

2015 target date for CPMC's Cathedral Hill Hospital

▶ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

CPMC wants to tunnel under Van Ness to join the hospital to a nine-story, 502,000-square-foot medical office building across the street. And its master plan envisions converting Pacific Presbyterian to ambulatory care; selling California Pacific Hospital, keeping only the medical offices and imaging services; and remaking the Davies campus into a specialty site for neuroscience and acute rehab. (See sidebar for complete list of changes.)

All the changes hinge on getting the Cathedral Hill campus up and running, then shifting patients there. The tab for Cathedral Hill and the St. Luke's rebuild: \$1.7 billion.

Three years ago, when CPMC was shopping around its preliminary master plan — which called for a 20-story hospital on Van Ness covering a full city block — it faced some of today's same opponents. Their angry dissent erupted at Health Commission and Planning Commission hearings and at community meetings, forcing CPMC back to the drafting table.

Then, as today, loud objections came from

"backed into a corner by recommendations... on salvaging its St. Luke's Hospital," San Francisco Business Times reported. "Cathedral Hill hospital's fate is in the hands of the Board of Supervisors, which in turn is heavily influenced by labor unions."

Revised master plan in hand, CPMC is again making the rounds of meetings with community groups. The Planning Commission and the Health Commission held their first joint hearing Sept. 17 on how CPMC's plans fit in with citywide health care needs.

At the hearing, Public Health Director Mitch Katz said that two years ago, he and Health Commissioners wouldn't support CPMC's master plan, especially the closing of St. Luke's. Moving St. Luke's patients to somewhere else "just wouldn't work [because of] the health-seeking behavior of low-income people." While he wasn't ready to accept all of the latest master plan, he emphasized its importance: "The city needs to [have CPMC] rebuild its campuses because we need those hospital beds."

Forty people spoke at the three-hours-plus hearing, which filled the supervisors' main meeting room at City Hall.

Next: Oct. 15 the Planning Commission meets for its first hearing on the new master plan.

Anyone going up against CPMC is in for a battle. The nonprofit affiliate of Sutter Health has 6,600 employees plus 1,200 physicians, making it the city's largest private employer after Wells Fargo. Health care in San Francisco is intricately tied to its four campuses where, CPMC estimates, it provides about 40% of the city's health care — it delivers 56% of the city's babies, accounts for 33% of hospital discharges and handles 32% of ER visits.

SIZE, NOISE AND TRAFFIC

CPMC's current master plan drops Cathedral Hill Hospital's height 50 feet to 15 stories and the number of licensed beds to 555 from the original 621. The visual boxiness has been mitigated by a lower profile on Post Street. And more than 400,000 square feet have been shaved off — still, at 925,700 square feet, it's 305,000 square feet larger than the new 18-story Federal Building.

Traffic congestion and mass are the big stumbling blocks for the Cathedral Hill Neighbors Association. "We aren't against the hospital, just the size and scale of it," says LaValle. "We'd like CPMC to reduce the height from 290 feet to 190 feet on Van Ness, and from 230 feet to 130 feet on Franklin. We're asking for 250 beds here and 250 at St. Luke's. CPMC can unpack some services planned for this site, maybe some of the lucrative beds like for oncology, and move them to St. Luke's."

