

# 12

## HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The need for human services crosses all economic and social strata and the range and scope of service are as varied as the community. Downtown San Diego has a concentration of the region's human service facilities that provide shelter, meals, counseling, job training, youth programs, and other services to help seniors, the working poor, the sick and disabled, abuse victims, students, and single parents with children. Downtown's array of services respond to human needs where people live and work, and help to improve the quality of life. Human service facilities play an essential role in the downtown community.

There are two main reasons for the historic concentrations of needy populations and human service facilities downtown. Providers locate facilities in proximity to their targeted populations, but transportation, lower land values and rents, and reduced potential for community resistance have historically played important roles. Needy populations, in turn, have traditionally been attracted to downtown as the result of affordable housing and single-room occupancy hotels (SROs), accessibility, and presence of government aid offices and human service providers. While a number of downtown facilities assist those with extreme needs, others tar-

get more independent populations in need of specialized services such as counseling, job training, child care, and refuge from domestic violence.

Some human service providers are associated with adverse neighborhood impacts. The facilities of greatest impact lack the complement of meals, shelter, restrooms, and counseling on-site. The lack of comprehensive care facilities can result in camping, loitering, public drunkenness, migrations from facility to facility, outdoor toileting, panhandling, and sometimes criminal behavior off-site. These impacts have been most intensely experienced in the eastern neighborhoods of downtown San Diego, where blighted conditions have endured the longest. There are many human service facilities in downtown that do not generate these types of impacts, and should be looked at as models for the future.

As redevelopment continues and downtown San Diego matures, human service providers must be considered partners because of their essential role in assisting downtown's neediest. Prevention of homelessness should be prioritized, including maintenance of affordable housing options and partnerships with human service providers to address needs.





## 12.1 HUMAN SERVICES

Human Services are provided throughout our community by a variety of entities: State, County, City, and private agencies. The major private not-for-profit agencies within the Community Plan area have a long and distinguished historical connection to San Diego, they operate with a high degree of accountability and professional standards, and are mission driven. They are the communities' response to human need. These agencies' services include but are not limited to the following:

- Family/Individual Counseling
- Recovery Services
- Childcare and After School Programs
- Housing Continuum - Emergency through Permanent Affordable
- Prevention Activities
- Senior Services
- Emergency/Outreach Services
- Community Centers and Youth Activity Centers
- Employment Services
- Domestic Violence Services

The plan for downtown San Diego includes integrating human service facilities into neighborhoods, allowing service accessibility where people live and work. Smaller facilities that blend in with neighborhood development patterns and potentially generate fewer off-site impacts are preferable to larger facilities. Smaller facilities also enable tighter on-site management. To avoid excessive impacts to any one neighborhood, clusters of facilities will not be permitted. Some existing clustering, however, will likely continue in the southeastern fringes of downtown.



*Human service facilities have tended to concentrate in downtown, to maintain accessibility to target populations, transportation, and government. The continued presence of these facilities is anticipated in the Community Plan, to meet people's needs.*

### Goals: Human Services

- 12.1-G-1** Promote future dispersion of human service facilities across downtown and throughout the City and region.
- 12.1-G-2** Ensure social service facilities are located with compatible uses.

### Policies: Human Services

- 12.1-P-1** Allow human service facilities in areas designated as Mixed Use, Core, and Mixed Commercial.
- 12.1-P-2** Promote child care, youth activities, and after-school/summer programs in Neighborhood Centers, downtown parks, and public facilities.
- 12.1-P-3** Accommodate larger health and human service facilities in designated large Floorplate Areas.

## 12.2 FACILITIES

A variety of management and operational techniques for human service facilities have proven to be effective in balancing client needs with community concerns in urban areas. As development intensifies and the population grows downtown, managing off-site impacts will grow in importance.

### Goals: Facilities

- 12.2-G-1** Minimize impacts to surrounding land uses and downtown-at-large, while balancing provision of services to populations in need of assistance.
- 12.2-G-2** Provide mechanisms to transition existing single-service facilities into 24-hour providers of housing, meals, and services.

### Policies: Facilities

- 12.2-P-1** Require a plan to demonstrate operations, facilities, and protocols to avoid off-site impacts from clients such as litter, outdoor toileting, loitering, camping, and outdoor lines. Require that facilities employ a continuum-of-care approach, or a collaboration, whereby multiple services are provided on-site, such as meals, shelter, and counseling services.

