



**Report to Town of Atherton
Park and Recreation Commission
Site Selection for Atherton Library
Building Project**

September 28, 2011

"A library outranks any other one thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is a never failing spring in the desert."

Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919)

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The Atherton Library has been a continuous part of the town's heritage since the early 1930s. Today we have the financial resources and community spirit to realize what is only a dream for many communities—to build a new library for future generations.

For the first time, we have the opportunity to intentionally choose the most ideal location for our library and create a facility built expressly to meet expectations for contemporary library service. We are now in a position to design a building that will possess the flexibility to adapt to any changes a library of the future will want to accommodate.

While there has been energy around improving the library (located in a twice renovated former private residence constructed in the late 20s) and discussions on how to best go about doing that for years, the process to build a new library began in earnest in 2009 when the Town of Atherton commissioned an assessment of the structural adequacy of the Atherton Library. That report concluded that

- the existing library did not meet current minimum seismic standards
- the building would experience extensive damage to structural and non-structural components during a seismic event,
- extensive building modifications would be necessary to meet minimum life safety level criteria.

Steady and measured progress since then has included Resolution 10-30, passed in June 2010, in which the Town of Atherton resolved to partner with San Mateo County Library, Friends of the Atherton Library, and other stakeholders to support and participate in the process of planning and building a new library, as well as to establish a library steering committee. Composition of the Atherton Library Building Steering Committee (ALBSC) was approved in August 2010; the committee was formally charged by the Town of Atherton to oversee the planning and design process of the new library.

As mandated by the Atherton Town Council, the two potential sites under analysis for the future Atherton Library were to be the current site of the library and a site in Holbrook Palmer Park. To prepare a recommendation for the preferred library site, the Atherton Library Building Steering Committee, working with the town of Atherton and San Mateo County Library, has assessed the professional findings of ABA, Group 4, Page and Morris, and LSA. The ALBSC has also engaged the community in a robust participation process, including four focus groups and three extensively publicized community meetings. The sites have been evaluated for potential environmental impacts and along numerous criteria commonly used in architectural and library site analysis.

The findings clearly indicate the park presents more advantages and opportunities than the existing site. Holbrook Palmer Park has been an asset to the town and a recreational heart of Atherton since the early 60s. Park and library are both institutions for the community to enjoy and inhabit, to take pleasure in and to explore.

There is tremendous potential synergy in locating the library in the park. Current uses of the park include leisurely walks, exercise, play activities, enjoyment of nature, and sporting activities. Current uses of the library include: leisurely explorations of information and literature, mental exercise, children activities, community discussions, and lifelong learning programs. All of these current uses are compatible and are primarily process oriented. Locating the library in the park holds the potential to further connect and make more convenient resources for families and the community. Additionally, a building designed to respect the natural beauty of the park and encourage graceful, indoor/outdoor spaces would be an asset to the community.

Once the site for the new library has been approved, the process will continue with the selection of architects for the next phase of the project. That phase will include confirming the community's priorities for the new building, discussions of and decisions on specific sizes of spaces, and preferred architectural styles.

The following pages detail a thorough investigation of the two sites and the findings that identify the park site as preferred.

It has been the privilege of the ALBSC to work over the last year and more on behalf of the community. There are so many opportunities associated with building a new library and doing so marks an exciting moment in Atherton history. Our new library will provide something positive and of lasting value to the community. This is a rare opportunity for people to come together and participate in creating a facility of significance and we look forward to the future steps that will bring us closer to a library everyone can take pride in and love.

Executive Summary

The committee has reached the following conclusions. Each topic is discussed in detail throughout this report; in addition, the Appendix includes original research and referenced documents.

Referenced material from the Appendix is available in electronic form on the town web site in the library section. Hard copies are available in the Town Administration Offices at 91 Ashfield Road and the Atherton Branch Library at 1 Dinskelspiel.

- The ALBSC thanks the community members who graciously volunteered their time and participated in our community meetings and process. Their input helped shape our work.
- The existing library space, resources and services are inadequate to meet the needs of the current library users. More importantly, the existing library does not meet current seismic codes and does not meet the minimum building performance level C-3 according to FEMA 356. To delay going forward furthers the risk of the existing library being rendered unusable and or unsafe by a seismic event ---the town would have no library.
- The ALBSC understands that locating our library in the park represents a change in public land use and recognizes that this change is consistent with park planning policy and public park land use.
- The town has an opportunity to partner with the library to provide a place for learning and sharing culture and ideas within the park, the community's place for recreation, community activities and cultural events.
- Building the library in Holbrook-Palmer Park provides the town a replacement for an aging building and related outdoor spaces that serves limited needs and interests with a new facility that will serve our broader community.
- The ALBSC understands that a new library in the park has a responsibility to support the community activities currently taking place in the Main House.
- This phase of the library building process deals with site selection, site concept plans and initial library program. The following phases will address building style, building size, design of interior and exterior spaces and the construction process.
- The Library Donor City Funds are sufficient to complete this project and provide for future maintenance, operational support and increased library services and program costs. Refer to the Finance Section for more information.
- To delay the project going forward subjects the project to increased costs of construction.
- The public process has and will continue to be an integral part of the project

Library Funding

The potential to improve Atherton library services is real. Unlike most jurisdictions in California, The Town of Atherton has funds available to build a new library to serve its community now and for future generations. These funds, accumulated over many years, are a function of the laws covering the funding for public libraries in California and more specifically, San Mateo County.

