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PRESS RELEASE

San Diego Takes Next Step Toward Civic Center Revitalization

Prebys Foundation and the Downtown San Diego Partnership, with support from Mayor Todd Gloria, engage national planning expert U3 Advisors to envision future of Civic Center properties.

Study Will Come at No Cost to Taxpayers.

SAN DIEGO – April 2, 2024 – With the support of Mayor Todd Gloria, the Downtown San Diego Partnership and nationally renowned real estate advisory firm U3 Advisors will develop a series of options for six key City-owned downtown properties. The Prebys Foundation announced a significant investment to support this effort to shape the future of the San Diego Civic Center core properties. This initiative marks a pivotal step in enhancing San Diego’s downtown cityscape.

Specifically, U3 Advisors has been asked by the Prebys Foundation and the Downtown San Diego Partnership to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the 2023 San Diego Civic Center Revitalization Committee Report and input from members of the City Council. The analysis will facilitate a process of delivering an implementation strategy that could then guide the city to secure a master developer for the site.

For this effort, the Downtown San Diego Partnership is contracting directly with U3 Advisors, which has successfully managed multiple civic projects in cities across the country. U3 Advisors brings a demonstrated background in aligning design and economic viability under the guidance of CEO Omar Blaik to this San Diego project. That experience includes similar public projects that have catalyzed equitable growth in communities such as Memphis and Philadelphia as well as creating a transformative vision for a 19-acre affordable mixed-use residential community and cultural district in Atlanta’s Civic Center and the Hazelwood Green in Pittsburgh, a 173-acre redevelopment of a former steel mill into a new postindustrial waterfront innovation center.

This ambitious endeavor aims to shape the parameters for what will be a transformative catalyst for the downtown civic core and position the city as a leader in urban revitalization.

The Civic Center core properties, including the City Administration Building and City Operations Building, have faced years of deferred maintenance that prevent city employees from efficiently delivering world class services to San Diego's residents. Mayor Todd Gloria's leadership in proposing the redevelopment of these crucial parcels, including his earlier establishment of a Civic Center Revitalization Committee, has laid the foundation for this renewed effort to invigorate Downtown's center.

"I'm grateful to the Prebys Foundation and the Downtown San Diego Partnership for their continued collaboration as we work to transform Downtown's civic core. This next step will help pave the way to creating a civic center that works for all San Diegans and is reflective of our world-class Downtown," **said Mayor Todd Gloria.** "I look forward to U3 Advisors' recommendations for a visionary path forward."

"U3 Advisors is honored to play a role as Mayor Gloria's administration and the people of San Diego reimagine these remarkable assets and determine how they can shape a new era for your historic Downtown," **said Omar Blaik, CEO of U3 Advisors.** "Our team brings decades of experience in real estate strategy, urban planning, and civic design. We are excited to advance the vision that San Diegans articulate for us and further efforts to identify the right development partner who will know how to bring that vision to life."

"A city as unique as San Diego deserves a civic center that embodies our collective, hopeful spirit and honors the diversity of our communities and cultures," **said Grant Oliphant, CEO of the [Prebys Foundation](#).** "The initiative reflects a strategic response to the challenges faced by downtown areas nationwide, offering a visionary model for urban renewal. U3 Advisors offers extensive successful, national expertise that is grounded in a clear understanding of the local economy."

"We're working to create a Downtown for all of San Diego, and it's long past time that we create a civic center that is welcoming, inspiring, and worthy of our entire community," **said Betsy Brennan, President & CEO of the Downtown San Diego Partnership.** "We believe that bringing in this expert can help the city find what has so far been the biggest missing puzzle piece: a developer who can take this ambitious project on. This planning effort will bring us together for the good of our local businesses, residents, workforce, and tourists who help power our economy."

About the Process

The work is expected to begin in May of 2024. The final report will be provided to the City of San Diego by the end of August 2024. As this is a privately funded effort not paid for by the city, the city would not be bound to implement the recommendations. However, it can use the

information provided to determine the best path forward. The Downtown San Diego Partnership plans to play a central role in ensuring that the stakeholders and work products best reflect the diversity and vibrancy of San Diego's urban core.

The U3 Advisors study will come at no cost to San Diego taxpayers.

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