

HOMELESS TO HOUSED

Terwilliger Center for Housing



CASE STUDY: SAN MATEO COUNTY NAVIGATION CENTER

SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

LOCATION:

275 Blomquist Street
Redwood City, California

PROJECT TYPE:

Short-term, interim housing

SIZE:

Lot Size: 2.5 acres

Facility Size:

Total Units: 240 for individuals and couples

- 168 units:
200 square feet with en suite bathrooms
- 72 units:
100 square feet with community bathrooms/shower facilities

OWNER:

San Mateo County, California

OPERATOR:

[LifeMoves](#)

PARTNERS:

San Mateo County (landowner),

San Mateo County Human Services Agency (operating cost funder),

LifeMoves (operating cost funder and service provider)

COST:

\$56 million

COMPLETION DATE:

2023

CONTACT:

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LifeMoves,

Paul Simpson, CFO

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Project Overview

The San Mateo County Navigation Center is a short-term interim housing program designed to act as a safety net for individuals who are experiencing homelessness and have been living outdoors as well as individuals who are at imminent risk of being unsheltered.

This project is significant due to the partnership between San Mateo County and LifeMoves, a nonprofit housing provider. It represents a groundbreaking approach to addressing homelessness, aligning with the goal of achieving Functional Zero homelessness in San Mateo County. By combining resources and expertise, the partnership aimed to create a model that provides interim shelter and fosters community, healing, and empowerment for unhoused neighbors.

The partnership recognizes that individuals come into homelessness through a variety of circumstances including, but not limited to, the following:

- Little to no income, job loss, increases in living expenses (rental/loan increase);
- Abusive relationships, death of a partner/spouse; and
- Alcohol or substance abuse, mental/behavioral/physical health challenges.

This new interim housing project focuses on security, client experience, stability, and a quick-build approach by using modular housing units. The off-site modular build and configuration with the State of California inspections/permits completed prior to delivery allows on-the-ground construction of infrastructure efforts and prioritized engagement with local agencies and inspectors for all site-specific work.

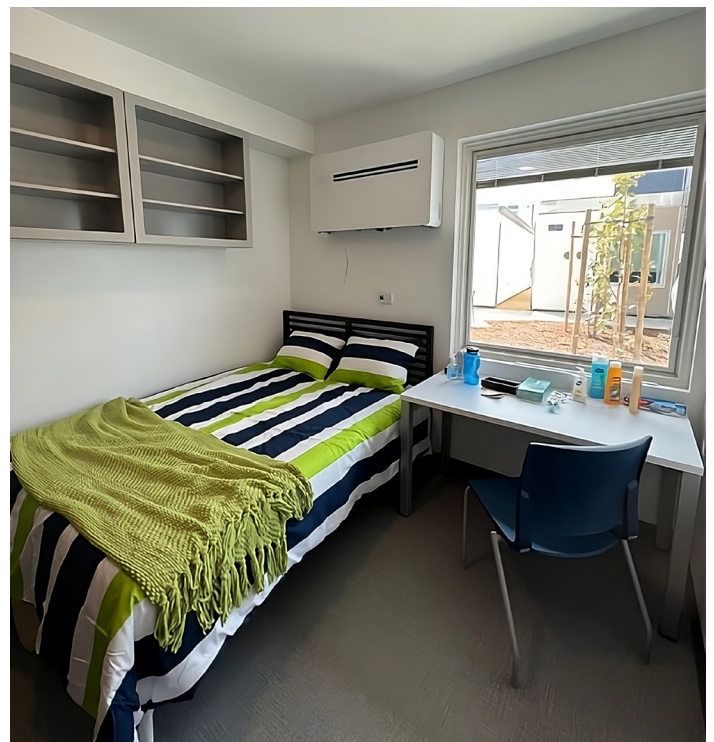
The unique design provides a facility where every client has their own lockable room, affording a level of comfort and security not often found in community shelters. The construction phase of the project took nine to 12 months to complete compared to the two to three years that permanent housing requires. Moving individuals into a supportive housing unit of this type, with lockable doors and on-site services, is the next step on the journey to permanent housing.

