



## Perris Press Release

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### Proposed Expansion in Store for Perris Theatre

The Perris City Council recently gave the go-ahead to a long-range construction plan that will transform the art deco Perris Theatre into a regional venue capable of attract high-profile theatrical productions concerts.

The City Council approved unanimously the plan that will greatly expand the 1930s theatre, make it user friendly to people with disabilities and includes the addition of a new lobby and restaurant, nearly 300 additional seats, dressing rooms, set-design rooms and adjacent outdoor space for smaller outdoor concerts, fashion shows or movie presentations.

Cost to complete the proposed restoration and renovations is \$8.8 million but that figure could change in the future if officials modify or scale back the renovations.

The recent City Council vote means Perris will continue exploring options on how best to revamp the historic theatre at D and Third streets.

Officials also noted that much of the cost of any future restorations could be offset by obtaining grants from the National Endowment for the Arts or one of several California foundations specializing in supporting the arts.

In a presentation to the City Council, Redevelopment and Economic Development Manager Michael McDermott said a rejuvenated and expanded theatre will raise the City's profile throughout Southern California.

A new theatre will attract touring productions and A-list musicians and concerts and cement the City's reputation as an entertainment Mecca, he said.

"It will be a community gathering place for the arts," he said.

McDermott said the blueprint approved by the City Council would preserve the art deco façade of the building also would "save the majority of the interior footprint" while allowing for major expansion and renovations.

A new theatre would also help Perris meet one of its long-term strategic goals of increasing community recreation and entertainment programming. Perris officials studied the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego and other theatres around the Inland Empire in their search to make the most out of the Perris Theatre.

Community support was solidly behind plans to move ahead with renovations.

"The design looks brilliant," said Dave Stuart, a member of the City's Planning Commission. "It could be built in phases and it preserves the art deco appearance of the theatre."

Katie Keyes, president of the Perris Valley Historical and Museum Association, said she "could not be more excited" about plans to upgrade the theatre.

"I grew up in Perris," she said. "To have the Perris Theatre preserved and expanded is wonderful for the City of Perris."

Midgie Parker, another long-time resident and member of the historical association, said simply of the theatre design: "Spectacular."

Mayor Daryl Busch City Council members also liked the blueprint.

Busch thanked the 19 members of the community committee who spent more than a year studying plans to restore and expand the theatre. He said the City will benefit from their hard work and commitment to making the Perris Theatre a gem for the Perris and surrounding communities.

Busch said the City stands an excellent chance of obtaining a grant to pay some of the renovation costs. Some of those foundations are committed to funding arts projects in communities with diverse demographics like Perris, the Mayor said.

Other council members said the theatre renovations will uplift the entire Downtown Area, which has benefitted in recent years from restoring the Bank of Perris Building, the Depot Building and several structural facades along D Street.

"Perris deserves this," said Councilman Al Landers, who was part of a community team that visited other theatres for the best ways to improve the Perris theatre. "This project makes a lot of sense. We need to move forward on this project. The people of this community deserve it."

Perris City Councilman Mark Yarbrough said a quality marketing strategy holds the key to full houses in a revamped Perris Theatre. He called the plan approved by Council "a beautiful project," adding "people out their heart into it." Perris Mayor Pro-Tem Joanne Evans called the concept approved by the City "amazing" and said "we should really plan for this."

Perris City Councilwoman Rita Rogers said the theatre renovation plan is a long-term project. She encouraged people to have patience because if the City can obtain the necessary funding, that patience will be rewarded with a gem that makes all Perris residents proud.

"The theatre will raise the profile of artists, actors and musicians throughout the entire Perris Valley," Rogers said. "It will definitely raise the arts and culture in this region."



The Perris Theatre after the first renovation.



The Perris Theatre before the first renovation.