The Free Public Libraries Act passed in 1911, provided libraries in California funding through an allocated portion of property taxes. In 1912, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors

established the San Mateo County Free Public Library. Under this law, property taxes dedicated for library use would fund 90% of library operating revenue. Donations from the community funded the remaining operating revenue requirements.

With the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, the portion of property taxes to fund libraries was fixed based on the proportioning in effect at the time this proposition was passed. The portion of property taxes funding the San Mateo County Library at that time was approximately 3.2 cents per \$100 of assessed property value. Consequently, the proportion of property taxes dedicated to providing San Mateo County Library services remains at approximately 3.2 cents per \$100 of assessed property value, as established in 1978 with the passage of Proposition 13.

The Town of Atherton Library is a member of the San Mateo County Library system, governed by the San Mateo County Library Joint Powers Authority (JPA). Atherton joined the JPA in 1999. The JPA Agreement entered into by the town and JPA defines the terms of the relationship between the Town of Atherton and JPA. Other member cities include, Belmont, Brisbane, East Palo Alto, Foster City, Half Moon Bay, Millbrae, Pacifica, Portola Valley, San Carlos, Woodside and the unincorporated areas of the county. The San Mateo County Library system is funded by all members in the JPA contributing to the San Mateo County Library system based on pre-determined proportion of property tax revenues collected by the County, as defined by Proposition 13.

The cost to provide basic services at each library branch is determined each year. Basic services cover the cost for staff, materials, equipment, programs and furnishings. If the cost to provide basic services within a jurisdiction is less than the property tax collected and attributable to funding basic library services, the jurisdiction generating the funds holds the excess. These excess funds, called Library Donor City Funds, are restricted and to be spent for library purposes only. This includes expenditures such as, facility maintenance, facility remodeling or expansion, increased service hours, and expanding library collections. Expenditures are mutually agreed by the JPA and the city council of the jurisdiction generating the excess funds.

Currently, Atherton property taxes allocated to libraries exceed the cost of providing basic library services. This is primarily due to the relatively high property values in Atherton that generate allocated funding for County Library services compared to the cost of basic services provided by the County Library system. These funds, held by the Town of Atherton in an account dedicated for library purposes, are valued at approximately \$5,600,000. The annual increase in the accumulated fund is approximately \$750,000. According to the JPA and San Mateo County Library Administration, Atherton will continue to generate Donor City Funds for the foreseeable future and will continue to generate Donor City Funds after the new library is completed. Even during a period of severe economic downturn in the real estate market, when property tax re-assessments were readily granted, the Donor City Funds generated by Atherton continued to rise. The increase in assessed property values generated by home sales and home improvement continues to outpace the decrease in assessed values requested and granted to existing home owners.

Accumulated Atherton Library Donor City Funds are sufficient to fund all costs associated with the design, construction, furnishing, collections and landscape improvements associated with the new Atherton Library. This includes reimbursing the town for Town of Atherton staff time attributable to the project. Such reimbursement will be covered by a Memorandum of Understanding negotiated and agreed to by the town and JPA. The existing fund balance of approximately \$5,600,000 plus the annual increase of approximately \$750,000 through the anticipated completion of the new library in 2015 will provide approximately \$8,300,000 for the project. Additionally, expected future Atherton Library Donor City Funds will fund ongoing library building operating and maintenance costs, landscape maintenance and continued improvements, together with expanded collections and programs within the community.

To delay going forward subjects the project to increased costs of construction. It also runs the risk of the existing library being rendered unusable/unsafe by a seismic event – the town would have no library. To date the status of a proposed “town center” is many, many steps behind the progress made for a new library and also at this time, the majority of funding for the proposed “town center” does not exist.

A new library located in Holbrook-Palmer Park, will contribute funds towards park improvements and maintenance. This could include contributions towards commonly shared areas such as driveways, parking lots, pathways and open space, as well as, funding for landscape areas directly associated with the library. These contributions towards park improvements and maintenance would benefit the town. In an attempt to fund park improvements and maintenance, the Town has engaged in renting park facilities for private events. These events can conflict with the community’s enjoyment of the park, particularly on weekends. To date, renting park facilities costs the town more than the revenue generated by these activities. The effect from the town’s recent change to using contract services for park maintenance and event management is not yet known, other than that the Town is currently in a 50% revenue sharing agreement with the service provider. The cost to maintain and operate the buildings and landscape facilities are not clearly segregated in the Town’s financial records and it is therefore, difficult to forecast the financial impact of this new arrangement. Previous to this change, town staff salaries contributed to the operating losses for these facilities. (Refer to Town 2010 Budget)The question as to whether facilities should be rented for large events or whether facilities should serve the community as a learning and cultural resource is essentially a public park policy issue.

