



MINIMUM SUGGESTED DONATION TWO DOLLARS.

STREET SHEET IS SOLD BY HOMELESS AND LOW-INCOME VENDORS WHO KEEP 100% OF THE PROCEEDS.

VENDORS RECEIVE UP TO 75 PAPERS PER DAY FOR FREE.

STREET SHEET IS READER SUPPORTED, ADVERTISING FREE, AND AIMS TO LIFT UP THE VOICES OF THOSE LIVING IN POVERTY IN SAN FRANCISCO.



MENTAL HEALTH BEDS THREATENED AT SF GENERAL	2	IMMIGRATION RAIDS IN TENDERLOIN	3	COMMUNITY GRILLS HSOC ABOUT HOMELESS RESPONSE	4	PREGNANT AND HOMELESS: FIGHTING BACK	6	SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR	7
---	---	---------------------------------	---	---	---	--------------------------------------	---	-------------------------	---

THE COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS WILL BE MOVING TO 290 TURK STREET AND STREET SHEETS WILL ONLY BE DISTRIBUTED FROM THE NEW OFFICE STARTING OCTOBER 1ST, 2019

LOCKED OUT. GENTRIFIED. CRIMINALIZED:

Ian James

Neoliberal Governance, Business Improvement Districts, and the Privatization of San Francisco

On July 26, 2019, ten district supervisors voted to establish the Downtown Community Benefit District. It became San Francisco’s newest Business Improvement District (BID), and it will receive over \$83,000,000 in property assessments from the City and County of San Francisco over the next 15 years. The money will not be spent according to any city budget. Instead, it will be spent according to a district management plan that was proposed by just 30 property owners, among them businesses such as Wells Fargo Bank and PG&E.

BIDs are not unique to San Francisco,

there are thousands across the United States and over 200 in just California. The way that BIDs function varies by city, but all BIDs in California share certain characteristics. Each BID consists of an area in which revenue is collected from properties by local government and is given to a private organization to spend on programs in the district. Property owners vote on whether or not to establish a BID before elected officials make the final decision. Votes made by property owners are weighted according to the amount of assessments that the property owners will pay. So, the more property you own, the

bigger your say in how a BID functions. If you do not own property, then you get no say at all. The more than 60% of San Francisco residents who rent have no power over BIDs, nor do homeless neighbors.

The vast majority of BIDs’ budgets are dedicated to programs controlling public space. In San Francisco, these programs take the form of surveillance and security. Private security patrols the East Cut Community Benefit District 24/7, and the Yerba Buena Community Benefit District has a dedicated SFPD officer working 12 hours per day. The Union Square BID has installed

350 security cameras and is aiming to expand the network to include every foot of public space in the district. BIDs regularly use the SFPD 10B program, where private companies hire off duty police officers as security.

The purpose of security programs is consistent across the city’s BIDs: target so-called quality of life crimes, such as sitting on sidewalks. Ninety percent of the 2,169 “criminal activities” reported by the Civic Center Community District’s private security were sitting, lying, trespassing or loitering. The mere act of existing in public space was turned into a crime by the BID. Not everyone who sits in Union Square, or lies in front of City Hall, is reported of course. BIDs dictate who is allowed to use the public spaces within their boundaries by discriminately enforcing these laws, and enforcement exclusively targets poor and homeless people.

Policy change is another way that BIDs increase their control over public space. The Union Square BID advocated strongly for the 2019-2020 city budget to include the Union Square Ambassador Program, which commits \$350,000 from the San Francisco general fund to pay seven retired cops to patrol Union Square. The Union Square BID has also donated thousands of dollars to political action committees and testified at several public forums in favor of Proposition L. Proposition L, passed in 2010, restricts sitting or lying on sidewalks citywide from 7 am to 11 pm. This change in law enabled BIDs to develop the security apparatuses that they rely on today.

Finally, BIDs schedule organized activities and install architecture that keep poor and homeless people out of public spaces. Hostile architecture installed to make spaces uncomfortable to rest in, such as spikes in front of buildings, are popular projects for BIDs. In emails to Board of Supervisor staff, the president of the Discover continued on page 5...



SHELTER WAITLIST UPDATE: AS OF SEPTEMBER 1ST THERE ARE 1,078 PEOPLE ON THE WAITLIST FOR SHELTER IN SAN FRANCISCO

PLANS FOR ADULT RESIDENTIAL FACILITY BEDS SHORTSIGHTED

Sam Lew

On August 22, over 100 health care workers, community members and public health advocates showed up to the Behavioral Health Center's Adult Residential Facility (ARF) to protest the displacement of those who are mentally ill from the facility.

The ARF is a board and care facility that houses the City's most vulnerable clients who have serious and persistent mental illnesses and cannot live independently. Residents of the ARF may be unable to prepare their own food, do their own laundry or manage their own money. They also may be unable to manage their medications, without which they would return to suffering major psychiatric crises on a regular basis and would cycle through the city's emergency rooms and psychiatric emergency room.

The San Francisco Department of Public Health is displacing severely mentally ill residents that are permanently housed at the ARF to make way for a navigation center to shelter unhoused people with temporary shelter beds. Essentially, the City is evicting one vulnerable, permanently housed population to house another temporarily, when they should be providing long term care and housing for all San Franciscans who need it. Without notice or community input, Public Health sent a letter informing behavioral health care workers that the adult population will be shrinking by 41 beds to only 14 permanent beds. City health care workers, too, will be displaced from work with this sudden reduction in beds.

Since the 1970s, more than 2,000 board and care beds have been lost and is in large

part the cause of the current homelessness crisis that exists. Indeed, board and care facilities play a critical role in housing vulnerable people who would otherwise be homeless. Today, there are only 601 board and care beds, down from 999 just six years ago.

"This is the only board and care facility that is publicly run," says Jennifer Friedenbach, executive director of the Coalition on Homelessness, which also publishes the Street Sheet. "It is permanent. This is exactly what we need in our system. And they're talking about taking 41 beds and replacing it with a navigation center where they come in and they go back out."

