

# Concord Hills Regional Park Land Use Plan and EIR

EBPRD/NPS Visioning Workshop  
August 11, 2015 – 10:00am-4:00pm



## *Draft Meeting Summary*

### **OVERVIEW**

This workshop built upon a preliminary visioning meeting from July 2015. It began with an introductory presentation by EBPRD and the PlaceWorks team regarding the on-going planning process, highlights from the Existing Conditions Report, and results from the July 1 community workshop and ongoing online engagement. Following the presentation, representatives of key stakeholder groups including Friends of Port Chicago, the Bay Point Historical Society, and the Concord Historical Society presented their organization's perspective on site uses. The remainder of the day was dedicated to a work session that included NPS, EBPRD, and the consultant team. The work session included a series of exercises to more clearly define interpretation goals set by the team, establish a site-wide interpretive approach, and design a concept for the visitor center and adjacent area.



### **STAKEHOLDER PRESENTATIONS**

Three stakeholder presentations were made following the introductory presentation by EBPRD and the PlaceWorks Team. Robert Allen and Diana McDaniel of Friends of Port Chicago spoke about their group's efforts to establish the National Monument and future Visitor Center; Dean McLeod of Bay Point Historical Society spoke about the history of the Bay Point community; and John Keibel of Concord Historical Society spoke about the Society and potential partnership at the Concord Regional Park site. These presentations are further described below.



#### **Friends of Port Chicago**

Robert Allen began the presentation with an overview of the creation of the national monument and the legacy left behind of the Port Chicago explosion and mutiny trial. He emphasized the importance of the events not only for the Bay Area but for the whole country as one of the early sparks of the Civil Rights Movement.

Diana McDaniel continued the discussion of Port Chicago with an overview of their proposed vision for a Visitor Center to interpret the memory of those who "served, died, and protested" at Port Chicago Naval Magazine. She presented the design concept drawings for the center with space for interpretation of the event, as well as other features. She additionally outlined the experience that Friends of Port Chicago would like people to have at the Visitor Center, which would include maps, photographs, and



memorabilia from survivors. They suggested an interpretive activity in which visitors are given an “identity” when they arrive. The visitor would move through the center “in the shoes” of that person, creating a unique and personal experience at each visit. They would like to expand the experience by discussing life at the time of the explosion and then incorporating the story of segregation and inequality. Ms. McDaniel described it as a place where people “feel something,” and pointed to the Museum of Tolerance as a potential precedent. Ms. McDaniel additionally indicated that Friends of Port Chicago would like to have office space and could potentially serve as a tenant in the new visitor center.

### **Bay Point Historical Society**

Dean McLeod presented an overview of activities at Port Chicago Naval Magazine and Concord Naval Weapon Station (CNWS) in context of the how it changed the surrounding area and how actions there impacted global events. For instance, weapons stored or developed at CNWS were used in war events around the world, effectively creating connections through destruction. He emphasized how the site changed history and that its legacy will be important to carry through into interpretation of the park. He suggested interpretive themes of social justice, atomic war, power and weakness, risks of wars and weaponization, and contrasting realities of a country at war and a country at peace. Mr. McLeod summarized some of the major events in the site’s history, including the Port Chicago explosion, emphasizing the huge blast radius of the explosion, and the forced expulsion of residents from the town of Port Chicago. A former resident of Port Chicago also read a narrative of her experience being dislocated from her hometown, suggesting that this story will be important to tell in the new park Visitor Center. Diana McDaniel from Friends of Port Chicago suggested that if their recommended interpretive feature of assigning a storyline to visitors is used, then perhaps one story could be from the perspective of a Port Chicago resident and impart the impact of being displaced from one’s home.

