RECOMMENDATION
The Library Advisory Commission (LAC) and staff recommend the Council review the attached draft report: Library Service Model Analysis and Recommendations, and provide feedback to the LAC prior to its presentation of the final report on June 26.

BACKGROUND
In December 2004 the Palo Alto City Council directed the Library Advisory Commission 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.” Since that time, the Commission has been conducting research, writing the attached draft report, and soliciting community input on the proposed plan.

A key set of data for this plan is a community library survey. With the approval of the Council, the Library commissioned a random-sample survey of the community in January 2006 to assess priorities and preferences for library services and service delivery methods. Overall, the Commission agreed there were four important take-aways from the community survey. The survey showed that having a strong and comprehensive collection of books and other materials is of critical importance to Palo Altans. Also receiving high ratings were convenience and access, including more convenient hours of operation, and more services and programs for children and teens. Comfortable and convenient facilities and maintaining the branch library system were also emphasized.

Other information considered in developing these recommendations included census and demographic data about Palo Alto, interviews with the directors of neighboring libraries, a
review of best practices and trends in public library service, and two public meetings jointly sponsored by Palo Altans for Government Effectiveness (PAGE) and the City of Palo Alto.

Four community meetings were held between May 4 and May 10 to share an overview of the plan and to hear comments from members of the community. Due to the tight time frame in which these meetings, the May 11 LAC meeting and the deadline for the Council agenda packet took place, the comments from these meetings have not been incorporated into the draft report. They will be summarized during the Commission’s presentation.

**DISCUSSION**

In an early brainstorming meeting, prior to establishing the draft recommendations, the Library Advisory Commission agreed on the following fundamental ideas, or guiding principles.

1. Branches are important. We are starting with the existing five locations and defining what needs to be done to each one.
2. Collections need to be bigger, better and more current. Collections go beyond books and media.
3. Hours need to be increased.
4. The Library needs more space. There need to be appropriate spaces for expanded collections and for different library uses.
5. The Library needs a staffing plan that will meet changing needs.
6. Successful homework areas or similar services will require a strong partnership with the schools.
7. Palo Altans want seamless access to other libraries’ collections with their Palo Alto Library cards.
8. Flexibility is important because everything is going to change.
9. The Library must be able to scale in appropriate technology.
10. People value the library as a place to go, so all facilities need to be renovated. At Mitchell Park, cosmetic improvements will not be sufficient. Only a substantial expansion and upgrade will provide the required extra space for enhanced services.

**RESOURCE IMPACT**

As of this date, a major section of the report remains unwritten. A discussion of Next Steps and Implementation will be prepared once the LAC receives Council feedback on the attached draft analysis and recommendations. The Commission realizes the Council and the community will need to know more about one-time and ongoing costs and funding options when considering the final report.

**PREPARED BY:**

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ATTACHMENTS
Attachment A: Draft Library Service Model Analysis and Recommendations
Attachment B: 4/12/06 Letter from the Friends of the Palo Alto Library