# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Summary Information (includes project description)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Resources</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Quality</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biological Resources</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Resources</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geology &amp; Soils</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenhouse Gas Emissions</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazards &amp; Hazardous Materials</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydrology &amp; Water Quality</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Use &amp; Planning</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mineral Resources</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population and Housing</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Services</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Traffic</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities and Service Systems</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory Findings of Significance</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Sources Consulted</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROJECT SUMMARY INFORMATION

1. Project Title: Zoning Amendment for Public Libraries

2. Lead Agency/Project Sponsor: Planning and Development Department
City of Berkeley
2120 Milvia Street
Berkeley, CA 94704

3. Contact Person: Aaron Sage, AICP
Senior Planner
(510) 981-7425
asage@cityoberkeley.info

4. Project Location: The proposed amendment would apply to all existing Berkeley public libraries, as follows:

Central Library
2090 Kittredge Street and 2031 Bancroft Way
APNs: 057-2028-017-01, 057-2028-005-00

Claremont Branch Library
2940-2950 Benvenue Avenue
APNs: 052-1573-016-00, 052-1573-017-00

North Branch Library
1170 The Alameda
APN: 061-2605-035-00

South Branch Library
1901 Russell Street
APN: 053-1679-016-01

West Branch Library
1125 University Avenue
APN: 057-2085-011

5. General Plan Designation: Central: Downtown
Claremont: Medium Density Residential
North: Low Density Residential
South: Medium Density Residential
West: Avenue Commercial/Medium Density Residential
6. **Zoning:**

Central: C-2 (Central Commercial)
Claremont: R-2A (Medium Density Residential)
North: R-1 (Single-Family Residential)
South: R-2A (Medium Density Residential)
West: C-1 (General Commercial)/R-3 (Multiple Family Residential)

7. **Description of Project:**

The proposed project is an amendment to the City’s Zoning Ordinance (Berkeley Municipal Code Title 23) that would allow modification with a Use Permit of any zoning requirement applicable to a change, expansion, or reconstruction of an existing public library, where a Variance is currently required for most such modifications. The proposed amendment would not affect existing requirements for a Use Permit for any new library or for any change or expansion of an existing nonconforming library. The draft proposed amendment is as follows, and is subject to further review and modification by the Planning Commission and City Council:

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Title, any conforming or lawful nonconforming public library existing as of May 1, 2010 may be (1) changed, (2) expanded, or (3) demolished and a new public library constructed on the same site, subject to issuance of a Use Permit, unless such change, expansion or new library is otherwise allowed by this Title. The Board may modify any requirement of this Title applicable to such change, expansion or new library as part of the Use Permit.

The main purpose of the amendment is to facilitate the approval of improvements authorized under Measure FF, a bond measure approved by Berkeley voters in November 2008 to “renovate, expand, and make seismic and access improvements at four neighborhood branch libraries”. The amendment would also allow modification of zoning requirements applicable to future, as yet unknown, improvements that may be necessary. The amendment would not allow modification of zoning standards for any newly constructed building on a site other than the five currently existing library sites.

8. **Surrounding Land Uses and Environmental Setting:**

**Central Library:** The Central Library is located in Downtown Berkeley at the corner of Shattuck Avenue and Kittredge Street. The site is surrounded by multi-family residential and commercial uses. The site and surrounding area are urbanized, with no significant biological resources.

**Claremont Branch:** The Claremont Branch library is located at Ashby and Benvenue Avenues in the Elmwood neighborhood, a predominantly residential neighborhood with a small-scale commercial district. The site is adjoined by a dentist office and
single-family residences. The site and surrounding area are urbanized, with no significant biological resources.

**North Branch:** The North Branch library is located in a residential neighborhood in North Berkeley, at the corner of The Alameda and Hopkins Street. The site is surrounded by single-family residences. The site and surrounding area are urbanized, with no significant biological resources.

**South Branch:** The South Branch library is located in a residential neighborhood in South Berkeley, at the corner of Martin Luther King, Jr. Way and Russell Street. The site is adjoined by a religious assembly use (Buddhist temple) and a vacant lot with an approved permit for a parking lot for the temple. Residential uses and a City park are located across the street from the site. The site and surrounding area are urbanized, with no significant biological resources.

