



# *San Francisco Tomorrow*

## *Working to Protect the Urban Environment*

*Issue 339*

*Will you want to live in San Francisco – Tomorrow?*

*November 2010*

## **Water Treatment Facility in Golden Gate Park**

It sounds like a very good thing: treating sewage wastewater to the next level of purification and rendering it useful as irrigation water and for recharge of the Westside aquifer. The recycled water project of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (PUC) proposes to build a one-acre advanced treatment facility in the west end of Golden Gate Park; this would be an additional step beyond tertiary treatment and would create water which matches or exceeds that which is currently used for irrigation in the park and local golf courses. San Francisco Tomorrow wrote to the PUC our concerns about the plant and asking that the following issues be evaluated in the draft EIR.

**Industrial Use.** Removal of the former plant resulted in a net gain of open space for the people of the City. Building an entirely new industrial use at this site, and seeking to justify it because there had been a treatment plant there thirty years ago, should be called what it is: a brand new industrial use and the loss of four acres of public open space from Golden Gate Park.

**Other sites for a Water Treatment Plant exist.** PUC has rejected the study of other sites. The EIR should require that other viable and feasible sites should be considered as alternatives to the project which would locate the plant outside Golden Gate Park. One Alternative should study a small plant added to the Westside Treatment Plant. Another Alternative should study converting a portion of the underused zoo parking lot as a plant site.

**The zoning is “P” for Public, meant for open space or parks.** The use proposed is an industrial use; if not for the fact that the proponent is a public agency, it would not be permitted in a “P” zone. If the proponent were a private agent, the industrial use proposed would not even be considered in a P zoning district.

**The Golden Gate Master Plan** envisions a combination of storage and recreation on this site: a much smaller log storage area (.75 acre, if needed) or a reforestation area (if log storage is not needed). The Plan sees the possibility of a new recreational use on this site, a fifth soccer field. A new industrial use is specifically discouraged. The Golden Gate Park Master Plan would need to be changed in order to accommodate this use.

**Aesthetics.** The formidable nature of an industrial use, necessarily illuminated all day and night and surrounded by high, chain-link fencing, is not shown in available renderings. So far, no drawings have been made public which show: the full site plan of the four acres; elevations from all sides, not just the street view; sections which show the height above and below grade; or a landscape plan which shows the site within its park context.. There should also be renderings which show the nearby context of historic structures such as the Murphy Windmill and the landmark Millwright’s Cottage.

**This is actually a four-acre site.** The PUC will control a four-acre site by MOU agreement with Recreation and Parks. The present plan utilizes only one acre. No mention is made of the use of the other three acres. CEQA specifically prohibits serial projects. i.e. the “piecemealing” of projects into several parts for sequential environmental study. This EIR should study the entire four-acre site, no just one-quarter of the site. PUC and DRP must reveal what is planned for the remainder of the site. If they do not know at this time what they want to use it for, they should be required to do a master plan for the entire site with time-specific phases as needed, or else limit their proposal to the one-acre site. Recreation and Parks will have a monetary stake in this arrangement, receiving an undisclosed lease amount.

## Proposition G Muni Salaries

Proposition G on the November Ballot would eliminate the Charter-established formula for setting minimum MUNI operator wages and instead have them go through a collective bargaining process. SFT Board was divided on this measure and did not take a position but offers a Pro and Con argument:

**PRO (A Yes Vote)** Prop G will remove Charter salary guarantees for Muni driver thereby allowing the MTA to allocate limited resources to services for riders rather than automatic annual raises. Currently, the Charter guarantees Muni drivers the second highest salary in the country determined by a survey. This measure will also allow the MTA to negotiate new work rules not now in effect.

**CON (A No Vote)** Muni drivers are the one group of workers who have the most stressful jobs and should not be a target of cost-cutting. They have no more control over our faltering economy than any other workers. The fault does not lie with the Muni driver but with the unaccountable administrators of the budget. Requiring long drawn out negotiation will not be beneficial for labor peace.

