INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Agency Commissioners

FROM: Fred Blackwell, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Media Clippings from 06.16.11 to 06.30.11

Enclosed is a collection of supportive and positive newspaper/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 / TRANSBAY / SOMA / BVHSP:


Attachment 3: SAN FRANCISCO Business Times: “Salesforce campus to transform blight into bright,” June 24, 2011


Attachment 5: The Examiner/sfexaminer.com: “Checkout time is near for San Francisco’s Hugo Hotel,” June 16, 2011


Attachment 8: Email from Linda Green, SFRA Staff: Mighty Men of Valor at South Beach Harbor,” June 16, 2011
Attachment 9: **SFGate.com**: “Bayview Third Street revitalization has way to go,” June 20, 2011

Attachment 10: **The Examiner/sfexaminer.com**: “San Francisco supervisors to hold hearing on health impacts of big developments,” June 22, 2011

Attachment 11: **SFGate.com**: “1st Fresh & Easy market opens in S.F.,” June 22, 2011

Attachment 12: **SFGate/City Insider**: “Better communication, transparency a good thing, jury says,” June 24, 2011

Attachment 13: **SAN FRANCISCO Business Times**: “First HOPE SF revamp to get under way at Hunters View,” June 24, 2011

Attachment 14: **THE WALL STREET JOURNAL**: “New Vision, Same Artists, for Hunters Point,” June 30, 2011

**REDEVELOPMENT:**

Attachment 15: **The Examiner/sfexaminer.com**: Legislature leaves redevelopment agencies in limbo,” June 18, 2011

Attachment 16: **UCN News Release**: “Three new projects add resources while eliminating blight,” June 20, 2011

Attachment 17: **San Francisco Chronicle/Politicsblog**: “Redevelopment supporters detail financial hit local agencies could take,” June 20, 2011

Attachment 18: **The Examiner/sfexaminer.com**: “End to San Francisco redevelopment may be near,” June 22, 2011

Attachment 19: **SFGate.com**: “Hayes Valley Playground revamp caters to children,” June 22, 2011


Farallon Capital Management is looking to sell the last remaining commercial development site in Mission Bay, a 3.36-acre property that could fetch more than $90 million.

The site, known as Block 40, is zoned for 650,000 square feet of life science, medical office, or technology office space. The last commercial land transaction to sell in Mission Bay was Salesforce's $278 million acquisition from Alexandria Real Estate Equities of a 14-acre property that is entitled for 2 million square feet. That deal traded at $140 per buildable square foot.

Block 40 is part of a 303-acre master-planned community that has exploded in the last few years as life science companies sought to be close to the research coming out of the University of California, San Francisco. While the neighborhood was planned as an exclusive biotech cluster, that perception changed dramatically when Salesforce announced last fall that it would build a new headquarters there.

In addition to Salesforce, companies that have opened operations in Mission Bay include Fibrogen, Bayer, Merck, and Pfizer. The Block 40 site is adjacent to both the UCSF Biomedical Research Campus and the under-construction, three-hospital $1.5 billion UCSF Medical Center at Mission Bay.

Michel Seifer and Paul Lee and Rob Hielscher of Jones Lang LaSalle have the listing.

“We expect to garner a tremendous amount of interest in this site as it offers both an irreplaceable location in one of the most prominent innovation clusters in the country, as well as flexible development options,” said Seifer. “It’s also got great visibility, fantastic...
proximity to world-class research facilities and has a myriad of transit and transportation options. This site will be at the top of the list for investors around the globe."

Farallon has been systematically selling off its remaining Mission Bay holdings over the past nine months. In November of last year, the Denver-based apartment real estate investment trust UDR paid $23.6 million for two acres in Mission Bay slated for 315 units. In April of this year, another multi-family REIT, BRE Properties, shelled out $41.4 million for two Mission Bay residential development sites entitled for 360 units.

Email J.K. Dineen at jkdineen@bizjournals.com
Salesforce CEO: approve our HQ plan, or else...

San Francisco Business Times - by JK Dineen

Date: Thursday, June 23, 2011, 11:15am PDT

First Twitter. Then Zynga. Now Salesforce.

It's seems barely a week goes by these days without some high-powered technology CEOs threatening to leave San Francisco if they don't get their way.

In an article that appeared today in the Wall Street Journal, Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff suggests it would be willing to find another home should the city not approve design-review of its 2 million square foot Mission Bay campus. Salesforce (NYSE, CRM), which paid $278 million for the land, is hoping to get the green light to start construction by September.

"If we can't get the approvals we could also end up somewhere else," Benioff told the Journal.

Let's be real. It's highly unlikely that the redevelopment agency board, which has rubber stamped pretty much everything that has been proposed for the 303-acre Mission Bay campus, will give Salesforce (NYSE: CRM) a hard time. We are talking about 10,000 Salesforce jobs. We are talking about at least $700 million of 100 percent union construction over the next five years. In Marc Benioff we are also talking about a philanthropic superstar who, along with his wife, donated $100 million for the UCSF Hospital that is driving much of the investment into Mission Bay.

But it's possible that Benioff is just feeling left out. First Twitter threatened to leave and the city because of the payroll tax and voila, Board of Supes passed a payroll tax exemption that neatly targets the Mid-Market building Twitter is moving to. Next Zynga, which is set to move its headquarters to 650 Townsend St., also threatened to move.
execs out of town and convert its newly leased space into a call center. The result? The city repealed a six-year-old tax on corporate stock options that was unique to San Francisco.

Down in Cupertino, even Steve Jobs has been getting into the action. Jobs flatly told the city council there that Apple would be willing to move to Mountain View if the town were unreceptive to a proposed spaceship-shaped campus. After watching Jobs lay down the law in Silicon Valley, Benioff may be feeling like a bit of a pushover.

Email J.K. Dineen at jkdineen@bizjournals.com
San Francisco Structures

Salesforce campus to transform blight into bright

Premium content from San Francisco Business Times - by Patrick Hoge

Date: Friday, June 24, 2011, 3:00am PDT

Related:

Commercial Real Estate

Employees at Salesforce.com's headquarters at One Landmark in downtown San Francisco love the amenities of an established urban neighborhood — the numerous restaurants, farmers’ markets at the nearby Ferry Building and the foot traffic.

Salesforce executives want to bring some of that vibe with them to their proposed headquarters campus in Mission Bay: a 14-acre development in a former industrial area that could eventually include 2 million square feet of office space for 8,000 employees in brightly colored buildings arranged around a publicly accessible “town square.”

Indeed, Salesforce and city officials alike are hoping the company will not just create a great home for itself, but also stimulate street life in a neighborhood that is being entirely reborn.

“Our focus is on getting people out and around, getting a lot of activity going on the campus,” said Bruce Francis, Salesforce’s vice president of corporate strategy.

That is why, for example, Salesforce has no provision for a cafeteria, and instead has proposed ground-level retail space for restaurants and shops in some of the eight buildings envisioned, Francis said.

 Needless to say, local boosters appreciate the gesture.

“It’s really good for business and the local neighborhood,” said Katherine Webster, an Internet entrepreneur who is president of the South Beach/Mission Bay Business Association.

Gabriel Metcalf, executive director of the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association, said manufacturing a lively street environment is difficult in a master-planned project like the Mission Bay Redevelopment Area, but he hopes Salesforce can succeed.

Metcalf likes Salesforce's initial proposal, and considers it a validation of the approach taken in Mission Bay, in which land was pre-entitled for various uses, parks laid out, infrastructure installed and a rail line built.

Salesforce bought the land, the last commercial plots in Mission Bay, late last year for $278 million. It hopes to begin construction next summer and presented its initial concept to the Mission Bay Community Advisory Committee this month.

