

# Money needed to repair buildings

A report to the City Council reveals a shortfall in the annual repair budget and predicts mounting costs

By David Ryan  
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Hult Center and 99 other city buildings are in need of as much as \$21 million worth of repairs.

The list of buildings included restrooms on Skinner Butte, the Eugene Public Library and City Hall, according to a report given to the City Council on Tuesday.

The report's news was not good. Or that new.

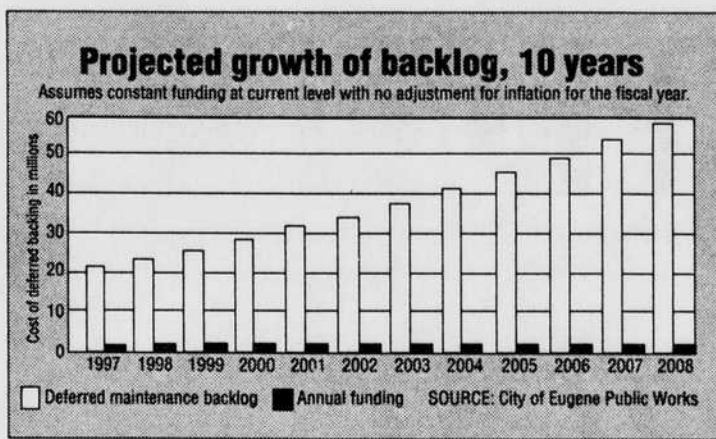
The city has \$1.2 million available each year to make repairs, which is insufficient, according to the report. If the city does not increase its funds for repairs, the cost could reach nearly \$60 million by 2008.

Doug Eveleth, city facilities management division manager, said the large maintenance costs accumulated over 30 years because of budget problems.

"Eugene has had a couple of decades of tight budgets, and the councils had other priorities," he said.

City spokesman Phil Weiler said the funds that would have been used to deal with the costs were often used for other purposes.

"The city is required to have a balanced budget," he said. "If



Katie Nesse/Emerald

there was a bit of money the city needed to come up with to balance the budget one year, the city would take that money out of maintenance."

But not all the costs were due to delays in maintenance on the buildings. Eveleth said that modern building codes increased the price of repairs — possibly 30 percent to 35 percent of the \$21 million cost, in his estimation.

The first actions the city took leading up to Tuesday's report happened in 1990 and 1992. At that time, the city contracted for services to report on the condition of the city's public buildings.

Since then, the city developed a method of measuring the amount of deterioration in public buildings, resulting in the report given to the council.

Ken Tollenaar, councilman and finance chair, told the council he thought it needed a ballot measure to fund it.

Ken Tollenaar, councilman and finance chairman said the list of projects needing funding through ballot measures, such as the Eugene Public Library, was a long one.

"The list goes on and on," Tollenaar said. "In addition to all these [projects needing ballot measures] we have not given consideration to the deferred facility maintenance backlog. It is simply not something that we put on our needs list."

A solution to the problem has yet to be implemented. Even if the problem isn't solved, Weiler said, he is pleased the council is aware of the problem.

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