

**BELLINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY
BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES**

**NOTICE OF MEETING
REGULAR MEETING
of TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 2025, 3:30 p.m.**

Publication of the agenda and the approximate times are a guide to, and not a limitation on, the activities of Trustees. Order of agenda items may be adjusted.

**Central Library, 210 Central Avenue, Bellingham, Washington
Lecture Room – 3:30 p.m.**

AGENDA	TIME (approx.)
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We acknowledge that we gather on territory that has been the traditional and ancestral homeland to the Lhaq'temish (the Lummi People), the Nooksack People, and other Coast Salish tribes of this region Since Time Immemorial.

We honor our shared responsibility to this land and these waters, we commit to learning from Indigenous wisdom, and we strive to repair and deepen our relationships as neighbors and friends.

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Call to order and introductions | 1 min |
| 2. Approve/modify agenda | 1 min |
| 3. Public comment
This time is set aside for members of the public to make comments.
Remarks will be limited to three minutes. | 3 min |
| 4. Consent agenda (see packet materials)
All matters listed on the consent agenda are considered routine and may be approved in a single motion. A Trustee may ask that an item be removed from the consent agenda and considered separately. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communications and FYI• Minutes: March 18, 2025: Regular Board Meeting; March 28, 2025: Special Board Meeting• Library performance & activity measures: March 2025• Financial reports
Claims: March 2025
YTD report: March 2025
1st Quarter Patron Use of Databases and Learning Resources | 2 min |
| 5. Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Board Chair• Library Board members• City Council liaison• Friends of Bellingham Public Library• Library Director (see packet materials) | 8 min |

Time check: 3:45

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 6. 1st Quarter Action Plan report (see packet materials) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebecca Judd, Director | 10 min |
| 7. Staff Safety and Mental Health/Welcoming Public Space update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Survey Summary (see packet materials); Rebecca Judd, Director | 10 min |
| 8. Budget Planning update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open hours adjustment (see packet materials); Rebecca Judd, Director – Action Item | 15 min |
| Time check: 4:20 | |
| 9. Central Library Renovation update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCF Letter of Agreement update; Rebecca Judd, Director • Library Giving Day update; Annette Bagley, Head of Community Relations • March 28, 2025 Special Meeting update; Rebecca Judd, Director | 15 min |
| 10. Strategic Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Bellingham Comprehensive Plan update; Rebecca Judd, Director • Library Strategic Plan 2026-2030 – discussion; Rebecca Craven, Board Chair and Rebecca Judd, Director | 20 min |
| Time check: 4:55 | |
| 11. New business | 3 min |
| 12. Agenda items for next meeting | 2 min |
| Time check: 5:00 | |
| 13. Adjourn | |

Accessibility:

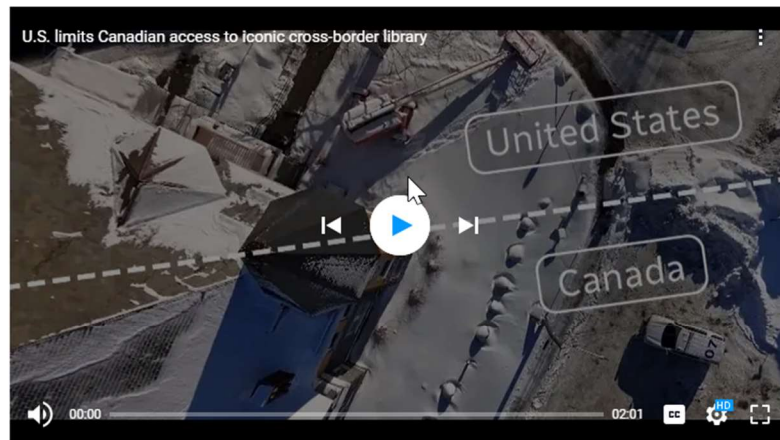
The Bellingham Public Library Board Room is ADA accessible. Elevator access to the upper floor is available at the Central Avenue entrance. If you require a sign interpreter or other accommodation, please allow the library 48 hours' notice. For additional accommodation, contact the Administrative Assistant at 360-778-7220 in advance of the meeting.

**Next Regular Library Board Meeting: Tuesday, May 20, 2025 – 3:30 p.m.
Location: Lecture Room, Central Library, 210 Central Avenue
Bellingham, Washington**

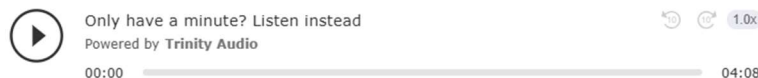


Here's how the gutting of a federal agency will affect Whatcom County's libraries, museums

By Robert Mittendorf
April 2, 2025 11:59 AM



With its free access from both sides, The Haskell Free Library and Opera House on the Quebec-Vermont border has symbolized Canada-U.S. friendship since 1904, but U.S. officials are now turning it into a hard border crossing as tensions between the two countries rise. By Video Team



Proposed cuts to a little-known federal agency could be “devastating” for library and museum patrons in Washington, Bellingham and Whatcom County officials told The Bellingham Herald.

Major news organizations reported Monday that the entire staff of the [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#) was placed on leave. The federal agency, which provides funding for museums and libraries across the country, was targeted for elimination in a [March executive order](#) from President Donald J. Trump.

“This was devastating news today,” Bellingham Public Library Director Rebecca Judd told The Herald.

Read Next

LOCAL

Are you being impacted by Trump administration cuts? We want to hear from you

March 7, 2025 1:49 PM

Neither the Bellingham library or the [Whatcom County Library System](#) receive federal funds directly, Whatcom County libraries Director Christine Perkins told The Herald. But both libraries receive federal money through the state.

“The executive order threatens vital funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services,” Perkins said in an email. “This is the only federal funding dedicated to supporting the work of public libraries across the United States. Although WCLS has received limited support via IMLS in the past, of greater concern is the impact these reductions will have on the budget of the Washington State Library which in turn supports WCLS and Whatcom County residents.”

[Whatcom Museum officials](#) recently applied for a \$250,000 grant from Museums for America, which is an IMLS program. Whatcom Museum is a Smithsonian affiliate.

Funds sought through the federal program “would contribute significantly” to the museum’s Archival Revival project that seeks to move its [photo archives collection](#) of 200,000 historic Pacific Northwest photographic materials to a climate-controlled vault, allow research access for historians and display local history exhibitions, Whatcom Museum Director Patricia Leach told The Herald.

“Without this grant, the museum will still move ahead with this project but will go at a much slower pace. While we’ve been fortunate to receive donations from our members and supporters, receipt of the IMLS grant would go a long way to helping us make significant progress,” Leach said in an email.

Judd said the Washington State Library received \$3.9 million from the agency’s Grants to States program.

“These funds help support the Washington Digital Library Consortium, of which Bellingham is a member, as well as statewide research database subscriptions, and professional training and consulting for our library and libraries across the state. Also, devastatingly, nearly one-third of the funding for the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library is federal. We know what a lifeline this home-delivery service is to those with vision impairment in our community,” Judd said in an email.

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Washington Secretary of State Steve Hobbs criticized the proposed cuts in a statement forwarded by Judd.

“Our libraries are the backbone of an informed and well-educated community — an important component in our democracy and election process. They also serve as places of gathering and acceptance as well as centers for knowledge and learning,” Hobbs said.

Funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services directly benefits public, Tribal, K-12, and community college libraries, Hobbs said.

The Bellingham Public Library’s \$8 million budget is funded [by the city government](#). The Whatcom County Library System’s \$11.5 million annual budget is 95% funded through a property tax on residents outside the city of Bellingham.

Both library systems share their collections and provide access to the books through the Libby app.

“At risk is the Washington Statewide Database Licensing program, which provides access to a variety of online research tools, and supervision of the Washington Digital Library Consortium, which lends over 1 million eBooks and eAudiobooks annually through the Libby app. The Washington Talking Book and Braille Library would also be profoundly affected,” Perkins said.



Robert Mittendorf | *The Bellingham Herald* | [X](#) [f](#) [envelope icon](#) | [phone icon](#) 360-756-2805

Robert Mittendorf covers civic issues, weather, traffic and how people are coping with the high cost of housing for The Bellingham Herald. A journalist since 1984, he's also a volunteer firefighter for South Whatcom Fire Authority.

Libraries are under siege: How Trump's cuts put community hubs in peril

Librarians, states say cuts will decimate local libraries. Feds say they will eliminate bloat and 'better showcase American exceptionalism.'



Sarah D. Wire

USA TODAY

MOUNT AIRY, Maryland – On Wednesday night and Thursday morning, libraries across the country were informed that grants approved last year – and in many cases already spent – are being terminated.

The grants violate an executive order recently signed by President [Donald Trump](#) and are inconsistent with the administration's priorities for the Institute of Museum and Library Services, according to the termination letter received by the states.

The IMLS was effectively shuttered earlier this week, and all work on approving federal grants for state, local and academic libraries was immediately halted.

California's, Connecticut's and Washington's State Librarians offices confirmed to USA TODAY that their grants had been ended six months early. Other states are anxiously awaiting to find out if they are next.



Even though their grant hasn't yet been terminated, Mississippi's Library Commission cut off access to the state's eBook system this week so that "if we did not receive the funds the obligation would not be there," said spokeswoman Kristina Kelly.

In anticipation that they too will face cuts, Ohio has frozen its summer reading program grants for over 50 libraries and Montana has halted all nonemergency spending, their state libraries said.

On Thursday, library advocacy group EveryLibrary issued a statement saying the terminated contracts included already authorized and approved grants that Congress created the agency to disburse, including the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian grants.

"This abrupt termination of *Grants to States* comes in the middle of the federal fiscal year and will create sudden, significant shortfalls in nearly every state library budget," the statement said. "Funding these grants is not optional — they are part of the agency's core mandate and must be administered and disbursed in accordance with law," the release states.

In fiscal year 2024, the Institute of Museum and Library Services distributed nearly \$267 million in congressionally approved funds to libraries and museums in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. and to library, museum, and archives programs through grants. It serves 35,000 museums and 123,000 libraries across the country, [according to its website](#).

Every state receives an amount of money proportional to that state's population. Often states use it to offer services to every library that would be difficult for individual libraries to purchase, like access to a pool of eBooks, subscriptions to research databases or materials for summer reading programs.

On March 31, the entire roughly 70-person staff was abruptly placed on administrative leave after the Department of Government Efficiency met with agency leaders, according to their union AFGE Local 3403, a branch of the American Federation of Government Employees.

"Museums and libraries will no longer be able to contact IMLS staff for updates about the funding they rely upon," according to a statement from the union local. "In the absence of staff, all work processing 2025 applications has ended. The status of previously awarded grants is unclear. Without staff to administer the programs, it is likely that most grants will be terminated."

IMLS did not respond to an emailed list of questions USA TODAY sent before staff was placed on leave.

'Shall be eliminated'

On March 14 [President Donald Trump](#) issued an [executive order](#) eliminating the Institute of Museum and Library Services "to the maximum extent consistent with applicable law."

The order states that the Institute must be reduced to its "statutory functions." It also requires that "non-statutory components and functions ... shall be eliminated."

White House press aide Anna Kelly told USA TODAY that "President Trump's executive order is cutting bureaucracy and bloat to deliver better services for the American people. Thanks to the President's refocus of the agency, the Institute of Museum and Library Services will be able to better showcase American exceptionalism with greater efficiency for the public."

Keith Sonderling, Trump's Deputy Secretary of Labor, [became acting director of the Institute March 19](#). He was accompanied by a team of security and staff from the Department of Government Efficiency, the federal advisory agency led by billionaire [Elon Musk](#).

The Labor Department issued a statement to USA TODAY that said, "President Trump was given a clear mandate by the American people, and his Executive Order delivers on that by reducing federal bureaucracy. This restructure is a necessary step to fulfill that order and ensure hard-earned tax dollars are not diverted to discriminatory DEI initiatives or divisive, anti-American programming in our cultural institutions. These changes will strengthen IMLS's ability to serve the American people with integrity and purpose."



'Libraries are part of our national culture'

Stephanie Matthews, 58, comes to the Carroll County Public Library in Mount Airy, Maryland, every other day. She attends a knitting club while her adult daughter brings her own child to toddler play time.

That's why Matthews is so worried about the funding cuts.

"The library is super important and should not have the cuts that are coming," Matthews said. "Libraries are just foundational to every community."

Her daughter, Rebecca Matthews, 27, said she's never considered herself the type of person to call her member of Congress, but after hearing about the cuts: "now I will."

A steady stream of patrons flowed through the Mount Airy library doors for hours Wednesday. Moms trickled in with tiny hands in their grasp on the way to story time. Seniors joked around a large conference table, needles clicking as the conversation flowed.

Parents read while their children clambered through a make-believe forest in the kids section. A mother explained how libraries work to her young son who was afraid he'd never see his book again if he put it in the return slot.



Outside, the library's bookmobile was being restocked. Emblazed on the side was a credit: "this project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services."

In Maryland, the State Librarian uses the funds for summer reading programs, the Digital Maryland database, library websites, ebooks, technology training and bookmobiles as well as training for librarians.

For Chris O'Daniel, 44, the Mount Airy library offers free Internet and a quiet place to focus as he applies for jobs. For his wife, it is a way to fill her voracious appetite for eBooks, he said. Any potential cuts to services would be terrible for them.

"Libraries are part of our national culture. Ben Franklin and the founding of the first libraries, all that stuff like that is part of who we are as Americans, and having access to free knowledge and free exchange of ideas – the library is the place for that," O'Daniel said.

Public and members of Congress sign letters of protest

Multiple advocacy groups are calling for Americans to contact their governors and federal lawmakers about the future of the Institute.

More than 21,000 people have [signed a petition](#) sponsored by EveryLibrary, a nonprofit that organizes grassroots campaigns for library funding and stopping book bans.

John Chrastka, Executive Director of EveryLibrary, said they hope the petition causes people to contact their elected officials and demand accountability about whatever changes are made to a "backbone agency" that most people don't even know exists.

"We want to educate them, inform them, and activate them because it's the kind of agency that would be very easy to see slip away in so much chaos in Washington, DC, and yet, if it did, there would be down-channel negative effects in almost every community in this country," he said.

In Congress, Reps. Suzanne Bonamici of Oregon and Dina Titus of Nevada collected signatures from 127 Democratic colleagues on a letter urging Trump to reconsider closing the Institute. No Republicans would sign on.

"I'm extremely concerned," Bonamici told USA TODAY. "It's completely unacceptable that they're trying to eliminate the Institute for Museum and Library Services. It's overall, a tiny drop in the bucket in the federal budget, but makes a huge difference, not just in urban but in rural communities as well to have a library or a museum."



She's also worried about whether Congress will be able to come together across the aisle to reauthorize the Institute this fall. It was last renewed in 2018 during Trump's first term with a bipartisan vote, despite Trump's repeated calls to close it.

State libraries plan ahead

State librarians have been trying to give local libraries and districts an honest take on what could happen if the federal funding ends or if the federal government tries to claw back money that was already approved and dispersed, as it has with other agencies.

USA TODAY found that states have received conflicting guidance from IMLS on whether to continue spending their grant money and whether further grants would be approved.

In Illinois, Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias, who is also the State Librarian, has sent periodic notices to local districts to prepare themselves for services to end.

He said the \$5.7 million Illinois received this year goes to all Illinois public, school, academic and special libraries and includes providing computer access to kids in high-risk communities, books to people in prison, and the cost of the online library catalog system and online programs.

Illinois spends about \$2.5 million of its funding on one of the country's largest intralibrary loaning systems, which allow libraries to keep their collections small and borrow from one another. Last fiscal year, 11 million items were transferred among more than 1,700 public, school, academic, and special libraries in Illinois.

In emails, Giannoulias has urged librarians and library administrators to keep their governing bodies aware of what the funding loss would mean. He called on school districts to talk with school boards and he urged everyone to contact their members of Congress. Ultimately though, he said it is up to the public to raise a fuss if they want these services.

