



San Francisco Public Library
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To: San Francisco Library Commission
From: Maureen Singleton, Chief Operating Officer
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Through: Michael Lambert, City Librarian
CC: Lisa Valerio, Capital Projects Manager
Date: November 9, 2023
Subject: Capital Projects Update

At the November 16, 2023, Library Commission meeting, the San Francisco Public Library (SFPL) will provide an update on its capital projects, showcasing recently completed projects, active capital projects, and upcoming capital projects. Highlighted below is an overview of the Library Improvements For Tomorrow (LIFT) program, which contains the Library's three largest active capital projects.

LIFT Background

Following the completion of the Branch Library Improvement Program (BLIP) in 2014, the Library initiated a project with the Department of Public Works (Public Works) in 2017 to undertake a feasibility study to explore the capital investment possibilities for the three library locations that were not included in BLIP: Mission Branch Library, Chinatown/Him Mark Lai Branch Library, and Ocean View Branch Library. To generate the feasibility study, Public Works engaged library staff to understand branch needs and reflect the community interests. The guiding principles in the study included: libraries for the 21st Century, flexible and adaptive building design, multifunctional community program areas, transparency and ease of wayfinding, and preservation of historic Carnegie libraries. The [2018 LIFT feasibility study report](#) provided preliminary cost estimates, assuming renovations for all three locations, and recommended a phased approach. A series of community meetings were conducted in all three communities in 2018 and 2019 to discuss the feasibility study, provide project overviews, and discuss community service needs and priorities. Community feedback from the Lakeview/Ocean View neighborhood indicated that the community wanted a new, larger facility rather than a renovation. In response to that, the Library commissioned an Ocean View feasibility study to assess possible sites and that [report](#) was issued in October of 2019. The Library has been funding the three capital projects over several fiscal years and was able to secure [\\$13.2 million in state grant monies](#) for the Mission and Chinatown branch library renovations in 2022.

Mission Branch Library

- **Project Overview**

The [Mission branch renovation project](#) includes the restoration of its 24th Street entrance, a new central staircase into the building's historic reading room that will be graced by a public art project: a [stained-glass mural by Bay Area artist Juana Alicia Araiza](#), preservation of the building's historic terra cotta façade, a new large community program room, improvements to the children's room, a new dedicated space for teens, and additional restrooms. The renovation will also add air filtration and air conditioning building-wide to address community resiliency needs for extreme heat and poor air quality events.

- **Community Engagement Post 2018 Feasibility Report**

The Library has engaged its community throughout the project life cycle, beginning in May 2018 to discuss the 2018 feasibility study, through the project design phase, and culminating in the [construction kickoff event](#) on August 29, 2023. The community engagement and public discussions of the Mission branch library renovation project, including Library Commission discussions, are posted on the Library's website, [Mission branch renovation page](#).

- **Project Status**

The project is in the construction phase. Construction began in late August 2023 and demolition of the staff workroom, children's room, and community room are complete. The construction is estimated to be two years.

Chinatown/Him Mark Lai Branch Library

- **Project Overview**

The [Chinatown/Him Mark Lai branch renovation project](#) will restore and repair the historic terra cotta decorations on the exterior façade and entry stairway, as well as restore the historic main reading room. The formerly added but little-used mezzanine will be removed, a new staircase will be added, and the elevators will be consolidated to allow library users to navigate the building more easily. The branch's community meeting room will be expanded, a new teen room added, and the rooftop terrace will be reconfigured to take advantage of city views. The building will be fully air-conditioned with filtered air to address community resiliency needs for extreme heat and poor air quality events.

- **Community Engagement Post 2018 Feasibility Report**

The Library has engaged its community throughout the project life cycle, beginning in June 2019 to discuss the 2018 feasibility study and the most recent community engagement was in August 2023 to share the latest design renderings and discuss [public artwork opportunities](#) for the

branch renovation. The community engagement and public discussions of the Chinatown branch library renovation project are posted on the Library's website, [Chinatown branch renovation page](#).

- **Project Status**

The project is in the planning phase. Design will be finalized in fall 2023, permitting will be completed in winter 2023, and construction project bid is projected to occur in spring 2024. The construction is estimated to be two years.

