TO:       HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL
FROM:     CITY MANAGER         DEPARTMENT: LIBRARY
DATE:     August 1, 2005        CMR: 336:05
SUBJECT:  APPROVAL OF LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMISSION’S RECOMMENDATION TO FUND A SURVEY OF COMMUNITY PRIORITIES FOR LIBRARY SERVICE

RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends that the City Council approve the Library Advisory Commission’s (LAC’s) request for funding, not to exceed $35,000, for a survey to assess community priorities for library service; and that this funding be provided from the Council’s Contingency Fund.

DISCUSSION
The Library Advisory Commission is working on a referral from the City Council to develop a long-range plan for library service in Palo Alto. In December 2004, the Library Director and City Manager presented a set of recommendations for reconfiguring the Library’s service model. The Council rejected these recommendations, and instead 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… recommend a redefinition of branch services.”

The Commission began its work by developing a matrix of library services and library service delivery methods, as a way of defining the universe of service possibilities. It concluded that library service models are not necessarily limited by technology or logistics, and that the optimal service model is a function of community needs and choices plus economic feasibility. The Commission believes community input is needed to determine and validate a prioritized list of services and service delivery methods. This community input will be sought through a community survey conducted by a reputable, objective and impartial survey firm with experience working with public libraries.

The survey will be completed by December 2005. The LAC will draft its report to the Council and review it with the Library’s partner groups, the Friends of the Palo Alto Library and the Palo Alto Library Foundation, before presenting it, including results of the survey and the Commission’s recommendations, in March 2006.
**BOARD/COMMISSION REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS**
The Commission has determined that a random sample survey of the community is the best way to assess citizens’ top priorities for library services and service delivery methods. A random sample survey, producing an accurate, reliable and timely measure of public opinion, will be conducted. The LAC will use this information to formulate its recommended plan, which will be presented to the Council in March of 2006.

**RESOURCE IMPACT**
Funding for a community survey was not included in the Library’s budget for FY 05/06. In order to conduct the survey, the LAC requests that the Council designate up to $35,000 from the Council Contingency Fund for this project.

If the Council approves this funding request, rather than returning with a separate CMR/BAO exclusively for this item, a portion of the existing FY 05/06 Library budget will be used for this project. As part of the mid-year budget review in the spring, staff will return to Council with a request to transfer funds from the Council Contingency to replenish the Library budget for expenses related to this project.

**PREPARED BY:**

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**CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:**

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