The Town of Atherton is in the enviable position of having sufficient dedicated funds to design, build and maintain a new library. It has the opportunity, through careful site selection, design and fund management to provide a lasting legacy for its community.

Process to study new library options

The process to arrive at a recommended site for the new library has taken a few years. It was initiated principally by public safety concerns and was followed by an assessment of library services.

In 2009 a seismic analysis was conducted on Council Chambers and the Atherton Library. The conclusion was that the buildings do not meet seismic safety standards and require significant seismic retrofit work. The question as to whether an investment should be made in an aging facility that from the library's perspective is inefficient and not otherwise serving Atherton public library needs was brought before the Atherton Friends of the Library. The Friends of the Atherton Library together with the San Mateo County Library Joint Powers Authority and Town of Atherton performed a Library Needs Assessment in the fall 2009. The findings conclude that the existing Atherton Branch Library is not adequately serving the community and that a new library should be built.

The Needs Assessment used a number of measures including:

- a community survey
- benchmarking, a process that compares the library services provided to communities similar to Atherton to the services provided by our library
- a comparison of the library services provided by the Atherton Library to the San Mateo County Library services model
- identifying user needs through focus group meetings
- factoring future trends in library services.

The findings from the Needs Assessment were presented and accepted by the Town Council in February 2010. (Refer to the Atherton Library Needs Assessment and the Frequently Asked Questions in the Appendix).

A Task Force, to include interested members of the public was formed by Council to evaluate the findings from the Seismic Study and library Needs Assessment in February 2010. Members were solicited in the same manner as with other Atherton committees. The resulting Task Force was formed February 2010 and received the approval of the Town Council to explore this and related issues. From April to June 2010, the Library Task Force met six times to discuss and evaluate the findings from the Needs Assessment and Seismic Study.

The Task Force recommended Atherton build a new library in Holbrook-Palmer Park. The Town Council accepted the Task Force finding that a new library be built and thought that while the recommendation that a new library in the park was a promising one and could benefit the community, it was decided that recommendation to locate the library in the park should be considered within a more formal public process. The Town Council Adopted Resolution No. 10-30 forming the Atherton Library Building Steering Committee (“...that the City Council of the Town of Atherton hereby partner with the San Mateo County Library, Friends of the Library and other key stakeholders to support and participate in the process of planning and building a new library and establish an Atherton Library Building Steering Committee based on recommendations from the Atherton Needs Assessment Task Force”).

In August 2010 the Atherton Building Steering Committee (ALBSC) was created from applicants, charged by the Town Council to recommend a site for the new Library at either the existing library site or a site in Holbrook-Palmer Park, oversee the planning and design process of a new library.

From August 2010 through September 2011, the ALBSC met at 11 regular meetings and 22 special meetings. All meetings were posted as required, including the library and town websites.

One of the first issues addressed by the committee was whether locating a library in Holbrook-Palmer Park would be consistent with the terms of Olive H. Palmer's Will bequeathing her property known as Elmwood to the Town of Atherton. The committee engaged, with the approval of City Council and the JPA, legal counsel to render an opinion on the matter. The opinion states that the construction of a public library would be consistent with the terms of the Will.

A Request for Proposal (RFP) was posted which sought to engage architects with library design experience to complete the site selection analysis and library building program and was approved by Council and issued in December 2010. The firm, Group4 Architects, recommended by the ALBSC to perform the first phase of work (Site Selection and Library Programming) was approved by council in March 2011 and the contract was approved in April 2011. The Atherton Planning Department selected and engaged, with Council and JPA approval, an environmental consultant (LSA Associates, Inc.) to conduct initial environmental studies for the two sites under consideration. The site selection and library program process included: establishing site selection criteria that were accepted by Council; holding a number of community focus group meetings with the Library Consultant in April and May 2011; and holding two community meetings in June 2011 and one in September 2011. The purpose of the focus group and community meetings was to provide the community information about the project and to learn from the community how they envisioned a new library and to hear and answer questions and concerns.

The ALBSC presented the preliminary findings and results from the focus group and community meetings to the Park and Recreation Commission in July 2011. The committee's final report and recommendation will be presented to the Park and Recreation Commission and City Council at their respective regular meetings in October 2011.

The ALBSC will continue its work on this project into Phase II, library programming analysis and building design, and Phase III the construction and completion of the new Atherton Library. It is anticipated that these phases will commence in late 2011 and continue through 2014.

While the Needs Assessment set forth convincing reasons for the formation of a new library, subsequent community meetings have raised concern about the program and size aspects of the assessment. We acknowledge these issues, and understand that the building program and space planning aspects are elements to be evaluated and carefully considered throughout the design process and particularly in Phase II.

The library program follows best practices and will be tested by analysis of how these programs and numbers were derived and whether this same process has proven to be successful in those other

jurisdictions where libraries have been built using the same formulation.

