INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Agency Commissioners

FROM: Fred Blackwell, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Media Clippings from 7/31/09 to 9/22/09

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

(Originated by Gia Casteel-Brown, Executive Assistant)

Fred Blackwell
Executive Director

YERBA BUENA:


Attachment 2: SF Business Times: “Moscone Center Makeover Gets Set to Begin First Phase”, August 21, 2009

BAYVIEW HUNTERS POINT & SHIPYARD:


Attachment 4: SF Business Times: “S.F. Mayor Proposes UN Center at Hunters Point”, July 30, 2009


Attachment 6: SFGate.com: “Gateway to College Program Gives Dropouts Hope,” September 2, 2009

Attachment 7: Sun Reporter: “Bayview Community Groups Receive Grant Funding As Part of Shipyard Revitalization,” September 3, 2009
Attachment 8: SFBG Politics: “Assembly Supports Sale of Candlestick Point Park,” September 9, 2009


SOMA:


Attachment 11: SF Gate: “Hugo Going the Way of the Dodo”, September 14, 2009


MISSION BAY:

Attachment 13: SFGate.com: “Mission Bay Becoming a Real Neighborhood,” August 26, 2009


CLOSED PROJECT AREA: WESTERN ADDITION:

Mexican Museum gets $280K from S.F.

San Francisco Business Times

The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency has signaled its ongoing support of the Mexican Museum with more dollars.

The San Francisco agency has granted $280,000 to the embattled institution, which has for over a decade struggled to raise enough money and support to open a new museum in the Yerba Buena Redevelopment Area.

San Francisco Arts Commission will manage $250,000 of the grant; the Mexican Museum will retain $30,000 for its operations and to work with consultants. Together they will work on pre-development plans for a museum adjacent to Jessie Square.

The failure of the Mexican Museum to make progress all these years has been a dim spot on the emerging Yerba Buena Cultural Area; this museum is the final, unfinished piece of the redevelopment.

The Arts Commission will require the museum to meet specific performance milestones related to fundraising, facility planning, membership and building a board of trustees.

Earlier hopes to build a standalone building have been abandoned. The current vision calls for incorporating the Mexican Museum into a mixed-use development at 706 Mission St. by JMA Ventures and Millennium Partners.

“The Mexican Museum is elated at the unanimous approval by the San Francisco Redevelopment Commissioners for the release of these funds to give us the impetus to move forward and kick off our revival fundraising,” said Mario Diaz, co-chair of the Mexican Museum’s board of trustees.

Nelson Rockefeller donated thousands of artifacts to the Mexican Museum, and its 12,000-piece collection is highly esteemed. Parts of the collection will be on display at the Palo Alto Arts Center starting Sept. 26.
Moscone Center makeover gets set to begin first phase

San Francisco Business Times - by Sarah Duxbury

Moscone Center is laying the foundation for its much-needed makeover.

The aging star of San Francisco’s convention business desperately needs major work to remain competitive in the meetings world.

Bids to replace the moveable airwalls in Hall E, a 60,000-square-foot room that can be subdivided into six smaller spaces, came in last week. Next, design firms will bid for the contract to devise the palette and look for Hall E, and thus for the eventual top-to-bottom renovation of Moscones North and South.

“This is a great time to get work like this done because it is so competitive,” said Joe D’Alessandro, president and CEO of the San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau. In all, it will cost up to $2.5 million to renovate Hall E — less than the CVB had anticipated.

The first major work will start during the usually-dead period around Christmas and New Year’s and will continue in fits and spurts during vacant weeks over the next 18 months. 2010 is not expected to be a strong convention year for San Francisco.

Project funds will come from the Tourism Improvement District, which began in January and assesses all downtown hotels a 1.5 percent fee on each hotel stay; less central hotels are assessed 1 percent.

The renovation of the whole of Moscone will take about five years and will cost between $70 million and $80 million for aesthetic and infrastructure upgrades, D’Alessandro said. The TID is expected to provide about $45 million of that, and the city will provide about $35 million. Once complete, the new Moscone will go for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification.

Separately, the Convention and Visitors Bureau board of trustees approved funds to hire San Francisco firm Economics Research Associates to study the return on investment of a proposed expansion of Moscone Center across Third Street to 680 Folsom St.

That feasibility study should be complete in 10 to 12 weeks.

sduxbury@bizjournals.com / (415) 288-4963
Forging Safer Neighborhoods, Part II

Building Strength from the Core: San Francisco's Coordinated Approach to Public Safety in the Bayview Neighborhood

by Elizabeth (Libby) Seifel, President, and Marie Munson, Senior Managing Consultant, Seifel Consulting Inc.

Many cities in the state have seen thriving neighborhoods decline, becoming run down and susceptible to crime. San Francisco's Bayview is just such a neighborhood.

Essie Webb moved to Bayview in 1944. Interviewed in 2006 by a student at UC Berkeley's School of Journalism, she described seeing a once-cohesive community splinter. "I guess all the air came out of the balloon, and it just came to the ground and it's still there, and it's just waiting for someone to put some air in and blow it up," Ms. Webb told the interviewer. Ms. Webb is one of hundreds of community members who over the years have galvanized efforts to restore Bayview. The tools of redevelopment are helping lift Bayview once again to be a neighborhood offering safety and opportunities for all.

