INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Agency Commissioners

FROM: Fred Blackwell, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Media Clippings from 2/13/10 to 2/25/10

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

(Originated by Gia Casteel-Brown, Executive Assistant)

Fred Blackwell
Executive Director

BAYVIEW HUNTERS POINT & SHIPYARD:

Attachment 1: SF Gate.com: “A Day in the life of Dr. Nadine Burke,” February 21, 2010

Attachment 2: SF Gate.com: “City golf course makes the cut,” February 14, 2010

YERBA BUENA:


MISSION BAY:


REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY:

Attachment 5: SF Gate.com: “Can sunlight group move beyond shadows of past?”, February 15, 2010

Attachment 6: SF Gate.com: “Newsom plan would defer up-front developer fees,” February 25, 2010

Attachment 7: SF Business Times: “Bridge to everywhere,” February 12, 2010

Attachment 8: SF Gate.com: “Plant a tree, build community in S.F.,” February 21, 2010
A UC Berkeley-trained physician with a master's degree in public health from Harvard College treats patients with Third World diseases in San Francisco. It's all in a day's work for Dr. Nadine Burke, medical director of the Bayview Child Health Center on Evans Avenue in Bayview-Hunters Point, which she helped to open in 2007 with the California Pacific Medical Center. She and a staff of eight combat health inequities, including the highest incidence of infant mortality in the state. Before the clinic opened, many patients went to hospital emergency rooms for basic medical care. At 34, she has become a role model for the community's children, not only for her humanitarian works, but for her snazzy sense of style, wearing chic dresses and 5-inch heels to work most days. Burke was one of three doctors recently honored at the Medical Center's annual Wishes for Wellness fundraising gala for their contributions to health.

9 a.m. Burke, a former 30-mile-a-week runner, usually walks to work from her Potrero Hill home. A knee injury put an end to her runs. Today, she takes her BMW, and is in a meeting discussing staffing issues with an office manager and a nurse. The clinic has three exam rooms, two tiny lab rooms, a nurse's office and a small conference room with children's toys. A warehouse in the back stores records and is the site of a mobile dentist service operated by the Native American Health Center, which sits patients in lawn chairs braced with sand bags.

"It's not fancy," Burke confides, "but it works."

10:42 a.m. Burke drives to a nearby meeting to discuss future projects with local nonprofit leaders, including Daniel Lurie, founder of Tipping Point Community, which gives grants to poverty-fighting organizations, and Katie Albright, executive director of the San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center. On the way in, she notes that she learns a lot of random things from her patients, like where to buy the best gold "fronts" (ornamental braces) for teeth, and about life. "My girlfriends and I complain about how we don't have time for the things we'd like to do in life," says Burke, who is single. "When I have a patient with six kids and a job (who) makes it work, it makes it hard for me to complain about my life and obligations."

11:20 a.m. She sees a 2-year-old boy with asthma and a cold, brought in by his aging babysitter and her husband. Burke asks why the mother did not come. "She's working," the sitter says. Burke asks a battery of questions about health and immunizations. She's told the boy eats fruit and vegetables daily, then learns he's served oatmeal for breakfast and frozen dinners or macaroni and cheese for lunch. The sitter looks down at Burke's shoes, a pair of metallic silver and navy closed-toe Mary Janes with 5-inch heels. "You walk all day in heels?" the sitter asks. "Yes," Burke replies with a smile.

11:50 a.m. Burke updates patient reports on the computer. "I wanted to be a pediatrician since I was 4 years old," Burke says. Her parents were Jamaican, her father a biochemist, her mother a nurse. She was born in
Canada and the family moved back to Jamaica for several years. When she was 5, they moved to Palo Alto, where she was raised. "When I was 5, I wrote a letter to my pediatrician that said, 'Why is it when I want to move my toe, it moves?' " she recalls. "The hilarious thing is, I still don't know. I've always been fascinated with the human body."

**12:00 p.m.** A mother and son with developmental disabilities are no-shows. While waiting for them, Burke relates the story of a 17-year-old from Mexico who was suffering seizures and falling out of his chair at school. He was undocumented and fearful. "The school nurse dragged him in," Burke said. An MRI showed he had neurocysticercosis, which comes from the eggs or larvae of tapeworms in undercooked pork. The parasites survive cooking and migrate to the brain, causing abscesses and seizures.

**12:30-1:30 p.m.** Burke attends a closed session with a team of mental health professionals to discuss a 10-year-old boy who is at risk of being taken out of his home because of medical, learning and behavioral problems. He has witnessed domestic violence and an attempted murder.

