



CITY OF FALLS CHURCH

DATE: December 20, 2014

TO: Mayor David Tarter and City Council Members
Ruth Rogers, Chair and Planning Commission Members

CC: Wyatt Shields, City Manager
Cindy Mester, Assistant City Manager
Mary McMahan, Library Director

FROM: Library Board of Trustees

SUBJECT: Transmittal Memo with the Master Plan Addendum for the Mary Riley Styles Public Library

This memorandum transmits a report prepared by library consultants from McMillan Pazdan Smith, Architecture and EsoArc Studio for a library expansion and renovation to meet the requirements of the FY15 Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) budget passed by Council. The report proposes two potential renovation and expansion plans on the library's present site. The cost of each option is estimated at approximately \$8M, adds 6,600 sq. ft. of new space, and completely renovates the existing facility.

What the consultants recommend:

The \$8M now included in the City's adopted CIP will:

- **Fund a critically needed 6,600 sq. ft. addition to the current facility.** We outgrew the existing 17,500 sq. ft. space at least six years ago. With 80 to 120 people attending story hours three times weekly, over 315,000 people using the facility annually, circulating over 460,000 items a year, answering almost 68,000 reference questions a year, and an annual program attendance of almost 19,000 people and over 650 programs provided a year for all ages, the facility is in urgent need of additional space. As these statistics indicate, the facility is heavily used; it is open 64 hours a week, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. It serves all ages and economic, cultural, educational, and demographic groups, and is a Star Library, a nationally recognized library award for outstanding service, for seven consecutive years. To continue that fine service for its citizens, the additional space may be built on either side of the existing one (west along North Virginia Avenue) or east (where the existing seven angled parking spaces and driveway are located). The additional space would provide:
 - Expanded children's and young adult space (25% to 50% increase, mirroring increase in numbers served)
 - New meeting space for programs and community use (362% increase, mirroring increased need)
 - Additional space for all collections (a 17% 19% increase, taking into account future electronic resources)
 - Additional space for Local History (58% increase, adding about 290 sq. ft. to its 505 sq. ft.)
 - Expanded study spaces (new space not currently in the library)

- **Allow the renovation of space and systems in the current building to provide adequate, safe service.** The existing building, last renovated 23 years ago, needs substantial renovations addressing more energy efficient lighting, replacement of the heating and air conditioning system and plumbing infrastructure, larger public restrooms to accommodate the large numbers of people using the library daily, a safe elevator, and an improved layout that maximizes workflow and use of adjacencies in the building. Renovation would also bring the current facility into American with Disabilities Act compliance, which it is not in now.

Important considerations:

- Either of the two options will bring the building up to 24,000 sq. ft. While not ideal, 24,000 square feet after adjusting future programs accordingly, will be workable for approximately 15-20 years. The original recommendation of a 33,000 sq. ft. building would have provided space for 50 years and as a raze-and-rebuild would have incorporated efficiencies that this option cannot entirely provide.
- Expanding to our east or west of the current building will cost approximately the same amount and provide the same space. The consultants suggest that expanding to the west is the more advisable option, but a more complete list of Pros and Cons for both options can be found on Page 36 of the Addendum to the Master Plan.
- Both options preserve the exterior Williamsburg design and interior charm.
- Both options would allow us to take advantage of the opportunities presented by any potential parking structure built to our east. While this is not part of the library’s expansion, the Addendum contains cost estimates and a description of a possible parking deck to be located at 313 West Park Avenue. The parking deck is a separate CIP project and not part of the library’s renovation and expansion CIP proposal.
- The Library Board of Trustees has not yet endorsed either option, preferring instead to transmit the report to you for overall consultation purposes and public input.

Final note:

Both of these options relocate the library’s main entrance to Park Avenue, and we are delighted by the opportunity to help frame that street as the City’s “civic avenue.” In addition to maximizing the impact and synergies of co-locating the Library, City Hall, Community Center, and Cherry Hill Park and farmhouse within the same block, the library’s current location on covenanted land is highly walkable, close to the Farmer’s Market, near local eating establishments and businesses, and as such, will continue to be a major focal point of the City’s community life and identity.

That the library should remain at its current location emerged as one of the community’s top priorities and was a loud and clear message from the public to the library consultants during the citizen engagement portion of the public hearings held in 2013. At that time, several City officials also agreed the library “created a vital center to the Community that cannot be reproduced in another location.” We are pleased that either of the expansion and renovation plans for the library meets this vitally important citizen priority.

