

Library Levy 2023 Annual Report

April 25, 2024 - Seattle City Council
Libraries, Education and Neighborhoods Committee

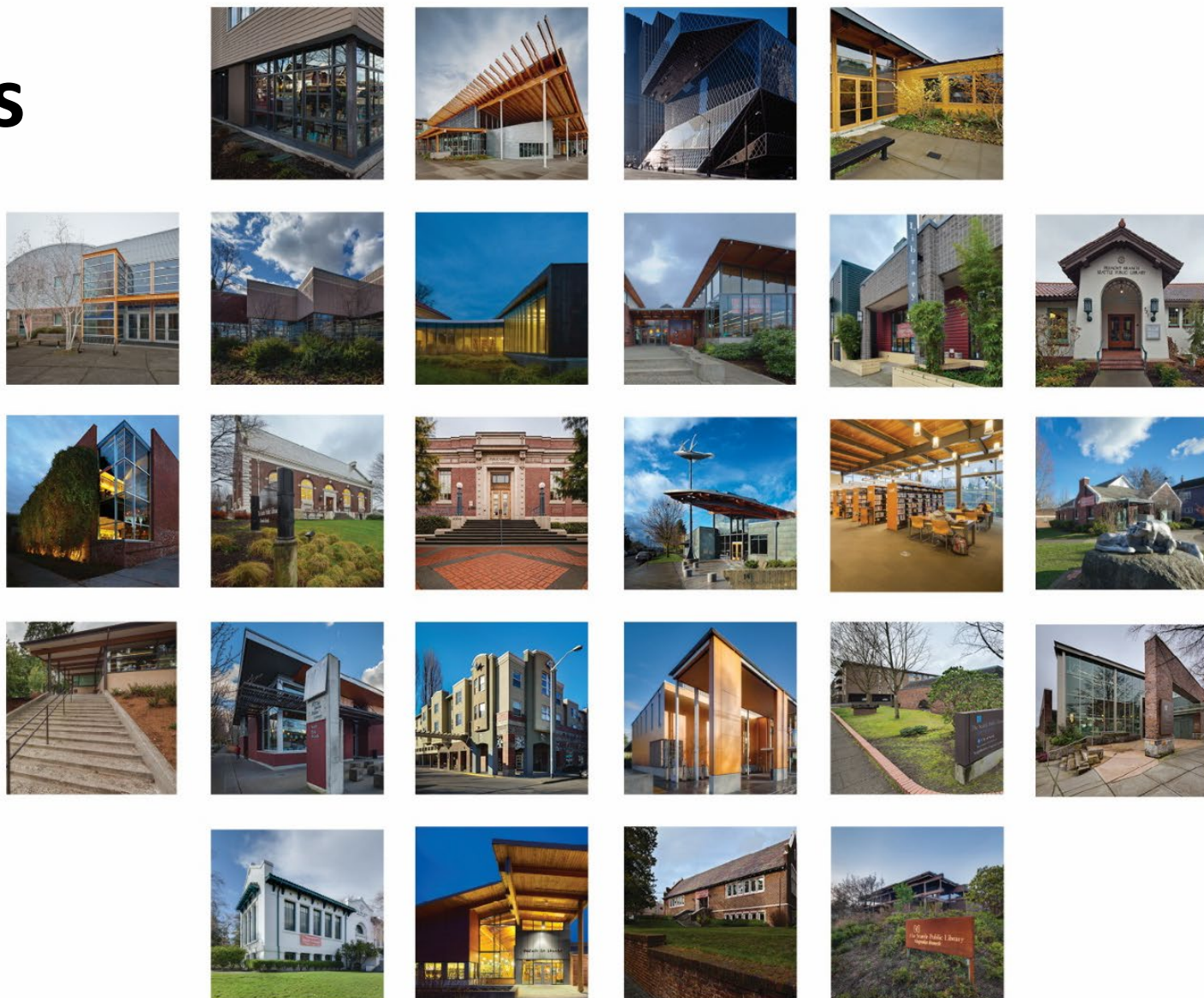
Agenda

- Library Resources
- Levy Background
- Levy Investment Areas
- Promises and Accomplishments in 2023
- What's Ahead



