

The Seattle Public Library
Board of Trustees Meeting
12:00 p.m. Thursday, January 25, 2024

Washington Mutual Foundation Meeting Room 1, Level 4
1000 Fourth Ave., Seattle, WA 98104

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-To submit public comment in writing, email: library.board@spl.org.

-To provide public comment in person at the Central Library, sign up in the meeting room.

-To provide public comment remotely, join meeting with link above and enter your full name in Q&A.

Agenda

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

D. CONSENT

1. Minutes of October 17, 2023 Special Library Board Meeting
2. Minutes of December 14, 2023 Regular Library Board Meeting
3. November and December 2023 Finance Report

E. CHIEF LIBRARIAN REPORT

1. Chief Librarian Report
2. System Report
 - a. Community Resource and Social Services Update: Daniel Tilton, Assistant Managing Librarian, Quick Information Center; and Laura Harrington, Community Resource Specialist

F. OLD BUSINESS

1. Approved 2024 Operations Plan

G. NEW BUSINESS

1. 2022-2023 Library Race and Social Justice Initiative Report
2. Library Foundation and Friends of the Library Updates
3. Updates from Library Board Members

H. EXECUTIVE SESSION

I. ADJOURN

J. NEXT LIBRARY BOARD MEETING: February 29, 2024

(For more information, call Laura Gentry, head of the Communications Office, at 206-915-9028.)

Unapproved Board Minutes

Board of Trustees Special Meeting
The Seattle Public Library
October 17, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

A special meeting of The Seattle Public Library (SPL) Board of Trustees was held in PACCAR Meeting Room 6, Level 4, Central Library on October 17, 2023. Following technical equipment difficulties in connecting the consultant remotely, Library Board President Carmen Bendixen called the meeting to order at 1:20 p.m. Vice President W. Tali Hairston and trustees Jay Reich, Ron Chew, and Yazmin Mehdi were in attendance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as published.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion of Strategic Plan early draft

Executive Director and Chief Librarian Tom Fay said the strategic plan will look at a ten-year horizon timeline with three phases of roughly three years each: the first phase leading up to a levy in 2026, the second phase being post-levy and implementation, and the last three years being further iteration of the work as well as evaluation and preparing for a next levy in 2033. Strategic Planning consultant Greg Netzer from Territory Northwest said a lot of work has been done since he last presented to the Library Board. Mr. Netzer said he has done this type of work with dozens of organizations, and he finds the Library's process to be without precedent. He said a number of public-facing organizations say they want to get community input and have a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) lens over the project, and create a ground-up process; however, he said in the Library's plan, all three of those goals are real. He said the depth and rigor the Leadership Team, Core Team and Library staff are bringing to the project, and the scale of work in terms of connecting with the community with an eye toward DEIA that is present in the thinking, is without precedent in his experience. He said the commitment is exciting, while also making the project extraordinarily large, complex, and messy. He said the project is currently in the messy part.

Mr. Netzer said the Core Team met for a full day in July, following many months of community outreach including community interviews and focus groups and a staff survey. He said the team had an enormous amount of information to work with in July. Mr. Netzer said the team took a high level view of information from stakeholders to work on elements of a "theory of change" plan. He said the team focused on ways the Library wants to make an impact on the community. He said the team crafted impact statements which were grouped into focus areas during the meeting, and they discussed what outcomes the Library wants to see in the community to make impacts in the focus areas possible. Mr. Netzer said the team did a lot of work on the focus area of "Belonging." He said the team walked through the theory of change process to experience the work process together. He said sub-teams were then created from the Core Team and tasked with working asynchronously to do the same work with the other focus areas. Mr. Netzer said this inwardly-focused work has deepened in the past two months as the groups have been in conversation with one another and fellow staff members to understand the areas of resonance. He said the team has made its way halfway through the plan, and the draft is being shared with the Library Board at this meeting. He said the work has been complex, with many moving parts, and much of it has happened concurrently.

Mr. Netzer said an important secondary piece to the process has been a third party analyst, Práctica

Consulting, that has done qualitative analysis of the more than 600 pages of input from stakeholder engagement focus groups, interviews, and survey results. He said the analyst has a specifically and purposefully different lived experience than Mr. Netzer, and the analyst did a lot of work to develop ground-up understanding of arising themes and provided a very detailed report to the Core Team. He said the team took the information and cross referenced it over their work to determine if the Library was addressing the areas the stakeholders brought forward. Mr. Netzer said four sub-teams have been wrestling with an enormous amount of data and have examined themes, impacts, and outcomes to find where the intersections and resonances are, and where items show up in more than one focus area. He said the internal team and external consultants have lent depth to the work.

Mr. Netzer said an early draft of the plan will be made publicly available, and a public survey will be released on October 25. He said the survey has been translated into all 16 of the City of Seattle top tier languages. Mr. Netzer said the survey will be open for three weeks, after which the team will take a month to review the information and determine what issues the community may raise that are not yet addressed that may be relevant and actionable. He said the idea is to double-check against a broader set of input to make sure the Library is addressing as many relevant issues for its future as the community feels it should be. He said one more focus group would be held with the Library's union leadership and members to make sure they are also kept apprised and involved in the process.

Mr. Netzer said the next step will be to look at the activities the Library will undertake to create the outcomes it wants to see in the community that will lead to the impacts it hopes to create. He said there will be multiple rails of work happening concurrently with a process for cross-referencing the work. He said a huge piece of work will be prioritizing the many clear and critical ideas. He said this will be challenging as there are many important ideas arising. He said the team will have deep conversation to raise the right issues to make the right impacts within the determined timeframe.

Ms. Smith said the team would like to ask for reactions from the Library Board to the work and impact areas presented so far. Library Board Trustee Yazmin Mehdi said she felt the staffing column being called out separately was jarring and almost implies that staff have a different degree of importance than other stakeholders. She said the bullet points under staffing fit under the other impact columns. She said it would be important to be able to explain why it was called out. Mr. Fay said the group wrestled with whether staffing should be called out. He said one of the reasons it was is that much of the Library's equity and race and social justice work has not been funded or staffed. He said when the Library looks at how it would do the work in a more intentional way at a broader scale, the emphasis needs to be on having staffing. He said to do the work at scale, the Library would need 60 more staff. Mr. Fay said it is not a matter of converting staff, but is about getting the right types and diversity of staff from the community. He said to really focus and work in DEI, the Library has to create that sense of belonging and do things it hasn't always done, or done well. Mr. Fay said the Library is thinking about how it will recruit from community to serve community, and how it will support staff in those efforts. He said currently there are too few members of particular communities to serve the needs of those communities, and the Library is trying to be thoughtful and intentional about what it means to fully support a community it is going to work in. He said building the correct staffing goes beyond sheer numbers of people to institutional and cultural change and how the Library thinks about staffing in a true DEI model and approach. He said the team would continue to think about whether staffing needs to have its own position in the plan, or whether it could be better integrated throughout the whole plan.

Library Board President Carmen Bendixen said she is hearing that staffing is the foundation that goes into all of the pieces and underlies the work in all areas. Mr. Fay agreed. Library Board Trustee Ron Chew said staffing is a critical piece because it is a long term process to create change, particularly in

a publicly-funded institution. Mr. Chew said it is good that it is called out because it really is about having enough foresight to start the process and see it through. Library Board Vice President Tali Hairston asked Mr. Fay why staffing is not under ‘sustainable systems’ because staffing sustains everything else. Mr. Fay said it certainly could be; and it could be integrated in total, throughout each of the other columns. He said it could be under sustainability as a key pillar. Mr. Fay said the team is flexible and wants to make sure the Board is also able to communicate the plan to stakeholders.

Mr. Netzer said the last area the team added was sustainable systems. He said the plan will need its own support and system, and the plan needs to speak specifically to how to sustain the Library. He said the team created staffing as an area of focus before the sustainable systems piece was added, though it could be moved under sustainable systems. Mr. Netzer said so much of the plan is externally focused, the team felt there needed to be an element that was specifically internally focused, and staffing is the important internal piece to address. He said there was conversation about how to include staff in planning for the future because many are struggling to see where they fit into where the Library is going, and the team wants to include them in a very specific way. He said there are many forward-looking elements in the strategic plan that will have obvious impacts on how to staff the Library in the future, which could mean helping existing staff to adjust their skillsets and take on new roles, or looking for different kinds of people to fill some new roles the Library may need to create to do necessary work. Library Board Trustee Jay Reich said he agreed with Mr. Hairston. He said the first four columns are about what the Library is doing for the patrons and community, and staffing goes in another direction. He said staffing belongs, but doesn’t work in the current configuration. Mr. Fay said the plan could be organized to delineate between public facing and internal work. He said as the Library moves through the activities in each impact area, staffing will be called out in a number of ways in order to have the types of staff needed to do the work.

Ms. Mehdi said stakeholders include staff as well as underserved communities, and overserved communities, for lack of a better term. She said people who are not within the Library’s focus around DEI still need to see themselves in the Library’s plan. Mr. Fay said the plan speaks to all Library users while considering how to bring the elements to scale for communities that have been marginalized. He said it is a delicate balance to communicate the work and also communicate it from a levy perspective for the betterment of the community. He said the Library needs to provide services, without overserving, and also dedicate resources where they are most needed. Mr. Reich said staffing is about finding, employing, and retaining the right mix of professional staff at scale to deliver the work needed. Mr. Fay said staffing will be iterative based on programs and available funding. He said it will take time to create elements of the system that support staff in doing the work, which could be funding, time, or additional staff to assist with program capacity.

Ms. Mehdi said the word “sustainable” is used in the document with a different connotation than is widely used. She said the team should ensure sustainable is the right word and properly define it, as its current use doesn’t speak to being green or energy efficient, though she would like to see that included. Mr. Fay said sustainable may not be the best word choice. He said the topic includes stability of systems, succession planning, human resources interactions, and other elements that support capacity and continuity of work from a systems side. He said a possible term could be “systems thinking.” He said green elements would be shown in activities involving buildings, fleet management, and technologies.

Library Board Trustee Ron Chew said he feels the notion of agility is missing. He said the Library survived through the pandemic without foresight, but rather required on-the-spot thinking and creation of appropriate activities for carrying out the Library’s mission. He said there could be things coming that will require a pivot and shift, and asked if there is a way to put a placeholder for the

notion of agility. He said the Library will need flexibility in terms of human resources, buildings and programs. Mr. Fay said Mr. Chew had a great point. Mr. Fay said those elements fit into the “systems thinking” concept that provides support and allows the organization to sustain through a variety of issues with agility. He said the more systems the Library has that are tried and tested, the more agile it will be. Mr. Netzer offered the idea of “resilience” and said the term “resilience” or “resiliency” might be a way to frame a number of these elements. Ms. Mehdi said she liked that direction.

Ms. Smith said she appreciated the conversation around staffing, systems, and resiliency. She said the visual elements in the plan are a draft. She said the team is thinking about internal sustainability and staffing as twin pillars that hold up the other impact areas. She said staffing and system operations resiliency are required for any of the rest of the plan to work. Ms. Smith said in the July work session, Mr. Netzer mentioned the areas of financial systems and operational systems were a parking lot or placeholder to address later, and staffing was in a similar position. She said the theory of change model is very clear cut to visually map the areas of belonging, enrichment, literacy, and empowerment. She said internal system and staffing are more familiar as a traditional “pillar and planks” strategic plan, and the Library’s strategic plan will be a hybrid of both models. She said the team is working on how to represent the ideas and appreciates the conversation. Mr. Fay said the plan has to be a hybrid because the team is looking at it with the foresight element and thinking ten years out. He said the Library hasn’t done a strategic plan for a very long time, so it is creating that plan and also building muscle memory of how to do the work with evaluative components and actualizing the elements. He said staffing and systems limitations have hamstrung the Library.

Mr. Fay said the budget only covers what the Library is currently doing, and costs have gone up. He said though the Library has tried, it is not possible to do more with less. He said the organization has restructured seven times in a decade. Mr. Reich asked where looking at the resources necessary to create the Library of the future fits into the discussion. Mr. Fay said as the Library looks at activities to meet the public facing impacts it aspires to over ten years, it will prioritize those activities, which will provide a place to start. He said the Library will be able to determine which staff, skill sets, communities, dollars, and resources are needed to do the work programmatically and build systems. Mr. Fay said a good example is the Community Resource Specialist position that was created with good ideas, but without a full consideration of the support resources and funding that were needed. Mr. Reich said a narrative should be shared with the public that the Library has a resource deficit and current services are just covered. Mr. Fay said that will be an important piece and prioritization will be a critical first phase. He said it must be made very clear that to implement priority work to scale, the levy will need to pass to provide the staff, systems and technologies to support the work.

Mr. Hairston said a problem statement and claim that comes along with it are important, and need to be pronounced and obvious. Ms. Mehdi said the problem statement should address the General Fund in addition to a levy. She said the City would like the Library to take on more, and the Library is already doing things to support the City’s General Fund focus of social work to provide help and support to unhoused communities and others. Ms. Mehdi said the Library needs to be clear that this body of work is true General Fund work and does not belong in the Library Levy. Mr. Fay agreed and said safety and security should also be funded through the General Fund. Mr. Fay said the Library needs to solve for securing levy funds, General Funds, and private funding. He said he recently spoke with the Library Foundation’s Executive Director regarding a donor estate and the option of using it to grow the Foundation’s endowment. Mr. Fay said in ten years’ time, the Library will be a nearly quarter-billion-dollar organization, and the Foundation’s current support level of \$4 million will no longer be effectively supportive. He said it will be key for the Foundation to move to the next level as well so that everybody is driving toward more resources in all funding categories. Mr. Reich said no one wants a strategic plan that cannot be funded, so the Library must bring the ask

and the problem along with the plan and be practical in addition to being visionary. Ms. Mehdi said the Library should make it clear that it is already reorienting its efforts to meet the needs of the people who need help. Mr. Fay said other city departments also struggle with bringing the work to scale. He said the work looks like lip service if resources are not put behind it. Mr. Reich said the Library's strategic advantage is that it is quasi-independent, and it has terrific public support and public philanthropy. He said few other departments have that opportunity and asset.

Mr. Fay said once some of the work happens with success, the Library will see some federal and state dollars, which will create more capacity and greater success for the organization. He said the conversation needs to move past the suggestion that more can be done with less, and said it would take \$300 to 350 million in levy funds just to carry the current work. He said while levies look to be doubling or tripling, the numbers are actually just covering escalated costs that the City isn't able to apply from General Funds because of a 1% cap. Mr. Reich said the strategic plan is a political document, and the Library needs to make its case about the deficit and future planning needs. Mr. Fay said messaging needs to be done well because the strategic plan will come out at the same time that the organization will be facing budget cuts due to the City's deficit. Mr. Fay said the Library will need to craft speaking points to try to mitigate cuts, knowing that the levy will be critical to carry the work and do it at scale. Ms. Mehdi said it is partly the Library's job, but it is really the City's job to continue to work on figuring out how to address the 1% cap. She said it is the job of the City's elected officials and lobbyists as well as anyone working with the State Legislature. She said the idea that this is a political document is very important because the Library will not be able to sustain larger and larger levies while the percentage of General Fund support continues to decrease.

Mr. Fay said the City and County are both facing these issues. He said King County is the economic engine for the state, so the state will have to find solutions. He said it will be important to communicate that the Library is doing work in areas that should be funded. Ms. Mehdi said the Library can also leverage private philanthropy and the General Fund. Mr. Reich said there needs to be an understanding of the reality and the Library may need to look to options such as creating a ratio of funding between the General Fund, the levy, and private funding.

Ms. Mehdi said the Library Foundation Board is thinking about how they can help, and the Library should not ask the Foundation to pay for General Fund work. Mr. Fay said he would like to see ongoing costs, such as staffing, removed from Foundation support, even if it means moving it to the levy. He said if grants from the Foundation can be freed up, the Library will be able to do some innovative work. He said the Library will need to be okay, at times, with losing some programming and people will speak up for needed support. Ms. Bendixen asked whether the Board will get into prioritization if the Library needs to make cuts. Mr. Fay said they would. Mr. Fay said as the team works through the activities that will help meet the Library's aspirational impacts, the activities will need to be prioritized to determine what will be kept and what will be let go. Mr. Fay said that could apply to lines of business or even locations. Mr. Fay said planning will be done around prioritization of activities and resources, but as the Library moves to implementation and actualizing the plan, in order to move in some new directions, some old elements will need to stop. He said the Library cannot assume it can continue to do everything. Ms. Bendixen said everything cannot be a priority. Mr. Reich asked when the hard decisions will be made. Mr. Fay said hard decisions will be made as the Library goes through the process of implementing the plan. Ms. Bendixen said it will not all be in the plan. Mr. Fay agreed and said as the Library moves through the strategic plan, it will encounter budget cuts, levy issues, competing levies, and other unknowns that mean the plan has to be dynamic and iterative to respond. He said the Library's impact areas and outcomes will stay roughly the same, but there may be hard decisions to make around activities, resources, and reallocations.

Ms. Smith said she wanted to move the discussion to focus on the process of identifying the different impact statements, the outcomes, and drafting the activities and incorporating the qualitative analysis into that, which also gives a visual of one way of prioritizing. Mr. Netzer said the diligent use of community input and feedback will be the proof that makes the argument for the plan going forward, because the elements of the plan were asked for and supported and guided by community voice. Ms. Smith said at the July retreat, the Core Team walked through the impact of “Belonging” together and used it as a template for the theory of change work. She said the group worked through the impact statement, outcomes, and potential activities for the idea of belonging, and then the subgroups followed with work in smaller groups on the impact areas of Staffing, Empowerment, Enrichment, and Literacy. Ms. Smith discussed the team’s process of working with high level feedback gathered from focus groups and surveys to determine outcomes, priority outcomes, and activities. She said her role was to coordinate the impact workgroups to work together and on their own, to critique each other, and to look across other impact areas to see where their impacts are also supported.

