The focal point of this area is the historic Ferry Building. With the removal of the Embarcadero Freeway, the Ferry Building and its environs are re-emerging as a site of proud civic importance to the City. Restoring the Ferry Building to its historic role as a bustling transportation hub and elegant centerpiece of the waterfront is one of the highest priorities of the Plan. Downtown workers, neighbors and visitors will flock to the area's new ferries, hovercraft and excursion boats, public market, conference facilities, retail establishments and other public-oriented activities. The Port already is laying the groundwork for this transformation, including seismic upgrades, design studies, funding initiatives and environmental review for the Ferry Building project. On the waterside, construction of the Downtown Ferry terminal project will provide new berths for expanding regional ferry service.
CHAPTER

The Ferry Building area offers a prime opportunity for preserving the historic context of the waterfront, while also providing for new and revitalized activities along the shore. The Ferry Building is a City landmark that also is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Originally named the Union Depot and Ferry House, this stately structure, with its clock tower situated at the terminus of the Market Street corridor, marks an historic entry and departure point for the City. Although once a bustling ferry terminal, the building currently is used mostly for offices, including the Port’s administrative headquarters, as well as many business active in international trade.

In spite of the fact that the Ferry Building is the centerpiece of the waterfront and a key orientation point for the downtown, it currently lacks the sense of place and purpose that should be accorded a building of such historic importance. In the late 1950’s and early 1960’s, both the north and the south wings of the building were altered. These “modernization” efforts, widely considered an affront to a once grand example of Neo-Classical Beaux Arts architecture, included reconfiguration of the building’s ground floor uses in such a way as to confound, if not actually discourage, the public from entering or walking around the building. The impact of these significant modifications became more evident to the general public after the Embarcadero Freeway was demolished in 1992.

The Ferry Building Waterfront also hosts other significant architectural structures. To the south of the Ferry Building, the former U.S. Agriculture Building is used for offices. The Agriculture Building is a modified palazzo building with Renaissance ornamentation and, like the Ferry Building, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Originally the Agriculture Building (formerly named the Ferry Building Post Office) contained a public lobby with offices above. The interior of the building has been modified by numerous tenants and little remains today of the original elements or materials, except for the staircase at the Embarcadero entrance.

The historic pier shed, bulkhead and connector structures of Piers 1 thru 5 are visually connected with the Ferry Building, adding to the strong architectural and historic character of this area. These structures were also previously cut off from the City by the Embarcadero Freeway. These buildings, together with the Ferry Building and Agriculture Building, will be included in the Port’s nomination for a National Register Historic District, and will be preserved according to the Secretary of the Interiors’ Standards for Historic Rehabilitation and will become even more prominent as a result of the roadway and open space improvements planned for the area.

Objectives for the Ferry Building Waterfront

Preserve and restore historic structures on the Ferry Building Waterfront, both to recall the area’s historic use and to accommodate new uses.
The Embarcadero Freeway demolition has focused public attention on the Ferry Building Waterfront, recalling a time when the area served as the primary gateway to the City. The challenge today is to return these functions to the area and to introduce new activities and connections to the water, while also restoring the area’s historic dignity and maritime character. The restoration and adaptive reuse of the Ferry Building and the surrounding buildings and the piers are critical to the reunification of the City with its waterfront, and to reestablishing the Ferry Building’s civic importance. The Ferry Building restoration should continue to be one of the highest priorities of the Port Commission.

In the early 1980’s, all the finger piers between the Ferry Building and Pier 22½ were removed and replaced with the Embarcadero Promenade, a public accessway that provides welcome relief from the urban congestion of downtown. Except for ferry operations at the Ferry Building, ferry and excursion boat operations at Pier 1, and historic ship docking at Pier 3, maritime activities are no longer significant in this area. As an integral part of revitalizing the Ferry Building Waterfront, new maritime activities should be developed for the public to enjoy.

In particular, because of its close proximity to transit and downtown, this area is a prime location for: 1) expansion of ferry operations to meet the Metropolitan Transportation Commission’s projections for increased ferry ridership in the Bay area; 2) excursion boat operations that require high visibility and close proximity to downtown; 3) historic ships and ceremonial ships to draw people to the waterfront; and 4) recreational boat moorings to permit boaters to stop and enjoy downtown San Francisco for the day. Additionally, this area offers a prime opportunity to accommodate new modes of waterborne transportation, including water taxis and airport hovercrafts, because of its proximity to the downtown commuter, business and tourist centers.

