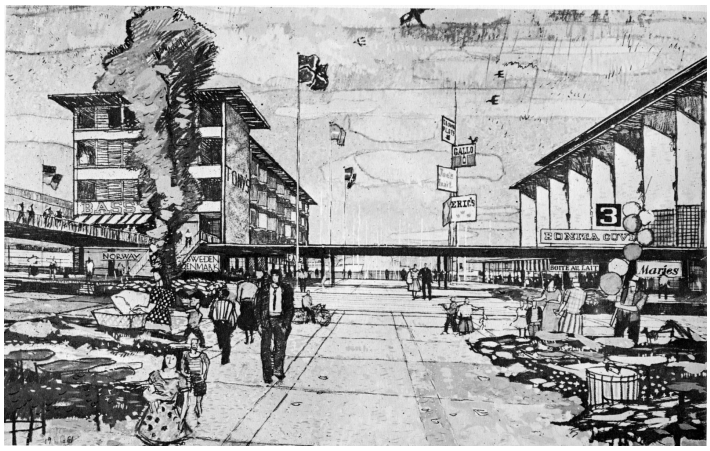


Figure 48 Model for a new Fisherman's Wharf by Bolles and Born. Source: San Francisco Port Authority *A Plan For Fisherman's Wharf* 1961.

While quite mesmerizing, this kind of fantastical plan threatened the existing character of the waterfront in the most direct way possible - with complete evisceration - and put some policy makers in an awkward position. For instance, on the one hand, state Senator Eugene McAteer was heavily pushing legislation that would advance Embarcadero City, on the other hand,

as president of the Fisherman's Wharf Merchants Association, he expressed strong reservations about the encroachment of business not related to the fishing industry and mused that "when you...wash away the charm and dignity of the area, you are ruining San Francisco" (SFC 18 May 1960).





Figures 49 and 50 From small-scale kitsch to grand kitsch. Source: San Francisco Port Authority *A Plan For Fisherman's Wharf*, 1961.

The plan was never implemented. Local fishermen, understandably concerned, barraged Magnin with angry phone calls, forcing him to distance himself from the plan, which he did by saying that some of its elements would not be undertaken for years, and that others were probably inappropriate (SFC 25 May 1961). Another issue helped keep *A Plan For Fisherman's Wharf* on the shelf. Trustees of the Maritime Museum were about to commence work on a state park (referred to as Project X), which included restoration of the Haslett Warehouse (proposed for demolition in the Bolles and Born plan), and creation of open space and a "turn of the century schooner display." The project would end up creating part of what is now Aquatic Park and the Aquatic Park Historic

District. The lack of coordination between the Port Authority and the city frustrated Mayor George Christopher, who scolded Magnin and the Port Authority, telling them that the plan was in violation of city policy and that it was imperative that they consult the Planning Department before pursuing any part of the plan (SFC 8 August 1961; SFC 9 August 1961). Apparently, Mayor Christopher was able to leverage the power of one state agency to help stymie another. This was not the first, and would not be the last time, that the difficulties of dealing with split jurisdictions would arise. This brief recounting also provides an example of local actors at cross purposes. Local merchants were in favor of the plan (at least initially), while those involved in fishing and related businesses were adamantly against it. One set of local actors sought to tap into money and a process that originated from the top-down sphere, others rallied against it. The failure of *A Plan For Fisherman's Wharf* attests both to the need for an established planning process that leads to publically-informed and formally adopted plans and to the difficult of creating them when groups are at odds.[16]

EARLY PLANNING EFFORTS: CONSULTANTS ON THE WATERFRONT

The first attempt by the Port and the Planning Department to coordinate development plans for the waterfront came in the early 1960s. The Port's operations were in a state of flux. Magnin gave a warning about profits in 1963; the next year was the most profitable in its history. The amount of cargo handled by its facilities

[16] It also attests to the power of the Redevelopment Agency, which as we have seen successful in transforming the Produce Market, an area and situation not entirely different from that of Fisherman's Wharf.

seemed to be on the rebound (but would start to plunge in 1967, see Chapter Three, Figure 2). But it was clear that the Port's hopes for sustaining its maritime operations rested in its ability to develop facilities in the southern waterfront. Thus, with few exceptions, for instance the wedding of Piers 27-29, efforts to modernize the port were focused in that area.

The conditions that in the 1950s were beginning to strangle cargo operations in the northern waterfront were only worsening, especially near Fisherman's Wharf, where commercial development continued to encroach on Port and related activity nearby. Increasingly, the Embarcadero became a source of contention, a dividing line between the Port and the city. In an atmosphere of uncertainty and friction, Port Authority President Magnin agreed to work jointly with the City Planning Commission to hire the outside consulting firm Arthur D. Little (ADL) to perform a comprehensive land use and economic analysis of the port's activities. When the announcement was made late in 1964 after six months of negotiations, it was greeted with enthusiasm (SFC 10 December 1964). Mayor Shelley (successor to Mayor Christopher) indicated that he would form a citizen's advisory committee to follow the process, a decision that lent legitimacy to the hope that there would be a new spirit of cooperation between the two agencies.

Despite assertions from Magnin that the Port would cooperate with the city, for instance he suggested that the Port would comply with city zoning controls, this unprecedented attempt at cooperation unraveled quickly. That it took nearly two years for the mayor to appoint the members of the waterfront advisory group was an obvious

sign that attempts at coordination had reached an impasse. In an attempt to this bureaucratic inertia, Mayor Shelley suggested, and Magnin agreed, that the Blythe-Zellerbach Committee could act as liaison between the city and the Port. The committee would also pay for the city's share of the planning effort (SFC 16 September 1966). Finally, after being delayed by feuding, the first of two commissioned reports was published with much fanfare and contention.

The first report, *The Port of San Francisco: An In-Depth Study of Its Impact on the City, Its Economic Future, the Potential of Its Northern Waterfront*, was revealed to the public by Mayor John Shelley and Port Authority President Cyril Magnin at the end of November, 1966. A Chronicle headline enthused that it was a "Breathtaking Plan for the San Francisco Waterfront" (SFC 30 November 1966). Its purpose was to analyze the Port's present and future cargo operations, to determine if maritime activity in the northern waterfront could be relocated to the southern waterfront, and then to propose how much and what development would be feasible for the northern waterfront (to some degree covering ground earlier trod by Ebasco). The report would serve as a background study for a master plan to be prepared by the ever-available John S. Bolles for the Planning Department that would cover both the water and land sides of the northern waterfront.

ADL's report came to several important conclusions, although, as Cyril Magnin pointed out, it "contained no major surprises" (SFC 30 November 1966). First, the report asserted that the decline of the port was a "myth". Four points were made to support this contention. First, the amount of cargo coming through the Port

had not declined in absolute terms and was in fact predicted to continue to grow at 1.5% annually through 1990. ADL based them on an analysis of types of trade classes (major, minor, inland, foreign), trade routes, and commodity trends; though growth at Oakland and elsewhere did create a relative decline as the Port's share of total Bay Area cargo shrank. Their prediction was not entirely unreasonable as the Port had seen increases in its cargo handling during for the last few years before the study (see Chpater Three, Figure 4). Second, the value of foreign goods moving through the port made it the 6th ranked port in the nation. Third, the direct income to the Port Authority from its operations was four times what Oakland received from its shipping activities. Finally, ADL also drew connections between the value of each ton of cargo, which was considered very high, and the creation of employment and income, demonstrating that the Port was still the one of the largest contributors, directly and indirectly, to San Francisco's economy. ADL estimated that between 11and 14% of the city's employment was attributable to the Port, 23,000 jobs directly 52-67,000 jobs total (ADL 1966a, 3). They further emphasized that:

> Numbers alone cannot fully indicate how the Port's valuable cargo has helped the city attract offices and headquarters, nor the role the Port is playing, today as in the past, as an integral part of the city's present character and future development. (ADL 1966, 35).

ADL therefore argued that it would be important to maintain and upgrade the Port's facilities. And, as Ebasco had thought seven years earlier, ADL also concluded that the Port could shift much of its shipping activities to the southern waterfront. By the

end of the 1960s, this 'policy' would become generally recognized, the Chronicle referring to it absently as a "trend" (SFC 4 September 1969).

To organize their suggestions, the consultants divided the Port into four sub-areas. For the area north of Pier 35, the recommendations were to reduce the Belt Line Railroad and to relocate viable shipping activities to the southern waterfront, to make the vacated Port land in this area, or portions thereof, and some of the associated seawall lots, available for development (Piers 45, 43, 41, 39, 37). It was thought that this area could be the target of an "expanded development program" to include commercial and tourist activities, restaurants, shops, and hotels, while maintaining and enhancing the fishing activities in that area, especially at Piers 43 and 43 ½.. Notably, no mention was made of Embarcadero City.

The area south of Pier 35 to the Ferry Building was proposed to be reserved for maritime activity, primarily because there was still demand for finger piers, particularly Pier 27-29 which was being rebuilt. In fact, most of the piers in this area were used for foreign trade, deemed the most valuable kind by ADL. ADL argued that the relatively modest amount of cargo that moved across them should not be interpreted as "under-utilization" and that "their operation as shipping facilities will continue to be their highest and best use because of the flexibility they provide" (ADL 1966, 115). Furthermore, maritime activities would "continue to enhance the attraction of the area by the authentic maritime atmosphere that they bring to the Waterfront" (ADL 1966a, 4). The third sub-area, around the Ferry Building, including Piers 1 through 24, could eventually "provide a dramatic site for an urban office and

commercial complex" (ADL 1966, 122). Several development schemes, including U.S. Steel's, would in fact be pursued for this area just a few years later.

It was advised that the last sub-area, the southern stretch of the waterfront, should for the most part remain maritime and that existing facilities that would be vacated as shippers and other lessors move to the new Army Street Terminal should not be converted to other, temporary uses until further analysis could be performed. The report also stressed the importance of two major projects underway at the time: the 68 acre Army street Terminal under construction at Pier 80 and the revamped Pier 27-29. These two projects were considered to be important because the capacity created by them would allow the Port Authority to retire 11 existing piers from cargo operations and to reuse them for other revenue-generating purposes. The remaining piers, it was predicted, would be sufficient as long as the "trend toward containerization is not accelerated" (ADL 1966, 2). ADL also suggested a mix of open space and commercial development for the Bart Tube platform under construction behind the Ferry Building, which could also be the site of the "city's long-awaited permanent heliport" (SFC 30 November 1966). Overall, "the optimum use of the Port's property would involve the expansion of commercial, recreational, and, perhaps, residential uses within the area controlled by the Port Authority." (ADL 1966, 164). In this regard, as Ebasco had suggested, new commercial development would be undertaken using money from private sources with the Port maintaining ground leases. It was recognized that this kind of development was critical to helping the Port maintain its financial independence. Figure 51 indicates the two areas ADL

considered most important for future development and which piers could be removed or released from cargo or maritime operation in the near term.

Like the Ebasco report, the ADL report did not present a policy framework, or provide much specific, long-range advice. Though it sketched a four-phase implementation of its suggested program, the most long-range thought was given to the southern part of the Port's property, for which "all planning should consider the longer range potential portions of this area have for mixed wharfage and other commercial development." (ADL 1966, 165) One exception stood out. ADL's program for the area from the Hyde Street Pier to Pier 35, (at the time the extent of Fisherman's Wharf), included "development criteria" which was phrased much like typical "planning language." Of course, these were just advisory statements. Examples included:

- Each area, and the entire Waterfront, should maintain a consistently authentic atmosphere.
- Each development should complement other development.
- All construction and physical facilities in the area should be designed as to enhance the overall atmosphere of the area
- All specific developments must be designed to permit an integrated flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic throughout the entire area. (ADL 1966, 165)

Other statements sounded like the kind of advice given to business enterprises, and so would not be part of a public policy document:[17]

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[17] They also express very unmistakably the interests of capital, and in so far as policy documents are expressions of public interest, they would not typically articulate so plainly the connection between government and capital. As pointed out earlier, one of the primary roles of planning is to intercede with the market on the public's behalf and for the public interest - whether and how it succeeds is one of the points of

- Each programming area should be developed so as to be marketable to private operators.
- Individual operators should be required to conform to business practices that will add to the value of the entire area.
(ADL 1966, 166)

In a way that Ebasco's proposal had not, the ADL report brought to front and center the idea that revenues from development projects targeted for areas no longer needed for shipping activities, primarily in the northern waterfront, could support development of modern marine terminals and other cargo-related operations in the southern waterfront. While the southern waterfront was home to a few important facilities, such as a grain terminal and a copra tank/dispenser, and would soon be home to the new Army Street Terminal at Pier 80, there was still plenty of room to develop new marine terminals and related operations.[18]

The suggested development program was ambitious enough to make some officials nervous. An argument between city Supervisor William Blake and Port Director Rae Watts grew out of the idea that the Port could develop its waterfront without much input from the city - even though analysis then underway was, supposedly, a joint effort with the Planning Department. The debate also elicited a few exchanges between Supervisor Blake and Cyril Magnin over the chance that the city would miss out on taxes if the northern waterfront were developed in the fashion

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discussion of this study.

[18] This kind of financial/development arrangement is sometimes referred to as "piggy-backing."

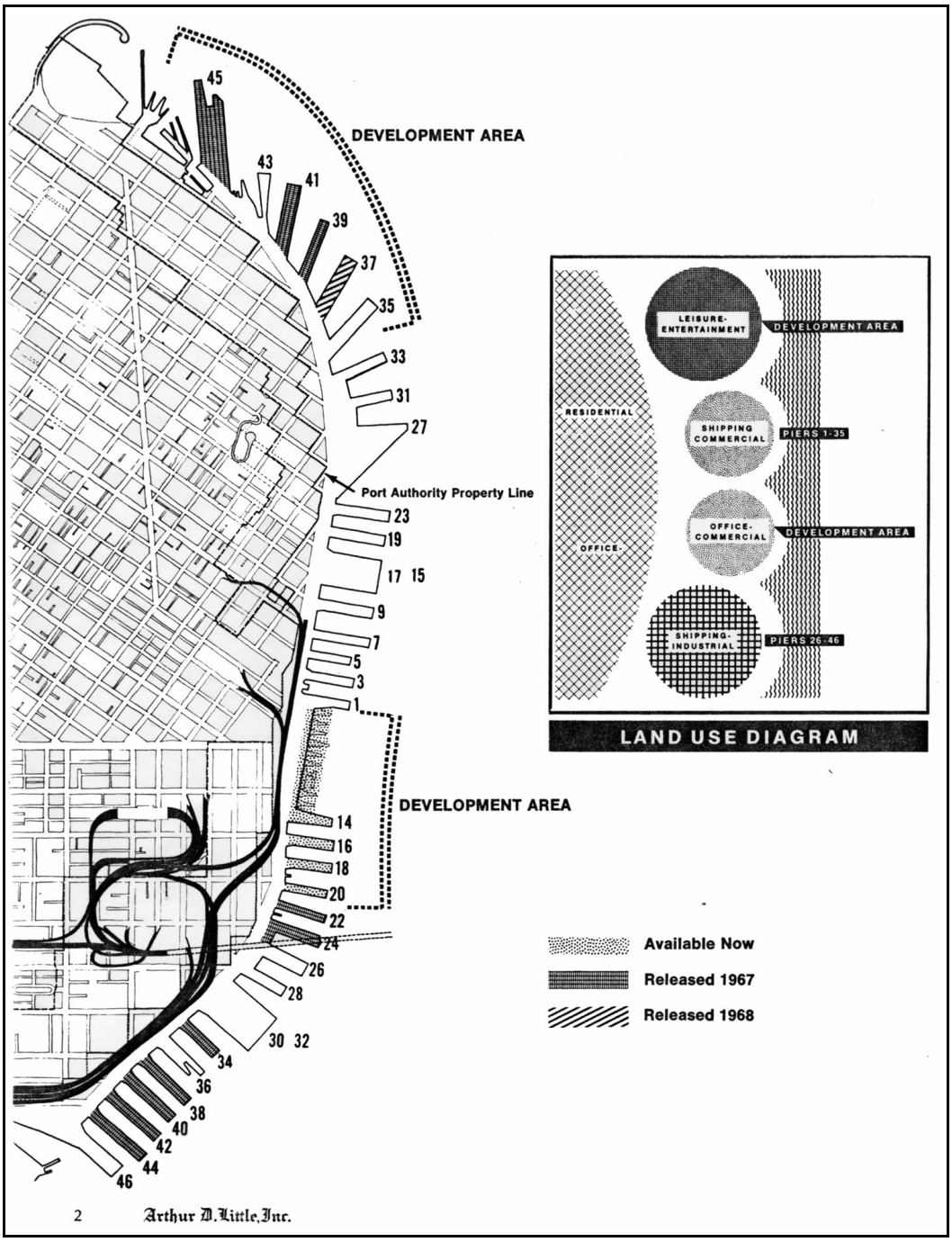

Figure 51 Proposed development sites and piers to be removed (referred to as "released"). Source: ADL 1966.

outlined in the ADL report unless the Port was ceded to the city; Blake would get his wish in just a few years.

John S. Bolles Associates introduced the first progress report on their master plan just several weeks after the ADL report was released, but it would take nearly another two years before their *Northern Waterfront Plan* would be published. Not only did their report's call for cooperation between the city and the Port Authority seem to have a predictable lack of impact, but their visions for the northern waterfront drew the ire of Port Authority nemesis Supervisor Blake, who exclaimed "this plan is too far out...You social planners couldn't even build an outhouse in San Francisco." (SFC 2 April 1968). Supervisor Blake was joined by Supervisor Leo T. McCarthy (later Speaker of the House in the California State Legislature) in further criticizing Bolles and the Planning Department for not sufficiently including property owners in the process, even though as Planning Director Alan B. Jacobs pointed out, many other groups and city agencies had in fact been involved (SFC 2 April 1968).[19]

Development, especially when occurring rapidly, is ever thick with politics and conflict and sensitivities regarding any proposals for the northern waterfront were understandably heightened. On the city side, construction of the view–blocking Fontana Apartments, proposals for development of a 22 acre site at the base of Telegraph Hill by Northern Waterfront Associates (both discussed below),

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[19] In fact, the Citizen's Advisory Committee included representative from an array of waterfront-related groups and agencies, including the Crab Boat Owners Association, the ILWU, San Francisco Beautiful (a progressive non-profit), the Russion Hill Improvement Association, and Northern Waterfront Associates (real estate developers).

rehabilitation of Ghirardelli Square and the Cannery, and the construction of Golden Gateway and the Embarcadero Center, were combining to make the area "one of the most attractive and fastest-growing areas of private development in San Francisco" (SFC 14 December 1966, referring to the Bolles report). Redevelopment Agency Director Justin Herman, responsible for much of the change rippling along the waterfront described it as "the most valuable asset we have in San Francisco" (SFC 15 February 1967). In the same breath, he helped to prepare the ground, as it were, by describing the northern waterfront as "virtually defunct because of the low intensity of uses" (SFC 15 February 1967), underscoring, as an alchemist might, that there is money to be made from converting underused piers into glass, steel, and concrete. Elements of Bolles' early proposal paralleled some of the suggestions of partner firm ADL, but the scale models and drawings employed by architects and designers lend more reality to their concepts than tables and charts, perhaps helping to raise collective hackles. The initial Bolles plan appeared to be another blueprint for a futuristic panorama of

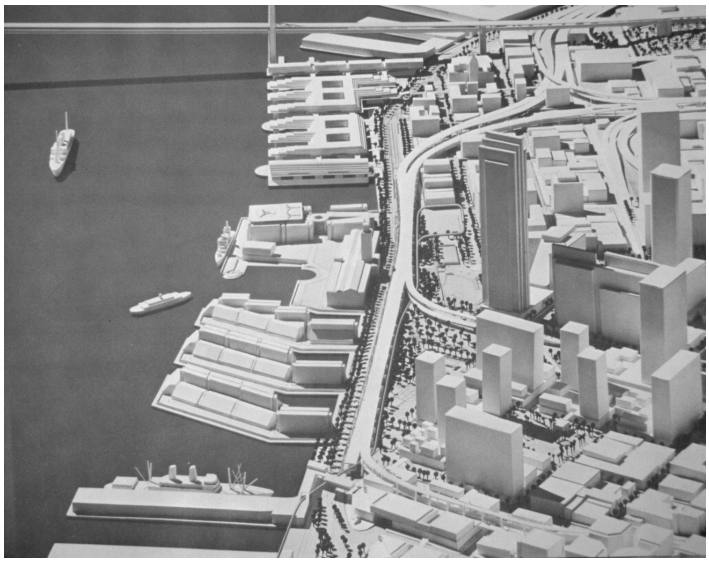

Figure 52 Model reflecting development ideas for the Ferry Building area. Source: Port of San Francisco/John S. Bolles Associates, *Northern Waterfront Plan* 1968

waterfront development, with the subtly expressed but important difference that it expressed concern for public open space and access to the Bay. The plan called for submerging the Embarcadero Freeway, constructing a low-speed monorail from the foot of Market Street to Aquatic Park, and constructing residential buildings just north of the Ferry Building and office facilities to the south to the Bay Bridge (SFC 1 September 1967).

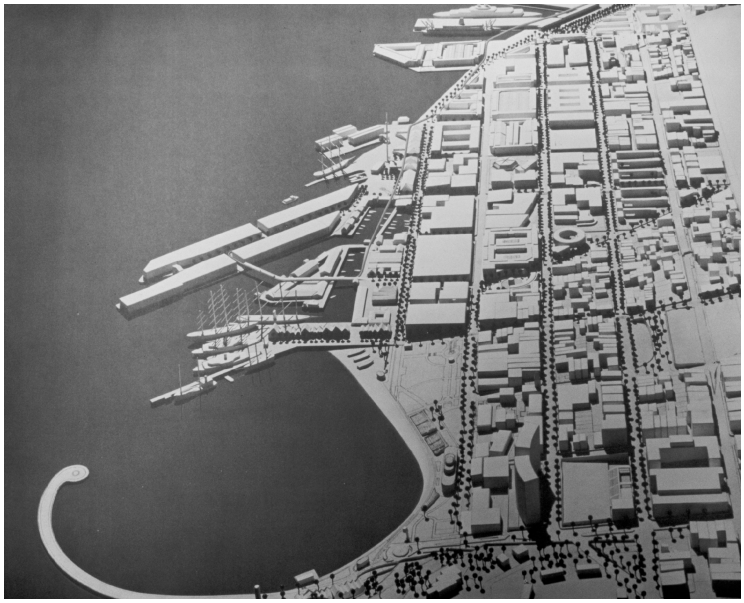

Figure 53 Model reflecting development ideas in the Fisherman's Wharf area. Source: Port of San Francisco/John S. Bolles Associates *Northern Waterfront Plan* 1968.

Seven months later, Bolles presented the final document to the Port Authority and the Planning Department in a joint hearing. Although somewhat more restrained than the initial version, it was described grandly as "an ambitious 20-year plan to develop the city's northern waterfront with new industry, homes, transportation systems, landscaping, promenades and underground streets" (SFC 21 November 1968). It was the most formal and complete expression of a plan yet produced for any part of the waterfront. Indeed, it formed the basis for the first real policy document for the waterfront, the Planning Department's *Northern Waterfront Plan*, adopted as an amendment to the city's Master Plan in the summer of 1969. Adoption of the plan

completely turned the tables on the Port. Despite its emphasis on commercial development, Port Director Rae Watts complained bitterly that the plan gave too much control to the Planning Commission and was too restrictive to allow the Port to undertake economically feasible projects in the northern waterfront. Without that commercial development, Watts threatened, the Port would be unable to "provide for the needs of the maritime industry" (SFC 20 June 1969). But by this time, the Port had been transferred back to the city, and as Planning Commissioner Mortimer Fleishhacker remarked to those present at the hearing, the Planning Commission was responsible for planning the city, including the Port, whether the Port liked it or not (SFC 20 June 1969).

More Dream Developments Materialize

Just before ADL and Bolles began to work on their various reports, cracks were beginning to show in the foundations of modernist urban visions, especially where the northern waterfront front was involved. San Franciscans were becoming increasingly sensitive to the physical growth of their city; local actors began to align themselves against external pressures that could alter the landscape. Alvin Duskin, one time dress maker, launched several famous anti-growth campaigns with full page ads in the Chronicle. Other activists geared up to fight proposals to extend the freeway system to Golden Gate Park, and still others organized to face the Redevelopment Agency, whose powers Justin Herman used to chilling effect.

With regard to the waterfront, one result of the rising tide of grass roots activism was an increased concern for public open space and access to the Bay. While some rather zealous views were formulated, at one point for instance, there was a push to replace the Ferry Building with an open plaza, there were legitimate fears that San Francisco was on the verge of privatizing its waterfront. The Embarcadero was a public right of way which, at the very least, brought people in direct proximity to the Bay, and whatever hustle-bustle adjoined it. Transit sheds and bulkhead buildings served as physical reminders of what the waterfront was, or used to be, and their modest profiles where not overwhelming.

Embarcadero City and the proposals to be discussed below did not just threaten to eviscerate the physical character which made the waterfront approachable and recognizable but also heralded a different kind of separation from the waterfront. San Francisco grew out of its waterfront. If the maritime activities that helped to establish San Francisco were to disappear and their physical and symbolic markers were to be replaced by commercial and office developments, a large and essential part of the city's built environment and its history would be destroyed. A sense of collective history creates a very public connection between San Francisco's citizenry and their waterfront. And in the face of an increasingly extensive and massive built environment, the Bay as a natural place, a respite from the urban fabric, was increasingly important. So, the economically-driven 'grand schemes' were a force of privatization, a part of the modernist vision that would sweep away the flotsam and jetsam of leftover (yet still important in the public mind) urban places and replace

them with the clean lines and bold geometry of the socially controlling future city. It is not a little ironic that the first real battles over these grand schemes were fought amongst the elite themselves, old wealth fighting the lieutenants of advanced capitalism. The battle was over height limits, an imbroglio that while somewhat tangential to the current discussion, would in its resolution become (through height regulations) a defining aspect of the Port's future.

Early contention over height limits arose from the proposal to construct twin apartment towers on the site of the old Fontana spaghetti factory, just above Ghirardelli Square. The seventeen story, slightly curved buildings became the target of the Russian Hill Improvement Association which hired a law firm instructed to "take any legal action necessary toprevent the apartments from being built" according to their representative, none other than Caspar W. Weinberger (SFC 7 December 1960). Weinberger said that in their crusade to prevent a "Chinese Wall," Russian Hill residents should not be thought of as being engaged in a "selfish move to save our own views." Rather, "it's the start of a city-wide campaign to preserve San Francisco's waterfront beauty" (SFC 15 December 1960). Russian Hill residents, among the wealthiest and most influential in the city, could not halt the project.

They were, however, instrumental in getting the Planning Department to initiate a study of height limit restrictions in an 80-block area of the northern waterfront. Interim height limits of 40 feet were approved pending a two year study. Despite some rocky interchanges with Mayor George Christopher, who thought that temporary limits of 40 feet were too restrictive, an abortive attempt by Board of

Figure 54 Fontana Apartments as seen today. Ghirardelli Square is to the left. Aquatic Park is below and out of the frame. Photograph by author.

Supervisors member Clarissa McMahon to undermine the process, and opposition from real estate interests, the Planning Department's recommendations were that the 40-foot height limit be made permanent for much of the northern waterfront, with higher limits allowed in other areas. The Planning Commission approved their proposal and the Board of Supervisors adopted the new height limits in early 1964. In explaining his support for the measure, Supervisor Roger Boas said "Ours is the broader view. They're eying the waterfront property as children do a piece of candy...I don't blame them. It's one of the choicest pieces of real estate in the United States...We're putting a sign on our hills and waterfront that says 'not for sale.'" (SFC

4 Febraury 1964). The same year Northern Waterfront Associates (NWA), a consortium of influential San Franciscans, would come forward with ideas for a mammoth development, known as International Market Square, at the base of yet another hill full of activists.

While it probably looked good for Robert D. Lapham Jr., president of the NWA, to say that the group would cooperate with the joint Port Authority and Planning Department planning effort, it may have been hitching a horse to the wrong wagon (SFC 10 December 1964). Perhaps Lapham, a past president of the Planning Commission, should have known better; he should have better understood the problems of developing a project in an environment full of maneuvering and cross-purposes. NWA had quietly purchased about 20 acres of land between the Embarcadero and the base of Telegraph Hill stretching from Pier 35 south to Pier 17. At one time, this area was the heart of city's first warehousing district. In the mid 1960s it was still home to a number of historic structures, including the gold rush era Sea Wall Warehouse (originally the North Point Dock Warehouse) which once served clipper ships. NWA asserted that it was too far gone for re-use, and despite intervention by the Junior League and a bevy of activists, preservationists, and historians, bulldozed it in 1969 (SFC 17 December 1969). On the other hand, as the first phase of their project (and the only part to be completed), they did in fact rehabilitate the two historic National Ice and Cold Storage Co.'s warehouses, together known as the Ice House.

Their project was to be a collection of halls, markets, showrooms, shops, restaurants, exhibition space, and a hotel that would tower 184-feet high; at more than twice the existing height limit (84 feet), it was greeted with enthusiasm by politicos and boosters:

> Mayor Alioto, like his Port Commission, was delighted with the International Market Center. "The Northern Waterfront Associate's plan is very important to us," he said. It is going to be complimentary to some larger plans we have for the whole waterfront." (Reinhardt 1971, 108)

This eight block, 15.4-acre concept of the future was placed in stark contrast to descriptions by project sponsors and supporters of property in the area as a collection of dilapidated "ancient brick buildings and ill-lit alleys," historical importance not withstanding (SFC 2 February 1968). In fact, Lapham claimed that property owners in the area were actually grateful that someone was willing to take their property off of their hands (SFC 15 July 1968). Roger Kent, vice president of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers Association and the main spokesman for a group called POW (Preserve Our Waterfront), was concerned not just with view from Telegraph hill but of Telegraph Hill itself, and he called for drastic changes to the project. Planning Director Alan B. Jacobs also had many criticisms of the project and insisted that its scale and design be rethought (Jacobs 1978; SFC 1 March 1968). To move things along, Jacobs decided to involve Bolles in his negotiations with the architectural 'dream team' working on the project, which included famed landscape architect Lawrence Halprin.

The result included a reduction of height to the existing 84-foot limit and design changes that would break up the structure's monolithic bulk and respect the form of the hill. Jacobs ended up supporting the project because the sponsors made all of the alterations he requested, and because NWA was required to enter into a set of special concessions in return for which the city would vacate the sections of street needed by the project. Despite the changes, POW and Kent accused Jacobs of sabotaging his own planning process because the project was being approved before the ADL and Bolles studies were completed (SFC 8 April 1968; SFC 17 April 1968). The Telegraph Hill Dwellers decided to request a height reduction in the area to 40 feet, which was rejected (SFC 12 April 1968). Not to be easily dissuaded, they ended up suing the city, claiming that the city could not sell public streets without going to bid (SFC 30 December 1969). Ultimately, the project was delayed for several more years, its permits expired before it could secure funding, and eventually the project's interim financier, Traveler's Insurance, pulled out of the deal (SFC 15 January 1071). As project director James O. Goldsmith put it "...you can hold something together so long" (SFC 12 July 1968). This is an example of how local conditions can make things difficult for finance and investment, part of larger and often fickle external forces.

Even though the contest over International Market Square occurred on mostly city land, rather than Port property, it underscores a number of issues faced by development proposals in the northern waterfront. First, San Franciscans were willing to fight hard to protect their hills, their views, and their history - especially as it related

to the waterfront. These particular San Franciscans were well-heeled, well-connected, and well organized. The political battles they fought reflected the desire to retain a physical, functional connection to the waterfront even as its use and purpose changed. It was clearly recognized that what happened directly across from Port property could have the potential to affect its general use, character, and accessibility. Second, height limits are very important. They directly affect the financial potential of a project and thus the design of its various elements. Third, where the city had some way to intervene in a project, it could force changes if there was the political will to do so. Jacob's relationship with Alioto and the respect which the Planning Department was beginning to earn under his stewardship was of course a critical part of the politics.

Finally, there were important differences between NWA's project and the Golden Gateway and Embarcadero Center projects that were under construction at the time. The most critical was that those endeavors were pursued under the aegis of the Redevelopment Agency, which could circumvent the city's planning code. The context was also different. The Golden Gateway did not eradicating historic buildings (signaling a randomness in historic preservation) and it was primarily a housing development; the commercial part of the project, Embarcadero Center, was to include lots of shops, a relatively friendly pedestrian environment, and several areas of first-class urban open space.

In its initial guise, the International Market Square project was devoted primarily to wholesalers, private dealers, a hotel, and exhibition space - overall a much more privatizing project. While the sponsors made significant changes, including the

addition of retail shops along the Embarcadero and roof gardens, the original design was apparently burned into the minds of its opponents. Karl Kortum, president of the San Francisco Maritime Museum, maritime historian, and waterfront activist, called the changes "frosting" and pointed out that it was still a "wholesale project, dedicated to the secrecy that has to prevail between wholesaler and the merchant buying from him. The exclusion of the public is a necessary evil." (SFC 9 July 1968). The fight over the International Market Square would be a precursor to upcoming struggles over waterfront development.

While none of the proposals in this chapter were successful, they did have impacts. First, their failure meant that waterfront remained largely unchanged; the landscape was one of continued, and increasing, moribundity. Yet this also meant that the slate remained clean for future proposals when a different context would produce different kinds of projects. Second, these grand plans represented an assault on the waterfront, an audacity that triggered local actors and agents to be at the ready, and eventually, to take back the Port in the hopes of controlling it.

Chapter 5: Scuttled - In the Presence of Plans

This chapter describes the first significant wave of bottom-up reactions to the threat of change. The sources of local responses were many, including the Planning Department, local officials, and citizens groups. Top-down forces were evinced through development pressure, exerted partly by the Port itself. The following discussion reveals the sometimes adversarial interplay between bottom-up agents and actors as they organize to respond to top-down pressure to develop the waterfront along modernist lines. It also reveals a pivotal shift in the relationship between top-down and bottom-up forces. While the conflict between top-down and bottom-up forces discussed in this chapter did not result in any visible change to the waterfront landscape, and so the state of disuse that gripped the northern waterfront in particular was perpetuated, the invisible potential for what the waterfront could become, how it could be revitalized, was altered.

Three crucial events occurred at the end of the 1960s that would create an entirely new environment in which the Port would function. These events would initiate the second stage in the evolution of waterfront planning policy and regulation, which was characterized by a clash between top-down proposals and the first manifestations of real local power. The events were: the passage of the 1965 McAteer-Petris Act that created the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, which subsequently published the 1969 San Francisco Bay Plan; the city reclaimed the Port from the state in 1969; and the Planning Department approved and the Board of

Supervisors adopted the first Northern Waterfront Plan with attendant changes in building height limits and zoning controls.

The policy and regulation wall that was built from these events was put into place just in time to break apart the last wave of proposals for 'grand schemes' of mixed-use commercial development projects that would surge up as the decade ended. These projects all centered around the Ferry Building, with a view to appropriating the area as a favored location for the extension of the city's burgeoning service economy. This served to dilute, at least symbolically, the fundamental role in the city's history played by maritime activity represented by the landmark Ferry Building and its place on the Embarcadero at the foot of Market Street.

THE NORTHERN WATERFRONT PLAN

The analysis performed by ADL and John S Bolles, as described in the previous chapter, served two purposes. First, it served to coordinate Port and Planning Department activities and second it provide the background analysis, information, and planning work that would enable the Planning Department staff to work quickly towards producing a formal public planning document. The draft plan, which the consultants presented to the Planning Commission in November 1968, was received enthusiastically. Its release was followed by a period of public comment, several public meetings, and a planning staff evaluation. The consensus was that the consultant's plan was a good one, so planning staff went about distilling from it the

final *Northern Waterfront Plan*, which was adopted in 1969. The plan boundaries extended from Aquatic Park to China Basin, a much larger area than usually associated with that part of the waterfront. Intended to cover the 16-year period until 1985, the *Northern Waterfront Plan* was rather unusual in that it was more than just strictly a policy document. It also contained a set of proposals and a section on implementing them.[1] The plan's basic purpose was to:

> ...guide future development in all areas on and contiguous to the harbor in a manner consistent with the interests of San Francisco. The Plan should provide guidelines whereby public and private interests can work together to fulfill the social, economic and physical objectives with maximum benefit for all. (SFPD 1969, 1)

and to:

> ...develop living, working and leisure activities and supporting facilities in the Northern Waterfront which will serve all persons in the immediate area, the City and Bay region, and tourists, and which complement or supplement the maritime character of the area. (SFPD 1969, 2)

These goals were certainly much more oriented to the public interest than the grand schemes that had thus far been proposed, something underscored by the fact that public comment was solicited and given some measure of real consideration in the plan. Clearly, such statements are intended to appeal to a broad spectrum of various

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[1] This is quite different from the contemporary San Francisco General Plan, wherein elements, or chapters, consist entirely of policy statements. There are no specific proposals and no implementation sections.

local actors, and represent an attempt to reconcile external pressures for change with locally-defined needs.

