

Library Board, Santa Monica Public Library
Director Report
October 2020
October 1, 2020

Citywide Budget:

Outlook: The Santa Monica Library Board met with Interim City Manager to review the budget pre-Covid and the impact of the reductions on staff and services. The key points:

With regard to the Library Budget:

- Budget reductions to the Library were truly due to the circumstances brought by COVID. During current budget the City is spending approximately \$94 per capita on Library services or approximately 8.4 million dollars.
- Ms. Dilg acknowledged that current funding for the Library is low and unfortunately the Library took a significant hit. It is not that City leadership is not invested in the Library but a confluence of factors led to a heavier impact on the Library. Library service is not where we want it to be.

With regard to Measure SM:

- The measure is currently on the ballot therefore, it could not be discussed in detail. If passed, funds would be allocated at a later time. The ballot measure is primarily to protect essential services which includes support for the Library.
- Ms. Dilg emphasized that funding will be allocated based on community needs.
- Ms. Dilg stressed that priorities would need to be identified and assistance from staff would be needed to think creatively to tap into additional funding through partnerships. Staff would also need to look at preserving funds by finding efficiencies.

The Library Board was encouraged to work with the Library leadership on a phased rebuilding plan.

Citywide Commitment to Race and Equity:

2019: City Council named equity as a core value of Santa Monica

2020: Santa Monica launches social justice forums to dig deeper into equity issues inside the organization

2020: City Council adopts the GARE team created racial equity statement for the City.

2020: City Manager directs creation of Equity and Inclusion Officers and a Racial Equity Committee to embed equity throughout the organization.

The September 8 City Council was a momentous one to focus on race and equity in several areas:

The Black Agenda: a nonprofit will be established in Santa Monica to support the economic and racial equity needs of the African American community.

Council adopted the City of Santa Monica Racial Equity statement, developed by the GARE (Government Alliance on Race and Equity):

“The City of Santa Monica acknowledges the effects of generational and institutional racism, and its consequences that continue to impact our residents. These lessons of our history cannot be ignored. The City is committed to advancing racial equity and social diversity to improve the wellbeing of people who live, work, play, and do business in our City, by:

- identifying and rectifying the policies, practices, and behaviors that perpetuate racism, discrimination, and other negative racial-based outcomes.
- cultivating an inclusive and fair environment where all people in Santa Monica, in particular disenfranchised communities of color, thrive in the areas of health, economic vitality, and connectedness.”

The Library staff is developing a strong cadre of programs focused on race and equity: The 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge and a book discussion on Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson and Language in the Trump Era by Norma Mendoza-Denton.

The Library is also part of the Southern California Library Consortium. The Glendale Library and Arts District has offered a series on race and equity – Be the Change – and allowed all local libraries to partake in the virtual programming.

Santa Monica Public Library Operations:

Rebuilding for a new library system: Library leadership continues to work with HR manager Mark Brower on developing a team and making decisions together.

Curbside Service and Returns: Montana Avenue Branch began curbside service on Wednesday, September 24. Initial services are scheduled for Monday and Wednesday which mirror proposed open hours when buildings are available to the public. Montana Avenue customers were delighted that service was restored. Beginning in October, Pico and Main will offer Saturday curbside services the first week of the month from 10-4 p.m. The no appointment, walk up service has meant a significant increase in service and circulation.

Human Resources: Jeremy Abbott has left the Library to pursue his Ph.D in the Library and Information field with an emphasis on the library’s role in human services. With salary savings and some redirected contract funding, and with HR’s assistance, we have brought back several library page staff beginning September 23.

Holiday Schedule

- Day after Thanksgiving (11/27) the Library will be closed

- Week of December 28 - January 1 the Library will be open with limited services and staffing

In-Service Day: there is no plan for an In-Service Day this year.

Building: The Ocean Park HVAC system is in dire need of replacement and related roof repairs. Christopher Dishlip from Architectural Services located the funding to replace the HVAC in November and the roof repairs will be examined at the same time.

Programming: The Library continues to offer strong cultural programming for all ages. Ready to Work Seminars in English and Spanish offer tips on job searching, job retention and career training with a host of other economic recovery partners: Chrysalis, Hospitality Training Academy, JVS WorkSource, Santa Monica College Noncredit Initiatives and SMMUSD Adult Education Center. Participants can meet individually with agencies or make future appointments.

Building Blocks for Kindergarten will integrate English and Spanish tools to support reading readiness and tie in 1000 Books Before Kindergarten programs.

Join us on October 7 for Fire Prevention Week with the team from our newest Fire Station #1. For young people of all ages.

For the complete October 2020 calendar:

<https://smpl.org/uploadedFiles/October2020CalendarOfEvents.pdf>

Grants: The Library was awarded a second \$5000 grant for resources from the California State Library. The Library was informed that they did not receive a CARES grant. Only 68 were awarded throughout the country. The California State Library's CA Library Literacy Services funding will enable us to procure loaning computer equipment as so many adult learners have no access to the technology so needed for their learning.

IMLS Data grant opportunity w/Indiana University

The Santa Monica Library was offered an opportunity to work with three other libraries and Indiana University to spearhead the use of data in programming with the public. This would have been a two-year grant; Approximately \$20K would be available each of the two years to partnering libraries through this IMLS grant. Library leadership is deliberating – the funding is not sufficient given the time and effort of implementation and evaluation.

