



# SIERRA MADRE PUBLIC LIBRARY & TSK ARCHITECTS PUBLIC MEETING

## CLOSING REPORT

MAY 6, 2023

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## General Overview of Event



On Saturday, May 6, 2023 from noon to 2:00 pm the public was invited to the City of Sierra Madre City Council Chambers to discuss the upcoming Library Meaningful Improvement Renovations with TSK Architects (<https://www.tska.com/>).

The Library received just over \$10 Million for renovations divided into two separate grants, funded by the California State Library and federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funds.

- *California State Library Targeted Grant (\$10,000,000):*
  - ADA & Seismic Upgrades/Improvements
  - Building Expansion & Renovation
  - Improved Green Space
  - Grant period ends: January 31, 2025
- *California State Library Building Forward Infrastructure Grant matched with federal ARPA funds (\$669, 210 total):*
  - Window Replacement
  - Fire Suppression Equipment
  - HVAC Repair and Install
  - Asbestos Abatement
  - Grant period ends: March 31, 2026

The Library has finally received funds to update its 1955 building. In 1955, it was expected that the Library building would be rebuilt or expanded after 25 years. While the building has had some small expansions (small meeting room and computer room), substantial maintenance has been deferred. The Library is in desperate need of an upgrade both structurally for seismic retrofitting and ADA compliance as well as internally to improve services for our growing community.

To take the reins on this renovation, TSK Architects was selected to move forward and this event provided an opportunity for Sierra Madre residents to learn more about TSK Architects, to provide feedback on the upcoming renovations, and to ask questions about the renovations and the architecture firm.

Representing the Library and the City of Sierra Madre, City Librarian Leila Regan, Library Management Analyst Lori Garza, and Deputy Director of Public Works Arnulfo Yanez were in attendance and available to answer questions from Sierra Madre citizens.

Jonathan Richert was present from TSK Architects.

Light refreshments were provided. This event was held during the Friends of the Sierra Madre Library Art Fair taking place next door in Memorial Park.

TSK Architects' Jonathan Richert introduced himself and provided a brief background of the firm and their experience before the public asked questions and provided feedback and commentary.

This event was televised/livestreamed and is currently available online here:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/TlPwqy8JFQA?feature=share>

## City Librarian Summary

This event was scheduled as soon as an architecture firm was selected for the Library Meaningful Improvement Renovations.

This is the only public forum event for the Library Meaningful Improvement Renovations prior to design due to the short grant periods. The \$10 Million targeted grant from the California State Library must be used in its entirety by January 31, 2025. Due to this short amount of time this is the only public forum prior to the design stage. However, there will be another public forum once a design has been selected to move forward with that the public will be allowed to ask questions and provide commentary.

Over the past several years, the Sierra Madre Public Library has worked to establish the Library needs of the community, building, staff, and other organizations. This can be reviewed in three separate documents:

- *The 2017 Library Facility Master Plan:* [https://cdnsm5-hosted.civiclive.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_212309/File/Library%20Facility%20Master%20Plan.pdf](https://cdnsm5-hosted.civiclive.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_212309/File/Library%20Facility%20Master%20Plan.pdf)
- *The 2018 Library Survey Results:* [https://cdnsm5-hosted.civiclive.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_212309/File/Sierra%20Madre%20Library%20Survey%202018%20Final.pdf](https://cdnsm5-hosted.civiclive.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_212309/File/Sierra%20Madre%20Library%20Survey%202018%20Final.pdf)
- *The 2018 Library Building Program by Joseph Matthews:* [https://cdnsm5-hosted.civiclive.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_212309/File/Services/Library/Lib%20Building%20Program%20Matthews%20Report%202018.pdf](https://cdnsm5-hosted.civiclive.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_212309/File/Services/Library/Lib%20Building%20Program%20Matthews%20Report%202018.pdf)

The 2017 Facility Master Plan was compiled by a committee of Sierra Madre residents, public library staff, and Library Board of Trustees. It provides recommendations addressing the deficiencies and limitations of the existing 1955 building.

The 2018 Library Survey was contracted with National Research Center, Inc (NRC) and was mailed to 4,910 households with 1,770 surveys returned (a response rate of 37 percent). The survey included questions on the community's preference for moving the Library, keeping the Library at its current location and reducing programming, enhancing the Library at its current location and expanding services with a property tax, and/or significantly reducing Library services and limiting public access due to ADA deficiencies. It also gauged the importance of certain services to the public like up-to-date collections, programming, reading/study space, technology, and local history archives.

