

NOVEMBER 1, 2024 | BI-MONTHLY | STREETSHEET.ORG

INDEPENDENTLY PUBLISHED BY THE COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS SINCE 1989

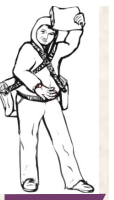


MINIMUM SUGGESTED DONATION TWO DOLLARS.

STREET SHEET IS SOLD BY HOMELESS AND LOW-INCOME VENDORS WHO KEEP 100% OF THE PROCEEDS.

STREET SHEET IS READER SUPPORTED, ADVERTISING FREE, AND AIMS TO LIFT UP THE VOICES OF THOSE LIVING IN POVERTY IN SAN FRANCISCO.

# STREET SHEET



CURRENTLY ALSO DISTRIBUTED BY HOMEWARD STREET JOURNAL VENDORS IN SACRAMENTO

# SOON



*Art. Nov '22* 13/16

# SUPERVISOR TO INTRODUCE NEW LEGISLATION TO EXTEND RAPID REHOUSING SUPPORT FOR HOMELESS FAMILIES

In response to the alarming rise in family homelessness, Supervisor Hilary Ronen, with support from the Coalition on Homelessness, introduced new legislation at the San Francisco Board of Supervisors meeting on October 22 to extend critical housing subsidies for families in need. The proposed ordinance amends the City’s Administrative Code to provide up to five years of rapid rehousing assistance for eligible families, addressing the increasing number of families at risk of returning to homelessness due to short-term housing subsidies.

Since 2022, the number of families experiencing homelessness in San Francisco has doubled, with over 500 families currently on the shelter waitlist. Many were able to exit homelessness through rental housing subsidies only to find themselves back on the streets once the subsidies expire. This legislation aims to stop this vicious cycle by extending the support families need to achieve long-term stability.

In the last two years, the number of unhoused families jumped from 205 to 405, according to the most recent point-in-time count from the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing.

“This legislation is crucial to preventing families from falling back into homelessness after their initial housing support ends,” said Mercedes Bullock, human rights organizer at Coalition on Homelessness. “We need to ensure that the City’s rapid rehousing programs offer adequate time and assistance to families facing the most severe housing challenges.”

At the meeting, Ronen pointed out the time lag between families receiving subsidies and being housed, often leaving just a short amount of time when they have a roof over their heads until their subsidies lapse.

“We have to stop the revolving door of poor families in San Francisco going from shelter to shelter to finally being housed again only to return to shelters again,” Ronen said.

The ordinance will allow the City to assess a family’s circumstances and, when necessary, extend rental subsidies for up to five years. Currently, many programs offer subsidies for only one to three years, but some families are unable to become financially self-sustaining within that time frame. For example, families receiving CalWORKs subsidies through the Human Services Agency (HSA) are limited to a one- to three-year support window, which can force families back into homelessness.

A key part of the ordinance requires the City’s Homelessness Oversight Commission to hold annual hearings and issue reports on the program’s implementation. These reports will analyze the effectiveness of extended subsidies in preventing returns to homelessness and offer recommendations for improvements.

**“This legislation gives San Francisco the tools to stabilize more families and keep them from facing the trauma of homelessness again,” Coalition director Jennifer Friedenbach said.**

Data from local family service providers underscore the importance of extending subsidies. Compass Family Services reported that 24% of families in their two-year program exited into unstable living conditions, while only 4% of families in their three-year program experienced similar instability.

This legislation acknowledges the challenges of securing landlords willing to rent to tenants with subsidies and aims to prevent premature evictions, allowing the City to maintain and expand landlord relationships, ultimately preserving more housing options for low-income families. By setting a bold new policy, this ordinance prioritizes family stability and takes a critical step toward breaking the cycle of poverty in San Francisco’s homelessness response.

**HELP KEEP STREET SHEET IN PRINT!**



**SCAN ME**

[coalition.networkforgood.com](http://coalition.networkforgood.com)

## COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS

The STREET SHEET is a project of the Coalition on Homelessness. The Coalition on Homelessness organizes poor and homeless people to create permanent solutions to poverty while protecting the civil and human rights of those forced to remain on the streets.

Our organizing is based on extensive peer outreach, and the information gathered directly drives the Coalition’s work. We do not bring our agenda to poor and homeless people: they bring their agendas to us.

## STREET SHEET STAFF

The Street Sheet is a publication of the Coalition on Homelessness. Some stories are collectively written, and some stories have individual authors. But whoever sets fingers to keyboard, all stories are formed by the collective work of dozens of volunteers, and our outreach to hundreds of homeless people.

