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# STREET SHEET



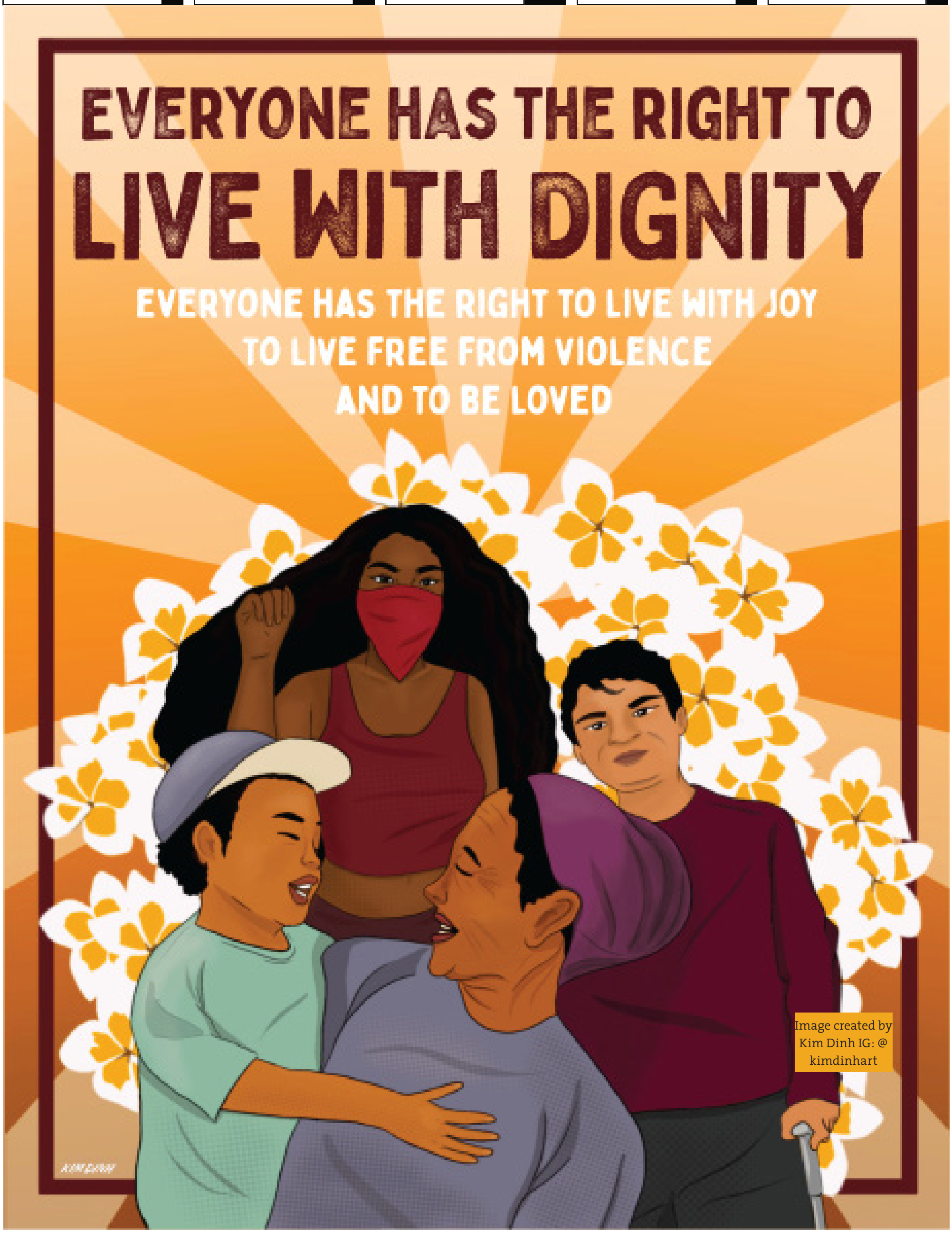


Image created by Kim Dinh IG: @ kimdinhart

# COVID-19 COMMAND CENTER ANNOUNCES PLANS TO CLOSE MOSCONE CENTER

Quiver Watts

On April 20, the COVID-19 Command Center told the roughly 150 residents sheltering at the Moscone Center West emergency shelter location that they would soon have to find new accommodations, as Moscone Center plans to reopen for regular business. The projected date for the site to fully shut down to shelter guests is June 30.

