

RECOVERY. REJUVENATION. RESILIENCE.



Vallie Brown has a vision for a stronger, more vibrant and inclusive District 5.



To bring District 5 back from the health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to think and act broader and bolder. We need an aggressive and community-based path forward for District 5 to emerge from this crisis — one that will protect and enhance our safety, neighborhood vibrancy, and diversity.

Without action, the impacts of this crisis will permanently devastate vulnerable communities, shutter restaurants, cafes, bars and commercial corridors, exacerbate inequality, and lead to more housing insecurity and ingrained homelessness with more despair than before. With the right approach that includes all of us working together, we can emerge as stronger neighborhoods in a stronger City.

I've worked in our neighborhoods, and in nonprofits. I've created housing on City land. I've served two previous District 5 Supervisors. And I've served the City and our neighborhoods in previous times of crisis. I know that the best ideas come from the grassroots level, and that we have to fight for more creative and more sustained action. I'm sharing initial ideas, which together we can build into a shared vision.

This is going to be a long haul. Regardless of how the public health aspects develop in the coming months, the impacts of this crisis will continue to be felt in our city budget, our local economy, and our health in the years ahead.

It's not just the safety we achieve now, but what we can sustain into 2021 and beyond. And, it's not being safe but feeling safe. It's not politicians in City Hall, but individuals and families in their living rooms who will make the final decisions about how they live, work, engage with transit and businesses, and community. It's not about political grandstanding and who can turn this crisis into an opportunity to get their preexisting pet project approved; it's about the people we serve. We must work on the grassroots level to ensure everyone feels safe and included in what happens in our community.

I'm committed to looking at every aspect of how City leadership touches our lives and how we can pull together to create positive change. Please reach out to me at vallie@votevallie.com to share your concerns, ideas, and even where we might disagree. My approach has always been to bring people together and bridge gaps where they exist. This is no time for politics. It's time for all of us to pitch in, work together, and rejuvenate District 5 and all of San Francisco.

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Protect Public Health Locally

There are things we can do locally to protect public health. We can bring together the City, nonprofits, and community members to share information and best practices, and connect with diverse communities. Right now, public health is at the center of everything, and our collective decisions to work from home, close restaurants and non-essential retail and services, has been the right decision. Those decisions are just part of a much broader set of public health, economic, and behavioral changes that our City must address to keep people safe from this destructive virus.

- + Create a new hub in D5 for testing, contact tracing, and volunteering. Thanks to leadership from the Department of Public Health, we have a testing site in the Western Addition at the Maxine Hall Community Health Center. To best serve District 5 and our surrounding neighborhoods, we should also add a site in the Inner Sunset to provide greater accessibility.
- + Establish a COVID-19 recovery neighborhood advisory council in each neighborhood to facilitate community involvement in sharing best practices, reporting problems, and cleaning for public safety.
- + Support nonprofits performing public health functions and outreach. Nonprofits are stepping up to help during this time of crisis, but they need more support from the City, more funding, more volunteers, and better coordination with each other and the people they are working to help.
- + Work with the Department of Public Health to ensure people have access to resources, information, and the support they need to stay healthy and stop the spread of the virus.



Bringing Back Small Businesses & Neighborhood Vibrancy

Our neighborhood small businesses are the fabric of our communities. Helping small businesses survive and bounce back is one of the main ways in which we can make a difference at the local level. It was already difficult before the crisis for restaurants and storefront businesses to make it in San Francisco. Restrictions have been costing store front small businesses a ridiculous amount of time and money. When I was supervisor, I passed Small Business Streamlining legislation to address many of the issues small businesses were facing with City permitting. But with the COVID-19 crisis, we have to do more, and be bolder and more innovative in how we help commercial corridors including the Fillmore, Japantown, Divisadero, Upper and Lower Haight.



HELPING RESTAURANTS, BARS, AND RETAIL THAT SERVE THE COMMUNITY

- + To allow appropriate distance between customers, some of our smaller bars and restaurants should be allowed to serve outside in public spaces. The City should be working with our State representatives to give small bars and restaurants the opportunity to serve alcohol in outdoor spaces including sidewalks, streets, and parklets to serve customers.
- + Before the crisis, getting approval to use existing patio and outdoor space was a huge challenge. We should allow patios, garages, parking lots, sidewalk tables and even backyards connected to the businesses to host service.



- + We can make “Food Islands” by making sidewalks, parking lots, and public spaces like the Japantown plaza available for restaurants and retail, even if they are at a distance from the brick-and-mortar business. It will take a change of mindset by City politicians and bureaucrats, and support from neighbors. We need to find ways to be creative and say yes so we can stay vibrant and keep businesses alive.