The ALBSC recommends that the study to determine the needs of actual Atherton library users based on existing facts and observations, including those at community meetings be considered in this first phase and continue to be studied and considered in Phase II. For example, certain fundamental precepts have evolved which will be integrated into programs and size. These include the premise that there should be no duplication of existing spaces and food spaces are undesirable. We understand that as a community building a library must be shaped by, and be responsive to, the community it serves.

Library Study and Atherton Library Trends

Despite the current facility's limitations, the community does use the Library. Over the past few years, use levels have actually been increasing. Atherton library usage has been increasing over the last few years, a trend seen throughout the state and the country.

Overall usage is less than what it might be since limited space and dated infrastructure narrow the ways that the public can use the facility. Many visitors tend to use it as a pick-up/drop-off point for requests rather than spending time working or reading onsite since it lacks the seating, acoustical separation or other characteristics that would make it a comfortable destination.

The Library does offer both a physical and a digital collection and plans to continue developing and maintaining resources in both print and electronic formats in a new facility. It is crucial that the new facility have as much flexibility as possible so that the technology offered when it opens is appropriate to community needs and can continue to meet evolving needs in the years that follow. It may be that iPad or eReader devices are offered for library use. In any case, the facility must accommodate whatever configuration of technologies is offered on opening day and beyond. It is also important that the Library offers basic technology support, digital literacy training and laptop plug-in access throughout the facility, to name some examples.

Building Program

The new library will offer flexibility – will allow visitors choices by offering zones for different needs and activities – the area for children and families can be separated acoustically from quiet study and reading spaces. The group activities and events (bridge classes, knitting group, museum lectures, cooking demonstrations, book clubs) can be supported without disturbance to individual users.

The community's needs and expectations are complex and cannot all be accommodated in a single volume of space. It is critical that space is preserved for solitary pursuits while more community and collaborative activities have an appropriate venue within the facility.

The Library has a responsibility to support and celebrate the community's heritage - both historical and cultural. Space is needed within the facility to accommodate the Atherton Heritage archives as

well as to display art created by community artists as well as by the community's children and youth.

The Library can be a focal point for education on many levels, from the information in its collections to the programs and workshops it sponsors to the building and site itself. The Digital Library serves patrons through tutoring students, computer learning, databases, electronic resources and assistance in doing research. If designed to "green" standards, it can become an environmental showcase and community "classroom".

Environmental Assessment

Structural Report's Summary

A structural report dated February 11, 2009 which evaluated the structural adequacy of the existing Atherton Library building was prepared on behalf of the Town of Atherton by the Crosby Group. The purpose of the report was to evaluate the adequacy of the existing building to meet the minimum life safety performance level established by the American Society of Civil Engineers Standard 31-03, (ASCE 31-03). ASCE 31-03 is the recognized standard for the seismic evaluation of existing buildings.

The existing Atherton Library building consists of an original building constructed in 1929 and an addition constructed in 1981. The ASCE 31-03 report concludes that both the 1929 and 1981 portions of the building do not meet the minimum life safety criteria established per ASCE 31-03. Identified deficiencies include lack of an adequate lateral force resisting system, inadequate attachment of the building to the foundation, lack of adequate shear-walls, lack of bracing for suspended ceilings and lack of positive connections from the building's roof structure to the supporting walls. The report concludes that extensive building modifications will be necessary in order to improve the Atherton Library's lateral load resisting system to meet the minimum life safety level as established by ASCE 31-03.

In September 2009 an additional report was prepared by the Crosby Group to evaluate the structural adequacy of the Atherton Library building against life safety building performance level C-3 criteria established in the Federal Emergency Management Agency 356 document,(FEMA 356). Buildings which meet the FEMA 356, C-3 level are anticipated to experience extensive damage to structural and nonstructural components during a seismic event. The report states that following a seismic event the existing Atherton Library building should remain stable although potentially economically impractical repairs may be needed prior to re-occupancy of the building. The report concludes that the existing Atherton Library building does not meet the minimum building performance level C-3 according to FEMA 356.

Environmental Screening and Traffic Analysis

An Environmental Screening project was conducted by LSA Associates, Inc. (LSA). The purpose of the project was to prepare early environmental analysis of alternative sites (3 sites were analyzed) and to prepare environmental documentation for selected site (MND or EIR).

First task – early environmental analysis (called Environmental Screening Analysis by LSA) of alternative sites

- Existing library site at 2 Station Lane (Site A)
- Site of Main Housing in H-P Park (Site B)
- Site of northeast parking lot in H-P Park (Site C)
- Note: LSA was advised that if Site B or C were selected the Main House would need to be demolished since the community has expressed a desire to not add any additional structures to the Park (from 2004-05 Park Master Planning Process)

Environmental topics considered in early environmental analysis

- Cultural Resources
- Traffic and Parking
- Biological Resources

Environmental topics not yet considered in early environmental analysis but required to be considered in Project Environmental Documentation

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Utilities and Service Systems

Historical Resources

- Site A: potential historical resource within and adjacent to site; the existing Atherton Library and Town Hall, jointly constructed in 1929
 - Town Hall recognized by the Town as “Historical Site”
 - Buildings’ may be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) under criteria 1 and 3
 - CRHR criteria:

- A c. 1870 Water Tower
- A c. 1896 Carriage House
- These are considered eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Places.
- Neither the Water Tower nor the Carriage House would be directly affected by development of either Site B or C.
- However, historical resources can suffer indirect effects from adjacent or nearby construction that impact the historic setting of the resource.
- LSA states that adverse impacts to these resources are not anticipated because of critical review of the library's final design by the Town Planning Commission and City Council.

