

File No. 200322

Committee Item No. \_\_\_\_\_

Board Item No. 20

# COMMITTEE/BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Board of Supervisors Meeting

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: March 31, 2020

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Prepared by: Lisa Lew  
Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: March 27, 2020  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1 [Urging Public Health Orders to Prioritize Needs of People Experiencing Homelessness  
2 During the COVID-19 Crisis]

3 **Resolution urging Public Health Orders to prioritize the needs of people experiencing**  
4 **homelessness and to create clear guidelines for homeless people’s health and safety**  
5 **during the COVID-19 crisis.**

6  
7 WHEREAS, As of the latest Point in Time Count, there are 8,035 people experiencing  
8 homelessness in San Francisco, 64% or 5,180 of whom are unsheltered; and

9 WHEREAS, In 2018, the Board of Supervisors in File No. 180864 declared that a  
10 shelter crisis pursuant to Government Code, Section 8698.2 exists in the City and County of  
11 San Francisco, and made findings that the health and safety of unsheltered persons in San  
12 Francisco is threatened by a lack of shelter; and

13 WHEREAS, The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is a growing threat to the health  
14 and safety of all San Franciscans, especially vulnerable populations like older adults and  
15 people who have serious underlying medical conditions; and

16 WHEREAS, According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development, “People  
17 experiencing homelessness often have a higher risk for exposure to communicable diseases  
18 and have little access to health care systems and treatment in their communities;” and

19 WHEREAS, On March 6, 2020, the San Francisco Health Officer issued a Declaration  
20 of Local Health Emergency Regarding Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19), which was  
21 preceded by a March 4, 2020, Proclamation of a State of Emergency issued by Governor  
22 Gavin Newsom and a February 25, 2020, Proclamation by the Mayor Declaring the Existence  
23 of a Local Emergency; and

1           WHEREAS, Few protective measures have been announced for people experiencing  
2 homelessness, both sheltered and unsheltered against the pandemic in San Francisco, and  
3 Health Orders and local officials have given conflicting guidance; and

4           WHEREAS, Shelter at Home is a core public health intervention that, along with  
5 isolation of cases, quarantine of contacts, social distancing, and widespread testing, interrupt  
6 the community spread of the novel coronavirus thereby reducing illness and severe disease,  
7 reducing demands on the health care system, and reducing social and economic disruption  
8 for in San Francisco; and

9           WHEREAS, Ethical principles require us to ensure social equity and racial equity in the  
10 distribution of limited resources and to ensure all San Francisco residents, including persons  
11 experiencing homelessness, and especially seniors and medical fragile, have equal  
12 opportunity to Shelter at Home and to benefit from reduced exposure to novel coronavirus and  
13 COVID-19; and

14           WHEREAS, Shelters provide safety in normal times, however during the current  
15 pandemic any congregate living arrangement increases the risk of transmission; and

16           WHEREAS, At a March 17, 2020, Board of Supervisors meeting, the Director of the  
17 San Francisco Human Services Agency in charge of procuring private rooms stated that “the  
18 Department of Public Health guidance is not to take a homeless individual who is on the street  
19 and put him or her in a hotel room with no services. They would prefer that people on the  
20 street are placed in shelters and congregate areas where they can better monitor them and  
21 bring services onsite;” and

22           WHEREAS, During the same meeting, the San Francisco Health Officer Dr. Tomas  
23 Aragon stated that: “From a disease-transmission perspective, absolutely having your own  
24 room is the best;” and

25

1           WHEREAS, There is an urgent need for clarity on the guidance for homeless  
2 individuals in congregate settings or living unsheltered; and

3           WHEREAS, The latest March 16, 2020, Order of the Health Officer (C19-09)  
4 recognizes that “The virus that causes Coronavirus 2019 Disease (“COVID-19”) is easily  
5 transmitted, especially in group settings, and it is essential that the spread of the virus be  
6 slowed to protect the ability of public and private health care providers to handle the influx of  
7 new patients and safeguard public health and safety;” and

