INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Agency Commissioners

FROM: Fred Blackwell, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Media Clippings from 8.11.10 to 9.1.10

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

MISSION BAY:

Attachment 1: City Hall Press Release: “Mayor Newsom Announces $1.35 Million State Grant for Affordable Housing in Mission Bay”, August 25, 2010

YERBA BUENA:

Attachment 2: City Hall Press Release: “Mayor Newsom Welcomes Dr. Jonathan Yorba as the new Chief Executive Officer of the Mexican Museum”, September 1, 2010

REDEVELOPMENT NEWS:

Attachment 3: SAN FRANCISCO Business Times: “CityPlace Showdown Looming”, August 21, 2010

Attachment 4: SFGate.com: “S.F. Mayor’s Top Development Aide Resigns”, August 20, 2010
SOMA & TRANSBAY:

Attachment 5:  **The Examiner: UNDER THE DOME:** “Ethiopian restaurant to continue Sixth Street corridor’s renaissance”, August 23, 2010

Attachment 6:  **The Examiner: UNDER THE DOME:** “Newsom Tracker: Mayor to break ground at new transit station”, August 11, 2010

Attachment 7:  **SFGate.com:** “State must put high-speed rail on fast track”, August 12, 2010

Attachment 8:  **SFGate.com:** “Transbay Terminal thrown under the bus”, August 16, 2010

Attachment 9:  **The Examiner: UNDER THE DOME:** “New Transbay Transit Center to be discussed at SPUR,” August 17, 2010

Attachment 10:  **SFGate.com:** “SF Transbay Terminal Ground Breaking marks new beginning,” August 24, 2010

VISITACION VALLEY; BAYVIEW HUNTERS POINT; HUNTERS POINT SHIPYARD:

Attachment 11:  **SAN FRANCISCO Business Times: SFBT Morning Call:** “Ohlones want say in Hunters Point”, August 11, 2010

Attachment 12:  **SFGate.com:** “Ohlones want a voice on Hunters Point project,” August 11, 2010

Attachment 13:  **SFGate.com:** “Bayview bridge plan doesn’t benefit the community,” August 13, 2010

Attachment 14:  **SAN FRANCISCO Business Times: SFBT Morning Call:** “Environmental group to help design Hunters Point span”, August 30, 2010
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Wednesday, August 25, 2010
Contact: Mayor’s Office of Communications,
415-554-6131

*** PRESS RELEASE ***

MAYOR NEWSOM ANNOUNCES $1.35 MILLION STATE GRANT FOR
AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN MISSION BAY

California Department of Housing & Community Development Names Mission Bay a Model for Sustainable
Development & Establishes Mission Bay as a Priority for Future State and Federal Funding

San Francisco, CA—Mayor Gavin Newsom today announced that the Mission Bay redevelopment project has
been designated as one of 5 Gold Level “California Catalyst Communities” by the California Department of
Housing Community Development (HCD) and will receive a $1,350,000 state grant. The Catalyst Community
designation, part of HCD’s California Sustainable Strategies Pilot Program, is given to communities that are
models of sustainable development and demonstrate a commitment to increasing housing supply and
affordability, improving the link between jobs and housing, stimulating job creation and enhancing
transportation choices. The City will receive $1,350,000 to support affordable housing in Mission Bay. This
designation establishes Mission Bay as a priority for future State and Federal funding.

“Mission Bay has become a critical engine for innovation and job growth in San Francisco and it will be an
important part of our City and regional economy for decades to come,” said Mayor Newsom. “The ‘Catalyst
Community’ designation and these grant funds will help ensure that Mission Bay continues to be a model for
smart growth and sustainable, affordable development.”

A 303-acre former brownfield site that was designated by the City and County of San Francisco as a
redevelopment project area in 1998, Mission Bay is transforming into a large scale, transit-oriented mixed-use
development. At full build-out, the project will contain more than 6,000 housing units (approximately 30
percent affordable), 49 acres of new parks, 4.4 million square feet of new office and laboratory space, a 43-acre
UCSF life science research campus and a new 550-bed UCSF hospital serving children, women and cancer
patients. Mission Bay is served by a robust public transit network, making it one of the most transit-rich
neighborhoods in the state. Mission Bay is also an economic growth engine for the region, the state and the
country, creating more than 31,000 high-quality jobs in critical fields like biotechnology, healthcare and
education. Today, there are more than 30 life sciences companies in Mission Bay.

