

Library Levy 2022 Annual Report

May 17, 2023

Seattle City Council Public Assets and Homelessness Committee





2019 Library Levy

- August 2019 vote (76% approval)
- \$219.1 million seven-year levy renewed 2012 levy commitments and promised expanded hours and services.
- Levy revenues, collected through property tax, grow 1% per year.
- Levy structured to collect more money in early years to cover assumed 4% annual inflation.
- “Library of the Future” planning effort funded by levy.



“I look forward to learning from the many communities we serve to help shape the future of the Library.”

– Chief Librarian Tom Fay



Key Levy Investment Areas

Levy Categories	Total Planned Spending (2020-2026)	%
Access to Library services and programs when people need them	\$87.0M	40%
Robust Collections of materials in physical and digital formats	\$42.7M	20%
Digital equity and upgraded Technology and Online Services	\$28.4M	13%
Expanded Children's Programming for ages 0-5	\$2.0M	1%
Daily and long-term Maintenance to preserve Library facilities	\$55.9M	26%
Total	\$216M*	100%

* Does not include Levy administration or funds expected to be received after levy period end. Reflects original levy plan. Some reallocations occurred in 2020 and 2021 due to pandemic.



Hours and Access

Promise: Reduce barriers to Library services and **expand open hours**

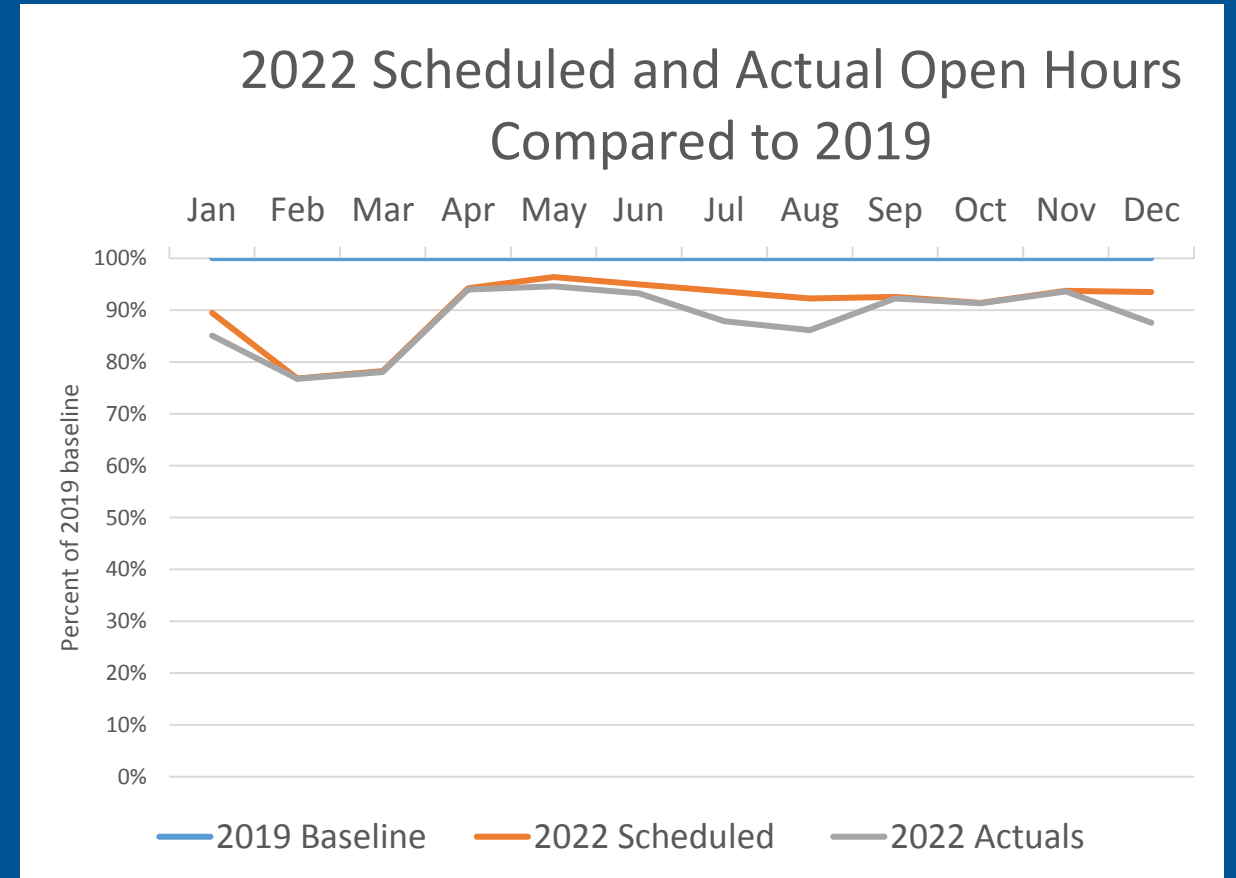
- In 2022, maintained open hours at 27 locations at close to 2019 service levels and restarted in-person programming.
- Prepared for expanded hours in 2023 by adding staff and planning new hours according to public survey results.
- Navigated continued impacts of COVID on Library operations.





