

LIBRARY 21 COMMITTEE
Minutes of 22nd Meeting
April 30, 1998
Joseph G. Sakey Lecture Hall
Main Library
449 Broadway

Members in attendance:

Nancy Woods, Co-Chair
William Barry
Ruth Butler
Karen Carmean
Ed DeAngelo
John Gintell
Karen Kosko
Andre Mayer
David Szlag
Charles Sullivan
Emily West
Robert Winters
Susan Flannery

Co-Chair Nancy Woods called the meeting to order at 6:35 P.M. Co-Chair Woods welcomed the consulting team from Sasaki Associates and turned the meeting over to David Hirzel. He reviewed the process for the three public meetings of March 24, April 30, and June 10, 1998. In addition, a meeting was held at Sasaki Associates on March 31, 1998 for private landowners, institutions, realtors, and developers to solicit interest on prospective sites. Written responses of interest were requested by April 17th 1998.

At tonight's public meeting, analysis of a number of sites, including the 449 Broadway site, will be presented and measured against the preliminary site criteria. From the extensive list of sites, a number of short-listed sites will be determined and will undergo extensive analysis for review at the June 10th meeting. At the end of the process, 3-5 sites will be ranked by Sasaki and presented in a report to the City Manager.

Mr. Hirzel previewed the meeting agenda as follows:

- to present information requested at the March 24th meeting
 - program confirmation
 - interrelationship between the high school and the library
 - the demographic distribution relative to library cardholders
 - status of Urban Ring Planning

- definition of preliminary siting criteria
- analysis of 18 potential sites per district (slide presentation)
- break period to review the 18 presentation boards of potential sites
- discussion period
- next steps

David Hirzel then discussed the meeting protocol. He asked that Sasaki be able to present the criteria and site analysis without interruption and that during the break period everyone would be able to see the boards up close, affix their written comments to the boards themselves, and then gather together again for an interactive discussion period until the meeting adjourns.

REQUESTED INFORMATION

Program confirmation

David Hirzel re-introduced the subject of the Library 21 space program which was presented at the previous meeting. The 85,000 sq.ft. program was questioned as the "Aaron Cohen" program, an earlier version, which had been later amended by the Library 21 committee. Sasaki used the 85,000 sq.ft. program to illustrate the fact that a floorplate of 20,000 sq.ft. at a minimum was necessary in order not to split up critical program elements. Mr. Hirzel explained that the current program assumption is between 90,000 to 100,000 sq.ft.

A Main Library and Cambridge Rindge & Latin High School

Sasaki staff solicited the comments of Assistant Superintendent Nordmoe regarding the relationship between the high school and the main library. Dr. Nordmoe submitted the School Department's response in writing and a staff member further explained their position. Mr. Jonathan Austin explained that the School Department was asked three primary questions:

What is the existing situation today? The response was that no high school courses are conducted in the library, students use the library on an individual basis for resources related to assignments. The HS does use the Main Library for expensive resource materials, e.g. the New York times on -line. The High School collection is geared towards the school curriculum, <missing text>

recommends the Main Library, on-line catalogue use, and that students reserve books. On average the Cambridge Rindge & Latin Library serves 200-300 students per day, increasing to 400 per day during exams. Daily use of the Main Library is difficult to quantify because many high school students do not take out books, but come to the library to use the reference facilities. Daily activity is tracked by the number of persons taking out books. Librarians estimate 50

students per day use the Main Library; the number varies by day, season, term, etc.

What would happen if the library expanded on the existing site? The school envisages more organized use of the library, possibly using some of the community meeting space as a wired classroom or conference room. The school anticipates enhanced collaboration in collection development and programming for the school age group.

What would happen if the library moved to another site? Curriculum would not be affected, access would simply be more difficult. The school library would have to provide a wider range of resources to students. Spontaneous use of the library, including encouraging students to register for library cards, would be affected.

In further discussion, the school department acknowledged that a branch library would provide access to most of the resources it values in a public library network.

Demographic distribution and library cardholders

Mr. Hirzel presented four maps for review. The purpose of the mapping was to compare residential density to cardholder population and library use.

