

SITE ANALYSIS + EVALUATION REPORT

EXECUTIVE REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The site analysis and evaluation report summarizes the planning process and information developed **to evaluate two sites identified by the Atherton Town Council for the location of their new library building:** the site of the existing library at 2 Dinkelspiel Station Lane, and several sites within Holbrook-Palmer Park. The summary includes the work products that were developed by the Atherton Library Building Steering Committee (ALBSC) for presentation and discussion at the community meetings and the Parks and Recreation Commission.

PROCESS

Group 4 Architecture Research + Planning, Inc. worked closely with the ALBSC over the course of five months (May to September, 2011) to study and analyze the proposed sites; review and discuss the program and best practices for a new Atherton library; and review and discuss associated cost model components. In addition to seven meetings and three subcommittee meetings with the ALBSC, Group 4 conducted two community charrettes in June 2011; presented an analysis of the Holbrook-Palmer Park site to the Parks and Recreation Commission in July 2011; and participated in a community open house on the two sites in September 2011.



Existing Atherton Library



*Atherton Library:
existing facility*



*ALBSC Meeting,
June 10, 2011*



*Community Meeting,
June 25, 2011*

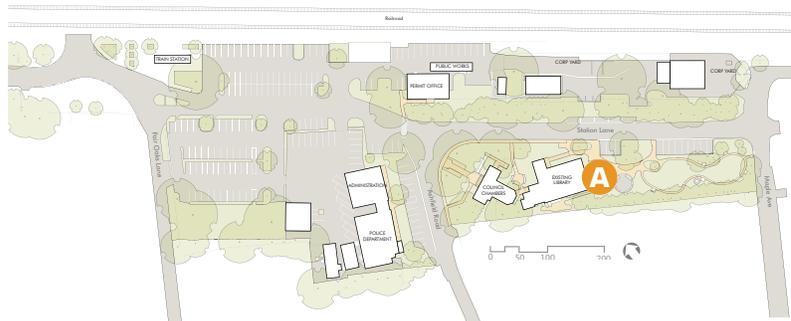
SITE ANALYSIS + EVALUATION REPORT

PROPOSED SITES

The two potential locations identified and agreed to by the Town Council for a new Atherton library were the existing site at 2 Dinkelspiel Station Lane, and Holbrook-Palmer Park. In addition to the existing library site, the ALBSC and Group 4 identified five sites for consideration at Holbrook-Palmer Park, including: the Main Residence site; the North Meadow/parking lot; the Front Lawn; the Pavilion; and the preschool. Each of these six sites was analyzed and evaluated according on a set of site prerequisites and evaluation criteria that were compiled from ALBSC and community project goals and objectives as well as Group 4’s experience in helping other communities determine library site feasibility. These prerequisites and criteria are described in more detail below.

This detailed review and analysis led the ALBSC and Group 4 to narrow the options down to two potential sites: the existing library site and the site of the main residence at Holbrook-Palmer Park (hereafter referred to as the “proposed park site”).

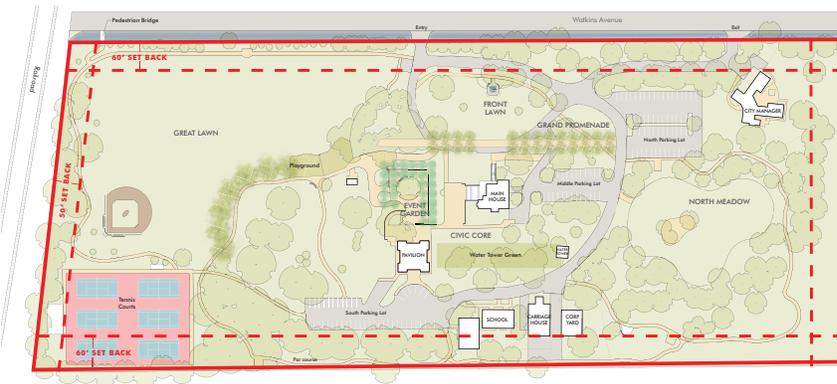
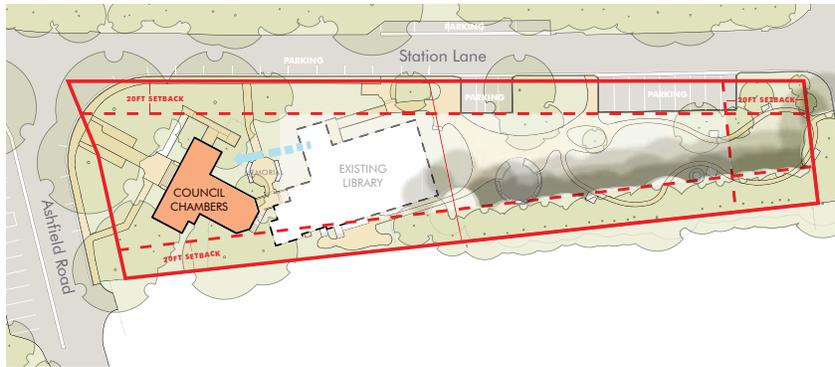
EXISTING LIBRARY