With this designation, Mission Bay will serve as a laboratory for other communities studying sustainable land
use strategies in action. The Catalyst Community designation comes with a commitment from HCD to provide
and facilitate financial and technical resources in support of the Mission Bay redevelopment project. Catalyst
Project designees will be awarded funding from Proposition 1C, which provides financing for affordable
housing and infrastructure across California.

For more information about Mission Bay, please go to: http://www.sfredevelopment.org/index.aspx?page=61

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Wednesday, September 1, 2010
Contact: Mayor's Office of Communications, 415-554-6131
San Francisco Arts Commission, Kate Patterson, 415-252-4638

*** PRESS RELEASE ***

MAYOR NEWSOM WELCOMES DR. JONATHAN YORBA AS THE NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE MEXICAN MUSEUM

Board of Trustees selects nationally recognized expert on Latino art and culture, Jonathan L. Yorba, Ph.D., to lead the Mexican Museum

San Francisco, CA—San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom today announced that, after conducting a national search, the Board of Trustees of the Mexican Museum has selected Dr. Jonathan Yorba to lead the organization as the new Chief Executive Officer, effective September 15.

“I applaud the Board of Trustees on selecting a candidate who not only possesses an incredible resume as a nationally respected leader in the arts, but also has demonstrated tremendous business acumen and extensive experience with economic development, redevelopment, and capital projects,” said Mayor Newsom. “The appointment of Dr. Yorba represents a major step towards seeing the Museum move to a new home in the Yerba Buena Cultural District.”

“I am honored to rejoin the Mexican Museum at this important time in the institution’s history,” said Jonathan Yorba. “I am looking forward to working with this tremendous group of people to build a brand-new home for the display and interpretation of such an important collection, including the Nelson A. Rockefeller Collection of folk art and contemporary Mexican and Chicano art.”

Currently, the Arts and Cultural Affairs Director for the City of Riverside where he is working with the Mayor, City Council, City Manager and staff on a $1.57 billion renaissance of public improvements, including downtown revitalization, Jonathan Yorba possesses a distinguished professional and academic background, including a doctorate from the University of California at Berkeley in Comparative Ethnic Studies, with a focus on American art. He is trained as an artist, museologist, scholar, and in philanthropy and fund-development.

Previous to his position with the City of Riverside, Yorba was the first executive director of La Plaza de Cultura y Artes Foundation, director of education and community programs at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, curator of education at the Crocker Art Museum, and from 1992 to 1997 he served as the acting executive director, interim curator, and independent researcher at the Mexican Museum.

Yorba brings over 25 years of experience in the arts, culture, and the humanities. He is the founding chairman of the Friends of the National Museum of the American Latino, Inc., a national board that is supporting the initiative to create a new museum for the United States. He has been a Fellow at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the National Museum of American History. Yorba also is an alumnus of the prestigious Getty Leadership Institute and is the chair of the Ford Foundation Fellows Fund. Yorba has authored numerous important publications including Arte Latino: Treasures from the Smithsonian American Art Collection, and has a particular interest in museums and globalization.

1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 200, San Francisco, California 94102-4641
gavin.newsom@sfgov.org • (415) 554-6141
This appointment marks an important milestone in the Museum as it prepares for a move from Fort Mason Center to the Yerba Buena District, as it fulfills its public trust commitment to preserve and display its significant collection of over 12,000 works of art.

The Co-Chairs of the Mexican Museum’s Board of Trustees Mario Diaz and Nora Wagner, stated, “The Mexican Museum is very fortunate to have Jonathan Yorba return to the Museum. His experience in cultural diplomacy and international relations, his energy and commitment to the 706 Mission Street Project collaboration, and his development background and knowledge of the collection were key factors in choosing him for this major leadership role.”

“I have been a huge fan of the Mexican Museum for more than 25 years. In fact, my first trip to San Francisco was specifically to visit the Museum,” stated Luis R. Cancel, director of cultural affairs for the San Francisco Arts Commission. “The Mexican Museum recognizes the national and international stature that Mr. Yorba will bring to the Museum. His expertise and experience will provide strong direction to the institution as it moves forward.”