Since last spring, hundreds of otherwise homeless residents have been sheltering at the Moscone Center. The site houses people who were referred by the Homeless Outreach Team or Guest Placement Team, were sent by the Healthy Streets Operation Center during an encampment sweep, have been denied service at shelter-in-place (SIP) hotels or other shelters, or are coming out of isolation and quarantine hotels after recovering from COVID-19.

The City's initial plan to warehouse homeless residents on barely distanced mats on the floor was publicized by Street Sheet last April and received national attention for its failure to meet basic safety needs for homeless folks in the face of a global pandemic. The City announced a policy shift the day after the story ran and instead began moving those it deemed "COVID vulnerable" into SIP hotels. Since then, the Moscone site has been an emergency shelter for those who don't meet the City's vulnerability requirements, with enhanced social distancing measures and dividers for guests, allowing for more privacy and safety.

The news of the coming site closure came as a shock to staff who reached out to Street Sheet out of concern for where current guests will be placed, and how that transition will be communicated. Some of the site's current guests arrived at Moscone after initially being told that they were going to SIP hotels, or being told nothing at all, so there is an understandable lack of trust. And even more concerning is that while the notice says many guests will be offered placements at Site S — formerly Next Door — and another site run by Five Keys, it does not guarantee that guests will not be turned back onto the streets.

The sudden announcement and the lack of clarity about what will happen to residents has created chaos for workers and guests alike, but this is hardly an anomalous process. Since the traditional shelter system stopped accepting new guests through the 311 system in April 2020, the COVID Command Center's Guest Placement Team has been responsible for placements in all the shelters, including existing adult shelters and SIP hotels, and they don't have the best track record communicating with residents.

Ben Baczkowski, a shelter–client advocate with the Eviction Defense Collaborative, says some of the confusion stems from an unusual intermingling of responsibility between the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, Human Services Agency, and Department of Public Health in the COVID Command Center, which try to operate as if they are individual agencies. "In practice what that means is they have created this nebulous web of so-called 'bureaucratic accountability.' And the overall effect is that as a provider and as a resident it is really chaotic in the hotels and shelter system," Baczkowski says.

As residents at Moscone grapple with uncertainty about where they will go next, SIP hotel guests are in a similar boat. While the City has publicly committed to offering housing placements to everyone who was in the SIP hotel system up until October 1, 2020, the process is moving quite slowly. According to publicly available data accessed on April 30, of the 2,235 people waiting for housing in the SIP hotels or broader shelter system, 51% have yet to be entered into Coordinated Entry, and 18% are listed as Problem Solving Status, meaning they could be exited back into homelessness. Only 30% have been deemed Housing Referral Status, meaning they qualify to be placed into housing coming out of the SIP system. (Percentages do not add to 100 due to rounding.) Of the 678 people who are Housing Referral Status, 67% have no placement or housing offer to date.

Baczkowski says he regularly gets phone calls from unhoused people worried about what they should be doing to try to get a housing offer, so that they don't end up going back to the streets. He says that people who had been in the Coordinated Entry system before the pandemic are now being bypassed as people in hotels are prioritized, pitting hotel tenants and shelter guests against each other for limited resources.

Baczkowski also raised concerns about the lack of due process being offered to hotel tenants and shelter guests alike. Thanks to the homelessness advocate Arnette Watson, the Shelter Grievance Policy was put in place in San Francisco in 1992 to protect shelter guests from being arbitrarily denied service. It meant that if you got kicked out of a shelter or evicted from your transitional housing, you'd be able to appeal the decision, and there would be a hearing with shelter staff and an advocate to try and reach an agreement. If that doesn't work, resolution falls to an independent decision maker who is a licensed attorney.

"While the policy has not officially changed, its implementation has fallen dramatically short during the pandemic," says Baczkowski.

The City "took this opportunity to suspend due process in the emergency housing system, and now if you get kicked out there's no way to get back in, and if someone says 'Oh, well, you threatened me,' then that person is effectively barred from being rehoused in the system," he says. "People are not getting housed, they are languishing in these sites, there is anger and frustration among people being passed over, and people with mental health problems. There are lots of people who really need housing who are being left for dead, for lack of a better word." ■

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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 agendas to us.

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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.

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## POETRY CORNER

### HEAVY

by M.y.N.D.

