



**STAFF REPORT**

**City Council**  
**Meeting Date:** 1/15/2019  
**Staff Report Number:** 19-001-CC

**Regular Business:** Approve the proposed Library System Improvements project scope, planning process, goals and tentative timeline

**Recommendation**

Staff recommends approval of the proposed Library System Improvements project scope, planning process, goals, and tentative timeline as outlined in Attachment A to this report.

**Policy Issues**

The City Council’s 2018 work plan includes the Library System Improvements Project.

**Background**

Multiple studies conducted by the City in 2015<sup>1</sup>, 2017<sup>2</sup> and 2018<sup>3</sup> concluded that the current Belle Haven and main library facilities are outdated and insufficient to meet community needs now and into the future, and should be replaced with new facilities. This report provides a summary overview of the Library System Improvements Project (LSIP), a component of the City Council work plan to address and resolve these critical community facility needs. What follows is a summary of key background information from the past 10 months of activity in the LSIP project:

- On March 28, 2017<sup>4</sup>, City Council reviewed the results of the Main Library Space Needs Study. The study was produced by consultants Noll and Tam Architects and funded by a \$90,000 gift from Menlo Park Library Foundation. The study concluded that the current main library facility is outdated and insufficient to meet community needs now and into the future, and should be replaced with a new facility.
- On July 18, 2017<sup>5</sup>, City Council authorized the City to accept a philanthropic offer from John Arrillaga to financially assist with the construction of a new main library on the Burgess campus, and directed staff to develop a preliminary work plan for so doing.
- On August 22, 2017<sup>6</sup>, City Council reviewed a preliminary work plan to advance the new main library project. After much discussion including robust public testimony, City Council emphasized the need to develop a New Belle Haven branch library as well as a new main library, and the need to make short-term improvements to current library systems. City Council directed staff to expand the scope of library system improvements and approach the project in a more holistic fashion.
- On October 17, 2017<sup>7</sup>, City Council authorized the creation of the Library System Improvements Project. The authorization included the appropriation of \$140,000 for immediate physical improvements to the Belle Haven branch library (which were completed in January 2018) and \$1 million to create a Library System Improvements Project fund. City Council also authorized funding for expanded operating hours at the Belle Haven Branch and a new staff position to project manage the LSIP project, and increased

<sup>1</sup> Operational and Administrative Review of the Library Department, 2015. [menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/15271/Attachment-D---Recommendations-from-the-Operationaland-Administrative-Review-of-the-Library-Departme?bidId=](http://menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/15271/Attachment-D---Recommendations-from-the-Operationaland-Administrative-Review-of-the-Library-Departme?bidId=)

<sup>2</sup> Menlo Park Main Library Space Needs Study, 2017. [menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/13235/G1---Library-Space-Needs-Study](http://menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/13235/G1---Library-Space-Needs-Study)

<sup>3</sup> Belle Haven Neighborhood Library Needs Assessment, 2018. [menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/18671/Final-Belle-Haven-Library-Needs-Assessment](http://menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/18671/Final-Belle-Haven-Library-Needs-Assessment)

<sup>4</sup> Menlo Park Main Library Space Needs Study. City Council, March 28, 2017. [menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/13235](http://menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/13235)

<sup>5</sup> Consideration of a philanthropic offer to assist with construction of a new main library building. Menlo Park City Council, July 18, 2017. [menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/15043](http://menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/15043)

<sup>6</sup> Next steps for the construction of a new main library building. City Council, August 22, 2017. [menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/15308](http://menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/15308)

<sup>7</sup> Next steps for library system improvements. City Council, October 17, 2017. [menlopark.org/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/\\_10172017-2989](http://menlopark.org/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_10172017-2989)



- the City Manager's contract award authority for contracted services related to the LSIP project.
- On May 22, 2018<sup>8</sup>, City Council reviewed preliminary site options for a potential new main library. After substantial discussion and public comment, City Council indicated a preference to await the results of further study, and a decision was deferred until a later date.
  - On August 21, 2018<sup>9</sup>, a scheduled City Council agenda item regarding the main library component of the LSIP project was removed from the agenda and the meeting canceled in order to review a potential inadvertent Brown Act violation related to the item that had come to the Mayor's and staff's attention.
  - On August 28, 2018<sup>10</sup>, the City Attorney reported that after a brief investigation, it was found that an inadvertent serial discussion had occurred in relation to the above noted item, however because the item was removed from the agenda and the meeting canceled, "there was no action taken nor any collective decision, commitment or promise by a majority of the City Council to make a positive or negative decision regarding the item in question, and therefore nothing to be cured and no criminal violation." The city attorney further concluded that the inadvertent Brown Act violation must be disclosed to allow the public to be aware of it. Further discussion of the main library component of the LSIP project was deferred until January 2019.
  - On October 1, 2018<sup>11</sup>, philanthropist John Arrillaga withdrew his pledge to financially assist with the construction of a new main library on the Civic Center campus, citing his concerns about the project's timeline and other factors.
  - On October 9, 2018<sup>12</sup>, City Council reviewed the results of the Belle Haven Neighborhood Library Needs Assessment produced by consultant Gensler, and authorized staff to move forward with the next step in the process, the Belle Haven Library Space Needs Study, with the services of consultant Noll and Tam Architects.

