



SIERRA MADRE PUBLIC LIBRARY & TSK ARCHITECTS PUBLIC MEETING

CLOSING REPORT

AUGUST 16, 2023

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General Overview of Event



On Wednesday, August 16, 2023 from 5:30 to 6:30 pm the public was invited to the City of Sierra Madre City Council Chambers located at 232 W Sierra Madre Blvd. to provide feedback and view the proposed design for the Library Meaningful Improvement Renovations with TSK Architects (<https://www.tska.com/>). This was a follow-up meeting to the May 6, 2023 meeting introducing TSK Architects. This meeting was strictly to show the direction of the Library Meaningful Improvement Renovations.

Jonathan Richert, Civil Market Director for TSK Architects presented on the prospective design of a renovated and expanded Library at 440 W Sierra Madre Blvd.

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

Also present at this public meeting from the Library was City Librarian, Leila Regan and Management Analyst, Lori Garza. From the City of Sierra Madre Deputy Director of Public Works Arnulfo Yanez was present to answer potential questions. In the audience was City Manager Jose Reynoso, Information Technology Manager, Oscar Millan, Deputy City Manager Laura Aguilar, and several members of the Library Board of Trustees and Friends of the Sierra Madre Library.

This was a one-hour long meeting that consisted of Richert from TSK Architects displaying and explaining the proposed design for the first half of the meeting, then allowing for public to comment for the second half of the meeting.

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

https://www.youtube.com/live/iZfNHkpJM0g?si=K9vRnQJnm_69HF5b

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City Librarian Summary

This event was scheduled after continuous discussions about the Library Meaningful Improvement Project design. The Public Library, City of Sierra Madre, and TSK Architects agreed that another meeting for public input was warranted after feedback during the May 6, 2023, meeting.

Originally, the May 6 meeting was going to be the only public forum event for the Library Meaningful Improvement Project prior to a finished design due to the short grant period for the \$10 Million targeted grant from the California State Library. This grant's funds must be expended by January 31, 2025. However, once TSK Architects got towards the end of the design phase, it became evident that public input would be greatly appreciated.

With limited time available, due to the scheduling constraints of the grant, this meeting was scheduled with two weeks of notice but the public responded with great interest and over 50 people attended with several others watching from home.

Keeping the public involved, invested, and informed when it comes to the Library Meaningful Improvement Project has been on the forefront of this renovation. The City of Sierra Madre and the Sierra Madre Public Library have set up a transparency page located here:

https://www.cityofsierramadre.com/cityhall/city_manager_s_office/transparency/library_survey

The City Librarian is the main contact for the public regarding this renovation. The public is encouraged to email the City Librarian, Leila Regan at LRegan@cityofsierramadre.com with questions, concerns, comments, and feedback.

This meeting was enlightening, even for the City Librarian, learning about the current building's deficiencies and its abilities, as well as, learning the amount of work and care TSK Architects has put into this design. There has been a lot of thought and care that went into this design and these decisions.

While this design is not the final design it is important to acknowledge that TSK Architects has taken into consideration a lot of public comments, research into the Library's past/history, and staff considerations.

Overall, I think this meeting was successful in expressing the rationale and reasoning behind TSK Architect's current design to the public. The design was well received and public comment is still welcomed for a brief amount of time before TSK Architects will make a final design.

Another meeting will be set up to present the final design.

TSK Architects Design Presentation

The current net square footage of usable space for the existing Library is 7,787 and TSK Architects is looking to add an expansion to the south portion of the library, bringing the Library's net square footage to 13,444. The expansion is being added onto the south because the lot area is fairly tight, with expansions not being possible to the north, east, or west.

TSK Architects has developed a few concepts to bring the existing Library into the 21st century while looking into the next 50 years. Public libraries have gone under a historic change. They used to be places for books. However, more services and capabilities have been added onto what libraries seek to do every day and how Libraries serve their communities. So now they're really a third place for communities to gather, to learn, to create, to play, to grow, and more. There are more opportunities for the community being built into the Library. How can TSK Architects create a Library that is a place for everyone? So everyone in the community of Sierra Madre and all visitors really feel that this is their Library?

