

**LEGISLATIVE DIGEST**

[Administrative Code - Safe Sleep Program]

**Ordinance amending the Administrative Code to require the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) to establish a Safe Sleeping Sites Program to offer all unsheltered persons a safe place to sleep; to require HSH to submit to the Board of Supervisors a plan to implement the Safe Sleep Program, including a cost estimate of implementation; to provide that the Safe Sleep Program shall not become operative until the Board of Supervisors has approved the appropriation of general funds to finance the program; and affirming the Planning Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act.**

Existing Law

Currently, there is no law requiring the City to operate outdoor sites where unsheltered people may sleep and receive access to services.

Amendments to Current Law

The proposed ordinance, known as the "A Place for All Ordinance," would establish that it is the policy of the City and County of San Francisco ("City") to expeditiously establish and operate a network of temporary Safe Sleep Sites or other temporary shelter facilities where unsheltered individuals may sleep, and would require the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing ("HSH") to establish a Safe Sleep Program ("Program"). However, the establishment of City policy and requirement to operate the Program would not be operative unless and until the Board of Supervisors appropriates funds to finance the Program.

The proposed ordinance would require that within 24 months of the Board's appropriation of funding to operate the Program, HSH would be required to open as many Safe Sleep Sites or other temporary shelter facilities as are necessary to accommodate all of the unsheltered people in San Francisco who may be expected to accept a referral to such sites. HSH would conduct an annual estimate of the number of unsheltered people who may be expected to accept referral to a site to inform the number of Safe Sleep Sites or other shelter facilities that must be opened.

Once opened, Safe Sleep Sites would be required to accommodate no more than 150 unsheltered individuals; prepare and implement a safety plan, intake plan, disability access plan, and exit plan; provide access to clean and regularly-serviced bathrooms, electricity, drinking water, hand washing facilities, garbage services, and showers; provide access to harm reduction services; and implement strategies to protect public health. In addition, HSH would be required to provide private transportation to individuals who need assistance to travel to and from Safe Sleep Sites.

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To inform the Board's consideration of the Program, the proposed ordinance would require HSH to submit to the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors within four months of the effective date a plan ("Implementation Plan") to open enough Safe Sleep Sites to serve 500 unsheltered persons within nine months of submission of the plan, and enough Safe Sleep Sites or other temporary shelter facilities to accommodate all of the unsheltered persons in San Francisco who may be expected to accept such referral. The Implementation Plan must include, among other things, a cost estimate of the Program, as well as an alternative cost estimate of a proposal to operate enough Safe Sleep Sites to serve 500 people; an estimate of the number of people who may be expected to accept referral to such facilities; a description of the services to be provided at a Safe Sleep Site; and a description of any accommodations to be provided. The proposed ordinance would also require the Director of Real Estate to submit to the Board of Supervisors within four months of the effective date a survey of real estate that may be used to operate the Program.

Background Information

This legislative digest reflects amendments to the ordinance made in the Budget and Finance Committee on April 21, 2021. In adopting the amendments, the Committee revised the ordinance to: 1) make clear that the adoption of City policy and duty to operate the Program are contingent on the Board's adoption of legislation appropriating funding to finance the Program; 2) allow the operation of temporary shelter facilities other than Safe Sleep Sites as part of the Program; 3) expand the operational requirements for Safe Sleep Sites; and 4) require HSH and the Director of Real Estate to submit to the Board of Supervisors within four months of the effective date an Implementation Plan and survey of real estate.

As of January 2019, more than 8,035 people in San Francisco were experiencing homelessness. 5,180 of these individuals were unsheltered, 86% of whom were sleeping outdoors in streets, parks or tents.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the City's Shelter in Place response exacerbated street conditions and contributed to an increase in the number of tent encampments citywide, with large numbers of unhoused people seeking shelter in neighborhoods throughout the City. This was at least partly due to a 76% reduction in available shelter beds, and a halt on new admissions to the shelter system in the early days of the pandemic, in compliance with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control requiring social distancing in the City's homeless shelters, thus necessitating a decrease in the shelter capacity. This reduction in shelter capacity is estimated to have forced nearly 1,000 unhoused people to return to City streets. From January to May 2020, the number of tents citywide increased by 71%.

On May 13, 2020, the City established its first sanctioned and supervised safe sleeping site on Fulton Street between the Asian Art Museum and the Main Library, which provides space for safely distanced tents, 24/7 access to bathrooms and handwashing stations, daily meals, and health care services. As of October 14, 2020, the City has opened six safe sleeping sites,

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five of which are active. In total, the active safe sleeping sites provide a place to sleep to approximately 213 unhoused individuals.

Safe sleeping sites are preferred over other types of shelter among unhoused people. According to a survey of 584 unhoused individuals conducted by the Coalition on Homelessness between June 3 and August 30, 2020, 58% of unhoused people surveyed prefer a “legal free campsite” to existing shelters.

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