Heavy as a wet feather/black out my soul with a sharpie/past pains scar me/scrape up the love with a razor/face 2 face with my savior/ pointless behavior/the point on your finger hurts deep like a stinger/boiling over with anger/ up farther than levitation/run ran races taking paces/back and forth/ burn it down with a torch/with remorse unconsciously/pour down rain/pour down/oh the humanity/ embrace my insanity/laugh in the mist of tragedy/breaking up shit raggedy/imagine my mentality/at a stand still/heal

Balancing acts...face those facts... crushed by the pressure...pull the lever...float here forever...crash fast never...cleaver excuses...I can only trick myself...I really need 2 catch my breath.....I really need 2 catch my breath...

Stuck in a mindstate

# We Have the Power to House Each Other

Learn how to turn vacant properties into homes at housethebay.org/take-it/

Suzanne. Q. Waters

In celebration of May Day, housing activists in Oakland staged a demonstration of the power of communities to house each other. A march wound through the streets of West Oakland and ended at a formerly vacant property that had been transformed into a home. Organizers said they hope to inspire community members to take action and open up vacant properties, while also highlighting the failure of politicians and corporations to address the housing crisis.

Outside the house was a U-Haul set up like the inside of a living room, with furniture, artwork, and a carpet, all created with materials salvaged from street corners where folks lost their housing. There was also a visual representation of the process of opening vacant properties, with replacement locks, a PG&E bill and a pile of zines with information on how to create housing.

House the Bay made headlines last May Day when they moved two homeless women into a vacant property in the Castro, and were forced out by dozens of police wearing "Thin Blue Line" masks, a racist symbol demonstrating opposition to Black Lives Matter. The work of moving homeless people into vacant properties remains at the center of the organization's work.

"If the City of Oakland won't provide housing to our unhoused neighbors, it's up to us to do it ourselves," said Ari Cowan, an organizer with House the Bay.

There are four empty units for every homeless person in the Bay Area, yet the City of Oakland has left over 4,000 unhoused residents to weather the pandemic outside. Corporate developers and real estate speculators continue to drive up housing costs, resulting in tenants being discriminated against and harassed in their homes, and far too often pushed out of the Bay Area or onto the streets. This action targeted a known slumlord, SMC Property Management Company, which is also the target of a rent strike led by a union of their tenants.

The demonstration was joined by Oakland's May Day caravan, and featured speakers from many community organizations. ■

For more information about this action, visit housethebay.org

# SAN FRANCISCO TAKES FIRST STEP TO MOVE DIAL ON HOMELESSNESS

The Our City, Our Home Oversight Committee released its first big disbursement including funding for exits out of homelessness for over 3,200 households. Included in the plan is funding to acquire over 1,000 units, to prevent homelessness for an estimated 21,000 San Franciscans, and to add over 1,000 new beds to the shelter system. The Oversight Committee is appointed by the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor, and charged with recommending how Prop C funding should be used. The body garnered input from over 850 people, mostly made up of those with lived experience with homelessness, plus city departments and service providers, to guide their decision making.

The measure calls for half of the funding to go to permanent housing, and one-quarter to go to behavioral health, as well as investments in homelessness prevention and shelter. It also dictates housing for families with children and youth.

"This measure captured the hearts of San Franciscans and we are thrilled the oversight body is embracing the spirit of the grassroots effort that made it happen, and the intention of the voters," said Tracey Mixon, a formerly homeless parent and Our City, Our Home Coalition member. "These funding recommendations will transform impoverished people's lives suffering from homelessness in uncountable ways."

Proposition C passed in November of 2018 with over 60% of the vote and funnels an annual $300 million in corporate profits towards permanent housing, shelter, mental health care and services for homeless San Francisco residents. The measure also allows funding to help several thousand San Franciscans stay in their homes through rental assistance and other supports. The measure faced a legal challenge, but proponents were victorious and the funds were released last fall.

Julia D'Antonio, formerly homeless parent and OCOH Oversight Board Member, said, "Our City, Our Home, Proposition C, was birthed in the community, and we are asking the city to honor that spirit by listening to people with lived experience who are calling for an emphasis on housing for all homeless people, including families and youth, as well as behavioral health treatment, shelter and prevention."

