

SOUTH OF MARKET PROJECT AREA NEWSLETTER

Volume II Issue 1
April 30, 2001

ALONG THE STREET

by Antoinetta Stadlman, Chair, South of Market Project Area Committee

It has been a little over twelve years since the Loma Prieta earthquake struck back in 1989, inflicting considerable damage along Sixth Street and its adjacent alleys. To facilitate the clean-up and repairs to the neighbourhood, an area consisting of approximately six square blocks lining Sixth Street was designated an Earthquake Recovery Zone. This permitted the use of Redevelopment money to perform some repairs, but these funds and Redevelopment were limited to dealing with problems specifically caused by the quake.

Some years after the earthquake, it was decided to upgrade the area to the status of a Project Area, this meant that Redevelopment could focus its energies on removing blight in general, rather than be restricted to dealing with earthquake damage only. In addition, this would expand the powers of Redevelopment to include the use of Eminent Domain if this should be deemed necessary. This last item, however, triggered off a State requirement that a community group be formed that would work alongside and advise Redevelopment in the writing of what is known as the Amended Plan, the document containing the basic rules and guidelines regarding what will be done in the area.

Thus, almost four years ago (April 24, 1997) an election was held, and the membership of the Project Area Committee (PAC) was decided, although our first meeting was not for several months. From the start our primary charge has been to work with the Redevelopment Agency in writing the Amended Plan, and this task is now nearing completion. We have recently had a neighbourhood workshop to obtain additional input, and will be having another sometime soon. The Amended Plan needs to be approved by the Board of Supervisors, and it is expected that we will be there sometime early this Summer.

During the past four years, we have wrestled many times with the question of how to improve conditions along Sixth Street without causing the gentrification and displacement which generally

accompanies Redevelopment activities. Redevelopment's specialty is building "affordable housing", and several projects have been completed, or are in the pipeline. New and wider sidewalks will replace the present ones within a year, and litter removal and steam-cleaning programs have been funded.

While all this is well and good, what also needs to be done is to invest in the economic infrastructure of the community, so that a wide array of neighbourhood-serving business will fill the currently vacant store-fronts along the street. Preserving the mixed use nature of the area is essential if Redevelopment's efforts are to have a long-lasting and positive effect. Failure to adequately support local economic development will have one of two results. We will have a few islands of low-income housing projects surrounded either by an area to which blight has returned, or by a neighbourhood completely transformed by private for-profit development activity.

There is still a good deal of discussion going on regarding the SRO hotels in the neighbourhood, most of which are located on Sixth Street. More than 1000 units of low-income housing are provided by the hotels, mostly to single adults. Most of these are private, market-rate buildings, although there are a few non-profit managed places also on the street. It is recognized that as many of the buildings are almost 100 years old that there are some issues of habitability, and the question of how much rehab and upgrade work should be done frequently arises. Unfortunately, doing even a relatively small amount of work can trigger far more extensive regulations that demand a high level of rehab work, which usually results in a building's losing approximately 20% of its units. Even though Redevelopment is obligated to replace units lost to such upgrades, they are only now finishing the replacement of the units lost to the earthquake a dozen years ago. Thus, with our almost zero-vacancy situation in the hotels, improvements to some units can end up being

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paid for by an increase in the level of homelessness, so the problem of balancing physical improvements against the loss of units remains.

If anyone would like to discuss Redevelopment or other neighborhood issues with me directly, my email is: Antoinetta@mindspring.com

NEW REDEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR SOMA NEARS COMPLETION

by Rhonnel Sotelo, Urban Planner, San Francisco Redevelopment Agency

Dear Community Member,

Over the past several years, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, in consultation with the South of Market Project Area Committee (SOMPAC), has been working to amend the existing South of Market Earthquake Recovery Redevelopment Plan.

This original Plan was adopted solely for the purposes of addressing the damage related to the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake, as well as to provide economic development assistance to neighborhood-serving businesses and related establishments. In an effort to expand revitalization efforts throughout the Project Area, the Plan Amendment would include but not be limited to the following key actions:

- Expand the territory of the original Project Area.
- Adopt redevelopment goals and objectives.
- Allow for redevelopment powers of eminent domain.
- Establish a set of Owner Participation Rules.
- Make changes to the City Planning Code to encourage more affordable housing, non-profit office space, and support a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood.