**West Branch:** The West Branch library is located on University Avenue, a major commercial thoroughfare, between San Pablo Avenue and Curtis Street. Commercial uses (retail and hotel) adjoin the site on University Avenue and multi-family residences adjoin the site to the north. A mixed-use building with multi-family residences and ground-floor commercial space is located across the street from the site. The site and surrounding area are urbanized, with no significant biological resources.

9. **Other public agencies whose approval is required:** None.

**DETERMINATION:** *(To be completed by Lead Agency)*
On the basis of this initial evaluation, I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

__________________________________________  _______________________
Signature                                      Date

__________________________________________  _______________________
Printed Name                                  For
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

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I. AESTHETICS -- Would the project:

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Discussion

a) Scenic Vistas: Although the City has not formally adopted a definition of "substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista" for the purposes of environmental review, the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance provide some guidance on this issue. General Plan Policy UD-31 states that "construction should avoid blocking significant views, especially ones toward the Bay, hills, and significant landmarks such as the Campanile, Golden Gate Bridge, and Alcatraz Island. Whenever possible, new buildings should enhance a vista or punctuate or clarify the urban pattern." Section 23F.04.010 of the Zoning Ordinance defines "view corridor" as "a significant view of the Berkeley Hills, San Francisco Bay, Mt. Tamalpais, or a significant landmark such as the Campanile, Golden Gate Bridge, and Alcatraz Island or any other significant vista that substantially enhances the value and enjoyment of real property."

The proposed amendment does not authorize any particular change in the physical environment, and therefore will not have any direct impact. The existing library sites are located in built-up, flatland areas and therefore additional development on these sites would be unlikely to block any scenic vista, particularly since proposed
actions pursuant to Measure FF are limited to improving or replacing, rather than substantially expanding, existing library structures. It is too speculative to assess the potential impacts of other future projects constructed pursuant to the amendment. Each future project would be subject to appropriate environmental review at the time a Use Permit is considered.

b) Scenic Highways: California’s Scenic Highway Program was established in 1963 to “add to the pleasure of the residents of this State,” and to encourage “the growth of the recreation and tourist industries upon which the economy of many areas of this State depend” (California Department of Transportation, 2001). In Alameda County, segments of Interstate 580 are designated by the State Department of Transportation (Caltrans) as California Scenic Highways, which requires the protection of scenic resources visible from the roadway. The existing library sites are not visible from Interstate 580, and are not located within a designated scenic highway or within a protected visual corridor. The City of Berkeley’s General Plan does not designate any scenic roadways. It is too speculative to assess the potential impacts of other future projects constructed pursuant to the amendment. Each future project would be subject to appropriate environmental review at the time a Use Permit is considered.

c) Visual Character/Quality: The proposed amendment does not authorize any particular change in the physical environment, and therefore will not have any direct impact. Projects proposed pursuant to Measure FF will be analyzed prior to Use Permit approval to determine if this impact would occur. However, it is likely these projects would improve the appearance of existing library sites by restoring existing structures and providing new landscaping and other site improvements. It is too speculative to assess the potential impacts of other future projects constructed pursuant to the amendment. Each future project would be subject to appropriate environmental review at the time a Use Permit is considered.

d) Lighting and Glare: The proposed amendment does not authorize any particular change in the physical environment, and therefore will not have any direct impact. Projects proposed pursuant to the amendment would be subject to a standard condition of approval that requires “all exterior lighting [to] be shielded and directed downward and away from property lines to prevent excessive glare beyond the subject property.” Projects proposed pursuant to the amendment would also be subject to design review, which typically includes a review of proposed materials to ensure they are not excessively reflective or create glare.
II. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES: In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. **Would the project:**

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use? □ □ □ ✗

b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract? □ □ □ ✗

c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use? □ □ □ ✗

Discussion

There are no agricultural resources in Berkeley.
III. **AIR QUALITY:** Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. **Would the project:**

- a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable Air Quality Attainment Plan? □ □ ☒ □
- b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation? □ □ ☒ □
- c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)? □ □ ☒ □
- d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? □ □ ☒ □
- e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people? □ □ ☒ □

