INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Agency Commissioners

FROM: Fred Blackwell, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Media Clippings from 4.15.10 to 4.29.10

Enclosed is a collection of newspaper and media clippings that refer to the Redevelopment Agency or an Agency-related project or program.

(Originated by Gia Casteel-Brown, Executive Assistant)

Fred Blackwell
Executive Director

REDEVELOPMENT:

Attachment 1: SF Examiner.com: “Loan plan could boost building,” April 29, 2010

BAYVIEW HUNTERS POINT & SHIPYARD:

Attachment 3: SFGate.com: “Candlestick-Hunters Point plan draws skeptics,” April 17, 2010
Attachment 4: SFGate.com: “Viz Valley’s File Mile House: Connection to the rest of SF,” April 18, 2010
Attachment 5: City Insider: “An apology, hearings and a 90th birthday,” April 20, 2010
Attachment 6: SF Examiner.com: “In other action,” April 21, 2010
Attachment 7: SF Examiner.com: “McLaren Park in running for renovation grant,” April 24, 2010

SoMa/TRANSBAY:
Attachment 9: SF Examiner.com: “City standing tall 160 years later,” April 16, 2010
Attachment 10: SF Examiner.com: “New features slated for transit hub to be revealed,” April 22, 2010
Attachment 11: SFGate.com: “Plan for new Transbay Terminal in, under budget,” April 22, 2010

MISSION BAY:
Attachment 14: SF Examiner.com: “Group seeks to preserve WWII-era building,” April 18, 2010
Attachment 15: SF Business Times: “UC targeted seed fund backs first startup,” April 23, 2010
Local News

Loan plan could boost building

Newsom proposes special tax district at conference

By Erin Sherbert

In order to jump-start construction in The City, Mayor Gavin Newsom is pitching the idea of a citywide Mello-Roos, a financial district that would help developers receive loans to pay impact and development fees.

Newsom made an appearance at a developers conference downtown on Wednesday, using the event to pitch his legislation aimed at creating jobs and jump-starting development.

The plan for the special district — which would allow the developers to pay back the loans through property taxes — would fast-track development projects that have been stalled due to financial pressures, Newsom said.

"We think that could be very, very helpful," Newsom said.

The mayor has been trying to push a proposal to defer 100 percent payment of some fees developers are charged up front. But responding to pressure from neighborhood groups and city lawmakers, Newsom scaled back his proposal this week, instead allowing developers to defer payment of 80 percent of some development-impact fees.

The legislation is expected to be debated at the Board of Supervisors Land Use and Economic Development Committee on Monday.

"If this is what is required to move it forward, so be it," said Newsom's development adviser, Michael Yarne. "The stimulative effects are diminished."

Newsom also proposed legislation to allow developers to reduce by one-third the fees they must pay to fund affordable-housing projects. In exchange, developers would agree to place a permanent 1 percent transfer fee on the property. Every time the property is sold, The City would collect 1 percent of the sales price for affordable housing.

But supervisors have not been comfortable with this idea, and as a result Newsom said he would table the affordable-housing legislation.

Biotech payroll tax break moves closer to expansion

By Joshua Sabatini

San Francisco's biotechnology tax break moved closer to an expansion Wednesday but still faces critics who say the giveaway is bad policy.

In 2004, the Board of Supervisors adopted a program to exempt biotech companies from The City's 1.5 percent payroll tax for 7½ years. The program sunsets in 2014 and currently biotech companies who apply today would only receive the tax break for four years.

Supervisor Michela Alioto-Pier introduced legislation that would ensure any biotech company that applies for the tax exemption before the program's expiration would receive the tax break for 7½ years. She said the tax incentive helps ensure the industry in San Francisco remains a "competitive force."

The Board of Supervisors Budget and Finance Committee voted Wednesday to send the legislation to the full board for a vote.

Committee chair Supervisor John Avalos said he was "not necessarily in favor" of the proposal. Avalos said the tax exemptions were a "slippery slope," as approval for one industry creates pressure to enact similar exemptions for other industries.

Since 2004, $963,396 was the total amount of payroll tax companies would have had to pay if they weren't granted the exemption. The full board could vote as early as next week on the legislation. It would take six votes from the 11-member board to go into effect.

jsabatini@sfexaminer.com
Creative finance turns blight into might

San Francisco Business Times - by John Stewart

On April 7, there was a well-attended groundbreaking for the fully entitled, 800-unit Hunters View project, a hybrid of affordable new rentals and condos for moderate-income, first-time homebuyers.

The San Francisco project replaces all of the existing, deteriorated, 267 public housing units, and their infrastructure and street grid, all being reflective of Korean War-era urban planning. The first phase will include 106 units of new, high-quality, environmentally sustainable public housing units and affordable rental units, as well as a community room, a management office, new streets and a public park.

In an era when lenders aren’t lending, and the Bush Administration eliminated HUD’s HOPE VI Programs (grants for public housing tear-downs, plus one-for-one replacement), on-site work has actually begun and a revolutionary new concept implemented: job formation.

How could this have happened in a city and region where the new construction pipeline is virtually empty?

Although the back story (something went right) doesn’t have the eye-catching traction of the San Francisco Chronicle’s April 7 headline “Protestors at Hunter View event demanding more local hires”), it’s worth noting that:

Mayor Gavin Newsom and his Office of Housing nimbly found a fiscal substitute for HOPE VI with its own $95 million HOPE SF Bond Program, a portion of which was allocated to Hunters View.

