URBAN ACTION 2001

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Contributors

Meryl Block - graduated from the University of Vermont in 1995 as an Environmental Studies major with a concentration in community development and applied economics. She has worked in the Bay Area for 5 years as a political and community grassroots organizer for environmental and reproductive rights organizations, and for the past year has been working as a marketing manager for political technology companies. Meryl plans to pursue a Master's Degree in City and Regional Planning.

Wendy Blommendahl - is a senior Sociology major. After receiving her BA, she plans to enter a graduate program in education and earn a Master's Degree, as well as a teaching credential. While completing her undergraduate studies, she is working at the Community Involvement Center. Wendy helps students find volunteer opportunities in the community and facilitates seminars on Community Service Learning.

Tiffany Chimaroké - is a junior Urban Studies major with an emphasis on environmental planning and design. Before she graduates next spring, she plans to study sustainable development in Cuba, and intern for a nonprofit organization that writes green plans. She plans to study planning abroad at the University of Amsterdam in the fall.

Michael Doherty - is a junior History and Urban Studies major at SFSU whose interests include sustainable development, transportation policy, and promoting the lost art of walking. When not in school he works for an environmental consulting firm in the East Bay.

Beth Eyre - has recently graduated from SFSU with a BA in Psychology. She has been working as a children's music and movement instructor for the past four years, and is currently writing a children's book.

Daniel Frattin - is a senior in the Urban Studies program.

Erica Gies - will earn a Master's Degree in literature, with a focus in eco-criticism, from San Francisco State University in May 2001. She has worked as an editor and writer since 1993. Her goals are to educate people about ecological issues and to promote sustainable living through journalism and literature.

Elizabeth Gunston - will be graduating next Fall with a double major in Urban Studies and Anthropology. She expects to go into the field of smart growth development.

Peter Ho - is a senior in the Urban Studies program. Currently, he is interning in the transportation sector and hopes to further his studies after graduation.

Ocean Howell - audits Urban Studies courses at SFSU. He attended the University of California at Santa Cruz and the University of Sussex in England, where he wrote his senior thesis on the philosophies of Heidegger and Derrida. Ocean earned his BA in modern literature in 1997. He presently works as an assistant editor, and in July will become associate editor for the Nonprofit and Public Management Series, as well as managing editor of a journal on governance, at Jossey-Bass Publishers. He was a professional skateboarder for six years.

Marianne Love – will graduate with a major in Urban Studies and a minor in Civil Engineering in May 2002. She attended Kingston University in England last year. Taking advantage of the dot.com economy she started ShrinksOnline.com three years ago and is currently contracting for PCWorld.com. She plans on obtaining a Master's Degree in City and Regional Planning.

Daniela Poeder - is a German exchange student from the University of Tuebingen, where she has been majoring in Cultural Anthropology and North American Studies. Her focus is Applied Anthropology in an urban context. After completing her exchange year at SFSU, Daniela will return to Germany to continue her graduate studies at the Free University of Berlin.

David Wallace - is a graduate student in History (American Political & Social) who has published short humor pieces in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Comic Relief* Magazine. He has recently returned from a two-year stint in the U.S. Peace Corps, serving in the former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan. In the southern Siberian town of Leninogorsk, David taught English to students grade 7 - 11, and taught advanced classes in Literature and U.S. History.
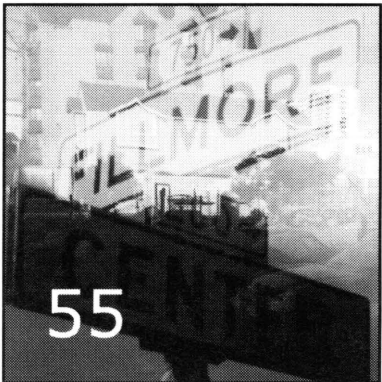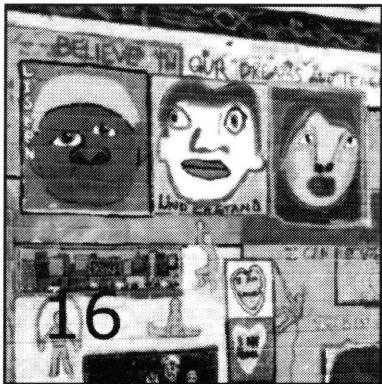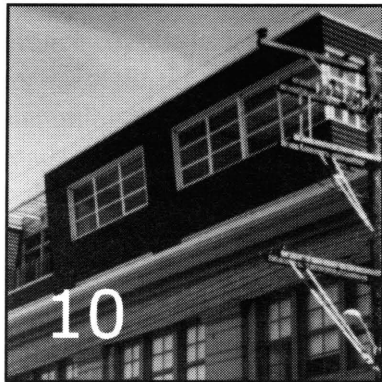
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The San Francisco Black Community's Response to AIDS/HIV

By David Wallace

The white gay community in San Francisco is well-known for its success in combating HIV/AIDS. The response in the San Francisco black community, however, has been slow and individualistic, even though there is a high incidence of HIV/AIDS in the black population. Among the reasons for this slow response are culturally inappropriate educational outreach programs and a lingering stigma about AIDS and homosexuality. This essay argues that, ultimately, the problem is that there are only black neighborhoods in San Francisco, but no real black community. Fortunately, agencies like the San Francisco Black Coalition on AIDS are providing vital social services, developing culturally appropriate marketing messages, and helping to build a true black community.

AIDS is the leading cause of death for blacks ages 25-44. Although comprising just 12% of the population nationwide, blacks make up 35% of all AIDS cases and account for 57% of all new HIV infections; and while the overall number of AIDS cases plummeted by 61% in the past five years, the number of blacks diagnosed with the disease ballooned by 20%. In the city of San Francisco blacks currently make up approximately 8% of the general population, but they account for 24% of the HIV/AIDS cases in the city. San Francisco blacks also have a 61% higher prevalence of HIV cases by number than the general population (statistics from the CDC). Why is this so? Particularly, why is this so in a city that is world-renowned for its knowledge regarding, and skill in handling, the HIV/AIDS pandemic? A major contributing factor lies in San Francisco's lack of a true black "community" (i.e., an historical enclave and/or collection of institutions, leaders and organizations). The Black Coalition on AIDS (BCA) has been operating in the City for 15

years yet remains largely unknown to most blacks—even those who could benefit most from its services. Beyond the problem of lack of community, BCA and others that have devoted time and energy to combating the plague among blacks have faced a host of obstacles ranging from systemic problems such as poverty and drug addiction, to media mishandling of the disease, to a lingering stigma among blacks regarding homosexuality. Fortunately, hope survives. BCA and others are hopeful that by developing culturally appropriate messages, they can help to build a San Francisco black community, so long missing in action. They are hopeful that new methods of reaching out to blacks can help finally turn the corner on this epidemic.

Although a variety of factors have played a role in the enduring, destructive effect that HIV/AIDS has had on blacks, the ultimate responsibility lies within the black community itself (or lack thereof). HIV/AIDS is a preventable disease. However, due to the lack of a strong community in San

Francisco, blacks have not had the success that, for example, the white gay community has had in stemming the tide of this disease and making inroads against its further spread. With the help of political clubs, merchants' associations, and the "concentrated" neighborhood of the Castro, the white gay community formed committees and political action groups to combat the disease and educate their community. But as for San Francisco blacks, there was no foundation of geographical, cultural, or political groups—that is, a true black *community*—to fight the disease, unlike most other large American cities.

As Albert Broussard demonstrates in his book, *Black San Francisco*, blacks here have had mixed success in developing a strong set of institutions and organizations. While there were more "black" newspapers in San Francisco in the past, there are now basically two (*Bay View* and *Metro Reporter*), and readership remains sporadic. One of the best venues for disseminating information in the black community has been the church; but, contrary to earlier hopes, the churches have only started taking up the issue of HIV/AIDS within the past year. Thus, to be able to reach blacks in significant numbers, marketing needs to be done through larger, more generic outlets such as local TV stations and larger newspapers such as the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Unfortunately, these outlets cost money that many are fearful of taking away from services and programs.

Duane Poe, current Executive Director of BCA, agrees that this lack of community continues to hamper efforts to make bigger inroads in fighting HIV/AIDS among blacks. He says, "You have to understand, when black folks use the word 'com-

munity,' we have a whole different meaning than most people. People say to me, 'Oh, you've got a black community in the Western Addition. You've got a black community in Bayview & Hunters Point.' That's not right. We have black *people* in those places, but there is no real black community in San Francisco." Mr. Poe goes on to explain that, during his four years with BCA, he has become increasingly aware of the need not only for a culturally sensitive and appropriate marketing effort to reach blacks, but also of the need to build and promote the institutions that would make up a San Francisco black community. The agency will focus on both of these issues in the coming year. Additionally, BCA has made inroads with several local black churches, historically the backbone of black communities in other cities.

Unfortunately, even cities with strong black communities were reluctant to accept ownership of the disease as anything other than a gay white male problem. From interviews with various people connected with BCA, I learned that the initial response to HIV/AIDS in the black community was slow and individualistic. Any real "services" were provided by families caring for sick members. Both BCA, and New York City's Minority Task Force on AIDS, were not formed until 1986—five years after the discovery of the disease, and a full year after the first World AIDS Conference. As Cathy J. Cohen states, in *The Boundaries of Blackness*, "A lack of leadership, in particular transformative leadership, best characterizes the response to AIDS from traditional black organizations and elites" (1999, 341). Of course, if the media hadn't from day one perpetuated the myth that HIV/AIDS was only a gay white male disease, blacks may have taken it up sooner.

> **So even though the stigma against drug use is a powerful force in the black community, it is still not as damning as homosexuality.**

Unfortunately, even if gay black men were also being infected, the community refused to take ownership of this issue for blacks. Ms. Cohen speaks of "cross-cutting issues" that not only encompass one's race, but also other primary identities such as gender, sexuality, and class. Thus, "We have to recognize that a gay sexual identity has been seen in black communities as mitigating one's racial identity and deflating one's community standing" (1999, 14). Accordingly, these people are then seen as not "worthy" of support from the larger black community—particularly in terms of expending precious political capital. Raymond a young gay man that is a BCA client, tells of how he could never tell his parents he is HIV positive because that would mean telling them he's gay. In fact, he says, "If they didn't know no better, it'd be better to tell them I got it from sharing needles." This assertion is borne out with eerie similarity in the few other books on blacks and AIDS. As the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported, "Blacks already view themselves as on the outside (of U.S. culture). People are very fearful of being on the outside of the outside group" (Scott November 10, 1991; A17). So even though the stigma against drug use is a powerful force in the black community, it is still not as damning as homosexuality.

Again, there simply was not much concern about the disease in the black community. Although even today there remains a lingering feeling that AIDS is simply a gay white male disease, this belief was even more prevalent in the early days of the epidemic (1981-1985), and thus contributed to the slow response in the black community. As Cohen states in *Boundaries*, while the labeling of AIDS as a gay disease mobilized that community to protect itself, "The absence of African Americans from images and discussions of AIDS undoubtedly supported the denial of black community leaders, who viewed AIDS as a disease they did not need to own" (1999, 182). This is not to say that the gay community didn't have their own problems in over-

coming the homosexual stigma in order to deal with this new threat. However, there were enough gay white groups forming to fight the disease and give people a place to go and join with others for political action and support. Unfortunately, black gay pride groups are still virtually non-existent—even in a "haven" such as San Francisco. And, as Dr. Pamela Johnson states in *AIDS & African Americans*, "Without political power, access to funding is undermined . . . without funds it is difficult to have adequate education, prevention, and treatment programs for the African-American gay man and the African American community at large" (2000, 53). This is a continuing, shameful pattern visited on blacks throughout their history in the United States.

While there were some black gay leaders in San Francisco willing to fight for blacks living with HIV/AIDS, there were never nearly the number there were of white gay leaders. One of the few was William J. "Brandy" Moore, a co-founder of BCA, who died of AIDS in 1994. Mr. Moore worked tirelessly to advocate for blacks living with HIV/AIDS. In addition to co-founding BCA, Brandy served as their Board President from 1990-93, was a member of the Black Leadership Forum, Executive Director of the Pride Foundation, and earlier worked as an aide to Supervisor Doris Ward and Speaker of the State Assembly Willie Brown. He served on Mayor Frank Jordan's HIV Task force, and served from 1987-89 on the California State AIDS Advisory Committee. However, to this day, he remains virtually unknown among the community he served—he simply wasn't "famous" enough outside of his work for blacks and HIV/AIDS. Perhaps if Brandy had stuck with his first career, as a male model, he might have achieved the notoriety and status the media is willing to sometimes grant blacks in this county. But, again, due to the absence of a black community to promote and recognize leaders such as Brandy, he was never able to achieve the recognition he deserved and that could have been so helpful in halting the spread of

HIV/AIDS among blacks.

The Disease Takes a Not-so-Magical Turn

"Because of the HIV virus that I have obtained I will have to retire from the Lakers today" (Press conference, 7 November 1991). With these words from Magic Johnson, the black community got their own Rock Hudson. Randy Shilts notes in *And the Band Played On* that, "the Hudson announcement [was] the single most important event in the history of the epidemic" (1987, 579). The media treated Magic's announcement as similarly historic for blacks. Unfortunately, the media coverage focused mostly on the celebrity aspect of the disease—not on the increasingly devastating effect HIV/AIDS was having on the black community. From the time of the first story on AIDS and blacks in the *New York Times*, in late 1985, until Johnson's announcement, in late 1991, no more than 10 stories appeared every three months. In the first quarter after Johnson's announcement, *sixty* stories on AIDS and blacks appeared. From the beginnings of the epidemic, in 1981, up through 1993, 62% of all stories on AIDS and blacks in the *New York Times* were either on Magic Johnson or Arthur Ashe (data from *New York Times* index). Having "innocently" contracted the disease through a blood transfusion, Mr. Ashe received particularly sympathetic coverage from the media—perpetuating the continuing Balkanization of AIDS sufferers into different groups worthy of various levels of sympathy or concern depending upon how they contracted the disease.

Both the *Chronicle* and *Examiner* devoted a good deal of space to Magic's announcement. In a column on the front page of the Nov. 10 Sunday *Examiner*, columnist Joan Ryan gushed over the idea that Magic could single-handedly reverse the tide of HIV/AIDS devastation on the black community. Johnson was called "very brave" and "a

true hero" for announcing his status. Gerald Lenoir, former BCA Executive Director, said he thought Magic's announcement would make the black community finally step up and take notice of the epidemic. Rev. Cecil Williams added he hoped the announcement would spur the black churches to action. Lost in the blizzard of Magic coverage, however, was this statement from Pat Norman, former BCA board president: "It's a horrible experience to have such a beautiful, magical person have this disease . . . but we must also remember that there are thousands upon thousands of beautiful, magical people facing what he now faces today" (*Chronicle* November, 8 1991; A22).

An aspect of Magic Johnson's case that highlights the continuing difficulty of dealing with the disease in the black community is the uncertainty as to how he contracted it. The media showed an unusual amount of sensitivity in not exploring the possibility that Johnson contracted the virus through man-to-man sex. Most studies done to date on transmission shows that it remains extremely difficult for a female to pass HIV on to a male partner through heterosexual intercourse (although we must remember that *all* unprotected sex is risky). Therefore, taking into consideration the fact that Johnson is not an intravenous drug user, or did not contract the virus through a blood transfusion as Arthur Ashe did, only one high-risk behavioral category remains. Yet Magic, supported by the media and community, was able to quickly brush aside any such "dark" suggestions. And, since he supposedly has not contracted the disease through one of these more unacceptable ways, he continues to be seen as more of an innocent victim than the dirty drug users or queers. It would not do for Magic to be seen as a disgrace to the community, as gays still are (Cohen 1999, 346).

Of course, in a perfect world, it would not matter how Magic contracted the disease. And, to his credit, he has done a lot of good work educating people regarding the disease. However, even if

you dismiss the continuing gossip as to whether or not Magic did indeed contract the virus through homosexual activity, a valuable opportunity has been lost. The media, and Magic, could have used his story to more strongly emphasize how this shows that anyone, gay or straight, can contract HIV/AIDS. Additionally, and in consideration of the continuing, pervasive homophobia that exists within the black community, strides could have been made in educating and informing blacks that even if Magic *did* contract HIV through gay sex, it doesn't matter. What matters is dispelling the myths and misconceptions that continue to exist about HIV & AIDS in the black community, and work on halting the spread of the disease.

Conspiracy Block

"I know where AIDS come from," a caller to BCA insisted one day in the summer of 2000. Dale had recently been released from prison, where he spent a good deal of his time in the prison library, and on the internet, researching the origins of AIDS. He'd gathered reams of data, and supposedly had traced the disease back some 300 years. When he called BCA, he asked to be allowed to come in and present his findings to see if the agency would help him determine what to do with them. "Since I'm black, and BCA is a black agency, I figure you might be of more help to me." Referred to the agency's Director of Communications, Dale made an appointment to come in the following week and show what he'd found. Unfortunately, upon his arrival, he was quite distressed to discover that the Director was white. Barely able to mask his discomfort, Dale stated that he would "have to decline" speaking at this time and left the office. Later, it was said his theory boiled down to the white man bringing AIDS to Africa during the slave trade. Unfortunately, even today, many wild conspiracy theories abound in the black community regarding the possibility that whites and/or the U.S. Govern-

ment developed the disease purposefully to devastate the black community. Early whisperings within the gay community suggested a similar thing. Considering the Tuskegee syphilis study where, from 1932-72, poor black sharecroppers were told that they were being treated for "bad blood," while actually being used as human guinea pigs to chart the untreated effects of syphilis, black concerns are understandable. As Shilts says in *And the Band Played On*, "most [people] remained uninformed as to the lasting legacy that prejudice imprints on an oppressed people. Humans who have been subjected to a lifetime of irrational bigotry on the part of a mainstream society can be excused for harboring unreasonable fears" (1987, 541). Unfortunately, this distrust would not help blacks in their fight against HIV/AIDS.

A sad corollary to black distrust of society's official structures and institutions is the fact that most institutions are deserving of that distrust. On a daily basis, blacks still must deal with a government and society that have been reluctant, to say the least, to accord them full integration and acceptance. This lack of integration into society exacerbates problems such as higher incidences of intravenous drug use and homelessness, which contribute to the difficulties inherent in the black community in dealing with HIV/AIDS. No one was more aware of this than Brandy Moore. His experience in city government working with housing issues enabled him to see first-hand the difficulties blacks faced in this arena (Brandy served in Mayor Agnos' Housing Department). Accordingly, at BCA, Mr. Moore was among the first and strongest proponents to push for housing for HIV-infected blacks in San Francisco. Because of the difficulty involved with setting such a program up, and the numerous people that would need such housing, he suggested limiting admission to those who were not only HIV+, but also homeless and at least dual or triple-diagnosed (i.e., they also had substance abuse problems, mental health issues, etc.). Thus, the "neediest of the

needy" would receive help first. BCA's first transitional housing facility was opened in 1991 in the Bayview district of San Francisco. It was not an immediate success.

Even after BCA had been around for five years, and expanded from being at first simply an advocacy group to a provider of HIV prevention and awareness services, there was still an unwillingness among blacks to apply for help/services. The stigma was too great. Sharon, a former BCA client, says, "You didn't want nobody seeing you go into a place that had to do with AIDS. Better to be a junkie in the streets than have your friends know you got AIDS." Additionally, BCA was dedicating all of their limited funds to staffing and providing services. They could afford very little to no advertising and the HIV awareness campaigns that were being done in the city certainly were not "Afro-centric," and thus unable to reach the continually growing number of HIV-infected blacks. Sporadic attempts *were* made at reaching out to blacks, when money became available.

> **When city agencies have attempted marketing campaigns targeting blacks, they have basically relied on what has worked for the white, gay community.**

A $30,000 grant from the San Francisco Department of Public Health in early 1993 allowed for the production of an interactive video entitled, "Brothers," which targeted black gay and bisexual men. The project was developed by BCA and the National Task Force on AIDS Prevention (NTFAP). Response was tepid, and some involved claimed it was because the video was too much like a "white boy video game." NTFAP was disbanded in 1998 and many of its programs absorbed by BCA.

To this day, BCA continues to have difficulties in reaching potential clients to make them aware of services they could find helpful. When other city agencies, such as the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, have attempted marketing campaigns targeting blacks, they have basically relied on what has worked for the white, gay community (e.g., a guy, presumably HIV+, biking up a hill thanks to the wonders of Crixivan or some other drug). In numerous focus groups conducted by BCA, participants have mentioned time and again that they feel, to date, there has been *no advertising whatsoever* that speaks to them. Joy Rucker, a former Housing Director at BCA, states that she feels the organization's biggest shortcoming has been their inability to be able to fund a good marketing campaign aimed at San Francisco blacks. "The greatest thing BCA was able to do," states Joy, "was set up that first transitional housing facility. But the saddest thing was not being able to promote it." To provide an example of how this lack of appropriate promotion impacts service delivery, when Mr. Poe arrived at BCA in 1996, there were five people in the 14-bed transitional housing facility Brandy Moore had secured.

As with Brandy, Duane realized the importance of housing. Being able to follow drug regimens, as well as avoid the problems associated with living on the street, means first having a decent place to live. Collaborating with the Bernal Heights Neighborhood Association, BCA expanded into co-facilitating permanent housing for its clients to transition into. Next, the agency worked on securing funding through federal grants connected with HUD. They used the money to purchase and renovate a larger house in the Western Addition. A local designer donated her services to provide a warm, homey feel to the building, and on October 21st, 1998—almost four years to the day after his death—

the Brandy Moore house was dedicated. The transitional housing program still only accepts HIV+, formerly homeless, dual or triple diagnosed individuals. However, since its inception, the 11-bed facility has constantly been full and maintains a lengthy waiting list.

"The problem is," says Mr. Poe, "in dealing with this type of issue, and this population, you're only going to have success with programs and services that people particularly care about and are willing to put out an effort for." Duane, like Brandy, was concerned with housing. Accordingly, to date, it remains the most successful of BCA's programs. However, recognizing that quality services also need a quality marketing plan—particularly as the agency works to build capacity—Mr. Poe has re-focused BCA's efforts towards developing outreach campaigns that specifically target blacks with culturally sensitive messages, and towards working more with institutions such as the black churches (while also working to *build* more community institutions).

An example of this new strategy has just been unveiled with BCA's *In the Spirit of Health* campaign. In 1999, BCA established an HIV Ministry and was able to accomplish a goal many in the community had dreamed of for years: getting the black churches more actively involved in fighting HIV/AIDS. The HIV Ministry built on BCA's annual "pass the plate" campaign done the Sunday after Thanksgiving wherein local churches encouraged their congregations to become educated about HIV and then collected a special offering to support BCA's work. A campaign targeting older black women at risk for HIV was developed to utilize this new relationship between the agency and local churches. *In the Spirit of Health* incorporates positive imagery of older black women, enfolds the need for HIV testing within the general rubric of

health issues these women face so as not to frighten them with a message only about HIV/AIDS, and distributes materials such as church fans, bible markers, etc. designed to reach this audience. The campaign has been hailed by all involved and continues to receive recognition and emulation from throughout California.

Challenge vs. Hope

Difficulties remain. Building a community—particularly among a population under constant attack—is not easy. Securing funding for culturally sensitive marketing remains problematic, as too many foundations consider such a thing as too nebulous and unable to produce quantifiable and trackable results. Overcoming the culture of distrust among blacks, as well as changing the harmful misconceptions within the community regarding AIDS as a homosexual disease, will take a lot of work. And, unfortunately, too many established institutions (such as the media) have demonstrated an inability, or perhaps a lack of desire, to help.

These challenges point to the need for continued hard work. Yet BCA and others remain optimistic regarding what they can accomplish and the progress that can be made. Sadly, there is no one on the scale of a Martin, or Malcolm, or even a Bobby Kennedy, to speak up for the black community today; to battle against the impact this disease continues to have on the community; t—To provide hope. So the fight must come from within. And though the struggle remains difficult, many within the community can envision a day when the spread of HIV/AIDS is halted in the black community. They feel, as Bobby did, when he said, "Some look at the world as it is, and ask: Why? I look at the world as it *could be*, and ask Why not?"

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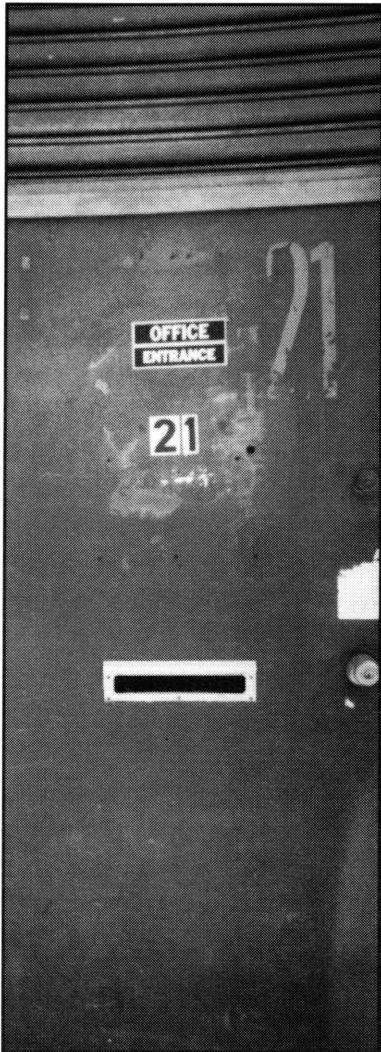
How Live/Work Units Fit in the Affordable Housing Puzzle

By Marianne Love

There is an affordable housing crisis in San Francisco and live/work lofts have taken center stage in the surrounding debates. Originally conceived of as a concession to working artists, developers have been building upscale lofts that evade impact fees and that are often illegally converted to office space. Willie Brown's Proposition K would have left the live/work situation as is, with the idea that upscale housing at least keeps the well-to-do from driving up housing costs in existing units; while Sue Hestor's Proposition L would have halted these evasive constructions in their tracks with a moratorium. Unfortunately, neither solution would have ameliorated the affordable housing crisis: K would have created only unaffordable units without even collecting the mandated impact fees for affordable housing, while L would have removed the developers' incentive for creating any housing at all, leaving them to favor commercial construction. This essay argues that a compromise must be struck—one that maintains or even enhances developers' incentives for building housing, while regulating live/work.

San Francisco's housing crisis can be attributed to many things indirectly: a booming regional economy, great weather, good food, and a finite amount of developable land. But it's directly a product of not enough housing. In the last few years a new form of housing, known as lofts or live/work spaces has found its way into the San Francisco landscape. Artists, pioneering the live/work lifestyle, set the trend, while developers rushed to make a profit. At the time of the November 2000 election Mayor Brown, supporting loft development, and Sue Hestor, adamantly opposing it, placed Propositions K and L on the ballot. Both Propositions would have exacerbated San Francisco's affordable housing crisis. L would have stunted market rate housing construction, making all housing more expensive and forcing loft developers to compete with traditional housing developers, while K would have developed all of the city's remaining land, land that must incorporate affordable housing, with office space and/or 'unaffordable' housing.