One of the most important aspects of the plan was that it called for restraint in developing the northern waterfront. For instance, following the consultants' lead, the plan suggested that the area between Piers 9 and 35 should remain in maritime use and be supported as such for as long as economically feasible. In fact, the plan even suggested that "public subsidy should be considered, when required, in order to preserve for as long as possible some authentic Port operations as an element of the waterfront" (SFPD 1969, 5). Should shipping and related activities be replaced, the plan advocated open space and housing as priority uses. This quite severely limited the area of potential commercial development available to the Port, at least for the next 10-20 years. And height limits proposed as part of the plan were more restrictive than the Port would have liked, especially in the area around the Ferry Building where the Planning Department concurred that commercial development was appropriate. The Port was going to have to live with these restrictions because by the time the plan was adopted in early summer of 1969 the Port would, after about 100 years, again be within the city's jurisdiction. This quite incensed Port Director Rae Watts, who chafed at the restrictions it represented, and criticized planners as "being unrealistic in their schemes" (SFC 20 June 1969).

The plan consisted of several sections, the first of which was made up of general objectives drawn from the Master Plan and policies that responded to them in

a fashion appropriate to the northern waterfront. These objectives and policies set the context for the main body of the plan itself, which consisted of a series of proposals for actions that would support the plan's policies. These proposals were divided into four subject areas: land use, transportation, open space, and urban design. Examples of land use proposals, perhaps the most important, included: developing open space and a pedestrian promenade along the water's edge between Piers 37 and 41; expanding water-oriented retail, restaurant, and commercial uses; and developing a cluster of hotels and motels in and around Fisherman's Wharf; development of housing along the base of Telegraph Hill, across from Piers 9-35; replacement of Piers 1-7 and with medium density housing and supporting office and commercial uses; and developing office space south of the Ferry Building "to complement the downtown office district" (p17).[2] No changes were proposed for China Basin, which was deemed important for shipping, with an exception for the possibility of a STOL (short take-off and landing) port. Still, there were some things with which critics would take issue, especially that the plan allowed for development over the water, and that commercial development could be on a scale deemed inappropriate for the waterfront. This, it was believed by some, rendered it not sufficiently sensitive to the environment. Modern, jet-age thinking was not superceded in the transition form Bolles' proposal to the public document which was based upon it.

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[2] That the plan suggested offices and housing on Port property reflects a disregard of public trust issues by the city at the time. It is not clear why this seems to have been the case.

While the concept of place had been utterly absent from consultant's analyses and developer's prospectuses, some of the most critical and meaningful proposals in the *Northern Waterfront Plan* had to do with urban design, which eloquently expressed the importance of place:

> The Northern Waterfront presents to San Francisco an extraordinary opportunity to develop a dramatic and delightful physical environment. The potential for drama and beauty is created by the area's natural qualities of the Bay's waterscape and the dominance of the surrounding hills and land forms. The interaction of natural environment of the Bay, land forms, and sky with the man-made urban environment and the vivid spectacle created by constantly changing patterns of light and color create a magnificent setting that provides rich and unforgettable images to both residents and visitors. (SF PD 1969, 37)

The urban design aspect of the plan also provided some of the basic reasoning behind restricting the physical parameters of development in the plan area:[3]

> The underlying design philosophy of this Plan is that urban forms should fully develop the outstanding natural beauty and qualities inherent in the character of the Northern Waterfront. The form and arrangement of the man-made urban elements should be determined and subordinate to the great natural forms of the water and the land. (SFPD 1969, 38)

The logic and sentiment in these statements were reflected in the height and bulk restrictions that the Port would find so vexing (but which critics considered still too lax). For example, it was determined that buildings should respect the forms of hills. This was (and is) achieved by requiring buildings at the base of hills to be shorter and

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[3] The discussion of urban design in this plan was a precursor to what would become the ground-breaking *Urban Design Element*, adopted in 1973, which put the San Francisco Planning Department squarely in the national urban planning limelight.

allowing taller buildings on the tops of hills, preventing a 'leveling' of topography that could occur if taller buildings were built at the base of hills with shorter ones above. Buildings should also step down in height toward the water (following the conclusions of the 1964 Planning Department study discussed in Chapter Four). Low height limits along certain sections of the waterfront (40 feet) would prevent new structures from dominating the existing low-slung transit sheds and bulkhead buildings. And of course, height limits would help also help to protect "one of San Francisco's most valuable assets" - its many views (SFPD 1969, 41).

In all, the plan presented quite a different vision for the waterfront than had come from the Port Authority, their consultants, or the calculations of financial analysts. Still, the plan recognized that the requirements of the Port were essential to the plan, and that generating revenues was vital to the expansion and modernization of Port maritime facilities. Thus, as seen above, commercial development was suggested for the areas immediately north and south of the Ferry Building. The plan also made clear the role that accommodating visitors and recreation was beginning to play in decisions that would shape the built environment of the northern waterfront. Modernist visions may have begun to give way to a more publically-informed planning process, but the *Northern Waterfront Plan* also reflected the change in the city's economy, nudging the city into a role a little more attuned to services and tourism. With statements such as "the maritime atmosphere of Port and shipping activities adds genuine interest, variety, and amenity to the waterfront environment and is a part of

San Francisco that cannot be easily replaced," the plan recognized a new value in traditional waterfront activities (SFPD 1969, 41). In a way, the plan appropriated the remaining traditional maritime activities in the northern waterfront, and assigned to them as much importance for their ability to attract visitors to the area as for their inherent economic function.

The last part of the plan was the implementation section, which was intended to be adopted pursuant to adoption of the *Northern Waterfront Plan* as an amendment to the Master Plan. Referred to as the 'Implementation Plan,' it included changes to zoning districts, height and bulk controls, and proposed the creation of special use districts (SUDs).[4] It also addressed inter-agency coordination: what actions by which agencies would be needed to make various aspects of the plan happen. In fact, the Planning Department felt that all of the major goals and proposals presented in the plan should be achieved for the most part within the plan's 18-year time frame. Almost two-thirds of the area covered by the plan was in public ownership, and almost half of that was in the Port's jurisdiction. Perhaps somewhat quixotically, the plan's authors suggested that given this situation, public agencies were in the position of being able to follow through on ideas established in the plan, of being able to make the plan happen. But in fact, the main body of the plan was not drafted in a way that would really encourage change to occur, and in any case it could not include the

[4] SUDs are established by in the Planning Code. In this case they included floor-to-area restrictions (FAR), established land use restrictions, and required conditional use approval (a Planning Commission-granted entitelment) for non-maritime development in the SUDs.

political or financial mechanisms to carry out projects. It was really in the 'Implementation Plan' that measures with 'on the ground' impacts were outlined.[5] Some of the implementing actions were adopted soon after the plan was approved, for instance the special use districts were established in 1970. But what to do with height limits, one of the most important planning tools, became locked up in the struggle over U.S. Steel's push for a 550-foot limit. The *Northern Waterfront Plan* proposed a height limit of 84 feet in the Ferry Building area, with exceptions to 175 feet, where no limits had existed earlier.

By formally adopting the *Northern Waterfront Plan's* vision for development, the Planning Department was creating an impediment to investors and developers who would use the waterfront with a view only to profit. However, what most helped to make height limits, planning documents, policy statements, and new layers of approvals and restrictions a reality for the Port was its return to the city. An account of the Port's transfer provides insight into the complex dynamic that can characterize the mobilization of local forces in response to external influences. In this case there was a successful combination of local boosters, who saw the possibility for gain in

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[5] In San Francisco, the General Plan (master plan) establishes policies that guide decisions, and the Planning Code implements some of those policies. So, when an element of the General Plan is changed, or a new one is added, it can carry much more weight if it generates changes or additions to the Planning Code. At minimum, such changes serve to codify aspects of planning policy. Typically plans were not (and are not) intended to create new development, rather, they guide the character of proposed development . However, over the last decade or two a range of planning tools have evolved, such as California's 'specific plan' that are intended to foster development, if not actually to identify funds and carry out capital projects.

recapturing the Port, together with a public that responded to the idea of a reunited city and Port.[6] The main result was to relocate the Port within the set of power relationships affecting the waterfront; severing its direct ties with the state would make the Port a more truly local agency. Ironically, after the transfer, burdens placed on the Port would cause *it* to view revitalization with an eye to profit.

THE IMPETUS TO TRANSFER

> Governor Pat Brown came down to the Ferry Building for some international event in the World Trade Center and was standing with a few of us in the WTC lobby when Mayor George Christopher walked in with his retinue. He came up to Brown, extended his hand and said "Hello, Governor, welcome to my city." With no hesitation at all, Brown shot back, "Welcome to my port." (As recounted by Don DeLone, letter dated 8 January 2001)

The issue of whether the Port should be a city rather than a state agency had been hanging in the background for a number of years. Already in 1951, only a year after the Chamber of Commerce argued that port ownership was not the most crucial factor to the port's vitality, the Board of Supervisors took up the issue. Then President of the Board of Supervisors George Christopher (later mayor) presented a resolution requesting that the state legislature take action to return the Port to city jurisdiction, but nothing came of it or of any of the early debates (SFC 13 August 1951).[7] By the

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[6] One insider has speculated that state officials believed that the new Bay Conservation and Development Commission might make development difficult, and thus viewed the transfer as a way to get rid of what could become a liability.

[7] It was Mayor Christopher who would later appoint Justin Herman as head of the Redevelopment Agency and who fully supported Herman's Golden Gateway

1960s, it was obvious that the Port's northern waterfront was suffering from serious neglect. The Port's cargo operations and financial status were see-sawing, and it was clear that Oakland was becoming an extraordinarily successful port. Furthermore, tensions between the city and the port regarding development were becoming more of a problem as the city evolved. The Planning Department reported to its commission that

> ...it seems pertinent to question whether the Port Authority should have sole control, as it does at present, over properties which it intends to lease to private developers for non-port uses... In any conflict of interests between the City and the Port Authority arising over proposals for the development of Port Authority property by private interests, the Port Authority enjoys an enormously disproportionate advantage. (SFPD 1961, p.5).

City officials became convinced that state control of the Port was not in San Francisco's favor, and Supervisor William C. Blake (who owned a ship-repair business) led the charge to recapture it. As mentioned earlier, it was argued that the State was avoiding its fiduciary responsibilities to the Port, and, because the Port of San Francisco had always been a self sustaining agency, with no access to tax monies, the state was (de facto) favoring other ports because any financial aid to the port would have had to come directly from state coffers, while other ports could receive money through their respective local agencies. As a state agency, the Port was also ineligible for federal development grants - grants that the Port of Oakland had succeeded in getting.

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project. Christopher was without doubt a 'development-oriented' mayor.

What helped bring the issue to the boiling point was the publication of the Arthur D. Little report. The ADL report clearly represented the next stage in the use of 527 acres of waterfront area land, and the idea that the state would be behind such important changes rather than the city disturbed not a few San Franciscans. Reacting to these reports, Supervisor Blake raised anew the transfer standard, arguing that the land should be on the city's tax rolls when development takes place. The Chronicle quoted him as saying that otherwise "a chance for new tax revenue would be passed up and an unfair advantage gained by developers located on state-held land" (SFC 1 February 1966). Cyril Magnin responded quickly, saying that the city would in fact derive tax monies from development on or in place of old piers: "If the supervisor had done his homework before speaking out...he would realize our program can produce millions of dollars in new tax revenues" (SFC 2 December 1966). By the time the debate became more widely public, arguments for transferring the Port included not just the potential to increase tax revenues and eliminate financial favoritism, but that it would also put an end to the lackadaisical approach to facility maintenance and general mismanagement (this latter point is somewhat ironic, as it was mismanagement that cause the state to take over the port in 1863).

Magnin's rather overbearing and defiant stance could not stem a rising tide, especially once the Chronicle's editorial board made its feelings apparent. A few days after the exchange between Blake and Magnin an editorial appeared in the Chronicle which supported Blake :

> These are good points, worthy of earnest attention, but they do not reach far enough. The City of San Francisco has for too long been divorced from the management of its own port. It should move vigorously to regain ownership from the State. (SFC 5 December 1966)

In the short run, Supervisor Blake authored a resolution to order Mayor Shelley not to enter into any agreements with the Port Authority on land deemed surplus to shipping needs. This only triggered more heated debates. The already testy relationship between Supervisor Blake and Port Director Rae Watts degenerating into open confrontation a month later when the Board of Supervisors was considering Supervisor Blake's resolution that San Francisco's official stance should be to return the Port to the city. Watts called Blake a "cheap, tin-horn politician" and Blake labeled Watts "a man who would be on welfare if he weren't at the public trough" (SFC 31 January 1967).

Support to transfer the Port to the city grew rapidly as business leaders and labor unions realized that a flood of jobs and money could gush from extensive waterfront development, and that tax income to the city was potentially huge. With regard to the last point, the city's assessor, Joseph Tinney, claimed that the city had been losing "at least a million dollars a year" because it had no stake in Port land (SFC 21 March 1968). The San Francisco Planning and Urban Renewal (later Research) Association (SPUR) was also eager to effect the transfer and issued a report in 1968 entitled "San Francisco Port... Asset or Liability?." Based largely on the 1966 ADL report, SPUR argued that with the Port operating at a loss it would be forced to

generate income by developing the extensive tracts of northern waterfront property no longer needed or suitable for cargo operations. The Port Authority would be "thrust...into the business of real estate development as its most practicable source of income necessary for the subsidization of the maritime operations" (SPUR 1968, 5). SPUR concluded, in what was for them at the time an unusually populist position, that only under city jurisdiction would port land be developed in a fashion that would benefit San Franciscans, not just commercial interests:

> Optimal utilization of portions of this acreage may not be for public open spaces, housing or recreation. Thus a conflict of interests between the financial needs of the Port and the environmental, social and cultural needs of the City may develop under the present port ownership. (SPUR 1968, 8)

It should be pointed out, however, that SPUR did not shy away from more profit-oriented reasons for obtaining control of the Port. After all, SPUR was still an organization with deep roots in business and politics; for instance, its board of directors in 1968 included Planning Commissioner Mortimer Fleishhacker, Jr. and business tycoon John L. Merrill. As it turned out, one of the conditions of the transfer was that land no longer required for shipping or maritime activities was to be developed so as to generate the maximum return to the Port. By placing tremendous pressure on the Port's real estate staff to chase massive commercial projects, this condition was, and would be, directly at odds with the city's attempts to control the nature of its own Port's development. In later decades, this situation would also put the different divisions within the Port, in particular maritime and real estate, at odds

with one another. The real estate division, for instance, would scrutinize the Port's maritime activities at every opportunity and where they looked marginal, the potential for some form of development would loom up.

Supervisor Blake's efforts to convince his peers that the time had come to reclaim the Port were helped immensely both by the election of Joseph Alioto in 1967 and by the completion in 1968 of Bolles' *Northern Waterfront Plan,* which contained the policies that could make some of ADL's development concepts possible. Alioto, who became notable as an anti-trust lawyer, was from a family of restauranteurs and fish wholesalers who had long been Port tenants, so his interest in Port-related issues was natural. Given his personal connection to the Port and a study that suggested tantalizing futures for the waterfront, it is not surprising that Alioto staunchly supported the idea of the transfer.

As discussions moved along, the city's efforts to retake the Port found an unlikely ally in Commissioner Cyril Magnin himself. While he must have seen the writing on the wall, it is not unlikely that his decision to come out in favor of the transfer was influenced by Mayor Alioto's predisposition, as the two men were generally on the same page regarding issues of urban development. That, and relations with the state were becoming uncomfortable. A Chronicle piece even described the state of affairs as a "cold war," reporting that Director Watts was forced to cancel his attendance at a meeting because out-of-state travel was being restricted by Governor Reagan (SFC 14 February 19/67). At a "Get the Port Back" luncheon held by SPUR at

the elite St. Francis Hotel, Magnin showed that he had changed his tune by stating that regaining the Port "would be the greatest bargain the City ever bought" (SFC 21 March 1968). He cautioned, though, that the Port should remain independent, and not be shackled by the Board of Supervisors.

Assemblyman John Burton (a democrat representing San Francisco and later one of the state's most powerful machine politicians) agreed to author the bill that would effect the transfer, and began to shepherd it through various state committees. Based on signals that the idea of a transfer was being received positively in the Governor's office and in the legislature, Alioto appointed a 16-member committee to negotiate the details with the state. However, the state's Department of Finance, headed by Casper Weinberger (obviously on an upward path early in his career) began by opposing the bill, insisting that the city would have to pay an adequate fee for the Port, then estimated to be worth $350 million; later amendments which finalized the purchase price and related financial matters garnered that agency's support. The state assembly approved the transfer in May 1968, and the state senate approved it in August, with three conditions: first, the transfer had to be approved by San Francisco voters and thus be placed on the next ballot and the city must pay $50 million to cover bonded indebtedness; second, that within 10 years of the transfer, the city must issue $50 million dollars in bonds for improvements; and third, an additional $100 million must be invested in the Port in a 25 year period. Alioto, perhaps the state's leading democrat at that time, and the first democratic mayor of San Francisco in decades, had

been accustomed to criticizing the governor, but on the occasion of the signing, had only praise for Reagan. According to a report by the Chronicle, the conservative Governor Reagan supported the bill because it represented a step towards local control (SFC 15 August 1968). After the governor signed it, State Senator George Moscone (later mayor of San Francisco) amended the bill to rename it the Burton Act. A few weeks later, in a 10-1 vote, the Board of Supervisors accepted the state's conditions, with one exception. The board voted to give the mayor the power to appoint the director of the Port, instead of keeping that power with the Port Commission. It was a move opposed by the Port's attorney, Miriam Wolff (later Port director herself), and a move that would have obvious repercussions for the political power relations between the Port and the city. Now it was up to the voting public of San Francisco.

The Chronicle (14 October 1968) editorialized that "the future welfare of San Francisco" was at stake, and that the State would not invest the $100-150 million dollars needed to replace obsolete piers, maintain facilities, construct a new passenger terminal, and generally support shipping. Seemingly every city official, socialite, union, and booster organization supported the transfer, which Thomas Mellon, the city's Chief Administrator, assured would not cost San Francisco tax payers a cent (SFC 24 October 1968). A full-page chronicle ad boasted that the city would benefit from an increase in jobs, payrolls, and business revenue, and that Port profits averaged $ 1 million per year. The transfer effort was bolstered by a public relations firm that, as Reinhardt sardonically put it (1971, 100) "began a campaign of enticement: 'The

Port means money in our pockets...Opportunity knocks...The Greatest Bargain of the Century."

The transfer agreement was placed on the November 1968 ballot under propositions "B" and "C". Proposition B (the Burton Act) contained the legal transfer and associated requirements while Proposition C was the amendment to the city charter that set up the Port Commission. Both propositions were approved overwhelmingly by San Francisco voters, and the Port was officially re-united with the city on February 7, 1969, signaled quietly by a changing of the flags flying form the Ferry Building. Yet, the Port's return to the city, and the conditions attached thereto, would only serve to inflame the battles over waterfront development and place the Planning Commission at odds with the new Port Commission.

Figure 55 Add placed in the Chronicle promoting the transfer. Source: San Francisco Chronicle 11/4/68.

As mentioned above, the agreement required the City (via the new Port Commission) to assume responsibility for $50 million in outstanding state general obligation bonds and was also required to invest $100 million over 25 years for harbor

improvements.[8] It was expected that commercial development in the northern waterfront would satisfy these obligations. However, the Burton Act included as part of the Transfer Agreement the requirement that the port *maximize* the amount of rent derived from land declared no longer needed for maritime uses. This condition was crucial, and remains so today, because in order to satisfy the requirement to invest $100 million dollars in development of shipping, shipping-related, and general navigational uses, the Port had to pursue development that would generate the most income possible from surplus land.[9]

While more recently this requirement has been interpreted a bit more leniently, in the early years of re-governance of the Port, it created extreme pressure. The Port Authority was placed in something of a bind - it had to chase income through implementing commercial projects, but these projects were limited in scope because the Port was under city jurisdiction, and subject to its policies, such as those in the newly adopted *Northern Waterfront Plan*, and some of its approval processes. It no longer had the power to ignore zoning restrictions, including land use controls and building height and bulk limits. The way in which the Board of Supervisors structured the reintegration of the Port with the city did, however, leave the Port fairly

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[8] Reinhardt (1971) suggests that the $100 million requirement was arbitrary, and not definitively traceable to any person or agency.

[9] The agreement also required legislative approval for expenditures over $250 million and two gubernatorial appointees out of seven Port Commissioners, conditions that would later be rescinded. When it was realized that commercial development along the northern waterfront would be difficult to achieve, the spending requirement was reduced to $25 million.

independent. Through Proposition C, the Board gave up nearly all opportunities to maintain any real control over the Port:

> ...(the Board) had voted 10 to 1 to deny themselves any review of Port Commission contracts, commercial agreements or development plans. All members of the Board except Leo McCarthy apparently accepted Magnin's view that "the Port is a business and ...can't be expected to run to the Supervisors with every contract. (Reinhardt 1971, 101)[10]

Reinhardt argued that the Port sought to divest itself of both state and local control, to become a "free-swinging, independent operation, liberated from the bureaucratic powers of government and all the latitude of private enterprise" (Reinhardt 1971, 104). His interpretation is a little extreme, but does underscore what would contribute to difficulties with inter-agency cooperation, sometimes creating tension. Regardless, the transfer was considered a victory by SPUR, the Chamber of Commerce, unions, the development community (and thus Magnin), and real estate businesses; to many, the Port was a potential treasure chest.[11] As soon as the transfer went into effect, Magnin wasted no time in sending out the call for developers. Newspaper ads were placed in papers as part of a nationwide campaign:

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[10] However, as indicated in Chapter Two, leases over $1 million per year must be approved by the Board of Supervisors, which thus gives it influence over Port activities through its fiduciary power.

[11] Mayor Alioto had just appointed Harry Bridges to the Port Authority Commission in what was probably a calculated move to assure labor support. With cargo handling jobs disappearing, development would offer alternative work and the hope that new container facilities constructed from revenues generated by that development would help keep the port's shipping activities alive.

> Prime waterfront property in San Francisco is now available for commercial development. The Port can now offer downtown waterfront property from famed Fisherman's Wharf to the Bay Bridge. Much of it is zoned for hotels, motels, restaurants, entertainment, retail shopping, office buildings and apartments. Sites are available on long term leases with flexible terms specifically designed to be attractive to private capital. (quoted in Reinhardt 1971, 108)

Proposals came from many quarters, for many parts of the waterfront, but it was around the Ferry Building that forces of change and resistance would swirl, testing both the city's ability to establish appropriate height limits and the mettle of the young Bay Conservation and Development Commission.

THE BAY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION VS. FERRY PORT PLAZA: REGULATION 1, DEVELOPMENT 0

Bay fill, which includes piers, had reduced the amount of open water in the Bay by about a third, and wetlands areas by more than 75%. In response to Bay Area environmental activism concerned with the diminishing bay, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) was established as a result of the 1965 McAteer-Petris Act. The act established BCDC as a temporary agency and required it to produce a *Bay Plan* that would set forth the policies to guide its decisions and actions. In 1969, the McAteer-Petris act was amended to make BCDC a permanent agency and to adopt the *Bay Plan* as law. BCDC commissioners include both Governor's appointees and representatives from city and county governments throughout the Bay Area. It is thus a kind of hybrid state-regional-local agency with emphasis on the

regional. BCDC's jurisdiction includes Bay water and tributaries up to the point of highest tidal action, all shoreline located within 100 feet of the bay (referred to as the 100-foot shoreline band), and all wetlands. BCDC's authority thus extends to much, but not all, of the Port's jurisdiction, in particular the piers, wharfs, and pile-supported structures. Generally, the shoreline band reaches only to the Embarcadero; the roadway itself and most of the Port's seawall lots are beyond BCDC's jurisdiction. BCDC's primary task is to administer a comprehensive and enforceable plan that will protect San Francisco Bay and the development of its shoreline.

BCDC's primary activity is to regulate dredging, fill, and to a certain degree the uses of land within its jurisdiction. On fill, uses are limited by BCDC to water-related activities, which include Port facilities, water-related industry, bridges, wildlife refuges, water-oriented commercial recreation, and public assembly. Importantly, offices and housing are not allowed on new or replacement fill.[12] Within the 100-foot shoreline band, BCDC requires that development be designed to provide the maximum feasible public access to the Bay (SFPD 1997, 96). BCDC exercises its authority through its permitting process. For instance, as conditions of the approval of a permit, BCDC can require public improvements consistent with the project (for instance,

[12] New fill is severely restricted, in fact, more so than by the doctrine of public trust, which applies to nearly all of the Port's land. The Attorney General has advised the Port that repairs and improvements to existing structures that may extend their useful life (this includes seismic retrofitting) constitute fill. The implications of this interpretation are still being worked out. It could mean that if a pier needed repair, any existing, non water-oriented uses would be displaced.

improving access to the water by building paths, or providing signs and benches).[13] As a result of the 1969 *Bay Plan*, the Bay Conservation and Development Commission would evolve into one of the first agencies in the U.S. to be able to exercise control over physical development as a way to protect the environment.

The first significant development project on which BCDC would cut its teeth was a 1969 proposal by Oceanic Properties, Inc., a division of Castle and Cooke (developers from Honolulu), and New York financiers Kidder-Peadbody to develop an area north of the Ferry Building. As a new city agency strapped with the requirement to invest $100 million in itself, the Port was moving hurriedly to attract development proposals. While not recommended by the ADL plan, the Port declared that Piers 1, 3, and 5 were no longer operational, and that Pier 7 would be soon be available for development (SFC 14 August 1969).[14] Oceanic tapped William Coblentz, a rising star in the local power structure (he would be a founding partner of Coblentz, Duffy, and Patch, a respected and powerful law firm specializing in land use and development), as their spokesman and go-between. The proposal was for a mixed-used development called Ferry Port Plaza, designed by Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill. It was to replace Piers 1-7 (north of the Ferry Building) with a luxury hotel, offices, and shops, and parking all crammed onto a single 40-acre pier.

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[13] As will be seen later, BCDC's control of the design of public access, and later their influence over general project design, would become quite controversial, leading to years of very difficult relations with the Port and Planning Department.

[14] 10 years earlier Ebasco rated Piers 1 and 7 to be in good condition, Pier 3 to be in poor condition, and Pier 5 had already been condemned.

Not unmindful of new requirements for projects (both as regulation from BCDC and as a response to the Planning Department's *Northern Waterfront Plan*), the design presented to the Port included public access to the water by "perimeter esplanades, parks, and open plazas" and it protected view corridors from streets leading to the project (SFC 14 August 1969). The buildings would be designed to conform with height limits.[15] Oceanic hoped that designing the project to be supported on pilings, not solid fill, and to cover only 40 percent of the site would cause BCDC to view the project favorably. As mentioned elsewhere, fill would eventually be defined to include just about any covering over water, including structures built on piles or cantilevered over the water.

So Close, Yet so Far

In September 1969, the Port entered a lease agreement with Kipco, Inc., a firm created by Kidder-Peabody, for the 40-acre area (SFC 4 September 1969), an arrangement which would bring a substantial sum into Port coffers, and, once developed, to the city's general fund through large tax payments. By February 1970, the development team had attracted another partner, the prestigious Ford Foundation. The project was moving forward so well that a spokesperson for the sponsors indicated

[15] Regulations for height limits resulting from the adoption of the *Northern Waterfront Plan* were under review. At the time, it was expected that 84 feet would be approved, which the Ferry Port Plaza project sponsors supported, although they indicated that the project might reach up to 125 feet in some places. The height limit issue was not resolved until 1971, as part of the controversy over U.S. Steel's project.

that, given continued smooth sailing, construction would start by the end of the year (SFC 12 February 1970).

Design changes delayed submission of the project to the Planning Commission until June 1970. The project had grown a bit, promising a 1200 room hotel (instead of 800) to enclose a "'Grand Court sculpture garden' with trees and reflecting pools" (SFC 20 June 1970). Somehow, under the hotel, parking would be provided for 2400 hundred cars - a vision of modern accessibility quite in keeping with earlier grand schemes. It also incorporated a 500-foot glass galleria flanked by two levels of shops and six of offices. The 'parks' and esplanades survived the re-draw, but along with the rest of the project, would not survive the approval process

Although the Port had already entered into a development agreement with the project sponsors, the project still needed approvals from the City Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors (which it would get), BCDC, and the Army Corps of Engineers. Things began to take a turn for the worse during the fall of 1970, when environmentalists organized to protest Ferry Port Plaza's sixteen football field-sized foot print over the

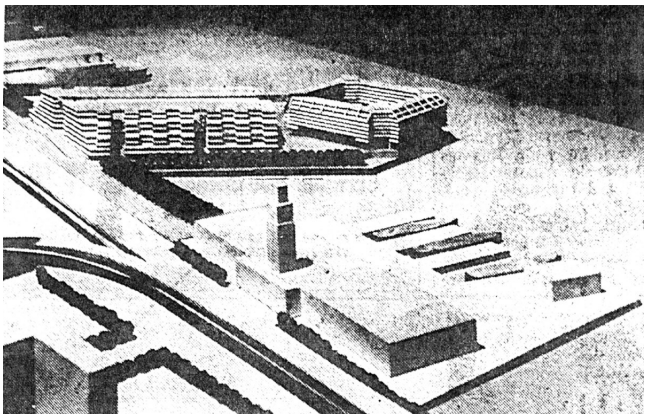

Figure 56 Model of Ferry Port Plaza development proposal, shown above the Ferry Building. Source: San Francisco Chronicle 7/18/70.

Bay. In a hearing before BCDC, Port Director Miriam Wolff, recent successor to Rae Watts, argued that the project was necessary to help generate the money required by the transfer agreement to be invested in Port facilities - that or the city would have to dip into its own pocket (SFC 4 September 1970). However, the pivotal issue at the time was whether or not an opinion from the California Attorney General would support a proposed administrative rule known as "the rule of equivalencies." Proposed by BCDC's executive director, Joseph Bodovitz, the rule would allow new fill for development (including development on piles) if a surface area equal to that being covered were opened up elsewhere, resulting in no net increase of Bay fill. The Ferry Port Plaza proposal would have filled more of the Bay than was to be freed by removing the old piers, so the Port offered to demolish the crumbling Pier 41.

The stakes for the Port associated with the 'rule of equivalencies' were great (the U.S. Steel project was also under review by this time), enough to get the Chronicle's buy-in, support from Mayor Allioto (almost a given), and accolades from the Northern California Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and the Chamber of Commerce. The Chronicle's editorial board, sounding a bit like good old boys trying to rationalize a deal with the notion that "fair is fair," said that the rule was sound, as it would allow the replacement of "beaten up old piers." "We think it ought to be adopted" (SFC 16 September 1970). In the same issue, the Chronicle printed a long-winded letter from Director Wolff appealing to the citizenry, saying that the project would not shrink the Bay, and that the Port would be replacing "decrepit,

uninteresting property with an exciting, esthetic and visually pleasing treatment." For his part, the mayor stressed that "the very life and future of the port rests on getting a development of this kind" and that "this is not a get-rich quick scheme for a few, as some have charged. We sought the development; we invited it" (SFC 19 September 1970).[16] Of course, just because the Port was acting as a magnet for capital did not mean that investors would not profit handsomely. As will be pointed out in later chapters, if there is not money to be made, and if the conditions are not right, private investment in commercial revitalization would not be forthcoming.

Even more than International Square, Ferry Port Plaza galvanized public reaction to grand schemes for a 'world-class waterfront' (an oldish concept, despite its au courant use). Hundreds of people from numerous groups packed BCDC hearings. The cries of "prevent the rape of the waterfront" that issued from a growing list of protestors, including the League of Women Voters, the Marine Conservation League, Friends of the Earth and two local advocacy groups, San Francisco Tomorrow and San Francisco Beautiful, echoed loudly throughout the meeting hall (SFC 18 September 1970). A collection of neighborhood groups and activists referred to as the "conservation coalition" even submitted a counter-proposal. The image on page 218 (Figure 57) reveals enough. One could expect no less from a

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[16] This is a case, not uncommon, of local actors and gatekeepers reaching out in an attempt to attract capital, to tap the veins of a top-down source of power. Their success or lack thereof contributes to the character of a place, helping to differentiate it from another. It also helps to crystalize what is often an abstractly described process of capital flow.

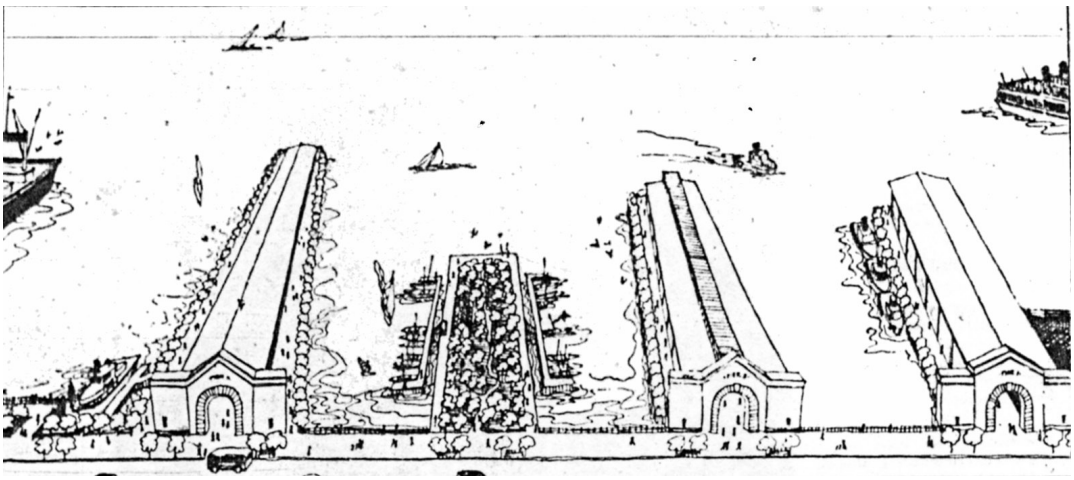

Figure 57 Pier designed as open space submitted as a counter-proposal to Ferry Port Plaza. Source: San Francisco Chronicle 10/12/70.

city of free-thinkers in a region that helped catalyze the environmental movement. In an odd, inscrutable twist, Ferry Port Plaza architects SOM likened the alternative to Ghirardelli Square, suggesting that such a thing at the city's doorstep was a bit cartoonish (SFC 12 October 1970)!

A few days after SOM calmly dismissed the rival proposal, Attorney General Thomas C. Lynch handed down his opinion, all but killing the project. Essentially, he held that BCDC did not have the legal authority to adopt a rule that would enable such development, unless it could be proved that the proposed developments were water-oriented. In such cases, fill is allowed. Lynch argued that the project as designed was in fact adding fill for non water-related uses. Furthermore BCDC regulations require disapproval of projects which could be just as easily constructed away from the water. BCDC Director Bodovitz, although he acknowledged that ultimately it was BCDC's decision as to what constituted water-related uses, admitted that Ferry Port Plaza, with

its big office building, was not particularly water-oriented. Mayor Alioto tenaciously stuck by the project, arguing "there is nothing in...the ruling which precludes the BCDC from approving the application..." and officials from Oceanic decided to view the 'delay' as a "normal procedure of business" (SFC 16 October 1970). BCDC commission voted 22-1 against recommending the project.

Mayor Alioto railed against the decision, concluding that BCDC did not have the power to create "a condition that effectively embalms rotting piers" (SFC 4 December 1970). While he was wrong about BCDC's power, he was probably right about the impact of the decision. Disallowing offices and housing as part of commercial development (the two least water-oriented uses) can cripple the ability of an agency or project sponsor to provide those things that are desired. That is, office and housing are often the 'economic engine' of projects which pay for amenities that would otherwise not be provided (unless hard to get public money could be leveraged). Without the office development in Ferry Port Plaza, there would be no way to provide esplanades next to the water and there might not be the money to remove old or rotting piers. More fundamental at the time, though, was the sobering notion that the Port might not be able to generate $100 million to invest in its maritime facilities.

