Public Access and Open Space

The Port’s network of existing and future public access and open space areas is one of the City’s most significant waterfront resources. It extends the City’s park and open space system, connects the City with the expansive waters of the Bay, and offers tremendous opportunities for public enjoyment of the waterfront.

This section provides an overview of the primary waterfront public access and open space policies, a summary description of the Port’s open spaces and public access areas, and standards and objectives that addresses the location and siting of open spaces and the character of improvements within those spaces.

Public Access & Open Space Policies
The Port’s public access and open space plan reflects five primary policies: a ‘continuous’ public access and open space program that encourages people to explore the entire waterfront; a ‘sequence’ of significant open spaces occurring at frequent walkable intervals; a ‘variety’ of public access and open spaces to experience the waterfront’s many activities; public access and open spaces which provide ‘connections’ between the City and the Bay; and open space ‘character’ that is an architectural backdrop to the magnificence of the Bay. In developing new public access and open space, the Port will build upon its base of existing public access and open space, create opportunities for people to explore the entire waterfront through a variety of recreational opportunities and connections with the water, and provide opportunities for spectacular views of the Bay and its maritime activities. In addition, the Waterfront Land Use Plan calls for the creation of a ‘PortWalk’ along the waterfront that integrates new public access and open space on piers with the Port’s continuous waterfront walkway. Concepts for the design and qualities of the ‘PortWalk’ and other public access to be included as part of pier development are discussed on the following pages.

Pier 7 public access and fishing pier
Chapter 3

Continuity
Develop a continuous waterfront walkway that connects public access, open spaces and activity areas from Fisherman's Wharf to Pier 70. The Embarcadero Promenade already provides a major portion of this walkway from Pier 39 to South Beach. Proposed future walkway improvements from China Basin to Pier 70 and improvements to the Jefferson Street sidewalks in Fisherman's Wharf will improve pedestrian access and enjoyment and will complete a continuous walkway along the waterfront. This concept is a fundamental part of the PortWalk, which will extend public access onto piers.

Sequence
Create a sequence of major open spaces and Open Water Basins that occur frequently and regularly at significant points along the waterfront. East Wharf Park at Pier 39, Pier 7, the Ferry Building (Harry Bridges Plaza) and South Beach Park are major existing open spaces north of China Basin. They will soon be joined by a landscaped park at Rincon Point. Additional future open spaces at Fisherman’s Wharf, Northeast Wharf at Pier 27, Brannan Street Wharf, and in the Mission Bay area also will contribute to this network. These open spaces will be complemented by a variety of smaller open spaces on piers and in other locations along the waterfront. Existing Open Water Basins at Broadway and Rincon Point will be complemented by new Open Water Basins at the Northeast Wharf and Brannan Street Wharf, and new open water areas between Piers 15 and 17 and at Piers ½, 2 and 24.

Variety
Develop a variety of public access and open spaces that offer many recreational opportunities and enhance other uses along the waterfront. The waterfront has a variety of public access and open spaces including natural areas, landscaped parks, plazas, waterfront walkways and open water areas. New public access and open space should continue to expand the diverse opportunities for recreation, views and appreciation of the waterfront and the Bay.

Connection
Design public access and open spaces to encourage connections between the City, the waterfront and the Bay. Many people will be drawn to those waterfront access areas, which are most visible from the City. New public access and open spaces should therefore be designed to maximize visibility or other connections between the City, the waterfront and the Bay.

Character
Emphasize San Francisco’s waterfront setting by designing most public open spaces as an architectural backdrop to the waterfront’s spectacular natural and built features. Improvements to the PortWalk should be simple and minimalist in form and character to allow the natural beauty of the waterfront and its view to and from the Bay to cast the strongest visual image. Certain locations along the waterfront that are planned for major development or large open spaces may warrant different design features reflective of their use or area (e.g. PacBell Ballpark, Ferry Building).
Summary of Public Access and Open Spaces

The development of the industrial and maritime Port from the 1860’s through the 1930’s offered few opportunities for public access or open space. Over the last 20 years, however, the shift of industrial activities to the southern waterfront and land use changes along the northern waterfront between China Basin and Fisherman’s Wharf have encouraged the development of public access and open spaces on Port property.

Waterfront Plan policies call for developing additional public access, open spaces and other uses to attract people to the waterfront as part of maritime mixed-use projects. These new projects will incorporate recreation-oriented maritime and commercial uses and new public access and open space improvements. The Port will further improve waterfront public access by providing major public open spaces, such as Rincon Park, and new open spaces in Fisherman’s Wharf, the Northeast Waterfront and South Beach.

