

# ***Mayor's Blue Ribbon Taskforce for the Miami-Dade Public Library System***



## **Taskforce Recommendations Summary From Meeting on Friday, February 21, 2014**

### **1 SERVICE NEEDS**

#### 1A

Taking into account the diverse interests and needs of our community, are there specific programs or service areas that the Taskforce would recommend to prioritize and/or phase-out as the Miami-Dade Public Library System (MDPLS) prepares its *Master Plan for 2014 and Beyond?* (i.e. technology, lending resources, community space, life-long learning, programming for children).

#### Comments:

- There is a need for increased use of technology and access to Library resources, especially in those communities where it is not readily available. (Mr. Johnson and Mayor Gimenez)
- Taskforce members suggested targeted lending or technology resources, respectively, to communities based on their demographics so as to better address each community's particular needs. (Mr. Quick and Commissioner Weithorn)
- Stressed the importance of libraries being future oriented. Existing Library plans for technology could not be implemented due to insufficient funding. Technology is a trend that cannot be ignored and should be expanded in libraries. We should explore the use of libraries as Maker Spaces and teach coding. (Ms. Weinberg)
- Even with limited resources, there is a need for the County to serve its residents as part of its core mission. The County and the Library System should identify

needed core services and technology learning needs, and should strive to provide those services well. (Mayor Gimenez and Ms. Weinberg)

- Libraries should be considered as part of the continuum of education for our children and residents. (Ms. Weinberg)
- Taskforce members expressed that the needs of adults of all levels of education and literacy should be considered. Also, services need to be structured to address the needs of geographic areas and the demographics served. (Ms. Velez and Mr. Rothman)
- Taskforce members discussed the allocation of services based on the needs of each community, as well as addressing survey results, functions and service needs to libraries depending on usage and needs of demographic groups and the geographical area served. (Mr. Wasson and Ms. Brown)
- Resources should be focused more on youth and community engagement rather than technology. (Mr. Auslander)
- Libraries are the center of family and civic life. They are a safe space. Continuation and expansion of children and adult programming could be funded through partnerships with community organizations. Adjusting library hours to include Sundays and staggering the hours of operation during the week should be considered. (Mr. Soto)

## **2 SERVICE MODEL**

2A

Does the MDPLS currently have an appropriate number of points of service? Are points of service accessible to library users? Should all points of service offer the same service delivery model? Are there specific recommendations from the Taskforce regarding the future service delivery models to be offered by the MDPLS?

Does the MDPLS currently have an appropriate number of points of service?

- Library service points are adequate. (Commissioner Weithorn and Mr. Wasson)
- The Library System needs more efficient library access and services from alternative locations, for example expanding virtual library services to include video components like Skype librarians, which would give us as much service as possible to as many people as possible. We need to determine appropriate methods to increase our library usage and to serve the needs of the majority of our residents, and evaluate whether our materials and services are diverse enough for all of our residents. (Mayor Gimenez and Commissioner Weithorn)

### 3 FUNDING

#### 3A

After consideration of the study presented on January 17, 2014 regarding countywide library services, the Blue Ribbon Funding Working Group's presentation shared on December 18, 2013, and the background information provided to all Taskforce members, does the Taskforce have a recommendation regarding the incorporation of the Library District into the General Fund.

- Taskforce members indicated that they did not support the Library System being incorporated into the General Fund. (Mr. Quick, Ms. Alpizar, and Commissioner Weithorn)

#### 3B1

After consideration of the services currently provided by the MDPLS, the community and employee surveys, the presentations provided by the four Blue Ribbon Working Groups and the additional background information provided to all Taskforce members, does the Taskforce have a recommendation regarding library funding within its current structure? (i.e. lower the millage rate, sustain the current millage rate, increase the millage rate to sustain current service levels, increase the millage rate to enhance service levels).

- Taskforce members pointed out that service level enhancements and efficiencies would be needed if people were asked to pay more. (Commissioner Weithorn, Mayor Gimenez, Mr. Soto, and Mr. Alfonso)
- Taskforce members commented on the need for efficiencies and that an increase in the millage rate was necessary to address the \$21 million budget shortfall. (Mr. Quick and Ms. Seaver)

#### 3B2

After consideration of the services currently provided by the MDPLS, the community and employee surveys, the presentations provided by the four Blue Ribbon Working Groups and the additional background information provided to all Taskforce members, does the Taskforce have a recommendation regarding funding library services through alternative approaches? (i.e. independent taxing district, a sales tax as an alternative to ad valorem funding, non-ad valorem fee, referendum on a temporary millage increase).

- Taskforce members discussed the option of a straw ballot referendum.
- Members were also informed that only the County Commission can set millage rates.
- The consensus from the Taskforce members was to increase the millage rate to restore the current levels of funding in order to both maintain and enhance library services.

## 4 AWARENESS, ADVOCACY, AND MARKETING

### 4A

After consideration of the community and employee surveys and the presentation provided by the Blue Ribbon Awareness, Advocacy and Marketing Working Groups, is the public aware of library services available in Miami-Dade County? Does the public demonstrate an understanding of how library services are funded? If it is determined that there is a need to increase education and awareness in these areas, what specific strategies does the Taskforce recommend to the MDPLS Leadership Team to include in the proposed MDPLS Master Plan for 2014 and Beyond?

- Taskforce members pointed out the importance of a strategic marketing program performed by outside marketing experts, as well as the importance of marketing to the different needs of our communities. (Ms. Alpizar, Mr. Santiago, Commissioner Weithorn, Mayor Gimenez, and Ms. Velez)
- Taskforce members noted that the Library System needed to obtain support from community partners who could help market the library (i.e. Knight Foundation, Miami International Airport and other local organizations). (Ms. Weinberg and Ms. Pandya)
- Taskforce members suggested the use of Marketing graduate students to develop a marketing plan, and also that digital marketing be incorporated into the campaign. (Ms. Weinberg, Ms. Pandya, and Mayor Gimenez)
- Taskforce members pointed out the possibility of leveraging County marketing resources. (Mr. Soto, Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Quick)

### 4B

The MDPLS already has established entities that lead advisory and advocacy activities for the department. Are there specific strategies that the Taskforce recommends related to the MDPLS's work with these entities?

- Taskforce members discussed support groups for specific library branches. There was concern expressed about the need to have support for the entire system versus segmented support. (Mr. Santiago, Mr. Quick, Commissioner Weithorn, and Ms. Lawther)
- Taskforce members discussed the need to market to the non-users of the Library System and the need to take the survey data depicting the areas in the community with low usage into consideration. (Mr. Rothman, Commissioner Weithron, Mayor Gimenez, Ms. Weinberg, and Ms. Lawther)