

**Published - Thursday, August 28, 2008 Winona Daily News**

Winona State University plans to build a new \$30 million dormitory by 2010 and designate two of its older buildings as swing-space for offices.

The new project will accommodate about 400 beds inside two structures connected by a patio area. WSU will build the yet-to-be named complex on what's now a university parking lot at the corners of Huff and Mark streets bordered on the south by the Canadian Pacific rail line.



An artist rendition of the 400-bed dormitory Winona State University plans to build on the corner of Huff and Mark Streets. The approximately \$30 million project is scheduled to be completed in 2010. (Photo Provided)

Richards and Conway dormitories, two components of WSU's "Quad," will become office space, Kurt Lohide, WSU's vice president of finance and administrative services, said. There is no current plan to demolish Conway and Richards Halls, but the university wants to tear down those dorms when it secures funding, Lohide said.

"It will relieve some overcrowding," he said. "Some students that we were tripling up in rooms we will put in double rooms."

Because the project will relieve overcrowding, Lohide said he didn't expect any net gain to the number of students living on-campus after the new complex is completed.

The two new four-level buildings will occupy about 130,000 square feet. Construction on the project is scheduled to begin around April 2009, and most of the work will be completed by July 2010. The buildings should be ready for students to move in by fall semester that year, Lohide said.

The project will affect parking on campus. WSU began paving several gravel lots this year ♦ adding about 400 spaces ♦ because the new buildings will cover about 350 spaces in a current lot.

"We anticipated that we would need them once we started going up with the new residence hall," Lohide said.

The dorms also tie into pedestrian tunnels that are planned to go under the Canadian Pacific rail line at Winona and Johnson streets. The Winona Street tunnel, which is also expected to be completed by 2010, will open inside the courtyard between the complex's two buildings, allowing pedestrians to walk under the rail line instead of crossing at Huff Street. "The (tunnels) will increase the safety of the students and also anyone living in Winona," he said.

The dorm will be funded by a revenue bond approved June 17 by the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system. The bond also includes \$7 million dedicated for WSU's planned expansion of Memorial Hall for its Integrated Wellness Center.

WSU also has plans to request approval and funding for the construction of a new building for its college of business, but those requests will not be made for at least two years, Lohide said.

Meanwhile, St. Mary's University is currently examining its housing situation because of rising enrollment, though no final decisions have been made, said SMU's vice president for communication and marketing Bob Conover.