

FAQ  
Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center  
April 17, 2019

**What is a SAFE Navigation Center?**

- SAFE Navigation Centers are essential to reducing unsheltered homelessness and connecting guests to services and housing assistance.
- San Francisco has opened 8 Navigation Centers and currently has 6 in operation.
- SAFE Navigation Centers build off of the best aspects of Navigation Centers and makes them more scalable, sustainable, and effective.
- The City is looking to expand SAFE Navigation Centers in neighborhoods across the city to respond to the homelessness crisis.

**How long will the Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center be in operation?**

- Should the proposal be passed by the Port Commission, the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing will enter into an MOU with the Port to utilize Seawall Lot 330 as a temporary SAFE Navigation Center for an initial term of two years.
- The Port Commission will have the opportunity to extend the operations for an additional two years if the commission finds that the City has met its good neighbor obligations.

**How many people will stay at the proposed Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center?**

- The Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center will open with capacity for **130 guests**, a size similar to existing navigation centers.
- Over a 6 month period operations will ramp up to the maximum capacity of **200 guests**.

**What is the plan to scale police and other City service support neighborhoods that host SAFE Navigation Centers?**

The City has developed a safety plan in partnership with SFPD for the Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center. The Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center Safety Plan includes the following safety, outreach, cleanliness and reporting provisions:

**Safety**

- SFPD will create and maintain a Safety Zone surrounding the Center.
- **SFPD will dedicate beat officers to the safety zone 7 days per week.**
- SFPD will be focused on loitering, drug use/sale and tents enforcement within the safety zone.
- The SAFE Navigation Center will have onsite security guards responsible for security within the site and will proactively patrol the perimeter of the facility.
- The onsite security guards will have a direct contact to Healthy Streets Operation Center to report any loitering and tents. In the event of criminal activity, security will alert SFPD via 911.

**Outreach**

- The Healthy Streets Operation Center, which is a multiagency coordinated response team consisting of the Department of Homelessness and Supportive

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Housing, Public Works, Public Health and SFPD, will work in a dedicated outreach zone surrounding the SAFE Navigation Center to connect people with services and invite them into shelter. This outreach model is built off of the successful model in the Mission District that has dramatically reduced street homelessness in the area.

**Cleanliness**

- To ensure that the neighborhood remains clean, the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing will partner with a nonprofit cleaning/employment program to maintain a “clean zone” around the facility.
- The program will hire people staying at the SAFE Navigation Center and other homeless and formerly homeless individuals to help with neighborhood cleaning.

**Reporting Issues**

- The SAFE Navigation Center will have a 24/7 phone number that neighbors can call to report a concern related to concerns on site.
- Neighbors can also report concerns in the neighborhood to 311. The City will have a special queue for 311 calls related to this site that will be prioritized at HSOC.

**Why was this site selected? How many sites were considered?**

- City has reviewed nearly 100 potential sites for future SAFE Navigation Centers in an effort to add 1,000 new shelter beds by the end of 2020.
- Each site comes with its own set of complications and opportunities. We have narrowed the list down to a handful of sites that have the potential to be SAFE Navigation Centers. The Embarcadero site is the first new site announced. We have also announced expansions at two existing locations. These three combined will add 280 new beds to the system.
- The Embarcadero site has many attributes that make it a good location including:
  - Publicly owned land
  - Significant square footage
  - An area that lacks homeless services or shelters
  - Proximity to public transportation
  - Ability to gain site control
  - Ability to run utilities
  - Ease of street access for construction and operations
  - Need - Proximity to where homeless people are living unsheltered

**What other sites in the area were identified? And why were they rejected?**

- We have investigated approximately 100 sites including other Port properties and found that few had the ability to meet the needs of the community as well as Seawall Lot 330. In addition to providing much needed shelter to people experiencing homelessness along the Embarcadero this site has the availability, square footage, location and constructability that most others did not.

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- The City is finalizing its evaluation of additional sites and looks forward to making an announcement soon about more SAFE Navigation Centers that will be proposed in other parts of San Francisco.
- The reason these site cannot be disclosed is because, in some cases, it could impact our lease negotiations and we need to have a community process with each site.

**What are the benchmarks of success for the SAFE Navigation Center?**

The success of the SAFE Navigation Center is measured on several levels including:

- Making connections to housing and services for people utilizing the program
- Reducing unsheltered homelessness in the area surrounding the SAFE Navigation Center.
- Maintaining or improving cleanliness in the area

**What are the impacts of SAFE Navigation Centers on neighboring communities?**

- SAFE Navigation Centers can be an asset to a community. The waterfront has a homeless population that the SAFE Navigation Center will serve and bring off of the street.
- Neighbors of existing Navigation Centers report a reduction in homelessness in the area, not an increase.
- Guests staying at SAFE Navigation Centers have 24/7 access which has a positive impact on the neighborhood because it does not require people to line up outside the center for entry or exit to the street in the morning.
- People can enter the site when they return and have no reason to linger in front of the facility.
- Additionally, meals will be served, and a robust array of social services will be provided on site.
- People staying at the SAFE Navigation Center will have many of their needs met onsite including services, medical care, meals and laundry.

