



# IMAGINING ISLAIS CREEK

A SPUR SUMMARY REPORT  
FOR  
THE PIERO N. PATRI FELLOWSHIP IN URBAN DESIGN



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This report has been written for the 2008 SPUR/Piero N. Patri Fellowship in Urban Design. It is the product of four months of research over the summer of 2008 regarding the outlet of Islais Creek, which is also the terminus for the largest watershed in San Francisco. The research was comprised of three phases. In the first, existing plans and efforts affecting the creek were examined. In the second, in-depth focused site analysis was undertaken. Finally, a concept plan and district design ideas were proposed. Throughout the process, community groups that could benefit from site development and existing stakeholders were interviewed.

Three Piero N. Patri Fellowship steering committee meetings were held over the summer to present findings and receive feedback. Workspace and day to day guidance were provided at the offices of EDAW in San Francisco. A final presentation was also given at the Port of San Francisco on September 23, 2008.

This report presents a not only a new vision for the Islais Creek outlet in this time of change and revitalization.



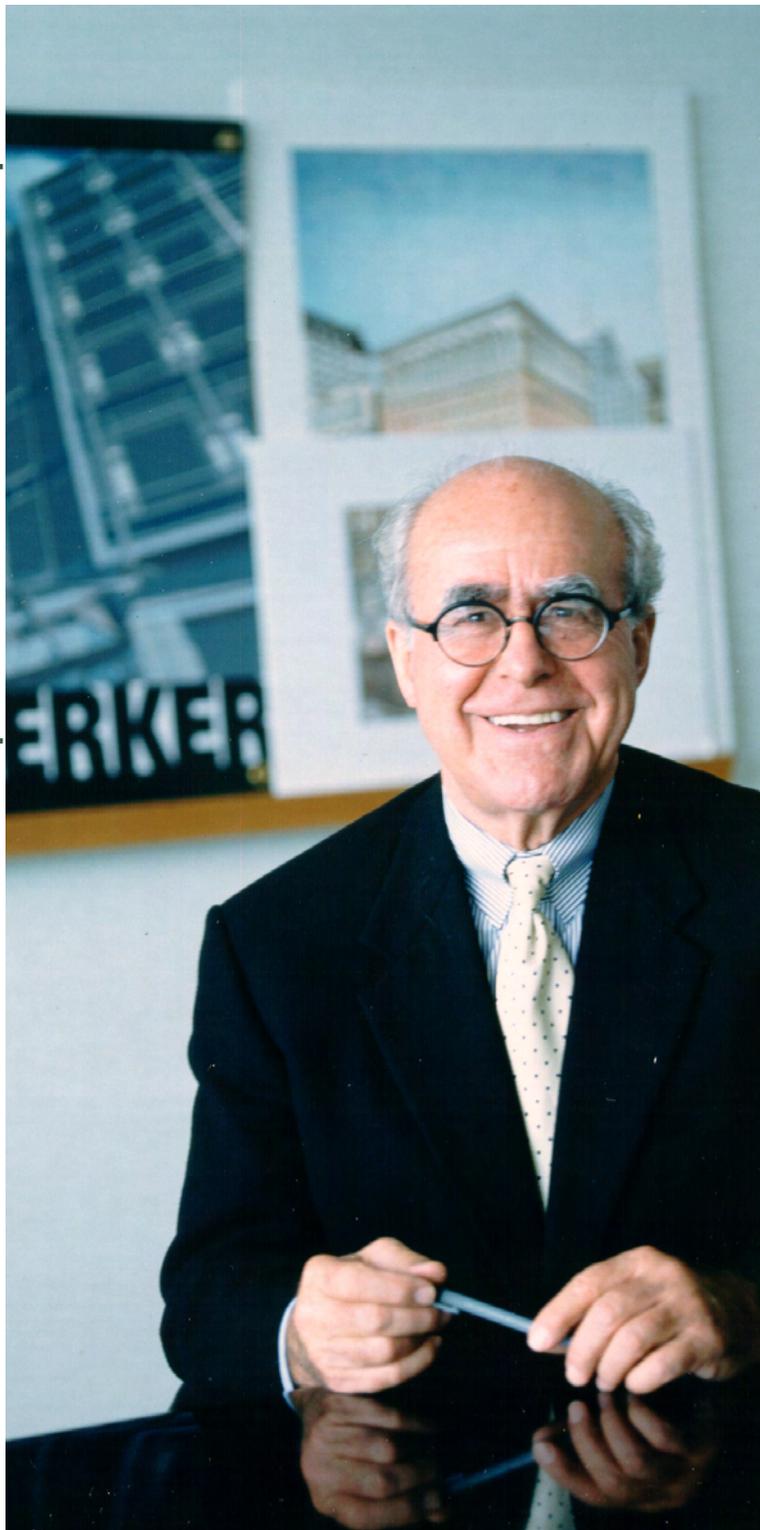
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SECTION I  
INTRODUCTION

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# The Piero N. Patri Fellowship in Urban Design at SPUR

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The summer of 2008 marks the second Piero N. Patri Fellowship in Urban Design at SPUR. The fellowship is an annual hands-on position for a graduate student in urban design, landscape architecture, architecture or urban planning, giving the fellow a unique summertime opportunity to gain firsthand experience working in the urban design and planning field on a project that will have a positive impact on the city of San Francisco and the Bay Area.

The endowed Piero N. Patri Fellowship was established by Piero's brother, Remo, his wife Johanna Patri, his brother Tito, and his wife, Bobby Reich Patri, in honor of Piero's commitment to good planning and urban design. Major contributions to the endowment were also made by Patri.Merker.Architects and dozens of Piero's friends, clients and colleagues.

Piero N. Patri, FAIA (1929–2006), an architect, urban designer and planner born and raised in San Francisco, dedicated his life to his work and the improvement of the city. Piero was the first chairman of the SPUR Environmental Design Committee, and in 1961 was the principal author, along with a team including his brothers Remo and Tito, of one of SPUR's first community plans: the Montgomery Center Plan, a visionary scheme that rethought the interconnection of the Financial District to the city, and which resulted, in a different form, in the ultimate siting of the Transamerica Pyramid.

Piero N. Patri's life was filled with notable accomplishments, both in projects produced by his firm and in his pro bono work. For 2008, the project selected in consultation with the Port of San Francisco, the Neighborhood Parks Council focuses on a small portion of southeastern San Francisco, the historic industrial core of the city. For more than 50 years, these uses have been declining here as in other old port cities worldwide. The new T-Third Muni light-rail line opened in April 2007 and will be a catalyst for change. In addition, the Planning Department is conducting community-based land-use studies in this area, which is collectively known as the Eastern Neighborhoods.

In the last years of his life, Piero N. Patri proposed the concept of a parkway through this corridor, bringing the prosperity of the northern waterfront to these neighborhoods, which have been generally impoverished and underserved. At the same time, the Neighborhood Parks Council and SPUR have been seeking to extend the San Francisco Bay Trail south to the city line. The Port of San Francisco controls many of these lands, and desires to see these lands redeveloped for publicly beneficial uses. The goal of the 2008 Piero N. Patri Fellowship in Urban Design is to advance all these objectives.

Piero's goals, which he emphasized to SPUR Executive Director Gabriel Metcalf and President Jim Chappell a few days before his death, included enhancing the potential of the central and southeast waterfront areas for economic development and housing, and enhancing accessibility to and enjoyment of the scenic southeast waterfront. For this year's fellowship, this combines with a vision originally developed by the Neighborhood Parks Council and SPUR, and further developed by NPC and the Mayor's Blue Greenway Task Force. That vision: Over 25 years, develop a working, urban waterfront that invites public use, enjoyment and access to the water — an environmentally sustainable and accessible shoreline, one that is safe and healthy for people as well as wildlife, a premier public open space on the Bay, a place that provides for public life, recreation and enjoyment, connects San Francisco's eastern neighborhoods to their waterfront, and serves as a catalyst for responsive and responsible development, employment opportunities and economic vitality.

The specific fellowship project includes the development of visionary general land-use/ transportation/recreation plan integrating the concepts of the Blue Greenway waterfront trail and Terry François Parkway with the adjoining neighborhoods for a small portion of the southeast waterfront. The goal of the plan is to create a vision for integrated public and private uses in one small segment that will inspire the City to plan, fund and design an adoptable, publicly endorsed plan for the entire southeast waterfront, and to begin implementation of that plan. The overriding goal is Piero's: to bring the social benefits and the prosperity of the northeastern waterfront to the residents, businesses and recreationists of the southeastern waterfront. The pedestrian/recreation/waterfront connection will be a key driver of this plan.

In order to select a fellow, SPUR put out the call to colleges and universities throughout California, and we are pleased to announce that from among a number of highly qualified candidates we have selected Sara Jensen, a candidate for a Master's degree in Landscape Architecture at the University of California at Berkeley. Sara also has a Master's degree in Architecture from Tulane University and worked as a project architect in New Orleans, specializing in university planning and healthcare programming and design. After Hurricane Katrina, she was a key member on a number of major rebuilding projects in New Orleans, most notably Louisiana State University Hospital, the first public hospital and Level I trauma center to re-open after the hurricane, and two new dormitories for University of New Orleans. She is a LEED Accredited Professional and was a Herman Miller Scholar at the AIA Academy of Architecture for Health Conference in 2006. She is currently working on a thesis exploring the connection between landscape and human and environmental health, and is a teaching assistant in the introductory course on Environmental Design at University of California at Berkeley.

An advisory committee guided Sara's summer activities. Office space, equipment and day-to-day guidance graciously provided by SPUR business member EDAW, Inc. under the leadership of SPUR Board member Scott Preston, co-chair of the SPUR Waterfront Parks Committee. Additional project leadership is being provided by Marcel Wilson, landscape architect; Robin Chiang, principal of Robin Chiang and Company and the head of Friends of Islais Creek; Cathy Merrill of Merrill Morris Partners and the longtime co-chair of the Waterfront Parks Committee; David Beaupre, senior waterfront planner for the Port of San Francisco; the Patri family; the Neighborhood Parks Council; and other SPUR volunteers.



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***Piero Patri's  
legacy is  
revealed in  
the city of San  
Francisco***

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# The Future of our Working Waterfront

by Gabriel Metcalf, SPUR Executive Director

San Francisco grew up around its waterfront. The jumping off point for the Sierra Gold Rush and later natural resource exploitation around the Pacific, the city's original economic purpose was to organize the movement of goods. The finger piers pointing into the Bay became the defining image of San Francisco, just as the men who worked in maritime industry became the human face of the economy.

But it's been a long time since the waterfront mattered to the city's economy in that way. At least since World War II, San Francisco's port has been in decline, and replaced by Oakland and Long Beach. And following the trajectory of the port has been the long decline of manufacturing. San Francisco no longer has an industrial or maritime economy.

Virtually every 19th century industrial city in the world has experienced something similar: the movement of manufacturing to other places. But San Francisco is among the minority of older cities to have actually succeeded in creating a new economic base. This city has reinvented itself over and over. While the waterfront went into decline, San Francisco itself did not.

What is to happen with our waterfront now that its original economic purpose is gone? It continues to astound outside observers that we have not yet definitively answered this question. Can it really take us half a century to grapple with a planning problem so fundamental to the city's identity? Well, yes. The special San Francisco combination of cultural progressivism coupled with planning conservatism has created the paradoxical condition of a flourishing economy, a strong tax base, a high quality of life and a waterfront that is crumbling into the Bay.

And yet there is progress. Haltingly, without any citywide consensus or overarching vision, we have begun to reclaim the waterfront. The Ferry

Building, the ballpark, Fort Mason, Crissy Field, the linear public space of the Embarcadero roadway... each one of these places has emerged in a new form as a treasured public place for the people of San Francisco. Gradually, we have discovered the answer for what we want our waterfront to be: a place for people. We are finally facing the challenge of turning the individual sites along the waterfront into places that will attract people to them, for what is truly an “only in San Francisco” experience of city life.