Director of Institutional and Strategic Advancement Rick Sheridan said he was in the subgroup that focused on Literacy. He discussed the method by which the Literacy subgroup used high level community feedback to develop an impact statement. He said the team expanded the definition of literacy so that it captured literacy for reading and reading for enjoyment, as well as digital literacy systems and skills such as accessing medical records online or understanding how to access government services online. Mr. Sheridan said the team mapped the external consultant’s report against the outcomes to confirm that comments from stakeholders are directly matched with outcomes and represented in the work. He said there is a nice alignment between the team’s work and stakeholder feedback. He said the team is now working on developing activities to support the outcomes, and the last step will be to map across the impact areas to ensure alignment within the impact areas and specific outcomes. Answering a question from Ms. Bendixen, he said all pieces of stakeholder input regarding literacy were reflected in the work. Mr. Fay said he appreciates the broadening of Literacy to include systems such as navigating government resources, and that expanding the concept of literacy is important. Mr. Sheridan said as SPL considers the next levy, it should be thinking about what literacy elements provide value to impact the lives of the community.

Ms. Smith said the group also worked on Empowerment which focuses on creating empowerment and confidence to have opportunities to pursue current and future pathways. She said the group developed outcomes that also map back to the other impact areas, such as activities where people develop skills for financial literacy, and where people have tools and resources to make critical decisions throughout their lives. She said throughout the document, the different impact areas are represented across the entire system. Ms. Smith referred to an earlier question of whether any of the feedback did not fit; she said the team ensured that all of the information that was provided from the qualitative analysis was considered, and there was a place for every comment to be represented. Ms. Smith said during the qualitative analysis, the analyst reviewed all feedback received and tagged each comment in relation to impacts. She said the values of “curiosity, care and connection” were also evaluated and comments were tagged with a corresponding value. She said all of the impact work groups looked at grounded theory analysis results to figure out where community statements best fit.

Ms. Smith said a subgroup also looked at Enrichment. She said Enrichment was similar to the Belonging impact area that was worked through in the July retreat. She said the group walked through the Enrichment impact area to practice “scissor and sort” and “grounded theory” methods to check their biases and do self-reflection, if needed, to align where the group thought it was going with where the community is telling the Library to go. She said the group used a prioritization process to identify comments that arose most frequently. She said these included the idea of resisting

all forms of censorship; having a collection that reflects the diverse interests and needs of Seattle's diverse cultures and communities; as well as many comments regarding capacity building, engaging with youth, and innovative alternative uses for the Library within the impact, across outcomes, and also across impacts that support multiple outcomes. She said the group pressure tested their work to determine if the work products based on community feedback had changed the team's thinking about the impact outcomes or activities. She said the group considered where core services such as books, facilities, and staffing integrate into the work and move the Library toward identified outcomes. Ms. Smith said the work groups were asked to incorporate the community voice by reviewing the impact mural boards and identifying input in other impacts that also supports their own impact or outcomes. She said part of the prioritization process is assessing which activities correspond with multiple impact areas and noting that these activities rise as priorities because they support multiple outcomes across multiple impacts. Ms. Smith said priorities would be weighed against what the Library is currently doing, and would undergo another round of prioritization.

Ms. Smith said the process discussed in the meeting thus far had considered the "community voice" which is information received from community organizations and partners that were part of focus groups and interviews. She said another process is being done to consider input from the "internal voice," which comes from Library leadership, City leadership, leadership from the Library Foundation and Friends, and 202 individual staff member responses to the staff survey. She said the external qualitative analyst was brought on to review the large amount data without internal bias.

Ms. Smith said an area of "sustainable systems and sustainability" was considered the "parking lot." She said this area was not called out and would not have an impact work group until the other areas were worked through. She said she, Mr. Fay, Mr. Sheridan, and Head of Finance Nick Merkner reviewed community feedback about areas relating to systems sustainability or resiliency. She said they grouped comments from the community by themes and developed outcome statements based on the comments. She read the outcome statement, "The Seattle Public Library increases public perception of the role and importance of public libraries, and it provides evidence of resiliency against political and social pressures." Ms. Smith suggested adding 'financial' to political and social pressures. Ms. Smith said the statement may need to be elevated and be rewritten as the impact statement, rather than an outcome. She said if the idea were turned into an impact statement, the rest of it would flow really nicely and provide the opportunity to make the connection with staffing, and to be more specific about the importance of resiliency and financial and operational systems as the foundation the Library needs to build from. Ms. Mehdi said the idea of sustainable systems is actually providing resiliency in the systems themselves, with the element of actual resiliency. Mr. Reich said despite the Library's resiliency and creativity, it is doing a lot with not enough. He said when talking about a levy, it must include a problem statement. He said the Library will need resiliency and resources to respond to stressors. Ms. Smith said the different themes that arose in the resiliency and systems sustainability are were: ADA accessibility; capital improvements and facilities; data driven decision making; and belonging, staffing, and capacity building. She said there is a lot of information here, and if the team wanted to fold in staffing, it would be easy to subsume it into this impact area. She said other themes included: partnerships; relational culture with community based organizations and government entities; resiliency; safety and security which is a complex and core piece that doesn't fit anywhere as well as it fits within the resiliency area.

Ms. Smith asked the Board if they had any questions about the process, or anything they feel needs to be addressed going into the next iteration of the draft. Ms. Mehdi asked what value the third party analyst provided that was different than the team's process. Mr. Fay said the consultant removed organizational bias, and that as someone who was not vested in the organization, their only

investment was to the impact areas and the information that was actually communicated by the stakeholders. He said the process was a grounding to determine what was reflected or not reflected in the community voice. He said this is the first time he has been involved in a process where they attempted to remove the bias as much as possible by having an external qualitative component. Mr. Fay said Mr. Hairston was interested in knowing the macro elements for the communication points for what the Library is trying to solve, and where those are reflected in the qualitative analysis. Mr. Fay said that information will be seen in input from the public stakeholder voice as well as the internal voice. He said the qualitative analyst was able to parse all of the information to make it visible. Ms. Smith said that the analyst is adept at qualitative analysis for strategic planning. She said the analyst used all of the feedback transcripts and categorized the input as if she were writing a strategic plan. Ms. Smith said her skillset was above and beyond the proposal requirements. She said the analysis benefitted from her background as a social worker, so that when she did the qualitative analysis and grounded theory and looked at the data to determine key insights, she could also elevate anything that addressed vulnerable groups or causes of harm, or note issues of importance. Mr. Fay said a major benefit is the removal of bias; he said the other elements Ms. Smith spoke of aid in prioritization. Mr. Fay said the analyst had capacity the team doesn't have to review an enormous amount of data. Ms. Smith said having one analyst review the entire data set provided consistency. Mr. Fay said the value add was multidimensional and the Library would put together a couple of speaking points on it for the Board. He said there was additional cost for the analysis, but it helped in terms of time and capacity.

Ms. Mehdi said she noticed recursiveness across impact areas and now understands that is purposeful and important to the process. Mr. Fay said it allows comparison across impact areas for prioritization and potentially to show where there may be capacity. Ms. Mehdi said there would also be opportunity to see if there are any "stop/harmful" elements represented across impact areas.

Ms. Smith said the team is now at the beginning of prioritization and activity drafting. Mr. Fay said part of the exercise is to make sure the activities are measureable. Ms. Mehdi asked, when looking at youth reading abilities, how one would measure the Library's impact versus the school district's. Mr. Fay said some of the areas are aspirational and will tie to partnerships or data sharing.

Mr. Fay said the Library would be looking at this information again at the All Boards meeting in November, framed a bit differently, and using Mentimeter surveys and points for engagement. Mr. Fay said there has been a great deal of work put into the project at this point by a large number of people including the Core Team, community, stakeholders, and staff voices. He said team members have had to be hyper-focused on this project and also carry out their day jobs as supervisors, managers, and staff. Ms. Smith said part of her role has been to coordinate work groups and keep the project going; she said every group included her in all of their meetings, so she has been able to make sure connections are noted between groups and the Core Team is able to provide feedback. She said the project to date has been a huge lift with good work from many people. Mr. Fay said as the project moves into implementation, having had Ms. Smith involved in all of the meetings and discussions and able to debrief on it all will make the work stronger. He said as all of the Core Team members have crossed pollinated in the work, they will be stronger as they go out with their teams and move the work to implementation. Mr. Fay said there was a recent article in the newspaper about this process, and the Library has had many inquiries since then. He said Ms. Smith will be presenting at an Urban Libraries Council conference with Laura Schlehuder from the Houston Foresight Group. He said it speaks volumes that there is so much interest from colleagues across the country.

Answering a question from Mr. Reich, Mr. Fay said the Board would see more of the work in November as the team works through activities. He said it will be a good opportunity to think about

how to make successful impacts that serve distinct needs. He said one of the things the Library is trying to accomplish through a hub mentality is not having to always be the one who provides the service, but being able to convene, leverage, and create greater networks of support amongst all of those trying make impacts to move the needle instead of competing for resources. Mr. Chew said there may be opportunities to shift resources from physical structures to programs that aren't necessarily facility-based. Mr. Fay said the Library will be looking at what it wants to do and what value is it getting from its physical investments. He said there are some hard conversations to be had, especially if the Library is going to do a capital campaign. He said the Library will need to think about the best uses for its spaces that serve the varied needs of the community. He said there are many things the Library can do to provide library services in spaces, but challenges will be in communicating, and in how the community sees itself in the changes.

Ms. Smith said once priority activities are identified, the team will need to identify resources, including time, staff, financial, and physical resources that get the Library to the impacts. She said the team will need to determine measurements for the activities toward their outcomes. She asked the Board to think about what types of resourcing the Library should consider in the future.

Ms. Smith said at the end of the month, the team will be releasing an updated draft of the strategic plan on the public website as well as releasing a public survey in all top tier languages. She said the survey contains targeted and direct questions to understand reactions to impact statements, outcomes, and how people use the Library. She said the survey is another pressure test to determine if the direction the team is headed is the same direction the public is saying it wants. She asked the Board to provide feedback on the draft plan to Mr. Fay by November 15 so that feedback can be incorporated with the results of the survey and with results of the final focus group. She said the team would bring the plan back to the Board for review late in the year. Ms. Mehdi asked Mr. Fay to send the survey link to the Library Board so that they may share it with others. Mr. Fay said the Board will likely vote on the strategic plan in their January meeting, if the work schedule continues to plan.

Mr. Reich asked about the rollout plan. Mr. Fay said the rollout plan will be developed by Mr. Sheridan's team and will use SPL communications, website, and marketing team and work with the Seattle Times and others to let the community know about it and weigh in. Ms. Mehdi suggested holding a series of workshops for unveiling the plan to the public and connecting it to the pre-levy effort. Mr. Fay said once the activities and priorities come together, there will be the opportunity to let the public and legislators know what the Library is working on as it works to develop capital funds and other funds to support libraries. Mr. Reich said the Library Foundation also has an interest in sharing. Mr. Fay agreed and said the Foundation will begin their own strategic planning process in January, and will use the Library's strategic plan as a basis for their own. Ms. Mehdi said the Friends also want to build on what the Library has developed. She said former City Librarian Deborah Jacobs held "hopes and dreams" meetings prior to the 'Libraries For All' levy in every community in the city, and the process helped to build momentum and grassroots support for the levy. She said SPL might consider doing a similar process within the context of this strategic plan. Mr. Fay said there will be moments where the Library will want to do something similar to build collaborative programming or move toward a capital bond. He said sessions will need to be held at different levels in the organization depending on the programmatic or service component the Library is trying to work through.

ADJOURN

Board President Carmen Bendixen adjourned the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

Unapproved Board Minutes

Board of Trustees Meeting
The Seattle Public Library
December 14, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of The Seattle Public Library (SPL) Board of Trustees was held on December 14, 2023. Library Board President Carmen Bendixen called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m. Vice President Tali Hairston and trustees Jay Reich, Ron Chew, and Yazmin Mehdi were in attendance. The meeting was conducted with a remote attendance option via video conference.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda as published;
the motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment was accepted via email, in person at the Central Library, and online in the remote meeting. There were no public comments.

CONSENT

It was moved and seconded to approve the consent agenda as
published; the motion carried unanimously.

CHIEF LIBRARIAN REPORT

Chief Librarian Report

Mr. Fay introduced the Library's new Director of Administrative Services, Rob Gannon. He said Rob joined the Library with previous experience at Seattle Public Schools, as well as having been the General Manager at King County Metro. Mr. Gannon said he is excited to be at the Library. He said after two and a half days, he is meeting lots of people, becoming familiar with the organization, learning the span of duties in his position, and learning about the Library's services and how it supports the community. He said he looks forward to meeting the trustees in person. He said he has worked in public service for many years and couldn't be happier to be at the Library. He thanked Mr. Fay for the opportunity and said he looks forward to working with the trustees and Library in the days, months, and years to come.

Mr. Fay said the Foundation raised \$83,000 against a goal of \$80,000 on Library Giving Day, November 28. He said they received gifts from 840 donors this year, compared with 743 in 2022, which is a 13% increase in donors. He said the Foundation had already met and exceeded its 2023 overall fundraising goal through November, having raised \$4.9 million against a goal of \$3.05 million, after receiving bequests that bumped the number higher than the goal. Mr. Fay thanked the Foundation team for their hard work in developing relationships with donors and undertaking efforts like Giving Tuesday. He offered kudos to Executive Director Jonna Ward, Deputy Executive Director Brian Lawrence, and the entire Foundation staff team.

Mr. Fay said he and Head of Communications Laura Gentry presented the Library's 2022-2023 RSJI report to the City Council's Public Assets and Homelessness Committee. He said the committee was appreciative and Committee Chair Lewis gave the Library kudos on its work in efforts with race and social justice and equity. Mr. Fay said the Library will be sharing this presentation with the Library Board at their January meeting.

Mr. Fay said he and Strategy and Policy Advisor Jessica Smith have continued visits to the Library's regional branches. He said they visited a number of branches in the Northeast Region

most recently and met with staff. He said he will join Mr. Gannon in additional tours. Mr. Fay said there has been a 4% vacancy rolling through the course of a year, and branch visits give him the opportunity to engage and meet many new staff members.

Mr. Fay thanked the Employee Engagement Committee and members of the Human Resources division who put on a “Tacos at Twilight” staff event at the Northgate Branch. He said many staff attended the fun event and he offered kudos to the Employee Engagement Committee for their work. Mr. Fay said the Library has hired Brian Sharkey as the new Director of Human Resources, and Mr. Sharkey will be introduced to the Board in the January meeting.

Mr. Fay said this month’s “Library at a Glance” report contains interesting information from the Library to Business group, as well as a report from Safety and Security Services with great information about how the team has worked to reduce youth exclusions nearly to zero. He said there is also a Downtown Region weekly report that provides good information on some of their work. Library Board Trustee Jay Reich said he also wanted to highlight the report on the dramatic decline in excluded youth. He said the issue was subject to some journalistic investigations several years ago, and this is extraordinary improvement. Mr. Reich asked the status of the Library’s Rules of Conduct review. Mr. Fay said that work is in progress and an update will be brought to the Board in second quarter 2024. He said the review has gone through a very extensive process involving the community at all age levels. Mr. Fay said the process has included a youth advisory group and a variety of lived-experience folks across multiple sectors, as well as a consultant to help guide the Library through the project, in addition to using a racial equity toolkit with racial equity outcomes designed into it from the beginning. Mr. Fay said the team has done a great job. He said the project should wrap up near the end of the first quarter and come to the Board for approval in the second quarter. He commended the Library’s security officers and branch staff who really focused on escalation and looked at barriers to youth being successful in the spaces. He said the team has worked with Capital Improvement Program staff to consider modifying spaces to make areas available for patrons to eat in every location, which decreases conflict stemming from hungry kids coming to the Library after school and not being able to eat without violating rules. He said the team has used a similar approach to consider behavioral issues and how the Library can help people be successful in meeting their needs. He said the result has been impressive compared to youth exclusion numbers in 2017 and 2018. Mr. Reich congratulated the Library and staff on the good work, and also for the realization that rather than a change in conduct, a solution could be found through a change in philosophy and attitude.

Regarding the report on Library to Business programming, Mr. Reich asked where the lawyers come from who participate in the programs, whether local lawyers have an opportunity to do pro bono work, and whether there is a further need for lawyers. Mr. Fay said there is always a need. He said the Library receives help from a variety of sources including immigration lawyers who also help with work in the area of citizenship. Mr. Fay said the Library is fortunate to have partnerships with other community based organizations who often have relationships attorneys. He said it became apparent during COVID when aid dollars were being distributed that equity was lacking. He said many businesses suffered during that period without the means to know and understand what was being offered and with no legal expertise to assist. Mr. Fay said that for startups or expansions, legal advice is a huge help. He said taking a ‘mom and pop’ business and turning it into an LLC can be complicated and attorneys’ pro bono work to help is appreciated tremendously. He said the work betters the community and creates opportunities that wouldn’t exist otherwise. Mr. Reich agreed and gave kudos to the staff working on this important program.

NEW BUSINESS

Draft 2024 Operations Plan

Head of Finance and Accounting Nick Merkner said minor revisions had been made to the Operations Plan following discussions with the City Budget Office the day before. Mr. Merkner

said changes are related to the section that covers City Council budget actions for the Seattle City Employees Retirement System (SCERS) in alignment the SCERS Board of Administration's recommendation. He said the budget authority will be reduced by approximately \$39,000 in the adopted budget, and Mr. Merkner will be working with the City Budget Office to add those resources back as part of an early year supplemental. Mr. Merkner said the changes in the plan that will be reflected in the revised version for the public had been emailed to the Library Board.

Mr. Merkner said on page 5 of the Operations Plan, the personnel totals on the table following Figure 2 have been revised to reflect this slightly lower number. He said on page 6 of the plan, Figure 3 shows the Operations Plan by funding source, and the figures have been revised to show a reduction by approximately \$39,000. He said on page 8 of the plan, a table at the top of the page shows the levy breakdown by service priority; he said these numbers were rebalanced slightly across the board as well, in consideration of this.