**Discussion**

a-c) The San Francisco Bay Area occasionally violates State and federal standards for ozone, particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM$_{10}$) and less than 2.5 microns (PM$_{2.5}$). Ozone forms due to reactions of precursor chemicals, known as criteria pollutants, nitrous oxides (NO$_x$), reactive organic gases (ROGs), with oxygen and sunlight. Fine particulate matter, PM$_{10}$ and PM$_{2.5}$, and ozone precursors would be generated by diesel-powered construction equipment and by passenger vehicles associated with future library projects that may be approved pursuant to the amendment.
The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) is responsible for developing regional plans for ozone reduction. On-site operation of construction equipment is subject to BAAQMD Rules and Regulations and compliance with these ensures that the goals of regional air quality plans are not obstructed and that operation of construction equipment does not have a significant effect upon ozone formation or production of other pollutants.

Construction activity also produces dust which can add to the amount of airborne particulates. However, each future library project would be subject to the standard City of Berkeley controls for dust minimization. By definition, these would limit dust-related impacts to less than significant.

Asbestos removal from existing structures would be conducted in accordance with the procedures specified in Regulation 11, Rule 2 (Asbestos Demolition, Renovation and Manufacturing) of BAAQMD regulations, also reducing the impacts to less than significant.

Due to the relatively small size of existing library sites, on-road construction-related vehicles would not be numerous and would not have a significant effect upon air quality.

Since projects proposed pursuant to Measure FF are not intended to substantially expand existing library programs, operation of these projects would not differ significantly from operation of the existing libraries with respect to air pollutant emissions. Improved building insulation and heating and air conditioning (HVAC) systems would be expected to result in fewer emissions. As the patronage of the library and the number of library employees is not anticipated to increase as a result of these projects, there would be no additional passenger vehicle trips. This issue would be analyzed prior to Use Permit approval for any specific project to determine if this impact would occur. It is too speculative to assess the potential impacts of future projects constructed pursuant to the amendment. Each future project would be subject to appropriate environmental review at the time a Use Permit is considered.

d) Dust control measures required as standard conditions of approval for each project constructed pursuant to the proposed amendment, and adherence to BAAQMD Rules and Regulations to reduce construction dust and diesel particulate emissions, would be expected to minimize the exposure by sensitive receptors to acceptable levels.

e) Libraries do not generate objectionable odors, nor would construction activities.
### IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:

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<th>No Impact</th>
<th>Incorporated Impact</th>
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<td>a)</td>
<td>Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?</td>
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<td>b)</td>
<td>Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?</td>
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<td>c)</td>
<td>Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<td>d)</td>
<td>Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?</td>
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<td>☐</td>
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<td>e)</td>
<td>Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?</td>
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f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

Discussion

All of the existing library sites are located in urbanized settings with no significant biological resources on site.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?

Discussion

a-b) Cultural/Archaeological Resources: Although several of the existing libraries are designated or potential historical resources, the proposed amendment does not directly authorize any physical changes to these structures, and therefore will not
have any direct impact. Projects proposed pursuant to Measure FF will be analyzed prior to Use Permit approval to determine if this impact would occur.

c-d) **Paleontological Resources/Unique Geologic Features/Human Remains:** Library projects are unlikely to involve substantial excavation (such as for an underground parking area), and therefore are unlikely to disturb paleontological resources or unique geologic features. Four of the existing library sites have been in use as libraries since the 1930s or earlier. Prior to its construction in the early 1960s, the South Branch library was developed as a church, dating to the early 1900s. Therefore, the likelihood of human remains being encountered as these sites is extremely low.

### VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS -- Would the project:

a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.

b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

c) Be located on geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable
as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?

\[ \square \quad \square \quad \square \quad \square \]

d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?

\[ \square \quad \square \quad \square \quad \square \]

e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?

\[ \square \quad \square \quad \square \quad \square \]

Discussion

None of the existing library sites are located within the Alquist Priolo Earthquake Fault Rupture Zone, or within the potential liquefaction or landslide areas designated by the California Geological Survey. The existing library sites are all relatively flat and most are almost entirely covered with buildings or other impervious surfaces, limiting the potential for erosion impacts. Other soil stability issues would be addressed through normal building permit review procedures, which require a soils report for new buildings and major additions. Sewers are available throughout the City.

