

Climate Change and Homelessness in San Francisco, CA

Sofia Hernandez

San Francisco has set forth strong initiatives to achieve their environmental goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. A recently passed legislation states in the findings section of the ordinance that the city is years ahead of its goal to cut emission by 2025. This ordinance, approved in July 2022, amends the planning code to include electric vehicles (EVs) which both facilitates and accelerates the conversion of certain sites into EV charging hubs. The city hopes to increase the adoption of EVs thus enabling the achievement for the city to become zero-emission by 2030. City leaders appear to be adamant that electrifying our personal automobiles is the primary climate solution. There is an urgency to increase charging infrastructures and increase the number of EVs on the road in a time span of less than a decade. However, what if city leaders had the same urgency to increase affordable housing? This is a vital component that will address numerous issues, including protection from climate risks. According to California's Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), between 2023 and 2030 San Francisco will need to build 82,000 new units with 57 percent of those units to be affordable housing, the same time span for EV charging hubs. Thus far, the city has been the slowest jurisdiction within California and lagging behind other major cities in adding new housing (Bastone 2022).

After informational interviews with the executive director of Coalition on Homelessness (COH) and the programs and impact director of LavaMaex, two nonprofit

homeless advocacy organizations, my research took an unexpected turn and I sought to learn more of how the housing and homeless crisis are connected to climate change vulnerability. The executive director of COH, stressed that an important and crucial factor in terms of protection from climate risks is housing. Housing is one of the most significant social determinants of health as housing quality, stability, affordability, and other factors have an impact on one's emotional and physical wellbeing (Wolin & Perkins, 2018). In recent years more studies have emerged that there is a connection between climate change, social determinants of health and health inequities with disadvantaged communities facing the biggest burden of climate change impacts (Friel, 2019).

According to the city's own environmental department, San Francisco is leading the way on climate action and has drafted several plans in terms of adaptation to climate change. Most climate action reports released by the city recognize their most vulnerable population, including those experiencing homelessness. For decades, San Francisco has funded and provided supportive services for the homeless population, but it has been evident that it has not been able to keep up with the needs (Keating 2019). Now, with the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, according to the programs and impact director of LavaMaex the number of unhoused people has increased throughout the country.

The pandemic also sparked criticism on how city leaders handled the homeless population. Al-

though climate change is considered a slow-moving threat, San Francisco is already experiencing the effects of climate change including extreme temperatures. As the city struggles to alleviate the homeless crisis as well as the housing crisis, climate change should be a cause for concern. As the Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated homelessness, the effects of climate change may bring the crisis to detrimental levels.

My research began with reaching out to seven nonprofit homeless advocacy organizations. Unfortunately, I was only able to conduct informational interviews with two, LavaMaex and COH. Nevertheless, with the information gathered through these interviews, I was able to structure my research paper and focus on issues and concerns raised by the interviewees.

I researched the initiatives implemented to address the needs of the homeless population during the Covid-19 pandemic. Some advocates blame the city's anti-homelessness policies on worsening the crisis during the pandemic. Later, in my research I found that these anti-homeless policies also impact the unhoused during severe weather. I researched tent confiscations and other actions taken against the homeless population. I then briefly researched the housing crisis, and the impact housing can have on human health. Lastly, through an interview with COH, I learned of San Francisco's inclement weather policy, to which I reviewed and will elaborate on further in the findings section of this paper.

First and foremost, it is important to note that the city does

have an abundance of supportive services and resources in place for the homeless population. There are numerous advocacy groups and organizations that work tirelessly to provide as much aid as possible and are working toward finding permanent solutions for homelessness. Considering the thousands of unhoused individuals still on the streets, and city officials' slow response to protect the homeless during the Covid-19 pandemic, there is undoubtedly room for improvement. Through this semester-long research project, it became evident, if not obvious enough, that housing can very well be the primary solution to protecting everyone from climate risk. However, with persistent homelessness, severe shortage of affordable housing, the continuance of city sweeps and the shortage of shelter beds, it raises the question: is San Francisco, California doing enough to protect its unsheltered homeless population from climate risk?