The neighborhoods with high residential density are Mid-Cambridge, Riverside, Neighborhood Nine, and North Cambridge. Those with moderate density are Neighborhood Ten, Wellington / Harrington, Area 4, and Cambridgeport. The density was compared to neighborhoods in which library cardholders live. The neighborhoods with the highest percentage of cardholders relative to population are Mid-Cambridge and Area Ten (42%), followed by North Cambridge (40%), Cambridgeport (38%), and Area Nine (37%). Agassiz and Area 4 (34%) have the second highest range of cardholders, followed by Riverside (27%), Wellington / Harrington (29%), and East Cambridge (28%). Cambridge Highlands (27%) and Strawberry Hill (26%) have the least number of cardholders relative to their population, which is not very dense.

When cardholder population is compared to where people actually borrow books, interesting results can be found. For example, in three neighborhoods abutting Mid-Cambridge in which branches are located (Cambridgeport, Area Nine, and Area Ten), a significantly higher percentage of users (roughly a 2:1 ratio) use the Main Library as well as their branch. In general, the further away from the Main Library location they live, the less people use the Main Library, preferring instead to use the closest branch.

Urban Ring Status

Ms. Carla Francazio presented the current status of planning for the Urban Ring, a circumferential intermodal transit network. The MBTA has hired a consultant to conduct a Major Investment Study process which has yielded seven alternatives which are currently being reviewed. The alignment incorporates light rail, bus travel, and rapid transit in separate corridors beginning at the JFK - U. Mass MBTA stop, connecting through Ruggles, crossing the Charles River to Kendall/MIT, traveling to Lechmere, Sullivan Station, and Chelsea, terminating at Wood Island near Logan Airport. The City of Cambridge favors those alignments which make direct connections to Kendall and the Lechmere MBTA stations. Likely Cambridge stops include those in the vicinity of Fort Washington Park and one near the corner of Mass. Ave. and Vassar Street. An optional location, depending on alignment, includes the corner of First and Binney Streets.

PRELIMINARY EVALUATION CRITERIA

The March 24th public meeting organized and discussed the proposed selection criteria from four lists: Physical, Community, and Financial Factors, plus a category called "Civic Success." Recognizing that the three to five (including the existing) site that will be selected for analysis and presentation to the City Manager will be studied in greater detail, it was necessary to conduct an initial screening of a "long list" of thirty candidate sites.

The source of this long list of candidate sites included suggestions received from the Library 21 Committee, the Library Selection Task Force, the initial public meeting, direct expressions of interest from the Cambridge real estate community, and a review of potentially feasible locations.

Each of the sites on the long list was weighed against a set of six criteria that reflect what we consider to be "critical success factors." The eighteen best of these were documented for review at the meeting. The factors used to review the long list of sites synthesize the factors most important to the community. *See the spreadsheet for precise ranking of criteria.*

Library Program Suitability - Assuming the need for a 90,000 - 100,000 square foot library program, this scoring assigns a priority to sites which have an optimum configuration and which have a maximum amount of frontage on a major street and one or more adjoining streets. It is considered to be beneficial for natural light to reach different sides of the building as it would increase the potential for different zones within the library. An assumption is made, where appropriate, when gut rehabilitation is envisioned.

Parcel Size ▫ This scoring "prefers" a site of 35,000 SF or more in order to accommodate a three-story building, but retains sites over 20,000 SF on the list.

Accessibility ☐ Inclusive of distance to the MBTA as well as access to bus and parking. The scoring for this factor puts high priority on MBTA access.

Centrality ☐ Inclusive statistically of demographics (concentration of residents) as well as card holders. Scoring for this factor is a reflection of density of population and card holders.

Availability ☐ Reflecting primarily on ownership of the land/building and if it is potentially available. Scoring ranges from the city as owner and/or availability (on the market) to locations where current information suggests it is likely to be unavailable.

Civic Heart ☐ Speaks largely to the potential for civic success. This factor summarizes a combination of physical, community and finance factors. Because it is perhaps the most subjective of the factors, it is not scored. The judgment is based upon a site specific analysis of the potential for achieving a solution that will meet the very high standards appropriate to the new library and that will enable the investment in a new central library to make the greatest contribution to the overall quality of the city.

