

DATE: January 14, 2022

TO: Tom Markus, City Manager

FROM: Rebekah Craft, Library Director

SUBJECT: Phase 3 of Baldwin's Long-Range Building Program

At the City Commission's long-range planning session on January 22, 2022, I will deliver an update on the proposed Phase 3 of Baldwin's long-range building plan, which includes an expansion and renovation of the front entrance and circulation area. This final phase of the building plan will upgrade a space that has been largely untouched for 40 years and will help Baldwin offer amenities that are competitive with other local libraries that already have an accessible entrance and a café space. We anticipate that construction on Phase 3 will begin in spring 2023, pending necessary approvals.

The completion of Phase 3 will fulfill the library's long-range building plan, which was created in October 2015 and presented to the City Commission at its long-range planning session in January 2016. To support this project, we are asking for a continuation of the library's full millage rate through FY2025-26.

The library remains committed to maintaining and upgrading other areas of the building out of its operating budget and Trust. In the last year, we have doubled the footprint of the Idea Lab makerspace. We have also painted the Grand Hall for the first time in over 20 years, and painted, carpeted, and refurbished the administrative offices and two public meeting spaces on the second floor for the first time in 30 years. In May 2022, we will be updating the landscaping on the north side of the building along Martin Street to expand the children's garden and add an outdoor programming space for the Youth Department.

Library Improvement Goals

The library's long-range building plan contains the following goals:

- Increase the value that the library delivers to residents, businesses, and visitors of all generations
- Respond to public input gathered through various forums, including surveys and focus groups
- Balance community needs given limited resources
- Ensure that Birmingham remains competitive with other communities who have invested heavily in their libraries
- Strengthen Birmingham's civic center (Shain Park, Library, City Hall, etc.)

Phase 3: Expansion and Renovation of Front Entrance and Circulation Area

The Library Board issued an RFP to hire an architectural firm to design the conceptual/schematic plan for the final phase of library improvements in June 2021. Merritt Cieslak Design was awarded the bid in August 2021 and has been working with library staff and the building committee to design the project.

Input from Public and Staff

To determine the most important aspects to include in the design, Merritt Cieslak Design (MCD) used several outreach initiatives to gather input from the community. These initiatives included a meeting with library staff, a Community Forum, and a Community Survey. Feedback was gathered from 610 community members in total. Here is the feedback collected from the three outreach initiatives:

BPL is highly regarded within the community, with 95% indicating that it is “very important” to the community, and 84% indicating that it is “very important” to their family.

The vast majority of library users visit the library to borrow materials and, to a lesser degree, for studying, reading, meetings, and programs.

90% indicated that they would like BPL to be a “comfortable place for learning and studying.”

The main entrance is currently cold and dark looking and is not a reflection of the community.

The front steps are daunting.

It is hard to tell if the library is open because of a lack of visual lighting cues.

Respondents were evenly supportive of improving library signage, lighting, and finishes, while also expressing support for an easier entry processional, having a self-checkout near the entry, and having an interactive touch screen with the week’s activities posted.

The idea of adding a café to the library received mixed results. Approximately one-third of respondents indicated that it would be “very” or “somewhat” important to them, one-third indicated that it is “not that important” to them, and one-third indicated that it is “not important at all” to them.

Respondents rated the following services that they would like to have available at the street-level entrance, in order of preference:

1. a materials return drop
2. a place to pick up hold items
3. a self-checkout kiosk

4. the circulation desk
5. tables and chairs
6. a café

The survey also asked respondents to add any ideas about how the library might be improved and the responses were numerous and varied. Some of the recurring themes were as follows:

- The library is great as-is
- There could be a better space for the Friends book sales
- Aesthetics could be improved, particularly at the entry
- The architectural language of the original 1927 building is widely appreciated
- The library should have better accessibility
- Free parking (even short-term) is desired
- A drive-up, driver's side book drop is desired

Conceptual/Schematic Design of Phase 3

After careful consultation with the library's staff and Building Committee, MCD has developed a plan for the Front Entrance and Circulation Area. The project will enclose the space under the existing awning and add a small addition to the front entrance to create 1,940 square feet of interior space all for public use. The new entryway will have a more open and logical layout with intuitive wayfinding. All furniture, fixtures, and carpeting installed in this phase will carry on the color and design features previously used in the Adult Services and Youth Services renovations. The plan makes improvements to the following five areas:

Public Entrance

- Creates a fully accessible street-level entrance with both an interior two-stop elevator and an ADA-compliant ramp that is completely enclosed and protected from the elements
- Keeps the materials return slot and automated handling system adjacent to the front door for easy access after-hours and upon entering the library
- Provides a welcoming and inviting aesthetic
- Updates the lighting to improve visibility and safety

Circulation Area

- Adds an ADA-accessible service desk that is closer to the front entrance
- Establishes clear sightlines to the entryway
- Incorporates hold shelving adjacent to the service desk
- Creates a dedicated spot for the self-check machines
- Improves the appearance of the ceiling to be closer to the 1927 look