Brief Background: The Covid-19 Pandemic

Advocates for the homeless argue that the city failed its homeless population during the Covid-19 pandemic. While, having had one of the strictest mandated Shelter in Place (SIP) in the country, the city and county of San Francisco, received praise for its fast and effective initiatives. In December 2021, when compared to twenty other large cities, San Francisco had the lowest coronavirus mortalities (Kukura 2021). However, to adhere to strict social distancing guidelines, homeless shelters were forced to close their doors or reduce capacity by almost 80 percent and were not allowed to take in new guests. Within the first couple of months of SIP, the number of tents throughout the city increased by 71 percent. In the Tenderloin, a historically underserved neighborhood, tents increased by 258 per-

cent (Ho 2020). Due to the growing number of unsanctioned encampments, the city faced multiple lawsuits against the worsening street conditions (Sabatini 2020). In order to alleviate the number of tents on city sidewalks and as a response to the lawsuits, the city along with the nonprofit, Urban Alchemy, opened its first sanctioned encampment in May 2020, known as Safe Sleep Village. According to Urban Alchemy, within three Safe Sleep Villages in the city, occupants had a safe place to sleep, received three meals per day, showers, toilets and were able to charge their phones. The largest Safe Sleep Village served just 150 guests each night. The first sanctioned encampment opened two months after the closure and capacity reduction of shelters and after many homeless individuals were left with little to no guidance on how to protect themselves from the coronavirus.

San Francisco's handling of Project RoomKey was another source of frustration for advocates and some city leaders. Despite receiving funding from the state of California, only eight hotels roomed 1,000 homeless individuals (ECS SF 2020). The issue – as traveling came to a halt amidst the pandemic, there were over 30,000 vacant rooms within San Francisco. At least thirty of these hotels offered over 8,300 rooms at discounted prices for unhoused individuals. There were 8,035 people experiencing homelessness in 2019 (SF PIT Count). Yet, hotel and motel rooms were only made available to the most vulnerable among the vulnerable. This included individuals who tested positive for the virus, those already in temporary shelters and vulnerability due to age or underlying health conditions (Canales 2020).

Anti-Homeless Policies

Often tents are the only form of protection an individual experi-

encing homelessness has from the outside elements. Despite the closure of shelters and the drastic reduction of supportive services during the pandemic, move-along orders and city sweeps continued. City sweeps are the confiscation of an unhoused individual's tent and other personal belongings by city workers. According to The Solution Not Sweeps Coalition, personal property being discarded often include medications and identification. Sweeps and other anti-homeless laws and practices have been in place for decades. Once referred to as the annihilation of public space: "while these laws have as a goal — perhaps not explicit, but clear nonetheless — the redefinition of public rights so that only the housed may have access to them" (Mitchell 1997). The annihilation or strict regulations of public space by law means eliminating the only space an unhoused individual has. While city leaders and law enforcement cannot blatantly define homelessness as a crime, the unhoused are punished for certain behaviors and "survival itself is criminalized"— when an unhoused individual cannot find a place to sleep or use a public restroom (Mitchell 1997).

As some city leaders mobilize these anti-homeless ordinances and as the homeless crisis persists, in recent years there has been an increase in "homeless concern" calls to 911 and 311. Chris Herring, a PhD Candidate of Sociology at the UC-Berkeley, conducted research on "complaint-oriented policing". During ride-alongs with San Francisco police officers, Herring found that officers expressed the endless calls to 911 and 311 of homeless complaints should be a social worker's job. Most calls did not involve a real crime. Rather several of the complaint calls were made because an individual was asleep in their tents. By the time an officer arrived, the individual had already

packed their belongings and left. The few instances where a homeless individual was arrested, according to the officers interviewed, the individual was released within a few hours. Yet, the aftermath of an arrest for the unhoused individual is damaging. A criminal record creates barriers for them to access supportive services, including affordable housing (Herring 2019).

