

# **The Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve ADVISORY BOARD REPORT**

August 2008

Participating Members

Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve Advisory Board

CoChairs:

Myrna Hayes, Shawn McAndrew

Members:

Eve Bach, Kenn Browne, Diji Christian, Gerry F. Cortez,  
Wendell Quigley, Diana Krevsky, Harmony Sakai,  
John Wankum, Linda L.Watts

City of Vallejo Staff: Gil Hollingsworth, Susan McCue



Photo by Brian Collett

AUGUST 2008

## **The Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve ADVISORY BOARD REPORT**



### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

The concept for a regional park, as envisioned for the Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve, offers the City of Vallejo unprecedented opportunity to create a destination that offers some of the most spectacular views of the Bay, historic landmark resources, and unspoiled natural habitat, as well as attracting visitors from afar as well as locally. As members of the Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve Advisory Board, we present this report with recommendations for an organizational structure and funding strategy that will make this vision a reality.

After five years of formulating a mission, setting goals, researching managing and governance models, and then crafting a comprehensive report with consultants hired by the City, the Mare Island Regional Park Taskforce submitted their findings to the Vallejo City Council in December 2007. The Council then approved the taskforce report for the proposed Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve and requested that an advisory board be formed early in 2008. After soliciting in the local newspaper for interested prospective members, the City Council appointed 18 members. The Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve Advisory Board commenced meeting twice a month on a regular basis as of April this year.

The City staff directed the Advisory Board **“to develop a proposal for the Mare Island Preserve’s long-term management organization, including a plan for financing the formation and initial expenses of the organization.”**

In accordance with the Mare Island Regional Park Taskforce Report 2007, which was the basis for determining what the next steps toward developing the Mare Island Preserve would be, the Advisory Board reconfirmed the Mare Island Preserve to be a “new” and valuable asset granted to the City by the State. Consequently, the Mare Island Preserve must serve all Californians under the terms of its land grant from the State of California as well as Vallejo and the surrounding community.

The Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve, when perceived as a vital contributor to a positive image of Vallejo, will generate economic benefits that encourage business and individual investment in the local community. A robust and productive managing organization for the Mare Island Preserve will bring a high level of financial growth to the Mare Island Preserve that will prove to be a major asset for the city.

The Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve:

- represents a popular media opportunity in the area and should be a primary component of targeted tourism and marketing plans for Vallejo
- should be seen by the City as an important attraction and actively engage in ways to capitalize on the asset
- can strengthen existing ties and nurture collaboration with other nonprofits, public agencies, and private enterprises
- should be included in the City’s long-range planning and budgeting of infrastructure and facilities’ plans for Mare Island
- should be viewed as a key component of the larger scope of Mare Island economic development and other comprehensive interagency/developer planning, rather than thought of as an isolated, independent property



Photo by Gerry Cortez



Photo by Myrna Hayes



Photo by Brian Collett



Photo by Myrna Hayes

Clockwise from top left: Visitors enjoy the 360-degree view; spectacular views abound from the top of Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve; Plein air artists take advantage of the inspirational scenic vistas; the “Spirit Ship” sculpture graces the starboard side of Mare Island.



## SUMMARY OF ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our findings, we recommend first establishing an interim catalyst group that will subsequently assist in launching a long-term, dynamic nonprofit management organization. This organization will then enter into a cooperative partnership agreement with the City of Vallejo. Jointly, the cooperating partners will coordinate a variety of private and public resources that deliver exciting recreational and educational programs on a fully operational and maintained facility located within a preserved historical landmark and beautiful natural habitat.

The outline that follows gives an overview of the proposal we believe will be a “bridge” from present use to full realization of the vision, development, and management for the Mare Island Preserve.

### **I. Formation of an Interim Short-Term Catalyst Group**

#### **A. Transitional “bridge” from current use of the Mare Island Preserve to a full management partnership**

- Provide immediacy and continuity of proposals by Taskforce and current Preserve Advisory Board
- Focus on “Building the Mare Island Preserve” by cultivating interest, involvement, and constituency for the future long-term nonprofit managing organization
- Promote public awareness about the Mare Island Preserve
- Reach out to the community and encourage volunteer participation
- Invite people who can bring needed skills and knowledge to the project
- Lay the groundwork for a funding base for the future long-term organization
- Develop a dynamic organizational/partnership plan for the development and organizational structure of the long-term organization
- Select an advocate/representative for the Mare Island Preserve who will participate on any existing or forthcoming Mare Island economic development committees

#### **B. Short-term, renewable license between an Interim Catalyst Group for the Mare Island Preserve and the City of Vallejo**

As owner of the land, the city generally delegates or “spins-off” some of its responsibility for managing the land through a cooperating agreement. A license is usually used for short term programming on City property. A contract for services is another approach.