The following pages provide a brief description of existing and planned public access and open spaces on Port property. The network of open spaces is organized on the following pages by subareas: Fisherman’s Wharf, Northeast Waterfront, Ferry Building, South Beach, Mission Bay, and the Southern Waterfront. Also illustrated on the following map are Open Water Areas and Open Water Basins. These areas are further described along with a listing of permitted uses for each Open Water Area or Basin in the BCDC Special Area Plan.

Plaza and park amenities included as part of new developments in the South Beach area
Fisherman’s Wharf
Fisherman’s Wharf has a variety of types of open spaces to observe the fishing industry, learn about maritime history, or take in views of the north Bay. There are open spaces for viewing on Piers 39, 41, 43 and 43½. The Hyde Street Pier is the home to the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park with its collection of tall ships and other boats, and the Fisherman’s Wharf Interpretive Signage program provides a fun and memorable self-guided tour of the fishing industry.

Existing

1. Jefferson Street Sidewalk
Sidewalk connecting the Embarcadero Promenade to Aquatic Park from Powell to Hyde Streets.

2. Swimming and Rowing Club Docks
Public access to swimming and rowing club docks which are within Port jurisdiction.

3. Hyde Street Pier
San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park -- historic ships and related exhibits located at the foot of Hyde Street.

4. San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park
On the Hyde Street Pier in Fisherman’s Wharf.

5. Hyde Street Harbor
Pier edge access at the entrance to the fishing harbor immediately east of the Hyde Street Pier.

6. Fisherman’s Wharf Interpretive Signage Program
Interpretive sign program describing the fishing industry through Fisherman’s Wharf between Powell and Hyde Streets.

7. Inner Lagoon Walkways
Areas to view the fishing harbor adjacent to Jefferson Street between Taylor and Jones Streets.

8. Pier 45 East Apron
Public access alongside existing Pampanito historic ship.

9. Pampanito Submarine at Pier 45
Berthed along the east side of Pier 45.

10. Pier 41
Ferry landing facilities and public access pier.

11. Pier 39/Aquarium
Commercial recreation uses, central plazas, and perimeter access. Also included are landscaped open spaces adjacent to The Embarcadero.

12. Sydney Rudy Waterfront Park, East Wharf Park
Lawn and children’s play area fronting on the Embarcadero between Piers 35 and 39.

Future

13. Fisherman’s Wharf Plaza
Opportunity to develop a major public plaza extending to the Bay in the area generally bounded by Jefferson, Taylor, and Powell Streets and the Bay.

[Image of Fisherman’s Wharf]

Pampanito submarine at the east side of Pier 45.
Public Access and Open Space

Northeast Waterfront

Public access and open spaces in the Northeast Waterfront combine the “Herb Caen Way” (Embarcadero Promenade) with a variety of public aprons along the historic “finger piers”. Also included is the spectacular Pier 7 public access and fishing pier and a planned destination open space at Pier 27.

**Existing**
- **Pier 23**
  Improvements adjacent to the Promenade between Piers 23 and 27.
- **Wharf Improvements**
  Marginal wharf and pier edge improvements between Piers 7 and 9 and between Piers 9 and 15.
- **Pier 7**
  Public access and fishing pier within the Broadway Open Water Basin between Pier 3 and 9.

**Future**
- **Northeast Wharf**
  A new plaza to be developed by the Port adjacent to The Embarcadero at Pier 27.
- **Northeast Wharf Open Water Basin**
  Piers 19-27, partial removal of Pier 23 shed (and potentially the underlying pier decking and piles).
- **Pier 23 East End**
  Remove eastern portion of pier and shed building.
- **Pier 15-17 Valley Open Water Area**
  Remove approximately 37,000 square feet of the decking and piles between the piers.
Ferry Building Area
The major open spaces in this area are centered around the attraction of the historic Ferry Building. The new Harry Bridges plaza on the City-side of the Ferry Building provides a grand civic forecourt to the Ferry Building that complements the adjacent Justin Herman plaza and park. The recently renovated Pier 1 includes complete perimeter access with viewing opportunities of the Ferry Terminal activities, and Rincon Park (construction 2001) will be a new two-acre landscaped park within walking distance of Downtown and South Beach.