Collaboration space and café

- Provides flexible space for meeting and collaboration, with chairs and tables for 36 people
- Offers high quality coffee, drinks, and snacks at a self-service café
- Connects to exterior plaza with movable doors
- Allows for after-hours use for space rentals or programs
- Adds a street-level family restroom for easy access from Shain Park during the library's open hours

Plaza

- Adds exterior programming space
- Utilizes native plantings and reduces the amount of concrete by adding larger garden beds and more shade trees
- Integrates aesthetically with building
- Extends the library outdoors to provide additional seating and meeting space
- Relocates Marshall Fredericks Siberian Ram sculpture to a new garden bed
- Creates an inviting connection to Shain Park and the civic center
- Includes a partial snow melt system at the entrance and along a path to the Bates Street book drop to eliminate the need for salt during icy and snowy weather

Other

- Brings in light with an expansive skylight that gives visitors a floor-to-peak view of the original 1927 building
- Creates dedicated Friends book sale area with merchandising space
- Adds four private study rooms for use by one or two users, which are in high demand
- Enhances the connection between the entry and Grand Hall

Renderings of the design are in Appendix A.

PROCESS

Baldwin intends to proceed with the design of Phase 3 as it did with Phases 1 and 2. When the City Commission signals its approval to move ahead, the Library and City will issue an RFP for design development and construction documents and select an architect in a manner approved by the City. The architect will work with the Library Board and Library Administration—and, whenever appropriate, with City government—on design development and construction documents. The Library will continue to solicit input from library staff and the public. It will also consult various City boards and committees, especially to the extent that the design affects the exterior look of the building. The City Commission will have the final decision on approving the designs.

The precise features to be included in Phase 3 will be decided in the design development stage. The features and costs described in this document are the most accurate ideas possible at this stage in the process. Once the project is finalized and approved by the Library Board and City Commission, the City will issue an RFP for construction.

TIMELINE

Assuming that the public and City Commission are willing and financing is available, the Library Board would prefer to proceed with the construction of Phase 3 in the spring of 2023, at which point the project is estimated to cost \$3,526,316. The Library Board anticipates issuing an RFP for architectural services for design development and construction drawings in the next six weeks.

DEVELOPMENT OF COST ESTIMATES

The cost estimates for Phase 3 were developed in January 2022 by architects Merritt Cieslak Design in combination with general contractors Frank Rewold & Sons. These cost estimates are based on schematic designs for Phase 3 and account for design and construction contingencies and inflation.

Conclusion

We hope that the City Commission will agree to complete the library's three-phase building plan—originally proposed to the Commission in 2016—by planning to begin construction of Phase 3 in 2023. This would require a continuation of the existing library millage through FY 2025-26.

The library millage currently consists of 1.1 mills for operating expenses, plus additional millage—up to the voter-approved maximum Headlee millage cap—for building improvements. The library has been collecting its Headlee maximum millage since FY 2016-17, and has applied the money faithfully to Phases 1 and 2.

The additional Library millage to be collected each year, using estimates provided by the City of Birmingham's Finance Department, is listed below:

FY 2021-22	\$654,283	.2380 mills
FY 2022-23	\$672,833	.2315 mills
FY 2023-24	\$685,532	.2250 mills
FY 2024-25	\$699,051	.2185 mills
FY 2025-26	\$712,204	.2120 mills

In its FY 2022-23 budget request, the library will ask for a total of 1.3315 mills, of which 0.2315 mills will be set aside for Phase 3. Details of the project, as well as final cost estimates, will be determined this year as we move into the design development and construction drawings stage of the project.

