Hunters Point Shipyard Arts District
Community Meetings

Process Summary

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Hunters Point Shipyard Arts District

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Background

The San Francisco Mayor’s Office and the Redevelopment Agency (collectively, the City) hosted three community meetings to develop a vision for an Arts District at the Hunters Point Shipyard and for the artists’ replacement space. The District would include replacement space for the current artists’ studios at the Shipyard, as well as space for community arts programming. There has been a longtime interest in developing an Arts District at the Shipyard, and this desire was quickly reaffirmed through this process.

The City hosted community meetings on November 14, 2007 in Building 101 at the Hunters Point Shipyard; on July 31, 2008 at the Bayview Opera House; and on December 3, 2008 at the Bayview Opera House. The meetings were about two hours long and were held in the evening. Between 60 and 80 people attended each of the meetings.

Each meeting included an informational presentation and an opportunity for discussion and comment on the future of the Arts District. Two of the three meetings featured small working group discussions and group reports. Participants also had an opportunity to provide additional feedback on written comment cards. The series of community discussions were held to solicit opinions from the artists and community members about the future of the Arts District. The meetings were facilitated by consulting staff from Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc. (MIG) with assistance from ArtHouse.

As a result of these discussions, the proposed Arts District will include Building 101, additional artist work spaces, and a proposed community-based Arts Center and related activities. Building 101 will receive substantial improvements to enhance safety, access and usability.

Each of the three meetings is summarized below, and recommendations for next steps are included at the end of this document.

Meeting 1

The purpose of this meeting was to provide participants with information about the land use planning process and to engage the artists and community members in a discussion about the desired qualities of the artists’ replacement space. Michael Cohen, Director, Mayor’s Office of Base Reuse and Development, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. He confirmed with the artists that Building 101 would be retained and improved. This was an important issue, as many artists consider Building 101 to be an important historic resource at the Shipyard. David Thom, Managing Partner, IBI Group, provided general information about the land use plan and the Arts District’s adjacent land uses, which are primarily residential. The site would be well-served by public transit with a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) hub nearby. David was joined by Kofi Bonner, President,
Lennar Bay Area Urban Land Division, who provided additional information about the proposed redevelopment activities. Michael Cohen, David Thom, and Kofi Bonner fielded questions from the group for about 30 minutes.

Later in the meeting, Russell Herrman, a representative from Shipyard Trust for the Arts (STAR) provided information about a survey of the artists that had been conducted by STAR. Alma Robinson, Executive Director for California Lawyers for the Arts, presented information about how arts funding was allocated throughout the city, including a key finding that the Bayview/Hunters Point community has received less funding than other neighborhoods in the city.

Joan Chaplick and Anchi Mei from MIG facilitated and graphically recorded the meeting. The meeting objectives and purpose were to:

1) Bring participants up to date on related planning activities at the Hunters Point Shipyard;
2) Begin developing a vision statement; and
3) Create guiding principles for the artists’ replacement space and the Arts District.

After the presentation, participants were directed to work in small groups with a facilitator and discuss the following three questions regarding the future of the Arts District:

1) What is your future vision for the Arts District?
2) What are the desired qualities of the artists’ replacement space?
3) How do you see the artists’ replacement space being integrated into the Future Arts District?

There were six groups, each with about 15 participants. After the discussion, each group reported out on the three questions and summarized the key points which were recorded on a large wallgraphic. The wallgraphic from the meeting is attached at the end of the summary.

Participants envision an Arts District that:

- Provides a place for artistic collaboration and for the artists and community to come together;
- Provides arts education opportunities, especially for children and youth;
- Provides neighborhood youth with opportunities for apprenticeships with artists;
- Includes opportunities for dance, music, and theater;
- Provides a linkage to the Bayview Opera House;
- Includes common areas and space for shared usage of high-cost equipment (i.e., kiln or printing press);
- Provides gallery space to display art;
- Includes arts-related commercial and retail activities that contribute to the financial sustainability of the District;
- Includes flexible, multi-purpose space and various types of space such as public, private, shared, or mixed-use;
- Maintains a buffer between public areas and residential spaces and the artists’ work spaces; and
• Develops linkages to other facilities at Hunters Point, such as the science and technology campus located on Parcel C of the Shipyard.

