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Homeless housing complex planned for Woodland

City's homeless population has nearly doubled in two years, officials say



Updated: 8:57 PM PDT Aug 12, 2019

Mike Luery

WOODLAND, Calif. — With the homeless population nearly doubling from 131 to 238 people in just two years, the small city of Woodland is looking to tackle a big problem spreading all across California.

The city introduced a plan that hopes to create housing for people living on the streets. Here are three things to know about the plan:

1) What is Woodland doing?

Woodland is planning a homeless village with tiny manufactured homes built on a permanent foundation.

“In a couple of years, we’re going to have 61 housing units,” Woodland City Manager Paul Navazio said. “And, they’re actually being intentionally designed to have more of a neighborhood feel.”

Navazio said Woodland has already secured \$5 million in state funding to build the tiny homes. But, that’s not all.

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The city is also relocating its emergency shelter and rehabilitation center from downtown to the designated site at County Road 102 and East Beamer Way, which is approximately 2.7 miles from city hall.

“Having a one-stop location, operationally, is the most efficient way to go,” said Scott Thurmond, executive director of Friends of the Mission, which is one of the key partners with the city of Woodland. “We have a setup where I think it's going to change the paradigm of homeless services in Yolo County.”



Stephen Coyle

The 5.5-acre campus will include 100 beds for the emergency shelter and a 60-bed treatment facility along with the tiny homes. The complex will provide wraparound services, including mental health, drug and alcohol counseling for people who come to the complex.

Kristen Cline, Woodland's Social Services Manager, said, "working with this population, staying connected and trying to find people is sometimes hard."

Cline said she is "looking forward to having it all in one spot."

2) How much will it cost?

Woodland has already secured \$5 million from the state of California, but it's not enough to build everything that's needed.

"The housing project, No Place Like Home project, is about \$10.2 million just for the housing units," Navazio said. "We have received a funding commitment from the state for roughly half of that. We're working on piecing together the remainder of that funding."

The housing, shelter and rehabilitation project would cost an estimated \$15 million altogether, but Navazio said he is confident Woodland can find the funding it needs to get the work started.

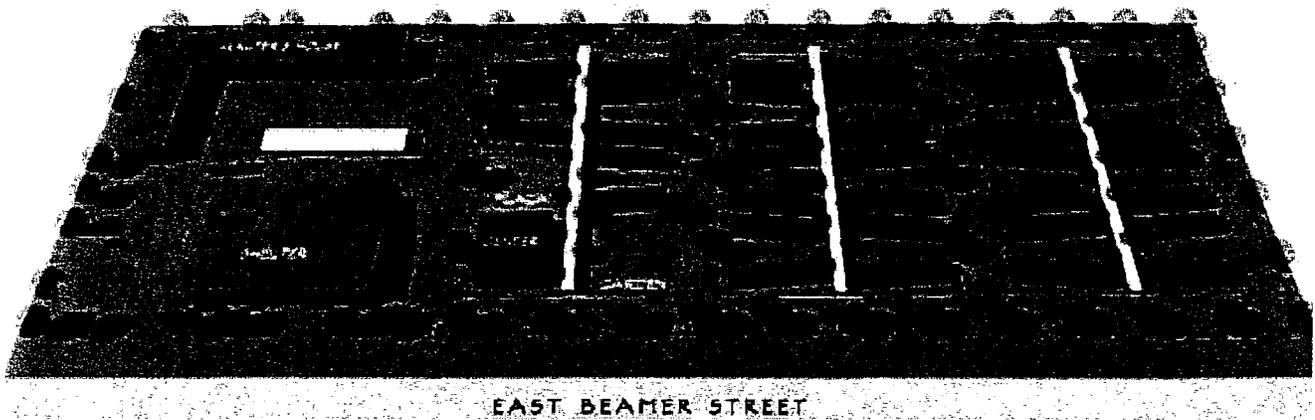
“We are hoping to break ground next year,” he said.

3) Will people living on the street go to the facility?

“Yes,” said Lori Lichman, who has been homeless in Woodland for about a year. “I think it’s good they are trying to build something for us. Because even if it is faraway, I think it’s a good thing to do.”

For many homeless living in Woodland, the new housing project can’t happen soon enough.

“Yes, I would live there,” said a man who called himself Q. “That would be a better place than what’s out here, right now. That would be a definitely better place.”



Stephen Coyle

For some, living in a home might seem like a foreign concept.

“Half of us here wouldn’t know what to do in a home,” said Lisa Marie DeLeon, who was camped outside of the old Yolo County Courthouse. “I had an apartment. I was living out of a box for two months. This becomes a bad habit. It’s almost like an illness that we’re going through.”

For some, the need for housing is urgent.

“I would go anywhere other than here,” said Richard Patino, who was lying on the ground outside the old courthouse. “If hell had a roof right now, I’d be there.”