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## MATIER &amp; ROSS

Once-Moribund West Oakland Up  
and Dot-Comming

Monday, July 3, 2000

San Francisco Chronicle

[CHRONICLE SECTIONS](#)[Phillip Matier, Andrew Ross](#)

**OAKLAND** -- For the past two years, the hot question in Bay Area development has been: When would long-neglected West Oakland -- with its miles of empty warehouses, torn-up railroad tracks and truck depots -- finally come into the dot-com age?

Well, it seems, the time has come.

Rick Holliday -- the developer who put up the first live-work lofts in San Francisco and who later brought warehouse lofts to exploding Emeryville -- has set his sights on the long-dormant warehouse area, with a 25-acre campus development that could change the face of Oakland forever.

The plan is for a combination housing and office complex about twice the area of Pacific Bell Park and situated about two minutes away from the West Oakland BART station -- next to the old railway station.

It's an area that Bay Area commuters have been whizzing past ever since the new Cypress freeway opened a couple of years back.

And while the area might not look like much from the freeway -- to a developer, it's a gold mine.

"Thanks to the new freeway, it's sitting 30 seconds from four highway ramps going in all four directions," says Holliday.

More important, the old railroad rights of way are a perfect conduit for laying fiber-optic cable.

It's a combo made for money.

"Look around," says Holliday. "San Francisco is built out and gridlocked. Santa Clara is built out and gridlocked. And on this side Hacienda Park (in Pleasanton) is built out and gridlocked, and the Berkeley-Emeryville corridor is pretty much a parking lot every day. . . . Oakland is just sitting there."

Both Mayor Jerry Brown and City Manager Robert Bobb are on board.

Brown calls the planned development proof that West

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Oakland is about to take off. ``It's going to be slow going, but it is going to happen," Brown said.

That, of course, remains to be seen. Rising rents and the fear of gentrification in Oakland -- particularly West Oakland -- have some residents already picketing City Hall.

So someone actually getting real with a development like this is bound to feed the fire. **BREAST PROTECTION:** The other day we told you about the two motorcycle cops assigned to Vice President Al Gore's latest visit who found time for a little extracurricular activity -- namely sticking junior police badges on the bare breasts of a couple of giddy young women walking by.

Well, another witness tells us he missed the badge act but did notice the officers enjoying themselves talking to the women and not paying attention to their surroundings.

As a matter of fact, says the witness, ``we were able to stand right over one of the motorcycles, located across the street from the socializing, and read the map of the VP's motorcade."

A supposedly secret map, we might add. Oh well, if the Veep really wants protection, maybe next time he's in town, he'll go topless, too. **S.F. SIZZLE:** These days the Legislature likes to call them Projects of Regional Concern (PORC for short), but ``Pork" is what they are -- and as usual, San Francisco got more than its share in the recently passed budget.

Thanks to Assemblywoman Carole Migden -- who also heads the Assembly Appropriations Committee -- the Palace of Fine Arts will get \$3 million, the ballet will get \$500,000, the San Francisco child abuse center will get \$200,000, and the city's playgrounds will get an extra \$500,000.

The city's gay community (which represents the backbone of Migden's support) will get \$1.25 million for the city's AIDS research program, \$250,000 for an AIDS empowerment program at the New College, \$500,000 for the AIDS Memorial Grove, and \$250,000 for the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Historical Society.

Migden also got \$400,000 for a study into building a new BART station at 30th and Mission -- the brainchild of her buddy, BART Director Tom Radulovich.

And thanks to state Senate President John Burton -- whose title tells all you need to know about his juice -- San Francisco will get \$4.5 million for the new M.H. de Young Memorial Museum, \$1 million for the Great Highway, \$804,000 for the Columbia Park Boys and Girls Club, \$500,000 for the Asian Arts Museum, \$400,000 for the Bayview Opera House, \$500,000 for the Mexican Museum, and \$250,000 for the National Maritime Museum.

In short, Burton not only delivered the bacon to every

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place in his district but also to all the ships at sea. CONFLICTED: Heads were spinning the other day when attorney and San Francisco Planning Commissioner Hector Chinchilla showed up in court representing a landlord who was using the dreaded Ellis Act to evict his tenants.

After all, the issue of a possible conflict of interest between Chinchilla's Planning Commission duties and his private life as a landlord lawyer was one of the sore points in last year's mayoral race.

At first, lawyer Chinchilla had insisted that his legal practice was a private matter and altogether separate from his planning duties. But after conferring with Mayor Willie Brown, he agreed to drop his landlord clients -- or so at least the mayor's campaign staff announced at the time.

So just what was Chinchilla doing back in court last Monday with one of those very same clients?

Nothing much, insists Chinchilla. He says he was simply subbing for one of his law partners who couldn't make it to court that day.

Chinchilla says that his appearance wasn't on any "substantive matter" and that he was just there to ask for a continuance.

But tenant attorney Karen Hull isn't buying it. As Hull sees it -- a client is a client, and a conflict is a conflict. BALL BARK: Animal Welfare Commissioner Richard Schulke tells us his lines were ringing off the hook from worried animal rights activists after last week's Chronicle story announcing the debut of Portuguese water dogs specially trained to chase homers hit into the bay at Pac Bell Park.

"People want to make sure they're not abusing and overworking the dogs, and whether or not there will be an animal control officer present," says Schulke. "There's also the issue of whether they meet the city code for performing animals."

Does this mean we're in for those proverbial city hearings?

"God, I hope not," says Schulke. "Then again. . . ."

Schulke can take heart. The Giants are paying for a police boat -- and two extra cops -- to protect the dogs. A Stone Alone: Rolling Stone Mick Jagger was in town during the weekend for 29-year-old daughter Karis Hunt's wedding at Treasure Island. The bride is Jagger's daughter by model Marsha Hunt, is a film producer and decided to have her nuptials there when she was working with a film out on the island.

She liked the view so much she went in and put the deposit down herself and this weekend papa showed up himself, along with family and friends and groom, Jonathan Watkins. The reception followed at Bimbo's.

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The biggest news was that there was no news, and no other Stones, or stars or paparazzi.

*Chronicle columnists Phillip Matier and Andrew Ross can be heard on KGO Radio on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Phil Matier can also be seen regularly on KRON-TV. Got a tip? Call them at (415) 777-8815. Their e-mail address is [matierandross@sfgate.com](mailto:matierandross@sfgate.com).*

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