

**News Advisory**

**Salt Lake City Council**  
June 3, 2009

**City Council Seeks Public Comment on Possible  
Tax Increase for Public Library System**

The Salt Lake City Council is seeking public comment on a possible property tax increase that would fund rising operating costs for the Salt Lake City Public Library System and which may also help fund future construction of two new branch libraries.

In response to a City Council query, the Salt Lake City Public Library Board of Directors has recommended increasing property taxes for the City Library District to generate \$3.44 million a year in new revenue. The City Council will take public comment on the proposal at its June 9 meeting which starts at 7 p.m. in the City Council Chamber in the City & County Building, 451 South State Street.

The Library System's proposed \$18 million budget – which includes about \$3.7 million in reserve funds – for the next fiscal year, which starts July 1, contains no tax increase. However, after Library System administrators presented the proposed budget to the City Council on May 12, a majority of Council Members requested that the Library System and Council staff explore the potential for a property tax increase. On June 2, the Library Board of Directors recommended that the City Council consider adding \$3.44 million in new revenue through an adjustment in the property tax rate.

The new revenue would be used for two purposes. First, it would restore about \$1.7 million to operating and capital reserves that would be spent under the Library System's proposed budget for the next fiscal year. Second, it would provide additional revenue to build a capital reserve over several years to help fund a branch library in the Glendale neighborhood of the City and a branch in the Marmalade neighborhood.

Library administrators have identified the Glendale and Marmalade neighborhoods as underserved and in the greatest need for public library services. In addition to supplying books, periodicals and audiovisual materials, the branches would provide access to computers and the Internet and educational support for the community.

City Council staff estimates that – without the proposed property tax increase – property taxes on a Salt Lake City home valued at \$280,000 would be \$95.32 for the Library System portion of property taxes. Property taxes on a commercial property valued at \$1 million in Salt Lake City would be \$618 for Library System portion of property taxes. A property tax generating \$3.44 million in new revenue would add \$29.46 to a home valued at \$280,000, and \$191 to commercial property valued at \$1 million, according to City Council staff estimates. Utah law allows library districts to tax up to 1 percent of the total value of assessed property within each district’s boundaries. The proposed tax increase still would fall below the 1 percent cap. The boundaries of Salt Lake City are the district boundaries of the Salt Lake City Public Library System.

The Library System’s proposed \$18 million budget includes about \$3.7 million in unallocated reserves. About \$1.2 million of that figure is being held to meet any unexpected costs in the operation of the Main Library and five branch libraries. The other \$2.5 million are funds the System has saved over several years to help build future branch libraries. Library System administrators estimate that it would cost about \$8 million to build 20,000 square foot libraries in the Glendale and Marmalade areas.

Besides attending the public hearing, people can comment on the proposal by contacting the City Council in the following ways:

**Mail:** Salt Lake City Council Office  
451 S State Street, Room 304  
P.O. Box 145476  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-5476

**Email:** [council.comments@slcgov.com](mailto:council.comments@slcgov.com)

**Call comment line:** (801) 535-7654

**Fax:** (801) 535-7651

###