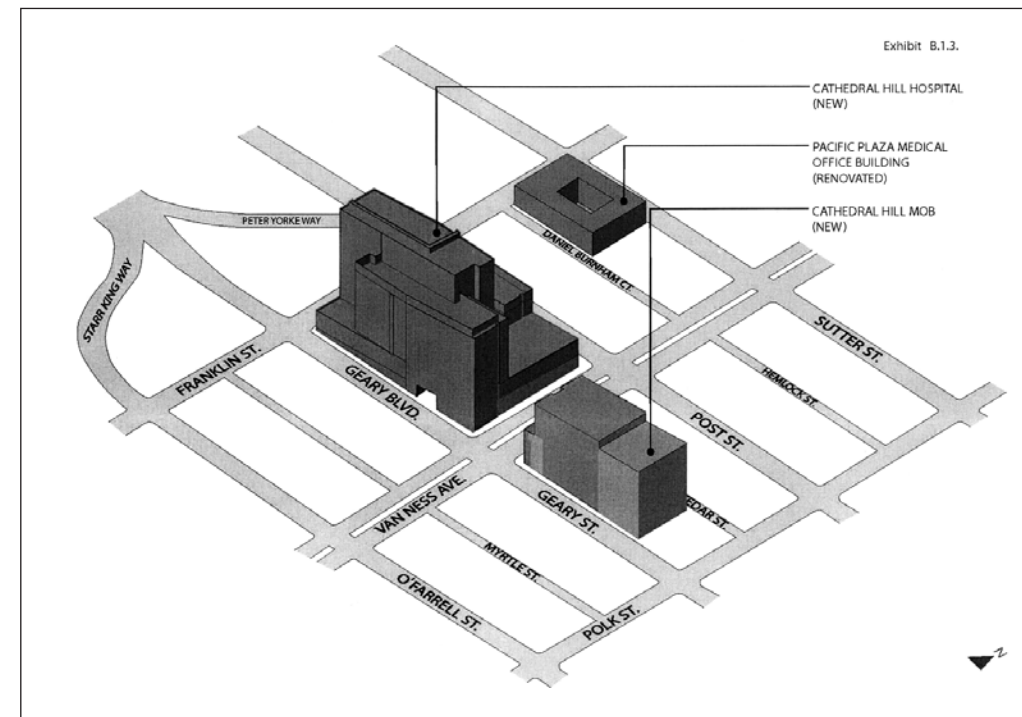
LaValle lives in a condo at One Daniel Burnham Court, on the block just north of the planned hospital. Her building, at 190 feet high, seems huge to her and she says she can't imagine a building 100 feet higher right next door. The Cathedral Hill Hotel (formerly the Jack Tar), which CPMC optioned to buy in 2003 and is to close Oct. 31, is 10 stories.

LaValle believes CPMC did respond to the pressure from her group and other residents, but she doesn't expect many more compromises.

"They seem immovable on most issues now," she said. "I think we made an impact, but perhaps [CPMC's changes were] less in response to neighborhood objections than to the economic downturn. It's hard for me to judge."

Nelson, a professional planner and land use expert as well as one of CPMC's main spokesmen, says he hasn't sat down with Cathedral Hill Neighbors for several months but knows what they want: Asking CPMC to reduce the height is "armchair health care planning," he says, and 555 beds is not too big to be safe or efficient — UCSF has 642 beds and CPMC's Pacific Presbyterian campus has 540.

"As a planner, I know the projects will affect the neighborhoods," he says, "and I come to the table agreeing with their concerns, but we'll manage the job sites with better ways of doing things than ever done before." For example, construction elevators will be in the middle of the work site, not the outside where



Massing diagram of the Cathedral Hill campus. Source: EIR Application to City Planning

the constant noise can drive neighbors nuts, he explains.

"And regarding size, I say, let's agree what 'too big' means," Nelson says. "We believe in the appropriateness of a single main campus. Everything is positive about a state-of-the-art, seismically sound building."

And traffic? He says the best source will be Planning's traffic report in the EIR, which will be done by the end of the year.

"I think we'll find there won't be much more traffic than there is now," Nelson says. But LaValle doesn't believe it.

"For every bed at the hospital there will be about seven CPMC employees coming and going, and that doesn't include doctors, patients' visitors and medical reps. It will affect all transit lines." Seven times 555 would be 3,885 employees.

Nelson's stats are different. He told the Tenderloin Futures Collaborative that at the peak shift — 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. — about 2,000 people will be working there, half of them employees. They'll be working, not coming and going, he said, plus those who drive to work will park at a garage in Japantown, where CPMC already rents 400 spaces for Pacific Presbyterian employees, and be shuttled to Cathedral Hill. "We just don't see traffic as a problem," he said.

But Paul Wermer, who has been active in the Pacific Heights Residents Association since the 1970s and lives near Pacific Presbyterian, disagrees. Shuttle buses blocking pedestrian walks, trucks obstructing intersections, noise and "significant traffic glitches" were commonplace until recently, he said.

