

Blueprint for Action:

Scaling Interim Housing in San Francisco



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Introduction

All Home, the Bay Area Council, and DignityMoves stand ready to support Mayor-elect Lurie's commitment to addressing unsheltered homelessness in San Francisco by mobilizing community stakeholders to implement evidence-based, data-driven solutions. The following "Blueprint for Action" provides a roadmap for the public, private and non-profit sectors to work together to address unsheltered homelessness in ways that are bold, practical, and actionable.

The cornerstone of this Blueprint is the rapid scaling of interim housing solutions to transition individuals from the streets to secure, supportive environments with urgency and efficiency. While not a permanent solution, we believe that interim housing creates an off-ramp from living unsheltered and serves as a critical step on the pathway to permanent housing.

While this Blueprint focuses on scaling interim housing, we acknowledge that without a concurrent investment in prevention, interim, and permanent housing solutions, the homelessness crisis cannot be effectively addressed. To ensure

"through flow" along the homelessness continuum, a range of options must be available for people living unsheltered to make a different choice - Homeward Bound, congregant shelter, safe sleeping/safe parking, temporary and interim housing - and ensure that unhoused individuals do not languish on the streets while awaiting a permanent housing solution.

We recognize the many systemic barriers that currently prevent interim housing from scaling effectively in San Francisco, including lack of adequate funding, coordination, and political will. However, we believe these barriers can be overcome through commitment, creativity, and partnership, bringing public and private partners together to support common-sense strategies to scale interim housing fast and cost-effectively.

All Home, the Bay Area Council, and DignityMoves share a commitment with the new Mayoral administration to address the unsheltered crisis in San Francisco and offer up our support and expertise. This Blueprint is the first step. It synthesizes actionable recommendations advanced by a range of respected partners including All Home's [Regional Action Plan](#); Crankstart's [Streets to Stability](#); and, the San Francisco Housing Accelerator Fund's *Expanding Interim Housing in San Francisco: A Strategic Path Forward* amongst others.

Key Opportunities

1. **Enhance Inter-Departmental Coordination and Accountability** - An opportunity exists to enhance inter-departmental coordination and accountability to streamline the delivery of interim housing and eliminate bureaucratic barriers. By fostering stronger collaboration across departments, the city can reduce inefficiencies and scale up its response to homelessness more effectively.
2. **Optimize and Diversify Funding Streams** - Scaling interim housing solutions will require significant upfront funding. There is potential to optimize existing public funding streams by reassessing rigid allocations and reallocating resources toward more impactful solutions. By fostering flexibility in how funds are used, the new Mayoral administration can better align investments with its highest priorities. Additionally, addressing the current lack of capital dollars presents a chance to unlock new sources of funding, with

philanthropic investment allowing for the expansion of interim housing projects and a more effective response to the homelessness crisis.

3. **Streamline Contracting Processes to Accelerate Projects** - There is a clear opportunity to streamline the contracting process, making it more efficient and responsive to the needs of interim housing projects. Simplifying operations and reducing the complexity of new construction and adaptive reuse when using public funds would accelerate the development of much-needed housing. Additionally, by expanding and strengthening technical assistance and deploying uniform pricing and outcomes, the new Mayoral administration can provide the expertise required to facilitate rapid project formation, ensuring a quicker and more effective response to the homelessness crisis.
4. **Scale Additional Interim Housing Placements** - Embracing a range of innovative solutions such as modular housing, adaptive reuse of buildings (e.g., hotels and commercial spaces) and safe parking sites with supportive services will be essential to addressing urgent housing needs. Site opportunities including public land, vacant lots and underutilized spaces can be prioritized for interim housing, as identified in the [Streets to Stability](#) study. Leveraging the Shelter Crisis Act to streamline approvals, reduce regulatory barriers, and remove traditional obstacles like zoning and permitting delays will allow for quick, scalable housing solutions.
5. **Operationalization through Multi-Sector Action Teams** - Leveraging the expertise of cross-sector "Action Teams" by the Director of Interim Housing Delivery will enhance collaboration and enable data-driven decision-making, streamline implementation and drive scalability. Acting as cross-functional units, Action Teams can coordinate efforts across stakeholders, resolve bottlenecks, foster an ecosystem of collaboration, and align resources to maximize impact. By providing actionable insights through data analysis, addressing capacity gaps, piloting innovative solutions, and proactively mitigating risks, Action Teams can ensure the interim housing strategies deliver solutions fast and cost-effectively.