Michael Freeman, a vice president at McCarthy Cook & Co., which owns the nearby China Basin Landing commercial complex, said that he initially did not favor the renderings he saw of the campus designed by architects Legorreta + Legorreta of Mexico City, which partner Victor Legorreta presented to the citizens group.

Freeman feared the bright exteriors — including green, orange, purple, pink and red — and the modernist, angular structures, would clash with the existing skyline.

"I thought it was a bit loud," he said.

But after Salesforce’s presentation to the citizens’ committee, on which Freeman has served for the last seven years, Freeman became a convert, specifically because of the way the campus seeks to be a neighborhood center, with commercial activity and public space for gatherings.

"I think it will take on a feeling similar to Union Square or Washington Square," he said.

One feature Salesforce has floated that Freeman particularly liked was a large projection screen above the public plaza that could be used for films or sports broadcasts.

Corinne Woods, who chairs the citizens’ advisory committee, was more skeptical, calling the idea "trendy."

Woods is concerned that the colors not clash too much with the surrounding neighborhood, and that the plaza be protected from wind — something Salesforce is studying — and be of the right scale, so that when it is not filled with people it will not feel cold and empty.

Overall, though, Woods said she thought the design was "headed down the right path," particularly in the way Salesforce is trying to integrate with the rest of the city.

"I like the openness of it, the fact that they are welcoming to the community," she said.

Both Freeman and Woods were also pleased with Salesforce’s environmental goals, which include plans to get LEED Platinum-level certification for the campus, as defined by the U.S. Green Building Council.
Plans call for rooftop solar panels, rainwater collection and storage, reuse of “graywater” for landscape irrigation, possibly wind turbines in towers and air-conditioning accomplished with atriums, functioning windows and piped water that has been chilled underground.

Ford Fish, Salesforce’s vice president of campus development, also said the company plans to provide significantly more bicycle parking than guidelines require.

Patrick Hoge covers technology for the San Francisco Business Times.
Contact him at phoge@bizjournals.com or (415) 288-4949.
Read his blog postings at Bay Area BizTalk.
Commercial real estate

Will Alexandria be a buyer again in Mission Bay?

San Francisco Business Times

Date: Thursday, June 30, 2011, 6:55am PDT

All eyes will be on Alexandria Real Estate Equities as bidding heats up on Block 40, Mission Bay's last remaining commercial development site.

Over the past year, Alexandria has been both a buyer and a seller in Mission Bay. The life science real estate investment trust was a seller last November when it unloaded 14 acres of entitled land to Salesforce for $278 million. It then turned around and became a buyer in April, picking up Fibrogen's headquarters at 409-499 Illinois St. for $290 million.

Now with last week's announcement that Farallon Capital Management has retained Jones Lang LaSalle to market and sell Block 40, it will be interesting to watch how Alexandria approaches the deal. Block 40 is entitled for 650,000 square feet of life science or tech office space, which is larger than any other approved office development site in San Francisco. Until Pier 70 is entitled -- probably five years away -- Block 40 represents the best last chance for biotech development in San Francisco.

But market sources suggest that how aggressively Alexandria pursues the deal may depend on the perceived competition. In the case of the Illinois Street deal, Alexandria was up against a joint venture made up of two direct competitors: Forest City and Health Care Properties. (HCP is an active player in South San Francisco, where Alexandria has a larger presence and Forest City's Science + Technology Group competes with Alexandria in Cambridge.)

If those players -- or other direct life science real estate competitors -- emerge as bidders in Block 40, Alexandria can be counted on to be among the top bidders. If instead the most aggressive bidders are medical office developers of traditional office builder (say Hines, Kilroy Realty, or Boston Properties) the REIT, which has spent much of the past year building up its cash position, may pass on the risk associated with new ground up development.
Checkout time is near for San Francisco's Hugo Hotel

TAGS: art|Defenestration|furniture|Hugo Hotel|san francisco|

By: Dan Schreiber | Examiner Staff Writer | 06/16/11 10:26 PM

The Hugo Hotel — and its trademark furniture art installation of furniture on the side of the building, "Defenestration" — is near the end of its quirky existence.

Mercy Housing, a nonprofit developer, has put forth initial plans to tear down the building at Sixth and Howard streets to make way for a new nine-story apartment building with 56 units. If all goes smoothly for Mercy Housing, construction — and destruction — could begin in spring 2013 and be finished two years later.

The plans need approval from The City's Historic Preservation Commission because the building belongs to a group of residential hotels under consideration for a historic district that once housed early-20th-century port workers. The commission held an informational hearing on the issue Wednesday.

The building, currently held by The City's Redevelopment Agency, has been vacant since a few of its rooms burned in 1987, and then it was badly damaged by the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake.

Artist Brian Goggin came up with the idea in 1997 and partnered with 100 other artists to attach discarded furniture to the sides of the building, the unofficial gate to the blighted Sixth Street corridor.

Literally, "Defenestration" means the act of throwing something or someone out a window. The concept finds its origin in 15th-century Prague, where two imperial governors were tossed out of a castle, an event that sparked the Thirty Years War.

According to his website, Goggin sees the piece as a step toward South of Market's revival, and a fundraising effort to fix up the installation took place in March 2010, partly by selling some of the furniture that had to be removed because of public-safety concerns.

A discussion about Mercy Housing's plan at the SoMa Leadership Council meeting Wednesday night centered on the safety of families within the framework of crime-ridden Sixth Street.

"Sixth Street isn't always an easy street, so we're going to have to take a lot of care in entrances to the building and things like that," said Mercy Housing's real estate development director Barbara Gualco, who added that the entrance to the building is planned for the Howard Street side.

Jim Meko, chairman of the leadership council, said local artists should be involved in the new structure.

"There better be some furniture hanging off this thing," he joked.

Mercy Housing officials at the meeting said they would reach out to the artists and attempt to pay respect to the Hugo Hotel's weird legacy.

dschreiber@sfexaminer.com
The push to open a new police substation on troubled Sixth Street has run into a surprising source of opposition - the Police Department.

The city’s Redevelopment Agency and merchants along the two-block corridor of persistent crime and violence enthusiastically support the substation. They assumed SFPD was, too. But now there are reports that police brass are getting in the way by demanding changes to the station’s design and insisting the department be allowed to abandon the five-year lease at any time without penalty.

When asked about these troubles, Redevelopment Agency Executive Director Fred Blackwell issued a diplomatic response. But there are clearly signs of friction between the two city agencies. Police officials did not return calls for comment.

"The agency and the community believe that it is critical to have a full-service substation and a solid lease commitment," Blackwell said in an e-mail. "The plans were developed in close cooperation with SFPD and include all the safety and security elements the police require, such as bulletproofing."

In other words, the agency is footing the bill for improvements, which is why there is frustration when the police want to change the design. Terminating the lease without warning is also a nonstarter.

But some involved in the project say they worry that the cops have decided Sixth Street is just a can of worms - that they've tried to clean it up, but nothing ever changes. Best to forget it.

C'mon. It is two blocks. It cannot be that hard.

The Ed Lee-for-mayor bandwagon continues to roll. The only thing lacking is a candidate.

Lee has been sticking to his promise not to run in November. But a privately funded poll released Wednesday has to have him wavering - and it probably sends a chill through the declared candidates.

According to the survey, conducted by EMC Research, 70 percent of likely voters have a favorable view of Lee. Asked if Lee were to run in November, 50 percent of voters polled said they would either "definitely" or "probably" vote for Lee, with only 30 percent saying they would vote for someone else.
Even when reminded that Lee had promised not to run, 62 percent of those polled said they "strongly" or "somewhat" supported a Lee candidacy, with just 23 percent opposing it.

"These are some very strong numbers," said Ruth Bernstein of EMC. "And it's not like we called people and said, 'Isn't Ed Lee awesome?'"