Library Resources

- Central Library and 26 neighborhood branches
- 650+ wonderful Library staff
- Maintenance and Operations Center
- Bookmobile, pickup lockers and more



2023 Library Usage

- 293,000 active patrons – a record high!
- 2.8 million physical and digital items in our collection
- 13.4 million physical and digital checkouts
- 340,000+ public computer sessions
- 3,500 programs with 100,000+ attendance



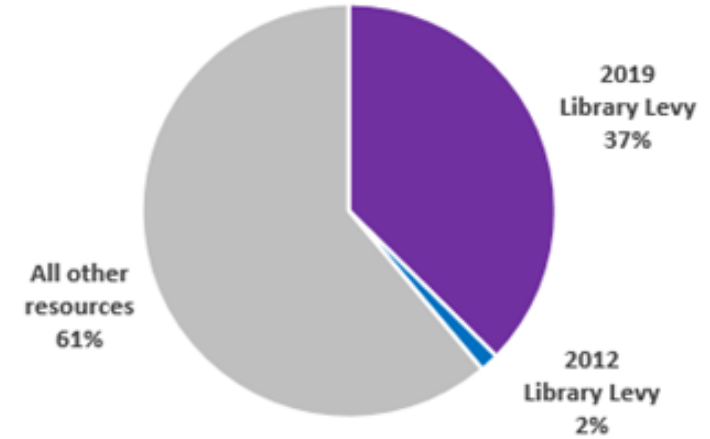




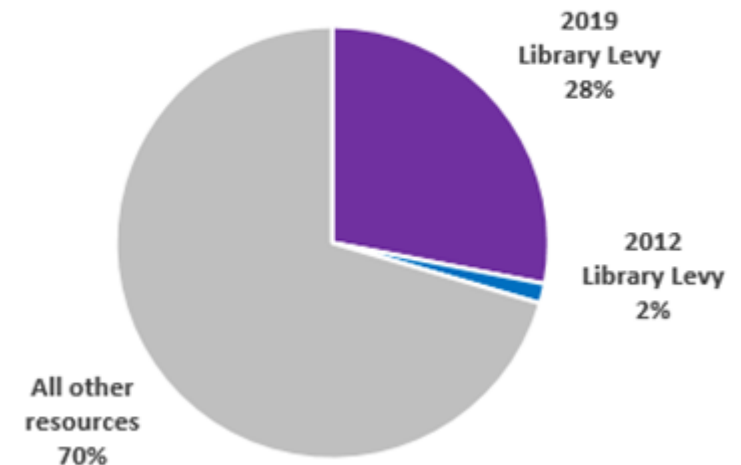
2019 Library Levy

- August 2019 vote (76% approval)
- **\$219.1 million** 7-year levy renewed 2012 commitments and promised more hours and services.
- Levy assumed **4% annual inflation** through the life of the levy. Cumulative inflation through 2023 has **exceeded** that.
- In 2023, the 2019 Levy represented **28% of Library total spending**. The 2012 Levy provided 2%.
- Levy **funds** Library's Foresight planning process and **10-year Strategic Plan**.

2023 Library Revised Budget
(\$132M)



2023 Library Spending
(\$107M)





Key Levy Investment Areas (2020-2026)

Levy Categories	Planned Spending	%
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 Planned Spending 2020-2026	\$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.



Spending Compared to Budget (2023 actuals)

2019 Levy Category	Revised 2023 Budget <small>(rounded)</small>	Actual 2023 Spending <small>(rounded)</small>	% Spent
Hours and Access	\$13.1M	\$12.1M	91%
Providing Books and Materials	\$5.9M	\$5.9M	99%
Technology and Online Services	\$2.4M	\$2.2M	93%
Children's Programming	\$0.37M	\$0.34M	92%
Maintenance	\$2.2M	\$1.8M	83%
Levy Administration	\$0.49M	\$0.45M	92%
Operating Expenses (Subtotal)	\$24.6M	\$22.8M	93%
Major Maintenance/Technology CIP	\$24.9M	\$7.2M	29%
Total	\$49.5M	\$30.0M	61%



Hours and Access

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

- Added **90+ hours per week** over 2019 levels in April 2023.
- Opened most locations **7 days a week** and all were open **more Friday and/or weekend hours**.
- Library locations were **open more hours** in 2023 than at any time since 2009.
- Many **in-person programs restarted** in 2023, including story times, Global Reading Challenge and more author programs.