Blueprint for Action: Recommendations

Enhance Inter-Departmental Coordination and Accountability

For the Mayor-elect's commitment to addressing unsheltered homelessness to be realized, strong leadership, an interdepartmental mandate and clear accountability measures will be essential.

- **Appoint a Director of Interim Housing Delivery** to lead the Interim Housing Contracting Group. Appointed by and reporting to the Mayor, a philanthropically funded, temporary position with the authority and autonomy to coordinate efforts across key departments, including the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH), Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD), and Department of Public Health (DPH), will ensure centralized leadership and accountability to meet the Mayor-elect's interim housing targets. Responsible for pooling resources, executing on the interim housing goals, and leading Action Teams to ensure streamlined implementation, the Director of Interim Housing Delivery will be a critical hire for the Mayor-elect. With HSH able to accept behested payments, there is built-in flexibility for philanthropic funding to support this role.
- **Enact an Interim Housing Contracting Group.** Composed of senior leaders of HSH, MOHCD and DPH who have authority, the Interim Housing Contracting Group will collaborate to issue joint Requests for Information (RFIs) for interim housing solutions. This group will coordinate the delivery of both the housing product and related services, ensuring alignment across departments. It will also operate as an interim housing loan committee, as recommended in the HAF report.
- **Establish Clear Measures of Success.** The Director of Interim Housing Delivery and the Interim Housing Contracting Group will be held accountable to meet the Mayor-elect's housing targets. They will provide regular monthly reports to the Mayor's Office and to funders and ensure transparency by publishing quarterly updates for public review. Regular coordination meetings with HSH, MOHCD, and DPH will be essential to resolve bottlenecks and

ensure alignment across departments. They will also be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the impact of these efforts on reducing homelessness and on public health outcomes, in addition to tracking outcomes for individuals transitioning from interim to permanent housing, employment, and treatment pathways.

Optimize and Diversify Funding Streams

Philanthropic investment has the unique ability to move faster and with greater flexibility than public dollars, making it an indispensable tool in addressing urgent crises like unsheltered homelessness. Unlike public funding, which is often constrained by bureaucratic processes and lengthy approval timelines, philanthropy can respond nimbly to emerging needs, catalyzing innovative solutions. This type of one-time investment is particularly impactful in sectors like housing and homelessness, where immediate, strategic funding can drive systemic change, pilot transformative approaches, and scale effective models. Leveraging philanthropic dollars in this way, the public sector can create meaningful and measurable progress toward reducing unsheltered homelessness, demonstrating the power of agile, visionary funding.

- **Leverage private capital** to jumpstart the scaling of interim housing and reduce the reliance on government funding, resulting in lower development costs and more efficient use of resources.
- **Establish a dedicated Interim Housing Accelerator Fund** to provide capital to accelerate the development of interim housing. Offering upfront, low-cost financing, this capital fund will enable quicker project timelines and the rapid scaling of housing solutions.
- **Centralize funding within a third party** that collaborates with MOHCD and the Interim Housing Contracting Group to ensure a coordinated response and allow operators to launch projects without financial delays. This could also result in the establishment of a pre-approved list of vendors and developers that could accelerate the rollout of interim housing and adaptive reuse across the City.
- **Bundle capital and operating funding** to create an integrated, efficient process and foster collaboration between departments, removing financial

bottlenecks and driving faster, more impactful housing outcomes to address the homelessness crisis.

- **Ensure long term sustainability by making the fund revolving.** As initial investments are repaid, the capital can be reinvested in new projects, creating a continuous cycle of support for interim housing. For new construction, Prop. 1 and other State funding could buy out the accelerator fund allocation for a particular project.
- **Provide start-up loans to operators.** A revolving low-interest loan fund, set at 3%, would provide operators of interim housing with affordable capital to cover start-up costs. This fund would eliminate the need for operators to use their own resources or draw on lines of credit, ensuring they can quickly launch new housing projects without financial strain. By offering flexible, low-cost financing, the fund would support smoother operations and reduce barriers to expanding interim housing capacity. Loan repayments will replenish the fund, creating a sustainable financial resource for ongoing housing initiatives.
- **Commission a comprehensive economic impact study.** The goal is to quantify the costs of unsheltered homelessness and the benefits of scaling Interim Supportive Housing in the Bay Area. Collect and analyze quantitative data on public spending in areas such as healthcare, law enforcement, emergency services, sanitation, and lost economic productivity. Compare the current economic burden with potential savings from investments in Interim Supportive Housing and supportive services. This analysis will provide regional leaders with actionable insights to guide resource allocation and policy decisions, demonstrating the financial case for addressing unsheltered homelessness comprehensively.