The Redevelopment Agency is working with the Museum on the development of a new, world-class facility. While earlier planning focused on a “stand-alone” building, current efforts are centered on a new mixed-use project that includes “706 Mission Street” and consists of a residential tower incorporating both the landmark Mercantile Building and the Museum.

According to Executive Director of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency Fred Blackwell, “The Redevelopment Agency and the City are fully committed to the public/private/non-profit partnership that will eventually bring the Mexican Museum to a new home in the heart of Yerba Buena Center, San Francisco's premier cultural district. The hiring of Mr. Yorba is another significant step in the growth of this vital cultural institution as we work together with the Museum and our development partner, Millennium Partners, toward this long-sought goal.”

“We are very happy that the Mexican Museum will have such a strong chief executive officer to help advance the Museum and make its eventual move to the Yerba Buena Cultural District a reality,” said Sean Jeffries, SF Managing Partner, Millennium Partners.

About The Mexican Museum

The Mexican Museum has an important international collection of over 12,000 artworks, including painting, sculpture, and folk art and represents thousands of years of Mexican art and culture within the Americas. The Museum also has an impressive number of rare books and a growing collection of Latin American art.

For more information, visit www.mexicanmuseum.org.

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1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 200, San Francisco, California 94102-4641
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CityPlace showdown looming - San Francisco Business Times

Another big land use showdown is headed to the San Francisco Supes.

A few weeks after Board of Supervisors voted 8-3 to approve the environmental impact for the Hunters Point Shipyard redevelopment, the legislative body is gearing up for a Sept. 7 vote on the CityPlace project in Mid-Market.

Of course CityPlace is a drop in the bucket compared to Hunters Point -- 250,000 square feet of retail versus 700 acres with more that 10,000 housing units. But it is seen by Mid-Market boosters as a best chance opportunity to finally bring meaningful change to the hard-luck blocks of Market Street between Fifth and Seventh streets.

The Planning Commission approved the certification of the project environmental study July 8th by a vote of 5-2, with a 6-1 approval on one of the related motions. But not everyone was happy. As Socketsite reported, Nonprofits Livable City and Walk San Francisco have appealed the EIR certification on the grounds that the project has too much parking. The developer, Urban Realty, argues that the type of retail it is proposing -- cost-sensitive value-based retailers -- specialize in the sort of bulky household items most San Franciscans currently drive to the suburbs to buy. And the amount of parking it is proposing, less than one spot per 1,000 square feet of retail space, is 20 to 25 percent of what most suburban retail malls offer.

In an interview a few weeks before the appeal was filed, Livable City Executive Director Tom Radulovich said there are 1,500 parking spaces within walking distance of CityPlace. “We want to see this area thrive but we don’t want to throw out our values as San Franciscans to see it thrive.”
It should be an interesting vote. The CityPlace team has done a masterful job of building support. They have labor, neighborhood groups, and many key Tenderloin progressives like Randy Shaw of the Tenderloin Housing Clinic. But the bike lobby and transit-first advocates have ample support and some of the progressive supervisors who were key supporters of the shipyard project -- David Campos, Ross Mirkarimi, and David Chiu -- will certainly feel at least some pressure to go against developer this time around.

Categories: Commercial Real Estate, Retailing & Restaurants

People: David Chiu, Ross Mirkarimi, Tom Radulovich, David Campos, Randy Shaw

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They say it's good to go out on top. Michael Cohen apparently took that to heart.

After a banner month that saw approvals granted, agreements signed or ground broken on some of the largest development projects in San Francisco history, the man who got those deals done for the city said he will step down as director of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development after 15 years in public service.

Cohen made the announcement to staff a day after watching Mayor Gavin Newsom sign an innovative agreement with the Navy on Wednesday for the handover of Treasure Island, a faded former naval base that the city intends to transform into a 21st century neighborhood.

A week earlier it was the groundbreaking for the new Transbay Transit Center, the first high-speed rail station in the country. Days before, Newsom signed legislation approving plans to put 10,500 homes, a green technology campus and perhaps a new football stadium on the former Hunters Point Naval Shipyard and Candlestick Point, the most ambitious redevelopment effort in the city since the 1906 earthquake and fire.