Participants emphasized that maintaining the affordability of the space should be a priority. Some participants encouraged the inclusion of live/work space, and suggested there be opportunities to purchase the spaces. There was agreement within the larger group that the terms “affordable” and “live/work” space will need further clarification and definition. There were several comments received that models of “live/work” artist spaces in other parts of the city were not acceptable, since they were considered to be too high-cost and out of the reach of most Shipyard artists.

Participants described the following as being desired characteristics and features of the replacement space:

Internal Space
• Upgraded utilities, including WiFi
• Outdoor access, including shared roof or deck areas
• Natural lighting – northern exposure preferred
• Good ventilation and operable windows
• Sound proofing and insulation
• Disposal area for waste materials
• Large cleaning area
• Shared space for large equipment such as a kiln or printing press
• Various size work spaces
• Varying levels of finishing from basic shell to more fully developed
• Safe and secure

External Space
• Safe and secure
• Accessible 24 hours/day, 7 days a week
• Buffer space or design features are included to help minimize potential conflicts with nearby residents
• Addresses safety and noise impacts from the nearby BRT hub
• Shared open space or commons; may include sculpture garden
• Loading dock and access to freight elevator
• Parking for artists near work spaces
• Plan is not highly structured and can accommodate organic development of the space by the artists

Integration with Arts District
• District should balance the artists’ need for privacy with the needs of the community
• Some spaces may be highly accessible to the public to encourage interaction and demonstration opportunities
• District may include arts-related commercial and retail opportunities
• District may include live/work spaces

After the meeting, the planning team for the visioning process, which includes representatives of the City, MIG and ArtHouse, reviewed the results of the meeting and identified some of the actions that would occur in advance of the next meeting. At participant request, the planning team decided to begin researching best practices and case studies that include similar arts facilities in other states and countries.

Meeting 2

The second meeting was held on July 31st at the Bayview Opera House. More than 75 community members attended the meeting. Wells Lawson, Assistant Project Manager in the Mayor’s Office of Economic and Workforce Development, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. Wells also noted that Luis Cancel from the San Francisco Arts Commission and Marcia Dale-LeWinter from the Hunters Point Citizens Advisory Committee were in attendance. Joan Chaplick, MIG Facilitator, reviewed the results of the last meeting, and Linda Schanfein from ArtHouse presented the case studies summarized below. Joan Chaplick and Anchi Mei, MIG, facilitated and graphically recorded the meeting.

The presentation included three case studies of similar arts district revitalization projects:
• Angels Gate Cultural Center in San Pedro, California
• Torpedo Factory Arts Center in Alexandria, Virginia
• Granville Island arts and retail district in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

These were three case studies out of five arts districts studied by the project team. Two other projects -- Worcester Arts District in Massachusetts and the Pittsburgh Cultural District in Pennsylvania – were also reviewed for any best practices that might be applicable to the Arts District. As an accompaniment to the presentation, participants received a detailed handout describing the features of the case study projects.

Following the presentation, participants were encouraged to ask questions and discuss the preferred features highlighted in the case studies. Participants identified factors and features they saw as key to the creation and success of the Shipyard Arts District. The main points were recorded and these comments, along with comment card responses, are integrated into this summary.

Participants identified the following key elements:
• Restore and rehabilitate.
  o Maintain and enhance the local character/design/feel of the shipyard.
  o Retain existing infrastructure to the extent that it’s environmentally safe to do so.
  Preserve Building 813. Build on what we have!
- Focus on Hunters Point history; reuse/rehabilitate the existing building into a grand museum.
- Make the Arts District an educational force in the Bayview, and a bridge/peacemaker between the existing neighborhood and the new community.
- Value artists as a community asset.
- Promote assets of land: large size of land, waterfront access, and best weather in the city.
- Focus on green building, remediation, and sustainability. An environmentally healthy artists’ space is important – clean up all toxic wastes before artists move in.

- Provide a diversity of art facilities and resources.
  - Balance visual, performing and media arts and crafts.
  - Create performance companies/organizations in the community.
  - Provide facilities for recording and video production.
  - Provide arts education/classes in the community.

- Ensure access to art resources and artist’s spaces.
  - Create access to arts education and financial benefits for this and other under-resourced communities.
  - Provide affordable space; it is important as is the ability for artists to have live/work spaces.
  - Make it easy to get to Hunters Point for both Bayview residents and others.