HOLBROOK- PALMER PARK



SITE ANALYSIS + EVALUATION REPORT



SITE PREREQUISITES

Site prerequisites were developed to ensure that the site would meet certain basic requirements for project implementation, including cost and schedule. Each of the sites was analyzed and evaluated based on three site prerequisites: Planning /Zoning Code, Site Character and Cost/Schedule.

PLANNING/ZONING CODE

The sites were evaluated for feasibility in regards to receiving required planning and zoning revisions/approvals for library development.

- At Holbrook-Palmer Park, an amendment to the zoning code or a variance would be required.
- At the existing library site, a lot merger would be required to join the two parcels that make up this site.
- Because the core of the existing library building is more than 50 years old, it may be deemed to have historic significance, which could have implications or restrictions for demolition. In Group 4's opinion, the existing condition of the building's core and the modifications made over time may have significantly compromised any historic significance.

SITE ANALYSIS + EVALUATION REPORT

SITE CHARACTER

Each site was evaluated for the potential to accommodate a new library building while retaining its existing site character. Both the existing site and Holbrook-Palmer Park provide sufficient opportunity and flexibility to allow the design of a new library building to be sensitive to its context and environment.

COST AND SCHEDULE

Each site was evaluated based on whether site development costs would be reasonable relative to the overall project budget, as well as on the ability to maintain a reasonable project schedule through anticipated planning approvals, design development, and construction.

SITE EVALUATION

Sites that met the prerequisites were further evaluated according to criteria in three key categories: Context, Experience/Opportunities, and Function.

Legend							
		A	B	C	D	E	F
		Existing Library Site	Main Residence, HPP	North Meadow/Parking lot HPP	Front Lawn, HPP	Pavilion Site, HPP	Preschool Site, HPP
Evaluation Criteria							
Context	Accessibility Safe pedestrian, bicycle, & vehicular						
	Minimizes impact to Park/neighbors						
	Consistent with Park Master Plan						
	Synergy with other rec/cultural activities						
	Connectivity with community						
Experience/Opportunities	Visual & physical indoor/outdoor connections						
	Outdoor spaces						
	Environmental/Sustainable						
	Library user experience						
Function	Flexibility/multipurpose						
	Efficient						
	Convenient						
	Interruption of service/temp facility						

SITE ANALYSIS + EVALUATION REPORT

This set of criteria are the industry standard for site evaluation study. Each of these categories was further broken down into more specific areas of evaluation. Each site was rated as good, neutral or poor relative to each other in regards to its ability to meet the specific criteria.

CONTEXT

The Context category was divided into five sub-categories:

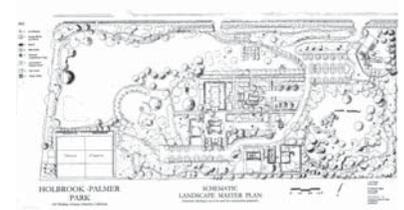
- Accessibility – safe for pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular traffic
- Minimizes Impact to park/neighbors
- Consistent with the Holbrook-Palmer Park Master Plan (for the existing library site, this was changed to the opportunity to retain the reading garden)

Evaluation Criteria		A Existing Library Site	B Holbrook- Palmer Park
Context	Accessibility Safe pedestrian, bicycle, & vehicular	+	+
	Minimizes Impact to Park/Neighbors	+	+
	Consistent with HPP Master Plan	n/a	+
	Synergy with Other Rec/Cultural Activities	⚡	+
	Connectivity with Community	+	+