Affordable housing is "priced to be affordable to specific segments of the population . . . who cannot afford market-created housing" (Fulton 1999, 351). Outside of San Francisco and the Bay Area, affordable housing is usually developed for people earning very low to low incomes, less than 80% of the median income for the area, but in San Francisco not even people making moderate incomes, 80 to 120% of the median income for the

area, can afford market created housing. Federal guidelines suggest that people should spend no more than a third of their income on housing. By these standards in 1998 only 20% of San Franciscans could afford a median priced home, while 36% could afford the median rent for a vacant two-bedroom apartment. With housing prices increasing dramatically in the last few years, 25% alone in the year 2000, and vacancy rates well below a healthy 5%, the number of San Franciscans who can afford to live here is dwindling (SF Chronicle).

What's causing housing to be so unaffordable here? A decline in housing construction paired with an increase demand is the main culprit. In the 1970s on average 1,700 housing units were built every year. That number dropped to 1,000 housing units per year in the 1990's. The drop wasn't due to a decrease in demand. Between 1988 and 1995 the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) projected a need for 23,405 new housing units, while San Francisco gained only 7,768 new housing units between 1988 and 1998. Rapid job growth in a growing regional economy has driven the demand. Since 1995, an estimated 11 new jobs have been created for every one housing unit (P-166). Even as the economy slows, ABAG forecasts the creation of 104,800 new jobs in San Francisco over the next 20 years.

Housing construction began declining in the late 1970s as traditional housing became harder and harder to build. Neighborhood opposition to new housing provided the impetus for the Board of Supervisors to pass a rezoning of residential districts in 1978. The rezoning or "down zoning" dramatically decreased the permitted density in residential

> **In industrial areas with enough vacant land to build 223,000 units, where there was little neighborhood opposition, and where higher densities were permitted, only a fraction of the units were built.**

districts. The supervisors who voted against the down zoning, including Quentin Kopp and Robert Gonazales, called it a 'disaster' that would result in 'pricing people out of the city.' The Board of Supervisors compromised by repealing the 1921 zoning ordinance prohibiting building residential units in industrial areas. Planners identified housing opportunity sites on vacant industrial land with enough room to build 223,000 new housing units (it wasn't broken).

Neighborhood opposition was only part of the mounting difficulty of building traditional housing. In 1978 California voters passed Proposition 13, cutting revenue generated from property taxes on all developments by more than half (ppic.org). The city began relying on developments that generated money in addition to property tax. Retail and office developments, generating both employment and sales tax, became favored over traditional residential development.

As traditional housing no longer paid for itself and was therefore becoming scarcer and more expensive, the city began extracting funds from office and other developments for affordable housing. Currently office developments are required to pay $10 per net additional square foot of office space to the affordable housing fund or donate the equivalent amount of land to an affordable housing developer. Market rate residential developers didn't entirely escape affordable housing contributions. Currently residential developments of ten units or more are suggested, but not required, to include 10% affordable housing for a period of 20 to 50 years. This policy should have created about 1,400 new affordable housing units since 1990. But in reality only 112 affordable condominiums and 27

affordable apartments were created (Byre October 25, 2000: 33).

None of these efforts generated enough housing to meet the demand. And even in industrial areas with enough vacant land to build 223,000 units, where there was little neighborhood opposition, and where higher densities were permitted, only a fraction of the units were built. After the Board of Supervisors changed the planning code in 1988 to allow live/work developments, the majority of housing that the private market has built on those industrial sites was 'live/work' units, rather than 'office space' or 'dwelling units.' These live/work developments were originally intended to provide affordable housing and workspace for the city's artists. 'Live/work' space typically consists of one large bedroom with loft and a separate bathroom. Artists made live/work units popular and accessible to the young, wealthy professional, and developers jumped on the opportunity. Since 1987, 1,918 live/work units have been built, 90% of them in the last three years (Welch July 13, 2000: A23).

Live/work developments were profitable to private developers because they were easier to develop outside of current regulations and lacked the objection normally raised from neighboring homeowners in established residential neighborhoods. 'Live/work units' weren't 'dwelling units' nor were they 'office space' (although they're frequently used for both) allowing them to bypass development fees and inclusionary affordable housing requirements. The original live/work law required residents to work in units and a least one person to live in each unit.

Opponents of live/work construction rightfully argue that their non-dwelling unit classification unfairly exempts them from including affordable housing without replacing it. Lofts now aren't affordable for most San Franciscans, as originally intended. Critics argue that the original requirement that residents work in units is not being enforced, nor are their regulations permitting loft space from being used entirely for offices. Live/work units aren't classified as office space even when the entire unit is used for offices, exempting them form the annual office cap. Critics also oppose the design standards, arguing that a higher density could be achieved with lower ceilings and neighborhood character could be preserved through total height limitations (Daly March 28, 2001: 2).

Proposition L

While Prop L was primarily intended to stop rampant displacement of local artists, community services and industry by reigning in office and live/work developments it did identify affordable housing as number three of eight priority policies stating "that the City's supply of affordable housing be preserved and increased." Sue Hestor, the long time activist and author of Prop L sums it up "Land use determines who lives in the city. Are ethnically diverse people, people who are politically active, going to be able to live here?" Although intending to keep ethnically diverse, politically active people in the city, Prop L would have forced high-income people to compete for the city's diminishing stock of affordable housing. Housing the high-income will not alone solve the affordable housing crisis, but without it, there would be nothing to keep high-income people from driving up rents in existing units that presently house lower-income people.

If regulation means a dramatic decrease in housing construction, it must be paired with incentives that reward private developers for building to San Francisco's needs. While live/work units don't serve the needs of families, people with disabilities, or those in very low, low and moderate-income brackets, they do serve people in high-income brackets, urban professionals, and artists. Not meeting the needs of this group will not help meet the needs of the rest of San Franciscans. On the contrary the fixes proposed in Prop L would only have exacerbated the problem. Less total housing

means more competition. Prop L would have placed a moratorium on new live/work units, except for a few 'integrated with work space for artists and artisans'. People who can and will pay more for housing are left competing with middle-income people for middle-income housing. Making middle-income housing more expensive. Those people, being priced out of their original housing compete for a less expensive housing stock.

Acknowledging the recent popularity of lofts, Prop L would have created a new category under residential uses called 'loft housing' 'that would be subject to the same requirements and fees as regular housing" (legal text of Prop L). Making live/work units into dwelling units includes suggesting (not mandating) a 10% inclusion of affordable housing for developments of 10 units or more, requiring impact fees for transit and schools, and applying current residential design standards to lofts.

This reclassification of live/work units as residential loft housing would exacerbate the housing crisis in two ways. First, it would make loft and traditional housing developers compete for the same permits. Those developers with the most profitable developments dominate, decreasing the city's production of 2+ bedroom residential units. Second, it would take away almost all current incentives to build market rate housing.

The only remaining incentive for market rate developers to build loft housing would be lack of neighborhood opposition, because of their location in industrial zones. But even industrial zones have become problematic with the interim zoning controls that created an industrial protection zone where residential and live/work units needed conditional use permits from the planning department and a mixed-use zone that permits all of the above. (http://www.ci.sf.ca.us/planning/livework.htm). While the need for protecting industrial space is important people have quickly forgotten that the original intent in lifting the ban of building housing in industrial zones was to provide a source of new housing for the city. Sue Hestor herself has forgotten, commenting on loft developers, "they build in some of the strangest places—right up against a scrap metal farm, for instance" (Curtis July 15, 1999).

Proposition K

Prop K, the alternative initiative, placed on the ballot by Mayor Brown would have developed all of San Francisco's remaining land unaffordably. Brown revealed his intent to develop all of San Francisco's remaining land at the ground breaking of One Embarcadero when he announced, "Mayors are known for what they build and not anything else, and I intend to cover every inch of ground that isn't open space" (Holden February 2001: 53).

Brown purposely ignored critics' opposition to live/work housing in Prop K allowing live/work developers to continue with business as usual. In ignoring live/work development, developers would have continued to build live/work units without including affordable housing. New live/work developments would have been permitted to demolish affordable housing without being required to replace it. An indefinite amount of live/work units would have been allowed to convert entirely to office space without counting against the annual office space cap. Allowing live/work units to be created without being regulated would ease the housing market for people who earn high income, 120% or more of median income, taking the pressure off existing affordable housing; but that alone won't do enough to solve the affordable housing crisis. Even if those live/work units are constructed under Brown's proposition all of them could be converted to office space.

A delicate balance must be struck between maintaining and even enhancing the private market's incentive to develop live/work units on the one hand and meeting the needs of San Franciscans who earn less than 120% of the median income on the other hand. Neither Prop K nor L struck that balance: L

flipped entirely to one side killing live/work developments with a moratorium, while K flipped to the other side ignoring the problems live/work units cause entirely.

A more effective solution might be to regulate live/work units independently of residential units, rather than reclassify live/work units as purely residential. . Reclassifying live/work units as residential will leave no incentives for developers to build housing. Live/work units should be mandated to include a percentage of permanently affordable live/work units. If this is deters developers from building live/work units, then that leaves space for non-profits and local government to build affordable housing but if it does get built it includes permanently affordable housing. Either way affordable housing gets constructed.

If inclusionary affordable housing is only suggested and not mandated, as is the current state of affairs, it won't help if live/work units are held to the same ineffectual standards as regular dwelling units. Instead of reclassifying 'live/work' as residential, why not require all affordable housing units to be replaced (or pay equivalent fee) no matter what development replaces them. Above all the opportunity for dense housing in San Francisco's industrial areas must be further explored. Since neither Prop L nor K passed, the city will now have to look for solutions that do not exacerbate the affordable housing crisis. That solution will have to recognize that live/work units, properly regulated, could keep the higher income people from driving up rents in lower income neighborhoods, and could thereby help alleviate the affordable housing crisis in San Francisco.

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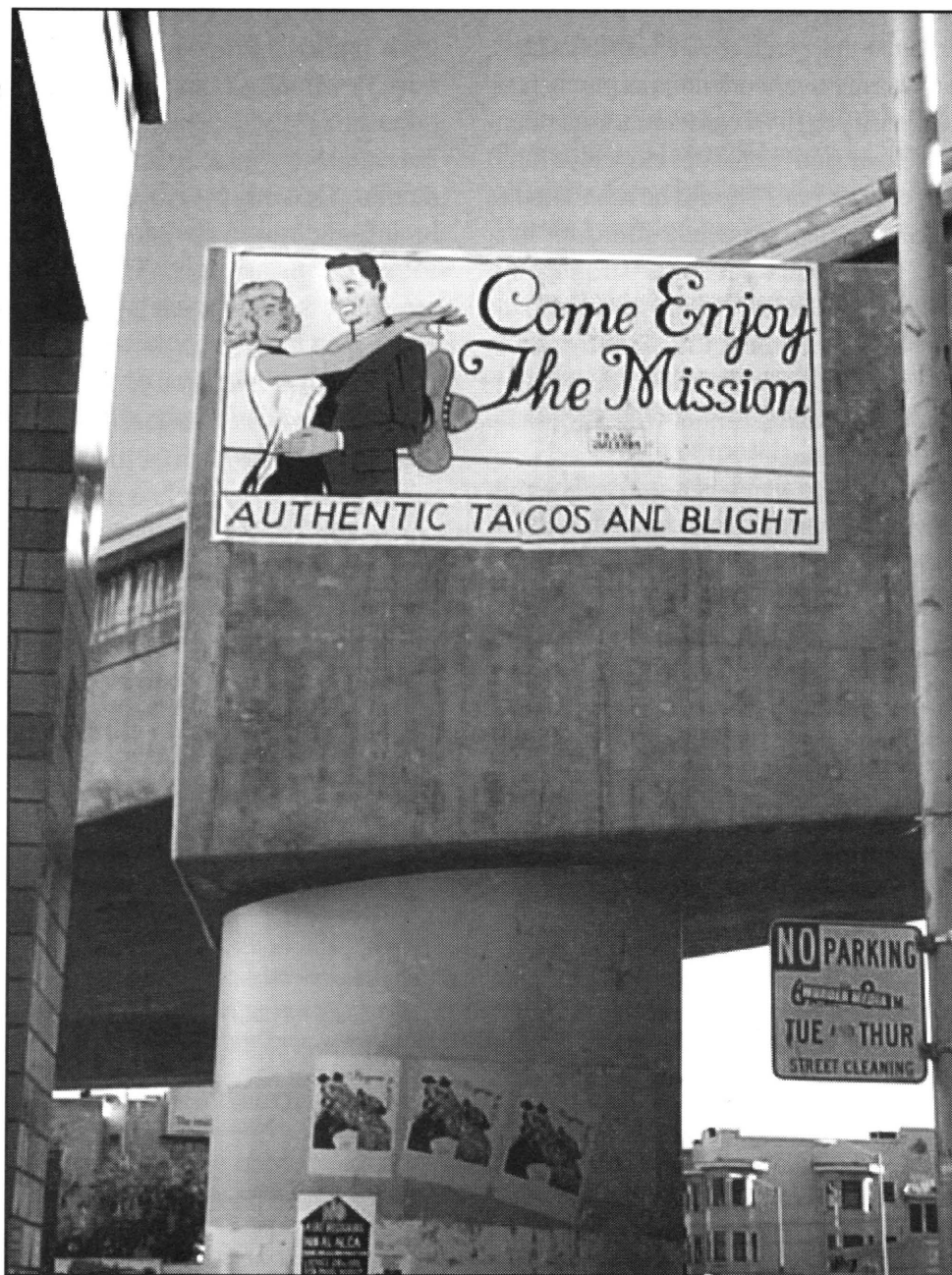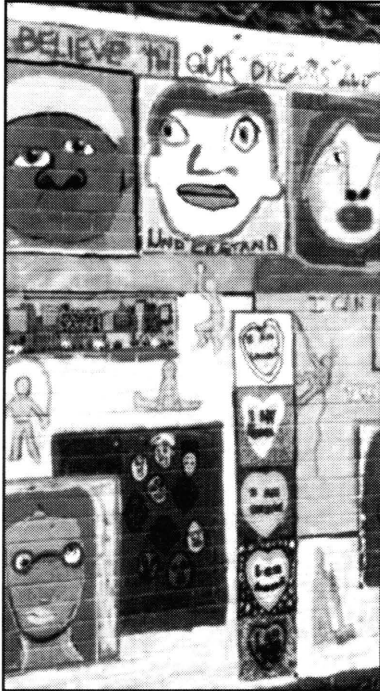
The Disappearance of the Barrio

By Beth Eyre

San Francisco's Mission District has been a predominantly working-class Latino neighborhood since the Irish population left for the suburbs after World War II. The barrio has served as a gateway for immigrants, primarily from Central America, and also as a home to artists, students, and people with alternative lifestyles. All of these populations are now being evicted and priced out as the neighborhood becomes prime real estate for tech companies, loft housing, and upscale bars and restaurants. But Mission residents have not been willing to go without a fight.

The Mission district is the oldest neighborhood in San Francisco. It was settled by the Spanish near Dolores Creek in the 18th century, and takes its name from the Mission Dolores (the oldest building in San Francisco). Early in the 20th century, the Mission became known as a working-class district, and today, much of the area is still home to low-income, working-class individuals and families—with some parts well established as a barrio. This district is now threatened by California's "new economy," which is rapidly changing its blue-collar, ethnic landscape into a kitschy haven for white, middle-class, high-tech professionals. The dot-com industry, in particular, has channeled its growth into the more affordable working-class areas of San Francisco, which has resulted in unprecedented growth in the Mission.

After the 1906 earthquake and fire San Francisco's business district, and many of its residential neighborhoods, was destroyed. But the Mission District survived largely intact. As a result, "refugees flocked to the area and transformed it into the densely populated, blue-collar neighborhood that it remains to this day" (KQED 2000, "The Mission"). Yet the invasion of the dot-com industry, and subsequent gentrification of the last few years, threatens the character of the Mission in dramatic ways. As mom-and-pop businesses and small factories are pushed out of the Mission, and replaced by high-tech businesses, low-income residents—who can't compete for high residential rents—are also being forced out of the area. Currently, there are more than 2,000 evictions a year in San Francisco, "most of them involving richer people displacing poorer people" (SFBG 2000, "38,000 Evictions?"). The Mission is one of the most vulnerable areas in terms of economic displacement, because it is here that we find so many low-income, working-class families, artists and students.

In his book, *Neighborhoods in Transition*, Brian Godfrey separates the Mission into three distinct zones: the Mission core, the North Mission, and the West Mission (1988). In 1988, renters occupied most of the housing units in the Mission core, half of which were Hispanic. In the North Mission, 95 percent of the housing units were rentals, and most of the renters were Hispanic, with Asians and alternative life-style groups (e.g., gays and lesbi-

ans) comprising the next largest groups. Here, the housing prices were the lowest in the district (16 percent lower than the city median). This was the first area to experience a significant Latin American influx, "where immigrants found low rents, housing vacancies and proximity to blue-collar jobs" (Godfrey 1988, 162). The West Mission attracted more affluent, young whites and gays (housing prices were 16 percent higher than the city median). So it is the largely Hispanic population in the Mission core, and North Mission, that is experiencing the most significant changes today.

"The Mission's traditional role in San Francisco has been a stopping-off place for successive waves of foreign born" (Godfrey 1988, 132). "From the turn of the century to the 1930's, the Irish in particular were a powerful presence" in the Mission (KQED 2000, "The Mission"). During World War II, Central Americans came, "seeking political refuge and economic opportunity, gradually changing the face of the Mission District once again"

It has been estimated that San Francisco arts groups will lose another one million square feet of studio space in the next three years.

(KQED 2000, "A Barrio of Many Colors"). After World War II, middle-class Mission residents of Irish, Italian, German, and Scandinavian descent left the neighborhood for "greener pastures" in the suburbs, leaving room for waves of immigrants from Central America. During this time, San Francisco attracted a "critical mass" of citizens formerly from Central America. Many Latin American males worked on the waterfront south of Market Street during and after the war. The Mission gradually became a barrio: a subculture within the wider American culture. In this way, the Mission served as a "revolving door into American society." And, in 1988, the Mission supported a greater number of Hispanics from Central America than any other major city in the United States (Godfrey 1988, 136-

138).

Today, the barrio is threatened by an influx of young, white, urban professionals. On street corners there are signs and graffiti warning the dot-com workers to stay out of the Mission. The uprising against the "dot-commies" is primarily led by two protest groups: the Mission Yuppie Eradication Project, and AARGG! (All Against Ruthless Greedy Gentrification). These groups encourage the destruction of "yuppie" bars and restaurants in the Mission, and have even posted a "hit list" on their website. Dot-com businesses are being forced to hire 24-hour security guards to protect themselves against arson, graffiti attacks, and the vandalizing of employees' cars. The Mission district is now "the battleground that rent wars are to be fought on."

These radical groups believe that vandalism is an appropriate response for a displaced people, and that it is their right and responsibility to "take back the Mission" (Keating 2000). Recently, an artists' community formed "Art Strikes Back." Every day, these artists block pavements outside dot-com offices and sneer at employees.

It has been estimated that San Francisco arts groups will lose another one million square feet of studio space in the next three years. Mayor Willie Brown, and the San Francisco Planning Commission, are largely to blame. The Mayor, who has recklessly sided with high-tech development, was forced to approve a five million dollar package for arts groups that are "in crisis," after having been displaced by rising rents. Yet such actions have come too late for many San Francisco artists.

The Planning Commission has also failed in its responsibilities. "Not only has it failed to address the soaring eviction rate (much higher in the Mission than in other parts of San Francisco), but it

continues to approve scores of new office projects" (SFBG 2000, "Defending the Barrio"). The Planning Commission has consequently gained a reputation for favoring high-tech growth over the rights of Mission residents. Additionally, the Ellis Act (a state law designed to circumvent rent control laws) has allowed landlords to take their rental units off the market in order to sell them as "live/work" spaces or condos. This antiquated law, in conjunction with the failures of both the Brown Administration and the Planning Commission, has created a climate of distrust between Mission residents and local officials.

Latino protest groups in the Mission core and North Mission have led their own fight against the 'Brown Machine.' Groups such as the Mission Anti-Displacement Coalition, and Mission Agenda, have led supporters on marches through the Mission District, and have even "shut down the Planning Commission after a speaker was forcibly removed" (SFBG 2000, "Defending the Barrio"). The approval of the Bryant Square complex, a 159,000-square foot office complex at 20th and Bryant, further mobilized protest groups. (I happened to be present at the final hearing for the Bryant Square project and witnessed first-hand how the Planning Commission ignores the concerns of the community.) Mission residents argue that the new economy does not effect everyone in San Francisco equally; that many Latinos in the Mission "lack the language skills and social skills required in this society" (SFBG 2000, "Defending the Barrio"). For Latino families, it's much harder to move, and much harder to fight "the system."

Gentrification has now become the new buzzword, though it is not new to the Mission. Beginning in the late 1970s, Valencia Street began to gentrify, as affluent white couples moved into Liberty Hill, and Latinos began moving away (KQED 1994). Mission Street, however, was mostly saved from gentrification due to the heavy Hispanic concentration in the barrio. It continues to "protect it-self from invasion through its forbidding reputation" (Godfrey 1988, 143). Youth gangs that "patrol" the Mission may have, until now, allowed the area to retain much of its ethnic identity, but now Mission Street is increasingly experiencing an influx of "yuppie" restaurants and nightclubs. In a recent edition of *Travel & Leisure* magazine, a bar on Mission Street was voted "best new hot-spot," and the Mission itself was labeled the new "up and coming" area of San Francisco (October 2000). Perhaps the current buzz about the Mission will lead to the kind of social cachet it experienced in the late 19th century).

As mentioned earlier, the 1906 earthquake led to housing shortages that "encouraged the development of increased densities in the Mission" (Godfrey 1988, 146). Yet, prior to that influx, it was considered to be a highly respected area where rich families lived (the Sprekels Mansion was located at Howard and 21st Streets). When working-class families moved in, the Mission lost its social standing, and was transformed into the blue-collar area that exists today. Now we are seeing the reverse happening: social cachet is coming back to the area, as the middle-class spreads further into the barrio. This infiltration of white, middle-class culture will continue to alter the Mission, but to what degree? Many fear that San Francisco's unique history and sensitivity to social issues is being undermined by those who want to get rich quick: the same "gut and get out" attitude seen during the 1849 Gold Rush. The working-class neighborhoods seem to be disappearing beneath a tidal wave of bars, bistros, and flashy storefronts. Some would argue that the "dot-comers" have just as much right to live and work in San Francisco as anyone else. They may even argue that they *are* the new working-class. The question is: how do we balance a healthy economy that doesn't drive out lower-income residents?

Kevin Keating, alias Nestor Makhno (the Russian peasant leader who fought the Bolsheviks in the Russian revolution), of the Mission Yuppie

Eradication Project, suggests that "gentrification isn't just obnoxious yuppies bouncing from cocktail lounges to sushi bars around Valencia and 16th Streets. It also involves the systematic removal of working-class people from their homes" (2000). The war between Mission residents and dot-com businesses is still heating up, and it will continue to rage long after the booming economy has ended. Many long-term residents will lose their homes in the coming months and will be forced to leave San Francisco for good. Perhaps Kevin Keating is right. Perhaps the Mission *is* the final battleground against the dot-com invasion.

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Photo Courtesy of Greenbelt Alliance volunteer Dale Low

Solutions to the Bay Area's Automobile Crisis

By Daniel Frattin, Peter Ho, Elizabeth Gunston

Photo Courtesy of Greenbelt Alliance volunteer Dale Low

The Bay Area is experiencing an increase in population, an increase in the number of cars on the road, and an increase in the amount of congestion and pollution that residents have to contend with every day. Without innovative new transportation policies, the matter will only get worse. This essay considers four such policy options: 1) Encourage Bicycling. 2) Support employee-sponsored initiatives like giving workers cash bonuses instead of free parking. 3) Encourage Smart Growth like infill, mixed-use, and transit-oriented development. 4) Implement Congestion Pricing that provides economic disincentives, like higher tolls, for driving during peak commute times. All of these options would help to ensure that the Bay Area remains an economically competitive and vibrant community.

As the number of people living and working in the Bay Area increases, so too does the number of cars on the road and the distance those cars travel. Rising congestion levels affect most Bay Area residents on a daily basis and are undoubtedly the reason that respondents to a Bay Area Council Poll identified transportation as their top concern (BAC 2000). Currently, drivers in the Bay Area spend a total of 110,000 hours each day in congested traffic. This congestion is estimated to cost some $3.5 billion in lost time and productivity each year. Although this figure may be translated into an annual per driver cost of $1000, the effects of congestion on many commuters' quality of life is, arguably, immeasurable. Additionally, cars traveling in congested conditions generate 250% more pollutants than cars traveling in free-flowing conditions. While current levels of congestion are appropriately seen as nearing an intolerable level, projections for 2020 forecast an even grimmer traffic situation.

Taking all of the above factors into consideration, it is clear that policymakers in the Bay Area must consider bold and innovative measures to address the region's congestion problem. Although new transit and road capacity might produce results if sufficiently funded, such funding is limited. Thus, drivers, transit advocates, and planners alike must disabuse themselves of the notion that the region may simply build itself out of its congestion problem. Rather, policies that will alter travel behavior and encourage the most efficient use of transportation resources must be implemented in conjunction with new capital investments. Among alternatives available are providing incentives to increase bicycle use, creating employer-sponsored measures, changing land use practices to smart growth development, and implementing congestion pricing. In the following essay, we will take a closer look at each policy.

Encourage Bicycling

For commuters trying to get to work, the bicycle is a great way to travel. The majority of Bay Area commuters travel under 20 miles, with over one-fourth of commuters traveling less than six miles (RIDES 2000). This gives those who travel short distances an opportunity to make a change of modes. On average, one percent of commuters in the United States take to the road on bicycles. The Bay Area has a better average, with bicyclists accounting for 1.7% of all commute trips. This number pales in comparison to the commute patterns of many Asian and European countries, where bicycling is a much more common means of making the daily commute.

A number of benefits come from riding bikes. The first is convenience. Since bikes can be locked to nearly any pole, bike parking often brings commuters closer to their final destination than parking in parking lots. The flexibility some office managers offer to bicyclists may even allow bicyclists to park inside their cubicles.

Second, riding a bike is much cheaper than owning a private automobile. Each year, a driver can spend in upwards of $10,000 just for the privilege of being able to drive to work. An article just published in the Denver Post shows that the average commuter in the ten largest metropolitan areas of the United States spends up to 17% of his/her household budget on transportation costs. Reducing these costs by bicycling would be a boon to many families' financial situations.

In addition to financial benefits, a greater proportion of trips made by bicycle would provide health benefits as well. Having one less car on the road means a little less pollution for everyone to breathe. "Cars emit more than 50% of ozone-forming compounds and over 70% of the carbon monoxide in the Bay Area" (Bay Area Air Quality Management District 2000). The Caldecott Tunnel, which connects eastern Contra Costa County with the East Bay, has developed a heavy layer of soot from all the autos that travel through it. All this pollution affects everyone who breathes it. Those who sit in rush hour each day breathe in more dirty air than those who travel when there is less congestion. Shifting drivers from cars onto bicycles will reduce the amount of pollution in the Bay Area.

