



Eugene City Council

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EUGENE CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

January 14, 2026

12:00 p.m. CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

This City Council Wednesday work session will be held in hybrid format using in person and virtual meeting technology. Information about online or other options for access and participation will be available at <https://www.eugene-or.gov/3360/Webcasts-and-Meeting-Materials>

Meeting of January 14, 2026;
Her Honor Mayor Kaarin Knudson Presiding

Councilors

Greg Evans, President
Eliza Kashinsky
Jennifer Yeh
Mike Clark

Lyndsie Leech Vice President
Matt Keating
Alan Zelenka
Randy Groves

12:00 p.m. CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

1. WORK SESSION: Library Local Option Levy

The Eugene City Council welcomes your interest in these agenda items. This meeting location is wheelchair-accessible. For the hearing impaired, a interpreter can be provided with 48 hours' notice prior to the meeting. Spanish-language interpretation will also be provided with 48 hours' notice. To arrange for these services, contact the receptionist at 541-682-5010. City Council meetings are telecast live on Metro Television, Comcast channel 21, and rebroadcast later in the week.

El consejo de la Ciudad de Eugene agradece su interés en estos asuntos de la agenda. El lugar de la reunión tiene acceso para sillas de ruedas. Se puede proveer a un intérprete para las personas con discapacidad auditiva si avisa con 48 horas de anticipación. También se puede proveer interpretación para español si avisa con 48 horas de anticipación. Para reservar estos servicios llame al 541-682-5010. Las reuniones del consejo de la ciudad se transmiten en vivo por Metro Television, Canal 21 de Comcast y son retransmitidas durante la semana.

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EUGENE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



Work Session: Library Local Option Levy

Meeting Date: January 14, 2026
Department: Library, Recreation, Cultural Services
www.eugene-or.gov

Agenda Item Number: 1
Staff Contact: Angela Ocaña
Phone: 541-682-5632

ISSUE STATEMENT

This work session offers the Eugene City Council an opportunity to discuss and possibly take action to move forward with a Library Levy. The current levy will expire in June 2026. Staff will provide more detailed levy options and timeline for potential referral to the May 19, 2026 ballot. DHM Research consultants will provide levy polling information, conducted in November. The consultants will present their survey findings which assess voter support for a potential levy.

BACKGROUND

The Eugene Public Library has received levy funding for operational and service enhancements since its opening in 2000. On July 27, 2020, the Council moved to place the Library Levy on the November 3, 2020, ballot. The levy maintained an average tax rate of \$0.15, generating approximately \$2.85 million in annual revenue at an average cost of \$37 per home. The measure was approved with 76 percent community support. The Eugene Public Library is now nearing completion of the 2020 Library Levy.

Levy reports are completed annually in accordance with reporting requirements. Reporting for the 2020 levy began in 2021. Reports include service investments and impacts as well as required accountability and transparency mechanisms.

Key achievements from the library levy include:

- Increased building use, card registration, and circulation through extended hours
- Strengthened Teen Services
- Advanced equitable literacy outcomes through partnerships and lowered barriers through a fine-free youth policy and student cards
- Increased the number of off-site programs and activities
- Bridged digital equity gaps
- Expanded outreach and partnerships
- Enhanced youth and toddler access to materials

With an average of one million visitors a year, 65 percent of all Eugene residents have an active library card. The library levy increased hours at both branches by 84 percent with record-high usage. The increase in usage has resulted in more than 25 million materials checked out. These changes are helping advance the Eugene Public Library's mission to provide access for all.

January 14, 2026 Work Session – Item 1

On September 22, 2025, the Council received an overview of the 2015 and 2020 levies. Staff provided a proposed levy framework for the 2026 Library Levy process and timeline for council consideration.

On October 27, 2025, the council received an overview of the three concepts for a potential 2026 library levy, and financial considerations of each concept. Staff informed council polling was planned for November, and results would be shared at the January work session.

DHM Research completed the polling in early December. The purpose of the survey is to provide information related to the proposed levy options and services.

The methodology and process were informed by standard public-sector opinion research best practices and input from City staff and included a mixed-mode phone/text survey of 400 voters matched to active voter records. DHM will provide a detailed overview of survey results at the work session.