Seven foundations took a fresh look at their policies of avoiding bricks-and-mortar, project-specific grants and investments. Eschewing business as usual, they stepped up with early money. Kudos to the Ford Foundation of New York, Enterprise, Fannie Mae, LISC, the San Francisco Foundation, the Stewardship Council (Park Planning) and the Baytree Fund (education access).

The project successfully competed for a $30 million grant under the State’s Prop. 1C Program.

Violating rumors of its nonexistence (see Fox News), stimulus funds ($6 million) were put on the table by the Housing Authority as catalyst.

None of the above are off-the-rack items. In addition to these atypical funders, there were loans from the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency and Mayor’s Office of Housing, plus private equity. All in, there are over a dozen sources. That’s why Hunters View was about seven years in gestation.

It’s “man bites dog” when government entities, non-government organizations and the private sector work inventively together. In this economy, it’s also the offspring of the mother of invention.
The ambitious redevelopment project designed to remake both Candlestick Point and the long-closed Hunters Point Naval Shipyard into a vibrant new San Francisco neighborhood - complete with a new home for the 49ers - is getting a skeptical look from city officials.

Developers and consultants on the project painted a rosy picture of that proposed community for the city's Planning Commission on Thursday evening.

The plan, overwhelmingly endorsed by the city's voters in 2008's Proposition G, calls for building a community for more than 24,000 people on 720 acres of underused bayfront land, with 32 percent of the 10,500 homes and apartments set aside as affordable housing.

The development "will transform a contaminated, underutilized area into two waterfront neighborhoods that resound with activity, innovation, vitality, art and nature," gushed the full-color briefing brochure given to the commissioners by Lennar, the Miami-based home builder behind the project.

The developer also will provide millions for education, housing assistance and job training for neighborhood residents, and promises it would make a "good-faith effort" to hire half of its construction crew from San Francisco.

'A marketing feel'

The commissioners weren't entirely convinced.

"All of this has a little of a marketing feel, rather than planning," said Commissioner Christina Olague. "I'd like to know what we have to do to hold the developer to that 50 percent (local jobs) number or to job training."

Other commissioners worried that the developers were focusing only on a best-case scenario for a huge development plan that could take 20 years to complete and glossing over the problems involved in dropping a community the size of Hercules into the southeast corner of the city.

"I want to see a clear commitment ... of what we're getting," said Commissioner Kathrin Moore. "If we stop short, what are we left with?"

It's Lennar, not the city's general fund, that's at risk for any shortfalls, said Tiffany Bohee of the mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development.

"We have protection in place," she said.

If it goes as planned, the project will transform the Bayview-Hunters Point area.

The new housing units, designed for all income ranges, would be the center of a community that includes neighborhood and regional shopping, space for artists and entertainment, a green-tech research and development center, and plenty of open space.

While a 69,000-seat football stadium on the shipyard site remains the project's showpiece, there are contingency plans to replace the stadium with either homes or research and development space if the 49ers follow through on their plan to move to Santa Clara.
Candlestick-Hunters Point plan draws skeptics

"We really want to make this a pedestrian development," said Tom Evans, a planner for the city redevelopment agency. "We're building in rules (for the new development) to make it feel like a San Francisco neighborhood."

Although there are plenty of approvals still needed before construction can begin, on the top of the list is the replacement of the aging, rundown Alice Griffith housing project with a mixed income residential development, with space reserved for the project's current residents.

Some residents cynical

The prospect of the new neighborhood rising in an area long ignored by the city is one reason residents of Bayview-Hunters Point were the strongest supporters of Prop. G.

"I've never seen the community look forward to something with so much hope and happiness," Eric Butler, a resident of Alice Griffith, told the commission.

But other residents, who have seen plenty of other highly publicized plans for the area fade away, are reserving judgment.

Espanola Jackson, who's been pushing the city for improvements to her Bayview neighborhood since the 1960s, reminded commissioners that the state park at Candlestick Point was built on the old city dump.

"I want development, but I want clean development," she said, "because my community has been filled with everything the rest of the city didn't want."

Thursday's planning hearing was the first of two on the development plan before the commission and the redevelopment agency are asked to certify the project's environmental impact report on June 3.

E-mail John Wildermuth at jwildermuth@sfchronicle.com.

http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/04/17/BAHG1CVSQD.DTL

This article appeared on page C - 2 of the San Francisco Chronicle
Illustration by Paul Madonna

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Viz Valley's Five Mile House: Connection to the rest of SF

Joen Madonna
Sunday, April 18, 2010

Originally claimed by friars in 1775, Visitacion Valley remained predominantly pastureland for longhorn cattle, horses, sheep, goats and pigs for the Mission Dolores until the mid-1800s, when enterprising land-grant settlers used large plots to begin industrializing the area. From the turn of the previous century through the 1930s, residential housing expanded in the valley because of the direct connection to downtown via the Third Street rail line built in 1894. Depending on which way one typically traveled, Viz Valley's central transportation hub, the Five Mile House, was either the beginning or the end of the line into or out of the city. A freestanding flatiron-shaped building with streets on three sides, the Five Mile House was a boardinghouse and saloon, and descriptively named for its location 5 miles from city hall, which was then located at Eighth and Market. This naming convention was commonly used to orient people to the distance from the city center, with the Five Mile House the last railcar stop inside the city, the Four Mile House closer to downtown, and the Six Mile House farther along the road, just outside the city limits. As automobiles replaced train travel, the Bayshore Freeway cut off that streetcar line and essentially Viz Valley from the rest of the city. Locals continued to enjoy the bar and restaurant at the former Five Mile House through the 1970s, and a small-town feeling persists in the valley today. According to longtime resident of the area Mr. Chavez, locals used to tease the owner that he was the only landlord in San Francisco who owned an entire city block. The Five Mile House was not only a hub of Visitacion Valley for nearly a century, it was the connection point of the valley to the rest of the city by an easy and direct route.

