

FAQS – Oak Park Properties

March 2019

Project Overview

The Oak Park Project - encompassing 15 acres at 1700 and 1750 Oak Park Boulevard - is actually four projects in one. It is a new library to replace the current outdated library; new sports fields for the community to enjoy; a new neighborhood of 34 single-family homes; and a greatly improved Monticello Avenue as well as the adjacent section of Oak Park Boulevard.

It is a unique partnership between Contra Costa County, the principle owner of the land; the City of Pleasant Hill; and the Pleasant Hill Recreation & Park District. The Mt. Diablo Unified School District also owns a portion of 1700 Oak Park Blvd with the County.

This partnership is described in a July 2018 Memorandum of Understanding. The MOU establishes a framework for the transfer of five acres from the County to the City of Pleasant Hill for a new library; the sale of five acres to Recreation & Park District for sports fields; and the ultimate sale by the County of 1750 Oak Park Blvd (the existing library site) to a home builder for construction of 34 single-family homes.

All partners are sharing in the common infrastructure, environmental review, design and construction costs. That includes sharing the cost of transforming Monticello Avenue from a narrow private road into a tree-lined boulevard that will better serve the nearby middle school, the new library and sports fields, and the entire community.

In addition, the County is donating the new library site at no cost to the City, and plans to provide an opening day collection worth \$1 million (by comparison, the cost of opening day collections at recent new libraries has been less than \$200,000).

Environmental reviews for the comprehensive project are currently under way and expected to be available to the public later this spring.

Construction activities are expected to begin in late fall (2019); the existing library and administrative offices will be demolished prior to the start of construction.

The new library is anticipated to open in spring 2021.

The City has hired Swinerton Management & Consulting to oversee construction of the library, based in part the company's extensive record of successfully delivering similar public projects on schedule and budget.

Library FAQs

What is the plan for the new Pleasant Hill Community Library?

The new Pleasant Hill Library is being designed by the award-winning firm Bohlin Cywinski Jackson (BCJ), with extensive community input throughout the design process. The design documents are nearing completion. Construction activities are expected to begin in late 2019, with a grand opening in spring 2021.

The vision for the library is a place where people of all ages can explore, learn and connect. As visitors go through the entry doors, they will find an open central space to support a collection of 70,000 items, and spaces for reading, storytelling, accessing technology, collaborating and gathering. There will be a special “maker space” for hands-on creativity, and outdoor spaces for reading and play. A bookstore will showcase high-quality used books being sold by the Friends of the Pleasant Hill Library, and the Café Vibe will offer a comfortable area to bring a snack and chat with friends.

How will library services be provided during the interim?

A temporary library will be located at the Pleasant Hill Senior Center. While details are still being worked out, some highlights include:

- Approximately 10,000 items available for check-out at the temporary library, including DVDs and the popular “Lucky Day” collection of new books
- Access to computers
- Library staff on hand to assist with everything from book recommendations to online searches
- Storytimes or other programs at the Pleasant Hill Teen Center
- The ability to order materials from cclib.org and pick them up at the temporary Library
- A regular column in the Outlook by Patrick Remer (Senior Community Library Manager) with news about special community events and library happenings

In addition to the temporary library, library lovers are welcome to attend programs and check out materials at any of the 25 other branches throughout Contra Costa County. For details on other library locations and programs, visit cclib.org/locations.

The County owns the current library, but the City of Pleasant Hill will own the new library. Why?

Only six of the 26 Contra Costa County Library buildings are owned by the County, including the current Pleasant Hill. The remaining libraries are owned by the city or town in which they are located or leased from a school or private entity. The Contra Costa County Library partners with the cities and towns to fund operational costs. As part of the Oak Park Properties partnership, the County will transfer five acres of land to the City of Pleasant Hill to build the new library. The City is paying for construction of the new library.

Why is the current library closing before the new library is open?

The current library is closing so the property can be prepared for the future housing development that is one element of the overall Oak Park Properties project.

The plan was always to start construction activities for the new library and houses as soon as possible.

Originally, the houses were going to be built on five acres behind the library, and the sports fields/park were going to be built on the site of the existing library at a later point in time.

On further analysis, the project partners realized that the better configuration was to flip the sports fields/park with the homes, thus building the new neighborhood on the parcel where the current library sits.

Having the library and the sports fields next to each other:

- Creates a single civic space for the public to enjoy
- Allows additional preservation of the riparian habitat along the creek
- Provides the opportunity for shared parking

What about the Pleasant Hill Middle School students who currently go to the library after school?

Project partners are working with Pleasant Hill Middle School leaders to make sure parents are aware of the upcoming library closure.

The Teen Center at Pleasant Hill Park on Gregory has a shuttle bus from Pleasant Hill Middle School. While there is a nominal fee, those with financial needs may access the district's scholarship program for reduced fees.

The Teen Center is holding an open house on May 15 for interested parents. Check out the website to learn more: <https://www.pleasanthillrec.com/246/Teen-After-School-Program>

What will happen with the Friends of the Pleasant Hill Library?

The Friends of the Pleasant Hill Library is a valued partner, raising more than \$75,000 a year to pay for library programs and other library-related needs through their sales of gently used books. The City is working with the Friends to find a temporary location for their operations.

Park/Sports Fields FAQs

The Recreation & Park District is the lead agency for the new park/sports fields, which will be built on 5 acres adjacent to the new library. Initial park conceptual designs feature two baseball/softball fields with overlapping soccer fields, bocce courts and a creek side-walking trail.

New Homes (Oak Park Residential) FAQs

What is the plan for new homes?

The County is working with a team to secure land use approvals for 34 single-family homes to be built on the site of the existing library. If approved, the County will sell the land to an experienced home builder for future development.

The County and its development team have established a website to keep the public informed on the proposal. It can be found at <https://www.oakparkblvdresidential.com>.

Latest update 3/15/19 – added information about the Pleasant Hill Teen Center