



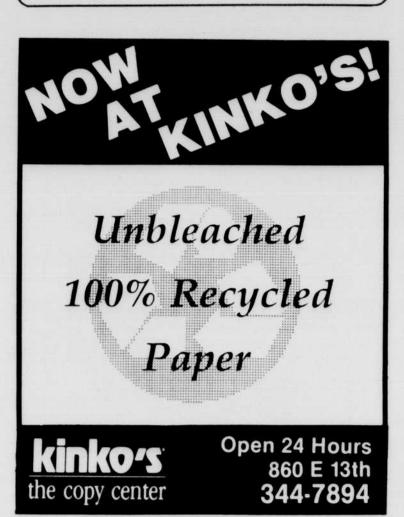
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The city will develop a plan to locate its public library in the former Sears building downtown, as well as solicit community opinion on the proposal.

Sears focus of library site search

By Pat Malach

The Eugene Planning and Development Department has been granted the money to come up with a plan to locate the city's public library in the former Sears building at the corner of 10th Avenue and Charnelton Street.

The city council has allocated \$105,000 to develop a conceptual design and to educate the public about the proposed site, said council member Ruth Bascom.

The council hopes to submit a site, design and financing proposal for the new library to voters in time for next year's March 26 election.

We are proceeding solely with (the Sears building) option." Bascom said. "It is the least expensive option we have looked at.

The council had considered two other options. including renovating and expanding the current library, located at 100 W. 13th Ave., or constructing a new building.

"If, during the education process in the fall, it doesn't look good and there is no community support for the proposal, we will back off," Bas-

She added that in a recent survey of Eugene citzens, 68 percent said they believed the current library needs to be expanded.

There is a real consensus that something needs to be done, but there is no consensus on how or where" the improvements should be made, Bascom said.

If the proposal makes it to the ballot but is rejected by voters next spring, she said the council would look for other options. "We will catch our breath again, and in a year or two we'll see what else we could propose," she said

The most important issue now concerning the proposal is how to fund the project, said council member Shawn Boles. He said the council has asked the planning and development department to bring back three or four funding options to be

Those options could include using urban renewal funds, money from the sale of the current library structure, or developing the Sears building as a mixed-use structure that would include apartment housing as well as the library.

Boles said raising property taxes is an option, although he favors a 5 percent restaurant tax with a "sunset" date. The tax would be in place for ten years and voters would have to be re-approved it at that time

Bascom said the best idea for funding she has heard so far is the usual bond measure (property tax) method

The city has a lot of bonding capacity that can still be used," she said. "We are only using about 80 percent of our bonding capacity now.

The biggest problem facing the proposal could be paying the increased operating expenses of a larger library, Bascom said. The increase in personnel and maintenance of a larger building could double the operating costs of the library.

The conceptual designs for the Sears building should be ready by September, said Eugene Community Relations Director Barb Bellamy

Bellamy said the intensive public information campaign would begin after designs and funding proposals are completed.

'We will work from mid-September to mid-October to try and get some public feedback." Bella-

The information campaign will include public forums, meeting with neighborhood groups and a possible display at the current library. A display will also be included during the Eugene Celebration Sept. 21-23

Bellamy said her office hopes to get a good idea of community support for the proposed library

"By mid-October we will know whether we should move on (with the Sears proposal) or look for a different option." Bellamy said.

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Brand, however defended the exclusion. "The University is not, nor should it be, in the business of looking into relationships between two people," Brand said.

If unmarried, childless couples were considered eligible for housing, "then any two people could be considered." Brand said. "It would not be possible to say who would be eligible. We have a scarce resource and we need to maximize the use of it.

Bills said she believes a poli-

cy that excludes such couples is contrary to the University's anti-discrimination policy.

Marjorie Ramey, directe University Housing, said the new policy will not affect current priority arrangements for family housing. Graduate students, either married with or without children or unmarried with children, will still have top priority. All others will be considered "on a first come, first served basis," Ramey said.

Brand, who made his announcement Friday at a state Board of Higher Education meeting in Portland, called the decision "precedent setting." He said other colleges and uni-

versities in the state are currently rethinking their family housing policies, but added he was not sure whether the Uni versity's new policy would affect their decisions.

ASUO Co-president Sheila Stickel said she was pleased with Brand's decision, but still had some concerns about the status of unmarried couples and gay and lesbian couples without children.

"We're really pleased to see him taking a stand and setting a precedent," she said. "We would like to see (the policy) broadened, but we assume they're taking things one step at a time.



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