Mr. Merkner said on Attachment 1 of the plan, the projected budget savings and subsequent totals were revised accordingly, and the same adjustments were applied in Attachments 2 and 5. Mr. Merkner said these changes noted verbally in the meeting today will be represented in the final version that is published to the public, which is the version the Library Board will vote on today.

Mr. Merkner said the Library budget, across all funding sources, including private gift and grant support, is approximately \$102.2 million for 2024. He said this is made up of \$90.1 million in operating and \$5.9 million in capital budget appropriations for the Library. He said grants approved by the Foundation Board of Directors and other Library gifts total approximately \$6.2 million. He said the purpose of the Operations Plan is to present a picture of the Library's planned spending over the coming year covering all of these different funding sources. He said the document represents the Library Board's adopted budget and functions as the Library's guiding financial document for operations for the next year.

Mr. Merkner said he wanted to call out revisions made to the final version of the plan based on the Board's feedback in their November meeting. He said Finance staff revised the memo and opening to provide more information on the purpose of the Operations Plan. He said staff took a look at the economic tone that was included in the plan and made some updates. He said staff specifically called out the Strategic Plan under the Opportunities section, and also made reference to it in Section 1 under the Priority section. He said staff updated the language in the General Fund section based on feedback received from Mr. Reich. Mr. Merkner said staff revised the section on separation and retirement payouts to be more explicit that this refers to accrued vacation and sick leave payouts. He said staff updated the section on the aging building portfolio risk and included more information as it relates to macro level risks for the portfolio. Mr. Merkner asked the Board if they had questions or areas needing more information.

Mr. Reich congratulated Mr. Merkner on a great job. He said he would have liked to see a black-lined version, but he was able to find the changes, and he appreciated the wordsmithing. Mr. Reich said the document is a transparent picture of the Library's financial situation and is good reading for anyone who wants to know how the Library spends its money. Mr. Merkner said it was a great point about providing more of a crosswalk between changes from version to version, and he would note that for future years. Library Board Trustee Yazmin Mehdi said she appreciated more detail added to information on payouts related to retirements and separations. She said Finance staff reacted to everything the Library Board spoke about at the last meeting, and she would also appreciate a crosswalk of changes to refer to in the future. Mr. Fay said the Library would provide a tracked-changes version as well as the final version next time.

Library Board Vice President Tali Hairston said he is interested in how the economic forecast might have adjusted the 2024 Operations Plan, if at all. Mr. Merkner said the City adhered to a biennial budget this cycle. He said when the Library developed the budget, they did it for 2023

and 2024. He said they will be embarking on the 2025-2026 biennium coming up in the next couple of weeks. Mr. Merkner said when the 2024 budget was included with the initial biennium, it was essentially balanced, and as part of that balance, the Library agreed to redeploy some Library accumulated savings to help offset reductions that would have otherwise occurred. He said when the City Council adopted their 2024 budget, it was at the balanced level, meaning that departments were not asked to make any additional reductions above or beyond what had been previously endorsed. Mr. Merkner said the Economy and Revenue section of the Operations Plan notes that growth has been slow and a bit more flat-lined. He said while things stayed level for 2024, the City's latest projections for 2025-2026 are for a \$251 million deficit for the 2025 fiscal year, which is staggering and significant. Mr. Merkner said it is definitely a challenge that the Library and other City departments will be navigating as they embark on the next leg of the budget process.

Mr. Merkner said it should be made clear that the Library Board is voting on the 2024 Operations Plan as discussed, with changes made from the draft version appearing in the meeting packet.

It was moved and seconded to approve the 2024 Operations Plan as revised; the motion carried unanimously.

Election of 2024 Library Board Officers

Ms. Bendixen said protocol has been for Library Board officers to serve two year terms, while the chief librarian is traditionally nominated as secretary.

It was moved and seconded to nominate Tali Hairston to serve as board president, Yazmin Mehdi to serve as board vice president, and the chief librarian to serve as secretary in 2024; the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Reich asked when the new officers take effect. Mr. Fay said the new roles start in January. Ms. Bendixen said this would be her last Board meeting as president, and Mr. Hairston would assume that role in the January meeting. Mr. Reich thanked Ms. Bendixen for her terrific work and great job running smooth meetings. He said he appreciated all of the enthusiasm and love for the Library that her leadership has shown. Mr. Fay said he would like to acknowledge Ms. Bendixen's leadership as well. He said when Ms. Bendixen stepped into the role, the Library was coming out of COVID and had a lot of work and issues constantly in front of it. He said he appreciated Ms. Bendixen's availability and work with the Library on some pretty tough decisions that were made in that time frame. Mr. Fay thanked Ms. Bendixen for her leadership, which has been most certainly appreciated. Ms. Bendixen thanked Mr. Reich and Mr. Fay for their acknowledgement. She said the role has been fun and interesting, and for someone who usually prefers the background to the spotlight, it has been a learning experience in a great way.

Library Board 2024 Friends/Foundation Liaisons

Ms. Bendixen said the Library Board needs to choose liaisons to attend meetings of the Friends and Foundation boards in 2024. Library Board Trustee Ron Chew asked about the Friends Board's meeting schedule. Mr. Fay said the Friends Board would have a more static meeting schedule in 2024, as opposed to a very dynamic schedule in 2023. Mr. Chew said he would be happy to serve as liaison if there is a predictable schedule. Executive Assistant Amy Lawson said the Friends Board would be meeting on the third Tuesday of every month; at 5:00 p.m. in odd-numbered months, and at 9:00 a.m. in even-numbered months. Ms. Lawson said the Foundation Board will meet the second Wednesday of the month from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Mr. Chew said the Foundation schedule works better for him and asked if meetings are hybrid or remote. Ms. Lawson said they are. Ms. Mehdi said she enjoyed attending Friends Board meetings this year and would be happy to continue. Ms. Lawson said she misspoke, and the Foundation Board is meeting again in person at the Central Library, while the Friends Board will meet remotely. Mr.

Fay said the Foundation will also have links for remote attendance. Mr. Reich and Ms. Bendixen each said they are happy to attend as a backup if Mr. Chew or Ms. Mehdi are unable to attend a meeting of either board.

Updates from Library Board Members

Mr. Chew said he recently bumped into former Library Board Trustee Theresa Fujiwara at the Beacon Hill Branch. He said she appreciated her time served on the Library Board and she mentioned that she had not yet received her service gift since she departed during the pandemic and the opportunity to present the gift at a meeting had not happened. Mr. Chew said he connected with Mr. Fay and Ms. Lawson. He said that Mr. Fay and Mr. Chew would be taking Ms. Fujiwara to lunch in January to thank her for her service and give her the gift. Mr. Chew said Ms. Fujiwara is still on the sidelines cheering on the Library, and she appreciates all of the work that is happening. Mr. Fay thanked Mr. Chew for bringing the issue to the Library's attention. Mr. Hairston said he also works with Ms. Fujiwara on a project and they speak frequently.

Mr. Fay said he had received a text during the meeting from Assistant Director of Equity Learning and Engagement Services Valerie Garrett-Turner, related to Mr. Reich's earlier question about pro bono attorneys for the Library to Business program. He said Ms. Garrett-Turner said that the University of Washington Law School is the Library's biggest connector for volunteer lawyers. Mr. Fay thanked the UW Law School and said there are also attorneys participating who represent a number of firms from throughout the city.

ADJOURN

Board President Carmen Bendixen adjourned the meeting at 12:42 p.m.



The Seattle Public Library

Memorandum

Date: January 25, 2024

To: The Seattle Public Library Board of Trustees

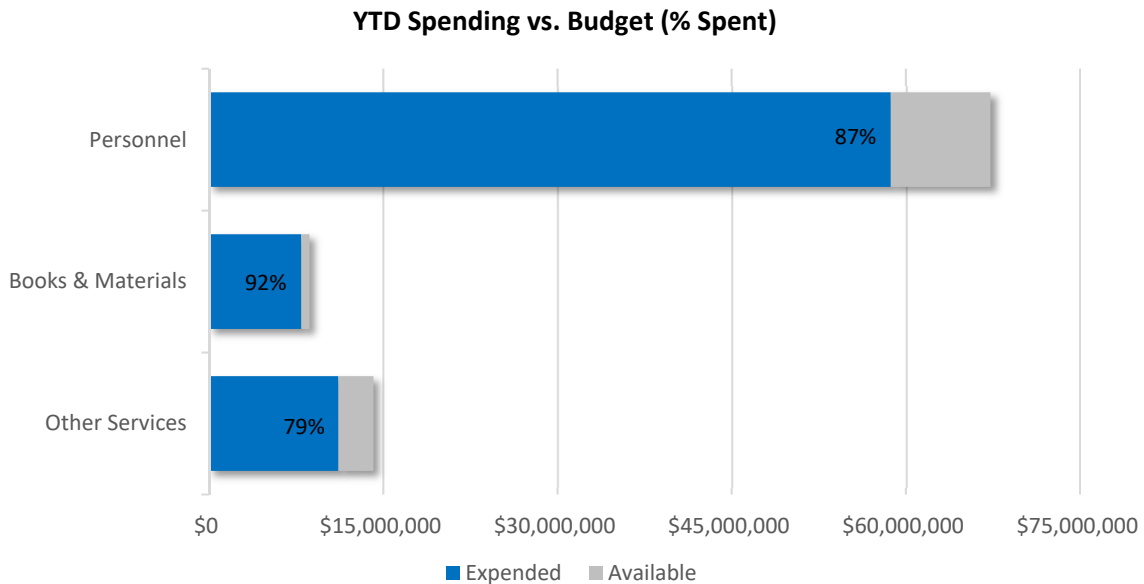
From: Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian
Rob Gannon, Director of Administrative Services
Nicholas Merkner, Head of Finance and Accounting

Subject: **November 2023 Financial Reporting**

Overview

Overall, the Library has expended **86%** of its operating budget with **92%** of the year elapsed. This is well ahead of the prior year when the Library had expended **82%** of the operating budget at this point in the year. Total expenditures at the end of the month were \$77.8 million.

The chart below provides a high level overview of year-to-date spending by budget group, and also helps to illustrate relative sizes within the Library's operating budget.



Personnel Services

Personnel costs represent the largest category of expenses at the Library and make up 75% of the revised operating budget. As of this report there have been **24 pay periods processed**, so we expect 90% of the personnel budget to be expended—spending is slightly behind target at **87%**.

Non-Personnel Services

The largest individual category of expenditures within the non-personnel budget is related to library books and materials—this category represents 9% of the revised operating budget. Spending is as expected at **92%**.

Other accounts which represent 16% of the adopted budget—and include equipment, services, and supplies—are **79%** expended.

Revenues

Library generated revenues collected during the period under review are **\$55,000**—bringing year-to-date collection to **\$709,000 (121%** of our target).

As has been noted on previous reports—but is still important to identify from a longitudinal stability perspective—the Library’s 2023 revenue budget of \$584,000 is \$282,000 short of the Library’s pre-COVID revenues of \$866,000. This \$282,000 delta has been funded through use of accumulated Library Fund Balance. This means any excess revenue collection during Q4 will directly offset use of Fund Balance, preserving it for use in upcoming budget periods.

Action Requested: Library Board consideration of November 2023 Operating Budget financial reporting for approval at January 25, 2024 meeting. Comments or feedback are welcome.

Expenditure Control for November 2023

Amounts in \$1,000s	Revised Budget*	Current Month Expenditures	Year to Date Expenditures	% Expend	Balance of Budget
Personnel Services					
Salaries	43,632	3,171	37,918	87%	5,714
Benefits	23,659	1,879	20,793	88%	2,866
Personnel Services Sub-Total	\$67,291	\$5,050	\$58,712	87%	\$8,580
Books and Library Materials					
Books & Materials	8,651	800	7,942	92%	709
Books and Library Materials Sub-Total	\$8,651	\$800	\$7,942	92%	\$709
Other Services and Charges					
Central Costs	2,814	167	2,508	89%	307
Equipment - IT & Facilities	2,709	414	2,243	83%	466
Office Supplies, Printing & Postage	314	22	227	72%	88
Operating Supplies	509	77	476	94%	33
Other Expenses	743	45	394	53%	349
Other Maintenance	773	31	598	77%	175
Phone, Wireless & Internet	546	6	356	65%	190
Professional Services	764	43	624	82%	141
Software	857	33	548	64%	309
Staff Training & Travel	334	6	102	30%	232
Vehicle Costs	280	23	314	112% (A)	(35)
Facilities - Space Rental & Utilities	1,768	92	1,684	95%	84
Facilities - Building & Grounds Maint	1,303	135	689	53%	615
Facilities - Garage Debt Service	450	-	386	86%	64
Other Services and Charges Sub-Total	\$14,165	\$1,094	\$11,148	79%	\$3,018
TOTAL LIBRARY OPERATING BUDGET	\$90,108	\$6,944	\$77,802	86%	\$12,306

Footnotes:

* Includes \$1.2M in prior year encumbrance and grant budget authority; \$838k in legislated carry-forward and mid-year supplemental authority

(A) Overspending related to this category to be covered by cumulative underspending in other areas of the Library's budget

Revenue Control for November 2023

	Revenue Budget	Current Month Revenue	Year to Date Revenue Collected	% Collected
Operations Plan Other Library Revenue				
Lost Material Fees	110,000	8,312	110,244	100%
Central Library Parking Garage Fees	240,000	25,133	313,602	131%
Copy Services/Pay for Print	110,000	7,198	93,010	85%
Space Rental (Private & Inter-Departmental)	76,050	9,598	120,538	158%
Book Sale Consignment	45,000	4,501	63,099	140%
Coffee Cart & Miscellaneous (vending machines, etc.)	3,000	108	8,190	273%
TOTAL LIBRARY GENERATED REVENUES				
	\$584,050	\$54,850	\$708,683	121%

Footnotes:

The Library's 2023 revenue budget of \$584k is \$282k below pre-COVID revenues (\$866k)



The Seattle Public Library

Date: January 25, 2024
To: Library Board of Trustees
From: Tom Fay, Executive Director and Chief Librarian
Re: January 2024 Chief Librarian's Report


1. On December 19, I participated in virtual program called "Libraries Lead the Way." The moderated panel brought together leaders from all five public libraries participating in the Books Unbanned program. Library directors Nick Higgins (Brooklyn), Misty Jones (San Diego), Skye Patrick (Los Angeles County), David Leonard (Boston) and I discussed the role libraries play in safeguarding intellectual freedom. The program covered why book bans are so concerning, why it is such an important issue right now, why libraries don't stay neutral on the issue, how libraries choose materials, and responses participating libraries are seeing to the Books Unbanned project. The program was targeted to public library foundations to help spread education and awareness and build support for this important work.
2. On January 9, I spoke at the Ballard Rotary Club's lunch meeting. I spoke to an engaged group of community contributors about the Library's strategic planning process underway; our seismic retrofit projects at the Green Lake, University, and Columbia branches; the Books Unbanned program; the Library's expanded digital newspaper access; and upcoming events and programs. The Ballard Rotary has been a generous contributor to The Seattle Public Library, supporting our Global Reading Challenge Program for 18 years.
3. Community Partnerships and Government Relations Program Manager Kiersten Nelson has led the Library's effort to connect with new members of Seattle City Council. We reached out to offer congratulations to all incoming councilmembers and have begun to set up initial meetings. On January 11, I had my first meet and greet with Councilmember Maritza Rivera. I appreciated the opportunity to connect with Councilmember Rivera and begin to build a mutually supportive relationship. I look forward to opportunities to connect with all of the new Councilmembers to learn about their priorities and share about Library operations.
4. Also on January 11, I participated in a recorded conversation with former SPL employee Chance Hunt for use in the "Future of Libraries" course he is teaching at the UW iSchool. We spoke about the Library's strategic foresight work with the University of Houston and how that process helped with the Library's strategic planning effort, as well as how SPL is responding to current signals and drivers we are seeing in the city and in the profession.
5. On January 18, I participated in the inaugural meeting of the EBSCO Public Library Leadership Advisory Board in Palm Springs, CA. The new Advisory Board is comprised of

leaders of 25 major urban library systems whose mission is to improve and advance public libraries through open dialog, surfacing ideas, and providing guidance, expertise, and strategic insight around the needs, goals, and potential pathways to success for public libraries in both the short and long term. The Advisory Board was convened to provide external advisors with diverse perspectives and experience to help EBSCO consider its role in the community, navigate challenges, make informed decisions, and take appropriate action. EBSCO is the leading provider of research databases, e-journals, magazine subscriptions, e-books and discovery service for public libraries, academic libraries, corporations, schools, government, and medical institutions.

6. As mentioned in my report last month, the Library has hired Brian Sharkey as our new Human Resources Director. Brian most recently served as the Deputy HR Director at the Finance and Administrative Services Department (FAS) with the City of Seattle where he oversaw labor relations, employee relations, safety, leave administration, ADA accommodations, and risk management. Brian joined us on December 20. We are continuing the recruitment process to fill the open Director of Library Programs and Services position.

Meetings and events during this reporting period:

- a. Board Meetings: Monthly Library Board of Trustees meeting; meeting with new Library Board President & Vice President; monthly meeting of Library and Friends leadership; monthly Library Foundation Board meeting; Foundation Executive Committee meeting.
- b. Standing Meetings: Compensation Committee; Senior Management Team; Monthly Managers meeting; Union/Leadership meetings; Foundation CEO/Chief Librarian bi-monthly meetings; Strategic Planning Core Team meetings.
- c. Library Talks, Meetings, Interviews and Visits: KCLS Director meetings; Metro area library director meetings; OCLC Public Library Directors Roundtable; Urban Libraries Council Director/CEO meeting; Ballard Rotary presentation; UW iSchool Future of Libraries class recording; EBSCO Public Library Leadership Advisory Board in Palm Springs, CA.
- d. City Meetings, Events and Programs: OIR holiday open house; RSJI presentation to City Council's Public Assets and Homelessness Committee; Mayor's Emergency Executive Board meeting; Chamber of Commerce annual public officials reception; Department of Neighborhoods Director Jennifer Chao's City Council confirmation; Deputy Mayor Wong and department directors bi-monthly meeting.

