It has been said that bail bonds are for rich people, not for the poor. It affects poor people because they lack the resources to pay bail. When an inmate goes to court and is given a bail amount, they often don’t have the ability to pay that amount. Inmates also get high bail from court and have to keep going to court so they can get bail low enough. They have to sit in jail until the judge decides to let them go. Before they eliminated cash bail, poor inmates used to have to sit in jail before being released because they couldn’t afford to post bail. But now that they have eliminated cash bail, all inmates are being forced to sit in jail and wait for the judge to release them.

Poetry By Me
Living the Life of Trauma

Living the Life of Trauma is not easy
nor is it fair.
But having people there that share their
compassion and love for us makes it a
more glorious affair.
As we thrive to be better persons to
Pursue our dreams in a society that views
Us not as human beings.
However, Love and compassion is what
Can truly take us there
So, believe that in the end one day
We’ll look back and see the roads we traveled,
will make us heroes like no one
On this earth can even compare.

by Rodney McClain
On Tuesday, October 19, the Board of Supervisors will vote on whether to approve the proposed Vehicle Triage Center (VTC) at the Candlestick Point State Recreation Area in the south-eastern corner of San Francisco. The site, funded by Proposition C dollars released in this year’s budget, would be large enough to accommodate up to 155 vehicles with 177 tenants. According to the Department of Housing and Supportive Housing’s (HSH) proposal for the VTC, the site could be opened as soon as the end of the year, and guests will have access to desperately needed services such as restrooms, showers, laundry, electricity and black water dumping, as well as the opportunity to work with on-site housing case managers.

For the guests who may soon be able to stay there, the VTC would be a welcome resource indeed, as it provides protection from many of the dangers of living in a vehicle in San Francisco. Cindy Keener, a vehicularly housed resident of the Bayview, said that she would happily move her vehicle to the VTC given the chance. “People need a place where they feel safe. Safe from harassment from police and DPW. A place with showers. A place without vandalism,” she said.

Doc, who currently lives in his vehicle near the proposed site, feels the same. “I want to live at the Safe Parking Site if they would allow me in my car. We are already like a community, parked around Candlestick. I would like to see it formalized,” he said.

While many of the details of what the VTC would look like have been released by HSH, one question looms large in the minds of prospective residents: How would it be run? As of now, it’s not known which organization would be contracted to operate the VTC, and what rules they may set in place, but according to Doc, the residents themselves should have some say in the matter.

“We need some rules…[and] we should make the rules,” he said. “We are the ones living there. The city would not need to come out all the time like they do now to do check-ups on us. Now they come out all the time and profile what they think are troublemakers.”

Another unanswered question is what will happen to those vehicularly housed folks who are unable to access the VTC. A City count conducted last August found that in the district covering the Bayview, over 650 people are currently living in their vehicles, hundreds more than the site’s proposed capacity of 177 guests. Jennifer Friedenbach, director of the Coalition on Homelessness, which publishes Street Sheet, warns that City-sponsored sites like these can often result in increased criminalization of those left outside. “These 155 spots funded by Prop. C are a fantastic start,” she said. “But with about 2,000 people living in vehicles across San Francisco, a number that has likely risen significantly since then. For people like Cindy and Doc, all they can do is hope the city will one day provide a solution that can help them once and for all off the streets and into a home.”

Friedenbach shares Doc’s view. “Enforcement will only exacerbate and increase homelessness,” she said. “The city can address safety concerns by refraining from harassment of those living in vehicles and halting the confiscation of inhabited vehicles.”

However, the City decides to move forward, it remains clear that it will need to do more than just open this site to address the needs of vehicularly housed people. As of the last point-in-time count in 2019, the City counted over 5,500 people living in their vehicles across San Francisco, a number that has likely risen significantly since then. For people like Cindy and Doc, all they can do is hope the city will one day provide a solution that can help them once and for all off the streets and into a home.

"Enforcement will only exacerbate and increase homelessness. The City can address safety concerns by refraining from harassment of those living in vehicles and halting the confiscation of inhabited vehicles." -Jennifer Friedenbach

FREE WiFi FOR ALL

Internet companies have made billions during the pandemic, despite the shrinking incomes of seniors & people with disabilities on supplemental security income (SSI). Access to the internet is becoming an essential good, and we need #FREEWIFI for the city of San Francisco!

