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SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES WORKSHOP

A CASE STUDY OF BASE CONVERSION: TREASURE ISLAND

Convened on September 11, 1993

Edward J. Blakely

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SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES WORKSHOP PRESENTERS AND PANELISTS

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- Ed Blakely President, Pacific Rim Council on Urban Development, Professor of City and Regional Planning, UC Berkeley
- Peter Bosselman Associate Professor of City and Regional Planning, UC Berkeley
- Michael Closson Executive Director of the Center for Economic Conversion
- Judith Corbett —Executive Director of the Local Government Commission, co-designer for Village Homes in Davis, California
- Galen Cranz Associate Professor of Architecture, UC Berkeley
- Paul Okamoto Architect, President of Urban Ecology, Inc., Commissioner of San Francisco's Environment
- Sim Van Der Ryn Architect, Professor of Architecture, UC Berkeley, President of The Farallones Institute

Facilitators: Ron Golem, Jenni Goliman, Paul Okamoto, David Reel, Paul Tuttle, Shahbaz Yusuf.

About the Pacific Rim Council on Urban Development....

The Pacific Rim Council on Urban Development, formed in 1989, is the premier urban planning and real estate association of the Pacific Rim. Its members include individuals affiliated with the Urban Land Institute, American Planning Association, and major land economists from the public and private sectors. Members represent internationally renowned business persons, developers, public officials, and decision-makers. PRCUD's purpose is to exchange information and business and professional contacts among Pacific Rim urban planning professionals. PRCUD believes that Pacific Rim cities will shape the region's economic destiny. It fosters an atmosphere of mutual learning and sharing of technical and natural resources directed to solve urban problems.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By Paul Okamoto

The Sustainable Communities Workshop, A Case Study in Base Conversion: Treasure Island was a handson workshop for Bay Area planners to see how the process of military base conversion might take place. The day-long seminar repeatedly returned to two major opportunities presented by the current base closure process: (1) the transformation from our present Cold War military economy; and (2) the creation of sustainable social and urban environments. Treasure Island was used as the specific site to test ideas behind these two themes. Because the workshop was an introduction to the ideas of base closures and sustainable communities and conditions at Treasure Island, discussion fell into the realm of physical planning separate from discussion of creating a community participation process. Participants acknowledged this situation and focused on the physical planning and urban design issues at Treasure Island.

There was major agreement from the participants in terms of planning goals and possible uses for a sustainable community on Treasure Island. Consensus appeared to suggest the following:

- 1. Treasure Island should be public-oriented and reflect the entire Bay Area region as a whole, rather than be its own enclave or just part of the city and county of San Francisco.
- 2. The major land use should be for institutions and organizations serving the public interest and possibly performing research, development, and educational activities on issues related to the Pacific Rim, maritime, or the bay estuary.
- 3. There should be a balance of work/housing space with an emphasis on pedestrian access, public transportation, and a mix of housing types reflecting the Bay Area's range of income and demographics.
- 4. Innovative and appropriate technologies should be designed and installed to reduce environmental impact on Treasure Island and the bay estuary, and to enhance environmental quality.
- 5. The urban design plan should have an identifiable pattern with a focus point to create a coherent experience while moving about the island.

While there appeared to be consensus on planning goals and uses, there were differences of opinion on specific points of an urban design plan.

- 1. The physical isolation due to geography (island) and weather (fog) was not addressed as to whether the future community would feel intimately a part of the Bay Area region, San Francisco, or want to be isolated (like the city of Alameda). The resolution of this issue would determine the character, population, and density of Treasure Island.
- 2. There was not clear consensus on the ideal population for Treasure Island. Numbers varied from 5,000 to 30,000, but there has not been an environmental analysis to support these numbers. Establishing a target population is important because average building heights would vary dramatically between a target population of 5,000, with buildings

averaging two to three stories, versus 30,000, with buildings averaging four to seven stories plus some high-rise buildings.

3. The urban design for the center of Treasure Island was conceived as either (1) buildings and paved public plaza (like some European urban plans), or (2) open green space (like Manhattan's Central Park). Further design discussions are needed to take place to determine whether a sustainable community on Treasure Island can support a large urban park at its center or whether that central green space should become the agricultural heart of the urban design plan.

Probably the ultimate questions for Treasure Island's future, and for any discussion of sustainable communities, are who will live there and what are the social and cultural characteristics of the community. The creation of community from our current way of life must be seen as the weak link toward achieving sustainability. If we can indeed transform our current military economy, can we create a sense of community? If we have an idea of what a sustainable community should be, can we create an urban design plan that will help and not hinder this social and cultural transformation?

Regardless of how we resolve the question of community, designers and planners will still need to work with the future community in order to best design for the future of Treasure Island. And at the same time, we have the opportunity to make the vision of sustainability synonymous with the base closure process.

INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Communities Workshop, A Case Study in Base Conversion: Treasure Island was a workshop for planners in the San Francisco Bay Area on processes of military base conversion. The primary focus of the event was to generate ideas on a design vision for a sustainable community using the Treasure Island site as a model. How do we go from the present conditions to the transformation of a military base into a sustainable urban community?

The panelists' presentations highlighted their views and definitions of sustainable communities. After hearing their viewpoints and taking a tour of the facility, the 70 participants embarked on designing their own interpretations of what Treasure Island as a sustainable community might be.

TREASURE ISLAND AT A GLANCE

Treasure Island was created as the site for the 1939 World's Fair to celebrate the completion of the Golden Gate and Oakland Bay Bridges. It is located in the middle of San Francisco Bay at the center span of the Oakland Bay Bridge. As well as being considered one of the most remarkable engineering feats of its day, the island affords spectacular views of San Francisco and the surrounding Bay Area. The World's Fair itself initiated Treasure Island's close connection with the Pacific Rim. The Navy took over the island in December 1940 for use as a troop transfer point for the Pacific theater of war. It has since remained a Navy Technical Training Center, and a fleet support and base facility for the Twelfth Marine Corps District and the Commander Naval Base, San Francisco.

The island is 403 acres in size and was constructed with sand and silt dredged from the bottom of San Francisco Bay. The bearing capacity of the soil is restricted and special foundations are sometimes required. Settlement has occurred on the western portion of the island which is now below high-tide levels. The western side is also subject to heavy wave action caused by extremely harsh wind conditions and is generally unsuitable for waterfront facilities. The eastern portion of the island is relatively stable.

The majority of the buildings on the island are in deteriorated condition. There are large areas of open space interspersed with a local road system. Access to Treasure and to Yerba Buena Islands is restricted to the on/off ramps of the Bay Bridge that are presently operating at full capacity. Any increased bridge traffic caused by the redevelopment of Treasure Island is considered to be a serious problem.

THE IMPACT OF THE MILITARY BASE CLOSURES

Presented by Captain Al Wynn, Naval Station Treasure Island

The closing of Treasure Island and its adjacent Bay Area bases represents the biggest basing decision the U.S. Navy has recently undertaken. Because of the magnitude of the task and the dislocation it will cause, it is desirable to convert as quickly as possible. Steps are currently being taken to speed up the schedule of closures even further than initially planned. The changes will be rapid. They will require

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rapid public decision-making. The president's base closure committee has suggested that those properties that can generate jobs will be transferred quickly and virtually at no cost.

