



SAN DIEGO  
HOUSING  
COMMISSION

## INFORMATIONAL REPORT

**DATE ISSUED:** March 24, 2022

**REPORT NO:** HCR22-040

**ATTENTION:** Chair and Members of the San Diego Housing Commission  
For the Agenda of April 1, 2022

**SUBJECT:** January 2022 Reporting Update for City of San Diego's  
Storage Connect Center I

### **NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE HOUSING COMMISSION**

#### **SUMMARY**

The Housing Authority of the City of San Diego (Housing Authority) and San Diego City Council (City Council) require the San Diego Housing Commission (Housing Commission) to “provide written reports on number of Clients served, utilization rate, any changes to operation, outreach activity, connections to other services and housing, at least monthly and upon request by the Council President/Chair of the Housing Authority” (Housing Authority Resolution HA-1777).

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Housing Commission administers the agreements for the City of San Diego's (City) Homeless Shelters and Services Programs based on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Housing Commission and the City of San Diego (City) that first took effect on July 1, 2010. The Housing Commission and City entered into a separate MOU for the City's Temporary Bridge Shelter Programs, which was approved by the Housing Commission Board of Commissioners on November 3, 2017, as well as the Housing Authority and City Council (City Council) on November 14, 2017. On March 20, 2018, the City Council authorized the execution of a First Amendment to the MOU (Resolution R-311627) to also address the duties of the parties concerning the Storage Connect Center (the Center) located at 116 South 20<sup>th</sup> Street, San Diego, CA 92113. The Housing Commission and City bifurcated the Temporary Bridge Shelter MOU and entered into a separate MOU for the City's Transitional Storage Programs, which was approved by the Housing Commission Board of Commissioners on June 12, 2020, as well as the Housing Authority and City Council on June 16, 2020.

As part of the March 2018 approval, the Housing Commission re-allocated up to \$1,068,743 in funding, which included savings realized on start-up and operating costs of the City's Bridge Shelters, to support the Center. This approval supported the oversight and management of the Center, which helps keep homeless San Diegans' belongings off of downtown streets, sidewalks, and storefronts by providing a safe place for individuals to keep their belongings as they attend to their personal needs, which may include working on housing options, looking for work, attending classes, meeting with service providers, seeking medical care, or other activities such as accessing cleaning or washing facilities. On February 8, 2019, the Housing Commission approved the execution of the first one-year renewal option of the agreement with Mental Health Systems (MHS) to operate the Center for a term of July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020, with a corresponding budget of \$1,190,828.40.

The recommendations were presented to the Housing Authority for review on March 12, 2019. The Housing Authority approved the execution of the first one-year renewal option of the Agreement with MHS, contingent on the successful presentation of a plan by the City of San Diego to the City Council, regarding identification of an additional storage center site as well as a proposal for a comprehensive community engagement strategy for the implementation of the identified site. The City of San Diego completed this request and sent a status update memo to the Council in June 2019. The first one-year renewal option of the agreement was subsequently executed with MHS.

On June 12, 2020, the Housing Commission approved the execution of the second one-year renewal option of the agreement with Mental Health Systems (MHS) to operate the Center for a term of July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021, with a corresponding budget of \$1,249,942. On June 11, 2021, the Housing Commission approved the execution of a six-month non-competitive agreement with MHS to operate the Center for a term of July 1, 2021, through December 31, 2021, with a corresponding budget of \$624,971. The Housing Commission awarded the six-month agreement to MHS through a non-competitive process to ensure the continued operation and provision of uninterrupted services for the Center during the pandemic. The Housing Commission determined to temporarily delay the competitive solicitation process known as Request for Proposal (RFP) to increase the number and quality of responses received due to the ongoing strain on staffing resources seen across the homelessness service provider system during the pandemic. The RFP for the Center was released on July 15, 2021, and on September 29, 2021, MHS was notified that their submission for the Center was recommended for contract award, contingent upon approval by the Housing Commission Board of Commissioners and the Housing Authority.