## Analysis

Consistent with the structure outlined in Attachment A, the following provides a brief status update and potential next steps for each of the three main components of the LSIP project.

### New Belle Haven branch library

The comprehensive Space Needs Study for a potential new Belle Haven branch library is well underway. Numerous stakeholder interviews, focus groups and community workshops were convened in October, November and December 2018, yielding valuable insight and feedback from residents. Participation in the process has been strong and feedback from community members about the process itself has been generally positive and appreciative. A citywide survey is in the field now, and asks residents to indicate their preferred library features. To ensure robust participation by Belle Haven area residents, printed versions of the survey were directly mailed to every Menlo Park household north/east of Bay Road in December. The survey is available in English and Spanish, and will remain open until January 31. Nearly 800 survey responses have been received to date. The Library Commission will undertake public review and discussion of the draft Space Needs Study January 28 and February 25. City Council will review the draft study March 12 and the final study April 9. Staff anticipates recommending options and next steps to City Council April 9, potentially including a request for authorization to issue a request for proposals/qualifications (RFP/ RFQ) for architectural design services and to proceed with preliminary design (Phase II.)

<sup>8</sup> *Approve next steps for library system improvements.* City Council, May 22, 2018. [menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/17636/J1---Library-System-Improvements](http://menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/17636/J1---Library-System-Improvements)

<sup>9</sup> *Meeting cancellation notice.* City Council, August 21, 2018. [menlopark.org/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/\\_08212018-3142](http://menlopark.org/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_08212018-3142)

<sup>10</sup> *Disclosure of Brown Act violation - rescheduling next steps for Library System Improvement Project.* City Council, August 28, 2018. [menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/18442/I2---LIB-IMPROVE-18-172](http://menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/18442/I2---LIB-IMPROVE-18-172)

<sup>11</sup> *"Arrillaga withdraws offer to help Menlo Park build new library."* The Almanac, October 2, 2018. [almanacnews.com/news/2018/10/02/arrillaga-withdraws-offer-to-help-menlo-park-build-new-library](http://almanacnews.com/news/2018/10/02/arrillaga-withdraws-offer-to-help-menlo-park-build-new-library)

<sup>12</sup> *Approve the library needs assessment for the Belle Haven neighborhood and direct staff to begin a space needs assessment for a new Belle Haven branch library.* City Council, October 9, 2018. [menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/18751/I1---LIB---Belle-Haven-Assessment-18-187](http://menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/18751/I1---LIB---Belle-Haven-Assessment-18-187)

### New main library

The withdrawal of Arrillaga's philanthropic pledge is a financial setback; however, it provides the opportunity to conduct the City's traditional community-oriented planning and design work process that a project of this nature and scope requires. Some aspects of the project were placed on a fast track in response to the pledge, resulting in community members protesting that the project was moving too fast and that the City was not as responsive to community input as it should have been for a project as far-reaching and impactful as this. Now that the pledge is no longer a driving factor, there is more time and flexibility to proceed with the next steps of the project in a way that actively involves and engages community members in every step of the process. The initial research and study phase (Phase I) for the main library component of the LSIP project was completed with the finalization of the Main Library Space Needs Study in March 2017. When the Belle Haven Space Needs Study is completed and presented to City Council April 9, 2019, the top two major LSIP project components will be at the same stage of development at the same time. This fortuitous alignment presents the opportunity to achieve efficiencies, system integration, and economy of scale in the preliminary design process (Phase II) by moving both LSIP project components forward under the same design contract. Staff anticipates presenting options and potential next steps to City Council April 9, potentially including a request for authorization to issue a RFP or RFQ for architectural design services and preliminary design (Phase II) for the main library in parallel with and under the same design contract as the Belle Haven branch library, which would remain the first priority.

### Short-term system improvements

To help ensure the continuous provision of high quality, modern and safe library facilities for Menlo Park residents pending the development of new facilities, City Council appropriated funds and directed staff to implement service and physical enhancements to the Belle Haven Branch Library October 17, 2017. Physical upgrades to the Belle Haven branch library including new carpeting and shelving, new furniture and interior paint, additional new books and DVDs for the collection were completed and the branch library's operating hours were extended in January 2018. At the Main Library, multiple small maintenance projects were completed by the Public Works department in 2018, primarily to maintain and repair the building's aging furniture, equipment and systems infrastructure. On the service side, the library launched a new automated renewal service to improve patron convenience in December and will launch a new Little Free Library incentive program in January in response to popular demand. Additionally, the library is currently undertaking a comprehensive update of Library Strategic Plan with the advice and participation of the Library Commission and other relevant stakeholders, and in alignment with the direction established by City Council in the 2019 work plan. The Library Strategic Plan Update will cover the years 2019-2020, and is scheduled for completion in March 2019.

