



San Francisco Tomorrow

Working to Protect the Urban Environment

Issue 332

Will you want to live in San Francisco – Tomorrow?

November 2009

What Was Once Candlestick Point Park

You step out of your twenty-story Candlestick Point condo into a broad expanse of grass and shrubs leading to the Bay. You wander, absorbing the peace and serenity of nature just outside your doorway. The ideal home.

You leave your long-time Bayview home for a picnic at Candlestick Point State Recreation Area but once there you feel uncomfortable. What was previously your State Park now feels like a residential community's backyard. They have their barbecues and lawn chairs on what was once your park.

This is a potential outcome of the proposed Lennar Candlestick/Hunters Point development project. Lennar has presented a project that will offer high-end housing on 23 acres of what is presently State Park land. It is where they intend to make their greatest profit. No surprise – they are offering future residents the pleasure of owning State Park land that was once the property of us all.

Lennar explains that they can do this because, they say, only 40 acres of the 159-acre park are used as recreational lands and the rest are scruffy and dispensable. Many things are wrong with that analysis. For one thing people do use many of those other acres. They walk through the grasslands, and they do what people do in State Parks – they enjoy the peace and serenity of nature and escape from their urban pressures. They appreciate the expanse of open space that distances them from development.

This is a State Park after all, part of a system dedicated to preserving the biodiversity of the State. Let's not forget the critters. Over 180 wildlife species have been documented at Candlestick Point State Recreation Area – and critters need space just as we do. Those 110 non-recreational acres play a key role in sustaining the lives of our fellow creatures and give pleasure to the countless citizens who saunter through the park.

Senator Mark Leno's bill SB 792, passed by the legislature last month, allows the State to sell 23 acres of Candlestick Point State Park for high-end housing. It does not mandate that sale. (Lennar wanted 42 acres – we thank Senator Leno for whittling that number down). While the Lennar development plan puts high-end housing on what is currently the State Park it has no permits for the project. Proposition G passed in June 2008 also did not mandate the project. Approved was the concept of a development at Candlestick and Hunters Points, but with no specific plan.

We have time to change the Lennar project for the better and save all of Candlestick Point State Recreation Area. The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) should be out in early November. To help us change the project for the better; write your comments on the DEIR and on the precedent-setting sale of public land to a developer. It takes energy and dedication to preserve the little open space we have left in San Francisco. Lennar has 740 acres on which to site the housing. Contact your Supervisor to record your opposition to the loss of any public land at Candlestick Point Park.

*You and Your Friends are invited to SFT's
Holiday Party*

Wednesday, December 9, 2009 5:30 to 9 p. m. Forest Hill Clubhouse

\$35 per person. Sponsor \$60 Patron and one guest \$120 Please mail check to
Jane Morrison, 44 Woodland Avenue, SF 94117 564-1482

Institutional Master Plans: What is their purpose?

Why is it important to have a master plan when a major institution wants to expand into an established residential neighborhood? *Because the expansion can change everything* about how the neighborhood lives: its size, its appearance, the attraction of regional traffic, the scale and livability of streets, buildings, shops and open space. A case in point is California Pacific Medical Center (CPMC) which has bought the old Jack Tar Hotel on Van Ness Avenue and a number of nearby properties and wishes to develop a new 555-bed, 15-story hospital and office tower.

Background. There has been a Code requirement for a hospital or other large institution to prepare and publicly present an Institutional Master Plan (IMP) since 1978. Leaders in creating this amendment to the Planning Code Section 304.5 were Douglas Engmann and Sue Bierman, both of whom later served with distinction on San Francisco's Planning Commission. The impetus came from the over-concentration of hospitals in the northeastern part of the City, including the U.C. hospital in Parnassus Heights. Over the decades, in part due to the planning process, U.C. has divided its facilities between Parnassus and Mission Bay, to the benefit and sustainable character of both locations. The purpose of an IMP is to assure compatibility and sustainability of growth of the institution over a period of years.

