



City of Manhattan Beach Facilities Strategic Plan

JOINT HEARING OF THE LIBRARY AND CULTURAL ARTS COMMISSIONS

November 13, 2007

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Narrative Description of the Issues for Review

Throughout the course of a year long program of outreach the community was asked in a variety of ways and with a variety of techniques to rate by priority the importance of replacing and/or providing an array of new community facilities to better serve the full range of constituencies of Manhattan Beach. Of the ten or so facilities the community was asked to consider a new library and a swimming facility consistently rated at the top of the list. And while, visual and performing arts facilities consistently rated near the bottom of the list as a short term priority the community clearly registered that these facilities are a long term priority and must be incorporated into a strategic long range plan for community facilities in Manhattan Beach.

I. The Existing Library

A. Size

The inadequate size of the library and floor area for critical programs and services discourages use of the library and results in depressed attendance compared to other community libraries. Limited building size prevents accommodation of program services common to contemporary community libraries. Current benchmark and best practices nationwide and within the Los Angeles County library system establish a ratio of library square footage to population size at around 0.71 to 0.75 SF/capita. At 12,200 SF the existing library is 0.34 SF/capita. Before the closing of the 7,300 SF Manhattan Heights Park branch (and its transformation into the Creative Arts Center) that ratio was 0.54. Volumes per capita accommodated within the existing library are 1/3 the size of current benchmark and best practices within the County of Los Angeles system and nationwide. Most areas of the library require re-construction and/or reconfiguration to achieve code compliance –in particular ADA requirements as they relate to space standards for readers' seats, book stack areas and staff service areas.

B. Program and Configuration

The existing library has overcrowded shelving, it is technologically outdated, it has no group study meeting rooms, it does not have a quiet, comfortably sized and configured adult reading room and its staff offices, work areas and support spaces are inadequate in size and configuration impeding effective and efficient administration of library programs and services. The lack of acoustical separation among some program areas hampers operations (children's collections and adult collections). The library lacks services and programs considered essential requirements of contemporary libraries such as the following:

- Young Adult Programs and Services
- Group Study Rooms
- Self-Service
- Family oriented spaces
- Food and beverage services

II. The New Library

A. Size

The strategic plan includes, the regulating plan provides and the illustrative plans demonstrate the accommodation of an approximately 28,000 SF community library with a floor area per capita ratio of approximately 0.75.

B. Program

In 2001 the City engaged in a comprehensive library needs assessment which formed the basis for the development of the building program for the new library incorporated in the strategic plan. Components of the new library included in the needs assessment and the strategic plan are the following:

- Lobby, information services and gallery
- Public meeting room
- Friends-of-the-Library bookstore and gift shop
- Café/coffee bar
- Circulation services
- Browsing/new arrivals display
- Internet express
- Children's library with story time theater
- Reference services
- Non-fiction collection
- Fiction collection
- Periodicals
- Audio visual library Non-fiction collection
- Fiction collection
- Spanish language collection
- Local history collection
- Group study rooms
- Young adult library and services
- Career center

III. The Location and Configuration of the New Library

A. Overview of the Two Options

The strategic plan and the regulating plan provide for the location of a new library in one of two locations: 1) co-located with a community center, senior social/activity center and tiny tot and children's playground program in a courtyard configuration at the south end of Live Oak Park; and, 2) on the site of the existing library site.

B. The Live Oak Park Option

The illustrative plan recommended by the steering committee shows a co-located library, multi-purpose community center, senior social/activity center and tiny tot and children's playground programs arranged around a common courtyard in the area of the park currently occupied by Joslyn Hall, the Scout House and the Annex, referred to in the strategic plan as the "south panhandle" of the park. The library occupies the north wing of the building facing the park and Valley Drive, thus capitalizing on the two best sun orientations for a library—north and east. As is demonstrated in countless examples across America—particularly the Carnegie libraries of the turn of the last century--the park setting is ideal, and particularly American, in the way that it creates a peaceful pastoral environment for the library in the heart of a bustling, vital downtown.

