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The Future of Treasure Island?

Introduction

Treasure Island located in San Francisco, California is on the forefront for new urban development. Its peculiar history has designated itself for a development of paramount proportions. Ownership has changed hands through levels of government, and now it has landed itself back into the local community. The story of how Treasure Island became what it is today started long before anyone conceived its manufacture, and looks to become a vision of the future.

Brief History

Treasure Island's ownership is summarized under the California state bill SB 1873. Before the city decided to build Treasure Island, the United States Navy had already acquired Yerba Buena Island well over a century ago. The City and County built Treasure Island between 1936 and 1939 by depositing sand and gravel on shoals north of Yerba Buena Island and surrounding that fill with a rock retaining wall. In 1941, the City and County of San Francisco leased Treasure Island to the United States and Treasure Island and Yerba Buena Island became a military base known as Naval Station Treasure Island. In 1942, the Navy initiated federal court proceedings to condemn Treasure Island and portions of the surrounding tidelands. As a result, the islands became property of the United States Navy.

Naval Station Treasure Island was officially closed on September 30, 1997 pursuant to a decision of the federal Base Realignment and Closure Commission. During that same year, the Legislature enacted the Treasure Island Conversion Act, empowering the Treasure Island Development Authority (TIDA) to serve as a redevelopment authority. Under the Conversion Act, the authority is the only entity that may lawfully accept from the federal government title to trust lands on the TIDA property. Since its closure in 1997, it has continued to undergo proceedings for its redevelopment

Changing of Hands

In 1990 the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-150) established a commission to carry out the closure and disposition of Treasure Island. The Base Realignment and Closure Commission (“BRAC”) was composed of eight members appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. In selecting individuals for nominations for appointments to the Commission, the President was to consult with –

(A) the Speaker of the House of Representatives concerning the appointment of two members;

(B) the majority leader of the Senate concerning the appointment of two members;

(C) the minority leader of the House of Representatives concerning the appointment of one member: and

(D) the minority leader of the Senate concerning the appointment of one member.

This Commission was to meet only during the years of 1991, 1993, and 1995 and then to terminate by December 31, 1995.

In 1993, “Congress and the President selected Naval Station Treasure Island for closure and disposition by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (“BRAC”). The Department of Defense subsequently designated the City and County of San Francisco and, then, the Treasure Island Development Authority as the Local Reuse Authority (“LRA”) responsible for the conversion of Treasure Island under the federal disposition process” (TIDA).

The LRA obtained responsibilities for the redevelopment of Treasure Island as stated in Bill: AB 37 Chaptered 09/16/96. This bill states that a single local reuse entity is the only entity that is eligible for certain state benefits for use in a military base conversion. Prior to this bill, the law recognized the El Toro Reuse Planning Authority to be the entity, but in late 1994, the Bill to change authority to LRA began its manifestation. As a result, LRA also assumed the responsibility for redeveloping a large list of Military Bases throughout the San Francisco Bay Area (Appendix. A).

Tidelands Trust for Treasure Island

The history of the Tideland Trust for Treasure Island is summarized within the California State Bill SB 1873. Since statehood, the Legislature has transferred in

trust certain tide and submerged lands, including the beds of navigable waters, to local jurisdictions for specific public trust uses of statewide benefit, such as improvement of navigation and the construction of harbors. The State Lands Commission, having the state's remaining jurisdiction and authority, exercises oversight responsibility over these lands, and is responsible for assuring that these legislative trustees comply with their respective granting statutes and the legal principles under the Public Trust Doctrine. Quite often, the improvement of these granted tide and submerged lands results in the generation of tidelands trust revenues, which are also subject to the use restrictions of the Public Trust Doctrine and the granting statutes.

