



# MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. LIBRARY

San José, California

Livingston Case Studies  
in Urban Development



**PENN INSTITUTE** *for*  
**URBAN RESEARCH**  
University of Pennsylvania  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



**Martin Luther King, Jr. Library**  
**San José, California**

**Livingston Case Studies in Urban Development**

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**Credits**

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<http://www.SJLibrary.org>

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## CASE MATERIALS





## Introduction

On August 1, 2003, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library in San José, CA, opened its doors to the public for the first time. Over one hundred people were already waiting in line. At the official grand opening celebration two weeks later, nearly 12,000 people visited the library throughout the day.<sup>1</sup> Among a variety of opening day activities was the kick-off of a four day read-a-thon, where six ‘marathon readers’ broke the Guinness World Record by reading continuously for 74 hours, 49 minutes, and 37 seconds.<sup>2</sup>

The library stands eight stories tall and has 477,000 square feet of interior space.<sup>3</sup> The design of the contemporary building has been well-received. It is built of pre-cast concrete and blue-tinted glass, and has a large central atrium and two-story light wells which allow natural light to spread throughout the library, including to its lower, underground level. The building contains special collections rooms, computers that provide access to all visitors, a young children’s area, a teen center, a coffee shop, and a book store.<sup>4</sup> Throughout the structure are thirty-three imaginative art installations by conceptual artist Mel Chin.

The library has won a litany of awards, including the 2004 Library of the Year, from Thomson Gale and Library Journal; the 2004 CAPIO Award of Excellence, from the California Association for Public Information Officials (CAPIO); the 2004 Silver Anvil Award for best practices in public or governmental relations, from the Council for Advancement

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Albanese, “Joint San José Library Opens; Public/university facility seen as model for partnerships,” *Library Journal*, September 1, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Bob Egelko, “A red-letter day at San José’s new library; Six readers conclude record-breaking literary marathon,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 17, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, <http://www.sjlibrary.org/>.

<sup>4</sup> Storar, Suzanne T., *Writing the Book on Collaboration*, The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., March, 2001.

and Support for Education; the 2005 James C. Howland Gold Prize, from the National League of Cities for municipal enrichment; green building awards; and at least eight other awards commending the building’s design, creation process, and functionality.<sup>5</sup>

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Library has received such attention because it is the only large-scale joint city-university library in the country. It serves as both the main library for the city of San José and the only library for San José State University. According to the April 29, 2007 edition of the *San José Mercury News*, the “city, university partnership is one success on the books.”<sup>6</sup> However, it did not always seem to be headed that way. Strong leadership and fortuitous timing overcame doubts about whether the tenth largest city in the nation and the fifth largest university in the California State University System (CSU System) would be able to meld their operations, missions, resources, and users. The library now receives between 8,000 and 13,000 daily visitors when school is in session, and about 2.5 million visitors annually. Over 1.5 million items are available to anyone who enters the building.<sup>7</sup>

The library is located in the heart of San José, within a cluster of the city’s anchor institutions,<sup>8</sup> including San José State University

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<sup>5</sup> Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, <http://www.sjlibrary.org/>.

<sup>6</sup> Mary Anne Ostrom, “City, university partnership is one success on the books,” *San José Mercury News*, April 29, 2007.

<sup>7</sup> Jane Light, interview by Jon Stover, MLK Library, July 19, 2007.

<sup>8</sup> “Anchor institutions – universities, hospitals, sports facilities, performing arts and other cultural facilities like museums and libraries, public utilities and some large churches and local corporations – are serving as engines of urban renaissance (or even survival) in many places. Their direct impact devolves from their holding land and being large employers, revenue generators, purchasers, centers of human capital development and economic clusters and service deliverers. Indirectly they can be sources of urban reinvention and civic pride, attractors of knowledge industry workers or of suburban spenders.” – Eugenie Birch. Introduction to “Special Report: Anchor

and numerous other academic institutions, a hospital and two large medical centers, the HP Pavilion sports arena, and the San José Repertory Theater. The library has become a new type of anchor institution, merging the influence of town and gown<sup>9</sup> for the good of the greater community. In doing so, the building has not only improved library facilities for the city of San José and San José State University, but has also helped revitalize an area of downtown San José and become a source of pride for its residents.

### Site Context

When discussions of the joint library project began in 1996, the City of San José (City) had a population of 870,000.<sup>10</sup> San José is often referred to as the capital of the Silicon Valley, and in the late 1990s the high-tech industry was booming. The population of the city was growing rapidly, but the main library, also called the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, was small and out of date. Relative to the size of San José, the library system had little funding. Four blocks west of campus, the old MLK Library was sandwiched between, and over-shadowed by, a high-rise hotel and the city convention center, which was looking to expand.

San José State University (SJSU), (University) is located on the eastern edge of the central business district in downtown San José. Within blocks of the campus lie City Hall, a pedestrian mall, and Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) light-rail lines connecting downtown with the greater San José metropolitan area. The University had 1,153 faculty members and 19,291 full-time students for the 1997-98 school year,<sup>11</sup> most of whom

were from the San José area originally and most of whom drove to campus.<sup>12</sup>

San José State University is one of 23 schools in the CSU System. SJSU has bachelor and masters programs, but does not award PhDs. The University prides itself on not being insular and research-based, but providing wide access to teaching. On the other hand, the University had a history of little interaction with the city, as well as a relatively poor relationship with the area community. However, a confluence of interests offered a solution to the town-gown tension. Much like the City, SJSU was looking to upgrade its library system. And like the City, SJSU was short on funds to do so.<sup>13</sup>

Property taxes in San José were at an all-time high in 1997. One beneficiary of this increase was the San José Redevelopment Agency (RA), a public entity overseen by the mayor and the city council and charged with revitalizing the city physically, socially, and economically. In 1997, RA had a five year budget of \$539 million—half as much as the city had spent on redevelopment over the previous 41 years altogether.<sup>14</sup> With this ample funding, a primary goal of the agency was to expand the downtown. Other projects on the table included a \$30 million theater, a \$51 million library and parking lot complex, and a \$10 million expansion of the city Convention Center. In addition, RA was partnering with multiple developers to build new residential buildings downtown. The property tax base was projected to grow even further, from \$75 million in 1996-97 to \$129 million in 2002-03.<sup>15</sup>

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Institutions." *The Next American City*, Summer 2007, Issue No. 15, 27.

<sup>9</sup> "Town" represents the community around the University and "gown" signifies the University.

<sup>10</sup> MLK Library Archives, San José, California.

<sup>11</sup> John N. Berry III, "The San José Model," *Library Journal*, June 15, 2004.

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<sup>13</sup> Patricia Breivik, interview by Jon Stover, phone interview, June 22, 2007.

<sup>14</sup> "San José Redevelopment Swims in Cash Bonanza," *The San Francisco Chronicle*, December 12, 1997.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

## A Library Vision Emerges

“We brainstormed about some ideas over breakfast,”<sup>16</sup> said San José’s Mayor Susan Hammer, about an initial meeting in 1995 with then-new SJSU president Robert Caret. Caret thought the City and University could work together more closely than they had in the past and Hammer welcomed the overture. “And we got together again about a month or two later. Caret said, ‘You know, we need a new library.’ And I said, ‘You know, we do, too.’”

As both President Caret and Mayor Hammer took to the idea of a joint library, they talked to their advisors and formed teams to further investigate the idea. Mayor Hammer spoke with Bob Brownstein from the Mayor’s Budget and Policy Office, Assistant City Manager Darrell Dearborn, and Frank Taylor, the Director of the Redevelopment Agency. These investigations were, however, kept fairly quiet. The public, and even most people who would end up working on the project, did not know it was being considered until the February 3, 1997 State of the City Address, given by Mayor Hammer:

“...In true spirit of Silicon Valley, government must continue to be less bureaucratic and more entrepreneurial. As we learned time and again in this city, government initiatives succeed when they involve our community. That’s why my proposals tonight are invitations for partnerships – where a creative government works in concert with others to solve problems.

“I offer the following partnerships for our future: First, San José’s public library system is grossly inadequate for a city whose residents and businesses must confront global competition. ...The stacks

in our main library contain mostly popular subjects and current fiction, and we have less than half of the material that is available in many other big city libraries. Because of budget limitations, the idea of a state-of-the-art library, with materials worthy of Silicon Valley, has seemed an unreachable dream.

