INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Agency Commissioners

FROM: Fred Blackwell, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Media Clippings from 7.2.10 to 7.14.10

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

SOMA & TRANSBAY:

Attachment 1: SF Business Times: “South of Market offers bright spot in somber San Francisco market”, July 2, 2010

Attachment 2: SF Business Times: “Temporary Transbay Terminal opens August 7”, July 6, 2010

Attachment 3: SF Business Times: “TMG to manage reposition of SoMA office building”, July 9, 2010

Attachment 4: SF Examiner.com: “TJPA board expected to approve contract for Caltrans employee parking,” July 12, 2010

*Attachment 16: SF Examiner.com: “Crews dig up past to build for future,” July 14, 2010*

REDEVELOPMENT:

Attachment 5: SF Business Times: “Mid-Market retail project wins approval”, July 8, 2010

Attachment 6: SF Examiner.com: “Decrepit block poised for rebirth,” July 9, 2010
   “Nathaniel Ford,” July 9, 2010
BAYVIEW HUNTERS POINT; HUNTERS POINT SHIPYARD; VISITACION VALLEY:

Attachment 7: SF Business Times: "Developer Holliday takes over Bayview job," July 2, 2010

Attachment 8: SFE Examiner.com: "Big project turns on small bridge," July 4, 2010

Attachment 9: SFE Examiner.com: "Hunters Point project must pass for The City’s sake," July 6, 2010

Attachment 10: SFE Examiner.com: "Gervin, Gilmore taking time out for city’s youngsters," July 8, 2010


Attachment 12: SFE Examiner.com: "Damaged creek to be source of Bayview jobs," July 11, 2010


Attachment 14: SFE Examiner.com: "Housing project is on thin ice," July 12, 2010

Attachment 15: SFE Examiner.com: "Chiu could meet political Waterloo in shipyard plans," July 14, 2010

Attachment 16: SFE Examiner.com: "Study highlights shipyard benefits on eve of vote," July 13, 2010


South of Market offers bright spot in somber San Francisco market

San Francisco Business Times - by J.K. Dineen

Will fast-growing technology firms save San Francisco’s commercial leasing market?

San Francisco tenants gave back another 570,000 square feet of office space in the second quarter, with Wells Fargo relinquishing 350,000 square feet of space at 155 Fifth St. and BlackRock vacating 113,000 square feet at 45 Fremont St., according to a Grubb & Ellis report.

Combined with the 560,000 square feet of negative absorption in the first quarter, the market has seen a net increase of 1.3 million square feet of newly vacant space so far this year — enough space to accommodate 6,500 workers. Vacancy rates rose from 17.6 to 18.5 percent.

But if the trends still look grim, the atmosphere in SoMa is anything but somber. Technology companies like Salesforce, Ubisoft and Trulia all inked substantial deals. Large tech companies Zynga and Dolby are in the market for more than 200,000 square feet, while out-of-town tenants like the mobile ad firm Graystripe and online advice company LivePerson hope to relocate to SoMa.

Grubb & Ellis calculates a 13 percent increase in tenant demand over the last six months, with tech firms representing more than 30 percent of the demand. The tenant representative firm Studley is tracking 1.5 million square feet of demand from tech companies. Space near the Caltrain station is snapped up quickly.

“Anything near Fourth and Townsend is the holy grail right now,” said Jeffrey Moeller of Grubb & Ellis.

But the anticipation of a San Francisco office market recovery by bullish landlords and optimistic economists in the second quarter of 2010 “appears to be ahead of reality,” according to Studley. Studley sees the fundamentals remaining weak, with total availability hovering at 19.7 percent, just below the all-time high of 20.2 percent reached one year ago.

“The titans of San Francisco’s tenant base — legal, banking and insurance companies — are simply not growing in 2010,” said Steve Barker, Studley executive vice president.

But for tech firms seeking under 30,000 square feet, it’s beginning to feel more like 1999 than 2009. If you look at the sort of Class B space South of Market most tenants are attracted to, rents increased 2 percent in the second quarter, according to Colin Yasukochi, research director of Jones Lang LaSalle. While SoMa, Mission Bay, Showplace Square and Yerba Buena have a combined availability rate of 27 percent, much of the available space doesn’t work for small tenants. If the large blocks of space like 370 Third St., 500 Terry Francois and 155 Fifth St. are not included, availability drops to about 10 percent, he said.

“That is what people are talking about when they say tech firms are having a hard time finding space,” said Yasukochi.
“Markets are made up of half statistics and half emotion,” said Mark Geisreiter, managing director of Grubb & Ellis. “Small subsets of the market are starting to come back, which is the first sign of a recovery — not everything recovers at once.”

J.K. Dineen covers real estate for the San Francisco Business Times. Contact him at jkdineen@bizjournals.com or (415) 288-4971. Read his blog postings at Bay Area BizTalk.

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Temporary Transbay Terminal opens Aug. 7
San Francisco Business Times - by Eric Young

A temporary Transbay Terminal will open August 7 as construction crews begin demolition of the existing terminal.

The Transbay Joint Powers Authority said the temporary terminal will be located at Howard and Main streets in San Francisco. It will serve as the temporary bus facility until completion of the new Transbay Transit Center at First and Mission streets in 2017.

The temporary terminal will serve several bus lines, including AC Transit, Muni, Greyhound, WestCAT Lynx, Greyhound, SamTrans and Golden Gate Transit.

The open-air facility will serve AC Transit, Greyhound and WestCAT Lynx on the inside of the site and Muni, Golden Gate Transit and SamTrans on the perimeter.

The temporary facility will be in use until the new $4.2 billion Transbay Terminal is completed. The transit center project is part of a wider redevelopment proposal surrounding the new transportation terminal, bounded roughly by Mission, Main, Folsom and Second streets. Plans call for nearly 2,600 new homes, 3 million square feet of new office and commercial space and 100,000 square feet of retail.

One of the most prominent elements of the redevelopment involves a possible 1,000-foot office highrise built by Hines Group next to the transit terminal.

Eric Young’s beats include law, government, transportation and sports for the San Francisco Business Times.
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TMG to manage reposition of SoMA office building

San Francisco Business Times - by J.K. Dineen

Continental Development Corp. has tapped San Francisco development firm TMG Partners to manage the repositioning of the 400,000-square-foot 155 Fifth St., which Wells Fargo vacated at the end of June.

TMG President Michael Covarrubias said the firm is evaluating all the options for the property — including housing and retail — but it is probably best suited for a large technology or government office tenant. The San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau has also looked at the property as a potential location for the expansion of Moscone West, but is currently focused on another TMG-owned property, 680 Folsom.

The Fifth Street property redevelopment comes at a time when central SoMa between Fourth and Seventh streets has seen radical change and could undergo even more development. A block South of 155 Fifth St., the $460 million Westfield San Francisco Centre opened in 2006; just to the north, the InterContinental San Francisco hotel was completed in 2008. In addition, the Hearst Corp. has hired Forest City to come up with a redevelopment scheme for the San Francisco Chronicle property directly across the street.

“We are going to look at a few alternative uses,” said Covarrubias. “It could be in the right place at the right time. It’s right in the middle of an up-and-coming pathway.”

Continental owns or manages 4 million square feet in Southern California and, like TMG, specializes in new development as well as reviving aging or challenged urban properties. Continental Senior Vice President Alex Rose characterized TMG as a Northern California version of his firm.

“When we knew Wells was going to leave, the conclusion we came to was that it was important to have local knowledge of market conditions, brokers and city folks and processes,” said Rose.

Contact him at jkdineen@bizjournals.com or (415) 288-4971.
Read his blog postings at Bay Area BizTalk.

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TJPA board expected to approve contract for Caltrans employee parking

By: Will Reisman
Examiner Staff Writer
07/12/10 12:08 PM PDT

With the existing Transbay Terminal scheduled to be demolished Aug. 14, the Transbay Joint Powers Authority is set to approve a $144,000 contract agreement to procure new indoor parking spots for employees on Caltrans’ legal team.

Historically, the employees of Caltrans, the state transportation department, were able to park in the Transbay Terminal located on Mission and First streets. However, under plans afoot to construct a new, state-of-the-art transit center, Caltrans employees will no longer have their indoor spots.

As part of the deal to build the new terminal, the TJPA Board of Directors is expected Thursday to approve the $144,000 contract, which will pay for 28 parking spaces at a garage within a half-mile of the soon-to-be demolished Transbay Terminal.