In order for commuters to even think about taking a bike to work, they must be offered incentives that make it convenient enough for them to do so. When bicyclists in San Francisco got together for their monthly Critical Mass, they brought downtown rush hour to a halt, showing that they have political clout to get things done. The bicyclists demanded more and safer routes through the city and access across the new eastern span of the Bay Bridge. The attention they drew caught the eyes of politicians who helped them get a bike lane for the bridge as well as new bike lanes across the city.

Planners must change the layout of city streets and promote easier access through walkways or paths that cut across huge developments and keep bicyclists out of dangerous roadways. Planners and civic leaders need to look at changing the way developments are zoned and promote more densely-packed housing as well as mixed developments and in-fill of core commercial areas. Officials of Davis, California, which has a large student population, enacted policies that promote dense housing and limit the amount of retail growth outside downtown. They promote alternative transportation through bike lanes and free bus passes, and provide plenty of bicycle parking throughout the campus. Such improvements have found much popularity among those living there.

Encouraging cities and businesses to look into ways to get more people to lessen their dependence on autos, and get them onto bicycles through these incentives and changes in policy can make a small contribution to reducing the growing congestion problem in the Bay Area.

Employer-Sponsored Measures

Another approach to reducing traffic congestion and auto reliance is through employer-sponsored initiatives. These measures could address the ways in which parking conditions influence a workers decision to drive.

Providing parking is an expensive venture. Taking into account the amount of land needed, the cost for construction and maintenance of the spot, and the loss of land available for more productive use, parking spots are estimated to cost between $4,000 and $18,000 (Colby 1997). In addition, free parking is a disincentive to using other modes of transport, from public transit to riding a bike or walking. As was found in an EPA study, "free parking" is, on the average, worth the same as commute gasoline and that its elimination would reduce commute car traffic by 20%" (Bullock 2000). In other words, the amount that one could spend on parking may be as much or more than the amount spent on gasoline used for the trip. Therefore, having free parking greatly reduces the price of commuting, acting as incentive to drive rather than use other methods of transportation.

A recent survey done by RIDES for Bay Area Commuters shows that over two-thirds, or two million, daily commuters head off to work alone in their cars. This has had a profound impact on Bay Area commute patterns. It is well known that the Bay Bridge, which is the most heavily used bridge in the Bay Area, is congested before 5am and stays that way until 10am, way past what is common for rush hour. An incentive to dissuade people from driving to work alone (especially if they have other alternatives) can take the form of a parking cash-out. Parking cash-out is an element of California law that allows employees of firms of 50 or more people to get cash for their parking spots. The parking cash-out option is given to an employee who chooses to use another mode of transport, whether transit carpooling or biking, instead of driving to work alone. Currently, this law only applies to areas that don't meet clean air standards and is only available to those who rent parking from a third party. A study of this program has shown it to reduce the number of solo drivers. Of all the solo drivers who chose this option, the rate of those who drove alone dropped 13 percent with an equally positive outcome for other forms of transportation. Even in cities with very little access to public transit, the studies have shown a decrease in demand for parking.

> **The average commuter in the ten largest metropolitan areas of the United States spends up to 17% of his or her household budget on transportation costs.**

The option of offering a cash-out option in lieu of subsidized parking is difficult because of current tax laws. The codes allow free parking to be tax exempt, but once the employee opts for the cash-out option, they are subject to taxes. The Internal Revenue Code has to change to either tax parking subsides, which are tax-exempt or make the cash-out option non-taxable.

Businesses also subsidize parking with validations; these validations could be extended to include incentives for transit or bike riders. In Seattle, businesses offer transit riders a discount at their establishments if they show a pass or transfer. Businesses see parking validation and/or free parking as a way to attract customers. Transit validations or valet-bike parking should be seen in a similar light.

Raising the costs of commuting can only work if there are alternatives to lure people out of their cars. In order get the most cooperation from all

sides, one must look at how best to come up with alternatives suitable to meet the needs of the commuter. In areas that have a good transit system and huge disincentives to solo driving, there is a program that offers people rides home in cases of emergency. The transit rider calls a dispatcher who notifies a driver (district employee or contractor) that they will need to be picked up and driven to their destination. This program has shown much success in getting people who were previously afraid of being left stranded at their work and has enticed people to ride transit, leaving their cars at home.

Smart Growth

Increasing the use of these alternative forms of transportation can help to lessen the dependency on the automobile and help to alleviate traffic congestion. In order for the use of these systems to rise, their convenience and practicality have to increase. One such way to do this is by changing current land use practices that are common in the Bay Area, especially in its suburbs.

Alternative forms of development to sprawl include infill, mixed-use, and transit oriented developments. All of these options are often referred to as smart growth, and have the common result of integrating land uses and serving alternative forms of transit efficiently. Infill development is the "building homes, businesses, and public facilities on unused and underutilized lands within existing urban areas" (Greenbelt Alliance 2000). Mixed-use development is when both residential and commercial uses are built on the same site, providing walking convenience. Transit oriented development encompasses mixed-use and infill development around centers of transit. Building housing near transit and existing services, as well as on underutilized land, offers an alternative to those who have had to look toward the Bay Area's periphery for available and affordable housing. Additionally, studies have shown that neighborhoods that are twice as dense as the aver-

age neighborhood have driving rates that are nearly a third lower than less dense neighborhoods. Explanations for this phenomenon include the presence of more efficient transit, more local shops, and more human-scale streets and buildings in many dense communities (Holtzclaw 1994). Given the many benefits, these three types of developments can help to alleviate the Bay Area's congestion problem, bringing people closer to mass transit and their desired destinations (ABAG 1998).

Infill development helps to lessen traffic congestion by decreasing the need for trips and making alternative forms of transportation more convenient. For example, many infill projects are also mixed-use, locating residents close to places of business where they can work, shop, or get other services. Because a variety of places are in close proximity to one another, people are given the option to travel by means other than the automobile such as by walking and bicycling. When businesses and services are located farther from places of residence and with larger distances between one another, people are discouraged from using alternative forms of transportation due to the inconvenience of longer travel time. Additionally, research has shown that transport such as light rail cannot be supported without high density housing.

Mixed-use development has also been proven to reduce the number of trips made, as well as shorten those that are made. It has been noted that this type of development is most effective when located near centers of activity and transit stations. A study put out by John Holtzclaw showed that automobile spending and ownership increase in areas that are less dense and have a separation between uses (Holtzclaw 1994). Additionally, he found a correlation between the number of miles traveled by automobile and mixed-use development. As closeness of alternative modes of transit, business, and services increased near residences, the number of miles driven went down.

Because proximity to transit can play a key

role in the reduction of automobile use and dependency, transit-oriented development is an option of first choice in the Bay Area. A study on differences in travel patterns between transit-oriented neighborhoods and ones that cater to the automobile was conducted on the East Coast in the early nineties. The findings pointed to increased rates of up to forty-five percent in transit use occurring in the transit-oriented neighborhoods than the other neighborhoods which were more car reliant (Cervero and Gorham 1995). In a local study of BART ridership, researchers found a third of the residents living near stations took BART to work, as opposed to 5 percent of those living in unserved areas (Zykofsky 1998). High transit ridership has been achieved through the practice of incorporating what have been identified as the three-Ds: density, diversity, and design, into this type of development. The density element covers the requirement of having residents and workers located within walking distance of stations. Diversity refers to the variety in land uses, types of housing, and modes of travel that a transit-oriented development incorporates. The last feature, design, addresses the site layout and features, which should be to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders (Bernick and Cervero 1996).

In order for a land use policy based on smart growth to be implemented, changes would have to be made in other government policies. Included in these would be zoning revisions pertaining to the segregation of housing, offices, and shops, and to the requirement of wide streets and deep property setbacks (Hortaman 2000). These zoning practices prevent the development of higher density projects that serve a greater variety of needs. If zoning ordinances were relaxed in the region, smart growth

> **Because proximity to transit can play a key role in reducing automobile use and dependency, transit-oriented development is an option of first choice in the Bay Area.**

would spread more easily, possibly reducing traffic congestion and automobile reliance. Offering incentives such as tax breaks to developers who build infill, mixed use or transit oriented developments would further encourage smart growth. The funding for these tax breaks can come from the increased tax revenues that local governments will receive from the rise in land values and the increase in business sales that result from such development.

The smart growth policy's effectiveness at reducing traffic congestion would be significant. While growth does increase traffic, this compact development would reduce and shorten trips, and encourage alternative transportation. Because residents would be located closer to businesses and transit hubs, using alternative means of transport would be more convenient. This equates to less dependency on automobiles. Additionally, shortened trips make the options of walking and bicycling more appealing.

Region wide-adaptability of the smart growth policy would overall be plausible. In combination or alone, infill, mixed use, and transit-oriented developments can be effective in urban centers, existing suburbs, and growing regions. Only the rural parts of the Bay Area may find difficulty incorporating such policies since higher density is not applicable for agricultural lands. However, this policy could be quite effective at reducing automobile use and dependency in the Bay Area since it promotes development that caters to the pedestrian and public transit.

Congestion Pricing

One last policy to consider is congestion pricing. Although such a system of variable fees may

seem unusual to many Americans, who are used to driving on freeways or on toll roads with unvarying rates, the concept is one with which they are quite familiar: airlines, telephone companies, power companies, long-distance freight carriers, and hoteliers all charge higher prices during periods of peak demand. There are three main types of congestion pricing that are currently being used worldwide: cordon pricing, route pricing, and lane-pricing (Federal Highway Administration 2000).

The first type of congestion pricing to be implemented was cordon pricing. In 1975, Singapore established a restricted zone in its central business district. Inside the restricted zone, only cars displaying an expensive, special license are allowed to operate during peak-traffic hours. As the technology became available, Singapore has moved to an electronic road pricing (ERP) system employing the components mentioned above. Tolls, varied according to the level of congestion present on the roadway, are collected at various points of entry to priced zones (Cervero 1998).

Route pricing is probably the most familiar to most drivers in the Bay Area; it refers to tolls collected from all users of a highway, bridge, or tunnel. Under this system the entire roadway is subject to tolls, although carpools or mass transit vehicles may be exempted (Federal Highway Administration 2000).

The most recent application of congestion pricing has been lane-pricing. With lane-pricing, a portion of a highway is free for all users, while a central lane or lanes require a toll for entry. Again mass transit vehicles and carpools may be exempted from tolls (Federal Highway Administration 2000). In many cases, access to central lanes may be more restricted than access to the highway itself, that is, not all entrances to the highway will have corresponding entrances to the central toll lanes. This feature allows for smoother, safer traffic flow on both portions of the road and reduces capital and operating costs by limiting the number of ETC de-

vices needed to monitor traffic (CalPoly 1997).

State Route 91 (SR 91) is a freeway that connects housing-rich areas of Riverside County to employment centers in Northern Orange County. In partnership with the California Private Transportation Company (CPTC), CalTrans devised an ambitious $134 million plan to construct a ten mile, four-lane expressway in the central meridian of the existing freeway. In addition to reducing congestion, the project has improved road safety and reduced accidents. An Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) report indicates that the SR 91 project has produced small reductions in emissions. These benefits are the product of improved traffic flow and an increase in ridesharing (Environmental Protection Agency 1997). The private financing and maintenance of the project also generates important public benefits. The state was spared the expense of constructing the $134 million dollar project and paying interest on bonds that would undoubtedly have been used to finance it. Even more importantly, roadway users will be forced to bear all the costs of emergency services and maintenance of the roadway for the duration of the CPTC's 35-year operating agreement. With annual costs estimated at $6.5 million in 1997, this frees roughly $227.5 million for other transportation projects over the next 35 years (CalPoly 1997).

Although congestion pricing would never completely eliminate traffic congestion, this policy will incrementally improve traffic flows and move the Bay Area towards a more acceptable level of traffic congestion. Ultimately, the region will need to deal holistically with its congestion problem since congestion pricing is just a step in this direction.

The San Francisco General Plan states that "a certain level of traffic congestion [is] inevitable;" it is an "indication that a community has such strong attractions that people are drawn to it" in spite of the inconvenience congestion causes (SF General Plan). While this may be true, we believe that policies such as the ones outlined above could provide

long-term benefits for all Bay Area residents and should be incorporated into regional and local plans. Though some may be easier than others to implement, all should be considered by policy makers. If used in combination, these four policies can have an even greater impact on the congestion and auto reliance problem in the region.

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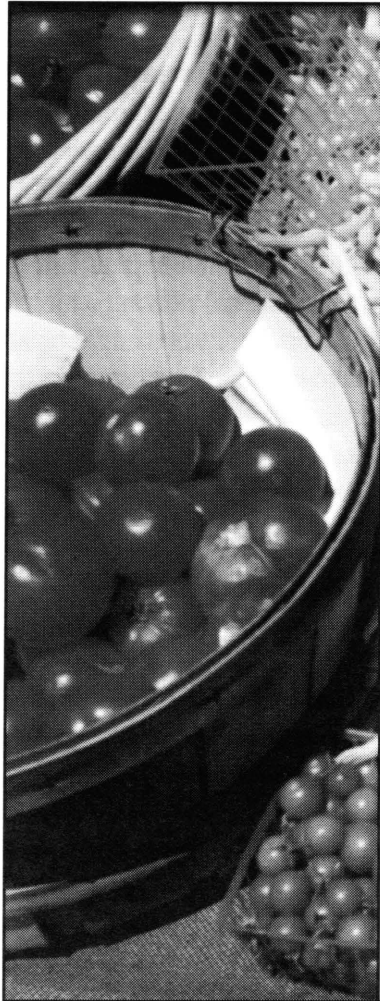
FrankenFoods

By Wendy Bloomendahl

Genetically modified, or "transgenic," foods were released into the market in 1992 and they already make up a large percentage of the food that we purchase; at least 50% of soybeans, for example, are genetically modified. The official defense of genetically modifying crops is to increase yields, with the ultimate purpose of ending hunger. Yet tests have shown that conventional crops typically outperform the transgenic crops; 30 out of 38 varieties of conventional soybean, for example, produce higher yields than their transgenic counterparts. As many of these crops now have pesticides in every cell, they have the further problems of causing illness among agricultural workers, creating herbicide-resistant weeds, and upsetting the delicate balance of ecosystems. Though the science is in its infancy and though the current evidence weighs against genetically modified foods, agricultural corporations are plowing forward with aggressive business practices—undercutting the independent seed producers and creating monopolies—in the pursuit of higher profits, not better yields.

"Imagine the wholesale transfer of genes between totally unrelated species and across all biological boundaries   plant, animal and human   creating thousands of novel life forms in a brief moment of evolutionary time. Then, with clonal propagation, mass-producing countless replicas of these new creations, releasing them into the biosphere to propagate, mutate, proliferate and migrate, colonizing the land, water, and air. This is, in fact, the great scientific and commercial experiment underway as we turn the corner into the Biotech Century."

—Jeremy Rifkin

Everyone and everything are part of the environment and have impacts upon it. All the ways we live our daily lives, how we choose to travel, work, and eat, affect the surrounding world. Though food and eating habits may seem harmless enough, most people unknowingly purchase and consume food that has been genetically altered. Sixty percent of the food in grocery stores contains genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and it is estimated that within five years, at least ninety percent will contain GMOs. Issues related to the use of farmland, treatment of farm workers, and protection of the environment are important to the discussion of genetic engineering. I offer this paper as a genetic engineering primer: a brief overview of the ways in which farming is no longer as simple as tilling soil, sowing

seeds, or planting the usual crops. I explain the various techniques geneticists use to alter plants, and go on to describe ways in which this alteration impacts our environment. I also discuss the ways in which we affect our environment by perpetuating, as a society, the production and consumption of genetically engineered foods.

What Is Genetic Engineering?

Within every cell of every living thing is Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA), often called the "coding" or the "blueprint" for life, and for all the characteristics possessed by organisms. DNA is a sequence of amino acids that are organized in a specific order and act together to create unique organisms. The order and placement of the amino acids on the strand of DNA determine the traits and characteristics an organism will have. Plants and animals (very complex organisms) have billions of amino acid bonds in one strand of DNA. Genetic engineering is the removal of a piece of genetic coding from the gene of one organism and insertion of that piece of coding into the gene of another for the purpose of achieving a desired trait. For example, some arctic fish have a tremendous ability to withstand extremely cold temperatures. In an effort to keep strawberries and other crops from freezing in cold weather, geneticists have taken DNA from these fish and inserted it into the genes of these plants, hoping that the crop will acquire the cold-resistant trait.

Genetic engineering is a fairly new science, and geneticists know very little about the consequences of "creating" new organisms through the manipulation of DNA. Today's scientists are unable to understand and explain the functions of many of the billions of bonds of amino acids in one DNA strand. However, geneticists do understand that not only is the actual coding of a trait important, but also the position of the coding on the strand and the

strand's relationship with the amino acids around it. Many factors affect the characteristics of organisms. Therefore, placing the coding for resistance to cold temperatures within a new organism's DNA will not necessarily give the new organism that trait. As Stillwell points out, "The random nature of insertion prevents scientists from knowing which of the organism's regulatory functions might be affected" (1999). Due to our inability to control the placement of the code within the new organism's DNA, undesired or harmful traits could be produced through genetic engineering. Also, "the alteration of the DNA sequence may have unintended and unexpected effects on the cellular processes of the recipient organism" (Stillwell 1999). In other words, the new organism may not even survive! At best, instability and unpredictability characterize genetically engineered plants.

The Proposed Purpose of Genetic Engineering

Despite concerns over the many unknowns, some geneticists, corporations, politicians, and farmers give various rationales for "plowing ahead" with genetically engineered crops. They argue that genetic engineering may produce more nutritious, vitamin rich foods, or add to certain plants' medicinal value; or that, thanks to genetic engineering, farmers may be able to grow crops in geographical areas previously unable to support these plant species, due to temperature, soil richness, and other factors. However, these applications are very new and have not yet been successful.

The most commonly held goal of genetic engineering is to produce a higher yield from fewer acres of cropland. Geneticists are trying to achieve the goal of a higher yield in several different ways. By inserting pesticides into plant DNA, scientists can create a plant that has pesticides present in every cell. Insects eating any part of the crop will die, an effect that, in theory, protects those crops from

pests. Also, by inserting virus genes into the plant DNA, scientists sometimes make plants that are resistant to viruses that would, under normal circumstances, kill them.

The most common approach to producing a higher yield is to create herbicide resistant crops. These crops have had their DNA altered to make them able to resist large amounts of topical herbicides so that surrounding weeds can be destroyed without harming the crop, no matter how much of the herbicide is used. According to Anderson, herbicide resistant crops constitute 71% of the 27.8 million hectares of genetically engineered crops planted worldwide (1999).

The Problems with Genetic Engineering

The attempt to increase crop yields has been rather unsuccessful. Due to the instability and unpredictability of genetically engineered crops, many fail. "In 1997, crop failure affected 30,000 acres of GE herbicide resistant cotton in Mississippi" (Anderson 1999). Due to lack of testing and lack of knowledge about environmental factors, many unknowns concerning genetically engineered crops persist. Studies conducted by Ed Oplinger, Professor of Agronomy at University of Wisconsin, showed that the average yields of genetically engineered crops were four percent lower than conventional crops (Anderson 1999). During 1995 and 1996, 30 out of 38 varieties of the conventional soybean, "outperformed the transgenic [genetically altered] ones, with an overall drop in yield among the transgenic soybeans of an average 4.34 bushels per acre" (Anderson 1999). The 1980 World Census on Agriculture found that smaller farms were three to twelve times more productive than larger ones (Anderson 1999). These real-life results expose the dangers of large-scale planting of unstable genetically engineered crops, yet genetically engineered crops still constitute 30% of

corn and 50% of soy grown in the United States. Greater yield from conventional crops shows us that an effort to produce more food to feed the hungry would be better served by placing more time, energy, and value in conventional farming methods. Yet genetically engineered crops continue to be planted in the name of eliminating world hunger.

Due to our lack of knowledge about the specific workings of genes and our inability to strategically place the inserted DNA on the new strand, genetically engineered plants are very unstable and unpredictable. According to Stillwell:

"By transferring new 'regulatory' genetic information into the recipient organism, genetic engineering can destabilize the way DNA replicates, transcribes and recombines . . . As a result of altered regulatory functions, GMOs may exhibit increased allergenic tendencies, toxicity, or altered nutritional value. They may also exhibit mutations, which are errors that can occur in the sequence or reading of the DNA within a cell. Altering regulatory functions may create new components or alter levels of existing components of an organism" (1999).

As mentioned previously, the specific "code" for a trait is not the only factor in producing a trait; the position of the "code" within the strand and how it interacts with the surrounding amino acids also contribute to an organism's characteristics. Dr. Mae-Wan Ho explains, "Genes function in an extremely complex, interconnected network, so that ultimately, the expression of each gene depends on that of every other" (1996). Even though scientists can isolate the piece (or "code") of DNA that keeps a fish from freezing, inserting that "code" into a new organism does not necessarily produce that trait. Our crude methods make it impossible to know exactly what traits the new organism will possess. To some extent, genetic engineering is a matter of chance as much as it is a matter of scientific knowledge and planning. Is such guesswork and random experimentation with the environment and with the

human food supply wise?

In addition to being unpredictable, genetic engineering leads to excessive monoculture in croplands: creating acres and acres of land planted with identical plants sharing the identical genetic makeup. Biodiversity and mixed cropping (the creation of croplands with diverse genetic makeup) protect plants from pest infestation and viruses and also protect soil fertility. According to Ho, "Diverse ecological communities are more resilient to drought and other environmental disturbances... (because) species within an ecological community are interconnected in an intricate web of mutualistic as well as competitive interactions, of checks and balances that contribute to the survival of the whole" (1996). When several different species are planted together, chances are better that part of the crop will be naturally protected and able to survive.

The Environmental Impact of Genetic Engineering

Since the genetic engineering of plants is a very new science, many of its long-term effects are not known. Plants are living, mutating, reproducing organisms, so it is impossible to predict with precision the effects of altering a plant's genetic makeup, releasing new plant forms into the environment, or introducing new plants to the food chain. As Stilwell states, "the interaction of GMOs with other complex biological systems, such as the human body or natural ecosystems, cannot, in many cases, be anticipated or fully tested before commercial release" (1999). Therefore, we can only hypothesize as to the probable effects that genetically engineered crops will have on our environment. Although there are some overall risks involved with genetic engineering, the particular varieties of genetically engineered plants have, in addition to the more general risks, their own distinct probable environmental consequences and side effects. Competition and cross-

pollination between genetically engineered and naturally occurring species, as well as insect- and herbicide-resistant crops, are just some of the anticipated negative consequences of genetic engineering that are now becoming realities.

When more plants are engineered to be grown in any climate or any soil, farmers will have the opportunity to override natural environmental balances, introducing previously unsustainable crops in areas previously unable to support them. However, introducing new plant life into delicate ecosystems carries environmental consequences. "Transgenic [genetically altered] crops [could gain] a competitive advantage over native plants, potentially causing serious ecological disruption" (Anderson 1999). The new organisms upset the symbiotic ecosystem and could also bring viruses or pests that were never before in that area. This could harm native plants that have not formed a natural resistance to these unfamiliar viruses and pests. If native species are endangered or destroyed because of this, their delicate relationships with other organisms—insects, birds and other plant life—are destroyed forever. Like a ripple, a change in balance when one organism is disrupted eventually affects every other organism in the ecosystem.

Another disruption in the ecosystem could occur due to cross-pollination between conventional and genetically engineered crops. Cross-pollination could "transfer advantageous traits to wild plants, which could then become more vigorous" (Anderson 1999). This new generation of "super weeds" may be resistant to the herbicide usually used to control it, or contain pesticides within the plants' cells that could kill or otherwise harm the insects and other animals that feed off them. The United Kingdom's National Institute of Agricultural Botany reported in April that a hybrid "super weed" may have been created after canola pollen was taken up by wild turnips growing nearby. According to Betts, "some of these hybrid plants have proven to be resistant to the herbicide for which the canola was

engineered to be resistant" (1999). The complex symbiotic relationships between the different organisms within an ecosystem create mutual dependence and reliance. A change or disruption of one organism affects all of the organisms in the ecosystem.

Many crops have been engineered to produce a pesticide (Bacillus thuringienis, or Bt) in every cell, which kills certain insects that eat the crop. These crops with a built-in pesticide were grown on 7.7 million hectares worldwide in 1998 (Anderson 1999). Three main problems result from genetic engineering involving Bt: increased insect resistance to the pesticide, endangerment of insect populations, and soil damage. With increased and continual exposure to Bt, targeted pests develop resistance to this pesticide. Harmless species of insects that eat the pollen or other parts of the crop also ingest the pesticide and may be killed. In addition, the active forms of Bt in some kinds of genetically engineered crops can bind to soil and stay present even after the crop is gone.

Bt has been used as an occasional topical biological pesticide for many years. Now that it is being engineered into the genes of the crops, "insects are continually exposed to the toxin, and are therefore under constant pressure to develop resistance" (Anderson 1999). With time and evolution, organisms change and adapt to their environment. Since insects are increasingly exposed to the pesticide, even ingesting it on a daily basis, the US Environmental Protection Agency warns that insect resistance to Bt "poses [a threat] to the future use of Bt pesticides"(2000). Continued use of Bt is crucial for environmental health, as Bt is one of the few biological pesticides that can be used on organic crops. With insects becoming increasingly resistant to it, Bt will no longer be an effective method for

controlling pests, and we will lose one of the world's most important biological pesticides.

Since Bt is produced in every cell of the genetically engineered plant, organisms (whether insect, human, or other creature) that eat the crop therefore ingest the pesticide. In its naturally occurring form, Bt needs enzymes that are present only in certain insects' digestive system in order to be activated. Anderson notes, though, that in many of the genetically engineered crops, Bt is already in its active form and can therefore harm a wider range of insects, including insects lacking the Bt-activating enzymes (1999).

Many harmless insects are affected by active Bt, such as Monarch caterpillars, lacewings, and bees, as well as other life forms further up the food chain that feed off the insects that have eaten the Bt crops. In laboratory tests, 44 percent of the Monarch caterpillars that ate leaves laced with Bt corn pollen died within four days. No caterpillar deaths were recorded among Monarchs that ate leaves with normal corn pollen or no pollen at all (Woodworth 1999). The lacewings suffered from disruption to their development and increased mortality, while bees had difficulties learning to distinguish the different smells of flowers. Finally, female ladybirds were fed on aphids that had been eating transgenic potatoes, and when compared to ladybirds fed on a normal diet, they laid fewer eggs and lived half as long (Anderson 1999). Even though the detrimental effects of active Bt on living organisms have been demonstrated repeatedly and the long-term effects on humans are not yet known, Bt crops continue to be planted.