- Synergy with other recreational and cultural activities
- Connectivity with the community

The existing library site was rated positively for accessibility, minimizing impact to park/neighbors and community connectivity. This site is adjacent to residential neighborhoods to the south and east, but sufficient screening is provided by the existing redwood grove and other mature trees. The redwood grove is a critical visual and acoustical buffer that would remain if the new library was sited here. The existing library site was rated neutrally in terms of synergy with other recreational and cultural activities because of its adjacency to governmental and administrative buildings and activities rather than cultural and recreational activities.

The main residence site in Holbrook-Palmer Park was rated positively in all of the Context subcategories. Holbrook-Palmer Park is viewed as very accessible by all modes of transportation. Its network of pedestrian walkways is extensive and no new paved roads would need to be introduced. There is no anticipated impact to the residential neighbors



Holbrook-Palmer Park Master Plan



Synergy and Connectivity



Synergy and Connectivity

SITE ANALYSIS + EVALUATION REPORT



Synergy and Connectivity

because the main residence site is centered in the park with a substantial distance to the nearest neighbor. This site provides generous acoustical and visual setbacks. The site is consistent with the Holbrook-Palmer Park Master Plan which designates specific areas for recreation, pastoral, and civic or community activities. The new library would be at the center of the community core. Holbrook-Palmer Park is a treasured asset of the community, and locating the library where the community gathers will increase its convenience and use. With thoughtful site and building design, the new library will enhance the park and provide additional amenities both inside the building and in the adjacent exterior program spaces.

EXPERIENCE/OPPORTUNITIES

The Experience/Opportunities category was divided into four sub-categories:

- Visual and physical indoor/outdoor connections
- Outdoor spaces
- Environmental and operational sustainability
- Library user experience



Visual and Physical Indoor/Outdoor Connection

The existing library site was rated negatively for visual and physical indoor/outdoor connectivity and for outdoor spaces. The site does not have long views, there is not much space to create strong indoor/outdoor connections or outdoor spaces, and the site's proximity to the train results



Library User Experience

in sound disruptions to outdoor activities. The existing site was rated neutrally on sustainability. Heavy shading by the tall redwood grove to the south of the site limits opportunities to generate electricity from photovoltaic panels; however, other green features could be implemented in the building design. The long, narrow site would dictate a long, narrow building with a less operationally-efficient layout. The site was rated as neutral for library user experience because of its contextual relationships to the town's administrative buildings and departments rather than other cultural/recreational amenities, as well as its limited potential for creating indoor and outdoor public spaces.

Evaluation Criteria		A Existing Library Site	B Holbrook- Palmer Park
Experience/ Opportunities	Visual + Physical Indoor/Outdoor connections	-	+
	Outdoor spaces	-	+
	Environmental + Operational Sustainability	⊕	+
	Library User Experience	⊕	+

in sound disruptions to outdoor activities. The existing site was rated neutrally on sustainability. Heavy shading by the tall redwood grove to the south of the site limits opportunities to generate electricity from photovoltaic panels; however, other green features could be implemented in the building design. The long, narrow site would dictate a long, narrow building with a less operationally-efficient layout. The site was rated as neutral for library user experience because of its contextual relationships to the town's administrative buildings and departments rather than other cultural/recreational amenities, as well as its limited potential for creating indoor and outdoor public spaces.

SITE ANALYSIS + EVALUATION REPORT

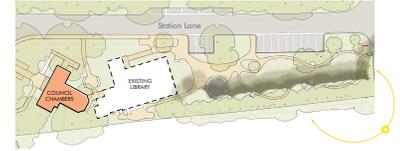
The main residence site in Holbrook-Palmer Park was rated positively in all of the Experience/Opportunities sub-categories. Being situated in the middle of Holbrook-Palmer Park, the site has the potential for long views and myriad ways to create indoor/outdoor connections and spaces. The site has excellent solar exposure and presents many opportunities for a wide variety of other green design options. The spacious site allows more opportunities for the building to support a more regular, operationally efficient layout. The site was rated as positive for library user experience because of the opportunities for joint programming with other multigenerational recreational and cultural activities.