### **Concord Historical Society**

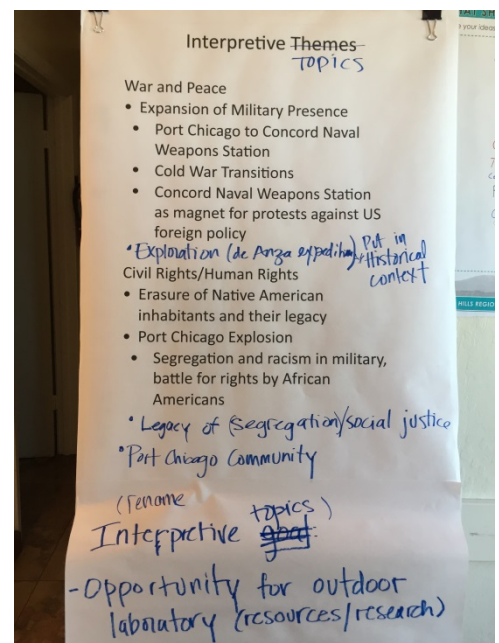
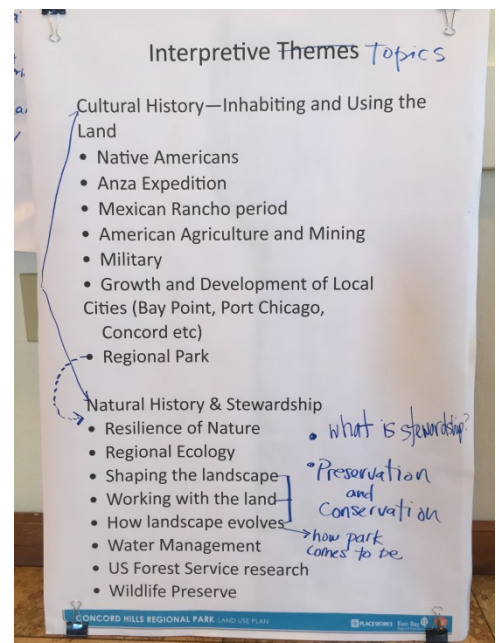
John Keibel gave a brief overview of how the Concord Historical Society was established and their role in the community. He continued with a presentation of the group’s goals for the visitor center at the Concord Regional Park Site, which included attention to the military history of the site; partnership between Concord Historical Society, NPS, and EBRPD for events and exhibits; and collaboration between groups involved in the site to promote for one another and expand the interpretive potential to the full Concord area. Mr. Keibel also indicated that Concord Historical Society has a number of artifacts from the Concord Naval Weapons Station, including signs, doors from buildings and magazines, and military medallions, which could be used in interpretive exhibits. The artifacts are catalogued at the Concord Historical Society’s main office.

## GOALS AND PRECEDENTS

The purpose of this discussion session was to finalize the list of interpretation priorities for the regional park and goals for the visitor center. Using boards that outlined interpretive themes, Donna Graves (public historian for the PlaceWorks team) facilitated a conversation based on the concepts previously developed by the group. Following is a summary of the boards with additions and edits from the group in bold.

### Interpretive Themes Topics

- Cultural History – Inhabiting and Using the Land
  - Native Americans
  - Anza Expedition
  - Mexican Rancho period
  - American Agriculture and Mining
  - Military
  - Growth and development of local cities (Bay Point, Port Chicago, Concord, etc.)
  - Regional Park
- Natural History & Stewardship
  - Resilience of Nature
  - Regional Ecology
  - Shaping the Landscape
  - Working with the land
  - How landscape evolves – **How parks come to be**
  - Water management
  - US Forest Service research
  - Wildlife Preserve
  - **What is stewardship?**
  - **Preservation and conservation**
- War and Peace
  - Expansion of Military Presence
    - Port Chicago to Concord Naval Weapons Station
    - Cold War Transitions
    - Concord Naval Weapons Station as a magnet for protests against US foreign policy
  - **Exploration (de Anza expedition in historical context)**
- Civil Rights/Human Rights
  - Erasure of Native American inhabitants and their legacy
  - Port Chicago explosion
    - Segregation and racism in military, battle for rights by African Americans
    - **Legacy of segregation and social justice**
  - Port Chicago community
- **Opportunity for outdoor Laboratory for resources/research**



