This chapter examines the four most important “waterfront design resources” which define the urban design character of the Port waterfront -- open space and public access, views, historic resources, and city pattern. These resources are evaluated in their existing condition, and policies and future actions are specified to:

- **Preserve** the existing resource;
- **Enhance** the resource where appropriate; and
- **Create** new resources where needed along the waterfront.

Applying these concepts requires an understanding of how the open space, views, historic resources, and city pattern work together to create the waterfront’s unique character, and how preservation, enhancement, and creation of these resources fits into the Port’s overall public trust responsibilities and economic capabilities.

To provide a baseline for analysis, inventories were prepared to record the types and location of existing open space and public access areas, views and vantage points, historic and non-historic buildings, and components of the City’s pattern. Analysis of how people use and enjoy San Francisco’s dynamic urban waterfront led to an understanding of the interdependence of views, open spaces, and historic resources with the Port’s maritime, commercial and recreation activities. For example, dramatic views of the Bay or maritime activities are often framed by historic buildings that house commercial activities and restaurants and/or that are the major feature of an open space. An open space next to an historic or non-historic building often emphasizes the building’s importance and increases its visibility, while activating the open space and making it safer. The interplay of rectangular finger piers and open water areas creates a city pattern that is unique to San Francisco.

In order to enhance existing resources or provide well designed new resources, the Port will balance the opportunities and constraints of public access and open space, views and historic resource preservation with the Port’s commercial and maritime activities. In some areas, the placement or protection of one type of resource can limit the opportunity for another resource. Between Piers 19 and 35, for example, the distance between waterfront views is greater than in other parts of the waterfront because many bulkhead buildings and piers remain in this area. While wholesale removal of bulkhead buildings and piers would open up views in this area, it would do so at the expense of erasing part of San Francisco’s architectural heritage and splendor, and removing dynamic waterfront commercial and maritime activities. Views could, however, be created through openings in historic buildings and by selective removal of non-historic buildings.
The architectural character of Port development will be directed to enhance San Francisco’s unique city pattern. Development on piers and on the seawall will emphasize the edge where land and water meet. Development on the “inland” seawall lots will complement the character of adjacent city districts. By preserving, enhancing and creating a unique combination of waterfront resources and land uses, the Port will provide a balanced variety of waterfront experiences for San Franciscans and visitors to enjoy.

Implementation of the policies in this chapter will create a scenic and publicly accessible waterfront, while allowing the Port to continue to meet its maritime land use needs, and provide opportunities for new activities and uses to draw people to the shore.