With all those different program elements, we know there are challenges and one is noise. Libraries are places for quiet study but are also a place to come together and play and learn. TSK Architects worked on creating a sound gradient where quiet places are available on one side of a building and louder activities are on another side so there is a transition from quiet spaces to loud. This design creates more quiet zones on the north side and more active space on the south side of the building.

After studying the existing architectural character of the Library, we wanted to continue that midcentury modern design into the Library renovation and expansion. This includes very clean linear lines and low sloped and flat roofs. As we continue to develop the exterior of the building, we're going to keep this same existing language in the floor plan so it feels like one uniform building.

Key aspects of the presented design include:

- Shortening the stacks, so they are not so tall and more accessible for ADA.
- Reorganizing the staff space so they can better serve the community.
- New restrooms, men's and women's with three fixtures each. This will allow for a lot more capacity in the Library.
 - Their planned location is part of where the Children's Room is currently located.
 - Two single occupancy restrooms will still be available on Level Zero.
 - Also wanted to place restrooms above dirt. Eventually, way in the future, restrooms will leak and when they do we want the restrooms over dirt, not books.
- The rest of the former children's room has been made into a teen room, a space for teenagers to collect, gather, and socialize.
- The extension, is how TSK Architects truly intends to make this building more accessible and friendly to the community of Sierra Madre.
 - Currently, if you park in the back of the Library, you have to walk along the long west side walkway that is not ADA accessible to get into the Library.
 - We've created a secondary entry on the south side of the building. Patrons can enter close to the parking lot and come up a stairway or an elevator.

- As they come up to the first floor the Children's Room will be right there as well as additional stack space and seating space.

What's so lovely about the current building is all the natural light. When you add an extension, windows are being taken further away from the center of the building. TSK Architects has created as large an opening as we can in a structural back wall for the extension. Also looking to provide glazing or glass so patrons can see all the way through the building and to make it feel like an open and large space.

Additionally, TSK Architects are adding an outdoor reading balcony off the south Level One expansion. We're trying to provide different opportunities for seating in the Library. People like to read in different environments. There are outdoor seating areas, private reading nooks, and open group seating.

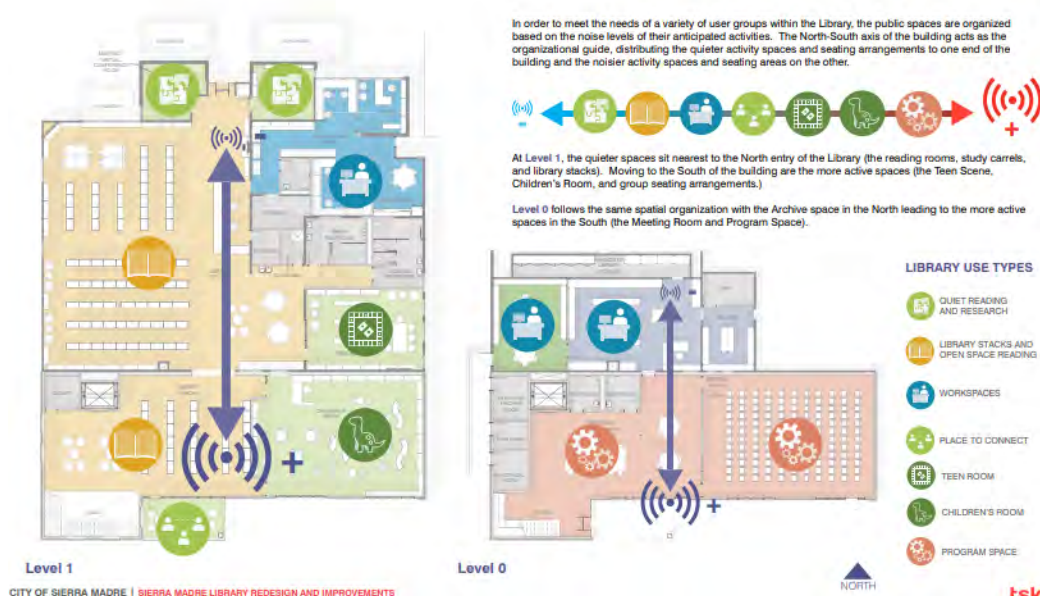
We are still in discussion with the Library regarding the additional community space on Level Zero. The space is an opportunity for technology, community engagement, events and it connects to this larger meeting room that currently has a capacity for 134 seating.