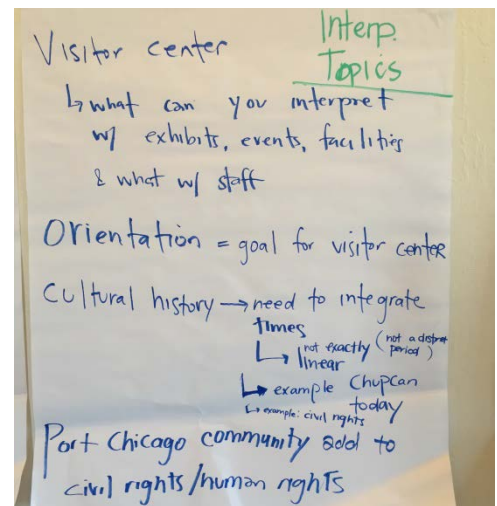
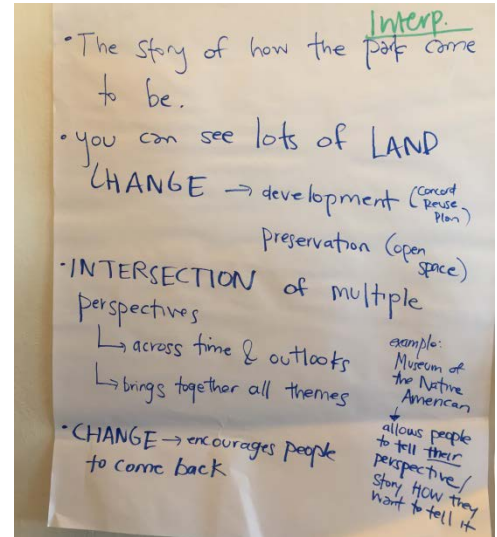
During the discussion, NPS and EBRPD participants suggested that there should be an integration of natural, cultural, and historical material. Additionally, based on the presentations from the stakeholders, many NPS and EBRPD participants felt that the interpretive features should be able to present multiple perspectives within the same space since the history of the site is so complex. It was also suggested that the exhibits should change to encourage people to return to the center. There was discussion about the presentation of time and the importance of not limiting situations and events to the past. The use of a “time web” was recommended in place of a “time line,” which allows for the continuation of certain events and influence on the site.

It was noted that interpretation can occur through a variety of mediums and that there should be a distinction about the methods of interpretation that are relevant for the various topics. For example, some topics are best for exhibit or facilities, while others can be interpreted through staff or at events.

Following the discussion about site-wide interpretation, Nancy Malone (S&S) led a conversation about goals for the Visitor Center complex using a board that outlined the priorities from the last visioning meeting. Following is a summary of the board with additions and edits from the group in bold:

- Create a Hub/Core for the Park
- **Create Regional hub and recreational opportunities**
- Create a world class destination
- Create an inspiring place to visit
- **Create a “campus” of indoor and outdoor functions**
- Create an aesthetically provocative Visitor Center
- Provide seamless integration of NPS/District operations
- Provide permanent and changing exhibits
- Pique interest in other experiences/stories **and a place where people can connect with history**
- **Engage school children/provide educational opportunities**
- Create a gathering space
- **Place for difficult conversations, for mediation and conflict resolution**
- **Place for community building**
- Provide Universal Access
- Utilize Green/Sustainable Building Strategies

The goals and precedents section ended with a presentation of precedent projects from David Trachtenberg of the PlaceWorks Team. The presentation included visitor centers, memorials, and industrial reuse projects and served as inspiration for the design activities that followed.