"Everyone should be worried," he said. "I think particularly in rural areas, in underserved communities, they'll see the greatest impact, and they'll see it immediately."

'They're under siege right now'

Rural Arkansas is bracing, knowing it cannot replace the endangered services. The state library pays to offer eBooks and a research database to every library in the state as well as books for the blind, the summer reading program and access to federal document repositories.

Adam Webb, executive director of the Garland County Library, said if every library in Arkansas had to pay for the state-offered research database separately it would cost about \$47 million, rather than the \$800,000 the state currently pays.

"Every school and public library, even universities in Arkansas, use it," he told USA TODAY. "For us in Garland County, that resource goes away because IMLS goes away. I don't have the money to pay. That's more than my material budget in a year for one resource."

The community has a high poverty rate, a high rate of adult illiteracy, and low reading scores, he said. "By decreasing our library's ability to provide resources, it's going to affect all of those different things, the

low-income families and seniors that depend on our resources, school age kids who need access to libraries to help boost their literacy scores, and just the general public who use us.”



The county library received a separate IMLS grant a few years ago to help it purchase an “invaluable” new bookmobile, he said. Even with the help of a private Arkansas nonprofit to cover the rest of the cost, the library system couldn’t have purchased it without IMLS, he said.

Webb said he's trying to warn the 250,000 people who walk through his library's doors each year that cuts are likely. Along with the potential end of IMLS funding, Arkansas libraries face possible cuts from the state legislature. A case pending before the [Supreme Court](#) could end reduced price high-speed Internet access for rural libraries.

“A lot of Arkansas libraries feel like they're under siege right now,” he said.

Webb said there’s only a small group of people who need to be convinced to restore funding.

“We're having to spend a ton of time telling a very small number of people all the good that we do,” he said, “when, if you go into our communities, you can talk to anybody that can tell you how much they love our libraries.”

(This story has been updated to add new information.)

[Local News](#) | [Local Politics](#) | [Nation & World Politics](#) | [Northwest](#)

Federal funding pulled from WA state libraries

April 9, 2025 at 10:00 am | Updated April 9, 2025 at 10:00 am



The existing Washington State Library is seen in Tumwater. (Erika Schultz / The Seattle Times, 2023)

By [Shauna Sowersby](#)

Seattle Times staff reporter

Washington library programs are facing potentially “devastating consequences” after receiving notification last week that federal funding has been eliminated for programs like libraries at state prisons and support for rural and tribal libraries.

The Washington State Library, which operates a reading room in Olympia and specialized branches like the Washington Talking Book and Braille Library, distributes grant money to Institutional Library Services. It receives federal funding each year from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services’ “Grants to States” program.

Washington State Librarian Sara Jones told The Seattle Times she received notification last Wednesday that this year's \$3.9 million grant had been terminated in an April 1 memorandum penned by IMLS Acting Director Keith Sonderling, who was appointed to lead the agency by President Donald Trump and sworn in March 20.

To lose federal funding in addition to likely state funding cuts means it will be difficult for Jones to "run a state library for this state that's anything close to what people recognize," and could lead the state library to be funded "at well less than half of what we were last year," she said.



RELATED

- [WA AG sues Trump over dismantling of libraries agency](#)
- [Trump cuts to grants, funding send WA arts organizations reeling](#)

In the memorandum, Sonderling wrote the grant is "unfortunately inconsistent with IMLS' priorities" and said an [executive order issued by Trump March 14](#) mandated the IMLS to "eliminate all non-statutorily required activities and functions." On March 31, the entire 70-person IMLS staff [was placed on administrative leave](#).

The executive order claimed its purpose was to "continue the reduction of federal bureaucracy" and directed the IMLS and several other agencies such as the United States Agency for Global Media, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in the Smithsonian Institution, and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness to "reduce the performance of their statutory functions and associated personnel to the minimum presence and function required."

An email request from The Times to the media contact listed on the IMLS webpage was returned as undeliverable.

The IMLS, an independent agency of the federal government, was established in 1996, and provides federal grants to libraries and museums all over the country. Washington libraries have received federal funding since the 60s and the state's library agency has existed since territorial times, Jones said.

In a document forwarded to The Times, Jones wrote that losing the federal funding "would have devastating consequences, especially for smaller and rural libraries." This year's grant was pulled despite being two-thirds of the way through the federal fiscal year, Jones said. She said Washington was one of only three states including California and Connecticut to have federal dollars pulled.

The Washington State Library manages the federal dollars and also administers them to public, tribal, K-12, universities and community college libraries. Access to e-books and audiobooks, research databases and digitized heritage materials are funded with federal dollars, and are at risk without grant money, Jones said.

Considering the state's \$16 billion budget shortfall over the next four years, Jones said that having federal funding pulled "couldn't be at a worse time." Library services were already in a tough financial situation and the state library was looking at cutbacks in services.

"It's really hard for me to imagine how bad these cuts and services to people are going to be," Jones said.

Additionally, the impacts will also be felt in libraries and library programs in juvenile detention centers, state hospitals, and state prisons.

Jim Kopriva, media relations manager for the Washington Department of Corrections, said reducing funding for those services will be a "shock" to those programs. He said DOC's mission is to try and help incarcerated individuals become better people while they are in custody and not return after release.

"That means educating them. That means emotional regulation, drug treatment and whatever they need to be stable and not come back," said Kopriva. "Education is a big part of that. And literature is a big part of that — personal enrichment is a priority of corrections. And so if our libraries are closed after 50 years, that'll be a shock for sure."

Nine of the 12 prisons in the state are served by the state library and supported by grant funding, as well as Eastern and Western State Hospitals. Federal funds also support 32 partially or fully funded Library Development staff, staff at Washington Talking Book and Braille Library in Seattle, and prison and hospital library staff.

In a letter to Washington's congressional delegates dated April 4, Secretary of State Steve Hobbs wrote that Washington libraries, universities, tribes and museums received more than \$23.7 million in the last three years through the IMLS grants.

"Libraries ensure people have unfettered access to information at hundreds of public, school, academic, and institutional library locations across Washington," Hobbs told delegates. "This commitment is rooted in the fundamental principle that an educated and informed citizenry is critical to a free society. That goal for libraries is not a partisan issue."

On Friday, Washington Attorney General Nick Brown [joined 20 other states in a lawsuit against the Trump administration](#) to block the dismantling of the IMLS.



Shauna Sowersby: 206-652-7619 or ssowersby@seattletimes.com. *Seattle Times* political reporter.

CASCADIA **DAILY** NEWS

Bellingham Public Library seeks donations to upgrade children's department

\$7M interior renovation planned for 75-year-old Central Library

- March 31, 2025 9:00 p.m.



The Bellingham Public Library Board of Trustees and Whatcom Community Foundation have launched a donation drive to help support the next phase of renovations at the Bellingham Central Library. ([Hailey Hoffman/Cascadia Daily News](#))

By [Julia Tellman](#) Local News Reporter

The next phase of a [major renovation project](#) at the Bellingham Central Library is set to begin this year and community partners have launched a fundraising campaign to make up the difference between public funding and the cost of revitalizing the aging library.

The 75-year-old, 44,000-square-foot facility on Central Ave saw nearly 500,000 patron visits in 2024.

After setting aside the dream of building a replacement library downtown, the City of Bellingham began the first phase of an extensive remodel in 2018. The result, completed in 2021, was a redesigned main floor, new public restrooms and study rooms, and freshened aesthetics.

Now, in the second phase of the remodel, the timeworn youth spaces and meeting rooms on the ground floor will see an update. The total project, which will include safety and security upgrades and staff space improvements, is estimated to cost \$7 million.

Bellingham Public Library, which is a city department rather than a separate taxing district, derives most of its funding from the city general fund. The library has requested \$2 million from the state's Library Capital Improvement Program, but grant awardees will not be finalized until the end of the 2025 legislative session in late April. Even if Bellingham receives the state grant, the library is still short on funding for interior design and construction.

That's why, in honor of National Library Giving Day on April 1, the Bellingham Public Library Board of Trustees and the Whatcom Community Foundation [launched a fundraising campaign](#) to renovate the children's department and relocate the teen space.



An array of children's books and activities are available on the ground floor of the Bellingham Public Library. ([Hailey Hoffman](#)/Cascadia Daily News)

"We get so many people coming in ... who say, 'Oh, I grew up here, it looks exactly the same. I love that!' and we go, 'That's fantastic, welcome back,' but it should not look exactly the same," said Bethany Hoglund, the library deputy director, in a promotional video. "Our community deserves a children's library and a teen space that is updated, clean and current."

The library is seeking \$3.5 million total in private donations, with \$1.4 million already committed. One donor has pledged to match up to \$100,000 in new gifts this year.

Design, bidding and contractor selection are expected to happen this year, depending on total funding received. Construction in the library will likely start in 2026.

Eventually, the library's natural gas boiler and the rest of its aging HVAC system will be replaced with an electric system, enabling the library to continue being a place of respite from the heat, cold or poor air quality for all patrons, including vulnerable community members. The HVAC upgrade is estimated to cost another \$5 million. Finally, in the third phase of the remodel, the library exterior will be redesigned with energy and accessibility upgrades.

To learn more about the library renovation project, visit bellingshampubliclibrary.org.

Julia Tellman writes about civic issues and anything else that happens to cross her desk; contact her at juliatellman@cascadiadaily.com.

Bellingham Public Library



Library Delivery Truck

Delivers Books and MORE!



Library All Star

Bellingham Public Library Owns: 1

How Big: 10 feet tall

How Many Wheels: 6

How Fast: Never over the speed limit

Works for: Bellingham Public Library System

Remember to: Wave when you see us!

We are a big yellow truck, and hard to miss.

*This truck's job is to bring awesome materials
to every Library location in Bellingham.*



Library Delivery Truck

Delivers Books and MORE!





Regular Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Tuesday, March 18, 2025 – Central Library Lecture Room
3:30 p.m.

Minutes of Actions and Decisions of the Library Board of Trustees of the Bellingham Public Library as authorized by RCW 27.12.210 and SEC. 7.02 Charter of the City of Bellingham.

Board Members Present: Rebecca Craven, Kristy Van Ness, Kendra Bradford, Deborra Garrett, and Shirin Deylami
City Council Library Liaison: Hannah Stone
Library Management Staff: Rebecca Judd, Annette Bagley, Katrina Buckman, Bethany Hoglund, Jon McConnel, Jennifer Vander Ploeg and Madeline Rosenvinge
FOBPL Representative: Carol Comeau, Friends of BPL Board Liaison
Guest Presenter: None

Call to order and introductions: Regular session was called to order at 3:31 p.m. by Chair, Rebecca Craven.

Approve/modify agenda: Kristy Van Ness moved to approve the agenda. Shirin Deylami seconded. Motion carried.

Public comment: One member of the public provided comment.

Consent agenda: Kendra Bradford moved to approve the February 18, 2025 Regular meeting minutes and the February 2025 performance and activity measures and financial reports. Deborra Garrett seconded. Motion carried.

Board Chair report:

- The Bragg-Muldraw funding request from last month's vote was delivered to Whatcom Community Foundation, and we are waiting to hear if their Board approves the request.
- Congratulations on the Whatcom READs event and thank you to everyone who attended.
- The Friends of the Bellingham Public Library Board meeting is tomorrow, March 19.
- There will be a Special Meeting of the Library Board on March 28 to discuss the 3% budget reduction exercise, the Central Library building renovation, and Levels of Service. For pre-

reading, Rebecca J. will send a link to the BERK report about services and funding models, as well as a link to the Facilities Master Plan and the latest strategic plan.

Board member reports:

- Deborra Garrett and Kendra Bradford both enjoyed the addition of the music performance to the Whatcom READs author event.
- Kristy Van Ness shared kudos to Adult Services librarian Katie Bray for her skillful virtual conversation with the author as the final Whatcom READS program.

City Council liaison report:

- Hannah Stone expressed appreciation for Library staff and said to continue the great work everyone here is doing despite the challenging times with the constrained budget and other unknowns.

Friends of BPL report:

- The Friends received a \$10k donation from the estate of Nancy Allen to support children's materials, as well as another large donation that is still being finalized.
- Members of the Friends Board will be attending an ALA webinar on "Shaping the Future of Your Friends of the Library" on March 22 as well as a Whatcom Community College class on volunteer management.
- The Annual membership meeting of the Friends will be Saturday, April 19 from 10am-12pm in the Central Library Lecture Room. Library Trustees are invited to attend. The program will include a presentation on Disaster Preparedness from Gregg Hope and Katie Bray's popular Book Talk on her 2025 recommended reading list.

Library Director report:

- Rebeca Judd reported that former Board member Marilyn Mastor has passed away. She served as a Library Trustee from 2007-2011 and then again from 2015-2017. Her obituary can be found on earthfuneral.com
- There is an opportunity for the Board to participate in a survey about library Trustees as part of an IMLS grant. Rebecca Judd will send details.
- Rebecca Judd discussed recent news about the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS). She will follow-up with a link to an article that outlines different parts of the Executive Order as well as ways to participate and advocate for libraries. State Librarian Sara Jones has been sharing information about the impact on WA libraries should this funding be eliminated. There will be significant impacts on State Library staffing levels.

2025 Board Committees Discussion

- Rebecca Craven outlined the following list of Board Committees:
 - Executive Committee
 - The purpose of this committee is to plan Board meetings and Special meetings.
 - Rebecca Craven (Chair) and Kristy Van Ness (Vice Chair) are standing members.
 - Policy and Personnel Committee

- The purpose of this committee is to help the Library develop and update Library policies and oversee the annual review of the Library Director. Once Madeline Rosenvinge is back from parental leave, this Committee will also formalize and streamline the onboarding process for new Trustees.
 - Deborra Garrett and Shirin Deylami elected to join this committee.
- Fundraising Committee
 - The purpose of this committee is to assist in the development of fundraising strategies for the Library.
 - Kendra Bradford and Kristy Van Ness elected to join this committee.
- Friends liaison
 - The purpose of this liaison role is to strengthen the relationship between the Board and the Friends. The liaison will attend the Friends board meetings.
 - Deborra Garrett elected to join this committee.
- Rebecca Craven mentioned a few other details about Board committees:
 - A facilities committee is not needed at this time.
 - Beginning in May, regular meetings for each committee will be scheduled one week before the board meeting.

Statistical Trends: Input and Outputs through 2024

- Jon McConnel screenshared a PowerPoint presentation (*see Attachment #1: Statistical Trends: Inputs and Outputs through 2024*). Board Q&A followed the presentation.

Staff Safety and Mental Health/Welcoming Public Space update

- Head of Operations Jennifer Vander Ploeg gave an overview of historical challenges regarding safety, as well as specific actions we have taken to mitigate these challenges.
- On the last page of the report (page 63 of the board packet), there were questions about the graph and what it is telling us. Jennifer Vander Ploeg and Katrina Buckman explained that the graph is broken out by week and shows correlations between adverse weather events, shelter availability, and the number of incidents reported at the Library. The main takeaway is that when more shelters are available, Library incidents decrease, particularly when there are open day shelters.
- Hannah Stone noted that it is important to share this information with the County as they are more equipped to open a day shelter, and that she is happy to be a part of that conversation.

Budget Planning Update:

- None

Central Library Renovation Update:

- None

Library Giving day and National Library Week Update:

- Annette Bagley reported that Library Giving Day is ready to launch on April 1 – and that donors will be invited to give to the Bellingham Central Library Renovation campaign. The campaign will run all year. Annette will share promotional materials and draft emails with the Board.

New Business:

- None

Agenda items for next meeting:

- None

Meeting adjourned at 5:11 p.m.

