

# Library tax measure goes before Capitola voters

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CAPITOLA — Capitola voters will join others in Santa Cruz County in deciding on a library sales tax in November.

The City Council agreed to put the measure on the ballot this week even though a long-awaited Capitola branch exists only on paper.

The council could have refused to put Measure L on the ballot, and Capitola voters could still reject it at the ballot box.

But if the measure passes in the rest of the county, the tax would still be collected in Capitola without a cent going to the city.

"I can't see the value of a tax being collected and the city not having an opportunity to share it," said City Manager Susan Westman.

Scotts Valley City Councilwoman Gina Koshland, whose city is in the same bind, put it more tersely.

"Frankly, I think that's black-mail," she said.

If approved, the measure would establish a quarter-cent sales tax that would take effect in April 1997 when an existing half-cent earthquake recovery tax expires. The tax could raise more than \$5 million per year for libraries.

Because of the Capitola Mall, a

large portion of the tax likely will be collected in Capitola, but the money is to be distributed based on population.

The intention is that Capitola's \$200,000 share would go into its city's general fund. The city would then give it to the Santa Cruz county library system, said Westman.

"It will help them to continue their operations that residents of Capitola use," she told the council.

For years, Capitola has planned to build a city library that will be part of the city-county system.

The tax money is not anticipated to be used to fund the construction of the Capitola branch.

City Treasurer Glenn Hanna warned that Capitola should insist on the right to take its money if it chooses to split from the system.

Westman said there is nothing to prevent the city from later using the money for its own library.

By this time, Capitola leaders had hoped to reach an agreement with the library system to have a seat on the five-member oversight committee, which directs library operations.

The committee includes two Santa Cruz City Council members, two county supervisors, and one resident appointed by the other four.