The Advisory Board recommends the following actions:

- Continue current visitor access programming (*hikes, outings, open days, events, etc.*) at the Mare Island Preserve
- Expand use of area without permanent capital improvements that fulfill requirements of the State Lands Commission for opening the area as a park, and achieve proposed Phase One of the Mare Island Regional Park Taskforce goals

- Research pitfalls and benefits learned from past City lease agreements
- Clearly spell out terms of license according to specific needs
- Allow a flexible, organic approach that buys time and anticipates environmental clean-up schedules for a time when additional properties and structures become part of the Mare Island Preserve
- Dissolve the interim group when the formal, long-term organization is formed

**C. Short-term funding needs**

- Liability insurance coverage
- Coordination of programming and day-to-day use of the area
- Promotional materials and public outreach, such as printed publicity materials and website
- Basic maintenance of existing infrastructure and safety improvements
- No permanent capital improvement expenditures

**D. Short-term funding resources and approach**

- A license agreement with the City that provides the legal framework permitting relationships with nonprofit groups for the acquisition of funds and donations
- Use of City’s contractors and fundraisers
- City’s role: retain full legal responsibility for property during interim phase
- Reliance on existing resources — in-kind and volunteer
- Interim group fundraising events, sponsors, and possible matching funds from the city
- A designated funds account to hold revenues in trust earmarked for building the future long-term organization

**E. Use of Mare Island Regional Park Taskforce Report recommendations as a guideline by Interim Catalyst Group**

- Carry out Phase One proposals
- Adhere to the mission and principles set forth
- Form a long-term managing organization for the Mare Island Preserve



Photo by Sue Wilson



Photo by Myrna Hayes



Photo by Gerry Cortez

Left to right: A lone bag piper pays tribute to fallen soldiers; the Mare Island Naval Cemetery, in existence since 1858; a volunteer leads tours of the historic Mare Island cemetery.

**II. Long-term, dynamic nonprofit managing organization for the Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve and cooperative agreement partnership with the City of Vallejo.**

**A. Nonprofit managing organization will be launched by Interim Catalyst Group**

- A solid core of public interest and financial support will be in place
- A Board of Directors will be selected from a pool of dedicated candidates  
*Note:* Minimum number of board members/officers under CA Corporation provisions, include a President/Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, and Secretary
- Partners for the Mare Island Preserve will be identified (*see Figure 1*)
- Management, governance, operations, and funding plan will be developed.
- Periodic progress reports to the City staff and public

<b>Partners for the Preserve</b>			
Types of support that will sustain the Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve			
<b>Working</b>	<b>Advisory</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Money/Financial</b>
City Staff: manager/facilitator/strategist  Volunteers  Paid contractors  Publicist  Legislative advocacy	Expertise  Mentors  Planners  Government & political representatives  Legal	Municipal services and programs  Public/private liason  Security  Legal services  In-kind, pro bono  City/County/ State/ National	Fundraisers  Benefactors  Grants  Community contributors  Foundations  Loans  Government funding

Figure 1

**B. City of Vallejo’s role as a shared management partner**

The cooperating agreement is usually codified in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that describes in detail what the City does and what the nonprofit managing organization will do. The MOA describes rules, legal restrictions, and terms of agreement. The City benefits from this type of arrangement in that it gets many advantages of having a park without having to actually operate it. The City shall:

- Select a managing nonprofit partner to be responsible for operating the Mare Island Preserve/park (*does not have to be a competitive process*)
- Prepare a lease agreement that typically lasts 30–66 years
- Authorize the management nonprofit to make capital improvements based on the master plan
- Allow renewal and negotiable changes in the lease agreement
- Play a leadership role like other joint ventures or partnerships in seeking out and enhancing collaborative opportunities

### C. Funding needs

- Day-to-day program costs for continuous use and expansion of existing on-site programming
- Cost of organizational development and preparation of a 98-acre master plan
- Money and in-kind support for ongoing operations and maintenance
- Hiring a professional to sustain fundraising momentum
- Paid coordinator as a strategist and other consultants as needed
- Fees
- Ongoing development of the Mare Island Preserve
- Expansion of public outreach and promotion
- Long-range planning for all of Mare Island that includes the watershed or the river corridor — a mandatory precursor for the Mare Island Preserve to become eligible for certain major funding sources