“At the same time that our city needs improved library services for our knowledge-hungry public, San José State University is struggling to find resources for an expansion of its library. University President Robert Caret and I believe we can satisfy both our needs by joining forces.

“I propose the construction of a single new library on the edge of the San José State University campus to make 21<sup>st</sup>-century knowledge available to the residents of our City and the students and faculty of the University. By pooling our resources, our residents will have access to an outstanding repository of books and materials – the University’s collection – which includes a million volumes and thousands of periodicals. In turn, San José State will receive financial support from the City and the Redevelopment Agency. This new library could be second to none in information technology. It could be part of a long-term plan to focus resources on our 17 branch libraries. Through this partnership, we can achieve what neither institution could accomplish by itself. Skeptics may say this has never been done before. I say just watch us.”

While the public may have been impressed with the idea, those affiliated with both library systems were startled. The proposal had not yet been discussed with the library board or faculty at San José State University. In fact, President Caret was not even in town for the announcement. University Library Dean Patricia Breivik noted, “The Mayor said she wanted to announce it at the State of the City

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<sup>16</sup> Unless otherwise noted, quotations are taken from personal interviews.

Address, but you just don't do that!" The abrupt announcement had the potential to upset key figures at the library and derail the project entirely. Breivik continued, "Right there, the project should not have worked."

## Existing Facilities

### *City Library System*

After over thirty years of housing the main public library in an old downtown post office building, the Main Library opened in April of 1970. The public library system in San José is the largest between San Francisco and Los Angeles, but relatively small for the City's population. The library system has 17 local library branches in addition to the Main Library, but the main branch handles system-wide administration, management, cataloging, acquisitions, outreach, and interlibrary loans.<sup>17</sup>

In 1986, construction began on the convention center, located next to the Main Library. Though the light-rail line extended to the 'Convention Center Stop,' the library became "lost in a sea of construction." Two high-rise hotels were erected next to the site, overshadowing the library. In the mid 1990s, talks began about enlarging the convention center. The library site was the logical place to expand. Meanwhile, the library's atrium design and escalator system created numerous functional problems; and at only 118,000 gross square feet, it drastically needed to expand as well.

### *University Library System*

San José State University's library collection was split between two buildings: the Wahlquist building and Clark library. Most of the older materials were stored in Wahlquist, located on the current site of the King Library, on 4<sup>th</sup> and San Fernando streets. Wahlquist also contained

non-academic campus offices and services. In 1982, newer publications were moved to Clark Library, located near Wahlquist on the northern side of the campus. Wahlquist had roughly 96,000 square feet of library space, and Clark had approximately 103,000 square feet of space.<sup>18</sup> The University's collection grew, and shelf space was expected to be exhausted by the year 2005. In the mean time, expanding aisles of books were competing with already-limited seating space. Clark and Wahlquist had only enough seats for one in every twelve students—by far the lowest rate among the six largest campuses of the CSU System.

### *Comparison*

SJSU and the San José Public Library System (SJPL) had similar problems: they both needed technological upgrades and room to expand. Meeting these needs together permitted both institutions to realize economies in funding the construction and maintenance of the combined library building. SJPL's operating budget of \$32,367,000 was merged with the SJSU library budget of nearly \$6,800,000 and the 356 full-time staff of SJPL was combined with the 82 staff members at SJSU.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the mutual benefits of this cooperative enterprise in the planning and construction of the library, the two organizations had significantly different missions, cultures, and operating systems. The University collection was intended to be relatively comprehensive and cumulative, focusing on acquiring and retaining materials essential to support the University's academic programs. Circulation was light compared to its gate count, and services were academic in nature. The City Library, on the other hand, had a more popular and utilitarian collection. Items had to demonstrate continual use by users in order for them to remain in the collection and circulation was high compared to the gate count. SJPL

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<sup>17</sup> Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, <http://www.sjlibrary.org/>.

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> MLK Library Archives, San José, California.

spent only 12% of its funds on materials, while SJSU spent 22%.<sup>20</sup>

**Table 1: Comparative Annual Data for Year 1996-97, University and Public Libraries<sup>21</sup>**

	University System	Main City Branch	Entire Public System
Books and Periodicals	1,376,000	266,000	1,369,700
Total Collection Items	1,458,000	301,000	1,426,939
Acquisitions Processed	12,833	39,093	260,623
Use Gate Count	1,280,184	577,092	-----
Out of Building Circulation	287,000	842,314	6,034,303
In Building Reserve Circulation	33,000	-----	-----
In Building Use Re-shelving	587,000		
Reference Transactions	122,344	195,626	670,636
ILL to and from other Libraries	22,000	3,719	-----
Staff Full Time Employment	110	163	318
Total Square Feet (Gross)	199,000	118,000	-----

## Players

### City Library

#### Director

Jane Light (1997 - Present)

#### *Background*

Jane Light was hired as the Director of the San José Public Library System on March 31, 1997—less than two months after Mayor Susan

<sup>20</sup> Jane Light, interview by Jon Stover, MLK Library, July 19, 2007.

<sup>21</sup> MLK Library Archives, San José, California.

Hammer first publicly announced plans for a joint library in the State of the City Address. As Director, she became the chief administrator for the City’s library system, including the Main Library and all of its branches. Light had a strong background in inter-library cooperation—a major factor that led to her hiring. For the first ten years of her career she worked for a consortium of libraries in San Mateo County. Later, while Director of the Redwood City Public Library, she chaired the administrative council of a consortium of libraries and developed creative and flexible financing so that the member libraries could purchase a shared library computer system. “My whole career was around putting libraries together, cooperatively,” Light said. “We librarians put too much value on autonomy we’ve lost or might lose, and not on what we’ve gained through cooperation. I’m willing to lose that autonomy and instead negotiate to meet my organization’s needs and that of our customers. But sadly, a lot of libraries don’t have the confidence to do that.”

#### *Agenda*

When Light took office, the Main Library had roughly 100,000 square feet of total space, a small annual budget given San José’s population, and outdated facilities. Light wanted the new Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library to have a modern physical plan that would be flexible enough to accommodate users for the next 20 to 30 years. The new facility should add considerable seating, computers, staff space, and open space, and have ample room to accommodate growth of the library collection. She knew that a solely city-funded library could only afford at most 600 seats and 250,000 square feet of total space. She believed joining the City and University libraries would double the Martin Luther King Library’s current staff and allow for significantly greater space. “My thinking was, ‘How do we get the most utility with smaller expenses?’ We had, honestly, two mediocre libraries. Our staffs were good, but our

collections were crummy and the building was not so great. And it's hard to get people to support something mediocre. And now we can raise our level, get people excited. And that helps funding.”

### **City Manager's Office**

#### City Manager

Regina Williams (1994 - 1999)

Debra Figone (1999)

Del Borgsdorf (1999 - 2006)

#### Deputy City Manager:

Darrell Dearborn (1989 - 2003)

#### *Background*

The City Manager oversees day-to-day operations of the City and implements City Council policies. The Manager's deputies often negotiate large, complex agreements, including various economic development projects and labor relations. Darrell Dearborn worked for the City of San José from 1989 to 2003 as Deputy City Manager. He was skeptical of a joint library from an operational standpoint but quickly became a strong supporter. He became the City's chief negotiator for the project, with particular focus on financial and technical aspects behind joint occupancy.

#### *Agenda*

According to Del Borgsdorf, who was the City of San José's City Manager from 1999 to 2006, “In this case, building the building was not a worry for us.” The City Manager's office had three main challenges: (1) helping both sides secure funding; (2) determining how much to build and how much should be spent financially; and (3) deciding how the cost should be divided between the City and the University. Darrell Dearborn worked on specific financing issues and acted as chief negotiator for the City. Dearborn was committed to doing anything necessary to get the deal done. He wanted to develop a

relationship of comfort between the two library staffs and then express that through a formal agreement. Other goals were to ensure that the general public of San José would have access to University materials, to create a cooperative relationship that would last through the building's useful life, and to guarantee appropriate cost-sharing between the University and City.

