

MEMORANDUM

TO: Newberg Planning Commission

FROM: Doug Rux, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Supplemental Material MAMD323-0002/MISC123-0009 at 516 N College Street #2

DATE: June 8, 2023

Attached are comments received from the Applicant addressing public comments submitted.

Attachment: 1. YCAP Comments



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June 7, 2023

To: City of Newberg
Community Development Department
PO BOX 970, Newberg, OR 97132

Subject: Response to Opposition for Expansion of Shelter at 615 N. College Street.

File Number: MAMD323-0002/MISC123-0009

Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

Thank you for considering YCAP's request for a Major Modification of CUP-2-90 for YCAP's existing shelter to add 8 additional beds and an accessory modular building for use as an office and meeting space.

YCAP understands that improving services for individuals who are unhoused can spark community concerns and misinformation. High quality services to help move individuals who are experiencing homelessness into stable housing are as vital to a community as the fire department, police, libraries, schools, and numerous other city and county programs that can become a focal point for strong feelings in the community. While everyone agrees the fire department, EMS, and police are critical community functions, individuals who live close to those services also must contend with alarms and sirens in the middle of the night as well as occasional traffic disruptions. While all community services have some level of tradeoff, YCAP's goal is to help quickly move individuals who are unhoused into stable housing and thereby minimize their impact on the Newberg community.

For example, the Newberg Public Library is currently a location where many individuals who are unhoused congregate to use public restroom facilities. With the modifications at 615 N. College Street, YCAP will be able to open a Day Center which will enable individuals to use restrooms and showers in a facility designed for that purpose. In addition, the modular will enable additional YCAP trauma-informed staff, mental and physical health providers, and substance use disorder partner agencies to be onsite to connect individuals to needed support services.

YCAP would also like to address the specific concerns raised in letters to the commission. First, as the commissioners know, YCAP is not tripling the size of the facility, but is increasing the size from 16 to 24 beds. One reason for this increase is to help keep more people off the streets at night and reduce the disruptions mentioned in the letters while also improving safety and security. YCAP does acknowledge that even with the increase in bed size, there is no guarantee that an individual experiencing a mental health crisis will not cross the path of a resident in Newberg. With the number of individuals in Oregon suffering from mental health and substance use disorders on the rise, these encounters will continue to increase across our state without significant, coordinated interventions.

One letter stated “Important to note that these issues did not exist prior to the shelter being open every evening. When it was just a warming shelter, we never had any issues in the neighborhood. This has only happened once it was open regularly.”

YCAP would like to clarify that the shelter at 615 N. College Street has never been “just a warming shelter” and has been operating as a full-time shelter for more than 30 years with individuals and families staying at the shelter while they awaited placement in stable housing. The only recent change to facility usage was post-COVID when YCAP leased the building to a local Newberg shelter provider. That lease has ended, and YCAP will no longer be leasing the facility to an outside agency. The addition of the modular will also help YCAP have greater oversight of the facility and property during the day.

Many letters were concerned that individuals experiencing homelessness did not have a place to go during the day. YCAP would like to clarify that once completed, the new facility will have a Day Center that will be open 7 days a week as well as the nightly shelter operations. As a result, individuals will have the opportunity to be in the facility during the day which should alleviate these concerns. Onsite Day Center and shelter services are located only within the fenced property line and will not include any car, RV, or individual camping areas.

In regards to concerns about property values, the two bedroom, one bath (1010 square foot) house located at 614 N College St, Newberg, OR 97132, directly across the street from the shelter, sold on April 27, 2023 for \$355,000. The property had been a rental home for the last 10 years after being purchased on January 7, 2013 for only \$95,000.

Some individuals believe the facility itself will increase homelessness in Newberg. However, the facility has been operating in a similar capacity for 30 years, and the housing crisis has ballooned around it. In fact, the change in property value of the house across the street from \$95,000 to \$355,000 in 10 years is a better indicator of why homelessness has been on the rise in Newberg. Individuals experiencing homelessness are already in Newberg. Many families have lost their rental homes in an increasingly competitive housing market, and the expanded shelter operations will help move individuals more quickly from the streets back into stable housing.

YCAP has internal data that shows shelter alone is not an effective way to move individuals into stable housing; therefore, YCAP has designed a program of intensive case management and support services that thoughtfully transition families from homeless to housing. As a result, more individuals remain housed. Homelessness is a complex issue and many individuals require a non-traditional living environment such as long-term care facilities, adult foster-care programs, permanent supportive housing, or other living arrangements. This more inclusive and proactive approach helps prevent repeat homelessness and moves Newberg residents who are experiencing homelessness into stable, long-term housing.