Bernstein said there's no reason for Lee to rush a decision.

"As soon as he begins to run, he becomes a candidate," Bernstein said. "His getting into the race changes everything."

For everyone.

The race for San Francisco District Attorney will either turn former Police Chief George Gascón into a politician or sour him on the elective process.

This is Gascón's first run for office - he was appointed D.A. in January by then-Mayor Gavin Newsom - and as the prohibitive favorite, he's the target of opponents David Onek and Sharmin Bock.

The problem is finding issues on which the candidates disagree. Onek is touting his pledge never to seek the death penalty. Bock and Gascón point out that no San Francisco prosecutor has gone for the death penalty in 20 years, and it's unlikely a jury would vote to condemn someone anyway.

Bock, an Alameda County deputy district attorney, likes to stun with controversial statements. For example, she has declared that she might have opposed the death penalty for Osama bin Laden. Last week she said, "It is a misuse of resources to even consider incarcerating people for drug use."

But so far, the most frequently asked question seems to be: How do you pronounce your name?

Clip and save: It is David ON-nek, not OH-nek. It is George Gas-CONE, not Gas-CAN. And it is Shar-MEAN Bock, not Shar-MIN.

C.W. Nevius' column appears Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. E-mail him at cwnevius@sfcchronicle.com.

http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/06/23/BADJ1K19FS.DTL

This article appeared on page C - 1 of the San Francisco Chronicle

© 2011 Hearst Communications Inc. | Privacy Policy | Feedback | RSS Feeds | FAQ | Site Index | Contact
San Francisco Structures

Update: Transit center foundation work begins

Premium content from San Francisco Business Times - by Eric Young

Date: Friday, June 24, 2011, 3:00am PDT

Related:

Commercial Real Estate

The last remnants of the old Transbay Terminal are almost gone as demolition of the 74-year-old building finishes this month.

Construction workers will then start to dig further into the ground to lay the foundation for a new transit center expected to serve as many as 45 million passengers annually at First and Mission streets.

Once complete in 2017, the $4.2 billion Transbay Transit Center will house nine transportation systems, including the San Francisco Municipal Railway, AC Transit, Greyhound and even California’s high-speed rail. In contrast to the bunker-like building that was razed, the new Transbay Transit Center is designed to be an airy, light-infused structure topped with a public park, and featuring art and earth-friendly design elements.

That first phase of the Transbay job is expected to cost almost $2 billion. The money for that part of the project is expected to come from a variety of sources, including local, state and federal funds.

Another major source of funding is the sale of plots of land immediately surrounding the transportation center.

None of those land sales have been executed, said Adam Alberti, a spokesman for the project. The parcels will be auctioned off over time in order to not flood the market, which would bring down the price, Alberti said. The timing of those sales is not yet finalized and will be dictated in part by when the market for land firms up, Alberti said.

The transit center project is part of a wider redevelopment proposal surrounding the 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 shops.

The second phase of the Transbay project involves burrowing a tunnel to link the current Caltrain terminus at Fourth and King streets to the Transbay Terminal. That is expected to cost about $2.6 billion.

Eric Young covers law and government for the San Francisco Business Times.  
Contact him at eyoung@bizjournals.com or (415) 288-4969.  
Read his blog postings at Bay Area BizTalk.
Mighty Men of Valor at South Beach Harbor

Jovan:

Thank you for noticing the kids who were at the breakwater, and the others who were blown out towards the Bay Bridge. The winds were much too strong for them to be out there, especially the 8 year old.

The two chaperones were unable to control all of the kayaks. And even though they spoke very little English, you were able to communicate with them and tow them to safety!

Thank God you noticed that they were in trouble. I believe that we have awesome Harbor Attendants at South Beach Harbor, and we really do appreciate you all. Maybe Jim Walter will share this story in our next newsletter.

* Mighty … Having or showing great power, skill, strength, or force: a mighty orator; a mighty blow

Men … A male human endowed with qualities, such as strength, considered characteristic of manhood

Valor … Courage and boldness, as in battle; bravery …

*  
Linda W. Green  
Management Assistant III  
Tuesday thru Saturday x1048  
Main Number to SBH Office 415.495.4911  
Office hours are 8:30 to 5:00 everyday.

South Beach Harbor Office  
The Embarcadero, Pier 40A  
San Francisco, CA 94107

x1111 for Front Desk 8:30 to 5:00 (7 days a Wk)  
x1047 Alvin Sonza, Harbor Office Assistant (Su-Th)  
x1045 James Walter, Harbormaster (Tu-Sa)  
x1035 Ed Wesley, Asst. Harbormaster (Su-Th)  
x1046 Jon Wessel, Harbor Office Assistant (Th-Sa)

Harbor Office Fax (415) 512-1351  
Harbor Security (415) 608-1951 After Hrs.
Bayview Third Street revitalization has way to go

Will Kane, Chronicle Staff Writer

Monday, June 20, 2011

When Bayview merchant Marvin Robinson hears about the millions of dollars San Francisco is investing in Parkmerced, Treasure Island and Hunters Point, or the special Twitter tax break for Mid-Market, he gets a little frustrated.

Stepping out the front door of his small business at the corner of Third Street and Palou Avenue, he sees vacant stores with barred windows to his right and corner boys slinging drugs to his left. And he says he doesn't see the city doing much about it.

"It is all about where you establish the priorities at," he said.

Robinson, 60, has owned and operated the Bayview Dollar Store & More for two years and has lived in Bayview all his life.

"You had every conceivable kind of business here" when he was a kid, Robinson said. "But now? All your violence, your hanging out, all the bad things you hear about? It's here."

If the Bayview still remains an economic problem area, it's not for lack of trying, officials say. The city invested millions in bringing a new Muni streetcar line down Third Street, planting trees and improving the look of the street. Workmen spruce up empty storefronts on the public's dime so they are less of an eyesore.

But the response from merchants so far has been tepid, in part because of the economic downturn.

S.f. investing in area

"While I am not happy with what's happening on the street, it is not because the city is not paying attention or not investing in the community," said Fred Blackwell, head of San Francisco's Redevelopment Agency. "We haven't reached a tipping point yet in terms of facade improvements and tenant improvements."

So far, the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development has improved 14 storefronts in the area and is working on 10 more. A Fresh & Easy grocery store is set to open on Third Street in August. A full-fledged grocery store, city officials say, will give shoppers an alternative to the small liquor stores that dot the neighborhood.
In his new budget proposal, Mayor Ed Lee pledged to hire someone to help revitalize vacant storefronts throughout the city, but especially along Mid-Market and Third Street.

"These (efforts) are significant enhancements and improvements for the area," said Christine Falvey, spokeswoman for the mayor. "But the mayor acknowledges that more needs to be done for the area, and that's why he created this position."

It is impossible to change the character of a neighborhood overnight, especially during an economic slowdown, but the city is making incremental progress, Blackwell said.

**Returns take a while**

"For these things, it actually takes a while for the investments to take hold," he said.

Between 2005 and 2008, the city's sales tax revenue for the Third Street area increased 53 percent, said Crezia Tano of the Mayor's Office of Economic and Workforce Development. Since then, sales tax growth in the area has slowed, but not stopped.

The city could do more to make the area an attractive destination for merchants and shoppers, said Gabriel Metcalf, executive director of the San Francisco Planning and Research Association, a planning think tank.

The city should cut some stops on the T-Third line so the streetcar is more efficient, he said. It should also widen the sidewalks so shoppers feel less cramped.

"You want it to be a place that invites people to stroll," he said.

**Safety, stores needed**

But residents of Bayview won't feel ready to stroll down Third Street until they feel safe, said Debray Carpenter, 22, the founder of the Black Star Liner Coalition, a local advocacy group.

"We could use more stores, but we need a community spot for the kids, too," he said. "If everybody spent that money on a community-based store, things would be better. We'd have more jobs."

