TO:                  HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM:               CITY MANAGER                DEPARTMENT:  PUBLIC WORKS

DATE:               JUNE 10, 2002                 CMR:286:02

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION CERTIFYING ADOPTION OF MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION AND APPROVAL OF CONCEPTUAL DESIGN OF THE MITCHELL PARK LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY CENTER PROJECT

REPORT IN BRIEF
On March 11, 2002, Council approved a feasibility study scheme for the Mitchell Park Library and Community Center expansion projects. That scheme united the two facilities into one structure and placed it alongside Mitchell Park. The architect, Group 4, has now completed the conceptual designs.

The conceptual designs have been reviewed and recommended for approval by various City boards and commissions, the community and the Project Committee. Features of the design include a 53,900 sf (or a reduced-program, 47,000 sf) 2-story library wing, a 16,800 sf 2-story community center wing, a common lobby/entry that opens onto the park, shared spaces, indoor-outdoor spaces, under-building and surface parking, safe pedestrian pathways, reconfigured site circulation, and landscaping.

The project capital cost estimates are $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 include site, parking and landscape costs, as well as design and construction management costs. To fund the capital costs of these projects, both facilities are being considered for inclusion in a bond measure in November 2002. An application for State Library Bond Act grant monies will be submitted on June 14, 2002, for a 65% State, 35% City match. Another City Manager’s Report elsewhere on this agenda addresses the grant application in detail.

The Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) has been circulated and all public comments responded to. The MND, with comments and responses, is included as Attachment A. For a project of the size analyzed, all environmental impacts can be mitigated to less than significant, in part through the use of an aggressive parking and transportation management demand program.
RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that Council:

1. Adopt a Resolution Adopting a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Mitchell Park Library and Community Center Project (Attachment B).

2. Approve the conceptual design of the Mitchell Park Library and Community Center Project.

BACKGROUND
Mitchell Park Library and Mitchell Park Community Center are located off Middlefield Road in south Palo Alto. They share a large site with Mitchell Park. The library was designed by Edward Durrell 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 the State Register of Historic Resources.

The Mitchell Park Library is severely overcrowded and in need of expansion. Many of the building’s original systems are past their useful life and need replacement. In May 2000, the City’s Library Advisory Commission (LAC) produced the New Library Plan (NLP). This document lists the LAC’s recommendations for upgrading and expanding the City’s library system, including a significant expansion of the Mitchell Park Library into a full-service resource library for south Palo Alto.

In January 2001, the City retained Phillips Swager Associates (PSA) to prepare programs for the expanded libraries, quantifying the various space needs described in the NLP. PSA completed the programs in August 2001 and recommended 55,000 sf to accomplish the NLP’s vision for the Mitchell Park Library.

The Mitchell Park Community Center was constructed in 1970 immediately adjacent to the library. It is a one-story, wood-framed, 10,000 sf facility housing many City recreation programs and some staff. The facility is outdated and in need of expansion to better accommodate current and future recreation programs. A building program by PSA was completed in 2001 recommending a 16,800 sf facility.

City Council approved coordinating the expansion of the Mitchell Park Library with the expansion of the Mitchell Park Community Center to ensure the site is master planned to accommodate both facilities as well as the parking, circulation and landscaping.
The Mitchell Park Project Committee was formed to select an architect and to provide guidance to the architect through the design process. The committee consists of community, Youth Council and School District representatives, Library Advisory Commission, Park and Recreation Commission, and Public Art Commission members, and key Library, Recreation, Planning and Public Works staff.

In October 2001, the Project Committee selected Group 4 Architecture, Research + Planning, Inc. (Group 4) to prepare a feasibility study, or master plan, of the Mitchell Park Library and Community Center site. Group 4 has master planned and designed award-winning libraries for Daly City and Burlingame, recently completed the design of the City of Santa Clara’s new library, and is currently designing the Berryessa Library in San Jose.

On March 11, 2002, Council approved the feasibility study and selected a scheme for continuation into conceptual design. The scheme unites the library and community center into one new structure and places it at the southwest corner of the site adjoining the park. Also on March 11, Council approved an amendment to the contract with Group 4 to include the conceptual design work.

**DISCUSSION**

Group 4 has worked very hard since March in order to complete the conceptual designs. Three of the firm’s principal architects as well as support staff have prepared and developed the designs and conducted an extensive public review process. The designs were presented to and discussed with the Library Advisory Commission, the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Planning and Transportation Commission, and the Architectural Review Board. In addition, there were three community meetings held at Mitchell Park Community Center, including one for school children.

