

## PUBLIC ADVISORY REGARDING COVID-19 AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Consistent with Executive Order No. N-29-20 issued by Governor Newsom on March 17, 2020, and the County of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency Shelter In Place Public Health Order dated March 31, 2020, the regular meetings of the:

### **LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMISSION (LAC) ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2020 AT 6:30 PM**

**This meeting will be held via Zoom teleconference ONLY**

Commissioners and Library Staff Members will be participating remotely via videoconference.

#### **Public Participation:**

The meeting will be broadcast through the Santa Cruz Libraries YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/user/SantaCruzPL> which you can access through the Santa Cruz Libraries website by scrolling to the bottom of the page and clicking on the YouTube icon.

For those wishing to participate via Zoom you can join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device by entering or clicking on the following URL: <https://zoom.us/j/95328798258>

For those joining using a telephone only, please call:

1 833 548 0276 (Toll Free) or 1 833 548 0282 (Toll Free)

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Slowly enter the Webinar ID of 953 2879 8258

The meetings will be recorded and posted for viewing after the meetings on the Santa Cruz Public Libraries website [www.santacruzpl.org](http://www.santacruzpl.org)

#### **How to comment on agenda items via email before the meeting:**

Members of the public may provide public comment by sending comments via email to the Library Board Clerk at [scplboardclerk@santacruzpl.org](mailto:scplboardclerk@santacruzpl.org)

- Identify the agenda item number in the subject line of the email.
- Emailed comments should be a maximum of 500 words, which corresponds to approximately 3 minutes of speaking time.
- Each emailed comment will be read aloud for up to three minutes.
- Emails received by [scplboardclerk@santacruzpl.org](mailto:scplboardclerk@santacruzpl.org) outside of the comment period outlined above will not be included in the record.

#### **How to comment on agenda items via Zoom, during the meeting and prior to the close of public comment on an item:**

- Identify the agenda item
- Type your comment using the Q&A feature of the Zoom teleconference participant panel

**How to comment on agenda items via telephone, during the meeting and prior to the close of public comment on an item:**

- Call 831-427-7713
- Identify the agenda item
- The representative will type your comment
- Your comment will be read aloud



## LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2020

6:30 PM

### 1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Commissioners Lindsay Bass, Bruce Cotter, Rena Dubin, Jim Landreth, Mary Ripma, Bob White and Tricia Wynne

### 2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

### 3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

*Any member of the audience may address the Board on any matter either on or off the agenda that is within the Board's jurisdiction. Note, however, that the Board is not able to undertake extended discussion or act on non-agendized items. Such items can be referred to staff for appropriate action which may include placement on a future agenda. If you intend to address a subject that is on the Agenda, please hold your comments regarding that item until it is before the Board so that we may properly address all comments on that subject at the same time. In general 3 minutes will be permitted per speaker during Oral Communication; A MAXIMUM of 30 MINUTES is set aside for Oral Communications at this time.*

### 4. REPORT BY LIBRARY DIRECTOR

- A. Library Director's Operations Report (P3-6)
- B. Library Director's Facilities Report (P7-8)

### 5. MEMBER REPORTS

### 6. CONSENT CALENDAR

*All items listed in the "Consent Calendar" will be enacted by one motion in the form listed below. There will be no separate discussion on these items prior to the time the Board votes on the action unless members of the public or the Board request specific items to be discussed for separate review. Items pulled for separate discussion will be considered following General Business.*

- A. Minutes of July 20, 2020  
RECOMMENDED ACTION: Approve Minutes (P9-10)

## 7. GENERAL BUSINESS

*General Business items are intended to provide an opportunity for public discussion of each item listed. The following procedure is followed for each Business item: 1) Staff explanation; 2) Board questions; 3) Public comment; 4) Board deliberation; 5) Decision.*

- A. Library Budget  
STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Review and Accept Library Budget Update (P11-12)
  
- B. 2020 Holiday Closure Proposal  
STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Review and Endorse 2020 Holiday Closure Proposal (P13-14)
  
- C. Library Operational Recommendations under Covid-19  
STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Review and Endorse Library Operation Recommendations under Covid-19 (P15-18)

## 8. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned to the next regular meeting of the Library Advisory Commission to be held on Monday, November 16, 2020 At 6:30 PM via Zoom teleconference.