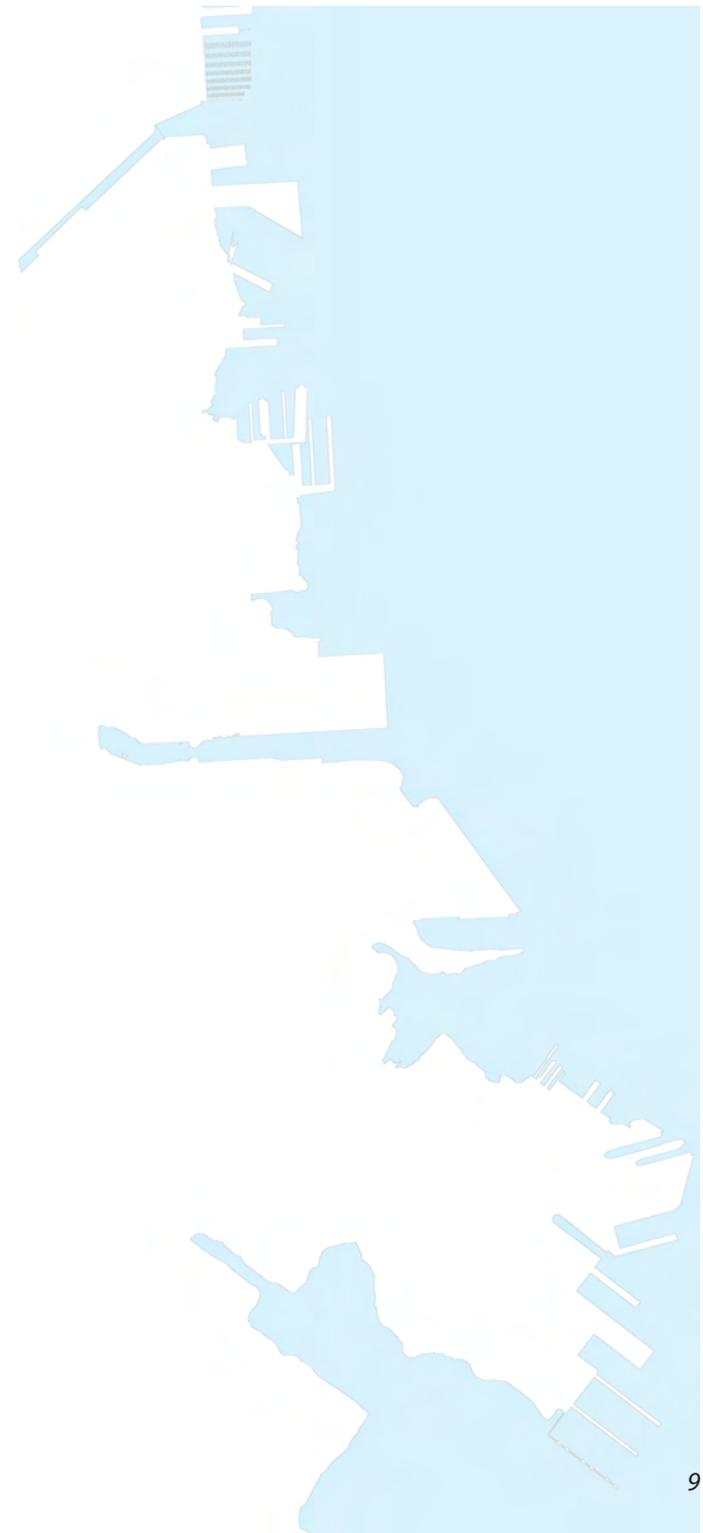
This slow transformation of the waterfront provides the backdrop for this year’s Piero Patri Fellowship. Sara Jensen, this year’s sparkling fellow, was given the challenge of developing a vision for Islais Creek.

Originally the outflow for the city’s largest watershed in Southeast San Francisco, Islais Creek became the city’s meatpacking district, a heavily industrialized and polluted area known as Butchertown. With the decline of maritime activity, the creek fell into a cycle of disuse. And yet, even with the neglect, the trash and occasional sewer overflows, the simple fact that it is one of three creeks that still flow into the Bay – the other two are Mission Creek, a half mile to the north and Yosemite Creek to the south – meant that people have kept rediscovering Islais Creek and imagining its potential over the years.

Friends of Islais Creek, a volunteer organization, has organized to clean up the creek and think about possible public spaces along its edge. Both the Bayview Hunters Point and Eastern Neighborhoods planning efforts have considered it a potential key piece of open space for the neighborhoods to the north and south.

The document you are holding tries to take these efforts to another level by envisioning a new future for Islais Creek.

The planning challenge is different from most public spaces in San Francisco: Islais Creek is surrounded by places that are essential to the functioning of the city – a bus yard, the main sewer plant, the last cargo pier, warehousing. It is not a residential neighborhood like Dogpatch to the north or parts of Bayview to the south. Nor is it an area that will be radically changed like Mission Bay. It is a place of work and infrastructure and while specific uses will certainly



evolve over time, it is going to remain a place of work and infrastructure. So the question we face is how to bring Islais Creek into its fullest potential as a public place, woven into the fabric of this specific kind of working neighborhood.

I hope you will agree that Sara has risen to this challenge, and that the “Imagining Islais Creek” is a major contribution to planning in San Francisco.

We are grateful to the Patri family for their continued support of this effort, the Port of San Francisco for their willingness to be such engaged and open minded “clients” for the work, and to EDAW for hosting Sara and lending their expertise with the art and science of placemaking. We would also like to thank the fellowship committee, a devoted group of urban designers and open space advocates, for their guidance in shaping and developing the priorities for this project. And finally, we are grateful to all of the SPUR members who have made this work possible.

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*What is to happen with  
our waterfront now that  
its original economic  
purpose is **gone**?*

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*Below: The shores of Islais Creek, 1905 (Photo courtesy Port of San Francisco)*





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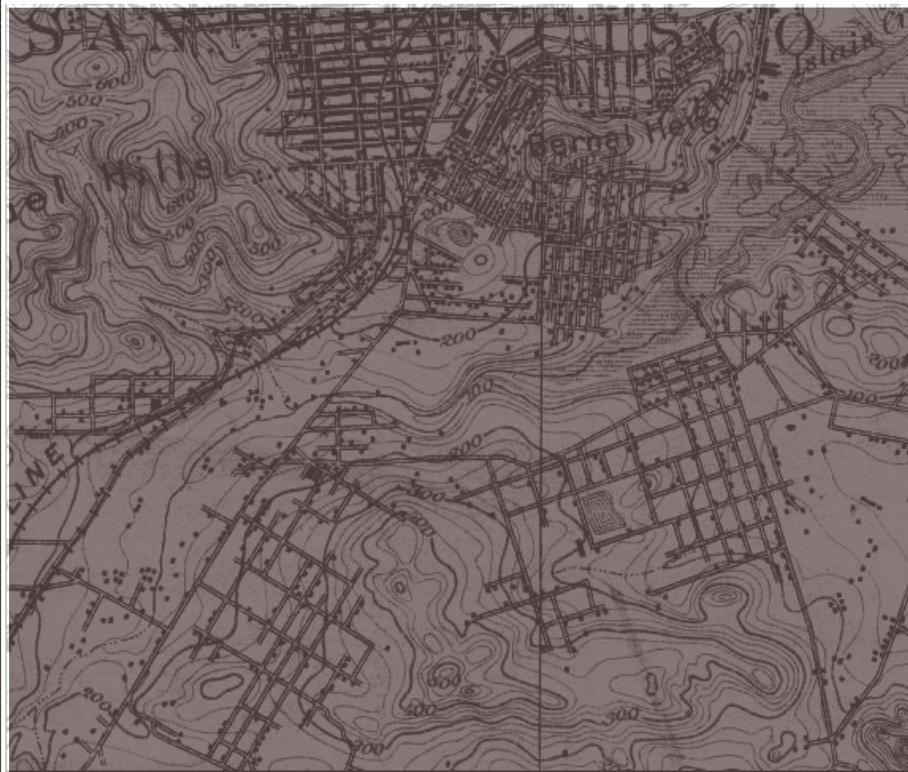
# INVESTIGATING

# SECTION II

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# ISLAIS CREEK

EXISTING CONDITIONS ANALYSIS





## PROJECT LOCATION

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Islais Creek is one of San Francisco's most important water bodies. Its watershed comprises most of the southeastern sector of the city. But despite its importance, it is hidden below the surface of the city for most of its length.

The creek meets the bay in the heart of San Francisco's southern waterfront. At the turn of the century, as industry began to overtake the waterfront, Islais Creek was further hidden away and neglected as the needs of production rose.

Today, with San Francisco in its post-industrial age, the face of the waterfront is changing. Large developments have been built and are under construction in Mission Bay to the north of Islais Creek, and more are planned in Hunter's Point to the south of the Islais Creek. These plans seek to more directly serve the constituency and mitigate years of environmental neglect.

Between Mission Bay and Hunters Point are a chain of undiscovered nodes on the water. Connecting these are key to creating a cohesive coastline and restoring one of San Francisco's greatest amenities.

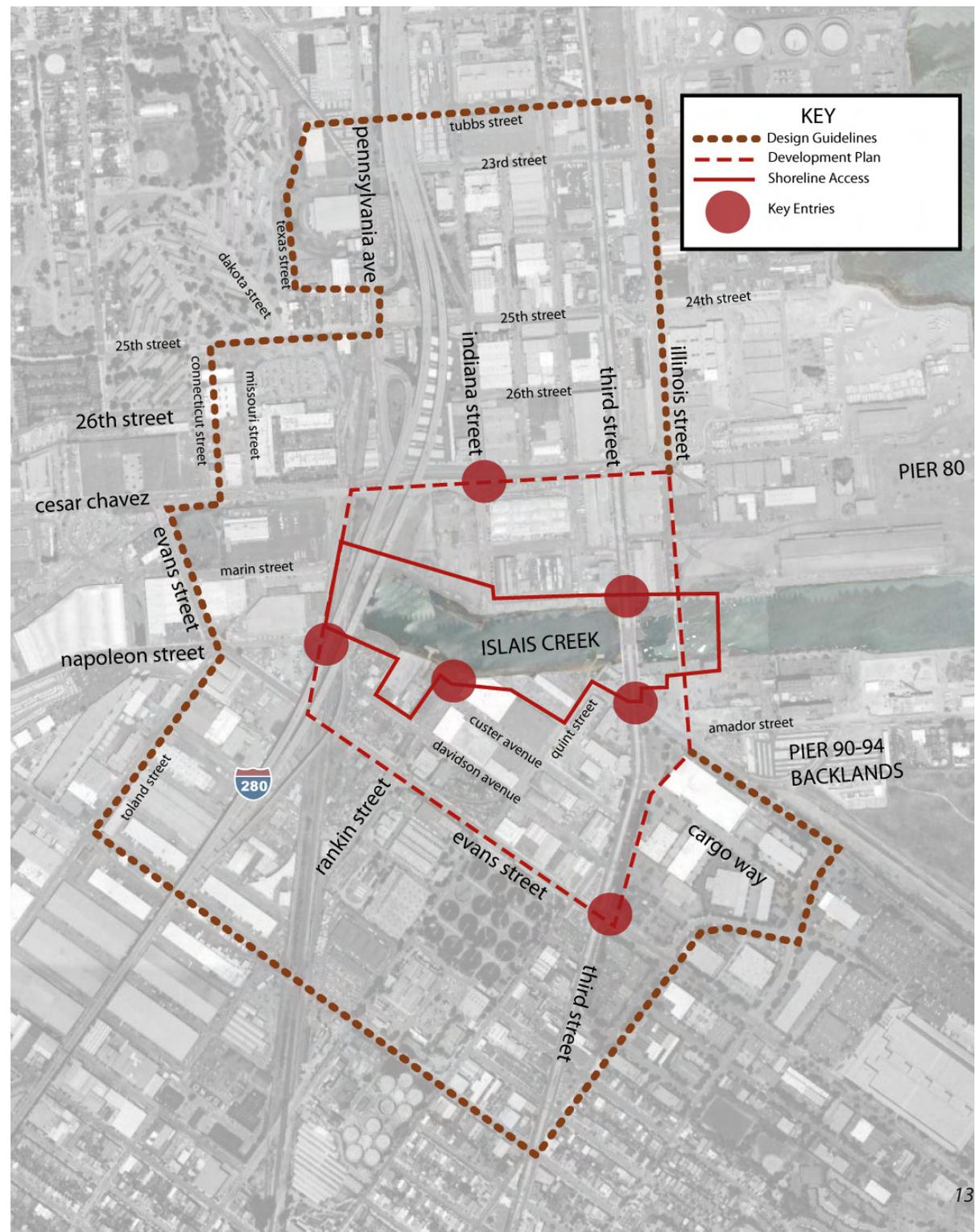
## PROJECT BOUNDARIES

The project examines the Islais Creek site at three levels.

Initially, the boundaries for the concept plan were set at Cesar Chavez to the north, Evans Avenue to the south, I-280 to the west, and Illinois Street to the right, encompassing about 10 city blocks. These remain the boundaries for a comprehensive development plan.

Further examination of the site and interviewing of residents revealed that the perceived unfriendliness of surrounding industrial context discouraged use of the site. As such, the project scope was expanded to include design concepts for the whole district.

Finally, this concept plan looks at the experiential scale. The identity of Islais is no longer that of a creek, but of an industrial waterway. The human scale seeks to reconnect users to the water's edge.





Above: The 1896 Coastal Survey showing the original fluvial valleys of Islais Creek (1)

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF ISLAIS CREEK

### *Natural and Cultural Origins*

Islais Creek is the accumulation of the largest watershed in San Francisco. An 1869 Coast Survey shows the creek originating in the San Bruno mountains and travelling eastward until spilling out into a large tidal marsh on the southeast waterfront of what is now San Francisco.

The Muwekema Ohlone tribe were the native occupants of the region. The members of the tribe would forage in the rich fluvial valley for food, as its banks were home to mussels, shrimp, and clams. The tribe was especially fond of the Wild Cherry, or Hollyleaf Cherry, shrub, which they called "Is Lay Is." When Spanish explorers arrived in San Francisco, they appropriated a version of this name for the creek that was such a rich agricultural source for the valley.

### *Urbanization and Industrialization*

As Portuguese, Italian, and Irish farmers began to move into what is now the Bayview area, they also utilized the nutrient rich banks and water for vegetable crops. At this point, it is also estimated that Islais Creek provided up to 85% of the drinking water for San Francisco residents, at least until the late 1800's. However, the quality of the

inlet started to decline, first with the vast makeshift housing that appeared on the coast during the mid-1800's Gold Rush, then with the industrialization of the port around 1870. In the early part of the twentieth century, the city passed bonds to fill in the tidal marsh at the mouth of the creek, among several other locations along the coastline, to increase port activity. This move also increased the Islais Creek watershed from 8.3 square miles to 11 square miles, which is still the effective area today.

