

San Francisco Chronicle

SFCHRONICLE.COM

MONDAY, MARCH 31, 2025

CONTAINS RECYCLED PAPER

\$3.00



Photos by Stephen Lam/S.F. Chronicle

An Oak Street-Masonic Avenue upgrade would give bikes and pedestrians their own red and green lights.

Street revamp rolling again

By Sam Whiting

San Francisco officials could soon move forward with a makeover of a major city thoroughfare to improve safety, after the plan was delayed by concerns that it would cut badly needed street parking — the latest example of tensions over street changes that continue to flare in the city.

The proposed changes would revamp Oak Street between Stanyan and Baker streets, where the busy one-way artery borders the southern edge of the Panhandle — a hazardous eight-block stretch of road in a city that has struggled to reduce traffic injuries and

After years of pushback over loss of parking, Oak Street makeover may soon proceed



Tim Hickey, president of the North of Panhandle Neighborhood Association, says he'd be "elated" if a makeover project for Oak Street is approved.

fatalities.

Bicycling advocates and the North of Panhandle Neighborhood Association support the "quick build" project, devised in 2019 as part of San Francisco's Vision Zero effort to expedite safety improvements to dangerous streets and intersections. But plans were slowed by the COVID-19 pandemic and by opposition from the Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council, some merchants and an elite private high school, which raised concerns about the loss of street parking in the area.

Such conflicts have erupted as San Francisco tries to balance the com-

Street continues on A7

Plans for senior housing project back on track

By Erin Allday

An affordable housing project at the Laguna Honda Hospital site that would provide units for low-income seniors in San Francisco is on track again after being delayed by the hospital's federal certification problems.

Still, construction likely won't begin on the proposed 215 units for at least another two years — spring 2027 at the earliest — according to a presentation made to the San Francisco Health Com-

mission this month.

Advocates for the project say the units are badly needed in a city where affordable housing, especially for seniors with limited income, is in critical short supply. A 2022 report on aging and disability in San Francisco found that senior and disabled adults could make up nearly a third of the city's population by 2030, and housing demand for those residents already far exceeds supply.

"I'm pretty excited that

this project has finally started moving forward again," said former San Francisco Supervisor Norman Yee, who introduced the project in 2020.

"We have problems in San Francisco. All levels of care for the elderly, especially those who are low income, are disappearing in the city," Yee told the health commission at its March 17 meeting. "We lack care in the city and people are being displaced. And there's ample space up there at the hos-

pital. I thought this was the perfect place to provide that care."

Laguna Honda is the city's largest skilled nursing facility, with about 400 residents.

The housing project would build a senior living community in the hospital parking lot, including one-bedroom apartments and studios for independent living and for residents who need some assistance. The complex would also include

Housing continues on A9

Capitol braces for showdown on trans sports bills

Despite long odds, bans on participation to be debated

By Sara Libby and Sophia Bollag

One day after Transgender Day of Visibility — meant to highlight the discrimination faced by transgender people worldwide — members of the trans community will be under a much different spotlight in the California Capitol, as lawmakers weigh two bills meant to eliminate trans girls' participation in school sports programs.

Despite the bills' incredibly long odds in the Democratic-supermajority Legislature, they are being heard as the debate over transgender sports participation — and even the mere existence of transgender people — has reached a fever pitch, and created significant tensions within the Democratic Party.

Assembly Bill 89 by Assembly Member Kate Sanchez, R-Rancho Santa Margarita (Orange County), would require the California Interscholastic Federation — the agency that oversees school athletics within the state — to ban transgender girls from participating on girls sports teams. AB844 by Assembly Member Bill Essayli, R-Corona, would require students to use bathrooms and locker rooms that correspond with their sex assigned at birth.

Sanchez said she introduced the legislation because she believes it's unfair for women and girls to compete against transgender athletes who have "undeniable biological advantages."

"Women's sports have always been a space

Bills continues on A8

Federal cuts upend S.F. vaccine studies

By Jack Lee

In early March, UCSF ophthalmologist and professor Dr. Nisha Acharya received an unexpected email from the university grant office that stated her five-year research award from the National Institutes of Health would be terminated immediately.

The multimillion-dollar project studied the effectiveness of the vaccine for shingles, a painful rash caused by the virus that's also behind chickenpox. The research included investigating the effectiveness of the vaccine in people who previously had shingles of the eye.

Termination of the grant means the research has ground to a halt.

"I'm scrambling," Acharya said. "I have to let people go."

Acharya is one of several Bay Area researchers forced to halt critical research into the efficacy of vaccines after the NIH discontinued dozens

Vaccine continues on A8

Homeowners blame PG&E for ADU holdups

By Jessica Roy

Want to build an ADU in California? If you need help from Pacific Gas and Electric Co., be prepared to wait.

As accessory dwelling units explode in popularity across the state — among both homeowners and government officials who see them as a remedy for California's housing crisis — I put out a call for people's ADU stories in January. One theme emerged right away: complaints about PG&E delays.

I heard from half a dozen homeowners and ADU builders in the Bay Area dismayed by their experiences with California's largest utility company, saying it was responsible for holding up projects and creating chronic delays.

A spokesperson for PG&E said the utility has been working hard to improve its process-



Gabrielle Lurie/S.F. Chronicle

Andrew Solow said dealing with PG&E took nine months of the nearly four years he spent converting his basement into an ADU.

es, but that many issues are outside of its control and such complaints do not reflect the majority of its customers' experiences.

Those who contacted the

Chronicle included Andrew Solow, who decided in 2020 to convert the finished basement in his Marina-style home on a San Francisco hillside into an acces-

sory dwelling unit. He planned to use it for rental income, and potentially as a place he could live if he ever couldn't use the stairs, or to house a home health aide or family member.

All he needed to do was install a kitchen and add a second electric meter.

But not only did the \$100,000 odyssey end up costing twice as much as Solow expected, it went on for more than four years — about nine months of that spent just dealing with PG&E for permits, inspections and work, which Solow said required dozens of emails and more than 50 hours of his time.

A home renovation project eating up more time and money than expected is a story familiar to anyone who has lived through one. But Solow said that due to PG&E, the drawn-out process was "neolithically stupid and in-

PG&E continues on A9