**1:50 p.m.** At her desk, Burke eats a pear-Gorgonzola salad from Trader Joe's. Her boyfriend, Arno Harris, the top executive at a solar energy company, e-mails to say he will have to skip the Super Bowl party they've planned with his 6-year-old twins because he has to go to Hong Kong for business. She had not considered herself an entrepreneur until Harris pointed it out. "You deal with investors, marketing and a product that has a return on the investment, as well as manage a budget and a staff," he told her, reframing her appearances at cocktail parties with philanthropists and her day-to-day toils. "I was like, 'No, I'm just a doctor,' " she recalled. "He's been a great coach."

**2:20 p.m.** Janae Heard, 18, an Everest College student studying to become a medical assistant, comes in for a routine checkup. She has seen Burke for three years. "She gives a lot of advice on family issues and health issues, as well as lifestyle advice," said the soft-spoken teenager, listing conversations with Burke about time management and resolving spats with friends. "She's an open person. She'll tell you about her experiences with life, and she don't judge you. She just wants you to get better. I don't dread coming to the doctor. I like coming here. And she dresses classy. She don't take it overboard."

**2:30 p.m.** Ezequiel Valencia, 8, and his brother, Mauricio, 10, come in with their mother for a routine checkup. Burke, who is fluent in Spanish, discusses the mother's concerns about her younger son's weight and concentration issues at school. She learns that at school, they eat pancakes with syrup for breakfast and pizza and spaghetti, and at home, rice, beans, beef, chicken and eggs. The boys, like all Burke's patients, are offered a choice of a free book with each visit (in English or Spanish) donated by the Reading Tree. They make their selections with a smile.

**3:37 p.m.** Burke treats an 11-month-old boy with an earache and clogged sinuses, clearing his nostrils with saline drops and a bulb syringe - but not before wailing ensues.

**4-6:30 p.m.** Burke sees four patients, including a 16-year-old Guatemalan girl who needed a physical and had never seen a dentist in her life. After work, Burke heads to Bar Bambino for a double date with her boyfriend and another couple, a full day finished. "I love the science of it, and the challenge of it, diagnostically, particularly in..."

http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/02/21/LVG01BVMCV.DTL&type=printable 2/25/2010
A day in the life of Dr. Nadine Burke

"This community," Burke said of her job. "It's a lot like working in the Third World. It's phenomenal."

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http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/02/21/LVGO1BVMCV.DTL

This article appeared on page N - 1 of the San Francisco Chronicle
City golf course makes the cut

"We're No. 17! We're No. 17!" That's the enthusiastic chant heard coming from the folks who run the city's Gleneagles Golf Course in McLaren Park.

The urban course, located not far from the Sunnydale public housing projects in Visitacion Valley, made the list of GolfWorld magazine's top nine-hole courses in the country. San Francisco's municipal green ranked No. 17 on the list of 25.

Built in 1962 by the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department and designed by Jack Fleming, Gleneagles is known as a challenging course with narrow fairways and lots of trees. "For many years, the toughest part about Gleneagles was finding it," said Tom Hsieh Jr., general partner of the outfit that manages the course for the city.

Hsieh is quite pleased with Gleneagles' ranking -- even if it didn't break the Top 10. After all, he said, most of the others that ranked better, including the No. 1 The Dunes Club in Michigan, were built for a lot more money. And unlike The Dunes, Gleneagles is open to the general public.
Moscone loses competitive edge

Millions expected to be sent using facilty to lure, retain events

By John Upton Examiner Staff Writer

The centerpiece of the City's critical convention business, the Moscone Center, has lost its competitive edge, and tens of millions of dollars are expected to be spent dragging the aging facility into the 21st century.

The 164,000-square-foot convention center has hosted some of the region's largest and most prestigious conventions, including Oracle OpenWorld and MacWorld. But one of its three buildings dates back to 1981 and larger and more modern facilities are snatching away conventions away from San Francisco, leading to the City's coffers and businesses taking a hit. City and industry officials will spend tens of millions of dollars from new hotel taxes to update and expand the once-visions convention center by building an underground ballroom.

Tourism is San Francisco's top economic engine, and conventions account for more than one-third of the City's $8 billion annual tourism industry.

The tax dollars generated by tourists — especially by conventiongoers who spend large sums during multiday hotel stays — help pay for essential services such as public safety, road improvements and parks. Tourism-based industries already are reeling from a dismal 2009, and an uptick is not expected this year.

