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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

**MAYOR LEE ANNOUNCES \$6.7 MILLION INVESTMENT TO
STRENGTHEN LOCAL SMALL BUSINESSES & NEIGHBORHOODS**

*Funding to Support Success of Small Businesses Includes New Disaster Recovery Program, Support for Women
Entrepreneurs, Streamlining of Business Permits & Shop Local Initiatives*

San Francisco, CA – Mayor Edwin M. Lee today announced \$6.7 million over the next two years to expand services for small businesses and strengthen neighborhood commercial corridors. The City supports small businesses with resources including technical assistance, access to capital, business counseling, loans, physical improvements to storefronts, and capacity-building.

“Since day one I have made supporting small businesses and our diverse commercial corridors a priority,” said Mayor Lee. “Our goal is to encourage small businesses to start, stay and grow in our City’s unique, diverse business corridors, and these investments ensure the cultural vibrancy of our neighborhoods and commercial districts so they continue to thrive for generations. We are providing support to the small businesses that support San Francisco’s economy, while building strong communities at the same time.”

“Mayor Lee’s proposed budget addresses the real needs of our small businesses and neighborhood commercial corridors by making smart investments in programs that work,” said OEWD Director Todd Rufo. “These new initiatives will help retain and strengthen local businesses, activate vacant and underutilized neighborhood buildings and streamline and accelerate the permit process for San Francisco small businesses.”

Small businesses make up 90 percent of businesses in San Francisco, generating economic activity and employing approximately half of San Francisco’s workforce. San Francisco has more than 90,000 small businesses that create 230,000 jobs and contribute to the vibrancy of the City’s diverse neighborhoods.

The proposed funding builds on the success of the Mayor’s Invest in Neighborhood Initiative (IIN), the Office of Small Business, and the Small Business Development Center.

The \$6.7 million funding will initiate new and build upon existing programs to address critical needs along commercial corridors, including:

- *Business Retention* – Supplement existing legal services and lease assistance, the Business Retention Program will coordinate services to storefront businesses at risk of losing their leases and engage commercial brokerage services to provide real estate assistance;
- *Neighborhood Asset Activation* – Expand services to assist cultural and community facilities in their role as vital neighborhood institutions. The goal is to target vacant or underutilized buildings of cultural or historical significance and implement creative short- and long-term activation to enable identified buildings to become assets to their surrounding communities;

- *Expanded Customized Support for Neighborhood Commercial Districts* – Support the commercial districts of Japantown, Fillmore, and Lower 24th Street (Calle24) to build community capacity and implement projects and events that bolster neighborhoods;
- *Small Business Disaster Recovery Fund* – Administer a citywide program to help small businesses recover after a disaster such as fires in commercial buildings;
- *Support for Women Entrepreneurs* – Enhance support to programs that assist low-income and minority women business owners in multiple languages and cultural capacity;
- *SF Shines Express* – Expand the SF Shines Façade and Tenant Improvements Program to provide storefront improvement grants to businesses in three corridors in the outer neighborhoods of San Francisco;
- *Construction Mitigation Fund* – Develop a new citywide program that will help alleviate the impacts of major construction projects on neighborhood commercial districts;
- *Business Portal* – Implement next phase of portal which will allow businesses to apply and renew citywide permits and business registration fees online (over four years);
- *Small Business Acceleration Team (SBAT)* – Provide a dedicated case manager that will co-locate at the Department of Building Inspection at 1660 Mission focused on assisting and accelerating the permit process for restaurants and other food related businesses. This initiative is a partnership between the Department of Building Inspection, the Planning Department, the Department of Public Health, the Office of Economic and Workforce Development and others departments involved in the permitting process; and
- *Buy Local Initiatives* – Expand the Shop and Dine in the 49 and SF Biz Connect initiatives focused on increasing local purchasing at San Francisco small businesses.

In the last year, the Invest in Neighborhoods Initiative provided over 20 neighborhood grants totaling almost \$450,000 to promote, beautify, and activate our neighborhoods; completed over 140 assessments to assist small businesses in complying with the American Disabilities Act (ADA); administered 118 loans totaling over \$4.6 million to small businesses; developed business plans for over 70 small businesses to improve profit margins and strengthen business models; granted 31 local businesses a total of \$480,000 for façade and tenant improvements; transformed five small businesses so that they provide healthy food options in communities that are underserved; and visited more than 6,000 business with on the ground assistance from the Jobs Squad team.

For more information on the Invest in Neighborhoods Initiative and the Office of Economic and Workforce Development, go to: investsf.org.

Mayor Lee last week joined the White House and U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), in coordination with the National League of Cities, to launch the Startup in a Day initiative, a partnership with U.S. cities to develop online tools that let entrepreneurs discover and apply—in less than a day—for local, State, and Federal requirements needed to start a business. San Francisco is already committed to Startup in a Day solutions with the San Francisco Business Portal, a comprehensive web tool that brings together the complex information surrounding business registration, permits, and licenses in a single user-friendly City website. To access the San Francisco Business Portal, go to: businessportal.sfgov.org.

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