Bayview's Expansion and Contraction

With the opening of Hunters Point Naval Shipyard during World War II, Bayview boomed as a regional industrial center, and the federal government built temporary housing on Hunters Point hill to house shipyard workers. But with the elimination of thousands of jobs at the shipyard in the 1950s, Bayview suffered dramatically. On the Third Street corridor—the vital retail spine of the neighborhood—many retailers and cultural venues closed. Temporary wartime housing was replaced with permanent public housing.

In the 1960s, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) formed two redevelopment areas in Bayview—one to replace remaining wartime housing on Hunters Point hill with a mixed-income neighborhood, and the other to develop an industrial park on a blighted 126-acre area. These areas were successfully redeveloped; yet portions of Bayview still suffer from physical deterioration, economic decline, and high crime rates.

In 2008, Bayview's violent crime rate—at 44 violent crimes per 1,000 residents—was nearly three times the citywide rate. Third Street and the public housing sites in particular were hotspots of criminal activity and contributed to an intimidating environment for residents and businesses as well as a negative image for Bayview. High rates for crimes against persons and property such as assault (25 assaults per 1,000 residents) and robbery (17 robberies per 1,000 residents) discouraged enjoyment of the neighborhood, patronage at local businesses, and economic growth.

Forging Ahead Together

SFRA has partnered with Bayview residents, the City of San Francisco, nonprofits, and other stakeholders to address factors associated with crime, such as poor housing conditions, community disconnection, and lack of economic opportunity. In 2006, SFRA boosted efforts to revitalize Bayview by designating over 1,300 acres of the neighborhood as a redevelopment area, which included the public housing developments and the Third Street corridor. Tom Evans, Lead Planner for SFRA, said, "This designation provides a dedicated funding source for community revitalization strategies—ranging from..."
physical quality of life improvements to workforce and business development programs for a neighborhood that has lacked adequate investment from both the public and private sectors.

**HOPE SF**

HOPE SF—spearheaded by Mayor Newsom and Supervisor Sophie Maxwell, who represents Bayview—will sustainably redevelop and preserve the City’s remaining public housing projects. SFRA has partnered with the Mayor’s Office of Housing, San Francisco Housing Authority, residents, the community, and others to implement HOPE SF, which is designed to reverse the cycle of unhealthy living conditions and crime at these sites. Bayview’s 267-unit Hunters View—the first public housing development to be revitalized by HOPE SF—will be replaced with a mix of affordable and market rate housing, including units affordable to and reserved for current residents. The new design will enhance safety and knit the site into the larger neighborhood by connecting streets to the surrounding street grid. The $300 million project will be financed through a variety of sources, including tax increment and housing set-aside revenues, which will fund low-income housing and infrastructure improvements, such as open space. SFRA Director Fred Blackwell said, “By transforming HOPE SF communities into mixed-income neighborhoods with high quality facilities, improved retail access, and amenities such as parks and open space, we will create a positive physical and social impact on the this part of the city.”

**Model Block Program**

The SFRAs Model Block Program is a new initiative to improve the quality of life for residents on a block-by-block basis. The pilot project is reconfiguring the streetscape on a block of Newcomb Avenue to support resident efforts to reclaim their neighborhood. Newcomb Avenue has been a notorious locale for drug-related crime. The program has provided installation of trees and other plants along the block to enhance the streetscape, reduce stormwater runoff, calm traffic, and create community-gathering places. The program offers loans to assist low- and moderate-income residents wishing to undertake home repairs and renovations. Blackwell said, “Redevelopment has supported the strong Newcomb Residents Association by helping to reshape the block’s physical environment. Our partnership is decreasing crime and improving safety at this former crime hot spot.”

**Reviving the Business Community**

Redevelopment provides financial support to the Bayview Business Resource Center (BBRC), established in 2001 to serve emerging and established businesses in Bayview. BBRC reaches out to local businesses and the community with a variety of programs to encourage local investment and enhance public safety for both patrons and employees. Over 500 very low- to moderate-income entrepreneurs gained access to small business training and services to grow their business management skills at the BBRC.

**Breathing New Life into the Third Street Corridor**

SFRA is one of many partners working to transform Third Street into a safe place where local residents find...
Forging, Continued

In response to the heightened number of crimes in the Third Street business corridor, Loftus said, “we increased the number of foot and bicycle patrols in the area and enlisted the assistance of private and public agencies in a coordinated response.” The SFPD and SFRA work closely with the Bayview Project Area Committee to share information and coordinate crime prevention efforts.

The BBRC/Bayview Merchants’ Association has been working with the SFPD to start a merchant watch program. So far, ten businesses have signed up for the program. According to Ben Kaufman, Outreach Coordinator for the Bayview Merchants’ Association, dialogue between merchants is key to creating a safe neighborhood. “Our first step was to link the merchants of the area by letting them know each other’s emergency contact information, hours of operation, and languages used in businesses. This way, if a neighboring merchant sees something suspicious, they can look out for each other.”

BBRC’s Third Street Corridor Project includes grand opening events for new corridor business, new business attraction efforts, and the convening of the Third Street Stakeholder’s Group. Last month, the project coordinated the National Night Out event in Bayview, which involved over 25 organizations. Nearly 400 residents and business owners came together for a night of barbecue and live music, while children enjoyed organized games and activities.

