

Harbourfront Open Space and Leisure/Tourism Development: Perspectives from San Francisco

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San Francisco: harbour development (I)

- Historic industrial development along San Francisco Bay
 - Originates with Gold Rush, 1849
 - City develops along waterfront
 - Industrial era development: canneries, fishing, military facilities, shipping
 - Infrastructural development along waterfront, including freeway
 - 1960s-1970s industrial restructuring
 - Shipping container facilities relocated from SF harbourfront
 - Old brick canneries close

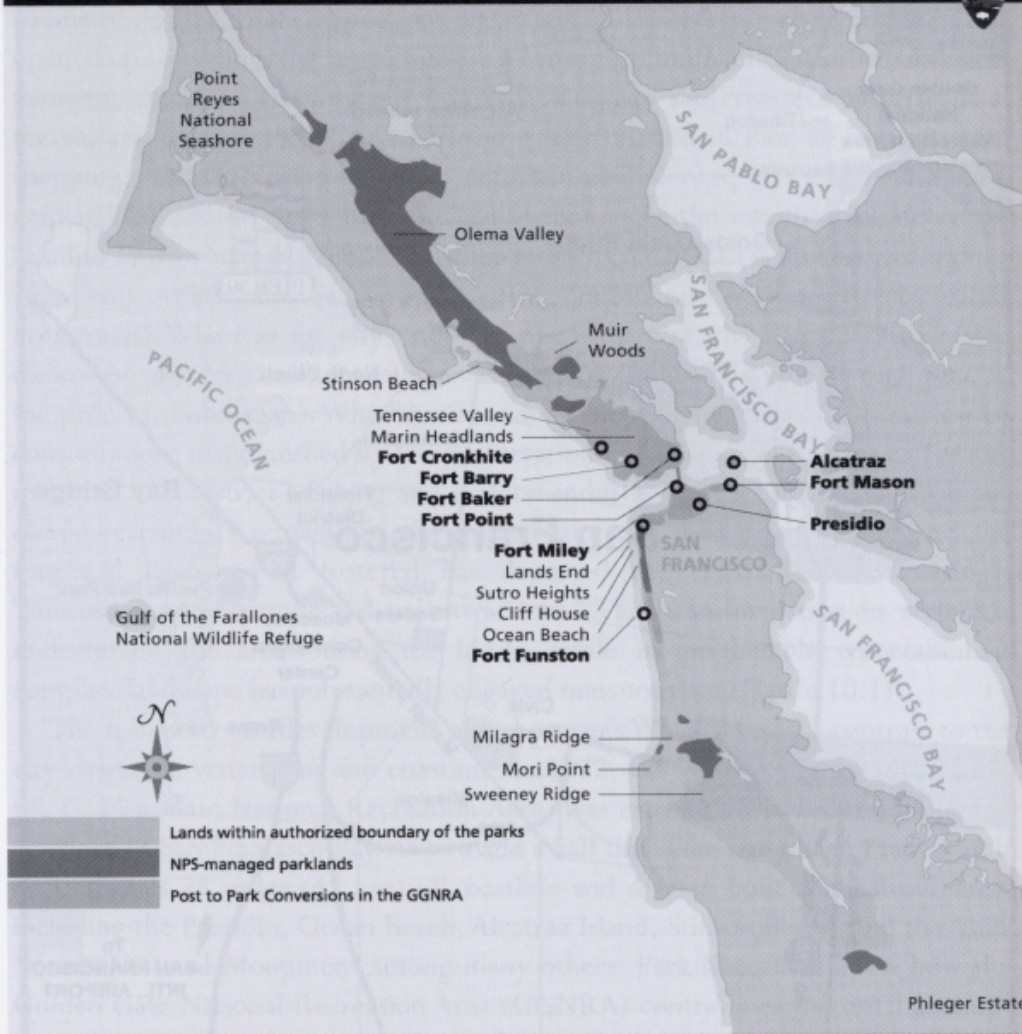
San Francisco: harbour development (II)

- Postindustrial urban development, 1970s-present
 - Old industrial buildings converted into leisure and tourism centres
 - Ghirardelli Square, The Cannery, The Ferry Building
 - Loma Prieta earthquake, 1989
 - Freeways along waterfront torn down
 - Military bases along waterfront closed and space opened to public access
 - The Presidio, Crissey Field, Fort Mason, Fort Point
 - Golden Gate National Recreation Area established: world's largest urban park
 - Opened entire waterfront opened to public access, 1972

