



# AGENDA REPORT


**TO:** Jestin D. Johnson  
City Administrator

**FROM:** Jamie Turbak  
Director of Library Services

**SUBJECT:** 2024 Library Commission Annual Report

**DATE:** September 6, 2024

City Administrator Approval

  
Jestin Johnson (Sep 11, 2024 19:49 PDT)

Date:

Sep 11, 2024

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff Recommends That The City Council Receive An Informational Report From The Oakland Public Library Commission (LC) For Fiscal Year 2023-2024.**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Library Parcel Taxes Audit**

On June 13, 2024, a required audit of the Library Parcel Taxes for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-20 through FY 2022-23 was made available to the LC. The audit findings were that the library spending of Measure Q, D, and C proceeds were in accordance with their respective requirements, there were no significant issues with the Measure Q reserve fund requirement, and the City had implemented the previous audit recommendations. However, the LC is concerned with the finding that the City fell short of the required General Fund appropriation requirement by \$62,000 in FY 2022-23, the first year of Measure C. The LC recommends that the audits be performed as required by Measures C and D.

### **Library Funding in the Oakland Budget**

Prior to the city's adoption of the 2024-2025 midcycle budget, Library Commissioners met with the Mayor and Councilmembers, to advocate for their continued support of the Oakland Public Library during the upcoming budget review. While Council was able to pass a budget that preserved library staffing and operating hours, the LC has serious concerns about the allocation of restricted funds in the 2024-2025 budget amendment approved on July 2, as well as a proposal by the City Administrator to use Measure C and D reserve funds to close an operating deficit for 2023-2024. It is the position of the LC that both of these decisions may endanger the ability of the City to sustain Library funding in the long term.

### **Structure and Activities of the Library Commission**

The LC has 15 seats, of which 14 are currently filled (one in holdover status). Three seats will be vacant by the end of 2024. While the LC prioritizes candidates that meet our objective of proportional representation by Council District, there are currently no members residing in D2 or D5. Ordinance 13757--adopted by Council in 2023--allows for

Life Enrichment Committee  
September 24, 2024

Councilmembers to nominate candidates for the Commission, and the LC encourages Councilmembers to nominate residents from underrepresented districts to serve on the Commission.

As required by aforementioned Ordinance, the LC also has two standing committees, the Sustainability Committee, which oversees the effective delivery of library services, and the Community Engagement Committee, which maintains strategic lines of communication between the OPL and the Oakland community. Following Oakland's ending of the COVID State of Emergency declaration in 2023, the resumption of in-person meeting requirements impeded the operations of the Community Engagement Committee.

Since the last LC report to the Life Enrichment Committee, the Commission has created and adopted new Bylaws, developed a Patron Experience survey, started development of a new Action Plan, increased monitoring of open maintenance requests, and initiated a new Mentorship program. The LC also received an update from the OPL Racial Equity Team in 2024 and will be incorporating Racial Equity goals appropriately into the survey and into the Action Plan.

As was the case at the time of our last update, Commissioners regularly visit branches, meet with community advocates, monitor library funds appropriations and usage, and look for new opportunities to support our Libraries.

**OPL Developments of Interest to the Commission**

In support of the LC's Sustainability and Community Engagement goals, Commissioners continuously engage with community advocacy groups and provide updates and/or request the Library Director provide updates on various OPL initiatives. These include; Feasibility Studies for the Main Library and Piedmont as well as a proposed Hoover Durant Branch; Capital Improvements at AAMLO, Main, Brookfield, Elmhurst, and Melrose; specific library concerns brought to commissioners; and the hiring of a new Library Safety Manager in 2024.

**Library Usage**

In addition to maintenance reports, the LC tracks OPL visits and other statistics to ensure that Library resources are fully utilized, and that all Oakland residents have access to a safe, pleasant, welcoming and inclusive environment in our Libraries. The LC is pleased to note that in-person visits, print-media loans, and in-person programs have mostly recovered to pre-pandemic levels, while use of e-materials has doubled.