### D. Funding resources and approach

- Seed money and donor contributions in place built up by interim catalyst group
- Matching funds and grants from various sources such as government agencies, foundations, and private donors
- Fundraising events
- Stable on-going funding from various sources
- Active pursuit of partnering support
- Lease revenues collected on public trust land to support expenses of the Mare Island Preserve (*this income is required by State law to be spent on Public Trust properties within the Land Grant*)
- Utilizing the City's grantwriter
- Cultivating ongoing relationships with various public agencies — all can potentially serve as conduits to State and Federal money



Photos courtesy National Archives, Pacific Region (San Francisco)



Photo by John Klycinski

Left: (Top photo) workers load ships with ammunition made by Mare Island Naval Ammunition Depot workers (bottom photo).

Above: Visitors enjoy a ride during the 150th celebration of the Mare Island Naval Ammunition Depot in 2007.



## NARRATIVE OVERVIEW

The Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve Advisory Board recommends the following steps toward making a regional park a reality for immediate, interim, and future use of the Mare Island Preserve:

### **1. Use Mare Island Regional Taskforce Report and Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve Advisory Board as guidelines**

All parties should refer to the principles and recommendations proposed in the Taskforce Report and by the Advisory Board when identifying various functions for the Mare Island Preserve, and when negotiating the terms of the long-term cooperative agreement with the nonprofit managing partner. Building on these two documents will bring continuity and clarity to the development process and likely expedite it.

The City should implement specific recommendations of the Taskforce Report (2007) for interim Phase One use of the initial 98 acres acquired by the City. As described in the Taskforce Report, this 98-acre portion of the property is available now, and already somewhat developed. Many of the existing buildings and facilities can be improved enough for temporary public use, and infrastructure maintenance can be carried out prior to funding and preparation of the actual Master Plan.

These basic improvements will enhance the visitor's experience. Ongoing, active public access serves as an incentive for funders to make additional investments because it demonstrates that preliminary investment at the local level has been initiated.

### **2. Continue support for informal, nonprofit programming currently operating on-site**

The City currently supports a variety of informal nonprofit uses of the Mare Island Preserve. This support should continue as guided by the Phase One scenario of Taskforce Report, e.g. the Historic Park Foundation's Memorial Day and Veteran's Day services and guided tours of the cemetery, Arc Ecology's Flyway Festival guided outings, Second Saturday Access Days and the Mare Faire, and Sierra Club-sponsored hikes.

Continued support will foster public access to the property and build a core constituency and pool of volunteers who will help expand the park's capacity over time. From this solid base, a "Partners for the Preserve" (*see Figure 2*) can grow and resources can be identified that build a "bridge" from now toward a healthy and fully functioning, sustainable management organization in the future.

### **3. Enter into a short-term license agreement between the City of Vallejo and the Mare Island Preserve Interim Catalyst Group**

The City should enter into a well-defined, short-term license agreement with an interim catalyst group to spearhead and assist with temporary public access, improvements,



and informal programming. The City can accomplish this through a fairly smooth and straightforward process. Entering into a temporary use license agreement with a nonprofit organization enables initial fundraising capabilities, and allows for general volunteer handling of maintenance and minor operational upgrades.

Mutual involvement and cooperation among the public and the city enhance a sense of community and pride of place. The outcome would be increased funding opportunities for the Mare Island Preserve's future and a more permanent managing organization.

#### **4. Follow a collaborative process to identify roles of cooperating partners**

To make progress toward forming a permanent nonprofit managing organization for the Mare Island Preserve, City staff should work together with a core of nonprofit organizations and other interested constituents or individuals for the purpose of clearly defining partner roles and responsibilities. The best entity suited to fill the scope of management functions can then be decided. This process will set the stage for terms of a cooperative agreement between the City and the long-term nonprofit partner. It will also assist in forecasting gaps in resources and skill sets the nonprofit managing partner needs from its board members, staff, and consultants to ensure success.

An early, long-range view also provides guidance for structuring the new organization and board composition. Such foresight will anticipate how the agreement can accommodate evolving management challenges when the remaining parcels of the Mare Island Preserve are brought online.