On Monday, May 3rd, the oversight committee will consider the behavioral health portion of the fund. Then, the recommendations will go to the Mayor and Board for final approval. The Mayor and the Board of Supervisors will hopefully honor the oversight committee's recommendations — as it is a people's initiative and the desire is to center unhoused people's experience, not ideas of what homeless people need from politicians and those in power. ■

For those interested in participating in oversight committee meetings, go to https://sfcontroller.org/meetings/220

# MAY DAY 2021

Photo Credit: Leon Kunstena, ProBono


Photo Credit: Leon Kunstena, ProBono

On May Day thousands of organizers around the Bay Area came together to march for justice. Respresented were labor groups showing solidarity with Amazon workers unionizing in Alabama, abolitionists calling for the release of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal and all prisoners, housing activists taking on speculation and private property, mothers of the victims of police brutality, communities calling for an end to white violence against AAPI people, and homeless advocates fighting for homes for all. The day was marked by direct actions, marches, and car caravans celebrating the worker's holiday.


Photo Credit: Leon Kunstena, ProBono


Photo by Brooke Anderson | @movementphotographer

Barbara Doss, the mother of Dujuan Armstrong, who was killed inside Santa Rita Jail
https://whathappenedfilm.com/


"Today we say f*** landlords, f*** speculators, and f*** this political system that refuses to house our unhoused neighbors while thousands of homes sit vacant. And f*** yeah to the power of direct action because through it we can turn every empty house waiting to be flipped into a home for people who need them." - Carlos


Photo by Brooke Anderson | @movementphotographer

# IN 2021 AND BEYOND, WE NEED TO PRIORITIZE HELPING UNHOUSED SAN FRANCISCANS INTO HOUSING, NOT JUST REMOVING THEM FROM PUBLIC VIEW

Carlos Wadkins

On Wednesday, April 21, District 8 Supervisor Rafael Mandelman brought his "A Place For All" legislation before the Board of Supervisors Budget and Finance Committee. It was met with negative reactions from members of the committee and many of the dozens of people who gave public comment on the topic. While that reception and the decision of committee chair Matt Haney to not pass the legislation on to the full board mean that the legislation has no clear path to being passed, it is still important to understand the flaws in "A Place For All" and proposals like it.

"A Place For All" would require the creation of enough safe sleeping sites and shelter within 18 months to accommodate every unsheltered person in San Francisco. While this legislation's reliance on safe sleep sites is unique, "shelter for all" policies have been tried in several cities dating back decades as a solution to homelessness. The problem with these policies, and with "A Place For All," is that the cost of maintaining enough shelter beds for all—which are not an exit from homelessness for any—prevents cities from investing in the permanent solutions needed to move people out of homelessness and into housing.

It's easy to see how this problem would be replicated by "A Place For All." Safe sleeping sites made headlines earlier this year for the eye-popping amount they've cost the city since the program started last year: around $61,000 per tent per year, according to the city's department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing. This cost is well over the cost of a private market subsidy with support services for a single household, which is about $40,000 per year, and it's over two times the average cost of rent for a one-bedroom apartment in San Francisco. During the April 21 meeting and in an op-ed touting the legislation, Supervisor Mandelman argued that these costs were grossly inflated and could be reduced through "better planning and economies of scale." According to the City's Budget and Legislative Analyst's report on "A Place For All," safe sleeping sites are currently run at a full-service cost of $193 per tent per night (about $70,000 per year), but could be run at a minimal-service cost of $93 per tent per night (about $34,000) because Supervisor Mandelman's legislation does not require on-site medical, clinical, and social services. However, even at this lower cost, the BLA estimates that this legislation would cost about $169 million annually—not including one-time installation costs—if applied to all unsheltered San Franciscans (using the report's high-end estimate of 5,000 people based on the 2019 SF Point-in-Time count). At the current full-service rates, the BLA estimates it could cost over $346 million.

