

**ORANGE COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**ACTION AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT**

**Meeting Date:** September 15, 2015

**Action Agenda  
Item No. 8-a**

**SUBJECT:** Southern Branch Library Siting Criteria, Process Update

**DEPARTMENT:** Manager's Office, Asset  
Management Services  
(AMS), Library, Planning

**PUBLIC HEARING: (Y/N)**

No
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**ATTACHMENT(S):**

- 1) July 17, 2015 Memorandum from  
Manager

**INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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Jeff Thompson, (919) 245-2658  
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**PURPOSE:** To receive an update on the Southern Branch Library siting process and provide staff direction regarding next steps.

**BACKGROUND:** On September 18, 2012 the Board of Orange County Commissioners (BOCC), in conjunction with the Carrboro Board of Aldermen, approved a set of guiding principles and a comprehensive site selection criterion for potentially locating a Southern Branch of the Orange County Library (hereafter "the Branch"). Since that time the BOCC and the Carrboro Board of Aldermen have submitted several properties for review by County staff consistent with the approved Branch siting process. Attachment 1, "July 17, 2015 Memorandum from Manager" outlines these criteria, the sites that have been suggested to staff study, and the sites currently under study:

- 1) 101 N. Merritt Mill (St. Paul's AME Zion Church)
- 2) 200 E. Main Street (Municipal Parking – "Armadillo Grill" site)
- 3) 203 S. Greensboro (Municipal Parking owned by Carrboro)
- 4) 311 E. Main Street (Fire & Hearth property assembly)

Staff has worked closely with Carrboro staff in evaluating pertinent land use information. The Board may recall that the initial due diligence processes exhaust readily available and cost free information prior to moving into the preliminary phase assessments requiring professional services such as environmental, traffic, geotechnical, and cultural/archeological studies.

The full Preliminary Phase Analysis located at [www.orangecountync.gov/AMS/librarysite](http://www.orangecountync.gov/AMS/librarysite), evaluates the four sites through the BOCC adopted criteria. The highlights of this analysis are as follows:

**Fire & Hearth Site.** This site is challenged by its need to aggregate parcels of different ownership to be large enough for the Branch site. The majority of the property is either not for

sale or under contract for sale. Additionally, the property has significant access and potential traffic challenges. Staff does not recommend the County pursue further due diligence at this time.

**St. Paul AME Zion Church.** The congregation is planning to relocate the church to the Rogers Road Community. This site is too small for an adequate branch library and its location would require off-site parking and designed congestion mitigation efforts. Staff does not recommend the County pursue further due diligence at this time.

**200 E. Main Municipal Parking Lot (“Armadillo Grill” site).** This was the site of the Carrboro Arts and Innovation Center proposal presented to the Board of Carrboro Aldermen in February, 2015. The site is compact, constrained on the east boundary by the railroad, and would not support a Branch Library with adequate parking. Staff does not recommend further preliminary phase study within the criteria process.

**203 S. Greensboro Street.** This site is owned by Carrboro and was offered for study by the Town Board of Aldermen. The site is adequately sized to support a Branch Library with on-site parking. It offers reasonable access, visibility, and is zoned appropriately for a library purpose. Staff does recommend further preliminary phase study within the criteria process.

At the invitation of Carrboro, County staff continues to participate in a parallel process of exploratory discussions with Kidzu, The Arts Center, and Carrboro regarding the concept of the Branch Library being co-located with these groups as part of a Carrboro Arts and Innovation Center (“CAIC”).

**SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPACT:** The Southern Branch Library will 1) provide more convenient and accessible access to Orange County Library services; 2) further the Library’s mission to support and enrich the residents in northern Orange County; and 3) addresses the following three Orange County Social Justice Goals:

- **GOAL: FOSTER A COMMUNITY CULTURE THAT REJECTS OPPRESSION AND INEQUITY**

The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race or color; religious or philosophical beliefs; sex, gender or sexual orientation; national origin or ethnic background; age; military service; disability; and familial, residential or economic status.

- **GOAL: ENSURE ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY**

The creation and preservation of infrastructure, policies, programs and funding necessary for residents to provide shelter, food, clothing and medical care for themselves and their

- **GOAL: ENABLE FULL CIVIC PARTICIPATION**

Ensure that Orange County residents are able to engage government through voting and volunteering by eliminating disparities in participation and barriers to participation.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** There is no financial impact associated with the analysis of these sites to this point of the preliminary phase of the analysis. Should be BOCC ask that preliminary phase activities continue that involve more in-depth study, these estimated costs would range from \$10,000 to \$15,000 per site. Adequate funds are available within the appropriated Southern Library capital project for these in-depth studies.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):** The Manager recommends that the Board allow the Manager to initiate discussions with the Carrboro Town Manager on property acquisition options for the 203 S. Greensboro property.