#### **5. Enter into Cooperating Agreement between the City of Vallejo and Nonprofit Managing Organization**

The City of Vallejo and potentially other local agencies would enter into a cooperating agreement with a nonprofit organization specifically established to provide for long-term management of the Mare Island Preserve. Based on the extensive research conducted by members of the Regional Park Taskforce (2003-2007) regarding the best models for a managing entity for the Mare Island Preserve, we recommend the formation of a new nonprofit that focuses its efforts primarily on The Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve within the context of Mare Island. The Task Force Report provides specific guidelines for the composition of the Board.

Due to many factors identified and evaluated by both the Taskforce and the Advisory Board, it is not likely that there is an existing model for a nonprofit that initially will be a perfect fit in the short term. Steps toward forming a long-term nonprofit organization are part of an organic process that needs to evolve within a supportive and nurturing environment to achieve success.

The new nonprofit organization can begin with a few founding members actively working to carry out the organization's mission. In some rare cases, nonprofit organizations are formed through mitigations that provide for either start-up money or a revenue stream, such as was the case with the forerunner of the Solano Land Trust or the Carquinez Strait Preservation Trust — two local examples. Or, they may be well-endowed with funding

Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve  
**Proposed Nonprofit Partnership Categories**

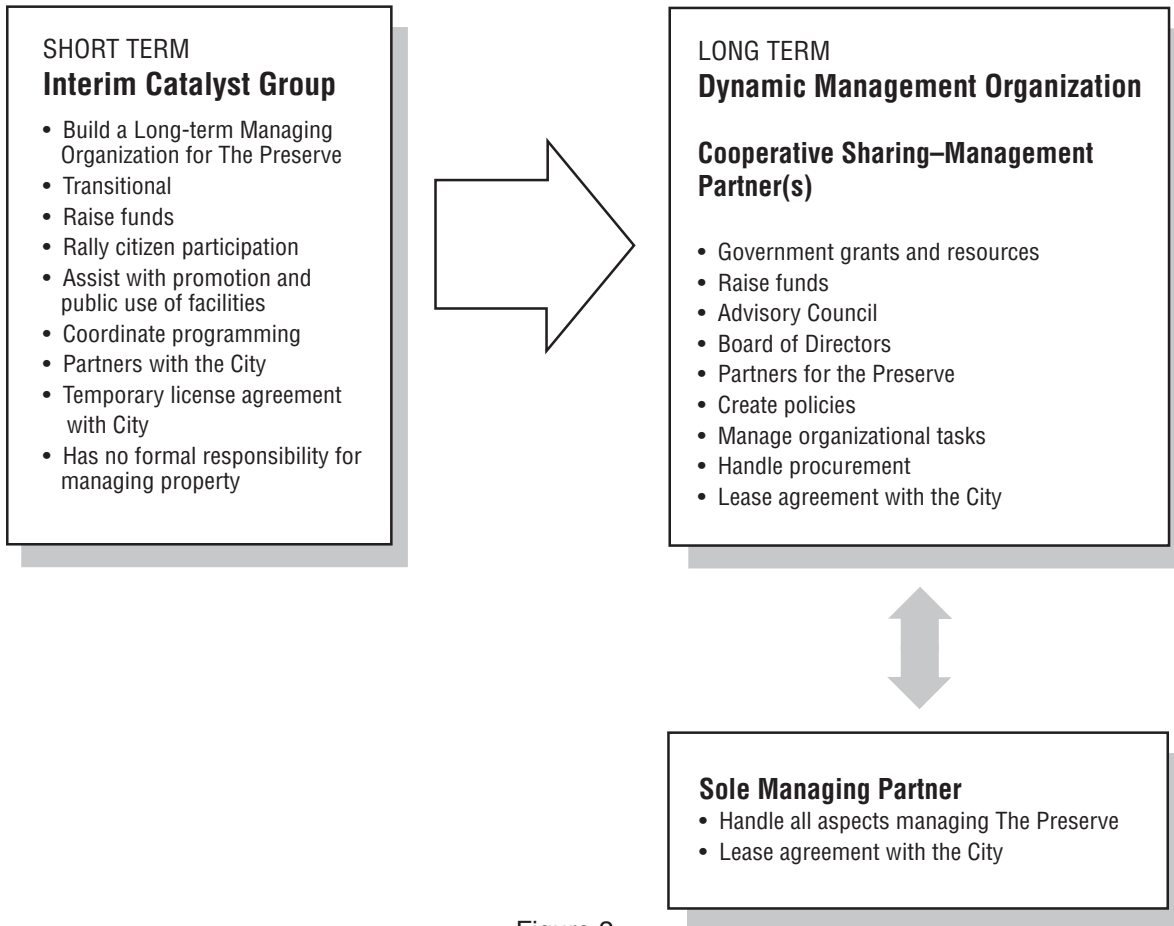


Figure 2

from the beginning. In some of these cases, the boards of directors are appointed, but in most cases, they are invited by a core group interested in forming a nonprofit and either accept or decline to become board members.