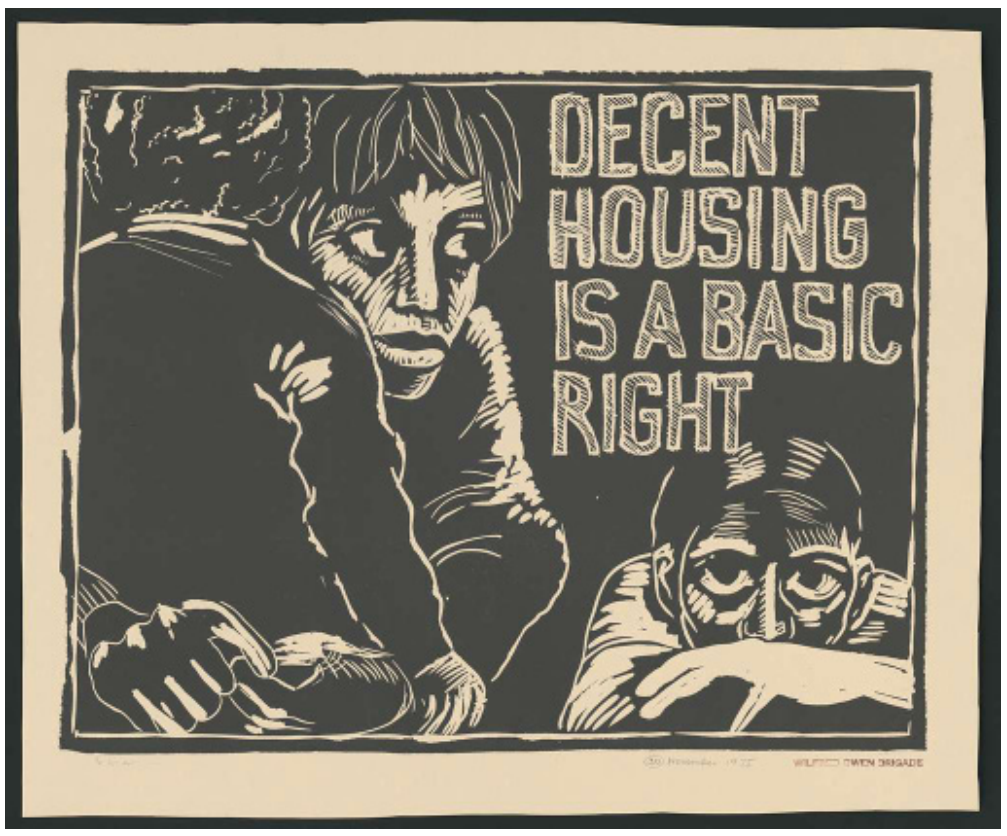
While "A Place For All" carries this hefty projected price tag, the legislation did not contain any new funding sources to achieve its requirements, so the required $169 million would come out of the existing homelessness budget. In other words, "A Place For All" would replace many of the long-term solutions the city is currently funding with safe sleep sites. These existing solutions include community based recommendations from the Our City, Our Home Oversight Committee on how to spend the over $300 million in Proposition C funds, 50% of which must be invested in housing. They also include the Mayor's Homeless Recovery Plan, which aims to place 4,500 people into permanent supportive housing and acquire 1,500 new units over the next two years, alongside "Flex Pool" subsidies, which help unhoused people access private housing. In his April presentation to the Budget and Finance Committee, Supervisor Mandelman argued that these permanent solutions could be achieved alongside his legislation. However, without the introduction of any new source of funding, "A Place For All" would trade thousands of potential units of permanent housing for thousands of tents with few housing exits and nothing to stop the number of San Franciscans being displaced onto the streets from rapidly rising.

This outcome is similar to what faces unhoused people in New York City, where over $1.8 billion is spent annually on a massive shelter system for over 60,000 New Yorkers in order to satisfy New York's "right to shelter" mandate. A 2018 report from the Picture The Homeless Research Committee called "The Business of Homelessness" argues that New York's prioritization of shelter over permanent solutions to homelessness has exacerbated the crisis, stating "by failing to create new units... the city is ensuring that shelter entry will continue at pace for the foreseeable future." The report finds that investing in greatly increasing the availability of low-income housing would be much more financially responsible than continuing to prioritize expanding and maintaining the shelter system.

> "Even at current capacity and cost, the city could finance its share of the cost of housing every homeless family with the money that it is already set to spend on operating shelters over the next three years. Over the next seven years, the city will spend more on operating shelters than the amount of city subsidy required to create new housing for every single homeless household in NYC." - "The Business of Homelessness" report

Based on the effect that "A Place For All" would have on San Francisco's ability to invest in long-term solutions to homelessness, as well as the outcomes other cities such as New York City have had with similar "right to shelter" policies, it's clear that this legislation would be disastrous for unhoused San Franciscans' ability to exit homelessness. Beyond that, it would also bear negative implications for people living on the streets of San Francisco, because it would increase the city's ability to enforce anti-homeless ordinances. In his op-ed, Supervisor Mandleman implies that this legislation is not aimed at ending homelessness, but rather at ending street homelessness, defending the cost of "A Place For All" by arguing that "If we want to solve street homelessness in our neighborhoods, we need to fund policy interventions targeted to solve street homelessness in our neighborhoods." This sentiment was reflected both in the Supervisor's words and those of his legislation's supporters in the Budget and Finance committee, many of whom expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to have their uhoused neighbors removed from their neighborhoods and business districts. Mandelman also alludes to the fact that this kind of widespread removal could not be possible without legislation like his, because of a federal court ruling that "prohibits most local enforcement actions 'when no alternative sleeping space is available.'" For unhoused San Franciscans, this means that "A Place For All" gives the city the ability to effectively ban street homelessness, removing unhoused San Franciscans by threat of criminal prosecution from the neighborhoods and communities they call home. The city's constant sweeps and police harassment are already aimed at making it increasingly difficult for unhoused folks to survive on any given street for long periods of time, but a shelter for all policy like "A Place For All" gives the City power to make it effectively impossible.