Service Level Options

Option One - Maintain Current Levy Services

Option One maintains current library levy services while advancing the community's priorities of access, equity, and safety through additional investments. A levy with an average tax rate of 15 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value would cost each home approximately \$43 dollars per year and support an average annual service level of \$3.3 million.

Service Components

- Maintain 160 service hours across three locations
Ensures consistent access for residents citywide and supports equitable service delivery across Eugene's neighborhoods.
- Maintain high-quality, inclusive collections
Provides diverse materials in both print and digital formats that reflect the full spectrum of community experiences, interests, and voices. A well-balanced and inclusive collection supports literacy, lifelong learning, and cultural understanding.
- Increase focus on technology and digital equity
Expands access to essential technology, such as Wi-Fi, device lending, and digital literacy programming, to bridge the digital divide. This ensures that all residents, including students and job seekers, have equitable access to digital tools and information.
- Enhance building safety and create more welcoming spaces
Prioritizes security, and accessibility upgrades to make each facility safer and more inviting. A welcoming and secure environment strengthens public trust and encourages greater community use.
- Develop a Library Systems Plan
Establishes a strategic roadmap for future library services, facilities, and partnerships. This plan will provide the library data-driven options for sustaining and improving library operations in future levy cycles.

Option Two – Maintain Library Levy Services and Expand Early Childhood Literacy Programs

Option Two increases investments in Eugene's youngest learners through evidence-based early

literacy programming, supporting the City of Eugene’s Strategic Plan’s goals of fostering belonging and access by helping every child enter school ready to learn. A 2018 study by the Public Library Association found that families increased home reading by an average of 20 minutes per day after participating in six consecutive storytimes and the Association for Library Service to Children reported gains in vocabulary, phonological awareness among children attending library storytimes. Public libraries nationwide follow the Every Child Ready to Read framework developed by the Public Library Association and the Association for Library Service to Children. Research shows that families who participate in library storytimes increase literacy behaviors at home, and children build foundational skills linked to school readiness. As a result of expanded early-literacy services, Eugene Public Library would expect increased caregiver engagement in literacy activities at home, stronger school-readiness skills among young children, and broader access to early learning opportunities for families across the community. A levy with an average tax rate of \$0.17 per \$1,000 of assessed value, would cost the average home approximately \$49 per year and support an average annual service level of \$3.6 million.

Service Components

- Add Early Literacy Librarian to lead and coordinate early learning initiatives, ensuring consistent quality and measurable outcomes across programs.
- Reinstate the “Storytime to Go” program, training volunteers to bring literacy programming directly to preschools, daycares, and kindergarten classrooms. This model extends the library’s reach into neighborhoods and learning environments citywide without significant new staffing costs.
- Expand the number and variety of storytimes and early learning programs offered both in library branches and in community settings, with a focus on accessibility for working families and underserved areas.
- Expanding the youth collection, ensuring that children and families have access to inclusive, developmentally appropriate books and resources that reflect Eugene’s cultural and linguistic diversity.
- Build and sustain partnerships with early learning providers, local schools, and family-serving organizations to coordinate literacy support and align with citywide efforts to improve early childhood outcomes.
- Implement a training-of-trainers model that provides on-site professional development for youth-serving staff at preschools and daycares and additional sessions at the library; and expand annual learning convenings for librarians and teachers.

Option Three – Maintain Library Levy Services, Expand Early Childhood Literacy Programs and Expand Book Drop-off and Pick-up Locations

Option Three increases library access and equity across Eugene by installing book vending kiosks and return units in three areas: West Eugene, River Road, and South Eugene. These automated kiosks extend service to neighborhoods that are underserved by proximity or public transit, providing residents with 24-hour access to books, returns, and hold pickups. The kiosks will provide a small-footprint to provide 24-hour borrowing, returns, and hold pickups. Metrics gathered from these sites will inform a data-driven expansion strategy based upon usage patterns, circulation data, and community engagement metrics. This information will inform future decisions about

permanent micro facilities or additional kiosks for other areas across the community. Book vending kiosks have been identified by the American Library Association and peer libraries nationwide as an emerging best practice for improving library accessibility, reducing barriers, and expanding engagement in high-need areas. A levy with an average tax rate of \$0.19 per \$1,000 of assessed value, would cost the average home approximately \$56 per year and support an average annual service level of \$4.0 million.