http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/04/18/PKM31CS363.DTL

This article appeared on page Q - 35 of the San Francisco Chronicle
An apology, hearings and a 90th birthday

The Board of Supervisors voted 8-2 Tuesday to request that Lennar Corp., the developer of the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard project, issue a formal apology for sending an armed security guard into a community meeting in February at the Nation of Islam Mosque in Bayview-Hunters Point.

Supervisor Chris Daly, who authored the non-binding resolution, said that Kofi Bonner, president of Lennar Urban, already issued a statement calling the incident regrettable. That was a good start, Daly said, but didn't go far enough.

Voting in favor of the resolution were Daly and Supervisors Michela Alloto-Pier, John Avalos, David Campos, David Chiu, Bevan Dufty, Eric Mar and Ross Mirkarimi. Opposed were Sean Elsbernd and Carmen Chu. Sophie Maxwell was absent.

UPDATE: Bonner issued a new statement before the board meeting was adjourned. "Lennar apologizes for any actions that escalated tensions or led to additional misunderstanding in the Bayview-Hunters Point community," he said.

In other action Tuesday, Mirkarimi called for the creation of an "adult re-entry court" to provide people who violate probation or parole and other recidivists with alternatives to incarceration; he also requested a comprehensive report on San Francisco's troubled crime lab and how it compares to other crime labs.

Alloto-Pier requested regular audits of city departments to be "vigilant about cutting waste, fraud and abuse." Mar introduced a resolution urging the National Park Service to give strong consideration to allowing the family that operates Louis' Restaurant overlooking Ocean Beach to retain the concession rights to the eatery, which Mar called a "Richmond tradition."

Chu asked for a hearing on public safety in city parks, with a focus on Golden Gate Park.

And finally, the full board wished a happy 90th birthday to Jane Morrison, a long-time Democratic Party activist and environmentalist in the city who is still going strong. "I'll be back here in 10 years," Morrison said at a City Hall reception in her honor.
Resolution voices support for Louis’

Supervisor urges feds to keep family-run business in coveted spot

By Joshua Sabatini
Examiner Staff Writer

The City is rooting for the decades-old, family-operated Louis’ Restaurant to remain open for generations to come.

Supervisor Eric Mar introduced a resolution Tuesday that would put the board on record of supporting a long-term lease for the 73-year-old restaurant at 902 Point Lobos Ave. above the Sutro Baths.

As The Examiner reported April 6, the fate of the restaurant has become uncertain after the National Park Service, which administers the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, decided to solicit bids to determine who should obtain a long-term lease to operate at the location. Proposals are due by May 25.

The restaurant was opened on Valentine’s Day 1937 by Louis and Helen Hontalas, and has remained in the family—operated by their sons and grandchildren.

“Many of you know the beloved Louis’ Restaurant that’s been there for 70 years. It was opened up on Valentine’s Day,” Mar said during Tuesday’s board meeting. “It’s been a great experience to go to Louis’ and to see the most beautiful view of, I think, of within The City and have breakfast within a family-run restaurant.”

The resolution is not legally binding, but is meant to send a message as it “strongly urges the Golden Gate National Recreation Area to consider the importance of this cultural institution and the local family that has kept this San Francisco tradition serving loyal customers.”

The board is expected to vote Tuesday on the resolution.

IN OTHER ACTION

• In an 8-2 vote, a resolution was adopted calling on the Lennar Corp. — contracted with The City for redeveloping Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood — to issue a formal written apology to The City and the Stop Lennar Action Movement “for irresponsible and potentially dangerous behavior.”

A member of the Lennar security team attended a community meeting at a Nation of Islam mosque carrying a firearm. The security guard was brought outside and handcuffed to a pole until police arrived on the scene.

Supervisors Carmen Chu and Sean Elsbernd opposed the resolution. Supervisor Sophie Maxwell, whose district covers the Bayview where the incident occurred, was absent from the meeting Tuesday.
McLaren Park in running for renovation grant

By: Katie Worth
Examiner Staff Writer
04/24/10 9:30 AM PDT

This makeover will need a little more than a touch of makeup and a new dress.

San Francisco’s sprawling McLaren Park is competing with nine other parks nationwide for a $30,000 Sears More Green Across America “makeover grant” this week – and needs your vote.

The Sears website describes McLaren Park as “one of the largest and most treasured parks in San Francisco,” but states that “parts of the park are in clear need of beautification and renovation.”

The grant would go toward renovating the Burrows and Gambier Street entrance to the park, which the website describes as “one of the glaring examples of deterioration.” The site is depicted as a scene of patchy grass, little landscaping, and a dirty sand pit used primarily by dogs for a bathroom.

The park that garners the most votes on this site will win the contest, but it looks like bedraggled McLaren has far to go: of the 10 parks, it’s currently ranked seventh, with just 450 votes, compared to Fun Forest in Chesapeake, Va., which has 23,262 votes so far.

But there’s still time: the contest ends on May 5.

