

TNDC The kudos keep a-comin' for Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corp., the latest the 2003 Heritage Award, San Francisco Architectural Heritage's annual tribute to a group whose work preserves the city's historic character. "Because TNDC is a neighborhood preservation and development business, it's a great honor to be recognized by an organization of the caliber of Heritage," said TNDC Senior Construction Project Manager Valerie O'Donnell, who accepted the award June 7 with Director of Housing Development Don Falk, and Façade Improvement Program Manager Katie Mullin. In May, TNDC received the Best Development award from the Bay Area Transportation and Land Use Coalition (a 6-year-old, 90-member advocacy group of nonprofits, neighborhood associations, unions and others) for Curran House, an upcoming project at 145 Taylor that will replace a parking lot with 67 affordable apartments and gardens. And in April, San Francisco Business Times named TNDC's SoMa Apartments and Studios at Eighth and Howard one of the year's "Best (Residential) Real Estate Deals." Congrats, TNDC.

BICYCLISTS Do you live downtown, depend on your cycle to get around, but sometimes need to take BART during commute hours when bikes are taboo? Check out the Bike Station at the Embarcadero BART Station, a free, secure place to stow your wheels weekdays 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Leaving it overnight costs \$3 for the first 12 hours, \$5 for 24 hours. Available soon: \$30 monthly passes for anytime storage during the week. Operated by retailer Mike's Bikes & Sausalito Cyclery, the Bike Station, which opened June 16, can store 100 bikes at a time and also offers parts, accessories and repairs. Mike's provides the free service using one-year funding from BART, the city's bicycle program, S.F. Transportation Authority, Bay Area Air Quality Management District's Transportation Fund for Clean Air, and the California Dept. of Transportation. Mike's will keep the Bike Station rolling if it looks like it can be self-sufficient after a year. Commute hours will remain free, and weekends may be added. More info: Bike Station manager Dan Sankey, (415) 834-1049.

FUNDED PROGRAMS Among the two central city organizations facing the ax in the 2003-04 city budget were Hospitality House's Tenderloin Self-Help Center and the Tenderloin Sidewalk Improvement Program. Directors Jackie Jenks of the former and Shawn Collins of the latter send many thanks to the community folks who successfully lobbied for restored funding — \$567,618 for the Center and \$140,000 for TSIP (part of the DPW budget, a match for neighborhood sponsorship funds).

— MARJORIE BEGGS

This column needs regular infusions. If you have some good news (no events, please), send it to marjorie@studycenter.org.

City cracking down on sidewalk scofflaws

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

IT was the ol' good news-bad news, this time from Department of Public Works' Clifton Wong: 85% of the 322 TL sidewalk defects found during DPW inspections last year have been repaired or are being repaired, Wong announced at the July 9 Tenderloin Futures Collaborative meeting.

The bad news: 50 of those defects have been totally ignored by building landlords, even after two notices. The inspections, begun in January 2002, lasted three months and included 831 properties.

The Tenderloin inspections were part of a bigger project aimed at making sidewalks throughout the city safer. Also, the city has to keep cutting curb ramps — some the responsibility of landlords — to comply with the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act. Wong, division manager of inspection services at DPW's Bureau of Street Use and Mapping, estimates that city-wide about half the curb ramps are in place.

So far, Wong's six inspectors have covered seven neighborhoods. Chinatown was first, then the Tenderloin. "We took them in order based on which had the oldest infrastructure, the most commercial activity and the most pedestrians," Wong said.

DPW has been a paragon of patience with property owners, sending several notices and giving them plenty of time to fix defects, especially if they're in the process of rehabbing their building or if there are other extenuating circumstances.

Re those 50 scofflaws in the TL: TSIP Director Shawn Collins said he will use whatever clout he has to help Wong connect with the nonresponding landlords, a nice community connection for DPW.

"After that, we'll take each on a case-by-case basis," Wong said. "I'm going to suggest that in the most egregious cases we take owners to code enforcement — that means a lawsuit."

COSTLY CURB RAMPS

Fixing sidewalks is pricey. ADA-mandated curb ramps used to cost \$1,500, Wong said. But in the past six months, the tab has doubled with the feds' enforcement of guidelines for "truncated domes" on the ramps — yellow domes on the street sides of the curb cut that visually disabled people can detect underfoot or with a cane so they know where the sidewalk ends and the street begins.

