



Student housing is coming to Montcalm Community College's Sidney campus.

After more than two years of planning, the groundbreaking for an 84-bed, three-story dormitory is slated for spring 2025. It is expected to open fall semester 2026. The facility will be built on the southeastern part of the campus where the college's tennis courts are currently located.

The design features double-occupancy bedrooms in a share apartment-style housing unit, a mini kitchen, bedrooms, bathrooms and a living room. Amenities such as wireless internet, study spaces, on-site trash removal and laundry, electric, water, heat and air conditioning are all included. For safety, the building boasts a secured main entrance and live-in residence staff, as well as surveillance cameras and security.

MCC's Vice President for Administrative Services and Chief Operating Officer Connie Stewart said completion of this project aims to support the need for affordable student housing.

"Access to high-quality, affordable local housing is a long-standing topic in Montcalm County," Stewart said. "Our goal is to support our students and student-athletes and to support overall enrollment growth at the college."

With an estimated \$8.5 million cost, Stewart said, "This is a significant investment in our students and community and supports us as we strive to fulfill our mission to enhance lives through quality education."

The addition of student housing is part of the college's 2019 Master Plan and was listed as a priority project in the

college's 2021-2024 strategic plan to support increasing the number of full-time students and to address student retention.

"Student housing supports local students who want the full college experience as well as those out-of-district students who choose to attend MCC," said MCC President Dr. Bradley J. Barrick.

"Bringing student housing to campus offers a richer, more community-oriented academic environment," Dr. Barrick said.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2022, 13.1% of the population in Montcalm County was living with severe housing issues.

In 2022, a survey was conducted by MCC of current and potential students. Of high school students considering attending MCC, 56.06% of respondents said they would be more likely to attend MCC if student housing were available, while 42.86% of high school students not considering attending MCC said if housing were available, they would be more likely to attend.

Stewart said data from the ALICE reports provided by United Way of Montcalm-Ionia Counties supports the need.

"We've seen that in ALICE reports, we have students that are couch surfing or on occasion, students living out of their cars," she said. "Hopefully this would open up an affordable opportunity for them to find a quality place to stay and earn a great education." **Q**