TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENT: COMMUNITY SERVICES

DATE: MAY 20, 2002 CMR: 262:02

SUBJECT: MITCHELL PARK LIBRARY JOINT VENTURE PROJECT

REPORT IN BRIEF

The California Reading and Literacy Improvement and Public Library Construction and Renovation Bond Act of 2000 makes $350 million of State bond funds available for construction and renovation of public libraries. This report describes a joint venture project of collaboration with the Palo Alto Unified School District, the Everyone’s Homework and Enrichment Center (EHEC), as part of the City’s application for funding from the State Bond Act. The EHEC proposal is to establish a place and a program providing a familiar and safe location after school for homework and enrichment activities outside the school library or classrooms at the new Mitchell Park Resource Library. Included are a complete program description, budget and legal agreement to be incorporated in the bond application due on June 14, 2002.
RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that Council approve the submission of a joint venture project with Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD), the Everyone’s Homework and Enrichment Center project, as part of the City’s application for funding from the State Bond Act.

BACKGROUND
The California Reading and Literacy Improvement and Public Library Construction and Renovation Bond Act (Bond Act) of 2000 makes $350 million of State bond funds available for construction and renovation of California public libraries. The Bond Act provides 65 percent of the eligible project costs (up to a maximum of approximately $30.8 million) with a local match of 35 percent.

There are two types of funding categories for Bond Act-eligible projects, one for new buildings and one for remodeled and expanded buildings, each with different requirements and priorities for funding. After analysis of the options (see CMR 362:01), the Mitchell Park Library/Community Center project was determined to be the most competitive for Bond Act funding of the three Palo Alto library projects currently being considered for expansion. It is eligible in the category of new buildings. The first priority for funding in this category is given to “joint use projects in which the public library and the public school district have a 20-year cooperative service agreement.” A joint use project is not limited to a co-located library (i.e. one in which public and school library services are both provided), but may be a collaborative service.

In 2001, Council established five priorities, including Joint Planning with PAUSD. One of the objectives was to implement City/PAUSD library collaboration programs. Potential library collaboration was discussed at several City/School Liaison Committee meetings beginning in April 2001 and culminated at the October 11, 2001 meeting in a joint presentation by City and PAUSD library staffs of a common purpose and goals for collaboration. In February 2002, a draft proposal for the “Everyone’s Homework Center” was presented to the City/School Liaison Committee.

DISCUSSION
City and PAUSD staffs have cooperated in the creation of a proposal for the Bond Act application that serves the needs of students, carries out the New Library Plan vision for the Mitchell Park Resource Library, and takes advantage of the proximity of the Mitchell Park Community Center. It is also consistent with Bond Act requirements. The result is Everyone’s Homework and Enrichment Center (EHEC). Attachment A details the proposal. This proposal fits neatly with the location of Mitchell Park adjacent to three PAUSD schools (Stanford Middle, Hoover Elementary and Fair Meadow Elementary) and the flood of students now coming across the park to the Mitchell Park Library and Community Center every day after school to address their academic and recreational needs.
A community needs assessment process was conducted as part of the grant application process. It found that there is currently no consistent communication between the schools and the City staff to address students’ homework and school assignment research needs. Further, the existing homework centers and programs at Jane Lathrop Stanford (JLS) Middle School and the library do not meet the increasing demand. Physical space is extremely limited at the library, which is heavily used, noisy and distracting. Computers and other technology are not specifically designated for homework help and are in high demand by all library users. Through discussion with teens, teachers, school administrators, and the community, the proposal has evolved and improved with the incorporation of the recreation component and the opportunity to include enrichment in addition to homework programs.

The EHEC proposal is to establish a place and a program providing a familiar and safe location for homework and enrichment activities outside the school library or classrooms. It will operate year round, targeting children and teens primarily in the 4th through 8th grades. Staff from PAUSD and the City’s Library and Recreation Divisions will plan programs to foster the education of the whole child. Volunteers will primarily provide staffing of the center with oversight at the library provided by City staff. Volunteers will include high school students recruited and trained with the assistance of PAUSD as well as adults.

**RESOURCE IMPACT**
Attachment B is a budget identifying one-time expenses to begin operations and projected on-going expenses for the EHEC, distributed between the City and PAUSD. For both parties, some of the expenses are existing expenses and some are new. In June, staff will be preparing a complete, projected budget incorporating these expenses and others for operation of the new Mitchell Park library, to be authorized by Council for submission of the Bond Act application.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**
In approving this proposal and the legal agreement, Council is establishing a policy to continue an agreement with PAUSD for a minimum of twenty years and to operate the library for forty years. See Attachment C.

**TIMELINE**
This CMR addresses the first official step for the City’s application for Bond Act funding. The PAUSD Board will also address this proposal in May. Staff will return to Council June 10, 2002 for approvals of the conceptual design of the Mitchell Park Library and Community Center, the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), and a resolution certifying the project construction budget, the commitment of the local funding match for project and the operating budget for the Mitchell Park Library upon a successful award by the State Bond Act Board. The application will obligate the City to provide matching funding if the proposal is successful, whether or not there’s a
successful bond measure in November. Council action on all of these items is required in order to comply with Bond Act requirements and for Palo Alto’s submittals to meet the deadline for the first round of funding, June 14.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
In accordance with Bond Act guidelines and other requirements, this project is being reviewed per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Staff has prepared a MND for the project, which will be provided to Council for action when the Mitchell Park Library and Community Center project is reviewed in its entirety by Council on June 10, 2002.

ATTACHMENTS
Attachment A: Everyone’s Homework and Enrichment Center proposal
Attachment B: Homework Center Proposed Budget
Attachment C: Joint Use Cooperative Agreement for Development of “Everyone’s Homework and Enrichment Center”

PREPARED BY: ________________________________
MARY JO LEVY
Director of Libraries

DEPARTMENT HEAD: ____________________________
PAUL THILTGEN
Director of Community Services

CITY MANAGER APPROVAL: _______________________
EMILY HARRISON
Assistant City Manager

Cc: Library Advisory Commission