



MEMO

October 15, 2013

To: Long Beach City Council

From: Long Beach Public Library Foundation Board of Directors

CC: Mayor Bob Foster
City Manager Pat West
Mike Conway, Director, Department of Business and Property Development

Subject: Long Beach Civic Center Revitalization

City Council Members,

Thank you for the chance to meet with many of you recently regarding the Civic Center. This memo contains follow-up information in preparation for the 10/22 council meeting.

Background

In June the city staff issued a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) which called for the City to "rebuild or relocate within the Downtown area the existing Main Library" (Pg 4) and estimating the size to be 50,000-75,000 square feet (versus the current 135,000 square feet) (Pg 8).

At the council meeting on 10/22, the Council will have the opportunity to review and discuss the future of the Civic Center. As we understand, Mike Conway will be presenting an updated assessment of the current facility conditions, a review of the previous seismic study, and the RFQ short list.

During this meeting, you will determine the exciting future for the Civic Center by deciding whether the city will move forward with a Request for Proposals (RFP) to build a Civic Center complex through a Public/Private Partnership.

Key Messages

(1) The Long Beach Public Library Foundation and the broad community of library supporters urges you to keep Main Library located as a key component of a new and/or revitalized Civic Center.

(2) The City should avoid determining a square footage for Main Library until third-party experts in Library design can be engaged to make professional recommendations regarding the size, scope and services that will be needed to fulfill the current *and future needs* of Long Beach residents.

(3) The process for moving forward with a revitalized Civic Center needs to be open and transparent. Library supporters and all other community stakeholder groups should be invited to provide timely input and feedback.

Opportunity At Hand

The Civic Center revitalization project provides the perfect opportunity for a focused discussion on the importance of the library and its evolving role. We should gather inspiration from cities like Cerritos, Seattle, and San Diego, which have built large, innovative main libraries with visionary architecture and features in the heart of their communities – libraries that draw thousands of visitors to help drive the economy of downtown businesses.

Our community has a chance to create a thriving Main Library as a key component of the Civic Center that will serve the current and future needs of all Long Beach residents and be a source of civic pride for all residents.

(Continued)

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The Library of the Future Will Embrace the Changing Role of Libraries:

The role of the library and the services it offers patrons is continuing to evolve. Potential ideas for a new/revitalized Main Library include:

- Library Café and Store to bring in more visitors and additional revenues
- Expanded Children's Area including a Discovery Center with more hands-on kinetic learning
- Upgraded teen center and Makerspace with the latest light screen, tablet and touch screen technology
- Think Tank Rooms and special events spaces for corporate, social and community meetings
- Virtual conferencing capabilities to host large scale meetings in partnership with local businesses, the convention center and city hall
- Shared museum to display the impressive history archives of the Port of Long Beach and the Library

As Part of the Civic Center Design, Main Library Will Serve an Important Role as:

- A central hub of cultural, social and retail activity to revitalize the downtown area
- An economic engine – studies have shown that libraries increase surrounding property values, support job creation, empower job seekers, equip small businesses, drive business to downtown establishments and decrease crime rates
- A highly accessible public service – connectivity to downtown via pedestrians and public transportation
- A benefit to the community by providing access to technology, information and resources for everyone, especially underserved populations
- A symbolic representation of the priority Long Beach places on education and literacy. With low literacy rates in both youth and adults, a robust Main Library is more important than ever.

Main Library Currently Provides Critical Services:

- 135,000 square feet available to the downtown population of 40,000 and the entire city of 460,000
- 317,667 patrons served on average per year, approximately 20,000 per month (recorded)
- 320,455 volumes and 467,920 items circulated
- 70 public access computers and free wifi access
- 286-seat auditorium and two public meeting rooms
- Children's Storytime Theater (100-person capacity)
- Long Beach State and Federal Depository
- Information Center for People with Disabilities (inc'd special needs children, supported by Foundation)
- Family Learning Center serving 1,730 users annually
- Teen space with study rooms and a videogame room
- Miller Special Collections Room of rare books and art endowed in perpetuity
- 485 seats for the public's use of Library services
- Bookstore selling used books to fund programs
- Art display area to feature works by local artists
- Digital Media Lab with cutting-edge filming and editing equipment (being developed by Foundation in partnership with community organizations)
- Other life-long learning programs

Please let us know if you have any other questions regarding this memo. We look forward to hearing more on October 22.

Sincerely,

The Long Beach Public Library Foundation Board of Directors