More from Katie Worth

- Train-truck accident delays T-Third line
- Upper Haight welcomes new farmers market
- City eyeing office space near City Hall
- Arts Commission wins grant for Buddha sculpture
- Eroded road to reopen in June

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Lennar, security team apologize for gun-in-mosque debacle

By: John Upton

04/27/10 3:15 PM PDT

A homebuilding company apologized for a controversial incident in which an armed guard sent to record a health-related community meeting inside a makeshift mosque was placed under citizen’s arrest.

Miami-based Verasys LLC – the risk-management company that hired the security guard – also apologized for the incident and said Miami-based homebuilder Lennar did not know that its consultant would carry a weapon to the meeting.

The plain-clothes garbed guard was removed from the Feb. 18 community meeting in the Bayview district after a concealed weapon was spotted by meeting participants.

A US EPA consultant shared health information during the meeting with community members about asbestos dust kicked up at the shuttered Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, where Lennar is leading redevelopment efforts.

The former SFPD officer was licensed to carry the weapon and not charged with any crimes.

The meeting was held at the Center for Self Improvement and Community Development on Third Street, which also serves as a mosque.

"Notwithstanding my legal right to carry a legal firearm, I was unaware that the presence of my firearm would result in so much controversy," Verasys's guard wrote in his own apology letter, which was signed only by attorneys. "Had I known the meeting was being held in a place of worship, I would not have brought a weapon."

Verasys was recently acquired by Andrews International, a Los Angeles-based firm that advertises that it employs more than 10,000 experts in security, investigative and disaster-related services.

Lennar Urban President Kofi Bonner apologized for the incident in an open letter after San Francisco’s Board of Supervisors voted to request such an apology.

“Lennar apologizes for any actions that escalated tensions or led to additional misunderstanding in the Bayview Hunters Point community,” Lennar Urban President wrote in the statement. “We do not condone and deeply regret the incident on February 18. As stated in the apology letters submitted to the Board by the security firm and its independent consultant, Lennar neither authorized nor was aware that the consultant would be carrying a concealed firearm that night to a community meeting at the Center for Self Improvement and Community Development.”

Supervisor Chris Daly, who sponsored the legislation that requested the apology, told the Examiner that he appreciated Bonner’s statement but said it failed to address main points raised by supervisors.

“Most importantly,” Daly said in an email, “it is not addressed to the (Stop Lennar Action Movement) Coalition.”
City standing tall 160 years later

Fire, death, shifting government, rapid growth were norm in 1850

By Katie Worth
Examiner Staff Writer

Think San Francisco has problems?

"Today's issues are mere trivalities compared to those faced by San Francisco's first city government, established 160 years ago today. At that time, The City had grown tenfold in mere months, burned to the ground more times, lacked a water or sewer system, and had a pesky problem of people dying left and right and no one wanting to take responsibility for burying them."

The city of San Francisco was officially incorporated April 16, 1850. Just a few years before, The City existed as the quiet Mexican pueblo of Yerba Buena, centered around a plaza at what's now Portsmouth Square in Chinatown. After Capt. John Montgomery sailed into town and claimed it for the United States in 1846, there had been several makeshift governments hastily assembled by groups vying for power — at one point, there were three civil governments and one military government simultaneously competing for authority. Meanwhile, The City's population grew from several hundred to 20,000 in little more than a year.

There was very little law and order," said professor Gray Brechin, a historical geographer at UC Berkeley. "It was sort of an overgrown mining camp with a harbor." The first charter — which would be replaced by new charters several times in the next decade — established the southern boundary of The City in the empty land approximately where 16th Street exists today, and the western boundary approximately where Webster Street runs today. It divided San Francisco into eight wards "so that each ward shall contain as near as may be, the same number of white male inhabitants."

The City had just burned to the ground on Christmas Eve the year before — and was to burn six more times in the next year and a half — so fire abatement was of foremost concern to officials. The charter directed the government "to regulate the storage of gunpowder, tar, pitch, resin and all other combustible materials, and the use of candles and lights in shops, stables and other places."

Though The City was bordered by water on three sides, it didn't have many reliable water sources, a problem exacerbated by the mushrooming population, according to history professor Robert Cherny of San Francisco State University. "They were housed in ships run aground, in tents, in whatever shanty was available," he said. "Not surprisingly, there were no fire codes, so this was a very-flammable city."

The first mayor of San Francisco, John Geary, spent much of his first State of The City address considering the fire problem. The City's first charter would not last long, Cherny said. By the next year, a group of vigilantes took over city government and insisted on a new charter. The same would happen again in 1856, he said.

Brechin said that period in San Francisco history is easy to romanticize, but the reality — a city filled with rats, prone to devastating fires, lacking sewage or water systems, and run by a constantly changing set of characters — is that it was a pretty ugly time.

"I'm glad I wasn't there," he said. "It must have been god-awful."

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1850

Mayor: John W. Geary
Population: 94,766
Leading Industries: Mining, shipping

- Several earthquakes felt throughout the year
- City plagued by fires
- Competing fire companies form; The City adopts rules for proper Fire Department organization
- First dramatic entertainment, "The Wife," at Washington Hall
- Hygeia, Bryant and Co., opened first bath house on Maiden Lane
- 500-pound grizzly bear caught near Mission Dolores
- Mayor Geary welcomed new Chinese residents to San Francisco in a ceremony in Portsmouth Square
- Presidio and other areas reserved for military purposes
- Grand jury condemned gambling in The City as "a crying evil" and urged that something must be done about price fixing, along with numbers of houses of ill-repute
- New sidewalk laid along Battery Street
- Catholic Bishop Joseph Sadoc Alemamy arrives

2010

Mayor: Gavin Newsom
Population: 808,977
Leading Industry: Tourism

- City schools cut services as budgets shrink
- America's Cup sailing race won
- Mayor runs for state office
- Grime lab scandal rocks city
- Planned Transbay Transit Center will link with high-speed rail from L.A.
- Santa Clara goes to ballot to steal 49ers
- City breaks ground on Central Subway
- U.S. Postal Service closes city branches

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The City's first ordinances

In the months after San Francisco was incorporated, the Common Council of Aldermen and the mayor took on the issues of the day.

