



STAFF REPORT

City Council

Meeting Date:

5/14/2019

Staff Report Number:

19-094-CC

Informational Item:

Little free library pilot incentive program update

Recommendation

This is an informational item and does not require City Council action.

Policy Issues

The little free library pilot incentive program is included in the Library Commission's two-year work plan.

Background

Little free libraries (LFL's) are "take a book, return a book" free book exchanges popularized by the nonprofit organization Little Free Library. LFL's typically take the form of a small wooden box of books mounted on a post in front of a home or business where passerby can easily access the books. The vast majority of LFL's are installed on private property and maintained by sponsoring community members whom Little Free Library refers to as "stewards."

Studies have consistently shown that young children who have access to books in the home achieve markedly higher literacy levels later in life. According to the Children's Literacy Foundation, 61 percent of low-income families do not have age-appropriate books in their homes. Increasing access to books and encouraging a lifelong love of reading, especially among children, are core values of Menlo Park library.

Various community stakeholders, including residents and members of the Library and Parks and Recreation Commissions have expressed interest in increasing access to books throughout Menlo Park and especially where there is need for additional literacy supports for children, including by providing incentives for the installation of LFL's throughout the community.

At its November 19, 2018 regular meeting¹, the Library Commission voted to recommend implementation of the LFL's pilot incentive program. The incentive program is designed encourage Menlo Park residents to install and maintain LFL's on their properties by providing financial incentives (mini-grants) that will cover 100 percent of the up-front installation costs at no charge to the resident. In exchange, participating residents are required sign a written pledge to keep the LFL on their property, curate the LFL's collection of books, and keep the LFL in good condition.

At its December 17, 2018 regular meeting², the Library Commission voted to recommend the program's application eligibility and selection criteria.

¹ Hyperlink: https://www.menlopark.org/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_11192018-3185

² Hyperlink: https://www.menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/20296/Staff-report_LC_2018-12-17_selection_criteria_little-free-libraries

The Menlo Park Library Foundation and Friends of Menlo Park Library nonprofit organizations donated \$5,000 each (\$10,000 total) to support the incentive program. This provided sufficient funding to acquire approximately 20-25 LFL boxes and carry out the program.

Analysis

The pilot incentive program began accepting applications from Menlo Park residents in January. A total of 25 eligible applications were received. Because sufficient funding was available from the Menlo Park Library Foundation and Friends of Menlo Park Library donations, all 25 applicants were selected for participation in the program. All participants are Menlo Park residents. One participant voluntarily withdrew from the program after the selections were announced. The 24 remaining participants are spread evenly throughout Menlo Park, as shown in the map in Attachment A.

A brief welcome and orientation luncheon for program participants will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, May 18, at the main library. City Council members are welcomed and encouraged to attend the luncheon and meet the program participants. The event will include a “ribbon-cutting” of a demonstration LFL box and group photo.

The LFL boxes will be installed in front of the 24 participants’ homes by the public works department in late May and early June.

Impact on City Resources

There is no substantive impact to City resources related to this program’s activities. The Menlo Park Library Foundation and Friends of Menlo Park Library nonprofit organizations donated \$5,000 each (\$10,000 total) which provided sufficient funding to acquire the LFL boxes and carry out the incentive program.

Environmental Review

This action is not a project within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines §§ 15378 and 15061(b)(3) as it is a minor change that will not result in any direct or indirect physical change in the environment.

Public Notice

Public notification was achieved by posting the agenda, with the agenda items being listed, at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