The Housing Crisis and Health

As of December 2022, the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in the city is just under \$3,000. A four percent increase compared to the previous year (Zumper). Within the San Francisco Bay Area the homes are 90 percent market-rate (Plan Bay Area 2050) and the values of homes have been increasing faster than household incomes (Garcia et al. 2022). Throughout the US the most common standard of housing affordability is 30 percent of household income. Housing cost burdens over 30 percent is considered excessive and 50 percent or more is considered severe (Schwartz, 2021 27-28). For people living below the poverty line at least one in four are spending upwards of 70 percent of their income on housing costs (Mamo & Acosta, 2020). Rent-burden is prevalent among low and very low-income households and disproportionately affect Black and Hispanic households (Schwartz, 2021 27-28). With such severe rent-burden this puts other necessities on the backburner, leaving little to no income for groceries, electricity, medication, transportation and even school supplies. This leads to both housing insecurities and the threat of eviction. The exposure to the threat of eviction has been shown to increase depression and anxiety, as well as high blood pressure, among other health risks. Eviction can also lead to forced homelessness (Mamo & Acosta, 2020). The city's housing crisis, as the homeless crisis, was exacerbated

by the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic has left many extremely low-income households on the brink of homelessness not just in San Francisco but the entire region. The loss of jobs and business has again, disproportionately affected Black, Indigenous and people of color communities which have further deepened inequity and housing insecurity (Reid, et al 2021).

The city and county of San Francisco has some of the highest living costs in the world. Even so San Francisco has a shortage of housing, especially affordable housing. San Francisco's severe housing shortage has not gone unnoticed. For the first time, California's HCD will conduct its first-ever review of San Francisco's housing policy. According to the HCD San Francisco is the slowest jurisdiction in the entire state of California to produce housing when compared to other tech-hub cities. Currently, only 9 percent of units in the city are affordable (Rezal & Caughey 2022). The city has recently received approximately \$117 million in funding from the HCD to build three affordable housing developments (Dickey 2022). By 2030 the city will need to add an additional 82,000 homes with 57 percent being affordable housing. This means the city will need to add over 10,000 new units per year beginning 2023. That is three times more than the city's recent pace (Rezal & Caughey 2022). Affordability along with accessibility, quality, and stability of housing are crucial for a multitude of reasons. These factors have shown to have an effect on one's emotional and physical health (Wolin & Perkins, 2018). It is imperative that San Francisco meet its deadline of 2030 as housing along with supportive services can solve innumerable issues, as I will elaborate further in the finding section of this paper.

Inclement Weather Policy

In adequate housing or in other instances lack of housing, exposes a person and their family to harm. Unhoused individuals are exposed to elements – during cold weather, frostbite and hypothermia are most common. Freezing to death is a common concern amongst the homeless population. Moreover, many health issues are worsened by homelessness and others develop health issues as a result of homelessness (Wolin & Perkins 2018). As I finalize my research, it is December 2022, and the coldest and wettest days of the winter season are expected to intensify. In response to the extremely cold days ahead the Interfaith Winter Shelter program began at the end of November 2022 and will run through March 2023. The program has increased the number of shelter capacity and provides meals to their guests. (ECS SF 2022). On the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) website there are five different sites scheduled for the Interfaith Winter Shelter program, each scheduled to serve for at least four weeks. The capacity of the shelters range between 30 and 80 guests. The HSH website also has four different sites listed for the "Temporary Inclement Weather Shelter", these however, are only scheduled for ten days ending on December 19, 2022.

Aside from the inclement weather policy, San Francisco has information on their website on how to protect oneself from extreme weather and bad air quality during Covid-19. The webpage was last updated May 2022. The webpage includes how to protect oneself from extreme heat, wildfire smoke or unhealthy air. If cooling centers are available one is advised to wear a mask, but if one has Covid-19 then the individual is not allowed to use the cooling centers and is advised to seek medical attention (sf.gov). As far as protec-

tion from wildfire smoke – one is advised to create a “clean air space at home” and to wear a mask outdoors. The city also launched Urban Heat Watch, a program sponsored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association. The program will allow the city to measure how temperatures differ between neighborhoods and eventually aid the city in addressing health inequities associated with extreme heat (sf.gov 2022). The unhoused population is acknowledged as being among the cities most vulnerable to heat but there is no clear explicit language on how they will be protected.

