Tenderloin Community Council:
Strategic Approach to Addressing Harms Related to Open Air Drug Market

PRESENTED BY
SAM DENNISON
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Purpose:

• Provide a framework for an actionable plan for the short-term & long-term
TL Community Council

- Formed in Spring 2019
- In-person meetings 20-25 people
- TL residents, business owners, non-profit
- Each mtg 30% to 60% POC
- Long term residents--many in the TL for 10+ years.
TL Community Council Purpose

• Honest talk among the multiple communities of the TL
• Identify harms related to open-air drug sales and use
• Review, evaluate, and advocate for effective ways to address those harms
TL Community Council

- Participated in City Hearings April 2019
- Negotiated for broader representation on this Task Force
- Negotiated framing the issue as addressing harms and not just sales
URGENCY TODAY

- INCREASES IN VIOLENCE
- INCREASES IN OVERDOSES
- COVID HAS CHANGED WHO IS ON THE STREETS AND FOR WHAT PURPOSE
- LOSS OF LIFE, LOSS OF BUSINESS, LOSS OF STABILITY
Assumptions

• The drug market has existed for decades and impact is getting worse
• The TL is a traumatized community
• These conditions didn’t occur overnight, are deeply entrenched, & require a strategic approach/plan
Further Assumptions

- Law enforcement & treatment are equally important
- Participants in the market must be engaged
- Success should be measured objectively and subjectively
- This problem can’t be dealt with in isolation
- Chronic, wide-spread poverty is a driver
HARMS & CONCERNS RELATED TO OPEN AIR DRUG MARKET

INTERFERENCE WITH DAILY LIFE
FOR MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY INCLUDING
YOUTH, BUSINESSES, FAMILIES,
PEOPLE IN RECOVERY
ERRODED COMMUNITY IMAGE

VIOLENCE
IMPLIED OR
THREATENED
ACTUAL
PROPERTY LOSS
INCLUDING THEFT AND
GRAFFITTI

OPEN AIR
DRUG MARKET

UPPREDICTABLE
BEHAVIORS
RELATED TO USING
& BEING HIGH
RELATED TO
WITHDRAWL
MENTAL HEALTH
ISSUES

DETERIORATING PUBLIC
HEALTH
VISIBLE: OVERDOSES, VISIBLE
WOUNDS
INVISIBLE: HEP C, etc.

DETERIORATING PUBLIC
HEALTH

OPEN AIR
DRUG MARKET

VIOLENCE
IMPLIED OR
THREATENED
ACTUAL
PROPERTY LOSS
INCLUDING THEFT AND
GRAFFITTI
POVERTY & HOMELESSNESS

Harms & Concerns Related High Rates of Poverty

Interference with Daily Life
For members of the community including lack of adequate resources & opportunity, congested sidewalks, instability, lack of economic

Violence
Implied or threatened, actual sexual violence, partner violence

Property Loss
Including theft and graffiti

Unpredictable Behaviors
Related to trauma, related to untreated mental health concerns

Deteriorating Public Health
Visible: obesity or malnurishment, mobility issues
Invisible: shortened life expectancy

Poverty Homelessness
Race and Racism

• Chronic under investment and over enforcement have created on-going, chaotic conditions in the Tenderloin. These conditions are, in large part, the result of historical racisim and on-going structural racism. All Tenderloin residents feel the impact of under-resourcing, but Black and Latinx people are most deeply impacted by generational poverty and disproportionate arrest and incarceration.

• Any initiative to address the open-air drug market will be much more effective if it is accompanied by a public process that accounts for the impact of racism on access to housing, employment, healthcare, family stability, and human dignity. Such a process must include and be driven by the people who have been most harmed by historical racism.

• If we want a process of accountability and repair to be effective in changing conditions in the neighborhood, it will have to include a commitment to economic repair and investment for addressing the historical harms of racism. Without economic investment in the people who are most engaged/impacted by the drug market, reduction or elimination of the open-air market will remain very difficult.
Recommendation:
A plan that is

• Actionable & Effective
• Multifaceted
• Builds on existing resources
• Accountable to diverse communities within the TL
Trauma Informed Systems
- Trauma changes behavior
- Interventions built on trauma informed systems maximize success

Harm Reduction
- When it’s not possible to eliminate harmful behavior, strategies for reducing harm set the stage for meaningful change

Restorative Justice
- Many harms caused by the drug market aren’t adequately addressed by the court system.
- Unaddressed harms lead to cycles of violence and drug use

Action Plan & Resources
- Leading to short-term and long-term improvements

Police Engagement
- Policing for community stability first and drug market disruption second:
  1. Predictable police presence,
  2. Security from violence,
  3. Community & service collaboration.

Anti-violence Programming
- Cycles of violence fuel the drug market.
- Intervening before violence occurs & after it occurs is necessary
Next Steps
Coordinating Existing Resources

SHORT TERM 3 TO 6 MONTHS

Coordinate existing community based services/resources & law Enforcement

Create strategy & coordinating body
• Community stakeholders (residents, business, etc.)
• Community based orgs
• City agencies (enforcement, health, etc.)

Identify short-term, high priority goals
• By location
• For maximum improvement

Improve communication & coordination with enforcement.

Map & align existing harm reduction, outreach, safety, cleaning services.

View efforts as neighborhood wide & build on local resources.

Build on COVID related initiatives to maximize short-term outcomes
• Safe Streets
• TL Plan
• HSOC & HOT resources
Next Steps
What Does Short-term action look like?

Coordinated Efforts

• Support existing calming activities (police, HSOC, HOT, etc.)

• Prepare other resources for immediate activation to maintain calm through presence and services to follow on calming activities

• Monitor the area for upticks in activity

• Respond to upticks with appropriate resources (enforcement, HSOC, etc.)

Supporting Existing Successes

• At safe sleeping sites and existing encampments focus efforts on maintaining and enhancing safety and calm

• Use outreach teams with credibility to monitor and address problems

• Enhance harm reduction, street medicine and other services
Next Steps
Build Community Based/Supported Long-term Plan

SHORT TERM  6 TO 12 MONTHS

Monitor & support coordinated existing initiatives

Strategy & Coordinating Body
• Define 3 to 5 year goals
• Identify & advocate for resources

Produce strategic plan incorporating Task Force priorities & strategies

Use short-term efforts to build strategies to develop long term goals and plans

• Coordinate with Supervisor’s office on funding and resource strategies
• Coordinate non-profit, City (DPH, HSH, etc.), and enforcement agencies/resources
• Design evaluation and accountability