



SoMa West CBD Fact Sheet

2/2/2019

“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.” - Jane Jacobs – quotation in Urban Place Consulting Group proposal on creation of the SoMa West CBD

- The votes of property owners are valued relative to the size of their properties. The five biggest votes in favor of the SoMa West CBD accounted for 40% of the weighted vote in favor of it. Those five votes were cast by:
 - Three companies headquartered outside of San Francisco.
 - One large company headquartered in San Francisco.
 - The city and county of San Francisco.
- Only 21% of property owners that will have to pay for the SoMa West CBD submitted petitions in favor of its formation.
 - 589 of the 2738 parcels
- 68% of property owners never even returned their petitions.
- The city decided its position before any public hearing. The Board of Supervisors voted to submit petitions in favor of the SoMa West CBD on behalf of city property four months before the public hearing. They then passed a resolution declaring their intent to form the SoMa West CBD before the public hearing.
- \$211,000.00 of city taxpayer money will go to the SoMa West CBD in just the first year.
 - \$9,000.00 will pay for our public library.
 - \$24,000.00 will pay for our parks.
- \$234,000.00 of state taxpayer money will go to the SoMa West CBD in just the first year.
- 79% of the SoMa West CBD budget (\$3,129,103.00) will go to security and “beautification.”
- When the city passed local legislation in 1995 that made it easier to form BIDs in SF they included a section that made BIDs report to the city’s Human Rights Commission due to public security concerns. That section was removed by legislation passed in 2004.

What is a BID?

Over the past several decades Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) have been greatly expanding across California, and they have acted to criminalize the presence and activities of poor people in public spaces. A BID is a special, legal subdivision of the city. BIDs are funded by city collected assessments on property, including properties owned by the city and non-profits. The BIDS use these funds with very little public oversight.

What do BIDs do?

BIDs spend money on the following types of activities:

- Security through ambassadors or private officers that patrol public spaces (sometimes armed and assisted by electronic security systems).
- Drafting and promoting legislation that criminalizes poor and homeless people. They lobby local and state legislators to push legislation that supports the targeting, harassment and exclusion of homeless people, poor people, street vendors, and buskers from their districts.
- Opposing legislation that seeks to protect street based people from criminalization including those that attempt to overturn sit-lie ordinances.

Many BIDs hire private companies to implement ambassador programs that provide districts with “safety, cleaning, hospitality, outreach, and landscaping services.” In addition, Ambassadors work on behalf of the BID and wear special uniforms to distinguish themselves from the general public and from local cops (even though sometimes they can be confused for cops). BIDs are also known to hire private security or in some situations retired cops, working hand in hand with local law enforcement. Some BIDs claim to offer services, outreach, referral and resources to poor and homeless people. However, in most cities, the needs of the poor far outnumber viable services so often that the outreach that BID employees provide is superficial to non-existent.

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BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS
BIDs DESTROY OUR COMMUNITIES