- Involve local youth and local residents.
  - Involve public in process.
  - Involve communities outside the Bayview as well. Reflect and leverage San Francisco’s reputation for innovation, cutting-edge, multi-cultural, and multi-media arts.
  - Involve diversity of types of people and artists, including all ages, races, and ethnic groups, seniors, disabled, etc., and take advantage of the depth of local talent.
  - Efficiently coordinate youth arts programs.
  - Connect arts to youth academic excellence.
  - Pay attention to the local youth talent.
  - Create youth art programs that address substance abuse, crime, etc. Work with the juvenile/jail system.
  - Aggressively include benefits for the Bayview/Hunters Point residents.
  - Identify partners/investors – it is key to the project.

- Value economic advantages.
  - Need to have financial projections of economic possibilities for the Arts District, and a list of challenges.
  - Consider the impact of commercialization and how it might influence the type of art being produced and programs being offered. Use Granville Island as a basis of comparison.
- Take advantage of the economic boost that can be provided by the creation of art-based jobs in fabrication, welding, painting, etc.
- Include art galleries (as in the highlighted case studies) and make connections with those interested in purchasing art – it is important.

Participants also shared their comments regarding the public process for this project. Some participants wanted more outreach to Spanish-speaking and Cantonese-speaking communities as well as local residents, more youth involvement in this planning process, and more information about the Lennar design process.

**Meeting 3**

The third and final meeting of the process was held on December 3, 2008 at the Bayview Opera House. The purpose of the meeting was to bring participants up to date on progress that had been made and to get participant feedback on some potential scenarios for the site that would house the Arts District, including the artists’ studios. Wells Lawson, Assistant Project Manager, Mayor’s Office of Economic and Workforce Development, opened the meeting, and Joan Chaplick, MIG, served as the facilitator. David Thom, IBI Group, provided a presentation on the status of the land use plan and presented seven potential scenarios for the layout of the Arts District. The different scenarios emphasized qualities that community member had identified as important during the process. For example, some scenarios emphasized the reuse of existing buildings and protection of historic structures.

Participants broke into small groups of about 15 participants and discussed each of the scenarios. As they discussed the scenarios, participants were reminded that they would be asked to identify their two most preferred scenarios and share their rationale with the group. While the groups were not expected to reach consensus, they were asked to report the majority opinion in their group. The purpose of the exercise was to provide City staff with an indication of what structures within the scenarios should be retained or developed to create the most desirable site configuration.

The following page illustrates the scenarios that community members discussed.
Scenarios 1-4: Art Center location as shown and artist replacement space is either in renovated Building 813 (A) or north of Building 101 (B).

Scenarios 5-6: Art Center and artist replacement space is only in renovated Building 813.
There was no one scenario that was popular across the groups. The group reports shared a variety of perspectives on the most desirable site configuration. There were several comments that resonated with the group:

- Overall, participants desired a site configuration that encouraged a campus-like feel and connectivity between the buildings.
- Most participants did not support the use of Building 813 for replacement space and/or community arts space.
- The pump house was considered an interesting option; however, its status as a historic structure would likely limit the types of improvements that could be made to the building.
- Representatives from the performing arts community noted that none of the scenarios appeared to include space that would meet their specific needs for performance and instruction space.

Wells Lawson closed out the meeting by introducing the process the City would use to stimulate implementation of the Arts District. The City relies on a process of issuing an RFP (request for proposal) for the Arts District. Successful applicants would most likely include a group composed of community representatives with a variety of skills and interests. Wells acknowledged that there were several artists and community members who had been active in the process and would most likely continue. He then introduced two community members, Jeanine Mitchell and Karen Slater, shared their interest in providing leadership to the process, and encouraged community participation. Jeanine Mitchell described her previous efforts with another community to start a community-based mural program that helped to stimulate the local arts district. Karen Slater represented a group of Shipyard artists who are very interested in championing the Arts District. She encouraged any members interested in becoming more actively involved with the creation of the Arts District to contact her. Karen distributed a brochure that briefly described their interests and how to get in contact with them.

This meeting concluded the visioning process. Wells Lawson encouraged those interested in actively participating to contact the artist group as identified by Karen. The City will continue to provide support and encouragement to community members engaged in this process. It is likely that an RFP to further develop the Arts District will be issued by the City sometime in Spring 2009.