

Library Board, Santa Monica Public Library
Director Report
January 2020
January 9, 2020

Citywide Priorities:

Capital Improvements Program: The Library has two approved CIP projects that had been placed on hold due to the many changes that had developed. These are: **Info Desk/Circulation Desk** conversion and the **Automated Materials Handling Sorter** system known as AMHS. In terms of connecting the dots, here is an overview of the processes and how they tie into the City Priorities and the Library Strategic Plan.

The Library continues to look for ways to improve services while maintaining efficiencies. The City's projections for revenues identifies plateaus or reductions that impact our bottom line. The CIP funding is secure -these project costs have been set aside, but timing is everything and therefore we need to move forward on these projects. The Information Desk/Circulation Desk project examined the traffic patterns of our community use, the existing staffing, and the desire to create a more welcoming and engaging atmosphere in the lobby of the Main Library as well as more focal points for additional self-check systems and an ease in navigation for customers.

The types of questions that are asked at the Information Desk and Circulation Desk are very similar in nature. The goal would be to provide a consistent single stronger point of entry for customers where a team of staff work together to best meet the community's needs, and triage requests as needed, prepare the area for the AMHS and allow for more directed access to library services. The consolidation would reduce the desk size and allow a stronger presence to greet customers at each entrance of the building.

What is an AMHS system? Like the AMHS at Pico Branch Library, this is an automated return system that would allow the close to 1.0 million materials returned to the Main Library to be checked in and sorted using the RFID tags already added to each item. The system sorts with significant accuracy and efficiency, allowing staff more time to better address customer service needs. We will be able to get the materials back on the shelves in a shorter time frame, the customer will get a receipt upon return, and the occasional errors that occur will be reduced.

The Information Desk/Circulation Desk and Automated Materials Handling Sorter are part of the City's Priorities for Engaged and Thriving Community and for Learning and tie in to the Library's strategic plan as a Vibrant Learning Center.

City Architectural Services will design the changes to the Desks and the lobby area. The Library will issue an RFP or request for proposal for the AMHS system and both projects will initiate in 2020 to be completed and installed by close of business 2021. Group 4, our consultants for the Facilities Master Plan will be apprised of all physical plans and changes and will weigh in on the work.

Library Facilities Update:

The Fairview Branch Library work is near completion. A walkthrough to examine the window and front door replacement is scheduled in mid-January.

The Pico Branch Library projects are near completion as well. The front desk is much more professional and useful to both customers and staff; fine tuning to aid the construction will be forthcoming. The end panel installation visible to our public was successful; we will seek additional funds to replace the end panels on the other end of the shelving that is not as visible to the public. We have been watching for the impact of water with the recent weather; there are leaks detected in various places and some damage to Study Room 3 ceiling, and adjoining walls.

Library Facilities Master Plan. Group 4 is meeting regularly by phone and digitally with a team of Architectural Services and Library leadership to plan and review data. The team is collecting data and resources from a variety of City departments on past and existing plans, facilities maintenance, and current needs that will impact the work. The timelines do include community and staff engagement as a primary set of activities including physical outreach and survey distribution. A concern to be addressed is whether to coordinate communication with existing and planned community priorities – 2020 Census and 2020 Vote – or to highlight the facilities master plan as a separate and distinctive process.

Library Services and Programs:

Diversity: Beginning this year, Santa Monica Public Library, along with 20 other library systems in CA, is participating in Cultivating Race, Equity and Inclusion in Libraries. Together with Marin County Free Library, Cecilia Tovar and Patty Wong are leading a statewide effort to create a network of public libraries leveraging work internally and externally on race, equity and inclusion. Goals are to create library wide equity action plans, develop capacity for the work and then create allies and a network in CA. We received a \$245,000 grant from the CA State Library and are hosting the Southern CA cohort – 8 libraries including Santa Monica. The training team is Jesus Cordero, Delia Galan, Lynnette Lawetzki and Cheryl Thompson with management support from Susan Lamb. We plan to condense a year of progressive training and organizational change into three two-day intensive sessions over the course of the next six months. The lead trainer is Gordon Goodwin of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity – GARE <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/> The City of Santa Monica has participated with

the GARE network for the past three years, with a commitment of three cohorts and more than 30 engaged staff.

Library Strategic Plan: The Santa Monica Public Library Board endorsed and adopted the updated FY 19-21 Strategic Plan at the December 2019 meeting. For more information and an accompanying Strategic Plan 101 video, see <https://smpl.org/StrategicPlan/>

Santa Monica Library Board: Priorities for the Library Board include:

- filling the current vacancy
- meeting staff at all levels
- formal training and analysis on key city and library priorities
- active advocacy for library mission, vision and values

The January 2020 meeting will initiate stronger analysis of data with a demonstration of SiSense and an overview of City legislative priorities with Stephanie Venegas, liaison to City Council.

Human Resources:

Classification Study and Survey: Library leadership is in the final stages of pre-recommendation review with consultant Segal Waters. Data from several neighboring and comparable cities on position and salaries are a part of the final process.

Recruitment and Selection:

Staff Assistant III (Admin): The Library interviews are taking place now to fill this long-term vacancy. Many thanks to Catherine Lopez for her work as as-needed key support during this time.

Library Service Officers (Admin): The Library conducted interviews for as-needed support. References are being checked now.