As large developments near Third Street take shape, the area's business picture could improve, Metcalf said.

"I think the major investments of Mission Bay, Pier 70 and Hunters Point will create opportunities in terms of customers for stores," he said. "It will put people on the sidewalk."

Robinson said he's ready for that.
"It is a crying shame that I have to be praying and believing for something to happen on its own," he said. "We just really want to make sure that the mayor-to-be, the powers-to-be, really take a look at this neighborhood."

E-mail Will Kane at wkane@sfchronicle.com.

http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/06/20/MNAJ1JPBLV.DTL

This article appeared on page A - 1 of the San Francisco Chronicle

© 2011 Hearst Communications Inc. | Privacy Policy | Feedback | RSS Feeds | FAQ | Site Index | Contact
San Francisco supervisors to hold hearing on health impacts of big developments

By: Dan Schreiber | Examiner Staff Writer | 06/22/11 5:56 PM

A Board of Supervisors committee hearing Thursday will focus on the Department of Public Health’s role in reporting the potential health impacts of large developments.

The 1 p.m. hearing by the Government Audit & Oversight Committee is of interest to activist groups that obtained emails in April between DPH officials and Lennar, the company that plans to build 10,000 new homes at the shuttered U.S. Navy Base at Hunters Point.

A group called People Organizing to Win Employment Rights says the emails -- obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request -- show collusion between company and government officials over how to publicly portray the shipyard’s contamination problem, which POWER contends is causing asthma and other illnesses for Bayview district residents.

In a press release Wednesday, the group called for the resignation of a DPH environmental engineer involved in the shipyard project. POWER contends the emails also show misconduct by officials in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

dschreiber@sfexaminer.com

San Francisco officially welcomes a new entrant to the grocery wars today.

The city's first Fresh & Easy Neighborhood Market opens this morning on 32nd Avenue at Clement Street in the Outer Richmond.

Neighborhood residents should have already received their $5 coupon in the mail, and the promise of "wholesome food, not whole paycheck," a cheeky dig at you-know-who, whose nearest San Francisco stores are at Stanyan and Haight streets in the Haight, and California and Franklin streets, in Pacific Heights.

Safeway's Outer Richmond store, closer to Ocean Beach, might have more to worry about, although it's not sitting idly by. A "preliminary project assessment" for a long planned expansion and do-over, including housing, was submitted to the San Francisco Planning Department last week (www.safewayonlaplayasf.com).

"We're a competitor of anyone who sells food," said Fresh & Easy spokesman Brendan Wonnacott. "We're selling good food at quality prices. Especially fresh-prepared foods," he added, pointing to a sector that is taking up increasing amounts of space on grocery shelves.

Safeway and Whole Foods Market would boast the same, plus they are double or more the size of Fresh & Easy's 10,000-square-foot stores and have more, quantitatively, to offer.

But Outer Richmond residents aren't complaining. Their neighborhood has been underserved, grocery-wise, since Albertson's closed in 2007 - at the space Fresh & Easy has moved into - and DeLano's Market on Geary Boulevard shut its doors, along with its two others in San Francisco and two in Marin, last December.

Fresh & Easy, the U.S. offshoot of the British supermarket chain Tesco, with 12 stores in the Bay Area and 128 statewide, is moving into other underserved neighborhoods of San Francisco.

"It makes sense to put stores where people want access to them," said Wonnacott.
A Bayview store, at Third Street and Carroll Avenue, is scheduled to open Aug. 24. Another store opening, at the old Bell Market on Silver Avenue in the Portola neighborhood, is "moving through the process."

And, we learned on Tuesday, Fresh & Easy just signed a lease for the shuttered DeLano's Market on South Van Ness Avenue in the Mission District.

With **Mollie Stone's Markets** having taken over the DeLano's store in the Castro, that leaves just one shuttered DeLano's in San Francisco - on Geary Boulevard. Wonnacott said he had a look-see at the space on Tuesday, but figures it's probably too close to the 32nd Avenue store to be a candidate.

**Memo to the mayor:** Wonnacott, who is based in Southern California, where Fresh & Easy is headquartered, was in town to prepare for today's ribbon-cutting ceremony. Assorted executives and public officials are scheduled to attend, including, we were originally told, San Francisco Mayor **Ed Lee**.

As of Tuesday evening, that was no longer so sure, according to the mayor's office. No reason for the uncertainty given, and no response to an inquiry.

One wonders whether it has something to with organized labor's displeasure at nonunion Fresh & Easy coming to town.

As we noted last month, a state bill pushed hard by the **United Food and Commercial Workers Union**, which has been organizing boycotts and other protests against Fresh & Easy for years, would ban the purchase of alcohol at self-checkout stands.

Seeing as Fresh & Easy uses only self-checkout stands, one could be forgiven for guessing who the bill, authored by Assemblywoman **Fiona Ma**, D-San Francisco, is primarily aimed at.

Just FYI, Mr. Mayor.

**Let them eat liens:** If you can afford to fly two bottles of vintage red wine to London on a private plane, surely you can settle a couple of outstanding bills back home.

The thought occurred to me as I read former Chronicle wine writer **Jancis Robinson**'s account of her recent dinner with **Francis Ford Coppola** at a tony London restaurant whose patrons, in Robinson's words, consist mostly of "wine lovers and hedge fund managers."

The wines in question - a Pinot Noir and a 1958 Cabernet ("the star of the evening," said Robinson) - were flown over especially for the dinner from Coppola's Inglenook estate in the Napa Valley.

http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/06/22/BUN41K0MFL.DTL&type=pr... 7/1/2011
Much of the conversation revolved around Coppola's plans, which we wrote about in April, to transform his Rubicon Estate and the Inglenook label into California's version of Chateau Margaux (sfg.ly/fCZ8za).

Little, however, was said about Chateau Souverain, Coppola's other property in Sonoma County, on which there are liens filed by a local contractor and subcontractors in connection with unpaid construction bills stretching back to last year.

According to those involved I talked to on Tuesday, the bills, some of which Coppola's attorneys have disputed, are no closer to being paid than they were in April, when we wrote about them.

Perhaps that's because Coppola isn't as captivated about Chateau Souverain, "a thoroughly mainstream wine blender, bottler and 'wine wonderland' tourist destination," according to Robinson, now the Financial Times wine columnist (sfg.ly/jco6nD).

"'I don't want to drink great wine every night,' " Robinson said a "defensive" Coppola told her, "explaining that the Sonoma operation will bankroll the serious investment he expects to make to the old Inglenook winery buildings."

No doubt the builders, plumbers, electricians, tile guys, earth movers and artists waiting to get paid for their humdrum work will be delighted to hear that.

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

http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/06/22/BUN41KOMFL.DTL
This article appeared on page D - 1 of the San Francisco Chronicle

© 2011 Hearst Communications Inc. | Privacy Policy | Feedback | RSS Feeds | FAQ | Site Index | Contact
Better communication, transparency a good thing, grand jury says

A civil grand jury said that "if all promises are kept," the huge development proposed for Hunters Point could "truly become a jewel." "Anything less will be an economic and sociological disaster for the city," the civilian panel continued.

The report, released Thursday, said that cozy relationships between Lennar Urban, the project's developer, and the city meant residents weren't always getting the clearest, most accurate information about health and environmental issues at the old naval shipyard.

"We're looking out for the local people," said Perry Shirley, a grand jury member who worked on the report. "It is not very often that the city gets that many acres; we have a huge opportunity to do this thing right."

In a statement, Kofi Bonner, president of Lennar Urban, said the idea that there was a conspiracy was "absurd."

"Lennar remains committed to improving the health and safety of residents in the Bayview and Hunters Point," he said.

Still, the jury members said they wanted to see more.

