

1 [Shelter-in-Place Hotels - Maximizing Shelter and Housing Through Federal Emergency
2 Management Agency Reimbursement]

3 **Resolution urging the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing to take**
4 **advantage of 100% reimbursement of costs related to the City’s Shelter-in-Place hotels**
5 **program by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and to expand the City’s**
6 **portfolio of permanent supportive housing.**

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8 WHEREAS, Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, the City and County of San
9 Francisco (“City”) has housed people experiencing homelessness who are considered
10 vulnerable to Covid-19 in over 2,600 hotel rooms across 29 Shelter-in-Place (“SIP”) hotel
11 sites, through the statewide Project Roomkey, whose purpose is to provide non-congregate
12 shelter options for people experiencing homelessness, protect human life, and minimize strain
13 on health care system capacity according to the California Department of Social Services; and

14 WHEREAS, For most of duration of the pandemic, the SIP hotel program, as part of
15 Project Roomkey, was enabled by a 75% reimbursement by the Federal Emergency
16 Management Agency (“FEMA”) of costs associated with housing people experiencing
17 homelessness who are considered vulnerable to Covid-19 in SIP hotels; and

18 WHEREAS, FEMA has defined people who have tested positive for Covid-19, have
19 been exposed to COVID 19, or are “high risk” of health complications (aged 65 up, underlying
20 condition, etc.) as eligible for reimbursable housing in the SIP hotel program; and

21 WHEREAS, In late October 2020, the San Francisco Department of Homelessness
22 and Supportive Housing (“HSH”) announced that due to an unspecified anticipation of FEMA
23 reimbursement being cut off at some point in the future, the City would be winding down the
24 SIP hotel program in phases by June 2021 and arranging exits from homelessness into
25 housing for the more than 2,300 individuals currently housed in SIP hotels; and

1 WHEREAS, Service providers and advocacy organizations criticized this plan as too
2 vague and premature, given that housing exits had not been identified to cover all residents in
3 SIP hotels and there was no immediate threat of FEMA reimbursement being cut off; and

4 WHEREAS, On November 2, 2020, the Youth Commission unanimously voted to
5 support the Board of Supervisors' hearing on the SIP Rehousing and Site Demobilization
6 Plan, on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. 201234, and to include
7 questions and comments highlighting concerns with the aforementioned Plan; and

8 WHEREAS, Specifically, the Youth Commission expressed concerns around the lack
9 of attention given to youth, including Transitional Aged Youth ("TAY") in documents describing
10 the SIP Rehousing Plan, despite the need for TAY to receive attention to their specific needs
11 and situations as part of any housing referral process; and

12 WHEREAS, On December 23, 2020 the Mayor signed an emergency ordinance
13 unanimously approved by the Board of Supervisors on December 15, 2020, on file with the
14 Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. 201328, extending the SIP hotels program, with
15 the first group of residents moving out of SIP hotels into housing by March 2021; and

16 WHEREAS, Under this new plan, unhoused people would fill 60% of vacant SIP hotel
17 rooms as existing residents moved out, with the other rooms being wound down so as to not
18 require the City to move residents out without a rehousing plan should FEMA reimbursement
19 be cut off; and

20 WHEREAS, However, on January 21, 2021, the federal administration announced that
21 FEMA would henceforth reimburse 100% of the cost of housing eligible individuals
22 experiencing homelessness in SIP hotels through the end of the pandemic; and

23 WHEREAS, Other regional FEMA offices in the United States are already reimbursing
24 local governments for the cost of housing more individuals than are strictly considered
25 vulnerable under federal guidelines; and

1 WHEREAS, Housing is a human right, and especially during a pandemic that has
2 disproportionately impacted unhoused and homeless individuals, as well as the Black and
3 Latinx communities which are already overrepresented in the population experiencing
4 homelessness, the need for all residents to have access to safe and stable non-congregate
5 shelter, such as a hotel room, cannot be overstated; and

6 WHEREAS, There are currently over 6,500 people unsheltered in San Francisco, in
7 addition to those sheltered in SIP hotels, Safe Sleep Sites, and other programs; and

8 WHEREAS, The lack of adequate stable housing available for people exiting the
9 program coupled with available FEMA funding currently makes SIP hotels the most viable
10 option to keep people housed, off the streets, and safe amidst the pandemic; and

11 WHEREAS, Alternatives to continuing to expand SIP hotels, such as Safe Sleep Sites,
12 congregate shelters, or organized encampments, can be just as costly as SIP hotels but lack
13 the benefit of federal reimbursement; now, therefore, be it

14 RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission urges the City to immediately take action to
15 maintain and expand the SIP hotels program, and fill vacant hotel rooms at a one for one rate
16 at least, while renegotiating with FEMA authorities to allow for individuals who do not currently
17 qualify for the program to be included; and, be it

18 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission urges HSH to continue to invest
19 in permanent exits from homelessness, especially including expanding the City's portfolio of
20 permanent supportive housing, including permanent supportive housing for TAY, with the
21 objective of providing stable housing to all individuals in the SIP hotel program.

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25 Nora Hylton, Chair
Adopted on February 1, 2021
2020-2021 San Francisco Youth Commission