

# Commentary from the Site Selection Meeting for the Kenmore Library

Wednesday, October 18, 6:30-8pm

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## Meeting Summary

Denise Siers, Associate Director for Public Services, began the meeting with introductions of KCLS staff. She reviewed KCLS efforts since the bond issue in September 2004. During the past two years, KCLS and their consultants, Pacific Real Estate Partners, have worked aggressively to identify suitable sites in the downtown for the new/expanded Kenmore Library. Pacific Real Estate Partners have contacted local property owners and made sales offers, even before the bond election, working with City officials to identifying areas of growth. KCLS' goal was to purchase property in 2006 and select architects for the project in 2007; however, there is very little available and affordable real estate in Kenmore.

Kay Johnson, Associate Director for Facilities Development, presented three potential sites with the help of Bill LaPatra and Mia Maguchi from Mithun Architects. Despite the limited choices, she explained that KCLS felt it was important to get public input. Using an aerial image showing the relationship of the sites, Kay Johnson offered the following analysis of the three sites against the Board-approved Site Selection Criteria.

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### Site #1: Post Office

KCLS has a purchase agreement on this site that allows for a 90 day due diligence period while KCLS studies the suitability of this site for the Kenmore Library. The parcel is about 19,500-square-feet. The building on the property was constructed in two phases from 1962-1963. The property is currently fully leased to several businesses, including the Kenmore Post Office. There are currently six tenants in the building. Five are on month-to-month leases; however the USPS lease runs until June 11, 2011.

#### PHASE I:

- **Visibility:** This site is not as easily seen from State Route 522. It would be highly visible on 181<sup>st</sup> Street.
- **Site Capacity:** This site would require parking underneath the building to provide an adequate number of stalls for library use. Future expansion would require either building an additional story on the building or acquiring more land.
- **Access:** Right turns from State Route 522 through the parking areas or access from 181<sup>st</sup> Street provide either right or left turn access. Pedestrians have sidewalks on a portion of 181<sup>st</sup> Street. Public transportation is available on State Route 522

#### PHASE II:

- **Centrality:** Rated based on current conditions. The future developments, when completed, will place this site in a crucial area of the emerging city center.
- **Site Infrastructure:** KCLS is in the process of conducting due diligence for this site. A hazard materials study conducted several years ago will be undated based on the current environmental standards. Construction systems may be costly if the underlying soils are unsuitable. Utilities are apparent on 181<sup>st</sup> Street and the site is on the sewer.
- **Cost and Availability:** KCLS has a purchase and sale agreement negotiated and signed for this parcel. The limitation is that the USPS has a lease until June 2011. The delay could be mitigated while KCLS proceeds with design and permitting in order to initiate construction immediately upon the vacation of the building. The area that the USPS leases is potentially a separate building that could be operated while construction commences on the eastern area of the property. This would add some cost, but may allow for earlier completion of the library.

#### PHASE III:

- **Community Preference:** There was considerable discussion about the attributes of this site during the public meeting. The site was rated as a contender, but no clear preference was given.
- **Lease vs. Purchase:** This site would be owned by KCLS.

- **Partnerships:** This site is limited by a height restriction of 35 feet, which would suggest that another story could be added. Mutually beneficial opportunities would occur if additional public owners purchase adjoining lots the vicinity of this parcel.
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#### Site #1: Fire Station

The Fire District is acquiring property to build a new facility. This is larger than 10 acres and includes a substantial area designated as wetland and protected species habitat. The development portion is near the intersection of 73<sup>rd</sup> and 181<sup>st</sup> streets.

#### PHASE I:

- **Visibility:** This site is not as easily seen from State Route 522. Visual appeal is somewhat limited due to the surrounding developments: a Park & Ride and the back of an adjoining building.
- **Site Capacity:** There is more than adequate space for the library and parking. This site may offer the most potential of any reviewed.
- **Access:** Access occurs from an extension of 181<sup>st</sup> Street that loops into the Park & Ride to the east and north of the fire station. There may be potential conflicts with transit traffic.

#### PHASE II:

- **Centrality:** The location is not central to the current planned community growth, development and retail. It is presently not a gathering place for optimum attractiveness to a broad range of current and potential library users. This site would be a destination site that is somewhat isolated from other compatible destinations. The site is considered neighborhood friendly and is familiar to current library users since the current library is located nearby.
- **Site Infrastructure:** This site meets normal expectations for site mitigations, technical and environmental attributes in King County. Access to utilities appears to be typical for an urban site.
- **Cost and Availability:** This site will be available in the future; however the fire district commissioners have not set a price or terms. The current plan is that the site will be available following the completion of their new facility (KCLS is estimated to be able to commence construction is 2010-2011).