Mayor Alioto tried to get BCDC's buy-in of the *Northern Waterfront Plan*, which, as adopted, incorporated the Ferry Port Plaza design. He seemed to hope, not entirely unreasonably, that because the project was in essence part of a comprehensive plan for the northern waterfront, it should be seen as a reasonable endeavor. Such

logic did not impress BCDC. Thus, Mayor Alioto carried the battle further, insisting that the city should not "be stymied by one man's opinion...The law is not a permanent thing." And with that, the Port would, in March 1971, file an ultimately unsuccessful suit against BCDC over Ferry Port Plaza. Ferry Port Plaza was the first port development proposal to be scuttled by BCDC and its newly formalized regulatory power.

THE CITY VS. FORD MOTOR COMPANY AND U. S. STEEL: REGULATION 2, DEVELOPMENT 0

At about the same time that Ferry Port Plaza was being debated, the Port was pursuing development on the site between the Ferry Building and the Bay Bridge, an area characterized by its old, crumbling finger piers, many of which were more than 50 years old at the time. The 1500-foot stretch, extending from Pier 14 to Per 24, was removed from shipping use not long after the transfer. Consultants had recommended to remove the piers and to develop the area with commercial and office uses, which became a nearly immediate priority for the city's newest agency The concept was also supported by the *Northern Waterfront Plan*, which suggested that such uses were appropriate here because they would become an extension of the downtown. Eagerly, the Port cast its net, fishing out two proposals for the site, one by Ford and another by U.S. Steel.

Ford Motor Company produced a nearly unbelievable scheme which proposed a multi-purpose "urban dealership" (see Figure 58), and would have been owned and

Figure 58 The Ford proposal for development in the Ferry Building area. Source: Port of San Francisco/William L. Pereira Associates 1969.

operated by a real estate subsidiary of the automobile giant. This project, designed by architect William Pereira (whose credits included the then-controversial Transamerica Building), would have resulted in an almost stereotypical dystopian suburban fantasy/nightmare - a mall, restaurants, and car dealership built over the water and connected to downtown via massive freeway-style ramps (Pereira 1969). One particularly obtuse feature was the inclusion of 15 acres of parking - enough for 4500 cars - to help remedy congestion! While it adhered to the 84-foot height limit proposed as part of the *Northern Waterfront Plan*, the project was designed to be built on piles. This approach did not result in directly filling the Bay, but it did involve building over the water. In all likely-hood, BCDC would have interpreted this as tantamount to fill, dooming the project. But Ford's proposal did not catch the eyes of

the Port Commission, who were more distracted by the shiny, 550-foot object dangled by U.S. Steel, voting four to zero to consider it, not Ford's proposal, in May 1970 (SFC 12 October 1970).

U.S. Steel's monumental proposal was steered to the Port Commission somewhat on the sly. The company was keeping a low profile by using local agents to 'shop' the project. Their architects, however, were the high profile Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill, who were also designing Ferry Port Plaza.[17] The Chronicle put the proposal on the front page on December 13, 1969, a week after announcing Ford's plans, and included an artist's sketch that made clear the project's scope (see Figure 59). The scheme was to replace the existing piers with a cruise terminal, shopping center, 25-story hotel, and a 44-story office, which, at about 550 feet, would have been taller than the pylons of the Bay Bridge, dwarfing most nearby development. The battles lines were drawn quickly. Business interests, unions, the Chamber of Commere, and Port officials favored the project, while community activists, architects, conservationists, and Planning Department staff did not. SPUR supported the project initially, but changed its position towards the end of the debate.

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[17] According to Reinhardt, the Port did not so much as 'receive' a proposal from U. S. Steel as it actively solicited it, using real estate kingpin Walter Shornstein as local 'muscle' to work the project though San Francisco's approval process. He also outlines some of the 'power lines,' to borrow from Mike Davis, citing friendships between Magnin, his son-in-law (who sat on the Planning Commission), hotelier Ben Swig, and Mayor Alioto. A potent mixture of ego and circumstances, but in this case, not enough to allow unfettered transformation of the built environment by capital.

The heart of the argument over U.S. Steel concerned height limits. The Planning Commission was in the process of approving various implementing actions generated by *Northern Waterfront Plan*. The issue of height limits was taken up just as the U.S. Steel project was making the rounds. A month after the project was unveiled, the Planning Commission, with the exception of president Mortimer Fleishacker Jr., and in opposition to Planning Department Director Alan B. Jacobs, approved a motion to adopt 400-foot height limits in the area between the Ferry Building and the Bay Bridge (SFC 16 January 1970). The height limits proposed for the remainder of the northern waterfront were approved as proposed in the Department's plan, making fairly clear the political intentions towards the site in question. Pushing hard, newly appointed Port Director Miriam Wolff appealed to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors, arguing that 400 feet would not allow a building large enough to keep the interest of developers (SFC 4 March 1970). The Port argued that it desperately needed

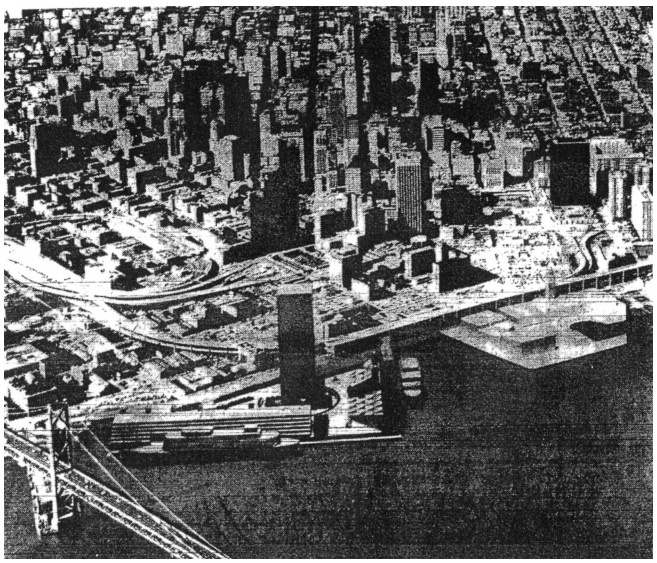

Figure 59 Model of the U.S. Steel proposal for development between the Bay Bridge and the Ferry Building. Source: San Francisco Chronicle 13 December 1969 .

a new passenger terminal and that it could not afford to construct one, let alone demolish rotting piers, without a substantial money-making project.[18]

In the fall of 1970, the Board of Supervisors returned the heigh limit issue to the Planning Commission, strongly hinting that 550 feet was preferred. The Planning Commission duly took up the proposal and, over protests against "Manahattanizing" San Francisco, approved 550 feet in a four to two vote. San Francisco Tomorrow's Norman Rolfe expressed the frustration of many in stating that "we've had the argument that there will be a great exodus from the city if we don't roll over and play dead to every developer who waves a wad of money" (SFC 11 September 1970). Ex-Planning Commissioner Gardner Mein took the anti-high rise rhetoric a step further, exclaiming that "high rises are like heroin...once you start, you can't stop, except by drastic means, and by then its too late." Mein was supported by Supervisor Roger Boas, who pledged to fight the project, saying that "the Board of Supervisors should stand on the side of San Franciscans" (SFC 12 September 1970). Board president Diane Feinstein, one of the project's most vocal critics, suggested that the building should become part of the Yerba Buena redevelopment area, a revitalization project being undertaken in a nearby section of downtown.

The two sides were quite polarized; either the project was a gift to San Francisco that would help to provide important waterfront amenities and would mark

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[18] In the decades to follow, justifying the inclusion of non-maritime uses in a project in order to support maritime ones (here, office supporting a new cruise terminal) would evolve into a complex game related to satisfying the public trust issues in proposals for development.

San Francisco as a first-class city, or it would doom the city's heritage, destroying the relationship between the place and its setting. Thus, views were also part of the debate, with supporters arguing that the proposed single slender tower would block fewer views than a shorter but more massive structure. Mayor Alioto chafed at the idea, saying that he would rather see a high rise building and open space than a lower, 40-foot "Chinese wall" running the length of the waterfront (SFC 29 September 1970). Architect Ernest Born (from whose hand issued Embarcadero City), now a member of the Art Commission, also piped up in favor of U.S. Steel, suggesting that the tower would be "one of the great things in the country... one of the finest of our times" (SFC 6 October 1970).

As the debate continued, some protestors placed the blame for the offending proposal on city officials, and not U.S. Steel. In fact, throughout all of this, U.S. Steel was fairly non-committal, perhaps a calculated move. Representatives said that the project would require a year of study and engineering tests, which could not begin until the height limit was settled (SFC 12 October 1970). The pressure against U.S. Steel's proposal mounted with the creation of a citizen-activist umbrella group called the Citizen's Waterfront Committee and the publication of a privately financed report under the auspices of Supervisor Boas and Planning Commission Fleishhacker a month later (both mentioned in Chapter Six). The latter pointed out that the proposed project did not conform to Master Plan policies (as set forth in the *Northern Waterfront Plan*) and further suggested that the Burton Act requirement to invest $100

million in the port be rescinded (in fact, it was later reduced to $25 million). Responding to mounting pressure, the Board could no longer delay the vote, and on February 16, 1971, voted six to four to impose the 84 foot height limit for ninety percent of the area in question, and 175 feet for the remaining ten.

During the debate, several supervisors pointed out that the height limit issue was actually moot, because BCDC would not allow the construction of office, as seen in the case of Ferry Port Plaza. Oddly, Director Wolff made the same observation, but persisted with her stance, probably hoping for a favorable result from the city's suit against BCDC. After the vote, Board members Ronald Pelosi and Roger Boas said that the Port ought to get out of the real estate business and stick to shipping (a curious statement, given the clear impetus for development built into the transfer and the northern waterfront's increasingly rundown and outmoded facilities). On the other hand, Supervisor Mendelsohn, in reference to the Port's aging bulkhead buildings, said a plan which included tearing down "those stucco portals to nowhere" should be adopted (SFC 17 February 1971). Clearly, what to do with the northern waterfront was far from settled. But, with the defeat of U.S. Steel, there could be a collective sigh of relief and renewed vigor in making sure plans were put into place that reflected the public interest and supported a more vibrant public realm.

The transfer brought the Port into a new environment by transforming it from an agency heavily influenced by external connections into an agency more a part of the local political, policy, and planning context. This change, combined with the defeat of

U.S. Steel, signaled both the end of the age of grand schemes and the waterfront's flirtation with modern ideals. Even as a local agency, though, the Port had to resolve its responsibilities under the Burton Act and had to plot a course for the future use of its land. This meant that the Port would, as a local agency, be in conflict with other local actors as it sought to tap into, or become a magnet for, outside investment. Now, however, the Port's struggle to revitalize its waterfront would have to respond to a thickening collection of policy and regulation, none of it of its own creation. The combination of activism and new land use controls and regulation that successfully staved off projects like Ferry Port Plaza and U.S. Steel would be a harbinger of what was to come for the next several decades.

Chapter 6: New Pressures - A Part of the Gang

This chapter describes the most important sources of local influence on the Port's activities, now a local agency, and how its beleaguered position attracted the attention of new stakeholders, particularly the Mayor, members of the Board of Supervisors, and a bevy of new citizen's groups. The Port's new status represented a shift in local conditions to which both local and top-down forces had to adjust; for the former, however, this shift provided new leverage, altering the nature of interactions between local and outside actors and agents. New players led to a new dynamic in the politics of planning that would substantially affect the both the Port and developers in their attempts to pursue commercial development of increasing moribund land in the northern waterfront. This begins the third stage in the evolution of planning policy and regulation. The chapter starts with a discussion of the Port's condition just after its transfer to the city. Its many troubles fueled local criticism and emphasized the need for a formal, policy-based vision for its future.

Agency on the Rocks

During the 1970s and 80s, the Port of Oakland moved along a trajectory of growth that would eventually make it the fourth busiest container port in the U.S.. Although San Francisco retrofitted Pier 80 to be able to handle containers in 1967, it was not converted into a major container terminal until 1976. San Francisco's

inability to compete with Oakland was by now unmistakable; it lost shipping lines and faced a severe reduction in the amount of cargo it handled.

Despite the decline in shipping, some Port commissioners, union officials, maritime businesses, and members of the public (individual citizens and some organizations) believed that new, modern facilities would reposition the Port as a primary cargo handler and that shipping in the northern waterfront should not be abandoned.[1] Some observers also felt that city control of the Port would actually weaken its competitive position in shipping rather than improve it, as was argued would be the case after the transfer. A grand jury appointed to oversee the transfer noted that in its first three years as a city agency, the Port "has found itself handcuffed in its efforts to regain the top position it formerly held among West Coast ports" because of local politics (SFC14 December 1972). It is unlikely, however, that the change in stewardship would have had much impact on the decline in shipping, given the reasons discussed in Chapter Three. Rather, as argued here, the most significant impact of local control of the Port was its affect on the ability of the Port to pursue reuse of land no longer needed for maritime activities and on the character of new development. So, even if there was still strong support for improving the Port's cargo-handling operations, it was apparent that most of the northern waterfront, not just a

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[1] The San Francisco Bay Guardian continued to argue naively that the Port was trying to dupe the public into supporting redevelopment plans, and that it was ignoring its own consultants when it suggested that shipping in the northern waterfront was not sustainable. The Bay Guardian never seemed to believe that the Port was pursing commercial projects in an effort to support shipping, and that decline in the northern waterfront was real.

few especially desirable locations, would be the subject of an intense debate over revitalization. Not only would the Port have to deal with a dim-looking future for its cargo-handling business just as it was being transferred to the city, but it would also have to pursue revitalization in an entirely different political and regulatory environment.

The decade or so after the transfer in 1969 was a difficult time for the Port in other ways. Reintegrating such a large landholding agency comprised of a myriad of economic and social functions was messy, especially because the Port was not going to be a typical city agency.[2] The details of the Burton Act had to be ironed out, rules and regulations institutionalized, and new administrative practices established. The 1970s were also tough for the Port at other, very basic levels. Its finances danced precariously close to the red line during most of the decade. Newly adopted City laws regarding conflict of interest resulted in the resignation of a number important figures, including several Port commissioners, and generated a number of investigations and inquiries, none of which helped the Port's already bruised image.[3] Moreover, the Port

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[2] As described in Chapter Two, the Port is a semi-independent agency. As pointed out, it makes every effort to be financially self-sustaining in order not to become beholden to the city. However, the Board of Supervisors approves its budget and leases over $1 million. Other aspects of its operations are subject to the approvals of various other agencies and governing bodies.

[3] New San Francisco conflict of interest laws led the city attorney to advise Port Commissioners Cyril Magnin and Michael Driscoll to step down from their posts, which they did in August 1974 (SFC 7 September 1974). A few years later, Mayor Moscone appointee Richard Goldman also resigned because his wife was a Haas family member. The Haas family controlled Levi-Strauss, which was building an office development across from Pier 27, a project that included several small parcels

went through five directors in fewer than ten years. Many of these difficulties were made worse by, or themselves actually intensified, the Port's often contentious struggle to develop its property, always, it argued, to support shipping and regain something of its former greatness.

With the Port's role as a shipping center dramatically reduced, and as portions of its northern waterfront fell into decay and disuse, the foremost question was 'what to do with the waterfront?' The question itself was not new, as we have seen; the difference now was that it was being asked in an entirely different context, by many public agencies and advocacy groups, each with different concerns and new ways to insert themselves into the process and to alter the Port's course. Answering the waterfront question focused most of the attention and debate on the northern waterfront. As will be shown in Chapter Eight, what comprised the northern waterfront began to creep south, to China Basin Channel. This is not to say that the central and southern waterfront areas were ignored. The port was certainly keenly interested in bolstering its shipping activities, and would initiate a number of significant programs in the 1970s and 1980s to improve and develop container and other maritime-industrial facilities. It was, however, the northern waterfront that was most in the minds of public advocates, city agencies, and port officials desperate for income. After all, it was the worn fabric of the northern waterfront that needed

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of Port land (SFC 16 November 1977).

stitching back to the city and that held the most promise in San Francisco's new stage of urban evolution as a service-sector and tourist-based city.

Despite its failures to date, and the negative effect previous development attempts had on its reputation, the Port was still under tremendous pressure (in part from the requirements of the Burton Act, as discussed earlier) to continue its pursuit of commercial development in the northern waterfront in order to support its struggling maritime activities. But as the failure of the U. S. Steel project revealed, now that the Port was a city agency and new players, BCDC in particular, were at the table, major development would be even more difficult to achieve. This was quite opposite the intended effect of local stewardship, few benefits of which seemed to materialize as far as the Port was concerned, either in terms of successful commercial developments or in the recapture of quickly dwindling maritime functions. The ensuing debate over policy and the struggle to influence land and water use affected not just the Port's goals for its property, but also the management and administration of the agency itself.

New Local Influences on the Port

There are five particularly important ways in which the Port's status as a city agency subjected it to new influences. All would affect the waterfront landscape either directly, for instance by restricting certain land uses, or indirectly, by introducing new political pressures to pursue certain goals. First, the Port's budget and administration came under close scrutiny. Second, the mayor became an important figure in the

Port's political constellation. Most importantly, the mayor was now responsible for appointing Port commissioners and confirming the commission's nominations for Port director, but his influence was also felt through special committees, one of which is described briefly, later.[4] Third, neighborhood associations, activist organizations, and special interest groups were made more influential because they could now more easily apply pressure on government agencies directly involved with the Port's activities, whether it be through hearings or through ballot-box activism. Indeed, the Port was now faced with a charged-up and vigilant public. The Port's transfer had the effect of empowering citizens, who were now dealing with a city agency that was responsible to the mayor and in some ways to the Board of Supervisors, and not to the state and its more removed, less accessible political mavens. Interested parties could also make use of a whole new set of tools in their attempts to alter or possibly halt projects. These tools were made available especially through the rapidly evolving planning process: compliance with general plan policies; historic preservation; protesting and appealing planning entitlements (for instance conditional use permits); and the environmental review process established by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Fourth, the Port's new 'sister' agencies, in particular the Planning Department and the Redevelopment Agency, found themselves in a position to try their hand at directly influencing the Port, especially through policies pertaining to land use and

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[4] The Board of Supervisors can decide to intervene in the mayor's selection of Port commissioners. Once it decides to takes such an action, a two-thirds vote is required to reject a nominee.

urban design. For example, as we began to see in the last chapter, Planning Department height limits became applicable to Port property, imposing new restraints on the physical parameters of the development of port land. More broadly, the General Plan's policy goals and objectives could also be related, if not applied directly, to the Port.[5] Fifth and finally, the Port was now subject to local ballot-box initiatives. The first three of these new sources of influence will be discussed in this chapter. The role of city agencies will be address in Chapter Seven, and the final point, which has proved to be of particular importance, will be addressed in Chapter Eight.

Financial Woes[6]

While the Port was able to maintain a positive balance in the 1971-1972 fiscal year despite a major longshoremen's strike (SFC 15 December 1972), most of the decade was financially touch and go.[7] In 1972, Mayor Alioto's Port Committee, established to evaluate the future potential for shipping and to recommend possible

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[5] The relationship between the Planning Department and the Port, regarding political and legal jurisdiction is even now a little unclear and continues to evolve. While the Port is subject to the Planning Code, it has argued that it is not subject to the General Plan. However, the code implements General Plan policy, leading some to argue that therefore the Port must also conform to the General Plan.

[6] It should be noted that the fiscal issues discussed here pertain to the Port's regular operating budget. One positive aspect of the transfer was that the Port could now ask San Francisco voters (as opposed to state-wide election) to approve general obligation bonds.

[7] The 135 day strike of 1971 shut down all of the West Coast's ports until a Taft-Hartley injunction was imposed (see Fitzgerald 1986).

development projects, testified that the Port would need subsidies to make up for the income it had hoped for but failed to receive from real estate ventures in the northern waterfront, all of which had so far been rejected (SFC 2 June 1972). In the same year, the San Francisco County Grand Jury, assigned to monitor the Port in the first years after the transfer, issued a statement warning of the Port's severe financial difficulties and their repercussions: "Unless corrective measures are adopted and implemented very quickly the maritime business that is slipping away from the grasp of the port will slip even faster and result in severe economic difficulties" (SFC 14 December 1972).

By the middle of the decade the Port's financial condition was nearly desperate. In 1974 Mayor Alioto called for a probe into the Port's financial problems, something the Board of Supervisors twice voted against.[8] Supervisors Kopp and Barbagelata, concerned that the Port had been handing out sweetheart leasing deals, had been particularly vocal in opposing any official probe, claiming that another inquiry would interfere with the grand jury's own investigation. The Board did, however, eventually ask the state for an audit of Port management. The state agreed, and State Auditor Harvey Rose (currently the city's auditor) issued a report at the end of the year. According to the Chronicle, Harvey Rose "...charged that the Port had consistently over-estimated its revenues and prepared 'unrealistic budgets' in a futile

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[8] Ironically, Altioto's connections to the Port were being called into question at the same time. The Alioto family was in the restaurant business in Fisherman's Wharf and the Mayor had interest in a firm bought by PFEL. PFELwas run by his son (see Chapter Three, p. 131). Furthermore, Altioto's law firm worked for shipping firms with connections to the Port and to Cyril Magnin (SFC 5 September 1974).

attempt to avoid city tax subsidies" (SFC 3 May 1975). As then interim Port Director Bernard Orsi commented, the report's conclusion that the Port was in serious financial difficulties was no surprise (SFC 5 December 1974). And indeed, in 1975 the Port Commission passed a budget that was $1.52 million in the red. However, a way was found to shuffle money around, allowing the Port to avoid dipping into the City's general fund (SFC 3 May 1975).

Earlier promises made by Mayor Alioto and Port Commissioner Cyril Magnin that the Port would be able to support itself seemed likely to be broken a year later, when the 1976 budget was short $2 million (SFC 22 January 1976). Funds were again reallocated, but even after such financial legerdemain, the balance remained in the black only because of an insurance settlement for Pier 37, which had earlier burned down. By 1977, recently elected Mayor George Moscone and the Port decided it would be worth repeating Mayor Alioto's earlier requests to the state to cancel the bond debt that was part of the transfer agreement. Nearly half of the Port's budget went to paying off the interest on $86 million in bonds, which it acquired as part of the conditions of the transfer (SFC 14 April 1977). Moscone's appeal in August 1977 was unsuccessful. While the state did eventually agree to stop taking a share of returns greater than $250,000, it never released the city from its bond debt obligations (SFPD 1997, 721).

The Port's financial problems were associated with several other factors. Naturally, some of the blame for the Port's poor financial position was placed the

Port's inability to implement real estate development projects, but there were also more direct causes. Not as much cargo was moving through the Port. The loss of several major shipping lines meant a reduction in freight handled, and therefore, a reduction in income from rents, wharfage fees, and related charges. In 1974, the Port suffered an especially big hit with the loss of American President Lines, at the time the Port's longest-standing tenant. APL had signed on as the primary tenant of the Port's new terminal at Pier 94, but its departure meant that the Port had no one to occupy its new facility. Instead of earning $3.5 million per year, the Port was accumulating debt service on the $30 million city bond passed by voters to build the facility. The Port attempted to get PFEL to lease the terminal, but they would not agree to the rent, which was just as well as the firm went out of business in 1978, sunk by the failed LASH concept (SFC 27 August 1977).

Budget problems were also blamed on the Port's failure to collect overdue rent and to increase rents on some of its properties, including the Ferry Building, when the opportunities presented themselves (SFC 27 November 1975; SFC 10 December 1976). This became something of a public embarrassment, and was noted in particular by the grand jury which noted the apparent lack of supervision of commercial leases. It also criticized the imbalance between the amount of money being invested in shipping facilities and the income it was receiving from its shipping tenants. Pier 80, for instance, was getting an $8 million upgrade but was not fully used (SFC 2 October 1974). Poor rent collection practices were still an issue several years later, causing

Port Director Tom Soules to acknowledge them publically, attributing the situation to bad management which created backlogs in the accounting department. Soules, not one to miss an opportunity to comment on the way things worked at the Port, explained that there was a lot of pressure for the Port to use a "light touch" when big clients could just move across the Bay (SFC 17 December 1976).

At one point, PFEL owed the Port nearly $2 million dollars in back rent. It was a time of "dead beat tenants," as one Chronicle article referred to the various businesses that were in arrears (SFC 12 December 1976). In 1979, the Port Director, Edward L. David, could finally announce a profitable year, saying that the failure of PFEL and States Steamship Company allowed the Port to find new, healthy firms (Lykes Brothers, American Flag Line, and Taiwan-based Evergreen) to which they could lease their facilities, including Pier 94 (SFC 7 December 1979).

Financial difficulties, accusations of mismanagement, conflicts of interest, the probes and investigations generated thereby, and the new involvement of the mayor in the Port's activities created at best an unsettled atmosphere in the upper echelons of the Port's administration. One result was an unusual instability in the office of the director. Several anecdotes reveal the particularly contentious air that surrounded the Port during most of the decade, and into the mid 1980s.[9]

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[9] This discussion focuses on the directorship, but much of the same friction and uncertainty could also be found in the Port Commission chambers. Even members of Mayor Moscone's commission, a commission comprised largely of his own appointees, found themselves at opposites sides of the table. For instance, insurance executive and Citizens Waterfront Committee member Richard Goldman, appointed by Moscone in 1976, envisioned development from Fisherman's Wharf to the Bay

Directors Adrift

In 1972, Supervisor Quentin Kopp, later a state assemblyman, highlighted a conclusion made by the a grand jury that bad management was a main cause for the Port's decline and precarious financial situation. To him, this was an indication that Director Miriam Wolff should resign (SFC 14 December 1972). About a year later, Director Wolff would indeed find herself on the outs. A staunch supporter of LASH technology and someone generally more interested in the Port's maritime functions than in real estate, Wolff was also known for her brash personality, a characteristic that openned her to scapegoating when city officials decide that it was time to replace her (Fitzgerald 1986).[10] Her stance put her at somewhat at odds with Mayor Alioto and Cyril Magnin, both of whom favored concerted efforts to pursue commercial ventures. That the Port's position only worsened during her tenure, and that the few commercial proposals of consequence that came past her desk failed to go anywhere, in particular Ferry Port Plaza and U.S. Steel, did not help her cause. She "left under pressure from city officials disenchanted with her work," as the Chronicle put it (SFC 22 August1974).

Bridge - but development "with dignity"(SFC 29 December 1976). His opinion about development was quite different from that of his fellow Commissioner Morrison, also a Moscone appointee, who was concerned primarily with resuscitating the Port's maritime activities, and not with pursing real estate ventures.

[10] Wolff was vocal her support of the U. S. Steel proposal because it meant money for developing the Port's maritime businesses.

Wolff was replaced in the interim first by Edward L. David (who would later become director under Mayor George Moscone) and then by Bernard Osri, a close political ally to Mayor Alioto. Osri took over the position until his permanent replacement was found.[11] This was Tom Soules, who in turn would find himself in political hot water. Soules, a port director from Boston, was nominated by the Port Commission and confirmed by Alioto in January 1975 (SFC 16 January 1975). Soules was hired because, in his own words and referring to Osri, "I came here because the people of San Francisco, through the press, rebelled at having a political toady run this port" (SFC 20 November 1977) . That Soules got the job made some of the more development-minded people happy because of his work in Boston, which was considered an example of successful waterfront development. The hope was that he would be able to do something similar in San Francisco (SFC 4 December 1974; SFC 16 January 1975).

Soules, whose interests were actually oriented towards improving traditional maritime activities, had a different view of his purpose. His anti-development stance, quite untenable given the political and practical realties facing the Port, was based on a vision of the working waterfront, and he openly voiced his scepticism: "There are

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[11] As an indication of how politically charged things were, Alioto's choice of Osri, his former campaign manager (for an unsuccessful campaign for governor), raised not a few eyebrows, and was even covered in the press. In making his selection, Alioto passed over H. Boyce Luckett, who was supported by many people in the shipping business. It was eventually revealed that Luckett's name was removed from consideration because he was vice president of PFEL, raising conflict-of-interest issues (SFC 22 August 1974) .

people that want the Port's real estate so they can get rid of the railroad tracks, the hustle-bustle of business on the piers, just so they can have clear views" (SFC 16 November 1977). He also remarked that no port in the world could survive if it became a political football. Soules made things even more difficult for himself by contesting requests for leases made by politically connected prospects (SFC 16 November 1977). This, and his rather gruff, impolitic approach put him on the wrong side of Moscone, who was elected during his third year as director.

Unfortunately for Soules, Moscone also gained control of the Port Commission through several key appointments; the only appointee left from Alioto's administration was labor leader Harry Bridges. In 1977, Soules was asked to step down by Moscone and two of Moscone's main allies on the commission - Jack Morrison and James J. Rudden. Soules fought to keep his post, but was fired by the commission, who claimed that he was "a poor administrator who was unable to revive the long-dormant waterfront and unwilling to take advice" (SFC 16 November 1977). The day he was given his notice, Soules remarked "The mayor and the commission think they can give the public the illusion that they are fighting for shipping. But that's what I've always done, not them" (SFC 16 November 1977). With Soules out, Moscone and his Port Commission were free to select a director who would support their vision for the waterfront.[12] The Mayor approved the Commission's selection of Edward L. David,

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[12] Nevertheless, quite a lot was done under Soules' watch, including the removal of old piers and substantial work towards a new terminal in the southern waterfront. Somewhat ironically, it was under his watch that the massive retail project at Pier 39 was initiated (SFC 24 October 1977).

a long time employee of the port. Sadly, Mayor Moscone's assassination made their relationship a short one.

The primary observation to be made from the preceding discussion is that the Port's new status as a city agency placed it in an entirely new political, administrative, and managerial realm because the Port had become more directly important to local politicians. Mayors recognized that the fortunes of the Port would have significant consequences for their administrations. This meant that the Port directors would have to deal with the pressure to respond to mayoral imperatives. The Port's budget problems were particularly unfortunate because it was expected that the transfer was going to line the city's collective pocket. Instead, financial problems placed the Port under intense public scrutiny, particularly when it became known that it could not even collect the rent. This attention only served to charge further the political atmosphere around the Port because politicians now had to deal with the possibility that this new agency might not be able to maintain its self-sufficiency. Alioto, Moscone, and their successors recognized the potential impacts of the Port's success or failure on their administrations. Tapping into the city's general funds to bail out the Port, although potentially a practical necessity, would not have been attractive.

That the mayor, and to a lesser degree the Board of Supervisors, were now playing direct roles in how the Port functioned did not make it easier for the Port to establish policy regarding the use of its land, and generally its future as an agency. The struggle to establish consistency between the Mayor's and director's vision for the

Port (and often the commission's) resulted in turnover at the director's level, which helped to stymie the Port's ability to firmly establish, let alone pursue consistently, a set of goals and priorities. One result was that the question of how to strike a balance between commercial development and maritime industry was a major point of contention, both within the agency and among those who would influence its course. This was both reflected in and perpetuated by the lack of a body of coherent policy, particularly in the form of a planning policy document for the Port, that could provide general guidance and some structure for decision-making. The result was another source of delay in revitalizing the northern waterfront and a contribution to the further decline that would begin to find its way to the Port's southern waterfront, despite several projects undertaken to modernize its facilities.

A Piece Of The Action: Citizen's Groups and Official Committees

Public concern over the issues generated by the U. S. Steel project did not die with its defeat in 1971. To the contrary, the whole affair was so unsettling to those concerned about the Port and the waterfront that it helped to galvanize activists to create at least two citizen's committees and drew the attention of the fairly young San Francisco Tomorrow, an advocacy group that continues to thrive. Encouraged by their role in the creation of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission and the subsequent defeat of U. S. Steel, groups such as San Francisco Tomorrow, the Bay Area chapter of the Sierra Club and neighborhood organizations including the

Telegraph Hill Dwellers Association and the Potrero Hill Residents and Homeowners Association began to advocate more broadly for public access to the waterfront and for more publicly-minded development.

Indeed, everyone who had a stake or interest in the Port, including environmental activists, neighborhood groups, business organizations, the Mayor's office, and even BCDC itself seemed to form special Port-related committees or put waterfront issues on their agendas. Each group had somewhat different concerns and purposes, but all saw advantage in the city's new stewardship of the Port, which made the new agency responsible not just to other city agencies and the Mayor, but to these committees and advisory groups as well. In particular, savvy neighborhood and advocacy groups could influence the tenor and often the nature of the debate over what to do with the waterfront through their involvement in the local political process, something they had been a part of for a long time and knew intimately. Now, however, there were political, administrative, and legislative means to influence both waterfront-related policy and specific decisions about development. They could become engaged in the growing role of planning and policy formulation, and participate with realistic hopes of affecting the process and ultimately the physical form of the waterfront. Not only was the public influencing the content of planning documents, but it could then use the policies to evaluate and even contest development considered inappropriate. The struggle over the future of the waterfront had finally been brought to familiar turf. San Francisco had begun cutting its activist teeth in the

1950s during the freeway revolt and sharpened them in fights over redevelopment and the "mad rush to the sky," albeit, a number of battles were unsuccessful (Brugmann and Slettleland 1971). So, as the Port was brought into the sphere of influence of a city reeling towards visions of cleansing city renewal and a downtown of corporate glory reaching skyward, it was also facing an experienced public. The subsequent discussion will describe, briefly, the interests of a few of the most influential of these citizens advisory committees.

Unhappy with the U.S. Steel proposal and the actions of the Port Commission, Board of Supervisors member Roger Boas and Planning Commissioner Mortimer Fleishacker, Jr. formed a small private committee sometime around 1970 and commissioned a study of the Port. The report concluded that revenue generated by commercial development would not be sufficient to pay for needed modernization. So, in addition to coming out against both the U.S. Steel project and a proposal for a new passenger terminal, the "citizen's group," as the Fleishacker-Boas committee was referred to by the San Francisco Chronicle, advised Mayor Alioto that the Port had better build a new container terminal at Islais Creek if it was to have any hope of staving off the demise of San Francisco as a major shipping port. In a letter to Mayor Alioto, Boas and Fleishacker wrote "instead of turning to real estate development, the Port should turn to the city for financial support," something that the Port was loath to do (SFC 12 November 1970) . Responding to the advice to modernize, which fairly closely followed their own evaluations, the Port Commission did in fact pursue

projects to upgrade their cargo operations. With the successful passage of a 1971 $34 million bond measure, secured by pre-arranged leasing agreements to fund the project, the Port was able to avoid financial dependence on the city and initiate the construction of a new terminal at Pier 94 at Islais Creek.

The goals of the Boas and Fleishacker committee were quite different from those of the more truly citizen-based group of the 1970s, the very active Citizen's Waterfront Committee (CWC). The Fleishacker-Boas committee was interested in supporting and continuing the Port's maritime functions while, as will be seen below, the CWC's interest was in saving the Bay from further fill, and getting the Port to come up with a long range plan that would ensure public benefit from shoreline uses. The CWC was an umbrella group formed late in 1970 largely in response to the U. S. Steel and Ferry Port Plaza projects.

Richard N. Goldman, the CWC's chairman, heavily criticized the Port saying "we look forward to an orderly development of the waterfront to which the community can point with pride rather than disdain" (SFC 12 November 1970). The CWC, which maintained

Figure 60 Development concept for Piers 31-33. Source: San Francisco Citizens Waterfront Committee/ Livingston and Blayney *What to Do About the Waterfront* 1971.

deep suspicion of the Port's claim that it needed commercial development to support cargo and other maritime operations, unveiled its own plan for the northern waterfront, which concentrated on providing open space and commercial recreation (shopping and entertainment, for instance). The CWC also claimed that the plan would address what to do with land no longer needed by the Port for maritime use at no cost to taxpayers. Lawrence Livingston, Jr., primary author of the CWC plan, also argued that the third of the Port's land not needed for maritime operations could be leased for private development that could pay for public access for the other the two- thirds, most of which was in the northern waterfront (SFC 23 September 1971). Their proposals included building an elevator and funicular system at Telegraph Hill and turning Pier 33 into a 'maritime park' and restaurant. Their vision for the Ferry Building area would have pulled the shoreline back away from the terminal itself, making it an island which, theoretically, would have provided access to the bay for hundreds of thousands of people (Livingston and Blayney

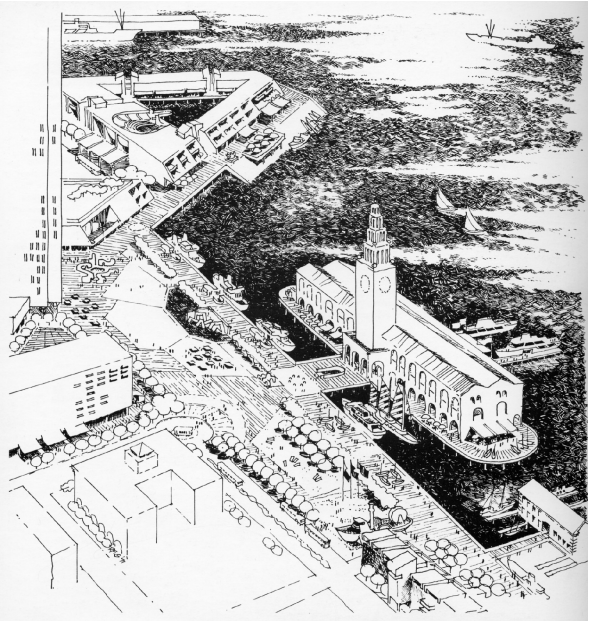

Figure 61 Development concept for part of the Ferry Building area. Source: San Francisco Citizens Waterfront Committee/Livingston and Blayney *What to Do About the Waterfront* 1971.

