

TO: Honorable City Council
FROM: Library Advisory Commission
DATE: December 4, 2006
SUBJECT: Transmittal of *Library Service Model Analysis and Recommendations*
Report (LSMAR) and Council Directives of May 15, 2006

The Palo Alto City Library Advisory Commission (LAC) respectfully transmits the completed *Library Service Model Analysis and Recommendations* (LSMAR) Report to the City Council (Council), previously submitted in draft version on May 15, 2006. Following further analysis by the LAC, the LSMAR has been updated and refined.

Additionally, with this report, the LAC addresses the May 15th, 2006 directives from Council by providing additional information to augment the LSMAR.

This transmittal document includes seven sections:

- I. Background;
- II. Overview of needs;
- III. Recommendations for improvements to library services and facilities;
- IV. Additional cost implications of an expanded Mitchell Park Library;
- V. Recommendations on other Council directives;
- VI. Conclusion; and
- VII. Attachments
 - A: Scaled Options for Library Service Improvements
 - B: Library Programs – Current and Recommended
 - C: Analysis of Strategies Related to City/School Library Partnerships
 - D: LSMAR report with appendices.

I. BACKGROUND

Council's original direction to the LAC in December 2004 was to:

recommend a strategy for creating a full-service library at the existing or another site, a strategy to include maintaining neighborhood facilities and distributed services; to maintain collection services, and to direct the LAC to recommend a redefinition of branch services.

The LAC presented a draft of the LSMAR to Council in May 2006 to solicit feedback prior to completion of the final report. The Council conceptually approved the following parameters for the LAC's work:

- Maintain all current library locations;
- Expand and/or improve access to services and collections and seek technological and other efficiencies; and
- Upgrade Mitchell Park library services from branch library resource levels without downgrading the Main Library.

The Council stated that existing general fund revenues shall not grow (other than inflation etc.) to cover the library, but rather, the additional required funding for non-capital and operating costs should come from a parcel tax or another source.

The Council directed the LAC and staff to complete the following work by the end of November 2006:

- Determine methods to reduce operating costs;
- Determine how big Mitchell Park Library would need to be;
- Determine facilities growth requirements (if any) at other libraries;
- Be explicit about service levels at Main; that the Main Library will continue to serve adults, teens and children;
- Maintain 4th and 5th grade services at Children's Library;
- Prepare preliminary cost models/projections/estimates for capital and staffing needs;
- Develop scaled versions of the recommendations with costs;
- Identify strategy and funding for increasing collections;
- Provide more analysis of strategies related to City/School partnerships; and
- Outline what would need to happen at the libraries if no funding for the recommendations can be approved.

In order to meet the Council deadline for addressing these directives, the LAC met eleven times since May and extensively publicized these meetings to seek additional input into the LSMAR planning process. Several meetings were devoted to the analysis of and development of recommendations for the service areas of city/school partnerships, collections, technology, programs and staffing. Summary analyses of these topics are included as appendices to the LSMAR report. At four of these meetings, the LAC also reviewed and provided input on the library facilities study conducted by Group 4 Architecture to evaluate space needs and site options for the Mitchell Park Library and space issues at Main and Downtown libraries.

Based on Council's approval on October 23, 2006, two additional directives originally issued on May 15 will be delayed and are not addressed in the LSMAR or in this transmittal. However, following the release of the City's Auditor's report on library operations, the LAC will work with staff to develop recommendations on these two items:

- Determine methods to reduce operating costs; and
- Outline what would need to happen at the libraries if no funding for the recommendations can be approved.

As this report was being prepared, Group 4 Architecture continued its work to finalize the library facilities study. Without the information on the preliminary cost for all of the LAC's facility recommendations and the City's Public Works Department review of those costs,

it was not possible for the LAC to develop scaled options for library facility improvements.

