

Community News

Atherton: City Council studies measure to fund Town Center

If it can use general funds, town is close to funding project



Atherton Civic Center, Civic Court view. (WRNS Studio)

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The Atherton City Council on Wednesday got an early look at the ballot language for the measure it is likely to approve on Feb. 15, asking voters to repeal 2012's Measure L.

Wednesday's meeting was a study session only, and no action could be taken, but the likely ballot measure isn't likely to change much from what town staff recommended in the council agenda:

“Should the Town of Atherton be allowed to use available general funds to fund the remaining funding need of the Town Center? Other funding sources include private donations, grants, and building fees; but the Town would not use any of the Town's parcel tax or mandatory reserves.”

The key phrase is allowing the town to use general funds for the project, which had been denied by Measure L.

The town has been working to rebuild the civic center for decades. One building, now used as the city council chambers, was built in 1928, and is the one part of the center expected to be retained. The rest of the center, from town administration and police buildings to Atherton Library, is comprised of buildings past their planned time of use, or decrepit temporary structures.

If approved by the City Council on Feb. 15, the new measure would probably be part of a special election in June, part of San Mateo County's vote-by-mail process.

A study by town staff shows that Atherton is within hailing distance of having enough money to pay for the \$24.4 million project.

City Manager George Rodericks said Wednesday that Atherton Now, the town's fund-raising committee for the project, has made some progress, and is expected to provide \$7 million to \$10 million in total.

Building fees would add another \$2.9 million, the state's Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund would provide an estimated \$3.1 million, existing unallocated general funds would provide \$4.6 million and Capital Improvement Plan funds would provide \$4.4 million.

If those expectations were fulfilled, the Town Center might be fully funded, or probably not further than \$2.3 million from complete funding. That amount could be raised over a few years by various plans staff and council are considering, including bank loans.

Tags: [Civic Center](#)



John Orr John Orr edits and writes for Daily News feature pages, including arts and entertainment. He also reports on the Town of Atherton and some other cities. Previously, he was mysteries and thrillers books columnist for the Mercury News, and also wrote about movies and blues music.

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