



Agenda Report

Fullerton City Council

MEETING DATE: MAY 6, 2025

TO: CITY COUNCIL

SUBMITTED BY: DAISY PEREZ, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER

PREPARED BY: AMANDA ARBISO, PARKS AND RECREATION
MANAGER
MIRIAM DUARTE, PARKS AND RECREATION
SUPERVISOR
JAIME CORTES, SENIOR LIBRARIAN
ALEC MACLENNAN, ADMINISTRATIVE ANALYST

SUBJECT: HUNT BRANCH LIBRARY ONE YEAR IN REVIEW

SUMMARY

The Hunt Branch Library reopened in April 2024 and reestablished itself as a space for community engagement, learning and collaboration. It has become a vibrant hub serving a wide range of residents and organizations. This report provides a comprehensive overview of the facility's first year of operations.

PROPOSED MOTION

Receive and file.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- Approve the Proposed Motion
- Request additional information or clarification on specific aspects of the Hunt Branch Library programming, operations, or financial performance
- Other options brought by City Council.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Proposed Motion.

CITY MANAGER REMARKS

The City operated the historic Hunt Library for one year and was able to recover approximately 38% in revenues of the operating cost. Our goal is to increase the cost recovery in the coming year.

PRIORITY POLICY STATEMENT

This item matches the following Priority Policy Statements:

- Fiscal and Organizational Stability
- Public Safety
- Infrastructure and City Assets.

FISCAL IMPACT

Hunt Branch Library Year 1 operational costs from April 2024 through March 2025 total approximately \$650,000 supported by program fees, rentals and grant revenue totaling \$247,755. The following summarizes all operating costs and revenues:

Hunt Library Operating Costs' Summary

<i>Operating Expenditures</i>	650,000.09
Staffing - P&R and Library	311,442.17
M&O Costs - Security Services	306,092.92
M&O Costs - Utilities	32,465.00
<i>Revenues</i>	247,755.44
Rental Fees	50,175.00
Program Fees	22,130.44
Donations & Partnerships	50,450.00
California State Library Grant	125,000.00
Net General Fund Impact	\$402,244.65

The anticipated net impact to the General Fund totals approximately \$403,000. The FY 2024-25 Adopted Budget included these Hunt Library costs and revenues.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

The Hunt Branch Library, constructed in 1962, reopened to the public on April 13, 2024 after undergoing a major renovation to revitalize the historic building into a modern, community-centered facility. The reopening marked a significant milestone for the City of Fullerton, reintroducing the Hunt as a flexible space for public programming, educational partnerships, private rentals and city use. Collaborative efforts of key community partners, including the Fullerton Public Library Foundation, the Friends of the Fullerton Public Library and the Library Ad Hoc Committee made the return of the library possible. These groups advocated for and supported the vision of Hunt as a cultural, educational and recreational hub for West Fullerton. The site has become a highly activated space welcoming residents of all ages and interests over the past year.

The Hunt Branch Library transformed into a vibrant destination, hosting youth camps, adult workshops, private celebrations, school partnerships and community events. Hunt Camp, held June 2024, and the sold-out Melodies & Makers Camp in August 2024 marked the first of many youth-focused programs. The library also served as the host site for two after-school conference week programs with Raymond Elementary and welcomed local private schools and daycares to special events such as Baby's First Rave and the Lunar New Year Celebration.

The City established a major partnership with the Fullerton School District, resulting in a \$50,000 agreement to operate a two-day afterschool program for Pacific Drive Elementary beginning March 2025 while also providing the District with meeting space on an as-needed basis. Internally, the facility hosted various City staff gatherings such as the employee health fair, movie night and appreciation luncheon.

The rental program steadily expanded since the first private event on August 10, 2024 and now averages at least two rentals per month. Hunt hosted its first wedding in March 2025 with three out of four Saturdays activated. April 2025 fully booked with programs or rentals each Saturday and a quinceañera vendor expo planned for May 31, 2025. Staff will host a wedding show to further promote the facility's rental potential.

