



San Francisco Public Library

DRAFT

August 15, 2008

Honorable David L. Ballati
Presiding Judge
San Francisco Superior Court
400 MacAllister Street
San Francisco, California 94102

RE: San Francisco Public Library's Response to the 2007-2008 Civil Grand Jury Report,
Accountability in San Francisco Government

Dear Judge Ballati:

Pursuant to Penal Code Sections 933 and 933.05, the San Francisco Public Library ("Library") submits the following response to the 2007-2008 Civil Grand Jury Report released on June 26, 2008 entitled *Accountability in San Francisco Government*. The Grand Jury requested that the Library respond to Recommendation #11 of the Report.

RECOMMENDATION #11

Recommendation 11: "The City should make it a high priority to insure that all the information posted on the City's official website accurately discloses successes as well as challenges in a manner that is fully and easily accessible to the citizens."

Response: The Library agrees with this recommendation as related to information regarding the financial and operational challenges of the Branch Library Improvement Program ("BLIP") projects. The Library is committed to keeping the community at large accurately and promptly informed about the BLIP. As explained below, the Library informs the public about the BLIP on the City's website. In addition to the website, the Library provides information to the public about the BLIP by conducting monthly community meetings and fully engaging stakeholders such as the Library Citizens Advisory Committee (LCAC), Council of Neighborhood Libraries (CNL) and the Friends of the Library.

Since the launch of the BLIP in 2001, the Library has consistently posted information regarding the BLIP projects on the Library's website which can be found at <http://sfpl.org> under the link entitled, *Branch Renovations & Construction [BLIP]*. In response to Recommendation #11, the Library recently updated its website information regarding the BLIP and will continue to update information on all BLIP projects in a timely manner. The Library has and will continue to ensure that information posted on each project is accurate and is posted in a manner that is fully and easily accessible to the citizens of San Francisco.

In addition to the Library's website, information regarding the BLIP is available on the Library Commission website. Specifically, the BLIP Program Manager's monthly reports to the Library Commission, which include PowerPoint presentations regarding program budgets, schedules, and construction reports, are posted on the Library Commission's website under the meeting agendas, at <http://www.sfpl.org/librarylocations/libcomm.htm>. The Library Commission meeting minutes detailing Commission discussions of the successes and challenges facing the BLIP are also posted on the Library Commission web page: <http://sfpl.org/librarylocations/libcomm.htm>.

Finally, the Department of Public Works (DPW) also posts information on its website regarding BLIP projects under construction: http://www.sfgov.org/site/sfdpw_page.asp?id=85898.

The Library, Library Commission, and DPW's websites are all accessible through links on the City's main web page: <http://sfgov.org>. Citizens can find BLIP information from the City's main webpage by searching either under City Agency, at http://www.sfgov.org/site/mainpages_index.asp?id=7695, or by doing a keyword search from the main web page, at <http://www.sfgov.org/>. For example, keyword searches such as **capital projects** and **branch improvement** will link citizens to both the Library and DPW's websites that provide information on the BLIP.

FINDINGS #14-#18

Although the Grand Jury Report requires the Library to respond only to Recommendation # 11, the Library would like to comment briefly on the Grand Jury's Findings #14 through #18 under *Section C, Fiscal Controls and Accountability* of the Report, regarding cost overruns in the BLIP projects.

The Library Commission has been proactive and diligent in addressing concerns related to cost overruns and scheduling delays in the BLIP. In March 2007, the Library Commission requested that the City Controller's City Services Auditor ("CSA") conduct an independent review of the management of the BLIP program. The Commission requested this review because of escalating construction costs; the challenges of attracting enough bidders to have a competitive bid climate; and an ambitious community engagement process that contributed to delays of original project schedules.

The Controller's Office presented its report at a public meeting of the Library Commission on September 20, 2007. A copy of the report, entitled *SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY AND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS: Strengthened Program Management Required for Branch Library Improvement Program to Avoid Further Budget Increases*, is available on the City Controller's website at <http://co.sfgov.org/webreports/details.aspx?id=640>. The Report concluded that "[a] variety of factors contributed to delays and cost increases. It is not possible to attribute any single cause to a given project because many projects were affected by more than one factor." The Report identified the following factors as contributing to project delays:

- Applications for state bond funding for five projects took considerably longer than anticipated.
- Delays to five branches are due in part to the Library's decision to increase the size of those projects in order to meet increased service needs.
- Unclear responsibilities between the Library and Public Works and senior management staff vacancies at the Library contributed to some delays.

The Report also found that "[e]scalation factors used in cost estimations are consistent with industry standards but are inconsistently applied and calculated."

The Report recommended that the Library and DPW develop a new Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") regarding fiscal and operational management of the BLIP program. In response to this recommendation, the Library and DPW have entered into a new MOU setting forth in detail each department's duties and responsibilities in order to efficiently and effectively manage the BLIP. Specifically, the MOU describes the fiscal oversight mechanisms for BLIP finances and each department's responsibilities for program management including regular weekly, monthly, and quarterly reports to track project budgets and schedules. In addition, the MOU sets forth each department's responsibility to involve the community in the BLIP program. The new MOU was presented to the Library Commission on May 15, 2008, signed by the Departments on June 4, 2008, and is attached hereto.

Please do not hesitate to contact this office if you have any questions concerning the Library's response to the 2007-2008 Civil Grand Jury Report.

Respectfully Submitted,

Luis Herrera
City Librarian

Attachment: Memorandum of Understanding between SFPL and DPW (dated June 2, 2008)

Cc: Angela Calvillo, Board of Supervisors
Office of the Mayor of San Francisco
Office of the Civil Grand Jury