

News editor: Pat Ferrier, 224-7742

Nonprofit plans a Units would be for low-income disable

By PAT FERRIER
PatFerrier@coloradoan.com

A Minnesota nonprofit company plans to build a 23-unit, two-story apartment building for low-income disabled residents on Harmony Road.

Accessible Space Inc., has \$2.35 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to develop the project on 2 acres west of the intersection of Hogan Drive and Harmony Road.

The city of Fort Collins has agreed to kick in \$500,000 from its home and affordable housing programs and will consider an additional \$350,000 request in May, said Ken Waido, chief city

planner for the advanced planning department.

The project has been through the city's early review process, said Ted Shepard, chief planner for the city's current planning department.

Dan Billmark, director of real estate development with Accessible Space Inc., said the project will serve disabled residents making 50 percent or less of the county's median income.

In Larimer County, the median income for one person is \$48,450; eligibility for the new units, therefore, would be \$24,225 or below.

Rents could be capped at roughly \$350 per month, Bill-

mark said.

More than 31,000 Larimer County residents are living with a disability, according to the 2000 Census.

Housing is a critical issue for many of them, said Nancy Jackson, executive director of Disabled Resource Service in Fort Collins.

Late last year, Jackson said her office worked with 165 people who had various housing needs.

"The current features in many apartment units that promote themselves as accessible don't have all the features that a person, particularly someone in a wheelchair, might need," she said.

Features to be included in the

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partment building

ed residents

Accessible Space project include roll-in showers to accommodate wheelchairs, roll-under counters, cooktop stoves and wall ovens.

"You don't find those in a lot of apartments that are available in the community," she said.

The project is still in its early stages, but Accessible Space hopes to break ground early next year and be open by the end of 2007.

It's a realistic timeframe, Shepard said. The next step as far as the city is concerned, is a public meeting with residents living in the area. The land is near the Fairways subdivision off Harmony Road.

Interested?

Residents interested in getting on a waiting list for a unit may call Accessible Space at (800) 466-7722, ext. 284. Visit www.AccessibleSpace.org for more information on the organization.

Eligibility for a unit

- Must have physical disability, including but not limited to a closed brain injury, hearing or visual impairment
- Income that's 50 percent or less of the county's median income.

Shepard anticipates there may be some "good old-fashioned compatibility issues" between residents who may not want a multifamily project in a single-family neighborhood.

The subsidized housing will allow low-income disabled residents to live independently, Billmark said.

Units will be available for

people with physical disabilities who make at or below 50 percent of the median income.

"It's hard for people to find good accessible housing," said Dolores Kueffler, program manager for the Northern Colorado Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, who wrote a letter to HUD supporting the project.