FUNCTION

The Function category was divided into four sub-categories:

1. Flexibility/multi-purpose
2. Efficient
3. Convenient
4. Interruption of service/temp facility

The existing library site was rated neutrally for its potential flexibility and multi-purposed spaces. Depending on the design of the library there could be flexibility for use by the surrounding administrative functions, including the police department, permit office, public works, council chambers, and administration. The library's efficiency at this site was rated poorly because of limitations on the ability to optimize the building configuration operationally. The site was given a positive mark for convenience due to its proximity to the administrative offices and its long-term location of the Atherton Library. Since the existing building would need to be torn down in order to build a new library, there would be either an interruption of library service or the costs of a temporary facility to serve the Atherton community during construction; for this reason, this site was rated as poor on the interruption of service criterion.



Existing Library Site



Existing Library Site is very shady



Proposed Park Site



Flexible spaces

Evaluation Criteria		A Existing Library Site	B Holbrook- Palmer Park
Function	Flexibility/Multi-purpose	⊖	+
	Efficient	-	+
	Convenient	+	+
	Interruption of Service/Temp Facility	-	+

SITE ANALYSIS + EVALUATION REPORT



Flexible spaces



Multi-purpose spaces

The proposed park site was rated positively in all of the Function sub-categories. Site conditions support a greater possibility of designing and building a flexible, multi-purpose, and efficient library. It is viewed as a convenient site because it is centrally located within Atherton, where a new library will support and enrich existing park activities and events. Developing a new library in Holbrook-Palmer Park would not require interruption of service or temporary library facilities during construction.

PARKING AND TRAFFIC ANALYSIS

Concurrent with Group 4's Site Analysis and Evaluation, Neal Martin & Associates (consulting with LSA) conducted a parking and traffic analysis of both sites.

PARKING

A new expanded library would require a total of 35 spaces. The existing library site would require two additional spaces. This would require either sharing used of the Town Office lots and the Caltrain station lot or adding new parallel parking spaces on the east side of Dinkelspiel Station Lane.

At Holbrook-Palmer Park, no new parking spaces would be required. Weekly utilization is expected to increase from 64 to 90 spaces for a total utilization rate of 73% at 7pm – the busiest weekday time. Saturday utilization is expected to increase from 75 to 92 spaces for a total utilization rate of 74% during the 10am hour – the busiest weekend time. This would still leave over 30 parking spaces available at these peak times.

TRAFFIC

The traffic analysis found that there are no anticipated level of service (LOS) impacts to any of the related intersections at the existing library site. Therefore, no mitigation measures would be required.

Development of the new library at Holbrook-Palmer Park would result in a minimal LOS impact at the Watkins Avenue/Middlefield Road intersection. No mitigation measures would be required since the LOS impact at this intersection would only increase by 0.3 seconds at peak hours.

PRELIMINARY SITE PLANS

Preliminary site plans were developed for the existing library site and the proposed park site in Holbrook Palmer Park (included on the following pages). The footprint used to develop these site plans is based on the 9,800 square foot program template that Kathryn Page of Page & Moris developed for the new Atherton Library (an 11,100 square foot dashed line indicates the larger program footprint option). The intent of these site plans is to explore opportunities to integrate the building with the sites based on the project goals and objectives that were established with the Community, the ALBSC and confirmed by the Town Council. These drawings are not proposing a design for the library but are identifying opportunities at each site that could be further developed and refined as the design moves forward.

Supplemental library/community outdoor program spaces have been indicated on both sketches. The existing library site, because of its size limitations does not have as many outdoor space opportunities as the proposed park site. There is also greater opportunity at the proposed park site to leverage the improvements for the library to include other Park infrastructure needs such as pathway improvements, crosswalks, traffic calming strategies, parking lot improvements, landscape improvements, storm drainage and Park Master Plan identified amenities such as the grand promenade and event garden.

