

Small Business

Small businesses are the heartbeat of San Francisco, both culturally and economically, and they are hurting. Portola small businesses have the [second highest number of reported commercial burglaries](#) in all of San Francisco, trailing only the Tenderloin. Meanwhile, crimes in D9 are 17% less likely to end in arrest or citation than in neighboring D8 despite being served by the same station. [Over 77% of D9's small business owners](#) want increased SFPD foot and bike patrols but have instead faced an effort to defund those services in addition to the SFPD staffing crisis. The foot traffic our small businesses need to survive will only come if customers feel safe to shop. You can read my full Public Safety Plan [here](#).

City Hall's status quo is failing D9 small businesses. In my hundreds of conversations with D9's small business owners, their most pressing concerns have resulted in my small business agenda:

Theft/Graffiti/Vandalism have real financial impacts on the small businesses they target and if continued unchecked could result in food deserts in D9 with grocery stores closing. Our current strategy of graffiti abatement which simply provides new blank canvasses for taggers and penalizes small businesses for the City's inability to prevent graffiti in the first place has failed.

- **Enforce graffiti and tagging laws** and fully staff the graffiti team at SFPD which has been deprioritized due to the staffing crisis.
- **Increase accountability for theft** by enforcing the law and pursue misdemeanor charges against those who shoplift below the \$950 threshold for felony theft. The City should also implement a cumulative approach where repeated offenses can lead to charges once the total value exceeds the threshold to hold offenders accountable and deter repeat offenses. I will support the City Attorney in pursuing civil cases and stay away orders against repeat offenders
- **Increase DPW staffing** of the graffiti abatement program which currently only has 6 abatement staff for the entire City and increase awareness of the free graffiti abatement program.
- **Implement community service** for first time graffiti and vandalism offenders as an opportunity for restorative justice with increases in accountability for each future offense. I will support the City Attorney in pursuing civil cases and stay away orders against repeat offenders.
- **Only fine the owners of vacant storefronts** for blight and graffiti. Small business owners are already fighting graffiti by being vibrant members of our communities and should not be punished for the City's failure to enforce the law.
- **Ensure evidence is acted on** by SFPD when provided by small business owners. Every small business owner I talk with has said they have attempted to provide conclusive video evidence of a crime only to be refused by SFPD. I will ensure processes are in place where small businesses can submit evidence and ensure it is reviewed and acted upon.

Safe and Clean Streets are essential to our small businesses thriving and too many are facing intolerable and unsanitary conditions at their entrances which their businesses would be fined or closed for if located a few feet further inside their business.

- **Ensure a responsive, accountable, and fully staffed SFPD** so we can shift to a community policing model, increasing foot and bike patrols supported by over 77% of D9's small businesses.
- **Better coordinate DPW** staff to have regular, consistent, and responsive street and sidewalk cleaning.
- **Support the City Attorney's effort** to allow the City to provide housing and relocation services to those with encampments by storefronts.

- **Pair SFPD funding to mental health crisis funding** to ensure crisis outreach and mental health are seen as equally essential to addressing our homelessness and mental health crises.
- **Increase the placement of trash cans and prosecute illegal dumping** in D9's busiest commercial corridors such as San Bruno Avenue, Cortland Avenue, Mission Street and Valencia Street to reduce litter and waste in our streets.

Clear and Consistent Permitting, small businesses are already at the whim of many factors out of their control when pursuing their dream, City Hall should not be one of those factors. We've seen this dysfunction in D9 with Bissap Baobab having to endure a nightmarish process simply to secure a liquor license as a restaurant on the main commercial strip of the Mission including an **8 hour hearing**. We need to give our small business owners as much clarity as possible and remove the ability of a single person objecting to side-track their dreams and open.

- Enact parallel review of both the planning and permitting processes to expedite the timeline a small business can open.
- Make permitting fully ministerial for code-compliant projects to prevent a single objection from holding up a small business' opening for months or longer.
- Finally move our DPW, DBI, and Planning permitting system fully online and get rid of our current system that enables corruption through an opaque process that favors those who can afford to pay well-connected permit expeditors.

Vacant Storefronts can contribute to a sense of blight and neglect in a neighborhood and have a direct economic impact on the community. They represent missed opportunities for local businesses to generate revenue, create jobs, and contribute to the local economy.

- Establish additional financial incentives, grants, and tax breaks to encourage property owners and entrepreneurs to occupy vacant storefronts. Create programs that support small businesses, including start-up resources, mentorship, and access to affordable financing.
- Streamline regulations with a comprehensive review of zoning and permitting regulations to ensure they support the adaptive reuse of vacant storefronts and simplify processes for acquiring permits.