

Library will hold reception on proposed move

By Phil Sutin
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MAPLEWOOD • The Maplewood public library will hold a reception Saturday to explain plans to expand the library three times its size by moving from City Hall to the former community center building.

To pay for the expansion, the library wants voters on April 4 to approve a \$3.4 million bond issue and increase the district's operating property tax by 6 cents for each \$100 of assessed valuation. The bond issue needs a four-sevenths favorable vote to pass and the tax increase needs a simple majority.

The reception will start at 10 a.m. at the Pioneer Bank, 2211 South Big Bend Boulevard, Maplewood.

"We can offer more services in a more pleasant surrounding and use a historic building," said Terrence Donnelly, the library director, on Monday. The community center structure is at 7550 Lohmeyer Avenue.

In addition to providing space for library materials, a



A rendering of what Maplewood Library is expected to look like on its lower level if it moves to the city's former community center building.

renovated center would include a community meeting room, the library said in a statement.

"The library intends to add new hours and new services in its new location," the statement said.

The district seeks the 6-cent tax increase to pay for the added cost of the operating a new, larger facility, the statement said.

The district's residential tax rate last year was 20.9 cents. Donnelly estimated that the library would have to raise its total tax rate by 25.26 cents to retire the bonds. The library would not know the exact amount until it sells the bonds.

If both proposals pass, the owner of a house worth \$150,000 would pay an additional \$89.09 a year in property tax-

es to the library. If only the operating tax increase passes, that property owner would pay an additional \$17.10 a year to the district.

The community center was one of the last buildings constructed by the New Deal's Works Progress Administration in the 1930s. "The library renovation will respect the historic character of the building and will not change its outside appearance," the statement said.

The library is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year. It has been in City Hall since 1963. Its collection contains about 39,000 items.

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