



LENNY LIMJOCO

With the new federal building 40% complete, the workers celebrated.

Federal building 'topped off'

THE new federal building under construction at Seventh and Mission is as high as it will go and as big as it will be. It has been "topped off," reached "its concrete outer limit," according to Jack Bell, one of three project supervisors for the 18-story office building.

To celebrate, the General Services Administration hosted a "topping off" ceremony on May 13 that drew close to 400 people but no TV or press to the catered affair. "It was chiefly to honor the men who had put it up,"

Bell said.

Bell estimated that the 234-foot-tall building with "a shade over 500,000 square feet" is 40% complete.

"Now we move to the next stage, which is closing in the building [with walls chiefly made of glass] and working on the interior," Bell said.

The complex, whose designer, Thom Mayne, was awarded the prestigious Pritzker Architecture Prize on May 31, is officially scheduled for completion in March 2006. ■

— PHIL TRACY

How much owners will pay for TL benefit district tax

BY MARJORIE BEGGS

IF all goes according to plan, the North of Market/Tenderloin Community Benefit District will get its first installment of hard cash to begin operations next January, and by the end of 2006 will have brought in nearly \$1 million to improve the neighborhood.

The proposed district, gestated through a 50-person steering committee that's been meeting since July, began by polling property owners in the area (see map) to see if they agreed in principle to pay an annual assessment.

In return, they'd get sidewalk and street cleaning, graffiti removal, trees, marketing and promotion of neighborhood events, safe passage programs for children and seniors, social services and more — all beyond what the city already provides. A third of the owners went for it.

Property owners then were asked to sign a petition saying they wanted the district and were willing to pay the tax; of those who returned the petition, 32%, weighted by the combined assessed value of their property, said "aye." That touched off the creation of a management plan written by district consultant Marco Li Mandri, which he submitted May 23 to the Board of Supervisors.

During the supes' Government Audits and Oversight Committee hearing, only two property owners spoke against the district, and the issue for both was inadequate notification. The committee approved the management plan and forwarded it to the full board, which was considering a resolution on the proposal as The Extra went to press. Because Supervisor Chris Daly authored the resolution and it affected only his district, no opposition was expected, said his aides. The resolution sets a public hearing on Aug. 2, and kicks off an official Department of Elections letter and ballot to property owners.

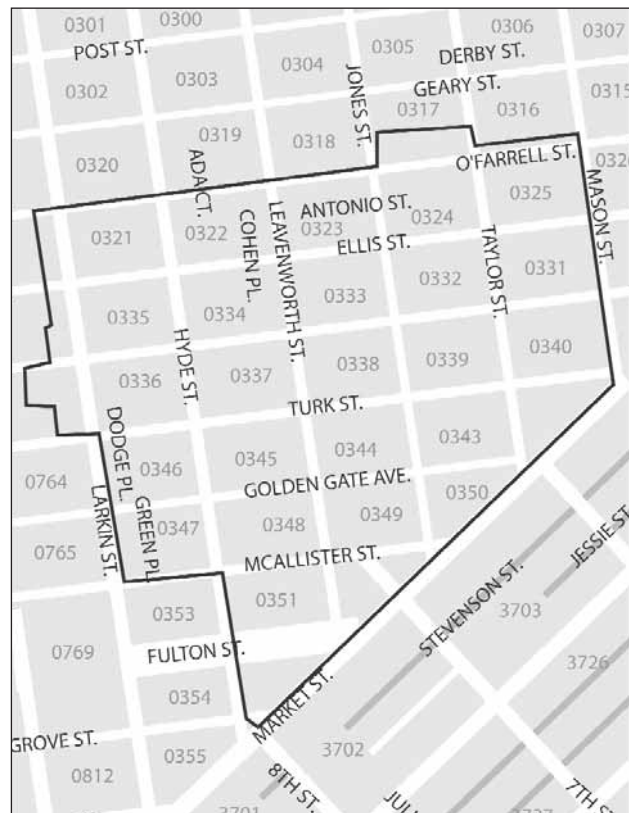
At least 50% of responding owners, again weighted for assessments, must approve the district. Each of the 497 parcels gets one vote. Ballots must be returned by the day of the public hearing.

And the tab? Assessments are based on this calculation: 12.5 cents per square foot of lot size, plus \$8.25 per linear foot of lot frontage, plus 3 cents per square foot of nonexempted building area. "Exempted" is a misnomer — every property gets taxed, but churches, nonprofits, affordable housing and rent-controlled residences get a discount: They don't have to pay the third add-on, the 3 cents.

The management plan, which lists all district assessments, gives an example of the tax bite for a nonexempted property. The owner of a 5,000-square-foot lot with 50 feet of frontage and 4,000 square feet of building area would pay \$1,157 annually. The amount can be adjust-

ed, up to 5%, in subsequent years.

For the first year, the assessments range from \$59,873 for the Hilton Hotel to \$25.53. That's what one condo owner at the Hamilton at 631 O'Farrell would pay. (According to building manager Carol Gilano, the former tourist hotel, built in the 1930s, was converted to 186 condos in 1962.) Condo owners, and other multiple owners of a single parcel, get taxed but don't get a vote unless they ask the city for a separate proportional assessment ballot. Elaine Zamora, lawyer, TL activist and one



MAP COURTESY OF BENEFIT DISTRICT

TL Community Benefit District boundaries.

of the first movers and shakers in the formation of the benefit district, said none of the condo owners had asked, as far as she knew.

In all, the plan's assessment roll shows 695 owners contributing to the district. A sampling of what others would pay: St. Anthony's Foundation: \$3,641 for 121 Golden Gate and \$1,747 for 150 Golden Gate, the building it plans to raze for new digs; Hastings College of the Law: \$4,632 for its student housing at 100 McAllister; Golden Gate Theater at 1 Taylor: \$10,442; and TNDC: \$1,466 for its Alexander Residence at 230 Eddy.

Zamora's single-story offices at 118 Jones would be levied \$646. "It's definitely a bargain," she said.

If the benefit district materializes, 81% of the money collected the first year will fund services. The admin costs of the new nonprofit that will be formed to manage the district will consume 12% of the budget, and 7% will be held as a contingency.

The benefit district's life — 15 years, and then it's up for renewal — can be shortened if property owners aren't satisfied. Every year, owners who pay 50% or more of the levied tax have 30 days, beginning on the anniversary date of the CBD, to petition the supervisors to axe the district.

They'd have to have a good reason. The supervisors, however, can "disestablish" the district themselves at any time by a vote of eight members. Says the management plan, they "need not make findings of bad actions by the designated management corporation" to initiate the action. ■

WEST NILE VIRUS

is transmitted by mosquitoes and spread by migrating birds. Disease in humans is rare, but its consequences can be severe. If you develop an illness with high fever, headache, stiff neck, confusion, or muscle weakness, see your doctor immediately.



FIGHT THE BITE SAN FRANCISCO

We can prevent West Nile Virus:

- Drain water from gutters, roofs, and outdoor equipment.
- Apply insect repellent to exposed skin and/or clothing according to label instructions.
- At dawn and dusk, wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts and other protective clothing outdoors.
- Report significant mosquito problem areas to the Department of Public Health at (415) 252-3805.

More info: 877-WNV-BIRD or www.sfmosquito.org

