Resolution urging City Departments to ensure that all clients brought into the COVID-19 Response System be placed into shelter or housing post-emergency; requesting a comprehensive plan to prevent shelter in place hotel clients from being discharged to the streets; and urging transparency in hotel referral and grievance policy.

WHEREAS, Since the declaration of a local public health state of emergency, San Francisco’s Homeless Response System has shifted dramatically, with shelters and navigation centers being re-purposed or closed for varying lengths of time, the shelter reservation system pausing, and alternative shelter and housing programs being quickly established in hotels and RVs; and

WHEREAS, This unprecedented amount of local, state, and federal funds invested into temporary shelter in hotels and RVs for people experiencing homelessness during the COVID emergency has helped curb the spread of COVID-19 and provided dignified shelter for over 1,300 people experiencing homelessness; and

WHEREAS, As of June 16, 2020, 1,263 vulnerable people experiencing homelessness are staying in a private Shelter In Place (“SIP”) hotel room, over a third of whom were previously sleeping unsheltered on the streets; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (“HSH”) recently released a Request for Proposals to identify Providers to operate current and future SIP, Congregate Setting, and/or Isolation & Quarantine (“I&Q”) Sites; and
WHEREAS, The Questions and Answers published in RFQ #HSH2020-130 – COVID-19 SERVICES, indicate that, “At this time, the City expects these [hotel and congregate] sites to be in operation for at least a year, but the City cannot guarantee the length of time each site will remain open, given the evolving nature of the situation”; and

WHEREAS, While these developments are promising, San Francisco and cities around the country are at a crossroads grappling with how to approach the next phase of hotel and mass shelter programs as contracts end, hotels begin to re-open for tourist use, and recovery priorities shift; and

WHEREAS, There is a looming risk that San Franciscans sheltered in hotels and RVs return to street homelessness or crowded shelters at the end of the Shelter In Place hotel program; and

WHEREAS, HSH has recently indicated a goal to prevent anyone in a hotel or the COVID response system from being discharged to the streets, however, in a May 2020 email to the Board of Supervisors, HSH stated that “The city can no longer guarantee that a shelter bed or permanent housing options will be available for everyone when the use of shelter in place hotels concludes;” and

WHEREAS, As part of the citywide post COVID-19 recovery efforts, a Housing and Shelter Workgroup comprised of representatives from the Board of Supervisors, Mayor’s Office, HSH, HSA, and community stakeholders was formed in early June to outline a set of options and policy proposals for safely increasing housing and shelter capacity for post COVID-19 response and address; and

WHEREAS, The number of people experiencing homelessness who have “exited” homelessness from hotels during the emergency remains undisclosed, although overall “exits” to housing for the month of April, when the data was last available, totaled 93 individuals; and
WHEREAS, Vacancies have remained high in the hotel program, ranging from 600-1,400 vacancies in “active” hotel rooms per night over the past month; and

WHEREAS, At the same time, placement into SIP Hotels is currently restricted to people who are vulnerable, as defined by the County Health Officer and the process through which an individual or family can receive an offer for placement is neither public or transparent; and

WHEREAS, In addition to the lack of clarity around eligibility, for those currently staying in a Shelter in Place hotel the San Francisco Shelter Grievance Policy does not currently apply, despite the SIP Hotels’ function as a form of temporary emergency shelter; and

WHEREAS, The Shelter Grievance Policy was first approved in 1992 and has been amended multiple times to “focus on preventing the escalation of conflicts, maximizing the use of informal avenues to resolve disputes and improving shelter environments for providers, staff, and shelter clients;” now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, The Board of Supervisors urges the Human Services Agency and Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing to apply the Shelter Grievance policy to Shelter-in-Place Hotels; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board urges HSH to publish clear intake and referral procedures for people experiencing homelessness to access Shelter-In-Place Hotels and refine a community-based referral model; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board opposes discharging any clients to the streets who are currently staying in City or privately-funded hotels, congregate shelters, or RVs for the COVID response; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board urges HSH to conduct a Coordinated Entry Assessment and enter into the ONE System every client in a SIP Hotel, RV, or congregate site; and, be it
FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board reaffirms its support for the Housing First model and urges HSH to maximize the number of hotel units acquired for transition to permanent supportive housing; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board urges HSH to release a comprehensive plan that outlines anticipated steps to prevent clients in SIP hotels or other COVID alternative housing options from being discharged to the streets. The Board urges HSH to include in the report:

a. The anticipated number of units that will be converted to permanent supportive housing;

b. A summary of anticipated occupancy for congregate shelters;

c. The number of people experiencing homelessness who have “exited” homelessness during the COVID emergency;

d. How many clients in SIP Hotels have had a housing assessment;

e. How many SIP clients assessed are Housing-Referral Status, and a breakdown by race; and

f. How many vacant Permanent Supportive Housing units are vacant or available for occupancy; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board urges the Housing and Shelter Workgroup of the Citywide Recovery Workgroup to incorporate the goals outlined in this resolution including ensuring that nobody exits the COVID-19 response system to the street or unsheltered homelessness and ensure behavioral health treatment options are integrated in future system planning.
Resolution urging City Departments to ensure that all clients brought into the COVID-19 Response System be placed into shelter or housing post-emergency; requesting a comprehensive plan to prevent shelter in place hotel clients from being discharged to the streets; and urging transparency in hotel referral and grievance policy.

July 02, 2020 Government Audit and Oversight Committee - AMENDED, AN AMENDMENT OF THE WHOLE BEARING SAME TITLE

July 02, 2020 Government Audit and Oversight Committee - RECOMMENDED AS AMENDED

July 14, 2020 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED

Ayes: 11 - Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton and Yee

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 7/14/2020 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution, not being signed by the Mayor within the time limit as set forth in Section 3.103 of the Charter, or time waived pursuant to Board Rule 2.14.2, became effective without her approval in accordance with the provision of said Section 3.103 of the Charter or Board Rule 2.14.2.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board