SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL
CENTRAL STAFF

April 17, 2019

M E M O R A N D U M

To:	Members of the Select Committee on the Library Levy
From:	Asha Venkataraman, Council Central Staff
Subject:	Proposed Amendments to CB 119491: 2019 "Libraries for All" Levy Renewal

On April 17, the Select Committee on the Library Levy ("Select Committee") will discuss and vote on potential amendments to Council Bill (CB) 119491, the 2019 "Libraries for All" Levy Renewal ordinance. This memo provides a description of proposed amendments. Amendment language is provided in Attachment A. In considering these amendments, please note that the Library Board of Trustees ("Board") has exclusive control over Library expenditures, so any change in allocations for a specific purpose is subject to Board approval.

Background

On March 28, the Library presented its proposed renewal of the 2012 levy, to collect $213.3 million over 2020-2026. This amount includes $167.4 million to retain the core services funded by the 2012 levy (including adjustments for inflation resulting in a $44.8 million increase from the 2012 $122.6 million levy) and an additional $45.9 million to enhance and improve services.

During the April 8 issue identification session, the Select Committee discussed funding sources for Library capital projects, the proposed fine-free policy, and the rising cost of e-materials. It also considered potential changes to the levy, including adding air conditioning and elevators to the three branches scheduled for seismic retrofits and opening a non-traditional library space in the new Denny substation. Lastly, the Select Committee had a preliminary discussion about amendments of interest to Councilmembers, including early childhood education and adding more open hours systemwide.

On April 11, the Select Committee discussed potential amendments Councilmembers were considering proposing for a vote. These included funding educational programming for children and youth, opening the Library system for additional hours, conducting a feasibility study on co-locating child care spaces at the Central Library and library branches, providing additional security officers, and expanding the Community Resource Specialist program. Councilmembers also expressed interest in understanding the portion of the budget that levy funds support, and the funding source that support various programming.

Proposed Amendments

1. *Expanding English and Bilingual Kaleidoscope Play and Learn Funding (Councilmember González)*

As previously discussed at the Select Committee meetings on April 8 and 11, the Library currently provides programming targeted to children. One of these programs is the English and Bilingual Kaleidoscope Play and Learn, which serves children birth to five years of age in multiple languages. The Library partners with community-based organizations to provide this program at the Beacon Hill, Broadview, Columbia City, Lake City, and Rainier Beach branches. The Seattle Public Library Foundation currently funds this program for $2,000 in 2019.

The cost to expand this program by six events per week (between 288 events to 312 events per year) is $1,104,250 for the six-year levy period for additional staffing, supplies, facilitator training, program evaluation, curriculum materials and consultation to community-based organizations. The Library would also need to hire a program manager to coordinate efforts and partner with organizations at a cost of $1,016,510 for the levy period. The plan is to increase the number of these events at the Lake City and Columbia City libraries, and expand to branches including High Point, Delridge, Northgate, and potentially South Park and NewHolly as space allows.

Option A: Expand Play and Learn programming by six programs per week and hire a program manager, increasing the total levy amount by $2,120,760, or $302,966 a year on average. This would cost the median homeowner an average of $0.84 per year or $0.07 per month.

Option B**:** Reject all proposed amendments and adopt the Mayor's proposal for the levy.

2. *Adding More Hours Systemwide (Councilmember O'Brien)*

As discussed at the April 8 and 11 Select Committee meetings, the Library considered but did not include in the Mayor's proposal adding another open evening hour Monday through Thursday system-wide, for an additional four hours per week at the Central Library and each of the 26 branches, totaling 108 hours per week. This would mean 1,581 open hours per week system-wide. Levy costs to add these hours starting June 1, 2020 are $6.2 million over the six-year life of the levy, which consists of $3.64 million for the Central Library, $1.94 million for the branch libraries, and $572,000 for a floating custodian to respond to needs across all additional open hours.

Option A: Add evening hours to the Central Library and a floating custodian, increasing the total levy amount by $4,212,000 or $601,714 a year on average. This would cost the median homeowner an average of $1.68 per year or $0.14 per month.

Option B: Add evening hours to all branch libraries and a floating custodian, increasing the total levy amount by $2,512,000 or $358,857 a year on average. This would cost the median homeowner an average of $1.00 per year or $0.08 per month.

Option C: Add evening hours to the Central Library and all branches as well as a floating custodian, increasing the total levy amount by $6,152,000 or $878,857 a year on average. This would cost the median homeowner an average of $2.45 per year or $0.20 per month.

