



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

**MAYOR LONDON BREED ADDS 60 NEW BEDS TO DIVISION
CIRCLE NAVIGATION CENTER**

The new beds build on Mayor Breed's goal of adding 1,000 new shelter beds by the end of 2020

San Francisco, CA — Mayor London N. Breed today celebrated the addition of 60 new beds at the Division Circle Navigation Center in the Mission, which brings the total number of beds at Division Circle to 186. The new beds will be used to address homelessness in the area, with a particular emphasis for people at the cross-section of homelessness, mental illness, and substance use disorder. Mayor Breed and Vallejo Mayor Bob Sampayan today toured the newly expanded Navigation Center, located at 224 South Van Ness Ave.

Mayor Breed is committed to dramatically expanding shelters and Navigation Centers to provide a safe place for people to be off the street and be connected with long-term services. In October 2018, she announced a goal of opening 1,000 new shelter beds by the end of 2020. With the expansion of Division Circle Navigation Center, Mayor Breed has added 346 new shelter beds toward the 1,000 bed goal. There are an additional 244 beds under construction, and 200 additional beds in the pipeline.

“The new beds at the Division Circle Navigation Center get us one step closer to providing the shelter we need in our City,” said Mayor Breed. “Everyone deserves a safe place to sleep at night and access behavioral health care if they need it. We must continue adding more shelters and housing throughout San Francisco and connecting people to the services that can help get them off the streets and out of homelessness.”

The Division Circle Navigation Center opened in the summer of 2018 with 126 beds. The Navigation Center is operated by the St. Vincent de Paul Society of San Francisco, a non-profit provider that is responsible for case management and partnering with the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) to provide housing navigation services. The St. Vincent de Paul Society also coordinates with the Department of Public Health and the Human Services Agency, who provide onsite access to physical and behavioral health services, as well as benefits access.

After a year of successful operation, the City has expanded the capacity of the Navigation Center by adding 60 beds, an additional set of restrooms, and new community space with a clinic. Since its opening, the Division Circle Navigation Center has served 1,245 people. Forty-three percent of all people who have exited from all San Francisco Navigation Centers have left to either another shelter program or into housing.



Navigation Centers are designed to serve San Franciscans who are living unsheltered in the community. Unlike traditional shelters, Navigation Centers allow people to bring their partners, pets, and belongings with them. In addition to room and board, case managers provide support to connect them with employment opportunities, health services, public benefits, and housing.

The original construction of the Division Circle Navigation Center was supported by State funds secured by Assemblymember Phil Ting. The Navigation Center is located on land leased from Caltrans that was previously used as a parking lot. As a result of Assembly Bill 857, introduced by Assemblymember Ting, the City is able to use underutilized Caltrans locations like this one for emergency shelter programs at affordable rates.

“Division Circle is a great example of how vital state and local partnerships are in addressing California’s homeless crisis,” said Assemblymember Ting. “This Navigation Center got its start with the help of state funding and state land. Growth and expansion are signs of success, and I’m pleased to see our investments in programs that help people flourish.”

The Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) currently offers temporary shelter to approximately 3,400 people per night through traditional shelters, stabilization beds, Navigation Centers, and Transitional Housing. However, 65% of San Francisco’s homeless population lives unsheltered on the city streets, which clearly demonstrates the need for more shelter beds.

“We are thrilled to be expanding access to the Division Circle Navigation Center today for people suffering on our streets,” said Jeff Kositsky, Director of HSH. “Navigation Centers are a critical tool to provide safety and a step in the journey to exiting homelessness. We thank Mayor Breed for her bold leadership to expand access to shelter in San Francisco, to community leaders and neighbors who supported this expansion and our City partners and St. Vincent de Paul Society for their tireless and compassionate work.”

“As a long standing nonprofit service provider, St. Vincent de Paul is happy to support the Mayor and her initiative to increase beds for those who are unhoused and most vulnerable,” said Shari Wooldridge, Executive Director of the St. Vincent de Paul Society of San Francisco. “Our mission has been to bring back the humanity, dignity and self-respect to any one in need. Today we are able to provide another 60 beds for those who are looking to heal and move in a different direction with their lives.”

Earlier this month, Mayor Breed launched a new behavioral health initiative—Heal Our City—which includes a plan to help the approximately 4,000 homeless San Franciscans who have mental illness and substance use disorders. Of this group, San Francisco’s data shows that 41 percent frequently use urgent and emergent psychiatric services, compared to 15 percent of people experiencing homelessness overall who use these services. This population also suffers greatly from alcohol use disorder. Examining this population through an equity lens, African American people represent 35 percent of these residents, while they make up just five percent of the overall population of San Francisco.



The initial steps of the new initiative will provide enhanced care coordination, create a multi-agency program to streamline housing and health care for the 230 most vulnerable members of this population, and increase access to behavioral health services by expanding the hours of the City's Behavioral Health Access Center. Additionally, on Thursday, September 12, Mayor Breed announced the City will open 15 new Hummingbird psychiatric respite beds, with funding provided by Tipping Point Community.

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