

December 15, 2022

Mayor London Breed  
1 Dr Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
Room 200  
San Francisco, CA 94102

San Francisco Board of Supervisors  
1 Dr Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
Room 244  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Mayor Breed and Members of the Board of Supervisors,

The Our City, Our Home (OCO) Oversight Committee is pleased to provide the attached Needs Assessment in fulfillment of our responsibilities defined in the Business and Tax Regulations Code Section 2810(e)(2)(B). The report describes the characteristics and needs of people experiencing homelessness in San Francisco, examines the scale of resources available, and identifies root causes and pathways out of homelessness.

The committee has worked diligently over the past two years conducting listening sessions with over one thousand stakeholders, coordinating with multiple city departments, analyzing data and the service landscape in our city, the State of California, and our nation. We feel strongly that what we have highlighted here reflects the steps needed to move the needle on homelessness in San Francisco. The urgency of taking intentional action steps is reflected on our streets every day. We look forward to continuing our thought partnership for the improved future of our beloved city, families, and children.

The OCO Oversight Committee strongly recommends the City prioritize the following actions based on the striking findings identified through the Needs Assessment:

#### **Focus on Policies and Practices that Achieve Equitable Outcomes Based on Race and Ethnicity**

~~Foremost, our analysis shows that racial and economic inequality are root causes of homelessness. Communities of color Black San Franciscans and other communities of color~~ are overrepresented across all types of homelessness, from unsheltered individuals to doubled up families. This flies in the face of San Francisco's progressive values, and the data speak louder than words. ~~Foremost, our analysis shows that racial and economic inequality are root causes of homelessness.~~ Racism is a structural barrier to housing and economic security, one which demands urgent attention and collaboration across sectors and initiatives.

The ~~Our City, Our Home~~ OCO Oversight Committee shares interests and concerns with San Francisco's African American Reparations Advisory Committee and the Office of Racial Equity, as well as City departments and other public and private entities. We look forward to working with them to address racial disparities, particularly as they impact housing and homelessness. We will continue to focus on racial equity in our community engagement, oversight, and spending recommendations work. The City should ensure all policies and practices are creating measurable improvements for our unhoused Black and Brown neighbors.

### Designing Our System to Meet Diverse Needs

Our assessment shows that people experiencing homelessness have diverse needs. For some, permanent supportive housing (PSH) is a necessary and lifesaving intervention; others thrive in affordable housing with less intensive services or with either long-term or temporary rental subsidies. What is the right balance of these resources?

City departments are engaged in complex planning activities such as the system modeling and strategic planning taking place in the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH), the bed optimization study and the implementation of Mental Health San Francisco Key Performance Indicators in the Department of Public Health (DPH), and the finalization of the Housing Element in the Planning Department. We look forward to continuing collaboration with City departments as they work to determine the numbers of shelter units, treatment beds, individual and family affordable housing units, PSH units, rental subsidies, and the scope of services that must be funded in order to meet our community's needs. The OCOH Oversight Committee's Needs Assessment contributes to these efforts by mapping the scale and scope of needs in the community. It is our hope that departments will use our findings in their planning efforts.

### Continue to Fully Fund Programs Significant Having an Impact Based on New Investment Successful Interventions

~~Current resources from safety net supports to housing are not available at the scale the homelessness crisis demands.~~ OCOH funding has already had significant impact—expanding shelter and crisis interventions by 15%, increasing PSH by 15%, making rapid re-housing available to 24% more households, adding 6% more treatment beds to the behavioral health system, and adding nearly three times the number of subsidies for families in overcrowded living situations. Still, the current best estimate is that as many as 9,000 households will become homeless in San Francisco over the course of the year. Use of General Fund and other funding sources will be necessary to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness that are outlined in the Needs Assessment. Even as the City projects decreased OCOH Fund revenue in future years, and economic uncertainty looms, we urge you to prioritize full and increased funding to address the crisis of homelessness in our city.

### Promote Effective Coordination to Overcome Critical Challenges and Opportunities

The high cost and protracted process of housing development in our community is a significant barrier to solving homelessness. Consequently, the Committee applauds the City's determination, as stated in the current draft Housing Element, "to continue and expand streamlined review of all permanently affordable housing, reduce the cost of construction in regulatory review processes, and rely on innovative materials to make more efficient use of limited public funds." We urge you ~~to~~ leadership in addressing these concerns through thoughtful political leadership.

No single City department or community organization addresses the entire ~~Our City, Our Home~~ OCOH population, which includes sheltered and unsheltered people as well as families living in single room occupancy hotels, victims of domestic violence, couch-surfing youth, doubled up families, and households at imminent risk of losing their housing. Additionally, OCOH Funds cannot solve homelessness in its entirety. Coordination between City departments and with nonprofit providers is essential to ending homelessness in San Francisco. ~~A r~~Recent and encouraging examples of coordinated effort ~~include is~~ the City-Wide Homeless Strategic Plan being spearheaded by ~~the~~ Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing HSH, and Likewise, we support efforts to ~~right-size~~ contracting contracts with community-based providers, with attention especially to staffing, pay-equity, operations, and maintenance. This kind of coordination and collaboration is essential and

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must be expanded. As an example, expanding contracting with BIPOC lead organizations presents one opportunity for greater coordination and collaboration. We ask for your leadership in identifying all possible funding sources and promoting effective collaboration in the service of ending homelessness.

On behalf of the OCOH Oversight Committee and with gratitude and respect we provide the Needs Assessment of homelessness and homeless populations in San Francisco.

Sincerely,

Shanell Williams  
Chair

Julia D'Antonio  
Vice Chair

Julie Leadbetter  
Data Officer

C: Nina Catalano  
Michelle Cunningham-Denning  
Jennifer Friedenbach  
Ken Reggio