II. OVERVIEW OF NEEDS

Fifty years ago, Palo Altoans passed a bond measure to build a new Main Library and a branch library at Mitchell Park. The successful bond measure in 1956 followed a failed measure in 1949, years of discussion, and the eventual recognition that it was a mistake to put more money into the old Main Library that had been built in 1904. While much has changed over the last 50 years, much has stayed the same.

Today Palo Alto is a world center of higher education, technology, research and business and its Library has evolved to adapt to a more diverse population, and new and ever-changing media formats and technology. The population has steadily grown and is dramatically increased by a larger daytime workforce. Children no longer play in the street and families seek first-rate early literacy and youth programs. There are more hired caregivers for the young and old and more diversity of language and culture both in our residents and visitors from around the world. Accordingly, today's libraries must serve many functions beyond information resources: among them, community gathering places for diverse programs and events, rooms for organizations to host meetings, spaces for people who want quiet study or contemplation, and spaces for small groups to study together.

Work and life styles have also changed. People work in remote locations, demand 24/7 access, and try to keep pace with the abundance of free flowing information. Today Palo Altoans are much more accustomed to helping themselves and expect systems and services to facilitate immediate self-service and reference and referral when needed. Palo Altoans also have a greater retail orientation – they seek high customer service yet want to browse, explore and learn. They have become accustomed to self-service checkout and web-based services both in the libraries and accessible from work and home. Palo Altoans also seek sustainable neighborhood-based services with access to public transportation and safe biking and walking access.

Preliminary data from the 2006 National Citizen Survey presented to the City Auditor's Office for the *Service Efforts and Accomplishment Report, FY 2005-06* found that 78% of respondents rate library service as good or excellent which places Palo Alto in the 60th percentile compared to other jurisdictions, below many other city services.

Despite the advent of the Internet and the increase in home-based and hand-held technology, library visitor counts and circulation continue to increase. The Community Survey conducted by Godbe Research in 2006 about the Palo Alto City Library (PACL) found that 86% of respondents use the Library (see Appendix E of the attached LSMAR report). And over one-third report they frequent the library once a week or a few times a month.

While it is impossible to predict the future with certainty, there are some clear and compelling demographic indicators that should guide library improvements including an

aging population and Palo Alto's continued status as a destination location for families. Between 2000 and 2030, Palo Alto's population of older adults (55 and above) could more than double to over 36,000. The November 2006 white paper on the *Impact of the Aging Baby Boom Population on Palo Alto's Social and Community Services* indicates that 76% of those surveyed plan to stay in or near Palo Alto when they retire and hope to stay in their homes. When asked *of all services, which are the most valuable to you personally*, "Education and Libraries" rated first among services. The survey also indicates that Baby Boomers are strong library users, want neighborhood-based services that enable them to stay in their homes and avoid isolation, and seek new and dynamic programming.

Vigilance towards youth and families will also be needed as Palo Alto Unified School District continues to be a draw for families with school-age children. District growth projections indicate that PAUSD could grow by as much as 1,500 additional students by 2010, and given current housing development, it is expected that most of Palo Alto's new population will be south of Oregon Expressway. It is vital that our libraries actively attract youth, our future library supporters. National research and PACL experience indicate that youth respond to dynamic facilities, services, and volunteer programs that invite their use, support school assignments, provide new technologies and web-based services, have convenient hours and are in close proximity to school and recreational programs.

To meet demographic demands, the Library must evolve to fit customers' lifestyles, needs, and interests. The Library must remain a core component of community sustainability –where individuals can access and share technology and information instead of purchasing books and media and technology. Facilities need to be upgraded and the Library needs to more actively work with community partners to provide a more vibrant adult and youth program including developing collections and technology that are accessible, meet learning needs, and adapt new models for service delivery.

Unlike many neighboring communities, Palo Alto has to date failed to reinvest adequately in libraries as vibrant community destinations. With the exception of Children's Library, the near miss of Measure D in 2002 set us further behind in addressing aging infrastructure, and flat operational funding has meant little time for innovation. When a community invests in a "library as the third place" it becomes more than a repository of information. It becomes a gathering spot – different from work or home, a place where you don't need to purchase anything to spend the entire day. The Palo Alto City Library could become a network of centers for learning, tourism, civic engagement, technological innovation, and economic and community development. The potential is infinite if we provide a strong collection, excellent staff, innovative technology, and dependable places, where all people regardless of age or economic status, can engage in lifelong learning and community involvement.