The schedule of closures is as follows:

- 1. Mare Island in Vallejo in mid-1996
- 2. Oak Knoll Naval Hospital Oakland at the end of 1996
- 3. Naval Station Treasure Island, Naval Air Station Alameda, the Naval Aviation Depot at Alameda in 1997
- 5. Naval Public Works Center

The immediate economic impact of the closures will be as follows:

- 1. A total of 33,000 naval military and civilian jobs will be eliminated.
- 2. A total of 18,000 military jobs will be moved out of the Bay Area.
- 3. Approximately 15,000 civilian jobs will be lost.
- 4. Between 50% and 60% of the jobs will be eliminated in the first two years.

I. WORKSHOP INTRODUCTION

Presented by Professor Edward Blakely, President, Pacific Rim Council on Urban Development; Professor, UC Berkeley

Treasure Island, the centerpiece of the San Francisco Bay Area and one of its historic and visual treasures, is a place that symbolizes the challenges facing the Pacific Rim community. All the nations of the Pacific Rim — whether Russia, Viet Nam, or Australia — share the same urban dilemmas — from citizen participation, to questions of environmental health, to infill, and to military base conversions. Treasure Island is a microcosm of these concerns: it is an integrated site that has practiced sustainability for military purposes over the past 50 years that will shortly convert to urban purposes. Treasure Island's location and history make it a pioneering landmark for the Pacific Rim because it is a site that represents the multi-cultural, social, and economic challenges that the Pacific Rim will face in the future.

The coming base closures and the consequent job losses to the Bay Area will have regional and national impact. None of the facilities at Treasure Island has ever been part of any local city. The island has been isolated from the surrounding communities for over the past 50 years, existing solely within the context of the regional and national network of military bases. We have now have a regional responsibility to understand the conversion of Treasure Island and to reposition its function within a new international economy.

Globalization is here. The Bay Area is the gateway to the expanding Pacific Rim trading network and to the global economy. Just as soldiers left the Bay Area for the Pacific theatre of war, so trade will dock here to make the peace. Treasure Island is not simply one conversion facility. It is part of an integrated network of sites that ties us together as a Pacific Rim community.

II. KEYNOTE ADDRESS: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Presented by Sim Van Der Ryn, Architect; Professor, UC Berkeley; President, The Farallones Institute; Author of Sustainable Communities; The Integral Urban House.

Sustainability has become a popular buzz word, a politically correct mantra chanted by the very institutions that created many of our urban problems in the first place. "What is sustainability? What is

sustainable development?" are questions often uttered in the simple hope that something better is going to happen. In this regard, sustainability could just as well be defined, in the words of Warren Johnson, as "muddling towards frugality." The fact is that we really have no choice but to change. There is general agreement that the present overheated system is breaking down and something is going to replace it. We often simply hang on to the idea that "sustainability" is anything that works better than what we have now.

There are, of course, more sophisticated renderings of this notion of sustainability. But the fancier definitions are part of the problem. The concept of sustainability comes from two sources. First, renegade economists (notably Nicolas C. Rogan in *The Entropy Law*) began to interpret wealth not just as the product of labor and capital, but as the product of all the free work of the entire ecosystem— everything that supports life. Second, ecologists, such as Howard Odem, began to introduce transactional analysis to natural systems. In both cases, this work was very abstract and very quantitative. The idea of sustainability itself is abstract and does not lend itself to any understandable practice. What really makes anything sustainable is people and culture and place.

Prior to the Second World War, sustainable rural communities did exist in the United States. What changed them was the war effort. People were uprooted from small communities and merged into the vast public works and armament programs and into the rapidly constructed military towns that supported them. These were standardized, planned communities that became the prototype for the modern suburb. This military-industrial standardization was then utilized by large corporations as the format for corporate culture and organization. It was also utilized in the development of the garrison-state built around the Cold War. People lived with the expectation that they would move around every four to five years. They would do their "tour of duty" in various suburbs, move up in the corporation, and then move somewhere else.

The abstract economic and ecological definitions of sustainability pale in comparison to the reality of this vast transformation. The fact is that sustainability is about people, culture, and place. It is about health —the health of living systems, the health of our culture, and our own health. The problems of the modern world will not be solved until people are once again rooted in culture and place.

Given present circumstances, it is difficult to imagine this happening. The idea of sustainability as a balance between the resources that are consumed and the resources that are continuously available is not possible in industrial culture. The notion that sustainability is development that does not foreclose or degrade the environment for our children is equally impossible. We cannot expect that from the way we presently live.

There are, however, important features of sustainability that offer a possible path. Sustainability is not just a matter of conservation. It will not work to simply do things more efficiently and with less waste. Conservation is only one aspect. It only slows the way things get worse. Sustainability requires conservation plus regeneration plus stewardship. In the terminology of Richard Register, we need to work on regeneration and restoration to some healthy state — or wild work. This must be followed by maintenance

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of the existing systems — stewardship or glee work. Conservation is the final tool to create some type of sustainable structure — this is homework.

We cannot expect the government to do this for us through draconian measures. Top-down design is not the way to proceed. Sustainability is rooted in community. To fully understand what this means, we need to interpret community as a verb as well as a noun. In healthy communities, people are communing, both with each other and with the place they are in. Community is about interdependence and interconnectedness. It requires neighborliness and community action.

The question then becomes: how does this understanding of sustainability apply to the reality of places like Treasure Island? The conversion of military bases does indeed give us a fortuitous opportunity to reinitiate healthy, sustainable communities. Military installations are particularly good guinea pigs because they are not healthy communities. They have a captive, migrant population. They are controlled entirely by outside forces. Yet despite the chance for redesign that the Treasure Island base closure affords, despite the good intentions for creating something better in the future, we cannot successfully design it into a model of healthy living. This is because, as previously mentioned, sustainability must be initiated at the community level. We must give up control and allow the resident population to design for themselves. That is sustainable development.

Four-Step Program to Sustainability

This four-point program corresponds to the process of healing an unhealthy body. Achieving sustainability is about the cycle of health.

1. Awareness = context Solutions grow out of where you are. They require an examination of addictions and needs.

2. Pain = analysis

Analysis necessitates an inventory of the flows and the impact of what it takes to sustain a place. It means tracing the footprint. In the case of Treasure Island, that footprint goes far out into the surrounding environment.

3. Healing = design

We must consider nature as both matrix and model. Design must be embedded within natural systems. We need to reconstruct natural systems of purification and health rather than rely on mechanical models.

4. Transformation = implementation

People co-evolve with the system they create. We are just at the beginning of knowing what sustainability is about. We have to admit that we don't know how to fix things and that it will be an incremental process of understanding.

At base, we need a whole new story. We should give up the Cartesian mechanical, rational model of understanding, which is far too limited and outdated. Instead, we must understand human nature as part of a larger nature, and begin to integrate ourselves back into the larger setting of place and environment of which we are a part.

III. PANEL DISCUSSION

Panel participants: Paul Okamoto, Moderator; Carl Anthony; Michael Closson; Judith Corbett; Galen Cranz; Sim Van Der Ryn.

Base Closures and the Opportunity for Sustainability

"This is the opportunity to envision a healthy, sustainable, peace-oriented economy for the 21st century." —Michael Closson

Carl Anthony introduced the panel discussion with a reference to Chris Rosen's book *Limits to Power*, which describes the rebuilding of cities after the tragedy of great fires. In all but one case, the cities were rebuilt with exactly the same mistakes that existed prior to the fire. We now face the same kind of critical juncture. Military reconversion is the profound challenge of the post-cold war world. We need to take advantage of this moment, even if it appears to be a tragedy for the Bay Area. We must remain optimistic about the opportunity the base closures provide for demilitarization and for social and economic transformation. During the last 50 years, the defense program has been a de facto industrial policy for the United States. The conversion process can be a building block to a highly visible, national alternative to a military economy. It should be a bold and dramatic conception, more so than anything we have conceived before.