## **LIBRARY PARCEL TAXES AUDIT**

On June 13, 2024, the City Auditor issued the audit of Library Parcel Taxes for FY 2019-20 through FY 2022-23. The scope of the audit included Measure Q proceeds from FY 2019-20 through FY 2021-22, Measure C proceeds for FY 2022-23, and Measure D proceeds from FY 2019-20 through FY 2022-23.

The objectives of the audit were to determine whether 1) the Library spent tax proceeds as intended by the respective measures, 2) the City met the minimum General Fund appropriation requirement, 3) the Library met the Reserve fund requirement for Measure Q, and 4) the Library implemented the previous audit recommendation.

As required (most recently) by City Ordinance No. 13757 C.M.S., the audit findings were presented to the LC for review on July 29, 2024.

### **The audit results found that**

- The Library spent Measure Q, D, and C proceeds in accordance with their respective requirements.
- There are no significant issues with the Measure Q reserve fund requirement.
- The City implemented the previous audit recommendation intended to provide the LC with additional financial reports to strengthen their oversight abilities.

### **However, the audit found the City did not meet Measure C requirements in two respects:**

- The City fell short of meeting the required General Fund appropriation amount of \$14,500,000 by \$62,406 in FY 2022-23. **Of concern to the LC is the fact that the auditor has been unable to ascertain the cause of this shortfall as of the date of this report, and thus the actions that will be required to bring the City into compliance are not yet known. As required by Measure C, if the City fails to meet the minimum required General Fund appropriation, this special tax cannot legally be collected. Any unexplained and unauthorized shortfalls in appropriations pose a serious risk to the sustainability of the OPL system.**
- The City mistakenly collected approximately \$112,000 in Measure C taxes from exempt property owners. This issue has been corrected as of March 2024.

### **Audit recommendations**

- The City Administrator should validate the General fund appropriation shortfall with the Finance Department and consult with the City Attorney's Office to determine the appropriate course of remediation.
- To ensure timely and accurate processing of new parcel taxes, the City Administrator should create an administrative instruction to notify affected departments of approved ballot measures so staff can review and update procedures to reflect additional parcel tax exemptions, changes to the general fund appropriation, and other requirements before processing the new measures.

### **LIBRARY FUNDING IN THE OAKLAND BUDGET**

Beginning in April of 2024 and through May-June of this year, Library Commissioners met with the Mayor and Councilmembers to request that the city not cut any Library services or staff during the upcoming 2024-2025 Midcycle Budget Review, and that it continue to meet its obligations under "The 2018 Oakland Public Library Preservation Act" (Measure D) and "The Library Services Retention and Enhancement Act of 1994" as reapproved in 2022 (Measure C). These measures require that the City appropriate \$12,992,267 or \$14,500,000 per year, respectively, exclusively for the use of the Oakland Public Library system. This appropriations requirement guarantees that Measure C and D funds are used only for Library operations, and never used to close structural deficits in the General Purpose Fund; it was also a critical component to getting these measures passed by Oakland voters.

Commissioners also requested a preview of any proposed changes to the OPL Budget from the Mayor's office, but this was not provided. The information about proposed changes was provided to the public on May 23, but it was not clear where to find this information. The LC requested and received an update from the OPL Finance Department that outlined the specific proposed changes at the end of June. It was only then that it became clear to the LC that the City intended to reduce its legally required appropriations and use restricted Measure C and D reserves to close a deficit in both the FY 23-24 and FY 24-25 budgets. While a finalized budget has not been made available to the LC as of the date of this report, the OPL Director reported the following planned withdrawals from fund balances at the July LC meeting:

|                 | <b>Measure C</b> | <b>Measure D</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|
| <b>FY 23-24</b> | \$1,536,130      | \$1,931,753      | \$3,467,883  |
| <b>FY 24-25</b> | \$2,261,262      | 2,156,181        | \$4,417,443  |
| <b>Total</b>    | \$3,797,392      | \$4,087,934      | \$7,885,326  |

Although Council adopted a measure on July 2 declaring a "Severe and Unanticipated Financial Event" in order to pass a budget that fell short on the Library fund appropriations required by Measures C and D, "substantial GPF deficits" of up to \$208 million for the FY 2023-2025 biennium were predicted by the city's Finance Department and reported to the City Administrator as early as November of 2022.