LIBRARY AT A GLANCE 					
Active Users – Last 12 Months	292K	↑ 1%	Monthly Users – Digital	106K	*
Monthly Questions Answered	58K	↓ -6%	Monthly Circulation – Digital	639K	↓ -1%
			Monthly Users – Physical	41K	↑ -7%
			Monthly Circulation – Physical	481K	↓ -3%

The percent of change is a comparison to prior month data. Physical circulation includes renewals. *Recalculated value not comparable to prior month.



IN FOCUS: Coffee and Conversations

The Library is a community hub for informal gatherings and supportive services through "Coffee and Conversations."

Overview: "Coffee and Conversations"

In 2023, The Central Library and the Ballard Branch began offering "Coffee and Conversations" — programs that bring patrons and staff together for informal discussions. These weekly coffee-and-pastry offerings have allowed patrons to get to know library staff in a casual setting.

Social service referrals are a crucial component of these events. When staff learn about immediate needs during these conversations, they refer patrons to the Library's Social Services team for direct assistance.

How Coffee and Conversations Lead To Social Services Referrals



Coffee and refreshments are served. Staff engage in conversations, moving between tables.

In these conversations, some patrons disclose a crisis, such as the lack of sleeping bag or needing help finding shelter.



The Library's Social Services team finds a solution to those needs, such as making a referral to a shelter or sourcing a sleeping bag.

How it Started: Community After a Tragedy

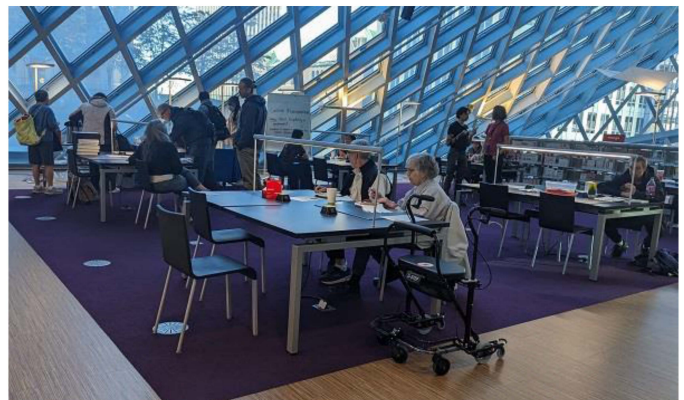
Following the death of a homeless patron in February 2023, Ballard Branch staff started Coffee and Conversations as place for community mourning.

Following success at the Ballard Branch, Coffee and Conversations expanded to the Central Library in August.



What Patrons Say

"This is my favorite activity of the week. I usually just come here to use the computer and printer, but now I get to get to know people in the Library"



LIBRARY AT A GLANCE

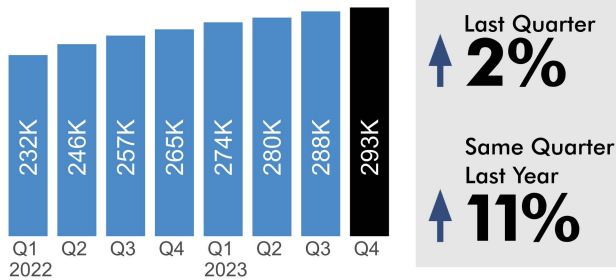


IN FOCUS: Quarterly KPIs

2023 saw a notable increase in digital readership, a small decrease in physical circulation, and growth in overall active users.

Active Library Users

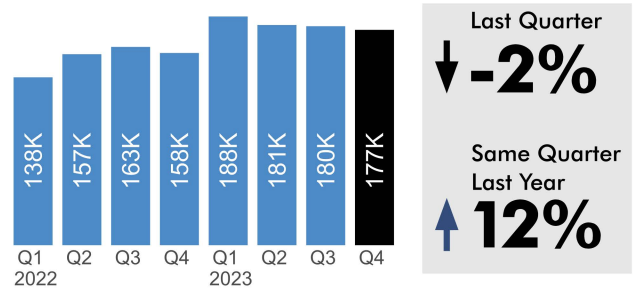
Patrons who checked out materials or logged in to use a Library resource in the last 12 months



Active users reached an all-time high at the end of 2023, driven primarily by growth in e-content use. This count does not include Books Unbanned users.

Questions Answered

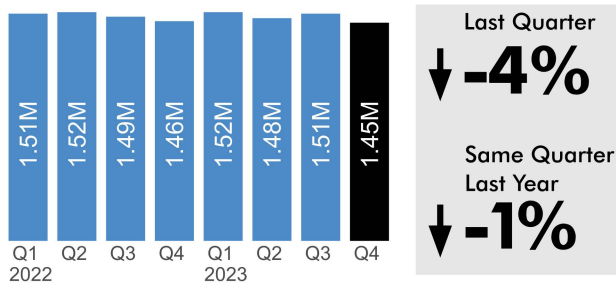
Number of in-person, phone and online questions answered



Library staff answered 18% more patron questions in 2023 than in 2022.

Physical Circulation

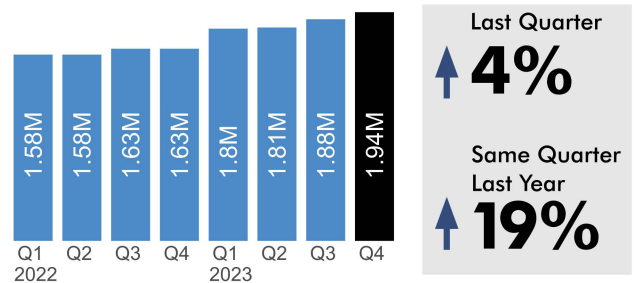
Number of items circulated or renewed



Physical circulation in 2023 was slightly lower than in 2022, with 21K fewer checkouts.

Digital Circulation

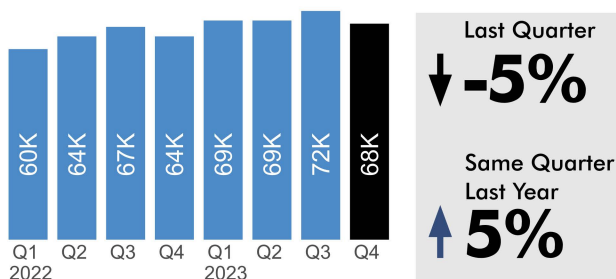
Number of items circulated



In 2023 16% more digital materials circulated than in 2022. Books Unbanned cardholders accounted for 1% of digital circulation in 2023.

Quarterly Borrowers - Physical

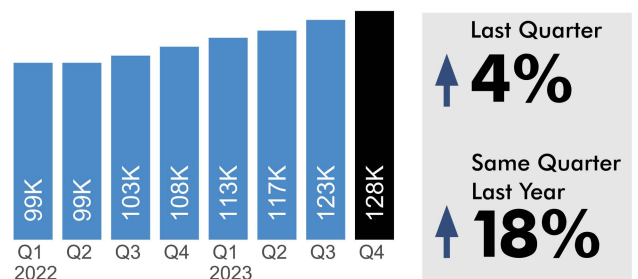
Number of patrons who borrowed physical materials



In 2023, the number of patrons who borrowed physical materials increased by 9%.

Quarterly Borrowers - Digital

Number of patrons who borrowed digital materials



In 2023, the number of patrons who borrowed digital materials increased by 15%. Books Unbanned cardholders accounted for 2% of the patrons who borrowed digital materials.

Facility Maintenance and Janitorial/Custodial Accomplishments in 2023

January 12, 2024

Dennis Reddinger, Head of Buildings and Capital Improvement Projects & Rob Gannon, Administrative Services Director

The Janitorial/Custodial team was very busy this past year. In addition to their daily job duties, they responded deep cleaning work orders and put an emphasis on the exterior of library branches. They completed and closed over 2000 work orders in 2023, and attended to other issues including the regular power washing outside of Central and Ballard, cleaning and decontaminating Lake City, and coordinating the cleaning efforts of the bed bug outbreak that occurred at a few of our branches.

The team has been working diligently to respond to the many needs for deep cleaning of restroom facilities in branches that have been subjected to the increase of illegal drug use. These instances can leave residual substances that contaminate surfaces and create exposure risks for our staff and patrons. The janitorial/custodial team did a tremendous job keeping clean facilities throughout.

The Facility Maintenance team was also very busy in 2023. They maintained daily operations in the maintenance operation center (MOC) while the building was undergoing a full remodel.

One very big challenge and accomplishment was that the facility maintenance team took on the job of breaking down and removing the automated material handling system (AMHS) system from CEN. This approach created substantial cost savings for SPL moneys by not having to contract with an outside vendor. The team faces the nearly every-day challenge of addressing vandalism on, around and inside SPL properties. Several branches experienced broken windows, graffiti and damage to the exterior grounds. Facilities were repaired, glass replaced and additional safety and anti-graffiti window film was installed as well as building surfaces were cleaned and/or painted over. Two of the more notable events were the damages done to Ballard by an errant car and the burst plumbing/pipe flooding Central's stairwell.

While undertaking all this work, this team of extraordinary employees also performed over 5600 work orders requested by the Library. This work included exterior and interior building improvements and maintenance, electrical and mechanical work, fire/life safety checks, ground maintenance, vertical transportation repair and maintenance, and plumbing and roof repairs. This work was absolutely essential to keeping the Library operational, safe and open to the public.

And amid all of this work by the Janitorial/Custodial and Facilities Maintenance teams, there were also staffing challenges due to illnesses, emergency leaves, and even the transitioning of leadership. But as a result of their tireless efforts, these two teams were still able to get the library branches ready, stocked, clean, and running for our patrons.

Communications Office: 2023 Year-end Report

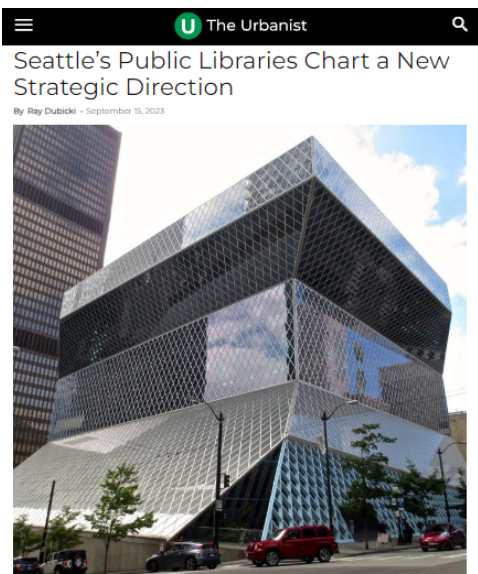
Learn more about us [on our infoNET site](#). Contact us at communications@spl.org.

Activities and accomplishments in 2023

Media coverage

Earned media is publicity the Library receives as a result of media planning and outreach, usually facilitated through media pitches, press releases and building relationships with journalists – a core function of the Library’s Communications Office.

With the invaluable help of many Library colleagues, the Communications Office produced [53 press releases in 2023](#). There were at least [237 stories](#) written about the Library in 2023, most of which resulted from earned media efforts. Library media coverage is currently under-counted, as we do not yet have a good way of tracking broadcast coverage, but that will be remedied in 2024.



[Seattle’s Public Libraries Chart a New Strategic Direction](#)



NEWS

Seattle Public Library Grants Free Access to Banned Books

[Seattle Public Library Grants Free Access to Banned Books](#)

View the Library’s complete list of media coverage on our [Media Tracking Spreadsheet](#).

Library initiatives and projects supported by the Communications Office

Promotional support for programs and services: Communications supported program and service managers in promoting this year’s 25th anniversary [Seattle Reads selection](#); the expansion of [Homework Help hours and locations](#); the exciting scenes at this year’s [Global Reading Challenge](#); the distribution of [Solar Eclipse glasses](#); the ever-popular [Book Bingo program](#), including Spanish-language radio promotion of the Loteria card; the [“Meet Me At Higo”](#) art exhibit with Wing Luke Museum; the Library’s first ever [all-electric Bookmobile](#); [our improved online calendar](#); [an in-depth interview](#) with a Library to Business

program partner; five [StoryWalks in Magnolia](#) over the summer; [COVID vaccine clinics](#); the travel adventures of the [Short Story Dispensers](#); new [Hawaiian language children’s books](#); the excellent [“Black Activism in Print”](#) gallery exhibit at Central; guest curators series programming; and many wonderful author events.

This fall, for example, we helped promote an event with James McBride, a Bullitt Lecture with local author [Timothy Egan](#), an event with Black horror writer [Tananarive Due](#), who was featured on Converge Media and in the [South Seattle Emerald](#); and a [three-part series](#) guest-curated by author Frank Abe in honor of the centennial of John Okada’s birth, which was featured in the Seattle Times and the Northwest Asian Weekly.

We also supported and promoted an event at the Douglass-Truth Branch celebrating the [50th anniversary](#) of the installation of the Soul Pole in April, organized with community partners by African-American Collection librarian Taylor Brooks.



Levy hours expansion: We developed internal [FAQs](#), [external](#) announcements, and branch flyers about the expansion of levy-funded hours systemwide. We also worked with many reporters covering the story, including an [in-depth investigative piece by the Seattle Times](#). A full list of stories can be found in the Media Coverage section of this report.

Books Unbanned: A big focus of the Communications Office in 2023 was supporting the launch of the Books Unbanned program on April 27, 2023. Launched by Brooklyn Public Library in 2022, Books Unbanned protects the right to read and fights censorship by offering a free library card for teens and young adults across the nation. The Library’s Books Unbanned program received widespread media interest from the day it was launched, with stories in the biggest media outlets locally (KUOW, the Seattle Times, including this [Danny Westneat column](#), King 5, Seattle Channel) and many nationwide outlets. Media coverage seems to have been a big driver of Books Unbanned sign-ups – as of the end of November, the program had more than 6,400 signups from all 50 states and Puerto Rico, and more than 67,000 checkouts.

Strategic planning: The Communications Office supported communication needs for the Library’s strategic planning efforts in 2023, including the publication of the [strategic foresight report](#) developed by Houston Foresight, the development and announcement of staff and [public engagement surveys](#), the coordination of an [all-staff Town Hall](#) to discuss the development of the plan; and writing/editing

support for the plan itself. The Head of Communications has served on the core team for strategic planning throughout the year and we look forward to its rollout in early 2024.

Green Lake Branch retrofit project: Communications developed [internal](#) and [external](#) announcements and updates to [the public-facing, seismic retrofit project page](#) informing staff and patrons of the yearlong closure of the Green Lake Branch and informing them of progress made on substantial renovations to the branch. We also worked on a number of [media stories about the project](#), including this [Pacific Northwest Magazine story](#), and coordinated a drop-in with Chief Librarian Fay the last week the branch was open prior to the closure. We are now turning our attention to planning a public celebration and media tour of the building once it is reopened to the public in 2024.



Green Lake Branch seismic retrofit work

Security enhancements: The Communications Office supported Library leadership and the Administrative Services division in communicating safety and security pilot programs and other improvements being made at select locations, including new security cameras, air-quality sensors and enrollment in the Seattle Police Department’s trespass program. Communications materials included a [staff announcement](#), [newsletter interview with Tom Fay](#) and a [regularly updated infoNET page](#).

Rules of Conduct Review Task Force: Communications continues serving on the Rules of Conduct Task Force core team, supporting efforts to make the Library’s Rules of Conduct and Exclusion Guidelines more equitable. We participated in Task Force meetings, led by REAL co-facilitators Dr. LaMont Green and William Yi, and most recently supported a [substantive community engagement process](#). Task Force members, including Library staff and community members, held five community listening sessions that drew 73 people (including 13 insecurely housed people and 60 youth) and six sessions with staff, which drew 120 frontline staff and security who have experience with the ROCs. The conversations were inspiring, honest and very helpful, and will inform the Task Force’s proposed revisions of the rules, which are slated to be completed in early 2024.

Automated Materials Handling System Replacement (AMHS) Project: Communications assisted the AMHS replacement project transition team with planning and communicating the systemwide implementation of the new AMHS at the Maintenance and Operations Center (MOC). We kept staff informed with [regular staff announcements](#) and updates [on the project webpage](#).



The new AMHS in action at the Maintenance and Operations Center

Library App Project: Communications continued serving on the core team of the [Library App Project](#), led by the Marketing & Online Services. The project aims to develop a new app to make Library services more equitable and accessible. We helped analyze staff, patron and community feedback collected during the project's discovery phase, assisted in the development of [an RFP](#) and [reported results](#) to [staff](#) and [patrons](#). We look forward to supporting the build-out and launch of the app in 2024.

MS 365 Implementation: Communications continued serving on the core project team responsible for the implementation of new MS 365 tools, an effort led by the IT division. New tools included Teams, OneNote and SharePoint Online. We [kept staff informed](#) of progress made on the project, and, in support of the infoNET migration to SharePoint Online, helped revise the charter of, reconstitute and co-lead the infoNET Advisory Committee.

CRM system testing and rollout: Communications supported LPSD's development and testing of a new Customer Relationship Management system to help document, guide and strengthen the Library's programs and partnerships with community organizations. We kept staff informed through the [development](#) and [testing](#) of the new CRM system, [which will be rolled out](#) at the beginning of 2024.

All Staff Day 2023: Communications played a key role in supporting a successful All Staff Day 2023, the first in-person in three years. We planned internal promotion and communication; edited materials; worked with a small team to organize the Staff Art Show; and drafted a Staff Day survey. Survey results, photos, session notes and the virtual art show are all [available on infoNET](#). Communications are involved with planning the next Staff Day, planned for Wednesday, March 27, 2024.

