

**MOORPARK CITY COUNCIL  
AGENDA REPORT**

**TO:** The Honorable City Council

**FROM:** Jeremy Laurentowski, Parks and Recreation Director

**BY:** Jessica Sandifer, Program Manager

**DATE:** November 30, 2016 (CC Meeting of 12/7/16)

**SUBJECT:** Consider Locations for New City Library

**BACKGROUND**

A new City Hall/ Civic Center (Civic Center) has been among the City's top ten priorities for a number of years. From 2000 to 2004, the City/Redevelopment Agency of the City of Moorpark was able to acquire enough land for a new Civic Center location adjacent to the corner of High Street and Moorpark Avenue. The Civic Center location would ultimately function as a civic "bookend" for the west end of High Street, with the Police Services Center and Ruben Castro Services Center being the bookend to the east. The design process was started in 2005, when the City Council authorized an Agreement with GKK Works to design the new Civic Center. In June 2006, a Campus Master Plan (Master Plan) and Building Site Design concept was presented to the City Council. Due to the significance of the project, and the many intricacies associated with the site and proposed architecture, the City Council created an Ad Hoc Committee to work with the Architects and staff on preparing a conceptual Master Plan. The initial appointees to the Committee were former Mayor Hunter and Councilmember Millhouse. The committee was reorganized in 2007 to include former Mayor Hunter and Councilmember Mikos. The committee has since been disbanded.

In January 2007, the City of Moorpark assumed control of the library from the County of Ventura and on May 15, 2007, the conceptual Master Plan was approved by the City Council. The concept included a 35,000 square foot City Hall structure, parking improvements, and improvements on High Street. In addition, the concept included a future option to create a new 25,000 square foot library, south of where the existing library stands today (Attachment 1). The concept as designed was estimated to cost \$28.4 million, with \$20 million going to the City Hall and associated site improvements, and \$8.4 million going towards the library. However, at the time the concept was presented, the City was still evaluating the needs for a larger library facility. In July 2007, the library consultant hired by the City completed a space needs study for a future library. The study indicated that in order to provide the amount of space necessary to accommodate the ideal levels of service for current and future patrons, the building would need to be approximately 33,000 square feet in size. This was larger than the

size of the building that was provided in the Master Plan. In consideration of the costs to construct such a large building, as well as the associated maintenance and staffing costs, the City opted to conduct a voter opinion survey in the fall of 2007. The results of the survey did not substantiate that a ballot measure would be supported by the Moorpark voters to raise the necessary funding for a new library building. After the survey was completed, efforts on the Master Plan stalled.

In 2009, the undergrounding of the open storm drain channel to the west of the proposed Civic Center created additional design opportunities related to the City Hall building. The City was also expected to acquire about five acres west of and adjacent to the current civic center site as part of the Development Agreement with Essex. The covered channel would allow for potential expanded parking to the west of the site, as well as an opportunity to explore a new approach to the Master Plan and inclusion of the library, particularly since funding would not be available for an expanded library as proposed in the 2007 study. The project Architects were directed to design a Master Plan concept with a single-story City Hall building and incorporating the existing library building, which would be expanded and renovated. The library was proposed to be expanded from its current footprint of about 7,000 sq. ft. to approximately 15,800 sq. ft. Concurrently with these planning efforts, the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Civic Center Master Plan was being prepared. For many reasons, including the historic Tanner Wall and future traffic constraints on High Street and Moorpark Avenue, the EIR preparation was turning into a lengthy and time consuming process. In January 2012, the City Council approved moving forward with the design of the expansion of the existing library while the EIR document was being completed. This way the library part of the project would not be further delayed, as the library expansion could be designed and constructed separate from the City Hall.

