TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC WORKS

DATE: DECEMBER 4, 2006 CMR:434:06

SUBJECT: TRANSMITTAL OF A STUDY BY GROUP 4 ARCHITECTURE ON LIBRARY SPACE NEEDS AT MITCHELL PARK LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY CENTER, MAIN LIBRARY AND BRANCH LIBRARIES; LIBRARY AND PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE GROUP 4 ARCHITECTURE REPORT; AND STAFF RECOMMENDATION TO UNDERTAKE POLLING PRIOR TO FINAL DECISION ON LIBRARY AND FACILITY ENHANCEMENTS

RECOMMENDATIONS
The Library Advisory Commission and the Parks and Recreation Commission unanimously recommend a joint library and community center project. The Library Commission further recommends that additional study be done on an expansion of the Main Library as part of a future study phase and that near-term operational improvements be provided at the Main, College Terrace and Downtown libraries to include updates to public and staff spaces in the form of fresh paint, carpeting, better lighting, and sufficient funds be provided for new furniture and shelving.

Staff recommends that City Council:

1. Direct staff to poll Palo Alto residents to determine the level of community acceptance for the capital improvement options and costs developed by Group 4 Architects for the Mitchell Park Library, Mitchell Park Community Center, and the other branch libraries; also included in the polling will be an assessment of the level of community acceptance for a public safety building.

2. Based on the results of the poll, provide staff with direction on which project(s) to proceed with in terms of design and environmental assessment (if appropriate).

BACKGROUND
The Mitchell Park Library and Community Center are located off Middlefield Road in south Palo Alto. The two buildings share a large site with Mitchell Park. The library was designed by
Edward Durell Stone, a prominent international architect, as a one-story wood-framed building. It was constructed in 1958. An addition was constructed in 1975, expanding the building from 5,100 square feet (sf) to 9,500 sf. The addition so altered the Stone design that the building is no longer eligible for listing as a historic resource on either the National Register of Historic Places or with the State Registrar of Historic Resources.

The Mitchell Park Community Center (MPCC) was constructed in 1970 immediately adjacent to the library. It is a one-story, 10,000 sf facility housing many City recreation programs and some staff. The facility is outdated and is in need of renovation and expansion in order to better accommodate current and future recreation programs.

In November 2002, a bond election was held in order to finance construction of a combined library and community center. Features of that design included a 53,900 sf (with an option of a reduced 47,000 sf program) 2-story library wing, a 16,800 sf 2-story community center wing, a common lobby/entry that opened into the park, shared spaces, indoor-outdoor spaces, under-building and surface parking, reconfigured on-site circulation and landscaping. The capital cost estimates were $30.7 million for the full program library, $27.7 million for the reduced program library and $10.2 million for the community center. These costs included site and construction costs as well as design and construction management costs. The bond measure, which required a 67 percent majority vote, failed with a vote of roughly 61 percent.

In December 2004, the City Council directed the Library Advisory Commission (LAC) to “recommend a strategy for creating a full-service library at the existing site or another site, a strategy to include maintaining neighborhood facilities and distributed services; to maintain collection services, and to direct the LAC to recommend a redefinition of branch services.” Council later directed staff and the LAC to “determine how big Mitchell Park Library needs to be” and “prepare preliminary cost models/projections/estimates for capital needs.”

On June 12, 2006, Council approved a recommended project timeline and methodology for determining the potential size and costs of the new Mitchell Park Library and deferring infrastructure upgrades on the College Terrace Library to give staff the necessary time to work on the Mitchell Park Library study (CMR:260:06).

On September 11, 2006, Council approved a contract with Group 4 Architecture (CMR:343:06) for design and cost estimating services. Council directed Group 4 to study four different scenarios for the Mitchell Park Library, the results of which are summarized herein and detailed in the attached report (Attachment A). The scenarios considered in the Group 4 study were:

1) Demolish the existing library and construct a new library without adversely impacting the community center.
2) Construct a new library on the surface parking lot south of the community center and add surface parking where the library currently stands.
3) Demolish the existing library and community center and construct a combined facility on the site.
4) Expand the existing library and incorporate a new community center into an expanded, remodeled library.
DISCUSSION
The Group 4 Architecture report (Attachment A) meets the Council-directed study completion
date of no later than December 18, 2006 and provides conceptual size, space and cost
information related to the four study scenarios. A Project Management Team (PMT) met bi-
weekly beginning on September 12, 2006 to develop and evaluate the design options. The PMT
was comprised of representatives from the LAC and the Parks and Recreation Commission,
Group 4 Architecture and staff from Public Works, Library and Community Services.