Next Regular Library Board Meeting Tuesday, April 15, 2025 – Central Library Lecture Room – 3:30 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees

Attachments:

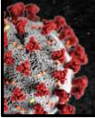
- Attachment #1: Statistical Trends: Inputs and Outputs through 2024

BellinghamPublicLibrary



Statistical Trends

Inputs and Outputs through 2024



It is statistics time! The Washington State Library is getting ready to open up the annual stats survey for 2024 metrics, and we thought it would be helpful to provide an update to the run-down shared the past few years of some of the statistics we report. Last year we reported through 2022 plus some 2023 measures for BPL & WCLS. This year it'll be the statewide stats for 2023 plus some 2024 data for us locals. The 2024 data comes from the Jan. 2025 Board Reports of BPL and Whatcom County Library System, and also from some reports I've run.

This year's report will update last year's, highlighting ways in which we are more alike other libraries than different, especially in how we're impacted by external forces and societal trends. It has two sections: First – continued COVID impacts + recovery; and second, long-term trends impacting libraries, esp. the shift from physical to digital, and changes in computer & internet use. This is likely be the last year to focus on COVID impacts & recovery from the pandemic.

RCW 27.12.260: Annual Report of Trustees

- At the close of each year the board of trustees of every library shall make a report to the legislative body of the governmental unit wherein the board serves, showing the condition of their trust during the year, the sums of money received for the library fund from taxes and other sources, the sums of money expended and the purposes of the expenditures, the number of books and periodicals on hand, the number added during the year, the number retired, the number loaned out, and such other statistics and information and such suggestions as they deem of public interest. A copy of this report shall be filed with the state librarian.
- [[1935 c 119 § 12](#); RRS § 8226-12. Prior: [1909 c 116 § 8](#); [1901 c 166 § 8](#).]

Quick reminder -- Libraries in Washington State are required to submit metrics to their sponsoring jurisdictions, and to the State Librarian. Nowadays there's an online tool to submit stats. Used to be a paper form....

1923

REVISED FORM FOR PUBLIC LIBRARY STATISTICS

Compiled by the
A. L. A. Committee on Library Administration

This is a revision of the form for Library Statistics sent out in February, 1917. It is
for the use of public libraries.

Rate of tax levy for library purposes..... $1\frac{3}{10}$ mills.....

afflicted. Also, if the new items recommended are adopted, it will eliminate the compilation of
much additional data for the Bureau of Education tables."

"A brief outline of salary schedules is added. Some libraries may not want to give this
data but it will be highly valuable information, and will eliminate one of the principal reasons
for frequent questionnaires."

Each library using this schedule is expected to omit all headings which have no reference
to its work and to condense under the nearest general heading all which are insignificant to it.

Annual report for year ended December 31, 1923.....

Name of library Bellingham Free Public Libraries.....

City or town Bellingham..... State Washington.....

Name of librarian Earl B. Carhart.....

Date of founding 1903.....

Population served (latest statistics or estimate—state which) Est. 1920 - 30,820.....

Assessed valuation of city or town 13,352,232.00.....

Assessed valuation is what per cent of true cash value 50%.....

Rate of tax levy for library purposes..... $1\frac{3}{10}$ mills.....

1

BPL has copies of its paper forms back to 1923!
And back then there was an operating levy...

Washington Public Library Statistics

apps.sos.wa.gov/library/libraries/libdev/publications.aspx

644 (Library) - Home Mail - MacComel Jo... PSD - Blue Turnip

Washington Public Library Statistics

Public library statistics including budget, collections, and usage data, are collected and compiled on an annual basis by Library Development staff. More statistics are available from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Washington 2020 Map of Public Library Service

2022 CSV file of Library Administrative Data
2022 CSV file of Branch Library Data

Note: the two csv (comma separated values) files contain the same data as presented in the Excel Spreadsheet below, but in a more open, non-proprietary format.

2022 Excel Spreadsheet - Note: there are multiple tabs

2022 Full Report (1.5 MB)

2022 Report Categories

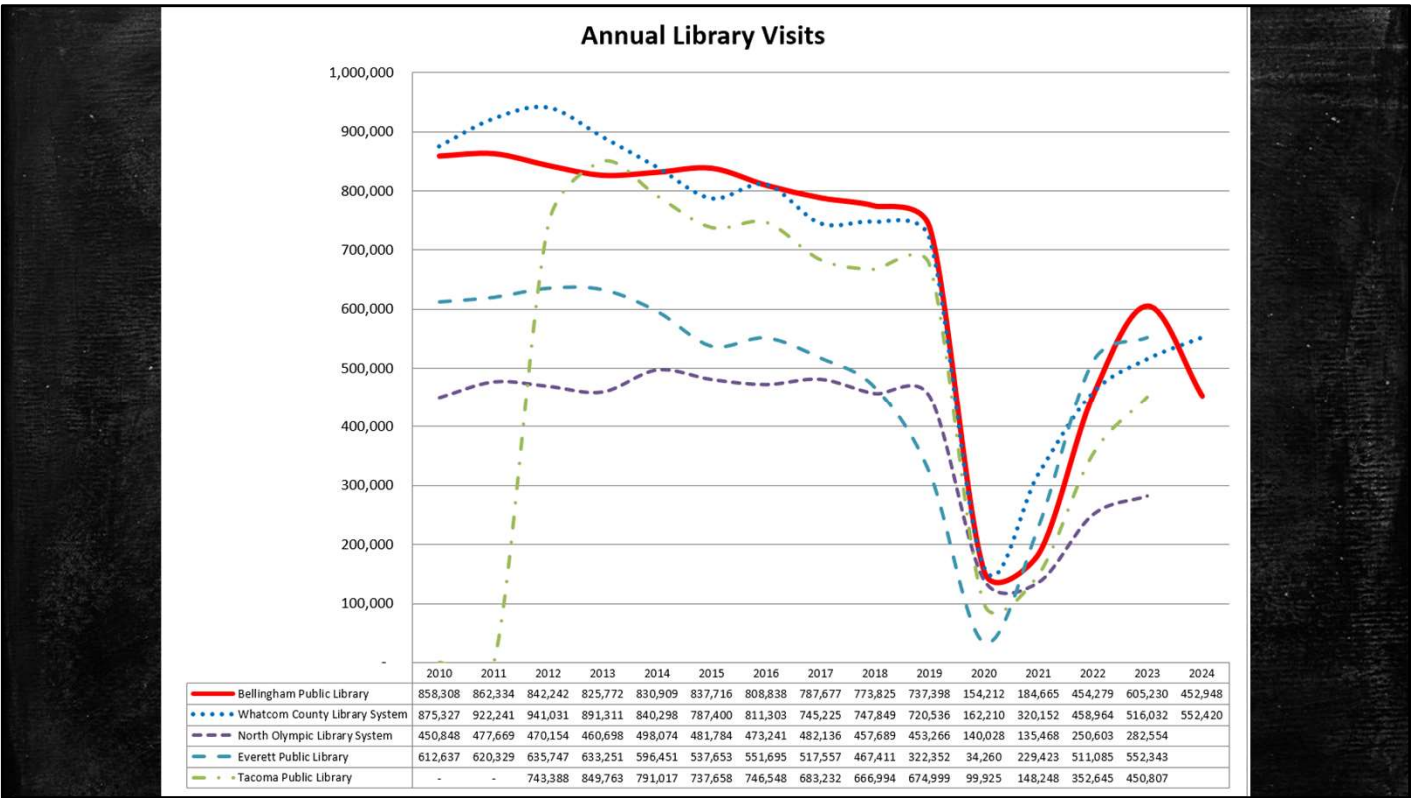
COVID-19 Impacted Library Services	Resource Sharing: ILL and Cooperatives
Top Ten Lists	Library Programs
Summary of Service	Annual Library Service Measures
Revenue and Expenditures Summary	Automated Systems, E-Rate and Filters
Total Revenue Sources	Electronic Service Measures
Operating Revenue Sources	Internet Presence
Local, Federal and Capital Revenue Detail	Branch Data
Local, State and Federal Revenue Per Capita Detail	Salaries
Total Expenditures	Benefits
Total Operating Expenditures Detail	Public Library Service by County
Personnel, Collection, Other & Capital Expenditures	Glossary
Outlets, Registered Users and Staff	Notes
Collection/Holdings	Credits
Circulation and Collection Use	Table of Contents

Previous Statistics (1999 - 2021)

The Washington State Library collects the submitted data, cleans it up, does some analysis, and publishes each year's data online. They also pass the data along to the federal Institute for Museum and Library Services for their Public Libraries Survey.

[illegible][illegible]

In 2013 the Board of the Whatcom County Library System asked for a report on 10-year data trends in comparison to other comparable libraries. I pulled together 10 years of the Washington data and prepared a tool that would allow for comparisons, as well as making it fairly easy to change which libraries are being compared. I've been adding new data ever since. You can download the Excel file from the BPL website.



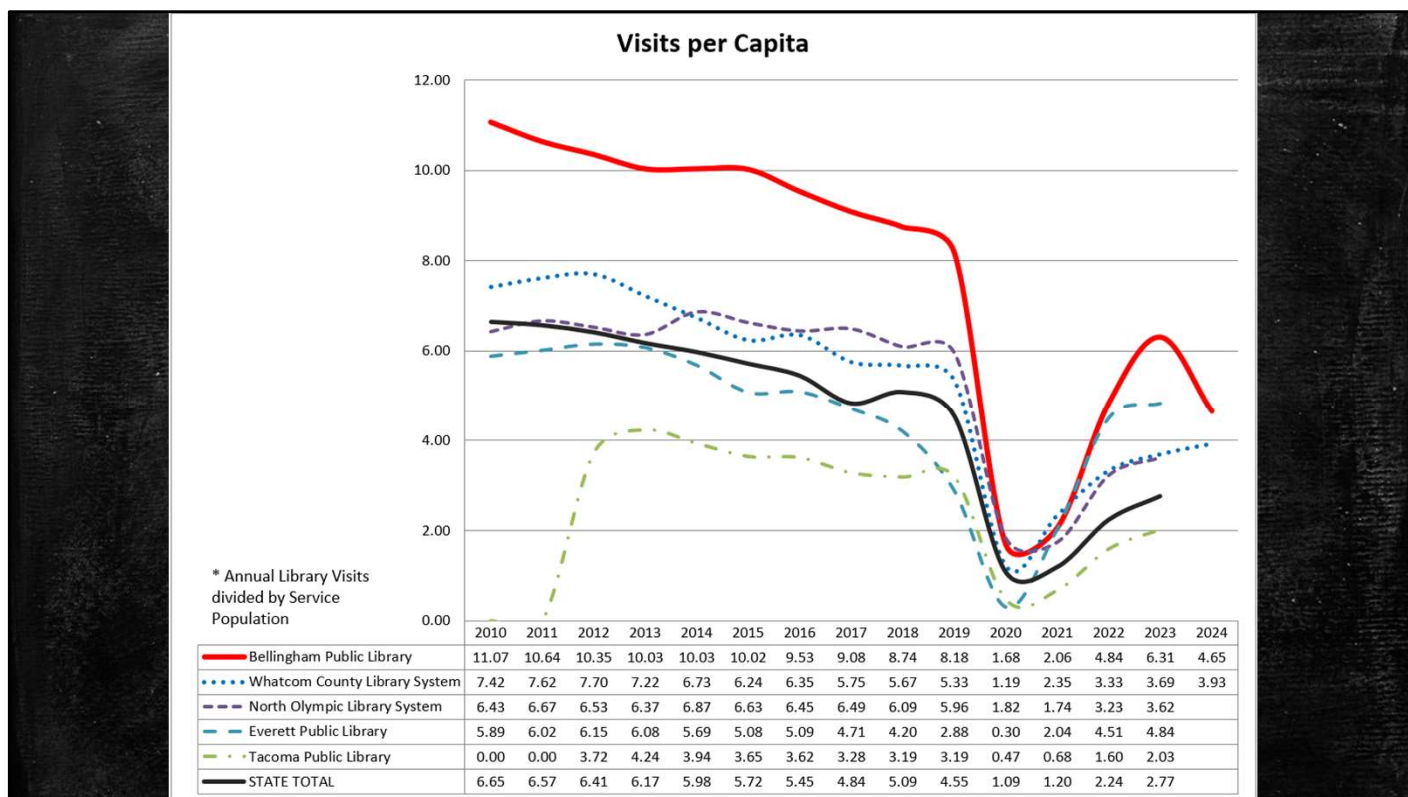
FIRST, this is the default chart format I’ve been using for the State data. BPL is the heavy red line, and these charts include a variety of other peer libraries. Charts that are normalized also typically include the State average.

Onward!

One thing we normally track is people coming into our buildings, representing a ‘Visit’. BPL’s visits have been trending down since a peak in 2009.

2021-3 showed strong recovery from the COVID crisis for all these libraries, to varying degrees.

For 2024 BPL has a new people-counting system, so the data isn’t truly comparable with the previous series. We think it’s more accurate than the old system. While the numbers show a big drop, it’s more likely that it’s really just better at showing the true numbers. Until we have several years of data we won’t know if we’re back on the same trend or not.



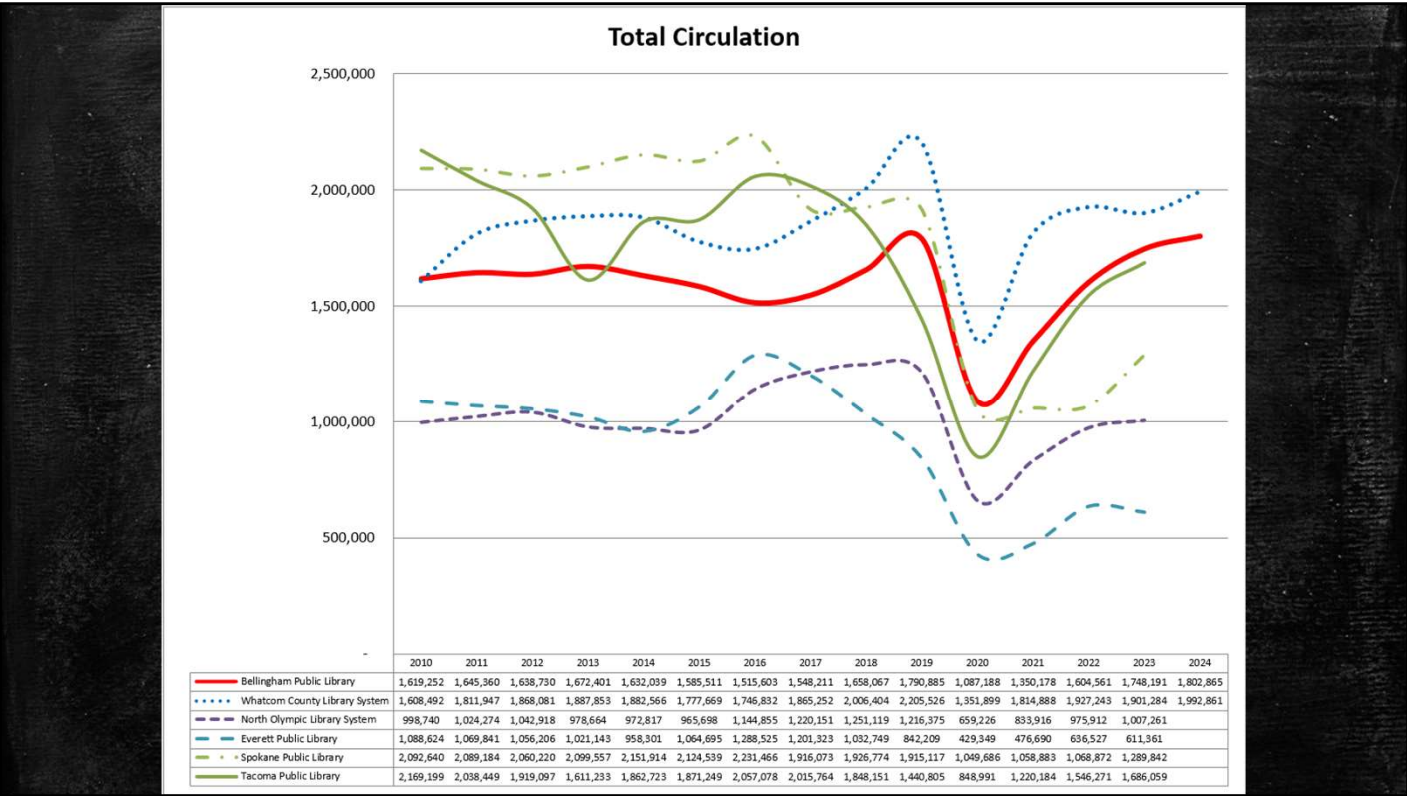
Visits normalized by Population:

For 2020 and '21 we dropped an enormous amount, even when curbside visits were counted.

In 2023 BPL recovered almost all the way to where the previous trends would likely have us.

As we expected last year, the 2024 data from our new people counting system showed a decrease. Again, it'll take several years before we know for sure what the new trend is.

Next up: circulation!

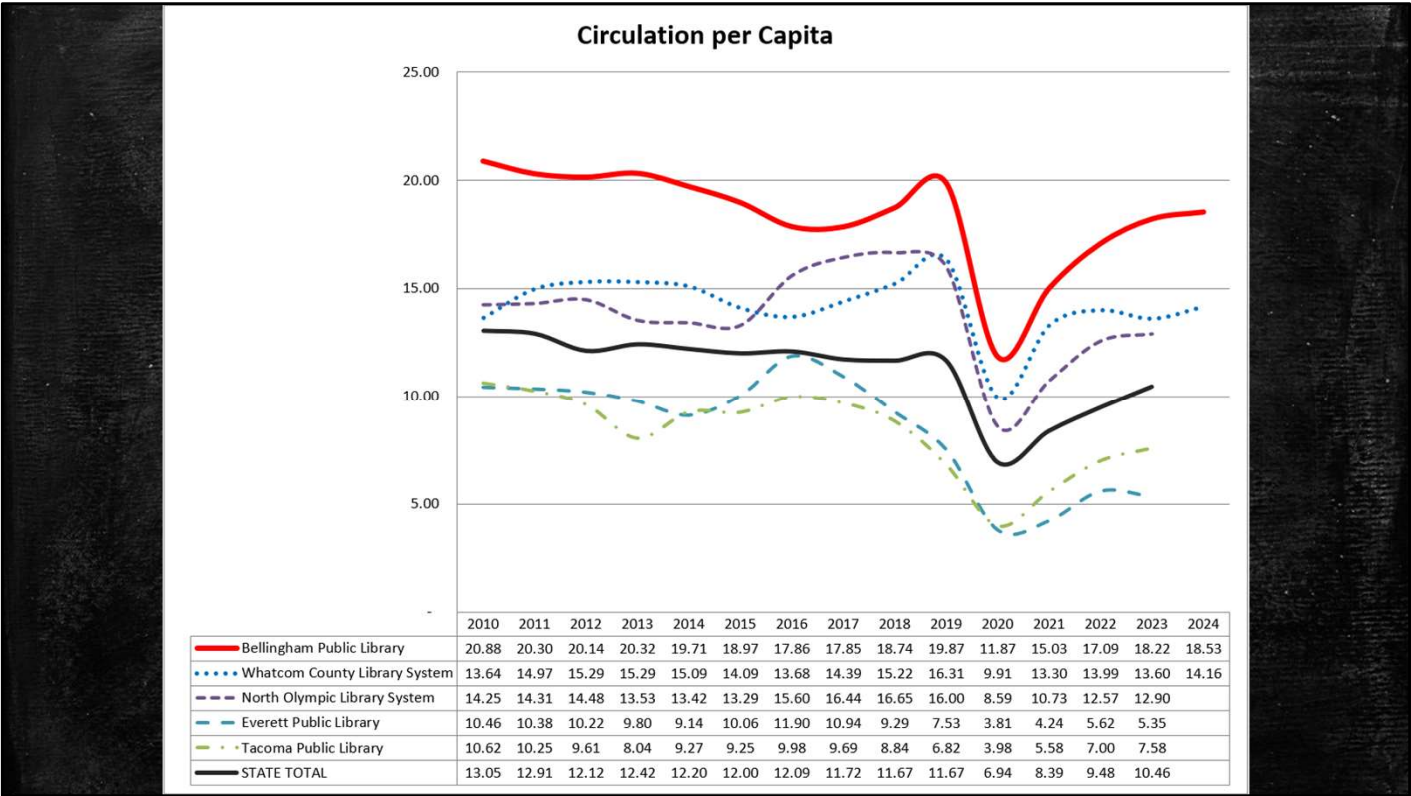


BPL had a few years of declining circulation in the middle 20-teens, but the 3 years to 2019 saw increases when ebooks are included.

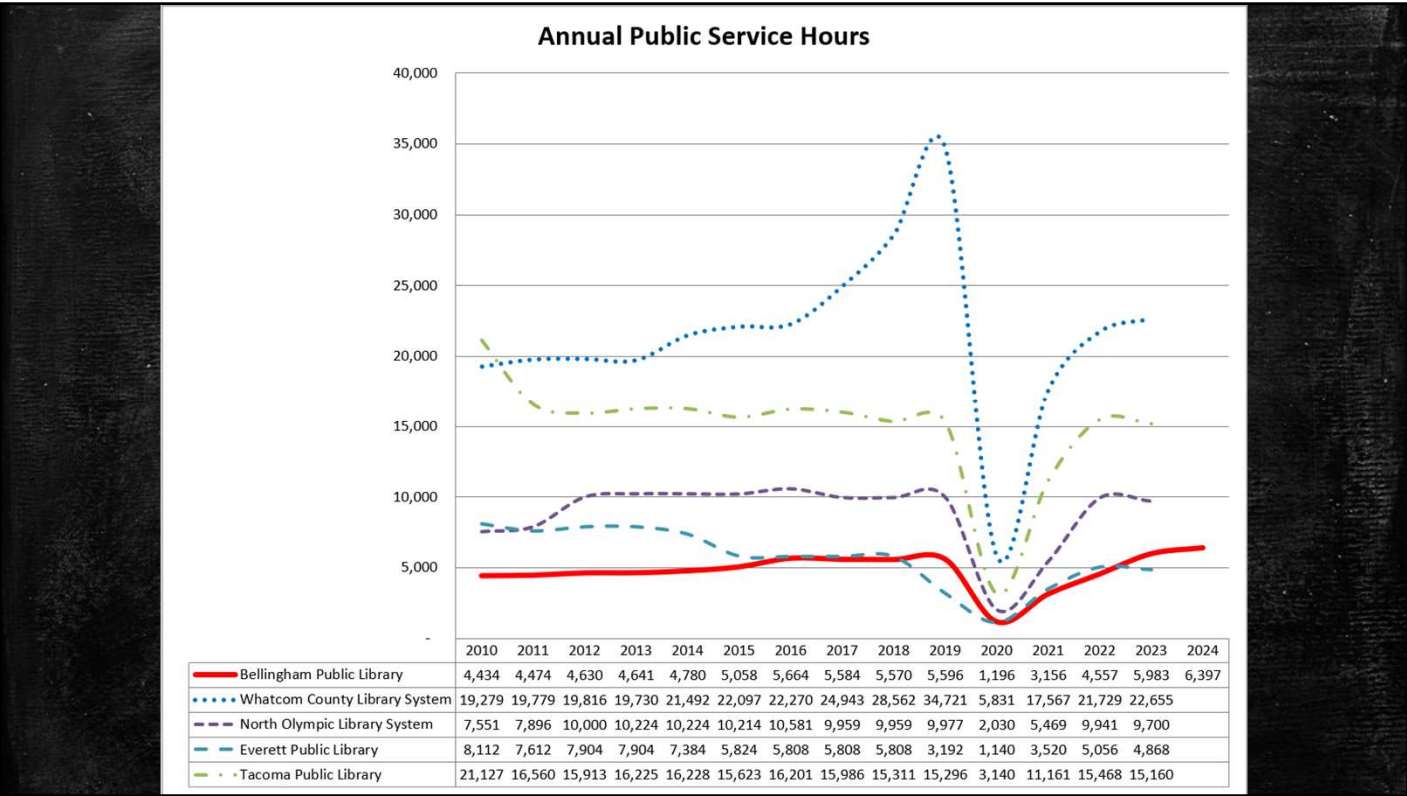
For 2024 we've hit a new high for total circulation, so I think we can say we've recovered from COVID on this metric.

There's a difference though – the split of what makes up the final number is shifting, but we'll get to that later.

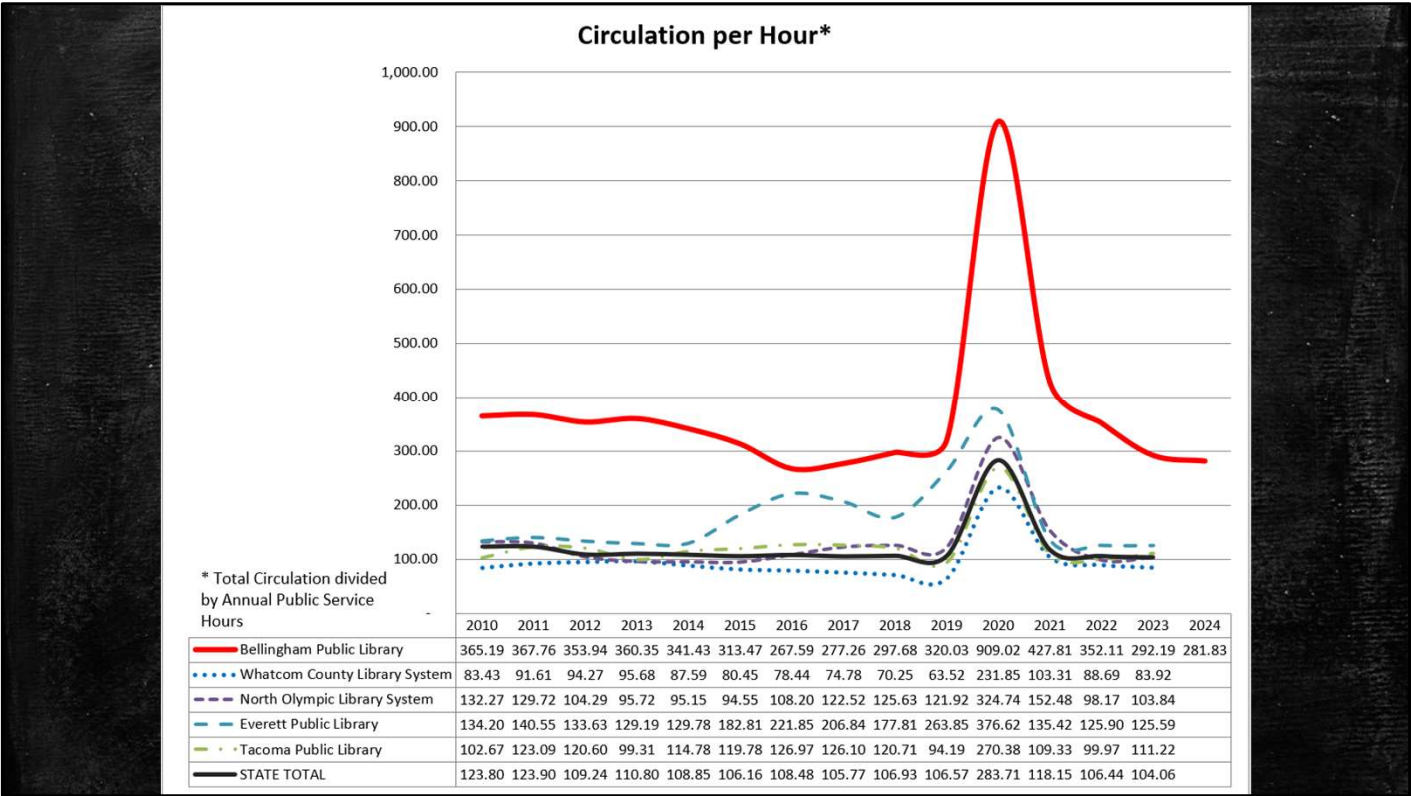
This doesn't really show the intensity of circulation at BPL, though. It helps to use per Capita-type comparisons....



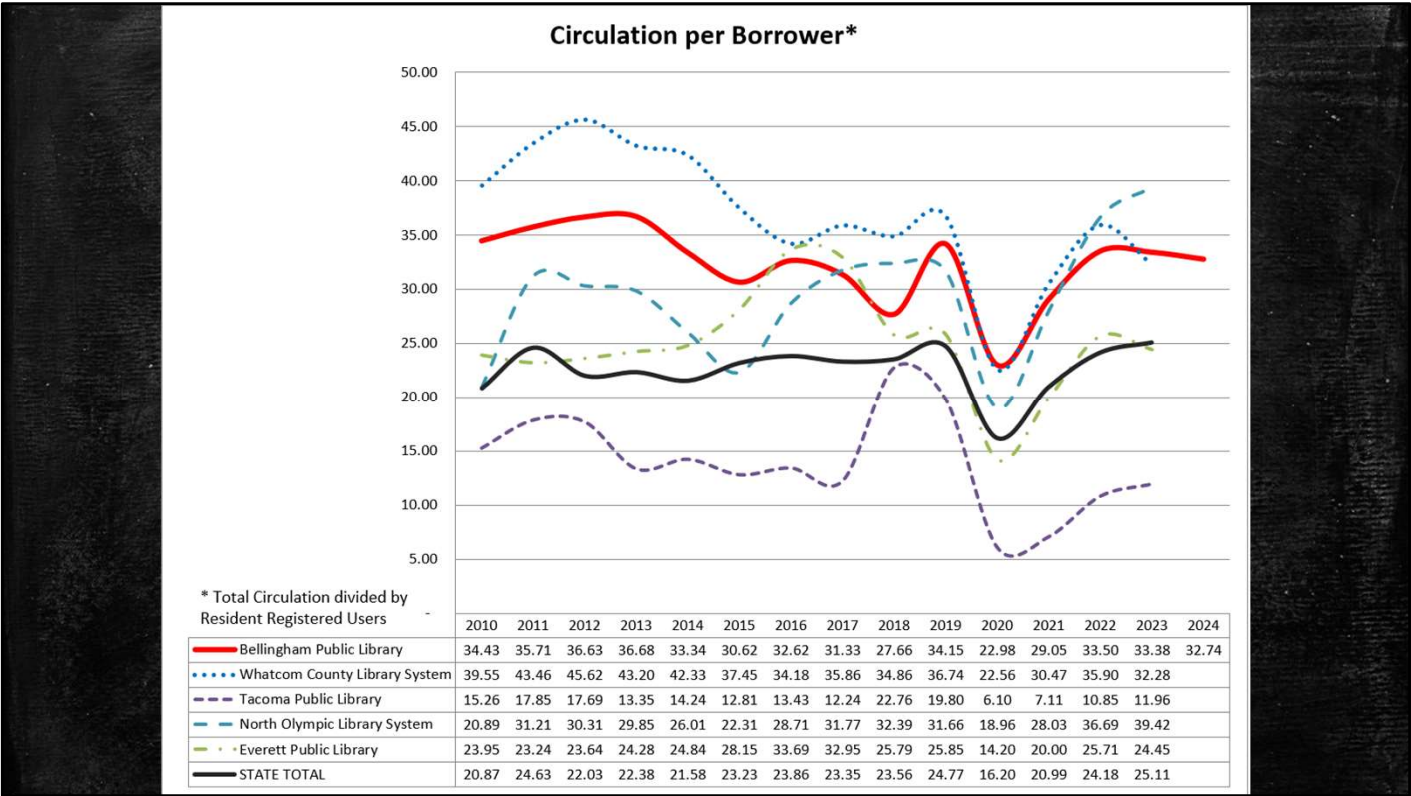
Circulation per Capita is a common metric, which shows us well above the State average. These libraries mostly kept their same order on this measure during the pandemic. 2023 saw a mix of small increases and small decreases. BPL really looks to be recovering well, back above where we were in the mid 'teens, but still not fully back to where we were in 2019.



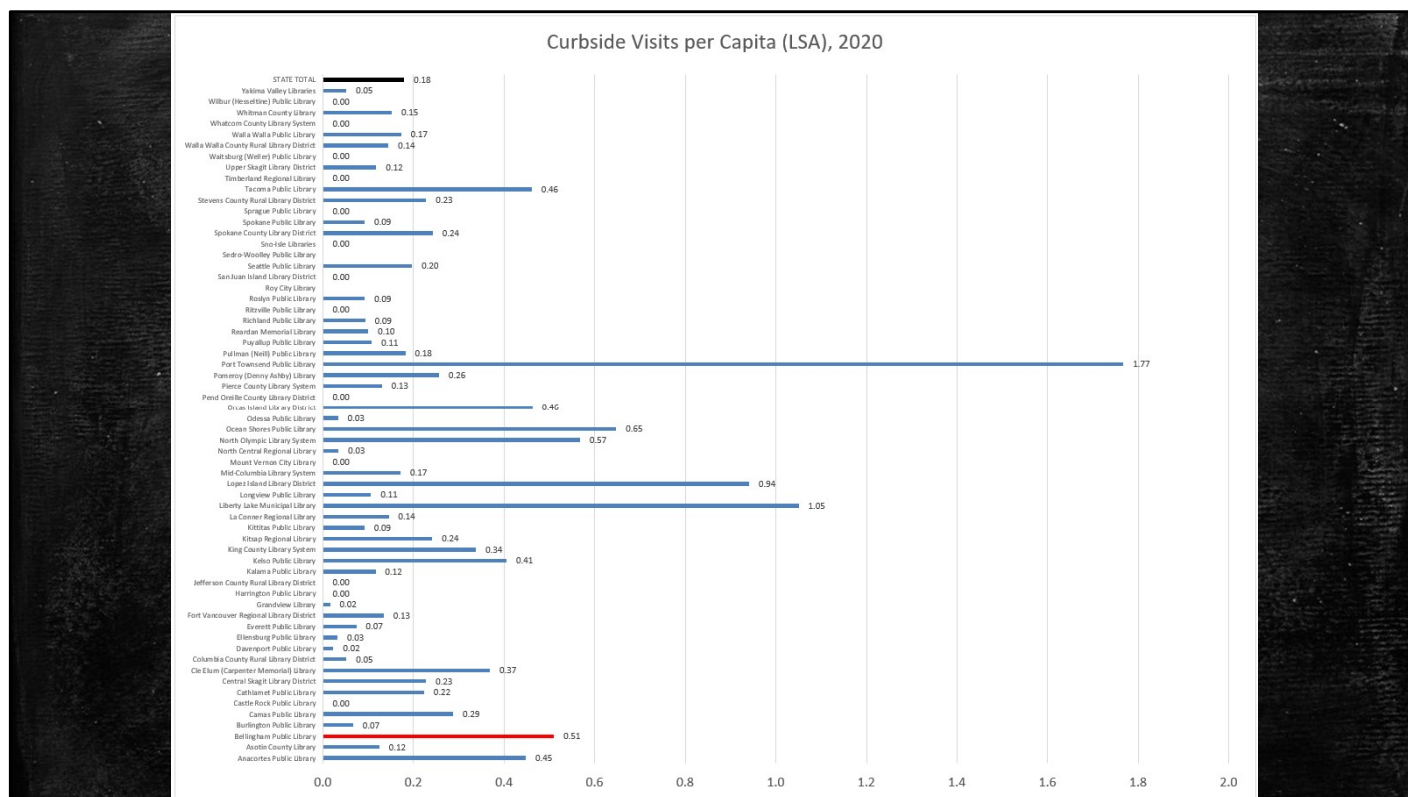
Our public service hours have not only recovered from the pandemic, but are now the highest we’ve ever recorded (at least going back to 2002). This is due to the opening of the Bellis Fair Branch Library in April 2023.



Another metric where the pandemic had a big impact was Circulation per Hour (Total Circulation divided by Annual Public Service Hours). 2020 was extraordinary, while 2021 returned to a point more in the realm of sustainable workload. For 2024 we maintained pre-pandemic numbers, between where we were in 2017 & 2018. For 2023 we're #1 in the State. 2nd is Richland with 275, 3rd is Camas with 217.

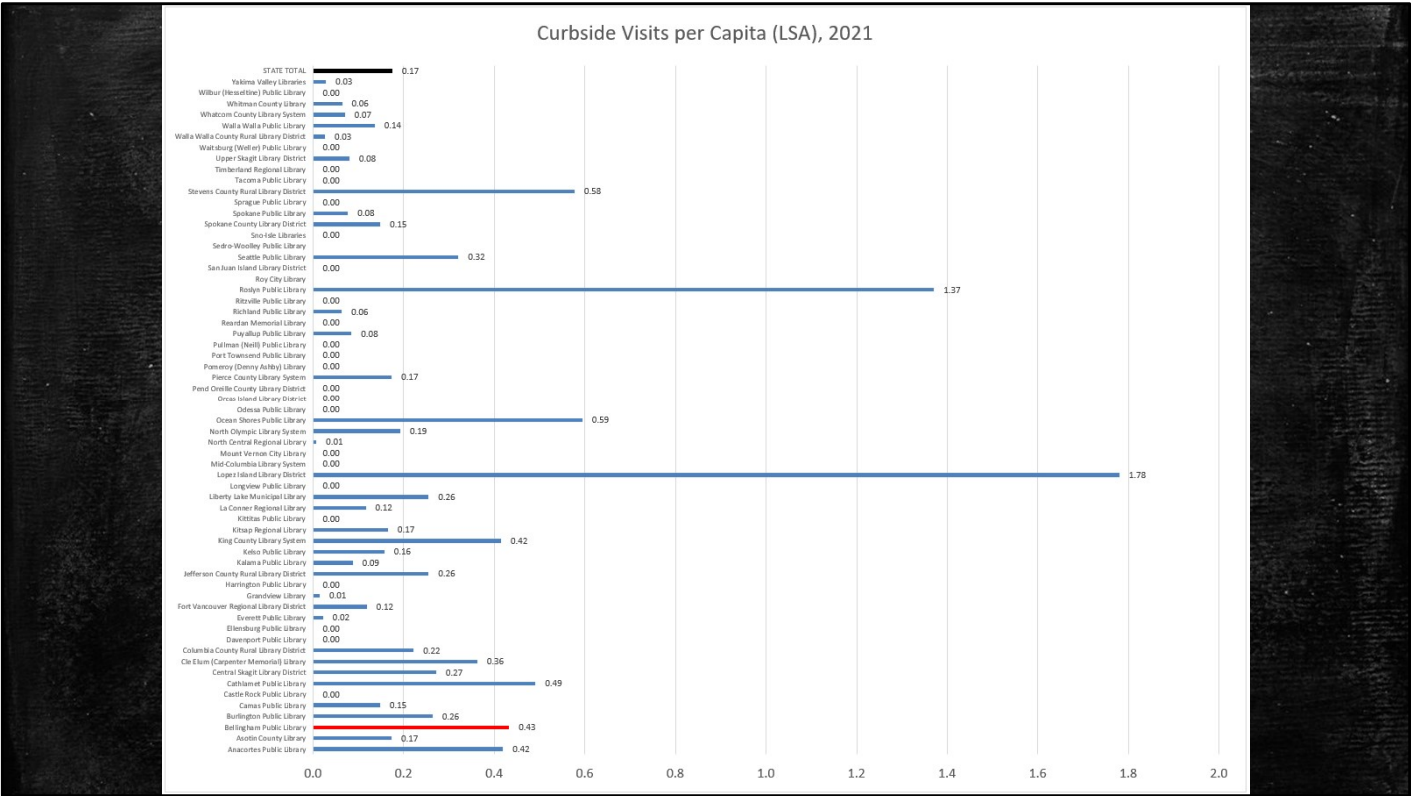


Circulation per Borrower is a less-common comparison. WCLS’s cardholders had been borrowing at a higher rate than BPL’s cardholders, both well above the State average, but the pandemic pretty much evened us up for 2020 & ‘21. In 2022 WCLS’s borrowers increased their borrowing at a faster clip than BPL’s, and we’ve pretty much levelled off back where we historically have been at around 33 items. It’s still well above the State average, though.

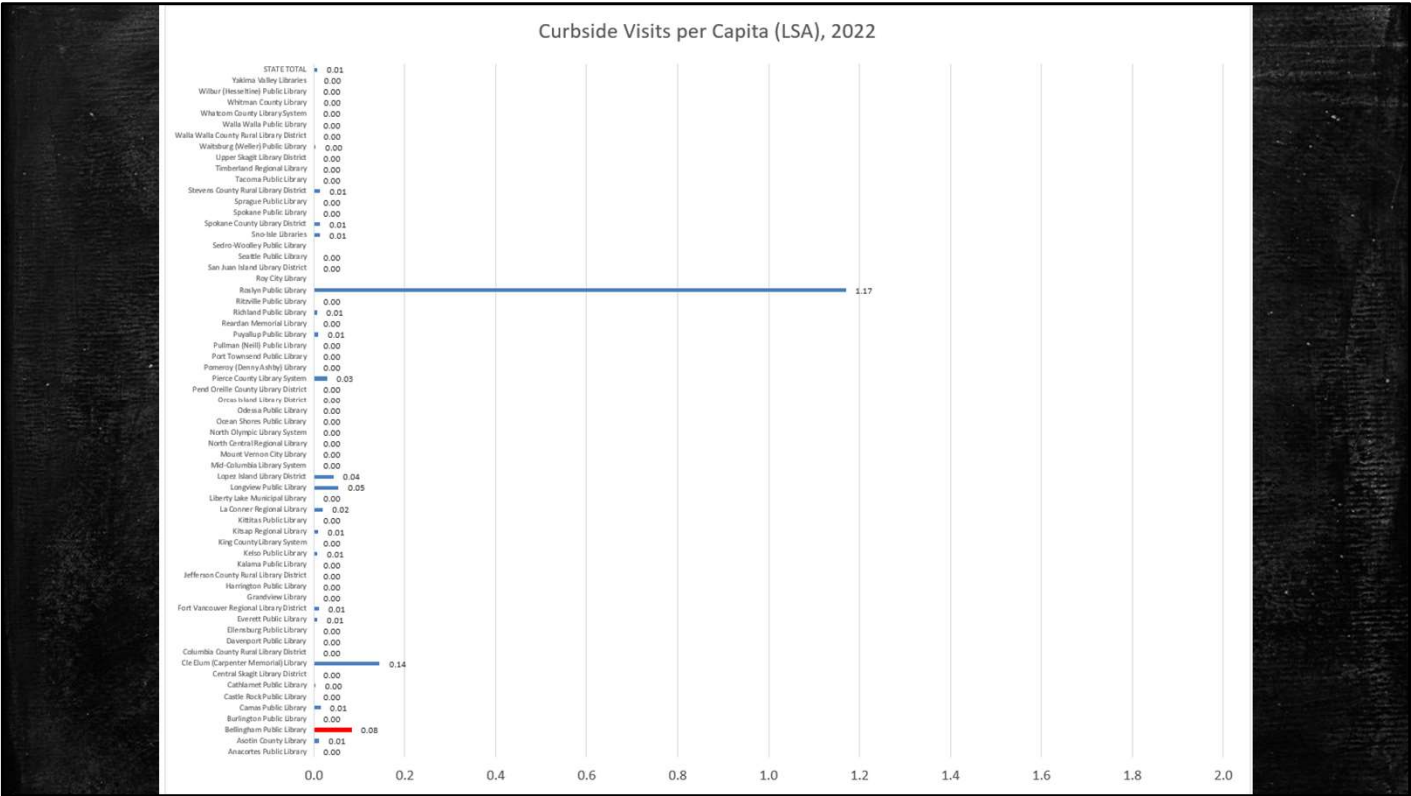


The pandemic has led to changes in what data the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the State Libraries are asking libraries to report. Added for 2020 were over a dozen new questions specifically related to service during the pandemic. Offering 'curbside' service was a common option for libraries, and we were asked to report on whether or not we offered curbside service, and if so, how many hours of curbside services were offered, and how many patron visits we had.

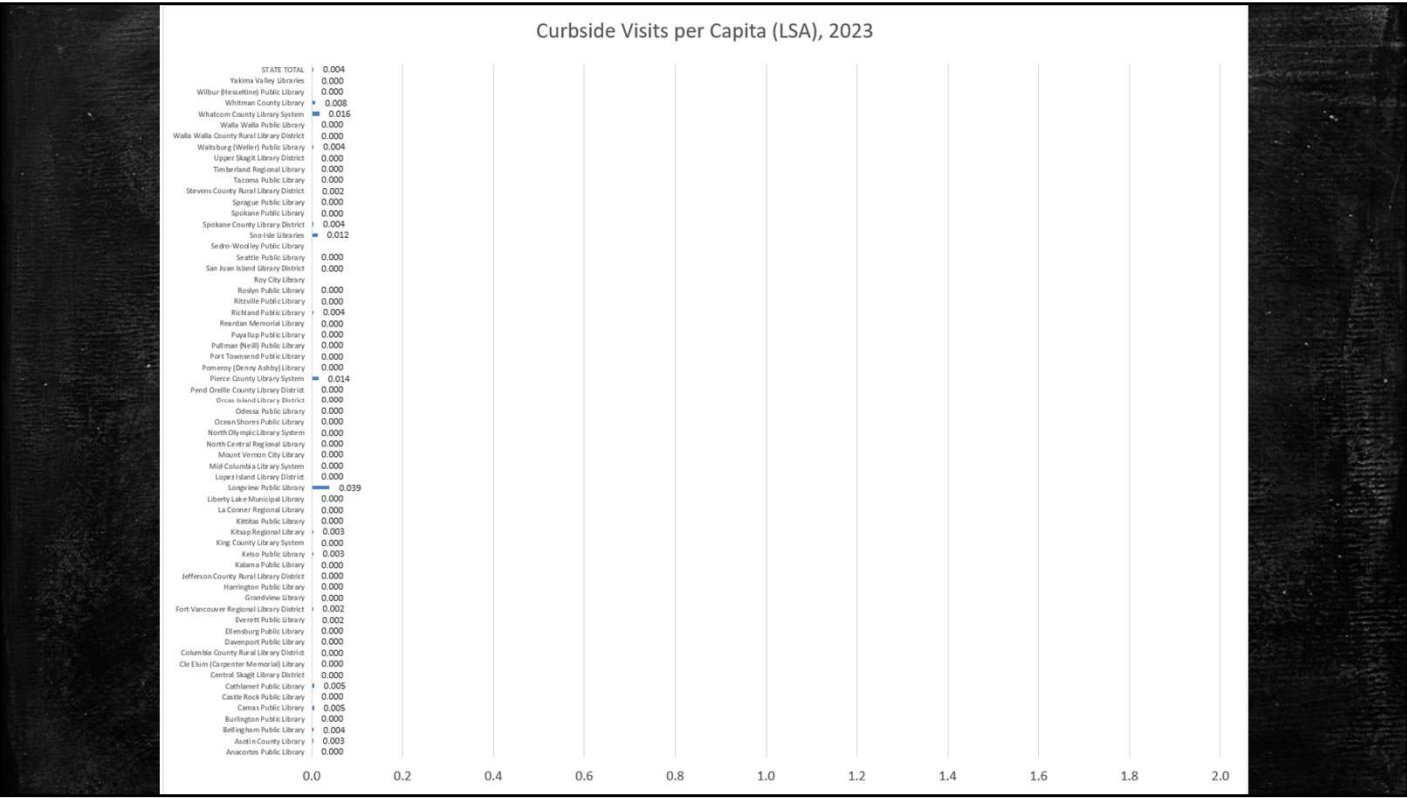
So here we have all 60 WA public libraries and a calculation of how many Curbside Visits per Capita each offered. BPL was in the top 10% (6th). WCLS did not report a count of curbside visits.



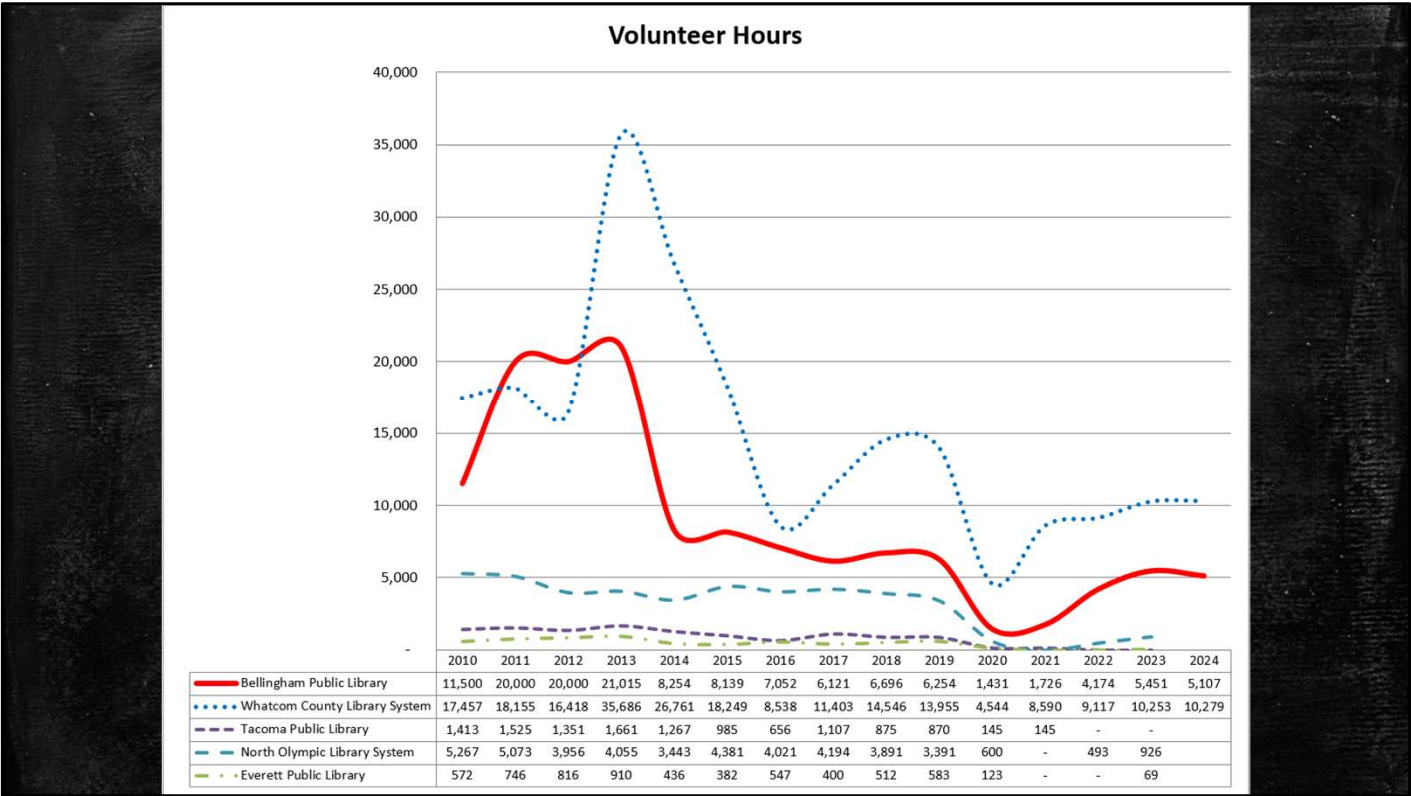
In 2021 BPL was 6th again, but out of 37 instead of 47, as some libraries apparently dropped curbside in 2021, or at least stopped reporting it.



In 2022 BPL was third of 23 libraries that reported curbside visits.



I had to add a 3rd decimal place in order to show much of anything for 2023. Curbside was basically over in 2023, and we ended our service during 2024.



One more metric that had a substantial impact from the pandemic was reported Volunteer Hours. Our building was closed for a long time, and there were hurdles to getting volunteers back in the building. Some libraries have rebounded more strongly than we have, while some others were less. For 2024 we seem to have flattened out at a new normal.

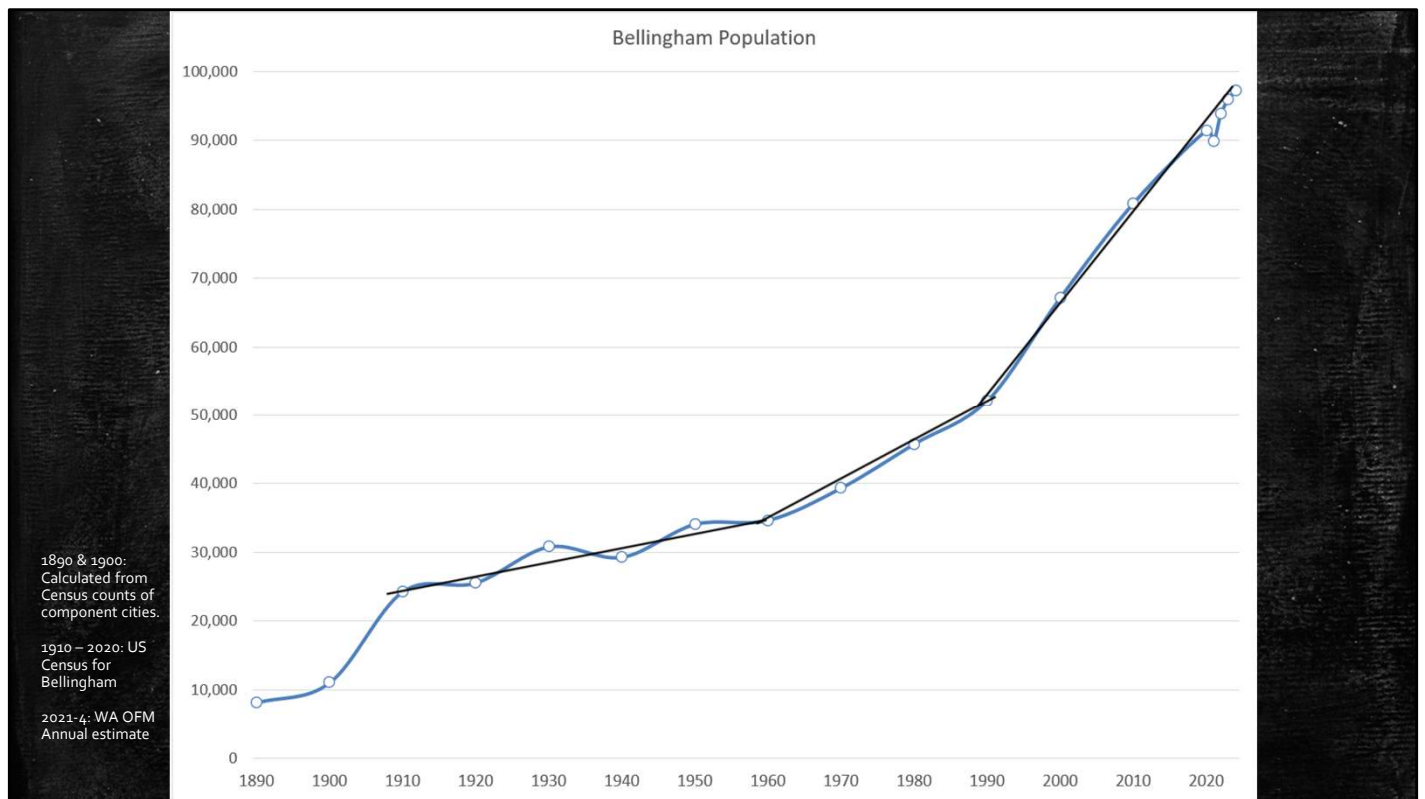
Moving on from COVID impacts ...

Long-Term Trends

- Population growth
- Library programming growth
- Shift from physical to digital
- Changes in computer & internet use

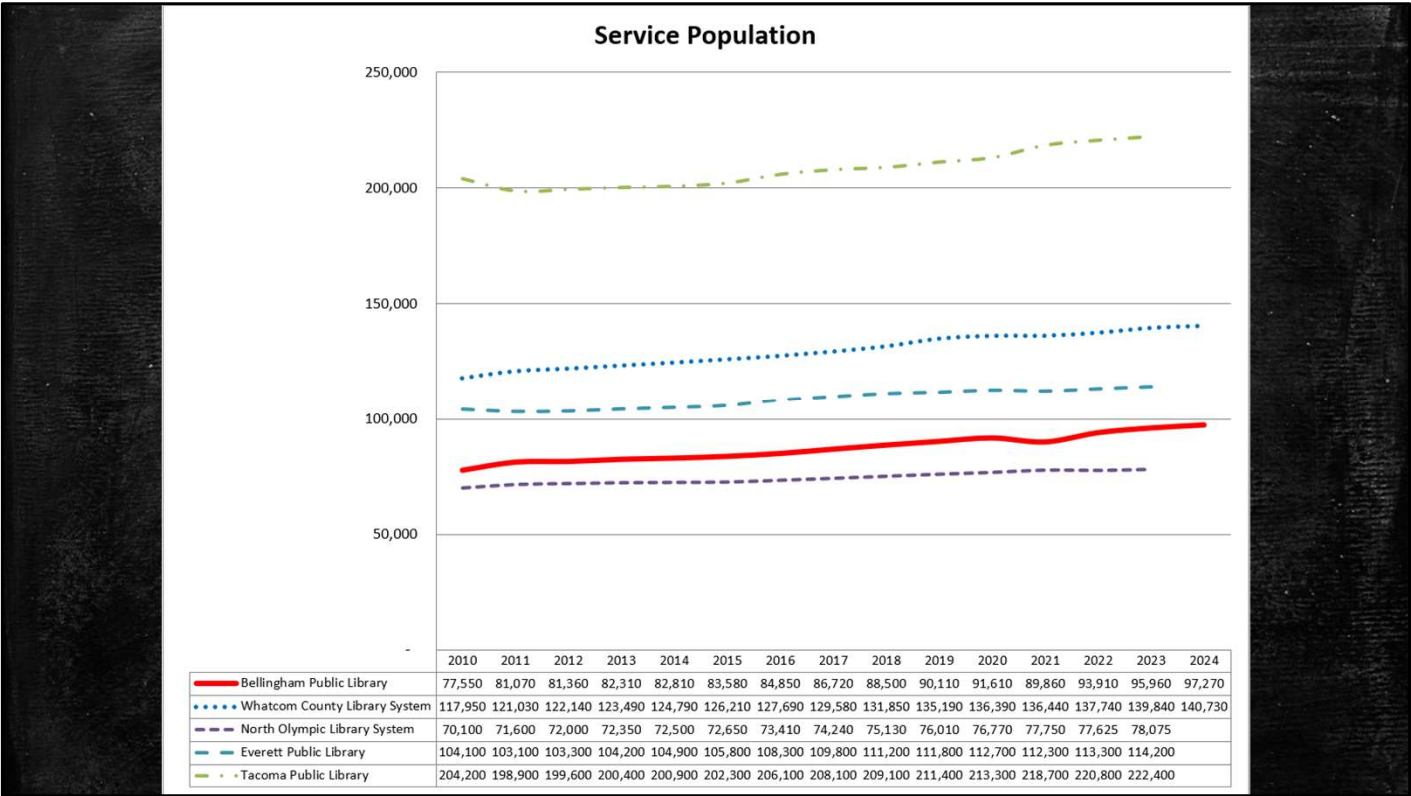
So those were some examples of impacts of the pandemic, and how we've recovered, or not, in the years since.

Moving on, we'll get into 4 long-term trends that have been impacting public libraries.

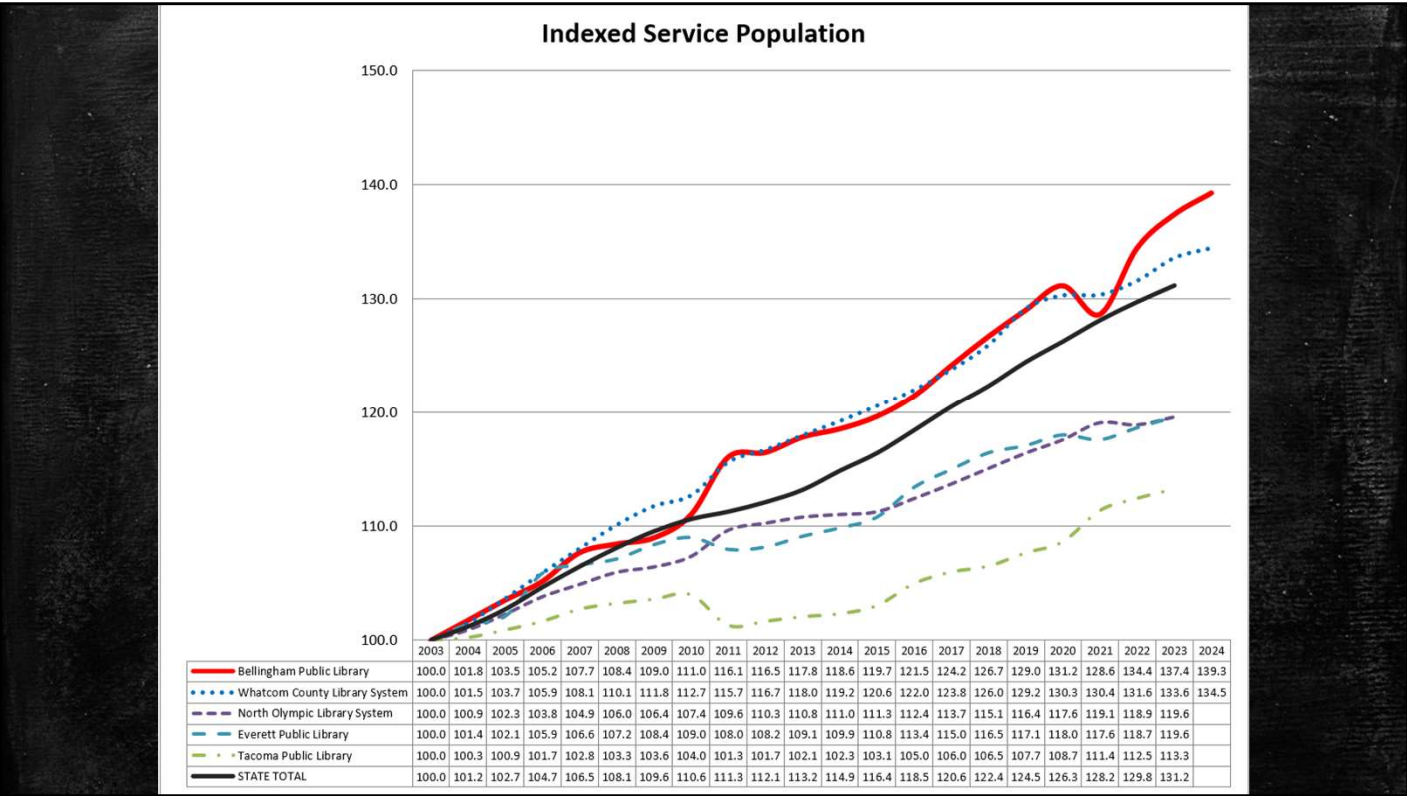


The first long-term trend is continued population increase.

First, some data that doesn't come from the State Library. This chart shows the Legal Service Population for Bellingham (starting in 1903...). Over the past ~110 years Bellingham has had three phases of growth: (first line) 1910 – 1960 was slow. (second line) 1960 to 1990 sped up a bit. (third line) 1990 to the present - growth really took off. The 2021-24 numbers are OFM estimates, which had an odd downturn in 2021 before resuming the previous trajectory.

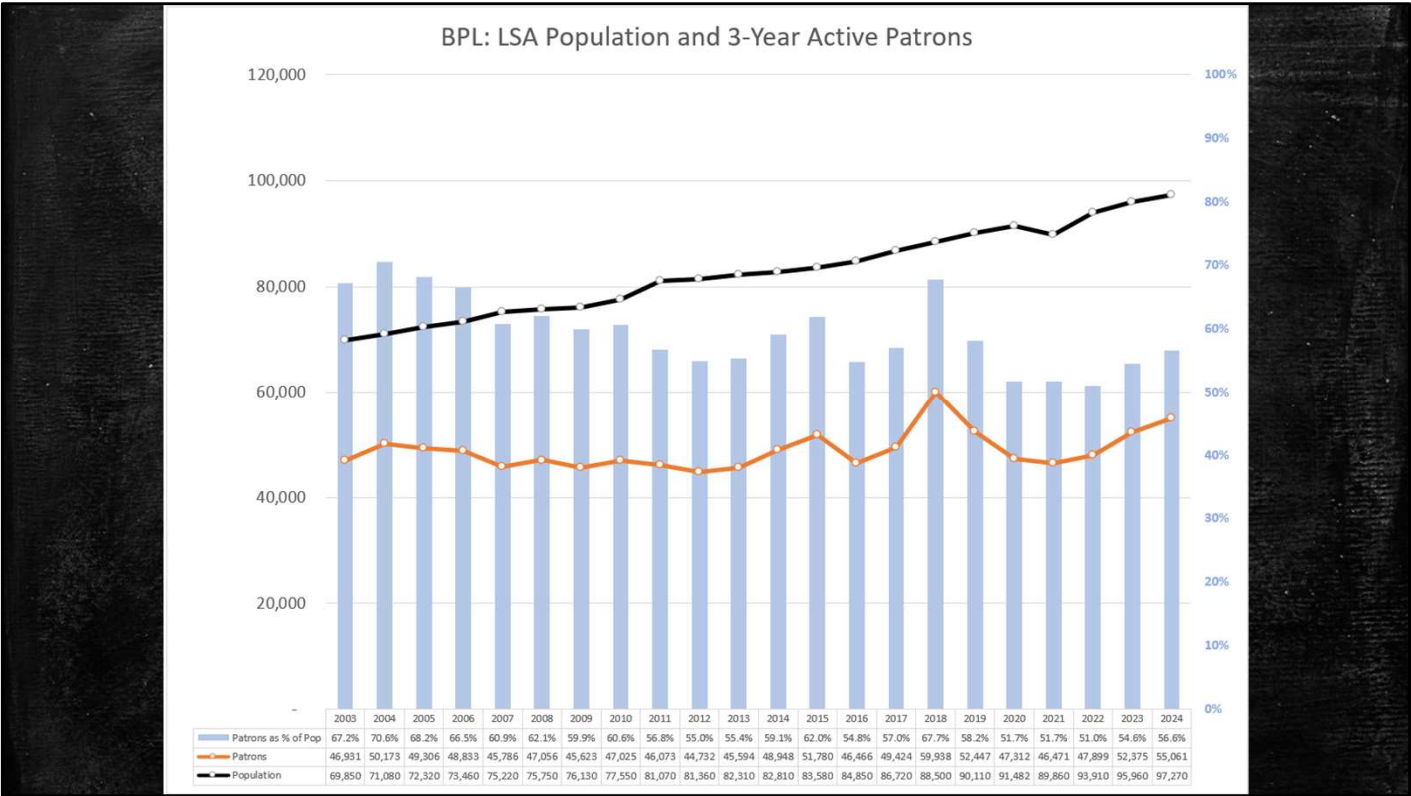


Here we are zoomed in to just the latest 15 years.
 A new estimate of population is generated yearly by the Washington Office of Financial Management. OFM’s 2024 April 1 estimate has us on nearly the same growth rate as before the 2020 Census data came out.



This is easier to see when looking at the rate of change.

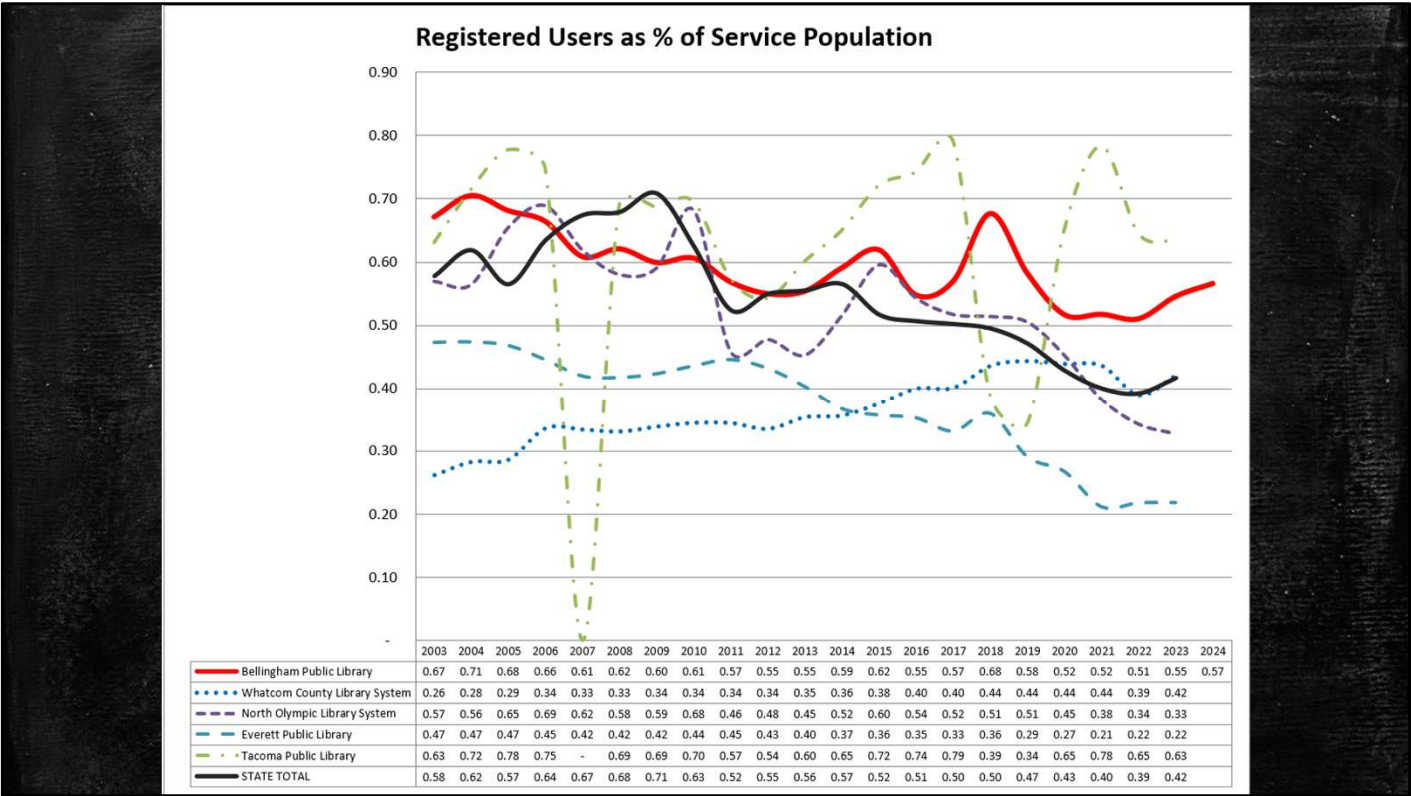
A different way to look at the LSA Population numbers is to show the rate of change relative to a start point – here we have 22 years of data with 2003 as the starting point. The WA OFM had an estimated rate of growth for Bellingham during the oughts that was proven by the 2010 Census to be too low – hence the bump up for 2011. At that point our growth diverged from the State overall growth rate estimate. Everett and Tacoma’s both went down. In 2021 we dropped from 2020 -- as others have pointed out, it’s likely due to WWU’s COVID closure. But for 2022, OFM has pushed us back up, and the rate was largely maintained through 2024.



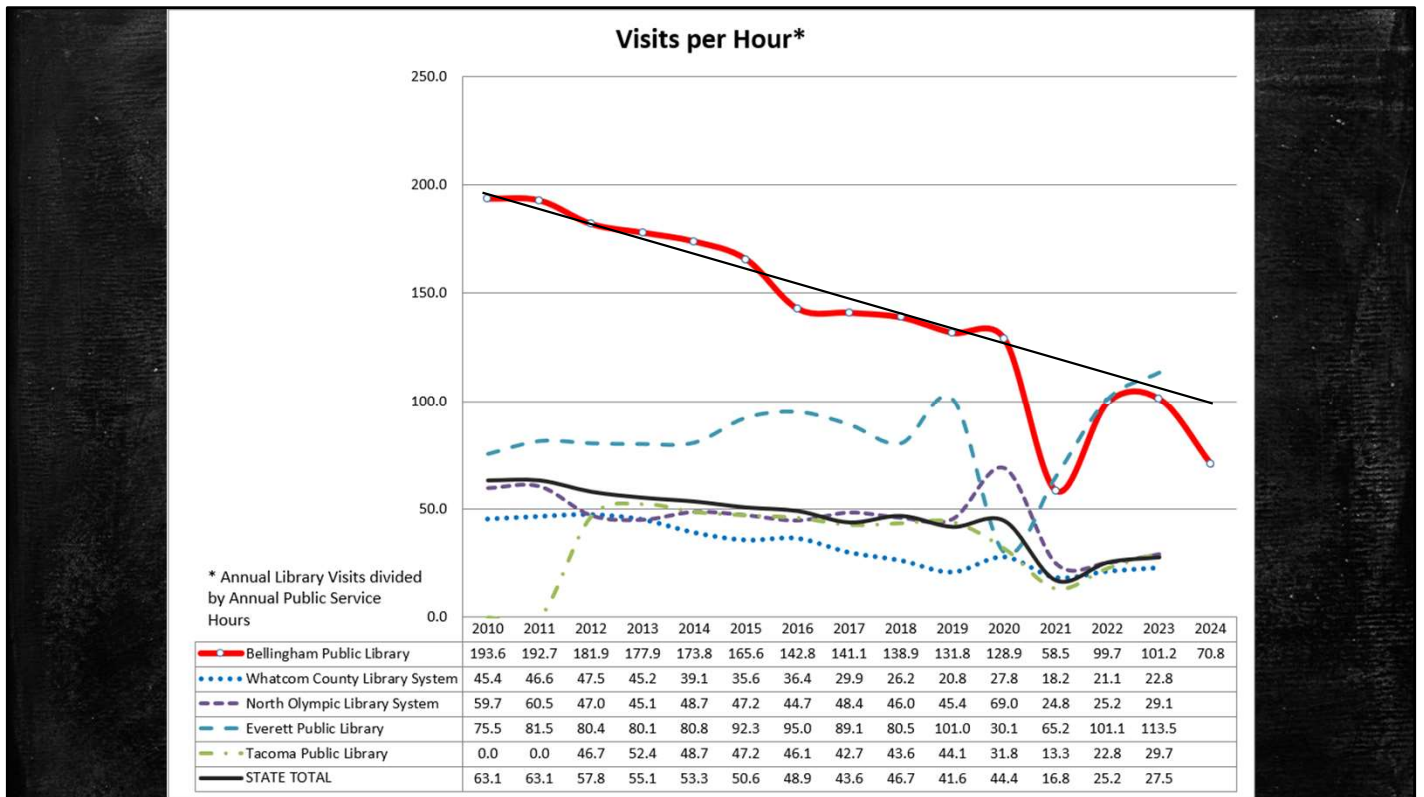
This is a bit of an aside, and the chart isn't in the merged workbook. It shows the OFM pop. estimates with our reported 3-Year Active Patrons, and the annual rate of cardholdership. Ideally every eligible person would have and use library card, so our rate of cardholdership would be 100%. We used to report as much as 70%; more recently we've been in the low 50's.

2018 was an anomaly caused by not de-duplicating students with both a personal card and a ConnectedED card.

In 2024 we've continued the post-pandemic up-tick in patron registrations, which helped boost our count of active cardholders enough to gain ground against population growth. We're back up over 55% of the population having used a BPL card in the past 3 years!



Here’s that data from 2003-2023 compared to a few other libraries in the State. Over time, our cardholder base has held steadier than that of the state as a whole. WCLS caught up a bit. No big change due to the pandemic, apparently. Nothing obvious in the chart, anyway.



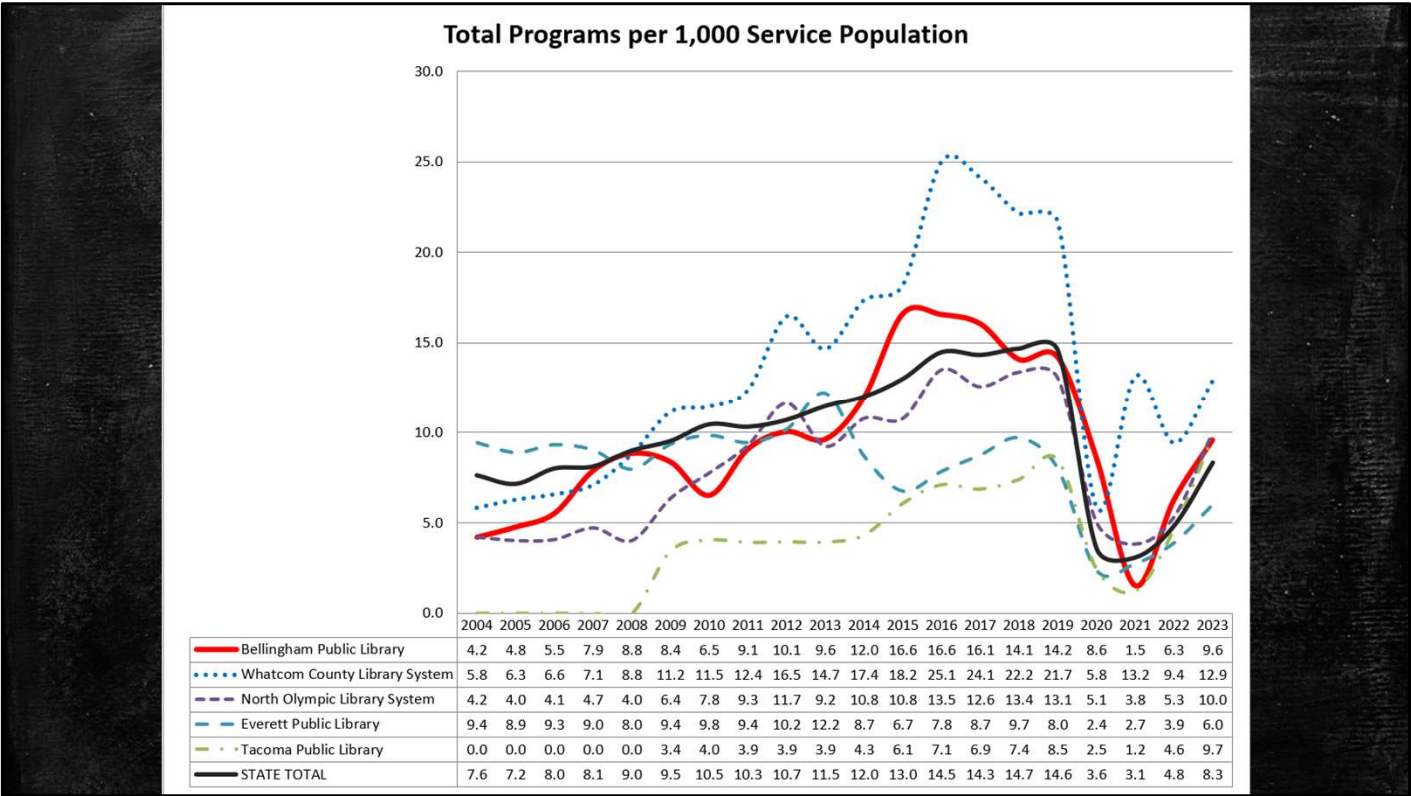
Visits per Hour are also dropping (as are Visits per Capita, as we saw previously).