'Unfinished business'

"For a number of years I have intended to return to the private sector, but there was some significant unfinished business to take care of," Cohen said. "That unfinished business has now been completed."

Cohen, who headed the city attorney's office's real estate group under former Mayor Willie Brown, almost left about 11/2 years ago, but Newsom convinced him to stay to shepherd those three landmark projects, the mayor said.

"People in the city will one day fully appreciate his work and what he's done," Newsom said. "He is the best of the best."

"People in the city will one day fully appreciate his work and what he's done," Newsom said. "He is the best of the best."

Cohen said he will remain in his post until the end of September, also the deadline for the city to submit its proposal to host the 34th America's Cup, the world's premier sailing race, which carries with it an economic windfall estimated at $1.4 billion for the Bay Area.

Newsom said he will make an announcement soon on Cohen's replacement. City Hall sources said Jennifer Matz, the office's managing deputy director, is the leading candidate.

Cohen's departure comes as Newsom is trying to unseat Lt. Gov. Abel Maldonado in November. Even if the mayor loses, he's termed out at the end of 2011.

"You have to see this as part of the changing of the guard," said Gabriel Metcalf, director of the San Francisco Planning + Urban Research Association. "We're not going to know what direction economic development is going to take until we have a new mayor."

A shrewd dealmaker

Cohen earned a reputation as a shrewd and determined dealmaker who grasped the big picture and was able to navigate the city's political camps. "It's a huge loss for the city," said Supervisor Sean Elsbernd, who worked with Cohen on renovating the Harding Park Golf Course into PGA Championship-caliber links. "Michael is hands down one of the top five smartest people I've ever met in my life."
Will Travis, director of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, said Cohen "always understood what our concerns were," and had a knack for uniting forces whose goals might seem at odds.

"People like Michael can make barrel loads of money in the private sector," Travis said. "The fact that he's been able and willing to devote so much of his time to public work cannot be ignored."

Calvin Welch, a longtime housing activist and frequent Newsom critic, called Cohen "the single most important mind, voice and guiding hand on the entire development side of the Newsom administration."

'A thoughtful person'

His departure leaves a "yawning hole," Welch said.

"That's not to say I agree with many of Michael Cohen's conclusions," he said. "But I do think he is a thoughtful person."

Cohen said he plans to launch his own development company and will not accept a position at a firm that did business with the city during his tenure.

"My heart always will be in building from the ground up," Cohen said, "and I want to create a new company from the ground up."

E-mail John Coté at jcote@sfchronicle.com.
Ethiopian restaurant to continue Sixth Street corridor’s renaissance

By: John Upton

08/23/10 12:43 PM PDT

The resurgence of the Sixth Street area South of Market will continue next week with the grand opening of an Ethiopian restaurant.

The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency has been working to improve the economically battered area since 2003 with the assistance of local nonprofit consultant Urban Solutions.

Since then, 30 building facades have been overhauled and 30 new businesses have been founded in the area, creating more than 100 jobs, Urban Solutions figures show.

The renaissance is scheduled to continue next Tuesday when Moya Ethiopian Restaurant and Coffeehouse opens to the public.

A ceremony is scheduled at 10:30 a.m. Aug. 31 at Moya, which at 1044 Folsom St., is between Sixth and Seventh streets, followed by a bread-making demonstration and lunch specials.
Newsom Tracker: Mayor to break ground at new transit station

By: Erin Sherbert
Examiner Staff Writer
08/11/10 8:00 AM PDT

It's a day that's been long overdue. Mayor Gavin Newsom will meet up with Speaker Nancy Pelosi and U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood for the groundbreaking ceremony of the Transbay Transit Center and California High Speed Rail Station Wednesday at 10:30 a.m.

More from Erin Sherbert

- Sen. Boxer promotes Small Business Jobs Bill
- Newsom Tracker: Mayor launching anti-truancy effort
- Crackdown targets truancy at ground level
- Officials: Mandatory recycling and composting law a success
- Convention & Visitors Bureau promoting International Pow Wow

Topics

- newsom tracker
- mayor gavin newsom
- nancy pelosi
- ray lahood
- transbay transit center
- california high speed rail station

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"This is a big deal, I can tell you that," U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood told a crowd of about 1,000 people at San Francisco's Transbay Terminal.

