

Mailboxes still not installed in all SROs

8 months after deadline, only 16% have complied

BY TOM CARTER

INSTALLATION of individual mailboxes at SROs for each tenant, guaranteed by a city ordinance two years ago in a victory over the Postal Service, has slowed to a snail's pace.

At the current rate, it will take almost 11 years to complete the job. And some SROs will never get them.

There are 503 SROs and just one postal employee assigned to oversee the involved installation process. The lobby of every SRO is different, so many hotels are waiting their turn to be inspected and told specifically what to buy for the expensive installation; others, with banks of boxes already installed, await final approval by the postal worker before they can be used.

"It's a bottleneck," says tenant organizer Peter Masiak of the Central City SRO Collaborative. "The law was passed without working with the post office."

Since the Board of Supervisors passed the law in December 2006 requiring individual lock boxes, 82, or 16%, of the city's 503 SROs have installed the boxes and been certified, USPS spokesman Augustine Ruiz Jr. said in a recent email.

"The law was passed without working with the post office."

Peter Masiak
SRO COLLABORATIVE

Some SROs can escape the requirement altogether if they don't have adequate space in their ground floor lobbies.

"Because this is centralized residential deliveries, USPS only delivers on (the) ground-floor level," the email said. "Some hotels have space constraints and/or second floor lobbies. USPS will not deliver on upper floors."

The S.F. Department of Building Inspection (DBI) is bound by USPS restrictions.

"The post office won't deliver up a floor, or in the basement, or in a lobby where there is insufficient space to install mailboxes that meet their requirements," says Rosemary Bosque, chief housing inspector. "We work with the (hotels) as required for compliance, and where the post office delivers is policy, unless they change it."

To start the expensive process, the hotel requests a USPS inspection to get advice on "mailbox setup and numbering." A standard, 30-door aluminum mailbox system costs \$525, according to the Website mailboxesdepot.com. Cost would be considerable for an SRO such as the Mission Hotel at 16th Street and South Van Ness with 297 units. The SRO pays for installation, too.

The post office has to approve and certify the finished "gang-box" installation. But the P.O. is "not the policing agency" to see that SROs initiate their legal obligation. DBI's outreach to such organizations as the S.F. Apartment Association, Bosque said, ensured that all 503

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CENTRAL CITY



SAN FRANCISCO

'AN EXCITING PLACE'



PHOTOS BY LENNY LIMJOCO

Residents relax along the central thoroughfare of Boeddeker Park with its limited foliage.

Boeddeker boon

\$3 million-plus for Tenderloin park's future makeover

BY TOM CARTER

MILLION-DOLLAR changes are coming to Boeddeker Park — but not for three years. The investment is almost sure to be more than the \$3 million that configured the park in the mid-1980s. No doubt, too, the park's community building will be renovated, perhaps get a

second floor, an idea that surfaced last year in public meetings.

But any detail is speculative. Ideas coming from community meetings starting in 2010 will help determine the makeover, and how extreme it might be. The total amount Boeddeker will receive also may not be known until 2010.

Mayor Newsom, the Rec and Park Department and four corporate representatives announced at a June 19 City Hall news conference that Boeddeker would be one of three city parks sharing \$8 million for improvements through the Trust for Public Land.

But the sum involves some fundraising by the trust that's still going on. Banana Republic, Levi Strauss Foundation, McKesson Corp. and Pacific Gas and Electric Co. each put up \$1 million for park renovation. The trust studied the city's parks for the past few years and chose Hayes Valley Playground, Balboa Park and Boeddeker as recipients, a plan the mayor's office and Rec and Park approved.

The trust has until Aug. 31 to raise the \$4 million match or it will be held back. But trust officials are confident. On July 24, Jacob Gilchrist, a manager for the trust's Parks for People project, said \$2.3 million had been donated so far.

"We've got \$3.5 million more outstanding in grant requests now," Gilchrist said, "and we're not stopping at \$4 million. We will continue to fund-raise for Boeddeker Park for several years. As each project continues and becomes a real project, it gets easier to do."

Headquartered in San Francisco, the 36-



Tenderloin Police Station across the street from the park is seen in the background.

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