The library is configured into a two story format consistent with the principles of the strategic plan--as given in the regulating plan and illustrated in the illustrative plan--that call for the consolidation of buildings into compact arrangements that maximize opportunities for open space in the City's parks. Major functions on the ground floor are the community meeting room, facing directly onto the courtyard and the community center across the way, the Friends-of-the-Library bookstore and gift shop, the café/coffee bar, reception, gallery and information services, circulation services internet express, new arrivals and the children's library. The children's library faces directly onto the park. The major functions on the second floor include reference services, major collections, the young adult library and career services.

Libraries are civic and community centers in their own right, they are more than just a repository of books. A library is a place to sign up for Medicare online, fill out job applications, debate global warming, download photos or watch DVD's. It is a place to see people and be seen. The combination of the library, community center, senior social/activity center and tiny tot and children's playground programs in a park creates mutually beneficial and symbiotic relationships among these important community serving components and between them and the park. Children and seniors are among the heaviest users of a community library and hence the proximity of the senior social/activity center for seniors and the park for children and their parents is ideal to maximize the convenience and use of

the library, the park and all of the other programs in the mix. This relationship among the parts will breathe life into library and vice-versa. The proximity of the community center with its array of a variety of kinds of meeting space allows for the expansion of community serving programs of the library by providing a facility through which small and large group programs could be delivered. The proximity of the park will create opportunities for joint programming that combines after school park related programs offered by Parks and Recreation and library related programs perhaps in cooperation with the school district. As a kind of "one-stop" community serving place where a senior or parent and child could conceivably spend the better part of a day this configuration will reduce car trips and traffic congestion in the downtown area.

Parking for the new facility is accommodated in a mixture of at grade and below grade formats, with approximately 60 diagonal spaces provided along the west side of Valley Drive adjacent to the park and another 130 provided below grade below the facilities, with direct access to the library above. In respect for concerns of the neighbors to the west all service, deliveries and maintenance and operations facilities serving the library will be located below grade.

Other advantages of the Live Oak park option include:

- Logical construction sequencing that minimizes impacts on the operations of the existing library. In this option the new library will be completed while the existing library remains in operation. Only upon completion of the new facility will the new library relocate.
- Adaptive re-use of the existing library. As a facility with a few more years of life in it the existing building can easily accommodate, for example, the occupants currently housed in the Annex building—the post office, chamber of commerce and dial-a-ride program.
- Long term use of the existing library site. Located in the heart of downtown and the civic center adjacent to the civic center parking garage and the Metlox garage the existing library site is an ideal location for a future visual arts and community theater.

Disadvantages of this option include:

- More buildings in the park than the other option
- Greater parking requirement in the park than the other option
- Potential perception of greater impacts on the neighbors.

C. The Civic Center Option

An alternative location for the library accommodated in the regulating plan and shown in an illustrative plan is the current location within the civic center. This option requires a two story format, probably similar in configuration to that shown in Live Oak Park. Here the library would enjoy proximity to the civic center and downtown and frontage on a major downtown street, Highland Avenue. This location is easier for the community to understand and requires that the community consider less change to the status quo—it merely proposes that a better library be built in place of the existing one. And it would require less building and less parking in Live Oak park.

Disadvantages of this option include :

- An isolated community center. None of the symbiotic benefits for both the library and the community center offered by the other option are available to this one. Without the library the community center is subject to a kind of splendid isolation in the park reminiscent of the experience most of us have of semi-abandoned community centers across Southern California leftover from the era of the 60s and 70s.
- Confined library configuration. The adjacency of city hall to the north and the new commercial development to the south limits access to light and views on the long sides of the site.
- Awkward construction. The tight urban nature of the civic center site makes construction there more difficult and time consuming than in the park. And either the library has to move twice, once into a temporary location then into the new facility or it has to be put out of operation for the two years that it will take to complete the new facility.
- Questionable parking supply. A new library on the existing library site includes no provision

for additional new parking. It is not clear until further study whether the existing parking supply within the civic center and the Metlox garage is sufficient and available.

- No place for visual arts and community theater. The rebuilding of the library in place will forever preclude the ability to provide a site on public property in the vicinity of the civic center and downtown for a community theater and visual arts center. No other publicly owned sites are available in the downtown area and it is unlikely that privately owned sites will become available, nor is it fiscally responsible to take revenue generating properties within the City out of commission for public use.

