The Seattle Public Library

Library Levy Background

Feb. 19, 2026

www.spl.org/Levy

Agenda

Levy Overview

- Library Budget
- Levy Categories

Collections

- Books & Materials

Building Maintenance

- Major Maintenance
- Facility Support
- Repairs

Technology & Online Services

- Staff & Public Technology
- Internet Access
- Cybersecurity
- Network Infrastructure

Feb. 25: Next Presentation

- Hours & Access
- Helping Children
- Administration & Central Costs

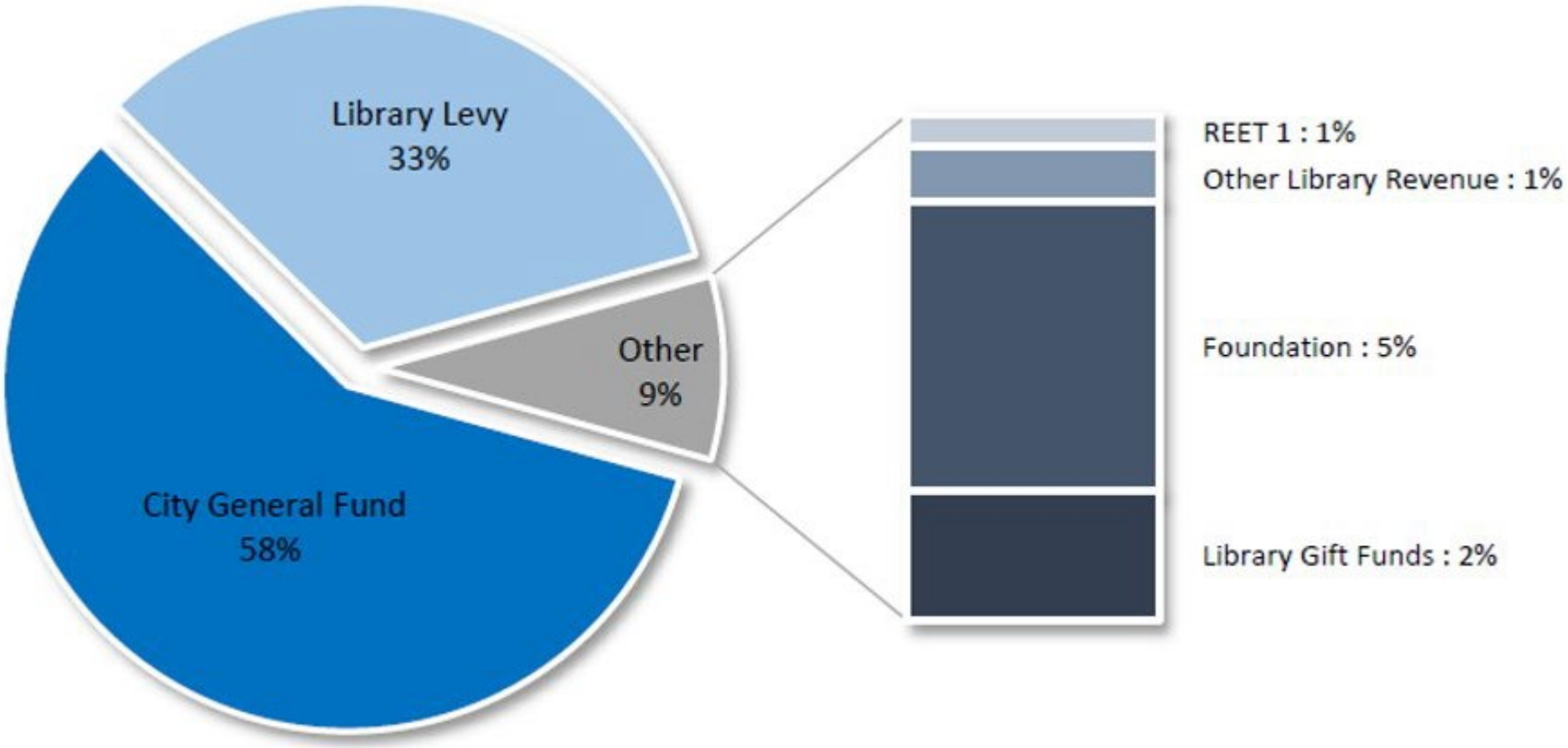
2026 Library Budget

Operating budget $102.5M

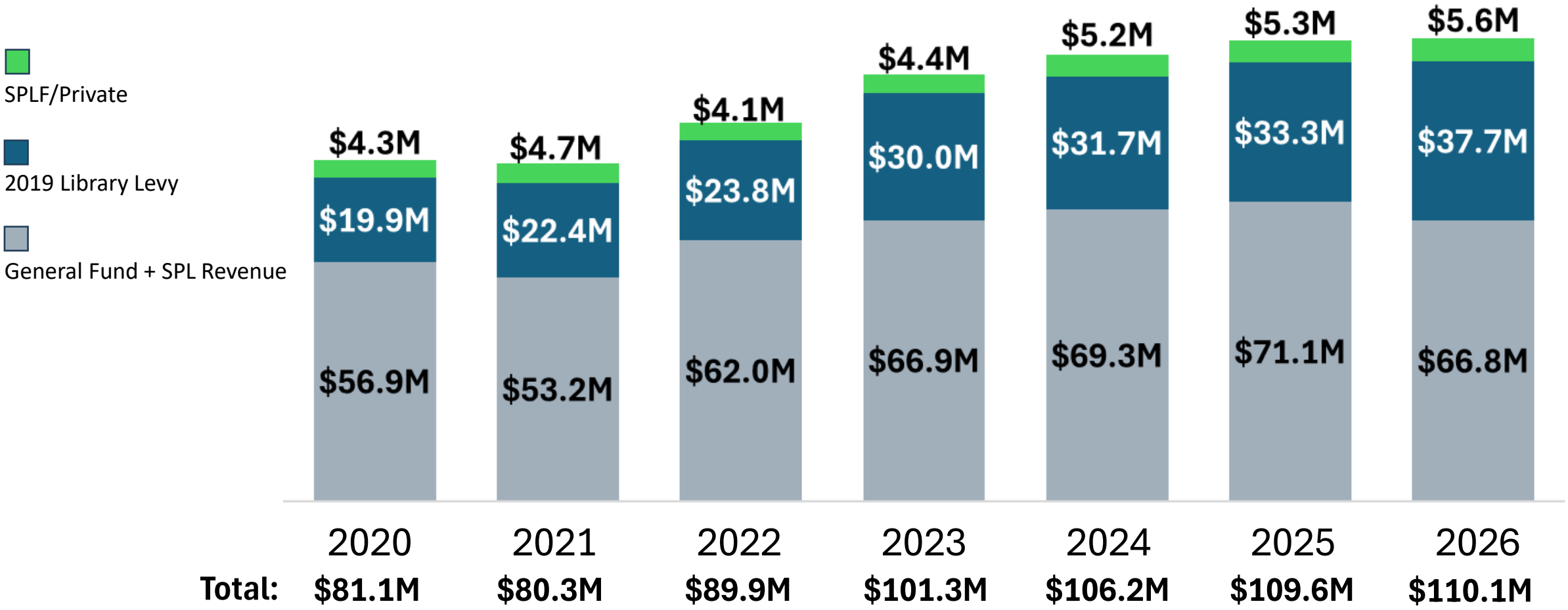
- $35.7M from levy

Capital budget $2.6M

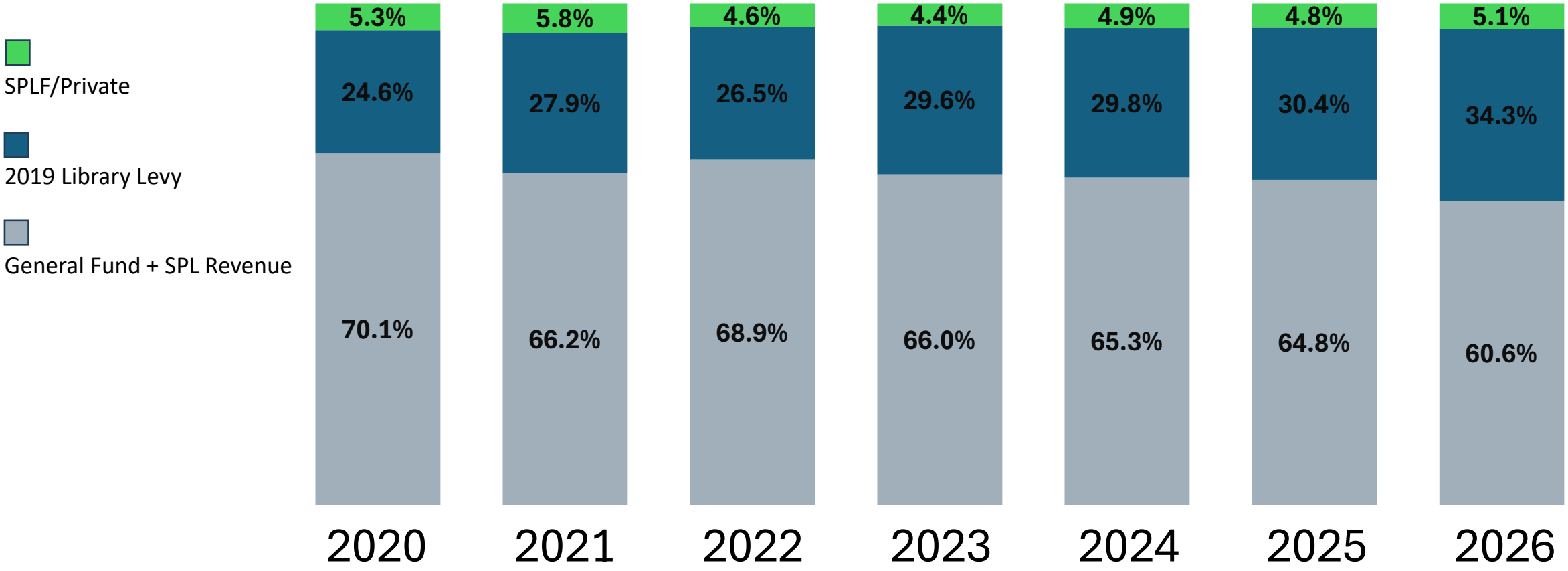
- $2.0M from levy
- $605k from REET



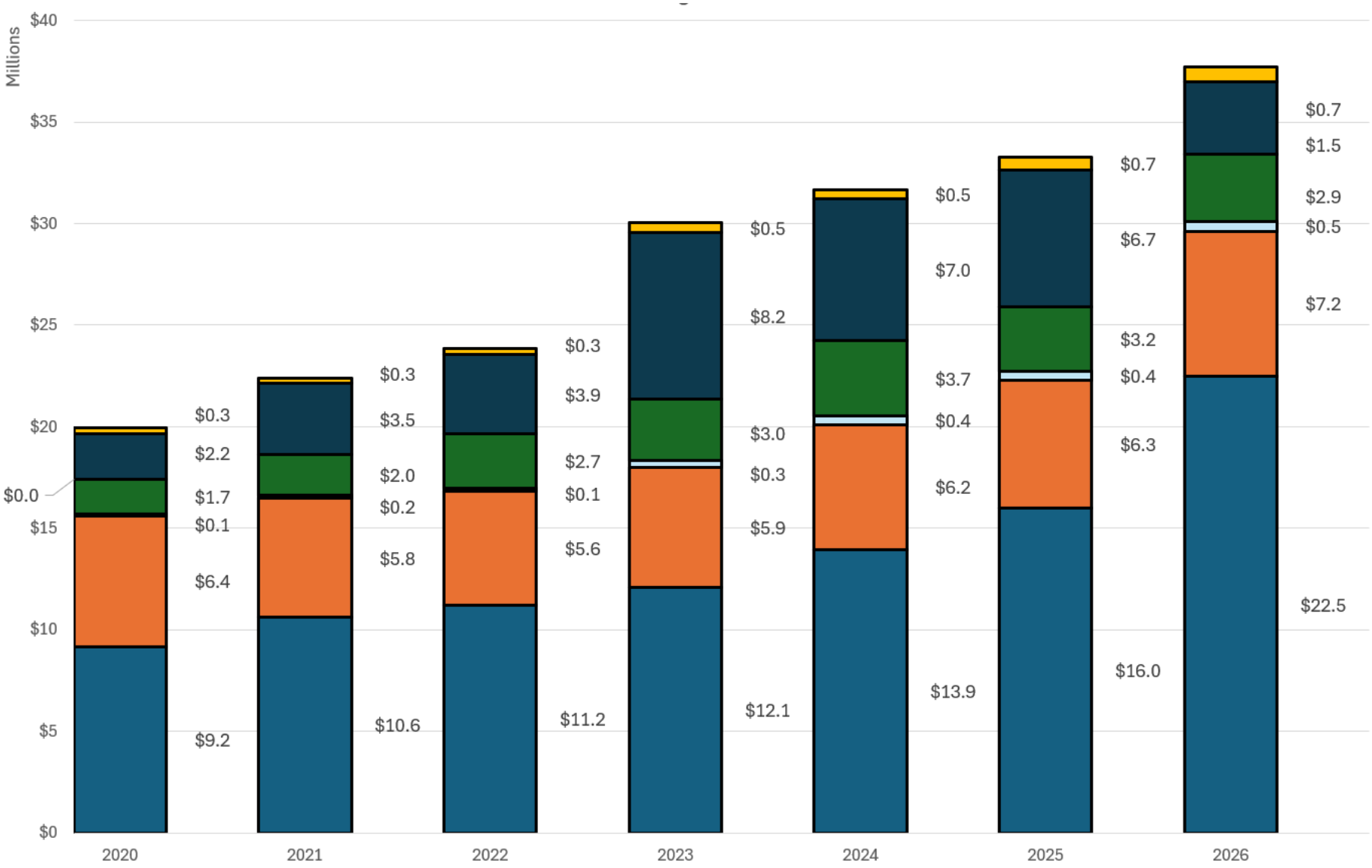
Library Budget: By Funding Source



Annual Levy Funding: Funding Source by Percentage



Annual Levy Funding: By Category



Administration & Central Costs

Building Maintenance

Technology & Online Services

Helping Children

Books & Materials

Hours & Access

Accomplishments

Collections: Books & Materials

The Seattle Public Library

Overview

COLLECTIONS

Physical & digital books

- E-books & e-audiobooks
- For all ages, interests and viewpoints

Physical & digital history items

- Photos, maps, postcards, menus, & more

Unique collections

- LGBTQ+, African American, Aviation, Zines, and other curated collections

DVDs & CDs

Physical & digital magazines, newspapers

- Free access to New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal & magazines

