



# Memorandum

**TO:** MAYOR LICCARDO

**FROM:** Councilmember Esparza

**SUBJECT: BUDGET DOCUMENT**

**DATE:** 5/25/2022

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Approved *Maya Esparza*

Date 5/25/2022

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the following recommendation be enacted.

### **Proposal**

Program/Project Title: Sunday Hours for Tully and Seven Trees Libraries

Amount of City Funding Required: \$328,265

This change is:

One-time       Ongoing

Cost Estimate Number (if applicable): 91

Proposal Description, including the reason for the need and anticipated outcomes (Please describe how the proposal will affect services for San José residents, community groups, businesses, etc.):

Prior to the Great Recession, our branch libraries provided their critical services to our communities seven days a week. Staffing and budget cuts during our recovery resulted in significantly reduced hours and services, including the loss of Sunday service at our library branches. Although the cuts were made across all branches, the impacts were inequitably felt in our highest need communities. For our poorest and most underserved communities, libraries serve as critical resources, from accessing digital connectivity, to serving as community centers and safe places for youth. Just as we began to work towards restoring staffing and hours at our libraries, the Covid pandemic forced us to reduce services yet again, and yet again these same communities were hit the hardest. As we continue reopening and restoring our libraries to be the vital community centers and resources that they are, we need to apply an equity lens to our service hours, especially in our most underserved communities that have been hit hardest by Covid.

This proposal seeks funding needed to restore Sunday service hours to the Tully and Seven Trees Branch Libraries. Both of these branches serve enormously underserved, low-income communities of color that have struggled to survive these past two years, and face a long and challenging recovery

ahead. Both libraries are in the 95111 ZIP code, one of the ZIP codes hit hardest by Covid in the entire county. The Tully Library service area includes one of the city's largest Areas of Concentrated Poverty, where over 20% of residents live below the federal poverty line (\$30,718 for a family of 4).

In the three census tracts surrounding Seven Trees, an area that is 95% people of color, 53% of households earn less than \$75,000 per year, compared to only 35% of households citywide. In the three tracts surrounding the Tully Library, also 95% people of color, 58% of households earn less than \$75,000 per year, and the percentage of households living below the federal poverty line is nearly twice the city average. Tully and Seven Trees serve three of the most overcrowded census tracts in the city, where over 20% of households are overcrowded, with multiple families per home.

For kids and families living in apartments and homes with multiple families under one roof, it is no exaggeration to say that the surrounding parks are their front yard, and the libraries are their living rooms. These libraries serve many of the communities in the heart of our digital deserts, and the connectivity resources they provide to our students and their families make the difference for many families to be able to participate in the modern online world. Tully Library serves families from as far away as Santee, who absolutely rely on it.

An equitable recovery requires prioritizing critical services in the communities where the need is greatest. Restoring Sunday hours to the Tully and Seven Trees Libraries will enable families in many communities that have been struggling to recover from the pandemic to access critical resources. These include parents whose work schedules may not permit them to access the library during any other time, students who may not have reliable internet at home and depend on the library to complete their schoolwork, and seniors who rely on the library to access critical services.

### **Funding Source**

Essential Services Reserve:

Other (Please specify program/project/fund):

### **Department or Organization Contact**

Please list the contact information for the individual that certified cost estimates contained within your recommendation:

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Department or Organization: Library

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