The 2018 Library Building Program was completed by library consultant Joseph Matthews. At that time, options that were being considered included a new building or remodel and addition

at the existing location. Library space and design parameters appropriate for our Library were researched and identified.



# Library Meaningful Improvement Feedback

## Comments and responses for TSK Architects:

- **Weather affecting the Library and neighboring residents**
  - First time TSK has heard about water run off issues but they will keep the weather/water in mind regarding the design.
- **Scope of the project**
  - TSK knows there are structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing issues in the existing building.
  - First task is determining what needs to be done with the existing structure.
  - Allocate right amount of funds toward the structural part of the building then look at funds going toward the actual renovation.
  - Hopes to add square footage/extension to the south side of the building.
- **Original plans of the building**
  - Not yet provided building's original plans. Regardless of having original plans TSK will come in and review the building. Having the originals would be a great help, however.
  - Desire is for any additions or building add-ons to fit the character of the original building as well as the character of Sierra Madre.
- **Library as a piece of architecture**
  - Little bit of a mid-century modern building. It has a low and long profile.
  - How beautifully lit it is on the inside, want to keep that.
  - Back of the building and front of the building almost read as two completely different buildings, hope to be able to unify the building and make it look consistent as a structure.
- **Lead designer and background**
  - Jonathan Richert (representative of TSK Architects present) will be lead designer.
  - Background: Masters from Cal Poly Pomona, most of career has been working in higher education and civic facilities.
- **Retain trees in the front**
  - No design for the landscaping, yet. Health of the trees will be taken into consideration.
  - Understands the trees are something the community loves.
- **At what stage of this project will the next community workshop take place**
  - Toward the end of conceptual design, before design-development and construction documents.
  - There will not be enough time to make changes to the design.

- This meeting is to make sure TSK is able to hear the community's concerns and comments early enough to be incorporated into the design.
- **Detailed program for the Library design**
  - In the works with the City, a lot will depend on the funding for the project. How much goes toward structurally correcting the existing building. Then remaining budget will be used for the programming aspect and to renovate the existing building.
- **The process from now until construction**
  - First step, evaluate the existing structure and the cost to bring it up to where it should be structurally.
  - Then enter the phase of conceptual/schematic design. Taking into consideration community input, and the remaining funds, TSK will develop floor plans, elevations, and renderings on how to use those funds to meet the needs of the community, the Library Board of Trustees, the Library, and all the stakeholders.
  - Then have a second meeting with the public to provide feedback and allow us to make small adjustments as needed.
  - Enter Design-Development phase where we take those schematic designs and start making documentation for the contractor to use to build. Won't be able to build off it but it's another step. This stage provides another opportunity to check against the budget. Each phase, is a chance to stop and adjust.
  - Next is construction documents – final documentation and drawings that the contractor will use to actually build the project.
  - Finally there is permitting – where the City will look at it and make sure the documents meet all the City's requirements, all the code requirements, everything that needs to be done on the project. Allowing the project to move into bidding, where the project will be bid out to potential contractors.
  - When all of those phases will occur is something still being worked out with the City to make the January 31, 2025, deadline for the \$10 Million California State Library Targeted Grant. Working back from that date to make sure the timeline is being adjusted accordingly.
  - There will be flex in the schedule. It can be a high quality project within the provided timeline. Don't want to push things to the last minute where
    - There is not enough time to finish or
    - The contractor has to throw 90 people on the project at the last minute
- **Robotic retrieval system so the stacks could still be high**
  - Depends on the budget.
- **Primary objective is to bring the Library into the future, not make the Library look like it's always looked**

- **Firm will provide an estimate for Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment (FF&E)**
  - The building and site will be a part of TSK's scope but will work with the City for any FF&E that's desired.
  - Anything attached to the building is a part of TSK's scope anything that can be moved out is not.
- **Don't put too many limitations on TSK Architects**
- **Consider building new instead of renovating**
  - How far can the funds go? What can be achieved in the given timeline? It'll be a dual consideration. It's about serving the community of Sierra Madre and giving you the best project that TSK can.
- **Requirement shouldn't be to clean up the old design**
- **Timeline for keeping the existing**
  - Still working on ways to help speed up the process and keep in sync with the Library and what the Library is trying to achieve.
  - Evaluating the existing structure includes having TSK engineers look at the current structure to find out what needs to be done.
  - Funds will be set aside for the unexpected.
- **Is there a chance for phasing to get parts of the construction started early**
  - TSK is in conversations with the City right now on different ways the project could be delivered and the pros and the cons of each option. This way TSK can move forward with a method that the City prefers but that would be most advantageous for the project.
  - When TSK comes into the Library in the fall, it will be the start of construction. End of 2023/beginning of 2024 construction will start.
  - Analysis is already happening. The City has done theirs and TSK will start very soon.
- **Charging a fee for the short project time**
  - No.
- **Wish Jonathan well with producing the design in a timely manner.**

