

## Sub-committee Report

**Date:** November 2, 2009  
**To:** Community and Neighborhood Services Sub-Committee  
**Through:** Karolyn Kent, Deputy City Manager  
**From:** Heather Wolf, Library Director  
**Subject:** Express Library Proposal  
"Council District 6"

### Strategic Initiatives



### Purpose and Recommendation

Because there is no library location within the recommended service area for southeast Mesa, these residents travel greater distances and/or to other municipalities to access a library. To provide equal library access to all Mesa residents, library management proposes a two year "Express Library" pilot project. This small, minimally staffed branch would be located in a shopping center and provide basic library services three days a week.

### Background

Mesa Public Library operates three branches currently, serving a population of 459,765 spread over 132 square miles. Following standard public library practice of first establishing a main branch to serve the community and act as the operational center of the library system, Mesa then added two branches in response to growth. In 1985, Dobson Ranch branch opened in west Mesa. The Red Mountain branch has served northeast Mesa since 1987, first as a storefront library and then a permanent building in 1995 which was expanded in 2002. These three locations are well used, serving over 1.3 million customers in FY 08-09, but no longer adequate given the geographic size of the city and the number of residents.

In fact, the standard is to locate public library facilities to serve a 3 mile radius, so that users travel a maximum of 3 miles to a convenient library facility. A resident of the Sunland Village East neighborhood in southeast Mesa travels 4.9 miles to reach the nearest library, the Southeast Regional Library in Gilbert. To access the nearest Mesa branch, that same resident travels 6.2 miles to the Red Mountain Library.

## Discussion

A southeast library branch is important as these Mesa citizens have the least access and are in an area where the population growth will continue. As you know, DMB Associates plans to develop the former GM Proving Grounds into a thriving business and residential community in southeast Mesa. According to DMB, 30,000-50,000 additional residents will live in this new development. Because DMB understands a convenient and accessible public library contributes to the quality of life of a residential community, they agreed to dedicate a library site as part of this project.

A future DMB site is good news, but does not remedy the current lack of library service. According to estimates prepared by the City's GIS department, by 2010, just over 78,000 people will live within the 3 mile radius of the proposed Express Library. We can't know for sure how many of those residents will use the new library, but we do know many southeast Mesa residents use one or both Gilbert libraries (Southeast Regional and Perry) rather than travel further to Red Mountain. In FY 08-09, 15,928 Mesa residents received a Gilbert library card from Southeast Regional or Perry. Only 1,029 Gilbert residents received library cards from Mesa libraries. Under the Library District's Reciprocal Borrowing Program (RBP), Gilbert earned \$270,889 while Mesa received no reimbursement even though Mesa residents paid \$1,691,958 in library district tax. Unless the trend of Mesa residents using Gilbert libraries changes, Mesa residents' tax dollars will continue to go to Gilbert.

So, library management began brainstorming low cost ways to create a library presence in this un-served area. The best solution was to open a storefront branch where a loyal clientele can be created that will move with the library when the time comes for a permanent location to be built.

Operating costs and start-up will be kept to a minimum through several means:

- Locate in small storefront, approximately 2,500 square feet.
- Operate 3 days a week, 23 hours -- Tues. 10-7, Thurs. 10-5, Sat. 10-5.
- Staff with existing staff who will rotate from other locations.
- Provide basic services only.
- Offer self-service as much as possible.
- Expand successful volunteer program to new location.
- Pay rent, utilities, and monthly operating costs with Used Book Sale money.
- Purchase books, furniture, and equipment with Impact Fee and Library Bond funds.

A small location with limited operating hours, basic services, self-service opportunities, and a dedicated volunteer base allows the Express Library to operate with minimal staff. In addition, as part of our new service model, we continue to re-allocate staff resources. Recently, two librarian retirements occurred which resulted in the creation of 4 Library Page PT non-benefited positions and 3 Library Assistant positions, a gain of 3 FTEs at no additional cost. The new positions can be used to

help cover the 3 day a week operation at the Express Library and to offset the increase in traffic expected to continue at the other libraries in FY 09-10.

Express Library operational costs such as rent, utilities, and other monthly fees would normally be paid from the library's current operating budget. However, library management proposes using Used Book Sale (UBS) money as an alternative source that won't negatively impact operations at the other branches. UBS revenues are restricted for the library and consistently average \$50,000 annually. In fact, this fund paid for the majority of the RFID project. FY 09-10 begins with a UBS balance just over \$60,000 and the expectation of generating another \$50,000 over the course of the year. We feel confident the UBS money is sufficient to cover all non-personnel operating costs currently estimated at \$52,486 for the course of the one year pilot.

Currently, the library has \$1,200,000 in the Impact Fee fund and \$482,000 in bond money. Money from both funds could purchase a small collection of books, DVDs, and audio items as well as furnishing and equipping the new location. Estimated costs would total \$590,944. All items would be transferrable to a future, permanent building.