Research Statement

This research examines whether city governments of San Francisco have done or are doing enough to protect one of their most vulnerable populations from climate risk, such as exposure to extreme weather. While we all face the consequences of climate change, it is evident that elites of the world will endure much less burden and stress, compared to the poorest and most disadvantaged groups (Friel 2019). Throughout the country’s history environmental racism and structural racism have made people of color and those living in poverty much more vulnerable and exposed to harm. Countless studies show that people of color are overrepresented within homeless populations (Olivet et al. 2021 82-83). While this is evident throughout the country, I will be focused on San Francisco, a city of immense wealth yet has been combating a homeless crisis along with extreme scarcity of affordable housing. As of 2022 the city’s homeless population decreased by a minuscule 3.5 percent, even so people of color particularly Black/African Americans and Hispanics are overrepresented (PIT Count 2022). As the city has made very little progress in alleviating the homeless crisis, it should

be a cause for concern of what is to come, as scientists and other experts are warning us of the fast-approaching climate risks, many of which will become irreversible if we do not act now.

While San Francisco per capita spends more money than any other city on homeless services (Herring 2019), the city has been unable to cope with the needs of the unhoused population (Keating 2019). San Francisco also has more anti-homeless ordinances when compared to other California cities and possibly the entire country (Herring 2019). My research will also examine how these two contradictions will affect how the city protects the unsheltered from exposure to the elements which are expected to worsen with climate change. For my Housing Policy and Planning and Urban Health Policy courses I researched the Covid-19 pandemic and the effects it had on the homeless population within San Francisco. The continuous failure towards its most vulnerable population was evident. Newly released count shows the number of deaths among individuals experiencing homelessness doubled during the first year of the pandemic, between March 17, 2020, (the day SIP was mandated) through March 16, 2021, when compared to any previous year (Cawley et al. 2022). As city leaders have fallen short, non-profit organizations and advocacy groups have stepped in to provide aid to the homeless population. As part of my research I will be interviewing employees from non-profit organizations aimed to support unhoused individuals and finding permanent solutions to homelessness. Interviewing individuals who work closely with the homeless population will provide insight on what they witness and experience through their crucial work.

Literature Review

On April 4, 2022, the Intergovern-

mental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its 6th report with suggested climate solutions. Previous reports by the IPCC have taken up to seven years to compile. This report could potentially be the last warning to all governments before some of the catastrophic effects of climate change become irreversible (Harvey 2022). Within the latest report the IPCC has called out the wealthier individuals and multinational corporations on their obligation and high potential to reduce their “luxury emissions” (Alexander 2022). While the world’s largest and wealthiest producers of pollutants are hardly reprimanded for their offenses, the more impoverished countries and the impoverished communities within wealthy countries are facing the biggest burdens of climate change. Robert D. Bullard, an expert on environmental justice, argued that while the U.S. does have some of the best environmental laws in the world, not all communities are equal. For decades, studies have shown and continue to show that low-income communities and people of color are disproportionately exposed to environmental injustices (Bullard 2003). This is due to the country’s long history of systemic oppression that has kept certain groups without protection from harm. British geographer, Harriet Bulkeley, says, within cities, climate risks have been “historically and systemically produced through urbanization” and the urban poor are the most vulnerable and face greater risks of climate change (2014, 35).