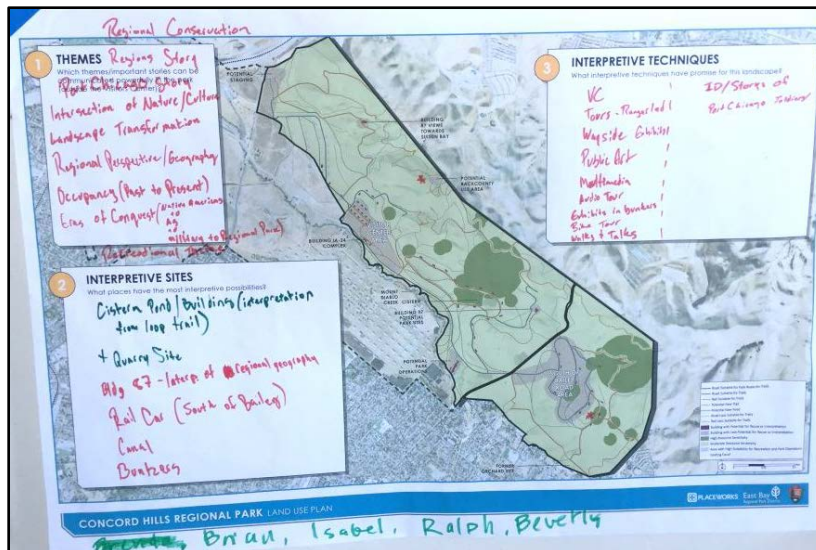
# SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY #1: REGIONAL PARK THEMES AND USES (PARK-WIDE)

For this activity, workshop participants divided into three groups to discuss site-wide interpretive topics and strategies. Using a large map worksheet, the groups self-facilitated an activity to answer the following questions:

1. Themes: Which themes/important stories can be communicated powerfully within in the park beyond of the Visitor Center?
2. Interpretive Sites: What places have the most interpretive possibilities?
3. Interpretive Techniques: What interpretive techniques have promise for this landscape?

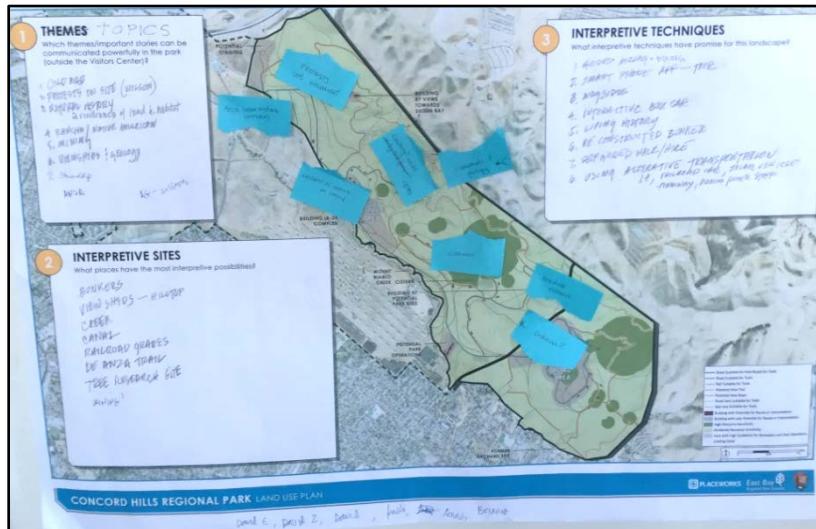
Input and ideas generated by each group are summarized below:

## GROUP 1



Themes	Interpretive Sites	Interpretive Techniques
Regional conservation	Cistern pond/ building- interpretive from loop trail	VC [visitor center] Tours – ranger led Wayside exhibits Public art
Regional story	Quarry site	Multimedia audio tour
Port Chicago story	Building 87 - regional geography	Exhibits in bunkers
Regional perspective	Rail car- south of Bailey Road	Bike tour Walks and talks
	Canal	ID/stories of Port Chicago Soldiers
	Bunkers [magazines]	