The navigation center beds, often lauded as the solution to homelessness by public officials, rarely equate to an exit out of homelessness, and shelter residents usually stay somewhere between 30 to 60 days before being churned back out onto the streets. Beds in a navigation center represent a temporary respite, but are in no way a long term, permanent residency like beds in the ARF.

"This is a valuable resource to us," said Friedenbach. We're fighting to try to expand the system. Why is City Hall working against us?"

The department claims that the ARF is an underutilized resource: It hasn't admitted any new clients since September 2018. But this isn't because those beds aren't needed; it's because the department has failed to staff up. The solution, it seems, isn't to inhumanely displace severely mentally ill San Franciscans, some who have lived in the ARF for over 15 years, but



ASK US ANYTHING

HAVE A QUESTION YOU WANT US TO ANSWER ABOUT HOMELESSNESS OR HOUSING IN THE BAY AREA? ASK US AT STREETSHHEET@COHSF.ORG OR (415) 346-3740 AND IT COULD BE ANSWERED IN THE NEXT ISSUE!

COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS

The STREET SHEET is a project of the Coalition on Homelessness. The Coalition on Homelessness organizes poor and homeless people to create permanent solutions to poverty while protecting the civil and human rights of those forced to remain on the streets.

Our organizing is based on extensive peer outreach, and the information gathered directly drives the Coalition's work. We do not bring our agenda to poor and homeless people: they bring their agenda to us.

VOLUNTEER WITH US!

PHOTOGRAPHERS
VIDEOGRAPHERS
TRANSLATORS
COMIC ARTISTS
WEBSITE MAINTENANCE
GRAPHIC DESIGNERS
WRITERS & COPYEDITORS

DONATE!

LAPTOPS
DIGITAL CAMERAS
AUDIO RECORDERS
SOUND EQUIPMENT

CONTACT:

STREETSHHEET@COHSF.ORG

STREET SHEET STAFF

The Street Sheet is a publication of the Coalition on Homelessness. Some stories are collectively written, and some stories have individual authors. But whoever sets fingers to keyboard, all stories are formed by the collective work of dozens of volunteers, and our outreach to hundreds of homeless people.

Editor, Quiver Watts (they/them)
Assistant Editor, TJ Johnston
Vendor Coordinator, Emmett House

Our contributors include:

Jennifer Friedenbach, Sam Lew, Jason Law, Jay Rice, Miguel Carrera, Kelley Cutler, Jesus Perez, Armando del toro Garcia, Raúl Fernández-berriozábal, Tracey Mixon, Darnell Boyd, Shyenene Brown, Anisha Tammana, Olivia Glowacki, Mike Russo

SUBMIT YOUR WRITING

STREET SHEET publishes news and perspective stories about poverty and homelessness. We prioritize submissions from currently or formerly homeless writers but gratefully accept all submissions to streetsheetsf@gmail.com

to focus on how to increase staff at the facility.

In the next 60 days, 19 residents in of the ARF will have to relocate. Public Health has asked them to move up to the second

floor, which is a facility for elderly people with mental illnesses.

Shawn Dubin, the former program director of Creative Arts, says that uprooting people who consider the first floor of the Behavioral Health Center their home will be "incredibly disruptive." She also says that without another place to stay at the same level of care, ARF residents will face the challenges of homelessness: "It's

going to be into the gutter, and then into jail. Preventative care is so much better than after the fact."

Under California Health and Safety Code, reductions in public health services require a public hearing and the public must be given at least 14 days notice before that hearing. No notice has been given, even though, according to Mission Local, the City had taken action earlier this year in May to decertify the beds and repurpose them as shelter beds.

Jennifer Esteen, psychiatric nurse with Public Health on the City's transitions placement team, led rally goes in a chant to demand public hearings, public notice and fair access and ended with a call for expanded services: "The same [health and safety] code says that the county shall fulfill its duty to provide care to all indigent people. ALL people. Not those who are homeless, but not the mentally ill. Not those who are mentally ill, but not the homeless. ALL indigent people. Our clients are all residents of SF and all deserve to have access to services in San Francisco." ■

SMOTHERED BY THE LAW: AN IMMIGRATION RAID IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

Tee Hoatson

If you work in community with folks on the streets near downtown San Francisco, news of the August 7 mass arrest has reached you by now.

In one fell swoop, the San Francisco Police Department arrested 50 individuals allegedly selling meth, fentanyl, heroin and cocaine in a 50-block area, covering large portions of the Tenderloin and Civic Center, and Federal Agencies arrested 37 more. All of the individuals arrested by the feds were Central American immigrants. The very same day, U.S. Attorney David Anderson announced this operation as part of a year-long “crackdown” on crime in the Tenderloin: the Federal Initiative for the Tenderloin, or FIT. The initiative comprises 15 federal agencies, including the U.S. attorney’s office, the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Administration and — frighteningly — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Department of Homeland Security more broadly.

At first glance, housed San Franciscans have reason to support this measure. They might think that reducing crime in the Tenderloin will make the streets safer for everyone, and the smaller the drug supply, the better for the community. The people who will actually be affected by the police presence deserve it—they’re organized criminals, drug dealers or “bad hombres,” as Donald Trump might say. And they don’t even live in the Tenderloin, right?

Not quite. It’s more complicated than that.

This point of view is seductive and easy to justify, if you skip a dose of critical thinking. Reporters across the nation are falling for it, and even Randy Shaw, longtime executive director of the Tenderloin Housing Clinic and editor of Beyond Chron, echoes similar sentiments. Everyone wants to believe that those designated to “protect and serve” are actually doing so, that arresting drug dealers is a surefire way to make us all safe.

But make no mistake: FIT and SFPD’s agenda do nothing but strengthen the reach of Trump’s detention machine and terrorize our fellow San Franciscans. With this initiative, the federal and city governments are taking a devastating approach to substance use and public safety that has been ineffective for decades: criminalization.

Heavy government spending on increased police presence and aggressive incarceration has been the standard response to visible signs of poverty—like street drug dealing—since the height of the racist War on Drugs, which Richard Nixon started. Despite their popularity, these tactics fail to solve the underlying and systemic causes of street crime and substance use. At the same time, they do the double harm of dispro-

tionately subjecting vulnerable and suffering communities to abuse and violence at the hand of the state.

