



March 10, 2021

Dear President Silva and Members of the Library Board,

This letter is to bring you up to date on activities during the months of January and February, 2021 and to provide a look forward to some of the activities, programs and plans we are working on.

Modified Library Services Reports: (Consent Agenda). Just a reminder that I have not included the “regular” Library Services Report in your Board Packet because we aren’t collecting most of those statistics. I have included some numbers, trends, and other interesting activities/services provided to the community during the closure. The Expenditure Reports and Check Registers for January and February are also included.

Main Library Update. Nearly all our full time vacancies are filled! Our new Senior Librarians (Rosemary VanLare, Lauren Walton, and Jenny Gillette) and Library Technicians (Trina Dikitanan, Briana Surmick and Fernada Nunez Gutierrez) have all started work and are in training. They all fit in well with our existing team and we expect by the time we do open our doors for a limited opening we will all be ready to go. Supervising Librarian Sierra Campagna is preparing to re-open the Librarian I recruitment soon since we did not have a suitable candidate from the eligible list. At this time, all staff who can work from home are still being given the opportunity to work from home, 2 or 3 days a week. A few people, mostly the part timers, cannot work from home and those folks are our front line warriors who staff the popular Library Takeout. Face coverings are required while working unless you are in a private office or have a work space with dividers well above your head. Staff have been very good in following the rules of distancing, face coverings, cleaning the shared spaces and observing room occupancies. We have squeezed our budget and have ordered custom Plexiglas dividers for all public service desks and staff workrooms so we can use each workstation. We did receive portable Plexiglas screens for public facing desktops but in using them for Library Takeout, we found them inadequate and we actually broke one when a customer accidentally pushed it and it fell to the floor.

Staff has completed our plan for our Limited Opening 2.5 (LO2.5) which we expect to implement when the county goes to the Red Tier. LO2.5 would add four computers, a print station, the public scanner and a copy machine to the Dewey’s Café space and Library Takeout continues from the front of the building. A Reference Librarian or Computer Lab Technician will staff the space and answer questions. Customers would enter from the back parking lot patio entrance. There would be a 30 minute time limit to use the computer with the possibility of extending an additional 30 minutes if no one is waiting. Restrooms would only be available on the first floor in the café. No plans to change hours of operation. Our staff team, led by Supervising Librarian Marlon Romero and Circulation Coordinator Kevin Tam, are finalizing plans for our Limited Opening 3.0. This plan would be implemented when the county goes to the Orange Tier. The plan may include opening both floors of the Main Library to only 30 members of the public for 30 minutes. Computers will be on the open floor (no longer in the café) and available for 30 minutes. No computers will be available in the children’s department during this phase. There will be no lounge seating, only chairs at the computers which will be limited to one per table (currently four). We will encourage people to come in, locate what they are looking for and use the Express Check stations to check out and leave. There will be staff available at the checkout desk should they need

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assistance. Masks will be required, social distancing & hand-washing encouraged. Hand sanitizer will be strategically placed around the building (service desks, self-checkout, etc.) Restrooms on both floors will be open for public use. At this point, we have not made plans to change our hours of operation but are looking at possible schedules to see if we can add a morning to the Library Takeout schedule. There is no time table to reopen the two neighborhood libraries.

It is the staff desire to be vaccinated before allowing members of the public into our buildings but we are not certain of the timing of vaccinations for the various groups. The City continues to work to get city employees classified as essential but not all groups are receiving that designation. Public Safety both sworn and non-sworn; child care workers (Tiny Tots, Rec Leaders, others working directly with children); and Emergency Operations Workers are eligible from the City. Few library employees fall into the 65 years and older category. We take all precautions to keep a healthy work force and healthy work place.

West End Library. We were having an issue with a person or persons sleeping in the bushes next the West End book drop porch. They were continually cutting chunks out of the bushes to create space for their belongings by the back wall and fence and another spot in the bushes for additional belongings. The individuals refused assistive services when offered by the outreach team then we never saw them, just their belongings and trash. Then they began urinating and defecating back there and the smell and mess became overwhelming. No amount of water helped to dissipate the smell. As a result we had the planting area cleared of chest high vegetation, decreased the planting strip by about ½ by widening the walkway and paving it in, the re-planted the area with groundcover (Red Creeping Thyme) that will only grow, maybe, ankle or knee high. The work was completed March 2 and it looks so much cleaner. Branch staff continue to work at the branches two days a week to keep the collections in good shape, do the pull lists for Library Takeout and to familiarize the new employees to those locations, all are much happier with the new landscaping.