SUSTAINING SAFE PRACTICES

- + We need to make sure there are clear guidelines for social distancing and keep these rules in place throughout 2021. The City must be involved in creating solutions and be clear with everyone that there's no magic wand coming to eliminate public health risks that will linger; all businesses and customers should be acting differently, not waiting for a return to “normal.” We have to adjust and thrive under more challenging restrictions.



SMOOTHING THE WAY FOR NEW WAYS OF SHOPPING

- + Implement curb parking management in all corridors to reduce double parking by having more loading zones, pick up-drop off parking and various parking times, ranging from 15 minutes to a few hours. We need to make it easy for folks to pick up purchases from small businesses across the district to help merchants as they transition to sidewalk pick up. As Supervisor, I worked with the Inner Sunset neighbors to implement the first commercial and short-term parking program.



- +The City should sponsor eCommerce collectives, working with business, nonprofit and neighborhood groups to foster e-commerce options for businesses who do not have the bandwidth to transition on their own. We can explore portals for businesses in the same neighborhood or street to feature products and services for pick up or delivery. We must recognize that many of our small businesses are struggling, and re-opening these stores will require creative solutions. Shop local needs to take on a whole new meaning.



- +Touchless deliveries and eCommerce doesn't work for the unbanked, and the cost of banking is out of reach for people with insecure income. The City should provide no-fee prepaid debit cards and also offer cash refunds for remaining balances.

REMOVING REMAINING PERMITTING DELAYS AND BURDENS.

- +The city has long been discussing ways to reduce permitting times for our local businesses, which in our current system drag on and add huge costs to opening or changing the physical scope of businesses. We should streamline small business permits and require the City to approve, or reject with cause, any permit within 45 days, waive all fees if it takes up to 90 days, or automatically grant approval if it takes longer than 90 days. The City can process routine requests if we apply the right incentives and pressure. This will help businesses that need to change or want to open to fill the void.



- + Delay business taxes for all small businesses (under 20 employees) to 2021.

UNLEASHING CREATIVITY



- + It's time to allow our small business owners to finally unleash their full creative potential. We have a vibrant cohort of small businesses in our many D5 commercial corridors and it is our responsibility as local leaders to bring them to the table and listen to their ideas and innovations around operating during this crisis.

Reimagining Public Spaces

Our parks, streets and farmers markets need to play a new role. These are now critical public spaces that allow us to function as a community. I was involved in creating the first parklets and farmers markets in District 5 when I worked as an aide. Out of COVID, we can find new ways to imagine public spaces.



- + Expand farmers markets with more frequent markets, increased time when appropriate, and more space. Let's keep local farmers thriving and ensure access to fresh food for our neighborhoods.

- + Expand parklets for outdoor tables. Many of our local restaurants are not equipped for indoor social distancing and we must consider outdoor alternatives.

- + Create new open spaces for people to get outside by closing sections of commercial corridors to cars, for instance we could make parts of Haight, Divisadero, Fillmore, and Irving into pedestrian-only corridors to let small businesses, especially restaurants and bars, to use that new open space for safe social distancing.

- + As we open up — not before — let's look at more evening pedestrian-only streets, potentially larger side streets, that could close a lane and turn to one-way only traffic on planned evenings.



- + Creating “night markets” for food trucks, farmers markets, and local merchants to stay open later and reach more people. Large parks like the Panhandle and Kimbell Playground could be opened and lit on special community nights with local vendors.

Transportation

The future of our public transportation system is a huge concern as we emerge from this crisis. Re-opening Muni lines that have been shut down during this crisis will require all of us to be able to move with confidence. All steps must follow public health guidance, but even if the health crisis ebbs, we have to ensure riders feel comfortable. We must redouble our efforts to decrease crowding on MUNI which is now not only inconvenient, but poses a public health risk. We have to protect Muni operators and of course everyone who takes public transportation. And we can't lose sight of issues that existed before the crisis. We can't afford long term damage to our public transportation system that so many rely on. It's also time to double down on our efforts to promote biking and walking.



- + Explore the option of “open air” shuttle service through 2021 for N-Judah, the 5-Fulton, 21 Hayes to supplement traditional trains and buses.

- + Protect the health of Muni drivers and passengers with new physical barriers to prevent the spread of the virus between the driver and passengers, and between fellow passengers.



- + Equip Muni vehicles with hand sanitizer dispensers and disposable masks for passengers who attempt to ride without appropriate protection, and Clipper Cards and contactless payments, including mobile payment on the MuniMobile app, should be encouraged and made more easily available.

+ Install more bike racks and prioritized spaces for bikes while residents run errands, pick up groceries and takeout, and enjoy the physical and mental health benefits of the outdoors from a safe distance.

+ Explore community “valet” parking for bikes and cars during street closures for residents to bike and drive into commercial corridors on weekends and evenings.



+ Update parking management policies to reduce double parking by having more loading zones, pick up-drop off parking and various parking times, ranging from 15 minutes to a few hours.