More from Will Reisman

- FasTrak sales jump with toll increase
- Contract amendment for eyebar plans approved by committee
- Unexplained absences for Muni operators on the rise again
- Mayor taps transit veteran for appointment to SFMTA Board
- Bus yard housing plan revived

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LOCAL NEWS

USS POTOMAC

Thomas Exner, CFO of San Francisco's Red and White Fleet, announced a partnership with the USS Potomac Association to offer private cruises and events on President Franklin D. Roosevelt's 165-foot Floating White House. The Red and White Fleet will contribute brand recognition and marketing, and will secure and manage planning and private events on the Oakland-based ship, with the aid of caterers and the association's tour assistance.

BAY BRIDGE

The vision of a scenic 525-foot-tall tower rising above the Bay waters — the Signature feature for the new eastern span of the bridge — is coming into focus, as the first sections are set to arrive from China this weekend. The pieces, each 150 feet tall and weighing roughly 1,433 tons, are set to connect to the foundation of the bridge and will arrive either Friday or Saturday in the Port of Oakland, Caltrans spokesman Bart Ney said.

NATHANIEL FORD

The head of the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, which operates Muni, saw his agency get a big boost when the federal government announced the dedication of $6.8 million for a new bus facility, retail space and affordable housing units near the City College of San Francisco's main campus at the intersection of Phelan and Geneva avenues. The project is a joint venture between the SFMTA and the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency.

Shiny new neighbor on Market Street

Details of the CityPlace project:

- Location: 935-955 Market St., between Fifth and Sixth streets
- Size: Roughly 250,000 square feet of new retail space
- What is expected to occupy buildings: Interior is for affordable retailers; Ross clothing store has been given an example.
- Dates for project: Construction could begin as early as this year and could be complete by 2022.

Shopping destinations: CityPlace will replace three vacant Market Street buildings between Fifth and Sixth streets with a five-story mall containing affordable retail outlets.

Decrepit block poised for rebirth

New mall envisioned as anchor for mid-Market turnaround

By John Upton

Construction of a glass-demolished mall filled with affordable retail outlets could kick-start a long-hoped-for renaissance of the economically wracked mid-Market Street neighborhood.

Plans to tear down three vacant Market Street buildings between Fifth and Sixth streets and replace them with CityPlace, a five-story mall, were approved Thursday by the Planning Commission.

The mall will be occupied by retail tenants that sell discount goods, electronics, sports equipment and other wares that are otherwise hard to find in downtown San Francisco, Urban Realty developer David Rhoades said.

The construction site sits at the junction of the low-income Tenderloin neighborhood, where shopping opportunities are generally limited to liquidation and overpriced produce, and the glitzy Market Street shopping strip, which caters largely to tourists.

"This is a perfect fit for this stretch of Market Street," Rhoades said. "The idea was to bring something to this block of Market Street that would really activate the street."

The block is presently a magnet for crime, including a number of violent unprompted attacks in the past year, largely because it's flanked with long lines of vacant storefronts.

The construction plan is strongly supported by city officials and neighborhood activists.

That's because the mall could increase foot traffic through the block and help breathe new life and activity into the downtrodden strip, potentially chasing away criminal activity.

The only major controversy related to the mall was based on the amount of underground parking that would be provided. Transit advocates urged that additional parking would increase congestion along Market Street — a concern that city officials may ban cars on.

City officials are considering turning the mid-Market neighborhood into a redevelopment area, which would help the state borrow money to invest in facade, footpath and other improvements. A previous plan to create a mid-Market redevelopment area collapsed because of disagreements about the amount of affordable housing that should be included within the neighborhood.

The stretch of Market Street has long been a focus of revitalization, with recent proposals that included a hotel measure to add billboards. That idea, which was rejected by voters in November, would've taken revenue from the signage to help fund a theater and arts district.

Mayor Gavin Newsom, who supported the approval of CityPlace, unveiled an 81.5 million loan program during his budget speech that aims to bolster the economic development and the arts in the central Market Street and Tenderloin neighborhoods.
Mid-Market retail project wins approval

San Francisco Business Times - by J.K.Dineen

The Planning Commission Thursday approved Urban Realty's CityPlace project, a 250,000 square-foot value-based retail development that could help spark a revival of the forlorn stretch of Market Street west of Fifth Street. The votes were 5-2 and 6-1 on various motions needed to approve the project.

With the entitlements in place the developer will now ramp up efforts to lure mass-market retailers like TJ Maxx, Bed Bath & Beyond, or Target -- the sort of bread and butter stores the developers says are missing from the more trendy and upscale stores in Union Store and the four-year-old $460 million Westfield San Francisco Centre at Fifth and Market Streets.

The glass-curtain building, designed by Gensler, would consist of five wide open 45,000 square foot floor plates. It also calls for two levels of under ground parking, some 167 spots, which was most controversial aspect of the plan. Both the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition and the pedestrian advocacy group Walk SF argued that the project should have been approved for the 70 parking spots allowed under current zoning.

"We want to see this area thrive but we don't want to throw out our values as San Franciscans to see it thrive," said Tom Radulovich, executive director of Livable City and a BART board member.

During the approval process Urban Realty decreased the number of proposed parking spaces from 200 to 188 and finally to 167. Project attorney Jim Abrams of Gibson Dunn said 167 parking spots "is the minimum amount of parking we can provide in order for this project to succeed."

For Urban Realty executives David Rhoades and Martin Sawa, the approval caps off a six year entitlement process. Rhoades and Sawa began acquiring property on Market Street in 2004, quietly and quickly accumulating properties on the mostly vacant block between Fifth and Sixth streets. In total they bought eight properties for $100 million.

In late 2009, Rhoades told the Business Times how he and his partners went about assembling the retail development property as well as another group of sites across the street on the north side of Market Street.

"We were very quiet," said Rhoades. "We acquired this under three different transactions. Across the street, three transactions. Mission Street was one and then 901 Market St. So it was eight different transactions -- and no one knew about any one of them."

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Developer Holliday takes over Bayview job
San Francisco project was stalled for years
San Francisco Business Times - by J.K. Dineen

Developer Rick Holliday is stepping in to take over the stalled 198-unit project on Jamestown Avenue in the Bayview District, a condo development that was abandoned two years ago amid a storm of lawsuits and the collapse of the housing market.

Holliday will start work immediately to complete the first two buildings totaling 66 units: One of the buildings is 80 percent done and the other is 40 percent complete. Construction costs to finish phase one will total approximately $10 million. Work on the $20 million phase two, also 66 units, will commence once sales of phase one gain traction. Holliday said he doesn’t know when they would build the third and final 66-unit phase.

The project, a glaring example of how the real estate downturn hit hardest in underserved neighborhoods, will generate "$25 million or $30 million" worth of sorely needed construction jobs at a time when many of the construction trade unions are suffering 30 to 40 percent unemployment, according to Holliday.

“This has been a very troubled project, but there is a new sheriff in town and we are going to make it a good project,” said Holliday.

The Jamestown development was one of two projects developer Noteware Development and equity partner Goldman Sachs paid top dollar for at the apex of the frothy real estate market. Noteware and Goldman Sachs shelled out an eye-popping $18.5 million for the Bayview site in 2006. At nearly $100,000 a door, Noteware and Goldman’s investment cost more than most luxury developers were paying for the most expensive highrise sites in Rincon Hill and SoMa. The team proceeded to snag a $90 million construction loan from Citibank for the Jamestown project.

By 2008, it was clear that the market was heading down and construction was halted on the project, along with the 340-unit 5800 Third St., another Noteware/Goldman Sachs joint venture that was taken over by Holliday a year ago.

After the project was stalled, 15 subcontractors and suppliers filed complaints worth more than $10 million against contractor Thompson Pacific and Jamestown Equity Partners, the limited partnership set up to develop the property, according to legal complaints.

These included Nicodemus Plumbing, which was owed $3.6 million, and smaller claims by Hillside Drilling, Enterprise Roofing, Northside Plastering, Mark Horton Architects, Bode Concrete, Helix Electric and others, according to the complaints. The new development team was able to settle for less than half the original lien amount, and many of the original subcontractors will be brought back on the job, according to
“Cleaning the liens up was not terribly expensive, but it was complicated because so many people were involved,” said Holliday. “Those (subcontractors) are our first choice to put back to work now that we have bank financing back in place.”

Holliday has brought on Cannon Constructors to jump-start the project, the same team that took over Noteware’s 5800 Third St., which is nearing completion.

James Noteware, who was president of Noteware Development, is now working as the director of housing and community development for the city of Houston and commented through a spokesperson, Janice Evans, that he didn’t walk away from the project.

“He sold his interest in those projects and didn’t owe anyone anything,” said Evans.

While Noteware had originally positioned the development as workforce housing priced about $600 a square foot — $600,000 to $700,000 a unit — the new pricing will likely be just under $400 a square foot. The project will be billed as family housing close to biotech jobs in South San Francisco, the state park at Candlestick Point, as well as the massive redevelopment project slated for the Hunters Point Shipyard.