Streaming music, movies & TV

- Hoopla & Kanopy

Highlights

COLLECTIONS

Top 10 largest e-circulation library in the world

- E-book checkouts have nearly doubled since 2019
- Driven by Seattle readers = increased demand

Grew collections

- From 2.4M to 2.9M items since 2019
- Digital items, Peak Picks, Special Collections

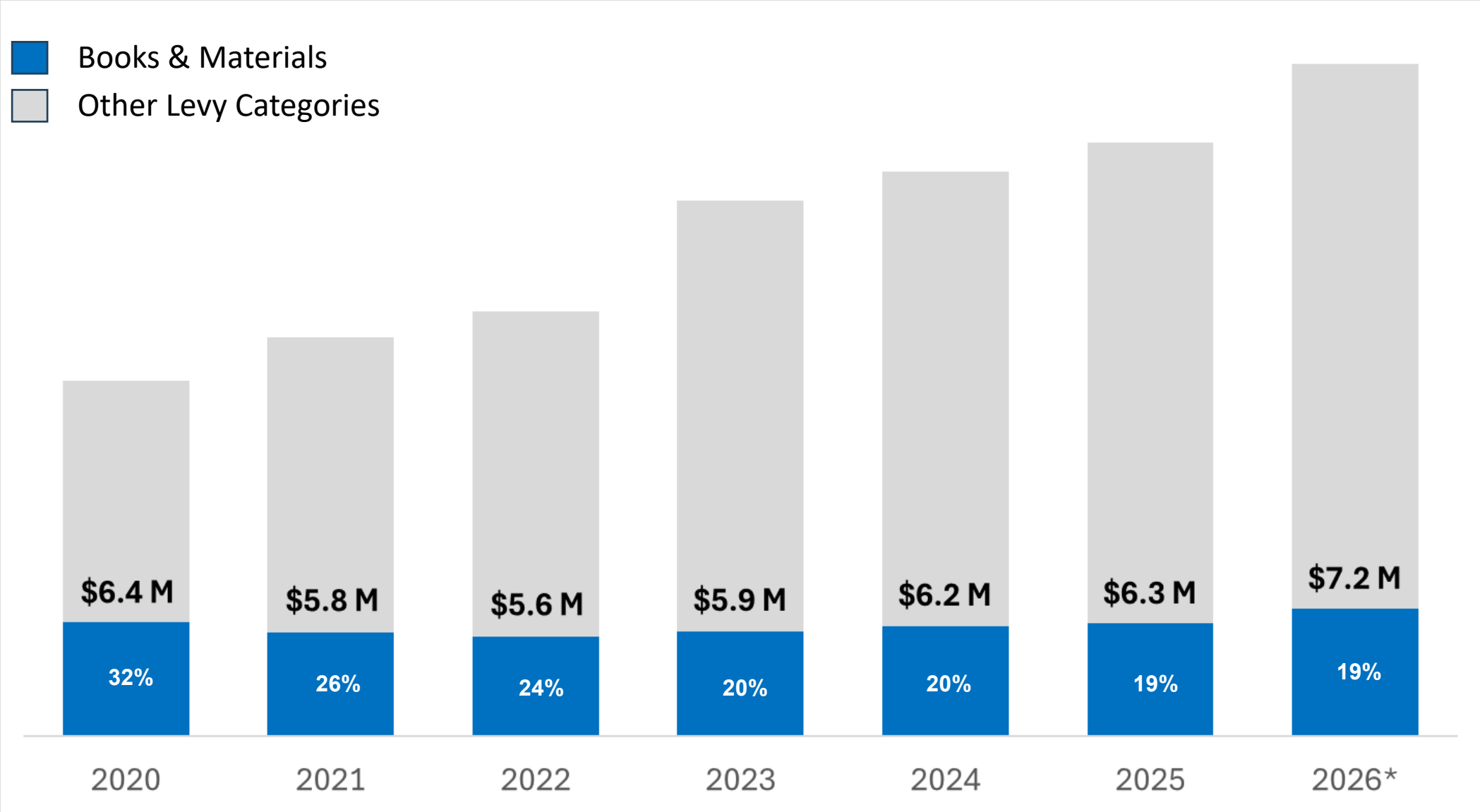
Increased language access throughout system

- Spanish collection at all locations
- Added Dari, Pashto, Portuguese and Ukrainian language collections
- More translated communications

Increased access to local history

- Grew digital history collection to 33,000 items

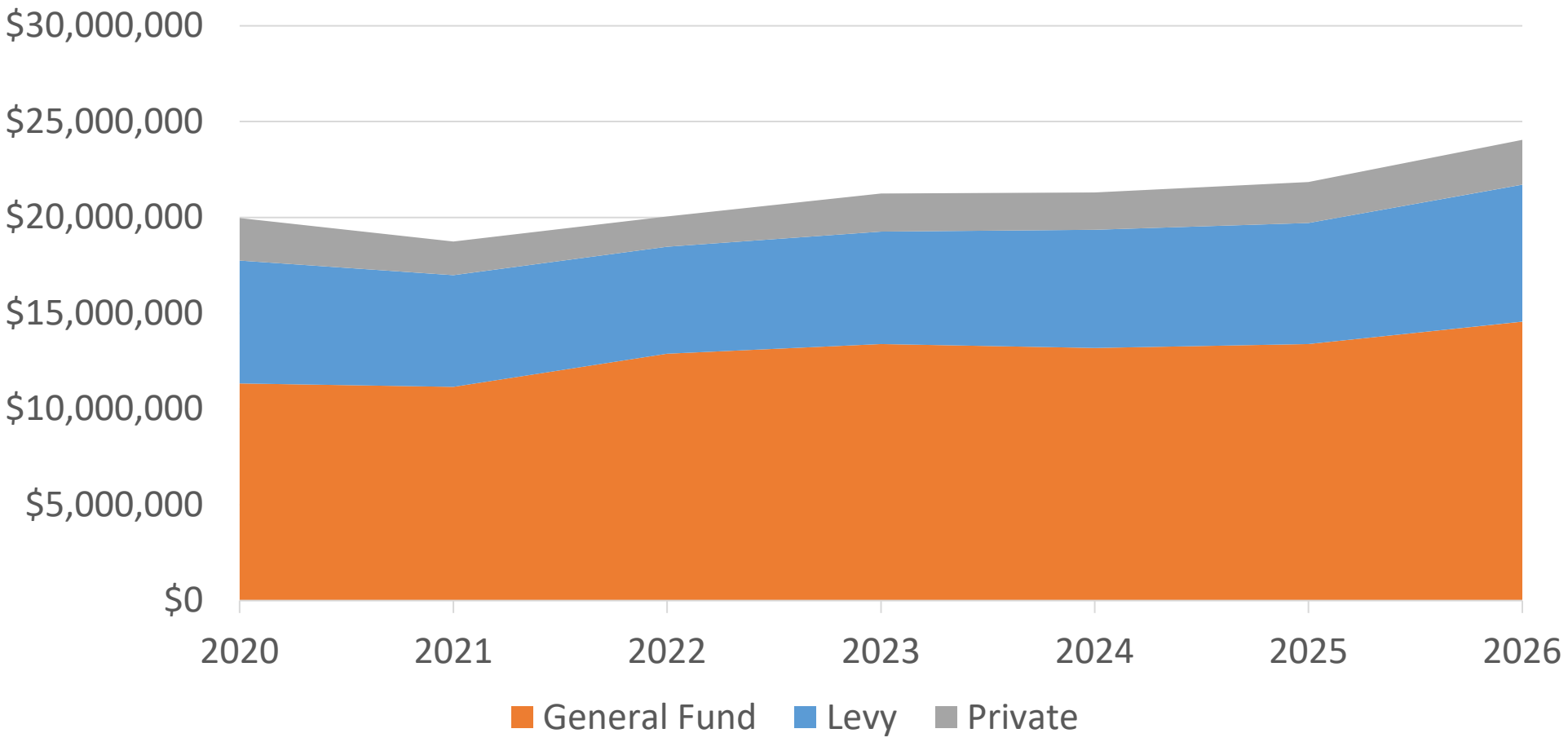
Annual Levy Funding: Collections



Spending by Funding Source

Books & materials, acquisitions, processing, material distribution

COLLECTIONS



Spending by Funding Source

Books & materials, acquisitions, processing, material distribution

COLLECTIONS

Funding Source	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 budgeted
General Fund	$11.34M	$11.16M	$12.88M	$13.4M	$13.19M	$13.39M	*$14.56M*
Library Levy	$6.42M	$5.83M	$5.56M	$5.87M	$6.16M	$6.32M	*$7.15M*
Private Funds	$2.21M	$1.75M	$1.58M	$1.98M	$1.95M	$2.13M	*$2.34M*

