

THE Valley Springs NEWS

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\$7.8 million transit plan unveiled

By Nick Baptista

A \$7.8 million plan to improve safety and transportation in downtown Valley Springs is scheduled to be considered Thursday by the Calaveras County Planning Commission.

The televised meeting will begin at 9 a.m. Due to the coronavirus outbreak, the meeting will not be physically open to the public. However, it can be viewed or listened to at <http://calaverascounty-ca.iqm2.com/Citizens/Default.aspx1>.

The so-called Valley Springs Town Center Connectivity Plan (See Page 2)

HWY 12 & VALLEY OAKS SHOPPING CENTER



A traffic signal at the State Route 12 entrance to the Valley Oaks Shopping Center is being recommended in a study going before the Calaveras County Planning Commission.

Med Center honors key people

By Nick Baptista

Four individuals and one organization received Dignity Health's Values in Action Awards during a ceremony Friday outside of Mark Twain Medical Center.

Receiving the annual awards were Volunteer Chaplain Dick Brown for Dignity, Kara Evans for Stewardship, Dr. Wyatt Jaffe for Justice, Janna Fautt for Excellence and The Doris Barger Golf Committee for Collaboration.

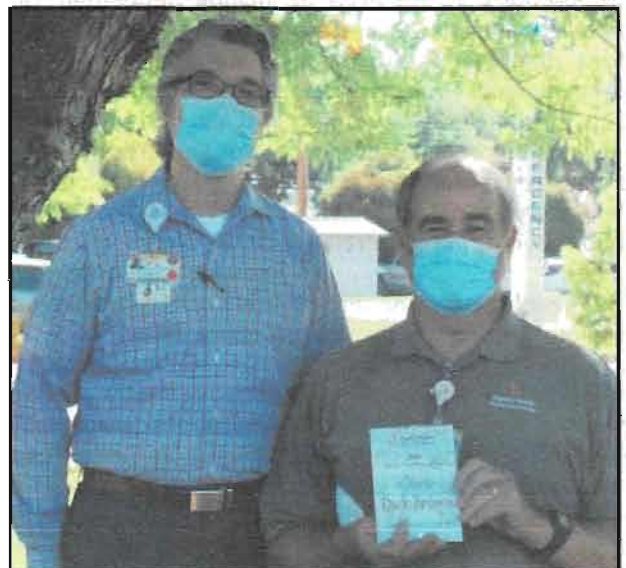
Brown has been a dedicated volunteer chaplain at MTMC for more than five years.

"Our staff has come to depend on Dick for his never failing dependability, his genuine and sincere kindness, love and words of encouragement and strength for patients, families, and

staff during times of tragedy," his nomination reads. "When the call is made, Dick arrives, holidays, weekends, early hours, and late nights for hours on end. He is known for his sense of humor, soft voice, stern stance when appreciated, words of wisdom, faith and belief in God, comfort and respect to all. Dick will continue to stay in touch and check back in with staff weeks and months after a difficult situation that he was asked to tend too.

"As a volunteer, often Dick gives just as much time and commitment as a paid staff member. All the while displaying grace and professionalism like our staff. He is thought of highly by our staff and

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Mark Twain Hospital President and CEO Doug Archer, left, presents Chaplain Dick Brown with Dignity Health's Values in Action Award for Dignity.

Plan

From Page 1

has been in the works for several years.

A traffic congestion problem at Valley Springs Elementary School got the project rolling, according to District 1 Supervisor Gary Tofanelli. His district includes the school.

"Caltrans was receptive to help us," he added, and in 2017 provided a grant for the study.

Public workshops began in late 2018 and continued into last year. The outcome of the grant, workshops and study is an implementation plan that covers six downtown areas. It identifies infrastructure projects to enhance bicycle, pedestrian, and vehicular connectivity.

Area 1 contains Valley Springs Elementary School, Valley Springs Library, Veterans' Memorial Hall and Valley Springs Memorial Park.

Key issues, the study said, "include chaotic school drop-off and pick-up conditions with vehicles backing up for several blocks, lack of sidewalks and marked crossings, and lack of bicycle facilities."