1971).[13] Not surprisingly, the CWC's particular proposals were not implemented, though their general call for open space and public recreation did indeed resonate, and while not necessarily realistic, some of their suggestions for funding more modest projects (HUD grants, for instance) were pursued.

Goldman and the CWC, working with San Francisco Tomorrow and a group of planners and architects, spearheaded another plan for the Ferry Building area, this time with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Called 'Embarcadero Gardens,' (or sometimes Tivoli Gardens) the 1973 proposal called for converting the area between Piers 7 and 24 into a place of "floating restaurants, a carousel, a show boat, an esplanade for strolling lovers...fountains, boutiques, and picnic facilities 'all with a maritime flavor'" (SFC 10 April 1973). The CWC's concept was supposedly modeled after the Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen and the Piazza San Marco in Venice. Unlike those places, it also included an amusement area, a boardwalk of theaters, galleries, bars, berths for 150 boats and, inland, space for offices. In its scope it harkened back to some of the 'grand plans' of earlier decades, but its focus was quite different; that is, it was geared primarily to bringing people out to the water, and its uses were envisioned as attractions to residents of San Francisco, not just tourists or downtown workers. Indeed, half of the area was to be dedicated to open space. The

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[13] The main author of the CWC report, Lawrence Livingston was influenced by Christopher Tunnard from whose *Taming Megalopois* he quoted: "Our urban waterfronts can be treated as a new resource for the economy of leisure. But there must be safeguards, or they will be despoiled all over again in the very name of the public..." (quoted in Livingson and Blayney 1971, p.8).

CWC envisioned structures which jutted out over the water, removing activities from the freeway's imposing presence (SFC 2 February 1974). The project had the support of Cyril Magnin, the Port Commission, BCDC, SPUR, the Telegraph Hill Dwellers, and Mayor Alioto's Port Committee (mentioned above) - just about all of the major players at the time. And although Goldman asserted that the project would not need money from the city, and the CWC's economic consultants projected a fairly substantial revenue, the project did not materialize (SFC 10 April 1973).[14] What it did do, however, was to force the Port to engage seriously with the proposal, and it helped to create more widely-held public expectations about what might be done with that particular stretch of the waterfront.

As we will see in the next chapter, planning documents for the waterfront would reflect the new priorities. And even though the Embarcadero Gardens was not to be, it was important in that, as CWC's planning consultant George Rockrise commented, "'a remarkable feature of the plan' is that for the first time a civic group, the Citizens' Waterfront Committee that commissioned the Gardens, has made a 'truly positive contribution to a development project'" (SFC 7 February 1974). While activists were not successful in getting their development proposals implemented or forcing immediate change in planning policy, their involvement did buy them a place

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[14] Why this is the case is a little unclear. Most likely is that it would have been difficult to pay for. Advocates from S.F. Tomorrow later claimed that business interests allied with Mayor Alioto were trying to keep the area for their own development ideas (PSF 1975). Furthermore, even though it was a 'benign' proposal, it would likely have run into difficulty with BCDC restrictions to do with building over the water.

at the new table and thus another opportunity to voice concerns and influence policy - as would be reflected later in the Planning Department's *Northern Waterfront Plan* and the BCDC's *Special Area Plan* discussed in the next chapter.[15]

For example, when Mayor Alioto, frustrated by the Port's decline and not provided with an agreed-upon strategy for its revival, decided to form a special citizen's committee in 1971 to evaluate its long range, economic development, Richard Goldman, chair of the CWC, was chosen as one of the 13 members (SFC 15 March 1972).[16] The Mayor's Port Committee was formed in 1972. Its charge was to "satisfy both economic and esthetic considerations in proposing future uses of the city's Northern Waterfront" (SFC 12 May 1972). The creation of this committee, and its diverse membership, clearly signaled the influence that activists and neighborhood groups concerned with the environment and public access now had in shaping the debate over the waterfront.[17] In his statement to the new committee, Mayor Alioto admitted that the Port's northern waterfront could support much more public use:

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[15] Concurrent planning efforts also forestalled the proposal; indeed, many ideas were held in abeyance (often until they evaporated) until BCDC completed its *Special Area Plan*.

[16] Goldman would later become a Port Commissioner. After being forced to step down (and see note 3, p. 230), he was appointed to the Northeastern Waterfront Advisory Committee, an influential group formed as part of the multi-agency planning effort for the Northeastern Waterfront Survey, described later.

[17] The committee included representatives from: the Planning Commission, the Board of Supervisors, BCDC, SPUR, advocacy groups, labor, and private business.

> Right now...the people cannot get to the bay. In times of the ferry boats, everyone had a consciousness of the water...(now *sic*) we simply have no physical or visual contact with the bay. Right now, what you have is a slum. (SFC 12 May 1972)

The committee itself concluded that "subsidization of the maritime activities of the Port by income from its non-maritime properties should not be allowed to lead to poor exploitation of the non-maritime properties" (Mayor's Port Committee 1972, 9). The mayor's committee began its work with the notion that the Port's cargo operations might no longer be important to San Francisco, but ended by concluding that in fact these activities were very important to the city. This led the committee to warn that unless the Port overhauled its facilities, it would not be able to compete with other West Coat ports (Mayor's Port Committee 1972).

Alioto also created a committee to prevent Fisherman's Wharf from becoming a "plastic Disneyland" and to preserve the "original spirit of Fisherman's Wharf," an unsurprising move given his family's restaurant business and the many friends and political connections he had in and with the Wharf. His particular concerns were Piers 45 and 47, then used for storing newsprint (not what the mayor considered the highest and best use), improvement of conditions for the fishing fleet, and the creation of a promenade from the Wharf to the Ferry Building (SFC 22 May 193). Unfortunately, he and the committee were unable to prevent the production of a space of intense consumption in the Wharf (a characteristic to be addressed briefly in Chapter 8). However, ideas very similar to Alioto's would be implemented as part of more

contemporary changes to the waterfront. And in fact, some of these improvements have helped to remove at least a little of the plastic, Disney-like quality that has characterized much of Fisherman's Wharf. The committee eventually decided that its focus should be on restoring the fishing fleet, and in that regard, securing long-term leases for fishing and related businesses was critical.

Three final observations should be made with regard to the proliferation of citizen's advisory groups. First, their support for improved shoreline open space, access to the water, and generally skeptical feelings about office and commercial development was difficult for the Port, because to provide such public benefit is expensive, usually requiring substantial, high-rent development to support it. By the mid-1970s, state and federal subsidies and grants were typically very hard to come by. If the income from the commercial 'economic engine' of a project is diverted to providing recreation and public open space, then that income will not likely be available to support commercial maritime uses - the Port's main impetus for developing its real estate.

Second, the development dynamic was now much more complex. As more groups became involved, more voices were added to an already large chorus. In later years, differing opinions about what should happen on the waterfront, and even how particular projects should be configured, would help to delay the development of plans and even to kill development proposals. There was, and still is, an irony at work - planning documents were intended to help make decisions about how and where

development should occur, but the plans, and the processes of developing them, came to include and empower many voices, which often resulted in a miasma of debate and fractured purposes. Even in the 1980s, when planning for the Embarcadero Roadway in the northern waterfront was underway, decisions were hard to come by, and progress slowed by contention over even small detail.[18]

Third and finally, citizen advisory committees convened by public agencies to participate in setting goals for policy documents and redevelopment plans were created by a selection process, not an election process. So, a small handful of people represented the wider community and the community itself did not necessarily select its participants. Furthermore, certain people were selected repeatedly to serve on different groups (a practice that continues), reducing the depth of representation that the term CAC implies. Thus, while CACs helps make public planning process more manageable and focused, they tend to empower individuals with strong personalities and those who have the will to be involved, and who may not in fact share the concerns of the majority of the community.

SUMMARY

The 1970s and early 1980s found the Port on the defensive. It had administrative difficulties, it lost shipping lines, American Pacific Lines and the LASH technology it adopted both failed, it had all but lost the fight for container

[18] Conversation with Diane Oshima, Port Planner, 14 December 2001.

cargo, and its attempts at commercial development were dazzling failures. Publicity was not favorable. This made the Port's absorption into San Francisco's body politic a difficult process. Even so, the Port's new political context deeply influenced the planning process that would become a critical factor in the waterfront's evolution. A diverse and vocal group of stakeholders would influence public agencies as they began to plan feverishly for the embattled Port's future. Yet, as Chapters Five and Six have demonstrated, bottom-up or local forces have many voices; it's a chorus whose members change, and in which some voices may be louder at times than others. Local actors and agents that comprise bottom-up forces may compete with one another, and may switch positions depending on circumstances. This underscores the complex nature of interactions among agents and agencies that, while they affect the landscape, do so in ways not necessarily apparent in the built environment.

The next chapter turns to a discussion of some of the most important planning documents to evolve during the 1970s and early 1980s. These plans were creations of agencies that took on the responsibility for establishing the vision of what the waterfront should and could be. With the exception of the Port, these agencies had the tools to frame this vision and, in some instances, to implement it. They were also a response to demands from the public and therefore reflected public interest, which increased the power of local agencies and actors to exert influence on the landscape from the bottom-up. These plans, along with an active and knowledgeable citizenry,

represent a solidification of local power, denoting the third stage in the evolution of policy, regulation, and their affect on the transformation of the waterfront.

Chapter 7: A Consciousness of the Water - the Continuing Evolution of Plans and Policies

Interest in and concern about the character of the waterfront was generated not just by the nature of previous proposals for development, but by the awareness of larger pressures bearing down on San Francisco. However local actors and agencies, because of their new ability to influence the Port, could more directly respond to top-down forces. This chapter describes several of the external pressures that continued to affect San Francisco and its Port during the 1970s and 1980s. The bulk of the discussion then describes the new aspects of local power represented in planning documents. So, the third stage in the relationship between planning and waterfront transformation is characterized both by the Port's status as a local agency, as addressed in the last chapter, and by the accumulation of land use policy and regulation (and, as we shall see, general design) that restricted the potential for redeveloping Port land and affected its general character.

Another Cycle of Top-down Forces

First, by the end of the 1970s, containerized cargo had become the standard method for moving most goods (see Chapters Three and Five). The switch to containerization made the northern waterfront useless for non-bulk cargo operations, emphasizing its potential for revitalization to potential investors. This dovetailed with the second top-down force affecting the Port - San Francisco's continued

transformation into a post-industrial city. Between 1970 and 1990 the number of employees in the city grew from 401,863 to 520,059, an increase of 118,196 employees or 29.4%.[1] The FIRE sector (finance, insurance, and real estate) itself grew by 110,758, more than doubling. Togther, the retail, service, and FIRE, sectors grew from accounting for 55% of the city's employment to 71%. These same sectors added 9,402 establishments - 84% of the city's total increase in businesses. Table Five compares employment change in six major economic sectors. Such growth continued to put pressure on the downtown and nearby Union Square shopping district to expand. So, while part of the city's economic growth could be met by vertical expansion, it also spread horizontally, especially office development, which spread into the South of Market area adjacent to the downtown core. Between 1965 and

San Francisco Employment for Selected 2-Digit SICs, 1970 and 1990				
	1970	1990	Difference	% Change
Manufacturing	58,911	36,351	**-22,560**	**-38%**
Transportation and Utilities	53,015	40,690	**-12,325**	**-23%**
Wholesale	43,163	29,937	**-13,226**	**-30%**
Retail	58,229	83,503	25,204	43%
Services	65,574	79,987	14,413	22%
FIRE	97,211	207,969	110,758	139%

Table 5 Source: U.S. Census, County Business Patterns

[1] According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census' *County Business Patterns*.

1983, office space in San Francisco's downtown doubled, adding 36 million square feet (SFPD 1983). During the 1970s, the city's annual economic growth rate of more than 3.5 percent exceeded the national average and the 1980s saw a decline in unemployment (PSF 1988/9). These figures are indicators of what many urbanists have identified as contemporary global capital working to reform cities, especially their downtowns, as transnational and multinational corporations seek to diversify investment through real estate and to establish nodes in the global financial and information network; essentially, real estate has been integrated into global capital markets.[2]

The northern waterfront, especially in the area between the Bay Bridge and the Ferry Building, was still considered some of the most valuable land in United States and under different circumstances, it is argued here, would have been developed in a response to market demand. Its value derived from its dramatic character, its accessibility by transit (San Francisco planners point out that "downtown was built on the back of transit," and could not function otherwise), and its potential as a 'natural' extension of downtown. That value, however, would never be taken advantage of because of the restrictions placed upon development established by the plans discussed in this chapter.

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[2] As discussed by Logan (1993), though he points out that process of doing business in globalized real estate actually relies on local actors with local knowledge and connections, which reduces the power of global forces to alter landscapes on their own.

Another top-down force affecting cities during the 1970s and 1980s was a shift in federal funding for urban development and redevelopment from direct grants to programs such as the Urban Development Action Grants (UDAG) that required the inclusion of private funding. The Reagan administration perpetuated the emphasis on de-federalizing urban programs, which resulted in increasing privatization as both a factor in and result of urban redevelopment (for instance helping to generate an era of "public-private partnerships"). The evidence of this change in the character of urban space can be seen literally in the streets of downtown San Francisco, where placards embedded in some sidewalks announce that the right to pass is granted by the building's owner. It is also seen in the nature of open space provision. San Francisco requires open space for new major new downtown construction, but it is often incorporated into roof top areas, making it not really accessible to people except those who know about then. At the street level, there are many examples of open spaces that have features that degrade the public realm: they are designed defensively, are not well connected, or their insufficient size makes them unsuitable for public gatherings. As will be seen in Chapter Nine, one of the successes of contemporary waterfront development, made possible through land use policy, urban design standards, and regulation, has been the inclusion of significant public open space and access (although naturally there has been debate over the particulars of design).

A look at plans, the policies they established, and the context from which they arose helps to make clear the role they have played and continue to play in countering

top-down forces that sought to invest in San Francisco's urban waterfront, ostensibly to revitalize it, with little consideration for public needs, in terms of land use or urban design. It is these plans and regulations that most directly answered the question of "what to do with the waterfront?" To this end, this chapter will discuss the most important planning documents pertaining to the Port, in particular its northern waterfront, produced by the San Francisco Planning Department, the Redevelopment Agency, and BCDC, presented in roughly chronological order.[3] Land use policy and regulation are not clearly apparent in or easily read from the waterfront one sees today, but they are integral to the process which creates it and are therefore an essential part of the landscape. They are also preeminently local in nature.

WINDS OF CHANGE: NEW PLANNING POLICY DOCUMENTS

> I think it's a pitiful situation that exists here - there is no policy, no plan. It's a sorry sick situation.
>
> - Port Commissioner Byron Arnold (SFC 11 December 1974)[4]

> The importance of the waterfront to the total community is recognized through the planning procedures which have been adopted. (PSF 1989/89, 4)

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[3] It is not possible to cover every plan produced during this time in. Among those omitted or discussed only cursorily are the *South Bayshore Plan*, an 'area plan' of the General Plan, and the *San Francisco Bay Area Seaport Plan*, a regional plan adopted by the Metropolitan Transportation Committee and BCDC in 1982.

[4] Arnold was expressing frustration in response to staff frustration at the seeming inability of the Port to make decisions, in this instance, resulting in the loss of an opportunity to win cargo away from Oakland.

While the Port adjusted to its new circumstances, the Planning Department, the Redevelopment Agency, and BCDC embarked on intensive planning efforts that would fundamentally affect the ability of the Port to dispose of its property. These plans would determine where the Port could pursue what activities and describe what general requirements it had to meet when it did pursue development. The evolution of the planning and regulatory environment took the Port full swing from an open field to a tangled jungle of policy. The Port's position was not helped by the lack of its own solid vision for its future, particularly with regard to land use. In fact, the Port did not even have a professional planner on its staff before 1982 (San Francisco Business Times August 1987).

Policies in the plans that were published and updated during the 1970s and 1980s generally favored protection of existing maritime uses and supported shipping. For the purposes of this discussion, then, their most important focus was on those Port land areas no longer used or needed for maritime use, most of which were in the northern waterfront. Ironically, even though the Port was unlike other City agencies in that it was semi-autonomous, it would have only limited control over its own fate - at least as far as non-maritime activities were concerned. The best the Port could do was to participate in the various planning efforts, continue to maintain its facilities, try to improve its maritime business, especially shipping, and, as will be seen in the next chapter, pursue more modest development projects in an effort to meet the increasingly restrictive sets of conditions placed on it.

The northern waterfront had been transformed by years of decline and neglect; few piers were in active use and by the late 1970s many were abandoned or falling apart. As it was often described, much of the waterfront north of China Basin Channel was becoming blighted. Given the Port's history of proposals for monumental projects that showed little consideration for existing urban form, that all but ignored the public realm, and that treated the Bay as potential landfill, conservationists, activists, and public agencies recognized that to make the most of the opportunities presented by disused Port property, plans for revitalization that reflected their concerns had to be formulated.

The Planning Department's Revised Northern Waterfront Plan

The Planning Department acted first with amendments to the *Northern Waterfront Plan* (*NWP*) in 1971.[5] The essential policies were not significantly altered; it retained objectives and policies pertaining to land use, transportation and urban design for the waterfront and land side areas within its boundaries, but it did not include a section on implementation. It also remained rooted in John Bolles' 1968 work, much to the consternation of environmentalists, who were unhappy that policies

[5] As mentioned in Chapter Two, the *General Plan* contains "area plans,"one of which is the *Northern Waterfront Plan*, and "elements," which contain goals and policies arranged by subject matter, such as housing and transportation, that are citywide in application. While area plans are more targeted and specific in nature, the goals and policies therein are based on goals and policies in the elements; policies from the elements not refined or incorporated in an area plan may still be applicable to development in the particular area covered.

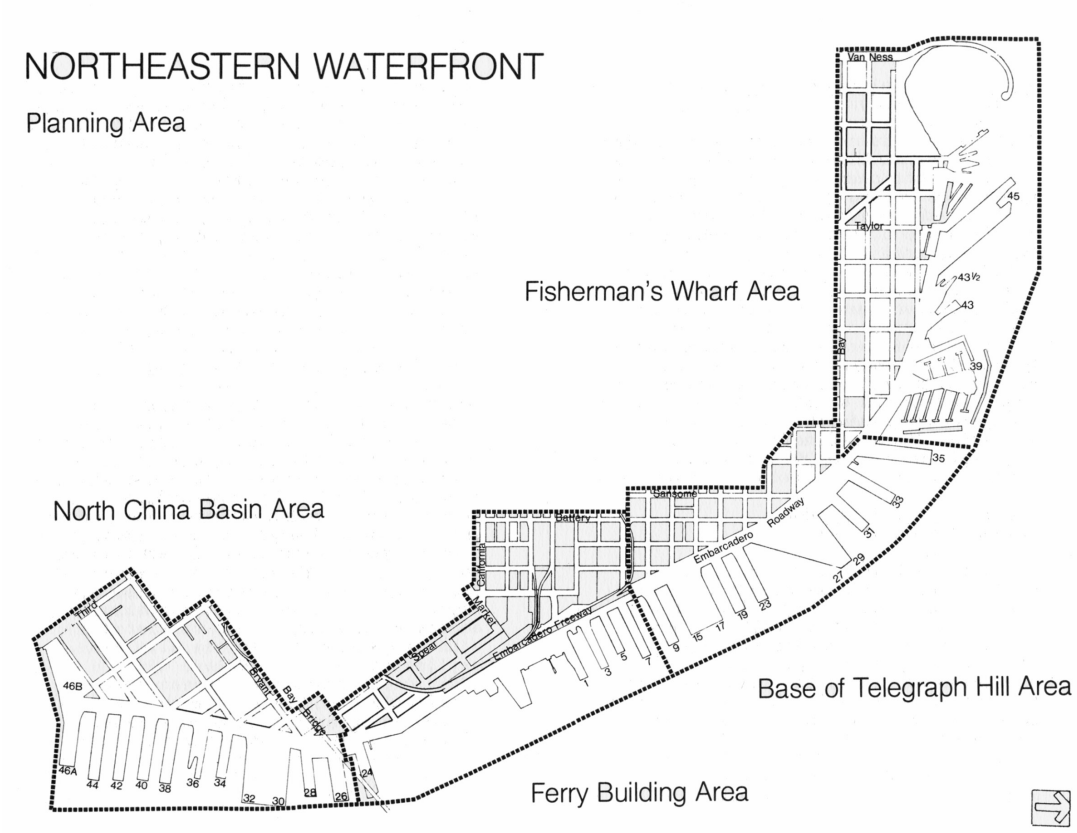

Figure 62 1980 Northeastern Waterfront Plan area; the boundary is very similar those in earlier versions of the plan. Source: San Francisco Planning Department *Northeastern Waterfront Plan* 1980.

for expanding commercial development over the water were retained. At the time, the City was suing BCDC with the hope that it would be able to maintain complete control of the nature of waterfront development.[6] The suit did not succeed (as mentioned

[6] Planning Director Allan B. Jacobs was at odds with BCDC because its staff was making decisions that were not supportive of the Planning Department's newly amended 1971 NWP. He was particularly incensed that housing would not be allowed, a battle he fought later, too, in 1974 (mentioned in Chapter Six) on the eve of the adoption of BCDC's *Special Area Plan*. That BCDC limited housing and office development to private waterfront land was a point of frustration. Such a restriction

earlier), but to activists like Richard Gryziec of San Francisco Tomorrow it appeared that such legal action and the 'weak' *Northern Waterfront Plan* were part and parcel of the City's attempt to foster the commercialization of Port property and nearby land, not sufficiently recognizing the waterfront as a unique natural resource. On the other hand, with changes to its plan and related implementation through additions to the Planning Code, it probably looked to the Port as if the Planing Department was in fact trying to expand its purview - not an unwarranted interpretation.

The purpose of the *Northern Waterfront Plan* was to "...guide the future development in all areas on and contiguous to the harbor in a manner consistent with the interests of San Francisco" (SFPD 1971, 3). These interests were narrowly defined, as many critics vocally argued, and with the advent of BCDC's plans for the San Francisco waterfront, the plan was in need of updating. In fact, the next set of amendments to the *Northern Waterfront Plan*, adopted six years later in 1977 and which changed its title to the *Northeastern Waterfront Plan*, were conceived largely to bring it into conformity with BCDC's 1975 *Special Area Plan* (discussed below), which itself was simultaneously amended "to ensure congruency with the City's plan" (BCDC 1980, ii). Perhaps most importantly, the *Northeastern Waterfront Plan (NEWP)* was amended to reflect BCDC's prohibition of office and housing on fill.[7] The 1977 version was much more attentive to the public's interest, especially with

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was tantamount to banning those uses on the waterfront because almost all of San Francisco's waterfront was and is publically owned.

[7] Technically, BCDC authority to restrict uses is limited to Bay fill.

regard to access to the waterfront, sensible transit, and promoting a coherent urban design framework for the area.[8] It also more carefully focused visions for commercial development, especially by removing ideas of building the city out over the water, thus excising much of Bolles' earlier work.

An important cause for these changes in the plan was the input of a Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) which included what was fast becoming a familiar cast of characters, including William D. Evers (who had left BCDC and now represented SPUR), Supervisor Dianne Feinstein, James Herman (ILWU), Richard Goldman (CWC), and Jean Kortum (San Francisco Tomorrow).[9] The plan actually acknowledged the shifting priorities:

> The San Francisco community, in general, has changed its interests and desires for the Northern Waterfront such that significant concerns for preserving maritime uses, creating open space and controlling traffic have been expressed

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[8] Here, "the public's interest" is a reference to both what members of the public said was important and to the general benefit of the polity.

[9] It should be noted that such committees were not required. Rather, they reflected the influence of neighborhood activists and advocacy groups. They have no legal authority but are important because they can lend legitimacy to the planning process, especially by ensuring that it does not occur "behind closed doors." As noted in Chapter Six, one limitation, however, is the choice of members, who tend to be from a partially self-selected group of people who are interested and active in planning issues. The Redevelopment Agency, on the other hand, is required to create a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) when establishing a redevelopment area. Naturally, the role and tenure of PACs, CACs, and similar groups varies based on many factors. Note also that the advisory committee for the 1977 *NEWP* was similar in composition to the WAC and the Northewastern Waterfront Advisory Committee (discussed below), making committee members a rather incestuous group. In a similar vein, the same consultants are hired for many different projects. For instance, the Port and Boris Dramoff of the design form ROMA have had a decades-long relationship.

> since the adoption of the existing Northern Waterfront Plan. These concerns are reflected throughout the Objectives and Policies of this Plan for the Northeastern Waterfront. (SFPD 1977, v.)

These new priorities resulted in a plan with intentions quite different from the visions of massive development proffered not so long before:

> The overall goal of the Plan is to create a physical and economic environment in the Northeastern Waterfront area which will use the area's resources and potential in the manner which will best serve the needs of the San Francisco community...the dominant planning principles...are: (1) provide for those uses which positively contribute to the environmental quality of the area and contribute to the economic health of the Port and the city, (2) preserve and enhance the unique character of the area, and take advantage of the unique economic opportunity provided by San Francisco Bay, and (3) provide the maximum possible visual and physical access to San Francisco Bay while minimizing the adverse environmental impacts of existing and new activity. (SFPD 1977, 1)

The complement to the plan's more cautious and focused stance towards commercial development along the waterfront was its support of the Port's maritime activities:

> Objective 1: To retain and enhance maritime activities, reserving as much of northeastern waterfront as is realistically required for future maritime use, and providing for efficient operation of port activities. (SFPD 1977, 2)
>
> Policy 2 - Continue maritime activities on Pier 45, Piers 35 through 9 and Piers 6 through 32 as long as practical. When and if it is determined that those piers are not needed for maritime use, improvement plans should be adopted for each area and appropriate amendments made in this Plan. (SFPD 1977, 2)

Other policy statements reflected the city's new sensitivity to the importance of the water beyond maintaining shipping and developing commercial activities:

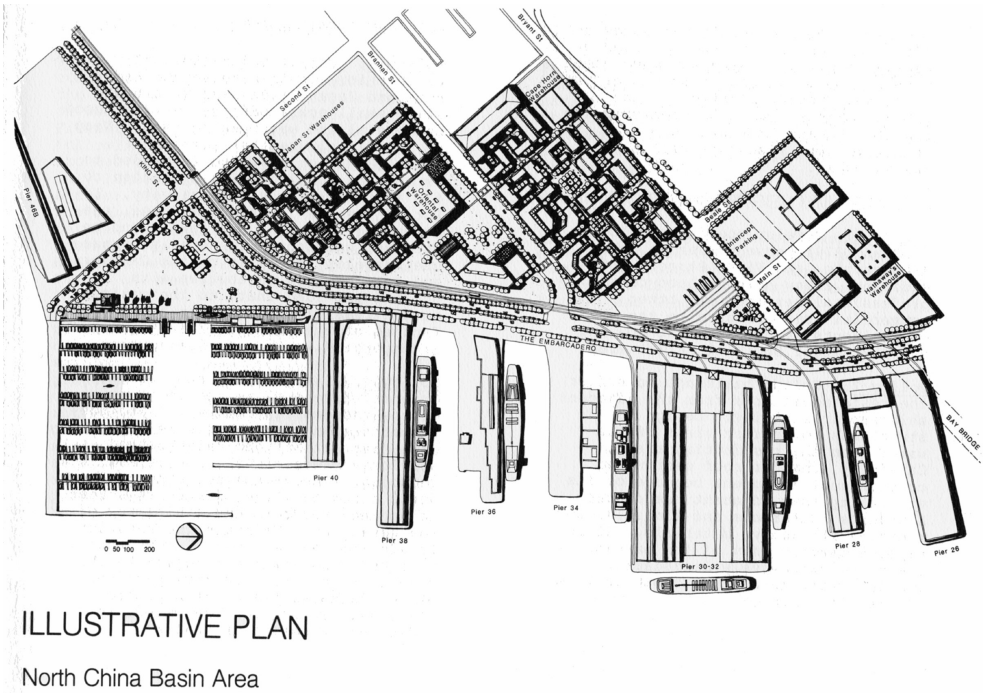

Figure 63 Illustration of possible development program for the North China Basin Area. Source: San Francisco Planning Department 1980, *Northeastern Waterfront Plan.*

> Urban Design Objective - To Develop the full potential of the northeastern waterfront in accord with the unusual opportunities presented by its relation to the bay, to the operating port, fishing industry, and downtown; and to enhance its unique aesthetic qualities offered by the water, topography, views of the city and bay, and its historic maritime character. (SFPD 1977, 11)

The plan also placed requirements on non-maritime development on the bay side of the seawall, east of the Embarcadero by providing for maximum feasible public access, protection of views, and retention of historic structures. The Planning Department had some power to enforce its policies insofar as a conditional use authorization is required from the Planning Commission for any non-maritime use in the northern waterfront. This requirement was included in the Planning Code as a

result of the *NEWP* policy.[10] Note also that the policies applied to an area several blocks inland, beyond the Port's waterfront jurisdiction. This brings up one nearly constant source of friction between the Planning Department and the Port. The Port was ever focused on the area under its jurisdiction and with its need for income earning development. The Planning Department, however, was concerned with the larger issues of how the city and its waterfront should relate together. This difference in perspective has led to variations or conflicts in priorities regarding land use, transportation, urban design, and open space. The imposition of the 40-foot height limit along most of the waterfront is an example of the Planning Department's broader perspective. The height limit reflects concern for public view corridors from inland to the Bay, and with preventing the construction of a physical barrier between the city and the water, instead of just maximizing development potential.[11] The *Northeastern Waterfront Plan* was amended again in 1980. The revisions included more specific

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[10] As has been noted, the *Planning Code* implements the *General Plan*, of which the *NEWP* is an element. For instance, if a *General Plan* policy calls for reduced height limits in a certain area, the *Planning Code* is amended to designate the new height. Zoning maps are also altered to reflect the change. In this case, a series of Northern Waterfront Special Use Districts (SUD) were added to the Planning Code, specifying the requirements that would trigger the need for conditional use authorization. An SUD is the designation given to an area the character of which does not fit one of the typical land use types, for instance residential, commercial, or industrial. Granting a conditional use involves a detailed case report by planning staff that is advisory to the Planning Commission, which ultimately decides whether to authorize the entitlement. The specifics of how the *General Plan* and the *Planning Code* relate is beyond the scope of the discussion.

[11] Recently, however, the Port and Planning Department have progressed in their coordination and the Port's design horizons have broadened substantially.

urban design policies and created a policy document more pointedly interested in reducing the impact of the automobile on the waterfront. There were also more substantial changes. First was the addition of policies which supported the intent to develop the area just north of the China Basin Channel, known as South Beach, as a mixed-use residential area, as suggested in the Redevelopment Agency's *Northeastern Waterfront Survey* and echoed in the *Total Design Plan* and the Port's own *Maritime*

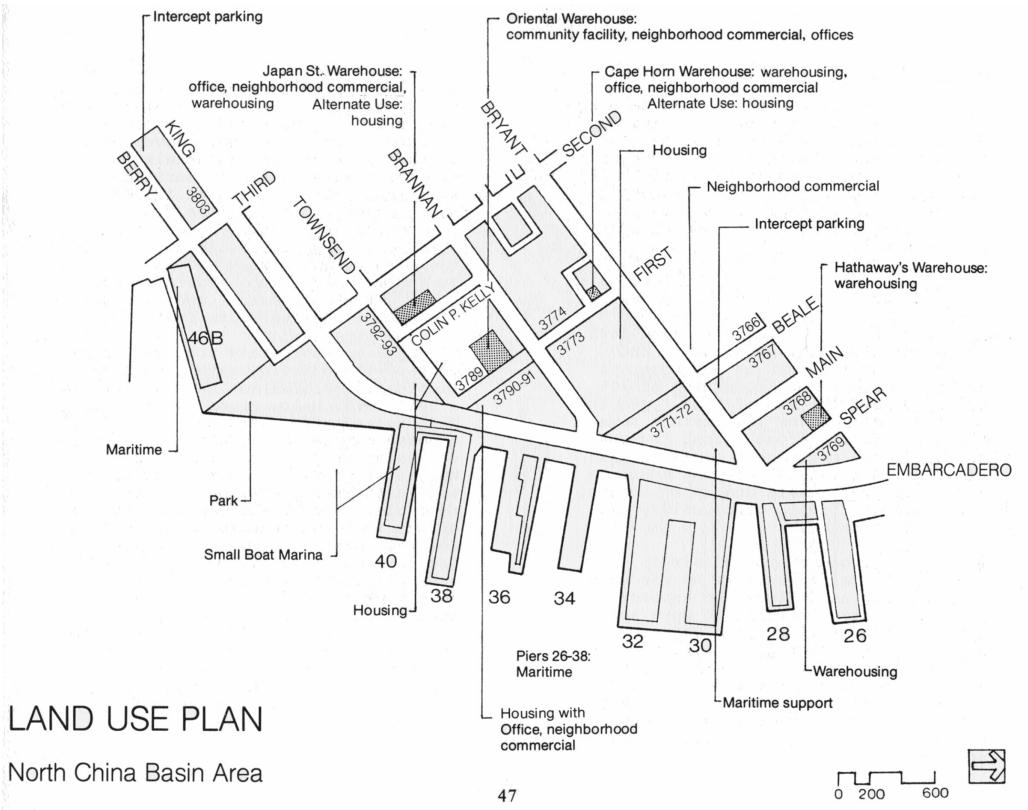

Figure 64 Details of the land use program for the North China Basin Area (similar to the Rincon Point-South Beach redevelopment area discussed later), including proposed warehouses slated for adaptive re-use. Source: San Francisco Planning Department 1980, *Northeastern Waterfront Plan.*

Strategy (discussed below). Momentum was building to present the case to the State that the Port land included in the South Beach area was no longer needed for maritime purposes, and could be removed from the public trust - the most significant impediment to building housing on Port land (see Chapter Two and Four for discussions of the public trust).

Figure 65 The Ferry Building isolated by the Embarcadero Freeway. Source: Economic Development Council et. al. 1979, *Action Development Program For the San Francisco Waterfront*.

Second, and perhaps the single most significant aspect of the 1980 plan, was the inclusion of a new section on the "Embarcadero Corridor." Planners took aim at the Embarcadero Freeway and the general mess created by the Embarcadero (or rather, how it was used) along much of its northern waterfront alignment. With the maritime-industrial character of the northern waterfront all but gone, both the Embarcadero freeway, which ended at the Broadway off-ramp, and the surface road stood as effective barriers to creating a new waterfront. The freeway itself was the single most disruptive element preventing good public access to the waterfront, especially at its most publically important section - the Ferry Building area. Parking underneath the freeway, at intervals along the

Embarcadero roadway, and on piers themselves (parking is very lucrative), in conjunction with an almost dead State Belt Line rail switching service, only added to the increasingly moribund feeling of much of the northern waterfront south of Fisherman's Wharf.[1]

With a new Embarcadero, there would come a new northern waterfront. The 1980 plan called for the removal of the freeway and presented a series of policies for rejuvenating the Embarcadero, including pedestrian walkways along the water, the extension of transit services along its length, and rerouting the roadway to accommodate open space and water-related activities. Policies in the plan also stated that these improvements should be carried out without disrupting remaining maritime activities. The impetus for the 'Embarcadero Corridor' proposals was the expectation that federal money would be available to remove the freeway. Instead, it would take ten years and an earthquake before the visions of a new Embarcadero could materialize.

The plan revealed a new consciousness of the water and thus a more public role for the northern waterfront, as can be seen in two of its main Objectives:

> Recreation and Open Space: To strengthen and expand the recreation character of the northeastern waterfront and to develop a system of public open spaces and recreation facilities that recognizes its recreational potential, provides unity and identity to the urban area, and establishes an overall waterfront character of openness of views, water and sky and public accessibility to the water's edge. (SFPD 1980, 14)

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[1] As a temporary use, parking on piers did not require BCDC approval.

