From: Neishi, Susan M CIV OASN (I&E) BRAC PMO West
To: Forman, Keith S CIV OASN (I&E) BRAC PMO West; Gilkey, Douglas E CIV OASN (I&E) BRAC PMO West; Kito, Melanie R CIV NAVFAC SW; Macchiarella, Thomas L CIV OASN (I&E) BRAC PMO West; Votaw, Jill CIV OASN (I&E) BRAC PMO West
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New city in mix to steal 49ers
By: Ken Garcia
Examiner Staff Writer
October 23, 2009 When the San Francisco 49ers unveiled their environmental impact study for a new Santa Clara stadium recently, they took some blindside hits from transportation planners about the impact the project would have on local roads and public transit.

Many likened it to a failed end-around. And then this week the San Francisco Planning Department held a hearing on transportation issues for the proposed Hunters Point/Bayview development that includes new housing, parks, shops and restaurants - and even the remote possibility that the 49ers would build their stadium there.

So why is any of this important? Another little wrinkle has emerged in the NFL playbook, now that Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger is giving his official seal of approval to legislation that would allow a new football stadium to be built in the City of Industry, and the stadium developer is very anxious to lure a team to a site where transportation issues are typically moot.

And guess which team is among those on the list?

Developer Jon Semcken said recently that he planned to approach the San Diego Chargers and five other teams to play in the proposed $800 million, 600-acre stadium 20 miles east of Los Angeles, which is moving along at a much faster pace than the Santa Clara football arena. He told reporters that he might pursue the 49ers if South Bay voters don't approve plans for the stadium next year.

In announcing his support for the Industry stadium, Schwarzenegger said that the venue would create jobs and finally bring a football team back to Los Angeles. The governor told the Los Angeles Times that the team doesn't necessarily have to come from California - but relocating one would seem to make sense.

The Industry stadium legislation was opposed by San Diego lawmakers who fear losing the Chargers, and likewise a similar amendment that would have barred the developer from going after either the 49ers or the Raiders was killed, leaving lots of speculation.

It would seem inconceivable that one of the Bay Area teams would relocate to enemy territory in Los Angeles - but that was the case for the Raiders when Al Davis moved the team there in the early '80s after getting the city of Irwindale (which is near Industry) to pony up $10 million for a planned stadium that was never built.

So we know that as NFL stadium deals and team moves go, it's better never to say never.

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