Over 50 years ago, biologists J. Clarence Davies III and Barbara S. Davies argued that when it comes to pollution control it should be the government setting standards and being strict with implementing them: yet the biggest and wealthiest producers of pollutants are the ones who set the standards. Thus private entities have gotten away with destroying the environ-

ment for all living organisms (Davies & Davies 1975). Davies and Davies, though their argument was half a century ago, is still very relevant as governments are moving slow in setting the standards and with the release of the 2022 IPCC report, world climate experts have criticized governments for not taking enough initiative to lower carbon emissions. While environmental scientists and other experts work toward aiding us in transitioning to a more green society, for now, their efforts can merely be suggestions. In a podcast, *A Rude Awakening*, environmental scientist Jonathan Foley, when discussing the suggested climate solutions within the IPCC report, only briefly mentions the importance of energy affordability for all. Then, Bulkeley in her book on climate change, in reference to the Fourth Assessment Report by the IPCC from 2007, mentions the importance of acknowledging the vulnerability of certain groups. The discussions of the current and past IPCC reports in terms of vulnerability has veered my research into whether the transition into a low-carbon society includes protection for our most vulnerable populations: more specifically the unhoused population with a focus on San Francisco, CA, one of the wealthiest cities in the nation.

In 2017, San Francisco was home to 74 billionaires, the third highest number of billionaire residents in the world (Peiffer et. al 2022). In a report released by UC Berkeley, it was stated that the median sale price for a home in San Francisco reached 1.3 million and a family of four earning up to \$165,000 per year is considered “middle income” (Garcia, et al. 2022). Yet, as the city has earned the title of one of the wealthiest and most expensive cities in the entire country, it has fallen short of providing enough affordable housing and all while combating homelessness.

As previously stated, San Francisco spends billions of dollars on homeless services yet has approximately 24 anti-homeless laws in place. On average, California cities have nine anti homeless laws (Herring 2019). Activists and city leaders blame the worsening crisis on San Francisco’s history of anti-homeless policies which may have also played a critical role in exacerbating the crisis during the COVID-19 pandemic. While an unexpected threat, the city and county of San Francisco, received praise for the initiatives taken throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the city seems to be receiving critique in regard to the slow but pervasive threat, climate change. Critics claim the city is not prepared for the transformation climate change will have on our city and entire region (Charnock 2022). As we face the consequences of climate change, Kristina Dahl, et al. have found extreme heat may very well be the one that affects the daily life of the average US resident the most (Dahl et al. 2019 1). City inhabitants have already begun to experience the heat island effects. Heat islands are urban areas experiencing higher temperatures than outlying or rural areas due to that lack of greenery, such as trees which are vital for shade, and infrastructure made of materials, such as concrete that absorbs heat (EPA). As heat waves intensify there will be more heat related deaths and illnesses especially within heat islands and among vulnerable populations. The homeless population, which are largely found within cities, are among the most exposed to climate risk. Homeless individuals often do not have access to resources such as shade, air conditioning or cooling centers. These resources are necessary to protect themselves from extreme heat (Kristina Dahl, et al. 2019 25). In Dahl’s et al.’s report there are numerous suggestive actions we should take to prepare for the rising temperatures, yet

that’s all most climate solutions are – suggestions, until governments begin to set standards.

Research Design/Research Methodology

In an attempt to uncover the answer to whether San Francisco is doing enough to protect its unsheltered homeless population from extreme weather, expected to worsen with climate change, I will be conducting qualitative research by way of interviews. The interviewees will be professionals at nonprofit organizations who work to aid the unhoused population. One being, LavaMaex, a nonprofit that was founded in 2013, provides mobile showers and other supportive services that promote wellbeing to those experiencing homelessness. With the San Francisco Bay Area experiencing record breaking temperatures (National Weather Service) this passed Labor Day weekend, I am curious to know whether LavaMaex witnessed a notable difference in the amount of homeless individuals seeking a cool shower or other services to escape the heat. The second nonprofit, Coalition on Homelessness (COH) in San Francisco, since 1987 their mission has been to provide supportive and on-going services to homeless people and create permanent solutions to homelessness (COH). I chose to reach out to COH given the organization’s long-standing history of combating the city’s homeless crisis. The research instruments will include in-depth open-ended questions and analysis of the interviews with inductive coding. For this research inductive coding will potentially aid me in finding my answer since as of now I do not know what the salient themes are. These interviews and answers to my questions of whether the efforts of the city are sufficient enough could uncover other important factors and issues. Through these interviews I hope to gain some insight from the crucial