Michael Closson remarked that, since the early 1960s, several hundred military bases have already been closed around the United States. Most of them have been successfully converted. But the process has not been very imaginative. The issue of sustainability has never been incorporated into the analysis of base conversion. Much of the redevelopment simply took place on top of toxic hotspots. But the political and ideological frame of reference has changed. President Clinton's transition team included leading urban designers who called for the creation of ten visionary cities on abandoned military sites. This is base conversions' true potential. It provides the opportunity to envision a healthy, sustained, peace-oriented economy for the 21st century. We must be creative, visionary, and work with long-term, strategic sustainable thinking. We must be imaginative in looking at the whole array of productive options rather than just at "re-employing" people.

The crucial question is "Conversion to what?" What does conversion to a demilitarized, sustainable economy mean? The time lag is critical in conversion. Environmental clean-up should be dealt with judiciously. The property disposal process should be expedited.

As a basic foundation upon which to proceed, Judith Corbett defined a sustainable community as one that will look the same in 300 to 500 years as it does today. It is based on renewable resources. At present, urban life is based around the overwhelming use of a non-renewable resource— oil. The byproducts of oil are systematically destroying the earth's environment. Over half of the oil is used as gasoline for transportation. The conversion to a sustainable economy means utilizing renewable resources as efficiently as possible and using the by-products of those resources. As a whole, industrial production should be based on local sources of supply.

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Galen Cranz added that we should not be against industrialization. Instead, we should reform it around biological lines. Ecological principles should exist between industries, so that the waste of one becomes the resource for another. Giving up the dependency on oil is a critical first step in this direction and toward sustainability.

Creating Sustainable Values

"An uncritical numbness allows us to live in an unsustainable world." --- Galen Cranz

Galen Cranz pointed out that sustainability is often reduced to an analysis of elements— land, air, water, and energy. Another way to conceptualize the problem is to use the body as a map to sustainability. What do individuals perceive about the quality of their lives? Often there is much we do not notice, or we take for granted. Sometimes too we unconsciously make adjustments to painful situations. An uncritical numbness allows us to live in a non-sustainable world. Likewise, there is an uncritical attitude toward industrial products that are created entirely on the basis of consumer demand, profitability, and marketing.

We need to learn how to perceive the world and how we live in it. This should not simply focus on the future. We must understand sustainability as the intrinsic satisfaction of living properly on earth. Living in harmony and balance is a better way to live. Indeed, seeking and creating sustainable practices will create community, rather than the opposite. Husbanding resources and resource management will create community identity. Sustainability is the great hope around which community can be developed.

According to Gordon and Suzuki in *It's A Matter of Survival*, we have about ten years before there is an inexorable downward trend in the quality of the environment that we will not be able to reverse even if we collectively wake up and want to do it. That downward spiral will continue in perhaps a hundred-year cycle.

Ultimately, there is environmental equity — everyone will be pulled down if we do not take up this task. It is a matter of survival. We need to reform the nature of industrialization. It will not simply be technical change. This will be a social and cultural transformation. We need new attitudes, values, and behaviors.

Judith Corbett offered the Ahwahnee Principles (see Appendix) as the basis for achieving environmental sustainability. The principles set out that all planning should be in the form of complete and integrated communities. They do not simply deal with environmental sustainability, but consider social and economic sustainability as well. They are practical and implementable solutions. Corbett argued that we must look at practical, hands-on solutions that can be accomplished by public officials rather than by simply engaging in theoretical preaching.

Reinventing the City: Sustainability and Urban Design

"As urbanists, we need to think about urban systems from the inside out." —Galen Cranz

Michael Closson explained that Treasure Island has enormous potential. It can be a laboratory for redesigning our urban centers. It is not simply a real estate development process. Galen Cranz offered the

insight that the idea of the city as a dense and evil thing, with parks and open spaces as essentially remedies for a poison, is 19th century thinking and must be put aside. Development should be reconceptualized. Buildings should be designed in a sustainable way and that requires designing from the inside out. Corporate design as it is presently practiced is much like automobile styling. It deals with the surface, it manipulates form —you know nothing about the engine that actually generates building. It does not work on the root, on the engine. We need to find the root of energy systems and urban development.

From there, we need to incorporate those disciplines that analyze and interpret the city from its most elemental perspective into the design process. As urbanists, we need to evolve people who think about urban systems from the inside out. Perhaps that means that there will no longer be simply architects, or engineers, or planners, but some new kind of professional that integrates all those things. What we need is a new way to conceptualize the relationship between infrastructure, natural systems, and building. We must find a unified conception. How can we reinterpret the relationship between highways, sewers, and streets, open space, the buildings, and the natural geography? The unit of analysis has to change.

Unfortunately, there is no generic checklist for sustainable development or sustainable solutions. Therefore we must attend to what is unique about a specific site, such as Treasure Island, and consider that specific look and reality in aesthetics. Urban design should be a site-specific analysis and study. There must be a new aesthetic. Natural processes must be visible— including restoration processes. We must celebrate the pragmatic, the everyday natural practices within which we live our lives. We can no longer cover up the machinery with a superficial surface cover.

Big cities need to be ecological. Even office buildings can be run in an ecological direction. A good example is the Audobon Society Headquarters in New York City. We should practice ecology on the aristocratic model. Things should last. We should create an anti-obsolescence aesthetic and end the association between new and good.

Sustainability and Social Justice

"We have no choice but to understand and implement new social solutions" — Carl Anthony

Carl Anthony argued that communities cannot be built just around the natural environment and through urban and architectural design. We must consider the forces that are driving social problems and look to their solutions. We must face the changes in the social environment. There has been an overemphasis on individuality and on the market as a guide to daily life. We have assumed that production and consumption are assurances of well-being. There has been an overemphasis on private property and private decision-making as a guide to community well-being. Anthony offered two examples of social decision-making:

1. The housing market should be designed to anchor people to community. Public decisionmaking should facilitate this rather than private capitalism. Over 150 houses are needed per day to keep up with Bay Area population growth. If, as a community, we decided

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that no new houses would be built further than two blocks from public transportation, we could harness the energies of population growth toward new urban forms.

2. If the Bay Area is going to lose 33,000 jobs as a result of the base closings, why not go to a 32-hour work-week? Work needs to be reorganized in a more equitable, more reasonable manner. The 32-hour work-week, for example, would share out income among a broader population. It would create 25 percent more jobs in the Bay Area. With an agreed-upon 10 percent pay cut, the average hourly wage would go up by 10 percent. This would create greater demand. There would be more time for family and neighborhood. The quality of life would go up.

We have no choice but to understand and implement new social solutions. Justice, community, and culture are integral parts of environmental protection and critical elements of sustainability. People need to be anchored in a safe and secure place. The emphasis on economic conversion and high technology has an important place, but we should not confuse the appreciation of the by-products of high technology with the creation of safe and stable communities.

The Question of Community Participation

"It cannot be done by a team of designers. It must be done by the citizens themselves." — Sim Van Der Ryn

Michael Closson made the point that democracy and citizen participation are critical to the base conversions and to sustainability. Even if creative ideas have been proposed, if the citizenry— the various stakeholders in base conversion — have not been a part of the decision-making process in a meaningful way, that lack comes back to haunt any real success toward reconversion.

The crisis mentality often practiced by local officials is essentially anti-democratic. The immediate reaction to base closures is to transition the facility rapidly and lose as few jobs as possible. If we simply see the base conversions as a crisis, it will be counterproductive, unimaginative, and despotic. The tradition of rapid, panicked decisions is extremely attractive to local officialdom because of political pressures. This should be avoided, and instead we should concentrate on the interaction between concerned citizens, designers, and political officialdom. The first idea that comes up about conversion is not necessarily the best idea. We should look at a whole range of options by a full range of participants.