Service Components

- Deploy book vending kiosks and return units in West Eugene and River Road to increase access in neighborhoods located more than 10 minutes from a library branch. These kiosks would allow residents to borrow, return, or pick up reserved materials at their convenience.
- Install a book vending kiosk in South Eugene, complementing the existing return bin and extending after-hours and weekend access for families and working adults.
- Integrate all kiosks with the library's existing catalog and circulation system to ensure seamless access to materials and efficient restocking and maintenance.
- Implement signage, lighting, and outreach to promote awareness, ensure safety, and maximize use.
- Expand digital and physical collections to support increased customer demand and ensure diverse, inclusive materials are available citywide.
- Conduct a comprehensive systems planning study to define a vision for the 4th floor at the downtown library, evaluate potential expansion sites, and assess Bethel Branch needs, including feasibility, cost estimates, and a phased implementation timeline.

The current levy expires in June of 2026. To meet the May ballot timeline Council must pass a resolution no later than February 18th to meet the filing deadline. If Council provides staff direction to move forward with one of the levy options, Staff will plan to return to council with a proposed resolution for Council adoption on January 28, 2026.

RELATED CITY POLICIES

The Library's efforts align with key focus areas within the City's [Strategic Plan](#):

1. Urgent Community Needs: including contributing to community safety, resilience, youth development, addressing homelessness.
2. Communication and Outreach: including improving awareness, transparency, and engagement across the community.
3. Culture of Belonging: including inclusion, equity, amplifying marginalized voices, and increasing participation.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

[October 25, 2017 Work Session](#)

Council received a Presentation of Year One of the 2016 levy.

[January 14, 2019 Work Session](#)

Council received a presentation of Year Two of the 2016 levy.

[January 27, 2020 Work Session](#)

Council received a presentation of Year Three of the 2016 levy.

[June 10, 2020 Work Session](#)

Council received a presentation on local option levy packages for Council to consider.

[July 13, 2020 Work Session](#)

Council received options for renewing the library levy at the November 3, 2020 General Election and directed the City Manager to return with resolutions for both options.

Councilor Clark, seconded by Councilor Taylor moved to substitute to direct the City Manager to return to Council with a resolution for both Option 1 and Option 2.

Passed 5:3 (Opposed by Councilors Yeh, Syrett and Pryor)

[July 27, 2020 Work Session](#)

Council reviewed two proposed library local option levy renewal resolutions for consideration to place a levy option on the November 3, 2020, ballot.

Councilor Semple, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to adopt the resolution selecting Library Levy Option One to place on the November 3, 2020, ballot.

Passed 6:2 (Opposed by Councilors Syrett and Zelenka)

Councilor Semple, seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to appoint Councilors Yeh, Pryor, and Taylor to the voters' pamphlet proponent committee for the Library Local Option Levy.

Passed 8:0

Councilor Semple seconded by Councilor Yeh, moved to direct the City Manager to prepare a neutral information tabloid concerning a library local option levy.

Passed 8:0

Councilor Semple, seconded by Councilor Yeh, move to direct the City Manager to include on a supplemental budget sufficient appropriation to produce a voters' pamphlet and produce a neutral information tabloid.

Passed: 8:0

[February 14, 2021 Work Session](#)

Council received a presentation of Year 2 of the current library levy.

[December 15, 2021 Work Session](#)

Council received a report on the fifth year of the expanded "Library of the Future" services, provided with levy funding.

[January 12, 2022 Work Session](#)

Council received a presentation of Year 5 of the 2016 levy.

[December 14, 2022 Work Session](#)

Council received a report on the first year of expanded library services made possible with levy funding.

[February 14, 2024 Work Session](#)

Council received a report on the Year 2 expanded library services made possible with levy funding during the period starting on July 1, 2022 and ending on June 30, 2023.

[July 16, 2025 Work Session](#)

Council received a presentation of Year 3 of the current library levy.

[September 22, 2025 Work Session](#)

Council received a presentation on the local option library levy library staff have presented updates and provided annual reports to the City Council. These yearly reports highlighted the achievements made with the funding received.

[October 27, 2025 Work Session](#)

Council received a presentation of the local option library levy concepts for a potential 2026 ballot.