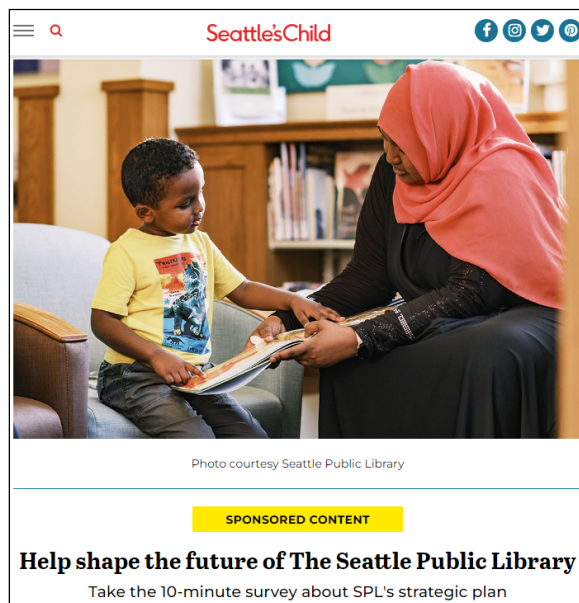
Communications Office initiatives

Revamping media outreach strategy: Following conversations with Library staff who have had recent experience working with media, the Communications Office initiated several changes to our media outreach strategy to better support and train staff, including:

- Updating the Communication Office [Service Request Form](#), which staff and managers can use to request media promotion of their program or service. We now ask for more details to help clarify expectations and identify spokespeople, media training needs, and partners who need to be kept in the loop.
- Developing a new media training presentation for one-on-one and group discussions and a one-sheet handout of [tips when working with media](#). These materials are meant to support staff and provide guidance on best practices while working with reporters.
- Prioritizing the presence of a Communications Office staff person in every media interview so we can support staff and identify any emerging issues that may need addressing.
- Changing the way we track and share Library news stories with staff. We now post a comprehensive set of links on the infoNET Message Board once a month rather than posting one story at a time as they are published. We have also developed a new [media tracking spreadsheet](#) that all staff can view to see Library media coverage throughout the year.

Reaching prioritized audiences: In 2023, we initiated a paid content campaign with independent media outlets that reach the Library’s prioritized audiences to promote the Strategic Plan public survey. We worked with the South Seattle Emerald, International Examiner, Seattle Gay News, Real Change, The Medium, Seattle’s Child and ParentMap on placing sponsored content to promote the survey.

We also continued our focus on reaching Spanish-language / Latinx audiences and working with staff who support those audiences. We promoted several Spanish-language programs through interviews on El Rey radio, including the launch of Book Bingo in June and an L2B “start your business” series in Spanish in November and December, and partnered on a community event (see below).



A new focus area in 2023 was reaching African-American audiences and promoting the work of community partners. We worked with the Seattle Medium and the [South Seattle Emerald](#) on stories about the Soul Pole 50th Anniversary event at the Douglass-Truth Branch; the Seattle Medium also published several other stories about Library programs, including the return of story time at the Douglass-Truth Branch.

Other highlights of media coverage focused on prioritized audiences included coverage of the 25th anniversary of Seattle Reads in the International Examiner and [Northwest Asian Weekly](#).

South Park Fiesta: As part of our work to support the Library’s Language Access Plan and reach prioritized audiences, the Communications Office collaborated with MOS and the South Park Branch to host a bilingual summer event at the South Park Branch with El Rey 1360 AM. “Fiesta en la Biblioteca - Party at the Library.”

The event was a success, with 98 South Park residents attending (twice as many as the goal), and engaging with many activities. We hope to plan something at another branch in 2024!



Library news on Shelf Talk and LinkedIn: The Communications Office collaborates with the Shelf Talk Editorial Team to produce the Library’s [Shelf Talk blog](#). We also collaborate with the Human Resources

division to share news on our LinkedIn page. In 2023, the Communications Office produced [31 blog posts](#) and [13 LinkedIn posts](#).

Coffee Chat weekly staff newsletter: We produced [24 staff newsletters](#) in 2023 and launched a new one-page, biweekly, printable and shareable document for directors, supervisors and managers to share with their teams.

Critical incident & security communications: Our goal in incident response is to accurately, effectively, and compassionately communicate to staff during and after urgent and rapidly changing situations. Here are critical incidents we helped respond to in 2023, and other security-related communications we produced:

- [A difficult loss for the Ballard community 1/8](#)
- [Security incident at the Lake City Branch 2/13](#)
- [Lake City Branch assault on staff member 3/3](#)
- [Patron photo from last week's assault at LCY branch 3/7](#)
- [IDC Branch security incident on 3/28](#)
- [Douglass-Truth security incident 3/28](#)
- [More information on the car accident at the Ballard Branch 4/17](#)
- [Central Library assault on staff member 4/26](#)
- [Lockdown at Ballard Branch 4/28](#)
- [Deceased person found on 5th Avenue plaza this morning 5/12](#)
- [Assault at Capitol Hill Branch 5/12](#)
- [Security incident at the University Branch 5/19](#)
- [Lake City Branch security incident 6/4](#)
- [New security measures and resources 6/14](#)
- [Columbia Branch assault on a security officer 7/15](#)
- [Capitol Hill Branch patron assault on staff 7/19](#)
- [Capitol Hill Branch patron assault on staff 7/20](#)
- [Suspected fatal overdose on Central's 5th Avenue plaza 7/30](#)
- [UNI patron harassment and assault on security officer 8/12](#)
- [IDC lockdown incident for medical aid 8/13](#)
- [Safety and Security Pilot Programs infoNET Page 8/25](#)
- [Lake City Branch assault on security officer 9/7](#)
- [Greenwood Branch Medical Emergency 9/14](#)
- [University Branch closed due to bomb threat 10/20](#)
- [CAP assault on officer and lockdown 11/24](#)
- [Early DTH closure due to shooting in the area 12/1](#)

Setting measurable goals and reporting regularly

Communication goals and metrics: The Communications Office implemented new measurable promotional goals in 2023. With this being our first year implementing measurable goals, our primary intent was to create baseline data for future year goals.

2023 goals included:

- incorporating strategic messaging in our promotional writing and media outreach about:
 - Library Levy successes
 - promoted 12 times
 - the Library's commitment to equity
 - promoted 23 times
 - the Library's breadth of service
 - promoted 25 times
- getting strategic messages reflected in media stories
 - 54 stories reflected Library messaging
- reaching the Library's prioritized audiences
 - positively appeared 48 times in media serving prioritized audiences
- sharing news regularly with Library stakeholders
 - 117 messages to staff, partners, and City colleagues
- generating positive stories on behalf of the Library
 - 162 positive stories in 2023!

We will be reflecting on and revising these goals as needed in early 2024 to meet the Library's strategic needs throughout the year.

Reporting: We edited the 2023 first quarter levy report and helped developed a web-based animation for the annual report to the City Council about levy accomplishments in 2022, working with levy administrator Jan Oscherwitz and MOS (see the animation on www.spl.org/Levy). We continued to edit and help guide the development of the monthly Library at a Glance infographic for board reports. Levy reports are available [on the SPL.org website](#). We also created weekly reports for the Mayor's office on Library activities, and biweekly highlights for interdepartmental (IDT) meetings.

Public disclosure

Communications fulfills public disclosure requests for the Library. In 2023, we worked on 76 Library public disclosure requests, and we welcomed a new Public Disclosure & Public Information Coordinator, Karly Williams. Karly is developing public records information and best practices for Library staff that we plan to share in 2024. She is also advising the Social Services Team and the Partner CRM project team on how best to protect the information of patrons and partners.

News you can use: How to work with Communications

- Getting started:** If you'd like to work with Communications, a good first step is to [fill out this simple form](#), which helps us understand your needs.
- Tip of the month – working with media:** We wanted to remind staff that the Communications Office is responsible for the Library's outreach to the media, and if you get contacted by a reporter or other member of the media, you should always contact the Communications Office and/or direct them to us first (easiest way is to email us at Communications@spl.org). We are happy to involve staff in media efforts and provide training but want to make sure that you're fully supported and that we're following our media protocols. Here is a [simple set of FAQs](#) so you get a sense of how we work with media.
- Wondering about how MOS and Communications work together?** Check out the chart at right, which we included in this [Explainer](#) on this topic in Library Coffee Chat.
- Need "boilerplate" Library info?** Do you need a short description of the Library and its mission? We have a ["general Library content"](#) section of our infoNET site, where you can find blurbs about the Library, our mission, a bio of Chief Librarian Tom Fay and more.
- Tell your story to the media:** Are you launching a new program, partnership or event? Reach out to us for help writing press releases, talking points, media pitches and more. Start by filling out [this simple form](#).
- Tell your story to staff:** The Coffee Chat newsletter is designed to inform and connect Library staff. Learn more on the [Coffee Chat page](#) and send your submissions to newsletter@spl.org.
- Reach out any time:** You can reach the head of the Communications Office, Laura Gentry, at laura.gentry@spl.org. Or you can reach the entire team at communications@spl.org.





The Seattle Public Library

2024 Operations Plan

The Seattle Public Library's 2024 Operations Plan reflects the second year of the City's biennial 2023-2024 budget cycle and the fifth year of a seven-year, voter-approved, \$219.1 million Library Levy. This plan summarizes planned spending information across the City's 2024 Adopted Budget (General Fund, Library Levy, Library-generated revenue, Real Estate Excise Tax), in addition to private funding resources from Library gift funds and grant awards provided by The Seattle Public Library Foundation. The Library Board of Trustees is responsible for monitoring Library funds appropriated through the City's budget.

The Library Board Policy on Race and Social Justice and the City of Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative—a commitment to eliminate racial disparities and achieve racial equity—help guide the use of these funds and all aspects of Library operations. The Library budget team participated in a City-wide equitable budgeting rubric project, has independently conducted interviews with peer organizations, and has undertaken a literature review to learn how other organizations center equity in their budget development process. We anticipate information gathered through this process will inform and shape our budget development philosophy in future periods.

Economy and Revenue

The City yielded higher than projected General Fund revenues in 2023, a trend which is expected to continue into 2024. These factors influenced a 2024 budgeting process where the City General Fund was balanced as a starting point—meaning the Library was not asked to provide target reduction proposals. The other side of that coin is the Library's non-grant budgets did not have changes beyond those associated with known spending plan variations, adjustments for central costs and benefit rates, and limited allowances for inflationary support.

Unexpected strength in employment and growth in Gross Domestic Product avoided the recession predicted last fall. However, the Federal Reserve's restrictive monetary policy (keeping interest rates high) is expected to remain in place through the first part of 2024—while this helps control inflation, it can also restrict economic growth. These factors, along with cooling technology, professional service, and business service sectors, have shifted the longer-term regional outlook toward slower and flatter economic and revenue growth. Several City revenue streams have yet to fully rebound coming out of COVID-19, meaning a slower recovery creates pressure on future periods. The City's latest projections on revenues, and the impact of generation-high inflation, indicate the City will face a \$251 million deficit for the 2025 fiscal year.

City Council Budget Actions

The City Council approved a budget action to reduce funding for employer contribution to the Seattle City Employees Retirement System (SCERS) in alignment the SCERS Board of Administration's recommendation. The City's 2024 Proposed Budget initially used a rate of 16.22%, which was

derived prior to updated actuarial results being known. The recommended SCERS Board rate is representative of these updated actuarial calculations and has been approved at 15.82%.

Overview of the 2024 Operations Plan relative to the Adopted 2023 Plan

To provide a comprehensive picture of the Library’s 2024 planned spending, the Operations Plan includes both Operating and Capital budgets. The 2024 Library budget across all funding sources—including private gift and grant support—is \$102.2 million. This amount is \$2.5 million lower than the prior year (a 2% decrease). This net decrease is due to variation in the 2024 Capital Budget, nearly all of which is in accordance with the long-term capital financial plan. Some of the high level changes to the Library’s 2024 budget are as follows (summarized view of year-to-year changes provided as Attachments 1 and 2):

Operating Budget Changes

- A continuation of \$700,000, and a one-time redirection of \$1 million, in prior period budget authority to offset City General Fund revenue reductions associated with COVID-19
- \$247,000 in additional gifts and grants from The Seattle Public Library Foundation and other private sources for collections, programming, and early learning
- Adjustments to Central Costs, annual wage increases, benefit rate changes, health care, and other inflationary changes added \$550,000 in operating resources. These resources are largely dedicated to designated cost pools and do not carry programming flexibility.

Capital Budget Changes

- Removal of a one-time, \$1 million supplement from the JumpStart Payroll Expense Tax—which helped fund de-carbonization efforts via branch electrification and other measures
- Library Levy capital support decreased by \$3 million. This is in accordance with the long-term capital plan as the 2023 budget included one-time increases to account for IT infrastructure purchases, seismic retrofit and unreinforced masonry project costs.
- REET capital project support decreased by \$870,000. 94% of this reduction is in alignment with what was laid out in the City’s long-term capital financial plan. The Library was asked to make an additional reduction of \$53,000 for 2024 owing to REET revenues that are projected to fall short of previous estimates.

I. Priority Areas within Library Operations

The Library is currently assessing our strategic direction, which may result in changes to how the budget is structured in future periods. There is additional information as it relates to the strategic plan included in the Opportunities section of this document (Page 12, Section VI)—although the shape and form of said plan are still being developed. For the upcoming year, the Library will continue to utilize the five fundamental areas of our operations as reaffirmed by the community through a 2021 survey. Additional information as it relates to each of the existing priority areas, along with notable investments, will be discussed in the proceeding sections.

A. Hours and Access

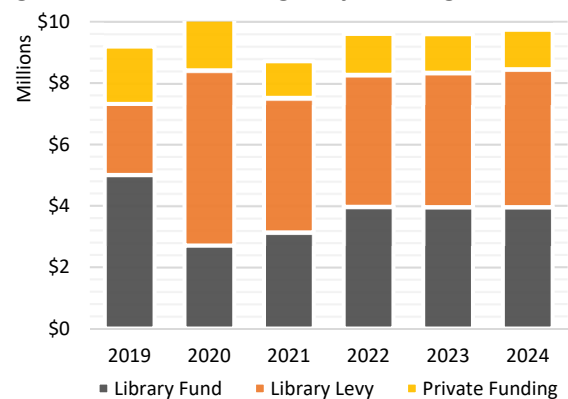
Library open hours mean access to technology, collections and resources, programs and knowledgeable staff for information and referral. To this end, Public Services staff are versed in the role the Library plays in creating a more equitable community with increased opportunity for low income and historically marginalized individuals and families in Seattle. The Library's largest expenditure is related to personnel, representing \$73 million, or 71% of total Library resources. One of the Library's key investments in this area is:

\$70,000 to offer programs for adult learners, such as English for Speakers of Other Languages classes, Adult Education Tutoring, digital literacy and English classes, family literacy classes, citizenship classes and tutoring, and community outreach. *(funded by The Seattle Public Library Foundation)*

B. Books and Materials

When considering the purchase of materials to be added to the collection, the Collection Services team applies an equity lens that factors in audiences, categories and formats, while also focusing acquisitions on titles that reflect underrepresented voices, including those from people of color, the LGBTQ+ community and other marginalized groups. Circulation trends have rebounded, and over 1.1 million items are circulated per month.

Figure 1: Materials Budget by Funding Source



The Library provides \$11.2 million (11% of the overall budget) to support the purchase of books and materials, and the movement of those materials across the system. These resources are provided via a combination of General Fund, Library Levy and private gifts (a summary of which can be seen in Figure 1). Key investments in the 2024 books and materials budget include:

\$100,000 for Books Unbanned, which is a partnership with other library systems to fight censorship and champion intellectual freedom by offering a free e-card allowing access to the Library's catalogue for teens and young adults (ages 13 to 26) nationwide *(funded by The Seattle Public Library Foundation)*

\$124,000 for archiving and processing the Paul Dorpat collection to make it discoverable and accessible to the public *(funded by The Seattle Public Library Foundation)*

C. Technology and Online Services

The digital environment provides increasing opportunities to participate in the information society, although some individuals and families can face serious barriers to access. These barriers, often referred to as the "digital divide," may include a lack of affordable internet connectivity; lack of internet ready devices; or a lack of skills, knowledge, or means to access digital resources. The Library plays an important role in helping bridge the digital divide by providing access to patrons who lack this capability at home.

According to a survey conducted by the Library, one-third of Seattle residents said they relied on Library computers or Wi-Fi networks to access the internet and other digital resources. The Library provides free access to digital devices (desktop computers, laptops and tablets) that can be used to search online resources, connect to the internet, or use popular software. Our wireless internet access is provided free to patrons and has experienced exponential growth as patron preferences shift toward mobile access. Additionally, patrons can use their Library card to check out a portable Wi-Fi hot spot. Key investments in this area for 2024 include:

\$250,000 for the finalization of a Microsoft 365 migration project *(funded by the General Fund and The Seattle Public Library Foundation)*

\$615,000 for IT enterprise equipment upgrades to repair and replace core and central switches to maintain and improve the Library's network *(funded by the 2019 Library Levy)*

D. Literacy and Early Learning

Libraries play an important role in fostering literacy, particularly for those who have historically faced barriers to access, such as immigrants and refugees, and those developing literacy skills, such as preschool and elementary students. A key investment in this priority area for 2024:

\$52,500 for Global Reading Challenge, a reading incentive program for 4th and 5th graders enrolled in Seattle Public Schools. Students form teams and read selected books, then take part in a trivia competition—semi-finals and the City-wide final take place at the Central Library in the spring *(funded by The Seattle Public Library Foundation)*

E. Building and Facility Support

As part of the 1998 Library's for All capital campaign, the Library remodeled and replaced a number of our branches. Many of these renovations and buildings are now over 20 years old and in need of ongoing and careful oversight and maintenance to protect the public investment. The Library utilizes an internally developed and actively managed Comprehensive Facilities Plan to surface and direct where investments are needed throughout the system. However, resulting from budget reductions taken during the COVID-19 pandemic, several building maintenance projects were deferred to future periods. This is not an optimal approach, as timely and ongoing maintenance is less expensive than emergency repairs and replacements—this is particularly salient when considering the iconic and unique buildings present in the Library property portfolio.