During the 19th and early part of the 20th century, the area immediately adjacent to Islais Creek was known as Butchertown, home to the city's meatpacking, shipping, and processing section. These plants would often dump blood and offal in the creek, and the growing population would also dispose of garbage and sewage there. City officials forced the creek underground into concrete boxes and culverts in the 1930's. Butchertown eventually gave way to auto wrecking yards, and Islais Creek fell into greater disrepair. The construction of Highways 101 and 280 further severed the creek from the surrounding neighborhoods. The clearing out of the wrecking yards and the construction of a wastewater treatment plant in the 1970's somewhat mitigated the environmental damage, but as a whole, the site was still neglected.

### *Reclaiming Islais Creek*

Daniel Burnham, commissioned by San Francisco for a new master plan around 1905, recognized Islais Creek's potential as an axis for the city, calling out "Islais Parkway" as one of his grand boulevards on the plan. Unfortunately, with the earthquake of 1906, this plan was never realized.

Below: Painting depicting the Ohlone Indians (2)



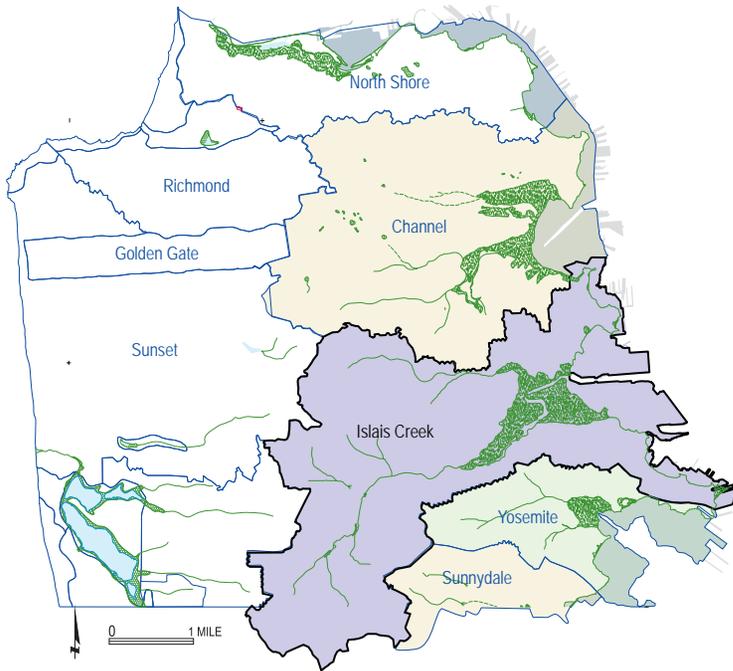


*Left: Butchertown, 1929 (3). The Southern Waterfront was home to most of the city's meatpacking industries.  
Below Left: The shores of Islais Creek, 1944 (4). Offal, waste, detritus were all dumped into the creek.  
Below: Islais Creek 2008. The site is now mostly home to auto repair facilities and a MUNI bus yard.*



In 1988, Julia Viera, a resident of Potrero Hill, launched the Friends of Islais Creek initiative with a \$50,000 grant to clean up the park. The Friends were key in bringing together a task force made up from members of MUNI, Department of Public Works, Caltrans, Public Utilities Commission, and the Port of San Francisco, who all had projects in the general area but were unaware of the other's activities.

In 2001, the Creek faced another environmental setback when the MUNI 3rd Street Light Rail project inadvertently ruptured a sewer main near Islais Creek when attempting to run a conduit underneath, flooding the creek with wastewater. Residents and several community groups assisted with the cleanup, and Islais Creek Park was reclaimed, along with the new addition of the Islais Creek Promenade, built by the Friends and meant as a plaza for MUNI workers to eat lunch. As of late, the promenade has been utilized by local skateboarders as a notable recreation spot in San Francisco, as well as a launch for kayakers. With its inclusion as a major node on San Francisco's Blue Greenway, there is great potential for Islais Creek enter a new era as one of the City's amenities.



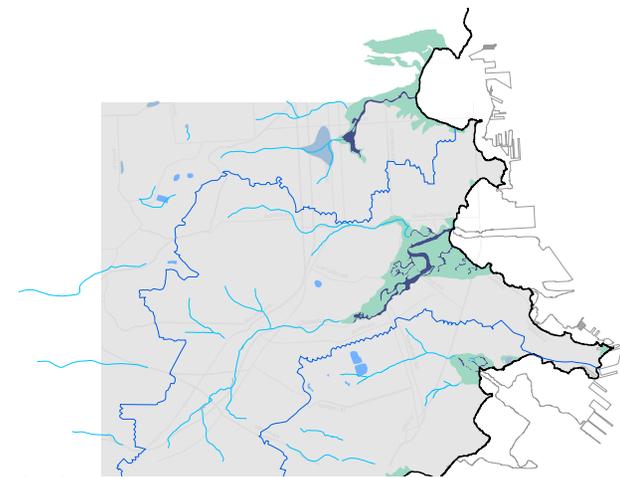
The watersheds of San Francisco (5)

## THE CHANGING SHORELINE

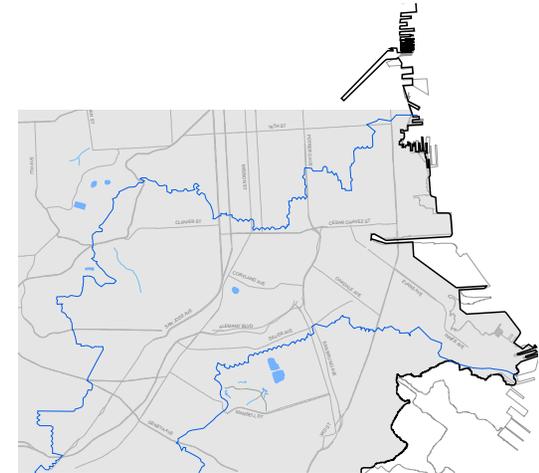
Much of the southern San Francisco shoreline is built on fill. The original shoreline, shown above, was expanded as industrial operations in San Francisco grew in the early 20th century. Islais Creek is the largest watershed in the city. Originally an area of about 8.3 square miles, the fill expanded the effective watershed area to almost 11 square miles. Given San Francisco's combined wastewater system, flooding during a major rainstorm becomes more amplified as the area grows.

Although once a fluvial valley where the Ohlone Indians foraged for food, due to industrial expansion, the creek was channelized and culverted underground. Even so, the origin of the creek can be found in Glen Canyon Park in the center of San Francisco. At the park's edge, though, the creek disappears under the city, not to be seen again until it passes under the I-280 freeway.

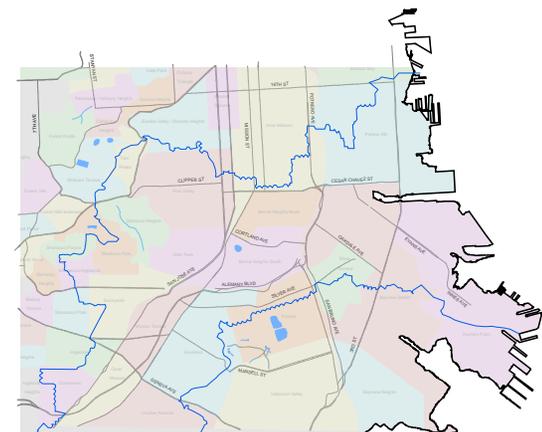
Currently, the watershed is home to the Portrero Hill, Noe Valley, Bayview, Excelsior, Diamond Heights, and Bernal Heights neighborhoods.



San Francisco Shoreline, pre-1850 (6)



San Francisco Shoreline, 1929 (7)



San Francisco Shoreline, 2006 (8)

# THE WATERSHED PATH



The headwaters of Islais Creek are located in Glen Canyon Park....



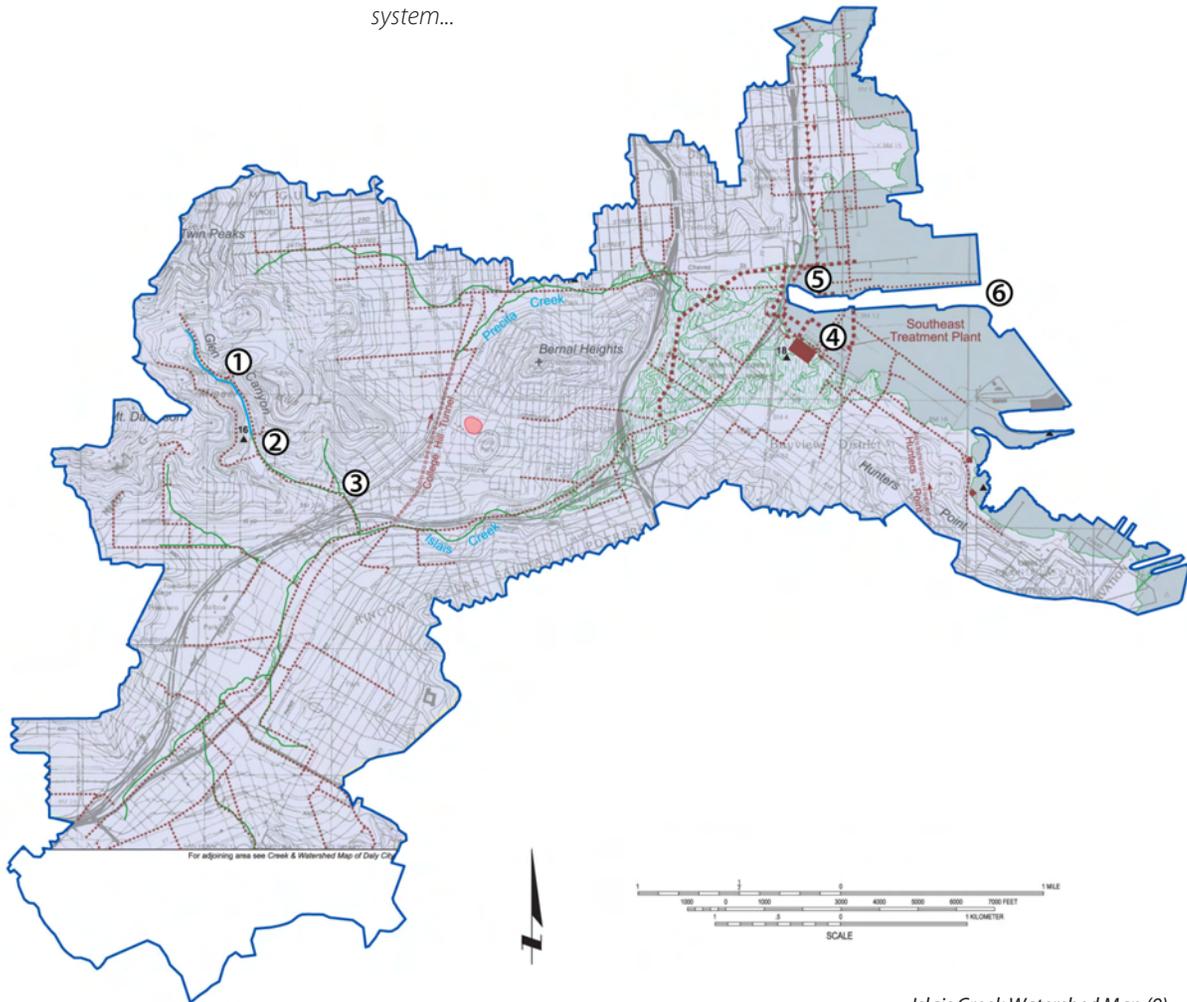
...flows east underground in San Francisco's combined wastewater system...



...is treated at a plant...



...and eventually flows out to the Bay.



1 Glen Canyon Park is the only daylighted portion of the creek until it reaches the Bay. However, given its northern location and the fact that the surrounding area is undeveloped, it receives only a very small portion of the natural watershed's runoff.



2 At the southeast corner of the park, the creek is sent into a culvert. The total Glen Park flows account for about 6% of the total runoff carried by Islais Creek.



3 San Francisco's combined wastewater system utilizes the natural downslopes of the creek and carries both storm runoff and wastewater to treatment plants. While providing a higher level of treatment to all wastewater, the system can flood in storm events.



4 The Southeast Wastewater Treatment Plant is located just south of Islais Creek, and treats both the storm runoff and wastewater before discharging to the Bay.



5 Some outfalls are routed to Islais Creek, which again sees daylight after passing under I-280.



6 The water reaches the San Francisco Bay.

Islais Creek Watershed Map (9)

# ISLAIS CREEK IS A **NODE** BETWEEN NEIGHBORHOODS



## EXISTING PLANS AND EFFORTS

A key component of the Piero Patri Fellowship is to design a development plan that can work within a real-world context. Extensive research was done to fully understand the existing plans and efforts being undertaken in the surrounding area. The Islais Creek site is at a location central to many notable development projects in San Francisco, here categorized into neighborhoods and community groups, connective networks, and agencies serving the city of San Francisco.