The Project Committee met regularly with Group 4 to discuss the input from the community and the review groups and to consider ways that the designs could accommodate their recommendations and resolve the issues that were raised. Issues included parking, site traffic, bicycle and pedestrian circulation, tree preservation, landscaping, tennis court relocation, floor plans, shared spaces, security and sustainable design. Based upon these discussions, Group 4 made many improvements to the conceptual designs, and produced a final conceptual design.

On May 30, the Project Committee voted unanimously to recommend the final conceptual design to Council. The final conceptual site plan, floor plans and perspective sketch are included as Attachment C.

Summaries of the key issues that affected the development of the conceptual designs are listed below.
**Program**
The programming studies recommend 55,000 sf for the library and 16,800 sf for the community center. However, combining the two facilities into one saves approximately 1,100 sf by sharing certain spaces, such as staff, meeting and mechanical rooms and the lobby. Consequently, Group 4 has developed conceptual designs of approximately 53,900 sf for the library and 16,800 sf for the community center.

In an effort to reduce costs, the City Manager asked the LAC to review the programs to determine if any spaces could be reduced or eliminated. The LAC reported to Council in January 2002 that the Mitchell Park Library could be reduced to 46,700 sf, a reduction of about 8,000 sf, and still attain the major goals of the NLP. Reductions in space came from collection areas, teen area, seating throughout the building, storage, Friends of the Library area, exhibit space and the joint staff lounge, plus the loss of a public/staff conference room. On April 22, 2002, Council directed staff to survey the community with two bond measure options: a full program at all facilities, and a reduced program at the Main and Mitchell Park Libraries and the Art Center.

Staff directed Group 4 to develop a second conceptual design for the library at the reduced program of 46,700 sf. The conceptual design of the reduced library is essentially the same as the full program library and keeps the same site location and configuration, massing, style and general floor plans of the library. The most significant difference is that the length of the building as it extends towards Middlefield Road has been reduced by approximately thirty feet.

The community center is the same in both versions. It was not reduced in size because staff had originally directed the programmer not to include some desired, but non-essential spaces: a gym, lockers, showers, and a fitness/work-out room.

**Floor Plans**
The conceptual floor plans are arranged with separate library and community center wings, joined by a common lobby. The floor plans work well for both the library and the community center wings of the facility. Group 4 conducted a number of meetings with library and community center staff to analyze different floor plan configurations and adjacencies. Some of the features of the floor plans are:

- A glass common lobby/entry that unites the two wings of the building and is envisioned as a gathering and waiting space, as well as a focal point of the approach to the building and a portal to the park
- A gallery off the lobby connecting the two facilities
- A separate library entrance closer to Middlefield Road
• A large and a medium multi-purpose room, with the large one having the facilities (separate entry, restrooms, kitchen) to accommodate public and private parties after normal operating hours
• A Homework Help and Enrichment Center, in partnership with the Palo Alto Unified School District
• Numerous outdoor spaces, like patios, decks and gardens, so users have the ability to have a meeting or read a book outside and enjoy the views and weather
• Children homework spaces
• Teen spaces in the library with pathways and adjacencies to teen spaces in the community center
• A centralized circulation hub in the library for convenience and security
• Many rooms with views to the park and landscaping

Tennis Courts
Two existing tennis courts and two existing paddle tennis courts would be removed to accommodate the new building and adjoining landscaping. There have been staff, Parks and Recreation Commission, and community meetings to discuss whether the courts will be replaced. With the consensus of the tennis community, staff is recommending that all four courts be replaced, but has not yet determined where. Options are at another location within Mitchell Park, at Cubberley Community Center, at another park in Palo Alto, or a combination of these sites. Community Services staff is confident that there are locations that will not be adversely affected by the relocated new courts.

Parking
There are currently 264 parking spaces at Mitchell Park for the park, library and the community center users. The parking demand for the entire site, including the new facility, has been calculated at 390 spaces per the Palo Alto Municipal Code. However, the Project Committee, and Boards and Commissions urged that methods be found to encourage alternative forms of transportation and reduce the number of parking spaces provided on site. The Council also has the ability to require that events at the site be coordinated to manage parking demand.

The Planning and Community Environment Department will prepare a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program for the site to determine the extent to which overall parking demand can be reduced. A TDM program develops strategies for encouraging employees and visitors to use alternative modes of transportation when coming to the site. On-site bus and shuttle stops, bicycle parking, and employee ride-sharing are all strategies that can be employed to reduce the parking demand and would be incorporated into the project. With a combination of a joint use facility (library, community center, and park) and a TDM program, the Planning Director has the discretion to reduce the parking demand up to 20%, from 390 to 312 spaces. However, if
necessary, the site can accommodate 390 parking spaces in under-building and surface parking lots.

