



A Presentation to the Library Commission

Presentation for the City of Oakland Library Commission

March 30, 2026 • Presented by Colleen Haikes, Director, Friends of the Oakland Public Library

Oakland's Library. Our Community. Together.

Introduction

- I'm a board director, Friends of the OPL — joined 2021
- Communications professional
- Oakland resident for 20 years — Main & Lakeview Branch
- Sunday afternoons with my kids in the Children's Room — Storytime, Summer Reading, Paws to Read, and Teen Zone

“Libraries are a critical hub for engagement, enlightenment, and a bulwark for democracy.”



Colleen Haikes
Director

Agenda

Intro to the Friends of the OPL

How We Support the OPL

Save the Dates

Friends of the OPL

At a Glance



1950

Year Established

\$4.5M+

*Granted to OPL
since 1993*

1,576

*Dues-Paying
Members*

We are the Friends 501(c)(3) organization supporting OPL systemwide — distinct from the many excellent Branch Friends groups.

Our Mission

Advance the role of OPL as a vital community resource — critical to the culture, education, and welfare of our diverse community.



Supplement public funding — OPL's budget comes primarily from the Measure C and Measure D parcel taxes and the City's General Fund; we fill critical gaps.



Provide advocacy and a civic voice for the library with elected officials and the broader public. Mobilize volunteers, donors, and community members who love their libraries.



Serve the full OPL system.

Who We Are

- The Board: 18 volunteer directors (max 20) — 100% volunteer-led governance
- Paid Staff: accountant and three bookstore managers
- 200+ Volunteers



The Friends are supported by 200+ volunteers and paid managers of the Bookmark. Above are about half of our Board Directors at our 75th Anniversary Open House.

The Board Leadership



Kathryn Sterbenc

Served 8 Years as President
Stepped Down in November 2025
Staying on as Director, Advocacy Focus



Ynez Arce

Elected President, Nov. 2025
Former VP, Joined Board in 2017
Strong Focus on Operations

How We Fund the OPL



The Bookmark Bookstore

*933 Broadway — 100% donated inventory.
Also we sell select inventory online via Ebay, Bookshop.org,
and our own website, FOPL.org*



Annual Memberships

*1,500 + dues-paying members — an all-time high!
Annual dues start at \$25 for individuals, \$15 for seniors.
35 members now give at the \$1,000+ Book Angel level.*



Donations & Grants

*Accepted on behalf of the Library from generous
community members.*



Ballot Measure Surveys

*Fund public opinion research to build winning campaigns
for the library. Example: Polling and campaign consulting
for ballot measures.*

2025 Grants to the OPL

\$260K

Annual Grants

Awarded September 2025

\$155K

Special Project Grants

For targeted community programs

\$88K

Afterschool Art Workshops

With MOCHA at 11 high-priority neighborhood libraries (2024–25)

What Our Grants Fund



Facility enhancements & furniture



Photographers & videographers



Programming of all sorts: Digital literacy, gardening, film screenings, yoga, music, science, arts & crafts, fix-it clinics, author events and more



MLIS scholarships for library staff



Bike Fix Project — repairs & instruction at two East Oakland libraries



Oakland Youth Poet Laureate — 15 years in June!

Oakland Youth Poet Laureate

🎉 Celebrating 15 Years This June! 🎉



Celebration event: Early June at OakStop on Broadway

One of our signature, long-running grants — elevating young Oakland voices through the power of poetry.

The Bookmark Bookstore

- Open since 1993 — a constant OPL revenue stream for 30+ years
- Moved June 2024 to 933 Broadway — nearly 3× larger space
- Runs almost entirely on volunteers
- Sells 100% donated inventory: books, CDs, DVDs, puzzles
- Unique model: rent-paying retail storefront and a civic engine
- Helping activate and revitalize the Broadway corridor



Former Washington Street location



New 933 Broadway store

The Bookmark Growth Since the Move

June 2024 relocation to 933 Broadway



20–30%

Monthly Revenue Increase

After relocation to 933 Broadway



200+

Active Volunteers at The Bookmark



1,576

Dues-Paying Members

All-time high — up 50%!



