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Meet the candidates, week 22: “What is the most neglected part of District 1 and what do you plan to do about it? Please name a specific area and a specific idea to redress the neglect.”

The Richmond District is a close knit neighborhood. It is bound by commonalities such as schools, markets, and merchant corridors. Any area one identifies as neglected directly affects an adjacent area. To identify one area and not address the impact it has on the whole of the neighborhood is not the way to solve our challenges.

For years, everyday Richmond District residents and small business owners haven't had a seat at the table in our local neighborhood decision making. This leadership void has led to neglect in several areas of the Richmond, which we all feel acutely today.

To address these issues, we must focus on four key areas: enhancing public safety, revitalizing merchant corridors, improving parks and open spaces, and strengthening residential neighborhoods while increasing access to housing.

Public Safety/Increase Police Presence: We need to increase foot patrols and community policing efforts along not just our merchant corridors but also in our residential neighborhoods to deter crime and build stronger relationships between police and residents. A visible police presence will make shoppers, business owners, and residents feel safer, encouraging more foot traffic and economic activity. We can't do this without a fully staffed police department, and with such limited staffing at Richmond Station we must continue to prioritize recruiting efforts. In the interim, giving officers the tools they need to succeed — as outlined in Proposition E in the March 2024 election, will help.

Support Small Businesses: Our merchant corridors, once bustling with activity, have seen a decline in public safety, increased property crime, vacant storefronts, and underutilized parks and open spaces, which adversely affect the neighborhood's vitality and residential appeal.

I will work to streamline the permitting process for new businesses and provide grants or low-interest loans to help existing businesses upgrade their storefronts. The Supervisor's office is uniquely positioned to work with local merchants to

attract more customers and clients to the Richmond District and highlight the unique offerings of Clement, Geary, and Balboa.

Enhance Green Spaces: We will invest in upgrading local parks and open spaces, ensuring they are clean, safe, and well-maintained. This includes adding more recreational facilities, improving lighting, and organizing community events to activate these spaces and make them central to neighborhood life.

Support our residential areas and access to housing: Upgrading sidewalks, adding street lighting, and enhancing public spaces will make our merchant corridors and surrounding residential areas more pedestrian-friendly and inviting. We must also improve transit access and traffic calming measures to ensure safe, walkable streets. We must create more mixed-income housing that is accessible to middle class families and working people, while continuing to support policies that protect tenants from displacement and provide assistance to those facing housing insecurity.

By focusing on the above areas, we can ensure that the Richmond District will be a safe, thriving neighborhood.