COVID and Weather Impacts on Operations

- Started 2022 at 97% of 2019 baseline hours. By Jan. 20, reduced to 77% in response to surge in cases.
- Restored hours to 94% on March 30 and added hours through June.
- Extreme heat and staffing shortages reduced summer hours.
- Dec. hours impacted by ice storm/snow.






Hours and Access

Promise: Reduce barriers to Library services and **expand open hours**

- Added **90+ hours per week** over 2019 levels in March/April 2023, a 7% increase.
- Most branches open **7 days a week**.
- Opened all libraries **more hours on the weekend**, and **swapped Friday for Monday closures** for branches open 6 days a week consistent with 2021 levy survey findings.

A photograph of a person wearing a straw hat, a blue backpack, and jeans, standing at the entrance of a modern library building. The person is looking towards the entrance. A speech bubble is overlaid on the image, containing text.

"I just want to say that the new library hours are **AWESOME!!**"



Hours and Access

Promise: Reduce barriers to Library services and expand open hours

- No late fees as of Jan. 1, 2020, **restoring 18,000 accounts.**
- In-house social services team established in 2022. Adding two **more security officers** in 2023.
- Leveraged private, state and federal funds to install holds pickup lockers in 5 locations, with sixth at Greenwood Branch scheduled for 2023.

