

The New Stewart-Lakewood Library

A New Cultural Information Library Center

Design:

A design that incorporates the use of a rotunda and columns in the design to disguise the handicap access without the use of a long winding route for seniors/disabled because this is so tiresome.

A design that uses new features rather than the usual pointed spire which we seem to have gotten stuck for building design. Something fresh but harkens back to building style to last through the next 50 to 100 years.

Building of the new Stewart-Lakewood Library should focus on using LEEDS certified type methodologies and incorporate energy efficiency and alternative forms of energy available to reduce operating costs. Methodologies should include such things as solar energy for lighting and other uses, thermal heating systems, recycling and the use of environmentally sustainable materials.

Parking areas should be disguised with the use of greenery and shrubbery. Design should incorporate drop-off or “Kiss-Ride” areas. The design should incorporate heavy use by daycare center vans, senior center vans, school buses dropping off, and MARTA Para-Transit Vans.

Exterior Outdoor Space:

A use of green space that allows for community gardens, flowers, shrubbery and flower blooming trees that provide a shaded setting for use by staff and the public—children seating, teens, seniors disabled, to be incorporated in outdoor seating areas. A walking area that encourages people to move and walk around as well.

An outdoor pavilion with a stage area for library branch staff and community to use for outdoor activities such as Friends of Library book sales, children reading programs, author readings, gardening programs, wellness activities, chamber music series, etc.

The inclusion of various pieces of public art made from bronze, stone and various textures should be incorporated at this site to teach our youth and general population about art, and it helps to promote art education and the development of new artists which is a part of economic development. The inclusion of a water feature as part of the artistic features to create a calming sensation is vital.

Signage boards around the exterior space that gives details on the history of the branch library and Fulton County and its early settlers, pioneers. The site being nominated is across the street from The Historic Jeremiah S. Gilbert House at Avery Park, a city of Atlanta Cultural Center and the home of the children of two of Fulton County's founding families—the Gilbert Family and the Perkerson family.

Additional Building Space:

The library should make use of available land space to incorporate building of add-on space for leasing out to such entities as Dunkin Donuts or other like entities that allows for revenue generation to assist branch with costs.

LIBRARY SITE USAGE: Community Needs

- Δ More Services for Students, Personal Learners, and Preschool Children
- Δ Teen Center and Teen Services
- Δ Larger Young Adult Area and Services
- Δ Increased Services Senior Citizen Population and Disable Population
- Δ Ability to Respond to the Diverse Needs of a Population:
 - Racially, Culturally & Ethnically
- Δ Job Search Centers
- Δ Literacy Education and GED Center
- Δ Increased Selection of Audio Books, E-Books and Digital Media
- Δ Science Center
- Δ Music Center and Greater Variety of Selections
- Δ Spirituality/Religious Education Areas
- Δ Health & Wellness Center
- Δ Genealogy Section with Microfiche/Microfilm Readers and Printers
- Δ Display Area For Art Exhibitions
- Δ Computers & Computer Education Center
- Δ Language Arts Center For Learning Languages
- Δ Professional Display Holders For Placement of Community Information
- Δ “For Sale” Area for Friends of Library Group to Sell Items
- Δ Docking Stations For Lap Top Computers
- Δ Electric Re-Charging Stations For Electric Scooters/Wheelchairs and Cell Phones
- Δ Staff Break Room & Meeting Areas
- Δ Enough Space For Staff Work Areas
- Δ Front Display Windows
- Δ Front Waiting Section For Library Patrons Being Picked Up With Phone

March 23, 2011

Mr. John Szabo, Director
Atlanta-Fulton Public Library Board of Trustees

Fulton County Board of Commissioners
Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System
One Margaret Mitchell Square
Atlanta, GA 30303

**RE: SITE NOMINATION FOR NEW STEWART-LAKEWOOD LIBRARY
-CORNER OF METROPOLITAN PARKWAY & AVERY ROAD, SW /
PERKERSON NEIGHBORHOOD
-AT THE HISTORIC JEREMIAH S. GILBERT HOUSE AT AVERY PARK**

I am writing to nominate a site for the new Stewart-Lakewood Library. First, I would like to thank you for the time you spent in giving us information and signage to put out as well as electronic material to distribute to get the Library Bond Referendum passed to build new libraries and update older libraries.

In speaking with other neighbors and business leaders, I asked them how they felt about having the site at the corner of Metropolitan Parkway and Avery Road, across from the new condominiums and across the street from the park space on the side and behind the Historic Jeremiah S. Gilbert House as the new location for the new library. So far, everyone has stated that they like this site because they can see it being highly visible because of all the traffic that passes this location. This location is between Cleveland Avenue and Lakewood Avenue which has access to Highway 166 (I-285) and Cleveland Avenue which has approximately 10 highway and interstate entrances and exits.