The project "will require more communication, more transparency and more commitment from the city," the jury concluded.

Well, that says a lot.
San Francisco Structures

First Hope SF revamp to get under way at Hunters View

Premium content from San Francisco Business Times - by Blanca Torres

Date: Friday, June 24, 2011, 3:00am PDT

Related:

Residential Real Estate

John Stewart Co. expects to break ground this fall on the first housing units to be rebuilt under the umbrella of San Francisco’s ambitious Hope SF program.

The developer is working on a reuse and revitalization of Hunters View, an existing public housing community that is outdated and dilapidated.

“It was a conscious decision to get Hunters View under way, to go after the funding before it was too late,” said Jack Gardner, president and CEO of the John Stewart Co.

Hope SF includes other public housing sites including Sunnydale, Bayview, Potrero Terrace, Alice Griffith and Westside Courts.

Overall, the program will lead to thousands of new homes for San Francisco residents.

Like many Hope SF projects, Hunters View involves a complicated build-out.

Hunters View is a 22-acre site that originally contained 267 units. The redevelopment could triple the number of units to about 750. The entire project will take several years and more than $350 million to complete.

The part moving forward this fall involves a 107-unit affordable housing project on the first eight acres. The phase will run about $75.5 million, including costs for new buildings, infrastructure, parks and open space.

The idea behind Hope SF sites is not only to replace old housing and increase units, but also to create new neighborhoods with a variety of housing types and income levels, Gardner said.
John Stewart began entitling Hunters View before Hope SF was established, which allowed the developer to secure funding from sources like Prop. 1C that are no longer available.

"Starting Hunters View is a demonstration that Hope SF is possible; that the city, largely without federal support, can tackle and help turnaround large public housing complexes," Gardner said.

Blanca Torres covers East Bay Real Estate for the San Francisco Business Times.
Contact her at btorres@bizjournals.com or (415) 288-4960.
Read her blog postings at Bay Area BizTalk.
The shipyard at San Francisco's Hunters Point is the kind of work environment that only an artist could love.

Tucked in a remote corner of the city that juts into San Francisco Bay, the decommissioned Navy base is home to a cluster of decaying buildings that have no heat, little plumbing and sit on a toxic cleanup site. Yet since 1983, a community of artists has used Hunters Point as studio space. Drawn by low rents and the area's isolation, some 350 painters, sculptors and musicians work in the gritty warehouses and former Navy Administration buildings northeast of Candlestick Park, making it the largest artist colony in the city and one of the largest in the U.S.

Now, urban development has caught up with the Point, as it is often called, and the city and artists must agree on how to replace many of the studios—and what they will be charged for rent.

A long-promised redevelopment of the wider Hunters Point area that calls for building thousands of homes, as well as retail space, parks and artists' studios, is set to move forward this summer with the construction of 88 houses. The plans call for the eventual demolition and consolidation of most of the artist buildings, familiar to some Bay Area residents for their semiannual open-studio sales. Well-known artists working at the Point include painter Carmen Lomas Garza and poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti.

The artists have cleared one hurdle: They are guaranteed, in redevelopment plans approved by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors last summer, to be devoted an equal amount of studio space—some 225,000 square feet—in the new development as there is at the current site.

also is room in the plan for a community arts center that could include performance and educational space.

When the project is complete, San Francisco's Redevelopment Agency will own the largest existing building, known as Building 101, which will continue to be used for studios, as well as a nearby new complex to house artists from seven other buildings due to be demolished. Lennar Corp., the private developer behind the wider $7 billion, 770-acre redevelopment project, must build and hand over to the city the new artist studio complex under an agreement with San Francisco.

"There is no better place to be an artist," said Robin Denevan, who has made encaustic paintings, which involve using hot wax, for 11 years in the Point's Building 116, which is set to be demolished. Several years ago, the Navy, which is in the process of turning over the remaining buildings it owns to the city, tore out all of Building 116's pipes out of concern they were tainted by radiation.

Mr. Denevan, said he is looking forward to moving to a new studio building. "We are the luckiest artists in the Bay Area to not only have this community and space, but also to have it built into the legal documents that we must be here," he said.

Marc Ellen Hamel, president of the Shipyard Trust for the Arts, a nonprofit group that represents artists at the Point, said most of the artists who will be moving are optimistic about the new building. "It is kind of amazing that we are still here, and that the government has promised we are not going to get kicked out," she said.

Two weeks ago, relocation consultants hired by the city began canvassing the artists about how much space they need, how they use the space and what sort of amenities they desire. Some prioritize natural light and high ceilings, while others place more emphasis on a freight elevator to move their works.

But not every artist is looking forward to the move. Howard Hersh, another encaustic artist who has worked at the Point for four years, said he likes the current studios. "I am not looking for some fabulous new art building." Mr. Hersh added, "While I appreciate the efforts to include us, the bigger problem is that it is a huge capitalist venture that is gobbling up a huge chunk of land."

Karen Slater, a painter who has worked at the Point for 15 years, helped propose a community arts center near the new studio but is concerned about losing the industrial aesthetics of the current studios. "We don't want a sterile environment out there. Some artists don't tend to work in those kinds of places very effectively," she said. Early renderings of the proposed studio building depict a slick, modern structure.

Kofi Bonner, president of Lennar Urban, which is handling the Hunters Point project, said it is...
in his company's interest to maintain a thriving art community since it plans to market the development in part as a cultural center. "The artists in and of themselves can be very useful and supportive in our creation of a unique community," he said.

Perhaps the most touchy issue is rent. Some long-term tenants pay as little as 26 cents a square foot per month, or about $130 for a 500-square-foot studio — far below average in the city—while the average tenant pays about 81 cents a square foot per month.

The redevelopment plan stipulates that rents should be affordable, and not any higher than needed to cover the city's costs. The city will be responsible for maintenance and upkeep of the new building, funds the city says it needs to obtain through the rent.

"Rent is a tricky equation when you are trying to take folks who have been out there for a long time and move them into a brand new building that does have heat and water," said Wells Lawson, the project director at the redevelopment authority.

Mr. Lawson said he hopes to finish the planning for the studio building design in the next year.

Write to Geoffrey A. Fowler at geoffrey.fowler@wsj.com
Legislature leaves redevelopment agencies in limbo

By: ADAM WEINTRAUB | Associated Press | 06/18/11 9:23 AM

Gov. Jerry Brown has been pushing since January to abolish California's redevelopment agencies, and last week's flurry of budget activity pushed them one step closer to the brink.

What's beyond that brink? Progress, unemployment or a lawsuit against the state, depending on whom you ask. In the meantime, the uncertainty is disrupting work on development projects throughout the state.

The Legislature on Wednesday approved a state budget backed by Democrats. While the main bills were vetoed swiftly by Brown, two bills that would eliminate some 400 redevelopment agencies and allow creation of new agencies were passed but not transmitted to the governor.

Supporters said the overhaul of the state's redevelopment agencies would bring in $1.7 billion, money that would be directed primarily to schools, law enforcement and other local services. The legislation also would tighten the rules for agencies that often are seen as providing easy money to private developers for projects that may do little to fight blight.

"This bill is not an assault on redevelopment," said Assemblyman Bob Blumenfield, D-Sherman Oaks, who presented the budget bills. "It fixes a flawed funding method."

Opponents used words like "ransom" and "extortion" to describe the bills because they would allow community redevelopment agencies to exist in a new form only if local governments agreed to make substantial payments to the state.

They said many agencies would not be able to come up with the cash and would have to shut down, killing a source of financing for public improvements and the construction jobs they create.

"The only purpose of this legislation is to save the state from having to cut its spending by the amount it forces the cities to pay. Not one penny of this money is returned to taxpayers," said San Diego City Attorney Jan Goldsmith in a prepared statement Thursday.