Carl Anthony concurred, explaining that 17,000 military jobs will be refocused on jobs in the Bay Area civilian economy as a result of the base closures. The process of reconversion must involve these people specifically. They are a great resource, and they are the ones who must be integrated into the new order. They have the largest stake in the conversion process, and they will contribute a different perspective from the designers' vision or the utopian vision. In addition, their involvement in decision-making can transform their experience into leadership.

Furthermore, it is necessary to go to each site and understand specifically what the characteristics of the location and the infrastructure are. Treasure Island would not be a good shipbuilding facility, for example. Those working with the infrastructure can offer important information in this regard. They

understand the investments that have been made. They know the capacity of the infrastructure, which in the case of some of these sites meets up-to-date environmental standards.

Michael Closson argued that very few military sites have been converted through the revitalization of existing industrial infrastructure. He voiced his concerns that an emphasis on participation by those who will be displaced will end with a short-term, job-oriented focus. Carl Anthony responded by suggesting there is a large gap between reuse strategies and the real needs of the workers who have to accommodate themselves to the reality of closures. We should integrate the ideas and insight of the people who have worked with the infrastructure and know it — those who understand the specific site characteristics. They understand not the products, but the infrastructure and what it is capable of. For example, these people have suggested the possibility of converting to mass-transit manufacturing at the Navy Aviation Depot in Oakland.

Several panelists observed the need to engage those people facing the change of military base closures and the need to help them learn what closure means. This will create a mobilized, politically conscious community able to face the future. This is what is most important. We can have high technology, real estate development, public access, and so on, but what is essential is the ability to cooperate with each other for the survival of the species. The planning and design process should support that. The expectation is that political officialdom will understand the opportunity that the base conversions represent. The expectation is that they will understand leadership and opportunity, and that they understand that decisions will be made at the cost of people's lives. We are borrowing resources from other communities. Not everyone has the opportunity to sit in meetings and talk about the future. Citizens expect leadership and action that is fair.

Many panelists agreed that the main product of the military conversion should be the rebirth of a political community. The by-products of a healthy community are the buildings and infrastructure and how they are used. We do not really need everything that is currently on Treasure Island. We need, rather, a community that is able to face the future. If we can use this opportunity to create an energized, repoliticized community able to face the future and what it means, even if it is uncertain, then we will have succeeded. It will also make the issues of property transference and infrastructure use much easier to deal with.

Treasure Island and the Vision of Sustainability -A Utopian or a Regional Perspective?

"Treasure Island is part of a regional system. It is not an enclosed utopia." -Carl Anthony

Are planning and design solutions useful in setting out the steps toward sustainability? Sim Van Der Ryn responded that the conversion of the cold war garrison-state to something else is a massive shift. There is no "cookbook" recipe for sustainability. It is a very painful, dislocative process of demilitarization and closure. It is a situation that this society has created. No rational, orderly planning process is possible in the midst of chaos. The phenomena and changes are out of our control.

We have to forget, Van Der Ryn continued, our reliance on the traditional planning tools and ideological approaches. Instead, we need to go from numbness to awareness. One idea would be to cut off Treasure Island from any link to the Bay Bridge and the surrounding infrastructure of the Bay Area. Find 500 volunteers to reinhabit the island. Provide them with all the information they desire— create an information-open system. The residents themselves will recreate Treasure Island. They will create their own vision. As designers, we love to run the game — but it cannot be done. The audience response was that theoretically this is not a bad idea since Treasure Island is already controlled and cut-off. It has historically been sealed off. The question is, can it be resurrected as a sealed utopian community?

Michael Closson argued that the important question is how Treasure Island serves regional needs. In terms of economic development and in terms of sustainability, what can be done on Treasure Island? What kind of industries can be established there that will see to regional needs? The base closures should be used as a catalyst and a vehicle for creatively revitalizing the regional economy for the 21st century. The bases must be converted in a coordinated way. They must be considered as a network of facilities that complement each other and complement the revitalization of the overall regional economy. We must conceptualize Treasure Island — indeed, all of the bases — as an integrated part of a sustainable, healthy regional community; that is, as part of an integrated system of healthy neighborhoods.

Carl Anthony added that the Greenbelt Alliance notion of an urban limit line is crucial to regional development. Rather than suburban hemorrhage, we should concentrate on restructuring the urban investment we have already made within a defined space. There is no point in seeing Treasure Island as a sealed environment without exercising control over sprawl as part of our understanding of regionalism and sustainability. If we have limits to urbanization, the notion of a regional economic system makes sense, and Treasure Island can perform a new function within it. However, we must be willing to exercise control over suburban sprawl and concentrate on urban infill and densification. This requires forcing back resources onto Treasure Island and the other existing communities around it.

IV. DESIGN PRESENTATION

Presented by Peter Bosselman, Associate Professor of City and Regional Planning, UC Berkeley

Peter Bosselman presented five design alternatives for the reuse of Treasure Island. Students from his Advanced Urban Design Studio at UC Berkeley were asked to design with the reality of the Treasure Island site in mind. To create some perspective on its size, Bosselman explained that central Los Angeles, central Manhattan, a good portion of downtown San Francisco, or most of Venice, Italy, would each fit on Treasure Island. It is difficult to place the island in the spatial configuration of the Bay Area because of the fog that shrouds it. It is a cold and windy place a good portion of the year.

The students were asked to design a self-contained community with the necessary services, commerce, and employment per inhabitant available. Energy sources and recycling were to be considered as part of the design. It was assumed that a BART line would not be available to Treasure Island. Light rail or ferry service would provide connections with San Francisco and the East Bay. The student projects were arranged along a continuum of population growth from low to high density. The five student projects for Treasure Island presented included the following:

- 1. A low-density population of 8,000 with 30 percent of each acre devoted to intensive (glasshouse) agriculture.
- 2. A population of 10,000 with a major sports facility and Olympic training center. A major part of the island would be left undeveloped as green space.
- 3. A tourist center with an active bay model and eco-museum.
- 4. A high-density population of 25-30,000 similar to the Marina District in San Francisco. A block configuration of residences would be created in a non-automobile environment. Existing buildings would be recycled.
- 5. A high-density population of 30,000 living within a new pedestrian-oriented urban center. Service-commercial nodes would be located within five-minute walking distance of any residence.

V. THE VISIONING WORKSHOPS

The conference participants were broken into six teams of between eight and twelve individuals with the task of identifying a sustainable vision for Treasure Island. Each team was asked to produce an outline of land use types and activities, and to prepare a map or diagram visualizing the team's sustainable plan. It was suggested that each group spend an initial 20 minutes brainstorming to identify various sustainable activities and alternative plans. Approximately 40 minutes was to be used discussing the alternatives and choosing one or more preferred plans. A program list of uses and ideas for the preferred plan was then to be devised. The teams were to complete their sessions by diagramming their preferred plan.

Each team had a recorder to take notes, a timer to mark their progress, and a facilitator to ensure that their ideas were guided to an end product. They each designated a representative to present their sustainable vision and design concept to the assembled workshop at the end of the day. The conceptual designs are shown on the following pages.

The following list represents the 26 recurring design concepts and land use patterns offered by the six teams. They portray the majority opinion, or the consensus, among the groups. There were, however, a wide variety of unique ideas presented by the individual teams. There was also a clear difference of opinion among them on questions of population density, workplace, and residential land use patterns, as well as on what each deemed to be sustainable economic activities. Specific designs can be found in Appendix B.