## GROUP 2



### Themes/Topics

Cold War  
 Protests on site  
 (Wilson)  
 Natural history – a  
 resilience of land  
 and habitat  
 Rancho/Native  
 American  
 Viewsheds and geology  
 Stewardship  
 [Juan Bautista de] Anza

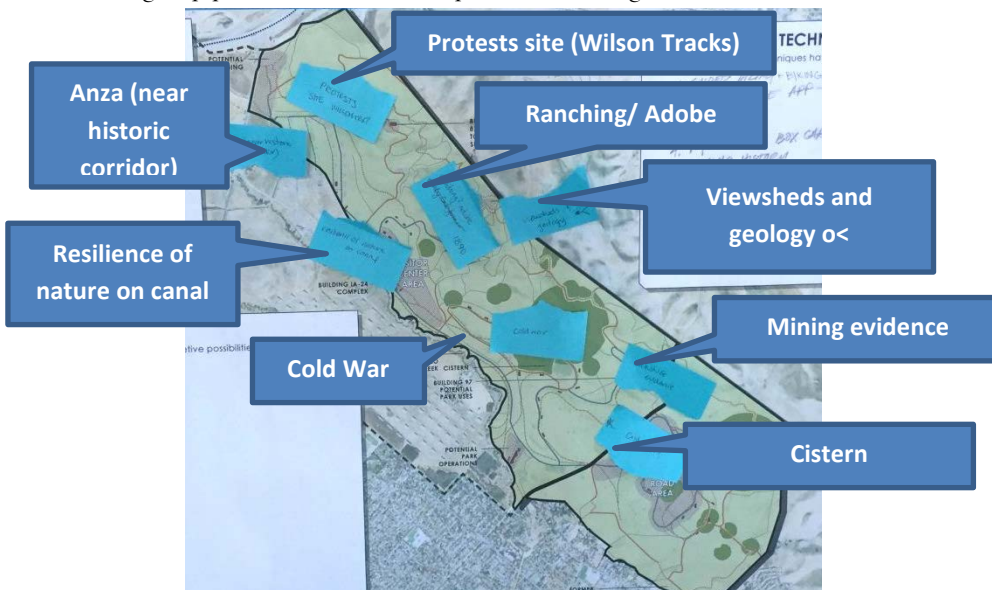
### Interpretive Sites

Bunkers [magazines]  
 Viewsheds – hilltop  
 Creek  
 Canal  
 Railroad grades  
 [Juan Bautista] de Anza  
 Trail  
 Tree research site  
 Mining

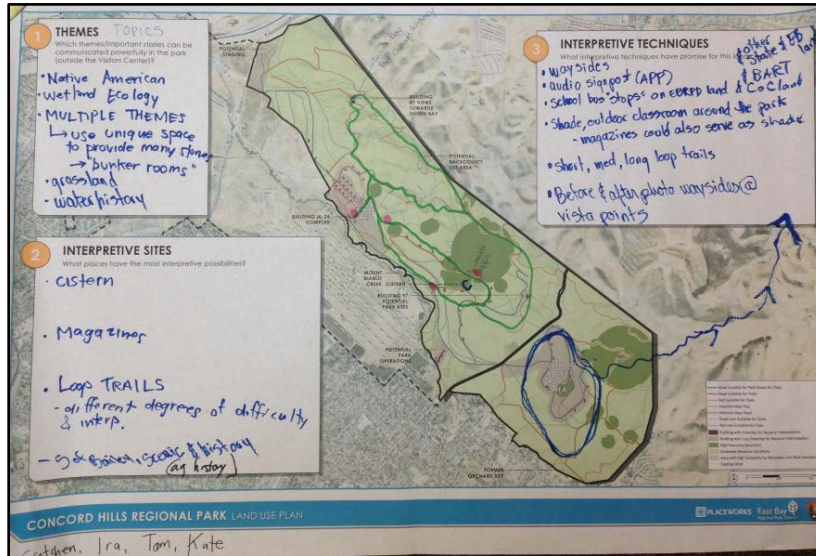
### Interpretive Techniques

Guided hiking and  
 biking  
 Smart phone app tour  
 Waysides  
 Interpretive box car  
 Living history  
 Reconstructed bunker  
 Self-guided walk/hike  
 Using alternative  
 transportation i.e.  
 railroad car, solar  
 vehicle, tramway,  
 human power stuff