When "insect resistant" crops decompose, the active forms of Bt do not disappear from the soil. According to Anderson, "unlike naturally oc-

> **With near monopolies and sweeping patents, the emerging life science industry is now in control of the food supply all the way from the laboratory to the dinner plate.**

curring forms of Bt, [its active forms] are not degraded by microbes, nor do they lose their capacity to kill insects"(1999). This seriously disturbs soil ecology and harms the many microorganisms found in fertile soil. "Deviations in the numbers and kinds of soil organisms may influence the fertility considerably by decreasing the [soil's] ability to retain water and nutrients" (Suurkula 1999). Also, soil organisms can mutate and change with the new DNA and create new soil microorganisms, potentially dangerous to other soil organisms, plants, and even humans. According to Suurkula: "Experimental findings confirm that vector genes (the Bt gene introduced to the crop) can promote transfer of genes between soil microorganisms. Other . . . findings show that vector genes can be transferred from GE plants to soil microorganisms. Taken together, this means that there are compelling reasons to consider the possibility that the cultivation of genetically engineered plants may lead to transfer of genetic material between soil microorganisms to a hitherto unprecedented extent" (1999). This means that not only are we releasing new organisms into our environment, but we are setting the stage for transfer and mutation of genes already present.

To date, approximately 50 percent of the United States soybean crop has been genetically engineered to be herbicide resistant. This means that they have had a "code" added to their genetic makeup that keeps them from being harmed by topical herbicides applied to kill surrounding weeds. The most obvious problem with this kind of crop is that larger amounts of herbicides can now be used without harming the crop. This leads to more run-off and ground water pollution as well as increased danger for farm workers due to exposure to greater amounts of poison. This also means that with increased use and cross-pollination, weeds can become resistant to the herbicide. After ten sprayings in 15 years, one weed "survived seven times the herbicide concentration that killed other plants" (Anderson 1999). Researchers in Canada and Australia have "found that the populations of herbicide-resistant wild oat are higher than was documented in 1996 and that fields have more combinations of resistance. For example, more than half the fields in both townships had some herbicide resistance, and many of the fields were resistant to two or more groups of herbicides" (Lutz 2000). With increasingly large numbers and amounts of herbicide being used, current herbicide types and dosage levels lose their effectiveness. This escalates into the production of new herbicides, increased quantities of herbicides unleashed on the environment, and the resultant need to re-engineer GE plants to be resistant to the new herbicides.

Applying large amounts of herbicides also presents a danger to all herbaceous plants, threatening extinction not only of harmful weeds but also beneficial plants, fish, and wildlife. Ho believes "the use of highly toxic . . . non-discriminating herbicides threatens to lead to large scale elimination of indigenous species and cultivated varieties, damaging soil fertility and human health besides" (1996). Plants that are not able to form resistance to the herbicide will be killed off, gradually becoming extinct. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and English Nature in the UK believes that "increased use of these herbicides will kill the weeds which support the insects and produce the seeds fed on by birds" (Anderson 1999). Once again, we see that the extinction of a weed has far-reaching effects and can harm other species that have formed symbiotic relationships with the weed. Additional research indicates that glyphosate (the main active ingredient in most herbicides) "can kill fish in concentrations as low as 10 parts per million, that it reduces growth of earthworms and increases their mortality and that it is toxic to many of the beneficial mycorrhizal fungi which help plants to take up nutrients from soils." It is also the third most commonly reported cause of pesticide-related illness among agricultural workers in California (Anderson 1999). Increased use of dangerous

poisons affects not only the weeds, but can harm soil, ground water, insects, animals, and humans. Organisms must either adapt to the environment or perish; when humans add to or change elements within it, all organisms are eventually affected.

Social Perpetuation of the Production and Consumption of GMOs

Sociologist M. Bell describes us as members of a capitalist society, moving on a "treadmill of consumption" (1998). Searching for happiness and satisfaction, we consume material goods and strive to have "more" than the next person. This creates competition and envy, which produces the opposite of our original goal; we feel disconnected, unsatisfied, and isolated. This then accelerates our movement on the treadmill, because we try to compensate with more material goods and by having ever more possessions than the growing pile of goods possessed by the next person. There is no happy ending; only desire spiraling into infinity and constantly raised stakes.

Parallel to the treadmill of consumption is what Bell calls the "treadmill of production" (1998). This treadmill produces the goods we consume in our travels along the treadmill of consumption. Driven by our constant desire for more, and the subsequent increased consumption, the treadmill of production accelerates to produce more goods. Companies in search of greater profits (that will ultimately be used to consume more material goods) then produce more products for consumption. Perpetuated by advertising and people moving on the treadmill of consumption, the production treadmill also accelerates with our daily activities and consumer choices. In order to be profitable and satisfy investors, companies must constantly cut costs and figure out new ways to maximize their income. This philosophy leads to the sidelining of the environ-

ment, and to the belief that profit is the bottom line: an end to justify *any* means.

Bell believes these two treadmills not only accelerate with use, but also perpetuate each other (1998). When people are making a lot of money producing, they have disposable income to use for consumption of material goods. This creates inequality between people, which contributes to the envy and competition driving the treadmill of consumption. This in turn creates a need for more products, which accelerates the treadmill of production, again increasing inequalities between those who have and those who do not have a disposable income to use to purchase material goods. All the while, people continue to feel dissatisfied; they strive to buy more in order to feel happy, thus creating a need to produce more. We, as a capitalist society, seem to be trapped in a vicious cycle.

By continuing to consume and produce food the way we presently do, we are perpetuating and therefore condoning the use of GMOs. Food today is a product; it is produced and sold for profit. "The retail value of global food sales is now estimated at $2,000 billion per annum" (Anderson 1999). It is a profitable commodity, and agri-business is now very much a part of the treadmills of production and consumption. Agri-businesses produce goods for a profit and are usually looking for ways to cut costs, time, and effort in production (planting, growing, harvesting) in order to increase profits and gain disposable income for participation on the treadmill of consumption. According to Anderson, the new 'Life Science' companies are involved in biotechnology (genetic engineering) and "hold interests in food, additives, pharmaceuticals, chemicals and seeds" (1999). In our market-controlled, capitalist society, success is measured by profit; in agri-business, the situation is no different. Companies are constantly shifting, acquiring, changing, and investing in order to gain an advantage over other companies in the constantly accelerating race for profit. Anderson asserts that the emerging 'life

science' industry has led to the virtual demise of the independent seed industry in industrialized countries, and near monopolies, which now guarantee markets for new genetically engineered crops (1999). This, together with sweeping patents and contractual agreements with farmers, grain elevators and processing companies, means that the life science industry is now in control of the food supply all the way from the laboratory to the dinner plate.

It is extremely difficult, and sometimes impossible, to know whether food we are eating contains GMO ingredients. Only by consuming foods that are labeled "GMO Free," and certified organic products, can we be certain that we are not eating GMOs. Prior to the release of genetically modified foods into the market in 1992, the FDA ruled that genetically modified foods should be regarded and regulated as if they were traditional food. This means that the United States "does not require a pre-market approval process, public notification, or labeling [and] it is the very companies who stand to profit who decide whether or not these products are hazardous" (Anderson 1999). Therefore, we, the public, know very little about the existence of genetically engineered food, let alone the probable environmental and health risks these foods involve. Without proper labeling, we are often ignorant of the fact that we are eating GMOs; we remain unsure or unaware of what we are consuming. The FDA's decision that genetically engineered foods are "substantially equivalent" to conventional food has left us, as consumers, unable to make responsible, informed decisions about our personal expenditures. This lack of information perpetuates our consumption of genetically altered foods.

As a result of the way farmlands are arranged and crops transported, farmers who choose not to grow genetically modified crops find it difficult to keep their products separate from the genetically engineered crops. "In the United States, few grain handlers are set up to segregate the new class of crops from conventional crops. Some have equipment capable of testing the crops, but processors and exporters are ill-equipped to segregate them," the *Natural Products Industry Center Daily Industry Newswire* explains. Trains emptying the silos full of corn and grain do not distinguish between traditional and genetically modified crops, so conventional farmers must transport their goods separately, through private means. According to the *Illinois AgriNews*, "Most grain elevators...will accept biotech grain without a penalty." And in a survey of 1,200 elevators in the Corn Belt states, "80 percent of respondents said they were not planning to segregate biotech and conventional soybeans" (Wandrey 2000). This means that farmers growing non-GMO products must spend extra time, money, and effort transporting their goods separately and protecting them from genetic contamination; growers of genetically engineered crops therefore have an advantage over conventional growers. As a result, agri-businesses are forced to make decisions based on efficiency and monetary savings rather than on their personal beliefs about the safety of genetically engineered foods and our right as consumers to have a choice about what we purchase. Since businesses must make a profit in our capitalist society, many farmers choose the subsidized route rather than the ethical one, thereby perpetuating the production of genetically modified foods.

Agriculture is a profitable business; people will always need food and will always buy food. Therefore, in our society, economic logic dictates that agribusinesses will continually try to increase profits by increasing yields and producing more while incurring fewer costs. Unfortunately, this often means that the environmental consequences are ignored and overlooked. With the powerful technology that we have today, geneticists are able to manipulate DNA and create new life forms, thus changing our ecosystem. In the process, many people seem to have disregarded the impact that biotechnology will

have on the environment and *every life form within it*. Although ignorance may be bliss, as planetary citizens we must take responsibility for the ways we affect the environment or future generations will suffer the consequences.

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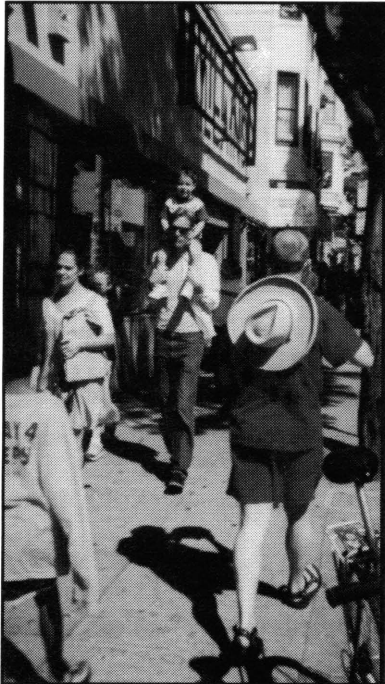
More Thoughts from the Old World

By Daniela Porder

This personal essay compares the author's hometown of Reutlingen, Germany with San Francisco. Like many European downtowns, Reutlingen features an exclusively pedestrian area that is free of the pollution of cars, that enhances retail activity, and that contributes to a sense of connectedness between the town's residents. Although it would be difficult to implement this feature on the scale that it exists in European towns, there are a number of areas in San Francisco where pedestrians already dominate that would naturally lend themselves to a car-free environment.

Whenever I visited American cities in the past, I always had the feeling that something essential was missing. No matter where I was, in a big city like New York, a small town in New Jersey, such as Englewood, or in San Francisco, I would ask my American friends, "So, where is the city center?" I still remember the blank looks on their faces, and the efforts they made trying to answer: "We ARE in the city center." Whereupon I would continue my inquiry: "No, I mean the pedestrian area of the city, where people stroll through the streets; where shops and cafés are concentrated."

Eventually I realized that what I was familiar with from German and other European cities seems not to exist in American cities. Of course, each major U.S. city has its "downtown," complete with financial districts and high-rise buildings. But this is not comparable to the inner city of a European town, where everything flows together, creating a vivid and lively atmosphere.

During my residence in San Francisco, I've found it intriguing to compare my adopted city to my hometown of Reutlingen, Germany. Even though the two cities are in many respects incomparable,

examining how the physical structure of a typical European city differs from that of a U.S. city may lend insight into current San Francisco urban planning concerns. After considering what works well in European cities, San Franciscans might decide to incorporate these advantageous features into their own city. In particular, I encourage San Francisco's residents and urban planners to consider whether the benefits of vital city cores, bustling with activity—schoolchildren playing after school, youth skateboarding and gathering to socialize, adults meeting for dinner or shopping at neighborhood establishments—could be enjoyed by San Franciscans, perhaps by adopting car free zones.

Before comparing Reutlingen and San Francisco's downtown areas, I will give a brief history of how the core of Reutlingen developed and what it is like today. Reutlingen is a city of a little more than 108,000 inhabitants in southwestern Germany. It is situated about 40 kilometers (25 miles) south of Stuttgart. Reutlingen was first settled in the late Paleolithic Age. Between 1220 and 1240, King Friedrich II declared Reutlingen to be a city, and as a consequence, its townspeople built walls,

ditches, and towers, in order to clearly distinguish the urban area from its rural environs. By the 14th and early 15th centuries, Reutlingen had grown to the point where it enveloped seven surrounding villages; however, the city only covered about 44 square kilometers (Gemeinhardt and Loeffler 2000).

In 1726, the city was almost totally destroyed by a fire, which lasted for three days, burning down 80% of all residential houses, destroying almost all public buildings, and leaving 1,200 families homeless. Restoration and rebuilding began almost immediately, and due to the sense of urgency, the rebuilding of Reutlingen was conducted rather randomly, without a clear plan. As a result, streets in Reutlingen's inner city are narrow and often crooked.

Today, city walls no longer limit Reutlingen's urban boundaries. Yet the remains of them, including two former city gates, the *Tuebinger Tor* and the *Gartentor*, mark the core of the city: the so-called *Innenstadt*, or in American terms, "downtown." Thus, the old medieval town of Reutlingen is the city center of 'modern' Reutlingen.

The main characteristic of Reutlingen's downtown is the marketplace that lies in the heart of the *Innenstadt*. The marketplace is a large square area in front of City Hall. There are several benches and steps, a few trees, and a huge fountain called the *Marktbrunnen*. Three times a week this square is used for a farmer's market. Throughout the year it serves as a stage for city festivities and various cultural events, including the Christmas Market in December. Most importantly, it is in constant use by various groups of people — school kids meeting after school, little kids running around, skaters practicing new moves, homeless people gathering, members of the punk scene hanging out, tourists taking pictures, shoppers resting in the sun, people meeting each other, and so on. The marketplace offers an important public space. Kevin Lynch, who was a noted professor of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT, calls this a *node*: strategic spots "in a city into which an observer can enter, and which are the intensive foci to and from which he is traveling" (Lynch 2000).

The most significant channel crossing the plaza is the *Wilhemstrasse*, a promenade for pedestrians only. Along this boulevard are numerous mixed-used houses. Typically, the first floors of these buildings are used as shops, boutiques or cafés, while the remaining floors (usually between three and five) are used for housing. On each side of this walkway are benches that provide "sittable space" for pedestrians (Whyte 2000). During the summer, café owners put out chairs and tables for their customers, encouraging patrons to linger and observe the passing crowds.

Cars are prohibited in the city center. And last year, the 'pedestrian only' area was expanded, with the banning of cars and other motorized vehicles in an even wider area surrounding the *Innenstadt*. Most residents welcomed this decision. Now, many of the streets leading to and away from the marketplace are pedestrian friendly. Exceptions are made for residents, and for delivery drivers, though these few cars and trucks don't disturb the peaceful and relaxed atmosphere of the whole pedestrian area. And of course, there are not only pedestrians, but also many bicyclists, skate boarders, and inline skaters who take advantage of the traffic free zones.

What is true for Reutlingen is certainly true for most European cities. The car-free zone in the city core creates a safe and pleasant environment for people of all ages, and is thus a strong magnet

> **The car lanes on Haight Street could be transformed into usable public space—space made by people for people, not for their machines.**

for people. The question is "Would the same be possible for San Francisco?"

Looking at downtown San Francisco, particularly lower Market Street, I find it difficult to imagine successfully limiting car traffic. The physical structure of the city's downtown is not suitable for creating an inviting pedestrian area; the blocks are too big and streets are too wide, and promenading through gray walls of concrete doesn't seem very inviting to me. What is there to attract people to walk around squeezed between gigantic concrete buildings? Perhaps uninviting downtowns are the cause of shopping malls' popularity in the USA, though it might be the case that shopping malls are the cause of people's withdrawal from the streets.

The way land was developed in San Francisco's downtown seems to make it impossible to create a vivid "pedestrians only" zone. However, I can imagine creating enjoyable pedestrian zones in other areas of the city. For example, on the western end of Haight Street, near the entrance to Golden Gate Park, the physical and social environment seems well suited to creating a pleasant car-free zone. In physical structure, Haight Street is comparable to Reutlingen's Wilhelmstrasse. Both streets are narrow, and mixed-used buildings are located on either side. And perhaps more importantly, pedestrians already outnumber cars.

Banning motor vehicles on upper Haight Street would create a safer environment for pedestrians, who could cross the street to go from one shop to another without being hindered by cars driving by at dangerous speeds, or by drivers fighting for parking spaces. Without cars, the atmosphere would become more slowly paced, leisurely and comfortable. The possibility of bumping into other people is not as frightening as being hit by a car since collisions with our own species don't usually result in severe injury or death.

Excluding cars, and at the same time providing more room for people, would also make more room for creativity. On Reutlingen's Wilhelmstrasse,

for instance, you can always find local and international street musicians and entertainers, as well as artists doing portraits or chalk paintings on the ground. The car lanes on Haight Street could similarly be transformed into usable public space — space made by people for people, not for their machines. Members of the community could unleash their creativity, participating in the design of their immediate environment in the form of murals or other works of art.

Instead of car lanes, designers could construct sittable space in the form of benches and steps. This would encourage people to stop and rest, and give them a chance to relax and muse. Trees and other plants could further beautify the promenade and contribute to a pleasant atmosphere. This kind of environment would serve an important social function: hanging out in public space enables people to meet and interact more easily with others, as they are no longer isolated and kept apart by cars. People would be in more intimate contact with each other, able to gain a sense of human connectedness, which I consider to be a basic human need.

To improve access to the area, bus lanes could be routed in a manner that would guarantee fast, convenient transportation to and from the pedestrian zone. Additionally, bike lanes and bike racks could be provided to encourage people to use their bikes more. Moreover, a connection for pedestrians and self-propelled vehicles from Haight Street to John F. Kennedy Drive in Golden Gate Park would be desirable. Particularly on Sundays, when the Park is closed to automobile traffic, and is used heavily by bicycles, in-line skaters and pedestrians, a connection between these two car-free zones would create an attractive social environment. People would then have the option of moving quickly between Golden Gate Park and Haight Street.

Banning cars would also reduce noise and pollution. This would benefit not only those recreating on Haight Street, but also regular residents of

residents of the area. No longer having to dodge speeding cars, breathe in their toxic exhaust, nor be disturbed by blaring horns and roaring engines, would make the environment more enjoyable for everyone. Moreover, the car fumes would no longer be dirtying the facades of the unique Victorian houses in the Haight.

While some business owners on Haight Street might balk at this idea, feeling that their establishments might be harmed by the elimination of auto traffic, the European experience shows that they have much to gain from such an arrangement. Leisurely activity in the area would increase; as would the amount of walk-in business produced by having more people spending more time in and near shops. Additionally, following the example of the Wilhelmstrasse, delivery vehicles could still have access to the zone on restricted hours and for a limited duration to facilitate the movement of goods. And finally, residents could get special permission for parking in nearby side streets.

As I've tried to explain, creating car-free zones in San Francisco, accessible by public transportation, would enhance the quality of life in the city. Banning cars in certain areas would create islands for recreation and relaxation, while at the same time maintaining, if not improving, retail activity in those zones. Of course, I am not proposing changing San Francisco into a European city. However, I think we could make incremental, positive changes, in areas where pedestrians already dominate the scene.

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By Tiffany Chimaroké

It's up in the air
Like blue smoke
Warning the town
My city overflowed
By trash filled gullies
Crowded graffiti alley-ways
Black and grey air pollution
My city is on fire
Blue fire-with blue smoke
Acid rain and pregnant girls
Pushing thousands of strollers
Youth charged as adults
Tried and passed
Accepted into pre-meditated
Institutions-for money
Ghettos full with culture
People raced to get in line
For free cheese
Free police brutality
Free police harassment
Schools and education put
On hold
Youth scattered without
Mentors
On hold for matches
Which determine
Whether or not
My city burns
For money
For what is new
And youth are up in the air
Like blue smoke
Warning the town
And my city overflowed.

Being Consumed

By Elizabeth Gunston

Are we consuming or are we being
consumed?

America: the land of opportunity
Land of the free, home of the brave
Or is it a rat race we call life
Pacifiers and televisions for our children
so we can work
60 hours a week under fluorescent
lights to
Earn cars and computers and 1 week
vacations to Disneyland
Slaves to the almighty dollar

Are we consuming or are we being
consumed?

Got milk? Your way right away. Just
do it. Where's the beef?
Cut down rainforests for a 29 cent
hamburger with my side of fries
Tons of rock excavated for my
beloved's wedding band
Waking to the smell of Colombian cof-
fee
While Colombians don't have enough to
eat.

Are we consuming or are we being
consumed?

A land filled with savages, but opportu-
nity knocks
Fur and timber bound for the mother-
land
Plantations of tobacco and sugar
Kill the Red Man and bring in the Black
Build a rich nation from sweat and blood
God's will takes us further West

Are we consuming or are we being
consumed?

How far we have come.
How far will we go?
Blockbusters in Europe, McDonalds in
China
A Starbucks around every corner
Hollywood exporting the American
Dream.
America exporting its Hollywood prod-
ucts
The world our vast market

Are we consuming or are we being
consumed?

Lobbyists: the strings for our puppets
Magazines with more ads than articles
Junkmail, the new door to door sales-
man
Pepsi Cola machines in the hallways
To educate the next generation
Be young, have fun, make money

Are we consuming or are we being
consumed?

Temperature's rising every year
Cancer a familiar visitor
A frog with six legs but can't hop
Surplus yield with no food to eat
Where did all the buffalo go?
All good things must come to an end

Are we consuming or are we being
consumed?
Are we consuming or have we been
consumed?

Puigq
Music: "In 3's" from the Beastie Boys-
The In Sound From The Way Out!
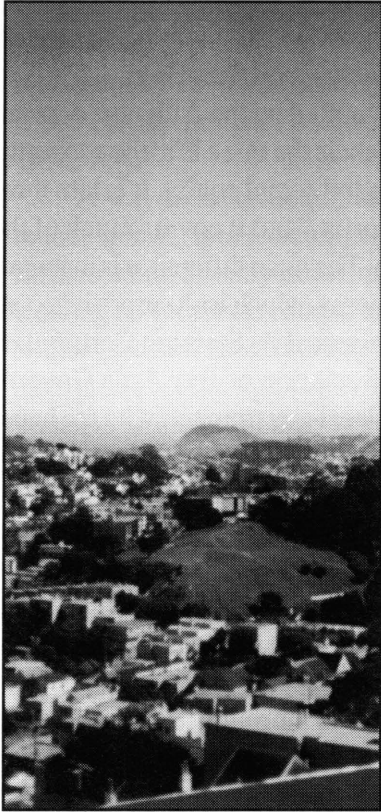
Sustainable Development in the Bay Area

By Erica Gies

American consumption patterns are quickly exhausting non-renewable resources, threatening biodiversity, polluting the environment, and creating unsustainable (and unlivable) cities. In the Bay Area, we are lucky to have both a political and a physical environment that encourages people to think of themselves as responsible members of their ecosystem. This essay provides details from three recent proposals—from the Department of the Environment, the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development, and Urban Ecology—that provide specific recommendations as to how we can continue to build a sustainable Bay Area. The subjects of the recommendations range from efficient transportation, to environmental justice, to clean industry, to organic farming. We will need to take these issues seriously if we are to leave future generations an inhabitable world.

What is sustainability? The United Nations offers a definition: "A sustainable society meets the needs of the present without sacrificing the ability of future generations and nonhuman forms of life to meet their own needs" (City of San Francisco 1997, 1). This definition is similar to the Cherokee notion of considering the effects of decisions on the next seven generations. Both ideas acknowledge that our actions have repercussions; that our resources must be carefully managed if we are to live off of them indefinitely; and, most importantly, that we are not separate from nature but are a part of it, and should therefore act as responsible members of our ecosystem. These ideas are all encompassing; their implications affect every part of our lives—or they will once our society becomes better educated on the topic.

As a result of the technology movement that began with the dawn of agriculture 10,000 years ago, allowing us to abandon our nomadic ways for "civilization," humankind has come to view progress as the latest technological advance. This trend has severed us more and more completely from nature. We live in heated and cooled houses, and buy our food from stores. But as acid rain, smog, the extinction of numerous plant and animal species, and the increase in certain human diseases such as cancer attest, we do not exist in a vacuum. Our choices have a drastic effect on our environs, and even if some of us do not care about the health of other species, our actions are quickly making the planet unlivable even for ourselves as well.

These problems seem vast because they require that our entire society reevaluate ingrained ideas and change behaviors. But that also makes them an intriguing challenge, because everyone—no matter what their chosen path—can contribute to the solution. Nevertheless, people in government, urban planning, law, education, and the media are in especially powerful positions to implement change.

The Bay Area is at the forefront of this move-

ment, partly because we live in such a beautiful area and people are particularly conscious of wanting to preserve it, and partly because Bay Area residents have historically been politically progressive. In the *Guide to California Planning*, William Fulton writes, "The Bay Area is a hot-bed of environmental activism and slow-growth sentiment that is measurably more liberal than any other part of the state" (1999, 37). As a result, there are currently three proposals for a sustainable Bay Area that fall within the urban planning arena. They are: "The Sustainability Plan for the City of San Francisco," edited by the Department of the Environment (1997); "Compact for a Sustainable Bay Area: Economy, Environment, Equity," edited by the Bay Area Alliance for Sustainable Development (1999); and "Blueprint for a Sustainable Bay Area," by Urban Ecology, a nonprofit group (1996). All three groups drew inspiration from a wide spectrum of political, business, ecological, and public leaders, and from other areas and cities around the world.

Of the many policy issues addressed in these three proposals, which are in various stages of completion, few have been implemented. Because all three documents are helping different people to work toward similar goals, I'll focus on a few topics common to all three proposals that I found to be particularly compelling in assessing what we need to do to preserve and maintain a healthy urban environment.

A Comparative Overview

"Blueprint," by Urban Ecology, reads as if written for the lay reader and is quite thorough; covering sustainable living in the home, in neighborhoods, in old and emerging urban centers, and throughout the region. Into these main categories fall many subcategories, including making housing more affordable; sustainable design; sustaining landscapes; green spaces, bay, and estuary; transportation and land use; jobs and industry; use of mate-

rials, water, and energy; and financing.

"Compact," edited by the Alliance, concentrates on what it labels the three E's: the economy, the environment, and social equity. It is less thorough than "Blueprint," but it covers much of the same information. The main difference is in its emphasis on the economy, which isn't surprising, considering the members of its Steering Committee. They are: the Association of Bay Area Governments, a group of local governments who are hyper aware of the reality of fighting for funding; the Bay Area Council, an advocate of business interests; PG&E; the Urban Habitat Program, which is concerned with affordable housing; and the Sierra Club, an environmental nonprofit organization. In contrast, the nonprofit group Urban Ecology has the luxury of being more idealistic.

While also quite thorough, San Francisco's "Plan" differs because it focuses on physical systems of the planet—such as air quality, climate change, ozone depletion, biodiversity, and the effect humans have on them. It also takes measured looks at energy; food and agriculture; hazardous materials; human health; parks, open spaces, and streetscapes; solid waste; environmental justice; and water and wastewater. It considers economic development to a lesser extent than the Alliance's "Compact." All three proposals noted the importance of data to guide decisions, but San Francisco's "Plan" had the most hard numbers.