As we go into the back area of the lower level, we're creating a dedicated space for the Archives in the Library with climate control and created an area for the public to research in the archives. Also adding a much larger MDF/IT room with climate control. We'll also have a Friends of the Library area and we'll have two single occupancy restrooms.

There will be some of the noisier spaces off to the east side: Meeting Room, Children's Room, Teen Room and they'll have glazing so you can see inside but the doors can also close to provide sound separation.

We will continue to work with the Library Staff and City Staff to develop some of the technical details of the Library but we wanted to present this to you to really get the community feedback on if there are things that concern you. Is there anything you'd still like to see? Anything you like or don't like? So we can potentially respond to that. There are opportunities to shift as the needs of the community come up, though we are on a tight timeline for this project.

NOISE LEVELS CONCEPT DIAGRAM



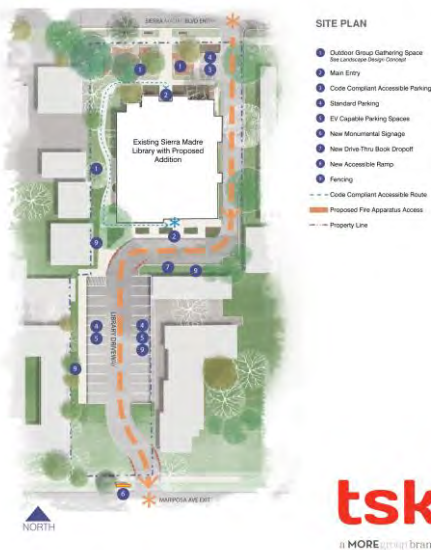
Library Design Feedback

Public Comments and responses:

- **Can the floor plan document be put on the City's website?**
 - Yes.
 - We are on a tight timeline and so any changes will be made pretty soon.
- **How many square feet are the Friends of the Library being allocated?**
 - 400 square feet for the store/work area plus an additional 200 square feet in storage.
- **Archive room will hold historical collection, art collection, and will be climate controlled. Will there be a drainage system in case of any kind of moisture since they will be on the ground floor?**
 - It will house most of the art collection that is not on display.
 - Not aware of any current drainage issues in that area of the Library. The climate conditioning will be bringing in cold air and evacuating humidity to mitigate any moisture.
- **Commend you and your team for your thoughtful plans and for trying to maintain the aesthetic integrity of the Library. You have really taken that into consideration. I really like it thus far but hope to see more.**
- **Regarding the issue of noisier and quieter areas. How much of the teen room area noise will be mitigated?**
 - The Teen Room will be mostly glass so you can see in. There will also be a door so noise won't bleed over as much.
- **I like the idea of shortening the stacks and then for tall people like me can you raise it up.**
 - Code doesn't take into account tall people other than hitting our heads.
- **Is there an illustration of the south exposure of the building?**
 - We don't have one today. We had a complete plan shift about three days ago that changed our southern exposure so if I showed you something today it would be completely out of date.
- **Back parking lot is now the extension? Is the new parking Lot going to be the vacant lot?**
 - What is currently the back parking lot is going to be the extension and the fire lane.
 - Some of the existing back parking lot will continue to be the parking lot but it will extend to what is now the vacant lot.
- **What's the height of the ground floor?**