## Comments and responses for the City of Sierra Madre:

- **Previously, the Library secured a financial amount from the City and it sounds like getting additional funding amount from the City would be best secured now rather than later. If we want more for this plan now is the time to invest.**
- **Structure for decision making**
  - Group of individuals from the City: Director of Planning Vincent Gonzalez, Senior Planner/Architect Clare Lin, TSK Architects Jonathan Richert, Deputy Director of Public Works Arnulfo Yanez.
  - From a Library Services perspective: City Librarian Leila Regan which will be in collaboration with the Library Board of Trustees.
  - All individuals will be constantly meeting (phone, email, and in-person).
    - TSK and Public Works meeting on an almost daily basis.
    - Engineering Bureau/Public Works Department evaluating designs on a daily basis for change orders, and new regulations brought down from the State.
- **Last time City did construction of this size.**
  - Maybe about 10-12 years ago during the water projects.
  - Nothing in the millions regarding construction projects.
- **The City has never done a project of this size before, hoping the City has the experience to proceed with this project and advises on formalizing the decision making structure so decisions can be made quickly and efficiently. You've outlined a number of people that have to be involved in decision making process that can slow down the process.**
  - For this magnitude, the City has the proper amount of people, about five individuals that will help us get through this project.
- **Considerations for the vacant lot behind the Library on Mariposa Avenue**
  - That lot ideally would be used for additional parking space with some landscape design.
  - Existing parking along the south side of the building will be removed and the Library will need additional parking.
- **With bidding and evaluation, it seems like there will only be 10 months for construction.**
  - The plan is to empty the Library by this fall. Use the entire 2024 for construction.
  - Many studies were done last fall (2022) such as a geology report, seismic report, and materials analysis. This has all been in motion since last July (2022) when the City knew it was receiving funding.
  - Certification certificates have been processed and have been submitted to the state and to the county to expedite this process so by the fall (2023) the idea is

for TSK to have that stack of documentation in place which should be ready by late summer, early fall.

- There are concerns that will be discussed with TSK.
- **Concerns The City has for this project.**
  - This is going to be the Library's finest hour. This is going to be the City's, the community's finest hour in regards to the Library. That alone gets Deputy Director of Public Works Arnulfo Yanez excited. This will be Yanez's fifth library project in his 27 year career.
- **Length of bid time for construction**
  - 15 to 30 days per contractor program.
  - There is always back and forth but everything has been laid out already as far as drafts, drafts of previous projects, City staff expertise, etc.
- **Contractor charge a premium for a shorter turn around**
  - That would be disclosed in the agreement/request for proposal for the job assignment for the contractor.
  - These were time constraint regulations that were brought down by the California State Library. It is a great opportunity for the City and we accepted the funding.
  - The City will do the best job with the money and the time window presented.
- **TSK Selection**
  - There were 172 firms that inquired.
  - There were 110 that contacted the City.
  - It came down to 72 that were very serious.
  - Then down to 14 through process of elimination:
    - The dollar amount for the project.
    - The window of construction
    - Rules and regulations that the City put in place.
  - There's a reason why TSK is here, they answered all the questions appropriately. Great firm, great references, great experience. The only firm that will be able to complete the project in the time frame.
- **Concerns over the timeline and the late start given that we were awarded the \$10 Million in July 2022**
  - The City was notified of these funds in July 2022, however we did not receive the award packet until a few months ago.
  - While waiting to receive the award money, wheels were already in motion starting last summer – drafts, conversation, phone calls, research, all started last July (2022).
  - Two months ago was just when we were informed of the timeline and stipulations for the grant. Public Works has been involved since the beginning

and the Library Board of Trustees have been receiving building updates for several months now.

