



New waterfront neighborhood emerges in Alameda

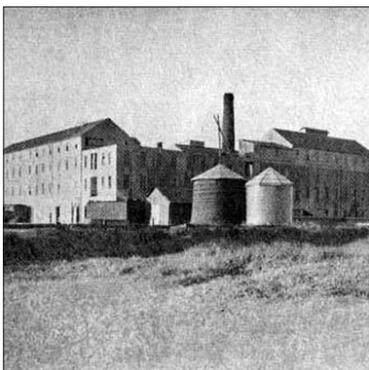
Years of hard work and collaboration are coming to fruition in Alameda, where a former naval air station could be converted into a thriving new waterfront community.

As proposed, [Alameda Point](#) will have 1,425 housing units, 5.5 million square feet of businesses and 200 acres of parks and open space by 2035. City officials estimate 9,000 permanent jobs, countless numbers of temporary construction jobs and millions of dollars in new tax revenue could be generated.

“Come to Alameda Point,” Mayor Marie Gilmore said at a June 24 ceremony honoring the first transfer of ownership from the Navy to the city. “We are open for business.”

And the [California Department of Toxic Substances Control](#) (DTSC), which helped supervise the removal of toxic materials, assisted in hanging the “open” sign. As part of the transfer, DTSC and the Navy signed land-use covenants that restrict uses in some regions, including the former marshland. Areas with no land-use covenants have been cleaned to residential standards.

Alameda Point has an industrial history that includes a borax processing plant and an oil refinery that operated from 1879 to 1903. Then came the military and Alameda Naval Station, which opened in 1940 and closed in 1997. Its pre-military and military legacy includes contaminants such as solvents, fuel, lead and other heavy metals, pesticides and herbicides and even ammunition.



Left to right:
Borax Works (1893);
Propeller Shop (1945);
aerial view (1984).
Photos courtesy of
[Alameda Naval Air
Museum](#).

Below:
Transfer of ownership
ceremony. DTSC photo.





Alameda Point continued

Navy studies in 1983 and 1986 confirmed the contamination as a health risk, which persuaded DTSC and the California Department of Health Services to require the Navy to prepare a cleanup plan. Federal EPA was the lead agency.

A cleanup of this size and complexity required a variety of remediation technologies – ranging from micro-organisms treating the contaminated material on site to excavation. Through 2012, The Navy spent \$500 million cleaning the property – and more than \$100 million is budgeted for 2013 and beyond.

Stewart Black, Deputy Director of Brownfields and Environmental Restoration at DTSC, has been involved in the project for years, and was at the property transfer ceremony. Project Manager James Fyfe and Supervisor Karen Toth also attended.

“The Alameda Point project is a perfect example of how, when we work together we can find the resources to clean up contaminated properties to safe levels and put them back into productive use for our communities.” Black said. “It’s exciting to see this kind of success.”

The location is spectacular, with the City of San Francisco a backdrop on one side and huge cranes and container ships of Port of Oakland on another. It is one of the last large waterfront development opportunities in Alameda.

Alameda officials have been capitalizing on the potential for more than a decade. Since 2000, they have leased property from the Navy, and, in turn, subleased buildings to a variety of tenants, including a fitness club, a winery and distillery, and various manufacturing and light industrial operations. It also is home base of Sweden’s America Cup yacht team.

About 100 businesses employ about 1,000 people and generate \$90,000 in annual sales tax revenue, numbers that are sure to increase over the years. Also, the [Alameda Point Collaborative](#), formed in 1999, provides shelter for formerly homeless families in about 200 units of ex-military housing.

The June 24 ceremony highlighted a key step that starts moving Alameda Point out of public ownership onto private tax rolls. With the economy improving, the timing could not be better, city officials said. They are preparing development plans and an environmental impact report in hopes of attracting more private investment starting next year.

The Navy will transfer more property over the next several years, including about 600 acres to the Veterans Administration.

“This project will have tremendous economic impact on both the local, regional and national economy,” Black said.