Evaluation Process
Group 4 began the study with an analysis of where users of the various City libraries live.
Mitchell Park Library is used predominantly by residents of south Palo Alto (87%). The Main
Library is used mostly by residents of north Palo Alto (68%). Nearly half of the city’s
population is located in the service area for the Mitchell Park Library. Distributions for the other
branch libraries can be found in Attachment A.

Group 4 then compared the service levels at all Palo Alto libraries to libraries in towns with
similar demographics (Burlingame, San Mateo, Alameda, Tiburon, Belvedere, Cupertino and
Saratoga) to determine how Palo Alto libraries, and Mitchell Park Library in particular, compare
to these cities. The predominant area of shortfall at the Mitchell Park Library, when compared to
libraries in other areas, is a lack of space for group study rooms, programs, dedicated children’s
program space and staff work area and storage.

Design Scenarios
The PMT studied each of the above four scenarios that were directed by Council. These
scenarios were broken into sub-scenarios based on a “low” and “high” range of design. The
“low” range represented a more economical project that would have 5 percent less space than the
recommended square footage. The “high” end scenario represented a building that would be 5
percent greater than the projected need and also includes space for Library Administration and
Technical Services staff. These scenarios were presented to the LAC for review at four meetings
beginning in October 2006.

- Option 1a: 28,500 square foot (sf) library. Library modifications would consist of a one-
  story addition, renovation of the existing library, and under building parking to meet the parking
  demand. The addition would be west of the existing library. The existing community center
  would remain and would receive planned scheduled accessibility, heating and air conditioning
  upgrades. The current offset intersection would remain.

- Option 1b: 37,500 square foot (sf) library. Library modifications would consist of a two-
  story addition, renovation of the existing library, and under building parking to meet the parking
  demand. The addition would be west of the existing library. The existing community center
  would remain and would receive planned scheduled accessibility, heating and air conditioning
  upgrades. The current offset intersection would remain.

- Option 2a: 28,500 square foot (sf) one-story new library. A new library would be built
  at the southwest corner of the existing parking lot. The existing community center would remain
and would receive planned scheduled accessibility, heating and air conditioning upgrades. The current offset intersection would be realigned so that the entrance aligned with Mayview Road. Parking needs could be met with surface parking.

- **Option 2b:** 37,500 square foot (sf) two-story new library. A new two-story library would be built on the southwest corner of the existing parking lot. The existing community center would remain and would receive planned scheduled accessibility, heating and air conditioning upgrades. The current offset intersection would be realigned so that the entrance aligned with Mayview Road. Parking needs could be met with surface parking.

- **Option 3a:** 42,000 square foot (sf) one-story new library and new community center. A new one-story library and community center would be built at the southwest corner of the existing parking lot connected to a new library located along Middlefield Road. The current offset intersection would be realigned so that the entrance aligned with Mayview Road. Parking needs would be met with surface parking.

- **Option 3b:** 51,000 square foot (sf) two-story new library and new community center. A new one-story community center would be built at the southwest corner of the existing parking lot connected to a new two story library located along Middlefield Road. The current offset intersection would be realigned so that the entrance aligned with Mayview Road. Parking needs could be met with surface parking.

**Construction Costs**
Detailed descriptions of all the scenarios that were presented to the LAC and Parks and Recreation Commission can be found in Attachment A. Construction costs for each scenario for Mitchell Park and/or all Libraries are included in Attachment A and summarized below. The costs were prepared by a professional cost-estimating firm and reviewed by Group 4 Architecture to ensure that costs reflect Group 4 Architecture’s experience with its own recent, similar library projects. At this conceptual stage, the estimates should be used only for ‘order of magnitude’ purposes and to assist in comparisons between the various options. Costs are presented in current-year dollars with an inflation factor that reflects recent trends in construction cost escalation. Detailed construction costs will be prepared as the project progresses through the City’s design-review process.
Conceptual Cost Estimate Summary

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*FF&E = Furniture, Finishings and Equipment

Board and Commission Recommendations- Mitchell Park Library and Community Center
The LAC expressed concern that a joint use facility would come at the expense of other library facility improvements. The Library Advisory Commission consequently rejected Option 1 (expansion of the existing library) as too costly due to the need to provide underground parking as well as the need to bring the existing building up to current building codes. The LAC recommends going forward with Option 3 (new joint use facility), recognizing the many advantages of sharing certain program space. The LAC acknowledges that the library needs can be accommodated in Option 2 (new library only) but strongly urged the Council to recognize the needs of the community and to plan for the future.