Traffic and Parking

- Six intersections were studied and analyzed for level of service (LOS) (congestion) impacts.
 - Fair Oaks Lane/Dinkelspiel (Station) Lane
 - Watkins Ave./Middlefield Rd.
 - Watkins Ave./Holbrook-Palmer Park Exit
 - Watkins Ave./Holbrook-Palmer Park Entrance
 - Watkins Ave./Dinkelspiel (Station) Lane
 - Watkins Ave./El Camino Real

- Two intersections are currently congested (i.e. function at unacceptable levels of service). Other intersections function acceptably.
 - Watkins Ave./Middlefield Rd. – LOS E in PM peak hour
 - Watkins Ave./El Camino Real – LOS F in AM peak hour

- Parking surveys were conducted at both existing library site and at Holbrook-Palmer Park. Parked vehicles were counted every hour 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on a weekday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on a Saturday. Current utilization:
 - Existing Library – 42% of available spaces used during highest weekday hour (i.e. 14 of 33 spaces used during 3 p.m. hour)
 - Holbrook-Palmer Park – 52% of available spaces used during highest weekday hour (i.e. 64 of 124 spaces used during the 7 p.m. hour). 61% of available spaces used during highest Saturday hour (i.e. 75 of 124 spaces used during the 10 a.m. hour).

- Site A – impacts expected with development of a 12,000 sq. ft. new library:
 - No traffic impacts at nearby intersections.
 - An additional 2 parking spaces (added to the existing 33 spaces) needed. This could be accommodated by expanding the on-street parallel parking spaces on the east side of Dinkelspiel (Station) Lane or sharing use of the adjacent Caltrain Station and Town offices lots.

- Sites B & C - traffic impacts expected with development of a 12,000 sq. ft. new library:
 - Level of service (congestion) impacts would occur at the Watkins Ave./Middlefield Rd. Intersection (i.e. PM Peak hour LOS degrades from E to F and delay degrades from 45.3 sec. To 57.7 sec.) This level of service impact assumed that the re-use of the existing library would generate the same number of trips as the existing library.
 - A revised study was performed assuming that the re-used existing library would not generate the same amount of traffic on the local road networks as it currently does. As shown in the revised September 2011 report, the removal of existing library building re-use trips from the street network, and the change in trip distribution, no impacts would result to the study area intersections with development of an 11,100 sf library under this alternative.

- Site B – parking impacts expected:
 - No new parking spaces required. Weekday projected utilization increased from 64 to 90 spaces (+26 spaces) for a total utilization rate of 73% during the 7 p.m. hour. Saturday projected utilization increased from 75 to 92 spaces (+17 spaces) for a total utilization rate of 74% during the 10 a.m. hour.

- Site C – parking impacts expected:
 - 58 existing parking spaces removed. An additional 24 new spaces would be required for new library, possibly located north of new library site.

Biological Resources

- Primary biological resource affected by a new library at any site is heritage trees.
- Site A – Three heritage trees (two coast live oaks and one coast redwood) are located within the building footprint and would be removed.
- Site B – No heritage trees are located within the building footprint.
- Site C – No heritage trees are located within the building footprint.
- Mitigation for loss of heritage trees is provided by provisions of the Municipal Code.

Parking Report – additional work

The following analysis is additional work conducted to address the parking requirements at the two sites when special events and/or combined groups utilize the space. This work was performed by the ALBSC and Town Staff.

Existing site

As stated previously, parking at the existing library site includes 16 paved lot spaces and 17 street parking spaces for a total of 33 spaces. 42% of available spaces (14 spaces) are used during the highest weekday hour of 3pm. This coincides with parents bringing children to the library after school and to attend Friends of the Atherton Library children's programs. It has been determined that even with anticipated increased library use of a new library there is adequate parking for the current library size. The existing parking at the train station area is currently used to accommodate the additional parking requirements for special events held by the library and it is anticipated that this area would accommodate the needs required by a new library.

Holbrook-Palmer Park site

The environmental consultants concluded that no new parking spaces would be required if a new library were located in the park. The park has 169 paved parking spaces that include the spaces along the entrance and exit drives. This does not include the 50 spaces adjacent to the buildings and 60 to 80 spaces in the North Meadow that are used during special events, such as the Annual Egg Hunt. The total number of cars that can be accommodated at the park including spaces for special events is 279 to 299. The spaces used by daily groups include the following:

Exercise Classes (mornings in Carriage House)	10 cars
Tennis (mornings mostly)	5-8 cars
Team Sheeper (various)	12-20 cars
Lacrosse Camp (June, August, 9am-12pm, WD)	Drop Off/Pick Up*
AYSO Soccer (Sept-mid Nov, 4:30-6:30pm WD)	Drop Off/Pick Up*
MA Lacrosse (Feb-June, 3:45-6:30pm WD, 10am-3pm WE)	Drop Off/Pick Up*
Little League (mid March – early 4-7pm WD, 8am-4pm WE)	Drop Off/Pick Up*
Pre-School (8:30am & 1pm Drop Offs, 11:45am & 3:45pm Pick Ups)	
Playground and walkers (through-out the day)	10 to 20 cars

Note: * Most of the group activities listed parents drop children off and pick them up. Parking is mainly utilized when there are games that parents attend. This is evident in the highest parking uses as compiled by the environmental report.

