



SAN DIEGO
HOUSING
COMMISSION

News Release

November 18, 2015

FORMER HOMELESS TENANTS OF HOTEL METRO MOVING INTO ALPHA SQUARE APARTMENTS, SPACIOUS FURNISHED STUDIOS WITH THEIR OWN PRIVATE BATHROOMS

*Grand Opening of 201 Affordable Units, an SDHC Joint Development Partnership with
City of San Diego, Civic San Diego, Alpha Project for the Homeless &
Chelsea Investment Corporation*

San Diego, CA — Formerly homeless and low-income San Diegans moving into the new Alpha Square Apartments (Alpha Square) will live in more spacious studio apartments with their own private bathrooms, putting an end to the days at the Hotel Metro when they had to go down the hallways to use the bathroom facilities.

Close to a hundred people attended today's grand opening ceremony, which was held on the rooftop of Alpha Square ([watch the video](#)).

"We wanted something that did not look like an affordable housing building," said Bob McElroy the President & CEO of Alpha Project for the Homeless (Alpha Project), which co-developed Alpha Square with Chelsea Investment Corporation. "I think when you walk the place you would never know this is a low-income housing project and it doesn't have to be – our people deserve better than that."

The 201 studios are more than double the space of the previous units at the 25-year-old single room occupancy hotel and are furnished and equipped with cooktops and air conditioning. Alpha Project will provide supportive services for tenants at Alpha Square.

Alpha Square will remain affordable for 55 years. It was also developed in partnership with the San Diego Housing Commission (SDHC), the City of San Diego and Civic San Diego.

"This is about partnerships. That's why you see all of us here. It's about every single one of us working incredibly hard to get resources to get funding to move the ball forward," said Speaker of the California State Assembly Toni Atkins.

Alpha Square is a six-story, transit-oriented mixed-use \$47.6 million development with retail space at the street level.

"The opening of Alpha Square is going to be a home for those who need a little help," said Mayor Kevin Faulconer. "It encapsulates the spirit of San Diego, bringing people together in what I like to call 'One San Diego.'"

The development was 10 years in the making, which included a study that concluded that the aging Hotel Metro needed to be torn down.

“This is a day that we should be proud of ourselves because the Hotel Metro served its purpose well for 25 years or so, but it wasn't built to live 25 years, and certainly not serving the population that it did,” said San Diego City Councilman Todd Gloria.

The City of San Diego provided a \$17.6 million loan for the construction of Alpha Square and owns the land, which is subject to a 70-year ground lease.

SDHC also authorized the issuance of more than \$6.2 million in State multifamily housing revenue bonds to assist with construction financing for Alpha Square. The San Diego City Council, sitting as the Housing Authority of the City of San Diego, approved the bonds.

“I'm very pleased to announce that construction is complete, the units are 100 percent pre-leased, (and) total project cost is materially below project,” said James J. Schmid, founder & CEO of developer Chelsea Investment Corporation.

Alpha Square recently received an award from Building Industry Association of San Diego County for Best Affordable Project.

SDHC Chairman Gary Gramling who lives in the East Village said that Alpha Square is also a great example of SDHC's efforts to preserve affordable housing in the city of San Diego.

“And we did it with a brand new building to replace the outdated Hotel Metro, which is just blocks away from here.”

Joining Chairman Gramling at today's ceremony were also SDHC President & CEO Richard C. Gentry and SDHC Commissioners Frank Urtasun and Kellee Hubbard.

SDHC also awarded 135 Federal rental housing vouchers, which will allow very low-income tenants to pay up to 30 percent of their income toward their rent. These SDHC housing vouchers have an annual value of more than \$1.4 million.

The vouchers are among the 1,500 Federal housing vouchers that SDHC has committed to provide rental assistance to homeless individuals and families over the next three years in **HOUSING FIRST – SAN DIEGO**, SDHC's landmark Homelessness Action Plan, which was announced on November 12, 2014.

On-site services will include case management and access to long-term treatment and additional services for all residents through Alpha Project programs and partnerships.

Priority for occupancy was given to residents of Hotel Metro. Pending availability, however, residency at Alpha Square will also be open to low-income San Diegans.

The first residents of Alpha Square are expected to move into their new units early December.

Hotel Metro was built in 1990 as short-term, workforce housing. Rooms were relatively small – most offering only 100 square feet of space – just enough for a single bed, a counter with a sink, a microwave, a small refrigerator and an open closet.

At Alpha Square, which includes six more affordable housing units than Hotel Metro and two managers' units, rooms are 260 square feet on average and include a refrigerator, sink, cooktop, full bathroom and high-speed Internet; furnishings include a bed, nightstand, writing desk and television.

Alpha Square also provides 4,065 square feet of common space inside the facility and 6,600 square feet of common space outdoors.

The ground floor of Alpha Square features a community dining room and kitchen, management and service provider offices, a computer lab, laundry facilities, bike storage and a multipurpose room.

For more information about San Diego Housing Commission, visit www.sdhc.org

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