



**TO:** Library Commission  
**FROM:** Peggy Ford, Staff Liaison  
**SUBJECT:** Potential New Library and New Location

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Accept staff report regarding potential new Library and new location

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**BACKGROUND**

At the November 6 and December 4, 2012 Library Commission meetings, Commissioners discussed potential new Los Altos Main Library locations and funding options.

Subsequently, the Commission agreed to wait until after the downtown parking study was completed (spring of 2013) in order to request permission from Council to research a new library and funding and make recommendations to Council if necessary.

**DISCUSSION**

Once the Downtown Parking Management Plan is presented to the City Council, and if a majority of Library Commission members believe relocation of the Main Library to downtown could be a viable alternative, it is recommended that a joint Council/Commission study session be requested in order for the Council to provide feedback to the Commission on the relocation concept

December 4, 2012

Item # 4



**TO:** Library Commission  
**FROM:** Peggy Ford, Senior Recreation Supervisor  
**SUBJECT:** Library Relocation and Funding

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Discuss relocation of the main Los Altos Library

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**BACKGROUND**

At the October 2, 2012 Library Commission meeting, Los Altos resident Bob Simon spoke during Public Comments to request that the Commission look into the possibility of funding the construction of a new library building through private means independent of the Civic Center Master Plan. (Attachment 1)

Subsequently, Los Altos resident, David Smith attended the November 6, 2012 Commission meeting to suggest to the Library Commission that the Library be relocated down town between Main and State streets and that the Library Commission appoint a select committee to develop some alternative approaches for a new library. (Attachment 2)

Based upon the comments from these two individuals, the Commission requested this item be on the agenda at its next regular meeting.

**DISCUSSION**

The Library Commission acts in an advisory capacity to the Councils of Los Altos and Los Altos Hills in matters pertaining to the City libraries, it cooperates with other governmental agencies and civic groups in the promotion of adequate and efficient library services to the community with prior approval of and at the direction of the City Council, makes budget recommendations to the Councils with regard to the libraries, and submits an annual report to both Councils. The Library Commission is also advisory to the North County Library Authority and advises the administrative staff of the County Library. The Commission consists of seven members, two of which are appointed by the Los Altos Hill City Council.

The North County Library Authority (NCLA) was formed by a Joint Powers Agreement between the City of Los Altos and the Town of Los Altos Hills to plan, support, acquire, maintain and operate programs and facilities for the extension of public library services for the benefit of the inhabitants of Los Altos and Los Altos Hills. It is governed by a board consisting of two appointees

December 4, 2012

Item # 4

from each member city and one member appointed by the Los Altos Library Commission. The North County Library Authority administers the \$76 parcel tax that was enacted with the passage of Measure L in 2010.

Currently, the Santa Clara County Library District rents the Los Altos main Library facility and provides library services while the City owns the property/building and maintains its exterior.

It is prudent for the Library Commission to consider potential impacts related to the relocation of the Library, particularly to the downtown area. These impacts could include:

- Potential loss of retail space
- Need to replace and add parking to an already high demand use area
- Impact on merchants – positive and negative
- Costs related to the planning and design effort
- Capital costs to construct a new facility and additional parking
- Re-evaluation of the approved Civic Center Master Plan

Given that a Downtown Parking Management Plan is currently being developed, staff recommends that the Library Commission defer further discussion of relocating the Library until the Parking Plan is completed and the results are presented early in the spring of 2013.

Once the Downtown Parking Management Plan is presented to the City Council, and if a majority of Library Commission members believe relocation of the main Library to downtown could be a viable alternative, it is recommended that a joint Council/Commission study session be requested in order for the Council to provide feedback to the Commission on the relocation concept.

#### ATTACHMENTS

1. Statement from Bob Simon dated October 2, 2012
2. New Main Library proposal from David Smith dated November 6, 2012

October 2, 2012

STATEMENT TO THE LOS ALTOS LIBRARY COMMISSION

I'm Bob Simon, and I live in Los Altos. While I'm reasonably familiar with the Los Altos Civic Center Master Plan, I admit that my knowledge of where matters stand now is limited. What I do see is that, since early in the master planning process, any thought of a new main library for Los Altos has taken a back seat; library construction has been relegated to one of the later phases--if not the last phase--of the process of creating a new civic center.

Against that backdrop, I note that we are a community comprised in part of residents of considerable means. It therefore occurs to me that perhaps the Library Commission should review the library's needs (a needs assessment has already been completed by an outside consultant) and consider the possibility of approaching selected individuals and families with a view to funding the construction of a new library building through private means, so that the creation of a suitable library for Los Altos and Los Altos Hills can move forward independent of the civic center master plan. Or relatively independently.

Further, as part of this review, perhaps the Commission could explore a variety of options for the location of a new library facility. Maybe the Civic Center is not the ideal location; a new library nearer the heart of the village might be more appropriate.

In short, I request that the Los Altos Library Commission conduct a review of the library's needs and goals with an eye to evaluating the possibility of moving to fill those needs and goals in the most suitable location, adhering to an appropriate time line, and calling upon the private resources that abound in this community to get the job done.

Thank you.

## New Main Library Los Altos/Los Altos Hills

1. **Do we need a new main library for Los Altos/Los Altos Hills? Yes!!!**
  - 1.1. Based on the last needs assessment, the present main library should provide a total building size of at least 40,000 square feet, an increase of over 40%.
  - 1.2. Present building constraints severely limit and restrict the library's ability to meet the profound change happening among libraries driven by -
    - 1.2.1. Digital technology and customer's expectations for digital access
    - 1.2.2. Space for collaborative and participatory activity and education
    - 1.2.3. Flexibility in design to adjust to changing demand - primarily driven by technology and societal change (e.g. filling education gaps, etc.)
  - 1.3. As part of the Santa Clara County Library, the Los Altos Library will experience declining financial support in the future as a result of all the other libraries in the system having built new larger facilities in the last few years
2. ***The libraries of the future, given the changing role of delivering expanded social and educational opportunities, are integral to their towns and it's residents.***
3. **What is the ideal location for a New Main Library? - Downtown Los Altos Between Main and State Streets**
  - 3.1. The library of today and tomorrow is the "heart of the community" and would greatly improve the vibrancy of downtown Los Altos
  - 3.2. Parking for the present highly utilized, but under-capacitated library is the No. 1 complaint. A new library, at a new location, would incorporate adequate parking to address this complaint.
  - 3.3. A new library should include a number of venues to attract different constituencies
    - 3.3.1. A new library would include meeting rooms for collaboration and shared learning.
    - 3.3.2. A large community room with great audiovisual support will enhance lectures and presentations by guest speakers and could show movies on weekend nights. It also could become a venue for major events of high interest within the community (e.g. election results, etc.)
    - 3.3.3. A flexible building design and structure that can be easily modified as technology offers new opportunities for learning
    - 3.3.4. A small theatre could be considered - space permitting - for use by Bus Barn, youth theatre and lectures.
4. **Next Steps**
  - 4.1. Recommend that the Library Commission appoint a select committee to develop some alternative approaches for a new library to include the following.
    - 4.1.1. General size and costs (e.g. cost estimate for a 2 story structure with basement)
    - 4.1.2. Select Committee should include complementary skills and experience to quickly generate a range of alternatives for public comment.
    - 4.1.3. Given a range of cost estimates - the Committee should propose alternative funding (i.e. a mix of public and private funds).
5. **Reference: <http://www.princetonlibrary.org>**