Spending by Funding Source

Books & materials ONLY

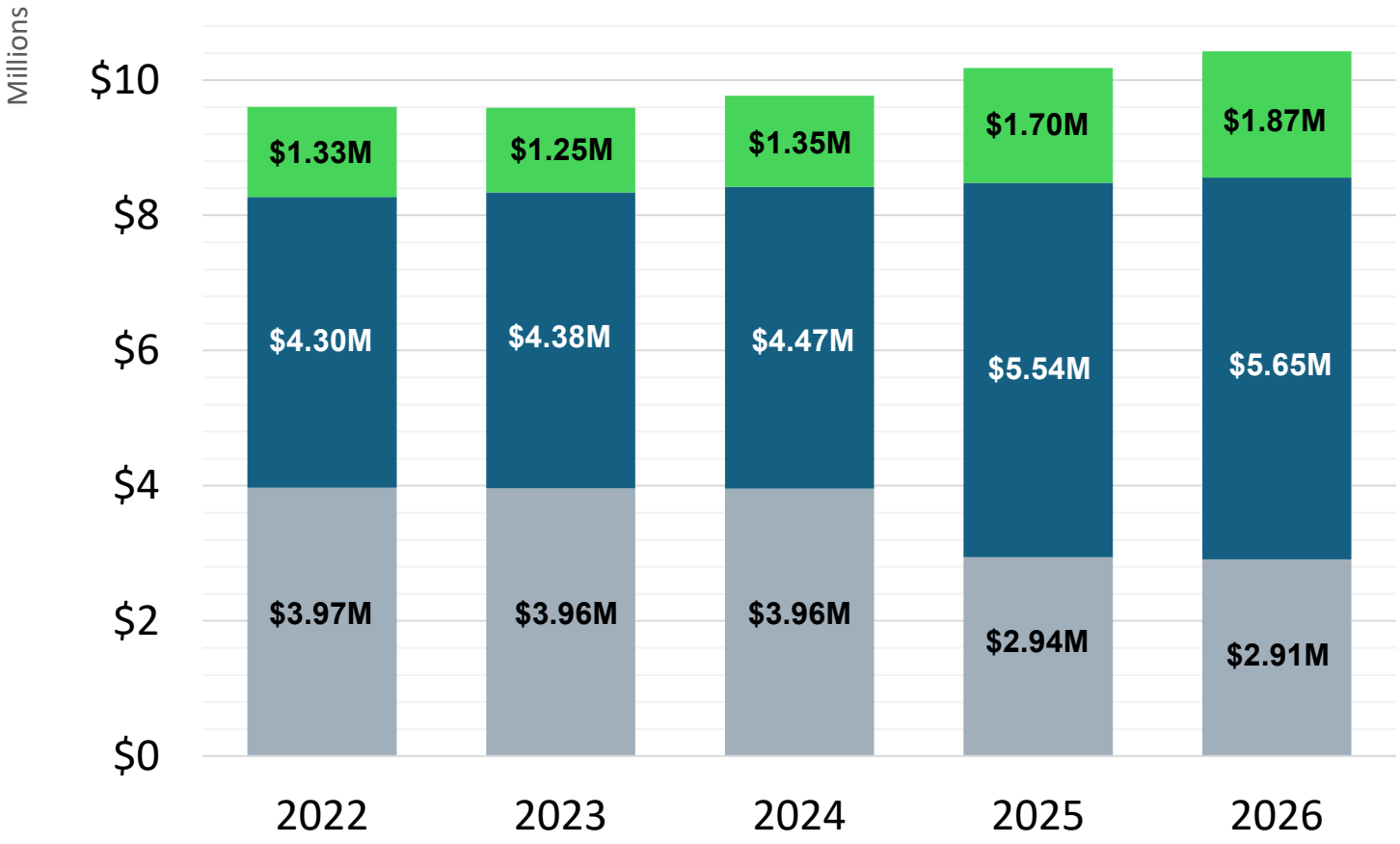
COLLECTIONS

Private funds

2019 Library Levy

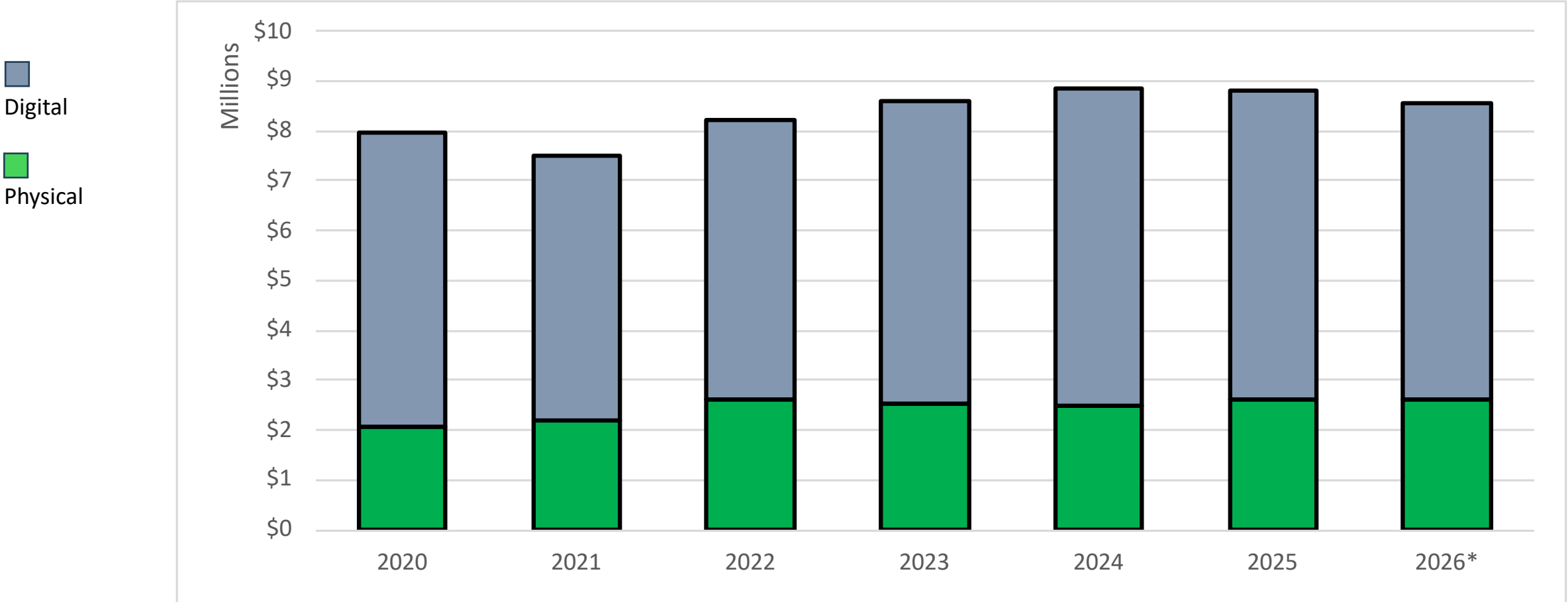
General Fund

Books & materials = 55% funded by the levy



Physical vs. Digital Spending

COLLECTIONS



Spending by Type

COLLECTIONS

Funding Source	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 budgeted
Physical Materials							
General Fund	$1.10M	$1.52M	$1.90M	$1.86M	$1.82M	$1.24M	*$1.93M*
Library Levy	$0.96M	$0.67M	$0.73M	$0.69M	$0.67M	$1.4M	*$0.71M*
Titles Purchased	104,550	237,772	203,635	211,721	168,065	191,163	*180,000-200,000*
Digital Materials							
General Fund	$4.30M	$3.74M	$3.53M	$3.64M	$4.16M	$4.15M	*$4.94M*
Library Levy	$1.55M	$1.58M	$2.07M	$2.42M	$2.22M	$2.01M	*$0.98M*
Titles Purchased	125,050	103,066	109,908	113,658	99,500	94,067	*100,000-110,000*

Physical Collection Size by Location

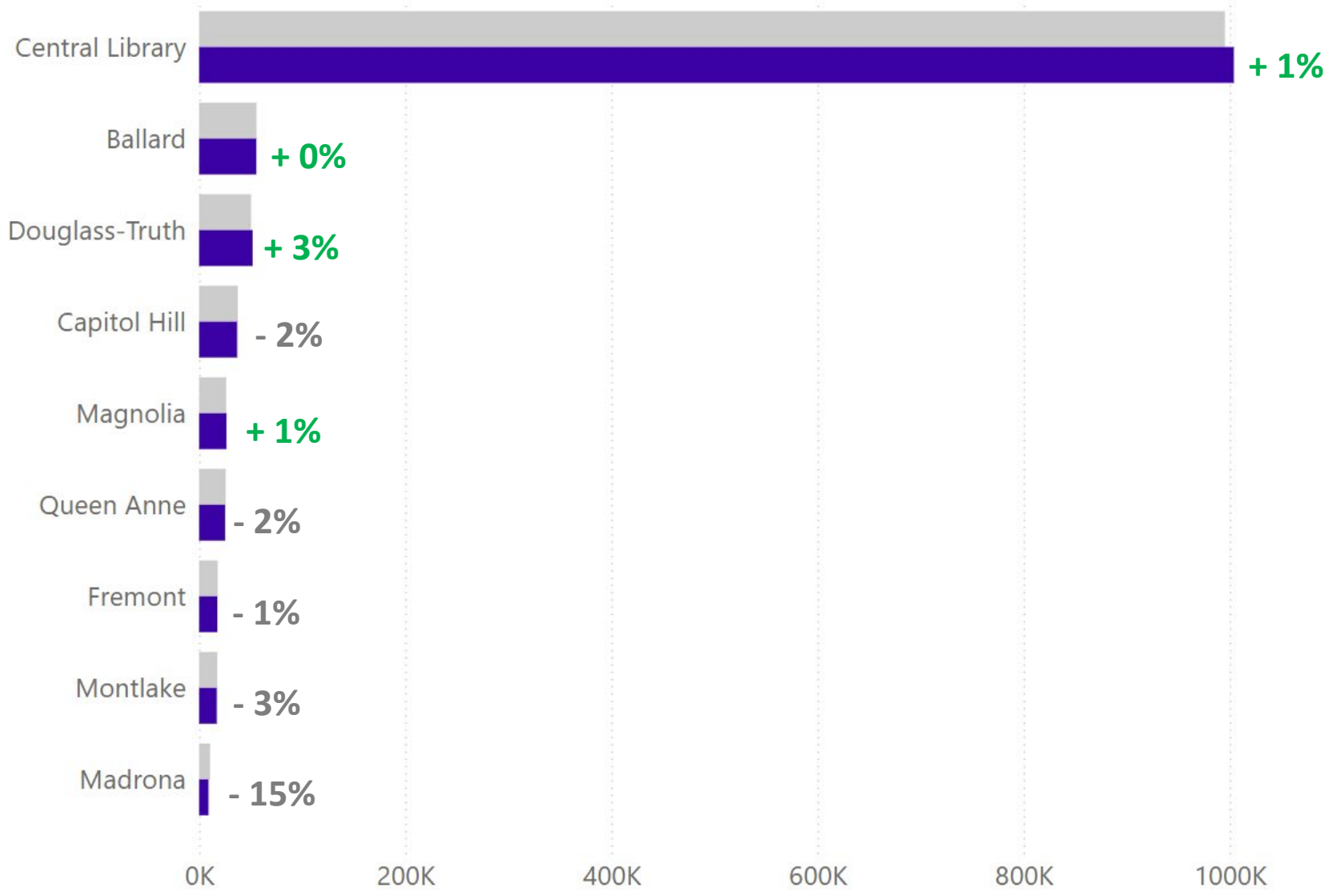
COLLECTIONS

Collection sizes at locations are determined by:

- Community need
- Patron use
- Size and capacity of location

Collection sizes grow and contract as the factors above change.