"In the past, CPMC paid a lot of lip service to residents' concerns, though under pressure from the supervisors, that's changed in the last two years," said Wermer, who's concerned that CPMC is following the same path with Cathedral Hill residents.

Nelson counters that CPMC is, in fact, listening. In the new master plan, Cathedral Hill's loading dock and ambulance entrance both have been moved away from busy Van Ness and Geary traffic. The emergency department entrance and the large truck loading dock will be on Franklin, with the ambulance entrance and exit on Post.

THE BED BUGABOO

When CPMC published its 2008 master plan, neighbors raised a hue and cry over the number of beds. Hospitals count beds in two ways: The number the state Department of Public Health licenses it to operate, and staffed beds, those ready to accept patients with staff to care for them.

Last year, CPMC's four hospitals had 1,253 licensed beds but 869 staffed beds. When CPMC critics want the biggest bang for their statistical buck, they use licensed beds. By 2015, CPMC's planned licensed beds would drop 33% but staffed beds only 3% — from last

year's 869 down to 845. That's 555 at Cathedral Hill, 86 at St. Luke's and 186 at Davies, and 18 at Pacific Presbyterian.

Nelson says objections based on the number of licensed beds is crazy-making, especially for St. Luke's. Its licensed bed loss would be 62%, its staffed bed 38%. Neighbors acknowledge the difference, but counter that staff reductions have been decimating the hospital for years.

Nelson responded in an email to The Extra: St. Luke's is an "albatross" that's been unable to fill its beds for years, he wrote. Rebuilding it for 250 beds would keep the campus "from being the vibrant part of the neighborhood it should be by dumping scarce health care dollars into empty beds."

More worrisome for the Tenderloin is that by 2015, CPMC will eliminate all but the 18 psych beds at Pacific Presbyterian. None are planned for Cathedral Hill. Almost gone, too, would be CPMC's SNF beds — skilled nursing facility beds for patients needing short- and long-term rehab or who have chronic illnesses. Most of these patients are elderly. Of the 173 SNF beds at St. Luke's, California and Davies, only Davies' 38 would remain.

LOCAL ORGANIZING

Getting a handle on CPMC's master plan is a task: It's 391 pages, and in June, The Lewin Group, a national health care and human services consulting firm hired by the Health Department, released a 50-page master plan review. It was outdated when it hit the streets, Nelson says, because CPMC had already altered some master plan details in response to Health Department concerns. Regardless, the Health Commission passed a resolution with eight recommendations for CPMC, most drawn from the Lewin report.

Two of those recommendations should sound alarms for central city residents: CPMC needs to increase the number of its Medicaid patients and its charity care to be on a par with other San Francisco hospitals.

Nelson says CPMC is working on increasing its charity care. "One of the best ways to do that," he says, "is [for the plan] to move the emergency department out of Pacific Heights and closer to an underserved neighborhood." That would be the Tenderloin.

One more alarm: St. Francis Hospital is where many TL residents go for care. How will it fare with a new huge, modern hospital just six blocks away?

"We think it's a legitimate concern that CPMC will poach the lucrative patients from St. Francis and send it into a death spiral," says Green, the California Nurses Association rep.

The central city, with its concentration of poor, elderly, and physically and mentally disabled, will be affected by whatever CPMC finally builds on Van Ness Avenue, and the number of beds and kinds of medical services it has available citywide.

Tenderloin groups are just starting to organize to respond to the CPMC master plan. TNDC, the Central YMCA, Hastings, Community Housing Partnership and the TL Community Benefit District are surveying residents and other locals about the Cathedral Hill development, asking them to rank the neighborhood's and the city's most pressing health issues.

"So far, we have a small, informal committee called the Good Neighbor Campaign working on the organizing," said Dina Hilliard, TL CBD associate district manager. "We've gotten about 300 surveys back and hope to have 1,000 by the end of October. Then, we'll work on building a broad-based communitywide coalition."

The target of the organizing is still undecided, Hilliard says, but she's heard rumblings about the seven structures that will be demolished to build the medical office building. "CPMC has been very quiet about the fact that they are displacing residents," she said.

