



Richard Bangert

Building 25 next to VA wetland that the city was required to offer to affordable housing providers.

## Mia Bonta Introduces Fix to Surplus Lands Act for Alameda Point

Richard Bangert

An amendment to the California Surplus Lands Act that went into effect in January 2020 brought long-term leasing and land sales at Alameda Point to a screeching halt for two years. The new law mandated that no government-owned land could be sold, or leased for more than a year, without first offering the land to affordable housing providers on a state clearinghouse.

After the city listed six initial sites on the clearinghouse, the process ended in January 2022 without yielding one single unit of additional housing of any type. In an effort to remedy the flawed law, Assembly Member Mia Bonta has introduced legislation to exempt Alameda Point from the process, citing the agreement with the Navy to follow the community base reuse plan. Under the current process, it forces Alameda to entertain ad hoc changes, such as offering to place housing in job-generating commercial zones. The Community Reuse Plan for Alameda Point adopted in 1996 spells out the types of uses for all of the areas, and the Navy has been conducting environmental cleanup based on those agreed-upon uses.

The current law was touted as a way of getting unused government-owned land into the hands of affordable housing developers. Exemptions are allowed, but the bill's language is vague as to whether Alameda's binding agreement with the Navy for redevelopment of the base takes precedence and qualifies as an exemption.

In order to move forward, and out of an abundance of caution to avoid potential penalties from the state, or lawsuits, the city listed six sites on the state's clearinghouse in late October 2021. The sites are considered priorities for pending leasing and development deals.

"We received no responses to our solicitation and will be moving forward with disposition of the properties either through sale or lease," said Nanette Mocanu, Assistant Director of Base Reuse & Community Development.

Without the amendment introduced by Bonta, Alameda will continue wasting time and money on the absurd exercise

of listing surplus Navy property on a state clearinghouse meant for other types of state, county, and local government property. The catalogue of recently listed properties is an embarrassing case study in the failed overreach of the law into military base redevelopment.

One of the listed sites encompasses an already-existing residential neighborhood where the Big Whites and ranch-style homes are being rented. The city already approved a framework for upgrading this area of the Main Street Neighborhood. The other five sites have long been planned for commercial job-generating development, not housing. Two of them are former aircraft hangars, one is the former Air Traffic Control Tower, one is a single-story wood frame building being eyed for expansion of the next-door brewery and currently used by the Food Bank and Red Cross, and one is a two-block area zoned for commercial and light industrial that includes Astra's indoor rocket testing facility.

One of the hangars is Building 25 on Monarch Street that sits adjacent to the VA wetland and will tower over the planned De-Pave Park wetland when completed. The 55-foot-tall building currently houses two wine makers and a beverage distributor. The city council approved a lease proposal for a brewery in a vacant bay, but this proposal could not move forward due to the new law requiring that the whole building be offered to a housing provider.

Neither Building 25 nor the nearby Air Traffic Control Tower building have ever been consid-

ered for housing due to their proximity to the endangered Least Tern nesting site on VA property.

Beyond the particular site location issues, two other factors probably contributed heavily to the lack of interest among housing providers. One hurdle is the \$100,000 surcharge that will be due to the Navy for any market-rate units over the baseline number of units allowed under the Navy's No-Cost Economic Conveyance. The city's cover letter stated, "The City is already in the disposition and development process for the remainder of the market rate units permitted at Alameda Point without paying the fee. Projects will likely require additional horizontal improvements such as sidewalks, utility lateral connections, demolition, grading, etc."

— Nanette Mocanu, Assistant Director of Base Reuse & Community Development

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Assembly Bill No. 2319, introduced by Bonta on Feb. 16, would provide an unambiguous exemption from the Surplus Lands Act for Alameda Point. It would create a special statute just for the City of Alameda "due to contracts between the City of Alameda and the United States government for the conveyance of the Alameda Point property," reads the bill. It is expected to be heard in committee in March.

"I'm hoping this new legislation will be our fix," said Mocanu. "Other than that, we're marching forward with the state process."

Contributing writer Richard Bangert posts stories and photos on his blog *Alameda Point Environmental Report*.



City of Alameda

## Alameda's 4th of July Parade Returns to the Island City

Sun Staff Reports

The City of Alameda announced the city's renowned 4th of July Parade will return after a two-year hiatus on Monday, July 4.

The city made the announcement on Tuesday, March 1. The parade has been canceled the last two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The city also announced plans to hold the Mayor's 5K Walk/Run R.A.C.E. (Ralph Appezatto Charity Event) before the parade begins. Benefits of the race will go to the Midway Shelter. The race will begin at 9 a.m., with the Parade starting at 10 a.m.

Alameda's 4th of July Parade

is the longest in the nation with a route that spans 3.3 miles, attracting more than 170 entries and 2,500 participants. The parade draws more than 60,000 spectators from the region and entries include a full spectrum of Bay Area residents, including equestrians, dance troupes, floats, antique cars, community groups and marching bands from the community, local schools and people of all shapes and sizes.

To enter a float into the parade or to become a parade sponsor, visit [www.alamedaca.gov/RESIDENTS/Alameda-4th-of-July-Parade](http://www.alamedaca.gov/RESIDENTS/Alameda-4th-of-July-Parade).

## Mayor's Message on Alameda's Plans to Help Unhoused Residents

Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft

It was a chilly 39 degrees outside when I left my house before 5 a.m. on Feb. 23. I was helping count the number of people living unsheltered in Alameda. I was joined by Alameda Unified School District (AUSD) Superintendent Pasquale Scuderi, AUSD Board President Jennifer Williams, and Alameda Community Development Director Lisa Maxwell. We were among hundreds of volunteers throughout Alameda County participating in the national "point in time" (PIT) count of individuals and families living in tents, vehicles, encampments, and shelters on this winter morning.

The federal government requires cities and counties to conduct a PIT count every other year, but the survey hasn't taken place since January 2019 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The data collected is used to determine federal and state aid allocations to



help end homelessness and help inform local response to homelessness.

Our driver was Alameda Point Collaborative Executive Director Doug Biggs, and an unsheltered individual served as our guide, for which they received a stipend. As we drove and walked through our assigned census tract using a cell phone app to collect data, it was

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**Alameda Sun Almanac**

Date	Rise	Set
Today	6:38	18:04
March 5	6:37	18:05
March 6	6:36	18:06
March 7	6:34	18:07
March 8	6:33	18:08
March 9	6:31	18:09
March 10	6:30	18:10



## JUSTICE MURAL

Sun Staff Reports

A 1990 painting of a flutist by Kyiv, Ukrainian-born artist Aleksandr Agafonov, was projected on the side of the historic Alameda Theatre & Cineplex Friday, Feb. 25.

The projection was part of a partnership between Mystetskyi Arsenal National Art and Culture Museum Complex, a museum and an art exhibition complex in Kyiv, and Justice Murals, a Bay Area nonprofit that uses murals (painted and projected) to foster awareness and action around humanitarian and social justice issues.

According to *The Art Newspaper*, an online and print publication that covers the international art world, Justice Murals has projected a painting on buildings in San Francisco and Oakland. Each projection has been accompanied with a

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