### **San José Redevelopment Agency**

#### Executive Director

Frank Taylor (1979 - 1999)

#### Project Manager

Dolores Montenegro (1989 – Present)

#### *Background*

The San José Redevelopment Agency (RA) is the largest tax increment producing redevelopment agency in California. RA has twenty-two designated project areas that account for twenty-five percent of all land and forty percent of all jobs within the City. The mission of the agency is to improve the quality of life in the City of San José by creating jobs, strengthening neighborhoods, developing affordable housing, and building public facilities. The organization was created in 1956 and, since 1977, has invested over two billion dollars in the City, including one billion dollars in the downtown area alone.<sup>22</sup>

RA is governed by the Redevelopment Agency Board that consists of the ten City Council members, and is led by the City Mayor, who also serves as chairman of the board. Despite being overseen by the City government, RA had a reputation for poor communication with the City. The agency has an executive director, Frank Taylor, two deputy directors, and a staff working in ten divisions, including development, planning, engineering,

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<sup>22</sup> San José Redevelopment Agency, <http://www.sjredevelopment.org/>.



architecture, finance, and public and governmental affairs. The redevelopment agency obtains its funding through tax increment financing. A base amount of property taxes within project areas goes towards schools, the City, and the county, but as property assessments increase above that level, the additional funds are pooled together and pledged to service debt issued to serve redevelopment projects. In the late 1990s, business in Silicon Valley was booming, property values were high, and the redevelopment agency had a plethora of funding.

### *Agenda*

Dolores Montenegro was assigned as Project Manager for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library in large part because she already had familiarity with project staff on the University side. As with every project, the redevelopment looked to “create the greatest economic, social, and environmental impact: to serve the greatest need for the population.” Specifically, RA hoped the project would help revitalize the area by increasing development and pedestrian traffic, eventually extending the downtown east of 4<sup>th</sup> Street. With strong support of Mayor Hammer and the Redevelopment Board, budgets were approved for library design and construction. The feasibility study was funded in part by SJSU. Though the campus was not located in a redevelopment zone, it was determined that its impact would significantly affect surrounding redevelopment zones. RA acted as the developer for the project, overseeing development agreements, design, finances, and construction.

### **Mayor’s Office**

#### Mayor

Susan Hammer (1990 - 1998)

#### Chief of Staff (Budget and Policy)

Bob Brownstein (1990 - 1998)

### *Background*

Susan Hammer was Mayor of San José from 1990 until 1998. She had served on the City Council for years before she was Mayor and had close relationships with many City officials. After the initial discussion with SJSU’s President Caret, she became very passionate about making the library a reality, and was the project’s most vocal and visible proponent. “This was really important. This got a lot of my attention. Of course there were other important things, too, but this was big.” Hammer encouraged individual council members to hold district meetings to respond to neighborhood questions and concerns. This was helpful in gaining support throughout the City. Hammer visited service clubs and community events to talk about the project, especially once the funding and design was settled on, and people could see what was happening. Bob Brownstein was Hammer’s point person for these many meetings.

### *Agenda*

“First and foremost, I wanted it to be accessible to everyone in San José,” says Hammer. The Mayor wanted the library to be technologically cutting-edge, to engage kids, and to be a hub of activity. Hammer envisioned the library not only as a functional amenity for the University and City residents, but also as “a sort of symbol of bridging the gap between the University and the City. The two entities had not come together on joint projects or anything. It was almost like there was a large, chain-linked fence surrounding the campus.”

### **San José University President’s Office**

#### President

Robert Caret (1995 - 2003)

Don Kassing (2004 - Present)

#### Vice President

Don Kassing (1993 - 2004)

## *Background*

Robert Caret became President of San José State University in 1995, bringing a vision of making the University a more integral part of downtown San José. He discussed possibilities with SJSU Library Director Jim Schmidt and proposed the joint library idea to Mayor Susan Hammer over breakfast in 1996.

Don Kassing became Vice President for Administration and Finance, as well as the Chief Financial Officer for SJSU in 1993. In this role, he was responsible for budget accounting, purchasing, facilities management, new construction, and maintenance of the campus. Bob appointed Kassing chief negotiator and point person for the University. “I led negotiations, development, finance, and architectural work (from the University side)...it’s the most interesting role I’ve ever had.”

## *Agenda*

As Kassing described, “You have this convergence of energy around this awfully good idea, that’s still being defined. You’re the people in place when this idea is hitting, so you have to do this. And you’re lucky this idea hit while we’re here. Therefore, we’ve got to find a way to do it.” The most critical aspect of Kassing’s role was to secure the needed financial support. From early on, it was clear that most of the University funding would have to come from the CSU System, in the form of general obligation bonds. There were two obstacles here. First, the public would have to vote in support of increasing total state higher education funding. Second, SJSU had to compete with twenty-two other campuses to receive funding for what would end up being the biggest project in the history of the CSU system. Kassing worked closely with the librarians and architects planning the operations and design of the library and then acted as salesman for the project to the CSU trustees and to CSU CFO Richard West.

## **San José State University Library**

### Dean

Jim Schmidt (1992 - 1999)

Patricia Breivik (1999 - 2005)

### *Background*

The charge of the Dean of the SJSU Library is to help the library meet the information needs of the University’s student body and faculty. From the beginning, Jim Schmidt and, later, Patricia Breivik fully supported the idea of a new library. “Here was the opportunity to, through collaborative effort, create a community center for life-long learning. This is why I went into library science,” said Breivik. During the planning process, the SJSU Library Deans worked closely with the SJPL Director, Jane Light. It was their responsibility to determine the program and coordinate operations of the new library. They continue to preside concurrently over the daily operations of the library systems.

### *Agenda*

A main goal of Schmidt and Breivik was to ensure that the completed library would meet the objectives of the University library system. In particular, the library had to include the space, technology, and services to accommodate SJSU’s estimated needs over the next 20 to 30 years. Schmidt and Breivik also attempted to ensure that University resources would always be available to the student body and that the library environment would provide first-rate support for many types of student activity. Primary concerns were getting enough financial support and preparing the library staff for their new role.

## **San José State University Academic Senate**

### Chair

Kenneth Peter (1996 – 1998)

The Academic Senate is the representative collegiate body and serves as the official voice of University faculty. The Senate was led by Kenneth Peter, a professor in the political science department. The Senate wanted more say in the creation of the library and was concerned that a joint library would jeopardize student access to resources. They worried that computers, seats, and University books would be used up and poorly treated by the public. They also worried that the presence of noisy children and homeless people would create an environment unsuitable for a University library. Additionally, the Senate wanted to ensure that the public library would not censor what it deemed to be racist, homophobic, or pornographic material. A few of the professors on the Senate were vehemently outspoken against the joint library, and for the University to authorize the project, it needed the approval of a majority of the Academic Senate.

### **Save Our University Library (SOUL)**

Faculty members created an organization called Save Our University Library (SOUL). The organization gained momentum in late 1998 and some of its rallies gathered over 200 people. SOUL garnered support not only from faculty, but from students and staff. Some protestors carried signs, while others, particularly the library staff, wore gas masks to represent what they believed to be the unsanitary and inhospitable working environment they would have to move to—in a nearby parking garage—during the construction process. SOUL even created a website to support and raise awareness of their cause.

### **SJSU Faculty Union**

#### Chair

Jo Bell Whitlatch (1996 – 2000)

Jo Bell Whitlatch was the President (1996-2000) of the local chapter of the California Faculty Association (CFA)—the union for faculty of San José State University. She was also the

Chair (1998-2000) of the CFA Collective Bargaining Team for the California State University System (CSU). Labor agreements are system-wide for CSU. During the joint library planning process, Whitlatch represented the interests of SJSU faculty. From 1997 until 2000, the library remained an unpopular proposition beyond the more vocal opposition of groups like SOUL. The faculty union was worried that the public library mission would overwhelm the University and that opening up University doors to the public would create theft and security issues. The union believed they would be better off with their own library and talked with legislators to try to find ways to kill the deal.

### **San José State University Student Body**

#### *Background*

San José State University enrollment for the 1997-1998 school year was 19,291, ranking fifth among CSU campuses.<sup>23</sup> The CSU System planned for the five largest campuses to cap their enrollment at 25,000 full time students, which SJSU expects to reach by 2010. Most of the students at SJSU are from the San José metropolitan area, and the school takes pride in the fact that many of its students have part- or full-time jobs, have families, are immigrants, and represent a broad range of ethnic backgrounds.

