



Berkeley Public Library – Central Library

Interior Public Areas Improvement Project

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is this project being undertaken?

Our review of the Central Library interior public spaces is staff-driven, based on requests from staff to revisit space-related service issues in the public service areas of the Central Library especially issues pertaining to acoustics, seating, way-finding, space allocation and workspace lighting.

What is the goal of this project?

This project involves programming and conceptual design services conducted by a design firm, inclusive of review of the 2009 Page & Moris space planning document and other relevant building documents and information gathering meetings with Library staff and stakeholder groups with the goal of developing a final report inclusive of cost-effective design scheme recommendations and associated cost estimates for the Library's consideration to improve space-related service issues.

When was the Central Library last updated?

In 1996, the Library began a planning effort to expand, improve services and address seismic issues at the Central Library and in April 2002, the Central Library completed a major renovation and earthquake retrofitting project financed by Measure S, a 1996 voter approved \$30 million bond measure to finance the rehabilitation of the Central Library and other downtown Berkeley civic center area improvements. At completion, the Central Library was dramatically enlarged (100,000 sq. ft.), retrofitted, restored and reopened in its current configuration. The goal for the Central Library's major renovation and expansion effort was to adapt the historical structure for the delivery of library services into the 21st century without diminishing the building's original significance and charm.

In early 2009 at the time of planning for the Measure FF Branch Libraries Improvement Program the Library engaged the services of Page + Moris, LLC, a design consultancy office, that included a study of usage limited to the first three floors of the Central Library and associated recommendations for interior facility enhancements in order to make the Central Library function better in anticipation of increased patronage during branch closures as part of the branch bond program. The final report was completed in August that year and presented a range of findings and suggested responses. Based on the Library's then available resources and operational constraints some of the findings were implemented, such as increased number of computers and improved way-finding, while others were left to be addressed at a future date.

Since that time, staff has identified additional Central Library facility needs as well as opportunities for service enhancements beyond those identified in the Page + Moris study.

Why does the Central Library need to have any work done?

Our efforts are based on a desire to ensure the best use of public space for patrons and staff. We're obligated to look at our facilities and make certain they function well. Whatever the recommendations are in the final report they are not intended to be full-scale construction efforts similar to the Branch Improvements; rather, we are looking at adjustments that improve the use of the building's existing square footage without substantial structural change to be phased in over a period of time.



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What changes are proposed for the Central Library?

It is not known at this time what work will be done to the Central Library. We will consider the recommendations in the design team's final report and determine which suggestions to implement incrementally as budgetary and operational needs dictate.

Who is the design firm for this project?

The Berkeley-based design firm of Noll & Tam Architects and Planners (<http://nollandtam.com>) was selected after a competitive process; the firm was selected based on their extensive library design and building experience.

Will the Central Library have to close at all to implement the changes?

No. Improvements will be phased in to allow for continuity of services; some services may be relocated in the building while selected areas are affected.

Will there be an impact to shelving as a result of this project.

No decisions regarding this have been made as we will need to see what recommendations are in the final design concepts. The design team's recommendations also will include opportunities to improve the layout of collections, better utilize existing shelving and recommendations for stack display types and arrangements.

Why provide a separate room for teens?

We feel a responsibility to provide adequate spatial resources to properly serve the teen population at the Central Library and creating a new teen room has been a long-standing goal identified in the Library's 2008-14 Strategic Plan.

What is the process for stakeholder input?

The design team will host a series of meetings to seek input from various stakeholder groups, inclusive of both Library staff members and the community. This input will help shape the recommendations in their final report.

What will be the cost for improvements to the Central Library?

Cost estimates will be associated with the scheme recommendations in the design team's final report. The Library will budget for any improvements it chooses to implement.

Where can I view the recommendations for the Central Library?

We will be posting the design team's report, inclusive of schemes and cost estimates, to the Library's website Planning page: <http://www.berkeleypubliclibrary.org/Array/central-library-space-improvements>.