In March 2012, the Architect's library consultant completed a feasibility analysis on the existing library building and the costs associated with renovating the structure versus building a brand new building. The report concluded that the costs to renovate the existing library versus building a new structure were essentially the same. The primary factors that contributed to this conclusion were the grade separation between the existing library parcel and proposed expansion area, as well as the condition of the existing structure, both of which would require substantial construction costs. The expanded library would ultimately become a two story structure at the grade separation and would require stairs and an elevator. In addition, the existing library had undergone several expansions and remodels over the years which would require significant funding to bring each remodeled area up to current building codes. The cost to expand the existing library was estimated at \$6.7 million. The cost to construct a new 16,000 square foot library was estimated at \$6.85 million.

In February 2012 the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Moorpark ("Agency") was dissolved by action of the State. The Agency owned the majority of the property slated for the new Civic Center and since then the City Council has had no further discussion on the library or Civic Center Master Plan. However, the property ownership issues

were recently worked out through the Successor Agency and the development of the Long Range Property Management Plan and the properties are in the process of being legally transferred to the City of Moorpark.

## **DISCUSSION**

In the nine years since the City took over the County library, it has become very successful. Events and activities at the library have increased over 600% and attendance at the library has increased over 300%. All of these events and new activities have benefited but also detracted from the library's success. For instance, the current library lacks an event space, requiring special events to be held at other locations, which takes patrons away from the library. When events are held in the library, such as story time and game events, a large crowd makes it difficult for patrons to move around the library or find a place to quietly study or read. The success of the library has reinforced the need for a new larger library that can accommodate spaces for all types of library patrons. Conversely, the decrease in the City's workforce over the last several years has highlighted the fact that the proposed new City Hall may not need to be as large as previously estimated once the City reaches build out.

Staff is recommending that the City Council authorize staff to move forward with the design and construction of a new library building. In order to move forward with the project, staff is requesting that the City Council approve the location for the new library. Staff has prepared two potential locations for the City Council's consideration. Both locations have the same advantages in that they will not require the temporary relocation of the library, so services to patrons would remain virtually uninterrupted. In addition, both locations are on High Street. Staff believes that it is necessary to maintain civic uses downtown, as it enhances the overall civic center concept and may contribute to the success of local businesses. Successful libraries in other cities have increased local businesses by bringing library patrons downtown, energizing and activating the downtown area. Another important component of keeping the library downtown is the proximity of the library to the patrons that utilize it, as well as the proximity to neighborhood schools. Both Chaparral Middle School and Walnut Canyon Elementary School are within walking distance to the downtown area and based on recent discussions with library staff, a large percentage of the patrons that utilize the library are located in nearby neighborhoods. Lastly, both locations allow for the reuse of the existing library building for City Hall or other community uses. It should be noted that the proposed library shown in the attached exhibits represents an approximate 18,000 square foot (s.f.) single story building. The size and layout of the library building is diagrammatic and has been provided for discussion purposes only. The final design, size and site specific features will be proposed by the architect as the project progresses and as the City's budget allows.

Site A – North Side of High Street, west of Moorpark Avenue

This location is on the property that was purchased for the new Civic Center complex, south of the existing library on the north side of High Street. Street parking for the library will be constructed directly adjacent to the front of the library on High Street and an overflow parking lot will be constructed to the north of the site, directly south of the existing library parking lot.

One advantage of Site A is that it is within close proximity to the existing library location, which will make the transition to the new site convenient for library patrons, as well as library staff. Another advantage of this location is that the library would be included as an integral component of the future civic center, as it allows the north side of the site to remain open for a new city hall building and other civic uses. It also allows for the expansion of the library if warranted in the future. The library at this location would be a prominent feature on High Street and a major component to the civic bookend referenced earlier in this report. If an opportunity presented itself in the future to construct the new civic center, the library would be the primary civic use directly adjacent to High Street and should be designed as a prominent architectural feature as seen from Moorpark Avenue and other downtown areas. Staff believes that the location of the library on the south side of the property, directly adjacent to High Street, will allow adequate room on the north side of the property for a future City Hall building and other civic uses to be built at a later date.

