

CITY OF HAYWARD
AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE 01/16/07
AGENDA ITEM _____
WORK SESSION ITEM WS#2

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Library Director
SUBJECT: Request for Qualifications Regarding New Main Library

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council review and comment on this report.

BACKGROUND:

Hayward has had a long tradition of providing quality library services to its residents. The current Main library opened in 1951, when the population was 14,000 (with subsequent remodels in 1958 and 1977). Today the Main library is 25,000 square feet of which 7,500 is allocated to "back of house functions." The Weekes Library was built in 1964, and remodeled in 2001. Its total square footage is 8,567, of which 900 square feet is allocated to staff areas.

Improvements in operating efficiency have certainly helped the library meet community needs, and have led to increases in both circulation and number of library visits. But the fact remains that the current facilities are too small for the present population and do not address current needs, as reflected in changes in library usage and technology over the past 50 years. For example, while libraries have become increasingly important to families as after-school learning centers, Hayward students have no place to engage in group study and there are no rooms for tutors to help adults learn to read. There are no designated areas for children's story-time, and limited community room space is constantly in demand with groups often turned away. Meanwhile, with respect to technology the library system currently offers the community a total of 49 computers for their use, a ratio of only one computer for every 3,000 people. In short, overcrowding and competing uses for space demonstrate that the Hayward Public Library must build again to keep up with the functional and technological space demands for today's library.

In the spring of 2006 the Library Director met with a variety of stakeholders in the community to elicit their impression of library services and to query them on what services they believe the library should be providing. While branches were deemed important, overwhelmingly the response was that the current Main Library was inadequate and that a larger facility is needed to accommodate current library demand. This observation mirrors similar statements expressed in the past, and is what resulted in a decision to include one million dollars in the current CIP budget to commence the planning and design. In further support, the Library Commission voted unanimously on October 16, 2006 to support the "creation of a new and expanded Main Library in the downtown area, preferably located on the current site."

A new Main Library should be designed to be flexible and able to accommodate rapid and frequent change. It would also serve as a destination for the downtown area and one of the "anchors" of a revitalized downtown. A sample library design building program for a medium sized library of about 50,000 square feet includes a children's programming area, a literacy center with small tutoring rooms, group study rooms for teens, a homework area, quiet study rooms, a technology lab, a public meeting space, as well as areas for collections. The actual square footage and features would be determined following an assessment of how best to "program" the space, from which the proposed size of a facility can be determined.

Because funding is provided in the budget, staff would normally begin the process by preparing and issuing a request for qualifications to obtain the services of a consulting firm that specializes in library design to assist the City in producing a conceptual design for a new Main Library. Given the Council's interest, however, it was felt that a Council discussion is in order before embarking on the preparation of an RFQ. Following the Council's discussion, staff would propose to issue the RFQ. Thereafter, once the responses are evaluated, staff would bring forward a recommendation to the Council for authorization to execute a contract with the recommended firm.

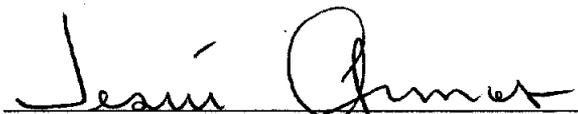
The Council has also expressed interest with regard to additional library services in the neighborhoods. Potential locations for possible new library facilities include the proposed community center at Mission and Valle Vista identified in South Hayward BART/ Mission Boulevard Plan, or a joint use library located on the campus of Longwood Elementary School. Some have also suggested that providing library-type services within Southland Mall should also be explored. In staff's perspective, these options merit consideration, and should be viewed as complementary to, but not a substitute for, a new Main Library.

Recommended by:



Lisa Rosenblum, Library Director

Approved by:



Jesús Armas, City Manager