#### *Agenda*

The student body had mixed reactions to the idea of a joint library, especially since most of them would no longer be students by the time the project was completed. During demolition and construction, all library services were to be crammed into the already-insufficient Clark Library. Many students felt the project was much needed and appreciated the communal vision of the library. Others, however, believed the project was an expensive and unnecessary

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<sup>23</sup> MLK Library Archives, San José, California.

nuisance. By September 1998, 2,200 students (8% of the study body) had signed petitions against the library.<sup>24</sup> In a letter to the editor of *the San José Mercury News*, Samantha Araiza, an undergraduate sociology student, wrote, “During construction we will have to compete with, and put up with, more annoying, loud construction work. We students will have to deal with the lack of materials and library resources during this period. When do we receive the quiet study environment that we so deserve and pay for?”<sup>25</sup>

## University Fundraising

### Development Director for the University Library, SJSU

Caroline Punches (2000 - 2003)

#### *Background*

Fundraising at SJSU is overseen by the Office of University Advancement and a university-wide development office. The Vice President of Advancement directs seven secondary development offices that pertain to specific areas of the University, including the College of Business, the College of Engineering, Student Affairs, and the University Library. In 2000, just as construction of the library began, Caroline Punches was brought in as the Development Director for the University Library.

#### *Agenda*

As appointed by the University, the Development Office of the University Library was the sole entity responsible for private fundraising. The office was charged with obtaining gap financing for the University—funds that could not be obtained from University coffers or the California State

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<sup>24</sup> Anne Jordan, “Double Booking,” *Congressional Quarterly, Inc.*, August, 2005.

<sup>25</sup> Becky Bartindale, “Protesters Target Joint-Library Plan Relocating Offices to Parking Garage Surfaces as Issue,” *San José Mercury News*, October 15, 1998.

University System. A major set-back to the fundraising campaign was the speed of the library planning and development process. By the time the Development Office for the University Library knew its charge and target funding amount, construction of the library was beginning. As with any capital campaign, it is best if fundraising efforts happen well before construction begins. Said Caroline Punches; “This was a huge obstacle. Donors say, ‘Why do you need money, it’s already being built!’” Punches had to leverage the uniqueness of the project and the fact that both the University and the City stood to gain from it. In addition, the dot-com bust made fundraising much more difficult than it had been in the late 90s. Punches targeted a diverse body of sources, including major San José employers; SJSU faculty and staff; and individuals and foundations with a history of giving in the Santa Clara Valley area.

## City Residents

### *Background*

In 1996, 849,263 people lived in San José.<sup>26</sup> The City was rapidly growing, and that trend looked to continue into the future. While this growth seemed to argue for an expanded central library, most of the public had a much stronger allegiance to one of the 17 branch libraries than to the downtown hub. In fact, 86% of all out-of-building circulation came from the local branches.

### *Agenda*

The people who showed up at early hearings about the joint library were almost unanimously opposed to the idea. Some were concerned that a library catering to University students would not be child-friendly. Most of the public were concerned that an influx of funding to the main library branch would result in less attention to the satellite branches. “We need to remember

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<sup>26</sup> MLK Library Archives, San José, California.

our branches and think about them,” said Mary Oliver at one hearing. “If it takes money away from the branches, then I think it’s not a good idea.”<sup>27</sup> To gain popular support, the public would have to be guaranteed that their local libraries would receive increased funding as well.

## The Planning Process

### Feasibility Taskforce

Mayor Hammer and President Caret demonstrated strong leadership from the start by vocalizing their support for the project. In April of 1997, Jane Light, Director of SJPL and Jim Schmidt, Director of the SJSU Library, put together a taskforce of about fourteen staff from both libraries to analyze the feasibility of the project. Light and Schmidt asked their group to determine whether there were any insurmountable obstacles that would render the project infeasible. Jim Schmidt believes the phrasing of the charge was particularly clever: “It meant not giving [Hammer] a list of difficulties. [We were to] determine if there’s a great, big immovable rock.” Susan Hammer made sure to use the same forward-thinking language to her group. Jim Webb, Library Commissioner and Blue Ribbon Taskforce member, agreed with Schmidt, “You have to understand the value of the question,” he said. “She didn’t ask if there were problems with the idea...you don’t come back with a list of problems.”

Preliminary committee meetings set the tone for organization yet to come. The feasibility task force included representatives from both the City and University libraries, demonstrating that both sides were serious about working together. The optimistic, pro-active nature of discussions continued throughout the project. The task force reported back to Hammer two

months later: there were many glaring obstacles, but nothing insurmountable. Hammer and Caret signed a letter of intent shortly thereafter.

Hammer continued to champion the project, letting people know that it was “a personal priority and a fabulous thing.” This attitude filtered down to library staff on both sides, as well as to everyone else working on the deal. Hammer met regularly with Frank Taylor and Dolores Montenegro from RA and with the Deputy City Manager, Darrell Dearborn. As Mayor, Hammer presided over both the City Council and RA. “While I wore two hats, there was a clear line of authority between City and redevelopment sides. Different budgets, different lawyers.”

### Mayor’s Advisory Committee

Hammer gathered the support of the City Council. In March of 1997, the City Council authorized the City Manager and City staff to participate with staff from RA and SJSU to develop a plan for the joint library. The City Council appointed a seventeen-member Joint Library Advisory Committee, chaired by Councilwoman Charlotte Powers. The committee was charged with (a) collecting public input, (b) identifying potential delivery and operational issues, and (c) generating proposals to ensure the library met the needs of both the City and University communities. The Advisory Committee met for the first time in April of 1997 and agreed to an initial, but extendable, six-month time frame to make recommendations.

### Additional Meetings

Four other groups began meeting concurrently.

- 1) Mayor Hammer and President Bob Caret continued to get together. RA Director Frank Taylor soon joined the conversations, and, at the suggestion of SJPL Director Jane Light, the San José City Manager, Regina Williams, began to attend the meetings as well. By June of 1997,

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

many questions remained unanswered. The RA anticipated a project budget of around \$90 million, while the University expected a figure closer to \$120 million. And while RA favored a 1/3 City, 2/3 University financing split, the University expected to split costs 50/50.

2) More frequent meetings included members of the SJSU administrative staff, including Library Director Jim Schmidt and Vice President Don Kassing; SJPL Director Jane Light; RA staff, including Jim Forsberg; and Bob Brownstein from the City Budgetary Office (also chief of staff for Mayor Hammer). The City Manager's office joined these discussions as well. The group focused on how to conduct a feasibility study; explored financing options; planned for parking issues and the replacement of existing campus functions and buildings. Light also began to meet on a bi-weekly basis with Forsberg and his staff to keep RA up-to-date on the dialogue between the two library directors and the Mayor's Advisory Committee.

3) The most frequent meetings were smaller, between SJPL's Jane Light and SJSU's Jim Schmidt, although the two were often accompanied by various consultants. Schmidt and Light began to develop a "preprogram" of each library's needs and determine what areas of overlap could reduce the total size of a combined reference collection. At the time, the two libraries occupied 370,000 square feet at three locations. Initial estimates of combined needed space within twenty years fell between 500,000 and 600,000 square feet.

Light researched how other joint libraries were operated, though all existing co-owned libraries in the United States were of a much smaller scale. The SJSU and SJPL had consultants undertake studies regarding needed site size, square feet, and cost. Light and Schmidt worked to meld the findings. As each side worked together, the spirit of the collaboration began to take form. The building, and even its creation process, was, according to Light, "not

a merger, but a marriage." Both sides were separate entities that sought to keep their identity. However, both sides not only cooperated, but supported and made concessions to the other.

Though the library staffs were initially quite skeptical about the project, the attitudes of Light and Schmidt helped change the perception of the joint library. Also, warming sentiment towards the library was the fact that its benefits were becoming more clearly defined:

- Expanded floor plan
- The ability to provide the latest technology
- A 67% increase in collection capacity
- Up to 3,000 user seats, more than twice the combined capacity of the two libraries
- Increased space for public meeting rooms
- Improved library parking
- Increased opportunities for SJPL programming due to greater use of multi-media and the close proximity to the University and its variety of on-campus speakers and activities
- Expanded collections and services for both City and University users

Feasibility was analyzed at three levels. Preliminary discussions centered on the size, cost, and funding sources of the project. It was generally agreed that if these first questions could not be answered, then the project should not move further. The next stage would be to examine whether the two libraries could fulfill their somewhat different missions at least as well, if not better, through a joint facility. Finally, attention focused on how the operations would work on a day-to-day basis, including policy-making, staffing, budget, and maintenance.

