

# Disconnect for Project Connect

Mayor's liaison to Collaborative: 'I'll get back to you'

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

**J**ASON Chan, the mayor's liaison to District 6 since November, came away from the January Tenderloin Futures Collaborative meeting with a lesson in being prepared — or not.

Chan presented an update on the mayor's Project Homeless Connect, which "was initiated to help end chronic homelessness," he said.

"Dec. 8 was the last (outreach) we held," he said. "Mayor Newsom and 300 volunteers tried to get the homeless here in the Tenderloin and in SoMa connected to services and into housing."

The homeless were brought to intake stations at 201 Turk and 6th and Folsom where they were assigned a case worker and learned about how the city could help them.

"We got 53 people into housing," Chan announced proudly, "and we'll be doing Project Connect in the Tenderloin and SoMa again in February." One change is that the homeless will be brought to the vast Bill Graham Auditorium "so we can process the people better."

Presentation over, hands shot up.

"Can youth be involved as volunteers?" asked Central Y Executive Director Carmela Gold.

"Yes," Chan said. "This next time we'll have

a Project Connect for kids — kids helping kids." He promised to call Gold with details.

Michael Nulty, Alexander Tenants Association's community liaison and co-president of Alliance for a Better District 6, asked if and if the city actually had vacancies for the recruited homeless people and if the housing provided would be permanent.

"The housing is permanent," Chan said. "I don't know if there are vacancies now. I'll have to get back to you. We tried to secure 50 units for the last Project Connect, but we saw more than 1,000 people that day."

(The Extra went to [www.projecthomeless-connect.com](http://www.projecthomeless-connect.com) and learned that 800 homeless were seen and the 50 housing units were temporary, 60 to 90 days.)

"And are you tracking this effort?" asked Glenda Hope, TFC chair and S.F. Network Ministries director.

The project is conducted every other month, Chan explained. "On the off-month we can evaluate how we did. I don't have any data on it, but I will get back to you," he said.

"How is this project connected to the city's other homeless efforts?" asked TNDC's Jerry Jai.

Chan paused, a little too long. Then he mentioned that when the homeless are brought in, they get information about medical and dental services. "It's like one-stop shopping," he said, unconvincingly. He had one more hurdle.

"So what was the criteria for the 53 people who did get housing that day?" queried Clint Ladine, operations manager for S.F. Rescue Mission.

Chan blanched. "I don't know. I'll find out."

In the original 10-week pilot Project Connect, launched last June, teams of city employees and volunteers went into six low-income neighborhoods where they did door-to-door assessments of residents' needs and let them know about existing programs and services. Drove of volunteers fanned out through Bayview, Western Addition and other communities, including the Tenderloin on July 28.

The Extra contacted Chan after the TFC meeting to find out if the mission of Project Connect had shifted — from connecting people who had housing with needed services to connecting the homeless with housing and services. Chan said, "I'll find out."

And he did. "I'm supposed to refer you to an October press release or refer you to the press office," he said. "I'm actually not supposed to talk to you. I didn't know that."

The press release says that this new effort will assess the downtown street population in depth, create an SFStat model to show "pertinent, detailed data," link the homeless to services, evaluate shelter system problems and "empower" the Street Outreach Team.



**Preliminary draft rendering of facade for St. Anthony's proposed new building at 121 Golden Gate Ave. that will contain a 300-seat dining room.**

## ST. ANTHONY'S EXPANSION PLAN

Paula Lewis, director of operations at St. Anthony's Foundation, came to the Futures Collaborative meeting ready for questions about the foundation's project to raze its dining room for the poor at 121 Golden Gate and rebuild a more neighbor-friendly facility.

For years, there have been complaints that the people lined up outside waiting to eat intimidated passers-by, dealt drugs, threw trash around, and worse. St. Anthony's expects the new facility to resolve the greatest problems.

"We've really listened to the concerns of the community," Lewis said.

She brought along two staff members — Gualberto Rego, building and projects manager, and Mark Fisher, administrative coordinator — plus draft renderings of the building's exterior and floor plans.

The new three-story building will have the

dining room on the first floor, food prep in the basement, a second floor with 17 units of permanent senior housing, and, on the third floor 17 units of respite housing, for people just discharged from the hospital.

"All the units are the same," Lewis explained, "about 300 square feet, with a separate bathroom, and an area with a microwave and refrigerator." Each housing floor will have a community room.

The main feature of the new building is an open, arched arcade, or loggia, that wraps around the Golden Gate-Jones corner. Diners waiting there to enter the dining room will have views out through the arches to the street and into the dining room through the windows that flank the arcade.

"Inside, there will be a separate area where seniors and the disabled will wait," Lewis said. Reconfiguring the dining room also will allow St. Anthony's to serve 300 people at every meal, 50 more than now.

In an e-mail to The Extra, Lewis cautioned that the building design could change because St. Anthony's has not yet started the entitlement process or been before the planning Commission.

At the meeting, she handled the few questions easily.

"What about the carts?" asked Ed Evans, of the Mayor's Disability Council. "When the people are in the arcade, are their carts outside, on the sidewalk?"

No problem, said Ava Perkins, St. Anthony's client safety services manager, who also came along to field questions. "If they have a cart, they get food to go."

Lewis later explained that diners with carts can come to the entrance and ask for a lunch to-go, which is brought by a runner. They also can eat inside and leave their carts outside "but at their own risk," she wrote. "Our staff does their best to maintain clear passage of the sidewalk for our disabled guests and for the safety of pedestrians."

Asked about the project's time line, Lewis said it's tied to the plans for 150 Golden Gate, the old Knights of Columbus building, which St. Anthony's owns. City

Planning just issued a conditional use permit, the first step toward demolishing it and erecting a new five-story building to house the foundation's administrative offices, its social services and, temporarily, the dining room, while 121 is under construction. Estimated finish dates are 2008 for 150 Golden Gate, and 2010 for 121 Golden Gate.

And what's all this going to cost?

"We estimate that both buildings will cost \$35 million," Lewis said, "and we won't even start the demolition on 150 Golden Gate until we have 90% of the funds." A capital campaign is looming, for sure. ■

## Seeking shapers of SoMa's future

**T**HE city is looking for 22 good people to fill slots on the new Western SoMa Citizens' Planning Task Force. (Western SoMa boundaries are Fourth Street to Division and Mission to Townsend.) The members will advise the Board of Supes and the Planning Commission about zoning; height, density and design guidelines; preserving service and light industrial jobs, residential uses, and arts and entertainment opportunities; and other concerns that will become part of a new SoMa Neighborhood Plan.

"Our biggest concern," said Paul Lord, senior city planner, "is to look at measures to protect the housing in the residential enclaves — the alleys — in this community."

The three-year task force appointments shake out thusly: Supervisor Daly appoints three members; the directors of the Planning Department and the S.F. Transportation Authority each appoints one; and the supes name the remaining 17.

Members must include a resident of western SoMa for more than three years, a resident for less than three years, an SRO tenant, a youth, someone raising a family, a senior, a businessman, a community-based organization employee, an arts representative, an entertainment industry rep, a nonprofit developer, a for-profit developer, a bicycle advocate, a parks and open space advocate, a transportation advocate, a preservation advocate and a labor representative.

More info: [http://www.sfgov.org/site/bdsupvrs\\_index.asp?id=4386](http://www.sfgov.org/site/bdsupvrs_index.asp?id=4386), or call Rules Committee clerk, 554-5184, regarding vacancies. ■

— MARJORIE BEGGS

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