PRELIMINARY SITE EVALUATION

SITE DESCRIPTION		PRELIMINARY CRITERIA							Prelim. Tally	
district	location	parcel size	existing building size	library program suitability	parcel size	accessibility	centrality	availability		civic heart
		sq.ft.	sq.ft.	1 = good fit	1 = > 35,000 sf	1 = MBTA within 5 min. walk, bus, auto	1 = high residential density	1 = City-owned and/or available		
				0.5 = fair fit	0.5 = 25 - 35,000 sf	0.5 = MBTA within 10 min. walk, bus	0.5 = moderate residential density	0.5 = privately-owned		
				0 = poor fit	0 = unde	0 = bus only	0 = low reside	0 = unlikely		

					r 25,0 00 sf		ntial density			
CENTRAL SQ..	Prospect St. parking lot	53,300	N/A	1	1	1	1	1	5	Potential
	Naggar block	56,000	27,900	1	1	1	1	1	5	YES
	7-Eleven block	36,230	30,000	1	1	1	1	1	5	YES
	TAD & Dangle properties	46,190	90,000	0.5	1	1	1	1	4.5	YES
	Post Office gut rehab.	39,350	55,750	0.5	1	1	1	1	4.5	YES
	YMCA & retain facade	30,241	180,000	0.5	0.5	1	1	1	4	YES
	Police Station block	36,035	51,000	0.5	1	1	1	0.5	4	potential
	Cambridge Gas + Light	28,000	43,000	0.5	0.5	1	1	0.5	3.5	YES
	Salvation Army site	28,000	27,000	0	0.5	0.5	1	0	2	NO
CHARLES RIVER	Mahoney's site	48,800	N/A	1	1	0	0.5	0.5	3	potential
	Micro Center	70,545	43,600	1	1	0	0.5	0.5	3	NO
	Riverside Press	131,000	N/A	1	1	0	0.5	0	2.5	NO

	Park									
KENDAL SQ.	Comm. Energy site/s	400,000	N/A	1	1	1	0	1	4	Potential
	Tech. Sq. (Polaroid)	N/A	40,000	0.5	1	0.5	0.5	0.5	3	Potential
MID-CAMBRIDGE	Existing Library	N/A	38,000	0.5	1	0.5	1	1	4	YES
PORTER SQ.	Sears Bldg. & Porter Exchange	108,000	236,000	1	1	1	1	0	4	Potential
	Porter Sq. parking lots	25,065	N/A	0	0.5	1	1	1	3.5	Potential
	Porter Sq. MBTA station	N/A	N/A	0	0.5	1	1	0	2.5	Potential
<u>Second Tier Sites:</u>	Acorn Park			Flagstaff Park			Osborn Triangle			
	Alewife MBTA area			Fresh Pond Mall			Quest Diagnostics			
	Bread & Circus			Modern Continental			Polaroid site			
	Broadway sites & Moore/Hampshire			Neville Manor			Star Market site			

Additional Evaluation Criteria - Next Round

It is recognized that the final evaluation and documentation of the short list of up to five sites will address a range of more detailed issues. For purposes of the review of the long list of sites, these additional criteria are assumed to be relatively less critical to potential success of a site. While they can be a critical factor in the final determination,

the goal for the initial review of sites is to create a list of the best locations that pass the basic test of program accommodation, size, accessibility, centrality, availability and potential to be a civic heart. The additional factors include:

- Utilities/availability
- Soils/environmental
- Regulatory constraints
- Parking - on and off-site
- Traffic
- Costs: Construction premiums, acquisition costs, operating premiums, relocation costs, parking premiums, etc.

SITE ANALYSES - 18 FIRST TIER SITES

The five districts were presented in alphabetical order as follows: Central Sq., Charles River, Kendall Sq., Mid-Cambridge and Porter Square. The sites within the district were presented in the order they were ranked; that is, those scoring highest to lowest according to the criteria above.