Adult programming has flourished, with a monthly series offering activities like floral arranging, charcuterie board creation, piñata making, painting and cooking. Wellness and education-focused contract classes include yoga, English as a Second Language (ESL) and monthly sound baths. Weekly Family Storytime and K–8 drop-in tutoring—offered in partnership with Young Leaders of Orange County—have anchored library community engagement efforts. A few relocated programs underperformed and returned to their original sites. The lessons learned improved program alignment with the site audience.

The Hunt Branch Library hosted a wide range of family programs and special events throughout the year that drew strong attendance and reflected community enthusiasm for creative, inclusive programming. Highlights included Puptoberfest with over 600 attendees, Swiftie Summer Jam with 450 attendees and Breakfast with Santa, which welcomed nearly 200 families. Other notable events like Cinco de Mayo, Family Movie Night, Melodies and Makers Camp and Adventure Play Day brought the total attendance for special events to well over 1,600 participants. These offerings helped establish Hunt as a welcoming and reliable space for all-ages engagement.

Hunt offered ongoing weekly programs providing value to local families. "Artsy Wednesdays" featured hands-on art sessions tailored for different age groups—Artsy Tots, Kids, Teens, and Grown Ups—with more than 80 participants engaged across the series. Family Storytime, held weekly, represented one of the Hunt's most popular offerings, with attendance exceeding 350 participants throughout the year. Free tutoring for K–8 students was held weekly in partnership with Young Leaders of Orange County (YLOC), serving over 90 students. Signature programs like Baby's First Rave and Craftecito added creative flair to the calendar and offered opportunities for early childhood and cultural enrichment in a fun, interactive environment.

Extensive outreach supported this growth. Staff mailed promotional materials mailed to every business in Fullerton and has ongoing digital, print and email campaigns. A

promotional banner faces the train tracks to attract commuters and staff presented to groups like Rotary and P.E.O. to promote the library offerings.

Significant community and institutional investment made Hunt Branch Library possible. Renovation and reopening cost \$6,916,040, funded with \$5,639,000 from the California State Library, \$750,000 from the Fullerton Public Library Foundation and \$527,040 from USAC funding. This total included \$250,000 in programming support with \$125,000 allocated to the first year of activities and operations. The Foundation funded all library furniture, including event tables and chairs and provided critical matching funds for the California Building Forward grant. The Library Ad Hoc Committee contributed significantly to planning and reopening efforts.

Hunt Branch Library General Fund operating costs from April 2024 through March 2025 totaled approximately \$650,000, including \$311,442.17 staffing costs across both Parks and Recreation and Library departments and \$338,558.00 maintenance and support costs for custodial services, utilities, facility repairs and contracted security. \$72,755.44 General Fund revenue from rentals (\$50,175.00), programs (\$22,130.44) and donations (\$450.00) partially offset costs. Staff anticipates additional \$50,000 Fullerton School District partnership and \$125,000 in State programming grant funds revenue to bringing the total projected revenue to \$247,755.44. The net General Fund impact for the year will reduce to approximately \$402,244.56 after all funds received.

Staff adjusted operational practices in response to revenue trends to support ongoing cost recovery. Staffing levels at Hunt have remained lean due to lower-than-anticipated rental volume, helping to minimize personnel costs without impacting basic services. Staff limited discretionary spending wherever possible and delayed non-essential purchases unless supported directly by grant funding. These adjustments ensure the facility remains fiscally responsible while continuing to serve the community.

Staff presented the Hunt Branch Library: One Year in Review to the Parks and Recreation Commission on April 14, 2025. A public commenter asked about the budget and strategies for sustaining Hunt operational and programming costs over time. Staff informed the Commission of ongoing efforts to pursue additional partnerships, maximize rentals, seek sponsorships and apply for new grant opportunities to support future Hunt operations and help offset the General Fund impact. The Commission received the report and discussion as an informational item. Staff also presented the report to the Library Board of Trustees on April 24, 2025. The Board of Trustees expressed concerns with the financial sustainability of facility operations.

The Hunt Branch Library remains on track as one of Fullerton's most consistently activated and community-focused facilities with strong partnerships, growing attendance and intentional cost recovery through programming and rentals.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 - PowerPoint Presentation
- Attachment 2 - April 2024 to March 2025 Calendar

- Attachment 3 - April 2025 to December 2025 Calendar

cc: City Manager Eric J. Levitt