Memorandum

CITY OF DALLAS

DATE September 13, 2024

TO Honorable Chair and Members of the Quality of Life, Arts, and Culture Committee

SUBJECT **Proposed Elimination of the Hotspot and Laptop Loaning Program**

The purpose of this memo is to provide background information on the proposed elimination of the hotspot laptop lending program in the City Manager's Recommended Biennial Budget for FY 2024-25 and FY 2025-26. After careful consideration of the factors below, this cost reduction measure helps the Dallas Public Library to maintain its current level of service across the City and expanded hours across the system which were instituted in January 2024.

This program was selected based on several factors:

- Initial investment in wifi hotspot laptops was largely a response to the COVID-19 pandemic to promote internet access during a period in which library buildings were closed.
- While hotspot laptops do provide a temporary connection to the internet, 30-day loans of hotspot laptops are not a long-term solution for home internet service that would support remote work and/or online learning.
- The program cost is high compared to other services. For 1,800 hotspots, the total cost of the program is $619,920. This is higher than other proposed cuts to programming staff and entire branch staffing.
- Compared to other loanable materials the staff time required is intensive. More than any other type of material, these items are lost or returned with incomplete parts causing conflicts with the public for Library personnel.
- Ending the hotspot laptop program preserves in Library service where access to the internet can be accompanied by Library personnel that can assist with digital literacy skills