

Moving Forward with a Permanent Library for the Florence-Firestone Community

On November 19, 2019, the Los Angeles County (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) approved a motion to establish the proposed new Florence Library Project, Capital Project Number 77616 (Project), and to set aside \$4,671,000 for the Project. The Board also directed the Chief Executive Officer’s legislative team in Sacramento to explore all potential funding opportunities that can be used to support the siting, development and construction of the Project, and to date, has received promising news that this request from the Board is being considered for State funding, through the leadership of 59th District Assembly Member Reggie Jones-Sawyer.

As outlined in the November 19, 2019 motion, due to the budgetary impacts related to siting the new Florence Library (Library) at its former location on the 1600 block of East Florence Avenue, where a 108-unit, affordable housing project was being erected, the Board had approved, on May 30th, 2017, the siting of the Library at the Florence-Firestone Constituent Service Center (FFCSC) located at 7807 S. Compton Avenue, Los Angeles, California, 90001. However, while community leaders and stakeholders initially supported this location, stakeholders subsequently voiced additional concerns that resulted in County departments being tasked with seeking suitable alternative locations within the Florence Firestone community.

After an exhaustive and comprehensive search, conducted by staff from various County departments and outside real estate consultants, and guided by input from community stakeholders, a suitable alternative location could not be found, either for purchase or for lease.

MOTION

SOLIS _____

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MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

Page 2

June 23, 2020

Over the course of three years, numerous community engagement meetings were held, in person and virtually, including one-on-one meetings with the Supervisor, and a stakeholders' working group was convened. In addition, two sets of community surveys were distributed, via hard copy and electronically, to receive input from the community. By May 2020, when it became apparent that a suitable alternative site large enough to accommodate all of the amenities and space requirements of the new Library could not be located, the stakeholders' working group revisited the option of siting the Library on the second floor of the FFCSC. This option was discussed at length at the stakeholders' working group meeting on May 27, 2020, and support for the FFCSC as the location for the Library was memorialized in a letter sent to Supervisor Ridley-Thomas dated June 3, 2020 from a consortium of Florence Firestone stakeholders and community organizations. In addition, one dissenting letter, also dated June 3, 2020, was received from a member of the working group.

The proposed Project will consist of converting the entire second floor (approximately 8,600 square feet) of the existing FFCSC into a public library with adult, teen, and children areas, including a customer service desk, a library manager's office; and a staff workroom area. The renovated library space will include new ceiling, wall, and floor finishes, along with new lighting and furniture. Additionally, the existing first-floor lunchroom will be converted to also serve as a community meeting room, including new interior finishes and audio/visual and telecommunications components to accommodate the library programming. Also, space on the first floor will be reconfigured for two Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services' offices that will be relocated from the second floor of the building to make room for the Library. The existing building mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems will be reconfigured as necessary, the public restrooms will be upgraded to meet current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, and the low-voltage and the telecommunication systems will be upgraded to provide public access computers and Wi-Fi access. The exterior of the building and the surrounding space will remain unchanged with the

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

Page 3

June 23, 2020

exception of any required ADA upgrades and new wayfinding signage, and the existing parking area will be resurfaced with new striping to provide more efficient access and circulation.

The community of Florence Firestone deserves a new, state-of-the-art permanent library as soon as possible. Work must commence immediately to remodel and refurbish the second floor of the FFCSC to deliver the permanent Library as requested by the stakeholders' working group and constituents from the Florence Firestone community.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Find that the proposed Florence Library Project (Project), to be located at 7807 S. Compton Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90001, is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), because it consists of minor alterations and repair of existing public facilities with negligible or no expansion of use, replacement of existing features at the site with the same purpose and capacity, placement of small equipment and minor alterations to land which does not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. As such, the proposed Project is within certain classes of projects that have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment in that it meets the criteria set forth in sections 15301(a), (d) and (f), 15302(c), 15303(c), 15304(b), and 15311(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines and Classes 1(d), (j) and (s), 2(e), 3(b), 4(c), and 11(d) of Los Angeles County's Environmental Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines, Appendix G. Additionally, the proposed Project will comply with all applicable regulations, is not located in a sensitive environment, and there are no cumulative impacts, unusual circumstances, damage to scenic highways, listing on hazardous waste sites compiled pursuant to Government Code section 65962.5, or indications that the proposed Project may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource that would make the exemption inapplicable based on the record of the proposed Project. Upon the Board of Supervisors' (Board) approval of the recommended actions, the Department of

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

Page 4

June 23, 2020

Public Works (DPW) will file a Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk in accordance with section 21152 of the Public Resources Code;

2. Approve the proposed Project, and the total project cost of \$5,671,000, of which \$4,671,000 is available in the Fiscal Year 2019-20 budget, and an additional \$1,000,000 in funding from the Community Development Block Grant, available to the Second Supervisorial District, will be included as part of the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Supplemental Budget, consisting of planning, feasibility and design services, and remodeling and refurbishment work to make the subject property suitable for library use, pursuant to Government Code Section 25351; and
3. Authorize the Director of DPW, or his designee, to deliver the completed Project through a Board-approved Job Order Contract.

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(RT/CG)