The words, "Severe and Unanticipated Financial Event", were taken directly from the text of Measure C, and--while the conditions that constitute such an event have not been defined in the measure--the City Administrator is required to submit a report to the City Council "explaining" the event. A further requirement is that the City Administrator report on the steps that were taken to avoid the need to reduce the required appropriation, and future steps that will be taken to return the appropriation amount to the required amount of \$14.5 million. It is the position of the LC that the City has failed to meet the reporting requirements as set out in the text of Measure C. The July 2 declaration by the City Council does not obviate this fact.

In the absence of a truly unanticipated event--such as a pandemic or natural disaster--the reduction in appropriations for OPL in the General Purpose Fund (GPF) puts the long-term

sustainability of the OPL system in severe jeopardy in two ways. The first is that--if found to have violated any of the requirements of Measures C or D--the City will lose access to more than \$30 million dollars per year in parcel tax funds until the Maintenance of Effort is restored. This will effectively shut down the Oakland Public Library system. The second is that this reduction constitutes a broken promise to Oakland voters who--having seen restricted Library funds used to fill a GPF Deficit against their express wishes--may refuse to renew such measures in the future. It must be emphasized that when library advocates engaged with voters during the development of both parcel tax measures, the primary source of opposition revolved around concerns that these funds could be misused to fill a GPF deficit. The narrow exceptions and reporting requirement for same, as described in Measures C and D, were carefully written to prevent exactly what took place in the Council Chambers on July 2. The severe risks posed by failing to meet Measure C and D appropriations and reporting requirements cannot be overstated.

At risk is not only more than 5,000 yearly OPL programs, services for Seniors, Youth, and the Unhoused Community, accessible operating hours, OPL-OUSD partnerships, community resilience building, equity, safe community gathering spaces, and too many other benefits to be enumerated here; but the very existence of a functioning Library system.

As such, the LC strongly advises the City of Oakland to immediately take all necessary steps to correct the errors described above, and to comply with all requirements of Measures C and D going forward.

### **STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE LIBRARY COMMISSION**

The City of Oakland's Library Advisory Commission (LAC) was established in 1969 by Ordinance No. 8064 C.M.S. Subsequent ordinances expanded the role of the LAC to provide citizen oversight of Measure Q (now Measure C) and Measure D funds. Most recently, Ordinance No. 13757 C.M.S.--as enacted by City Council in July of 2023--changed the name of this body to the "Library Commission" (LC), while also affirming and expanding the role of the LC in providing oversight of library funds designated by voter-enacted measures.

The LC also supports the vital role of the Oakland Public Library in our community, by serving as an open liaison between Library Patrons, the Library Administration, the Mayor, and the City Council. To support this role, the LC receives regular informational reports from the OPL and other City Departments. Most recently, the LC received a presentation from the OPL Racial Equity Team and the OPL Chief Financial Officer.

The LC Bylaws and most recent Library Ordinance recommend that the 15-member Commission have two members from each Council District, as well as an at-large representative. The current by-district membership is as follows:

| District        | Commissioners |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1               | 3             |
| 2               | 0             |
| 3               | 4             |
| 4               | 2             |
| 5               | 0             |
| 6               | 4             |
| 7               | 1             |
| <b>At-Large</b> | 0             |

Districts 2, 5, and 7 need Commissioners. Although Districts 1, 3 and 6 are over-represented on the LC, it should be noted that one Commissioner from each of these districts will be leaving the Commission by the end of the year.