IV. The Visual Arts Center and Community Theater

A. Existing facilities

Visual arts facilities are located in two disparate locations. The Creative Arts Center is the result of a renovation of the cylindrical former Manhattan Heights Park branch library. On the other side of town buried within the tennis courts and ball fields of Live Oak park is the ceramics studio combined in a single building with the tennis pro shop and concessions stand.

The Creative Arts center in Manhattan Heights Park delivers several vital community programs and services related to the visual arts. Its components include:

- Exhibition gallery
- Reception and administration
- Printmaking, drawing and painting studio
- Music, Drama and dance studio
- Outdoor reception and exhibition patio
- Kitchen

While the renovation is expert in many ways the facility suffers from many problems inherent in the original building such as awkward room configuration and weak acoustics. The steering committee has found that the Manhattan Heights Park location is disadvantageous for both visual arts and for the park. Reasons include parking limitations within the park, impacts on the park and isolation of the facility from downtown where most cultural events take place

There is no publicly owned or operated community theater in Manhattan Beach. Years ago the council chamber in City Hall was capable of transformation into a 99-seat theater in the round. This was rendered inactive when in order to equip the council dais with video and digital technology it was required—as is standard practice-- that the dais be fixed in place.

B. Programmatic content of new facilities.

The strategic plan states that a comprehensive visual arts center and community theater in line with current benchmark and best practices will include the following:

Visual Arts

- Reception, lobby and interactive information kiosk
- Exhibition gallery
- Kitchen
- Three multipurpose classroom studios for: drawing, painting, printmaking
- Ceramics studio (with kiln)
- Sculpture studio
- Multi-media, digital media computer lab
- Outdoor welding area

Community Theater

- Lobby, tickets/will call, interactive computer kiosk, coat check
- Café, bar
- 199 sloped floor, fixed seat theater
- Multipurpose black box theater suitable for theater in the round and rehearsals
- Scene shop and storage
- Outdoor stage

C. Location

The steering committee considered a variety of options in determining where geographically within the City's boundaries that a visual arts and community theater would most appropriately fit. The committee concluded that such a facility was best situated downtown in the vicinity of the civic center, the Metlox development and the core commercial neighborhood adjacent to the Strand, beach and pier. Within this area the committee considered both publicly and privately held properties including the northwest corner of the Metlox property at 13th street, the parking lot of the Von's Supermarket property and the existing library site. Of these the existing library site was considered the most advantageous and only viable option with benefits for the new facility itself, downtown and the civic center. The strategic plan therefore recommends, the regulating plan provides and the steering committee's recommended illustrative plan accommodates a fully integrated visual arts center and community theater with all of the program elements identified above in a facility on the existing library site. As a long term provision of the strategic plan this recommendation relies on the decision to co-locate the new library with the community center, senior social/activity center and tiny tot and children's playground programs in Live Oak Park. It is only upon the completion of this facility that the existing library site becomes available for other community facilities such as the visual arts center and community theater.

D. Exhibition Space Citywide

The strategic plan recommends that all new community facilities be planned and designed with in mind that lobbies and public circulation spaces be seen as potential exhibition space. The lobbies of the library, the community center and the senior social/activity center, are, for example, ideal opportunities for the display of art given proper accommodations of wall space, lighting and social gathering areas.

