

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****May 24, 2016**

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**SUBJECT: LIBRARY MAKERSPACE**

The purpose of this informal report is to notify Council of the Library's plan to pilot a "makerspace" at the Northwest Branch Library in Council District 2.

Makerspaces – sometimes referred to as "fablabs" – are places where people gather to create, invent, and learn. The Library's makerspace will support and complement its current STEM-education initiatives and expand upon those efforts. The Northwest Branch Library was chosen as the pilot location because it has an existing 660-square-foot computer lab that can be cost effectively repurposed. In addition, the initial target audience for the space, named "Panther Lab," will be K-12, and there are 20,554 children living in the Northwest Branch Library's service area.

"Maker programs" – something libraries have been doing in one form or another for decades – will address topics such as robotics, electronics, engineering, computer programming, aeronautics, video and audio production, and computer-aided design. The lab will house 3D printers, video and audio production tools and software, advanced-level digital design software, iMacs, and an extensive collection of tools and materials, for example, circuitry components and robotics kits.

The Panther Lab will operate 16 hours per week, offering both structured classes and periods for unstructured, yet supervised, use of the equipment. The anticipated weekly schedule is as follows:

- Monday 2-7 p.m.
- Tuesday 2-5 p.m.
- Thursday 2-7 p.m.
- Saturday 2-5 p.m.

The Library hopes to attract volunteers, instructors, and educators from area schools, colleges, and universities, and STEM-oriented companies and organizations, such as Idea Works, Bell Helicopter, Lockheed Martin, Facebook, and BNSF Railway to assist with the Panther Lab.

The yearlong pilot is scheduled to begin in September 2016 and if successful – attracting at least 10 students per class and receiving high ratings from parents regarding the programs' educational value – the department will consider offering these programs and activities at other Fort Worth libraries and expanding the curricula to include adults.

For further information, please contact Library Director Gleniece Robinson at 817 392-7706.

**David Cooke**  
**City Manager**