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FREE

Marina library on its way

Some concerned by use of funds

By A.J. Fish

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Renovation of the Marina public library is complete, but the branch will not be open to the public until July, library officials said yesterday.

Branch Library Improvement Program Project Manager Mindy Linetzky said that moving books and material back into the neighborhood branch will take about three months, a number based on other branch renovations.

They are still waiting for furniture and shelving to arrive.

"You don't want furniture delivered until construction is over, because we don't want it to

get damaged," Linetzky said.

In the approved schedule, the Marina library's materials were supposed to be moved in by February or March, Linetzky said, but "it is taking a little bit longer. Marina had a 64-day extension for construction," which pushed the beginning of the move-in phase to a later date, she said.

Meanwhile, the Sunset branch, which completed construction in December, began moving in this January, Sunset Branch Manager Jan Hudson said yesterday. A branch ribbon-cutting ceremony is going to take place March 31, Hudson said.

The Branch Library Improvement Program, a 2000 voter-approved \$106 million bond renovation measure, has been running over budget and behind schedule, and the Bayview, North Beach and Ortega

branches have had their renovation start dates postponed indefinitely.

Some library activists have been critical of the execution of the BLIP funds.

James Chaffee, a citizen who has attended Library Commission meetings for years, said the three branches with poor seismic ratings — Richmond, Noe Valley, and Marina — were stipulated in the bond measure to be renovated before all other branches. But the Richmond branch is still open, and the Excelsior and West Portal renovations have completed. "So that's already kind of a betrayal" of the voters, Chaffee said.

Both the Sunset and Marina branches will house brand new furniture purchased with funds raised by the Friends of San Francisco Libraries Foundation.