The group placed notes on the map at the following locations:



## GROUP 3



Group 3 organized their topics and techniques by site. Although their results on the above board are shown in the question area, their results are organized by site below:

<i>Interpretive Sites</i>	<i>Themes Topics</i>	<i>Interpretive Techniques</i>
Cistern	Native American Wetland Ecology Early Agriculture	Panel Audio signposts – get visitors involved in oral histories School group “bus” stops
Magazines	Military history	Self-curated exhibits Short accessible loop at visitor center Long hike loop that brings in magazine history as well as many other topics In depth at each magazine – potentially allow community groups to present “their” story in each magazine Shade structures – outdoor classrooms, picnic, or rest areas

Loop trails with different degrees of difficulty and interpretation	Multiple topics	
South of Bailey Road	Scenic History (specifically ag history)	
Along creek	Water History Hydrology	Outdoor classrooms
Building 87 Viewpoint	Land use over time	Before and after photos Views to Bay and Port Chicago area
Hillside – various places to teach about landscape from various perspectives	Grassland ecology	Shade structures Outdoor classroom

Following the activity, the groups presented their results to the other workshop participants. Some additional concepts came out of this discussion including:

- Utilizing existing rail for transportation within park and creating a rail theme.
- Creating unique interpretive space within bunkers that can present different perspectives on the history of the site.
- Utilizing the experimental forest for owl habitat.
- Integrating public art.
- Telling the Mount Diablo Story through collaboration with State Parks. Set up dual installations at both parks that speak to one another.

## VISITOR CENTER PROGRAM

To begin the discussion of the Visitor Center Area, Nancy Malone (S&S) led a conversation about programmatic needs for the Visitor Center complex. Using a board that outlined the program that came out of the last visioning meeting, plus interim input from NPS and EBRPD (shown at right), the group went through a “what’s missing” brainstorm to make suggestions about the program. Following is a summary of the board with additions and edits from the group in bold.

### VISITOR CENTER AREA PROGRAM - INDOOR USES

- Permanent Exhibits
- Temporary Exhibits
- Reception
- Theater [**could be at another location**]
- Information Desk



- Sales/Concessions
- Staff Offices
  - **Interpretive at VC**
  - **Museum staff with museum storage**
  - **Friends of Port Chicago at VC**
- Exhibit/Research space
- Collections Storage [**Staff only**]
- General Storage
- Recreation Storage
- Interpretive [program] Storage
- Janitorial
- Staff Restrooms
- Public Restrooms [**within and outside of VC**]
- Community Room [**can be separate from VC**]
- ~~Rainy day~~ Classrooms
- **Conference room for park functions**
- **Social Justice Research Library**
- **Banquet/Reception Room**
- **Cafe**

Visitor Center Area Program	
INDOOR USES	OUTDOOR USES
• Permanent Exhibits	• Covered Picnic Sites
• Temporary Exhibits	• Shade Structures
• Reception	• Outdoor Classrooms
• Theater	• Amphitheater
• Information Desk	• Exhibits/ Interpretation
• Sales/Concessions	• Trail Connections
• Staff Offices	• POCH Staging
• Exhibit/Research space	• Shuttle Stop
• Collections Storage	• Bicycle Parking
• General Storage	• Staff Parking
• Recreation Storage	• Visitor Parking
• Interpretive [program] Storage	• Bus Parking
• Janitorial	
• Staff Restrooms	
• Public Restrooms	
• Community Room	
• Rainy day classrooms	

