



CITY OF ONTARIO

Special City Council/Housing Authority Meeting APRIL 5, 2024

*Ovitt Family Community Library
Community Conference Room
215 East C Street, Ontario, CA 91764*

MAYOR PAUL S. LEON • MAYOR PRO TEM DEBRA DORST-PORADA
COUNCIL MEMBERS ALAN D. WAPNER, JIM W. BOWMAN AND RUBEN VALENCIA

CITY CLERK SHEILA MAUTZ • TREASURER JAMES R. MILHISER
CITY MANAGER SCOTT OCHOA • CITY ATTORNEY RUBEN DURAN

WELCOME TO A STUDY SESSION OF THE ONTARIO CITY COUNCIL

Anyone wishing to speak in person during public comment regarding the study session will be required to fill out a blue slip. Blue slips must be turned in prior to public comment beginning. The Clerk will not accept blue slips after that time.

Comments will be limited to 3 minutes. Speakers will be alerted when they have 1 minute remaining and when their time is up. Speakers are then to return to their seats and no further comments will be permitted.

Remarks from those seated or standing in the back of the room will not be permitted. All those wishing to speak including Council and Staff need to be recognized by the Chair before speaking.

ACCOMODATIONS

If you need special assistance or accommodations to participate in this meeting, please contact the City Clerk's office at 909-395-2009. Notification of 48 hours prior to the meeting will help the City make reasonable arrangements. Equipment for the hearing impaired is available in the Records Management Office.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The study session will begin at 10:30 a.m.

CALL TO ORDER (*OPEN SESSION*)

Porada, Wapner, Bowman, Valencia, Mayor/Chairman Leon

STUDY SESSION

1. ONTARIO CITY LIBRARY STUDY SESSION

That the City Council hear a presentation regarding Ontario City Library from California State Librarian Greg Lucas and review corresponding reports.

ATTACHMENT: [20240405-Ontario City Library Study Session 01 Report 2](#)

ADJOURNMENT

CITY OF ONTARIO

Agenda Report
April 5, 2024

SECTION:
STUDY SESSION

Department: Community Life & Culture
Prepared By: Shawn Thrasher
Staff Member Presenting: Helen McAlary,
Executive Director Community Life and Culture
Approved By: 

Submitted To: Council/OHA
Approved: _____
Continued To: _____
Denied: _____
Item No: 1

SUBJECT: ONTARIO CITY LIBRARY STUDY SESSION

RECOMMENDATION: That the City Council hear a presentation regarding Ontario City Library from California State Librarian Greg Lucas and review corresponding reports.

THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL GOALS ARE BEING ACHIEVED:

Encourage, Provide or Support Enhanced Recreational, Educational, Cultural and Healthy City Programs, Policies and Activities

FISCAL IMPACT: There is no direct fiscal impact associated with this action.

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS: At the June 15, 2023 Budget Adoption meeting, the City Council requested a study session regarding the value and future of libraries. Throughout history, libraries have served as pillars of knowledge, community engagement, and cultural enrichment. As technology has evolved, contemporary libraries have also evolved. The purpose of this study session is to comprehensively explore the past, present, and future of the Ontario City Library, along with the critical role libraries have in shaping our community's intellectual, educational, and social landscape.

Greg Lucas, a distinguished leader in the library field and the California State Librarian, will facilitate the discussion. Greg Lucas brings to the table a wealth of experience and a deep-seated commitment to serving the people of California.

The study session will commence with a brief overview of the library's history and evolution provided by the Community Life & Culture Executive Director, Helen McAlary. Subsequently, Greg Lucas will facilitate a discussion-style study session to explore the vital role that libraries play in shaping the community.

Ontario City Library Study Session
Helen McAlary, Executive Director, Community Life & Culture
Greg Lucas, California State Librarian
Ovitt Family Community Library
April 5, 2024, 10:30 AM

History of Ontario City Library

The history of Ontario City Library is one of continued growth, progress, and community support. The City of Ontario was incorporated in 1891; however, a library was established in Ontario in 1885 when residents pooled together their private book collections. One of Ontario's founders, William Chaffey, served as president of this group and provided a space for the new library in the Holt Adobe. Between 1885 and 1902, the library continued to grow and was moved to several locations. In 1902, residents reached out to philanthropist and industrialist Andrew Carnegie, who believed building public libraries democratized access to knowledge and education and contributed to widespread literacy and learning essential for societal progress and individual empowerment. In anticipation, residents raised enough money to purchase two lots; in 1906, Carnegie donated the remaining funds to build a library, understanding that the city would pay for the maintenance. The library opened in 1907, and by the following year, it was so popular that hours increased to seven days a week. Since then, the library has been open every day of the week except on holidays. The library collection continued to grow, and in 1923, the basement of the Carnegie building was converted into a children's room.

