

This City Pays \$60K Per Tent Supporting Homeless and Crime

Analysis by [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#)

✓ Fact Checked

July 16, 2022

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › The San Francisco neighborhood known as the Tenderloin is infamous for drug dealers and users, but the police presence in the area is nonexistent
- › Once known for trendy restaurants and jazz clubs, the area has long had some “dicey areas” but quickly went downhill during the COVID-19 pandemic
- › The city of San Francisco runs six “safe sleeping villages” where people who are homeless can sleep in tents, with three meals per day, security and bathrooms provided
- › The program costs the city \$60,000 per tent, per year, to run, and there are about 260 tents in all; this amounts to twice the median cost of a one-bedroom apartment for each tent. City officials are trying to lower the cost to \$57,000
- › More than \$1 billion is expected to be spent on homelessness in San Francisco over a two-year period
- › San Francisco has also invested millions more of taxpayer funds to Urban Alchemy, a social enterprise that sends teams made up primarily of ex-cons who have served life sentences in prison to the streets to de-escalate conflicts

In a “Full Measure” report, host and investigative journalist Sharyl Attkisson describes the toleration of open air drug dealing in the San Francisco neighborhood known as the Tenderloin.¹

Once known for trendy restaurants and jazz clubs, the area has long had some “dicey areas” but didn’t start to go really downhill until right before the COVID-19 pandemic. “By most accounts, it was during COVID and a change in mayors that there was an explosion of drug-dealing that seems, to many, to be tolerated by nearly every authority,” Attkisson said.²

Today, Tenderloin resident Katherine Vaughn, who was once homeless, says it’s gotten so bad that she’s afraid to walk her pit bull in the neighborhood. “Constant garbage in the streets, people laying around on the front of the building shooting up, people passed out on the streets,” she said.³ Despite being infamous for drug dealers and users, the police presence in the area is nonexistent.

City Pays \$60K Per Tent to Support Crime

The city of San Francisco runs six “safe sleeping villages” where people who are homeless can sleep in tents, with three meals per day, security and bathrooms provided. While the program currently costs the city \$60,000 per tent, per year, to run, and there are about 260 tents in all, they are trying to revamp the program to lower the cost to \$57,000.⁴

The New York Post reported that this amounts to twice the median cost of a one-bedroom apartment, and more than \$1 billion is expected to be spent on homelessness in San Francisco over a two-year period. The funding is coming from Proposition C, a 2018 business tax.⁵ San Francisco Mayor London Breed described it as a “historic investment” and said:⁶

“For those exhibiting harmful behavior, whether to themselves or to others, or those refusing assistance, we will use every tool we have to get them into treatment and services, to get them indoors. We won’t accept people just staying on the streets, when we have a place for them to go.”

However, according to area experts, the tents are primarily used for drug dealing.

Tolerance for Drug Dealers Destroys Neighborhood

Randy Shaw is head of the Tenderloin Housing Clinic, an advocacy group for low-income housing. He believes that the “hyper-focus” on homelessness is distracting from the real issue plaguing the area, which is drug dealing. It’s gotten so bad, he said, that a sub-economy has formed, referring to the billion dollars spent on so-called “safe sleeping villages.”

“Everyone says, ‘Oh, weren’t those tents for homeless people?’ They’re dealing drugs out of the tents. Because you can have a drug deal in a tent, the police can’t see you,” Shaw told Attkisson. He continued:⁷

“If you eliminate drug dealers in the Tenderloin, we would be fine. We wouldn’t have to do anything else. That is 90% of the problem. But people have a need for whatever reason to talk about homelessness, people with mental health problems. They’re all over San Francisco. What distinguishes the Tenderloin is the toleration for massive open-air drug dealing.

... It really started changing in 2019. And then it really got bad during the pandemic. People always say, ‘Well, Tenderloin’s had a long history of vice.’ Yes, it has. But the worst it was in the 80s and 90s is nowhere comparable to how bad it’s gotten.”

Ex-Cons Hired to Turn Around the Neighborhood

San Francisco has also invested millions more of taxpayer funds to Urban Alchemy, a social enterprise that sends teams made up primarily of ex-cons who have served life sentences in prison to the streets to de-escalate conflicts.⁸

“Their workers, mostly ex-cons, line the streets of the Tenderloin District, wearing uniforms marked with fluorescent yellow stripes. They’re tasked with peacefully turning around tough neighborhoods by cleaning them up, having conversations and providing support,” Attkisson reported.⁹

However, Urban Alchemy only works during the hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Shaw said. “We need the police to come in in other hours. And they've just been nowhere to be found. You're here right now – do you see any police?” Attkisson said they spent hours in the Tenderloin but didn't see any uniformed police officers during that time, even along the “most notorious strip.”