- That's something that we're currently working on. The floor to floor there is roughly 9'4", which is virtually no space at all so what we are working on now with our structural engineer is different ways to make sure that our structural depth in that area is as small as possible. So the lower level will have about an 8' clearance space. The lower level is not going to be a wide expansive space like the upper level.
- **Right now you have a lot of box diagrams, making it hard to visualize what the Library will look like. Love the imagination and design but literally what does it look like inside and outside.**
 - As mentioned, we had some exterior renderings as well as elevations. Recently, because of the fire lane, we actually flipped the entire addition over and because of that all of our imagery is essentially a week out of date. I would have shown that to you, but unfortunately because of that shift we do not.

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- **The parking that we're going to rely on now will be in front and the back and it goes down to the street in back. When you go down that back drive it's really hard to see traffic coming down either way and they really should paint the curbs on either side red for 100 feet so that no one can park there only because it makes it more open so you don't get into an accident. It's very easy to get into an accident.**
 - One of the things we just started exploring is adjusting the exit to be more centered. It's something that we'll explore we're aware of the issue that it's a dangerous intersection.
- **What is the target date?**
 - The target for starting the bidding process is in January of 2024.
 - Shovel in the ground hopefully will be around March or April, 2024.

- **The transition over to a temporary facility is when?**
 - Leila Regan, City Librarian: Because they have a lot to do with the building even before they start the bidding process, we're going to be transitioning to our temporary Library location at 350 W Sierra Madre Blvd starting October 16, 2023. The Library will close temporary October 16, we're trying to re-open December 2 at our temporary location.
 - Jonathan Richert, TSK Architects: We're in continual conversation with the City to see how we can speed up the timeline.
- **First of all, it's beautiful, thank you for this. It's really welcomed that we're doing this with you. A lot of kids and a lot of people use the seats to the front of the Library**

outside, just some consideration if the Wi-Fi could go out to those spaces. It's a very usable space, it's very shaded. People love it toward the street and please don't take those trees.

- We are doing what we can to keep the trees alive. We are running into issues that we're trying to figure out but we know how important those trees are to the community.
- **Everyone talks about the midcentury design and I never thought it looked so great myself. It was kind of like a dead zone in architecture. So I was kind of interested to see if you were going to enhance it both to the exterior and the interior so it looks more like the 21st Century. Just because it's been there for 70 years doesn't mean it's great.**
- **Are there going to be renderings done of the inside?**
 - We're working on it right now.
- **Why the midcentury style is aesthetically pleasing is because when you're inside of the Library you can look outside and see those beautiful trees through the big glass windows and you can see the San Gabriel Mountains. Of all the libraries I've been in it is the most relaxing and enjoyable, creativity driving and the most aesthetically pleasing.**
- **You can't see the San Gabriel Mountains when you're sitting in the Library.**
- **I'm midcentury design, I'm not going to get into that. I was very concerned about the process of adding space and I want to commend you on finding a way to do that. The budget you are working with is for construction of the building and it's not for furnishing and equipping the inside of the Library?**
 - Correct, the primary budget we are working with is for the construction of the building.
- **Which falls on the community to fill in that gap through fundraising and the Friends of the Library who are being very generous. Will you at some point in the near future have an idea of what the budget will be for furniture, fixtures, and equipment?**
 - Yes, that is something we have spoken a little bit about with the Library. I don't have much information on it now but to the degree that we are asked to help we would love to step in and help.
- **In the design and construction has there been any thought to energy efficiency to resiliency?**
 - In terms of energy efficiency, quite a bit. We are replacing all the windows in the Library so they will be much more energy efficient and redoing the roof to provide better insulation. We haven't gotten into the walls yet but we don't believe that there is any existing insulation in the walls, so we will be adding insulation to the walls. We will also be removing and replacing all of the lighting.

From an energy efficient standpoint, we are providing quite a bit of an upgrade to not only the addition but to the existing as well.

