

Aquatic Park

Subarea 1-1



Subarea Description



Subarea 1-1: Aquatic Park

Aquatic Park (Subarea 1-1) covers many historic and recreational attractions. Most of the waterfront in this subarea belongs to the San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park, including Hyde Street Pier and its several historic vessels, the Maritime Museum in the historic bathhouse, and Aquatic Park Pier (also known as Municipal Pier) extending into the water from the end of Van Ness Avenue. The subarea also includes Aquatic Park Cove, located at the western edge of Fisherman’s Wharf, a portion of Fort Mason Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA), and parts of the Marina and Russian Hill neighborhoods.

Both Aquatic Park Pier and Aquatic Park Cove, the subarea’s main waterfront elements, also belong to Aquatic Park Historic District.

Aquatic Park Pier provides public access with sweeping views and is popular for fishing. The horseshoe-shaped pier also acts as a breakwater wall, providing significant shelter from wave hazards.

Aquatic Park Cove is a sheltered human-made lagoon and cove that sits adjacent to the San Francisco Maritime Museum and Ghirardelli Square. It is popular for open-water swimming and events, such as the swimming leg of the Escape from Alcatraz

triathlon. Aquatic Park Cove includes a small sandy beach with a stepped concrete seawall and a small craft boat launch. Two long-established swimming and rowing clubs, the Dolphin Club and South End Rowing Club, are in the cove near Hyde Street Pier.

Hyde Street Pier, originally constructed as a multi-slip car ferry at the end of Hyde Street, houses the NPS San Francisco Historic Maritime Museum on the north side and the Port Joint Operations and Security Building and a fuel dock on the south side of the pier. Several historic vessels, including the Balclutha, a 19th-century square-rigger cargo ship, are permanently docked along Hyde Street Pier. Additional historic vessels docked here include the 1895 C.A. Thayer, 1890 steam ferryboat Eureka, 1891 scow schooner Alma, 1907 steam tug Hercules, and the 1914 paddlewheel tug Eppleton Hall.

The Bay Trail connects these many recreation resources and facilities included in the Aquatic Park subarea. The Bay Trail follows the waterfront and runs through the Fort Mason Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) and past Black Point and Historic Batteries. It also goes past the Fort Mason Youth Hostel and GGNRA headquarters.

In addition to the subarea’s public and historic attractions, Aquatic Park Cove provides emergency services. It includes a small craft launch and an Emergency Fire Water System (EFWS) suction connection, which allows fire engines to pump water for fire suppression directly from San Francisco Bay.

San Francisco Fire Department’s Pump Station No. 2 is located near the base of Aquatic Park Pier at the foot of Van Ness Avenue near Fort Mason. This pump station contains four diesel-driven pumps. Each pump has a capacity of 2,700 gallons per minute, drawing seawater from the bay through a 160-foot concrete tunnel and delivering the seawater to the Emergency Fire Water System for fire suppression and disaster response. The entire pump station includes sensitive electrical equipment that is at and below grade and sensitive to any inundation.

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Since 2017, the Port has connected with tens of thousands of community members through the Waterfront Resilience Program. Public feedback collected about Aquatic Park underscores the importance of outdoor space and recreational activities, from swimming and rowing to walking and jogging. Views are also a community value.

Further feedback highlights additional community priorities, including opportunities to protect and maintain historic and cultural resources and public transit. Community feedback related to this subarea is included in the Community-Identified section as part of the Review of Landmarks, Assets, and Services listed below and incorporated in the overall POCC analysis.

Landmarks, Assets, and Services

Land Use

Land use zoning in this subarea includes open space along the waterfront, and inland the land use is primarily residential and mixed use residential, with pockets of land designated office, retail, and vacant. Dock uses are temporary and ceremonial; fishing access through four public access points. Other land uses include water recreation, and ceremonial berths for historic ships and interpretive exhibits.