Streamline Contracting Processes to Accelerate Projects

Streamlining the contracting and procurement processes will enable interim housing projects to scale fast and cost-effectively.

- **Issue a strategic, unified Request for Information (RFI)** for all contractors. This will establish a pool of qualified nonprofit vendors, streamline the procurement process, and ensure high-quality service delivery.

- **Implement a per-unit daily payment rate.** Based on housing modality, the city would cover both operations and services, while leveraging diverse funding sources such as CalAIM, Proposition 1, and McKinney-Vento funds to maximize impact. This would ensure flexible, sustainable financing and consistent service standards across interim housing projects, enabling rapid scaling. For a detailed framework, refer to the proven strategies outlined in the [Streets to Stability](#) report.
- **Standardize contracts for operations and services** across the HSH interim housing portfolio to ensure consistency and efficiency in service delivery. By tailoring contract rates based on acuity, population needs, and targeted outcomes, this approach creates a clear, equitable framework. This model allows for streamlined resource allocation and outcome tracking, ensuring that all housing types are supported appropriately while maintaining financial sustainability.

Scale Additional Interim Housing Placements

- **Implement a range of innovative, cost-effective housing solutions** that can be rapidly deployed and scaled to meet urgent housing needs. These solutions could include modular housing (which can be prefabricated off-site and assembled quickly, reducing construction time and costs), adaptive re-use of existing buildings (such as converting hotels, motels, or commercial spaces into housing units), and leveraging existing infrastructure to expedite delivery. These approaches provide flexible, scalable options to address homelessness in real-time while maintaining long-term adaptability.
- **Identify suitable sites** for new interim housing communities, including public lands, vacant lots, and underutilized commercial spaces. A key input will be the 77 sites identified in the [Streets to Stability](#) report.
- **Leverage emergency provisions** made available by the **Shelter Crisis Act** to streamline timely approvals for interim housing projects. Reduce the permitting and building code burden on developers of interim housing sites to create a more agile and responsive framework. Interim housing development can allow cities and counties to act quickly in addressing homelessness by removing traditional obstacles related to zoning, building standards, and regulatory compliance. While California's legislative environment provides both regulatory flexibility and liability protection for local governments that

support the accelerated deployment of much-needed housing solutions under emergency codes, there is still uncertainty as to how the protections can be applied. Seek an opinion from the Chief Administrative Officer about how to expedite the building processes and take full advantage of emergency codes.

- **Recognize that not everyone experiencing homelessness requires Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH).** For individuals with lower acuity, alternative pathways, such as housing navigation, roommate matching, and employment opportunities should be prioritized. By providing tailored support that connects these individuals to housing and jobs, stability can be achieved more quickly and PSH resources freed-up for those with higher needs. This approach ensures a more effective use of resources while empowering people to regain independence.