Existing

- **Ferry Boat Santa Rosa**
  North side of Pier 3 adjacent to the Santa Rosa.
- **Pier 1**
  Perimeter access around Pier 1 and through the bulkhead rail corridor.
- **Pier 1/2**
  Public access walkway with views of ferry activities.
- **Ferry Plaza**
  Public plaza on the waterside of the Ferry Building that serves the Downtown Ferry Terminal
- **Harry Bridges Plaza**
  A new civic plaza on the City side of the Ferry Building located between the north and south lanes of the Embarcadero Roadway.
- **Seawall Lot 347N**
  An office building plaza with Bay views at the northeast corner of Howard Street and The Embarcadero.

Future

- **Herb Caen Way (“Embarcadero Promenade”)**
  25 foot wide (minimum) Embarcadero shoreline walkway with “Art Ribbon” project extending from Fisherman’s Wharf to China Basin.
- **Rincon Park**
  A new landscaped park on the east side of The Embarcadero with views of the Bay Bridge, between Howard and Harrison Streets adjacent to the Rincon Point Open Water Basin between the Ferry Terminal Breakwater and the Pier 22 1/2 Fireboat house.

San Francisco Bay

Ferry Building Area

Harry Bridges Plaza on the City-side of the Ferry Building.
South Beach
South Beach is home to the new South Beach Marina and Park and the waterfront walkway on the edge of the new ballpark. The area is also planned to have a major new open space – the Brannan Street Wharf, to be constructed immediately south of the planned cruise terminal on Pier 30-32. Both the Brannan Street Wharf and the South Beach Park will serve the vibrant new South Beach neighborhood.

**Existing**
17 **Jeremiah O’Brien**
Last World War II liberty ship currently berthed at Pier 30-32 or at Fisherman’s Wharf along Pier 45.
19 **South Beach Harbor Public Access Pier**
Recreational boat harbor and public access pier.
21 **South Beach Park**
Lawn and other park improvements adjacent to the South Beach Harbor and the ballpark.
23 **Ballpark Public Access**
Public access walkway extending along the waterside of the ballpark adjacent to China Basin Channel between South Beach Park and the Third Street Bridge.

**Future**
24 **Pier 24**
Remove Pier 24 to create Open Water Area
25 **Brannan Street Wharf**
A plaza and promenade open space to be developed and financed by the Port, including the removal of Piers 34 and 36 to create the Brannan Street Wharf Open Water Basin.
26 **Pier 38**
Perimeter pier edge access on Pier 38.

*PacBell Park and waterside Promenade.*
Mission Bay
The planned Mission Bay project adjacent to Port lands includes a complete open space system ranging from mini-parks, to landscaped boulevards, to a major waterfront open space east of the realigned Terry Francois Boulevard. The entire south edge of China Basin Channel will also be a landscaped park or other natural open space area.

Existing

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<td>1.</td>
<td>Agua Vista Park</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Mission Creek Harbor &amp; South Shore Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>China Basin Park</td>
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- **Agua Vista Park**
  Plant area and fishing pier with views of Pier 70 along Terry Francois Boulevard in the Mission Bay area.

- **Mission Creek Harbor & South Shore Park**
  Landscaped park and plazas along the south side of China Basin Channel between Fourth and Sixth Streets to be constructed with Mission Bay improvements. Mission Creek Harbor landscaping is located on Port property adjacent to South Shore Park.

- **China Basin Park**
  Landscaped park with ballpark and bridge views adjacent to China Basin Channel and Third Street.

Future

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<td>Pier 52 Boat Launch</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Mission Bay Walkway</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Mission Bay Open Space</td>
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- **Pier 52 Boat Launch**
  Public boat launch in the Mission Bay area with adjoining waterfront edge access.

- **Mission Bay Walkway**
  Waterfront walkway on Port property east of Terry Francois Blvd. connecting the Third Street Bridge at China Basin with the Pier 70 area, to be constructed with Mission Bay improvements.

- **Mission Bay Open Space**
  Landscaped area adjacent to the Bay along Terry Francois Boulevard in the Mission Bay area and on adjacent Port property, to be constructed with Mission Bay improvements.
Southern Waterfront

The most prominent open space in the Southern Waterfront area is the new Heron’s Head Park located on the Pier 98 area. This new wetland and natural area was improved by the Port as a quiet place to enjoy bird watching, fishing or viewing the adjacent Pier 94-96 container terminal.