**Standing Committees**

The two standing committees of the LC are the Sustainability Committee and the Community Engagement Committee.

**The Sustainability Committee** oversees the effective delivery of library services and tracks maintenance, staffing and interdepartmental issues that may impact library operations. Maintenance issues are tracked through the Quarterly Maintenance Report, a document of all open outstanding service requests by library branch. This report is presented quarterly to all Commissioners, and it has been very helpful in highlighting outstanding issues at Branches. It serves as a starting point for discussions with branch managers and allows all Commissioners to advocate more effectively for the resolution of open requests. Here is the data for the table of total open service requests for the period of August 2022 through June 30, 2024.

| Date     | Open Service Requests |
|----------|-----------------------|
| Q4 2022  | 155                   |
| Q1 2023  | 178                   |
| Q2 2023  | 126                   |
| Q3 2023  | 150                   |
| Q4 2023  | 109                   |
| Q1 2024* | 202                   |
| Q2 2024  | 198                   |

\* Due to a reporting issue, Q1 2024 stats were updated on May 23, 2024.

LC members review open service requests quarterly, reach out to Branch Managers to confirm priority, and escalate concerns to OPL Administration and other members of City leadership when resolution of high-priority maintenance issues impacting Library operations are excessively delayed. If a particular branch is still experiencing major issues after such attempts, it is the policy of the LC co-chairs to include a report on that branch as a standing agenda item during every LC meeting, until the Commissioner assigned that branch has confirmed that the Branch Manager is satisfied with the safety, accessibility, and cleanliness at the branch.

In 2023, the Sustainability Committee began developing a survey to assess the library experience of patrons and staff to find possible areas of improvement to the patron experience. The Sustainability Committee then convened an ad-hoc committee to complete this work.

**The Community Engagement Committee** exists to develop and maintain strategic lines of communication between the OPL and the Oakland community, to lead LC advocacy on behalf of the OPL, and to educate Oakland residents about OPL services and programs.

Due to repeated lack of quorum, this committee was unable to meet for over a year between March of 2023 (when the Coronavirus Pandemic Emergency Declaration was ended) and May of 2024. The functioning of this committee has been severely hampered by statewide legal requirements mandating full in-person attendance at all standing committee meetings. While the LC was able to take steps to address the quorum issue at our March 2024 meeting, it should be noted that this issue would have been resolved more quickly given the option to hold virtual meetings. Attempts have been made at the State level to make this possible, but none have been successful thus far. This is an ongoing area of concern for the LC.

Since resuming meetings in May of 2024, the Community Engagement Committee has begun work on a communications advocacy plan for the 2025-2026 budget cycle, as well as a timeline for survey data collection, public outreach and other activities.

In addition to the activities led by the two Standing Committees, as described in the prior section, every Commissioner is assigned to represent one or more OPL Branches, and to liaise with at least one Councilmember on behalf of their branches and the entire OPL system. Commissioners also maintain relationships with local "Library Friends" groups. To ensure that relationships and institutional knowledge are retained as the composition of the LC changes, the LC instituted an informal mentorship program in 2024.

The remainder of LC work is performed by ad-hoc committees.

### **Ad-Hoc Committees**

**The Bylaws ad-hoc Committee** drafted the first-ever bylaws for the LC in 2023. The bylaws included language to ensure proportional representation from all City Council districts and redefined quorum requirements to be based on the number of commissioners, rather than the

number of seats on the commission. This has had the effect of reducing the number of meetings cancelled due to lack of quorum but will not address quorum issues resulting from legally mandated in-person requirements. The bylaws also clarified the roles and requirements of standing committees and ad-hoc committees, as well as the Chair and Vice-Chair positions. The bylaws were reviewed by the City Attorney's office and adopted by the LC at the June 2024 LC meeting.