Therefore, we support the Metropolitan Parkway/Avery Road site for the new Stewart-Lakewood Library with several reasons outlined below:

-The site is roughly close to 9 acres because it goes from the corner on down to the blue building, therefore, it is a large enough tract to build upon, and the owner is willing to make some concessions to help the library system in gaining the site.

-Transit (see auto info below) at the Metropolitan Parkway and Avery Road site includes MARTA Bus #95 Metropolitan Parkway which goes all the way down to Hapeville, Georgia. The other bus route on the back side of the site is MARTA Bus #193 Sylvan Hills which comes out of the Oakland City Train Station and goes down Sylvan Road, turns onto Springdale Road and goes down to Cleveland Avenue and goes to the East Point Train Station. This site would give additional library coverage to the cities of Hapeville and East Point.

-The site can be used as an economic development engine because the library system can use this as a catalyst to help the neighborhood gain a nice, franchise sit-down restaurant and coffee shop. Just think what would happen with a library that has revenue coming in to help pay for programs and some of the other resources required to help with children programs, literacy and educational programs, special programs, etc. There is so much that can be done. This would serve as a

catalyst to jump-start another piece of development in that part of the Perkerson neighborhood. People from Pryor Road, Sylvan Hills, Capitol View and Capitol View Manor, and Oakland City as well as the business people who travel to the area would have more opportunity to become a part of the library, therefore bringing more money into an under-served economic area.

-The library would have a connection to an historic site and park space at the Historic Jeremiah S. Gilbert House rather than being isolated in a spot such as that of the old Club Nicky's location. In this manner, the library can become a destination where people can go to sit in park space that we are working on finding more resources outside of the City of Atlanta government to build upon for the public to use. It would be so wonderful for children to have access to the library and access to park space close by in programming as well. Think of children coming from the schools for field trips to the library where they can also learn about their community's/county's history.

-The terrain of the site at Metropolitan Parkway and Avery Road is far better for building than the amount of money it would cost to pay for terrain improvements at the Old Club Nicky's site which is a very hilly, kudzu covered terrain on the back and side. This will make it costly, but it still cannot take away the isolation atmosphere because of the ravine on the back side where all the kudzu is located.

-The Metropolitan Parkway and Avery Road site is located in the Perkerson neighborhood which sits between a lot of communities but which has no real public buildings in the neighborhood because the Jeremiah S. Gilbert House (owned by the City of Atlanta & operated by the Bureau of Cultural Affairs) is also a rental facility. Also, we have no schools located directly in the community either so we have no formal public owned community meeting room space. The schools are located just outside of our neighborhood boundaries with Perkerson Elementary School and Emma Hutchinson Elementary School being the closest.

-The Capitol View Church site is in the middle of single-family residential homes that face out onto Metropolitan Parkway. However, the site is too small and the width of the streets make it difficult to accommodate the high volume of ongoing traffic that would use the site such as daycare center vans, senior facilities' vans, MARTA Para-Transit vehicles, and other vehicles which would have to pass directly in front and around single-family homes. The hours of the library would mean more lighting for night time use which would disturb homes of this type.

-The old Adair Park School Building site is in the middle of single-family residential homes that face out onto Metropolitan Parkway. However, the site is too small and the width of the streets make it difficult to accommodate the high volume of ongoing traffic that would use the site such as daycare center vans, senior facilities' vans, MARTA Para-Transit vehicles, and other vehicles which would have to pass directly in front and around single-family homes. The hours of the library would mean more lighting for night time use which would disturb homes of this type.

-Sylvan Road and Dill Avenue site is still too small, and it's not on a major street. Our goal in building the new library should be to accommodate the heavy transit usage in this area and the large number of seniors who can't drive. Also, this area would require parceling so many parcels of land that require environmental clean-up which leaves a problem since the existing Stewart-Lakewood Library has severe roof problems and flooding problems.

-The old Club Nicky's site really would be placing another public resource in an area that has a lot of public resources including the proposed new library for Atlanta Technical College and Atlanta Metropolitan College (there was over \$2 million already allocated by the State for building a new library...Atlanta Technical College and Atlanta Metropolitan College as well as Perkerson Park Recreation Center and park space, Capitol View Elementary School, Perkerson Elementary School,

Sylvan Hills Middle School, etc. Also, this site is in an area that is also part of the Beltline TAD and Metropolitan Parkway TAD, etc. while the Metropolitan Parkway and Avery Road site is only in the Metropolitan Parkway TAD in the Perkerson neighborhood which has relied heavily on private investment to make improvements and add businesses to the neighborhood. We should respect the needs of the colleges to be able to expand and development, and they will need more space.