The Ferry Building Waterfront abuts downtown San Francisco’s diverse mix of urban activities. Although this downtown area is dominated by high-rise buildings, the edge closest to the water is characterized by smaller scale commercial structures and large open spaces such as Justin Herman Plaza. The northern part of the area is adjacent to Golden Gateway, a waterfront neighborhood containing low to high-rise residential and commercial development. The southern part of the area is adjacent to the emerging Rincon Hill and Rincon Point mixed commercial and residential districts. In addition to the maritime activities discussed above, non-maritime land uses occurring on Port property include offices, restaurants, retail, parking, public access and a service station. New open spaces and ancillary commercial developments have been proposed for the mostly non-Port properties immediately across The Embarcadero which were vacated through demolition of the Embarcadero Freeway.
Because of its central and very visible location, the diversity of adjacent uses, and the significant transportation and open space improvements planned or under way for the broader area, the Ferry Building Waterfront should host an exciting array of maritime, commercial, civic, open space, recreation and other waterfront activities. New uses should draw people into the Ferry Building, so that it becomes a more inviting, lively and interesting place to be - a destination in its own right. The area should provide both a place for downtown workers to enjoy lunchtime or after hours activities, as well as a destination for other San Franciscans and visitors who might not ordinarily come to the area during the course of their daily routine. New uses should generate activity during evenings and weekends to complement the weekday office uses in the adjacent downtown.

Currently, there are many public access opportunities in this area, including the Embarcadero promenade, the Broadway and Rincon Point Open Water Basins, public access at Pier 3, the Ferry Plaza and Justin Herman Plaza. However, because most of these areas are not particularly well connected to the City and to each other, they are not well used. Ferry Plaza, located on the east side of the Ferry Building, provides a mix of activities to serve the public, including the Golden Gate Ferry Terminal, Gabbiano’s Restaurant, public access on top of the Golden Gate Terminal and along the south and east sides of the Plaza, and open space in the center of the Plaza.

Extend the PortWalk through the area, providing more convenient, direct and aesthetically pleasing public access connections to open space areas and the Bay.

A vision for new activities at the Ferry Building
To address this issue, the Waterfront Design & Access Element includes design criteria for the PortWalk to create continuous waterfront pedestrian access from the Embarcadero Promenade south of the Agriculture Building to the south edge of Pier 1. On the City side, the planned Ferry Building Plaza will create a grand civic open space that relates to the newly visible Ferry Building and waterfront, which would establish a dramatic element along the PortWalk. New developed and improvements along the Ferry Building Waterfront should therefore seed to further enhance the PortWalk, connecting with existing open space areas, as well as to new open space at Rincon park, and new pedestrian improvements that are part of the Waterfront Transportation Projects.

The 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake triggered a dramatic increase in the demand for ferry service to and from downtown San Francisco. Last year, commuter and recreational passengers made 2.8 million ferry trips, and this number is expected to grow to over 4 million during the next decade (See Appendix A for more information on ferries). New modes of waterborne transportation, including airport hovercrafts and water taxis are being explored. These trends indicate the need to provide more facilities and services to accommodate waterborne travelers. The Ferry Building Waterfront clearly is the best place to meet this need, a conclusion supported by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission’s Regional Ferry Plan, which encourages coordination of ferry schedules to allow inter-ferry transfers at the Ferry Building.
Plans for expanded ferry operations at the Ferry Building
Further increases in ferry ridership also are likely to result from the conversion of Treasure Island from military to civilian use. Any major new uses will require creative means of transporting people to the island because of the Bay Bridges’ limited capacity to handle more traffic flow.

In combination with nearby BART and MUNI service, the Waterfront Transportation Projects also will emphasize the important role this area plays in moving people in and out of the City, and up and down the waterfront. Redevelopment of the Ferry Building and environs should maximize convenience of connections between landside and waterside transportation modes. The Port should promote a direct, continuous transit line between the Northern and Southern Waterfront and, in particular, between the F-Line and the MUNI Metro extension when funding permits. Direct, continuous transit lines along The Embarcadero that do not require transfers will encourage the public to use transit rather than private cars. On the waterside, ferries and water taxis should connect the Ferry Building with other waterfront locations, including Fisherman’s Wharf, China Basin, Candlestick Park, regional airports, Treasure Island and other locations.

The expansion of ferry operations and the provision of new means of waterborne transportation, combined with increasing roadway congestion will, over time, divert automobile drivers to other modes of transit. Nevertheless, maintaining parking in the area is a key concern for Port tenants, and has presented a stumbling block to past efforts to redevelop the Ferry and Agriculture Buildings.

