



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
LONDON BREED, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS
DIRECTOR KATY TANG

December 6, 2022

Supervisor Matt Dorsey
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
1 Dr. Carlton B Goodlett Place City Hall, Room 244
San Francisco, CA 94102

RE: Small Business Commission Response to BOS File No. 220954 Resolution urging City departments to report to the Board of Supervisors with specific information necessary to permit the Board to scope a citywide strategy called 'San Francisco Recovers'

Dear Supervisor Dorsey:

Thank you for your request regarding San Francisco Recovers, and your Resolution calling for a coordinated citywide strategy to address drug overdoses, ensure treatment and support programs for drug addiction, and address drug use and its associated public nuisances.

The Small Business Commission (the Commission) looks forward to working with your office to address these issues in a citywide, comprehensive approach. Small businesses understand how problematic and distressing drug use can be. As stewards of their community, business owners often serve as the liaisons between City agencies and community members in distress.

Over the past year, the Commission has sought to better understand responses to public safety concerns, and how businesses can support effective solutions. In particular, the Commission has reviewed research on the impacts that community groups and Police can have in crime prevention. Studies show that in a city of 100,000 residents, every 10 additional nonprofits focused on crime/community led to a 9% drop in murder, a 6% drop in violent crime and 4% drop in property crime rates.¹ These findings build on previous studies emphasizing the importance of summer job programs and after school recreation. Research also demonstrates the significant impact that community investment (in the built environment, as well as through business improvement districts) can have toward violence reduction.

Based on this research and the firsthand experience of small business owners in San Francisco, the Commission recommends all of the following measures:

Strengthening Partnerships with the Office of Economic and Workforce Development

¹ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0003122417736289>



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As small businesses employ nearly 1 million people in San Francisco, the Commission looks forward to ongoing collaboration with the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) to better connect job seekers with small business employment.

The City should continue to work with and fund organizations that engage at-risk youth, provide opportunities for after school employment and recreation, prevent recidivism, and foster community investment. These all serve as early prevention programs that can have lasting impacts.

OEWD offers several programs that support and bolster entrepreneurs. Research demonstrates that ongoing investments in entrepreneurship programs have significant positive impacts on socially disadvantaged groups.² The City should provide ongoing funding for programs that provide resources to entrepreneurs who otherwise may not have access to training and capital.

Community Ambassadors

One ongoing approach to deter drug use, provide resources to people experiencing drug addiction, and encourage greater foot traffic in our commercial corridors has been through community ambassadors. In addition to providing eyes on the street, the Commission would like to see ambassadors equipped with direct access to law enforcement, should emergencies arise. While there are several forms of community ambassadors in San Francisco, the Commission is particularly interested in ambassador programs that utilize retired police officers as they are already trained and have the experience to respond to issues. This also provides an avenue for addressing the police officer shortage that San Francisco has been experiencing. Additionally, the City currently has multiple types of community ambassador programs administered across a variety of departments. We recommend these community ambassador programs be coordinated by a single agency in collaboration with homeless outreach, behavioral health and public safety services.

Reliable Law Enforcement and City Services

It is imperative that small businesses, their employees, and their customers, feel safe and supported through ongoing, reliable law enforcement. As businesses try to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, foot traffic is vital for attracting customers. Whether it's from a business owner, a community ambassador, or a resident, calls to 911 or 311 should receive quick response. The small business community has repeatedly noted that they are spending growing staff time and resources to cleaning the streets surrounding their storefronts, often multiple times a day. Requests to provide services for individuals in crisis should be a priority and response times must reflect this.

This past summer, the Board of Supervisors approved a law requiring each San Francisco Police Department District Station to work with community to develop a Community Policing Plan on an annual basis. The plans should outline specific strategies, based on community input, that include utilization of

² Lyons, Elizabeth, and Laurina Zhang. 2017. "The Impact of Entrepreneurship Programs on Minorities." *American Economic Review*, 107 (5): 303-07.



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foot and bike patrols. The Commission supported this proposal, and would like to see ongoing progress towards the development, and implementation, of these plans.

Statewide Advocacy

San Francisco is not the only City facing drug abuse and its ramifications. The Commission supports ongoing efforts to enhance utilization of mental health resources, rehabilitation programs, and mental health conservatorships at a statewide level.

The Small Business Commission is deeply invested in addressing this ongoing crisis. We look forward to supporting this initiative, including the expansion of citywide intervention services, ongoing collaboration with community partners, expansion of prevention programs, and robust enforcement.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this feedback and these recommendations. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sharky Laguana", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sharky Laguana
President, Small Business Commission