Holliday said Citibank and Goldman Sachs deserve credit for not completely walking away from what was essentially a terrible investment. He particularly credited former Goldman Sachs executive Jesse Blout for pressuring the banks not to sell the note as a write off. Blout declined to comment.

“It could have been bad — it could have sat there and rotted and rusted for years,” said Holliday. “Everyone knows full well they are not going to make money. I think it speaks particularly well for Citibank and Goldman to say, we made some mistakes, but we need to finish this thing so it’s not an eyesore.”

In addition to the construction issues, Holliday faces 11 complaints from the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection. The property was cited under a new ordinance that requires abandoned or vacant buildings to register and pay an annual fee. They also face some angry ex-Noteware team members who say they are owed money. Claude Everhart, a community outreach specialist who worked with the neighborhood to get the land entitled, said he was not paid for his work. He declined to say how much he is owed.

“I am angry at how these guys have treated this neighborhood,” said Everhart. “You would not treat a neighborhood in another part of the city like we were treated. My community has sat out here with this albatross of a project for all this time and all the people who worked with the community have not been paid.”

Holliday has been working with the city Planning Department to redesign some of the landscaping around the development and will meet with neighbors to discuss the latest developments.

“We need to do some redesign and consider different landscaping and meet with neighbors to reconnect because there have been so many promises made for different things,” he said.

Chris Foley of Polaris Group, who brokered the sale of the property to Goldman Sachs and Noteware, said Holliday and Citibank deserve credit for cleaning up all the liens on both projects and moving them forward.

“It has been a lot of work for them and I salute them,” said Foley. “I think the real goal here is to finish a project that was started, to keep a promise made to the community, while recouping as much capital as possible.”
Big project turns on small bridge

Environmental groups oppose plan that could help 49ers build a stadium in San Francisco.

By Will Reisman
Examiner Staff Writer

In an area brimming with stunning Bay views and unique natural scenery, the flat, marshy and debris-filled wetlands of Yosemite Slough are hardly inspiring.

However, this small, remote and patch of coastal land in the Bayview-Hunters Point community is playing a major role in the massive development project proposed for the area, and it could play a major role in deciding whether the 49ers stay in San Francisco.

In a draft proposal approved by the Planning Commission last month, The City's southeastern communities are set to expand by 10,000 new homes, with a bustling green technology business sector and a rebuilt, state-of-the-art football stadium.

Lennar, the project developer, has proposed a multiuse bridge to extend Averilus Walker Drive across a half-mile stretch to Candlestick Point, connecting the Bayview and Hunters Point communities normally cut off by Yosemite Slough.

The bridge would ease traffic on existing rapid-transit lines, a series of fast-moving hybrid buses given traffic-signal priority on city streets, with key stops along the Caltrain, Muni and BART networks. The bridge would also feature wide bicycle lanes, pedestrian pathways and green spaces. It would turn the area into a network for city residents and visitors, a feature that would allow quick, efficient access to and from the stadium — a necessity stipulated by the NFL.

"From the first moment we sat down with league officials and their consultants, it became clear that the bridge was a non-starter," said Mark Gubler, the 49ers' executive vice president who is working with Lennar on the stadium aspect of the project. "The more we worked on this project, the clearer it became that the stadium was a dead concept without the bridge."

In a letter to the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, one of many agencies involved with the project, NFL Senior Vice President Neil Glazer said a bridge over Yosemite Slough would be "critical" for any stadium plans to move forward.

But environmentalists object about its effect on the delicate nearby ecosystem.

"This is a bridge built by a private developer that is going through a state park," said Mike Liles, conservation director of the Golden Gate Audubon Society.

"This will undoubtedly have an impact on wetlands birds that have already lost 90 percent of their habitat, and we don't see the bridge serving the purpose they require, particularly since there is no chance the 49ers are going to be there."

Yosemite Slough, part of the Candlestick Point State Recreation Area, is home to at least 18 bird species, six mammal species, five reptile species, one amphibian species and 14 types of butterflies, Liles said. It's also part of a $69 million rehabilitation effort proposed by the California State Parks Foundation that will restore 34 acres of the Candlestick Point State...
Landmark debate on Hunters Point set for this month

After countless community meetings and public hearings, the last substantial debate over the Candlestick Point Hunters Point Shipyard development plan could come July 13.

On that date, the Board of Supervisors will be asked to certify an Environmental Impact Report of the plan — a document that was approved by The City's Planning Commission on June 3.

If the Board approves the EIR, the development project, in the works for two decades, could move forward with a final seal of approval from city officials. If the board rejects the document (which is certainly a possibility, since several supervisors have expressed concern over the undertaking) the marriners behind the plan will have to tweak certain elements of the EIR and bring it back for approval.

Even with the Board of Supervisors' approval, the fight over the future of the Hunters Point and Bayview communities is unlikely to end. Several groups, including the Golden Gate Audubon Society and Arc Ecology, have said they would pursue litigation against the development if the EIR is approved.

July 13 might mark the end of the line for city oversight of the project, but it could signal just the beginning of a prolonged legal fight over the proceedings.

— Will Reisman

CONTROVERSIAL PLAN
A new bridge would allow for more efficient public transit, but has sparked concern over its impact on the local wildlife habitat.

Numbers behind the plan

| 10,500 | Proposed housing units in redevelopment project |
| 32    | Percent of those units that will be affordable |
| 2.5 million | Square feet proposed for research and development |
| 336   | Acres proposed for open space |
| $229 million | Cost of infrastructure improvements in development |

SOURCE: UNH, Office of Economic and Workforce Development
Gervin, Gilmore taking time out for city’s young stars

While a shady cast of characters hung out on Third Street on Tuesday morning, a block away inside the Joe Lee Recreation Center at the Bayview-Hunters Point YMCA, about 300 kids were all smiles. George Gervin and Artis Gilmore were wowing the crowd with a basketball clinic and inspirational speeches about making good choices to reach your life goals.

RICH WALCOFF

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RICH WALCOFF

I doubt any of the youngsters had a clue who the former or A-Train was, but Wednesday’s personal story about being raised in Detroit, one of six children of a single mom who instilled the “norms, principles and values” that launched his Hall of Fame career, hit home.

At his Gervin Academy charter school in San Antonio, Texas, George, 58, says he tells students, “You can do your one through 12 in the classroom, or you can do one to 12 in your life. My inter-city kids living in brown homes are looking for love and get in gangs. We must Redirect kids. Get ’em on the right path and continue to remind them how important education is.”

Gilmore, 68, who grew up in Dayton, Ohio, during the days of Jim Crow laws says, “Although some things will never change, we are gaining knowledge and experience and the key for today’s kids is education.”

The seminars are sponsored by a national development program called Shaping and Preserving Youth, which is working in conjunction with The City’s Housing Authority and police department to offer young people healthy summer activities. The free program is its inaugural year in San Francisco and currently has openings for about 30 more kids. For more information, visit www.sanwaag.com.

Gervin got his nickname in 1973 from Julius Erving when they were teammates with the ABA Virginia Squires because, “I wore a big hat, drove a Cadillac and acted cool,” says the former teammate.

Gervin thinks the cool thing for Lebron James to do would be to re-sign with the Cleveland Cavaliers. Gervin sees Cleveland as only a couple of players away from winning a championship.

“LeBron isn’t always greener. If he goes to Chicago and things don’t go well, fans will say he’s not like Mike. He doesn’t understand that,”

I know LeBron is being influenced by a cadre of corporate image makers, but tonight’s hourlong national TV spot “The Decision” is the epitome of self-indulgence, especially since the King has no ring and was flat out awful in his last playoff game against the Celtics.

Stay home, work on some post-up moves and revisit your future plans in two or three years.

THE FAB FOUR

The Yankee infield of Alex Rodriguez, Derek Jeter, Robinson Cano and Mark Teixeira is not only the best in baseball, it may be the best of all time.

A-Rod and Jeter are arguably Hall of Famers. Teixeira, 26, a two-time All Star and three-time Gold Glove winner, still has a decent chance to enhance his Cooperstown credentials, and the sky is the limit for two-time All Star Cano, 27. Teixeira is the only one of New York’s Fab Four (combined contracts: $300 million) not selected for next week’s All-Star Game in Arizona.

Remember the only team that had its entire infield start an All-Star Game? The 1983 St. Louis Cardinals with first baseman Bill White, second baseman Julian Javier, shortstop Dick Groat and third baseman Ken Boyer.

KGO (AM) Sports Director Rick Waloff can be heard weekdays from 6 to 9 a.m. on the KGO morning show. He can be reached at Rick.Waloff@gmail.com.

