

# MIRA MESA EPICENTRE

## Frequently Asked Questions

[updated 6/27/24]



### GENERAL QUESTIONS

#### **Where is the Mira Mesa Epicentre located?**

The Mira Mesa Epicentre is located at 8450 Mira Mesa Boulevard, San Diego, CA 92126 – next to Mira Mesa Community Park and Mira Mesa Senior Center.

#### **How large is the facility?**

The building is roughly 8,000 square feet.

#### **Why is this facility being developed by the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation rather than the City of San Diego?**

In May 2021, County Board of Supervisors (BOS) District 3 identified City of San Diego-owned Mira Mesa Epicentre as a high-priority capital project and community investment that could advance equity, inclusion, youth development, and arts and educational opportunities. The BOS directed the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to negotiate an agreement with the City to launch a project that could rehabilitate the facility and then both operate it and run programs that would match the goals identified by the BOS.

The County of San Diego obtained a right of entry agreement with the City to access the facility while DPR staff held public meetings and engaged the community on the planning and design of the Epicentre property. The terms of the long-term lease agreement will require both BOS and City Council approval.

#### **Who has jurisdiction over the property, the City or the County?**

The City of San Diego owns the property. The County of San Diego will lease the building and surrounding grounds and will be responsible for maintenance and operation of the facility throughout the lifespan of the lease term.

#### **What is the County's desired outcome for Mira Mesa Epicentre, once renovated?**

DPR plans to operate the facility as a public community center for use by residents of all ages, interests, and abilities via a wide variety of activities, programs, events, and meetings with a special focus on youth and teens. This will include collaboration with neighboring City of San Diego Parks and Libraries, local schools, the San Diego Police Department, and community organizations. There will also be options to reserve communal spaces within the facility for workshops, meetings, and private functions.

Investing in today's youth who will become tomorrow's leaders is a high priority for the County of San Diego. The rehabilitation of the Mira Mesa Epicentre will activate a highly visible public space and improve public safety in the community. All DPR teen programs will operate with the intention of diverting youth away from negative behaviors by bringing them into a positive environment that equips them with social, physical, and educational tools that can help them lead healthy and productive lives.

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### **Who will pay for the ongoing operation of the Epicentre?**

Annual operation costs will be included in the County Department of Parks and Recreation's Operation Plans starting in Fiscal Year 2025/2026 and beyond, with an estimated cost of \$518,985 per year. This cost includes two full-time staff as well as programming costs, facility maintenance, and utilities.

### **QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PROJECT**

#### **How much funding is available for this project?**

The County has dedicated a budget of \$10.25 Million for public engagement, design, environmental review, and construction.

#### **What is the timeframe for the project?**

Project planning began in 2021. A Facilities Conditions Assessment was completed in February 2022 to gain a better understanding of the existing state of the facility and assess the scope of rehabilitation.

Concept and schematic designs were completed in Summer 2023 and presented to the community for feedback at public meetings, and in Fall 2023, we began the process of developing construction documents based on the feedback from those designs.

The renovation/construction of the facility is anticipated to begin in Fall 2024.

#### **Will the project follow environmental guidelines?**

The project will comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and all applicable environmental regulations. For more information, connect with our Resource Management Division team member, Emily Pacholski, at [Emily.Pacholski@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:Emily.Pacholski@sdcounty.ca.gov).

### **LEASE**

#### **How long is the lease term?**

45 years.

#### **Where can citizens read the details of the lease agreement?**

The lease agreement is currently in negotiation between the City and County. Once approved by the City and the County, the lease agreement will be available for public viewing.

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### **Who is responsible for maintaining the property?**

The County has an obligation to maintain the property as part of the lease agreement. This includes keeping the premises in good order, condition, and repair, as well as removal of trash and debris from the premises and the adjacent areas.

### **What happens when the lease ends?**

Unless otherwise agreed, the responsibility for maintenance would return back to the City.

### **Could the Epicentre site become a commercial or residential development?**

No, for the duration of the long-term lease with the County, which is set for 45-years, this site is reserved for public community center use.

### **Will the County operate the facility for purposes other than a youth-focused community center, such as affordable housing?**

No. The long-term lease specifies the County's permissible use of premises as a public community center. Any deviations from this intended use would require a modification to the lease. The County is committed to create a center for the local community that includes programs, activities, classes, and events that benefit residents of all ages, and abilities, with a special focus on youth and teens. The County will do what is necessary to ensure the project is a success.

### **What happens if the Epicentre Programming is not successful? Will the County forfeit the lease?**

The Permitted Use under the Lease is to operate the property as a public community center. Any deviations from that use would require a lease amendment. The County is firmly committed to advancing equity, inclusion, youth development, arts, and educational opportunities in the Mira Mesa community and will do what is necessary to ensure the project is a success. The County does not intend to forfeit the lease.

### **What is happening with the Community Development Block Grant restrictions that require the property serve low-income households?**

A recent City Council action finalized the repayment of HUD CDBG funds connected with the Epicentre so there are no longer any grant restrictions and /or requirements associated with the Epicentre Building.

## **OPERATIONS**

### **What will the building be used for?**

The vision for the Mira Mesa Epicentre is to create a central hub for the local community, offering a central public gathering space that includes programs, activities, classes, and events that benefit residents of all ages, and abilities, with a special focus on youth and teens. Amenities will be developed

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based on community input, and programs will be offered to meet the needs of the community. Diverse offerings will be available and both activities and associated promotions will be provided in multiple languages, to ensure there are no barriers to access or participation.