VII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:

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<td>a) Generate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?</td>
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<td>b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs?</td>
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Discussion

a) **Greenhouse Gases:** Gases that interfere with the balance of the sun’s radiation on the earth (the so-called greenhouse gases, or GHGs) are dominated by carbon dioxide. Projects constructed pursuant to the proposed amendment would
generate carbon dioxide from gasoline/diesel and electricity use during project demolition/construction and operation. However, the City of Berkeley requires that all current City-sponsored projects achieve a minimum of LEED silver standard that describes the efficiency of their building energy use, among other factors. Furthermore, the proposed amendment and the Measure FF projects are not intended to substantially expand existing libraries, but rather to facilitate improvements to existing structures including energy efficiency. Therefore, it is expected that projects constructed pursuant to the proposed amendment would use less energy for heating and cooling than the existing building. As the Measure FF projects are not anticipated to have more patrons or more library employees than the existing library, there would not be an increase in operational GHG from passenger vehicles as a result of the projects.

Demolition/construction activity will require the use of heavy equipment that produces GHGs. New construction materials used in each project also result in the production of GHGs during their manufacture. Draft significance criteria issued by the BAAQMD in October 2009 do not include recommended values for construction-related GHG emissions by which the project could be judged. As projects constructed pursuant to the proposed amendment are expected to be relatively small, one-story library structures, the expected energy and GHG emissions savings from operation of the projects would probably surpass the GHG emissions from construction after a few years. The project would therefore have a less-than-significant impact on GHG emissions.

b) Climate Action Plan: The City of Berkeley adopted a Climate Action Plan (CAP) on June 2, 2009. The proposed amendment would encourage implementation of the CAP by facilitating improvements to the existing libraries’ energy efficiency, and by re-using existing library sites which are located on major transportation corridors in or near existing neighborhood activity centers, thereby encouraging walking, biking and transit to access the sites. Because projects constructed pursuant to the amendment would not likely provide additional vehicle parking, they would discourage automobile use. Such projects would therefore be consistent with adopted plans, policies and regulations.

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1 Information about the proposed BAAQMD CEQA thresholds can be found online at: http://www.baaqmd.gov/Divisions/Planning-and-Research/CEQA-GUIDELINES.aspx
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**VIII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

-- Would the project:

a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials? 

b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?  

h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?

Discussion

a) **Construction Phase.** No projects that may be considered under the proposed amendment would involve the routine use and transport of hazardous materials or petroleum products. In the short-term, construction activities would require the use of certain materials such as fuels, oils, solvents, and glues that in large quantities could pose a potential hazard to the public or environment if improperly used or inadvertently released. Inadvertent release of large quantities of these materials into the environment could also adversely impact soil, surface waters, or groundwater quality. However, the on-site storage, or disposal of large (exceeding the reportable quantity, which is typically 25 gallons or more) quantities of potentially hazardous materials is not required for a construction project of the anticipated size and type.

Considering the quantities of hazardous materials required for the projects, release to the environment would only impact a relatively small and localized area for a short period of time and therefore, the impact would remain less than significant. The applicant or the applicant’s subcontractor would be responsible for adequate clean-up and disposal of affected media. If large spills of hazardous materials occurred on the project site, the applicant or its subcontractor would be responsible under State law to report such a spill to the appropriate agencies and clean-up the spill to acceptable levels. The use of best management practices typically implemented as part of construction would minimize the potential negative effects to groundwater and soils. These could include the following:

- Follow manufacturer’s recommendations on use, storage, and disposal of chemical products used in construction;
- Avoid overtopping construction equipment fuel gas tanks;
- During routine maintenance of construction equipment, properly contain and remove grease and oils;
- Properly dispose of discarded containers of fuels and other chemicals.
Operational Impacts. Libraries would use small quantities of household and commercial quantities of substances that, if not properly stored or used, could be considered hazardous to human health or the environment. These chemicals would include familiar materials such as toners, paints and thinners, lubricants, kitchen and restroom cleaners, and other maintenance materials. These common consumer products would be used for the same purposes as in any residential or neighborhood commercial use. Library maintenance staff would dispose these substances and the spent containers through household hazardous waste centers or through standard refuse collection. Considering the types, quantities, and use of commercially available household chemicals, the proposed project would not result in an adverse effect on the environment with respect to the use, storage, or disposal of hazardous substances and therefore the impact would remain less than significant.

