

**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.

## How to use this guide:

This is *not* a handout to councilmembers, but an internal tool for commissioners to use to prepare for conversations with councilmembers.

**PART I: Context** – you should be well-versed and fully understand the below talking points, and be prepared to bring up a few *specific* and *tailored* examples to make your case.

- **Contextual Talking Point (1): Libraries are key community assets supporting education, public safety, resilience, economic development, and the public good.**

*Supporting examples - you'll need to be familiar with specific examples of how the branches in the district represented by your councilmember serve the community. Talk to branch managers and create a narrative with 2-3 examples that will resonate with your councilmember. To get you started, here are some examples of programming and services found at multiple OPL branches. If you have better local examples that aren't on this list, use them!*

- **Education**
  - OUSD collabs
  - Adult literacy programs
  - ESL & GED classes
  - Cooking, computer, crafting, writing, etc. classes
  - Youth volunteer opportunities
  - Homework help & mentorship programs
  - Educational resources, such as collections, computers, and librarians
- **Public Safety**
  - Safe places for youth
  - Programming for youths and seniors such as boxing, gaming, bike fix, film nights, computer literacy
  - Job/resource boards
  - MACRO at libraries.
- **Resilience**
  - Cooling/warming/storm/clean air centers
  - Battery storage
  - Seed & tool libraries.

- Libraries as current & future resilience spots/hubs
- **Economic development**
  - Adult literacy
  - GED classes
  - Computer classes
  - Job readiness training, resume assistance, job fairs {This is true at the W. Oakland Branch.}
  - Neighborhood Business Assistance workshops
  - Financial workshops
  - Computer access & hotspot loans
  - Relevant collections/books/periodicals
  - Local employment opportunities
  - Tax help
- **Public Good**
  - Libraries as polling places
  - Summer food programs
  - Tenants' rights workshops
  - Free community meeting space
  - Free clothing
  - Lawyers in the Library
- **Contextual Talking Point (2): For our Libraries to be clean, safe and equitable, both OPL and Public Works need to be funded fully.**

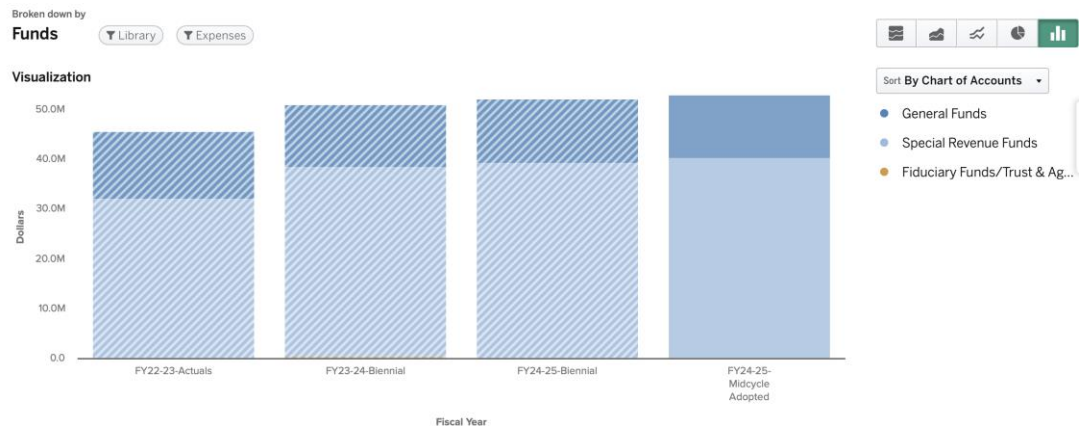
*Supporting Examples – Talk to branch managers and collect stories about delayed maintenance and repairs, and how it's affected patrons. Give 1-2 specific examples to your Councilmember from branches in their district. Here are some examples of the kinds of issues you might want to bring up, pulled from service requests & prior LC meeting discussions.*

- Temescal tool lending library burglarized due to delayed repair to broken window after a car crashed into the library
- 81st Ave having safety issues (substance use, sexual activity) in public restrooms because delayed upgrade to door latches.
- Mice and insect infestations, mildew, mold and rot at multiple branches.
- Ongoing roof leaking at AAMLO.

- **Contextual Talking Point (3): It's not only wrong to defund our libraries, it also violates Library parcel tax measures, which opens the city to serious legal risk and jeopardizes the entire library system.**

*Supporting Facts – Familiarize yourself with the below facts and share a few key points with the Councilmember to establish the serious risks currently facing our libraries.*

- 70-75% of Library funding comes from Parcel Taxes C and D



- Both parcel tax measures require the city to allocate a certain amount of money to OPL in the general fund, \$12,992,267 for Measure D and \$14.5 Million for Measure C.
- If the city fails to do this, the law says that the city can be prevented from collecting this parcel tax. *The city has been out of compliance at least since last summer and the City Administrator and Finance Department are aware of this.*
- **If the City Council passes a 2025-2026 budget that allocates from its general fund less than \$14.5 million to OPL, OPL could lose an additional 40% of its funding, and if the council allocates less than \$12,992,267, OPL could lose an additional 70-75%. This would effectively destroy our public libraries.**
- Not only that, it would be a broken promise to Oakland voters, 80% 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.

## PART II: The Ask

*As we know, the City's General Purpose Fund is facing unprecedented demand. In our communications with councilmembers, we can acknowledge this, but at the same time emphasize the legal obligation they have to honor the requirements of the parcel tax measures.*

Regardless of how you choose to personalize your message to your councilmember, all communications to elected officials must center on the following **three asks**

1. **RESTORE THE GENERAL FUND APPROPRIATION TO \$14.5 MILLION PER YEAR IN THE 2025-2027 BIENNIAL BUDGET**
2. **ALLOCATE DEDICATED FUNDING FOR LIBRARY MAINTENANCE IN THE OAKLAND PUBLIC WORKS BUDGET TO ENSURE OUR LIBRARIES REMAIN SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE TO PATRONS.**
3. **PARTNER WITH THE LIBRARY COMMISSION TO ENSURE THAT THE LIBRARIES IN YOUR DISTRICT CONTINUE TO FLUORISH AND SERVE THE COMMUNITY. MEET WITH COMMISSIONERS AT LEAST TWICE YEARLY AND SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT OPL AND LIBRARY COMMISSION EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES WITH CONSTITUENTS.**

## PART III: Example

Commissioner Roye drafted an example message that succinctly incorporates the **three main asks** and draws on the contextual information described in the prior section:

*Council Members! The Oakland Public Library System (libraries) play a crucial role in supporting education, public safety, resilience, and economic development. Residents of all ages benefit by improving their literacy skills, finding job opportunities through resource boards, and more, all thanks to the services provided by our amazing public libraries.*

*Our community libraries are at risk if we don't secure the proper funding for maintenance and repairs at our library branches. Without adequate support, these essential community assets may not be able to function equitably, ultimately affecting the operational standards and efficiencies of our library systems.*

*Did you know that failing to meet appropriations requirements could result in a loss of up to \$30 million in library funds? It's crucial that we restore the \$14.5 million general fund appropriation in the 2025-2027 biennial budget and ensure that DPW is adequately funded to maintain safe and accessible libraries for all.*

*Let's come together to advocate for our libraries and secure the funding they need to continue serving our community effectively. It's time to take action to ensure that our libraries can thrive and meet the needs of all residents.*