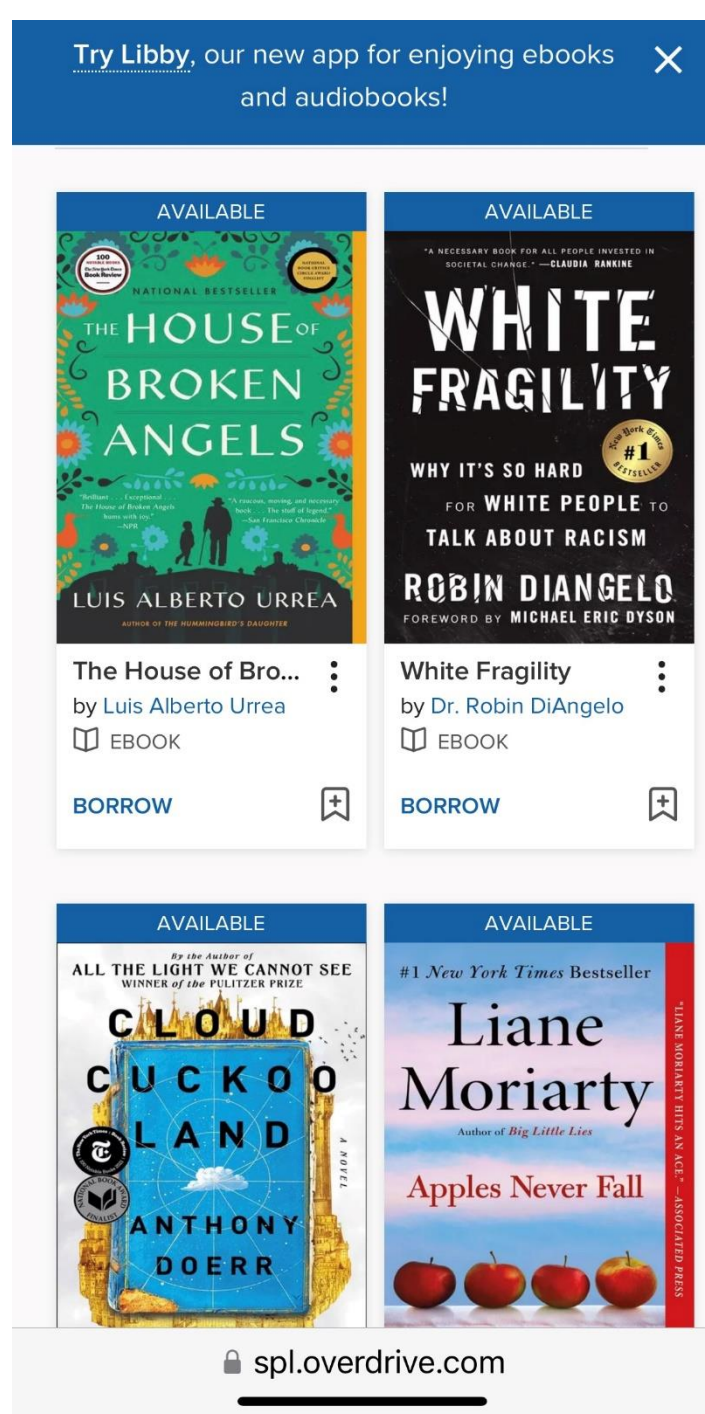




Providing Books and Materials

Promise: Purchase more e-materials

- Added **110,000+** copies to digital collections in 2022, **12.5% more** than we added in 2021.
- Over **151,000 patrons** downloaded more than **4.7 million digital books** (e-books and e-audiobooks), an 8% increase compared to 2021.
- Digital books continue to **cost 3 – 5 times more** than print books, eroding our buying power as demand shifts to online materials.





Providing Books and Materials

Promise: Increase breadth and depth of collection and buy more popular materials including Peak Picks

- Added **203,000+** physical items from all funding sources.
- Celebrated the **fifth anniversary** of the **Peak Picks** collection.
- Added **867 titles** to our collection as a result of **diversity** audits.



“And the idea of Peak Picks? Whoever it was should get a Nobel prize. JMO.”



Technology and Online Services

Promise: Upgrade our technology and support digital access

- **Upgraded 219 public computers.** Over 35,000 people used Library computers nearly 300,000 times.
- Installed 22 ScanEZ stations that can be used to make **free scans and copies**, send faxes and translate scanned text to 100 different languages.

"This is free? ...
I loooooove Seattle
libraries."





