



**ITEMS FOR  
DISCUSSION/ACTION**

**Agenda Item # 10**

**AGENDA REPORT SUMMARY (REVISED REPORT)**

**Meeting Date:** January 28, 2020

**Subject:** Friends of the Library Ad Hoc Committee Recommendation

**Prepared by:** Manny A. Hernandez, Maintenance Services Director

**Approved by:** Chris Jordan, City Manager

**Attachment(s):**

1. Friends of the Library Pros/Cons and Comments
2. Museum Pros/Cons and Comments
3. Los Altos Library Pros/Cons and Comments

**Initiated by:**

Friends of the Library Ad Hoc Committee

**Previous Council Consideration:**

June 25, 2019 and July 9, 2019

**Fiscal Impact:**

The Ad Hoc Committee is bringing four possible options for work space and storage for the Friends of the Library. If City Council chooses one of the four locations, the direct fiscal impact to the City would depend on the location selected and the placement costs Council chooses to take on. Some site prep would have to be done at all locations except the current location.

**Environmental Review:**

Not applicable

**Policy Question(s) for Council Consideration:**

- Does the City Council wish to provide a free lease of land to the Friends of the Library at one of the proposed locations until a new Los Altos main library is built?
- If City land is provided to the Friends of the Library, what level of cost is City Council willing to take on in the placement, hook-up and eventual maintenance of those facilities.

**Summary:**

- The Friends of the Library have been utilizing space at the Hillview Community Center for over 40 years at no cost to the Friends.
- The Friends of the Library donates about \$150k each year to the Los Altos Library.
- The Friends are temporarily using land at the Government Center for their storage and operations. The lease for this usage will expire December 31<sup>st</sup> of this year or when the new Community Center construction is complete.

---

**Reviewed By:**

City Manager

CJ

City Attorney

CD

Finance Director

SE

---



**Subject:** Friends of the Library Ad Hoc Committee Recommendation

- 
- The Friends wants to utilize the City's property until the redevelopment of the main library
  - The Friends preference in a long-term location is on the Government Center property.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff recommends the Council receive this report, consider the views of the ad hoc subcommittee members, and provide direction to staff regarding the Council's preferred location.

**Purpose**

Find a suitable location for the Friends of the Library storage and operations.

**Background**

The Friends of the Library is a non-profit that provides supplemental funding to the Los Altos Library. The Friends provides approximately \$150,000 annually to the Library. The Friends operation is centered around space previously provided by the City at Hillview Community Center to the Friends at no cost. Under the current lease for the space being used at the Government Center, the City is providing approximately 1,120 square feet in three temporary units across from the library and behind the Police Department.

At its June 25 meeting, City Council unanimously approved the formation of an ad hoc committee consisting of up to two Council members, up to two City staff members, up to two representatives of the Friends and one representative from the History Museum. That committee was charged with finding a short-term solution (defined as during the construction phase of the community center project) and a long-term solution (defined as after the opening of the new community center, until the opening of a new Los Altos main library). The recommendation for the current short-term solution was presented to City Council and accepted at the July 9, 2019 meeting. The long-term solution was expected to be presented around the end of the 2019 calendar year.

**Discussion/Analysis**

The Friends of the Library Ad Hoc Committee is comprised of seven members, two City Council members (Mayor Jan Pepper and Council Member Lynette Lee Eng), two Friends members (Allan Epstein and Duncan MacMillan), one History Museum representative (Elizabeth Ward), one Los Altos Library representative (Marlene Iwamoto) and one City staff member (Manny Hernandez). This committee has met seven times since July 3. Two of those meetings were on-site visits to look at potential locations.

In the long-term considerations for a Friends of the Library location many options were considered and discussed. Non-City property such as a downtown location, local church property and County land in Los Altos was discussed by the committee. Off-Government Center City property locations



**Subject:** Friends of the Library Ad Hoc Committee Recommendation

---

were also discussed and weighted along with several locations on the Government Center. Below is the list of locations that were considered and discussed by the committee during this process.

Off-Site Locations:

- County property on Foothill Blvd.
- Church property on University Ave.
- Downtown location
- Woodland Library property
- Lincoln Park (South)
- Rosita Park

Government Center Locations

- Orchard area behind police department vehicle gate
- City Hall overflow parking (AT&T property)
- Los Altos Youth Center (Orchard side)
- Los Altos Youth Center (Gated patio area)
- Current usage space adjacent to the soccer field and behind PD

Two off-site locations discussed were non-City property. The County owned property off Foothill Expressway near the Interstate 280 entrance was one consideration. This property had many hurdles to overcome even if the County would agree to its usage for the Friends. The sitework involved in making this ready for locating the Friends structures was the biggest factor before consideration of parking, utilities and accessibility. The County was not contacted.