Editor: TJ Johnston  
Artistic Spellcaster: Quiver Watts  
Cover Art: Erik Ruin/Just Seeds

Jack Bragen, Felicia Mello, Stella Kalinina, CalMatters, Jordan Davis, Isidore Mika Székely Manes-Dragan, Sophie Ramona

### VOLUNTEER WITH US!

- PHOTOGRAPHERS
- VIDEOGRAPHERS
- TRANSLATORS
- COMIC ARTISTS
- NEWSPAPER LAYOUT
- WEBSITE
- MAINTENANCE
- GRAPHIC DESIGNERS
- INTERNS
- WRITERS
- COPYEDITORS

### DONATE EQUIPMENT!

- LAPTOPS
- DIGITAL CAMERAS
- AUDIO RECORDERS
- SOUND EQUIPMENT

### CONTACT:

[TJJOHNSTON@COHSF.ORG](mailto:TJJOHNSTON@COHSF.ORG)

***Street Sheet is published and distributed on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples. We recognize and honor the ongoing presence and stewardship of the original people of this land. We recognize that homelessness can not truly be ended until this land is returned to its original stewards.***

## ORGANIZE WITH US

### HOUSING JUSTICE WORKING GROUP TUESDAYS @ NOON

The Housing Justice Workgroup is working toward a San Francisco in which every human being can have and maintain decent, habitable, safe, and secure housing. This meeting is in English and Spanish and open to everyone! Email [mcarrera@cohsf.org](mailto:mcarrera@cohsf.org) to get involved!

### HUMAN RIGHTS WORKING GROUP WEDNESDAYS @12:30

The Human Rights Workgroup has been doing some serious heavy lifting on these issues: conducting direct research, outreach to people on the streets, running multiple campaigns, developing policy, staging direct actions, capturing media attention, and so much more. All those down for the cause are welcome to join! Email [lpierce@cohsf.org](mailto:lpierce@cohsf.org)

**EVERYONE IS INVITED TO JOIN OUR WORKING GROUP MEETINGS!**

# CALIFORNIA PLEDGED \$500 MILLION TO HELP TENANTS PRESERVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING. THEY DIDN'T GET A DIME.

FELICIA MELLO/CALMATTERS

*California allotted half a billion dollars to help community land trusts across the state. But budget cuts and bureaucracy have land trust advocates back where they were in 2020: seeking state aid to preserve affordable housing.*

Luke Johnson and his neighbors thought they had found the perfect solution to avoid being displaced from their Silver Lake, Los Angeles fourplex: A state program was offering \$500 million to help tenants, community land trusts and other affordable housing developers buy buildings at risk of foreclosure.

With their longtime landlords set on selling the building, Johnson and his neighbors persuaded them to sell to a community land trust that pledged to keep rents low.

But six months later, the state program has vanished after failing for three years to give out any of the grants and loans it promised. The deal with their landlords has collapsed. That leaves Johnson, 85, and his husband unsure whether they'll be able to stay in the rent-controlled two-bedroom apartment where Johnson has lived for nearly half a century.

The sudden disappearance of half a billion dollars of state money meant to help community land trusts has left some housing advocates questioning California's commitment to preserving existing affordable housing, a strategy that's less flashy than building new units but can also be less expensive.

"It's a struggle for us and I'm sure for a lot of other people who counted on getting that grant and didn't get it," Johnson said.

State lawmakers created the Foreclosure Intervention Housing Preservation Program in 2021. It was a watershed moment for community land trusts, nonprofits that purchase land and preserve it as permanently affordable housing by renting or selling the buildings on it to low- and moderate-income residents. Residents then manage the property cooperatively.

While community land trusts have tripled in number in California over the last decade, springing up everywhere from coastal and inland cities to tribal lands and the Mexican border, they often struggle to raise enough money to compete

with private developers. Access to a dedicated pot of state money was poised to be a game-changer for both the trusts and cities seeking to prevent displacement of low-income residents, said San Francisco Supervisor Dean Preston.

"We had hoped the state would help San Francisco and other cities that want to really ramp up these programs," Preston said. "(Community land trusts are) a very effective, quick and permanent way of creating truly affordable housing with resident control."

The state planned to dole out the half-billion dollars in loans and grants over five years, funding purchases of financially distressed buildings of up to 25 units.

Three years in, however, the state agency charged with developing the program, the Department of Housing and Community Development, had yet to give out a single dollar.