On November 12, 2021, the Housing Commission Board of Commissioners approved the recommendation of the contract award to MHS for the operation of the Center. The recommendations were presented to the Housing Authority on December 6, 2021. The Housing Authority approved the execution of an initial six-month term of January 1, 2022, through June 30, 2022, with a prorated annual budget of \$624,971, with two one-year options to renew.

### **MONTHLY REPORTING SUMMARY – JANUARY 2022**

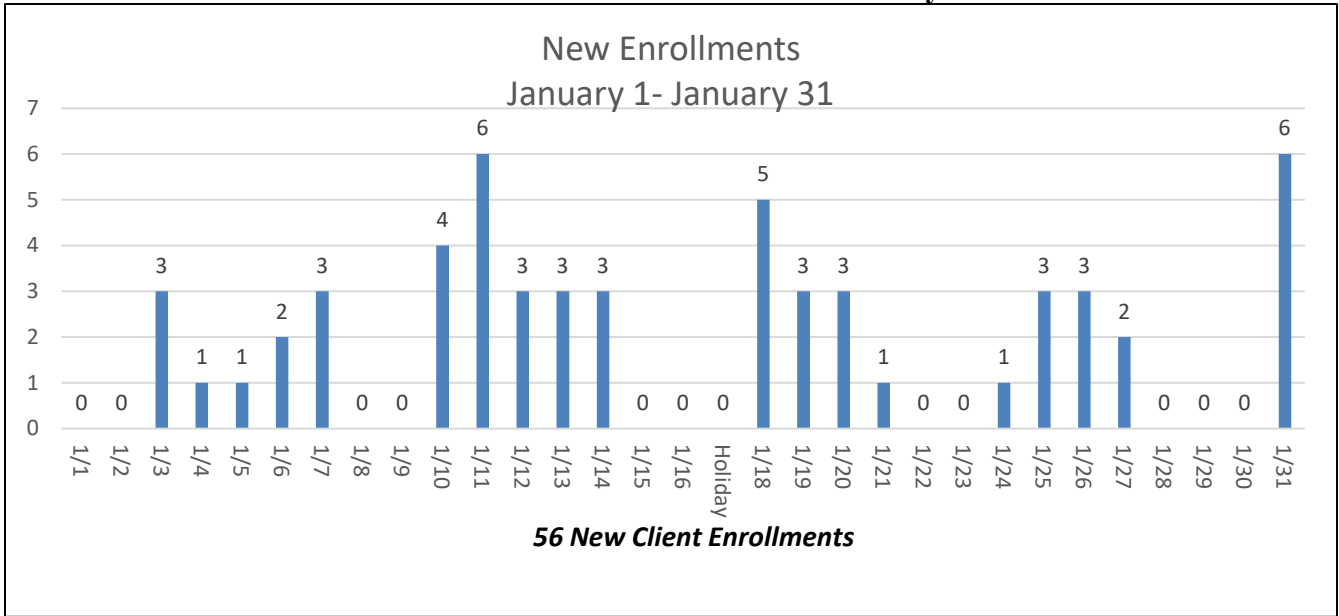
The tables below provide an overview of data captured in January 2022 for the Center, operated by MHS, which opened on June 13, 2018. The Center is open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. The Center has seven inventory specialists on staff, including two bilingual inventory specialists, conducting client intakes and storage bin assignments, as well as assisting clients with ongoing access to containers in a supervised staging area. Pursuant to the Housing Authority's approval of the operating Agreement (Resolution No. HA-1777), the Center provides a maximum of 500 storage bins<sup>1</sup> that can be utilized at any given time.

The Center enrolled 56 new clients and served 454 total clients throughout the month of January. Of the 454 clients served in January, 431 of them returned to the Center to access their storage bins, and the total number of return check-ins in January was 2,625. Forty-seven clients exited the Center in January.