When this local requirement for an IMP was enacted, there was also in force a *federal law that mandated regional health planning*. Local institutional master plans were subject to review to insure effective facilities planning. Unfortunately the federal law expired, victim to a national trend of deregulation. Yet the need for

evaluating hospital development plans in a context of other existing and proposed facilities is still very important to San Francisco.

The City's Institutional Master Plan law was amended in 2007, and the amendments gave more review responsibilities to the Department of Public Health, requiring that DPH hire a health planner. Unfortunately, to date, DPH has not adequately addressed a very primary issue – *acute care in a seismic or other emergency*. There is a plan for sub-acute care (school grounds, etc.) in an emergency, and rightfully the approach of this plan needs to be applied to all of San Francisco's emergency needs.

The CPMC Proposal. Under review at the Planning Commission, and due for continued public hearing on November 19, is the California Pacific Medical Center Institutional Master Plan. In its present form, CPMC proposes a 555-bed mega hospital at Van Ness Avenue and Geary Boulevard and continues the pattern of large institutions being built where the rich people are, and opening themselves to a charge of over-concentration of facilities. Both the Coalition for Health Planning in San Francisco (medical professionals and neighbor groups in Bernal Heights and Cathedral Hill) and the Cathedral Hill Neighbors assert that city emergency health facility needs would be better served by splitting this mega hospital into two 250-bed state-of-the-art hospitals, one on Cathedral Hill and one at St. Luke's. The Planning Commission and the public need to demand an IMP that provides a broader context with which to evaluate the CPMC proposal.

The Freeway Revolts of the 1960s

In the San Francisco Chronicle's "Insight" Section (Sunday, October 11, 2009), the Opinion "**Freeway Revolt Set S.F.'s NIMBY Course**" and the Editorial "**The Preservation Wars**" resurrected tumultuous debates. On its front cover, a large pickle jar labeled "SF" is filled with Victorian houses and architecture. A big header reads "**Pickling the Past**"---along with "**NIMBY: How the Freeway Revolt shaped San Francisco**" and "**Editorial: Does the city's new Historic Preservation Commission have too much power?**" The accounts of the 1959-65 citizen revolt, which

stopped ten proposed freeways including Doyle Drive, detail the emotional battles and citizen perseverance. The NIMBY uprising led to so-called anti-growth (actually limited-growth) measures and neighborhood power (actually limited influence), including the preservation movement. The Chronicle Editorial then warns of "sweeping powers" of the new Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), and bemoans the initiation of landmarking for five Appleton-Wolfard Libraries---all eligible for the National and California Registers.

The "Insight" Section (Sunday, October 18, 2009) continued the dialogue with divergent Letters to the Editor. A former Division of Highways Planner criticized the NIMBY's of the Freeway Revolt: "*The result transportation-wise is that there are congested streets---Oak, Fell, 19th Avenue and Lincoln Avenue---that would now be free of all*

through traffic and livable again." Another writer harked back to old maps that showed a huge array of freeways through many neighborhoods---if fully implemented. And another letter added a cautionary reminder:

(continued to bottom of page three)

FAKE TURF compromises nature in the city

Recreation and Park Department (RPD) is "partnering" with the City Fields Foundation to install FieldTurf, an artificial playing surface made up of rubber and plastic, to replace grass on many playing fields throughout the city. The soccer fields south of the Beach Chalet in the West End of Golden Gate Park are the latest site proposed for artificial turf, slated for conversion into a high-volume attraction for organized soccer clubs. Grass fields may not be ideal as wildlife habitat but they are feeding areas for many birds, insects and ground dwellers. The city needs to weigh the effects on the natural world before installing FieldTurf throughout San Francisco. Furthermore, bright lights on tall standards to allow night-time play may harm wildlife, local birds as well as migratory birds. The lights would be intrusive for neighbors and prevent enjoyment of the dark night sky. **What You Can Do:** Call the office of Recreation and Park Department General Manager Phil Ginsburg at (415)831-2401 and e-mail RPD's Dan Mauer at dan.mauer@sfgov.org

HISTORIC PRESERVATION of Branch Libraries

We're grateful to have a new Commission.

