




**COUNCILMEMBER CHRIS CATE
CITY OF SAN DIEGO
SIXTH DISTRICT**

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: August 27, 2020
TO: Mayor Kevin L. Faulconer
FROM: Councilmember Chris Cate 
SUBJECT: Request for the Safe Reopening of City Libraries

As the 2020-2021 school year begins for San Diego students, COVID-19 has resulted in an unconventional start with the majority of students participating in online learning. However, not all students have equal access to resources to fully succeed under this new method of learning. Libraries have always been the great equalizer for children, youth, and adults of all backgrounds. They provide much needed resources, such as books, computers, and safe productive places to learn and work.

The City of San Diego has been effective in adopting solutions to provide businesses of all sectors with the tools and options necessary to continue operating in a safe and socially-distanced manner. The City has also proven it can safely open certain indoor facilities to address the recent dangerous heatwave by opening up indoor "Cool Zones" throughout the City. As students begin the school year, we should also be evaluating how we can safely reopen our City libraries to provide children with the much needed resources to ensure academic success. Not doing so would greatly impact the ability for children to learn, especially those who are in lower income families with fewer resources.

In addition, if the County of San Diego's case rate remains below 100 per 100,000 people for 14 days after coming off the State's Monitoring List, schools may be permitted to reopen for in-person instruction should school districts choose to do so. In this case, students returning to school will also need access to libraries and the resources they provide.

For these reasons, I am requesting that the City evaluate options to safely reopen all City libraries as soon as possible. This can, and must, be done safely by following all social-

distancing, health, and sanitation guidelines. This can include reducing the maximum capacity of libraries to allow for proper distancing or implementing a “by-reservation-only” system which ensures that the number of individuals in a library never exceeds the safe maximum capacity at any given time.

CC: Misty Jones, Director, Library Department