YANKEES 6, A’S 2


By Janie McCauley
The Associated Press

OAKLAND — Mark Teixeira hit a three-run homer to help J.A. Happ win for the first time in more than five weeks, and the New York Yankees completed a sweep of the A’s with a 6-2 victory Wednesday night.

Derek Jeter had a go-ahead single and Ramiro Pena also singled in a run in New York’s five-run fourth inning. The Yankees won their fifth straight and extended their first road sweep since May.

Burnett (7-1) pitched seven strong innings to end a six-start winless stretch in which he was 0-5 since beating the Indians on May 28.

Nick Swisher homered and doubled among his three hits against his former team, and New York was still doing all he can to be added to the AL All-Star team.

Alex Rodriguez went 0-for-4 with two strikeouts and a walk a night after hitting two home runs, with a grand slam. He has 507 career home runs.

Gilmore seen as Cleveland as only a couple of players away from winning a championship.

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Hunters Point project must pass for The City's sake

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors appears to be contemplating going where no board has gone before. And I think, based on its dubious history, you understand that that is not a good thing.

Still, it's within the board's power and reach to avoid its base instincts and for once put aside its often-fuzzy ideological notions. That may be adding a lot — but in this case, it has a chance to do a great thing for The City.

Simply put, this month it must approve environmental plans for the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard development, the largest land-use project in San Francisco in more than two decades. It appears some of the board members are considering voting against it despite major public, governmental, and labor support.

But I'll do my best to make it easy for them, since there is hardly any reasonable argument to block the project. Arguments yes, reasonable, no. Remember that Chris Daly, who tried to kill the development through a voter initiative that was overwhelmingly rejected, is still a supervisor.

The Hunters Point-Bayview district has been the most politically neglected area of San Francisco for ages. Yet it is the most ethnically diverse part of The City and the one most in need of affordable housing and jobs. It's a section of The City that has been poisoned much and delivered almost nothing. Its primary legacy has been one plagued by high crime rates, an area polluted by chemical-spewing energy plants and as a place one symbiotically passed by on the way to somewhere else.

But that would end if the development project is approved. Its history would be rewritten. Its future would be brighter.

That's what will happen with the Lennar Corp. planned 4.6 million-square-foot project. It will bring 10,500 new homes — one-third of them affordable. It is projected to bring $8 billion in development value to The City and generate more than $2 billion annually in business revenue. And it is expected to create 10,000 jobs with an estimated payroll of $750 million.

It's a project The City can't afford to lose. Lennar has already spent more than $100 million to get the project where it is today, and through the efforts of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, the abandoned shipyard has received more than $700 million in federal cleanup funding.

Despite the overheated rhetoric from the local Nation of Islam leaders that toxic dust from the project is being inhaled into the air, the Environmental Protection Agency has said that Lennar is handling the soil cleanup correctly. One small aspect of the project is a plan to build a 908-foot bridge across the Yosemite Slough that backers of the proposal to build a new stadium for the San Francisco 49ers say is key to their efforts, but that some environmentalists oppose.

Still, despite these standard pockets of opposition, the project has near-unanimous support from local citizen advisory groups, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission and the Recreation and Park Department.

The City's Planning Commission recently approved the EIR for the project by a 4-3 vote, predictably with the three members appointed by the supervisors against it — on the grounds that the project needed more study.

More study? One would be hard-pressed to find another development plan that has been more scrutinized or debated in this country, with more than a decade of intensive planning to get to this point.

So it comes down to this: The Board of Supervisors is faced with the most important land-use decision San Francisco has seen in 20 years. Board members have jobbed for years for more affordable housing for city residents, and the shipyard project provides more than 4,000 units. Its allies in labor are pushing hard for the project for the thousands of jobs it will provide over the next generation.

Two years ago, nearly 65 percent of The City's voters gave support to the overall plan, winning in every district in San Francisco.

Now it's up to the legislative representatives of those districts to show that they have the well-being of the entire city at heart.

After all the time and promises, to do anything less would be heartless.
The Bay Area is a natural wonderland where unique geological and meteorological phenomena have sculpted an abundance of intricate microclimates around a biologically rich expanse. And the region has been ground zero for history-shaping American endeavors, including its role as a Navy headquarters during World War II and the mass production of computer chips, which boosted the population while polluting water supplies and the ground upon which hundreds of people live, work and play.

Most of the damage was inflicted in the last century, a period when property records were painstakingly detailed, meaning federal and state regulators have identified most of the companies and agencies that must now fund extensive cleanup efforts.

The US Environmental Protection Agency leads oversight, and in some cases the cleanup, of the nation's most polluted sites. These sites are called Superfund sites, although the super size fund that was created by federal lawmakers when the program was created in the early 1980s is depleted and must be topped up annually.

The EPA normally leads cleanup-related work if the scale of pollution overwhelms a site's resources or if the property responsible for the pollution can't be found, no longer exists or is financially bust.

"The intent was for the EPA to deal with the worst sites," said California's federal EPA Superfund Division official, Kathleen O'Shea. "We always try to get the worst level to deal with it; if a county can deal with it, great. If it's a more of a problem, then the state can do it." Most of the Bay Area's Superfund-listed sites are in the South Bay, where computer-chip manufacturers stored chemicals in underground tanks that have corroded and leaked, and in the East Bay, where heavy industry was concentrated.

The only Superfund site in San Francisco or on the Peninsula is on the northwestern end of the county's border at the shuttered Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, where the Navy has spent more than $6 million in 2004 to remove contamination in anticipation of a massive home-building project led by Lennar Corp.

The EPA and Navy plan to announce the cleanup process next year for the most-radioactively polluted portions of the 550-acre site, according to EPA cleanup official Mark Espen. A former shipyard dump and surrounding land might be excavated or simply covered with soil. Lennar Urban Vice President Mark Bonner said the company hopes radioactive waste will be removed, but it said development plans call for only parkland to be built in the area regardless of the treatment that's selected.

Cleanup work at many of the other heavily polluted pieces of land in San Francisco and San Mateo counties is overseen by the state, generally by its toxic-substances division or water department.
Places where contamination persists

Pesticides, lead, other pollutants remain prevalent in several areas of San Francisco.

Fort Mason

Federal officials are trying to determine exactly what pollution was left behind at the former military base — which the United States acquired from Mexico in 1846 — by various industrial activities and the storage of pesticides and other chemicals. Lead, volatile organic compounds and underground storage tanks and pipes pollute the site, which is now part of the national parks system.

Hunters Point Naval Shipyards

The shuttered shipyard is among the Bay Area’s most heavily pollution-damaged sites. The Navy flushed radioactive waste through sewer systems and dumped it in an on-site dump. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency figures show the Navy has already spent $460 million on cleanup activities, which have been heavily focused on land that San Francisco and development officials set aside for a stadium plan rejected by the 49ers. Cleanup is ongoing, but the amount of pollution that will be removed remains unclear. The 550-acre shipyard is slated to contain thousands of new homes under a redevelopment project that could begin soon.

Treasure Island

The 450-acre island was built for the 1939 World’s Fair. It was planned to be used as an airport after the event, but the Navy took over the island to help coordinate its operations during World War II. San Francisco International Airport was instead built in northern San Mateo County. The Navy is now cleaning up solvents, petroleum and other pollution left over from its operations, with construction of the first of thousands of new homes slated to begin in 2013.

Former PG&E Fillmore manufactured-gas plant

Fillmore and Bay streets

Homes and a paved school playground were built above contamination left behind by the manufacture of gas from coal and other materials until 1986, when the plant was closed. The property was damaged by the earthquake. PG&E is working with the state to develop cleanup plans.

Former PG&E Beach Street manufactured-gas plant

250 Beach St.

PG&E is investigating contamination left behind by a plant used to manufacture gas from 1899 to 1981. When fuel was phased out in favor of natural gas, a hotel now occupies the small plot of land, which is near the popular Fisherman’s Wharf.

Former Schlage factory

Bayshore and Sunnydale avenues

In 1999, the Schlage Lock Co. disbanded a large workforce that had manufactured locks and lock components since 1936, devastating the neighborhood’s economy and leaving behind pollution that was alleged in court documents to have seeped into neighboring land. Neighboring landlord Universal Paragon Corp. acquired the site in mid-2008 under a Development agreement, and cleanup activities began this year in anticipation of a redevelopment project that could see 6,000 people occupying the 11-acre site by 2015.

Former PG&E Hunters Point power plant

1000 Evans Ave.

A power plant operated at the former shipbuilding site from the 1930s until 2006. The 38 acres of waterfront land is now being cleared of petroleum-based pollutants. Picture uses for the land have not been determined, but home-building is being considered.

