

Hope SF to start work on 6,000 units of housing

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By: J.K. Dineen

The **John Stewart Co.** will start work next month on the \$77 million phase one of Hunters View, the first step in the city's sweeping plan to transform 2,500 units of run-down public housing in four parts of the city into new mixed-income neighborhoods with 6,000 units.

Phase one of the Hunters View project will include 80 replacement public housing units and another 26 affordable housing units. New infrastructure, pathways, a park and a community room will also be part of the first phase. In total, the \$325 million Hunters View redevelopment will increase the density of the Hunters Point project from 267 units to 750 units. The company recently received \$30 million in state grants and **CitiBank** has committed to a \$40 million construction loan.

John Stewart Co. President Jack Gardner said demolition is expected in January and February of next year. Excavation and construction will start in the summer of 2010.

"It's really going to happen this time," said Gardner. "It is definitely going to be transformative and make an incredible difference to that neighborhood and those residents."

Hunters View is the first of four ambitious public housing rebuilds under the city's "Hope SF" program. In the largest of the proposed

redevelopments, Related of California, an affiliate of New York-based Related Cos., has teamed up with Mercy Housing to build 1,498 units in Visitation Valley's distressed Sunnyside development. Under the \$400 million proposal, Related and Mercy would build 1,070 public housing and affordable rental units, as well as 428 affordable and market-rate condos. In Potrero Hill, **Bridge Housing Corp.**, together with its for-profit arm Bridge Infill Land Development, plans to construct 805 public housing and affordable rental units, as well as 446 affordable and market-rate condos, also about a \$400 million investment. At the 136-unit Westside Court in the Western Addition, EM Johnson Interests and TMG Partners are proposing to replace 136 units of public housing and add another 80 to 100 of affordable and market rate housing.

The redevelopments will be paid for by a combination of condo sales proceeds (52 percent), low income tax credits (17 percent), local redevelopment money (7 percent), private funds (4 percent) and \$97 million in bond funding approved in 2007.

"When you put it all together you're talking about an impressive increase in the amount of housing," said Doug Shoemaker, who heads up the mayor's office on housing.

After the Hunters View redevelopment, Bridge Housing Corp.'s project in Potrero Hill is probably the next furthest along, according to Bridge Interim President Lydia Tan. She said Bridge has spent the last 18 months "coming up with a shared vision for what Potrero could be."

"We have made a presentation to anyone on the hill who would talk to us," said Tan.

Both the Potrero and Hunters View developments are looking to reconceive the street grid so that the isolated projects are reconnected to the broader neighborhood. In the case of Hunters View that means building an extension of Fairfax Street to give the public housing better access to Bayview Plaza and the Third Street Muni line. In Potrero Hill, a new 24th Street would be built east of Starr-King Elementary School, creating a new mixed-use neighborhood center with a park, housing, shopping and a 30,000-square-foot community center. Currently, 24th Street dead ends at De Haro Street. Tan said the residents have been fairly consistent in their demands.

"They like the idea of the neighborhood center, the street grid, the retail and they like the mixed-income components," said Tan.