New sidewalks and shared use paths along Sequoia Avenue and Pine Street, as well as school crossings at three intersections in the area to improve pedestrian access to these destinations are being recommended. Projects in this area also include pavement markings delineating passenger loading zones adjacent to the elementary school and nearby child development services center.

"These improvements will promote walking and bicycling to school by creating safer routes, reduce idling and traffic stress, and benefit the environment by reducing emissions," the study said.

The cost of those improvements is estimated at \$1.5 million.

Area 2 primarily represents the central residential area of Valley Springs. Key issues

include access from the residences to services, the nearby park and Valley Springs Elementary School. Students who live in this neighborhood are within walking distance of the school, but families may not feel comfortable walking without dedicated paths or sidewalks, the study said.

Improvements to this area include improved crossings at most intersections, a new sidewalk on one side of each street, and a new connected network of shared use paths on California Street, Daphne Street and Sequoia Avenue, connected by the sidewalks running north to south.

"The shared use paths provide connectivity and a comfortable travel space for bicyclists and pedestrians without adding too much hardscape to the residential area, helping to maintain rural character," the study said.

The projected price tag for these improvements is nearly \$1.2 million.

Area 3 is the town center.

"Several surface parking lots present challenges for people walking and bicycling, creating potential conflicts with drivers entering or exiting wide, informal driveways," the study said. "Improvements to this area include pedestrian, bike, and roadway improvements around Laurel Street and the township blocks adjacent on both sides of Laurel Street from SR 12 to Daphne Street. The projects improve intersection crossings at three intersections along Daphne Street, one of which is a school crossing intersection, as well as add a continuous sidewalk along Daphne Street."

Other recommended improvements include the addition of sidewalks and marked parking on Cedar, Laurel and Chestnut streets to support pedestrian access to the businesses in this area.

"These improvements will create a more inviting town center, supporting local economic activity," according to

SEQUOIA AVENUE IMPROVEMENTS



EXISTING



PROPOSED

Proposed improvements in front of Valley Springs Elementary.

the study. "Providing walking and bicycling facilities will reduce traffic stress and encourage active transportation, contributing to a safer and healthier community."

The estimated cost is nearly \$1.5 million.

Area 4 includes SR 12, which means improvements in this area are subject to Caltrans review and approval, and implementation will involve coordination and permitting with Caltrans.

Key issues include pedestrian gaps, regional bicycle use, and access to commercial uses. Higher vehicle volumes and speeds on the state highway may also contribute to higher levels of stress for people walking or bicycling.

Recommended improvements include addition of sidewalk to fill gaps along Highway 12 and on Pine Street, improved crossings across Highway 12 and Pine Street, and the addition of a buffered bike lane on the south side of Highway 12, and a bike lane with conflict markings on the north side.

Project costs for those improvements come in under \$400,000

Area 5 includes the eastern portion of State Route 12 and improvements will be subject to Caltrans review and approval.

Key issues include gaps in the pedestrian network, and driveway access issues, and safety concerns. Improvement recom-

mendations include a shared use path with buffer on both sides of SR 12, a new traffic signal at the entry to the Valley Oaks Shopping Center, and bicycle lanes with green conflict markings on the south side of Highway 12.

Improvements in this area have the highest price tag at nearly \$2 million.

Area 6 encompasses SR 26. Improvements in this area are also subject to Caltrans review and approval.

Key issues include commercial uses with driveway access issues, and gaps in the pedestrian network.

Recommended improvements include new sidewalk to fill gaps on both sides of SR 26, new/improved crossings at SR 26 and Nove Way, and buffered bike lanes with green conflict markings on SR 26. The improved crossing at Highway 26 and Nove Way would include a rectangular rapid flashing beacon in addition to high visibility markings.

The cost is estimated at more than \$1.3 million.

The Planning Commission will make a recommendation on the plan that will be forwarded to the county Board of Supervisors for final consideration.

All improvements identified in the study "are likely eligible" for funding through additional grants, the study concluded.