No. 7: Regulating Bar Rooms, etc.: All bar rooms and gaming tables in this city shall be closed at twelve o'clock, midnight, under a penalty of fifty dollars and not more than one hundred dollars.

No. 9: Relative to Supplying The City with Water Buckets: That the person or persons occupying any house or other building in this city shall keep in each of said houses or other buildings six water buckets marked with the initials of their names to be used upon occurrence of any fire.

No. 23: To Prevent Running Horses in the Public Streets: That no person or persons shall be allowed to race, ride or drive at such speed on any of the public ways within the limits of this city as to endanger or hazard the life or limbs of any person under penalty of not less than twenty nor more than fifty dollars at the discretion of the recorder.

No. 25: Against the Violation of the Sabbath: That no person or persons shall be allowed to play at any game of chance or hazard on the Sabbath under the penalty of not less than fifty nor more than five hundred dollars.
We hate to brag...

Our physicians are ranked among the best in California year after year.

BROWN-TOLAND

Treating people, not just patients.

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The best in California year after year.

Our physicians

We hate to brag...

Large selection of

Asian Food & Specialty Foods

Beverage ( Hawaiian )

Strawberry Banana
Blueberry & Monster
Strawberry C-Monster
Mango Tango

Orange Juice (ea.)

Large selection of specialty sodas available!

Full selection of knitting & sewing supplies available!

THIS WEEK'S SALE ITEMS!

Crystal Geyser
Spring Water
1.5 gallon

Black Beans
15 oz.

Mustard
Squeeze Bottle, 20 oz.

Bumble Bee
Chunk Light Tuna
In Water, 8 oz.

BevYaT

Whole Peeled Tomatoes
28 oz.

Beverage ( Hawaiian )

Sale from
4/23-4/29

1650 Polk Street @ Clay • (415) 775-9090
Store Hours: Sunday–Thursday 9am–9pm • Friday & Saturday 9am–9:30pm

Gascón speaks out about Arizona bill

Police Chief George Gascón is making waves in Arizona again for his opposition to a bill that would make it a state crime to be in the country illegally.

Gascón, former police chief in Mesa, Ariz., often sparred with Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio about immigration issues. Gascón said he worried the bill would lead to racial profiling by officers. —Renee C. Byer

City reported to be using stimulus as intended

For those with doubts about stimulus spending, here's some good news: San Francisco isn't wasting its funding.

According to California Inspector General Laura Chick's audit of federal stimulus funds received by San Francisco, the city has no reportable issues concerning how it's spending the money it received through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

San Francisco is set to receive more than $1.12 billion in federal stimulus funds.

City reported to be using stimulus as intended

Alexandria Theater plans going up for public airing

On April 28, as promised, the folks looking to redevelop the Alexandria

New features slated for transit hub to be revealed

By Will Reisman

The $1.6 billion Transbay Transit Center, which is located at Mission and First streets, is expected to begin full service in 2017. The final completion date of the mixed-use development is slated for 2018.

The design presentation will be made at the Transbay Joint Powers Authority board of directors meeting at 9:30 a.m. today at City Hall. Construction on the project should begin this summer, with the final completion date of the mixed-use development slated for 2017. The state's planned high-speed rail line, which would connect passengers from Anaheim to San Francisco, is expected to begin full service in 2020.

The Transbay Transit Center will replace the existing Transbay Transit Terminal, which is located at Mission and First streets.

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ATTACHMENT 10
The iconic tower intended to come first is nowhere in sight, but San Francisco's new Transbay Terminal is ready to go.

There are still plans for a 5.4-acre park that will rest atop three levels of shops and bus platforms, 70 feet in the air. The architecture retains the glassy futurism of the concept selected with fanfare in 2007.

Now, after two years of tweaking, the completed terminal design will be presented today to the Transbay Joint Powers Authority. Officials say the first stage of construction - demolition of the existing terminal at First and Mission streets - should begin in August or September.

Under this scenario, the $1.189 billion terminal would open for bus service by 2017. An additional $400 million will be spent to build a shell beneath ground that will eventually house a train platform and concourse.

"There are two missions" in the design, said Fred Clarke of Pelli Clarke Pelli, the lead architects. "We want this to be a great transit center by which the city is perceived, but also the very best neighbor it can be."

The complex would replace the existing terminal, a concrete structure that extends across First, Fremont and Beale streets. It is the terminus for bus routes to San Francisco from throughout the Bay Area.

Prominent architect

The 1939 terminal was designed by Timothy Pflueger, the city's most prominent architect of the era. Because of this connection, there have been sporadic calls to restore and upgrade the building instead of tearing it down.

One obstacle is the difficulty and expense of trying to thread tunnels for commuter trains and California's high-speed rail system beneath Pflueger's terminal. But the new center also is designed to be a centerpiece of the emerging Transbay district, inviting rather than heavy.

