

TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENT: LIBRARY

DATE: OCTOBER 26, 2009 CMR: 409:09

REPORT TYPE: INFORMATIONAL

**SUBJECT: Library Advisory Commission and Staff Response to Council's
Direction to Reconsider Design for Renovation of Downtown Library**

This is an information report and no Council action is required.

BACKGROUND

On September 14, 2009, staff and Group 4 Architecture updated the City Council on the Measure N library bond measure projects (CMR 368:09). Staff also recommended approval of a contract for construction management services to support these projects, approval of a contract amendment with Group 4 to complete the design of a temporary library, and adoption of a budget amendment ordinance for temporary library facilities. The Council received public comment on the bond measure projects, most of which was focused on the plans for the renovation of Downtown Library.

Incorporated into the Council's motion to approve the staff recommendations was an amendment directing Library staff and the Library Advisory Commission (LAC) to readdress some elements of the design for Downtown Library. The specifics of the amendment were to:

- direct Library staff and the LAC to review additional space for collections in the Downtown Library;
- reconsider relocation of Administrative Staff to Mitchell Park Library or Main Library;
- evaluate space for additional computers at the Downtown Library;
- include the possibility of moving Library Administrative Staff to City Hall; and
- bring the design of the Downtown Library back to Council as an information item.

Staff and the LAC have completed their review as directed by the Council.

DISCUSSION

Following the Council's directive regarding Downtown Library, staff with the assistance of Group 4 prepared information for discussion at the LAC special meeting on September 17, 2009. The Commission had planned to meet in a retreat format to discuss its goals for FY 2010 and to

plan for its annual joint meeting with the City Council. The agenda was revised to add an action item that would address the Council's directive regarding Downtown Library. Architects from Group 4 attended the meeting to present options to the LAC for increasing the shelving capacity, adding public computers, and relocating the Library's Administrative Office.

Space for Collections

The LAC discussed a number of options to expand shelving capacity at Downtown Library. These included increasing the shelving height of the stacks in the northeast corner of the library from 66" to 84", adding several sections of shelving in this area, and installing fixed shelving units in the area currently designated as the multipurpose program room. The impacts of each option were reviewed including the size of the collection that would be accommodated, the effect of the increased height on the natural light and views through the windows, the decrease in number of seats and tables caused by adding shelving units, and the impact on the functioning of the multipurpose program room.

Group 4 also provided a range of collection capacity that would be possible under each option. The low end of each range assumed the current pattern of circulation continues after Downtown Library is renovated. The high end of each range assumed that the goal to convert the collection to contain high-interest, popular titles is achieved and a higher percentage of the collection is in circulation at any time. Across all options, the low end of the range was a collection size of 17,500 volumes, which assumes the most recent design is maintained and the current pattern of percentage of the collection in circulation continues. The high end of the range was 34,200 items under an option that increases the shelving height, removes 6 tables and 15 seats, eliminates the program room, and assumes a more active circulation rate.

After consideration of the options, the Commission voted to increase the height of the 66" shelves to 84" and add 4 sections of 84" shelves. This option would accommodate a collection in the range of 21,600 to 24,800 items, but would not eliminate any tables, chairs, or impact the function of the multipurpose program room.

The LAC agreed that a small modification to the shelving would be the most cost effective way to increase the collection at the Downtown Library, with little effect on costs, timeframe and operations for the bond projects. The Commission believes that a program room at Downtown Library is vital and provides the flexibility to accommodate future demographic and technological changes.

Public Computers

The Downtown Library currently has 11 desktop computers and 4 loaner laptops for the public. The proposed design would have accommodated 12 desktop PCs and added a specialized cabinet that could hold up to 18 laptops.

Group 4 presented a revised floor plan to the LAC that increased the number of desktop computers to 14 and included the specialized cabinet to allow an increase in the number of laptops if funds are available to expand that service. In their discussion, the Commissioners acknowledged that it would be possible to convert some reader tables in the future to hold additional desktop computers if needed.

Location of Library Administration

Three options to relocate Library Administration were evaluated by staff and the LAC - moving to City Hall, to the new Mitchell Park Library, and to the renovated Main Library. Group 4 reported that each of these options would require an additional two months for redesign and review of the revised plans for Downtown Library.

