



San Francisco Public Library

**Consolidated Minutes of May 2, 7 & 11, 2024
Ocean View Branch Library-Community Engagement Meetings**

Meeting Dates: **May 2, 2024 (6:00 - 8:00 pm), I.T. Bookman Community Center**
 May 7, 2024 (5:00 – 7:00 pm), Ocean View Branch Library
 May 11, 2024 (10:00 am – 12:00 pm), Ocean View Branch Library

AGENDA

- Welcome and Introductions
- Project Background and Overview
- Designing our Future
- Wrap Up

Welcome Introductions and Remarks – Michael Lambert, San Francisco City Librarian

- At this series of community meetings the Library and Public Works shared the presentation: [\(insert link to presentation here\)](#)
- Michael welcomed everyone and thanked them for showing up and continuing to show strong support. This project would not have gotten this far along or been possible without it.
- He then introduced library and public works staff in attendance (list is combined for meeting series:)
 - Dolly Goyal, Public Services Chief
 - Maureen Singleton, Chief Operating Officer
 - Kate Patterson, Director of Communications
 - Rebecca Alcalá-Veraflor, Chief of Branches
 - Denise Sanderson, Southwest District Manager
 - Jaena Cabrera, Ocean View Branch Manager
 - Connie Wolf, Library Commission President
 - Teresa Ono, Library Commission
 - Jaena Cabrera, Ocean View Branch Manager
 - Andy Sohn, Public Works Architect
 - Lourdes Garcia, Public Works
- Michael acknowledged community leaders and elders in attendance and thanked them for their advocacy (list is combined for meeting series:)
 - Mary Harris

- Former Commissioner Al Harris
- Jeff Buckley, Legislative Aide to District 11 Supervisor Ahsha Safai
- Council of Neighborhood Libraries representatives:
 - Ms. Edna James
 - Nicky Trasvina
 - Johanna Lopez Miyaki
- Youth 1st Executive Director Renard Monroe, Delia Fitzpatrick, Monique Guidry, Ernest Jones, Michael Lai

Vision 2030

- The Library recently completed a major strategic planning process; thank you to those of you who participated.
- Our new vision is:
 - A democratic, equitable, and vibrant San Francisco for everyone (where our staff help our residents to live their best lives.)
- Our new mission is to:
 - Connect our diverse communities to learning opportunities and each other.
- The new Ocean View Branch Library will be **THE** signature project to help us realize the vision and mission of our library system.
- Particularly as we seek to address equity and the fact Ocean View has long had the smallest library branch in the city, with the least access to library collections and services.

Project Background

- This project began in 2018 with the issuance of a Branch Capital Projects Feasibility Study commissioned by the Library and issued by Public Works.
- This study made the case for capital improvements and investments in the Mission, Chinatown and Ocean View Branch Libraries.
- Upon sharing the results of this study with the community, it became clear that a renovation of the existing library was not going to adequately meet the community's needs for a 21st century library.
- The Library heard you loud and clear and in October of 2019 commissioned another feasibility study to explore the potential of building a new library on the city owned parcels along the greenbelt adjacent to Brotherhood Way.
- This project and all non-essential capital projects across the city were shelved from 2020-2021 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
 - Michael acknowledged the deep disappointment this setback had on the project, the frustration in losing momentum and of having work on the project be delayed.
- We were able to get moving again in early 2022.
- Public Works submitted our preliminary project assessment application to the Planning Department for the Orizaba parcel, and we secured the project assessment report from Planning later that spring.
- This assessment revealed some Key Project Considerations for building the new library including the recommendation for the Library to:

- Consider joint-use options for the Library to co-locate with other services to bring greater benefit to the community.
- The need to address site access and pedestrian safety on Brotherhood Way. This point has been a constant refrain we've heard throughout all our previous community meetings and Library Commission meetings to date.