Some of the traffic noise from Moorpark Avenue experienced at the current library location would be reduced at the Site A location. However, a disadvantage of this location is the proximity to the railroad tracks and the potential for noise and vibration from the trains.

Site A is staff's recommended option.

Site B – South Side of High Street, east of Moorpark Avenue

This location is on property that the City is re-purchasing from the Successor Agency of the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Moorpark. Staff is proposing two options; one option is an 18,000 square foot single story building (Site B1), and the other is an 18,000 square foot two-story building with an auxiliary 10,000 square foot two-story building for commercial uses (Site B2). Both locations are directly east of the proposed Apricot Lane Farms development and both locations allow for a potential 4,000 square foot expansion of the library if warranted in the future. Staff believes that the main advantage of this location is the likelihood that pedestrian activity will increase and be focused centrally on High Street, which may ultimately increase the success of downtown businesses. The Library would bring more pedestrian traffic on High Street and would help activate the street scene simply by having people directly downtown. The City of Santa Clarita for example attributes the success of their downtown businesses to the fact that their new library has brought the needed pedestrian

resources to their historic Newhall downtown area. The success of their library is attributed to the fact that it is centrally located and within walking distance from neighboring schools and the residents that utilize the library's services. This location has similar advantages.

Although Site B2 allows for a 10,000 square foot commercial building, the main disadvantage of both options is the loss of overall commercial space on High Street. In addition, both options would most likely impact parking on High Street and would potentially require shared parking with the adjacent Metrolink parking lot. Site B2 would require an increase in funding for both construction and operating expenses due to the fact that the library is a two-story structure. The two-story library would require at least one additional staff person to accommodate the split level layout and would require additional construction costs related to the engineering needed to accommodate the second floor and auxiliary structures, such as an elevator and stairs. In addition, the location of Site B is within close proximity to the railroad. The proximity to the railroad is a concern at this location and additional funding will most likely be required to mitigate noise levels and vibration.

As noted above and in consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of both sites, staff is recommending Site A for the location of the future library. Site A provides the most advantages for the construction of a new library. The site is relatively level; the proximity to the old library location is an easy transition for library patrons; it provides a civic "bookend" on the west side of High Street; presents the most opportunities for future expansion needs of the library and similar to both options, directly addresses High Street and may enhance pedestrian traffic downtown.

Staff is recommending that a Request for Qualifications/Request for Proposal (RFQ/RFP) be prepared for an architect with specific experience relating to design and space planning of libraries. Hiring an architect with a history of designing attractive and well thought out libraries will maximize the design and space planning efforts for the library. Staff feels that it would be appropriate to form an Ad Hoc Committee consisting of two members from the City Council, as well as certain City staff, who will participate in the Architect selection process and in the conceptual design phase of the library. Staff would return to City Council after the proposals are received to select the members for the committee.

