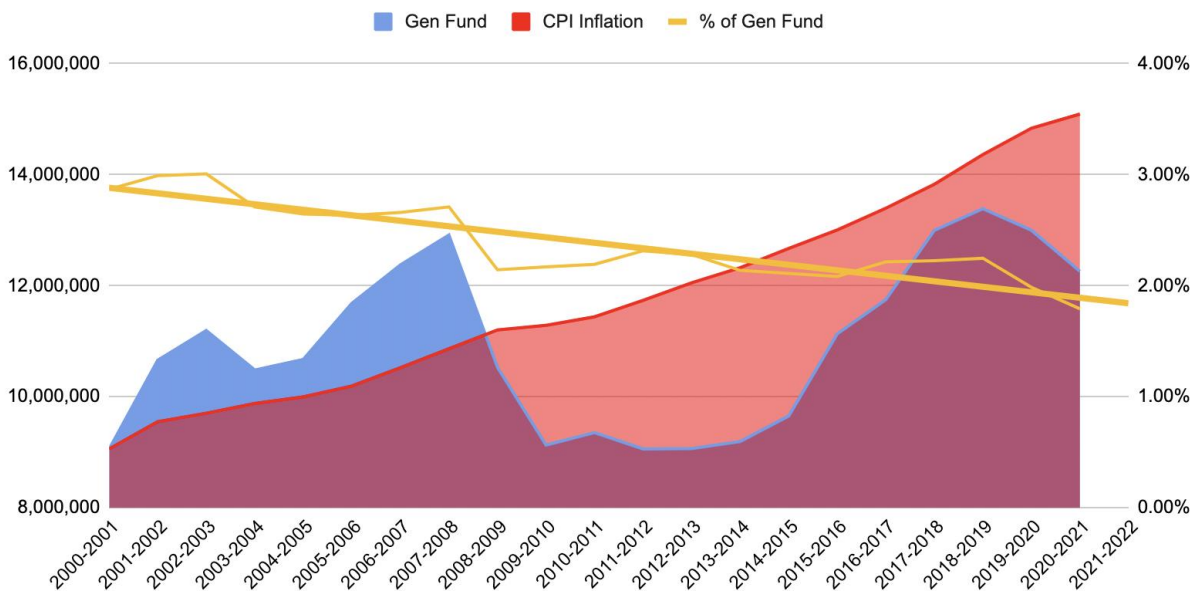


Dear Oakland City Council,

We, the Library Advisory Commission, write to you today to provide policy guidance on the possible renewal of Measure Q, the library parcel tax. With Measure Q set to sunset in 2024, we know that discussions over a possible successor ballot measure have begun. In our oversight work, we have seen that Measure Q has provided an invaluable source of funding for essential library operations, has been expended as the voters intended, and is crucial to supporting the current level of library branches, hours, and programming.

After considering the funds available to the Oakland Public Library and the many challenges facing Oakland, we recommend that any Measure Q renewal be done at the current rate rather than at an increased value. As discussed below, we do believe that additional funding will be necessary to sustain the excellent quality of Oakland’s library services, but we do not believe this funding should come from an increase in the Measure Q ballot measure. On the contrary, we believe that additional funding should come from an increase in the General Fund contribution to library services.

Gen Fund, CPI Inflation and % of Gen Fund



As indicated in the chart above, the city’s General Fund contribution to library services has not kept pace with inflation. If it had, today’s General Fund contribution would be roughly \$3 million higher than it currently is. The failure of the General Fund contribution to keep pace with inflation means that increasing costs, especially in personnel, have adverse impacts on the ability of the General Fund to support pre-Measure Q services. This in turn places pressure on the funding set aside in Measure Q and Measure D to support library services above and beyond the pre-Measure Q baseline. We also note with concern that the overall portion of the General Fund devoted to library services has declined from 3% to 2%. This suggests that the failure of General Fund library spending to keep pace with inflation is due to policy decisions instead of broader trends in the health of the General Fund.

Based on this analysis, and to ensure that the public can have full confidence that revenues from a Measure Q successor tax would not substitute for General Fund funding, we recommend that the City

Council increase the baseline General Fund spending for library services to at least \$15 million annually. We further recommend that this requirement be written into a Measure Q successor measure as an updated version of the “Maintenance of Effort” requirement contained in Measure D. Finally, we recommend that the Maintenance of Effort be indexed to inflation so General Fund-supported positions can continue to be funded by the same source despite changing price conditions.

We thank the City Council for their continued attention to providing world-class library services in Oakland, and to the many essential services that libraries provide to the Oakland community.

Regards,

The Library Advisory Commission