

City and County of
San Francisco



President, Board of
Supervisors

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Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin Joins SEIU 1021 to Call for Housing for Essential City Workers

San Francisco – Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin stood with members of the city’s largest labor union, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1021, to call on the city to build housing for San Francisco’s essential workers using innovative new financing tools. In July, the Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a new Workforce and Middle-Income housing program (WHAMI) authored by President Peskin, which provides a much-needed new local source of financing for acquisition, conversion and development of housing affordable to middle-income San Franciscans, including teachers and city workers like first responders, healthcare workers and librarians.

President Peskin and SEIU 1021 members gathered in front of 360 5th Street, a housing site which was approved in 2017 for 127 residential units, but which the developer has since abandoned, leaving a “trash lake” which continues to blight the neighborhood.

“This project is just one example of market failure which can be solved with creativity and political will,” said **Board of Supervisors President Aaron Peskin**. “I am calling on the lender to sell this entitled project to the city at a fair price, and for city leaders to take advantage of new tools to build housing at scale that bring thousands of essential workers and working families home to San Francisco.”

The legislation that President Peskin authored is called the Workforce and Middle-Income Housing Program (WHAMI), addresses one principal barrier to middle income housing development. The program utilizes two types of tax-exempt revenue bonds: governmental purpose and 501(c)3 bonds which can finance housing targeting 80-120 percent of Area Median Income.

“Everyday workers like me commute from places like East Contra Costa County to serve the city we love. Thousands of San Franciscans, who were born and raised here, are now forced to drive several hours because we can no longer afford to raise our families here,” said **SEIU 1021 Vice President of Organizing Brandon Dawkins**. “It’s time for our city leaders to act and demonstrate that they care about working people who are the backbone of our city.”

The site at 360 5th Street is not unique. It is one of tens of thousands of fully approved units which are not being built chiefly because of lack of financing. Other opportunity sites include office to housing conversions, empty condo buildings, underutilized public sites and buildings in foreclosure.

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