HOUSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
Presentation to Houston City Council Quality of Life Committee

Council Member Ellen Cohen, Chair

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Director of Libraries
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Background

Chapter 24, Section 24-5 of the Code of Ordinances provides authority to establish rules and regulations for the Library.

City Council approved changes to Section 24-5 in December 2013.

Expanded definition of where rules apply – now includes exterior spaces.

Quality of Life Committee was briefed on proposed changes to our rules in February 2014.
Expanded Definition

Section 24-5 (a): …”Without limitation, the director is now authorized to include provisions that govern the use of library premises by the public, including the use of the property around the library, *in order to promote an environment that is protective of the health and well-being of patrons and children while at the library facility*”….

Section 24-5 (b): For the purposes of this section, *library premises* means the building and any city-owned property, plaza, green space, or walkway around the building. The term does not include a parking lot.
Our goal is to have each of our library locations be safe, healthy, family-friendly and welcoming environments for all customers.

HPL’s commitment to providing healthy environments was nationally acknowledged last month when our Healthy L.I.F.E. program received the 2014 Innovation award from the Urban Libraries Council.

To further our progress, we propose designating all Library premises as No Smoking Zones.

Libraries across the country are beginning to explore this practice – HPL will be among the industry leaders.
Why “No Smoking Zones?”

OUR CUSTOMERS

HPL serves over 4 million in-person visitors each year.

25% of our registered cardholders are under the age of 18.

56% of our total circulation is in children’s and teen’s materials.

41% of our programs are targeted to children or families with children.
Enforcement

Staff and/or security will ask customers to extinguish or leave the property.

If customer refuses, he or she will be subject to suspension from Library premises, following existing policies and procedures.

Additionally, the Houston Police Department can issue a citation under Chapter 21, Article IX of the Code of Ordinances.