We will be holding an in-person rally against AT&T on Monday, October 18th from 12-4PM. 12:00 PM location, SOMA Pilipinas (6th and Mission). 12:45 PM location, Powell BART station, Market & Stockton, to walk over to AT&T building at 1:00 PM Here is the Facebook event: https://fb.me/e/1k23XxDGk.

Can’t join us in-person for the rally? We got you - you can register for the October 18th 12-4 PM Zoom watch party: https://bit.ly/wifivirtuallyall

On a roll? Support our work further! Sign & share our online petition: https://bit.ly/ SDAfreewifi

Join our #FreeWifi groupchat: https://app.groupme.com/join_group/71649355/7IY16aJQ

Photographs in the Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

FREE WiFi FOR ALL
There are spirits on the streets. Spirits that walk the line between this world and the next. There are spirits that hide in the shadows. Yokai creatures that howl and bark and turn into tea kettlekats that do skateboard tricks along the Embarcadero, having lost their tightrope somewhere in Okaya in 1899. There are Angels. And there are demons. There is the As Above and the So Below.

This tale does not start in an abandoned warehouse. It is not set in some graveyard with ghouls, though they exist too, in a state of permanent hunger and longing for flesh. They are never satiated, and stalk the Mission and the North Beach looking for a warm meal, between 937 and 99 degrees Fahrenheit, the blood temperature of a healthy human body. Despite being corrupt, they do not feed on corruption themselves, feverish humans are quite safe from them.

There are dark things that hide in the shadows, and once a year they get to peek out from their corners and their dusty upper shelves, from the cursed objects at Rigley’s Believe it or Not, to the creaking parts of the machines of the Musée Mécanique. Penny Arcade, whose gears and grinding wooden parts house the ghostly remnants of our recent past lives and the spirits of those who sold it all for a chance to ask the Great Zoltar what the future held for them. It is not recommended. The price for finding out what only Great Father Time can tell is everything you got—even your immortal soul. It might seem a way off that the bill has to be settled—it can’t possibly be true—but when these hell hounds come to carry the souls of the Aikens into the Realm of the Underworld, it all becomes crystal clear: the only way is down, baby...down...down...down...

Ginsburg and Cassidy play checkers for one night only in the bones of the old City Lights, before they head back to their comfortable abodes in the Tower of Song, where the artists live, somewhat like an ancient and more comfortable Hotel Chelsea with their dusty upper shelves, from the cursed objects at Rigley’s Believe it or Not, to the creaking parts of the machines of the Musée Mécanique. Penny Arcade, whose gears and grinding wooden parts house the ghostly remnants of our recent past lives and the spirits of those who sold it all for a chance to ask the Great Zoltar what the future held for them. It is not recommended. The price for finding out what only Great Father Time can tell is everything you got—even your immortal soul. It might seem a way off that the bill has to be settled—it can’t possibly be true—but when these hell hounds come to carry the souls of the Aikens into the Realm of the Underworld, it all becomes crystal clear: the only way is down, baby...down...down...down...

---

Behind the Healthy Street Operation Curtain: The True Story of San Francisco’s Abusive Encampment Response

Coalition on Homelessness 2021

What is HSOC?

“What the Healthy Streets Operations Center (HSOC) [launched] on January 16, 2018 to coordinate the City's response both to homeless encampments and to behaviors that impact quality of life, such as public drug use and sales.” - 2019 Controller's Report on HSOC

What's Wrong with HSOC?

HSOC pursues its goal of eliminating large encampments (but often doesn't connect people to dignified services) through three main types of operations:

1. Resolutions
2. Re-encampment prevention
3. Cleaning
Once an area is “resolved,” regardless of whether the people who lived there have moved into a shelter or just around the corner, it is subject to tactics aimed at preventing the re-emergence of the original encampment.

The Structure is to Blame

Based on what advocates have witnessed, HSOC uses a poorly structured resolution process that prioritizes street cleaning over service connection, providing little time for outreach workers to work with residents and creating an atmosphere of stress and panic that makes it difficult for residents to advocate for their needs.

One thing that advocates and Department of Emergency Management Executive Director Mary Ellen Carroll agree on is that HSOC’s rate of service connection is less than satisfactory.

Conclusion

The current HSOC operations fail to permanently address homelessness, increase economic costs and violate human rights. From the unhoused person's perspective, they are cruel and trauma-inducing. From the housed person's perspective, they are only pushing people into more residential areas.

