

Statement on Homelessness Solutions for the San Francisco Bay Area

Introduction

The Beyond Homeless community comprises cross-sector Bay Area leaders that believe we can significantly impact homelessness and provide a model that can be adopted in communities around the country.

Current and decades-long approaches have not yielded the results we need. The recent [performance audit](#) of San Francisco's street teams acknowledges the widespread failures of the city's efforts to combat homelessness, and it calls for better coordination between city agencies in addressing the diverse needs of persons experiencing homelessness. We wholeheartedly concur with this assessment, but we believe coordination and collaboration must include the entire community, including local government, private non-profit organizations, and businesses.

Homelessness is a humanitarian crisis that requires legislation akin to a natural disaster, in which bureaucracy clears the way and every sector of the community comes out of their silos to work together to strategically create a coordinated, comprehensive ecosystem connecting the array of programs and services needed to meet the needs of those experiencing homelessness.

We must shift the narrative away from monolithic models that leave thousands in the streets. Our new coalition is looking at the myriad root causes of homelessness to design and provide a holistic and personalized array of options—from emergency shelter to long-term care—and which will provide the full range of services on-demand, meeting these individual needs.

These policy recommendations advocate for a unified, multifaceted, evidence-based approach to address homelessness in the Bay Area.

Collaboration for Community Care

We advocate for a community-led solution that brings together all sectors under one plan, so that we can create a comprehensive system of care for our neighbors. This radical collaboration also manifests into physical hubs and integrated spokes, creating a single point of entry for identifying treatment, optimizing resources, and resulting in enough housing and services that are personalized to the needs of each individual, resulting in data-based outcomes of cost savings, regained independence, and return of business to the city.

- **Hub-and-Spoke Model of Care:** Creation of independent community-led hub, or community care center, a common point of entry for triage and immediate placement to care with the appropriate services for relief from the street and immediate support in a non bureaucratic way. This is a proven model for freeing resources on fire, police, EMS, hospitals, sanitation. The central hub and supporting spokes constitute a system of integrated providers and communities across the community.
- **Community-led Solutions:** Homelessness cannot be solved by one sector alone. We need the expertise and resources of each sector to create a community-led solution. This includes

service providers, and the wider non-profit community engaged in homelessness, funders, advocacy groups, city and county, police, fire, EMS, hospitals, the business community, the voluntary sector, and philanthropy. Working together, the task force will develop a comprehensive strategic plan, including developing infrastructure and mechanisms for effective resource sharing and utilization, ensuring that available funds, expertise, and services are optimized to support homeless individuals and the community as a whole.

- **Resource Optimization:** Through collaboration, we create mechanisms for effective resource sharing and utilization, ensuring that available funds, expertise, and services are optimized to support homeless individuals. Collaboration between public and private entities to innovate in housing development and supportive services, utilizing the strengths of both sectors to overcome challenges.

Addiction Recovery and Mental Health Support

Homelessness policy must be designed with treatment in mind. Individuals suffering from substance-abuse disorder and mental health problems require compassionate intervention, readily available recovery services, and on-going support. The fentanyl epidemic and consequent overdose crisis have demonstrated that San Francisco's policymakers must promote a culture of recovery.

- **On-demand treatment:** Provide enough beds and services to help people at the moment they decide they are ready.
- **Trauma-informed Care:** Emphasize the principles of trauma-informed care in service delivery, acknowledging the complex needs of homeless individuals and tailoring interventions accordingly. We must build facilities and paths to recovery that are personalized to the experiences of our neighbors recovering from addiction, mental illness, and on their path to independence.
- **Compassionate Intervention:** We cannot leave people strung-out and dying in the streets. Individuals with substance-use disorder need compassionate intervention through, e.g., CARE Courts, Conservatorship, and Jail Diversion programs that partner with law enforcement and the courts. We must give them a choice between treatment, reconnection with family or friends, jail or other conservatorship, or a bus ticket out of the area.
- **Integrated Services:** San Francisco has more than one hundred separate service providers. We must use policies, funding and incentives to encourage integration of services for a coordinated path to success. Since service providers will be wary of collaboration—despite demonstrated proof that collaboration produces superior results, funders to service providers must motivate this collaboration by requiring collaboration/integration and outcomes substantiated by metrics.

Housing Solutions

Our region needs more housing of all types, from emergency shelter, to interim housing, PSH, affordable and market-rate. Housing that not only to end homelessness, but also provides opportunities for lower- and middle-income households. Developers want to build, but bureaucracy makes it nearly impossible. We ask the government to step aside, remove red tape, and allow the private sector to make it easier for the housing supply to meet demand.

- **Zoning and Permit Reform:** Repeal or dramatically reduce zoning rules, with priority on raising density caps, reducing parking and lot-size requirements, and promoting multi-family residential buildings. Replace discretionary permit review with by-right permitting and

eliminate post-entitlement appeals to make the permitting process inexpensive, expeditious, and predictable.

- **Workforce Housing:** Support the police, fire, EMS, teachers, social workers, case managers, public transportation operators, with dedicated housing for them. Give them equity in housing through their work and/or offer subsidies on their rent so they can live in the city that they work for every day.
- **Mobile / Tiny Housing:** Embrace new models of housing that have proven to be faster and cheaper to construct, and allow temporary use of parcels slated for long-term development.
- **Reuse of Existing Stock:** While this group advocates that intentional, trauma-informed design for housing will create the best outcomes, we must look to empty housing units across city hotels and vacant apartments for opportunities to create master-leases for the appropriate groups of people.
- **Align Incentives of Labor and Developers:** Union labor requirements have raised construction costs to the point where affordable housing is not financially viable even with subsidies. Allowing builders to offer equity in exchange for lower labor costs would ease the cost of development and allow workers to enjoy a share in the profits, aligning the incentives of workers and developers.

Summary

These policy recommendations underscore the need for a holistic, collaborative, and community-centered approach to address homelessness in the San Francisco Bay Area. By embracing these guiding principles, we can foster a supportive environment where innovative solutions emerge organically, leading to lasting change for our most vulnerable neighbors. Together, we can redefine the Bay Area's narrative, showcasing a community that embodies compassion, resilience, and successful outcomes for our neighbors both housed and homeless.