- Resiliency in regards to solar power and backup generators is not part of this current project.
- **Regarding the trees in the front, you said you are going to try to save them. Is the building moving forward in the front at all into the tree area?**
 - No, we have one tree that is an inch away from the building and it is a tree that will likely continue to grow and even as we try to work on the existing building it will be a question of whether we can maintain the tree in place without it affecting the project. We are trying to do everything we can to keep it in the absolute worst case scenario we had to remove it we will take that wood and integrate it into the Library. Our goal is to try to keep it. We do understand how important it is.
- **Is this one of the palms or one of the native Coast Live Oaks? In favor of saving the trees anyway you can because they are really mature trees.**
 - It is one of the oaks.
- **You are trying to preserve parking spaces on the south end that are facing right up against the expansion, correct?**
 - No, because of the size of the expansion and having a fire lane we are not able to maintain the parking spaces right up against the building so from an accessible parking standpoint we still have two parking spaces up front on the northeast side of the building and we're going to work on trying to provide accessible spaces as close to the building as we possibly can.
- **Will the back now become a planting area? Same way there are trees in the front will removing those parking spaces allow for greenery in the back?**
 - That's something we're working on with our landscape architect right now we believe there will be room for planting up against the south side of the building.
- **The ability to take this relatively small budget and add useful space to allow the Library to increase their ability to serve the community is marvelous and keeping the building narrative whole both architecturally and visibly is all out of the park.**
- **How much time does the community have to put their comments out?**
 - Very soon, within the next couple of weeks we're going to be locking down our plans in order for us to be able to meet the schedule to get it built on time.
- **That small glass area on the North where you can look out into the garden area is probably the most magical space in the Library and on the floor plan it seems like that's been kind of crowded a bit because of the stacks. My only comment is to make sure that people can sit, read, and enjoy in that area.**

- It's hard to tell, but what we're looking at doing is building in a wooden bench right up along the window so someone could sit up right with the window and be able to read and enjoy that space.
- **Are you planning trees at all in the back parking lot there?**
 - Largely, it's going to be dependent on two things:
 - The space our code-required parking takes up
 - Budget
- **I have no doubts that the midcentury modern architecture will look great and be energy efficient once you add those new windows in the front because you won't have to use as much electricity for light. It'll also be very easy to move it into the 21st Century because there are a lot of architects using that particular type of architecture currently.**
 - Where we are trying to build resiliency into this project is making sure that it is flexible for the future.
- **Are you going to be able to have solar panels to help with the powering of the building?**
 - Solar panels are not within the budget of this project. By code, we're not required to provide them. Something I have to double check is that we are providing an opportunity for solar in the future. Solar could be put on the addition area roof in the future. It would be a struggle to put it on the existing area roof. The additional loading of solar panels on the existing building roof would require a lot of structural upgrade.
 - You could potentially put it over the parking lot if that is something you wanted to do in the future.
- **Just looking at it, it looks like there is a lot more open space than there is now and I would encourage you to keep open space because if you jam an area up with all kinds of stuff then it's almost impossible to open it up again. But if you start by making it open, you can always add a little bit if you want.**
- **Friends of the Library: I'm very enamored with that space for our bookstore, I'm wondering how much of that is window or will we be able to use the entire space for shelves?**
 - Right now there are no windows in that space.
 - If we make that door a storefront door at least the glass will allow for some natural light in. However, where that location is, it is part of the existing building and it is a little bit buried, we're going to be retaining some of the dirt to provide access to that door.
- **Can you go into greater detail about the northwest Level 1 area?**

