



DEPARTMENT OF
HOMELESSNESS AND
SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

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London Breed, Mayor

Frequently Asked Questions: Proposed Acquisition of 1800 Sutter St.

FAQ Updated Sept. 7, 2021

What is Permanent Supportive Housing?

- Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is long-term affordable housing with on-site social services for people exiting homelessness.
- PSH tenants have all the rights and responsibilities of a lease and formal tenancy.
- PSH is not a temporary shelter.
- Tenants in PSH pay 30% of their income toward rent, consistent with affordability standards.

What type of social services are provided?

- The services provided at PSH sites are generally focused on community building, housing stabilization, and homelessness prevention.
- Each tenant's service plan is customized to meet their unique needs and goals. For example, the plan can be focused on accessing health care and addressing chronic medical needs or could be focused on job training and employment.
- For tenants with substance use disorder, access to treatment can be the focus of their service plan.
- PSH includes onsite 24/7 staffing.

Who will be served at 1800 Sutter?

The exact subpopulation to be housed at 1800 Sutter has not yet been finalized, but HSH is likely to focus this housing for older adults and people with disabilities exiting homelessness.

Can the community give input to the target population?

Yes, we are always open to hearing recommendations from the community.

How will tenants be selected for this housing?

Potential tenants will be assessed and matched to the best available housing options through the City's centralized Coordinated Entry process.

How is PSH different from the Shelter-In-Place Hotel Model?

- PSH is long-term housing and tenants will have the opportunity to integrate into the community.
- The Shelter in Place (SIP) Hotel model is a temporary shelter that the City opened to provide safe and non-congregate shelter options during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Guests in SIP do not have leases; this is not their long-term home.

Why was the property at 1800 Sutter Selected?

The Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) issued a Request for Information (RFI) to interested property owners to submit information to assist the City to identify suitable properties for possible acquisition as Permanent Supportive Housing for people experiencing homelessness. The owners of the property at 1800 Sutter submitted property information under the RFI. After both a document review and a site visit, the property was prioritized for acquisition based on its condition, location, amenities, and ability to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness. Important attributes included:

- The property at 1800 Sutter is a high-quality building that will not require significant upgrades to open as housing.
- The rooms are good-sized with private bathrooms.
- The building has an outdoor community space that is good for socializing and community-building activities.
- The building has amenities such as meeting rooms and offices to support onsite services.
- The building is near public transportation.
- The building is near social services, particularly senior services.

Will the project have a Good Neighbor policy? What does that policy involve, both for HSH and the provider?

Yes! The service provider shall maintain a good relationship with the neighborhood, including:

- Collaboration with neighbors and relevant city agencies to ensure that neighborhood concerns about the facility are heard and addressed;
- The provider's management staff is available to respond to neighbors within three business days, if reasonable; and
- A representative of the Grantee will attend all appropriate neighborhood meetings.

HSH will enter into an agreement or contract with the nonprofit operator and service provider at the PSH site. Through our contract management, HSH holds the provider accountable to all components of the contract, including the Good Neighbor Policy. If the operator is failing to live up to the Good Neighbor Policy, HSH will work with the provider, community, and any other needed City departments to address the concerns.

Who will operate and provide services at the site?

- HSH will select a nonprofit operator and service provider to manage the housing.
- HSH partners with experienced nonprofit organizations that have expertise in managing supportive housing and working with people exiting homelessness.
- HSH will run a public process for soliciting the operator and service provider.



Are residents allowed to come and go from the site?

Yes, the residents will be tenants with all the rights and responsibilities that come with a lease. This housing will be their long-term home, and they will have the opportunity to integrate with the community.

What is the responsibility of the City to maintain cleanliness in the area?

- The nonprofit service provider will be responsible for maintaining cleanliness right around the property.
- San Francisco Public Works is responsible for maintaining cleanliness for other public spaces, and HSH will work with Public Works to ensure support for the area.
- Additional cleaning services for the neighborhood could be discussed as this project moves forward. At some Navigation Centers, HSH has partnered with cleaning and job training programs to provide additional support to the neighborhood.

What has the community process been and what are the next steps for approval?

- The owners of the building submitted a response to the City's Request for Information about potential buildings to acquire in July 2020.
- City staff and technical consultants conducted multiple site visits to assess the quality of the property and its viability as permanent supportive housing
- HSH is currently at the beginning of the community engagement process to discuss this proposal. HSH will continue to engage with the community.

To move this proposal forward:

- The City would introduce a resolution to the Board of Supervisors to authorize the acquisition. Timing TBD.
- The approval resolution would be heard at the Budget and Finance Committee of the Board of Supervisors. Timing TBD.
- A full vote of the BOS would follow the Budget and Finance Committee.
- If approved by the Board of Supervisors, the Mayor would sign the resolution to complete the approval process.
- The City would close on the property within approximately 30-60 days following final approval.
- The site would continue to function as a SIP hotel as the provider selection takes place.
- The transition from SIP to PSH would likely take approximately 9-12 months from authorization.

Are residents permitted to have visitors?

Yes. The visitor policy is outlined in each tenant's lease and is consistent with citywide residential hotel visitor policies, which include limitations on daytime and overnight guests.



What can the City offer the community to mitigate any negative economic impacts on small businesses in the area?

