



CITY OF OAKLAND

AGENDA REPORT

TO: Jestin D. Johnson
City Administrator

FROM: Jamie Turbak,
Director, Library
Services Department

SUBJECT: Results of Piedmont Avenue Library
Feasibility Study

DATE: October 17, 2024

City Administrator Approval


Jestin Johnson (Oct 11, 2024 05:43 PDT)

Date:

Oct 11, 2024

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Receive An Informational Report Regarding The Results Of The Piedmont Avenue Library Feasibility Study.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In August 2023, the City of Oakland (City) commissioned Hibser Yamauchi (HY) Architects to study the feasibility of repurposing the former Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) Piedmont Avenue Early Childhood Development Center on 86 Echo Ave, Oakland, CA 94611 as a Joint Public/School Library. This new library will be modeled on the successful partnership between OUSD and Oakland Public Library (OPL) at the 81st Avenue branch library and will replace the existing Piedmont Avenue branch, which currently operates in a small 1,920 square foot modular structure adjacent to this property.

The first of a series of meetings was held in January 2024 to listen to and understand community needs. Participants included neighbors, students, teachers and their families, Friends of the Piedmont Avenue Library, elected officials, and OPL and OUSD staff. These first meetings established the services and site development requirements for the library and informed multiple design options; a reuse, an expansion, or replacements of the existing structure.

During additional meetings in April and May 2024, the community reviewed the design options and agreed to further explore the construction of a new building. The consultants completed a conceptual design for an 8,265 square foot replacement of the existing structure (**Attachment A**). This design is four times larger than the current modular library and includes a community room that can be shared with the school for early morning, evening, and weekend events. Additionally, a new children's room, outdoor learning garden and a maker's space will be located near the current entry from the schoolyard. Students and classes can easily access the library and participate in a variety of activities in these spaces.

The final phase of the facility study was an expense analysis of the conceptual design which estimated a total project cost of \$18.9 million, inclusive of soft and hard costs. We do not expect an increase in staff operational costs.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

In 2012, the Piedmont Avenue Branch moved into a modular structure owned by OUSD located at 80 Echo Avenue, Oakland, CA 94611, on the grounds of Piedmont Avenue Elementary School.

In 2017, OUSD and the City entered into a Joint Use Lease Agreement for the modular structure.

In 2020, an advisory committee appointed by OUSD recommended that the Piedmont Avenue Early Childhood Development Center, that was closed in 2010, be repurposed to be jointly used by OUSD and another entity as a library and educational space for OUSD students. This vacant facility is located at 86 Echo Avenue, Oakland, CA, 94611.

In 2021, OUSD issued a “Request for Proposals for Public Library Joint Occupancy Development for the Premises” for the development and operation of a public library on the 86 Echo Avenue property. The City submitted a proposal to operate the Piedmont Avenue branch library at this larger location, and the OUSD Board selected the City’s proposal.

In 2022, the City Council unanimously passed Ordinance [13716 C.M.S.](#), authorizing the City Administrator to negotiate and execute a 50-year Joint Occupancy and Lease Agreement for constructing and operating a new public library at 86 Echo Avenue on property owned by Oakland Unified School District. It further authorized the City Administrator to negotiate and execute a joint use agreement for OUSD’s use of the new library and to extend the existing Joint Use Lease Agreement to allow the City to continue to operate the modular Piedmont Avenue Branch Library located at 80 Echo Avenue until construction of the new library is complete.

In 2023, OPL and Public Works (OPW) selected HY Architects to conduct a feasibility study of how to adapt 86 Echo Avenue for a new branch library to better meet current and future needs.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

During Phase 1, HY Architects assessed the conditions of the existing structure to identify:

- 1) the extent of the structural repairs needed,
- 2) any hazardous materials that should be removed,
- 3) the condition of the exterior and interior assemblies,
- 4) any issues with the layout of the interior spaces,
- 5) the condition of the building systems, i.e. mechanical, plumbing, electrical, fire alarm etc.
- 6) the condition of the outdoor spaces to identify areas that should be upgraded for accessibility, safety, security, drainage, or other reasons.

During Phase 2, OPW, OPL, OUSD, and HY Architects participated in meetings to discuss the operational requirements for the library. Then, a series of community meetings were held from January to May 2024, and participants reimaged and brainstormed ideas for services and spaces. Incorporating feedback from all stakeholders, HY Architects created four design

options: 1) reusing the existing facility, 2) reusing and expanding the existing facility, 3) and 4) building a new library facility. Based on the feedback from the initial community meetings, HY Architects more deeply developed two of these design options to present at the last community meeting in May 2024. The two options were 1) reusing and expanding the existing facility, 2) building a new library facility. The cost of these two options was estimated at 1) \$17.5 million to reuse and expand the existing facility and 2) \$18.9 million to construct a new facility. Because of the operational advantages and the relative marginal cost difference between an expansion and a rebuild, the community, OUSD, OPL, and OPW preferred to build a new library facility, which led to the final conceptual design. The City received approval from OUSD for the final conceptual design in October 2024.