## COMMUNITY PLANNING

The southeastern sector of San Francisco is home to a number of communities with dedicated, close-knit populations but low public visibility. However, that profile is being raised through both city-sponsored plans and grass roots community groups. Islais Creek sits at the intersection of these efforts, belonging to none but at the edge of many. While this location may contribute to its neglect now, it also positions the site to be a major node and meeting point between several diverse populations.



*The Islais Creek Promenade, funded by Friends of Islais Creek*

## **FRIENDS OF ISLAIS CREEK**

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Founded by Julia Viera in 1984, Friends of Islais Creek is a grass roots neighborhood collective that serves as stewards for the creek. They have spearheaded most of the major improvements at the water's edge through grants and partnerships. Among their efforts are Islais Creek Park, the Islais Creek Promenade, and cleanup of the park following a sewer main eruption on Third Street. More recently, the group has been instrumental in installing a kayak launch at the water's edge, as well as partnering with the San Francisco Neighborhoods Parks Council to bring in the recreational group Kayaks Unlimited to store equipment there and become a steward of the creek. Now headed by architect Robin Chiang, Friends of Islais Creek remain involved in its preservation and are now looking towards more widespread development.



*Dogpatch Neighborhood, San Francisco (10)*

## **EASTERN NEIGHBORHOODS PLAN**

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In 2001, the San Francisco Planning Department started a massive re-zoning effort for the eastern neighborhoods of San Francisco, south of Market Street and north of Islais Creek. As these neighborhoods hold almost all of the city's remaining industry, the plan began with the intent of writing zoning controls for the preservation of these lands. The four neighborhoods to be re-zoned are East SoMA (South of Market), The Mission, Showplace Square/Portrero Hill, and the Central Waterfront. Realizing the need for housing in San Francisco, the plan does call for transitioning about half of Production, Distribution, and Repair zones (also known as PDR) to Urban Mixed Use (UMU). The Plan was passed in the summer of 2008 by the Planning Department, and is currently under review by the Board of Supervisors.

## **BAYVIEW HUNTERS POINT PLANNING EFFORTS**

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With a rich history but badly underserved population, the Bayview and Hunters Point neighborhoods are currently in the midst of enormous changes. The communities formed around the Hunters Point Shipyard, which was at peak production during World War II. The industry brought a large influx of African Americans from the Southern states to the San Francisco area, with the population of the neighborhood growing from 16,500 to 147,000 between 1940 and 1950. This long legacy of established families contributes to one of the highest rates of home ownership in the city. Unfortunately, the industrial legacy of the area contributes to one of the highest rates of health problems (namely asthma and cancer) in San Francisco. However, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency has interests in several areas in the neighborhood, and the Hunters Point Shipyard redevelopment effort, led by Lennar Corporation and one of the largest private development efforts in the nation, is due to transform this sector of the city.



*The Bayview Opera House*

# ISLAIS CREEK IS DISCONNECTED FROM MAJOR NETWORKS



## CONNECTIVE PATHS

San Francisco is known as one of the United States' most walkable cities. Several planning efforts are underway to reduce auto use and connect citizens to all parts of the city. Islais Creek sits just in between many of these efforts. The mixture of business and open space could serve any and all of these networks, and the site is separated by only a block or two from extensive pedestrian and recreational paths.



*Terry Francois Boulevard today*

## **TERRY FRANCOIS PARKWAY**

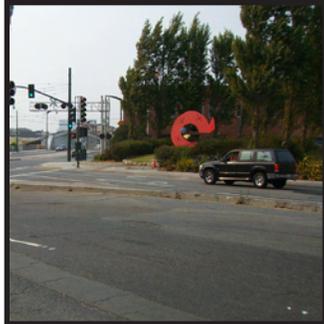
Piero N. Patri envisioned bringing the prosperity currently seen on San Francisco’s northern waterfront to the southeast via a connector route to the Bayview/Hunters Point neighborhood. The thread between the two was the proposed Terry Francois Parkway, a road that, in the words of Patri Merker Architects, “is a concept that connects the dots that for whatever reason, have not been connected.” Terry Francois Parkway consists of realigning and renaming the existing Terry Francois Boulevard with Illinois Street. Although the plan still remains but a concept, there is hope of it being partly realized with the upcoming Seawall Lot 337 proposals, which include streetscape improvements to Terry Francois Boulevard.



*Heron’s Head Park on the Blue Greenway*

## **BLUE GREENWAY AND BAY TRAIL**

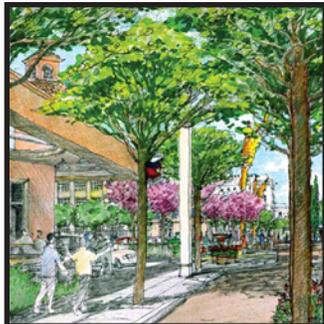
Mayor Gavin Newsom assembled a task force that worked for 6 months between 2005 and 2006 to create the vision for the Blue Greenway, named for its goal of creating both a continuous biking/pedestrian path and a recreational waterway. The 13 mile stretch along San Francisco’s Southern and Central Waterfront begins just south of the Embarcadero and extends well south of the Hunters Point Shipyard area. The plan would also complete San Francisco’s portion of the Bay Trail, which brings together multiple counties and municipalities to make a continuous loop around the San Francisco Bay. The Blue Greenway, which is guided by the principles of “Identity, Connectivity, Health and Environment, and Economy and Development,” seeks to ensure an accessible, recreational path in conjunction with industrial port activity.



*Intersection of Third Street and Cargo Way*

## **CARGO WAY**

In March of 2006, the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) dispersed a \$75,000 grant to the Port of San Francisco and the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency to make improvements on Cargo Way, a roadway bordered on the north side of the India Basin Industrial Park and on the south side of Pier 90-94 Backlands. The roadway provides a connector from Illinois Street to Heron’s Head Park, a restored wetland and future site of Literacy for Environmental Justice’s education center. Through extensive community design meetings, a plan was reached to provide a bike and pedestrian pathway on the south side of the roadway, separated from heavy truck traffic by a buffer of native plants and trees. The design also incorporated stormwater management swales and permeable paving. The plan still awaits additional funding for completion.



*Illustration from the San Francisco Better Streets Plan (11)*

## **BETTER STREETS PLAN**

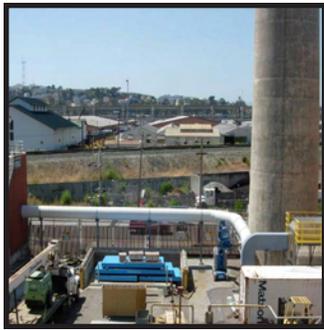
It is estimated that streets make up 25% of land area in San Francisco, which outnumbers its area of parks. A new direction of urban design thought views streets as not only arterials, but public space. Following this philosophy, the San Francisco Planning Department, with several partner agencies, released the first draft of its Better Streets Plan in June 2008. The plan seeks to not only show the potential of San Francisco’s streets, but to streamline the permitting process for improvements. Currently under public review, the Better Streets Plan offers up street typologies, design toolkits, and a new vision for San Francisco’s public realm.

# ISLAIS CREEK IS A WATERSHED THAT SERVES SAN FRANCISCO



## PUBLIC AGENCIES

The Central and Southern waterfront is also home to many public works projects that serve the city of San Francisco. Many of these projects have historically been sources of contention with nearby residents, but public projects currently on the boards are showing a commitment to environmental and community mitigation. These projects also have the greatest impact on the Islais Creek watershed and accessibility to its shores. Careful examination of their effect has revealed a great opportunity to enlist public partners in the new vision for the creek.



View of city from the Southeast Wastewater Treatment Plant (12)



Pier 90-94 Backlands today, as seen from Cargo Way



Architectural model of the new MTA/MUNI facility (15)



Caltrain (14)

## **SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

San Francisco's water treatment network similar to most older American cities in its functions. The system combines both wastewater and stormwater pipes to treatment facilities. While this provides a higher level of treatment to stormwater, the system is often overtaxed in a major rain event. As such, the PUC unveiled their Wastewater 100-year Master Plan, which calls for the upgrading of outdated pipes and encourages exploration of Low Impact Design (LID) strategies and Best Management Practices (BMP) to better control stormwater. Another major component of the master plan is the replacement and/or upgrading of the Southeast Wastewater Treatment Plant, which sits just to the south of Islais Creek and whose odorous activities have long been an issue for nearby Bayview.

## **PIER 90-94 BACKLANDS**

The Port of San Francisco is currently undertaking the redevelopment of the areas west of Piers 90-94, known as the "Backlands." Comprising 44 acres south and upland of Islais Creek, the long-term vision for the land is that of an "Eco-Industrial Park," featuring concrete crushing operations and asphalt plants that employ recycled materials. The Southeast Wastewater Treatment Plant will also be potentially relocated here, and the entire development will be a demonstration of how LID strategies and industrial activities can co-exist. The plan also calls for preserving pedestrian and bike paths in order to keep the waterfront accessible. After consulting with the neighboring community, the Port will also try to ensure opportunities for Bayview residents to open small businesses in subdivided warehouse development.

## **MTA/MUNI FACILITIES**

MTA and MUNI have a number of projects close to the Islais Creek site, among them a recently opened Light Rail Facility on Illinois Street and a planned maintenance and office building on the north bank of the creek, designed by architect Robin Chiang. The planned building will not only bring a larger population to the creek, but MUNI will take stewardship of access on their property. The building's sustainable design will also be a model for public projects on the Southern waterfront. It should also be noted that MUNI's Third Street Light Rail connects the site directly to downtown.

## **SFTA OAKDALE CALTRAIN STUDY**

It is estimated that Caltrain carries about 28,000 riders each weekday to the San Francisco, San Mateo, and San Jose area. In 1988, a Caltrans study was commissioned that investigated relocating the Caltrain station, then at Paul Avenue, to Oakdale Avenue between Phelps and Quint Streets. Under a California Department of Transportation Grant, a design feasibility and station concept plan was released in February 2005. The plans have been generally favorably received by neighboring Bayview residents, whose designated Town Center is in close proximity to the station, and, through community design meetings, have ensured that there will be room in the station for vendor booths that could be leased by locally owned businesses. The station is currently under environmental review, and scheduled to break ground in 2011.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Piero N. Patri dedicated his work to improving all areas of San Francisco. This commitment is reflected in the fellowship work by performing extensive community outreach in order to achieve a design that is directly beneficial to the neighboring populations of the Southern Waterfront. Through extensive interviews and by becoming personally familiar with the myriad community planning efforts surrounding the site, this year's Patri Fellow identified three key groups, among many others, that the design would serve.

### *The Bayview Hunters Point Community: At the edge of revitalization*

The Bayview Hunters Point Community is very active in redevelopment efforts in the area, dating back to the Hunters Point Improvement Association founded in 1937. The neighborhood began to decline after the Hunters Point shipyard moved out and the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) was engaged around 1969. Community members took the initiative to form groups to work in conjunction with the SFRA, the latest incarnation being the Bayview Project Area Committee (PAC). The Bayview PAC is an elected group of 21 members that allows citizens take a proactive role in the planning process.



*The highest priority for the Bayview community is generating new jobs*

*Clockwise from top right: Graffiti art in Bayview; a locally owned taqueria; the Bayview Opera House; community informational meeting. All photos taken on the Third Street Revitalization Walking Tour held on June 12, 2008, led by the Bayview Merchants Association*





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*“This spot is **legendary** in the skate world and needs to be kept that way if at all possible” - Bryan Hornbeck, San Francisco Skateboarding Association*

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*At left: interventions made at the Islais Creek Promenade by skateboarders*

Another group key to the restoring the neighborhood is the Bayview Merchants Association, which is actively involved in the revitalization of the Third Street commercial corridor.

Bayview has the highest rate of home ownership in the city (over 55%). Although in most parts of San Francisco the overriding concern with redevelopment is affordable housing, the largest concern in Bayview is creating jobs and businesses local to the neighborhood. The community groups have insured that this is the cornerstone to nearly all efforts planned for the area.