The Santa Cruz City-County Library System does not discriminate against persons with disabilities. Out of consideration for people with chemical sensitivities, we ask that you attend fragrance free. Upon request, the agenda can be provided in a format to accommodate special needs. Additionally, if you wish to attend this public meeting and will require assistance such as an interpreter for American Sign Language, Spanish, or other special equipment, please call the Library Administration Office at 427-7706 at least five days in advance so that we can arrange for such special assistance, or email [library\\_admin@santacruzpl.org](mailto:library_admin@santacruzpl.org).

## **Library Director's Operations Report**

August and September have proven challenging. The Library has been operating five curbside locations (Aptos, Downtown, Live Oak, Felton and Scotts Valley) and had an aggressive expansion of service plan until the fires in the Santa Cruz Mountains. As evacuation orders were issued, SCPL closed services at the Felton and Scotts Valley branches. About 1/3 of our staff was displaced, living outside of their homes during this period. One staff person lost a home. Many still are living elsewhere due to infrastructure issues and smoke damage. Staffing remaining services has been difficult. As evacuation orders were lifted, we reopened curbside services at the Felton Branch after the Labor Day Weekend. During the crisis, the Library Director signed an MOU turning the Scotts Valley Branch over to CalFire for the length of the incident. The building has been returned and is scheduled to reopen next week.

I really need to acknowledge the amazing work of the first responders. All three San Lorenzo Valley branches remained safe. The fire got incredibly close to our Boulder Creek Branch. Firefighters were able to save the facility. We are not finding internal smoke damage in the buildings.

The Library provided staff for the Emergency Operations Centers and laptops/ charging stations to Evacuation Shelters.

SCPL faced additional difficulties with air quality issues in the region during and after the fire. Continued air quality pollutants in the unhealthy range over 150 on the EPA air quality index requires employers to provide respiratory protection and have a written respiratory protection program that addresses: proper selection of respiratory equipment; employee training; medical evaluation of an employee's ability to wear a respirator; ensuring proper fit of the respirators; and proper respirator use, storage, and cleaning. As a result, libraries around Northern California began closing curbside pickup on days when pollutants exceeded 150. I have included an article from Library Journal that discusses how libraries around the Bay Area are dealing with the issues.

## **Library Journal Article**

### **Libraries Largely Spared, Considering Safety of Curbside Service During Worst California Wildfire Season in State 's History by Lisa Peet Sep 09, 2020 | Filed in News**

California's 2020 wildfire season is one of the worst on record, with fires causing extensive damage to homes, businesses, and forestland. California Gov. Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency on August 18, and more than 1.5 million acres have burned so far. Response and evacuations have been complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as a record-breaking heat wave. The Santa Clara Unit (SCU) and Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit (LNU) Lightning Complex fires, sparked by lightning storms on August 16 and 17, are currently the second- and third-largest fires, respectively, in

California history. Libraries across the state have largely escaped severe fire or smoke damage. However, harsh smoke conditions have curtailed many libraries' curbside or front-door pickup services, and the resources they have offered patrons in past wildfire seasons, such as assistance filing claims and in-library computer use, are impossible to provide safely because of COVID-19 related library closures. Nearly 1,500 structures have been destroyed in the San Mateo–Santa Cruz Unit (CZU) Lightning Complex fires, including a number of historic buildings in Big Basin Redwoods State Park, and they have caused at least one fatality. The University of California, Santa Cruz completely evacuated its campus on the night of August 22; the evacuation order was lifted on August 31, although some buildings remain closed. “We have been lucky in regard to the CZU and SCU lightning complex fires,” San José City Librarian Jill Bourne told LJ. “We did have some branches that were impacted by smoke and poor air quality for a few days” at San José Public Library, she added. “There have been some power outages, and some staff were told to evacuate their homes at one point, but otherwise, our express services have continued.”

