Council previously directed staff to prepare conceptual designs and associated project cost estimates of the three New Library Plan projects by June 2002 in order to determine which projects could be placed on a November 2002 ballot for public funding. Accordingly, consultants were retained to prepare feasibility studies of all three library sites: Children’s, Main and Mitchell Park. The Council approved coordinating the Main Library expansion project with the Art Center Foundation’s proposed expansion of the Art Center as the two facilities share the same site. Consequently, the Art Center Foundation retained a consultant to prepare a feasibility study of the Main Library/Art Center site. Staff had anticipated asking Council to approve one site option from each of the feasibility studies, which would then be developed into conceptual designs. New information suggests a different approach in the case of the Main Library.

That feasibility study has concluded that two of the many site plans analyzed merit further study. Scheme 3, termed the “preferred scheme” in the site feasibility report because it appears to better meet the library program objectives, is to demolish the Main Library and build a new one. Scheme 2, termed the “alternate scheme” in the site feasibility report, is to retain the main reading room of the library and add on to it. The potential advantage of this approach is that it retains a majority of the existing Main Library building, which has been identified as an historic resource. It is not yet clear whether the renovation and expansion could be done while preserving the historic integrity of the Main Library due to seismic upgrades that would be needed. The Art Center expansion plans are the same in both Schemes 2 and 3.

As part of the environmental review process under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the City retained Architectural Resources Group (ARG) to evaluate the historical significance of the Main Library and the Art Center. ARG determined that both facilities are potentially eligible for the California Register of Historic Resources. While the Art Center can be expanded without damage to its historic character, the Main
Library “preferred alternative” would demolish an eligible historic building. Consequently, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must be completed prior to Council making a decision to select a site alternative.

Staff recommends that, in order to keep to the schedule for library improvements, Council direct staff to develop conceptual designs of both Scheme 2 and Scheme 3. This will provide information needed for the EIR process as well as clearer information on what the projects might look like and their costs. The preparation and public review of the EIR, which will occur simultaneously with the conceptual design effort, has an anticipated completion of June 2002. Upon completion of the EIR, Council could select conceptual designs for both the Main Library and the Art Center and decide whether to include the projects on the November 2002 ballot.
RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that Council select Main Library/Art Center Expansion Feasibility Study Scheme 2 and Scheme 3 for development into conceptual designs of both the Main Library and the Art Center and direct staff to proceed with preparation of an EIR which will analyze both.

BACKGROUND
In May 2000, the City’s Library Advisory Commission (LAC) produced the New Library Plan, which recommended creating significantly expanded resource libraries at the City’s Main, Mitchell Park, and Children’s Libraries. Council conceptually approved the New Library Plan in October 2000.

In January 2001, the City retained an architectural firm to prepare a building program for the New Library Plan, quantifying the space needed at each facility to accommodate the program described in the New Library Plan. That program recommends approximately 66,000 square feet (sf) for the Main Library (currently 27,000 sf), 55,000 sf for Mitchell Park Library (currently 9,500 sf), and 12,000 sf for Children’s Library (currently 3,400 sf).

The Art Center Foundation and City are also interested in expanding the Art Center. The Art Center shares the same site as the Main Library, including parking, landscaping and infrastructure. Staff recommended and the Council agreed to look at the expansion of both facilities in a coordinated manner. Consequently, in June 2001, the Art Center Foundation contracted with Mark Cavagnero Associates (MCA) to prepare a site feasibility study that would explore options for developing both projects on the site. The Art Center Foundation also contracted to have a programmatic study done for the Art Center, and that report recommends expanding the 29,000 sf facility to 56,000 sf in three phases.

Last year, the City initiated the environmental review of the Main Library and Art Center projects as required by CEQA. One component of the environmental review is to ascertain the historical and cultural significance of buildings that may be removed, remodeled or added onto. In January 2002, the City’s consultant reported that both facilities are potentially eligible for the California Register of Historical Buildings.

DISCUSSION
MCA has summarized the results of the feasibility study in the “Site Planning Study, Palo Alto Main Library and Art Center.” An executive summary of this report is attached (Attachment A). Copies of the full report have been provided to each of the Council members. Additional copies will be made available to the public for review at the Main Library and at City Hall.

Many site options were explored by MCA and presented to the community, boards and commissions, and the Project Site Committee, which includes representatives from the
Library Advisory Commission, Art Center Foundation, Friends of the Library, area residents, community gardeners, and staff. The different schemes included:

- Demolition of the Main Library and construction of a new Main Library at roughly the same location
- Retention of the Main Library reading room and an addition to the facility
- Three phases of additions to the Art Center
- Various community garden options, including retention, reduction and reconfiguration
- Various parking options, including parking under a new Main Library, surface parking, and a parking structure
- Various entrances and exits to the site for vehicles, including drop-off and delivery areas
- Retention of the existing landscaping and groves of trees

Throughout the feasibility study effort, certain schemes were removed from further consideration as not meeting established project guidelines and/or not being favorably received by the community groups and boards and commissions reviewing them. Other schemes were favorably received. In the end, Schemes 2 and 3 were determined to be the most promising and met most of the guidelines. These schemes have been termed the alternate and preferred schemes, respectively, in the consultant’s report.

Scheme 3 (Attachment B) includes: complete demolition of the existing library and a new two-story library constructed at the same location; three phased one-story additions for the Art Center; parking under the new library and surface parking; retention of 90% of the community gardens; retention of the groves of trees; and new vehicular entrances, exits and drop-offs.