The overriding need facing the Palo Alto City Library is to handle increased growth in usage and population, current and projected. Space is inadequate to address the current and evolving demands on PACL. Existing facilities are outdated and deteriorating. Technology has not been optimally integrated into staff or user experience. Neither facilities nor technology are fully adequate to serve existing or future community

demographics or use patterns. Looking forward, it appears that important demographic segments will be underserved in collections and programming. And, because staff is too stretched, it is challenging to plan and implement future vision for PACL.

The LAC recommends that our community invest in libraries for the next 50 years by rebuilding its distributed library system befitting the birthplace of Silicon Valley. This report outlines scaled options for service improvements and facility recommendations that set us on that course.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The LAC recommends that the Council adopt the recommended level of service and facility improvements outlined in the LSMAR report to ensure a vision for the City's Library as an institution that:

- Boldly addresses community needs through the provision of collections and services that meet leading edge standards for content, access and connectivity;
- Efficiently and effectively serves all ages and supports life-long learning with a well-supported staff, expanded partnerships, and a vibrant volunteer program.
- Provides safe and inviting facilities with flexible spaces that include areas for quiet study and reflection, small and large group meetings, and spaces for delivery of neighborhood programs and services.

While the LAC was certainly aware of fiscal constraints throughout its deliberations and wherever possible is recommending changes that can be accomplished with the existing operating budget, the Commission placed primary emphasis on proposing a compelling vision and set of programs to sustain the Palo Alto City Library into the future while maintaining its branch structure.

All of the LAC's recommendations for improvements to PACL that appear in the attached LSMAR report are summarized below, presented in the following two sections:

Library Services

- Hours
- Programs
- Collections
- Technology
- Staffing
- Scaled Recommendations – referring to Attachment A

Library Facilities

- Scaled Recommendations

It is expected that community discussion, the City Auditor's Report on Library operations, and technology planning may result in further refinement of recommendations for service improvements in 2007. However, the LAC recommends that the City Council move forward immediately with planning for proposed facility improvements.

Library Services

The LAC spent two months refining its recommendations for improved library services in the areas of hours, programs, collections, technology, and associated staffing needs. Summaries of the analyses of the current status and needs in these service areas are included in Appendix G to the attached LSMAR report.

With the understanding that accomplishing most of the recommendations will require new sources of funding and responding to Council's directive to provide scaled options for investment, the LAC has grouped its recommendations for library services into three tiers:

- Improvements currently planned or possible with existing funds;
- Mid-tier of recommended improvements requiring additional investment; and
- High-tier of recommended improvements requiring additional investment.

Hours

PACL offers many service hours because there are five branches in the system. The Community Survey reported that 71% of the respondents felt it was important to provide longer hours. The lifestyles of many families do limit the times when they can come to the library; so expanded hours should be beneficial, especially to those living closest to the small branches. It is important to note that the LAC agrees with the staff recommendation that hours are added only if staff shortages for current hours are first addressed.

The LSMAR recommendations for improvements in library hours are:

- Increase schedule at College Terrace & Downtown libraries by adding 7 hours per week each plus 4 hours on Sunday
- Increase hours at Mitchell Park from 58 to 62 (same as Main) per week
- Increase hours at Children's Library from 48 to 50 hours per week

Programs

Library programs are important to develop early literary and social development skills in young children, to connect readers of all ages to literature, to promote lifelong learning and cultural awareness, and to enhance community life. As the ratio of staff to service hours at PACL is considerably lower than in most comparable city library systems, most staff activity is dedicated to staffing service desks, thereby reducing staff available to develop and implement programs commonly provided in most libraries. Although volunteers can support the provision of many programs, more staff is needed to plan and oversee increased programming.