During the feasibility study, Group 4 demonstrated that all of the parking could not be accommodated in surface parking lots only. Some parking would need to be in a parking structure and/or under the new building. The community as well as the boards and commissions were unanimous in their preference for under-building parking instead of a parking structure. Accordingly, the conceptual designs include under-building parking for approximately 100 cars and a new surface lot for approximately 100 cars, all primarily for the library and community center users. Combined with the existing surface lots, which are used primarily by the park users, the entire site parking total is approximately 335 spaces.

**Site Circulation**

Group 4 developed a number of different site circulation schemes to ensure that pedestrians, bicyclists and alternative modes of transportation are being accommodated safely, conveniently and intuitively. Pedestrians and bicyclists will be able to access the library and the community center without having to cross driveways or parking lots as they do now. The plans include an on-site shuttle bus stop. They also include a well-defined two-way vehicular roadway through the site from Middlefield Road to East Meadow Road. One of the two traffic lights in front of the site on Middlefield Road will be removed to improve traffic on Middlefield Road. A new vehicular entrance is provided off Middlefield Road directly across from Mayview Road. It is centered on the site, framed by new landscaping helping to define a park entryway, and leads directly to the lobby of the building. Parking is on the right of the entrance road and a pedestrian path is on the left that does not cross any driveways.

**Landscaping**

A large, existing Silver Dollar Gum tree, a preferred species of eucalyptus tree, will become a feature of the site, framing the entry. All other significant trees, including redwoods, pines and an oak, have been retained and are important components of the landscaping. Additionally, dozens of new trees will be planted. The parking lots will be landscaped. The area between the library and Middlefield Road is planned to accommodate a children's garden and a general public garden, potentially with public art.

**Security**

Pathways, driveways and parking lots will be well-lit. The building interiors are laid out in a manner that will allow both interior and exterior surveillance. The Fire and Police Departments have reviewed the plans to ensure that emergency site access, surveillance and security are accommodated.
Sustainability
Group 4, with its electrical and mechanical engineers, conducted a sustainability workshop with City staff. Sustainable strategies for both the site and the building were discussed. In an effort to meet the City Council's direction to incorporate sustainable components and strategies, staff recommended that Group 4 include the following in the design and construction cost estimate for the project:

- Raised floor system, which allows more efficient control of heated and cooled air, eliminates ductwork, and is more flexible in running electrical and telecommunications cabling in future remodeling projects
- Photo-voltaics, which are panels, usually on a roof, that convert sunlight into electricity. The City is hoping to obtain grant funding for at least a portion of the capital costs
- Alternative transportation, including electric car recharging stations, shuttle bus drop-off, and bicycle parking at grade and in the under building garage with a changing room
- Water-efficient landscaping
- Landscaping to minimize heat islands
- Building commissioning, which is the balancing and fine-tuning of the buildings' electrical and mechanical systems
- Recycled content building materials
- Low-emitting materials to improve indoor air quality
- Maximizing natural daylight
- Minimizing energy and water use

Preliminary calculations indicate the project will qualify for a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification. LEED is a program conducted by the United States Green Building Council. Projects get points for incorporating environmentally conscious and energy efficient materials and systems. Points are scored for the site as well as the building. A project must have a certain number of points to be LEED certified. Additional points can earn the project a silver, gold or platinum ranking. Staff's goal is to achieve a LEED silver certification for this project.

Architecture
Group 4 conducted a design preference survey with those who attended the community meetings. The preferences were for light, open, naturally-lit interior spaces, sloped roofs, natural materials, and patios and decks. These features have been incorporated into the conceptual design. Architectural features and styles will be more fully developed in the next phase of design, schematics.
PUBLIC AND BOARD AND COMMISSION REVIEW
The designs were reviewed by the Library Advisory Commission, the Architectural Review Board, the Planning and Transportation Commission, the Parks and Recreation Commission, the community, and the Project Committee. In general, the groups felt that the community center and the library work well combined in one facility. The building integrates well with the park, the landscape and the parking. The parking and the pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular site circulation are safe and convenient. Sustainability has been incorporated. Formal recommendations from all the Boards and Commissions are included in Attachment D.