Even critics of the agencies blasted the "voluntary" payments. Redevelopment agencies "do need substantial reform if not elimination," said Assemblyman Don Wagner, an Irvine Republican, but he compared the payments to the extortion schemes portrayed on the cable television crime drama "The Sopranos."

Amid the tensions of the day, a call for Wagner to apologize to Italian-Americans escalated to the brink of a shoving match on the Assembly floor.

Brown vetoed the main budget bill Thursday morning, angering Democratic lawmakers and reopening the door to so-far fruitless negotiations with GOP legislators over tax extensions, a state spending cap, reduced pension costs and regulatory reforms.

But the Legislature did not send any of the other budget bills to the governor, including the redevelopment package. For redevelopment agencies and local governments around the state, that leaves the bills sitting like a death sentence without a signature.

If Brown signs them, dozens of agencies believe they will not be able to make the payments required to continue operation under the new system. Hundreds more are still crunching the numbers but fear the worst.

The city of Oakland estimates it would have to find $41 million not already allocated for other uses to keep redevelopment projects going if the bills become law, Mayor Jean Quan said.

"We're not even sure we could do it," she said.

If not, the city would have to stop work on about a dozen affordable housing projects.

Redevelopment agencies were created in California in the 1950s as a way to provide more housing and reverse urban blight. The agencies typically finance improvements using bonds or other money, with the money eventually repaid using the increased property taxes that result from the improvements.

Because that so-called "tax increment" is devoted to paying off the initial investment by the agency, it is not available to local governments. The state makes payments to replace the amount lost by schools.

The need to reduce state spending to close a $9.6 billion budget deficit makes an attractive argument to eliminate those "backfill" payments by scrapping the agencies.

Stories about luxury retail projects supported by the agencies and seizing private property through eminent domain for commercial developments helped bring allies to the side seeking to abolish the agencies.

But when they work, supporters say, redevelopment agencies are among the most powerful tools available for local governments to revitalize communities.

Quan points in particular to the successful renovation of the area around Oakland's Fox Theater, which is ahead of schedule in repaying the initial investment. Among those backing the redevelopment project was Brown, the former Oakland mayor.

The fight over redevelopment already has complicated several projects.

The Bridge District in West Sacramento is about a mile from California's Capitol, encompassing more than 200 acres of mostly vacant and industrial land. Now the area is home to a ballpark for an Oakland A's farm team, and $50 million worth of work has begun to convert it into a new neighborhood with hundreds of homes a short walk from the metro area's core.

If the redevelopment bills become law, city officials aren't sure whether they'll be able to finish it, and that could violate the terms of a $23 million affordable housing grant from the state.

The free market had failed to revitalize the West Sacramento area on its own, so government stepped in to turn an expanse of scrub brush and dilapidated buildings into something better, said Jon Robinson, redevelopment services manager for the city.

"It's an instance where redevelopment is working exactly as intended," he said.

The city of Folsom, a suburb east of Sacramento, refurbished much of its historic district using redevelopment money and has signed contracts to finish the project, Mayor Andy Morin said.

He sees the redevelopment bills as a "poison pill" that would eliminate many of the agencies that now exist and scuttle projects already planned. That could include refurbishing the 50-year-old arena where the Folsom Rodeo is held each year.

"We're prepared for the worst and hoping for the best," Morin said.

Some local government officials and the California Redevelopment Association contend that the bills are an attempt to get around certain laws, including Proposition 22, the ballot measure approved by voters last year to prevent the state from raiding local tax money.

"You can't do indirectly what you're prohibited from doing directly," said Chris McKenzie, executive director of the League of California Cities. "The Legislature has done exactly what the voters said they could not do."

The league's attorneys are preparing to sue if Brown signs the bills, he said.

"They have dealt us an incredibly strong hand for litigation," he said.

THREE NEW PROJECTS ADD RESOURCES WHILE ELIMINATING BLIGHT

The Coronet senior living facility is the third redevelopment sponsored project to open in June.
much-needed homes and services for our senior citizens."

This month of openings began on June 2 with Armstrong Place and Townhomes. Armstrong Place provides 116 apartments for low-income seniors, including 23 units dedicated to formerly homeless seniors. Armstrong Place also features space for community services and retail shops. Adjacent to the senior building, Armstrong Townhomes consists of 124 for-sale affordable homes for first-time homebuyers. Amenities include a fitness center, community gardens, as well as a children’s play area.

On June 9, Westbrook Plaza had its grand opening which marked the completion of a development that has been many years in the making. The development of this site was driven by a desire to provide the South of Market community both needed affordable housing and health care. The innovative, mixed-use project brings both affordable housing and accessible, quality healthcare under one roof. Westbrook Plaza includes 48 affordable housing units for low-income families, common space, and an expanded 20,000 square foot community health clinic. The new clinic at Westbrook Plaza incorporates the latest design and technological innovations to improve the provision of health services to the larger South of Market community. Unlike the old clinic, the new clinic will include an on-site pharmacy and a full-service dental clinic.

"With these three projects," Blackwell added, "we are providing homes for another 314 individuals and families for whom home ownership has been only a distant dream."

The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency has spent $428 million creating low- and moderate-income housing, creating over 14,000 homes that families can afford. The agency has created numerous economic plans for blighted neighborhoods, worked with community-based organizations to improve quality of life in redevelopment zones, and created employment opportunities for hundreds of residents.

Note: A dedication ceremony for The Coronet will occur Wednesday, June 22, at 11 a.m. at 3575 Geary Boulevard.

# # #

Forward email

SafeUnsubscribe

This email was sent to jberlin@katzandassociates.com by gaynell.armstrong-mccum@sfgov.org | Update Profile/Email Address | Instant removal with SafeUnsubscribe™ | Privacy Policy.

San Francisco Redevelopment Agency | One South Van Ness Avenue 5th Floor | San Francisco | CA | 94103
Redevelopment supporters detail financial hit local agencies could take:

Redevelopment supporters have been jockeying hard to save the $5.6 billion annual economic development program, and today upped the ante when they released a list detailing the financial hit each individual agency would take under a plan crafted by majority Democrats.

That plan, codified in two pieces of legislation passed by lawmakers last week, would eliminate the $5.6 billion program, then force redevelopment agencies that want to live on to give some of their money to schools and other local programs. The thing is, the legislation doesn't offer a nice, clear formula to figure out how much each individual agency would owe under the new program. Instead, it sets out a complicated formula based on each agency's proportionate share of existing redevelopment dollars -- and how much the state wants to take.

The first year, Democrats want redevelopment agencies, in total, to pony up $1.7 billion; in future years, they would collectively have to give up $400 million.

So, as political observers around the state wait to see if Gov. Jerry Brown will sign the legislation, the California Redevelopment Association has attempted to crunch the numbers. (They warn, however, that actual payments would be set by the Department of Finance and could differ from the association's estimates.)

What's the takeaway for Bay Area cities, who depend on redevelopment dollars for everything from affordable housing to actual development projects to city salaries?

Well, the city of Oakland would have to part with nearly $40 million of its $131 million annual redevelopment budget next fiscal year, and $9.3 million a year in the future. San Francisco's $89 million share would fall by more than $24 million the first year, then around $5.7 million annually in the following years. And San Jose's $202 million annual budget would fall by $47.5 million next fiscal year, and then by $11.1 million in future years.

We'll see what Brown decides -- but judging by his past statements, things don't look great for supporters of redevelopment. After all, the governor originally proposed simply killing the program -- the Democrats' plan was an attempt at a compromise.

http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/blogs/nov05election/detail?entry_id=91402
End to San Francisco redevelopment may be near

TAGS: Alice Griffith | budget | development | Hugo Hotel | Hunters Point Naval Shipyard | mid-Market Street | Redevelopment Agency | San 

By: Dan Schreiber | Examiner Staff Writer | 06/22/11 4:00 AM

As state budget wrangling continues in Sacramento, San Francisco's Redevelopment Agency is waiting for the end — or a significant change — to what it does.