## 12.3 HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION STRATEGIES

At the level of downtown development planning, homelessness prevention involves both understanding and addressing underlying causes of homelessness, as well as protecting and enhancing affordable housing options. Affordable housing is addressed in *Chapter 3: Land Use and Housing* including goals and policies for maintaining and expanding housing options for low- and moderate-income households.

Maintaining a strong network of human service facilities is also critical because downtown is home to a variety of people with limited financial means. Seniors, low-wage earners, single parents, students, and the disabled have more opportunities to find affordable housing downtown, within proximity to transportation, services, school, and work. Due to limited incomes and resources, their living situations are sometimes precarious. The assistance offered by human service providers can help to stabilize individuals at risk of homelessness, and thereby keep people off the streets. Many of downtown's human service facilities are providing job training, health care, meal programs, alcohol and drug abuse treatment, and counseling in addition to services for the homeless.



## Goals: Homelessness Prevention Strategies

- 12.3-G-1** Create and maintain and expand housing options affordable to very-low income and special-needs groups.
- 12.3-G-2** Encourage location of human service facilities that provide assistance to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

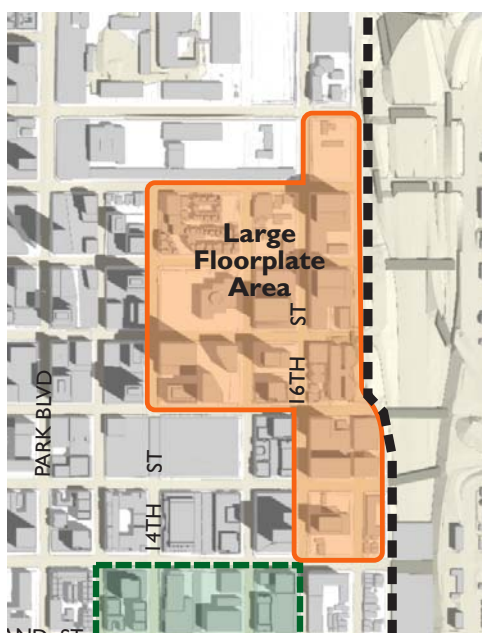
## Policies: Homelessness Prevention Strategies

- 12.3-P-1** Work with human service agency providers, the City, and the County to expand the range of services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and require all new or relocated facilities to provide such services.
- 12.3-P-2** Allow human services in housing projects for very-low and low-income households, wherever possible.

## 12.4 HEALTH CARE

Another key factor for making downtown livable and addressing community needs is health care as the downtown population grows. Paralleling regional trends, and reflecting mid/high-rise housing downtown, a significant portion of downtown growth may come from the retired population. Children are expected to increase in numbers as well. These two groups are the most frequent users of medical care, and facilities downtown will increase to serve their needs, as well as those of the middle-aged adult population. Medical facilities in close proximity to downtown are not only essential for health purposes, but will also help cut down on driving trips to facilities located outside the area.

The location of nationally-recognized hospitals in Hillcrest greatly benefits downtown, and may focus facility needs on clinics and urgent care facilities. These most likely can be incorporated in mixed-use buildings, although buildings with large floorplates allowed in designated areas may be suitable for larger medical facilities. The Northeast sub-district of East Village would be an ideal location, although such a facility could be located elsewhere as well. Consideration should be given to medical services for students, elderly, and working poor with limited incomes and health insurance coverage.



*The areas designated for large floor plate buildings provide development opportunities for the multi-service medical facilities needed to serve downtown's diverse population.*



### Goals: Health Care

- 12.4-G-1** Encourage the provision of sufficient and easily accessible health care facilities to meet needs of all sectors of the growing downtown population.
- 12.4-G-2** Allow for the integration of new clinics or larger facilities in the downtown fabric, following established community design goals.

### Policies: Health Care

- 12.4-P-1** Coordinate new medical care facility development carefully with providers, addressing both practical needs and downtown development and design objectives.
- 12.4-P-2** Pursue a diversity of facilities to meet the long- and short-term medical needs of downtown residents, the poor, visitors, and employees.
- 12.4-P-3** Encourage the location of a small hospital or similar facility downtown.