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**MEMORANDUM**

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**Date:** July 17, 2015

**To:** Board of Orange County Commissioners

**From:** Bonnie Hammersley, Orange County Manager

**Subject:** Southern Branch Library and CAIC Discussions

The purpose of this memo is to provide a summary of the discussion from meetings that occurred on the Carrboro Arts and Innovation Center (CAIC) and the Southern Branch Library project for the Board of Orange County Commissioners (BOCC) and Town of Carrboro Board.

On July 7, 2015, the County Manager, Deputy County Manager, County Asset Management Services Director, Town of Carrboro Manager, and the Town of Carrboro Planning Director met to discuss the CAIC and the status of the Southern Branch Library siting process. The County reiterated that it will continue to participate in the CAIC process with the understanding that the evaluation of sites for a stand-alone Southern Branch Library will run on a parallel track. At the next CAIC meeting (July 20), County staff will provide an update regarding the County's role in the CAIC as well as the status of the library siting process. In an effort to keep the Town of Carrboro Aldermen and the BOCC informed it was decided that County staff would provide a chronological list of events related to the Southern Branch Library from 2010 to present (Attachment A). Also, the managers agreed to expand efforts to keep their boards informed throughout the process of any changes as they occur.

On July 8, 2015, the BOCC Chair, the Town of Carrboro Mayor, the Town Manager and the County Manager met to discuss the recent concerns regarding the communication to the Town of Carrboro Aldermen on CAIC and the Southern Branch Library project. The Mayor and the Chair asked the managers to continue to share routine as well as sensitive information with the Boards throughout the duration of the project. A discussion of the next steps in the process took place and is summarized below.

The County staff is currently evaluating a number of sites from the County's list of potential sites (Attachment B). This attachment includes all the sites evaluated by the County; the strikethroughs constitute sites that do not meet the specified criteria adopted by the BOCC on September 18, 2012:

- Visibility
- Site Capacity, Parking
- Access (pedestrian, cycling, vehicular, public transportation)
- Alignment with Planning Tools and Comprehensive Plan
- Acquisition Considerations (lease vs. purchase)
- Centrality of Location
- Physical Site Conditions, Allowances and Constraints
- Site Cost and Availability
- Community Preference
- Advantages of Partnerships

The County staff intends to narrow the evaluated sites down to the top two (2) sites and present to the BOCC in a “Staff Report” for the September 1, BOCC next regularly scheduled meeting. The County staff will solicit input from the Town of Carrboro staff as these remaining sites are further evaluated so that the Town of Carrboro’s interests and concerns are considered and presented in the Staff Report.

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you.

cc: Town of Carrboro Aldermen

## **Attachment A: Southern Branch Library Project Chronology**

**2010-2012** - Evaluation and ultimate BOCC rejection of 210 Hillsborough Street location as a Southern Branch Library site.

**September, 2012** - BOCC adopted site selection criteria.

**December, 2012** - Letter from Carrboro Manager to the County Manager suggesting 3 sites be evaluated.

**May, 2013** - Letter from Carrboro Manager to the County Manager suggesting 4 additional sites be evaluated.

**November, 2013** - BOCC authorized staff to begin primary phase 1 due diligence on 120 Brewer Lane site.

**January, 2014**- BOCC authorized staff to begin the public input work as part of the primary phase due diligence on 120 Brewer Lane site.

**May, 2014** - Staff report to BOCC updating the primary phase due diligence and public input process for the 120 Brewer Lane site.

**October, 2014** - Staff report to joint meeting of BOCC and Carrboro Board of Aldermen on progress of 120 Brewer Lane Memorandum of Understanding and Development Agreement negotiations.

**June, 2015** - Southern Branch Library site criteria update staff report to BOCC CAIC Steering Committee update reports to BOCC and Carrboro Board of Aldermen.

## **Attachment B: Potential Southern Branch Library Sites Submitted for Evaluation**

1. ~~210 Hillsborough Street, Carrboro~~
2. ~~1128 Hillsborough Street, Carrboro (Shetley Property adjacent to MLK Park)~~
3. ~~401 Fidelity, Carrboro (Adjacent to Westwood Cemetery)~~
4. ~~301 West Main Street (Carrboro Town Hall)~~
5. ~~120 Brewer Lane, Carrboro (Butler Property)~~
6. 203 S. Greensboro, Carrboro (Municipal Parking Lot)
7. ~~201 N. Greensboro, Carrboro (“CVS” site)~~
8. ~~300 E. Main Street, Carrboro~~
9. ~~Century Center, Carrboro~~
10. ~~501/503 Franklin Street, Chapel Hill~~
11. 311 E. Main, Carrboro (Fire & Hearth Assembly)
12. 200 E. Main Street, Carrboro (Municipal Parking - “Armadillo” Property)
13. 101 N. Merritt Mill, Carrboro (St. Paul AME Zion Church Property)