



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA
LIBRARY/COMMUNITY CENTER COMPREHENSIVE SITE PLAN AD HOC COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOM**

**MINUTES
THURSDAY, JULY 3, 2025, AT 7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT

Tom Afschar (At-Large Member)
Leslie Albe Field (Member, Community Services Commission)
Kristen Dubé (Board Member, Friends of the South Pasadena Library)
Rich Elbaum (At-Large Member)
Tony Hou (At-Large Member)
Alexandria Levitt (President, Senior Citizens' Foundation of S. Pasadena)
Bianca Richards (At-Large Member)
Sheila Rossi (Mayor Pro Tem, City of South Pasadena)
Dean Serwin (At-Large Member)
Julia Wang (At-Large Member)

ABSENT

Janet Braun (Mayor, City of South Pasadena)
Gene Kim (At-Large Member)
Victoria Rocha (At-Large Member)
Jasmine Wong (At-Large Member)

Cathy Billings, Library Director, announced a quorum.

CITY STAFF PRESENT:

Cathy Billings, Library Director and Sean Faye, Administrative Secretary, were present at Roll Call.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. **PUBLIC COMMENT – GENERAL (NON-AGENDA ITEMS)**
None

PRESENTATIONS

ACTION/DISCUSSION

2. REORDERING OF, ADDITIONS, OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

3. APPROVAL OF THE LIBRARY/COMMUNITY CENTER COMPREHENSIVE SITE PLAN AD HOC COMMITTEE MINUTES FROM THE JUNE 5, 2025 REGULAR MEETING.

A motion was made by Richards, seconded by Dubé, and approved by roll call vote to approve Item No. 3. The motion carried 6-0-4-4:

AYES: Afschar, Dubé, Hou, Levitt, Richards, Serwin

NOES: None

ABSENT: Braun, Kim, Rocha, Wong

ABSTAINED: Albe Field, Elbaum, Rossi, Wang

4. SEEKING DIRECTION AND INPUT FROM THE AD HOC COMMITTEE, GROUP 4 ARCHITECTURE WILL PRESENT AND LEAD A DISCUSSION ON SITE DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS AND UPCOMING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Presenters: Dawn Merkes, Andrea Gifford, Vickie White, Justin Nutt, Group 4 project team.

The team's presentation covered:

- Project Schedule and Workplan
- Assessments (Community, Program, and Site)
- Site and Building Strategies
- Plans for second round of community engagement

Assessments

Community: Group 4 presented the results of the community engagement that took place March-June. There were more than 600 hundred survey responses and almost 3,000 people participated in in-person and online engagement. 80% were residents and 20% were non-residents. The community's top priorities in the four areas included in the survey were:

- Library: Books, quiet reading and study, children's play and learning.
- Senior + Community Services: fitness and wellness, games and hobbies, senior lounge, nutrition and meals.
- Shared Use Spaces: Watch movies and performances, visual and creative arts, lifelong learning and classes and cooking classes.
- Library Park Campus: Enjoy existing trees, attend markets and fairs, attend community performances and events, walk around the site.

Program: Projected space needs for library and community/recreation/senior services in 2045 were presented. Projected library needs were between 27,000 and 33,000 square feet and recreation and community services needs were between 19,200 and 26,000 square feet. The total square footage required to meet needs would be reduced by 10% by co-locating and integrating services and sharing spaces.

Committee members had concerns that the 2045 population numbers being used as the basis of space needs were too low. Staff stated that the numbers were taken from the City's 2021-2029 Housing Element. Staff and the consultant were directed to follow up with the City's Community Development Department to verify the accuracy of population growth projections and update the space assumptions accordingly.

Site: John Lesak of Page & Turnbull provided an overview of their assessment of the historic resources of the site and surrounding structures. Elements of the existing building(s) were identified as being of primary historical significance, contributing historical significance, or non-contributing, with the Community Room being of primary significance. The site's adjacency to (or inclusion in) historic districts (e.g. Mission West Historic District), residential properties, and the commercial development across from the Community Room on El Centro Street were discussed, with an emphasis on site strategies compatible with the downtown historic district and preservation of architectural features of primary significance.

Parking related to the site was reviewed, including existing street parking and off-site parking (e.g. Mission Meridian garage), and possible future public-private partnerships, with reference made to the approach to parking included in the City's Downtown Specific Plan. The recommended strategy is to focus on parking near the site, not on-site.

Site and Building Strategies

The consultants recapped the three site options discussed by the Ad Hoc Committee at the June 5th meeting, and the direction they were given to further refine two options (demolish all buildings on site and demolish 1980s buildings and retain 1930s building) for presentation at the July meeting.

New preliminary site development options were presented: A1 and A2, which demolished all buildings, and B1 and B2 that retained the 1930s building and demolished the 1980s buildings. The four options were discussed and considered in the context of the evaluation criteria that have been used throughout the site planning project process:

- Allows for 21st century services and operations
- Aligned with City's Downtown Specific Plan
- Cost Effectiveness
- Retains South Pasadena heritage and character
- Retains civic presence of building
- Enhances Library Park, residential neighborhood, and business neighborhood

The site strategy preferred by the Committee was to renovate the 1930's building with or without the colonnade, with a new plaza and entrance in the northeast corner of the site.

Settling on this preference was preceded by an extensive discussion of the limits that retaining the historic building place on design and functionality, and the idea that starting from scratch would provide more freedom to design and develop the site in the most ideal way.

The committee directed Group 4 to return with more detailed building options for the committee's review, including bubble and stacking diagrams annotated with existing space uses to assist their understanding of the diagrams and addressing the following:

- Easy ground-floor access and egress and space for seniors.
- Egress needs for library to expeditiously remove people whose behavior is unsafe or disruptive.
- Kitchen adjacent to big meeting room or room where senior meals are.
- More clearly include children's "story room" space with amphitheater seating (Carlyle Bequest)
- Clearly identified open-hours and after-hours access points.
- Show staff service points to better understand how staff will oversee/monitor the activity at the facility.
- Clarify and explicitly show shared-use spaces.

The Ad Hoc Committee discussed at length issues of safety and security and access and egress, with a strong emphasis on the special needs of seniors. There was consensus that there is a need to find a balance that supports safety, comfort, inclusivity, and multi-generational integration (not isolating seniors).

Plans for Second Round of Community Engagement

Group 4 provided an overview of the plans for a second round of community engagement, including preliminary mockups of engagement kiosk panels and survey questions, and received feedback from the Committee.

COMMUNICATIONS

5. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

None

6. STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

None

PUBLIC COMMENT – CONTINUED

7. CONTINUED PUBLIC COMMENT – GENERAL

In-person comment by Tucker Nelson sharing feedback, concerns, and suggestions for the site.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further matters, Library Director Billings adjourned the Regular Meeting of the Library/Community Center Comprehensive Site Plan Ad Hoc Committee at 9:41 P.M. to the next Regular Library/Community Center Comprehensive Site Plan Ad Hoc Committee meeting scheduled for August 7, 2025.

Respectfully submitted:

Signed by:



Cathy Billings
Library Director

APPROVED:

Signed by:



Lucy Hakobian
Community Services Director

ATTEST:

Signed by:



Cathy Billings
Library Director

Approved at the Library/Community Center Comprehensive Site Plan Ad Hoc Committee meeting, September 4, 2025.