



Office of the City Manager

ACTION CALENDAR

January 17, 2012

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From:  Christine Daniel, Interim City Manager

Submitted by: Deanna Despain, City Clerk

Subject: New Location for City Council Meetings

RECOMMENDATION

Review the summary of alternate locations for City Council meetings and direct staff to report back by May 1, 2012 on the cost, schedule, and viability of the following three options: Berkeley Community College Auditorium, Longfellow Middle School Auditorium and North Berkeley Senior Center Multi-Purpose Room

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

None.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) is relocating its district offices from the Maudelle Shirek Building to the renovated West Campus facility in February 2012. The district is renovating a space at West Campus to serve as the new meeting location for the School Board. That meeting space will be ready for use in September 2012. With the poor seismic condition of Old City Hall and the continued costs for maintenance and repairs, an alternate location for City Council meetings is likely to be needed after BUSD relocates to its new meeting location in the fall.

At the meeting of November 8, 2011, the City Council directed staff to report back on alternate meeting locations for the Council. The Council requested that staff “analyze feasible alternate locations for a Council Chambers, issues of accessibility for the disabled, proximity to transit and traffic and noise impacts in the surrounding area, adequate seating for large crowds, and connectivity to technology including television broadcasting.”

BACKGROUND

Staff has analyzed 11 possible locations for Council meetings. The relative strengths and weaknesses for each of the locations are summarized below. The full data for the facilities (20-point checklist) is provided as Attachment 1.

The 11 locations that were analyzed are as follows:

Facility	Location
Berkeley Adult School	1701 San Pablo Avenue
Berkeley Community Theater	2223 Martin Luther King Jr. Way (BHS)
Berkeley City College Auditorium (BCC)	2050 Center Street
Brower Center Tamalpais Room	2150 Allston Way
Ed Roberts Campus Atrium	33075 Adeline Street
Florence Schwimley Little Theater	2223 Martin Luther King Jr. Way (BHS)
Longfellow Middle School	1500 Derby Street
Main Library Community Room	2090 Kittredge Street
North Berkeley Senior Center (NBSC)	1901 Hearst Avenue
South Berkeley Senior Center (SBSC)	2939 Ellis Street
West Campus	University Avenue at Bonar Street

In addition to the criteria identified by the Council, there are additional considerations to be weighed when considering meeting locations.

- Scheduling – the Zoning Adjustments Board, Rent Board, and Planning Commission all use the current Chambers for meetings. Any alternate location may need to accommodate these legislative bodies, which would add five meetings per month (for a total of seven) to the scheduling demand on the new location.
- Room Set Up – except for West Campus, the dais would consist of tables and chairs that would need to be set up and taken down by staff before and after each meeting. The parliamentarian system and the speaker timer would also need to be set up and taken down, if they can be accommodated in the new space.
- Captioning – only West Campus has the infrastructure in place for off-site closed captioning (this is the individual who listens to the meetings and provides the real-time captioners' notes on the television screen). If off-site captioning infrastructure cannot be added to other locations, on-site captioning would then be required at an increased cost.

- Security – several of the facilities on the list close at an hour that is prior to a typical adjournment time for a City Council meeting (e.g. Berkeley City College closes its building at 10:30 p.m.). For these locations, additional costs would be incurred for security and janitorial services beyond the facilities' normal operating hours.
- Costs – all of the facilities have some additional costs associated with them. The need for significant upgrades for technology, broadcast, audio/visual, and sound amplification would be factors at several of the facilities under consideration.

Below is a summary of the six primary areas of analysis requested by the City Council:

Accessibility for Disabled

While all facilities meet ADA requirements, some have better ease of access than others due to their proximity to transit, the physical layout of the facility, and the available space in the meeting room for persons in wheelchairs.

The facilities with the best access are West Campus, Longfellow School, Ed Roberts Campus Atrium, North Berkeley Senior Center, and South Berkeley Senior Center.

The facilities with adequate access include the BCC Auditorium, Berkeley Adult School, Brower Center Tamalpais Room and the Main Library Community Room. For the BCC Auditorium, Brower Center and the Library, the primary concern is the capacity for accessible seating in the venue.

Entrances to the Little Theater and the Community Theater are not readily apparent given the layout of the campus. The relatively small amount of accessible seating was also a concern.