**What happens if we see an increase in homelessness in the area?**

- By focusing outreach on the neighborhood and inviting people into the SAFE Navigation Center from the surrounding area, we will reduce homelessness in the area.
- SFPD enforcement efforts will ensure that tents are not set up near the site.
- Should crime go up in the area, SFPD will revisit its safety plan for the neighborhood.
- If neighbors see people experiencing homelessness loitering in the area, they can report to 311. 311 will have a dedicated queue of calls/reports related to the Embarcadero Navigation Center that will alert the Healthy Streets Operations Center for priority response.

**How long will the Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center be in operation and what happens when it closes?**

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- To utilize the site as a SAFE Navigation Center, the City needs to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Port. This MOU will have a term of 2 years.
- The Port Commission will have the ability to extend the MOU by an additional 2 years by a vote and by making findings that the SAFE Navigation Center has met its good neighbor obligations.
- The Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center is designed to be temporary, and will utilize structures that can be relocated.
- When the Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center closes, the parcel will be returned to Port control for development purposes.
- When the Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center closes, any remaining guests will be transferred to other sites. No one will lose their shelter space due to the closure.
- The City has operated other temporary Navigation Centers on sites slated to be developed and has closed the centers in collaboration with the developers and owners.

**Will the Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center attract more homeless people to my neighborhood?**

- The top priority for the site will be to provide shelter to people living outdoors along the Embarcadero and in the outreach zone.
- Because the SAFE navigation Center does not take walk-ins, there is no incentive for non-residents to approach the site.
- Neighbors of current Navigation Centers have reported a decrease in the visibility of homelessness in the area surrounding the site.

**Why would you put a SAFE Navigation Center in this location?**

- The Embarcadero has a significant homeless population with very few resources to address the crisis in these neighborhoods.
- It is an opportunity to use public resources to address a public crisis.
- This site meets many of the site specifications required to open a SAFE Navigation Center.

**How will be people get into the Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center?**

- People experiencing homelessness will access the center through invitation from our outreach programs and referral from the Coordinated Entry system.
- The primary focus will be on inviting people living along the Embarcadero first. Our outreach teams will work section by section along the Embarcadero inviting unsheltered homeless people into the site.
- There will be no walk-ins permitted, so there will be no lines outside of people trying to get into the center.

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**If neighbors see someone experiencing unsheltered homelessness along the Embarcadero, how can they get them help?**

- First, the Homeless Outreach Team will be deploying a concerted homeless outreach effort along the Embarcadero inviting people into the center.
- When you see someone unsheltered in the area, please call 311 and give the exact location. The Healthy Streets Operations Center, which handles all homelessness related 311 calls, will respond. The City will set up a special queue for 311 calls related to this site that will be prioritized at HSOC.

**Can people drink or do drugs on site?**

- Guests are not permitted to use drugs or alcohol at the site.

**What will the site look like?**

- San Francisco Public Works is designing the facility. The goal of this project is to establish a SAFE Navigation Center using temporary materials that are physically appealing and fit into the neighborhood. The design will build on the concepts and lessons learned from the Bayshore, Civic Center, Division Circle, and Central Waterfront Navigation Centers.
- We are very early in the design phase of this project and are interested in community input on key components including fencing, landscaping, paint color, lighting, and security cameras. Renderings were shared at an April 3<sup>rd</sup> community meeting and are that presentation is available on HSH's website.

**Will the Shelter Crisis Ordinances impact the Embarcadero SAFE Navigation Center?**

- The ordinances are tools to expedite the process of opening new homeless facilities once approved, including this site.
- The ordinance requires the City to engage in a robust community engagement process.
- The ordinances do not limit the Port's authority over the site or the Board of Supervisor's authority to approve large contracts.

**Is a 200-bed facility too big? Does this impact the level of services provided?**

- 200 beds is not dramatically larger than existing programs. The City currently oversees Navigation centers with more than 100 and shelters with more than 300 beds.
- The SAFE Navigation Centers are built off of the success of Navigation Centers and scaled to meet the need of the community.
- These sites will be adequately staffed to serve 200 people and provide high-quality services.
- The scaling cost savings are primarily on the operations costs.
- HSH worked with current Navigation Center guests, providers and the community to determine the appropriate size for SAFE Navigation Centers.

**What type of services are provided at a SAFE Navigation Center?**

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A SAFE Navigation Center builds off of the service model of our current navigation centers and employs a low-barrier, high-service model. Key components of the services include:

- Onsite case management to link people with the unique services needed to help them stabilize including health care, benefits counseling, mental health care, substance use treatment, employment services and housing assistance.
- Roving services that are brought onsite regularly include: housing assessments, medical services, behavioral health and benefits counseling.

**What are the cultural norms /rules at SAFE Navigation Centers?**

SAFE Navigation Centers have a welcoming and dignified culture that focuses on the following components:

- No violence
- No drug dealing or use
- Guest safety
- Guest privacy
- Welcoming in partners
- Allowing pets
- Providing safe storage for belonging
- 24/7 access
- No set meal times
- Trauma-informed care
- Use of restorative justice practices
- Build guest leadership and sense of ownership through involvement in site operations

**What amenities are included at SAFE Navigation Centers?**

- Meals
- Privacy
- Space for pets
- Outdoor space within the facility
- Community space
- Laundry
- Private services/counseling space
- WiFi