



PHOTO BY TOM CARTER

Installing restrooms at the new park in the 1000 block of Folsom Street is expected to be a priority expenditure of the SoMa Stabilization Fund.

Community improvements to total \$34 million

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activist who chairs the committee. "We'll need to stay focused on achieving solid infrastructure that needs to be placed in the community."

"We're really just getting started," said committee member Kelly Wilkinson, Episcopal Community Services associate director. "We want to form a vision for the committee based on what we hear from people who come to meetings and Chris Daly's input."

The advisory committee is hopeful that the unprecedented windfall from the rich high-rises will improve SoMa.

"Right now the neighborhood can be a little rough," said member Steve Sarver, who manages San Francisco Soup Co., which has four outlets South of Market. "It's more of a

SOUTHSIDE feeling than statistics. And this is an opportunity to make it more welcoming to families and businesses. It's a big pot of money, but everyone is comfortable with that and we have high expectations that we can make a difference."

Other committee members are gang prevention counselor Rudy Corpuz, labor organizer Conny Ford, consultant Ada Chan

and Walden House Chief Development Officer Donald Frazier.

FEE GETS SPLIT 2 WAYS

The committee will not advise MOCD on how to spend the entire \$50 million. The \$25-per-square-foot fee is divided into two funds: \$11 for Rincon Hill Community Improvements, which the Planning Department administers, and \$14 for the SoMa Stabilization Fund, which MOCD administers, the projects subject to approval by the Board of Supervisors.

Rincon Hill improvements will be publicly accessible facilities within the 12 blocks bounded by the Embarcadero, Essex Street, Folsom and, to the south, Bryant (and the north side of the bridge), according to the ordinance. Funds will go for acquiring and developing open spaces, streetscaping, and a community center. Naturally, the improvements will add to the value of the 2,300 condos that City Planning estimates will be built, most selling for around \$1 million, an obvious incentive for the developers to cave in to Daly's hard-nosed bargaining.

Daly's ordinance also directs that the Rincon Hill Improvements Fund contribute \$6 million "over time" to the Stabilization Fund. It is earmarked for pedestrian safety,

streetscaping, developing community facilities and acquiring land for affordable housing.

So the \$6 million plus the \$14 fee share of the \$50 million means the committee will advise on how to spend \$34 million.

Apart from the Rincon Hill ordinance, most developers of large projects fall additionally under the inclusionary housing rule requiring that 12% of their buildings be affordable housing, or if they choose to go off-site — and it must be in SoMa — it's 17%. A third option is to pay an in lieu fee to the mayor's office, which is what Urban West Associates and its partners building the South Tower did. The fee was \$11 million and is to go for SoMa affordable housing.

REZONING SPARKED CHANGE

The Rincon Hill area has for years been zoned RC-4 — residential and commercial same as the Tenderloin — and a light industrial area, but vastly underused. Its gaping vacant lots, whipping winds and narrow sidewalks on long blocks with wide, fast streets were uninviting.

A five-minute walk from the Financial District, though, Rincon Hill was the

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One Rincon Hill won't be No. 1 long

The South Tower at One Rincon Hill, the taller of two towers to be built at First and Harrison streets, will be 550 feet high with 54 floors when it is completed in 2007, but it will only be the tallest residential building in California for a little more than a year before Los Angeles wins bragging rights.

Twin limestone-clad towers, one 60 floors, the other 50 floors, will be built on the southeast corner of Olympic Boulevard and Grand Avenue. Developers say construction will start in mid-2007 and will be completed 18 months later, according to an April 2006 report in the Los Angeles Times. Those condos will start at \$700,000; penthouses at \$3 million.

The 861-foot, 72-floor Trump World Tower near United Nations Plaza in Manhattan is America's tallest residential building, according to the Web site of real estate data firm Emporis.

Europe's tallest, the 554-foot Beetham Tower in Manchester, England, will be inched out in 2010 when a 560-foot, 52-story residential building is completed in Leeds.

Q1, a designation for Queensland Number One, is the world's tallest residential building at 1,059 feet. Located in Surfers Paradise on the Gold Coast in Queensland, Australia, it was completed in late 2005, according to the Wikipedia Web site. It's nine feet shorter than the Eiffel Tower.

—TOM CARTER

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