

Library Board, Santa Monica Public Library
Director Report
September 2020
September 3, 2020

Citywide Budget:

Outlook: The Santa Monica Library Board has issued a letter to City Council and to Interim City Manager Lane Dilg expressing disappointment and sadness at the disproportionate and significant reduction in the Library's budget. The Board requested a meeting to discuss the library budget and to request a process for restoration of funds and services.

City Council authorized a ballot measure regarding a real estate transfer tax for those sales larger than \$5,000,000. The measure will be placed on the November ballot, would require a simple majority and the tax indicates the library as one of the benefits of those funds. No formula of receipts has been established. If successful an estimated \$3 million in tax revenues are anticipated. The Library is one of several agencies identified in the funding proposal.

Although reopening is not imminent, the Library will need to prepare a number of documents to substantiate decisions for reopening to the public. One of those plans includes an amendment to the Library Rules of Conduct, focused on COVID-19 conditions. An outline of proposed changes will be available at today's meeting.

Santa Monica Public Library Operations:

Rebuilding for a new library system: The Library management team is working to develop a stronger team for the future needs of the Library with HR staff member Mark Brower facilitating. The team began with a reflective exercise focused on personal and professional motivation and expectations for oneself in a work environment and how the team can thrive. All staff worked with Paula Singer and Mollie Cooper from Segal Waters to identify priorities in service development to patrons, community programming engagement and outreach. Library staff at all levels beginning with the Librarian III teams will be working with the Library Management team to rebuild a new structure of service. An interim Pandemic Organizational plan with two groups of staffing has been organized to meet immediate community needs.

Curbside Service and Returns: A primary focus on operations is curbside service and circulation of materials, including collection development and returns. Due to new scientific analysis regarding the length of time COVID-19 remains active on a variety of materials, the recommendation for sequestering returned items has been increased to 5 days instead of 3 days.

Returns are coming in slowly with about 33,000 out of 57,000 items still checked out. Curbside service is evolving and will advance to walk ups (no appointments needed) beginning September 8. The service may expand to more hours as well after a successful Saturday pilot with no appointments. The expanded curbside offerings of no appointments will be implemented at Main and Pico. Montana Avenue Branch is planning curbside soon and will follow suit with no appointments. A single Saturday each month is planned for October-December and plans for an evening and regular Saturday service will coincide with centralized scheduling efforts within the next six months. Staff from the branch team intersect to support all activities including the Pico curbside service. The red heart shaped decals promoting social distancing were designed by Library Assistant II Susie Lopez and reflects how staff feel about our community.

Building: The fumigation at Montana Avenue Branch has been completed and staff has returned to the building to resume curbside planning, and the daily routines of collecting returns, shelving and pulling holds.

The Ocean Park HVAC system is in dire need of replacement and further delays will impact the roof. Building Maintenance and Architecture are aware of the situation and the immediate financial needs. Replacement estimates for the system hover at \$110,000. It will be difficult to fully operate the building without this repair.

Programming:

Staff is focused on services to youth and families with back to school support, support for neighborhood book clubs, Summer Reading and Santa Monica Reads. LEAF (Literacy and Education for Adults and Families) has been restored with one-year grant funding from the California State Library – Tara Crow is on staff and a second Literacy Assistant position is in recruitment. As these positions are limited in funding and scope- we have been informed that former permanent staff would not be eligible for reinstatement through this process.

Library Assistant II Jeff Altman is taking the lead on the design and content of the newsletter and has provided outstanding work highlighting the many services the library has been able to offer to the public. It is eye catching, informative, and highlights the good work of the team. Available in English and Spanish

<https://smpl.org/newsletter/>

Santa Monica Library Board: Congratulations to Lucien Plauzoles on his election as Chair and to Arlene Hopkins on her election as Vice-Chair. There is one vacancy on the Santa Monica Library Board – Lucien Plauzoles’ term ended in June 2020. The City Council will hear appointments to Boards and Commissions at their September 8 meeting.

Partnerships:

Board Chair Lucien Plauzoles joined the Library Management team and met with new City Council member Kristin McCowan to introduce her to library operations and priorities. Council member McCowan was very interested in fine free for all. The Director will work with the staff to update the data and impacts of fines on adults and share this information with the Council member. A meeting with Community Services Director Andy Agle has resulted in a discussion with leadership from the Library and CS to discuss collaboration and service development.

Foundation of Santa Monica: Restoration of the 501(C) (3) is underway at the State level. Antonio Spears is interested in bringing back leadership to the Foundation and exploring alternative funding opportunities and corporate support. Leadership from the Friends and Antonio will be meeting to discuss ways to collaborate and benefit the Library.