Sacramento has also seen extreme smoke conditions. Out of concerns for staff safety, “we closed curbside for a couple of days to allow us to develop protocols for the new normal,” Sacramento Public Library Director Rivkah Sass told LJ at the beginning of September. “Right now, since our libraries are closed, we believe staff is quite safe with minimal time outside.” Because the library’s service area covers a thousand square miles, decisions about when staff can work vary widely among the 28 branches. “We had larger concerns about our delivery drivers who, of course, do jobs that require a lot of in and out as well as physical exertion. We’re comfortable now that we can do the right thing, including closing different libraries in different areas of the county,” said Sass. “What works in our North Highlands–Antelope Library doesn’t necessarily work in our tiny Delta branches.”

#### PREPARED IN SONOMA

In Napa, Sonoma, Santa Cruz, and parts of San Mateo County, the multiple fires of the LNU Lightning Complex have been burning since August 17. Initial evacuation orders in Sonoma County were lifted by late August but then reinstated on September 7; as of press time evacuation orders for most residents have been lifted again. Because Sonoma County Library (SCL) buildings are closed to the public due to the pandemic, the library can’t provide services such as charging stations, helping people locate the services they need, or entertaining local children that they offered during previous wildfire seasons. “We’re doing as well as we can,” said Director Ann Hammond. “It’s definitely been a challenge. With COVID, that was bad enough, and then you throw a fire on top of that—it’s hard to know how to respond.” The library has nearly 1,000 hotspots—a critical community need, as the hilly terrain means that many residents can’t connect with broadband—and Chromebooks checked out. It is also providing curbside service; workers wear cloth masks inside buildings and N-95 masks to take materials outside and place them on tables for customers to pick up, said Hammond. To

date SCL has only needed to close one branch, the Guerneville Regional Library, because of its proximity to one of the fire sites, although September has seen short-term closings because of power shutoffs. When the 2019 Kincade Fire forced SSCL to close all 14 branches briefly—with only three able to reopen after the first week—Hammond told LJ, “We’re going to get through this, and we’ll be stronger as a result.” Hammond also made good on last year’s vow to be prepared, which she believes helped avoid smoke damage and poor air quality in the buildings in 2020. “After the big fires last year, we put in super high-quality air filters, and we have air scrubbers at most of our locations,” she told LJ in August. “We’ve been able to keep things safe inside the buildings, so that the staff and the collections did not suffer in that regard.”

The library also has a partnership in the works with PG&E, the state’s largest power provider, which will install generators in several branches in return for being allowed to use them as community emergency centers in case another major fire causes evacuations. And in 2019, the library began providing remote story times live on Facebook for children who had been evacuated or whose branches were closed—getting a jump start on programming that would become business as usual during the COVID-19 shutdown. The air filters will likely come in handy after the library reopens its branches, which closed in March (the air scrubbers—which are portable and can be moved among locations—clean particulates, so would not be as effective in countering aerosolized coronavirus). “We’re learning to be prepared,” Hammond told LJ. “The fall is fire season in northern California, and that’s not going to change any time soon.”

#### MONITORING AIR QUALITY

In the San Francisco Bay Area and parts of the California Central Valley, the SCU fires have burned more than 390,000 acres and destroyed 82 structures. As of September 7, they were at 94 percent containment, but smoke conditions continue to impact the area. San Francisco Public Library (SFPL) had only opened two locations in mid-August and had instituted SFPL-toGo, its front-door version of curbside pickup— “but it was only a matter of days before we had unhealthy air in San Francisco,” said Tom Fortin, chief of the main library. SFPL monitors the local air quality through the Environmental Protection Agency website AirNow.gov, and when the air quality index (AQI) reaches a threshold of 150 or higher, the library cancels SFPL-to-Go. “It’s essentially an outdoor service, so we can’t have our staff outside when it reaches an unhealthy level,” Fortin told LJ on September 4. “It’s happened in the past couple of weeks maybe five or six times.” Cal/OSHA, the state Division of Occupational Safety and Health, mandates that government employees must wear N-95 masks to perform any work outside when the AQI reaches 150 and should not work outdoors in any capacity when it hits 200. Although jurisdictions across the state have varying rules, SFPL abides by OSHA and union regulations. “The city is very cautious and we’re keeping our staff safe, so we are suspending service when the air quality index hits 150 or higher. It might only be a matter of hours, and then we reopen again,” explained Fortin. Customers may see it as a disruption, he added, “but when we put it in context and remind our patrons that we

