

Post Office Relocation Delays New Kenmore Library

The King County Library System (KCLS) has been actively working toward building a new 10,000 square foot Kenmore Library since early 2005. Property at a highly visible and accessible site was purchased in March 2007 and KCLS assumed the leases for the occupants of the building, including the Kenmore branch of the U.S. Postal Service. All tenants with the exception of the U.S. Postal Service, which has a lease through 2011, are on month-to-month leases. KCLS has attempted to assist the U.S. Postal Service by offering to cover the cost of relocation and the difference in the lease payments through the term of the current lease. Although design work is progressing and building permit documents are anticipated to be submitted in May 2009, the U.S. Postal Service continues to postpone relocating to a new site.

Timeline of Progress

- **September 2006:** KCLS signs a Purchase and Sale agreement for a parcel of land located on 181st Street, which is home to multiple tenants including the Kenmore branch of the U.S. Postal Service. KCLS has 90 days to conduct a due diligence review of the site.
- **October 2006:** A public meeting is held to discuss three possible sites for the new Kenmore Library.
- **November 2006:** KCLS staff meets with City officials to review three site options for the new Kenmore Library. Given the community's overall urgency for the new library and the likelihood of the U.S. Postal Service relocating in a timely manner, it is recommended that KCLS acquire the site at 181st Street.
- **December 2006:** The KCLS Board approves the site for the new Kenmore Library and staff meets with officials from the U.S. Postal Service who explain they are willing to relocate if KCLS ensures that rental costs are the same and covers relocation expenses.
- **February 2007:** KCLS selects Weinstein AU Architects for the Kenmore Library project in order to begin preliminary design work.
- **March 2007:** KCLS finalizes the purchase of the site and assumes the leases for the current occupants of the building.
- **April 2007:** Weinstein Architects begins a conceptual design study of the site.
- **May 2007:** KCLS contacts the U.S. Postal Service's facilities department staff in Denver to coordinate the relocation.
- **June 2007:** A public meeting is held to solicit input on the design of the new library.
- **September 2007:** KCLS offers to help the U.S. Postal Service find another site, cover the cost of relocation and cover the difference in the lease payments through the term of the current lease. Despite these efforts, KCLS learns that they are not including the relocation in their 2008 work plan. KCLS starts the formal process to appeal the decision, enlisting the help of city, local and state officials.
- **October 2007:** U.S. Postal Service officials indicate they may include the relocation of the Kenmore Post office in their 2008 work plan after all. The KCLS Board passes a motion to continue the project and maintain the pace of development and contracting at the current site, rather than explore other possible sites.
- **November 2007:** KCLS receives notice that the U.S. Postal Service will reconsider relocating the Kenmore branch at an earlier date than the end of their lease.
- **February 2008:** Detailed planning for the new library interior space is progressing rapidly along with architectural designs.
- **March 2008:** A public meeting to present the designs for the new Kenmore Library was well-attended by community members. KCLS receives notice that the U.S. Postal Service will assign staff from its Real Estate Division to begin working on the relocation project in July.

- **May 2008:** KCLS receives notice from the U.S. Postal Service that a Facilities Project Coordinator has been assigned to work on the relocation of the post office.
- **July 2008:** A public meeting is held to discuss the U.S. Postal Service relocation, with the mayor of Kenmore and a U.S. Postal Service representative in attendance. Following the meeting, KCLS sent the U.S. Postal Service officials a list of suitable alternative sites, including the current Kenmore Library, which could be made available to the Post Office as a long-term lease.
- **November 2008:** Two weeks before a scheduled visit by officials from the U.S. Postal Service to investigate alternative sites for the Kenmore Post Office, KCLS receives notice that the trip is cancelled due to budget concerns. Although the relocation would not require new construction and all expenses would be covered by KCLS, USPS considers the relocation a new construction project. USPS indicates that the relocation may be reconsidered next year. KCLS contacts U.S. Rep. Jay Inslee's office to see if the process may be expedited.
- **December 2008:** Inslee's staff members suggest that KCLS contact Senator Patty Murray's staff in this effort since she may be in a good position in the new congressional structure to exert some influence on the U.S. Postal Service relocation.
- **January 2009:** U.S. Postal Service representatives agree to visit KCLS on January 27 to review potential sites for relocation.