



# San Francisco Tomorrow

## Working to Protect the Urban Environment

Issue 347

Will you want to live in San Francisco – Tomorrow?

September 2011

### The SFT Annual Picnic was held at Pier 23

The SFT Annual Picnic was held at Pier 23 Restaurant this year so that members could come together in a fine location for talking and thinking about the big changes that will come in the wake of the America's Cup races. Over 48 SFT stalwarts turned out to "picnic" on the Embarcadero on what turned out to be a beautiful day near the water. It was relatively windless, the temperature was just right and both the Bay and the sky unfurled their brightest blues for the occasion. For those who were unable to attend, let it be known that we had the added pleasure of eating outside in the "Beer Garden" and had first row seats for observing the elegant tall ship from Russia, the Pallada, as it sailed into the Bay.

Pier 23 is located adjacent to Pier 27 which, in the summers of 2012 and 2013, will serve as part of America's Cup Village. Hundreds of thousands of people are expected to visit the city during the weeks leading up to the Cup races. After 2013, Pier 27 will be converted into a new Cruise Terminal.

Brad Paul and Jennifer Clary guided informative walks and talked about the plans for the America's Cup. Jennifer raised some of the many concerns on

a wide variety of civic and environmental impacts that will occur as a result of the America's Cup. These include plans to disconnect, for two years, the recently inaugurated, multi-million dollar shoreside power system which vastly reduces pollution emissions from visiting cruise ships; impacts from traffic and transportation systems overload; impacts on nearby neighborhoods; impacts from hundreds of thousands of people converging on the Marina Green and our National Parklands; and the long term development rights granted by then-Mayor Gavin Newsom to Larry Ellison/Event Authority for Piers 26, 28, 30-32, 19, 19 1/2, 23, 29, and Seawall Lot 330.

Brad Paul reviewed the extensive effort that multiple neighborhood associations in the Northeast Waterfront have put into accomplishing a sweeping Community Vision for the area. The neighborhoods are hopeful that many of their ideas for an improved, more beautiful and people friendly Embarcadero can be put into practice by the City in time for the America's Cup, or after the Cup as part of mitigations.

*Left: Jennifer Clary, SFT President, on deck at Pier 23  
Center: Shoreside power system for berthed cruise ships  
Right: SFT picnickers learn about plans for America's Cup*



# California Pacific Medical Center wants a new campus

Using the mantra of “seismic upgrades”, California Pacific Medical Center (CPMC) plans to take the following drastic actions: close its California Street campus; convert Pacific Heights campus to outpatient services; reduce or eliminate services formerly provided at St Luke’s Hospital and medical office building; and concentrate inpatient and acute care at a new site in the Van Ness Corridor. Some believe that CPMC is using the seismic safety issue in order to restructure operations on all its campuses and that, not seismic safety is the real motive for all this activity. They propose a massive development which consists of a 555-bed hospital about 265’ high to occupy the entire “Jack Tar” block; a medical office building 130’ high to occupy nearly half a block at Van Ness and Geary; a second medical office building absorbing existing offices at Sutter and Franklin.

The proposed new CPMC campus is at the confluence of major transportation corridors (Van Ness, Geary, Franklin, Post, Sutter). Traffic impacts can be expected to exacerbate existing congestion on Highway 101, the Geary Corridor, and other thoroughfares or transit preferential streets (O’Farrell, Polk, Bush, Gough, and routes through the Tenderloin and Civic Center). The Geary Corridor is already subject to congestion. Van Ness experiences frequent meltdowns where local traffic conflicts with Highway 101.

There is as yet no CPMC institutional master plan for all this development. However, the city planning document that is in effect (the Van Ness Area Plan or VNAP) limits the site to housing and ancillary commercial development. The Van Ness Corridor is zoned to foster housing opportunities, preserve some existing commercial use, and limit traffic-

inducing development. CPMC’s plan conflicts with other key elements of the Van Ness Area Plan (increases allowed uses, doubles the allowable height, exceeds bulk controls). The VNAP would require developers to build housing, while limiting building mass and traffic-inducing commercial uses. The height limit was set at 130 feet, with bulk and design controls to reduce development impacts. These controls would foster a consistent architectural profile appropriate for an important boulevard.