Project Overview

- Fast forward to today. The goal remains the same – a new state of the art branch library for the Ocean View community.
- On a positive note, the Library has been building the budget for this project through multiple budget cycles.
 - Last year alone, we secured \$19.8M in the FY24/25 budget, which was a substantial infusion of dollars into this project.
 - And we've budgeted an additional \$4.8M in this year's FY26 budget.
- This should be celebrated. When this project is ultimately completed the Library will have invested more in this new branch library than we have ever invested in any neighborhood library in our history. And that's the way it should be.
- Currently we are still in the planning phase of this project.
- The Library has been continuing to follow the key project recommendations from the Planning Department:
 - We are continuing to monitor the traffic studies underway along Brotherhood Way that can address / mitigate some of the earlier concerns we've heard from the community regarding access, pedestrian safety, and speed of vehicle traffic.
 - We are also considering joint-use options for co-locating the new library with other services for greater benefit to the community.
- More recently, there was an ordinance passed by the Board of Supervisors for the Library to prioritize the Orizaba parcel as we continue planning for the new library.
- We are adhering to that ordinance and that's a big reason why we're here today.
- Michael reiterated that this capital project is the top priority for the San Francisco Public Library.
- In this moment we are actively working with Public Works to secure a fresh cost estimate to understand the current environment for construction costs (cost per square foot) and what's possible in the near term with the available budget.
- One of our greatest challenges is the fact SF is the #1 most expensive real estate market for construction in the world. Inflation for the past few years has not helped.
- We're going to continue building the budget and also looking into the availability of additional infrastructure monies from the State Library and working with our Friends & Foundation of the San Francisco Public Library to raise private funds for this project.
- We hope to have more clarity regarding the Orizaba site later this year, as we continue to monitor the traffic studies from the SFMTA and SFCTA. (It's important to remember these projects are independent of the new library project and running concurrently).

Questions and Discussion – May 2, 2024

Note: “PW” signifies Public Works

How are you able to adhere to the ordinance to build the new library on Orizaba site and still talk to the Pilgrim Community Church as a possible location?

- (LIB) The original ordinance sponsored by Supervisor Safai was amended to prioritize the parcel on Brotherhood Way, allowing the library to retain flexibility.

Can you tell us more about the conversations with the church?

- (LIB) We’ve had preliminary discussions exploring the possibility of having a partnership with the church.

Is there a deadline to decide on a location?

- (LIB) We hope to have more clarity on the parcel on Orizaba Avenue and Brotherhood Way when the traffic studies are completed and follow the guidance from the Planning Department based on the results. The studies should be completed later this year.

Why wasn’t the community at the table during the discussions with the church?

- (LIB) Conversations with the church were brokered by San Francisco Real Estate. The Library has met once with Reverend Pierre. We respectfully accepted an invitation last week by the Reverend to have preliminary discussions about a partnership.

Will the project cost more the longer it takes to build a new library?

- (LIB) We have allocated 90% of the funds for the project and are working with PW on a new cost estimate.

What made having the library on Brotherhood Way attractive was the possibility of building a large library. Will we still be able to get the same square footage on another site?

- (LIB) The cost per square foot has increased, limiting the number of properties available on our budget. Good public library design will optimize the space. A facility doesn’t necessarily have to be large in order to meet the community’s needs.

The San Francisco County Transportation Authority (SFCTA) originally said their study will conclude in early 2025, but it sounds like it will likely conclude in Summer 2025. How can the community help speed things along?

- (LIB) We hesitate to put pressure on other City department heads. Given the concerns about Brotherhood Way, it’s important to wait for the results from the traffic studies.

Is the public able to comment on the traffic studies?

- (LIB) The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) has their own public meetings, but I don’t know when the studies will be discussed.

How will the Library make up the project’s budget shortfall?

- (LIB) The project is self-funded thanks to the Library Preservation Fund. We will also seek additional money from the State and get help from the Friends of SFPL.

Will there be a difference in cost and time between a library built on Orizaba and one co-located at the church?

- (LIB) We are working with PW on cost estimates and timelines.

Brotherhood Way can be dangerous, but Randolph Street can also be dangerous. There are always cars parked on the sidewalk and drivers speeding through the stop signs.

We have people at these meetings who aren’t a part of this community playing politics. The cost will increase the longer we wait and the people who fought to have a new library will never see it built.

- (LIB) I understand the community’s frustration. We lost momentum during the pandemic, but we are committed to this neighborhood and are working as fast and as hard as we can to build a new library. A fresh cost estimate will help us determine what size library we can afford, how to best stretch our budget dollars, and if additional money is needed. It’s important that we continue to meet and hear the community’s aspirations for the new library. Please reach out to me at citylibrarian@sfpl.org with your comments and concerns.

District 11 Supervisor, Ahsha Safai spoke at the meeting in support of building the new library on the Orizaba site for the following reasons:

- **Co-locating with the church will not work since there is no funding for potential housing on the site.**
- **Near consensus to build on Orizaba.**
- **Believes improvements will be made on Brotherhood Way after the studies.**
- **Waiting will increase costs and reduce services and features.**

Questions and Discussion – May 7,2024

Note: “PW” signifies Public Works

I worked at the IT Bookman Center and regularly saw unsafe traffic situations outside of the Ocean View Branch, so traffic safety issues are not unique to the Orizaba site.