As a city, we can and should do better by our housed and unhoused neighbors. Political battles during the epidemic also revealed how profoundly broken the “revolving door” approach the City takes to homelessness is, and the lack of structural investments in long-term solutions has increased systemic inequalities.

Read the full report "Behind the Healthy Street Operation Curtain" at https://www.cohsf.org/behind-the-healthy-street-operation-curtain/
FAMILIES SPEAK OUT ABOUT COORDINATED ENTRY

Ruth Wong

Since 2018, the City of San Francisco has been using a system called Coordinated Entry to distribute housing resources to homeless people. Coordinated Entry is mandated by the federal government, and requires the city to score homeless people with points, to identify which people are the most vulnerable. The people with the most vulnerabilities (for example disability, substance abuse, or mental illness), are the first ones prioritized to receive housing. The Coalition on Homelessness hosted a listening session in August with 35 families who were experiencing or had experienced homelessness to get feedback on how Coordinated Entry has been going for people.

In our listening sessions, the number one complaint we heard was lack of respect and lack of trauma-informed care in the assessment process, as well as the shelters. Participants reported discrimination due to the language they spoke or their legal status. One of the participants shared, “the social worker isn’t patient with me. You get buried with a lot of questions. It’s more of an interrogation than a help of needs.” Another said, “I found out how to enter a shelter. I was evicted for not paying the rent and they threatened to call immigration. They told me I could not apply to a shelter because there was no space. I would like the people who attend the shelters to have sensitivity; the vast majority of us who live on the street have traumas and we want people to have empathy.”

The second most common piece of feedback was that there were not enough resources to go around. One of the mothers said, “I would like the help to be permanent. In the subsidy many times when the contract ends, and they see that you already have a job, you no longer qualify and they take away the aid and we fall back into the same circle. They take away our support if we earn a little more. I would like the aid to be more stable, it is good to earn a little more. I would like the subsidy to be permanent.”

Everyone thinks it’s a good idea to give housing to those who need it most. However, there is way less housing available than the number of people who need it. When the vulnerability qualification is applied to all extremely low-income housing across the city, there are swathes of people who will never be able to get any housing resources at all because they are “not vulnerable enough.”

This has also resulted in racial disparities. In some counties, white people are more likely to be housed through Coordinated Entry. The exact reason isn’t clear, but Margot Kushel, a doctor and researcher on homelessness at UC San Francisco, speaking on According to Need, a podcast series from 99% Invisible, said, “There’s so much structural racism, it is much easier to become homeless if you’re Black... So what we see, if you just look within the homeless population, the Black folks look healthier. Because to be homeless and Black means you could just be poor. And in general, this is a sweeping generalization, but in general, a higher proportion of the white folks who are homeless have these disabilities that are related to their homelessness. Not everyone, of course, but you’re more likely... And so what people who have interrogated this have found—and this is true in many places across the country—is that the white folks are more likely to get resources just because they score higher because these scoring systems are all based on individual vulnerability.”

From a bird’s-eye view, data from a San Francisco public records request shows that the racial breakdown of people who get housing through Coordinated Entry and the racial breakdown of the homeless point-in-time counts are pretty similar, but that doesn’t mean that systemic racism isn’t there. On the housing side, housing providers are seeing more people with extremely high needs enter permanent supportive housing compared to before Coordinated Entry was implemented. For example, a property manager we spoke to who runs several permanent supportive housing buildings reported that someone moved in who was totally blind. “They can’t do things for themselves. It leads to them being taken advantage of by other folks in the hotels. Other people are running off with their money. It hasn’t been many, but we’ve gotten a few that were totally disabled that should have went to Laguna Honda or something like that. They shouldn’t have been placed in housing where it was independent living... There’s only so much our case managers can do.”

The third most common piece of feedback about Coordinated Entry was that participants didn’t understand the resources available and where they had to go to access them. At least one participant was afraid to use the system due to having children, and no assurance that the government wouldn’t take her children away once there was a record of her being homeless in the system.

It makes good sense to coordinate housing resources so that homeless people don’t have to get bounced around from provider to provider. It also makes sense to give housing resources to those in the most need. However, there are so few housing resources available that the vast majority of people going through Coordinated Entry do not get anything. For Coordinated Entry to make sense, there needs to be housing for the city to be able to coordinate the entry of homeless people into.

Overall, our research shows that Coordinated Entry is too complicated, does not give people the dignity they deserve, and does not provide enough housing resources to bring people out of homelessness permanently.

