

# Lennar gives Bayview-Hunters Point \$7.3 million

Lennar gives Bayview big job-training, housing grant

By John Wildermuth | May 4, 2012



Photo: Brant Ward, The Chronicle



IMAGE 1 OF 4

The photo op check for over \$7 million rested on the second floor balcony of San Francisco City Hall. Lennar Corp. contributed \$7.3 million to the Hunters Point/Bayview community Thursday May 3, 2012 as the ... [more](#)

After decades of promises, the Bayview-Hunters Point community finally saw some cash Thursday as the builder of the mammoth shipyard redevelopment project handed over a \$7.3 million check for local job training and housing assistance.

"We're finally at a stage where we're fulfilling a very old promise," said an exuberant Mayor **Ed Lee**. "This is a promise to our communities that they will incur the richness of our city."

The contribution, the first installment of a proposed \$37.5 million that will be used for community benefits, should send a message to the naysayers who have complained for years that the heavily black neighborhoods would never see a nickel of the money promised by Lennar Urban, the Florida developer behind the project, Lee added. "It's here, the money is in the bank," he said.

About 75 people, most of them from the Bayview and Hunters Point neighborhoods, showed up at City Hall for the long-awaited event. "It's great to see the money arrive," said Richard Hopson of the Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment, one of the

community groups that haggled with Lennar for years over its planned contribution to the neighborhoods around the 702-acre development site. "But it will be more important to see the effect this money will have."

Hopson is a member of the committee that will decide how the money will be spent. While the package includes \$5.4 million earmarked for housing programs and \$1.5 million for job training, no decisions have been made on what specific projects will be financed.

The committee, made up of community members, labor representatives, local faith-based groups and nonprofits, will meet with people from the neighborhoods to see how they want the money used, Hopson said.

### *For community benefit*

"We're going to be listening to ensure that what the community wants will happen," he added.

The San Francisco Foundation, a community organization that administers more than \$1 billion of charitable assets, will provide general financial management and oversight of the new community benefit fund.

The relaxed and upbeat crowd at the ceremony Thursday was a marked contrast to the angry groups that for years were deeply divided over the plans to build more than 10,000 homes and a variety of retail, office, industrial and entertainment buildings on the site of the shuttered Navy base.

The city, neighborhood groups, environmentalists, the developer and the Navy, which closed the base in 1994, were at odds for years over the continuing cleanup of the Superfund site.

### *Ongoing disputes*

There also were ongoing disputes about the amount of affordable housing in the development and the environmental impact of the \$1.2 billion project, not to mention the debate over how much Lennar would contribute to help the community.

While San Francisco voters overwhelmingly endorsed the shipyard project by passing **Proposition G** in 2008, the project's 7,700-page environmental impact report squeaked through the Planning Commission on a 4-3 vote in June 2010. The project was approved by the Board of Supervisors the next month after hours of debate.

Over the course of about 500 community meetings, Lennar officials heard plenty of people say the shipyard development and the community benefits it was slated to bring would never happen, said Kofi Bonner, president of Lennar Urban.

"We're going to be in that community for the next 20 years as we build out the development," he said after the ceremony. "We've already invested about \$200 million in the shipyard project, but that was for us. The money today was for the community."

The shipyard project, which includes Candlestick Point, calls for dropping a neighborhood the size of Hercules or Lafayette in the southeastern corner of the city. Construction is slated to begin this year on about 400 homes overlooking the main part of the shipyard, with plans now being drawn for the reconstruction and replacement of the Alice Griffith housing project, Bonner said.

It's an exciting time that's been a long while coming for the Bayview-Hunters Point community, said Supervisor Malia Cohen, who represents that part of the city.

"For the first time, when you talk about the Bayview, you don't talk about the disparity," she said. "We can make sure the southeast neighborhoods aren't known for what they used to be, but for what they will be in the future."

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