Option D**:** Reject all proposed amendments and adopt the Mayor's proposal for the levy.

Please note that Option C combines Options A and B, but only includes the cost of one floating custodian position (avoiding double counting).

3. Expanding the Community Resource Specialist Program (Councilmember Mosqueda)

Currently, the Library contracts with the Downtown Emergency Service Center (DESC) for a Community Resource Specialist (CRS) program. This program connects patrons, primarily those that self-identify as homeless, to resources related to issues such as housing, health, and social services and can also perform a vulnerability assessment (Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool or VI-SPDAT assessment) for patrons to enter the Coordinated Entry for All system. The CRS employs a social worker and a case manager, who have held drop in hours at the Central Library four times per week and once a week at the Rainier Beach branch. Social worker interns also hold drop in hours at the Central Library twice a week. The case manager has drop in sessions once a week at the Ballard and Capitol Hill locations. The current contract is supported by General Fund at a cost of $110,000 in 2019.

Option A**:** Add a youth services support social worker and a part-time case worker to the current contract, increasing the total levy amount by $1,149,992 or $164,285 a year on average. This would cost the median homeowner an average of $0.46 per year or $0.04 per month.

Option B**:** Reject all proposed amendments and adopt the Mayor's proposal for the levy.

Potentially Necessary Technical Amendments

Depending on which, if any, of the preceding amendments the Select Committee adopts, further changes may be required to maintain the internal consistency of the levy ordinance. These potential technical amendments are described below.

1. If the Council adopts any of the amendments described above, the Council will also need to amend the amount of the tax rate levied. The current rate of $0.119 cents per thousand dollars of assessed value will need to be updated to the new amount resulting

from the cumulative additions to the seven-year proposed amount. This amendment language is reflected in Attachment A on pages 3-5 as Proposed Amendment 4.

2. If the Council adopts the amendment described in Section 1 of the Proposed Amendments section of this memo, the Council will also need to amend the levy categories to add and describe a "Supporting Children" levy category to authorize such spending. The amendment language to add and describe such a category is reflected in Attachment A on pages 6 and 7 as Proposed Amendment 5.

Next Steps

On April 22, the Council will vote on placing the 2019 levy proposal on the August 6, 2019 ballot.

Attachments

A. Proposed Amendments to CB 119491

cc: Kirstan Arestad, Central Staff Director
Erik Sund, Supervising Analyst

Attachment A: Proposed Amendments to CB 119491

Proposed Amendment 1: Maintaining and Expanding English and Bilingual Kaleidoscope Play and Learn Funding (Councilmember González)

Option A:

WHEREAS, Council intends that by increasing the amount of the levy by $2,120,760 over the $213.3 million as transmitted, funding will be allocated to support a new levy category for supporting children, including: (1) expanding Play and Learn programming for children; and

Proposed Amendment 2: Adding More Hours Systemwide (Councilmember O'Brien)

Option A:

WHEREAS, Council intends that by increasing the amount of the levy by $4,212,000 over the $213.3 million as transmitted, funding will be allocated to support open hours and access by: (1) opening the Central Library one additional hour Monday through Thursday with appropriate custodial staffing; and

Option B:

WHEREAS, Council intends that by increasing the amount of the levy by $2,512,000 over the $213.3 million as transmitted, funding will be allocated to support open hours and access by: (1) opening the 26 Library branches for one additional hour Monday through Thursday with appropriate custodial staffing; and

Option C:

WHEREAS, Council intends that by increasing the amount of the levy by $6,152,000 over the $213.3 million as transmitted, funding will be allocated to support open hours and access by:

(1) opening the Central Library and the 26 Library branches one additional hour Monday through Thursday with appropriate custodial staffing; and

Proposed Amendment 3: Expanding the Community Resource Specialist Program (Councilmember Mosqueda)

Option A:

WHEREAS, Council intends that by increasing the amount of the levy by $1,149,992 over the $213.3 million as transmitted, funding will be allocated to support open hours and access by:

(1) expanding the Community Resource Specialist program with support for youth; and

Proposed Amendment 4: Changing the Levy Amount

Section 2. Levy of Regular Property Taxes – Submittal. The City submits to the qualified electors of the City a proposition as authorized by RCW 84.55.050 to exceed the levy limitation ("lid") on regular property taxes contained in chapter 84.55 RCW, as it now exists or may hereafter be amended, for property taxes levied in 2019 through 2025 for collection in 2020 through 2026. The proposition shall be limited so that in the first year the City shall not levy an additional tax rate of more than ~~$0.119~~ [ ] cents per thousand dollars of assessed value, in addition to the maximum amount of regular property taxes allowed by RCW 84.55.010 in the absence of voter approval under this ordinance, plus other authorized lid lifts. Subsequent years of the Levy will use the amount of dollars raised by this increased rate to calculate the appropriate limit under chapter 84.55 RCW for the remainder of the Levy. To this new limit there will be added no more than a one percent increase in dollars levied for the purposes of this Levy each year.