1,070 ft

Height of Donated Cookbooks

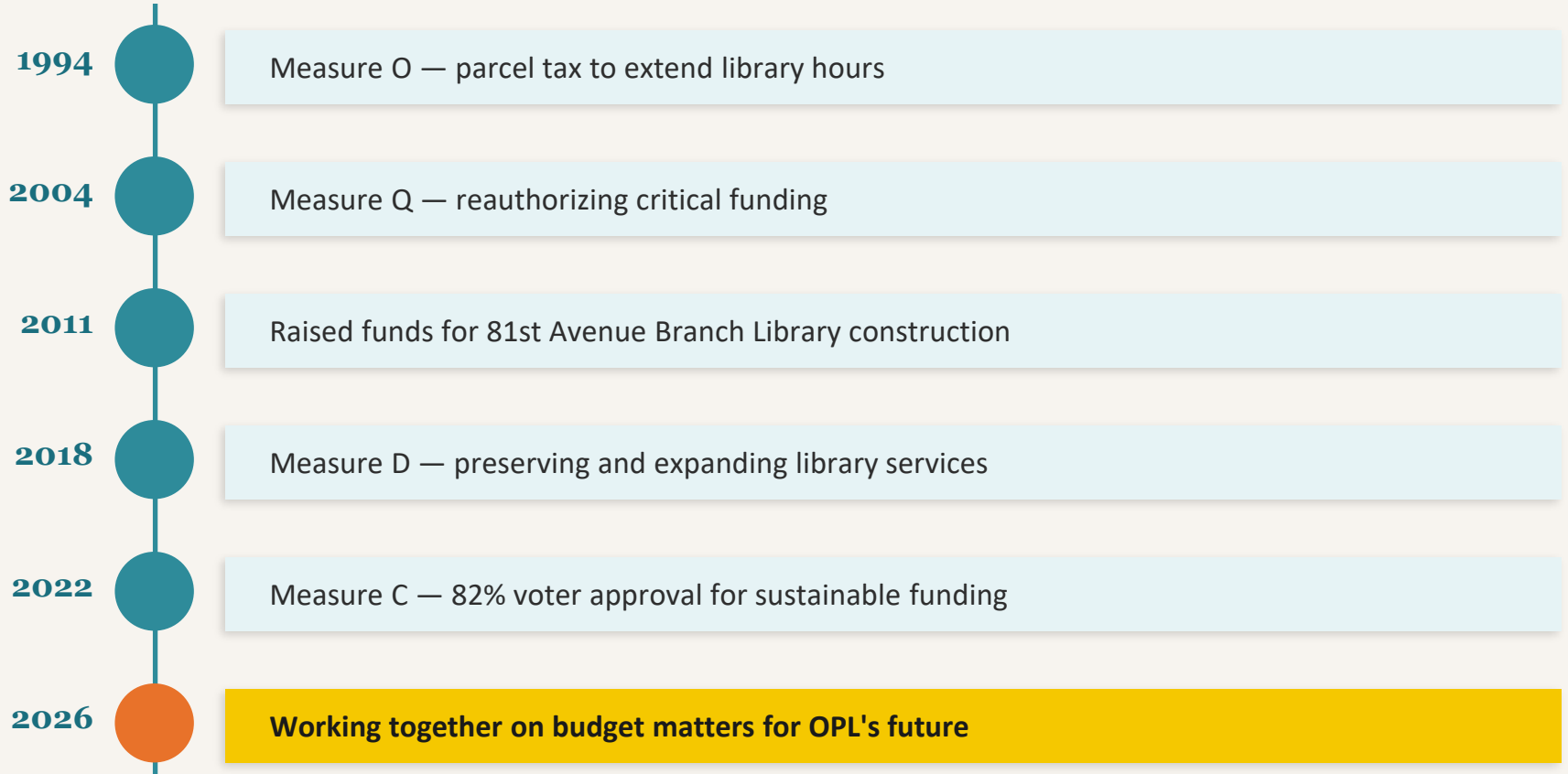
~10,000 volumes = Salesforce Tower!

More Than Fundraising — We Advocate With You



Meeting monthly since 2013 — sharing goals, resources, and strategy to protect and grow OPL funding.

A Record of Advocacy





Upcoming Events — Save the Dates!

Saturday, May 17, 2026



OPL Advocates Spring Mixer

1-3 pm at Main Library — Brad Walters Room & Courtyard

Come to the Spring Mixer co-hosted by the Library Commission & Friends of OPL

Friday, June 5, 2026



Youth Poet Laureate — 15th Anniversary

7 pm at Oakstop on Broadway

15 years of amplifying young Oakland voices! Don't miss this milestone celebration.

Thank You!

Together, we keep Oakland's libraries strong.



Learn more at www.fopl.org • The Bookmark Bookstore: 933 Broadway, Oakland