Existing

- **Warm Water Cove Park**
  Native planting and walkways at the foot of Twenty-Fourth Street.

- **Islais Creek**
  Public improvements coordinated by The Friends of Islais Creek on the north edge of Islais Creek east of Third Street.

Future

- **SWL 344 Existing Wetlands**
  North of Pier 94 in the Southern Waterfront area.

- **Heron’s Head Park**
  Wetland and natural park located at Pier 98 between India Basin and Pier 96.

- **India Basin Park**
  Landscaped and natural area that is part of a larger City park on the south side of India Basin.
Chapter 3

The PortWalk

The ‘PortWalk’ will be created through a combination of the continuous waterfront walkway along The Embarcadero Promenade – Herb Caen Way, and along other waterfront roadways, waterfront public plazas and parks, and public access on piers. There will be visible connections between public access and open spaces that complement development destinations over the water. On piers, the ‘PortWalk’ will take many different forms, depending on site location, view opportunities, and the type and design of the development project of which it is a part. It will include a “Bayside History Walk” to provide access behind and within historic buildings on piers.

PortWalk improvements will be created as Port property is redeveloped with new uses. Major developments on piers will be required to provide public access on the pier apron, a Bayside History Walk, and an additional public access area consistent with the project and size of the pier. These public access improvements also are required under planning policies of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, particularly in the San Francisco Waterfront Special Area Plan (BCDC-SAP). For major development on large piers, it is expected that a higher proportion of public access will be necessary than for finger piers. Smaller projects also will be required to provide maximum feasible public access consistent with the project.

The following pages describe siting and character design standards to be considered when developing or improving public access and open space areas on piers, the shoreline or wharf areas as follows:

- **General Siting and Location** – The placement of open space within a project, making the most of climate and views, making public spaces feel safe, and making open spaces and public access obvious and accessible to the public;
- **Perimeter Access on Piers** – How new or renovated piers can include perimeter public access;
- **Destination Open Spaces on Piers** – How new development on piers can include “Destination” open space areas that add recreational opportunities;
- **Bayside History Walk** – A public access walkway that creates physical and visual access to and through historic resources; and
- **PortWalk Design Criteria** – “Design Criteria” to ensure a consistent and complementary approach to the design of improvements and furnishings within open spaces.

Additional criteria are included in the BCDC-SAP in its General Policies, in its Geographic-Specific Policies for Fisherman’s Wharf, and the Southern Waterfront, and elsewhere as indicated in the standards which follow.
General Siting and Location
New public access and open spaces should meet siting and location design standards that address placement of the open space within a project, how it visually and physically connects to The Embarcadero and the Bay, microclimate conditions, and security. These standards will be used to review the design of public access and open spaces in future projects. How the design standards apply varies depending on the size of the open space, location along the waterfront, type of adjacent or associated use, and location and type of other open spaces in the area. More specific design criteria for individual sites can be found in Chapter 4.

Connection to The Embarcadero
If not directly connected to the water's edge, new public access and open spaces should include a clear walkway or other circulation route identifying how to reach it from the Embarcadero Promenade.

Visible Connection to the Water
New public access and open spaces should include views to the Bay, maritime activities, and if feasible, the City. New public access and open spaces also should include contact with a pier edge, seawall edge, or other waterfront edge wherever feasible. (Refer to Chapter 3 Waterfront Views, and Chapter 4 Subarea Design & Access Criteria for a complete discussion of views. Also see BCDC-SAP Northeastern Waterfront “Waterfront Design Policies, Waterfront Form and Structure”.)

Location of Required BCDC Public Access
BCDC public access policies require public access areas to be located at ground or platform level, be open to the sky (except limited covering is allowed if it enhances public access and does not support private uses above), and along the waterfront edge. Other uses may extend to the edge if the uses enhance the total project design and do not occupy more than 20 percent of the public access edge. Also see BCDC-SAP Northeastern Waterfront “Public Access Policies.”

Open Water Basins
To preserve views of the Bay as the predominant features between Pier 35 and China Basin, create Open Water Basins within which new fill should be limited, consistent with BCDC-SAP Northeastern Waterfront “Open Water Basin and Public Access Policies.”
General Siting and Location (continued)

Commercial Facilities Within and Adjacent to Public Access and Open Space

Design public access so that the user is not intimidated nor is the user’s appreciation restricted by structures or incompatible uses. Allow accessory commercial activities (e.g. food and beverage services, bike or skate rentals, ferry queuing) within open space and public access areas after maintaining adequate pedestrian circulation and minimizing blockage of the waterfront edge. Allow adjacent commercial uses (e.g. restaurants) to spill out onto public access and open space areas. Clearly delineate adjacent commercial uses areas from public use areas with signs, planting, fences, elevation changes, or other distinguishing characteristics.

