

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of San Diego Seeks to Redevelop Downtown's Old Central Library

CITY LOOKS TO EXPLORE A NEW CHAPTER FOR VACANT SITE IN DOWNTOWN SAN DIEGO

SAN DIEGO – In a move to transform the old Central Library Downtown into much-needed housing, the City of San Diego is now accepting letters of interest from interested developers for the property located at 820 E St. Today, the City issued a [Notice of Availability \(NOA\)](#) to sell or lease the historic building.

“The Old Central Library site is prime real estate in Downtown San Diego, but it’s in need of some TLC,” said Mayor Todd Gloria. **“By inviting proposals for its future, we are taking the first step toward transforming this long-vacant building into something that better serves our residents and contributes to a more vibrant Downtown. I look forward to seeing creative ideas that honor its legacy while delivering real public value for San Diegans.”**

In July, the City Council declared the property surplus land under the state’s Surplus Land Act. This law requires the City to negotiate with developers willing to make 25% or more of the housing affordable to lower-income households – those that make 80% or less of the area median income. Interested developers must be registered with the state of California. The Council also directed staff to issue the NOA for this property. The City is seeking a developer who will maximize the redevelopment potential of the site, while also paying fair market value for the property.

“All San Diegans will benefit when we breathe new life into this unused property,” said District 3 Councilmember Stephen Whitburn, who represents Downtown. **“Downtown San Diego is the region’s ideal location for new housing with its proximity to jobs and transit, and replacing this old vacant building with new affordable homes will significantly improve this area for Downtown residents and visitors.”**

The building, which occupies half a city block, opened in 1954 as the City’s main library. It closed in 2013 to begin transferring collections to the new Central Library on Park Boulevard.

“This unique property, situated in the heart of Downtown, has great potential to be revived into a high-quality, mixed-use development that includes low- and moderate-income homes,” said Economic Development Director Christina Bibler. **“For nearly 60 years, the current building served as**

our residents' main library, and now we look forward to the next phase and how it can invigorate new life into this block and help us address our housing crisis."

Interested parties have until Monday, Nov. 3, 2025, to indicate their interest to the City per the NOA.

If an agreement is not reached for the sale or ground lease of the property under the Surplus Land Act, the City may market the property to the general public with a lower affordable-housing requirement.



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