**The Survey ad-hoc Committee**, convened by the Sustainability Committee, developed a Library Experience survey. The survey asks patrons and staff to rate their local branch on a 1-5 scale, on various metrics pertaining to safety, accessibility, organization, and other key indicators of patron experience. The survey is currently under review by the OPL Director. When it is finalized, data collection will be directed by the Community Engagement Committee.

**The Action Plan ad-hoc Committee** is in the process of reviewing and updating the 2021 Action Plan. Major updates to the plan include clarification of roles to align with the new bylaws, and incorporation of OPL Racial Equity goals into the LC's strategic plan.

### **OPL DEVELOPMENTS OF INTEREST TO THE COMMISSION**

To support LC efforts to advocate for the continued sustainability and growth of the Oakland Public Library system, Commissioners track various initiatives by the City and Library advocacy groups.

#### **Branch Feasibility Studies**

The City and OPL have begun a feasibility study for the renovation, redevelopment or relocation of the Main Library. Additional feasibility studies are underway, led primarily by grassroots community advocacy organizations. Commissioners representing these groups provide regular updates to the LC and the OPL Director.

- **Main Library:** The City of Oakland and the Oakland Public Library launched "Reimagining a New Oakland Main Library"--a study of options for the renovation, redevelopment or relocation of the Oakland Main Library--in June of 2023. As of the date of this report, community engagement meetings have been completed, while online community surveys and social media campaigns are ongoing. This study is scheduled to be completed in early 2025 with recommendations for funding needs and strategies. The study was made possible by Measure KK funding and completed in collaboration with two community-focused architectural and planning partners, EHDD and blinkLAB! architecture.
- **Hoover Durant:** The Friends of the Hoover-Durant Public Library (FOHDPL), a California-registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is currently engaged in an ongoing feasibility study in collaboration with the City of Oakland, Department of Public Works, the Oakland Public Library, and blinkLAB! architecture. This study--which was also made possible with funding from Measure KK--aims to present to institutions, grant-funders and other stakeholders a pathway to bring back a library to the Hoover, McClymonds, Clawson, Western Longfellow, Mosswood and Pill Hill communities in West Oakland. FOHDPL is a grassroots, volunteer-run nonprofit organization, vital to the culture, education and



welfare of its diverse community. FOHDPL members are represented on the LC, providing critical advocacy for this project. This study is expected to be published at the end of 2024.

- **Piedmont Avenue:** The Friends of the Piedmont Avenue Library--also a 501(c)(3) nonprofit--launched a feasibility study for a new Piedmont Avenue Branch in 2024. This study was also made possible with funding from Measure KK. in collaboration with the City of Oakland, the Oakland Public Library, the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) and HY Architects. The funding for this study was approved by the Oakland City Council in 2022. This study is expected to be published at the end of 2024.

### **Capital Improvements at Branch Libraries**

There are many capital projects recently completed or underway at OPL due to decades of deferred maintenance. Despite being critical to the continued safe and effective operations of our libraries, most of these projects are reliant on external funding.

- **African American Museum & Library at Oakland (AAMLO):** Thanks to a \$1.69 million grant from the California State Library and matching funds from Measure KK, AAMLO will be able to make critical repairs and improvements. AAMLO is dedicated to the discovery, preservation, interpretation, and sharing of historical and cultural experiences of African Americans in California.
- **Brookfield:** this branch is about to undergo extensive critical maintenance work funded by a grant from the California State Library for \$2.15 million and matching funds from Measure KK. This project is entering the project bid/award phase meaning that the City will advertise the project and accept contractor bids for construction. This phase is estimated to begin in 1-2 months.
- **Elmhurst:** Extensive upgrades were completed in 2023, funded by Measure KK. These included new floors, new paint indoors and outdoors, conversion to all-electric power (including a heat pump that also provides air conditioning), new flooring, and the addition of a gender-neutral restroom. With an additional grant from Sunlight Giving Foundation and matching funds from OPL, the backyard was also updated with a new shed, gazebo, tree and community garden.
- **Main Library Infrastructure Project:** While the feasibility study to completely reimagine the Main Library is still in progress, the Main Library must still tackle critical urgent maintenance projects to remain in operation. With a \$4.1 million grant from the California State Library and matching funds from Measure KK, the Main Library Infrastructure Project will improve electrical and data capacity, while also upgrading lighting, flooring, roofing, and energy efficiency. The Main Library will be closed to the public for five months, (June – early November 2024) to complete these improvements designed to enhance the library's facilities and provide a better experience for patrons.