As determined by the Taskforce Report (2007), the City of Vallejo and the Greater Vallejo Recreation District do not have the capacity or mandate to operate the property for the broad variety of expected public trust-based uses. As the City’s partner, a nonprofit managing organization can tap sources of revenue that government cannot. This nonprofit cooperating partner would work in partnership with the land owner — the City of Vallejo — and others to leverage money and other resources for the planning, capital improvements and operations and maintenance of the Mare Island Preserve.

The Advisory Board believes that it will require a well-crafted agreement that may at some point involve cooperative management partnership of the property through MOAs with the City, possibly the Greater Vallejo Recreation District, the Vallejo Sanitation and Flood Control District, Solano County, and, in the initial years, the US Navy. Other agencies may also become partner managers in the future.

## **6. Delegate an evaluation and review process**

A mutually agreed upon disclosure method of evaluation and progress to the public and City Council should be an essential part of the process. Throughout various stages of development, review of the Mare Island Preserve's expansion, role clarification, contribution identification, and management development is important, and will ultimately lead to a cooperating agreement with a nonprofit cooperating partner. This review of goals, accomplishments, and adjustments can continue once the long-term nonprofit cooperating partner is in place with regular status reports.

A visible mechanism allowing for management transparency administered by the City of Vallejo and its cooperating partner will best serve all Californians. As a public trust property, a high level of public oversight should be the standard.

## **7. Identify Funding Sources**

The Advisory Board feels that in order to achieve successful management of the site, given the wide range of important historical, natural and scenic resources that have to be managed in a balanced way, a strong local and regional underpinning of support must be identified. Possible sources of revenue and other in-kind services can be generated by the City for short- and long-term funding.

**Interim short-term funding:** An interim catalyst group may act as a service provider and secure a contractor or licensee to the City to provide certain services within a defined scope of work. The interim catalyst group will likely apply for relatively small contributions and grants from foundations, corporations, and other nonprofit organizations and individuals in amounts generally less than \$50,000. These funds would be used for Phase One capital, programming, operations and maintenance, and public engagement. The group would also seek in-kind contributions of professional services, supplies, equipment, expertise, etc.

Under a licensing arrangement, it would also be appropriate for this interim group to launch a fundraising campaign that secures funds to finance formation and provide initial expenses to establish the long-term nonprofit managing entity. The ultimate financial goal of the Interim Catalyst Group will be to build a funding and operational base for formation of the Mare Island Preserve's long-term nonprofit managing organization.

The group's policy will have a provision earmarking funds for this purpose. Funds will be transferred at the time the long-term organization is established. This arrangement also clears the way for Phase One development of the Mare Island Preserve, and assures a solid foundation for a successful transition.

**Funding of the long-term nonprofit partner:** The long-term nonprofit cooperating partner would be established when the Interim Catalyst Group has gathered sufficient funds, organizational capacity, and a pool of qualified, dedicated, skilled project participants to support a successful formation of a nonprofit organization. This pool will be cultivated for the purpose of serving as board members, advisory council, and

committee members, volunteers and supporters, as well as employees and contractors to work in conjunction with the City to manage the Mare Island Preserve.

The City should provide funding and/or services to the Mare Island Preserve. City departments, such as City Attorney, Public Works (including landscape division, maintenance division-water, streets, lighting, events and street sweeping, garbage service, recycling division), Planning, Economic Development and Tourism, and Fire and Police should provide some services to help support day-to-day operations and organizational development. These contributions of services, supplies, or expertise would be matched and augmented by additional sources brought to the partnership by the nonprofit cooperating partner and other partners. The City should direct its grantwriter to seek funds for identified Phase One and long-term nonprofit cooperating partner financing.



Photo by John Klycinski



Photo by Brian Collett



Photo by Brian Collett



Photo by Gerry Cortez



Photo by Myrna Hayes

Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve is rich with nature's beauty.



Visitors celebrated the Mare Island Naval Ammunition Depot's 150th anniversary in 2007.

Photo by John Klycinski