Urban Areas

What is the physical makeup of a sustainable Bay Area? Multiuse, compact neighborhoods with housing, shopping, and employment all accessible by walking, biking, or public transit is vital. This concept runs counter to much modern zoning, which segregates usage into separate zones for industry, single-family homes, business, and more. But population is key to related issues like transportation. "Blueprint" says, " . . . it is generally agreed that a

minimum of 10 to 15 [housing] units per acre is needed to support public transit" (Urban Ecology 1996, 33).

A way to increase population density (and reduce sprawl) is to encourage infill development. Infill is using already developed areas, either by building on vacant or redlined lots, or by putting old buildings to new uses. Building from existing structures preserves the significant resources already invested in an area. Another way to increase population density is to change zoning laws to allow rental units on single-family lots. This idea has worked well in some California cities, such as Palo Alto and Pacifica, and could also work in Santa Clara County: an area filled with single-family lots, and plagued by ever-rising housing costs and a frantic demand for housing created by the many people moving there to work in the technology industry.

Infill housing should fit into the neighborhood, so as to upset the not-in-my-backyard crowd (NIMBY) as little as possible. While successful multi-unit projects have actually had a positive impact on property values in some places, long-time residents frequently oppose them. Live-work arrangements and collaborative living offer lower-cost alternatives to single-family dwellings. They can be ideal for the thirty percent of all U.S. households that consist of a single parent with children, and the twenty-five percent of the population that lives alone (Urban Ecology 1996, 24).

Buying or renting a home that is close to work, shopping, and transit (as opposed to living on the fringes of the greenbelt) is another way to promote sustainability. People building new homes can build moderately sized units and take advantage of the climate, whether it offers cooling wind ventilation or passive solar heating. People doing remodels shouldn't forget to fix leaky windows and replace inefficient appliances. Using renewable resources to build with is equally important. Some of these include fly ash concrete, salvaged lumber, chip board, straw bale encased in cement, stucco, rice

straw, gypsum, metals, and cotton and cellulose for insulation (Urban Ecology 1996, 27). The *Handbook of Alternative Materials in Residential Constructions,* by Richard T. Bynum and Daniel L. Rubino, is a comprehensive look at residential sustainability measures, which compares eco-friendly alternatives with traditional materials in regard to cost, time of installation, durability, ecological impact, and other considerations (1998). The book also features an index of suppliers.

Transportation

A compact urban environment makes it possible for people to cut down on or even avoid single-person car trips, which reduces air and water pollution, noise, and traffic congestion and frees up people's time and money for other things. "Car trips produce much more pollution than stationary sources [of pollution] such as power plants, oil refineries, and manufacturing facilities" (Urban Ecology 1996, 86). And, less fuel-efficient vehicles, like minivans and sports-utility vehicles, are increasing the problem.

Making transportation alternatives like BART, Caltrans, and Muni more efficient also reduces commute times and the costs of shipping and goods. With fewer people driving, the streets become safer for pedestrians and bicyclists, two groups of people who derive health benefits from their chosen methods of transportation. Other ways to promote this alternative are to close streets, or parts of streets, to private car traffic (a plan being considered for Market Street and for Kennedy Drive); to make storefronts reflect a human scale; and to add street furniture like lights, bicycle racks, and benches to city sidewalks. San Francisco's long term transportation goal is for 100 percent of trips to and within the city to be made without single-occupancy vehicles. Its "Plan" suggests allowing commuters to choose cash instead of free parking, increasing funding for public transit, lobbying for an income tax

deduction for transit passes, requiring businesses that provide free parking to offer an equal benefit to customers who travel by other means, and making Muni free (1997, 102-104).

While encouraging alternative forms of transportation, it is also necessary to discourage car usage. According to "Blueprint," the Bay Bridge carries 250,000 people per day in cars and buses. In 1946 it carried twice that many on trains and in cars. During a 1946 rush hour, trains arrived in the city from the East Bay every ninety seconds. Today, the Bay Area Economic Forum estimates that local companies lose $2 billion annually while employees sit in traffic. A Caltrans official admits, "We can't build our way out of congestion" (Urban Ecology 1996, 82). So why is our culture so car-centric? As "Blueprint" points out, "Cars have historically received disproportionate subsidies like those to gasoline and road construction costs. Increased transit subsidies or decreased auto-related subsidies could level the playing field" (Urban Ecology 1996, 87). The Alliance's "Compact" vows to "support the implementation of congestion pricing and other pricing reforms that do not unduly burden vulnerable populations and use the revenue generated to improve transit alternatives and affordability" (Bay Area Alliance 1999, 14). The "Plan" suggests several disincentives to driving that more accurately reflect car ownership's costs, including higher bridge tolls, gas taxes, parking fees, and the elimination of free parking for employees. Some trips can even be avoided. For example, telecommuting and teleconferencing are viable alternatives to local and distance travel.

Getting Back to Our Roots

Aside from access to work, school, and play, access to nature is also a vital component of people's lives. When people have first-hand experience with nature, they are more likely to value it and to work to protect it. Urban Ecology states that, "Green spaces are invaluable oases that provide relief from the intensity of urban life and remind us that nature exists" (1996, 37). More importantly, green spaces and bodies of water " . . . ensure regional biodiversity by providing habitat for wildlife and drinking water for some areas. They filter the impacts of human activity and contribute to the region's economy by providing food and recreation" (Urban Ecology 1996, 72). Invertebrates are an illustration of the importance of creatures we rarely think about: 'We need invertebrates, but they don't need us,' entomologist Edward O. Wilson has written. Wilson thinks that if human beings were to disappear tomorrow, the world would not change much. But if invertebrates were to disappear, human beings would be extinct in a few months, along with fish, amphibians, birds, and mammals. Soon after would go most flowering plants. Within a few decades, only bacteria, algae, and a few simple plants would be left. (Menzel and D'Aluisio 1998, 25).

Wilson lends perspective on the ecosystems that support our lives, challenging us to reevaluate our arrogant and dangerous assumption that we are more important than other creatures. If their health is so vital to our own, we must give more consideration to how our activities affect their lives.

An effective tool for preserving open space and allowing nature to flourish is the urban growth boundary (UGB), promoted by groups such as the Greenbelt Alliance (www.greenbelt.org). An UGB can define the limits of a city for up to 20 years. In addition to preserving the surrounding greenbelt, UGBs provide added incentive to develop compact neighborhoods inside city boundaries.

Another way to set aside land for nature is through nonprofit organizations like the Nature Conservancy (nature.org). Like similar groups, it acquires critical habitat and wildlife corridors by buying land with the express purpose of preserving it. Public support is crucial. Often these nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) must clean up con-

taminated areas to give wildlife the boost it needs to return to an area. Parts of the Bay are currently so polluted that the California Environmental Protection Agency has issued advisories against eating certain fish because they contain PCBs, dioxin, DDT, and mercury (Urban Ecology 1996, 76). Growth management initiatives offer lower tax rates to owners of undeveloped land who sell their development rights to cities or NGOs (Fulton 1999, 191). This tactic has been effective in the effort to restore some of San Francisco Bay's wetlands, which are important because they " . . . cleanse water, regulate climate, and prevent erosion and floods" (Kay 2001).

Organic Agriculture

The Bay Area is known worldwide for its rich soil that can grow almost anything. Urban Ecology points out that "Our agricultural lands are home to [more than] 8,500 farms and produce 100 different crops, contributing $2 billion per year to the economy" (1996, 74). But many of these crops are grown by big agri-businesses that use pesticides, poisoning our ground, water, bodies, and fellow creatures. The structure of large farms with immense fields of single crops deprives the land of nutrients, doesn't allow it to rest, and greatly reduces the topsoil that makes agriculture possible.

Organic farming is gaining popularity in the region, and buying organic produce is a direct way to make a sustainable choice in our day-to-day lives. Buying organic produce supports the farmers who've chosen not to pollute our environment, and eating it avoids putting cancer-causing chemicals into our bodies. According to 'Blueprint,' " . . . at least 25 Bay Area farms provide home delivery service

> **Today, the Bay Area Economic Forum estimates that local companies lose $2 billion annually while employees sit in traffic.**

or drop-off points for organic fruits, vegetables, and nuts" (Urban Ecology 1996, 75). One company that delivers fresh produce to customers' doorsteps from a variety of organic farms is Planet Organics (www.planetorganics.com). Organic produce is also available at farmers' markets.

Organic dairy products that are hormone, antibiotic, and pesticide free are available from Clover Stornetta Farms, Horizon Dairy, and Marin's Straus Family Creamery. The latter bottles its milk in fifty percent–recycled glass bottles, which customers return to the store to retrieve a deposit. The family that owns Straus has also put its 660-acre ranch under a conservation easement to the Marin Agricultural Land Trust to protect it from future development (Urban Ecology 1996, 81).

Organic food choices benefit consumers as well as our environment. Hundreds of scientific studies have linked health risks to pesticides, genetically modified crops, and the hormones and antibiotics found in most cattle. Now there is growing concern about bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), also known as mad-cow disease. Because the U.S. government has not taken the initiative by passing mandatory labeling laws to inform the American public about what is in our food, our safest choice is to seek out organic food whenever possible.

Sustainable Urban Life

When it comes to the Bay Area's most urban city, San Francisco's "Plan" has a lot of ideas. It aims to have a neighborhood park or open space within a 10-minute walk of every home. It also advocates encouraging local nurseries to promote wildlife-supporting, drought-tolerant, San Fran-

cisco–native plants, and giving property owners incentives to plant and maintain vegetated backyards to which building residents have access. An even more progressive idea supported by the "Plan" is to "provide a business-tax reduction incentive for companies that donate at least twenty hours per year of volunteer time per full-time employee to work in public park and recreation facilities or provide design and professional services to neighborhood park councils" (1975, 75-84). One of the "Plan's" proposals that has already been realized is the restoration of the wetlands at Crissy Field. Residents sponsored school children, who helped plant thousands of diverse native plants. The result is restored beaches and shoreline dunes, a 20-acre tidal marsh, and a 29-acre meadow.

San Francisco's "Plan" refers to citizen involvement in the greening of our cities. In our own homes, we can plant drought-resistant, native plants, instead of water-dependent lawns. Shade trees can lower cooling bills in the summer and provide shelter from the winter wind. A garden can feed a family pesticide-free fruits and vegetables. In the absence of traditional yard space, we can use rooftops, patios, windowsills, or community gardens. Gardens can also give us natural places to use compost, thereby reducing landfill waste.

Industry

In addition to protecting green space in order to maintain Earth's livable balance and nourish our souls, we must have industry to drive our economy. But do we want any kind of industry? We can't afford—environmentally, financially, or socially—to have some of the chemical and industrial polluters we've allowed in the past. The polluted sites (known as brownfields) they left in their wake are expensive to clean up and are disproportionately found in low-income neighborhoods. We want businesses in the Bay Area that are environmentally responsible and that create jobs for people with a range of education, experience, and income.

As "Blueprint," points out, "The gross domestic product (GDP) measures the country's prosperity by the total dollar volume of goods and services bought and sold in the nation, but ignores the social and environmental cost of doing business" (Urban Ecology, 1996, 95). For example, in his book *Culture Jam*, Kalle Lasn points out that the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, which cost $2 billion in cleanup efforts, had a positive effect on the GDP (1999, 88-89). Lasn says the GDP only counts "goods" and ignores "bads." Furthermore, the current expansionist economic model is not sustainable because it is based on never-ending growth derived from natural resources.

A San Francisco think tank called Redefining Progress takes other indicators into account to calculate a genuine progress indicator (GPI), including: crime, the breakdown of the family, resource depletion, degradation of wildlife habitat, and changes in leisure time. "Blueprint" says, "Redefining Progress' GPI . . . shows a 45 percent decline [in our quality of life] since 1970" (Urban Ecology 1996, 95). A new worldview is rising in the field of economics to address this disparity with the dominant expansionist economic model. These newcomers are called ecological economists, or bio-economists, and they aim " . . . to design a new economic system that gives us what we need without sacrificing the well-being of future generations (Lasn 1999, 88).

We have examples of industries driven by both the expansionist and the ecological economic models in the Bay Area. The high-tech industry is a notorious polluter. "Blueprint" points out that: "there are 29 Superfund 'National Priority' sites in the Silicon Valley, which has the greatest concentration of such sites in the country. And according to the *San Jose Mercury News*, there are pools of toxic solvents up to a mile and a half long lying under some Sunnyvale neighborhoods adjacent to high-tech firms" (Urban Ecology 1996, 96). In contrast, the

secondary materials industry, which does recycling and salvage, is contributing to the solution. San Francisco's "Plan" explains where this industry fits in and how to expand it. The three fundamental approaches to reducing waste are to avoid creating waste in the first place; to purchase durable, repairable products and reusable packaging; and to purchase more products made from recycled materials in order to strengthen the commodities markets for recovered materials. To date, waste reduction has been largely voluntary. A more effective approach must include economic incentives that make it more expensive to 'waste,' and more cost-effective to recycle and reuse. Eventually, consideration must be given to mandatory measures (1997, 90).

Recycling is an important step, but it does not target the heart of the problem, which is the use of nonrenewable virgin resources and harmful production methods. "Blueprint" tells of an industrial ecosystem in Kalundborg, Denmark, based on nature's own cycles, where seven industrial and agricultural producers use each other's byproducts (Urban Ecology 1996, 103). This kind of industrial organization, known as "closed-loop production," could be studied and implemented in the Bay Area.

> **Waste reduction has been largely voluntary. A more effective approach must include economic incentives that make it more expensive to 'waste,' and more cost-effective to recycle and reuse.**

Social Equality and Environmental Justice

Another key component of the sustainability equation is social and economic equality. If people aren't reasonably financially secure, the environment might not be their first concern. If they don't know where their next meal is coming from, or whether they can walk safely through their neighborhood,

recycling, or taking the time to plant gardens, might not be priorities. Additionally, being a conscientious consumer often means choosing a more expensive product. (Although, if we all made conscientious purchases, that would change.) For people living on the edge of financial insolvency, these choices are not always options. Social and economic inequality does not foster a participatory sense of community, a vital part of sustainability.

A related issue is environmental justice. People with low incomes are more adversely affected by pollution than those with higher incomes. They usually cannot afford to move away from their polluted neighborhoods. Sometimes they lack the know-how to wage a political battle and the money for lawyers to keep polluting industries from invading their backyards. A classic and unfortunate example is Bayview/Hunters Point. Plagued by extremely high cancer rates, its residents are now fighting to keep a third power plant from locating there. Golden Gate Law Clinic and the Southeast Alliance for Environmental Justice documented the disproportionate number of brownfield sites there. "Findings were: six times as many registered hazardous materials facilities as in the city overall, five times as many acutely hazardous materials released, and three times as many active underground storage tanks; moreover the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard is one of the most toxic Superfund sites" (Urban Ecology 1996, 108). This atrocious record is considered by many to be the result of class-based discrimination, wherein wealthy corporations and the U.S. government have dumped their waste in the backyards of people too poor to make their protests heard.

Solutions Require Cooperation

Ecosystems and regions are holistic; that is, they don't end at city borders. They blend into each other, forming a web that covers the entire planet. While the planet is a bit much for local governments to deal with, the Bay Area Alliance recognizes there is much to be gained by working with neighboring local governments and by consulting all citizens. Its "Compact" is an attempt " . . . to help coordinate policy decisions and implementation programs. [It] needs to recognize that certain issues transcend political boundaries. It needs to help instill a new attitude in business and communities, one of considering the regional implications of local decisions, as well as the implications of all decisions on all three E's—environment, economy, equity" (1999, 2).

Financial institutions must become more accepting of alternative building solutions, rather than continuing to favor single-family home loans. Local governments need to encourage infill development and prevent sprawl. "Blueprint" states that: "Homes in [low-density] areas [at a region's edge] cost up to 400 percent more to service [than city homes]. In effect, we are throwing away our cities and buying inefficient new ones" (Urban Ecology 96, 110). This savings could alter the trend of local governments fighting for commercial development to increase revenues, which developed as a result of Proposition 13, and its subsequent reduction in local property tax revenues. If they were freed from the single-minded quest for money and out-of-date zoning standards that segregate usage, they could concentrate more on the kind of mixed development that would be good for the whole community, and region.

Our entire society needs to reevaluate ingrained ideas and change its way of doing things, and that requires education. We need to educate each other and ourselves about the effects of our daily actions on the world around us. The media is an outlet that can reach millions. News organizations need to report more stories about environmental accountability for businesses and institutions, and to feature sustainability instructions for individuals. Schools are ideal because they can teach our youngest citizens how to practice sustainable habits before they get out on their own; kids trained early won't need to unlearn ingrained bad habits. Neighborhood outreach programs can bring communities together and provide first-hand, accurate knowledge to city governments.

Even if we are successful in changing how we live, work, and play, that might not be enough. We need to think about how many people the Bay Area—and for that matter, the Earth—can support. The natural world has safeguards that adjust the balance of certain populations when they get out of hand. But since we have eliminated a lot of those safeguards through technology (such as shelter, agriculture, and medicine), we need to try other ways to stabilize our rapidly increasing population. The Alliance's "Compact" says: "The United States should have policies and programs that contribute to stabilizing global human population; this objective is critical if we hope to have the resources needed to ensure a high quality of life for future generations" (1999, 5). Nonprofit groups like Zero Population Growth (ZPG) espouse the same principles by advocating that couples have no more than two children. That's because two children will ultimately replace the two parents in the world, thereby not increasing the population. ZPG wants to slow population growth to achieve a sustainable balance between the Earth's people and its resources. Its programs strive to influence public policies, attitudes, and behavior on population issues (www.zpg.org).

Status of Proposals

I believe that as our air and water quality con-

tinue to decline, as building resources grow more expensive and less readily available, and as our food sources become more polluted, more and more people will become aware of these problems and work toward a solution. Fortunately for us in the Bay Area, we already have three proposals on the table. For five years, developers, architects, planners, and designers have been using suggestions from "Blueprint," and university professors have been teaching from it. Urban Ecology hopes to publish an update within the next five years.

San Francisco's "Plan" is a "known compendium of good ideas," according to Mark Westlund, public relations director for the Department of the Environment. He says that since 1996, pesticide use in city parks has been cut by fifty percent, and that ten environmentally efficient city buildings are in the works, including the new California Academy of Sciences and Laguna Honda Hospital, the first green hospital in the country (2001). The Bay Area Alliance's "Compact" is still in draft form but will soon be offered to its members and to the public for input. All citizens are encouraged to contribute their opinions about issues in the "Compact" on the Alliance's Web site (www.bayareaalliance.org). The target date to publish the "Compact" is December 2001. Members will then begin implementing recommendations in the "Compact." Let's hope that the planners, architects, city governments, and industry will continue to act effectively on the proposals.

What Individuals Can Do

On an individual level, environmental concerns like sustainability can seem overwhelming. However, there are many things you can do, and your conscious lifestyle will serve as an example to oth-ers. First, support Caltrans if it proposes to eliminate a freeway or put transportation funds toward the expansion of public transit. More freeways aren't the answer to gridlock. Choose to live, work, and shop in transit-oriented developments, where you won't be reliant upon a car. This arrangement will make it more convenient for you to support your neighborhood stores and local economy. It will also make it easy to walk or bike to work, play, or shop instead of driving. You'll spare the air and get your exercise at the same time.

You can even sell your car. Some cities, including San Francisco, have implemented car-sharing programs. City CarShare (www.sfcarshare.org) members do not own cars. When they need to use a car, they pick one up from one of several locations around the city. They pay only a refundable deposit, a $10 monthly fee, 45 cents per mile, and $2 per hour capped at $25 per day (Shahum 2001, 13). There are no charges for gas, insurance, or repairs.

Buying locally grown, organic farm products is another way to support sustainability. In addition to providing yourself and your family with healthy food, you'll be reducing pollution caused by transporting produce long distances from the field to your door. Volunteering on a restoration or clean-up project, and supporting environmental legislation, are other possibilities. Reusing, recycling, and buying products made from recycled and renewable materials to create market demand for sustainable products also helps. Since the natural world of which we are a part is interrelated, what happens in the Brazilian and Indonesian rain forests, and to the melting polar ice caps, are equally important. But for now, as citizens of a country that consumes far more than our share of the world's resources, we must put our own houses in order.

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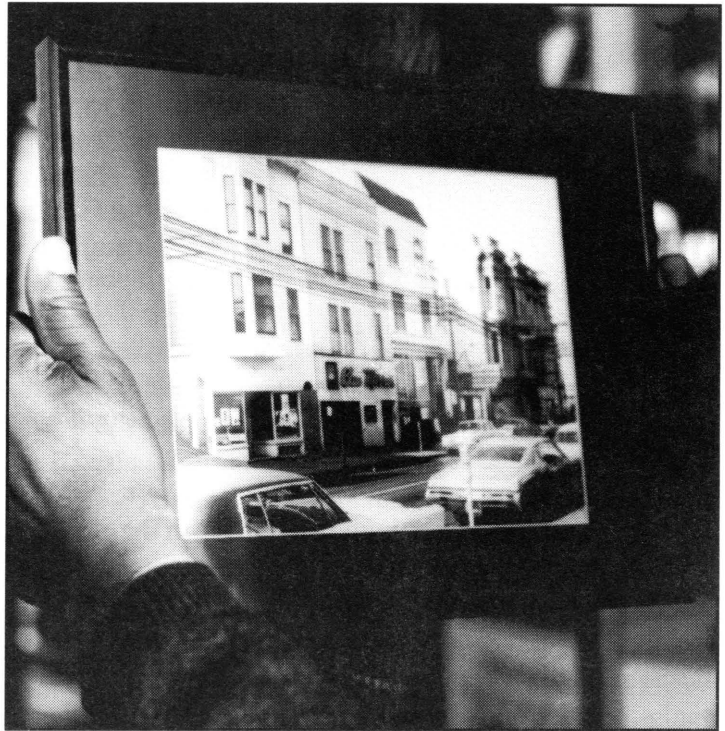
The Revitalization of the Fillmore

By Michael Doherty and Meryl Block

In 1948 the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency declared the Fillmore District blighted and—deaf to the continued and impassioned protest of residents—proceeded to raze swaths of what had been known as "The Harlem of the West." Even though one of the criteria for assessing "blight" was "nonwhite population," the city and the SFRA maintained that their intention was to 'revitalize' the neighborhood by replacing its aging housing stock with modern units, and by improving infrastructure so that the area could attract investment. But now, 40 years later, the area is still depressed, dotted with vacant lots that were housing units before redevelopment. This essay argues that the reason the redevelopment of the Fillmore was a failure was that the city and the SFRA were caught in a web of institutionalized racism. From this vantagepoint, they were able to rationalize the fact that they were imposing a plan without involving the affected community, a plan that ultimately sought to hold up property values near the Central Business District at the expense of the people who lived there.

The Fillmore is a neighborhood within the Western Addition in the heart of San Francisco, just southwest of the central business district. The area first became a major retail center after the 1906 earthquake, when many businesses moved from quake-ravaged Market Street to Fillmore Street, which was relatively unharmed. Over time, the district transformed itself from a well-to-do white neighborhood to a "Japantown" to San Francisco's black neighborhood. At that point, the area was targeted for redevelopment and was subsequently destroyed by urban revitalization. . Today, the district is most remembered for its jazz clubs, the Nihonmachi center, and the bitter taste that redevelopment left in the mouths of Fillmore residents following the Western Addition Redevelopment Projects.

Walking south down Fillmore Street today, you immediately notice three things. First is Geary Boulevard, the large highway that cuts through the district. Its six lanes of high-speed traffic cruising through subterranean corridors is a dividing line between two neighborhoods, themselves heading in different directions. The second thing you will notice as you continue south of Geary is the emptiness of the area: the lack of pedestrians, the vacant land, and the hollow storefronts. Finally, as you walk through the Fillmore Center development, you notice the immense scale of the buildings; evidence of automobile-friendly planning.

A stroll north of Geary provides a striking contrast. This neighborhood is built to human scale, with low-rise and Victorian buildings, storefronts full of patrons, and people waiting for tables at one

of the many restaurants.. This neighborhood is known as Lower Pacific Heights and stretches up into the wealthy enclaves of Pacific Heights and the Marina to the north. The feeling one gets here is that this neighborhood is thriving, as opposed to the depressed, almost ghost town feeling just a few blocks south. But this is not Lower Pacific Heights; this is part of the historic Fillmore. Today the area is predominately white. The only observable nods to its former distinction as the Harlem of the West are an African American bookstore and John Lee Hooker's Boom Boom Room.

All neighborhoods go through a metamorphosis over time, but this dramatic change requires a look at the history of African American migration into San Francisco, the timeline and scale of redevelopment, and the decision-making process that targeted the Western Addition. We feel that the factors that led to the redevelopment of the Fillmore show that the City and the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) were not forthright with the citizens of San Francisco about the conditions that necessitated redevelopment. Under the guise of a socio-economic and structural evaluation of the Western Addition, the City and the SFRA manipulated the statistical data (in the case of race) or relied on subjective evaluations of other conditions, to provide legitimacy to their predetermined plan. Ultimately, the SFRA was interested in protecting the property values of nearby neighborhoods, not in improving the quality of life of its residents.

The Fillmore: A Vital Black Neighborhood

The lack of employment opportunities for African Americans prior to World War II kept San Francisco's black population surprisingly low throughout much of the early history of San Francisco. Census data shows that in 1900, only 1,654 African Americans were residing in San Francisco out of a population of 342,782. In contrast with other large cities, the population of African Americans rose only to 2,414 by 1920 after the Great Migration from the south had brought significant African American populations to other cities of industry. Perhaps because the African American population was not large enough to be a major presence, San Francisco was considered an open, black-tolerant city.

San Francisco had desegregated its schools and blacks had been given the right to vote and the right to ride public transit. Yet the real estate industry still encouraged blacks to live in certain neighborhoods, and it was still difficult for blacks to join unions and find higher paying, skilled work. During these years, the majority of black Bay Area migrants settled in Oakland where they could get better paying Union Pacific jobs (Broussard 1993, 11-132). The defining event that established a large black community in the Fillmore was World War II. With the war came jobs, so workers poured into the Bay Area from around the country to work in the well paying war industries. Almost overnight, San Francisco had an African American population. Census data shows an almost ten-fold increase of African American residents between 1940 and 1950, from 4,846 to 43,502. The overwhelming majority of these people settled in the Bayview-Hunter's Point district and the Fillmore.

The Fillmore already had a small African American community but the internment of the Japanese led to housing vacancies in the district that were quickly taken by the newcomers. By the end of the war, African Americans were firmly established in the Western Addition and they intended to stay. Within San Francisco's white political community, the establishment of a black community had caused rumblings in the 1920s. These rumblings began again. African Americans were no longer a small group of little concern to city officials; now they had achieved a critical mass that brought them to the attention of the city as a whole. By the end of the war, African Americans had replaced the Chi-

nese in the crosshairs of San Francisco politics, and Fillmore was ground zero.

