

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE HOPE SF SCHEME TO PRIVATIZE SAN FRANCISCO'S LAST PUBLIC HOUSING AT SUNNYDALE AND POTRERO HILL



What happened to all the public housing in San Francisco?

Over the last few decades, almost all the public housing in San Francisco has been eliminated through privatization via federal HOPE IV and Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) programs. One by one, San Francisco Housing Authority (SFHA) buildings were handed over to private management companies and tenants were given Section 8 vouchers. Many tenants were displaced. And this didn't just happen here: since 1990, half of all the public housing in the U.S. has been eliminated.

Now, the HOPE SF scheme is demolishing the last SFHA buildings at Sunnydale, Potrero Hill, Double Rock, and Hunters View, to clear the land for private real estate developers to build "mixed-income communities", with more than half the units being market rate.

We need changes in our homes and neighborhoods. Our buildings need to be fixed and updated. But that's not what's happening with HOPE SF. So what is really going on?

What is HOPE SF?



HOPE SF, created by former mayor Gavin Newsom in 2007, is a partnership between the San Francisco city government (led by the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development), the San Francisco Foundation, and Enterprise Community Partners. It's being sold to us tenants as a "revitalization initiative" to "rebuild public housing." They even go so far as to call it reparations! But we know the truth. What's being built isn't public housing. HOPE SF is a scheme to eliminate the last public housing in San Francisco.

Who really benefits from HOPE SF?

This is a plan for private developers to make a profit from building and managing "mixed-income communities" made up of market-rate and supposedly "affordable" units.

Working class people living in housing projects are told to leave their homes, so they can be demolished and replaced with housing and neighborhoods meant for the rich. HOPE SF is a plan to price working class people out of their neighborhoods and out of San Francisco. This is part of a nationwide plan by the federal government, banks and developers to eliminate public housing entirely.

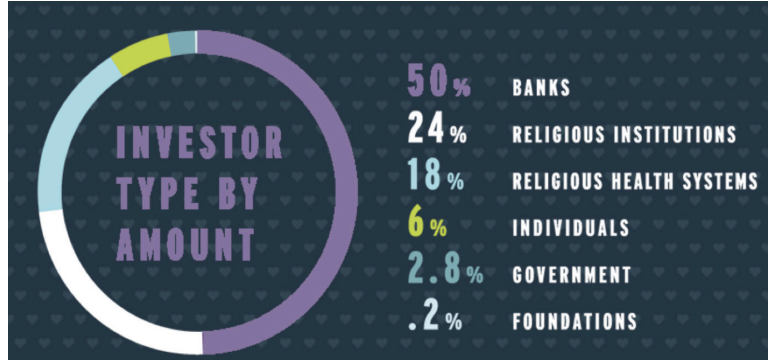
One look at the HOPE SF website and it becomes clear who really benefits from it: the city government, banks like Bank of America, Wells Fargo, JP Morgan Chase, corporations like Google, Kaiser Permanente, and foundations are working together via the HOPE SF scheme to make a profit and push people out of their homes. This isn't for tenants.

Each of the four HOPE SF sites formerly managed by SFHA are being handed over to different private developers. Mercy Housing and Related California are the two developers at Sunnydale, and Mercy Housing will own manage all of the new buildings. BRIDGE Housing is the developer and management company at Potrero Hill.



Who's behind Mercy Housing?

Mercy Housing is one of the biggest “affordable housing” developers and management companies in the country. It manages over 300 properties with 22,500 units in 21 states. Even though Mercy is technically a “non-profit” it makes billions. In Mercy’s most recent available financial report, they claimed nearly \$3.4 billion in assets, with \$96



million of that being cash. Mercy collects over \$260 million in rent every year Some of their biggest donors include Capital One, Bank of America, and Chase. The Mercy Housing California Board of Directors includes former bank executives from Wells Fargo and Bank of America, a real estate consultant, a commercial real estate executive, and a retired Salesforce executive. These people spent their entire careers getting rich off the backs of the poor, and now they want to make money eliminating public housing.



Who's behind Related California?

Mercy is working with Related California to gentrify Sunnydale. Related California is a subsidiary of Related Companies, a massive real estate company and the biggest land-

lord in New York City. It owns over \$60 billion in real estate assets. Related Companies is also responsible for the largest private real estate development in the country, Hudson Yards in Manhattan, which cost an estimated \$25 billion to make and received \$6 billion in tax breaks despite the fact that it remains a ghost town.

