

McCall gives St Luke's the green light for expansion

City council OK's footprint, which includes rerouting Hewitt Street

The first phase of a \$35 million plan to modernize and expand St. Luke's McCall Medical Center was approved last week by the McCall City Council.

Council members unanimously voted for approval during a regular meeting held Thursday at city hall, setting the massive project into motion.

Phase one includes surface and subsurface improvements and other prep work for the expansion, which will begin this summer and include utility work and rerouting Hewitt Street.

Rerouting Hewitt Street is necessary to expand the hospital building, hospital officials said.

The expansion phases of the project will almost double the hospital from its current 30,000 square feet to 80,000 square feet.

Inpatient rooms will also increase from the current 12 to 17 private rooms, with the ability to expand to 20 in the future.

Expansion also means four new, full-sized operating rooms and eight emergency room bays.

Part of the current facility dates back to the 1950s. An addition was built in the late 1990s.

Hospital construction will follow this summer's prep work, beginning sometime in 2019 or 2020, starting with the new story addition, followed by the renovation of the 1990s portion of the building.

The original 1950s portion of the building is set to be demolished to make way for parking by 2020.

Expansion and modernization has been a topic of discussion between the McCall Memorial Hospital District and St. Luke's for at least 10 years.

"Sometimes this is characterized as big-city healthcare invading our community, and I think it should be characterized as St. Luke's living up to its commitment made to this community," hospital district Chair Andy Laidlaw during last week's public hearing said.

Dr. Gregory Irvine, an orthopedic surgeon who has worked at St. Luke's McCall for seven years, says he and his staff have run out of room due to increased demand for services.

"The current physical plant where we are practicing medicine is now up to 60 years old and we are using a facility that is far beyond its useful life," Irvine said.

The lack of space has led to limited services, Irvine said.

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“The patient rooms, emergency rooms, surgical suites, imaging, lab and other patient care areas are all inadequate,” he told the council.

St. Luke’s McCall Site Administrator Sean McCallister said he looks forward to breaking ground on phase one this summer.

“We are pleased with the council meeting outcome and are grateful for widespread community support for the project,” McCallister said.

“We anticipate taking advantage of the upcoming build season and proceeding with site preparation and upgrades after securing final approval from St. Luke’s governing bodies,” he said.

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