Where the new terminal crosses First and Fremont streets, for instance, there will be a 25-foot clearance between the sidewalk and the underside of the bus deck. The current clearance is 18 feet.

The terminal will be veiled in glass panels supported from behind by a lean net of steel. Corner brackets clamping the glass in place will be embedded with LED lighting, as will the underside of the bus deck above the streets.

And unlike today's low-ceilinged waiting rooms, travelers will enter the facility through the Grand Hall, a glassed-in space between First and Fremont streets that will be 100 feet wide, 260 feet long and as much as 100 feet high.

For all the emphasis on aesthetics, much of the design work involved the structural engineering required to handle an anticipated 114,000 daily travelers by 2030.

The terminal is designed to ride out an earthquake on the scale of the magnitude 7.9 temblor in 1906. The foundation beneath the train platform will consist of a 5-foot-thick mat of concrete. Each panel of the outer glass veil has four inches of air between it and the next panel, allowing air to circulate and also preventing the panels from rubbing together and shattering during an earthquake.
Plan for new Transbay Terminal in, under budget

"The awning is designed to move and flex, almost like the scales of a fish," Clarke said, referring to the outer veil. The terminal in a sense will do this as well, consisting of three structures linked by rubber-like expansion joints.

Under 2007 budget

It's a mark of today's slow economy that the elaborate project remains on the budget set in 2007, when the Transbay authority held a competition to select a design team for the new terminal and a developer for the adjacent parcel at First and Mission streets, a site seen as the future home of San Francisco's tallest building.

Not only that, the $1.189 billion budget now includes the rooftop park, which in 2007 was to be financed separately.

The final park design by PWP Landscape Architecture isn't as elaborate as the original rooftop concept: The waterway along one edge is gone, as is a thin southern extension that would have covered the ramp that will be used by buses to and from the Bay Bridge.

But the park space remains expansive, 1,400 feet long and 170 feet wide. A grassy bowl at one end could seat 1,000 people. The design also includes a picnic meadow, a children's park and a small cafe.

Entertainment options

"It's a landscape that needs to be broken down into more manageable pieces," said Maria Ayerdi-Kaplan, executive director of the authority. "That's why the programming is so important, the cultural and entertainment components."

Other changes have streamlined the terminal's structure, such as reducing the number of skylights from five to three. It still is expected to receive a gold ranking from the U.S. Green Building Council.

As for the once-touted 1,000-foot tower, the new design treats the building's planned footprint as a plaza filled with a grid of potted trees. Developer Hines continues to negotiate the fine points of the land sale agreement with the Transbay authority, and the city is still crafting the zoning that would allow such heights.

While the existing terminal is demolished and the new transit center is being built, buses will use a temporary terminal two blocks away at Main and Folsom streets.

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http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/04/22/MNGS1D2189.DTL

This article appeared on page A - 1 of the San Francisco Chronicle
New digs going to ex-homeless

By John Upton
Examiner Staff Writer

Ground-floor retail outlets and supportive housing will move into the first building expected to be constructed as part of a planned new South of Market neighborhood.

Construction of a boxy, yellow and gray, eight-story building for formerly homeless residents is planned to begin next spring near the Transbay Transit Terminal and wrap up by 2013.

The residential building is one of 39 planned to be built within a 10-block area surrounding a transit hub that was freed up for redevelopment after freeways and connectors were toppled in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake.

The 120-unit building at the east corner of Folsom and Essex streets will be filled with studio and one-bedroom apartments. On-site counseling services for residents will be available on the ground floor.

"The goal of this," Redevelopment Agency Project Manager Olson Lee said, "is to keep people housed and then to work on whatever issues they have, whether it's a psychiatric illness or something along those lines, and to try to connect them with all the services available in The City."

Storefronts designed to accommodate and entice neighborhood-serving shops are planned along Folsom Street, Lee said.

Presumed park predator turns out to be harmless

By Mike Aldax
Examiner Staff Writer

The man whose recent activities at a Richmond district playground made local moms nervous that their kids could be in danger may not be a threat after all, police said.

Parents mobilized in recent days against the man they say shows up at Mountain Lake Park playground without kids, does pull-ups, offers children candy and takes pictures of boys and girls using his cell phone.

Fearing the man who wears sunglasses, slacks and a jacket while at the park might attack their children, parents launched a widely circulated e-mail campaign that earned much attention from community groups and an investigation by the Police Department.

Police identified the man last week and visited his home Monday, according to a police update. He was "cooperative," "unguarded" and "surprised at being the subject of a police investigation," according to a report from Richmond Police Station Capt. Richard Corriea.

"He allowed officers to examine his cell phone and his laptop computer," the report said. "He stated that he hadn't taken any photographs. He explained that he was looking at his phone's screen while using the telephone's stopwatch feature as part of his workout."

The investigation, which included a background check, "did not disclose any facts that suggest that the individual had engaged in illegal activity or that he presents a risk to our community," Corriea's report said.

Police then told the man about signs in the park that say adults are prohibited from entering the children's play area except when they are with children, Corriea said.

"I hope that the results of our investigation help to assuage any worries you have had about the safety of children in our community," he said.
Bayer grabs Mission Bay R&D space

Drugmaker's first S.F. foray

San Francisco Business Times - by J.K. Dineen

**Bayer** will open a San Francisco research and development facility in Mission Bay, relocating a group that was previously in Richmond.