Does the cost estimate for the new library include everything inside of the library? Prior to opening the current Ocean View branch we had to raise \$250,000 for furnishings, equipment etc.

- (LIB) I can assure you we have stable funding. San Franciscans voted to continue the Library Preservation Fund which enables us to self-fund capital projects. Also we’ve had success working with Friends to help fund furnishings, fixtures and equipment.

What possibilities are there for this building once the new building is open?

- (LIB) This building is a valuable asset that belongs to the library and it will help us in some way. Initially we thought we would sell it to help offset the cost of the new library but it's still to be determined what will happen.

Are you still looking at other parcels?

- (LIB) Yes we still have optionality. The Orizaba site is a viable site and a top option, but we don't need to decide now. We're waiting for the traffic studies and results could change the orientation of the building on the site. It is still a viable option and since the property is city owned it gives us leverage. There aren't a lot of other options. The only other possible option is the church across the street and we had a very preliminary conversation with them regarding development of their site.

Alemany traffic is very fast. Is the front entrance of the library going to be on Alemany?

- (PW) The building isn't designed yet so this is still to be determined.

Questions and Discussion – May 11, 2024

After hearing the background of the project I agree with the decision to move the library to a different space.

Is there a way to make sure that this project involves local hiring?

- (LIB) I believe this is baked in by law. There is a Board of Supervisors requirement for Public Works projects to include local hiring for local business enterprises (LBEs)

Do you know what the percentage requirement of local hiring is?

- (LIB) I don't know the answer but will find out.

Are there other examples of co-use libraries in San Francisco?

- (LIB) Yes there are. Our Mission Bay branch is tenant in a building that includes senior housing and access to shared meeting spaces. The Glen Park branch is an example of a neighborhood library that includes housing and retail along with the library.

Is there a timeline for the soil testing?

- (LIB) We don't have a timeline for this yet. The immediate next step is getting a new cost estimate and timeline range from public works. Also getting a timeline on the traffic studies. The traffic studies could impact the orientation of the building on the site.

Do the slides you showed last year still apply to today's meeting?

- (LIB) No, the purpose today is to provide a project update and to participate in a visioning exercise to learn what the community wants. The pandemic changed the ways people use the library and what they need it to provide so we are having a fresh conversation.

There seems to be a lot of controversy surrounding the Orizaba location. What other locations did you look at that haven't worked out?

- (LIB) Access and safety concerns about the Orizaba site have been discussed at every community meeting and it's critical that we understand and mitigate these concerns.

In 2018 we did an informal examination of the neighborhood. We did our due diligence but the market was overheated at that time and nothing else was promising. As of 2022 the Orizaba site has been our main focus. Public Works is the current default owner of the Orizaba site and there are ways we can leverage that. We did learn in 2022 that the property can't be transferred between city departments if there is already a use planned.

We took advantage of the pause in 2021 and 2022 and took time to look again for other potential sites and have had very preliminary conversations with the IT Bookman community center.

What about the church parking lot at Beverly and Shields or possibly the new rec center on Shields?

- (LIB) We looked at the Minnie and Lovie Ward site but there would be too much impact on the neighborhood.

For the new library I hope staff is added that speaks Chinese.

- (LIB) Yes, the library prides itself on being culturally competent and hiring librarians with language conditions that serve the populations in their neighborhoods.

It's hard to keep brainstorming for five years about what we want to see in a new library. Shouldn't we focus on the library location?

- (LIB) Choosing a location can happen at the same time as having these conversations. The way the public uses the library has changed since we last brainstormed ideas and we can't skip this important step.

Combined Brainstorming

Prompt 1: What makes you proud of your community?

- The neighbors - people are friendly and connected and we look out for one another.
- The micro-neighborhoods.
- Multi-generational families that have owned their properties for more than one generation.
- Culturally, ethnically and generationally diverse. The district has the most children and seniors in San Francisco.
- The diversity of churches. Different ways the community builds connection.
- There is a senior center with rotating programs including meals, dances, card games, music, memory programs, etc. Supports aging in place.
- Unique mix of spaces within the community to interact.
 - Green spaces, Minnie & Lovie, many childcare facilities. The library.