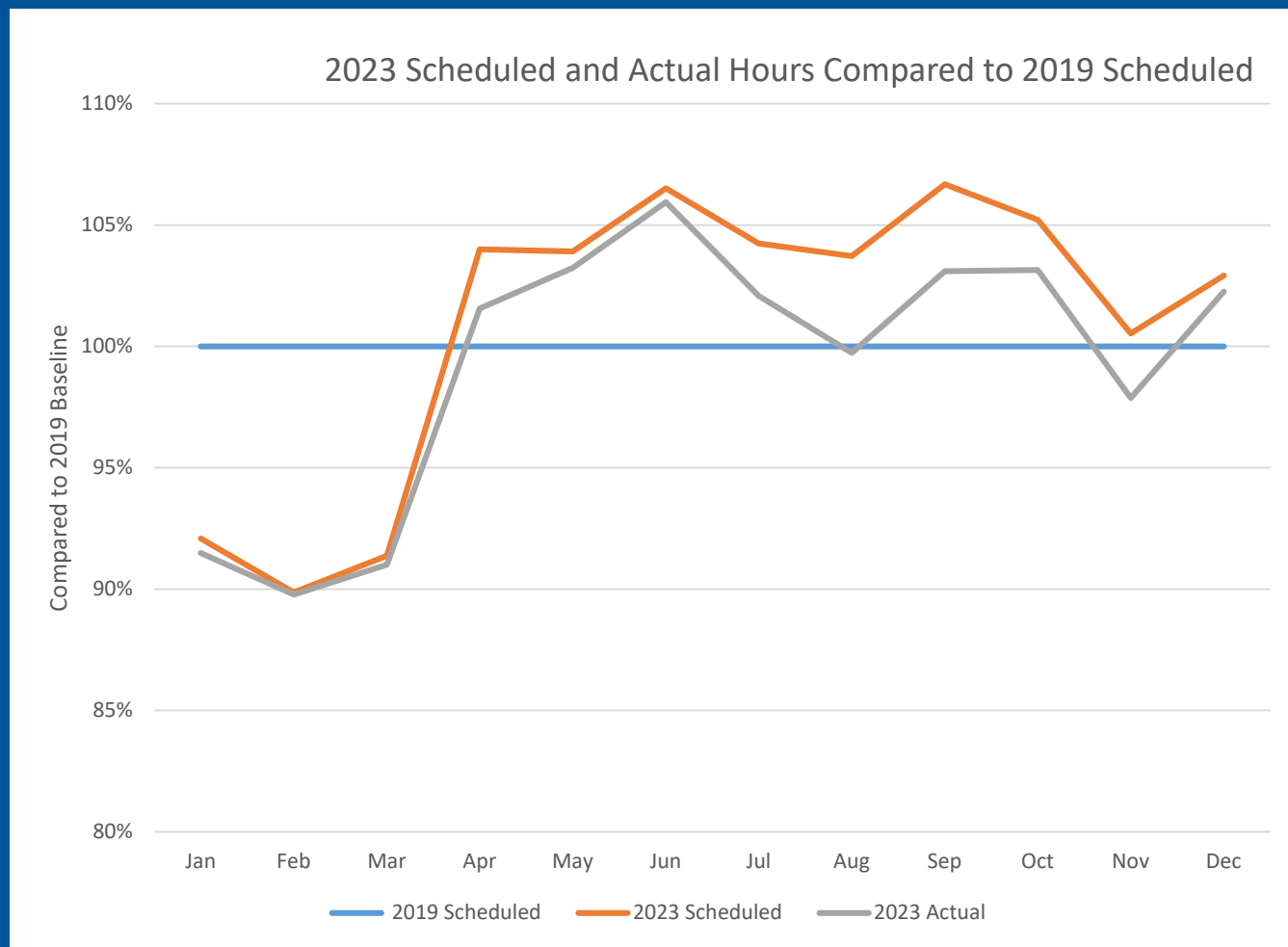






2023 Challenges in Operations

- Most of year, 2023 hours **exceeded 2019 baseline.**
- Overall, Library was open **98% of scheduled hours.**
- Construction projects, excessive heat and insufficient staffing resulted in **scheduled and unscheduled closures.**
- **Temporary reductions in open hours** have recently been implemented to stabilize operations.

