



CITY OF COMMERCE AGENDA REPORT

TO: Honorable City Council **Item No.** _____

FROM: City Administrator

SUBJECT: Removing Barriers to Access of Children's Books

MEETING DATE: November 20, 2018

RECOMMENDATION:

City Council approval of the Library Commission's recommendation to eliminate fines for Children's books in order to remove barriers to access of Children's books.

BACKGROUND:

In September 2018, the Library Commission received a report from the Library Department regarding removing barriers to access children's books and examining library fines for children's books. Staff respectfully requests Council approval to eliminate late fines for children's books (Juvenile category) per the proposed new option below.

Currently, libraries are evaluating ways to remove barriers to library access for its young patrons, including L.A. Public Libraries. The City wants to encourage everyone to continue to read books at home with their children and for children to be encouraged to read books. Some families are reluctant to check out books because of the accrual of fines, deterring them from having books at home for children to read by themselves or with their parents.

Staff included a report provided to the Library Commission that includes findings about library fines, as well as the current library practice for books that are returned late. The Library Commission and the library looked at an option to eliminate fines (for up to 30 days), should the City Council approve:

Current Practice: A person (child or adult) checks out children's books for the borrowing period of three (3) weeks or twenty-one (21) days. They would receive notification prior to the books being due and a notice on the due date.

New: Going forward, **one day after the due date**, a person would have 30 days to return the children's books and not incur a fine. On the 31st day, the book is considered lost and the borrowing privileges are suspended and a lost/replacement fee is placed on the patron's record (dollar value of the book).

New: For past fines, the Library will come up with a program for children to read-away their existing fines, so they can be able to check out books again.

We know that most people that are late turning in children's books are days or a week late. We don't anticipate books being late 30 days. Some reasons for returning books late are the books are left at school, the caretaker's house, day care or with another parent.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Provide further direction to staff

FISCAL IMPACT:

Currently the total amount of fees owed to the library by 445 patrons ages 0-17 that have fines above the \$10 threshold and are blocked from checking out books and materials is \$57,060.

- \$14,676 are late fines
- \$41,848 are for lost items

RELATIONSHIP TO 2012 STRATEGIC GOALS:

The issue before the Council is applicable to the following strategic goal of the Council: "Protect and Enhance Quality of Life in the City of Commerce."

Recommended and prepared by: Beatriz Sarmiento, Director of Library Services
Reviewed by: Vilko Domic, Finance Director
Approved as to form: Noel Tapia, City Attorney
Respectfully submitted: Edgar P. Cisneros, City Administrator