

Dorothy Day Center Reveals \$100 Million Expansion Plan in St. Paul

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Community leaders learned Friday expansion plans at the Dorothy Day Center in St. Paul (Photo: KSTP/Cleo Greene)

Community Leaders from dozens of major Twin Cities companies attended a community breakfast, where Catholic Charities revealed architectural drawings for a five-story Dorothy Day Center.

Catholic Charities opened the Dorothy Day Center in 1981. It served meals to about 30 to 50 people per day and it has been forced to become an overnight shelter for more than 250 people. It now serves meals to several hundred a day.

"It was not designed to be that. It is overcrowded." said President and CEO of Catholic Charities Tim Marx. "More than 6,000 people rely on us each year, some sleep on the floor with thin mats and it's not right."

Catholic Charities is expected to break ground in June on the first of two new buildings. Higher Ground St. Paul will offer emergency shelter and a range of permanent housing options. It will be at 411 Main St. That is across from the current Dorothy Day Center. Catholic Charities expects it to be complete by 2016.

"The second phase of the project is a Connection Center." said Marx. "This is where people can get services offered by us, Ramsey County, the Department of Veterans Affairs and health care organizations."

Four floors of permanent housing are planned above the Connection Center to be complete by 2018.

The new center will cost about \$100 million. The state of Minnesota, Ramsey County, city of St. Paul and other public providers have committed about \$40 million.

Catholic Charities hopes to raise additional money for the second phase of the project with a mix of bonding and tax credits. However they are hopeful that private sector companies will lend a helping hand.