

# Millennium Tower developer's about-face on next big SF high-rise

**Matier & Ross, SF Gate, 10-20-16**

Facing a legal and public-relations nightmare with its sinking and leaning Millennium Tower, the San Francisco highrise's developer is redesigning the foundation of its newest luxury condo project up Mission Street — with the idea of going all the way down to bedrock.

“It calls into question all the other projects (downtown) that aren't going to bedrock,” Supervisor Aaron Peskin said Wednesday when informed of Millennium Partners' possible change in plans for its high-rise at Third and Mission streets.

Construction work is already under way on the 45-story condo tower at 706 Mission St., which will house the new Mexican Museum on the first four floors and incorporate the 10-story Aronson Building next door.

The project is a few blocks west of the 58-story Millennium Tower at 301 Mission St., which has sunk 16 inches and is leaning 2 inches to the northwest. That condo high-rise sits on a concrete slab with piles driven 60 to 80 feet deep, well short of bedrock.

In contrast, the 706 Mission St. tower was designed without any piles. Instead, it was to be held up by a four-story basement garage sitting on a bowl-shaped concrete slab, 12 feet thick at the center and 5 feet thick at the edges.

At least, that was the plan the developer gave to the city before we broke the news in early August that the Millennium was sinking. That raised questions about whether buildings built on bay fill, as the Millennium is, should be anchored to bedrock to ensure their safety in an earthquake.

Several Millennium condo owners have sued the developer, fearing that the bad publicity and safety questions are tanking the value of their units.

Millennium Partners brought in a structural engineer who said the building's problems had not compromised its ability to survive a major earthquake. And several experts told The Chronicle last month that high-rises constructed on bay fill don't have to go to bedrock — and that, in fact, several others around the Millennium also have piles that don't reach bedrock.