



SAN DIEGO  
HOUSING  
COMMISSION

## INFORMATIONAL REPORT

**DATE ISSUED:** April 29, 2021

**REPORT NO:** HCR21-056

**ATTENTION:** Chair and Members of the San Diego Housing Commission  
For the Agenda of May 6, 2021

**SUBJECT:** March 2021 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 look for work, attend classes, meet with a service provider or doctor, or otherwise attend to their personal needs. 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.

### **MONTHLY REPORTING SUMMARY – MARCH 2021**

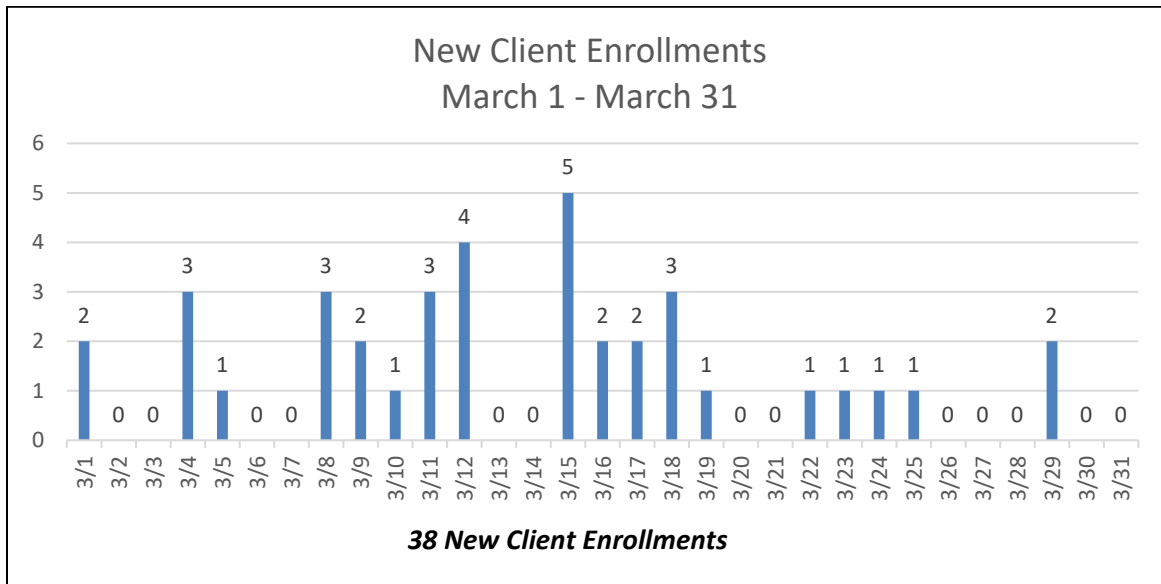
The tables below provide an overview of data captured in the 34<sup>th</sup> month of operations for the Center, operated by MHS, which opened on June 13, 2018. The Center is open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.

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. As of March 31, 2021, 488 bins were assigned to clients. In total, the Center enrolled 38 new clients and served 514 total clients throughout the month of March. Of the 514 clients served in March, 468 of them returned to the Center to access their storage bins, and the total number of return check-ins in March was 2,397. Twenty-six clients exited the Center in March.