He was speaking at Wednesday's groundbreaking for the first high-speed rail line in the United States, and at the site of what other speakers hailed as "the Grand Central Terminal of the West" - California high-speed rail's northern terminus to be built out of the ashes of a dilapidated bus station.

For all the mutual back-slapping and high-flown rhetoric, the occasion did feel historic, even if, as Mayor Gavin Newsom jokingly told LaHood, half of the attendees were consultants getting a piece of the $43 billion project.

After the speeches, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-San Francisco, picked up a ceremonial shovel, along with LaHood, Newsom, Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., Rep. George Miller, D-Martinez. There were congratulations all around, not only for each other, but for us Californians as a whole.

The reason we're the first to be getting high-speed rail - and billions of dollars from the federal government to build it - "is because California had its act together," LaHood said. "You're way ahead of the curve on high-speed rail. You're in the catbird seat."

'There are time limits': The president of the Transportation Solutions Defense and Education Fund was in the audience. David Schonbrunn said he shares "the same vision" espoused from the speakers' platform.

Next week, however, Schonbrunn's organization (www.transdef.org) is filing a petition, along with the city of Menlo Park, the town of Atherton and other advocacy organizations, challenging the environmental impact report relating to the San Francisco-San Jose portion of the line and demanding California's High-Speed Rail Authority pull it back for a rethink.

The petition, to be heard in Sacramento County Superior Court, is the latest in a number of court actions filed by critics, who have lambasted the board, questioned various assumptions about the project, and, most especially, vociferously object to the proposed Pacheco Pass route that would run directly through some Peninsula cities.

Merits aside, there are serious concerns that the Bay Area could fall behind the curve should such issues be tied up in endless litigation.

"People must not forget that there are time limits," said High-Speed Rail Authority CEO Roelef van Ark.

For example, approximately $5 billion in federal and matching funds to start building the Bay Area segment will be off the table if the arguments aren't settled by next year, when the Obama administration decides which of the four segments of the San Francisco-to-Los Angeles line gets that money to begin construction.

"The funding is tied to a very tight schedule," van Ark said. "If you don't get the environmental process done by September 2011, you won't get the funding, and the Bay Area could be the last to see its section built.

"The possibility is very real," he said.

Katie, bar the door: Virgin America, the Bay Area's very own airline, is adding Dallas-Fort Worth to its growing roster of national and international destinations.
Daily flights to and from SFO and LAX are set to begin Dec. 1.

But Dallas wasn't Virgin America's first choice for its next port of call. Chicago was. "We've been trying to get into O'Hare for the past two years," said Virgin America CEO David Cush.

But the carriers controlling most of the gates - United Airlines and American Airlines - have refused point-blank to let Virgin America in. Delta, the other major carrier at O'Hare, made a financial offer that was "not acceptable," Cush said.

Perhaps the fact that Virgin America is a low-cost carrier has something to do with it. It took years for the minority offshoot of Britain-based Virgin Atlantic to get into SFO. Some of the same carriers objected on the grounds that a domestic-based airline must be clearly controlled by U.S. citizens.

After the company made some adjustments to its corporate governance, it got clearance from the feds. A more recent objection on the same grounds to Virgin America's expansion plans, led by Alaska Airlines, was rejected in January.

"This is a page from the old airline playbook," said Cush, citing the shutout in Chicago. "Keep competition out."

Blogging at sfgate.com/columns/bottomline. Facebook page at sfg.ly/doACKM. Tweeting: @andrewsross. E-mail: bottomline@sfchronicle.com.

This article appeared on page D - 1 of the San Francisco Chronicle
You can’t tear down a flyer in San Francisco without incurring the wrath of angry neighbors or a preservation group. So why didn’t anyone fight to save the old Transbay Terminal?

My point is not that the old terminal should be saved. It’s seismically unsound and, after decades of neglect, clearly the worse for the wear. It’s also architecturally unsuited for the task of housing an expanded commuter bus system, much less the terminus of a new high-speed rail project.