Operationalize through Multi-Sector Action Teams

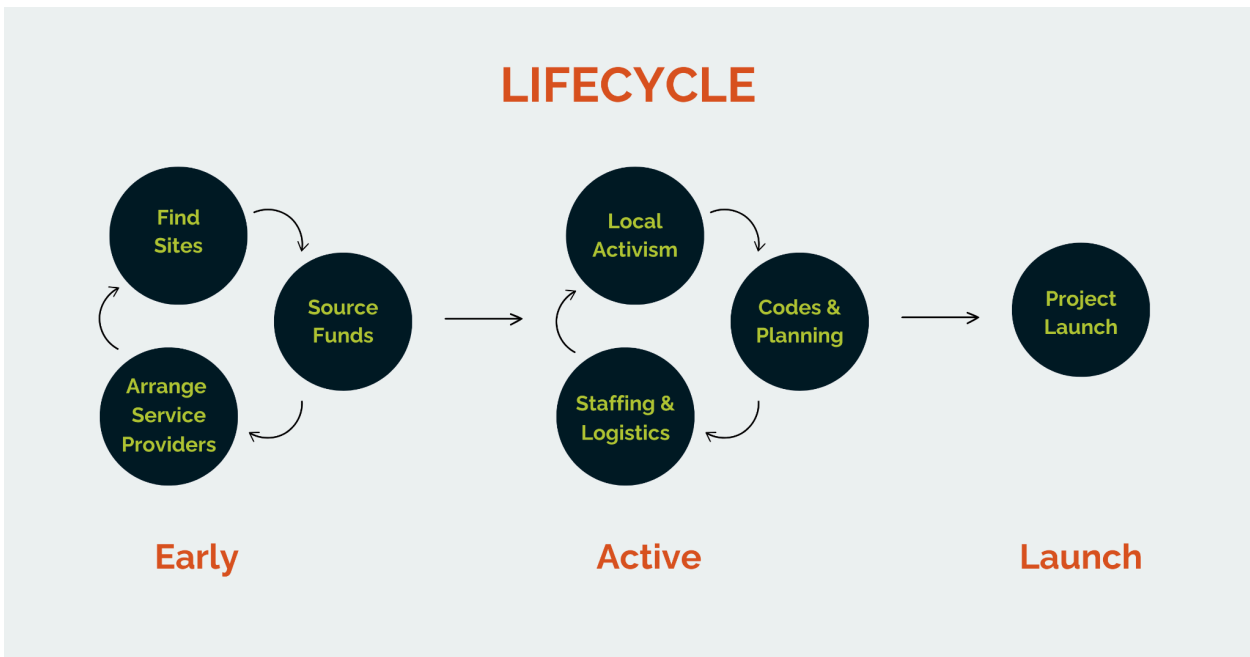
Action Teams formed to support the Director of Interim Housing Delivery and the Interim Housing Contracting Group will ensure the successful and rapid scaling of interim housing placements. These Action Teams will serve as a critical operational arm, facilitating cross-sector collaboration, streamlining processes, and addressing obstacles in real-time. By incorporating external expertise, the Action Teams will help facilitate multi-sector collaboration, drive strategic initiatives, and address complex challenges in the pursuit of effective and sustainable housing solutions.

- **Form multi-sector Action Teams** with clearly delineated responsibilities to operationalize the scaling of 2,500 placements in 24 months and ensure seamless project development, risk mitigation, and accelerated timelines. Action Teams to include:
 - **Private Sector Partners:** Developers, investors, and stakeholders with expertise in financing, construction, and project delivery.
 - **Public Sector Partners:** Representatives from the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH), Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD), and Department of Public Health (DPH) to ensure policy alignment and inter-departmental coordination.

- **Community Leaders:** Individuals with lived experience, nonprofit service providers, and advocates to ensure solutions are equitable, effective, and community-informed.
- **Technical Experts:** External advisors with expertise in financing, site analysis, regulatory navigation, and modular/adaptive housing solutions.
- **Establish an “Early Stage” Action Team** to focus on laying the groundwork for successful project initiation by addressing key risks and challenges during the **pre-development phase** including:
 - **Site Identification:** Collaborate with city agencies to identify suitable sites, including public lands, vacant lots, and underutilized commercial or industrial spaces. Leverage insights from the [Streets to Stability](#) report, which identified 77 potential sites in San Francisco, as well as additional properties flagged through city inventories and private-sector opportunities.
 - **Funding Acquisition:** Facilitate the identification and mobilization of funding sources, including public capital (e.g., Prop. 1 funds, CalAIM), philanthropic grants, and private financing.
 - **Access to a Revolving Accelerator Fund:** Support the establishment of a revolving capital fund to streamline access to low-cost financing for interim housing development.
 - **Service Provider Identification:** Establish partnerships with service providers to ensure operational readiness once projects move into the active phase. This includes evaluating the capacity of providers to deliver supportive services, such as case management, employment pathways, and behavioral health programs.
 - **Emergency Code Activation:** Leveraging permissions under the **Shelter Crisis Act** to streamline zoning and permitting approvals.
 - **Risk Mitigation:** Proactively identify potential legal, financial, and regulatory risks and work to address them early in the process.