But CPMC still has the option to achieve its goals of seismic safety upgrades and modernization by upgrading hospitals and medical office buildings at four of their existing campuses, instead of concentrating medical services in the northeast quadrant of the city and worsening the underserved quadrants in the west and south of the city. This imbalance would create impacts on emergency response and city-wide distribution of medical care. CPMC controls four previously independent hospital complexes offering inpatient and emergency care and is responsible for 40% of the city’s medical care. Proposed consolidation reduces or eliminates acute care centers at St Luke’s, Pacific Heights, and California Street that are accessible now for emergency treatment—or after a disaster.

**The Development Agreement proposed by the Mayor did not consider impacts identified in the Draft EIR, zoning compliance, or medical service impacts city-wide.** The Mayor’s plan also ignored findings of the Legislative Analyst’s Report which was prepared for the Board of Supervisors. CPMC proposes mitigations that would not begin to compensate city residents for severe, irreversible consequences of their plan.

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**SFT has been asked to co-sponsor an appeal of the recently approved conditional use for nine Verizon Wireless antennas on the rooftop of Kaiser Permanente Hospital at 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Geary Boulevard. Local residents strongly believe that installing a Verizon Cell phone tower there is neither desirable nor necessary for the following reasons:**

- 1) **Health and environmental hazards concerning** the power level and intensity of RF radiation emissions. See:
  1. <http://www.scribd.com/doc/3773284/Health-Effects-from-Cell-Phone-Tower-Radiation>
- 2) **Inappropriate notification to neighbors and schools.** Many residents have claimed that they did not receive notification about the initial meetings. Parents from neighboring schools were also not informed about details regarding the wireless frequencies that could potentially affect their child’s environment.

**There should be a healthy limit to the volume of antenna towers in each neighborhood.** There are currently over 28 antenna locations in our neighborhood among the major cell phone companies. (8 ATT, 1 Clearwire, 2 MetroPCS, 7 Sprint, 6 Tmobile, 4 Verizon). Wireless companies pay substantial monthly payments to landlords willing to install the antennas on their rooftops. When is enough enough?

# Hunters Point redevelopment cannot begin until the toxics there are removed.

A Superior Court judge recently ordered that Lennar Corporation may not proceed with development of the most toxic Hunters Point Shipyard parcels until the federally-mandated remediation process is complete. He ruled that the City of San Francisco's redevelopment plan for the former Hunters Point Naval Shipyard failed to properly evaluate the environmental and health risks from allowing the Navy to transfer ownership of the contaminated Superfund site before the clean-up of the area is complete.

Last year, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors approved the massive 702-acre development that proposed varying projects including 10,500 housing units and a new 69,000-seat football stadium for the San Francisco 49ers on the troubled Shipyard property and neighboring Candlestick Point. The construction by the developer Lennar Urban Corporation is projected to last more than twenty years.

City officials and the Lennar Corporation claimed there was no need for the EIR to evaluate the environmental and health impacts of transferring the contaminated Superfund site to the City and the developer in advance of complete clean-up. But

the Court placed the responsibility to evaluate these impacts, and actually do most of the clean-up, on the City and Lennar, a task which the environmental impact report (EIR) simply ignored.

Pollution problems at the Hunters Point Shipyard date back to World War II, when the Shipyard's massive dry docks were used to build and repair U.S. Navy warships. Fuels, solvents, and lead paint were routinely used—and dumped—at the facility. Bayview residents are extremely concerned about the toxic and radiological contamination at the Shipyard and want assurance that the site will be safe as a future workplace and neighborhood.