### **New Role: Library Safety Manager**

Due to ongoing safety concerns brought to the attention of OPL by Branch Managers and Patrons, OPL hired a Safety Manager in early 2024. The role of the Safety Manager will be to lead improvements OPL's security model and develop fair and equitable safety policies to ensure that Libraries are safe and welcoming for all community members.

**LIBRARY USAGE**

**OPL Usage for the past five years**

|  | <b>FY19-20</b> | <b>FY20-21</b> | <b>FY21-22</b> | <b>FY22-23</b> | <b>FY23-24</b> |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Total Patron Visits</b>               | 1,499,772      | 35,488         | 923,751        | 1,259,286      | 1,356,325      |
| <b>Physical Items in Collection</b>      | 1,260,149      | 1,329,593      | 1,316,765      | 1,368,400      | 1,371,544      |
| <b>Print Items Borrowed</b>              | 2,380,197      | 1,289,555      | 2,197,735      | 2,117,465      | 2,078,900      |
| <b>E-materials Borrowed</b>              | 490,869        | 643,595        | 490,869        | 760,503        | 1,026,375      |
| <b>Number of Programs</b>                | 4,549          | 108            | 4,549          | 5,064          | 6,116          |
| <b>Uses of Public Internet Computers</b> | 168,467        | 8,696          | 168,467        | 100,073        | 103,747        |
| <b>Virtual visits to Library Website</b> | 1,947,657      | 1,405,324      | 1,194,657      | 1,723,690      | 1,689,562      |

A total of 1,356,324 patrons visited the Oakland Public Library in FY 23-24, this is up from 1,259,286 patron visits in FY 22-23, see the table below. The LC is pleased to note that by FY 22-23, patron visits had recovered to 90% of pre-pandemic levels, print items borrowed were at 87%, and the number of programs offered at our libraries had increased by 34%. The use of e-materials jumped by 31% during the pandemic, and--after a brief drop in 2021-2022, is now double pre-pandemic levels. The use of Library computers recovered in FY22-23, but dropped to approximately 40% in the following year and this decrease has been sustained. The LC is currently inquiring with branches to determine whether this is a result of reduced demand or reduced accessibility.

**OPL Usage by Branch**

| <b>Branch</b>     | <b>FY 2022-2023</b>  |                             | <b>FY 2023-2024</b>  |                             |
|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
|                   | <b>Patron Visits</b> | <b>Print Items Borrowed</b> | <b>Patron Visits</b> | <b>Print Items Borrowed</b> |
| <b>81st</b>       | 68,616               | 75,839                      | 70,000               | 71,584                      |
| <b>AAMLO</b>      | 8,400                | 46                          | 8,549                | 51                          |
| <b>Asian</b>      | 163,449              | 161,960                     | 184,408              | 159,997                     |
| <b>Brookfield</b> | 31,469               | 16,163                      | 31,000               | 15,520                      |
| <b>Chavez</b>     | 51,060               | 67,793                      | 83,480               | 63,726                      |
| <b>Dimond</b>     | 113,325              | 329,870                     | 145,800              | 334,917                     |
| <b>Eastmont</b>   | 63,042               | 24,550                      | 27,600               | 25,811                      |