“We did see people lined up to use drugs in broad daylight and lots of drug dealers doing business with no fear of being stopped,” she said.¹⁰ Meanwhile, Urban Alchemy has an estimated 20 contracts with the state of California – employing 1,500 ex-cons – to improve “rough” neighborhoods. The contracts are worth \$50 million, and this is expected to increase to \$100 million in coming years.¹¹

90-Day State of Emergency Declared

December 17, 2021, Breed declared a state of emergency in the Tenderloin, “allowing the City to waive certain laws to quickly address the crisis of people dying of drug overdoses on the streets of the neighborhood as part of the Mayor’s Tenderloin Emergency Intervention Plan.”¹²

A news release from the Office of the Mayor noted, “Similar to the City’s COVID-19 Declaration of Emergency, this action will eliminate bureaucratic barriers, allowing the City to quickly respond to the conditions relating to the health and safety of the people in the Tenderloin.”¹³

Part of the motivation for the state of emergency came from the Tenderloin Community Benefit District, which organized escorts for school children so they could get home from school safely. “One of the reasons we wanted the state of emergency is because we want to have the kids in the neighborhood feel safe walking to and from school,” Elise Gorberg, with the Tenderloin Community Benefit District, said.¹⁴

While the state of emergency has since expired, the city claimed it to be a success, with 345 people placed in shelters and 154 moved to permanent supportive housing.¹⁵ But according to Shaw, “The state of emergency was supposed to involve a police

crackdown on drug dealers. That has never happened. The bottom line is that San Francisco always has had the resources and the staffing to stop drug dealing, except it allows it in the Tenderloin.”¹⁶

Gorberg added, “I think there are definitely areas in the neighborhood where we have seen some improvement. But I think what we’re really concerned about is seeing what will happen after this sort of three-month period that we’ve been in.”¹⁷

As an aside, it’s becoming increasingly common for governments to use emergency powers to funnel resources to any given cause — not always positive ones. In April 2022, President Biden extended emergency law for the eighth time, and this time he didn’t even pretend that it was related to a public health emergency.

He said it was due to instability in Iraq. By extending his emergency powers, he can funnel millions of dollars, without accountability, into the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Naomi Wolf, author of “[The End of America](#),” published in 2007, and “[The Bodies of Others: The New Authoritarians, COVID-19 and the War Against the Human](#),” which was released at the end of May 2022, said, “He’s basically weaponizing HHS, all the way down to boards of health, which have been weaponized during the pandemic.”¹⁸

Wolf, a former adviser to the Clinton administration, states that there are 10 steps that leaders who want to crush a democracy will always take. We are now in Step 10, part of which is the proposed World Health Organization Pandemic Treaty, which would give the WHO unbridled privilege to declare an emergency and then have total authority to dictate the global response, even if that response contradicts the constitutional rights of a member state.

A Containment Zone

Why aren’t police congregating in the Tenderloin to shut down drug dealers? Shaw believes that the city is sacrificing the area so it doesn’t spread — and contaminate the rest of the city. He told Attkisson:¹⁹

"I think ultimately it comes down to City Hall accepting the Tenderloin is a containment zone and feeling like, 'I'm really afraid they'll go to another neighborhood.' But they don't want to say that publicly because it sounds like they're not caring about low-income families. But how else do you explain it?"

And here's the kicker: we sent 40 to 80 officers to Union Square after the Louis Vuitton handbags were stolen on a video. I mean, we're protecting essentially vacant stores. It wasn't even people or families. No one lives, you know, it was businesses.

So what does that tell you about what the city's priorities really are? It's very sad because San Francisco called itself a progressive city. It says, 'We care about working people. We care about low-income people.'

Well then, why are families and kids having to walk through drug dealers? ... They accept it. They figure, don't touch it, because they might move to another area where they definitely don't want it. I mean, it breaks my heart to watch this stuff."

Sources and References

- [1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 10, 11, 14, 16, 17, 19 Full Measure May 8, 2022](#)
- [4, 6 Zero Hedge June 30, 2022](#)
- [5 New York Post June 26, 2021](#)
- [8 Urban Alchemy, Our People](#)
- [12, 13 Office of the Mayor December 17, 2021](#)
- [15 ABC News March 15, 2022](#)
- [18 Substack June 6, 2022](#)