

WCCCD to invest \$40 million in new buildings



David Jesse, Detroit Free Press 11:27 p.m. EDT June 7, 2016



(Photo: Wayne County Community College District)

Wayne County Community College District will invest \$40 million to build two new facilities — one in downtown Detroit and the other in Taylor, college officials will announce today.

A \$25 million Health and Wellness Center will be built on Fort Street between the community college's main downtown campus and the post office. College officials say they hope to open it by 2018 and have the public use part of it for traditional fitness training. No details have been finalized on how much of the space will be open to the public or on the rates.

The \$15 million Horticulture Education Center will be built on the college's Downriver Campus in Taylor. College officials hope it will be up and running by 2018.

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The goal is to add a number of programs for students in the new spaces, tied to various careers.

"We are always looking to expand our offerings to meet the needs of the workforce," college spokeswoman Tina Bassett told the Free Press. "There's a lot of programs we're going to be able to do to help our students."

The college will not issue bonds or seek another millage to pay the cost, Bassett said. Instead, it will use money it has been accumulating since voters approved a millage in 2012. That millage was sold to the public as a way for the college to improve instruction and bolster the college's offerings.

The additional programs offered in the new facilities could include things like biotechnology, hydroponics, aquaponics, fitness training, sports management, sports medicine and kinesiology, the school said in a press release that was to be issued today but was shared with the Free Press in advance.

College officials said the buildings would help capitalize on trends in education and business.

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Wayne County Community College District will build a \$15 million Horticulture Education Center on the college's Downriver Campus in Taylor. It is hoped to be up and running by 2018. (Photo: Wayne County Community College District)

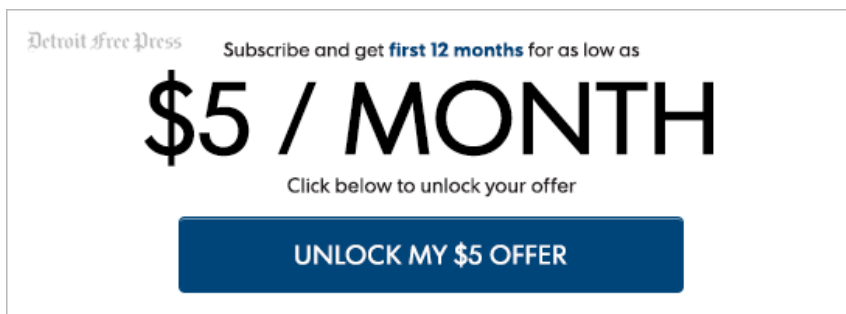
"We're very excited to provide a state-of-the-art center to expand our students' learning, as well as the opportunity to improve overall health and wellness to community residents," said WCCCD Chancellor Curtis L Ivery in the release. "Our mission has always been to provide pathways to better lives through higher education. Healthy minds and bodies (are) an integral part to living a great life, and this center will provide numerous outlets to achieving that."

The college is planning to explore partnerships with area hospitals and other health-related organizations for the programs in the new center.

The health and wellness center is modeled on wellness centers at other community colleges, Bassett said.

"Most community colleges have them. We are just catching up," she said.

College officials pointed to the wellness center at Washtenaw Community College as a model for what they would like to build. That was built in 2007 and cost \$13 million.



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College officials said the agriculture building is aimed at helping students get jobs in a booming field.

"We are thrilled to offer a modern location where students and residents alike can study a field that has grown rapidly in interest and importance to our region, and the nation at large," said WCCCD Downriver Campus President Anthony Arminiak in the press release. "Michigan is a leader in agriculture, and metro Detroit is a leader in urban agriculture. This center is directly in line with that interest and with our mission to provide pathways to better lives through higher education."

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