- Walkable, quiet. The weather.
- The schools. Close to SF State, City College.
- The history of the community.
- It's a creative community.
- Strong base of community organizations. There is a lot of neighborhood activism, advocacy and volunteerism.
- Mix of long-time residents and people traveling though on their way to other parts of the city.
 - Important to remember legacy neighbors as well as hosting new transplants.
- There's a lot of community pride and community commitment.
- Not a lot of hate/issues.
- Long time neighbors

Prompt 2: What are your aspirations for the new library?

- Spacious and open, not cramped. Priority for community gathering space.
- Library as a destination.
- Easily accessible and safe to access for everyone in the community.
 - Ideally located near the existing library, public transportation and safe intersections.
 - The preferred site is more difficult for many in the community to get to.
 - Would be nice to have a neighborhood shuttle to provide access. Shuttle stops and loading space for shuttles.
- Views of the city (like Potrero).
- Large meeting space with afterhours access.
- Several bathrooms. Eg: one on each floor. Elevator for access.
- Would like to see an extended outdoor learning area for children with natural spaces such as a garden. An aquarium.
- Outdoor reading spaces.
- Intentional device free spaces.
- There are a lot of students in the neighborhood. Provide a place to accommodate night owl population for studying (24-hour access).
 - Homework centers staffed after hours.
 - Access to technology specifically for youth. Space to collaborate-smart tech.
- Live performance space visible from the outside. Could be combined with a recording studio.
- Include a maker space, teaching kitchen.
- Dog kennel room inside so that people have some place for their dogs. Also an outside dog park/run area.
- Holds pickup and drop off locker outside.
- Tool lending library. Borrow things besides books.
- Space for book sales and book swaps. (library is not allowed to sell items)
- Ample availability of charging stations and ports. Furniture with charging ports.
- Family childcare 0-13 because of after school.

- For children:
 - Clean spaces.
 - Space for stroller parking.
 - Bathroom where children can reach the fixtures.
 - Children sized tables, chairs, etc.
 - Space for children to be in fellowship with other programs.
- For seniors:
 - Accommodate walkers and wheelchairs.
 - Sturdy seating to get in and out of. Higher chairs.
 - Keep fall prevention in mind.
 - “Play” area for games, etc.
 - Large print materials.
 - Wherever the library is placed think about how seniors would access it. There are a lot of hills in the neighborhood. Paratransit/robust shuttle system.
- Space for computer classes and workshops. Classes for beginners.
- Intergenerational programming. Foster social connections.
- Parking, or at least short-term parking zone in front of library.
- Space for bike parking. Bike sharing opportunity
- Diverse language collection and space for it.
 - More Chinese books/resources.
 - More Mandarin speaking staff.
 - (LIB)-FY-Language collections can currently be accessed from other libraries, either in San Francisco or outside of SF.
- Outdoor seating area with heaters, rooftop space.
- Zipline, slide, gondola, bar/refreshments, outdoor movie space.
- Space for gaming.
- Workforce development space.
- Quiet spaces to do homework or have privacy.
- Café.

Prompt 3: How can this library meet future needs?

- By being a community hub with all of the amenities.
- Visibility as focal point and landmark.
 - Visible and inviting. Large windows.
 - Can be a landmark/calling card that brings vibrancy and economic development to the neighborhood.
 - Opportunities for all ages.
- It needs secured continued funding for future improvements and for maintenance. Can’t just build it, it needs money to be maintained.
- Outside performance space like an amphitheater.
- Kitchen as a learning space-eg: cooking classes.

- Space for community led programs.
- Indoor play spaces that are safe for discovery, connection, etc.
- Coffee/cocktail bar.
- Exhibit space/gallery. Art studio space for all ages with art materials provided.
- Critical that it provides more than just library services.
- A place for placemaking, community meetings, gathering.
- Enhanced accessibility to library services.
- Dedicated space for youth to do homework.
 - Safe space.
 - Later hours to accommodate family work hours.
- Adjust to the needs of the community.
 - Robust literature for community.
 - Repurpose space for needs depending on time of day.
 - Services for students/community with differing abilities.
- Take advantage of the connection with SF State. Can bring SF State intellectual resources, authors, etc.
- Establish partnership with City College Performing Arts Center for cross promotion of events etc.
- Plan for growth.
- Be an emergency hub.
- Be a heating/cooling center.
- Have unhoused social services.
- STEM/Maker space.
- Classes in small business and entrepreneurship.
- Cooking, nutrition and health classes.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Michael Roman and Florinda Battad.