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COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

# Proposed Woodland Research and Technology Park poised for public review



A rendering of the proposed Woodland Research and Technology Park. Plans call for 2.2 million square feet of office and research buildings and 1,600 homes with a 10-acre central park.

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The proposed 351-acre Woodland Research and Technology Park will begin its public approval process next month, with the hopes of connecting with companies that want to be close to the University of California Davis.

Designed as a mixed-use campus, the research park will feature 2.2 million square feet of office and research buildings and 1,600 homes with a 10-acre central park separating the neighborhoods from the offices and a small commercial area.

The project has drawn the attention of potential office tenants, and it's starting to get interest from residential developers, said John Hodgson, founder and of The Hodgson Co., the lead developer on the park.

“We are not at this time actively marketing it. But, yes, people are interested in sites,” he said.

The project is 7 miles north of UC Davis straight up Highway 113. A growing number of agricultural technology companies and seed companies have come to the area in recent years to be close to one of the highest-ranked agricultural universities in the world, said Woodland City Manager Ken Hiatt.

“We anticipate there will be a lot of companies spun out of the university that will be interested, as well as national and international companies that want to be close to Davis,” Hiatt said. Woodland has a long history with food, seed and agricultural companies, and the future of those industries will require more research and science, he said.

A draft specific plan on the project will go to the city in November for review. A full environmental document on the project is expected in December, which will then be open to public comment for review. The city could vote on the project in spring of 2021.

The research park will be phased in over time, with the tech park offices on the southwest side expected to be developed first, Hodgson said. He's expecting a 20- to 30-year buildout. The residential part of the project is about 155 acres, and he anticipates it will see a mix of modern single-family homes and some higher-density construction with eight to 10 homes per acre.

The market will work out what kind of homes people want, he said.

Most of the region's existing research lab space is currently occupied, and the city of Davis' inventory of large office and research space is mostly full, Hiatt said.

"It's pretty exciting to have an opportunity to create research and development space to attract and retain an R&D workforce," Hiatt said.

Woodland is hoping to reap the rewards of proximity to UC Davis. Development of new housing and office space in Davis is constrained by a lack of developable land and difficult city approval processes. That has been pushing population growth toward Woodland for years, Hodgson said.



Housing is limited in Davis, so Davis rents and mortgages tend to be high, he said. “Not everyone can afford an \$800,000 house.”

The city of Davis is also considering developing a research park, but that project must first win voter approval in November.

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