



ALAMEDA COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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Agenda Item 7 February 9, 2023

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January 23, 2023

Honorable Board of Supervisors
Administration Building
1221 Oak Street, Suite 536
Oakland, California 94612

Dear Board Members:

**SUBJECT: POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND DISPOSITION OF
20055 REDWOOD ROAD, CASTRO VALLEY (OLD
CASTRO VALLEY LIBRARY)**

RECOMMENDATION:
Provide direction on the disposition and development of the Old Castro Valley Library.

DISCUSSION/SUMMARY:

On March 10, 2020, the General Services Agency made recommendations to the Board of Supervisors about the future disposition of the former Castro Valley Library site. Located at 20055 Redwood Road, the library building became vacant when the new Castro Valley Library opened in October of 2009, nearby at 3600 Norbridge Ave. The Board directed staff to pursue use of the property for the development of veterans' affordable housing and related uses and transferred responsibility from the General Services Agency to the Community Development Agency (CDA) for this purpose.

To assess the old Castro Valley Library as a site for both affordable veterans housing and a veterans' service space, CDA staff engaged expert firms to do the following, in partnership with a group of local veterans:

- Engaged an architecture firm to assess the site to see if a mixed-use project would fit on the site and created several massing studies to look at options
- Engaged an economics firm to see if the mixed-use reuse of the site was feasible
- Engaged a historic architecture firm to prepare a Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE) of the site

The massing studies showed that the site can accommodate a mixed-use project, but it would be very dense and tall. Using the architectural massing studies, our economic consultant reached out to affordable housing developers to gauge interest in the site.

Some affordable housing developers expressed interest in responding to a County Request for Proposals. Lastly, the historic architecture firm completed a 33-page Historic Resource Evaluation which found that the old library building "...retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance", making it eligible for the California Historic Register. For that reason, it is considered a historical resource under CEQA, and, as such, any plan to demolish the building would trigger the need to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to address the impact, as this would potentially cause a substantial adverse change to a historical resource. The Board of Supervisors would need to consider certification of an environmental impact report, adoption of a mitigation monitoring and reporting program, and potentially a statement of overriding considerations before approving demolition of the building and a new project for affordable veterans housing and services.

CDA staff shared the results of each of these studies with the local veterans' group and, on November 4th, the historic consultant presented the Historic Resources Evaluation to the Parks, Recreation and Historic Commission.

Surplus Lands Act

To advance the Board of Supervisors direction, a Surplus Lands Act exemption would allow the Board to designate the property as "surplus exempt". Using this exemption, the Board of Supervisors can direct CDA to conduct a Request for Proposal (RFP) process for affordable veterans housing and veterans' services. A successful RFP process would lead to a Board approved agreement with an affordable housing developer for a project at the site.

CEQA and Land Use Considerations

The Historic Resource Evaluation concluded that any option other than preservation of the building would require the preparation of an EIR. A completed EIR would be required at the time the Board of Supervisors considered a Disposition and Development Agreement with an affordable housing developer. The EIR responsibility and cost would typically be placed on the affordable housing developer.

The property is currently zoned for "public facilities". Re-use of the property for residential units would trigger a rezoning and General Plan Amendment.

Castro Valley Veterans Group

CDA had five meetings with the Castro Valley Veterans group that included: Marc Crawford, Mike Martin, John McPartland, Keisuke Warner, Chuck Moore, and Bob Swanson. The group was briefed during every step of the analysis. The group would still prefer having use of the existing building for veterans' services.

Community Input

A project update was presented to the Castro Valley MAC on February 22, 2022. The Castro Valley MAC's consensus was to keep the existing Castro Valley Library building for use as a Veteran's services center. Similar comments were received at the Unincorporated Services Committee meeting on April 27, 2022. On July 13, 2022, the Transportation & Planning Committee recommended retaining the building and property for a future County or Veterans use and not pursue an affordable housing project at this site.

Recommendation

- 1) Direct CDA to take the necessary steps to designate the property as “surplus exempt” under the Surplus Lands Act.
- 2) Direct CDA to issue a Request for Proposals for Veteran’s affordable housing that includes 7,400 square feet of ground floor space for Veteran’s services.

Alternatives

- 1) Retain the Old Castro Valley Library building for a County or Veterans use.
- 2) Eliminate a development hurdle by identifying County funding to conduct EIR and make land use changes prior to any RFP process.
- 3) Postpone any RFP process until a local source of funds can be identified to provide affordable housing funding for the project. There currently are no Measure A-1 housing funds available for this project.

FINANCING:

Issuance of an RFP will result in no Net County Cost.

VISION 2026 GOAL:

The proposed disposition and development of the Old Castro Valley Library meets the 10X Goal of **Eliminating Homelessness** in support of our shared visions of **Safe & Livable Communities** and **Thriving & Resilient Population**.

Very truly yours,

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Sandra Rivera, Director
Community Development Agency

cc: Susan S. Muranishi, County Administrator
Donna R. Ziegler, County Counsel
Melissa Wilk, Auditor-Controller
Laura Lloyd, County Administrator’s Office
Andrea Weddle, Office of the County Counsel
Lucy Romo, Community Development Agency