|                    |           |           |           |           |
|--------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Elmhurst</b>    | 20,401    | 6,706     | 25,000    | 9,465     |
| <b>Golden Gate</b> | 37,059    | 91,786    | 38,400    | 94,517    |
| <b>Lakeview</b>    | 72,713    | 120,316   | 85,000    | 116,543   |
| <b>Main</b>        | 201,468   | 349,905   | 190,430   | 308,068   |
| <b>Melrose</b>     | 25,800    | 35,943    | 28,380    | 33,670    |
| <b>MLK</b>         | 36,000    | 24,818    | 42,000    | 22,137    |
| <b>Montclair</b>   | 62,686    | 191,877   | 98,940    | 192,500   |
| <b>Piedmont</b>    | 27,600    | 95,514    | 41,000    | 94,776    |
| <b>Rockridge</b>   | 157,800   | 317,789   | 130,464   | 324,221   |
| <b>Temescal</b>    | 87,292    | 156,690   | 91,657    | 166,188   |
| <b>West</b>        | 31,106    | 49,900    | 34,217    | 45,209    |
| <b>Total</b>       | 1,259,286 | 2,117,465 | 1,356,325 | 2,078,900 |

In addition to its Main library, 16 neighborhood branches and African American Museum & Library at Oakland (AAMLO), the Oakland Public Library is expanding its effort to engage people in the community by making resources available online. The library provides free public access to technology--computers, high-speed Wi-Fi, hotspots, and laptops--to help bridge the digital divide.

Additional facilities, programs and services for **FY 23-24** include:

- OPL Summer Lunch Program
- Second Start Literacy Program
- Teen Takeover
- Family, Toddler and Preschool Story Time
- Bilingual Story Time
- Infant and Child Play Groups
- Crafting and Maker Workshops for Adults, Children and Teens
- Bike Fix Clinic
- Seed and Tool Lending
- Business Assistance Workshops
- Interest-based social clubs
- STEM Workshops

The above list is only a small representative sample of community programs and services offered at Oakland Public Library branches. Many branches also provide free meeting spaces,

shelter and cooling during heat waves and other adverse weather events and serve as a hub for the dissemination of information and resources to the community. By serving as community hubs, Libraries are a critical lifeline for Oakland residents, the unhoused community, families, immigrants, teens, and seniors. Many recent and upcoming capital improvements also include resiliency measures such as backup power and solar arrays, allowing these branches to serve as Resilience Hubs. Given how our communities rely on OPL branches, it is critical that we ensure that the OPL system can not only continue to operate at current levels, but grow and change to meet the evolving needs of Oakland community.

## **CONCLUSION**

The City of Oakland's Library Commission exists to ensure Library Parcel Tax funds are collected and used in accordance with legal requirements, and to advocate for the continued flourishing of the Oakland Public Library system. While the LC was able to realize many of its responsibilities this year, and while we are pleased that the Library system will remain operational at expected levels through FY 2023-2025, we urge the City of Oakland and the City Council to consider the critical role that Libraries play in our community and take steps to address the Library Commission concerns to ensure the long-term financial stability of the OPL system.

## **Appendix: Library Commission Rosters**

Commissioners as of 6/30/2024  
Mary Forte, Co-Chair  
Gabrielle Sloane Law, Co-Chair  
Chiye Azuma, Vice-Chair  
Alternier Cook  
Carolyn Moskovitz  
Karen Roye  
Cristina Tostado  
Karen Zukor  
Alex Weinberg  
Brittany Buckmire  
Bradley Boyd  
Carolyn Jones  
Elias Lawler  
Anand Patel

The LC acknowledges and thanks the following individuals who ended their terms on the Commission since the previous report and a special acknowledgement to Caleb Smith for his hold over status for several months:

Cathy Smith  
Ayushi Roy  
Angelica Valentine  
Caleb Smith

**ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Staff Recommends That The City Council Receive An Informational Report From The Oakland Public Library Commission, Covering The Period From June 2023 To June 2024.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Jamie Turbak, Library Director at 510-238-6610.

Respectfully submitted,



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Jamie Turbak  
Director of Library Services