The San Mateo County Navigation Center integrates vital wraparound services for clients including an on-site dental clinic, nurse station, and drug-treatment facility. The co-location of supportive services within the shelter ensures easy and convenient access, removing logistical challenges and streamlining the process of receiving care.

Unique aspects of this project include the following:

- A quick-build timeline due to modular, off-site construction;
- LEED Silver Certification;
- All-electric design;
- Carbon neutral;
- Outdoor community spaces;
- An electric commercial training kitchen; and
- Space for on-site case management and services.

The all-electric design seeks to achieve building energy decarbonization goals by using cost-effective, currently available technologies including solar panels. The solar panels not only provide renewable energy, but also energy that is stable in a geographic area that is prone to rolling blackouts and that serves the needs of the clients who may have not had access to reliable electricity in the past.



The Partnership

The project team's collaborative efforts directly contribute to San Mateo County's Functional Zero goals as they work toward reducing and eliminating homelessness in the community. By providing a holistic approach that combines shelter, wraparound services, and access to health care professionals, the partners empower clients to achieve self-sufficiency. This model not only offers immediate relief, but also fosters stability and personal growth, ultimately paving the way for successful reintegration into permanent housing.

Supportive service partners in addition to LifeMoves include El Centro de Libertad, Healthcare in Action, Pacific Dental, Primary Care - Stanford University Medical, Substance Abuse/Outpatient Services, housing specialists, and volunteers from the community who provide evening workshops and support groups.

By working together to design an innovative and effective solution to address homelessness in the community, the San Mateo County and LifeMoves partnership represents an inclusive environment that combines shelter, wraparound services, and easy access to vital health care resources.

Costs and Financing

The total project cost for the San Mateo Navigation Center is \$56 million. To meet the project costs, the following funds were committed: \$46.1 million from the Homekey grant program through the California Department of Housing and Community Development for construction, a \$5 million donation by philanthropists John & Sue Sobrato, a \$500,000 Federal Community Project Funding Grant secured by Congresswoman Jackie Speier, multiple labor trade donations, San Mateo County American Rescue Plan Act and County General Funds, a \$9.2 million Homekey grant for operations, and San Mateo County funding of \$25 million (\$5 million per year for five years) for LifeMoves' operating costs. LifeMoves raised \$2.3 million in philanthropic funds overall to cover costs associated with the development's first five years of operation.

To secure the land, San Mateo County swapped land with Redwood City, California. This straight swap is an innovative way to use the land that is available for multi-purposes. In this situation the land was allocated for use of this interim housing site, affordable housing, and luxury condominiums. Philanthropist and developer John Sobrato is involved with the affordable housing units that will be built and operated by Mid-Pen.

The site where The Navigation Center is located became available in 2021. The city and county agreed to a land swap, giving the county ownership of the plot on Blomquist Street. In return, Redwood City took ownership of a parcel on Maple Street, where construction will soon begin for up to 1,110 units of additional housing for formerly homeless residents.

Challenges

Several project challenges were posed during the building and construction of The Navigation Center. These include the following:

- Designing and building during the COVID-19 pandemic resulting in several logistical challenges and including supply chain delays and
- Unexpected weather challenges in the Bay Area that have never been experienced—such as consistent and heavy levels of rain—set the project schedule back.

Outcomes

The Navigation Center clients have experienced comfort and calm by having their own space, ensuite bathrooms, and community areas that provide meeting and classrooms, nutritious food, and entertainment.

People who are experiencing homelessness in Silicon Valley now have additional relief. The San Mateo County Navigation Center in Redwood City provides people with a fresh start and an opportunity to find permanent housing.