Peter Gomez, owner of El Azteca Taqueria Restaurant, in San Francisco’s Bayview Neighborhood.
Thursday, July 30, 2009

S.F. Mayor proposes UN center at Hunters Point

San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom wants to put a United Nations center focused on global warming at Hunters Point Shipyard.

The mayor’s office said the proposed center “would be focused on promoting sustainable and clean technologies.”

It would include an incubator for startups in the cleantech market.

Newsom’s office did not say how much money, if any, the city would be willing to put into such a center. The 80,000-square-foot building would be started by Lennar, which is the developer working with the city in Hunters Point Shipyard. Lennar will “provide an improved, buildable pad and all of the necessary supporting infrastructure.”

The next steps in the process include creating an advisory board to guide further planning and fundraising.

The proposed center, called the United Nations Global Compact Center, would cost about $16 million to $20 million.

This money will come, the mayor’s office said, from “a combination of corporate sponsorship, state and federal grants and foundation and other financial support.” It didn’t give details of those sources.
State should follow S.F. voters’ lead on big redevelopment

San Francisco Business Times

To borrow a line from the movie “Casablanca,” opponents of the Hunters Point Shipyard project are shocked — shocked! — that the massive San Francisco redevelopment involves a land swap between the city, state and a developer.

They shouldn’t be. And, just like in the movie, they’re really not. After all, when San Franciscans last year voted on Prop. G to enable the massive project, the land swap was no secret. It was on the ballot, and was one of the key facts that opponents focused on in their attempts to kill the project. It’s right there in their official ballot arguments — more than once.

Still, now that the state’s portion of the land swap has gone to Sacramento, Hunters Point detractors are grasping at the issue again, proclaiming themselves caught unawares. The fact that Senate Bill 792, sponsored by San Francisco Democrat Mark Leno, has largely the same opponents that last year attempted to torpedo Prop. G shows what’s really going on. This is a Hail Mary, a last-ditch effort to delay, deny or downsize an urban renewal plan that won the backing of more than 60 percent of San Francisco voters after a fulsome debate.

That doesn’t make 792 unimportant. It’s necessary because the land the developer would receive is 42 acres of parkland at the Candlestick Point State Recreation Area. Park it is; untouched wilderness it’s not. Much of the section to be turned over to Lennar Corp. is bare dirt that’s used mainly as excess parking for Candlestick Park. You could say the wildest life that inhabits this portion is probably 49ers tailgaters a few Sundays per year. Lennar would pay market value, an estimated $40 million, which the state could use to maintain the remainder of the park — which is worth preserving — and the developer would donate to the city a roughly equal-sized slice of the Hunters Point shoreline to replace what’s lost from the park. It’s all a key element of allowing the nearly 8,000 condos (2,500 affordable) that Lennar plans at the site to go forward.

It is also the essence of an effective public-private partnership to produce affordable housing. Therein lies the problem: Hunters Point opponents object not just to this particular project, but to the concept itself. After all, the developer (the private end of the partnership) needs to get something out of the deal, and that’s just too much to stomach for San Francisco activists trained on years of anti-developer rhetoric. Last year, you’ll remember, Chris Daly and cohort sponsored a Trojan Horse alternative to Prop. G. It would have required 50 percent of the units at Hunters Point to be affordable to San Francisco’s poorest residents.

That this would have made the entire project financially infeasible, killing it at birth, was not beside the point, it was the point. In this view, the city should not lower itself to dealing with profit-compromised developers to provide more affordable housing for its residents. No, affordable housing should be a noble
undertaking, one controlled and financed entirely by the public purse. (Where a cash-short city might come up with untold millions in unencumbered loot has never been specified).

Fortunately, voters saw this for what it was. State legislators need to do the same. For it may not seem so now, in the depths of a historic housing slump, but San Francisco’s homes shortage is not cyclical but structural. It will reemerge quickly once the economy improves.

In other words, (to paraphrase that old movie again), we’re going to need the thousands of homes from projects like Hunters Point: Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow — but soon, and for the rest of our lives.

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Gateway to College program gives dropouts hope

By Nanette Asimov, Chronicle Staff Writer

Wednesday, September 2, 2009

(09-02) 11:10 PDT SAN FRANCISCO -- By the time Stacey Jones started her senior year of high school last fall in San Francisco, she'd been to half a dozen schools in half a dozen districts, from Sacramento to San Mateo. She'd floated from relative to relative since her mother was in a serious car crash a few years earlier.

Her grandmother's death last fall was the last straw, and Jones quit going to school altogether.

Until now.

At 18, she is one of 54 dropouts who have agreed to return to school because this time, they'll have a chance to earn college credits and receive social services through a new program called Gateway to College that just opened at City College of San Francisco's Southeast Campus.

"I don't know where I'd be right now without this," Jones told a room of dignitaries who gathered last week to kick off the program at the campus in the Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood where the students will study.

"I didn't want to be a dropout. This is definitely a second chance."

The state will pay for the students' education because they'll be enrolled in the San Francisco Unified School District. They'll take high school courses at the college, working their way up to college-level classes.