This spring, with California facing a projected \$56 billion budget deficit, some lawmakers began raising concerns.

"It's the kind of thing that you look at and it makes your head explode," Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel, who chaired the Assembly's budget committee, said in an interview. "This is something of importance to everyone in California, and yet we're sitting here with this tremendous allocation of resources and making zero progress. That is totally unacceptable."

Lawmakers scrapped the program in June.

It wasn't the only state spending on the chopping block this year. But community land trust advocates complained that the state's slow rollout undermined the program before it could get started.

"We got into the 2021 budget expecting the funds would be available within a year or year and a half," said Leo Goldberg, co-director of policy at the California Community Land Trust Network. "If the program had been rolled out, there would have been successes to point to that would have made it easier to defend."

### THREE YEARS IN, ZERO PROGRESS

Johnson said he immediately felt at home in the diverse Silver Lake of the 1980s, with its vibrant and organized LGBTQ community, Latino families socializing on porches and

Russian immigrants filling Orthodox churches. Over the last 40 years, he's watched the neighborhood gentrify as hipster professionals moved in, bringing their cash with them.

Johnson's now-husband, Osbey, came to house-sit in 1990 and never left. They and their neighbors, friends who have all lived in the building for at least a decade, hosted community events in the complex's back garden.

When their landlord signed a contract to sell the building to a for-profit developer, they feared displacement. Average rent for a two-bedroom in Silver Lake had ballooned over the years to nearly \$4,000 per month, according to Zumper.com, about four times what Johnson and his husband currently pay.

After he and his neighbors, one of whom had experience organizing with the Los Angeles Tenants Union, launched a phone and email campaign, the private developer backed away from the deal and their landlord agreed earlier this year to sell to the Beverly-Vermont Community Land Trust, giving the trust until this month to raise the \$1.5 million purchase price.

That should have worked: California was expected to start distributing the affordable housing preservation funds this year. Land trusts were already having initial conversations with the fund manager selected to run the program about projects that would be eligible.

But by July the expected state support was off the table. The clock was ticking to find a backup plan. The residents started an online crowdfunding campaign and threw a backyard fundraiser with barbecue and a drag show. The land trust pitched the project to small banks and credit unions.

Even if the trust got approved for a loan, the interest on a private loan would likely be much higher than using state money, foiling the tenants' plans to keep their rent affordable. Kasey Ventura, an organizer with the land trust who had negotiated similar deals, estimated rents on the units would need to rise to at least \$2,000 a month — still below market rate, but a significant jump.

The loss of the state fund was a "huge setback" for not only the Silver Lake tenants, but community land trusts across the Los Angeles area who had been banking on the support, Ventura said.

"We have dozens, if not hundreds of units that are in this bubble now of 'How do we do this?'" Ventura said.

### WHY DID THIS PROGRAM TAKE SO LONG TO ROLL OUT?

New government programs often take months, if not years, to roll out. But even by state standards, the glacial pace of the Department of Housing and Community Development's launch of the housing preservation program stands out.

The state housing department declined to make anyone available for an interview for this story. But in an emailed statement, spokesperson Alicia Murillo said the unprecedented nature of the housing preservation program created a steep learning curve for agency staff.

The program "was very different from any other program HCD manages, both in terms of the types of projects (small-scale acquisition/rehab vs. our usual larger-scale new construction) and in terms of the mechanism for fund disbursement (using external nonprofit lenders rather than disbursing funds ourselves)," Murillo wrote.

Another state effort to create housing stability for low- to moderate-income Californians, created at the same time, launched much more quickly: Lawmakers authorized California Dream for All, a downpayment assistance plan that covers up to 20% of a home's cost for certain first-time homebuyers, with the same 2021 budget bill that created the housing preservation program.

Less than two years later, the California Housing Finance Agency, a different arm of the state bureaucracy, had already given out all \$288 million in initial Dream for All funding to eager homebuyers. This year, the agency overhauled Dream for All to serve a more diverse set of buyers; the revamped program survived state budget cuts and awarded an additional \$250 million in no-interest loans.

By contrast, the state housing department took a year to draft guidelines for the housing preservation program, then another eight months to turn those into final rules. The plan called for a nonprofit fund manager to run the program, but the state didn't award that contract until July of 2023, two years into the program's five-year timeline.

That's unusual, said Ben Metcalf, managing director of UC Berkeley's

# WOOD STREET RESIDENTS T ON BIKES TO MEET WITH ST LAWMAKERS

ISIDORE MIKA SZÉKELY MANES-D

For the third straight year, a group of former Wood Street encampment residents bicycled some 80 miles from Oakland to Sacramento in a show of solidarity with unhoused Californians.