Since the earthquake and demolition of the Embarcadero Freeway, the amount of off-street parking in the area has been significantly reduced. The economic viability of the Ferry Building and Agriculture Building renovations depends, at a minimum, on limited amounts of short-term parking for tenants and visitors, automobile drop off and pickup areas to serve the transportation and commercial functions of the Ferry Building, loading and unloading areas to serve potential retail functions in the buildings, and transportation staging areas. Loss of parking and loading areas may limit the Port’s ability to successfully redevelop the Ferry and Agriculture Buildings, accommodate certain desirable uses like a public market or excursion boats, or successfully develop other properties in the area like Piers 1 and 3.

The projected loss of waterfront parking and the need to replace it to serve existing and future Port activities requires a creative solution to rationalize parking in the broader area. This should be an objective of the mid-Embarcadero roadway design process currently underway.

After the Embarcadero Freeway was built, little attention was paid to ensuring that the design of facilities on each side of The Embarcadero were physically or visually connected. In fact, landside improvements were designed to face away from the waterfront to buffer against freeway noise and traffic. At the same time, the public paid little attention to the waterfront facilities because they were not seen from the other side of The Embarcadero. Now that the Freeway is gone, special consideration should be given to urban design
features that are in keeping with and enhance the historic maritime character and architectural value of the waterfront facilities, and that reconnect the Ferry Building area to the City and the Bay. Public views from, through, and around the Ferry Building should provide new opportunities to observe maritime activities and the Bay. Portions of Piers 1/2 and 2 should be removed in order to enhance views of the Bay.

In general, San Francisco’s downtown is an active, mixed-use environment that hosts a range of activities and services for downtown employees and residents. Yet for the most part, Port properties in the area have not enhanced or benefitted from this setting. Demolition of the Embarcadero Freeway and construction of the planned roadway improvements have stimulated public and private sector interest in restoration of this area. New development along the waterfront to the south, such as the South Beach Harbor, the new South Beach mixed-use residential neighborhood and the adjoining ballpark at China Basin, reinforce this interest. The Ferry Building area therefore offers perhaps the best opportunity on the waterfront for a successful public and private partnership to provide new public amenities, jobs and other benefits to the Port, the city and the region. The high costs of historic renovation will require a creative financing approach if the Ferry Building and environs are to offer a large public component that will attract people to the waterfront. In the Ferry Building itself, there should be a mix of public and commercial uses to ensure the market and financial feasibility of this critical renovation project.

Pursue a mix of public and private resources to achieve an appropriate quality and mix of uses.
### The Ferry Building Waterfront Acceptable Land Use Table (1,2,3,4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Maritime Uses</th>
<th>Commercial Uses</th>
<th>Residential Uses</th>
<th>Open Spaces/Public Access</th>
<th>Maritime Office</th>
<th>Maritime Support Services</th>
<th>Recreational Boating and Water Use</th>
<th>Historic Ships</th>
<th>Passenger Cruise Ships</th>
<th>Ferry and Excursion Boats</th>
<th>Seawall Lot 351</th>
<th>Pier 5 Pierhead / Bulkhead</th>
<th>Pier 1</th>
<th>Pier 1½</th>
<th>Pier ½</th>
<th>Ferry Building</th>
<th>Pier 2 and Ferry Plaza</th>
<th>Agriculture Building</th>
<th>Promenade</th>
<th>Future Rincon Park, Seawall Lots 327, 348</th>
<th>Steuart Street, Seawall Lots 347N, 347S</th>
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**Table Notes**

1. This table focuses primarily on acceptable long-term uses for the sites described. The Plan also allows other interim uses on Port property, which uses are not identified in this table. See Chapter 3 for a description of interim use policies.
2. Refer to Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 for General Land Use Policies and specific Development Standards which apply to the acceptable uses and sites identified in this table.
3. Definitions of land uses are included in Appendix C, Glossary of Terms.
4. Uses are subject to further review for compliance with the Public Trust, BCDC and Planning Commission policies, which will vary depending on factors specific to the use proposal such as the mix of uses, project design, any fill requirements, or whether the use is proposed within a National Register historic resource. (See Chapter 3 and 5 for further discussion of waterfront regulations).
5. The table identifies acceptable maritime and maritime support activities best suited for the sites in this area. However, the Port Commission retains the authority to use Port sites for any maritime uses, subject to BCDC San Francisco Waterfront Special Area Plan policies regarding Open Water Basins and Other Open Water Areas, pp. 24 and 26.
6. Unless otherwise indicated, “E/I” indicates existing general office uses in structures on the pier deck, which are allowed as interim uses pursuant to the interim use policies in Chapter 3.
THE FERRY BUILDING WATERFRONT SUBAREA

Legend

Waterfront Mixed Use Opportunity Areas [a]
Other Maritime Areas
Other Public Access & Open Space Areas
Piers Designated for Removal

[a] Waterfront Mixed Use Opportunity Areas include any underlying existing and acceptable maritime, public access and open space and commercial areas. See Acceptable Land Use Tables for more detail.

