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New Civic Center Implementation Roadmap Recommends Path Forward Through Joint Partnership and Phased Development

Downtown San Diego Partnership, Prebys Foundation, and U3 Advisors' Implementation Roadmap outlines a phased approach to transform San Diego's Civic Center into a vibrant hub for education, housing, culture, and creativity.

San Diego, Calif., April 14, 2026 — Today, the Downtown San Diego Partnership (DSDP) and the Prebys Foundation (Prebys) released an Implementation Roadmap developed with consultant U3 Advisors, a strategic plan that advances the vision for revitalizing the San Diego Civic Center and brings it closer to reality.

Last year, the three organizations delivered a vision guided by extensive community input and building on [Mayor Gloria's Civic Center Revitalization Committee](#). At the request of the City of San Diego and City Council the new report, [Quantifying Transformative Economic Impact: Implementation Roadmap](#) builds on the January [study](#) by DSDP, Prebys, and U3 Advisors. It moves the Civic Center vision into implementation, with a focus on phasing and governance, while also addressing infrastructure and financing considerations.

The roadmap outlines a near-term path forward, including formation of a partnership structure—recommending a Joint Powers Authority—as early as 2027, a possible City Hall relocation decision in late 2026, and completion of initial Phase 1 projects within five years.

“This roadmap lays out a clear path to re-energize the heart of Downtown as a place where people live, learn, and connect,” said Betsy Brennan, president and CEO of the Downtown San Diego Partnership. “It would bring new housing, cultural vibrancy, and daily activity to further strengthen the economic and social fabric of our city.”

The vision has attracted a number of collaborators willing to help advance the plan, including the San Diego Community College District and potentially the San Diego Unified School District.

A Phased Approach to Reimagining San Diego’s Downtown Core

For over four years, the vision to reimagine the heart of San Diego has been in the works. The release of the Implementation Roadmap advances that vision with a clear, phased path forward that aims to bring renewed energy and activity to Downtown.

“This is about more than a development project—it’s about building a Civic Center that reflects the full potential of San Diego,” said Grant Oliphant, CEO of Prebys Foundation. “The City and City Council called for greater clarity on how to move downtown revitalization forward. This plan offers a clear, actionable path—one that can move ahead with partners who are ready to go and can help make this happen.”

The first phase focuses on establishing an education and culture hub at the Golden Hall site proposed to be anchored by the San Diego Community College District, complemented by new residential units and the transformation of the underutilized Civic Plaza into an iconic public space. The Civic Theater is proposed to be renovated and expanded with a new hotel following the relocation of City Hall from the City Administration Building.

San Diego Mayor, Todd Gloria, at the 2026 State of the City announced an exclusive negotiating agreement with the San Diego Community College District for the redevelopment of Golden Hall. This would bring the Mesa College World Art Collection and Museum Studies program to the site, while allowing the opportunity to build several thousand units of affordable housing downtown through its partnership with the San Diego Unified School District and the recently created Regional Housing Finance Authority.

The second phase aims to redevelop or create adaptive reuse of the Civic Center Plaza building, the King Chavez High School site and the Evan Jones Parkade as a mix of housing types with active ground floor uses.

The School Unified School District and San Diego State University have indicated a strong interest in establishing complementary educational programs at the Civic Center site, reinforcing their enduring commitment to serving communities throughout San Diego.

Long-term economic revenue

The outcomes of the *San Diego Civic Center Revitalization: Quantifying Transformative Impact* report released earlier this year, shows an impressive amount of economic opportunity that can be generated with the implementation of a new outlook at the Civic Center space. Estimated revenue includes more than \$14.4B in one time economic impact and more than \$400M in annual economic impact. The transformation will create nearly 80,000 temporary jobs to include construction and ancillary development, and 1,000 permanent jobs for San Diegans. It will attract 4,500 new residents to downtown with nearly 2,300 housing units. Additionally, by relocating City Hall, the City is looking at an upwards of \$325M savings.

"After several years of thoughtful planning and bold visioning for the future of the Civic Center, some tangible next steps have begun to emerge with regard to exactly how this place will begin to transform," said Omar Blaik, CEO of U3 Advisors. "The Joint Powers Authority we are recommending is a governance and operational model that has produced remarkable results in other districts across the country and can do so for San Diego right now. With the right professional staff and volunteer board in place, the JPA combines strong local control and accountability with the external resources needed to bring the community's vision to life. U3 Advisors remains dedicated to moving this work forward alongside a growing network of dedicated partners and stakeholders."

A non-traditional approach stewarded by a cohort of civic-minded stakeholders.

In order to guide the project's long-term vision and ensure a holistic outcome, the Downtown San Diego Partnership, Prebys Foundation, and U3 Advisors are recommending a non-traditional approach to drive the development forward. At the center of the plan is a recommended Joint Powers Authority (JPA), a public partnership between the City of San Diego, the San Diego Community College District, and the Regional Housing Finance Authority, and other future partners, supported by a dedicated nonprofit to manage implementation and ensure coordinated leadership, accountability, and long-term stewardship.

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The **Downtown San Diego Partnership** is a nonprofit organization that serves as the principal voice and driving force behind the economic and cultural prosperity of Downtown San Diego through membership, advocacy, enhanced services, and community investment. It also serves as the managing organization for several special districts including the Property and Business Improvement District, otherwise known as the Clean & Safe program, which provides enhanced services in 280 blocks of Downtown. For more information, visit downtownsandiego.org.

Prebys Foundation is the largest independent private foundation in San Diego County. The Foundation invests in arts and culture, youth success, health and well-being, and

medical research to build an inclusive, equitable, and dynamic future for all. Learn more at prebysfdn.org.

U3 Advisors is a nationally recognized consulting firm that provides real estate and economic development solutions to communities and anchor institutions — colleges and universities, medical centers, foundations, and nonprofit and civic organizations. With more than 20 years in business, U3 Advisors' core practice is serving nonprofit institutions during the planning and pre-development phases of complex real estate projects. For more information, visit U3Advisors.com.