In their annual caravan to the state capitol, the Wood Street Commons residents rode for three days in October to lobby their lawmakers.

Residents of the commons, who were swept by state police last year, collaborated with Sacramento's unhoused community on staging the event, which concluded with a rally.

Wood Street Commons members have been coming to Sacramento since 2022, one year before the establishment of Camp Resolution, another similar self-governing camp that was recently swept in late August. It was a collaboration of Wood Street Commons with the Sacramento unhoused community, with members of all groups sharing ideas and providing material support in the form of labor and resources, that allowed the capital's once-leased encampment to begin.

Wood Street Commons now

aspires to become a resource for unhoused people throughout California. Many members of Wood Street Commons are involved with Poor Magazine, a zine and podcast publication focusing on homeless and poverty issues; they now have a plan which they intend to detail and execute with the help of legal will from powerful institutions.

The riders were scheduled to meet with three assembly members, but not a single one showed in person. Instead, the people of Wood Street Commons met with staff of the representatives.

In her presentation, LeaJay Harper of Wood Street spoke of the urgency behind this year's ride.

"Why it's important this year is because of the governor's executive order," Harper said, referring to Gavin Newsom's urging cities to clear encampments. "We have just been seeing encampment and community after community swept violently, very violently, without compassion, crushing peoples wheelchairs. Specifically in Oakland, they're saying they spent billions of dollars."

Meanwhile, services that are

intended to benefit the homeless do not seem to be as helpful as they might immediately appear on paper. The tiny homes that the the City of Oakland erected on Wood Street after it swept residents have limited enter and exit times, and yet they are not connected to water, electricity or air conditioning.

"They build these tiny tombs or jail-like rooms," Poor Magazine editor Tiny told legislative staff. "They don't let you have a friend in the room, cook your food in the room, have any guests in the room, bring any of your animals or your belongings or your storage. Who lives like that? Close the door, lock it, you're there till next morning. That's jail!"

Although some of the staff members appeared sympathetic to commons residents, Wood Street Commons must find support with numerous steps along the way. Although given suggestions of who they can turn to, such as State Assemblymember Mia Bonta, it is up to them to seek those connections.

The people of Wood Street Commons drafted a plan called "Homefulness," where existing vacant lots that the City of Oakland allots for housing the city assigned to use for the common good can be used as community resources via a nonprofit program organized by Wood Street. They provided the legislative staff with folders detailing the proposal. However, the program's founders face a few obstacles.

"When we try to move there, they kick us out," Harper said.

On the non-profit status of the riders' organization, a representative who just goes by the name Freeway told the staff, "We received a 501(c)(3) as a result of us saying to the homeless administrator of Oakland when she was about to evict us, 'Why can't we run our own site? Why can't we govern ourselves?' They said, 'If you get your 501(c)(3) you can,' so we

took that challenge."

Another advocate, who gave her name only as Kelly, also said they have had difficulties with paperwork and need to find allies who understand state bureaucracy. She and other community members also cited zoning laws as a major challenge.

As Kelly says, "So we are in the middle of writing the application and we need to get the application filled," Kelly said. "That's where our glitch is."

Wood Street community member Nori added that added enforcement on unhoused communities creates another obstacle to obtaining nonprofit status. "So we can't actually get the standing to apply unless we have some sort of standing until we have a track record, but we can't get the track record until we have the place to do it," Nori said

Delaying further action would cost unhoused residents their lives, Freeway told the staffers. As Freeway told one representative, "We have buried more of our community members than have been housed," they said. "That's a real statistic."

Since the Supreme Court's decision on *Grants Pass v. Johnson*, the risk of death has been heightened: Even before the decision, sweeps were already shown to be deadly. The Wood Street community believes that its program can help provide stability and protection for highly at-risk community members. It would provide a fixed address and a supportive community to residents based on each person's ability and needs, Freeway said.

"It's taking the people who are living there and saying 'OK, what are you good at, what are you passionate about? What drives you to get out of bed every day? What drives you to get to bed every night? What works for you? We'll put you in the driver's seat and create this plan for you, and work with you to make sure you're successful'" Freeway said. "And the people that go through that program cycle up and work through into their positions in



# REK ATE

BRAGEN

# NEURODIVERGENT PEOPLE HAVE LIMITED OPTIONS FOR SUPPORTIVE CARE

JACK BRAGEN

the community, and each one to each one we pass it down, whoever comes in goes through the same process.”