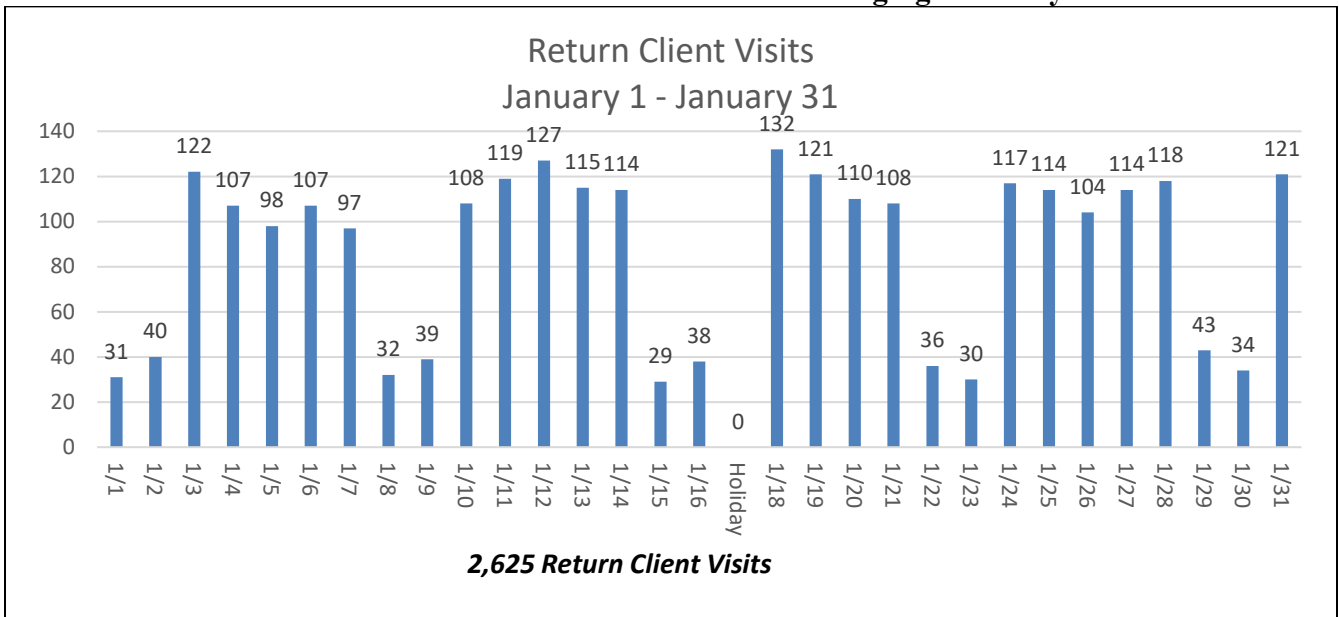
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<sup>1</sup> The Housing Authority and the City Council mandated a maximum of 500 storage units in the March 2018 approval for operation of the Center.

**Table One: New Client Enrollments January 2022**



**Table Two: Client Return Visits to Access Belongings January 2022**



**Table Three: Resource Referrals for Enrolled Clients in January**

| RESOURCE TYPE  | TOTAL REFERRALS IN JANUARY |
|--|----------------------------|
| Basic Needs  | 29                         |
| Food Assistance                                      | 27                         |
| Health Care  | 20                         |
| Shelter  | 23                         |
| Housing Search and Information                       | 24                         |
| Income Support and Employment                        | 18                         |
| Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services    | 13                         |
| Transportation                                       | 24                         |
| At-Risk Homeless Housing Related Assistance Programs | 20                         |
| <b>TOTAL RESOURCE REFERRALS</b>                      | <b>172</b>                 |