RESOURCE IMPACT
Group 4 has prepared two construction cost estimates for the project. One includes a full-program library, the other a reduced-program library. In addition to the building costs, these estimates include the surface and under-building parking, landscaping, an allowance for sustainable design, an allowance for reconstruction of the tennis courts at another location, an allowance for public art, and the removal of a traffic signal on Middlefield Road. Staff has added the other project costs, including design, construction management, contingencies, allowances, escalation, and financing, to arrive at the estimated total project capital costs of $30.7 million for the full-program library, $27.7 million for the reduced-program library, and $10.2 million for the community center. See Attachment E for the summary estimate of all project costs. These costs have been updated from those discussed with the Council during the site feasibility stage of the project. The capital cost estimates do not include furnishings, estimated at $3 million. Nor do they include any staffing, operation, or maintenance costs, which are estimated at $2.2 million per year, because these costs are not reimbursable with bond proceeds.

The City, with assistance from Group 4 and Beverly Simmons, a consultant grant writer, will be applying for a Library Bond Act grant on June 14, 2002. The grant is a 65% State, 35% City matching grant with a $20 million cap per project. To increase the chances of success, the City has entered into a cooperative agreement with the Palo Alto Unified School District to sponsor the Homework Help and Enrichment Center at the Library.

There is a statewide pool of only $150 million in grant money for this application cycle. Therefore, staff is recommending applying for the reduced-program library amount of $29.3 million in an effort to increase the City’s chances of receiving a grant and to reduce exposure to the Infrastructure Reserve. The State will most likely inform the City if a grant will be awarded by the end of 2002. If the City receives a full grant for the reduced library, the split would be approximately $19 million from the State, and $10.3 million from the City. Note that the grant application estimate differs from the City’s estimate ($27.7 million) due to differences in the eligibility of certain costs, such as furnishings,
and differences in percentage mark-ups for certain items. If the bond measure does not pass, a successful grant means the City will be required to use available reserves, shift existing resources, or seek another revenue source. Staff does not recommend using reserves.

The City Council is scheduled to decide on July 8, 2002, whether to include the Mitchell Park Library and the Mitchell Park Community Center in a bond measure on the November 2002 ballot. If the Library is included in the bond measure, the Council will need to decide for a full-program, $30.7 million library, or a reduced-program, $27.7 million library. If the community center is included in the bond measure, staff recommends using the estimated amount, $10.2 million. Since proceeds from a bond measure cannot be used to pay for furnishings, operation, maintenance, staffing, or other on-going costs, the City will need to identify other funding sources for these costs.

The City Manager has convened the Community Facilities Cost Advisory Committee to review the cost estimates of all the community facility projects being considered for the bond measure. The Committee consists of eight professionals in the building industry, including architects, developers, contractors, construction managers, and public works staff from other cities. The Committee has met twice, and is planning to meet once more. It will issue a report stating its conclusions and recommendations regarding the various cost estimates. Staff will incorporate the Committee’s recommendations and revise the final conceptual design cost estimates for all the projects accordingly. The Committee’s report and the revised final estimates will be included in the Council packets for the July 8, 2002, Council meeting.

Current staffing levels are inadequate to proceed into final design and construction of all of the projects if a bond measure were to pass in November. The 2002-03 Proposed Budget document includes the following additions to the Table of Organization: an Engineering Technician III, a Senior Project Manager, and an Office Specialist. These additions to the Public Works Department have an annual ongoing cost of $246,640 in salary and benefits expense. The funding of these positions will be requested by a Budget Amendment Ordinance only after a successful November 2002 bond measure vote. Staff may also request one Library position to support the building planning process, however, these needs are still being reviewed. The cost of three Public Works positions can be capitalized as part of the construction process and could therefore be financed as part of the bond measure as long as they are directly related to design and construction activities. These positions are not permanent and should be terminated upon project completion or adsorbed through attrition of similar positions.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**
This recommendation does not represent any change to existing City policies.
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
This project is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the project, which addresses the potential environmental impacts, and identified mitigation measures included in the project that would reduce impacts to a less than significant level. The MND has gone through the public review process and staff has responded to all comments (see Attachment A). The City Council received copies of the Initial Study and the MND at the beginning of the review period. Staff recommends Council approve and certify the MND by adopting the attached Resolution (Attachment B).

ATTACHMENTS
Attachment A: Mitigated Negative Declaration, including comments and responses
Attachment B: Resolution Adopting a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Mitchell Park Library and Community Center Project
Attachment C: Site plan, floor plans, and perspective sketch
Attachment D: Recommendations on the conceptual designs from the Boards and Commissions
Attachment E: Summary cost estimate

PREPARED BY:____________________________________________________
BOB MORRIS
Senior Project Manager

DEPARTMENT HEAD:______________________________________________
GLENN S. ROBERTS
Director of Public Works

CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:_______________________________________
EMILY HARRISON
Assistant City Manager