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Anonymous UCSF donors prepared to go to court to fight Warriors arena

By Matier and Ross on May 4, 2015 at 9:31 AM

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Images rendered by steelblue. / Courtesy of MANICA Architecture.

IMAGE 1 OF 10 | WARRIORS PROPOSED MISSION BAY ARENA

Rendering showing the southeast entrance of the Golden State Warriors' proposed new arena in San Francisco's Mission Bay area.

The out-the-gate attack may center around parking and traffic headaches, but the real aim of the anonymous big-bucks group of UCSF donors that's going after the proposed Warriors arena at Mission Bay is to kill it entirely — so the land can be saved for a future expansion of the school's \$4 billion hospital.

“The mission of this world-class medical center should not be trumped by an entertainment center or the avarice of a few rich people seeking to double the value of the Warriors as a sports franchise,” said former UCSF Senior Vice Chancellor Bruce Spaulding, who was brought on by the newly formed Mission Bay Alliance to put the brakes on planning for the arena.

The fight went public last week, but it has been brewing in the back rooms of City Hall and UCSF since April 2014. That's when the Warriors struck a deal with Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff for the



rights to 12 acres in Mission Bay after the company dropped its plans to turn the site into a corporate campus.

Benioff is a major benefactor of UCSF — his name graces the new UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital at Mission Bay — so it was widely believed that the school was either on board or at least was going to be quiet about having the Warriors as neighbors.

As it turns out, however, the Warriors weren't the only bidders for the property.



Rendering released on Dec. 10, 2014 showing a southwest aerial view of the Golden State Warriors' proposed new arena in San Francisco's Mission Bay area. Courtesy of MANICA Architecture. Images rendered by steelblue.

Reliable sources tell us that UCSF Foundation chairman and billionaire investor Bill Oberndorf and a group of wealthy donors also made an offer for the property in hopes of banking the land for the medical center's future expansion — but came in \$5 million under the Warriors' \$150 million bid.

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Attempts to reach Oberndorf for comment were unsuccessful.

From what we're told, he and his crew never got a chance to make a counteroffer. Benioff — with encouragement from Mayor Ed Lee, who was scrambling to come up with an alternative to the Warriors' doomed scheme for an arena on Piers 30-32 — had already locked up the Mission Bay deal with team owners Joe Lacob and Pete Guber.

UCSF officials weren't happy but stayed mum, we're told, in part because the mayor's people reminded them that the university has a sizable contract — \$149 million in 2014 — to run San Francisco General Hospital. They also pointed out that UCSF gets some pretty healthy tax breaks from the city.

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The unspoken but received message: Both those deals could change if UCSF made waves over the Warriors deal.

City Hall's reach, however, did not extend to the school's mega-millionaire donors — including investment banker Sandy Robertson (who recently hosted President Obama at a fundraiser at his San Francisco home), Chiron founder William Rutter and others backing the Mission Bay Alliance.

Former Mayor Art Agnos —who has fought other developments along the waterfront but who is supporting the arena at Mission Bay — said the UCSF donors won't win this one.

"The notion that this is going to be land-banked for the future? That train has left the station," Agnos said.

Maybe, but that's not the way the arena opponents see it.

Their first play will likely be to go to court to argue that the 18,000-seat arena — and its 200 planned events a year — will have a negative impact on the neighborhood.

In other words, opponents will seek to tie up the planned arena in legal knots for years. As political consultant Jack Davis, in semi-retirement but working for the arena foes, told us: “We are going to litigate, litigate and litigate until the cows come home. On a one to 12 level, I give it a 10 that this is not going to pass.”

Another possibility is an anti-arena initiative on the city ballot.

But Agnos says both sides can play in this game — and once there’s a full-on campaign, the donors might not look so sympathetic.

“That would be a fool’s errand because it would expose the fact that the university pays no taxes to speak of to the city, and now they’re arguing that they want to bank more land for which the Warriors are prepared to pay millions in taxes,” he said.

Game on.

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Opponents of Warriors arena prepare to battle impact findings

By Phil Matier and Matier & Ross | May 29, 2015 | Updated: May 31, 2015 4:12pm



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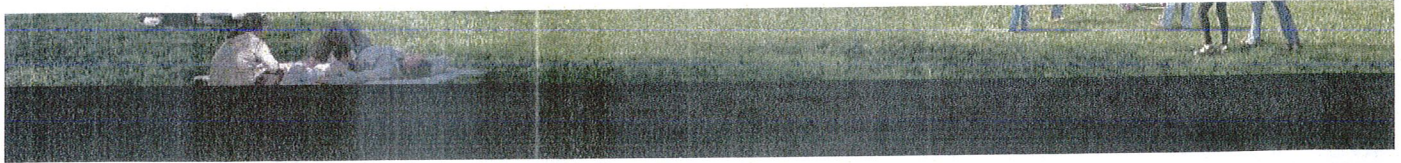


Photo: Images Rendered By Steelblue., Courtesy Of MANICA Architecture.



