

ATTACHMENT B

May 29, 2019

LIFE ENRICHMENT COMMITTEE

Oakland City Council

Subject: Annual Report of the Library Advisory Commission

Chairperson Taylor and Members of the Committee:

The Library Advisory Commission hereby reports on its activities for the period since the last formal report to the Committee (August 2017).

Introduction

In addition to providing citizen oversight of Measure Q funding, the City of Oakland's Library Advisory Commission (LAC) is dedicated to supporting the Oakland Public Library's (OPL) active and vital role as an integral part of Oakland through advocating for and publicizing the programs, outreach and activities of its 18 locations. Serving as an open liaison between the Library Administration, the Mayor and City Council, and the citizens of Oakland, the LAC both supports existing library programs and, as required by Ordinance No. 8064 C.M.S which established the Library Advisory Commission in 1969, "integrate[s] the activities of the commission with the City's overall goals and objectives."

In 2018 the Library Advisory Commission created a Strategic Plan which clarified its goals and its ongoing committee structure. The two standing committees are a Sustainability Committee (dedicated to overseeing the timing and strategy of ballot measures and other funding structures, maintaining oversight of the OPL Library budget and leading efforts in the LAC communication with elected officials) and an Outreach Committee (whose focus is to lead relationship-building with other advocacy groups, manage public messaging (including social media and public events) and educate the public at large about OPL services and programs.) Together, and adding additional ad hoc committees as needed, the LAC works towards these strategic goals:

GOAL 1: Establish long-term financial sustainability for Oakland Public Library.

GOAL 2: Increase public awareness of Oakland Public Library's financial situation, need for a new Main Library, programs and services.

GOAL 3: Plan and advocate for expansion of the library system and services, contingent on funding resources.

GOAL 4: Maintain LAC infrastructure to sustain a robust commission.

This report will detail how the Commission has fulfilled its roles, including exposing the City of Oakland and its libraries to a broader community of citizens, state agencies and advocacy groups. Both as a group and individually as Commissioners, we continue to support and represent the needs of Oakland's branch libraries, library system and neighborhoods in our continuing advocacy.

Long-Term Financial Stability

The Commission worked diligently to ensure that language in the 2018 Oakland Public Library Preservation Act (Measure D) protected funds expressly for the purposes stated: to increase the public library's availability and resources for Oakland's students and residents. Measure D passed with an impressive 76.89% rate of voter support, which allowed the library to increase its hours on April 1, 2019 for the first time since 2004.

The LAC meets annually with City Council Members to understand their goals, objectives and concerns. Currently, we seek to update them on the very tangible and rapid results that additional Measure D funding has had on OPL services. We attend meetings with Branch Friends groups and with local advocates and library patrons to publicize the new funding and the need for ongoing support of funding in the future. Commissioners meet monthly with Library Branch Managers to discuss and understand staffing and operational needs.

Recently, the Commission reviewed the audit pattern for Measure Q and recommended to the City Auditor a more frequent completion of annual audits as required by Measure Q and Measure D Ordinances. The City Auditor, Courtney Ruby, responded and confirmed that her office will accommodate this request in her fiscal year 2019-20 audit work plan. The audit scope will include fiscal years 2017-18 and 2018-19. The audit will commence after the city's financial statement audit for fiscal year 2018-19 is completed. This is anticipated to be approximately the first quarter of calendar year 2020.

So that the Library Advisory Commission can provide citizen oversight in a wholistic manner, we request that the inclusion of Measure D oversight be included in our mandate. This will allow the Commission to review Measure D reports related to the expenditure of revenue collected from this special tax as required by Measure D Ordinance. To review Measure Q financial reports in isolation of both funding sources prevents a comprehensive understanding of OPL's operating and staffing needs.

City-Wide Advocacy and Vision

Our ongoing recruitment of diverse members has resulted in a Commission with a remarkable range of experience and ability, representing 6 out of 7 Council Districts in Oakland. We have happily managed to arrive at a mix of race, age, gender, orientation and personal experience that reflects the diversity of Oakland. To bolster our ongoing desire for diverse representation and ensure that branch libraries without the support of a branch Friends group have equitable advocacy, our current group of Commissioners has opted to monitor individual branches, in addition to working on systemwide goals.

We continue to support and publicize the need for the inclusion of OPL in the City's Downtown Specific Plan, meeting in person with City Planning Department staff, as well as submitting a

formal letter to the Planning Commission requesting said inclusion. Commissioners have participated in downtown planning meetings since February 2016 to advocate for an expanded Main Library, so we were very disappointed to find that this vital element of city services was completely absent from the draft Downtown Specific Plan. With the influx of up to 50,000 new citizens projected, our Main Library needs, at the very least, some structural upgrades and additional space. A world-class city like ours deserves a Main Library that can support and serve its population.

