

Statement to be read to the Long Beach City Council
Tuesday, October 22, 2013
Subject: Long Beach Public Library Main Branch

I am reading this on behalf of John McGinnis who lives at:

*411 West Seaside Way
Long Beach, CA.*

He writes:

I regret I can't be here. As president of the Long Beach Board of Education, I'm chairing our school board meeting this evening.

I strongly support the revitalization of the Long Beach civic center *including* the downtown main branch of our public library as an integral part of our civic center.

When my wife Dianne and I moved to Long Beach, right across the street from city hall and the library's main branch, we were excited about the revitalization of downtown. We were also proud of the city's historic commitment to its public libraries. That included, especially, downtown's main branch and its integration with city government and services. We saw that as a vital expression of this city's values.

Over the past several years, other cities along the west coast have remodeled, expanded or rebuilt their downtown main libraries. Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego have all invested heavily in their main libraries. They recognized that in this growing information age with Internet access, electronic formats and the continued increase in the publication of print materials there is greater use of public libraries than ever. And there is a growing demand for assistance using government services. Nearly 79 percent of public libraries (up from 54 percent) provide assistance to patrons using government services. Libraries provide free access to job databases and they help patrons complete online applications. Libraries also provide software to help patrons create resumes and start new businesses. These services are especially effective when main libraries are integrated with civic centers. Many cities provide these services in newly designed, architecturally beautiful buildings that make a statement about their civic pride.

So, it is truly inconceivable that Long Beach would now *choose* to distinguish itself from other great cities by diminishing its downtown main library and by detaching it from its civic center. Instead, out of respect for the multigenerational families who built

this city's library, and in service to the multicultural immigrants who make Long Beach their home and depend on civic services, education and public libraries for their success, we should build a new downtown main library. It should be integrated with our civic center. And finally, it should be architecturally designed to express this city's values and the rich diversity of the people who are Long Beach.

John McGinnis

President of the Board of Education

Long Beach Unified School District