

South Davis Library and Education Center Staff Report

Subject:

Receive a report on facility planning efforts for a 'South Davis Library and Education Center' and provide conceptual approval to partner on continued development of the project.

Recommendation:

Receive a report on facility planning efforts for a 'South Davis Library and Education Center' and provide conceptual approval to partner on continued development of the project.

Vision:

In reviewing the needs of the South Davis region and the capacity challenges experienced by the current library facilities, the South Davis Library Ad Hoc Committee has expressed extreme interest in establishing an appropriately named 'South Davis Library and Education Center' in South Davis. This would be a shared use facility among agencies and serve as a community space with a variety of amenities in addition to library services.

The envisioned center would include innovative use of technology for library collections, provision of children's programming and early childhood education, adult education classes through the library and through partnerships with schools and universities, community meeting rooms, individual and collaborative study spaces, classroom spaces for a variety of programming, art classes and exhibition space, an outdoor theater, and an expansive garden area.

The vision for the new facility is to serve the interests of the community as a whole and be a welcome place for all residents. It is therefore the desire of the South Davis Library Ad Hoc Committee to explore the interests of other parties in the vision for the center.

Background:

The Yolo County Department of General Services 'Strategic Space Utilization Study', finalized in October 2014, states that based on projected demographics the Mary L. Stephens Branch Library in Davis requires double its current space and that its location does not allow for expansion. Library services are essential to the economy of the City and County as they provide reading and writing resources, online information databases, meeting places, resources to obtain employment opportunities, and much more.

This study, nearly 5 years old, is even more relevant today since the need to expand library services for the City of Davis has only become increasingly obvious to the community as well as the library staff and has caught the County's attention as an immediate necessity. For example, staff reports that a number of patrons who use services provided by the Mary L. Stephens library are forced to sit on the floor due to overcapacity.

A library in South Davis would also provide essential resources not currently available to this part of the community. Currently, residents of South Davis lack formal meeting places and other community services that the Mary L. Stephens library provides for other Davis residents. In

addition, numerous South Davis residents experience difficulty accessing the Mary L. Stephens library due to the distance as well as the freeway that intersects their route.

A study in 2006 conducted concurrently with the development of Measure P indicated that Davis voters would only be able to accommodate a certain level of funding support for maintenance and increased library service in Davis. Funding was determined at the time of Measure P passage in 2008 to be insufficient for standalone construction of a South Davis facility and continuing operations. In preparation for Measure P, with growing interest from South Davis residents, a draft library service plan was developed for a building and land identified as part of an existing MOU between the City of Davis and Yolo County. The property totals in size around 1.7 acres in Walnut Park.

The MOU expired on October 28, 2012, reverting the land back to the City, and a replacement MOU was established by the City of Davis on October 9, 2012 expressing the City of Davis' continued interest in establishing a South Davis library, an interest that is shared by the County, with land in Walnut Park as a continued option.

Since then, a South Davis Ad Hoc Committee for Library Services was formed charged with examining service needs. This committee includes representatives from the Davis City Council, the Davis Joint Unified School District, the Yolo County Library, and Yolo County Board Supervisors for Districts 2 and 4. While working to mitigate a small part of the library service needs in South Davis through utilization of a small portion of the Marguerite Montgomery Elementary School, the committee has also advocated for long-term planning and development of a new library facility. This facility is envisioned to be a shared use facility for the community serving as a community and education center as well as a library.

Need:

The portion of the Marguerite Montgomery Elementary School in South Davis, which is currently used for overflow from the Mary L. Stephens library, is inadequate for serving the needs of the City of Davis as a whole and the South Davis region both in its current state and in the long-term.

Pushing the overflow to the Elementary School is not an adequate long term solution and a new branch in South Davis using the Walnut Park property is both the necessary and obvious solution. Data from a meeting in December 2018, provided in Exhibit A, showed high usage of the library with frequent use of meeting rooms and parking spaces. Ultimately, this data coincides with the experience of staff that often find individuals crowding at tables or sitting on the floor.

Establishing an additional library facility in South Davis is essential to reduce facility capacity issues, expand services to a growing Davis community, and provide access for those who have difficulty traveling to the Mary L. Stephens library. Locating the new facility in South Davis is preferred due to land made available by the City in Walnut Park and the opportunity to serve residents currently separated by the intersecting freeway from City and community facilities. This opportunity is unique and benefits the entire community as it is able to both mitigate the

overflow and potentially serve new community members who previously faced geographic barriers to library access. The new facility plans to serve the city by way of new meeting rooms, classrooms, and activity space for innovative adult and school-age programs.

Next Steps:

The South Davis Ad Hoc Committee seeks to explore the interests of other parties in the vision for the center. Yolo County has begun the development of a conceptual design for the facility. This development process has included meetings with various community non-profits and stakeholders to incorporate interests and community needs in the design of the facility. The committee seeks to complete the conceptual design by Spring 2020. Subsequently, a work group would be formed of interested parties to develop a multi-agency funding strategy and implementation plan.