Civic Engagement

In our ongoing branch-specific advocacy, Commissioners engage with Oakland's communities in discussions about library services and needs. From our annual OPL Advocates Holiday Mixer for library supporters each December, to our participation in the selection of a new African American Museum and Library at Oakland (AAMLO) Chief Curator, to our presence at library events from movie screenings to author events, festivals to poetry competitions, we represent the city and its libraries. By training advocates to support the library, we hope to create a pool of civically engaged representatives who will promote the Library in a diversity of ways.

For example, members of the LAC participated in community engagement meetings to define the qualities and experience sought in the Chief Curator at AAMLO. A Commissioner was also an interview panel participant. Bamidele Agbasegbe-Demerson was named to the post in May 2019 to help direct the largest museum and library dedicated to preserving and making accessible the rich and long-standing history and contribution of African Americans in California and the West.

Some OPL highlights from the past year

- The LAC has worked with library staff to make the system more accessible and user-friendly than ever. Automatic renewals for checked-out materials has been implemented, and the library debuted a new text message service, Shoutbomb, that will help patrons access their account via direct text messages.
- This year's summer programs feature over 150 free events for adults, teens and children aimed at fostering an environment where people can be free to explore, connect and grow.
- Expanded Hours: On April 1, 2019, the Oakland Public Library expanded its hours for the first time since 2004 as a direct result of Measure D, a dedicated parcel tax that passed with nearly 77 percent of the vote in June 2018. All branches received an increase in hours, and all locations are now open on Mondays. In addition, 15 locations now offer six days of service and two open evenings per week. The Main Library and the 81st Ave. Branch are now open seven days per week.
- Measure D has funded a total of 76 new positions to assist with the expanded hours. Open recruitment for these positions started in late September; by April 1, these employees were on-boarded, trained and ready to support the library. The library recruited for open positions online, at community events all across Oakland, at their quarterly job fairs, and at the California Library Association statewide conference. Over

40 temporary, part-time library staff were hired into benefitted, permanent positions. Additionally, 30 new employees were hired from zip codes in Oakland that ranked high in the Oakland Equity Indicators Report.

- A record 11,161 children participated in our Summer Reading program in 2018, due in large part to partnerships with local sports teams. OPL debuted a limited-edition Warriors Library Card, and the Oakland Athletics offered ticket vouchers for each person who signed up for Summer Reading.
- We saw a 9.3% increase in Storytime attendance (totaling 72,361 systemwide).
- California Humanities awarded OPL a grant that spurred Oakland Mosaic, a program series that highlights the talents and experiences of Oakland's immigrant population. OPL hosted a Mam Cultural Festival, created a Korean community cookbook with a community group from the Asian Branch, and hosted Kabul Dreams, Afghanistan's first rock band, at the Golden Gate Branch. Oakland Mosaic succeeded in affirming that Oaklanders are naturally curious about our neighbors and the world.
- The African American Museum & Library at Oakland (AAMLO) was awarded the "Recordings at Risk" Grant, which allowed the museum to preserve 98 rare films featuring Black Panthers, labor union protests and more footage from the Bay Area.
- Through our Books for Wider Horizons program, our 72 volunteers served 2,358 children by performing 104 weekly storytimes at 45 different Head Start Centers and preschools.
- A proposal for the elimination of overdue fines was passed by City Council on May 21, 2019. We have found that overdue fines negatively affect patrons who can least afford the fines and are not an incentive to returning library materials. We believe this will reduce economic barriers to the free public library resources for our neediest communities.

In summary, the City of Oakland's Library Advisory Commission was able to realize many of its goals this year. We oversaw the financials regarding Measure Q, advocated for Oakland Public Library, and worked with City elected officials, City Administration and the public to help the Oakland Public Library fulfill its mission -- to empower people of all ages to discover new worlds, meet their neighbors and develop into their very best selves.

Respectfully submitted,

Lesley Mandros Bell, Chairperson
Library Advisory Commission

Exhibits 2:

- 1 – LAC Roster
- 2 – PowerPoint

Library Advisory Commission Roster

EXHIBIT 1

Library Advisory Commissioners 6/25/19:

Lesley Mandros Bell, Chairperson
Dr. A. Aurea Lewis, Vice-Chairperson
Reginald Constant
Tyron Jordan
Nathaniel Dumas
Cathy Smith
Amy Johnson
Mary Forte
Alternier B. Cook
Ada Chan
Carolyn Moskovitz
Jessica Jung
Joseph Karwat
Viola Gonzales

The LAC acknowledges the following individuals who ended their terms on the Commission since the previous report to the Life Enrichment Committee (August 2017):

Ain Bailey
Nidhi Khosla
Ken Lupoff
Kerrick Goodman-Lucker
Charles Sanchez
Laura Liang
Susanne M. Perkins
Rebekah Randle
Andrew Racle
Victoria Barbero
Rosa Montgomery
Sarah McClung