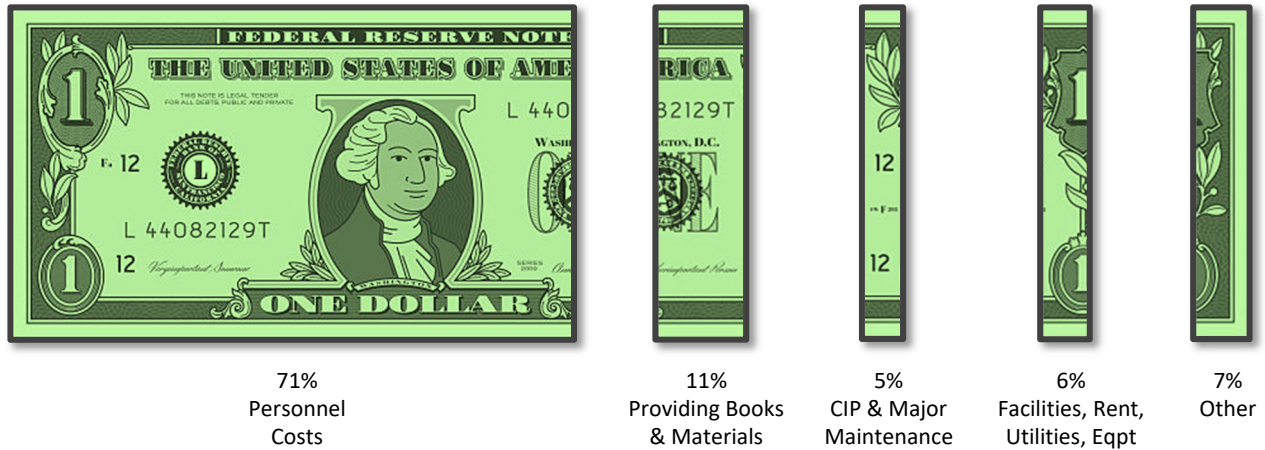
Our buildings provide a forum where patrons can read or study in a comfortable environment, listen to interesting and engaging speakers, participate in meaningful community events, or find daytime respite. \$15.9 million, or 15% of Library resources, support keeping our facilities open, clean, functional, and welcoming to all. A key investment in our building operations are:

\$2,078,000 for utilities across 28 library locations (27 neighborhood libraries and a Maintenance and Operations Center). Library facilities serve an important role of not only housing our collection of books and materials, but also providing welcoming and functional spaces for all members of the community. Heating, cooling and lighting are central elements of our buildings being open and operational. *(funded by the General Fund and the 2019 Library Levy)*

II. Operations Plan Overview by Personnel, Collections, and Buildings

There is an overarching and larger scale framework within which our priority areas fall, these consist of: 1) Personnel, 2) Books and Materials, and 3) Buildings. Relative investments of Library resources among these categories are shown below, along with an illustration of how \$1.00 is spent at the Library using this lens. Due to the unique nature of Library services and how they are provided to the public, Library work is inherently people-oriented—meaning the majority of our resources are dedicated toward personnel. Additional department level budget information can be seen on Attachment 1.

Figure 2: How \$1.00 is spent at the Library and the Proposed Budget

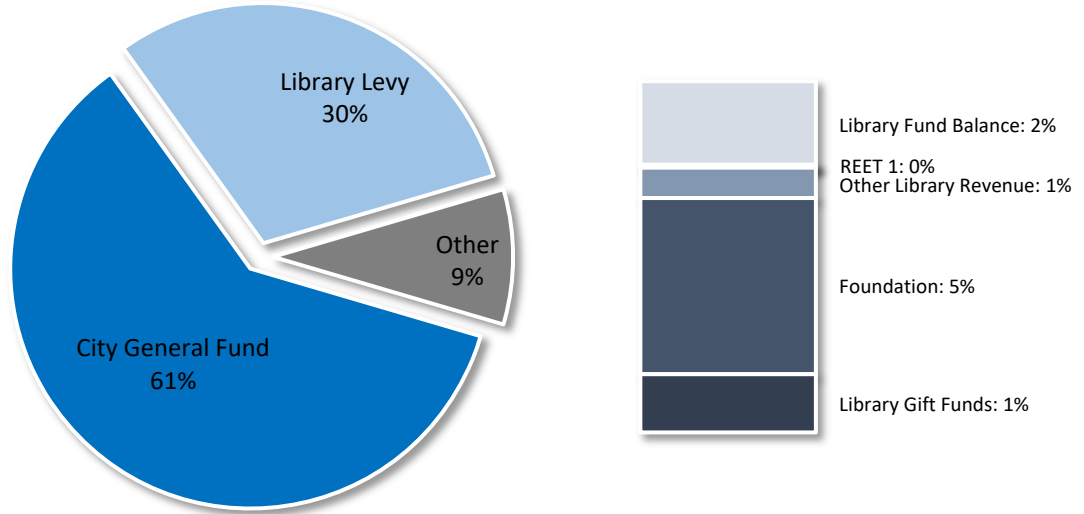


Amounts in \$1,000s	2024 Proposed	%
<i>Personnel</i>		
Public Services, Collections & Access	\$53,406	52%
All Other Departments	\$19,569	19%
<i>Personnel Sub-Total</i>	<i>\$72,975</i>	<i>71%</i>
<i>Providing Books & Materials</i>		
Books & Materials Collection	\$10,222	10%
Collection Processing & Distribution	\$989	1%
<i>Providing Books & Materials Sub-Total</i>	<i>\$11,211</i>	<i>11%</i>
<i>Buildings</i>		
Capital Improvements & Major Maintenance	\$4,878	5%
Utilities, Maintenance, Rent, Equipment	\$5,905	6%
<i>Other</i>		
Direct Programming Supplies	\$1,650	2%
City Central Costs	\$3,030	3%
Software	\$940	1%
Other	\$1,604	1%
<i>Other Sub-Total</i>	<i>\$7,224</i>	<i>7%</i>
Total	\$102,193	

III. Operations Plan Overview by Funding Source

The design and development of the Library budget occurs against a backdrop of equity impacts associated with the City’s Language Access Plan (Library plan included as Attachment 3), as well as the City’s Race and Social Justice Ordinance and the Library Board policy on Race and Social Justice (Attachment 4). Library operations are supported by three main funding sources: City appropriation of General Fund support, an annual allocation from the seven-year, voter-approved Library Levy, and private gift funds—which include annual grants from The Seattle Public Library Foundation.

Figure 3: Operations Plan by Funding Source



Amounts in \$1,000s	2023 Adopted	2024 Proposed	% Change
<i>Operating Fund</i>			
City General Fund (Operating)	\$60,105	\$61,883	3%
2019 Library Levy (Operating)	\$24,079	\$25,194	5%
Other Library Revenue	\$553	\$778	41%
Interdepartmental Support	\$31	\$27	-13%
Use of Library Fund Balance	\$3,331	\$2,212	-34%
<i>Operating Fund Sub-Total</i>	<i>\$88,099</i>	<i>\$90,094</i>	<i>2%</i>
<i>CIP</i>			
2019 Library Levy (CIP)	\$8,894	\$5,859	-34%
REET I (CIP)	\$948	\$78	-92%
JumpStart Payroll Expense Tax (CIP)	\$1,000	\$0	-100%
<i>CIP Sub-Total</i>	<i>\$10,842</i>	<i>\$5,937</i>	<i>-45%</i>
<i>Gifts and Grants</i>			
Seattle Public Library Foundation*	\$4,425	\$4,672	6%
Gift Funds (Balch, Bunn, other)	\$1,416	\$1,490	9%
<i>Gifts and Grants Sub-Total</i>	<i>\$5,841</i>	<i>\$6,162</i>	<i>6%</i>
Total	\$104,782	\$102,193	-2%

* Grant awards approved by The Seattle Public Library Foundation Board of Directors

A. General Fund

The majority of the Library’s funding is provided by the City General Fund, with 61% of the budget provided by this resource. The Library’s financial well-being and our ability to deliver services to the public is closely tied to the performance of the local and national economy.

Amounts in \$1,000s	2023 Adopted	2024 Proposed	% Change
Hours & Access	\$26,746	\$28,444	6%
Providing Books & Materials	\$13,502	\$13,425	-1%
Technology & Online Services	\$4,349	\$4,358	0%
Literacy & Early Learning	\$539	\$560	4%
Building & Facility Support	\$7,559	\$7,516	-1%
Administration	\$4,591	\$4,817	3%
City Central Costs	\$2,819	\$2,764	-2%
Total	\$60,105	\$61,884	3%

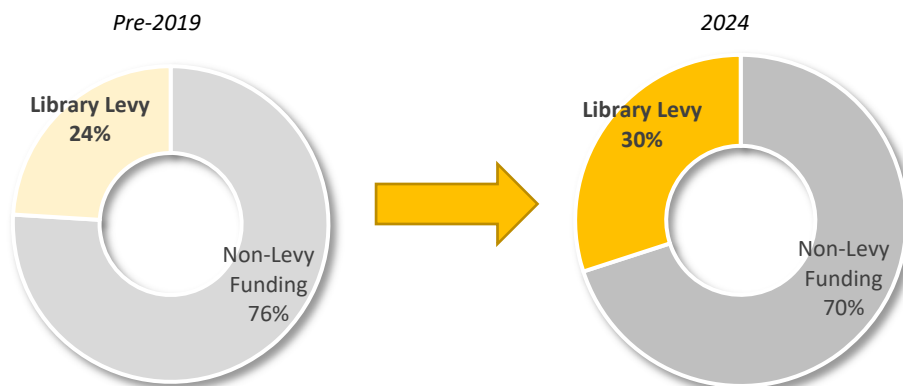
In 2023, the local economy outperformed the City’s forecasting models, resulting in additional General Fund revenues of nearly \$76 million. Because of this, the City Budget Office was able to maintain 2024 Endorsed Budget commitments and no additional reductions were requested for the mid-biennium. With that being said, the City’s 2023-2024 biennial budget does include a one-time use of \$2.2 million in accumulated Library fund balance in lieu of service reductions. Considering the projected \$251 million shortfall in the City’s 2025 fiscal year, a priority and hurdle for the Library and City will be to secure baseline General Fund in support of our operations. It will be essential to keep historically marginalized communities and prioritized audiences who rely on Library services at the forefront of upcoming budget, policy, and programming decisions.

The City Budget Office requested the Library achieve an underspend target or meet a mid-year budget reduction for five out of the last 10 years. Considering the economic landscape, the risk of the City requesting a mid-year 2024 budget reduction should not be understated. In the event a mid-year reduction occurs, the Library has controls in place to closely monitor non-labor expenditure activity in addition to vacancies and other system-wide personnel shifts.

B. 2019 Library Levy

In August 2019, Seattle voters approved a seven-year, \$219.1 million 2019 Library Levy renewal to support, maintain, and expand core Library services, renewing a \$122 million Library Levy that was first passed in 2012. With the passage of the 2019 Library Levy, the Library increased our dependence on time-limited voter-approved funding.

Figure 4: Pre-2019 Library Levy Budget % Compared to Current-Year Budget %



Each year, the Library Board of Trustees allocates available levy funds through the Operations Plan. More information on 2019 Library Levy categories, including how they map back to the budget can be found on Attachment 5.

Amounts in \$1,000s	2023 Adopted	2024 Proposed	% Change
Hours & Access	\$13,283	\$13,692	3%
Providing Books & Materials	\$5,800	\$5,931	2%
Technology & Online Services	\$2,563	\$2,670	4%
Literacy & Early Learning	\$301	\$381	27%
Building & Facility Support	\$1,832	\$1,947	6%
Major Maintenance (CIP)	\$7,747	\$5,244	-32%
Major Maintenance (IT)	\$1,147	\$615	-46%
Administration	\$300	\$573	92%
Total	\$32,973	\$31,053	-6%

Levy – Operating Fund

In 2024, the Library continues to fulfill levy commitments. Once the Green Lake Branch reopens after completion of the seismic retrofit project, the Library will be scheduled to open 10% more hours per week than in 2019 before the start of the 2019 levy. Air conditioned public spaces have become an increasingly important community need throughout the city as summer temperatures climb, wildfire smoke becomes more prevalent, and many lack air conditioning in their homes. With the installation of air conditioning at four branches in late 2023, unscheduled closures due to excessive heat in the summer should be reduced. In 2024, we will also be offering seven weekly play and learn groups, exceeding our levy commitment to fund up to six groups. We will also continue to offer social service support to at-risk youth through our community resource specialist program.

2024 brings expanded City-wide Central Costs allocations to the Library Levy—these costs have previously been funded by the General Fund, but represent expenditures associated with City IT, labor relations, payroll, financial system licensing, and other forms of centralized support. Other highlights of levy funding for 2024 include fine-free access to the books and materials collection, investment in e-materials and our no-holds no-wait Peak Picks collection, digital equity through the Wi-Fi hot spot program, and enhanced levels of building maintenance and branch security.

Levy – Capital Improvement Program

Of the Library’s 26 neighborhood branches, seven are Carnegie-era branches that are considered historic city and state landmarks. These branches—Douglass-Truth, Columbia, Fremont, Green Lake, Queen Anne, University, and West Seattle—are unreinforced masonry buildings, which means the buildings are at an increased risk for damage during a seismic event. The current seven-year levy, passed by voters in 2019, included planned funding for seismic retrofits at the three of the most vulnerable branches: Green Lake, University and Columbia. The 2024 budget includes levy funding for the University branch seismic retrofit project, which continues planning, design and permitting. Seismic retrofit projects will also allow installation of air conditioning in these Carnegie-era branches.

Mechanical systems replacement, repair and electrification of branch libraries will continue in 2024—with emphasis on the highest priority sites to fulfill the 2030 Mayoral electrification mandate to reduce City reliance on fossil fuels. Branch electrification is prioritized based on immediate maintenance needs, air-conditioning status, years since last remodel, and proximity to other branches. Specific site selection is dependent upon pending federal grant funding outcomes, which have been delayed at the federal level. The Library’s 2024 capital IT infrastructure budget includes \$615,000 to replace existing end of life wireless access points at both Central and branches, accounting for over 300 discrete access points—which provide wireless signals for the public, staff and partner networks. The 2024 capital project plan is included as Attachment 6.

C. Other Capital Improvement Program Support

Capital improvement projects may carry large fund balances as timelines shift and are influenced by external factors (such as COVID-19), project complexity, supply chain disruptions and materials shortages (more likely with historically-landmarked buildings), and the availability of qualified contractors in a competitive local construction market (also often related to historically-landmarked buildings). Projects require ample planning and are often multi-year in nature—as a result, the Library may have carryforward resources that span multiple fiscal years. A long-term capital improvement program is submitted to the City Budget Office each year and is included as Attachment 7.

Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) – Capital Improvement Program

The 2024 Operations Plan includes a total of \$78,000 in REET funding, which is tax revenue generated from property sales in Seattle. The total \$78,000 is dedicated to ongoing planning, design and construction costs associated with the University Branch seismic retrofit project (which includes upgrades to, and electrification of, the branch’s mechanical and HVAC systems).

D. The Seattle Public Library Foundation

The Seattle Public Library Foundation helps the Library equitably enhance its collections, offer activities for all ages, pilot new and innovative initiatives, and enrich our program of service for our community. It supports the Library by securing and managing donations from individuals, businesses and other foundations to enhance levels of Library service beyond what public funding alone is able to provide. The Foundation’s goal is to expand the reach of the Library, not to supplant funding for core Library operations. The Library submits grant requests and provides support where needed, however the final award amount, as well as the efforts funded, is at the discretion of The Seattle Public Library Foundation Board of Directors.

Amounts in \$1,000s	2023 Adopted	2024 Proposed	% Change
Hours & Access	\$1,197	\$1,322	11%
Providing Books & Materials	\$1,642	\$1,735	6%
Technology & Online Services	\$318	\$428	35%
Literacy & Early Learning	\$779	\$698	-10%
Major Maintenance (CIP)	\$200	\$210	5%
Administration	\$289	\$279	-3%
Total	\$4,425	\$4,672	6%

E. Library Gift Funds

The Library receives investment earnings from two main funds, the Robert C. Bunn Trust and the Albert S. Balch Trust, which are used to enhance Library services and support new initiatives. There are also designated contributions that were made to the Library and are spent in accordance with donor restrictions. The allocation and approval for spending authority of Library gift funds occurs as part of the Operations Plan. Detail on items funded for 2024 can be found on Attachment 8.

F. Library Enterprise Revenues

The Library has limited opportunities for revenue generation, with said resources used to help support core operations. Library enterprise revenues have been on a slow path to recovery. 2024 revenue projections place the Library at 90% of pre-pandemic revenues, with full revenue recovery (\$866,000) expected for 2025. These funding sources provide approximately 0.8% of the Library’s 2024 budget.

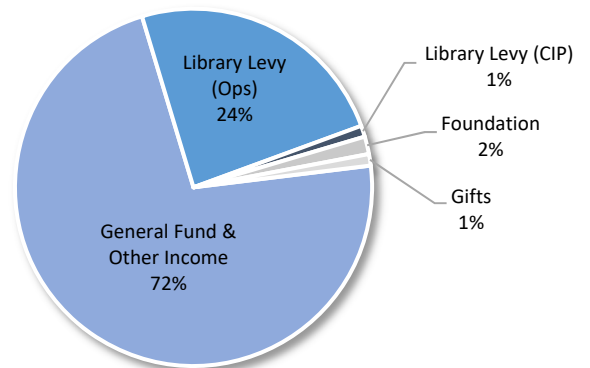
Amounts in \$1,000s	2023 Adopted	2024 Proposed	% Change
Lost Material Fees	\$110	\$115	4%
Central Library Parking Garage Fees	\$235	\$345	32%
Copy Services/Pay for Print	\$110	\$95	-16%
Space Rental	\$50	\$135	63%
Consignment Fees	\$45	\$85	47%
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$3	\$3	0%
Total	\$553	\$778	29%

IV. Staffing Levels by Funding Source

The 2024 Library budget contains 709 positions (608.1 FTE)—funded via multiple sources (Figure 5).