The other non-City property discussed was the Union Presbyterian Church. As with the County site, concerns with this location included access to utilities and accessibility. Another concern is the permitted use of this parcel is currently for a church and the Friends of the Library operations will require a use permit for that property if the Friends are placed there, like other non-church activities or businesses that occur on church properties in the City. The cost of a lease with the church was unknown and after initial contact with the church nothing further was discussed.

It was also suggested that the Friends lease a space in downtown Los Altos. The Friends biggest concern was the cost of a lease in a downtown property, but also questioned parking and their access to the main library from downtown.



**Subject:** Friends of the Library Ad Hoc Committee Recommendation

---

Lincoln Park South was discussed and although there is ample parking adjacent to the possible location of a portable, required setback from the front and rear property lines severely limit space on this narrow strip of parkland. Questions also arose on the aesthetics of that end of the park with the prominent structure location. Cost of utility hook-up was also an unknown but anticipated to be costly at that site.

Woodland Library and Rosita Park are the two off-site locations that the subcommittee feels are the most plausible locations for the Friends of the Library storage and workspace. Woodland currently has an undeveloped space immediately to the south of the building, while Rosita has a grassy berm west of the parking lot. The most prevalent issue for the friends at these, or any, site away from the Government Center, is the transportation of books to and from the main library in order to maintain the same work plan they currently use. Changing their work plan is also an option from an off-site location, but it is thought that a change will negatively impact the volunteers, the amount of money spent on operations, or both.

The Friends of the Library's interest to find a location on the Government Center was also explored by the sub-committee. The City Hall overflow parking on AT&T property was discussed, but with the understanding that the property is not owned by the City. When members of the sub-committee tried to reach out to AT&T no progress was made. The orchard side of the Los Altos Youth Center was also explored, but the committee did not see a realistic way to place a temporary structure the size Friends is looking for in that space.

The orchard space behind the Police Department automatic gate on the north end of the property was also looked at. This space proved to be problematic due to its location behind the secure area of the police station. The location of the Friends operations would also have them hand trucking crates of books across the police vehicle access into and out of the police station. Another possible issue with this location would be the necessary removal of numerous apricot trees to make space for the Friends portable.

The Los Altos Youth Center patio and the current temporary space being used by Friends right now are the two that the subcommittee feels are the most plausible Government Center locations for the Friends of the Library storage and workspace. Placement of a portable in the patio of the LAYC facility would eliminate the use of the patio and outdoor BBQ space that is connected to the indoor facility. A 20' x 40' structure placed in that location would necessitate the removal of a tree (crepe myrtle) and the fence surrounding the patio. Placing the proposed structure in this location will also block natural light coming into the LAYC building from that side.



**Subject:** Friends of the Library Ad Hoc Committee Recommendation

The location that the Friends of the Library is currently using for the short-term is the other long-term location the sub-committee feels is plausible. With this location having less space than the previous usage space in the Hillview Community Center, the Friends already feel that an expansion of this work space is needed for the long-term. This is not possible due to mature oak trees being in close proximity to the storage units and work space.

Recommended Sites (Pros/Cons)

The Friends of the Library subcommittee has discussed and considered the above locations to recommend as possible sites for the long-term usage by the Friends of the Library. The sub-committee has narrowed that list to four City-owned properties.

1. Woodland Library Property
2. Rosita Park
3. Los Altos Youth Center Patio
4. Current Temporary Location

Location	Pros	Cons
Woodland	-Immediately adjacent to library -Currently unused space -Parking -Restrooms in the library -New PG&E service not needed	-Not near main library -Setback limitations for portable -Limited parking -Site prep needed for portable placement -Possible impact to demonstration garden
Rosita	-Space not used by sports groups -Parking -Restrooms -New PG&E service not needed	-Not near main library -Loss of green space
LAYC	-Close proximity to main library -Close proximity to book sale location -No relocation costs for storage sheds -Existing concrete for portable placement -Friends can utilize the same work plan	-Loss of LAYC patio to facility users -Loss of mature tree -Aesthetic impact to the facility -New PG&E service required
Current Location	-Close proximity to main library -Close proximity to book sale location -No relocation costs for storage sheds or portable work space -Friends can utilize the same work plan	-Aesthetic impact to the Government Center -New PG&E service required -No expandability for workspace portable



**Subject:** Friends of the Library Ad Hoc Committee Recommendation

---

Woodland Library

Woodland Library, located at 1975 Grant Road, is the branch location of the Los Altos Library, a member of the Santa Clara County Library District. The branch library is in a 4,600 square foot building that includes a children's area, teen space and a non-English language collection. The library hours are 11am-8pm, Monday-Wednesday & 11am-5pm, Thursday-Sunday. To the immediate south of the library facility there is an open space of undeveloped land that is approximately 3,000 square feet in total.

