

Draft for Public Review

The Central Waterfront Neighborhood Plan



San Francisco Planning Department
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The System of Parks and Open Spaces

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OBJECTIVE 1

Create a linked system of new and improved open spaces within the neighborhood and along the shoreline. Connect this system to transit stops and other major or important destinations through a network of pathways and improved public right-of-ways.

Public parks, plazas, and open space areas are critical neighborhood enhancing and defining elements. In a successful urban neighborhood, these spaces will complement and enhance open space provided as part of public streets. Well-located parks and plazas can knit together surrounding areas by providing a variety of active and passive recreational activities and informal gathering places for the neighborhood. Open spaces provide a venue for people to gather and socialize or simply to enjoy a quiet space in the midst of activity. A successful open space system enlivens and supports the neighborhood by including a variety of convenient, accessible, and attractive public spaces serving different purposes.

OBJECTIVE 1

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The Central Waterfront has little developed open space and there is only limited opportunity to create more. Therefore, this plan focuses not just on enhancing and adding to existing open space but on improving the connections to and between them. This is to be done in two ways. First, it is important to link existing parks and planned open space to important destinations within the neighborhood and to adjacent areas. Doing so will help both to enliven the open space and to orient people as they move about the neighborhood. Second, existing and future open spaces should be connected to each other. A network of open space has a more substantial pres-





Esprit Park is the area’s primary neighborhood park.



Warm Water Cove today.



Aerial view of Warm Water Cove, looking west, showing proposed park expansion and enhanced public access connections.

ence than small and unrelated parks. Furthermore, a well-developed system of parks and open spaces is a substantial part of neighborhood character, making a more attractive, interesting, and pedestrian-friendly place.

It is important to recognize that an essential part of our open space is created by our system of public streets. In order to be successful, the system of parks and open spaces must be predicated on well-designed and streets and sidewalks. This is discussed further in Moving About, the System of Public Ways.

Policy 1.1

Ensure that open spaces are linked by the public street system and that the street system serves as an extension of the open space system.

Certain streets should receive special treatment, including benches, lighting, tree planting, way-finding signs, widened sidewalks, and bulb-outs. These features make the street more welcoming, not just to move along, but as a destination in and of itself. In conjunction with well-conceived land use patterns, such streets mark a space belonging to people—an essential element for successful urban open space. Such features are discussed in the Moving About and Urban Design sections.

Policy 1.2

Establish and improve publicly accessible parks at waterfront destinations.

Development at the Port’s Pier 70 opportunity site should include open space at the water’s edge, taking advantage of its striking setting and scenic Bay views. In particular, the Port should be encouraged to create a public waterfront at the end of 18th Street to serve as both a neighborhood and regional destination.

Warm Water Cove should be improved. In order to attract the activity necessary to making Warm Water Cove a pleasing and safe destination, it should be better connected to the rest of the neighborhood through pathways and improvements to public right-of-ways. This open space should be expanded along the water’s edge to the north and south. New development should be designed so that it does not “turn its back” on Warm Water Cove and should serve to extend the open space inland as much as possible. Related discussions appear in the Land Use and Urban Design sections.





Artist's rendering of potential waterfront open space and public access between 20th and 22nd Streets.



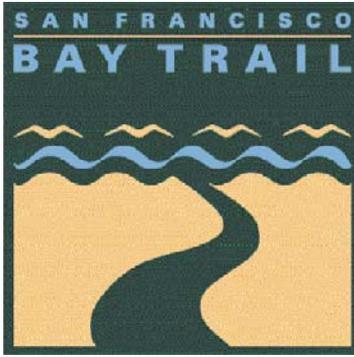
The Port should be encouraged to create new open space where possible along the water's edge, especially at Pier 70-72 (between 20th and 22nd Streets), and at the end of Mari-
posa Street.

Open space improvements and development should be pursued in association with future implementation of the Bay Trail.

Policy 1.3

Enhance public access to the waterfront through the use of pedestrian and bicycle paths.

Routes designed especially for pedestrians and bicycles will encourage access to the waterfront and provide an active edge to the shoreline. Refer to the Moving About section for further discussion of pedestrians and bicycles.



Policy 1.4

Clearly mark the Bay Trail where it passes through the Central Waterfront, and move it closer to the Bay as opportunities become available.