The company’s Bayer Healthcare Pharmaceuticals is set to lease almost 50,000 square feet at 455 Mission Bay South, a new, two-building, 210,000-square-foot complex that will also house the new San Francisco offices of the drug marker **Nektar**.

Bayer will occupy a portion of the ground floor as well as floors three and four. Nektar, which has subleased 102,000 square feet from **Pfizer**, has an option to expand onto the second floor, according to sources involved in the project.

While the lease is still being finalized, developer **Alexandria Real Estate Equities** has already started work on the build-out for Bayer. Over the past two months, the developer pulled permits for $10 million in tenant improvements in the building, according to Department of Building Inspection documents. Permitted work includes “interior offices, laboratories, conference rooms, mechanicals, electrical, plumbing, and fire sprinkler systems.” The interior architect is Madison, Wisc.-based Flad Architects while San Mateo-based **BN Builders** is the contractor, according to the permits.

The move will represent the first time Bayer HealthCare has had a presence in San Francisco proper, although the company has a large facility in Berkeley, which is home to a protein-based therapeutics group focusing on hematology and immunology inflammation.

In 2006, Bayer announced that it would be closing its 52-acre Berlex facility in Richmond. A year ago, Bayer hired the brokerage GVA Kidder Mathews to market the 350,000-square-foot Richmond campus, now named the Hilltop Science & Innovation Campus. At the time, Helmut Altmann, Bayer’s vice president of integration program management, said the company would continue to occupy 100,000 square feet there for three to five years. Bayer HealthCare also agreed in 2009 to invest $100 million in its Berkeley manufacturing site, after the city worked to extend a tax credit program for the company.

Neither Alexandria executives nor a Bayer spokesperson returned a call and email seeking comment. During an earnings call in February, Alexandria CEO Joel Marcus said his company was “in the early stages of discussions with a very significant expansion with one major such company, which would also be a new client to the portfolio.” During the call, Marcus said that biotech rents dropped about 3 percent since the end of 2008, according to a transcript of the call providing by Seeking Alpha.

Luring Bayer to Mission Bay is a coup for Alexandria and for the 303-acre Mission Bay campus. Over the past four years, the biotech developer has been averaging one new building a year on the campus and current
tenants include Merck & Co.-owned Sirna Therapeutics, Presidio Pharmaceuticals Inc., Celgene Corp., Pharmion, J. David Gladstone Institutes and UCSF's Orthopedic Institute.

Another biotech, Fibrogen, moved last year into an Illinois Street building developed by Shorenstein Properties and SKS Development. Nektar, currently based in San Carlos, is scheduled to move into Mission Bay by the end of the year. In March, the San Francisco Business Times reported that pioneering Mission Bay biotech Five Prime Therapeutics Inc. will leave Mission Bay, opting for cheaper space at Two Corporate Drive in South San Francisco.

Despite nearly 700,000 square feet of vacancy at 500 Terry Francois Blvd. and China Basin Landing, Mission Bay has been a bright spot for the commercial real estate market, said Colin Yasukochi of Jones Lang LaSalle, who expects several significant leases to be signed in the submarket this year.

"Biotechnology is a growing sector in the economy, and one of the few segments of the economy that has been growing through the recession," said Yasukochi. "Mission Bay is truly coming into its own — that is the market to watch."

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Local News

Sand ladder to remain

Changes to beach stairs rejected by park users, environmentalists

By Katie Worth
San francisco Staff Writer

Athletes, beachgoers and bikers can heave a sigh of relief — though their quads may not: For now, the sand ladder isn't going anywhere.

The sand ladder is a 400-step staircase that descends from the bluffs on the western edge of the Presidio down to Baker Beach, and the rigor necessary to climb it has made it a landmark for training athletes — as well as anybody looking for access to the City's customarily rude beach.

To the dismay of many of regular users, the National Park Service last year proposed to remove the trail as part of a larger plan to improve the portion of the California Coastal Trail that winds through the Presidio.

As it stands, some of that trail is wide and accessible to bicycles and pedestrians, but much of it consists of a narrow dirt path adjacent to the Presidio's busy Lincoln Boulevard.

The long-term vision put forward by the National Park Service was to run the path slightly farther from the road and closer to the bluffs, and routing it in a way that would make the entire path accessible to wheelchairs and pedestrians, explained Kate Bickert, associate director of park projects and stewardship for the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, the nonprofit that partners with the park service in many projects.

The reason the park was considering taking out the sand ladder was to comply with environmental regulations, explained Steve Ortega, environmental protection specialist at the National Park Service.

Because the new, accessible trail would have run through the habitat of an endangered plant species, the Park Service would be required to mitigate that impact by restoring the plant's habitat elsewhere. The sand ladder also runs through that habitat, so the idea was to restore that habitat to exchange for disturbing the habitat with the new trail, he said.

However, the idea did not prove popular with either park users or environmentalists. He said about 40 people commented on the project, equal numbers opposing the removal of the sand ladder and concerned about the new trail's environmental impact.

The Park Service heard the opposition and also realized it would need to do much more environmental analysis before trying to move forward, so for now, it is postponing the controversial part of the plan, explained National Park Service spokeswoman Chris Powell.

For now, demolishing the sand ladder is off the table, Ortega said.

“We realize we don’t have community consensus at this point and it’s too little too complex for us to take on at this point in time,” he said. “But I wouldn’t say it’s never going to go forward.”

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Group seeks to preserve WWII-era building

By Kamala Kelkar
San Francisco Staff Writer

Plans for a park on a waterfront strip on the developing, 60-year-old land fill south of AT&T Park also include the fate of the neighborhood’s iconic World War II Bluepeter Building.

