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Hayes Valley Neighborhood Assn
400 Grove Street, Suite #3
San Francisco, CA 94102

February 23, 2021

Re: Crime in Hayes Valley

Dear Hayes Valley Neighborhood Association:

Thank you for your letter expressing your concerns about crime in Hayes Valley and the impact of these crimes on small businesses and residents. I apologize that we were unable to get you a response in the timeline you had hoped, but wanted to take the time to respond as substantively as possible.

The San Francisco District Attorney's office works to promote public safety and justice for all San Franciscans. We share your concerns about recent brazen crimes and understand the significant impact this has had on your lives and on how safe you feel.

You mentioned a perception that our office does not charge and prosecute crimes—that is simply false. In 2020, we have filed over 4,000 new cases, and we are continuing to prioritize violent crimes like those you mentioned, as well as burglaries that impact businesses and residents.

You have asked for concrete ways that we—as well as our justice partners— can increase public safety and business prosperity, and I wanted to address some of the resources the District Attorney's Office has already allocated to this effort.

First, we have established the Community Liaison program—which is what led me to your letter. This program partners members of the District Attorney's Office with each Supervisorial District and focuses on establishing lines of communication with community organizations, District businesses and residents, and local public safety agencies and foot beat officers. Hearing directly from each stakeholder will provide us with the information necessary to address high-need areas and identify repeat and violent offenders. In District 5, there are three Community Liaisons appointed from our office: I am Assistant District Attorney Eric Quandt, and on my team are Assistant District Attorney Trevor Kempner, and District Attorney Investigator Lt. Glenn Pon.

Although the Community Liaison Program is still new, we have already begun reaching out to individual constituents and working with partner agencies to strategize around preventing and deterring crime and holding those who commit crimes accountable. In District 5, our Liaisons have visited local businesses and trained owners and employees about successfully and efficiently reporting crime, as the initial reports are often the most critical step in a successful



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prosecution. We are also scheduled to attend the HVNA public Safety Meeting on March 1, 2021 to hear from residents and address specific concerns reported by HVNA board members.

Additionally, our office has heard the many concerns regarding repeat and violent crime occurring at Walgreens, and other neighborhood stores. We take these offenses very seriously, charge them, and prosecute them—frequently file Motions to Detain people who repeatedly commit these crimes pre-trial. When detention is not appropriate or lawful, our prosecutors ask for appropriate pre-trial release conditions, such as home detention, electronic monitoring, warrantless search conditions, placement in a residential treatment facility, issuance of stay away orders, and more. We have also assigned a prosecutor to work with Walgreens to closely monitor crimes occurring in their stores and pursue cases against repeat and violent offenders. As part of this effort, we have also asked District Attorney Investigators to write arrest warrants where probable cause exists, even when these cases have not been referred to us by the relevant policing agency. We invite other retail stores to join us in this effort.

As we work to identify the main drivers of crime in particular neighborhoods, we have also asked the court for more comprehensive stay away orders, where such an order is defensible under the law. For example, we have recently asked for orders prohibiting people with repeated offenses from entering neighborhoods such as the Tenderloin, Castro, and Hayes Valley. These stay away orders can help provide law enforcement with an additional tool to intercede in crime, as stay away order violations provide an independent basis for arrest.

Lastly, we are constantly working to grow and improve our Collaborative Courts and Victim Services Divisions. Our Collaborative Courts—such as Behavioral Health Court, Drug Court, Veterans Justice Court, Young Adult Court, Intensive Supervision Court, and multiple others—connect the accused with comprehensive and rigorous interventions meant to address crime at the root. The constant and massive churn of offenders through our jails and prisons has failed to make our communities safer and protect our most vulnerable citizens. Our office is committed to restorative approaches, where appropriate, that make victims whole and demand accountability and change from those who have caused harm.

Expanding our Victim Services Division has allowed victims of crime to receive compensation, housing, and other necessary services. Supporting victims is a truly essential part of our job. In District 5, our Victim Services Division partnered with Supervisor Dean Preston's office to establish a Victim Assistance Program for small businesses impacted by broken windows. While this alone does not solve the deeper problem of financially struggling businesses and senseless vandalism, it has helped many businesses defer some of the cost. You can read our Office's 2020 Victim Services Report here: <https://sfdistrictattorney.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/End-of-Year-Report-2020-FINAL.pdf>.



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We also work alongside other stakeholders—the Mayor’s Office, Board of Supervisors, San Francisco Police Department, Department of Public Health, and various community groups and residents, among others—as none of these efforts take place in a vacuum. To that end, our office recently convened a meeting with our justice partners to address many of the concerns you raised. We agree that the status quo is not acceptable and commit to engage with all stakeholders to be part of the solution. We are continuing to work with them towards more concrete solutions. Please feel free to reach out to us if we can provide additional details about anything mentioned above or assist in any way.

Sincerely,

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