

LTCC inching closer to putting bond on ballot

By Kathryn Reed

Lake Tahoe taxpayers have not directly paid for any of the buildings at Lake Tahoe Community College. But that could soon change.

The college is contemplating going to the voters in November with a general obligation bond between \$35 million and \$55 million. This would be spent on facilities.

The board this month agreed to hire Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates to conduct a survey of 400 registered voters in the district to gauge their opinion of the proposed bond. The research firm will be paid \$19,500. The board had budgeted \$20,000 for this expense.



Lights at South Tahoe Middle School are a possibility.
Photo/LTN

Different questions will be put to voters to find out what dollar amount, if any, they support. The survey will last about 19 minutes.

South Lake Tahoe will pay for a portion of the survey because it will have specific questions asked at the end. They will be

multiple-choice questions, but the exact questions are not known.

Results of the survey will be presented to the board at the April 8 meeting.

The answers will help the board decide if it wants to go forward with the bond measure.

College President Kindred Murillo told *Lake Tahoe News* this would be the community's opportunity to decide if it wants to help fund the college. The college would hope to leverage the taxpayer money like Lake Tahoe Unified School District did so there would be even more money available for improvements.

While the college has not definitively decided how it would spend the money, it has a list of ideas.

One idea is to put lights on the South Tahoe Middle School field so there are more opportunities to play football and soccer at night. With the college starting soccer programs in the fall, it will mean more demand for fields.

The college field is half on city property, half on college land. It is maintained by the city and governed by the recreation joint powers authority. The college, though, has priority over using it for classes and intercollegiate play.

Part of the bond money could go toward adding bleachers and dugouts at the college field.

"There's a possibility of putting a bubble over it in the winter," Murillo told *Lake Tahoe News*. "One major problem with artificial turf is snow." She said snow is more damaging than something like a SnowGlobe music festival.

The expense of a bubble is being researched.

Three capital outlay projects have been submitted to the state. The first priority is a remodel for efficiency that

would include an overhaul of the science labs, student services and technology. This will include a university center. This is needed as the college looks at offering four-year baccalaureate degrees.

The next project is for a regional public safety training facility. This could include having a city fire station on campus.

The third idea was for a sports medicine facility, but with South Tahoe High having just built one the college now sees this as being redundant. Instead, another project could be adaptive physical education or a sustainability center to go with environmental studies.

Safety improvements would be made throughout the campus, along with technology upgrades.

The college is also looking at improving the trails people use so they are clearly marked and in good condition.

Dorms are another project.

"They are essential to make a destination college real," Murillo said.

Today students have to live at home or rent an apartment or house.

With improvements the city is making to Harrison Avenue and what the college could do in the future, Murillo foresees the area from Al Tahoe Boulevard to Lakeview Commons being a hub for college students.

Murillo also envisions creating an early childhood education center by taking the existing Child Development Center and perhaps moving the Tahoe Parents Nursery School to the campus.

Build-out of the projects is likely to take 10 years and the bond payments would last 20.

"We want to make the community feel like it's theirs," Murillo said of the college.