

Renewal of Library Preservation Fund*

Digest by the Ballot Simplification Committee

Status: Draft for Consideration
On: Monday, July 25, 2020
Members: Packard, Anderson, Merrill, Patterson

Deadline to Request Reconsideration: TBD

The Way It Is Now: The City Charter establishes a Library Preservation Fund (Fund), set to expire on June 30, 2023. The Library uses this Fund to pay for library services and the construction and maintenance of library facilities at the Main Library and 27 branch libraries. The money in the Fund comes from a property tax set-aside of 2½¢ per \$100 of assessed property value each year.

The Fund supports the Library on top of a minimum amount of funding that the Charter requires the City to provide the Library each year ("baseline funding"). The Library's baseline funding was initially based on the amount of funding the City provided in the 2006-07 fiscal year. The City has since adjusted the Library's baseline funding based on changes in the City's discretionary revenues, which are revenues received by the City that are unrestricted and may be used for any lawful City purpose.

The Charter requires the Main Library and branch libraries to be open to the public for at least 1,211 hours every week. To change the total number of hours that libraries must be open, the Library Commission must hold public hearings in each supervisorial district.

The Proposal: Proposition ___ is a Charter amendment that would renew the Fund for 25 years, until June 2048. The money in the Fund would still come from the same annual property tax set-aside, with no increase in the tax rate. The Fund would continue to pay for library services and the construction and maintenance of the facilities of the Main Library and 27 branch libraries.

Proposition ___ would also:

- allow the City to temporarily freeze increases to the baseline funding when the City anticipates a budget deficit over \$300 million in the upcoming year provided that within two years the baseline returns to what it would have been without the freeze; and
- require the Library to open its libraries for at least 1,400 hours per week. After July 1, 2028, the Library Commission may modify these hours every five years, after holding public hearings in each supervisorial district.

A "YES" Vote Means: If you vote "yes," you want to renew the Library Preservation Fund for 25 years, allow the City to freeze the baseline funding for the Library in years when the City anticipates a budget deficit over \$300 million provided that within two years the baseline returns to what it would have been without the freeze, and require the Library to increase the minimum open hours it must maintain per week.

A "NO" Vote Means: If you vote "no," you do not want to make these changes.