Public Works staff looked at available space at City Hall and determined that there is not sufficient space (700-950 square feet) to house Library Administration at that location. This was reported to the LAC. Group 4 presented information on the cost and impacts on schedule to incorporate Library Administration into the design for Mitchell Park Library or Main Library.

The design plans for the Mitchell Park Library and Community Center are now approximately 70% complete. Changing the plans to move Library Administration to that facility would result in a 6-month delay for the project and cost approximately \$900,000 to add the needed square footage. An alternative to adding square footage would result in the reduction of public use space equivalent to eliminating the technology learning lab. Moving Library Administration to Main Library would not impact the design schedule for that project, but it would cost up to \$500,000 to add the needed square footage.

Following a discussion of these options, the LAC determined that Library Administration should remain at Downtown Library.

Follow-up to September 17 LAC Meeting

Following the LAC's action on September 17, Group 4 produced a new version of the proposed floor plan for Downtown Library (Attachment A). The Library Bond Stakeholders Committee received an update on this project at their meeting on October 8.

NEXT STEPS

Staff is now in the process of reviewing the 95% construction documents for the Downtown Library, and discussions about the timeframe to bid the project are underway. The design team, staff and construction manager are analyzing three construction bid scenarios:

- 1) maintain the original plan of advertising Downtown Library for construction bids in early spring of 2010, followed by the Mitchell Park Library & Community Center (MPLCC) in early summer of 2010;
- 2) combine Downtown Library into the same bid package as the MPLCC so that one contractor would be awarded the contract for both libraries; and
- 3) advertise the Downtown Library for bids at approximately the same time as the MPLCC, in the summer of 2010.

It is the current opinion of the project team that the best and most cost-effective scenario appears to be the third - to advertise the Downtown Library for bids at approximately the same time as the MPLCC, summer 2010. In this scenario, smaller contractors would be able to bid on the Downtown Library, while subcontractors and larger construction firms might conceivably bid on both projects. From a financing viewpoint, opening construction bids for the two libraries at the same general time would allow the first bond sale to have an accurate number for both libraries, instead of estimating what the MPLCC might cost at a later date. The start date of construction

would be staggered, in order to allow Library staff time to coordinate relocation. The concept of deferring the start of Downtown Library by approximately three months has been presented to and approved by the Library Bond Stakeholders Committee. This concept will continue to be researched as the project progresses.

RESOURCE IMPACT

The proposed changes to the Downtown Library floor plan will not increase the design cost. There will be a minor cost increase to install the higher and added shelving units, but this can be accommodated within the project budget. Increasing the collection size at Downtown from the current size of 12,200 items to a range of 21,600-24,800 items will result in a one-time cost of \$188,000 to \$252,000 and annual ongoing costs of \$62,000-\$76,000. Adding three desktop computers will cost \$4,500 in one-time and \$1,500 in annual ongoing costs.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The original schematic design for the renovation of Downtown Library was based on the recommendations of the LAC’s *Library Service Model Analysis and Recommendations* (LSMAR) report, adopted by the City Council in December, 2006. The LSMAR stated that the facility needs for Downtown Library include a fully accessible building, refreshed and brightened interior space, improved lighting, more electrical outlets, enhanced patios, and a multi-purpose area that could be used for programs, events, and meetings. The LSMAR also stated that the collections at both the College Terrace and Downtown libraries would emphasize high circulating titles and would be regularly refreshed.

While the LSMAR’s vision for the Palo Alto City Library “recognized community support for strong library collections at each location”, the report specifies a larger collection only at the new expanded Mitchell Park Library. Significantly increasing the size of the collection at the Downtown Library will impact the ability to both regularly refresh that collection and keep it current.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was completed prior to the approval of the bond measure in 2008.

