

POTRERO BOOSTERS
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
SERVING THE HILL SINCE 1926

July 27, 2015

Brett Bollinger
San Francisco Planning Department
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94103

Re: Potrero Boosters Comments to Warriors SEIR

Via Email

Dear Mr. Bollinger:

When the Golden State Warriors announced the acquisition of the rights to Mission Bay blocks 29-32, the Potrero Boosters Neighborhood Association was carefully optimistic that the City, with its stated desire to lure the Warriors to San Francisco, would provide additional transportation and transit infrastructure to our neighborhoods.¹ Indeed, we saw the Warriors as a tremendous opportunity, as the City has lagged in developing the infrastructure to accommodate the growth, both residential and commercial, experienced by our neighborhoods over the last decade.

However, upon reading the Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (the “SEIR”) for the Golden State Warriors Event Center and Mixed Use Development (the “Arena”), we have some significant concerns. We are distressed by the volume of identified impacts on traffic transit and parking identified as “significant and unavoidable.” A failure to avoid significant impacts will directly reduce the day-to-day quality of life for the residents living and moving into the Potrero neighborhoods.

As a result, we are compelled to comment on the SEIR. We do so not with an eye to preventing the Arena from being built. We do so based on our belief that the City is capable, with the right measures in place, of making this development an asset to not just the City as a whole, but to its direct neighbors as well.

This letter will consider two sets of impacts, those associated with (i) parking, transit, traffic and emergency vehicles, and (ii) air quality.

¹ The “Boosters” represent the Potrero neighborhoods of Potrero Hill, Showplace Square and Dogpatch, i.e., those neighborhoods directly adjacent to the Mission Bay site in question.

Parking, Transit, Traffic and Emergency Vehicles

General Comments

For the Arena to coexist within its rapidly developing surrounding neighborhoods, the City must maintain dedicated funding of full time transit and transportation solutions and review the parking management programs throughout the adjacent areas. Proper attention must be paid to the travel needs of the populations that live and work (and who will soon live and work) in the area full time, and not be reserved for those few times a year when the confluence of San Francisco Giants and Arena events bring about the largest transportation challenges. New transit should be based on current data and SFMTA should be prepared to move away from more outdated transit planning.

Impact TR-2b: Parking

Parts of northeast Potrero Hill and Dogpatch are currently part of Residential Parking Permit (“RPP”) Zone X. RPP enforcement is from Monday to Friday, from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm reflecting the out-of-City commuter concerns RPP was designed to remedy. These hours do not correspond with the weekend and evening operations of the Arena. Due to proximity to the Arena and existing transit options, Zone X is well within the parking shed for the Arena.

Extension of RPP enforcement hours should be considered. Yet mere extension of enforcement may not be enough. RPP areas marked with four-, rather than two-, hour limits, which may serve local businesses well, would not generally provide protection from Arena parking. Areas in our neighborhoods not currently under RPP, but which are otherwise residential in character, cannot be allowed to suffer the pressures of Arena parking. And, of course, enforcement must have the resources behind it to provide appropriate ticketing and towing for violators.

A plan needs to be developed to prevent our neighborhoods from becoming a free parking zone for Arena event attendees. Metering by itself will not provide an adequate solution given the day-to-day mixed uses of the areas in question. A meeting with community stakeholders would ensure the adequacy of a plan and help garner the support necessary to make it a reality.

We also believe that parking for the Arena should be bundled with the tickets sold. No person driving to an event at the Arena should have to guess about where they will be parking. Remote, satellite parking served by shuttles and taking advantage of mobile application technology should be required under the SEIR.

Impact TR-4: Transit

We would celebrate the introduction of ferry service to the Arena site, and would hope that an electrified Caltrain would provide additional service to and from the Peninsula. We consider both improvements to be part of the critical path to the Arena opening—that is, they must be operational prior to the Arena’s first tip-off. That parochial interests on the Peninsula have tied-up Caltrain electrification is of great concern. Ridership is already at capacity levels throughout much

of the weekday schedule. Without additional trains on the schedule, we question the extent that Caltrain can be depended on in the Arena rideshare models.

Transit improvements should be funded from dedicated sources, regardless of whether those funds come from the incremental property, sales or ticket taxes arising from the Arena. With a current estimate of \$14 million being collected by the City annually, at least half that mount should be funding improvements to our transportation system intended to move people out of cars. Our neighborhood intersections are overburdened as they are, with many graded a “D” or an “F” under level of service standards. We do not have any excess capacity to accommodate more drivers.