want them to be safe and stay home when the air quality is not healthy, they understand.” As Sonoma County Library continues to provide curbside service, a number of workers have objected to the fact that they’re required to bring books out for pickup when the air quality is poor, despite the availability of masks. When staff members are unable to work under 2020 California wildfires conditions, SCL requires them to take sick or vacation time, they stated, rather than being offered paid leave. Some employees have taken to Twitter, asking supporters to email library administration to request that they close branches in evacuation zones. Hammond has heard the criticisms, and “I appreciate having the concerns brought forward. We take that very seriously. We have made sure that we have good procedures in place and plenty of PPE [personal protection equipment] for the staff.” she said. “If anyone has an underlying condition we're only too happy to work with them to come up with an accommodation.” She realizes that this has been difficult for staff, Hammond added. “It was already stressful with COVID, it's made more stressful with the fires, and I'm really proud of them for their dedication.” At the time of publication, California and parts of the Pacific Northwest region are still fighting what the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection has declared the largest wildfire season recorded in California history, compounded by record-breaking high temperatures and dangerous fire conditions. The small town of Malden, in eastern Washington state, was destroyed over the Labor Day weekend—including the library, a branch of the Whitman County Rural Library District. Residents across the state are urged to keep a close eye on reports for their area.



## Library Director's Facilities Report

### Aptos

The County Board of Supervisors approved the Aptos Library Design/Build Selection Committee's recommendation at their August 4 meeting awarding the contract to the Bogard Construction/Anderson Brule Architects team. The Design Committee has developed a recommendation that will be presented to the community (virtually) on September 28 between 5:30 and 7:30 p.m. for their review and comment. Construction will begin in Summer 2021 and the branch should open at the end of 2022.

### Boulder Creek

The branch closed to the public on February 21. Original project bids exceeded available funding. The project was rebid this summer. The County Supervisors awarded the contract in the amount of \$1,132,754 to CRW Industries for construction of the Boulder Creek Library project and adopted a resolution accepting unanticipated revenue in the amount of \$175,000 from the Friends of the Boulder Creek Library. Construction will begin this autumn. The Boulder Creek branch should reopen in the summer of 2021.



### Branciforte

Permits have been submitted to the City. Bidding should take place this fall and construction will begin in early 2021. The remodeled library should open in early 2022.

### Capitola

Work has been able to continue on the project. The Friends of the Capitola branched have raise \$750,000 and are contemplating solar. Grand Opening is expected in early 2021.

### Downtown

The City of Santa Cruz held interviews for a project manager for the multiuse project (including the library branch). The City Council will review the recommendation and contract at their September 22 meeting.

### **Felton**

County staff continues to finalize closeout documents but will still need to resolve some stormwater and traffic mitigation issues. The Friends will provide funding for a display case and provided program funds to the branch for the next three years (\$15,000 per year). The Felton Branch Friends are also setting aside resources for improvements to the teen area and park.

### **Garfield**

Permits are being submitted. Bidding should take place this fall and construction will begin in early 2021. The remodeled library should open in autumn 2021. An exterior book drop has been added to the Garfield Branch.



### **La Selva Beach**

Construction continues. The Friends of the Library, having been greatly successful in their fundraising, has used this opportunity to commission a change order to replace a stationary glass wall with a nanawall. The Grand Opening is expected in early 2021.

### **Live Oak**

Construction documents have been completed. When construction begins, the branch will remain open with a few interruptions. The remodel should be complete in the spring of 2021.

### **Live Oak Annex**

A team is completing the design development package. Construction documents and permitting will occupy most of autumn and winter. Construction is expected to begin in the summer 2021. The project should be complete by summer of 2022.

### **Scotts Valley**

The City is creating a work team to holistically review the many small projects within the building. Meetings should begin soon.



## LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, JULY 20, 2020

6:30 PM

### 1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

**PRESENT:** Lindsay Bass, Bruce Cotter, Rena Dubin, Jim Landreth, Mary Ripma, Bob White, and Tricia Wynne

**STAFF:** Director of Libraries Susan Nemtiz, and Administrative Assistant Ivan Sumano-Vargas

### 2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED THE AGENDA</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	<b>Bruce Cotter</b>
<b>SECONDER:</b>	<b>Jim Landreth</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	<b>Bass, Cotter, Dubin, Landreth, Ripma, White, Wynne</b>

### 3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None

### 4. REPORT BY LIBRARY DIRECTOR

Library Director Susan Nemitz reported on the current developments in the Library.

### 5. MEMBER REPORTS

Commissioners provided updates on their respective regions.

### 6. CONSENT CALENDAR

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED CONSENT CALENDAR</b>
<b>A. Approved Minutes of May 18, 2020</b>	
<b>MOVER:</b>	<b>Rena Dubin</b>
<b>SECONDER:</b>	<b>Tricia Wynne</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	<b>Bass, Cotter, Dubin, Landreth, Ripma, White, Wynne</b>

## **7. GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **A. Library Operational Recommendations under Covid-19**

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED THE APPROACH PROVIDED IN THE DOCUMENT</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	<b>Rena Dubin</b>
<b>SECONDER:</b>	<b>Bruce Cotter</b>
<b>AYES:</b>	<b>Bass, Cotter, Dubin, Landreth, Ripma, White, Wynne</b>

### **B. Library Facilities**

The Commission reviewed and discussed the Staff Report.  
A member of the public, J. Grunstra, made a comment.

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

Final adjournment of the Library Advisory Commission at 8:15 PM to the next regular meeting to be held on Monday, September 21, 2020 At 6:30 PM via Zoom teleconference.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ivan Sumano-Vargas, Clerk of the Commission

## STAFF REPORT

DATE: September 21, 2020  
TO: Library Advisory Commission  
FROM: Susan M. Nemitz, Library Director  
RE: FY 2021 SCPL Budget Update #2

### RECOMMENDATION

Review and Accept Library Budget Update

### BACKGROUND

The LJPB adopted the FY 20/21 Budget back in June with unanimous approval. The LJPB requested timely updates to the Board and Library Advisory Commission during this uncertain and unprecedented time.

### DISCUSSION

There are no changes to the revenue or expenditure updates that were made to the LJPB Board in August.

The first quarter sales tax revenue report will be ready in October. The early July and August sales tax monthly reports have indicated accurate forecasts.

The MOE funds (property tax basis) will be affected by property reassessments due to the recent fire devastation. These estimates will not be available for several months.

Based upon this information, the Library proposes to continue with the FY 20/21 budget plan as adopted. Library Administration did choose to rescind a job offer from March for a Librarian at the Scotts Valley Branch. The individual has postponed their start date because of the pandemic.

August Budget Update:

*Revenue*

The sales tax projections for FY 2020-21 remain unchanged. With so much uncertainty, the recommendation is to wait and see the first quarter sales tax results before making additional reductions to the libraries.

*Personnel*

As part of the adopted FY 20/21 budget the Library made the following cuts to its personnel budget.

Temporary workers were eliminated which consisted of all on-call substitutes and Library Aide staff. The savings from this cutback was estimated at \$776K. The Library also instituted a 10% furlough for all regular staff resulting in a savings of \$700K. In addition, the Library froze all hiring on vacant positions totally an estimated \$500K.

In the FY 20/21 projections the Library had considered a retirement incentive and the Library did receive 9 interested applicants. After consultation with the Chair of the LJPB, the Library was unable to grant the retirement incentives since it would bring staffing levels to dangerously low levels in order to continue to provide services system-wide. The savings estimated through retirement savings was \$300K. The Library plans to make up for these savings through continued hiring freezes if more positions become vacant throughout the year.

The total estimated personnel savings adopted as part of the FY 20/21 budget were \$2,276,000.

*Non-Personnel*

As part of the adopted FY 20/21 operating budget the Library also cut \$150K in non-personnel expenditures.