CENTRAL SQUARE

- **Prospect Street parking lot:** The larger of the two lots is 53,000 sq.ft. The site is suitable for a 3 story building and would allow various building configurations. It is one of the few vacant sites. It is one block from the MBTA and bus lines and has potential for on-site parking. It is located in a highly dense residential area of Mid-Cambridge. It is privately-owned and its availability is unknown. This site is removed from an address on Mass. Ave. and is considered to be behind Central Square. The owner owns a smaller 17,000 SF parking lot across Prospect St. from this site. Its preliminary tally was a " 5".
- **Naggar block:** The size of the site allows various building configurations, most of which could accommodate a three story library building. The former cinema building entrance is considered historically significant, at a minimum its facade would likely remain. It is adjacent to the Central Sq. MBTA stop and bus lines and has good parking potential. The City owns two parking lots on this block. It is located in a highly dense residential area (Area 4). It is privately owned and is considered available. This site has the ability to have two addresses, one on Mass. Ave. and one on Bishop Allen Drive and potential for open space. Its preliminary tally was a " 5".
- **7 Eleven block:** The potential for the program is good; the 36,000 sq.ft. site would allow various building configurations for a three story library. The structures in this block have little, if any, historic value. The site is adjacent to the MBTA and bus lines and has the potential for adjacent parking. The site is

located in a highly dense residential area (Riverside). All properties on this site are privately owned; availability is unknown. This site was the location of the former Cambridge Athenaeum library. Building a library on this site contributes to the notion of a civic district, encompassing the City Hall, YMCA, Senior Center, and Post Office. Its preliminary tally was a " 5".

- **TAD/Dangle block:** The 46,000 sq.ft. site has fair potential for various configurations. It would accommodate a three story building. Several buildings in this block are considered "contributing" and their facades would likely have to remain, restricting potential. The site is on the MBTA and bus lines and has fair potential for parking on site with extensive re-building. It is privately owned and available, but has some lease restrictions. Its preliminary tally was a " 4.5".
- **Post Office rehab.:** This site has fair potential for a library program. The 2 _ story portion fronting Mass. Ave. would likely have to remain for historic preservation purposes, requiring the necessary 2-3 story addition be built over the rear portion of the building. The site is adjacent to the MBTA and bus line, and has potential for adjacent parking. It is the property of the federal government; any relocation of the facility would require a site located within the 02139 zip code due to existing labor agreements. We consider the monumental facade questionable for a civic library building. Its preliminary tally was a " 4.5".
- **YMCA - retain facade:** The existing site is 30,000 sq.ft., its program encompasses 180,000 SF. The building has historic facades on two sides which would likely be saved. This restricts the potential for reconfiguration. It is adjacent to the MBTA and bus line, and has parking potential adjacent to the site on Green St. It is privately owned, but potentially available, as the YMCA would like to build a modern facility on its adjacent property. The development is restricted by the inclusion of privately-funded single room occupancy (SRO) facilities in its program. Its preliminary tally was a " 4".
- **Police station block:** The existing 51,000 sq.ft. building has historic facades, which would restrict the footprint and potential reconfiguration for a library. The parcel would likely have to encompass the entire block which includes residential uses. The site is adjacent to the MBTA and bus lines and has limited parking potential. It is located in a highly dense residential area (Riverside). It is potentially available, but requires relocation of the police station functions and acquisition of adjacent properties. It is removed from a Mass. Avenue address. Its preliminary tally a " 4".
- **Cambridge Gas + Light:** This Mid-Cambridge site encompasses the Gas & Light structure and the YWCA's abandoned pool. The site has historic facades. Its building envelopes somewhat restricts the potential for reconfiguration and may require the adjacent Mass. Ave. retail property, which has no historic quality. The site is located adjacent to the MBTA and bus lines, and has no parking

potential. Its availability is unknown. The Gas & Light building has library presence and good frontage on Mass. Ave.. Its preliminary tally was a " 3.5".

- **Salvation Army site:** This 28,000 sq.ft. site is adjacent to the fire station. It could accommodate a four story building. Its adjacent properties restrict the potential building configuration. It is on bus lines, is more than a five minute walk from the MBTA and has no on-site parking potential. It is located in a highly dense residential area (Area 4) It is privately owned and would require relocation, its availability is unknown. Its preliminary tally was a " 2".