Golden Gate Bridge

Paint that was blasted off the bridge during repainting efforts contained lead that now pollutes the land at both ends of the iconic span. In the 1950s, 40,000 tons of painted steel were cut away to prepare for the bridge’s seismic retrofit. Areas that remain sullied by the heavy-metal contamination are expected to be cleaned up by 2013.

Sources: U.S. EPA, California Department of Toxic Substances Control
DOWNSMIZED ST. LUKE’S UNVEILED

Health provider aims to consolidate services in Mission district

By Brent Bega
Examiner Staff Writer

The plans for a politically volatile project to rebuild a downsized St. Luke’s hospital in the Mission district were unveiled Saturday as one of The City’s biggest health care providers consolidates its facilities.

California Pacific Medical Center will present the plans and an environmental impact report to the public this week in hopes of building a seismically safe hospital that caters to San Francisco’s southeast side. The project could go before the Planning Commission by late summer.

The medical center has already revealed its ambitious plan to build a 555-bed hospital with medical offices at the site of the Cathedral Hill Hotel on Van Ness Avenue. The project would consolidate medical services at several hospitals.

At one point, the Cathedral Hill project seemed all but closing St. Luke’s Hospital on Cesar Chavez, which would leave the county-run San Francisco General as the only hospital in the southeast portion of The City. St. Luke’s has always served low-income residents as a birthing center and emergency room, but faced financial difficulties in recent years because of a majority of its 299 beds remained empty.

“Patient volume was so low that it didn’t make sense to rebuild a hospital,” said Geoffrey Nelson, director of Enterprise Development for CPDC. “That plan went over like a lead balloon.”

Opponents of the closure cited the loss of union jobs and the decrease in health care to underserved neighborhoods. In a swell of support from politicians and the recommendations of a blue-ribbon panel, St. Luke’s will now be rebuilt with almost one-third of the beds.

The new hospital will remain a place for low-income patients to receive care, but it will also appeal to a growing number of professionals in the area, said Chief Administrative Officer Dionne Miller on Saturday.

“We couldn’t survive without appealing to the changing population of the Mission district and surrounding neighborhoods,” Miller said.

Now, the surrounding community will have a chance to give its opinions on the project, with construction expected to affect the residential neighborhood for at least five years. The new hospital will be built on an abandoned hospital parking lot, while the current hospital will remain open.

DAMAGED CREEK TO BE SOURCE OF BAYVIEW JOBS

By Andrea Koskey
Examiner Staff Writer

Islaic Creek, which has been polluted twice in the past by toxic spills, could spring new life for employment in the Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood.

The creek, located just south of Cesar Chavez, is only one of two waterways remaining in The City. For more than two decades, Robin Chang has seen the potential Islaic Creek has to bring jobs and economic growth to Bayview-Hunters Point.

Chang, president of the Friends of Islaic Creek — a neighborhood organization whose goal is to restore and preserve the creek — hopes that all change with San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency plans to put a motor coach yard on the north shore of the creek.

“A huge percentage of drivers and maintenance live in the Bayview,” Chang said. “It’s easier for them to get to work.”

Though the watershed has been the victim of diesel spills in the past, Chang is hopeful the addition will be more positive than negative.

In 1984, a Muni employee pumped thousands of gallons of oil into a ditch near the creek, according to a website set up for the Friends of Islaic Creek. Then in 2003, while drilling supports for the T-Third Street Rail Bridge across the creek, a San Francisco Public Utilities pipe was accidentally dislodged, spilling thousands of gallons of sewage into the creek.

Chang, though, said since this project is located on land, it will hopefully be different.

“This project isn’t as complicated,” Chang said. “That was a big project.”

According to SFMTA, the first phase of construction to build a new coach yard is expected to begin in the fall. SFMTA spokeswoman Kristen Holland said Phase Two will build the structure that will house the buses used by Muni as well as maintenance bays.

The entire cost of the project is $57 million. Holland said the project should be complete by 2012.

The new yard will replace SFMTA’s Kirkland Motor Coach currently located near Pier 39. The Kirkland facility, first built in 1955, is small and outdated, according to the transit agency.

The Islaic Creek project has gone back and forth for years, according to Bayview/Hunters Point Project Area Committee Coordinator Bill Dennis. He said it is about time the plans move forward to bring jobs to the area.

What’s next?

July 2010: Award contract
Fall 2010: Start work
Phase one: Demolition
Phase two: 16 service bays; shops; administrative offices
Cost: $57 million
Completion date: 2012

Source: SFMTA

INTERVIEW

Josh Mailman

The Bay Area local who is battling cancer will race 50 miles in the 2010 LIVESTRONG Challenge in San Jose today.

Why are you participating in the LIVESTRONG Challenge? Because I can! I have a rare form of neuro-endocrine cancer which only affects 1 in 10 million people. I have been inspired by LIVESTRONG because they focus on survivorship. Through support groups and patient educator — things that LIVESTRONG works for — I have been able to get the best treatment and live my life to the fullest.

How did you get into biking? I started biking as a way of commuting from where I live in the East Bay to work in Silicon Valley. I love it for health and because I enjoy it.

How has cancer affected your life? About a week before my diagnosis, I had a moment that made me think, “I’m never going to get to use this.” But actually it’s been the opposite. I’ve done six metric and a half this year. I think we’ve proved by taking the LIVESTRONG Challenge since my diagnosis.

How has your diagnosis affected your life? It has changed my perspective on life, what I do with my time, what I value. I have changed my focus to patient advocacy and nonprofit organizations... My motto is “Not just SURVIVE, but THRIVING.”

— Josh Mailman

Source: The Examiner
Bayview businesses back Lennar's Hunters Point bridge

San Francisco Business Times - by J.K. Dineen

With the San Francisco Board of Supervisors slated to vote Tuesday on the $8 billion plan to redevelop the Hunters Point Shipyard, developer Lennar has an unexpected group of new backers: industrial business owners in the Bayview District flatlands.

A group of businesses ranging from moving companies to metal shops to marble and granite wholesalers have jumped into contentious entitlement battle by supporting the most controversial aspect of the Lennar’s plan, a 900-foot bridge across the Yosemite Slough. The reason? An alternative road supported by environmental groups would involve the taking of a railroad right of way the businesses use for storage, truck parking, and operations.

In a July 8 letter to the Board of Supervisors, Nathan Apple, owner of metal shop Wizard of Metals at 1265 Van Dyke Ave., said “if this bridge is not built it will most likely be the death of my business.”

“I understand the construction of the bridge may temporarily displace some birds and rodents,” said Apple. “If the bridge is not built it will undoubtedly result in the permanent displacement of businesses and loss of jobs in a community that so desperately needs them.”

Master developer Lennar is proposing to build a bridge connecting Hunters Point and Candlestick Point as part of a redevelopment that would transform 770 acres of former industrial shipyards into a new neighborhood with 10,500 new homes, 3.6 million square feet of commercial space, an artists’ colony and potentially an NFL stadium.

The project narrowly cleared a significant hurdle in early June when the city Planning Commission and Redevelopment Agency approved the environmental impact report. Now it is up to the Board of Supervisors to give final approvals -- but whether Lennar has the six votes needed to move the project forward is uncertain.

**A bridge to somewhere**

The $100 million bridge over Yosemite Slough would be open to pedestrians, cyclists, and the rapid transit buses, but not to regular traffic. It would require 32 concrete piers and cut across a green marshland that is home to 118 bird species, 14 kinds of butterflies, 10 mammals, five reptiles, and at least one amphibian.

Opponents to the bridge say the slough’s delicate ecology would be permanently disturbed by the construction and are proposing an alternative route that skirts the state park and follows a railroad right of way.
Bayview businesses back Lennar’s Hunters Point bridge - San Francisco Business Times

way the Navy used decades ago.

Until about six years ago, the non-operational railroad bed was being used by the Golden Gate Railroad Museum to run novelty steam trains. But when the museum left the neighborhood, groups of homeless set up camps along the defunct rails, and complaints of drug dealing and prostitution soon followed.

The proliferation of crime along the tracks prompted the Navy, which owns the property, and Bayview police district brass to hammer out an informal agreement with businesses abutting the property. The businesses owners were given permission to use the land; in exchange, they maintain it and keep away squatters.

Once the agreement was in place, the property owners divided the property up and spent thousands of dollars to construct storage areas, build fences and pave over the weed-choked train tracks.

“We have put all this money into gates and concrete and paving to make it usable,” said Apple. “This is coming in a little late in the game -- it has already become part of our businesses.”

Apple has been in the Bayview for 22 years. His company, which had 19 employees before the recession, has gone through several rounds of layoffs and is down to 10. The company is a custom metal design, fabrication and installation shop and employs metal fabricators, designers, and welders.

“My business would not survive a move right now,” said Apple. “Times are tough enough economically. I’m downsizing, I’m doing everything I can -- a move is not in the cards. I would have to close the doors.”