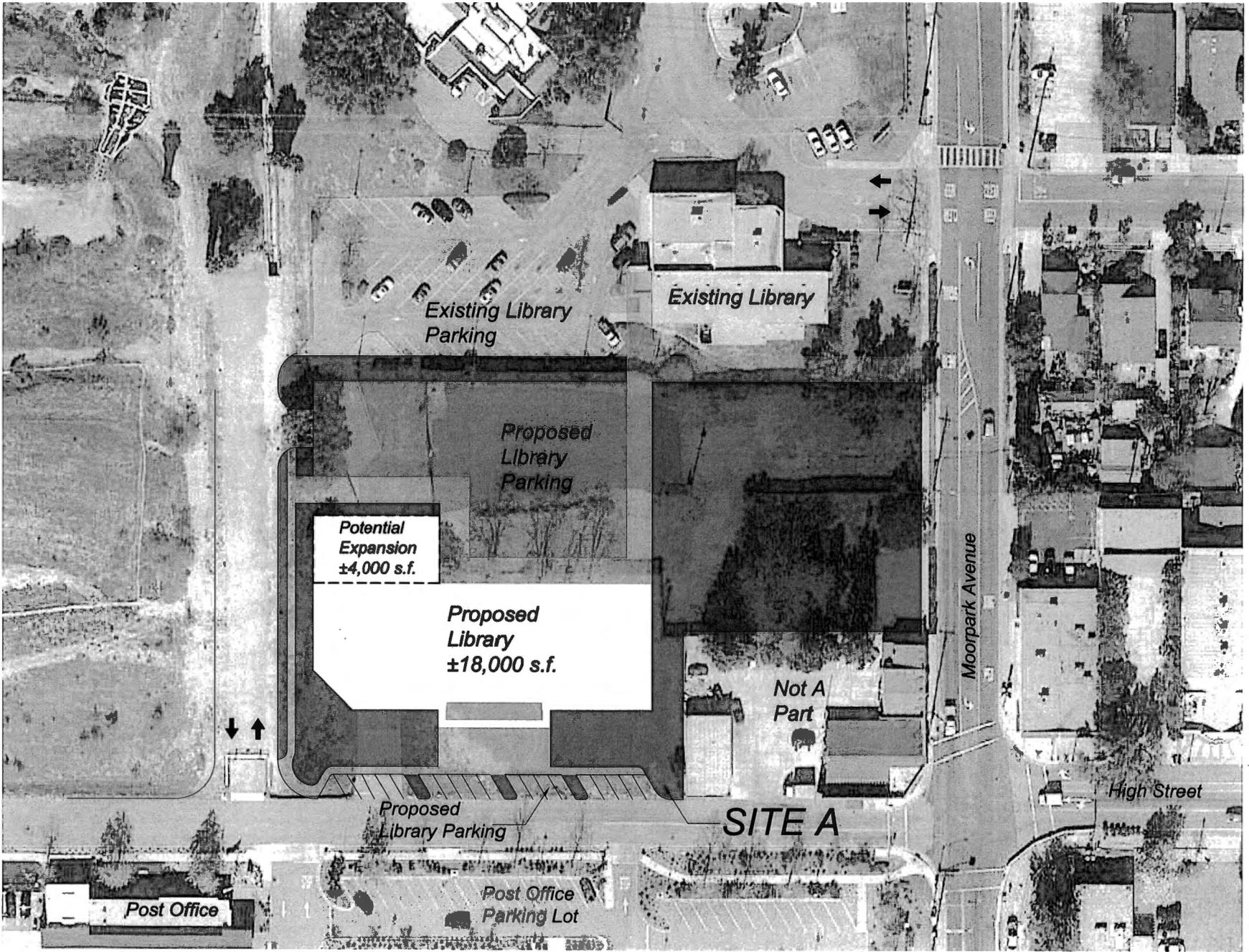
### **FISCAL IMPACT**

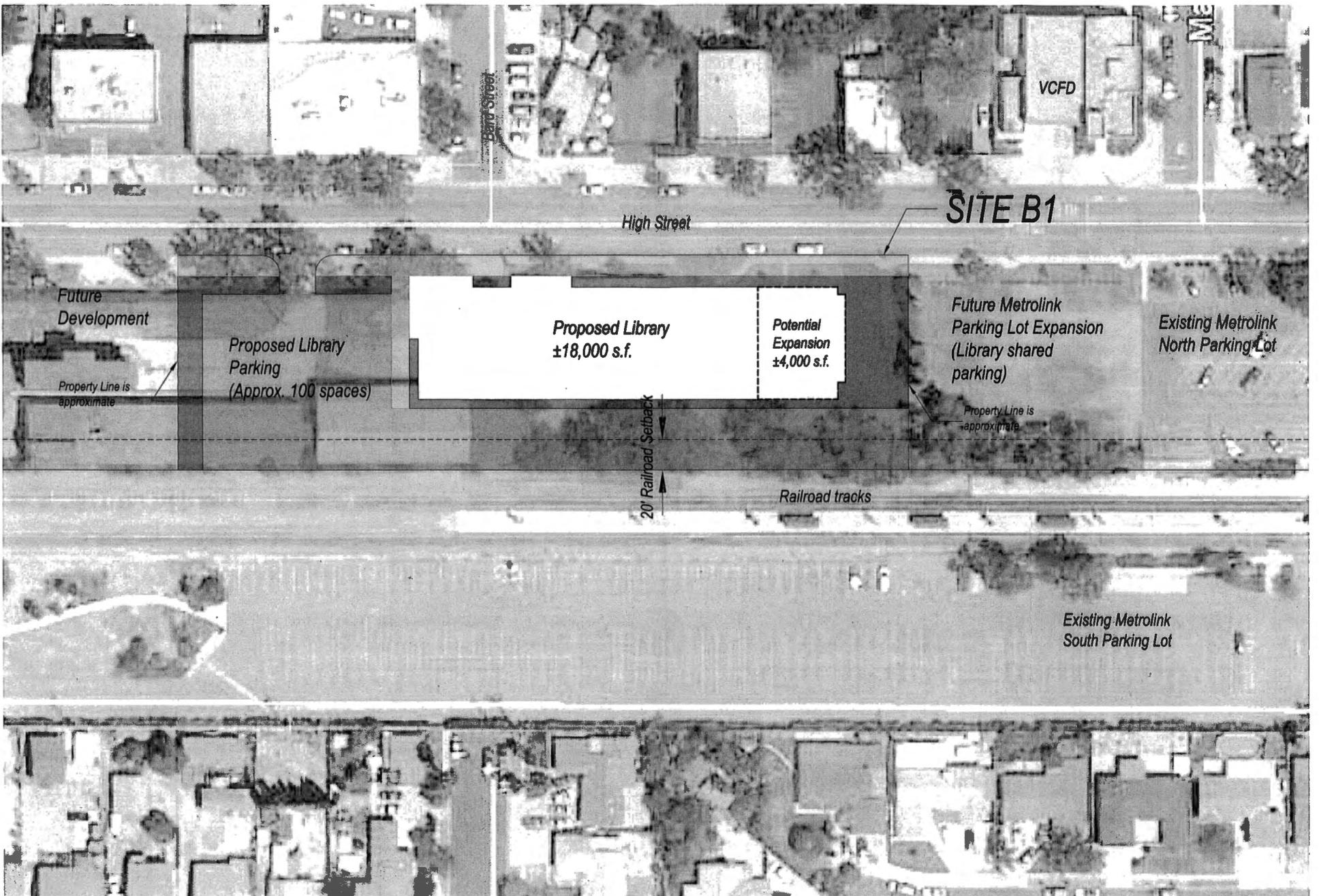
Construction costs have increased since this project was originally brought to the City Council's attention. Staff estimates that the current cost to construct a new 18,000 square foot library building is in the neighborhood of \$10 to \$11 million dollars. Staff anticipates that the conceptual design phase will cost approximately \$80,000 and will return to City Council with a budget amendment once an architect has been selected and a fee has been negotiated.