The library survived the Great Depression, which caused drastic budget cuts. Federal relief funds were used to keep the library open and even paid for an expansion. A new library building had been planned for 1942, but the Depression and war halted those plans. However, it was during the 1940s that the much-valued section of the library, the local history collection, was started, which ultimately became the Robert E. Ellingwood Model Colony History Room.

During the 1950s, the Carnegie building was deemed structurally unsafe in an earthquake, and building master plan was developed with consultants from the USC Library School. A new 18,500-square-foot library was dedicated on January 15, 1961, at the present site of Ovitt Family Community Library. Eventually, library services shifted to a community center type model, incorporating public programs and self-improvement classes. Meanwhile, the Latino population was growing in Ontario, and the library began collecting books in Spanish and offering bilingual programming.

A new two-level addition was added in 1970, which included an audio-visual collection. The Friends of the Ontario City Library was incorporated in 1973 as the library's non-profit fundraising arm. In the 1980s, the library's cataloging system migrated to an automated computer system as the library continued to evolve this time within the changing digital and technological space. In the 1990s and 2000s, when some predicted the decline of

public libraries as the internet became popular, Ontario City Library remained steadfast in its vision of serving the community and continued to thrive. A new location was opened in south Ontario, first in the Vineyard Village Shopping Center and then co-joined with Colony High School.

Despite predictions of slowing down, Ontario continued to invest in the library. The City Council moved forward with a new building project, which opened in 2006. The 60,000-square-foot library established Ontario as a leader in the region for library services, a reputation that still holds today. In 2020, The Library Board of Trustees voted to recommend to the City Council a Library Master Plan, which the Ontario City Council unanimously adopted. The Master Plan recommends expanding library services into underserved geographic locations in the city, including small branches, satellites, and mobile services. That same year, during a crisis similar to the Great Depression, the library retained staff on-site during the pandemic closures to assist patrons via phone. It was one of the first libraries to reopen.

The Contemporary Library

Ontario City Library is recognized statewide as a contemporary library with programs and services worth observing and replicating. Unlike the Carnegie library of 1906, the contemporary library is not simply a warehouse of books. While physical books remain, technology is fully integrated into the library experience, facilitating processes like book checkouts, Wi-Fi access for personal devices, and hands-on learning opportunities, such as 3D Printing in the library's makerspace. The contemporary library provides extensive digital resources, including e-books, downloadable audiobooks, and databases, offering community members seamless access to information and entertainment. Ontario City Library has a "library of things," a curated collection where individuals can borrow items such as tools, kitchen appliances, outdoor equipment, and more. These collections aim to promote resource-sharing, reduce consumption, and foster a sense of community ownership and sustainability.

Rather than adhering to strict silence, modern libraries such as Ontario City Library are designed as adaptable learning environments. They accommodate group discussions and collaborative learning alongside traditional quiet study areas. The contemporary library strongly emphasizes life-long learning, presenting educational workshops, classes, and seminars catering to community members of all ages and diverse interests.

Value of the Contemporary Library

There are many ways libraries impact and add value to a community. Those most relevant to the City of Ontario are outlined below.

First, libraries are **hubs of lifelong learning**. While libraries are not schools, they are educational institutions, playing a vital role in building and supporting communities of learners, enriching lives, and reaping social and economic benefits. Public libraries are often most associated with the education of children, and Ontario City Library is no

exception. Little Learners, Big Futures is the library's early literacy program for toddlers and preschool-aged youth that uses stories and songs to teach children and enforce the idea that parents are a child's first teacher. Over the next five years, the library will expand its literacy initiative to create programs serving all grade levels.

For adults, the public library has been called "a classroom of life." According to Pew Research, 76% of adults acknowledge that libraries help them learn new things. Thousands of adult learners across all walks of life rely on the library to build skills, explore new technologies, and prepare for college or job-related training. Adult learners rely on the library to build skills, explore new technologies, prepare for college or graduate school, and receive job-related training. One such program is Liftoff to Literacy, which provides one-on-one tutoring to adults who struggle with reading skills. Another, Ontario Learns, offers programming for adults to learn home skills, financial literacy, and technology skill building.