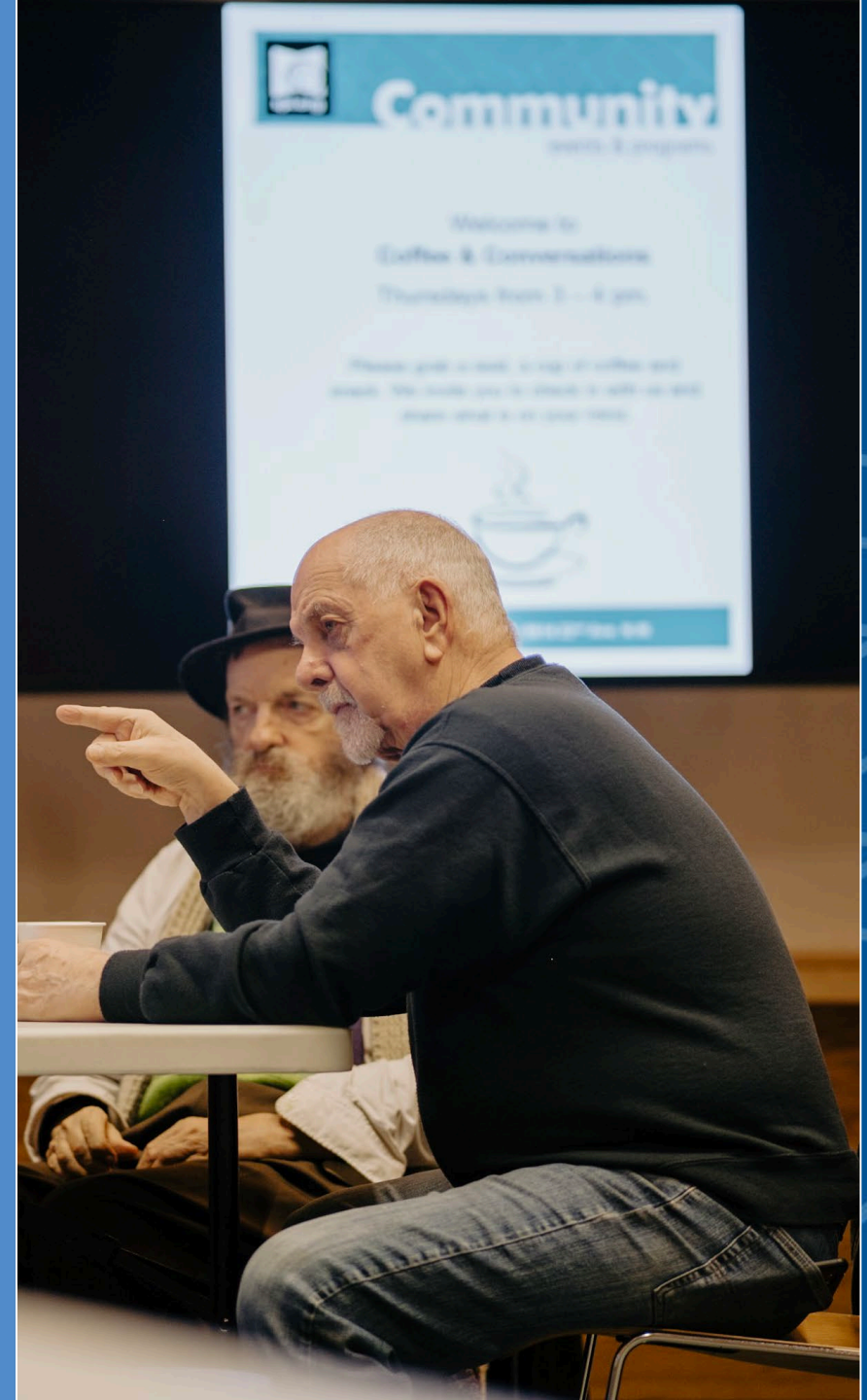




Hours and Access

Promise: Reduce barriers to Library services and expand open hours

- No late fees as of Jan. 1, 2020, **restoring 18,000 accounts**.
- Made it easier for patrons to **request** lost item **fee waivers online**.
- In-house Social Services team established in 2022. Provided over **900 referrals** in 2023 and launched weekly “Coffee and Conversations” and Teen Drop-ins at the Central Library.





Providing Books and Materials

Promise: Purchase more e-materials

- Added **113,000+ copies** to digital collections in 2023, **3% more** than we added in 2022.
- Over **174,000 patrons borrowed** more than **5.4 million** e-books and e-audiobooks, 15% more than in 2022.
- Seattle ranks **8th in the world** in use of OverDrive digital materials.
- Digital books continue to **cost 3 – 5 times more** than print books, eroding our buying power as demand shifts to online materials.



“Best library in the US. Love Kanopy and the ease of checking out e-books.”

- Library patron email



Providing Books and Materials

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

- Added **211,000+** physical items from all funding sources.
- Acquisitions included **118 Peak Picks titles and 18,000 copies** purchased exclusively with levy funds.
- Added **500+ titles** to collection as a result of **diversity** audits.
- Added **1,500 titles** to our **World Language Collections**.





Technology and Online Services

Promise: Upgrade our technology and support digital equity

- **Replaced 368 public and staff computers**, added 14 laptops at branches.
- **Deployed 17 hybrid carts** at Library locations to allow simultaneous in-person and remote participation at meetings.

“I've been using your email-to-print service fairly often over the last year and I just want to express my thanks for how simple and reliable that system is.”

- Library patron email





Technology and Online Services

Promise: Upgrade our technology and support digital equity

- Loaned **1,150 hot spots** in the community, including **250** for long-term internet access to sites such as Tiny House villages.