We want to hear from small businesses about what kind of support they need. The City is looking at several ways to support the neighborhood and its small businesses, which will be developed in partnership with the community and could include:

- Maintaining restaurant space as a neighborhood-serving business enterprise that reinforces the Cultural District—small businesses, institutions, and community activities.
- Ensuring that the operating budget includes funding for both services and security so that residents are integrated into the neighborhood and any potential disruptions are limited.
- Committing to support Japantown Cultural Heritage and Economic Sustainability Strategy (JCHESS).
- Encouraging resident patronage of local business enterprises.
- Participating in cross-departmental efforts to support local businesses with the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD) and the Mayor’s Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD).
- Extending the Community Ambassador Program to Japantown.

How can the City support the workers currently working at the Buchanan Hotel to prevent job loss?

While we cannot dictate the hiring decisions of third-party contractors, HSH will require that the selected provider/operator prioritize the hiring of existing qualified Buchanan staff for any new hires needed for the ongoing operations of the building as PSH.

What is the entitlement pathway for this project? Will it need CEQA, Change of Use, Planning Code changes, or any other planning review and determination? How does this project affect the Japantown Special Use District?

- The conversion of the property at 1800 Sutter from a tourist hotel to housing will require a change of use but that process is “as of right” and does not require any discretionary approvals by the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors.
- There is no CEQA analysis that will require review or approval by the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors.
- The proposed project is consistent with the Japantown Special Use District.



Is the City using its emergency authorities under the COVID-19 emergency to move this project forward quickly?

While no emergency authority or powers are directly invoked in order to acquire the property or convert it to PSH, acquiring properties to house current Shelter in Place Hotel (SIP) guests is a critical component of the City's emergency SIP rehousing work, and must be completed on an expedited timeline given federal time limits on reimbursement of SIP housing costs.

Did the property owner approach the City or did the City approach the property owner about the possible sale?

- The City has a unique opportunity, with new funding available, to acquire buildings (hotels or residential buildings) to convert to permanent supportive housing to help address the housing crisis.
- To determine the scope of opportunities for acquisition in San Francisco, the City released a [Request for Information](#) to property owners to collect information about properties that may be available for sale.
- The owners of 1800 Sutter responded to this RFI.
- The City already had a relationship with the property owners because of the City's current lease of the site for use as a Shelter-in-Place hotel.
- The City's acquisition team has followed up on all RFI submissions and determined which properties are viable for use as permanent housing.
- The property at 1800 Sutter was prioritized for acquisition along with other properties across the City due to its good condition and desirable amenities.

Is this project being “fast-tracked” and if so, what role will the Japantown community have in ensuring this project meets the community needs culturally, socially, economically, etc.?

- The proposed acquisition of 1800 Sutter is not being “fast-tracked.”
- The proposal is going through all local and state requirements for acquisition and use as permanent supportive housing.
- The City is operating with urgency because of the homelessness crisis and the unique confluence of state and local resources that make building acquisition possible.
- HSH is committed to a robust community process and will work with the community to ensure that diverse voices and perspectives are heard, that information is shared, and that there is the opportunity for input into this project.
- HSH is listening to community input now and will include many recommendations from the community into the program design, should the project move forward.
- Additionally, we are committed to being a good neighbor, which means championing the needs of the Japantown community with other City departments to support the cultural vibrancy and economic stability of the community. We are currently taking recommendations on how best to do this.



Are there other property options that resulted from the RFI outside of the four that are being pursued? Are additional properties being vetted as a contingency? If not, why not?

- Yes, there were many properties identified through the RFP process.
- The current proposal of four buildings is the first round of proposed acquisitions, and there will be more proposed purchases in the near future.

There is a lot of distrust between our community and the city because of the injustices that took place during redevelopment. How can we guarantee that the promises you make now are ones that are going to be kept if you or others that made the promises leave your positions?

Since HSH was developed in 2016, we have a strong track record of working closely with communities where we open new projects. For example, we have built strong partnerships in the Dogpatch, Embarcadero, and Balboa Station Area, where we recently opened temporary shelter programs. Each of these communities had significant concerns prior to the opening of homeless services sites in their neighborhoods but through consistent engagement, they have become largely supportive of the projects.

Some people in our community think that you spoke to the communities of the other hotels first. From their community meetings, it seems that you have been in communication with them for months while our community only found out weeks ago. Can you speak more to this?

This is untrue. HSH began community outreach about these 4 properties at the same time. It may have appeared at one community meeting that there was more awareness of this project because the property had been initially identified by homeless services providers who brought it to the attention of the City. These providers attended the community meeting to express their support for the acquisition of this particular site.

What is HSH's plan to outreach to small business owners who are unable to attend these meetings during their workday and to small business owners who speak Japanese?

- HSH has outreached to the Japantown Community Benefit District and the Japantown Merchants Association. These organizations are collecting input from small business owners who are unable to attend evening community meetings.
- HSH is happy to meet with the merchants and small business owners anytime that is convenient for them and can provide interpretation services to help facilitate those discussions.

It appears that out of the four properties under consideration only one, the Buchanan, is a tourist hotel. Why were no other tourist hotels considered?

- The current proposal of 4 buildings includes 2 tourist hotels, an under-occupied residential building, and an SRO hotel.

Do you intend to do any retrofit work to adapt the hotel for permanent supportive housing?



1800 Sutter Acquisition – FAQ (Updated Sept. 7, 2021)

- The building does not require significant retrofitting to function as housing. This is one of the many features that make this property attractive for acquisition.
- If we do move forward with this property, it is likely that we will add kitchenettes in each room, replace certain finishes, and conduct other upgrades as appropriate.