## A More Efficient Process

During the first few months after Mayor Hammer announced her proposal for a joint library building, confusion persisted among the members of the planning teams. The scope of the Mayor's Advisory Committee's responsibilities was unclear and "some thought maybe it was window dressing," said Light.

Additionally, some of the consultants helping the library systems were not presenting the same optimistic mindset as Mayor Hammer. One University-appointed consultant, a real estate negotiator, came to a meeting and completely altered its tone and temperament. The consultant was not invited back, but it took some time before dialogue resumed between Don Kassing of the University and Jim Forsberg of RA.

RA hired Anderson Brule Architects (ABA) as group process consultants in August of 1997. ABA President Pamela Anderson Brule began working with the Advisory Committee to clarify their role and strengthen their organizational structure. Light worked especially closely with Brule and told her to "be a cheerleader for the project. Don't ask why, but how.' It was never *should* we do it, but *how* should we do it," Brule said. Light and Brule met at Brule's home. The two brainstormed and mapped out the organizational process needed to make the library a reality. "We had to be careful not to step on toes. At this point [the Mayor's Advisory Committee] was the agency making City decisions, but we wanted it to be more of a joint effort."

ABA devised a planning process that was primarily staff-driven, with staff from both sides having regular input. A new organizational structure (see Appendix: "Organization Chart" (from ABA Work Plan) was created. At the top of Brule's organization was the "Core Team." The Core Team consisted of RA's Executive Director, the City Manager, Mayor Hammer, and President Caret, as well as leadership from

City, RA, and SJSU administrative staff. The goal of the core team was to present a finalized plan to the City Council in six months.

The Mayor's Advisory Committee became the Joint Library Advisory Committee, consisting of the fourteen original members and joined by seventeen administrative staff support members from SJSU, the City Library, RA, and the Mayor's Office. Consultants for the City and University were present at these meetings, as were Brule and her assistant. The role of the Joint Library Advisory Committee remained largely the same: to secure public input, identify the service-delivery issues and public impacts of the project, and work with staff and consultants to generate a proposal that best met the needs of the City and University communities.

Two new subcommittees were created: an Operations Subcommittee and a Public Input Subcommittee. Each consisted of a few members of the Advisory Committee, administrative staff, including Light and Schmidt, and a variety of consultants. The Operations Subcommittee reviewed operational issues, library staff focus group findings, public process input, and consultant recommendations. The Public Input Subcommittee reviewed the proposed public process, implemented focus groups and public surveys, and notified the community of meetings and presentations open to the public. Each of the other groups occasionally met in public forums as well.

Brule not only set the structure of organization, but the tone and ground rules for each meeting. Before she arrived, the meetings were unorganized and often started late. She quickly emphasized the importance of starting meetings on time, documenting proceedings carefully, making sure everyone shared a clear sense of the aim of each meeting and a commitment to accomplishing it. She also created an atmosphere that was open to discussion, where input was welcome from every person. Brule believes that this "inclusive" method of

dialogue helped dissolve the boundary between the two entities, create more interaction, allow for creativity, and enable viewpoints from both sides to mix.

As Brule noted, “From a natural biology standpoint, there were two organizations being brought together that could reject each other: very different cultures, leadership, IT, everything.” ABA created detailed charts outlining the overall planning process, the structure of each committee, and even the way in which each meeting built towards a final goal. In-depth documentation was kept throughout the process. An absolute solution was still a long ways off, but they were “getting the essence of what would happen to make the library operationally effective. We became aware of what info they needed, and we were able to feed that information to them.” The prospect of merging two such different organizations was an exciting challenge for Brule. Says Brule: “This was the most fascinating period of my life.”

Meanwhile, Schmidt and Light continued to refine the building program and features. Basic ideas, such as complete access to the library for every visitor, became cemented. The size of the library was reduced from 630,000 to 530,000 square feet. The Mayor’s Office felt the building was still out of the budget and size was reduced further, to 485,000 square feet.<sup>28</sup>

ABA was invited to stay on during the design process as local architects that worked with the design and executive architects, Carrier Johnson and Gunnar Birkets. Schematic design began to help provide visual support for the University as it lobbied for funding from the California State University System. While Light and Schmidt had the final say on operations decisions, the RA and University architects and project managers dealt with design issues that did not directly affect operations. SJSU Vice President Don Kassing showed the latest

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

designs to the CSU Chancellor and trustees and worked to get influential members of the California State University System excited about the project.

### **The Memorandum of Understanding**

Between May 1997 to May 1998, the Joint Advisory Committee met eight times. Technical teams had created an operations mission statement and draft recommendations, and RA, City, and University staffs had defined the physical aspects of the project and their targeted sources of funding. On May 7, 1998, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was submitted to the City Council and Redevelopment Agency Board. The document was written by RA and signed by RA’s Executive Director, Frank Taylor, SJSU President Caret, City Manager Williams, and their attorneys.

The MOU outlined the terms and conditions under which University, City, and Redevelopment Agency “agree to continue the feasibility of the development and operation of a joint City/University library.” The MOU provided detailed descriptions of four main areas: the site and ownership; the development process; apportionment of costs; and operations.

### **Site Location and Ownership**

The preferred site was the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and San Fernando streets, on the northwest corner of San José State University’s campus where the Wahlquist Library stood. The location was on the downtown-facing side of campus; a few blocks from a pedestrian promenade with retail, restaurants, and a light-rail line; and about a mile from the downtown Amtrak train station. The area adjacent to this corner of campus was an RA-designated enterprise zone, aimed at revitalizing the area by increasing residential development. The RA helped fund six new residential developments within a few blocks of the subject site, including a 314-unit



condominium development called the Paseo Plaza and Villas, built directly across the street.

The MOU set out language for future use of the land as “tenants in common,” an irrevocable grant as long as the operating agreement (yet to be created), remained in effect. By sharing the land as tenants in common, the University would retain ownership of the land, but both parties would fully own the building and have complete access to the land. The MOU also specified that the University would pay all relocation expenses and that ownership and operational responsibilities would be outlined in the operating agreement.

### **Development**

The building was to have 145,000 gross square feet of space for City use, and 320,000 gross square feet for the University, approximately a 31-69% split, for a total of approximately 465,000 square feet of programmed space. The building was to be between six and eight stories above ground; include a basement, an atrium, and retail space; and to have entrances on both the City and University side of the building.<sup>29</sup>

An environmental impact report (EIR) was to be paid for by the University and reimbursed by RA. In an effort to expedite the process, Requests for Qualifications (RFQs) for architects had already been prepared, and the selection process would be determined by a panel of four RA/City staff members and four members of the University staff. SJSU, RA, and the City must jointly sign off on designated “design milestones” and cost estimates to continue with each phase. A construction management delivery system had not yet been decided upon, but its cost would be fronted by the RA and reimbursed by the University. The RA would have total control over the construction bidding process, and the

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<sup>29</sup> MLK Library Development Agreement, December 1998.

University and RA would oversee all change orders.

The total budget for the joint library was estimated to be \$171 million. RA would provide \$70 million, subject to board approval. SJSU would provide \$10 million in fundraising and an additional \$91 million conditional on approval from the University Board and the passage of a higher education capital bond measure scheduled for a vote in November 1998.<sup>30</sup>

### **Apportionment of Costs**

If the University bond funding was approved and binding development and operations agreements were executed, predevelopment cost apportionment would be the same as the construction break-down: approximately 41% for RA and 59% for University. The discrepancy between space usage and funding amount was due to the fact that San José State already owned the land. By paying a higher proportion of development costs relative to their building usage, the City was, in essence, paying the University for their share of the land. In addition, RA wanted to fund a higher level of building finishes than the CSU standard. If the bond measure should not be approved, or the Development Agreement or Operations Agreement not be executed, then the cost apportionment for costs incurred up to that point would become 50%-50%. Additionally, if any design changes were to be made by one party, the party requesting the change would pay for it in its entirety.<sup>31</sup>

### **Operations and Development**

In the operations section of the MOU, the purpose of the library was clearly stated: to provide access to all, promote intellectual freedom, and offer high-quality services and materials. All collections would be accessible to

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

the public and to the student body, with limited exceptions.

