

# GOOD NEWS for...

## CALLING CITY GOVERNMENT

Want to know how to get a dog license or food stamps or when street cleaning is? Want to report dope dealing or a broken street light? After 6 a.m. March 29, call 311, the city's new 24/7, know-it-all phone number. It is meant to streamline the flow of information. No more fumbling through 2,300 department and agency numbers to find the right one for your questions or complaints. Agents at 311 will provide the information you seek, or refer you to the proper source. An account of the call is kept, and through a tracking number progress on the subject can be checked through 311, or on the Internet. Now, the city gets 7 million phone calls a year and 40% of them are never addressed, 311 spokesman Tomas Lee told the February meeting of the Alliance for a Better District 6. Other calls, he said, may be "transferred 7 to 10 times" before reaching the right source, if ever. The efficiency move operates on \$4.2 million now and is projected to cost \$9.2 million in 2007-08. "It's a huge suggestion box, too," Lee said.

## NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVISTS

Tired of watching your community quality erode because of small crimes like petty gambling, graffiti, loitering, shoplifting? Tenderloin/SoMa Community Courts are recruiting new panelists. In Community Courts, misdemeanor violators are held accountable for their actions by community members rather than by judges and juries. The courts operate in 12 neighborhoods, and are organized and staffed by the District Attorney's Office and California Community Dispute Services. To be a panelist, you must observe two court sessions and complete a short training class. Court sessions are held in the community once a month and last approximately one hour. Panelists hear cases, explain to offenders how their actions affect the neighborhood, and determine consequences: Pay restitution to victims who have suffered financial or property losses, do community service or pay fines that are filtered back to the neighborhoods for improvements. Some offenders also are ordered to receive addiction treatment, anger management counseling or other services to change their behavior. Information: Contact Dina Hilliard, Tenderloin community organizer for the Safety Network Program, 538-8100 x 204 or dhilliard@iisf.org. Also, for more details on Community Courts, see [www.sfdistrictattorney.org/page.asp?id=44](http://www.sfdistrictattorney.org/page.asp?id=44).

If you have some good news, send it to [marjorie@studycenter.org](mailto:marjorie@studycenter.org) or [tom@studycenter.org](mailto:tom@studycenter.org).

# Mercy Housing joins St. Anthony's as building costs soar on Golden Gate

BY PHIL TRACY

IN what could only be seen as a fitting gesture, St. Anthony Foundation announced to the Tenderloin Futures Collaborative meeting in February that it would collaborate with Mercy Housing to build more senior housing at its 121 Golden Gate Ave. site, one of two Golden Gate addresses St. Anthony's is rebuilding.

Paula Lewis, director of operations for St. Anthony's, explained that construction costs — particularly at 150 Golden Gate — have grown beyond St. Anthony's capacity to finance both projects, plus add senior housing, which many residents have been clamoring for. The original plan was for one floor of senior housing and one floor of respite housing. The new plan is to add two or three floors of senior housing. The number of units will increase from St. Anthony's original 17 to a number that might reach as high as 80, Lewis said.

St. Anthony's will keep one floor for respite housing for convalescing seniors, perhaps following surgery, before they can return to their own housing. St. Anthony's will also build the ground floor dining hall and a new food preparation facility in the basement.

Lewis said Mercy Housing has experience getting federal housing dollars and St. Anthony's doesn't. She introduced Amy Bayley, Mercy's VP of Community Planning. Bayley said they would pursue HUD's Section 202 Program, which awards capital grants to build housing for low-income people 62 and older and operating grants for subsidizing rents.

The Rev. Glenda Hope, Collaborative chair, asked whether the housing could be designated for elderly homeless. Bayley said HUD would require proof that such a focus would not discriminate against other seniors. She said Mercy Housing recently persuaded HUD to include "frail" seniors as a group, succeeding only after "a long conversation." Persuading HUD to back homeless-only housing, Bayley said, "would entail a very long conversation."

Resident David Baker expressed some concern about the changes. "In other words, everything is pretty much up in the air right now," he said.

Lewis said she felt the news deserved "a little more positive spin than that." She was optimistic: "Should we be able to get through this collaborative process and find the funding, we will have a bigger project. Something will happen on that site. It's not like everything is thrown out the window. We feel ultimately this will lead to more housing for people in the community."

