

## YWCA to sell prime spot on Oberlin

**JACK HAGEL, Staff Writer**

RALEIGH - The YWCA of the Greater Triangle, betting on high-dollar demand for choice property on a blossoming stretch of Oberlin Road, plans to close and sell its facility near Cameron Village and consolidate operations downtown.

The organization's 50,000-square-foot facility at 1012 Oberlin Road features offices, meeting rooms, residences, a swimming pool, gymnasium, restaurant and playground on 3.5 acres.

It has been an important meeting place for the women's organization since the mid-1970s. But over the years, services and programs have shifted off site. A breast-cancer awareness program, for instance, takes place at a hospital.

"Sometimes it's street outreach, or in beauty shops," said Leigh Duque, the organization's executive director.

It doesn't hurt that the property is on a hot stretch of Oberlin.

It sits between the Cameron Village shopping center and Oberlin Court, a luxury apartment complex where developers are adding shops. Farther north, Blue Ridge Realty is adding about 4,100 square feet of shops at Oberlin Village. Just north of that, 2.74 acres were rezoned to allow construction of up to 18 homes. Across the street, developers have talked about redeveloping the Country Club Homes apartments.

Zoning at the YWCA property could allow for a 10-story building with high-end condominiums and maybe ground-floor offices or shops, said Jim Anthony, president of Anthony & Co., a Raleigh real-estate services firm whose offices are on Oberlin Road. "It's a fabulous site," he said.

The YWCA does not yet have a buyer for the property, which last year was appraised at \$4.67 million, said Carter Worthy of Carter Worthy Commercial, the Raleigh company hired to find a buyer.

It's possible the property could still serve as a community meeting place. "If we can find a user whose program matches up with what the property has, that will be a bargain," Worthy said. "To replace that kind of facility would cost more than that."

But she said she doesn't know of any such groups in the market.

Proceeds from the property sale will help expand existing programs and create new ones at the

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Some of the programs offered at the YWCA's Oberlin Road facility will move to the organization's downtown building at 554 E. Hargett St. by Sept. 1.

Others, including the YWCA's aquatics program, will be canceled. The Hargett Street facility doesn't have a pool.

Proceeds from the sale are expected to expand existing programs or fund new programs including wellness services, personal finance and physical fitness classes and after-school academic activities.

For more on the move or YWCA programs, call 834-7386.

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YWCA's existing property at 554 E. Hargett St. downtown.

Expanding at Hargett Street is also possible. The YWCA has about 1.2 acres of undeveloped property there, Duque said, adding that there are no immediate plans.

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