Prior to the redevelopment of the Fillmore in the 1940s and 1950s, the district was not only the main African American community in San Francisco but also a vibrant center of commercial ownership for African Americans. Of the nearly 1,000 San Francisco African American-owned businesses recorded by the Committee for Community Solidarity Inc. in 1959, 80% were located in the Fillmore District and nearly 100 were located on Fillmore Street proper (Jefferson 1994, 6). The area had restaurants, supper/nightclubs, pharmacies, art galleries, barber/beauty shops, doctors, dentists, lawyers, banks/finance companies, realty companies, printing and stationery stores, retail and apparel shops, butchers, bakers, markets, and everything else that a neighborhood could need (Jefferson 1994, 6).

The Redevelopment Laws

The political climate in San Francisco, combined with new Federal and State laws, allowed the SFRA to propose a plan for a new, revitalized Fillmore District. The SFRA was empowered by two laws: The California Redevelopment Act of 1945 (CRA) and the Federal Housing Act of 1949. The CRA authorized any city or county to establish a Regional Development Agency to combat urban blight. Agencies engaged in a variety of activities: purchasing property, razing and building structures, providing municipal infrastructure such as streets and lighting, developing affordable housing, and renovating downtown commercial areas. They also used their eminent domain power, which is the right for a public entity to purchase private property within a designated redevelopment area; not just for public use, but to transfer to other private owners. This tool is generally used in conjunction with the CRA (PPIC 1999).

Following the enactment of the Federal Housing Act in 1949, the CRA enabled the SFRA to apply for federal grants and loans, which provided federal funds for public housing programs. The act was intended to provide "a decent home and a suitable environment" for every U.S. family.

Redevelopment plans for the Fillmore district also took advantage of the authorization for tax increment revenues, added to the CRA in 1952, as a means to finance redevelopment activities. Tax increment financing gives power to redevelopment agencies to receive and spend property tax revenues attributed to the increase in assessed values that has occurred since the redevelopment project was adopted (PPIC 1999). The increased tax revenue is an incentive to increase the size and prevalence of retail in a redevelopment area.

Determining Urban Blight

The first factor in determining blight was the economic condition of the area as indicated by the property values. As we have discussed, if you walk through the Fillmore district today, you will notice a tangible difference between Pacific Heights, north of Geary Boulevard, and the Lower Fillmore, south of Geary Boulevard. The 1960 census reported that the economics of Pacific Heights were vastly different from the economics of Lower Fillmore. The median Pacific Heights housing price was over $25,000, versus Lower Fillmore's median value of $18,500 (SPUR 1962, 31).

The physical condition of the neighborhood was the second factor to consider when determining whether an area was blighted. The Western Addition was in sore need of rehabilitation: many housing units were illegal conversions and not up to code—over 50% of the buildings were built before the turn of the century. The redevelopment documents seem to imply that the residents are responsible for the disrepair of their houses, and we feel that this is a case of blaming the victims (SFRA 1964, 12-13). The redevelopment documents fail

to consider that there was high population density as a result of a large migration of minorities forced to settle in a specific, small neighborhood (Broussard 1993, 167-174). They also fail to observe that prior to World War II, African American residents actually paid the highest average rents in San Francisco: $25.89 per month compared to $23.89 per month for whites, and this trend continued throughout the war (Broussard 1993, 35 and 174). Additionally, although the SFRA notes that less than 10% of residents owned their own home, it fails to hold the absentee landlord responsible for repairing the buildings for which they were receiving rent. Finally, the City itself fails to recognize its own contribution to property decay. The City declared a neighborhood blighted and then waited up to 15 years to assess the properties and take action. Because the City failed to give an incentive to property owners to maintain their buildings, property values fell (Schallert 1966, 64).

The final factor in determining blight is perhaps the most controversial: the social conditions of the neighborhood. This included income level, number of families, public health issues, crime, and "non-white population" (SFRA 1964, 14). Although listed as a consideration for renewal, great care was given to prioritizing other measures of blight in the Western Addition as rationale for redevelopment instead of race.

Based on 1960 Census data, African Americans accounted for between 58.9 and 68.0% of the population in the heart of the Fillmore, Census tracts J-6, 7 and 8. But the impact of renewal on African Americans was diluted because the City used data that incorporated a larger statistical area than the heart of the Fillmore (Census tracts J-6, 7, 8). The city relied on figures of Census track J, which incorporated the Western Addition as a whole, and showed that the area undergoing redevelopment was only one third black (Schallert 1966, 13).

Redevelopment Plans Approved Despite Opposition

One of the first steps of the City's plan to combat blight in the Fillmore was to commission Mel Scott to provide recommendations for the district. Scott's planning report included recommendations for drawing back the white middle class that had fled to the suburbs, saving architecturally-significant buildings, providing professional and commercial space near the Central Business District, cleaning up the slums, and transforming San Francisco into a professional and tourist-based economy similar to Manhattan (Fure-Slocum 1990, 33-34).

On June 3, 1948 the Board of Supervisors declared the Western Addition to be a blighted area based on Scott's report, even after vocal citizens expressed concern at a heated public meeting attended by over 3,000 people (Silverman 1994, 102). Supporters of the designation included the Chamber of Commerce, the Building Trades Council, the Housing and Planning Association and State Senator Gerald O'Gara, who tried to reassure the crowd by highlighting safeguards in the plan. He said,

If the Board of Supervisors declares that the Western Addition is a redevelopment area, it does not mean that the entire area is blighted... The Western Addition, as you know, includes a number of good buildings and the purpose of redevelopment is to protect them from the blight that surrounds them...I again emphasize it will be no reflection on any of the good buildings in this district, of which there are many, and they are not to be touched if this area is declared a redevelopment area (Supervisor's Hearing June 3, 1948, pp. 5).

Dr. Carlton Goodlett expressed serious concern at the meeting, as did members of the San Francisco CIO Housing Committee, especially around discrimination in redevelopment practices and the

lack of adequate housing. Regardless of these concerns, the City designated the area for redevelopment on August 3, 1948 (SFDPC 1952, A-3). In an attempt to quiet cries from the minority community, the city adopted Non Discrimination Resolution Number 8660 in 1949—and it did temporarily lessen concerns (Silverman 1994, 108).

In 1953, redevelopment plan WAA-1 was adopted by the city despite continued opposition that was fueled by the significant housing shortage in San Francisco. The four-part plan included the Geary Street widening project and its associated street improvements, the creation of a community center and recreational facility, the encouragement of a Fillmore Street Shopping District between Fulton and Sutter Streets, and the improvement of surrounding residential neighborhoods (SFDPC 1952, Section B). The plan's outlined objectives included,

A. To eliminate as many blocks of the worst blight in the Western Addition as possible under available financing.

B. To facilitate the development of planned public improvements in the Western Addition, including the Geary Street widening and the Community Center.

C. In a previously blighted area, to provide a well planned environment attractive for private investment in new construction. To free it from adverse effects from adjoining blight by extending and strengthening adjoining areas which are attractive for investment (SFDPC 1952, C-1).

In 1956, demolition work began in Area WAA-1. The project encompassed about 99 acres bordered by Post Street to the north, Eddy Street to the south, the Franklin-Van Ness Corridor to the east, and Hamilton Square Park to the west. Major projects in the area, apart from road improve-

ment, included the beginnings of the Japantown Center, St. Mary's Cathedral, and the recreational center at Hamilton Square. In these locations, the SFRA used its eminent domain rights to purchase property within the development area to clear the way for new construction. With construction, businesses lost their local clientele and began losing money. This allowed the SFRA to buy their property at lower costs because the owners were motivated to sell (Mollenkopf 1983, 182-183). John Mollenkopf's discussion with impacted businesses showed that residences were quickly cleared from the area, which made it easier for the SFRA to buy out local businesses at a "fair" value. For the most part, project WAA-1 met with little organized opposition.

In 1964, redevelopment plan WAA-2 was adopted by the city and dramatically expanded the Fillmore revitalization area to include the land bordered by Bush Street to the north, Fulton Street to the south, Broderick Street to the west, and Van Ness Avenue to the east. This expansion was part of the sweeping vision of Justin Herman, the powerful head of the SFRA. Fresh off of the success of the Golden Gateway redevelopment, Herman saw a chance to reshape the Western Addition. Under plan WAA-2, nearly one half a square mile of the city was demolished and 15,000 people were displaced (SFRA 1964, 10-19). In its place was to be a new, safe, blight-free, residential community which [would be] socially and economically integrated and which contains ample public facilities and healthy commercial areas convenient to the residents (SFRA 1964, 19).

The plan was later amended by the Board of

> **It wasn't until the late 1980s that the Fillmore Center was constructed, and Safeway did not open until 1983, a generation after the area was demolished.**

Supervisors to shift the WAA-2 Project from public facilities and housing to economic development and the creation of business and economic opportunities.

The Community Organizes

This time, Western Addition residents were not going to be passive about the project. The fight for civil rights had brought a community consciousness to many African Americans. Many had just been displaced as part of project WAA-1, and were now being asked to move again at a time when the "Housing Famine," which had existed in San Francisco for decades, was intensifying (Duggar 1961, 130). Too many people were fighting for too few apartments. In 1969, the Bureau of Social Science Research found only 200 affordable vacancies in the entire city (Hartman 1984, 75). This is at a time when 6,149 housing units and 2,459 hotel units were being demolished in area WAA-2, 2,726 units of War Housing were being demolished around the city, and as Hartman describes in his book *The Transformation of San Francisco*, thousands of residents were being displaced as part of the Yerba Buena Project (UCFSF 1963, 27, B-3).

Groups such as the Western Addition Community Organization, the Tenants and Owners in Opposition to Redevelopment, and the Western Addition District Council, began to fight against the SFRA to stop the relocation of residents and bring a community voice into the process. Subsequently, redevelopment critics were appointed to SFRA posts. One of these redevelopment critics was Reverend Hamilton, a black Western Addition resident, who was appointed to the position of WAA-2 project director. The community was eventually able to get a court injunction to stop the displacement of residents until an adequate housing plan was accepted. Eventually, a consent decree was signed requiring the SFRA to provide 1,500 to 1,800 low-rent housing units by 1973 to replace units destroyed. In reality, this was too little too late. Ultimately, the SFRA never built the replacement housing; they insisted that San Francisco Housing Authority units in the area were acceptable. This displays how community organizations were only able to slow, not to substantially change, the Western Addition plans (Hartman 1984, 60-75).

The major redevelopment projects took many years to finish, and the result was not the revitalized new neighborhood the City had envisioned. By 1973, the Geary Boulevard work was complete, but as part of the public-private partnership, the City was still trying to find developers for property in area WAA-2. It wasn't until the late 1980s that the large town house and apartment high-rise complex named the Fillmore Center was constructed, and Safeway did not open until 1983, a generation after the area was demolished (Hartman 1984, 334).

The 47,000 square feet Safeway store was the first superstore (bakery, delicatessen, pharmacy and floral dept) for the corporation. As well as the superstore, Safeway Incorporated constructed 71,000 sq. feet of commercial/office building on Fillmore Street. The development of the superstore was made feasible due to the incentives of the Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG). Created by the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (amend in 1977), the UDAG provides federal grants to economically distressed cities to stimulate industrial and commercial development which revitalizes local, economies, improves the tax bases, provides jobs in the area of high unemployment, and creates or retains business activity in urban areas. The UDAG federal provided funds may be used to finance elements of a project which cannot feasibly be financed by the private sector but, without which, the project would not proceed (SFRA Factbook, p.7).

The San Francisco Redevelopment Program 1987 Fact Book assessed the value of the land and

tax revenues before and after the development of the WAA1 and WAA2 projects Land Value. The value of the land of the WAA1 track increased by nearly fifteen fold. The land within WAA1 was valued at $11,396 prior to redevelopment and $180,736 after redevelopment. The value of the land of the WAA2 track increased by over five fold. The land within WAA2 was valued at $120,916 prior to redevelopment and $760,162 post redevelopment (SFRA Factbook, p.7).

The tax revenues also increased substantially. The tax revenues, based on the current rate 1.1 per 100 assessed value, from the WAA1 track also increased fifteen fold. The tax revenues from the WAA1 was valued at $126 prior to redevelopment and $1,880 post redevelopment. The tax revenues from the WAA2 track also increased by over five fold. The tax revenues from the WAA2 track was valued at $1,342 prior to redevelopment and $7,096 post redevelopment (SFRA Factbook, p.7).

The increase in values does not represent the overall health of the Fillmore community. Large businesses, such as the Safeway Superstore, AMC Kabuki 8 movie theatre, and the Nihonmachi center provides an increased tax base but were not indicative of the Fillmore Community as a whole. The increase in tax revenue was advantageous to the SFRA, as described by the tax increment financing amendment to the CRA.

The Fillmore Today

Frank Jordan formed the Mayor's Fillmore/ Western Addition Economic Development Task Force (Task Force) to Advise the Mayor and SFRA. The objectives adopted by the Task Force were to: empower African American to establish businesses in the Western Addition, to aid in the establishment of said business by loans and cash infusion, to ensure the employment of citizens of the Western Addition in new and existing businesses, and to provide expert technical assistance similar to the U.S. Small Business Administration's Volunteer Executive Corps (Jefferson 1994, 8-9). At the time the Task Force was developed a consultant, The Jefferson Company, prepared an economic assessment of the local area. They found that:

—The Lower Fillmore district was highly accessible by both public and private transportation

—The Lower Fillmore district was a traditional retail area with potential for becoming a successful commercial area due to the success of business activity on Upper Fillmore and the Nihonmachi Mall. Although the inclusion of the Lower Fillmore area in this successful commercial activity is impeded by the physical barrier created by the Geary Boulevard Bridge

—The leasing trends within the Lower Fillmore district were district were inconsistent with the Intent of WAA-2, economic development and the creation of business and economic opportunities. The increase in fast-food establishment inhabiting the first-floor office space has resulted in a reduction of opportunities for a community-based business to flourish and sense of community identity to develop

—There were remnants of the Lower Fillmore district's cultural heritage resurfacing, identifying a destination area for music enthusiasts (Jefferson 1994, 2-3).

During our observations in the fall of 2000, parcels of vacant property and empty storefronts could be found along lower Fillmore Street mixed in with newer, out of scale buildings. This is in stark contrast to the building boom that was transforming the rest of San Francisco. While the City did contribute at least $100 million (nearly $550 million in today's dollars) of public money in the area, other sources of investment are necessary to complete revitalization of the district (UCFSF 1963, B-2; SFRA 1964, 29). The City did take the Jefferson Company consultancy's advice in designating the

area a "Historic Jazz District" in order to attract businesses and tourists into the area (Jefferson 1994, 11). In Mayor Brown's 1998 State of the City address he announced that $100 million in city bonds would be floated to help the area and that the Blue Note Jazz Club would be opening, along with another movie theater, on the vacant land between Ellis and Eddy Streets (Brown 1998, 5). But now, almost three years later, construction has not begun.

Rassales, a popular Ethiopian restaurant and jazz bar on California and Divisadero, expanded to the Fillmore because it is one of the key anchor points for the new Jazz Preservation District. With the help of a sizeable loan from the city's Redevelopment Agency, more than $1 million was invested to transform the location at 1534 Fillmore Street (just south of Geary) into a nightclub. The space changed from a neighborhood meat and fish market into a lounge, nightclub, and restaurant with more than 6,000 square feet (Jazz West 2001). But Fillmore Street is still distressed.

Why, after 44 years and hundreds of millions of dollars, is the area still in dire straits? It is simply because the SFRA adopted a vision that was based on the assumption that you can build your way out of a bad neighborhood. And they were unwilling to accept that their presumptions were flawed and prejudiced. Although on the surface they claimed to be acting for the common good, the SFRA sought to push out the undesirable minorities in the Western Addition, in order to hold up property values in surrounding neighborhoods, and provide an opportunity to expand office space along the Van Ness and Geary Corridors at the expense of African American businesses.

The SFRA had opportunities to promote the free flow of pedestrians along a north-south line by using the space above the subterranean Geary Boulevard as a park. This type of project would have also helped to expand recreational opportunities, as described in the plan for WAA-1. The fact that they did not pursue this type of project is further evidence that the City and the SFRA had no intention of rebuilding a vibrant African American neighborhood in the Fillmore. The City and the SFRA were caught in a web of institutionalized racism that allowed them to believe that the Western Addition project was good for the city and that plans were based on objective, race-neutral determinants. They were blind to the flaws and lack of community involvement in their plans, which led to a failed project.

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The Poetics of Security: Skateboarding, Urban Design, and the New Public Space

By Ocean Howell

Skateboarding is a thorn in the side of landscape architects, planners, and building owners; so much so that there are now design workshops that teach a series of defensive architectural tactics for deterring the activity. The type of skateboarding that plagues these architects and the spaces they create, "street skating," has only existed for about 15 years, and in fact was born out of the barren, defensive spaces created by redevelopment. Thus street skating is not only an impetus for defensive architecture, but also a symptom of defensive architecture. Recognizing that redevelopment spaces fostered pathologies, cities and corporations have begun to build more friendly spaces in the past 15 years. But they have been careful to ensure that the spaces are only friendly to a select subset of the public, namely office workers and consumers. It is not only skateboarding that is excluded, but also any activity it is not directly tied to either production or consumption, including, in many cases, simply laying down on a bench. To create such spaces requires detailed knowledge of the minutest details of undesirable behaviors—a knowledge that can only be gleaned through surveillance. Because the resultant spaces appear open but exclude the vast majority of the citizenry, they are not public spaces at all, but rather sophisticated simulations of public space. Although this essay will argue that the negative effects of skateboarding have been exaggerated, the purpose is not to argue that skateboarding should be permitted in public space. It is by virtue of its status as a misuse of these spaces—and because it is a symptom of defensive design—that skateboarding is exceptionally good at drawing attention to the quietly exclusionary nature of the new public space. Ultimately, skateboarding affords an observer glimpses of the larger processes of surveillance and simulation by which public space, both physical and cultural, is produced.

I began skateboarding in 1984, when I was 11 years old, and immediately became a devotee. When I was 18 I became a professional street skater, earning my living from royalties from sales of skateboards that bore my endorsement. The company that sponsored me, Birdhouse, was a small independent operation owned by longtime pro, Tony Hawk. My job was to appear in magazines, videos, and contests using these Birdhouse brand boards to jump down stairs, slide on benches, and generally abuse street furniture in the most skillful and creative way that I could; and by example, to encourage others to do so. I did this professionally for six years, until I graduated from college and retired.

I now work as a junior editor at a publishing house in downtown San Francisco. But I also continue to skate and I contribute essays and stories to a skateboarding magazine called *Slap*. As both a skateboarder and an office worker, my experience of the public space downtown is always split. I unconsciously scan my surroundings for both a place to practice my disruptive sport, and a nice quiet place to have lunch. Of course, when I come downtown to skate, I receive a colder welcome than when I come downtown to work. It is not only police, security guards, tourists, and office workers who treat me differently; but increasingly, I am also treated differently by the design of public space itself. From threatening metal spikes to fortuitously-placed cobblestones, an arsenal of design tactics communicate to me—with varying degrees of subtlety— that skateboarding is not a legitimate public use of these spaces. Skateboarding is what planners and architects refer to as an "urban pathology." So, psychologically, I move through the open spaces of downtown as both a public nuisance and as a legitimate member of the public whose right to eat his lunch in peace is to be architecturally defended.

Taken at face value, there is nothing mystifying or objectionable about this tension. An office worker 'contributes something to society': his labor; an office worker is productive. A skateboarder, on the other hand, gets in people's way and chips up benches; a skateboarder is destructive. Given that the downtown is zoned for commercial use, it is clear why the design of open space should consider an office worker a member of the public and a skateboarder a nuisance; and the purpose of this essay is not to suggest that skateboarding should be permitted in public space. Rather, I intend to inquire into the processes by which public space is produced. Uses, behaviors, and people are compartmentalized in urban centers in the name of efficiency; but since redevelopment this logic has been used to justify mass exclusions and to manufacture an exclusively upscale public sphere. Through the example of skateboarding, this essay will argue that the determination of which activities are legitimately public and which activities are pathological is nearly indistinguishable from the determination of which activities generate profit and which activities threaten profit. Michael Fotheringham, the architect who is presently giving San Francisco's Union Square a makeover, explains how good design should focus on the "'needs and comforts'" of the "'prime client'" (Hansen April 2001, 23). Where designers used to talk about "citizens," they now talk about "consumers." Public space is commercial space.

Literature on cities is replete with the metaphor of public space as the site, the physical embodiment, of democracy. Its purpose is to facilitate interaction between all citizens, not just consumers; it exists to foster debate—even conflict—among the various competing interests that are represented in the citizenry. To these ends, a public space should be both "'physically and psychologically accessible,'" (Loukaitou 1998, 301) as Kevin Lynch would put it, to the public, in all of its unmanageable diversity. The work of William H. Whyte alone provides abundant evidence that when this is accomplished, a space will not need to be managed from the outside—it will regulate itself. Without going

too far into all of the discussions, I will acknowledge here that many critics argue that there has never been a space that unequivocally welcomes the public, that constructions of publicness have always entailed exclusions. Certainly Frederic Law Olmsted's Central Park, one of the most beneficent of all public works, represents a paternal and missionary philosophy of public space. The idea was to manufacture a bucolic idyll in the dense urban center in order to divert the potentially revolutionary passions of the workers away from the industrial system that subjugated them. Allowing the workers to mingle with the elites was to have the effect of civilizing the lower classes. Later, City Beautiful plans—which were always sponsored by corporations (Loukaitou 1998, 17)—sought to 'inspire' good citizenship among the lower classes with grand neoclassical symmetries. Even though these spaces fall short of the ideal democratic space, the fact is that the marginalized were still conceived of as a presence.

While these spaces took it as their duty to gently coerce the dispossessed, thus acknowledging the presence if not the necessity of conflict, the new public spaces have taken up the task of denying the existence of competing viewpoints and the people who advance them. The new spaces take as their ideal not the public space as a site of debate, but the public space as a site of repose for consumers and clients. Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris and Tridib Banerjee point out, in their book *Urban Design Downtown*, how the design metaphors that architects use to describe public spaces have shifted from the 'plaza' and the 'green' to the "'room,' 'terrace,' 'court,' 'garden,'" and other soothing, private spaces (1998, 229).

Skateboarding is not terribly important in the grand scheme of things; it is a young counterculture that admirably seeks to challenge power relations and less admirably seeks to escape from them. But it does provide a unique perspective on the creeping privatization of public space. Homelessness, drug abuse, and prostitution have been around—in various forms and in varying degrees of severity—probably as long as cities have; and they are undoubtedly exacerbated by exclusionary design insofar they are isolated and ghettoized. Skateboarding is clearly different from these urban pathologies in that it is a recreational activity, not a sustaining activity. But it is further different in that it is not only an impetus for exclusionary architecture, but also the direct product of exclusionary architecture. Like the Freudian symptom or 'return of the repressed,' skateboarding was born out of the defensive, barren plazas of redevelopment—on the sites where street life was forcibly subverted to property values.

Of course, no one defends redevelopment spaces anymore, and there has been a push for a resurgence of the public sphere in cities. The designers of public spaces in Giuliani's New York, for example, have taken certain of William H. Whyte's recommendations to heart, creating spaces that people want to inhabit. But they have been careful about selecting which people. The redevelopment spaces succeeded in excluding the marginalized people whose neighborhoods they supplanted, but their hostility also warded off the middleclass whose safety the spaces sought to assure. Pleasant spaces have the opposite problem of welcoming everyone. To attract the upscale public while deterring the masses has been a primary urban design goal of the last ten years. This is a complicated task that this essay will argue has only been accomplished with extensive surveillance of undesirable behavior. This information is used to create exclusionary spaces that appear public to the selected users; it is used to simulate a public sphere. Through a discussion of how skateboarding has been appropriated by corporate marketers, this essay will also argue that the cultural space of advertising and public opinion is produced by the same processes of surveillance and simulation.

If it were made plain that the exigencies of capital quietly determine nearly every aspect of every space that people inhabit, many would not accept it. So the job of private interests is to obscure this fact with sophism, cover it with an aesthetic gloss, and demonstrate that the interests of private profit are equal to the interests of the public at large. Accordingly, private interests study and meticulously document any challenging cultural formation—any activity that draws attention to the commercial nature of public space—then vilify it as a threat to the public while simultaneously claiming a sanitized version of the culture's philosophy as its own position. Using the example of skateboarding, this essay will argue that it is according to these joint processes of surveillance and simulation that public space is produced.

Misused Transportation/ Misused Space: A Brief History

Skateboarding was invented in the 1950s in Southern Californian beach towns when surfers tore the T-handlebars off of their scooters and skated on the asphalt banks of the local schoolyards as though they were surfing waves. The sport quickly took on a life of its own, and throughout the 70s people could be found riding in empty backyard swimming pools of vacant houses. The basic move was to ride up the transitioned wall of the pool, slide along the edge, and plunge back down the wall. Soon cities and private companies began building pools exclusively for skateboarders. The most commonly accepted story about the origin of street skating starts with a group of skaters being thrown out of the privately owned Skate City park in Whittier, California in the early 1980s. Apparently they didn't have the money to pay the entrance fee, so they snuck in. After being escorted out, a professional skater named John Lucero led the group

in a kind of sarcastic protest in the parking lot. In full view of the owners of the park and the skaters inside, they began to do tricks on the edges of the curbs, as though they were the edges of a pool. These undesirables came back and did this day after day and soon skaters from inside the park came out to try this new style.

In the early and mid 80s the style expanded out of the suburban parking lot and into the more varied terrain of redeveloped urban centers, primarily Los Angeles and San Francisco. This happened to coincide with America's explosion of personal liability suits and, although *Landscape Architecture* magazine reported in March 1998 that there has never been a successful skateboarding liability suit (Thompson, p. 82), nearly every one of the parks was bulldozed—to be replaced by family fun centers. By and large, the only people who could continue to practice the old style were those who could afford to build private ramps. Thus street skating quickly became the most urban and populist version of the sport: it didn't cost anything except the price of the board itself, and it could be done anywhere there was pavement. In 1999 there were an estimated 9.5 million skateboarders in the U.S. alone (Levine July 26, 1999; 70), and by all accounts, skateboarders are now a strong presence in nearly every modern city, from San Francisco to Osaka to Sao Paolo.

For length reasons, this essay cannot undertake a study of the socioeconomic characteristics of skateboarders. But it is important to note that American skaters are typically from lower middle class families: they are economically stable but don't usually continue their education past high school. And while many influential skaters have come from the upscale suburbs of Marin, Orange County, and the San Fernando Valley; at least as many have come from such neighborhoods as East Hollywood, Gardena, and the Mission.

