

# EUGENE CITY COUNCIL

## AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



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### Work Session: Library Local Option Levy

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Meeting Date: January 14, 2015  
Department: Library, Recreation, and Cultural Services  
[www.eugene-or.gov](http://www.eugene-or.gov)

Agenda Item Number: B  
Staff Contact: Connie Bennett  
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#### **ISSUE STATEMENT**

On November 24, 2014, the council directed the City Manager to develop funding options for City Council consideration to invest in the Eugene Public Library of the Future and to sustainably operate the services.

#### **BACKGROUND**

On November 24, 2014, the council received background information on council action history regarding Library funding, including levies. The council also received the results of focus groups and surveys identifying the current and future library services needs of the community, and identifying barriers to access to services, as well as assessment in light of the Envision Eugene pillars and triple bottom line principles.

#### **Existing Service Level**

The existing, or core, library services are those currently supported by the anticipated general fund budgeted for the Library:

- Downtown Library services 61 hours across seven days/week.
- Bethel and Sheldon Branch services 26 hours over five days/week.
- Publically available technology to use at the library.
- Ability to use personal technology to access library services online 24/7.
- Some off-site programs serve those unable to come into the library, for example storytimes to low-income children at daycares and large print book delivery to homebound seniors.
- Purchase of a limited amount of new materials.
- Offering approximately 1,000 free public programs for all ages.

The existing level of services does not address the barriers to access identified by community members in the “Library of the Future” conversations. Some new services may be provided with donated funding, such as the Imagination Library early literacy program for children from birth through four, which was implemented in Fall 2014 and is funded by the Eugene Public Library Foundation.

## **Developing Options for the Eugene Public Library of the Future**

The local option levy alternatives outlined below were developed to address the public's concern about current barriers to accessing services – such as shortened hours, limited neighborhood convenience, not enough space for programs or services for teens, and constraints on access to technology. The levy alternatives are also designed to focus on the services identified by the public as their priorities for what the library should provide to the community:

- Creating young readers.
- Connecting to the online world.
- Encouraging lifelong learning.
- Stimulating the imagination.
- Providing a community space.

The Boards of the Eugene Public Library Foundation and the Friends of the Eugene Public Library, as well as the Eugene Public Library Advisory Board (DAC), have been consulted in preparation of these options.

### **Library Levy Options**

Each of the options includes and expands on the previous one, and all are based on the core library services supported at the existing level of funding. These are preliminary estimates. As the levy proposal moves forward these estimates will be further reviewed and refined.

#### Option 1 - \$1.8 to \$2.0 million/year, \$25-30 per year for a typical household

Option 1 begins with the existing service level, and adds the following to meet current needs:

- Restore hours at Bethel and Sheldon branches, to 48 hours over six days a week.
- Restore Sunday mornings at the Downtown Library (three hours/week).
- Improve access and convenience by adding another library location: an automated “Library Spot” kiosk.
- Expand shared “Makerspace” workspace.
- Expand volunteer program.
- Restore materials budget to FY09 levels.

#### Option 2 - \$2.8 to \$3.0 million/year; \$35-40 per year for a typical household

Option 2 includes everything in Option 1, PLUS additional services to increase access by bringing Library services out into the community:

- A new, full-service branch, anticipated to be located in southwest Eugene.
- Community outreach visits, to bring library services to people where they are already gathered, such as schools and businesses.
- Acquire tablets and/or laptops to lend for public use on-site at the Library.
- Expand access by increasing Downtown hours by seven hours/week.

### Option 3 - \$4.3-\$4.5 million/year; \$55-60 per year for a typical household

Option 3 includes everything in Option 2, PLUS additional services to eliminate nearly all barriers to access, including fully providing neighborhood access. Option 3 services include:

- Adding another two additional branches, for a total of five neighborhood branches (in addition to the central Downtown Library).
- Double community outreach visits to serve Eugeneans who are unable or unlikely to visit the Library on their own.

### **Timing**

In order to place a measure on the May 19, 2015, primary election ballot, the council must act by February 9, 2015. In order to place a measure on the November 3, 2015, general election ballot, the council must act by July 29, 2015 (last meeting before summer break).

### **Other Background Information**

Under Oregon law, a property tax measure placed on either a primary election ballot (May) or a general election ballot (November) requires a simple majority of the votes cast in the election. General election ballots are usually more crowded than primary election ballots.

### **RELATED CITY POLICIES**

This item relates to the following Council Goals:

- *Accessible and Thriving Culture and Recreation:* A community where arts and outdoors are integral to our social and economic well-being and are available to all.
- *Sustainable Development*
- *Effective and Accountable Municipal Government*

It also supports the implementation of priority strategies identified in the Library of the Future report.

### *City of Eugene Financial Management Goals and Policies*

#### Policy C.3 – Serial tax levies

"To the maximum extent possible, serial tax levies will be used only for time-limited operating services or for capital improvements subject to the rate limitation for non-school governments."

#### Policy C.6 - Non-recurring revenue

"Except for local option levies approved by the voters, the City will use non-recurring revenue on limited-duration services, capital projects, equipment requirements, or services that can be terminated without significant disruption in the community or City organization."

## **COUNCIL OPTIONS**

1. The council may direct staff to prepare one of the three options to place a library levy measure on the ballot, with an additional work session to be scheduled prior to February 9, 2015.
2. The council may choose to not pursue a library levy at this time.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Library of the Future Summary Report
- B. Library Local Option Levy History

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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