When newspapers, renowned for Pulitzer-winning photographers, disparage the modern architecture of San Francisco's historic branch libraries with unflattering photographs, a bit of skepticism should be aroused. For every period of time, historically significant buildings of high architectural quality should be professionally evaluated.

Many cities and nations have created Historic Preservation Commissions---by example, the 2,000 such commissions in the United States, the French National Historic Landmark Commission, UNESCO and its advocacy for vulnerable world heritage sites. An Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) provides a healthy balance in preserving San Francisco's historic and cultural resources. These are also economic engines for 16 million visitors who spend \$8 billion dollars here annually.

Recently, San Francisco's new Historic Preservation Commission strove to balance landmark designations of historic libraries with project schedules and permits. The HPC delayed landmarking the 100-year old Park

Branch Library---and instead required the incorporation of an historic preservation architect into the project. The HPC initiated landmark designations for the branch libraries in the Western Addition, Excelsior, Marina, Eureka Valley and North Beach. However, the renovations of the Western Addition, Excelsior, Marina and Eureka Valley Libraries have been completed. The North Beach Library is currently in its CEQA/ EIR phase and has the highest architectural integrity of all the libraries designed by architects Appleton and Wolfard. The HPC deferred landmarking for Merced and Parkside Libraries until current construction is completed. During the preservation debates, the Ortega Library and the Merced Library's interiors were unfortunately demolished. In time, the mere presence of the Historic Preservation Commission will institutionalize respect for our historic resources. Respectful maintenance and compatible designs are neither costly nor inconvenient---simply a mindset and a worthy responsibility for future generations.

Freeway revolts (continued from page two)

Healthy Skepticism

--History reminds us that private citizens are often right.

--Despite the overwhelming use of state power, political might and economic battering rams, average citizens have changed the course of the Panhandle and waterfront freeways and prevented filling in the bay, dismantling of cable cars, removal of J-Church streetcars, high-rises along the waterfront

and Telegraph Hill, continued redevelopment of "blighted" ethnic neighborhoods.....
--Today's citizen activism scrutinizes highways through the Presidio National Park that cut a scarring swath, subways under Chinatown that will decrease surface buses and a proposed North Beach Library that blocks public vistas to historical sites.
--If San Franciscans have a healthy skepticism, it's with just reason. Hopefully, this will never change.

FUN! FOOD! FRIENDS Of the Environment!

You and Your Friends are invited to party with San Francisco Tomorrow on **Wednesday, December 9, 2009 from 5:30 pm to 9pm** at the Forest Hill Clubhouse, 381 Magellan Avenue.

\$35.00 per person, \$60.00 for Sponsor and guest, and \$120.00 for Patron and guest. Please mail check to Jane Morrison, 44 Woodland Avenue, SF 94117 or phone Jane at 415-564-1482.



To reach the Forest Hill Clubhouse, at 381 Magellan Avenue, take Muni to Forest Hill Station. Go west (turn right) two long blocks on Dewey, right one block on Montalvo, then right onto Magellan.

Come meet, converse and celebrate with our invited guests: State Senators Leland Yee and Mark Leno, State Assembly Members Fiona Ma and Tom Ammiano, City Officials, and representatives of SF Muni, PUC, Recreation and Parks Department, Transbay Joint Powers Authority, BARTD, Sierra Club, League of Conservation Voters, Clean Water Action, San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, Alliance for a Clean Waterfront, Friends of the Urban Forest, Treasure island Wetlands Project, Nature in the City, Livable City, Walk San Francisco, Presidio Sustainability Project, San Francisco Bay Guardian to name a few. *(Original artwork by Phil Frank.)*

JOIN THE FIGHT AS AN SFT MEMBER!

You can help protect our urban environment as an up-to-date member of San Francisco Tomorrow. Your choice: \$15, \$25, \$35, \$50 or more. Make checks payable to "San Francisco Tomorrow" and mail them to SFT at 41 Sutter Street, #1579, San Francisco 94104-4903.

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SFT's Holiday Party

December 9, 2009

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