

Library retrofit a possibility

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Michael Rose, reporter

A seismic upgrade for the Salem Public Library might be added to the \$70 million worth of improvements already proposed for Vern Miller Civic Center.

Salem City Manager Linda Norris said Wednesday that the city has started exploring the idea [of] retrofitting the library to make it safer during a major earthquake. The city has hired an engineering firm to determine what might be needed, she said.

By December, the city expects the engineering firm will have a report ready that outlines its findings, including a cost estimate.

City officials have been meeting with community groups to discuss a seismic upgrade and redesign of the Vern Miller Civic Center. Voters could be asked as early as November 2014 to support a bond measure to finance the project.

The civic center, 555 Liberty St. SE, includes city offices and the police station. The structure doesn't meet state or federal seismic standards for critical emergency response facilities.

Talk of upgrading the civic center led to questions about the nearby library, Norris said. Like the civic center, the library was built before the region's potential for strong earthquakes was known.

The main library building was constructed in the early 1970s. An auditorium and children's section was added in the mid-1980s.