



Office of the City Manager

INFORMATION CALENDAR

March 25, 2008

To: Honorable Mayor and  
Members of the City Council

From: Board of Library Trustees

Submitted by: Terry Powell, Chair, Board of Library Trustees  
Donna Corbeil, Director, Library Services

Subject: Information on Library Branch Facility Needs and a Possible Bond Measure to  
Address These Needs

INTRODUCTION

Much has changed in the types of library services provided since the Berkeley Public Library's four branches were constructed, beginning in 1923, and renovated in the early 1970's. One recent and major innovation has been the addition of public use computers; the diversity of material has also expanded beyond books to include magazines, movies and music. Additionally, local Library users can reserve material from not only other Berkeley Library locations, but from a statewide network of libraries that brings the book they want to their branch library seamlessly, on request via the Library's website.

In FY 06/07 the patrons at the four branch libraries – Claremont, North, South and West – checked out over 640,000 items. These neighborhood branches served three-quarter of a million visitors and the Tool Library alone checked out over 40,000 items. The Central Library served approximately 900,000 visitors and checked out over 470,000 items during the same time period. The branches are open 6 days / 48-hours a week, during which they provide public service and access to books, music and movies for all age groups, public computers, information/reference services, and reader seating. Collectively they have held over 760 programs, with over 20,000 attendees, in the past year.

After 30 years of limited maintenance, while experiencing extensive increase in use, these branch facilities are now in need of upgrades and some expansion. In addition to the general deterioration of the facilities detailed in the attached summary, high usage and a lack of funds for deferred maintenance and infrastructure improvements have left our branch libraries in serious need of structural, electrical, telecom, ADA and space improvements, i.e., infrastructure systems improvements, to meet the needs of the community both now and in the future.

BRANCH LIBRARY MASTER FACILITY PLAN

In FY 2008 the Board of Library Trustees adopted as a priority the completion of a 20-year assessment and feasibility study of branch libraries. The Branch Library Master Facilities

Plan (LMFP) project is a physical evaluation of the four Berkeley Public Library branches and the Tool Library to assess their feasibility to serve the community, both now and into the future. The goal of the project is to develop pertinent facility information and knowledge that will provide a vital, nearby resource of library services in Berkeley's neighborhoods; assist the Board of Library Trustees in strategic decision-making regarding facility expenditures; and define a model for future Library response to community needs in library services.

The 2008 Branch Library Master Facility Plan:

- Updates, to current code standards, recommendations since the *Berkeley Branch Libraries Feasibility Study*, January 1996, in all pertinent areas, including structural, mechanical, electrical, architectural finishes, hazardous materials, ADA compliance, etc.;
- Follows the approach of involving architectural and other professional experts in the evaluative process;
- Includes input from the community, gathered by survey and community meetings held at the branches, a workshop held at the February BOLT meeting, and the convening and feedback from a community-representative Facilities Master Plan Advisory Committee; and
- Makes recommendations related to ADA compliance, life safety, functionality, historical integrity and feasibility to meet current and future service needs.

### STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed program to improve all four branches would cost between \$21 – 26 Million, depending on which options are selected, to bring the buildings up to current code standards; meet seismic requirements; make all of the branches fully accessible to Berkeley's diverse population; provide environmentally sustainable "green" operations; and create adequate space for the Tool Library, focused services for the disabled, commuters, and the adult literacy program, Berkeley Reads.

#### *WEST BRANCH*

West Branch Library, originally constructed in 1923 and expanded in 1974, underwent an extensive planning process as part of a potential State of California-funded building grant process in 2004. The Library consultant at that time recommended the original historic building be restored and a two-story addition be added. The building has some structural and infrastructure damage that need attention. In addition, the Literacy office is severely constrained for a highly successful program, continuing to operate out of a small room in the rear of the building and juggling meeting room space for computer learning, meetings, tutoring, and West Branch community programs.

#### *CLAREMONT BRANCH*

Claremont Branch, built in 1924 and expanded in 1975, had ADA-related modifications in 2000, making it the most accessible of the branches. The historical and functional aspects of the branch would benefit from a renovation and completion of full lobby space though a minor expansion.

#### *NORTH BRANCH*

North Branch Library, built in 1936 and the most heavily used neighborhood branch library, is substantially undersized for the needs of the North Berkeley area community, is not ADA accessible and lacks the infrastructure to meet current and future technology needs. Two

options for modest additions to the rear of the building are proposed, the larger-size addition would allow for community meeting / library programming space.

### *SOUTH BRANCH*

South Branch, originally built in 1961 and expanded in 1974, has serious structural defects that would make it susceptible to significant damage during a major seismic event. Further, its infrastructure systems – electrical, mechanical, and telecommunications - are not constructed to adapt to current needs and the space lacks adequate flexibility to meet minimal computer and seating needs of the community. The South Branch also houses the Berkeley Tool Lending Library, the first of its kind in the country. This facility is one of the Library's most successful and popular programs. It is, however, in dire need of additional space to store, display and repair the tools it loans. The construction of a new building would allow the development of a branch to meet the community's library needs and would significantly improve the tool library operation.