In short, even though it might temporarily make housed San Franciscans more comfortable on their commutes, criminalization does far more harm than good. Let’s spell out exactly what that harm looks like.

FIT fuels the fires of xenophobic and anti-immigrant hatred and violence.

Remember the interview in which top Nixon aide John Erlichman revealed the true motivations behind the War on Drugs? Well, history repeats itself.

As a refresher, Erlichman said the following:

“The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people. You understand what I’m saying? We knew we couldn’t make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did.”

Sound familiar? Trump’s government is using the same trick with FIT. By getting the general public to associate Central American immigrants with violence and drugs, and understand their criminalization as a matter of public safety instead of inhumane cruelty, they are able to avoid criticism while pursuing explicitly racist agendas.

Imagine what would happen if the federal government invested the money from FIT into employment case management and immigration transition services, ensuring the many young boys forcibly trafficked into the drug industry were able to escape the cartels, instead of taking an approach towards drug use and sales that’s failed for half a century...

Imagine if they helped support the economies of desperately poor countries like Honduras, where people could flourish and have control of their own resources, and stopped supporting corrupt leaders aligned with capitalist exploitation.

But they won’t.

They don’t actually care about rehabilitating drug users and sellers or keeping the streets of the Tenderloin safe for everyone. FIT is a shoddy cover-up to further the federal government’s existing racist and

anti-immigrant agenda.

In a supposed “sanctuary city,” we can and should be doing better.

Crucifying drug users goes against the advice of public health officials.

FIT deceptively masquerades as a public health and safety initiative, but it employs a clear double standard to who deserves health and safety. As Kristen Marshall of the DOPE Project explains, “...in the next few days and weeks, people who use drugs, specifically those who use opioids like heroin and fentanyl, may not be able to get their needs met consistently. Their tolerances could fluctuate wildly, which puts them at higher risk for overdose. Additionally, as the supply replenishes (because it always does), it could vary in potency from what people were used to earlier this week, and given the strength and inconsistency of our fentanyl supply, this also deeply impacts people’s risk for overdose.”

Despite these harrowing risks, FIT has no intention of providing substance use treatment, peer counseling, case management or permanent supportive housing for

people who use drugs on the streets of the Tenderloin.

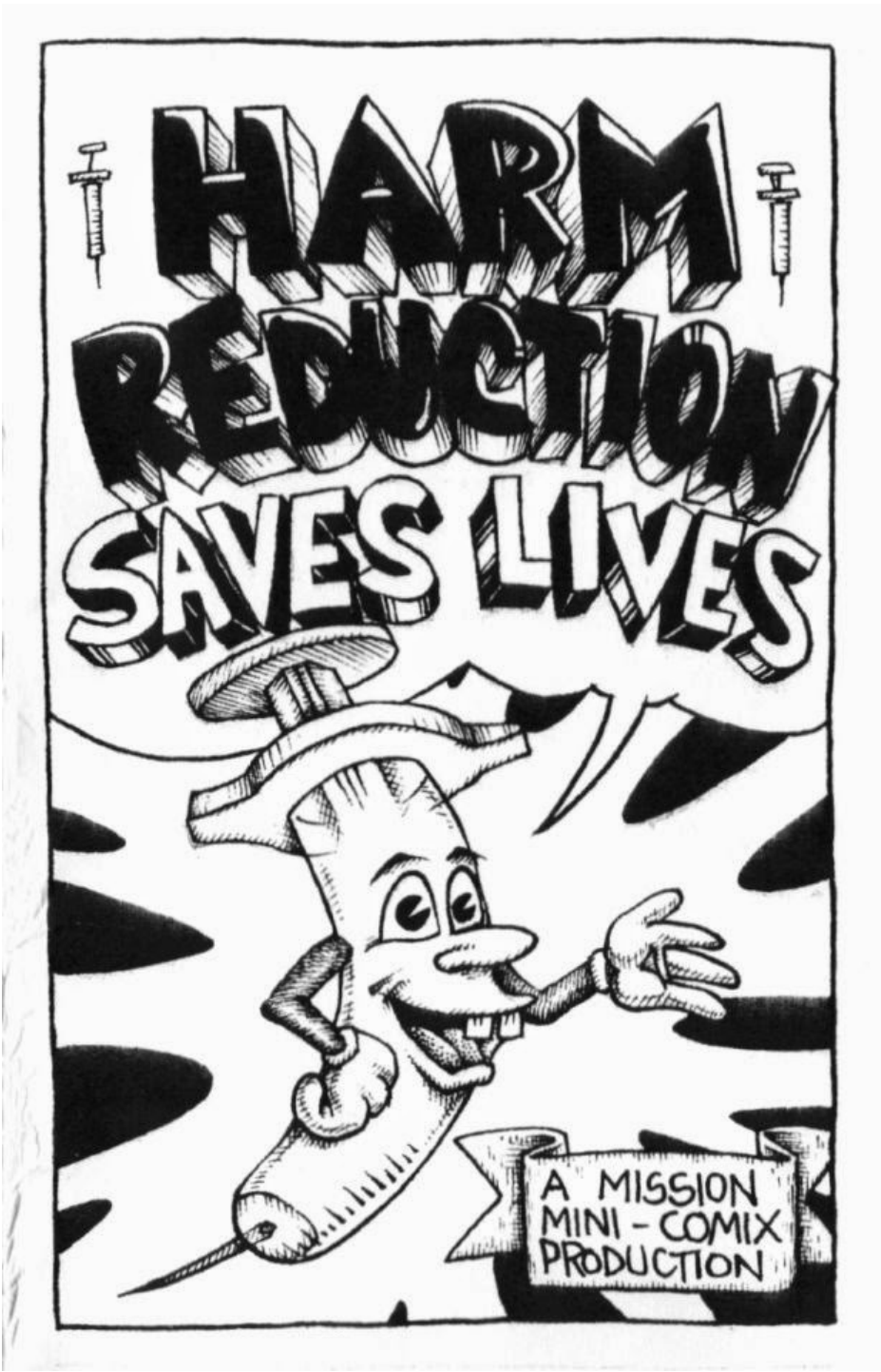
In the eyes of FIT supporters, only a select few deserve “safety”—those who are wealthy, white and housed American citizens, regardless of whether or not they sell or use drugs.