Presently, the members of the community-elected South of Market Project Area Committee are reviewing the draft Redevelopment Plan and Owner Participation Rules. The PAC and the Agency are both looking to the general public to help determine what changes, additions, or deletions may be necessary to ensure area wide revitalization, particularly along the Sixth Street Corridor.

You have several ways to participate. You may find copies of all the critical documents at the PAC office, located at 1035 Folsom Street. Let your voice be heard at one of four PAC topical subcommittees, regularly attend the General PAC meeting on the 3rd Monday of every month, or write your comments, and send them to me, Rhonnel Sotelo, at the Redevelopment Agency, 770 Golden Gate Avenue, SF, CA 94102, or send via email to Rhonnel_Sotelo@ci.sf.ca.us. The Agency and the PAC will utilize your input to better refine the contents of the Redevelopment Plan and the 20-year vision for revitalization for this area of San Francisco.

Sincerely,

SAN FRANCISCO REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Rhonnel Sotelo

Urban Planner

BESSIE CARMICHAEL STILL NEEDS A NEW BUILDING AND PARK

by Patrice Johnson, Family Support Coord., SOMCC

In 1996 a land swap occurred. Park & Rec now owns the land that Bessie Carmichael occupies between Sherman, Folsom, Columbia, and Harrison. SFUSD owns the land across Sherman Street from Bessie between Cleveland, Seventh and Digital Think. At the time of the land exchange, the plan was to open the new school in 1999. Both SFUSD School Board and Board of Supervisors have passed resolutions prioritizing Bessie. In February 2000 a park plan was approved by the Rec and Park Commission.

The New Bessie Carmichael working group was told in November of 1999 and in February 2000 that SFUSD had \$8 million for Bessie. In August 2000 SFUSD reported that there was no money. November 17, 2000 SFUSD reported plans had been submitted to the state for \$9-10 million.

March 28, 2001 Supervisor Chris Daly co-hosted a community meeting with NBC and the Bessie Carmichael PTA. SFUSD, Park and Rec, Redevelopment, and the Mayor's office were present at the same table for the first time in several years. At this point no department has any funding committed to the project, the state funding process has been delayed. SFUSD plans to finance the school with bond money next fall or spring. NBC is working on a new strategy to get a quality school as soon as possible. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday May 1st from 6:30-7:30 pm at Bessie Carmichael Library (55 Sherman Street).

The New Bessie Carmichael working group is a small group of parents, teachers and neighbors, that formed in November 1999 to hold the School District and elected officials accountable, document the process, and build community capacity in order to get a school that best serves SOMA neighborhood.

If you can help or have questions about the NBC working group please contact **Patrice Johnson at frc@sirius.com or 820-3508.**

FOR SIXTH STREET: TWO QUOTES AND A WISH

by Roger Gordon, Executive Director SOMA Foundation

Anwar Sadat, the Egyptian president who forged the first peace pact between an Arab nation and Israel, said, “He who cannot change the very nature of his thought will never be able to change reality.” Sadat may have been thinking of millennia-old conflicts but he may well have been speaking of things closer to home. Our neighborhood epitomizes the struggle each of us faces to marry our personal concept of “community” with those of everyone else. Unfortunately, as in all societies, it is easier to see and to focus upon differences than upon similarities.

The South of Market Foundation has been working for nearly 10 years to help create a shared view of this community. We want it to be a better place to live, work, invest, shop, learn, play, grow up, and grow old in. We want it to have a unique character and to add its own blend of flavors to the City.

I became the new executive director of the Foundation in mid-March and immediately began trying to learn about the concerns of those who live and work in SoMa. On my first day I visited SRO hotels on Sixth Street, paid visits to shop owners and spoke to people on the streets. Since then I have also met with City officials and community groups to learn the history of this wonderful district – particularly Sixth Street.