8           WHEREAS, On March 18, 2020, the California Business, Consumer Services and  
9 Housing Agency released Interim Guidance for Homeless Assistance Providers on Novel  
10 Coronavirus (COVID-19) that mirrors the recommendations from the Centers for Disease  
11 Control and Prevention (CDC); and

12           WHEREAS, While local Health Order mandates general Social Distancing  
13 Requirements that include maintaining at least six-foot social distancing, the State Interim  
14 Guidance and CDC recommend that “In general sleeping areas (for those who are not  
15 experiencing respiratory symptoms), ensure that beds/mats are at least 3 feet apart, and  
16 request that all clients sleep head to-toe;” and

17           WHEREAS, As of March 23, 2020, the San Francisco Department of Health  
18 recommendations for “Preventing Spread of COVID-19 among Persons Experiencing  
19 Homelessness” had not been updated since March 11, 2020, and do not contain a  
20 recommended distancing between beds in emergency shelters; and

21           WHEREAS, The local guidelines recommend that emergency shelter providers screen  
22 clients for symptoms: “Screen on intake and daily for: Fever (temperature over 100.4°F or  
23 38°C)” and “Have thermometers available for staff” but does not outline specific screening  
24 protocols; and

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1           WHEREAS, Emergency shelter providers have not been given clear guidance or  
2 support to meet the local, state, or CDC recommended guidelines; and

3           WHEREAS, For example, as of March 22, 2020, SFDPH and HSH had not provided  
4 no-contact thermometers to emergency shelter providers, preventing staff from following  
5 recommended screening guidelines; and

6           WHEREAS, As of March 23, 2020, emergency shelter providers in San Francisco have  
7 been given no direct resources or support to modify the arrangement of beds or cots in  
8 shelters to abide by the new guidelines; and

9           WHEREAS, As of March 23, 2020, the City's largest shelter continues to shelter at  
10 least 340 people, with no reduced capacity since the outbreak; and

11           WHEREAS, As of March 23, 2020, many of the City's largest emergency shelters  
12 continue to shelter dozens of vulnerable seniors and immunocompromised individuals in close  
13 proximity to each other; and

14           WHEREAS, Some congregate emergency shelters are being asked to expand rather  
15 than reduce their capacity; and

16           WHEREAS, The crowded conditions in San Francisco's emergency shelters run  
17 contrary to the City's social distancing requirements; and

18           WHEREAS, Although homeless individuals are specifically exempt from the shelter in  
19 place order, the conditions in San Francisco's emergency shelters run contrary to the principle  
20 behind the mandate to shelter in place to slow the transmission of a communicable disease;  
21 and;

22           WHEREAS, A homeless encampment in San Jose has already experienced an  
23 unsheltered person dying due to coronavirus; and

24  
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1           WHEREAS, The City and County’s current hotel procurement is focused on sites for  
2 those who have COVID-19 but don’t require hospitalization and those at-risk or awaiting test  
3 results and need to quarantine; and

4           WHEREAS, On March 16, 2020, California Governor Gavin Newsom secured 393  
5 rooms across two hotels in Oakland “to get people out of these encampments,” and  
6 announced that additional rooms are anticipated to “find additional hotel beds for people  
7 sleeping outside;” and

8           WHEREAS, The state of California “is immediately procuring 1,309 travel trailers from  
9 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and private vendors to provide quarantine  
10 capacity – moving people out of shelters and into isolation placements, focused on people  
11 with COVID-19 or those demonstrating symptoms;” and

12           WHEREAS, Governor Newsom’s directive to procure travel trailers prioritizes  
13 “protect[ing] healthy people in those facilities and create capacity in the existing shelter  
14 network;” and

15           WHEREAS, San Francisco currently has approximately 30,000 vacant housing units  
16 and more than 40,000 empty hotel rooms; now, therefore, be it

17           RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors (the “Board”) urges the  
18 Public Health Officer to issue a new Order of the Health Officer to mandate that all homeless  
19 individuals in congregate emergency shelters who can self-care be placed in private rooms  
20 immediately; and, be it