“The Lennar Corporation is known for ignoring toxic contamination in other regions where it develops on decommissioned military sites, and Bayview Hunters Point is one community where we will not allow them to cut corners,” said Jaron Browne of POWER. Earthjustice, a non-profit public interest law firm, argued the suit on behalf of People Organized to Win Employment Rights (POWER) and Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice, two community organizations based in Bayview-Hunters Point.

## Kezar Gardens Opens in Golden Gate Park

It will be called Kezar Gardens, the half-acre site at 780 Frederick Street that until now has held the Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council (HANC) Recycling Center. The Native Plant Nursery that Greg Gaar started from scratch there will be part of the new Kezar Gardens; the Recycling Center will not.

This happy transition was celebrated at an event on August 27th at the site. HANC has already begun creating community gardens there consistent with the conceptual plan approved by the Recreation and Parks Commission in December 2010.

Originally, Recreation and Parks (RPD) staff estimated that the project would require \$250,000 simply for implementation of Phase One. Instead, HANC is building the community gardens at no cost whatever to the city, to meet the needs of the local neighborhood and RPD's goals.

The HANC recycling activities will move off-site to other locations in the area and continue to offer convenient recycling facilities to keep San Francisco compliant with State of California Law (AB 2020).

HANC has been a long-time supporter of community gardening, local habitat stewardship and creative reuse in San Francisco, evidenced by its fiscal sponsorship of the 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue Garden for the Environment, operation of the Native Plant Nursery facility, sponsorship of greening of right-of-way space, and donations of materials for urban agriculture projects including Hayes Valley Farm and Little City Gardens. It is due to HANC's extensive network of allies and supporters in the urban agriculture, reuse and recycling communities in San Francisco that it is able to source the materials and labor needed to design, construct and implement a world class community garden

facility at no cost to the city. Operation, membership and programming of the garden will be achieved according to the 2006 RPD guidelines and policies outlining operation of community

gardens on public land in San Francisco. There is a citizen-led advisory council that has been meeting to help facilitate the transition of the site at 780 Frederick Street to its new use.

For essential information about San Francisco Tomorrow  
go to [www.sftomorrow.org](http://www.sftomorrow.org)

## This so-called Sustainability Center is just too much.

SFT, the Sierra Club, and other environmental and neighborhood groups, take issue with the proposed Sustainability Center which would morph the much-needed replacement structure for the San Francisco Botanical Garden greenhouses into a series of buildings with a heavy impact on the eastern part of Golden Gate Park.

A full EIR is needed to assess the impacts of the project for these reasons, among others: the presence of federally-listed species, the threat of harm to the red-legged frogs in the adjacent pond, the creation of a new 20-foot wide roadway through the garden, the removal of an unspecified number of large trees and lack of conformance to the Golden Gate Park Master Plan. Alternatives need to be studied before the City allows the project sponsors to develop one of the last remaining tracts of open space in the Eastern portion of the park.

Probably the most serious problem is that the Botanical Society is beset with "mission creep" and is no longer satisfied with simply replacing the dank and outworn nurseries as they stand in the low area near the rhododendron grove. Instead, the Society seeks to combine the nursery operation with public-viewing areas and educational facilities. New classrooms, offices and indoor demonstration areas would require them to provide for fire-truck and public access via a new twenty-foot wide roadway. The presence of rare plants would cause them to fence the whole thing off, creating a fence within a fence and further cutting off the gardens from the public. Without this road, school buses would not enter the gardens; with the roadway, the impact of continuous school bus drop-off and pick ups, along with the regular traffic associated with any large nursery operation, will transform the quiet, secluded site into a hub of traffic and congestion with impacts extending far beyond the buildings' footprint. The Master Plan called for a more modest nursery structure to be set near the present entrance off Ninth Avenue and Lincoln Way, close to public transportation.

The Planning Department is accepting public comment until Sept 16. Please email them to say that a full EIR for this project should be required. Information on the project and how to contact the Dept. can be found at <http://www.sfplanning.org/index.aspx?page=1828>



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