#### PHASE III:

- **Community Preference:** Those in attendance thought this was a good choice for neighborhood access and due to the familiarity with the current library. There appears to be ample parking and easy access to this site.
  - **Lease vs. Purchase:** KCLS assumes that the property will be owned by KCLS.
  - **Partnerships:** There is ample land and capacity for a co development opportunity on this site.
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#### Site #1: LakePointe

This site is offered as an alternative location located south of State Route 522. It includes more than one acre of land with an irregular triangular shape. Current plans by the owner suggest an office building on two floors with underground parking. The library would require one floor with easy access from the parking lot and a presence on State Route 522/Burke-Gilman Trail.

#### PHASE I:

- **Visibility:** This site offers the best visibility from State Route 522 of any presently being considered. The potential visual appeal is optimal.
- **Site Capacity:** This site will accommodate the library and its parking.
- **Access:** This site is presently accessible by pedestrians via the Burke Gilman Trail. Vehicular access is from State Route 522 via 175<sup>th</sup> or 68<sup>th</sup> streets and 175<sup>th</sup> Street. Public Transportation available nearby on State Route 522 or 68<sup>th</sup> Street.

#### PHASE II:

- **Centrality:** Currently the site is isolated and does not have compatible uses to create a gathering place for community building. The future plans for the area indicate a different set of circumstances with much higher potential for meeting this objective.
- **Site Infrastructure:** This site is served by utilities; however, 175<sup>th</sup> Street is an underdeveloped access road and future plans including extensive urban improvements for this area. There are substantial unknowns about the suitability of the underlying soils for the type of development KCLS would require.

- **Cost and Availability:** This site appears to be available for development, although price and terms have not been negotiated.

#### PHASE III:

- **Community Preference:** Discussion was limited due to lack of information; however, many positive comments were made about the visibility of this area in the future with new development proposals.
- **Lease vs. Purchase:** Due to lack of information this site is rated as medium.
- **Partnerships:** This site has potential for KCLS to partner with another entity to co-develop the property. Preliminary studies indicate adequate space for the library and office space with under-building parking.

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## Community Comments

### Site #1: Post Office

#### Advantages:

- Close to other activity, stores and services. Library is one stop among many in an errand run.
- Know the price of the land.
- New development (Kenmore Village by the Lake) in immediate proximity.
- May be able to share parking with businesses nearby.
- Library would complement retail directly around site.
- Easiest of three schemes to get to.
- Potential for redevelopment and growth around the site is higher.

#### Disadvantages:

- Post Office lease extends to 2011.
- Parking is tighter, expensive and more difficult.
- Delaying library project will allow increase price due to escalation in construction costs.

#### Questions & Concerns:

- Would there be a temporary library? *(Yes, hoping for a lease opportunity off-site.)*
- How long is the delay with moving the Post Office? *(Lease is until 2011, no chance of breaking lease.)*
- If the Kenmore Post Office leaves, concern they will not relocate in Kenmore? *(Not a KCLS issue; land has been for sale, so if KCLS does not buy it, someone will.)*
- The status of the easement—will need assurance the access easement will be permanent. *(KCLS will have to negotiate with other owners to ensure this occurs.)*
- How much more expensive is underground parking? *(Figure roughly \$30,000 a stall, or 3x cost of surface parking.)*
- Is this scheme underestimating access and parking issues? Heard plans to reduce traffic of 181<sup>st</sup> St. *(Have not heard that.)*

#### Suggestions:

- Explore options with the Post Office lease buyout to speed up timeline.
- Ask Post Office about possibly using space in the new library.
- Would like to continue to see if corner lot adjacent would be available.

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### Site #2: Fire Station

#### Advantages:

- Plenty of land for less expensive surface parking.
- Good access for cars.
- Close to current library (which has a good location according to many.)

#### Disadvantages:

- Property availability and price are unknown.
- Further from center of town and new developments.
- New Fire Station and Park and Ride may create traffic problems?
- Timeline dependent on Fire Station's moving out.