"Skate and Destroy/Skate and Create"

This sarcastic motto from the late 80s and early 90s serves as a good introduction to the philosophy of street skating. It used to appear on bumperstickers, T-shirts, and skateboards—often one of the halves would appear independently, and often the slogan would appear just as it's written in the header above. The message is that while skateboarders consider what they do to be an art form, they also recognize that skating on street furniture is destructive, but don't feel too troubled by that fact. The reasons that they don't feel much reverence for these redevelopment plazas are first of all that they are disused anyway, and second that they understand that these spaces are actually scripted for use only by office workers, tourists, and conventioneers. Absent from this list are not only the usual suspects—homeless, drug dealers, and prostitutes—but also children, students, old people, or anyone else who does not directly contribute to a corporation's profitability and marketability (Loukaitou 1998, 181-188). As Loukaitou-Sideris and Banerjee note, "the design characteristics commonly present in the plazas—introversion, fragmentation, escapism, orderliness, and rigidity—are consistent with the objectives of control, protection, social filtering, image packaging, and manipulation of user behavior" (1998, 98).

These manipulative, profit-driven spaces make up the vast majority of new public spaces that are being built, and they are usually publicly subsidized through some combination of floor area bonuses, land write-off or write-down, tax abatement, zoning incentives, tax increment subsidies, and any number of carrots (Loukaitou 1998, 84). To spend public money on corporate window dressing— spaces that exclude the majority of the public—is simply a bad deal. But the corporations have the upper hand. A member of the Los Angeles Comunity Redevelopment Agency stated, on the condition of anonymity:

'Our job is to make development happen, not to chase developers away. Developers are spending millions of dollars on a project. They can say "If you make us build this there is no way we can continue," or "Public open space may look nice, but it has inherent security problems"' (Loukaitou 1998, 95).

David Martin, the architect of the Willshire plaza in the Bunker Hill redevelopment area, has the solution to this dilemma: you make buildings and plazas in such a way that "'the corporate edifice and the very expensive building facades ... intimidate homeless'" and other unintended users (Loukaitou 1998, 146). Like the interior designs of fast food restaurants that use garish colors to ensure that no one will want to linger and tie up seating for other customers, these new spaces are designed to keep commerce (people) moving along. Architect Nathaniel Owings said in support of redevelopment's public spaces, "the key ... is not merely a conglomeration of goods. Rather it is good circulation—ease of movement ... [P]otential shoppers should be occupied in noticing displays of goods, not in watching out for people who might bump into them" (1969, 129). These are literally consumer spaces: they are intended to be passively and briefly consumed, but they invite no participation.

Arguing with cops, security guards, and concerned citizens about what public space is, and should be, is a right of passage for skateboarders. They understand that public space is precisely about bumping into other people—it is about interacting with the public, not with goods. They understand that the design of this verisimilar public space is a selective discourse that classifies its users, defining as the legitimate public those who consume and

pathologizing those who put the space to any other use. Street skating is a counter-discourse, a challenge to that construction of publicness.

Skateboarding is not protest or activism, but is more like what Michel de Certeau described, in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, as a 'spatial practice.' Skateboarding is "a certain play within a system of defined places" (1984, 106). As the public space of the Central Business District (CBD) becomes more authoritarian, skateboarding "'authorizes' the production of an area of free play on a checkerboard that analyzes and classifies identities. It makes places habitable" (1984, 106). William H. Whyte provides a good example of a spatial practice, in his film *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, when he affectionately shows how people can find a place to sit even where they are architecturally discouraged from doing so. In a demonstration of remarkable adaptability and quotidian creativity, people place small blankets over spikes that are meant to intimidate them, balance on intentionally narrow ledges overlooking fountains, and remain perched on canted ledges that are designed to deposit them right back onto the sidewalk (1998b). Whyte laments the way that open spaces enhance a corporate image while alienating the public that they nominally serve. In one scene he shows an intentionally solitary bench, and announces that "this is a design object, the purpose of which is to punctuate architectural photos" (1988b). But because there are no obstructions (people), these are precisely the types of benches that skateboarders love to inhabit. In spite of the corporate space's disregard for the public, a small, resourceful portion of the public can still find a way to put the space to public use.

An even better comparison can be made between skateboarders and the Situationists, a group of European Avant Guard artists, architects, and theorists who were prominent during the 1960s, and who influenced the thinking de Certeau and Henri Lefebvre. The Situationists hated the mechanized, rationalist urbanism of such figures as Hausmann and Le Corbusier, which sought to "suppress incidents and places that contradict narratives of authority" (Saddler 1998, 99). Prominent Situationist Guy Debord referred to the products of this brand of capitalist urbanism as 'Spectacle.' It was this urbanism that systematically replaced unselfconscious, anarchic, and deeply human places like the old Les Halles market, with proscriptive, consumerist, and dehumanizing places like the new Les Halles shopping mall and entertainment complex. So in order to create space for humans in this city of spectacle, the Situationists engaged in guerilla resistances: drift and *détournement*.

The *flâneur* -inspired drift is an act of wandering the city according to no set route and no set schedule. The Situationists believed that one would discover the truths of the city by immersing oneself in its streets without ever going anywhere, without participating in the production of capital; the slogan was "'Work to Make Ourselves Useless'" (Saddler 1998, 92). The French word *détournement* can be translated as any one of the following: "'diversion,' 'rerouting,' 'hijacking,' 'embezzlement,' 'misappropriation,' and 'corruption,'" (Saddler 1998, 17) and all of these meanings apply. Examples of *détournement* can be found in the Situationist art forms of graffiti and pastiche, both of which take rigid systems (maps, the new public space, mainstream newspapers) and hijack them, misappropriate them for their own diversion. To go for a skate is to go for a drift, to explore the streets looking for hidden places, opportunities for creative misappropriation; it is to recombine the artifacts of production and reinterpret the city for oneself. Skateboarders have even hijacked the sanitized Les Halles for their own art and diversion. As Situationist thinker Constant Nieuwenhuys put it, "'human beings were born to manifest themselves'" (Saddler 1998, 97), even in places as lifeless as the new Les Halles.

Redevelopment and the Fruits of Xenophobia

When telling the history of street skating, it is impossible to overemphasize the importance of the Golden Gateway Redevelopment area in downtown San Francisco. Until 1961, it was a 51-acre produce market run by Italian immigrants from North Beach, with streets reminiscent of the old Les Halles. Led by the autocratic and deeply classist Justin Herman, the Redevelopment Agency designated the area as "blighted." (This is a medical term that describes a spreading pathology; and for Redevelopment agencies nationwide, it was all that was needed to invoke eminent domain.)

The type of street skating that was practiced in the suburban parking lot was, by and large, limited to curbs and sidewalks. Street skating as urban pathology—the type that consistently damages planters, handrails, fountains, and anything else that is found in a city street—was born in the Golden Gateway, and the Bunker Hill Redevelopment area in Los Angeles. Were it not for these redevelopment projects, it is possible that skateboarding would have never mutated past its more benign form. As Justin Herman constantly noted, the produce market was crowded and chaotic; it would have been no more possible to skate there than it is in San Francisco's present-day Chinatown. You cannot skate in a fine-grained city, you need the auto-friendly super block (which is why skateboarding was so easily adapted to suburbs). Also, skateboarding is very difficult: it took thousands of hours to develop all of the permutations that exist today. The defensive architecture of redevelopment was a laboratory for skateboarding: vast plazas, full of modernist architecture, that were empty most of the time.

Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM) prepared the original plan for the Golden Gateway, and in 1971 the centerpiece became Lawrence Halprin's Justin Herman Plaza. Popularly known as "EMB," short for Embarcadero, this plaza was "the birthplace of much of what makes up modern street skating" (Carroll June 1999, 72). It was skateboarding's "Holy Land" (Carroll June 1999, 72), as the addresses on the tickets that the police issued attest: Buenos Aires, Argentina; London, England; Naples, Italy; and Saga, Japan. (Costantinou June 14, 1999). They all came for EMB. Its redesign in 1999 prompted an outpouring of somber, indignant eulogies worthy of the old Penn Station.

Another prominent feature of the Golden Gateway is a series of skyways that connect office buildings to apartments to elevated plazas to John Portman's muzak-filled Embarcadero Center. The plazas are eerily pleasant but they present monolithic, two story walls to the street. The urban critic Trevor Boddy notes, in his essay "The Analogous City," that the historical precursor to this formation was the Medici family's skyways over 16th century Florence (1999, 128). They were built as an escape route during street fighting, and as an elevated point from which the family could safely observe the vitality of the streets without having to participate in them. Right around the corner from EMB, there is a fortified skyway entrance to the plaza surrounding SOM's Alcoa building. Ironically, this defensive design destroys the self-regulating potential of the space by reducing the number of eyes in the space, and thereby creates a vacuum that can be populated by indigents. This space is known as "Hubba Hideout"—"hubba" is slang for drugs. When skateboarders took the place over, they actually made it safer.

The creative misuses of architecture that were developed here quickly spread all over the world through the skateboard media. If you go to any modern city in the world—whether you speak the language or not—and say "EMB" or "Hubba," the local skaters will take you directly to their city's equivalents: a plaza with deep steps and a tall ledge going down stairs. Although most skaters don't

know the full history of redevelopment, the San Francisco skaters do know that Justin Herman was a classist, if not a racist; and they treat him with sarcastic reverence. *Slap's* eulogy for EMB was titled "Remembering Our Old Pal Justin Herman." There is no doubt that it would have infuriated Herman to learn that he had unwittingly helped to create a whole new urban pathology, but as William H. Whyte points out in *City*, "fears proves itself" (1988a, 158).

Voyeur-god vs. the Spatial Practitioner: Transcending Public Space/Creating Public Space

The majority of America's important skatespots are the products of redevelopment. And it appears as though the firm with the most spots to its name is SOM (often in partnership with William Wurster), a firm to which Le Corbusier himself served as consultant. This list includes the Alcoa Building's plaza, the Daley Center and the Sears Tower in Chicago, and—through their redevelopment plans—Justin Herman Plaza and Robert Venturi's Freedom Plaza in Washington DC (though the final plaza is not shaped as SOM envisioned it). SOM's most prominent principal, Nathaniel Owings, felt that "Cities are the measure of our ability to be civilized" (1969, 142); and that the measure of a city, was its public space. This, he argued in his book, *The Spaces In Between*, is "the ultimate purpose of planning" (1973, 173). Owings was suspicious of the car and the suburbs because they atomized people, eroding the public sphere that he so wanted to foster. But the sincerity of his desire to improve the ground-level space of the city was matched only by the irreconcilability of his removal from that space.

To get a sense of this removal, one can flip through Owings's beautifully illustrated book, *The*

American Aesthetic. About half of the two hundred or so images are unpeopled aerial photos of cities, while the other half are sweeping aerial photos of nature. This visual absence of street life is surprising at first, given that Owings's writing displays an almost activist commitment to urban public space. But this incongruent agglomeration—an abstract bird's eye city perspective meets street-level social justice meets pristine nature—is the very heart of Owings's philosophy.

In *Spaces*, Owings describes how while walking the paths around his Big Sur cliff house, Wild Bird, an epiphany shows him that "the high soaring, wide view of the hawk gives clear judgement, with high perspective, on the Earth and on the Being and on the Everything-Else-But-Me" (1973, 275). Owings believed, with gnostic zeal, that it was this hawk's view that would help him to combat the evils of the mechanized city (1973, 276). For de Certeau this perspective of the "voyeur-god" (1984, 93)—looking down on the Earth and on the Being and on the Everything-Else-But-Me—is a theoretical "fiction" which allows the architect to remain "aloof"; it is a "lust to be a viewpoint and nothing more" (1984, 92). The "condition of possibility" of this "solar eye" perspective, "is an oblivion and a misunderstanding of . . . the murky and intertwining daily behaviors" (1984, 93) that de Certeau believed were the true architecture of the city. The difference in perspectives here is between the city as an uninhabited network of rational symmetries and the city as a nearly illegible intermingling of the daily practices of people's daily lives

Owings's purely 'top-down' approach did cause him to misunderstand urbanites' daily lives. After his hawk's view epiphany, he returned to San Francisco only to learn that "an Afro-haired youth" had "emerged from the gloom of the Mission District into the sunlight of Market Street, a street which marks the edge of the business district," and "sprayed bullets indiscriminately" (1973, 278). Shaken by the story of this young man, Owings re-

solved that he "would try to help the others of his kind to live within a tolerable habitat . . . and I returned to the sanctuary of Wild Bird" (1973, 278). There he pondered "calyptte anna" (humming bird) and a yucca plant, and another epiphany showed him that he had to introduce the openness of nature into the supposedly stifling density of the city (1973, 278). One would hope that Owings would have responded to the shocking story of the young black man from the "gloom of the Mission," by actually going into the Mission and spending time on its streets. ("Must one finally fall back into the dark space where crowds move back and forth?" [de Certeau 1984, 92]). Instead he went to the sanctuary of Wild Bird to ponder nature and fantasize about what the city should look like from the perspective of God.

From this remote height, Owings could not perceive the contradiction between his desire to improve the environment of the urban dispossessed and his desire to "bring suburban ease to downtown" (1969, 129). From the cliffs of Big Sur, Owings was too far away to see that his altruism was incompatible with his belief that slums were "festering sores" (1973, 117). Had he spent time in people's neighborhoods, it is unlikely that he would have argued that "the high rates of mortality and disease among slum populations stem not only from contagion, poor medical services and malnutrition but also from a kind of body despair. People do

take on the quality of their surroundings" (1969, 123). This specious, degeneration theory-inspired logic seems to suggest that it wouldn't make too much difference if these populations were provided urgently needed and long denied social services. The obvious conclusion is "that there are no wise solutions short of tearing it all down and starting over" (1984, 99). From the cloistered perspective of the voyeur God, Owings could not see that this program was anathema to his most deeply held belief that "What we do must be done out of love, not fear" (1973, 286).

Owings ends his introduction to *Spaces* by declaring that
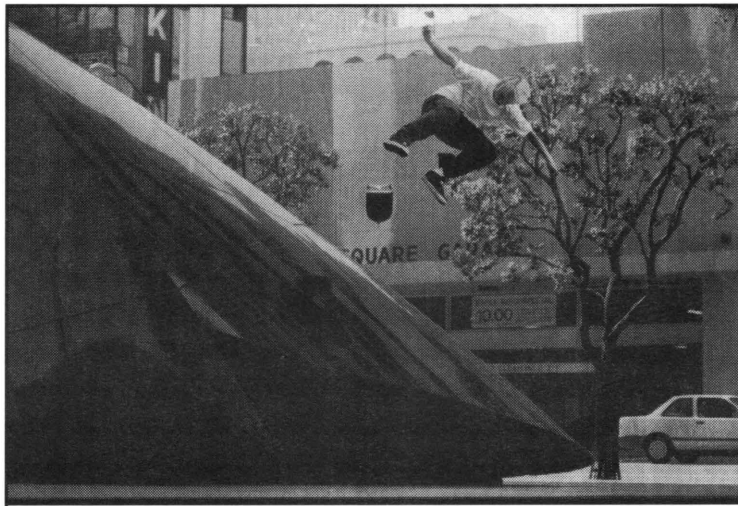
Keith Hufnagel photographed by Gabe Morford. ©Morford.

nonarchitecture—open spaces—will be the objective, and the buildings will simply frame them. We can use the oldest of all forms, yet one which is considered new today: we can reintroduce into our crowded cities the open space—the plaza—where man can dance, celebrate, and experience the joy of living in the spaces in between (1973, x).

It is not clear how he intended to encourage this celebration of life by providing such barren spaces, but he turned out to be successful in spite of himself, as this photo will attest.

This is another of SOM's gifts to skateboarding: the AP Gianini Plaza at the Bank of America building in downtown San Francisco. It is an enor-

mously unpopular corporate space, famous among urbanists for its disregard for sunlight and for being generally inhospitable; the 1971 Urban Design Plan for San Francisco uses the plaza as cautionary example (p 88). In keeping with Owings's gnostic, aerial perspective, the Japanese artist Masayuki Nagare's massive black sculpture on the north end of the plaza is named "Transcendence." But from the street level perspective, the perspective of people's everyday lives, this sculpture is didactic and pretentious; San Franciscans have always disdainfully referred to it as the "Banker's Heart." Skaters see nothing so high-minded as 'transcendence' in this object; instead they see an opportunity to celebrate the messy vitality of the street, a chance to reaffirm the chaotic daily life that this object seeks to transcend. This space as a whole instructs its users to briefly observe this sculpture commemorating the rejection of street life, and move along. Like Situationist graffiti, skating in such a space amounts to "'words of refusal or forbidden gestures'" (Raoul Vaneigem quoted in Saddler 1998, 97).

This photo of Keith Hufnagel, taken by Gabe Morford, is one of the culture's best-known images, and served to popularize the Banker's Heart as a spot. But when Ken Kay gave the plaza a makeover in 1996, he obstructed the approach to the sculpture with what he called a Japanese Garden—intended to "thwart skateboarders" (Leccese November 1998, 80). Once again the Banker's Heart was condemned to be almost universally unappreciated by the public. In justifying the makeover, Kay stated that the plaza had been "one of the most hostile urban spaces" in the city, "a catalog of the design mistakes of the 60s" (Adams December 3, 1997). And no one argued with him. But in making the space less hostile, he has limited the scope of its use. The design mistake that he has rectified is not that of excluding the public at large, it is that of inadvertently letting the wrong people in. Kay even ran architectural design workshops titled
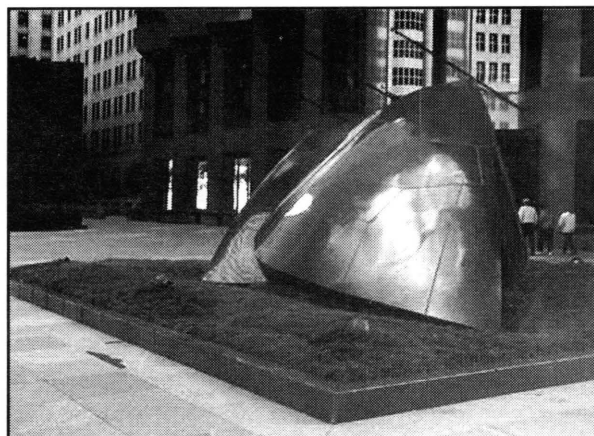
Ken Kay's new Giannini Plaza, still one of the most hostile spaces in the city.

"Banish the Boarders," advertised in the commerce-intensive *Downtown Idea Exchange* (January 15, 1998; 4).

Like many of SOM's spaces, Giannini Plaza failed because no one wanted to be there—least of all the white, educated office workers whom the design was trying to lure back from the suburbs. And urban critics have been unforgiving, lavishing such spaces with descriptions like paranoid, cruel, wasteland, bunker, citadel, fortress. But how to appeal to the office workers, conventioneers, tourists, and potential business tenants without simultaneously appealing to the undesirables? And how to deter the protestors, restless young people, drunks, and underemployed without simultaneously deterring the brown baggers?

The Makeover: New Public Space from Punishment to Discipline, from the Fortress to a Poetics of Security

In his great book, *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault narrates the history of technologies for maintaining order as an evolution from cor-

poral punishment to internalized discipline. Authority has done away with the scaffold and the yoke because they arouse sympathy for the criminal/victim, and thereby reveal the criminality of authority itself. Order in an industrialized society, then, is maintained on the principles of Jeremy Bentham's prison, the Panopticon. This design allows prisoners to be seen from a central tower, but does not allow the prisoners to see who is in the tower, which is at the level of the cells, not elevated, so that there is never any place to hide. Unlike the authority that the prisoner knows is administered from on high, this invisible authority has insinuated itself into every recess of a prisoner's space, and finally into his consciousness. Because they assume that a pervasive and unverifiable authority can watch their every move, the prisoners will behave *themselves*, internalize discipline. Mike Davis's brilliant Fortress LA analysis is largely Foucault's Panopticism theory applied to the physical space of the Los Angeles CBD.

I had a harrowing experience about six years ago that illustrates the ineffectiveness of corporal punishment, and ultimately, the problem with transparently defensive architecture. A few friends and I were skating with at least 15 other people in Union Square in San Francisco late at night when a squad car tore into the square and sped towards us. My friends and I got away, but I later heard that several people were tackled, arrested, and taken to jail—just another night in a sweep that had been going on for some time. While we were catching our breath, a 30-something couple in expensive eveningwear rushed up to us. The man yelled, "They could have run one of you over! You should report that!" I walked away from the scene feeling emboldened, and the couple walked away feeling less secure in their own police. As with dozens of other people who witnessed the scene, I believe that the couple also left wondering about the nature of public space.

Chasing people with squad cars and tackling people in the street is counterproductive to regulating behavior. In terms of architectural strategies for
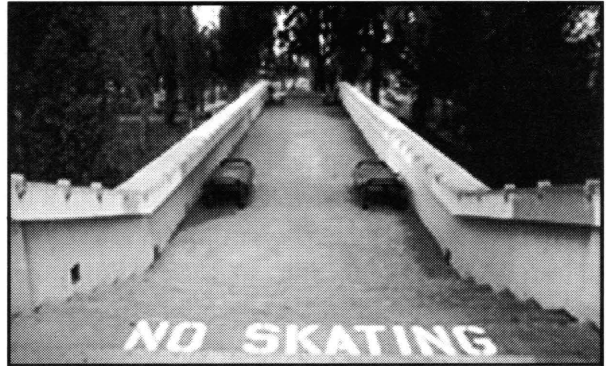

"Hubba Hideout." A skyway entrance to the plaza surrounding SOM's Alcoa Building.

discouraging skateboarders, the design tactics illustrated here similarly have all the subtlety of tackling someone in the street. An architect at the Department of Public Works told me that they refer to these metal clips as "pig ears." It becomes difficult for police and planners to assert that skateboarding is a public incivility, when they fill public spaces with deterrents that are only slightly more benign than those that are used to keep pigeons off of ledges. The incivility appears to be less on the side of the skateboarders than on the side of public space itself. One citizen who described herself as "a middle-aged lady with a bad leg" wrote to the Editor of the *Examiner* to complain that the pig ears "are far uglier and distracting than the skateboard marks," and are "so mean spirited!" (Fuller December 20, 1999). Regardless of which side of the argument you come down on, these tactics provoke questions about the publicness of public space. For the purposes of maintaining order, it would be better if these questions were never asked at all.

Like the eyes inside the tower in the Panopticon, these disciplinary tactics are only effective if they are pervasive and unverifiable. The redesign of the Philip Burton Federal Building—the 1996 winner of the prestigious San Francisco Prize—provides a good example of this logic. The

plaza needed to be redesigned because it was a gusty place to have lunch, because skaters misused it, and because a terrorist could drive a bomb up to the front door, as one did in Oklahoma in 1995. The sponsors of the contest, the Government Services Agency and the SF MOMA, knew that the public would not accept too militaristic a design. The GSA project executive said "'We didn't want to make the building a fortress.' . . . The resulting competition brief bore the title 'The Poetics of Security'" (Nyren February/March 1999).

The logic of a Poetics of Security dictates that, in order to be effective, a design must be proscriptive, but appear humanist. In Mike Davis's terms, a space cannot be transparently militaristic; it must instead deploy ever more refined ruses of discipline. In most respects the resulting design does succeed in being accessible yet defensible, cozy yet 'surveillable.' The desire to defend federal property against terrorist attack is completely sensible. But looking at the details like those pictured here, it becomes clear that the space also defends against
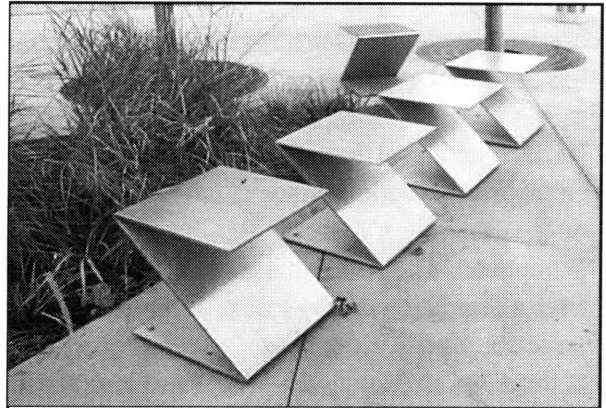
The design of the Federal Building Plaza discourages public speaking and laying on benches. These benches even discourage users from facing their companions—and they certainly discourage people from lingering.

This bench prevents its users from laying down. It also prevents skateboarders from sliding across its edge.

those who might skateboard, or even lay down, on one of the benches.

It is telling that in describing the design, the judges gave none of the standard lines like "it will be a benefit to the entire community." Rather, they said that it "improve[s] not just a little corner of the city, but a little corner of our consciousness;" it "tell[s] us something about who we are and where we are" (GSA 1998). This space studies and classifies its users, dictates to them whether or not they are a legitimate member of the public, improves their consciousness, tells them who they are.

It so happens that the design doesn't do a good job of telling skateboarders who they are right up front. It leaves a number of possibilities open to them; and the managers were forced to resort to more corporal deterrents. Because there was a lapse in the design, another healthy debate about the publicness of the space ensued. In an editorial local pundits Matier and Ross smugly noted that even though the taxpayers had spent three million dollars to keep the terrorists out, they were unable to keep the local skaters out (November 8, 1999). I'd guess that Matier and Ross believe that the skaters should

The sign here indicates that "anti-rolling devices have been installed for your safety." Unlike the aggresively spraypainted "NO SKATING" sign, skateboarding is here more compassionately pathologized.

be kept out. Regardless, skateboarding has instigated the disclosure of a fact that this design is laboring to obscure: people are being kept out.

On the site pictured to the right, skateboarding has stirred a more pointed debate about public space. This is the Ribbon of Light sculpture, a series of cement blocks that run the length of the Embarcadero. The architects originally wanted to build ramps and banks into it, but the city protested that it would it attract skateboarders. When it was finally built in 1996, the Ribbon was hailed by the chairman of the San Francisco Arts Commission, Jill Manton, as "art as an environment instead of art as an object" (Gillette April 1996, 83). The opposition that Manton draws between environment and object gets right to the heart of the issue. Is public art to be an environment that people inhabit, or an object that people passively consume? For one of the three architects of the project, Stanley Saitowitz, it is clear that art is to be an object. In apparent contradiction with Manton's ideas about the piece, Saitowitz views the line of the ribbon as being like the centerline on a road which "'tells cars

how to behave.' The line, in this version, would tell pedestrians 'how to behave'" (Gillette April 1996, 86). Not only is the public not invited to participate in the ribbon, the public is also to take direction from this piece of art.