### **Who will have access to the building and its programs?**

The Epicentre and its programs will be available for all residents. Most open-hours and programs will be geared toward youth and teens, as the property will soon serve as the hub for the County's SD Nights program (short for San Diego/Safe Destination Nights), offering recreation, school support, and career counseling. The general public will have access to the site outside of those hours, and details will be publicized. Schedules and programs will change based on time of year and the interests that are expressed to staff by the local community.

### **What are the anticipated hours of operation?**

Operating hours will be continuously evaluated and adjusted to meet the needs of the local community. The current proposal outlines hours for youth and the general public and is subject to change based on available resources:

#### Youth Programming Hours

- 3 - 7 p.m. on weekdays
- 1 - 6 p.m. on weekends

#### Public Hours

- Reservable outside youth programming hours, 7 days a week, 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.
- Personal use, private events, public meetings

### **What type of programs will be offered?**

The Epicentre will offer programs for people of all ages, abilities, and interests, with a special focus on activities for youth, ages 10 to 18. Programs may include tutoring, mentoring, career counseling, performing and visual arts, gardening, cooking, various recreational classes, and intergenerational programs with the neighboring senior center.

The facility will serve as a hub for DPR's SD Nights program (short for San Diego/Safe Destination Nights), in which staff coordinate events for teens in urban areas throughout the County, to keep them off the streets during critical hours. The facility will also be available by reservation for private events like birthdays and retirement celebrations.

### **What type of amenities will be offered in and outside the facility?**

Anticipated interior amenities include a lounge area, game tables and consoles, workstations and a homework area, a music room, fitness equipment, a stage with audio and visual equipment, a demonstration kitchen, and a multi-purpose space. Anticipated exterior amenities include central

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gathering areas, open lawn areas, garden areas, drought tolerant landscaping, and an outdoor sport court.

### **Will the Epicentre be reservable?**

Yes. Once opened, reservations for specific areas at the Epicentre can be made through staff on-site or by contacting the DPR Reservation Desk. Venue availability will be viewable anytime, online, at <https://reservations.sdparks.org/>.

### **Is there parking available with ADA access?**

Parking is available next to the facility, and this includes ADA parking spaces and access.

### **Are there restrooms?**

Restrooms, with ADA access, are located inside the facility.

## **SAFETY AT THE FACILITY**

### **How will safety and security of the facility be maintained?**

The City of San Diego Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol (RSVP) police force currently occupies a portion of the facility. DPR is working with the City to continue to share occupancy of the facility with RSVP. Having a police force in the facility creates a sense of safety for the building and surrounding area. The facility will be locked during non-operating hours with exterior and interior security cameras and an alarm system. After-hours security lighting will also be provided. After-hours security lighting will also be provided.

DPR encourages all visitors to report issues in or around the area so they can be addressed in a timely and appropriate manner. Visitors can contact on-site call the City of San Diego Police Department or County Sheriff's Office or call 911. Safety information, including emergency numbers will be posted.

## **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS**

### **What public outreach have you done for this facility?**

DPR has attended over 40 community-led events and meetings since late 2022 that are focused on the Epicentre project to engage the community's needs and gather feedback. DPR continues to attend monthly community meetings and events to stay present and current on the community's desires. Feedback from the community has been gathered via in-person events as well as via online surveys to meet the diverse needs and schedule of the community.

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### Surveys

- Surveys asked what the desired recreational offerings should be for the Epicentre.
- Fall 2022 - Distributed to the community at the Mira Mesa Street Fair
- Winter 2022 - Distributed to Mira Mesa High School students
- Sept. 13 to Oct. 3, 2022 – An online multi-lingual version of the survey was shared via DPR flyers, social media outlets, community groups and mailed to more than 16,000 Mira Mesa residences and businesses within 1 mile of the building.
- DPR collected over 800 responses from all the initial surveys.
- June 26 to July 14, 2023 – Flyers for an updated online survey were distributed by DPR at the July 2 Independence Day event in Mira Mesa and shared via other media outlets to collect additional input on the design concepts and program opportunities. DPR collected 156 responses from the secondary survey.

### DPR Public Meetings

- Nov. 10, 2022 - provided attendees with an overview of the project, goals and work completed up until the meeting. Two interior concept plans and a site plan were presented. Participants shared feedback on preferences.
- Jan. 24, 2022 – recapped prior meeting information, provided project updates, and presented two exterior concept plans and a refined interior plan based on previous feedback. Attendees shared thoughts and voted on options to help determine the design process.
- Jan. 12, 2023 - DPR staff conducted a lunchtime event at the Mira Mesa High School. Students shared feedback on the concept design and programming.
- July 6, 2023 - A large community event was held with DPR's SD Nights (San Diego/Safe program) at the Mira Mesa Recreation Center where attendees could provide feedback on the updated design concepts and proposed programs that could be offered at the facility. This event information was mailed to 33,961 residences and businesses to cover a wider segment of the Mira Mesa Planning Area.

### STAY INFORMED

#### How can I stay informed?

If you would like to receive e-mail updates on this project, email Park Project Manager Riley DeWitt-Rickards at [riley.dewittrickards@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:riley.dewittrickards@sdcounty.ca.gov) to be added to the distribution list.

To learn more about the project, and other DPR development projects, visit [sdparks.org](https://sdparks.org) > Plans > Development Projects > Mira Mesa Epicentre.

For other comments or questions, contact Riley DeWitt-Rickards at [riley.dewittrickards@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:riley.dewittrickards@sdcounty.ca.gov) or 619-695-6010.