-The Perkerson neighborhood would also allow the library greater access for the senior highrises in the area to begin to be engaged with the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System. It would allow the system to plan for them in a regular library system and not separate from everyone as people with visual disabilities currently have to do if they want to use the special equipment for people with visual challenges. There are other seniors on the other side of Springdale Road when you cross Cleveland Avenue. Also, this would help a lot of disabled citizens to have greater access.

-Lots of stable homes surround the Metropolitan Parkway and Avery Road site. The neighborhood has traditional style ranch homes that have been there with some neighbors having lived there for 55 years, 30 years, etc. This says a lot about the stability of the neighborhood, and it would be great having a lot of people gain walking access to the library because of the work we will be doing to market the new City-Central Condominiums and building upon our public resources. We have the Kroger Citi-Center Shopping Complex in our neighborhood which generates a tremendous amount of business. There are various businesses and medical complexes and others who we are working with to try to redevelop old vacant lots. We want the new Stewart-Lakewood Library!

The above are just some of the reasons that the Perkerson neighborhood would like to have the new Stewart-Lakewood Library located at Metropolitan Parkway and Avery Road. It is a great neighborhood with an awesome record of moving problems because the neighbors have a concept of standing up for themselves. We have worked to remove strip clubs, old messed up motels, etc. and our neighbors would like to have the opportunity to have something in their neighborhood that can help to showcase their belief in the importance of education and literacy to the community.

Thank you for the time you have taken to read this communication and to follow up on the ideas and suggestions that I listened to from neighbors before contacting you. The neighbors just wanted me to put forth a suggestion for our new Stewart-Lakewood Library to make it a showcase of environmental and cultural highlights for the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System.

PEACEFULLY AND RESPECTFULLY YOURS!

Neighbors and Members of the Perkerson Neighborhood

Dr. Carl Hendrickson, PCA Chair

Mr. Ruben Burney, PCA Vice-Chair

Flora M. Tommie, PCA Secretary

*PCA/Perkerson Civic Association

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINISM:

The new Stewart-Lakewood Library should be built at the Metropolitan Parkway & Avery Road site when you look at the methods that other major cities have used in building up a cultural learning center area; that method has relied heavily on the principle of what we call “Environmental Determinism.” It’s when the building of public libraries has been a way to start the concept of cultural centers based upon our responses to the physical environment surrounding us. It’s what we see when we look at placement of libraries around park sites and existing cultural locations such as the Jeremiah S. Gilbert House and Avery Park. It is the physical stimuli that we get in surrounded by peaceful green space of 11.3 acres of forests made of pine trees, Southern Red Oak Trees, and a historic house built around approximately 1865. It’s what we see in cities planning their new libraries: areas like Rochester, New York; Chicago & Rockford, Illinois Public Library by the Jefferson Street Bridge...they are making use of their park space and historic space to create a revitalization of the urban areas as outlined below in the Parks and Libraries in Partnership white paper below in a paper from “Projects For Public Spaces.”

<http://www.pps.org/topics/pubpriv/whybuild/schull>

Parks and Libraries in Partnership

By Diantha D. Schull, Executive Director, [Libraries for the Future](#)

From *Great Parks/Great Cities: Seattle, 1998*,

a publication on an Urban Parks Institute regional workshop.

Diantha Schull is Executive Director of Libraries for the Future, a national organization that represents the users of America's public libraries by promoting information and technology policy in the public interest. Previously, Ms. Schull was Executive Director of the French-American Foundation. She also founded the New York Library Programs Consortium, a network of libraries engaged in public affairs programming. As a consultant to libraries, foundations, and museums, she has advised such organizations as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the New York State Department of Education, National Public Radio, the American Association of Museums, the French Ministry of Culture, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Modern Language Association, and the American Library Association.

I would like to explore how parks and libraries are working together in urban neighborhoods, and how they might, by working together, become far more instrumental in revitalizing communities and cities.

In the future, this alliance of parks, libraries and other institutions could provide the basis for a new urban agenda.

"[An] alliance of parks, libraries and other institutions could provide the basis for a new urban agenda"

Public spaces such as parks, markets, gardens, walking trails, sidewalks, and plazas are all essential components of healthy communities and livable cities. However, we do not know how libraries and these other spaces, especially parks, relate to one another, and how they might relate to one another in

the future.