FIT robs people socializing or living on the street of their humanity.

As Sam Lew, policy director of the Coalition on Homelessness, puts it: “The Tenderloin is a community with poor housing stock and a shortage of affordable housing, populated primarily with people of color who for the most part do not have kitchens, living rooms or backyards. Therefore, most residents do most of their socializing on our city sidewalks.”

When SFPD shows up in the Tenderloin to enforce FIT, any and every low-income or unhoused person on the streets is subject to criminalization. FIT’s job is not only to detain and deport immigrants under the guise of stopping drug trafficking, but to clear as many people from the sidewalks as possible. This will happen regardless of the facts that they have nowhere else to go and most have committed no crime other than taking up public space while poor.

When Trump and the Right target one place in our city, our whole community pays the price. FIT is bad news for everyone in the Tenderloin—either you’re losing your humanity, or denying someone else’s. ■



SFPD, DPW GRILLED ON RESPONSE TO HOMELESSNESS

The group of San Francisco city departments tasked with tackling street homelessness has been blasted by two city panels in the last month.

The Healthy Streets Operation Center (HSOC) gave progress reports at the request of the Police Commission and the Local Homeless Coordinating Board at the bodies' meetings on August 7 and August 20, respectively.

After HSOC representatives gave presentations to both boards, the lead agencies of HSOC — the Police Department and Department of Public Works — were scrupulously questioned on just how successful they've been on their mission.

Launched last year, HSOC proclaims its duty as “a service-first approach to addressing encampments,” while at the same time maintaining street cleanliness, according to its handouts at both meetings. Joining police and Public Works in their efforts — at least on paper — are the Departments of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, Public Health and Emergency Management, among other agencies.

But it's often police and Public Works only who are represented at these operations, usually called “resolutions.” HSOC's tactics in clearing out street encampments — from Public Works' staff throwing away residents' possessions to police enforcing the operations — has drawn criticism from homeless people and their allies.

Kelly Cutler, a human rights organizer at the Coalition on Homelessness, which publishes Street Sheet, noted that neighbors' complaints drive the whole process, and the lack of adequate social services dooms HSOC's stated mission to failure.

“The goal of HSOC is responding to complaints about visible homelessness,” she said. “If the complaint is resolved and it doesn't connect people to housing, then it's not really resolved.”

POLICE COMMISSION

One measurable performance for which HSOC has claimed victory is fewer tents and encampments on the streets. The number of tents and improvised structures decreased from 568 in July 2018, when it first started counting them quarterly, to 451 in July 2019 — something that Mayor London Breed has been trumpeting.

At the Police Commission hearing, a slide from HSOC's PowerPoint detailing its achievements read: “HSOC resolved 25 large encampments of 6+ tents (88% reduction in sites during 2018),” though in some places bigger camps continue to cluster.

But the level of services, such as shelter and physical and behavioral health care, is lacking, and the services are inadequately offered, Chris Herring told the panel overseeing the Police Department.

Herring, a doctoral candidate in sociology at the University of California, Berkeley, also presented at the August 7 meeting. He pointed out that shelter and navigation center stays offered usually last no more than seven days and that most shelters won't allow camp residents to bring their tents and property. While the number of police officers at HSOC more than doubled in the last year from 24 to 58, only 5% of homeless people are meaningfully offered shelter, he said.

As far as assessing how homeless people qualify for services, “How are officers making that determination in the first place?” Herring said to the commission. “We can't say for sure without data, but our concern is that constantly moving people around, taking their tents, and only taking them off the streets for a few days at a time has actually worsened the homeless crisis.”

Where people displaced from their tents go after their shelter stays expire is another unknown, Herring said. There's no data comparing outcomes of people in encampment resolutions where the Department of Public Health takes the lead with those where the police and Public Works drive.

Deputy Chief David Lazar, who commands HSOC's police complement, tried to soften the brunt by telling the commission that his unit aids in the “decriminalization of homelessness.” Lazar displayed bar-graph charts connecting a decrease in police-issued “quality of life” citations and bookings to service availability. But this could owe more to a recent U.S. 9th Circuit Court ruling that ticketing and arresting for homelessness-related acts without providing services is overly punitive than police acting more mercifully.

While fewer tickets and bookings occurred throughout the last year, it's unclear which of the three dozen city and state homelessness-related codes were enforced.

But Jennifer Friedenbach, executive director of the Coalition on Homelessness, doubts that HSOC's citation numbers tell the whole story.

“They've not provided what citations they're counting, so we don't know if it's just HSOC (that's issuing them) or citywide,” she said. “We know the proportion of homeless people in jail has doubled. HSOC itself has increased their response to homelessness than decreased” with the surge of police officers in the unit.”

Commissioner Petra DeJesus pressed HSOC representatives for numbers such as how many citations have police issued and what proportion of tents get destroyed in sweeps.

Lazar replied that 73 citations were given and of those, 47 were charged by the District Attorney's office from September 2018 to May 2019, but the owners can reclaim their property from Public Works once the case is over.

“But the bottom line is that they don't get their property back, that property is being destroyed,” DeJesus said.

When DeJesus grilled Lazar on outcomes of shelter stays after camps get removed, Lazar replied they stopped taking people to the Providence Baptist Church shelter in the Bayview neighborhood because it was ineffective.

“We're going to stick with navigation (centers),” he said.

Commissioner John Hamasaki also requested specifics on where tents go after sweeps, and he said that whenever he drives around the city and sees sweeps in progress, he doesn't see Public Works bagging and tagging — just belongings thrown onto a truck, and that unsettles him.

“It's horrifying to see someone living under those circumstances,” he said. “But when that last bit of shelter, that last piece of clothing and belongings are taken away from them, I find that cruel and inhumane, and it shocks the conscience.”