Other cities have started using newer and larger convention centers to lure events away from San Francisco, which is losing business as a result, according to Moscone Center General Manager Dick Shaff. Groups that use the center for conventions are "demanding improvements," he said. "Phoenix just spent $600 million building a brand new convention center, and they're driving very hard bargains," Shaff said. "It's a very competitive environment."

The loss of conventions to other cities compounds recessionary woes plaguing The City's tourism industry.

"Last year was our worst year in quite some time," San Francisco Convention and Visitors Bureau Executive Director Joe D'Alessandro said. "I don't see 2010 being much better.

"To help arrest the convention business' local decline, hoteliers and city lawmakers in 2008 created the Tourism Improvement District, which levies 1 to 1.5 percent in new taxes on hotel visits.

The new taxes will fund improvements to the Moscone Center and The City's tourism marketing strategy.

School district set to send pink slips to teachers

By Mike Alday Examiner Staff Writer

Hundreds of teachers in The City are being laid off with tentative pink slips March 15 as the San Francisco Unified School District grapples with a projected two-year, $413 million deficit.

New figures released by the SFUSD show that 318 teachers — including 174 at elementary schools, 66 at middle schools and 78 at high schools — will receive pink slips.

The layoff proposal also includes slashing a long list of librarians, nurses, counselors and positions that work in support of teachers. Also, 163 administrative positions are slated to be cut, the district said.

The layoffs are not final. The March deadline for tentative pink slips is required by state law "in order to ensure SFUSD is legally able to lay off teachers if necessary," the district said.

The district still must strike an agreement with labor unions, await final word on state funding and receive approval for the layoffs from the Board of Education, spokesman Gentle Bythye said.

The district also hopes attrition will help reduce layoffs, she said.

Any teacher who notices the district by March 1 will receive pink slips.

Targeted fund: Created in 2008, the Tourism Improvement District takes in money from hotel visits to fund improvements to the Moscone Center, among other projects.

Roughly $88 million from the new tax is budgeted to be spent expanding and improving the center.

The first five years of work will focus on improving the existing buildings, the oldest of which lacks sufficient power outlets for the high-tech companies that use it for conventions, according to D'Alessandro.

A massive underground expansion of a tunnel beneath Howard Street that connects two buildings could create a large single convention room in the second half of the decade, he said. Some major improvements could be completed within two years, D'Alessandro said.

THE 3-MINUTE INTERVIEW

Curt Yagi

The executive director of local integrations, Real Options for City Kids is throwing the organization's 50th anniversary party at Cafe Du Nord.

What is ROCKY? We aren't a nonprofit youth development agency, in San Francisco's Visitacion Valley. We specialize in sports and outdoor activities.

How many kids participate in your program? We work with all the public schools in Visitacion Valley, so year-round we have 450 children in our programs.

Your fundraiser is called Funk Out with Rock. What can people expect? We get hundreds of people together for an over-the-top event at Cafe Du Nord to come out and have a good time. The theme is Funk, and we have a really good band.

What can people expect? We get a picture and put it on our Web sites. People can go and donate. The host who raised the most money by the benefit night will be named "Master of Funk."

What will the proceeds benefit? All of our programs. We raised $2000 last year we took our after school program. — Andrea Kennedy
Mission Bay Roundup

Mission Loc@l
By Anrica Deb

Mission Bay's Community Advisory Committee met late last week to discuss a few odds and ends, focusing on plans for affordable housing development on the corner of Channel and Fourth Streets.

Mercy Housing's plan for 1000 Fourth Street places a 150-unit affordable housing development a stone's throw from Mission Creek and AT&T Park.

The schematic Mercy and the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency presented includes childcare, after school programming, and some parking, as well as "quite smashing views across the channel," according to architect Daniel Solomon from WRT Solomon ETC.

Kennerly Architecture and Planning also participating in the planning, as did Episcopal Community Services, which serves the formerly homeless.

Twenty percent of the units will be reserved for the formerly homeless.

The design team said they intend to have the project LEED certified, and the plans show frontage planning with sun exposure in mind.

A few of the advisory committee members said that they were worried the filigreed metal fins along one side of the building would need cleaning or be disturbing-looking from the interior, and several were concerned over one of the exterior colors, which looked greenish-yellow via overhead projector. The design team assured would appear different "not yellow" on site. Read more here.
At some point in the next month, a working group will be formed to ponder the proper ratio of sunlight to shade in San Francisco's public parks - the urban design equivalent of trying to count the number of angels on the head of a pin.