As for the skateboarders, Saitowitz feels that they "have taken to it in the most unpleasing way. I try to talk to these people. I say, 'Can't you understand you're ruining something that belongs to you, the people?'" (Adams December 20, 1995). For my sensibilities, Saitowitz loses his argument before he even begins by identifying skateboarders as "the people." His didactic tone begs the question: who determines the meaning of public art and public space? Is it the public or the artist? Saitowitz seems to believe that, as the artist, his interpretation of the piece is the legitimate interpretation. But with or without his blessing, "the people" will interpret
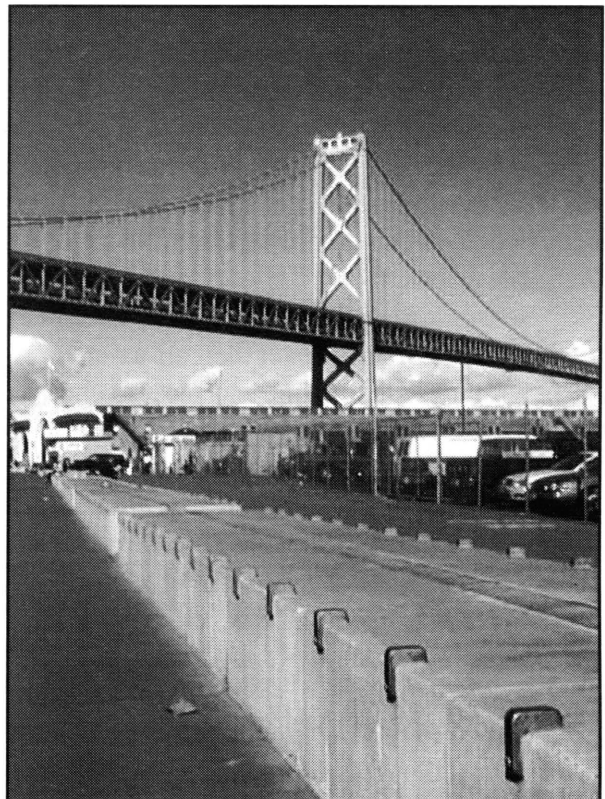

The Ribbon of Light.

art in public space—which is as it should be. As de Certeau would put it, Saitowitz 'transmutes the misfortune of his ideologies into ideologies of misfortune' (1984, 96). Saitowitz's case is not helped by the fact that the sympathies of the other designer of the Ribbon, Barbara Stauffacher Solomon, are on the side of the people, on the side of art as environment. "'I love it that the skateboarders love it, and Stanley hates it that the skateboarders love it'" (Gillette April 1996, 100). In describing why she loves that the skateboarders use it she says, simply: "'It's part of the world'" (Adams December 20, 1995).

The third artist on the project, Vito Acconci, is an outspoken critic of art-as-object. Because this conception of art promotes the "safety of the panorama," disciplines the body, and reinforces "dominant class" relations, Acconci responds with spaces that encourage chaos (2000a), that "express a minority voice," and act as a "cancer" (pathology) on the dominant space (2000b, 176). "Our goal is to make spaces that free people—to make devices and instruments that people can use to do what they're not supposed to do, to go where they're not supposed to go" (2000a). He is presently building a skateboard park in an old factory in Avignon, France.

Solomon and Acconci could not have been pleased to see the city cover their art-as-environment with pig ears. No one was pleased about it: they make a farce of a work that was intended to be "expressive of the democratic spirit and the working-class history of the area" (Gillette April 1996, 83). Skateboarding has here stirred a high profile debate about the publicness of public space, a debate taken up architects, citizens, the *SF Chronicle* and *Examiner*, and *Landscape Architecture Magazine*.

Now we come to a space that has had more success in eliding this debate, the plaza at 50 California St. This is a famous skateboard spot, popularly know as "Brown Marble," where arrests and
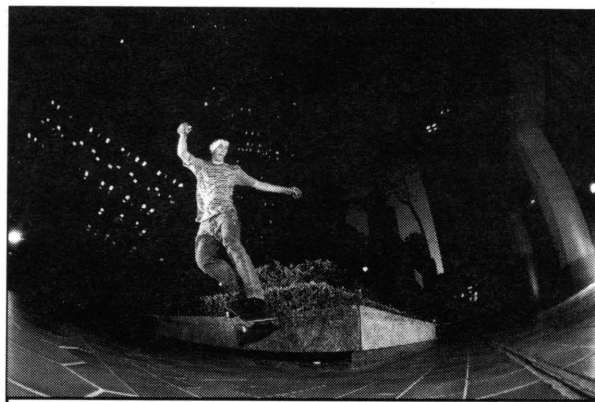
50 California Plaza, "Brown Marble," in the early 90s.

scenes like the one I described in Union Square were once common. No longer. The police haven't had to say a word to a skater in Brown Marble for some time because there isn't any brown marble there anymore. It's now a series of rounded, faux-limestone benches with arm rest-like cornices strategically placed every couple of feet, so as to discourage the slide of a board across its edge (Kay 1998, 4).

In a classic Foucauldian turn, Ken Kay (the architect who remade the Banker's Heart Plaza) has built the police force into the design itself. The result of extensive surveillance, the design predicts every potential movement of a skateboarder through the plaza, literally down to the level of individual gestures. The design erases the very potential for the presence of this subset of the public, and thereby has erased the possibility of questions about the publicness of the space. Finally, like the addition of volleyball courts in Berkeley's People's Park, a Starbucks was planted in the space to intimidate the undesirables and attract the brown baggers. Loukaitou-Sideris and Banerjee report that the vast majority of such plazas' users are white, educated office workers between the ages of twenty and fifty (Loukaitou 1998, 183). It is only this selected public that is permitted to experience this space as psy-

The newer, friendlier 50 California Plaza.

studied and measured the minutest gestures of skateboarders in order to obviate their behavior. These cobblestones obstruct the approach to the bench, and these axons (the divots) are precisely the width of the baseplate of a skateboard truck, which means that when someone attempts to slide the edge, they will be locked in place. But unlike pig ears, these design elements could easily be the architect's poetic license. Because the new Ferry Plaza understands its potential pathologies in such micro-scopic detail, the space appears more public. Though this was also a very expensive project, Matier and Ross will not be writing any sarcastic articles about this space. It's just there.

Public Space: "Right to Pass by Permission, and Subject to Control, of Owner"

chologically accessible, transparently public.

Still, some of the more alert members of the selected public are aware that the design of 50 California is exclusionary. The new Ferry Plaza, however, has no need of inappropriate cornices. The architects, ROMA, had inadvertently built other skatespots: Pier 7, a few hundred yards away in San Francisco; and 3rd St. Promenade in Santa Monica. Determined not to let it happen again, they

Because I was curious about how the designers of some of these details felt about them, I tucked in my shirt and took a trip to the San Francisco Department of Public Works. I spoke to two landscape architects both of whom were very solicitous. One was acutely aware that "San Francisco is the most famous skatespot in the world"—this was the architect in charge of everything-proofing the city: skateproofing, bumpproofing, graffitiproofing, and so on. My line of inquiry was 'how do you deter unintended uses of a space without making the space hostile?' The most important element, they told me, was visibility; there can't be any places to hide. At the same time, the space couldn't be so empty that no one would want to use it. So you try to predict the behavior of undesirables and obviate those behaviors with subtle design techniques: bright lights in corners, narrow benches, rigid circulation patterns, and so on.

None of this was news to me, but I was surprised to see the extent to which these tactics were

Divots and cobblestone: the new Ferry Plaza appears public by virtue of the invisibility of its deterrents.

deployed. There is a rounded ledge in the new Justin Herman plaza, for example, that was designed specifically to be unskateable: it doesn't have any edge to slide. The determination of how convex the surface needed to be would have required detailed measurements. Skaters are quick to spot subtle deterrents like the divots in the Ferry Plaza benches, but even skaters are surprised to hear that this ledge is a deterrent. (Incidentally, they eventually figured out how to skate it anyway.) This architect also showed me a design that she was very proud of: the Haight St. entrance to Golden Gate Park. This entrance used to be filled with drug dealers and indigents of every description, so one would expect a defensive design. Still, I was surprised to learn that every detail of every design element was intended to deter some behavior. The flat handrail is too high to sit on and is buttressed with tight vertical bars so that people can't slip under it to relax on the now completely visible slope, the pillars are constructed out of a textured slate that is unattractive to graffiti artists, the planters are canted and too low to sit on, and so on. The architect pointed out that the real accomplishment here was not only the subtlety of all the deterrents, so much as it was that these deterrents created an airtight network that filtered out unintended users, and controlled the behavior of selected users. It would be something to have this architect lead a walking tour of the city; or better yet, have a skateboarder, drug dealer, homeless, and prostitute lead a walking tour. I believe that people would be surprised to see that this impenetrable network of disciplinary tactics extends over the entire city, with barely visible points surfacing on every block and in every open space.

The other thing that surprised me about my conversation with this architect was the contempt with which she spoke about the undesirables. Speaking specifically about skaters and graffiti artists, she smiled at me conspiratorially and described them as "people of slightly lower mental capacity." (I hadn't identified myself as a skateboarder, only

as an editor.) When talking about the whole range of undesirables, she expressed her envy of the tiny "Private Property" plaques—"Right to Pass by Permission, and Subject to Control, of Owner"—that appear in the pavement in many open spaces, and even on a number of sidewalks that are unconnected to open spaces. "That's what we need," she said, security guards "can just ask anyone to leave at any time." The challenge, as this architect sees it, is to design public spaces so that they convey this same sense of private property, so that they communicate to the undesirables that they may be thrown out at any moment. All this to ensure a pleasant space for consumers. That is the logic of a Poetics of Security.

Although he wrote in favor of gentrification and select redevelopment projects, William H. Whyte also believed that the well-behaved drunk at least had a right to be in public spaces. And he loved the leafleter, the surreptitious vendor, the street performer, the disheveled man soaking his feet in the fountain, and the man just standing there talking to himself—as for the pigeon lady: "every square should have one" (1988b). But Whyte notes how even one of his researchers was asked to leave one of the corporate plazas of New York. The reason that the New York City Department of City Planning can claim Whyte as the primary influence on a resurgence of a public sphere in the new book, *Privately Owned Public Space*, is not so much because of his intentions, but because his research is a body of comprehensive urban surveillance. This is the most important tool in simulating a public space that will welcome the upscale and deter Whyte's characters.

Public Space and the Enforcement Benefits of Selective Simulation

Viewed in this light, it is clear that there is some-

thing of the themepark in these designs. The theme is that of uncontested public space, a unified and pristine public sphere. Certainly there are behaviors that should not be allowed in public space: muggings for example. But what about Whyte's pigeon lady? What about a polite homeless who wants to read on a bench for an hour, then go somewhere else? Different people will have different answers about where the line should be drawn, and these discussions can and should be contentious. These debates are part of what makes a public space public. The presumption that is built into these 'pre-regulated' spaces is that no member of the selected public should even have to consider these questions. The fact that defensive architecture isolates and exacerbates the same problems that it defends against is of little concern (it is in defensive, empty spaces where people are likely be mugged). It's as though the selected public has an inalienable right to be shielded from unsightly social problems, and it is the job of public space to uphold that right. Disneyland's Mainstreet USA simulates a charming turn of the century business district while leaving out the immigrant laborers and TB victims and horse manure, but these new spaces simulate an imaginary present: a glimmering downtown *agora*, without all of the homeless and without all of the troublesome debate.

While downtown is remade as a themed version of a public sphere, this design aesthetic of selective simulation finds its obverse in the peripheral skatepark. I do not wish to seem ungrateful. These parks are built by cities for public use, often with significant input from the skaters themselves. They provide an opportunity for civic engagement for young skateboarders: many an apathetic 16-year-old has become an effective activist in his local town in pursuit of a skatepark. So my purpose is not to suggest that skaters should stop lobbying and cities should stop building.

Still, it is impossible not to notice that skateparks are themeparks. Here in the outskirts,
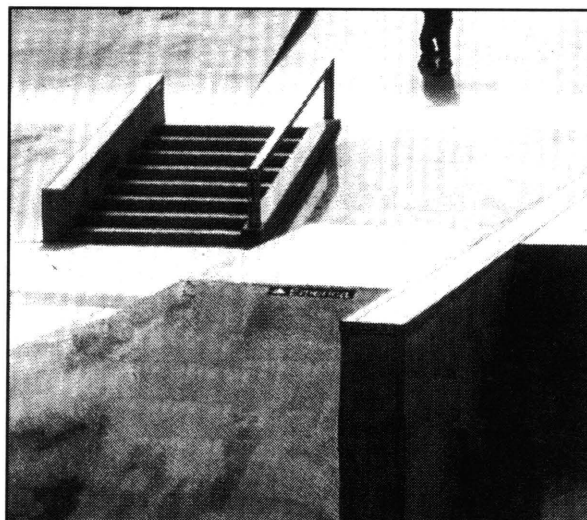
Themed corporate plazas of this type appear in the peripheries of modern cities worldwide.

there are spaces full of handrails, stairs, and benches that are not intended to be held onto, walked down, or sat upon. While the downtowns are being Disnified with spaces like the private-public plaza, the redeveloped "Japan Town," and the merchandise-intensive historic wharf; the peripheries of cities are now the sites of a Lilliputian downtown, a themed post-redevelopment city, there for the destroying. Here angry young skateboarders can have all of the fun of contesting the commercialized city, with none of the fuss of social conflict. Skateparks are Olmstedian safety valves. But instead of defusing the urban-born passions of the masses by returning them to bucolic nature, these spaces offer just the opposite: a return to the idyll of the modern urban center.

The purpose of this simulation is enforcement. George Kelling's and James Wilson's theory of 'broken windows' provides a good way to frame this issue. The idea is that small signs of disorder, like broken windows, encourage more disorder that eventually leads to petty crime that eventually leads to serious crime. So to prevent serious crime, you

must crack down on small-scale disorder. This influential enforcement program is widely credited with cleaning up the subways and streets of New York; and it was applied in San Francisco as Operation Matrix under Mayor Frank Jordan. (I believe that my experience with the police sweep in Union Square was part of Operation Matrix.) It is also used as a justification for the types of micro-scopic exclusionary architectural designs that I have been describing. Though this is not the place to take up an argument with the theory of broken windows, it is worth noting that it is ill-applied to skateboarding. Far from encouraging serious crime, skateboarders are the best possible 'mayors.' Recognizing this fact, the Parisian suburb of Créteil actually replaced the worn out benches in their plazas in order to keep the skaters from abandoning the plazas to the real criminals. An integral part of the broken windows program is to be prepared to win court challenges to what can seem like draconian police tactics. A city that can demonstrate that it has made good faith attempts to accommodate a targeted group has a stronger moral and legal position in court (Kelling 1996, 228). The chips and scuffs that skateboarders leave are, like broken windows, small signs of disorder. Thus stepped up street enforcement and even sweeps often accompany the creation of a skatepark in a city.

Thankfully there have been no outright sweeps in San Francisco since the opening of the Willie Brown skatepark last year. Still, the fact that the park's main champion was former supervisor Amos Brown should suggest that this was not strictly a beneficent act. Amos Brown was a great proponent of the sweep, and he had a distaste for homelessness which baffled many San Franciscans. But he was perhaps even more outspoken on the subject of skateboarding: "'It's wrong for skateboarders to violate the public's safety in the same way that it is wrong for a drug pusher to do so,'" he said. "'I see these two crimes as equal. I don't see one being more severe than the other'" (Layne January

ary 19, 1997). Given that Brown consistently pathologized skateboarding in the most histrionic terms, it's no mystery why this (poorly designed) themepark is located far from transportation in the recesses of the Crocker Amazon district, miles from downtown.

X-treme Sports, X-treme Investing, X-treme Space

To fully appreciate the profit motive in these simulations, it is necessary to take a trip back to the Ribbon of Light on the Embarcadero. Skateboarding has been sanctioned and in fact welcomed with fanfare and city sponsorship on this exact site for the last three summers when the X Games was in town. The X Games is a festival put on by ESPN to showcase what they term "Extreme Sports," and skateboarding has always been the flagship event. Directly behind this pig ear-covered public art, there was a "street course," complete with handrails over empty gaps, benches on top of steep banks, and staircases that led to nowhere. The real public space here—the Ribbon—is militarized and exclusionary, but the contrived public space welcomes the excluded behavior. This is because the X Games boasts sponsorship from every corporation, and brand thereof, that might want to target a young, rebellious market including not only Mountain Dew, Sprite, and M-TV, but also AT&T and the Marines.

Skateboarding is a spatial practice, an everyday activity that challenges commercial space; but the X Games elides this unmarketable fact, representing skateboarding as paroxysmal, macho thrill-seeking—like 'skysurfing': jumping out of an airplane with a snowboard attached to your feet. As pro street skater Jason Dill put it, the X Games is to skateboarding as Kenny G is to jazz. No skateboarder has ever used the word "Extreme" to describe what he does. That word is purely an ad-

vertising strategy—a strategy has been wildly successful. There is "Extreme Pizza" in my neighborhood; Nissan has an SUV called the X-terra; there are firms that offer "Extreme Consulting"; one can read about "Extreme Investing" in online publications; there is even a fund called "Synergy Extreme Canadian Equity Fund."

There is a *New Yorker* article about skateboarding that is authored by a writing teacher in Iowa who had had no experience of the sport, and even he was quick to discern that the X Games was "a dog show for the skateboard illiterates at large" (Levine July 26, 1999; 74). Although the author shows a great deal of admiration for skateboarding—making a protracted and earnest comparison between skateboarding and ballet—there is no respite here from the commodification. He compulsively justifies skateboarding's presence in the high brow, advertising driven space of the *New Yorker* with impressive sales figures—$838 million in 1999! (July 26, 1999; 70). The subtitle of the article tells the whole story: "a multimillion-dollar industry that still can't shake its outlaw image." The assumption here is that to be a multimillion-dollar industry should mean integration and cultural acceptance. The fact that skateboarding is literally illegal draws attention to the choice of the word "outlaw"; it's almost as if skateboarding is illegal because it doesn't make enough money. In any case, the premise is clear: to be profitable is to be a legitimate member of the public.

Looking back through newspaper and magazine articles about skateboarding, it begins to seem that skateboarding was in fact illegal by virtue of being unprofitable. The first successful X Games was in 1995 and the pre-95 articles were typically discussions about why skateboarding needed to be banned; namely because the skaters were obstreperous punks, gang members, or petty criminals who got in people's way in the commercial districts. After '95 even such sage publications as the *Christian Science Monitor* began advancing the misunder-

stood-good-kid perspective, skateboarding as a healthy alternative for 'at risk' youth (Sappenfield August 15, 1995). As the LA Times observed last year, "skateboarding, once seen as an outlaw sport of hooligans and underachievers, is becoming downright legitimate" (Husted December 4, 2000). Like the *New Yorker* essay, all of these articles go on to discuss X Games and sales figures. These articles—before and after—were discussing the same group of people, maintaining the same culture; skateboarding was the same illegitimate, pathological activity that it had always been. The only difference was that corporations had devised a way to profit from it.

Another major turning point in the popular perception of the sport was a 1998 Nike ad campaign that showed metal bars obstructing home plate on a baseball diamond, a golfer being chased off of the green by a cop. "What if all athletes were treated like skateboarders?" the copy challenges. Why are golf and baseball considered legitimate public activities while skateboarding is considered a pathology? The same images could have been accompanied by the question 'what if everyone was treated like homeless?' were it not for the fact that homeless don't usually have disposable income.

Nike ran this campaign because of a skater demographic bulge and because skateboarders only bought shoes from companies owned by other skateboarders. In fact, in the early 90s, skateboarders bought their equipment, shoes, and clothes almost exclusively from a handful of small, skater owned and operated companies. Their loyalty was fierce and Nike was not welcome. Even more troubling, these skate shoes—like Etnies—were quickly becoming a casual wear staple in the general public. Nike was losing market share and understood that they had to penetrate the skateboarder's world if they wanted to remain competitive.

They accomplished this by hiring Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, the 'Got Milk?' ad firm. The cultural critic Thomas Frank went to a convention

and heard a best practices presentation on this campaign. He reports in *Harper's* that the advertisers did not set out to decide whether the skaters' "hostility" towards Nike "was justified or warranted but to liquidate it" (July 1999, 78). This "'grass-roots'" campaign—like most young, hip campaigns—was crafted by a group of anthropology PhDs who studied and surveyed skateboarders using ethnographies and other anthropological research methods (July 1999, 78).

There are now successful market research firms that are exclusively devoted to providing "information, research, news, trends, and photos of global youth ages 14-30." The man with the paternal voice who counseled us to buy Ovaltine has lost his job to people who describe themselves as 'cool hunters' and 'guerilla marketers' (the job of a hunter and a guerilla is to inhabit a space with their target without being seen). They have descended from the Madison Ave. office into the street to provide corporations "24/7 coverage" of countercultures. These quotes are taken from the website of a firm that is appropriately named "Look Look." I know a graphic designer who left a skateboarding magazine to work for Old Navy, a company that was also frantically trying to target the skateboarder demographic. He has told me that the design rooms of Old Navy are filled with surveillance-style, long lens, "sniper photos" of skateboarders drifting through the city, walking down the street, living their daily lives.

This combination of surveillance and simulation reaches its creepy, Foulcaldian zenith in the new skateboard video games: Tony Hawk Pro Skater and Tony Hawk Pro Skater 2. To make the Tony Hawk games, Activision paid pros to skate in full-body sensor suits that digitally mapped every microscopic gesture of a skater's style. How far down does this skater crouch before doing a trick, is her elbow bent or straight at the peak of the trick, how close together are his feet when he lands? Using these surrogate spatial practitioners, you can

'detourne' all of the famous redevelopment spaces, including Justin Herman Plaza, the Alcoa Building Plaza's skyway, Philadelphia's JFK Plaza, and many more. In the background you hear an angry cry of " . . . truth devoured / A silent play on the shadow of power / A spectacle monopolized / The camera's eye on choice disguised." These overwrought, but sincere, lyrics are by the anarchist band Rage Against the Machine; the song, "Guerilla Radio," is the video game's theme music. Here you don't even have to go to the trouble of traveling to the themed skatepark; for that matter, you don't have to go to the trouble of learning how to skate. You can contest the exclusionary design of the city from anywhere—from a sofa inside a gated community. Thanks to a metonymical slight of hand you can misappropriate the artifacts of capitalist production by immersing yourself into an even purer simulation: a nowhere space, populated only by consumerism. These games have sold over 5 million units.

One could spend a lifetime cataloging these appropriations, and some of them are much more audacious than the skateboarding examples—like the Ghandi 'Think Different' Apple ads which seem to suggest that buying a computer is somehow akin to civil disobedience against violent imperialism, an heroic and revolutionary act. But my purpose is not simply to point out this sleazy sophism; it is to illustrate the process by which cultural space is produced. The process is one of surveillance and simulation, a Poetics of Security. Like exclusionary architectural details, these appropriations proliferate into a tightly knit network, with points surfacing on every block in every city, penetrating nearly every space that people inhabit.

Conclusion: Urban Pathology as Surreptitious Creativity

If skateboarding ever did have the potential

to disrupt the cultural space of media representation, that potential is long since spent. But its capacity to challenge the commercial spaces of the city is untouched. The micro-scopic networks of surveillance continue to insinuate themselves into the smallest recesses of public space. But skateboarding continues to insinuate itself further into the networks of surveillance, seeking out and exploiting even smaller fissures. San Francisco skaters know, for example, that you can continue to skate the ledge at Giannini plaza, provided you don't skate north of the third pillar of the Bank of America building, where you will once again become visible to cameras and guards. Skateboarders know when the security guards work, they know where the cameras are, they know from which direction to enter a

Ken Kay was not completely successful in 'banishing' skaters. Shawn Connelly exploits a crack in the design of 50 California Plaza. Photo © Richard Hart.

space, and they know how slip out of it undetected. Simulations of public space are becoming more sophisticated, but so are the skater's tactics for 'detourning' those spaces, reintroducing into them the debate that has been elided.

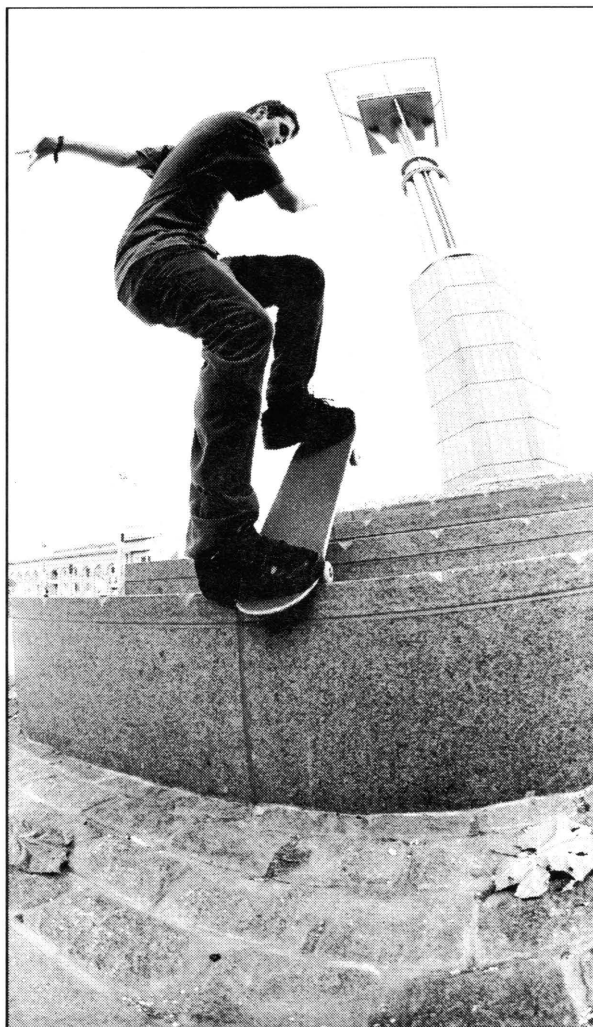The question of whether or not a destructive activity like skateboarding should be allowed in public space proceeds from an assumption that what we have is public space to begin with. In this sense skateboarding is not destructive of public space at all, but rather, productive and creative; it creates public space, if only for a moment. In downtown San Francisco, the network of exclusionary designs has been quite successful in filtering out everyone except the selected public. Most homeless are first of all concerned with sustaining themselves, not in challenging exclusionary architecture, so they have

Public Space: Elias Bingham slides over the cobbletone and the divots in ROMA's new Ferry Plaza. Photo © Richard Hart.

taken the hint and left. Skateboarding, on the other hand, was born out of such architecture, and it is in its nature to challenge defensive design—skaters only stop to think about this fact occasionally, in the same way that a person only occasionally notices that they breathe. In Jaques Lacan's terms, skateboarding is like the protean Real in its relationship to the Symbolic Order of the downtown. Skateboarding is the obverse of defensive design; it is not an attack on exclusionary architecture but in fact, a symptom: an irreducible component of such architecture. This is now a symbiotic and irreversible relationship: skateboarding cannot exist without defensive design any more than defensive design can exist without skateboarding.

Though it is just a young urban counterculture, with all of the attendant solipsism, skateboarding is also an ineliminable residue of the public that persists in spaces that increasingly enforce privateness. When I have lunch downtown I see how for some of my professional colleagues, the skateboarders are simply something interesting to look at. Here skateboarding is what William H. Whyte would describe as "triangulation," one of the seven elements of a successful public space, a focus of conversation and a testament to the cultural diversity and vitality of the city (1988b). Others of my fellow downtown workers feel that skateboarding is an irritant, even a menace. Skateboarding challenges these people to examine their reasons for feeling entitled to such comfort: the comfort of a simulated public space, produced by surveillance, directed toward profit, and enforced by spikes and guards. If nothing else skateboarding makes these folks feel uncomfortable, it gives lie to the simulation and reintroduces debate. As the saying goes, it reminds people that they are in a city, which is, after all, the greatest measure of our ability to be civilized.

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