



# City Council Agenda Report

ITEM NO. 14

**DATE:** May 15, 2024

**FROM:** Arminé Chaparyan, City Manager

**PREPARED BY:** Cathy Billings, Library Director  
Lucy Hakobian, Deputy Director, Community Services

**SUBJECT:** **CONSIDER THE FORMAL ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LIBRARY/COMMUNITY CENTER COMPREHENSIVE SITE PLAN AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR THE LIBRARY/COMMUNITY CENTER SITE PLAN PROJECT AND SELECT AND APPOINT THE MEMBERS TO THE COMMITTEE**

---

## Recommendation

It is recommended that the City Council consider:

1. Formally establishing a fourteen-member Brown Act Ad Hoc Committee, to be known as the Library/Community Center Comprehensive Site Plan Ad Hoc Committee, composed of two Councilmembers, one Library Board Trustee, one Community Services Commissioner, one Friends of the Library representative, one Senior Citizens' Foundation of South Pasadena representative, and eight at-large members; and
2. Appointment of the following slate for the fourteen positions of the Library/Community Center Comprehensive Site Plan Ad Hoc Committee:
  1. Evelyn G. Zneimer, Mayor, City of South Pasadena;
  2. Janet Braun, Councilmember, City of South Pasadena;
  3. Bianca Richards, representing the Library Board of Trustees;
  4. Leslie Albe Field, representing the Community Services Commission;
  5. Kristen Dubé, representing the Friends of the Library;
  6. Alexandria Levitt, representing the Senior Citizens' Foundation;
  7. Tom Afschar, as an at-large member;
  8. Rich Elbaum, as an at-large member;
  9. Tony Hou, as an at-large member;
  10. Eugene Kim, as an at-large member;
  11. Victoria Rocha, as an at-large member;
  12. Dean Serwin, as an at-large member;
  13. Julia Wang, as an at-large member; and
  14. Jasmine Wong, as an at-large member.

## Executive Summary

The City Council approved \$150,000 in the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget to fund the first phase of a comprehensive site planning project for the Library Park site that is home to the Library, Library Community Room, and Senior Center. On December 20, 2023, the City

Council discussed an agenda item that sought direction on the creation of an ad hoc committee to assist with the development of the Library/Community Center Comprehensive Site Plan (Site Plan). Two Councilmembers (Mayor Zneimer and Council Member Braun) were tasked to work with staff to refine the composition of the proposed ad hoc committee and to develop a slate of members for the City Council's consideration at a future meeting. The composition and membership being recommended by Mayor Zneimer and Council Member Braun and staff takes into account the feedback and recommendations provided by Councilmembers at the December meeting.

## **Background**

The existing Library and Senior Center facilities were built in 1982. Starting as early as 1999, it was recognized that the library facility was not able to meet the space and functional needs of the community. Over the years committees created by the City Council were tasked with assessing library and community services needs and identifying improvements that should be made to the facilities. These included the Community Facilities Task Force (active 1999-2004) and the Community Center Ad Hoc Committee (active 2013-2024). Both were successful in assessing needs, gathering community input, and making recommendations, but the recommendations were not acted on.

In June 2022 the Library embarked on the process of developing a new five-year strategic plan. The community outreach conducted as part of the development of the 2023-2027 Library Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan) provided extensive feedback from the public about the shortcomings of the existing library facility. Many of these needs had already been documented by the Community Facilities Task Force two decades before. Adopted May 3, 2023, by the City Council, the Strategic Plan included two facility-related goals: 1) address short-term and long-term critical and safety-related improvements, and 2) ensure the City has a viable and modern library facility that meets the long-term needs of the community. Based on the totality of information collected from the work of previous committees, public input from the Strategic Plan, and multiple professional facility assessments, there was consensus that the idea of a new facility for the Library Park site should be explored. City Council allocated \$150,000 in the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget for the purpose of developing a Site Plan that would address the community's need for a contemporary and forward-looking facility for library and community services. The allocation of these funds launched the Library/Community Center Comprehensive Site Plan Project (Project). The following summarizes the Project activity that has taken place to date.

August 23, 2023: After the adoption of the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 budget, the Project kicked off with an interdepartmental staff meeting where team members and next steps were identified, including formation of an ad hoc committee and drafting and issuing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to start the competitive bidding process to select a planning/design consultant to lead the Project.

December 20, 2023: At a regular meeting of the City Council, staff recommended Council consider establishing an ad hoc committee to work closely with staff and consultants for the duration of the Project and proposed a suggestion for the composition of the ad hoc committee. After discussion and input from Councilmembers, Mayor Evelyn G. Zneimer and Councilmember Janet Braun volunteered to be part of this new ad hoc (hereinafter referenced as "two Councilmembers") and were asked to work with staff to develop a recommendation for the final composition and membership of an ad hoc committee for Council's consideration at a future meeting.

December 22, 2023: The City issued a RFQ soliciting proposals from qualified consultants to assist in the initial phase of the development, visioning, and planning for a Comprehensive Site Plan. The deadline for submissions was January 25, 2024, later extended to February 1, 2024. Thirteen proposals were received by the deadline.