At the same time, an adult mentor will work with the students and pair them with services they may need: child care, housing, medical services and more. That part is funded with a $300,000 grant from the Oregon-based Gateway to College National Network, which in turn is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The collaboration between the San Francisco school district and City College is the newest of 24 Gateway to College programs around the country.

The program for 16- to 20-year-olds is already so popular that even people in Oakland want to sign up, said Chris Jackson, a City College trustee who works with residents in the Bayview-Hunters Point area to increase awareness of the college campus in the largely low-income, African American community.

Nick Mathern, a Gateway to College director, said surveys of dropouts show that circumstances beyond their control often make it too hard to continue in a normal school program.

"Students very seldom leave school lightly," he said. "They do it under duress because they have to provide elder care or child care, or they're dealing with health issues or even homelessness."

Jones understands that, which is why she gave up on school last year. Even a persistent counselor from Downtown High School was unable to persuade her to return to school until the Gateway to College program was offered.

Now, she says, "I want to go to college." She'd like to work with children someday.

The state estimates that more than 850 students dropped out of San Francisco schools last year, about 18 percent of high school students.

District officials hope to expand the Gateway to College program to 300 students in the coming years.

This article has been corrected since it appeared in print editions.

Get back on track

To learn more about the Gateway to College program, contact Laurie Scolari, an associate dean with City College, at lscolari@ccsf.edu or (415) 239-3000.

E-mail Nanette Asimov at nasimov@sfchronicle.com.

http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2009/09/02/BAA119F7LQ.DTL

This article appeared on page D - 1 of the San Francisco Chronicle
Bayview Community Groups Receive Grant Funding As Part Of Shipyard Revitalization

By San Francisco Bureau

Five Bayview community groups and local employers will share $275,000 in grant funding that will pay for job training and support employment-barrier removal for residents in the Bayview-Hunters Point neighborhood.

The funds, provided by Lennar, are part of the Community Benefits Agreement, which ensures investment in the local community as development at the former Hunters Point Shipyard proceeds.

"We are proud to be working with local, community-based organizations in their efforts to help Bayview residents gain the skills necessary to find and keep steady employment," said Kofi Bonner, Regional Vice President for Lennar Urban. "As part of our Phase I Community Benefits, Lennar has awarded $275,000 to five such organizations. As construction moves forward at the Shipyard, the need for skilled construction workers will continue to grow, making these training programs a vital part of the success of the project."

The grant recipients selected through a competitive process include Renaissance Parents of Success and Restoration House, which will each receive $75,000; Bayview Hope Transportation which will receive $45,000; and Young Community Developers and Positive Directions will receive $40,000 each.

"One Stop" program focuses on mentoring youths and ex-offenders so they can acquire the skills needed to get and keep a job.

Restoration House's X-Cell @ Work program works with underserved adults ages 18-24 from the Bayview-Hunters Point community to help build the skills necessary to find jobs and succeed in a professional environment.

The Bayview Hope Transportation Academy has been training Bayview residents to obtain commercial (Class A) driver's licenses for five years. With the additional funding provided by Lennar, they will begin teaching program participants to obtain Class B driver's licenses. The program targets underserved and unemployed members of the community and has enjoyed great success since its beginning.

Both Young Community Developers and Positive Directions will use their grant funds to support the barrier removal component of their job development programs.

"I am extremely pleased with our selections and look forward to each organization having a positive impact on the lives of those who participate in the programs," said Dorris Vincent, chairperson of the Business & Employment sub-committee of the Hunters Point Shipyard Citizens Advisory Committee.

Kofi Bonner
Assembly supports sale of Candlestick Point Park

Text and photos by Sarah Phelan

On Wednesday night, as folks were getting ready to watch President Barack Obama's speech about health care, the State Assembly voted 69-1 in support of an amended version of Sen. Mark Leno's SB 792.

Leno's bill, which is now back in the Senate, gives the State the authority to sell 23 acres of Candlestick Point State Recreation Area for $50 million.

Assemblymember Tom Ammiano was the lone dissenter on Leno's bill with seven others abstaining or not voting.

Those voting "aye" included Assemblymembers Fiona Ma and Nancy Skinner. Florida-based developer Lennar, which has entered into a public-private partnership with the City of San Francisco to
Assembly supports sale of Candlestick Point Park - SFBG Politics Blog

redevelop 770-acres at Hunters Point Shipyard and Candlestick Point, is arguing that it needs these additional 23 acres of prime waterfront property to build luxury condos, if the rest of its massive redevelopment plan is to pencil out.

Initially, SB 792 would have allowed the State to sell 43 acres of Candlestick Point State Recreation Area, the Bayview’s only major park, for condos. As such, it faced stiff opposition from the Sierra Club, Arc Ecology and Friends of Candlestick Point Park.

In its amended form, SB 792 authorizes the exchange of 23 acres, thus preserving 20 acres of existing parkland—a compromise, Leno says, that secured the neutrality of these three key environmental groups.

“I am especially pleased that after months of negotiations, amendments to SB 792 resulted in the neutrality of the Sierra Club, Arc Ecology and Friends of Candlestick Point,” Leno said.