> Urban Design: To develop the full potential of the northeastern waterfront in accord with the unusual opportunities presented by its relation to the Bay, to the operating port, fishing industry, and downtown: and to enhance its unique aesthetic qualities offered by water, topography, views of the city and Bay, and its historic maritime character. (SFPD 1980, 19)

In its final break with past thinking about the range of uses that would be appropriate for a new, 'modern' waterfront, the plan included a policy to "prohibit heliports or STOL ports," as had been part of earlier proposals. This, plus a stronger stance against prioritizing the automobile, resistence to monumental development, and a new concern for preserving the historic aspects of the waterfront, most practically through adaptive reuse of old warehouses, signaled the end in San Francisco of planning in the age of the modern.

BCDC's Special Area Plan[2]

BCDC was not idle after the adoption of its *Bay Plan*. The mandate to regulate Bay fill had been reaffirmed by the failure of the city's lawsuit, and so the agency moved to solidify its role by creating detailed and geographically specific guidelines regarding the nature of development that could occur within its San Francisco jurisdiction. In essence, BCDC was able to transform its regulatory power into land use planning policy. In 1973, at the behest of Chairman William D. Evers, BCDC established an advisory sub-committee whose particular focus was the San Francisco waterfront. The sub-committee would quickly become a powerful voice in the debate

[2] As a reminder, the McAteer-Petris act established BCDC as a temporary body in 1965 charged with writing the *Bay Plan*. The act was amended in 1969 to make BCDC permanent and to bring the *Bay Plan* into state law.

over San Francisco's waterfront. The purpose of the sub-committee, referred to as the waterfront advisory committee, whose members constituted a cross-section of interests, was to devise a way to satisfy BCDC's concerns to preserve the Bay while supporting the Port's need to generate income to bolster its maritime activities.[3] The waterfront advisory committee worked for two years to develop what it believed was a solid policy document for the Port's waterfront. One member of the committee referred to it as a "miracle between paper covers" (PSF 1975). Entitled the *San Francisco Waterfront Special Area Plan* (SAP), it was adopted as an amendment to the *Bay Plan* in 1975.

The *SAP* signaled BCDC's evolution from an agency concerned generally with the protection of the Bay into a regulatory agency with broad planning powers particular to San Francisco. But, as we shall see, the *SAP* became another source of conflict in defining goals for Port development. Perhaps the most important aspect of the plan is that it precluded housing and office development on Bay fill, including piers.[4] Such restrictions did not sit well with the Port Commission, or with Planning Director Allan B. Jacobs, who noted that "San Francisco is the only location on the

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[3] The committee included Supervisor Diane Feinstein, Cyril Magnin, Richard Gryzeic (San Francisco Tomorrow), and Richard Goldman (WAC), as well as representatives from the Planning Department, environmental and residents' groups, and SPUR.

[4] As discussed in Chapter Five, BCDC's authority to restrict uses is limited to the bay and bay fill. This is only part of its jurisdiction, which extends inland roughly 100 feet, to about the Embarcadero. In the remainder of its jurisdiction, and for Port land outside of BCDC's jurisdiction (land inland of the Embarcadero), uses are restricted by the public trust, which also precludes office and housing.

bay where intense urban uses come down to the water's edge and where continuation of such development is so logical" (Chron 3\9\74).

So, despite the fact that the *SAP* was devised by a broadly-based committee, including representatives from the Port, and was described at the time as the resolution to years of conflict between conservationists and proponents of development, the Port Commission flatly rejected BCDC's plan. Members of the Port Commission expressed serious concerns over the potential impact of the plan on the Port's its ability to dispose of land as it saw fit. In a special public meeting held by the Port to discuss the *SAP*, Commissioner Arnold criticized the plan and its implications. His opinion was that BCDC would be, through its plan, over-extending its mandate by assuming jurisdiction over the economics of Port development. Addressing BCDC's William Evers, who was present at the hearing, he bluntly described the situation:

> Without the BCDC we could fill in the Bay and do just about anything we please...so you see, you're antagonistic to us to the extent that you are depriving us and limiting us on the use of our property. (PSF 1975, 14)[5]

Commissioner Arnold approached the issue more reasonably, arguing that, at a minimum, new Port Director Tom Soules should be first allowed to perform his own analysis of what Port property should be retained for maritime uses, and what could be used for other purposes, before the Port Commission took any stance on the *SAP* or submitted their own plan for BCDC review (PSF 1975). For his own part, Soules said

[5] Curiously, the public trust seems sitll not to have been on the radar.

of the *SAP* "I believe that it is a type of restriction that no other port director in the United States has had imposed on him" (SFC 16 April 1975). He also said "... (I) know of no seaport which has had success under similar conditions of restriction or compromise, however well intentioned, and we believe that the port cannot be made competitive by this means" (SFC 18 Aotril 1975). San Francisco Tomorrow's representative Richard Gryzeic was unconvinced by anything the Port said: "the real waterfront obstructionists are Joe Alioto and his Charlie McCarthy commissioners" (PSF 1975, 29).[6]

On the other hand, Supervisor Feinstein, anxious to see development move forward, supported BCDC, saying that "failure to adopt the plan would 'condemn the waterfront to total stagnation.'" (SFC 18 April 1975). As the Chronicle pointed out, her assertion was based on the "long history of wrangling over non-shipping projects proposed for the Embarcadero" (SFC18 April 1975). Indeed, it was commonly held that this 'wrangling' had everything to do with the state of the waterfront, as succinctly put by a member of the League of Women Voters who testified at the April, 1975 hearing:

> For years the shores of San Francisco have been suffering from the decay of inaction. The League of Woman voters feels that a living port is essential to the life of San Francisco. Now, more than ever, we need the legislative controls

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[6] San Francisco Tomorrow had no love for Alioto. The organization had called for Alitoto's removal six months earlier, based partly on his purportedly illegal appointment of Bernard Osri as interim port director, and because of his family's financial connections with PFEL. They weren't happy with his appointments to commissions, either (SFC 24 October 1974)

> of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, including its power to make special area plans. (PSF 1975, 38)

Feinstein was not alone in suggesting that development could not occur without a clear set of policies as articulated in a plan for the waterfront. In the Port's special hearing on the *SAP*, San Francisco Tomorrow's Richard Gryziec, and John Williams, the Port's commercial property developer, argued to a combative commission that a project like the Embarcadero Gardens (mentioned in Chapter 6) could only move forward if there were first a *SAP* to support it (PSF 1975, 30). Without such a plan, such proposals could not be considered because the proper tools to guide developers and to help decision-makers in their evaluations would not exist. Another supportive point of view came from SPUR's representative at the meeting, who argued that the plan was necessary because, should, for instance, the Redevelopment Agency take over the area to initiate a redevelopment project, the Port would not be able to assess accurately its land value and back up its estimates. If there is no plan that establishes potential uses, there is no way to determine property value. In the end, BCDC Chairman William Evers, responded to the Port and his agency's other critics by announcing that the plan would be adopted by the BCDC regardless, which it was (SFC 16 April 1975). Neither the Port nor the City had the means to contest the decision.

The plan analyzed the Port parcel by parcel. After establishing which portions of the Port land did not or would not support shipping or maritime-related activities,

the sub-committee assigned them a range of possible new uses. Their decisions pertaining to what kinds of development could occur, and where, were in part based on conclusions reached by the Mayor's Port Committee (mentioned last chapter, p.21), which suggested that the Port needed an income of $3 million per year from its non-maritime property. Thus, for instance, to enable the Port to generate enough income to meet that goal, a hotel was added as a possible use for one piece of port property (PSF 1975, 8).[7] Whether or not the target income recommended by the Mayor's Port Committee or BCDC's take on what would generate that income were realistic is debatable.

Even though it was based on a very detailed analysis, at its core the *SAP* is quite straight forward. It focuses on the areas determined by the Port of San Francisco as likely to be surplus to maritime needs, that is, areas potentially available for development as part of revitalization efforts. Maritime uses were supported by both the wider public trust doctrine and by the McAteer-Petris Act (through BCDC's *Bay Plan)* and were therefor of less concern. The assumption was that the Port was already doing everything it could to utilize and improve property supporting its maritime and shipping industries, and so this did not need to be addressed at the same level. BCDC is able to enforce its policy because at its core BCDC is a permit-granting agency, and

[7] Debate also ensued over requirements for 50% walkable open space for any proposed projects in the Ferry Building area.

can thus deny developers entitlements if it determines that even a part of a proposal is in conflict with the Bay Plan and the McAteer-Petris Act.[8]

Organized into a series of sub-areas, the plan lists clearly what the permitted uses are on new or replacement fill. It also includes policies that are the basis for decisions on whether or not to grant permits and that make recommendations that are advisory to the City; that is, it provides indications of what kinds of projects or improvements might be approved by BCDC. In general, the plan was aimed at limiting fill, improving the shoreline, and providing public access to, and views of, the water. Some of the points of the plan included:

- Neither office nor housing could be permitted on new or replacement fill without amendments to the McAteer-Petris Act.[9]
- Generally, uses allowed on new or replacement fill included maritime uses, public recreation, and in limited areas hotels, shops, and amusements.
- Generally, for alterations to existing structures, such as a change in use of an existing pier, or to the shoreline itself, provision of public access to the water's edge and creation of open space were of the highest priorities. However, development on an existing pier, for instance, could include housing or office

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[8] It is possible for developers to argue over particular policies; the outcomes of such engagements depend partly on the members of the BCDC and the Port Commission at the time, the importance of the project, and its characteristics. Developers, sometimes in coordination with other city agencies, can occasionally negotiate the relaxation of some policy restrictions because their proposal may include elements that are particularly desirable to the public or the Commissions, and which would not be provided without the project. Of course, this can also create scandal.

[9] This was based partly on the committee's conclusion that city restrictions on height would render any office or housing development too small to generate rent to the Port. Therefore, it was not worth revisiting state legislation for something already restricted by the city (hiding behind the Planning Department's skirts, it seems).

under BCDC regulations because it would not involve new or replacement fill.[10]

- Waterfront land should not be used for auto access and parking; and the existing Embarcadero Freeway was deemed an impediment to the best use of the waterfront.

- Piers removed could only be replaced within the same general area (the plan defined three such areas). The plan also allowed for 'fill credits' equal to the area of fill (for instance piers) removed. However, 50% of the replacement fill must be devoted to open space and public access to the bay, quite severely limiting the parameters of any development thereon.

- A detailed 'Total Design Plan' was required to guide replacement and reuse of finger piers north of the Bay Bridge, in the area between Piers 7 and 24 (completed in 1980). No replacement fill was to be permitted in this area unless it was consistent with that plan.

The BCDC was not insensitive to the Port's economic needs, and recognized that the Port should not be overly restricted in the use of its property:

> The Plan the committee came up with was based on a blending of interests. It was responsive to the financial needs of the Port, the environmental constraints of the Bay Plan and McAteer-Petris Act, and strong public desire for an accessible, usable waterfront. (BCDC 1975, 2)

Nevertheless, despite the intentions of the plan's authors, the restriction it imposed would prove to be a burden on the Port. Not only were issues of good urban design at stake, but the Port's ability to generate income from development to pay for open space or new shipping facilities was severely limited by the inability to promote

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[10] Even so, such developments would still be subject to the public trust - this condition just removed a layer from the collection of approvals and permits necessary for a project.

housing or office development. If developers cannot make what they consider to be sufficient return, and if the Port cannot derive income from development, there is little chance of any change. In this regard, the *SAP* contributed to several decades of relatively little change - quite opposite Supervisor Feinstein's expectations.

It should be pointed out that the adoption of BCDC's *SAP* imposed a layer of regulation in addition to that deriving from existing policy established by the Planning Department's *Northeastern Waterfront Plan*. Even while the *Northeastern Waterfront Plan* was amended in 1977 to ensure that it and the SAP were in conformity, it differed from the SAP in that the range of its policies were wider and it included inland areas beyond BCDC's jurisdiction. Furthermore, the Planning Department maintained its own land use policies, building form restrictions, and the authority to grant entitlements, as mentioned earlier.

The 1979 Northern Waterfront Survey and the related 1981 Rincon Point - South Beach Redevelopment Plan

Sometime around 1974, Supervisor Diane Feinstein began to work with the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency to pursue development of moribund port land (SFC 21 December 1974). Feinstein, who had cut her teeth on waterfront issues early in her career protesting the U. S. Steel proposal, saw different possibilities for development, especially given the city's need for new housing. The idea of turning over revitalization efforts of the financially strapped and ineffective Port to the Redevelopment Agency was not whimsy. After all, 'renewal' was what the Agency

was all about and it had the mechanisms to make things happen, as demonstrated by the Golden Gateway and the Embarcadero Center.[11] As Feinstein put it, "' I believe this can be sold to the citizens...because it means the difference between doing nothing (on the waterfront) for two decades and doing something'" (SFC 21 December 1974).

The idea was not entirely new. Consultants had suggested in a report prepared for the Citizen's Waterfront Committee in 1971 that to establish a redevelopment project area would put in place a financing mechanism for marine parks and other public uses that would not otherwise be affordable (Livingston and Blayney 1971). In order to make the possibility a reality, one step was to get BCDC to agree to the concept. As a member of BCDC's waterfront advisory committee, Feinstein had a direct line of communication with BCDC Chairman William Evers. When the *Special Area Plan* was published in 1975, it included policies that supported the kind of mixed-use development Feinstein envisioned. Working also with Robert Kirkwood of SPUR gave the concept of pursuing redevelopment real momentum.

Feinstein and her cohorts had an even more significant hurdle, however, in that they had to convince the state legislature that several parcels of Port land were no longer needed for maritime purposes and were surplus to the needs of the public trust. The City took its case to the Sacramento, and after a long legal and legislative process,

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[11] Two of the most important of these mechanisms are the power of eminent domain and the ability to initiate 'tax increment financing,' a kind of government-sponsored, controlled speculation.

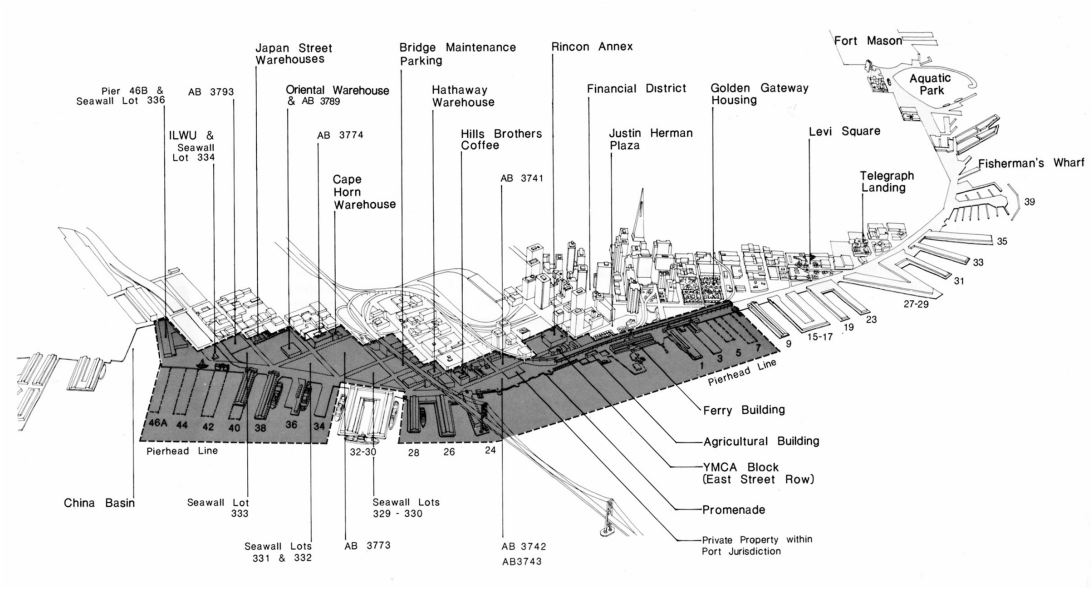

Figure 66 Axiometric drawing showing the Northeastern Waterfront Survey area boundaries (dark grey) and various landmarks, including Assessor's Blocks (AB). Source: San Francisco Redevelopment Agency 1979, *Northeastern Waterfront Survey Summary Report*.

the request was granted. This in fact is the only place on San Francisco's waterfront that the State Lands Commission has made such a finding (see Figure).[12]

At this point it is worth digressing a moment to explain the basic steps of the California redevelopment process. It is a complicated one, and a detailed discussion is beyond this study. First, the Redevelopment Agency must establish a geographical survey area, the boundaries of which are approved by the Board of Supervisors. The

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[12] It is also possible to swap land - that is, exchange a piece of land burdened with the public trust for another piece that is not, so that development can be undertaken. This does not happen easily. Most recently, the Port has undertaken this to support the massive, and massively politicized, Mission Bay project and a proposed cruise terminal/condominium/office project at Piers 30-32. However, it is beyond the scope of this study to delve into the arcane process by which decisions regarding the public trust are made, so suffice it to say that to argue successfully that a piece of land no longer serves trust purposes is exceedingly difficult.

survey is primarily a collection of land use and related data that become the basis for identifying specific "project areas" located within the larger survey boundary. Once a project area is chosen and shown to meet criteria for redevelopment, including findings related to economic and social blight, a redevelopment plan is written to guide actual development of the specific project or program. The Redevelopment Agency can only operate in legally established project areas. It is an involved process with many requirements, which usually involves the Planning Commission, and in this case, the Port; final approval rests with the Board of Supervisors. Once the plan is approved, the Redevelopment Agency can begin to use its powers to initiate and support development by, for instance, the disposing of public land, acquiring private land through eminent domain, issuing requests for development proposals, and implementing tax-increment financing.

The Board of Supervisors approved the Northern Waterfront Survey Area in 1977. The survey was performed and the results were published in 1979. The project area eventually selected from with the survey area was named the Rincon Point - South Beach Redevelopment Area, the plan for which was adopted in 1981. The resulting development project will be discussed briefly in Chapter Eight. The survey was a joint effort of the Redevelopment Agency, the Port, and the Planning Department, with citizen review and comment provided by a NEWAC (naming a public advisory committee, or 'PAC', is a requirement of California redevelopment law). In part, the survey was undertaken as a step towards implementing some of the

public policy established by BCDC's *SAP* and the Planning Department's *Northeastern Waterfront Plan*. More specifically, one of the main purposes of this survey area was to identify where on the waterfront housing, among other things, could sensibly be developed. It was in fact a bit unusual in that it included a set of fairly specific policy goals, or visions, for what should happen in the area of northern waterfront covered by the survey. The survey identified a set of sub-areas for which different goals were established, and addressed job creation, housing development, transportation improvements, open space, and urban design. Generally, the survey, and subsequently the redevelopment plan, called for a mix of hotels, shops, open space, housing, and a marina between the Bay Bridge and Townsend Street, just north of China Basin Channel (see Figure 67).

The survey was an important document because it was the legally necessary first step in the Redevelopment Agency's particular process and it established a framework for change between Pier 7 and China Basin Channel that reflected the goals of all of the major agencies involved - BCDC, the Planning Department, the Port, and the Redevelopment Agency. It was created, and was ultimately quite successful, because of the unprecedented cooperation and rare political momentum that supported it. Allen Temko, long time architecture critic for the San Francisco Chronicle, concluded his praise of the survey by pointing out what might be its most meaningful contribution (other than the development it would enable)

> ...thus far citizens have accomplished democratically what princes and popes did in the days of autocratic planning. The result has not been a patched-up popular compromise, but a lordly urban vision. (SFC 8 October 1979).

The survey itself made a point of describing the unusual circumstances of its creation:

> The planning and design of the Northeastern Waterfront requires an approach which goes beyond problem solving to create a new vision of what the future might be like. The vision is not one imposed upon the planning process, but rather one which has evolved out of it and resulted from the active participation of the Northeastern Waterfront Advisory Committee, City officials, professionals of various disciplines, and the general public. (RA 1979, no page)

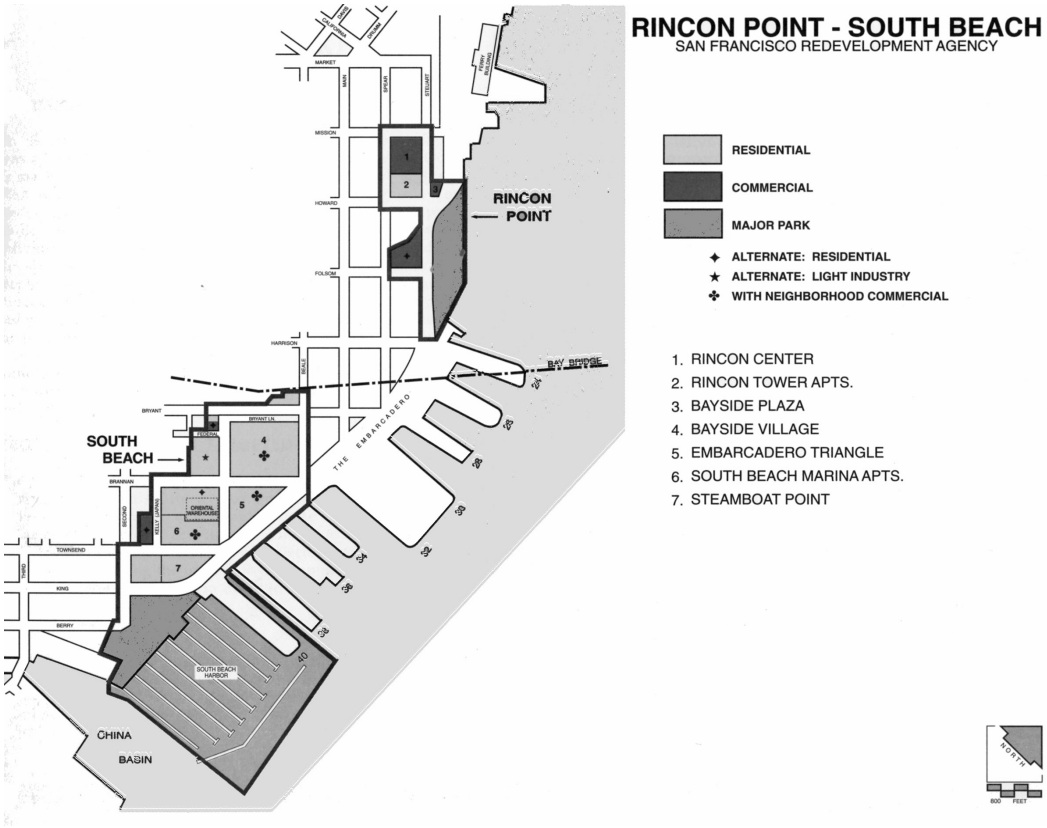

Figure 67 Rincon Point-South Beach Redevelopment Area land use program. Source: San Francisco Redevelopment Agency 1996, *San Francisco Redevelopment Program*.

Temko attributes much to the involvement of environmentalists, who, he suggests, were responsible for the overthrow of the "city's own foolish northern waterfront policy - I won't call it a plan - that consultants ...concocted some years back under the gaze of our beauty-loving former doge, Signor Alioto."[13] Temko observed that the plan, as outlined in the survey, brought the city back to the water not by proposing massive development along and over the water, but rather "simply and sanely" by demolishing the freeway and proposing good public access to the Bay.

Writing the actual plan was the next step in the redevelopment process, followed by pursuing specific development projects that would implement the plan. Such projects have a much more limited scope, and therefore would not by themselves fulfill the survey's broader visions. Nevertheless, the *Rincon Point - South Beach Redevelopment Plan* has led directly to significant changes along a very visible part of the waterfront. These changes are described in the next chapter. It can be said here, though, that the Redevelopment Agency essentially took over development of most of the waterfront from south of the Ferry Building to China Basin Channel. The critical difference between Planning Department and BCDC policy plans and regulations is that they are prescriptive or reactive; they do not cause anything to happen. Once a redevelopment plan is in place, however the Redevelopment Agency has the ability to pursue development; it can act as a project sponsor or housing developer.

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[13] Temko refers to earlier versions of the *Northerneastern Waterfront Plan*, and not to the documents from 1977 and later.

The Port's Maritime Strategy and the Total Design Plan

Two other documents were created as part of the process that resulted in the 1979 *Northeastern Waterfront Survey*. One, a *Maritime Strategy*, was prepared by the Port during the early stages of the survey. This was Port's effort to succinctly state its basic needs and goals, which, it was hoped, would be reflected in planning documents both extant and underway, especially the *Northern Waterfront Survey* and the *Total Design Plan* (discussed below). The *Maritime Strategy* was not adopted by any governing body, and so did not carry the legal weight of an ordinance or resolution. However, it was important as a general statement of the Port's intentions. The scope of the report was the entirety of the Port's jurisdiction, within which the Northeastern Waterfront Survey Area fit. In stating its basic land use objectives, the Port acknowledges new obligations being placed on its property, but somewhat grudgingly:

> Piers and seawall lots no longer to be retained for maritime uses will be developed at their highest and best uses. No efforts, however, have been made to distinguish public recreational and open space uses from highest and best uses. It has been assumed that a successful commercial development program will include sufficient new public open space, open water, and recreational uses for the enjoyment of the residents of San Francisco. (PSF 1979, 1)

The Port's basic decisions regarding what to do with its land reflected the obvious changes to its activities, most essentially that cargo moving through the port was going through a radical redistribution. In 1971, the northern and southern waterfront handled about the same amount of cargo, but by 1977, the piers south of China Basin Channel were handling more than two-thirds of the cargo (PSF 1979). Of

course it had been clear for some time that the northern waterfront was not going to be where the Port made its stand, but some break bulk general cargo, such as newsprint, continued to come across its more modern finger piers. The *Maritime Strategy* listed all such facilities, perhaps in an attempt to place a check on the pressure to chase maritime operations completely out of the northern waterfront. Even now, the maritime operations side of the Port struggles to convince critics and doubters that it needs to keep some areas in reserve for potential future maritime uses. However, this debate is now focused almost entirely on the southern waterfront, at least with regard to shipping.[14]

The second document to come out of the survey process was the *Total Design Plan* (*TDP*). The *TDP* was called for in BCDC's *Special Area Plan*. Because the Rincon Point- South Beach Redevelopment Project could lead to the addition of fill (the slips in a marina, for instance, might be considered fill) in the area covered by the *TDP*, it was an important time to write this area-specific policy document. The same agencies and citizen's committee involved in preparing the Northern Waterfront Survey were involved in preparing the *Total Design Plan* for the area between Piers 7 and 24, although the *TDP* was primarily a Port-BCDC effort).[15] The plan was

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[14] In some places, the Port is required to preserve areas for existing or future maritime operations, especially cargo handling, to support the needs of the Bay Area, in accordance with the *San Francisco Bay Area Seaport Plan* (see p. 293).

[15] In fact, the NEWAC was comprised of the same familiar people from the same citizens groups and public and private agencies and organizations. This could cause one to wonder exactly how representative they really were.

endorsed by the Planning and Port Commissions in January of 1980 and adopted by BCDC that June (BCDC 1980, 1). The purpose of the *TDP* was to set forth specific policy and criteria for development on Port property in the area between Piers 7 and 24 under the jurisdiction of BCDC. Particularly, it includes :

- the approximate location, amount, and height and bulk of proposed uses;
- the location and design of parks, open space, public access areas, and view corridors;
- the amount of parking to be allowed for permitted uses; and
- the means by which public recreation, open space, and public access are to be provided and maintained. (BCDC 1986, 1)

BCDC uses the plan to evaluate all proposed projects requiring a permit from them. Furthermore, the plan confirmed the role of city agencies in the review process:

> Detailed designs prepared for specific projects shall be in accord with these Guidelines and Program and subject to approval by the San Francisco Port Commission, and Planning Commission and Art Commission, and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission. Detailed landscaping and materials plans and signs shall be approved by the San Francisco Department of City Planning prior to approval of any new non-maritime development in this area. (BCDC 1986, 3)

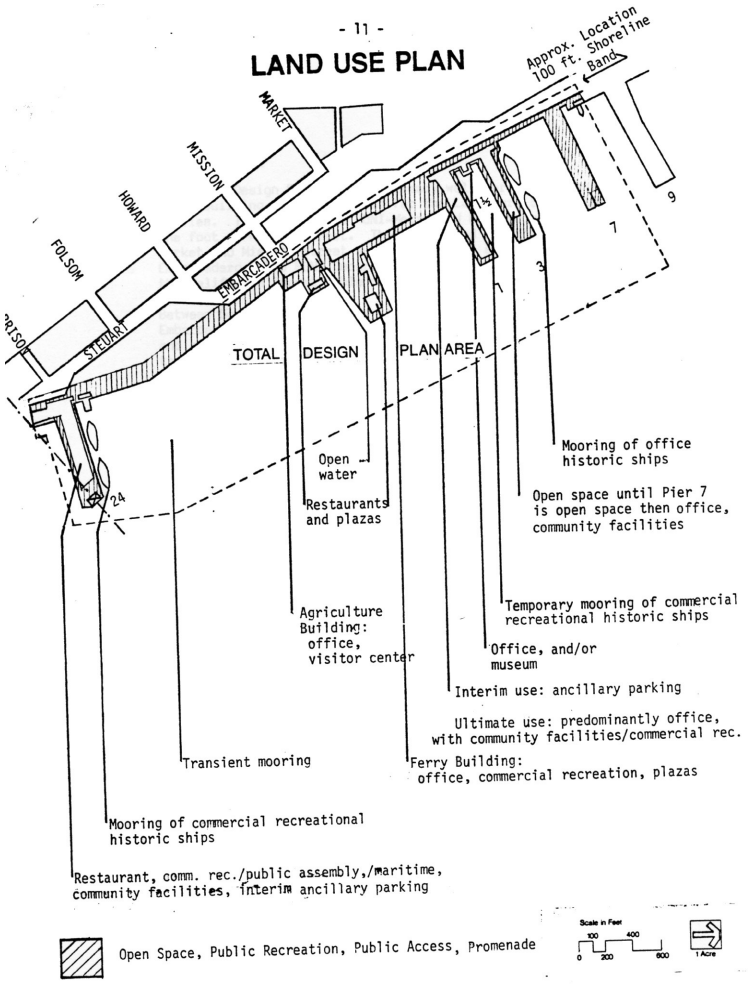

Figure 68 Total Design Plan area boundaries and land use program. Source: BCDC 1980, *Total Design Plan*.

The decision to make sure that all of the relevant agencies would be involved in evaluating potential development resulted in layers of bureaucracy, especially in the area around the Ferry Building, that would prove too much of an obstacle for at least one major proposal (discussed in Chapter Eight). Nevertheless, some of the suggestions for specific land uses, especially public open space, called for in the *TDP*

have been carried out with federal grants and through the formal financial mechanisms available to the Redevelopment Agency as implemented through the *Rincon Point - South Beach Plan* (see Chapter 8).

The Central Waterfront Plan and the Bay Area Seaport Plan

With plans in place slating much of the Northern Waterfront for new uses, some effort had to be turned to establishing policies for those areas where the Port's maritime and shipping activities would be concentrated. While BCDC's *Special Area Plan* covered the length of the waterfront, the Planning Department's efforts had stopped at China Basic Channel. So, in 1980 it released the *Central Waterfront Plan*, covering the area between China Basin Channel and Islais Creek, including a significant inland area beyond Port jurisdiction. The city had for some years been concerned with the decline of the central waterfront. While not moribund, the concentration of abandoned rail yards, warehouses, contractor's open storage, and truck depots led some to characterize this area as a place of underutilized land and of lessening economic importance because it supported only modest job density. While the downtown prospered from the increase in finance, administration, and service jobs, the central waterfront was suffering from severe declines in waterborne commerce, manufacturing, and wholesale trade (Mayor's Economic Advisory Council 1978). The city reasoned that "there is a danger stemming from over reliance on a limited number

of economic sectors to provide jobs, especially during recessionary periods" (SFPD 1980a, 2).

So, the purpose of the *Central Waterfront Plan* was not just to establish policy pertaining to Port activities, but more broadly to address the transition of an old industrial area in a place of mixed uses, with the idea that industrial land needed to be preserved, especially as economic consultants indicated that there were bright spots in the city's industrial and maritime future:

> The overall goal of the plan is to create in the Central Waterfront area a physical and economic environment conducive to the retention and expansion of San Francisco's industrial and maritime activities. This goal is set forth in order to reverse the pattern of economic decline in the area and to establish a land base for the industrial and maritime components of the San Francisco economy. (SFPD 1980a, 16)

Specific to this discussion, the plan contained policies pertaining to maritime activities, in accordance with the Port's general goals for the area:

> Objective: Retain and expand maritime activity along the Central Waterfront.
>
> Specific policies associated with this objective included:
>
> Policy 1: Retain all existing maritime general cargo facilities along the central waterfront (Piers 48, 50, 70, 80).
>
> Policy 2: Retain all existing ship repair operations along the Central Waterfront (Pier 54).
>
> Policy 3: Encourage the expansion and modernization of maritime cargo handling facilities and the development of container facilities along the Central Waterfront.

Policy 4: Reserve land adjacent to the waterfront as required for maritime support use.

With these policies, the Planning Department anticipated some of the requirements established in the *Bay Area Seaport Plan* published jointly in 1982 by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the region's transportation agency, and BCDC. For the purposes of this discussion, the most important part of the *Seaport Plan* is that it established "port priority areas" within which marine terminals and directly-related activities were to be set aside by the Port and protected. It also required that any land within the areas so designated not currently used for shipping had to be kept in reserve should it be needed in the future. Interim uses are permissible as long as they can be easily replaced if a marine terminal or related use is needed. With these two plans, there was now a collection of policy documents which reflected and encouraged the polarized nature of the port.

Caught in Irons: The Morass of Plans and the Struggle Over Revitalization

The1970s brought the Port fully into San Francisco's political vortex. Faced with decaying piers in the northern waterfront and a nearly continual decline in shipping and maritime activity in the central and southern waterfronts, the Port found itself in a much more complex environment in which to pursue revitalization than before the transfer. Its position as a city agency exposed the distressed Port to intense

scrutiny and subjected it to a complex and burdensome array of policy plans and regulation as well as increased public activism.[16] By the end of the 1970s, the Port and any project sponsor submitting proposals for development would have to navigate policies and regulations set forth in the Planning Department's *Planning Code*, the *General Plan*, of which the *Northeastern Waterfront Plan* is part, BCDC's *Special Area Plan*, and would also have to negotiate public trust issues. By the 1980s, depending on the area for which the project was proposed, more specific documents applied, including BCDC's *Total Design Plan* and the *Rincon Point - South Beach Redevelopment Plan*.[17] Furthermore, each plan and each agency has different, but again, over lapping areas of jurisdiction. While many of the goals and policies in these plans were quite similar, especially where public access to the water, open space, parking, and general building programs were concerned, there were also many variations. Some differences were obvious, for instance the *Northeastern Waterfront Plan* did not allow housing on Pier 45 whereas the *SAP* did. Others, because of the flexibility in how similar goals and policies might be interpreted, were more subtle.

An especially important difference is found in the sometimes quite territorial nature of agencies. One difficulty, which continues even today, has been the debate

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[16] A host of other technical and regulatory requirements overseen by agencies such as the Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Coast Guard are not discussed here.

[17] Redevelopment plans are not technically subject to the San Francisco *Planning Code*, but must comply with the *General Plan*. In point of fact, the *General Plan* has often been amended to create conformance between it and a redevelopment plan.

Figure 69 View of the waterfront looking north, @1979. Source: San Francisco Redevelopment Agency 1979, *Northeastern Waterfront Survey Summary Report*.

between the Port and the Planning Department over the application of *General Plan* policies, which includes the *Northeastern Waterfront Plan*, to Port property. The Port has agreed that it is subject to the controls established by the *Planning Code* and in its associated *Zoning Maps*, but that it is not necessarily beholden to the *General Plan*. The Port argues that, according to the Burton Act Transfer Agreement, the Board of Supervisors can vote to approve funds for capital projects even should they not conform with the *General Plan* (PSF 2000, 47). What makes this a particularly contentious point is that the *Planning Code* is the specific implementing document of

the *General Plan*.[18] The implication for the Planning Department, and a large part of the disagreement, is that if one must comply with the *Planning Code* one must be in compliance with the *General Plan* as well. In another example, BCDC's *SAP* has been a source of friction for the Port, the City, and BCDC because it has extended BCDC's purview beyond simply regulating land uses to the control over the detailed design aspects of projects. This has been seen some by some as an imposition from an agency working beyond the intent of the legislation that created it. Of course, it would not do to call attention to such difficulties; instead, the Port's 1988\89 Shipping Handbook, a sort of combined fact book and advertising brochure included this statement :

> Planning for waterfront development is handled through a joint effort of the City and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) which assures co-ordination and consistency in project implementation. (PSF 1988/89, 4)

This is in stark contrast with a statement made by Randall Rossi, a port planner, about planning efforts in Fisherman's Wharf:

> Its paralyzing because all of these agencies don't talk to each other...And by the time you add up all of the restrictions, you wind up with a situation where you can't do anything. (San Francisco Business Times August 1987)

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[18] How this works, for instance, is that a *General Plan policy* may state that heights must be lower as buildings approach the water. The *Planning Code* would then include specific height designations, such as the current 40-foot limit that applies to most of the northern waterfront.