Jean Sweeney Open Space. Recreation and Parks Director Amy Wooldridge contacted me to say Alameda Recreation and Parks Department will be applying for a Statewide Park Program competitive grant (funded by Prop 68 – the Parks, Environment, and Water Bond Act of 2018) to fund the development of the western portion of the Jean Sweeney Open Space. The western portion is where the community gardens, the food bank and hopefully a Seed and Tool Library will be located. Back at the beginning of the future planning for the open space the Library proposed a small seed and tool library. ARPD agreed and the community meetings agreed that a seed and tool library would be a great amenity to that area. ARPD would provide the footprint and the shell of the building with water and electrical hookups. The Friends of the Library are pledging \$75K for the build out of the new seed and tool library. The small collection we have at the main library would be transferred to this new location. According to Director Wooldridge, this is the final round of competitive grants with \$395.2M available for award (I don't know how much the City is requesting) and the City may find out about the award during the late summer or early fall 2021. This will be an exciting project if it received funding. We will talk more about this project at the March Library Board meeting.

American Red Cross Blood Drives. The Library continues to host our quarterly Red Cross Blood Drives. The next Blood Drive will be on March 9, from noon to 5:00 p.m. There is an urgent need for blood donations to the Red Cross is very appreciative that we are able to continue to host the Blood Drives. The March 9 Blood Drive is completely booked although they may have a few no shows and can

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take a few walk-in donors. The one “glitch” that never seems to get corrected is that my name and direct office number is listed on the Red Cross flyer and people keep calling me for an appointment!

National Park Service Japanese American Containment Site Grant Project. This project continues to move forward. The archivist, Brad Shirakawa, is busy sorting through photographs and documents, meeting with various church members to pick up boxes of family memories and scan photos and identify people and places and things. It's both tedious and fascinating. Some documents require extensive clean up when scanned into a MSWord document and I was going to apply for an Intern from the San Jose iSchool but the more he thought about it, he is doubtful that he would have enough regular hours for the Intern to work. We may use a very tech savvy high school student through the church or temple. This project team meets the first Tuesday of each month and smaller groups meet as necessary in-between.

Japantown Historical Markers. This project team is working on the content for the four markers, the selection of photographs and what the written content focus for each marker is under way. We hope to have content ready for editing by the end of March and layout for fabrication to begin in April. Fabrication is estimated to take about four months. The goal is to have the four markers mounted by the end of August so the Fall Art Walk produced by Rhythmix Cultural Works can happen on September 17. The name of the project is: “Tonarigumi: Lost & Found” Alameda Japantown Historical Marker Project. The word, “tonari” is “neighbor” in Japanese, Tonarigumi is a neighborhood association. A logo will be developed that will be on all four markers. The marker on the library will focus on neighborhood & sense of community; on the Marketplace the focus will be early community, businesses; on the Buddhist Temple the focus will be early beginnings Japanese school, evacuation, resettlement & religion; and at the Buena Vista United Methodist Church the marker will focus on early community activities, evacuation, resettlement, religion & family. I am working on paperwork, obtaining the easement from the property owner at the Marketplace and managing the funding for the Library and Marketplace markers with our pro bono consultant and the fabricator of the markers. This project team meets the second Wednesday of each month with smaller group meetings as needed.

Friends of the Library. The Friends are doing an amazing job with their virtual programming, “Friends at Home.” If you do not receive the Friends newsletters, you should sign up, they have so many great authors and art docent lectures on the calendar. To sign up for the newsletter, click here: <https://alamedafriends.us14.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=65dd7a20d116500b76de71a2d&id=6bedb2bb93>

They are trying to record their programs (with the permission from the author/speaker) and you can watch the recordings on their YouTube channel: <https://alamedafriends.com/category/past-events/> Since the first of the calendar year they have had over 3,000 people register for/attend their various virtual events. They have become quite adept at managing the Zoom audiences!

The new online book store is going well. Now that the State Shelter in Place has been lifted, I am allowing the book sale volunteers to come into the book sorting room again. They are still NOT accepting donation but they have a lot to work with. Any books purchased by Thursday will be delivered to Alameda residents on Saturday; purchasers who live out of Alameda can pick up their selections in the parking lot behind the main library in Alameda on the corner of Oak and Lincoln on Saturday between 10:00 AM and 11:00AM. To assist the book sale group, the library is lending them a wireless scanner to

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see if they have valuable donations or not. Since the library wasn't using the scanner and the Friends were curious, we lent them one. This is an experiment that is just beginning.

The next Friends Board meeting will be on Monday, March 22, 2021 via Zoom at 6:30 p.m.

Alameda Reads. The Alameda Reads office is still closed to learners and tutors. Only minimal work is being completed. Program Coordinator Barb Papik and Office Administrator Red Lustig mail materials to participants so the tutors and learners have what they need to continue learning process. Barb Papik is in touch with other literacy programs around the state so she keeps abreast of new ideas to connect with her learners and tutors.

If you have any questions about the items to be considered at the Board meeting, or if you would like to discuss these or any other items, please email me at jchisaki@alamedaca.gov or if it is not urgent, please leave me a message at 747-7747.

Sincerely,



Jane Chisaki
Library Director