

Ramirez, Angelica

Public Comment

A-6

**From:** Leslie Dinaberg <leslie@lesliedinaberg.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 25, 2022 12:58 PM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Subject:** Public Comment for American Rescue Plan Act at Finance Committee (3/1)  
**Attachments:** Library Letter to Board of Supervisors.pdf



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Attached please find a letter of Public Comment for the American Rescue Plan Act being reviewed by the Finance Committee on 3/1. Thank you so much for your assistance in getting this information to the committee members.

Leslie Dinaberg  
Writer | Editor  
Leslie@LeslieDinaberg.com  
805/452-3749

February 25, 2022

Dear Finance Committee Members,

**Re: American Rescue Plan Act Appropriation Requests**

I am writing to you in support of the Santa Barbara Public Library request to use funds from the American Rescue Plan Act to support our need for digital materials and a library garage for mobile customer service. These two requests fall within the staff recommendation.

**Library Garage for Mobile Customer Service:** As you are well aware, the pandemic limited access to vital library services. In response to these limitations, in June 2021 the Santa Barbara Public Library launched a Library on the Go van — a fully functional mobile library branch. The Library on the Go van brings collections, services, programs, and staff to sites throughout the greater Santa Barbara area, including parks, low-income housing sites, immigrant program providers, and senior living facilities. Programs have included early literacy classes and storytimes, outdoor Storywalks, hands-on coding classes, healthy cooking classes, and adult education services to the Neighborhood Navigation Centers in coordination with SB ACT and other organizations serving people experiencing homelessness.

Community response to the Library on the Go van has been overwhelmingly positive and it truly has been a bright spot during some very dark times.

With the addition of the van, outreach has increased with over 100 stops visited within the first 6 months of use. Building on the success of the Library's outreach efforts and collaboration with established community partners, SBPL secured grant funding for an additional outreach vehicle in January of 2022. Both vehicles will be fully customized and equipped with WiFi, hotspots, laptops, materials for checkout, tables, carts, and an array of other outreach items.

These vehicles are essential to providing off-site library services, particularly to the most vulnerable, and the construction of a garage is critical to preserving them to allow for long-term use in the community. A secure garage is needed to safely store materials and to protect the vehicles and all of the equipment from weather, theft, vandalism, and other elements, and should be equipped with adequate lighting and safety features as security cameras and power to charge the vehicles and outreach devices. The space also needs to be large enough to house multiple vehicles with enough shelving and workspace to store and prepare materials as each outreach visit is tailored to the needs

of the location and to allow for quick and efficient access for staff to be able to safely load and unload materials.

**Library Digital Materials:** Santa Barbara Public Library offers an array of online learning platforms, digital databases, and individual titles, and a comprehensive digital library collection is essential to being responsive to community needs, particularly for those that have been impacted by COVID-19 and the most vulnerable community members that are unable to visit the physical Library to check out materials. The rise in demand for digital materials continues to increase as a result of the pandemic and people's habits moving toward digital adoption. For example, the unique users of Hoopla in 2020 increased 37% versus 25% increase in 2019; and during that same time period, users of Overdrive increased 18% in 2020 compared with 10% in 2019. Over a million items have circulated to date on Overdrive alone by Library patrons, and that trend is expected to continue.

Demand for digital materials continues to rise, and unfortunately, so does the cost. The Library's ability to meet demand has become increasingly challenging and funding has only allowed them to fulfill about 25% of purchase suggestions. **A \$300,000 enhancement to the Library's digital collections** would aid in securing increased access to community members and reducing wait times for needed material. The enhanced funds would also be used to support the Student Success Card initiative, providing over 10,000 SB Unified students access to digital content.

There is also an additional request for ARPA funds that were not appropriated within the staff recommendations but will greatly help the library.

**Additional Library Digital Materials:** This additional request will help ensure SBPL's successful transition from Black Gold Library Cooperative. There are several thousand titles SBPL purchased collectively with Black Gold that will need to be replaced as the city withdraws from the cooperative. This additional \$200,000 will assist in making the transition a success.

Thank you so much for your support of this vital community resource.

Best regards,

Leslie Dinaberg  
Vice Chair, City of Santa Barbara Library Board  
[Leslie@LeslieDinaberg.com](mailto:Leslie@LeslieDinaberg.com)