The end of the agency in The City could mean the ax for nearly a dozen projects that would provide hundreds of affordable-housing units, according to Redevelopment Agency Executive Director Fred Blackwell.

Blackwell addressed the agency's commission Tuesday to discuss the limbo condition of two state Assembly bills that passed muster with lawmakers last week, but have yet to be decided by Gov. Jerry Brown, who wants to eliminate the agencies statewide.

"The hit in San Francisco would be pretty substantial," Blackwell said in a phone interview, noting threats to efforts such as business revitalization on Third Street in the Bayview district and a push to revamp the mid-Market Street neighborhood.

Some of The City's bigger developments are safe, such as the plan to add 5,700 new homes at Parkmerced, because they are being financed through private capital. Funding for the massive
Treasure Island project also should be safe since officials restructured its financing to avoid relying on redevelopment funds.

Plans to build 10,000 new homes at the former Hunters Point Naval Shipyard hinge mainly on redevelopment funds, but Karen Finn, a manager in the governor's Department of Finance, said in April the project would be safe because Brown has no intention of killing "projects that were under contract, under way."

Blackwell said it might not be that simple because the project's second phase — the bulk of new construction — has yet to secure a contract.

"That [statement] is out of line with what's in black and white in the bill itself," Blackwell said.

If redevelopment goes by the wayside, successor agencies would execute projects with active construction contracts. But those still in the planning phase — such as the replacement of the Hugo Hotel at Sixth and Howard streets and the rebuild of the Alice Griffith housing project in the Bayview — could be scrapped.

Brown vetoed a primary state budget bill last week, but Assembly bills 26 and 27 would respectively eliminate redevelopment agencies, or force reform by letting them exist only if they pay a large portion of their collected revenue to essential services such as schools and fire departments.

Redevelopment supporters have threatened to file a lawsuit if the bills pass because they contend it is a violation of voter-approved Proposition 22, which prevents the cash-strapped state from raiding local government coffers.

If redevelopment morphs into a less potent funding source, work would slow significantly, Blackwell said. Essentially, the local agency would have to find money it doesn't have in the upcoming fiscal year's $289 million budget.

"We will have to find $24 million to redirect to the schools, and that's money we do not have budgeted," Blackwell said.

dschreiber@sfexaminer.com

**Tearing 'em down**

*Projects that would be affected if the Redevelopment Agency is defunded include:*

- **Transbay Transit Center:** Although the project also is overseen by the Transbay Joint Powers Authority, some funding depends on revenue from Redevelopment Agency projects on state land in The City
- **Alice Griffith housing project:** Rebuild of venue in Bayview district
- **Hugo Hotel:** Demolition and replacement building at the site of the hotel and its art installation, "Defenestration," at Sixth and Howard streets
- **5800 Third St.:** Senior housing at location in Bayview district
- **Market-Octavia neighborhood:** Housing development on the parcels formerly occupied by Central Freeway
- **Schlage Lock factory:** The Schlage Lock area plan in Visitacion Valley
- **Mid-Market Street:** General neighborhood revitalization
- **Sixth Street:** Facade and tenant improvement program
The best public buildings, no matter how modest their size, accomplish two things at once. They do the job that people expect and then they go beyond expectations.

The new 2,500-square-foot clubhouse at Hayes Valley Playground in San Francisco succeeds on both counts.

Yes, there is a recreation room and meeting space, accessible bathrooms and an office for the park staff. But what catches the eye is the linear collage of right-angled forms clad in three shades of metallic blue.

In a residential setting where the tone is set by Victoriana, a boxy bolt of modernism is bound to stand out. It also sends a message. Common ground for families and youth deserves to be celebrated, and architecture can embody the free spirit of play.

"We kept hearing people saying they wanted something bright and colorful and inviting," says Bryan Shiles of the architecture firm WRNS. "In this city, that was really refreshing."

The clubhouse is part of a $3.9 million transformation of the public playground at the corner of Hayes and Buchanan streets, uphill from the ever-more-chic Hayes Street retail scene. What's left from before are basketball courts, two tall lampposts and one tough London plane tree; all else is new, such as the oblong play area with a soft surface so that young bones bounce rather than break.

The space reopened on June 11 after 17 months of work, and on the morning I visited, it already was part of the neighborhood scene. There were hipster moms watching toddlers clamber on low walls, and an older woman in a head scarf at an adult-size fitness station. At noon kids spilled from a bus on their way to a program at Opportunity Impact, which uses the recreation room to provide activities for neighborhood youth.

In the old playground, the clubhouse was at the Hayes-Buchanan corner, blocking easy access to grass and swings. Its replacement stands back along the playground's alley side; the two community rooms pop up at either end like modular blue stacks, with the bar in between occupied by the restrooms and park office. The structure's roofline extends between main rooms to shade a large porch, a welcome option on sunny days.

Those are the basics. The fun comes in such details as the blue walls assembled from panels of Trespa, a blend of resin and recycled-wood-based fibers. The roof above the porch is slit by an oculus that sends an oval spotlight skimming across the shade.

http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/06/22/DDG31JUH88.DTL&type=prim... 7/1/2011
Another feature of the roof? It's planted with drought-tolerant species. Think the fabled living roof of the California Academy of Sciences, but a lot smaller.

All this might sound costly, and indeed, the $3.9 million project is more than the city would have been able to afford on its own. But this and two other spaces in the city are being revived in a partnership between the Recreation and Park Department and the Trust for Public Land, a nonprofit that believes in urban health as well as open space. The design work by WRNS included a pro bono contribution as part of the 1% Program created by local advocacy group Public Architecture.

Honestly, though, it's exactly the sort of investment that government should make, and make happen.

Hayes Valley deserves the praise it has received for community activism that replaced a freeway ramp with a landscaped boulevard. The retail strip is upscale but fiercely local.

At the same time, it's a terrain altered by gentrification. On the east end of the playground's block, you can tuck into a $30 veal chop at cozy Bar Jules. Directly across from the playground on Buchanan Street, the stucco townhouses are a public housing project.

This is the sociological context, and it's more important than the architectural one. The bolt-blue clubhouse is designed to catch every child's eye, no matter their race or class, and it does so with a smile.

Place appears on Wednesdays. E-mail John King at jking@sfchronicle.com.

http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/06/22/DDG31JUH88.DTL

This article appeared on page E - 1 of the San Francisco Chronicle

© 2011 Hearst Communications Inc. | Privacy Policy | Feedback | RSS Feeds | FAQ | Site Index | Contact
Gov. Jerry Brown: Education trumps redevelopment

San Francisco Business Times - by Blanca Torres

Date: Thursday, June 23, 2011, 2:24pm PDT

Governor Jerry Brown learned a few lessons during his tenure as mayor of Oakland, including, “You have to crush the opposition.”

The governor, who delivered a keynote address Thursday at the annual Pacific Coast Builders Conference in San Francisco, emphasized that the state is in a difficult position right now, a problem that requires taking a stand even if that means vetoing a budget proposed by your own party.

Brown talked the usual politics stuff: solving the budget problems is not going to be easy, but state leaders are working on it; California has a robust economy; education is important to move the state forward and needs more funding; and taxpayers can’t expect to pay less in taxes and demand more services.

After his speech, the governor sat down for some questions from George Marcus, founder of real estate firm Marcus & Millichap.

Brown spoke about his time running Oakland, where he says he received a crash course in local politics.

“Every project was opposed by somebody,” he said. “I never had the experience of so much mindless resistance.”

His principal goal in Oakland was the creation of market-rate housing into the city’s core, which Brown thought would bring more disposable income.