But I’m not caught in the death grip of nostalgia the way so many San Franciscans are. I believe that cities should be living, breathing, changing organisms - that they need new buildings and new projects and all kinds of regular alteration, in fact, lest they become as exciting as a beetle trapped in amber. The battle cry of “Manhattanization” makes me nod enthusiastically, not quake in my boots.

Mine is a minority opinion, at least to judge by the battles royales at the Planning Department and the incredible politicking that developers have to do in order to build anything new in San Francisco.

There have been fights over the new terminal, but they’ve mainly been about where it should be situated and whether the new high-speed rail project should terminate there. About the building itself? Nary a peep of protest.

Curious, I took a stroll through the old building the day before it was permanently closed for demolition. I saw plenty of things that should have made this city’s preservationists issue demands and proclamations.

For starters, the building itself is old, at least for California (it was built in 1939), and it has a pedigree (the architect was Timothy Pflueger, who also designed local gems like the Castro and Paramount Theatres, 450 Sutter and the San Francisco Stock Exchange Tower). It’s loaded with historical features, many of which have been covered or shuttered for years: banks of phone booths, a long and lovely newsstand, an old state police office with a jail cell.

There’s a diner and a bar that are so authentic, you can almost smell the asbestos. I was particularly taken with the old diner, which has a teal-and-butter color palette and a long teardrop of a counter. On the far right side of the diner, a shelf of plants were still green, and it wasn’t hard to imagine a former, bustling life for the place - complete with plastic-backed menus and uniformed waitresses slipping pies out of the old-fashioned refrigerated shelves above the sink.

Of course, some people have been enjoying this ambiance for many, many years. I saw them during my stroll, too. In and out through the dank hallways they shuffled, ignoring the few harried commuters, pausing only to ask for change: the 30 remaining homeless people of the hundreds who have called the terminal home for decades.

I guess their stench of poverty and misfortune was enough to scare away the city’s anti-change brigades. The fact that the closure of the building means the disappearance of the homeless people within it has been reason enough for San Franciscans to support its demise.

And I suppose there are more pressing things for San Francisco’s nostalgists to protest: new restaurants in North Beach, their neighbor’s new garage, the closure of the Tonga Room.

But not the Transbay Terminal. They’re happy to let that building - and those who lived within it - disappear.

Caille Millner is an editorial writer. E-mail her at cmillner@sfcronicle.com.
New Transbay Transit Center to be discussed at SPUR

By: Will Reisman
Examiner Staff Writer
08/17/10 9:38 AM PDT

Last week, scores of local, state and federal politicians got to slap each other on the back and congratulate themselves during a lavish groundbreaking ceremony at the Transbay Transit Center.

Now, the real work begins.

A multimodal transit hub that will service 11 different operators, including the state’s high-speed rail project, the new Transbay Center has been hyped as the “Grand Central Station of the West.”

Today, city planners will discuss how the massive project fits into downtown San Francisco and what effects it will have on surrounding neighborhoods. David Alumbaugh of the San Francisco Planning Department will lead a forum discussion at the headquarters of SPUR, a local think-tank.

The talk will begin at 12:30 p.m. at SPUR’s headquarters on 654 Mission St. It is free to SPUR members and $5 for the rest of the public.

More from Will Reisman

- BART to hire person to independently monitor police
- Test run puts Muni line in charter territory
- Experts to discuss public transit options following major catastrophe
- Subway travel times disputed
- The City to prioritize most dangerous sidewalks

Topics

SPUR, Transbay Transit Center

Follow The Examiner
SF Transbay Terminal Ground Breaking marks new beginning

If you follow this space, you recall the long process of working to get a final design for the new San Francisco Transbay Terminal.

The old terminal, slated for demolition, was the hub of trains into San Francisco from the East Bay and using the San Francisco / Oakland Bay Bridge. Then, after trains gave way to cars and buses, it was the terminus of AC Transit Bus Service and San Mateo Transit Service for the East Bay and the North Bay. But with all of that, it had still fallen into a state of deterioration such that it became a blight in the South of Market area of downtown San Francisco.

After the establishment of the Redevelopment Plan in 2005 and a competition, a design created by Pelli Clarke Pelli emerged as the unanimous winner. Here’s this blogger’s video from the competition and the presentation in San Francisco City Hall in 2007:
Ground breaking marks new beginning

The plan is to take shape over the next seven years and be complete in 2017. I'm certain the vast majority of San Franciscans, let alone people in the Bay Area, have no idea what dramatic change is about to take place in what was once the place that was known as the unofficial parking and transit hub for SOMA's nightlife.

