

Doing the Waterfront Right

Friday, April 24, 2009 - 11:00am PDT by JUDY CHANG

Architecture, Community / Economic Development, Government / Politics, Housing, Land Use, Urban Development, Pennsylvania

Philadelphia's SugarHouse waterfront development could learn a thing or two from San Francisco's Mission Bay neighborhood, according to this piece.

"Mission Bay is easily one of the best new waterfront neighborhoods in America, with 2,700 new condos already built. Yet a mere 10 years ago, the place didn't exist. It was 300 acres of raw brownfields, populated by a few hardened pioneers living on houseboats in Mission Creek.

Clearly, San Francisco didn't get its waterfront to this point by following the SugarHouse model.

The Nutter administration took some heat last week for signing off on the gaming operator's plan to build a suburban-style box surrounded by acres of asphalt parking just south of Penn Treaty Park. Public anger would be more fairly directed at Gov. Rendell, who prefers easy money to real development, and who imposed this crummy slots barn on the Delaware waterfront.

But even a master plan doesn't guarantee that Philadelphia will produce its version of Mission Bay. San Francisco's plan was in place for years before development took off.

How did San Francisco do it? Obviously, the explosive growth in nearby Silicon Valley and the city's famously tight housing market helped make Mission Bay attractive to developers. In 2000, the opening of the Giants' AT&T Park, set firmly within the city grid, helped focus attention on the neighborhood. So did the extension of an urbane light-rail line."

Full Story: [Changing Skyline: Some waterfront lessons from the City by the Bay](#)

Published on Friday, April 17, 2009 in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

Planetizen www.planetizen.com | Copyright © 2000 - 2014 Urban Insight, Inc. All rights reserved

Email: editor@planetizen.com | [Advertise](#) | [Contact Us](#)