



# News Release

## Superior Court of California County of San Francisco

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**Gordon Park-Li, Chief Executive Officer**

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### **SURVEY REVEALS STRONG NEIGHBORHOOD SUPPORT FOR NEW COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTER**

**SAN FRANCISCO** -- Nearly 60 percent of residents and business leaders surveyed on their attitudes about the new Community Justice Center scheduled to open in March said they were "positive" or "very positive" about the new problem-solving Court, Mayor Gavin Newsom and Chief Executive Officer Gordon Park-Li announced today.

"We have maintained the status quo for far too long," said Mayor Newsom. "This survey is proof that the public wants us to rethink the way we provide services. The Community Justice Center has proven its value in other cities, it's time for San Francisco to try the same model."

"The San Francisco Superior Court is eager to begin serving the community with this problem-solving justice model that has proven successful in the City," Park-Li said. "The Community Justice Center's success depends on feedback from residents and business leaders who live and work in the Tenderloin, Civic Center, Union Square and SoMa neighborhoods. This survey clearly indicates a need for a new approach to addressing the needs of the community and the people who repeatedly commit crimes in these areas."

The survey found deep support for the Community Justice Center, a neighborhood-based collaborative justice Court that will partner with the City and County of San Francisco to assess and address the ongoing needs in people's lives that fuel individuals' repeat

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offenses on the streets in the Tenderloin and SoMa. The CJC, which is scheduled to open in early March, will process defendants who are arrested for misdemeanor and non-violent felonies in those neighborhoods.

These areas have the highest percentage of people living below the poverty line (23 percent). These neighborhoods also serve as the hub for 45 percent of the City's homeless population, and endure between one-quarter and one-third of all crime in San Francisco – including 57 percent of all drug-related crimes, according to the survey.

The survey, conducted by the City's Department of Public Health Community Behavioral Health Service, found that:

- 59 percent of those surveyed expressed "positive" or "very positive" attitudes toward the opening of the CJC. Just 8 percent reported a negative opinion about the CJC.
- 85 percent said drugs or drug-dealing were the crimes they had the most concern about, followed by 27 percent who said they were concerned about major crimes such as robbery, assault and rape. The third most-mentioned crime concern was problems related to the homeless in these areas.
- 85 percent cited homelessness as a serious problem in these neighborhoods, followed by 71 percent who said these areas were faced with drug-related crimes.
- 20 percent reported that they were victims of crime in the past year. Of these, 55 percent said they had experienced a property crime, car break-in, theft or some sort of harassment. Forty-five percent reported that they were mugged or assaulted.
- 44 percent of respondents said that they did not trust the Courts, while 25 percent said they did.

The survey was considered a key aspect of gauging the needs of the neighborhoods

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that the CJC will serve. It also will serve as a baseline for future surveys. The collaborative justice model that is the basis of the CJC is dependent on obtaining ongoing feedback from the community.

In November and December 2008, 394 surveys were collected by (1) randomly calling residents of the neighborhoods and (2) street surveys of residents, students, businesses and visitors. The survey was designed to capture information about the Community Environment, Safety, Social Services, Public Trust and Confidence, and Awareness of the CJC.

"The Court is accountable to the public, and the CJC model is an example of this commitment," said Commissioner Ron Albers, who will be presiding over the CJC. "We are confident that the CJC's success will improve the public's trust and confidence in the Court's ability to solve problems that adversely impact the lives of people who live and work in the City."

The CJC's operations and services will be co-located at 555-575 Polk St.

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