Physical Collection Size: Mid-City and Downtown

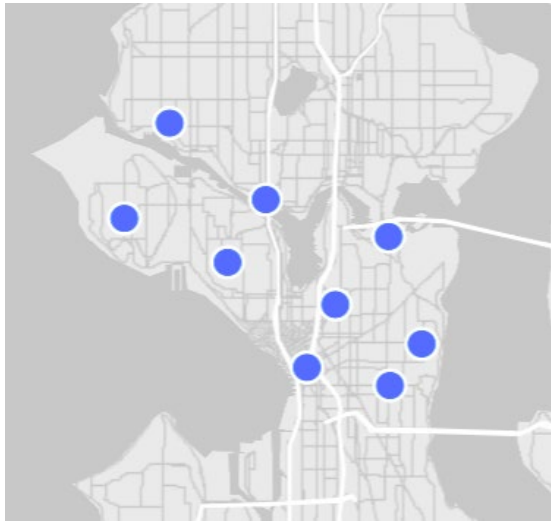


MAP

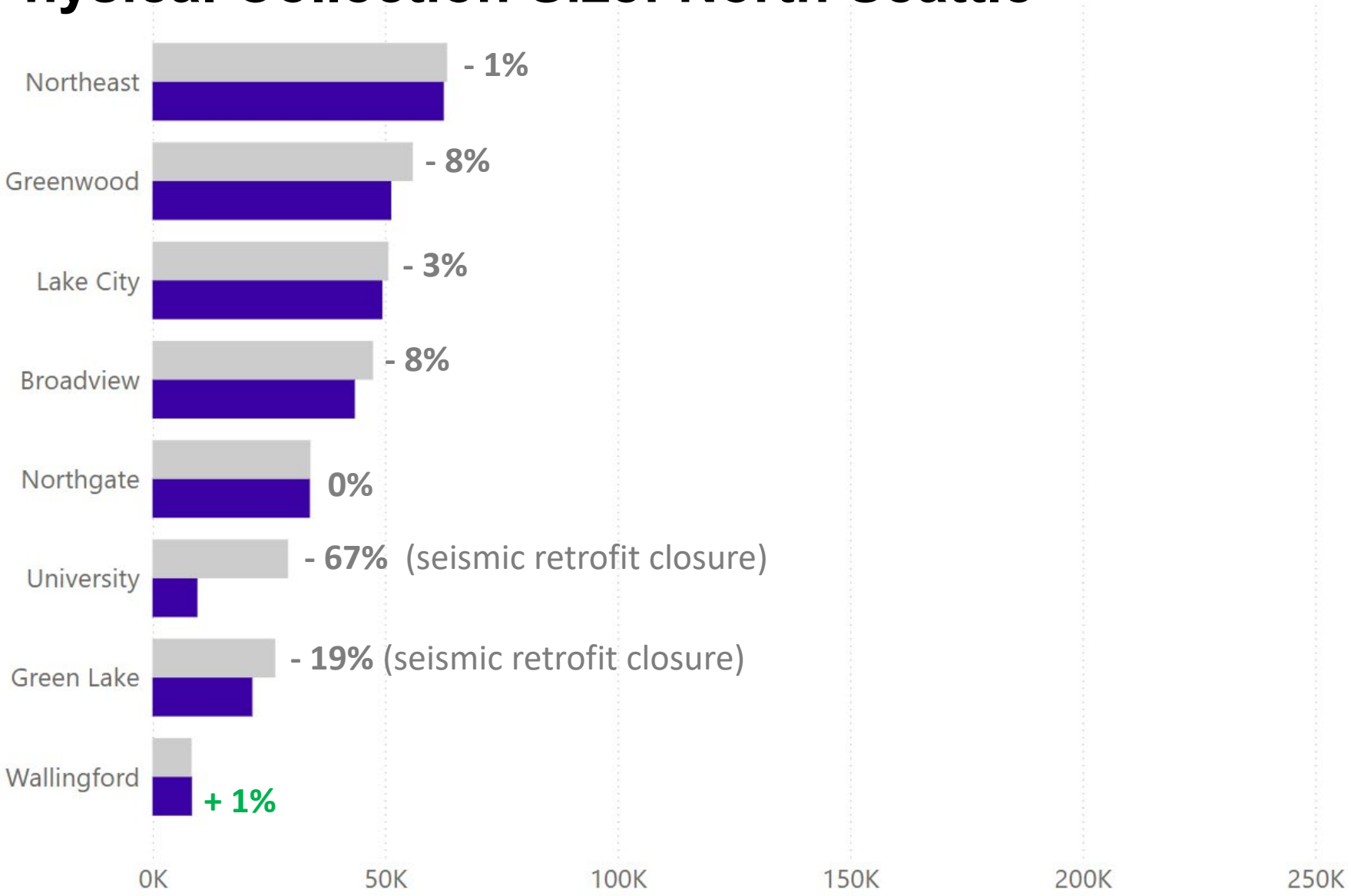
Library Location

CHART

2020 2025



Physical Collection Size: North Seattle



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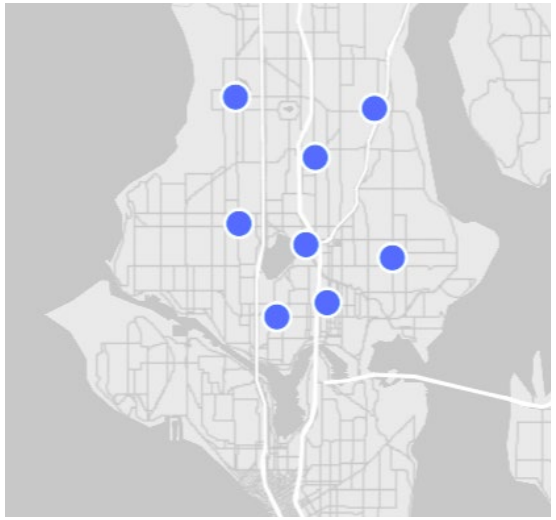
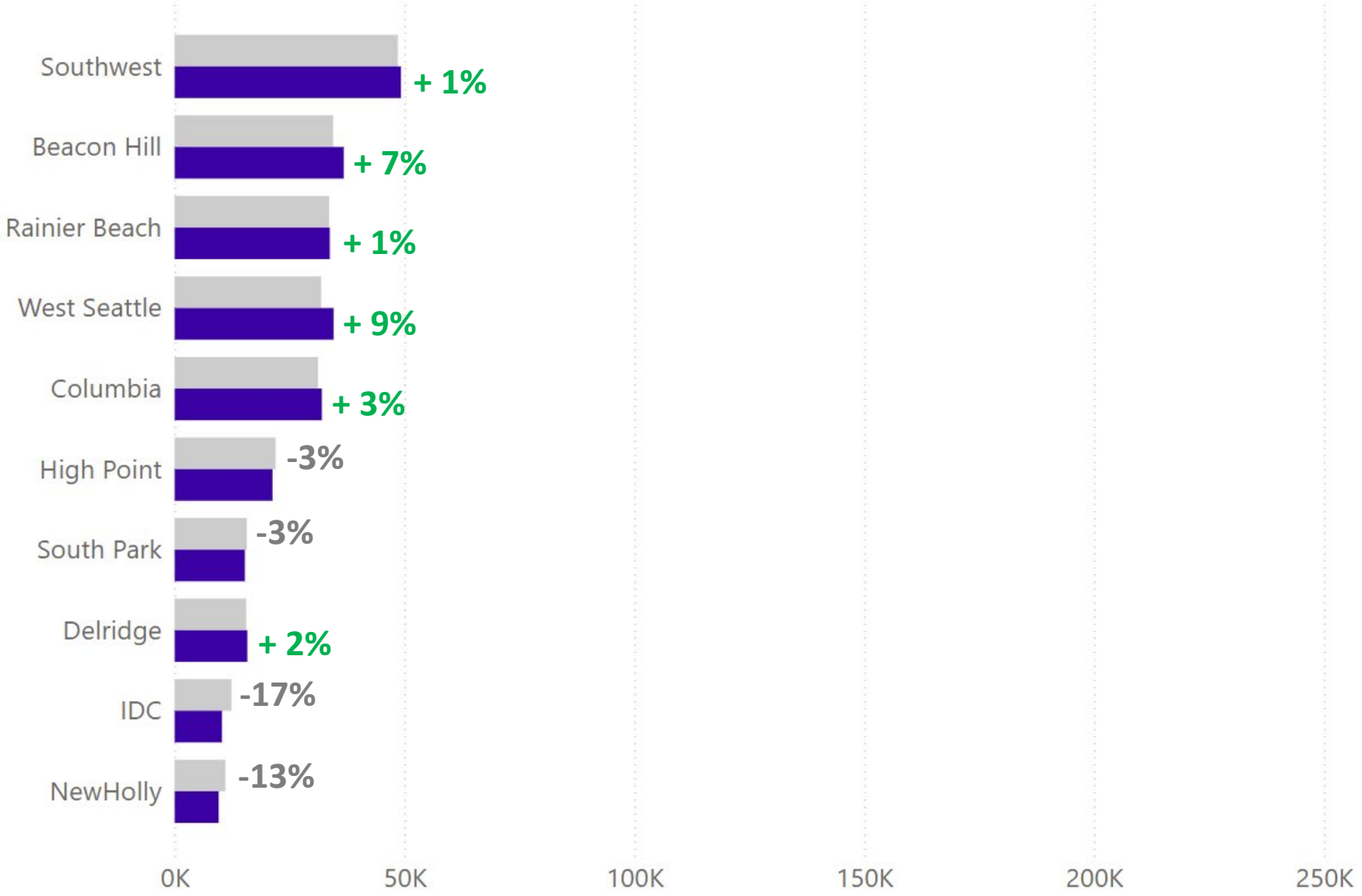
Library Location

CHART

2020 2025



Physical Collection Size: South Seattle



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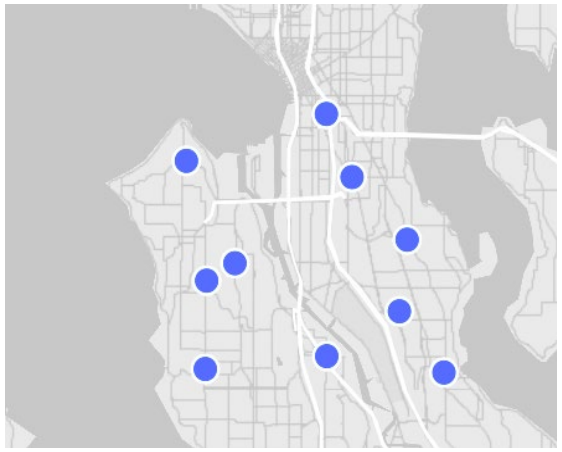
Library Location