- In the northwest corner there are 8 study carrels next to the picturesque window where we hope to put in bench seating.
- **My recommendation is to make that Northwest corner to remain a seating/reading area since that is a magical area of the Library. So tables, chairs, comfortable chairs, etc.**
- **The area in front of the Library with the benches and the trees, seems like one of the more pleasant parts of the Library. I see a lot of people going there. If there's any money left, I would say the shrubbery is not the best in that whole area. It could be made more pleasant a lot of people use it.**
 - One of the things we are starting to look at is the landscape for the site as a whole and how we can create really nice spaces with multiple uses. A space for individuals to sit outside and feel secure by themselves but also if a group needs to gather outside, having that capability.
- **When it comes to preserving that oak tree out front, let me say that all they do is make a big mess. That's why that front area always looks dirty, it's because of those oak trees, just my opinion. I'm not a big fan of oak trees. Just because they're old doesn't mean they're good.**
- **What is in the area on the northwest side of the Library interior on Level 1? What about the windows in that area?**
 - It's additional seating. Again, creating different zones for different personalities.
 - There are no existing windows in that area. There is a solid door that we are turning into a window. The majority of the wall is remaining solid both for structural reasons and cost reasons.
- **If you're going to put this up for bid in January, time is short and there's a lot to be done in a short time. You really don't have something someone can bid on at this point?**
 - No, at this point we have technical drawings. We are much further along in the development of the project than what we're showing today but this gives the overall of how we're spacing the projects.
- **Is there a way we can record in written form any of our suggestions today to give to you, or to the company, or to the City? How would we do that?**
 - Leila Regan, City Librarian: This is recorded and you can watch it anytime. Like with the previous meeting, I will do a closing report that will be available to the public on the Library's transparency page. I will also be putting designs on that website, as well. It can be found under our Library *In The News* section on our website.
- **Can we write comments on the page or no?**

- No, if you have comments, you can email me, my email is on the Transparency Page or you can look up the City Librarian and I will happily forward it along.
- **The space right outside of the Teen Room, what kind of space is that?**
 - It's varied seating, so right now we're showing tables with chairs around it as well as soft seats. There are really a lot more opportunities, but it is more of a group setting as opposed to individual seating.
- **You might want that with the carrels up front.**
 - Part of the reason we were placing these carrels up here was to keep them away from some of the more active spaces. So if someone is sitting at a carrel trying to study they don't have so much movement and noise right around them.
- **It's just that front northwest spot is one of the more pleasant spots in the Library where people go to enjoy. If the teen space is closed theoretically, you wouldn't have a lot of noise there.**
 - Definitely we'll take this into account and look at how we can do this. There is seating in the northwest area of Level One and ultimately the study carrels are there for anyone who wants to sit there and also look out the window.
- **I want to thank you for coming tonight and showing us this but I also want to remind everybody in this community that the money we have been granted for this project is designated to improve the structure. It's for structure, it's for HVAC, it's for ADA. It will not cover the tables, the chairs, etc. That is going to have to come from this community or people that are willing to basically pony up money. We will have naming opportunities on rooms and everything else but it's going to be up to this community to fund the ephemera of what goes inside this Library. So bear in mind that the money we're spending is only for the structure of this building. So it's just a strong reminder, this is our Library we are very happy to keep the Library and to make it bigger and more accessible for everybody and if you're too tall to reach the short ones, I'm short and I can reach the bottom so there you go.**
 - To that point, the furniture that we are showing there is a recommendation for how that space can be used. There is opportunity as we move forward to change furniture.
- **There really is no furniture budget. Are you going to be able to recommend a type of furniture that will work well with the architecture so that there is a beautiful presentation?**
 - If asked to that is work that we can do.

Closing Remarks

It was wonderful to be able to share with the public all of the work being done by TSK Architects, the Sierra Madre Public Library, and the City of Sierra Madre to expand the building and provide for our growing community's needs.

While the presented plan is not the finalized plan, it was rewarding to share the direction of the Library expansion and the extent of the renovation with the public. The main points discussed were the building's current mid-century modern design, bringing the Library into the 21st century, providing better environments for the outside courtyard area, and creating a cozy reading area in the northwest corner of Level 1.

For more information regarding the Library Meaningful Improvement Project and to look at the current available plans go to the Library's Transparency page:



To provide comments or feedback, please reach out to the City Librarian, Leila Regan, through email at LRegan@cityofsierramadre.com.



Acknowledgements

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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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