

City Council  
Katy Geissert Civic Center Library Community Room  
Torrance, California

Members of the Council and Commission:

**SUBJECT: Library Commission – Welcome and Video Presentation**

**BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS**

In 2013, as part of the Library's Celebration of a Century of Service, a video contest was held. The Library Commission presents one of the winners – "Explore the World with the Torrance Library"

This video can be found on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKwgfrF1LFY>)

Respectfully submitted,



Harry P. Ross  
Chair, Library Commission

NOTED:



LeRoy J. Jackson  
City Manager

City Council  
Katy Geissert Civic Center Library Community Room  
Torrance, California

Members of the Council and Commission:

**SUBJECT: Library Commission - Commission Outreach**

**BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS**

No more stone tablets, papyrus scrolls, or scribes copying books. Libraries today are vastly different and offer services and programs that were never dreamed of many years ago, and for every member of the community. The Library Commission conducts outreach into the community, both by speaking to groups such as Homeowners Associations about the Library, and by attending community events. In the past year, Library Commissioners have attended meetings of the Torrance Youth Council, to show support and acknowledgement for their efforts undertaken on behalf of the library, and you may have seen us at your esteemed City Council meetings.

Commissioners regularly collaborate with Library staff to conduct outreach, speaking to community groups or manning booths at events such as the Cherry Blossom Festival, Torrance Certified Farmers' Market, and YMCA Healthy Kids Day. The Commission uses such outreach to promote services and interact with the public, to take the pulse of the community.

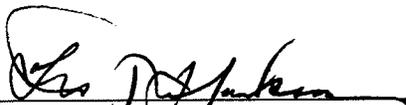
Our meetings are held regularly at each branch library where input is gathered. Commission members are often members of other community groups and as such are better able to understand needs and collaborate when the opportunity arises. Our library employees are understaffed and overachieve at the same time, and we thank them each year for their service.

We gratefully acknowledge your support of the Torrance Public Library.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Harry P. Ross  
Chair, Library Commission

NOTED:

  
LeRoy J. Jackson  
City Manager

City Council  
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Torrance, California

Members of the Council and Commission:

**SUBJECT: Library Commission – Community Focus Groups and Survey Results**

**BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS**

In 2014, the Library Commission participated in information gathering for the Library. Commissioners facilitated six community focus groups, conducting a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis and asking community members to prioritize potential future services.

Trends revealed in the focus groups included library strengths in locations around the city, open hours, programs, accessibility, materials for children, free resources, book clubs, and help with homework. Staff helpfulness and customer service were also cited as current strengths. Weaknesses included limited availability of new books, noise and chaos during the after-school hours, limited technological resources, limited Sunday hours, and many comments on parking limitations or lack of access to bus services to the library. Users wanted more parking, coffee on site, computer classes, more new materials, lower fees, Sunday hours year-round, and more programs. They also saw budget woes, security, technology, increased prices for materials, and the misperception that libraries are not wanted or needed as threats.

With the results in hand, the Commission participated in discussing trends, and assisted in crafting a community survey. The Community Survey was released in September, and results were collected through November. The Commission participated in promoting the survey.

Over 550 people took the survey, about half the amount that took the previous Community Survey in 2012. Survey results showed that the greatest reason to visit the library was to borrow books, with second reason to attend adult programs, and third to borrow movies or sound recordings.

Of current technological resources, web pages and databases are used the most. 92% who use library computers and internet indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied, though a near equal amount indicated they did not use computers or internet at the library. Having internet access at home or work remained the largest reason people did not use the library.

86% indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the selection of books, movies

and magazines, a figure that is down from the 2012 survey.

Of the people indicating they use ebooks, 76% were satisfied or very satisfied with them. Requests for more ebooks, a greater selection of ebooks, and ebooks that are compatible with the Kindle ereader were common comments.

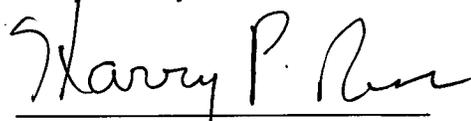
96% of those who use reference and research assistance are satisfied or very satisfied with this service, this holds steady with the 2012 results. Also holding steady with 2012 results were satisfaction with the library environment, overall customer service, and overall use of the library with greater than 90% satisfied or very satisfied.