The Parks and Recreation Commission supported the joint use facility, Option 3, based on the following concepts:
- It would encourage joint use of all nearby facilities (library, community center, park, school district properties)
- More space would be available to the City if the Palo Alto Unified School District and/or Foothill College obtain more space at the Cubberley Community Center
- Potential of increased facility rental revenue with an improved and versatile multipurpose room and a commercial grade kitchen
Although the option of replacing only the library would be an improvement for the library system, concern was raised by the commissioners about the impact a phased project would have on the potential for any future expansion of the recreation programs and/or the community center.

**Infrastructure Management Plan**

**Main and Branch Libraries**

If it is determined that the Mitchell Park Library and Community Center are not renovated and expanded, staff would proceed with ADA improvements, heating, air conditioning and seismic retrofit work that is already scheduled as part of CIP PE-04012, Mitchell Park Library and Community Center. The estimated cost of the improvements at the Community Center is $2.5 million. These improvements are part of the 1996 Adamson Report that was used to identify and prioritize upgrades to City facilities. This CIP also includes similar work at the existing Mitchell Park Library which would be deferred pending further direction on a new library. It should be noted that ADA improvements to the library will require some loss of programmable space as aisles are widened to improve circulation.

The LAC recommended expansion of planned infrastructure improvements for the libraries, to include upgrades to public and staff spaces in the form of paint, carpeting and better lighting and that sufficient funds be provided for new furniture and shelving. Part of Group 4 Architecture’s workscope was to evaluate the Main Library and the branch libraries. Its report indicates that while additional space is needed at Main Library for group study and a program room, a more detailed analysis and related design work would need to be done as part of a later phase of work. The College Terrace and Downtown libraries, while not ideal in size, were found to be functioning adequately as small branch libraries.

**Main Library:** Group 4 Architecture’s recommended improvements at the Main Library include group study areas that are acoustically separated from the rest of the building and a program space that seats 100 people. To accommodate these recommendations, the Main Library would need to expand to between 23,076 and 26,822 square feet from the current 21,313 square feet now available on the main floor. The basement of the Main Library is only suitable for storage since renovation of this space for public use would be cost prohibitive due to the need for seismic, accessibility, and other building system upgrades. Options for meeting additional space needs include additions to the existing building and renovation and reallocation of existing spaces in the library.

On February 15, 2005, as part of the 2004-05 mid-year budget, Council approved CIP project PE-05002, Main Library Space Reconfiguration, in order to establish a limited youth services collection and program area and improve the public space usage and staff efficiency at the Main Library (CMR 150:05). The project goals were accomplished by relocating the Technical Services (collections support) staff to the Downtown Library, reducing the size of the circulation and reference desks, and moving the book return and check-in operations away from the public service desk to the staff workroom (CMR 152:05).
A contract for $269,300 was awarded on October 16, 2006, for improvements at the Main Library (CMR:393:06). The work to be performed under the contract will provide an enlarged periodical room and public area by reconfiguring staff space, as well as areas of the existing reference and circulation desks. The wall separating the periodical room and the staff area will be demolished and pushed back to provide larger public space. The existing check-in operations and desk will be relocated to the existing conference room and manager’s office area in the staff area. New and more efficient Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant circulation and reference desks will make room for a public display area. The men and women’s public restrooms will be upgraded to meet current building codes and accessibility requirements. The staff area will be reconfigured to accommodate the changes made with the relocation of the check-in function, relocation of the manager’s office and enlargement of the periodical room. Although the Children’s Library is scheduled to re-open in 2007, a small children’s area and improved teen area will remain at the Main Library. In addition to the above work, a project is scheduled for construction in FY 2008-2009 to replace the mechanical and electrical service and distribution systems, provide new carpet and paint the exterior of the building (PF-07010, Main Library Improvements) with a budget of $1,073,000. Two previous lighting studies have not shown a need for lighting fixture replacements, but due to changes in book stacks and furniture location, additional study may be warranted.