HOMELESS TO HOUSED: PROJECT PRO FORMA

| | |
|---|--|
| NAME: San Mateo County Navigation Center | BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF TYPE: San Mateo County Navigation Center encompasses 240 safe, temporary living units to provide intensive on-site support services to individuals and couples experiencing homelessness. Unlike a congregate shelter, the Center offers increased privacy for clients and space for couples to stay together. The Center is a key component of the County's plan to make interim or permanent housing available to every unsheltered person who chooses assistance. |
| LOCATION: 275 Blomquist Street, Redwood City, CA | |
| NUMBER OF UNITS/RESIDENTS SERVED: 240/260 | |
| SIZE (SQUARE FOOTAGE): 2.5 acres | |
| SPONSOR: San Mateo County, California | |

Development Pro Forma

| | TOTAL (\$) | PER RES./UNIT |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------|
| USES OF FUNDS | | |
| Acquisition of land and/or building | land swap with Redwood City | |
| Architecture, engineering, and entitlement costs | 1,300,000 | 5,417 |
| Construction costs | 50,000,000 | 208,333 |
| Legal and professional costs | 2,632,000 | 10,967 |
| Additional equipment and related costs | 0 | 0 |
| Development fees | 0 | 0 |
| Interest during construction | 0 | 0 |
| Real estate taxes during construction | 0 | 0 |
| Other costs | 775,000 | 3,229 |
| Total uses, capital cost | 54,707,000 | 227,946 |
| SOURCES OF FUNDS | | |
| Permanent debt | 0 | 0 |
| Equity | 0 | 0 |
| Philanthropic capital, government grants, or similar | 55,961,199 | 233,172 |
| Total sources | 55,961,199 | 233,172 |

Operating Pro Forma 5 Years Out

| | TOTAL (\$) | PER RES./UNIT |
|--|----------------------|----------------|
| ANNUAL REVENUE | | |
| Revenue from residents | 0 | 0 |
| Revenue from resident-related sources (vouchers, etc.) | 0 | 0 |
| Revenue from San Mateo County H.S.A. | 25,000,000.00 | 96,154 |
| Revenue from other sources (grants, philanthropy) | 6,481,840.00 | 24,930 |
| Support for wraparound services | 0 | 0 |
| Other (LifeMoves private revenue) | 2,309,855.00 | 8,884 |
| Total revenue | 33,791,695.00 | 129,968 |
| ANNUAL EXPENSES (Reflective of the average cost of the first 7 years) | | |
| Property operations | 0 | 0 |
| Salaries | 4,000,595 | 15,387 |
| Repairs and maintenance | 154,543 | 594 |
| Utilities | 54,567 | 210 |
| Taxes | 0 | 0 |
| IT/corporate operations/insurance | 294,816 | 1,134 |
| Other property-related expenses | 1,539,423 | 5,921 |
| Total property operational expenses | 6,043,944 | 23,246 |
| OTHER RESIDENT SERVICES | | |
| Salaries | 0 | 0 |
| Administrative allocation | 604,395 | 2,325 |
| Other (one-time vehicle purchase) | 110,000 | 423 |
| Total resident services | 714,395 | 2,748 |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | 6,758,339 | 25,994 |

About the Urban Land Institute

ULI is a nonprofit education and research institute supported by its members. Its mission is to shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. Established in 1936, the Institute has more than 48,000 members worldwide representing all aspects of land use and development disciplines.

About ULI Homeless to Housed

Homeless to Housed (H2H) recognizes that ULI members are well positioned to help address homelessness. With generous support from a growing number of ULI members, the initiative works to explore real estate solutions to the growing crisis affecting communities everywhere. Core elements of this work include conducting research, promoting cross-sector collaboration, providing local technical assistance through ULI's network of district councils, and sharing knowledge and expertise for addressing housing challenges for individuals and families.

This initiative began through the 2022 research report *Homeless to Housed: The ULI Perspective Based on Actual Case Studies*. Driven by the generosity and guidance of Preston Butcher, the report explores the role the real estate community can play in addressing the issue of homelessness. It includes a summary of lessons learned, a blueprint for how to replicate best practices in U.S. communities, and a series of case studies that demonstrate how the development community can be an active partner in addressing the critical shortage of housing in the United States. See the full report and companion case studies: uli.org/h2h.

uli.org/homelessness

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