

# NEWS

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For Immediate Release

## Ending Homelessness: County of San Mateo Begins Construction of First Navigation Center

**Redwood City** — On a vacant lot next to the bay, local civic leaders and champions for people without housing today celebrated the groundbreaking of what will become the County of San Mateo’s first Navigation Center.

The Navigation Center will provide 240 safe temporary living spaces for individuals and couples along with intensive support services. These services will be designed to help clients find and maintain stable housing.

The groundbreaking marks the launch of what County officials are calling “[Our Year of Working Together to End Homelessness](#).”

“This Navigation Center is proof that here, in one of the most innovative and creative areas in the world, we do not shirk from challenges but embrace them,” said Don Horsley, president of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors.

“Ending homelessness is one of the greatest challenges of our times and I can think of no greater responsibility of local government than seeing to it that all residents have a stable roof over their heads,” Horsley said. “This Navigation Center is a giant step forward.”

As a long-term investment in assisting those in need of housing, San Mateo County Supervisor Carole Groom said the \$57 million cost of construction “is money well spent.”

“I’m excited to see what a tremendous impact this will have on the lives of so many,” Groom said. “We know that turning our back on our residents without shelter does no one any good. It’s truly a project whose time has come.”

Supporters say the Navigation Center will dramatically improve the prospects for the county’s unhoused while also shrinking encampments.

“Redwood City residents fully support this effort to address homelessness in our community and look forward to our partnership with the County to ensure the Navigation Center is a success for all those it will serve,” said Giselle Hale, Redwood City mayor.

To fast-track the Navigation Center, the County Board of Supervisors and the city council of Redwood City agreed in [September 2021 on a land swap](#). The County’s Project Development Unit is ambitiously projecting the center to open by the end of 2022.

Philanthropist John Sobrato, who donated \$5 million toward the project, said he was impressed with the San Mateo County team’s proactive commitment, especially Callagy’s, to ending homelessness and believes the Navigation Center demonstrates how other municipalities, churches and corporations can use extra land for shelter and transitional or emergency housing.

“Our workforce is not just high tech. We need to keep those in all other industries in our community to keep our economy humming, so we need to find a way for them to secure stable and dignified housing,” Sobrato said. “This project is an important step in transitioning people ultimately into permanent housing. I am also committed to sponsoring a permanent supportive housing project we hope to build on the LifeMoves shelter site just block away after it gets demolished.”

Once it opens, access to the Navigation Center and its services will be by referral (no walk-up/drop-in services). [LifeMoves](#), a nonprofit organization based in Menlo Park, will operate the Navigation Center under a contract with the County of San Mateo.

The Navigation Center will replace the Maple Street Shelter, which currently provides emergency and transitional housing for up to about 110 individuals each night and is operated by LifeMoves.

“LifeMoves is incredibly honored to partner with San Mateo County in this endeavor,” said Aubrey Merriman, the chief executive officer. “As we partner to provide intensive case management, addiction, mental health, employment and housing services to persons experiencing homelessness, in their journeys to secure housing, we are also working to improve the quality of life for the entire community.”

Unlike traditional shelters, the Navigation Center will allow people to have private sleeping quarters, be able to stay with their partner and bring their pets (under certain guidelines). In addition to a room and on-site meals, case managers will provide support services to connect clients with employment opportunities, health services, social service benefits and permanent housing.

### **Navigation Center Details**

**Location: 275 Blomquist St., Redwood City**

**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**



With its bayfront location, the Navigation Center will be built on raised land to shield it from the anticipated impacts of sea level rise.

**240 Housing units, arrayed in one-, two- and three-story wings**

- 168 with in-unit restroom
- 72 without in-unit restroom

**260 Total spaces available for clients**

**Features:**

- Dog run
- BBQ area
- 68 parking spaces
- Space for 140 bicycles

The center will also include a shared dining area, an electric commercial training kitchen to serve residents, a community center and space for on-site counseling, vocational training and other services. The project targets Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification, all-electric design and carbon neutrality.

**Cost:**

- \$57 million total cost (\$237,500 anticipated price per bed)

**Funding:**

- \$55.3 million [California Homekey](#) Grant Award that includes \$46.1 million for capital costs and \$9.2 million for operating costs
- \$5 million donation by John Sobrato (donation part of a County match)
- \$500,000 federal grant secured by Congresswoman Jackie Speier

**Timeline:**

- Construction expected to be complete by the end of 2022.

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