- Partnered with **16 community organizations** to distribute hot spots and share information about Library resources.

"I think this service is really great. Thank you for supplying a hot spot for those of us that don't have internet at home."

- Library patron in a hot spot survey





Children's Programming

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

- Offered **200+ weekly Play and Learn sessions** at seven branches.
- After **re-launch of in-person story times** in April, offered over 500 programs at 18 branches and in the community.

"I am able to help my children more in the learning process. I am able to use the tools I learn in Play and Learn in different life situations."

- Play and Learn participant from annual survey







Maintenance

Promise: Maintain Library buildings and preserve them for the future

- Began construction of **earthquake retrofit, climate upgrades and accessibility improvements** at Green Lake Branch.
- Installed **HVAC systems** at Northeast, Southwest, and Capitol Hill branches.
- Began to operate the **new automated materials handling system** at the Maintenance and Operations Center.



What's Ahead

- 10-year Strategic Plan
- Reopening of Green Lake Branch and closure of University Branch for seismic project
- New Library app
- Potential levy renewal in 2026







"I don't know what a librarian's job description includes, but from what I saw I think the number one role must be social worker, followed by tech support."

- Library patron email

What we're trying to do with the Strategic Direction is the transformational impact of community belonging and organizational resiliency... That is going to create more equitable opportunities for all."

- Tom Fay, Chief Librarian

Questions?

"Excellent website & customer service. There's nothing more culturally relevant and free than our library."

- Library patron email

"Thank you for your support of LGBTQI kids and adults. We know that librarians are the secret masters of the universe."

- Library patron email