Map Notes

1 Facilities located along the marginal wharf between piers north of the Ferry Building are generally described by the number of the pier on the left followed by "1/2", e.g. Pier 1 1/2 is located between Pier 1 & Pier 3.

2 When the Waterfront (Embarcadero) Transportation Projects are completed, portions of certain streets abutting the Embarcadero will be vacated and included in adjacent seawall lots which are designated for potential new developments.

Waterfront Plan Project Area Boundary

SWL Seawall Lot

3 The maps are illustrative only. Please see the Acceptable Land Use Tables in Chapter 4 for a complete listing of acceptable permanent uses for each Port site.
Development Standards for Mixed Use Opportunity Areas

Ferry Building Mixed Use Opportunity Area

The Ferry Building Mixed Use Opportunity Area extends from Pier 5 to the Agriculture Building and includes Seawall Lot 351, the Pier 5 bulkhead/connector building, Piers ½, 1, 1½ and 3, the Ferry Building, the Agriculture Building, and Ferry Plaza. The Opportunity Area also includes the area in front of the Ferry Building, which currently is the subject of a planning effort for a new plaza. The Ferry Building, the focal point of the Opportunity area, survived both the 1906 and 1989 earthquakes, but sustained damage in the 1989 earthquake. Seismic repairs and upgrades costing more than $4.5 million are currently under way, funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Furthermore, the Port has secured approximately $2.0 million to date in federal and state grants to complete conceptual design, feasibility studies and environmental review, and to begin final design on renovation of the building. The Port also has secured $10.1 million for design and construction of ferry landing facilities. Because the conceptual design of this important project already is under way, many development standards are provided herein to reflect public concerns regarding the role the Ferry Building area should play in the revitalization of the waterfront.

Development Standards

- Carefully locate any recreational boating activities to avoid navigation and operational conflicts with waterborne transportation.
- Promote activities in and around Piers 1 and 3 which enhance, complement and benefit from the existing uses in the area and the transportation-related functions planned for the Ferry Building.
- Consider reuse plans for Treasure Island, if available, and related transit needs in the development of the Ferry Building Area.
- Carefully design freight service areas for new uses so that they are compatible with the transportation network.
- Maximize efficient use of new and existing parking to serve existing business, further promote public use of the Ferry and Agriculture Buildings, and stimulate reuse of Piers 1, 1-1/2, 3 and 5.
- Any pier parking should be hidden from view, perhaps in or behind structures, and should not interfere with access to or enjoyment of the waterfront.
- Encourage cafes along the waterfront to take advantage of afternoon sun on the north side of The Embarcadero and pedestrian activity on the PortWalk along the Embarcadero Promenade.
- Reconfigure existing deck areas north and south of the Ferry Building to allow pedestrians and passersby to view maritime activities and the Bay.
**Development Standards (cont.)**

- The design of new development should respect the character of the Ferry Building, the mid-Embarcadero open space improvements, and the Golden Gateway project.

- The design of new development should minimize the perceived barrier of The Embarcadero and encourage a pleasant pedestrian connection between the City and the waterfront.

- Preserve the Piers 1, 1½, 3 and 5 bulkhead and connector buildings according to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Historic Rehabilitation and allow for improvements in visual and physical access to the waterfront as further described in the Waterfront Design and Access Element.

- Preserve the Ferry Building and Agriculture Building according to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Historic Rehabilitation.

- Extend a waterside PortWalk from Pier 1 to the Promenade, where it would not interfere with ferry and excursion operations.

- Provide new uses near Pier 7 to further activate Pier 7 and take advantage of its prominence. Maintain the Broadway Open Water Basin on either side of Pier 7.

- Maintain the Broadway Open Water Basin on either side of Pier 7.

- Design and locate the mid-Embarcadero open space to reflect and enhance the grandeur of the Ferry Building as a focal point, and reconnect The Embarcadero with the Market Street corridor.