CHARLES RIVER

- **Mahoney's site:** This site and the adjacent parcel are owned by Harvard University. The potential exists for a 3-story library building. The site has good suitability for the library program and provides excellent south-facing orientation to the river. The adjacent parcel could be open space associated with the library. The site is accessed only by bus and car and has on-site parking potential. It is located in a moderately dense residential area (Riverside). The site is the prime river site of three considered. Its preliminary tally was a " 3".
- **Micro Center:** The potential exists for a 3-story library building. The site has good suitability for the library program and provides several orientations to the river. The existing parcel size is 70,000 sq.ft. It has limited access by bus, no MBTA access and has potential for on-site parking. It is located at the edge of a moderately dense residential area (Cambridgeport). Its availability is unknown. Its preliminary tally was a " 3".
- **Riverside Press Park/Playground:** The potential exists for a 3-story library building. The site has good suitability for the library program and provides several orientations to the river. Its parcel size totals 131,000 sq.ft. It has limited access by bus, no MBTA access and has potential for on-site parking. It is located at the edge of a moderately dense residential area (Riverside). This is an existing open space/playground which would likely need to be preserved. Its preliminary tally was a " 2.5".

KENDALL SQUARE

- **Commonwealth Energy site:** (First, Third, Binney & Main Streets) The site is currently under agreement between Comm. Energy and a private developer. It spans ten acres with frontage on Main Street. A 3 story library could be built here as part of the Phase 1 development plans. The site is adjacent to bus routes, is within a five minute walk of the Kendall Sq. MBTA stop and has unlimited parking

potential. It is located in a low density area (East Cambridge) and is close to the city line and the Charles River; it borders on the canal. This site is clearly the most pioneering site of all; its identity is that of a (future) business center; however the potential to create a library with supporting retail, office and entertainment uses is envisioned by the developer, making this site an incubator of potential civic activity. Its preliminary tally was a " 4".

- **Technology Square (Polaroid):** The building profiled is the one fronting on Main Street. The site is owned by Polaroid Corp. It has a fair suitability for a library program because its layout is restrictive being only 40,000 SF. It would require a 3 story addition along Main St. The site is adjacent to bus routes and to a likely Urban Ring stop, it is within a 10 minute walk of the Kendall Sq. MBTA stop, and has sufficient parking adjacent to the site. It is located at the edge of a moderately dense residential neighborhood (Area 4). Its availability is unknown. It is a pioneer site for a library because of its strong identity as a center for business. Its preliminary tally was a " 3".

MID-CAMBRIDGE

- **Existing Main Library - 449 Broadway:** This site would allow a 2-3 story building, however the layout would be fairly linear, restricting an ideal building layout. The site is within 10 minutes of the MBTA red Line, adjacent to bus stops and has limited on-site parking potential. It is located in a high residential density area. The site is available; it requires re-use of the high school parking deck and replacement of the tennis courts. The layout shown obscures the unattractive south facing wall of the gym, and the addition would not cast shadows on the park, as the earlier scheme would. Its preliminary tally was a " 4".

PORTER SQUARE

- **Sears Building - Porter Exchange:** This site has good suitability for the library program; it would fit in less than half of the existing building, preserving retail at grade. The parcel size is 108,000 sq.ft. Its structure is considered historically significant. It is on bus lines and the Porter Sq. MBTA stop and has good on-site parking. The site is located in a high density residential area and is close to the Cambridge-Somerville city line. Lesley College owns the property and we're told it is unavailable. The building is strongly identified as a commercial center, but the area has good civic heart potential. Its preliminary tally was a " 4".
- **Porter Sq. parking lots:** This 19,000-27,000 sq.ft. site would accommodate a five story library, which is a poor fit - long and linear footprint. It abuts new residential development. It is adjacent to bus and MBTA and has extremely

limited on site parking potential. It is located in an area of high residential density and is close to the Cambridge/Somerville city line. Its availability is unknown. The five story height of a proposed library is this sites' greatest impediment. Its preliminary tally was a " 3.5".

- **Porter Sq. MBTA station:** This site could accommodate a four story building constructed on air rights over the Red Line tracks. Its footprint would be affected by the MBTA. The Commonwealth Lock building adjacent to the site is considered significant. The site is obviously on the MBTA, is adjacent to bus and has no on-site parking potential. It is likely unavailable. Although it is considered to be in a fairly civic location, it presents many technical difficulties such as noise and vibration mitigation. Its preliminary tally was a "2.5".