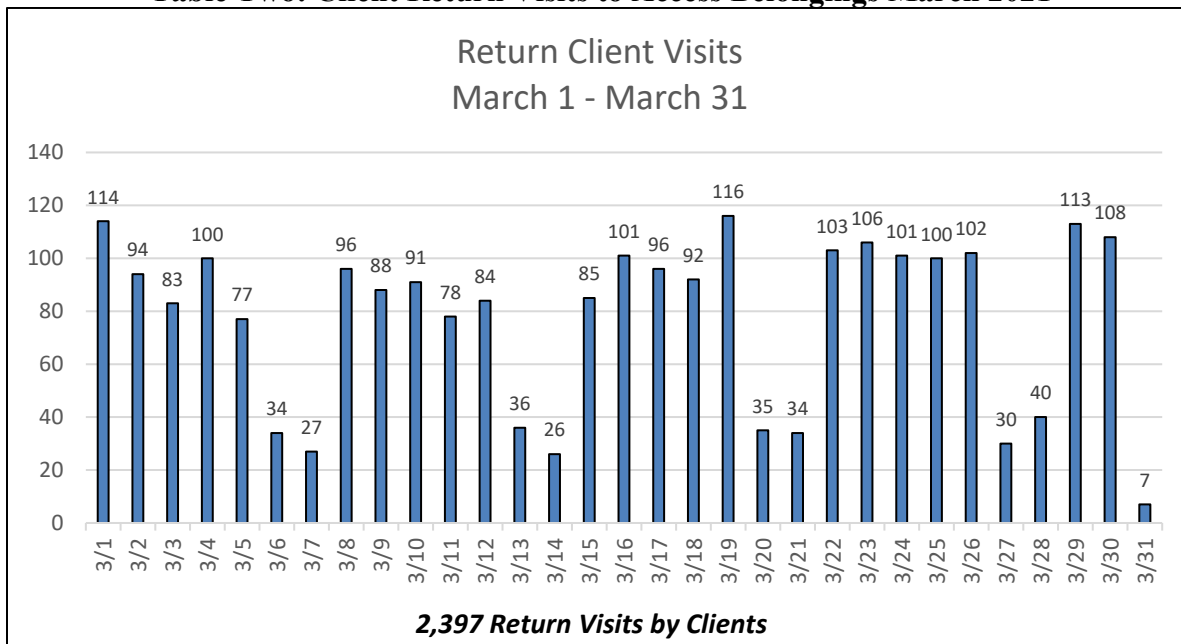
---

<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 March 2021**



**Table Two: Client Return Visits to Access Belongings March 2021**



**Table Three: Resource Referrals for Enrolled Clients in March 2021**

RESOURCE TYPE	TOTAL REFERRALS IN MARCH
Basic Needs	13
Food Assistance	7
Health Care	5
Shelter	5
Housing Search and Information	5
Income Support and Employment	4
Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services	3
Transportation	5
At-Risk Homeless Housing Related Assistance Programs	5
<b>TOTAL RESOURCE REFERRALS</b>	<b>52</b>

**Table Four: Summary of Weekday and Weekend Check-Ins Fiscal Year 2021**

Summary of Check-Ins: July 1, 2020 – March 31, 2021				
	Weekend	Weekday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>July 2020</b>	290	2,475	147	143
<b>August 2020</b>	395	2,166	190	205
<b>September 2020</b>	301	2,060	147	154
<b>October 2020</b>	363	2,273	187	176
<b>November 2020</b>	370	2,125	170	200
<b>December 2020</b>	328	2,443	158	170
<b>January 2021</b>	400	1,924	222	178
<b>February 2021</b>	288	1,848	138	150
<b>March 2021</b>	262	2,135	135	127
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,997</b>	<b>19,449</b>	<b>1,494</b>	<b>1,503</b>
<b>Average Check-Ins</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>2,161</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>167</b>

### **STORAGE CENTER ACTIVITY OVERVIEW**

The Storage Center serves San Diegans who are experiencing homelessness. Of the 1,545 total distinct, unduplicated persons served in the program since the opening of the Center, 45 percent identified as

having a disability, 38 percent experienced chronic homelessness, 31 percent were 55 years of age or older, and 6 percent were veterans.<sup>2</sup>

Center staff conduct basic outreach activities in the area surrounding the Center. Center staff also act 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 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 homeless individuals 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 was 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. The most recent meeting was held via telephonic conference in March with 11 representatives in attendance.

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 minutes are provided on a monthly basis to the Community Advisory Committee as well as City Councilmembers. Community Meeting Minutes for the March 10, 2021, meeting are attached to this report.

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 partner and 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.