As programs and services evolve, partnerships will be an essential component to improve service delivery and operate efficiently. Accordingly, the LAC recommends that

the City Council forge a stronger partnership with the PAUSD School Board to strengthen delivery of services to the school age population. It is also recommended that the Library work more closely with senior providers such as Avenidas, childcare providers such as Palo Alto Community Child Care, and the City Community Services Department, among others.

The LSMAR recommendations for improvements in library programs are:

- Increase children and youth programming (see Attachment B)
- Expand service to teens and increase outreach to schools
- Expand the volunteer and outreach program
- Make deliveries between branches on the weekends to improve access to collections
- Fund routine replacement of outdated furniture and equipment

Collections

The cornerstone of the library is a strong collection. It is through libraries that the public owns a collection and items are purchased on behalf of the community.

Use of PACL's collections, as measured by circulation, has increased 29% since 1987, when the Library's online catalog was first introduced. This increase parallels a trend in public libraries that shows an upswing in library usage despite the widespread adoption of online resources and the Internet.

The Community Survey found that the library collection was the top driver of library use. The survey's conclusion states that:

Library collections, including books, magazines, and multi-media materials, appeared throughout the survey as a priority for the PACL to invest. In particular, library collections represented the top motivator of library usage – at both PACL branches and non-PACL libraries. It was also a top reason for satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the libraries. In addition, collections consistently emerged as some of the most important program and service improvements tested, including access to other library collections with a Palo Alto Library card and access to web-based references and electronic databases.

Preliminary data released by the Auditor's Office found that 71% of residents rated the variety of library materials as good or excellent, which placed Palo Alto only in the 43rd percentile compared to the other jurisdictions that participated in the most recent *National Citizen Survey*.

Despite the widely-expressed perception that PACL's collection should be improved, the City's support of collections is comparable to that of similar communities in California (see Library Collections section, Appendix G of the LSMAR report), and the Friends of the Palo Alto Library make significant contributions to enhance library collections - \$135,000 granted in 2006-07.

The 2006-07 adopted budget for the purchase and leasing of print, media, and electronic collections is \$579,077, or \$9.32 per capita. However, when compared to expenditures for collections in 1987, adjusted for the increase in the Bay Area CPI, it is evident that the purchasing power for library collections has been decreasing. The average spent per capita that year was \$7.22 per capita, which equates to \$13.14 in today's dollars.

While PACL has an adequate collection for a medium-size library, essential duplication across the branch system means less depth than a collection of its size might otherwise have. The Community Survey found that the principal reason that Palo Altans visited libraries outside of the City is because they have materials PACL doesn't. Although it is clear that access to an improved method of borrowing books from other libraries, such as the Link+ system, is a desired service and will benefit those needing titles beyond the scope of PACL's collection, this should not be seen as an acceptable substitute for improving the Library's collection. A common complaint is that popular items have long waits. In addition, the existing collection is not properly housed or displayed and, in many cases, exceeds standards for shelving capacity.

Successful steps have been taken in recent years to weed items; lease, outsource, and purchase more efficiently; to build collections in new areas such as online reference databases, books in Chinese and Russian languages, media and e-books; and to improve access by facilitating online holds and delivery to library branches.

The collection recommendations build on these successes to provide a more complete overall collection and greater access, variety, and refreshment throughout the system. As previously noted, the Library will explore joining a resource sharing service with other libraries in early 2007 (e.g. Link+). The Library will also work to explore ways to get more materials out to the community, especially those who are homebound.