Dozens of public commenters at the Budget and Finance committee meeting spoke in opposition to "A Place For All" for these reasons, including several currently and formerly unhoused San Franciscans who demanded the city invest in providing them housing instead of the proposed safe sleep sites. All three members of the committee — Supervisors Haney, Gordon Mar and Ahsha Safaí — agreed with them that "A Place For All" would take away from other priorities such as the Our City, Our Home recommendations, thus choosing not to pass the legislation onto the full board. However, the committee did not disagree completely with the idea of a shelter for all policy, as some panel members seemed more concerned with the legislation's reliance on safe sleep sites and the high costs and low level of services associated with them. As a result, "A Place For All" is effectively dead in committee, but the potential for a shelter for all policy to achieve more success at the Board of Supervisors remains. For now, at least, the city remains able to spend the money that would have gone to Mandelman's legislation on funding thousands of exits from homelessness in the next two years, while continuing to maintain a right-sized and diverse shelter system. ■



# "NOBODY SHOULD GO WITHOUT THE SHOT"

## DISPATCHES FROM VACCINATED STREET PAPER VENDORS

*With Covid vaccines being rolled out differently across the world, that means marginalised and vulnerable communities in different parts of the world are receiving immunisation at different rates. But it does mean some good news: street paper vendors are beginning to receive the jab, and with the world opening up again, that's more than welcome.*

By Jill Shaughnessy

With Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Moderna, Johnson and Johnson, and more vaccines beginning to become available, countries are starting to vaccinate their populations, starting with the elderly. The rollout of the vaccine begins to provide a light at the end of a very dark tunnel that is the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, the process to grab a vaccine appointment remains a mystery to many. Homeless populations are eligible for the shot in different parts of the world.

The requirements differ globally, but a few street paper vendors have gotten their jab.

In Nashville, Tennessee, soon-to-be expired doses are being sent to homeless shelters around the city. As of 5 April, Tennessee was in phase 3 of the vaccine distribution. That means all people considered homeless, regardless of age, are eligible to get the shot.

Three vendors from The Contributor street paper in Nashville have already received their vaccine. In an interview, vendor Paul describes his experience getting the jab at Music City Center. He tells The Contributor that the entire process took about 30 minutes. In Paul's experience, it took 15 minutes for the shot, and 15 minutes of observation time to ensure he didn't have a bad reaction. He describes how he experienced no pain with the shot and was ready to grab a cup of coffee and get to work afterward.

Vendor of Nashville street paper The Contributor: Teresa
Courtesy of The Contributor

Paul encourages everyone to get the vaccine. "Nobody should go without the shot. Nobody. The more people get the shots, get vaccinated, the sooner the city can reopen to full capacity," he says.

Teresa is another vendor who received her vaccine in Nashville. She was originally turned away at the Walmart vaccination center because she didn't have health insurance. To her relief, after an hour of waiting, she was able to get the shot anyway. Teresa had no real pain after, just a little discomfort in her arm.

"It's not as bad as you think it would be. Even the scaredy cats that are afraid of shots, it's not that bad," she says.

Megaphone in Vancouver, Canada is also seeing some success with vaccine distribution for their sellers.

"We have been fairly fortunate in Vancouver, B.C. There have been several vaccination clinics for marginalised people – including vendors – in the Downtown Eastside, which is home to mostly low-income residents and also a lot of people experiencing homelessness. In fact, the office building where Megaphone is located hosted a vaccine clinic (Friday 26 March) and many of our vendors signed up," says Megaphone editor Paula Carlson.

Peter Thompson, a vendor for Megaphone, received his vaccine at the Carnegie Community Center. He did not schedule an appointment ahead of time, but rather walked into the vaccine center after hearing about it from the Megaphone office.

