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Burien, Washington  
June 6, 2011

Dow Constantine, Executive  
King County Council  
401 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue Ste. 800  
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Mr. Constantine,

By this time, you have been contacted by residents of the North Highline community and Councilmember Joe McDermott in regard to the future of both the White Center and Boulevard Park libraries. For over a year, the White Center Library Guild, of which I am currently the president, has been attempting to convince the King County Library System Board, that the promise made in 2004 should be honored. Members of the Guild took KCLS publicity to our community in order to help pass the county-wide Capitol Bond Measure which included a new 10,000 sq.ft. White Center Library on the current site and further improvements for the Boulevard Park Library. The campaign was a success and a number of new and improved libraries followed in King County. Then came the long wait to see what annexation would bring to the North Highline area.

Partial annexation brought the White Center and Boulevard Park libraries into the City of Burien, but in proximity to the unresolved border with Seattle. Now the proposal brought by the KCLS administration to the KCLS Board is to eventually close both libraries and build a "consolidated" library, yet to be sited, but which they envision will serve both communities in a more cost effective way.

The financial benefit to the KCLS has been calculated. What cannot be demonstrated is whether this consolidated library will provide the access, especially to students from nearby public and private schools (Cascade Middle School has a free/reduced lunch rate of 80%) that parents, teachers, and residents believe is necessary for the academic achievement of our children and the underserved needs of this community.

Although a number of us have long argued for the planning and construction of a new White Center Library to begin, as the start date

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was originally 2009, we are now supporting the suspension of a decision to go forward until after the remaining annexation question is resolved. We feel that this will give the maximum flexibility to site a new White Center Library. We also reject the proposal of a consolidated library. These two smaller libraries were situated because of their proximity to schools with access by foot or by bus.

The KCLS "Library Service Area Analysis" was completed last month. This was an extensive study to identify "key usage trends, geographic considerations, demographic trends and library distribution conclusions". The final part of the study was telephone and on-line interviewing. A number of us believe that the interview questions were misleading and non-inclusive. The KCLS recommendation was to have been acted upon by the Board at their May meeting in North Bend. Again, a number of library advocates appealed to the Board for a delay until after annexation. The three members of the Board who were present voted on a one month delay. Therefore, we can expect their decision to be delivered in Issaquah on June 28.

It was pointed out to us by one member of the KCLS Board at the North Bend Library meeting, that the Board is composed of "volunteers just like you". We do recognize that they are "volunteers", but they are very different from those who speak up at meetings or write letters. The KCLS Board has the full force of the law behind them, with funding to develop their own studies, questionnaires and legal advice. We have no one who we can hold accountable for what we voted on in 2004. Whether the system would be any better, were the KCLS Board to be elected, I don't know. What I do observe is that the Board appears to be primarily responsive to the recommendations made by the administration. Not one person has stood up in a meeting, or to my knowledge written a letter in support of the KCLS consolidation plan.

These libraries are important to the people who live here. Great deference should be given to their views, especially given that the everyday lives of the deciders will not be affected by their decisions. We will continue to strongly advocate on behalf of those whose voices have not been heard and those who believe that these libraries rightfully belong to us. We did not vote for a consolidated library in 2004.

Today, we are beginning a petition process. The language of the petition is as follows:

SAVE OUR LIBRARIES: WHITE CENTER AND BOULEVARD PARK

We, the undersigned, wish to maintain the White Center and Boulevard Park libraries in their current locations.

Accessible libraries are crucial the academic improvement of our children, who struggle to overcome poverty.

We ask the KCLS Board of Trustees to delay any decision about the future of our libraries until after annexation is resolved.

We are now calling on our elected officials to support this view. Having worked with you in the past to help preserve the Evergreen pool, I trust you will give highest consideration to our recommendation and that of both the City of Burien and the North Highline Unincorporated Area Council.

Sincerely,



Rachael Levine  
430 S. 124<sup>th</sup> St.  
Burien, WA 98168

Cc Councilmember Joe McDermott  
City of Burien Council  
NHUAC  
White Center Library Guild