## Presidio Hotel Plan just won't go away

Shortly before the Presidio Trust brought forward its Museum plan to house the Fisher collection three years ago, they requested proposals for building a large luxury hotel in the Main Post near the Museum site. The Museum proposal was withdrawn when the public expressed its outrage at this intrusive use in the historic Main Post, but the Trust has never let go of, and is now pushing hard for, its scheme for a new hotel. A hotel would not fall within the mandates of the Presidio Trust Act or comply with the National Environmental Policy Act.

The plans call for a fourteen-building hotel complex between Anza and Graham, from Lincoln on the North to the end of parade ground on the South, which would dominate the Main Parade and mock the spartan soldier's barracks opposite. Twelve of the fourteen buildings would be new, and two would retain the shells of existing buildings for a total of about 88,000 sq. ft. plus underground parking. The Main Post is the Park's single most historic area dating from its settlement by the Anza expedition in 1776. To get its way, the Trust must change the Main Post Master Plan, part of the Presidio Trust Management Plan which now prohibits the proposed hotel. A major modern addition to the Post theater on the Main Post is also proposed, completing the Trust's idea that the Main Post is a dull place on its own and needs the buzz of an entertainment venue.

Meanwhile, the Park still has no History Museum or permanent Visitors Center, both of which would better serve local, national and international visitors and help them understand the history of the

Presidio and the western United States, than would a large hotel in the center of the most historic park area. Besides, the Trust is already remodeling Pershing Hall into a bed and breakfast hotel.

The lack of renovation and preservation of the old Main Post barracks buildings is particularly troubling to members of the public since these buildings represent the roots of the Presidio as a strategically important military installation. "History matters," said one concerned observer "Lots of young men spent their last night there and never came back."

The Main Post is such a unique historic setting that it called by the State Historic Preservation Officer "the Plymouth Rock of the West". It is the single best location in the State for presenting and learning about California history starting with the Spanish and Mexican eras. This proposal for a luxury hotel complex trivializes the whole site and ignores the deep history going back to the founding of the city of San Francisco.

The hotel is not needed for the fiscal viability of the park as it approaches the 2013 date for termination of federal support. The Trust itself says the hotel would not bring in very much money to its treasury where income already exceeds initial budgets, and where funds should be set aside for a Visitors Center.

If the Trust is to live up to its legally stated duty to protect the Park and its National Historic Landmark District, the history of the Main Post must be upheld against such an intrusion.

## SFT Endorsements for November 2, 2010 as found also in the September 2010 Newsletter

### **Board of Supervisors.**

- District 2 **Janet Reilly**
- District 6 **Debra Walker.**
- District 8 **Rafael Mandelman**
- District 10 **Ranked Choice 1. Eric Smith 2. Tony Kelly.**

### **State measures.**

NO vote on Proposition 23

### **Local Measures.** SFT urges your **YES** vote for the following measures;

- Proposition AA – increases the vehicle license fee to fund transportation projects
- Proposition A – \$46.15 million General Obligation bond to retrofit soft story buildings containing affordable housing
- Proposition C – Previously approved as a resolution, this will add to the City Charter the requirement that the Mayor make a monthly appearance at the Board of Supervisors.
- Proposition E – allows voter registration on Election Day – only for municipal (off-year) elections. (note; since the state does not allow Election Day registration, it cannot be implemented in elections with a statewide vote)
- Proposition I – approves a privately funded pilot project to open polls on the Saturday before the November 2001 election, as well as on the traditional Tuesday.
- Proposition J – increases the hotel tax from 14 to 16%, and closes loopholes that allow on-line travel sites to avoid payment.
- Proposition M – Requires the SF Police Department to establish a foot patrol policy, but also overturns Proposition L, the Sit/Lie ordinance, if both pass
- Proposition N – increases the real estate transfer tax for transactions over \$5 million, with proceeds going to the General Fund