LOCAL HOMELESS COORDINATING BOARD

Almost two weeks later at the Main Library, the Local Homeless Coordinating Board, an advisory panel to the City, also queried HSOC at what's to be the first quarterly public meeting between the two groups.

Like the police commission, the board also asked about the outcomes of temporary shelter placements. Homelessness Department director Jeff Kositsky replied that the focus of HSOC is to “get people connected with services” and is “not responsible for programmatic outcomes.”

That caveat was also indicated in a footnote in the City Controller's evaluation on HSOC from last spring. It noted that police officers make referrals, as opposed to “linkages,” to Homelessness or Public Health, and “at present, there is no means to track how many HSOC referrals can result in linkage to care.”

That might also explain why out of 347 placements in weeklong beds, only five resulted in successful exits to other programs.

“The results were not very good, just a 2% success rate,” Kositsky said. He added that HSOC is due to change its policy in September with a full rollout by the end of the year, though details won't be available until the next board meeting.

The Coordinating Board also inquired why only eight Mission District camp residents out of 150 — about 5% — accepted a seven-day shelter bed in April 2018, while more accept placements at navigation centers.

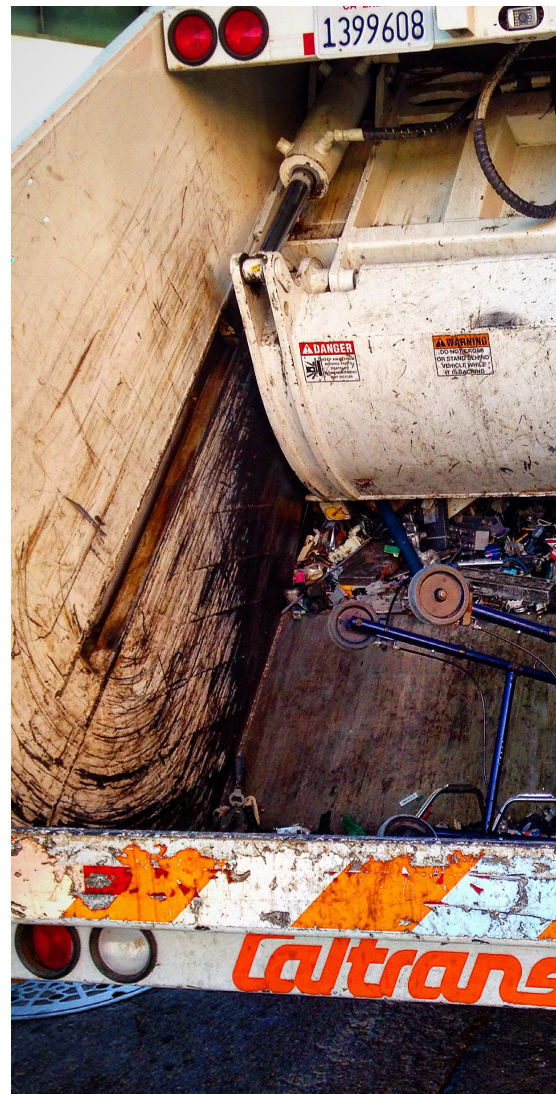
Kositsky replied that overall acceptance rates at larger encampments is about 65%. He also said that Homelessness and Public Health, along with the UC San Francisco, are working to improve numbers and outcomes.

But Coordinating Board member Kelley Cutler said these operations are still led by law enforcement, and despite its purported “leading with services” approach, HSOC conducts more sweeps. She cited some key indicators of the City's progress.

“The numbers just don't add up,” she said. “I'm looking at the shelter waitlist, I'm looking at the point-in-time count of people on the streets have increased. It doesn't add up there wouldn't be larger encampment resolutions.”

Conceding the increase in the homeless population, Kositsky pointed out that more people in San Francisco have been entering homelessness than leaving it.

“We are still seeing three new people for ev-





TJ Johnston

LESS

every one we house in any given year,” he said.

Public Works director Mohammed Nuru appeared uncomfortable and was barely audible when pressed about the recovery of homeless people’s property once it’s swept. The Coordinating Board asked him how many “bag and tag” confiscations were carried out and how many people were able to retrieve their goods.

Nuru told the board that there were 400 incidents where Public Works took homeless people’s belongings to the department’s storage yard between September 2018 and February 2019. He admitted that in that same time frame, 58 people retrieved 151 items from storage — a retrieval rate of a little more than one-third.

But Nuru’s department is already taking flak after reports exposed Public Works employees ignoring the “bag and tag” policy and even keeping the items to sell later. A video from the Solen Belonging project showed police and Public Works tossing away property during a sweep, and a former employee confessing to not following procedure because no one told him about it.

After audience members called for a less police-centered procedure during public comment, coordinating board chairman Del Seymour said, “Seems what I’m hearing from the public is HSH (the Homelessness Department) needs to be on the street. More HSH, HOT [Homeless Outreach] team or whoever is in your department. Maybe we need better representation.” ■



PAGE 5 SEPT 1, 2019 STREET SHIFT

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS DESTROY COMMUNITIES

continued from page 1...

Polk Community Benefit District praised installing planters as a way to discourage homeless people from setting up tents. Like private security, controlling design allows BIDs to determine what public space should offer and to whom. BIDs use all of these tactics to replace local governments as the administrators of public space, to the detriment of the people who rely on these spaces for life sustaining activities.

The Downtown Community Benefit District is merely the latest piece of a puzzle that was started in 1999, when the Union Square BID was established as the city’s first. Today, there are 16 BIDs, which collectively control over 450 blocks of San Francisco. Walking down Market from Gough to the Embarcadero, you pass through six BIDs and not a single block that they do not claim under their direct control. Collectively, the city gave BIDs over \$17,500,000 in property assessments during the 2017/2018 fiscal year. The Downtown Community Benefit District and the SoMa West Community Benefit District, starting in FY 2020, will receive an extra \$7,500,000 per year. Growth in size and influence has not brought any new oversight measures, and the majority of people still have no idea what BIDs are.