Other lessons from Oakland include “identifying your strengths or your best asset.”
In Oakland’s case, that could be its proximity to other places like San Francisco and Silicon Valley, its views of San Francisco, its access to transportation such as BART and freeways, and the nice weather. Other than the weather, I’m not quite sure if any of those are proprietary to Oakland.

The governor also touched on redevelopment agencies, a subject high on the minds of many in the development industry.

Brown reiterated his previous argument that in a time of financial crisis, the state needs all the property tax dollars it can get, even those earmarked for redevelopment agencies.

He also said that he supports the idea of creating a new mechanism to take the place of redevelopment, but didn’t offer any details on what that could be.

"I like redevelopment," Brown said. "But if I have to choose, I think education is more important."

An audience member asked the governor, then what about affordable housing? Children need schools, but they also need places to live, especially if they are poor.

Brown replied, "That is a conundrum."

Email Blanca Torrres at btorres@bizjournals.com
Tech, medical movers rejuvenate San Francisco real estate

Premium content from San Francisco Business Times - by Emily Fancher

Date: Friday, June 24, 2011, 3:00am PDT

Related:

Commercial Real Estate, Residential Real Estate

After a few years of slowdowns, stalled projects and uncertainty, San Francisco's real estate market is coming back.

It's no surprise, as the city has always been defined by its boom-and-bust cycles, but this time the activity looks a little different. Developer Forest City, for example, has created a prototype office that's helping to develop a tech sector in the Mid-Market/Mission Street area. (See story, Page 4.)

Commercial development is also getting a shot in the arm from health and medical institutions. They are clamoring for medical office space closer to the downtown core and adjacent to new hospital projects. (See story, Page 10.)

A potential housing boom is underway as well, but this time it's rental apartments, not condos, that are driving the build-out. Developers are rushing to snag young, tech-smart tenants as rents rise. (See story, Page 14.) The result is construction cranes rising on the skyline, with mothballed projects back in play at Mid-Market and new projects getting underway in Mission Bay and Upper Market as well. The Business Times' annual listing and map of residential projects under construction, approved or in planning tells the story on Pages 16-17.

Two neighborhoods that will eventually see thousands of new housing units are getting makeovers — Mid-Market, with the arrival of tech wunderkind Twitter (See story, Page 20), and Parkmerced, which will see a $7.1 billion transformation in the southwest corner of the city (See story, Page 28).

Two segments of the housing market continue to struggle, however. Affordable housing has taken a hit as city and state subsidies have been cut (See story, Page 24). Student
housing, long ignored in San Francisco, is getting a fresh look from developers and universities after new legislation makes it more financially viable (See story, Page 29), but a shortage of beds continues to threaten local institutions’ ability to attract students.

San Francisco Structures takes a look at these and other projects and plans that are defining the city’s landscape, both physically and economically. It’s a big project that couldn’t happen without the hard work of real estate reporter J.K. Dineen. Staff reporters Blanca Torres, Patrick Hoge, Eric Young, Sarah Duxbury and Chris Rauber also wrote for the publication, as did contributors Sarah Thailing and Dan Fost. Craig Blanchard designed the publication, including the residential map, and Spencer Brown and Paolo Vescia took the photographs.

Our annual San Francisco Structures event will take place this September — we hope you’ll join us for more about our city’s real estate and economic revival.

Emily Fancher is a senior editor at the San Francisco Business Times.
Contact her at efancher@bizjournals.com or (415) 288-4948.
Read her blog postings at Bay Area BizTalk.
Redevelopment change likely headed for court fight

By: JUDY LIN | Associated Press | 06/30/11 2:07 PM

California’s budget for the new fiscal year includes major changes to community redevelopment agencies, which Gov. Jerry Brown and others have criticized as being little more than slush funds for private developers that drain tax money away from schools and public safety.

The change will save the state $1.7 billion in the new fiscal year by forcing redevelopment agencies to send more money to school districts and local governments, if the change is allowed to stand.

Cities and redevelopment agencies this week pledged to file a lawsuit, saying the Legislature acted illegally when it approved a pair of bills to eliminate the agencies and require them to make additional payments to schools if they want to continue operating.

Redevelopment supporters point to Proposition 22, a ballot initiative passed last fall that prohibits the state from further raids on transportation, redevelopment or local government money.

They defend redevelopment agencies as one of the few vehicles promoting construction and jobs at a time when California is still reeling from the effects of the recession. Unemployment statewide remains above 11 percent.

"We’re deeply disappointed that the governor has joined the Legislature in blatantly violating the California Constitution because it was just seven months ago that the voters of California said that redevelopment funds should be spent for redevelopment and not diverted by the state for other purposes," said Chris McKenzie, president of the League of California Cities.

He was particularly critical of the provision that says redevelopment agencies can continue, but only if they agree to send tax money generated by the new developments to local schools and governments.

"The governor provided the elimination bill," McKenzie said. "What the Democrats did is they added a gun-to-your-head provision. The second one said, Oh, but if you pay the extortion — the $1.7 billion — you won’t be eliminated."

Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg and Assembly Speaker John Perez said they felt confident the bills, ABx1-26 and ABx1-27, would be upheld. Democrats pushed through the package with only token support from Republicans, who generally voted against the budget bills because they did get the pension and spending reforms they sought.

"We’re confident that it’s legal and we’re confident that reform is necessary," Perez said after lawmakers passed the budget package late Tuesday.
Brown began the year with an unprecedented proposal to eliminate the economic development arms of California’s local governments, collectively known as redevelopment agencies. Brown proposed phasing out the state’s approximately 400 agencies as a way to trim government and free up more money for education, public safety and other essential services.

The first redevelopment agencies in the state were established 60 years ago to combat urban blight but have since evolved into complex agencies that dabble in affordable housing, infrastructure projects and commercial development, often with mixed success.

"It is a matter of hard choices, and I come down on the side of those who believe that core functions of government must be funded first," Brown said in January.

Two former officials of the Southeastern Economic Development Corp., a San Diego redevelopment agency, were charged recently with approving lavish bonuses and salary increases for themselves and other employees without approval. Opponents also have pointed to questionable projects, including an entertainment venue just a block from the state Capitol that features a bar where mermaids — and mermen — swim in a giant aquarium.

Sacramento city spokesman Maurice Chaney said the project received some indirect funding from the sale of a hotel that was developed using redevelopment money.

Cities see Brown’s proposal as another way the state was meddling in their affairs. The state has previously raided redevelopment funds to help fill its own budget deficit.

Democratic lawmakers, under heavy lobbying from cities and the redevelopment association they represent, hesitated to go as far as the governor.

The compromise package that emerged this week eliminates redevelopment agencies but allows them to continue as long as they agree to help out the state by sending some of their tax money to school districts and local governments.

"The speaker and I were always of the mind ... that there are a lot of things to fix about redevelopment, and certainly we need their contribution to the fiscal crisis," Steinberg said. "But we want to tighten it up. We want to make it better even with fewer resources and allow them to continue."

Some lawmakers were more reluctant than others.

During votes on the budget Tuesday night, Democratic Sens. Alan Lowenthal of Long Beach and Ted Lieu of Torrance delayed voting for the main budget bill until they got assurance from the governor that he would give redevelopment agencies flexibility if they have trouble making contributions.

"I didn’t want those two bills to squeeze the RDAs out of existence if they wanted to continue," Lieu said.

He said the governor also committed to helping local governments develop new economic tools. Other lawmakers could not be swayed.

Assemblyman Anthony Portantino, D-La Canada Flintridge, said he could not support the change because it took away money from small cities that are still struggling to recover.
"There were compromise proposals offered by the cities and the redevelopment association, and one of my frustrations is there was not a fruitful conversation that came out of that," he said.