### **San Francisco Tomorrow *OPPOSES* the following measures;**

- Proposition B – sponsored by Public Defender Jeff Adachi, this would set new requirements for employee contributions to the pension fund and to health care for dependents.
  - Proposition H – placed on the ballot by the Mayor, this would ban local elected officials from serving on a political party's county central committee. Elected at the state and federal level are automatically represented on this committees.
  - Proposition K – placed on the ballot to draw support from Proposition J, the hotel tax increase, this measure would close the internet loopholes, but would not increase the hotel tax.
  - Proposition L – This ordinance would make it a crime to sit or lie on a city sidewalk.
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## **NO** on State Proposition 26 known as the Polluter Protection Initiative

Currently, a majority vote by the State Legislature or a local government agency is required to impose a mitigation fee on a business or industry that causes harm to public health or the environment. Proposition 26 aims to make it nearly impossible for the state to collect these fees and hold polluters responsible for their pollution by classifying these fees as taxes and making them subject to a two-thirds vote. Should this initiative pass on Election Day, some of California's biggest polluters will no longer have to pay to clean up their messes.

According to the Legislative Analyst's Office, the state has collected important regulatory fees that, under the proposition, could be reassessed as taxes, making it much harder for them to be approved. For example, fees on oil manufacturers, businesses that "treat, dispose of, or recycle hazardous waste", as well as fees imposed on alcohol retailers, which all go towards positive programs that focus on education, recycling, clean up and abatement, and investments in new environmental technologies, could be lost. Passage of Prop 26 would also put Assembly Bill 32, California's landmark global warming law, in jeopardy since a key part of that program is setting a price on carbon.

Passage of Prop 26 would also make it difficult for the state to collect revenue to clean up pollution and mitigate negative health impacts; meaning California would have to find some other way to finance these important efforts. With an already over-tapped state budget, that task is more than daunting.

# Muni Service Cuts

In December 2009, Muni service cuts included six discontinued routes, 16 foreshortened routes and shorter operating hours for 22 routes---which will not be restored. With herculean city budget deficits in the next three fiscal years, these cuts are just precursors. Even as they attempt to assemble funding for service restorations, Muni hopes to divert \$164 million of NEW local funding and \$88 million of NEW state funding for the Central Subway, the match required by the Federal Transit Administration for federal dollars received. This would drain the citywide Muni system to build the short 1.7 mile Central Subway. With a structural deficit of \$609 million for fleet maintenance, Muni riders will increasingly suffer transit losses.

Instead, ALL service cuts can be restored, the fleet maintained and citywide Muni revitalized---by better using the Central Subway's existing state/ local funds of \$384 million, including \$124 million in Prop K sales tax dollars. In economic recessions, we must prioritize transit needs and hasten job creation, reallocating \$943 million of federal funds to citywide public transit improvements. Also, consider the question:

## Who Protects the Fragile Chinatown Marketplace?

The Central Subway may do what the 1906 Earthquake could not---make Chinatown disappear. Unbridled progress and technology do not necessarily soften the deleterious consequences of gentrification and disruptions due to new construction. When the 1906 Earthquake completely flattened Chinatown, City Hall and developers advanced plans to relocate the Chinese to Bay View/ Hunters Point. But Chinese-American leaders sought help from fellow countrymen and the Dowager of the Ching Dynasty. With City Hall acknowledging Chinatown's economic worth in international commerce and tourism, Chinatown was rebuilt in its same location. One hundred years later, the Central Subway will exacerbate gentrification and relocation of the Chinese---but at an incremental pace that would likely raise few alarms. Construction disruptions, street digging and bus/ traffic rerouting alone will hurt the fragile Stockton Street marketplace. The Central Subway's plan for dense development and commuter travel to CalTrain is the inexorable road to Chinatown's demise.

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## **Redmond Kernan Lecture at the Presidio** *hosted by the Presidio Historical Association* **Wednesday, November 17, 2010**

"El Polin and the Mexican Presidio: New finds at El Polin Springs"

Moraga Room, Presidio Officer's Club

5:30 Reception, 7:00 Lecture by Eric Blind and Kari Jones, Presidio Archaeology Lab  
and Adrian Praetzellis, Professor of Anthropology, Sonoma State University.

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