Section 6. Election – Ballot Title. The City Council directs the City Clerk to file this ordinance with the Director of Elections of King County, Washington, as ex officio supervisor of elections, requesting the Director of Elections to call and conduct a special election in the City in conjunction with the state primary election to be held on August 6, 2019, for the purpose of submitting to the qualified electors of the City the proposition set forth in this ordinance. The City Clerk is directed to certify to the King County Director of Elections the ballot title approved by the City Attorney in accordance with the City Attorney's responsibilities under RCW 29A.36.071. The following ballot title is submitted to the City Attorney for consideration.

THE CITY OF SEATTLE

PROPOSITION NUMBER 1

Property Tax Levy Renewal for The Seattle Public Library

The City of Seattle's Proposition 1 concerns supporting, maintaining and improving core Library Services.

If approved, this proposition would sustain investments and increase spending on Library operating hours, collections, technology, and maintenance, including seismic retrofits, as provided in Ordinance XXXXXX. Consistent with chapter 84.55 RCW, it would increase regular property taxes for seven years. The 2020 tax increase, up to ~~$0.119~~[ ]/$1,000 of assessed value, would be used to compute limitations for subsequent levies, with up to 1% annual increases. Seniors, veterans, and others who qualify under RCW 84.36.381 would be exempt.

Should this levy be approved?

Yes

No

Those in favor shall vote “Yes”; those opposed shall mark their ballots “No”.

Proposed Amendment 5: Adding a Levy Category

Section 4. Library Services. Levy investments will be made in ~~five~~ six categories of Library Services. Program elements, in subsections 4.A through 4.~~E~~F of this ordinance, are illustrative examples. In accordance with the annual City budget process, each year the Library Board shall adopt an annual operations plan and capital budget. The Chief Librarian and the Library Board shall submit to the Mayor and the City Council an annual levy expenditure plan that will support, maintain, and improve the core Library Services identified in this section. Levy Proceeds will be used, in combination with the annual budget appropriation of City General Fund, Real Estate Excise Tax (REET), and other City funds as available to the Library, for Library Services.

A. Hours and Access. Major program elements include: supporting Library operating hours in neighborhood branches and the Central Library; providing access to Library programs and services in the community; and outreach and engagement services throughout the city.

B. Collections. Major program elements include: increasing the variety, depth, and accessibility of collections with new titles and additional copies in various physical and digital formats; providing additional online resources as new platforms and services emerge; curating a local history collection and making those resources more widely available through digitization; providing fine-free access to the Library's collections; and continuing innovative approaches to collection distribution and to fulfilling patron material requests.

C. Technology. Major program elements include: replacing and upgrading the Library's technology infrastructure, including its Integrated Library System, the Library's main business platform for procuring, processing, and tracking Library materials; its enterprise network that

provides high-speed internet and Wi-Fi access to the Central Library and all 26 branches; and its technology equipment such as switches, routers, servers, cabling, computers, tablets, printers, copiers, scanners and widescreen monitors, and other audiovisual equipment for newly emerging technologies such as virtual and augmented reality. Further, this category maintains and enhances the SPL.org website and catalog, with a focus on language accessibility as well as device compatibility and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The technology program also supports the Library's digital equity efforts, including digital literacy instruction and provision and support of internet access devices for use within Library buildings and for check-out.

D. Maintenance. Major program elements include enhanced resources to provide routine, preventive, and major maintenance for the Library's heavily-used buildings as they age, to prolong their useful life. Maintenance also includes funding to seismically retrofit three landmarked branches identified as high-vulnerability in the City's Unreinforced Masonry Building Study.

E. Administration. Administration program elements include supporting implementation and accountability measures for Levy programs and annual reporting to the public on Levy outcomes.

F. Supporting children. Program elements include support for programming targeted towards children ages zero to three.