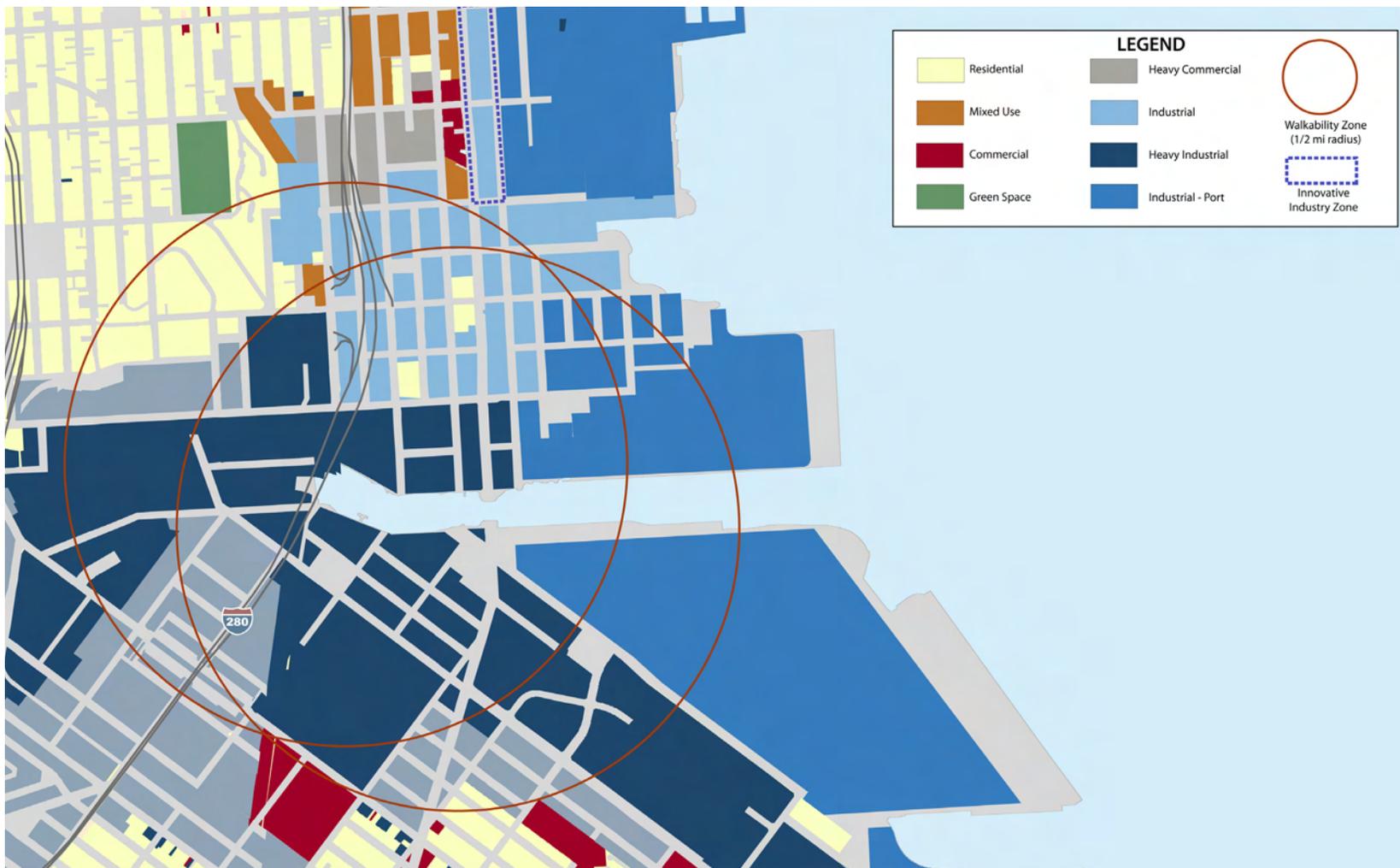
### ***Skateboarders: Active Users***

An unintended effect of the construction of the Islais Creek Promenade was the influx of skateboarders that now populate the walk most of the day. Citing the pipe rails and long concrete stretches, SF Weekly recently named the promenade the “Best Legal Skateboarding Spot in San Francisco.” Since the promenade’s construction, skateboarders have even taken the initiative to build their own half-pipes and ramps. In an email sent to the Patri Fellow, Bryan Hornbeck of the San Francisco Skateboarding Association stated, “This spot is legendary in the skate world and needs to be kept this way if at all possible.”

### ***Schoolchildren: A need for environmental education***

As the Blue Greenway begins to extend south, and port properties begin to look at ways to mitigate the waterfront, there is ample opportunity to educate urban schoolchildren about the environment. Literacy for Environmental Justice (LEJ), a nonprofit group dedicated to this mission, has adopted nearby Heron’s Head Park as the location for a LEED-platinum certified, off the grid educational center.

Heron’s Head Park is a bayside location, so Islais Creek offers a different opportunity for watershed education. The site is already utilized by the San Francisco School, a charter institution that brings its middle school biology classes to the site to teach about water quality.



*Left: To test the viability of preserving the PDR districts around Islais Creek, a 1/2 mile radius walkability circle was drawn around the site, showing that the site was accessible from residential areas, but needed to have more businesses that served individual residents.*

*Below: A typical business in the vicinity of Islais Creek*

**The Production, Distribution, and Repair zone provides a diverse range of jobs for San Francisco**





# TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS

Although the Southern Waterfront is somewhat underserved by public transportation, the Islais Creek site is well-triangulated between a few major transportation networks. The recently opened Third Street Light Rail, which connects directly to downtown has two stops just the east of the site. The MUNI 19 bus also connects the site to downtown. The plans for the Oakdale Caltrain station call for a location just south of the creek. Lastly, Cesar Chavez, a major east west arterial for San Francisco, runs just to the north of the site and also has on and off ramps to Highway 101 and Interstate 280.

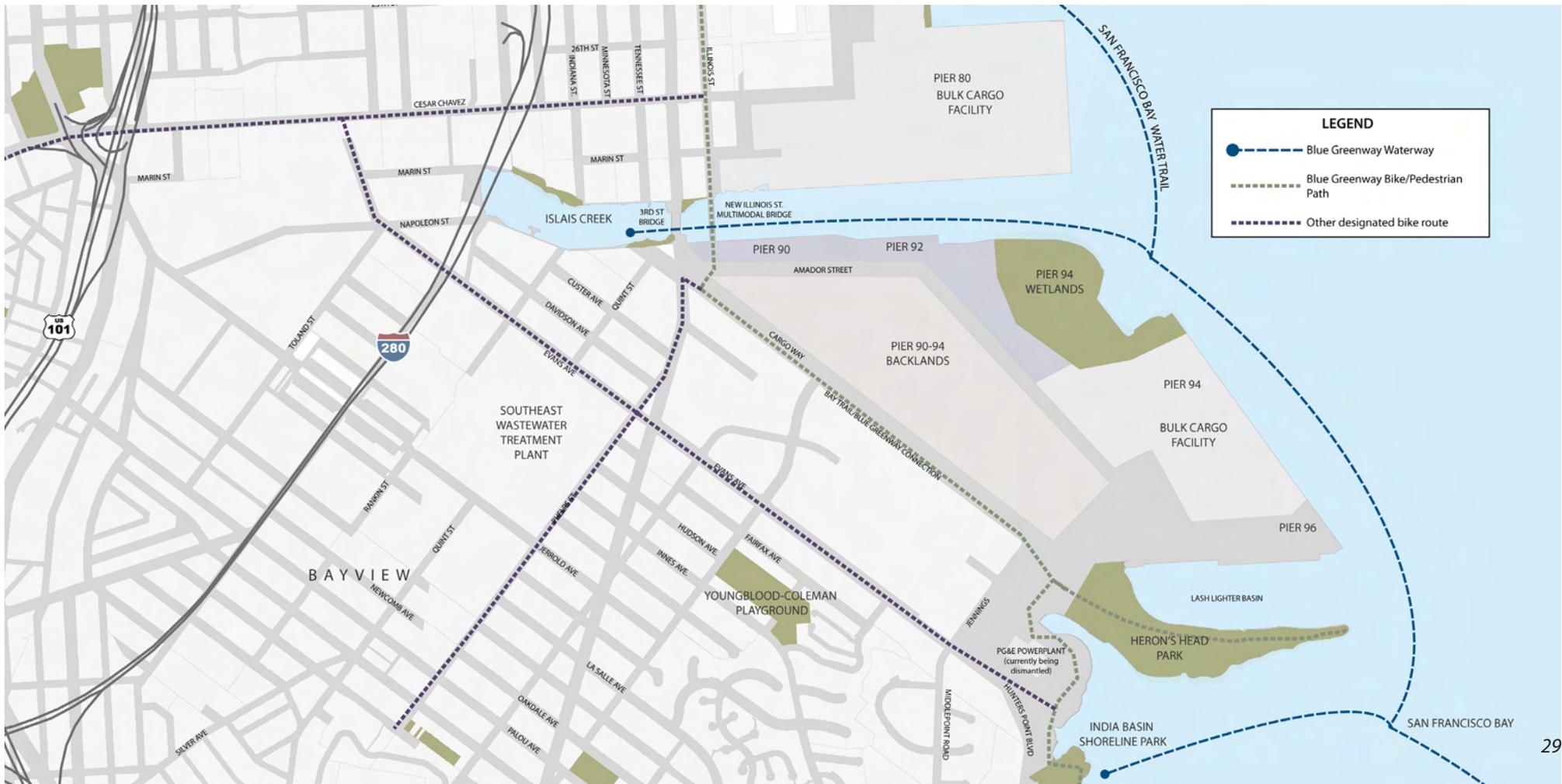
Below: Transportation Networks near Islais Creek



# RECREATIONAL NETWORKS

The Blue Greenway is due to transform the Southern Waterfront as a recreational destination. Because of the logistical difficulties in raising the two drawbridges that cross the waterway, Islais Creek is much better suited as a kayak launch than for other personal watercraft. The San Francisco Neighborhood Parks Council has already enlisted Kayaks Unlimited as stewards for the site. Islais Creek is also situated between three designated bicycle routes - Illinois Street, Cesar Chavez, and Evans, but disconnected from them due to a lack of destination points and secondary bike arterials from the streets.

Below: Recreational Networks near Islais Creek



# LANDMARKS AND PRESERVATION

The history of Islais Creek is revealed in remnants at the site. The warehouses and steel structures that border the site tell of its industrial context both in the past and today. Friends of Islais Creek, local skateboarders, and other grass roots groups have made improvements and interventions over the years. The site analysis of Islais Creek seeks to honor the efforts of these groups by taking inventory of these projects and evaluating their current condition.



*Above: The Alioto Canning Warehouse and dock remnants at Islais Creek*

*Above Right: A bench built from salvaged concrete in Islais Creek Park*

*Right: Landmark Map at Islais Creek*



## LANDMARKS IN GOOD CONDITION to be preserved

### A ISLAIS CREEK PROMENADE



Funded by Friends of Islais Creek, the promenade was intended to be a lunchtime plaza for MUNI employees. It has become a very popular sport for skateboarders in San Francisco, who would like to see it remain as is.

### B ISLAIS LANDING



The kayak landing features a floating dock and ramp to accommodate tides. Although it is a new structure, users of the dock would prefer to have it replaced, as the current dock has turns too sharp to negotiate with a kayak.

### C ISLAIS CREEK PARK



The park, also funded by Friends of Islais Creek, features native plants and a few picnic tables and benches that are in good condition.

## LANDMARKS IN FAIR CONDITION to be rehabilitated

### D COPRA CRANE



A historic crane, once used to unload coconut meat at the docks when Islais Creek was a produce center, appears to be structurally sound but could use restoration. The dock it sits on is also deteriorating. Friends of Islais Creek is working with Port of San Francisco to restore the crane and make it a landmark for a planned waterfront labor exhibit.

### E TULARE PARK



While plantings at the park are in fair condition, the park has been cut off by the Illinois Street bridge and is difficult to access, and consequently its main users are the homeless.

## LANDMARKS IN POOR CONDITION to receive major mitigation or to be demolished

### F ALIOTO CANNING WAREHOUSE



The warehouse was purchased by Caltrans with the intention to demolish for a highway off ramp. These plans are no longer on the boards, and the Public Utilities Commission is considering purchase for part of its Southeast Wastewater Treatment Plant relocation. PUC has deemed the property in need of major environmental remediation, but the existing concrete frame appears to be stable and could support new skin infill.



*Right: View of Islais Creek looking west from the Third Street Bridge. Kayak Landing and the Alioto Canning Warehouse can be viewed in the distance.*

# TRAIL ALIGNMENT

If Islais Creek is to be a destination recreational site, it is key to provide both public access to the shoreline and a loop that effectively connects to the Blue Greenway bike routes. The analysis below targets ideal destination points and existing condition of shoreline access.

*Below: Trail alignment connecting to Blue Greenway*



## CLEAR SHORELINE OR EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

These paths either have existing park infrastructure (i.e. the Islais Creek Promenade or park) or unrestricted shoreline access in which to create a pedestrian path.

## SHORELINE ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS REQUIRED OR ALTERNATE PIER-SUPPORTED ACCESS SUGGESTED

These paths are generally clear but need more improvements to be pedestrian friendly (i.e., under the freeway, through Fireman's Plaza). These lines also indicate where an alternate boardwalk access could be built in case existing barriers to shoreline access cannot be overcome.

## SHORELINE BARRIERS

Development to the shoreline prevents clear pedestrian routes, and would require selective demolition in order to create shoreline access.

## PLANNED NODES ALONG SHORELINE

These areas demarcate key gathering places and activity nodes surrounding Islais Creek, both existing and planned.