Proposed Findings of the Library Commission

	<u>Recommended Finding</u>		<u>Response</u>
I. The Existing Library			
A.	Size		
1.	The existing library is too small in comparison to benchmark and best practices in library planning and design nation wide and in comparison to other libraries within the Los Angeles County library system.	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u> <u>Other</u>
2.	The existing library is too small to effectively deliver the comprehensive array of programs and services appropriate for a community of this size and kind.	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u> <u>Other</u>
3.	The size and configuration of the library is suppressing use of the facility by the community.	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u> <u>Other</u>
4.	The size of the library limits the size and availability of its collections.	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u> <u>Other</u>
B.	Configuration		
1.	The existing library is seriously deficient in technology infrastructure.	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u> <u>Other</u>
2.	The proximity of the adult collections and the children's library creates unresolved and intractable acoustical conflicts.	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u> <u>Other</u>
3.	The library lacks an appropriately sized and comfortably configured quiet adult reading room or area.	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u> <u>Other</u>
4.	The library lacks programs—and the space in which to deliver such programs—considered essential in contemporary community library planning and design. These include a young adult library and career services, group study rooms, internet access, self-service, family oriented spaces and food and beverage services.	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u> <u>Other</u>
5.	Staff offices and work rooms are inadequate in size and configuration to allow staff to effectively do its job.	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u> <u>Other</u>
6.	The existing library is non-compliant in the area of ADA requirements especially in circulation, stack and reading areas and staff work areas.	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u> <u>Other</u>
II. The New Library			
A.	Size		
1.	At 28,000 SF and a floor area per capita ratio of 0.75 the size of the new library identified in the strategic plan is about right.	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u> <u>Other</u>
B.	Program		
1.	The components of the new library as described in the strategic plan are consistent with benchmark and best practices within the Los Angeles County system and nationwide.	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u> <u>Other</u>
III. The Location and Configuration of New Library			
A.	Two Options		
1.	Both the existing library site in the civic center and Live Oak park are reasonable options for the location of a new library.	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u> <u>Other</u>
2.	The Live Oak park option recommended by the steering committee is the better of the two options	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u> <u>Other</u>
3.	Whether located in the civic center or Live Oak park the two story	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u> <u>Other</u>

format recommended in the strategic plan is necessary, beneficial to the community and workable for the layout of the library itself.

B. The Live Oak Park Option

1. The Live Oak Park option recommended by the steering committee is advantageous for the following reasons: Agree Disagree Other
 - Library/community center/seniors/park support symbiosis
 - Park/library symbiosis
 - Pastoral, tranquil and spacious library setting
 - East and north light in the library
 - Logical library construction staging
 - Logical relocation of post office and chamber of commerce
 - Appropriate site for community theater and visual arts center

2. The Live Oak park option recommended by the steering committee has the following disadvantages: Agree Disagree Other
 - Entails more building in the park
 - Requires more parking in the park
 - Perception of greater impact on the neighbors.

C. The Civic Center Option

1. The civic center alternative is advantageous for the following reasons: Agree Disagree Other
 - Less change for the community to apprehend
 - Less building in the park
 - Less parking required in the park
 - Library stays where it is

2. The civic center alternative has the following disadvantages: Agree Disagree Other
 - Isolated community center
 - Confined library site
 - Limited opportunities for daylight in the library
 - Awkward library construction staging
 - Questionable supply of parking at the civic center
 - No site identified for post office or chamber of commerce
 - No site identified for future visual arts center and community theater.

Proposed Findings of the Cultural Arts Commission

Recommended Finding

Response

IV. The Visual Arts Center and Community Theater

A. Existing facilities

- | | | | | |
|----|---|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. | It is inappropriate that visual arts programs and services are accommodated in two disparate locations and that the majority of them are delivered through a facility located in Manhattan Heights Park rather than downtown. | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Other</u> |
| 2. | The existing Creative Arts Center while serving its purpose admirably in the short term is an inappropriately sized and configured facility for the effective delivery of visual arts programs and services. | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Other</u> |
| 3. | The location of the ceramics studio in a building shared with the tennis pro shop and concessions imbedded within the tennis courts of Live Oak park is inappropriate. | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Other</u> |
| 4. | Manhattan Beach has no community theater and should have one. | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Other</u> |

B. Programmatic Content of New Facilities

- | | | | | |
|----|--|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1 | The program components of the new visual arts center as identified in the strategic plan are appropriate in type, number and size. | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Other</u> |
| 2. | The program components of the community theater identified in the strategic plan are appropriate in type, number and size. | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Other</u> |

C. Location

- | | | | | |
|----|--|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. | Visual arts facilities should be consolidated into one location, preferably located downtown and if feasible co-located with a community theater. | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Other</u> |
| 2. | The community theater is most appropriately located downtown.
The existing library site is the best location for a co-located visual arts center and community theater. | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Other</u> |

D. Exhibition Space City Wide

- | | | | | |
|----|---|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. | Public spaces within new community facilities should be planned and designed to accommodate art exhibitions and other community oriented arts activities. | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Other</u> |
|----|---|--------------|-----------------|--------------|