It will consist of a large, 1,000 ft skyscraper, 2,600 housing units, and a giant, elevated urban park unlike anything experienced in America. Indeed, the six-acre park is so large given where it's located, it's more like a much smaller version of Golden Gate Park, but for Downtown San Francisco.

The structure that supports the park will also serve to connect various forms of transit, including the planned extension of CalTrain from next to AT&T Park, and become - this space' prediction - the new place for Bay Area teenagers to hang out. (Try taking a cyber walk around to see what I mean.)

Grand Central Station

"Today, in breaking ground on the Transbay Transit Center, we are opening a new chapter in that history of progress," Speaker Nancy Pelosi said. "We are coming together to create jobs and revitalize our economy, and we are laying the first building blocks of a new 'Grand Central Station of the West.'"

Speaker Pelosi's right. The SF Transbay Terminal project will create 48,000 new jobs during its construction phase, but once finished, will transform Downtown San Francisco in a way that perhaps has not been fully considered.

"This is one of the most important and transformational public transportation projects in America. Once the dust has settled, San Francisco's skyline will be transformed - as will transportation, housing, and employment choices for people across the Bay area and beyond," said United States Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood. The U.S. Department of Transportation and the Federal Railroad Administration are proud to contribute to the first phase of this effort."

"This is a historic day for San Francisco and for the entire State," said San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom. "History will write that High-Speed Rail and a new engine for job creation and economic growth in California began today, with the groundbreaking of this project. It is a culmination of decades of planning to fulfill our City's vision of leading the nation as a transit - first City and a hub of a modern High - Speed Rail system."
Ohlones want say in Hunters Point

Ohlone Indians are asking San Francisco supervisors to give them a say in the planned Hunters Point project, arguing that San Francisco failed to follow state rules regarding redevelopment around suspected burial sites, the San Francisco Chronicle reports.

Read more at the San Francisco Chronicle

Categories: Commercial Real Estate
Tags: San Francisco

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An Indian tribe held a sunrise ceremony at Yosemite Slough on Tuesday in an attempt to show just how important the sacred sites around the proposed Hunters Point Shipyard/Candlestick Point redevelopment project are to the Ohlone people.

"We want to be shown the respect we deserve as the original people of that land," Tony Cerda, chairman of the Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe, said. "We need city recognition."

Cerda and about a dozen other members of the tribe, many dressed in traditional regalia, appeared before the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday afternoon to plead for a greater voice in development of what they say are their traditional tribal lands.

"There are only three ways to get land," Cerda said. "You can buy it, have it given to you or steal it. What gives them the right to dictate to us?"

The controversy springs from the environmental impact reports that were done for the 700-acre project, which received final approval last month. Cerda and other Indians argued that San Francisco refused to follow state rules requiring notification of the "most likely descendants" when development could take place around suspected burial sites.

While city officials insist that San Francisco's status as a charter city exempts it from many of those notification requirements, they also say that Ohlone groups were informed about the project and invited to make suggestions about dealing with their ancestral sites.

"It's fair to say we should have gotten to them earlier," said John Rahaim, the city's planning director. "But we met with them in February."

"They didn't meet with us," Cerda said, "and we're the only people who can trace our genealogy all the way back to Mission Dolores," where the Spanish city of San Francisco was born.

Ohlone tribes not recognized

Cerda's complaint highlights the problems surrounding the Ohlone claim to Bay Area lands. While no one disputes that the Ohlones were the primary American Indians living in the area before the Spanish arrived, there's no complete agreement on which Ohlone tribe lived where.

In January, for example, Rosemary Cambra, chair of the Muwekma Ohlone, spoke briefly to the Planning Commission about the need for environmental cleanup of the Hunters Point shipyard, which she referred to as "our homeland."

The federal government has added to the confusion by refusing to grant official recognition to any of the Ohlone tribes, which means they generally don't have to be consulted in connection with federal projects that may affect their homelands.

"The government has always pitted us against each other," said Cerda, whose tribe lays historic claim to the land from Carmel north to San Francisco and east to the slopes of Mount Diablo in Contra Costa County.