12 SECOND TIER SITES (in alphabetical order)

The subsequent twelve sites were considered and discarded because they would not rank sufficiently to make a viable site. They are as follows: Acorn Park, Alewife MBTA area, Bread & Circus, Broadway & Hampshire, Broadway & Moore, Flagstaff Park, Fresh Pond Mall, Modern Continental, Neville Manor, Osbourn Triangle, Quest Diagnostics, Polaroid site - Memorial Drive, Star Market site - Mt. Auburn St.

Rick Dumont and Jonathan Austin asked for input on the site analyses of 18 first tier sites and 12 second tier sites from the audience.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- Library should be a community learning center, e.g. like one in Central Sq.
- Was the Holmes Trust site looked at? Yes, it was thought to be too controversial.
- Was parking a consideration? - This round of analysis included assessment of potential for structured parking underground, adjacent or nearby parking only.
- Some Central Square sites remove existing retail space which is problematic. - TAD, Naggar properties. There is something to be said for the site being one block off Mass. Ave., as a place of potential "repose" away from the hustle and bustle of the street.
- Existing library is a civic structure in a park, achieving "civic heart" status means proximity to municipal buildings and institutions - Central Square is civic, but offers no repose.
- Larger sites in Central Square offer the potential to create inner courtyards, quiet space like the courtyard at the Boston Public library, within the building.

- Why demolish a structure which contributes to the historic character of Central Square when other buildings make a more significant contribution from a use standpoint?
- Renovation of a potential contributing structure is more complicated than a vacant site.
- A strong statement was made regarding the importance of proximity of the existing library to the high school - states that the superintendent 's position reflects a conflict of interest because the school will have a library building of some sort on the existing site.
- Existing site of the Main Library should be ranked a "1" for accessibility and is geographically central.
- Technology planned for the new library is critical for high school students to be able to access.
- Existing library is still a place of repose and will be if expanded.
- As a parent, a resident stressed the link to the research functions of the Main Library, and questioned why the school department offers so little support for the Main Library to remain on the existing site.
- Library use by high school students is clarified - CRLS library supports 200-300 per day, Main Library supports approximately 50 students per day. CRLS open 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Mon. - Fri., Main Library open seven days a week, and evenings.
- Naggar block building facades are historic, retail should be kept at grade.
- Existing site has critical need for good research to be made available all over the City.
- Which sites would have value added by a Main Library site? - YMCA is helped, they get a new facility built on their own property behind the Mass. Ave. site. Gas + Light will benefit.
- In next round, economy of branch libraries should be looked at.
- Purity Supreme site with connection to Central Square branch library should be explored.
- Potential use of existing main library building could be specifically geared to high school students.
- Existing site is difficult to reach by public transportation, takes time and many connections.
- A community creates civic buildings, they should not be rehabilitated buildings initially built for a civic purpose. A civic building needs a "sense of place" can't be knitted seamlessly into a dense urban fabric.
- The purpose of the building is also to store important resources.
- Tennis courts near existing site are zoned "open space". An existing diagonal path across the site, which is historic, was preserved by the Rawn scheme and must continue to be preserved. When the high school was built there was never any thought to expanding the library.
- It is not just nearby homeowners who appreciate the open space around and the existing building.
- Don't solve the access problem by creating more parking, solve it with public transportation and other modes of transportation, e.g. jitney service ala Galleria

Mall. For example, scoring for Kendall Sq. gets more points because of availability of parking, but river bank is not the place for a large parking lot. - note Vehicle Trip Reduction Ordinance is in effect.

- Remember how children, elderly, get to library - 2/3 of Area 4 residents don't drive.
- Harvard Square sites? - Flagstaff Park and Cambridge Common area sites were evaluated in the first round, didn't make it to the second round.

The Sasaki team and Co-chair Nancy Woods thanked everyone for their attention and their comments and reminded them of the June 10th meeting date. Co-Chair Woods asked everyone to sign the attendance sheet and reminded them that comments could be posted to the web page Comment Book, messages could be mailed, faxed (617/923-7210) or e-mailed to Carla Francazio at Sasaki (cdfancazio@sasaki.com) or to Richard Rossi at City Hall who will pass them on to the Sasaki team. Comment sheets were also available in the meeting room for those who wished to leave a written comment that evening. Co-Chair Woods adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.