What Is Coordinated Entry?

Coordinated Entry is what the City of San Francisco uses to prioritize which homeless people get subsidized housing. People go to an Access Point, where they are given an Assessment. The questions in the assessment are used to score how vulnerable a homeless person is. For example, if you have a disability, you would get more points in your score. The people with the highest scores get more housing resources. Access Points specialize in families, youth, or single adults, but anyone can get assessed at any Access Point.

Resources that you can get through Coordinated Entry:

- Permanent Supportive Housing, which is mostly for single adults.
- Rapid Rehousing, which is a time-limited rental assistance, mostly for families and youth
- Problem Solving, where you do not get housing, but you can get some money to help stay housed, for example, a bus ticket to travel to a family member who you can live with, or money to help with utility bills so that the person you are living with will let you stay.
- Emergency Shelter, which is mostly for families.

Resources that are NOT a part of Coordinated Entry:

- Low income housing (lottery)
- Affordable housing listed on DAHLIA database
- Shelter for single adults
- Public Housing
- Section 8/Housing Choice Vouchers

Coordinated Entry is required by the federal government. However, the City of San Francisco decides how to do it. So, we can advocate for improvements that make it more equitable.
VICTIMS OF A FAILED SYSTEM

Solange Cuba

The system of Coordinated Entry is known to most folks experiencing homelessness in San Francisco. It is a system designed to coordinate and manage the limited resources available to unhoused people in San Francisco, and to prioritize who has access to housing subsidies and who does not. The evaluation is very strict and asks a range of questions about the health, income, and current living situation of those who enroll.

There are people with jobs who work full time, even extra hours and can’t afford to live in the city. The low minimum wage and high cost of living makes it impossible for a family to afford a house in San Francisco. For the past three months, Carlos Wadkins and Jessica Hernandez, two organizers with the Coalition on Homelessness, have been doing outreach to families who live in their RVs near San Francisco State University and organizing assemblies with the community, listening to their stories and offering support in facing those daily problems.

For many of these families, Coordinated Entry did not offer them the security they needed to get out of homelessness. Residents I spoke with repeatedly told me how their RVs felt safer and more permanent than the hope of resources offered through the system. We all know how expensive it is to live in the City, but it is also not fair to have to move from the place where we feel at home just because it is difficult to pay for it.

Marlon says “I bought my RV because nobody can kick me out of my RV. However, if I take one of those subsidies nobody will assure me that I won’t be kicked out after two years and become homeless again. At least my RV is mine and my kids won’t have the chance to end up in a tent in a dangerous neighborhood. Also many subsidies are outside of the city. I want to live here in San Francisco. I have my life, my job. Everything is in San Francisco.”

On the other hand, Jose Luis shared that he and his family have been through the process to get a subsidy through the city but he mentions that he was doing extra hours at work because of that they denied the subsidy for him and his family because he was above the limit to be considered low income. Other folks pointed out that shelters are not the best environment. They prefer to live far from those places where the violence and drug abuse is close to them. Folks in the RVs they just want to have a place where they can park without thinking about the street cleaning or any kind of harassment.

The families got organized and they have been talking together about solutions. The problem goes beyond whether or not there are subsidies, the problem is that the City ensures that aid is strictly limited. Several families pointed out that if they take a subsidy, they cannot work overtime because that will increase their salary and lose them their subsidy. Several families worried that if they were to sell their RV and opt for a subsidy instead, that they could end up in a shelter or on the street if the subsidy was then taken away. One family told us that at least they could feel secure that they own their RV, and that no one could take it away. They see it as a choice to live in a place where their children do not see as much violence.

So the city is condemning us not to be able to choose a better life. The city is showing people that if they take a subsidy, they cannot have two jobs, and they cannot choose to have savings. We know that an income for a family of four is approximately 3,500 dollars. In many cases, only one person works within the family, but if the person works overtime, their salary increases they and could lose their subsidy. Is this fair?

People are eligible for ALL of these discounts if they:
1. Are currently experiencing homelessness in San Francisco, AND
2. Have worked with a Coordinated Entry Access Point in the last 6 months.

Please call or visit a Coordinated Entry Access Point to confirm your eligibility. The full list of Coordinated Entry Access Points is available at the following link: tinyURL.com/CEAccessPoints.

You can also call 415-487-3000 x 7000 to contact a Coordinated Entry Access Point. Please leave a message with your name and phone number if you are not able to speak with a staff member at a Coordinated Entry Access Point immediately.

