

America's Waterfront Tevival



America's Waterfront Revival

Port Authorities and Urban Redevelopment

PETER HENDEE BROWN



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Since the early years of the twentieth century, public authorities have been providing an enormous share of the public infrastructure in the United States and have shaped our urban environment in powerful ways. Politicians have continued to create new public authorities, but many older ones remain influential, adapting to ever-changing economic trends, technologies, and user demands by entering new lines of business. Among the authorities that have continued to change and have remained relevant are many of the nation's industrial-era port authorities, including the Tampa Port Authority, the Port of San Francisco, the Port of San Diego, and the Delaware River Port Authority. Despite their unique histories, markets, and geographic locations, these four ports have many similarities. Most important, as globalization and technological change led to declines in shipping, they all evolved from single-purpose maritime cargo-handling operations into diversified business organizations focused on waterfront revitalization. All four ports became deeply involved in real estate development in support of nontraditional maritime and nonmaritime public and commercial uses. In *America's Waterfront Revival*, Peter Hendee Brown examines the experiences of these four port authorities, considering three important questions. First, how did external and internal forces encourage or impede these authorities as they engaged in new functions? How did the port authorities transform themselves as organizations in order to implement waterfront redevelopment? Do public authorities change as institutions when they diversify into new functional areas and, if so, do abstract theoretical models of public authorities adequately account for this institutional evolution? Drawing on a wide range of sources, including enabling legislation, annual reports, financial statements, strategic business plans, land use plans, audits, media accounts, and interviews, this book delivers significant new findings on the opportunities and challenges existing authorities face when they engage in new functions.

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