Staff Development:

Library staff will be attending ALA Midwinter Meeting (Philadelphia) and the Public Library Association 2020 Conference (Nashville). The Reference Team is hosting a Collection Development Summit.

Partnerships:

CCS and Cultural Affairs: Susan Lamb and Kathy Lo are working with Shannon Daut and Naomi Okuyama from Cultural Affairs to provide support for the research and activation of the Education and Arts engagement with the Belmar effort.

2020 Census: A number of library leaders are working towards this effort with the City's Complete Count Committee and the City Manager's Office.

2020 Vote: With the City Clerk's Office, Library leadership hopes to offer an 11 day Voting Center at the Main Library in the Multipurpose Room from February 22-March 3, Election Day.

Santa Monica Public Library Friends: The Friends continue to provide young adult titles to assist in building the Olympic High School/Obama Center Library. In total more than 50 boxes of quality titles have been donated. A recognition ceremony is in the planning stages. Many thanks to Sheila and Rachel Ginnerty (Friends) and Ivy Weston (Library) and Anthony Fuller (SMMUSD) for their collaborative coordination.

Safety & Security Monthly Report

Library Services Officer Team began several new practices this month, particularly around partner patrols. At the branches, an LSO partners with a branch staff member to walk the exterior and interior areas, provide guidance to addressing situations, and advising the public on rule violations. At the Main Library, two LSO members partner together for more focused exterior perimeter patrols. This aligns with efforts by Santa Monica Police Department (SMPD) Homeless Liaison Program (HLP Team) to increase presence in the area around the Main Library and engage with individuals beyond rule enforcement, who may be connected to services. In addition, LSO's continue to staff the entrance doors at opening at the Main Library, greeting people at the door, and supporting programs and services hosted by the Library's Outreach Specialist from The People Concern and the two social workers. Library Administration is work with Architecture to create and post signs on the exterior of library buildings outlining the Library Rules of Conduct and expectations of behavior on library grounds.

The Safety and Security Taskforce met this month to review a draft of a Staff On-boarding document around Safety and Security that include emergency and safety-related situations, as well as who do contact for specific incidents/situations. In addition, the taskforce discussed more regular practice opportunities with staff around emergency procedures and the need to improve communication on various security-related issues, including having members of the taskforce speak at All-Staff meetings.

As-needed LSO interviews were held in December to fill one or two possible vacancies and to support the growing number of services and initiatives around safety and security. Decisions and notifications will be made in January.

Addressing Homelessness

Our Outreach Specialist and two social workers have been working to create and promote wellness, community, and connections to service among our unsheltered visitors. This month, we held our quarterly Library Resource Fair, which welcomed 58 people to connect to about 10 service providers. These fairs are a way for the Library

and its City partners to maximize connections to service and dissemination of information for our most vulnerable visitors. Below are statistics for our Pop-Up Resource Fairs to date.

Pop-Up Resource Fair Data

- Total Fairs: 10 (2017 – 19)
- Total Attendees: 566
- # Service Providers: 21
- # Service Provider Engagements: 1,211
- Top 5 Service Provider Engagements:
 - o The People Concern - 298
 - o DPSS - 169
 - o Venice Family Clinic - 176
 - o Chrysalis - 164
 - o DMH - 88

In addition to the Resource Fairs, our Outreach Specialist has been working hard to grow two monthly programs based in the Library, one focused on Art (Library Arts Brigade) and one focused on Wellness (Pathway to Wellness). These programs see an average of 20-25 people each month, many of whom use the Library on a daily basis. While the main goal is to build relationships and connect individuals to service, another valuable outcome is the community-building aspect. Understanding the importance of caring for one another and being aware of Library services and offerings help create more sustainable, positive relationships.

Our 2 library social workers, under the guidance of the City's Human Services Department, are also coordinating efforts to maximize drop-in session times throughout the week for unsheltered and vulnerable individuals. They will be alternating Saturday and Sunday hours each month and will be working on integrating visits to the branches in January. In addition, they will be working with Administration to develop topics, resources, and trainings for staff and to better equip them when dealing with difficult or challenging situations.

Former Library Board member Marc Morgenstern began a pilot Writers' Workshop called Write Place with people experiencing homelessness. We will be continuing the pilot through February and then re-evaluate. From this program, Mr. Morgenstern has connected with some of our regular visitors and provided an outlet to create and tell their stories in a safe, supportive environment. A blog post interview with Marc will be published shortly on santamonica.gov. He also wrote a short piece for the Friends of the Library Newsletter because he was able to connect the efforts of the Friends with participants by offering donated books and resources for the workshop. He thanked our Friends of the Library and its bookstore volunteers for their generosity, "We hope your entire team can feel pride in knowing that some of your books are carried in the backpacks of the homeless, offering them comfort, reflection and inspiration. "

Marc also shared the following via email, and we will be discussing a full report of the pilot as we move into the next "session" in January:

Over the past five weeks, we have developed a supportive and trusted environment for creativity and self-expression in all forms. We have successfully built a constructive place for sharing and positive discourse based on writing. Here's a sample of direct quotes from participant emails to me:

Thank you for your sentiments, means a lot to me these days. I did finally start writing.

That was another really good group discussion, Marc. I'm glad you started this, because I've gotten a lot out of it.

I just finished a rewrite. It was much better but I lost it. I'm going to head to the library and use a computer and polish it up some more and send that to you...for everybody in the class. Thanks for the guidance.

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Wong, Director of Library Services