Seattle City Attorney
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May 15, 2012

CITY OF SEATTLE
PROPOSITION 1
Library Levy measure placed on the August 7, 2012 ballot

City Attorney's Explanatory Statement

Seattle Proposition 1 approves a property tax increase totaling $122,630,099 over seven years. The levy is limited so that the City shall not levy more than $17,000,000 in the first year and the levy amount cannot grow by more than 1% per year. The taxes raised would provide funding for operations, major maintenance and capital improvements for the Seattle Public Library. The funding provided through Proposition 1 would be spent in four categories:

1. **Hours and Access**. Major program elements include supporting operating hours at the neighborhood branches and Central Library, and providing support for in-person reference services.

2. **Collections**. Major program elements include providing variety and depth in the Library's collections with new titles in print and other formats, increasing the size and quality of the digital collection, and making local history resources more widely available through digitization.

3. **Technology**. Major program elements include replacements and upgrades to the Library's public computer inventory and online resources, including user-focused improvements to the catalog and public website.

4. **Maintenance**. Major program elements include enhanced resources to provide regular care and major maintenance, such as repair or replacement of structural elements and building systems, for the Library's heavily-used buildings as they age, to prolong their useful life and ensure they are clean, safe and welcoming.

These program elements are illustrative examples. The levy funds will be spent in accordance with the annual City budget process for each year of the levy. The City Librarian and Library Board shall submit to the Mayor and City Council the funding and expenditure plan that will support, maintain and improve the core library services identified in the categories above. Each year the Library Board shall adopt an annual operations plan and capital budget.

Proposition 1 would authorize the collection of more property taxes than would otherwise be allowed by the limits imposed under RCW 84.55. That state law generally limits the increase in property tax revenue to 1% over the highest amount that the City could have received in one of the three most recent years. Proposition 1 lifts that lid on property taxes.

The taxes authorized by Proposition 1are in addition to those collected under the limits of RCW 84.55 or any other authorized levy lid lifts. In the first year of collection (2013), the additional tax rate associated with the tax increase authorized by Proposition 1 for any property owner would be approximately 15 cents per thousand dollars of assessed value. The City's total regular property-tax rate would not exceed the state-law rate limit of $3.60 per $1,000 of assessed value. Taxes levied in 2019 for collection in 2020, and later tax levies, would be calculated as if Proposition 1 had not been passed.