Ten years later, the adoption of the Port's *Waterfront Land Use Plan* in 1997 finally provided an opportunity for the Port, the Planning Department, and BCDC to work through some of their respective differences. Nevertheless, such interagency disagreements over development goals and general policy direction and interpretation have created a difficult and intimidating planning and development process. On the whole, this makes for an arcane and sometimes acrimonious bureaucratic environment and one very much influenced by individual staff members and the attitudes of department heads - another quality that is local and that reveals a place's uniqueness, which, of course, is a factor in how a place changes.

Even though they both reflected and generated interagency difficulties, the plans discussed here were a source of empowerment in that they reflected the concerns of a multitude of stakeholders, especially environmentalists, neighborhood groups, citizen committees, and organizations like San Francisco Tomorrow. The public could now affect Port land use by getting a place at the table as planning policy was being established, thereby influencing the content of policy documents, and ultimately, the character of the waterfront landscape itself. Moreover, through the entitlement process and by monitoring compliance with policies, controls, regulations, and environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), these plans and regulations provided local actors with more ways to challenge, appeal, and simply criticize proposals for development.[19] All of this was part of bringing the Port more

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[19] CEQA is state legislation that, among other things, establishes certain standards for evaluating the potential impact that a project may have on the

fully into the local planning and development process, a characteristic of the third stage in the evolution of Port-related planning policy and regulation and waterfront change.

But while the public interest was more wholly incorporated into the planning process, and policies were established with the intention of saving the Bay and improving potential development through urban design policy, the result was a waterfront that remained largely static for decades. The Port's ability to pursue commercial development projects and generally to revitalize the waterfront was hampered by layers of planning policy and a more powerful and proactive public, not to mention its underlying financial and administrative difficulties. Perhaps the most limiting condition was the direct imposition on potential development that stemmed both from restrictions on what could be developed and where, and from what had to be *included* in any given project, open space, for instance. Then and now, as Port Director Soules pointed out, no other (American) Port has had such restrictions placed on it.

These kinds of conditions had two related affects. First, any program for revitalization now had the financial burden of supporting two kinds of goals: public access, open space, and publically-oriented uses on the one hand and maritime

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environment. However it is carried out locally. In fact, in implementing CEQA, local jurisdictions have a fair amount of flexibility in how standards are established and how projects are assessed against them. San Francisco has developed a particular "way of doing things" in this regard. In most cases, the San Francisco Planning Department is the "lead agency" responsible for implementing CEQA.

activities on the other. Given that two of the most lucrative land uses, housing and office, were not acceptable uses, financing development was made quite difficult. Second, the red tape, time delays, and sunk costs (e.g. fees to agencies or architects) that were associated with project reviews conducted by several agencies guided by multiple planning and regulatory documents helped to intimidate even the most stalwart of developers. In one example, a project to improve the Ferry Building area (described in the next chapter) that actually enjoyed a wide base of support and seemed to be navigating the planning process successfully became a victim of the delays and frustrations of the permitting and entitlement process and disagreements over project parameters. Furthermore, as with the example of the *Special Area Plan*, guidelines for making decisions about revitalization generally and about the character of development projects specifically, could not be established until plans were in place; this took years.

Chapters Six and Seven, then, have described not just gate keepers, actors, plans, and policies, but what is part of a *planning process* that is an important aspect of San Francisco as a place. It should be stressed, though, that the role of public policy, specifically land use policy, is not to cause development but rather to affect the pace and nature of change.[20] As has been pointed out, policies and regulation dictate

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[20] Some types of plans, such as the 'specific plan' legislated by the State of California and Redevelopment Agency plans, can implement development programs. In fact, one nearly constant struggle between the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency and the Planning Department has been over the extent to which redevelopment plans must comply with established General Plan policies. Although a fascinating example of bureaucratic turf war, it is an issue beyond the scope of this study.

the possible range of land uses and activities along the waterfront and establish the basic physical parameters and design of structures. Policy defines and directs the potential of market forces. Thus, the plans adopted in this period (amended on occasion since) had, and continue to have, a tremendous impact on the waterfront by directing and even limiting the spatial flow of capital. At a basic level, San Francisco's urban waterfront landscape is formed by two opposing pressures: on the one hand, the cycles of economic boom and bust, especially as they encourage or restrain investment in the second circuit of capital (a top-down pressure on the urban fabric) and on the other hand, planning policy and regulation, or the planning process (a bottom-up pressure).[21]

So, a place is defined partly by local 'conditions.' The nature of the planning policy and regulation and the planning process in general become part of the set of local conditions that affect actors and agents in their attempts to perpetuate change. These conditions, which can restrain or empower, had a direct impact on the character of San Francisco's waterfront landscape. When one sees this as a complex mix of activists, gatekeepers, bureaucracies, and personalities, and the built and natural environments, local conditions become more than 'situation,' they create 'localness.' It is these unusual or even unique local conditions, here the peculiarities of how and

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[21] This is not news to planners, whose essential training includes how to wield the fairly blunt tool of zoning as a way to influence the market. The ineffectiveness of such tools comes partly in how they are implemented (or not), leading some critics to accuse planners of being the "bucket carriers for capitalism," an altogether too simplistic evaluation of the planner's role in society.

why the Port has or has not changed, that are an intimate part of what makes places different from each other. Understanding the role of planning and regulation helps to illuminate the invisible, underlying process that explains what one observes in the current, surface aspect of the landscape, the built environment of the waterfront, and provides it with more meaning than could otherwise be derived by just interpreting the visible or tangible.

New planning policy and regulation washed away the modern visions of urban development on the waterfront with a concern for the water itself, both as a fundamental part of the natural environment and as new kind of cultural and economic resource. The latter was realized, for instance, when locating commercial development on or near the water, thereby benefitting from its unusual, often dramatic, location. But the water, and areas near it, now had the potential to be subsumed by consumption. The policies established by BCDC and the Planning Department including maintaining views of the Bay and promoting activities based primarily in leisure and entertainment, from shopping to sport boating, of which the paragon would be Pier 39 (discussed in the next chapter). While the benefits of this kind of policy focus are debatable, they resulted in Pier 39, they nevertheless encouraged publically-oriented rather than completely private uses. So one other aspect of struggle for the waterfront has been over its new economic and cultural value, and in particular over the privatization of that value. Value derived from shipping and maritime activities was supplanted by the value of natural features and cultural history. In other words,

conflict arose because the waterfront promised increased exchange value for developers because of views and setting, but, for the same reasons, it also had special use value to the public. In that planning policy and regulation are an attempt to resolve or mitigate such conflict, they can be seen as a check to the power of capital.

All told, the conditions outlined here contributed to the stultifying atmosphere that pervaded the Port of the 1970s and 1980s and represented a significant shift from the 1950s and 1960s, when the Port pursued grand plans for development, albeit unsuccessfully, that would have created a neo-Corbusian-futurist-modern waterfront. Somewhat ironically, now not only would the possibilities for revitalization of the northern waterfront be more modest and supportive of the public realm, they would be even harder to implement. Regardless, it was clear that pursuing commercial development, especially land use geared to consumption, was still a fundamental necessity, first, because of the conditions of the transfer, which called for maximum return on land no longer required for maritime use, and second, to generate income to respond to new demands for public improvements and access to the waterfront, and third, as always, to support shipping activities. Chapter Eight discusses some of the projects that were pursued during the 1970s and 80s; some were successful, others not.

Chapter 8: Major Changes Along the Waterfront During the 1970s And 1980s

> What this port should have is an over-all plan for its future and then let the public look over it and understand it. Then when a development comes up, we'll be able to see where it fits in, instead of taking it as one project by itself. (SFC 26 February 1976)
>
> -Words of wisdom from John Williams, the Port's commercial leasing manager, upon quitting his job.

This chapter reveals how top-down forces and their agents, including some developers and the state (through, for instance, the doctrine of the public trust) met with countervailing bottom-up forces as generated by plans, regulations, the Port's new political context, and the planning process in general, to initiate, or stymie, change in the waterfront's built environment. This chapter thus describes a landscape beginning to be characterized by the affects of a nascent process of negotiation. The detail provided also supports the suggestion made in this study that not all actors, agents, or agencies can be neatly classified as top-down or bottom-up. As will be seen, developers can be locals who have a personal interest and creative vision that are not driven by external pressures. Yet, those same developers may need to tap into national or global financial networks or team up with outside firms to achieve their goals. They must also negotiate with other local agents and actors, from neighborhood groups to local organizations with special interests.

That revitalization of the northern waterfront did not proceed apace was not necessarily from want of trying, and change was not entirely absent; some major

projects were proposed, a few succeeded, some public improvements were implemented, and decayed piers were removed. Very little commercial development occurred on the northern waterfront during the 1970s, 80s, and a good part of the 90s, indicating the limited power of capital to transform what was perhaps the City's most valuable property. Rather than presenting a litany of every change that did or did not occur, this chapter will provide several specific examples of attempts to revitalize the northern waterfront.

The failure of both the Ferry Port Plaza and U.S. Steel projects signaled a dramatic shift in the balance of power for control of the waterfront - or at least those portions of Port property no longer needed for, or able to support, shipping or other industrial maritime uses. The Port's chance to redevelop its northern waterfront with large-scale, mixed-use projects capable of generating substantial revenue to support upkeep and cargo-related improvements was all but gone. Any argument that the Port could "save" most of the northern waterfront if it could just develop one or two major projects became moot; the morphology of revitalization would have to be different. Instead of a bold extension of the city, a San Francisco that would jut over the water and into the future, eradicating all signs of decay with visionary urbanism, the waterfront's renewal would have to be of a gentler form. More modest projects would have to be pursued, and these projects would have to address concern for the environment, open space, public access to the water, and also include other features deemed important by various agencies and activists and now reflected in land use

policy and regulation. Moreover, development of Port property would occur in the arena of, and be subject to, local politics.

But even this new tempered vision of the waterfront would prove difficult to achieve. As pointed out in Chapter Seven, one of the most significant and direct effects of new plans and regulations, indeed of the overall waterfront planning process, was the suppression of redevelopment. This is another characteristic of the third stage in the development of planning policy and regulation. While San Francisco, especially downtown, was being transfigured by waves of national and international investment, the northern waterfront for the most part continued to stagnate. As office buildings were being erected piers were decaying or being demolished; few developers could be attracted to the waterfront.

With the exception of those piers that remained in operation to receive break bulk cargo, news print paper being one of the most important, the northern waterfront was for the most part reduced to serving as the home for ferries, tugs, and miscellaneous, non-cargo related activities. Reflecting this spreading maritime moribundity, the "northern waterfront" was not a static delineation; its extent began to creep southward. Initially, its southern boundary was the Bay Bridge, but as finger piers became relics of another time, the boundary crept further south. By the early 1980s, largely as a result of the push to develop South Beach-Rincon Point (through

the redevelopment plan for the area), China Basin Channel became the southern boundary of the northern waterfront. So, the polarization of Port activities that began to appear in the 1960s was certainly cemented by the 1970s. By the 1980s, however, the balance began to tip, relegating shipping and traditional industrial maritime activities to a smaller and more remote part of the waterfront.

FISHERMAN'S WHARF: PLACE AND PLACELESSNESS

> The Wharf's problems lie in a...world of politics, real estate economics and a planning process gone seriously awry. (San Francisco Business Times August 1987)

If any place on the waterfront could exhibit the dialectical oppositions of the (post)modern condition, surely it was Fisherman's Wharf. The 1970s and 1980s were a time of ostensibly competing demands for the wharf: promote tourism, but protect the activities which gave it its charm to begin with (which in turn generates more tourism); concentrate consumption in a place established by production (fishing and fish processing, canning, and food preparation); develop new activities on Port property that would make the area more palatable to residents of the city but do so in ways that maintain the wharf's authenticity (thereby generating more tourism and in turn making it less appealing to residents). While fishing, fish processing, and marine services such as boat repair and fueling did indeed occur at the Wharf, and still do, the surrounding area's historic relationship to the water was being transformed. That is, warehouses, food-processing, and other land side activities that had connections to the

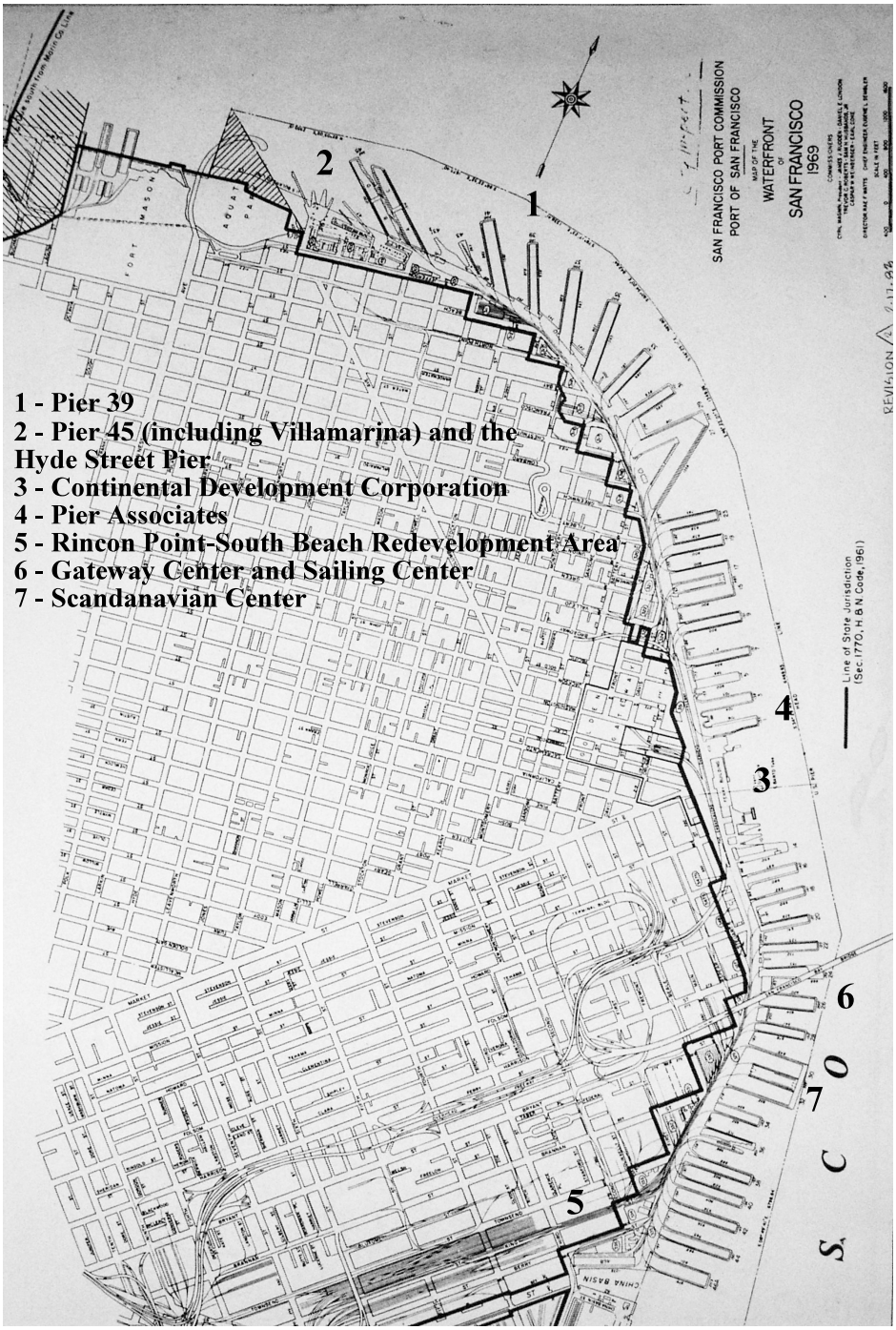

Figure 70 1969 Port map showing location of the projects discussed in this chapter. The dark line indicates the Port jurisdictional boundary. Comparing this map with Figures 41, p. 150 and Figure 86, p. 355, will reveal some of the changes that have occurred along the northern waterfront. Source: Port of San Francisco.

fishing operations, cargo handling, and other maritime businesses using the piers Fisherman's Wharf were replaced by land uses that supported tourism. Oddly, the waterfront and land side activities became even more interrelated as tourist-oriented land uses developed and changed the immediate built environment around the wharf.

The transformation of the connection between waterfront activities and land-side development was fueled by a feedback system that evolved between them. The Port side provided the interest, from historic boats moored at Hyde Street Pier to a working fishing fleet, processing facilities, and seafood restaurants, that would draw tourists. The land side provided the hotels to locate consumers within easy reach of that which was to be consumed: the Bay (from cruises to views), its setting, fish, and local history based on consuming the bay (historic ships and buildings, a maritime museum, fish again).[1] The land side also included sites of consumption "themed" by their historic link to water - former sites of production whose raw materials came across San Francisco's piers. These are exemplified by the adaptively reused old mustard and chocolate factory (Ghirardelli Square) and former Del Monte Cannery (the Cannery), as well as "curiosity shops." Later in the 70s, a shopping and hotel complex called the Anchorage was constructed, whose relationship to the waterfront was and is in name and proximity alone. Its construction signaled the need for only the weakest association with the waterfront to generate consumption. Through all this, most non-fishing related maritime operations faded away from the wharf area: the

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[1] The Hyde Street Pier was the home to what would become the country's largest collection of historic ships.

Foreign Trade Zone was relocated from Pier 45 to piers further south; Crown-Zellerbach moved its paper-handling facilities from Pier 45 to Piers 27-79 (later relocated; Piers 37 and 39 (the former was badly damaged by fire in 1976) had only a few tenants; Pier 41 had been removed from maritime use by 1972.

The infrastructure, especially the physical connections between land and water, that had supported industrial and heavy commercial activity also changed. Improvements were made to Aquatic Park and the cable car terminus, open space was created (between Ghirardelli Square and the Cannery), the area's parking capacity was increased, and, eventually, pedestrian access to the Bay was expanded. All of this supported the tourist enterprise - recreation and shopping - rather than industry and the movement of goods. The mix of Port and landside activities combined to create an intoxicating atmosphere; it was and is perhaps even more now, a kaleidoscope of consumption. The morphological rejoining of the city and the waterfront in this place has become a defining element of the landscape.

Consumption is an example of something not readily categorized; it is both a local/global and top-down/bottom-up phenomenon. Tourism-based consumption is the result of cultural and economic trends on the one hand, but is also generated by or focused on a local scene and reliant upon the character of a locale. In the case of the wharf, consumption is primarily a function of tourism, entertainment, and leisure seeded in the fishing industry, historic preservation and adaptive re-use, and the natural surroundings. The role of consumption in (and of) Fisherman's Wharf can be

seen partly as a top-down force in much the same way that growth of San Francisco's downtown represents the larger forces of capital at work in the city. There is also a local urge to transform Fisherman's Wharf into a world-class tourist destination in order to benefit from the economic potential of hotels, sales, business opportunities, increased employment, and tax revenues - all based on tourism. Local forces thus support tourism both actively and passively by making a place appealing, by supporting the activities and features that draw people (and investment) to the place, and by contributing to the creation of the necessary infrastructure to support it (hotels, transportation, services). But the infrastructure is also created by top-down forces seeking investment opportunities or corporate expansion. Underscoring this dual nature, the opportunity to profit by serving tourists is sought after by both global concerns and local businessmen; and both attempt to take advantage of the unusual nature of a place. Thus, the wharf experienced sustained pressure to change from both external economic and cultural pressures and from the local desire of some to support those activities. While many San Franciscans criticized the wharf's overly touristic nature, plans and regulations supported it. In this context, the Port approved development of Pier 39, a festival market that would cement the wharf as a "world-class" tourist-shopping destination. Whether or not it was, or is, a success is largely a matter of opinion.

Pier 39: Producing Consumption

> Corm. Kitsch. Schlock. Honky-tonk. Dreck. Schmaltz. Merde. Whatever you call the pseudo-Victorian Junk with which Warren Simmons has festooned Pier 39, this ersatz San Francisco that never was - a chef d'oeuvre of hallucinatory cliches - is a joke on the port and planning commissions...and an especially bad joke on the whole unfortunate city, which must live for the next 60 years...with this childish excrescence, which was stupidly allowed to deface the northern waterfront.
>
> - Alan Temko (SFC 30 October 1978)

The southernmost part of Fisherman's Wharf was by the 1970s an area in transition, flanked on the north by the wharf proper and on the south by the Port's cruise terminal and what was left of the real working waterfront north of the Bay Bridge - the area of finger piers in the northeastern waterfront at the base of Telegraph Hill. The three finger piers in the wharf area were being used for little more than warehousing, water taxis, tugs, tour boats, and ferries (BCDC 1975, 19). By the second half of the decade, only Pier 39 was in use. As part of their report (see Chapter Three), the consulting firm Arthur D. Little had concluded in 1966 that these piers could be removed from maritime use, and BCDC's *Special Area Plan* reflected as much. If any area of the waterfront had the potential as a place for development, this was it.

In fact, as the *SAP* was being prepared, Warren Simmons, the owner of the local chain of Tia Maria Mexican restaurants, was looking to sell his idea for a mall/entertainment/park complex at the site of the three piers. By the time the *SAP* was published in 1975, the permitted uses on new or replacement fill for this area

included an explicit reference to Simmons' "North Point Park" (what would later be called simply Pier 39).[2] The *SAP* described it as "bay-oriented commercial recreation that is complimentary to park use" (BCDC 1975, 20). The 1977 Northeastern Waterfront plan also included policies which anticipated development there, and even included a detailed, accurate plan view of a possible Pier 39 development. One policy stated:

> Permit additional water-oriented commercial recreation development of restaurants, entertainment and specialty shops in the Pier 41 to 37 waterfront area in conjunction with a major waterfront park along the seawall. (SFPD 1977, 15)

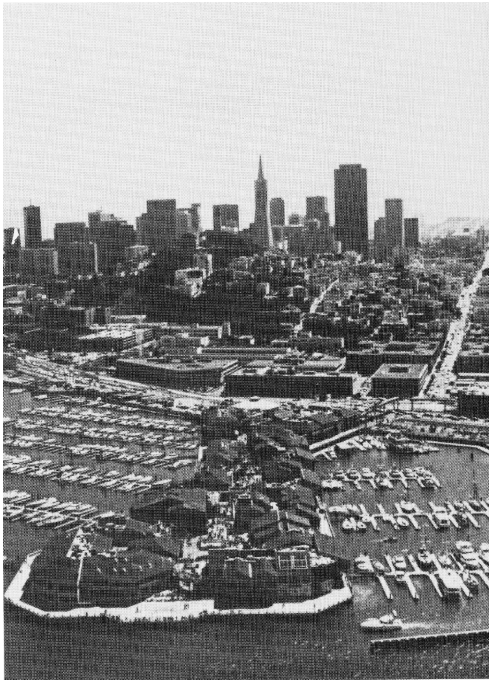

Figure 71 Pier 39 @ 1978 - a site of consumption. Source: San Francisco Planning Department 1980, *The Northeastern Waterfront Plan.*

Simmons was an ex-Pan Am pilot who had managed to make a few connections in San Francisco because of his restaurants, which he later sold to finance the Pier 39 project. His connections allowed him to present his ideas almost directly to Port commissioners and in doing so, to avoid competitive bidding (which anyway was not

[2] Generally, the *Special Area Plan* allowed fill for only a limited set of non-maritime industrial uses, few of which have the potential to generate rent: marinas; bay-oriented commercial recreation, and bay-oriented public assembly. These uses are defined as "facilities specifically designed to attract large numbers of people to enjoy the Bay and its shoreline, such as restaurants, specialty shops, and hotels." (BCDC 1975, 8).

then mandated). Such connections were critical, and Simmons later mused that he could not have pushed the project forward without the friendship of people such as Mayor Moscone (Los Angeles Times 5 October 1978). As Logan (1993) argues, such connections emphasize the local character, rather than the global, of real estate investment and development. Of course, being able to pursue a project in such a fashion opened the process up to criticism, which even anti-development Port Director Soules tried to deflect by arguing that it would not be fair for other developers to bid on Simmons' own idea (SFC 15 May 1975).[3] The Port Commission was not entirely deaf to the project's critics; Commissioner Rudden said that "if anybody cares to come in with something better that would serve ecological and environmental ends" then they should do so (SFC 15 May 1975). His comment, along with the policy requirements for open space and access to the water as part of the project, indicated the increasing influence that activism wielded in the planning and development processes.

Figure 72 Pier 39 in 1953 - a site of labor disputes. Source: Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

[3] According to the LA Times, Simmons saw the dilapidated Pier 39 and thought it would be a good place for a Tia Maria restaurant. The site was huge, though, and so his scheme grew to fill it. Initially, his ideas met resistence, but boat owners said that they would support his project if he included a marina, which he did, and so they did. (Los Angeles Times 5 October 1978).

Simmons' proposal adhered to the various land use policies applicable to the site. It could be permitted under existing regulation without any special requirements, its development was not contingent on development elsewhere, making it more straightforward than other recent proposals, and it fit within the 40-foot height limit.[4] As compared to other projects proposed for Port property, Pier 39 was generally warmly received.[5] The Port Commission voted three to two to proceed with negotiations, and so the port launched the process proper that would create one of the country's most popular destinations.

Pier 39 was not just a jewel in the eye of a commission desperate to do something on the northern waterfront. The San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, the boating community, and real estate professionals thought it a dandy project. In fact, Simmons won significant support by readily agreeing to demands that a marina be included in his designs. One usually persistent critic and protester, Karl Kortum, director of the San Francisco Maritime Museum, actually praised it, saying that it was "the first waterfront development with public access since Fisherman's Wharf came into being at the turn of the century" (SFC 4 August 1977). Even most of the vocal activist and grass roots organizations that vigilantly watched over the Port were relatively quiet (but none openly supported Simmons) - a far cry from the protest

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[4] For instance, improvements to the Hyde Street Pier were required as part of any development of Pier 45, as discussed later in this chapter.

[5] Except that Commissioner Jack Morrison felt that the Port was not getting as good a deal as it should, something that would in fact come back to haunt the Port, and the project. That story is not part of this discussion.

against U.S. Steel. The criticisms that were aimed at Pier 39 were fundamentally different from those leveled at the Port's previous development schemes. Instead of attacking the basic mix of activities or the mass of the structures, criticisms focused on the project's architectural character and its potential to generate a traffic nightmare on the Embarcadero (partly because of proposed alterations to the roadway itself). In similarly modest criticisms, nearby residents and Fisherman's Wharf merchants were concerned about potential parking problems. Simmons' mollifying response was to include a multi-story garage, which, unfortunately, was built, even though its inclusion was questioned by several city Planning Commissioners as well as Robert Katz and Richard Gryziec at a hearing regarding the project's Environmental Impact Report (SFC 30 July 19/76).

Critics also claimed that Pier 39 would just create a second Fisherman's Wharf. One person described it as a "goddam vacationland for tourists who come down here and spend $2 and then go home" (SFC 30 July 1976). The last bastion of protest against the project was at the Art Commission, which saw its role as a that of a defender against honkey-tonk (SFC 12 March 1978). The Art Commission actually managed to stall the project for a while, but political pressure easily overwhelmed resistence based on aesthetics.[6]

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[6] Other issues would arise later, including charges that several Commissioners who voted to approve the project were granted large restaurant concessions.

The reality was that, given the constraints placed on the Port, Pier 39 was one of a very few permitted developments that could afford to pay for required public improvements such as open space and access to the water, and also generate income to help the Port run its operations and modernize its shipping facilities. As such, it was almost guaranteed to succeed, especially when the developed altered elements of the proposal to meet local demands. As initially constructed - though it has gone through a few modifications and changes in tenant mix since - Pier 39 included a five acre stretch of open space, a perimeter promenade (which responded to the requirement for public access to the Bay), tens of restaurants and more than 100 specialty shops and boutiques, a large marina, and across the Embarcadero on seawall lots, a 1000-car parking structure. Its low profile buildings were built partly with weathered wood and the remains of old piers 39 and 41. Pier 39 was first big project north of the Bay Bridge since the mid 1960s - the last being the upgrade of piers 27-29. After six years, including 30 months to secure all of the necessary permits, Pier 39 was opened on time in early October 1978 (SFC 4 August 1977). But while the project was successfully completed, it has not been an entirely successful. After its completion, critics had found another fault - that the Port was more concerned with generating tourist activity, and creating a place for tourists, than with San Franciscans. Essentially, the Port was also accused of being a purveyor of bad taste and shameless consumerism. Pier 39 was savaged fairly early on by Alan Temko, the Chronicle's redoubtable architecture critic, for its unabashedly 'faux' character. Unlike the romanticized, softly historic

consumption found elsewhere in Fisherman's Wharf, Pier 39 was a "contemporary mass-feeding, hard selling operation" (SFC 29 August 19\77). His criticism reached crescendo by the time Pier 39 opened:

> ... a kind of 'post-modern' or 'ad-hoc' populism - that is, the vernacular building of mass-consumption merchandising...
>
> ...a false city-scape" of modernist contradiction - "a meandering pattern, seemingly free, but in fact cleverly controlled...
>
> ...mass-feeding and sleazy entertainment are 'water-related' if they occur in a pier...
> (Chron 10\30\78)

The irony of Pier 39 is that the land use policy and regulations that were in place to protect the public interest, and the environment, when combined with the Port's financial imperatives, ended up producing a site of consumption that was of little interest to many, probably most, residents of San Francisco. In attracting people from elsewhere in the Bay Area and beyond, the Port managed to alienate this part of the waterfront from its City. In an instant city, this was a flash of dystopian morphogenesis resulting not from the power of capital to reform the landscape or the globalization of cities and culture, but from local regulation and policy as they reflect, albeit imperfectly, local values and local conditions. Furthermore, Pier 39 did not spring from a national or international corporate interest; it was, rather, a local entrepreneur who had a particular vision. Simmons sold his restaurant chain to finance the project, so while it is possible that some or all of the capital that he

generated for the project came from or ultimately flowed into national or global financial networks, Pier 39 is hardly the high symbol (literally and figuratively) of globalization that is a downtown corporate skyscraper. On the other hand, his monument of shopping and eating is certainly part of a global phenomenon that is the perpetuation of landscapes of consumption.

A Catch-22

Pier 39 was not the only way that consumption became perhaps the defining element of the landscape in Fisherman's Wharf. While exactly what should happen in Fisherman's Wharf, from major development to pedestrian improvements, has been and still is a subject rife with contention, there has been one clear goal, sought after by the Port, reflected in policy, and supported by regulation - the encouragement of the fishing industry and its associated businesses, including restaurants.[7] Debate has raged over how this should be done. As described earlier in this chapter, the fishing fleet, fish processing, and other activities supported the Port and the city economy in two fashions: directly in terms of employment and revenue associated with the fishing industry, and indirectly by tourism attracted to the wharf because of the working character and "genuine flavor" imparted by those activities. Policies and regulations support this situation and therefore are the main reasons the wharf is as it is today. Protecting activities found there, improving its physical condition, and ensuring that

[7] The Port's revenue from restaurant leases in the Wharf is substantial, so such businesses are well protected.

new development maintained its character were considered so essential that a separate plan was written just for the wharf area.

After some unsuccessful proposals for development, and with the wharf increasingly in need of upkeep, the Port decided that it needed to outline a coherent strategy for the wharf and so engaged the design firm ROMA to lead the effort. The *Fisherman's Wharf Action Plan (FWAP)* was adopted by the Port Commission in 1981.[8] The *FWAP* was a fairly cautious document that addressed some of the criticisms leveled at past development proposals by including basic use and design standards. Its main goals were to maintain the authenticity of the wharf's maritime character, to enhance its attractiveness to residents and tourists, to protect and improve commercial fishing activities, to encourage development of the Hyde Street Pier and Pier 45, and to encourage the minimization of parking and traffic problems. The plan was concerned that over-commercialization of the wharf, which threatened its "authentic character," made it increasingly unattractive to San Francisco residents. The idea was that if Fisherman's Wharf could be made appealing to residents, activity would be less seasonal, which would support local businesses (ROMA Architecture and Design 1981, 1). The plan also called for certain critical infrastructure and public improvements, including a new breakwater, repairs to the Jefferson Street seawall, and improvements to Fish Alley, which was suffering from prolonged physical

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[8] ROMA worked with a civic advisory committee, comprised of representatives from area businesses, neighborhood groups, and many local agencies. The plan was intended as a refinement of existing BCDC and City plans for Fisherman's Wharf.

deterioration. The often maligned visual character of the wharf was also identified as needing much improvement. This cause was not helped by the Fisherman's Wharf Pavilion, constructed in 1982. Containing restrooms and the ticketing office of Harbor Carrier, it was built at the heart of a cluster of restaurants and tourist shops as part of public improvements recommended by the *FWAP*. It is not an uncommon irony that attractions that rely partly on their beautiful setting to be successful are themselves so ugly (see Figure 73).

Two of the most important physical improvement projects called for in the plan were actually implemented. First was the construction of a new breakwater considered critical for protecting the fishing fleet and historic ships moored at the Hyde Street Pier. The Hyde Street pier had served as a breakwater but over the years had been largely removed. A new breakwater had been a priority for years, but it was not until 1985 that federal funding through the Corps of Engineers was approved (Peter Grenell and Associates1985, 3). The breakwater, including a promenade, was completed ahead of schedule in 1986. Second was repair of the Jefferson Street sea wall, on which many businesses, especially restaurants and crab stands, had been

Figure 73 Fisherman's Wharf Pavilion just after its opening. Source: Port of San Francisco *1982 Annual Report*.

built.[9] These projects, and some of the open space improvements and the completion of the cable car terminus, served to strengthen both of the wharf's main characteristics, its authenticity (breakwaters helped protect the fishing fleet), and the tourism (cable cars now brought tourists directly from one site of consumption, Union Square, to another).

However, one of the most significant development ideas supported in the plan never came to fruition, and underscored the conflicted position of the Port. The plan called for the construction of a "Fisheries Center" as part of Pier 45 development. In turn, development of Pier 45 was linked to development of the Hyde Street Pier. The plan also called for relocating fishing facilities to an improved Hyde Street Pier so that much of Pier 45, a large, 11.5-acre structutre, could be devoted to new uses. At the time, Pier 45 was considered a unique opportunity because a portion of it was built in landfill prior to the McAteer-Petris Act; BCDC regulations at the time indicated that housing was allowable on existing bay fill. The potential to build housing was important to the Port because it was believed that bringing residents to the wharf would serve to help even out the seasonal nature of commerce in the wharf and to make the area more appealing to San Franciscans, thereby softening its tourist-hardened image. SPUR considered housing to be a lynchpin for the future success of the *FWAP* (SPUR 1981).

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[9] Some of these improvements were part of a package funded by a voter-approved bond measure in 1984; but most of the money was directed to cargo operations in the southern waterfront.

The Port's first efforts to attract development in Fisherman's Wharf at Pier 45 had actually preceded the *FWAP*. Around 1972, the Port Commission was actively seeking proposals for mixed use development to include hotels, retail, and housing. In 1974, the concept of development on the pier was officially sanctioned by the Port's commission, which was "optimistic that plans for Pier 45 will escape much of the controversy that has stalled or eliminated development elsewhere on the waterfront" (SFC 11 April 1974). Mixed-use development at Pier 45, however, was doomed.

