



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

# SERVING THE HOMELESS

UPDATES ON HOMELESS SERVICES IN THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

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## **City Council to Consider Plan to Purchase Hotel for Year-Round Family Shelter**

In November, the City Council is expected to consider a plan to purchase a downtown hotel and transform it into a year-round shelter for homeless families.

Under the plan, the City would purchase the Days Inn at 1449 Ninth Ave. on Cortez Hill to house approximately 150 people. The proposal was endorsed by the Council's Land Use and Housing Committee at its Oct. 11 meeting. The City would contract with a social services agency to operate the facility. The families would receive counseling, health care, jobs, and other social services. The shelter would allow families to save money and eventually rent their own homes.

The City is negotiating a purchase price. If the transaction cannot be completed by Dec. 15, a temporary sprung structure will house families as part of the City's Winter Shelter Program. The County has committed to providing social and health services to program participants. Developer Peter Janopaul, who renovated the El Cortez Hotel, said he will donate \$10,000 for a children's play area at the shelter and has challenged other developers to match it.

## **Homeless Outreach Teams Assist with Special Needs of Individual Homeless People**

The City's two Homeless Outreach Teams provide a critical change in perspective on how to approach the homeless issue. In the past, police officers were the primary contact for the homeless, and the solutions available for assistance were only jail or placement in a detoxification center.

The HOT Teams, as they are known, now view each homeless person as an individual with individual needs. Two City police officers team with a County social worker and a Psychiatric Emergency Response Team clinician to contact homeless people. They work together to assess the homeless person's problems and identify how to help them from a range of solutions.

Whether the homelessness has been caused by loss of income, psychological problems, substance abuse, lack of job training, or other problems, multiple options to assist each person are now available.

This approach not only provides short-term answers but also develops permanent solutions for these individuals. One HOT Team focuses on downtown and another on the beach area.

The HOT Teams are a partnership of the City, County, Centre City Development Corp., and Downtown San Diego Partnership. In the 2000 fiscal year, the teams provided care, resources, and assistance to approximately 450 individuals.

## **City to Acquire Pacific Highway Building for Homeless Veterans**

The City of San Diego has acquired a building on Pacific Highway for use by the Vietnam Veterans of San Diego as a transitional homeless shelter.

The City purchased the building from Pacifica Cos. for approximately \$2 million. The veterans organization had been using the facility, but its lease was to expire in September. The City now leases the facility to the organization.

The City Council voted in August to purchase the building through eminent domain as part of the City's reuse plan for the Naval Training Center. As part of that plan, the City is required to provide housing for the homeless.

## **HELPFUL PHONE NUMBERS FOR MORE INFORMATION**

The City's Homeless Services Program is administered by the City's Economic Development and Community Services Department. For more information, call (619) 533-6525.

Persons who are homeless and need assistance can call the United Way InfoLine at (619) 230-0997.

Concerned citizens or students interested in information or statistics about homeless issues can call the San Diego Regional Task Force on the Homeless at (858) 694-8722.