

A bigger, better Fillmore Library is on the way, thanks to \$1.5 million in state money

Tony Biasotti , Special to The Star



The long-planned expansion and renovation of the Fillmore Library will become reality, now that the state has budgeted \$1.5 million to pay for most of the project.

The money was included in the 2019-20 state budget, at the request of Fillmore's two representatives in the Legislature: Assemblywoman Monique Limón and Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson, both Democrats based in Santa Barbara.

On Monday morning, Limón and Jackson joined a group of city and county leaders at the Fillmore Library to announce the funding and present an oversized novelty check.

"Libraries really are a cornerstone of democracy," Jackson said. "When we don't have this available to people, we all suffer."



The Fillmore Library is receiving \$1.5 million in state funding to expand and renovate its aging library. Presenting a ceremonial check Monday in Fillmore are Nancy Schram, Ventura County Library director; Monique Limon, state Assembly member; Hannah-Beth Jackson, state senator; and Kelly Long, county supervisor. (Photo: Tony Biasotti/Special to The Star)

Fillmore's library was built in the 1950s and hasn't had a major renovation since. At 2,900 square feet, it is among the smallest libraries in the county. To keep up with modern industry standards for a city of Fillmore's size, it would have to nearly triple in size.

The planned expansion will nearly double the size of the library and will add a community meeting room; a reading lounge; a center for math, science and engineering education; two study rooms; and two new restrooms.

The project should cost about \$1.8 million, said Nancy Schram, the director of the Ventura County Library system, which oversees the Fillmore Library and 11 other libraries in the county. In addition to the state funding, the expansion will be paid for with a donation from the estate of Fillmore resident Lucille Wigley and from fees collected by the city from developers who build in Fillmore.

That makes it a true collaboration between the state, the county, the city and individual donors and volunteers, Limón said.

"No one does anything by themselves," she said. "This is about partnership."

The project should break ground in late 2020 or early 2021, Schram said, and should be finished by the middle of 2022.

The county library system has been planning the expansion for years, but until the state funding was secured, there was only "a hopeful timetable," Schram said.

Now that the money is there, the county will put the design of the project out to bid.

“It’s been a long time coming, and this is so, so needed,” Schram said. “This is a gift to the Fillmore community that will positively impact lives for generations to come.”