The Library is poised to make further cuts in the non-personnel budget if revenues from sales tax continue to fall during this fiscal year. Cuts that the Library has identified as able to be made are in training, travel and professional services.

*Reserves*

The Library estimated ending FY 19/20 having used \$633K in reserves. In comparison, FY 19/20 ended with the Library using only \$431K.

The Library is also reporting ending FY 19/20 with its 20% reserve at \$2.96M and its unrestricted fund balance at 1.36M.

Report Prepared by: Kira Henifin  
Principal Management Analyst

Reviewed and Forwarded by: Susan Nemitz, Library Director

## STAFF REPORT

DATE: September 21, 2020  
TO: Library Advisory Commission  
FROM: Susan Nemitz, Library Director  
RE: 2020 Holiday Closure Proposal

### RECOMMENDATION

Review and Endorse 2020 Holiday Closure Proposal

### DISCUSSION

Significant budget reductions that include an elimination of temporary positions, a hiring freeze and a ten percent furlough of regular staff shifts is resulting in a loss of over 1/3 of staff work hours for the fiscal year. Honoring staff earned vacation requests at this time is difficult, during holiday periods, it is likely to be nearly impossible. The City of Santa Cruz and other jurisdictions, often closes public services during the Winter holidays. As a result, the Library Director is recommending additional public service closures. Prior to the holiday period, staff will be surveyed to determine their availability. Limited services may be offered if large numbers of staff choose to work during the holiday period.

The Director recommends these additional Holiday Closures for 2020:

- Wednesday, November 25, 2020 through Saturday, November 28, 2020
- Thursday, December 24, 2020 through Saturday, January 2, 2021

Report Prepared by: Kira Henifin,  
Principal Management Analyst

Reviewed and Forwarded by: Susan Nemitz, Library Director



## Library Holiday Closure Policy

JPAB Policy # 108  
Approved: October 2019  
Five-year Review Schedule: October 2024

### Closure Schedule for the Santa Cruz Public Library System

- April: Spring Staff Training Day – TBD
- October: Autumn Staff Training Day – Columbus Day
- November: Veterans' Day  
Thanksgiving Day  
Day after Thanksgiving
- December: Christmas Eve – Close at 2 pm (if branch is scheduled to be open)  
Christmas Holiday  
New Year's Eve Holiday – Close at 2 pm (if branch is scheduled to be open)
- January: New Year's Day Holiday

Note per MOU: When a holiday falls on a Sunday, the following Monday shall be observed.  
When a holiday falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday shall be observed.



## STAFF REPORT

DATE: September 21, 2020  
TO: Library Advisory Commission  
FROM: Susan Nemitz, Library Director  
RE: Library Operational Recommendations under Covid-19

### RECOMMENDATION

Review and Endorse Library Operation Recommendations under Covid-19

### DISCUSSION

“The coronavirus has really brought home the urgency of addressing the digital divide, particularly because of its impact on African Americans and other minorities who have been far more likely to lose their jobs, miss out on school’s online classes and fall ill. We need to work together to ensure that no one is left on the wrong side of the digital divide.”

— Mayor McKinley Price, Newport News, President, African American Mayors Association

### Digital Inclusion

The Santa Cruz Public Libraries supports the Digital Inclusion Statement created by the Urban Libraries Council.

- Digital equity is integral to race, economic, educational and social equity.
- High-speed internet is as essential to 21<sup>st</sup> century life as clean water and electricity.
- Achieving digital equity is a community responsibility which requires sustained collaboration among public, nonprofit, technology and private sector stakeholders.

- COVID-19 exposed the limitations of a digital inclusion service model that relies on physical spaces and loaned tools to meet daily needs.
- The good work of libraries on digital inclusion is, at best, a temporary fix for ensuring that everyone can participate fully in digital life.
- Affordable in-home broadband, computers and the skills and support needed for success are the path to achieving digital equity.
- Collaboration among top elected officials, school leaders and library executives provide a springboard for action on digital equity.
- The pandemic intensified what it means to be unconnected in a hyper-connected world and created a window for action.