Community Design

1. A City in the Bay. Recreate Treasure Island as a complete integrated community with housing, shops and services, work places, schools, parks, and civic activities essential to everyday community life.

- 2. Community and Neighborhoods. Develop a pattern of smaller well-defined neighborhoods within easy walking distance to a town center, parks and recreation, schools, and work places.
- 3. Centralized Town Center/Commons. Establish a compact, mixed-use, and centralized town center with a community commons area, commercial, public, civic, residential, and recreational activities all within easy access and walking distance from surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- 4. Grid System with Radial Paths. Organize development around a grid pattern of pedestrian and bicycle roadways and paths with radial boulevards extending from the town center, connecting the major employment center, ferry stops, open spaces, schools, and commercial/tourist activities.

Land Use

- 5. Mixed-Use Development. Create a compact, mixed-use development and encourage residential units and offices over ground floor commercial uses and live work spaces.
- 6. Higher-Density Housing. Provide high-density, low-rise, mixed-use housing, centrally located and within walking distance to parks, transportation stops, commercial stores and services, and work places.
- 7. Diversity of Housing Types. Create a diversity of housing types for a wide range of families, age groups, and economic levels located throughout the island in every neighborhood.
- 8. Hotel, Conference, and Recreation Facility. Create a major hotel, conference, and recreation facility within a park setting of Yerba Buena Island, providing dramatic views of the bay and surrounding cities.
- 9. Maintain Coast Guard Facilities. Maintain existing Coast Guard Station on Yerba Buena Island, which is essential to public safety and shipping in the bay and coastal waters.
- 10. Phase Development. Phase development over time, to replace existing structures and facilities.
- 11. Agricultural Uses. Provide major open and agricultural space and a nature preserve on the north side of the island, replacing existing housing over time.
- 12. Innovative, Research, and Incubator Business Park. Encourage the development of innovative, research and incubator, and small business park that uses appropriate technology, energy, and resource conservation.
- 13. Diversity of Business and Commercial Opportunities. Encourage a diversity of business and commercial opportunities that promote appropriate technologies and energy and resource conservation, including but not limited to:

Ecological/educational research and Bay conservation/educational, learning center; Deep sea fishing port; Marina-, water-, and recreational-oriented industries; Tourist, visitors, and hospitality industry; Cruse ship docking port (using existing port facility); Hotel/Conference Center; Aqua-farming center for Bay Area restaurants (clams, fish, oysters, etc.); Toxic clean-up training facility; Entrepreneurial incubator industries; All necessary local serving retail commercial and services.

- 14. Concentrate Industrial Uses and Major Work Places. Concentrate major industrial uses and work places to the southern and eastern sides of the island, adjacent to the major dock facilities and reusing the existing hangers.
- 15. Preservation of Historic Structures. Preserve and reuse existing historic structures on the islands, in particular the two hangers and the Headquarters (Museum) building.
- 16. Expand Marina Cove. Expanded and further developed as a marina and for recreational water activities.

Transportation and Circulation

- 17. Ferry and Bus Services. Provide ferry and bus services to and from Treasure Island to Oakland/East Bay and San Francisco, connecting the island community to regional transportation systems (BART, CalTrain, and the bus systems).
- 18. Emphasize pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit. Focus on pedestrian, bicycle, cart, and public transit system as the major form of transportation on the island.
- 19. On-site Transit System. Provide a public transportation loop system of jitney buses, electric trans, or trolleys on the island connecting all neighborhoods with the town center, work place, schools, and parks.
- 20. Restrict Auto Access. Restrict auto access to the island while allowing access for delivery vehicles, emergency vehicles, and visitors.
- 21. System of Canals. Provide opportunities for a system of canals on the island that provides for alternative means of circulation, access, and recreational activities related to the water and the bay.

Open Space and Recreation

- 22. System of neighborhood parks, plazas, and open spaces. Create a system of neighborhood parks, public plazas, greens, and open spaces connected by a network of trails and pedestrian greenways, paths, and roadways throughout the island.
- 23. Perimeter Open Space and Bay Access. Preserve the perimeter of the island for public access, open space, and pathways providing access to the water's edge from every part of the island.

Infrastructure and Utilities

24. Recycling and Innovative Energy Production. Provide for recycling and innovative energy production facilities (co-generation plant, windmill electric generators, and tidal generators) adjacent to existing sewer facility on the northeastern portion of the island.

Implementation

- 25. Self-Governance. Create a separate and independent community organization for the planning and regulation of the island's development by local residents.
- 26. Community Participation. Create a system that encourages community participation by all residents, workers, and property owners on the island.

VI. CONCLUSION

The Sustainable Communities Workshop presented participants with an opportunity to consider various aspects of sustainable development in an urban context, and relative to the conversion of Treasure Island from military to civilian uses. Although the definitions of what constitutes sustainable development were not identical, participants approached agreement that a converted Treasure Island should be oriented to the public and the region, with the major land uses centered on entities serving the public interest. A balance of work and housing seemed important, designed to de-emphasize use of the private automobile and re-emphasize pedestrian and transit mobility. Other urban design considerations should include an identifiable pattern of land use with a focal point to create a coherent experience when moving around on the island. Innovative and appropriate technologies should be used, it was felt, in order to reduce impacts on the natural environment of the island and the bay estuary.

Divergence on specific urban design issues emerged among participants. For example, prescriptions regarding the ideal population of the island varied from 5,000 persons to 30,000 persons, a range that would result in significant differences in land use. Another difference was in the character of the focal point, which some believed should be occupied by a built structure or paved public plaza, while others imagined an open green space.

Probably the ultimate questions for Treasure Island's future, and for any discussion of sustainable communities, center on the community itself: the people who live there, and their social and cultural characteristics. It is ironic that we have the chance to recreate community on a military base because it is past military mobilization that helped contribute to the uprooting of communities and the current way of life. Will it be possible to depart from our current way of living and transform our sense of community? This remains to be seen. In the meantime, designers and planners have the opportunity to incorporate sustainability into the base closure process and contribute to a social and cultural transformation.

