

# **Library Service Needs in South and Southwest Berkeley Communities UPDATE (7/2/07)**

Since being invited to join the proposed Ed Roberts Campus (ERC) project, the Board of Library Trustees has been discussing the possibility of Berkeley Public Library's participation. The project, which will be located at the east side of the Ashby BART station parking lot, is scheduled to break ground in 2008. To ensure all aspects of the opportunity were fully considered the Board appointed two Trustees to continue to study, along with library staff, the library service needs of the South and Southwest Berkeley communities and the opportunities and the issues associated with a move of the South Branch Library to ERC.

## ***Current Situation***

South Branch, 1901 Russell Street (at Martin Luther King, Jr., Way)

### **FORMER LOCATIONS:**

3200 block of Adeline (early 1900s); then,  
1839 Woolsey (at Grove, now MLK, Jr., Way)

- Current South Branch built in 1962; the meeting room was added in 1973.
- Size: 5629 square feet (including 645 square feet for Tool Lending Library)
- Collection size has tripled since the library opened, including new media formats which did not exist previously – DVDs, CDs, and books on CD.
- The number of public seats has declined to make space for collections and computers.
- Serving teens and providing home work assistance is a priority but there is no room for a designated study/computer area for this age group.
- The branch has six public computers located in the entryway; more are needed.
- The program/community meeting room is crowded and used for storage and by staff as work area.

West Branch, 1125 University Avenue (near San Pablo Avenue)

- Built in 1923 and expanded in 1973.
- Size: 5500 square feet
- In 2004 the Library applied for State library bond funds for a major renovation and expansion. While rated "very good," it was not funded.
- The collection size has almost doubled in the last 13 years.
- The Library's Berkeley Reads adult literacy program offices are in the branch; more space for tutoring and intake is needed.
- The program/community meeting room also functions as a computer lab for the literacy program.

## Opportunities

- The Ed Roberts Campus (ERC), a collaboration of disability organizations, has invited the Berkeley Public Library to consider opening a branch in the building. For more information on ERC, go to [www.edrobertscampus.org](http://www.edrobertscampus.org).
- In May 2007 the Library contracted with Noll & Tam Architects to investigate possible spaces for a branch library at ERC. They will develop three space options and a kiosk. For more information on Noll & Tam Architects, go to <http://www.nollandtam.com/>

## Studies

- Hatchuel Tabernik & Associates (HTA) completed its "South Berkeley Community Assessment of Library Needs" in October 2006. This assessment pointed to severe programmatic limitations at the South Branch, built in 1961. Survey respondents said:
  1. There was a lack of space for library materials (books, DVDs, and etc.), computers, meeting space, an area for teens, and seating.
  2. They prefer that the Tool Library remain at its present location and be allocated additional space.The report is posted on the Library's website:  
<http://berkeleypubliclibrary.org/weblog/files/SBL%20Community%20Assessment%20Complete.pdf>
- *Berkeley Branch Libraries Feasibility Study*, January 1996 by Bull Stockwell Allen & Ripley Architects. Available at West Branch, South Branch, and Central Library Reference Desk.

## Next Steps

- July 25, 2007, Board of Library Trustees, at 5:00 PM at the South Branch Library – Noll & Tam Architects will present their findings to the Board.
- July 2007, HTA will launch a Southwest Berkeley Community Library Needs Assessment study. To participate or find out more check the library's website, <http://www.berkeleypubliclibrary.org>
- On July 24, 2007, at 7pm, there will be a community meeting to begin to get public input for **Southwest Berkeley Community Library Needs Assessment study: LifeLong Medical Care -- Parking on the street 3260 Sacramento St. (& Alcatraz) Berkeley Upstairs Conference Room - 2nd floor**

For more info, call 981-6195, 548-1240 (TTY), or go to [berkeleypubliclibrary.org/](http://berkeleypubliclibrary.org/)  
Wheelchair accessible. To request a sign language interpreter, real-time captioning, materials in large print or Braille, or other accommodations for this event, please call (510) 981-6107 (voice) or (510) 548-1240 (TTY); at least five working days will ensure availability. Please refrain from wearing scented products to public meetings.

- Upcoming community meetings will be posted at all branches and on the library's website, <http://www.berkeleypubliclibrary.org>

For more information, call 510-981-6195, 510-548-1240 (TTY). Send comments to [director@berkeleypubliclibrary.org](mailto:director@berkeleypubliclibrary.org) or by mail to Berkeley Public Library, Board of Library Trustees, 2090 Kittredge Street, Berkeley, California 94704.