

# Temple Terrace council, developer agree on arts center

By [Robbyn Mitchell](#), Times Staff Writer

Published Wednesday, July 16, 2008 12:35 PM

---

TEMPLE TERRACE — The long-awaited Community Arts and Education Center moved one step closer to reality Tuesday night.

City Council members voted unanimously to retain land for the building on the proposed site of the downtown redevelopment project. But as a part of an agreement with Ram Development, the land's potential buyer, the council reserves the right to back out within two years if it cannot raise the millions needed for completion.

Mayor Joe Affronti and council member Ron Govin were both confident the money could be raised to fill in the gap left after the city commits \$2.5-million to the project.

The council also reviewed the initial construction proposals for the building.

John Toppo of Toppo Consultants presented the council members with several options for the building depending on how much money the city raises. The first phase is a 22,000-square-foot, single story-building, which would house a theater with retractable seating, three large classroom studios, one small administration office, and office space for the Temple Terrace Chamber of Commerce. Phase two is an 8,000-square-foot second-story shell, which could be rented to any business or organization that falls within the terms of the city's agreement with the developer.

Should the city decide to retain the use of the second story, phase three could become three additional classrooms and an office suite.

For all three phases, Toppo said the estimate was \$7.4-million for construction alone.

Mike Marshall, the city's redevelopment agency director, said the actual price of the project including annual operations costs of \$271,000 annually would total around \$10-million.

Affronti said the money would be well worth it.

"There is a real need for this type of facility in Temple Terrace," he said. "We already have a wonderful recreation facility, but we do not have any place for those searching for cultural activities."