Cerda and most of his tribe's 2,000 members now live around Pomona (Los Angeles County).

Supervisors ask for protocols

The supervisors gave a boost to Cerda's efforts by unanimously approving a resolution urging the Planning Department and the Redevelopment Agency to put together "specific protocols" for working with the Ohlones and other American Indian groups on the shipyard redevelopment project.

While the resolution might not have been the most ringing endorsement possible, it's an important bit of recognition, said Neil MacLean of the Ohlone Profiles Project, a San Francisco-based group to connect people with the history of the Ohlone tribe. He said the tribe not only wants to prevent the desecration of the resting place of their ancestors, but also to see construction of a cultural center with a genealogical research center and a place for sacred ceremonies.

That's a real possibility, said Michael Cohen, director of the mayor's office of economic and workforce development.

"Around the old dry dock, we plan to have cultural and historical facilities," he said. "We'll show the history of the African Americans who came to work there in World War II, but also the history of the Ohlones and all the other groups who were part of the area."

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http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/08/11/BAD91ES0D3.DTL

This article appeared on page C - 1 of the San Francisco Chronicle
Environmentalists have taken a lot of heat over our opposition to building a bridge across Yosemite Slough as part of the Hunters Point redevelopment project just approved by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. Allow us to set the record straight.

The city’s environmental community is no stranger to Bayview Hunters Point. Environmentalists worked with Bayview residents to expose the toxic health threats posed by the abandoned naval shipyard more than 20 years ago. We helped put the shipyard on the federal Superfund list and dragged the Navy, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the city kicking and screaming into taking its cleanup seriously with Proposition P in 2000.

We helped the community build Candlestick Point State Park and Herons Head Park and worked shoulder to shoulder with neighborhood residents to shut down the Hunters Point PG&E power plant.

Environmentalists are committed to stopping the proposed Yosemite Slough bridge not only because it is bad for the environment; it’s bad for Bayview. If you live in the north, west and central parts of San Francisco, you are just a short walk to a great park such as the Presidio, Lands End, Ocean Beach and Golden Gate.

The Bayview development plan takes the only significant, large park on the east side of San Francisco and the city’s only state park, and changes it from a place where local residents can enjoy the natural environment in their neighborhood and turns it into a glorified Embarcadero with less space but 25,000 more people on it.

It is remarkable in a city facing continuing financial difficulty that six members of the Board of Supervisors voted for an exorbitantly expensive bridge when the director of the Office of Workforce and Economic Development admitted he could not produce either a market or economic analysis to validate his repeated claim that the bridge was "fundamental" to the success of the project.

Indeed, six members of the board ignored study after study presented by environmental groups demonstrating that the city had miscalculated transit times, misrepresented the environmental alternative to the bridge route and otherwise had ginned up data to build a bridge that could not be supported by the facts.

Even the measured amendment to withdraw the bridge temporarily while these errors and omissions were reconsidered, together with a non-bridge alternative, was rejected by these members of the board.

The inclusion of the bridge in the development plan is based solely on desire, not facts. A non-bridge alternative exists that maintains the integrity of the project, saves the park and protects the wetlands restoration that is in process at Yosemite Slough.

There is a simple, meaningful alternative to the bridge that would save taxpayer money, benefit the community and protect the environment. Why would the city and the Board of Supervisors ignore these facts and demand a bridge be built? It makes you wonder who has the best interests of the community at heart.

Arthur Feinstein is the vice chair of the San Francisco Bay Chapter of the Sierra Club. He is supported in this view by the Golden Gate Audubon Society, California Native Plant Society, Yerba Buena Chapter and San Francisco Tomorrow.

http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/08/13/EDED1ESGGL.DTL

This article appeared on page A - 12 of the San Francisco Chronicle
Environmental group to help design Hunters Point span

The California State Parks Foundation has agreed with developer Lennar Urban to prepare initial conceptual designs for a bridge over Yosemite Slough that was a key sticking point in the redevelopment of San Francisco's Hunters Point Shipyard, the San Francisco Chronicle reports.

Read more at the San Francisco Chronicle

Categories: Commercial Real Estate

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Companies: Lennar Urban, The California State Parks Foundation

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