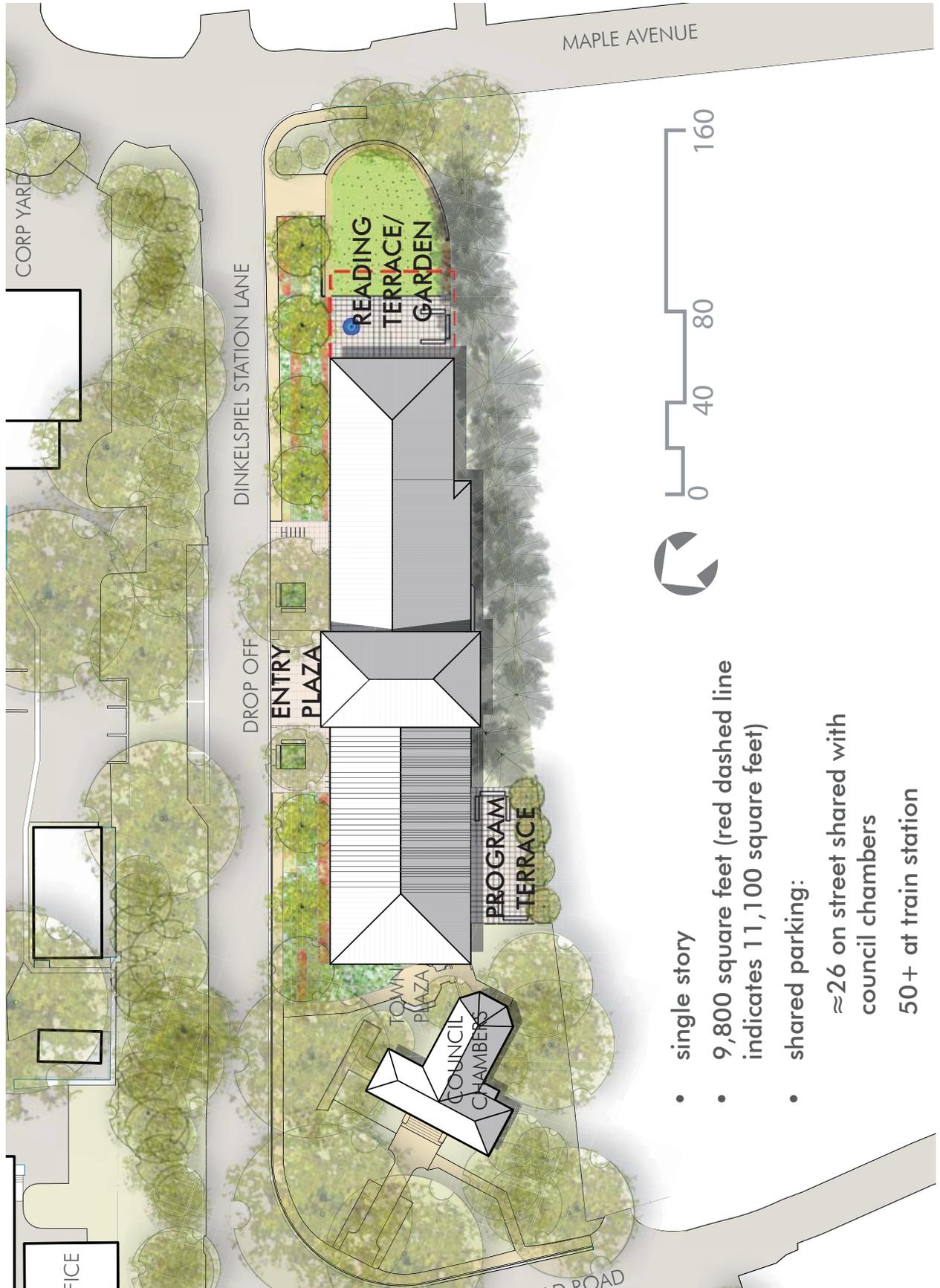
Site fit and scale can also be analyzed for each site based on the site plan sketches. The size of the proposed library on the existing library site, even though it is within zoning guidelines, results in a large amount of the site covered with building; it is also at a greater density than any neighboring site. At Holbrook-Palmer Park, the proposed library would create minimal change to the open/green space of the existing park because the proposed footprint can easily fit within the existing hardscaped area of the Main residence and no additional parking is required. The design of a library at the proposed park site would focus on enhancing the visual and physical relationships of the new library to the Carriage House, Water Tower and Pavilion. There are possibilities for outdoor spaces that create an inviting, usable and enhanced community core.

