

## CAFE: The Center for Age-Friendly Excellence

*Advancing Livable Communities for all Generations*



### CAFE Focus Group Report Daly City April 16, 2019 Older Adults (Hillcrest Housing)

#### Transportation

This focus group had at least one participant that was comfortable with taking Lyft. This person took Lyft to doctor's appointments and shared that Lyft drivers are not trained or willing to help, even when asked. Residents use Lyft because Care Advantage Transportation sends Lyft and Care Advantage is their insurance carrier. The Care Advantage system uses the Lyft "concierge" user interface where a rider uses a phone number rather than the Lyft app to request a ride.

Care Advantage has several pluses and minuses: not enough vehicles that take wheelchairs; one can call anytime; not enough wheelchair ramps around hospital and doctor's offices. The problem is logistics: difficult to know exactly when to arrange wheelchair accessible vehicle—one knows what time the appointment starts, but not what time it ends as timing of doctor appointments unknown.

Redi-Wheels experiences remain negative with all Daly City focus groups. Riders must give exact times for appointments and pickups and waits are usually an hour or more.

SamTrans (#120 bus) Participants report a very long walk from the Westlake bus stop to South Gate (Kaiser Hospital, banks and shops). The group made a recommendation that a bus stop be added to (#120) after the Westlake stop, on the corner by the Safeway.

Focus group members shared that there are no bus stop shelters. Rainy weather washes out potholes in the street and it is impossible to cross in a wheelchair. No one in the group knew where to report potholes.

The group spent a fair amount of time addressing the problems of what bus shelters do exist: There are no benches upon which to sit and wait and many of the bus stops are dirty and smell foul. Participants often feel unsafe at bus stops, particularly at night. One bus stop has a bar in front and homeless people are laying down in the bus stop.

Focus group members asked for more time to cross the street. The time interval between walk and stop is too short for them and they feel unsafe. The worst cases are the intersections of Mission and Hillcrest, and Junipero Serra and Mission. They also asked for verbal or sound indicated walking signs.

## **Housing**

Like every other focus group in the region, this one asked that more affordable housing be built. They shared that Hillcrest is a “blessing” and at the last application, 700 older persons applied for 39 rooms. Our note taker reported that one of the focus group participants had heard of HIP Housing.

The participants shared that they have observed some new housing being constructed, but none of it is affordable or even low-income.

## **Social Participation**

The participants explained that they tend not to go to the senior center because there are plenty of activities at Hillcrest, they noted the exercise classes and line dancing.

There is a creative brown bag arrangement where one person drives to Lincoln and brings back brown bag meals for all. Another person delivers them door to door at Hillcrest. This saves separate car and bus trips to Lincoln.

The members say Hillcrest is a “special” place because of Tom. They say he is “an angel” (Tom is the director of Hillcrest). They said that he even got them a PG+E discount on utilities.

## **Respect and Social Inclusion**

Focus group members said they felt respected in Daly City. At least one person in the group could not recall participating in any social activities outside of Hillcrest Housing. There is one activity leader from Wider Circle. They say he leads classes in personality improvement, health, attitudes and values like compassion, how to sleep well, exercise with laughter and sitting yoga. These are the most innovative classes in our experience thus far in Daly City.

They reported that Doelger Senior Center “has everything” and sometimes Hillcrest residents attend Doelger. The challenge is getting there. Transportation is a major barrier.

## **Civic Participation & Employment**

An unusual number of the participants were still working part and full time. One person sold insurance, and another worked 3 days a week. The group had heard of jobs at the Post Office

and HART may be helpful; but they shared that if they tried to get a job in almost any other situation, they would not be hired.

### **Communication and Information**

Tom is the key contact at Hillcrest for information. Internet service is provided throughout the building and some residents are active users. Tom helped the residents get low cost internet service. Many residents are relying more on smart phones as compared to computers.

They were unaware if community computers still existed downstairs in the lobby area. The focus group members expressed a wish to learn how to use Uber and Lyft on their smart phones.

The main hard copy information comes from the Filipino newspaper (because it is free) and sometimes Doelger will send special printed information about activities to Hillcrest Housing.

### **Community Support & Health Services**

The group said that their community support is Tom. Everyone at Hillcrest has health insurance and the main provider is Health Plan of San Mateo. They do struggle with noise pollution from neighbors of non-stop very loud music and don't know how to fix the problem. (This is a first in all of our focus groups).

Daly City is a sanctuary city and residents said they were afraid that President Trump will release undocumented immigrants into Daly City. They heard that these people are criminals and they are afraid for their safety. They heard that the Daly City Council is debating the issue and they want to make their concerns heard at city council, but don't know how. They are worried about their self-preservation. The wonder if San Mateo County is a sanctuary county?

### **Outdoor Spaces & Buildings**

They reported that one of the exits to the building is full of furniture. The manager now knows. A major complaint is that dog owners do not pick up after their pets and the ground is foul. One person in the group suggested that they tell Tom about the potholes and that he would know where to report the issues.

Many of the residents spend significant time within the Hillcrest building and don't venture out except for special events or needed errands and appointments.