



CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY RECEIVED

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OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

MEMORANDUM

TO: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

FROM: Susan M. Flannery, Director of Libraries *SF*

DATE: April 23, 1996

RE: Council Order #055, dated 3/25/96

The Cambridge Public Library Strategic Plan states that, "The Cambridge Public Library is designed to work as a unified system with a strong main library and six active branch libraries each tailored to the unique constituencies and needs of its immediate neighborhood". The Board of Library Trustees and library staff are committed to this vision in their planning for future library services.

A larger main library building will, at a minimum, generate additional costs for utilities and maintenance. Energy efficient fixtures, zone controls for HVAC, and proper insulation will assist in controlling some of those costs. Because the Main Library shares an electrical and heating system with the high school, the library does not now pay for its electricity and heat. While an adjustment will have to be made in the library budget to reflect the change in operations, it is almost impossible to estimate the utility and maintenance costs of a new facility without a final design.

Regarding additional staffing costs, it is to be expected that a new building will attract new users but it is difficult to predict how many. Cambridge already has a very high rate of library use so the margin for growth might not be as large as it has been in other communities. The design of the new library facilitates "self-service" with high interest materials prominently displayed, a unified collection, online catalogs throughout, self-check out stations, and helpful signage. Many features in a new facility will also allow staff to work more effectively: one check out desk instead of two, elevator access to the book collection so books to be re-shelved don't have to be hand carried, adequate computers will eliminate the need to maintain a reservation system, and multiple computers in the reference room will allow for group training rather than the current system of one-on-one instruction.

Main Library	Boudreau Branch	Central Square Branch	Collins Branch	O'Connell Branch	North Branch	Valente Branch
449 Broadway	245 Concord Avenue	45 Pearl Street	64 Aberdeen Avenue	48 Sixth Street	70 Rindge Avenue	826 Cambridge Street
Cambridge, MA 02138	02138	02139	02138	02141	02140	02141
617-349-4040	349-4017	349-4010	349-4021	349-4019	349-4023	349-4015

Increasing library usage at the Main Library has created a current need for additional staff that is unrelated to a new facility. The library, along with other city departments, experienced budget reductions in FY82 after the implementation of Proposition 2 1/2. Since that time, circulation has increased 74%, yet staffing remains 11 FTE's below what it was in 1979. In the past five years there have been modest increases in staff to meet increased public demand: a full-time children's librarian, three part-time para-professionals, and a full-time reference librarian. The Main Library facility will be designed to work with the current staff but the public's demand for service may require additional staff.

Neither the Library Board of Trustees or the staff envision an expansion of the Main Library at the expense of the branch libraries. Each has a unique role that is strengthened by the whole of the system.

The Main Library currently provides all administrative support, building maintenance, purchasing, computer technical support, book ordering, and cataloging to the branch libraries. Main library staff are also used to cover branches for vacations, sick leave, etc. when necessary. Among other things, the strategic plan calls for:

- providing wheelchair access to the O'Connell, Valente, and O'Neill Branches

- replacing roof, painting interior, refinishing floors, and new shelving at the Collins Branch

- repainting and recarpeting Central Square

- purchasing computers for all branches

- initiating cooperative relationship with schools

This work will be done over the next few years, assuming modest capital funds are available.

A new main library facility is a major part of the library's strategic plan but it is not the only focus. The trustees and staff trust that the City will be committed to a thriving library system.

Private donations until recently have not been actively solicited. Nevertheless, small donations have trickled in over the years and several trust funds have been established. A few overtures to the business community generated \$11,000 this year and the recent initiation of a "Friends of the Library" campaign has garnered over \$18,000 in the past four months. The Trustees are exploring the establishment of a library endowment fund which would supplement operations funding from the City. There is untapped potential in the community for private fund-raising and sponsorship. A new facility could be an excellent vehicle for such efforts.



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City Manager

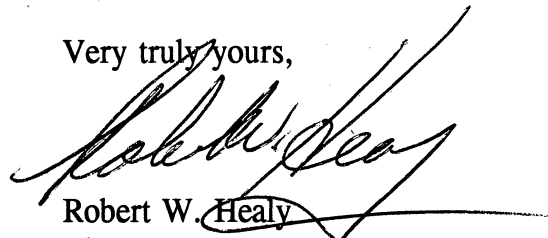
RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

April 29, 1996

To The Honorable, the City Council:

As requested by the Finance Committee Chair to aid in budget discussions, please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 26 regarding an evaluation of the future operating costs of the Main Library and its affects on the branch libraries, received from Susan Flannery, Library Director.

Very truly yours,



Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
attachment

Consent Agenda #15

S-237

Relative to Awaiting Report Item
number 26 regarding an evaluation
of the future operating cost of the
Main Library and its affects on the
branch libraries.

In City Council April 29, 1996

Placed on file