There is a powerful connection between learning and community well-being. Investing in education and fostering a love for learning cultivates stronger and healthier individuals, building robust and thriving communities. Studies have shown that individuals with higher educational attainment can break generational cycles of poverty and overcome emotional and behavioral challenges. Moreover, higher education levels often open doors to better job opportunities and earning potential, providing economic stability and growth. Education is also closely linked to improved health outcomes. Educated individuals are more likely to make informed health decisions, leading to better overall well-being. They become advocates for improved access to quality education for all, creating a positive ripple effect that uplifts the entire community.

Second, libraries are **powerful connectors**, linking community members to vast resources that can improve their lives. Pew Research has found that 95% of Americans agree that the materials and resources available at public libraries play an essential role in giving everyone a chance to succeed. Through programming, partnerships, and related services, libraries introduce community members to resources that they may not have previously known even existed. At Ontario City Library during the last few years, community members have obtained bus passes and information about adding solar to their homes, housing, and mental health. Parents connect to vision and dental care for their children at low or no cost. Community members can use the library's Wi-Fi, check out tablets and hotspots, and check out the library of things mentioned above which include scientific calculators and blood pressure cuffs.

Third, libraries themselves are often **sources of great community pride**. When asked to rank city services by satisfaction level, Ontario residents ranked Ontario City Library second to fire protection and paramedic services. Libraries, including Ontario City Library, are nationally known as one of the most trusted branches of government in each community. A survey done last year by Every Library found that 91% of parents and guardians say that they trust public librarians and 86% find school librarians trustworthy.

Libraries additionally play a role in building and strengthening the bonds between community members, fostering a sense of unity and pride within neighborhoods and the community as a whole. By providing gathering spaces, a variety of programming, and resources that cater to various interests and backgrounds, libraries create opportunities for people to connect, share experiences, and collaborate, ultimately contributing to the development of a stronger, more cohesive, and proud community. These events encourage friendship-building and networking among community members with shared interests.

The library also actively collaborates with local organizations, including Ontario Montclair School District, businesses, and community groups, promoting resource sharing and cooperation among community members. The library plays a significant role in cultural and heritage preservation. Through a strong local history collection, community members of all ages can explore the rich heritage of Ontario, reinforcing the sense of pride that comes from being part of this vibrant community.

Fourth, the library **provides the value of a third space**, a term coined by sociologist Ray Oldenberg that refers to spaces where people spend time between home – the first space – and work – the second space. Third spaces are locations where community members exchange ideas, have a good time, and build relationships and have often been referred to as "the living room of society." Third spaces are essential community builders, but according to the Brookings Institute, brick and mortar third places are being lost as more and more Americans go digital. The public library is also one of the indoor spaces where people of all ages, socio-economics, ethnicities, and races engage with one another, learn about one enough, develop empathy for one another, learn with one another, and together build a stronger community.

Fifth, public libraries contribute to a community's **economic development**. A study from the Aspen Institute wrote that libraries serve as anchors for neighborhood revitalization, strengthening social bonds, and fostering community identity. Moreover, addressing concerns raised by the National Council for Adult Learning, libraries directly combat non-productivity costs, totaling \$225 billion annually, through literacy programs and adult basic skills education. Public libraries actively support personal economic development through various means, offering opportunities for skills enhancement, job seeking, access to social services, and even small business development. For example, a local entrepreneur in Ontario utilizes the library's makerspace to 3D print specialized cookie cutters for her bakery, showcasing how libraries can empower innovation and creativity. There is also a beneficial ripple effect libraries have on local businesses. Research done by the Minnesota Public Library has shown a "halo spending" effect, with nearby restaurants, retail, and services experiencing approximately 23% more spending from library visitors. This underscores how libraries serve as information hubs that foster business development and contribute to the community's economic vitality. Additionally, a study done by the Philadelphia Free Library found that homes within ¼ mile of a library are worth more than homes more than ¼ mile from a library and that in Philadelphia, the additional home values generated by proximity to a library produce an additional \$18.5 million in property taxes to the City and School District each year. There have also been

several Return on Investment (ROI) studies, including one conducted in Texas in 2012 and refreshed in 2017 that demonstrates that for every dollar invested in library services, communities see a return of at least \$4.64; the study called that "a conservative estimate."

Sixth, while libraries do not directly enforce laws or conduct crime prevention strategies, **they significantly deter criminal activities**. A study conducted at UC Irvine in 2014 found that public library visitors acted as "eyes upon the street," deterring criminal behavior. This research also included a study of the Los Angeles Public Library which revealed that library hours cuts from 2009 to 2011 resulted in adverse consequences. A similar study in Kansas City in 2021 examined the impact of public library buildings on crime rates. The study indicated that public libraries' presence in neighborhoods and programs for children and adults can potentially lead to reduced criminal offenses. These findings highlight public libraries' vital role in promoting community safety. By providing a welcoming and accessible environment for residents, libraries contribute to a sense of community vigilance and cohesion, ultimately helping to create a safer and more secure neighborhood.