IMAGE 1 OF 4

Rendering released on Dec. 10, 2014 showing the Golden State Warriors' proposed new arena in San Francisco's Mission Bay area as it would appear from a bay-front park to be built. The arena would seat 18,000 ... more

The fight over the Golden State Warriors' 18,000-seat arena at Mission Bay kicks off Friday with the release of the project's environmental impact report — and opponents have already lined up a team of five top-flight attorneys to take the report apart, piece by piece.

Lippe, who took the city on over the America's Cup plans, **Susan Brandt Hawley**, who fought the 8 Washington waterfront high-rises, and **Osha Meserve** and **Patrick Soluri**, who represented Sacramento residents opposed to the Kings' arena, are on the team as well.

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“Based on preliminary documents from City Hall, they have already flagged what could be some serious legal challenges,” said **Sam Singer**, a spokesman for the alliance.

From the looks of things, the first targets will be parking, traffic and noise.

Warrior spokesman **P.J. Johnston** said the team had been expecting the move.

“Someone is always going to sue,” Johnston said.

In this case, however, the opponents include some very big donors to UCSF, which sits just across the street from the proposed arena.

And unlike the medical center, which is trying to work out the potential traffic problems with the city and the Warriors, the alliance does not appear to be interested in a compromise and is instead ready to tie the deal up in court.

“Until the cows come home,” said Singer.

The new legal threat does not, however, appear to be taking any of the steam out of Mayor **Ed Lee**’s support for the arena.

“They can litigate until the cows come home, but we will defend until the Warriors come home,” Lee said.

By the way, Lee and his wife, Anita, gave themselves a late birthday present the other day, treating each other to one of the recent playoff games against the Rockets.

No freebies (they paid \$300 each for the seats) and no VIP treatment. They sat in the third section up from the floor — and after about 10 minutes of posing for selfies with the crowd, settled in for the rest of the game.

Bridge to a new life: Tony Anziano, Caltrans’ man in charge of construction of the troubled \$6.2 billion Bay Bridge, got more than a nice going-away cake when he retired in

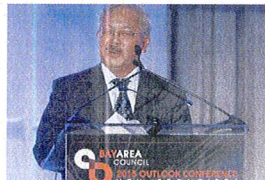
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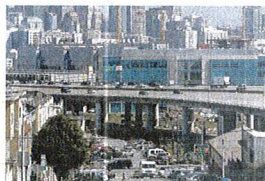
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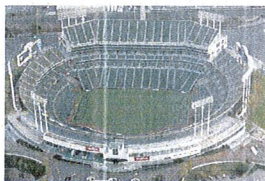
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February.

State records show he cashed out with a lump-sum \$241,693 payout for unused vacation and comp time accrued during his nearly 35 years of working for the state. That's on top of his annual \$70,548 pension.

The payout was based on his final \$144,000-a-year salary.

John Hill, a spokesman for state Controller **Betty Yee**, said he could not tell us how many unused vacation, holiday and personal leave days Anziano had banked, calling the information "confidential."

Anziano could not be reached for comment — but he is hardly alone when it comes to getting a nice payout from the state.

A recent report by **Will Evans** of the Center for Investigative Reporting found that more than 35,000 California state employees have exceeded the official limit of 80 banked vacation days.

Topping the list is **Bruce Wolfe**, executive officer of the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, who as of last June had accrued 507 days of vacation worth \$262,000.

Not so fast: State Sen. **Mark Leno** was one of the lawmakers who said "no" to the city's request to author a bill to allow San Francisco to set up speed cameras. It's not that Leno supports speeding, but he did have a couple of interesting concerns about how the cameras operate.

For starters, unlike a standard traffic ticket, where you are pulled over and made immediately aware of the violation, it would take 30 days for the notice of the \$100 fine to arrive in the mail. "You could make the same trip 30 times and keep making the same mistake before you knew what was going on," Leno said.

Tuition timing: It's interesting to note that the two-year UC in-state student tuition freeze worked out between Gov. **Jerry Brown** and UC President **Janet Napolitano** pretty much

coincides with the sunseting of the Proposition 30 tax increase approved by voters in 2012 — in part because it carried with it an implied promise that tuition would not go up.

Under the deal, UC will get more state funding — but will table Napolitano's proposed 5 percent a year hike. After two years, tuition increases will be adjusted to meet inflation.