Bob Landsinger, who owns Vector, a moving company, also said the alternative route would put him out of business. Vector is a certified under the city’s Local Business Enterprise program -- an initiative that ensures local and minority-owned businesses win city contracts -- and specializes in moving public libraries and government agencies. He keeps his 10 moving trunks on the land that would be seized for the new road under the alternative scenario. He has been there 21 years.

“They would swallow my property,” he said. “They will have one less LBE if they pull this stunt. I cannot afford to be moved off of that property -- that is my operating center.”

He added: “They would be wiping out all the business abutting the rail,” said Landsinger. “It would be a lot more disruptive than running the bridge along Yosemite Slough.”

Cheaper, greener alternative

Saul Bloom of Arc Ecology, which is pushing the alternative route, said the alternate route would cost about $50 million less than the bridge. While he said he sympathizes with the property owners, he said mass transit line is an appropriate use for the railroad right of way. He said Lennar’s plan to eliminate sidewalks and parking spaces on Ingalls and Innes streets will have an adverse impact on more property owners than building a road along the old tracks.

“While I can see that those individuals now squatting on the public property of the alignment may find it inconvenient to adjust, the modifications to Ingalls – actually quite close to takings – will have a far larger impacts on many of those businesses.”

Bloom said the alternative is the best bet for allowing the project to “move forward unimpeded by litigation and with the least impact to the environment, public, residents, and the neighborhood’s economy.”

“While I am sympathetic to the concerns of those few businesses the police have allowed to squat on the right of way, it nevertheless appears to be a very significant and untaxed public subsidy bestowed on a very
Bayview businesses back Lennar's Hunters Point bridge - San Francisco Business Times

small number of people apparently without ... any formal oversight or public process,” said Bloom.

Meanwhile, property owners along the track will be watching Tuesday's vote carefully. Mike Foti, who has a concrete business at 1177 Revere St., is also worried that the new road would wipe out a growing community of beekeepers who operate on the railroad right of way. Foti’s brother Mark Foti and abutting property owner John MacDonald, who owns an engineering business there, have a combined 11 hives.

“If they had the traffic running through there it would mess up the bees,” he said.

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Housing project is on thin ice

Alice Griffith rebuild hinges on shipyard redevelopment plans

By Erin Sherbert
 Examiner Staff Writer

The long-awaited plan to rebuild one of San Francisco’s most distressed public housing projects could be financially derailed if supervisors kill a proposal for the massive redevelopment of the former Hunters Point Naval Shipyard.

Mayor Gavin Newsom’s long-touted plan to rebuild the Alice Griffith housing project, aka Double Rock, is financially tied to the redevelopment of the shipyard. The master developer, Lennar Urban, is required to kick in some $46 million for construction and infrastructure to help pay for rebuilding the public housing, according to city officials.

The proposal for the Hunters Point project is to build more than 3,700 new homes, including affordable and market-rate housing.

Lennar finding is as follows: the only hope that the project will break ground in 2012.

Alice Griffith, which includes 256 housing units, sits on the 702-acre site. The price tag for the entire redevelopment is more than $2 billion. The City is relying on a mix of private grants and federal, state and local funding to help pay for the project, said Doug Shoemaker, the mayor’s director of housing.

In need of help: The Alice Griffith public housing site is considered the most distressed of the Bay’s right dilapidated projects neglected by the U.S. government.

Alice Griffith residents, however, say they cannot wait much longer, according to Michael Cohen, the mayor’s director of economic and workforce development.

More than 650 residents are living in Double Rock, which has long been considered the most dilapidated public housing site in San Francisco.

“Even though we are living in bad conditions, we want to see better for ourselves,” said Tommy Henry, a Double Rock resident. “We need this project to go through.”

Bayview-Hunters Point (2)
Petrie Hill (2)
Bay Area (2)
Western Addition (1)
West of Twin Peaks (1)
Sunset (1)
Pacific Heights (1)
North Beach (1)
Excelsior (1)
Diamond Heights (1)
Bernal Heights (1)

Total reported thefts: 155

Popular avenues for thieves

Bike thefts reported to police between Jan. 1 and May 31. (However, police and bike advocates claim it’s only a fraction of the actual number of stolen bicycles annually since so many go unreported.)

Widespread bike thefts part of daily life in The City

By Mike Alday
 Examiner Staff Writer

About one bicycle per day is reported stolen in San Francisco police — a figure that does not account for the many more thefts that go unreported.

The Examiner obtained Police Department figures showing 355 bicycles were reported stolen between Jan. 1 and May 31. With the most, 39, missing from the Mission district, followed by 19 in the South of Market neighborhood and nine in the Upper Market and Castro area.

However, bicycle advocates say there are plenty more stolen that police never hear about, since the victims often believe it’s a lost cause.

The manager of a Bike in The City said he hears customers complain of stolen bikes or parts “pretty much every day.”

“T’s just that, just like shop,” said Renée Rivera, acting executive director of the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition.

The Mission district, led by The City in reported bike thefts. Sales manager for Valencia Bikes said that neighborhood has a high concentration of bicyclists with “nicely built bicycles” and thieves are well aware of that, Bailey said.

The bicycles being robbed are not often those locked up on city sidewalks, he said, citing customer reports. “The vast majority say the bike has been taken from their property,” Bailey said. “It’s from a garage that was left open or a gate left unlocked.”

The theft reports come to light as the Police Department prepares to test new high-tech devices geared toward nabbing bike thieves. The devices are transponders that allow electronic tracking by police and will be hidden on decoy bicycles positioned to be stolen.

“The vast majority say the bike has been taken from their property,” Bailey said. “It’s from a garage that was left open or a gate left unlocked.”

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Popular avenues for thieves

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Mission (30)
South of Market (19)
Upper Haight-Castro (9)
Fisheerman’s Wharf (7)
Mission Bay (7)
South Beach (7)
Financial District (6)
Frisley Valley (6)
Rob Hill (6)
Richmond (6)
Ocean View (6)
Ocean View-Nevada (6)
Upper North Park (4)
Van Ness (4)
Chinatown (4)
Golden Gate Park (3)
Japantown (3)
Lone Mountain (3)
Marina (3)
Bayview-Hunters Point (2)
Petrie Hill (2)
Bay Area (2)
Western Addition (1)
West of Twin Peaks (1)
Sunset (1)
Pacific Heights (1)
North Beach (1)
Excelsior (1)
Diamond Heights (1)
Bernal Heights (1)

Total reported thefts: 155

Source: San Francisco Police Department

BART TRIAL AFTERMATH

Uncle calls apology ‘ploy’

OAKLAND — An uncle of Oscar Grant III, the unarmed man fatally shot by Johannes Mehserle, had harsh words to deliver a letter of apology written by the former BART police officer convicted Thursday of involuntary manslaughter.

Speaking outside True Vine Baptist church Saturday afternoon, Cephus Johnson rejected the letter released Friday, terming it a “ploy” to gain sympathy from the judge before sentencing.

He can write the letter after he spends 2 years in prison,” Johnson said.

Grant’s mother, Wanda Johnson, was also at the church, but declined to comment. A call to Mehserle’s attorney Michael Benjamin seeking a response to Johnson’s comments was not immediately returned.

THE 3-MINUTE INTERVIEW

Dave Barger

The president and CEO of JetBlue, who is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, talked about the airline industry and high-speed rail during a recent stop in San Francisco.

Were you bummed Virgin America stormed onto the scene with its swanky, Vegas-style cabins? Our focus is on our East Coast hub in New York. I think the low-fare airlines in the Bay Area are now alive and well and present at [San Francisco International Airport]. Close to 25 percent of the traffic at SFO is now offered to [low-fare airlines].

If you were not in the industry, how would you feel about all these fees being tacked onto the price of airfare? I’m sure I would be appalled at the sheer number of additional fees, but I think that’s the way of the world today.

What changes do you foresee happening to air travel in the next few decades? I believe that we’ll be seeing more technology in a significant way to navigate airplanes. We will be using satellite instead of ground-based radar — a different than what we’re doing with a GPS in a car.

Do you see nationwide high-speed rail as a threat or complement to the airline industry? It’s a complement, I think, don’t think we need hundreds of departures every day from the Bay Area to Los Angeles.” — Mike Alday
KEN GARCIA: VOICE OF THE CITY

Chiu could meet political Waterloo in shipyard plans

When he ascended to the presidency of the board 17 months ago, Supervisor David Chiu was largely unknown and was the only San Francisco supervisor able to scrape six votes from his colleagues.

Today, Chiu is only slightly better-known, operating a key role at a critical juncture in the City’s history, when his reputation will be staked on his ability to put together six more votes.