CHART

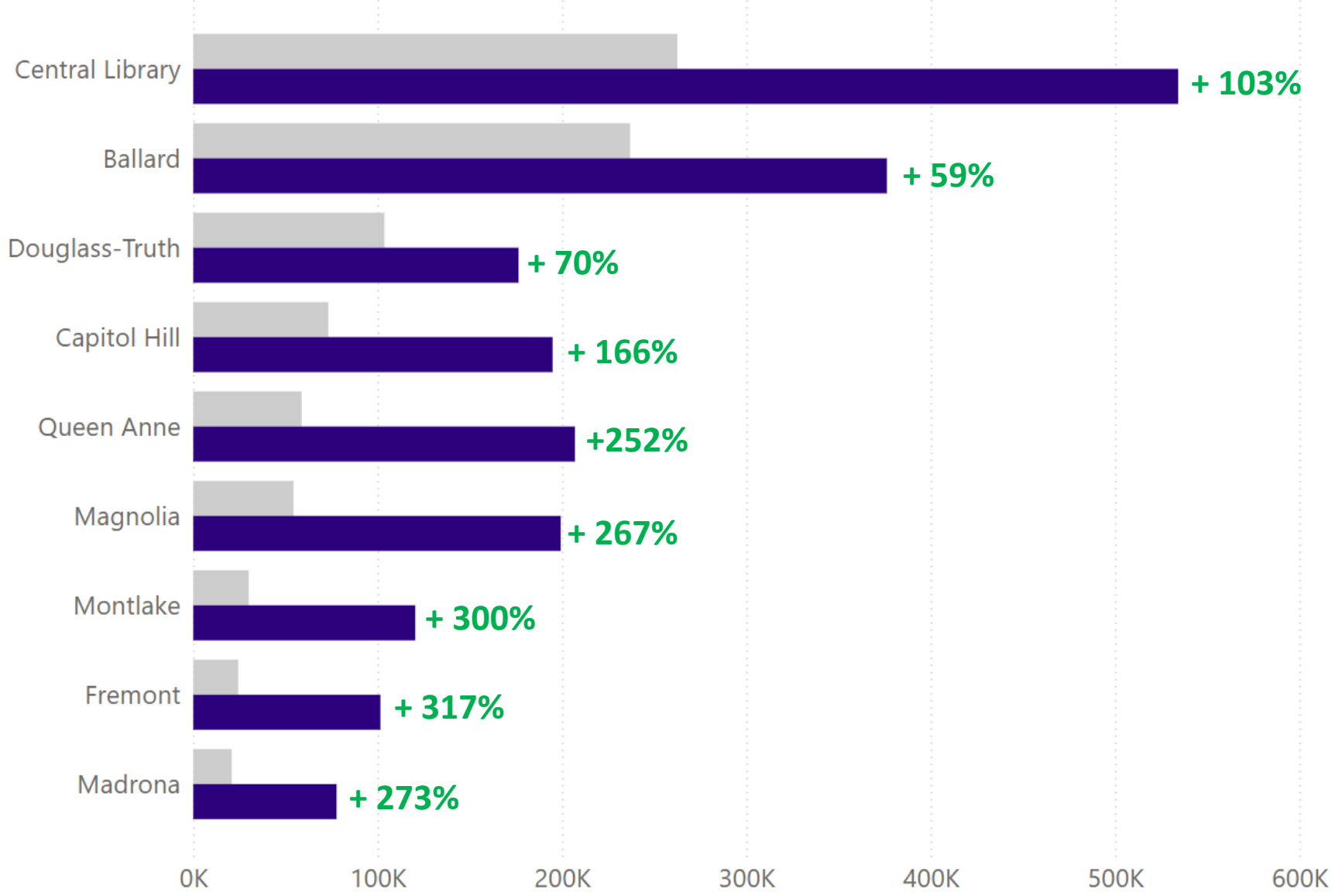
2020 2025



Physical Circulation by Location

COLLECTIONS

Physical Circulation: Mid-City and Downtown Seattle

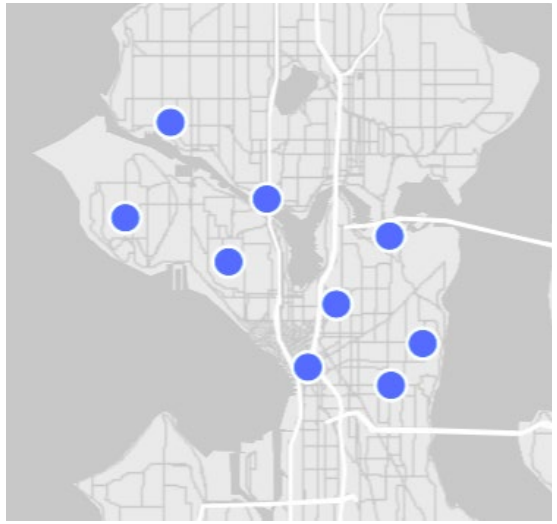


MAP

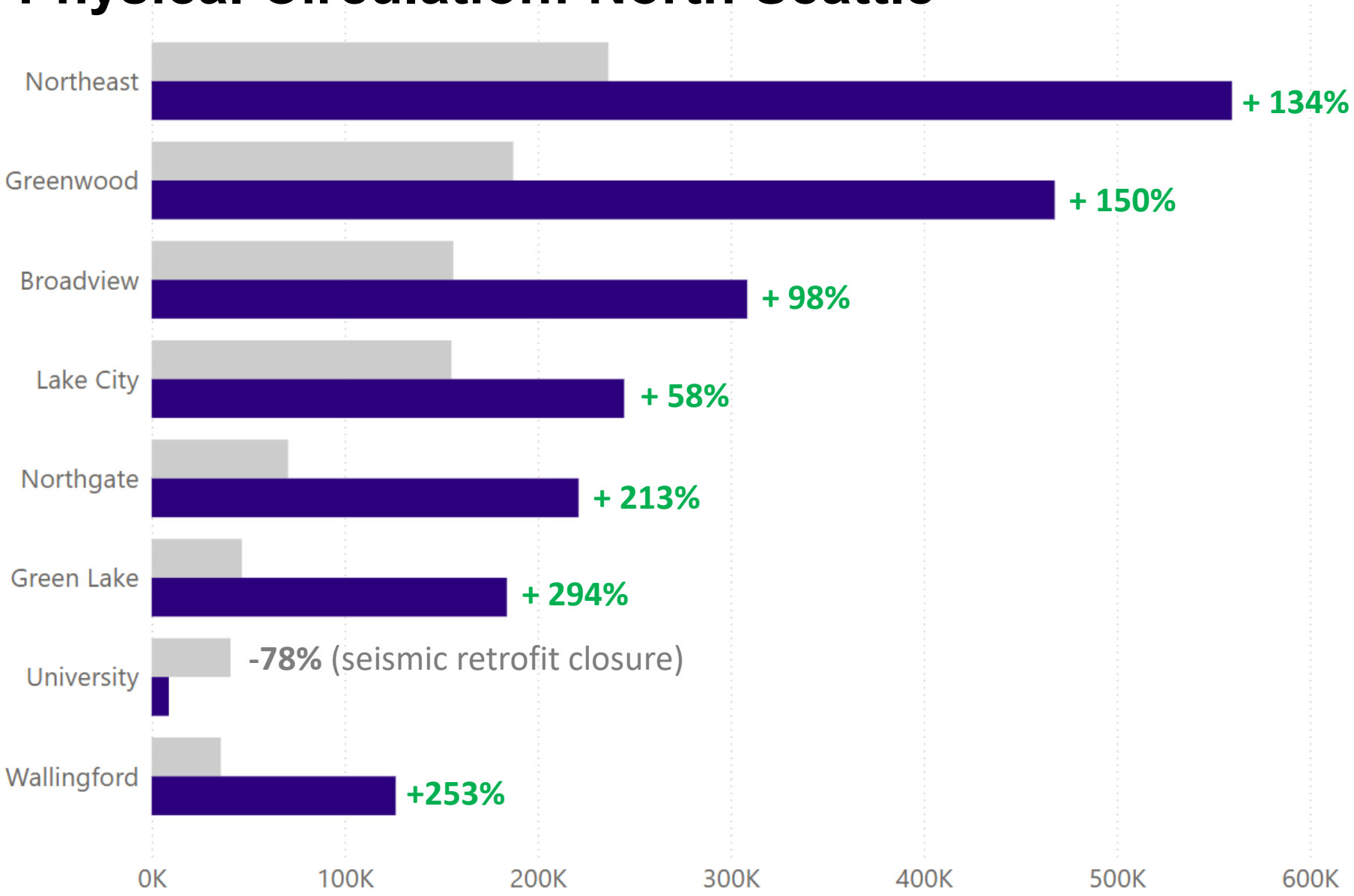
Library Location

CHART

2020 2025



Physical Circulation: North Seattle

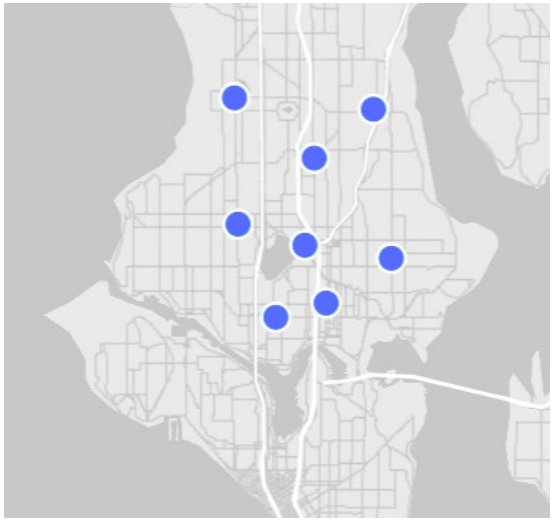


MAP

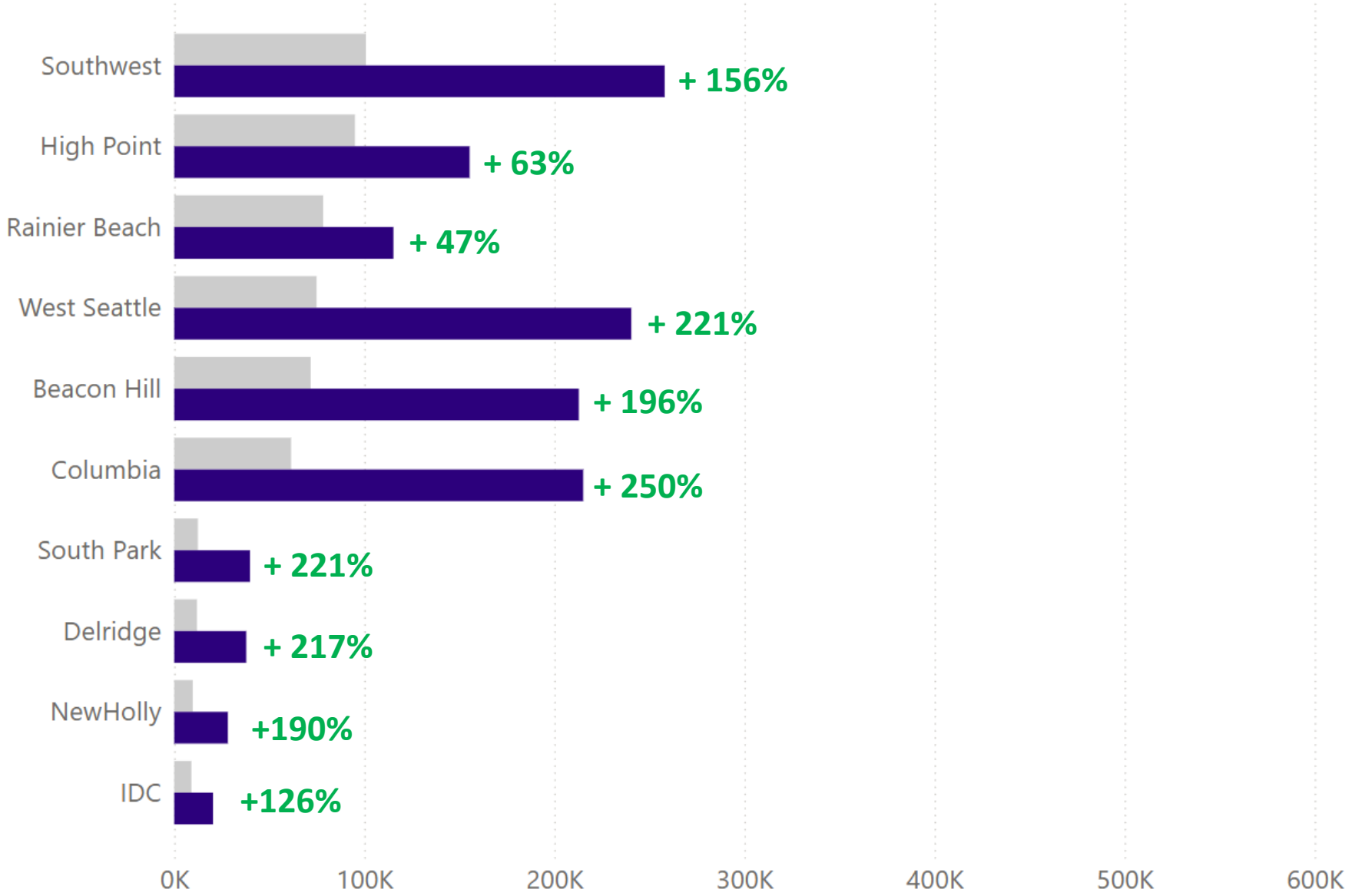
Library Location

CHART

2020 2025



Physical Circulation: South Seattle



MAP

Library Location

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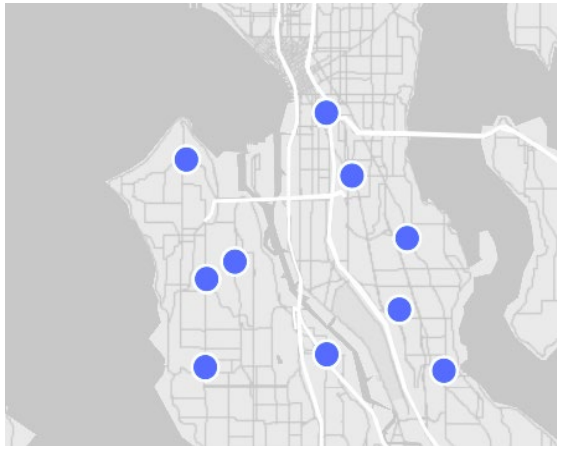
2020 2025



Peak Picks

COLLECTIONS

- **What is Peak Picks?** A collection of new and popular books with no holds or waits.
- Walk in and walk out with a physical copy.
- 100% levy funded
- New and popular titles
  - Most circulated titles every year
  - New titles every month
    - Rotate based on interest
    - Hundreds of titles across fiction and non-fiction books each year

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Peak Picks circulation	60,765	116,673	141,623	147,146	113,612	147,970

Digital Materials

E-books, e-audiobooks, streaming, digital services

COLLECTIONS

- **Digital materials include**
  - E-books & e-audiobooks
  - Streaming music, TV, and movies
  - Online newspapers & magazines
  - Digital comics

- Available to all cardholders

BookFlix

BookFlix pairs animated stories with real-world concepts to help new readers improve their skills.

Hoopla Digital Comics

Enjoy thousands of digital comics and graphic novels in our Hoopla Digital Collection.

O'Reilly Complete Public Library

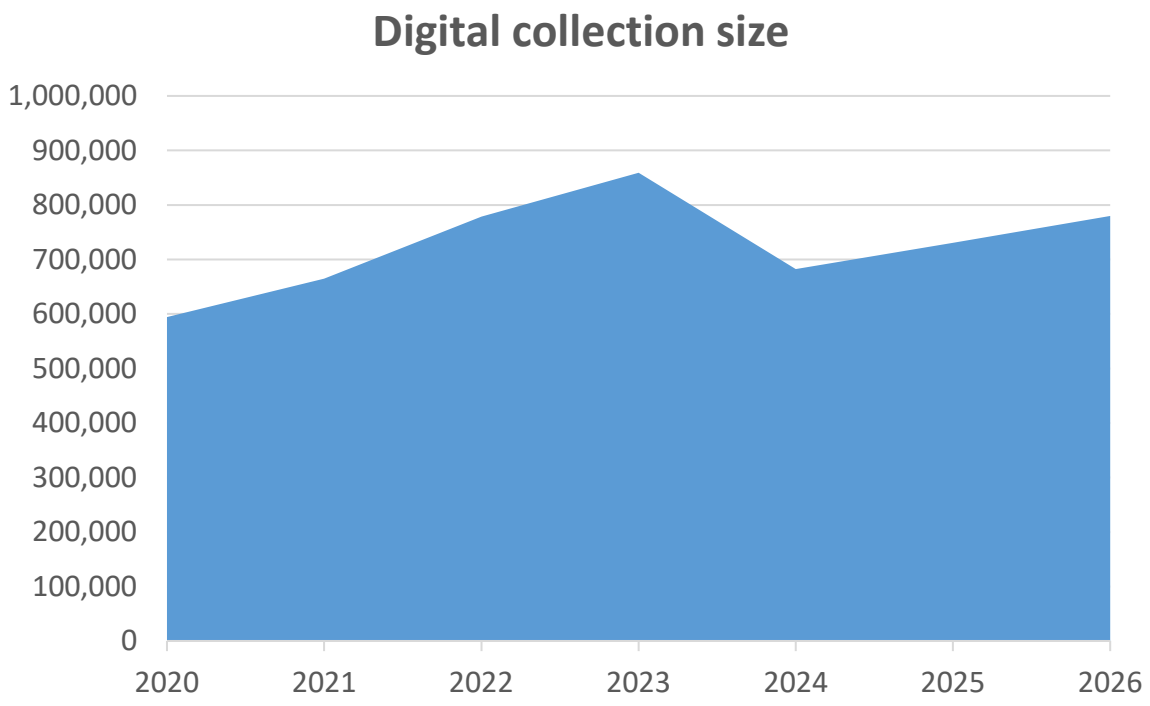
Read digital books on software, programming and business.

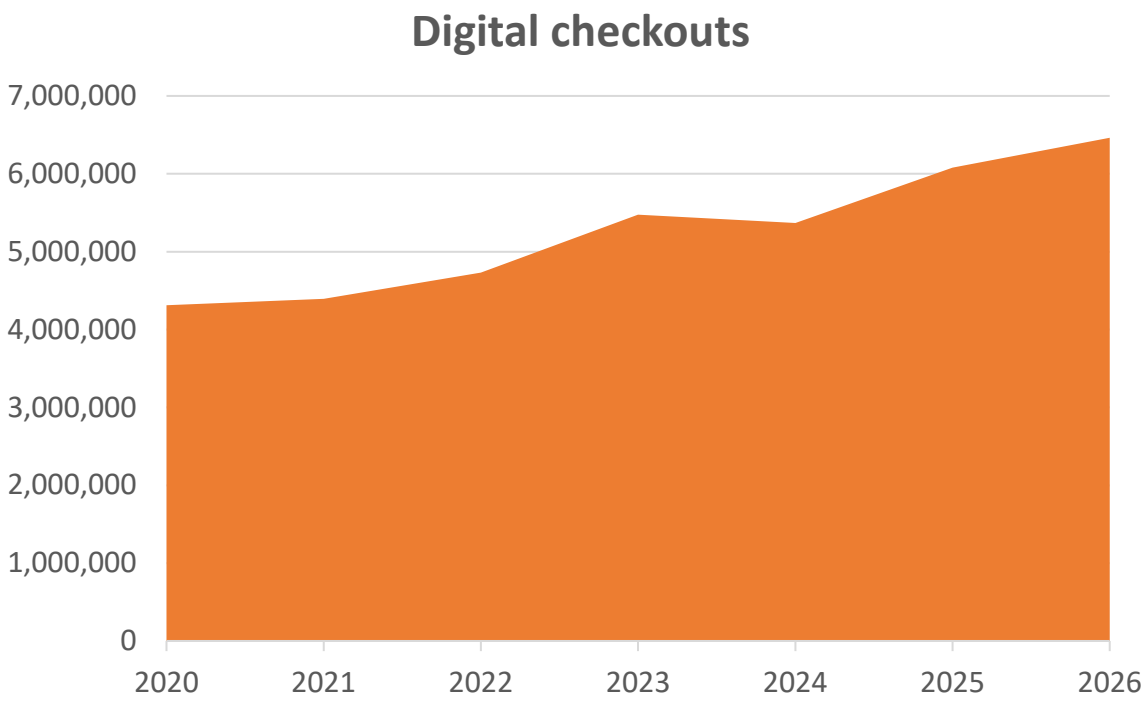
OverDrive & Libby

We have thousands of e-books and audiobooks you can borrow for three weeks and download to most devices.

Digital Materials: Size & Use of E-Books/E-Audio

COLLECTIONS





Digital Materials: Size & Use of E-Books/E-Audio

COLLECTIONS

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 Projected
Digital collection size	594,462	664,508	778,612	859,027	682,188	730,176	780,000
Digital checkouts	4,309,992	4,393,819	4,730,622	5,476,637	5,366,666	6,079,682	6,462,622
Digital spending	$5.89M	$5.32M	$5.60M	$6.06M	$6.38M	$6.15M	$5.92M

Books Unbanned

COLLECTIONS

- For all teens & young adults in the U.S. ages 13-26
- Access to entire digital collection
- Launched with Brooklyn Public Library in 2023
  - Now with six libraries nationwide
- Over 25,000 sign-ups
  - Signups from all 50 states, D.C., Guam, and Puerto Rico
  - Checked out e-books nearly 730,000 times since 2023
- Privately funded: Seattle Public Library Foundation's generous and passionate donors
  - $300k in 2025; $375k in 2026

Books Unbanned.

spl.org

"I've been able to read books that are about experiences that **make me feel like it's okay to be who I am.**"

– Books Unbanned cardholder,
age 16, Georgia

"I love reading, but being from a small town, my library book options have been limited. **This card has truly changed my life.**"

– Books Unbanned cardholder,
age 18, New Jersey

Impact on Library Patrons

COLLECTIONS

"Our kids have read hundreds of books that we would have not bought; **reading levels have greatly improved**. Our quality of life is better because of the Library and its resources."

"With online reservation and Peak Picks, I am able to read books of interest – this **enriches my life tremendously**."