and necessary work these nonprofit organizations do to alleviate the homeless crisis within the city of San Francisco. Also, I will review some of the anti-homeless ordinances in place as well as search for initiatives that are designed to protect the homeless population from extreme weather conditions. Thus far I found, the HSH website has information on locations of cooling stations in public libraries during heatwaves. My questions for the interviewees will be whether they believe the initiatives the city has in place during inclement weather, are sufficient enough. The follow-up question would be for the interviewees to explain why or why not. I understand this is a very broad topic. With a time frame of only four months (August through December), I will not be able to interview multiple homeless focused organizations so my findings will be limited to the ones I can interview. However, I expect to find that the reasonings whether the policies are believed to be sufficient enough will be overwhelming. Moreover, asking open-ended questions in terms of sufficiency will allow the professionals to share and elaborate on their lived experience of what they witness on a daily basis working with such a vulnerable population.

Limitations

For this research I reached out to seven nonprofit homeless advocacy organizations and only two responded. Though this is understandable considering the demand of supportive services. Thus my research and findings revolve around the responses and shared information from LavaMaex and Coalition on Homelessness. Another limitation was that there simply was not enough information available to thoroughly answer the question of whether San Francisco is doing enough to protect its most vulnerable population from climate risk.

More research needs to be done and one semester was not enough time.

Findings

In short, the answer to whether San Francisco's efforts to protect the homeless population from climate risk is sufficient, is no. At least that is what I gathered from my interviews with Elaine, the programs and impact director of LavaMaex and Helen, the executive director of COH. While both shared insights based on their experience and the services provided by each organization, their answers as to what the prominent solution is: permanent, adequate, affordable housing. Helen stressed that housing will address many issues and that includes protection from climate risk. However, providing housing alone is not always enough. Many individuals who once experienced homelessness need supportive resources that will enable them to stay in their homes. Supportive housing has been proven to be an effective method to address homelessness, increasing housing stability, addressing health issues and even decreasing public cost. Research within San Francisco estimated that by the seventh year of benefiting from supportive housing, the savings of health care cost per individual was over \$13,000 (Wolin & Perkins 2018). According to Helen, there is a lack of behavioral help and long-term support – some individuals who may have a disability that prevents them from working, will need on-going supportive resources throughout their life. Providing more supportive resources and services can also prevent homelessness. San Francisco does in fact have an inclement (or severe weather) policy. However, COH finds that the policy is too hard to follow. During extreme heat waves, cooling centers are offered in libraries, but people are not allowed to bring in property, including pets. During wildfire season, when air quality is

bad due to smoke, one is advised to stay indoors. Lastly, the capacity of shelters are never comprehensive. For instance, while the Interfaith Winter Shelter program intends to increase the number of shelter beds, the site with the highest capacity is only for 80 guests. Currently, there are an estimated 7,754 people experiencing homelessness, nearly 4,400 are unhoused individuals (PIT Count 2022). In October 2021, San Francisco had one of its worst storms in 26 years, and COH drafted a letter addressed to Mayor London Breed with suggestive solutions to improve the city's severe weather protocol. According to the letter, the notification of emergency shelter arrived on a Friday night, when most organizations are closed for the weekend. While rains began on a Friday, shelter beds were not made available until Sunday. The letter also addressed concerns about city sweeps. Despite the limited number of shelter beds and mats during the cold and rainy season, tents, tarps, and other gear the individual had for protection were confiscated. Leaving the individual completely unsheltered.

The letter presented several recommendations on how to make the policy more effective. A couple of the recommendations included funding for emergency staff to allow existing shelters to operate 24/7 during severe weather. Also, ensuring the number of shelter beds and mats are adequate. COH requested that homeless sweeps, property confiscation including tents are banned. Tents are vital as there are never enough shelter beds to accommodate the thousands of unhoused individuals. Lastly, within the letter, there is an emphasis in communication recommendations. Although initiatives are in place during severe weather, during the informational interview, Helen expressed that initiatives were never advertised enough.