When asked about future services they would like to see, the top four results in paper or online surveys were technology training, downloadable audio books, increased wireless internet capacity, and getting personalized reading recommendations. Requests for better/faster wireless, better/faster computers, and more computers were common comments.

Suggestions to make library use easier or more likely to be used included comments on the noise and temperature of the library environment, the restrooms, having a larger more up to date collection, updating the website, increasing hours, and requests for coffee, tea, or cookies on site. Also expressed was the importance of staff interactions, both in praise for assistance and personal service and in complaints when staff was unfriendly or unhelpful. This demonstrates the library as a personalized service to most responders, with the staff interaction experience being very important. Updating the website was also frequently commented upon, along with the search capabilities for the catalog. Fines and fees also came up as a complaint, with people requesting elimination of the hold fee, and lowering of the DVD fines as the most common specifics.

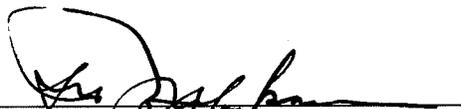
The Commission discussed the results with the City Librarian, and is prepared to follow up on specific endeavors with more focus groups, and continued conversations with the community about library services and resources in an evolving future.

Respectfully submitted,



Harry P. Ross  
Chair, Library Commission

NOTED:



LeRoy J. Jackson  
City Manager

City Council  
Katy Geissert Civic Center Library Community Room  
Torrance, California

Members of the Council and Commission:

**SUBJECT: Library Commission – Commission Advocacy**

**BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS**

The Library Commission routinely participates in local and state advocacy for library services and programs, interacting with state and local officials as well as the general public. We advise your Honorable Body on various library issues as well as request your assistance in ensuring that our state lawmakers remember the importance of public libraries.

The Library Commission has followed development of the state budget carefully, especially since the trigger bill in 2011 severely curtailed public library and systems funding, dropping the Public Library Foundation (PLF) and Transaction Based Reimbursement (TBR) programs to \$0. Both PLF and TBR gave funds directly to libraries, and this loss harmed cooperative services, along with the power of Torrance Public Library to fund large projects. In addition the cuts to the Southern California Library Cooperative (SCLC) harmed training and public library service to the region. There was a danger of California as a whole losing federal funds that pay for innovative services, and give grants to libraries to serve communities. The Library Commission was proud to send letters urging our legislators to fund public library programs that have statewide impact, and help communities to meet the needs of their citizens. When the issues are critical to the City and we need your direct support, we also ask you to contact our legislators or to write a letter emphasizing how state legislation impacts the service provided by your public library.

In 2014, funding was increased to systems, and the Public Library Broadband Project was created. This included public libraries on the high speed broadband network that currently connects UC and CSU campuses, along with California Community Colleges, K-12 education, and other institutions. Funding was provided to start putting public libraries on that network, along with funding for grants to those who needed technological or infrastructure assistance. The City Librarian and the CIT Department are working on potential participation in this project, and the Commission was proud to advocate for such a significant investment in needed infrastructure for public libraries.

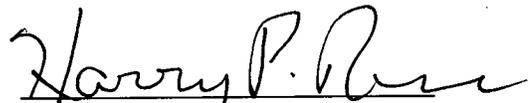
As Commissioners we regularly visit local legislators to promote the Torrance Public Library, remind them of what the public library does for their constituents, and press for their attention in Sacramento to library funding and measures. In 2014, Commissioners

visited Assemblyman Mūratsuchi and Senator Lieu, attended a workshop held by the California Public Library Advocates (CPLA), and attended an advocacy pre-conference and legislative luncheon at the CLA annual convention. In 2015, Commissioners have visited our three new local legislators, introducing them to the library and pressing for continued attention in Sacramento. They all expressed strong support for libraries as a whole, and a commitment to library issues. We also attended a recent workshop hosted by California Public Library Advocates (CPLA), and were able to speak with the State Librarian and the President of the California Library Association.