The real question is whether such a task force can move beyond preordained positions and explore something more radical: an approach to urban design that embraces the complexity of the times in which we live.

That's a tall order for a working group conceived in response to single-issue politics of the most simplistic sort.

I'm referring to the short-lived Park Sunlight Protection Ordinance that Supervisor David Chiu prepared for the June ballot. It tightened shadow restrictions already in place for downtown parks by taking away the discretion of city commissions to allow buildings that might cast a bit of extra shadow but provide other benefits. It also extended protection to plazas on Market Street and all open space within the three blocks of Yerba Buena Gardens.

The proposal surfaced in late January when Chiu and four fellow supervisors moved to place it on the ballot without running the details by planners or the public. Two weeks of saber-rattling later it sank; Chiu and Mayor Gavin Newsom agreed instead to assemble a task force to discuss how the 1980s-era protections might be strengthened or tweaked.

Task force has chance

Now, aides to the two politicians are working with the San Francisco Planning + Urban Research Association (SPUR) to craft a list of participants that all sides can agree on. There's a desire to move quickly, so that the task force can wrap up work by early summer.

This would leave time, if desired, for a ballot measure in November to endorse the findings - or, if opponents of tall buildings feel boxed in, an initiative along the lines of what Chiu proposed.

Task forces often are the last thing needed in a city as politically devious as San Francisco; they're an invitation to endless process, or a way for insiders to twist the rules to their advantage. This one, though, has a chance to succeed.

The reason, oddly, is that any discussion about preserving the ambiance of public parks will likely move away from the absolutist position of the proposed ballot measure - which, in essence, was that the protection of
sunlight is more important than any other issue that might shape how San Francisco grows and evolves.

An example? No sane person would say that shadows are the most dire threat to perennially troubled United Nations Plaza. But if keeping the current amount of sunlight trumps all else, then you couldn't add anything nearby that, in return for minor slivers of occasional shade, might bring needed year-round vitality to that stretch of Market Street.

'Stealth weapon'

At its most cynical level, a sanctimonious push for "park sunlight protection" is a stealth weapon aimed at buildings or plans that already have gone through extensive public review. It taps into a visceral dislike of the tall or the new: the recent towers I hear the most complaints about, One Rincon and the San Francisco Federal Building, are lightning rods for their visual prominence rather than the shadows they cast.

But it's also absurd to insist that towers must sprout everywhere like mushrooms to create jobs or produce large amounts of housing. Emphasizing quantity rather than quality would erode the city's long-term health.

If the working group mission is framed as an affirmative - how do we nurture parks and plazas as enticing environments - then it can provoke a discussion that's long overdue.

The fact is, there are good reasons for San Francisco to grow. They range from the quest for regional sustainability to the vibrancy of districts like Yerba Buena that concentrate culture and life in tall buildings around well-maintained plazas and parks.

Downtown open spaces aren't just sylvan retreats. Their urban setting can help make them thrive.

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http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/02/15/BA171BVJQ8.DTL

This article appeared on page C - 1 of the San Francisco Chronicle
Newsom plan would defer up-front developer fees

John Coté, Chronicle Staff Writer
Thursday, February 25, 2010

It's not a cure-all for San Francisco's sputtering economy, but Mayor Gavin Newsom says his plan to let developers defer up-front fees owed to the city will jump-start major construction projects while creating at least 700 blue-collar jobs.

"This is a big deal," Newsom told a crowd of applauding construction trade unionists at a meeting hall in the Mission District Wednesday, some of whom have been out of work since last summer.

Skeptics, though, contend parts of the mayor's proposal could delay neighborhood improvements like parks near new homes and constrain the amount of new affordable housing.

Developers currently pay millions of dollars in up-front fees to the city to offset the impact their projects have on a neighborhood, from increased traffic to demand for parks and schools. They must also designate a portion of residential projects to affordable housing or pay a separate fee for the city to build that housing elsewhere.

The mayor's administration says the package of legislation, tentatively set to go before the Board of Supervisors' land use committee March 15, would cut up-front costs for developers, making it easier to get financing in this recession. Newsom said his proposals would speed up start times on four specific projects by as much as two years, including the second tower in the One Rincon Hill development. Work on the four projects could start in two months, he said.

Major condo projects

They include condominium and mixed-use developments at 201 Folsom St., 1998 Market St. and 2001 Market St., and represent 1,200 residential housing units - about one-quarter of the total units already approved but waiting to break ground for financial reasons, according to the mayor's office.