Related Companies' CEO Stephen M. Ross has a net worth of \$7.6 billion and owns the Miami Dolphins NFL team. He's close with former President Donald Trump, hosting a fundraiser for the former president with tickets costing upwards of \$100,000 for lunch and a photo op. He also holds a stake in one of Trump's biggest creditors, Ladder Capital, which is described as a "shadow bank" – a financial institution that operates similarly to a bank but outside of financial regulations.



Related CEO Stephen M. Ross with Trump



Who's behind BRIDGE Housing?

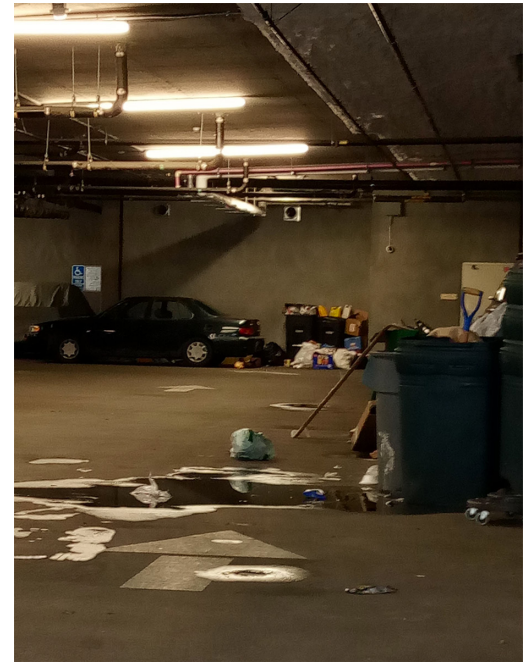
BRIDGE is another private developer and management company, operating over 20 properties in San Francisco, with more than 80 properties and 9,000 units in total. Google and Housing Trust Silicon Valley recently threw \$30 million at BRIDGE to speed up Potrero redevelopment. Other big donors include Bank of America, Wells Fargo, and US Bank. BRIDGE claims to have "built a track record of successful collaboration with all levels of government, market-rate developers, financial institutions and other nonprofits." Obviously, their focus is not on tenants but on the state and private wealthy interests.

BRIDGE contracts out to the Shanti Project, whose employees pressure tenants at Potrero Hill to leave their homes and move to private BRIDGE units across the city. When tenants have voiced concerns, Shanti employees have completely disregarded them.

What does this mean for Sunnydale and Potrero Hill?

Mercy and BRIDGE do a few things to create an image of "serving the community": they hand out some meals, hire a few residents, and hold meetings (where they actually just ignore residents' concerns). But really, what they're doing is pushing us out of our homes so they can build and make a profit. In the buildings owned by Mercy, BRIDGE, and other private companies, they create oppressive rules for residents designed to control people, and give them "justification" to evict residents if they want to.

HOPE SF and the developers have lied to residents about what this “redevelopment” plan actually means. They say it’s going to be better for residents. But HOPE SF did this at Double Rock/Alice Griffith: SFHA buildings were demolished and a private developer constructed new buildings. Now, Double Rock residents say the management company (John Stewart Company) makes them live in dangerous conditions and ignores maintenance requests. Parking issues and violence have continued. And because residents now live in private Section 8 units, they have fewer rights than they did in public housing and have to pay for utilities. Plus, residents at Double Rock have Section 8 Project Based Vouchers which are tied to the unit, so if they move they can’t take the voucher with them. All the Mercy and BRIDGE units they’re telling people to move into also are tied to these Project Based Vouchers.



Run down garages at the new privately owned buildings at Double Rock

What can we do? Fight back!

Related and Mercy aren’t all powerful. In 2014, the city handed over management of the Midtown Park Apartments in the Western Addition to Mercy Housing, who planned to demolish the buildings and raise rent for some residents by 300%. Tenants fought back and went on a rent strike, and it worked! Mercy agreed to leave Midtown, the buildings were not demolished, and the rent hikes were cancelled.

If we come together and organize, we can fight for our rights and interests to be protected. You are not alone. There is a national movement of tenants organizing to stop the privatization of public housing and fight against gentrification. We can demand fair rents, proper maintenance, and to be respected in our homes.



Learn more about the United Front Against Displacement Bay Area:

Phone: 510-815-9978 Email: wewontgo@riseup.net theufad.org