## Comments and responses for the Sierra Madre Public Library:

- **Additional workshop when plans are finished**
  - Once the design is complete, another workshop to go over the design will be taking place hopefully in August.
  - Reason why there is a rush is due to the grant period for the \$10M ending January 31, 2025.
  - This meeting is to help inform TSK Architects of community needs.
- **Considerations for other entities in the Library**
  - TSK Architects, specifically Jonathan Richert the Lead Designer, has met with the Library Board of Trustees for their April meeting and listened to the needs/wants from:
    - Sierra Madre Historical Preservation Society
      - Proper climate controlled archival storage
    - Friends of the Sierra Madre Public Library
      - Bookstore and sorting/storage area
    - City of Sierra Madre IT Department
      - Larger, climate controlled server room
  - The Library's needs and wants will depend on what is available. Bigger items include:
    - Programming Room/Community Room
  - TSK will take into consideration today's conversation for community needs.
  - \$10 Million seems like a lot but with structural, seismic, and ADA requirements it will not go as far as previously thought.
- **Considerations for the California Room that is now a meeting room, concerns about the Library going digital, concerns over the archives and local history, concerns over the local history storyboard that is no longer being used**
  - The California Room, which is now the Sierra Madre Meeting Room, does not have any heating or cooling. It was designated for the local history but it is not climate controlled which made it less than ideal for delicate historical materials.
  - Some archives have been moved to a more stable though not completely climate controlled area there are a lot of issues with the Library and the HVAC.
  - Historical books put into circulation are usually copies or duplicates.
  - Digital books are not replacing physical books and also cannot be deleted haphazardly from the Library's system.
  - Moving to the temporary library location will limit the Library's available print collection and that might lead to an increased digital collection.
  - Hoping for a better archive space in the renovated building.
- **Information on the temporary library**

- Sierra Madre Room at the YMCA. The Library will be moving from an almost 9,000 square foot facility including our basement to an almost 3,000 square foot facility.
- Looking to relocate to the temporary library location in December 2023/January 2024 and possibly having the Library completely closed for up to a month to relocate and prep the temporary Library.
- **This is probably our one chance to make something of the Library. This is an opportunity to do something amazing. However, bringing the Library up to ADA standards is going to shrink the collections, that is just a given. We need to think about what a Library is going to need 40 years from now, 50 years from now.**
- **Grant funding specifics: when do they have to be fully spent and can the funding be diverted**
  - The grants are from the California State Library and there are two separate grants.
    - \$10 Million Targeted Grant – must be used in its entirety by Jan. 31, 2025
    - \$669,210 Infrastructure Grant – must be used by March 31, 2026
  - The grants are specific in what they can and cannot be used for, an example is the Infrastructure Grant can only be used for internal renovations.
  - They can only be used for the Library and cannot be diverted to other projects.
- **Extension available for the \$10 Million State grant**
  - An extension is possible but it is not guaranteed and it will depend on the ebb and flow of construction. Might not be able to request an extension until six months before the end of the grant period.
- **In the design process, who makes the decisions for the Library**
  - City Librarian and Library Board of Trustees as well as officials from the City will make sure the design fits as close as possible within budget to community, non-profit entity, City, and staff needs.
- **Grant funding available for Furniture, Fixtures, & Equipment (FF&E)**
  - How much of the grant will be used for FF&E will depend on what's left after the structural and ADA needs of the Library.
  - Also hoping for support from our Friends of the Library, Library Foundation, and other entities to help us provide funding for FF&Es in the Library.
- **Decision making process for the work flow, location, and need of Furniture, Fixtures, & Equipment (FF&E)**
  - City Librarian Leila Regan will be communicating staff and Library Board of Trustee needs to TSK when it comes to designing with larger furniture in mind (shelving, reference desk, etc.).

- City Librarian also has a running spreadsheet of patron requests for the Library and an open door policy for the public to discuss the direction they would like to see the Library go.
- When it is time to move forward with FF&E products, City Librarian will get approval from the Library Board of Trustees and then City Council on purchasing.
- Internal will be dictated a lot by ADA compliant. Make sure the Library is compliant and functional for today and the future.
- **What entities fundraise for what parts of the Library**
  - Friends of the Library – fund all of our programming and special projects.
    - Other local entities that help with programming are the Community Foundation, Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club, Woman’s Club, etc.
  - Board of Trustees – steering the ship. Help with approving policy and keep the Library connected with community needs.
  - Library Foundation – new, but fundraise for very specific items. Usually physical items. No current funds but with the renovation they have something to fundraise for.
- **Bring back the Storyboard from the California Room**
- **General concern over community input and turnaround time.**
  - The community has been involved in the Library building for a very long time. There is a 2017 Facility Master Plan that was developed by staff, trustees, and community members, which includes a thorough examination of the Library and its deficiencies. There was a 2018 Library Survey that went out to every household regarding the future of the Library needs and what the community wanted to see happen with the Library building. Also a full evaluation and of the community and Library needs through another project (The 2018 Matthews Report).
  - In 2019 an architecture firm was hired to create a brand new building design that ultimately did not move forward due to COVID but the community had a huge input on that and got to weigh in on the new Library building a lot.
  - There is a really good amount of community input regarding the Library building and its future.
- **Feeling that the Library is not listening to residents because they don’t want change. They’re happy with what they have and if change things too much you might not get the community support and participation you are hoping for. Suggest another workshop like this immediately when there is a design despite limited funds and time. Remember the Library is working for the residents.**
  - This is a 1955 building that has had a lot of deferred maintenance. It is not ADA compliant. It’s bordering on not being seismic compliant. There are rooms that