Transit funding can go to infrastructure and operations that, when not deployed for the largest of events, can mitigate the day-to-day concerns of the neighborhood. We have identified the following necessary enhancements:

- Connecting the I I North Point-Mission Bay line through to the commercial districts on 17th, 18th, and 20th streets in Potrero Hill, to the 22nd Street Caltrain Station, and terminating adjacent to the Pier 70 and NRG Power Plant development projects. This line can serve as an outlet for residents and business to move around, rather than through, the greatest Arena impacts.
- Increased running of the 10 Townsend to three times an hour during events.
- Making the E Embarcadero a seven-days-a-week line, turning south from its current 4th and King terminus to serve the Arena, with a terminus at the 25th Street Muni Yard.
- Moving the proposed Muni Turnaround from the congestion inducing 18th and 19th Streets to the 25th Street Muni Yard, where staging could be done more efficiently and more residents to the south of the Arena could be served on a daily basis.
- Keeping the 55 16th Street line as a dedicated connector from 16th Street BART to Mission Bay, and perhaps extending the line to incorporate transfers from the J Church.

This list of improvements is not intended to be exhaustive. But they represent the need for a global transit plan for the area—one with a growing population and growing businesses—and one that has additional transit *decreases* planned, exacerbating cuts made in 2008-2009.

Impact TR-5: Traffic

Traffic is perhaps the Boosters greatest concern; increased traffic drives every other discussion in this letter. The intersection of 7th and 16th Streets is already at an “F” grade for level of service, creating danger to bicycles and pedestrians at all hours of the day. New drivers, not familiar with the area, will only compound the difficulties of an intersection where four modes (Caltrain’s tracks run adjacent to 7th Street) of traffic come together. Prior to the Arena’s opening, this intersection should be reworked under the City’s Vision Zero plan.

Additional bicycle infrastructure may also be appropriate. Both 16th Streets and Mariposa Streets experience significant automobile traffic, and with dedicated bus lanes coming to 16th Street, neither are ideal for bicycles. A pedestrian and bicycle connector at 17th Street, including an

overpass over the Caltrain tracks, would extend the bicycle routes already on 17th Street through the Mission and the western part of Potrero Hill. Such improvements should be evaluated so that bicycling can be a safer, more prevalent means of reaching the Arena.

Impact TR-10: Emergency Vehicle Access

The SEIR should provide greater clarity as to how emergency vehicles, patients and hospital staff will access the UCSF medical facilities adjacent to the Arena. Mariposa Street between 101 and 280 has an increasingly residential character and a three-ton vehicle weight limit, and runs adjacent to a school and Jackson Park. It should not be depended upon as a route from the 101 Freeway to UCSF. Emergency traffic along this stretch would be dangerous and inconvenient to residents and patients alike.

Early discussions on UCSF transportation showed Minnesota Street through the Dogpatch Historic District serving the hospital. The SEIR should make clear that this routing has been abandoned, and show an alternative route that allows ease of access to the hospital under the heaviest of traffic conditions.

Air Quality Impacts

Impact AQ-2 and Mitigation M-AQ-2b

The air quality mitigation disbursement plan described in AQ-2 and M-AQ-2b is not adequate to meet the needs of the Potrero neighborhoods and our neighbors to the south. Given our proximity to freeways, industrial activities (including a UPS distribution center and a Recology recycling facility), heavy trucking, and the historical uses of our neighborhoods (including a recently decommissioned power plant), we feel that this represents a significant environmental justice issue.

While the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (“BAAQMD”) may be able to use mitigation funding anywhere in the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and portions of Solano, and the Arena is likely to draw automobile traffic from all of these areas, the bulk of the pollution by vehicles will be within two miles of the Arena. Mitigating pollution sources in Solano County will not go to reduce the impacts in our neighborhoods, which will experience additional car traffic at least 225 times per year.

As pointed out by the San Francisco Department of Environment, “The City’s neighborhoods in the Southeast areas are heavily burdened by air pollution-not only from major industrial facilities, but also from the thousands of automobiles and heavy-duty diesel trucks that travel daily on nearby freeways and City streets.”

The SEIR forecasts that 53% of Arena attendees on a weekday, and 59% on a weekend, will drive to the Arena. While those mobile sources of pollution will travel through other Bay Area counties, they will all arrive in our neighborhood, the analysis of the BAAQMD seems to equate moving efficiently at freeway speeds to idling on our neighborhood off-ramps and our poor level-of-service intersections.

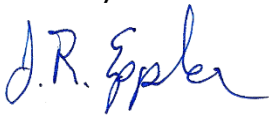
As Arena traffic is the source of the impact, money should mitigate pollution sources near the Arena. If a stationary source of mitigation cannot be identified near the Arena, then mitigation could take the form of additional hybrid and electric buses for the SFMTA.

As a result, 80% of the funds called for in Mitigation M-AQ-2b should go to reducing the impacts in the area of the Arena itself.

Summary

The Potrero Boosters Neighborhood Association believes that, without mitigation, the Arena would significantly impact our neighborhoods for the worse. The SEIR, with its failure to identify reasonable mitigations to predicted impacts, causes us significant concern. That said, we are still optimistic that, with dedicated funding and enforceable agreements between the City and the Warriors, and with appropriate air quality management, there are opportunities to not only accommodate the Arena, but to address concerns with the context in which it is proposed to be built.

Sincerely,



J.R. Eppler
President