



July 21, 2021

Dear Measure X Community Advisory Board Members:

As the Mayor of El Cerrito, I am writing in support of Measure X funds that could provide for an expanded county library budget and directly support the increase in hours of operation, staffing and collection development. I believe this request easily follows the purposes of the key targets for Measure X in Contra Costa County by:

- supporting crucial safety-net services;
- investing in early childhood services;
- protecting vulnerable populations; and
- funding other essential services.

And, like the other recent recommendation made to the Advisory Board by the El Cerrito City Council to fund the Community Crisis Initiative, I believe also requesting assistance for our growing county library needs would help rectify local equity concerns in many cities, like El Cerrito, which may be experiencing difficult financial circumstances at this time.

The Contra Costa County Library's per capita operating income falls woefully short of the median for libraries statewide, and particularly that of other Bay Area County libraries. Currently, the cost of additional operational hours and facilities maintenance beyond the county-funded minimum threshold is borne by cities like El Cerrito.

While *some* of our county's cities and their libraries' respective friends' groups and foundations can pitch in substantively to fill in the opportunity and equity gaps produced by this scant level of support— such funding becomes a contentious community debate in a city under extreme financial constraints.

Because of physical limitations of the building in its present location, additional Measure X funds cannot at this time add hours or personnel to the existing El Cerrito library. But such funding could free up local funding for other critical city needs. And, should ongoing Measure X funds be established for county libraries, it would assist El Cerrito's efforts to plan, finance, build and operate a new library facility. In addition to possible state and federal funds, I believe an ongoing commitment for additional county funds could importantly assist in establishing a much improved and safer library experience for El Cerritans and neighboring residents.

Thank you for your consideration using Measure X funding for this worthy county cause.

Sincerely,

Paul Fadelli
Mayor, City of El Cerrito

CC: El Cerrito Council Members, Michael Alan Fischer, Supervisor John Gioia, Contra Costa County Librarian