The recommendations in

the letter include announcing shelter locations on electronic boards on bus and train stops. Encouraging news media to run banners on the bottom of the screen. Also, urging the city to have “predetermined” sites for shelter beds and begin sharing information on how to access them immediately after the sites have been determined. It seems access to information is not made available until after shelters are set. Poor communication in the past has led to shelter beds being underutilized.

Poor communication was also evident during the Covid-19 pandemic. According to Wise, many unhoused individuals were unaware or uninformed that the world was amidst a pandemic. Moreover LavaMaex’s impact has inspired and reached over 81 cities in the country to launch their own mobile showers programs. During the interview, Wise stated that there has been an increase of homelessness throughout the country. There are more unhoused individuals as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the number is expected to increase. Many people have not been able to recover financially, and some have not been able to find jobs. In addition to providing mobile showers to people experiencing homelessness, LavaMaex also provides supportive services during their Pop-Up Care Villages which are scheduled once a week in the city. During these pop-ups, people are offered services such as case management and health care, as well as haircuts and clothing. Recently, LavaMaex has seen an increase in individuals facing housing insecurity, also seeking their services. Housing insecurity includes severe rent burdens (Wolin & Perkins 2018) which can leave individuals unable to afford other necessities such as health care. Supportive services are crucial to both the unhoused and low-income housed individuals and

their families.

Conclusion

Enough research supports that the conditions of one’s housing, housing insecurity or the lack of housing can be damaging to human health. Permanent, adequate, stable, and affordable housing is a key solution to innumerable issues. In addition to housing, some individuals and families need accessible and on-going supportive resources necessary to keep them housed which will also enable them to thrive. It is crucial that San Francisco meets its deadline of adding nearly 47,000 affordable housing units by 2030. This is the same deadline the city has for adding thousands of publicly accessible charging infrastructure to accommodate EVs. The most prominent issue with initiatives taken during the Covid-19 pandemic and severe weather is they are temporary fixes. Another issue is that there are just not enough shelter beds for the nearly 8,000 people experiencing homelessness. These issues on top of city sweeps leaves thousands of individuals exposed to illnesses, infection, and the elements.

It would not be realistic to say we can eradicate homelessness, but it is evident more effort is needed to drastically alleviate the crisis, that is both, the homeless crisis, and the housing crisis. Although deaths of those experiencing homelessness during the first year of the pandemic do not seem to be a result of exposure to the elements – the doubling of deaths reflects the city’s failures to the homeless population. The coronavirus pandemic was unexpected and shut down nearly the entire world. Even so, San Francisco was fast in setting initiatives that undoubtedly saved numerous lives. Climate change however, the effects are manifesting slowly. It is still a threat, nonetheless, and unlike the Covid-19 pandemic, the effects of climate change are ex-

pected. The city has time to ensure the homeless population does not fall victim to the effects and risks of climate change. If the city fails the homeless population this time around, frankly, it will be evident homelessness is the least of the city’s priorities.

Works Cited

- Accessing Temporary Shelter. (2022). Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing. <https://hsh.sfgov.org>
- Bastone, N. (2022, August 10). San Francisco housing policies under state review. Axios. <https://www.axios.com>
- Bullard, R. D., & Wright, B. H. (1986). The Politics of Pollution: Implications for the Black Community. *Phylon* (1960-), 47(1), 71 -78.
- Bulkeley, H. (2014). *Cities and Climate Change* (1st ed.). Routledge.
- City Administrator. (2022, September). San Francisco activates heat mapping effort as City prepares for heat. <https://sf.gov>
- Canales, K. (2020, April 11). There are more vacant hotel rooms in San Francisco than there are homeless people as the city decides whether to house its 8,000 homeless in empty hotels. Business Insider Nederland.
- Cawley, C., Kanzaria, H. K., Zevin, B., Doran, K. M., Kushel, M., & Raven, M. C. (2022). Mortality Among People Experiencing Homelessness in San Francisco During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *JAMA Network Open*, 5(3), e221870. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.1870>
- Coalition on Homelessness San Francisco, & Friedenbach, J. (2021). *Severe Weather Protocol Recommendations*.
- Davies, B. S., & Davies, B. S. (1975). *The Politics of Pollution*. Pegasus.
- Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing. (2022). 2022 Point-in-Time Count. <https://hsh.sfgov.org/get-involved/2022-pit-count/>
- Dickey, M. R. (2022, October 4). San Francisco gets over \$117M to build affordable housing. Axios. <https://www.axios.com>
- Episcopal Community Services of San Francisco. (2022, December 5). Interfaith Winter Shelter. <https://ecs-sf.org/interfaith-winter-shelter/>

