

Parcel taxes for Sacramento libraries will expire. Measure E would extend funding | Opinion

BY [THE SACRAMENTO BEE EDITORIAL BOARD](#)

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Sacramento's public library system is our civic gateway to the world of knowledge and literature. Without the continuation of a modest parcel tax, the city's 12 libraries would be closed far more than open.

Measure E, placed on the November ballot by the Sacramento City Council, would combine two existing parcel taxes and make them permanent, costing a single-family homeowner the same \$54.50 per year. On a busy ballot, Measure E deserves an enthusiastic Yes to maintain access to a wealth of library resources.

More than 10 times a minute, some library cardholder is borrowing something from the library system. Its use by the public is extraordinary, and maintaining public access is fundamental to a functioning society

The Sacramento Public Library system, which serves all cities in the county save for Folsom, is one of the best bargains in government. The 12 libraries that operate in Sacramento meet their mission with a lean budget of about \$25 million a year. The city parcel taxes are an essential foundation providing about \$10 million of that budget. And with a [strapped city budget](#), there is simply no substitute for that money.

While the parcel tax extension would be permanent, any further annual increase could be no more than 3%. Appropriate spending would be assured through ongoing citizen oversight. Some spending proposals on ballots come with considerable mystery. Measure E is as straightforward as they come.

The measure's campaign, led by council members [Mai Vang](#) and [Karina Talamantes](#), is facing no official opposition. As a tax measure, however, Measure E requires a two-thirds "Yes" vote to pass. Getting two-thirds of Sacramentans to agree on anything is no small task. Hopefully, a sound library system is one of those civic values that unites us.

The Sacramento public has been directly supporting this system through a parcel tax since 2004. A second was approved in 2016. Because both are set to expire before the next election cycle, passage now is a necessity. Measure E combines the two existing parcel taxes into one, and anchors this public support into future budgets.

An estimated 220,000 Sacramentans hold library cards. This represents about 40 percent of the city's entire population. It is a testament to the widespread popularity and use of the library system.

It will need continued support from city funds to maintain its mission. Voting Yes on **Measure E** sends a message, loud and clear, that libraries are important to the residents of the state capital. Vote Yes on **Measure E**, to keep our minds wide open to what libraries uniquely offer.