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#### Guadalupe Royal Theater bond measure fails during second reading

By Taylor O'Connor

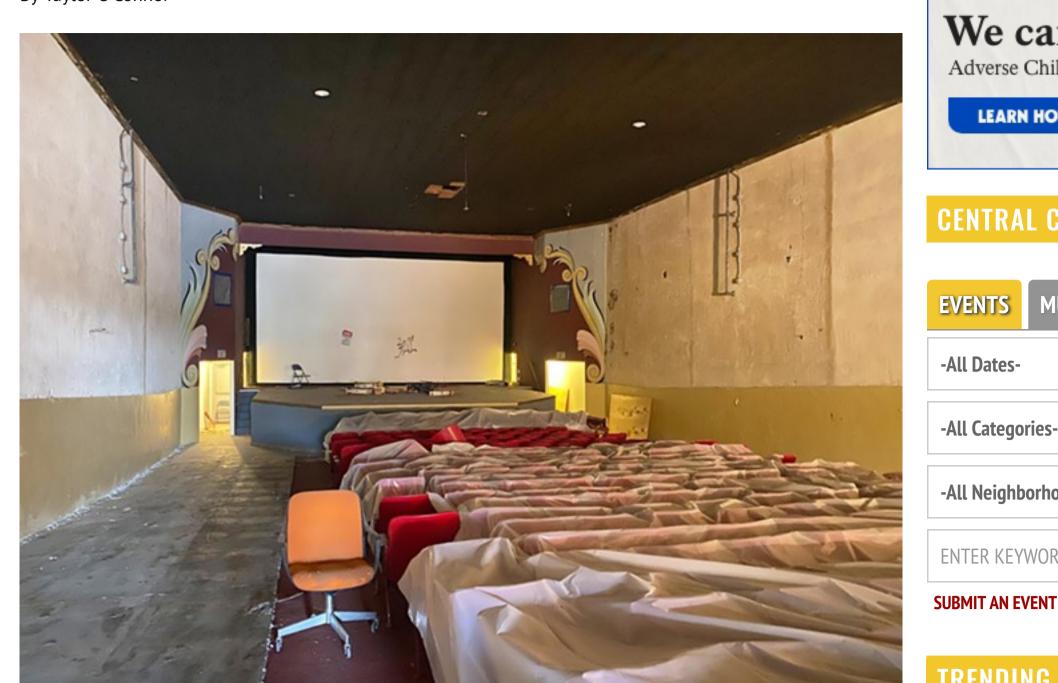


Photo courtesy of Thomas Brandeberry MOVING FORWARD: Despite the Guadalupe Royal Theater bond measure failing to make the ballot, city

officials are searching for alternative revenue sources to see this project come to fruition within grant deadlines.

Guadalupe voters won't have a chance to weigh in on a bond measure to fund the Royal Theater renovation project after the Guadalupe City Council voted 3-2 to put it on the ballot (with Councilmembers Eugene Costa Jr. and Christina Hernandez dissenting). It required one more vote in favor to pass.

"I'm now going to other sources and [deciding] what needs to be done and

how to get this project finished," Project Manager Thomas Brandeberry told the Sun. "There's nothing off the table except the bond." The Royal Theater is a federally designated historic building that opened in 1939 as a movie theater and was owned by a Japanese-American family until

proposes to revitalize the historic building with a new state-of-the-art movie

they were sent to internment camps during World War II. The project

theater, an amphitheater, and a performing arts center that could host live stage performances, musical events, educational and cultural programs, and provide a meeting space for local organizations. For nearly a decade, Guadalupe city officials have discussed renovating the theater and came close to seeing it to fruition after receiving \$10.5 million in grant funding from the state and federal governments, which would cover all

of the construction costs. However, earlier consultants told the city that the

project would be about \$3 million short due to inflation and rising costs.

Facing a March 2025 deadline from the federal government, city officials proposed a general obligation bond measure, which would have added an average of \$77 in property taxes per household per year with rates fluctuating depending on property values. While many residents expressed concern about increased taxes and multiple tax measures on the ballot, others supported the measure.

"I feel like this is a really good idea to bridge the past and the future. I'm excited about the future and ... thinking of the possibilities with what my grandchildren would experience," resident Melissa Chavez said during the June 25 meeting. "To ensure this building is intact and there for future generations is really important."

Adding tax measures to the ballot requires a four-fifths vote from the City Council during its first and second reading, and it must receive two-thirds voter approval if it makes the ballot.

The measure survived the first round with a 4-1 approval (Costa Jr. dissented) during Guadalupe's June 11 meeting, but Hernandez's change stopped the measure short of making it to the November general ballot during the measure's second reading on June 25.

"Council members have their own ethical, moral conscience to make a decision so I would never criticize people for their [choices]," Brandeberry said. "I'm concerned that she changed her vote without explaining. From the perspective of the community and the expectation of the community that wanted [the measure] to pass, she should have told us her reasoning."

Hernandez did not respond to the *Sun*'s inquiry for comment before press time.

Along with searching for alternative revenue, Brandeberry told the *Sun* that he's continuing with the request for proposal (RFP) process in order to find a nonprofit operator to run the theater.

"We'll have the RFP out in a couple of weeks, that's the plan. We still need an operator no matter what because we will ultimately have something here," Brandeberry said. "If nothing works and we have a gap, we will still have a historic movie theater and someone needs to [be] the operator. Hopefully, the operator will be operating a performing arts center."









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