

NEWS

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For Immediate Release

San Mateo County's First Homeless Navigation Center A Step Closer

Supervisors approve land exchange with City of Redwood City

Redwood City – The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors today took a major step toward fulfilling a decade-long pledge to effectively end homelessness.

The Board voted 5-0 to approve a key agreement with the City of Redwood City that will allow development of a 240-bed, state-of-the-art shelter east of Highway 101 off of Maple Street. The shelter, called a Navigation Center, will provide intensive counseling and other supportive services.

“This is an historic day in San Mateo County,” said Supervisor Warren Slocum, whose District 4 includes Redwood City. “We are one major step closer to creating 240 safe spaces for people experiencing homelessness and offer hope and dignity to get them on their way to permanent housing.”

The Board approved swapping a County-owned parcel at 1580 Maple St. for a Redwood City-owned parcel at 1469 Maple St. The deal also sets aside 10 acres along the nearby waterfront as future park space, waterfront recreation and open space.

“The County has long had a goal of ending homelessness and this land swap gives the County the ability to expand services to achieve our goal of ending homelessness,” said District 3 Supervisor Don Horsley, who has championed efforts to end homelessness.

The County plans to build the new navigation center at 1469 Maple St. while Redwood City expects to use the former County land to extend Blomquist Street. The County plans to relocate an aging and outdated existing homeless shelter on Maple Street to the newly acquired 1469 Maple St.

“By building a navigation center from the ground up, it really allows us to build a facility with services that are proven to break the cycle of homelessness,” said County Manager Mike Callagy. “A safe navigation center where individuals are treated with dignity and respect will provide people with the stability they need to transition to more permanent housing.”

The navigation center model provides short-term housing, while also offering on site a range of intensive safety-net and other housing, stability, and recovery focused case management services.

County officials say they hope to break ground on the new navigation center in 2022 and have it open by late 2022. The site would be raised to protect against sea level rise.

“The City of Redwood City has been a terrific partner through this whole planning process,” Callagy said. “We know that a common concern among many residents in San Mateo County is homelessness, and we applaud the city for taking the steps necessary to address the urgent need for a navigation center.”

While County officials have worked for a decade to end homelessness, San Mateo County continues to face an unprecedented and growing shelter crisis. Homelessness is experienced disproportionately by race and other protected characteristics.

According to the County, over 1,500 County residents were experiencing homelessness in 2019, with over 900 unsheltered. The largest number of unsheltered individuals were in Redwood City with a substantial population living in tents and on the street and facing numerous daily challenges, including exposure, high stress levels, sleep deprivation, unsanitary surroundings, lack of access to hygiene and care, and poor nutrition.

The pandemic and its associated medical social and economic impacts have worsened the housing crisis and strained existing shelter capacity. This has further imperiled those experiencing homelessness.

“A navigation center will play an important role in addressing the need for not only shelter but services,” Callagy said. “The County’s goal is to achieve functional zero homelessness, meaning that anyone who desires shelter can access it through an array of County facilities and programs. Together, we can end homelessness in San Mateo County.”

Learn more:

[Link to Report to the Board of Supervisors](#)

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