After confirming your eligibility, you can learn how to apply for these discounts by:
1. Visiting the SFMTA’s Customer Service Center in person at 15 South Van Ness Avenue (Cross street: Market St. and Van Ness Ave, open Monday-Friday from 8 am – 5 pm)
2. Going to SFMTA’s website at SFMTA.com/IncomeDiscounts
3. Calling 311

The SFMTA created these discounts after a few months of dialogue with community organizations in the End Poverty Tows Coalition. Thank you to SFMTA and all of the community organizations who participated in this important dialogue. Thank you also to the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, and the Coordinated Entry Access Points for their collaboration.

For more information, please go to SFMTA.com/IncomeDiscounts or call 311.

These new discounts are in addition to other SFMTA discounts for people experiencing homelessness that include the following:
- A one time, FREE removal of all towing costs
- A one time, FREE removal of all boot costs
- The Access Pass – free Muni for people experiencing homelessness

This past year has been horrible for Tosca, a 58-year-old grandmother born and raised in San Francisco.

She lost her job, her home, and a son to the COVID-19 virus. She was living in her car when it was towed outside the construction site where she worked. Getting towed, booted, and piling up parking citations can create formidable barriers for people like Tosca who are working hard to exit homelessness.

That’s why the SFMTA has created new discounts on parking and transit tickets for San Franciscans experiencing homelessness. San Franciscans can apply for these discounts after they start working with the City’s Coordinated Entry Access Points, community organizations that help people resolve their housing crises.

SFMTA’s new relief programs will provide people experiencing homelessness deep discounts, like:
- A one time only, free removal of all open parking tickets on one vehicle
- Fare evasion ticket dismissal anytime
- Removal of all late penalties on one vehicle’s parking tickets anytime

The families of Tosca and others that I spoke with repeatedly told me that they own their RV, and that at least they could feel secure that they own their RV, and that no one could take it away. They see it as a choice to live in a place where their children do not see as much violence.

The SFMTA’s new relief programs will provide people experiencing homelessness deep discounts, like:
- A one time only, free removal of all open parking tickets on one vehicle
- Fare evasion ticket dismissal anytime
- Removal of all late penalties on one vehicle’s parking tickets anytime

The families of Tosca and others that I spoke with repeatedly told me that they own their RV, and that at least they could feel secure that they own their RV, and that no one could take it away. They see it as a choice to live in a place where their children do not see as much violence.

The SFMTA’s new relief programs will provide people experiencing homelessness deep discounts, like:
- A one time only, free removal of all open parking tickets on one vehicle
- Fare evasion ticket dismissal anytime
- Removal of all late penalties on one vehicle’s parking tickets anytime

The families of Tosca and others that I spoke with repeatedly told me that they own their RV, and that at least they could feel secure that they own their RV, and that no one could take it away. They see it as a choice to live in a place where their children do not see as much violence.

The SFMTA’s new relief programs will provide people experiencing homelessness deep discounts, like:
- A one time only, free removal of all open parking tickets on one vehicle
- Fare evasion ticket dismissal anytime
- Removal of all late penalties on one vehicle’s parking tickets anytime

The families of Tosca and others that I spoke with repeatedly told me that they own their RV, and that at least they could feel secure that they own their RV, and that no one could take it away. They see it as a choice to live in a place where their children do not see as much violence.

The SFMTA’s new relief programs will provide people experiencing homelessness deep discounts, like:
- A one time only, free removal of all open parking tickets on one vehicle
- Fare evasion ticket dismissal anytime
- Removal of all late penalties on one vehicle’s parking tickets anytime

The families of Tosca and others that I spoke with repeatedly told me that they own their RV, and that at least they could feel secure that they own their RV, and that no one could take it away. They see it as a choice to live in a place where their children do not see as much violence.
RALLY TO DEMAND SIP HOTELS STAY OPEN
WHERE: 345 TAYLOR STREET @ NOON
Please join us for a rally on Wednesday, October 20th 2021 at 12:00pm to urge our city to #KeepSIPsOpen!
Why are Shelter-In-Place hotels closing their doors at the height of the pandemic and when thousands are still stranded on the streets? Join unhoused people, SIP tenants, healthcare workers, and neighbors to demand the City #KeepSIPsOpen
ACCESS: This will be an outdoor event with no access to public restrooms.