In July, after surveying staff and community, the Santa Cruz Public Libraries created an Interim Digital Inclusion Plan to address disparities in public access to digital resources. The Library Advisory Commission endorsed an earlier version of the plan, which was subsequently endorsed by the Library Joint Powers Board in August. Library staff has worked diligently on the plan but many activities were interrupted by the recent fires.

#### **1. Expand access to the internet**

- The five curbside sites have all had their Wi-Fi signals boosted to reach 600 feet from designated buildings and the Wi-Fi service is available 24 hours a day.
- A social media campaign promoting the Libraries' free Wi-Fi has been created, Free Wi-Fi flags are at library sites and maps of free Wi-Fi in the County is being distributed.
- Staff surveyed school districts to determine device/internet needs of students.
- Supervisor Zach Friend is spearheading a Cares grant of 50 plus, Wi-Fi hotspots for Library check out. Purchase has been delayed due to fire.

#### **2. Expand access to computer hardware**

- The purchase of 50 Chromebooks and 15 Kindle Readers for check out has been on back order for over a month as our vendor has been unable to fulfill contracts. Staff attempted switching to another vendor but they are back ordered as well.
- Provided 100 Endless OS computers (donation) to homeless shelters/underserved communities using our partners (CASA, AFC Faith Community Shelters, Santa Cruz HUD VASH Team, Mid-Pen Affordable Housing).
- Created pilot, outdoor, socially distanced space at the Downtown Branch to provide public computers. Pilot begins September 21.
- Provided charging stations at evacuation centers.

#### **3. Expand access to printing**

- Implement free On-the-Go Wireless Printing.
- Provide curbside pickup at one location, expanding to three on September 21.

#### **4. Expand access to technology support**

- Tripled staffing of Telephone Information support due to demand.

- Providing weekly Tech Talks to patrons to assist with the Virtual Library.
- Expanding K-12 Digital Concierge program to students for homework help on September 21.
- Developed a Raising a Reader pilot program at Live Oak.
- Providing library cards to SLV Middle School and DeLaveaga Elementary.
- Implementing SORA with Santa Cruz City Schools students can access Overdrive digital collections with student ID's.
- Assisting the Friends in raising 25,000 for digital resources through an event with Susan Orleans on October 1.

### **Reopening under Covid-19**

In September, the State of California issued a Blueprint for a Safer Economy. The framework assigns California Counties to one of four tiers based upon the prevalence of the virus within a County.

- Tier 1 - Purple - Widespread Transmission
- Tier 2 - Red – Substantial Transmission
- Tier 3 - Orange – Moderate Transmission
- Tier 4 - Yellow – Minimal Transmission

The Blueprint helps organizations determine the speed of reopening services to the public. Counties can be more restrictive than the framework. Santa Cruz is currently in the Red Tier with most surrounding counties in the purple tier. To advance, a county must meet the criteria for two consecutive weeks. In this framework, libraries were included in the retailer's classification. That means, libraries in Tier 2 can open their buildings (with modifications) limited to 50% capacity (not defined).

In a quick survey of Bay area libraries and Monterey Bay area libraries, staff could find only one example of public libraries allowing patrons into their buildings. San Juan Batista allows one person to enter their building at a time subject to appointment. Internet research shows that San Luis Obispo library is also open to the public for browsing and limited public computing.

Library management has been meeting in retreat to evaluate library priorities in light of current conditions. Staff reviewed the current strategic plan and FY2021 workplan. Staff remain committed to the circulation of physical and digital materials, learning programs for adults and children, provision of free access to computers and internet, outreach to underserved populations, and the development of transformative physical spaces. Specifically, SCPL must maintain progress on its Equity and Internet improvement initiatives despite the loss of over 1/3 of staff work hours.

The retreat focused on the organization's capacity to slowly reopen and make progress on its strategic plan over the next six months. The group is evaluating a complete reorganization (temporary) of the administration of library services toward key

objectives. This would require new work and shift assignments and would require consultation with affected unions and appropriate and timely notification of staff. The Management Team is also identifying initiatives and activities that will be delayed or ended.