



Written by [David Kelly](#) on April 12, 2023

## A “City in Chaos”: San Francisco Whole Foods Store Closes

Whole Foods temporarily closed its new flagship store at Trinity Place in San Francisco’s Mid-Market neighborhood at the close of business Monday to protect employees from the area’s growing crime, homelessness, and open drug use.

“We are closing our Trinity location only for the time being,” a Whole Foods spokesperson said in a statement. “If we feel we can ensure the safety of our team members in the store, we will evaluate a reopening of our Trinity location,” [reported](#) the *San Francisco Standard*.

Whole Foods Market, a natural and organic foods retailer, [first opened](#) its 64,737-square-foot Trinity Place store in March of 2022 with an emphasis on local offerings from Northern California, featuring more than 3,700 local products throughout the store. The store opened in the midst of deteriorating local street conditions brought on by Covid policies and leftist leadership that has allowed crime to go unchecked.

Covid policies are partly to blame for the stores’ closure. According to a March 2023 report [published](#) by the Bay Area Council Economic Institute, as a result of the “work-from-home policies employed by Bay Area businesses, and a sharp reduction in travel, the region’s downtown cores have experienced a hollowing out of economic activity.” That has led to reduced foot traffic, vacant retail and office space, giving a ghost town feel to the once-thriving Market Street neighborhood.

The economic report cited these key findings:

- The San Francisco Bay Area has seen a five-fold increase in residents working from home since 2019.
- San Francisco and San Jose metro areas collectively lost 147,000 people during the pandemic, joining only LA, San Diego and the Miami metro areas as regions to have lost population.
- San Francisco saw office vacancies increase from 4% vacancy in Q4 2019 to 28% by Q4 2022.
- People who left the Bay Area for another state increased 33% from 2019 to 2021.
- The City of San Francisco collected \$96 million fewer dollars (or -29%) in sales tax revenue in 2021 versus 2019, taking the hardest hit of any large West Coast city.

However, crime, homelessness, and open drug use are the most likely reasons for the abrupt closure of



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the Whole Foods store. San Francisco Board of Supervisors member Matt Dorsey, who represents the closed store's district, admitted as much, [tweeting](#), "Our neighborhood waited a long time for this supermarket, but we're also well aware of problems they've experienced with drug-related retail theft, adjacent drug markets, and the many safety issues related to them."

The *San Francisco Standard* [article](#) shared, "the beleaguered grocery store on Market Street slashed its operating hours due to 'high theft' and hostile visitors in October of last year, according to one of the store's managers. And in November, the store enforced new bathroom rules after syringes and pipes were found in the restroom."

The passage of California [Proposition 47](#) in 2014 didn't help as non-violent property crimes, where the value does not exceed \$950, became a misdemeanor. That meant police officers could no longer arrest thieves; they could only write a citation and hope the accused show up to court. With this law on the books, smash-and-grab crimes became common place throughout the city, adding to retailer woes. Walgreens, [according](#) to *Time*, has "closed five of its San Francisco locations in 2021, citing theft as the reason for closure."

In a [LinkedIn post](#), Davis Smith, founder and former CEO of Cotopaxi, shared last year his experience of the opening of a new retail store on Hayes Street in San Francisco. He wrote, "Our first week there, our windows were smashed and thousands of dollars of product was stolen. We replaced the window, and it immediately happened again (four times).... Our store is hit by organized theft rings several times per week. They brazenly enter the store and grab thousands of dollars of product and walk out.... It's impossible for a retail store to operate in these circumstances, especially when cities refuse to take any action (despite us paying taxes well above any other state we operate in). The city recently announced a reduction of police presence in this neighborhood, despite mass-scale crime."

To help with reducing the growing crime and providing safety for citizens, Supervisor Dorsey is seeking a city [charter amendment](#) request that would "re-establish minimum police staffing levels, and mandate certain budgetary provisions over a five-year period to achieve a fully staffed municipal police force in the City and County of San Francisco."

The closing of the Whole Foods store is part of a trend of visible signs of the long-term consequences clearly associated with leftist policies driven by Democratic leadership that can be found in many blue cities nationwide.

Davis Smith's observation paints the truth on San Francisco's current situation. He [stated](#), "It's sad, but San Francisco appears to have descended into a city of chaos. Many streets and parks are overrun with drugs, criminals, and homelessness, and local leadership and law enforcement enable it through inaction. One of the most beautiful and amazing cities in the world is now a place where many no longer feel safe visiting or living."



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