

City and County of
San Francisco



Board of Supervisors,
President

AARON PESKIN
佩斯金市參事

May 22, 2023

Dear Madam Mayor,

Thank you for participating in tomorrow's Question Time at the Board of Supervisors special meeting. I wanted to further elaborate on my intended line of questioning so that you would have an opportunity to prepare for a productive conversation.

While San Francisco remains one of the safest big cities in America, I know you share my concerns that the brazen drug dealing and deteriorating street conditions have exacerbated a humanitarian crisis on our streets. This is not a new problem, but it is one that has become so visible that many San Franciscans do not feel safe.

If this is a crisis, as has oft been stated, then the City needs to treat it as a crisis, and oversee coordination of Executive Branch Departments with regional, state and federal agencies.

My question to you, since you have rightly called the open-air drug dealing and surge in overdose deaths a "crisis," is:

Will you now, as we do in any major emergency, stand up a sustained Emergency Operations Center that will coordinate daily all of the many agencies and departments that can address this crisis – including the San Francisco Police Department, the District Attorney's Office, the San Francisco County Sheriff's Office, the California Highway Patrol, the administrative staff of the National Guard, SF Park Rangers, BART Police, UC Police, Federal Protective Services, Adult Probation, the SF Health Department, the Department of Public Works, Child Protective Services, the Superior Courts, and all other appropriate agencies – and direct them to *shut down* all public drug dealing in open air sites such as in and around this Plaza in the next 90 days?

We cannot continue to blame the lack of enforcement on funding. I am proud that this Board of Supervisors has approved a SF Police Department budget that has increased the baseline by more than \$50 million in FY 2023, which with an additional \$25 million supplemental appropriation for overtime staffing, totals almost \$740 million – an unprecedented amount of investment for any urban police department. How is SFPD being engaged in the most impactful way on the ground and sharing information?

We have long had an SFPD narcotics team, and presumably they have mapped out critical information. What data collection and analysis has already been evaluated to inform and implement an emergency plan? How many drug dealers are there? Who are the top drug ring kingpins? How many of them are known to law enforcement? Are any of them victims of human trafficking or coercion and eligible for diversion programs?

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What coordination is happening on a daily basis, and how do we target our efforts most effectively, including in the evenings?

After our call for support to Governor Newsom and Speaker Emerita Pelosi, it has been heartening to see some increased presence of patrols in Mid-Market – but my continued conversations with everyone from the CHP to BART Police and SFPD continue to highlight a lack of coordination without a centralized operations center to oversee this effort.

As for those languishing on our city streets, where is the coordination between our city agencies to ensure that our massive investment into existing resources is maximized and that a smooth continuum of care is established? Why do permanent supportive housing beds, with access to wrap-around services, continue to sit empty? Why does it require multiple intake interviews, paperwork and bureaucratic hurdles to obtain substance abuse treatment? Why are some of the only options for drug treatment, workforce development and transitional housing through our criminal justice system?

I believe that, while these have long been vexing issues, we can address them by working together cooperatively. Given the legislative branch's central role providing oversight and accountability through the unlimited power of inquiry imbued by the City Charter, I bring you these questions in the spirit of eliciting a clear and organized plan that will move our city forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Aaron Peskin".

Aaron Peskin

CC: Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Sean Elsbernd, Mayor's Chief of Staff
William Scott, Chief of Police
Paul Miyamoto, San Francisco Sheriff
Kevin Franklin, BART Interim Chief of Police