**Table Four: Summary of Weekday and Weekend Check-Ins Fiscal Year 2022**

| Summary of Check-Ins:<br>July 1, 2021 – January 31, 2022 |              |               |            |            |
|--|--------------|---------------|------------|------------|
|  | Weekend      | Weekday       | Saturday   | Sunday     |
| <b>July 2021</b>   | 258          | 1,656         | 143        | 115        |
| <b>August 2021</b>                                       | 221          | 1,677         | 112        | 109        |
| <b>September 2021</b>                                    | 219          | 1,811         | 114        | 105        |
| <b>October 2021</b>                                      | 315          | 1,953         | 143        | 172        |
| <b>November 2021</b>                                     | 267          | 1,909         | 138        | 129        |
| <b>December 2021</b>                                     | 269          | 2,152         | 127        | 142        |
| <b>January 2022</b>                                      | 352          | 2,273         | 171        | 181        |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>1,901</b> | <b>13,431</b> | <b>948</b> | <b>953</b> |
| <b>Average Check-Ins</b>                                 | <b>272</b>   | <b>1,919</b>  | <b>135</b> | <b>136</b> |

**STORAGE CENTER ACTIVITY OVERVIEW**

The Center serves San Diegans experiencing homelessness. Of the 1,857 total distinct, unduplicated persons served in the program since the opening of the Center, 52 percent identified as having a disability, 41 percent experienced chronic homelessness, 31 percent were 55 years of age or older, and 7 percent were veterans.<sup>2</sup>

Center staff conducts basic outreach activities in the area surrounding the Center. Center staff also acts as ambassadors to community members so community members can provide input on areas of need, raise any concerns they may have, and obtain general information about how to contact the facility

<sup>2</sup> Some persons may report more than one indicator of vulnerability.

operator or City services, such as San Diego Police Department (SDPD), Environmental Services Department (ESD), and the Mayor's office or the Housing Commission. In April 2020, Center outreach staff transitioned to also act as Inventory Specialists to provide needed additional operational support. Inventory Specialists are cross-trained to conduct outreach and rotate schedules during slower times of the day to continue to reach out to individuals experiencing homelessness within the neighboring community and act as ambassadors to community members. The City's Bridge Shelter Outreach teams and the SDPD's Homeless Outreach Team continue to conduct regular outreach activities and provide support to individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness throughout the City, including the neighborhood surrounding the Center.

SDPD coordinates ongoing law enforcement and security presence with the Center's security agency and supports the security company in managing the security needs in the direct vicinity of the site, while SDPD focuses on the surrounding neighborhood.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Prior to the opening of the Center, the operator, MHS, sought the input of residents in the neighborhoods surrounding the Center to ensure a successful partnership with the community. A Community Advisory Committee formed, and a meeting is held monthly with representatives from MHS, the Housing Commission, SDPD, the City's ESD, the Mayor's office and San Diego County Behavioral Health Services in attendance. In June 2021, community members from the neighborhood surrounding Storage Connect Center II, located in the Chollas Creek area, started attending the virtual community meeting. The monthly community meetings now include residents and community members from both Centers. The City of San Diego Mayor's office has taken on ongoing facilitation of the meetings.

The meetings provide community members with an opportunity to share their concerns and ideas with MHS, the City, and the Housing Commission, and allow the project's partners to share information and provide updates to the community. In addition, a summary of the meeting is provided on a monthly basis to the Community Advisory Committee as well as City Councilmembers. The community group last met on January 12, 2022, with five community members in attendance and 13 Center staff and affiliated partners in attendance.

The Housing Commission provides a dedicated phone line that community members can utilize to report concerns or ask questions about program operations. MHS, the Housing Commission, and City services will continue to collaborate with the Community Advisory Committee to ensure the Center takes into consideration the needs and expectations of the surrounding community while continuing to serve individuals and families experiencing homelessness in the City of San Diego.

### **Infectious Disease Mitigation**

Beginning in early March 2020, the Housing Commission began sending regular updates to homeless shelters and services providers on ongoing activities of the Regional Task Force on Homelessness (RTFH), the Housing Commission, City of San Diego, and County of San Diego to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 among homeless shelters and services programs and unsheltered populations.

The City of San Diego, RTFH, and Housing Commission staff continue to provide guidance to service providers as needed during this time to support alignment with County Public Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance to protect the health and safety of staff and clients, which includes symptoms monitoring for staff and customers, requirement of enhanced sanitation and cleaning practices, and utilization of personal protective equipment.