By operating like this, Wood Streets Commons residents can continue to help people the way they did before their encampment and others like it violently swept. Harper noted that city workers throw away residents’ medications and medical equipment, such as wheelchairs, in sweeps. As a result, medical workers face difficulties contacting their displaced patients, she added, and that resources dedicating to housing residents would be more cost-effective to cities and beneficial to the residents. spoke to the importance of staying in one place and sharing community.

“All this money is being spent [on sweeps] when you could be spending it on permanent housing solutions,” Harper said. “We know because a lot of us were unhoused on Wood Street, like myself for ten years. It is the community aspect, many of us don’t have friends or family so when they are breaking up our encampments they are breaking up our communities. And so not just putting people in housing and trying to find this temporary band-aid, but trying to help people sustain their housing long-term by redirecting the money into organizations that can really help us like lifelong.”

“That’s another reason why sweeps are violent and why people are losing their lives,” she continued. “Because from a doctor’s perspective, they’re saying, ‘If I’m treating a patient and you sweep them, then I lose contact with that patient, so who knows what kind of medicines or treatment they need.’ They sweep their medicines, their wheelchairs.”

Wood Street Commons has a website where updates on the Homefulness Program and Poor Magazine can be followed as the situation develops at [poormagazine.org](http://poormagazine.org).

Years ago, while I sat in a waiting room at a mental health clinic, I observed an old man who might have had dementia being brought in to get his shot of medication. He was grumpy and complaining at first, but said he felt better after the shot. It is plausible that the person administering it was to the man’s liking. It seems more doubtful to me that the medication, very likely a time-release oil compound injected into the muscle, would quickly make him feel noticeably better.

It is comforting to think that many disabled people can be taken care of and might not need to fend for themselves. Survival, if we have to do it alone, is not easy, and it is not getting easier. Quite the contrary.

When I first became ill with psychosis, four decades ago, I was not up against the challenge of basic survival. I faced coming back to reality, emerging from a psychotic, erroneous, substitute reality generated by my malfunctioning brain. For the basic needs, I was young and could rely on my parents.

Counselors and others seemed to infantilize recipients of mental health care. There was a lot of talking down and a lot of assumptions that we could not take care of ourselves and were not competent. It is a disservice to make assumptions like that, because doing so creates an increased barrier to a “patient” succeeding in one’s endeavors.

Example: In a therapy group, we were going to bake a cake. I have baked cake from cake mixes in the past and it is not a problem. However, this counselor assumed I could not bake a cake without being supervised and helped.

The above scenario speaks to how things were in the 1980s and 1990s. I wouldn’t mind more of that today since it is far more comfortable than what I now face. And I am not alone. Many older recipients of mental health care are concerned for their survival.

At one time, I might have rebelled against restriction and being taken care of. Now it is closer to being appealing. If the mental health system was willing to take care of me in exchange for a few restrictions, it seems like it would be a tempting deal.

**Today, it seems as though everything has turned upside down. Mentally disabled people are often left to fend for ourselves. The supposed help we might get comes from the criminal justice system, including “Care Court” and “Laura’s Law.” These two laws automatically take away our rights and make it likely we will be incarcerated.**

Incarceration and homelessness in the U.S. appear to be the two worst things you can do to a human being. And if you have a record of incarceration, it can ruin your chances of success for the rest of your life. If you are homeless, you are living outside of the comforts and support provided by residential infrastructure, (e.g., cooked food, indoor plumbing, heating, having a car.) As it stands, many are left with no means of existing and/or surviving. Surviving is illegal if you don’t have enough money.

My living situation seems precarious, and I lack income. And yet my psychotic mind wants to come up with entirely different ideas that would explain what I have seen, heard, and felt. Sometimes I’ve mused that maybe I am better off relapsing so that I can be moved to the “category” of the severely mentally ill. However, the social service system as it is today provides no accommodations. There are no halfway houses for mentally ill but otherwise intelligent people

to recover under decent and comfortable conditions. That’s long gone.

As I write this, I am close to age 60. Many mentally ill people do not make it this far. My level of progress has probably blown away all predictions. But I doubt it protects me. Schizophrenia for many patients is a disease that gets milder and less severe when you get to this age, if you can make it this far alive and intact, that is. I’m up against a substantial plate, one that includes a number of smaller increments. If someone gave me an opportunity not to need to do all of this, I would have to completely give up on having a self-directed life. I don’t truly believe I can be infantilized and restricted because the people in charge of it would not trust me to stay within bounds. But if given a choice, dear reader, which is better? I cannot answer for anyone else.