### **Impact on City Resources**

There are no new impacts to City resources associated with this report at this time. The Library System Improvements Project fund currently contains sufficient resources to initiate the next phase of the project, preliminary design (Phase II), should City Council direct staff to move forward April 9. At this time, no funds have yet been identified for the later phases of design development (Phase III) and construction (Phase IV); however, that is not unusual for a project of this scale at this early stage in the process. Should City Council agree with the tentative timeline outlined in Attachment A, then staff will prepare more detailed options and policy considerations related to financing these later phases, and will present them to City Council for review in December 2019 and January 2020.

### **Environmental Review**

This action is not a project within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines §§ 15378 and 15061(b)(3) as it is a minor change that will not result in any direct or indirect physical change in the environment.

**Public Notice**

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with the agenda items being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

**Attachments**

A. Project scope, planning process, goals and tentative timeline

Report prepared and recommended by:

Sean S. Reinhart, Interim Library Services Director

**CITY OF MENLO PARK  
LIBRARY SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT  
SUMMARY PLAN AND TIMELINE  
JANUARY 15, 2019**

**I. Scope.** The Library System Improvements Project (LSIP) contains three major components:

1. **New Belle Haven Branch Library.** Develop and implement a comprehensive plan to design, finance, construct and operate a new public library facility to replace the Belle Haven Branch Library currently located on the Belle Haven School campus.
2. **New Main Library.** Develop and implement a comprehensive plan to design, finance, construct and operate a new public library facility to replace the current Main Library on the Burgess campus.
3. **Short-term system improvements.** Identify and implement needed short-term improvements to current library facilities, services and operations to ensure the continuous provision of high-quality, modern and safe library facilities for Menlo Park residents pending the development of new facilities.

**II. Process.** The LSIP project is being implemented at the City Council's direction with advice and recommendations from the Library Commission and the Belle Haven Neighborhood Library Advisory Committee, and incorporates broad-based community input, current and relevant data, expert consultation, financing options and mechanisms including potential public-private partnerships, best practices and future trends in municipal library services, and Menlo Park community needs in all aspects of the project.

**III. Goals.** The LSIP project has two overarching goals:

- **Long-term goal.** Develop and construct new 21<sup>st</sup> Century library facilities that will:
  - Reduce the City's maintenance and energy costs and shrink the City's carbon footprint;
  - Eliminate the design deficiencies and limitations that hinder services and increase operational costs in the old library facilities;
  - Improve operational efficiency and increase availability of self-service and automation technologies; and
  - Create flexible, technology-infused community spaces and learning environments to serve Menlo Park children and families for the next 75+ years.
- **Short-term / ongoing goal.** Address and resolve current deficiencies and improve services within the existing old library facilities where feasible and to the greatest extent possible within the limitations of currently available resources and facilities.

**IV. Projected Timeline.** All dates are tentative / proposed and are subject to change:

**Phase I – Initial Study, Assessment, and Community Input (January 2017 to April 2019)**

- a. Main Library Space Needs Study: March 2017 – completed
- b. Belle Haven Neighborhood Library Needs Assessment: June 2018 – completed
- c. Belle Haven Library Space Needs Study: March 2019 – in progress
- d. Menlo Park Library Strategic Plan 2019-2020 Update: March 2019 – in progress

**Phase II – Preliminary Design (June 2019 to June 2020)**

- a. Issue RFP/ RFQs and award contracts for architectural design services – Belle Haven Branch Library, possibly Main Library: June 2019
- b. Initiate preliminary design process w/ City Council review including site options and preliminary cost estimates: September 2019

- c. Develop potential financing options and mechanisms for City Council review, including potential public/private partnerships: December 2019

Phase III – Design Development and Financing (January 2020 to December 2021)

- a. City Council evaluate and identify construction financing options: January 2020
- b. Undertake and complete design development and schematic design work: February 2020 to December 2021

Phase IV – Construction (April 2022 – August 2025)

- a. Receive bids and award contracts for facility construction: April 2022
- b. Undertake and complete construction work: August 2022 to August 2025

Phase V – Operations and Certifications (August 2025 and forward)

- a. Initiate operations in new facility / facilities: August 2025
- b. Secure and maintain appropriate and desired building certifications and/or awards, e.g. LEED, Net Zero Energy, architectural awards, etc.