#### Questions & Concerns:

- When will the land be available? *(2010 optimistically; 2011 realistically)*
  - Is there concern with the adjoining wetlands? Will this be a problem for potential development? *(There will be a setback requirement, but specifics have not been researched)*
  - Would this be new construction or a remodel? *(Plan shows for a building reuse; however, full requirements to update current building, including seismic retrofitting, are unknown at this time)*
  - Will a building remodel cut down on construction time? *(Maybe, but not a substantial amount; possibly a couple of months)*
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#### Site #3: LakePointe

##### Advantages:

- Enough land for co-development.
- Adjacent to Bothell Way to increase visibility.
- Adjacent to Burke Gilman Trail.

##### Disadvantages:

- Property availability and price are unknown.
- Location is difficult to get to for majority of residents. Do not want to have to cross Bothell Way.
- No traffic lights at this time to ease access. Will happen with LakePointe but unclear of their schedule.
- No firm plans for design or timeline of LakePointe. Until built up, area directly surrounding is undeveloped.
- Pump station future plans unknown.

#### Questions & Concerns:

- When will the land be available? *(Owner willing to sell, but price is unknown.)*
  - Concerned about soils. Will there be a premium for building foundation? Used to be under Lake Washington. *(Water table is most likely high. No Geotech report at this time.)*
  - What are the unknowns of this site? *(Base utility infrastructure is minimal. Not sure if it's adequate for planned use of library and office. Library would have to bear cost; would hope to share costs with a development partner.)*
  - Concerns with existing pump station. Brightwater had plans, but withdrew and may return? *(Did not know of this situation. Will look into it.)*
  - What are the plans for LakePointe and traffic access? When will the light be installed? *(Unknown, but will completely change traffic patterns and affect access.)*
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#### Other Community Comments:

- Is there an opportunity to work with City Council for co-development?
- Create a second story reading room that can serve as a community room
- Community wants KCLS to meet with City Council to discuss possibilities as the city is looking for a new City Hall site. Community wants to see resources put together for collaboration
- Community wants more choices and more concrete information on available sites.
- Any other ideas being pursued? *(Open to lease opportunities, but only one is available at the time)*
- Representative from St. Edward's Park is seeking tenant for seminary building. Would like to provide alternatives to the brew pub plans. Feels a library would be a great fit. Also envisions a community center. Could there be shuttle service? *(Site is not in downtown Kenmore)*
- What are the plans for the existing library? *(Sell and use money towards the new library)*
- What's the obligation of the bond? *(Without land, cannot build, but money is not going away. Available funds: \$5.8 million + sale of current library)*

# KCLS Site Selection Analysis

## Kenmore Library

Low =1, Medium=2, High=3

Site #1 Post Office	Site #2 Fire Station	Site #3 LakePointe	Phase I
2	2	3	<b>Visibility</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visible from the street</li> <li>• Traffic count that meets or exceed the average traffic counts of a major thoroughfare in a community</li> <li>• Visual appeal</li> </ul>
2	3	3	<b>Site Capacity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Space for building and parking</li> <li>• Space for future expansion</li> <li>• Space to accommodate the necessary setbacks, road expansions and other site amenities</li> </ul>
3	2	2	<b>Access</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility for pedestrians</li> <li>• Accessibility for vehicles</li> <li>• Accessibility for public transportation</li> </ul>
7	7	8	Total: Phase I
Site #1 Post Office	Site #2 Fire Station	Site #3 LakePointe	Phase II
2	2	2	<b>Centrality</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing population</li> <li>• Growth and development</li> <li>• Proximity to schools, retail and other libraries</li> <li>• Site is not isolated</li> </ul>
2	3	2	<b>Site Infrastructure</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cost-benefit of site mitigations</li> <li>• Technical and environmental assessments</li> <li>• Access to utilities</li> </ul>
2	1	1	<b>Cost and Availability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost for site acquisition</li> <li>• Timeframe for development of the site</li> </ul>
6	6	5	Total: Phase II
Site #1 Post Office	Site #2 Fire Station	Site #3 LakePointe	Phase III
2	2	2	<b>Community Preference</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Input from elected officials</li> <li>• Alignment with planning tools (Comprehensive Plan)</li> <li>• Input from a broad cross-section of the area to be served</li> <li>• Advisory Boards and Friends of the Library</li> </ul>
3	3	2	<b>Lease versus Purchase/Long-term Viability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of the long-term viability of the site</li> <li>• Availability of property for lease</li> </ul>
1	3	3	<b>Partnerships</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-location with other entity</li> <li>• Mutually beneficial joint development</li> <li>• Enhances service possibilities</li> </ul>
6	8	7	Total: Phase III
19	21	20	Overall Score