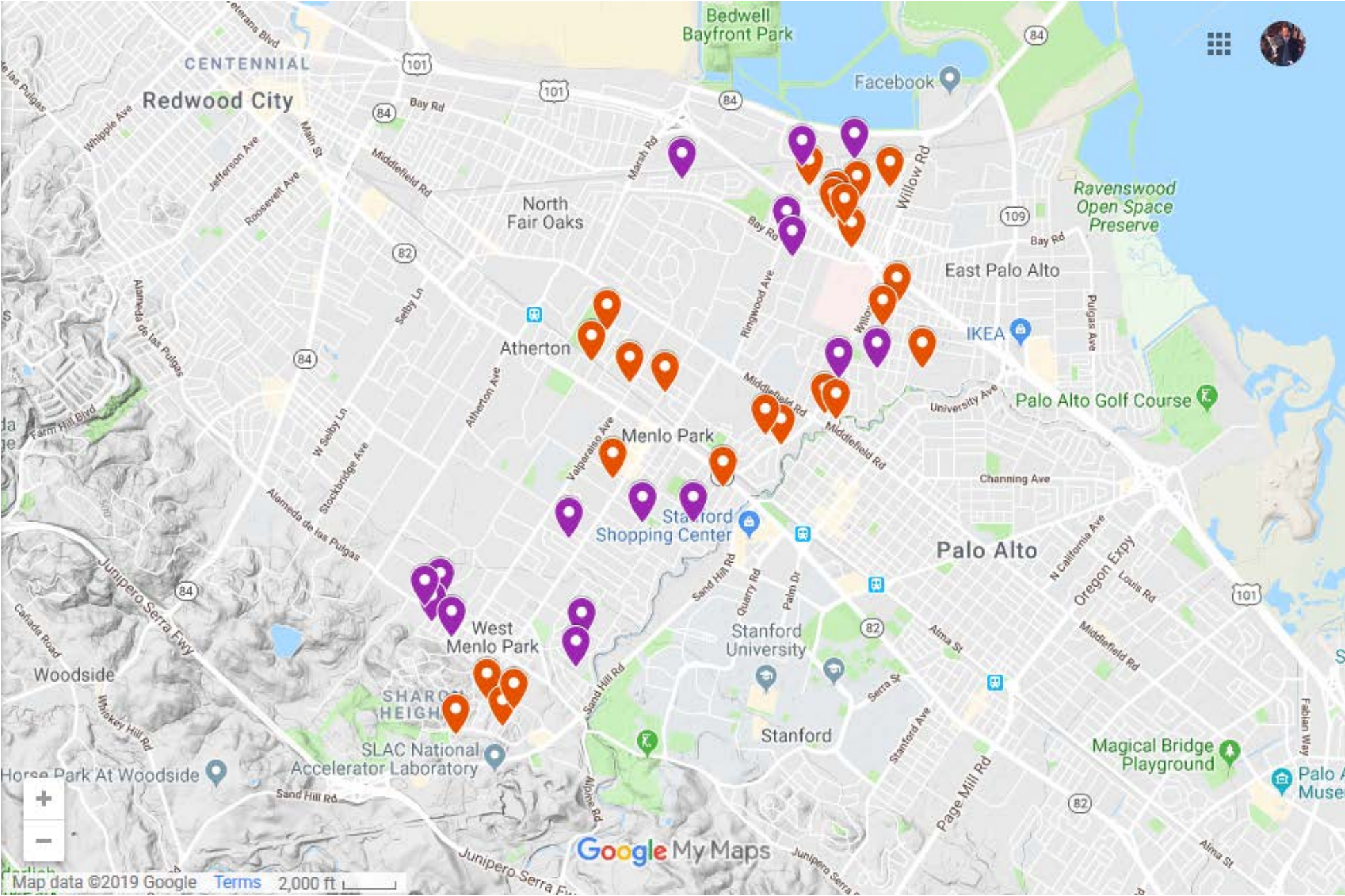
Attachments

A. Map of LFL’s in Menlo Park

Report prepared by:
Nick Szegda, Assistant Library Services Director

Report recommended by:
Sean S. Reinhart, Library Services Director

ATTACHMENT A. Map of little free library (LFL) locations in Menlo Park. Red pins indicate the approximate locations of 24 new LFL boxes to be installed during the little free library pilot incentive program. Blue pins indicate the locations of 16 pre-existing LFL's, according to the website <https://littlefreelibrary.org/>.



List of participating Menlo Park residents in the LFL pilot incentive program.

Name	Address
Angela Jaime	Berkeley Ave, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Anjali Bisaria	Hamilton Ave, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Christine Arnould and Gaetan Castelein	Sunset Ln, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Christopher Tong	Theresa Ct, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Dagan McLennan	O'Keefe St, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Elizabeth Blandford	Monte Rosa Dr, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Erin Cooke	Cambridge Ave, Menlo Park, CA 94025
George Yang	Madera Ave, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Heather Goudey	Clover Ln, Menlo Park, CA 94025
JoAnne Goldberg	East Creek Dr, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Julie Johnson	Sevier Ave, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Laura Moon	Eastridge Ave, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Mansi Shah	Laurel St, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Mary Jane Gertz	Berkeley Ave, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Mary Sanderson	Haight St, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Nami Turner	Woodland, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Nicholas Taylor	Mills Ct, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Norayma Dunn	Windermere Ave, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Patrick Deloulay	Arden Rd, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Patti Shavelson	Johnson St, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Randi and Larry Bethel	Monte Rosa Dr, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Rich Dvorak	Willow Rd, Menlo Park, CA 94025
Todd Stiers	Windermere Ave, Menlo Park, CA 94025
William Mitch	Oak Ct, Menlo Park, CA 94025