What I have seen so far is a great neighborhood, full of committed and involved people and punctuated by areas of blight and urban decay. It is also clear that it is not so much construction guidelines, investment requirements or affordability issues which make Sixth Street’s problems so intransigent, but rather our own personal constraints: the failure to communicate, to understand, and to trust one another. Over the years many groups and individuals have built inflexible and (in their minds at least) unassailable positions on such issues as housing, affordability, beautification, public spaces, zoning, etc. Others are focused on defending their investments in property and businesses, while others are doing well making a living out of solving the community’s problems. Not one of these perspectives is without merit, but neither will they allow for change if they are defended to the hilt without any chance of compromise.

Of course there are significant challenges to overcome in improving SoMa -- and there is certainly reason enough to be wary. But no change process is perfect. Those who ask to see a perfect plan before they will sign on to change are in reality arguing for the status quo. On the other hand, we should keep in mind what George Bernard Shaw said: “For every complex problem there is a simple solution – that is wrong.” Community-building is not an easy undertaking. It calls for balance and active broad-based public participation.

Shaw said: “For every complex problem there is a simple solution – that is wrong.” Community-building is not an easy undertaking. It calls for balance and active broad-based public participation.

Over the next few weeks, the South of Market Foundation will be developing its Economic Development Plan for Sixth Street. We believe Sixth Street can, should and will be the lively, safe and attractive center of the neighborhood. Our goal is to move six new businesses onto Sixth Street between Stevenson and Howard by June 6 of next year (“Six for Sixth”).

This will take more than money or ideas or commitment. Over the past ten years there have been more than enough of all of these. What it will take is compromise.

“He who cannot change the very nature of his thought will never be able to change reality.”

Compromise doesn’t mean abandoning one’s personal objections or concerns – nor does it mean withdrawing from the process. On the contrary, it means increasing one’s involvement and committing to stay with the change process to ensure its success. We are not going to get it right in one attempt. We won’t address all your issues. But we are going to get on base and work from there.

I believe that each of us who has it in himself or herself to form an opinion about Sixth Street has an obligation to participate and I look forward to working with each one of you.

Roger Gordon, Executive Director of the South of Market Foundation, can be reached at 415. 512. 9676 or roger@somafoundation.org

The S-O-S Clean Teams

by Jim Berk, S-O-S Clean Team Coordinator

The members of this program are either adults who are street people or youngsters who participate after school. There is a half-time Summer program for youths. These teams go out into the neighborhood every day to remove the blighting influences of garbage, trash, detritus, and graffiti.

S-O-S's Clean Team program uses local donations and the City's Beautification Fund monies to reward local youth (after school and weekends, and half-time in the Summer) and local adult street people for picking up garbage, trash, and detritus on our sidewalks and streets, and removing graffiti, within the 6th Street community. The program was started in May, 1999, by the founding members of S-O-S (then an association) who spent 1 1/2 hrs a week picking up garbage, trash, and detritus and leafleting the business operators on 6th Street.

In September, 1999, with the assistance of an escorting Police officer, we began the Teen Clean Teams after school, two hours a day for five days a week. Donations from local businesses and residents were sought. It was necessary to expand the work to the whole 6th Street community, 5th to 7th and all the cross streets. Because an aggressive effort was necessary, the work was limited to garbage, trash, and detritus removal; first, on sidewalks only, under the supervision of a S-O-S volunteer.

In December, 1999, we started adult Clean Teams in the same area in the mornings and expanded the garbage, trash, and detritus removal to the gutters. The three member teams were structured to have a reliable Team Leader, and a worker who had worked on the Clean Team before and one who had not, in order to:

- 1) correct or weed out non-productive workers and to recruit some as street organizers in the future;
- 2) and, spread the money around among as many of the needy as funds would allow.

In July, 2000, we received a \$15,000 grant from the Mayor's Beautification Fund and used half of it and local donations to fund Teen Clean Teams (two teams of six youths each for four hours a day for the two Summer months) who could cover the target area every other day. By the end of the Summer, because of the concentration, we had achieved the 'tipping' point on most of our streets. That is, a condition was reached where the clean sidewalks and gutters themselves prevented most of the former garbage, trash, and detritus collecting, and only routine maintenance was needed to keep them clean. Significant streets (foremost 6th Street itself) are still not past the tipping point. Usually that's due to the street culture of those who spend a significant portion of their day on the sidewalks. S-O-S recruits organizers from the street population to modify behavior and remedy that situation.

