

March 26, 2020

To: Honorable Mayor London Breed
Dr. Grant Colfax, Director of Public Health
Dr. Tomás Aragón, Health Officer of the City & County of San Francisco
Jeff Kosistsky, Manager of Healthy Streets Operations Center
Alaric Degrafinried, Director of Public Works
Abigail Stewart-Kahn, Acting Director of Homelessness and Supportive Housing
Emily Cohen, Homelessness Policy Advisor
Shalini Rana, Health Policy Advisor

Re: COVID-19 Public Health Emergency in the Tenderloin

Every day the Tenderloin Community Benefit District (TLCBD) deploys a dozen hard-working men and women to provide essential sidewalk cleaning and sanitation services. They are part of a larger team of dedicated City and non-profit workers who support cleanliness in the Tenderloin. Our daily first-hand experience and long-standing connections to the community, compel us to call City leaders' attention to an alarming and imminent danger to the Tenderloin that will impact all of San Francisco.

The sidewalks of the Tenderloin are overcrowded, making it impossible for residents and essential workers to maintain safe physical distances. We urge the City to act swiftly to remedy this public health concern during this critical window where we can “flatten the curve.”

According to Public Works data, Friday, March 20th saw a record 194 tents and makeshift shelters in the Tenderloin. This means that approximately 30% of the City's makeshift shelters and tents are located in a densely-packed residential neighborhood that is home to a significant vulnerable population, including many seniors. Tenderloin residents cannot run essential errands – shopping for food, fulfilling prescriptions, doing laundry, walking their dogs – without putting one another at risk of transmission. There are entire blocks of the Tenderloin that our Clean Team cannot access while also complying with the citywide physical distancing guidelines.

Responding to this urgent public health concern will require extraordinary action. This means that in addition to providing temporary hotel stays, we urge the City to immediately provide the people currently sheltering in place in tents on the sidewalks with (1) sanctioned, serviced and organized open spaces where they can set up tents in marked, safely-distanced spots and (2) restrooms, hand-washing stations, garbage collection, and other sanitary and support services, in order to protect our entire public health and health care delivery system. This is going to take bold, innovative thinking, including such

extremes as closing down streets to create space, identifying parking lots and open fields such as the Civic Center lawns as places for people to shelter in place in tents.

We know in this pandemic that each day matters and we need the City leaders to see the conditions that are being created in the Tenderloin and recognize the danger to the entire City's public health system. We call upon City leaders to address this public health crisis in one of SF's most vulnerable neighborhoods without delay.

Yours,



Simon Bertrang
Executive Director