Treasure Island includes lands that were historically tidelands subject to the public trust. In 1933, the Legislature granted the lands known as Treasure Island to the City and County of San Francisco for construction of an airport (Chapter 912, Statutes of 1933) and amended the grant in 1935 to authorize use of the lands for the Golden Gate International Exposition (Chapter 162, Statutes of 1935). However, this changed in 1944, when the Navy took title to Treasure Island and certain adjacent tidelands pursuant to a consent judgment in the condemnation lawsuit. The Navy has asserted that the fact and manner of its acquisition of Treasure Island property terminated any public trust title in filled areas.

To the benefit of Treasure Island and the state of California the State Lands Commission had the opinion that all former and existing tidelands within the property are subject to the public trust upon their transfer from federal ownership. As a result TIDA has been given the responsibility for redistribution of the tideland trusts.

Today, the existing configuration of trust and non-trust lands within the property is such that the purpose of the public trust cannot be fully realized. This measure is intended to allow for the exchange of lands to maximize public trust values for the benefit of the statewide public. Absent a trust exchange, the uncertainties regarding the sovereign trust title of lands within Treasure Island would remain, and most of the lands on Yerba Buena Island that are of high value to the public trust would continue to be non-trust lands.

Treasure Island Development Authority

TIDA was established as a California nonprofit public benefit corporation and designated certain powers under state and local legislation for the purpose of promoting the planning, redevelopment, reconstruction, rehabilitation, reuse and conversion of the former Naval Station Treasure Island (the "Base"). Specifically, the Treasure Island Conversion Act of 1997 (the "Act"), passed by the California legislature in 1997, granted

to TIDA the State's authority to administer the Tidelands Trust on Treasure Island/Yerba Buena Island and enabled TIDA to be designated as a redevelopment agency under the California Community Redevelopment Law. Treasure Island Development Authority (TIDA), is composed of a seven-member governing body, all appointed by the Mayor of San Francisco. They are responsible for making "policy decisions critical to the future of Treasure Island, approves large contracts, approves TIDA's annual budget, and acts as both the redevelopment agency and the trustee of the Tideland Trust for Treasure Island" (TIDA).

In pursuit of redevelopment TIDA calls upon the help of the Treasure Island/Yerba Buena Island Citizen's Advisory Board (CAB). CAB "consists of 25 members, 14 appointed by the Mayor and 11 by the Board of Supervisors (TIDA)." The experience of the board specializes in: "affordable housing, marine related activity (water sports, sailing, etc.) movie/film industry, the Treasure Island Elementary School, Job Corps, commercial redevelopment, organized sports, (soccer, baseball, etc.) organized labor, transportation (ferry, planner, etc.) land use planning, economic development (job creation, etc.), and open meeting proponent." With these skills and trades, CAB "is to gather public input and opinion from diverse communities in the City and County of San Francisco and to provide additional expertise to the Treasure Island Development Authority" CAB provides "recommendations to the Authority concerning the final reviews and implementation of the draft base reuse plan, policies and objectives for interim reuses, and other matters of importance to the future of Treasure Island and all citizens of San Francisco" (TIDA).

Helping the displaced

"In 1994, San Francisco elected to be governed under the federal 'Base Closure Community Redevelopment and Homeless Assistance Act of 1994' (TIHDI). This act is amended from the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (PL100-77) which is the first, "and remains the only – major federal legislative response to homelessness" (National Coalition, 1). The Base Closure Community Redevelopment and Homeless Assistance Act "required the City to propose a plan for using base resources to assist homeless persons as part of its land use plan (Reuse Plan) for the civilian redevelopment of the Base" (TIHDI).

The Treasure Island Homeless Development Initiative (TIHDI) "is a collaborative of 20 community agencies that was formed in 1994 to develop the homeless component of the Reuse Plan for Treasure Island. TIHDI's plan was adopted by the Citizens Reuse Committee and approved by HUD (Housing and Urban Development) and established

a legally binding agreement that includes 375 multi-bedroom housing units and several economic development opportunities (restaurant, conference center, landscaping and maintenance, deconstruction, retail store space). In addition, at least 25% of all new permanent jobs on Treasure Island will be reserved for homeless and low income San Franciscans. TIHDI is currently engaged in implementing the plan-working on all four fronts: developing housing, services, employment, and economic development opportunities” (TIHDI).