The city levies property assessments for BIDs on publicly-owned property as well, and the assessments are paid with public money. The Civic Center Community Benefit District alone levied \$397,235 of assessments on property owned by local and state government, including \$38,212 on properties owned by SFUSD. The Civic Center Community Benefit District also levied a \$43,584 assessment on city hall. Funneling public money through BIDs only serves to remove spending from the realm of public accountability.

The city is now paying consultants to target smaller commercial areas alongside patches of residential neighborhoods through a new type of BID: the Green Benefit District (GBD). Despite their friendly name, GBDs are structured almost exactly the same way as regular BIDs. The one difference is that GBDs collect assessments from mainly residential properties. This would be impossible anywhere else in California because state law forbids BIDs from collecting revenue from exclusively residential parcels. In San Francisco, however, the Board of Supervisors amended that law in 2004. They lowered the amount of written support needed to form a new BID, allowed BIDs to use property assessments to reimburse the costs of setting up a website, conducting surveys and other expenses from their own formation processes, and

enabled assessments on exclusively residential parcels.

Neighborhood groups and residents across the city have already worked together to defeat GBDs in the Haight, the Sunset, and Buena Vista. They wrote articles and spoke in public meetings against bloated budgets, lack of accountability, and an undemocratic formation process. Now, the fight has spread to the Mission. In a letter opposing the proposed Mission Dolores GBD, the Mission Dolores Neighborhood Association stakes out their reasons for saying no: one third of the money collected would go towards administration costs, the city had already spent over \$100,000 trying to force the GBD through, and the meetings to establish a management plan for the GBD were held behind closed doors. Proponents have tried to portray GBDs as neighborhood initiatives, but they are being advanced by large property owners and private consultants for the same reasons that the Union Square BID and the Civic Center Enhanced Service District were established.

Who BIDs are actually accountable to can be determined by looking at how they are created. The process starts with a steering committee that determines the borders of the BID, how much money the BID will collect, and how the BID will allocate its budget. They put this information into a management plan and an engineer’s report. The steering committee then needs to collect petitions in favor of their plan from property owners representing just 30% of the assessments. Property owners who own more property pay more in assessments, so their support is more important than the support of property owners with less property. The Downtown Community Benefit District was able to pass this stage with only 30 supporters because of supportive petitions like PG&E’s, which was worth 1.22% of total assessments. The Office of Economic and Workforce Development also provides steering committees with technical advice, contacts of consultants, and money during this stage. That is a level of the support that the city would never extend to a traditional property tax.

Once the petitions are submitted, an election is scheduled. Owners of property within the BIDs’ boundaries are sent ballots which they can return in favor of or in opposition to the BID. It does not matter if the property owner is registered to vote in San Francisco, and even corporations are allowed to vote. In order for the BID to go before the Board of Supervisors, only 50% of the ballots returned need to be in favor. Like the petitions, these ballots are weighted according to the amount of

property that the voter owns. This process stands in stark contrast to the process for taxes like Our City Our Home’s Proposition C, which is fighting in courts to be implemented after receiving 61% of the votes in a city-wide election. For the Downtown Community Benefit District, 73 property owners submitted ballots in favor and 63 property owners submitted ballots in opposition. Three hundred and forty-five property owners did not return their ballots at all, so their votes were discarded altogether. The final, weighted vote read 71% in favor to 29% in opposition. A small group of large property owners were able to push their plans through a system in which few people are allowed to vote, and votes are weighted according to the amount of property that voters own.

Before the election on the Downtown Community Benefit District was closed, the Board of Supervisors held a public hearing. After hearing public comment and tallying the ballots, they took the final vote on whether or not to establish the BID. That vote was a sham. One month before, the Board of Supervisors had authorized the mayor to submit ballots in favor of forming the Downtown Community Benefit District on behalf of city-owned properties. For each one of the city’s 16 BIDs, the Board of Supervisors actually tasked the mayor with submitting ballots in favor of creation before any public hearing. The Discover Polk, Japantown, and Ocean Avenue Community Benefit Districts would all have lost their elections if it were not for the city’s intervention. The city, and the Board of Supervisors in particular, are swinging the elections that they are supposed to be overseeing.

BIDs across the country have acted as laboratories for new forms of criminalization and privatization. The Denver City Code has a section stating that it is illegal to sit or lie down specifically within the boundaries of the Downtown Denver BID. In Sacramento, the Greater Broadway Partnership has pushed a lawsuit that would permanently ban seven homeless people from entering the Broadway business district. In San Francisco, BIDs have used private security, hostile architecture, and government lobbying to become the arbitrators of who is and is not allowed in public spaces. At every step of the way, local government has enabled them. In order to successfully organize against this co-option and to advance alternative visions of public space that are truly for the benefit of all, we must resist BIDs and the pseudo-private spaces that they work to create. ■

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT: PREGNANT AND HOMELESS

Meghan Roadkill Johnson

Unhoused people are constantly being stereotyped and discriminated against all over the nation, usually by people that have never had to sleep on the street or seek shelter, ever. San Francisco is no exception.

It has become a common practice amongst housed people to repeat misinformation about unhoused people for one simple reason: they know nothing about the obstacles these people face on a daily basis. They know nothing about the struggle. They would rather focus on the negative image of unhoused people rather than why they have been forced to live these lifestyles to begin with.

Support and homeless inclusion starts with firstly, recognizing our city lawmakers and the faulty policies they vote into place are NOT normally in favor of unhoused people. Second, not enough is being done by Mayor London Breed to address the housing and shelter crisis in San Francisco because sweeping people over and over again, further into poverty is not helping. Third, the policies affecting homeless people who are pregnant need to be dramatically changed, and more attention needs to be given to them. At this point not enough is being done.

At the Coalition on Homelessness, Executive Director Jennifer Friedenbach decided to take a stand and represent this forgotten community. On August 1st she wrote an open letter to Jeff Kositsky, director of the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, on the urgency of changing the policies for pregnant homeless individuals.

“San Francisco has a largely invisible homeless population — pregnant people. Because of a gap in San Francisco Emergency Housing policy, they are frequently homeless throughout pregnancy,” Friedenbach wrote. “As policy currently stands, homeless pregnant people only qualify for family shelter, housing or other services only after the third trimester.”