"It is a feeling of relief as it brings me one step closer to seeing my family again. It has been so long since I have seen them... It takes a toll on a person — mostly the emotional stress," he says in the March edition of Megaphone. After the shot, Thompson is feeling "fine, grateful, and relieved."

In the United Kingdom, seventy-year-old Gordon was the first Big Issue North vendor to get the shot. Gordon received the jab in January due to his lung condition and it provided a beacon of hope for him.

"I know loads of people are still waiting to have the first injection so I'm very lucky," says Gordon.

In Hamburg, Germany, residents of emergency shelters will be vaccinated in the coming weeks, but the rollout remains slow.

One vendor of the Hinz&Kunzt street paper has been vaccinated, however. "Elsa is older than 80 years and those people have the highest priority to be vaccinated here in Germany," says Benjamin Laufer, an editor at Hinz&Kunzt.

It appears more and more vendors will be getting the jab in the upcoming months. In the United States, President Biden plans to have 500 million total doses administered by August. Although the European Union missed its first vaccination goal, the world is closer to normalcy than it was a year ago.

"It's really important that people get it. Better to be safe than sorry," says vaccinated vendor Gordon. "The quicker we can get out of this lockdown, the better. I'm sick of this lockdown. I'm bored of it. I just can't wait to get back selling the magazine again." ■

Courtesy of INSP.ngo


Vendor of Nashville street paper The Contributor: Paul
Courtesy of The Contributor

# Shelters Have Standards. SROs Should, Too!

Jordan Davis

In previous issues of Street Sheet, I have written extensively about the fact that some of our lowest income tenants in supportive housing are paying much more than 30% of their income toward rent — a problem that we are closer to fixing than before — as well as about the lack of WiFi and cooling systems, and infantilizing policies such as not allowing people to pay their rent by check.

But then I came to realize a certain irony in our homelessness response system. As you all know, in 2008, San Francisco passed comprehensive "standards of care" legislation for city shelters that went into a lot of minutiae not only about what policies needed to be put in place, but also what material needs were to be provided. The Permanent Supportive Housing Rent Contribution Standard legislation — aka #30RightNow — has now been signed and is awaiting funding, but there have been practically no meaningful standards for supportive housing, and this has led to a potpourri of problems within.

To give you an idea, I will share my experience with one of many single resident occupancy hotels (SROs) being used to house formerly homeless people. After graduating from the Navigation Center in 2015, I was placed in a unit without the bathroom that was necessary for someone getting gender confirmation surgery — not to mention no fridge, no microwave or cooking appliance, and a trash bin that was just too small. I still have no fridge, but was able to pay for everything else. When I was able to get into a unit with a bathroom, there were no grab bars, because current guidelines only require them in communal toilets and baths, not in individual units. Anyone who needed grab bars had to pay for them out of pocket, to the tune of hundreds of dollars.

In addition, during my more than six years at that site, I have had to deal with an unreliable elevator, water outages and conditions that would not be tolerated in any other type of housing. And while people under rent control can seek a rent reduction because of a decrease in services, SRO tenants don't even have that option.

What I am mentioning is important, not just because of the need for us to eat healthier and to be able to not trip and fall, but because we should treat these units more like middling college dorms and less like flophouses.

And the sad part of all of this is that many SRO tenants have suffered worse experiences than I have, not only in terms of lack of provision of material needs—especially since people are just coming out of homelessness—but standards that are inadequate and infantilizing.

What we need most is a comprehensive list of standards and practices for supportive housing; we need new legislation that will spell out clearly what is needed for supportive housing with input from supportive housing tenants. Also, we need a way to seek rent decreases for every day we have a reduction of services. Imagine if every time the water goes out, we get a small decrease in rent? It would certainly force the City to pay attention to conditions within our housing.

If any tenants wish to be a part of this hopefully collaborative process in the coming months, they can always email me at 30rightnow@gmail.com ■

# Joe Biden, Homelessness, and Neoliberalism

Anisha Tammana

The last year has proven dire for unhoused people in San Francisco. COVID-19 has ravaged communities, particularly those who face homelessness. While the city claims to protect the most vulnerable, it is evident that the priorities of San Francisco, and of the United States, do not lie with its people. Amidst a global pandemic, neoliberal governance has only exacerbated wealth inequality and hardship for those on the streets. As gentrification in San Francisco expands, and homelessness continues to be criminalized, it proves to be an increasingly hostile environment.