SECTION III

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# IMAGINING ISLAIS CREEK

DESIGN VISION AND CONCEPT PLANS



MINIMUM EXPANSION SCENARIO  
approximate area: 5 acres



MEDIUM EXPANSION SCENARIO  
approximate area: 15.4 acres



MAXIMUM EXPANSION SCENARIO  
approximate area: 31 acres



## CONCEPT PLAN: FORMULATING A VISION

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### *Plan Objectives*

Initial visits to the site revealed that four key goals needed to be set for the concept plan:

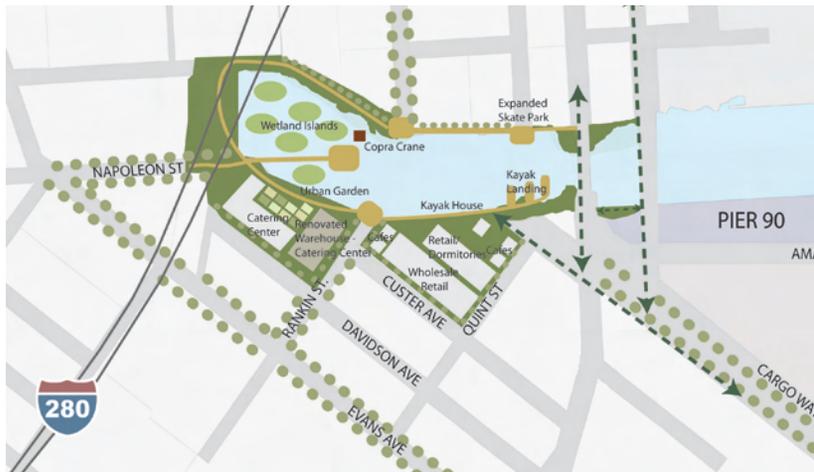
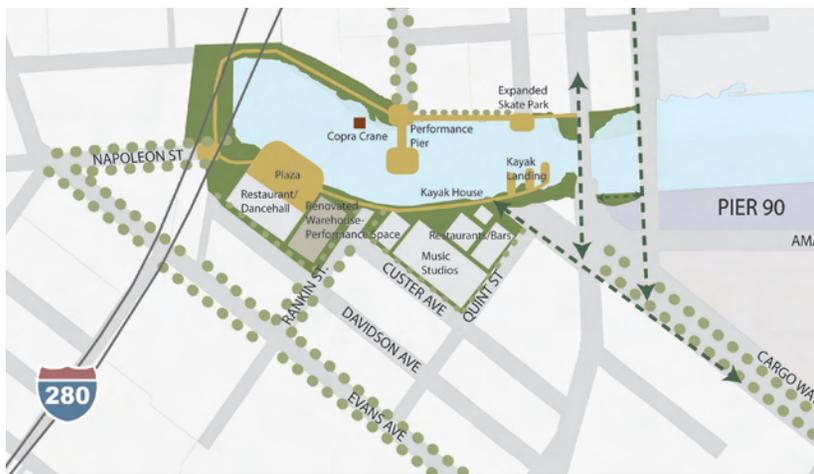
- To reconnect Islais Creek to the city
- To enliven the Islais Creek site and to create a viable public waterfront
- To create a sense of place within the city and waterfront context
- To restore the health of the site and watershed

### *Expansion Scenarios*

Site opportunities and constraints were first examined at the site level by surveying empty lots, publicly owned land, and current uses of privately-owned, adjacent lots. Minimum to maximum scenarios were proposed based on perceived availability of land.

The expansion scenarios proposed could be either used for phasing the concept plan or to prioritize lot by lot development. Publicly owned and empty lots would be developed at minimum and first, and private owners could be involved over time as development progressed.





## Imagining Islais Creek

After much research into the needs and potential of the Islais Creek site, three development themes and early conceptual diagrams were presented to the steering committee in order to analyze how each could activate the site, and the overall pros and cons to each proposal:

### • Nightlife and Entertainment

Crucial to the success of any site is that it is used at all hours of the day. The surrounding PDR context is busy from early morning to late afternoon, but is abandoned at night. With this in mind, a complex of nightclubs, performance halls, and restaurants was proposed. These are activities that also create a great deal of noise, so it is prudent to put them in a zone such as PDR, where they are sequestered from residential neighborhoods.

### • Wholesale Food Distribution and Catering

When exploring uses for the site that would fall within the current PDR business definitions, an ideal industry proved to be that of wholesale food distribution and centralized catering business. Advancing on this concept that was once proposed by Friends of Islais Creek, this theme also seeks to take advantage of San Francisco's growing identity as a center for slow food and sustainable eating.

### • Open Space and Environmental Education

The last plan was proposed as an effort to mitigate the decades of environmental damage inflicted on Islais Creek. Maximizing constructed wetlands and park space, the plan also serves to address an expressed desire from the Bayview neighborhood for active open space.

### *The Vision: A Food Center for San Francisco*

After discussion and further research, the ultimate vision for the Islais Creek concept plan centered around the wholesale food distribution

*Left: The three initial development schemes (top to bottom): Nightlife/Entertainment, Food Distribution and Catering Center, and a maximized open space and environmental education complex.*

Food Distribution and Jobs



Low Impact Water Treatment



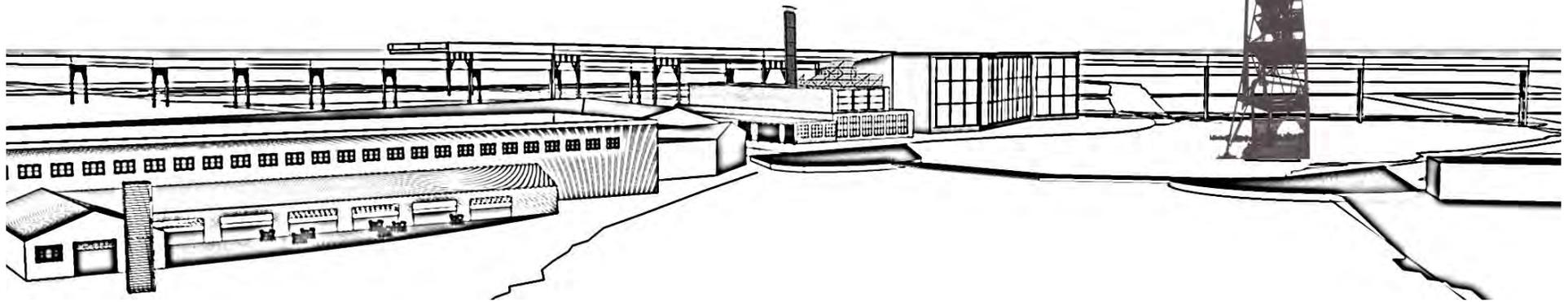
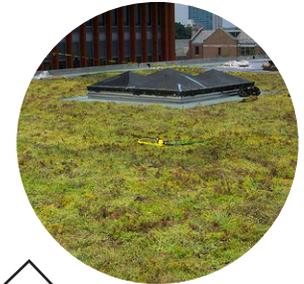
Green Space and Recreation



Pedestrian Friendly Environment



Sustainable Development



Above: Conceptual sketch of development on Islais Creek.

and catering theme. However, the programming of the site seeks to combine the most favorable elements of each of the three schemes in order to define a design philosophy and to provide a fully activated public waterfront in the industrial context.

The cornerstone of the concept plan is a catering center, which would centralize both the contract labor and resources these businesses, which are often small startups, require. There will also be space for wholesale and individual distribution of artisanal, local goods such as meat, cheese, milk, wine, and flowers. Featuring these products would establish a diverse array of goods in conjunction with the San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market, just to the south of the site on Jerrold Avenue.

It should also be noted that a wholesale distribution center’s peak hours are normally from midnight to 6 am, ensuring the round the clock surveillance desired on the site.

Additionally, the site will feature demonstration wetlands to give a higher level of treatment to stormwater and wastewater outfalls, circulation loops and open space for recreation, and an expanded skate park.

In summary, the plan seeks to benefit the neighboring communities on several levels including environmental mitigation, recreation opportunities, diversified job opportunity and food access to this currently underserved, but rapidly changin area of San Francisco.

# PLAN KEY

## DEVELOPMENT

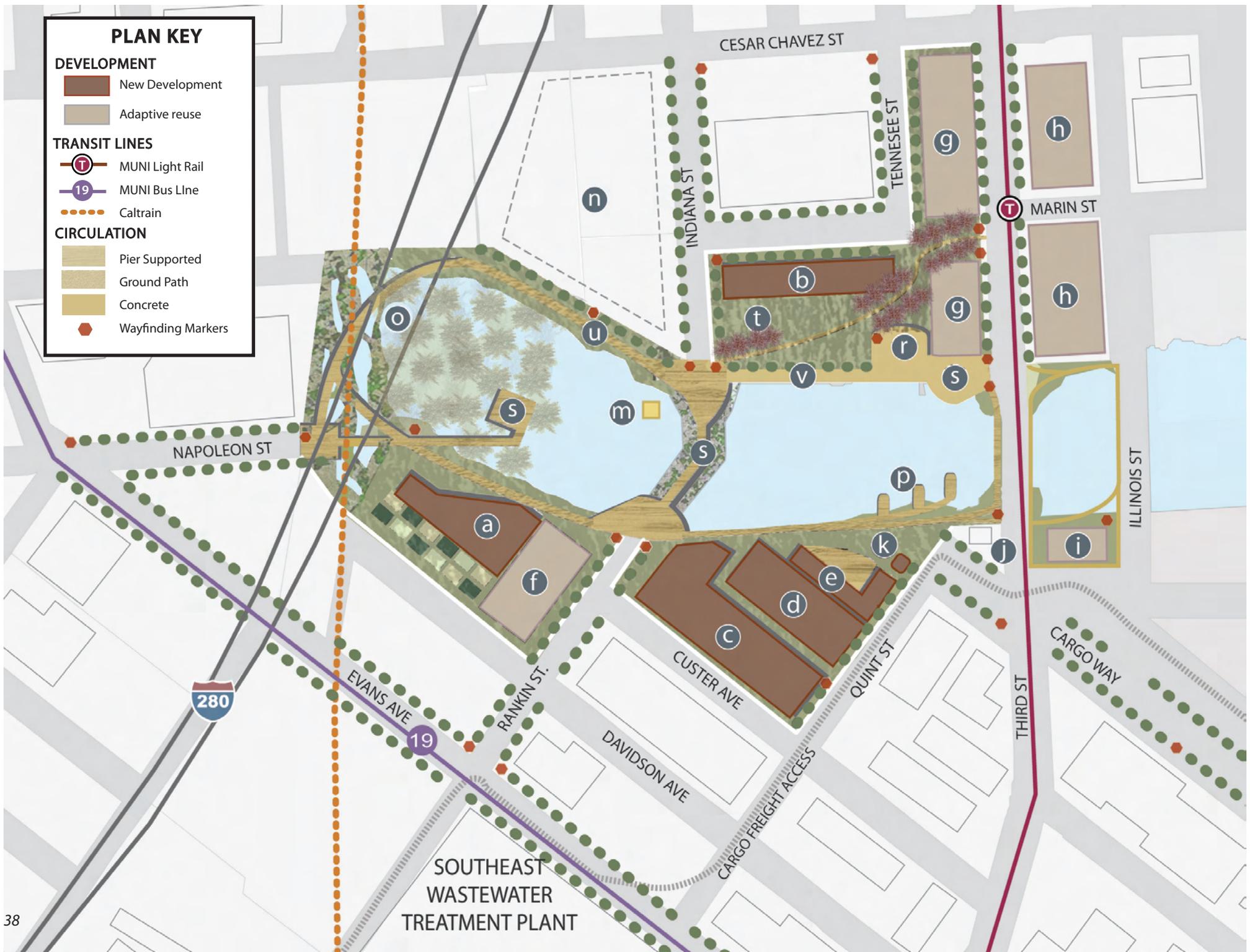
- New Development
- Adaptive reuse

## TRANSIT LINES

- MUNI Light Rail
- MUNI Bus Line
- Caltrain

## CIRCULATION

- Pier Supported
- Ground Path
- Concrete
- Wayfinding Markers



# CONCEPT PLAN: A FOOD CENTER FOR ISLAIS CREEK

## NEW CONSTRUCTION

- a Catering Center and Urban Garden**  
*The Catering Center centralizes both startup businesses and workers that are often contract labor. An urban garden on the south side provides produce and herbs for the businesses.*
- b Retail Flower Market**  
*A public flower market for individual retail fronts the park and waterfront. Commercial space is leased by Port of San Francisco.*
- c Wholesale Food Market**  
*Wholesale retail facilities front Custer Avenue for loading dock access. The warehouse would deal in goods such as bread, wine, and cheese that would be compatible with the San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market.*
- d Individual Retail/Catering dormitories**  
*The two story hall sells artisan goods on the ground level and has dormitories for students that are learning at the catering center on the second floor. The dormitory would further insure a population at the site at all times.*
- e Cafes and small commercial space**  
*Multiple businesses can rent space in a one story hall that fronts the water's edge.*

## SUGGESTED ADAPTIVE REUSE

- f Public Catering Hall**  
*The renovated Alioto Canning building can serve as a hall available to be rented to the public. It can be used as performance space or for other entertainment purposes.*

- g Nurseries and Wholesale Flower Market**  
*These warehouses have convenient truck access and are suitable for wholesale retail. It is suggested that to enhance the identity of this corner of the Islais Creek Development that nursery flower businesses be placed here.*
- h Artist studios/galleries/Cafes**  
*This renovated warehouse, currently being occupied by local artists, can expand on this use and add galleries and cafes that will be immediately accessible from Third Street.*

## EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

- i Fireman's Plaza and Community Center**  
*The Fireman's Plaza is due to be renovated and provides access from Illinois Street.*
- j Booster Pump Station**  
*The existing pump station must remain undisturbed in order to take treated water out towards the Bay.*
- k Islais Creek Park**  
*The park area is preserved, but replanted and has added picnic tables.*
- m Copra Crane**  
*The Copra Crane is refurbished and serves as an identifying marker for the site and gives reference to the industrial history of the park.*
- n MUNI Facility (planned)**  
*The planned facility will bring over 300 employees to the site and can provide stewardship for portions of shoreline access.*

## ECOLOGICAL ELEMENTS

- o Constructed Wetlands**  
*Wetlands under the overpass and experimental wetland islands provide a higher level of treatment to greywater on the site and to any wastewater outfalls.*

## RECREATIONAL ELEMENTS

- p Expanded Kayak Landing**  
*A new floating kayak landing with straight runs replaces the current landing, which has been cited as hard to navigate, and anticipates increased use.*
- r Skateboard Park**  
*The profile of Islais Creek as a major skating spot should be expanded upon. A skate park provides a territory for this population.*
- s Overlook Piers and Pedestrian Bridge**  
*A series of overlook piers on the water creates gathering places and gives views toward the city and the bay.*
- t Open Space**  
*A new park space, which can be used by recreational users and MUNI employees, is planned for land that is currently Port property.*
- u Recreational Loop**  
*A pedestrian and bike trail circles Islais Creek to extend the Blue Greenway*
- v Islais Creek Promenade**  
*The existing promenade is planted for stormwater treatment and to provide a buffer between skateboarders and pedestrians. The skateboarding level is reinforced with steel caps and other refurbishments to resist further deterioration.*

# PLAN THEME: FOOD DISTRIBUTION and JOBS

## LOCALIZING FOOD DISTRIBUTION

The Bay Area supports not only the thriving urban center but also some of the richest farmland in the nation. San Francisco is perhaps the city best suited to demonstrate a sustainable food economy to the rest of the nation.