On weeknights, the highest parking usage of 52% of spaces is at 7pm, a time when both Little League and MA Lacrosse activities are ending.

Summary:

Parking to accommodate existing daily user groups and a new library is sufficient. The parking problem occurs when events for large groups associated with rental activities occur and in particular when these events take place on weekends – at time when the community is most likely to want to enjoy the park. The main season for special events, such as weddings and corporate meeting/picnics is during the warm weather months, from May 1st through October 31st. This conflicts with sport and other recreational users.

Over the last two years, events have dropped with the economic downturn. On weekdays, there are usually 1-2 corporate events per month with around 200 people. That compares to as many as 1-2 events a week when the economy was stronger. On weekends, there is currently 6-7 events per month with anywhere from 180-400 people attending. Hours for the events range from 5pm-12am on Friday and 10am-5pm and 5pm-12am on Saturdays and Sundays. In previous years the weekends were crowded with as many as 12 events a month.

Recent Events with Over 300 People:

Annual Easter Egg Hunt	800 – 1,000 people	Community Event
July 20th (2 Corporate Events)	500 people	
August 10th (Google)	800 people	

The July 20th events brought in over 300 cars, which necessitated the use of every alternate parking area, including stacking cars in the North Meadow.

Conclusion:

The numerous daily groups utilizing the park for tennis, yoga, lacrosse, soccer and Little League do not lead to any parking usage issues even when several of the large daily groups are present at the same time. On the other hand, the special event groups utilizing the park can often lead to constraints on parking that can necessitate utilizing non-paved areas.

Main House Analysis

On March 19, 2007, a property inspection report was performed on the Holbrook-Palmer Park Main House by All Bay Home Inspection. The scope of this detailed report was to uncover both structural and safety concerns on the property so that maintenance staff could appropriately budget time, materials and equipment or contract out repair work to make the facility last long into the future.

The areas assessed and a summary of items found include:

ELECTRICAL – Issues with wiring, outlets and missing covers.

FIREPLACE – Issues with spark arrestor and trim on fireplace.

FURNACE– Suggested replacement.

WINDOWS – Not tempered glass.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS – Compliance concern.

SEISMIC – Issue with cripple walls and brick portion of foundation.

ROOF – Issues with leaks, vents and jacks.

GUTTERS – Leak potential.

For the full report, see the Appendix “Main House Analysis.pdf”

Site Selection

The site analysis and evaluation report summarizes the planning process and information developed to evaluate two sites identified by the Atherton Town Council for the location of their new library building: the site of the existing library at 2 Dinkelspiel Station Lane, and several sites within Holbrook-Palmer Park. The summary includes the work products that were developed by the Atherton Library Building Steering Committee (ALBSC) for presentation and discussion at the community meetings and the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Process

Group 4 Architecture Research + Planning, Inc. worked closely with the ALBSC over the course of five months (May to September, 2011) to study and analyze the proposed sites; review and discuss the program and best practices for a new Atherton library; and review and discuss associated cost model components. In addition to seven meetings and three subcommittee meetings with the ALBSC, Group 4 conducted two community charrettes in June 2011; presented an analysis of the Holbrook-Palmer Park site to the Parks and Recreation Commission in July 2011; and participated in a community open house on the two sites in September 2011.

Proposed Sites

The two potential locations identified and agreed to by the Town Council for a new Atherton library were the existing site at 2 Dinkelspiel Station Lane, and Holbrook-Palmer Park. In addition to the existing library site, the ALBSC and Group 4 identified five sites for consideration at Holbrook-Palmer Park, including: the Main Residence site; the North Meadow/parking lot; the Front Lawn; the Pavilion; and the preschool. Each of these six sites was analyzed and evaluated according to a set of site prerequisites and evaluation criteria that were compiled from ALBSC and community project goals and objectives as well as Group 4’s experience in helping other communities determine library site feasibility. These prerequisites and criteria are described in more detail below. This detailed review and analysis led the ALBSC and Group 4 to narrow the options down to two potential sites: the existing library site and the site of the main residence at Holbrook-Palmer Park (hereafter referred to as the “proposed park site”).

Site Prerequisites

Site prerequisites were developed to ensure that the site would meet certain basic requirements for project implementation, including cost and schedule. Each of the sites was analyzed and evaluated based on three site prerequisites: Planning /Zoning Code, Site Character and Cost/Schedule.

Planning/Zoning Code

The sites were evaluated for feasibility in regards to receiving required planning and zoning revisions/approvals for library development.