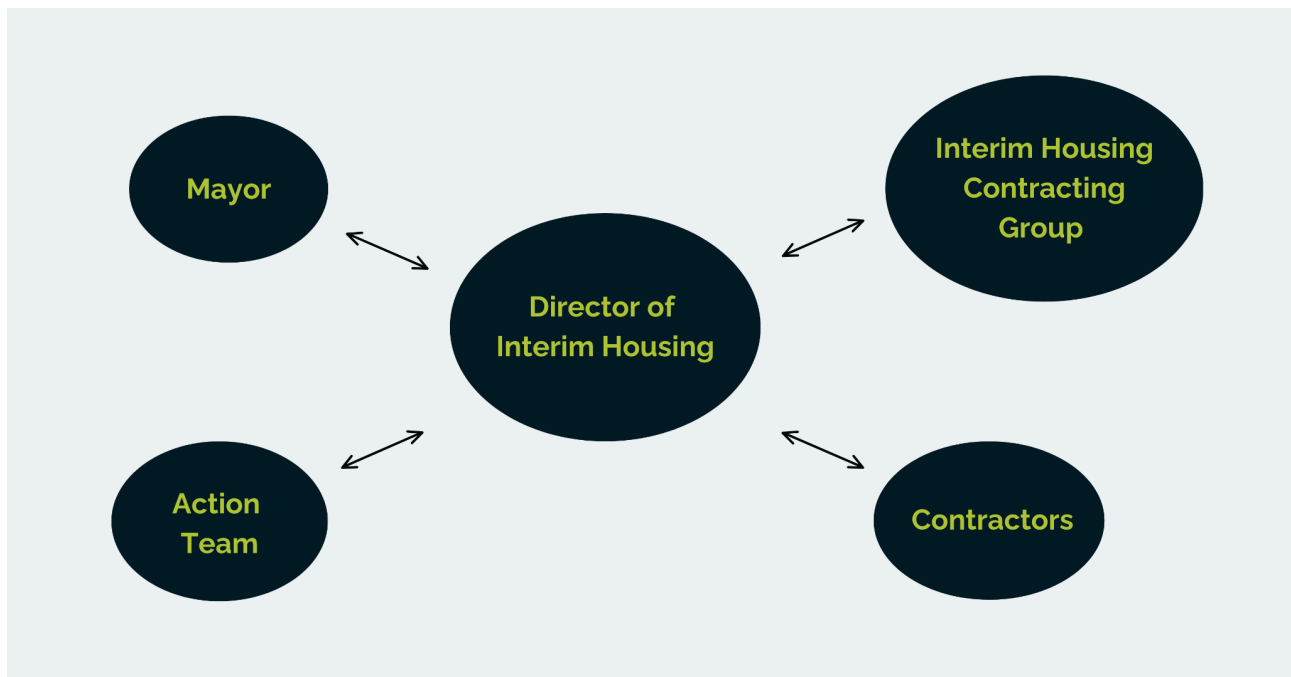
- **Technical Assistance:** Provide technical assistance to developers and operators to navigate regulatory frameworks, align budgets, and fast-track project feasibility.
- **Establish a “Second Stage” Action Team** to focus on supporting **active projects** through construction, implementation, and operations to maximize success and impact, including:
 - **Project Monitoring and Oversight:** Provide real-time project management support to identify and resolve bottlenecks during construction, permitting, or adaptive reuse processes. Serve as a liaison between developers, contractors, and city departments to ensure alignment with project timelines and budgets.
 - **Operational Readiness:** Assist service providers with pre-opening preparations, including staffing, operations planning, and the delivery of critical services to residents. Ensure projects are designed to meet the needs of target populations, including families, single adults, and individuals with varying levels of acuity.
 - **Outcome Tracking and Accountability:** Track and report on key metrics, such as the number of units delivered, occupancy rates, and the transition of residents into permanent housing. Provide regular updates to the Director of Interim Housing Delivery and the Mayor’s Office to ensure transparency and accountability.
 - **Problem Solving and Capacity Building:** Act as a problem-solving hub, addressing unanticipated challenges that arise during implementation. Leverage external expertise and provide technical assistance in areas like cost management, site development, and program design.

- **Leverage cross-sector expertise.** Invite private sector organizations offering technical assistance, strategic support, data-driven analytics, and thought leadership to collaborate closely with the City to identify and address systemic barriers, streamline processes, and drive the accelerated delivery of critical interim housing solutions. By leveraging their combined expertise and resources, these partnerships can help create a more agile and effective framework for addressing homelessness, ensuring timely implementation of innovative, scalable interim housing placements that meet the community's urgent needs.



Conclusion

The unsheltered homelessness crisis in San Francisco is a humanitarian catastrophe that demands immediate and bold action. By implementing this Blueprint, the Mayor-elect and San Francisco stakeholders have a historic opportunity to collectively address unsheltered homelessness, leveraging proven strategies and shared expertise to build a city where every individual has the dignity of a home.