San Francisco is gradually defining itself as a culinary center, both through its local food sources and through its talented chefs and numerous restaurants. The concept plan aims to encourage a sustainable food economy by centralizing a wholesale food distribution center for local restaurants and groceries. In a UC Berkeley Public Market feasibility report, 45% of surveyed restaurants said they would definitely shop at a local wholesale market if provided.

This concept was further refined through consultation with Michael Janis, director of the San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market. The SFWPM has done extensive research into expanding its facilities and encompassing other wholesale food distribution - such as wine, cheese, and baked goods. The Islais Creek site could capitalize on this need and provide the opportunity for this expansion to form a food corridor with the SFWPM. This area of San Francisco is also home to many restaurant supply warehouses and drink distributors, so the localizing of all these businesses would be a boon to San Francisco's growing food economy.

*Below Left: linkage from the planned development to the San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market*  
*Below Right: San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market (15)*



### SAN FRANCISCO FOOD SOURCES WITHIN 100 miles\*



*\*Information from the San Francisco Foodshed Project*





In that respect, the plan does not aim to compete with the numerous Farmer's Markets already in San Francisco, since the majority of the operations would be dedicated to wholesale. However, the Bayview neighborhood is currently lacking continuous food access. To address this need, a component of the plan also includes space for individual sales, and numerous cafes that could take even better advantage of a central food distribution center.



**Top Left:** Conceptual illustration: cafes and small commercial space on water (refer to plan for location)

**Left:** Conceptual illustration: Overlook pier and bridge, looking towards Catering Hall and Catering Center (refer to plan for location)

# PLAN THEME: LOW IMPACT WATER TREATMENT DESIGNING FOR A URBAN WATERSHED

Islais Creek is the largest watershed in San Francisco, but little evidence of where the city's water goes remains visible. Therefore, it is important that where the creek is revealed is also where water treatment is evident.

A major component of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission's Wastewater Master Plan is to encourage low impact design (LID) strategies and best management practices (BMP's) to divert surface stormwater before it overtaxes the the combined wastewater system. As such, new development on this site plans to employ these strategies through green roofs, living walls, and planted swales.

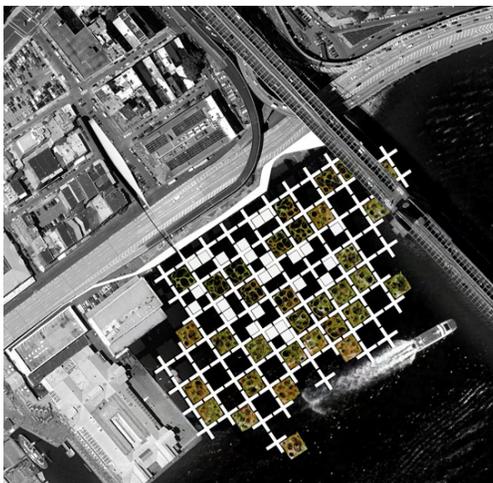
Additionally, the concept plan includes about 2.5 acres of constructed wetlands underneath the I-280 overpass. This location was identified in the *Urban Watershed Planning Charette*, published by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission and EDAW, as an opportunity site for this LID strategy. As there is a major wastewater overflow outfall here, a constructed wetlands could provide a higher level of treatment in the case of storm events. The site's high visibility can also be utilized for experimental techniques in water treatment, such as floating wetland islands. To maximize their educational value, the islands are integrated with a boardwalk system that snakes through the west end of the site.

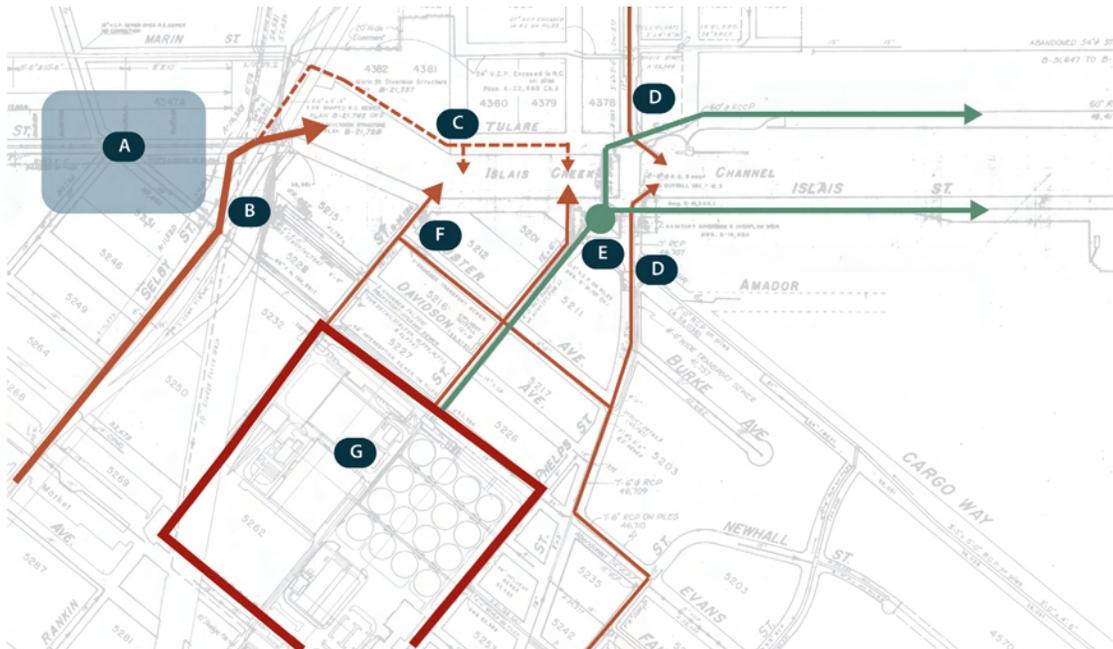
The wetlands could also be supplied year round if sustainable strategies are used in the building of new development. It is suggested that greywater pipes be routed to the treatment area.



*Above: Conceptual illustration of experimental wetland at Islais Creek.*

*Below: Examples of recent experimental wetland projects (l. to r.): Wetland grid by N.E.E.D. in New York City (16); a "Fish Hotel" on the Chicago River (17); wetlands under freeway at Mercer Slough in Seattle, WA (18)*





EXISTING STORMWATER CIRCULATION



PROPOSED STORMWATER CIRCULATION

PLAN KEY

- A** Area of frequent flooding
  - B** Main wastewater overflow outfall (treated water pipe)
  - C** Overflow outfall (backup pipes)
  - D** Overflow outfall
  - E** Booster pump
  - F** Overflow outfall - to be reduced
  - G** Southeast Wastewater Treatment Plant
- 
- greywater circulation
  - treated water
  - treated water overflow
  - outflow to Bay
  - constructed wetland
  - street flooding present
- 
- A** Greywater conveyance
  - B** Main wastewater overflow outfall (treated water pipe)
  - C** LID strategies on new development
  - D** Overflow outfall
  - E** Booster pump
  - F** Constructed wetlands for treatment
  - G** Southeast Wastewater Treatment Plant



# CONSTRUCTED WETLANDS



## PLAN THEME: GREEN SPACE and RECREATION ACTIVITY IN THE PDR CONTEXT

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The goals of the Blue Greenway encompass maintaining the identity of an industrial waterfront while providing public access to shorelines and other open spaces. While southeastern San Francisco does have a low amount of parkland in comparison with other parts of the city, the context of the Production, Distribution, and Repair district requires a careful balance of development and open space.

It is not to say that an industrial context is incompatible with open space, though. As more and more industrial lands are decommissioned, a new age of “industrial parks” is being seen in major cities. Industrial remnants make a fascinating fabric to weave greening strategies throughout, as seen at Gasworks Park in Seattle and Landschaft Park in Duisburg Nord, Germany.

Islais Creek’s history is industrial. The site presents a unique opportunity to both honor the relics of its past, and to repair the environmental effects they have left behind.

*Left: Conceptual illustration: constructed wetlands area (refer to plan for location)*

*Right: Example of wayfinding for recreation in the PDR context.*

*Below: Conceptual illustration: Islais Creek Promenade, replanted and refurbished to accommodate both skateboarders and pedestrians on promenade (refer to plan for location)*





# RECREATIONAL LOOP



# DISTRICT DESIGN CONCEPT: PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT CONNECTING THE CREEK

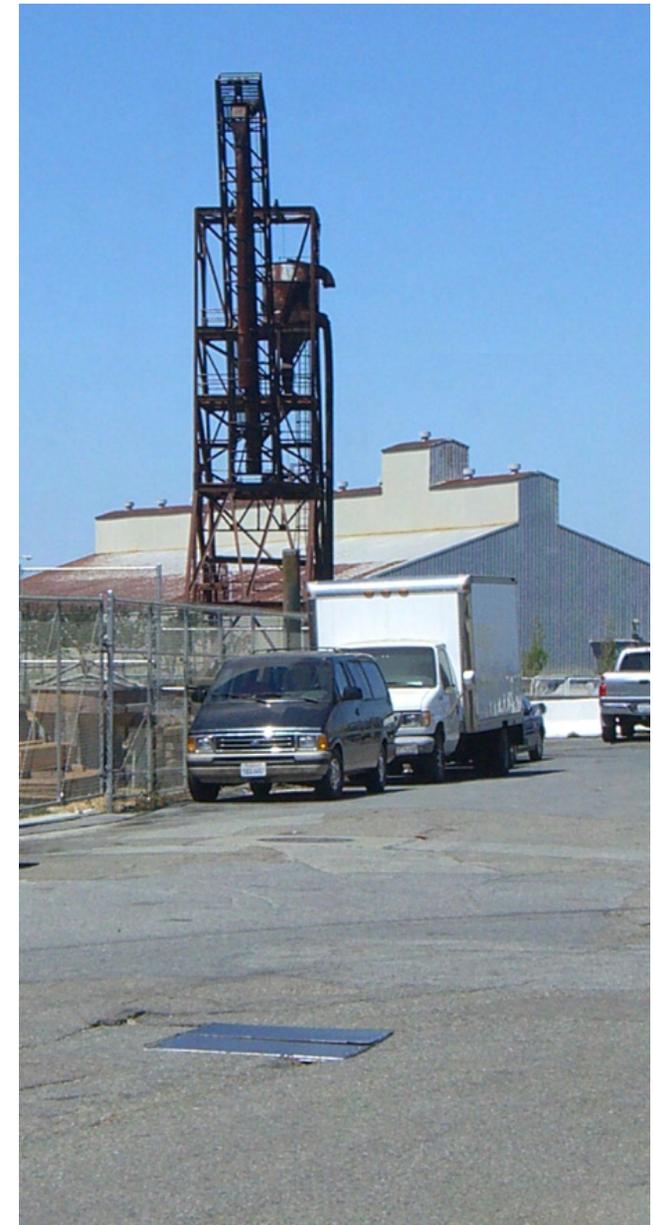
The success of any design depends on its availability to the public. One of the biggest roadblocks facing both the PDR districts and the upper reaches of the Bayview neighborhood is a lack of sense of safety. The wide swath of industrial buildings are perceived as unfriendly, unsafe, and without a human scale.

These district design concepts are for new development within the larger boundary set for the project. They are to show the potential of an industrial district for a new, sustainable age, one that can provide benefits not only for the environment, but also pedestrians and businesses.