Finally, **librarians act as second responders during crises**. FEMA categorizes Librarians as essential workers, which is of particular importance in disaster-prone California and has proven to be valuable resources throughout the state. Ontario City Library staff researched pandemic statistics and monitored news updates during the pandemic. They then shared this critical information during community-wide online meetings, which they facilitated. Similarly, during the Francis incident, the presence of library staff became a significant asset. By answering phones and effectively communicating with the public – a job at which librarians and library staff excel - they were able to free up first responders, allowing them to focus on emergency response efforts. Beyond librarians' expertise, library buildings play a critical role during emergencies. When community members are displaced from their homes, libraries provide essential resources. From offering crucial amenities such as Wi-Fi, cell phone charging, and access to food and water, libraries act as support centers during crises. Furthermore, the availability of public internet terminals within libraries becomes vital for displaced individuals to connect with family, friends, insurance providers, and other essential agencies. These connections are pivotal in ensuring that displaced community members receive the support they need during challenging times. Libraries also serve as cooling centers, providing a safe haven for individuals seeking relief from extreme weather conditions. As temperatures continue to rise, the need for cooling centers will grow.

In conclusion, Libraries have a powerful role in building the Premier Community of the Inland Empire. Ontario City Library is where residents learn, gather, and grow, building stronger connections with each other and their neighbors. Libraries are an essential piece of the civic infrastructure that contributes to a complete City. The attached charts outline specific operating costs and use of Ontario City Library.

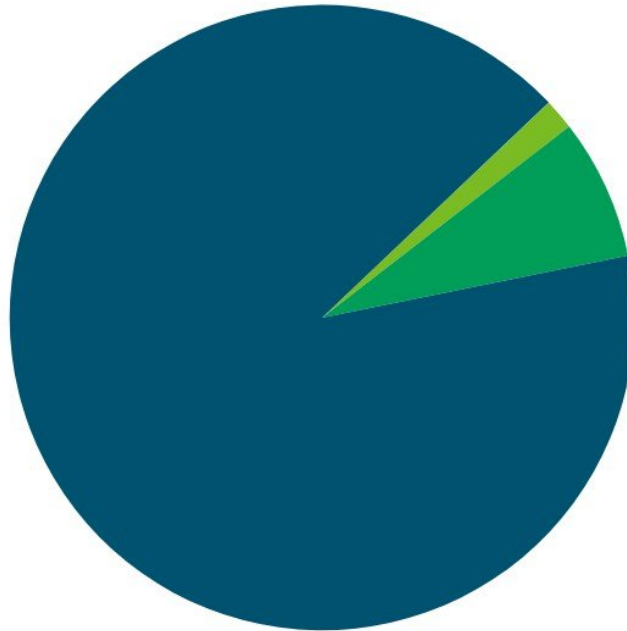
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City of Ontario

General Fund

\$438,579,429

91.1% Other
City Agencies



1.6% Library
Department
\$7,709,630

7.3% CL&C
Agency
\$35,069,334

Library Statistics

FY 2023 - 2024
JULY - FEBRUARY

Programs

415

Program Attendance



12,699

Computer Sessions



14,817

Patron Interactions

114,204

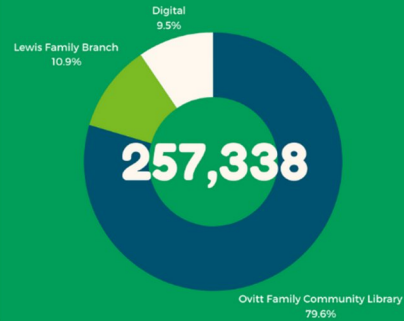


Library Visitors

107,303



Circulation of Materials



257,338

Library Statistics

Fiscal Year	Circulation of Materials	No. of Programs	Program Attendance	Patron Questions	Library Visitors	Computer Sessions	Registered Users
23-24*	257,338	415	12,699	114,204	162,265	14,817	110,753
22-23	333,728	615	21,675	83,927	239,069	20,031	135,200
21-22	347,869	410	10,300	64,358	169,722	14,190	127,655
20-21	234,798	47	8,111	30,624	59,202	5,154	115,775
19-20	422,469	652	17,290	44,263	167,795	41,048	115,525
18-19	565,596	1,081	31,543	65,268	190,764	67,732	107,950

*FY 2023 - 2024 (July - February)