

maritime activities (in this case commercial fishing) have become the background amenity for the city's thriving tourist economy. In other areas, the port uses piers for maritime support services such as ship repair, tug and tow operations, and a Foreign Trade Zone, largely outside the public's consciousness. At the Ferry Building, commuter and recreational ferries bring commuters to San Francisco from other Bay Area cities. The remaining cargo operations still take place in the Southern Waterfront. The Port Commission oversees this myriad of activities, balancing the often-competing interests of maritime and commercial tenants, public trust responsibilities to the people of the state, and responsibilities to the people of San Francisco, whose waterfront it oversees. As history attests, this balancing act, which has never been an easy one, continued to confound the port and stymie revitalization during the first two decades of local control.

When the city gained control of the port in 1968, it assumed responsibility for outstanding state obligation bonds and agreed to invest an additional \$100 million for harbor improvements. The city expected to generate the revenues for these investments through extensive new commercial development. To this end, the port proposed development of a 50-story US Steel Office Building located on fill between the Ferry Building and the Bay Bridge. In response to public outrage to this plan, the city's Planning Commission imposed a forty-foot height limit on most port property north of the Ferry Building. At the same time, the State Attorney-General's Office issued an opinion stating that the newly formed Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) could not permit non-water-oriented uses (e.g. offices and residential) on new bay fill. Consequently, the port's plans for the US Steel Building, and even more-ambitious projects to the north, never left the drawing board.

This pattern of misguided development expectations, quashed by regulatory revelations and public outcry, has repeated several times in the history of the port. In the process, housing, general office and private health clubs, among other uses, have generally been deemed unacceptable on the port's public trust lands. Most recently, a proposal for a sailing center with a hotel on piers 24 and 26 was defeated when San Francisco voters passed Proposition H in 1989.

Proposition H: the waterfront planning initiative

Displeased with the port's continuing attempts to develop ill-conceived, mega projects along the waterfront, San Francisco voters passed Proposition H in 1989, which placed a moratorium on non-maritime development along the shore until a waterfront master plan was developed. Proposition H included provisions aimed at addressing how the waterfront plan would develop if the port chose not to prepare it. Rather than delegate this task to the San Francisco Planning Department or Redevelopment Agency, the Port Commission elected to develop its own waterfront plan. It chose to do so, both because the unique nature and responsibility of the port were not readily understood by other planners, and to ensure that the plan was fully embraced by those who would be tasked with its implementation. The monumental challenge facing the port was to fulfill not just the letter but the spirit of Proposition H, by developing a waterfront plan that