Jesse Arreguín
Councilmember, District 4

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ACTION CALENDAR
January 22, 2013
(Continued from December 18, 2012)

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Jesse Arreguín

Subject: Compassionate Sidewalks Plan

RECOMMENDATION:
Direct the City Manager to convene a working group of representatives of City staff, the Homeless, Housing Advisory, Human Welfare & Community Action, and Police Review Commissions, the Police Department, and other stakeholders, including but not limited to business owners, homeless persons, service providers, students, and academic experts to develop a Compassionate Sidewalks Plan over a series of workshops.

The working group should focus but is not limited to the following topics:

1) The demographics and causes of homelessness
2) A survey of existing homeless services
3) An assessment of potential funding needs and sources
4) Existing laws and enforcement
5) Best Practices

BACKGROUND:
After months of contentious debate, Berkeley voters concluded with over 52% of the vote that Measure S, also known as Civil Sidewalks, was not the correct approach to address homeless individuals sitting upon commercial sidewalks. However, the rejection of Measure S is not an endorsement of inaction; it is a call to Council to do the job that it was elected to do: formulate solutions based on research and consultation with stakeholders.

The issues of homelessness are incredibly complex and demand in-depth research and discussion. Any proposal addressing homelessness requires an understanding of the demographics of the homeless population, the causes of homelessness, existing laws, a survey of existing resources and services, and an evaluation of best practices, among other things, if it is to be effective and successful.

We are a smart and compassionate city. With community collaboration and some critical and creative thinking, we can find solutions that make sense and reflect our values.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:
Unknown, some staff time

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