



## Officials seek West Augustine medical facility

By Sheldon Gardner  
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*County approves land transfer to help with project*

Plans to build a medical facility in West Augustine recently received support from the St. Johns County Commission.

Commissioners unanimously approved donating land for the project.

The land is about  $\frac{1}{3}$  of an acre near West King and North Brevard streets and will be transferred to the nonprofit West Augustine Historical Community Development Corporation from the St. Johns County Community Redevelopment Agency. The land's assessed value is \$8,887.

The corporation already owns property adjacent to the land.

Greg White, president of the nonprofit, said the idea is to build an 18,000 square foot medical facility that would provide services including medical and vision care, mental health care, substance abuse support and pharmaceutical services.

White said the West Augustine area has high rates of cancer, diabetes and infant mortality.

Healthcare's clinic in West Augustine helps people without health insurance, Medicaid, Medicare or benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

The proposed clinic would serve people with Medicare and other insurance, White said. It would also offer services that the Wildflower Healthcare clinic does not provide.

The effort has received letters of support from Congressman John Rutherford and others, including St. Johns County Sheriff David Shoar.

"The local municipalities, both the city as well as the county, as well as the state, as well as the federal have embraced (this)," White said.

The plans have been submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for review, and the nonprofit is seeking grants, White said.

The project is expected to cost about \$2.5 million.

The nonprofit would also like to build 80-90 affordable apartments on North Volusia and Chapin streets, White said. Officials are working with Ability Housing in Jacksonville on that effort.

"We're working on this diligently," White said.