At Libraries for the Future, we believe one of the primary values of a public library is its role as a trusted, accessible, neutral public space. This is true whether it is in the midst of a neighborhood undergoing great decay and decline, in which it acts as an oasis, or whether it's an anchor for a new neighborhood undergoing revitalization.

A library is one of the few places that belong to all of us equally. And although we don't have a national system of libraries, we do have an infrastructure in place that, if it were more visible, could make libraries an extremely important place in a community. There are 16,000 communities around the country where the library is, or is becoming, a communications center, a gathering place, a catalyst for civic development, and a resource where people of all ages, races, classes and cultures can congregate.

Similarities and Affinities

What characteristics do libraries and parks share? First of all, they're both organizational and information hubs for community improvement projects. In cities where new parks and libraries are being planned, there are opportunities to bring in as broad and inclusive a coalition as possible. In terms of economic development, parks and libraries are anchors, or catalysts. Parks and libraries have the potential to be powerful symbols and agents for neighborhood identity. They are places around which community service projects could be organized.

"Parks and libraries have the potential to be powerful symbols and agents for neighborhood identity"

Parks and libraries are natural partners. Both represent "the commons." They are our public space and we hold them together, and they're our collective responsibility. They're part of the underlying urban infrastructure- as important as the bridges and the roads and the housing. They promote civic participation; they foster local identity, and they both offer recreational, educational and social engagement opportunities.

Libraries and Urban Revitalization

Great cities have always had great libraries. And, as cities are being revitalized for the millennium, many of them are building new libraries- a real movement is afoot. There are new national libraries in Paris and London- each of which has provoked enormous public controversy, but which are quite successful. In Phoenix, San Francisco, San Antonio, Chicago, Denver, and Los Angeles, new libraries have become very important players in the new urban agenda.

We are also seeing large-scale library revitalization projects in many cities: for example, the Enoch Pratt free library system in Baltimore, or Little Rock, Arkansas, which has just renovated nine of its 12 branches. Even Newark, New Jersey, despite its economic situation, has renovated five of its ten branches.

Some characteristics about these library revitalization projects are very important as models for partnerships with other public spaces. One characteristic is that libraries are being conceived of almost as much as a function as they are being conceived of as a place. With the advent of the new technology, the library function can occur anywhere and everywhere. That does not mean they cannot also be a place. Libraries can undergo a fascinating evolution from place to technology to place.

As a result libraries today are less about the real estate necessary for storing books, and much more about being a public forum. In San Francisco, as in many of the new central libraries, there's far more space for meetings and performances and gatherings. These new libraries see themselves as interactive

communication centers. Some of them have satellites; some of them are working with cable television, and, of course, the Internet. Locally, libraries are more and more positioning themselves as centers for community information.

"The natural affinity between libraries and parks is going to be reinforced through a much more external orientation by both groups"

On top of all those other characteristics, libraries are planning their futures in the same ways one could think about parks- that is, in partnership with other institutions. The current crop of librarians, like most parks and recreation planners and officials, has not been trained to think about collaboration and public awareness and focus group meetings and all that we need to do to make our institutions important community places.

But many librarians do see libraries as networked institutions - networked, not only electronically, but with community-based organizations, non-profits, and businesses. This is a moment when the natural affinity between libraries and parks is going to be reinforced through a much more external orientation by both groups.

Shared Challenges

But while parks and libraries share much in common, one of these elements is an incredible set of challenges. In the past, we have tended to look to new, exciting solutions and global planning to solve problems. We have forgotten that we may have, right underfoot, some of the very best tools that we need for community building and urban development.

So, libraries and parks share this aspect of already existing and being taken for granted. They both lack uniform funding and government structures, and both are complicated, messy systems to understand. They both also reach across many constituencies. That can be a liability as well as an asset, because they are part of the urban services sector, which in recent years has suffered from a reduction of funding. For us to dare to think about a new politics for the public realm seems to be going against the tide.

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That is the real challenge. There are no national policies for either public libraries or public parks, and there is no national leadership. However, there are many kinds of partnerships already linking libraries and parks, and these can suggest the potential for a new urban alliance.

Partnership Opportunities

I see three different types of libraries-parks partnerships. First there is physical space and use collaborations, second are joint programming collaborations, and third are information and resource collaborations to support development of parks and open spaces.

