

## Library Board of Trustees

Escondido Public Library  
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August 15, 2017

To: Mayor Sam Abed; Deputy Mayor John Masson; Councilmember Ed Gallo;  
Councilmember Olga Diaz; Councilmember Michael Morasco

From: Library Board of Trustees

Subject: Recommendation Regarding Outsourcing of the Escondido Public Library to Library  
Systems & Services

Dear Escondido Mayor and Councilmembers,

The Library Board of Trustees bylaws state the primary mission of the Trustees is to be a vocal and energetic advocate for the essential services the Escondido Public Library (EPL) provides to our community, hearing the concerns of Escondido residents, and providing timely advice to the Escondido City Council. The Trustees have accepted the responsibility of following these bylaws and the trust you have placed in us.

During the process of considering the possible outsourcing of library services, the Board listened to a presentation from Library Systems & Services (LS&S), received and read 64 letters & emails from community members, and heard 58 community members speak directly to the Board during the last two Trustees meetings, which were attended by over 250 citizens. We also received an 81-page petition with 1,000 signatures, and a separate online petition containing 576 signatures opposing outsourcing EPL. In all communications received from Escondido citizens, one person had been in favor of outsourcing our library while all others were opposed.

Considering all of this community input, the Library Board of Trustees have come to the following conclusions:

1. LS&S would save approximately \$400,000 per year in operating costs as estimated by the City of Escondido's Finance Department.
2. LS&S would open our Library on Sundays.
  - a. Library Administration has also studied the possibility of increasing hours and presented a strategic plan to the City Manager, where the Library would be open additional hours throughout the week, including on Sundays, without increasing staff.
3. The EPL will lose talented staff due to both outsourcing and uncertainty.

4. Escondido will lose community support for both the Library and the City as indicated by the overwhelming input from the citizens who communicated with us.
5. Escondido could lose a high degree of local control over the operation of our Library.
6. Escondido will most likely lose our chance to build a new library on the City campus of Grape Day Park. It is extremely difficult to pass a bond measure at 67%, even if you have no organized opposition. With a disgruntled population created by this proposal it would be next to impossible for a bond to pass.
7. EPL has generated a great deal of civic pride. In 2016, an average of 1,366 patrons visited the library daily. These people are very passionate about our Library and of Escondido; some of this will naturally be lost if we change to LS&S. Due to the fact that so many people are involved, you cannot equally compare this type of outsourcing to other City services like graffiti removal, pavement maintenance, or landscaping.
8. Privatizing EPL may jeopardize volunteer and public monetary support. Many citizens have stated they would no longer financially support, or volunteer, for a for-profit company. In 2016, EPL had 218 individuals volunteer with a total of 29,080 hours of support in the form of various operational tasks, fundraisers, events, and within the five support groups. Based on the recommended value per hour provided by grantspace.org, this equates to a value of \$701,991 worth of effort potentially compromised should LS&S take over management operations.
9. The City is in danger of losing the support of the Friends of the Library organization, who annually raise \$75,000 in the Bookshop. This helps to pay for free public programs, and books and materials for children and adults. Additionally, this may impact the total Friends of the Library membership, which currently consists of 282 individuals.

In conclusion, the Trustees all want a positive image for the City of Escondido. We want Escondido to be a very welcoming community. EPL has been a significant part of this positive culture for a very long time. A City campus at Grape Day Park, that includes a new library, would greatly enhance community pride. It appears that by outsourcing our public library to LS&S we would potentially risk giving up too many positives in order to save a small percentage of Escondido's budget.

At the last Board of Trustees meeting, on August 8, 2017, the Trustees voted unanimously against the proposal to outsource the Escondido Public Library to LS&S. We have done our due diligence by listening to the public and therefore recommend the Escondido City Council reject this proposal.

In the interest of transparency, we would like to request the City post this letter on the City's website under the Current Issues/Public Library Services link.

Sincerely,



Ron Guiles  
Library Board of Trustees, President




Mayra Salazar  
Library Board of Trustees, Secretary



Elmer Cameron  
Library Board of Trustees



Mirek Gorney  
Library Board of Trustees



Gary Knight  
Library Board of Trustees

CC: City Manager, Jeffrey Epp  
Interim Library & Community Services Director, Cynthia Smith  
Principal Librarian, Joanna Axelrod  
Board of Trustees President, Ron Guiles  
Board of Trustees Secretary, Mayra Salazar  
Trustee, Elmer Cameron  
Trustee, Mirek Gorney,  
Trustee, Gary Knight