**Downtown Library:** The evaluation by Group 4 Architecture states that the existing services at this library adequately serve its service population and significant capital improvements are not recommended. Future options for this library stem from the possibility of relocating technical services and/or library administration to any new Mitchell Park Library. The current technical services area would likely become a program space and the library administration area would likely become group study areas.

As part of the Main Library Space Reconfiguration work, the Downtown library was recently remodeled to include space for Technical Services staff relocated from the Main Library. In addition to the new staff area, improvements were made to the parking lot and restrooms to make them ADA-compliant. The cost of this work was $85,000.

Upgrades to the existing lighting, heating and air conditioning systems are scheduled for construction in FY 2009-2010 as part of CIP PF-09001 (Downtown Library Mechanical and Electrical Upgrades). This work will provide for systems that are designed to meet the current building code, increased occupant needs and to optimize energy efficiency. The budget for this work is $325,000. Design is scheduled for fiscal year 2007-08 and construction in fiscal year.

**College Terrace Library:** A consultant design contract to begin major renovations to the College Terrace Library will be presented to Council in December 2006. Work on this project had been deferred so that staff could focus on the Mitchell Park Library Study. Improvements are planned for outdated and worn materials and equipment which includes new flooring, paint, roofing, heating and air conditioning as well as lighting improvements. A seismic retrofit and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements will also be part of this project. The estimated construction cost is $3.5 million. The restroom and circulation improvements needed at this site for ADA compliance will likely reduce the space available for books and other materials. The consultant workscope, however, will contain a provision to evaluate some interior remodeling
that may be able to make the library layout more efficient and thereby regain some of the lost space.

Children’s Library: The Children’s Library is currently closed for renovations. When it opens, it will provide a larger collection of children’s books and improved seating and program spaces. Given the historic nature of the building and the site constraints, no further expansions were studied as part of the attached report.

Polling and Community Outreach
At its October 23 meeting, the City Council asked staff to return with information about the timing and scope of polling for community sentiment towards funding for the public safety building and any library facility and/or service enhancements. Based on initial discussions with a polling consultant, staff is recommending that preliminary polling occur before the City invests time and money on environmental and design work for any library facility or service enhancements. While it is possible that the library projects could still proceed in time for a June 2008 ballot if this recommendation is approved, there is the possibility that the time required to do the design and environmental assessment on a selected library project may push the library measure out to a November 2008 ballot. Staff believes, however, that information from the community polling is integral to Council making a decision on a library or library/community center project. This could result in two potential measures going before the public on different ballots. Staff recommends proceeding with an RFP immediately to hire a firm and begin polling in the early spring for both the public safety and library facilities projects. Staff will return to the Council in January to award the contract and request funding for the polling firm.

RESOURCE IMPACT
Funding for this initial space needs study was included in Capital Improvement Program (CIP) project PE-07011, Library Service. There is $145,000 remaining in this CIP for conceptual design efforts and additional funding is required for further design and environmental analysis. Staff will return with a BAO to provide funding for design and environmental analysis before that work commences.

Please refer to the “Resource Impact” section of the “Library Service Model Analysis and Recommendations” staff report, also in this Council packet.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS
This recommendation is consistent with Council’s direction to the LAC and consistent with the establishment of the Library as a Top 3 priority for 2006.

TIMELINE
At the City Council meeting of March 6, 2006, staff proposed milestones for the Council’s “Top 3” priorities, including the Library (CMR:191:06). Council affirmed a desire for a schedule that would put both the Library and the Police Building on a June 2008 ballot. While the original schedule called for award of design and environmental review contract in January 2007, staff now recommends proceeding with polling before a final decision on preferred Library facility enhancements occurs. Once the polling is completed, staff will return to Council with the result. The existing design contract with Group 4 Architecture could then be amended to provide for a
contract that would provide for up to 35 percent design for the preferred option. Environmental review and more detailed cost estimating will also be included as part of the Group 4 Architecture workscope.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**
This project will be subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). A future contract with Group 4 Architecture will include appropriate environmental review and analysis in the scope of work. On June 10, 2002, a Mitigated Negative Declaration was approved for the 53,900 square foot library and community center that was later presented to the public as part of a 2002 bond election. Staff anticipates that a Mitigated Negative Declaration will be appropriate for the new proposals as well.

**ATTACHMENTS**
Attachment A: Group 4 Final Report, Mitchell Park Library Space Study (DRAFT) - (for Council only)

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