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## **On-site Medical Services: Key Approach to Proposed One-Stop Homeless Center**

*Downtown World Trade Center Site Recommended*

**San Diego, CA** – On-site medical services combined with interim and long-term housing are the key components of a comprehensive or “one-stop” homeless center recommended by a volunteer citizen’s committee.

“Research shows that providing medical services to chronically homeless people helps them get off the streets and stabilize their lives,” said Jonathan Hunter, a member of the selection committee.

The proposed homeless facility would feature a full-service medical clinic operated by Family Health Centers of San Diego, along with support services such as mental health screening, drug and alcohol treatment and job counseling.

The medical clinic would serve as the anchor tenant of the proposed service center at the 12-story World Trade Center building at 1250 Sixth Avenue.

The One-Stop Center Selection Committee submitted its recommendations to the City Council’s Land Use and Housing Committee, which will hear the matter on April 21 at 2 p.m., city hall building on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor.

The nine-member selection committee was coordinated by the San Diego Housing Commission at the request of the City Council per the recommendation of the [Land Use & Housing Commission](#). The panel met six times over an eight-month period, reviewed various approaches to assisting the homeless and narrowed three qualified proposals to two finalists interested in building and operating a new facility.

The committee is recommending that the city award a contract to develop and operate the homeless facility to a partnership comprised of Los Angeles-based People Assisting the Homeless (PATH), developer Affirmed Housing of San Diego and Family Health Centers of San Diego, which will provide an on-site medical service clinic open to the public.

In making its recommendation, the committee cited several advantages of the proposal by PATH Ventures and Affirmed Housing. They include:

- Members of the team have a successful track record in Southern California providing services and permanent supportive housing;

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- The project has the innovative feature of integrating housing and social services with a high-quality medical clinic open to the public.
- Renovating the World Trade Center would cost less than new construction and would finish sooner, allowing the facility to begin operating as early as December 2012;
- The amount of local funding needed to make the project work is less than the competing proposal;
- PATH Ventures and Affirmed Housing can supplement the project with their own funding sources; and
- Renovating the World Trade Center would be a positive reuse of a historic building and provide crucially needed services and housing for the community.

The recommended proposal calls for renovating the upper floors of the World Trade Center to create living quarters for up to 225 people. Up to 150 residents would occupy interim housing units where they could stay for up to two years. The remaining 75 units would be available to adults in need of housing and support services.

The renovations would start in November 2011, take a year to complete and cost an estimated \$18 million to \$21.5 million. Annual operating costs would be approximately \$3 million.

The Centre City Development Corp, the city's downtown redevelopment agency, has set aside \$10 million for a downtown homeless center. The Housing Commission is exploring funding options, including offering rent subsidies for as many as 75 homeless people and contributing to the project's capital costs.

The selection committee reached its recommendation after reviewing an engineer's report that concluded the World Trade Center is structurally sound and suitable for housing.

The historic building with Art Deco and Gothic Revival architectural features was constructed in 1928 to house the San Diego Athletic Club, which originally included 96 sleeping rooms. The property includes an adjacent parking structure built in 1969.

The 9-member selection committee is made up of representatives from the Mayor's Office, the San Diego Housing Commission, Centre City Development Corporation, County of San Diego, United Way of San Diego County, the Downtown Partnership, the East Village Community Action Network, the Downtown Residents Group and the Corporation for Supportive Housing.

### **Background:**

PATH is a nonprofit organization founded in 1984. Its motto: "A Hand Up, Not a Hand Out." In 2002, PATH built a three-story, 40,000-square-foot regional homeless center in Los Angeles that houses nearly two dozen social service agencies and a 98-bed transitional housing program. According to PATH's Web site, more than 100 communities have toured this homeless center "in order to replicate this national model."

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Affirmed Housing Group is a San Diego-based affordable housing developer specializing in tax-credit and tax-exempt bond financed multi-family and single family developments.

Family Health Centers of San Diego is the second largest federally qualified health center in the United States with 28 locations in San Diego County.

The City Council's Land Use and Housing Committee started the process in December 2008 by approving a draft request for homeless center proposals.

The selection committee reviewed proposals that were submitted by various nonprofit groups. Those were narrowed to two finalists: Father Joe's Villages and the partnership of PATH Ventures and Affirmed Housing.

A report published in 2009 by the Regional Task Force on the Homeless estimated there were 4,338 homeless persons living in the city of San Diego. Of those, 1,868 persons were living on the streets, 656 were living in emergency shelters and 1,814 were living in transitional housing.

The lack of shelter beds for the homeless was a major factor in a 2007 legal settlement that forced San Diego police to cease ticketing homeless people for "illegal lodging," or sleeping on sidewalks, doorways and vacant lots between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m.

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