

ART AGNOS

Reject pessimism

NO MATTER how you couch it, there's something fundamentally pessimistic in the message that San Francisco should vote down a new ballpark.

I reject that pessimism.

Some people say that San Francisco won't make money from this first-of-a-kind public-private partnership, claiming that other stadiums lose money — and that even if some make money, San Francisco doesn't have the know-how to do as well.

I know better.

Some stadiums did lose money, but I rejected the kind of financing they used when it came to San Francisco. Instead, I negotiated a

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deal that doesn't put our city at risk, and which caps our investment.

When my figures were challenged by members of the Board of Supervisors, their analyst said we overstated the amount of money San Francisco would make — and that the most likely scenario meant we would make "only" \$550 million. For the sake of ending the argument, I'll accept their figure because their bottom line is the same as mine — we make a lot of money.

One of the reasons it makes money is that a new ballpark will draw more paying customers. Candlestick is the second oldest baseball facility in the country, and by mixing both football and baseball there, neither is served well — and the result is that we lose money.

A case in point: While opponents say that the Giants barely drew two million fans this year, they don't point out that it took a National League championship to do it.

In contrast, the Dodgers, with a poor team that finished 4th (and out of contention by 15 games), drew over three million fans. The difference is that Dodger Stadium is a wonderfully pleasant place to be, win or lose, and Candlestick is

not. That's one of the reasons why the Giants have agreed to pay ten times their current rent at a new ballpark.

We made a similar decision when we built Louise Davies Symphony Hall — even though the Opera House holds almost the same size audience and is also used for musical performances. But what suits one venue may not suit another, and we've seen that because both have become important assets to our city.

San Francisco won't start our investment until 1995, while our private sector partner, Spectacor, begins making payrolls and purchases at once. We need the economic boost of their commitment now, and by 1995 we'll have completed the work and costs of the quake.

Our investment will come from the hotel tax, paid by visitors, which will be among the strongest parts of our city's economy.

I know San Francisco can do better than anyone else as we move

on the drawing board. We've just seen every area of city government come through the most severe test in 83 years, and they passed with flying colors. We can trust their ability to handle this new ballpark.

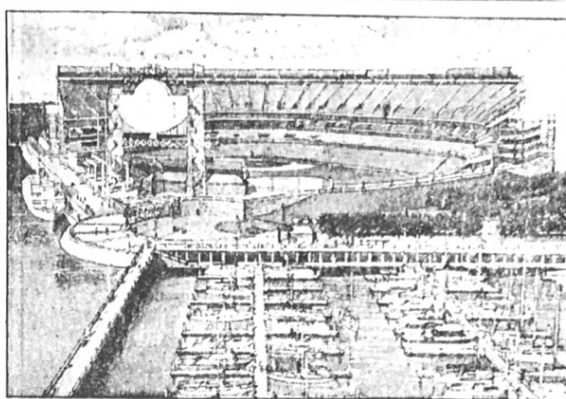
Certainly our city has demonstrated our ability to build safely, including on landfill. The Financial District, the new luxury apartments close-by the proposed ballpark, Moscone Center where we housed the homeless, even Candlestick are all built on landfill sites. All were safe.

I proposed this new ballpark last summer as a new model for economic stimulation that fits San Francisco. I've had to budget and plan our way out of a deficit, and I can easily foresee increased needs to help the homeless, fight AIDS, and combat crack — to name some of our highest priorities.

I want future mayors, and taxpayers, to know that we also planned reasonably to bring new revenues to help meet those challenges, and that we did so in a way that kept faith with our city.

I respectfully ask for your support for Proposition P, for the new ballpark investment.

Agnos is mayor of San Francisco and chairman of the 'Yes on Prop. P' campaign.



ANDREW NASH

We don't need it

NOW MORE than ever, I am convinced that the proposed China Basin stadium project is a low priority for The City. Since the earthquake important questions have been raised concerning the stadium plan.

There is no disagreement that the new stadium would be built on fill. Filled land, we have learned, can be treacherous. Structures can be built to withstand most earthquakes — much of San Francisco's Financial District survived the earthquake. However, designing structures to withstand earthquakes is exceedingly complex. This is especially true for irregularly shaped structures, such as the new stadium would be.

For example, in last month's earthquake the regular box-shaped office buildings built on fill in downtown San Francisco survived, while the irregularly shaped Embarcadero Freeway across the street suffered major damage.

Then there is the question of cost. The stadium is projected to

cost \$95 million. This compares to costs ranging from \$100 to \$120 million for similar stadiums under construction in Baltimore and Chicago. It is certain that the San Francisco stadium will need significantly greater foundation work and bracing to withstand future earthquakes. How can it be that the proposed San Francisco stadium will be less expensive than the other stadiums?

Candlestick Park, with a capacity crowd in attendance, withstood the earthquake. Some claim that

ing money immediately on preparing the China Basin site, building the parking garage, constructing new water and sewer lines, relocating businesses, building a new port maintenance facility, and cleaning up toxic wastes. All these costs would be incurred during the next several years.

And, The City's Planning Department would be required to complete a full Environmental Impact Report for the stadium in a little more than a year. This is the same department which will be required to guide The City in rebuilding from the quake.

Some argue that the financial benefits of the new stadium could be used to pay for rebuilding The City. But, the Supervisors' budget analyst says most benefits would start 30 years into the lease — that is, 36 years from now. Second, no one can agree on what the financial benefits will amount to.

Perhaps the newest argument in favor of the proposed stadium has become the "It will show the world we have risen from the earthquake triumphant" line. But, to me, the earthquake just reinforces the argument that a second stadium is not a city priority.

Instead of investing \$3 million a year in the proposed stadium, why not invest this money into early education or after school programs in some of our drug infested neighborhoods? This may be only a drop in the bucket compared to what's needed, but suppose we could prevent say 100 people from becoming crack addicts, wouldn't it be worth it?

Do we really need to build the same type of stadium as is being built all over the rest of the country to show that we have triumphed over the earthquake?

Finally, the argument comes down to the question of whether the Giants will remain in San Francisco if the people decide not to build another baseball stadium.

We have been told throughout the campaign that baseball is more than a business. The Giants have responsibilities to The City just like the rest of us. One of those responsibilities is to be a good citizen and to accept a reasonable financial arrangement. Such an arrangement could include staying at an improved Candlestick.

The City will be forced to begin spending immediately on preparing the China Basin site.

Candlestick is built on fill. That is untrue. Parts of the parking lots are on fill, but the stadium itself is on solid ground.

Some claim that The City's costs for a new stadium would not start until 1995, when The City would begin paying Spectacor \$3 million a year. This is wrong. The City will be forced to begin spend-

Nash is president of San Francisco Tomorrow, which opposes Prop. P.