## MEDICAL CENTER SCALES DOWN VAN NESS PROJECT

California Pacific Medical Center also made a presentation to the group and it too claimed

the changes it was reporting were caused by escalating construction costs. But, while St. Anthony's project is expanding, in CPMC's case, the result is to downsize the project. After the meeting, Lubor Mrazek, director for CPMC's four-campus master plan, said building costs in the last two years have skyrocketed 15% to 20% annually.

But it wasn't clear just what CPMC planned to cut from the huge complex that would straddle Van Ness Avenue, which med center officials previously reported to the Collaborative.

Bob Passmore, a former City Planning zoning administrator now working for the Marchese Co., which represents the CPMC Cathedral Hill project, was particularly short when it came to the list of changes he could specify.

The number of beds, which was identified at 627 at a Planning Commission hearing held last July, had shrunk to a tantalizingly indistinct "400 plus," according to Passmore. The 331-foot height of the 20-story building is now described as being "maybe shorter than what we showed you before." A nine-story, 400,000-square-foot tower of medical offices on the opposite side of Van Ness is still on the drawing board because "hospitals need to have a medical office building nearby in order to operate profitably," Passmore said. No offices for doctors, no patients for the hospital.

Also staying is the pedestrian walkway under Van Ness between the hospital site and the office building. Everything else is a hazard of conjecture.

Acute beds? Yes.

How many? No longer certain.

What other departments would the Cathedral Hill campus house? To be announced.

In truth, the only two notions Passmore was able to pass on were that CPMC and Sutter Health, its parent corporation,

should be making a firm decision sometime in March and that the state's deadline for seismically safe hospitals has been moved from 2013 to 2015.

One constant that has not changed is the disposition of the various neighborhood groups to the construction of the new hospital: They are unmollified. According to Merlayne Morgan, a vice president of the Cathedral Hill Neighbors: "They [CPMC] have made a number of presentations but we've yet to see any documents that spell out the changes they say they are making."

When asked why he had come to the Futures Collaborative with so few specifics he could share, Passmore laughed. "We were invited to speak in January and begged off because we were hoping to have answers in February."

Oddly enough, Passmore did make a presentation on Jan. 9, just one day before the January Tenderloin Futures Collaborative meeting took place. Passmore spoke to the Lower Polk Neighbors group. That night, the number of beds was estimated at "no more than 600," no mention was made of scaling back the size and shape of the building and its height was still 300 feet. When the differences between the two assessments were pointed out, Passmore again laughed and said, "That just shows you how quickly things can change in the hospital construction business."

Without a doubt, further developments can be expected on this project.

## TENDERLOIN HISTORY

David Baker distributed a flyer on behalf of Peter Field, who is researching the history of the Tenderloin from its earliest days.

Field is looking for old or his-

➤ CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



**CENTRAL CITY EXTRA** is published monthly by San Francisco Study Center Inc., a private nonprofit serving the community since 1972. The Extra was initiated through grants from the S.F. Hotel Tax Fund and the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund. It is now assisted by the Kosblom Committee of the San Francisco Foundation, which funds the Southside coverage. The contents are copyrighted by the San Francisco Study Center, 1095 Market Street, Suite 601, San Francisco, CA 94103.

PHONE: (415) 626-1650

FAX: (415) 626-7276

E-MAIL: [centralcityextra@studycenter.org](mailto:centralcityextra@studycenter.org)

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER: Geoffrey Link

SENIOR WRITER/EDITOR: Marjorie Beggs

REPORTERS: Tom Carter, Ed Bowers, John Goins, Anne Marie Jordan, Phil Tracy

DESIGN AND LAYOUT: Lenny Limjoco

PHOTOGRAPHERS: Lenny Limjoco, Mark Ellinger

CONTRIBUTORS: Diamond Dave, William Crain, Mark Hedin, John Burks

DESIGN CONSULTANT: Don McCartney

DISTRIBUTION: Itzhak Volansky

EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE: David Baker, Michael Nulty, Debbie Larkin, Nicholas Rosenberg, Brad Paul, Tariq Alazraie

Central City Extra is a member of the  
SAN FRANCISCO NEIGHBORHOOD NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION