



The Seattle Public Library

Memorandum

Date: April 15, 2021

To: Mayor Jenny Durkan
Councilmember Debora Juarez, Public Assets and Native Communities
Committee Chair, Seattle City Council

From: Tom Fay, Interim Executive Director and Chief Librarian
Alex Yoon, Director of Administrative Services
Jan Oscherwitz, Library Levy Administrator

Subject: **2020 Library Levy Report Submittal**

By April 15 of each year, The Seattle Public Library is required by ordinance to submit an annual levy report to the Mayor and the City Council. This report details the Library's progress in using levy proceeds to restore, maintain and improve core Library services during the prior year. The Library board of trustees reviewed and adopted the attached 2020 Library Levy Report at its Mar. 23, 2021 meeting. The [report](#) is publicly available on the Library's website, including a [summary](#).

In 2020, a year that included a global pandemic, an economic crisis, widespread social and political unrest, and the closure of all Seattle Public Library buildings starting in March, the Library Board directed levy resources to where they were most needed. The 2019 Levy funded \$19.9 million (24%) of the Library's total spending of \$84.7 million in 2020. Due to the closure of Library buildings to the public, the Library was unable to expand open hours, which was a key levy priority for 2020. However, we used levy funds to meet the levy's stated priorities of improving access, collections, technology, children's programming and maintenance. While we couldn't offer in-person events or in-building services for much of the year, we offered and created a wide range of virtual services, events and programs for everyone from seniors to families to jobseekers; circulated a record number of electronic materials, created a Curbside service to provide access to our physical collection at a growing number of locations, and loaned more hot spots than ever to communities that lacked digital access.

While we have much to be proud of with regard to what the Library was able to accomplish with levy funding in 2020 during unprecedented circumstances, we face challenges ahead due

to cuts to the Library's General Fund in response to the pandemic. As we work to offer in-building services and programs to the public in 2021, restoration of General Fund support for the Library will be critical in order to meet our levy promises to voters.

We look forward to sharing details about our Library levy accomplishments and welcome any questions about our levy progress.

cc: Council President Lorena González
Councilmember Lisa Herbold
Councilmember Andrew Lewis
Councilmember Tammy Morales
Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda
Councilmember Alex Pedersen
Councilmember Kshama Sawant
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Amy Lawson, SPL Chief Librarian's Office EA

2020

The Seattle Public Library LEVY REPORT

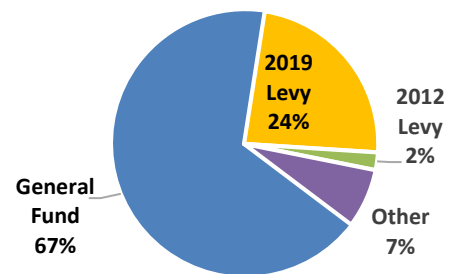


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Supporting Seattle's information needs in a year like no other

In August 2019, Seattle voters overwhelmingly approved (76%) a seven-year, \$219.1 million property tax levy to maintain and enhance Library services from 2020 through 2026, renewing a seven-year \$123 million levy that expired at the end of 2019. In 2020, the 2019 Levy funded \$20 million (24%) of the Library's total spending of \$84.7 million. The City General Fund provided \$56.9 million (67%), the 2012 Levy provided \$1.8 million (2%) and other sources, including The Seattle Public Library Foundation (SPLF), funded the remainder.

2020 Library Spending (\$84.7M)



The Library laid out a clear framework for how 2019 Levy proceeds would be used to maintain services that had been funded by the 2012 Levy and provide additional services and programs. This report, which covers levy activities and spending for 2020 with an emphasis on the fourth quarter, continues the series of levy updates the Library has provided for the Library Board of Trustees and the public since the 2012 Levy. Beyond renewing 2012 commitments, the 2019 Levy provided support for additional Library hours; elimination of overdue fines; improved collections and technology; safer, cleaner buildings; specialized programming and services for children; and development of a plan for the future of library service. Many of these additional investments came out of priorities identified through a 2018 community survey. More than 26,000 Seattle residents responded.

As noted in previous reports, at the beginning of the year, we fulfilled two key voter promises to expand Library programs and services: we eliminated overdue fines and opened an hour earlier at each branch on Sundays. These changes were intended to benefit communities who have been historically underrepresented in the use of Library services.

By March, however, Library service was drastically altered in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We canceled all in-person programming at the beginning of the month and, on March 14, closed Library facilities to safeguard staff and the public. Facilities remained mostly closed to the public through the end of the year as we incrementally added and restored services. Soon after closure, we launched new virtual services, provided restroom access in five locations for people who lacked access to hygiene services, and planned for ways to resume the lending of physical materials, launching a Curbside Pickup Service in August and expanding it through the fall. In August, we also restarted our Mobile Services delivery with modified procedures, restoring library services to patrons with some of the greatest barriers to library access.

As the Library met the challenge of launching or restoring services while our facilities remained largely closed to the public, we also had to reduce our budget by \$2.8 million (5%) due to General Fund cuts. We were able to rebalance the budget through a combination of strategies: not filling vacancies, cutting discretionary purchases, and redirecting over \$500,000 received from SPLF. Because buildings were closed for an extended amount of time, the Library Board directed the Library to reallocate \$1.58 million from the 2019 Levy that had been set aside to increase hours of operation and expand programming in 2020 to support the effective continuation of core Library services and to increase Library access for those who face the most barriers to Library use.

In a year that included a global pandemic, an economic crisis, and widespread social and political unrest, the Library directed resources where they were most needed. Ultimately, the Library was unable to meet or deliver on all levy goals for 2020, but we remained true to the spirit of the levy. The Board and the Library are committed to delivering on our promises to voters over the course of the levy, while we will also adjust course to reflect the changes in how our patrons use our services. Looking ahead, we will work with the City to restore General Fund resources to support Library service levels that were assumed in planning for the levy so that we can begin to fulfill key levy promises such as increases in hours.

This report focuses on how the Library is adapting to our new operating environment and demonstrates how we are providing a high return to Seattle residents on their investment in the core levy program areas — Hours and Access, Collections, Technology and Online Services, Children’s Programming, and Maintenance. In addition to the core levy-supported activities outlined here, this report highlights some of the ways the Library has been able to use levy resources to leverage funding from other sources, in particular The Seattle Public Library Foundation, to stay connected and nimble in service to the residents of Seattle.

“A big thank you to staff at The Seattle Public Library for outstanding service in the year of COVID - and every year. In spite of budget cuts and lockdowns, the Seattle Public Library has delivered service far beyond its budget and staffing level.”

- Library patron

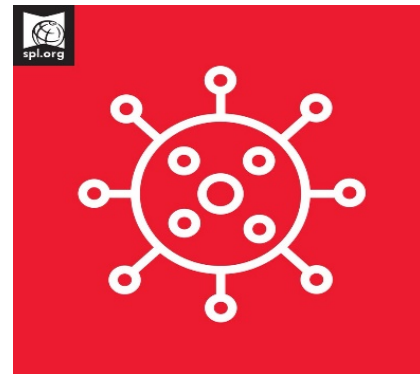
LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: HOURS & ACCESS

Expanding access and equity during COVID-19

The Hours and Access category of the 2019 Levy supports 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. Many elements of this levy category relate to reducing barriers to access, such as late fees and limited open hours.

We started the year by eliminating fines for overdue materials and opening our branches one hour earlier on Sundays, the first step in what was intended to be more than 10,000 new Library hours each year funded by the levy. However, because of COVID-19-related closures and city-requested budget cuts, we have deferred this levy promise through 2021.

Instead, we used levy resources to support developing a new model of service to allow patrons to access physical books and materials under COVID-19 restrictions, with a focus on equitable Library service delivery and high safety standards. We expanded virtual offerings, and offered phone-based programs and services for those who do not have reliable access to computers.



Increasing information access with Curbside services

Soon after the COVID-19 closure, we began planning how we could again safely loan physical materials to our patrons. In July, we began accepting material returns at select locations, and in August, after several months of planning, we launched a new service model: a no-contact Curbside Pickup Service at locations throughout the city: Ballard, Broadview, Douglass-Truth, High Point, Lake City, Rainier Beach branches and at the Central Library. When holds were available, patrons could either schedule an appointment or simply walk up to collect their books outside through contactless experience. We also resumed Mobile Services deliveries in August, providing books and materials once again to homebound seniors, people living with disabilities and preschool children living in low-income households.



Curbside Pickup – Rainier Beach Branch

Curbside at more locations

Since the Library started its Curbside Pickup Service, patrons shared feedback that they were happy, but wanted more locations.

Through the fall, we continued to expand our return locations and Curbside service, adding Greenwood and Northeast branches in October. Beacon Hill and Southwest branches were added in November, providing in-lobby Curbside service for the first time. Moving the service into lobbies helped staff and patrons stay warm and dry while also allowing for better efficiency in accessing and delivering Library materials.

For our in-lobby Curbside locations, the Library has implemented extra safety precautions, including limits on number of patrons allowed indoors and plexiglass barriers. By the end of the year, we also transitioned from scheduled appointments to walkup service for all branch locations, after determining that walk-up service was more efficient for staff and provided quicker delivery for patrons. Appointments can still be made for patrons who need accommodations to access Library materials.

In November, we reinstated due dates, which we had suspended when our buildings closed, to restore our collection and circulate more materials, essential to a well-functioning library system. But thanks to the 2019 Levy, patrons are never charged daily overdue fines, which would have been an exceptional burden in a year like 2020.

By the end of the year, we had expanded Curbside Pickup service to 11 locations and return service to 13 locations. In addition, we began offering a [Curbside printing service](#) at seven branches and the Central Library.

Planning for reactivation of in-building services

While the Library was expanding Curbside and Mobile locations and services in the fall, Library administration and several staff groups continued working to develop safety and operational plans for limited in-building services allowable in future phases of the state's Healthy Washington – Road to Recovery plan. When it is safe for libraries to reopen to the public, future in-building services will be provided at select locations using a phased approach, and services will likely include access to holds pickups, self-checkout, indoor seating, device charging options, restrooms, computers and Wi-Fi.

Increasing information access with virtual programs and services

While the Library was developing the Curbside Service model to provide access to physical materials, we were also working to restore information access by transforming essential in-person programs to virtual. With help from the levy, which partially funded staffing across the Library system, we hosted 400 virtual events from September to December, from career and entrepreneurial help to author programs and story times. Working closely with community partners, we also developed new services and programs that helped keep Library cardholders informed, entertained and connected in a challenging year.

“Life would be far less enjoyable without my great Beacon Hill branch. During this difficult COVID time, Staff at pick-up time have been a day of sunshine!! I'm 81 years and have been a fan since fourth grade.

Library patron, via
Bibliocommons



In the spring of 2020, after our buildings were closed and in-person reference services were suspended, the Library reconfigured our Ask Us reference service to be fully staffed remotely. A core Library service, Ask Us provides support for patrons to access many other Library programs and services, and is available by phone, email, chat, and phone in multiple languages through the Language Line.



Not surprisingly, use of virtual and phone-based reference services increased during the pandemic, with patrons calling, emailing or chatting for help with a wide range of issues, from older people who might be using electronic resources for the first time to parents and other caregivers trying to access homework resources for their children. In the fourth quarter, for example, the number of chat sessions increased by more than 120% and email sessions increased by 90% compared to the same time period in 2019. The number of phone sessions to Quick Information Center increased by 20% quarter over quarter.

We also reached out to patrons to explain and promote our services through our marketing channels. Our end-of-year [Thrive Together](#) campaign generated over 22,000 impressions on our social media channels and over 68,000 email opens. We updated our email [subscription center](#) to make it easier for patrons to sign up for email newsletters based on their interests.

Connecting small business owners to resources

In 2020, the [Library to Business](#) program hosted 196 virtual one-on-one business appointments, including 69 in the fourth quarter. While the Library has offered individual assistance to aspiring entrepreneurs since 2015, the COVID-19 environment has added layers of complexity for small business owners and requires significant staff effort to stay on top of relief programs and reopening guidelines and to transform in-person appointments to an online (or phone) service. Beyond individual assistance, the Library hosted 99 Library to Business workshops in 2020, including 37 in the fourth quarter. The Library team partnered with other City agencies, UW Entrepreneurial Law Clinic, local business associations, local community development organizations and local entrepreneurs to help Seattle residents start or expand their businesses.

In conjunction with the City's Office of Economic Development (OED) and community organizations, last fall we also offered several virtual programs on the business of food, including monthly Food Business Orientations and Business Resource Open House webinar in November that brought food industry experts together to discuss the issue of food access, the intersectional pandemic impacts on small business and other factors. With the help of the Beacon Business Alliance and OED, we were able to offer live in language translation in Spanish, Mandarin, and Vietnamese, a webinar feature we will continue in 2021.



A graphic recording of the November Business Resource Open House by Mari Shibuya

Providing resources to youth

Since March, the Library has leveraged strong relationships with Seattle Public Schools (SPS), Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) and many community partners to help youth and families who were thrust into the world of remote learning without adequate support.

In September, using levy savings from program deferrals, the Library hired a project manager to support K-5 remote learning through 2021. In direct response to community needs, and with financial support from the Seattle Public Library Foundation, in mid-October, we launched a free, [one-on-one virtual tutoring service](#) for Seattle students. Our subscription with Tutor.com, provides students with live, multilingual academic support in over 300 subjects, 7 days a week. Since the launch, we've had over 1,300 virtual student visits. We are also happy to report that we have seen a 100% increase in active SPS [Library Link](#) student accounts this school year.

To ensure equitable access to our educational resources, we pursued a multi-pronged community strategy grounded in data and equity practices. In collaboration with SPS, we promoted our new resources to educators, parents and students in multiple languages and formats. Following conversations with the SPS Community Engagement Team regarding student needs, we launched an ongoing effort to reach and engage 7,000 SPS scholars and their families residing in SHA communities. In partnership with SHA community builders and educational specialists, we produced multilingual video tutorials of Library services resources that were featured on [shayouth.org](#), in the [The Voice](#) community newsletter and via targeted text communications sent to residents' phones. In hopes of reaching immigrant and refugee parents who experience many barriers navigating systems, we collaborated with community-based organizations, specific language groups and ethnic media to share supports.

Building robust collections in print and digital formats

The 2019 Levy commits resources to maintaining and expanding the Library's collection of physical and digital materials. The levy includes additional funding for e-books, e-audiobooks and streaming services; money to continue and expand the Peak Picks collection; and funds to support the acquisition and digitization of local history items.

With buildings closed and General Fund cuts in 2020, a portion of levy funds – originally allocated to expand levy hours and programming – was redirected to the Library's collection. In 2020, the 2019 Levy funded 53% of the Library's total spending for books and materials.

Digital collections reaching more people

The pandemic accelerated the long-term trend of patrons' shift from physical to digital materials. More than 137,000 patrons downloaded e-books or e-audiobooks in 2020, including 90,000 in the fourth quarter alone, an increase of 20% over the fourth quarter of 2019. Quarterly checkouts from OverDrive increased by 23%, while checkouts for children's digital materials in the fourth quarter increased by 98% compared to the fourth quarter of 2019. We added over 34,000 titles and 108,000 copies to the digital collection in 2020. SPL's digital collection now includes more than 297,000 titles and 715,000 copies.

Building physical collections while restoring access

By the end of 2020, the Library had loaned over 2.3 million physical items, including almost 700,000 since the August launch of Curbside service. We added 100,000 items to the physical collection, including over 13,000 copies of Peak Picks titles.

After our buildings closed in March, staff continued to order new titles in physical formats in anticipation of patron interest. Our ability to process new orders was hampered by the time it took to plan and safely reintroduce staff to in-building work, resulting in a backlog of new titles. While the backlog has delayed patron access to new physical materials, the Library has developed solutions to resolve the backlog and hopes to be caught up by the end of first quarter 2021.

Peak Picks during a pandemic

Peak Picks – the Library's popular no-holds, no-wait collection of high-interest titles -- relaunched in August 2020 along with Curbside service. However, the complexities of providing access to a browsing collection during a pandemic environment posed some logistical challenges early on. By the end of the year, patrons could access a selection of 10 Peak Picks titles a day at all Curbside locations.



Peak Picks contributed to nearly 16,000 checkouts in the final quarter of 2020 (up from 700 in the third quarter) and over 60,000 checkouts for the year. While Peak Picks circulation is not at pre-pandemic levels, it provides access to popular print titles. Nineteen titles were added, including books from regional bestselling authors Ijeoma Oluo ("Mediocre"), Lindy West ("Sh*t Actually"), Jess Walter ("The Cold Millions") and Alexandria Bellefleur ("Written in the Stars").

Adding to local history collections

During the fourth quarter, the Library added over [150 new photos](#) to our Seattle Historical Photo Collection, which now holds over 3,200 images. The new additions include circa [1940's images of Boeing aircraft](#), First Hill and Madrona [family photos from the 1890s](#), construction of the [Kingdome](#) in 1973, performances at [Green Lake's Aqua Theatre](#), and Lummi sculptor [Joseph Hillaire](#) visiting Japan to create the Kobe-Seattle Sister City Friendship Pole in 1961.

We also began work on processing and digitizing portions of our African-American Ephemera Collection with additional financial support from The Seattle Public Library Foundation. This collection was originally held at the Douglass-Truth Library and created through additions by Library staff and community donations. Materials include newsletters, periodicals, fliers and other ephemera from 1950 to 2004. Digitized portions are now available on our [Special Collections Online website](#).

The levy-funded Seattle Room curator enhanced the Seattle Collection's Black culture and history holdings through the purchase of photos and documents related to Le Etta Sanders King (1893-1978), a dance-band pianist and highly regarded piano teacher in Seattle's Black community, and her son, Winfield King (1920-1976), a well-known local pianist and band leader. Winfield King began playing music venues in Seattle in the 1930's and later became the first Black person to hold a full-time office with the Seattle Musicians Local Union 76.



Seattle musician Winfield King at the piano.

The curator also acquired a large archive documenting the career of the Honorable Joseph R. Lewis (1829-1911), who served as Chief Justice of Washington Territory's Supreme Court and was a direct descendant of Betty Washington, George Washington's sister. Lewis left the Court in 1879 to resume a law practice in Seattle and was later elected to represent the city as member of the Territorial House of Representatives. The archive includes approximately 300 pieces of correspondence and a wide range of other materials, including copies of speeches and orations, legal documents and business records. The archive is remarkable for its depth and breadth and will serve as a rich resource for researchers interested in the early history of Washington.

LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: TECHNOLOGY

Keeping our technology up to date

The 2019 Levy promises around technology include dedicated funding for digital equity offerings; replacing infrastructure for public internet access; replacing outdated technology for acquisition and circulation; and maintaining/upgrading public technologies and the spl.org website. While our buildings have remained closed, our presence online has grown.

Digital equity and the HotSpot circulation program

Internet access remained a critical need throughout the year for everything from job-seeking help to social connection to remote learning, as the pandemic caused many long-term closures or changes to the services Seattle residents depend on. The 2019 Levy is the primary funding source for the Library's HotSpot program. In 2020, the Library was able to leverage levy funding with additional Foundation resources to offer more hot spots in the community.

In 2020, the Library's HotSpot program continued to support Seattle residents with mobile internet access through 675 hot spots the Library lends to cardholders for a three-week loan period and 325 "outreach hot spots" the Library provides to communities who need more long-term access.

We extended loan periods through the end of the year on 143 outreach hot spots that had been checked out prior to our building closure and loaned an additional 175 outreach hot spots after the closure. The Library newly acquired 75 of these hot spots in April, which went to over a dozen organizations that reach people with barriers to access. Those organizations include Alphabet Alliance of Color, API Chaya, Casa Latina, Compass Housing, and the Low Income Housing Institute. In August, the Library acquired 85 additional hot spots and delivered 50 to students at the Seattle World School and 35 to city sites providing childcare and remote learning support. The Library also upgraded our hot spot devices in fourth quarter of 2020, which will continue in 2021.

Increasing access through streaming events, social media and virtual tours

The Library's Marketing and Online Services team, along with Event Services, has increased access to virtual and streaming events, including a virtual visit from author Tommy Orange and other virtual events celebrating Native and Indigenous voices as part of [Seattle Reads](#). Other virtual programs offered in the fourth quarter included a series of online writing programs for [Seattle Writes](#) and a [Teen Library Challenge](#) to help engage teens reading and learning from home.

The Library is now able to stream Library programs through social media. Streaming increases the attendance at Library programs and provides patrons with a way to experience our offerings while our buildings remain closed. We expect to continue to stream programs when the public is back in our buildings and have purchased equipment to improve our ability to stream programs from the Central Library auditorium. We have also begun offering live virtual tours of the Central Library.

Since June, the Library has also hosted virtual Library Board meetings where the public can view and listen via WebEx video conference or by phone. Past board meetings can be viewed on the Seattle Channel's website.

"I am so grateful for the ability to use online library services! It is easy and excellent. I am an older woman who grew up in the University District and the Library has always been an important part of my life. Thank you for continuing to make it an essential part of the community."

- Library patron

Replacing hardware and software

Our efforts to enhance Library technology continued with the upgrading of staff computers at the Central Library to the Windows 10 operating system, an especially important step given the shift to a largely remote workforce during the pandemic. Outdated servers were replaced to reduce hardware outages and costs. We also completed a cabling closet on Level 3 of the Central Library to house information technology infrastructure. The rollout of new Wi-Fi technology for all branches was slowed due to technical challenges, but the hardware is scheduled to be installed at the remaining branches by the end of the second quarter of 2021. Due to increasing costs, when in-building services resume, we will be replacing Adobe software applications with a lower-cost alternative on public computers.

LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: SUPPORTING CHILDREN

Expanding early learning options for children

Planned programs delayed, virtual programs launched

The 2019 Levy promised additional support for Library early learning programs for children ages 0 to 5. The 2020 levy goal was to add up to six additional Kaleidoscope Play and Learn programs each week at Library locations starting in June 2020, but this effort was delayed due to our building closures. Savings related to this delay have been used to offset reductions in General Fund resources and to support staffing in the early learning program.



**Early Learning
Together**

Our early learning programming manager, who was partially funded by the levy in 2020, continued to work with our existing Kaleidoscope Play and Learn partners, which moved their weekly programs from in-branch locations to online venues after our buildings closed. The Library promoted these programs through our website. One of our partners, Chinese Information and Service Center, recently completed 14 early learning videos in several different languages (Russian, Vietnamese, Japanese, Mandarin, and Cantonese) as part of a project to support access to multilingual early learning programming online. These videos will be available on the Library's [Kids' YouTube channel](#) after editing and captioning are complete. The Library also continued to post virtual story times on Facebook Live and [YouTube](#), ranging from preschool story times to a virtual fire department tour in English and Spanish.

Reaching families with physical books

Early in the pandemic, through ongoing and intentional communication with eight community organizations, Library staff asked how we could best support BIPOC families (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) during this time. We heard what was needed most was not online platforms but physical books, especially books affirming Black lives. Thus began a pilot project to create best practices for supporting BIPOC families by working with our community partners to order and distribute books.

With financial support from the Seattle Public Library Foundation, the Library distributed 6,800 physical books to eight organizations: Atlantic Street Center, Gordon Hirabayashi Child Development Center, Open Arms Perinatal Services, Rainier Valley Food Bank, St. Mary's Food Bank, Wellspring Baby Boutique and Wellspring Early Learning Center. These organizations, in turn, distributed the books to the families they served.

We also distributed [early learning cards](#) and booklets to over 19 organizations across the city. Plans are to continue offering this publication in 2021 with a focus on expanded translation into more languages.

“I’m so excited that we can share this wonderful resource with our families! (It’s) such a powerful way to continue to foster literacy, early literacy, and staying connected in the midst of this pandemic.”

- Jami Bass, Open Arms Perinatal Services

LEVY ACCOMPLISHMENTS: MAINTENANCE

Protecting our investments

The 2019 Levy promised to maintain Library buildings, preserve funding for major maintenance and add resources to undertake earthquake retrofits for the [historic Columbia, Green Lake and University branches](#).

Routine maintenance: Keeping our facilities clean and safe

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented some unique challenges and opportunities for keeping the Library clean, safe, and accessible, another important levy priority. The extended building closures in 2020 made it possible for the Library to perform some essential maintenance for the first time in years. Staff, for example, were able to seal the concrete floors in a number of locations at the Central Library that had not received treatment since 2014. This maintenance not only makes the building look noticeably cleaner, it also protects the asset and decreases exposures to pathogens, dust, soils, and molds. As daily cleaning needs were reduced, nearly all deep cleaning activity was done in-house, resulting in budget savings we were able to capture to offset General Fund reductions.

In April, the Library reopened restrooms seven days a week at five locations to support the community's hygiene access needs, as most indoor restrooms across the city were closed to the

public due to the pandemic. Our custodial team cleaned restrooms three times daily and cleaned and disinfected them overnight. Our staff worked hard amid shortages in the global supply chain to maintain inventories of in-demand items (toilet paper, masks, respirators, gloves, hand sanitizer, soap, disinfectants, etc.) and also contributed to the citywide Return to City Worksite Operations Task Force.

The facilities team supported Curbside operations by relocating furniture, building and installing sneeze guards, outfitting interior spaces for physical distancing. Facilities also performed preventative maintenance activities, readied buildings for winter and repaired several locations damaged by acts of vandalism. Over the course of the year, maintenance staff completed 99% of its preventive maintenance work orders and service requests.

Major maintenance: Preserving libraries for the next generation

In 2020, the 2019 Levy provided \$4.7 million in budget authority for the Library's capital improvement program, including \$1.5 million for seismic retrofit work at the Green Lake Branch. There was also \$3.6 million in carryforward budget authority from the 2012 Levy for major maintenance. Despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Library spent \$1.5 million of levy proceeds and completed several substantial capital projects last year. At the Central Library, we repaired the 4th Avenue berm, replaced the parking garage door, and upgraded lighting controls to improve energy efficiency.

We completed design work for the seismic retrofit project at the Green Lake Branch, which is slated to begin in 2022. We also completed a number of projects at our branch locations, including updates to public restroom accessibility and general branch lighting improvements at the South Park Branch, parking garage lighting enhancements at the Capitol Hill, Greenwood and Montlake branches; HVAC energy efficiency improvements at the Beacon Hill, Delridge, High Point, Northgate and Southwest branches; window restoration at the Queen Anne Branch; and roof repairs at the Lake City Branch. We also completed initial preparatory work prior to occupancy at the Library's Maintenance and Operations Center.

Risks, opportunities and the path ahead:

The cuts and reallocations the Library undertook in 2020 do not provide a stable and sustainable financial picture going forward. As part of the 2019 levy, we promised significant expenditures for increased hours, materials, maintenance, and capital improvements. We cannot continue to cover City budget cuts with levy dollars in the years ahead and still deliver these important improvements that Seattle residents asked and voted for. To deliver on our promises, we must advocate for the restoration of General Fund support of Library services. At the same time, the unprecedented events of 2020 have changed what Seattle residents want and expect from the Library and how they use our programs and services. Some of these changes, such as increased reliance on virtual services, are likely to be permanent. In the year ahead, we will assess how we can best use levy dollars to deliver on priorities and meet emerging needs, but restoration of city budget support remains essential.

As you'll read in our 2021 first quarter report, our staff continued to adapt, enhance, and launch services and programs to help our community respond to the COVID-19 crisis and beyond. Here's a quick preview:

- Expanding Curbside Service locations
 - Planning for resuming in-person services
 - Surveying patron priorities
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2020 Financials

The Library spent nearly \$20 million of 2019 Levy proceeds and \$2 million of 2012 Levy proceeds out of a total of \$84.7 million from all sources in 2020. As noted in the executive summary, there were some significant revisions to the Library's budget over the course of the year.

Due to a steep decline of City revenues and a sharp increase in spending related to the pandemic, the City reduced General Fund resources to the Library by \$2.8 million (5%). The Library rebalanced its budget through a combination of strategies: not filling vacancies, cutting discretionary purchases, and redirecting over \$500,000 received from The Seattle Public Library Foundation. The Board also redirected \$1.58 million of levy proceeds allocated to increase hours of operation and expand programming, enhancements that were not possible in 2020 due to Library closures. Instead, those funds were invested in levy priority areas that would have experienced reductions due to the loss of General Fund support. With levy proceeds, we were able to launch Curbside Pickup Service in parts of the city where patrons were most reliant on our physical collection, increase our phone and virtual assistance, and invest in our digital offerings and virtual programming, including support for early learners and students. The 2021 budget is built on the assumption that the Library will not return to pre-pandemic operations before July 2021. The Library remains committed to fulfilling levy promises related to expanded hours and programming in 2022 and beyond. Spending tables below reflect budget realignments. Unspent funds will either carryforward into the 2021 budget or will be re-appropriated in future budgets.

2019 Levy	2020 Revised Budget	2020 Expenses	Available	% Spent
Hours & Access	10,203,593	9,183,107	1,020,486	90%
Collections	6,709,951	6,415,745	294,206	96%
Technology & Online Services	2,190,323	1,689,309	501,013	77%
Children's Programming	136,000	110,166	25,834	81%
Levy Administration	430,397	297,549	132,848	69%
Routine Maintenance	1,514,736	1,149,652	365,084	76%
Capital Improvement Program	4,701,000	1,094,277	3,606,723	23%
Total	\$25,886,000	\$19,939,806	\$5,946,194	77%

2012 Levy	2020 Revised Budget	2020 Expenses	Available	% Spent
Hours & Access	250,000	215,376	34,624	86%
Collections	200,000	200,000	-	100%
Technology & Online Services	1,034,602	537,544	497,058	52%
Levy Administration	-	-	-	N/A
Routine Maintenance	963,207	462,115	501,093	48%
Major Maintenance	3,612,974	387,771	3,225,203	11%
Total	\$6,060,783	\$1,802,806	\$4,257,977	30%

Service Restoration in 2020 by location

	Restroom Service	Book Return	Curbside Pick up	Printing
Ballard Branch	✓(Apr.)	✓(Jul.)	✓(Aug.)	✓(Dec.)
Beacon Hill Branch	✓(Apr.)	✓(Jul.)	✓(Nov.)	✓(Dec.)
Broadview Branch-		✓(Jul.)	✓(Aug.)	✓(Dec.)
Capitol Hill Branch	✓(Apr.)			
Central Library	✓(Apr.)	✓(Jul.)	✓(Aug.)	✓(Dec.)
Columbia Branch		✓(Jul.)		
Delridge Branch				
Douglass-Truth Branch		✓(Jul.)	✓(Aug.)	
Fremont Branch				
Green Lake Branch		✓(Jul.)		
Greenwood Branch		✓(Oct.)	✓(Oct.)	✓(Dec.)
High Point Branch		✓(Jul.)	✓(Aug.)	✓(Dec.)
International District Branch				
Lake City Branch		✓(Jul.)	✓(Aug.)	✓(Dec.)
Madrona Sally Goldmark Branch				
Magnolia Branch				
Montlake Branch				
NewHolly Branch				
Northeast Branch		✓(Jul.)	✓(Oct.)	
Northgate Branch				
Queen Anne Branch				
Rainier Beach Branch		✓(Jul.)	✓(Aug.)	
South Park Branch				
Southwest Branch		✓(Nov.)	✓(Nov.)	✓(Dec.)
University Branch	✓(Apr.)			
Wallingford Branch				
West Seattle Branch				