21           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board urges the Public Health Officer to issue a new  
22 Order of the Health Officer to mandate strict social distancing requirements in congregate  
23 emergency shelters, including a “shelter-thinning” mandate with strict maximum capacities;  
24 and, be it

25

1 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board urges the Public Health Officer to issue a new  
2 Order of the Health Officer to set screening standards in congregate shelters and protocols for  
3 testing and people exhibiting symptoms; and, be it

4 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board urges the Department of Public Health to  
5 create clear guidelines for homeless people's health and safety during the COVID crisis,  
6 including amending Order C19-07 ("Shelter In Place") issued on March 16, 2020, to clarify  
7 how the shelter-in-place directive applies to homeless individuals; and, be it

8 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board urges the San Francisco Human Services  
9 Agency in partnership with the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing to  
10 urgently procure adequate rooms, estimated at least 1,500, for the primary purpose of getting  
11 people who are currently in congregate emergency shelters into private rooms; and, be it

12 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board urges the San Francisco Human Services  
13 Agency in partnership with the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing to  
14 urgently procure adequate rooms, estimated at least 3,500, for the primary purpose of getting  
15 people who are currently unsheltered on the streets or in encampments in private rooms; and,  
16 be it

17 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board urges the San Francisco Human Services  
18 Agency in partnership with the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing to  
19 urgently procure adequate rooms for the primary purpose of getting people who are being  
20 released from incarceration into private rooms, rather than shelters or encampments; and, be  
21 it

22 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors (the "Board")  
23 urges Governor Newsom to secure rooms in San Francisco for the primary purpose of getting  
24 people who are currently unsheltered on the streets or in encampments inside in private  
25 rooms, similar to his actions in Oakland; and, be it

1           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board urges the San Francisco Human Services  
2 Agency to allow the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing to issue hotel  
3 vouchers to providers of emergency shelter; and, be it

4           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors urges the  
5 Departments of Homelessness and Supportive Housing and Public Health to immediately  
6 support emergency shelter providers to abide by social distancing guidelines; and, be it

7           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board urges the Department of Homelessness and  
8 Supportive Housing to work with emergency shelter providers to identify the maximum  
9 number of clients who can be safely sheltered in each shelter with appropriate social  
10 distancing in each shelter; and, be it

11           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board urges the San Francisco Human Services  
12 Agency and Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing to immediately begin  
13 transporting older shelter clients over the age of 65 into private rooms; and, be it

14           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the Board, upon passage of this Resolution,  
15 shall transmit copies of this resolution to Governor Newsom, Assemblymember Phil Ting,  
16 Assemblymember David Chiu, Senator Scott Wiener; the San Francisco Public Health Officer;  
17 Mayor London N. Breed; and the Directors of the San Francisco Human Service Agency,  
18 Department of Public Health, and Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing.

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# Introduction Form

By a Member of the Board of Supervisors or Mayor

Time stamp  
or meeting date

I hereby submit the following item for introduction (select only one):

- 1. For reference to Committee. (An Ordinance, Resolution, Motion or Charter Amendment).
- 2. Request for next printed agenda Without Reference to Committee.
- 3. Request for hearing on a subject matter at Committee.
- 4. Request for letter beginning : "Supervisor [ ] inquiries"
- 5. City Attorney Request.
- 6. Call File No. [ ] from Committee.
- 7. Budget Analyst request (attached written motion).
- 8. Substitute Legislation File No. [ ]
- 9. Reactivate File No. [ ]
- 10. Topic submitted for Mayoral Appearance before the BOS on [ ]

Please check the appropriate boxes. The proposed legislation should be forwarded to the following:

- Small Business Commission
- Youth Commission
- Ethics Commission
- Planning Commission
- Building Inspection Commission

**Note: For the Imperative Agenda (a resolution not on the printed agenda), use the Imperative Form.**

Sponsor(s):

Haney, Ronen, Preston, Peskin, Walton

Subject:

Urging Public Health Orders to prioritize the needs of people experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 crisis

The text is listed:

Resolution urging Public Health Orders to prioritize the needs of people experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 crisis.

Signature of Sponsoring Supervisor:



For Clerk's Use Only