

For immediate release
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MEDIA ADVISORY
CITY DATA DEEMS FARRELL SWEEPS
A MASSIVE FAILURE

San Francisco – The Coalition on Homelessness released an impact analysis on 311 data which concludes that the intended results of Farrell’s sweeps “ridding the city of tents” has not been realized and, based on this evidence, the number of calls complaining about tents have increased citywide, in every district except one.

The city has engaged in rigorous sweeps of homeless encampments over the past month, but these sweeps have not addressed nor changed the problem at large. On Wednesday April 25th at 5:00 am, the SFPD together with Department of Public Works began aggressively removing encampments in the Mission District, focusing on Division Street, and surrounding areas to the South.

We analyzed 311 calls related to encampments one month leading up to the sweeps and one month after. We found no decrease in the number of complaints, and, in fact, found that the number of complaints has risen. The complaints grew from 4,633 in the month preceding the sweeps compared to 5,399 in the month following the sweeps, a 16% increase. Increased calls came from every district including the district that had experienced sweeps, outside of D8 where complaints decreased slightly, by 3%. In District 9, where the sweeps were concentrated, complaints rose from 1,073 the month before the sweeps to 1,166 the month after, and increased by 25% in District 5, by 22% in District 6, and increased by 25% in District 10. The highest raw increase was in D6 with an additional 337 complaints. D3, D7 and D4 also saw significant increases.

“The increased sweeps have neither reduced resident complaints about tents nor increased available services for people that need them, ” said Joe Wilson, Executive Director of Hospitality House. "We urge the Mayor to rethink this failed approach. We need increased investments in housing, living wage jobs, and other services - real solutions to poverty and homelessness. The time is now for bold vision with a City budget that truly works for all San Franciscans."

Media sources released quotes from City officials, who claimed to have offered services to encampment residents and cited “service resistance” as the reason they needed to engage in this action. Through visual observation and direct encounters with those impacted, we found that the City had failed to offer comprehensive services to

those living in impacted tent sites leading up to the sweeps, with few exceptions. Police distributed a flyer to campers during the first day of sweeps offering a mat on the floor of the dining area at Next Door shelter for 7 nights, but the shelter only had room for 1/3 of people reportedly living in 126 separate tents. Only 8 people were able to stay on these mats due, partly, because those sheltered have to forfeit most of their survival gear to stay there and many felt the short stay was destabilizing.

"I was woke up by rude cops kicking my suitcases telling me to 'get the [expletive] up', telling me to move again." said Crystale, an encampment resident. "I ask to where and all I hear is jokes and they are basically making fun of me and the fact I'm homeless. Don't they know I am a human being?"

United Nations Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing Leilani Farha as quoted in the Guardian in January, 2018 "In international human rights law," Farha said, "providing shelter to people who are homeless is the absolute minimum standard for any country, regardless of resources." "There's a cruelty here that I don't think I've seen," she said.

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