Figure 5: FTE by Funding Source

	2023 FTE	2024 FTE	% Change
General Fund & Other Income	440.2	439.1	0%
Library Levy (Operations)	146.8	146.7	0%
Library Levy (CIP)	6.2	6.2	0%
Foundation	8.7	9.7	10%
Gift Funds (Bunn & Balch)	6.4	6.4	0%
Total	608.3	608.1	0%



A. Vacancies

As Library employees leave for reasons such as retirement or in search of other opportunities, their position will go unfilled for a period of time—in the simplest of terms, this period when a position is unfilled represents a period of vacancy. Assuming full employment for an entire year is unrealistic, as such a salary savings assumption is built into the budget that forecasts an

organization-level vacancy rate. A 4% salary savings assumption is included as part of the 2024 budget—this rate is in line with historical vacancy rates at the Library. Actual savings and expenditures will be closely monitored to ensure appropriation authority is not over-expended.

B. Accrued Vacation and Sick Leave Payouts for Retirement & Other Separations

Staff turnover due to cyclical separations jumped in 2021, however 2022 represented a return to pre-pandemic averages. While staff retirements remained relatively steady, the ranks of Library employees reaching retirement age, but who have yet to announce their retirement, are significant. As of November 2023, The Library had 128 employees eligible for retirement (compared to 150 employees in November 2022), with an estimated liability of \$1.4 million (compared to \$1.6 million in November 2022).

While the Library has been able to manage these payouts within our annual appropriation (against agency-wide vacancy savings), this approach is not a guarantee of sufficient resources regarding the future liability. Library separation and retirement payouts over the past three years are as follows:

	2020		2021		2022	
	Count	Amount	Count	Amount	Count	Amount
Separation Payouts	19	\$39,086	61	\$190,877	33	\$136,808
Retirement Payouts	11	\$179,223	15	\$206,542	12	\$151,425
Total	30	\$218,309	76	\$397,418	45	\$288,234

V. Future Risks

In any given year, the Library is faced with risks that can impact our operations in a multitude of ways. Two high priority risk areas have been included as part of this section.

A. Pressures of Social Issues on Staff and Safety/Security in our Buildings

The Library serves a critical role in providing daytime respite and engagement for people who are insecurely housed, unemployed, or out of school. Keeping libraries safe and clean ensures everyone in the city has a welcoming and attractive place to learn, to access the internet, search for a job, and connect with friends and family, or to simply be. However, providing open access to all also brings with it all the challenges our community faces outside of our doors, including mental health struggles, addiction issues, crime, violence, and insecure housing conditions.

These socio-economic challenges have introduced severe pressures on the Library and Library staff. There has been increased frequency and severity of disruptive patron behaviors, such as assaults, drug use, and harassment, as well as increased vandalism and intentional destruction of Library property. Immediate and ongoing impacts are on staff safety, operations and facilities. If this trend continues, the Library faces serious risks: we will need to hire additional security officers and we will have to continue to evolve staffing models to have more public services staff onsite to manage a more complex environment—potentially resulting in reduced hours, service levels and programs; increased costs for property damage and repair; and more unplanned closures due to violent and unpredictable incidents and facilities disruptions.

These impacts are also felt by the general public who may feel unsafe when such incidents and disruptions occur. Additionally, unplanned closures may create a sense of unreliability and erode public trust in an institution that is known for its high-level of service, excellence of resources and programs, and caring and compassionate staff. This may lead to a longer-term concern for reputation, access to information and resources, and overall sustainability.

B. Aging Library Building Portfolio

Library buildings are among the most intensively-used City facilities in Seattle. Prior to the pandemic, the Central Library hosted over 1.2 million visitors annually, with library branches serving over 3.6 million visitors. The Library's historic landmark buildings have unique features such as brick facades, slate roofs and other details. When undertaking maintenance and repair work, it is essential to use designs and materials consistent with their landmark status—all factors that increase major maintenance costs. Additionally, the economic disruption stemming from the pandemic skewed supply and demand for raw materials and services, forcing either reexamination of individual project scope or reprioritization of larger Library projects. Contractors are charging more; public project bids, such as those for the Green Lake seismic retrofit and Capitol Hill roof and mechanical system replacement, came in far above architectural estimates—resulting in delays and/or potential scope revisions. Additional risks and challenges associated with working on the Library's building portfolio can include, but are not limited to:

- Unforeseen conditions often found in century-old buildings
- Expected near-term changes to seismic building codes, likely to be more stringent than current codes
- Potential near-term changes to ADA/accessibility building codes, likely to be more stringent than current codes
- The Mayor's Executive Order seeking to eliminate the City's use of fossil fuels
- A highly active local construction market, leading to heightened competition for a limited number of qualified contractors

The Central Library will enter its third decade of service during 2024, and its systems are aging. A building of the Central Library's size, complexity, and intensity of use requires significant annual maintenance to preserve core functionality and continually improve building efficiency. Updating Central's mechanical and HVAC systems to align with current City policy (including the Mayoral order to eliminate fossil fuels) and lessen its carbon footprint will require significant funding beyond the annual Levy major maintenance allocation.

A system-wide internal evaluation of major maintenance needs was completed two years ago. Those needs were projected at roughly \$250 million for the next decade, with a roughly 60%/40% split between the costs projected at Central/branches. The bulk of the costs (~70%) would involve asset preservation in the categories of building envelope, roof and window repair/replacement, and mechanical systems (including HVAC and plumbing). While the \$250 million figure seems sizable, it is also quite possibly too low as inflation at the time was estimated at 4% annually (construction inflation has trended much higher recently), and there may be larger issues beyond the scope of major maintenance/asset preservation, such as potential seismic retrofits or full system-wide conversion from dependence on fossil fuels.

VI. Opportunities

While the Library is faced with risks each year, we are also presented with opportunities. Two opportunity areas have been analyzed as part of this section.

A. Strategic Planning

Guided by an internal core team and with staff, community, and partner input, a “Future of the Library” strategic foresight study was conducted in early 2023. Input for the Strategic Foresight process was gathered through multiple core team meetings, staff and community workshops with dozens of Library staff and community stakeholders participating, and a community and stakeholder survey for those who could not participate in person.

Using understandings from that study, the Library has engaged a consultant to lead the organization through an extensive strategic planning initiative. In support of this, the Library has engaged patrons, community partners serving Seattle’s many diverse communities, staff and key stakeholders. The Library has also had this feedback analyzed by a third-party qualitative analyst to ensure our understanding of the feedback is accurate and reflected in the direction of the plan. The plan is expected to be available in early 2024.

B. Capital Grants, Campaigns, and Alternative Funding Mechanisms

As the Library’s building portfolio continues to age, leveraging alternative funding mechanisms will have to be strategically employed by the organization to keep pace with accelerating needs. Increased research into the capital grant sphere, targeted capital campaigns, and bond issuance will all need to receive consideration by the organization. Organizational readiness of the Library and the Foundation must be assessed, a clear plan with a compelling case needs to be developed, and strong leadership to focus on longitudinal goals will all be essential. While there is much work to be done in this realm, there is also a great deal of promise and opportunity.

Closing Summary

Stable funding going into 2024 allows the Library to focus on longer term planning efforts. While the levy provides necessary resources to support ongoing Library programs and services, it is set to end in 2026. Internal planning on how to approach a future levy is already underway. Additionally, considering the upcoming 2025-2026 biennium and the City’s \$251 million projected revenue shortfall, it will be critical to work collaboratively with other leaders to develop a sustainable plan regarding funding over the long term.

Attachments

1	2024 Operations Plan compared to 2023 Adopted Budget
2	Key Changes in 2024 relative to 2023 Adopted Budget
3	Library Language Access Plan
4	Library Board Race and Social Justice Policy
5	2019 Library Levy Categories & Budget Cross-walk
6	2024 Capital Improvement Projects
7	Long-Term Capital Improvement Program Plan
8	Library Gift Fund Project Listing
9	Library Organizational Chart

Attachment 1

2024 Operations Plan Compared to 2023 Adopted

LIBRARY FUND & LIBRARY LEVY OPERATING

	2023 Adopted	FTE	2024 Proposed	FTE	% Change	FTE Change
CHIEF LIBRARIAN'S OFFICE	\$486,000	2.0	\$728,000	2.8	50%	0.8
INSTITUTIONAL & STRATEGIC ADVANCEMENT						
Institutional & Strategic Advancement Administration	231,000	1.0	234,000	1.0	1%	-
Communications	428,000	2.8	443,000	2.8	4%	-
Marketing and Online Services	1,229,500	7.0	1,258,000	7.2	2%	0.2
Institutional & Strategic Advancement Sub-Total	\$1,888,500	10.8	\$1,935,000	11.0	2%	0.2
HUMAN RESOURCES						
Human Resources	2,517,000	10.0	2,702,000	10.0	7%	-
Health & Safety Services	171,000	1.0	161,000	1.0	-6%	-
Human Resources Sub-Total	\$2,688,000	11.0	\$2,863,000	11.0	7%	0.0
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES						
Admin Services Administration	617,000	3.4	409,000	2.2	-34%	(1.3)
Financial Services	1,615,000	7.1	1,737,000	7.1	8%	-
Event Services	597,000	5.0	587,000	5.0	-2%	-
Facilities & Building Maintenance	8,544,000	53.5	8,704,000	54.0	2%	0.5
Security Services	2,467,000	21.0	2,531,000	21.0	3%	-
Administrative Services Sub-Total	\$13,840,000	90.0	\$13,968,000	89.2	1%	(0.8)
LIBRARY PROGRAMS & SERVICES						
LIBRARY PROGRAMS & SERVICES ADMINISTRATION						
Library Programs & Services Administration	2,078,300	12.4	2,231,000	13.1	7%	0.7
Sub-Total	\$2,078,300	12.4	\$2,231,000	13.1	7%	0.7
COLLECTIONS & ACCESS						
Circulation Services	3,480,000	37.0	3,554,000	36.2	2%	(0.9)
Materials Distribution Services	2,370,000	16.3	2,164,000	15.9	-9%	(0.4)
Technical & Collection Services	13,420,000	35.1	13,621,000	35.1	1%	-
Special Collections	900,000	6.3	925,000	6.3	3%	-
Sub-Total	\$20,170,000	94.7	\$20,264,000	93.4	0%	(1.3)
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY						
Information Technology	6,508,000	16.7	6,585,000	16.7	1%	-
Sub-Total	\$6,508,000	16.7	\$6,585,000	16.7	1%	0.0
PUBLIC SERVICES						
Branch & Central Library Operations	40,237,000	330.2	41,392,000	329.3	3%	(0.9)
Sub-Total	\$40,237,000	330.2	41,392,000	329.3	3%	(0.9)
EQUITY, LEARNING, & ENGAGEMENT SERVICES						
Community Engagement & Economic Dev	1,278,000	8.9	1,278,000	8.9	0%	-
Lifelong Access	729,000	5.6	751,000	5.6	3%	-
Youth & Family Learning Services	860,000	5.0	959,000	5.0	12%	-
Sub-Total	\$2,867,000	19.5	2,988,000	19.5	4%	0.0
Library Programs & Services Sub-Total	\$71,860,300	473.4	\$73,460,000	472.0	2%	(1.5)
Projected Budget Savings	(\$2,663,000)		(\$2,860,000)			
LIBRARY FUND & LIBRARY LEVY OPERATING TOTAL	\$88,099,800	587.1	\$90,094,000	585.9	2%	(1.3)

Attachment 1 (cont.)

2024 Operations Plan Compared to 2023 Adopted

CIP, FOUNDATION, & GIFT FUNDS

	2023 Adopted	FTE	2024 Proposed	FTE	% Change	FTE Change
CHIEF LIBRARIAN'S OFFICE	\$369,000	1.0	\$377,000	1.0	2%	0.0
INSTITUTIONAL & STRATEGIC ADVANCEMENT						
Communications	125,000	1.0	132,000	1.0	6%	-
Community Partnerships & Government Relations	98,000	1.0	102,000	1.0	4%	-
Marketing and Online Services	372,000	1.0	362,000	1.0	-3%	-
Institutional & Strategic Advancement Sub-Total	\$595,000	3.0	\$596,000	3.0	0%	0.0
HUMAN RESOURCES						
Human Resources	179,000	1.4	188,000	1.4	5%	-
Human Resources Sub-Total	\$179,000	1.4	\$188,000	1.4	5%	0.0
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES						
Admin Services Administration	270,000	0.6	225,000	0.1	-17%	(0.5)
Financial Services	269,000	2.0	244,000	2.0	-9%	-
Capital Improvement Program	9,698,000	4.3	5,393,000	4.8	-44%	0.5
Administrative Services Sub-Total	\$10,237,000	6.8	\$5,862,000	6.8	-43%	0.0
LIBRARY PROGRAMS & SERVICES						
LIBRARY PROGRAMS & SERVICES ADMINISTRATION						
Library Programs & Services Administration	160,000	-	102,000	-	-36%	-
Sub-Total	\$160,000	-	\$102,000	-	-36%	-
COLLECTIONS & ACCESS						
Circulation Services	-	-	-	-	0%	-
Materials Distribution Services	25,000	-	25,000	-	0%	-
Technical & Collection Services	1,186,000	-	1,284,000	-	8%	-
Special Collections	223,000	0.5	274,000	1.5	23%	1.0
Sub-Total	\$1,434,000	0.5	\$1,583,000	1.5	10%	1.0
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY						
Information Technology	1,145,000	0.4	711,000	0.4	-38%	-
Sub-Total	\$1,145,000	0.4	\$711,000	0.4	-38%	0.0
PUBLIC SERVICES						
Branch & Central Library Operations	19,000	-	41,000	-	116%	-
Sub-Total	19,000	-	41,000	-	116%	0.0
EQUITY, LEARNING, & ENGAGEMENT SERVICES						
Community Engagement & Economic Dev	1,212,500	4.0	1,382,000	4.0	14%	-
Lifelong Access	289,000	2.2	280,000	2.2	-3%	-
Youth & Family Learning Services	1,044,000	2.0	977,000	2.0	-6%	-
Sub-Total	\$2,545,500	8.2	2,639,000	8.2	4%	0.0
Library Programs & Services Sub-Total	\$5,303,500	9.1	\$5,076,000	10.1	-4%	1.0
CIP, FOUNDATION & GIFT FUND TOTAL	\$16,683,500	21.2	\$12,099,000	22.2	-27%	1.0

TOTAL LIBRARY OPERATIONS PLAN BUDGET

TOTAL LIBRARY OPERATIONS PLAN	\$104,783,300	608.3	\$102,193,000	608.1	-2%	(0.2)
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Attachment 2

Key Operating Budget Changes in 2024 Relative to the 2023 Adopted Operations Plan

All changes detailed below account for a salary step increases of up to 5% for eligible employees. This also reflects technical changes are related to inflation, rate adjustments, and healthcare. A 2023 & 2024 AWI under negotiation by the City--rate TBD.

LIBRARY FUND & LIBRARY LEVY OPERATING

	2023 Adopted	2024 Proposed	Net Budget Change	% Chg	FTE Chg
CHIEF LIBRARIAN'S OFFICE					
Technical Adjustments	486,000	491,000	5,000	1%	-
Levy Admin transferred to CLO	-	153,000	153,000	-100%	0.8
Language Premium budget centralized under CLO	-	84,000	84,000	-100%	-
Chief Librarian's Office Sub-Total	\$486,000	\$728,000	\$242,000	50%	0.8
INSTITUTIONAL & STRATEGIC ADVANCEMENT					
Technical Adjustments	1,868,500	1,913,000	44,500	2%	-
SPL.com website support	20,000	22,000	2,000	10%	0.2
Institutional & Strategic Advancement Sub-Total	\$1,888,500	\$1,935,000	\$46,500	2%	0.2
HUMAN RESOURCES					
Technical Adjustments	1,904,000	1,966,000	62,000	3%	-
City of Seattle Central Costs	784,000	897,000	113,000	14%	-
Human Resources Sub-Total	\$2,688,000	\$2,863,000	\$175,000	7%	-
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES					
Technical Adjustments	13,174,000	13,384,000	210,000	2%	-
Levy Admin transferred to CLO	-	(153,000)	(153,000)	100%	(0.8)
City of Seattle Central Costs	665,000	737,000	72,000	11%	-
Administrative Services Sub-Total	\$13,839,000	\$13,968,000	\$129,000	1%	(0.8)
LIBRARY PROGRAMS & SERVICES					
Technical Adjustments	70,394,000	71,917,000	1,523,000	2%	(1.5)
MS365 Conversion Funding Sunset from SPLF	100,000	150,000	50,000	50%	-
City of Seattle Central Costs	1,366,000	1,393,000	27,000	2%	-
Library Programs & Services Sub-Total	\$71,860,300	\$73,460,000	\$1,599,700	2%	(1.5)
Vacancy Savings	(\$2,663,000)	(\$2,860,000)			
LIBRARY FUND & LIBRARY LEVY OPERATING TOTAL	\$88,098,800	\$90,094,000	\$1,995,200	2%	(1.3)

Attachment 3

Library Language Access Plan Summary

Mission

The mission of the Seattle Public Library is to bring people, information and ideas together to enrich lives and build community.

