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Nonprofit raised \$20 million for East Bay cancer support center. The next step is breaking ground



Renderings of the 12,000-square-foot cancer support center.

CANCER SUPPORT COMMUNITY



By **Hannah Kanik** – Reporter, San Francisco Business Times
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A Bay Area nonprofit plans to break ground on a cancer support center in the East Bay this fall after fundraising \$20 million for the project.

The Cancer Support Community San Francisco Bay Area has been working since 2018 to design and build a one-stop shop of support services for cancer patients and their caregivers after they were gifted a 6-acre plot of land near the Lafayette Reservoir at 3939 Mt Diablo Blvd. in 2018 from former land-owner, Ray Leal, before he died.

CSC Chief Executive Officer Rob Tufel said the organization got to work designing a 12,000-square-foot, two-story structure, nature trails and community garden to build there. They partnered with Richmond-based Overaa Construction and Left Coast Architects, and later gained entitlements and unanimous approval from the city of Lafayette in 2021.

“We know there's going to be more people diagnosed with cancer, and we as an organization want to also increase our capacity to be ready to meet the needs of the growing number of cancer patients,” Tufel said.

While being gifted land was a major advantage, paying for construction amid high interest rates and rising costs was no easy feat, Tufel said. CSC launched a capital campaign to raise \$30 million for the project and has so far raised \$20 million and is halfway through a \$5 million match donation that will bring it to \$30 million.

Initial project estimates clocked in at \$15 million, and as construction costs spiked after the pandemic, that soon doubled. Tufel said at the time, CSC planned to hold off on construction and host community events on the land as they waited for more funds or costs to decline, but several donors stepped up to push the project forward.

“Several donors said to us, ‘We don't want to wait. We're willing to make large donations now,’” Tufel said. “We had several large anonymous donations to get us to that 20 million.”

The center is meant to support cancer patients and their families, offering support groups, exercise classes, cooking demonstrations and educational workshops, as well as social activities. They plan to wrap construction by 2025.