BRANCH LIBRARY
IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

City & County of San Francisco
Branch Library Improvement Program

New North Breach Branch Library
Frequently Asked Questions

What are the Library project goals?

1. Create a functional, improved, and enlarged Library to meet the needs of a multi-generational user group
2. Create comfortable and memorable spaces for the community
3. Make a welcoming, dynamic civic place in North Beach which allows for future connection to the Park
4. Design an efficient and cost effective building
5. Make the new building a model of sustainability

What will be some of the benefits of the new branch?

- Seismically safe and fully accessible
- Updated & expanded collections of books, CDs, DVDs & other materials
- New designated teen area
- Quiet adult reading area
- Expanded children's area with interactive learning features
- Program room with state of the art audio visual equipment to hold poetry readings, author receptions, children's programs, homework help, computer labs, etc. and available after hours for community meetings
- Increased materials in international languages
- Accessible restrooms
- Stroller parking
- Ergonomically designed staff work areas
- Technologically updated: 18+ public computers & 10+ laptops for public use
- Wireless (Wi-Fi) access to the internet
- Express self-checkout machines
- New furniture
- Public art
- 24-hour book return
- Maximum use of natural light
- Green Building (LEED Silver designation)

How big will the new branch library be?
The new branch will be 8,500 square feet - 60 % larger than the current library and include an upstairs program room.

When will it be built?
The project is scheduled to start construction in spring 2010 and open in late 2011. Construction schedule may be impacted by unanticipated delays in the design process, environmental review or other bidding, contracting or permit issues.

Who are the architects?
Leddy Maytum Stacy Architects of San Francisco.

Where will the new branch library be located?
On 701 Lombard, a triangular lot bound by Lombard Street, Mason Street, and Columbus Avenue. The main library entrance will be on Columbus.

Will the branch library close during construction?
No. The current branch will remain operational during the construction of the new building.

Will the amount of books increase?
Yes, the materials (books, CDs, DVDs, etc.) collection will expand. There will also be more tables, chairs, and computers.

Why isn't the existing branch being renovated?
In 2003, the library considered renovating the existing branch. The community objected that the branch would close for construction, tax dollars would be spent, and the branch would lose space due to accessibility requirements. If expanded, the branch would displace existing critical Park amenities such as the tennis courts, the tot-lot, and bocce ball courts. Expansion in the current location would also work against the long-term goal to centralize recreation amenities and open up the playground. Finally, the existing library was not designed for future expansion and the addition would result in compromised function and usability.

Will Mason Street need to be closed?
The design for the new library works whether Mason is closed or narrowed. The Department of Planning, through the environmental review, will study the effects of closure on the neighborhood.

Will there be Public Art?
Yes. The Arts Commission will establish a Community Artist Selection Panel who will review a pool of artists and conduct a community process to select an artist.

What happens to the existing furniture?
The furniture will be replaced or refinished. The Library has developed interior design guidelines to help the architects and staff choose appropriate furniture based on functionality, ergonomics, durability, maintenance, flexibility, and sustainability.

Is the community involved in the design process?
Yes. A community needs assessment was conducted, that included interviews with community stakeholders about materials, facilities, and services and a community survey analysis. Three community meetings were held (July 2003, December 2008 & February 2008) to discuss services and designs. The Library Commission will hold a public Peer Review where an independent architect and library professional will review the design. In addition, the Library and the Recreation and Park Department held three public meetings (April, May, & August 2008) where the Master Plan for the Library and the Joe DiMaggio Playground was discussed. As the design process moves forward, the Library will hold additional community meetings.

How much will it cost and where does the money come from to build the new branch?
In November 2000, the voters passed a bond measure for $106 million to upgrade San Francisco's branch library system and in November 2007, the voters overwhelmingly passed Proposition D authorizing additional funding to improve the branches. In March 2007, the Library Commission increased the budget of the North Beach project from $3.7 million to between $7.6 - $8.4 million in order to build a new branch. All designs are subject to change in order to meet the fixed budget limit.

Are there other funds that need to be raised?
Yes, the Friends of the San Francisco Public Library are raising funds from private donations for new furniture, fixtures, and equipment for the branch library. For information on the neighborhood capital campaign, call (415) 626-7512 ext. 103.

How do I find out more information about the new branch?
Contact the Branch Library Improvement Program at (415) 557-4354, check www.sfpl.org, or email BLIP@sfpl.org.

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