



**OFFICE OF COUNCILMEMBER TODD GLORIA**  
**City of San Diego**

**M E M O R A N D U M**

**DATE:** September 21, 2009

**TO:** Jay M. Goldstone, Chief Operating Officer

**FROM:** Councilmember Todd Gloria

**SUBJECT:** Recommendations for Citywide Emergency Winter Shelter Locations

Homelessness is a regional issue and requires a more comprehensive approach by all levels of government. According to the latest data produced by the Regional Task Force on the Homeless, it is estimated that of the 4,000 homeless persons living within City limits, nearly 3,150 or 78% live in Council District 2. It is also fact that the majority of the urban homeless and the greatest incidence of visible street homeless persons are located in Downtown San Diego.

I thank you for the opportunity to recommend Winter Shelter Locations and I will lead round two of this discussion by requesting that the Mayor and my Council colleagues seriously consider the following two sites:

- 1) 15<sup>th</sup> & Island: The site was used for the FY09 Winter Shelter. The City Council and Redevelopment Agency approved expenditures of roughly \$140,000 to prepare this site for the shelter use. Given the previous expenditure of taxpayer dollars, it is most fiscally responsible to verify the viability of this site for this purpose.
- 2) 13<sup>th</sup> & F Street: This site was the only remaining "Potentially Suitable" location proposed by the Mayor. The site is available and funding has already been identified for any necessary site improvements.

Although Downtown San Diego has undergone dramatic change in recent years, we cannot expect the issue of homelessness to disappear overnight. In restoring shelter and intactness to the lives of homeless residents Downtown, we also restore the health of the community. In order to effectively address a matter, it would make most sense to

go to the root of the problem. For this reason, the best shelter site would be Downtown. Services existed Downtown long before the urban housing boom. Putting a shelter in practically any other part of San Diego ignores the demand that already exists and the supportive services and associated infrastructure that are present in that community to help.

Although the immediate concern is housing this vulnerable population during the winter months, the overriding issue is that it is not sufficient for the City to care about the homeless for only 16 weeks in the winter. We need a permanent, year-round homeless shelter. San Diego's ultimate goal is to transition from temporary measures like the winter shelter to permanent housing units with social services needed to keep chronically homeless individuals off the streets. The City has received multiple proposals from private partners to construct a permanent supportive shelter, but those conversations are also stalled and realistically, we are at least three years away from realizing the benefits of such a facility. I ask that your staff begin to publicly vet the proposals so that the City Council can collectively decide on how best to site that facility.

Many communities have already begun to implement strategies to address the homeless population and end chronic homelessness—several communities I represent are included in that list. Over the past three years, the District 3 communities of Talmadge, Normal Heights and North Park have accepted three different permanent supportive housing developments for homeless seniors, disabled veterans and for youth who have transitioned out of the foster care system. I stand ready to continue this effort.

Until we implement lasting solutions like a year-round shelter and region-wide permanent supportive housing units, San Diegans will continue to pay for quick fixes, the problem will never be solved, and we will prolong the winter shelter discussion year after year.

By further delaying action, the City imperils the ability of the shelter operator to prepare for service in November. As I noted at the City Council meeting and as supported by the shelter operator, lead time is necessary, adding urgency to the now-delayed decision.

It is time for decisive leadership on the part of the City Council. I stand ready to make the tough decision.

cc: Mayor Jerry Sanders  
City Councilmembers  
Andrea Tevlin, Independent Budget Analyst