### *ED ROBERTS CAMPUS*

The Library is also exploring two options at the Ed Roberts Campus (ERC) building, in which a 21<sup>st</sup> century innovative library site would provide the opportunity to develop a unique and focused facility with programs to serve the ERC users and visitors and to meet the growing needs of commuters passing through the Berkeley BART Station.

Summary sheets for each facility are attached.

### LIBRARY FACILITY / CAPITAL PROJECTS - BACKGROUND

A recent request from the Library Board to the City Council, related to addressing facility needs at the Library, was made in the year 2000 in response to the opportunities presented by the Statewide Library Bond initiative popularly known as 'Proposition 14'. The Board recommended a bond initiative be included on the November 2000 ballot to cover the Library required 1/3<sup>rd</sup> match for any projects submitted. On November 7, 2000, Measure P – Library Bond for Renovation of Branch Libraries – passed with a favorable vote by 83.2% of voters. The measure was to position the Library to qualify for State of California or other Library improvement matching funds and ensure public safety. The bond was "to renovate, expand and upgrade Branch Libraries in an amount not to exceed \$5,200,000, at an interest rate not to exceed the legal limit; provided that said bonds *shall be issued only if state or other matching funds provide at least 65% of the cost of these improvements*". The Library developed a West Branch project to recover and renovate the historic 1923-era portion of the building and to replace the 1970's addition with a new, two-story 12,500 sq. ft. expansion to house both branch services and the Library's adult literacy program, Berkeley Reads. The \$9.6 Million project was rated "very good" by the State Library in the third (January 2004) and final cycle of funding, but was not selected for funded.

Earlier, in FY 1994/95, the Library contracted with the firm of Bull Stockwell Allen and Ripley Architects and Planners to conduct feasibility studies of the Central Library and Branch Libraries. The Central Library study culminated in the passing of a bond measure (Measure S – November 1996) to fund the renovation and expansion of the Central Library project, completed in 2002. The recommendation from the Board to the City Council in May 1996 was to place a library improvement bond measure on the November 1996 ballot that would provide \$52 million to renovate and expand all five library facilities. At the June 1996 meeting, the revised resolution recommended a ballot measure of not less than \$37 million for Central Library improvements and expansion. The Library branch facilities were

eliminated in lieu of the need for seismic upgrade and improvements to the City's Civic Center Building.

The *Berkeley Branch Libraries Feasibility Study* was completed and a report produced in January 1996. The scope of the branch study at that time was to examine the long-term needs of the branches; propose design alternatives; and supply individual budgets to meet these needs. The report called for "increasing the net assignable areas of the branch libraries to relieve current overcrowded conditions, to make the libraries more accessible and usable, and to improve staff and circulation areas." The study recommendations focus on the functionality of the spaces or lack thereof. Since 1996, only a minimal amount of deferred maintenance has occurred in the branch libraries, for the most part focusing on roof replacement and repair, carpeting and infrastructure upkeep. Some minor ADA-related work has occurred since this time, such as changes to the layout of the Claremont Branch in 2000.

In April 6, 1971, Measure B: (Library Improvements) was passed with 71.1% of the voters approving a bond measure for \$575,000 for "additions and betterments to existing library buildings, together with lands, equipment, furniture, fixtures and other works or structures necessary or convenient to provide adequate library services." This was the first public Library bond measure in Berkeley's history and it focused on the branch libraries. Much of the work that occurred in the branches since the initial construction was due to this bond measure, including the expansion of Claremont and West, the meeting room at South, and some interior lighting and soundproofing at North.

### SUMMARY

The consideration of upgrades and facility improvements at the four branches and the Tool Lending Library and the ERC opportunity are of immediate concern, have involved Library staff and managers, and have growing community input and support. The Board of Library Trustees views these projects as its highest priority effort for its oversight role, and as critical infrastructure improvement projects that respond to many of the neighborhoods' library needs.

The Library Board has not yet taken action to request your support and inclusion of a Library Branch Facility Improvements bond measure for the November ballot. At this time, however, we seek your advice and ask for your consideration of the Library branch improvement projects. We believe it desirable to include the Library's approximate \$26 Million in a bond-funded branch facilities improvement program as part of a survey or poll to be conducted by the City, of Berkeley citizens' views on upcoming ballot measures.

### CONTACT PERSON

Donna Corbeil, Director of Library Services, Library, (510) 981-6195

### Attachments:

- 1: Branch Libraries Facilities Master Plan, Estimated Project Costs
- 2: North Branch Library, Existing Building Evaluation Summary
- 3: West Branch Library, Existing Building Evaluation Summary
- 4: South Branch Library, Existing Building Evaluation Summary
- 5: Claremont Branch Library, Existing Building Evaluation Summary
- 6: North Branch Options Layout
- 7: West Branch Options Layout

8: South Branch Options Layout

9: Claremont Branch Options Layout