The LSMAR collection recommendations are:

- Improve the currency of the book collections at all libraries
- Invest in more licensed electronic databases
- Improve the media collections
- Buy more copies of popular titles to reduce the waiting time for holds
- Offer a greater variety of e-books
- Expand collections in non-English languages
- Maintain a small collection of children's books at Main when Children's Library reopens
- Experiment with loaning MP3 players preloaded with audiobooks
- Add sufficient staff to support collection increases – to order and prepare new materials for public use

Technology

In addition to free WiFi access and public computers with access to the Internet in all branches, by far the greatest progress in recent years has been enhanced content in the

web catalog, rich website content, and the Library's multi-server/application environment. The Library works closely with the City's Information Technology Division and allocates 1.5 FTE to focus on technology. A significant change in recent years has been the public's whole-hearted embrace of self-service access of the catalog from home and checkout machines that free staff to assist and serve customers in other ways.

The Library must continue to leverage current and emerging technologies to improve access and efficiency and embrace evolving technology that improves service delivery. While it is difficult to anticipate the changes ahead, Library technology investment must continue to keep pace with the trends and user needs.

The LSMAR recommendations for technology improvements are:

- Develop a multi-year technology plan in 2007-08 (described below)
- Investigate the feasibility and cost to join Link+ or a similar resource-sharing system to facilitate access to collections at other libraries
- Provide enhanced services on public laptop and desktop computers
- Extend the loaner laptop program to College Terrace & Downtown libraries
- Enhance the library website and provide online registration for library cards and online tutorials for learning how to use library resources
- Increase remote access to reference service through technologies such as instant messaging
- Increase staffing devoted to support the increasing use of technology to deliver library service
- Increase training budget for library technology staff

The process for developing the technology plan should include the establishment of a task force of City IT and library staff and citizens (including high tech professionals and youth) to inform and provide direction to the planning process. Among the technologies that should be evaluated are RFID and automated materials and how the Library adapts to them. It is anticipated that such a task force could also explore digitization opportunities, emerging technologies, possible partnerships with Silicon Valley companies to pilot innovations, and more.

Finally, the LAC recommends that facility improvements focus on providing flexible spaces that are adaptable for new technology.

Staffing

The heart of strong library programs and services is a highly trained and innovative staff. The Palo Alto City Library has an excellent and dedicated staff that works hard to present programs and services, evaluate them in light of changing needs, and assist the public in getting the most out of library resources. But additional investment is needed. While circulation and visitor counts have steadily increased over time, staffing and budget have remained relatively constant. Palo Alto's FTE per 1,000 hours open and FTE per 100,000 circulation fall below comparable communities with multiple branches.

With staff focused on basic operation and facility problems, little time is left for the breadth of service libraries should deliver.

The LAC recommends that staff be reorganized, cross-trained, and redeployed to better meet the changing needs of library customers, such as proactive customer service, new reference models, technology-based services, and volunteer management.

The LSMAR recommendations for staffing are:

- Increase staffing to adequately support current schedule of library hours
- Fund staffing increases needed to support recommended improvements in hours, programs, collections, and technology (as previously detailed)
- Hire an hourly custodian to improve the cleanliness of library facilities
- Restructure management organization to create an Assistant Director position
- Restructure staff to provide sufficient time for grant writing and fund development

Scaled Recommendations for Library Services

Attachment A is a list of LSMAR improvements to library services and is presented in scaled versions of enhancements available with existing funds, plus mid-tier and top-tier levels of improvement requiring additional investments. Top-tier items include all recommendations in the LSMAR. The mid-tier was approved by the LAC (4-1, Stinger no, Gerard and Skokowski absent) as a subset of the top-tier recommendations.

Library Facilities

In recent years, City Council has consistently voted to maintain all five PACL branches, further underscoring a strong community preference most recently validated by the results of the Community Survey. Accordingly, the LAC has focused on recommending facility improvements to make all library facilities community-wide resources in keeping with their history and changing needs, and to avoid duplication wherever possible.

With the exception of Children's Library, which is under renovation and expansion, all facilities need to be upgraded to address increased usage and to improve appeal, efficiency, and accessibility. As the only library south of Oregon Expressway, Mitchell Park Library is the most substandard given its high use and circulation rates. It is literally bursting at the seams and space constraints bring the library to a standstill when a program occurs or youth use the library after school. While each library serves the entire community, this plan calls for sustaining Downtown and College Terrace libraries as neighborhood branches, and developing Mitchell Park and Main libraries as the core of the library system, complemented by the historic Children's Library.