APPENDIX A

Design Plans

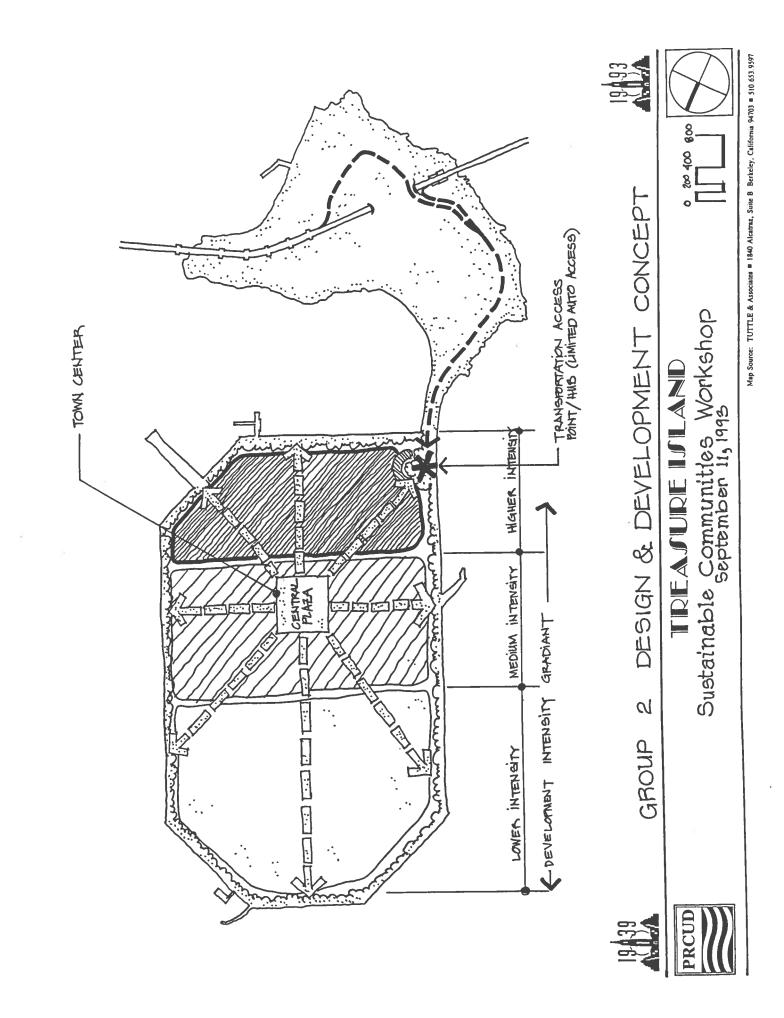
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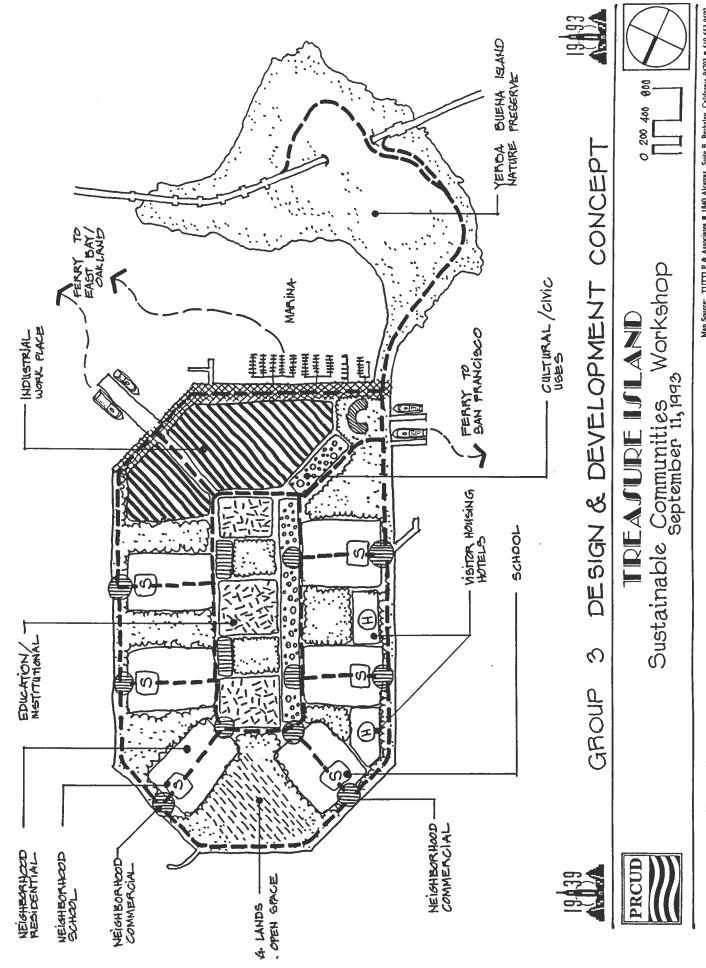
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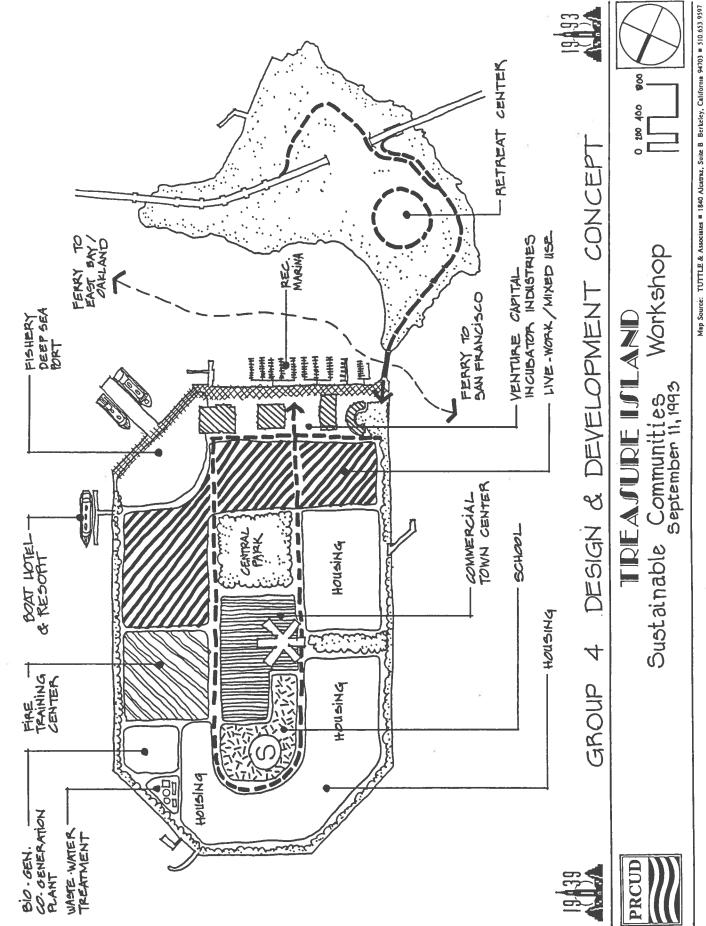
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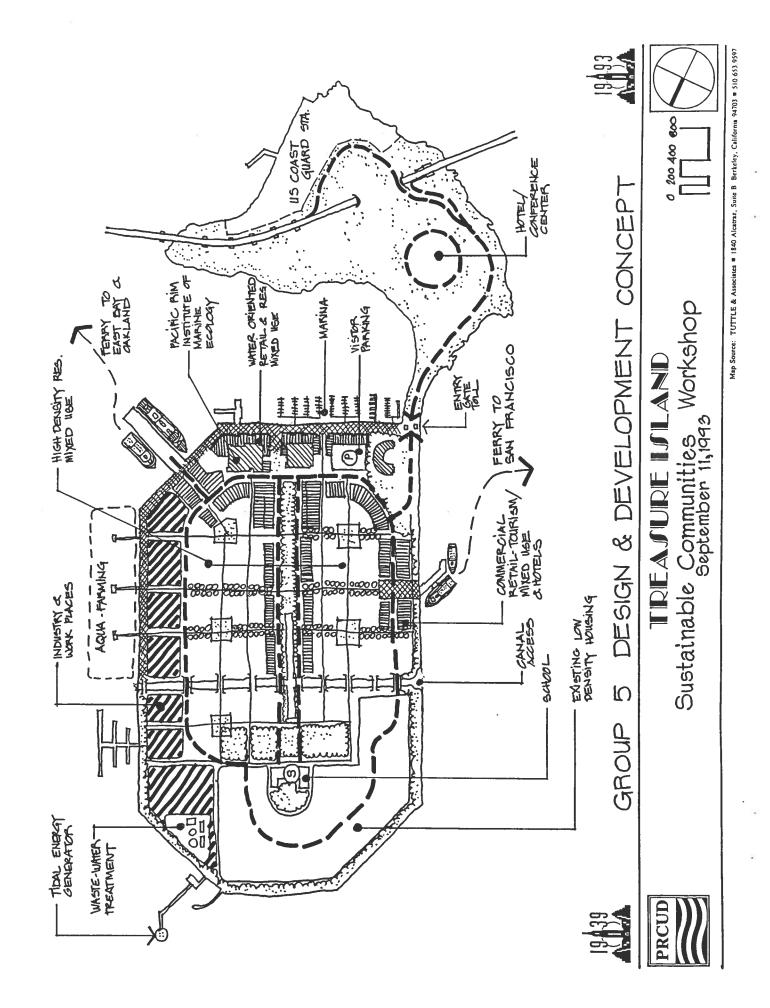
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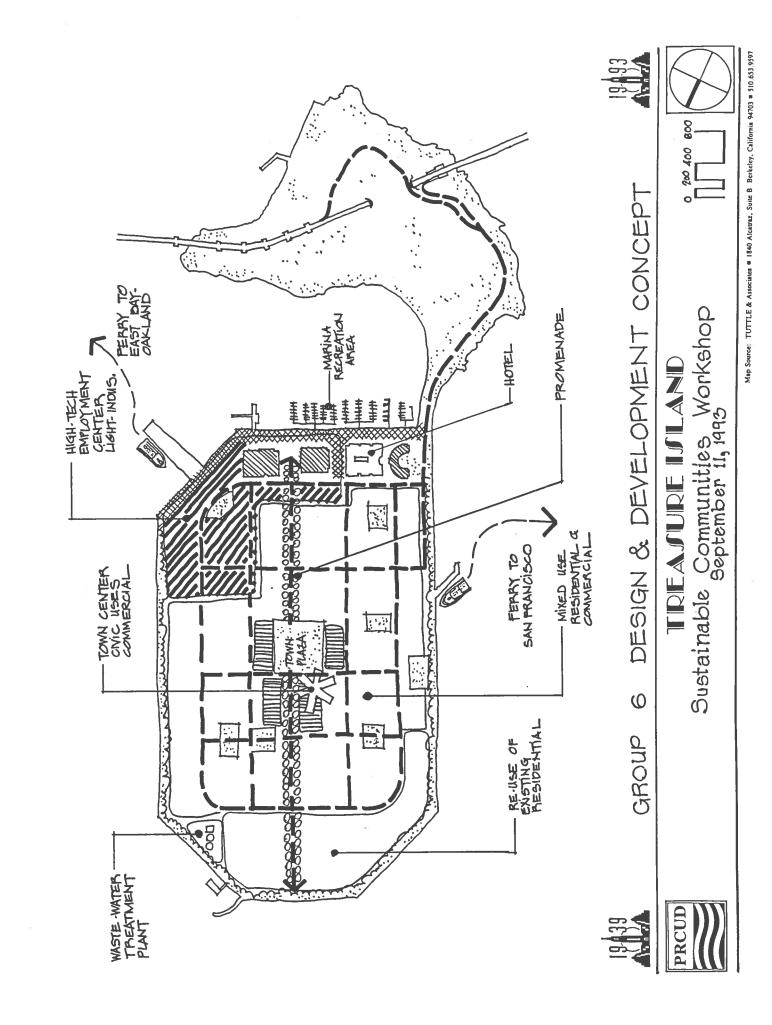