In September, 2000, we started the second year of after-school Teen Clean Teams, who now operate as two teams: one, the largest, to pick up garbage, trash, and detritus, and the other to paint out and otherwise remove graffiti. The S-O-S Clean Team Coordinator is the Team Leader on one, and another hired adult is the Team Leader on the other. Here, too, as of to date, many of our streets have passed the tipping point and, on those, new tagging is rare. In each case it is a battle, where our quick response and persistence eventually wins out. Work with the Teen Teams led to close cooperation with the local City Parks Recreation Center at 6th and Folsom to work on their grounds and in their building. As a result of the Clean Teams' significant efforts in blight removal, some of the community's property owners have contracted with S-O-S to clean up vacant or neglected properties and charged the Clean Team with performing regular clean-up and maintenance. Accordingly, several vacant lots are also cleaned weekly.

This past Fall also saw the beginning of the up and out aspects of the Clean Teams, teens and adults. Here we find local jobs that could enhance the skills and income of former Clean Team members. We have begun to vouch for, and assist getting, housing for reliable Clean Team homeless adults. We have also instituted a homeless policy and practice whereby we intercede with the Police to protect homeless occupation of certain sidewalks as long as they are good neighbors: that is, keep their area clean; don't block the sidewalk for pedestrians and wheelchairs; and find a restroom for sanitary purposes. We also supply the homeless with brooms and bags to keep their areas clear. Non-cooperating homeless are removed by the Police at our Clean Team Coordinator's request.

We are currently running three member adult Clean Teams for two days a week for four hours a day; four adults in self-supervised problem routes for two hours a day and five days a week in the afternoons; and six teens after school for two hours and five days a week and four hours on Sunday afternoons. We have a base of operations where we store our equipment and begin and end each team's operations. This program is supervised and operated by the

S-O-S Clean Team Coordinator volunteer and usually requires about 26 hours a week plus 4 hours per month for administration. We collect over \$1,250 per month in local donations and are currently requesting additional funding from the Redevelopment Agency for January/June, 2001, and will request more funds from both the Agency and the Beautification Fund for the 2001/2002 fiscal year.

As soon as school is out (in June) we will repeat our Summer Teen Clean Teams. But the emphasis this year will be on graffiti, developing job skills, and promoting up and out. Also, for our public youth work programs (SOMA Rec Center and Bessie Carmichael School), we will help them develop Clean Teams of outstanding students to handle litter and graffiti internally, which are problems in both institutions.

Clean Team Lessons

It's time to draw some conclusions from the almost two years that **S-O-S** has been cleaning up the 6th St corridor (5th/7th, Stevenson/Harrison). One such consideration is the *tipping point*. The Clean Team does more and more and more until one little bit more brings a big change : the scales tip. For over a year we have picked up litter on more streets and more often. Then, last Summer, the Teen Clean Teams did every street every other day for two months. On many of our streets we had then reached the tipping point on litter: that is, we could go a week without a significant accumulation of litter. We call that the maintenance level and is the direct result of our assault on litter. We've learned that a very clear sidewalk inhibits most people from littering.

But we still have our problem streets: the most serious are 6th, Stevenson, Jessie, Clementina, and Shipley; although Clementina reached the tipping point in December. Other streets are close to the tipping point : Mission, Minna, Natoma, Howard, and Harrison. What has changed as a result of our picking up every little bit of litter is people's behavior. We didn't harangue or harass either litterers or business operators but most acted to clear our sidewalks.

We also learned that the legal requirement that each property owner or operator keep their sidewalk litter free is only workable when someone (**S-O-S** here) keeps *all* the sidewalks clear. However good any one operator clears their sidewalk, a careless near-by neighbor, or the wind from blocks away, will defeat their efforts. When the City gives a ticket for litter it is almost always someone else's litter from somewhere else. A team effort is all that works, and only our neighborhood has a voluntary team of merchants, residents, and workers. Congratulations to all of you who have been part of the team and made it work.