b) Four of the existing library sites have been in use as libraries since the 1930s or earlier. Prior to its construction in the early 1960s, the South Branch library was developed as a church, dating to the early 1900s. Therefore, the likelihood of soil or groundwater contamination due to prior uses involving hazardous materials on these sites is extremely low. In addition, library projects are unlikely to involve substantial excavation (such as for an underground parking area), and therefore are unlikely to release any contaminants that may have traveled underground from nearby sites. In any case, a full review will be conducted prior to approval of any specific projects to determine if these impacts would occur.

c) As discussed above, libraries would not emit or handle any hazardous materials in sufficiently large quantities to pose a significant hazard to any nearby schools.

d) None of the existing library sites is listed on the State of California Hazardous Waste and Substances List (Cortese List) and therefore, projects on these sites would not represent a significant hazard to the public or the environment.

e,f) No properties in Berkeley are located within an airport land use plan, within two miles of a public airport or public-use airport, or within the vicinity of a private airstrip.

g) Projects constructed pursuant to the proposed amendment would not alter any existing roadways, and would be subject to standard review procedures to ensure that construction activities do not restrict emergency access, and therefore such projects would not obstruct or interfere with established emergency access and evacuation routes or interfere with other adopted emergency response plans during construction or during project operations.

h) For a discussion of fire protection services, see Section XIII. Public Services, below. According to the Berkeley General Plan, Berkeley “faces a significant wildland fire danger along its hillsides where the wildland and residential areas
According to Figure 14, *Hazardous Hill Area, Fire Station Locations and Evacuation Routes* in the Berkeley General Plan, none of the existing library sites are located within the Hill Fire Hazard Area. Therefore, there is no risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires at the proposed project.

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**IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY -- Would the project:**

a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?

b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?

c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion of siltation on- or off-site?

d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?

e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or...
planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?  

f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?

g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?

h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?

i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?

j) Inundation of seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?

Discussion

a, c-f) Projects constructed pursuant to the proposed amendment would be required to comply with standard conditions that require covering of loose soils and other materials that might affect stormwater quality. More specific analysis of stormwater quality issues would be conducted prior to approval of any specific project.

b) The East Bay Plain (DWR Groundwater Basin No. 2-9.01) is an important and beneficial groundwater basin underlying the East Bay, and extending from Richmond to Hayward. The basin is identified for use as a municipal, industrial, and agricultural water supply. Depth to groundwater varies but is generally more than ten feet below ground surface. The East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) provides municipal water supply in the City of Berkeley. Because groundwater would not be used to supply water for any projects constructed pursuant to the proposed amendment, nor would such projects substantially change groundwater infiltration rates due to the fact that the existing library sites are relatively small and/or are already substantially covered with impervious surfaces, the project would have no impact on the aquifer volume or groundwater table level.
g,h) The existing library sites do not lie within the 100-year or 500-year flood plain as determined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood hazard mapping. Within the City of Berkeley, the FEMA 100-year flood plain establishes the base flood elevation for new construction. The City of Berkeley only requires site planning and drainage design for new construction proposed to be located within the 100-year flood plain.

i) There are no impounded water bodies upstream from any of the existing library sites that would subject the library sites to significant flooding in the event of rupture. Therefore, no loss resulting from failure of a dam is expected. In addition, all of the sites are located above sea level and are not subject to loss from failure of a levee.

j) Inundation of seiche or tsunami is unlikely at any of the existing library sites. Wave run-up from tsunami in the San Francisco Bay is expected to range between 0 and 20 feet, and the library sites are all located at least 0.9 miles from the San Francisco Bay. There are no water bodies upstream from the project sites (e.g., reservoirs, ponds, canals, etc.) that might experience flood waves.

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X. LAND USE AND PLANNING -- Would the project:

a) Physically divide an established community?

   □ □ □ X

b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

   □ □ X □

c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?