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 Friends are very interested in working in a smart and collaborative way with the Foundation to advance fundraising to a higher level.

The Bookmark Café: Café lessors Sean Sangwoo Chu and Nana Murata desire to resume operations and operate curbside service in conjunction with the Library’s re-opening. They are working with staff at the City’s Economic Development unit. Chu and Murata have submitted a reopening plan and process and Norma Angel and Patty Wong met with Don Coccozza and Economic Development, along with Lou Enriquez to review the plan and recommend adjustments. The lease expires in September 2020 and will go to a month to month lease until an RFP can be issued.

Santa Monica History Museum: Staff and board members from the History Museum met with library leadership and submitted a draft reopening plan which has been shared with Lou Enriquez and the City’s Safety Officer, Don Coccozza. Discussions also included plans to cross-promote virtual engagement and a commitment to ongoing communication. Museum Board leadership would like to open weekend hours including Sundays.

Safety/Health & Security Monthly Report

Lou Enriquez, Library Services Officer Supervisor, and his team have been working on the following:

Additional expectations to the Rules of Conduct in a COVID world
Safety inspections and walk through for Bookmark Cafe with Economic Development and Don Cocozza
Review of reopening plans for Santa Monica History Museum
Support of Friends Bookstore operations
Reordering of PPE for library system

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Wong, Director of Library Services

8.28.20

Library Rules of Conduct Considerations

Below are areas for consideration and expansion for the Library Rules of Conduct. Focus is specifically on safety, security and well-being of our visitors and our staff, and SMPL will work with the City's Safety Officer to ensure that our operations

- Face coverings required
- Social distancing at all times (at least 6 ft.)
- Alignment with Covid-19 and pandemic-related guidelines from the LA County Department of Public Health, State of California, and City of Santa Monica Safety Officer
- Maximum number of people allowed per building, per area, or per floor, as approved by City's Safety Officer
- Maximum number of people allowed in meeting rooms and other gathering areas
- Limited and controlled entry into building
- Limited and controlled public restroom use
- Social distancing and limited paths of traffic in the building (one-way directions)
- Limit on computer and equipment usage
- Limit on belongings and other items that could lead to increased exposure
- Enforcement of restricted areas to the public; Long-term seating not available
- Guidelines for prohibiting members of the public who demonstrate signs of illness that could lead to increased exposure from entering the building
- Additional policies/procedures for children

Next Steps

- Explore language and specific rules created by other libraries
- Work with City Attorney's Office (CAO) to draft Library Rules of Conduct addendum
- Discuss and meet with CAO and Santa Monica Police Department (SMPD) to clarify roles and expectations for enforcement

From: [Priscilla Bouvet](#)
To: [Arlene Hopkins](#); [John Hart](#); [Lucien Plauzoles](#); [Marcia Ferreira](#); [Michael Klein](#)
Cc: [Patty Wong](#)
Subject: FW: Mayor's reply
Date: Thursday, August 27, 2020 10:51:00 AM

Good morning everyone,

On behalf of Lu, I would like to share Mayor McKeown's response (below) related to the letter sent last week to City Council.

Best,

Priscilla

From: Mayor Kevin McKeown <Kevin.McKeown@SMGOV.NET>
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2020 4:07 PM
To: Lucien Plauzoles <Lucien.Plauzoles@SMGOV.NET>
Cc: Lane Dilg <Lane.Dilg@SMGOV.NET>; Patty Wong <Patty.Wong@SMGOV.NET>; Gigi Decavalles <Gigi.Decavalles@SMGOV.NET>
Subject: Public Library Board Letter

Lucien, I have received and appreciate your letter of August 20th regarding Library budget cuts. The decisions that had to be made involved not only dollars but the public safety implications of providing indoor gathering space, circulating physical materials, etc. To that extent the choices had more to do with health than heartlessness. We appear to agree that it was a "terrible decision" we had to make, but it was the result of terrible times.

The Council has already committed to the restoration of Library and many other City services when the pandemic makes it safe and a recovering economy makes it possible.

As I must continue preparing for a City Council meeting in just over an hour, I'll leave it to the copied City staff to provide more of the details on constraints the Council was faced with in making Library decisions at budget time.

Stay well,

Kevin

Kevin McKeown <http://www.mckeown.net>

To protect your personal privacy when writing to me, use my personal email ONLY for personal matters and my City email ONLY for issues regarding Santa Monica.

Personal (friend, partisan politics): kevin@mckeown.net
or to your City of SM Mayor: kevin.mckeown@smgov.net

For an explanation, see <http://www.mckeown.net/email>

Telephone: (310) 393-3639 "Choose to be conscious"