Santa Monica Library Board: Congratulations to Lucien Plauzoles who was elected Chair and Arlene Hopkins who was elected Vice-Chair. This month, Kathleen Rawson will speak to the Board about Promenade 3.0 and the Library's impact on our economy as a Downtown Santa Monica member. In November, Gary Carter and Joseph Cevetello will be discussing CityNet and internet access in Santa Monica and the Library's role with the community.

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. Antonio met with the Friends of the Santa Monica Public Library Board to discuss ways to collaborate in fundraising and program support.

Friends of the Santa Monica Public Library: Friends and library leadership have met to discuss the possibility of using an alternative site – perhaps one of the branches not slated for reopening at this time – as a safe basecamp for sorting, housing of materials for online sales, and potentially physical sales. The City Operating Agreement with the Friends is currently being reviewed by the City Attorney’s Office to determine a quick amendment to allow support for that effort.

The Bookmark Café: The lease for the Bookmark Café ended September 30. The café will remain closed until further notice. When the Main Library is approved to fully reopen, the City will issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) inviting bids to obtain an operator for the café. Until this process is complete there will be no café service.

Santa Monica History Museum: The Santa Monica History Museum continues to provide virtual programming and will not open to the public until the library is allowed to do so. Staff at the Museum are in and out of the building and they may be working with volunteers – plans for safety protocols and reopening have been filed with the City and approved by the Safety Officer.

Safety/Health & Security Monthly Report

Lou Enriquez, Library Services Officer Supervisor, and his LSO Team, provided the following report:

Safety and Security

The LSO team has been working diligently with making sure library materials, curbside necessities and PPE’s are being transported to and from the branches and main in a timely manner. We are overseeing the public and staff safety during our curbside hours.

We have three teams overseeing the Main and the Branches. Two for Ocean Park and Montana, two for Pico and Fairview and three at the main. This has been helpful with patrolling the facilities, assisting library staff with any needs and keeps the team in separate pods for our safety / health protocols during this time of COVID.

We are currently working on finalizing the COVID restrictions into our Library Rules of Conduct, looking at how to safely open to the public when the city deems it safe too, preparing to add pages to staff and on boarding them with our safety/ health protocols that we have implemented during this time of the pandemic.

We are working closely with other city departments. We recently had SMFD come and check our AED's , replace their batteries and update any data on them, we have started up bi-weekly meeting with the SMPD Homeless Liaison team , during these meeting we meet with city departments, County Department of Mental Health, local property managers, Santa Monica Place, local resources and discuss concerns regarding homelessness throughout the city.

Erica continues to work with Emergency Operations Center as the Department Operations Coordinator (DOC) to relay any important information and updates regarding PPE supplies and operational changes as it relates to COVID-19. Meetings have been reduced to once a week, and DOC's provide significant update reports for leadership. City Safety Officer Don Coccozza will be speaking at the staff huddle this week to review protocols for staff who may be exposed to COVID-19. This presentation is to reassure staff that the City is taking every precaution to keep staff safe, particularly if there is a known case of exposure. Clear protocols and procedures include consistent communication with our City's Safety Officer and our Designated Infectious Control Officer.

Branch Curbside Operations from LSO Perspective

Pico's curbside service has been going well. LSOs Lawetzki and Bala had determined early on to establish a steady presence at the outside perimeter of Pico. An LSO regularly posted outside during curbside served to enforce the pandemic mask protocol, preserve social distancing, and keep away most of the troublesome elements. As well, LSOs assisted with patrons who were unsure of curbside procedures. LSOs often passed along to staff the library card information of patrons waiting outside but who had no cell phone. Services extended included taking in batteries and directing people to the Food Bank/Pantry, the public restrooms, and other Virginia Park facilities and services. As well, LSOs regularly field questions concerning voting, job opportunities, homeless services, and a host of library questions (when the library would reopen, available library programs, how to get a library card, and more).

Now that Pico curbside service has established itself, it is no longer as imperative to post LSOs outside Pico at all times. Factors in consideration are inclement weather, heat or high temperatures, and poor air quality during the fires, as well as the need to patrol Fairview more frequently. Challenges continue to be those few who refuse to wear a mask or maintain social distancing, the occasional intoxicated individual, and the random persons complaining about the pandemic/the government/the library, etc.

LSOs anticipate further challenges with the coming Saturday Pico curbside service, namely with the close proximity of the Farmers' Market, the clusters of transients that loiter outside Pico while they charged their devices (LSOs anticipate vigorous complaints about the power being turned off on various outlets during curbside), as well as complaints from patrons who must navigate a specific route during Saturday curbside.

The first week of Curbside at Montana was a success. Patrons came with masks and followed the six feet social distancing rule. LSOs handled some challenges involving people who did not have a cell phone to call into the branch in order for staff to retrieve their materials, but LSOs helped by calling into the branch for the patron. Consistently communicating Mondays and Wednesdays for Curbside at Montana to the public will be extremely important, as the community gets used to the different times and dates for this service at our 3 locations. No issues with parking in red zones in the front of Montana, but we anticipate this may change as word gets out about the service at Montana Ave. Branch.

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Wong, Director of Library Services