

## MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 26, 2007

TO: Office of Citizen Involvement, c/o Kathleen Todd, Director

Cc: County Chair Ted Wheeler; County Commissioners; Molly Raphael,  
Director of Libraries

FROM: Multnomah County Library Advisory Board (LAB)

SUBJECT: Library 07-08 Budget Request

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### **PROCESS**

In accordance with the ordinance that established the Library Board in 1990, the Library Advisory Board (LAB) acts as the Library's Citizen Budget Advisory Committee (CBAC). A subgroup of the LAB, the Finance Committee, was tasked with conducting an in-depth review of the Library's budget and reporting back to the entire LAB. The Finance Committee has met six times over the fall and winter and has reported to the LAB on a monthly basis. Molly Raphael, Library Director, and Becky Cobb, Budget Manager, attended the meetings and provided information and reports for the Committee's review. The LAB has authorized the Finance Committee to submit this report on its behalf.

### **PROGRAM OFFERS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Library's 07-08 budget request represents the first year of a new five-year operating levy, approved by Multnomah County voters in November 2006. The Library's program offers contribute strongly to the County's Vibrant Communities and Education priorities, while also providing the services outlined in the levy language (in bold below):

- ***"Keep libraries open; maintain current hours and services at Central and neighborhood libraries. Maintain free access to information; update books and materials."*** Program offers for the Central Library (80000), Regional Libraries (80001), and Neighborhood Libraries (80002) sustain the current level of services and open hours.
- ***"Continue books delivery to homebound seniors and nursing home residents."*** The Adult Outreach program offer (80007) will continue these services as well as providing services to shelters, transition homes, jails, and adult foster care homes.
- ***"Continue programs for school age children, story hours for babies and toddlers, summer reading, literacy services for children in child care, programs for teens; help teachers and students use library resources; provide homework helpers to assist children with school work."*** In conjunction with the Central, regional and neighborhood libraries, the offers that provide these services on an outreach basis are School Corps

(80003), Juvenile Justice Outreach (80004), Books 2 U (80005), and Early Childhood Resources (80006).

- ***“Open planned libraries in underserved neighborhoods of East County and North Portland.”*** The Library has submitted two new program offers, Troutdale Neighborhood Library (80022), and New Columbia Neighborhood Library (80023). These offers would provide one-time funding from the Library’s beginning working balance to pay for siting processes, tenant improvements to leased space (including computers and furniture), and opening-day collections for both libraries. This would prepare these libraries for their projected opening in January 2009.

We heartily endorse the above program offers as consistent with the language and intent of the new levy, and as strong contributors to the County’s Vibrant Communities and Education priorities.

The Library has submitted three additional new program offers. We are listing these in order of our endorsement.

1. ***Library Funding Study (80026).*** This program offer is submitted to the Accountability priority. A key goal of the Library’s 2006-2010 Strategic Plan states that people in Multnomah County will have a public library system supported by long-term stable funding. This program offer, with funding from the Library Fund’s beginning working balance, would provide for systematic analysis of the different options that are available for achieving this goal. The Library Advisory Board has long supported the exploration of other funding options and considers this a high priority, in full recognition that continued and growing reliance on a local option levy, for the majority of the Library’s funding, creates an uncertain future for the Multnomah County Library. We look forward to working with members of the Board of County Commissioners and other stakeholders on this critical financial issue.
2. ***Target Language Services (80024).*** As outlined in the Library’s recent needs assessment of the Asian (Chinese and Vietnamese) and Slavic (Russian speaking) communities, these populations have grown significantly in the last several years within Multnomah County. We support the Library’s efforts to serve these communities more effectively through hiring additional bilingual staff, improving the book collections in these languages, and reaching out to the appropriate community partners. This offer is submitted to the Vibrant Communities priority.
3. ***Protecting Vulnerable Library Collections (80028).*** Our priority for Protecting Vulnerable Library Collections is dependent upon the outcome of a pilot project, which will be conducted this spring. Although we fully support the Library’s efforts to protect the DVD and CD collection, while providing self-service access, we would like to see the results of the pilot project before fully endorsing this offer. This offer is submitted to the Accountability priority.

## **CONCLUSION**

In addition to our priorities for new program offers referred to above, the Library's 07-08 operating request totals \$51.89 million in existing programs, which matches the \$51.9 million of total projected budget requirements from the latest library fund forecast. This is an increase of approximately 4% from the 06-07 adopted budget, and includes a net addition of 10.5 FTE, bringing the total FTE to 464. We have concluded that this increase is more than reasonable given the Library's growth in usage and the additional workload resulting from that growth. As an aside, the average annual budgeted FTE over the last ten years was 467; thus, this increase is in line with the Library staffing in earlier years.

During the spring and summer of 2006, many of us worked diligently with the Board of County Commissioners to formulate a financial plan for the levy, which was placed before voters in November. That plan included a General Fund contribution from the County which, all agreed, would sustain the Library's current services, as well as adding two new library branches in 2009.

The Library's ability to maintain the services promised in this recent levy depends on the viability of this mutually agreed-upon financial plan. The LAB most strongly urges the Board of County Commissioners to support the plan's stated level of General Fund Appropriation.

## **LIBRARY BOARD MEMBERS**

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