The LAC envisions library facilities serving many functions that evolve over time. It is recommended that the City provide spaces for small and large group use, quiet study and conversation, and program rooms. The key is to create flexible spaces. It is also

recommended that as upgrades are made, our Libraries be on the forefront of “green-building” standards.

The facility recommendations call for completion of planned upgrades in the City of Palo Alto Infrastructure Management Plan (IMP) and additional capital improvements outside the IMP. In addition, recommendations focus on ensuring that lighting, temperature controls, and furniture provide inviting spaces. The LSMAR also calls for the development of a funding plan so each facility gets minimal renovation at least every 15 years.

The largest item in the facility recommendations focuses on rebuilding Mitchell Park Library to develop it as a full service library with the capacity to meet the current and future service demands of that facility. The need for significant improvement, best accomplished by building a new, larger facility, has been confirmed by the facility planning study that is nearing completion. The needs include more seating and public computers, a dedicated space for children’s programs, group study space, room to grow and properly house the collections, and a meeting room for general programming.

Another priority is the addition of group study space and a program room to Main Library. The space reconfiguration project soon to be underway at Main Library will remove the large public service desks, giving more space for display of collections and an expanded public area. However, these upgrades will not create the needed group study spaces or a program room.

Scaled Recommendations for Library Facilities

On November 16, 2006 the LAC unanimously (5-0, Skokowski and Stucky absent) passed three resolutions concerning library facilities. The LAC recommends that the Council:

- Move forward with Group 4’s Option 3 (combined library and community center) for an enhanced Mitchell Park Library recognizing the many advantages and opportunities of a joint use facility. The LAC acknowledges the library program can be accommodated in Option 2 (new stand alone library) but strongly urges the Council to recognize the needs of the community and to plan for the future.
- Expand planned infrastructure improvements for the Main, College Terrace and Downtown Libraries to include updates to public and staff spaces in the form of fresh paint, carpeting, better lighting, and sufficient funds be provided for new furniture and shelving.
- Further analyze the needs at Main Library for group study space and a program room.

The LAC voted (6-0, Stucky absent) not to recommend expanding Mitchell Park Library by building an addition on to the current library (Option 1 of the study by Group 4) as the design would create inefficiencies in the floor plan, would not address current problems

with the site, and would require expensive underground parking. The other options would provide a more efficient library program, seamless outdoor/indoor integration, improved accessibility, and eliminate the need for expensive underground parking. The joint community service/library facility is recommended as it could create opportunities for program efficiencies and economies. The LAC also believes a new facility is an opportunity to leverage future revenue through enhanced rental space.

As it was necessary to complete the LSMAR report before Group 4 finalized its facility study, the LAC determined it was premature to develop scaled options for facilities. Instead, the LAC recommends that both the low and high ranges of sizes for a new Mitchell Park Library or combined library/community center be further evaluated as additional information on the costs and site impacts is developed. More information on the costs to upgrade Main Library and make the additional improvements at Downtown and College Terrace libraries is also needed before an informed recommendation on how to scale or phase in these improvements can be made. The final report by Group 4 will provide preliminary costs for some of these improvements.

IV. ADDITIONAL COST IMPLICATIONS OF AN EXPANDED MITCHELL PARK LIBRARY

Associated with an expansion of Mitchell Park Library are added costs for collection expansion and some additional staff to operate a larger facility. These costs are not presented in the scaled options for service improvements as the latter are independent of any building expansion.

The LAC proposes increasing the size of the collection at Mitchell Park to 120,000 – 150,000 volumes, from the current size of approximately 80,000 volumes. The cost to achieve this growth, if phased in over 10 years, would total \$1.5 million at the high end. While the growth could be planned over a longer period, the facility should be planned to accommodate a collection of that size to meet the needs for the next 50 years. Endowments for collection growth and/or grants from library support groups could provide the financial support to reduce the impact on the City's operating budget.

