

WHY MITCHELL PARK LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY CENTER NEEDS TO BE REPLACED—NOW

THE PROBLEM:

- The Library is TOO SMALL:
 - It's the most heavily used branch in the Palo Alto Library system. More people visit it than any other and they check out more items there than at any other branch.
 - According to an independent research group, the library *building* should grow from 9,468 square feet to about 35,000 square feet if it is to meet the community's needs.
 - The current branch offers less than half the amount of general *seating* it should, given the population served (61 compared with the 150 seats recommended).
 - It can't hold enough *books* and other materials to meet the needs of the community. Independent experts recommend the collection size be almost doubled (from 79,185 to 150,000).
 - It lacks special-purpose *spaces* such as a storytelling area, group study rooms, and program space. Independent experts recommend all of these for a community of this size, for an additional 160 seats.

- The combined Library and Community Center is TOO OLD and POORLY DESIGNED to be Renovated.
 - The alternative to replacement is renovation. The City has budgeted \$2 million for a bandaid approach that would add no new space. And by renovating, the building would have to be brought up to modern accessibility codes – with wider aisles. The unacceptable result: even fewer books on the shelves.
 - Adding a second story to this old structure is not financially practical.
 - The current structure is poorly located for adding any significant amount of space on one level.
 - The traffic pattern around the current Mitchell Park Library and Community Center is unsafe, especially for children and bicycles.

- Now is the Time.
 - The cost of construction continues to rise. The cost of this building has already increased since a bond measure failed (by a small margin) in 2003. Let's not let more time pass.
 - If we wait, the City will be forced to spend its limited capital budget on a bandaid measure to improve a facility that is wholly inadequate. The result would be wasted money; a smaller collection of books and DVDs; and a continuation of the current, unsafe traffic pattern.

THE PLAN:

The new Mitchell Park library will:

- Be comfortable, spacious, and bright.
- Have plenty of seating for all.
- Offer designated spaces for
 - quiet reading
 - group work
 - computers
 - children's programs
- Contain thousands more books because there will be space to shelve them..
- Be situated on the south parking lot area—resolving the dangerous traffic pattern and preserving existing parkland and tennis facilities.
- And, during construction, the current Mitchell Park library would remain open to serve the community.

Now is the time to rebuild. Let's invest in Palo Alto for now and the future—just as our predecessors did fifty years ago.