Microclimate Conditions

The design and placement of new public access and open spaces should address microclimatic conditions by providing, for example, places that are sheltered from wind and places which receive maximum sun exposure.

Design For Security

The location of open spaces and their visibility from adjacent uses can affect the safety and comfort of the public. Open spaces and site improvements should therefore be designed to avoid concealed areas and include adequate lighting.
**Perimeter Access on Piers**

New major development on piers will include PortWalk public access around the pier perimeter to maximize contact between people and the water’s edge. On the historic finger piers this is accommodated on the existing pier aprons which are generally about 20-feet wide or greater. Newly constructed, reconfigured, or renovated piers with new commercial or recreation uses should also include perimeter public access.

In certain instances, safety considerations or maritime operational needs (e.g. ship loading and service areas at the cruise terminal) may preclude complete perimeter access. In other cases, priority viewing locations or microclimate conditions may warrant emphasizing public access on certain sides over others. Site-specific situations are addressed in the Subarea Design and Access Criteria presented in Chapter 4. For example, the criteria for Piers 26-28 call for aligning pier public access with the Harrison Street view corridor, and creating a public access edge on the north side of Pier 26 to take advantage of spectacular City views. Shown here are just two examples of how PortWalk circulation on piers could be modified from the standard pier perimeter public access design.

*Many perimeter access layout options are possible*

**Standard:** Perimeter Access

**Alternative:** Single Edge

**Alternative:** Half Pier
Chapter 3

Flat Pier Apron with a Bullrail Edge. The bullrail edge maximizes views and accommodates boat tie-up. Bullrails are typically 12 by 12-inch wood set on 3 by 12-inch spacers. They may be located at the edge or slightly set back from the edge. Most of the apron is reserved for circulation and seating.

The following illustrations show how pier and wharf edge layouts could meet the above criteria. Using bullrails at the edge or stepping the edge down provides the most visual access. Railings may be needed in some areas for safety.

Perimeter Access Design Criteria
Open spaces and public access along pier aprons and wharf edges should be designed to take advantage of their unique location of being over the water and at its edge. Apply the following design criteria for open space and public access on pier aprons and wharf edges:

- Minimize the use and appearance of railings along the water’s edge to take advantage of views;
- Allow circulation at the edge;
- Provide seating and a primary path of circulation along the apron;
- Place site furnishings – e.g. lights, commercial signage, and planters adjacent to the pier shed where they will not conflict with circulation.

The following illustrations show how pier and wharf edge layouts could meet the above criteria. Using bullrails at the edge or stepping the edge down provides the most visual access. Railings may be needed in some areas for safety.

Flat Pier Apron with Railing Edge. If a railing is used at the edge of the apron, consideration must also be given to ADA accessible viewing opportunities.
**Destination Open Spaces on Piers**

New pier developments will provide opportunities to create a variety of on-site public access and open spaces as part of the PortWalk. Destination open spaces vary in size and location. They may be at the far end of the pier to take advantage of spectacular views across the Bay, or set midway along a pier apron focusing on adjacent boats in the water and views back to the City or pier activities. They may be combined with commercial uses located next to important entrances, or be a quiet refuge away from the City. View opportunities, microclimate conditions and overall site planning will dictate the best locations for open spaces, whether at the edge or interior of the pier, or close to The Embarcadero. Taken together, there are innumerable combinations of circulation and destination public access designs that could be incorporated in new pier developments and integrated with pedestrian access from The Embarcadero to meet public access and open space policies and implement the PortWalk.
**Bayside History Walk**

The adaptive reuse of historic waterfront buildings in new developments presents the opportunity to create another way to explore San Francisco’s historic waterfront. The ‘Bayside History Walk’ will be a part of these developments that will provide public access behind historic bulkhead and connector buildings to the Bay’s intimate and quiet spaces. The Bayside History Walk will include views of the inner structure of the historic pier buildings and connections to pier aprons and walkways behind the bulkhead buildings. This Walk can be a self-guided tour of the waterfront with historic photographs, explanatory text and maritime artifacts. Below are illustrative examples of where this Walk could occur.
PortWalk Design Criteria
The PortWalk Design Criteria with accompanying examples of furnishings contained in Appendix C, give guidance for improvements within the Port’s public access and open space system to ensure a certain standard of design consistency, while also preserving opportunities for creativity. The Design Criteria address the design and guide the selection for the following types of architectural components commonly found in the Port’s waterfront open spaces:

- Bulkhead Building Colors
- Bulkhead Lighting
- Benches
- Trash & Recycling Containers
- Railings and Bullrail Edges
- Paving
- Planting
- Pier Apron Lighting
- Interpretive Signage
- Durability – Materials should be selected and designed for permanence, waterfront conditions and a high level of public use.
- Maintainable – Open space elements should be designed for achievable maintenance requirements.

Consistent with the Public Access and Open Space “Character” policy (on page 21) open spaces are to be improved as “an architectural backdrop to the waterfront’s natural and built features”. This policy allows the natural beauty of the waterfront to be the strongest visual image, and directs open space improvements to be “simple” and “minimalist” in their design. Implementation of this policy through the PortWalk Design Criteria and accompanying examples in Appendix C, addresses the character of architectural components that are appropriate in waterfront open spaces.

The architectural improvements addressed in the PortWalk Design Criteria are not prescriptive (except for Bulkhead Building Colors and Bulkhead Lighting). Instead, the Criteria define recommended types of architectural improvements that also meet the following four general design principles for improvements within open space areas:
Design Criteria

Building Colors

The front and sides of historic Bulkheads and other similar buildings fronting the Embarcadero Roadway shall be painted standard Port colors. Standard colors shall also apply to historic structures on Pier 43, 45 and 48. Consult Port staff for specifications of standard Port colors for the Bulkhead buildings.

Design Criteria

Bulkhead Lighting

The following concepts shall guide lighting improvements on bulkhead buildings along the Embarcadero:

- The Ferry Building should be the dominantly lit building on the waterfront.
- The existing street lighting along The Embarcadero Roadway should be the main source of light on the bulkhead buildings.
- Any additional lighting on bulkhead buildings should illuminate:
  - The flag
  - The inside of the arch
  - Evidence of uses within buildings

Consult Port staff for specifications on light fixtures for the flag and arch lighting. To provide lighting through street facing windows consider using independent light circuits to keep lights on through early evening hours.

Existing night view along The Embarcadero
Design Criteria

Benches

Benches let us know we are invited into a public area and provide us with a comfortable resting place. When selecting benches consider the criteria stated below. Benches should also include end and mid-rails at some locations for accessibility. Consider the following criteria for the selection of benches and refer to Appendix C for examples:

- Simple and Minimalist Form;
- Timeless Design;
- Comfortable;
- Durable and Maintainable Materials;
- Appropriate Scale for the Waterfront;

Design Criteria

Trash & Recycling Containers

Trash and recycling containers serve an important function in every open space. Their design should be noticeable without attracting unnecessary attention. Consider the following criteria for the selection of trash and recycling containers and refer to Appendix C for examples:

- "Background" Character;
- Simple or Minimalist Form;
- Functional;
  - Easy to Service;
  - Limit Blowing Debris;
  - Not Inviting to Birds;
- Durable and maintainable materials;
- Appropriate scale for the waterfront;

Recycling containers should be provided in some locations to accommodate the level of activity for the open space. Recycling containers can be a minor addition to a trash container in low intensity areas or may need to be separate containers for sorting of materials in higher use areas.
Design Criteria

Railings

Railings and bullrails are both used along edges of pier aprons and marginal wharves. See page 33 for typical edge treatment layouts. Railings for pier and seawall locations are discussed separately.

Bullrails are often a preferred edge treatment because of their minimal view blockage, ability to moor boats at them, and maintaining the waterfront character. Railings may be located in public access areas along non-maritime edges, or if determined necessary by the adjacent uses.

Consider the following criteria when selecting or designing railings and refer to Appendix C for examples:

- Top rail should be inviting to lean on;
- Railings should not be easily climbable (no climbable horizontal bars or cables);
- Create a rhythm established by a regular spacing of posts;
- Consider including a mid-rail slightly below the handrail for added interest;
- Consider using posts that break the line of the handrail to minimize the appearance of alignment imperfections;
- Maximize transparency;
- Durable and maintainable materials;
- Appropriate scale for the waterfront.