The need for additional staffing will be driven by the configuration of the new library (1 or 2 story and the number of service points), anticipated increased use, collection expansion, and will be mitigated by the adoption of RFID and materials sorting technologies. The library consultant working with Group 4 has estimated that from 1.75 to 4.5 additional FTE will be needed at Mitchell Park, depending on the building configuration selected. This assumes continued high use of self-checkout machines and the installation of an automated materials handling system. Increases in staffing should be phased in as the need becomes demonstrated.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS ON OTHER COUNCIL DIRECTIVES

Directive: Be explicit about service levels at Main assuming that the Main Library will continue to serve adults, teens and children.

The revised LSMAR continues the current level of services at Main Library.

Directive: Maintain 4th and 5th grade services at Children's Library

The revised LSMAR maintains 4th and 5th grade services at Children's Library.

Directive: Provide more analysis of strategies related to City/School partnerships

LAC recommends that the City Council forge a stronger partnership with the PAUSD School Board to provide seamless library services to students. Possible areas of increased collaboration include collections, technology, programs, facilities, and staffing.

According to the City of Palo Alto Community Profile (2005) over 17% of Palo Alto residents are ages five to 19 years. The majority of Palo Alto youth attend Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) schools. Thus, our public schools provide an effective vehicle to market and deliver library services, especially those services that enhance K-12 education. Thanks to the work of the PACL School Liaison and Youth Services staff, and a tradition of informal collaboration, much is already happening including library card campaigns, web-based services, school field trips to libraries and librarian visits to campuses, parent and teacher education, and after-school homework support (see Attachment C for overview of current collaboration). But much potential remains for future partnership – especially at the high school level.

To address this directive, the LAC worked with PAUSD and City staff and sought input from the Palo Alto Council of PTAs to analyze existing and future opportunities for City/School partnerships. The LAC recommends the following areas for future collaboration (Attachment C provides a more detailed analysis) should the City Council and School Board forge a stronger partnership:

Collections Collaboration

- Collaboration on database subscriptions
- High school textbooks available for use in PACL
- Enhanced collections for curriculum and homework support

Technology

- Transparency between PACL and PAUSD online catalogs
- Facilitated methods to enable students to use PACL cards to access licensed databases from schools
- Increased use of technology to support homework needs

Programs

- Reference staff available by e-mail and phone to students (and possibly adding instant messaging service)
- Homework assistance
- After school programs for youth that bridge the time between school and family
- More author fairs, class visits, talks, and book discussions
- Library-operated delivery van for outreach and service to schools for student use
- Enhanced information research skills for high school students
- Continued Library card campaigns

Facilities

- Flexible spaces for student use in PACL facilities
- Use of School libraries for students after hours

Staffing

- New PACL teen librarian position for 20 hours per week in middle and high schools
- Joint training opportunities for PACL and PAUSD librarians

VI. CONCLUSION

As this report is finalized, there is new momentum in support of the Palo Alto City Library. Now is the time to communicate a vision and make the case to the community. Once the Library audit is complete, it is also essential to ensure the community that the Library is running as efficiently as possible before asking for additional investment. The LAC will work with staff on developing effective means to raise awareness and move community dialogue forward. Additionally, the Commission will support the Council in the consideration of a diverse funding formula for recommended improvements.

The LAC urges the Council to ensure that the Palo Alto City Library continues to be a cornerstone of the community, a vital gateway to information that captures history and commitment to the future, with a stimulating environment that provides inclusive access and a commitment to lifelong learning. To quote one LAC Commissioner,

Libraries help us participate in the free circulation of ideas and information. They are its foundation – essential, evolving public institutions deserving of our full social and financial support.

Today, more than ever, Palo Alto needs a better than average library system.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: Scaled Options for Library Service Improvements
- Attachment B: Library Programs – Current and Recommended
- Attachment C: Analysis of Strategies Related to City/School Library Partnerships
- Attachment D: LSMAR report with appendices.