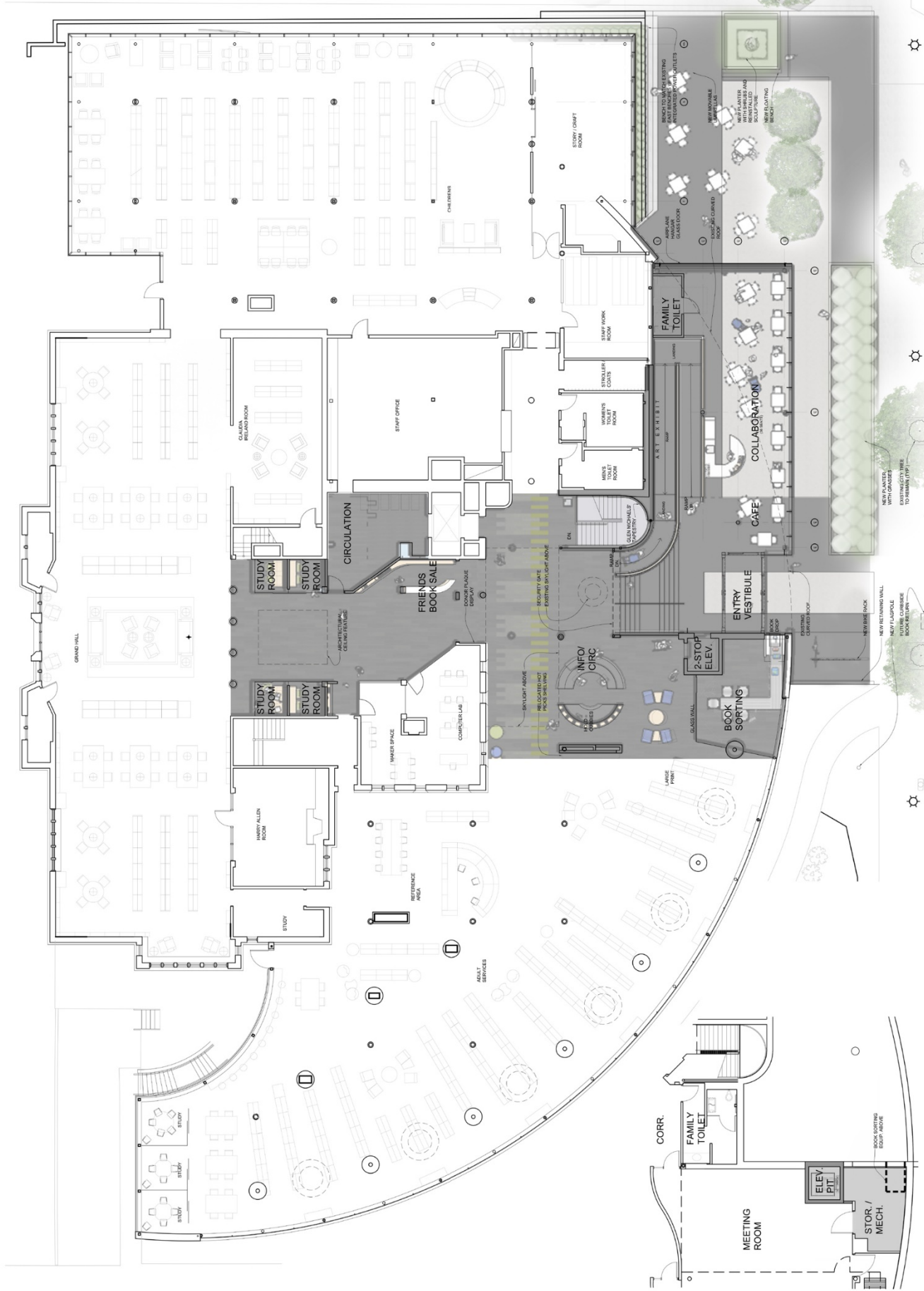
Appendix A

Project Scope of Phase 3

The designs on the following pages were developed jointly by Merritt Cieslak Design and the Baldwin Public Library Board of Directors and Library Staff.

AERIAL VIEW





VIEW FROM SHAIN PARK



VIEW FROM PLAZA



VIEW FROM PLAZA



VIEW FROM WEST



VIEW FROM COMMUNITY HOUSE



VIEW OF ENTRY



VIEW OF MATERIAL RETURN



VIEW OF COLLABORATION & CAFE



VIEW OF COLLABORATION & CAFE



VIEW FROM VESTIBULE



VIEW TOWARDS CIRCULATION DESK



VIEW FROM CIRCULATION DESK



SKYLIGHT (STEEL STRUCTURE)



SKYLIGHT (STEEL STRUCTURE)



VIEW OF FRIENDS AREA



VIEW FROM GRAND HALL



Appendix B

Phase 3: Schematic Design Cost Estimate Summary

Construction costs for expansion and renovation	\$2,533,958
Construction Contingency (5%)	\$126,697
Inflation (6.5%)	\$164,707
<u>SUB-TOTAL</u>	<u>\$2,825,362</u>
Architectural & Engineering Fees (10% of Sub-total)	\$282,536
Construction Manager Fee (3.5% of Sub-total)	\$98,888
Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment & AV/Low-voltage wiring	\$105,000
Inflation for FFE/AV (6.5%)	\$6,825
Liability Insurance	\$8,101
Owner's Contingency (6%)	<u>\$199,603</u>
TOTAL IN 2023 DOLLARS	\$3,526,316
Additional Library Millage (up to Headlee Max) for next 5 years	\$3,423,902
Optional Add-ons	
Full east-side Nanawall (instead of Hangar Door)	\$15,000
Snow melt system for full plaza	\$50,000

These costs include general conditions and construction phasing. Construction is expected to last 8 months.

The Library is committed to keeping the costs of the project as low as possible. Some value engineering may become necessary as the project progresses.

The Library would meet the shortfall between the cost of the project—which is \$3.53 million—and the amount from five years of additional Library millage—which is \$3.42 million—out of its reserves and Trust. The Library has enough money in its Trust to meet that commitment of \$102,414.