

By Amy Sylvestri

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City funds may be used to help keep San Leandro Hospital running, but even if the city opens its wallet, there is no guarantee that the hospital can be saved.

At the Nov. 5 City Council meeting, the council could decide whether they will begin negotiations with the Alameda County Medical Center (ACMC) to help keep the hospital open.

San Leandro Hospital is currently owned by Sutter Health, which plans to modify services at the facility and close down the emergency room.

The current plan to keep San Leandro Hospital running as is would be for multiple entities

including the city, the county, and the Eden Township Healthcare District (ETHD) to work together to fund the hospital, which would be operated as part of the ACMC.

However, Sutter doesn't have to agree to any proposal.

Over the past several years, there have been numerous "Save San Leandro Hospital" meetings and rallies. The San Leandro City Council formed an ad hoc committee to try to help, and now city money may be used in effort.

Mayor Stephen Cassidy said that if the idea is approved by the City Council next week, the city attorney will draw up plans, so the exact figure the city might contribute isn't known yet.

"It is my strong desire to see the hospital remain open and the reality is that that might require a financial contribution from the City of San Leandro," Cassidy said.

Earlier in October, the ETHD board of directors agreed to chip in \$780,000 over two years to the

effort. ETHD CEO Dev Mahadevan said the district is also looking to place a parcel tax on an upcoming ballot. He said they are considering a special election to be held in mid 2013.

Cassidy said that ideally, the contribution would be proportionate to the demographics of the hospital's patients – that the city would pay a percentage equal to the percentage of San Leandro residents who use the facility and the majority of the funding would come from the county.

“We are determined to do everything we can to keep the emergency room open,” said Cassidy, who encouraged the public to come to next week's City Council meeting and voice their opinions.

The City Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, Nov. 5, at 7 p.m. at City Hall, 835 East 14th Street.