+ Expand the “Slow Streets” program by rerouting buses a few blocks to close streets. Page Street is already part of the program, and I believe this program could be expanded to include corridors such as Divisadero which could be opened up for open air dining and more socially distanced walks and biking.

Vulnerable Communities

Low income communities in District 5 face even more pressure from COVID-19. In the short term, we need to look first at the essentials: food and housing, and particularly at families and children at risk. District 5 has vulnerable communities that have been hit hard and we must prioritize thinking about these groups when we make plans for recovery.



+ We must rethink how we work with nonprofits by scaling up what works to support vulnerable communities, from food banks to health care clinics to daycare providers. We can also create City-sponsored collaboratives for nonprofits to share resources and support each other and serve vulnerable communities more effectively.



+ With more residents experiencing the food insecurity that comes with loss of income, the City needs to be fully prepared to continue providing food resources for vulnerable residents through 2021.

+The City must supercharge our job placement and training programs with the understanding that some workers will not be able to return to their jobs because they simply don't exist anymore. From contact tracing to health care to apprenticeships, we must be innovative to get people into high demand and high paying jobs to be even stronger after COVID-19 than before.

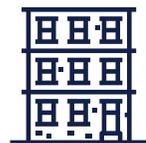


Housing

I have a strong track record of pushing for city policies and practices that expand the availability of housing at all levels of affordability in District 5, and COVID-19 has made the imperative to build more housing even more urgent and critical than before. We cannot let our politics get in the way of ensuring everyone has a home they can afford.

+ Zone our neighborhoods for affordability with higher levels of density to meet the public demand for more housing and more 100% affordable housing. This must include removing the restrictions that have been designed to keep low-income renters out.

+ Create new and denser housing on underutilized lots in the district on former commercial land and in our neighborhood corridors, not necessarily on traditional residential streets, which would allow us to expand the Neighborhood Preference Policy that I helped create to include people with historical ties to the district as well as existing neighborhood residents.



+ Support community-based solutions like co-ops and other alternative models for affordable housing. St Francis Square in the Western Addition is a model for building housing for low to middle income residents.

+ Demand fairness in qualifying for public housing. There is huge demand for public housing, which has created far too many challenges and regulations for people seeking public housing, for current residents, and for the agencies and nonprofits that manage public housing. We need to work with tenants and our partners to create a more fair system.



+ Encourage more building owners to accept Section 8 vouchers. As landlords are seeing a much higher rate of nonpayment, we should encourage them to accept Section 8 vouchers as a guaranteed source of payment from the Housing Authority.



+ Expand renter protections by identifying key areas to increase enforcement and penalties for illegal evictions, including and not limited to harassment, unfounded threat of eviction, and withholding legally required habitability repairs.

Homelessness

COVID-19 has cratered our homelessness crisis to an even more intractable level than before. We must address this public health crisis with sustainable solutions for the homeless that address the heart of the issue: lack of service and supportive housing.



+ Establish more supportive housing by expanding the Small Sites program to purchase private buildings and create small supportive housing sites with off-site or drop-in resident support services. These sites will provide housing for the most vulnerable residents transitioning out of homelessness, and off-site supportive service is far more cost-effective and is a solution that can be implemented immediately.

+ Identify smaller and more dispersed supportive housing options, including renting vacant apartments and permanently converting certain hotels into housing. We can be more creative and broader in our approach by thinking "smaller" and broader instead of arguing over larger facilities that won't come online for some time.

+ Focus on getting people out of tents, not into tents, with real solutions that address the crisis right now. We must focus on getting people off the streets and into housing with access to existing services and a pathway to permanent housing.



+ Provide both on-site and off-site mental illness and substance abuse resources along with any temporary housing made available to individuals currently experiencing homelessness.

Dealing with a Reduced City Budget

We face a massive budget deficit due to COVID-19 and have to be realistic about what's possible and what we can afford to prioritize right now. We need pragmatic leaders who are able to think realistically and prioritize how to best spend each budget dollar. I worked on City staff during the 2008 recession and saw the pressure it can put on services and jobs right when they are needed most. It is crucial that we are able to meet this moment and recognize that the budget surplus we have seen in the past is gone, and we need leaders who can make tough decisions.



+ Explore cutting the City's outside contract budget in half. Contracting has become a short-cut means of hiring city staff, even when the work is needed. It often creates more short term costs because outside services are more expensive with separate functions receiving separate contracts, when one city staffer could do the work. A cut to contracting would help eliminate less efficient contracts, and create good paying full-time jobs.

+ Fund entry level jobs that are prioritized for city residents. The City is the largest employer in San Francisco and there are needs that can be filled by low-income and out of work San Franciscans.

+ Create district collaboratives with non-profits to increase efficiency and save money providing nonprofit services funded by the City.