Figure 74 Pier 45, bottom center, and the Hyde Street Pier, bottom right @1975. Source: Port of San Francisco 1975/1976, *Ocean Shipping Handbook.*

The official call for proposals got five responses that all included various mixes of luxury housing, garages, shops and restaurants, hotels, and open space. A familiar tension gripped Pier 45 as local merchants, neighborhood activists, and officials reacted to the project. The range of concerns about the project varied from traffic congestion to finances.[10] Among traditional waterfront workers there was still resistence to the idea that the northern waterfront's time had come. One retired

[10] Supervisor John Barbagelata attacked the proposals because he felt they would not generate enough income. According to the Chronicle (24 December 1974; 30 December 1974; 11 January 1975), Barbagelata was waging a one-man war against the Pier 45 plans.

longshoreman accused the Port of being interested only in "hotdog stands and hotels" and not cargo (SFC 11 December 1974) . The Port's commercial property manager, John Williams, at the center of many development debates, responded by pointing out that they were clearly "not aware of the facts of life on this project" (SFC 11 January 1975).[11] And accusations of conflict of interest flew because Frank Alioto, cousin to the Mayor, and former Port Commissioner Cyril Magnin had connections with various of the entities that responded to the development opportunity.[12]

The Port weathered all of these criticisms, helped partly by the Mayor and Planning Director Allan Jacobs, who had consistently supported bringing housing to the water's edge.[13] The two leading contenders for the opportunity were Forty Five Associates, which proposed a festival-housing-retail complex dubbed "Villamarina" and a Houston firm, Gerald D. Hines Interests, which proposed a combination of

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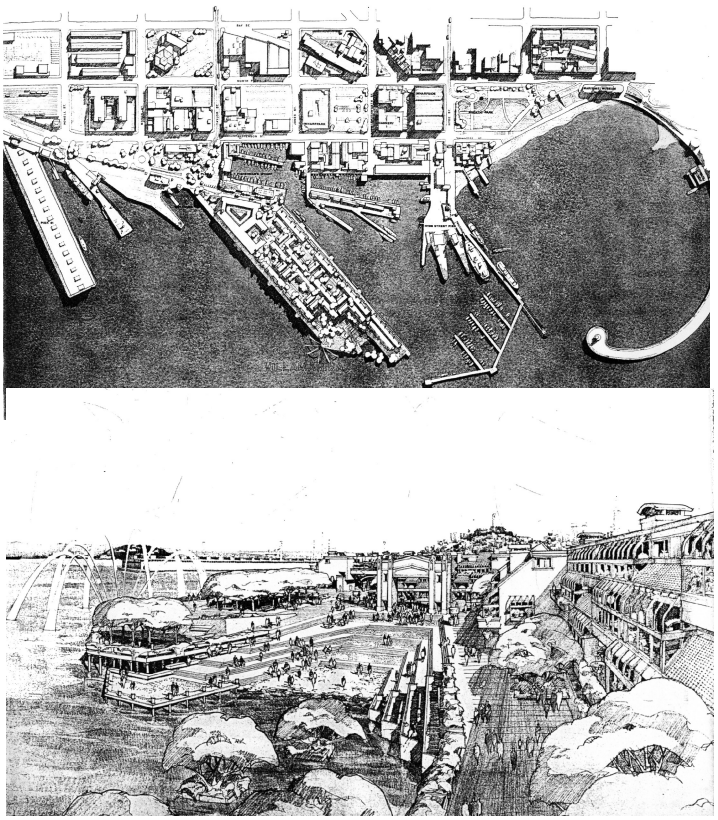
[11] These restrictions were being negotiated in light of then underway efforts to complete BCDC's Special Area Plan. The Chronicle described them as "the rigid restrictions placed on development during negotiations with waterfront conservationists" (11 January 1975).

[12] There was particular sensitivity to this issue as voters had just passed a tough conflict-of-interest measure in June 1974. SPUR actually defended criticisms that the Port was wheeling and dealing sub-rosa, and contended that pursuit of development was being fully disclosed and that the process "could not be faulted" (SFC 11 December 1974).

[13] However, the Planning Department's Northern Waterfront Plan did not support housing on the Pier. Policy therein instead emphasized the continuance of fishing and related activities - an inconsistency between the two plans that would have become an issue had the project moved forward.

residential, hotel, and office uses.[14] While Forty Five Associates was thought to have the best design, the Hines project had better money-making potential. The Port selected Hines and in May 1975, the Port Commission granted the firm a 60-year lease. Importantly, however, Hines was not bound to the lease agreement until all of the necessary permits and approvals were granted - an arrangement that clearly indicated the difficulty of securing them. Yet Hines was facing more than permitting difficulties. San Francisco Tomorrow threatened lawsuits, and protests were coming from many directions. Such hurdles are par for the development course, but with restrictions on building height and requirements for



Figures 75 and76 Drawings of Villamarina. Source: Port of San Francisco/Forty Five Associates 1974.

[14] Globalization cold-war style reared its head briefly when the Chronicle reported that even the Soviets wanted in on the Forty Five Associates proposal. Their interest was in building a cultural center that would "be used for showing the achievements of the USSR in the field of oceanography, shipbuilding, and fishing, as well as the cultural life of the Soviet people" (SFC 6 September 1974).

open space that limit design flexibility and potential profit, the development game is made very difficult. Profitability may have been of particular importance as Hines was apparently experiencing some corporate financial hiccups back home in Houston. How that would have had an effect on whether Hines pursued the project is hard to say, but if a development proposal results in a good bottom line with modest risk, it is hard to imagine a developer deciding against the opportunity. This underscores the importance of restraints to development on Port land; what would otherwise be an incredibly lucrative opportunity was made questionable by local policy, regulation, and civic protest.[15]

Nevertheless, what finally sank the project was that it ran into a recessionary period (ROMA Architecture and Design 198, 25), not the first time or the last that a project would be jeopardized by the time it takes to wind its way through the planning process. To make things worse, the Port Commission approved a proposal for development at nearby Pier 39. The Chronicle reported that "the award to Simmons was the 'last straw' for the Hines Associates" (SFC 18 July 1975). According to Hines, because Simmons' project was partly a retail and entertainment development, it would compete directly with similar components of their own project. All of these things would add up to unappealing circumstances for any firm; it was too much for Hines and the firm pulled out of the deal. Not one to give up easily, in 1975, at the

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[15] Hines was only the last to pull out. Before them, Gordon Bakar withdrew from consideration citing obstructionist anti-development waterfront types, and Amfac dropped out (it was involved in 2 proposals) because of conflict of interest issues (SFC 12 December 1974).

end of his term, Mayor Alioto convinced Hines to give the project a second chance, but Simmon's Pier 39 was moving determinedly forward, and the initial issues remained (SFC26 February 1976). The project was dead by March 1976.

Why Simmons, whose project is discussed later, could move forward while Hines failed is partly a matter of conjecture. However, Simmons' project was better suited to the constraints on development faced by anyone seeking to make good on what was possibly the most valuable real estate in San Francisco. Retail and entertainment do not lose as much financial potential from restrictive height limits as do office and hotel buildings, and to a lesser degree housing. Furthermore, the location of Simmons' project's was somewhat less burdened with issues of congestion, and its development was not conditioned on improvements to other facilities.[16]

The Port temporarily gave up hope that commercial development could proceed at least on part of Pier 45 and so, in 1979, hoping still to implement part of the *FWAP*, it solicited bids for development of fishing-related facilities and a "fisheries center." The Port received no responses. Concluding that the fishing industry could not be supported without some commercial venture, the Port resuscitated the idea of building condos on the pier. However, in 1984, in discussions with the State Lands Commission, the City was informed that housing on Pier 45 was not a permissible use pursuant to the doctrine of public trust, even though BCDC had deemed it acceptable. The opportunity to do something different in the Wharf was lost. In 1986, desperately

[16] Notably, some opposition to the project was based in the feeling that it would not earn enough money for the Port.

needing income, the Port decided that a hotel/festival market development at Pier 45 would generate enough funding to relocate and refurbish fishing facilities to the Hyde Street Pier. Four bids were received, but a an outburst of criticism from the public stymied the process before it went very far, even though the proposed mix of uses was allowable.[17]

Activists and local merchants argued that a hotel would generate too much congestion, and fishermen insisted that before the hotel was constructed, they should be accommodated at Hyde Street Pier. Estimates of the cost of retrofitting the Hyde Street Pier soared, making the proposed development program even less tenable. Criticism was so intense that no mayoral candidate would come out in support of the project (Calandra 1990).[18] Even Mayor Feinstein, at the end of her term, reversed her initial position supporting the concept. As Port Commissioner Ann Halsted noted, "there is a lot of public support for anything that's real and maritime there, that has to do with the water" (San Francisco BusinessTimes August 1987). The general perception was clearly that hotels and festival markets had little to do with San Franciscans or fishing. The argument made by the Port and its developers that the only way to generate funding to support and improve the fishing industry was with a

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[17] The project was even compatible with policies suggested in a 1985 neighborhood plan called the *Fisherman's Wharf Community Plan* (Peter Grenell and Associates). The plan, which community members felt was necessary to update the *FWAP*, was never adopted ot officially recognized.

[18] One candidate, Assemblyman Art Agnos, who would in fact win the 1988 election, vocally supported the fishing industry and disparaged the idea of hotels on the waterfront. He would back away from this position once ensconced at City Hall.

hotel-based development on Pier 45 fell on deaf ears. Nevertheless, this would not be the last time that the Port would attempt to use hotels, its last best hope for profitable commercial ventures, as the anchors for development proposals.

Fisherman's Wharf Epilogue

Since the opening of Pier 39, the underlying character of Fisherman's Wharf has changed little. It is still a major tourist area generally shunned by San Franciscans. Now, however, the fishing industry that is the foundation of the wharf's popularity is in much better condition, especially in terms of facilities. The 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake did about $20 million worth of damage to Port property, including Pier 45. Turning this event to its advantage, the Port managed to secure enough state and federal funds, including FEMA money, to repair the damage and reconstruct fish processing facilities (PSF 1990a).[19] Additionally, new berths for the fishing fleet were completed in 2000. The two new modern sheds are home to processors, wholesalers, and distributers that now comprise one of the largest concentrations of seafood businesses on the west coast. Fish handling and processing is busier here than anywhere in northern California and Oregon and a large part of the 11.5-acre pier is still available for commercial development.[20]

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[19] In 1989, it was estimated that 750 full time-equivalent jobs could be associated with fishing and the seafood industry, with gross sales impact exceeding $60 million (PSF 1988/89).

[20] Recent attempts to develop this space drew interest from a developer that wanted to construct a neo-museum called "the San Francisco Experience" and a non-

Planning policy has done much to help establish the character of Fisherman's Wharf as a place of mutually reenforcing activities - production and consumption. Local processes have etched them into the landscape, creating both place and placelessness. That Fisherman's Wharf has not changed substantially in 25 years can be attributed to local conditions: policy and regulatory restraints on development that limit potential profitability, and a planning process and political environment that halted projects by either delaying them until conditions were not favorable to developers or by the intensity of protests.

The single major exception was Pier 39, an example of a project that, for better or worse, conformed to planning policy and regulation and was successfully implemented. The difference between it and projects proposed for Pier 45 was local political support. Even though the Port's attempts at revamping Pier 45 technically conformed to established policy and were intended to achieve a goal that most people agreed with (support for the fishing industry), the agency still ran into severe difficulties. In this case, it was not plans and regulations that directly affected what happened at Pier 45, although they certainly limited the Port's choices. Rather, because the Port was subject to the politics of planning, its efforts to transform this very visible part of the waterfront were stymied. If the mayor or the Board of Supervisors did not support a project its chances for success were greatly reduced; the

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profit organization that hoped to build a research and educational complex focused on the Bay. Public outcry squelched the former and the latter had apparent difficulty with funding. The space is still available.

mayor could reappoint commissioners and the board could vote down leases. Where public disgruntlement is so intense and the profitability of a project is marginal, politicians are not wont to commit themselves, especially to support an agency so often criticized.

The Port's attempt to capitalize on the seemingly vast potential of the tourist industry created a visceral response from locals who saw it as another effort by the Port that would further alienate the citizens of San Francisco from their waterfront. For members of the public who wanted the wharf to become more appealing to them, and for local businesses who were concerned with the everyday functioning of the wharf, a hotel was anathema. So, the Port's inability to reorganize and redevelop Pier 45 and the Hyde Street Pier is an example of how both bottom-up and top down forces mix with local conditions to nullify potential change in a landscape. Limits on development, local resistence, competing ideas, and delays created by the planning process, combined with the vicissitudes of financing and investment, and, ultimately, economic recessions to squelch change. This interplay is not easily read from the landscape because it did not produce material change. One could not look at the new berths for the fishing fleet and conclude that a fair amount of struggle over place-making occurred before an earthquake made outside funding available for improvements. Indeed, the view of the harbor might lead one to think that San Francisco acted in an instance of unified purpose and interest. It could be argued that

the built environment in and of itself appears to symbolizes societal cooperation while often hiding struggle and conflict.

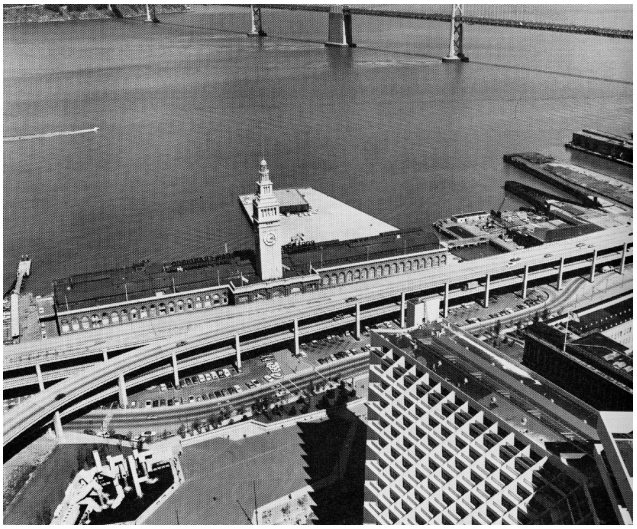


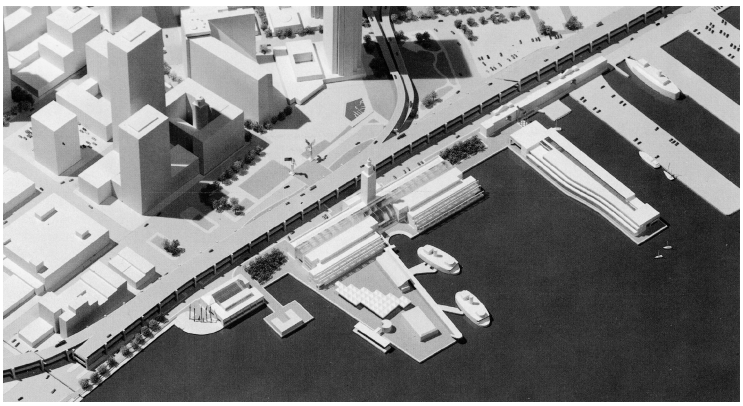
Figure 77 The Ferry Building made it to the 1970s unscathed, but still isolated. Source: Port of San Francisco 1973/74, *Ocean Shipping Handbook*.

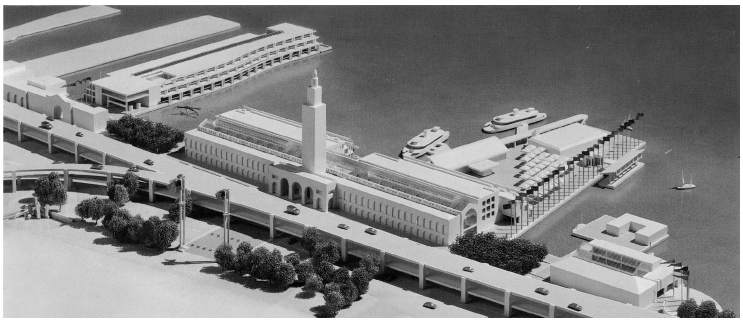
Ferry Building Area Redux

The U.S. Steel and Ferry Port Plaza proposals were defeated in the early 1970s. Less than a decade later, the Port renewed its efforts to transform the Ferry Building area. In 1980 the Port Commission selected Continental Development Corporation (CDC), based in El Segundo, California as its developer. Because now proposals had to comply with new land use and building form restrictions, the Port's request for proposals was primarily for restoration and adaptive re-use of the Ferry and Agriculture Buildings, and development of Pier 1½, which at the time was just a large shed used for parking. Undaunted, CDC embarked on a lengthy effort to achieve the Port's goals for revitalization. It was an effort that would end in nothing more than law suits.

What is perhaps most important about this proposal was its scope and scale, and how developers responded to criticism that it was overly commercial. Initially, the project encountered stiff resistence from Fisherman's Wharf businesses, which

protested that it would threaten their livelihoods, and San Francisco Tomorrow and the Telegraph Hill Dwellers, who claimed that the project did not respect the historic and architectural importance of the landmark building (SFC 19 November 1981). In fact, even the Port Commission rejected their initial ideas. CDC responded by pairing with architects I. M. Pei & Partners and offered to compromise by scaling back its initial program (SFC 10 December 1981). These two moves on the part of the developer garnered support from the Port Commission and a cessation of overt opposition form activists and businesses. "We are still keeping an eye on you" warned one neighborhood association member (SFC 10 December 1981).





Figures 78 and 79 Two views of CDC's model of proposed development of the Ferry Building and Pier 1. Source: Port of San Francisco/Continental Development Corporation 1980.

CDC's proposal included shops, offices, and restaurants, and a "Viennese-type coffee house that promises to become the new social hub of San Francisco"

(Continental Development Corporation 1980). An expanded World Trade Center was slated for Pier 1. Offices were permissible if they were maritime related (the Port itself, for instance) or if they were placed in existing structures, and not new fill (the Ferry Building). All in all, the developers promised a "total experience of work, trade, leisure, and recreation" that would enable the Ferry Building area to "once again serve San Francisco as it did in the past - as the city's crossroads and market plaza. Its central place" (Continental Development Corporation 1980). Nevertheless, it was, despite its pretensions, a dramatically subdued program when compared to the earlier grand schemes that would have overwhelmed the Ferry Building Area. The scale of the CDC's Ferry Building Complex proposal reflected both the limits placed on development in the area by the Planning Code and BCDC's *Special Area Plan* and *Total Design Plan* and the commercial and recreational uses encouraged by policy. Yet, even though the proposal got as far as construction scheduling, it was not a done deal.

CDC encountered two related problems. First, the permitting process was difficult and slow. Second, further delays were attributed to several tenants of the Ferry Building who did not want to be temporarily relocated during construction, and who claimed that they were not going to be sufficiently compensated by CDC (SFC 5 February 1986). The Port lost patience with CDC and sued to remove them from the project, claiming that the firm failed to obtain permits according to the agreed-upon schedule. CDC suggested that it was in fact the Port that did not want to continue with

the project because the commission realized it could have arranged a better financial deal (SFC 9 February 1991). So CDC filed a counter-suit to continue with the project. The Port eventually settled the suite by paying CDC several million dollars for its time and effort. CDC's project was yet another development to be scuttled by the difficult local planning process and peculiar local conditions.

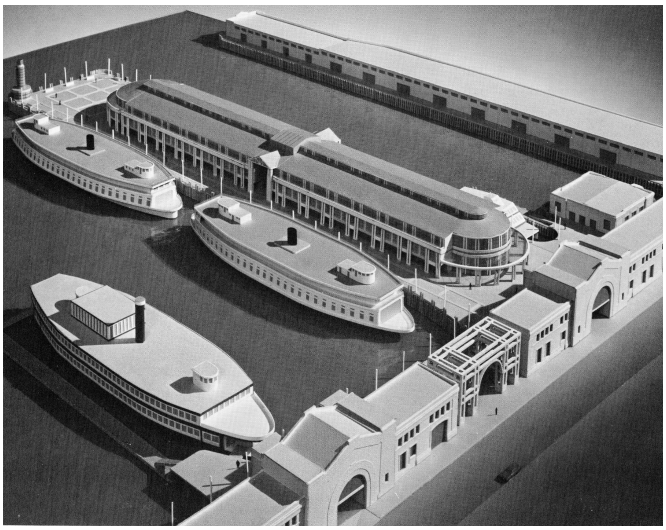


Figure 80 Model of Pier Associates' proposed development. Source: Port of San Francisco 1982, September/October *Wharfside*.

One other development was proposed for the area before the close of the decade. Pier Plaza, an even more moderate vision of waterfront revitalization, was proposed for Piers 1½, 3, and 5. Submitted by Pier Associates, a joint venture of maritime, design, and developer firms, this project included remodeling the existing bulkhead buildings, construction of 120,000 square-feet of office on Pier 3, a restaurant, moorings for historic ferries, and extensive public access improvements. The project, like the Ferry Building Complex, generally conformed to existing policies and regulations; its design seemed promising. Allen Temko commented that

> The Port of San Francisco has a history of grandiose projects that never get built. But its latest scheme to transform three old piers north of the Ferry

> Building into offices, cultural facilities and recreational open space has a real chance of success. (SFC 20 August 1985)

However, as part of the permit review and approval process, the State Lands Commission reviewed the project and determined that its office element had to be maritime-related, as opposed to 'general office,' in order to satisfy public trust requirements.[21] What happened exactly is unclear, but probably because Pier Associates was concerned that they might not be able to attract solely maritime-related firms to lease the office space, this project too sank quietly out of sight, sometime after 1986. Not un-coincidentally, the mid 1980s were marked by a recession; it is probable that both of these proposals were beset with the additional difficulties imposed by larger economic issues.

Overall, the result for the Ferry Building area was that, for a quarter century between the late 1960s and the early 1990s there were only three major changes to its morphology: 1) construction of a concrete platform (to protect the B.A.R.T. rail tube) on which is located a restaurant, open space, and a fishing pier (Figure 14); 2) removal of a half-dozen dilapidated finger piers; and 3) two public access projects, one to construct the Promenade, a public access project completed in 1982 (Figure 15) and the other to replace the old Pier 7 with a new public strolling and fishing pier, dedicated in 1990 (Figure 16). With regard to point two, the condition of the piers in the area had been evaluated as part of the *Northeastern Waterfront Survey*, which also

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[21] Discussion with Diane Oshima, Port Planner, February 4, 1999.

suggested a public promenade be built in the same area. Policy supporting these changes was also contained in the *Northeastern Waterfront Plan*, the *SAP*, and the *TDP*. Demolition of the piers and the construction of the 1600-foot promenade were completed in the early 1980s. Funding for these projects was provided primarily by a grant from the Economic Development Administration demonstrating that while planning policy does not cause things to happen, as has been pointed out, it can direct how public funds should be used (Wharfside April 1978).

SOUTH BEACH - THE REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

$400,000 condos and container terminals do not mix.
- Port Director Edward L. David (SFC 14 January 1982)

South Beach, the area between the Bay Bridge and China Basin Channel, has, over the last 25 years, experienced perhaps a more dramatic transformation than any other part of the waterfront. Parts of it have also proven to be as difficult to revitalize as anywhere on the waterfront. The changes visited upon South Beach are attributable largely to the work begun in the 1979 *Northeastern Waterfront Survey* and that culminated in the *Rincon Point-South Beach Redevelopment Plan* (refer to Chapter Seven) and a companion document called the *Design for Development,* a sort of standard-issue document providing details of the proposed development program. The program was approved by the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor in 1981. Its implementation was begun soon thereafter and is expected to be completed in 2006.

As described by the Redevelopment Agency, "the purpose of the project is to transform a blighted area into a new mixed-use waterfront neighborhood incorporating rehabilitation and new development" (RA 1995-1996). The main elements of the project include: mixed-income housing, historic rehabilitation, waterfront parks, a boat harbor, Embarcadero roadway improvements, and added later a "corporate office

Figure 81 View of South Beach (between the Bay Bridge and China Basin Channel), looking north over Pier 50 towards downtown @ 1980. Source: San Francisco Redevelopment Agency.

building," and, finally, a ball park.[22] The project also included various infrastructure improvements such as sidewalk and street reconstruction, landscaping, and the provision of utilities. Funding for the project has been through a combination of private investment, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), tax exempt revenue bonds, and tax-increment financing, a revenue-generating mechanism particular to redevelopment agencies (see Chapter Three).[23]

Most of the changes generated by the project have been to land side areas, but it has also led to unique uses of three of the Port's seawall lots. On the land side, several large, mixed-use projects and high-density housing developments have been completed as have several smaller projects involving the adaptive re-use of historic warehouses. The area is also now home to the Gap's recently completed headquarters. On Port land, several of its seawall lots now accommodate low income housing developments sponsored by the DeLancey Street Foundation and BRIDGE, a non-profit housing corporation.[24] A 700 berth marina replaced Piers 42-46 in 1986 and construction of the second of two waterfront parks has been recently completed. The

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[22] The stories of the ball park and the Embarcadero Roadway are for the most part beyond the scope of this discussion. The former is discussed by DeLeon (1992), though his account is now out of date, and the latter is mentioned briefly in Chapter 9.

[23] The Rincon Point-South Beach project has the distinction of being the first San Francisco urban renewal project sponsored by the Agency that did not require direct use of eminent domain. Instead, it used 'owner participation agreements' "backed by the threat of eminent domain" (Habert 1999).

[24] Overall, the project will have produced between 2500-3000 mixed-income units.

Giants' ballpark, built on Port property after an amendment to the redevelopment plan allowed for it, opened in 2000.

While several of the piers in the area were condemned, others supported a variety of maritime uses. Pier 22 ½ was home to the Port's fireboats, the Guardian and the Phoenix (where they are still berthed); parts of Piers 26 and 38 were leased to divers, underwater construction services, and emergency spill cleaners. Piers 30-32 served as a layover berthing facility and were (and are) leased for special events (PSF 2000). These uses, a number of them continue today, were all considered compatible with the residential and mixed use neighborhood rising from an otherwise derelict part of the waterfront.

However, the conversion of piers 42, 44, and 46a into a yacht harbor was a watershed moment for the Port. The proposal was actually made in 1979, several years before the redevelopment plan was adopted, and contention over it represented some of the last resistence by Port officials to forsaking the possibility of maintaining shipping on land north of China Basin Channel. Port Commissioner Morrison (a former Supervisor), ever a defender of cargo-related maritime uses, said that the decision to convert those piers could prove to be a serious mistake (San Francisco Examiner 25 October 1979). He warned his fellow commissioners that "if we're not careful this could be a signal to the community that we have given up maritime uses" (San Francisco Examiner 25 October 1979). One can understand his concern given public animosity to previous development proposals and past support of bond

measures intended to support maritime operations; it was clear that the citizenry shared similar ideas about the role of the Port. In this case, however, the impossibility of converting the area to container terminals was easily demonstrated. In a 3-1 vote, the other commissioners rejected the idea of preserving what were determined to be outmoded piers and "banking" them for future cargo-related use. The Redevelopment Agency was pleased with the decision, interpreting it as a significant endorsement of the concepts outlined in the *Northern Waterfront Survey* that were being incorporated into the redevelopment plan then underway (San Francisco Examiner 25 October 1979).

Initially, public support for the Rincon Point-South Beach redevelopment project was mixed. The Agency's reputation made some people very leery of the plan, and some members of the Board of Supervisors were concerned with how the project would be funded. This was Mayor Feinstein's pet project, as we

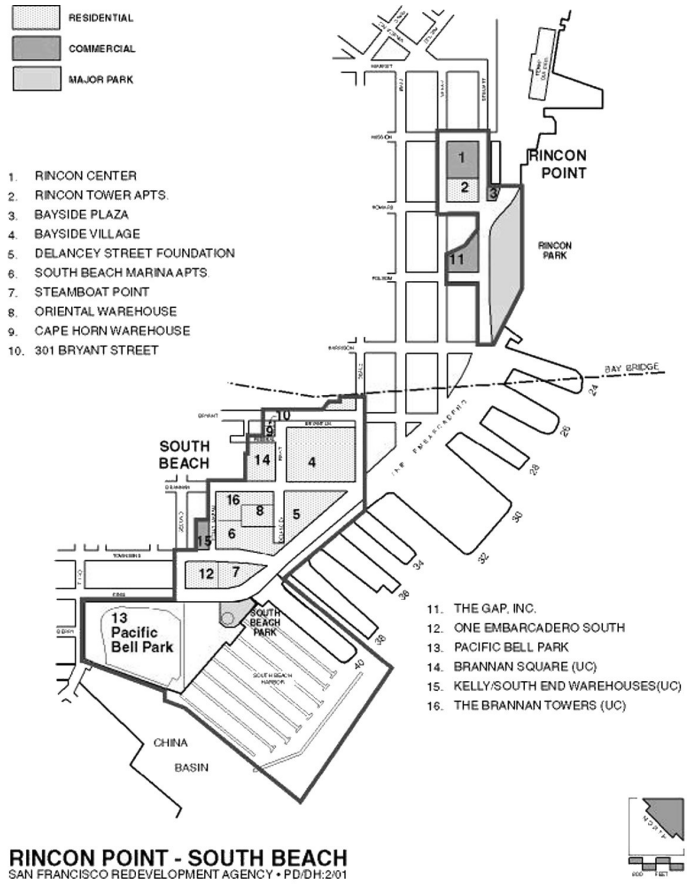

Figure 82 An updated version of Figure 67, Chapter 7, p. 285. Source: San Francisco Redevelopment Agency.

have seen, so of course her office strongly advocated it. The Chronicle editorial board, despite criticism of the project by Supervisor Quentin Kopp and the Board of Supervisor's budget analyst Harvey Rose, found the proposal to be "interesting and exciting" (SFC 24 December 1980). In large part because the project promised to build a large number of affordable housing units, support for the project grew. As the Chronicle observed "the idea of creating a new living area within walking distance of downtown has drawn few critics" (SFC 16 December 1985).

One important piece of the puzzle was incorporating Port property into the development program. The marina, waterfront parks, and housing were all supported in city's and BCDC's policy documents, and as indicated above, the Port eventually agreed that South Beach could not be reasonably reserved for cargo operations. The challenge, then, was to convince the State Lands Commission and the legislature that the seawall lots incorporated into the project area were no longer able to support trust uses other than revenue generation. After reviewing the request, the legislature passed Assembly Bill 2659 in 1987. The bill stipulated the conditions under which housing would be permitted on the three seawall lots in question. Essentially, it required that the land continue to be held in trust, but removed the requirement that it be used for maritime-related activities. Furthermore, revenue generated by developing the land, which itself could only be leased to the Redevelopment Agency, had to be used to support other trust purposes, such providing open space or water-oriented recreation. This is the only place on the waterfront where such action has been taken. It is also

one of the reasons that San Francisco is unlike so many other cities that have turned to housing in efforts to revitalize their waterfronts.

Figure 83 South Beach - affordable housing in the foreground with luxury apartments looming in the background. Photograph by author.

The transformation of Port land in South Beach occurred because there was agreement regarding what should happen to the area, several policy documents supported it, because the powers of the Redevelopment Agency were brought to bear, and because the public approved of the project. These conditions were so favorable that developers, their financial backers, and project sponsors continued to moved forward with construction even during the early 1990s, when real estate development in the rest of the city was grinding to a halt. Here, the Port, and in particular the Redevelopment Agency, acted as magnets for investment. Contrary to Pier 45 and the Ferry building, local conditions created an environment that was attractive to top-down forces and one in which the project could succeed. The overall result has been that, despite some issues relating to urban design (some of the apartment blocks disgrace their streets with blank walls and garage entrances, and several buildings are architecturally nearly inexcusable), the redevelopment project has managed to reconnect the city and its waterfront in ways that respond both to larger pressures facing the city, for instance its

need for new housing, while maintaining important public goals for the use of the waterfront. On the other hand, as will be discussed next, the reuse of Piers 24-26 and 30-32 was prevented by bottom-up forces, largely because proposals were for developments that would have done much to separate San Franciscans from their waterfront.

South Beach: No Room for Hotels

> The decades-long building boom that reshaped San Francisco's skyline is now inching toward a mile-long strip of dilapidated piers and bulkheads, creating an emotional debate... (SFC 16 October 1989).

As the old warehouses and rail yards of the South Beach area were being converted into a new urban neighborhood, a residential extension of San Francisco's downtown, the Port was pursing options to redevelop Piers 24-26 and 30-32. Where in the 1950s and 60s such changes had been part of a difficult transition for the Port, as described in Chapter Three, in this instance, the Port was hoping to capitalize on the them. Voting to allow the marina at Pier 40 put the Port Commission squarely on the path, and with three of its seawall lots devoted to housing, the Port could now concentrate on what they felt would be appropriate and lucrative uses given the evolution of the neighborhood. What was decided upon, however, was strongly rejected by residents and activists.

Piers 24-26, which lay partly under the spans of the Bay Bridge, were deteriorating. Pier 24 was condemned, and Pier 26 housed a few offices and

miscellaneous small industrial business. The first suggestion for revamping the double pier came in 1987 from a Sausalito sailor named Robert Scott, who brought to the Port Commission a proposal for a sailing center and conference facility dubbed Gateway Center. Scott "thought his project was a shoo-in because the Port...accepted it as a reliable moneymaker that would open the piers to San Francisco residents." (SFC 18 February 1990). However, when Art Agnos was elected mayor, he pressured the Port to open up the project to competitive bidding - not surprising given problems that had plagued the Port under Director Eugene Gartland.[25] The result was intense controversy over the new submissions that would plague Michael Huerta, whose appointment as Port Director in 1989 was much covered in the press.[26] Only two other proposals were received, which Chronicle columnist Thom Calandra interpreted as being the result of difficulties other developers had encountered elsewhere on the waterfront (SFC 18 February 1990). This observations points to another characteristic of local conditions that influenced the potential for change.

The proposal that was recommended by Port staff was from the Koll Company, a firm from Newport Beach in southern California. Not new to the area, they were

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[25] In the mid-1980s, the Port's activities and administration were scrutinized by another grand jury, which was created to investigate accusations of sweetheart deals, poor lease management, and charges that Director Gartland had conflict of interests. He was later cleared of those charges.

[26] His appointment was welcomed by many observers because he was financially astute. Moreover, for three years he was a commissioner for New York City's Department of Ports, International Trade and Commerce and, as the Chronicle quoted one of his ex-colleagues, "he knew a ship from a boat" (SFC 18 February 1990).

sponsoring the adaptive reuse of the old Hills Brothers Coffee building and associated new construction across the Embarcadero from the piers. Their project called for a sailing center and marina similar to Scott's Gateway Center, as well as a convention center, shops, offices, and a museum. But the lynchpin of their development was a hotel. Even though it was only four stories (because of height restrictions), labor leader and Port Commissioner James (Jimmy) Herman said it could become part of a "wall of hotels," the second time in a quarter century that potential development on the waterfront has been referred to as such (see Chapters 4 and 5). Herman chaffed at what could become the first hotel built on Port property, saying that if built, it would represent "a turning point in the port's history" (SFC 16 October 1989). Public outcry over the hotel was fast and furious; many argued that such a development would block views, encourage tourism, create congestion, and separate San Franciscans from the bay. Others worried that "the city is rushing ahead without a clear vision of what the waterfront should be" and that what was needed was an overall plan for the waterfront (SFC 16 October 1989). Port Director Huerta responded with the same argument that continued to fall on deaf ears - that the Port had to find ways to pay the bills for new open space, refurbishing its fishing facilities, and upgrading cargo operations. For their part, the developers responded to their critics by saying that the hotel was needed to generate profit and pay for the amenities included in the development program.

At a packed hearing, the Port Commission voted on the proposals. Many people believed that the project would be stopped because of a deadlocked

commission. To audible gasps, however, Commissioner Coleman, who had earlier voiced his strong opinion that a hotel on a pier was a bad idea, switched his vote. Apparently, Commissioner Coleman had been convinced that the Port needed the money; the project was approved 3-1 (SFC 18 February 1990). For many, the vote also represented a broken promise by Agnos, who, in his campaign for mayor, had said he would stop all development on the waterfront until guidelines for its future were established (SFC 17 February 1990).

As Alan Temko pointed out, such proposals in the end would "create a phalanx of view-blocking hotels and other tourist-shearing operations" and thus "sell the public interest short." Temko actually lamented restrictions on development enforced by public agencies like BCDC, observing that because of them, "developments must be cloaked in a nautical aspect, real or ersatz..." and "blithely enlivened with sails" (SFC 11 December 1989). His evaluation was that these proposals maintained a veneer of altruism by including elements such as sailing centers, harbors, docks, repair centers, and other maritime amenities. Underneath, however, they were

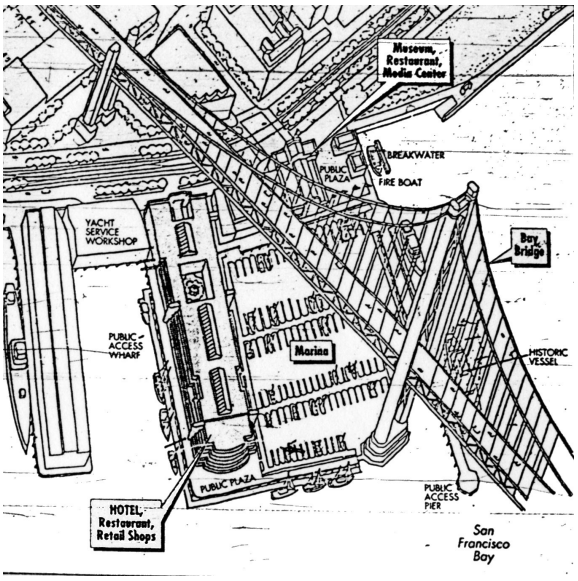

Figure 84 Sketch of Koll's Sailing Center proposal. Source: San Francisco Chronicle 12/11/89.

commercial developments that could have been built anywhere on dry land. In this light, it is not surprising that the Koll Company's proposal, based on a hotel-on-a-pier drew such fire, and that a frustrated public would turn to the ballot box in an attempt to stop the Port.

