

Huntington library gets more funds for project

By Ann Pepper

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HUNTINGTON BEACH — The City Council upped the budget for expansion of the city's Central Library by \$49,000 Monday night, moving a future children's wing a step closer to reality.

In August, the council said it wanted to enclose the library's lower atrium area, which otherwise would be accessible to skateboarders and other passers-by who might disturb library patrons.

Monday night's budget increase will pay for architects to design the enclosure at the library on Talbert Avenue.

Plans include expanding the children's area by giving it its own wing.

Additional materials needed to enclose the area are expected to cost about \$115,000.

"The project had been expected to cost \$3.8 million," said Max Bowman, city director of community services, the department that oversees the municipal library.

"The cost will now be about \$4 million. But with this approval we can go ahead and put the working drawing together. We'll be able to come back to the council for approval of the drawings in about nine months."

Once those drawings are approved and a contractor chosen, construction of the first phase of the library's expansion can begin,

Bowman said.

Phase I of the project includes 32,000 square feet of area for children's programs, the atrium and 230 additional parking spaces.

He said the project should be ready to get under way in about 18 months.

That is, it can begin if the funds for the project are available. Right now the city has banked about \$2 million from several sources toward the project.

"But we're still working with fund raising," Bowman said. "We hope to have the funds available on schedule."

In other business, the council:

■ Approved with conditions the use of electronic readerboards within the city limits. The boards may not be larger than 115 square feet or higher than 25 feet.

The council also gave the Planning Commission the jurisdiction to deny approval of a particular board if it has a negative visual impact on nearby residents and businesses.

■ Held off until Oct. 16 a decision on whether to relocate a house at 628 10th St. to Bartlett Park, the city's museum of historic buildings.

■ Authorized staff members to solicit proposals from concessionaires to operate the cafe and tackle shop on the rebuilt city pier.

The council next meets Oct. 16 at City Hall, 2000 Main St.