January 10, 2024: The two Councilmembers met with staff to discuss the composition of the proposed ad hoc committee. It was agreed that it should include members representing City Council (2), Library Board of Trustees (1), Community Services Commission (1), Friends of the Library (1), Senior Citizens' Foundation of South Pasadena (1), and five at-large members to be recruited through an open call for applications.

February 8, 2024: A call for applications from individuals interested in serving as at-large members of the proposed ad hoc committee was released. Applications were due February 28, 2024. Fifty-seven applications were received.

March 2024: The Library Board of Trustees, Community Services Commission, Friends of the South Pasadena Public Library, and the Senior Citizen's Foundation of South Pasadena identified the individuals that they recommend represent them on the proposed ad hoc committee.

April 23, 2024: The two Councilmembers met with staff to review the at-large member applications. Fifteen applicants were selected for interviews.

May 6 & 9, 2024: The two Councilmembers and staff interviewed at-large position applicants. Based on the caliber and strengths of the applicants, it was decided that the number of at-large members should be eight, instead of five. The recommendation for composition and membership of the proposed ad hoc committee is finalized for the City Council's consideration.

May 15, 2024: At a regular meeting the City Council is presented with a recommendation that they consider establishing the 14-member Library/Community Center Comprehensive Site Plan Ad Hoc Committee (referred to as "Site Plan Ad Hoc Committee") and appoint the slate of members as recommended by the two Councilmembers and staff.

### **Analysis**

The development of a new library and community center for South Pasadena is a transformational undertaking that will engage the entire community. Establishing a committee made up of people representing a wide range of demographics and interests to help guide the Project will be key to success. In December staff presented a suggested composition for the proposed committee to the City Council for their consideration. Staff suggested the committee be composed of at-large members from the community as well as representatives from City Council, the Library Board of Trustees, the Community Services Commission, and the non-profit Friends of the South Pasadena Public Library and Senior Citizens' Foundation of South Pasadena. Councilmembers discussed this suggestion and provided comments and input that are incorporated into the proposal before the Council tonight. In particular, Councilmembers expressed that 1) there needed to be a balance between at-large members and members representing official bodies, with the at-large members making up the majority, 2) at-large members should represent South Pasadena's diverse demographics and bring fresh perspectives to the Project, and 3) continuity and communication would be important for the

successful participation of the Library Board of Trustees and Community Services Commission.

The Site Plan Ad Hoc Committee is to be involved in all aspects of the Project, so its creation is critical to moving the Project forward. After a thorough process of onboarding members, the Site Plan Ad Hoc Committee's first order of business would be to participate in the review of the site planning consultant proposals so that a recommendation for an award of contract can be presented to the City Council. Once the Site Plan Ad Hoc Committee's work is completed, the committee will be dissolved as it has a limited purpose.

The onboarding process will ensure Site Plan Ad Hoc Committee members have the information they need to meaningfully participate. It will cover/include/provide:

The purpose of the Site Plan Ad Hoc Committee.

- Project overview and historical context.
- Logistics: meeting schedule, term of service, communication tools, etc.
- An overview of what the site planning process entails, including timeline, milestones, etc. (provided by a consultant with extensive experience).
- Roles and responsibilities of Site Plan Ad Hoc Committee members, staff, consultants.
- Access to background information and relevant reports/studies.
- Brown Act introduction/training.

The members of the Site Plan Ad Hoc Committee will play a vital role in this monumental project, from inception to completion, by contributing their insights and expertise. The Site Plan Ad Hoc Committee, being subject to the Brown Act, will ensure transparency and pave the way for the robust public participation that will result in a Comprehensive Site Plan for a library and community center that can meet the diverse needs of South Pasadena residents for decades to come.

#### **Alternatives (if applicable)**

The City Council could give direction to revisit the recommended composition of the proposed Site Plan Ad Hoc Committee and/or the slate of candidates presented. Alternatively, the City Council could choose not to establish the Site Plan Ad Hoc Committee, to move the Project forward in a different way, or to pause the Project.

#### **Fiscal Impact**

The \$150,000 allocated by Council to this Project in Fiscal Year 2023-2024 has not been spent. Pending the formal establishment of the Site Plan Ad Hoc Committee, a site planning consultant will be selected from the 13 eligible proposals received in response to the Request for Qualifications. The \$150,000 not spent in the current Fiscal Year would need to be allocated in Fiscal Year 2024-2025 to pay for these consulting services and any minimal Project-related administrative expenses (e.g., printing, supplies for community outreach events). To fully realize a new facility for South Pasadena's library and community services, funding for future Project phases, such as design and construction, would be required.

#### **Key Performance Indicators and Strategic Plan**

The Library/Community Center Comprehensive Site Plan Project is included in the Infrastructure section of the City's Strategic Plan as task no. 5.

**Commission Review and Recommendation**

The Library Board of Trustees has received multiple updates on the Site Planning Project and the proposed Site Plan Ad Hoc Committee. On March 14, 2024, the Trustees voted unanimously to recommend the appointment of Trustee Bianca Richards to the Site Plan Ad Hoc Committee. On March 11, 2024, the Community Services Commission received a report on the Project from Community Services Director Sheila Pautsch, and Commissioner Leslie Albe Field was selected to represent the Commission on the Site Plan Ad Hoc Committee.