

proposal, and agreed to negotiate an agreement with the BRA whereby its non-maritime development projects on the South Boston waterfront would be reviewed as if subject to zoning. The episode is illustrative for two reasons: it involved a rare dispute over the limits of Massport's autonomy, as well as a perceived challenge to the long-term balance of land uses in South Boston.

The BRA's role in the South Boston waterfront is also multifaceted, beginning with land ownership. As owner and steward of the Boston Marine Industrial Park in the eastern half of the district, the BRA, like Massport, is a direct investor and advocate in the maritime economy. The BRA was also given the job of assembling the site for the Convention Center. However, the BRA's most important and controversial task in South Boston involves its role as the city's planning agency. With the major land use and infrastructure assumptions in place, the city turned to the BRA in the late 1990s to prepare an encompassing plan for the South Boston waterfront district, and the result, the *South Boston Public Realm Plan*, was well received. It was when the BRA turned to the next logical step, the preparation of the Municipal Harbor Plan to harmonize local planning with Chapter 91, that widespread controversy arose over the details of mixed-use development along the Inner Harbor and Fort Point Channel faces of the district. Constituencies differed over the appropriate scale of development, the proper balance of housing, offices, and other landside uses, and competing visions of how best to create open space along the water's edge. This is no idle exercise; an approved Municipal Harbor Plan is essential for development of the scale and complexity envisioned.

Conclusion

The new excitement and interest in waterfront redevelopment has also been spurred by monumental changes in the physical character of the waterfront. In San Francisco, after citizens mounted several unsuccessful efforts aimed at removing the Embarcadero Freeway, nature intervened in the form of the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989. The earthquake wreaked havoc on many waterfront resources, from homes in the Marina District to the Bay Bridge and its connector freeways. As is often the case with tragedies, there was also a positive aspect for the port of San Francisco. Federal funds became available to repair damaged piers, which the port would not otherwise have been able to modernize. Because the earthquake rendered the freeway unsafe, the Embarcadero Freeway came down. The city has since spent over \$500 million to transform the waterfront's Embarcadero Roadway. The Roadway transformed from an industrial road designed to accommodate freight trains and serve cargo piers, to a world-class waterfront boulevard resplendent with public art, historic signage, new historic trolleys from around the world, and a three-mile-long promenade along the shore. The city is now placing the final touches on the crown jewel of the new Embarcadero Roadway, a magnificent public plaza where the elevated freeway once stood in front of the historic Ferry Building. The removal of this physical and psychological barrier to the water's edge has been a major factor in the port's successful efforts to reunite the city with its waterfront.