

HUNTINGTON BEACH

**Council Approves
Library Expansion**

The city's proposal to expand the Huntington Central Library, which six weeks ago was jeopardized by lack of funding, won unanimous City Council approval this week with the help of a resourceful financing plan.

The \$8.4-million expansion, which will add a resource area with books and activities tailored for children, a 320-seat theater and auditorium, and an expanded computer and media center, may open as soon as the fall of 1992, library director Ron Hayden said. Construction will probably begin within six months, he said.

The project will also require removing a section of Talbert Avenue to allow for additional parking. The improved parking lot will increase its capacity from 275 to 714 spaces. When the expansion is finished, Talbert Avenue—which now separates two library parking lots near Golden West Street—will begin at the east end of the new facility.

Under a new funding package proposed by Hayden, the expansion will be financed with \$3.4 million in funds already earmarked for the project and the sale of \$5 million worth of bonds, which will be repaid primarily from income generated by new services and attractions in the new library wing.

The 41,000-square-foot expansion will now be built in its entirety, whereas previous plans called for the project to be built in three phases over five years. Under original plans, the \$3.4-million cost approved by the City Council would have left the last two phases unfunded.

The financial picture had become complicated when the city's plan to sell Irby Park, which had been expected to be the chief source of income for the library project, fell through. Noting that the city's \$11.7-million pier-reconstruction project is siphoning off most surplus capital-improvement funds, the council last month voted to postpone the library expansion.

But by devising a funding plan in which the expansion is self-supporting, "we don't have to compete with other capital projects," Hayden said.

Revenue from new meeting rooms, video and computer rental charges, metered parking and portions of theater-ticket receipts is expected to cover much of the cost of repaying the bonds, he said.

—JOHN PENNER

For Reference

Not to be taken from this room

HUNTINGTON BEACH PUBLIC LIBRARY
7111 Talbert Avenue
Huntington Beach, CA 92648