So, what does SB 792’s passage mean for the park’s ecological integrity? And won’t the impact of removing 23 acres from the Bayview’s only major park be magnified, once condos and high rises have been built?

“I hear and understand the concerns of some in the community, the folks who are convinced that this will destroy their park,” Leno said, claiming that of the park’s 120 acres, only about 45 acres are currently used recreationally.

“SB 792]will effectively double the acres of useable parkland to 90 acres,” Leno stated.
Under the terms of Leno’s amended legislation, Lennar would have to provide $40 million for park improvements, including creating bike trials and repairing piers, thus increasing the acres that can be used for biking, hiking, boating and other recreational activities, Leno said.

“Another $10 million will be put into an annuity fund, which will provide $600,000 annually for park operation and maintenance,” Leno continued, noting that this dedicated funding stream will make it possible to deliver on “all of the things that have been promised, ever since the park was created, but have never been fulfilled.”

SB 792 also amends existing state law that allows 80 of the park’s 120 acres to be used for parking, Leno said.

“We think that was an inappropriate use of state park lands,” he said.

Leno also argued that SB 792 is as a way to keep Candlestick Point SRA open to the public, since the park is expected to be on the State’s soon-to-be released list of 100 parks slated for closure.

But what about the annual revenue from the 49ers’ use of the park’s parking lot? Can’t that keep the park open?

“Keep in mind that the 49ers parking revenue is coming to an end,” Leno said, “And that only $45,000 of that revenue goes to the City currently. The remainder goes into the State’s general fund.

Leno stressed that former San Francisco Mayor Art Agnos and Friends of Candlestick Park are ‘very worried’ about the future of the park.
Assembly supports sale of Candlestick Point Park - SFBG Politics Blog

Friends of Candlestick Point SRA got involved in the legislative process to ensure that no conveyance of park lands to the City for development can occur until the promised benefits go to the park.

"The money will go into a special fund, can only go into park improvement, and will stay there," Leno said. "Even if the developers default, they can't get it back."

But just how do you "close" a park? Because won't people just go there to walk the dog, anyways?

"There's a great likelihood our park will be on the list targeted for closure, because it's under developed, under funded and under utilized," Leno said. "And although folks say, well, all we'll lose is the $45,000, the problem is that entering a closed park will be considered trespassing. [Closing a park] could lead to the possibility of encampments, which aren't currently there, and to campfires on dry, semi-arid land. And there might be vandalism and graffiti which would degrade the property."

Leno said this latest round of amendments will lead to greater environmental protections, greater opportunities for the public to respond to the proposed development's upcoming EIR, and greater protections under CEQA.

But with the 49ers stressing that they would prefer to move to Santa Clara and don't want to move to the shipyard, isn't there a possibility that, if the Santa Clara deal falls through, their current stadium could get renovated—a decision that would get in the way of Lennar's plan to build condos on the park and around the 49ers current site?

"The Mayor has been clear that the 49ers need the stadium more than the development needs the 49ers," Leno said. "We'd love to have them, but we are not dependent on them staying."

Leno promised to be a steward of the park plan.
"I will make sure this park will be that much better," he said.

Arc Ecology's executive director Saul Bloom noted that Leno's amendments only secured his group's neutrality.
"We've been clear that environmentalists don't support development on park lands, but there was a gun to our heads, Bloom said. "Arc doesn't have the luxury to stand on the sidelines and be self-righteous. The situation called for rolling up sleeves and getting dirty. They wanted to take a quarter of the park and we backed them down to 10 percent. But are we happy about it? No."

Bloom also noted that Prop. G, the Bayview development plan that voters approved last summer, said nothing about selling the park and did not include a map [of the parks-for-condos sale].
"We supported Prop. G because it was silent about the park and silent about the bridge over Yosemite Slough," Bloom said. "But they went around the citizens of San Francisco on the matter of the park, because they knew they wouldn't be able to get support for that. So, we did the best we can, and we have preserved 90 percent of the grasslands."

Bloom notes that under the amended SB 792, Lennar gets almost all of the 49ers parking lot and five acres that goes into the park and the grasslands. The deal keeps the development 200 ft from the shoreline and preserves the ecological integrity of the park to the largest extent possible, Bloom said.

For Bloom, the next round in the battle is the long-awaited environmental impact report for Lennar's combined Shipyard/Candlestick Point development. The EIR is due out at the end of September.

"All Leno's legislative action does, is say, if the development is consistent with environmental law and there's no problem with the EIR, we can sell the property, if we want," Bloom said.

Meanwhile, folks at the Bayview-based POWER (People Organized to Win Employment Rights,) while disappointed by SB 792's passage, were heartened that neither Arc nor the Sierra Club endorsed the deal.

"If they felt they could support it, they would," POWER's Jaron Browne said.

Noting that five members of the Board of Supervisors have opposed the deal, Browne said POWER will focus on four issues in the coming months: opposing an early transfer of the Shipyard to the City; supporting cleaning up the Shipyard's Parcel E2 (in other words, not capping it); and raising questions around liquefaction issues and the impact of rising sea levels on the development.

POWER has planned a Sept. 15 rally at City Hall, to illuminate these issues, Browne said, and raise hell about the Navy's decision to disband the Hunters Point Shipyard Restoration Advisory Board.