My hope is that I can live under good conditions once again, within a few years from now. At present, I’m struggling through a lot of problems. My future is uncertain, and yet so is everyone’s.

**These are exceedingly challenging times for those who consider themselves “normal.” And these times are and more, far more challenging for people with disabilities.**

Liberty and care are both being taken from us through governmental and public action. And because of discrimination, the opportunity to better our conditions is evaporating. We are being infantilized with one hand, and left to our destruction with the other.

*Jack Bragen is author of Instructions for Dealing with Schizophrenia: A Self-Help Manual. Additionally, he has three collections of short fiction/science fiction for sale, and lives in Martinez.*

# DESPITE PROMISES, BUDGET CUTS AND BUREAUCRACY HAVE LAND TRUST ADVOCATES SEEKING STATE AID TO PRESERVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

FELICIA MELLO/CALMATTERS

Terner Center for Housing Innovation, who led the state housing department from 2015-2019. While it can easily take two years to launch a new program, he said, that timeline can shrink by a year if lawmakers have already appropriated the money, as they had for the housing preservation program. And things can move even faster, he said, “when an agency or director is motivated, or you have the right staff to implement it.”

Housing department spokesperson Pablo Espinoza said by email that part of the delay stemmed from the need for changes to state law that would allow officials to transfer money to the fund manager and pay its administrative expenses. It took several months for those adjustments to pass the Legislature, he said. California Dream for All didn’t face those hurdles, he said, because it was administered similarly to the Housing Finance Agency’s existing loans.

To design the housing preservation program, the department did “a ton of outreach” to community land trusts and others involved in preserving affordable housing, said Elizabeth Wampler, Bay Area executive director for the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, the fund manager awarded the contract.

Wampler’s group was drawn to the project after lending money to community land trusts to preserve affordable housing in the Bay Area, she said.

“We saw those deals had incredible impacts for communities of color,” Wampler said. “We know it’s a huge anti-displacement strategy to keep people in their homes. It helps to increase affordable housing stock — there are a lot of reasons why it’s a good strategy.”

Affordable housing groups had identified 162 buildings they hoped to buy and preserve as affordable using the state funds, according to a survey Wampler conducted.

But the state’s design process took so long that by the time it was complete, the state budget picture had changed and the department never signed a contract with Wampler’s group. Instead, the department put the program on pause in late 2023 — at least six months before lawmakers officially cut its funding.

“I think it was hard that the program hadn’t launched and hadn’t funded any projects,” Wampler said. That made it a target for lawmakers looking to save money, she said. “I think everybody involved was like, ‘Oh god, why didn’t we just get it done six months ago — we would have been in such a different position.’ ”

The department did already have some experience with affordable housing preservation through another program designed to help mobile home park residents and nonprofits buy and fix up parks. Like the housing preservation program, the Manufactured Housing Opportunity and Revitalization Program provides loans to purchase existing properties, some of them with fewer than 25 units. Both aimed to support residents banding together to manage their housing cooperatively.

Between 2013 and 2023, the department only approved a single loan application for the mobile home park program, CalMatters reported last year. But lawmakers have since redesigned it, and in 2023 the department awarded more than \$100 million to indigenous tribes, local governments, resident cooperatives and nonprofits like Habitat for Humanity.

## COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS SEEK BIG BANK BUY IN

Last year, while the Foreclosure Intervention Housing Preservation Program languished, more than 31,000 California properties that would have been eligible for the program received a notice of default, according to a California Community

Land Trust Network analysis of Property Radar data.

Among the state’s distressed properties was Oakland’s Warriors House, a local landmark near the 580 freeway painted in the splashy blue-and-gold color scheme of the Golden State Warriors basketball team and festooned with team memorabilia.

Owned by a local family for more than 50 years, the house needed extensive repairs when the family’s matriarch passed away after taking out a reverse mortgage, said Steve King, executive director of the Oakland Community Land Trust. The trust had hoped to use the state program to buy the home, both preserving the iconic property as affordable housing and preventing the woman’s son from being displaced, King said.

But without state support, the trust did not raise enough money in time, King said. A bank took possession of the property and sold it to a private buyer last year. The woman’s son, Lloyd Canamore, passed away shortly before the sale after moving to a rental in a different part of the city.

“It really messed him up,” said Michelle Easley, a neighbor who recalled Canamore as “a sweet man” who loved sports, his dogs and taking pictures with fans who would stop by the house.

