

**Item Title:** Approve the Acquisition of a New Property at 2802 and 2818 New Birch Drive for a Future Library in Southeast Raleigh

**Specific Action Requested:**

**That the Board of Commissioners authorizes the County Manager to execute a contract to acquire 2802 and 2818 New Birch Drive, Raleigh, NC, for a new Community Library facility, along with any other documentation necessary to acquire the property, subject to the terms and conditions acceptable to the County Attorney.**

**Item Summary:**

**Purpose:** The Board of Commissioners must approve all County real estate acquisitions.

**Background:** Southeast Raleigh's current library is located in Southgate Shopping Center on Rock Quarry Road. The County has leased and operated this 5,463 square foot facility as a community library since 1985. Wake County long range plans have called for a new library facility in this area for FY 2028.

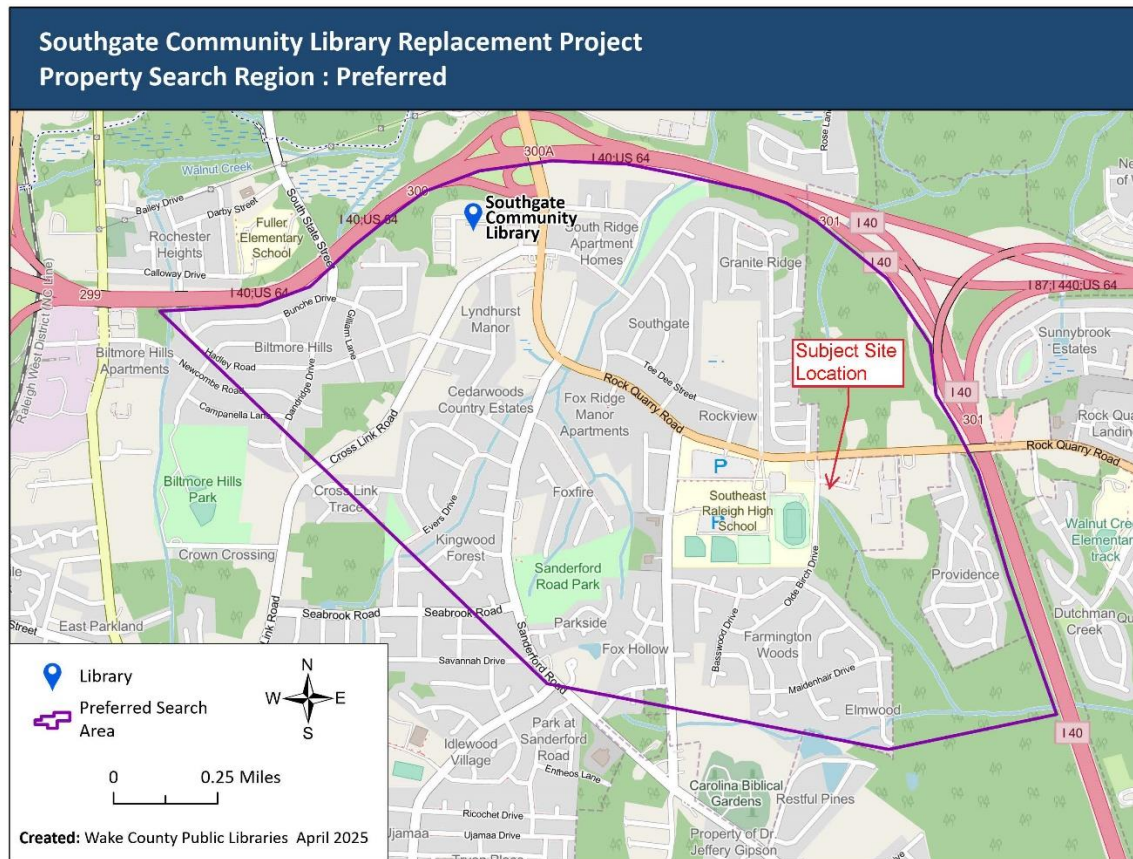
**Strategic Plan:** This action supports Lifelong Learning Goal 4: By 2029, three out of four residents asked will share that Wake County has high-quality education-based facilities, including schools, libraries, and other educational resources.

**Fiscal Impact:** The proposed purchase price for this site is \$6,695,000. Funds for the purchase of these properties is currently appropriated in Libraries Element of the Capital Improvement program which is funded by the recently approved Library Bond Referendum.

**Additional Information:**

Wake County has operated Southgate Community Library at the Rock Quarry Road location in southeast Raleigh since 1985. Over the years, Library staff has worked with the Landlord to address various expansions and upgrades to this space. This lease has been extended numerous times, but it has been determined that the space will no longer meet the community and Library system needs for the foreseeable future.

Wake County staff from Community Services (CS) used coverage areas and users drive times from surrounding County Libraries to determine a preferred search area. CS worked together with Facilities Design & Construction (FDC) to evaluate the best potential replacement sites within that preferred search area. The following map shows the preferred search area.



Within the preferred search area, only the subject property was listed for sale. To ensure all possible sites were considered, the area of consideration was expanded to include longer drive times and unlisted vacant properties that might be suitable for a library project. This consideration included the subject property and four others. All five sites were evaluated, and the subject property was selected to move forward for negotiations.

The subject property has two new 9,786 SF buildings constructed on one 2.13-acre lot. One building has a completed exterior and unfinished interior. The other building is identical in structure but also has a 6,000 SF area that is 100% completed and currently rented to a health care provider for the next 10 years. Wake County would take over this lease, subject to the lease provisions and collect the remaining rental payments. County Staff considered the current use to be compatible with County library operations. Additionally, the current lease will terminate about the time staff would be considering renovating the leased space to help accommodate expansion of this building to a future regional library facility.

In addition to completing construction of the unfinished spaces in each building, a new connector structure is proposed to be constructed to link the two buildings together. This will effectively create additional space to increase the area for library use to nearly 15,000 SF.



The purchase price for these two buildings is \$6,695,000. An appraisal by B. Carter Kennemur, CCIM and licensed NC General Appraiser supports the total purchase price.

Staff recommends approval of this acquisition subject to terms and conditions acceptable to the County Attorney.

An advantage to this approach of purchasing a completed building shell is that the parking areas and associated sitework are already completed. Staff believes that this will allow the library to be developed well within the originally contemplated total project budget of \$18.5 Million, which includes the cost of professional services, furniture, equipment books and library materials in addition to construction. Due to the complexities of this project, a more accurate estimate of cost will be possible once the project is fully designed. The design phase for conversion of this property to a library will begin later in this fiscal year, and construction is projected to begin in FY 2027, with completion anticipated in FY 2028.

**Attachments:**

1. Current Southgate Library Location
2. Preferred Search Area
3. Subject Site