

# How hospital behemoth can help the hood

*TL coalition seeks binding pact with Cal Pacific Med Center*

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

**T**HE Good Neighbor Coalition wants to make it clear: It now neither opposes nor supports California Pacific Medical Center's plans to build a 555-bed hospital and nine-story medical building at Geary and Van Ness. But it will support the project if CPMC signs a private, enforceable contract — a community benefits agreement — ensuring that residents and nearby small businesses won't get the short end of the stick.

That was the message from James Tracy, community organizer at Community Housing Partnership, one of 18 central city organizations and a dozen or so residents who are members of the Good Neighbor Coalition, formed last year to mitigate the effects of the complex on the area. Coalition organizations range from Meals on Wheels, a free food program of Lighthouse Church, to TNDC.

Tracy described the coalition and its work at the April Tenderloin Futures Collaborative meeting, inviting everyone to get involved.

## WHAT THE COALITION WANTS

The coalition wants CPMC's commitment to comply with a laundry list of "mitigation measures": replace housing for the tenants in the 27 SRO and low-cost apartment units in four buildings that will be razed for the medical office complex; assist small businesses whose buildings also will be demolished (Fina Estampa restaurant and Car Parts Automotive Service are two); hire residents for the construction work and for permanent jobs at the completed facilities; provide health, education and job development services for neighborhood youth; assure health care for low-income residents citywide and support existing central city health facilities.

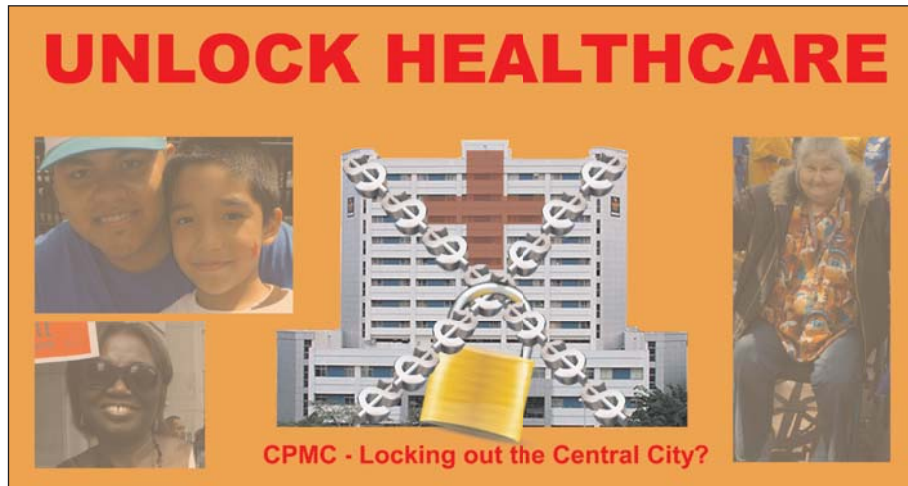
The must-have list came from the people and businesses affected by the \$1.7 billion complex, Tracy said. Last year, staff of the Community Housing Partnership, Central YMCA, TNDC and Tenderloin CBD and residents interviewed 800 neighbors. They asked them to rank the most pressing health concerns in the central city and citywide, as well as the neighborhood's greatest job and economic development needs, then took their answers and fashioned the list.

Since last year, the coalition has met with CPMC a few times, says community organizer Steve Woo, TNDC's coalition rep, and letters have gone back and forth since March.

## 'AGREE TO DISAGREE'

First, the coalition wrote CEO Warren Browner, outlining what it wanted. Mark Farrar, lead spokesman for CPMC's master plan, wrote back that CPMC agreed with many points. For some, however, "we may get close but will likely have to 'agree to disagree' on some of the particulars."

The Extra asked Geoffrey Nelson, CPMC director of enterprise development, what the sticking points might be. Nelson says CPMC is "overjoyed" a neighborhood group is offering guidance on how to "direct our services." Farrar's "agree to disagree" was not specific, Nelson said. "It was a reality check. We'll try like hell to get most people's health needs met in the Tenderloin, but in the real world, not all people's needs will be met. It's that simple."



**Good Neighbor Coalition** is circulating 1,000 of these postcards soliciting residents' signatures as a show of support for a contract with CPMC.

CPMC already has longstanding relationships with five Tenderloin organizations, Nelson said. Its Child Development Center counselors have been meeting with DeMarillac Academy students and families daily since 2005, a pro bono service. It has funded translators for Curry Senior Center's health clinic, also for about five years. St. Anthony Foundation got funds for its primary care and mental health programs. At Glide Memorial, CPMC gives free mammograms and funds taxi vouchers and a mobile dental van, and Tenderloin Health gets CPMC funds for its HIV-positive dental program.

"We're happy CPMC is funding Tenderloin agencies," Tracy told The Extra, "but the Good Neighbor Coalition isn't looking for checks — we want policy and institutional changes that will help the whole neighborhood."

## BAYVIEW PAVES THE WAY

Community benefits agreements, around for more than a decade, assure residents that they will get something good from a major development in their area. According to the Partnership for Working Families, which operates a Community Benefits Law Center, 13 such agreements are in force around the country. One is in our own back yard — Lennar Corp.'s housing project in Bayview-Hunters Point negotiated in 2008 by the San Francisco Labor Council, ACORN and the San Francisco Organizing Project. Among other commitments, Lennar agreed to provide \$8.5 million in job training for residents.

The coalition's last letter to CPMC, May 3, asks for a face-to-face to talk about "obtaining enforceable commitments . . . that go beyond what CPMC must do to meet applica-

ble legal requirements." The meeting was planned for June 1.

Meantime, the coalition has printed 1,000 postcards and is distributing them to people who live and work in the central city. They're asked to sign the card, which says "Unlock health care: CPMC locking out the central city?" on the front and, on the back, calls on the Board of Supervisors to make sure CPMC does right by its new neighbors.

"We've already collected 350 cards and when we get more we'll present them to the supervisors," said Woo.

They have time. The supes have the final vote on approving — or not — CPMC's master plan, of which the Cathedral Hill campus is one part. But that vote probably won't come until late this year, Woo says. First, the Planning Department has to approve a massive EIR. It was expected to be ready for review by the end of May, but Planning staffer Devyani Jain told The Extra that it's still months away. ■

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