Keeping the lid on tuition also reinforces Brown's image as a tightwad, which he has been cultivating in the media.

Just as important, working out a deal with Napolitano gives Brown a break from all those long and boring regents meetings and will allow him to get back to issues like climate change, which get a lot more attention on the national stage.

San Francisco Chronicle columnists Phillip Matier and Andrew Ross appear Sundays, Mondays and Wednesdays. Matier can be seen on the KPIX TV morning and evening news. He can also be heard on KCBS radio Monday through Friday at 7:50 a.m. and 5:50 p.m. Got a tip? Call (415) 777-8815, or e-mail matierandross@sfchronicle.com. Twitter: [@matierandross](https://twitter.com/matierandross)



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Opposition to Warriors' San Francisco arena builds

By [Sam Sorkin](#)  [@samsorkin23](#) on Jun 2, 2015, 5:15p [56](#)



The Warriors' arena project has its backers -- and its attempted derailers. - [Manica architecture](#)

Any giant project is sure to be a divisive issue, especially if accomplished in a major city. This no doubt holds true for the proposed Warriors arena to be built in downtown San Francisco.

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The [Mission Bay Alliance](#), a wealthy and mostly secret group of University of California San Francisco donors focused on derailing the Warriors' San Francisco arena, [has hired](#) multiple high-powered attorneys with expertise in the California Environmental Quality Act [CEQA].

The Alliance has hired noted attorneys who are experts in environmental law [in order to](#) thoroughly review the Warriors organization's Environmental Impact Report, which will be released this Friday, the day after Game 1 of the NBA Finals.

The Warriors organization bought the 12-acre plot of land in Mission Bay from Salesforce.com [last April](#) and is attempting to have the stadium built in time for the 2018-2019 regular season opener. The team was forced to abandon its original plans to build [a waterfront arena on Piers 30-32](#), after much political opposition derailed those plans. Following the purchase of the Mission Bay land, the Warriors had much smooth sailing, working on [arena designs](#).

Now, they are facing the Mission Bay Alliance, a high-powered group unafraid — and highly willing — to confront the team in court.

"Someone is always going to sue," arena project spokesman P.J. Johnston said.

The Alliance has hired famed attorney David Boies from the New York firm Boies, Schiller, & Flexner, which helped determine the 2000 presidential election in favor of George W. Bush, to be Lead Counsel. Boies, Schiller & Flexner, the Wall Street Journal writes, is a national legal "powerhouse." Boies is a highly skilled litigator; he was on the legal team that overturned Proposition 8, which had prohibited gay marriage in California.

Further, the Alliance has numerous attorneys who are "veterans of high-profile California development fights" at its disposal. Notably, [reports the San Francisco Business Journal](#), Susan Brandt-Hawley, Thomas Lippe, as well as Osha Meserve and Patrick Soluri have joined on.

"Our team of attorneys — some of the nation's best — will be tasked with analyzing the Warriors' proposed plan [the environmental impact report]," [Bruce Spaulding](#), UCSF's former Senior Vice Chairman and a representative of the Mission Bay Alliance said. "They [will advise] us on the environmental and civic impacts of a project that we believe would wreak havoc on Mission Bay for UCSF and bioscience research."

[Brandt-Hawley](#) has represented hundreds of public-interest groups in widely-varied California environmental and land use issues, and achieved a major victory when a San Francisco Superior Court Judge struck down the 8 Washington luxury condo project.

[Lippe](#) has extensive experience in litigating high-profile Bay Area land use cases, including attempting to minimize the environmental impact of the sailing competition America's Cup on San Francisco.

[Meserve and Soluri](#) run a Sacramento-based environmental law practice. Soluri specifically has experience litigating NBA arenas, and is currently fighting the [Kings arena deal](#) that allegedly includes [\\$100M in taxpayer-funded "sweeteners."](#) Meserve is an expert in challenging significant projects on environmental grounds.

"Our job is to protect the public's right to know what these impacts will be by ensuring [San Francisco] and the Warriors comply with CEQA," Meserve said in a statement.

Mission Bay Alliance spokesman Sam Singer said that the alliance has "already flagged what could be some serious legal challenges," and the San Francisco Chronicle [reports](#) that they will likely focus on noise, traffic, and parking issues. The Warriors' official [arena website](#) says that "950 parking spaces" will be built and the arena will be "well served by public transportation."

San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee, a vigorous supporter of the Warriors, is confident that the arena project will succeed.

"[We're prepared] to litigate until the cows come home," Singer said.

For more on this project, check out [our Golden State Warriors San Francisco arena project storystream](#).