That’s the minimum number needed for supervisors to approve the biggest land-use project in San Francisco in more than 30 years, a development that has gone through one of the most vigorous planning reviews in memory and promises to finally transform the long-neglected Hunters Point area.

The shipyard redevelopment proposal by Lennar offers huge benefits to The City — thousands of jobs, billions in revenue and more affordable housing than any project in decades — yet it’s still being resisted by some members of the Board of Supervisors.

Any vote against the project in the November ballot, even though the project appears to be a civic appetite for new homes and in recent years similar measures have been rejected by voters. He’s been supportive of plans to transfer the appointment power to city supervisors, an idea generally viewed as an unneeded power grab and one that city voters gave a thumbs-down to in June.

Typically cautious, Chiu has declined to officially say how he feels about the shipyard project, instead issuing cryptic statements about how he and his colleagues are engaged in “due diligence” on the massive environmental report and that he’s working with those on record opposing it.

“Every member of the Board of Supervisors is united in the critical need of cleaning up and developing the shipyard, but we need to make sure that this is the right project for the future of San Francisco,” Chiu told me.

It is, and as a trained lawyer, the proper course for Chiu would be “asked and answered.”

Lennar’s planned 35 million-square-foot project is estimated to generate more than $2 billion annually in business revenue and provide more than 10,000 jobs, and it would create more than 10,000 new homes, with more than one-third affordable.

The plan has been scrutinized by multiple boards and gone through more than a decade of planning reviews.

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Crews dig up past to build for future

Soil where new transit hub is being built may contain Indian bones

By Kamala Kelkar
Examiner Staff Writer

Bones from American Indians and coal from the post-Gold Rush era could be unearthed by archaeologists studying the dirt beneath what will eventually become the "Central Corridor of the West."

In the next month, the Transbay Transit Terminal at First and Mission streets will begin its demolition, with traffic moved to a temporary hub blocks away.

In place of the current facility, which was constructed in 1919, the Transbay Transit Center will be built to house nearly a dozen transit agencies.

In addition, the $4 billion project is expected to contain the terrains for the state's high-speed rail line.

On Monday in the Caltrans parking lot, archaeologists began digging into the dirt with a backhoe. The work, which is expected to run through August, is necessary to ensure that the rebuild of the terminal does not impact significant historic deposits.

Excavation that started Monday could reveal the markings of archaeological treasures.

The company in charge of the survey, William Sell Associates, has already tested sites around the 1 million-square-foot project area and determined that there are sand dunes and landfill.

The dates date back thousands of years to when the area was home to the Mission-Olone tribe, the first San Francisco Indians. The fill, which used to be part of San Francisco Bay, is more recent, dating to the 1800s. The land was part of an industrial district with businesses that included coal yards.

When digging begins under the terminal, where bones could be found, the process could take a turn. If bone fragments are found, The City's medical examiner will have to determine whether they are from Olone Indians.

And if they are, since the tribe is recognized by the state, the bones have to be reburied ceremonially, "otherwise their spirits will forever wander the site," tribal spokeswoman Ann Marie Swayer said.

"The only decent thing to do is to put them back into the earth," she said.

Illustration by Robert Skidmore

Journey through time: Heath Price works on redwood planks found during the archaeological dig in a parking lot near the Transbay Transit Terminal.

"It looked like this land was used in the 1800s for a coal yard after the Gold Rush, among other things," archaeologist Heath Price said of the Caltrans lot. "This fill isn't very old. This isn't the exciting part. The exciting part will be when we dig 65 feet [deep] the Transbay Terminal that has sand deposits from 2,500 years ago."

The 3-MINUTE INTERVIEW

Carrie Chen
The director of education and conservation for the Aquarium of the Bay helped launch the new ambassador program for California Sea Lions at Pier 39.

What is the ambassador program and how does it work? The ambassadors are hand-picked by me. The water is at 60 degrees which is where sea lions are when they dive. They will be trained to do tricks such as a head stand. They'll also do small talks every 15 minutes. It's a way to engage the community.

What is the most common question ambassadors are asked? Visitors ask about the sea lions. They are not wild. Because of how the nursery is set up, you can't see the opening in the greater San Francisco Bay. Some visitors think they're captive. But really, the sea lions are hanging out there because it's a great place to live.

The sea lions disappeared for a period of time. What happened? It was pretty unusual when they all got together. We think it has to do with the weather. They're not going to go elsewhere for food. But, they're back at Pier 39.

The program is in response to their return? It's something we had in the works for a while and then they swam away. Now we're happy they're back.
3 injured in separate incidents

Violence erupted on city streets Monday night and early Tuesday morning, leaving three people wounded in separate incidents.

A 35-year-old Hispanic man was struck in the leg by a stray bullet in the Bayview district after occupants in two cars opened fire on each other, police said. The shootout occurred around 6:30 p.m. Monday in the 1600 block of Palou Avenue.

About three hours later, police responded to the 600 block of Webster Street, where they found a 22-year-old black man suffering from stab wounds, police said.

Then at 3:35 a.m. Tuesday, two people got into an argument in the 400 block of Minna Street, and one pulled out a sword and sliced a 39-year-old white man’s forearm, according to police.

None of the men suffered life-threatening injuries, police said.

— Alix Aldar

Wheelchair-ramp suggestions sought

Funding earmarked to make intersections accessible for disabled

By Kamala Kelkar
 Examiner Staff Writer

The City is seeking suggestions for where to cut curbs for wheelchair ramps.

San Francisco has $82 million reserved during the next 10 years for curb-cutting, but the Department of Public Works needs to know where to do it. People who can benefit from ramps in their neighborhoods don’t contact Public Works about where to cut curbs, the department will just fund the ramps wherever it’s doing street improvements.

“There has been a total lack of reporting in areas like Hunters Point and Bayview... and we want to make sure people are aware of their right to this money,” Public Works accessibility coordinator Kevin Jensen said. “If we’re repairing a street or I’m replacing power lines, oftentimes we’ll just coordinate with them.”

Up to code: There are more than 2000 intersections in San Francisco that don’t have proper access for wheelchair users, which is required under federal law.

To get the word out, Public Works is sprinkling Alumit bricks with advertisements and mailing letters to residents to let them know they can make suggestions via e-mail or through the 311 call center. People must be available for a follow-up phone call.

Citizen requests will help Public Works prioritize curb-cutting. There are more than 2000 intersections in The City that still need curbs cut and angled for wheelchair access, per the American Disabilities Act, which requires all pedestrian crossings to have them.

“Of course in an ideal world every curb would have a ramp, but I don’t know any city that’s like that,” Jensen said.

— Alix Aldar

Curb ramps

The Department of Public Works has analyzed 22,270 of the 25,700 intersections in The City. The rest will be surveyed this summer. Here are the results:

Ramps: 17,000
Curbs without ramps but no pedestrian lines: 2,600
Curbs without ramps with pedestrian crossing (required by federal government): 2,500
10-year plan price tag: $82 million
Time it takes to build one ramp: one year
Price for one ramp: $14,000

Source: Public Works Department

Howard Chabner, chair of the Physical Access Committee for the Mayor’s Disability Council and who has used a wheelchair for about 20 years, has submitted more than 100 requests.

kkelkar@sfexaminer.com
Bus yard housing plan revived

Fisherman’s Wharf facility could net SFMTA $35 million

By Will Reisman
Examiner Staff Writer

A decades-old proposal to transform an aging Muni bus yard near Fisherman’s Wharf into a housing development has resurfaced, and the latest plan calls for a four-story building with 220 rental units.

For decades, the cash-starved San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, which operates Muni, has talked about selling off Kirkland Yard, a 60-year-old bus facility located on Beach Street between Powell and Stockton streets.

As part of an interagency deal, the Mayor’s Office of Housing would help procure the land and, with the backing of a private developer, the SFMTA would receive $35 million during the next 20 years.

The proposed development, part of the mayor’s Hope SF plan, would offer 25% of the 220 units at below market rates, according to Doug Shoemaker, director of the Mayor’s Office of Housing.

With the site situated next to an array of Muni lines, the project would be an example of a transit-oriented development, and it would provide much-needed affordable housing for residents in the northern part of The City, Shoemaker said.

In 2004, the SFMTA formed a citizens advisory committee to investigate the possibility of selling the outdated Kirkland Yard, but that proposal, like many others in the past, failed because the agency could not find an appropriate replacement for the bus yard.

Former Supervisor Aaron Peskin, whose district included Kirkland Yard, said he’s heard talk of selling the property for decades.

“Before they go waste any more staff time, they should be 1,000 percent sure that they don’t need Kirkland anymore,” Peskin said. “It’s actually kind of an embarrassment how much the agency has spent on consultants to realize they still need the facility.”