The third lesson we learned was that we can't depend on the City Departments to realize these facts. They have been very good at supplying the Clean Team with the physical tools to do our job, but they were willing to do that before the Clean Team existed. They have learned nothing from our experience and have resisted all efforts to coordinate their litter efforts with ours. In fact, they are on our sidewalks without reason, for the law makes it our business to keep our sidewalks clear : they have the streets to do. They will spend millions on litter control on the sidewalks forever, to little long term effect, and without involving the neighborhoods.

Graffiti

We are painting over graffiti on a daily basis now. We don't harm murals. But taggers, with every tag, are saying, "This is a slum". We paint them out to say, "This is no slum!". We can't always match colors very well, so we hope owners and operators will dress up their buildings after we blitz. If you have the right color paint, the Clean Teams can supply the labor. (Buildings in good condition rarely draw tags.)

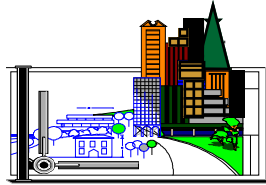
The Summer Intern Program

This summer S-O-S will initiate an Intern Program for participants on the Teen Clean Teams, and other qualified local youth, to place them in full-time, paid Summer jobs in a local business. Local industries like Engineering Surveying, Color Photography Labs, Auto repair Shops, Copy Shops, retail or food operations are willing to participate. S-O-S will recruit and select possible candidates, offer them to the participating businesses, and monitor their progress over the Summer. At the beginning of the school year S-O-S will conduct an exit interview and require a short essay on the Intern's experience in the program which will be submitted by the student Intern to their school as appropriate. It is anticipated that five Interns can be successfully placed in this first year of the program.

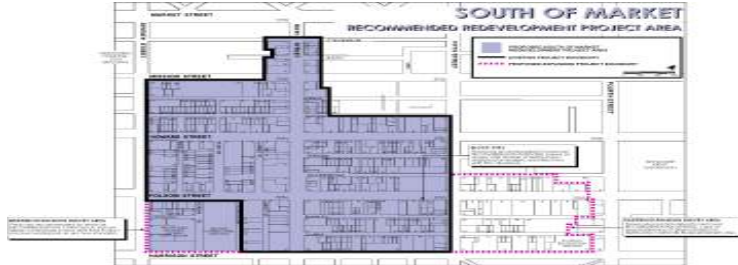
SOUTH OF MARKET PROJECT AREA

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"Serving the South of Market Project Area since 1997"



SOMPAC MEMBERS

CBO: Mercy Housing California/ Amy Bayley	SRO Residential Tenant/ Larry Davis	CBO: SF Tenants Union/ Marlies Hensel	CBO: South of Market Employment Center/ Don Marcos	SRO Residential Tenant/ Antoinetta Stadlman
non-SRO Residential Tenant/ Jim Berk	non-SRO Residential Tenant/ Emilia Diaz	SRO Residential Tenant/ Greg Higgs	SRO Residential Tenant/ Anthony Palmroth	Residential Property Owner VACANT
Business Owner/Service/ Marty Cerles	6 th Street Merchant/Retail/ Christian Gomez	CBO: West Bay Multi-Services Inc Edwin Jocson	SRO Hotel Owner/ Dipak Patel	non-SRO Residential Tenant/ VACANT
Residential Owner/Occupant Leonard Creed	CBO: South of Market Foundation/ Roger Gordon	Business Owner or Representative/Wholesale Henry Karnilowicz	CBO: SF Medical Outreach Program/ Charles Range	Residential Owner/Occupant VACANT
SRO Hotel Owner/ Dr. Mahendra J. Dave				

MAY 2001

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1 SFRA 4:00 PM CITY HALL	2	3 ECONOMICS NOON	4	5	6
7 HOUSING 6:00PM	8 SFRA 4:00 PM CITY HALL	9 CRIME & SAETY 6:00PM	10 CPA 3:00 PM	11 HUMAN SERVICES NOON	12	13
14 EXEC 8:30 AM	15 SFRA 4:00 PM CITY HALL	16	17	18	19	20
21 PAC 6:00 PM	22 SFRA 4:00 PM CITY HALL	23	24 CPA 3:00 PM	25	26	27
28	29 SFRA 4:00 PM CITY HALL	30	31			