

County of Santa Clara
Board of Supervisors
Supervisory District 5
Supervisor S. Joseph Simitian



100134

DATE: February 11, 2020
TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: S. Joseph Simitian, Supervisor
SUBJECT: 525 East Charleston Road, Palo Alto

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Approve referral to Administration to report to the Board with options for consideration relating to building affordable housing, including housing for extremely low and very low income persons with developmental disabilities, on the County-owned site at 525 East Charleston Road, Palo Alto. (Simitian)

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

This referral directs County staff to return to the board with options to develop affordable housing, including housing for extremely low income and very low income persons with developmental disabilities, on County-owned land at 525 East Charleston Road in Palo Alto.

People with developmental disabilities are at particular risk of homelessness. The income constraints that often accompany their severely disabling condition tend to be on-going in nature and make finding affordable housing in the community a special challenge. The number of adults in Santa Clara County with developmental disabilities has grown by 47% in the past decade and is projected to continue growing. Because of this, the need for affordable housing for persons with developmental disabilities will increase over the coming years.

This site, at approximately three-quarters of an acre, and adjacent to a church, park, and several schools, is particularly well-suited for housing for persons with developmental disabilities because of its proximity to Gatepath-Abilities United, a non-profit aimed at serving children and adults with developmental disabilities, and Magical Bridge, one of the County's first all-inclusive playgrounds. Gatepath-Abilities United currently uses the site under a County lease and also leases a larger nearby site from the County. Gatepath-Abilities United has expressed interest in partnering with the County to provide services to residents of

a new development at 525 East Charleston Road. Existing funding streams to support housing for persons with developmental disabilities will further leverage the use of County land.

Staff should return to the board by the April 21st meeting with:

- A feasibility study for use of the site, including occupants who are extremely low income and very low income persons with disabilities;
- A timeline for moving towards developing the land such that construction can begin when the site becomes available in October 2022; and,
- Requests for authorization to develop a request(s) for proposals for developers to partner with the County on financing and developing the site, which would remain in County ownership, but could be ground-leased to a development partner.

BACKGROUND

Santa Clara County owns three parcels of land at the corner of Middlefield Road and East Charleston Road in Palo Alto. One of the parcels is leased to the Challenger School, bringing in over \$1 million in rental payments per year. The other two parcels are leased to Gatepath-Abilities United, a non-profit whose mission is to serve children and adults with developmental disabilities.

Per a negotiation when the leases came up for renewal in 2014/2015, the site at 525 East Charleston Road will revert to the County's use in October 2022. Gatepath-Abilities United expects to redevelop their property at 3864 Middlefield Road, and staff will continue to work with Gatepath-Abilities United to see if there are opportunities for shared use of that site as well.