Map Source: TUTTLE & Associates = 1840 Alcatrar, Suite B Berkeley, California 94703 = 510, 653.9597







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APPENDIX B

Conference Materials

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	AGENDA Sustainable Communities Workshop September 11, 1993 Fog Watch Club, Treasure Island 8:30 a.m 4:00 p.m.
8:30-9:00	Registration
9:00-9:10	Welcoming Remarks Dr. Ed Blakely, President PRCUD Professor, UC Berkeley
9:10-9:30	Keynote Speech: Sustainable Communities Sim Van Der Ryn, Architect Professor, UC Berkeley
9:30-11:00	Panel Discussion: Visions of Sustainability Moderator: Paul Okamoto, Urban Ecology Carl Anthony, Earth Island Institute Michael Closson, Center for Economic Conversion Judy Corbett, Local Government Commission Dr. Galen Cranz, UC Berkeley Sim Van Der Ryn, UC Berkeley
11:00-12:00	Bus Tour of Treasure Island Tom Cuckler, Planning Division Head, NS Treasure Island
12:00-1:00	Lunch
12:30-1:00	Planning Perspectives on Treasure Island Dr. Peter Bosselman Professor, UC Berkeley
1:00-3:00	Workshop Facilitators: Ron Golem Jenni Goliman Paul Okamoto David Reel Paul Tuttle Shahbaz Yusuf
3:00-4:00	Presentations & Summary

Special Thanks to: Captain Al Wynn & Lieutenant William Anderson (Naval Station Treasure Island)

Sponsor: Pacific Rim Council on Urban Development (PRCUD) Cosponsors: AIA, San Francisco Chapter, MIT Real Estate Association, APA, Northern California Chapter.

Organizing Committee: Arleen Furukawa (PRCUD), Ron Golem (National Park Service), Janice Goldman (Elizabeth Seifel Associates), Jenni Goliman (Kaplan McLaughlin Diaz), Martha Matsuoka (Presidio Council), David Reel (Bentley, Moffett Transition Office, NASA), Dina Tamura (Economic Research Associates), Paul Tuttle (Tuttle & Associates), Lillian Yeh (PRCUD), Shahbaz Yusuf (Sedway Cooke Associates).

FACT SHEET: Treasure Island

Background: Treasure Island was created as the site for the 1939 World's Fair to celebrate the completion of the Golden Gate and Oakland Bay Bridges. Construction of the island began in 1936 by the Army Corps of Engineers which dredged sand and silt from the bottom of San Francisco Bay. The Navy took over the island in December 1940 on an emergency basis, during which time troops passed through either on their way overseas or back home.

Major functions on Treasure Island today include fleet support to six homeported and numerous other ships visiting San Francisco; extensive training administered by the tenant Naval Technical Training Center; headquarters of the Commander Naval Base, San Francisco, the Northern California/Nevada Regional Coordinator; headquarters of the TWELFTH Marine Corps District; enlisted and officer family housing, Naval Reserve training headquarters and facilities; a Personnel Support Activity; extensive recreation and club facilities; bachelor quarters (officer and enlisted); a regional Naval Legal Services Office, a Navy Brig and Correctional Custody Unit; and numerous other activities and functions. An annex of Naval Station Treasure Island has been established at the former Hunters Point Naval Shipyard. Treasure Island is further responsible for maintenance, security, and fire protection on those areas of Yerba Buena Island not in use for family housing.

Area:	Treasure Island: 403 acres	Yerba Buena 116 acres
Population:	Treasure Island: 3,000 residents Yerba Island: 2,000 residents	5,000 daytime
Housing Unit	s: 711 units on Treasure Island	115 units on Yerba Buena

Housing Units: 711 units on Treasure Island

Land: Treasure Island is man-made through use of land fill, and is limited in size. The bearing capability of the soil is restricted, and special foundations are sometimes required. Settlement has occurred on the western portion of this man-made island, which is now below high-tide levels. The eastern portion is relatively stable. Most existing large buildings of permanent construction are considered site constraints. Development of Yerba Buena Island is limited by steep slopes.

Circulation: Treasure Island presently has adequate road capacity on its primary circulation routes. Access to Treasure and Yerba Buena islands is restricted by the physical capacity of the on/off ramps of the SF-Oakland Bay Bridge, and the bridge itself, which is presently considered to be operating at vehicle capacity. Increased vehicular traffic on the bridge is expected to create serious problems.