   □ □ □ X
Discussion

a) Projects constructed pursuant to the proposed amendment would be limited to their existing sites and therefore would not divide any established communities.

b) Projects constructed pursuant to the proposed amendment may include modification of certain zoning regulations. However, this practice is consistent with most major development projects in Berkeley, and the zoning regulations in question were not adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. The Zoning Adjustments Board would have adequate authority through the Use Permit process (e.g., finding of no detriment, conditions of approval) to ensure that requested modifications do not adversely impact the environment.

c) The existing library sites are located in urbanized areas, are not part of a riparian habitat or other natural community, or a federally protected wetland.

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XI. MINERAL RESOURCES -- Would the project:

a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan? ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒

Discussion

No mineral resources are identified within or around the existing library sites by either the Alameda County General Plan or the City of Berkeley’s General Plan.
XII. NOISE -- Would the project result in:

a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies? □ □ ☒ □

b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels? □ □ ☒ □

c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project? □ □ ☒ □

d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project? □ □ ☒ □

e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport of public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels? □ □ ☐ ☒

f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels? □ □ ☐ ☒

Discussion

a-d) The City of Berkeley Noise Ordinance regulates the allowable hours for construction and demolition work and has guidelines for maximum allowable construction-related noise levels. Specifically, the Noise Ordinance restricts
construction to between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on weekdays, and 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on weekends or holidays, unless a variance is secured from the Environmental Health Division. As the branch library sites are located next to existing residential properties and sensitive receptors, more restrictive hours may be imposed on future library projects, using the standard Use Permit condition which allows 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Saturdays.

Also, where technically and economically feasible, the noise ordinance requires that construction activities be conducted in such a manner that the maximum noise levels at affected properties will not exceed the maximum allowable noise levels set forth in the ordinance. Depending on the site and its surrounding zoning, the applicable standards would be from 75 to 85 dBA on weekdays, and 60 to 70 dBA on weekends and legal holidays, at residential properties surrounding the project site. In addition to these requirements, several standard conditions would be applied, such as minimizing noise levels to the degree feasible through best management practices, notifying neighbors in advance of construction, and providing a noise complaint line. The noise ordinance and standard conditions for noise control would prevent construction noise from any projects implemented pursuant to the proposed amendment from causing significant impacts.

Libraries improved or replaced under the proposed amendment are expected to have the same uses and number of patrons as the existing libraries. Noise levels would therefore not change from existing project operation and there would be no permanent operational impacts.

e-f) No properties in Berkeley are located within an airport land use plan, within two miles of a public airport or public-use airport, or within the vicinity of a private airstrip.
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?  

Marked: ☒

b) Displace substantial numbers of people necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?  

Marked: ☒

Discussion

Projects constructed pursuant to this amendment would be limited to libraries and would not affect the residential population.

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XIV. PUBLIC SERVICES --

a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

- Fire protection?  
  Marked: ☒

- Police protection?  
  Marked: ☒

- Schools?  
  Marked: ☒

- Parks?  
  Marked: ☒

- Other public facilities?  
  Marked: ☒

Discussion

The proposed amendment is intended to facilitate improvements to existing library sites, and projects proposed pursuant to Measure FF are limited to improving or replacing, rather than substantially expanding, existing library structures. Therefore, the amendment would not substantially increase library patronage or demand for fire and
police services. Furthermore, the amendment does not affect residential population and therefore would not affect demand for schools and parks.

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XV. RECREATION --

a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment? ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐

Discussion

a) The amendment does not affect residential population and therefore would not affect demand for parks.

b) Projects constructed pursuant to the proposed amendment would not include recreational facilities.
XVI. TRANSPORTATION / TRAFFIC -- Would the project:

a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume-to-capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?

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b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?

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c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?

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d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

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e) Result in inadequate emergency access?

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f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?

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g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?

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**Discussion**

a-b) The proposed amendment is intended to facilitate improvements to existing library sites, and projects proposed pursuant to Measure FF are limited to improving or replacing, rather than substantially expanding, existing library structures. Therefore, it is not expected that projects constructed pursuant to the proposed amendment would substantially increase traffic congestion. Individual projects would be reviewed pursuant to the Use Permit process to ensure that substantial vehicle trips are not added, and if so, further analysis and possible mitigations would be required. It is too speculative to assess the potential impacts of other future projects constructed pursuant to the amendment. Each future project would be subject to appropriate environmental review at the time a Use Permit is considered.

c) There would be no change to air traffic patterns associated with the project.