Scheduled to be razed are a 16-room SRO — Charlie's Hotel at 1030 Geary — plus a six-room SRO, a building with four residential units and another with one. At the joint hearing, Planning Commissioner President Ron Miguel wondered whether those buildings could even be demolished without approval from the supervisors, though CPMC's master plan says the units will be replaced.

Finally, will CMPC listen if the Tenderloin gets organized?

Gerry Crowley is a North Beach resident but she's been living and breathing CPMC plans for the last two years. In 2003, she co-founded the San Francisco Neighborhood Network, a group of about 20 people from all over the city who meet weekly with city officials and the media to stay on top of important issues. CPMC is now on its radar.

"CPMC and its consultants are not meeting with the communities as they should — it's just common courtesy to confer with the people who use their services and who vote," Crowley says. "It's a trust factor. No communication means no trust. The blue ribbon panel had almost no neighbor representation. And CPMC's parent, Sutter Health, is closing hospitals in the East Bay. That says they don't give a rap about the people who live in their communities."

Nelson says CPMC's critics are making assumptions and "getting information from single sources. Our biggest hurdle is getting accurate information out there. And we are still trying to get different cross-sections of public input. Our hopes are high." ■

California Pacific Medical Center Summary of Changes

Cathedral Hill Campus

- Demolish Cathedral Hill Hotel and 1255 Post St. office building
- Build 555-bed, 15-story, 925,700-square-foot acute care and women and children's hospital
- Build 245,000 square-foot underground parking garage
- Demolish seven buildings, including 16-unit SRO
- Build new 502,000-square-foot Cathedral Hill Medical Office Building
- Build Van Ness Avenue tunnel
- Renovate 1375 Sutter St. building, currently medical and general mixed use

California Campus

- Sell hospital
- Transfer acute services to Cathedral Hill
- Transfer ambulatory services to Pacific Presbyterian
- Transfer remaining services to Pacific Presbyterian
- Establish free-standing outpatient and imaging services

Pacific Campus

- Renovate or rebuild residential apartment building
- Transfer acute care and emergency departments to Cathedral Hill Hospital
- Renovate 2333 Buchanan St.
- Demolish Gerbode Research Building, Stanford Building, Annex Building
- Construct new Webster/Sacramento St. underground parking garage
- Construct 204,916 square-foot addition to the Ambulatory Care Center
- Construct north Clay parking garage
- Renovate 2018 Webster St. parking garage
- Convert 2018 Webster St. from residential to office building

Davies Campus

- Complete seismic upgrades to meet SB 1953 requirements
- Relocate acute rehabilitation services from the south tower to the north tower
- Consolidate neuroscience programs on the Davies Campus in a new medical office building
- Replace current parking garage with underground parking

St. Luke's Campus

- Construct new 86-bed acute care hospital
- Renovate interior including structural and cosmetic upgrades. Move emergency department and operating rooms to new hospital.
- Demolish old hospital and build new expansion building on same site, upon completion of new hospital.

Source: The Lewin Group



PHOTOS BY MARJORIE BEGGS

Melinda LaValle lives at One Daniel Burnham Court, whose towers would be dwarfed by parts of the Cathedral Hill Hospital on the next block.

Cathedral Hill and Polk Street neighbors stunned by the proposed new hospital's size, and from staff and neighbors of St. Luke's, which CPMC then wanted to turn into an outpatient-only facility.

One neighborhood worried about a tsunami of people, cars, ambulances advancing on its community, the other that it would be left without vital acute medical services.

In response to a resolution from supervisors censuring CPMC for its St. Luke's plan, CPMC convened a 31-member blue ribbon panel of heavy-hitters — reps of labor unions, city offices, and health, business and community groups. Last year they thrashed out 11 recommendations for building a new St. Luke's Hospital "appropriate to the planned service mix" but didn't say how big it should be.

"The panel was a success in creating a political consensus for St. Luke's," Nato Green, California Nurses Association representative, told The Extra. "We pushed it as far as we could."

Green says the panel forced the hand of CPMC's board of directors — if they wanted to build Cathedral Hill Hospital, they also would have to build a new St. Luke's. CPMC was



The seven buildings left to right on the north side of Geary all will be razed for the Cathedral Hill medical office building.