Last month, the Navy held an open house in the Bayview, at which government experts were available for one-on-one consultations with the public, against a backdrop of maps, historical posters, and light jazz.

"It was one of the most offensive events ever, it was so bizarre," Browne.

But the US Navy's Melanie Kito told the Guardian at last month's
Assembly supports sale of Candlestick Point Park - SFBG Politics Blog

open house that the format was just one idea.

“We wanted a format that was less confrontational, where folks aren’t afraid,” Kito said, noting that the Navy is open to ideas.

With Navy preparing to make critical decisions about Parcel E2 and Parcel F, Bloom believes the solution is simple. “Reformulate the RAB,” Bloom said.
Candlestick land swap bill gains steam

Looks like local opposition hasn’t been enough to kill legislation dealing with redevelopment at Candlestick Point (Senate Bill 792) -- in fact, an amended version of the bill passed out of the state Assembly Wednesday. The tweaked bill now will go back to the Senate, which approved an earlier version in June.

The controversial bill allows for a land exchange between the state, which owns the Candlestick parkland, and local agencies, who in turn will sell the formerly state portions to private developers, i.e., Lennar Corp. (The state would get some land in exchange, and Leno's bill essentially authorizes the state to make the deal).

But critics, including a number of local environmental agencies, argued that the state wasn’t getting enough parkland back and that the changes could threaten the park’s natural habitat. They succeeded in pushing a number of amendments to the bill, including decreasing the amount of land being handed over from 43 acres to 23 acres, and deleting existing state law that allows more than two-thirds of state parkland to be used for public parking at any time. Leno's office said the changes were enough to get some groups -- including Arc Ecology -- to remove their opposition.

But others are still angry. Last Friday, several supervisors, city officials, Bayview residents and others held a press conference denouncing the bill and announcing they have gathered nearly 1,000 signatures opposing SB 792 "because of the impact of environmental racism that would result from selling some of the only healthy open space in San Francisco's largest African American neighborhood." Supervisor Chris Daly also introduced a resolution in July that raises those and other critiques, including allegations that it preempts the public input process, is fiscally irresponsible, and sets a dangerous precedent for public open space.

Posted By: Marisa Lagos (Email) | September 10 2009 at 01:15 PM
Listed Under: If you build it, they will come

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New Seeds of Hope... More Healthcare and Housing for SOMA

South of Market Health Center (SMHC) is proud to announce that they were approved for a $250,000 challenge grant from The Kresge Foundation. The well-regarded Kresge grant will help SMHC raise the final $1 million of the $15,000,000 fundraising campaign for the construction and equipping of its new medical clinic. Construction on this highly anticipated facility began in January and is scheduled to be completed in September 2010. However, in order to receive The Kresge Challenge grant all project funds must be raised and in place by December 31, 2010. This prestigious award from the Kresge Foundation signals to the giving community that SMHC is experienced in delivering effective programs, has talented and motivated leadership and possesses the ability to mobilize private resources to achieve sustainable transformation.

This project, which was developed in partnership with Mercy Housing California, was on the drawing board for nearly 10 years. With the assistance of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency the project was mobilized to master several challenges to ensure the building incorporated the highest attainable green building standards as well as the city’s improvement plans for the South of Market (SOMA) community. When completed, the site which is located on 7th Street between Folsom and Howard, will be home to SMHCs new 20,000 square foot medical clinic and Mercy Housing’s 49 units of affordable housing. The new building, Westbrook Plaza, is named in honor of Mrs. Elouise Westbrook, a founding member of the health center and a long time advocate of affordable housing and healthcare for the poor.

South of Market Health Center is one of several private clinics in San Francisco that serve as safety net providers to some of the city’s poorest and medically needy residents. For over 35 years SMHC has provided high quality health care to low-income persons and high-risk population groups. Most of the people who use SMHC are adults who have multiple and complex medical conditions that are further compromised by co-existing substance abuse and mental health problems. Patients receive general medical care for acute and chronic medical conditions, dental, podiatry, disease prevention services and specialty referrals. SMHC is not a free clinic. The health center operations are supported by small private donations, patient reimbursements, and a federal grant for general operations that insures care will be available to anyone, regardless of their ability to pay.

Currently most patients receive care at the clinic’s main site at 551 Minna Street in a refurbished warehouse just off the 6th Street corridor. Each year the clinic treats more than 5,500 persons at this site, who generate more than 20,000 annual visits. When services are moved to the new larger state-of-the-art facility, SMHC will double its capacity to serve more than 10,000 users with 40,000 annual patient visits.

Expanded services at the new location will include:

- 16 spacious examination rooms including two specially designed exam rooms to accommodate patients who are physically challenged or may require isolation;
- 5 dental operatories to accommodate an expanded service program and to meet a larger and ever growing demand for dental services;
- On-site health education, social and medical case management services; and,
- Patient pharmacy with retail access for SOMA residents.

The cost to develop, construct and furnish the new health center is $15.1 million. To date, $13.9 million (90%) has been raised towards the completion of the total project. SMHC's capital campaign includes gifts from foundations, corporations, and private donors, including the board of directors, staff and patients.