The City and University would retain authority to maintain and manage their respective collections. Operating budgets for both libraries would remain the same, and neither side would lay off staff due to the merger. The most heavily-used materials would be located on the lower floors, and the circulating University and City materials would be largely separated, with University collections positioned in the upper levels of the building. Any cardholder would be able to check out any circulating material. Non-circulating materials such as reference books and special collections would be available for in-house use by all users.

Library governance was to be decided prior to the Operations Agreement. Security was to be paid for jointly, and utilities and building maintenance would be split on a square-foot basis. The hours of operation were still undecided, but would be no less than 80 hours a week during semesters and 63 hours a week in the rest of the year. A preliminary project schedule, budget, project description, program, and square footage allocation were present in the exhibits section.<sup>32</sup>

### **Issues, Concerns, and Opposition**

As library planning became more defined and more public, a wide variety of obstacles presented themselves. Determining how the library would work operationally was especially difficult because no such precedent existed. Primary concerns were the differences in needs of users—community, students, and faculty; the differences in staff abilities and focuses; and keeping costs below what separate facilities would have entailed. Finally, San José State University academic faculty, library staff on

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<sup>32</sup> MLK Library Memorandum of Understanding, May 1998.

both sides, and the public all created significant opposition to the library.

### **Faculty**

Many faculty members believed a joint library shared the benefits of the University library with the City, while receiving nothing in return. Professors in the humanities were particularly outspoken about this. Three faculty groups influenced the library's development process: the Academic Senate; SOUL, the faculty-created organization in support of a University-only library; and the campus faculty union. Primary concerns were over library conditions for the students. Faculty members worried that the public would be noisy, disruptive, and take more than their fair share of seats, computers, and other resources. Some professors were convinced that University books and assigned reading would be taken out by the public, and thus be unavailable to the student body, or returned in poor condition. Other major concerns were that homeless visitors would detract from the academic environment, and that the public library system would try to censor materials that it deemed racist, homophobic, or pornographic. Lastly, many faculty members were upset that they were not involved early on in the planning process.

Numerous actions were taken to try to involve SJSU faculty in the process and convince them that their concerns were being taken into account. Anderson Brule Architects added a Faculty Task Force to the planning structure, ensuring the faculty a voice in the decision-making process. To prevent the homeless from sleeping in the library, a no-sleeping rule was decided upon. However, to ensure that students could take naps in the library, the rule was refined. As Whitlatch of the SJSU Faculty Union explained, "You can sleep, but not lying down: you can only sleep in a chair." It was agreed that library material and internet access were not to be censored, but that privacy screens on computer monitors would be

offered to shield passers-by from being offended.

In Spring 2001, Whitlatch was appointed to the Associate Dean position at the SJSU Library, under recently-appointed Director Patricia Breivik. This appointment changed Whitlatch's role dramatically. Whitlatch found herself representing those fighting *for* the library, not against it. Now her knowledge of the proposed library and her connections to the faculty union helped ease the tensions of nervous professors and librarians.

Concessions were made to appease the Academic Senate. Kenneth Peters and the Academic Senate drafted a list of conditions that they asked the library to back. The University and City agreed that at least 50% of the circulation of University materials would be for students and faculty and that the library program would be reassessed every five years.

The adoption of Link+ helped ease the fear that University materials would be over-used by the public. Link+ was an innovative, automated, and integrated library system that ensured that materials would be available at the joint library. If a book was already checked out, the user could request another copy from one of 35 other libraries in California and Nevada, which generally arrived within three or four days. Resources such as history books and art books are particularly popular with both the University community and the public. But, because of Link+, the issue of book ownership did not become an issue for the joint library which was able to meet the demand for materials from both community and academic patrons.

Peters set up an all-afternoon panel for the Academic Senate to meet with Deputy City Manager Darrell Dearborn, the University Lawyer, University Library Staff, University Facilities, and Vice President Kassing. The panel answered questions for upwards of three hours before the Academic Senate went to

vote. The measure passed by a two-thirds margin.

## Staff

The administrative staff housed in the Wahlquist Building was strongly opposed to temporarily relocating to the University parking garage on 10th and San Fernando Street during construction. In addition, much animosity was created by one of the most basic requirements of creating a new library—that library faculty did not want to change how they did their job and certainly did not want to have to merge ideologies and workspace. Patricia Breivik, Dean of the University Library, said, “The University staff doesn’t want to be outnumbered by City staff. And City staff doesn’t want to be out-stubborned by University staff.” Each library staff had its stereotype of the other. University librarians have faculty status, do research, and publish, “and they can be snooty about it,” Whitlatch said, while “academic librarians also have the reputation of thinking they’re too good to work at a joint reference desk.”

The vastly different information technology (IT) systems for the two entities almost ended library negotiations, too. City IT leadership had recently changed and came out with the stance that they would not let down their firewalls. This sent the message both that the City did not trust the students or, by extension, the University; and that certain portions of the City staff were not giving their all to make the library work. Further complicating matters, the City IT staff was paid between \$10,000 and \$15,000 more than the University IT staff per year. According to the SJSU labor contract, IT people are a professional class that cannot get overtime unlike City IT staff, who get time-and-a-half when working over forty hours a week. If extra work was to be done, University workers worried that they would not be compensated at the same rate as the City staff. City Manager Del Borgsdorf stepped in and helped persuade

the City IT department to make the necessary concessions to resolve the firewall issue.

Staff reservations were dealt with decisively. Breivik explained, “People were entrenched in what they were doing for twenty years, and then suddenly they have a new job! A lot of the fear was emotional, and irrational, almost.” Input was sought through meetings and surveys by consultants. A grief counselor was brought in to work with the staff. One message was clear to the staff: the library would be built no matter what.

### **The Community**

While some members of the public joined the “Save Our University Library” picket lines, the greater community was generally welcoming to the idea of a joint library. Some people were worried that they would not feel welcome at a joint university-public library. But frequent community meetings showed that the public’s point of contention rested on the public library system as a whole. Their concern was less with the joint venture between the University and the City than with the effect a new central library would have on the local branches which were responsible for most of the system’s circulation.

City Council members in San José not only represent the community in local politics; they also serve on the board of the RA. Mayor Hammer worried that if the project did not have widespread public support, then it would be halted. She promised that in addition to the joint library, neighborhood branches would be upgraded as well. Hammer began working with the City Council to create support for a general obligation bond measure to rebuild the entire branch system and add additional branches in neighborhoods that had no library. “I worked collaboratively with council members,” Hammer said. “You scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours. I interacted with them at lunch and dinner. Everyone came on board quickly.”

The City Council approved placing the bond measure on the November 2000 ballot, after Hammer had left office. It required a 2/3 vote and received over 75% support. As a result, new local branches were to be created, significant rehab was funded on the existing branches, and the community had little reason to oppose a new downtown library.

### **Library Operations**

The Operating Agreement and Development Agreement were both approved on December 17, 1998. Most aspects of both documents mirrored the MOU signed seven months earlier. The terms of the operating agreement “govern the rights and liabilities of the University and the City with respect to the joint library and the library building.”

The joint ownership of the library remained in the form of tenants in common, not a partnership. In this way, the funding and monetary issues could be handled separately. The library was to have approximately 474,598 gross square feet, with the University occupying 66.5% of the total and the City occupying the remaining 33.5%. The building was to have four types of space in the building: City, University, common space, and shared space. The shared space was open for future use-change, but it was agreed that if at any point either party disagrees that the space should be used as shared space, the party requesting the change would have to pay for any improvements or alterations.<sup>33</sup>

The University remained the sole owner of the land, but granted the City an exclusive easement over the entire property. The easement is irrevocable and will remain in place as long as the operating agreement is not terminated. All personal property on the site was to be jointly owned as tenants in common.

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<sup>33</sup> MLK Library Operations Agreement, December 1998.