ATTACHMENTS

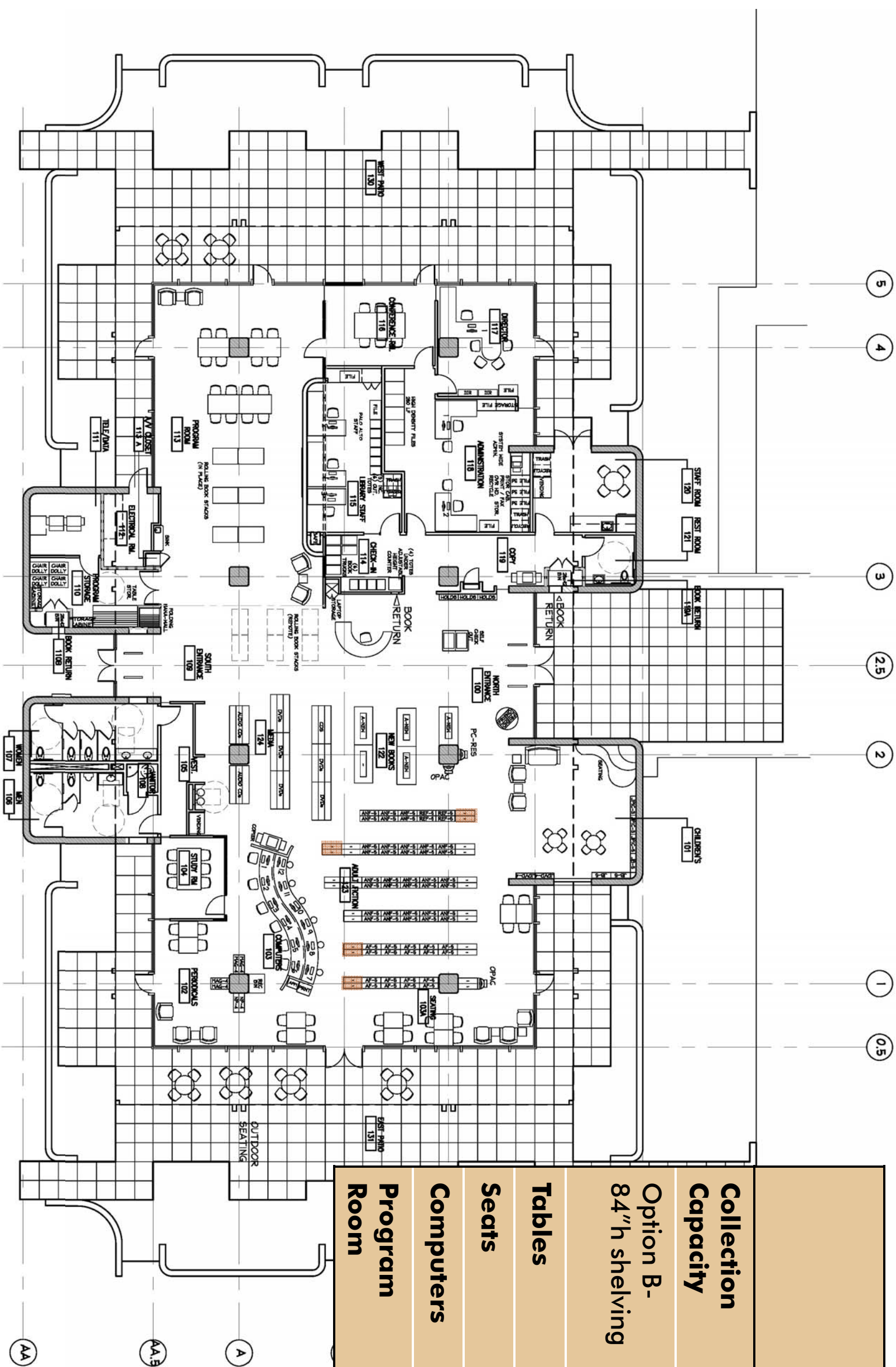
Attachment A: Downtown Library: Option 1b (09-17-09 LAC Preferred Option Revised)

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CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:

JAMES KEENE
City Manager



Collection Capacity	Option 1b revised
Option B- 84" h shelving	21,600 to 24,800 volumes
Tables	18
Seats	70
Computers	14
Program Room	Yes

DOWNTOWN LIBRARY: Option 1b (09-17-09 LAC Preferred Option Revised)