



Ocean Park Association

May 19, 2020

Mayor Kevin McKeown
Councilmember Glean Davis
Councilmember Sue Himmelrich
Councilmember Ana Maria Jara

Councilmember Greg Morena
Councilmember Terry O'Day
Councilmember Ted Winterer
Interim City Manager Lane Dilg
Library Director Patty Wong

Re: Proposed Ocean Park Branch library closure

Dear Mayor, Councilmembers, Interim City Manager, and Library Director:

For more than one hundred years, the Ocean Park Branch Library has been an essential part of our community fabric. It's also one of the rare Carnegie Libraries to operate continuously. The entire neighborhood relies on our beloved branch; the world knows and respects it.

The OPA Board of Directors, on behalf of our members, urges Council to keep this critical local institution open at least one day per week through the ongoing budget crisis. Without minimal outdoor "to go" service to pick up reserved materials, all patrons will lose significant access to educational and entertainment resources, but three of the neediest constituencies will suffer the most:

- **Low income families**, particularly those living in nearby Community Corps housing facilities, many of whom lack transportation options to other branches or books at home;
- **Seniors**, among the library's most active users, who generally walk to the branch and cannot easily travel to the Main, Pico or Montana branches;
- **Children**, who will now have drastically limited access to books that help maintain appropriate reading levels, as well as develop the love of reading and writing so essential to lifelong learning.

Under current austerity plans, we understand that the Ocean Park Branch will be staffed on a limited basis to pull materials for other branches and service its own book drops. We ask that staff be allowed to serve patrons with limited to-go service. (In 2019, almost 25,000 reserved adult books and almost 20,000 youth books were circulated via the Ocean Park branch). With staffing flexibility, our goal would be highly limited or net neutral impact on the revised city budget.

This is a matter of equity, and also one of good sense: minimal adjustments will reap untold benefits, particularly in this difficult time.

Thank you for your service and support to the Ocean Park community.

Marc Morgenstern
President, on behalf of the Ocean Park Association