COUNCIL OPTIONS

1. Direct staff to prepare a resolution referring to the May 19, 2026 ballot one of the three library levy options described in this AIS, with possible action on the resolution to be scheduled for Council’s January 28 work session.
2. Choose to not pursue a library levy at this time.

CITY MANAGER’S RECOMMENDATION

None.

POSSIBLE MOTIONS

1. Move to direct the City Manager to return to Council on January 28 with a resolution referring to the May 19, 2026 ballot a library levy measure consistent with **Option 1** as described in this AIS.

OR

2. Move to direct the City Manager to return to Council on January 28 with a resolution referring to the May 19, 2026 ballot a library levy measure consistent with **Option 2** as described in this AIS.

OR

3. Move to direct the City Manager to return to Council on January 28 with a resolution referring to the May 19, 2026 ballot a library levy measure consistent with **Option 3** as described in this AIS.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. A Resolution Calling a City Election on November 3, 2020, For the Purpose of Referring to the Legal Electors of the City of Eugene a Measure Authorizing a Five-Year Local Option Levy for the Funding of Library Operations.

B. Library Levy Timeline 2026

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Staff Contact: Angela Ocaña, Library Director

Telephone: 541-682-5632

Staff E-Mail: aocana@eugene-or.gov



COUNCIL RESOLUTION NO. 5307

A RESOLUTION CALLING A CITY ELECTION ON NOVEMBER 3, 2020, FOR THE PURPOSE OF REFERRING TO THE LEGAL ELECTORS OF THE CITY OF EUGENE A MEASURE AUTHORIZING A FIVE-YEAR LOCAL OPTION LEVY FOR THE FUNDING OF LIBRARY OPERATIONS.

PASSED: 6:2

REJECTED:

OPPOSED: Syrett & Zelenka

ABSENT:

CONSIDERED: July 27, 2020



RESOLUTION NO. 5307

**A RESOLUTION CALLING A CITY ELECTION ON NOVEMBER 3, 2020,
FOR THE PURPOSE OF REFERRING TO THE LEGAL ELECTORS OF
THE CITY OF EUGENE A MEASURE AUTHORIZING A FIVE-YEAR
LOCAL OPTION LEVY FOR THE FUNDING OF LIBRARY
OPERATIONS.**

The City Council of the City of Eugene finds as follows:

A. The Eugene Public Library’s mission is to support an informed community, lifelong learning, and the love of reading by providing access for all city residents to the universe of ideas and information. The library provides inclusive and equitable information access for all of Eugene that contributes to the education, development, and growth of our community. The library is a leader in the areas of community building, public computer access, early literacy, and free, enriching programs for all ages. The library is heavily used by our community and has been repeatedly recognized as being within our nation’s top three percent of public libraries for excellence in cost-effective delivery of key services.

B. The City of Eugene has a history of supporting its library. In 1906, the first Eugene Public Library, named the Carnegie Library, opened at 11th and Willamette. Over time, the Carnegie Library no longer met the needs of the growing community. In 1959, the library moved into a new building at Olive and 13th. By the 1990’s, Eugene had grown significantly, and the community desired a larger library to meet its new needs. The Mayor and City Council, supported by the voters, decided to open two branch libraries as well as build a new downtown library. Since its completion in 2002, the Downtown Library has been an anchor to downtown redevelopment. In 2000, the Bethel and Sheldon Branch Libraries opened in leased facilities with levy funding. These neighborhood locations are vital to accessible service delivery for community members in all parts of the city, especially for kids after school. After two years with reduced hours, voter-approved levy funding doubled open hours at both branches beginning July 2016.

C. In FY19, the library served over 3,000 visitors daily at three locations, and the library’s collection was utilized over three million times. Annually, the library provides almost 2,300 free programs, ranging from story-times and classes to entertainment. Over 65,000 community members of all ages attend these free programs every year. The library’s three locations provided over 1.7 million wireless sessions and over 145,000 Internet computer user sessions.

D. The City’s library services are funded by the City’s General Fund, donated funds, and the five-year operating levy approved by the voters in 2015. The FY21 General Fund budget of \$12,271,893 pays for the following services:

- a. Downtown Library services - 61 hours across seven days a week.
- b. Bethel and Sheldon Branch services - 26 hours over five days a week.

