



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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# Mayor Gloria Bringing Forward New Locations for Potential Homeless Shelters

CITY STAFF EVALUATED PROPERTIES INCLUDING SITES  
SUBMITTED BY PROPERTY OWNERS, CITY COUNCILMEMBERS AND  
INDEPENDENT BUDGET ANALYST

SAN DIEGO – In order to continue to help people get off the streets and onto the path to stable housing, the City of San Diego will present several potential sites to the City Council for their consideration on Monday. This follows an initial review of properties submitted to the City's Homelessness Strategies and Solutions Department (HSSD) and San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) by property owners or managers, along with site suggestions from City Councilmembers and the City's Independent Budget Analyst.

**"We've identified several key sites that can serve as permanent shelters, including two already owned by the City, and I urge the City Council to authorize us to take the next steps in order to help more people off the street,"** said Mayor Todd Gloria. **"Data clearly show our work to reduce homelessness is turning the tide, but we need more space for people to go. It is my hope the City Council will join me in meeting this moment with the decisiveness and urgency it demands."**

With a goal of increasing long-term capacity in the City's shelter system, the City [issued a formal solicitation](#) in September calling on property owners and managers to offer up potential locations that could be used as future shelter sites. As outlined in the [Comprehensive Shelter Strategy](#), many of the City's current shelter sites are temporary in nature, due to various site restrictions and future redevelopment plans.

Of the locations being proposed as long-term shelter options, two are City-owned properties and one is a privately owned commercial property. All three options would require site modifications and building improvements to be transformed into shelter space. The three options set to be presented to the City Council on Monday are:

- **1222 First Avenue:** The current City Operations Building, which will no longer be occupied by City workers as of this spring. The site includes five floors, totaling approximately 217,000 square feet. Refurbishment costs are estimated at \$45.2 million.

- **820 E Street:** The former Central Library building, which is currently vacant. The site includes 5 floors, with approximately 150,000 square feet. Refurbishment costs are estimated at \$86.8 million.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue property:** A privately owned, mixed-use space offering approximately 25,000 square feet. The address is being withheld given the potential for future negotiations. Its refurbishment costs are still undetermined.

Last July, City staff presented a proposed lease agreement for a large, long-term-use shelter on Kettner Boulevard in Middletown. After a year of negotiations, it was determined that this proposal could no longer advance and these three options would be presented to the City Council as alternatives on Monday.

Additionally, the City plans to nearly double the Safe Parking Program this spring with a new lot expected to open on Harbor Drive near San Diego International Airport. Next week, the City will also move forward with the Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego on a proposal for a semi-congregate facility that has space for up to 210 beds. This added space will create additional opportunities for families, seniors and women while offsetting the loss of 40 beds that are coming offline due to building redevelopment at a smaller City-funded shelter operated by Catholic Charities downtown. The SDHC board will vote on the proposal Friday, Feb. 14.

Currently, the City funds 1,630 traditional shelter beds and up to 770 tent spaces in the [Safe Sleeping Program](#). Under the Comprehensive Shelter Strategy, the City committed to identifying a permanent shelter location, as the continual relocation of existing shelters increases costs in the long term. In order to replace beds that came offline for various reasons, the City followed a [Short-Term Action Plan](#) adding 263 beds [across three new facilities](#).

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To help inform decisions and future shelter site planning, HSSD and SDHC staff have been conducting [listening sessions](#) since late last year with homelessness service providers and people with lived experience, including those currently staying in City-funded shelters.

**“Feedback we’ve heard and best practices suggest that shelter stability is key for individuals receiving services, and it ultimately creates future certainty for the City’s homelessness response,”** said Sarah Jarman, Director of the City’s Homelessness Strategies and Solutions Department. **“The City, in partnership with the Housing Commission, will continue these listening sessions, where critical input helps guide the City’s plans and decisions on homelessness.”**

#### **Timeline of Shelter Actions:**

*August 2024* – City formally requests City Council and Office of the Independent Budget Analyst to submit properties that could be used for shelters.

[September 2024](#) – City issues formal solicitation for property to be used for shelter.

*September 2024* – City and SDHC present Short-term Action Plan, requested by Councilmembers, to address temporary shelter facilities closing.

[October 2024](#) – Expansion of 230 tent spaces at Safe Sleeping Program begins under Short-Term Action Plan.

[November/December 2024](#) – 263 beds added to City’s sheltering system under Short-Term Action Plan. This includes 40 beds for veterans and 130 beds for adults and seniors at Veterans Village of San Diego, 56 beds focused on those with alcohol substance abuse operated by TURN Behavioral Health Services and 37 beds at the South County Lighthouse shelter operated by the San Diego Rescue Mission.

February 2025 – City staff return to Council after reviewing submitted shelter sites.



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## San Diego's Progress on Homelessness Under Mayor Gloria



Under Mayor Todd Gloria's administration, the City of San Diego has done more to address homelessness than during any time in the city's history. It has more than doubled the number of options to get off the street, expanded street outreach, launched innovative programs like Safe Sleeping, become a statewide model for incentivizing new housing production, and championed treatment options for those struggling with mental illness and/or addiction – all while taking a tough stance on unsafe, unsanitary tent encampments.