Reuse of existing structure

The 86 Echo Avenue structure consists of an approximately 6,370 square foot single-story classroom building on a relatively flat site with two outdoor play structures. The building was designed by Jensen and Langeberg Architects and was approved under application number 33336 of the Division of the State Architect. The classroom building is Type V-B of wood stud exterior walls with redwood plywood cladding and is supported on a concrete slab on grade with shallow concrete foundations. Lateral resistance is provided by wood shear walls. The building is partially-sprinklered, and the existing kitchen and utility areas have 1-hour rated walls. The majority of the roofs are asphalt-shingle steep-sloped, with a high low-slope built-up roof at the northeast side of the building.

The building was originally constructed in 1971 and underwent a fire alarm and intrusion system replacement in 2011. The Early Childhood Development Center ceased operation 14 years ago, and the building has been mostly vacant. The project site is owned by OUSD and is leased to the City per a 50-year Joint Occupancy and Lease Agreement ratified in 2022.

The structure requires upgrades to meet code requirements that trigger additional rehabilitation to a school building as well as for access and fire life-safety. The California Administrative Code also requires additional evaluation and testing for building projects. This process involves additional submittals to, and review and approval of testing criteria by, the State Architect in conjunction with the normal project approval process.

The existing building has the following structural deficiencies.

- Inadequate seismic resistance
- Weak foundation
- Potential liquefaction issues

The total project cost of repurposing and expanding the existing facility while implementing the necessary repairs and upgrades to meet code requirements is estimated at \$17.5 million. The design of the repurposed facility would be significantly restricted by the existing structure, the layout of the interior partitions, the location and orientation of the facility within the property, the sizing of the interior spaces, as well as the location of the utilities (i.e., mechanical, plumbing, and fire sprinkler systems). The selective demolition of the interior and exterior finishes could uncover unforeseen issues, which could cause construction delays, and design and construction cost changes.

This option was not selected given the design limitations and the relatively high cost, comparable to the cost of new construction. The cost of repurposing the existing facility is higher than it

would be for other construction projects due to the State Architect's stringent requirements for structural safety, fire and life safety, and accessibility.

In the preferred conceptual design, the 86 Echo Avenue structure would be demolished, and a new library building would be constructed. The estimated total project cost, inclusive of soft and hard costs, is \$18.9 million. In this option, the restrictions of the existing structure and building systems would be eliminated and unforeseen conditions minimized allowing the final design to better meet the needs of the community, significantly improving the quality of the service and operational outcomes.

Completion of this feasibility study advances Oakland's citywide priority of vibrant, sustainable infrastructure by creating a more robust facility that better serves students and the community and can support resiliency in times of emergency.

FISCAL IMPACT

This informational report aligns with prior City Council direction. City Council, in its FY2021-23 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), allocated \$750,000 for a feasibility study for a new Piedmont Avenue library facility located at 86 Echo Avenue, Oakland.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

The community engagement for the feasibility study included an online survey and community meetings. Participants included neighbors, students, teachers and their families, Friends of the Piedmont Avenue Library, elected officials, and OPL and OUSD staff. The community meetings were in-person and virtual. They were held on January 23, March 14, March 15, April 30, and May 1, 2024. In summary, there were 152 participants across the community meetings and 144 written suggestions in response to surveys.

COORDINATION

This informational report was prepared in coordination with the Oakland Public Works Department and the City Administrator's Office.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: There are no identified economic impacts associated with this report.

Environmental: There are no identified environmental impacts associated with this report.

Race & Equity: The proposed joint-use public library will be located on the Piedmont Avenue Elementary School campus, which serves 313 students enrolled in kindergarten through 5th grade. According to the California Department of Education, the ethnicity of the students are 47.9% African American, 21.1% Hispanic or Latino, and 13.1% two or more races. Districtwide, the African American student population at OUSD is 20%, so Piedmont Avenue Elementary has more than double the citywide percentage of African American students. Only 17% of students scored at or above the proficient level for math, and 22% scored at or above that level for

reading. An equity rating analyzing how well the school is serving disadvantaged students

relative to all students, compared to other schools in the state, based on college readiness metrics, academic progress, and test scores provided from the state's Department of Education rated Piedmont Avenue Elementary School 2 out of 10, indicating underserved students at this school may be falling far behind and experiencing large achievement gaps.

According to an article from EdSource published on January 29, 2024, nearly 178,000 economically disadvantaged third graders are not meeting state standards for English language arts, and the vast majority of those falling behind are disproportionately Black and Latino children. Early learning gaps all too often turn into lifelong opportunity gaps.

Libraries are one of the essential community pillars that support and enhance childhood development and education. After the opening the joint use public library in East Oakland, the 81st Avenue Branch Library, the 3rd grade reading scores of the OUSD Acorn Woodland and Encompass Academy Elementary students doubled. Access to a new public library's books, services, and support will positively impact student literacy rates and educational achievement.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff recommends that the City Council receive an Informational Report regarding the results of the Piedmont Avenue Library Feasibility Study.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Jamie Turbak, Director of Library Services, at 510-238-6610.

Respectfully submitted,



JAMIE TURBAK
Director, Library Services

Prepared by:
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Director, Library Services

Attachments (1):

A: Piedmont Avenue Library Conceptual Design October 2024