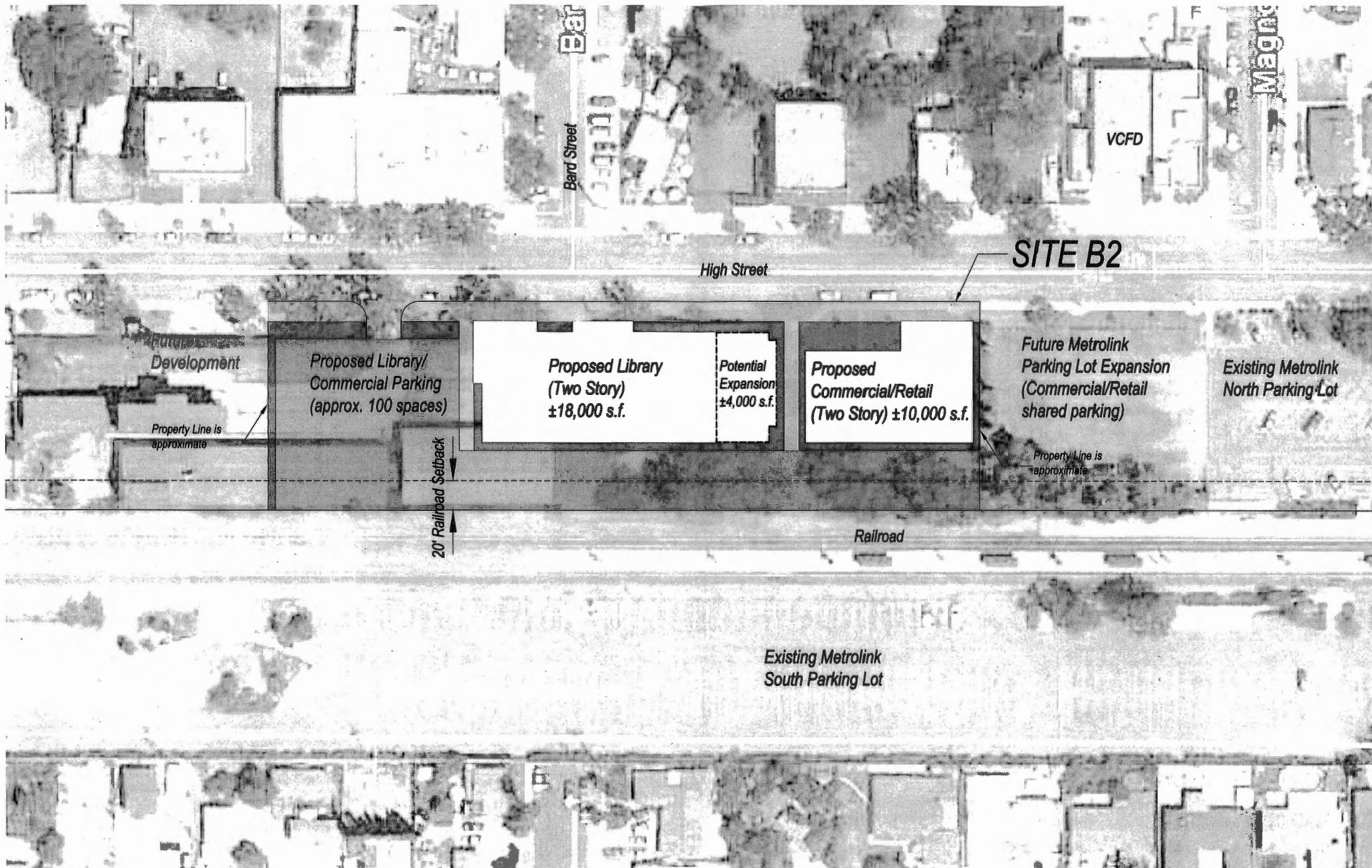
**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

1. Select Site A as the site for the new City library; and
2. Direct staff to prepare and release a Request for Qualifications/Request for Proposal for a library specific Architect for the new City library, subject to final language approval of the City Manager.

Attachments: - Potential Site Locations for New City Library







**SITE B2**

High Street

Bard Street

Magnolia

VCFD

Future Development

Proposed Library/  
Commercial Parking  
(approx. 100 spaces)

Proposed Library  
(Two Story)  
±18,000 s.f.

Potential  
Expansion  
±4,000 s.f.

Proposed  
Commercial/Retail  
(Two Story) ±10,000 s.f.

Future Metrolink  
Parking Lot Expansion  
(Commercial/Retail  
shared parking)

Existing Metrolink  
North Parking Lot

Property Line is  
approximate

20' Railroad Setback

Property Line is  
approximate

Railroad

Existing Metrolink  
South Parking Lot