### VISITOR CENTER AREA PROGRAM - OUTDOOR USES

- Covered Picnic Sites [**family size and 50+**]
- Shade Structures [**use magazines**]
- Outdoor Classrooms
- Amphitheater
- Exhibits/Interpretation
- Trail Connections
- POCH Staging
- Shuttle Stop [**combine with interpretation**]
- Bicycle Parking
- Staff Parking
- Visitor Parking
- Bus Parking

Note: Recreation storage is needed somewhere on site for EBRPD programs

## SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY #2: VISITOR CENTER AREA

The workshop concluded with a Small Group Activity focused on the Visitor Center Area, including the Buildings IA-24, IA-55 and the adjacent Magazine complex. The goals of the activity were to:

- Identify the locations of major indoor and outdoor uses in the Visitor Center Area.
- Identify key interpretive opportunities, relative to the resources in the area.

Working with the same team members, groups developed a concept for the Visitor Center building and adjacent area. They were provided scaled pieces that represented identified program amenities, such as parking, classroom, and amphitheater space. The results follow:

**COMMON TO ALL:**

- Building IA-24 would be re-purposed as a Visitor Center (VC).
- Primary parking would be south or west of IA-55.
- All groups took into consideration that building IA-24 can most easily accommodate ADA access on the east or south side, whereas the west side is several feet above grade and the north side would be distant from the most likely parking area.
- An interpretive trail would loop through the complex and connect to the VC.

**GROUP 1**

The features of this site plan include:

- Main entry to VC on the east side.
- Architectural, shaded picnic and seating areas on the east side of the VC.
- Outdoor classroom on south side of VC.
- Re-purposed IA-55 into an office, café and public restroom.
- Shuttle stops: just west of IA-55 and at the next intersection.
- Bicycle parking adjacent to VC.
- Equestrian access to VC.
- Amphitheater at southwest corner of Magazine Complex with view of Mount Diablo.
- Magazine uses include classroom and interpretation.
- Smaller picnic areas along Kinne Blvd.

**GROUP 2**

The features of this site plan include:

- Main entry to VC on the east side.
- VC has mezzanine along west side.
- Outdoor classroom on southwest corner of VC.
- Repurpose IA-55 into concessions such as café, wine bar and bike rental.
- Shuttle stop: just west of IA-24.
- Include bus parking within main parking lot.
- Group picnic sites near parking.
- Family picnic sites near VC.
- Amphitheater near VC, to southeast.
- Magazine uses include group picnic, classroom and interpretation.
- Processional experience to shuttle to take visitors to Port Chicago National Monument that begins at VC.



## GROUP 3

The features of this site plan include:

- Enhance presence of future bridge by creating an 'entry gateway' at the south end of the VC, with main entry to VC on the south end of building.
- VC adds mezzanines at both ends to locate classrooms under offices and related uses; leaves large space in middle for exhibits.
- Outdoor classrooms at creek, to southeast of VC and at magazines.
- Create a purpose-built structure at the site of IA-55 for community room and public restrooms.
- Shuttle stop: north end of IA-24.
- Large group picnic sites near parking.
- Amphitheater near VC, to southeast.
- Magazine uses include classroom, exhibit and interpretation.

## CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Before adjourning the group discussed additional considerations for the site design and planning process. These included:

- **Commemorative site.** It was determined that there should not be a "memorial" to Port Chicago at the new regional park site as this would detract from the existing memorial at the Bay. Rather, there could be a site for reflection on war and peace or a processional experience with a shuttle that takes visitors to the existing memorial.
- **Archive.** If an archive is to be established on the site, it would be best to create a new climate- and humidity-controlled building to safely store artifacts and historic material.
- **Roof access to Visitor Center.** The roof of the Visitor Center could be explored as an education and event space.
- **Building 97** is discrete and would be a good location for operations.

As a next step, the PlaceWorks team will be developing draft alternatives for the site plan, building concepts, and uses at CNWS.