- c. Publicly available technology to use at the library.
- d. Ability to use one's own technology to access library services online 24 hours per day.
- e. A limited amount of new material acquisitions.
- f. Approximately 1,200 free public programs offered at the library annually, for all ages.
- g. Some off-site programs, all of which serve those unable to come into the library.

E. On November 3, 2015, the City of Eugene voters approved Measure 20-235 to fund library services for five years beginning July 2016. The services included more hours and access, more programs and services, and more materials and technology. The five-year levy is set to expire in June of 2021.

F. Since the passage of the 2015 levy funding, the library has seen a 16% increase in cardholders. Currently, 65% of community members hold a Eugene Public Library Card. Similarly, since the addition of the 2015 levy funds, program attendance has increased 37%. More recently, the library has seen dramatic growth (over 75% increase during the past two years) in usage of the Maker Hub, which has almost 5,000 users per year.

G. The Eugene community has heavily utilized the services provided through the 2015 library levy funds. Renewal of the levy funds will maintain the high level of service the community has come to enjoy and expect from the library.

H. The goals of additional hours and access, more programs and services, and more materials and technology were attained through passage of the 2015 levy and can be seamlessly maintained for another five years through the continuation of that levy funding. Specifically, the 2020 levy will:

- a. Preserve the 47 additional open hours weekly across all three locations.
- b. Maintain the 1/3 increase in number of free, enriching programs for all ages.
- c. Maintain the Maker Hub area providing community members with access to and training on tools and equipment they might not be able to afford individually.
- d. Maintain increased off-site delivery of programs and outreach.
- e. Maintain high level of library collection and shorter wait times for high demand items.
- f. Maintain and replace internet-ready devices at the Bethel and Sheldon locations.
- g. Maintain programming and upkeep for the library Maker Van, which provides additional opportunities for outreach and access to tools and equipment the community wouldn't be able to afford otherwise.

I. The most recent feedback that the library has received from the Library Advisory Board, community partners, and through patron surveys, reaffirms the community's desires expressed in a 2015 community survey around hours and access, materials and technology, and programs and services.

J. In order to continue the services currently funded by the 2015 levy, the City Council developed a proposal for library levy funding. The levy proposal would pay for services identified in paragraph H, above. All other library services would continue to be funded by the General Fund and donated funds.

K. On July 27, 2020, the City Council agreed that a five-year Local Option Levy of \$2,850,000 per year should be placed on the November 3, 2020 ballot. The typical Eugene taxpayer is estimated to pay an average of \$37 per year over the five-year period of the levy. The tax rate for this levy will be \$0.15 per \$1,000.00 of property value per home, which is two cents less than the \$0.17 tax rate for the current (2015) levy.

L. In order to ensure accountability in the use of levy funds, several components will be included in the levy implementation:

- a. Levy funds will be budgeted and accounted for in separate funds that are easily identifiable by members of the public, in accordance with state law.
- b. Staff will prepare an annual summary of levy spending and performance measures. The report will clearly lay out the library's budget and the split between the General Fund and Levy Funds. The Library Advisory Board will annually review the report to determine whether spending complied with the intention of the ballot measure.
- c. The City Manager will provide an annual memorandum to the City Council about library levy spending and key performance measures for the services. The memorandum will include the staff report and any comments from the Library Advisory Board after their review.

NOW, THEREFORE, based upon the above findings,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EUGENE, a Municipal Corporation of the State of Oregon, as follows:


Section 1. A city election is called for the purpose of referring to the legal electors of the City of Eugene a measure authorizing a five-year Library Local Option Levy in the amount of \$2,850,000 per year, beginning July 1, 2021, to continue to maintain the current level of library services.

Section 2. The City Council orders this city election to be held in the City of Eugene, Oregon, concurrently with the election on November 3, 2020, in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 254 of the Oregon Revised Statutes, and the ballots shall be counted and tabulated and the results certified as provided by law.

Section 3. The City Recorder is directed to give not less than ten days' notice of the city election by publication of one notice in the Register Guard, a newspaper published in the City and of general circulation within the City.

Section 4. This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

The foregoing Resolution adopted the 27th day of July, 2020.



City Recorder - Deputy

2026 LIBRARY LEVY TIMELINE

