

Treasure Island deal gives homeless priority

Redevelopment Agency proposes they get 375 units out of 1,010 when Navy leaves 2 isles

By Gerald D. Adams
EXAMINER URBAN PLANNING WRITER

San Francisco officials primarily envision a cash-producing theme park and at least one resort hotel on post-Navy Treasure Island.

But the Redevelopment Agency has struck a proposed agreement that would give homeless people first dibs on the island's housing. It would provide homeless people with 375 of the 1,010 units on Treasure Island and adjoining Yerba Buena Island.

Gloria Root, who chairs the Treasure Island Citizens Reuse Committee, reacted to the news with concern and resignation.

"The homeless have been at the negotiating table. The private sector has not been at the table," she said with a sigh.

Root said she is worried that the island's prime need is for revenue, which the homeless agreement is unlikely to provide. What with Treasure Island's minimal automobile access and now the prospect of a high concentration of homeless inhabitants, Root acknowledged that no theme park developer is yet in the offing.

Last month, Root's committee and the Planning Commission en-

dorsed a reuse plan recommending a \$300 million theme park and 1,450 hotel rooms for the former World's Fair site and Yerba Buena.

Housing, the report added, should be reserved for a retirement community, people engaged in environmental studies and people who work on either island.

Conversely, in a memorandum to be presented Tuesday to a Board of Supervisors committee, Larry Florin, the Redevelopment Agency's director of new projects, pointed out that under the federal Base Closure Community Redevelopment and Homeless Assistance Act of 1994, homeless needs rate high priority.

Homeless consortium benefits

According to the agreement negotiated with the Treasure Island Homeless Development Initiative, a 14-organization consortium, 285 of the homeless units are to be on Treasure Island, 90 on Yerba Buena.

Other concessions:

► Once the Navy leaves in September 1997, The City would acquire the properties and lease them to the consortium.

► Should The City ever decide to sell the sites for market-rate development, the consortium would receive \$50,000 for each unit displaced.

► For every 1,000 market-rate units on Treasure Island, the consortium would receive one acre for affordable housing.

► Consortium clients also would receive a contract to provide jani-

torial and maintenance services, priorities for business concessions, jobs and leases for offices and a child care center.

In addition, The City would agree to provide administrative funding. The consortium has requested \$150,000 to operate in the 1996-97 fiscal year.

"If private investors come forward," Root noted, "homeless service providers have agreed to be flexible and to modify their plan."

Cost of services to island

In a further disclosure, the Redevelopment Agency's accompanying memo noted that The City will be facing a \$3.1 million tab for services to the island once the Navy leaves, including fire, police, emergency medical, maintenance of roads and landscape.

Their cost would be offset by \$184,000 in projected tax revenues.

"We're also estimating between \$2 million and \$4 million a year in utilities," Root said.

"You've got to start getting some revenue uses," the chairwoman added. She noted that aside from movie studios using Treasure Island's former aircraft hangars, other committed tenants — including the U.S. Job Corps, the sheriff's use of the brig for female prisoners and the fire fighting school — do not provide The City with revenue.

The Redevelopment Agency memo and negotiated agreement with the homeless consortium are due to be presented to the Board of Supervisors Select Committee on Base Closures Tuesday at 1 p.m.

BAY AREA

Plan to Use Treasure Island As Homeless Housing Site

By John King
Chronicle Staff Writer

A 30-year conversion plan for Treasure Island and Yerba Buena Island that includes an ambitious homeless housing effort passed muster yesterday with a key city committee.

The plan earmarks 375 of the Navy's 1,100 residential units on both islands as transitional housing for homeless families after the base closes next year. The homeless people would be trained for jobs and operate such businesses on the island as a restaurant, a convenience store and a janitorial service.

The plan would be implemented along with more lucrative proposals as a theme park and three hotels — although much of the commercial development would not be completed until at least the second decade of the next century, planners say.

The innovative approach was applauded by the Rules Committee of the Board of Supervisors, which said that using the spectacular mid-Bay site to fight homelessness should not detract from its

overall future. Similar arguments were made by people who have participated in the two years of public meetings about the islands.

"This is a way to create a new San Francisco neighborhood that can work, a collaborative community for both poor people and the wealthy," said Josh Brandon, a representative of the Treasure Island Homeless Development Initiative, a consortium of 14 groups.

The plan goes to the full board next Monday. If approved, it will be presented to the federal government and will serve as the basis for an environmental impact report.

Mayor Willie Brown and other city officials say the plan must be viewed in its entirety.

When asked yesterday about the wisdom of setting aside 30 percent of the base for homeless housing efforts, Brown said: "I don't think there's anything wrong with that (homeless housing)." At the same time, he stressed, "I don't want Treasure Island to get the title of being the homeless shelter for San Francisco. That would destroy its potential."

Herb Caen is taking the day off.