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**VALLEJO COUNCIL APPROVES \$2.8 MILLION LOAN TO IMPROVE
EMPRESS THEATRE IN DOWNTOWN VALLEJO**

VALLEJO – The Vallejo City Council and the Vallejo Redevelopment Agency on Tuesday night unanimously approved a loan of \$2.8 million to improve and renovate the Empress Theatre for use as an interim performing arts center.

Ownership details still need to be worked out, and will be brought back to the Council for consideration on Nov. 4.

“This really is an exciting moment,” Vallejo Mayor Tony Intintoli said prior to the vote. “We’ve been waiting for something like this for a long time. A facility like this could be a permanent one for local groups to use.”

Located on the 300 block of Virginia Street, the 90-year-old theatre is considered a key part of the City’s ongoing efforts to revitalize the downtown area of Vallejo. Every speaker who addressed the council spoke in favor of the project.

“This idea beats the tar out of a multiplex cinema in the downtown,” said Vice Mayor Gary Cloutier. “The Empress is the center of the downtown and it’s time we made an investment down there.”

Following the unanimous vote, council chambers erupted in applause.

“I don’t care how the City handles the ownership arrangements,” said Robert Litwin, current owner of the Empress Theatre. “We just need to get it done.”

The money will come from the City’s Arts and Convention Center Fund and will be loaned to Triad Communities Inc., which will oversee the renovations of the theatre. A not-for-profit organization will be created which will operate the theatre and repay the loan over 20 years at 3 percent interest.

1912	The theater opens as The Empress, but is soon renamed The Republic. It has 940 seats.
1920s	Fox West Coast Theaters take over and the name becomes The Vallejo
1930s	Fox changes the name to The Senator.
1931	Fire nearly destroys the theater. Fox rebuilds it.
1935	Fox renovates the theater, removing the balcony, installing stadium seats and adding a neon marquee.
1951	Fox remodels the ground floor and changes the name to The Crest.
1962	The theater is closed.
1980s	Bill Elliott buys the theater, renovates it and reopens it as The Empress.
1989	The theater closes after the Loma Prieta earthquake.
2003	Robert Litwin buys the now 500-seat theater and announces plans to reopen it as a performing arts venue.

Chart courtesy of VallejoNews.com