- At Holbrook-Palmer Park, an amendment to the zoning code or a variance would be required.
- At the existing library site, a lot merger would be required to join the two parcels that make up this site.
- Because the core of the existing library building is more than 50 years old, it may be deemed to have historic significance, which could have implications or restrictions for demolition. In Group 4's opinion, the existing condition of the building's core and the modifications made over time may have significantly compromised any historic significance.

Site Character

Each site was evaluated for the potential to accommodate a new library building while retaining its existing site character. Both the existing site and Holbrook-Palmer Park provide sufficient opportunity and flexibility to allow the design of a new library building to be sensitive to its context and environment.

Cost and Schedule

Each site was evaluated based on whether site development costs would be reasonable relative to the overall project budget, as well as on the ability to maintain a reasonable project schedule through anticipated planning approvals, design development, and construction.

Site Evaluation

Sites that met the prerequisites were further evaluated according to criteria in three key categories: Context, Experience/Opportunities, and Function. Each of these categories was further broken down into more specific areas of evaluation. Each site was rated as good, neutral or poor relative to each other in regards to its ability to meet the specific criteria.

Context

The Context category was divided into five sub-categories:

- Accessibility – safe for pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic
- Minimizes Impact to park/neighbors
- Consistent with the Holbrook-Palmer Park Master Plan (for the existing library site, this was changed to the opportunity to retain the reading garden).

Synergy with other recreational and cultural activities

- Connectivity with the community

The existing library site was rated positively for accessibility, minimizing impact to park/neighbors and community connectivity. This site is adjacent to residential neighborhoods to the south and east, but sufficient screening is provided by the existing redwood grove and other mature trees. The

redwood grove is a critical visual and acoustical buffer that would remain if the new library was sited here. The existing library site was rated neutrally in terms of synergy with other recreational and cultural activities because of its adjacency to governmental and administrative buildings and activities rather than cultural and recreational activities.

The main residence site in Holbrook-Palmer Park was rated positively in all of the Context subcategories. Holbrook-Palmer Park is viewed as very accessible by all modes of transportation. Its network of pedestrian walkways is extensive and no new paved roads would need to be introduced. There is no anticipated impact to the residential neighbors because the main residence site is centered in the park with a substantial distance to the nearest neighbor. This site provides generous acoustical and visual setbacks. The site is consistent with the Holbrook-Palmer Park Master Plan which designates specific areas for recreation, pastoral, and civic or community activities. The new library would be at the center of the community core. Holbrook-Palmer Park is a treasured asset of the community, and locating the library where the community gathers will increase its convenience and use. With thoughtful site and building design, the new library will enhance the park and provide additional amenities both inside the building and in the adjacent exterior program spaces.

Experience/Opportunities

The Experience/Opportunities category was divided into four subcategories:

- Visual and physical indoor/outdoor connections
- Outdoor spaces
- Environmental and operational sustainability
- Library user experience

The existing library site was rated negatively for visual and physical indoor/outdoor connectivity and for outdoor spaces. The site does not have long views, there is not much space to create strong indoor/outdoor connections or outdoor spaces, and the site's proximity to the train results in sound disruptions to outdoor activities. The existing site was rated neutrally on sustainability. Heavy shading by the tall redwood grove to the south of the site limits opportunities to generate electricity from photovoltaic panels; however, other green features could be implemented in the building design. The long, narrow site would dictate a long, narrow building with a less operationally-efficient layout. The site was rated as neutral for library user experience because of its contextual relationships to the town's administrative buildings and departments rather than other cultural/recreational amenities, as well as its limited potential for creating indoor and outdoor public spaces.

The main residence site in Holbrook-Palmer Park was rated positively in all of the Experience/Opportunities sub-categories. Being situated in the middle of Holbrook-Palmer Park, the site has the potential for long views and myriad ways to create indoor/outdoor connections and spaces. The site has excellent solar exposure and presents many opportunities for a wide variety of other green design options. The spacious site allows more opportunities for the building to support a more regular, operationally efficient layout. The site was rated as positive for library user experience because of the opportunities for joint programming with other multigenerational recreational and cultural activities.

Function

The Function category was divided into four sub-categories:

1. Flexibility/multi-purpose
2. Efficient
3. Convenient
4. Interruption of service/temp facility

The existing library site was rated neutrally for its potential flexibility and multi-purposed spaces. Depending on the design of the library there could be flexibility for use by the surrounding administrative functions, including the police department, permit office, public works, council chambers, and administration. The library's efficiency at this site was rated poorly because of limitations on the ability to optimize the building configuration operationally. The site was given a positive mark for convenience due to its proximity to the administrative offices and its long-term location of the Atherton Library. Since the existing building would need to be torn down in order to build a new library, there would be either an interruption of library service or the costs of a temporary facility to serve the Atherton on the interruption of service criterion. The proposed park site was rated positively in all of the Function subcategories. Site conditions support a greater possibility of designing and building a flexible, multi-purpose, and efficient library. It is viewed as a convenient site because it is centrally located within Atherton, where a new library will support and enrich existing park activities and events. Developing a new library in Holbrook-Palmer Park would not require interruption of service or temporary library facilities during construction.