"We're not waiting around for the federal government and 'Stimulus II' or 'Job Programs II,' " Newsom said. "We've got to take responsibility locally."

The mayor's legislation contains three components. The first, which has broad support, would streamline and centralize the development impact fee process in one place, the Department of Building Inspection. Developers now have to go to various agencies like the school district or Municipal Transportation Agency.

The second component would allow developers to defer fees they now pay up-front and begin construction in exchange for an additional surcharge. The total would have to be paid and any agreed-upon improvements made,
Newsom plan would defer up-front developer fees
such a building a park or setting up a child care center, before anyone could move into the building.

Cut of housing fees

The third and most controversial element would give the developers the option to cut 33 percent off the affordable housing fee they normally have to pay in exchange for agreeing to a permanent 1 percent transfer fee on the property. That means every time the property is sold, the city would get 1 percent of the sales price for affordable housing.

A Controller's Office analysis projects that with a transfer fee, the city would recoup the original affordable housing amount in 18 years on a mid-rise condo project, and have a continuous flow of money into an affordable housing fund.

"It's not to give away something now and never get it back," said Michael Yarne in the mayor's economic development office. "It's to get more back in the future."

Yarne maintains the controller's projections are a worst-case scenario.

Critics, though, say affordable housing money will trickle in, and not come in chunks that can be easily used to create homes.

"It would take (almost) 20 years in their projections to get the number of units" that would have been funded up front, said Supervisor Chris Daly, an affordable housing advocate. "Why would I want to do that?"

Stimulus expected

The controller's analysis found the stimulus effect of deferring fees would be "fairly significant during the current recession" and create 20 to 25 housing units. Cutting a third off the affordable housing fee would create up to 50 units per year, the report said. Yarne said that's on top of more than 5,000 units already approved.

For Oscar Ramirez, a 50-year-old union laborer with four children who's been out of work since July, any new construction jobs would be welcome.

"It's hard even to pay the rent," Ramirez said outside the union hall where Newsom spoke. "There's like 400-something people here at the union without work. That's like 25 percent of the force."

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http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/02/25/BA981C6K8F.DTL

This article appeared on page C - 1 of the San Francisco Chronicle
Bridge to everywhere
Housing builder rolls; funding clouds loom
San Francisco Business Times - by Blanca Torres

With more than 1,000 units under construction and 1,000 more in its pipeline, affordable housing developer Bridge Housing is enjoying a booming 2010.

Last fall, Bridge completed two condo developments in San Francisco, including the $60 million, 124-unit Armstrong Place Townhomes in the Bayview and the $63.5 million, 131-unit Mission Walk in Mission Bay, bringing for-sale homes to neighborhoods with limited options for affordable homeownership.

It also finished the 99-unit, $41.4 million Ironhorse apartments in West Oakland, adding a crucial piece to a major overhaul of a former industrial area.

Bridge has four projects under construction in Colma, Palo Alto and San Francisco and plans to start three more this year totaling more than 650 units. That doesn’t include eight developments fully entitled and ready to go.

"We’re fortunate that we’re going to be able to start as many projects this year as we are," said Lydia Tan, executive vice president of Bridge. The firm also appointed Cynthia Parker as president and chief executive to replace Carol Galante, who left to work for President Barack Obama’s administration.

Yes, Bridge is keeping busy, but like many affordable housing developers, executives at the firm are wondering how to keep up the pace or any pace at all.

Bridge secured funding sources for its current active projects two to three years ago before the affordable housing industry hit hard times.

Affordable developers scrape together money from various sources ranging from local redevelopment funds, state and federal grants and loans, bank mortgages and by selling tax credits that investors can use to offset business profits.

All of those sources have been depleted in some way.

“We’re in for a tough time,” Tan said. “We’re ready to see a huge drop off in construction because of what’s happened with local funding.”

St. Joseph’s Phase I, a $40 million, 84-unit senior housing project in Oakland, was almost derailed when budget deficits prompted the state to freeze billions of dollars it had committed to dozens of projects.

To keep St. Joseph’s moving, Bridge used funds from the federal stimulus package to replace the state’s
Cities are usually the first to pledge funds to an affordable housing project, so securing their support is crucial.

In San Leandro, Bridge expects to break ground this spring on the Alameda, a 100-unit apartment building. City leaders agreed to provide a $9.1 million loan for the $39.7 million project. More than $6 million of the loan will come from a bond.

