

Board of Library Trustees

TO: BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES DATE: DECEMBER 9, 2024

FROM: RIVERSIDE PUBLIC LIBRARY WARDS: ALL

SUBJECT: INFORMATIONAL REPORT ON COOL AND WARM CENTERS

ISSUE:

Receive an informational report on cool and warm centers.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Library Trustees receive an informational report on cool and warm centers.

BACKGROUND:

In collaboration with Community Action Partnership (CAP) of Riverside County and in support of CAP's Energy Crisis Response Plan in Riverside County, the City of Riverside entered into an annual Memorandum of Understanding with CAP to have all eight Riverside Public Library locations serve as cool/warm centers where individuals can seek temporary relief from extreme temperatures. The libraries activate as cool centers from June 1 to October 15 and warm centers from December 1 to March 31 each year.

DISCUSSION:

The eight Riverside Public Library locations are responsible for providing space and staff to monitor the cool/warm centers during activation periods. Cool centers must be activated when outside temperatures reach 97 degrees, and warm centers must be activated when outside temperatures drop to 40 degrees. They must also activate when there are official declared warnings. Centers are open to everyone during regular library hours of operation. In rare instances of extreme heat outside regular hours, Library Administration will work with the City Manager's Office to determine if any of the libraries need to be activated to ensure community members have access to relief from the heat.

In addition to providing space, all libraries are required to provide sign-in sheets, access to community resource information, distribute water and snacks, and report monthly statistics to CAP. CAP is responsible for providing notification of warnings/activation, free bottled water and snacks, and directories and statistics for all centers in Riverside County. Statistics are based on participants that sign-in on the sheets provided, although a name is not required to receive a bottle

of water or snack. During the warm center activation period from December 2023 to March 2024, each library averaged 25 participants per month. During the cool center activation period from June to October 2024, the libraries saw a significant increase in usage, as expected. Most libraries averaged 115 participants in the warmest months, with Arlington, Main, and Marcy Libraries seeing double the participation numbers compared to the other locations. Orange Terrace Library had the fewest with a monthly average of 45. The cooling centers have increased in usage over the past year with participants thanking staff "for helping people in need". During one of the more extreme summer heatwaves, some of the neighborhoods near the La Sierra Library lost power and Joseph Garcia, the La Sierra Library Supervisor, commented that community members appreciated being able to bring their elderly family members to the library to cool off.

Recognizing the need to accommodate pets as well as people, in October 2024 the SSgt. Salvador J. Lara Casa Blanca Library became the first known pet-friendly government cooling center in Riverside County. The library provided access to the outdoor garden as well as a designated area indoors with access to water and emergency supplies, including disposable water dishes, gloves, disposable bags, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes, as available. The pet-friendly cooling center opened just in time for the October heatwave and was able to provide relief to four people and their animal companions. Melina Velazquez, the Casa Blanca Library Supervisor, commented that there was a great deal of excitement generated in the community regarding the pet-friendly cooling center and while they were only activated for a short period of time this year, they're ready for next Summer......

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This item contributes to *Strategic Priority No. 1 Arts, Culture & Recreation and Goal 1.1*: Provide diverse community experiences and personal enrichment opportunities for people of all ages and Strengthen Riverside's portfolio of arts, culture, recreation, senior and lifelong learning programs and amenities through expanded community partnerships, shared use opportunities and fund development.

This item aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads based on the definitions in the *Envision Riverside 2025* as follows:

- Community Trust This report is transparent in providing the informational report on cooling and warming centers for inclusive community engagement, involvement of City Boards and Commissions, and timely reliable information. This activity and action by the City serve the public interest, benefit the City's diverse populations, and result in greater public good.
- 2. **Equity** The informational report on cool and warm centers provides members of the community equal access to share the benefits of community progress.
- 3. **Fiscal Responsibility** The informational report on cool and warm centers has no fiscal impact to public funds and ensures responsible management of the City's financial resources while providing quality public services to all.
- 4. **Innovation** The informational report on cool and warm centers is timely in meeting the community's changing needs and prepares for the future through collaborative partnerships and adaptive processes.

5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – The informational report on cool and warm centers relates to meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future and ensuring the City's capacity to persevere, adapt and grow during good and difficult times alike.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the meeting schedule.

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Attachments: City of Riverside news release, Riverside Residents Can Ride Out the Last (Hopefully) Heatwave of the Year with Their Animal Companions at First Pet-Friendly Cooling Center