



AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FOR HOMELESS VETERANS AND LOW-INCOME SAN DIEGANS CELEBRATES GROUNDBREAKING

Vista del Puente is one of eight developments awarded funding to date through HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO, SDHC’s homelessness action plan

SAN DIEGO, CA — The hillside overlooking Cesar Chavez Elementary School, with a faint view of the Coronado Bridge in the distance, will be transformed into the site of affordable rental apartments for homeless Veterans, non-Veteran homeless households, and low-income San Diegans upon the completion of [Vista del Puente](#), a San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC) partnership development that celebrated its groundbreaking today.

“Chronic homelessness isn’t going to be fixed overnight,” said San Diego County Supervisor Ron Roberts, the Chair of the Regional Task Force on the Homeless. “But the type of commitment we’re seeing here today ... we’re going to make a difference. We’re going to reduce the number of people who are out there.”

Close to 75 percent of Vista del Puente’s 51 affordable rental apartments will be set aside for homeless households: 26 units for homeless Veterans and 12 units for non-Veteran homeless San Diegans.

In addition, 13 units will be affordable for families earning up to 60 percent of San Diego’s Area Median Income (AMI), which is currently \$54,540 for a family of four. All of these units will remain affordable for a period of 55 years.

“Affordable housing shouldn’t be on the equal playing field with market-rate. ... We need to make it easier. We need to create a new permanent affordable housing fund,” said San Diego City Councilmember Georgette Gómez, whose district includes the site for Vista del Puente.

Located near the intersection of Gamma Street and South 40th Street in San Diego’s Southcrest neighborhood, Vista del Puente will be developed by National Community Renaissance (National CORE) and Townspeople, in partnership with SDHC.

“Reflecting on the name of this building, Vista del Puente – the ‘view of the bridge’ – I think of it as more of ‘Vista del Progreso’ – a view of progress,” said Frank Urtasun, Chairman of the SDHC Board of Commissioners. “To be able to accomplish projects like this is a big deal. ... We’re reinventing what public housing is all about here in San Diego.”

Vista del Puente is one of eight projects that were awarded development funding in the first three years of **HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO** (2014-2017), SDHC’s homelessness action plan.

SDHC is investing a \$4 million loan toward the development:

- \$3.8 million in U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HOME Investment Partnerships Program funds, which are granted to the City of San Diego and administered by SDHC; and
- \$200,000 from the City's Affordable Housing Fund, which is also administered by SDHC.

In addition, SDHC awarded 38 federal rental housing vouchers to provide rental assistance for the homeless San Diegans who will reside at Vista del Puente. When a resident moves out, the voucher will remain with the unit so that it may assist another homeless San Diegan.

“It is a project that took heart to bring here today, and it is going to change, not just a community, but the hearts and minds of people throughout this region,” said Marti Emerald, the former City Councilmember for District 9.

HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO is deeply rooted in the national “Housing First” model of addressing homelessness, which is to provide housing as quickly as possible with supportive services as needed.

“The Housing First model allows people to have some stability in their lives before they have to change their lives,” said Gordon Walker, CEO of the San Diego County Regional Task force on the Homeless. “We can be a very strong catalyst in helping people change their lives one at a time.”

Vista del Puente residents will also have access to on-site community services, such as: case management, mental health services, substance abuse recovery, job training and job placement.

“There are populations within the State of California that are always going to need some help. ... What this project does is bring together a variety of those needs in an effort to be able to create a place where people can stabilize, with the hope that they will be able to move on and move into market-rate and move into other aspects of their lives,” said Steve PonTell, President & CEO of National CORE.

Jon Derryberry, Executive Director of Townspeople, said Vista del Puente “is a dream for Townspeople and our partners.”

Including Vista del Puente, SDHC has awarded \$29.8 million through **HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO** toward the development of 407 permanent supportive housing units for homeless individuals and families.

In the next three fiscal years of **HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO** (2018-2020), which launched on July 1, 2017, SDHC will direct \$50 million toward the creation of approximately 500 permanent supportive housing units for homeless San Diegans.

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