Challenges & Opportunities

COLLECTIONS

Challenges

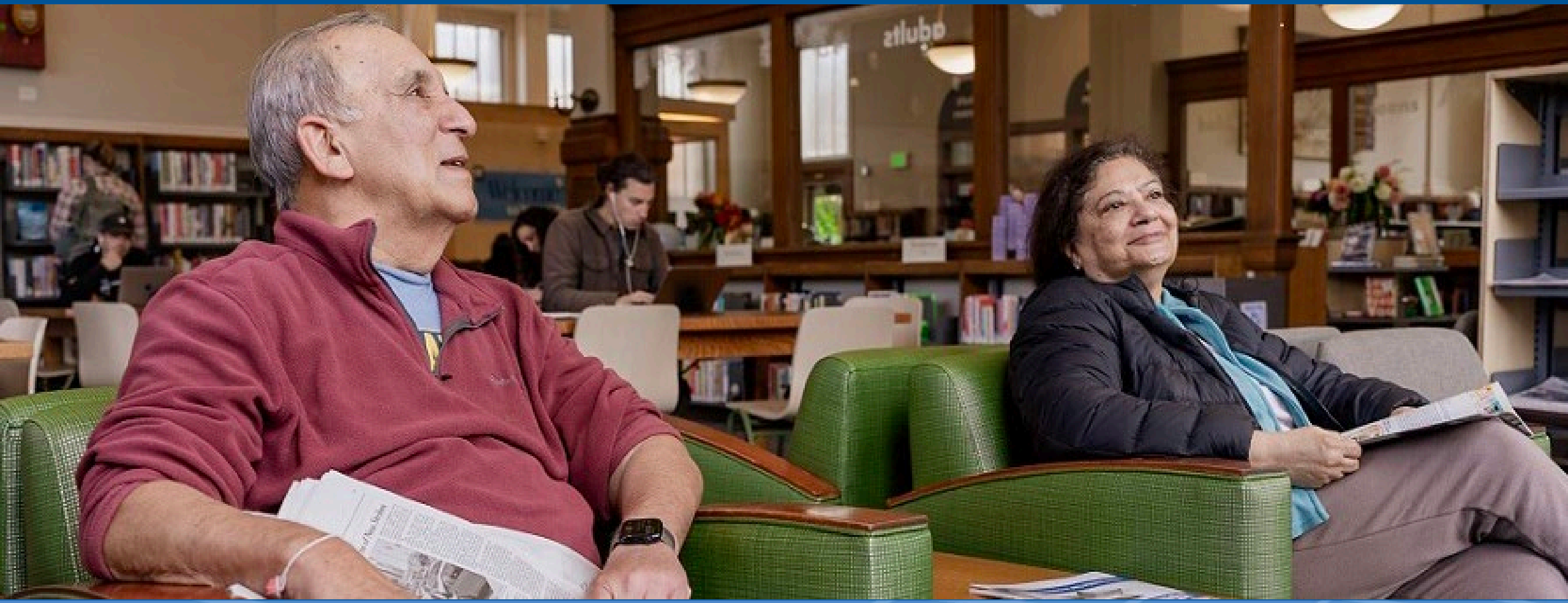
- E-book/e-audiobooks
  - Growing patron interest
  - Rising costs
  - Funding limitations

Opportunities

- Levy investments through increased funding

Accomplishments

Building Maintenance



Overview

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

Major Maintenance

- Renovations, seismic retrofits, ADA improvements, HVAC replacements, reroofing, etc.

Routine & Scheduled Maintenance

- Provide support for 27 public locations & 1 maintenance and operations center
- Landscaping, janitorial/custodial, building system and controls, etc.

Repairs

- Unplanned maintenance, graffiti, broken windows, etc.

Highlights

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

Improved public safety & accessibility

- Seismic retrofit and remodels
- Green Lake Branch complete in 2025
- University Branch to be complete in 2026
- ADA improvements (restrooms, entrances, elevators, etc.)

Increased climate resiliency

- Green Lake Branch = LEED® Gold-certified
- Electrification – transitioning away from fossil fuels
  - e.g. converting gas to electric heat pumps
- Air conditioning now at 22 locations

Maintained buildings

- Major maintenance (i.e. Greenwood Branch reroofing)
- Routine and preventative maintenance

Major Projects

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

Additional Highlights

- HVAC improvements and replacements at multiple locations
- Replaced and maintained Automated Material Handling System
- Centralized materials handling at a new maintenance and operations center
- Completed renovation of the Soul Pole at Douglass-Truth
- Completed roof replacements at Capitol Hill, Greenwood, and Queen Anne

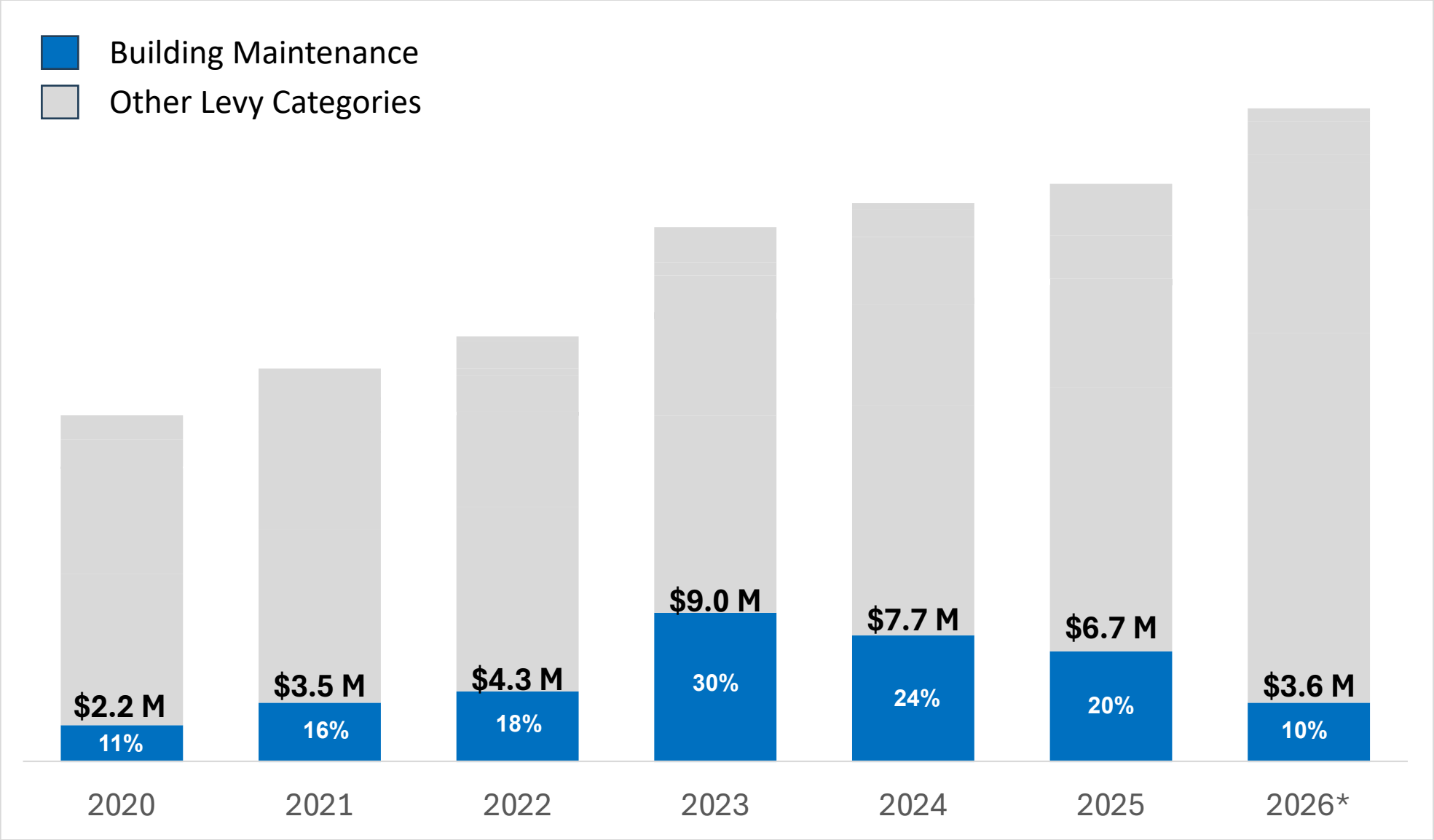
Facility Support

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

Highlights

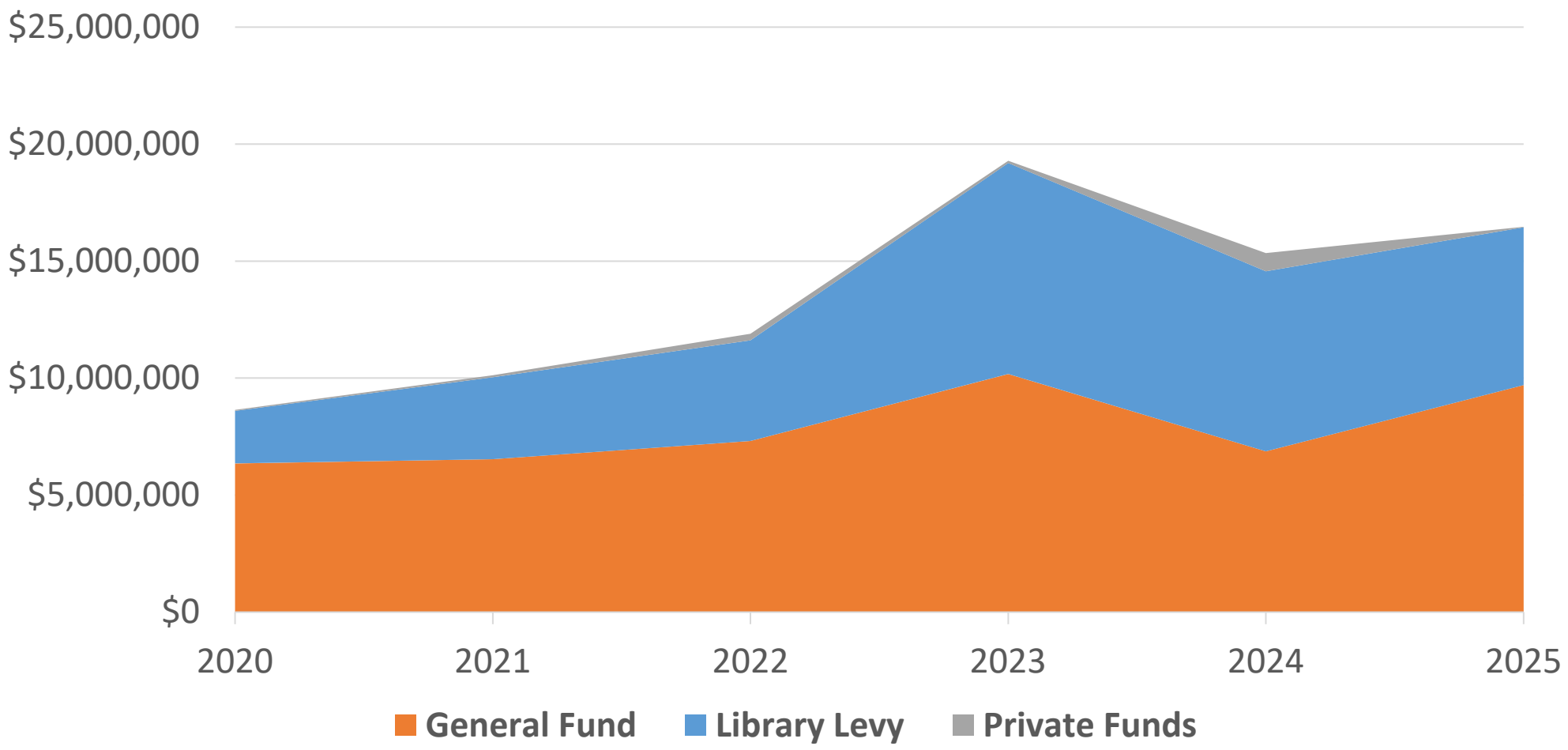
- Provided restroom access in 2020 during COVID-19 at five locations
- Reconfigured spaces for post-COVID reopening of all libraries
- Improved and provide more sustainable lighting at multiple locations
- Increased exterior pressure washing at high traffic locations
  - Central, Ballard, Capitol Hill, and Lake City branches
- Washed annually Central Library's nearly 10,000 windows
- Thousands of work orders completed – everything from graffiti removal to repairing carpeting and furniture to addressing plumbing issues and more

Annual Levy Funding: Building Maintenance



Spending by Funding Source

BUILDING MAINTENANCE



Spending by Funding Source

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

Funding Source	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
General Fund	$6.36M	$6.53M	$7.32M	$10.18M	$6.87M	$9.70M
Library Levy	$2.24M	$3.50M	$4.30M	$9.02M	$7.70M	$6.74M
Private Funds	$0.04M	$0.09M	$0.28M	$0.09M	$0.78M	$0.03M

Impact on Library Patrons

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

"I am endlessly grateful for the **free and plentiful access to art, knowledge, entertainment, community**… THANK YOU FOR ALL THAT YOU DO!"

"The Library helps us feel **connected and invested in the local community**. [It is] one of the few third-place spots in the city where we can gather without spending money."

"[The Library] **helped keep my meetup group alive** when our old venue closed down."

Challenges & Opportunities

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

Challenges

- Aging buildings
  - Seven buildings over 100-years-old
  - Four branches = City-identified critical unreinforced masonry (URM) concerns
    - By priority: Columbia, West Seattle, Fremont, Queen Anne
  - Essential systems approaching end-of-life
    - HVAC, elevators, escalators, etc.