Community-Identified



- Aquatic Park Cove
- Municipal Fishing Pier
- Dolphin Club and South End Rowing Club
- Hyde Street Pier
- Extension of E and F Lines into Marina District
- Creation of railway to Fort Mason

Historic and Cultural



- San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, including historic vessels docked along Hyde Street Pier
- Aquatic Park Historic District, a National Historic Landmark and building complex located within the Maritime National Historical Park
- Fort Mason Historic District
- Black Point Historic District
- Hyde Street Pier
- Emergency Fire Water System Pump Station 2
- Pioneer Woolen Mills and D. Ghiradelli Company

Maritime



- Historic Hyde Street Pier
- Small boat launch at Aquatic Park Cove
- Municipal Fishing Pier

Disaster Response



- Emergency Fire Water System Pump Station 2
- Emergency Fire Water System suction connection (1)

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Utilities



Water

- Buried water supply pipes

Wastewater

- Buried wastewater and stormwater sewer pipes
- North Beach Tunnel (wastewater)

Power

- Overhead and buried electric power infrastructure

Communications

- Several telecommunication cell sites (e.g. cells on top of buildings or small cell towers on streetlights) are likely distributed throughout the subarea, but specific locations are unknown

Natural Gas

- Buried natural gas supply line infrastructure

Transportation



- Muni bus stops (22)
- Hyde Street Line Cable Car turn-around (at Hyde and Beach Streets)
- Regional bus stops (Golden Gate Transit)

Open Space and Ecology



Open Space

- San Francisco Bay
- Bay Trail
- Fort Mason Golden Gate National Recreation Area / Black Point
- Aquatic Park Cove (public access, fishing, swimming)
- San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park (National Park Service)
- Russian Hill Open Space
- Dolphin Club
- South End Rowing Club

Ecology

- No key terrestrial habitat or ecological areas of significance have been recorded; however, the intertidal zone and the Bay are home to many important intertidal and aquatic species

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Problems, Opportunities, Objectives, Constraints, and Considerations

Problems

- Rising sea levels, wave hazards, and the likelihood of an earthquake put the safety of the shoreline at risk.
- Disaster response services important for efficient response after a hazard event occurs are located here and vulnerable to flood hazards.
- Historic waterfront and cultural (historic ship exhibit) as well as recreational facilities could be lost or damaged by flooding, erosion and other storm and wave damage and/or an earthquake.
- Damage to these historic assets could pose high costs to repair, result in loss of historic resources, reduce the historic integrity of the area and economic disruption (e.g. lost tourism revenue).
- Eventual loss of beach access at Aquatic Cove Park will impact beach and aquatic facilities, their public access points, and storage facilities. The South End and Dolphin Rowing Clubs will be impacted to some degree.
- Most of this subarea's assets are located on Bay fill making them potentially vulnerable to seismic activity.

Opportunities

- Ability to rehabilitate and preserve historic and iconic assets for continued commercial and recreational uses.
- Protection and enhancement of public access and connections to the Bay shoreline.
- Increased ecological connections to the Bay and potential to develop habitat by integrating nature-based features
- Potential partnerships with the National Park Service to secure and improve recreational connections (Fort Mason, San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park).
- Improvement or enhancement of maritime uses along the shoreline.

Objectives

- Assess and protect area and assets from flooding and seismic risks.
- Reduce the risk to disaster response function and public safety and public health from Bay storms and rising water levels.
- Improve recreation and tourism along the San Francisco waterfront when developing storm risk management project features and separate recreational project features.
- Reduce the risk to critical public infrastructure and private property damage from strong seismic activity and rising Bay water levels.
- Retain and improve public access when developing project features.
- Remove environmental risks and improve the natural environment (water quality/soil) and ecological value.
- Retain ceremonial berths for historic ships and interpretive exhibits as waterfront cultural attractions.

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Constraints

- Avoid and minimize impacts to local and regional transit stations, routes, and connections.
- Must not adversely impact the Bay ecosystem.
- Must not increase the risk of flooding from any source (Bay, creek, or surface waters) outside of the subarea.
- Must protect maritime and disaster response function.
- Must ensure no increased risk from contaminated lands.

Considerations

- **Land use and economic role:** There is high demand and economic activity in the area from the public recreational land and facilities, historic sites, and tourist attractions, and surrounding populated urban area.
- **Transparent communications:** Employ an open, transparent process that respects views of individuals and groups interested in USACE activities and the Port's waterfront resilience efforts. Coordinate with stakeholders and City staff working on the community-driven visioning effort for the Aquatic Park & Pier.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** There is high public interest in maintaining the existing character and qualities that are iconic to the City and in preserving the historic piers and buildings in place such as those found in Aquatic Park. The Aquatic Park Subarea has a strong community planning group that is focused on rehabilitating Municipal Pier, preserving the beach, reducing risk from sea level rise and maintaining and enhancing water recreation, historic resources and visitor serving uses. Community interests also include removing environmental risks and improving the natural environment (water quality/soil) and ecological value. Additional community feedback has cited enhancing public transit and safe pedestrian and bicycle pathways as a priority.