A way to extend the short hours of the Express Library would be the purchase of an automated materials vending machine. These machines are stand-alone and hold approximately 400 paperbacks. Library card holders can checkout and return items. The machines require a location protected from the weather, a power supply, and a dedicated high-speed Internet connection. Bond or Impact Fee money could cover the cost of the equipment and stock for the machine, as well as associated structural, electrical and architectural costs. However, maintenance costs could increase the library's operational costs. A machine stationed outside the Express Library would provide access to materials when the library is closed.

A two-year lease is traditional and would give the staff time to evaluate the success of the Express Library. If successful, the program could continue until a permanent location was built.

## **Alternatives**

### **Taking No Action**

If the Express Library pilot project is not approved, the library would wait 7-10 years to build a permanent branch at the DMB location. Southeast Mesa residents would continue to drive further than other Mesa residents to access city library services. As the area begins to grow again, the number of un-served residents will increase.

### **Automated Materials Vending Machine**

An alternative would be the purchase of an automated materials vending machine that would be stationed where large numbers of southeast Mesa residents congregate. Finding locations could be a challenge, since there is no indoor mall or large transportation hub in the area of need. As mentioned earlier, Impact Fee money could be used initially, but operational costs would be impacted.

### Expansion of Current Branch Hours

Instead of the Express Library, branch hours could be expanded. However, to operate Dobson Ranch and Red Mountain at 50 hrs per week (like Main) would add 11 hours a week at each location. Covering the additional 22 hours would require 4.5 FTE beyond the 3 FTE the library gained this FY through reallocation. The additional hours at these two locations would improve library service for residents already served, but southeast Mesa residents would remain un-served.

A Southeast library branch and additional hours at current locations are both important goals. Both provide convenient and accessible library service. However, we recommend the Express Library in southeast Mesa because:

- A new location is the best way to serve new customers.
- The southeast region has a demonstrated need if 16,000 Mesa residents received a Gilbert library card.

We are excited about this great opportunity to leverage bond and impact fee money with alternative funding to improve the quality of life of residents in southeast Mesa.

### Fiscal Impact

A spreadsheet detailing the costs of the Express Library is attached.

In addition to providing convenient Mesa library access for our residents and reducing their usage of the Gilbert Southeast Regional Library, the proposed Express Library location could result in an increase of Gilbert residents using a Mesa library. Of the 78,000 people that live within the Express Library's service radius, 69,000 are Mesa residents and 9,100 are Gilbert residents. Over time, this location could shift enough Gilbert and Mesa residents to a Mesa library to result in Mesa receiving a share of the RBP reimbursement which is currently \$26 per net card.

### Coordinated With

The Library Advisory Board heard a presentation and discussed the Express Library proposal on October 27, 2009. The Advisory Board would like further information, but unanimously approved and recommended presenting the proposal to the Community and Neighborhood Services Committee. The Library is consulting with Accounting, Budget, Facilities Maintenance, Information Technology, Mail Services, and Real Estate in our efforts to gain accurate information on costs and feasibility.

  
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Name, Department Director

  
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Name, Deputy City Manager

**Southeast Express Library Costs**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Estimated Quantity</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Estimated Total Cost</b>	
Rent per sq. ft	2500	\$11.00	\$27,500	
Common Area Maintenance (CAM)	2500	\$4.88	\$12,200	
Utilities	2500	\$1.50	\$3,750	
Monthly Alarm monitoring	12	\$25.00	\$300	
Monthly Custodial	12	\$728.00	\$8,736	
<b>Annual Operations Total</b>				<b>\$52,486</b> UBS
Fiber (linear feet from Ellsworth)	5600	\$10	\$56,000	
Wireless capability	1	\$7,500	\$7,500	
Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)	1	\$250,000	\$250,000	
Self-checkout machines	4	\$25,000	\$100,000	
Alarm system	1	\$700	\$700	
Building signs	2	\$4,872	\$9,744	
Collections: start-up/opening day (0.25)	0.25	\$500,000	\$125,000	
Automated Materials Vending Machine	1	\$100,000	\$100,000	
PC, monitor, software (12 patron, 4 staff)*	16	\$2,000	\$32,000	
Service Desk System: desk, partitions, chairs*	1	\$10,000	\$10,000	
<b>Capital Costs of Equipping Interior of Express Library Total</b>				<b>\$690,944</b> Bond/Impac
Patron computer seating (1 table, 4 chairs)	3	\$1,700	\$5,100	
Leisure Seating (tables, chairs, armchairs, etc)	20	\$400	\$8,000	
<b>Non-Capital Costs for Furnishing Interior of Express Library</b>				<b>\$13,100</b> Friends
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>\$756,530</b>

\* Items probably available in City Surplus

22-Oct-09