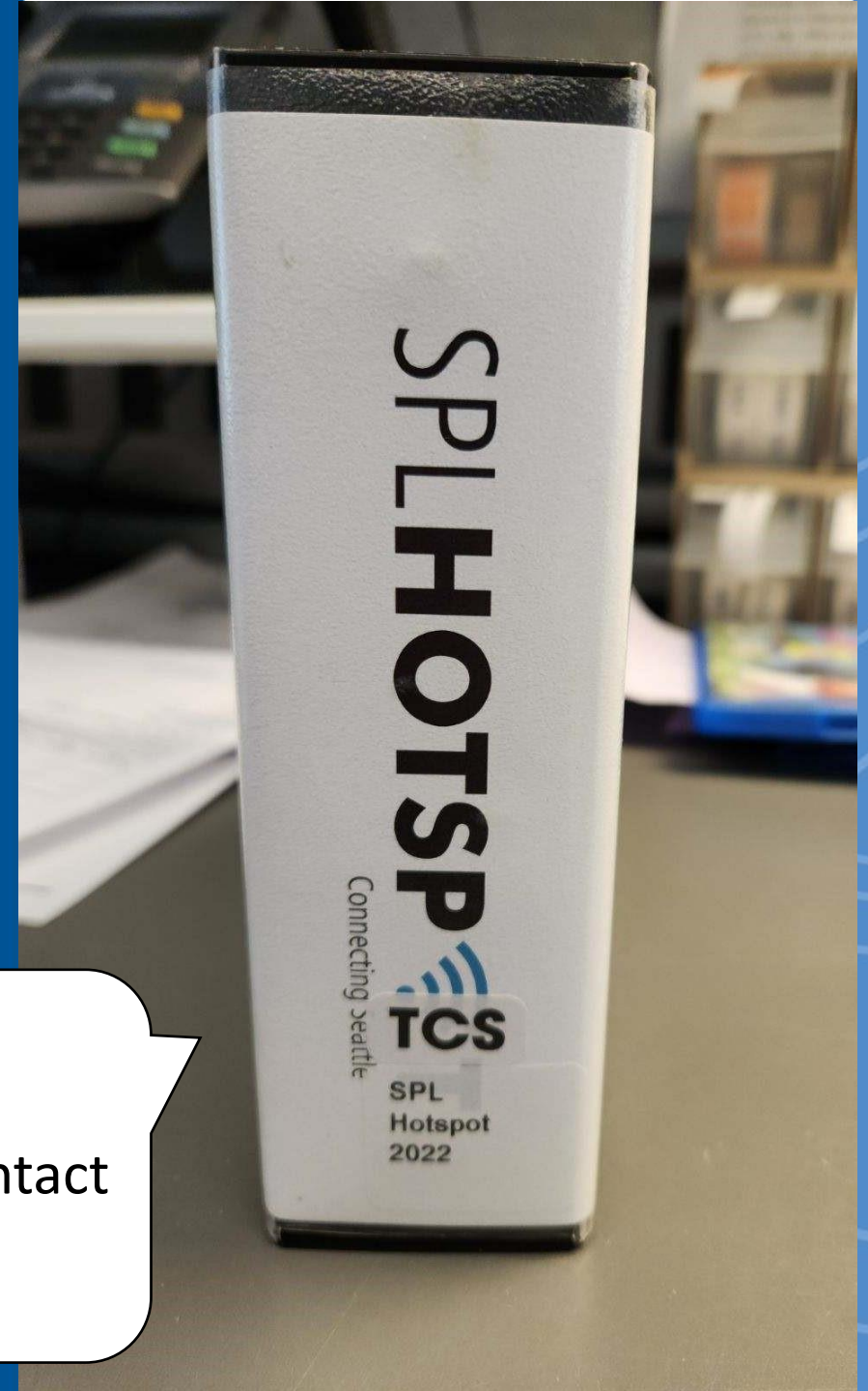
Technology and Online Services

Promise: Upgrade our technology and support digital access

- Loaned **1,270 hot spots** in the community, including 465 for long-term access.
- Partnered with **17 community organizations** including API Chaya, Harborview Abuse and Trauma Center, Lambert House, and University Beyond Bars.

"This has made such a difference in my life. I wouldn't be able to contact my family without it."

- API Chaya hot spot borrower





Children's Programming

Promise: Provide additional support for Library early learning programs for children ages 0 to 5

- Offered weekly Play and Learn sessions at five branches since October.
- Offered over 200 videos on SPLKids YouTube Channel.

“Partnering with the Library allows us to introduce more resources for families. Connecting communities to libraries reinforces that these are their spaces, too.”

- Xiomara Melgar, South Park Play and Learn Facilitator





Maintenance

Promise: Maintain Library buildings and preserve them for the future

- Green Lake Branch **readied for earthquake retrofit, climate upgrades and accessibility improvements** to begin in Q1 2023.
- Substantially completed exterior and ADA improvements at the Douglass-Truth Branch, including **reinstallation of the historic Soul Pole sculpture**.
- Responded to **increasing incidents of vandalism**.







Spending Compared to Budget (2022 actuals)

Levy Category	Revised 2022 Budget <small>(rounded)</small>	Actual 2022 Spending <small>(rounded)</small>	% Spent
Hours and Access	\$13.9M	\$11.2M	81%
Providing Books and Materials	\$5.8M	\$5.6M	96%
Technology and Online Services	\$2.5M	\$2.3M	91%
Children's Programming	\$0.3M	\$0.1M	52%
Maintenance	\$2.0M	\$1.7M	82%
Levy Administration	\$0.5M	\$0.3M	58%
Operating Expenses (Subtotal)	\$25.0M	\$21.2M	85%
Major Maintenance/Technology CIP	\$18.6M	\$2.6M	14%
Total	\$43.6M	\$23.8M	55%

THE SEATTLE PUBLIC LIBRARY





"I love SPL! You give me almost everything I could want."

Questions?

Getting a coat from the Library "is the nicest thing that has happened to me in a long time! It's so nice to know that the Library really cares about its patrons! I know it's not books – but it really matters!"

"The Seattle Public Library is a cultural asset of the highest order, an example of how we, as a city, are doing things right at a time when such examples are rare."

"My new card with The Seattle Public Library has opened new and wonderful learning resources for me, and I am most grateful for these benefits!"