The city foots the bill for curb ramps and domes unless the property has a subsidewalk basement, in which case the property owner pays — big bucks. Because of potential structural complications, a curb ramp over a subsidewalk basement costs about \$20,000, Wong estimated.

Alexander Hotel resident Michael Nulty asked Wong if the post office at 101 Hyde had been exempt from DPW's inspection project. "There are tree stumps and concrete sticking up in front of that building, and I've seen several people fall right there," he said.

"They're not exempt at all," Wong

assured him. "If you see a problem, call DPW at 554-5810 — we're complaint-driven."

"What about sidewalk seating and sidewalk signs? How are people in wheelchairs supposed to get by?" asked Ed Evans, who is on the Mayor's Disability Council. "There seems to be a real lack of enforcement."

"Again, call DPW," Wong said. "We'll give warnings, and if they're ignored, we'll impose financial penalties."

In a followup phone call to Wong, The Extra learned that DPW had actually found more sidewalk defects than the 322 that were the responsibility of property owners.

"We also sent out 81 reports to utility companies for defects that are their responsibility, and another 107 reports to city agencies, including our own departments," Wong said. He hadn't mentioned these other 188 problems at the Collaborative meeting because "I assumed a neighborhood organization would be mostly interested in the property owners."

TL activists, of course, love to play "gotcha" with the city. Wong said he'd remember that next time.

LONG-TIME NEWCOMER

Collaborative members welcomed two organizations to the meeting — one that's been in the Tenderloin more than a quarter of a century and one just arrived.

The Southeast Asian Community Center opened in 1975 as the Center for Southeast Asian Refugee Resettlement and provided vital services to the huge influx of Southeast Asians settling in the city, explained Philip Nguyen, executive director of Southeast Asian Community Center at 875 O'Farrell.

"Cultural orientation, help adapting to living in this city, self-sufficiency, survival services — that's what we did for the early immigrants and refugees," Nguyen said. "Today, we're in the second phase, community capacity building, empowerment, encouraging mainstream political involvement, and also trying to increase Southeast Asians' visibility." According to his estimate, 10,000 of the city's 25,000 Southeast Asians live in the Tenderloin.

"I hope you'll come regularly to our meetings," S.F. Network Ministries Executive Director Glenda Hope told Nguyen. "We've always felt it was

important to have representation for the Southeast Asians who live here."

HYBRID WHEELS

The new kid on the block, as of June 27, is City CarShare, located at Glide's surface parking lot on Mason between Eddy and Ellis. The TL is the most recent addition to the nonprofit's stable of 45 Bay Area locations — 25 of them in San Francisco — where wheelchair people can grab a car from one of CarShare's "pods" and drive off without the hassle of car ownership.

Annie Bourdin told the Collaborative that CarShare has 80 new pay-as-you-go Hondas and Volkswagens in the Bay Area used by CarShare's 2,600 members. The TL's lone car will be a Honda Civic hybrid, the first hybrid in CarShare's fleet.

Members, billed monthly, pay \$30 to join, \$300 damage deposit and \$10 monthly plus driving costs of \$4 an hour (\$2 between 10 p.m. and 10 a.m.) and 44 cents a mile, which includes gas, insurance and maintenance. CarShare estimates that costs for active members average \$65 a month.

During the month of July, two to three people a day were using the TL pod on weekdays, and many weekend days the little car was out all day, Bourdin said.

Added to that pretty good start is the news that CarShare just got a Metropolitan Transportation Commission grant to provide 300 subsidized memberships to CalWorks participants that will reduce enrollment fees by half and waive deposits. More info: 415-995-8588 and www.citycarshare.org.

SETTING RECORD STRAIGHT

Last issue, The Extra reported that some Collaborative members called the Rev. John Hardin a no-show at a June 26 meeting at 118 Jones called to discuss St. Anthony Foundation's continuing use of 150 Golden Gate as a homeless shelter. Hardin, however, said: "I went to the meeting and rang the bell for 15 minutes, but there was no answer. I went back to my office and called, got only an answering machine, and then went back and rang for another 10 minutes." Elaine Zamora, whose law office hosted the meeting, confirmed what happened: "We have a long office, the bell's at the front, and it was 95 degrees that day so we had a fan blowing. We just never heard him ringing," she said. ■

CENTRAL CITY



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