*Left: Conceptual illustration: trail on north side of Islais Creek (refer to plan for location)*

*Right: Rankin Street looking towards Islais Creek. The typical industrial street tends to be unfriendly to pedestrians.*

*Below: Map showing Islais Creek connections towards San Francisco communities*



# DISTRICT DESIGN CONCEPT: PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

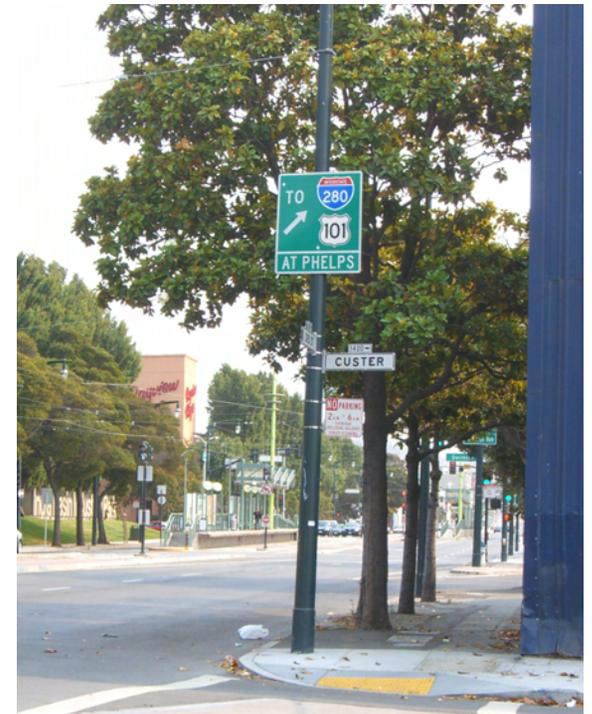
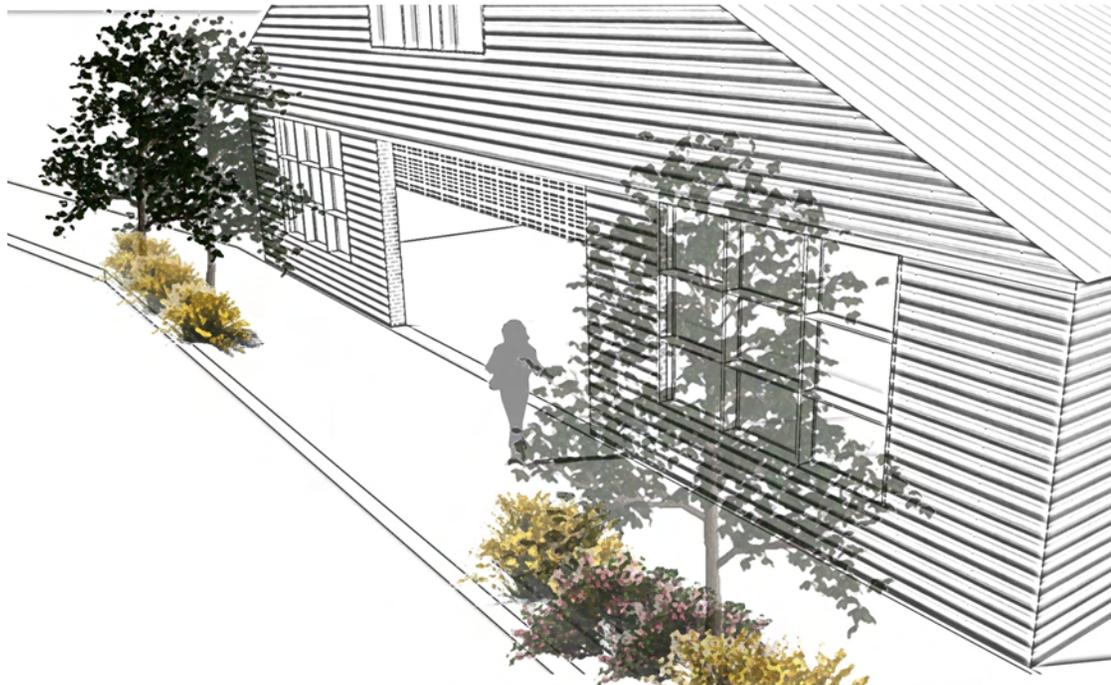
## PUBLIC REALM AND STREET FRONTAGES

Streets and sidewalks in the district must serve a dual purpose: they must allow loading truck access but in this context, must also be inviting to pedestrians. These pedestrians are not only visitors to the district, but also workers there.

New development should orient their main entrances towards the focus streets called out in this document whenever possible. It should be noted that industrial architecture can benefit the pedestrian realm - garage doors can provide overhangs on the sidewalk when open and large windows typically seen in warehouse architecture can give clues to and solicit interest in activities inside.

Although these streets are not as active as typical commercial thoroughfares, and therefore may not be thought of as a priority for street beautification, plantings can serve a purpose as environmental mitigation. The district should be a demonstration of localized stormwater treatment by employing swales and rain gardens.

*Right: Examples of street treatment (top to bottom): stormwater treatment and retention at the street level (21); existing tree buffers such as these near the Islais Creek site should be encouraged*  
*Below: Scale, fenestrations, and orientation are key to a pedestrian friendly industrial district.*





Above: Conceptual illustration: A re-envisioned Third Street with pedestrian friendly frontages and street treatment.

# DISTRICT DESIGN CONCEPT: PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT CROSSINGS AND WAYFINDING

The wide streets that are needed in a PDR district to accommodate industrial traffic are often intimidating to pedestrians. In order to bring a human scale to the area around Islais Creek and to accommodate the recreational traffic, it is suggested that major crossings employ 3-way pedestrian and bike signals, currently used in many European cities and being introduced in cities such as New York and Portland. In line with the Better Streets Plan for San Francisco, these signals should be timed at approximately 3.5 seconds per foot.

The large expanses of undefined concrete may also be confusing to users. As such, it is also suggested that crossings employ high contrast crosswalk paving that uses material that can still tolerate the heavy loads of truck traffic.

Lastly, wayfinding and defining the district through markers or industrial art should be encouraged. This will not only guide pedestrians and bikers through the district, but would be an opportunity to commission local artists.

*Right: Examples of pedestrian friendly wayfinding (top to bottom): An existing sign at the Third Street Light Rail stop; 3-way pedestrian and bike signal (19); defining markers created by local artists; and high contrast, permeable paving (20)*

*Below: Third Street and Cargo Way is an intimidating crossing for pedestrians.*





*Above: Conceptual illustration: The entrance to Islais Creek looking down Indiana Street.*

# DISTRICT DESIGN CONCEPT: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

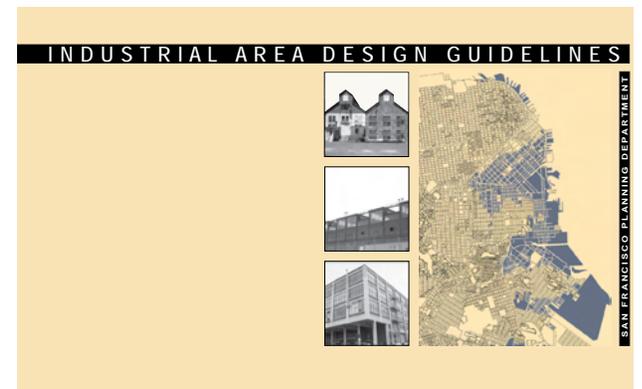
## RETHINKING THE PDR CONTEXT

Although more and more industrial districts are being converted to mixed-use buildings, it is important to distinguish that the district this project concentrates on will be most likely be kept as a solely industrial zone even with re-zoning plans currently on the boards.

The San Francisco Planning Department has published a document entitled *Industrial Area Design Guidelines*, which this report believes has sufficiently addressed issues of massing and facades.

As mentioned in the Public Realm section of this report, this particular PDR district should be a demonstration of how the large surface areas of industrial warehouses can employ sustainable building strategies. As such, new development in this area should embrace alternative energy, such as photovoltaic panels (appropriate as this area of San Francisco receives the most sunshine in the city), and green roof and living wall strategies for climate control and stormwater management.

**Right:** Examples of encouraged sustainable development (top to bottom): green roof (22); solar panels (23)  
**Bottom Right:** Cover of the SF Planning Department's industrial area guidelines, encouraged by this report  
**Below:** Conceptual Illustration: Living walls slow down wind, absorb storm runoff, mitigate carbon dioxide, and provide a pedestrian friendly street edge.





*Above: Conceptual illustration: The envisioned retail market/dormitory for the Islais Creek site - a new use for the PDR context featuring a sustainable building strategies.*



## CONCLUSIONS

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Piero N. Patri's lifelong vision was for San Francisco's Southern Waterfront to be reconnected to the city, for the sector to have the same prosperity and opportunities as the northern waterfront. However, the Southern Waterfront's identity is also unique within the city context, and must be preserved as such.

Throughout the course of this research, two main conclusions were made. First, that in order to be a truly sustainable city, San Francisco must carefully balance its remaining Production, Distribution, and Repair zones with the city's overall need for housing and recreational public space. Second, Islais Creek is a watershed that few of its users are even aware of.

While these concept plans and illustrations are purely conceptual in nature, and do not predict any kind of development along the Islais Creek shoreline, it is the hope that at minimum, it fulfills some part of Piero's vision, honors the effort of those who have adopted this site as their own, and can offer some ideas for the future.

# SECTION IV

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# CREDITS AND APPENDIX



# IMAGE SOURCES

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- (1) *the 1896 Coastal Survey* courtesy David Rumsey Historical Map Collection: <http://www.davidrumsey.com/>
  - (2) *Ohlone Indians painting* courtesy City of San Francisco: [http://www.sfgov.org/site/visitor\\_index.asp?id=8091](http://www.sfgov.org/site/visitor_index.asp?id=8091)
  - (3) *Butchertown, 1929* from the San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection, <http://sflib1.sfppl.org:82/search>
  - (4) *The shores of Islais Creek, 1944* from the San Francisco Public Library Historical Photograph Collection, <http://sflib1.sfppl.org:82/search>
  - (5)-(9) *Watershed maps* by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission and EDAW, produced for the Urban Watershed Charette
  - (10) *Dogpatch Neighborhood* courtesy of the Dogpatch Neighborhood Association, <http://www.dogpatchneighborhood.org/dogpatchStory.htm>
  - (11) *Better Streets Plan Illustration* by Robin Chiang
  - (12) *Southeast Wastewater Treatment Plant photo* courtesy of San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
  - (13) *Photo* courtesy of Robin Chiang and Company
  - (14) *Caltrain photo* courtesy SF Weekly Public Transit Blog, [blogs.sfweekly.com/thesnitch/public\\_transit/](http://blogs.sfweekly.com/thesnitch/public_transit/)
  - (15) *San Francisco Wholesale Produce Market picture* by TOPOS MEDIA.com
  - (16) *South Street Seaport Proposal* by N.E.E.D., via <http://pruned.blogspot.com/2008/08/fish-works.html>
  - (17) *Chicago River Fish Hotel photograph* by Tony Dornacher
  - (18) *Mercer Slough photograph* via <http://flickr.com/photos/stubbyfingers/>
  - (19) *3-way pedestrian signal photograph* by Payton Chung
  - (20) *Permeable paving* via [http://flickr.com/photos/kristen\\_k/](http://flickr.com/photos/kristen_k/)
  - (21) *Stormwater swale design and photo* by Kevin Robert Perry
  - (22) *Green roof photo* by Corey Seeman
  - (23) *Solar Panel photo* via Powerhouse Museum of Sydney, Australia
- All other photos by author

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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### **Selected Existing Planning Efforts:**

#### **The Bayview Hunters Point Project Area Committee**

<http://www.bvhp-pac.org/about.htm>

#### **The Blue Greenway:**

<http://www.bluegreenway.org/>

#### **Eastern Neighborhoods Plan:**

[http://www.sfgov.org/site/planning\\_index.asp?id=25288](http://www.sfgov.org/site/planning_index.asp?id=25288)

#### **Southern Waterfront Area Committee:**

[http://www.sfport.com/site/port\\_page.asp?id=34946](http://www.sfport.com/site/port_page.asp?id=34946)

### **Environmental (from the Water Resources Center Archives):**

**"Islais Creek reinterpreted: An exploration of restoration designs in the urbanized context of San Francisco,"** by Lucas Griffith, UC Berkeley

<http://repositories.cdlib.org/wrca/restoration/griffith/>

**"Daylighting Islais Creek : a feasibility study,"** by Rosey Jencks and Rebecca Leonardson, UC Berkeley

<http://repositories.cdlib.org/wrca/restoration/jencks/>

## POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

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While realizing this plan is purely conceptual in nature, research did reveal some potential funding and/or stewardship sources. Suggested resources include:

San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, community mitigation funds  
Port of San Francisco  
SFMTA/MUNI  
Caltrans Environmental Justice Grants  
Proposition A Park Bonds  
Coastal Conservancy Grants  
Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Grants  
City of San Francisco  
Selected private foundations and individual benefactors

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*The Piero N. Patri Fellowship is made possible by the generous support of the Patri Family, Patri Merker Architects, and Piero's many friends and associates. Many thanks to **Remo, Tito, Johanna and Bobby Reich Patri** for their guidance and support.*

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**Dan Dodt**, Bayview Historical Society

**Michael Hammann**, Bayview PAC and Southern Waterfront Advisory Committee

**The Students of the CP 248 studio** (Spring 2008), UC Berkeley

**Susan Eslick**, Dogpatch Neighborhood Association

**David Pham**, Robin Chiang and Company

**Maclean Carr**

My fellow classmates in the Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning department at UC Berkeley, for their encouragement, support, and friendship.