Any proceeds made off the property would be shared, 59% to the University and 41% to the City. Each party retained the right to govern over their own area's selection of materials, collection management, budget, program services, and lending policies. In shared sections of the library, the two parties acted as co-managers. A joint library committee was formed for the purposes of sharing information between the two entities, and a six-member subcommittee was created to advise the co-managers on policy issues related to joint library affairs.

All collective bargaining agreements within both entities were kept. Therefore, the University and City each retained authority and responsibility for their own employees that worked in the joint library. Library maintenance expenses were divided by the square-foot usage proportions of 33%-67%, while certain areas, such as the elevators, were split 50%-50%.

It was decided that the library bookstore would be run by the Friends of the Library and the University Library's Donations and Sales Unit. The use and management of the retail space and all advertising about the library must be agreed upon by both parties. The name of the property was still undecided, and both sides had to agree to a name before it went into affect. Changes to the Operating Agreement must be agreed to by both the SJSU President and the City Council.<sup>34</sup>

## **Library Development and Construction**

The Development Agreement, also signed on December 17, 1998, and set forth the rights and obligations of the RA, the City, and SJSU with respect to the design and construction of the project.

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

A third of total space would be allocated for the City, and RA agreed to fund 41% of the cost of the joint library, plus enhancements for public art, escalators, and the San Fernando entryway. Again, this gap between space allocation and project funding was a result of the University's contribution of the land and was estimated to cover the City's share of acquisition costs. The University agreed to fund 59% of project costs in exchange for approximately 66.5% of library space.<sup>35</sup>

While the RA funds were secured at the time of the Development Agreement, University funds were not. The University expected its money to come with the signing of the 1999-2000 state budget by the governor of the State of California. The University's obligations set forth in the Development Agreement were contingent upon the signing of the state budget. However, even after the CSU System received its funding, SJSU still needed to compete with the other UC state schools to have funds allocated towards the joint library. If funding from the University side was not received, the Development Agreement would be terminated.

Four project phases were outlined in the Development Agreement: the construction of temporary replacement spaces for facilities; the relocation of current occupants of the Wahlquist building; the demolition of the existing Wahlquist buildings; and the construction of the new joint library building.

The joint library was to be eight stories, not including a lower level with skylights, and have two entrances, one facing the corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and San Fernando streets and another facing the campus. Any design change would be funded by both sides, unless it benefited only one side. Both the University and RA shared the role of giving direction and working on daily issues with the architects. The Gilbane Building Company was selected for construction

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<sup>35</sup> MLK Library Development Agreement, December 1998.

management and would oversee demolition, engineering, and construction. The general contractors were to be selected through a competitive bid process.<sup>36</sup>

The Development Agreement and the Operating Agreement were signed by the Assistant City Attorney; Frank Taylor, RA Executive Director Taylor; SJSU President Caret; and City Manager Williams.

### Library Funding

The estimated total project cost for the joint library was \$171 million. The City’s contribution of 41% came to \$70 million, and was to be paid by the RA. As described above, the \$101 million in funding for the University was slightly more complicated. The University was able to contribute \$5 million of its own money and hoped for \$86 million from the California State University System. The remaining \$10 million would be raised through private fundraising, directed by the University Library Development Office.<sup>37</sup>

City Funding	
Redevelopment Agency	\$70M
University Funding	
University Funds	\$5M
Private Fundraising	\$10M
Proposition 1A Bond	\$86M
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Total Cost	\$171M

### Redevelopment Agency Funding

RA obtained its funding through tax increment financing. A base amount of property taxes within project areas went towards schools, the City, and Santa Clara County, but as property assessments increased above that level, the additional funds were pooled together and

pledged to pay off debt service issued to redevelopment projects. There were three factors that led RA to approve 41% of the expenditure, or \$70 million, towards the project:

1. The RA determined that a joint library would benefit the area and the surrounding redevelopment projects in downtown San José, including the Century Center, San Antonio Plaza, the Park Center Redevelopment Areas, and the community at large.
2. Without agency contribution, there would be no other reasonable means of financing the new public library.
3. The RA contribution would assist in the elimination of various blighted conditions in the downtown area.

The RA Board approved one-year and five-year construction budgets for the project. The agency worked as the developer and project manager during the development process.

### University Funds

San José State University had roughly \$5 million available for capital spending, and, after numerous discussions with Mayor Hammer, President Caret was willing to spend it all on the library. “Susan Hammer was a really, really good negotiator,” said then SJSU Vice President (and current President) Don Kassing.

### Proposition 1A Bonds

In 1998 a state-wide Higher Education Capital Outlay Bond was passed, creating \$209 million in general obligation bonds to be split among 24 projects and 23 total schools in the CSU System.<sup>38</sup> These funds were to be used in the 1999-2000 budget, and the trustees of the CSU

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> California Legislative Analyst’s Office, [http://www.lao.ca.gov/analysis\\_1999/cap\\_outlay/cap\\_outlay\\_crosscutting\\_an199.html](http://www.lao.ca.gov/analysis_1999/cap_outlay/cap_outlay_crosscutting_an199.html).

System decided which projects were worthy of funding.

Early on, Don Kassing began speaking with CSU trustees about the project, as well as with CSU CFO Richard West. As Schmidt and Light refined the library program and operations, Kassing kept the trustees updated through multiple briefings. Leadership at SJSU knew that the only way to get the library built would be through significant funding from the 1998 Capital Outlay Bond. It helped the cause that matching funds from the RA were in place, but they needed concrete plans and images to impress the CSU board. Thus, even before the Memorandum of Understanding was signed, consultants and architects had begun design work. Starting design so early in the process, not only helped sell the idea but also helped expedite the development process. The swift pace would be continued through fast-track construction.

### **Private Fundraising**

Private fundraising at SJSU was overseen by the Office of University Advancement. Under their direction, seven development offices targeted fundraising for various aspects of the University, including the individual colleges, student affairs, and the University library. The Development Office of the University Library, headed by Director of Development Caroline Punches, was the sole entity responsible for private fundraising for the project.

The office was charged with obtaining the gap financing for the University. The University pledged to contribute \$101 million. The CSU System secured \$86 million for the project, and President Caret allotted \$5 million from University funds. The role of the Development Office of the University Library was to obtain the remaining \$10 million. This task was made especially difficult because of the fast-track nature of the library. Construction began only a couple of years after the initial idea had been posed. Typically, large donors are reluctant to

give to a project that looks as though it will be constructed regardless of their contribution. To make things even more difficult, the local economy went into a marked and prolonged downturn in early 2001 with the end of the internet boom.

In some ways, though, the unique nature of the project mitigated the threat posed by the economic downturn. Caroline Punches and the Development Office targeted a wide array of potential financial contributors, including major San José employers; SJSU faculty and staff; and individuals and foundations with a history of giving to SJSU, libraries or literacy campaigns, or unique collaborations. The fundraising was a success from each targeted area. The largest contribution, \$2 million, came from The Koret Foundation. The Koret Foundation supports organizations in Israel and in the Bay Area that “help build vibrant communities, promote personal initiative, and encourage creative thinking.” Said foundation president Tad Taube, “This valuable community resource will serve more than a million people in the Silicon Valley, and it will further one of the key goals of the Koret Foundation: to advance educational opportunities for the people of the Bay Area.”<sup>39</sup>

The gift was the largest ever received by the University Library and the second largest ever received by the University. The Development Office raised \$16 million, greatly exceeding its original goal of raising \$10 million. The excess money went towards special collections and the library “wish list,” a list of elements the library directors hoped for but deemed inessential.

At first it appeared that naming rights of the library would go to the largest donor, but it soon became clear that would be unpopular with the press and with City residents. The library retained the name of the Main Library, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library.

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<sup>39</sup> “Koret Foundation Gives 2 Million to New Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library,” *Ascribe, Inc.*, March 12, 2003.

## Building the Library

After the Operations and Development Agreements were approved, ABA continued working on the project, now in the design phase, concentrating on the interior design of operational areas. ABA also designed space for special collections and the multi-cultural center, and assisted the design architects with furniture, fixture, and equipment design. Because they had been working so closely with both libraries, ABA knew the nuances and implications of their designs. Communication was highly efficient, which saved time in the design process.