Although the space is undeveloped there is a partial wall coming out from the from the building about 15 feet and there is currently a demonstration garden in in front of the large berm near the parking spaces. Based on a preliminary evaluation, accessory structure setbacks and other site constraints there is roughly 2,500 available square feet to place the portable and storage sheds needed by the Friends.

Placement of the Friends in this location places them immediately adjacent to a library and on City land that is not being formally used. There is a parking lot of 23 standard spaces and two disabled, and restrooms are available inside the library. Maintenance has checked the available power from the library building panel and have assessed that the power necessary for the Friends is available. The connection would just need to be made by an electrician. Sitework will need to be done in preparation for placement of the portable.

The downside of this location is the setbacks from the rear and side would push the placement well forward near the parking lot and the partial wall would need to be modified as well as relocation of the demonstration garden. The parking lot only has 25 total spaces, so the Friends usage of that lot is anticipated to impact the availability of spaces for library users. The Friends would also be at a distance from the Main Los Altos Library that would necessitate an alteration of their work plan or and addition of transportation to and from the main library in order to maintain their same system.

Rosita Park

Rosita Park is located at 401 Rosita Avenue. The park amenities include a PONY sized baseball field that flexes to AYSO soccer fields, tennis courts, playground, outdoor fitness equipment, restrooms, picnic tables, snack shack and a 90-space parking lot. The Recreation Department conducts tennis lessons on the three courts, PONY baseball plays on the field during baseball season and AYSO 43 and MVLA plays on the field during soccer season.

The location within the park that is being considered is the lawn of green space to the east of the parking lot. There is approximately 3800 square feet of space available with a berm and a few trees located in this space but based on the desired footprint of the Friends their portables could be situated in a way that does not necessitate tree removal. Sitework will need to be done in preparation for placement of the portable. City power to fit the needs of the Friends is available nearby and would



**Subject:** Friends of the Library Ad Hoc Committee Recommendation

---

just need to be connected by an electrician. The parking lot has ample parking and a vehicle loading and unloading space is also available. There are restrooms and a drinking fountain available as well as accessible pathways. The City completed a renovation of Rosita in 2011.

Drawbacks on this location are the loss of greenspace within the park during the time Friends are located there and the distance from the Main Library.

#### LAYC Patio

The patio of Los Altos Youth Center is one of the two locations on the Government Center site that the sub-committee is forwarding to City Council as a possible long-term location for the Friends of the Library. This is a space of approximately 960 square feet that a 24'x40' portable could possibly fit on the existing concrete that makes up the patio. The location at the Government Center is ideal for the way the Friends currently sort and sell books. They would have walking access to the Main Library and Recreation facilities where their quarterly book sales would take place. This location is also immediately across the access road from the storage units behind the Police Department that would not have to be relocated.

Drawbacks of this location include the loss of the LAYC patio that has outdoor grills and picnic tables, the removal of a mature tree in the patio, and the blockage of light into the LAYC facility from the structure that will be placed just outside the eastside windows of the facility. Another drawback is the cost of a new PG&E service to the portable. Staff has looked into the available load from the LAYC building and there is not enough power available to fill the needs of the Friends in their new portable. There will also be a cost to the removal of the patios surrounding fence.

#### Current Location (Near Hillview Soccer Field)

The location that the Friends of the Library are currently occupying adjacent to the Hillview soccer field is also a plausible location. The location is being occupied by a 16'x40' portable as a temporary placement for the Friends until construction of the new Community Center is completed. Along with the storage units behind the Police Department, the Friends would see this as one of their two preferred locations being that it is on the Government Center campus near the Main Library. Being that they are already using these locations there would be no additional site prep costs, they would just continue their current work plan.

One drawback is that they do not have adequate power for their needs and would be required to request a direct service connection from PG&E to meet that need. Staff was not able to locate a load large enough from the Bus Barn to provide that. Another drawback is the limited space available. The space currently being used for the Friends portable is bound by the parking lot and the dripline





**Subject:** Friends of the Library Ad Hoc Committee Recommendation

---

of the large oak trees. As long as those oak trees remain there is no further room for expansion. The storage units behind PD are also bound with no further expansion available.

Ultimately, the Friends of the Library desires a location for their storage and work space on the Government Center property. This would allow them to keep the same operational system of sorting and selling books at the main library and in keeping that way, would avoid additional expenses that it may take to transport books to and from an off-site location.

### **Options**

- 1) Based on the recommendations provided by the Ad Hoc Committee, City Council will provide direction on what City-owned location the Friends of the Library will be located until the completion of a new Los Altos Library.
- 2) City Council will not recommend a City-owned location for the Friends of the Library to occupy

### **Recommendation**

The staff recommends Option 1.