Opportunities

- Levy investments
- State and federal grants

The Seattle Public Library

Accomplishments

Technology & Online Services

Overview

TECHNOLOGY & ONLINE SERVICES

Public & staff technology

- Computers, printers, laptops, self-checkout stations, catalog stations

Internet access

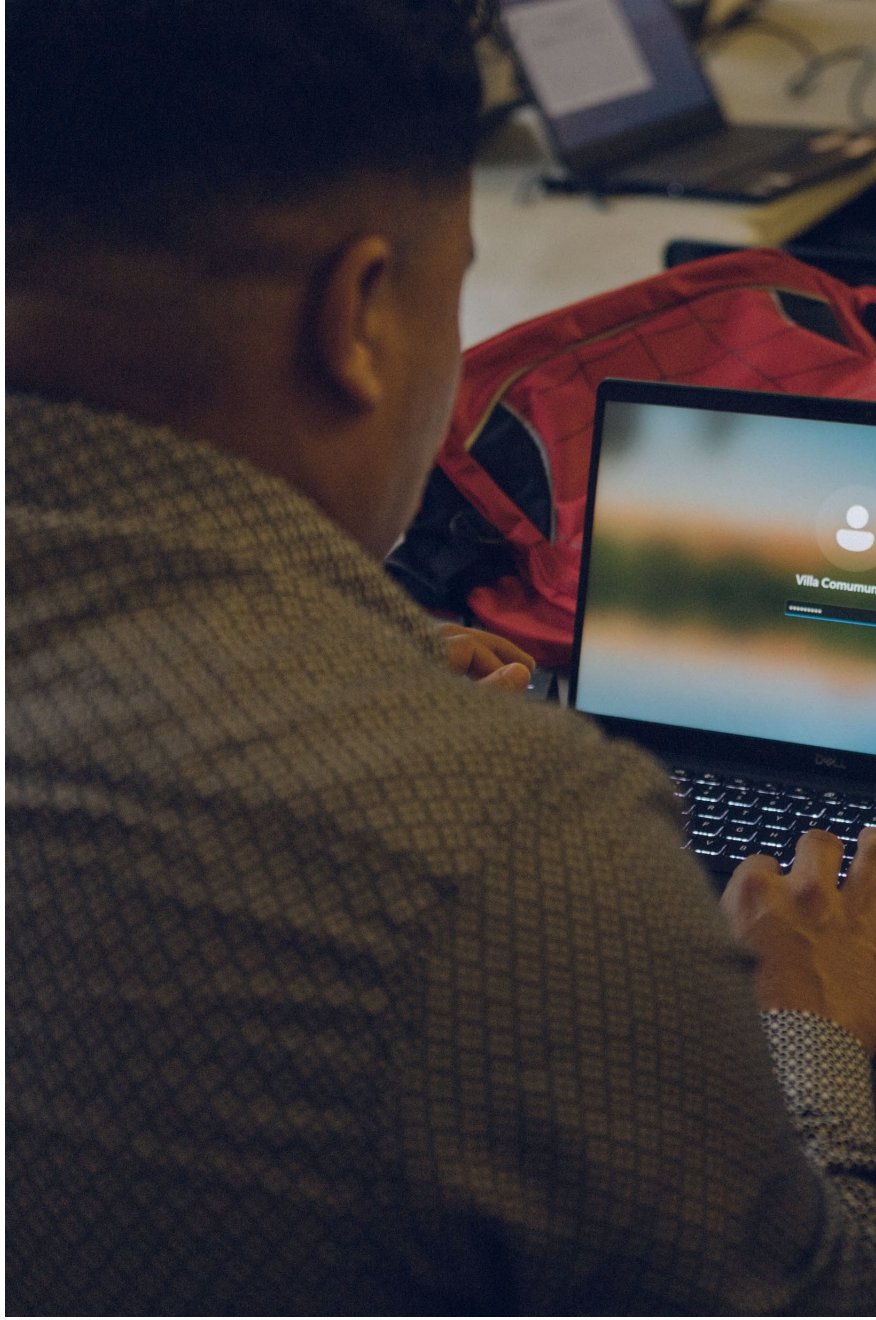
- SPL network (wired & wireless), Wi-Fi hotspots

Digital security

- Staffing, cyber threat monitoring tools

Capital IT

- Network infrastructure



Highlights

TECHNOLOGY & ONLINE SERVICES

Increased access to technology and digital tools

- Released new Library app in 2025
- Provided access to:
  - In-building Wi-Fi
  - Wi-Fi hotspots
  - Public computers
  - Print, copying, scanning

Improved systems, infrastructure, and security

- Accelerated cybersecurity program since 2024
- New Integrated Library System launches in 2026
- Network switches – systemwide replacement

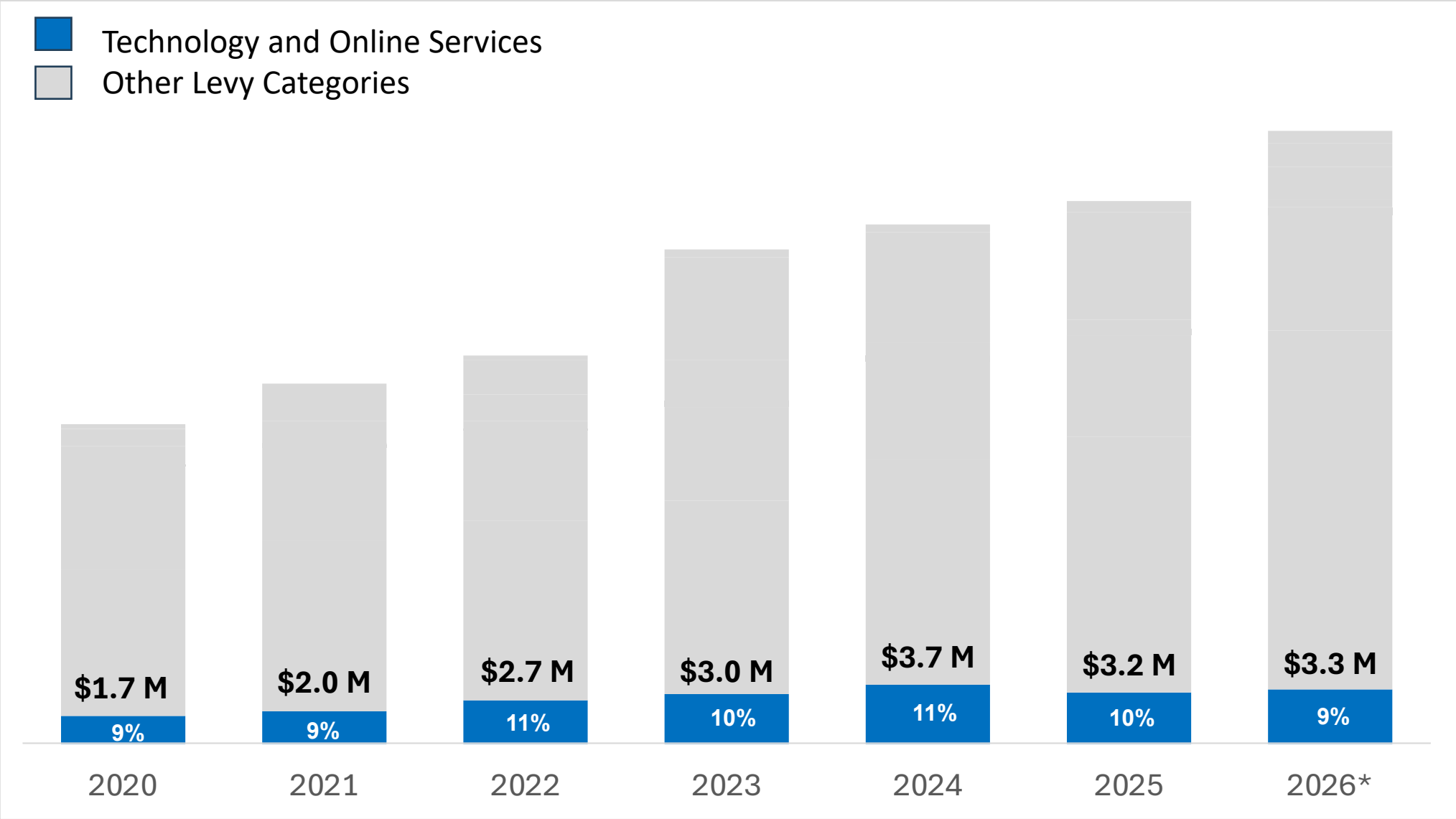
Integrated Library System

TECHNOLOGY & ONLINE SERVICES

2019 Levy promise

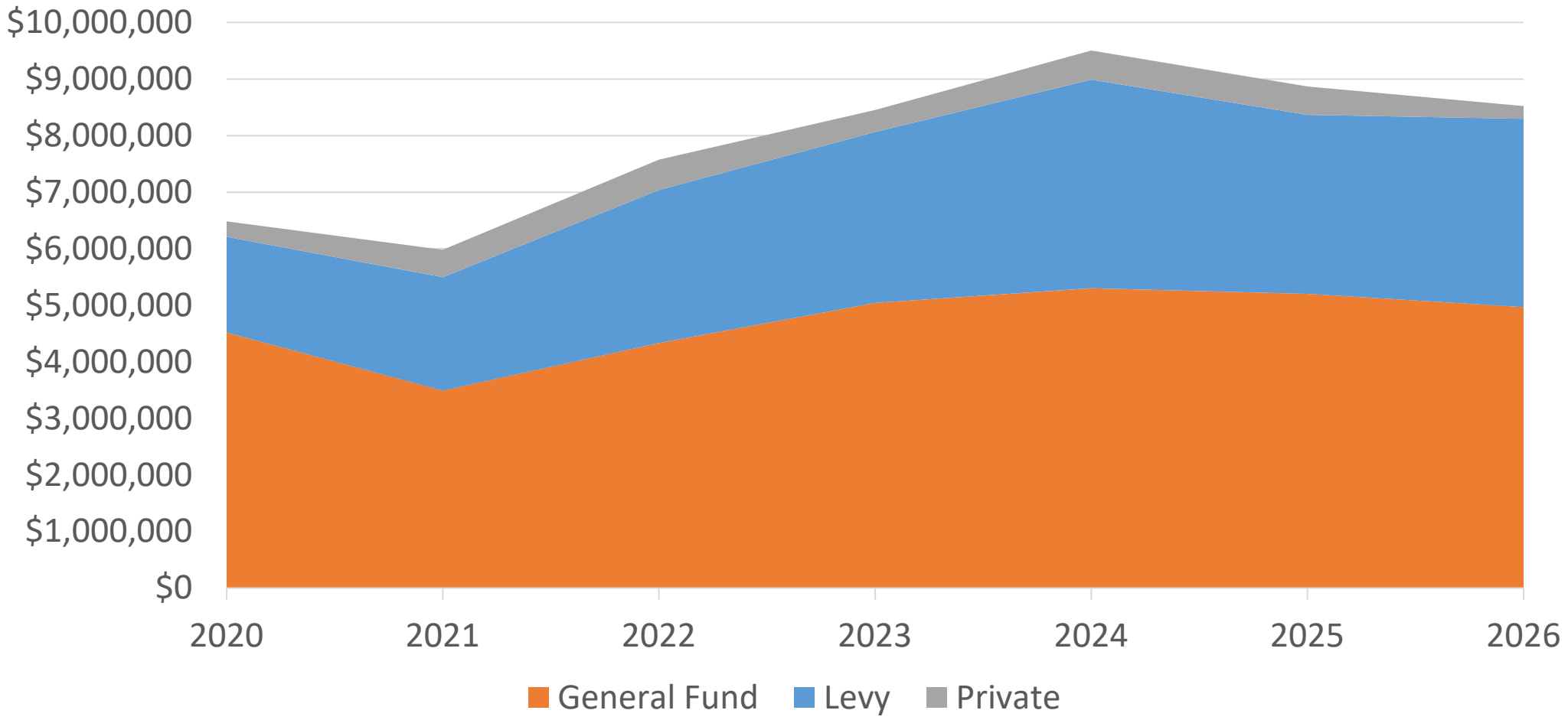
- **Replace Integrated Library System (ILS)**
  - Outdated & unsupported
  - Technological backbone of Library system
- **Manages:**
  - Patron accounts
  - Book holds
  - Lost item fees
  - And more
- **Scheduled to launch this year**
  - Will require some systemwide downtime

Annual Levy Funding: Technology & Online Services



Spending by Funding Source

TECHNOLOGY & ONLINE SERVICES



Spending by Funding Source

TECHNOLOGY & ONLINE SERVICES

Funding Source	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 budgeted
General Fund	$4.52M	$3.49M	$4.33M	$5.04M	$5.30M	$5.20M	*$4.97M*
Library Levy	$1.69M	$2.01M	$2.71M	$3.03M	$3.69M	$3.17M	*$3.33M*
Private Funds	$0.27M	$0.48M	$0.54M	$0.39M	$0.52M	$0.51M	*$0.23M*

Wi-Fi Hot Spots

TECHNOLOGY & ONLINE SERVICES

Data service cost = ~$270k per year

Supply budget cost = ~$30k per year: Devices, containers, cords, etc.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Wi-Fi Hot Spot circulation	2,707	6,934	8,289	7,333	5,847	7,047
Wi-Fi Hot Spot devices: Public	1,000	1,155	1,270	1,130	1,130	1,130
Wi-Fi Hot Spot devices: Outreach	400	400	352	372	285	317

