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Richmond to set library impact fees

By Rebecca Rosen Lum
CONTRA COSTA TIMES

The Richmond Library is joining the ranks of other regional and county libraries that collect impact fees from developers of new homes and businesses to pay for books, materials and hours of service.

Even before its financial crisis of 2004, the city lagged behind in expanding its resources to keep up with the library's steady rise in users, library director Monique LeConge said.

The Richmond City Council approved a library impact fee in concept June 6. Today it is expected to vote on the fee schedule, roughly equal to those charged by library systems in other California cities.

Developers of new homes will pay \$1,228 per unit. Businesses will be charged per 1,000 square feet of space: offices, \$272; retail, \$164; industry, \$115; and warehouses, \$35.

The revenues "will vary every year, depending on how many permits are pulled," LeConge said.

The library is making new demands of its users as well.

Also tonight, the council will vote on a proposed code of conduct that prohibits loud talking and playing music.

"When we've asked people to leave, they've said, 'You don't have anything posted,' so we are going to be more specific," LeConge said. "There is already an ordinance, but it is quite broad. It basically says, 'Don't disturb others.'"

It may surprise some to learn that adults, not teens, pose the problem, she said.

While teens tend to use the library to check out and read books, do research and work on homework, adults sometimes use the library as a place for meetings or for socializing -- acceptable until the noise level rises, she said.

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