Adequate Seating

The facilities are grouped into two categories, those with a larger capacity than the current chambers and those with a smaller capacity. The chambers current capacity is 123 persons. The meeting locations with more seating than the current chambers are West Campus, Longfellow School, NBSC, SBSC, Schwimley Little Theater, BCC Auditorium, Berkeley Adult School and Ed Roberts Campus Atrium.

The rooms with less seating are Brower Center Tamalpais Room and Main Library Community Room.

The Berkeley Community Theater at BHS seats 3000 people and is likely too large to be a viable meeting space.

Broadcast Infrastructure

There are only two facilities that have (or will have) permanent, built-in infrastructure for a live broadcast through Berkeley Community Media. Those locations are West Campus (the infrastructure is planned to be built by BUSD as part of their project to build a new meeting room) and Longfellow Middle School.

The other nine locations would require a technical upgrade to provide a hard wired connection for live broadcasts over Channel 33.

Technology Infrastructure

The facilities are divided into three categories, those that have both internet and teleconferencing ability (phone line through PA system), those that only have internet, and those that have neither. For additional costs, it is likely that the City could upgrade any facility with the required technology.

West Campus, Brower Center Tamalpais Room, and the Ed Roberts Campus Atrium and BCC Auditorium all have both internet and teleconferencing capabilities.

Four facilities have internet only: Berkeley Adult School, Longfellow School and Main Library Community Room.

There are also four facilities that have neither internet nor teleconferencing connectivity in the meeting room. These facilities are Schwimley Little Theater, Berkeley Community Theater, NBSC and SBSC.

Proximity to Transit

For this analysis, the locations are divided into two categories: those that are served by both BART and AC Transit, and those that are served by AC Transit only.

Facilities served by both transit providers are Brower Center Tamalpais Room, Ed Roberts Campus Atrium, NBSC, SBSC, Main Library Community Room, Schwimley Little Theater, Berkeley Community Theater and BCC Auditorium.

Facilities served by AC Transit only are Berkeley Adult School, Longfellow School and West Campus.

Traffic and Noise Impacts

In assessing this criteria staff considered whether the facility is located in a primarily commercial area or a primarily residential area.

The locations in commercial areas include Brower Center Tamalpais Room, Ed Roberts Campus Atrium, Main Library Community Room, Schwimley Little Theater, Berkeley Community Theater, BCC Auditorium and Berkeley Adult School.

The four locations in residential areas are Longfellow School, NBSC, SBSC and West Campus. Potential impacts on neighbors of Longfellow may be able to be mitigated by using the basketball courts bordering Sacramento Street for vehicle parking and controlling crowd flow into the inner courtyard and away from the sidewalks. Potential impacts on neighbors of NBSC might be mitigated by focusing external activities on Martin Luther King Jr. Way, similar to the current Chambers location.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Based on the analysis and site visits, staff recommends that Council consider the Berkeley City College Auditorium, North Berkeley Senior Center and Longfellow Middle School as the most viable options for an alternate meeting location. A summary of each facility is below (in alphabetical order).

Berkeley City College Auditorium

This facility's strengths are access to transit and a location that will have very low noise and traffic impacts on the surrounding area. It has good capacity (250), internet access, and could accommodate teleconferencing.

This location would need an upgrade in broadcast capability. It also lacks as much capacity for accessible seating space as the current Chambers provides.

Use of the auditorium would require the City to pay for additional security beyond building hours. There are other issues to consider including scheduling, set up and take down of equipment, a small stage, no kitchen, and no off-site captioning.

Longfellow Middle School

Currently, Longfellow school is the primary alternate meeting location for the City Council. The Council has met at this location at least three times in the past two years. It is the most ready-made facility of the three with built-in BCM broadcast ability, internet connectivity, plenty of accessible seating, good capacity (400), and kitchen amenities.

For regular use, upgrades would be needed to allow teleconferencing. There may be a higher degree of impacts on residents in the area, and the location is served only by AC Transit.

This facility would require security and/or janitorial staff for late hours, and equipment set up and take down for each meeting. The set up demands are somewhat mitigated by the availability of secure on-site storage for City equipment. The location is not currently wired for off-site captioning.

North Berkeley Senior Center Multi-Purpose Room

The Senior Center's strengths are good access to transit, capacity (240), and accessibility.

For use as a meeting space, upgrades in internet connectivity, teleconferencing and broadcast would be required. This facility is also adjacent to a residential area and may have some traffic and noise impacts.

