

Environmentalists argue that officials should not only consider the energy efficiency of a building but the embodied energy represented in the materials and construction work used to build it. If one is concerned about greenhouse gas pollution, it could take half a century for a highly energy efficient new City Hall in hydropowered Eugene just to break even on the embodied energy the city would throw away in the old building, according to carbon counters.

Poticha said the remodel could easily include replacing the building envelope, windows, heating and air conditioning system and adding south facing solar panels to dramatically reduce energy use. "It would probably be one of the greenest buildings in town," Poticha said.

ATTRACTIVE

Poticha acknowledges perhaps the strongest reason for tearing City Hall down. "Everybody says look how ugly City Hall is, why would you want to save it?" he said.

But Poticha said the building could be extensively remodeled, ripping off the ugly wood grill that people see from the street. "You wouldn't recognize the old City Hall."

"I understand that was put there to satisfy the timber industry," Taylor said of the wood screen, now covered with peeling paint.

Poticha said the remodel could reconnect the building with the street by adding ground floor offices and a plaza at the southwest corner, as shown in several of his students' designs (see below).

Taylor said a big part of the aesthetic problem with the old building is neglect. "People have wanted to tear that thing down for so long that they haven't painted it, they haven't cleaned it."

"They've let it go to hell," Poticha agreed.

Poticha said the better aspects of the building including its informal openness to the public with offices off a central garden courtyard with trees could be preserved. "There's not a city hall in the world like that building," Poticha said, pointing out the building design was selected by architects after a competition.

"A city that has previously squandered most of its valuable historic buildings cannot afford to tear down the single best city building we have remaining from the High Modern era," Matthews emailed the council. "A state-of-the-art, rebuilt City Hall can be proud and beautiful, an expression of our green economic aspirations as well as our community values."

PIT

The critics of a tear down fear that the alternative to a remodel could be yet another ugly pit downtown at a time the city is spending tens of millions of dollars trying to fill the downtown pits it already has.

"It would leave a huge hole," Taylor said of the teardown. "You will make the biggest hole the city has ever seen," Poticha said. "Do we call it then the Kitty hole or the Ruiz hole?" he asked.

The city has said that it would pay for a replacement for the old City Hall with \$10 million in "existing funds." But Poticha said that would pay to cover only about 10 percent of the site with a small building, leaving the rest as a parking lot or pit for years.

When or if the city could ever raise the money for later phases to build a complete new City Hall is unclear.

Meanwhile, the city plan appears to be renting offices

scattered around downtown after it tears down its existing offices. That could leave a city with a struggling downtown already suffering from a lack of a *there* there with a lack of a City Hall there as well.

"Most people will not know where City Hall is," Poticha said.

"It could go on for years," Taylor said of the pit and scattered offices plan.

Even some of those who voted for the city plan appeared concerned about what will come. "We got to make sure we're willing to build the new building and not stay forever in the trailer," said Councilor Chris Pryor.

But whether the big push to rip out City Hall can be stopped remains unclear.

City staff and a strong majority of elected officials appear firmly behind tearing the building down, whatever may happen. "I really appreciate this approach," Mayor Kitty Piercy said after Penwell's description of the plan.

Asked why people are so bent on a teardown, Poticha said, "If your mindset is I want a new house or new building, you're going to find every possible way to convince yourself."

Taylor said to stop the wrecking ball, "there would have to be a huge public movement for it." That could be hard, considering the city plan is also to avoid a ballot vote.

For \$25,000 to \$50,000 the city could do a professional study to flesh out the cost and feasibility of a remodel, according to Poticha. "This study will put the matter to bed as to renovate or demolish," he emailed city officials.

But Poticha didn't hear back and isn't very optimistic. "I think the city manager and the council are tired of the issue, they want to get on with it." **EW**



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3 p.m. Reading from Kesey's unpublished work in the collection, featuring Paul Calandrino, Cai Emmons, Miriam Gershow, Cecelia Hagen, and Max Rayneard, with Charlie Gurke on saxophone. Knight Library, Special Collections, 2nd Floor. **Free!**

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