Sample sections of railings constructed on the project site may be required for design review on larger projects.

Seawall Railings

A railing located along a seawall marks the edge of the city – where land meets water. Because of the location on the edge of land, rather than on a pier over the water, a seawall railing should be a heavier design and use materials appropriate to its location on solid ground.

Consider the criteria cited for ‘Railings’ when selecting or designing seawall railings, with particular attention to the appropriate scale of a seawall location, and refer to Appendix C for examples.
Design Criteria

Paving

Continuing the paving of the heavily used Embarcadero Promenade onto other adjoining open spaces helps inform users that these areas are there for public use and they are invited to be there. The Embarcadero Promenade is a simple dark concrete with a five-foot scoring grid. Although not mandatory, this paving should always be considered as an option or as the dominant paving material in waterfront open spaces that are contiguous to the Embarcadero walkways. Accent paving of other colors or materials may also be used in combination with the dark concrete where appropriate, or the dark concrete may be selected as the unifying material in larger open spaces.

Design Criteria

Planting

Planting may be used to accent entries, create a more intimate scale, add color or shield the wind or sun. Historically plants were not commonly found on San Francisco’s industrial piers. While proper use of plants may enhance an open space, plantings should be used carefully so as not to detract from historic character or from a pier or wharf’s unique construction of being a structure over the water, rather than on solid land.

Consider the following criteria when including planting on pier or wharf open space areas:

• Planting should be minimal on pier aprons, wharves, or near historic structures;
• Planting should be used primarily for up-close accent of entrances, cafe areas or other similar uses;
• Plants should be placed in pots or planters above the pier deck;
• Planting located along the pier apron should not be obvious from afar;
• Greater amounts of planting may be considered away from pier edges or inland from the seawall.
Chapter 3

Working maritime activities and rich history of the waterfront are interesting stories just waiting to be told. Interpretive signage exists along the Embarcadero Roadway, through Fisherman’s Wharf and at Heron’s Head Park. New open spaces, public access areas and sections of the Bayside History Walk should include interpretive signage to enhance the enjoyment of the waterfront. Consider the following criteria when developing content for interpretive programs:

- Include interpretive information in all major open spaces and other areas that have significant cultural, historic or educational interest and where possible along the Bayside History Walk;
- Coordinate content of interpretive information with that of nearby programs and signage; and
- Message content should appeal to a broad range of ages, interests, and ability to understand interpretive information.

Sign supports should have the following architectural characteristics:

- Simple or Minimalist Form;
- Durable and Maintainable Materials;
- Appropriate Scale for the Waterfront.

Design Criteria

Interpretive Signage

San Francisco’s historic “finger piers” have a unique linear shape being about 150 feet wide and 600-900 feet long. The historic pier sheds are simple industrial warehouse structures with regular spaced roll-up doors for servicing ships. Lighting the pier aprons for public access use should emphasize the length of the piers with a rhythm of doors, windows, perimeter lighting, and other edge improvements.

Lighting on pier aprons should meet the following criteria:

- Lighting along the apron adjacent to historic pier sheds should be attached to the shed or be on a pole very close to the shed;
- Accent the linear form of the piers using the rhythm of supports or openings on the sheds with regularly spaced fixtures;
- Lights should be shielded so that distant views of the pier, although noticeable, do not compete with City and Bay views;
- Additional lighting for entrances or other uses along pier edges should be shielded so as not to create bright spots or detract from the larger City and Bay views;
- Select fixtures and locations for lights that are not attractive as bird perches;

Design Criteria

Pier Apron Lighting

San Francisco’s historic “finger piers” have a unique linear shape being about 150 feet wide and 600-900 feet long. The historic pier sheds are simple industrial warehouse structures with regular spaced roll-up doors for servicing ships. Lighting the pier aprons for public access use should emphasize the length of the piers with a rhythm of doors, windows, perimeter lighting, and other edge improvements.

Lighting on pier aprons should meet the following criteria:

- Lighting along the apron adjacent to historic pier sheds should be attached to the shed or be on a pole very close to the shed;
- Accent the linear form of the piers using the rhythm of supports or openings on the sheds with regularly spaced fixtures;
- Lights should be shielded so that distant views of the pier, although noticeable, do not compete with City and Bay views;
- Additional lighting for entrances or other uses along pier edges should be shielded so as not to create bright spots or detract from the larger City and Bay views;
- Select fixtures and locations for lights that are not attractive as bird perches;