- Since 2021, Mayor Gloria has more than doubled the number of options people have to get off the streets and into programs that can help end their homelessness. This includes traditional shelter beds as well as Safe Parking and Safe Sleeping programs.
- To ensure the City is serving particularly vulnerable populations, the Mayor opened shelters with particular emphases on serving seniors, women, families, LGBTQ youth, survivors of domestic violence, and, in a partnership

with the County, those who struggle with substance abuse and mental health challenges.

- Many of the sites that become available for use as shelters can be used only temporarily, for a variety of reasons. With several shelters approaching their useful life, in 2024 the Gloria administration, working with the San Diego Housing Commission deftly replaced hundreds of beds that would no longer be available with a patchwork of new locations and interventions.
- In 2023, Mayor Gloria launched the Safe Sleeping program with more than 530 City-provided tents at two locations on the outskirts of Balboa Park, a program that is serving as a model for other cities. In 2024, the Safe Sleeping Program was expanded to 765 tents. This offers a vital non-congregate option to the shelter system that is reaching chronically homeless individuals and connecting them with vital services, often for the first time due to reluctance to access services..
- Mayor Gloria expanded the Family Reunification Program -- a hybrid outreach, services, and rehousing program -- which reconnects people with their families, friends, or loved ones willing to provide stable living environments. The program has had a 98% success rate in the number of people exiting to positive housing situations.
- In 2022, Mayor Gloria expanded an existing Safe Parking lot in Mission Valley to 24 hours a day to accommodate the daily schedules of people sleeping in their cars. In 2023, the Mayor created a fourth Safe Parking location at the City's Rose Canyon Operations yard. There are now 206 Safe Parking spaces and 18 trailers for families experiencing homelessness across four locations.
- In spring 2025, Mayor Gloria will open a fifth Safe Parking location at the site known as H Barracks near San Diego International Airport, nearly doubling the total number of spaces.
- To reach people where they are and build trust among a population of people who tend to be wary of government intervention, Mayor Gloria in 2021 launched and then expanded the City's Coordinated Street Outreach Program.

- Sponsored and passed SB 1361 (Blakespear) which exempts local homeless service contracts from CEQA. Giving local agencies another tool to expedite administration of life-saving services, to our most vulnerable neighbors.
- As Chair of the California Big City Mayors, Mayor Gloria led the charge to help protect the City's most critical source of homelessness funding, Homeless Housing Assistance and Prevention program (HHAP) from potential cuts.
- Because it's permanent housing that ultimately ends homelessness, Mayor Gloria has made producing more affordable housing a top priority. This effort includes:
  - Bridge to Home: This initiative allows the City to invest directly in the production of affordable housing by providing gap financing assistance to home builders. Through four rounds of funding, the City has helped get 22 projects across the finish line, resulting in nearly 2,000 affordable homes, including 400 set aside for people experiencing homelessness.
  - Homekey: Under the Gloria administration, the City has leveraged this state program to convert four additional properties to permanent housing for people experiencing homelessness. The City's Homekey portfolio now includes six projects totaling more than 600 homes.
  - Housing Action Packages: Mayor Gloria has secured City Council approval of two packages of policy reforms aimed at making it easier to build more housing. One of the many reforms contained in these packages was a measure to incentivize construction of single-room-occupancy housing projects, which are often the least expensive housing option for those at risk of homelessness.
- In all, nearly 5,000 people have been connected to permanent or long-term housing directly from City-funded programs during the Mayor's first term.
- With all of these new options for getting people off the streets and into care, comes an obligation for people to use them. In 2023, Mayor Gloria secured City Council approval of the Unsafe Camping Ordinance, which bans tent encampments in all locations throughout the city if shelter space is available and in certain sensitive locations regardless of shelter availability. In 2024 alone, the City removed 6,473 encampments under the Unsafe Camping



Ordinance, ensuring safer and healthier public spaces and putting many of the people in the encampments on a path to safer shelter and housing.

- During the past few years, the State of California has made funding available, on a competitive basis, for cities to remove tent encampments and move residents living in them into long-term housing. The Gloria administration has secured three of these grants to resolve encampments in East Village, along the San Diego River (in collaboration with the County) and along the I-15 corridor. As a result of these programs, the City has placed more than 100 people into housing.
- Treatment services for mental illness and substance abuse are the responsibility of the County of San Diego. However, Mayor Gloria has advocated persistently to expand access to behavioral health care. These efforts include:
  - In his 2022 State of the City address, Mayor Gloria called on state leaders to pass legislation creating CARE Court to provide another pathway for people struggling with mental health issues to access care. That year, the Mayor championed the legislation, Senate Bill 1338, that was ultimately successful. CARE Court is up and running in San Diego County.
  - In his 2023 State of the City address, Mayor Gloria led the work to reform the state's conservatorship laws to allow more severely mentally ill Californians to receive life-saving care. The Legislature passed Senate Bill 43 later that year. After San Diego County supervisors voted to delay implementation for one year, the program is now starting.
  - In 2024, after California voters approved a \$6.4 billion bond measure to fund more than 11,000 new treatment beds statewide, the City of San Diego streamlined its permitting process for siting behavioral health facilities to make it easier for people to access life-saving care.