



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, October 17, 2022

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Councilmember Whitburn Calls on City to End Street Homelessness with Civic Center Revitalization

SAN DIEGO – At today’s meeting of the San Diego City Council, Councilmember Whitburn requested that City Staff, the Civic Center Revitalization Committee, and the public provide recommendations to the City Council on how we can use the proposed civic center revitalization project to end street homelessness in San Diego.

“The homelessness we see on our streets is a humanitarian crisis,” said Councilmember Whitburn. “It deeply impacts our neighborhoods, and it costs our city business which costs us jobs.”

Councilmember Whitburn believes that the Civic Center Revitalization is a golden opportunity to free the city of encampments by making use of this City-owned land Downtown where homelessness is concentrated.

More shelter beds are desperately needed and although the city has added hundreds of shelter beds this year, it is still not enough. Because rents are increasingly unaffordable, people are falling into homelessness faster than new shelters can be opened.

With these parcels of land Downtown, Councilmember Whitburn believes that all the shelter beds needed could be added in just a fraction of the available space. Flexible spaces could also be created that serve as shelter space when needed and community space at other times.

“There are people out there on the sidewalks today who have agreed to go into shelter, but we don’t have an available shelter bed for them so they stay on the sidewalks,” said Councilmember Whitburn. How are we going to get people off the streets if there’s nowhere for them to go? This is our chance to fix that.”

Councilmember Whitburn looks forward to the possibilities that are presented by the proposed revitalization of the civic core. Downtown is unique because buildings can be built high, and the area is a transit hub. We need to think big and creatively.

“We have a clear opportunity to address San Diego’s most pressing challenge,” said Councilmember Whitburn. “And I hope that we as a city will rise to the occasion.”

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