



DEAN PRESTON

February 19, 2021

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

Re: *Supervisor Preston's Reply to HVNA Letter of February 14, 2021*

Dear Craig, Jenn, Bob and Lloyd:

I am writing in response to your letter dated February 14, 2021 on crime in Hayes Valley. First, I want to thank you for reaching out and clearly articulating your concerns.

They are certainly shared by our office. While overall crime is down by about 23%--rapes, robberies, thefts, auto burglaries and assaults are all down by record numbers-- it is also true that certain crimes are up, and that includes significant increases in residential and commercial burglaries. This is likely for a variety of reasons, and undoubtedly related to our ongoing pandemic. Not only is there an increase in economic desperation, but there is the reality that our lockdown measures have resulted in fewer eyes on the street and more opportunities for crime.

A bottom line for us is this: It is crucial that we all feel safe in the neighborhood, period. Our public safety work is focused on that shared goal. Our office recently hosted a public safety meeting in partnership with SFPD, the District Attorney's office, and SF SAFE. To promote safety in the neighborhood, we have connected many constituents with SF SAFE, a nonprofit that provides one-on-one consultations to prevent car, home, and commercial crimes, as well as offering support for more comprehensive neighborhood safety efforts. We are also in regular contact with our police captains (Captain Yep for Hayes Valley) and have set up regular meetings with them to address public safety concerns. In addition, the District Attorney's office recently launched a District Liaison program that assigns a team to work directly with each Supervisorial district on community outreach and public safety issues.

There is, to be sure, much more work to be done. On that point, we look forward to working together with you and all relevant city agencies to make real progress, as we have done with HVNA on other issues in the past.

One specific proposal I would like to highlight is the Community Ambassador program, run through the city's Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Services (OCEIS). The program provides a visible presence to assist residents, visitors, and businesses, and promote safety, and is currently in operation in six neighborhoods in San Francisco. OCEIS hires and trains the ambassadors, who act as a helpful presence on the streets, provide information and referrals, offer general assistance, and report hazards and emergencies to city agencies.

Our office met yesterday with the Director of the Office of Civic Engagement & Immigrant Affairs, and indicated our interest in bringing this program to Hayes Valley. Additionally, we met earlier this week with the leadership of the Japantown Community Benefit District, which uses a similar Community Ambassador program to increase public safety. They reported significant progress for improved safety and reduced crime, as well as positive reception to the ambassadors in the neighborhood.

We recognize that while the answer to public safety may not be achieved through any singular strategy, we strongly believe that bringing Community Ambassadors to Hayes Valley could be a key component to any plan. We would like your input on this possible approach. Assuming there is community support, we will do everything in our power to make this program a reality in Hayes Valley, including a push to have a pilot program included in the city budget as soon as possible, and we hope to have the support of Mayor Breed in this effort as well.

Lastly, I am planning to attend your upcoming HVNA Public Safety meeting on March 1, and look forward to hearing your feedback on this idea, as well as any others you may have, at that time.

Thank you for your time and for your partnership.

Sincerely,



Dean Preston
District 5 Supervisor