do not have any air conditioning or heating. There are a lot of things that are not working in this building. It is very precious to a lot of people and that is not to be minimized in any capacity but it is not functioning for staff and it's not really functioning for our community either. A lot of the shelves are way out of ADA compliance as they are too high.

- **You don't have to be ADA compliant, if you haven't started ADA compliancy**
  - You do have to consider ADA compliancy, especially if you start ADA, you have a set time to finish it.
  - ADA needs to be considered in any strategic plans or future planning.
- **Put a mailer in the water bill to let the public know. Have a big two or three meetings let the public know: this is what we'd like to have, this is what we're obligated to do by law. Don't bring in all kinds of things that people don't want and then wonder why everybody is upset and surprised.**
  - The plan is once there is a design, another program like this will be organized with a much larger lead time to be able to get that information out.
  - Regarding transparency, the Library has explained, especially in the 2017 master plan, the library is not currently functional. The Library needs a new roof, a new HVAC, and other improvements to make the building functional for staff and the community in addition to being ADA compliant.
- **The community will not support all these other ideas that have been circulating for the last 5-10 years like going digital, having a meeting room, having a playground, etc. The Library is already too noisy.**
  - The Library doesn't have a place for programs and that is why the Library is so loud. The Library staff is very aware of the noise complaints.
- **Maybe you don't need those programs, programs don't belong in a Library. A Library is a place for quiet study. It's not a place for children doing crafts. Programming can be done at Memorial Park or the Hart Park House, not in the Library**
  - The Library needs to be inclusive for all. This also means providing a quiet space. One of the solutions is to have a meeting/programming room where the Library can still hold programming away from study areas. Adjacency planning would allow the Library to provide for those who rely on the Library for programming (families) and for those needing a quiet, contemplative environment.
  - The Library receives a lot of compliments from young families regarding our programming.
  - During COVID, the Library did a lot of programming at Memorial Park. It was a lot of work for staff. The Library has limited staff and dividing staff between providing reference services at the Library and implementing an offsite program, is very challenging.

- The Library is trying to accommodate not only the Sierra Madre community but the Library staff that is trying to serve this community.
  - The City Librarian's door is open for any issues or concerns feel free to email or call and it will be put into consideration.
- **Libraries today are not the libraries of the 50s and 60s. Libraries are a place for the community. If you look at cities whose libraries are dying, it's because the Library is just a quiet place. There is another side to your opinion. If we want our Sierra Madre Library, which thrived during COVID with all the innovative programs, to maintain its place in our town, we have to look forward we can't look back.**

## Closing Remarks

This was an excellent opportunity to introduce the public to TSK Architects. The community was very involved with in-depth questions aimed at the Sierra Madre Public Library, TSK Architects and the City of Sierra Madre. Thankfully, a representative from each entity was present to answer questions and provide background on items like the timeline, decision making procedure, and Library needs.

This was a well-attended public program. The community was able to discuss their concerns, desires for the Library Meaningful Improvement renovations, and gain a better understanding about this project.

TSK Architects did a great job of introducing themselves and presenting their credentials for this project. They already had a thorough understanding of the project's needs and were receptive to concerns.

There wasn't a question or concern that was not answered thanks to the combined efforts of Jonathan Richert from TSK Architects, Arnulfo Yanez from Public Works and Leila Regan from the Library.

It was highly beneficial to hear from the public regarding this upcoming project.



## Acknowledgements

The Sierra Madre Public Library would like to thank the following groups and individuals for all of their support and assistance with this event:

Arnulfo Yanez

and the City of Sierra Madre Public Works Department

Jonathan Richert

and TSK Architects

All the members of the Sierra Madre Public Library who participated in the event.



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