Language Access Plan

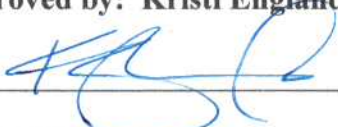
The Library provides the following as needed for patrons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP):

- The Library employs a significant number of public facing staff who speak languages beyond English, with an emphasis on neighborhoods with higher populations of LEP patrons
- The Library's World Languages unit provides print materials (books, magazines and newspapers) in 44 languages. It also has dedicated librarians in the World Languages department who can assist with translation and interpretation in Chinese, Russian and Spanish.
- Library staff access to Language Line when serving LEP patrons in person or over the phone
- When working with program managers, our marketing team uses a strategic framework to help evaluate language needs for the intended audience and how to best meet those needs with translation or original creation in each language. Considerations in addition to audience needs include the Library's ability to deliver service in other languages, project timelines, and content complexity and longevity.
- The Library regularly offers programs and services in four of the seven Tier 1 languages identified by OIRA: Chinese, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese. These offerings are supported by staff who speak these languages natively, community members, or both.



The Seattle Public Library

Board Policy

RACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE	Adopted by the Library Board Jan. 27, 2018
Owner: Executive Director and Chief Librarian	
Approved by: Kristi England, Library Board President 	

BACKGROUND

The Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) is the City of Seattle’s longstanding commitment to eliminate racial disparities and achieve racial equity in Seattle. This important effort recognizes that ending institutional racism involves more than simply developing programs to help people of color. The initiative works to address biases built into institutions and society, and end the underlying structural racism that perpetuates racial and social inequities.

In response to this initiative and its importance in the Library’s particular work, the Board of Trustees of The Seattle Public Library (SPL) has committed itself to addressing the Library’s role for doing the same in and through its programs, services and staff. To best serve the public and assist staff, the board has created an enhanced, Library-specific Race and Social Justice Policy to support this mission and the Library’s work.

This policy provides guidance to Library staff to underscore the organization’s ongoing RSJI efforts, support staff understanding, guide the use of resources, and highlight the Library’s unique role in addressing this challenging issue.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Seattle Public Library actively commits its programs and resources to eliminate institutional racism by ensuring that barriers to access by staff and the public are eliminated, by supporting broader public access to Library programs and services, and by providing the public and staff equitable opportunities for growth through employment and education. The key concepts of this policy include:

- Making a system wide commitment;
- Naming institutional racism;
- Acknowledging that there are barriers that need elimination;
- Affirmatively supporting programs to achieve these ends; and
- Making sure that there is equitable access to skills training and employment opportunities for staff and the public.

DEFINITIONS

Individual/Interpersonal racism: Pre-judgement, bias, stereotypes or generalizations about an individual or group based on race.

Institutional racism: Policies, practices, and procedures that work to the benefit of white people and the detriment of people of color, usually unintentionally or inadvertently.

Structural racism: The interplay of policies, practices and programs of differing institutions which leads to adverse outcomes and conditions, occurring within the context of racialized historical and cultural conditions, for communities of color compared to white communities.

APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to any and all Library activities.

RELATED LAWS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Board Policy, *Diversity*.

Administrative Procedure, *Diversity Action Plan*.

Seattle City Council Resolution 31164, *Affirming the City's Race and Social Justice Work*.

Attachment 5

2019 Library Levy Categories & Budget Cross-walk

2019 Library Levy Ordinance (Section 4) – Six Categories of Library Services

Levy investments will be made in six categories of Library services. Program elements, in subsections A through F of this ordinance, are illustrative examples. In accordance with the annual City budget process, each year the Library Board shall adopt an annual operations plan and capital budget. The Chief Librarian and the Library Board shall submit to the Mayor and the City Council an annual levy expenditure plan that will supplement, maintain and improve the core Library services identified in this section. Levy proceeds will be used, in combination with the annual budget appropriation of City General Fund, Real Estate Excise Tax, and other City funds as available to the Library, for Library services.

Hours and Access

Major program elements include: supporting Library operating hours in neighborhood branches and the Central Library; providing access to Library programs and services in the community; and outreach and engagement services throughout the city.

Collections

Major program elements include: increasing the variety, depth and accessibility of collections with new titles and additional copies in various physical and digital formats; providing additional online resources as new platforms and services emerge; curating a local history collection and making those resources more widely available through digitization; providing fine-free access to the Library's collections; and continuing innovative approaches to collection distribution and to fulfilling patron material requests.

Technology

Major program elements include: replacing and upgrading the Library's technology infrastructure, including its Integrated Library System, the Library's main business platform for procuring, processing, and tracking Library materials; its enterprise network that provides high-speed internet and Wi-Fi access to the Central Library and all 26 branches; and its technology equipment, such as switches, routers, servers, cabling, computers, tablets, printers, copiers, scanners and widescreen monitors, and other audiovisual equipment for newly emerging technologies, such as virtual and augmented reality. Further, this category maintains and enhances the SPL.org website and catalog, with a focus on language accessibility, as well as device compatibility and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The technology program also supports the Library's digital equity efforts, including digital literacy instruction and provision and support of internet access devices for use within Library buildings and for check-out.

Maintenance

Major program elements include enhanced resources to provide routine, preventive and major maintenance for the Library's heavily-used buildings as they age, to prolong their useful life. Maintenance also includes funding to seismically retrofit three landmarked branches identified as high-vulnerability in the City's Unreinforced Masonry Building Study.

Supporting children

Program elements include support for programming targeted toward children ages zero to five.

Administration

Administration program elements include supporting implementation and accountability measures for Levy programs and annual reporting to the public on Levy outcomes.

2019 Library Levy Category to 2024 Library Priority Cross-Walk

2019 Library Levy Category	Library Priorities	2024 Proposed*
Hours & Access	Hours & Access	\$13,692
Collections	Providing Books & Materials	\$5,931
Technology	Technology & Online Services	\$2,670
Supporting Children	Literacy & Early Learning	\$381
Maintenance	Building & Facility Support	\$1,947
Maintenance	Major Maintenance (CIP)	\$5,244
Technology	Major Maintenance (IT)	\$615
Administration	Administration	\$573
Total		\$31,053

**Amounts in \$1,000s*

Attachment 6
2024 Capital Improvement Projects

Project Description	Fund	2024 Budget
Seismic Retrofit/Unreinforced Masonry (Levy & REET) - continuing design and construction costs associated with the University and Columbia branch seismic retrofit projects. Levy portion includes dedicated seismic allocation plus carve out from the base major maintenance budget.	Levy	1,928,000
	REET	78,000
Mechanical & building systems, branches - mechanical system repair, replacement and/or electrification at priority branches (selection dependent upon pending federal grant funding decisions); also for emergent needs or as-needed branch repairs.	Levy	3,316,000
IT enterprise equipment upgrades - Wireless Access Point replacement at Central and branches	Levy	615,000
	Subtotal	Levy \$5,859,000
	Subtotal	REET \$78,000
	Total	\$5,937,000

**Personnel costs have been prorated*

Attachment 7
2024 to 2029 Capital Improvement Program Plan

Project	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Library Major Maintenance (REET)	78,000	386,000	605,000	785,000	975,000	685,000
Library Major Maintenance (Levy)	4,316,000	4,489,000	4,669,000	-	-	-
Unreinforced Masonry/Seismic Retrofit (Dedicated Levy)	928,000	3,500,000	1,839,000	-	-	-
IT Enterprise Equipment (Levy)	615,000	-	474,000	-	-	-
Total	5,937,000	8,375,000	7,587,000	785,000	975,000	685,000

**Attachment 8
Interest Earnings and Gift Fund Budget**

Non-Labor Detail

	Budget
Robert C. Bunn Trust	
Hours & Access	
Content strategy & creation	100,250
Translation & language support	20,000
Targeted advertising & communication	52,000
Targeted Marketing	52,000
Promotional printing	15,000
SDOT Library Street Signage	6,000
Admin	
All Staff Day Event	102,000
CLO Speaker Series	20,000
Strategic Direction Support	20,000
Professional Board Training and Conferences	15,000
Board Consultant for CLO Review	4,500
CPGR Programming Support	700
Total	407,450

Interest Earnings

Hours & Access	
Marketing Outreach Giveaways	30,000
Intern stipends, refreshments, feminine hygiene, ha	11,000
Admin	
Mayoral/City-wide initiatives	20,000
Legal Services and Support	25,000
RSJI Change Team Budget	13,500
Employee Engagement Committee	5,000
CLO Dues and Memberships	35,000
Total	139,500

Misc Gifts

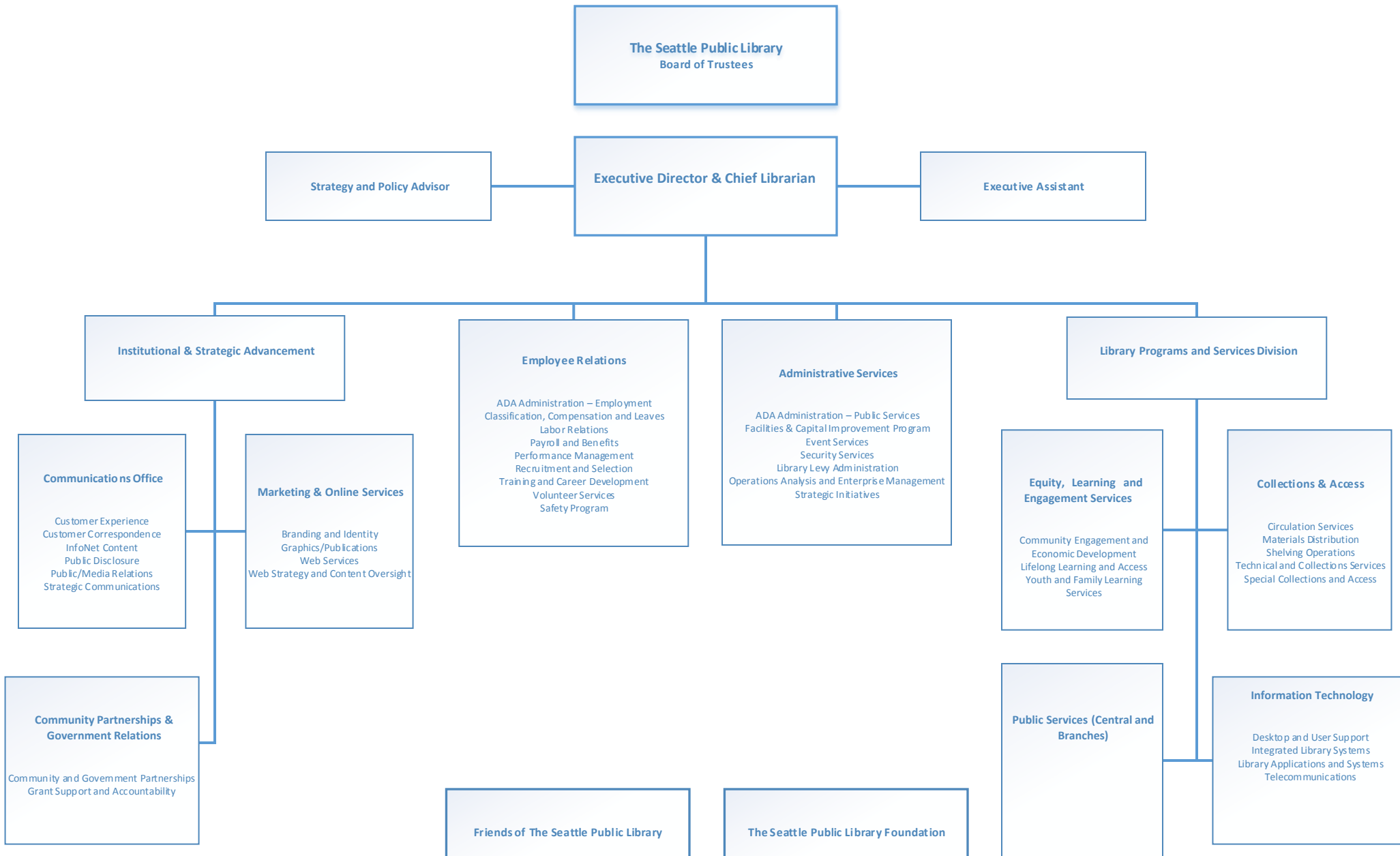
Providing Books & Materials	
Gustave J. Snelling Trust	8,000
Helen Snelling Trust	8,000
Halvor Holbeck Estate - Materials Distribution	25,000
Brown Estate - Special Collections	13,000
Dowse Bequest - Special Collections	7,000
Total	61,000

Labor Detail (A)

	Budget
Albert S. Balch Trust	
Providing Books & Materials	
Librn-A	65,000
Total	65,000
Robert C. Bunn Trust - Baseline	
Admin	
Com Prtnshps&GovRltnsPrgm Mgr	89,000
DigCommStrat	143,000
Strategy&Policy Advsr, CLO	163,000
Total	395,000
Robert C. Bunn Trust - 2-year Pilot	
Admin	
STA	18,000
Human Resources Manager	172,000
Procurement Support	137,000
Technology & Online Services	
SocMediaSpec	95,000
Total	422,000

Attachment 9
Library Organizational Chart

The Seattle Public Library



Friends of The Seattle Public Library

The Seattle Public Library Foundation



The Seattle Public Library

NEWS RELEASES

Date	Title
5-Dec-2023	Apply to be a Writers' Room resident at the Central Library by Dec. 22
18-Dec-2023	The Library adds online access to the Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, and NYT Cooking, Games and more



The Seattle Public Library
MEDIA COVERAGE

Date	Organization	Headline	Details	Link
3-Dec-2023	Seattle Times	<u>Reader Rant & Rave</u>	RAVE to the Ballard Elks Lodge #827, book dealers, Seattle Public Library and other donors to the VA Puget Sound's lending library! Before their commitment and donations, our bookshelves were tattered and bare. Now, we receive incredible weekly donations to serve our veterans! Multiple areas of our facility, including our hospice unit, are grateful recipients! Thank you for prioritizing our veterans!	<u>https://www.seattletimes.com/life/lifestyle/rant-rave-118/</u>
6-Dec-2023	Seattle Medium	<u>Seattle Public Library Invites Writers To Apply For Prestigious Writers' Room Residency Program</u>	In a remarkable opportunity for aspiring writers, the Seattle Public Library is now accepting applications for its highly sought-after Eulalie and Carlo Scandiuzzi Writers' Room Residency program. This unique program provides selected writers with a dedicated space to work on their projects, tapping into the rich resources and inspiring ambiance of the library.	<u>https://seattlemedium.com/seattle-public-library-invites-writers-to-apply-for-prestigious-writers-room-residency-program/</u>

6-Dec-2023	My Ballard	Ballard Library bringing back its free Sunday board games after pausing during the pandemic	Librarian Jonathan Koroshec tells My Ballard they have everything from amateur checkers to advanced chess to role-playing games (RPGs).	https://www.myballard.com/2023/12/06/ballard-library-bringing-back-its-free-sunday-board-games-after-pausing-during-the-pandemic/
8-Dec-2023	The Urbanist	An Interview with Seattle's Chief Librarian, Tom Fay	When I look at what we're trying to do with the Strategic Direction, we're talking about the transformational impact of belonging, and of being a resilient community. That's everything — that's from staffing, to those who support us, to the public at large. That is going to create more equitable opportunities for all. If you believe you belong, it's a better place to start than feeling that you're an outsider.	https://www.theurbanist.org/2023/12/08/an-interview-with-seattles-chief-librarian-tom-fay/
13-Dec-2023	Seattle Medium	Southwest Seattle Showcase Lets Artists Display Work For Free	Free from the concerns of gallery rules and submission requirements, artists who work in all mediums recently displayed their work on the walls and bookshelves of the Southwest Branch of the Seattle Public Library. This was the 31st annual Southwest Artist Showcase, a non-juried art show open to anyone in the southwest Seattle community, which ranges from Alki to the Arroyo Heights neighborhoods. The show takes place every October, this year running from Oct. 7 through Nov. 4.	https://seattlemedium.com/southwest-seattle-showcase-lets-artists-display-work-for-free/

19-Dec-2023	Seattle's Child	<u>Wordle 'round the family for FREE!</u>	SPL joins KCLS to expand family access to Washington Post and NYT — including games	https://www.seattlechild.com/free-access-to-nyt-wordle-round-the-family/
19-Dec-2023	Geekwire	<u>Seattle aims to unleash the power of open data through hackathon and new city strategy</u>	The winning project came from Team Bun Bun and featured a data visualization that layered multifamily building permit data onto the city's Race and Social Equity Index Map. The map identifies census tracts with the highest priority for equity efforts, and the visualization revealed that, in fact, the highest priority areas received the largest number of housing building permits from late 2020 to this month.	https://www.geekwire.com/2023/seattle-aims-to-unleash-the-power-of-open-data-through-hackathon-and-new-city-strategy/
25-Dec-2023	Seattle Times	<u>The most popular books of 2023, according to Seattle Public Library</u>	As 2023 comes to a close, it's time to reflect on all the great media that came out of the year, including books! We wanted to know what titles Seattle Public Library patrons were reading this year, so we asked our friends at the library to share their list of the most checked-out books of 2023. Fittingly, the two most checked-out physical books this year were by authors with Seattle ties: "Lessons in Chemistry" by Bonnie Garmus and "A Fever in the Heartland" by Timothy Egan.	https://www.seattletimes.com/entertainment/books/the-most-popular-books-of-2023-according-to-seattle-public-library/

27-Dec-2023	West Seattle Blog	WEST SEATTLE WEDNESDAY: 8 notes	Crafternoon for Teens/Tweens: 2 pm to 3:30 pm at Southwest Library (9010 35th SW), "Drop in to make duct tape crafts, hangout, play games, and eat snacks!" Free; ages 11-18.	https://westseattleblog.com/2023/12/west-seattle-wednesday-8-notes-3/
29-Dec-2023	NPR	Public libraries reveal their most borrowed books of 2023	Lessons In Chemistry was also the most borrowed book at public libraries in Seattle, Boston and Cleveland. However, in Topeka, Kan., it was not even on the top 10. Readers there preferred mysteries, thrillers and what's getting called romantasy.	https://www.npr.org/transcripts/1221912275