In addition to the mitigation efforts for COVID-19, starting in October 2021, Center staff implemented education and communication strategies to address the spread of Shigella, a bacterial illness affecting the digestive system. These efforts include educating Clients about Shigella, such as the symptoms, risk factors, how to mitigate the spread of infection, and reporting requirements if tested positive. Other infectious disease mitigation efforts include posters with information on how to properly wash or clean your hands inside the Client restroom and utilization of hand sanitizing stations. Staff also provide information to Clients verbally, and information is posted on flyers on-site about other infectious diseases, including symptoms, vaccination, prevention and control.

The Housing Commission continues to require service providers to implement enhanced cleaning measures and the continuation of wearing protective masks.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Jones  
Executive Vice President of Strategic Initiatives  
San Diego Housing Commission

Approved by,



Jeff Davis  
Deputy Chief Executive Officer  
San Diego Housing Commission

Docket materials are available in the “Governance & Legislative Affairs” section of the San Diego Housing Commission website at [www.sdhc.org](http://www.sdhc.org)

**Storage Connect Center I & II Community Meeting Summary**  
**February 9, 2022**

**Next Community Meeting**

**Date: March 9, 2022**

**New Time: 5:30-6:30 PM**

**Location: Telephone Conference**

**Storage Connect Center I (Sherman Heights) Community Member Attendance**

1. Connie Zuniga
2. Candelaria Gomez

**Storage Connect Center II (Lea Street) Community Member Attendance**

1. Richard Diaz
2. Denise Padilla
3. Lupe Diaz
4. Elida Chavez

**Storage Connect Center Staff and Affiliated Partner Attendance**

1. Matt Griffith- Community Representative, Mayor Gloria's Office
2. Stephanie Estrada-Community Representative, Mayor Gloria's Office
3. Sarah Jarman, Program Manager, Homelessness Strategies & Solutions Department (HSSD)
4. Laura Otis Miles-Senior Vice President, Mental Health Systems (MHS)
5. Veronica Aguilar- Program Manager, Mental Health Systems (MHS)
6. Talia Vukovich- Site Supervisor, Mental Health Systems (MHS)
7. Jennica Valdez- Program Manager, Mental Health Systems (MHS)
8. Melissa Kolts- Senior Programs Analyst, San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC)
9. Casey Snell-Director of Housing First Administration, San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC)
10. Jessica Adamo-Special Programs Manager, San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC)
11. Jefferey Nguyen-Community Representative for Councilmember Sean Elo-Rivera District 9
12. Lizzie Rodriguez-Community Representative for Councilmember Vivian Moreno District 8
13. Betsy Knight- Behavioral Health Coordinator, Behavioral Health Services (BHS) County of San Diego
14. Stephen Bilecz- Program Manager, Environmental Services Department (ESD)
15. Lizzie Rodriguez-Community Representative, Councilmember District 8 Vivian Moreno
16. Expedy Tavares- Central Division Community Relations Officer, San Diego Police Department (SDPD)

**San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) Announcement**

**San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC)** announced that starting in early March 2022, Storage Connect Center II will dedicate one day a week to enhanced outreach efforts to individuals in the community in the Chollas Triangle area. SCCII will utilize an MHS-owned truck to transport empty storage containers to designated outreach sites within the community to conduct enrollments. The designated outreach sites will be within walking distance of Lea Street. It will be the responsibility of the participant to return to the program after the initial enrollment to access their belongings.

**Community Member** asked why enhanced outreach was not started when the program first opened in 2019. Mayor Faulconer and Georgette Gomez agreed upon a list of specific target-areas which were presented to the community. The community member shared concern regarding reports of outreach workers going to North Park and other locations outside of the target areas.

