

Bay Area



Inside

Cityscape: Mission Bay's floating homes C10

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE AND SFGATE.COM | Sunday, November 8, 2009 | Section C

DEVELOPMENT

State exploring growth strategy

Vision California could alter politics, prod cities to accept or reject projects

By John King
CHRONICLE URBAN DESIGN WRITER

With little fanfare and a modest budget, work has begun that could lead to something California has never had — an

explicit government vision for how and where the state should grow.

The official action is modest, a \$2.5 million contract to devise a set of detailed growth scenarios for California, from classic

suburban sprawl to compact development focused on older cities. The goal is to produce a single "preferred scenario" — one that conceivably could be used to prod local governments to accept or reject new construction.

This sort of top-down planning would alter politics in California, where cities and counties for decades have de-

flected any initiatives that might crimp their autonomy. The difference now: legislative efforts to reduce the state's carbon emission levels, and voter support of a high-speed rail system that could put now-distant portions of the Central Valley within commuting distance of Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Proponents say there's no way to make wise long-term

decisions without data to gauge the impact of different patterns of growth when it comes to matters such as energy or water use.

"When you're building infrastructure, you have to take into account all the different state-wide goals," said Cynthia Bryant, director of the Governor's Office of Planning and Re-

Vision continues on C2



Michael Macor / The Chronicle

Artists John Melvin and Barry Beach take their "Home Away From Home" project through the Tenderloin. The mobile meeting place was inspired by drawings of neighborhood children.

COMMUNITY CULTURE

Tenderloin, artists' spirits brighten with installation

By Heather Knight
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

San Franciscans have an endless supply of museums, galleries and exhibit space to visit when they need their art fix. But over the past few weeks, some of the city's most eye-catching, conversation-sparking art has been available free of charge and in perhaps the city's unlikely space: the streets of the Tenderloin.

It's called Wonderland, and it took dozens of artists, most of them local, working for a year and virtually for free to produce the 15 large-scale installations.

There are giant wood frames wrapped in shiny silver material on the rooftops of the Warfield theater and Showdogs, a sausage joint across the street. A sound installation of record-

ed voices of Tenderloin residents singing and telling their stories. A big, hot pink, platypus-looking creature on wheels inspired by whimsical drawings by children.

There's no wine and cheese opening for this exhibit — and you might have to walk past panhandlers and drug deals to see it. But for Lance Fung, curator of the show that closes Nov. 15, that's what makes it worthwhile.

"Will a show at the MOMA change someone's life? No, you

Wonderland continues on C2

FROM THE COVER

Art colors Tenderloin

Wonderland from page C1

have to save 20 bucks to go there," he said. "I'm surprised that a project like this hasn't happened yet in San Francisco."

Fung, who was born in Pacific Heights and raised in Saratoga, usually curates much grander public art installations like 2004's Snow Show in Finland. A friend asked him last year to teach a course at the San Francisco Art Institute that would culminate in a public art show — and the idea of Wonderland was born.

The show is the latest example of an effort by the city, artists and neighborhood groups to turn the seedy area into an arts district akin to New York City's SoHo.

'It's owned by everybody'

But there's something about Wonderland that feels different, said Elaine Zamora, district manager of the North of Market/Tenderloin Community Benefit District.

"Temporary art doesn't gentrify a neighborhood — galleries and cafes can," she said. "It's not owned by one particular person. It's owned by everybody."

The community benefit district gave Wonderland a \$2,500 grant, the mayor's office gave \$5,000, and Grants for the Arts gave \$10,000. But mostly, the artists worked for free.



Queen Amie Krubally displays her batik artwork in the Tenderloin studio the Wonderland artists found for her.

Fung recently led a walking tour to some of the more unusual installations.

"Fear Head," a mural featuring a terrified girl between the faces of two monsters, is painted on the side of a building on Golden Gate Avenue. It has become so popular, it's the only installation that will remain indefinitely.

One of the most heart-wrenching displays is "Down the Rabbit Hole." Viewers must visit Youth With a Mission, a drop-in center for homeless people on Ellis Street, to be admitted between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Artists turned a small room next to the drop-in center into a vision of despair: the home of a prostitute, many of whom are trafficked through San Francisco. A dingy mattress, penicillin

Art installations

Wonderland will remain up through next Sunday and is free to the public. For details and locations of the installations, visit www.wonderlandshow.org.

bottle, McDonald's bag and condom wrappers litter the floor. A TV plays "Alice in Wonderland," and posters of Miley Cyrus and Taylor Swift hang on the wall, representing the lost childhood of human trafficking victims.

"I've seen women cry," Fung said of visitors to the display.

Providing space, workshops

But it's not all sad. Larry Gaspard, who lives in a half-way house in the neighborhood, loves the Hyde Street



The "Fear Head" mural by Roman Cesario and Mitsu Overstreet looms over Golden Gate Avenue near Jones Street.

Photos by Michael Macor / The Chronicle

sidewalk squares painted gold as part of Wonderland. "It's art, and I like art," he said.

So does Queen Amie Krubally, who was a well-known batik artist in Africa before moving to San Francisco. She's lived in a single-room-occupancy hotel for years and gave up her art because she didn't have space in her tiny room or the funds for supplies.

The Wonderland artists found an empty studio space

for her, and she's been creating artwork and leading workshops for neighbors for the past several weeks. She's hoping to find permanent space after the exhibit is over.

"I'm praying, please Lord, let me have another studio — I've been so blessed," she said. "Wonderland — the name is correct."

E-mail Heather Knight at hknight@sfgchronicle.com.