To: JPA Governing Board

From: Anne-Marie Despain, Director of Library Services
Danae Ramirez, Deputy Director of Library Services

Date: June 10, 2025

Meeting: June 16, 2025

Re: Belmont Library Improvement Project Report

Background

The Belmont Library Improvement Project, included in the FY 2024-25 budget, is underway and expected to be completed next month. This report provides an update on the project and a summary of key activities.

The Belmont Library is a 20,230 sq. ft. single story facility, which was completed in April 2006. Flooded in natural light from floor to ceiling windows that overlook the heritage oaks of Belameda Park and its proximity to local schools including Carlmont High School, makes it a popular and well-loved destination. The building and three-acre land parcel are owned and maintained by the City of Belmont and operated by San Mateo County Libraries under the JPA Agreement.

In the 19 years since the library opened, it has become vital and well-loved destination. The library has seen regular upgrades over the years, including lighting improvements, energy efficiency projects, replacement of the automated material handling machine and updates of other equipment and furniture. With nearly two decades of heavy use and evolving community needs, more extensive interior and exterior improvements are now required.

In 2018, collaborative working sessions began to assess maintenance and space needs and explore the addition of a makerspace. Stakeholder input was provided by staff, residents, volunteers, Friends of the Library, and City representatives. Architect Mark Schatz, who designed the original library, helped evaluate the space and develop ideas aligned with the Library's Strategic Plan and Makerspace Master Plan, *Everyone Is A Maker*. A community survey highlighted strong interest in technology, digital arts, and traditional media. However, due to cost concerns, the initial plans were scaled back to focus on an interior refresh rather than a full construction project.

Discussion

Following the pandemic, the Library engaged Noll & Tam Architects to develop a new flooring layout and interior and exterior color schemes. New paint and flooring will give the already beautiful Belmont Library a refreshed, modern look while preserving its charm.

Scope of Work

The following scope of work was identified as the current Belmont Library Improvement Project and approved by the Belmont City Council on November 26, 2024:

- Repainting of all exterior and interior walls and replacement of flooring with an exciting color palate to complement and refresh library spaces
- Upgraded furniture, including new tables and chairs, study carrels and lounge seating for all ages
- Selective new shelving to attractively display library materials and allow flexibility for collection placement
- Completion of the Makerspace with cabinets and countertops that will showcase a variety of technology where users can create and innovate
- Updated power and data access throughout the building to adapt to constantly changing and emerging technologies
- Enhanced meeting rooms with new AV systems for presentations and video conferencing, wall-mounted magnetic glass boards and soundproofing with acoustic tiles
- Improved study rooms with display technology for meetings and collaborative learning
- Renovated staff workroom with ergonomic workstations, hybrid meeting space and a streamlined office layout

Financial support for the Belmont Library Improvement Project is provided by three main sources, including the City of Belmont, San Mateo County Libraries and the Friends of the Belmont Library. The City of Belmont has budgeted $500,000 for the project and the Friends of the Belmont Library has committed $125,000. San Mateo County Libraries expenditures are estimated to be $805,000.

In addition, the family of John Christgau – a prominent teacher and educator who had nearly a dozen books published in his 84 years, and a 50-year resident of Belmont – donated just under $20,000 in his honor to the Belmont Library in 2019 to be put toward the renovation effort and new makerspace.

As the facility owner, the City led the building improvements, which are now complete. The Library managed the removal of some cabinetry, shelving and wall-mounted items, and the purchase and installation of selected shelving, and equipment, and new furnishings. To minimize the impact to the community and allow multiple City and Library contractors to work as efficiently as possible, the project work required the closure of the Library for several months, beginning on March 20.

During the closure, we have offered programs in pop-up locations throughout the City including Barrett Community Center, Carlmont High School and Twin Pines Senior and Community Center. Staff are using this time to strengthen community partnerships and provide services outside of our walls. Routine library services such as hold pickups continue to be available at the San Carlos Library, neighboring libraries, and by mail.

We look forward to reopening and celebrating the reimagined Belmont Library this summer!

Strategic Plan Alignment

Goal: We listen to our community and create responsive services and spaces where everyone belongs; and Strategy: Enhance and update facilities to create inviting and flexible spaces.

Fiscal Impact

Financial support for the Belmont Library Improvement Project is provided by three main sources, including the City of Belmont, San Mateo County Libraries, and the Friends of the Belmont Library. In addition, a private donation of $20,000 in honor of John Christgau will also support this project. The City of Belmont has budgeted $500,000 for the project and the Friends of the Belmont Library have committed $125,000. Allocations for Library expenditures for furniture, shelving and equipment were included in the FY 2024-25 Recommended Budget and approved by the JPA Governing Board on June 17, 2024. The total estimated cost is $805,000. Due to some furniture delays, some costs will fall under the furniture allocation in the FY 2025-26 Recommended Budget.

Recommendation

Recommend Governing Board acceptance of the Belmont Library Improvement Project Report. Operations Committee members present at the June 10, 2025 meeting concurred with this recommendation.