

Housing Continuum  
in the Gateway

less  
than **30%**  
**AMI**

This project serves the  
needs of residents in the  
Extremely Low Income  
(ELI) category.



## Bringing Homes and HOPE in Record Time

### New Hope Temporary Shelter

#### Key Stakeholders

- City of Bellflower
- Architect: Studio One Eleven
- Builder: Howard CDM
- Operator: Mercy Housing

#### Project Timeline

Land and property were purchased in December 2019 and became open for occupancy in May 2020.

#### Project Budget

This **homeless shelter** was a \$1.9 million project with a cost of about \$38,000 per bed.

#### Project Background

In years past, Bellflower residents consistently reported crime as the number one community issue, however in 2019 for the first time the number one issue for residents was homelessness. This was a wake-up call for the city to address this rapidly growing concern. In just five months, this team created the New Hope Temporary Shelter, providing social services for a total of 50 beds.

The conventional steel warehouse building at 8833 Cedar Street was an empty shell that now accommodates free-standing rooms and offices. The empty warehouse was outfitted with a self-supporting structure built out of metal stud infill walls. The New Hope Temporary Shelter was complete after just eight short weeks of planning and four months of construction.

#### Key Terms:

**Homeless Shelters:** A temporary residence for homeless individuals and families. Shelters provide residents with safety and protection from exposure to the weather while simultaneously reducing the environmental impact on the community. Supportive shelters provide a variety of services to help shelter residents to transition from homelessness to permanent housing.

**Self-Certification** – A voluntary process allowing licensed design professionals to confirm code compliance to avoid plancheck.

## Objectives/Goals

Homelessness increased two-fold between 2016 and 2018. The City Council and residents wanted to provide shelter in order to reduce the number of unhoused people in the City of Bellflower.

With the urgency to alleviate the homelessness crisis, the City expressed a desire to complete the shelter in under six months.

## Challenges

**Overview:** On average, three unhoused people die each day in Los Angeles County. This translated to a high demand for immediate emergency shelter.

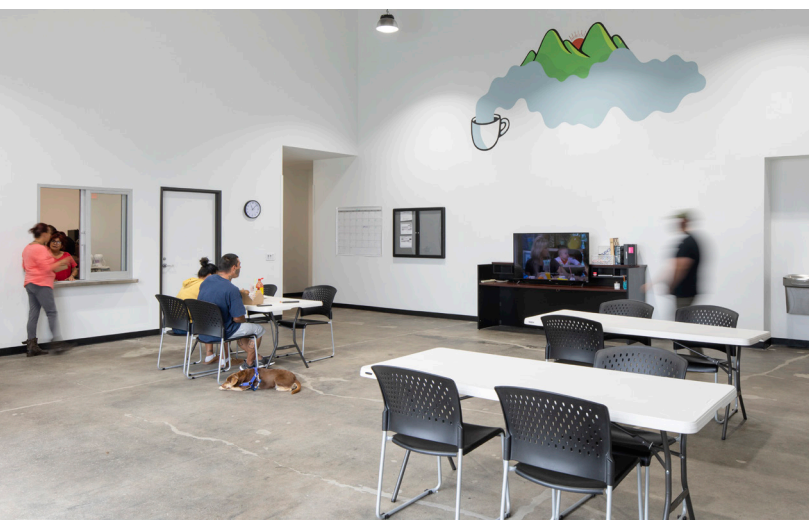
- 1 Time Constraints:** The dominant challenge was to provide needed housing and supportive services in an unprecedented short timeframe. The team identified time-saving methods in order for the project's goals to be met.
- 2 Expedited Construction:** After approval, the shelter needed to be constructed on an extremely tight deadline requiring close collaboration with the builder and inspectors.
- 3 Public Health Crisis:** There are numerous architectural considerations when dealing with COVID-19. The project needed to accommodate both the residents' comfort and safety.



## Solutions

**Overview:** The predevelopment and development processes required strategies to reduce costs wherever possible while expediting the approval for construction to begin. The following methods allowed the project goals to be met amidst pressing time constraints.

- 1 Self-Certification:** The Homeless Shelter was one of three projects in which the **self-certification** process, a voluntary process allowing licensed design professionals to confirm all code compliance, saved the development team 3 - 8 months in the development schedule.
- 2 Streamlined Building Modifications:** Production time was reduced by making the intentional decision to leave the existing shell and fire system "as is", thus avoiding a lengthy exterior upgrade. The use of metal stud infill allowed for very swift construction.
- 3 Safety Measures:** Though originally designed for 50 beds, COVID prompted the reduction to 46 beds to ensure appropriate physical distancing. The key was thinking about how individuals would move through the space to maximize their comfort.





# 92% FASTER

Permitting for homeless and transitional housing centers in Los Angeles County can take up to three years and an additional two years to construct. The team for New Hope found innovative ways to build a drastically needed shelter in record time.

# 100% OF LOCAL SHELTER REQUIREMENTS MET

The New Hope Temporary Shelter fully meets the desire to offer shelter to any resident in need.

# 46 BEDS

There are residents occupying the shelter's 46 beds all of whom enjoy the space and are happy to be in a safe environment with supportive services.





## Results

The self-certification process provides the same discretionary Planning Department oversight as more traditional processes, but it allows the contractor and builder to work creatively in the field to ensure that the approved project meets State and Local Building Code requirements. This unique approach radically compressed cost and timeline and can now become a model for other cities looking to do the same.

The building itself features a carefully crafted design that provides residents with a positive atmosphere. The building's ceiling is exposed at the intake/lobby and dining area to create vaulted ceilings. New storefront windows and skylights flood the center with natural light. On the street-facing wall of the Bellflower Shelter is a mural that beautifies not only the structure but the surrounding street presence.

A positive outcome of the shelter was that trash had been removed from alleys, streets, and parks that were once used and occupied by unhoused residents.

## Key Takeaways

The New Hope Temporary Shelter was designed, permitted and built in just five months. The self-certification process that allowed this project to meet its time restrictive goals can be a valuable resource to other cities and ultimately improve the ability to provide widely needed social services in a timely manner.

The shelter demonstrates the benefits of facilities that are built on a smaller scale. Every city has a responsibility to house people experiencing homelessness and doing it on a smaller scale is better for the residents as well as for the community as it humanizes the process of sheltering unhoused individuals.

The key to designing the "new normal" for housing in a post-COVID-19 world is thinking much more about open space. At every level, projects should maintain open space whether its housing with private areas such as balconies and roof decks; retail spaces with open storefronts; or restaurants with parklets.

