



MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Dennis Quinn, Director of Library Services

Date: April 26, 2022

Reference: Discussion regarding Extended Hours for Cozby Library.

Executive Summary

The Cozby Library and Community Commons will soon be implementing a service that would allow customers to access the library outside of staffed hours for self-service amenities. Additionally, the Library recommends modifying its schedule of fully-staffed hours in conjunction with the launch of this service to better match staffing to customer demand patterns.

Background

The Cozby Library has historically been a leader in its industry in terms of hours of service per week. With the exception of closures and modified hours in 2020 and 2021, it has observed a schedule of 70 hours per week, placing it in the 98th percentile of Texas public libraries. At the same time, there has been continued customer demand for additional hours, particularly in the evenings after its current closing times, and mostly for uses that would not require staff assistance.

Providing additional facility hours at the current service level would require additional staffing, which is not currently feasible for the City. In 2019, staff began researching options that would allow for increased hours without increasing personnel, and identified a solution that would allow for self-service access to the facility without staff present.

Staff gave an informational presentation to City Council on the findings of their research on September 20, 2020, aiming to implement the service as precautions related to the COVID-19 pandemic were eventually lifted. Staff developed a policy for use of the service, which was approved by the Library Advisory Board on August 12, 2021, and further amended on April 14, 2022. An initial target launch date in the fall of 2021 was delayed as efforts to coordinate with the City's janitorial vendor on safety and security measures were not successful. Staff is now prepared to implement the service in June 2022.

Description of Proposed Service

Upon implementation of Extended Hours, an authorized customer would be able to enter the Library by scanning the barcode on their library card at a kiosk installed in the front vestibule and entering their account PIN. Upon authentication, the doors to the lobby would open automatically and allow the customer into the Library. The customer would have access to the main library area (including the material collection, self-checkout stations, computer workstations, document center, and study tables) as well as the lobby, the Commons, and the public restrooms. Study rooms and auxiliary spaces would be closed.

The Library would be accessible in this manner in the evenings Monday through Friday, from the end of its staffed hours until midnight, at which time customers would be required to exit the building and the access system would not allow additional customers to enter.

In order to access the Library during Extended Hours, a customer must be a Coppell resident, age 17 or older, with a library account in good standing, and who has signed an authorization form acknowledging they have read and agreed to the policy which applies to the service. Customers will be required to help preserve the integrity of the authentication system by not allowing persons into the Library with them other than members of their household.

The Library is equipped with security cameras in various locations throughout the building, and customers will have access to personal alarms they may carry with them while in the building in case of emergency. Library staff has coordinated with the Coppell Police Department to arrange periodic patrol as part of their normal evening rounds. Staff will be able to review camera footage to verify customer compliance and determine responsibility in case of any harm to person or property. The Library reserves the right to revoke access from customers not adhering to the policy.

Modifying Staffed Hours

In tandem with the launch of this service, staff recommend modifying the Library's staffed hours to better suit customer demand. Currently the Library is open and staffed until 9:00 p.m. four nights per week (Monday through Thursday). On average, less than 5 customer interactions requiring personal assistance by staff occur during the hour between 8:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. each night. This is fewer customer interactions than any other hour during the week when the facility is open. With Extended Hours in place, the Library will have an opportunity to tailor its staffing schedule more closely to demand without impacting the availability of self-service amenities. Staffing the library until 8:00 p.m. on these evenings instead of until 9:00 p.m. would allow more staff to be present earlier in the day, where customer demand requiring staff intervention is higher.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends modifying the Library's fully-staffed hours to end at 8:00 p.m. instead of 9:00 p.m., effective concurrently with the implementation of the Extended Hours service described herein.