“We’ve encountered similar situations of houses in probate, longtime Black families losing the family home, and it’s devastating,” King said.

In 2020, concerns about private equity firms buying distressed properties and converting them to market-rate rentals led to the passage of a state law that gave tenants whose foreclosed homes were sold at auction — or nonprofits working with those tenants — 45 days to match the winning bid.

But tenants and community land trusts still struggled to come up with funds to take advantage of the law. The housing preservation program aimed to change that.

“Time will tell whether the agencies can respond fast enough, but the reason I believe the governor agreed to this funding is that no one wants to have homelessness go up due to foreclosures,” Sen. Nancy Skinner, a Berkeley Democrat who championed the auction change, told online news outlet Next City at the time.

Skinner declined to comment for this story.

Preston, the San Francisco supervisor, said he thought elected officials at the state and federal level underestimated the importance of preserving existing affordable housing. Building new housing is important, he said, but so is stemming the constant hemorrhage of affordable units as they are purchased and flipped to luxury abodes out of reach of many Californians.

“It’s not production in terms of building something from the ground up, but it is producing when you take something that would otherwise be renting for \$4,000 a month and instead have it renting for a reasonable percentage of someone’s income who is low-income,” he said. “That is creating affordable housing for working-class people who otherwise wouldn’t be able to afford to live in San Francisco.”

Without state support on the horizon, community land trusts across California are now pooling their efforts to create a joint capital fund, powered by philanthropy and private banks, that could eventually provide low-interest loans to buy buildings like the one in Silver Lake.

They’re hoping banks will be attracted by the opportunity to fulfill some of their obligations under the federal Community Reinvestment Act, which requires financial institutions to prove they are meeting the credit needs of historically disadvantaged communities.

The goal is to create a one-stop shop for lenders who want to support community ownership, raising \$20 million in 2025 and eventually growing that to \$100 million that community land trusts could combine with public subsidies to buy properties, said Jazmin Segura of the Common Counsel Foundation, which is hosting the fund.

Johnson and his husband still hope they won’t have to leave their home. The deadline to put down a deposit on the Silver Lake building came and went, with the land trust unable to come up with a Plan B that would have raised the money any sooner than next year. He and his neighbors are asking their landlords for more time to come up with a solution.

If they don’t succeed, Johnson fears he and his husband would have to leave Silver Lake.

“We really don’t know what the future is,” Johnson said.

This article first appeared on [calmatters.org](http://calmatters.org)



From left, Osbey Jackson and husband Luke Johnson on the deck of their long-time home, which is part of a multifamily building in the Silver Lake neighborhood of Los Angeles, on Oct. 5, 2024. Photo by Stella Kalinina for CalMatters

# PSH PROPOSAL SHAMES ONE DRUG CULTURE WHILE IGNORING ANOTHER

JORDAN DAVIS

At the September 24 Board of Supervisors meeting, Supervisor Matt Dorsey pulled yet another policy out of his rear end that sounds reasonable on the surface, but in reality further stigmatizes permanent supportive housing (PSH) residents.

Hot off the heels of his proposed legislation to stifle PSH development unless a certain percentage is dedicated to drug recovery housing, Dorsey announced that he was requesting that legislation be drafted that would require that PSH disclose so-called “drug-tolerant” policies around drugs at their specific permanent supportive housing sites. As of publication time, I have not been able to locate the legislation on the Legistar, indicating that it hadn’t been drafted yet.

Terms like “drug-tolerant housing” are stigmatizing to PSH tenants, inasmuch as all housing that is not specifically “recovery housing” gets labeled as drug-tolerant housing. This is just another example of our society’s tendency to punish the poor for things that rich people get away with. I’m not buying it, and neither are my fellow tenants.

The rhetoric around drug use among poor and working class people, and among unhoused and marginally housed individuals, reminds me of the saga around conservative radio host Rush Limbaugh’s oxycontin addiction in 2003, which was around the time I was in college and

forming my political opinions. Many remember how he spoke against drugs on his radio show and called for the imprisonment of drug users, but when his addiction came into the spotlight, conservatives just didn’t care. It was yet another example of the “do as I say, not as I do” ethos of conservatism that has prevented me from ever going Republican—that and my family being working class Democrats who always had FM radio on instead of AM.

Rush Limbaugh is dead now, but in his lifetime, he attracted followers even in “liberal San Francisco.” However, Dorsey, a registered Democrat has embraced the same hypocrisy even admitting that he relapsed in 2020 while he was working as the police department’s communications director. Today, Dorsey lives in a luxury market rate development where I am sure there is plenty of drug use, yet he wants to stigmatize us, his neighbors? It makes no sense.

