



STAFF REPORT

Library Commission

Meeting Date: 12/17/2018

Staff Report Number: 18-006-LC

Regular Business: Little Free Libraries Pilot Incentive Program – Application Eligibility and Selection Criteria

Recommendation

That the Commission reviews and recommends the Little Free Libraries Pilot Incentive Program application eligibility and selection criteria described in this report.

Background

Various community stakeholders including residents and members of the Library and Parks & 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 Little Free Libraries (LFL's) throughout the community.

At its [November 19, 2018 regular meeting](#), the Library Commission voted to recommend implementation of the Little Free Libraries Pilot Incentive Program pending development and review of the program's application eligibility and selection criteria.

More details about the pilot incentive program can be found [here](#)¹.

Analysis

The proposed pilot incentive program will encourage Menlo Park residents to install and maintain LFL's on their properties by providing financial incentives (mini-grants) that will cover 100% of the up-front installation costs at no charge to the resident. In exchange, participating residents will be required to 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.

Participants will be selected through an application process managed by library staff. What follows is a summary of the proposed application eligibility and selection criteria:

Eligibility requirements. Staff proposes the following eligibility requirements:

- Applications are open to City of Menlo Park residents only.
- Application must be signed by the property owner.
- Property owner must enter a written agreement with the City of Menlo Park in which the property owner shall be responsible for all maintenance, repair and curation of the LFL, once installed.
- Property owner must agree to allow an approximately 3" x 5" placard acknowledging program sponsors Menlo Park Library Foundation and Friends of Menlo Park Library to be affixed to and permanently displayed on the LFL.

Selection criteria. Staff proposes that a simple point system be used to evaluate applications and select LFL recipients, as follows:

- 1 point for complete and accurate application.

¹ URL: https://www.menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/18970/Staff-report_LC_2018-11-19_little-free-libraries

- 1 point for sites within 500 feet of a school, park, transit stop, community/senior/childcare center.
- 2 points for sites within 100 feet of a school, park, transit stop, community/senior/childcare center.
- 1 point for sites more than 500 feet distant from an existing LFL.
- 2 points for sites more than 1,000 feet distant from an existing LFL.
- Up to 3 points for applicant's statement of interest (i.e. "Why I and my property should be selected to participate in the pilot program").

Applications that score higher using the above system will be given higher priority in the evaluation and selection process. Library staff will manage the application evaluation and selection process.

Wait list. If more qualifying applications are received than there are available LFL's in the pilot phase (approximately 20), staff proposes to establish a wait list. Applicants on the wait list would receive first consideration should additional LFL's become available in the future. The wait list would be maintained for up to 12 months. After 12 months, the wait list would be cleared, although applicants would be allowed to reapply if additional LFL's become available in the future.

Should the above described criteria be implemented, staff anticipates making applications available to Menlo Park residents in January 2019. Applications would be reviewed in February and selections announced in March. Installations could potentially occur in April or May 2019.

Next Steps

Should the Library Commission vote to recommend the above described Little Free Library Pilot Incentive Program application eligibility and selection criteria, staff will develop the application form and program criteria accordingly and release it to the public upon the program's launch in January 2019.

Prepared by:

Nick Szegda, Assistant Director of Library Services

Approved by:

Sean Reinhart, Interim Director of Library Services