Appendix A

Accountability Framework for the Director of Interim Housing Delivery and Interim Housing Contracting Group

Outcomes:

1. Housing Targets: Establish specific interim housing unit targets (e.g., number of beds, units, or sites secured and operationalized) within set timeframes.
2. Scaling Interim Housing: Track progress on key milestones from the interim housing Blueprint, ensuring alignment with goals across city departments.

Regular Reporting & Transparency

1. Monthly Progress Reports: Submit monthly reports to the Mayor's Office, and key stakeholders outlining project status, challenges, and next steps.
2. Public Accountability: Publish quarterly updates on the City's website to maintain transparency, including success stories, lessons learned, and data on housing placements and service utilization.
3. Cross-Departmental Briefings: Conduct regular check-ins with Interim Housing Contracting Group and other relevant departments to ensure coordination, address bottlenecks, and share progress.

Collaboration & Stakeholder Engagement

1. Action Team Oversight: Provide regular feedback to the Mayor's Office on the performance of the Action team, ensuring alignment with project objectives and rapid resolution of issues.
2. Community & Service Provider Engagement: Facilitate bi-monthly meetings with housing and service providers to ensure the smooth execution of services and address operational challenges.

This framework will hold the Director and Interim Housing Contracting Group accountable to both the Mayor, the public, and funders while ensuring consistent progress on interim housing delivery in San Francisco.

Appendix B

Examples of Organizations with Collective Expertise in Unsheltered Homelessness Who Could Participate in Action Teams

All Home offers comprehensive technical assistance (TA) to support the effective implementation of the [Regional Action Plan \(RAP\)](#) aimed at addressing homelessness and housing insecurity. Through their TA offering, All Home works with local jurisdictions and service providers to build capacity, strengthen strategies, and optimize the use of available resources. This includes data analysis and tracking via their [RAP Dashboard](#), which monitors regional progress, as well as support in leveraging funding sources, policy development, and innovative solutions tailored to local needs. All Home's TA is designed to ensure communities can rapidly scale and sustain housing solutions while achieving measurable outcomes in reducing homelessness across California.

DignityMoves is trailblazing the widespread adoption of Interim Supportive Housing (ISH) to address California's unsheltered homelessness crisis. As a builder of ISH communities, DignityMoves' innovative model uses temporarily vacant land, relocatable housing units, and emergency building codes to build ISH quickly, cost-effectively, and therefore at scale. By harnessing the power of public-private partnerships to access private capital, land, and innovative funding strategies, DignityMoves accelerates the adoption of ISH by municipalities. Its DignityNOW model challenges them to leverage ISH to reach functional zero unsheltered homelessness by providing sufficient housing placements for everyone living unsheltered in their communities. As a fierce advocate for ISH at the state and national levels, DignityMoves is spearheading new approaches to funding and policy to expand the toolkit of homelessness-related solutions..

The Bay Area Council is the region's premier business advocacy and civic leadership organization. The Council's Executive Committee elevated homelessness to the organization's top public policy priority in 2018 and the organization has become a respected voice on homelessness issues in the region and in Sacramento. The Council has co-sponsored numerous state bills on homelessness, including the Interim Housing Act (SB 1395-Becker, 2024), and the Council's research arm, the Bay Area Council Economic Institute, has conducted two regional-scale studies of homelessness in the Bay Area and is currently conducting research on the costs of unsheltered homelessness.

The San Francisco Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) leads innovative strategies to streamline affordable housing development through its revolving capital fund. This fund offers flexible, low-interest financing to help developers cover upfront costs for site entitlement and acquisition, accelerating project timelines. HAF collaborates with local governments and stakeholders to navigate regulatory approvals efficiently and identifies suitable properties for transformation into affordable housing. By leveraging creative financial structures and fostering partnerships, HAF effectively addresses the housing crisis and drives sustainable growth in the affordable housing sector. HAF has published *Expanding Interim Housing in San Francisco*, which will be invaluable in scaling and leveraging Medi-Cal Managed Care payments for CalAIM funding and inter-departmental coordination.

This Blueprint was developed by All Home, the Bay Area Council, and DignityMoves, and was written by Gail Gilman of Antirim Advisors and Julie O'Dwyer, Program Manager at DignityMoves. It was completed in December 2024.