Wealthy people do drugs too. For example, the murder trial of Nima Momeni has put a spotlight on the drug use habits of the victim, Cash App founder Bob Lee, who was definitely not a permanent supportive housing tenant. And there has been a culture of cocaine use in San Francisco’s upper crust since the 1980s. However, when unhoused and marginally housed individuals do drugs, they are punished, jailed and stigmatized. Standards for their behavior are higher than for anyone else’s.

So, why don’t we have drug-tolerant disclosures for all housing, including luxury condos in South of Market and Mission Bay, as well as mansions in Seacliff and Pacific Heights? Better yet, let’s go beyond housing, and put up a giant sign in front of the Board of Supervisors chambers with a disclaimer that affords no guarantees that any policymaker is chemical-free? The drug use habits of the rich and powerful should become fair game when they start carping on us poor people.

Full disclosure: I have done coke, ketamine, molly, shrooms, whip-its, nitrous, LSD and a combination of LSD and ecstasy before, but I have never paid for them. I’ve done them with friends outside my home—often in a car, a venue bathroom, or some punk house—if you know the right people, you can get it for free. I also did drugs long after I was housed, so this subverts the narrative. I also only really do it to feel like an outlaw and to cope with being neurodivergent in an often unfriendly world.

If you think about it, my housing is recovery housing, as long as I do not allow alcohol in my unit. Also, no permanent supportive housing site would allow open alcohol or drug use in common areas.

This type of fear mongering just shames poor people. We need real solutions to the overdose crisis, not stigma.

BECOME A  
VENDOR  
MAKE MONEY AND HELP  
END HOMELESSNESS!

STREET SHEET is currently recruiting vendors to sell the newspaper around San Francisco.

Vendors pick up the papers for free at our office in the Tenderloin and sell them for \$2 apiece at locations across the City. You get to keep all the money you make from sales! Sign up to earn extra income while also helping elevate the voices of the homeless writers who make this paper so unique, and promoting the vision of a San Francisco where every human being has a home.

**TO SIGN UP, VISIT OUR OFFICE AT 280 TURK ST FROM 10AM-4PM ON MONDAY-THURSDAY AND 10AM-NOON ON FRIDAY**

CONTRIBUTE TO  
STREET  
SHEET

**WRITING:** Write about your experience of homelessness in San Francisco, about policies you think the City should put in place or change, your opinion on local issues, or about something newsworthy happening in your neighborhood!

**ARTWORK:** Help transform ART into ACTION by designing artwork for STREET SHEET! We especially love art that uplifts homeless people, celebrates the power of community organizing, or calls out abuses of power!

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** Have a keen eye for beauty? Love capturing powerful moments at events? Have a photo of a Street Sheet vendor you’d like to share? We would love to run your photos in Street Sheet!

**VISIT [WWW.STREETSHEET.ORG/SUBMIT-YOUR-WRITING/](http://WWW.STREETSHEET.ORG/SUBMIT-YOUR-WRITING/)  
OR BRING SUBMISSIONS TO 280 TURK STREET TO BE CONSIDERED  
PIECES ASSIGNED BY THE EDITOR MAY OFFER PAYMENT, ASK FOR DETAILS!**

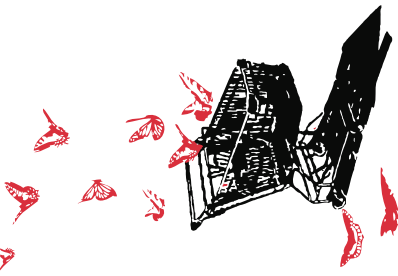
**You're invited**  
**to Street Sheet's**  
**35th anniversary**  
**celebration and**  
**fundraiser!**

at El Rio 3158 Mission St. x Cesar Chavez  
 San Francisco  
 Wednesday, Dec. 11 at 6 p.m.

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
 PAID  
 PERMIT NO. 3481  
 SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94188

Coalition On Homelessness  
 280 Turk Street  
 San Francisco, CA 94102  
 415.346.3740  
 www.cohsf.org  
 streetsheetstf@gmail.com

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Coalition on  
 Homelessness  
 San Francisco

**Your community.**  
**Your city.**  
**Your future.**  
**Your vote is your voice.**  
**Register now. Vote early.**

November 5, 2024 Election [RegisterToVote.ca.gov](https://RegisterToVote.ca.gov)



 **SAN FRANCISCO  
 ELECTIONS**