SFMTA Director Cameron Beach acknowledged those concerns during the board’s Policy and Governance Committee hearing Tuesday.

“I think the SFMTA certainly realizes the upside of this proposal, but a motor-coach maintenance facility is not an ideal neighbor,” Beach said. “The question remains: Where would we go?”

The SFMTA said it could replace Kirkwood Yard with a new facility at Islais Creek in The City’s southeast. The new location would force Muni buses to drive across town to serve lines operating in northeast San Francisco.

The agency is moving forward with the Islais Creek facility, which is slated to be finished in 2012, regardless of what happens to Kirkland Yard. Despite the prospect of gaining $35 million — which could conceivably go toward addressing operating shortfalls — SFMTA chief Nathaniel Ford said the agency would have to carefully consider the benefits and detractions of selling Kirkland Yard.

Environmental report stirs fierce shipyard debate

Uncertainty about cleanup plans and a proposal to build a bridge at a shuttered shipyard dominated an environmental debate about epic redevelopment plans during a City Hall hearing Tuesday.

One of the largest building projects in San Francisco history is planned on and around the shuttered Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, where a hotel, marina, entertainment area and more than 10,000 homes could help restore long-lost economic prosperity in The City during the coming decades.

A football stadium also is proposed, but the 49ers have rejected the plan in favor of a move to Santa Clara.

Environmental and neighborhood activists lodged protests against The City’s environmental review of the project, which must be finalized under California law before any construction-related work can begin.

Appealing argued that an environmental impact report, which took three years to prepare, failed to properly analyze alternative ideas to a bridge planned over Yerba Buena Slough or the effects of building near a radioactive dump.

The Navy and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are slated to announce cleanup plans for the dump next year.

Supervisor Chris Daly said during the hearing that the report failed to provide him with environmental information needed to make informed decisions about the project’s environmental review because it didn’t say whether dump contents would be excavated or merely covered.

Plans to redevelop the 99-acre area are widely supported, but fierce battles between political factions have erupted over the specific building plans, which some neighbors fear will push up the cost of living and force them to move.

The Board of Supervisors was debating into the night and preparing to vote on whether the environmental impact report should be certified or whether it needs additional work by city planning officials.

DOYLE DRIVE
Lanes close for rebuild project

Drivers crossing Doyle Drive this weekend will encounter fewer lanes due to work on part of the interchange.

Between 10 p.m. Saturday and 6 a.m. Monday, traffic will be reduced to one lane in each direction, according to Presidio Parkway project officials.

The closure is needed so work can be done on the Highway 1 and U.S. 101 interchange. Doyle Drive, the I-80 exit north of the Golden Gate Bridge, is undergoing a massive expansion.

More than 100,000 vehicles use the roadway, which is structurally and seismically deficient, every weekday. More information can be found at www.pcp.projects.org.

Steve Backman
The San Francisco native and topaz artist currently has an exhibit on display in Foundry Square II through Sept. 29. For more information about his work, visit www.topazartist.com.

When did you start working with topaz? I first started my career in early 1979 as a topaz artist. It was extremely frustrating and I ended up hitting it and get a topaz stuck in my hand, I chopped it off with a knife and then started making topaz beads as a hobby and it has grown from there.

How did you decide to start making topaz art? After taking history and art classes at SFU, I became inspired to create topaz artists. I then pursued a topaz artist class at the Golden Gate Bridge, and its 50th anniversary was approaching. My image of the Golden Gate Bridge was already a reality. I was on the display at the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Why do you prefer topaz? Topaz, like many other objects, is just really challenging. Each one is different and has its own unique characteristics.

How do you maintain concentration? I like to be in the quiet — no radio, TV or phone calls. Sometimes I use sunglasses to reduce the tension, but making topaz art is itself therapeutic. My brother says I have nerves of steel — Ishmael Bradtke
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Robert Kiyosaki will not attend this event.

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Local News

Impact report OK’d for Hunters Point

Vote allows supervisors to amend plans for contested development

By John Epton
Bay Area News Group

The future of the Bayview neighborhood, which has struggled with crime, joblessness and economic depression since a shipyard was shuttered in the 1970s, will be shaped by city lawmakers during the coming weeks.

The Board of Supervisors ruled early Wednesday that an environmental impact report for a 700-acre redevelopment project covering much of the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard and surrounding land meets standards set by California law.

The ruling allows lawmakers to now consider, refine and accept or reject specific shipyard redevelopment plans, which could include more than 10,000 homes, entertainment venues, a marina and scores of commercial buildings. The first planned hearing is scheduled in two weeks.

By an 8-3 vote, the board early Wednesday morning rejected four appeals that claimed the environmental review failed to properly analyze alternative development ideas, ignored health effects on Bayview residents from multiple sources of pollution, and glossed over Navy-related cleanup plans.

Supervisors John Avalos, Chris Daly and Eric Mar cast the dissenting votes. The ruling could be challenged in court.

With the administrative matter of the shipyard’s environmental review behind the board, its members will now help to craft one of the most ambitious and contentious redevelopment projects in San Francisco’s history.

Current building plans, shaped by master developer Lennar Corp. and Mayor Gavin Newsom’s administration, have been criticized by neighborhood and environmental activists.

The sprawling nature of the development, the expected high

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San Francisco Supervisors approve Hunters Point EIR

An emotional and contentious showdown over the $8 billion redevelopment of the Hunters Point Shipyard and Candlestick Point ended with the Board of Supervisors signing off on the project’s environmental impact report.

The vote was 8 to 3 with supervisors Chris Daly, Eric Mar, and John Avalos voting to uphold the appeal of the EIR.

The redevelopment plan, led by master developer Lennar, calls for creating a neighborhood of 10,500 homes, plus parks and amenities on the 720-acre site of the former shipyard. The development also includes 3.5 million square feet of commercial space — the planners envision a center of green technology — as well as 800,000 square feet of retail and 320 acres of open space and parks.

During more than 10 hours of testimony, supporters evoked the vision of a green, dense and economically vibrant neighborhood that would address decades of neglect in the city’s poorest corner. As midnight approached, dozens of carpenters, pile drivers, electricians and laborers — many of them Bayview residents — urged the board to pass a development that would create thousands of construction jobs.

"I've watched two communities get built while I've waited for something to happen in this one," said Angelo King, a contractor and Bayview resident. "You have done it in Mission Bay and South of Market, now you have a golden opportunity to do something in Bayview Hunters Point."

Critics argued that the plan should not go forward until the shipyard, one of the U.S. Navy's most polluted bases, has been 100 percent cleaned up. Stephen Volker, an attorney for Californians for Renewable Energy, said the project posed "human health risks borne by the adjacent minority community." "I encourage you to separate the remediation phase from the development phase," he said.

Both federal and state environmental agencies, as well as the San Francisco Department of Public Health, would have to approve any transfer of the property from the Navy, said EPA Remedial Project Manager Mark Ripperda.

"We are not going to allow any transfer unless we are convinced it is safe," he said.

Another controversial topic was the proposed 900-foot bridge across the Yosemite Slough. The bridge is opposed by the Sierra Club and other environmental groups, who argue it would harm one of the Bay Area's last remaining wetland areas. Supporters said the bridge would be needed for the green-technology center city officials hope will create thousands of jobs.

Michael Cohen said the project faced "much greater financial risk" without the bridge because it would more
San Francisco Supervisors approve Hunters Point EIR - San Francisco Business Times

difficult for employees and residents to travel between the isolated Candlestick Point and the rest of the city.

"It is the primary job-generating heart of the shipyard for the major employers we hope to have there; having that direct connectivity to BART, Caltrain, and T-Third is going to be important," he said.

Cohen stressed that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein have brought more money to clean up the site than to any other decommissioned military site in the country. More than $700 million has been spent on the cleanup so far. Failing to certify the EIR could jeopardize future federal cleanup money.

"Not only will not certifying the EIR do nothing to help the cleanup, it could set it back significantly," Cohen said. "It is central that we are able to show that the cleanup is going to yield real public and economic benefits."

Supervisor Chris Daly, who voted to reject the EIR, argued that the environmental documents didn't take into account the impact the project would have on the existing residents. Just before 2 a.m., Daly gave a speech outlining his belief that "proposal doesn't work for the majority of the residents of Bayview Hunters Point." He called labor's support of the project "the sellout of the union bosses." Another opponent of the project, District 11 Supervisor John Avalos, quoted 1980s pop singer Thomas Dolby, saying the EIR had "blinded us with science."

But District 10 Supervisor Sophie Maxwell, who represents the shipyard, said the environmental study was "comprehensive and exhaustive" and went "well beyond its required scope."

"I too want the community to be healthy. I believe we can have both, either and or," she said. "Jobs and health. Jobs and parks and health."

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