



For Immediate Release

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San Francisco's Historic Bayview Opera House Gets Major Facelift

Neighborhood Community Cultural Center to receive landscape design treatment as pro bono effort of local firm, SWA Group's 50th anniversary

San Francisco, CA – October 15, 2007 – On Friday Oct. 19, a 10am ceremony will celebrate a public-private partnership creating a major facelift for one of San Francisco's historic landmarks, the Bayview Opera House. Locally-based SWA Group, one of the largest landscape architecture firms in the world, is leading a pro-bono implementation in celebration of the firm's 50th anniversary. The property improvements, installed under the auspices of the San Francisco Arts Commission, have an estimated value of approximately \$100,000, one of the largest pro-bono installations of its kind. Some 20 neighborhood children will work with the SWA volunteers and learn about green spaces and sustainability.

The community celebration on Friday culminates a two-day intense transformation of the Bayview Opera House grounds, 4705 Third Street, including marquee signage, a garden café, a story garden with seating, new planting and lighting, enhancement of the existing 100 year old trees, a mural tentatively titled "Earth, Water, Vegetation", and improvements of the property's outdoor theatre.

The Bayview Opera House is located on the new San Francisco Municipal Transit Authority (SFMTA) Third Street rail line. As the light-rail line has opened and redevelopment of the Hunters Point Naval base has progressed, the Opera House is enjoying a renaissance as a gateway icon for the Hunters Point/Bayview neighborhoods.

"The Bayview Opera House is a San Francisco landmark, dearly loved by the community," said Arts Commission President P.J. Johnston. "The San Francisco Arts Commission is a strong supporter of the vibrant and diverse cultures of the Bayview and we are pleased to partner with the SWA Group to create a dynamic landscape befitting this wonderful building.

"The landscape improvements are but one part of a longer-term effort of revitalizing the Bayview Opera House, creating a neighborhood park and transforming this location to become the heart of the Bayview," said Johnston. "Our next step is a historic paint restoration on the building's exterior. We're well on our way, thanks to community

volunteers, private companies and city departments of Recreation and Parks, Metropolitan Transportation and Public Works.”

According to Rene Bihan, SWA Group Principal, “The Opera House landscape improvements are meant to have elements that are both permanent and temporary, and enhance the property exterior while engaging passersby and visitors into a more pleasing green-scape. The broader goal is to bring life to the Opera House itself and to a very visible gateway to the Hunter's Point district.”

"We're thrilled to join together with SWA Group in the revitalization of this valuable community asset," said Vernon Grigg III, President of the Board and Acting Interim Director of the Bayview Opera House, Inc. "This landscape project sends a message to the community that we are entering a new era."

“Rather than throwing one of those soon-forgotten anniversary parties,” said Bihan, “we decided to find a lasting community project and asked the Arts Commission for ideas. It was decided that the Bayview Opera House would be an excellent candidate for rejuvenation, and SWA became so enamored with the old Opera House that in addition to designing a new exterior, we decided to hold our Symposium there too.”

Neighborhood children, from elementary age through high school, will work with key SWA teams including a local artist painting a canvas mural about “Earth, Water, Vegetation” to hang from the balcony. They will also help build an Information Kiosk designed to inform the community about landscape, sustainability, and the garden club programs at their local high schools.

For more information on the Bayview Opera House, visit the website at www.bayviewoperahouse.org.

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