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MOTION

APTS, PARKS, HEALTH & AGING
~~HOUSING, COMM & ECON DEVELOP.~~

AUG 14 2012

The technological revolution has impacted every area of our lives- from the now-ubiquitous use of email to the explosion in cell phone usage. Just as technology has opened new possibilities for carrying out the tasks of daily life, the technological revolution has had a dramatic impact on the ways Cities can better and more efficiently deliver services to our constituents.

Among City Departments, the Library system is particularly well poised to harness technology to improve service delivery. With the advent of the internet as the dominant mode of accessing information and as books are increasingly read in digital form, the role of libraries is rapidly shifting. As a result, libraries in Los Angeles and across the world must re-imagine the role of a library branch in promoting access to information and literacy in the 21st century.

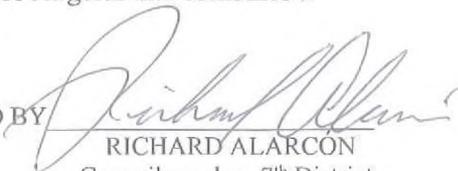
As a City we must be cognizant and pro-active in re-envisioning the role of libraries in promoting literacy in the 21st century. Libraries can promote literacy in a variety of areas, with a focus on the full spectrum of skills needed to fulfill the role of citizenship in the 21st century. These include not only reading and writing, but numeracy, financial literacy, and even as centers for "citizen literacy," with citizenship classes and voter registration, for example. Here in Los Angeles, our Libraries have already begun to explore and in some cases implement several of these non-traditional literacy components at several branches.

Promoting an expanded understanding of literacy to meet the demands of a 21st-century citizenry is a large undertaking. One natural avenue to begin with, given the recent economic crisis, is to focus on integrating some of the City's current financial literacy efforts managed by the Community Development Department with a physical presence at Library branches in order to serve as a point of access for Angelenos throughout the City. The City's promotion of free VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) tax preparation services for low- and moderate-income households, for instance, are a natural fit with the physical presence of libraries throughout our communities.

In addition, The Library and CDD should explore the potential to create a "Universal City Services Card" that would combine the use of a library card with a debit card and Work Source Center function, similar to what the Cities of Oakland, California and New Haven, Connecticut have implemented. In the future, the Card can be expanded to add functionalities of additional Departments, and in the short term the card can be used as a tangible focus to begin coordinating financial literacy offerings at our Libraries and harnessing new technology to improve services for our constituents.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Library Department, working with the Community Development Department, the City Administrative Officer (CAO), the Information Technology Agency (ITA) and the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA), prepare a report about how to integrate financial literacy efforts at the City's Libraries and about the process to create a Universal City Services Card for Los Angeles that combines a library card as well as a debit card function.

PRESENTED BY


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