The Bay Trail is an important element of the Bay Area’s recreation and open space system. The route that it takes should be clear to people—particularly important in a busy, working, urban area such as the Central Waterfront. The intent of the Bay Trail is that it should follow the shoreline wherever possible. As opportunities become available, the trail should be moved toward the Bay, and be incorporated into existing and future open space. Refer to the Moving About section for further discussion of the Bay Trail.



Aerial view of Irish Hill showing recommended access enhancements.

Policy 1.5

Work with the Port of San Francisco and PG&E to preserve Irish Hill and convert it into a neighborhood open space and natural historic monument.

Irish Hill was once a prominent feature of the Central Waterfront, serving as the home for workers in the nearby mills from the 1880s until World War I, when the hill was mostly leveled to make way for expansion of the shipyards. While little of the original bluff remains, it is an unusual reminder of the area’s history. The remnant of Irish Hill should be evaluated for its potential to be a successful open space. Pending this evaluation, its transformation into a unique public green space and a final destination on the waterfront from Potrero Hill and the Central Waterfront should be pursued.



Irish Hill today, viewed from Illinois Street.

Implement the following:

- Establish passive uses of the space.
- Add pedestrian pathways along the hill and one that reaches the top, culminating in a lookout. All pathways should be natural and reflect the character of the hill.
- Provide a park edge to add definition to the hill. To the west, it should be met by a pathway connecting Minnesota, Tennessee, and 22nd Streets. To the east, any future development should appropriately address the park.
- Add a sidewalk edge along 22nd Street.
- Add benches, especially on 22nd Street.
- Place a marker that illustrates the hill’s historic importance to the neighborhood and city.



Aerial view of proposed public path/open space at Tubbs Cordage Factory alignment.



Islais Creek and existing public promenade.

Policy 1.6

Work with private landowners to convert abandoned rail alignments into public open space and access.

Pursue acquisition or conversion of the curved alignment between the Caltrain Station and 20th Street. Comprised of two lots, both were former railroad right-of-ways. They are currently privately owned and are used as parking lots. Incorporating these into the system of public ways would help to create a functional, interesting, and attractive pedestrian route between Caltrain, future development at Pier 70, and other neighborhood destinations. Where there are other such opportunities, they should be pursued.

Policy 1.7

Pursue acquisition or conversion of the Tubbs Cordage Factory alignment to public access. Should it be infeasible to purchase the necessary property, future development should include the improvements outlined below.

Develop the area marking the historic alignment of the Tubbs Cordage Factory into a public pedestrian passage or open space that connects Tennessee and Third Streets. This will improve the connection between the Caltrain station and the planned 23rd Street light rail stop.

The following improvements should be made:

- Good night-time lighting for pedestrian safety and comfort.
- No low landscaping; in an already sheltered place, bushes and low plantings can create a foreboding environment for pedestrians.
- If benches are provided, they should be placed only at the street.

Policy 1.8**Develop a continuous loop of public open space along Islais Creek.**

Currently, public access to the creek is provided on the north side at the end of Tennessee Street. The area is hardscaped to cover a sewage outfall facility. On the south side of the creek is a handicap-accessible put-in for non-motorized watercraft. On the east side of the Third Street Bridge is Tulare pocket park. None of these spaces are well used (except by skateboarders, who use the outfall cover) because they are not easily reached, are small, and feel isolated and disconnected. As much as possible, future development should be required to contribute to the creation of a continuous loop of publicly accessible open space, and should themselves help to activate it. The loop should run from Illinois Street west along the northern edge of the creek, turning at the end of the creek to run east along the southern edge, ending at the 3rd Street Bridge. The Islais Creek loop should be linked to any new open space or landscaping created on Piers 90-92. Street treatments should integrate Islais Creek into the system of neighborhood open space. Public projects, for instance Muni's planned Islais Creek bus maintenance yard, should also include design features or funding that supports the development of open space here.

Policy 1.9**Convert the area behind the I. M. Scott School into public open space.**

The paved area behind the I.M. Scott School is currently used as parking. Because the neighborhood has a dearth of open space, and because the school is not fully utilized, the area would better serve the community as a mini-park or landscaped playground.

I.M. Scott School property, viewed from Minnesota Street.