This is completely backwards.

Pregnant individuals experiencing homelessness should not have to wait until their third and final trimester to be able to qualify for housing assistance. The city needs to offer housing to them during their first trimester. Allow them to prepare to bring their baby to stability, to a home. A lot more can be done in nine months versus three, and the city knows that.

Being formerly homeless myself, I can

understand the stresses and constant worrying that comes without having shelter, without having a proper home to take and keep your children safe. Right now, the expecting parent(s) must jump through several hoops, including going to a homeless access point. They can be met with roadblocks in paperwork and not enough case worker availability. With everything happening all at once, you can quickly feel powerless and overwhelmed.

Your body is already in survival mode having to experience homelessness. Depression is a normal side effect to have if you are houseless. Many homeless people are on the streets, living with conditions that pose a negative threat to their body. What this means is the homeless individual’s calendar age can drastically and internally accelerate, in some cases even doubling the person’s physical age. Now add the extra stress of pregnancy it becomes a huge risk to the unborn fetus and mother.

By the third trimester the major organs - heart, lungs, brain, etc - have already been formed. If there was a development problem with the fetus, would the homeless individual even have enough time to detect it? Let’s say the homeless, expecting parent(s) learned they had a high risk pregnancy and required bed rest; where would they go so they don’t potentially lose the baby? So many different events could arise. You’re vulnerable to many different health risks in the city.

Questions come flying from every direction. You lose sleep and your health can decline just thinking about them all: Where will I go for prenatal care? Do I have proper insurance? What if I get sick and have a miscarriage or go into pre-term labor? How tight is money right now? Will it be harder to find a job? Do I have enough food to eat? Where will me and baby go after they are born? Will I still be houseless?

Imagine how much stress from living in poverty would be alleviated by having the City actually responding to homelessness with real solutions!

It is imperative that I mention another vital piece of information Jennifer Friedenbach wrote in her letter:

“There are dozens of homeless pregnant people, clearly being documented by service providers like the Homeless Prenatal and Catholic Charities. More than one person has given birth on our streets and other pregnant people are living in tent

encampments. Many are sleeping in cars, even doorways. The city’s pregnancy policy as it relates to the homeless family system should be in alignment with current Medi-Cal and CalWorks eligibility, whereby individuals are eligible upon verified pregnancy.”

Help starts with the Homelessness Department moving away from their outdated policy, and following suit with federal policies involving pregnancy, like the agencies mentioned above, Medi-Cal, CalWorks, both federally ruled. By doing this, they will be letting pregnant individuals access adequate prenatal care and housing at ANY stage of pregnancy, not just the third trimester. This would be a complete game changer in our current pregnant policy situation.

Studies clearly show that expectant mothers who are housed have a huge advantage to having and maintaining a healthier pregnancy as compared to the great disadvantage of being houseless and pregnant. A baby given more stable options earlier in life will grow into a healthier, stronger person. This will

HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT

Jennifer Friedenbach

Handouts are nice
Organizing is nicer
Unity is preferred
Solidarity is required
I am nothing without us
No person can be excluded
God will not craft justice

It will take all of us fighting together
Social justice cannot wait

All of us are

Hurt when one of us are suffering
Unless we want blood on our hands
Many of us must take action
And do what is necessary
Nothing can stop us

Rising up
Instilling hope
Getting what is ours
Housing for all peoples
Treatment on demand

create a positive effect on the way they grow throughout the different stages of their lives.

To the City of San Francisco, let’s prevent further struggle for our future generations! Support our Unhoused Pregnant People today! ■



In the building I live in we have critters and roaches, and sometimes the bathrooms are kinda messed up with feces and cigarette butts, toilet paper all around and left on the floor. Usually the building is inspected once every year, but recently they’ve been doing it every month just to harass us. I want these conditions to improve because it is inhumane how people live with these conditions. We have pest control come but they just treat the rooms, so the infestations just move from one room to the next.

And another thing is that now I’m feeling like I’m in jail. We have desk clerks who used to answer the door - though now we have the electronic keys - but they make our guests sign in. You only get nine overnight visitors a month. Visiting hours are from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. If I pay rent to live in an SRO building, I feel I should be able to have guests whenever I want and not feel like I’m in jail. I don’t have a bathroom or a kitchen in my unit. Each floor shares one kitchen, four bathrooms and one shower.

We always talk about house rules at the monthly meetings, in which some people go and some don’t go. I don’t go to the house meetings. I know what’s going on by listening to the other tenants. The property manager facilitates the meetings. So if you do get an SRO, be careful what you sign. Because if you sign something it could jeopardize you living there anymore. Read it carefully because they can kick you out for violations of the house rules. ■

SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR

SEPT
8

10TH ANNUAL OAKLAND PRIDE PARADE + FESTIVAL

WHERE: FRANKLIN ST, OAKLAND @11AM-7PM

Oakland Pride Parade + Festival is the East Bay's premier LGBTQI Community Celebration and Festival that includes more than six city blocks of music + art + food + fun! Boasting four separate entertainment stages, Oakland Pride welcomes talent from the Bay Area and beyond!

ACCESS: WWW.OAKLANDPRIDE.ORG

SEPT
8

DEREK AND RAINER'S JOINT BIRTHDAY

WHERE: AT CHURCH AND MARKET (IN FRONT OF THE SAFEWAY STEPS) @2PM

Our vendor Derek Williams is having a joint birthday party featuring live music, food, games, etc. All are welcome, bring a dish to share and gifts.

ACCESS: This is an outdoor event

SEPT
12

ARTAUCTION19: TRANSFORMING ART INTO ACTION

WHERE: SOMARTS GALLERY, 934 BRANNAN STREET, 5:30-10PM

The Coalition on Homelessness cordially invites you to our 19TH ANNUAL ART AUCTION AND EXHIBITION. Come enjoy and bid on work from over two-hundred local artists and activists that truly transform ART into ACTION.

ACCESS: SOMArts is wheelchair accessible and offers multiple genderneutral bathrooms. Please contact development@cohshf.org to request other accommodations.