Wi-Fi Hot Spot Outreach

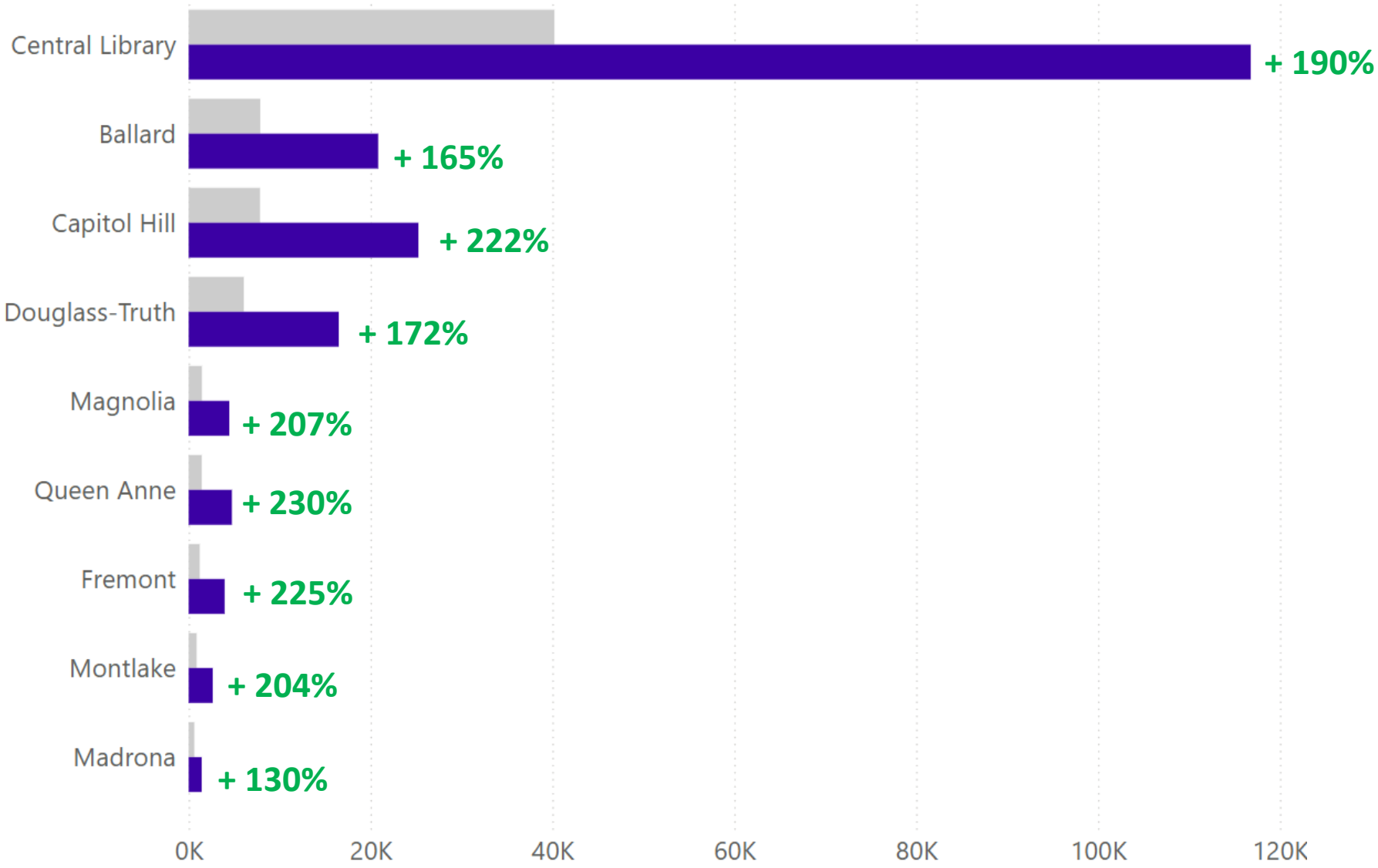
TECHNOLOGY & ONLINE SERVICES

The Library partners with over 45 community organizations to provide internet to communities that do not have it.

Just some of our partners include:

- Solid Ground
- YouthCare
- Alphabet Alliance of Color
- Casa Latina
- Harborview Abuse and Trauma Center
- Nickelsville Tiny House Villages (two locations)
- SHARE/WHEEL shelters and tent cities
- Villa Communitaria
- Low Income Housing Institute Tiny House Villages

Public Computer Sessions: Mid-City and Downtown Seattle

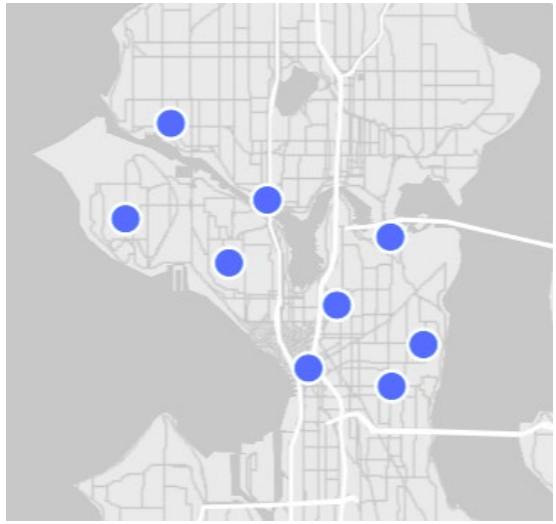


MAP

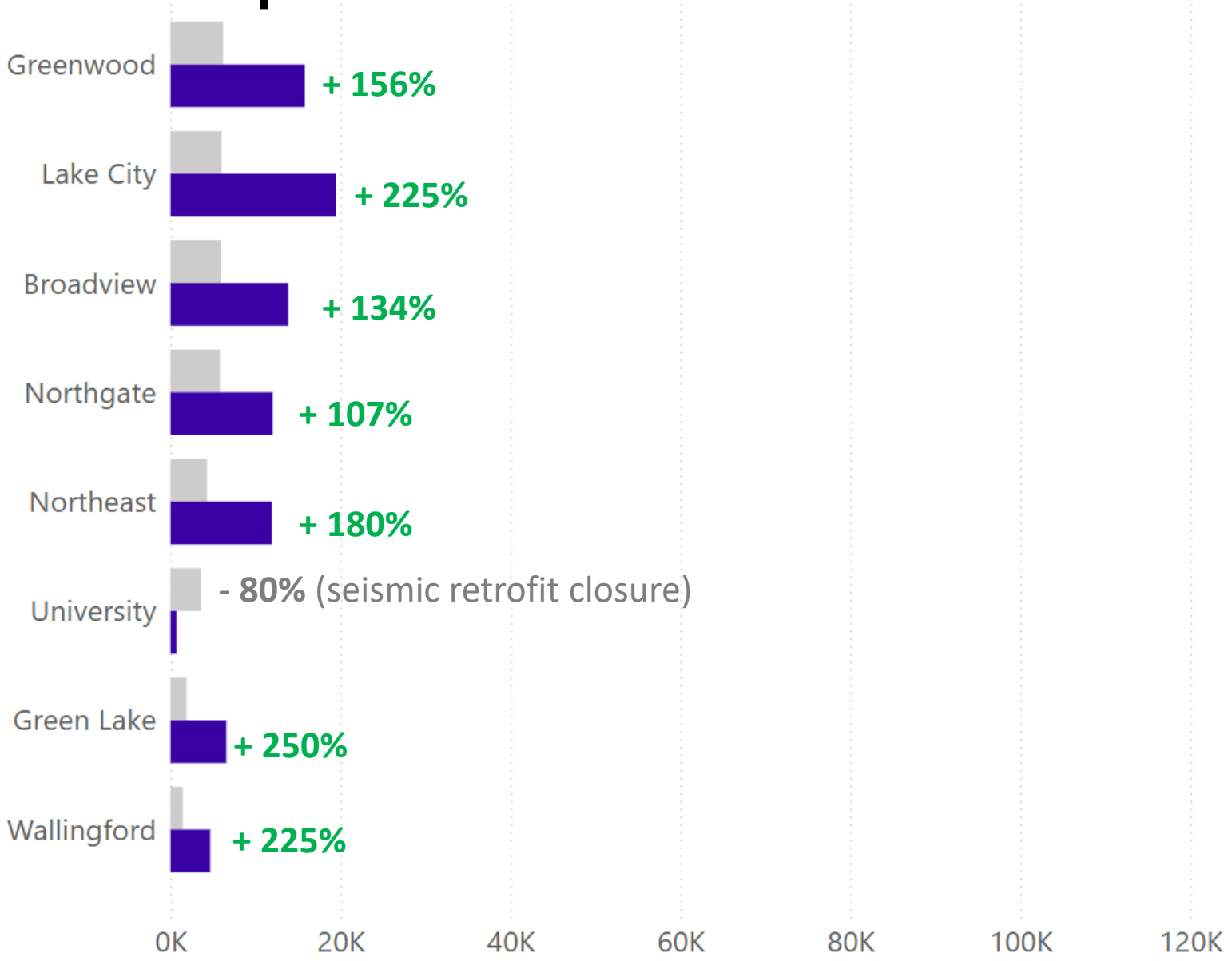
Library Location

CHART

2020 2025



Public Computer Sessions: North Seattle

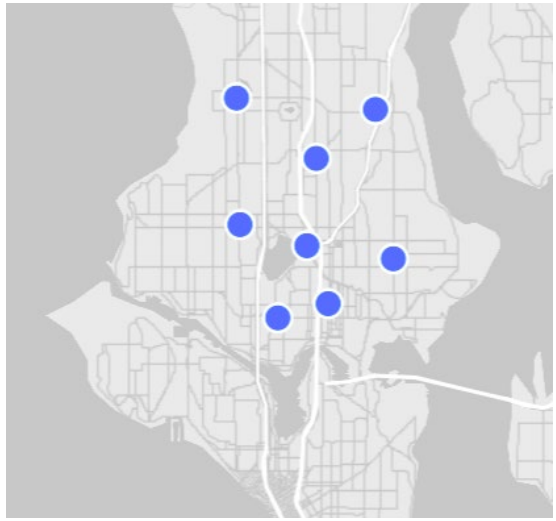


MAP

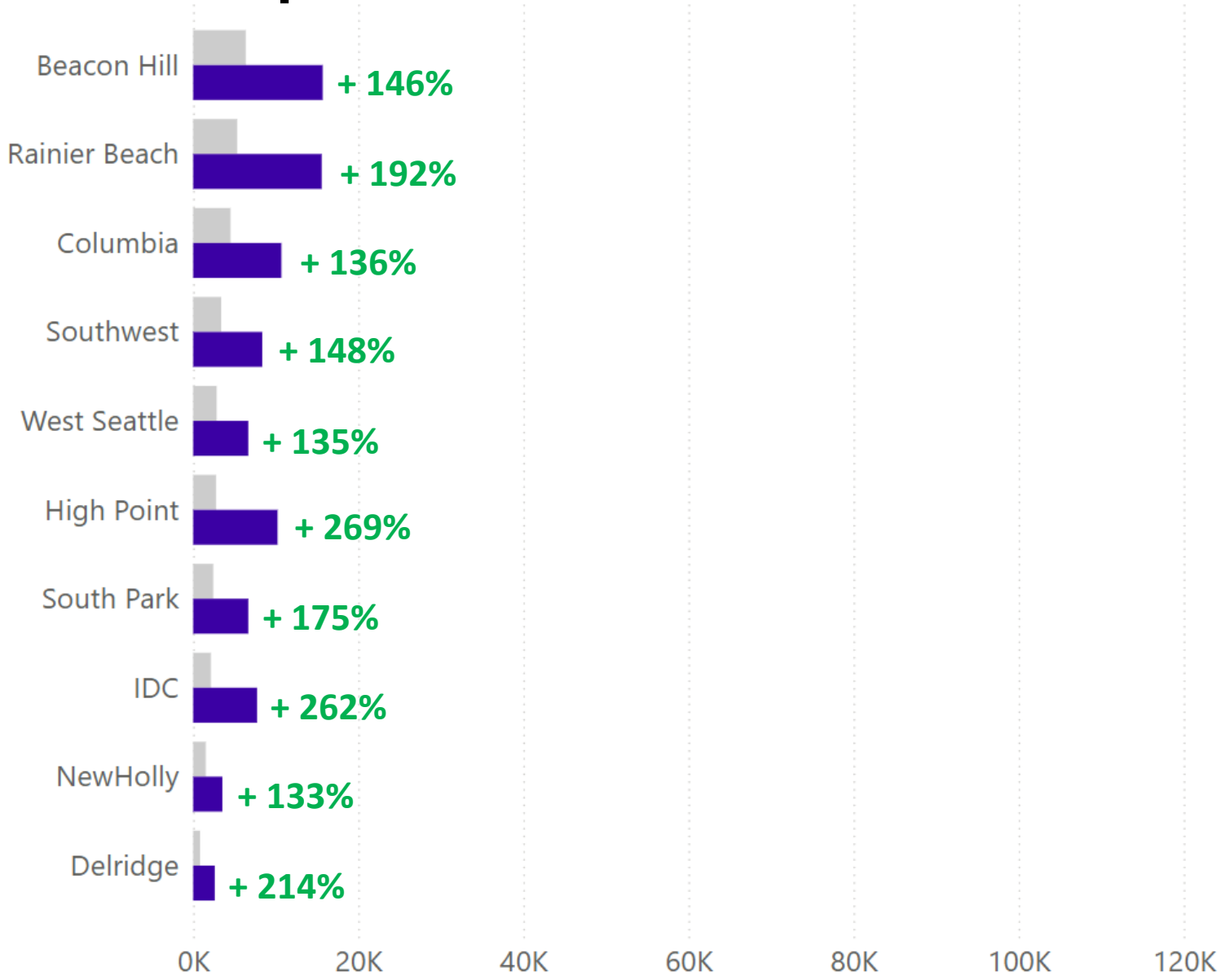
Library Location

CHART

2020 2025



Public Computer Sessions: South Seattle

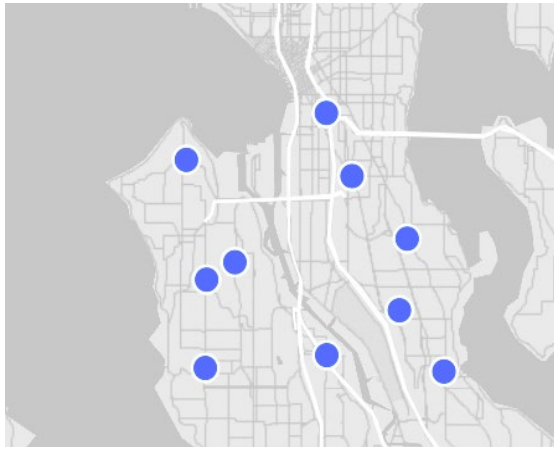


MAP

Library Location

CHART

2020 2025



Impact on Library Patrons

TECHNOLOGY & ONLINE SERVICES

"**[SPL's] online resources have made it so easy for me** to listen to audiobooks during my commute (Libby), learn new courses relevant to my field (LinkedIn learning) and watch films I can't find anywhere else (Kanopy)."

"I live in a place with no cell phone service, so **the library is invaluable when the power is out or my Wi-Fi is out** … It has what I need to be successful in my job."

Challenges & Opportunities

TECHNOLOGY & ONLINE SERVICES

Challenges

- Increasing cybersecurity threats
- Ongoing, rapid expansion of artificial intelligence

Opportunities

- More people using their own devices
- Levy investments

Feb. 25: Next Library Levy Presentation

Hours & Access

- Open Hours

Helping Children

- Early Learning and Literacy

Administration & Central Costs

The Seattle Public Library

Questions?

www.spl.org/Levy

The Seattle Public Library

Thank you!

www.spl.org/Levy