

**City and County of
San Francisco**



AARON PESKIN
市參事佩斯金

**President, Board of
Supervisors**

For Immediate Release
August 26, 2024

Media Contact:
Nate Horrell, (315) 560-9558

**President Peskin Rallies to Save Neighborhood Business,
Announces New Small Business Protections**

San Francisco – Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin rallied with a large group of neighbors, advocates, small business owners to save legacy neighborhood businesses on Fillmore Street, including Café La Méditerranée and Sushi Ten-Ichi, from threat of closure, and announced new legislation to protect neighborhood small business to be introduced at the Board of Supervisors.

Venture Capitalist Neil Mehta spent tens of millions of dollars to purchase at least a dozen storefronts through separate LLCs on three city blocks in the upper Fillmore neighborhood commercial district in early 2024. The bulks of these purchases occurred after the parcels were identified as targets for Mayor Breed’s upzoning plan. Since then, several longstanding restaurants, eateries, and shops have been forced into closure and two legacy businesses are fighting for their survival. Mehta’s Greenoaks Capital previously partnered with mayoral candidate Mark Farrell’s venture capital firm Thayer Ventures to invest in Sonder, an Airbnb-like corporate rental company.

President Peskin announced new legislation which will shift the balance of power toward legacy and neighborhood-serving businesses. It will ensure that building owners cannot unilaterally evict a city-certified legacy or neighborhood anchor business, in the Upper Fillmore neighborhood commercial district, an approach which may be replicated citywide.

“There is a right and wrong way to grow our city, and this is the wrong way.” said President Peskin. “We are here today with three generations of the Café La Méditerranée family. This family and this business are part of the cultural fabric of our city. They are being pushed out and not even getting a bus ticket.”

“We are honored to be recognized as a legacy business who has served as a pillar of our community for forty-five years.” said Vanick Der Bedrossian, owner of Café La Méditerranée. “The recent developments on Fillmore Street demonstrate the urgent need to give the legacy business program more teeth. President Peskin’s proposal is a great step forward to safeguard the unique spirit and character of our neighborhoods. We love Fillmore Street, we love San Francisco, and we want to stay.”

Nick Ferris of Neighborhoods United SF added: “What is happening on Fillmore Street shows that Mayor Breed’s upzoning plan is already fueling real estate speculation and making small businesses vulnerable to displacement and demolition. We must ensure that a wave a displacement doesn’t destroy our neighborhoods.”

“We support the need for more housing and especially affordable housing, but it does not need to come at the expense of small businesses,” said Justin Dolezal, President of Small Business Forward and owner of Bar Part Time. “We will not silently become a casualty of the upzoning plan.”

Among the advocates at the event was Bismar Jaffer, an attorney with Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights of San Francisco: “Many legacy businesses are owned by immigrants, or underrepresented groups who have historically faced barriers to economic opportunities. Protecting these businesses keeps these communities thriving and contributes to the city's diversity. San Francisco has a responsibility to support policies that safeguard the rights of small business owners and ensure equitable development. We demand that investors respect the historical and cultural significance of these businesses and provide the support needed to keep them in our communities.”

Chris Renfro, owner of Friend of a Friend in North Beach, the concluding speaker, offered a powerful citywide perspective: “I have seen outside investors tear down our history and make permanent changes to our city, changes that do not come from the community. Take the redevelopment of the Fillmore, for example: Once a thriving Black neighborhood with stores, restaurants, and music venues, this was a place where Black economic freedom was a reality -- until other people imposed their vision, one that was not shared by the community. We can do the right thing here and not repeat the mistakes of the past.”

Other community members across the city have already expressed interest in bringing these same small business protections to their neighborhood commercial district.

Additional Resources:

GoFundMe for Sushi Ten-Ichi: [Fundraiser by Save Ten-Ichi : Help Save Ten-Ichi and Preserve its Legacy in San Francisco \(gofundme.com\)](#)