**San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC)** responded they couldn't answer why the enhanced outreach did not start when the Lea Street storage center first opened because the Lea Street storage center was not under SDHC contract at that time. The SDHC and MHS ensures the designated outreach sites are within the vicinity of the parks listed in Mayor Faulconer's memo.

**Community Member** asked if referrals are provided to storage center clients.

**Mental Health Systems (MHS)** responded that all storage center staff are trained to assist clients through warm hand-off referrals. The storage center programs have partnered with many community organizations to refer clients in need of services, including medical services, to their programs.

**Community Member** asked how far Storage Connect Center II will transport bins with belongings.

**Community Representative for Mayor Gloria, Mental Health Systems (MHS), and San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC)** responded enhanced outreach will occur within walking distance of the Lea Street facility, so up to 2-3 miles. MHS clarified that Storage Connect Center II will not be transporting any individuals in the MHS-owned vehicle, only storage bins with the participant's belongings.

**Community Member** questioned if there is any discussion about relocating storage facilities in communities with higher need.

**San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC)** responded that data will be tracked during enhanced outreach such as how many individuals enroll at each site and how many times do those individuals come to Lea Street to access their belongings. SDHC and MHS will collect data which will eventually be presented to the City to show where the storage is needed most.

### **Storage Connect Centers Open Discussion**

**Community Member** asked if it is the official role of SDPD to actively relocate homeless individuals with their belongings from other neighborhoods to the Lea Street site.

**San Diego Police Department (SDPD)** responded that there is no attempt by SDPD to relocate anyone but they are trying to find housing for those who want it. There is no housing available countywide so they cannot do any enforcement at the moment.

**Community Representative for Mayor Gloria** responded that encampments are addressed on a case-by-case basis and if an encampment is occupied, then outreach specialists will engage with the residents to determine what services are needed. If encampments are unoccupied, then the Environmental Services Department will conduct clean-ups.

**Community Member** asked how many bins are available at Storage Connect Center II.

**Mental Health Systems (MHS)** responded there are 257 bins total at site with 77 of them available for use.



**Community Member** suggested the City provide more public toilets for unsheltered individuals. There is concern about unhygienic conditions near Euclid Ave. Community member asked for the interactive map link and for this issue to be revisited.

**Homelessness Strategies & Solutions Department (HSSD)** responded to let them know if there is a request for restrooms and confirmed the Euclid Ave location mentioned by the community member.

**Community Member** expressed concern regarding the lack of housing in San Diego for unsheltered individuals.

**Mental Health Systems (MHS)** responded that programs are doing their best to assist unsheltered individuals and refer them to housing-assistance programs. Once enrolled, those individuals work with new staff and case managers who help them with employment and income development, mental health resources, and shelter. When clients need shelter, storage center program staff call shelters to determine availability and enrollment times.

**Community Member** exchanged personal contact information with the group and Mental Health Systems (MHS) responded anyone can reach out to them at any time to get more information for resources and ways to assist unsheltered neighbors in the community.

**San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC)** suggested individuals go to the City's Homelessness Response Center located downtown San Diego as an entry point to get directly connected with a navigator who will help them navigate the complex system of homeless services and resources. The HRC address is 1401 Imperial Avenue, San Diego, CA 92101. It is open 6 days a week: Monday – Thursday from 8am-4pm, Friday 8am-2pm, and Saturday 9am-3pm.

**Community Member** reported criminal activity occurring in the RVs parked along Chollas Parkway and asked if those RV residents are storage center clients.

**Mental Health Systems (MHS)** responded that the RV residents are not storage center clients and MHS staff and security have asked them to leave, submitted Get It Done reports for their removal, and provided information to them about safe parking sites.

**Community Member** asked if there are any shelters that have available beds at this time and do storage center staff provide their clients with shelter information.

**Mental Health Systems (MHS)** responded staff provide clients with information about shelters and make calls to see which shelters have availability before referring clients to shelter.

**San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC)** announced there is a coordinated outreach event being held on February 15-17 with focus-areas being Commercial Ave corridor, 16<sup>th</sup> and National St, and Logan Ave.