SITE ANALYSIS + EVALUATION REPORT

EXISTING LIBRARY SITE



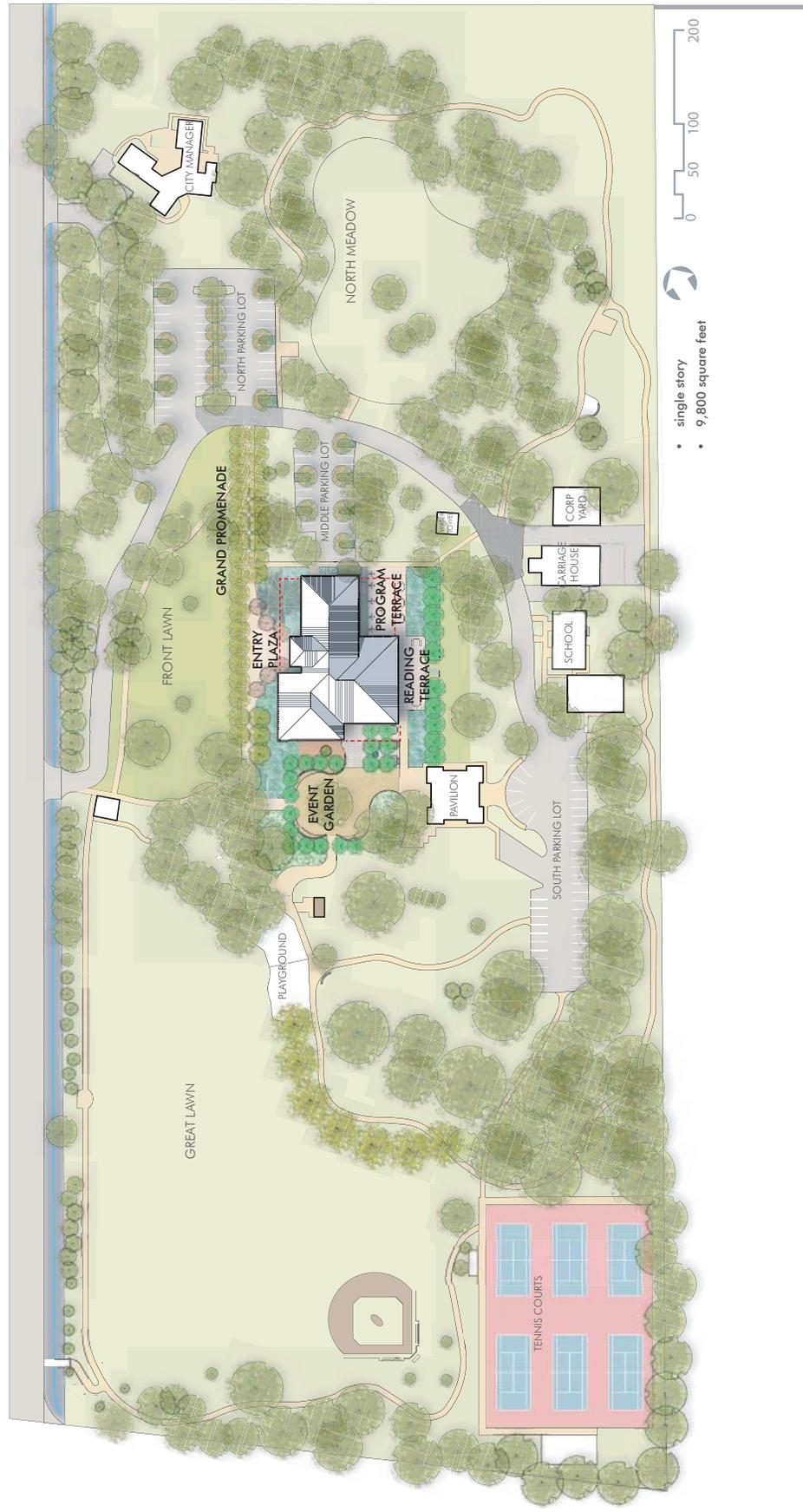
EXISTING LIBRARY SITE



- single story
- 9,800 square feet (red dashed line indicates 11,100 square feet)
- shared parking:
 - ≈26 on street shared with council chambers
 - 50+ at train station

SITE ANALYSIS + EVALUATION REPORT

PROPOSED PARK SITE



PROPOSED PARK SITE