A playground, several park benches and grassy knolls will crown the Bay’s front along Terry Francois Boulevard near Mariposa Street, but one tentative design utilizes the Bluepeter Building and the other assumes its demolition.

The Fort Commission initially planned to destroy the blue painted, wood structure built in the 1940s where the Navy fixed its ships because of the cost — up to $3.1 million to restore it in an economy that might not attract vendors.

But neighbors worried the building’s preservation. There are 6,000 residential units and more than 50,000 square feet of retail planned.

“Is it a gateway building,” said Friends of Bluepeter member Janet Carpenilli. “There were a lot of ship buildings all along the water and many of them are mostly gone.”

Commissioners voted to let Friends of Bluepeter take over the cost of restoration, under the condition: they raise $600,000 by March 2011 and use it for the good of the public.

“The building can be reshaped as most likely a restaurant or into some other ancillary uses for the parks, like a maritime history museum,” Carpenilli said.

Commissioners also voted to demolish the Bluepeter building if the plan fails, and then build more seating.

The design commissioners approved make up just less than a quarter of the 9-acre Bayfront park where parking for a new boat launch as well as a segment of the Bay Trail for pedestrians and bicycles has already been developed.

The Bayfront park — one of a handful of parcels primarily for passive recreation such as sitting to enjoy the waterfront — among more than 25 that make up about 40 acres of open space in the massive Mission Bay redevelopment project.

The current park design keeps the existing, non-native eucalyptus trees per request of the neighbors, but it also states that when they reach their sunset, they will be replaced with coastal live oaks.

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Hospitality business looks ready to rebound

Sir Francis Drake put up for sale as numbers point to bounceback

By Albert C. Pacello
San Francisco Staff Writer

The City’s biggest industry — hospitality — may be coming back sooner than expected, new data indicates.

“In general, we are a market that’s finding its bottom,” said Rob Kline, president and co-founder of the Chartres Lodging Group LLC of San Francisco, which operates about 100 properties worldwide.

“Last year was a very difficult year for the Bay Area in general. This is a very difficult year.”

The City’s biggest industry — hospitality business — may be coming back sooner than expected, new data indicates.

But there are no major hotels being built, land is scarce and there are union unrest are negatives when selling a hotel property.

The slow economy, weak convention business and continued labor unrest are negatives when selling a hotel property.

There’s always going to be no new supply.”

The current park design keeps the existing, non-native eucalyptus trees per request of the neighbors, but it also states that when they reach their sunset, they will be replaced with coastal live oaks.

“Looking at the long-term history, this market will bounce back here as well and the bounce back will be quite steep because there’s no new supply.”

CINDY STANFILL/THE EXAMINER

Sir Francis Drake Hotel

• 460 Powell St.
• 416 rooms
• Built in 1928 for $5 million
• Bought for $65 million in July 2009
• $20 million in renovations in foreclosure or mortgage default in the first quarter of this year.

The City’s convention business is projected to decline this year from 854,000 room nights to 787,000 room nights this year, the San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau reports.

The slow economy, weak convention business and continued labor unrest are negatives when selling a hotel property.

But there are no major hotels being built, land is scarce and there are tremendous costs to enter the market, Kline said.

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“She’s not going to snap back,” Kline cautioned. The economy is still fragile.

In a study his firm released this week, 106 Bay Area hotels were either in foreclosure or mortgage default in the first quarter of this year.

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UC targeted seed fund backs first startup

Mission Bay Capital’s $8.5 million fund, aimed at seeding bioscience companies spun out of University of California research, has made its first investment.

Redwood Bioscience landed an investment of less than $1 million, CEO Karen Boezi said. That will take the young Burlingame company through proof-of-concept stage for technology licensed out of UC Berkeley.

Redwood Bioscience already was familiar to leaders of Mission Bay Capital LLC. The company fine-tuned its business plan through QB3 New Venture Consulting, an offshoot of the California Institute for Quantitative Biosciences, that is based at UC San Francisco.

QB3 is best known for its Garage and incubator network for companies spun out of UC research. But Mission Bay Capital, which includes QB3 director Regis Kelly and associate director Douglas Crawford as unpaid directors, is the first effort to put actual cash into those types of companies.

In all, Mission Bay Capital hopes to invest in 15 companies. The fund, launched in August, operates outside the UC system and receives no state or public funding. Mission Bay Capital backers — who include VC Brook Byers and Jack Wadworth, the former head of Morgan Stanley’s Asia operations — say funding will allow portfolio companies to advance their projects and land more funding from traditional venture capital firms.

Other fund investors include Pfizer Inc. and the investment arm of law firm Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati. Most recently, the fund received a $1 million investment from Italian pharmaceutical company Zambon Co. SpA.

Redwood Bioscience’s “aldehyde tagging” technology — used to join small molecules to larger proteins and improve the strength and effective life of biotherapeutics — was born in the lab of UC Berkeley chemistry professor Carolyn Bertozzi. She co-founded the company with David Rabuka, a former grad student in her lab, who is Redwood’s chief scientific officer, and Mike Blank, a former management consultant who is Redwood’s vice president of operations.

The company, initially funded by angel investors, last fall received a $1 million, two-year National Institutes of Health grant. The company also is starting the process for a Series A investment. But, Boezi said, “in this environment it’s not going to happen overnight.”

“We have some time to raise that capital,” she said.