### **COVID-19 Mitigation Responses**

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 the Homeless

---

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

# **Homeless Storage Neighborhood Advisory Committee (HSNAC) Community Meeting Minutes**

**March 10, 2021**

## **Community Representative Attendance\***

1. Myron Taylor
2. Melanie Briones
3. Michelle Navarro
4. Candelaria Gomez

## **Storage Center Staff and Affiliated Partner Staff Attendance\***

5. Veronica Aguilar, Mental Health Systems (MHS)
6. Scott Wahl, San Diego Police Department (SDPD)
7. Ricardo Rivas, San Diego Police Department (SDPD)
8. Melissa Kolts, San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC)
9. Jessica Adamo, San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC)
10. Betsy Knight, Behavioral Health Services (BHS), County of San Diego
11. Stephen Bilecz, Environmental Services Department (ESD), City of San Diego

\*Following CDC's safety guidelines for COVID-19, the March 2021 HSNAC meeting was conducted via telephone conference.

## **Next HSNAC Meeting**

**Date: Wednesday, April 14, 2021**

**Location: Telephone Conference**

## **Community Comments**

Community Comment: Community representative asked Storage Connect Center staff if there were plans to install a portable bathroom and handwashing station at the facility.

MHS Response: During the last community meeting, a community representative asked for a portable bathroom and handwashing station to be installed on Commercial Street near the 5 freeway overpass. There was not a discussion on installing the portable restroom at the storage facility.

BHS Response: There were five locations identified by community members, which included locations near the San Diego Police Department, the old library, the new library, and a few other locations. Behavioral Health Services staff confirmed with the County of San Diego that there are existing handwashing stations at or near these locations, including near the MTS station. There was a review conducted

regarding the public restrooms, and the decision was made by the County that there is not a need for public restrooms in those areas because of existing public restrooms that are already accessible. The addition of a portable public restroom is based on ten or more individuals living in an encampment, and while these areas are frequented by many individuals, there were no encampments noted in those areas.

Community Comment: Community representative asked if anyone has seen an increase in urination and defecation in the streets and alleyway near the storage facility and in the community. The community representative shared a concern over another hepatitis A outbreak.

MHS Response: Around the storage facility, staff have not seen an increase because staff and the security agency patrol the area.

ESD Response: ESD's contract for sanitizing will continue through the next fiscal year so ESD will still have crews out actively sanitizing sidewalks.

Community Comment: Community representative asked when the Convention Center shelter will be closed and what will happen to the current unsheltered population.

SDHC Response: Demobilization efforts are in place as we speak, and the shelter should be fully closed by the end of March 2021. SDHC is working with the City on reconfiguring the bridge shelters to reopen. There will be significant street outreach conducted to unsheltered individuals to try to connect them with housing resources and get them into the Coordinated Entry System.

Community Comment: Community representative asked if the cleaning and abatement services under the 5 freeway will ramp up again after San Diego enters a lower tier for COVID.

SDPD Response: Jails will not accept misdemeanor bookings and quality of life violations that SDPD is normally out on the streets addressing around the clock. This ultimately means there is not a lot that SDPD can do if there is no threat of jail. We are hoping that when San Diego enters a lower tier, jails will go back to the normal booking procedure. We do go down there daily to do clean-ups with ESD seven days a week. We make everyone pick up their stuff, move out of the area while we de-litter and sanitize. For now we are doing the best we can to keep things from getting worse. When SDPD leaves the Convention Center shelter, they will rotate back over to this area so there will be some additional staffing in that area to keep structures from going up closer to the storage facility.

(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. This includes providing updated guidance as it is released from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, and the County of San Diego related to serving persons experiencing homelessness.

Housing Commission staff began tracking stock levels of critical cleaning supplies and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at all City of San Diego homeless shelters and services programs that the Housing Commission administers and began assisting with procuring needed cleaning and PPE supplies to ensure providers could effectively clean and sanitize program spaces in alignment with guidance from the CDC and County of San Diego.

In addition, the City of San Diego print shop started creating bundles of posters and flyers for providers for posting through facilities and delivered material on an ongoing basis to providers as needed. Communication trees were also reinforced between providers, the Housing Commission, the City of San Diego, the County of San Diego, RTFH, and program leadership were encouraged to ensure redundancy is in place at leadership and program management levels (as the Housing Commission carried out internally) in regard to communication and knowledge sharing, in case leadership workforce reduction occurred.

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 CDC guidance to protect the health and safety of staff and clients.

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)