Scheme 2 (Attachment C) includes: retention of the main reading room of the library and a two-story addition to the facility; the same three phased Art Center additions as in Scheme 3; surface and under-building parking and a two-level parking structure; the same 90% retention of the community gardens as in Scheme 3; slightly less retention of the existing trees as compared to Scheme 3 due to a larger library building footprint; and the same new vehicular entrances, exits and drop-offs as in Scheme 3.

Because the environmental work is not yet complete, the Council advisory boards and commissions cannot yet make final recommendations on various site schemes. However, they did provide comments to the City on the proposals. The Architectural Review Board, Planning and Transportation Commission, Public Art Commission, Library Advisory Commission, community and the Project Site Committee indicated a preference for Scheme 3. The Historical Resources Board, based on the information presented to date, preferred retaining the Main Library reading room (Scheme 2).
Most of the boards and commissions, as well as the community and the Project Site Committee, indicated that Scheme 3 has certain advantages over Scheme 2. These are:

- Better functionality of the library, both from a user and staff perspective
- A better fit of the building program spaces within the facility
- A more energy-efficient and sustainable library, as new construction would include modern, efficient systems rather than retaining older, less efficient systems
- More options for architectural styles, features and treatments
- Less building footprint on the site, enabling the scheme to avoid a separate parking structure and to retain more trees
- Potentially lower operation and maintenance costs
- Potentially improved life safety

Scheme 2 had only one significant advantage over Scheme 3: it retains the main reading room.

The City has received a preliminary structural assessment on the Main Library reading room. That report concludes that in order to seismically retrofit that facility to current codes, cross-bracing and/or exterior buttresses will be required. This may result in a compromise of the architectural, functional and historical character of that space. Further analysis of this issue will be conducted as part of the conceptual design effort and presented in the EIR.

MCA provided construction cost estimates for Schemes 2 and 3. Staff has taken those costs and added the other project costs, including design, furnishings, inflation, public art, and relocation, and has prepared a total project cost estimate for each facility in each scheme. The parking and site costs were divided between the two facilities based upon the relative size of the two projects: 70% for the Main Library and 30% for the Art Center. The total project costs are capital costs only and do not include staffing, operation, maintenance, or financing costs. Schemes 2 and 3 have essentially the same cost estimates: $42,600,000 and $42,500,000 for the Main Library and $18,500,000 and $17,400,000 for the Art Center. See Attachment D – Main Library/Art Center Feasibility Study Project Cost Estimate. Staff intends to convene a citizen blue ribbon task force to review project cost estimates in order to present to Council an accurate project cost estimate prior to Council deciding upon conceptual designs and which projects to place on a bond measure.

The Art Center Foundation has informed staff that it is very unlikely to be able to raise enough funds privately to support a $17,400,000 or $18,500,000 project at the Art Center. The Art Center Foundation has determined that the maximum project it can afford is $10,000,000, assuming it could raise half of the funding and the City would match with a $5,000,000 budget. Accordingly, staff will prepare a scope of work for the architect selected to prepare the Art Center conceptual designs that addresses this budgetary constraint. The architect will be asked to develop a number of different conceptual
design combinations/scenarios of renovations and an addition that add up to a total project cost of $10,000,000. Upon completion of conceptual design, Council will have to decide if the City will contribute money to the Art Center Expansion budget and, if so, how much, when and through what funding source/mechanism.

**RECOMMENDATION**
It allows conceptual designs to commence in order to meet the schedule for completion of conceptual designs prior to placing the project on a November 2002 ballot. It allows further development and consideration of a scheme to retain the main reading room. However, it will increase the conceptual design costs to the City. Final costs and the scope of services will return to Council for approval prior to authorizing the architects to proceed.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**
The recommendation to proceed to conceptual design on Schemes 2 and 3 is consistent with existing City policies.

**NEXT STEPS**
Staff is still proceeding under the assumption that, upon completion of the CEQA process around June 2002, Council will select conceptual designs on all the New Library Plan projects. Furthermore, staff anticipates that Council will decide in June 2002 which projects will be placed upon a November 2002 ballot for public funding. If Council decides to move ahead to conceptual design on the Main Library and Art Center projects now, staff will immediately proceed to retain architects to develop conceptual designs by June 2002. In fact, staff has already selected architects for both the Main Library and the Art Center. The scopes of work are being developed and the fees are being negotiated. Staff anticipates bringing these contracts to Council for approval in March 2002.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**
An EIR is being prepared for the Main Library/Art Center project. It is expected that the Draft EIR will be available for public review in early April 2002. The public review period for the EIR is expected to begin in early April 2002. The Final EIR is expected to be ready for Council review and approval in late June 2002. Once the EIR is certified, Council can make a decision to keep and modify, or replace, the existing Main Library and renovate/expand the Art Center. Mitigated Negative Declarations are being prepared for the Children’s Library Expansion project and the Mitchell Park Library and Community Center Expansion projects.

**ATTACHMENTS**
Attachment A: Executive Summary of the “Site Planning Study, Palo Alto Main Library and Art Center”
Attachment B: Scheme 3, “Preferred” site option
Attachment C: Scheme 2, “Alternate” site option
Attachment D: Main Library/Art Center Feasibility Study Project Cost Estimate