The Island Today

Currently, “Treasure and Yerba Buena Islands are home to over 3,000 residents as well as a number of commercial tenants, schools and community serving organizations. The Islands are also open for public use and recreation at all times, and TIDA encourages all Bay Area residents and visitors to take advantage of the Islands’ spectacular location and recreational amenities” (TIDA).

There is a diversity of housing on the Islands with 2, 3, and 4 bedroom rental units. “Treasure Island residents include City and County of San Francisco employees (teachers, firefighters, police officers), students from Bay Area colleges and universities, and many others who moved to Treasure Island to enjoy the views and the island’s unique environment” “In addition, (TIDA) has demonstrated its commitment to offer housing opportunities to those who are economically disadvantaged by signing a sublease with the Treasure Island Homeless Development Initiative (TIHDI)” (TIDA). TIHDI has a fairly strong presence on the Island occupying about 225 units.

The Island also has a small amount of restaurants and amenities. It also has film studios, which is at the “forefront of Mayor Gavin Newsom’s commitment to revitalize San Francisco’s film industry and to make San Francisco the premier filming destination in the country.” “The Islands have spectacular views of the San Francisco Bay and lack the traffic and commotion often associated with location filming in a large city” (TIDA).

Values, Opportunities, and Vision

Treasure Island’s history has shown its importance not only to the local community but has made itself internationally known. With the TIDA in charge of what the future of Treasure Island will become, they have been under the scrutiny of many facets of our community.

TIDA is looking to develop the Islands in a “sustainable” fashion that creates

an interdependent community as well as facilitate the amenities to a larger population. Similar to the history of the San Francisco Bay area, the communities around it, and how they flourished, the intentions for Treasure Island appear to be part of the same formula.

Unlike gentrification, that usually displaces economically poorer people, this development has set the bar for the incorporation and stratification of social classes. While it sets aside homes and jobs for the local population, it is also looking at incentives to keep people local, through the possibility of automobile tolls to access the island.

The opportunities for the development of this site have already begun to take place, with the master plan already going through approval. The intentions of the master plan, is to develop a smaller high density region, giving the rest of the island back to the outdoors. “The vision for a new urban neighborhood within a natural park setting at Treasure Island embraces a holistic, systems approach to sustainability that seeks to create a balance between resource regeneration, renewal and consumption. Looking out over a 20-plus year time horizon, Treasure Island will be transformed into a remarkable urban oasis. A mixed-income, cross-generational community will thrive in a self-sufficient, urban setting.”

“The City has adopted a vision statement and guiding principles for Treasure Island that is characterized by robust economies, ecosystems and communities. By realizing this vision in a manner that is guided by the City’s values, Treasure Island will become an international model of “sustainable” development” (TICD, 11).

Appendix A.

Military Bases LRA assumed control over, for their redevelopment.

Military Base	Local Reuse Entity
George Air Force Base	Victor Valley Economic Development Authority
Hamilton Army Base	City of Novato
Mather Air Force Base	County of Sacramento
Norton Air Force Base	Inland Valley Development Authority
Presidio Army Base	City and County of San Francisco
Salton Sea Navy Base	Imperial County
Castle Air Force Base	Castle Joint Powers Authority
Hunters Point Naval Annex	City and County of San Francisco
Long Beach Naval Station	City of Long Beach
MCAS Tustin	City of Tustin
Sacramento Army Depot	City of Sacramento
MCAS El Toro	Local redevelopment authority recognized by the United States Department of Economic Adjustment
March Air Force Base	March Joint Powers Authority
Mare Island Naval Shipyard	City of Vallejo
Naval Training Center, NS Treasure Island	City of San Diego San Diego
NAS Alameda, San Francisco Bay Center	City and County of San Francisco Public Works and Redevelopment
Alameda Naval Aviation Depot	Alameda Reuse Authority
Oakland Navy Hospital	City of Oakland
Fort Ord Army Base	Fort Ord Reuse Authority

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