The Senior Center is a strong candidate as it is a City-owned location which would facilitate scheduling for all the legislative bodies and allow the City to install and maintain permanent infrastructure. The City could customize the space for its needs and eliminate equipment set up and take down. The facility can be upgraded to accommodate off-site captioning and it has built-in kitchen amenities.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

CONTACT PERSON

Deanna Despain, City Clerk, 981-6900

Attachments:

1: Location Comparison Spreadsheet

**City Council
Alternate Meeting Locations
Facility Check List**

Attachment 1

	Standing Reservation	Accommodate Planning, ZAB Rent Board	ADA	Capacity	Transit	Parking	Residential Area	Dais Set Up	Install Permanent Infrastructure	Network and Internet Connectivity	Sound and Microphones	Tele-conference	Broadcast In
Berkeley Adult School	Yes - requires custodian stay after hours (after 10pm); classes in evening; café in MPR is open in evening	Maybe ZAB only	Yes	200+	AC Transit	Yes - generally full at night due to eve classes	No	No - Tables and chairs on stage	No	Internet	No	No	No
Berkeley City College - Auditorium	Yes - Security required for after 10:30pm	Likely ZAB only	Yes	250	BART; AC Transit	Street and nearby garages	No	No - Tables and chairs on stage	No	Internet	Yes - (6 mics)	Yes	No
Berkeley Community Theater	Scheduling issues; requires custodian stay after hours	Maybe ZAB only	Yes	3000	BART; AC Transit	Street and nearby garages	No	No - Tables and chairs on stage	No	No	Yes (13 mics)	No	No
Black Repertory Theater	Operator not interested.												
Brower Center - Tamalpais Room	Yes - Can reserve for 4pm-12am	Maybe ZAB only	Yes	100	BART; AC Transit	Street and nearby garages	No	No - Tables and Chairs	No	Internet	Yes (4 mics)	Maybe	No
Ed Roberts Campus Atrium	Yes - need to rent security after 9pm	Maybe ZAB only	Yes	125 (can rent additional chairs)	BART; AC Transit	Yes - BART lot is free after 3pm	No	No - Tables and Chairs in atrium	No	Internet	None - need to rent PA	Maybe	No
Florence Schwimley Little Theater	Scheduling issues; requires custodian stay after hours	Maybe ZAB only	Yes/Will need ramp for stage access	599	BART; AC Transit	Street and nearby garages	No	No - Tables and chairs on stage	No	No	Yes (13 mics)	No	No
Longfellow Middle School - Auditorium	Yes - requires custodian stay after hours (after 10pm); classes in evening;	Maybe ZAB only	Yes	400+	AC Transit	Yes - 50+ spaces on bball court	Yes	No - Tables and chairs in well	No	Internet	Yes (6 mics)	No	Yes
Main Library - Community Room	Yes - Security required for after 8pm	Maybe	Yes	Approx 90-100	BART; AC Transit	Street and nearby garages	No	Temporary stage	No	Yes - both	Needs Upgrade - only 2 mics	Phone line, but not thru PA	No - Audio connection only
North Berkeley Senior Center	Yes	Yes	Yes	240	BART; AC Transit	Yes (limited)	Yes	No	No	No	Inadequate	No	No
South Berkeley Senior Center	Yes	Yes	Yes	150	BART; AC Transit	Yes (limited)	Yes	No	No	No	Inadequate	No	No
West Campus - New Meeting Room	Yes	Yes - All	Yes	192	AC Transit	Yes. Lot.	Yes	Permanent	Yes	Yes - both	Yes - full compliment	Yes	Yes

**City Council
Alternate Meeting Locations
Facility Check List**

Infrastructure (BCM)	Off-site Captioning	Video Monitors	Projection Screen	Conference Room	Modern HVAC	Kitchen	Restrooms	Notes
No	No	No	Yes - via exterior access	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	
No	No	Yes - blocked by council on stage	Maybe - Student govt room	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Stage size may be limiting.
No	No	Yes	Classrooms	No	No	Yes	Yes	Too Big
Maybe	No	Yes	Yes - small	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
Maybe	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
No	No	Yes	West Gallery Area of Large Theater	No	No	Yes	Yes	
No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Storage space available for COB use
Maybe	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes - Staff break room	Yes	Yes	Too small
No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Purpose-built modern meeting facility