

**7Library Board, Santa Monica Public Library**  
**Director Report**  
**July 2020**  
July 9, 2020

**Black Lives Matter:**

The world and specifically the community of Santa Monica is turning inwards and outwards with the need to address the importance of black lives and to decry the violence and deaths of black men and women at the hands of law enforcement. The Library developed a statement and supportive documentation and will be issuing this soon.

**Action Item #1:** Endorse the Black Lives Matter Statement.

**Citywide Budget:**

The City of Santa Monica suffered a terrific economic downturn as a result of COVID-19 and a reliance on funding structures that revolved around tourism, parking and sales tax. Over the next two years, projections indicate huge shortfalls, ranging from \$150-\$226 million. On March 12, the Library shuttered first Pico Branch Library doors and then followed with the Main Library and the remaining three branches. Since that time, the Library has been devastated with the loss of all as needed staff moving to unpaid status as of April 11, leaving 73 FTE and followed by the elimination of 26 positions for a total of 47 FTE. 11 staff took VESIP (Voluntary Employee Separation Incentive Program) or retired. The remaining 14 staff were laid off with a small severance package. This has had a tragic impact on staff morale and library service. The total reduction from March to April 11 was \$1.5 million when SMPL went from 112 FTE to 73 FTE. An additional 26 FTE and significant supplies and expenses were identified to absorb the close to \$4 million in reductions, with 47 FTE remaining.

The staff represent dozens of years of experience. Our customers will miss their passion, customer service, subject matter expertise and talents. Our library community will miss their camaraderie and friendship and fellowship. We wish them well in their new, although unwarranted journey,

The Library reductions are significant in comparison to the other eliminations in the City both in number and percentage. There are currently no Library Pages as they are as needed staff and those positions were reduced to unpaid status.

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

All Library capital improvement projects were removed from the budget. This represents an additional \$853,620 in approved projects.

1. Safety and security: cameras, silent alarms, and security systems for all locations. (needed but not approved)
2. Continuation of consolidated desks and automated materials handling sorter (AMHS) at the Main Library (approved but deleted from CIP)
3. Integrated Library System (ILS) Request for Proposal (RFP) as the existing system is going on seven years of age and there are several improvements in the technology industry and indicators that our current system may not be as strongly supported. The ILS is the foundation of any Library's systems. All circulation and customer systems are driven from this platform including a record of all of the library's holdings. (needed but not approved)

**Library Facilities Master Plan:** The CIP was cancelled for the Master Plan but the contract will continue for Group 4 through October 2021.

### **Santa Monica Public Library Operations:**

The Library will be difficult to rebuild. Initial plans call for a smaller footprint of service, single shift service of no more than 8 hours daily due to limited staffing levels. The need for social distancing will mean service on the first floor of Main Library with initially five days of service, Pico Branch Library with five days of service and Montana Avenue Branch with two days of service. The staff will work on developing a system of services that will address the basic needs of the community: youth and family services, workforce and career development, and support for older adults.

**Action Item #2:** Endorse reduced Santa Monica Public Library hours of operation and focus on rebuilding service.

#### Proposed Hours of Operation:

**Main Library:** Monday-Thursday Noon-8:00 p.m. and Saturday 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. First floor only, focused on concierge delivery of materials, curbside service, limited walk in use of freestanding Internet access

**Pico Branch:** Tuesday-Thursday Noon-8:00 p.m. and Friday/Saturday 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Focused on Youth and Family Services and World Languages in partnership with Virginia Avenue Park

**Montana Branch:** Monday and Wednesday Noon-8:00 p.m. Focused on Workforce Development, Literacy and Education Engagement

The current staffing levels reflect an effort to rebuild library services: focus on the Main Library for express library services and library infrastructure and reduce service at the branches to concentrate on Pico and Montana Avenue Branch Libraries as neighborhood anchors.

**Action Item #3:** Approve concept of collection development policy adjustments due to reduced funding through FY 2022.

To make the final target reduction, the physical materials budget has been impacted with a reduction of 52% from 546,000 to \$263,000 with one more anticipated adjustment. This is a significant reduction to our ability to provide the same scale of new and replacement materials. There was an upwards adjustment to the eresources budget of \$75,000.