In terms of physical space partnerships, many libraries are adjacent to parks, on parks land, share or open space, are located next to exercise trails, or gateways to forests. In San Jose, where there is a development plan for 17 libraries, 7 of them are in parks. The challenge there is to think about how to use that systematically. I suspect that in every one of your communities there is at least one library that is part of a park but hasn't recognized the value of that location.

"I suspect that in every one of your communities there is at least one library that is part of a park but hasn't recognized the value of that location"

What could they do together? They could jointly cultivate gardens or sponsor recreational activities.

They could add children's playgrounds and reading areas outside the libraries. The Horticultural Society of New York has a program called GreenBranches that creates gardens at branch libraries throughout New York City. It installed its first garden in front of the Saratoga Branch of Brooklyn Public Library in 1997 and will complete 10 more sites by 1999. The designers work closely with borough botanical gardens and community groups, and they train the groups to maintain the gardens.

Several gardens are being planted in partnership with the Citizens' Committee Neighborhood Leadership Library Program, which establishes volunteer resource centers at branch libraries. As part of Libraries for the Future's Community Library Access Project, GreenBranches will help other groups strengthen library advocacy around the country through promoting gardens at libraries.

Programming partnerships also have great potential, where the library has a reading program in a park, or collaborates to run an interpretive center. In Athens, Georgia, one branch library, located on a popular nature trail, joined with several organizations, including the school district and the University of Georgia, to develop a resource site at the Sandy Creek Nature Center's Environmental Natural Science and Technology Center. The site contains four computers and Internet access via dial-in to the library. Users can even request books, which are delivered the next day via courier. Library staff train Nature Center staff about computers.

"Too often, parks and libraries compete with each other for funds instead of looking at collaborative ways to solve city issues and encourage development"

Chicago calls itself the "City in a Garden," and the (CPL) has been making that motto a reality at many of its branches. Through the Blue Skies for Children Initiative it has established gardens in three branch libraries, including the Douglass Branch, where collaboration with the Chicago Botanical Garden and residents transformed vacant lots into a Wizard of Oz garden for children. Other branches have created gardens through the Blooming Branches Garden Program that operates as a collaborative effort between the CPL and the Chicago Botanical Garden. The partnership offers gardening classes at branch libraries and encourages local groups to create their own gardens, such as the one at the Mount Greenwood Branch. Librarians report great local enthusiasm for the gardens, not only as popular places for children's story hours and readings, but as volunteer-maintained spaces that provide an opportunity for social interaction.

Then there are informational partnerships. Libraries are setting up information and support centers for environmental and gardening groups. These centers lead to joint programming and a lot more community involvement. The library functions as a neutral space, a repository for documents. For example, in Houston, Texas, several branches of the Harris County Public Library are located in or next to parks collaborate with parks administrators and staff in various ways. The Baldwin Boettcher Branch lies inside the grounds of the county's Mercer Arboretum, which built an education building that offers programs coordinated with the library. The library provides books and other materials about plants and animals, and the arboretum's staff advise the library on purchase of materials.

Within these three types of partnerships are some principles for effective collaboration: the involvement of key local stakeholders; timing in relation to other community development initiatives; and the recognition by all partners that success may mean giving up a little autonomy in order to resolve problems.

Beyond Partnerships

Current parks-libraries partnerships are relatively tenuous and unsystematic. Traditional institutional self-identities and definitions compound the effect of other barriers, such as professional protocols, that isolate staff and keep people within their boxes and individual funding streams. Too often parks and

libraries compete with each other for funds instead of looking at collaborative ways to solve citywide issues and encourage development.

We need to conceive of the city as a network of interlocking systems, and then look at how a park or library can be most effectively linked into that environment. If we take a more systems-oriented approach, beginning with collaborative asset-mapping, and look at libraries and parks as core institutions, we can use the relationship between libraries and parks to advance a new urban alliance.

Such a coalition could create an urban agenda that would enhance both the natural and physical environment, educate residents about sustainable communities and a sustainable natural environment, promote civic participation, focus attention on the value of public services and public places, and develop private and public resources. Only our imaginations limit the possibilities.

*“**Environmental determinism** [See [Answers.com](#), [Wikipedia.com](#)], “also known as climatic determinism or geographical determinism, is the view that the physical environment, rather than social conditions, determines culture. Those who believe this view say that humans are strictly defined by [environment-behavior](#) and cannot deviate. According to this view, individuals build up knowledge by encountering the world through their senses, and are unable to transcend their responses to the environment; they are at the mercy of environmental stimuli.*

The fundamental argument of the environmental determinists was that aspects of physical geography, particularly climate, influenced the psychological mind-set of individuals, which in turn defined the behavior and culture of the society that those individuals formed”.