SMHC continues to invite new partners and donors. For more information about the project, the Kresge Foundation Challenge Grant or upcoming events please contact Marilyn Griffin Director of Planning and Development at SMHC: 415 436 0111

http://www.smhcsf.org
Hugo going the way of the dodo

It appears the old Hugo Hotel’s days are limited.

The family that owns the odd-ball landmark at Sixth and Howard streets isn’t planning to appeal a recent jury verdict in an eminent domain trial that put a $4.6 million price tag on the vacant building with furniture sprouting from its exterior, their attorney said today.

Say goodbye.

"I don't believe that will be their inclination," said Les Hausrath, the attorney for the I.M. and S.I. Patel Living Trust. "This has been a very difficult and emotional process for them to have their property taken way."

City officials said seizing the four-story tenement building was their only option after it had sat vacant for about 20 years while the Patels refused to renovate or sell it.

"Eminent domain is a tool we do not like to use," said Fred Blackwell, head of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency. "But this is a site that has been underutilized and blighted for a very long period of time."

City officials offered to buy the property for $3.25 million in 2007, but the Patels refused. The redevelopment agency went to San Francisco Superior Court in June 2008 to seize the building. The agency valued the property at $3.7 million at trial, while the Patels maintained the property was worth $5.6 million.

A jury last week roughly split the difference. Their $4.6 million determination matched the Patels’ asking price for the property in 2005, which a developer agreed to pay, only to have the owners balk.

The city now plans to formally acquire the site, demolish the building and put in affordable housing with other uses on the ground floor, Blackwell said. No specific project is in the works, and the agency will likely solicit proposals for the site early next year, he said.

"When you look at the condition of the building and you look at the real estate market we're in ... we thought we put a solid offer on the table," Blackwell said. "We're more excited about moving forward with putting this building to better use than lamenting over the price at this point."

Read more: http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/blogs/cityinsider/category?blogid=55&cat=2842#ixzz0RsggQZJn
Shed no tears for this surreal counterpoint to the Skid Row scene below: The Hugo has sat empty since 1988, its owners rebuffing all offers until the city this month won a suit to buy the former residential hotel using eminent domain. The furniture tumbling from windows was added in 1997 and has presented a head-turning show ever since. After demolition occurs - low-income housing is planned - remember what this giddy icon says about public art: Earnest civic messages are no match for imaginative works that take us by surprise.

**Hugo building** 200 Sixth St. | **Architect:** Theo W. Lenzen. "Defenestration" artwork is by Brian Goggin.

**Style:** Irrelevant | **Size:** 4 stories | **Date built:** 1909

Cityscape is a weekly slice of San Francisco's built terrain. Explore past stops and suggest your own at sfgate.com/maps/cityscape

http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2009/09/20/BAOG19NM54.DTL

This article appeared on page **C - 2** of the San Francisco Chronicle
It's a Wednesday morning in San Francisco's newest neighborhood.

As construction workers raise steel into place on emerging high-rises, a man blasts a serve on the beach volleyball court under the Interstate 280 overpass.

Biotech workers and suited professionals crowd the bar at Philz Coffee, where tattooed baristas place mint leaves on steaming cups of individually filtered coffee.

Retiree Toby Levine surveys the Mission Bay morning from her high-rise terrace, where signs of a community are finally starting to emerge.

It's taken four mayors and three planning directors to create what is now the last swath of San Francisco land where planners can create a neighborhood from scratch. So far, 3,000 people have moved into the 300-acre rail yard south of the Giants baseball park. The neighborhood is 35 percent built, and 15 years from now, it's expected to have 11,000 residents.

Mission Bay feels as if it escaped the economic downturn - stores are opening, buildings are going up, and young professionals are zipping out of $700,000 condos to get to work. Most live in a six-block area north of Mission Bay Creek. These pioneers say it's now starting to feel like a place worth staying in on the weekends.

More crowded

"It's changed a lot. It's way more crowded now," said Claudia Arrenberg, 27, who shopped for pasta and fruit with her 2-year-old daughter at the new Mission Bay Farmers' Market.

She moved into UCSF student housing with her husband in 2005 so he could study neuroscience. But it was such a ghost town that they moved to Alamo Square, even though it was more expensive. They returned in 2008.

There's a public library, senior housing, a Safeway beneath the offices of the California stem cell research headquarters.

Half of UCSF's 12 buildings are completed, and dog walkers and parents are beginning to draw battle lines over the patches of park.

"We got more families than we expected, many couples with kids who commute to the South Bay on Caltrain," said Kelley Kahn, who manages the Mission Bay project for the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency.
"We thought we'd see more people in their late 20s, but it's older parents starting families and retirees wanting to leave the hassle of owning a house."

Levine is one of those retirees, who, after 40 years in the Mission District moved to a Mission Bay apartment in 2007 with her husband.

She began pushing for a tot lot after she discovered that there are 300 children in Mission Bay, but there's no playground.

"I like the adventurousness of starting something new at my age, and being in the middle of a tremendously important development for the future of the city," said Levine, 75.

Mission Bay is expected to create 31,000 new permanent jobs that range from retailers to biomedical researchers.

Levine has found it difficult to create community in Mission Bay, and she figures that's because the young professionals who work so hard to afford to live there just want to close their doors and relax at the end of the workday.

It's an investment to move to Mission Bay - condos start at $600,000 and go up to more than $1 million.

