

Housing project to expand Yolo Adult Day Health Center

Supes approve first phase of construction

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The old Yolo Hospital will be demolished for the expansion of Yolo... (Deo Ferrer-Daily Democrat)

When Woodland resident Sherrie Ewing got into a car accident, she was in a coma for seven weeks, after which she was unable to walk until the Yolo Adult Day Health Center intervened.

"I joined the Yolo Adult Day Health Center for physical therapy and I learned to walk," she said. "It took me two and a half years, but I did it. I learned to walk from a wheelchair to a walker to a cane. Now I can walk for miles."

Ewing shared her story of rehabilitation with Yolo County supervisors Tuesday, before the board voted unanimously to support a project that would both construct a larger center and build more affordable housing around it. This would effectively create a built-in resource for the community.

Specifically, the board voted to transfer the old hospital property, located on the corner of West Beamer and Cottonwood in Woodland, to Yolo County Housing. Working with development partners, the housing department is moving forward with the multi-million dollar design.

The project itself, which has been discussed for some time, will demolish the antiquated hospital, making room for about 80 housing units — 55 to affordable housing, eight for homeless people.

The remaining 17 units would be dedicated to those with mental health issues, utilizing more than \$3 million in Mental Health Services Act Funds, which the county received in 2007.

"Since that time a number of processes have occurred regarding the best utilization of these funds, with a few starts and stops in between," said Mindi Nunes, assistant county administrator, on Tuesday. "We believe to finally be on a trajectory toward development of a multi-family housing project."

With the board's approval, the construction will take place in phases — the first phase will build 50 units under a \$13.5 million budget, which includes money from Mental Health Act funds, grants, and other sources.

Although the old hospital is vacant, the Yolo Adult Day Health Center shares the property, and has been providing a multitude of services for more than 30 years.

Throughout those years, staff have assisted both individuals and families facing the challenges of serious health problems such as dementia, chronic medical diagnoses, mental illness or brain injury. But now the center has outgrown its facility.

Dawn Myers Purkey, who manages the center, thanked everyone involved in planning the development for their efforts.

"These folks embraced my concept informally and included me in the planning of the project that was conceived so many years ago," she said, smiling. "This is a good day. The letters of support that came from the community organizations, I think, paint a very powerful picture of the community need and of the community desire to expand our services to meet the needs of the next generation."

Before Purkey could return to her seat, Supervisor Jim Provenza asked about the center's attendance.

"We have about 30 people on the waitlist," she said. "We are serving at capacity today with 59 people. We would want to build a center that is in the range of 90 to 100 clients, which is what we would want to do with this larger space."

Provenza was in favor of the project, partially because it would expand the center's services to residents of the neighboring low-income housing community.

"Many of those individuals would benefit from Adult Day Health Care's services," he said. "It is really a unique opportunity."

If everything remains on schedule, the first phase of construction will begin in March 2016, taking about a year to complete. Phase two, which will include the expansion of the Yolo Adult Day Health Center, will begin soon after.

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