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NFL execs tour San Francisco site for 49ers stadium
49ERS' YORK SAYS TEAM REMAINS DEVOTED TO SANTA CLARA MOVE
By Mike Swift
San Jose Mercury News
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NFL officials toured San Francisco's proposed site for a new 49ers stadium on Monday, just two days after the company that controls the 49ers' preferred site in Santa Clara said it opposes the South Bay stadium plan next to Great America.
San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom used the NFL visit to declare San Francisco's site as superior to Santa Clara's. The mayor told reporters that the NFL wants the 49ers to stay in the city, and that Santa Clara has "no way to justify" spending more than $160 million on a stadium, which could lure the team south for the 2012 season.
Does that mean Santa Clara's stadium bid is in trouble? Not at all, said Jed York, the son of 49ers owners John and Denise DeBartolo York.
"We're still focused 100 percent on Santa Clara, and I think we're getting pretty close to something in Santa Clara," Jed York said in an interview with the Mercury News. "I think we are getting close to the point where we see there's a big light at the end of the tunnel."
In one of ownership's most positive statements yet about the team's ongoing talks with Santa Clara, Jed York said he is confident the team can work out its issues with the company that controls the city-owned land where the stadium would be built. Cedar Fair Entertainment Co. opposes the stadium plan because of concerns about effects on its Great America amusement park.
The 49ers, Santa Clara officials and Peter Crage, Cedar Fair's chief financial officer, are expected to meet July 10 or 11 to begin addressing the amusement park company's concerns about parking and the effects on Great America during stadium construction.
The NFL officials will tour the Santa Clara stadium site today, and meet with Santa Clara Mayor Patricia Mahan, who is unlikely to be as caustic as Newsom was Monday about his rivals to the south.
San Francisco "has a better proposal, with all due respect to Santa Clara," Newsom said, referring to the bay-side location of Hunters Point. "It should make the NFL pause and reflect on the fact that it makes no sense whatsoever for the 49ers to leave and go down next to Highway 101 and an amusement park."
Newsom also questioned the wisdom of Santa Clara officials, who are considering whether to contribute $160 million to the stadium, as well as the multimillion-dollar cost of moving an electric substation.
"Any city that wants to put $200 million up, I can assure you the worst investment you can make is an NFL stadium," Newsom said in remarks to reporters. "I just don't know how they can justify it. That being said, I guess that's up to them and the folks down there."
After meeting with Newsom in City Hall, the NFL executives drove to the former Hunters Point naval shipyard, a Superfund site that is being cleaned up by the U.S. Navy and developed by Lennar Corp. After passing mounds of contaminated soil covered with plastic tarps, a three-car caravan of city officials and Lennar executives drove the NFL executives to the top of a hill that offers commanding views of San Francisco Bay and downtown.
Neil Glat, a senior vice president with the NFL, called the view "pretty terrific."
Hunters Point is "right there on the water and could be a special place, but the devil's always in the details and those infrastructure issues can be thorny issues," and environmental "remediation issues can be time-consuming and costly," he said.
Today, the 49ers will be showing off the highway and transit connections in Santa Clara - one glaring weakness at Hunters Point. The NFL is not planning to tell the 49ers which site to pick, Glat said.
Asked about Newsom's statement that "the NFL would like to see the 49ers stay in San Francisco," Glat said the NFL had made no statement to that effect.
A big part of the NFL's agenda Monday was to check on Monster Park, the aging city-owned edifice that will remain the 49ers' home until a new stadium is built. Four nationally televised games are scheduled at Monster in the

coming season, including the first Monday Night Football game when the Arizona Cardinals visit San Francisco on Sept. 10.
In April, after years of angry correspondence between the 49ers and the city that the city's poor maintenance had led to public safety concerns at the stadium, city parks officials agreed to provide the team $10.3 million in rent credits to make repairs.
City officials Monday showed off some of the stadium's old escalators, clogged with leaves and other debris, that are to be repaired or refurbished before the start of the season. The stadium's parking lot, restrooms and elevators are also being repaired.
Asked about perceptions that Monster Park is perhaps the worst stadium in the league, Glat said: "It's far from state of the art at this point in time."

NFL officials tour proposed 49ers stadium sites
ASSOCIATED PRESS
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SANTA CLARA – National Football League executives on Tuesday toured a Silicon Valley site where the 49ers want to build a new stadium, a day after San Francisco's mayor gave his pitch to keep the team in the city.
Santa Clara Mayor Patricia Mahan and team owner John York and his son, Jed, escorted NFL executives Neil Glat and Eric Grubman on a walk from the 49ers headquarters to the team's preferred site near a theme park and the city's convention center.
“This site, we believe, would give the fans a great game-day experience and that's what it's all about: doing what's best for the 49ers and doing what's best for the fans,” Mahan said.
The new stadium is expected to cost $854 million, and 49ers executives have said they plan to ask the NFL for a $150 million loan to complete the project because a fund the league once had to help finance stadiums is depleted.
The 49ers want to build a new home venue because Monster Park, the San Francisco stadium where the team now plays, is outdated and the team does not think the site is suitable for what it has in mind.
On Monday, San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom briefed the league officials on the city's proposal to build a new stadium at the former Hunters Point Naval Shipyard along San Francisco Bay, a federal Superfund site long plagued by toxic pollution.
City officials have said the shipyard can be cleaned up in time to open a new stadium in 2012.
After Tuesday's tour, Glat called the Santa Clara site “beautiful” and “very doable for an NFL facility” but said he didn't want to compare it to Hunters Point.
“Every site is different and every site has different potential and different opportunities,” he said.
Niners owners favor a Santa Clara theme park parking lot south of the city as their top location, although Great America park officials recently announced they oppose the plan over concerns it could hurt their business.
The NFL cannot directly dictate where the 49ers build a new stadium, but historically the league has lent teams money for new arenas. Three-quarters of NFL teams also must approve a team's move.
The 49ers announced in November they had abandoned a decade-long attempt to build a stadium at Candlestick Point, its San Francisco home since 1971, and planned to move to Santa Clara.