



SFGATE HOME • BUSINESS • SPORTS • ENTERTAINMENT • TRAVEL

CLASSIFIEDS • JOBS • REAL ESTATE • CARS

Search

SFGate

Web by Google™

Sign In | Register

San Francisco Chronicle

# High-Tech Propaganda War Sand Hill foes, proponents hitting residents on all fronts

Bill Workman, Chronicle Peninsula Bureau  
Monday, January 27, 1997

SHARE

NEW! FONT | SIZE: - +

The debate over Sand Hill Road is the latest example of the sophisticated way the town and gown wars are fought in the Stanford University community.

What is essentially a battle over a road and development proposal is being fought with all the intellectual might and marketing know-how both sides can muster -- in competing Web sites, polished marketing campaigns and dueling letters to the editor.

For the past nine months, Stanford has had a web page detailing its \$342 million development proposal featuring colorful artists' drawings, maps and strategically placed ``at-a-glance'' graphics that crisply highlight the best possible spin the university's public relations staff can put on the controversy.

Opponents have struck back with online assaults on Stanford. The Civic League of Palo Alto, rejuvenated just in time for the Sand Hill struggles, and the recently formed Mid-Peninsula Action for Tomorrow (MPACT) representing Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Portola Valley residents, each boast their own web pages. The sites catalog what the groups see as fatal flaws in Stanford's designs and outline alternative measures.

``This has certainly become a battle of sound bites, hot-button words and visual images,'' said Dan Dippery, an MPACT leader and a retired executive with Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborne, a renowned international advertising firm. Dippery has put together an ad campaign in local newspapers to rally the opposition.

Almost daily for two weeks, MPACT has run three-quarter- page tabloid ads warning readers that widening Sand Hill Road, as Stanford has proposed, will only make traffic worse. One layout shows clogged commute traffic at the Sand Hill intersection with Santa Cruz Avenue and trumpets: ``If you think Sand Hill is bad now . . . wait till it's four lanes.''

Not to be outdone, Stanford last week circulated a glossy brochure inserted in the same newspapers, reciting a litany of the housing, traffic, commercial and environmental benefits the university insists the project will bring.

The report included a ``Dear Neighbor'' message from Stanford President Gerhard Casper, emphasizing that Stanford has planned Sand Hill with ``acute sensitivity to the interests and needs of the surrounding community.''

For the past four years, top Stanford officials spent nights and weekends attending public hearings, community workshops and forums and neighborhood coffee klatches lobbying for the Sand Hill plans, first made public in December 1992.

``America fought the Civil War in less time than it will have taken us to get the current version of the Sand Hill Road projects approved,'' said Larry Horton, Stanford's director of governmental affairs.

Not surprising in a highly educated community where the print media still weigh heavily in the public mind, it has been the letters-to-the-editor pages where the Sand Hill dispute has been most eagerly joined.

In recent weeks, newspapers serving the region have set aside large chunks of space for letters and op-ed pieces, often written by top professionals in development, transportation



blue of california  
blueshieldca.com/sfhss

MOST READ MOST E-MAILED TOP STORIES

1. Sutter County hunt for man who allegedly threatened rampage
2. Va. Tech Shooter Was Laughed At
3. SF Gate: News: Bondage File
4. Gunman's Uncle Indicates Family Is OK
5. VIRGINIA TECH MASSACRE STATE OF MIND: Video offers a window into tortured soul
6. Large number of cable car passengers riding for free
7. Woman Registers a .47 on Breath Tester

## Top Jobs

- GOVERNMENT**  
Public Safety  
Dispatcher  
*City of Berkeley*
- GOVERNMENT**  
Safety & Risk Manager  
*Marin Municipal Water District*
- GOVERNMENT**  
Senior Planner for City  
-Berkeley  
*City of Berkeley*
- GOVERNMENT**  
Sr. Contract Offcr  
Contract Offcr ...  
*SAMTRANS*
- GOVERNMENT**  
Dispatcher, Call Taker  
*Department of Emergency Management*
- GOVERNMENT**  
Law Enforcement  
Officers  
*California Department of Corrections and Rehab.*
- GOVERNMENT**  
Sales & Promo  
Supervisor  
*Sam Trans*
- GOVERNMENT**  
Senior Park Planne  
*East Bay Regional Park*
- HEALTHCARE**  
Plan, organize, direct & manage  
*Merced County*

San Francisco Chronicle  
SFGate.com

### ADVERTISERS

Own Timeless Beautiful  
Photos From Chronicle  
Collection

and planning, dealing solely with Sand Hill.

Among other things, the letters spawned a running dispute over the political correctness of project foes who describe the meadow where Stanford plans to put housing as ``Ohlone Field," a reference to archaeological digs along San Francisquito Creek that unearthed links to the area's Native American heritage.

Laura Jones, a Stanford archaeologist who monitors the digs, has taken opponents to task in print for using the Ohlone name. Descendants of the tribe that once lived along the creek prefer to be called Muwekma, she argued.

Jones contended that Sand Hill opponents are using the better- known Ohlone name to plant the idea that the university ``cares more for housing than for archaeological sites or indigenous cultures, which is simply untrue."

*This article appeared on page A - 14 of the San Francisco Chronicle*

SHARE

Ads by Google

What's This?

**Which Spyware Remover?**

Don't download any Spyware removers until you read this article.  
[www.DefeatSpyware.org](http://www.DefeatSpyware.org)

**Don't Buy Spyware Remover**

Until You Read This 2007 Guide Side-By-Side Comparisons  
[www.MySpywareGuide.info](http://www.MySpywareGuide.info)

**Ad Ware & Spyware Removal**

2006 Highly-Rated Ad Ware Remover. Fix your Computer - Free Download!  
[NoAdware.net](http://NoAdware.net)



Get up to 50% off home delivery of the Chronicle for 12 weeks!

[Back To Top](#)

San Francisco Chronicle Sections

Go

© 1997 Hearst Communications Inc. | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Feedback](#) | [RSS Feeds](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Site Index](#) | [Contact](#)

**HEALTHCARE**  
Healthcare -Kaiser  
Multiple locations  
*KAISER PERMANENTE*

**HEALTHCARE**  
Clinical Pharmacy  
Coord a key member  
*Hill Physicians Medical Group*

**HEALTHCARE**  
Health Record Analysts  
*Sutter Health Sac Sierra*

**HEALTHCARE**  
Healthcare  
Opportunities  
*Sutter Health*

**INVESTIGATOR**  
QA DISCREPANCY  
Investigate

**KITCHENWORKS**  
TOO MANY LEADS !  
LEADS! LEADS

About Top Jobs  
[View All Top Jobs](#)  
[Search more Jobs](#)

PROVIDED BY —  
**YAHOO! hotjobs**