- Include the Bayside History Walk in Piers 1-5.

- If feasible, design the mid-Embarcadero open space improvements to allow for future undergrounding of The Embarcadero in front of the Ferry Building, if funding becomes available.

- Explore the possibility of obtaining economic value from Seawall Lot 351 by combining it with the adjacent Golden Gateway residential site to provide expanded opportunities for mixed residential and commercial development.

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**Ferry Building**

- Restore the exterior Embarcadero façade of the Ferry Building, using building materials that maintain and/or restore the historic character and architectural integrity of the structure.

- Restore the historic grand, sky lighted gallery on the second level as the principal public space, to the extent possible.

- Encourage exhibition space in the building for historic or civic displays, such as the California Relief Map, or exhibits about Port history, the Ferry Building or San Francisco.

- Create a central, public foyer in the building which provides dramatic views and connections to the Bay and the ferries.

- Give preference to public uses on the first floor.

- Make activities available at different price levels to encourage full use and enjoyment by all segments of the public.

- Provide protection from inclement weather for ferry riders.

- Provide a water taxi stop where feasible.
Development Standards (cont.)

- If possible, uses in the building, including offices, should relate to unique thematic concept such as maritime activities, world trade and diplomacy, transportation and travel, or San Francisco and California cultural, business or artistic activities, or some combination thereof.
- Incorporate accessory retail uses to meet the needs of downtown workers, ferry riders and visitors, such as ticket offices, cash machines, travel offices, other personal services, and recreational equipment vendors.
- Allow theme retail and festival uses such as public and fish markets, as well as restaurants and other eating and drinking establishments that both attract and benefit from visitors to the waterfront.
- Avoid conventional shopping center or tourist-oriented retail uses.
- Consider moving the Port’s offices to make room for revenue-generating uses on the upper floors of the Ferry Building, if this helps support the costs of renovation.
- Consider adding a fourth floor to the Bay side of the building, consistent with earlier historic design guidelines, if necessary to increase revenue to support the expense of historic renovation.
- Determine the feasibility of opening the tower for paid public tours.
- Encourage public donations to help finance components of the Ferry Building restoration.

Steuart Street Mixed Use Opportunity Area

The Steuart Street Mixed Use Opportunity Area is comprised of Seawall Lots 347N and 347S on either side of Howard Street, and the portion of Steuart Street southeast of Howard Street, which will be closed as soon as The Embarcadero is rerouted around the site of the Rincon Park. This site will be separated from the Bay by the future Rincon Park and The Embarcadero and offers an excellent opportunity for revenue-generating commercial uses, the primary land uses in the area.

Development Standards

- Future use of the site should relate to adjacent development along Steuart Street as well as the Rincon Park. Under current discussion with the Redevelopment Agency is the use of the site as open space related to proposed office development of the Caltrans right-of-way south of Steuart Street. Absent the proposed development on the Caltrans property, encourage revenue generating commercial uses on this site.
- Design new development on the site so that it does not block view corridors down Steuart Street.
Development Standards for Other Existing or New Open Space and Public Access

Rincon Park

Rincon Park will become a new City park in the burgeoning South of Market waterfront area, with breathtaking views of the Bay Bridge and Treasure Island across the Rincon Point Open Water Basin. The park will be created by realigning The Embarcadero onto Steuart Street between Howard and Harrison Streets as part of the Waterfront Transportation Projects.

The park site, which will be made up of portions of Seawall Lots 327 and 348, former Beltline Railroad right-of-way and former Folsom Street and Embarcadero right-of-way, is located within the Rincon Point-South Beach Redevelopment Project Area, and comprises almost three acres of Port property.

The Rincon Point-South Beach Redevelopment Plan, approved by the Board of Supervisors in 1980, expressly permits a restaurant at Rincon Park. The exact location and type of restaurant have yet to be determined, but the restaurant will be designed consistent with the Waterfront Design & Access Element in order to be compatible with its waterfront location. The restaurant will provide commercial activity and food service in the park, and attract visitors before and after major events on the waterfront such as festivals or activities at the China Basin ballpark. These activities will generate ground lease rental revenues to partially compensate the Port for the costs associated with conversion of this property into a public park.

Development Standards

Rincon Park

- While a restaurant is the preferred primary retail use for the site, consider other retail opportunities that may generate financial support for the park and other Port activities.

- Design the park to appeal both to residents and downtown office employees.

- Design the park and restaurant to relate to their waterfront location, enhance the existing Promenade and Ferry Building area, and provide views of the Bay Bridge.