Library Commissioners are also members of the California Library Association (CLA) and California Public Library Advocates (CPLA). Both organizations advocate at the state level in support of public libraries. CLA hires a lobbying firm, Michael F. Dillon and Associates, and keeps us informed of movement on the state budget and legislation that impacts libraries. As Torrance is part of the South Bay region, we also pay attention to issues such as the future of adult education and So Cal ROC and the work of the South Bay Cities Council of Governments. At meetings and workshops, we speak frequently to supporters and staff from other public libraries in the South Bay, sharing ideas and concerns, and using our regional strength to meet the needs of all our constituents.

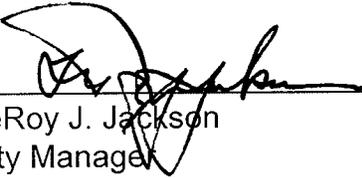
We appreciate your support in both funding the Torrance Public Library, and in your advocacy for library services at the state and regional level.

Respectfully submitted,



Harry P. Ross  
Chair, Library Commission

NOTED:



LeRoy J. Jackson  
City Manager

City Council  
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Torrance, California

Members of the Council and Commission:

**SUBJECT: Library Commission – Future Library Needs**

**BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS**

Now that we have the results of the Focus Groups and Surveys in hand, the Commission and the City Librarian are looking towards future resources and services.

**High speed and easy access internet** - Many criticisms of slow speed or the inability to get onto the wireless access at libraries came up in the focus groups and also in surveys. Greater access was stressed in the results. The library continues to work with the CIT department to add access points and speed but this all adds cost. More people are turning to internet access as a vital part of work, school, and navigating public resources. Therefore, the library needs to continue to provide a free and equal access point. Continued work at the state level, with potential participation in the Public Library Broadband Project, is only one piece of the puzzle.

**Additional formats of library materials** – The library has added multiple formats in the last three years, including Playaway audio books, Blu-ray discs, and ebooks. They have all been absorbed into the current collections budget, and users want more, especially in ebooks. Users are also clearly showing that they want new print materials faster, and a greater selection on the shelves. Downloadable audio was prioritized as a new collection users wanted to see. Again, all are possible with added costs.

**More library programs** - All the community programs offered for all ages continue to garner rave reviews, and the meeting rooms are packed to capacity. In the past three years, attendance has increased while staffing has been cut. Donations from the very generous Friends of The Torrance Library cover a large part of direct costs. However staff time is still a major stumbling block to adding programs without cutting other important and valued services.

As a result of these needs of our community, we members of the Torrance Library Commission respectfully ask for the City Council's support in the following ways:

- Increase the materials budget to support meeting the needs of print users today, and of electronic material use that is growing. Over \$140,000 was cut from the library materials budget in the recession; it is time to bring some of that back.

- Focus on providing the library with the electronic infrastructure needed in the information age. As more government services move online, and information access is required of schools and students, the library is the only place to go for so many families.
- Promote the library to your constituents, and remember that the library is here to meet the needs of all of the Torrance community, at all stages of life.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Harry P. Ross  
Chair, Library Commission

NOTED:

  
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LeRoy J. Jackson  
City Manager

Joint Council/Commission Meeting of  
April 21, 2015

City Council  
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Torrance, California

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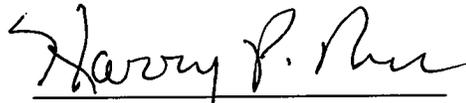
**SUBJECT: Library Commission** – Collaboration With Youth Council and Video  
Presentation

**BACKGROUND / ANALYSIS**

The Library Commission collaborates with the Torrance Youth Council in many ways, one of which is the production of videos promoting Library resources to teens.

The Library Commission presents the first video produced by the Youth Council – “That’s My Library!” which can be found on the Library’s Facebook page:  
(<https://www.facebook.com/torrancepubliclibrary/videos>)

Respectfully submitted,



Harry P. Rdss  
Chair, Library Commission

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LeRoy J. Jackson  
City Manager