At the same time that the Koll's Sailing Center was being pushed by Huerta and the Port, Erik Norgaard, an executive of the Danish firm Kampex Pacific, was looking to build a Scandavian Center, cruise terminal, and hotel project. As part of his proposal, he agreed to fund the fishery center at Pier 45 that the Port had tried unsuccessfully to build. The fishery center idea was a favorite of Agnos', and so when Norgaard and his team identified Piers 30-32 as a good site for their project, Agnos had another reason to hedge his promise of no waterfront development. Norgaard worked hard to locate financing for his project. He convinced Scandinavian banks, pension funds, and small investors looking for tax shelters to participate. With promises of 1,300 new jobs and millions in revenues to the Port, Agnos mentioned the project in speeches, even suggesting that he would fly to Scandinavia to demonstrate his seriousness (SFC 25 March 1988; SFC 25 May 1988). Yet the project moved forward slowly. The Chronicle editorial board expressed concern that the Pier 30-32 project had been allowed to simmer on the back burner too long, positing that the controversy over the vote on the Sailing Center must have "shell-shocked" the Port and mayor's office. They also complained that "officials tend to pay so much attention

to complaints of small and special interests that plans that would enhance the common good are sometimes set aside" (SFC 25 May 1990).

Perhaps criticism influenced, because Commissioner Herman and Mayor Agnos reversed their respective positions on hotels at Pier 30-32. Agnos voiced reservations, suggesting that a hotel was not appropriate for a pier, and Herman acknowledged that the project could have substantial benefits that might accrue if a hotel was allowed. In what must have been a very familiar refrain, Norgaard insisted

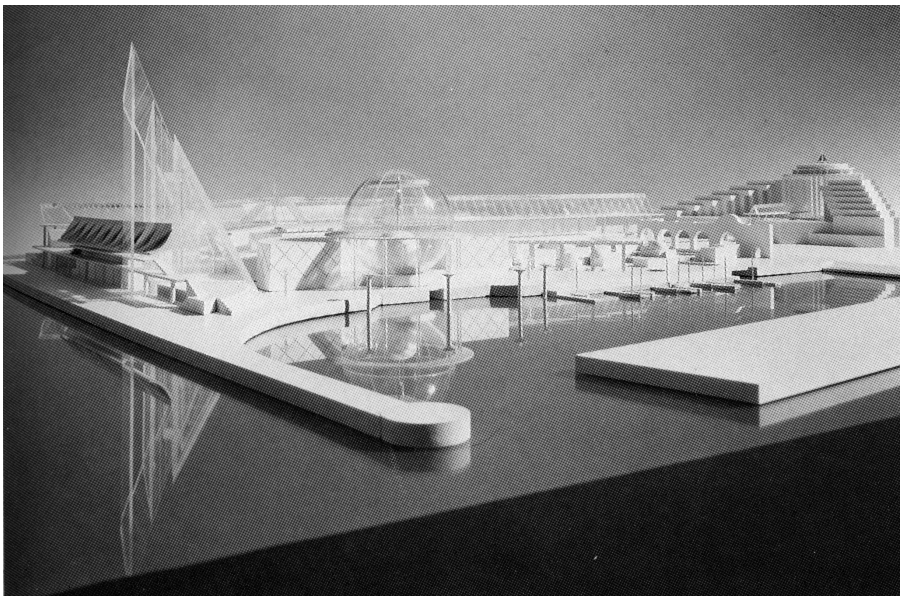

Figure 85 A model of Norgaard's Scandavian Center proposal.
Source: Port of San Francisco 1981, March/April *Wharfside*.

that the hotel had to be part of the project, otherwise it would not be financially possible. "We have scratched our brains for two years with the best consultants and there are no other uses that produce income" he concluded (SFC 25 May 1990). The proposal came to a vote at the Port Commission at the end of May, 1990. The hall was

packed with supporters, and the commission voted unanimously to approve the project. This drew fire from Telegraph Hill residents and San Francisco Tomorrow, who again threatened that a ballot initiative would be part of the fall elections (SFC 30 May 1990).[27]

Proposition H Lowers the Boom

Incensed at what they saw as another boondoggle in the making, and one that slipped through planning documents and regulatory protections, Robert Scott, former supervisor and Port Commissioner Jack Morrison, San Francisco Tomorrow, and the Sierra Club vowed to go to the ballot box. San Franciscans would determine what should happen on the waterfront in direct action. Proposition H was placed on the November 1990 ballot. It required a moratorium on hotels and any other non-maritime development within 100 feet of the water's edge until the Port completed a Waterfront Land Use Plan. The measure passed with just 51 percent of the vote.[28] The successful passage of Proposition H killed Koll's Sailing Center project, but Norgaard and his team actually reconfigured their proposal for Piers 30-32 to place the hotel on

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[27] As we have seen, development projects tend to create division, not just or necessarily pitting local or bottom-up against external or top-down interests, but creating conflict within the local community. It is important not to abstract such detail out of analyses of urban change.

[28] Opposition to the initiative was led by Mayor Agnos and included Jimmy Herman who, despite his opposition to the Sailing Center felt that the Port would be too restricted by a plan. The campaign included a specious slogan: "Save the Waterfront for Blue Collar People. Yuppies can work everywhere else" (SFC 25 October 1990).

land across from the piers. This won a lot of support for the project, even from skeptics like Jack Morrison. Fortune was not smiling on Norgaard, however. His ambitious project, which now also included a "World Centre," was required to include at least one local financial backer (further complicating where to place such projects in the local-global continuum or top-down/bottom-up framework). Norgaard requested an extension to his agreement with the Port, which the commission agreed to "given the current difficult economic development climate" (SFC 29 October 1992). A year later, the Port severed ties with Norgaard because he was unable to pull together financing. His project was, along with Continental's proposal for the Ferry Building, another example of a project that adhered to basic planning policy and regulation and worked its way through controversy, only to be delayed by the politics of planning long enough to skid into the trough of an economic cycle (and which prompted the Port to cut ties with the project). Local conditions again conspired to frustrate the sort of waterfront revitalization sought by larger economic forces. The lack of change of this part of the waterfront can really only be understood in this context.[29]

It is impossible to say whether either project would have successfully navigated the permitting process or even actually produced well-designed development. It is clear, though, that hotels were deeply problematic for many waterfront watchdogs, making the policy that allowed them suspect - even though neighborhood associations and organizations like San Francisco Tomorrow had a hand

[29] Piers 24-26 remain abandoned and a recent proposal for a cruise terminal at Piers 30-32 is, at the time of this writing, moving forward slowly.

in creating that policy. How it is that hotels slipped through as plans were being written is difficult to say; one could only guess that they were acceptable in theory because they would be the economic engines generating money for various amenities, but when proposals began to come in people lost their stomach for them. But now that the Port was a city agency and subject to local initiatives, activists and neighborhood organizations had a way to patch the breach in planning policy created by not limiting hotel development.

In his analysis of Proposition H, Richard DeLeon (1992) suggests that what made the initiative appealing was not just that it required the Port to write a detailed plan based on a parcel-by-parcel analysis, but that the process "had to make room for citizens as active participants; traditional methods of deal making had to be discarded" (DeLeon 1992, 132) As we have seen, however, citizens had been deeply involved in waterfront policy and development issues for twenty years. So, a slightly different interpretation is offered here regarding waterfront development; planning policy and activism had already demonstrated their strengths. With Proposition H, people were reacting instead to a tangle of planning policy and regulation that allowed an undesirable use to be proposed nearly anywhere on the northern waterfront. as one member of Save the Bay commented, people wanted to see:

> ...some kind of guarantee that hotels do not pervade the waterfront. "We'd like to see an overall plan for the waterfront rather than just a catch-as-catch-can philosophy of entertaining developers' proposals that happen to come in." (SFC 16 October 1989)

What San Franciscans recognized was that the Port needed its own clear policy statement, a detailed vision for the use of its land and one that would represent some level of consensus among competing local interests. This would happen with the publication of the Waterfront Land Use Plan following six years of community-based planning. The Port formed a 27-member advisory board based on recommendations from the Board of Supervisors, the mayor, and responses to a general request for participation sent to interested citizens, organizations, planners, maritime businesses, labor, and a variety of professionals. After years of public workshops and board meetings, the Port Commission approved the plan in 1997. With its adoption, the Waterfront Land Use Plan ushered in the fourth stage in the evolution of waterfront planning policy and regulation, and with it, a new approach to waterfront revitalization. This stage is characterized by a less burdensome planning process and by a more formally articulated democratic or publically-minded approach to revitalization stemming from the Port itself. So far it has witnessed dramatic improvements to parts of the northern waterfront. But only time will tell if its more moderated development policies, which call for projects that still rely much on recreation, entertainment, and retail, can be successfully implemented.

Because the Port land is public land, capital could not, and cannot now, directly invest in it. Rather, the Port itself acts as a developer. That the conditions of its transfer require the Port to seek the maximum return on property supports this characterization. The restrictions placed on Port development are similar to the

restrictions on development of private property imposed by zoning and other land use controls, though perhaps more limiting. So, much like the Redevelopment Agency, the Port is both local actor and, in as much as it solicits development, an agent of top-down forces. To repeat, the top-down/bottom-up dichotomy can render too simple a description of certain agents and actors and how they may affect the landscape. The roles that actors and agents may play as part of top-down or bottom-up forces can alter as the dialectic between forces shifts. The dual nature of the Port, and its switch from a state to a local agency, is an example, underscored by the fact that it is made up of competing internal interests - it has planning and development, real estate, and maritime divisions, not to mention a commission and director that may each respond to different pressures, as has been seen.

Chapter 9: Conclusion - A Waterfront Planned

> The Port's real value to the city isn't financial. It's the sheer beauty of it.
> - Port Director Dennis Bouey (quoted in San Francisco Business 4 April 1994)

> Determining the role of the port is crucial to saving it. (San Francisco Business 4 April 1994)

This chapter will conclude the study with a brief description of recent developments on the northern waterfront which represent the success of local forces in influencing its change. They are the result partly of a change in local conditions created by the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake (the potential for earthquakes is itself part of local conditions), to which both top-down and bottom-up forces responded. The former included the state, which at first insisted on rebuilding the wrecked Embarcadero Freeway.[1] Proposition H and the Waterfront Land Use Plan created a new source of local control over waterfront development that, as will be seen below, has helped to foster revitalization far and away different from what may have been visited on the waterfront decades earlier. The fourth stage in the evolution of waterfront planning, regulation, and revitalization continues even at this writing; the story of San Francisco's waterfront continues to unfold. How the waterfront's morphology will change in the years to come will be the result of both the conditions

[1] Not all locals wanted the freeway removed. Business leaders in Chinatown argued vociferously that tourism would suffer without the direct freeway access. That debate is beyond this discussion; suffice it to say, however, that tourism was not particularly affected.

and events discussed in this analysis and new forces that are even now at play. That, however, is another study awaiting an interested observer. The chapter ends with some brief comments.

Recent Changes on the Waterfront

A year before Proposition H was passed, the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake shook the Bay Area, severely damaging the Embarcadero Freeway. This event provided the opportunity to rethink the relationship between the city and its waterfront and to implement policies that had been in place since 1977 as part of the Northeastern Waterfront Plan. Furthermore, the city had for years maintained as official policy that the Embarcadero Freeway should be removed. The original concept to carry out these policies was developed as the I-280 Transfer Concept Plan. Elusive financing and jurisdictional issues, especially with the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans), were barriers to its implementation. The watershed moment came with the state's evaluation that the Embarcadero Freeway was too severely damaged to repair; it would have to be rebuilt. The city gasped collectively at the thought and Mayor Agnos organized to fight Sacramento. The Board of Supervisors joined the mayor by adopting an anti-freeway stance, and an unusual sense of common purpose brought various city agencies together. The city prevailed in its demand that the freeway be removed and replaced with surface transportation elements that reflected city policy.

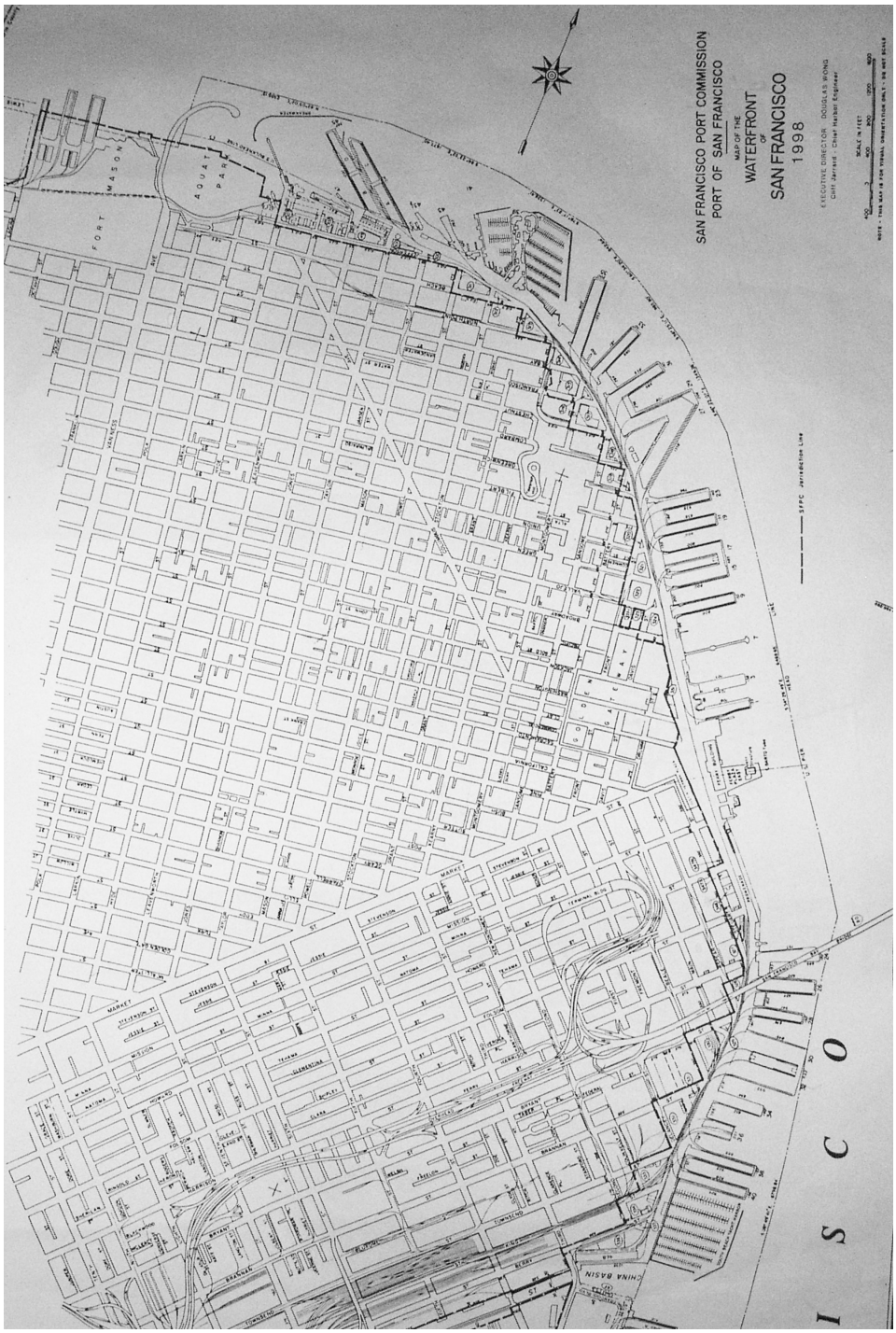

Figure 86 1998 Port map showing contemporary configuration of the northern waterfront. Source: Port of Sam Francisco.

While the design for a new Embarcadero roadway included a significant amount of Port property, there were only a few general policies pertaining to its reuse and reconfiguration. Thus, planning for the new roadway was undertaken in a multi-agency effort coordinated by the City's Chief Administrator's Office under the rubric of the Waterfront Transportation Projects Office (WTPO).[2] What commenced was a ten year planning endeavor involving substantial community input, a citizen's advisory committee for the Embarcadero Project, and ROMA as design consultants. As described by the WTPO, the city had been:

> ...presented with an unprecedented opportunity to realize its vision for a tree-lined boulevard with rail, bicycle, pedestrian, and public art amenities along the northeastern waterfront and (to) create a civic plaza that acknowledges the importance of the Ferry Building, the terminus of Market Street, and the city's historic relationship to the waterfront. (Waterfront Transportation Project Office 1994)

Funding was secured from a variety of federal, state, and local sources. As of this writing, all of the projects have been completed. The main elements include: a new Embarcadero boulevard which incorporates bicycle lanes and an exclusive right-of-way for an extension of the F-Line, the Municipal Railway's (MUNI) historic street car line; a water-side pedestrian promenade that runs from Fisherman's Wharf to China Basin Channel; the construction of a major public plaza

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[2] Planning for the Waterfront Transportation Projects had actually begun before the earthquake, and assumed the presence of the freeway. The earthquake caused a complete re-evaluation of the WTP, especially for the mid-Embarcadero segment running from Folsom to Broadway - essentially the Ferry Building Area (PSF 2000, 24)

connecting the foot of Market Street with the Ferry Building; an extension of MUNI's light rail system south of Townsend Street along an exclusive right-of-way in the center of the Embarcadero, and several open space improvements. While the design of the plaza leaves something to be desired, the overall affect of these projects has been to reunite the city and its waterfront in ways that benefit San Franciscans, not just tourists or people who live or work in the immediate vicinity. The Waterfront Transportation Projects (WTP) deal primarily with the Embarcadero while the Port's Waterfront Land Use Plan, adopted at about the same time that the WTP commenced construction, covers all of the land under the Port's jurisdiction.[3]

Figure 87 Looking south along the Embarcadero towards the Ferry Building. Bicycle and pedestrian paths run in front of the bulkhead buildings on the left. The historic streetcar F-Line runs down the center. Photograph by author.

[3] Policies in the Waterfront Land Use Plan both reflect and build on the WTP.

The *WLUP* is important for several reasons. First, it was an incentive for coordinating policy contained in disparate documents. To this end, the *WLUP* generated amendments to the *General Plan* and *Planning Code* and to BCDC's *Special Area Plan*.[4] The result of four years of coordinated planning by BCDC, the Port, Save the Bay Association, the San Francisco Planning Department, and the waterfront community, the Port characterized this as an historic achievement (PSF 2001a). It is important to point out that while the *WLUP* has gone a long way to creating a more straightforward process for the development of Port land, and so at

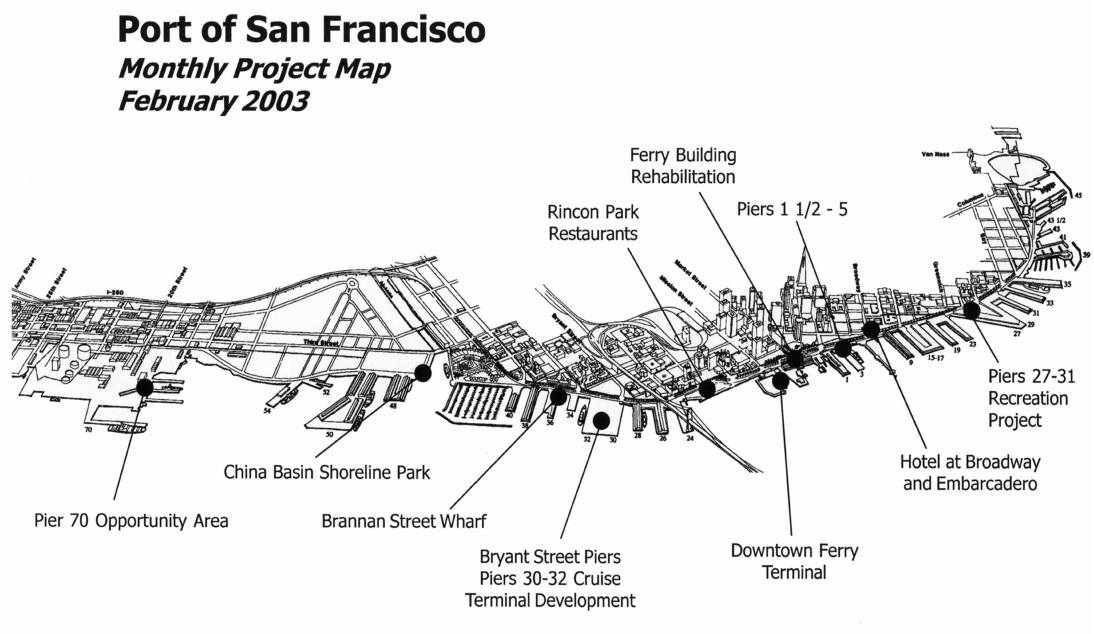

Figure 88 Port map indicating projects in various stages of review or implementation. Source: Port of San Francisco

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[4] As noted earlier, the precise nature of the relationship between *General Plan* policy and Port land use policy is still unclear. The Planning Department has also contended that in some instances the *WLUP* still allows the Port too much flexibility, permitting uses in places not supported by the *General Plan*.

least theoretically pursuing projects would be more appealing to developers, the various restrictions on the use of Port land still exist, especially against housing and office.

Second, it is the first comprehensive vision for the future of the waterfront produced under the aegis of the Port. As the plan itself comments

> Although many elements of the existing plans, policies, regulations and financial objectives are worthy of retention, a new approach is required to halt the continuing deterioration of Port property and to revive the debilitated state of Port finances. (PSF 2000, 23)

The goals of the plan are to create: a working waterfront; a revitalized port; a diversity of activities and people; access along the waterfront; an evolving waterfront, mindful of its past and future; urban design worthy of the waterfront setting; and economic access that reflects the diversity of San Francisco (PSF 2000, 4). The *WLUP* also helps to clarify, for example, issues pertaining to public trust requirements, how piers are subject to BCDC's differing restrictions, and the use and definitions of maritime terms. The plan contains policies pertaining to three main categories, maritime uses, open space and public access, and residential and commercial uses, and includes five sub-areas (see Figure 8, Chapter 2). Perhaps the plan's most significant element is that it identifies acceptable land uses according to a number of categories for every seawall lot and pier in the Port's jurisdiction.

Third, reenforced by the concurrent WTP, the plan served as the impetus to seek funds for and carry out a series improvements and commercial developments. In

an update to the Port Commission, Director Douglas Wong points out that the adoption of the *WLUP* "along with the current real estate market and other factors, has spurred considerable interest by private developers, public agencies and citizens in revitalization of Port property" (PSF 1999). His comment serves as a reminder that when resources are available to real estate firms and developers, as corporations seek to diversify, and generally when the agents of capitalism have the will to invest, this serves not just to impress top-down forces into landscape, but it also enables pursuit of visions for change defined and fought for by bottom-up forces.

Two years later, with successes in hand and the hope for more, Director Wong expressed his enthusiasm for the *WLUP*: "As promised, it has reawakened and

Figure 89 The Ferry Building and plaza as seen today. Photograph by author.

revitalized the Port through an intricate series of programs that have expanded maritime operations and created new public access, entertainment, and open space along the Bay" (PSF 2001). His statement was not just optimism. A number of projects that implement policies in the *WLUP* have been completed, and others are at various stages in the development process. Perhaps most significant among them has been the stunning transformation of the Ferry Building area. Formerly the site of a large shed serving as a parking garage, Pier 1 was converted into Class-A office space and has won several awards for the quality of its historically sensitive rehabilitation. It is home to the Port's offices, the headquarters of its developer, AMB Properties, and a restaurant.[5] The pier's perimeter has been developed as publically accessible open space. Renovation of the historic Ferry Building is nearing completion. The project will restore its historic facade and recreate the "Nave Bay" that ran the length of the building, essentially a grand, three-story atrium. The Ferry Building will house a ground floor marketplace, restaurants, office, and public uses including access to transportation, Port Commission meeting rooms, and features allowing circulation through the building. A new terminal structure adjacent to the Ferry Building is also underway. The Port boasts that "the eloquent design of the new terminals in combination with the renovated Ferry Building will create a stunning waterfront gateway to one of the world's most beloved cities" (PSF 2000, no page).

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[5] The office uses were allowed because the Port is obviously maritime-related and income derived by AMB' s presence helped to support public trust uses, in particular the historic rehabilitation of the pier and shed themselves.

It is clear from Figure 89 and 90 that the remaking of the Ferry Building Area, including the WTP, stands in stark contrast with proposals proffered during previous decades. Had any of those schemes been implemented, it is unlikely that the improvements now gracing the northern waterfront would have been possible. What did not happen in this part of the waterfront, and along the Embarcadero, partly by luck but mainly by active resistence, set the stage for a transformation guided by public policy that has resulted in a movement away from privatization and toward the creation of democratized space. The *WLUP* has not ended debate over development, or resulted in a magical transformation of the entirety of Port property, and it has certainly not remade San Francisco into a major handler of container traffic. Recent proposals for development at Piers 45, 27-29, and 30-32 have generated much controversy. And although the plan is in conformity with other policy documents, such as the *SAP* and *NWP*, there are still inter-jurisdictional disagreements. For instance, the Planning Department and BCDC do not agree on what to do with some of the bulkhead buildings in the northern waterfront, and as

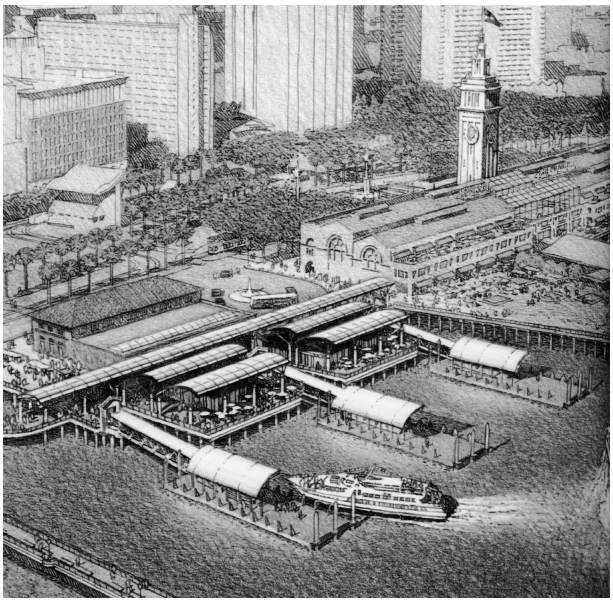

Figure 90 Illustration of the new ferry terminal, now under construction - a far cry from the modern visions of earlier decades. Source: Port of San Francisco, *2001 Annual Report.*

mentioned, the relationship between the *General Plan* and the *WLUP* is not entirely clear. Although the *WLUP* has already had a significant impact on policy for and development of the San Francisco's waterfront, it will not be possible to evaluate its full impact for some time.

Summary and Conclusion

Four Stages

A brief review of this study's historical analysis reveals four stages in the transformation of San Francisco's urban waterfront landscape since 1950. More than just an evolving body of policy and regulation, these stages represent an evolving planning process where bottom-up forces, including government agencies, policy, regulation, politics, activism, special interests, and top-down forces, including technological change, economic cycles, national or global business interests, and state government, all interact on a stage created by local conditions.

The first stage, from 1950 until about the mid-1960s, was characterized by the Port's decline as the preeminent cargo-handling port in the Bay Area. As the Port embarked on a policy to concentrate shipping activities south of the Bay Bridge, it also unveiled its first proposals for remaking the northern waterfront. Planning policy and regulation, especially as they pertained to land use and urban design, were nearly absent. This helped to create a situation that encouraged a proliferation of 'grand

plans' for redevelopment of the northern waterfront and also generated the first significant swells of Port-related civic protest.

The second stage, perhaps more of an interlude, occurred during the few years toward the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s; it marked the point when local power began to coalesce in the form of planning policy and regulation. This stage saw the publication of the first *Northern Waterfront Plan*, the passage of the McAteer-Petris Act - which created BCDC and the *Bay Plan* - and the transfer of the Port from the state to the City and County of San Francisco pursuant to the Burton Act. When the U.S. Steel proposal was rejected, it became clear that local power had begun to assert real control over the waterfront.

From the mid-1970s to the end of the 1980s, the period of the third stage, bottom-up forces held sway over the landscape by imposing severe restrictions on potential redevelopment. The Port was incorporated into the city's body politic, and efforts to plan for the waterfront and decide its future were initiated on several fronts. New layers of policy and regulation, reflecting the public's concern for environmental issues, open space, access to the water, and the design of new development, created a hindrance to commercially-based revitalization. The result was that, with a few exceptions, there was little in the way of revitalization for several decades.

The fourth stage, which continues at the time of this writing, began with the passage of Proposition H, the second direct intervention by San Francisco citizenry in determining the Port's fate; supporting its transfer to the city was the first.

Proposition H required the Port to produce its first *Waterfront Land Use Plan*. The adoption of the plan has been helping to rationalize the planning process. Some of the changes it has helped to generate have ushered in a new waterfront morphogenesis, characterized by the rise in prominence of civic-minded change along the waterfront, enabled by an invigorated planning process.

Top-Down and Bottom-Up Forces

These stages also reflect changes in the interplay among top-down and bottom-up forces. Top-down pressures have, and will continue to come, in many guises - but as Richard Walker points out in his discussion of globalization (Walker 1996), most such pressures are similar in nature, particularly as long as they have occurred in a common context, for instance in the realm of the capitalist economy. Once the first wave of top-down pressures on the 1950s waterfront resolved themselves, the impact of containerization for instance, they changed very little. For the most part, outside pressures came from the state or were comprised of cycles of investment that had the direct affect of encouraging or discouraging development.

However, bottom-up forces affecting the waterfront have changed radically in the decades since 1950, as illustrated in this study by the evolution of planning policy and regulation and the ever-shifting interactions among the ranks of activists, gatekeepers, associations, committees, and agencies. Initially, bottom-up forces were not at the ready, only coalescing in response to proposal for reuse of Port land that they

deemed to be misguided, continuing environmental degradation, and the creep of disuse. Yet, as has been shown, bottom-up forces prevailed in many ways, and the result for the waterfront has been that the ability of capital to perpetuate 'creative destruction' was stymied; the fires of capitalism were doused by Bay water. San Franciscans have participated and been effective. While current plans and policies may not satisfy everyone, and while agencies may still be skirmishing over turf, popular opinion seems to be that the result so far has been for the better.

This study shows that top-down and bottom-up forces are varied; their array and interactions alter over time and affect how places change. The forces that have been the focus of this study are not unique to San Francisco, and others not discussed here may be at work in different places. This complexity and variation are not sufficiently revealed in a simple dichotomous model of top-down versus bottom-up. The model proposed in Chapter One provides a framework that more completely represents their intricacies and provides a more satisfying approach to identifying and explaining the processes that transform the built environment; that is, it better captures how landscapes are produced. With regard to San Francisco's waterfront, the concentration of shipping in the south, housing one only piece of Port property, building height limits, Pier 39 and Fisherman's Wharf, and the new plaza at the Ferry Building are each the result of the variable dialectics of bottom-up and top-down forces. Artifacts of the built environment represent different moments in the history of

the relationship between sets of forces; lack of material change is equally representative, though not visibly so.

Planning and the Landscape

The study has demonstrated that plans and regulation, or more broadly the planning process and its role in development, affected by varied and often competing local actors, gatekeepers, and agencies, play a critical part in the formation of landscapes. The accumulation of policy and regulation dramatically altered the direction of change in the waterfront's morphology; that is, its form, function, and connection to the city. Helped with a little luck, sometimes in the form of an absence of investors or capital flight, San Francisco avoided the visitation of a modernist 'project' of office towers, STOL ports, and other gleaming monoliths of commerce on its waterfront. One result of the accumulation of planning policy has been to encourage a shift in the waterfront's morphology from that of an industrial, working port - a critical part of the system of production - to one characterized by consumption. This latter characteristic is evinced by two qualities: the 'hard' consumption typified by the tourist waterfront of Fisherman's Wharf and 'softer' consumption represented by the controls on building height and form to preserve views, marinas, and to some degree open space.[6] Railroad tracks are gone, except

[6] With regard to views, for instance: "Visual access to the Bay is one of the principle attractions of living in the Bay region. The truth of this statement can be demonstrated by comparing the values of marine view properties, both residential and commercial, with properties which lack views" (Livingston and Blayney 1971, 22)

where preserved as historic markers at the new Pier 1 building and after a long interregnum, box cars have been replaced by street cars and the light rail line. A number of the piers that remain are used for shopping, strolling, or as venues for events like the X-Games.

The waterfront also exhibits characteristics that indicate resistance.[7] The waterfront now is a place of many public spaces, not rampant privatization, as seen in the spread of public access to and recreation sites near the water, and in commercial development that includes features meant to draw people to the waterfront, and not prevent them from venturing to the water's edge. Furthermore, even as planning and regulation have supported, if not encouraged, consumption, civic protest and planning policies have successfully resisted the potential domination of the waterfront by 'hard' consumption, though it has a strong presence. There was the possibility that San Francisco could have replaced the freeway with hotels and shopping malls. San Franciscans do not now have to lament a waterfront that became an Atlantic City. Instead, with the Embarcadero Roadway as the seam, projects catalyzed by the Loma Prieta earthquake and implemented in response to some of the goals in the *WLUP* have once again reunited the city and its waterfront.

One of the most important aspects of land use planning, policy, and regulation, is that the process of their development serves to provide a focal point for the cacophony of voices raised in hopes of influencing the course of urban change; many

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[7] Similar to that described by Ley and Mills (1993) in their analysis of development in Vancouver.

actors and agents had a hand in the development of policy pertaining to the waterfront. Once plans are completed, they act as structural or formalizing elements in the process of urban transformation, for instance allowing participants to evaluate a potential development against established policy. Thus, plans can becoming the nexus of coordinated resistence or advocacy. As the various case studies presented throughout this analysis reveal, regardless of what finally defeats a particular project, or helps it to succeed, efforts to understand the planning and development process and the constraints of policy and regulation, reveal the complex nature of the development process and the unseen forces that transform the built environment. Together, these processes and their material manifestations (or lack thereof) are a landscape. The planning process provides an arena for, and sometimes is the source of, conflict and struggle over development, the end results of which create what could be called a negotiated landscape, a characteristic of San Francisco's waterfront revealed by this study. In hoping to induce revitalization, but also in response to entrenched bureaucracy, the Port itself seeks out developers, who in turn must secure investors. On the one hand, project sponsors attempt to build a project that maximizes their investment. On the other hand a collection of agencies and actors strive to achieve the most public benefit; admittedly, not all parties may agree on what that is.[8] For decades, the Port was caught somewhat in the middle (and in many was still is);

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[8] DeLeon (1992, 133) suggests, albeit in reference to what he calls urban "antiregimes," that this process results in "the best and safest enterprises that capital can offer." Projects like Pier 39 suggest that this is not always the case.

however, with the *WLUP* it has been able to introduce some measure of certainty into the development process, something of much value to project sponsors and watchdogs.

But plans are not active devices of change, and if conditions do not appeal to project sponsors and their financial backers, privately-funded commercial development is stymied. Any development must then rely on public financing - a fitful thing. Commercial revitalization of the waterfront has thus been the result of negotiation. As sometimes happens at the bargaining table, parties may walk away from the proceedings. For San Francisco's waterfront, this resulted in decades of inactivity, and may yet lead to more. This study has provided some insight into the struggle over waterfront development, especially in pointing out that it can occur at every level - within the Port itself, between

Figure 91 Looking though the financial district towards the nearly hidden Ferry Building. Photograph by author.

agencies, between the Port and developers, between the Port and activists, among activists and developers, and so on.

In sum, the built environment can provide clues as to how and why it is the way it is, but the forces that transform it, bottom-up and top-down, and their interplay, are not easily read from it. Together, top-down and bottom-up forces, the conditions and characteristics of the locale in question, and how they all interact are what indivduate an area, are what define place. They come to be expressed in the built environment, but the process and the result of that expression is negotiated, and that is an essential part of what forms an urban landscape.

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