Change anticipated in the Rules of Conduct:

**Action Item #4** Approve concept of adjustments to the Rules of Conduct in the era of COVID-19.

With social distancing as a necessity, and a diminished work force, the ability to accommodate all service points prior to March 2020 may be impacted. The staff will provide suggested language in the next few months to outline precautions we might need to take to ensure customer and staff safety. This might mean limits to the total number of people in the facilities, customer use of protection equipment at all times, and perhaps a restriction of the volume of materials per visitor.

These times are unprecedented but we will prepare recommendations through the lens of equity and the need for access for our underserved communities.

### **Operations:**

**Current State:** The Library focus on service during COVID-19 has been: mounting and support of a centralized phone service M-Th 10-4 and electronic reference, promotion of eresources and selection of e-materials, and digital programming for all ages, support of the City Emergency Operations Center with coordination of citywide staff documentation of time, volunteer coordination, business and economy support, interdepartmental communication, and support for maintaining social distancing in parks and beaches.

The next steps for Library service will focus on preparations for re-opening, return of and sequestering materials, contactless curbside service, and staff engagement in rebuilding library service.

**Grants:** The Library applied and received \$5000 for additional digital materials (California State Library); Lunch at the Library \$2500 for library programming at Virginia Avenue Park and PAL during summer lunch programs; California Library Literacy Funds \$32,500 for adult literacy and \$25,000 for Families for Literacy; \$5000 for Open+ support to install security system, cameras, and a keycard system with Bibliotheca to enable low/no staff support for a self-service branch access for the public (California State Library). The staff also applied for a \$300,000 grant for two years of youth services support for afterschool homework help through the CARES Act.

The Santa Monica Public Library was also asked to submit a second-year application for CREI support from the California State Library. With Marin County Free Library leadership, SMPL staff is leading a statewide initiative, Cultivating Race Equity and Inclusion in CA Libraries. If awarded, this second-year grant will develop a second cohort of 15 libraries, in addition to supporting the first year group of 21 libraries, to develop race and equity action statements and plans to move their communities forward.

**Santa Monica Library Board:** The Library Board is allowed to meet during COVID-19 to focus on action only decisions. These actions would include: adoption of re-opening plans, collection development changes or amendments, amendments to the Library Rules of Conduct, endorsement of statements regarding Black Lives Matter and similar statements, acceptance of donations or awards on behalf of the Santa Monica Public Library.

#### **Partnerships:**

**Foundation of Santa Monica:** Restoration of the 501(C ) (3) is underway. Antonio Spears is interested in bringing back leadership to the Foundation and exploring alternative funding opportunities and corporate support.

**Friends of the Santa Monica Public Library:** With COVID-19, the volunteer base for the Friends of the Library Bookstore has been sheltering in place. Lu Plauzoles and members of the online volunteer group have returned to the library to pick up materials to be mailed. The Friends have shared the plight of the Library with many and several have provided letters of support and calls to City Council during Council meetings. The Friends have met once and have reviewed Library staff requests for funding.

The Friends will continue to support the Library's Summer Reading Programs for adults, teens and youth as well as the Santa Monica Reads, **The Library Book** by Susan Orlean and a host of other programs.

**The Bookmark Café:** Café owners Sean Sangwoo Chu and Nana Murata are in continual communication with the Director. They have pursued and received relief from rent for

March- July 2020. Their lease expires in September 2020. Given the situation, the City may not desire to renew any RFP for a similar service if the Library cannot open to the public. The owners desire to resume operations and operate curbside service in conjunction with the Library's re-opening.

**Santa Monica History Museum:** Staff at the History Museum have sequestered at home during the same period as library staff. Communication with the Museum has been frequent and coordinated. Museum leadership will host a zoom session with library leadership to draft a re-entry plan as public health officials recommend conditions for the public to return.

### **Safety & Security Monthly Report**

The Library Service Officers patrolled the branches and the Main Library during the closure in the day and during night-time to cover the eliminated night patrol of third party All Tech Security. The LSOs were later deployed to assist Downtown Santa Monica Ambassadors to patron parks and beaches to enforce social distancing and share social service resources and have now returned to patrolling the branches and the Main Library and materials delivery to and from the libraries.

They will lead the necessary amendments to the Library's Rules of Conduct with the appropriate parties: City Attorney, SMPD, and library staff at various levels. The LSOs are integral to the safety of the teams that frequent the library and have been involved in scheduling and deployment decisions.

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Wong, Director of Library Services