SEPT
19

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF TENANT POWER AND RESILIENCE

WHERE: GRAND THEATER / GRAY AREA 2665 MISSION STREET @6-10PM

You are invited to join Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco for its first benefit celebration, honoring four decades of power and resilience. Your ticket purchase and participation supports the mission of Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco to ensure that no one is evicted because they did not know their rights.

ACCESS: The Gray Area Theater is fully ADA accessible and low chemical scent

WE'RE MOVING!

STARTING OCTOBER 1ST STREET SHEETS WILL ONLY BE DISTRIBUTED FROM OUR NEW LOCATION AT 290 TURK STREET. THIS SPACE IS WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE AND ALL ARE WELCOME TO JOIN THE STREET SHEET PROGRAM. CONTACT STREETSHEETSF@GMAIL.COM WITH ANY QUESTIONS OR ACCOMODATION REQUESTS.

The San Francisco Poster Syndicate & the Women of the Resistance Mural presents: The Women of the Resistance Poster Portfolio

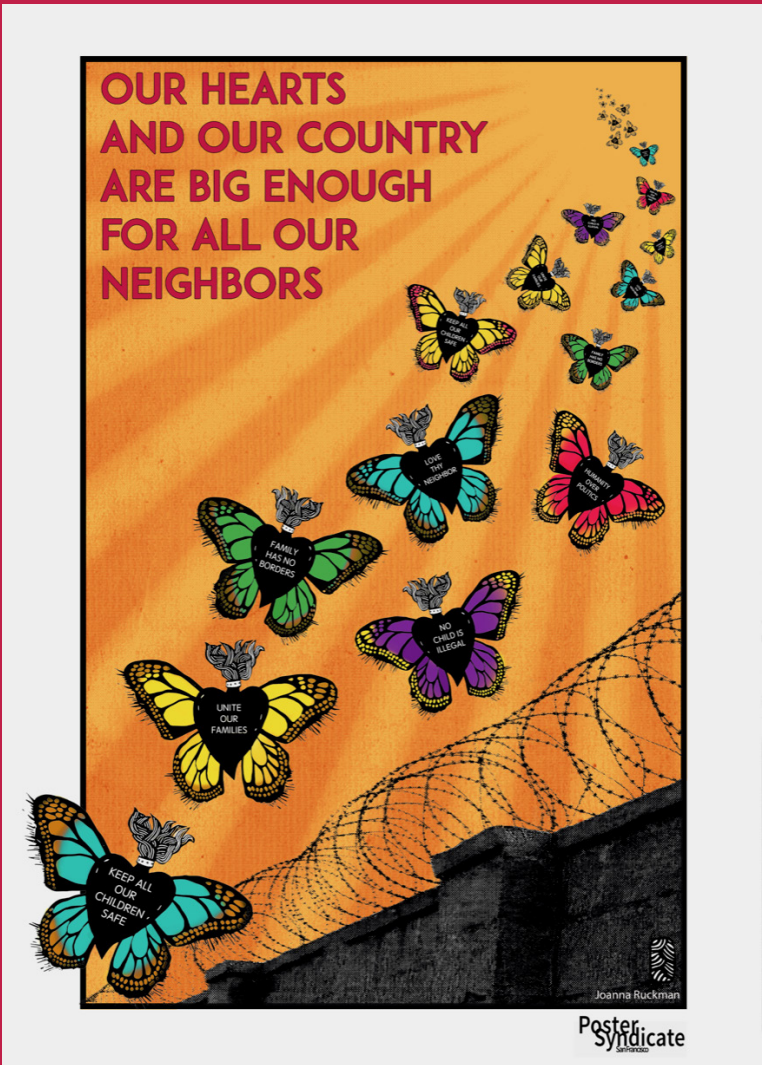
Opening reception September 7, 2019, 6-9 pm,
Closing reception September 27, 2019 6-9 pm,
Alley Cat Books, 3036 24th St, San Francisco, CA.



Continuing our homage to Balmy Alley's new mural, *The Women of the Resistance*, the muralists teamed up with the San Francisco Poster Syndicate to create a portfolio of posters depicting each revolutionary woman featured in the mural.

Screenprinted posters and portfolios will be on display and available for purchase September 7 - September 30 2019, at Alley Cat Books.

YOU'RE INVITED



The Coalition on Homelessness cordially invites you to our 19th Annual Art Auction and Exhibition. Come enjoy and bid on work from over two-hundred local artists and activists that truly transform ART into ACTION.

Live performance from DIANA GAMEROS
Food by THE ART OF GOOD TASTE
Music by DJ ANYA
THE GREAT TORTILLA CONSPIRACY
Photos by PRISCILLA RODRIGUEZ

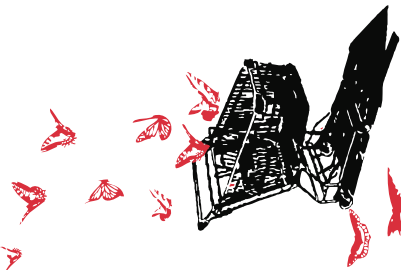
BUY YOUR TICKETS ONLINE at
<http://artauction19.info/buy-tickets>



NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 3481
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94188

Coalition On Homelessness
468 Turk Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
415-346.3740
www.cohsf.org
streetsheetsf@cohsf.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Coalition on
Homelessness
San Francisco

“Community can be family, community is your surrounding, community is people. Community is being a positive influence, being a role model in anyway possible to the younger generation

Sometimes we have to go through the dirt in order to see what other people go through in order to be a vessel to help.” **Oleaah Mauerman**

“I miss the comfort, the family feeling, going to sleep at night feeling safe. Not stressing and worrying about where we’re going to sleep the next night. My daughter, I say, she’s more comforted when she’s in that kind of environment (a home), she’s a little more erratic when she’s in the other kind of environment (homeless).

I’m trying to be the best example for people around me that I come in contact with. I try and be the changes I want to see in the world” **Roy Butler**

Name: Roy Butler, 51. Oleaah Mauerman, 42 and Asha Butler
Date: 26 September 2018
Place: Compass Family Services
Without a home: About 3 years

