

Local Government Scorecard
Santa Cruz City Council Meeting
January 14, 2020

SUBJECT: Remodeling of Branciforte and Garfield Park Branch Libraries

MOTION: For the remodeling of Branciforte and Garfield Park Branch libraries:
motion to:

- 1) Approve schematic design, budget of \$6,250,000 and financing;
- 2) Authorize the development of construction documents;
- 3) Authorize City staff to advertise for construction bids; and
- 4) Authorize the City Manager to execute the contract, in a form approved by the City Attorney, and execute change orders within the approved budget.

BACKGROUND:

In 2013, the Santa Cruz Public Libraries engaged in a comprehensive facilities master planning process resulting in the passage of Measure S, a \$67 million bond measure slated to address library facility needs across the system. Measure S was approved by the voters in 2016 and each jurisdiction was allotted a portion of the funds to spend how they deemed best for their community library. The City of Santa Cruz was originally allocated \$27 million to use towards three library branches located within the City limits (Branciforte, Garfield, and Downtown), but the figure was increased to \$31,250,000 after a review of available funds. To maximize the value of the bond issuance, funds should be spent by July 1, 2024.

In the spring of 2019, the City hired Bogard Construction (Santa Cruz) to provide project management services for the Branciforte and Garfield Park branches. Bogard, in turn, hired Jayson Architects, a firm with experience in designing and remodeling public libraries for design development.

For planning purposes, the City of Santa Cruz requested the development of schematic designs for the Branciforte and Garfield Park Branch libraries with a budget not to exceed \$4,250,000.

Jayson Architects met with library staff in the spring of 2019 to develop a program outlining the needs of each branch. The architects held a community input meeting for the Garfield Park Branch renovation project on May 15, 2019, and another for the Branciforte Branch on May 22, 2019. Patron feedback was also collected in the branches and on the Library's website. This information was utilized in the development of schematic designs.

The Branciforte branch library is 7,000 square feet and is located at 230 Gault Street on the East side of the City of Santa Cruz. Built in 1967, the building has had no major upgrades in the last fifty years. The building needs a roof replacement, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) modifications and major upgrades to its plumbing, electrical, lighting, heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC) and security systems. Interior finishes are worn and dated. Programmatically, the goal of the Branciforte branch renovation is to reclaim staff area for a community program space, reduce storage, modify the service desk, make safety upgrades to the entrance and develop a permanent teen space.

The Garfield Park branch library is a 2,300 square foot historic building located at 705 Woodrow Avenue on the West Side of the City of Santa Cruz. Built in 1915 through the Carnegie Foundation, it was renovated in 2002. The building has significant ADA issues, internal walls that decrease the utility of the already limited space, shelving and books cover the original windows, and the furniture and fixtures are worn and dated. The renovation design recommends opening up the interior by building shelving along the perimeter, reducing the staff work area to reclaim space for the public, zoning areas for adults and children and expanding the small study area for programming.

DISCUSSION:

The original budget for both projects was \$4,250,000. The initial budget estimate for Jayson Architect's renovation designs came in \$2,010,899 over that budget (\$1,330,012 for Branciforte and \$680,887 for Garfield Park). In response, staff requested that the architects analyze the consequences of reducing the project scopes to meet the original budgets.

Without the additional \$1,330,012 for Branciforte, the impacts to the project scope include:

- Loss of the outside expansion space.
- Loss of natural daylight from added windows in the children's area.
- Removal of the wood acoustical ceiling in the community program room, which would provide needed sound proofing.
- Removal of fencing around the branch, which would provide needed security for the building.

Without the additional \$680,887 for Garfield Park, the impacts are:

- Dropped ceilings and interior walls would remain, significantly impacting the goal of opening up the space and increasing square footage for public use.
- Loss of additional seating for library patrons, as requested by the public.
- Loss of additional book shelving.
- Staff areas would remain oversized, further reducing space for public activities.
- Loss of study room expansion, a space used by students and community groups.

Library staff believes the reduced projects scopes would have significant impacts to the programs and services. Staff recommends that an additional \$1.5 million of Measure S funds be allocated to the Branciforte and Garfield Branch projects and the City requests the Friends of the Library sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreeing to fundraise for the additional \$500,000.

CITY COUNCIL AND STAFF DISCUSSION:

The motion was passed unanimously by the council. There were however discussions regarding funding. This is due to the fact that the extra \$1.5 million from the Measure S bond will be taken out of the Downtown Library Project. Library Director Susan Nemitz pointed out that the Downtown project is underfunded regardless of this reallocation money. Regarding the \$500,000 that the Friends of the Library are expected to raise, several council members were convinced that the Friends of the Library will be able to raise the amount needed, considering their previous success at other libraries in the County. Council member Krohn raised the question on whether it could be possible to use funds from the Parking Fund. The City Attorney seemed to believe that this could be a possibility, yet it would have to be a policy issue for the Council to decide on whether to reallocate these funds.

An important discussion point was the way in which libraries serve as a very important facilities for homeless people in our community. It was underlined that this must continue to be the case, while at the same time confronting certain security issues that have been present at the libraries. Both community members and council members raised the concern of the new libraries having “defensive architecture.” This was particularly discussed with reference to the Branciforte Library, where a gate is going to be built in order to prevent encampments at the Library entrance. Both Mayor Cummings and Council member Glover discussed the possibility of not building this gate and suggested that further inquiry should be done to see whether there would be a significant difference within the budget to cancel the building of the gate outside Branciforte Library.

Council and community members also raised the issue of the narrow bike path by the Branciforte Library. The pathway is not currently included in the remodeling. However, Council member Matthews suggested that a solution to this problem could be found by using (allocating) some active transportation money or seek state grant money.

The Council also discussed to what extent the remodeling of the libraries would lead to a reduction of the collections. The Library Director pointed out that there will be some reduction in the collections. However, it is clear that libraries have changed. Books will always be the most important feature of a libraries but as libraries have taken on a variety of community services, 21st Century libraries need other important features which may lead to a certain reduction in the collections.

CITY COUNCIL ACTION:

Motion to remodel the Branciforte and Garfield Park Branch Libraries with the budget of \$6,250,000.

VOTE: All Council members present voted Unanimously to support the motion.

CHAMBER POSITION:

The Santa Cruz County Chamber is an advocate for improving the county wide Library system, by creating 21st Century facilities to meet community needs. The backbone of the Library system is to ensure that the downtown Library can function at the highest level of services to the community and support the other library branches. The Chamber supported Measure S and has worked with the City staff, the Friends of Public Libraries to incorporate first class design of the remodeled branch libraries. While the Chamber is concerned that the funding short fall from the Measure S dollars (caused by increased labor, material and construction cost) must seek other funding partners to create a better built, more efficient and sustainable Library system.