- Friel, S., & Krieger, N. (2019). *Climate Change and the People's Health (Small Books Big Ideas in Population Heal)* (Illustrated). Oxford University Press.
- Garcia, D., Manji, S., Underriner, Q., & Reid, C. (2022, April 4). The Landscape of Middle-Income Housing Affordability in California. *Turner Center*. <https://turnercenter.berkeley.edu>
- Harvey, F. (2022, April 6). IPCC report: 'now or never' if world is to stave off climate disaster. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com>
- Herring, C. (2019). Complaint-Oriented Policing: Regulating Homelessness in Public Space. *American Sociological Review*, 84(5), 769–800. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122419872671>
- Ho, V. (2020, July 1). San Francisco's homeless deaths have tripled. Advocates blame city neglect during pandemic. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com>
- Ho, V. (2020, July 1). "A true emergency:" Covid-19 pushes homeless crisis in San Francisco's Tenderloin to the brink. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com>
- Interfaith Winter Shelter. (2022, December 5). Episcopal Community Services of San Francisco. <https://ecs-sf.org/interfaith-winter-shelter/>
- Jacobs, S. (2022, April 8). A Rude Awakening with Jamie Alexander and Jonathan Foley of Project Drawdown. *KPFA*. <https://kpfa.org>
- Keating, W. Dennis. "The Right to Housing - The Goal Versus the Reality". 2020
- Kukura, J. (2021, December 15). San Francisco Remains the Safest Large City In the U.S. — When Comes to COVID Mortality. *SFist - San Francisco News, Restaurants, Events, & Sports*. <https://sfist.com>
- Mamo, L. and Acosta, M. E. "Narratives of Housing Displacement and Health in San Francisco: Eviction as Public Health Crisis." *PACE Applied Housing Research Initiative Working Paper* 2020
- Mitchell, D. (1997). The Annihilation of Space by Law: The Roots and Implications of Anti-Homeless Laws in the United States. *Antipode*, 29(3), 303–335. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8330.00048>
- Olivet, J., Wilkey, C., Richard, M., Dones, M., Tripp, J., Beit-Arie, M., Yampolskaya, S. & Cannon, R. (2021). Racial Inequity and Homelessness: Findings from the SPARC Study. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 693(1), 82–100. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716221991040>
- Peiffer, E., Batko, S., Bond, L., Moraras, P., Ta, J., Koo, I. and Newman, R. (2022, October 5). 'A Jolt of Energy' to San Francisco's Homelessness Response System. *Urban Institute*. <https://www.urban.org>
- Plan Bay Area 2050. Chapter 2: Housing. (May 2021). <https://www.planbayarea.org/2050-plan/draft-plan-bay-area-2050/chapter-2-housing>
- San Francisco Board of Supervisors. (2022, July 18). Amended in Committee Ordinance No. 190-22. Planning Code – Electric Vehicle Charging Locations. <https://sfbos.org/sites/default/files/o0190-22.pdf>
- Reid, C. (2022, April 4). On the Edge of Homelessness: The Vulnerability of Extremely Low-Income Households in the Bay Area. *Turner Center*.
- Rezal, A., & Caughey, E. (2022, June 29). What are San Francisco's biggest problems? Here's what you should know. *The San Francisco Chronicle*. <https://www.sfchronicle.com/projects/2022/fixing-san-francisco-problems/Housing/>
- Wolin, J. and Perkins, Jacquie. "Overview of Health and Housing". *PACE Center for Applied Housing Research Working Paper* 2018