Nearly one-third of Mission Bay's homes will be reserved for low-income families, more than is required by law, Kahn said.

**Below-market rate**

Mission Walk - a two-building development with the first below-market-rate homes in the neighborhood - is set to open in September. Nearly 650 people applied for one of the 131 townhomes and condos, which were priced from $149,000 to $302,000.

The Mission Bay of the future will have 6,000 homes, a 43-acre UCSF campus that includes a 550-bed hospital, 41 acres of new parkland, 4.4 million square feet of biotech and lab space, and 500,000 square feet of retail shops. It will have a 500-room hotel and a public school.

Residential construction south of the creek has slowed, Kahn said, because developers can't get financing.

"If the economy is worse than we thought, and it stays this way for five or seven more years, we'll be in trouble, but right now we are OK. We have money in the bank," she said.

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http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2009/08/26/BAGK19807F.DTL

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9/22/2009
Online gaming network Zynga is close to finalizing a deal to move its corporate headquarters to 500 Terry Francois Blvd. in Mission Bay, taking 137,000 square feet in San Francisco’s largest leasing transaction of 2009.

Under the pending four-year lease, Zynga would move to the fourth, fifth and sixth floors of a $149 million structure that has sat vacant since completion in June 2008.

The company’s 370 full-time employees are now largely divided between two office complexes — one in an abandoned potato chip factory at 365 Vermont St. that CEO and co-founder Mark Pincus owns, and the other at 444 DeHaro St. Zynga, the largest online gaming network with 100 million monthly users, has been looking for a new space so that it can bring all of its employees under one roof.

The move into a snazzy glass waterfront building would elevate the public profile of Zynga, which has been one of the city’s fastest-growing companies but is relatively unknown outside of game development circles. At 500 Terry Francois St., Zynga would plant its flag in a sub-market that continues to draw biotech and venture capital firms even as leasing has slowed to a crawl in the traditional downtown core.

Under the deal, Zynga would pay annual rent in the “mid $30s” per square foot; owner CBRE Investors would pay $50 a square foot, or $6.8 million, to build out the three floors of shell space overlooking San Francisco Bay, according to sources familiar with the transaction. The total cost of the build out will be closer to $10 million, with the tenant making up the difference. The contractor is Novo Contractors.

CBRE broker Meade Boutwell, who represents CBRE Investors, declined to comment because the lease has not been completed. Zynga also declined comment.

Michael Cohen, San Francisco’s director of economic development, said he was not aware of the details of the lease, but added that Zynga as a company “is right in our sweet spot.”

“Having a high-end digital media company in Mission Bay will complement the innovation that is already occurring there,” said Cohen.

Much of Zynga’s recent growth has come from its new Facebook game called “FarmVille,” in which players create and manage virtual farms, but other titles such as “Mafia Wars” and “Texas Hold’Em Poker” continue...
to break records. To keep up with its explosive growth, the company has been hiring at a furious pace. In addition to its 370 full-time employees, it has 160 job openings it is actively trying to fill. In addition, the company employs 131 contractors.

Zynga is the biggest and fastest growing company in the super-hot online social gaming sector, a relatively new category of video games in which play is often free and companies make money off sales of virtual goods, such as digital tools used to enhance gameplay, or advertising. Zynga’s offerings include casino games, word games, board games and role-playing games and are available on various social networks, including Facebook, Friendster, Bebo, Hi5 and MySpace.

CEO Pincus recently said his 2-year-old company is generating revenue at a rate of more than $100 million a year. Two thirds of its revenue comes from selling virtual goods ranging from digital farm buildings for use in “FarmVille” to poker chips for betting in “Texas Hold’Em.”

Pincus is a San Francisco booster, calling the city the “Motor City for virtual goods and social games.” In a recent interview with the Business Times, Pincus has said he wanted to stay in San Francisco, and that he would like the city government to do something to benefit his company financially in the form of tax credits or the like, given all the jobs that Zynga is bringing to the city and the high cost of living.

Kleiner Perkins Caulfield & Byers last July led a $29 million round of financing in Zynga, along with Institutional Venture Partners and previous investors Union Square Ventures, Foundry Group and Avalon Ventures.

GVA Kidder Mathews Executive Vice President Skip Whitney, who focuses on Mission Bay, said the potential Zynga deal “further endorses the model of innovation, which is why people want to be down in Mission Bay.

“It just bodes well (for) what Mission Bay is all about,” said Whitney. “It’s an eco-system of innovation and it doesn’t exclude other forms of innovation other than biotech.”

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City prepares to buy back Muni substation

By: John Upton
Examiner Staff Writer
09/21/09 6:00 AM PDT

The City is on the verge of buying back an old Muni substation on Fillmore Street from the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, which failed in its plans to convert the vacant building into a jazz facility.

The redevelopment agency bought the century-old building, which used to house large electricity-generating turbines for streetcars, from The City in 2003 for $900,000.

The agency planned to convert the building into a new jazz center or other community resource.

But the agency failed to find a developer interested in the project and it spent millions of dollars that had been set aside for the project to subsidize failing jazz-themed restaurants on Fillmore Street.

Legislation due to be considered by the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday would see the building's ownership transferred back to The City.