



June 8, 2017

TO: Library Advisory Commission

FROM: Alex Perez, Library Services Manager

RE: Library lending period review FOLLOW UP

Dear LAC members,

Thank you for the discussion on the Palo Alto City Library's lending period review at the April 27 LAC meeting. Per your request, I am providing follow-up information for your review and consideration.

Summary

The Palo Alto City Library is reviewing its standard lending period to determine whether to change it from 4 weeks to 3 weeks. Changing the standard lending period would put PACL in alignment with the majority of other libraries in the region.

Needs and benefits

- Aligning PACL's standard lending period with other libraries in the region will allow for better comparative assessment of library usage. Because circulation is measured by the total number of check-out and renewal transactions, our current four-week lending period reduces renewal transactions in the many instances where library patrons utilize materials for extended periods of time. This depresses overall circulation statistics. Thus PACL faces a structural disadvantage when assessing its circulation performance in comparison to other libraries.
- Changing the lending period to three weeks can reduce the amount of time library patrons have to wait for high-demand material. A shorter lending period will allow the queue of patrons with holds on high-demand material to move more quickly, providing library patrons with better access. This can also potentially lower the need for the library to purchase additional copies to meet hold demand.

Addressing impact

- While shortening the standard lending period can be seen as a disruption to library patron expectations, negative impact and perception can be reduced or eliminated by the implementation of automatic renewals. PACL is exploring a mechanism within our Integrated Library System (ILS) that would automatically renew all checked out materials at the end of the loan period. This function will allow library users to avoid overdue charges in most circumstances. For patrons needing to keep material beyond three weeks, the ILS will automatically renew items. This will create seamlessness between the old and new lending period standards and add a significant benefit for library users that should offset negative perception of the loan period change.

I am happy to provide further information and analysis if needed.