




City of Sierra Madre Agenda Report

Rachelle Arizmendi, Mayor
Denise Delmar, Mayor Pro Tem
John Capoccia, Council Member
Gene Goss, Council Member
John Harabedian, Council Member

Melinda Carrillo, Secretary
Michael Amerio City Treasurer

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: Ryan Baker, Director of Library and Community Services

REVIEWED BY: Gabriel Engeland, City Manager 

DATE: July 11, 2017

SUBJECT: Developing the existing Recreation Center into the new Sierra Madre Library and Cultural Center using funding derived from the sale of existing City-owned Library property

SUMMARY

At a special joint meeting of the Library Board of Trustees and the Community Services Commission on June 28th, 2017, both commissions recommended: 1) the existing Recreation Center be repurposed and expanded as the Sierra Madre Library and Cultural Center and existing Library service move to that location, and 2) the existing Library property and adjacent City-owned lot be sold to fund the project.

ANALYSIS

The current Library building is over sixty years old and in desperate need of large financial investment to bring the building up to date and ADA compliant. Estimates run from \$1.3 million to address all deferred maintenance and ADA improvements up to \$3.9 million to both address the existing building and add a needed expansion for adequate community space.

At the same time, the City, due to financial restraints has been forced to severely cut the Community Services Department over the past several years, reduce programming to the community and contract core classes and program services to outside agencies.

Staff has been looking into alternate methods of addressing these two issues without asking the community for a bond measure or property tax. The most viable solution identified would be to repurpose the existing Recreation Center in Sierra Vista Park as a new Library and Cultural Center. The existing Library property and adjacent City-owned property would be sold with monies received to fund the major portion of the project.

A single-story addition would be constructed on the north side of the existing Recreation Center on what is now a concrete courtyard. This addition would bring the total size of the building to 16,000 to 18,000 sq feet depending on funds received. Library services would be moved from the current library into the first floor of the new Library and Cultural Center, with the second story left as 3,700 sq feet of flexible open space and classrooms for community events, classes, workshops, meeting rooms, youth programs, and community rentals. Both Library and Community Services staff would be housed in the same building to further the ability to share resources, supplement activities, reduce overhead costs and create new community programs.

The YMCA currently leases the building. That lease will expire in February 2019. Though the YMCA would no longer be operating the building as a dedicated YMCA site, both Staff and the YMCA are eager to continue working as partners, with YMCA providing contract services, summer camps and classes that would be outside of the scope or ability of the City to provide.

The Sierra Madre Library and Cultural Center project has an initial estimate of \$3 million. The Friends of the Library has agreed to pay for initial architectural plans that would be used for a more detailed cost estimate.

These costs could be heavily offset by the sale of the City-owned property on which the current library building sits as well as the sale of the City-owned vacant property on the adjacent south of the current library building. Restrictions on the sale of the current library lot expired in 1978. No restrictions are in place for the sale of the vacant lot behind the library. Initial estimates for the value of the combined 1.02 acres is \$2.0 to \$2.6 million depending on what development would be allowed by the City.

Remaining funds needed would be sought through fundraising efforts.

STAFF/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Accept the recommendations of the Library Board of Trustees and the Community Services Commission to pursue creating a Library and Cultural Center in the existing Recreation Center, and further, to sell the existing Library property and adjacent City-property with proceeds going to fund the project.

ALTERNATIVES

The primary lowest-cost alternative to maintain the current level of service addresses ADA and structural issues in priority order over the course of 4 years at an estimated cost of \$1.4 million as outlined in the Library Facility Master Plan. This would be to retain service at its current level.

If investment is not made into the building, reduced service would be provided through one of the following means:

1. Move without expansion; shared/split facilities in existing buildings; retain existing Library building:
Library service would move to the Recreation Center without expansion. The Sierra Madre Room would undergo a minor remodel to accommodate a general reading area and the upstairs YAC would be used for some programming and children's services. The Hart Park House would see additional programming use. Community rentals would most likely cease. The existing Library building would be closed to public access. Library service in general, though fragmented across sites, would be at a similar level to what is currently provided.
2. Limited capacity in existing Library building:
All access to the existing lower level of the library (basement) would cease. A portion of the main building level would be remodeled to house the historical archives which would be restricted to the public. The entry portion of the Library would undergo some remodel to create a front "kiosk" desk which would be the extent of public access in the building. The remainder of the building would be restricted to staff access only. The community would check out books and materials at the "kiosk" that had been retrieved by Staff from the newly restricted areas. All Library programming at the library building would cease, however some programs may be included at other sites such as Hart Park House or the Sierra Madre room. Minor additional remodel of the building could convert the two small existing reading rooms near the front of the library into a history research room and/or a small technology room.

FINANCIAL REVIEW / SOURCE OF FUNDING

\$3 million is the initial estimated cost of the project. Detailed costs will be analyzed after preliminary architectural plans are received.

\$2 to \$2.6 million is the initial estimated value of the City-owned properties that will be sold to offset costs. An official property assessment would be conducted if Council is in favor of moving forward with the project.

Fundraising efforts would be sought for remaining funds needed.

PUBLIC NOTICE PROCESS

This item has been noticed through the regular agenda notification process. Copies of this report are available at City Hall, at the Sierra Madre Public Library, and can be accessed on the City's website at www.cityofsierramadre.com.