Wind: Treasure Island, situated in the prevailing wind pattern through the Golden Gate, is exposed to extremely harsh wind conditions. The western side of the island receives heavy wave action from these prevailing northwesterly winds and is generally unsuitable for the development of waterfront facilities. In addition, winter storms batter Yerba Buena Island from the south.

Structure: The majority of the structures on the island are in deteriorated condition and substandard for existing use, according to the latest engineering evaluation. Diminished activity has resulted in large areas of open space since old structures have been demolished and no new facilities constructed.

Water: Hetch-Hetchy (SF)

Brought from San Francisco in pipeline, running between decks of the Bay Bridge. Pumped into 5 reservoirs on Yerba Buena and pumped to Treasure Island. Average Daily Use: 2.5 Million Gallons per Day Capacity: 6.5 Million Gallons Per Day

Fact Sheet - Continued Electricity: PG&E and Navy Public Works Center Average Daily Use: 10 Megavolt Amps Capacity: 12 Megavolt Amps

Natural Gas: PG &E

Average Daily Use: 84,000 Standard Cubic Feet Per Hour Capacity: 1,000,000 Standard Cubic Feet Per Hour

Wastewater:

Average Daily Use: 2 Million Gallons per Day Capacity: 4.4 Million Gallons Per Day

Hazardous Waste: Minimal

Building Heights: Highest Building on Treasure Island is Building #1 (Administration Building and Museum): 90 feet (7 floors). Highest Building on Yerba Buena is 52 feet (5 floors)

Historic Buildings: Building #1, (Administration) & Buildings #2 and #3 (hangars located behind Administration Building). Building #1 is on the National Historic Register. Buildings #2 and #3 are recommended for the National Historic Register — decision pending. Any changes to buildings listed on National Historic Register has to be reviewed by National Historical Review Committee.

Water depth: Lagoon area (between the two islands) 14 feet Eastern and northern sides of islands is 25 feet/ Western side of islands is 53 to 100 feet (shipping channels to Pacific).

Telecommunications:

Pacific Bell and AT&T: normal high-quality telephone lines Fiber optics: utility easement for AT&T that runs down 4th Street: main telephone cable for the Pacific.

Source: Master Plan for Treasure Island and Civil Engineering Unit of Naval Station, Treasure Island.

PRCUD TREASURE ISLAND WORKSHOP

A SUGGESTED LIST OF OF ISSUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO DEFINE THE SUSTAINABLE VISION

ISSUE AREAS	GUIDING DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES	
SOCIAL	Encourage Community Participation	
TRANSPORTATION	 Reduce Automobile use Encourage Mass Transit Service Allow Multi-Modal Transportation Systems Encourage Systems that Improve Air Quality 	
HOUSING	 Encourage Development of High Density Housing Allow wide Range Of Housing Types Address Affordable Housing Preserve and Rehab Existing Housing 	
WORKPLACES	 Capture Opportunities for New High Tech Jobs Support the Employment Core of Downtown San Francisco Function As a Bridge Between the Employment Centers in the East Bay and San Francisco 	
RECREATIONAL	 Create Continuous Open Space Corridors Establish Major Transportation Links between Recreational Facilities Ensure a Balance Of Passive & Active Open Space 	
ENVIRONMENTAL	 Reduce Air Pollution Reduce Water Pollution Hazards Reduce Noise Create Habitat Areas for Educational Purposes 	
ENERGY USE	 Promote Use of Alternative Materials in Construction Use Non-Hydrocarbon Consuming Public Vehicles Promote Energy Efficient Design 	
ECONOMICS	 Provide Employment Opportunities that Encourage Housing on the Island Encourage Diverse Economic Base 	
PUBLIC SAFETY	 Create Safe Areas through Environmental Design Visible and Accessible Public Safety Services 	
CULTURE AND ENTERTAINMENT	 Encourage Public Art Arts and Crafts People Promote Diversity and Entertainment Facilities 	
EDUCATION	 Provide Education Facilities and Opportunities for Community 	
URBAN DESIGN	 Create Visual Identity Develop a Sense Of Community 	

PRCUD-SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

"SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES"

Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs... Living standards that go beyond the basic minimum are sustainable only if consumption standards have regard for long-term sustainablity. Brundtland Commission, 1987

Development that distributes the benefits of economic progress more equitably, protects both local and global environments for future generation, and truly improves the quality of life. Our Own Agenda, Inter-American Development Bank, 1990

Sustainable developments means improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems. A "sustainable economy" maintains its natural resource base. It can continue to develop by adapting, and through improvements in knowledge, organization, technical efficiency and wisdom.

Caring for the Earth, IUCN and WWF, 1991

THE AHWAHNEE PRINCIPLES

Preamble:

Existing patterns of urban and suburban development seriously impair our quality of life. The symptoms are: more congestion and air pollution resulting from our increased dependence on automobiles, the loss of precious open space, the need for costly improvements to roads and public services, the inequitable distribution of economic resources, and the loss of a sense of community. By drawing upon the best from the past and the present, we can plan communities that will more successfully serve the needs of those who live and work within them. Such planning should adhere to certain fundamental principles.

Community Principles:

- 1. All planning should be in the form of complete and integrated communities containing housing, shops, work places, schools, parks and civic facilities essential to the daily life of the residents.
- 2. Community size should be designed so that housing, jobs, daily needs and other activities are within easy walking distance of each other.
- 3. As many activities as possible should be located within easy walking distance of transit stops.
- 4. A community should contain a diversity of housing types to enable citizens from a wide range of economic levels and age groups to live within its boundaries.
- 5. Businesses within the community should provide a range of job types for the community's residents.
- 6. The location and character of the community should be consistent with a larger transit network.
- 7. The community should have a center focus that combines commercial, civic, cultural and recreational uses.
- 8. The community should contain an ample supply of specialized open space in the form of squares, greens and parks whose frequent use is encouraged through placement and design.
- 9. Public spaces should be designed to encourage the attention and presence of people at all hours of the day and night.
- 10. Each community or cluster of communities should have a well defined edge, such as agricultural greenbelts or wildlife corridors, permanently protected from development.
- 11. Streets, pedestrian paths and bike paths should contribute to a system of fully-connected and interesting routes to all destinations. Their design should encourage pedestrian and bicycle use by being small and spatially defined by buildings, trees and lighting; and by discouraging high speed traffic.

- 12. Wherever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of the community should be preserved with superior examples contained within parks or greenbelts.
- 13. The community design should help conserve resources and minimize waste.
- 14. Communities should provide for the efficient use of water through the use of natural drainage, drought tolerant landscaping and recycling.
- 15. The street orientation, the placement of buildings and the use of shading should contribute to the energy efficiency of the community.

Regional Principles:

- 1. The regional land use planning structure should be integrated within a larger transportation network built around transit rather than freeways.
- 2. Regions should be bounded by and provide a continuous system of greenbelt/wildlife corridors to be determined by natural conditions.
- 3. Regional institutions and services (government, stadiums, museums, etc.) should be located in the urban core.
- 4. Materials and methods of construction should be specific to the region, exhibiting continuity of history and culture and compatibility with the climate to encourage the development of local character and community identity.

Implementation Strategy:

- 1. The general plan should be updated to incorporate the above principles.
- 2. Rather than allowing developer-initiated, piecemeal development, local governments should take charge of the planning process. General plans should designate where new growth, infill or redevelopment will be allowed to occur.
- 3. Prior to any development, a specific plan should be prepared based on the planning principles. With the adoption of specific plans, complying projects could proceed with minimal delay.
- 4. Plans should be developed through an open process and participants in the process should be provided visual models of all planning proposals.

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Local Government Commission, 1991

Registration

September 11, 1993

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