University architect Art Heinrich acted as a project manager for SJSU. In March of 1999, RA was chosen as project leader, and most project management issues were deferred to Frank Taylor and Dolores Montenegro. During the operational plan, RA initiated the design team selection process. Seven teams, all with nationally recognized architects, competed and presented their ideas for the library. In June of 1998, a panel was chosen including Carrier Johnson, Gunnar Birkerts, and ABA. Gordon Carrier, a Principal at Carrier Johnson, had studied under Gunnar Birkerts, and maintained a good relationship with him. Because the two firms had experience working on projects together, RA thought they would be a particularly good fit for this complicated venture.

Carrier Johnson served as the executive architect. They documented the entire project, designed the public interior spaces, developed construction drawings, and supervised construction. They were led by project design leader Kevin Krumdieck. Gunnar Birkerts worked as the design architects, creating the overall massing and external aesthetics.

In early 1999, the RA hired Gilbrane Building Co. as the construction management company. Patricia Breivik was hired as SJSU Library Dean

in August 1999, still during the design phase. Shortly after taking her new position, Breivik caused a slight stir by requesting a couple of design changes. However, Breivik “realized the greater goal, and made concessions to keep things on track and not cause too much disruption,” said Montenegro. The City also requested change orders, deciding to add a teen center. Both sets of design changes went off without a hitch, and did not delay the construction process.

The efficiency of the process was due to good prior planning. The different players were on the same page because of the democratic process being utilized, where communication flowed easily. On a typical project, Dolores Montenegro, as project manager, would have any information sent to her, and she would send it out to everyone else. Because of the complexity of the project, power was decentralized. People called each other on the phone and emailed. This allowed people to ask questions quickly and cheaply. The City, RA, University, general contractors, and builders allowed people to trust each other and work collaboratively; and time, money, and relationships were saved as a result.

Conflicts were dealt with quickly. At one point, due to a clash of personalities, RA told the General Contractor that they did not want to work with a certain subcontractor. The subcontractor was fired, eliminating a problem before it became a large issue. Numerous other difficulties were easily bypassed as well, despite there being no precedent for this type of project. There were a total of four unions working on the project: City management, City non-management, University faculty, and University staff. Employees could not be merged because the unions had different contract agreements. Also, City and University employees were covered by different city and state personnel regulations, including salary schedules and pension plans. However, there was no backstabbing, and the payoffs of this truly collaborative effort showed. According to



Project Manager Dolores Montenegro,  
“personalities just meshed.”

Brule, President of ABA, believed that luck had little to do with the success of the project as a whole or of the construction process in particular:

“Art Heinrich, Dolores Montenegro, and Jane Light were highly responsible for setting down the pattern of behavior and cultural framework... They had an infectious culture of trust. Attention to detail, to process, and to the needs of others created a better method and system. Involving everyone’s input created fewer barriers later on. By having detailed documentation, it allowed us to remove people from the process when they weren’t a good fit, if they weren’t optimistic enough or good enough. And that was good. And the lack of bickering and competition, and the good communication and shared goals, made it easier for other people, such as the general contractor and project managers, to do their job. The mindset filtered down to them as well.”

Construction began in July of 2000 and ended in July of 2003. Books and staff were completely moved into the building a week before its opening. Despite fast-track construction on a complicated and unique project, the library was completed on time and under budget.

## Conclusion

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Library opened to the public only seven years after the initial idea was discussed- a very short time period for a project of its size. The efficiency of the planning and development process is even more remarkable when considering the large number of diverse stakeholders who each had a role in the process, and the fact that there was no pre-existing model for a joint city-university library. Below is a complete timeline of the development process:

### LIBRARY TIMELINE

*The histories of San José Public Library and San José State University Library leading up to the opening of the new Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library:*

- 1990** San José Main Public Library rededicated as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Main Library
- 1993** Plan developed to expand Clark Library while City grappled with main library at 100% capacity
- 1997 February** University President and Mayor announced intent to collaborate and build a new library that will serve both communities
- 1997 February** Committees formed to research locations, structure, and operational issues
- 1998 May** Memorandum of Understanding between the City and University approved
- 1998 November** State higher education bond passed allowing for needed funding for SJSU
- 1998 December** Separate Operating and Development agreements approved by the City and University
- 1999 March** Architectural design drawings completed
- 1999 December** Construction documents completed
- 2000** UC state spending bill issues \$200M+ and gives SJSU \$86M
- 2000 April** Demolition of Wahlquist Library to clear the building site
- 2000 July** Library construction began
- 2003 August** The *new* Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library opens at 4th and San Fernando streets

Since its completion, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library has been considered a success almost unanimously. Most of the people involved in its development agree on the factors that made the project possible, but they are split on whether they think the process can be duplicated. In

addition, there are varied opinions on how the process, in hindsight, could have been improved and on what the future has in store for the library. The creation process of the library was successful for three main reasons:

- It met specific needs
- It was backed by strong will
- It was helped by fortuitous timing

Both libraries were out-of-date, too small, and had little funding. Additionally, the same site happened to be the optimal location for both libraries.

Comments from the participants and other observers illustrate the collective wisdom about the reasons for the success of the project:

“There had to be a site that was geographically suitable for both the University and the City. I would guess it would be rare that a city can afford to have its main library located on a university campus. By the same token, the University must have ground on campus that’s located right from their perspective.”

- Darrell Dearborn  
(Deputy City Manager)

“One of the impetuses to this is that both bodies needed a new library. So that’s necessary. You have to have the need. If the circumstances are right, and the need is there, it could happen again. The model we used to bring constituencies and leaders together – it can work. Obstacles, challenges, and the site... there are a lot of factors. I can’t imagine this would be able to happen in a [rural or suburban] environment. The geographical connect (is necessary).”

- Susan Hammer  
(San José Mayor)

Strong, optimistic leadership presented itself at every stage; from the Mayor, to the University,

to the librarians, to the City Manager’s office, to the RA, to the consultants.

“I’ve never been involved in a project that had so much strong leadership, buy-in and commitment. And that filtered down to everything. It was contagious. Even the folks screaming and against it called us later and said ‘We were wrong.’ We always made it solution driven and never worried about the problem. It became a contagious culture. We became a culture, which is interesting. The cultural tie is that everyone is passionate, driven, optimistic.”

- Pamela Anderson Brule  
(Consultant and Architect)

“There was unambiguous commitment from the top of both organizations. Bob Caret was artful and tactful with the Academic Senate, and never ambiguous about his support for the project. Susan Hammer’s intramural politics didn’t waver her posture or demeanor: it was never ‘should we back off?’ but ‘how can we fix this fire?’ There were a number of places along the way where if they hadn’t acted this way, it could have hit the ground.”

- Jim Schmidt  
(SJSU Library Director)

“I’ve never worked on a team quite like that, where people were just making it happen. That was, to me, one of the amazing things. I said to Pam [Brule], ‘that was the best team I’ve ever worked with.’ I don’t think I’ll ever see one like that again. The reality is that there was something special going on.”

- Jane Light  
(San José Library Director)

The political climate allowed for partnerships and funding opportunities that would not have been possible had the proposal happened any

earlier or later. RA had a surplus of money due to all-time high property values in Silicon Valley (a couple years later the bubble burst and RA became much weaker financially); the University was able to raise private funds at the time of construction; the University bond measure passed in the state vote; RA was hoping to expand downtown in the direction of SJSU; and the City and University were hoping to mend their relationship.

“I don’t know if you’ll see it again. [The project was made possible by the] mix of needs that converged; the collection of people involved; and the innovative nature of this city.”

- Don Kassing  
(SJSU VP, current President)

Most of the people who were instrumental in creating the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library agree that its creation process was far from flawless. It got off to a rocky start with public concerns for the local library branches, an angry Academic Senate, and Save Our University Library pickets. The frantic pace in which the University, City, and Redevelopment Agency attended to the project caused some people to feel left out of the decision-making process. In hindsight, the public, the Academic Senate, and the student body might have been consulted shortly after the idea was formed. However, others believe that this may have ended up taking away from the initial momentum that led to the project’s success.

It remains to be seen whether another project of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library’s size and nature will be built again. The King Library serves as a model of how university-municipal collaboration can succeed. But certain preconditions must be in place for it to work. Both entities must have a need for a new building, available funding, and a strong willingness to collaborate. The missions of the two groups must align as well. Most importantly, there must be a site where both institutions want the building to be located.



## CASE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



