

Objective: Align on a clear, concise message for all Commissioners to share with our elected officials, communicating the benefits OPL brings to our community, highlighting the areas where we could use their support and deepening our relationships and rapport. These are intended to be a foundational launching point to inform your conversations. Please adapt, personalize and expand as you see fit!

Part 1) "Warm Up" Talking Points - lay the background for "The Ask"

- Libraries continue to be a key community asset that supports education, public safety, resilience, and economic development. They are an essential part a vibrant and healthy community. *Give specific examples of how the branches in the district represented by your councilmember serve the community. Give examples relevant to their legislative priorities if you know them:*
 - Education - OUSD collabs, adult literacy programs, ESL & GED classes, cooking, computer, crafting, writing - not to mention the collections.
 - Public Safety - safe places for youth, programming for youths and seniors (boxing, gaming, bike fix, film nights, computer literacy), job/resource boards, MACRO at libraries.
 - Resilience - cooling/warming/clean air centers, battery storage, seed libraries.
 - Economic development - Adult literacy, GED classes, computer classes, Neighborhood Business Assistance workshops, financial workshops, computer access, hotspot loans, relevant collections/books/periodicals
- Libraries aren't only dependent on OPL funding. *Another area where it's a good idea to talk to your branch managers and collect stories from your branches about delayed maintenance and repairs, and how it's affected patrons*
 - Maintenance, repairs and improvements at OPL branches are also dependent on appropriate funding for Public Works.
 - Current levels of Public Works funding are barely adequate to ensure basic levels of cleanliness and safety at library branches.
 - Reducing funding to Public Works could make conditions in some branches untenable.
- The future of our libraries is heavily dependent on what happens during the next biennial budget cycle, and the risk is much greater than you may realize. *Familiarize yourself with the below facts and adapt as appropriate to your audience.*
 - Library funding is a mix of restricted parcel tax funds and general fund appropriations. If the city fails to adopt a budget that meets the appropriations requirements of (\$14.5 million for Measure C, ~\$13M for Measure D), **we could potentially lose access to up to \$30 million in additional library funds.**
 - The city has been out of compliance with Measure C since FY 2022-2023, and appropriations have decreased for every year since [*amounts would be good here, unclear between contingency budget & only could find expenditures online*]
 - [*for now, use this in lieu of clear documentations on actual appropriations*] In July of 2024, we were informed that the city planned to withdraw \$7.9 million from restricted fund reserves to cover an expected shortfall in appropriations for the two fiscal years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025.
 - Measure C clearly defines the conditions under which parcel taxes can be collected in the absence of a complete \$14.5 million appropriation in the general fund. First, there

must be a "severe and unanticipated financial event", which the city has yet to define [as of February 17, 2025]. The City Administrator is required to report on the steps that were taken to avoid the shortfall, and to describe steps that will be taken to bring the city back into compliance with the appropriations requirement.

- As of the time of this [DRAFT] document [2/17/2025], the city has not clearly defined the nature of the "severe and unanticipated financial event" that it declared in July of 2024. The City Administrator has not reported on steps that were taken to avert the shortfall, nor on steps that will be taken to return the appropriation to the required \$14.5 million in the General Fund as soon as possible.
- **While the city is out of compliance with Measure C and D requirements, up to \$30 million dollars of library funding is at risk. We're not just talking about the potential for a slight reduction in library services, but the potential for the collapse of the entire library system.**
- **Furthermore, every fiscal year that the city fails to comply with the parcel tax measure represents a broken promise to Oakland voters, 80% [double check this stat] of whom voted to pass Measure C in 2023 on the sole condition that parcel tax funds would *never* be used to fill gaps in the General Fund.**

The Ask - in order of priority. *As always, adapt as needed, and speak from the heart.*

1. **RESTORE THE GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION TO \$14.5 MILLION PER YEAR IN THE 2025-2027 BIENNIAL BUDGET, AND FUND DPW ADEQUATELY TO ENSURE OUR LIBRARIES REMAIN SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE TO PATRONS.**
2. **COLLABORATE PROACTIVELY WITH THE OAKLAND LIBRARY COMMISSION BEFORE MAKING FUTURE BUDGET DECISIONS THAT MIGHT PUT THE LIBRARY SYSTEM AT RISK:** Consult with us in our capacity as an oversight body to ensure that legislation is aligned with the City's obligations under the Parcel Tax measures.
3. **WORK WITH US BEYOND THIS CRISIS AND SOW THE SEEDS FOR FUTURE GROWTH:** Ensure your constituents are aware of OPL programming and resources as well as LC openings and events through conversations, Newsletters, and Social Media. Use LC members as a resource for information, ask us about the latest developments in OPL (resources, programming, new initiatives), and use this knowledge when communicating with your constituents and developing legislation. Visit our branches and you will soon understand how precious they are to the community. More engagement with OPL and the LC will reveal more opportunities and ideas for future collaboration that will benefit all of your constituents.