Ocean View Branch Library

- **Project Overview**

The Ocean View branch capital project was originally slated to be a renovation. During the Library's community engagement meetings in 2019 residents of the Lakeview/Ocean View neighborhood voiced their preference for a new, larger library to better meet their neighborhood's service needs. In response to that feedback, the Library commissioned an Ocean View feasibility study by Public Works in 2019 to assess nine city owned parcels along Brotherhood Way for potential siting of a new library. The study goals included documenting the needs for a new, larger facility up to 20,000 square feet, exploring the architectural and landscape design opportunities and challenges of locating a new library along Brotherhood Way, creating a representative building program based on community and staff feedback to serve as a base for project cost estimates, and establishing site viability criteria (neighborhood connectivity, safe pedestrian access, accessible path from transit, existing vehicular infrastructure, level building site, synergy with existing site amenities, and within the Ocean View/Merced/Ingleside neighborhood). The [Ocean View Branch Library Feasibility Report](#) was issued in October of 2019 and determined the parcel at the intersection of Orizaba, Brotherhood Way, and Alemany Boulevard was the most optimal based on the site viability criteria. After issuance of the 2019 Ocean View Feasibility Report, the Library conducted additional community meetings. While there was broad community support for a new, larger facility the Library also fielded numerous concerns about pedestrian and traffic safety, preservation of green space for the community, and parking accessibility.

The Planning Department's [Preliminary Project Assessment](#) (PPA) of the proposed site recommended coordination with the San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) and the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) to maximize pedestrian safety improvements and access. The PPA also noted that a co-location with other public services is consistent with City policy to develop multipurpose neighborhood centers, and, as the Library refines the project, the building should be designed holistically with future parks, public uses, and services intended for the site or surroundings.

In response to the community feedback and the PPA, the Library has connected with SFCTA and SFMTA to discuss traffic and pedestrian safety in the area. The SFCTA Brotherhood Way Safety and Circulation Plan (BWSCP) is focused on improving safety, circulation, and connectivity for people driving, walking, and biking in the area. The BWSCP will start with a needs analysis, and concepts will be developed through public outreach and vetted through technical analysis. The SFMTA is in the planning phase of its Brotherhood/Alemany Safety Improvement Project (BASIP), which includes Brotherhood Way, Alemany, Orizaba Avenue, and Sagamore Street. BASIP is exploring ways to redesign and signalize the various intersections to improve safety and circulation, and could lead to greater design flexibility and programming for a potential Library project if pursued in this location. This SFMTA project is distinct from the larger SFCTA planning effort, but both agencies are coordinating community engagement and public outreach through spring 2024. It is also important to note that as an independent project to improve safety and circulation, BASIP is completely separate from the Library project. While SFMTA conducts its project work, and in consideration of the community feedback on the Orizaba Avenue/Brotherhood Way project site as well as the PPA considerations, the Library is exploring real estate options with the City Administrator's Real Estate Division (RED) along the main Randolph/Broad Street corridor to ensure the Library optimizes the siting of a new branch library for the community. Once the site is finalized, additional design work will be conducted and shared with the community. The Library is committed to building a new library facility for this community.

- **Community Engagement Post 2018 Feasibility Report**

The Library has engaged its community throughout the project life cycle, beginning in February 2019 to discuss the 2018 feasibility study. As noted previously, at the initial community engagements about the proposed renovations the neighbors voiced their preference for a new, larger branch library. After the issuance of an Ocean View Feasibility Report in October 2019, the Library conducted another series of community meetings in November 2019. In June 2022, the Library met with the community to review the Planning Department's PPA and provide a project update. The community engagement and public discussions of the Ocean View branch library project are posted on the Library's website, [Ocean View branch project page](#).

- **Project Status**

The project is in the planning phase. The Library is working with RED to assess other opportunities for siting a new library along the Randolph/Broad corridor to address community concerns regarding the Brotherhood Way site and be responsive to the PPA's recommendations. The Library is also awaiting SFMTA's BASIP concept designs.