Post to Park Conversions

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Golden Gate
National Recreation Area



Gulf of the Farallones
National Wildlife Refuge



- Lands within authorized boundary of the parks
- NPS-managed parklands
- Post to Park Conversions in the GGNRA

Parklands include

Alcatraz Island • Baker Beach • Bolinas Ridge • China Beach • Cliff House • Crissy Field • Fort Baker Fort Cronkhite • Fort Funston • Fort Mason • Fort Point • Gerbode Valley • Kirby Cove • Lands End Marin Headlands • Martinelli Ranch • Milagra Ridge • Mori Point • Muir Beach • Muir Woods • Oakwood Valley • Ocean Beach • Olema Valley • Phleger Estate • Point Bonita • Presidio • Rodeo Beach • Stinson Beach • Sutro Heights • Sweeney Ridge • Tennessee Valley

Figure 10.2 Post to Park Conversions, Golden Gate National Recreation Area

Source: Courtesy Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy

San Francisco waterfront



Origins of the Study

- Tourism is world's largest set of services industries
- Most tourism research focuses on "tourism sites"
 - tourism site development, theme parks, etc.
 - visitor origins and destinations, revenue generated from visitors
- Virtually no research on tourism in major cities, world cities, global cities

San Francisco tourism industry

- #1 tourism destination in the U.S., nine out of ten years on average
- Most popular leisure destination in the state:
 - Golden Gate National Recreation Area
- Largest revenue-generating source for city
- Substantial *repeat* visitors
- SF Convention and Visitors Bureau does not develop tourism

Research perspective

- Study major cities with sustained and repeat tourism demand
 - Paris, San Francisco, London, etc.
- Identify places and quality environments sought after by repeat tourists
 - San Francisco: North Beach, Union Square, The Mission, Fisherman's Wharf, Golden Gate Bridge, the Ferry Building
- Analyze and summarize characteristics of these places



Figure 10.1 Tourist map of places of visitor interest in San Francisco

Source: © 2003 Pier 39 Corporation All Rights Reserved

Desirable urban environments of sustainable tourism: place characteristics

- Repeatedly sought by BOTH visitors and locals
- NOT "tourist sites"
 - Many developed from neighborhood commercial districts
 - Fisherman's Wharf now disliked by locals
- "Organic" development at the street level, or not "overly planned" environments
 - Diverse and unique shops and restaurants
- Pedestrian-oriented

Making public space

- "Front region"
 - Spaces of public access, typically planned, attractive landscapes
- "Back region"
 - Spaces of work and industry opened up to public access
 - "Behind the scenes" places that people are attracted to see
 - "Unstaged", authentic sites, real historic places
 - Not themed, Not "made tidy"
- Visitors like to experience walking between "front" and "back regions"

Tourism and world cities

- "Leisure/tourism"
 - Leisure activities in world cities are often the same as "tourist" activities
 - Restaurants, shopping, museum-going, consumption in general
 - Activities and expenditures of visitors and locals cannot be statistically separated
 - Solves research problem on "tourism" as services industries in world cities
 - *Touristed* landscapes as places desired repeatedly by both visitors *and* locals

Leisure/tourism in world cities

- Leisure/tourism "lessons"
 - Visitors like to experience local cultural differences
 - In high quality leisure environments, locals mix with tourists
 - Cosmopolitan international tourists like authentic local places
 - Repeat international tourists do not prefer planned or themed environments
 - Focus on "touristed landscapes", not tourist sites

Comparing San Francisco and Hong Kong.

- Different stages of cultural, economic and tourism development
 - SF's harbourfront conservation owes to activities of SF Bay Conservation and Development Commission
 - SF has long history of urban environmental priorities
- Creating public access along the harbourfront
 - Endeavour to connect different waterfront areas to create continuous ribbons of access
 - Minimize separation of waterfront from public access
 - Maintain viewscales
- Opportunities to maintain authentic districts and neighborhoods, enhancing local place characteristics
- Development of leisure facilities for both international and local priorities

"Even in Fog, That City On a Hill Dazzles"

R.W. Apple on San Francisco:

“More than any other, this is the city that Americans fantasize about. No one leaves his heart in Salt Lake City. No one calls Baltimore "Baghdad by the Bay".

“... San Francisco has always been a paradox: a thoroughly worldly place, yet remote and somehow detached from world capitals like New York and London...

“Yet San Francisco looms large in the imagination of everyone who knows it.... Like Paris, Venice and Hong Kong, it is a city without peer, a city of myth and magic.”

The New York Times, 1999