Parking and Traffic Analysis

Concurrent with Grou4's Site Analysis and Evaluation, Neal Martin & Associates (consulting with LSA) conducted a parking and traffic analysis of both sites.

Parking

A new expanded library would require a total of 35 spaces. The existing library site would require two additional spaces. This would require either sharing used of the Town Office lots and the Caltrain station lot or adding new parallel parking spaces on the east side of Dinkelspiel Station Lane. At Holbrook-Palmer Park, no new parking spaces would be required. Weekly utilization is expected to increase from 64 to 90 spaces for a total utilization rate of 73% at 7pm – the busiest weekday time. Saturday utilization is expected to increase from 75 to 92 spaces for a total utilization rate of 74% during the 10am hour – the busiest weekend time. This would still leave over 30 parking spaces available at these peak times.

Traffic

The traffic analysis found that there is no anticipated level of service (LOS) impacts to any of the related intersections at the existing library site. Therefore, no mitigation measures would be required. Development of the new library at Holbrook-Palmer Park would result in a minimal LOS impact at the Watkins Avenue/Middlefield Road intersection. No mitigation measures would be required since the LOS impact at this intersection would only increase by 0.3 seconds at peak hours.

Preliminary Site Plans

Preliminary site plans were developed for the existing library site and the proposed park site in Holbrook Palmer Park (included on the following pages). The footprint used to develop these site plans is based on the 9,800 square foot program template that Kathryn Page of Page & Moris developed for the new Atherton Library (an 11,100 square foot dashed line indicates the larger program footprint option). The intent of these site plans is to explore opportunities to integrate the building with the sites based on the project goals and objectives that were established with the Community, the ALBSC and confirmed by the Town Council. These drawings are not proposing a design for the library but are identifying opportunities at each site that could be further developed and refined as the design moves forward.

Supplemental library/community outdoor program spaces have been indicated on both sketches. The existing library site, because of its size limitations does not have as many outdoor space opportunities as the proposed park site. There is also greater opportunity at the proposed park site to leverage the improvements for the library to include other Park infrastructure needs such as pathway improvements, crosswalks, traffic calming strategies, parking lot improvements, landscape improvements, storm drainage and Park Master Plan identified amenities such as the grand promenade and event garden.

Site fit and scale can also be analyzed for each site based on the site plan sketches. The size of the proposed library on the existing library site, even though it is within zoning guidelines, results in a large amount of the site covered with building; it is also at a greater density than any neighboring site. At Holbrook-Palmer Park, the proposed library would create minimal change to the open/green space of the existing park because the proposed footprint can easily fit within the existing hardscaped area of the Main residence and no additional parking is required. The design of a library at the proposed park site would focus on enhancing the visual and physical relationships of the new library to the Carriage House, Water Tower and Pavilion. There are possibilities for outdoor spaces that create an inviting, usable and enhanced community core.

Preliminary Plan for Existing Library Site



Preliminary Plan for Park Library Site



Conclusion

The town is uniquely positioned to intentionally choose the most ideal location for the new library. Holbrook-Palmer Park - is the town's place for play, passive and active recreation, community gathering, and social and cultural events. These experiences and activities would be enhanced and complimented by a library – a place to learn, share ideas and knowledge. A library plays the sacred role of being the neutral place where one can access information and knowledge regardless of its commercial or political value. Public parks are places that allow us to enjoy nature and our community – parks are our open, free space. By bringing these two places together we bring together – in every way - our common ground.

Appendix

Referenced material from the Appendix is available in electronic form on the town web site in the library section. Hardcopies are available in the town administrative offices at 91 Ashfield Road and at the Atherton Branch library at 1 Dinskelspiel.

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Library Funding

[Library Finance Background](#)

Process to study new library options

[Mailer 1 for June 2011 flyer](#)

[Mailer 2 for Sept 2011](#)

[Community Outreach Activities](#)

[Focus group arts and heritage notes](#)

[Focus group parents notes](#)

[Focus group teens notes](#)

[Email note sent June 23 2011 by Town of Atherton](#)

Library Study and Atherton Library Trends

[Atherton Library – Services to Schools](#)

[Atherton Library Trends](#)

[KPage completed & current projects 0913111](#)

Building Program

[Preliminary Library Program 9800sf](#)

[Preliminary Library Program 11100sf](#)

Environmental Assessment

[ASCE 31 Report Structural Evaluation Report](#)

[FEMA 356 Life Safety Building performance Evaluation](#)

[Environmental Screening and Traffic Analysis July 2011](#)

[Traffic Report Revised Sept 2011](#)

[Traffic Study Memo 091611](#)

Site Selection

[Comm Mtg #3 9-8-11 – Slides](#)

[Atherton Site Evaluation Report – FINAL](#)

[Site Diagrams](#)

[Group4 Library Projects](#)

Additional material

[Post Office Staff Report](#)

[Analysis of Post Office.](#)

[High Speed Rail Status report](#)