d) Given the limited scope of the proposed amendment, projects constructed pursuant to the amendment would not likely alter existing roadways or intersections, except perhaps to improve safety or efficiency. Specific site plans and improvements would be evaluated as part of the Use Permit process.

e) As with most major projects in Berkeley, vehicle access around the perimeter of the site on the existing surface streets would be preserved with temporary restrictions during the construction period. However, at all times adequate emergency access would be provided.

f) The Zoning Ordinance currently allows expansions of existing libraries in commercial districts to request a reduction of parking requirements with an Administrative Use Permit; the proposed amendment would not affect these existing provisions. The proposed amendment allows library projects in residential districts, or new library buildings in commercial buildings, to request a reduction of parking requirements with a Use Permit where a Variance would currently be required for such projects. Berkeley’s Zoning Ordinance currently allows such reductions for mixed use buildings, additions to existing buildings and changes of use in commercial districts, and office uses in the R-4 District.

Approval of such reductions is often granted based on the availability of on-street parking, transit service, bicycle accessibility, and location within a dense, walkable neighborhood. The Measure FF projects may require parking reductions because they are likely to involve additional floor area to meet accessibility requirements and provide adequate staff work areas, but they are located on sites too constrained to provide additional parking. However, the intent of these projects is not to expand library programs, services or collections, and therefore actual parking demand is not expected to substantially increase. In the event that parking demand does substantially increase, the project could result in inadequate parking
supply in the project area during periods of peak parking demand. However, lack of parking is not an environmental impact in and of itself. In this case, additional analysis would have to be conducted prior to approval of each subsequent project. It is too speculative to assess the potential impacts of other future projects constructed pursuant to the amendment. Each future project would be subject to appropriate environmental review at the time a Use Permit is considered.

g) Projects constructed pursuant to the proposed amendment would occur at existing sites and would not substantially alter existing roadways or bus stops, and therefore would not interfere with bus access. Bicycle and pedestrian access would be maintained to these sites using existing routes. City-sponsored projects must meet a minimum LEED rating of silver, and all major projects are reviewed interdepartmentally to ensure consistency with appropriate policies, including alternative transportation. This issue is also considered during the Use Permit process. Therefore, it can reasonably be expected that these projects would provide adequate bike parking and would not interfere with bus access or other policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation.

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XVII. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS --
Would the project:

a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board? ☑ ☑ ☑ ☐

b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects? ☑ ☑ ☑ ☐

c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects? ☑ ☑ ☑ ☐

d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing
entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed? □ □ □ □
ed) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project’s projected demand in addition to the provider’s existing commitments? □ □ □ □
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project’s solid waste disposal needs? □ □ □ □
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste? □ □ □ □

Discussion

The proposed amendment is intended to facilitate improvements to existing library sites, and projects proposed pursuant to Measure FF are limited to improving or replacing, rather than substantially expanding, existing library structures. Sites are fully developed with buildings and impervious surfaces, with some landscaping that would be retained, replaced, or modified. LEED Silver and City standards require careful stormwater handling. Therefore, it is not expected that the amendment would generate an increase in stormwater runoff such that new treatment facilities would be required. In addition, uses and occupancy are anticipated to be essentially the same as existing sites. As such the water consumption, wastewater generation, and solid waste generation would essentially remain the same as present.

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XVIII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife
population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory? □ □ ☒ □

b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulative considerable? (“Cumulative considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)? □ □ ☒ □

c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly? □ □ ☒ □

Discussion

a) All of the existing library sites are located in urbanized settings with no significant biological resources on site. Historical resource impacts would be evaluated as part of site-specific CEQA analysis prior to approval of specific projects.

b) Given that the scope of the proposed amendment is focused on existing libraries, projects constructed pursuant to the amendment would not result in significantly considerable cumulative effects above and beyond what was already analyzed within the City of Berkeley General Plan EIR at full build out.

c) The project will not result in any potential environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings. The proposed project does not entail the use, storage or handling of any significant amounts of hazardous substances.

LIST OF SOURCES CONSULTED


California Geological Survey (CGS, formerly California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology), *Special Studies Zone Map, Oakland West Quadrangle*, January 1, 1982.


