



Menlo Park Library Rebuilding Project Input Session

**Menlo Park Main Library
800 Alma Street, Menlo Park, CA
December 4, 2017**

Meeting Purpose: Community members learn about the proposed main library rebuilding project, the process to date, and give feedback about the location of the new library on the campus.

Objectives:

- Community members understand:
 - The background for this project
 - Pros and cons for various site options and potential additional uses for the building
- Community members give feedback on options

Meeting Agenda:

- Welcome
- Agenda Review and Group Agreements
- Overview of the Menlo Park Main Library Rebuilding Project
- Presentation on Site Options and Possible Housing
- Community Input
- Next Steps, Closing Remarks
- Evaluation and Close

Overview of the Main Library Rebuilding Project and Presentation: Susan Holmer introduced the project and the purpose of the meeting. Chris Noll and Ned Reifenstein of Noll & Tam Architects gave a presentation on the project, the two possible locations, and the possible addition of housing. Sean Kennedy and Maxine Skaggs Kennedy, housing architects, providing additional information about housing options at the library.

Following the presentations, community members had the opportunity to ask questions and provide comments.

Questions:

- Can the Gatehouse be used?
The architects have not looked at re-using the Gatehouse as it is historically important and too small for reuse as part of the library.
- What cost differences are there between the two sites?
At this point in the process, the two sites seem comparable in costs.



- How many housing units is the City thinking about?
The number of units depends on the configuration of the building forms on the site.
- Would housing add another story to the building?
The design team will consider adding a floor or two of housing as one strategy to preserve site for landscaping and open space.
- Does the Caltrain right of way or other constraints impact development on the current site?
The city confirmed on 12/18/17 that there are no Caltrain easements that effect the site.
- What will be the size of housing units – 1 BR?
The mix of unit sizes and types has not been determined.
- How would people qualify for housing?
This has not yet been determined.
- Where will parking for housing be?
A basement parking structure will be studied as part of the project.
- Would we address traffic flow if housing were added to the site?
Yes. Traffic flow would be studied and addressed as part of the development process.
- What are the parameters for looking at the whole site and project? Can we redesign Burgess Park?
The current study is looking at potential sites for the library and whether the proposed project will include other uses such as the Council Chambers, Childcare Center and Housing. Only the north end of the Civic Center will be studied.
- What are the zoning issues?
The project site is zoned P-F Public Facilities District - All public facilities used and operated for government purposes, such as a library, are permitted uses. If the proposed library project were to include residential units, than that would be a conditional use requiring a use permit and additional City approvals. A mixed-use project may also require an amendment to the City's General Plan.
- What are funding issues/constraints?



A private donor has pledged to build a new library on the Burgess campus if the City pays the initial \$20 million of the construction costs. City staff has determined that there could be up to an additional \$10 million in soft costs related to the construction, potentially bringing the City's contribution to \$30 million. The donor would pay any construction costs beyond the City's contribution. The City Council has not yet determined how the City's portion of the costs would be funded.

- Did proposed changes to the library come up before or after the donor?
The Library had been involved in the process of planning for three years before the offer of financial assistance was received from the donor.
- Can you design effective soundproofing?
Yes, acoustics will be an important consideration for any project proposed near the train line.
- What is the timeline and does housing impact the timeline?
Including housing in project has the potential to add time for design, approvals and funding.
- Can you build the library on the Laurel Street site without removing the City Council Chambers?
Technically, yes, but this is not one of the options under consideration.
- Is expansion of the Belle Haven library part of this process?
This siting process is specific to the library on the Burgess location. Planning for the Belle Haven Branch Library is now in the needs assessment stage.
- Does additional financing apply to the Belle Haven library?
The offer from the donor is for the main library only.
- What are the plans for Menlo Park Historical Association, which is currently in the library?
Space for the Historical Association has not been planned in the new main library.
- Why did we start with the Main Library instead of Belle Haven Library?
Planning for the Main Library, which includes the 1957 original library, has been in process for three years. The Belle Haven Branch Library is a newer facility completed in 1999.



- How much would housing add to the cost?
This has not yet been determined.
- Will a full-blown Environmental Impact Report be needed?
A full EIR review would likely be required if the project included residential units or greatly increased the square footage of an existing or relocated land use on the campus. A more limited environmental review may be possible if the existing library and other impacted campus uses remain at or near their present locations and do not substantially increase in square footage or have significant traffic or other related impacts. A final environmental review determination will be made after the preferred site location is selected and it is determined what land uses would be contained in the project.
- Would housing be one or two stories on top of library?
The design team will look at both options.
- Is there a restriction on number of housing units?
The design team is studying how many housing units will comfortably fit on the site.
- Would there be parking limits on housing?
This remains to be determined. There are many innovative approaches to providing housing in transit oriented areas.
- What are the next steps?
The design team is incorporating feedback from the first community meeting and will return with some concrete options in the second meeting.
- Where would the temporary library site be?
That remains to be determined. Options will be considered as the design process moves forward.
- Did you consider site near pedestrian crossing on SW side?
The design team is aware that a crossing at the SW corner is under consideration. Re-planning the south end of the civic center is not part of this project.

Comments:

- Concern about Ravenswood undercrossing and constraint on site



- Librarian office may have constraints on expansion.
- Consider basement for storage or something else, e.g., disaster preparedness
- Consider providing access to Laurel St.
- Coordinate grade separation with library construction
- Hard to make decisions about the library given all the changes, e.g. traffic patterns
- Support for housing, prefer Laurel site
- City should think more broadly about the entire site.
- Please consider traffic.
- Consider train noise and safety for potential housing.
- Important for the community to have the language to communicate with planners and architects.
- Think broadly about what library will look like in future.
- Concern that we're trying to do too much. Current entry and courtyard could be expanded, better use of basement.
- Interested in housing near transit.
- Consider connectedness of City/neighborhoods.
- Love the idea of a bigger meeting room at the library.
- Love the idea of affordable housing and teacher housing – housing on public land.
- Concern that housing becomes private and may be a separate issue.
- Housing could be rental housing, with rules. Would like to see > 30 units.
- Would like to see constraints on housing, e.g. for city employees or teachers.
- Housing problem is larger than City employees and teachers – need housing for all.



- Sunset Magazine as site for temporary library.
- Consider USGS for temporary library site.
- Consider ingress, egress, parking and traffic.
- Provide pedestrian/ bike access from grade separation.
- Need to understand traffic flow before picking a site.

Gauging Interest in the Two Sites and the Possibility of Housing:

At the end of the meeting, the City Manager's Office wanted to get a sense from the group of their preferences for the library site and their interest in housing on the site. While nearly half of all participants had left at this point, approximately 20 people remained. Multiple people in attendance expressed their concern with taking a straw poll at the end of the meeting when so many had left and the process was just starting off. A small number of people expressed a preference for the current site and a similar number expressed preference for the alternative site. The vast majority of people felt that there was not enough information about the potential sites or the library design for them to give a preference.

Regarding housing, the number of people who liked the idea of housing and the number who thought housing on the library site was not a good idea were approximately equal. A few people felt that there was not enough information to express a preference regarding housing.

Next Steps:

- Future meetings will be held on the following dates:
 - January 17, 2018
 - February 15, 2018
- The City will make notes available and send them out to participants.
- Schematic designs and information on housing will be presented at future meetings.