"The problem is that we've been very active on the affordable housing fund for the last five years, so a lot of our housing sources have been tapped out," said Tom Liao, San Leandro's housing services manager. "After the Bridge project, we'll be in savings mode for a number of years to be able to do more substantial projects like the Alameda."

Of the remaining tax-credit investors still funding projects, many have become more selective about developments and developers, said Doug Shoemaker, director of the Mayor’s Office of Housing in San Francisco. If one source of money falls through, that can often turn off other sources and kill or delay a project.

"Bridge has a great reputation and that makes it easier for them to secure tax credits," he said.

Funders and lenders are looking for an impressive track record, said Annette Billingsley, president of Union Bank's Community Development Finance division based in Walnut Creek, which has a $2 billion loan portfolio of affordable developments.

"We have placed a real emphasis on building long-term relationships with high-quality developers," Billingsley said. "Bridge Housing is one of these partners."

Tan said Bridge and other developers will have to seek out new funding partners and learn ways to cut costs while still providing quality developments.

"It's not business as usual, it won't be business as usual," Tan said. "We have to reinvent the industry and how we fund projects. As soon as we figure this out, the better off we'll be."

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A motley collection of volunteers planted western red bud, silktassel, toyon, and blue blossom trees beside Rosa Parks Elementary School on Saturday. The trees were all native to California, but not to San Francisco, a city still struggling to overcome its heredity as an arid haven for scrub brush, grasses and sand dunes.

But, then again, in the school's Western Addition neighborhood, overcoming history is part of the fabric of every day.

In this neighborhood, waves of various ethnic groups have come - and sometimes been pushed out by force. The elementary school once served as a way station for Japanese Americans being shipped to internment camps during World War II. The school sits next to an apartment complex that neighbors said was built during the city's infamous redevelopment schemes a half-century ago, which pushed out African Americans.

So Karen Kai was moved by the sight of the eclectic collection of folks coming together to plant trees: children, parents, teachers, school secretaries, neighbors and people from around the city; black, white, Japanese American and others.

"It really is the vision we had for the school," said Kai, 55, a Japanese American who now lives in the city's Eureka Valley neighborhood. "It's bringing the community together."

And it was for trees.

Of the 30 largest U.S. cities, San Francisco is ranked 30th in terms of tree canopy cover, said Dan Flanagan, executive director of Friends of the Urban Forest, which facilitated this planting of 82 trees.

Part of that is the history. Flanagan said only two trees are native to the city's boundaries: coastal live oak and buckeyes. Some say there is none.

The other part is city planning. Under San Francisco law, homeowners own the parking strip between the sidewalk and the street. And a permit is required to plant a tree, Flanagan said.

So, eight blocks away from the school, Shanon Loftus lamented the fact that half of her block of Baker Street was paved. She'd lobbied the rental property owner to plant trees - that she and others would pay for and maintain, including the concrete demolition cost. But the owner insisted that it would be a hassle and a future owner might not want it.

"I just couldn't believe he wouldn't want trees," said Loftus, 35, who got a Victorian box tree planted in front of
Plant a tree, build community in S.F.

her house from Friends of the Urban Forest on Saturday. "We have a really wide sidewalk. It would have really beautified the neighborhood."

Of the roughly 110,000 trees planted along streets in San Francisco, 43,000 were planted by Friends of the Urban Forest since its inception in 1980, Flanagan said. The city does the thoroughfares, the nonprofit does the rest. Saturday marked the 1,000th time the group had done a tree planting in the city.

The nonprofit requires those who want a tree to pay $75 and maintain it for three years, which the nonprofit checks at three-, six-, and 36-month intervals. They currently monitor 3,000 trees citywide.

Building a community is essential to the cultivation of trees, Flanagan said. Like newborns, saplings need extra care in the early years for them to survive. The nonprofit hired a grassroots organizer who had worked in political campaigns to identify community leaders who'll guide the effort.

"We want them connected because we need them to take care of the urban forest," Flanagan said.

And for some, the trees planted Saturday symbolized how far the community had come.

Barb Fujimoto volunteers at Rosa Parks Elementary, where she has a fourth-grader enrolled. When the Japanese Bilingual Bicultural Program was brought to the school three years ago, many Japanese American parents didn't follow. They feared the Western Addition was too dangerous, said Fujimoto, 56, who is white, but is married to a Japanese American. Mixing different populations is a challenge, even in San Francisco.

"We didn't know if the school would make it," she said. "This project means we're coming together to make this the best school."

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http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2010/02/21/BA841C4OE3.DTL

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