Neoliberalism describes an economic system which seeks to privatize social services and shrink government. The term encompasses a number of policies and approaches that have furthered poverty, including opposing welfare programs and encouraging a profit-driven approach to public services. The constant push for economic growth is a slap in the face to any disenfranchised Americans who do not benefit from these policies, which are designed to help the rich get richer. In everything from foreign policy to housing, neoliberalism shapes American politics and more importantly, American injustice.

When COVID-19 hit the country, we saw how unprepared our privatized healthcare system was to deal with a pandemic. Many Americans lost access to their healthcare, and others were unable to be treated for other conditions as hospitals were overwhelmed by COVID-19 patients. The United States has faced disproportionate death rates due to COVID-19 in comparison to other countries. To put the impact of the virus in racial terms, it is no surprise that it hurt communities of color far more than white communities: Last year, one study suggested that Black people account for 34% of the U.S. COVID deaths, but only 12% of the total U.S. population.

The toll of systemic oppression goes deep, as institutional violence impacts marginalized groups who are at higher risk for medical racism, incarceration, and housing discrimination.

In the last few months, we've seen promises from the Biden administration on everything from climate action to immigration reform to housing and homelessness. President Biden's housing plan calls for Section 8 vouchers to be made available to all who qualify, which could vastly expand the options for folks trying to move off the streets. And his announcement that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) would reimburse hotel contracts used to house homeless people during the pandemic has meant keeping many San Franciscans off the streets.

But we will have to fight hard if we want to see any structural changes. Progressives have long criticized the president for his moderate views and inaction on many pressing issues that face Americans. The promises made by Democratic politicians, however much better they seem than the hateful approach Donald Trump had taken towards poverty, may prove to be empty. Already, we have seen that the Democrats will not follow through on promises regarding immigration. The inhumane conditions in ICE detention centers and continued deportations of undocumented immigrants are evidence of these broken promises. The criminalization of homelessness and the horrific treatment of undocumented immigrants go hand in hand, as these immigrants are vulnerable and at high risk of becoming homeless.

As vaccinations become more accessible for individuals facing homelessness and the pandemic becomes less severe, we can only hope and organize for change, and reject neoliberal attitudes and policies in favor of building community power. ■

## REMEMBERING CHARLES DAVIS, Vendor #728

June 6th -- The service begins at 2 p.m. at Calvary Presbyterian Church, 2515 Fillmore St. SF 94115, cross street: Jackson, on the MUNI 24, 22 & 3 lines, calpres.org. There will be social distancing, full precautions, check-in (for contact tracing).

People are invited to come early (doors open at 1 p.m.) to pack sack meals before the service. During the service, we will bless the sack meals in Charles' memory. After the service, we will deliver the sacks meals to people who need them.

Wheelchairs may access the building from Fillmore Street where there is a level "ramp" at the right hand corner of the building (toward Pacific Avenue). Calvary Presbyterian Church (USA) is a Sanctuary Congregation, affirms Black Lives Matter and practices LGBTQ equality.

Contact Rev. Victor / victorfloyd@calpres.org if you have questions.

**Coalition On Homelessness**
280 Turk Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
415.346.3740
www.cohsf.org
streetsheetsf@gmail.com

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# STREET SPEAK

## Episode 7: Why Homeless Advocates Should Support Sex Workers

This episode features an interview with Celestina Pearl, the Outreach director at St. James Infirmary. She spoke with Street Speak about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on sex workers in San Francisco, the history of SESTA/FOSTA, the connections between homelessness and sex work, and the incredible mutual aid work that is sustaining sex workers during this challenging time.

Weather report brought to you by InoPoGu (Inocente Po Guizar), a Mexican trans queer person who's very outspoken about gentrification, got gentrified out of the bay, and is currently seeing some horrible gentrification and gentrification attempts in New Orleans. They are lightweight homeless/couch surfing, and ask listeners to please share their music and art! https://inopogu.bandcamp.com/

Listen to the show at http://www.streetsheet.org/street-speak-podcast/ or wherever you get your podcasts!

# STREET SHEET

**is now accepting submissions for our first ever**

# DISABILITY ISSUE

**We are seeking articles, narratives, poems, artwork, comics etc focusing on personal experiences with disabilities and well as disability justice issues. Submissions can be emailed to qwatts@cohsf.org or mailed to 280 Turk Street, SF 94102**

***payment may be available for submissions from people experiencing homelessness, please contact the editor for more information***

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