

## ANDREW NASH

# S.F. should stick with the 'Stick

**T**HE EXAMINER argues that the City should build a new baseball stadium at China Basin.

The bottom line for this brand of reasoning is that Bob Lurie says he will not play at Candlestick after 1994. This is blackmail that must be resisted by The City. No one wants to see the Giants leave, but how much should a financially-strapped city be forced to pay to a multi-millionaire and an out-of-town developer (Spectacor) just to keep the team?

Here in question-and-answer format are some responses to a recent Examiner editorial:

*How could Candlestick be made better?*

*There are many ways. Start with the little things: Improve parking lot circulation, improve food services, study ways to reduce wind, increase and improve transit ac-*

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cess, and continue to improve operations (as the Giants have started doing this year). These improvements should be considered before the City decides to spend millions of dollars and commit valuable land for a new stadium.

*But wouldn't the wind problem be the same at an outdoor waterfront park?*

The Examiner says that wind is worse at Candlestick than at China Basin and that Candlestick is poorly designed for wind. But studies have shown that wind is almost as bad at China Basin. And, why not develop a plan to reduce the wind at Candlestick, using those same

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designers who the Examiner says will plan the proposed stadium?

*Does San Francisco need two specialized stadiums?*

It is hard to feel sorry for those "baseball patrons who are forced to look out on cold concrete decks of empty seats that are often filled only for football" when there are thousands of homeless people sleeping on cold concrete streets of San Francisco. Maybe multi-use parks do not work well, but they work in many cities. Why should San Francisco spend money on a luxury when so many more critical needs go unmet?

*But can the City afford two parks?*

The Examiner says that operating Candlestick for football only and operating another stadium for baseball could make money.

This seems totally illogical. What about the alternative uses for the China Basin stadium site? Are these considered in the financial analysis? What about policing and maintaining Candlestick when it's used 10 times a year?

Today the Giants share those costs — does the Examiner expect those costs to simply go away? What about all the activity at Candlestick today that probably reduces crime in the area — what will happen without the Giants? Will the parking lot turn into a haven for drugs and murder? Are these costs included?

Not including these costs, The Examiner says, "It is anticipated that city profits . . . could cover San Francisco's initial \$2 million annual subsidy . . ." The important word is "could" — it implies "could not" as well.

*Won't the traffic and impact on neighborhoods be worse at China Basin?*

The Examiner says that impacts will be less at China Basin than in the Hunters Point/Bayview District.

But this begs the question. Shouldn't we try and reduce impacts wherever they are located? Can't we implement programs to reduce impacts in the Hunters Point and Bayview neighborhoods?

For example, why not build a

Muni Metro extension down the Third Street corridor which could be tied to developing jobs and improving housing along Third Street, both critical needs for those neighborhoods?

The Examiner contends that China Basin is at the "transit hub" of the Bay Area. It's a pretty odd hub. It's located about a mile from Market Street's transit lines and BART.

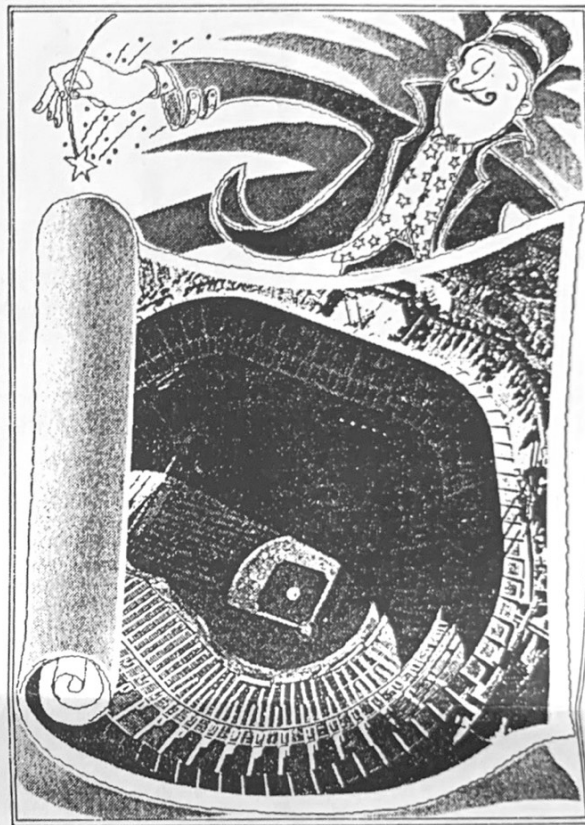
All the transit projects, including the Muni Metro extension and CalTrain extension, are merely planned — no funding is in place, they are not part of the region's transportation improvement plan, and there are still many questions to be resolved. The Examiner makes them sound like a *fait accompli*, which is strange considering the City has failed to implement one significant transit project in the last 15 years. What has changed?

The China Basin stadium is said to be close to CalTrain, however, the temporary station site discussed in the Mission Bay EIR (Seventh and Channel streets) is almost exactly the same distance from the China Basin Stadium site as the existing CalTrain Bayshore Station is from Candlestick Park. Why not improve access to Candlestick from CalTrain?

The Examiner says that a downtown park will bring thousands of customers into the commercial heart of town, to shop in stores, to eat in restaurants. First, China Basin is hardly the commercial heart of the City — it's over a mile from downtown and located in a newly developing neighborhood with few stores and restaurants. Second, while The City reports that 87 percent of Candlestick patrons drive, it expects 80 percent of China Basin patrons to drive. Drivers don't spend money, according to the Examiner.

Finally, why not create some of these activities along a Third Street transit corridor? Provide guaranteed business to new stores and restaurants in an area of The City which desperately needs economic development.

Building a new stadium in China Basin is a poor use of The City's



resources. It will cost The City in:

- Lost opportunities for economic development.
- Money to pay for stadium construction and operations.
- Better uses for proposed stadium land.

It has been said many times, "Why build another cold, windy stadium only four miles from Candlestick?" The only reason seems to be to placate Bob Lurie. Isn't this City strong enough to stand up and say that its priorities lie elsewhere?