



An architect's sketch shows what a spacious new Yolo County Animal Shelter could look like. Many questions remain about the scope of the shelter, its size, its cost and its site. Courtesy sketch

### County Government

# County supervisors receive update on new Yolo animal shelter

By **Anne Ternus-Bellamy** From page A1 | March 22, 2017

WOODLAND — Efforts to build a new, larger animal shelter in Yolo County continue to move forward, though what that facility ultimately will look like — and how much it will cost — remains to be seen.

Also unclear is whether all four cities in Yolo County will be willing to share the cost of a new facility and whether cities like Woodland and West Sacramento will be willing to pay for the same level of animal care and service that many Davis residents want.

The current shelter, on Gibson Road in Woodland, is nearly 50 years old and, according to recent studies, does not meet current facility standards or shelter medicine best practices. It also is simply too small.

The Board of Supervisors last year contracted with Davis architects Indigo Hammond + Playle to produce a needs assessment and conceptual drawings for a new shelter. Indigo worked with the UC Davis Koret Shelter Medicine Program to conduct the assessment and ensure that adequate medical, quarantine, adoption and community spaces were identified.

Architect Bruce Playle unveiled the results at Tuesday's board meeting.

"This is a hypothetical plan," Playle told the board, adding that it "demonstrates one example of how you can use design to provide best shelter practices."

The design features 28,000 square feet of space compared to the current shelter's 6,400 square feet and includes a veterinary clinic, a classroom, indoor-outdoor kennels and more.

Playle could not affix a price tag to the design, noting that factors like site selection — it's not clear where in the county the new shelter would be built — would play into the cost, but the design could be built in phases based on available funding.

County Administrator Patrick Blacklock said the initial design "is pretty costly ... and exceeds our ability, so we have some work to do to re-scope the project ... and come up with a lower-cost alternative."

Financing for the project would come from a public-private collaboration, with a nonprofit, Unleashing the Possibilities Inc., raising funds privately while the county and participating cities fill in the rest.

"When we initially were talking to the cities about this, the overall dollar amount was in the \$12 million range," Blacklock said, adding that Unleashing the Possibilities has set a fundraising target "in the seven-figure range."

But the estimated cost has since increased to \$16 million, then \$18 million or more, Blacklock said, adding that the county should hit pause on the project to bring the cost back down.

And while the ideal would be all four cities — Davis, Winters, Woodland and West Sacramento — sharing the cost of the facility with the county, the project still could move forward even if one or more cities opted out.

"It's just a matter of sizing," Blacklock said. "The facility can go forward if a city chooses not to participate."

Supervisor Matt Rexroad of Woodland indicated that could happen.

"I think we have one, if not two, cities that are not going to be willing to fund that level of care for animals," especially given other financial needs, he said.

"The standard of care and level of service that city of Davis residents who have emailed me want to see provided is one level and I see a different level for Woodland and West Sacramento residents," Rexroad added. "We need to be financially realistic about how we approach this."

Supervisor Oscar Villegas of West Sacramento agreed.

"There's no question everyone agrees there's a need," he said, "but when the rubber hits the road, you're going to get some pushback from at least a couple of cities."

Supervisors Don Saylor and Jim Provenza of Davis both expressed support for continuing with the effort.

“It’s important to move forward,” Provenza said.

“We’ve made tremendous strides with our shelter services, going from a point where I think half of the animals were being put to sleep and now over 90 percent survive,” he said. “But we’re limited by an old building and everyone acknowledges we can’t really go any further until we have a new building.”

Next steps will include gathering input from cities on the conceptual plan and developing capital and operational cost projections.

Meanwhile, Unleashing the Possibilities continues to raise funds to donate to the county to speed up the process for construction. The nonprofit is governed by a board composed Yolo Superior Court Judge David Rosenberg, former Yolo County Supervisors Helen Thomson and Betsy Marchand, Beth Dovi, Heidi Kellison, Nancy Lea, Katie Villegas, Brian Christison, Nita Superak and Janis Rosenberg.

Donations to Unleashing the Possibilities can be made at [www.unleashingyolo.org](http://www.unleashingyolo.org).

— Reach Anne Ternus-Bellamy at [aternus@davisenterprise.net](mailto:aternus@davisenterprise.net) or 530-747-8051. Follow her on Twitter at [@ATernusBellamy](https://twitter.com/ATernusBellamy)