In 2024 our visits were strongly impacted by the new people counting system.

Which puts us below our previous trend. [line]

My expectation is that the trend will continue at a similar rate, but on a new, lower, baseline.

Why are we seeing fewer visits per open hour? Is it a trend we need to reverse? If so, how?

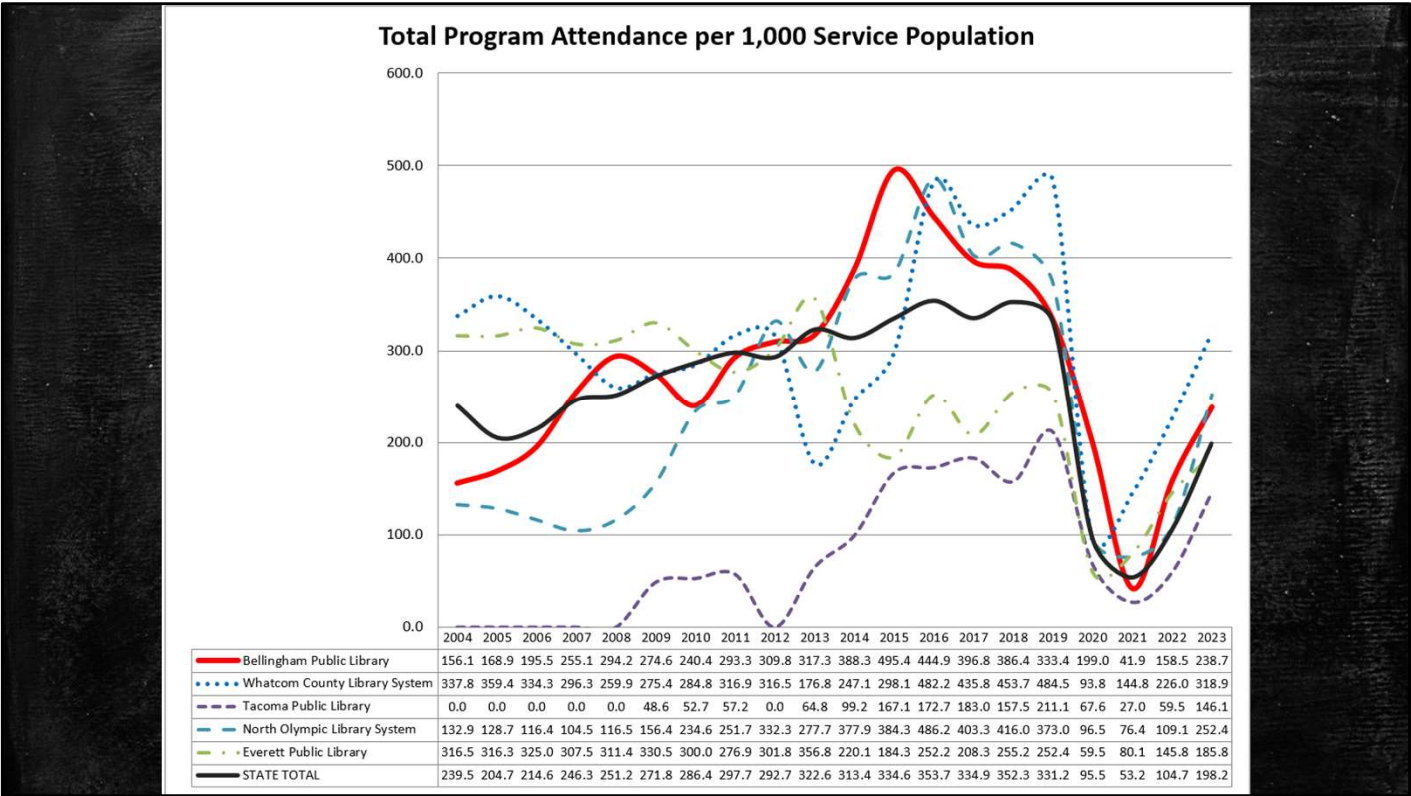


Another trend seen in the data is that the number of programs offered by public libraries are increasing relative to our population.

During the first year of the pandemic BPL's number of programs dropped off substantially less than some other libraries and the State average.

2021 saw a major change in reporting about programs. It's possible this change will result in a new baseline.

It looks like there's generally progress back to where programs had been prior to the pandemic. In 2023 we were back to where we a decade earlier.

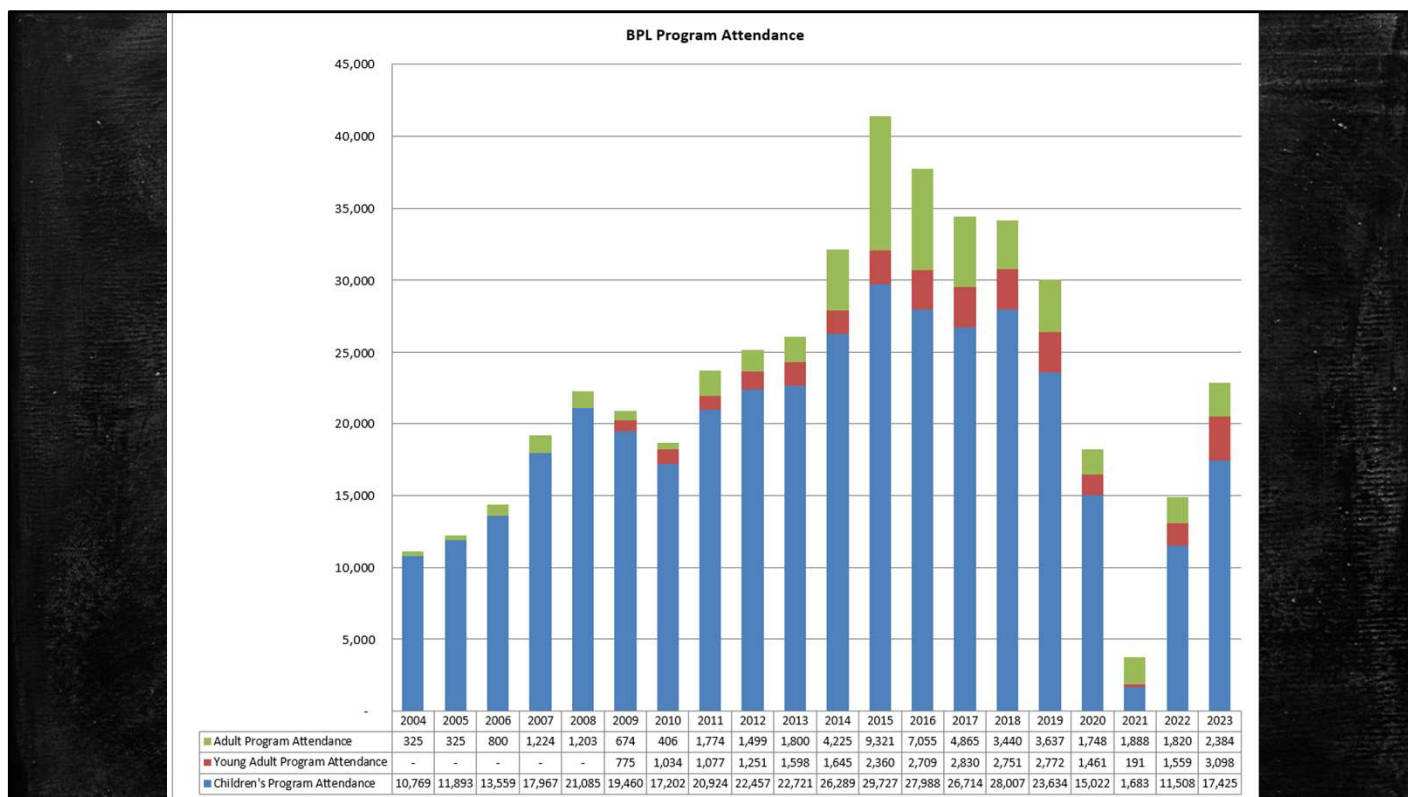


Part of the same trend, attendance at programs generally increased over the past 15+ years.

BPL did report a decline from 2015 to 2019, but that just put us back in alignment with the state average.

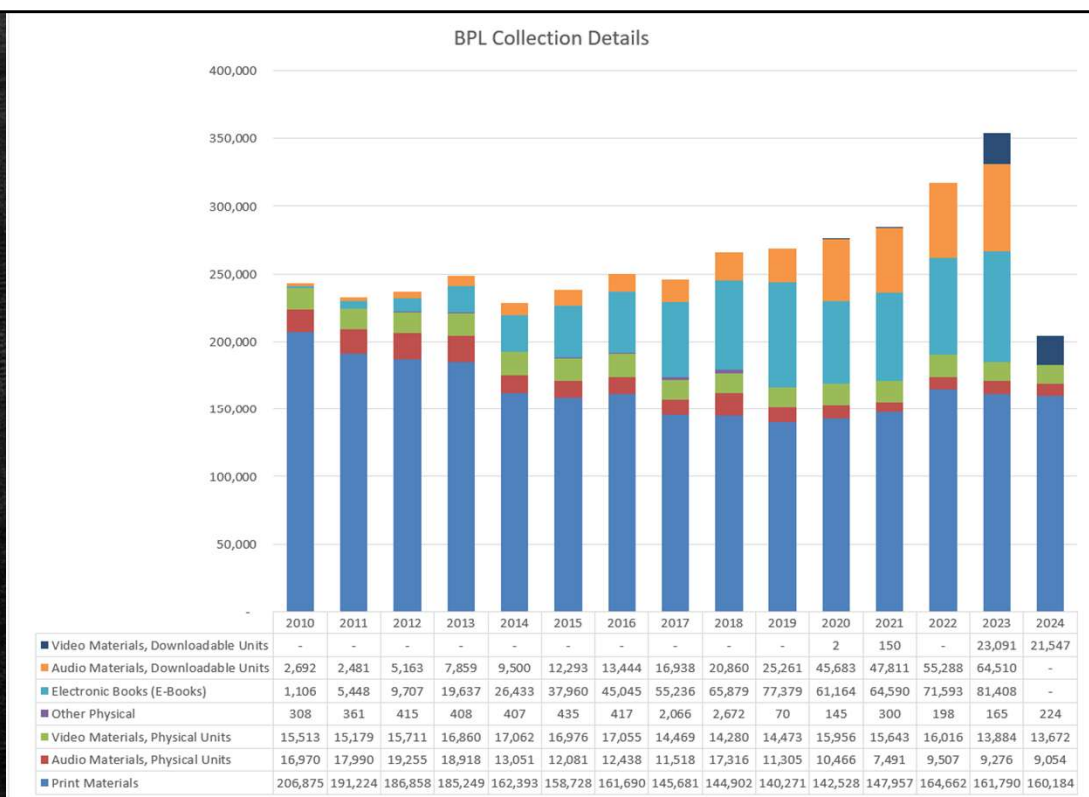
We’re generally right around the State average, per capita, but dropped off less than others during the first year of the pandemic.

There has clearly been a shift in the library world to having more programs, and that has driven an increase in attendance despite the countervailing trend of fewer visits to library buildings. In part this is driven by library staff getting out in the community to hold programs outside of library spaces. Remote programs are now a thing, too.



Here is the BPL Program Attendance (red line on the previous chart) broken out by the programs' audience age group. Overall attendance at Children's programs is largest. Attendance for Young Adult programming was larger than attendance at Adult programming in 2023, which hadn't happened since 2010.

Moving along, the next trend is the shift from analog to digital.

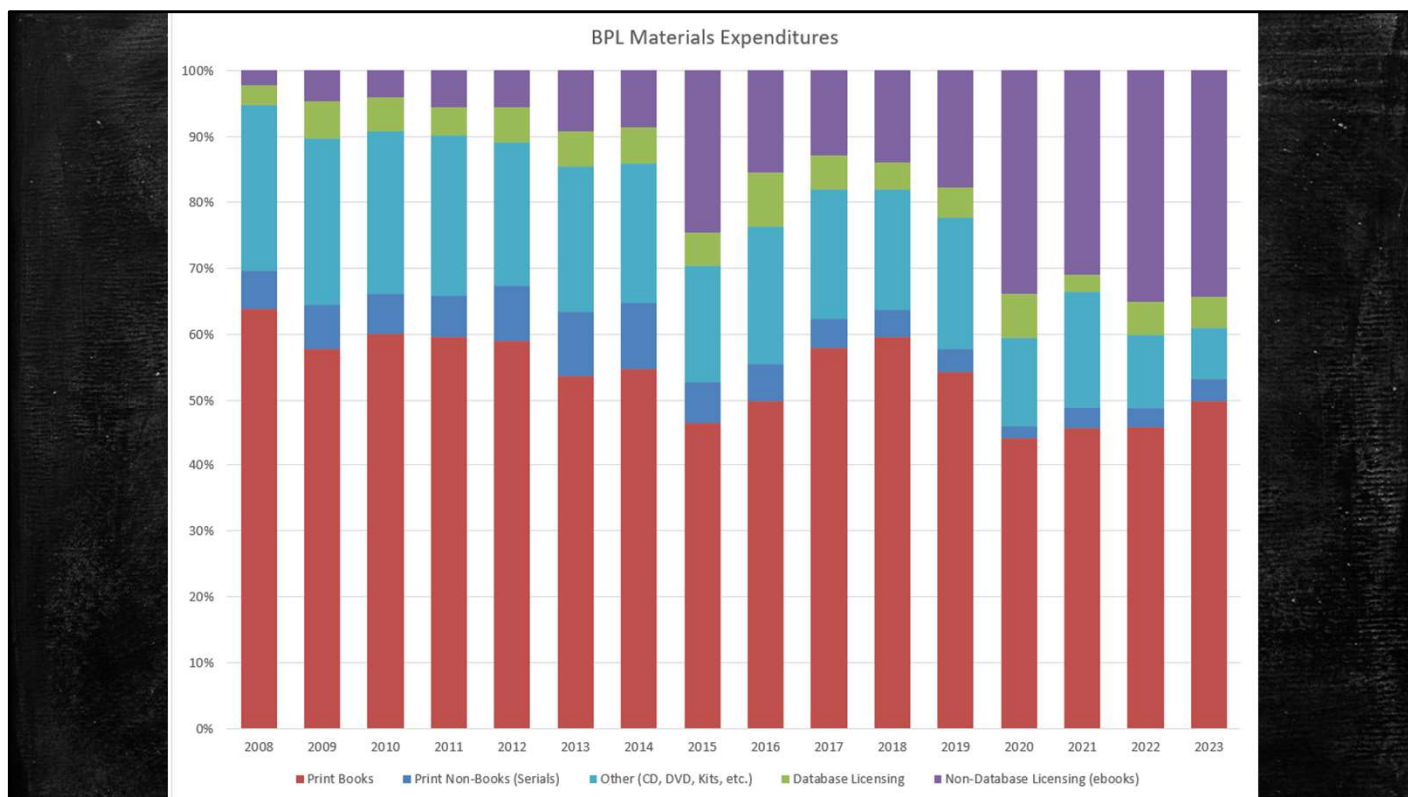


One long-term trend in libraries and in society in general is a shift toward digital media containers from analog media containers. From print books to ebooks; from audio recordings on records/cassettes/CDs to downloadable or streaming audio (both music and spoken word and books); from video on film, VHS tapes, DVDs, & Blu-Ray discs to streaming video.

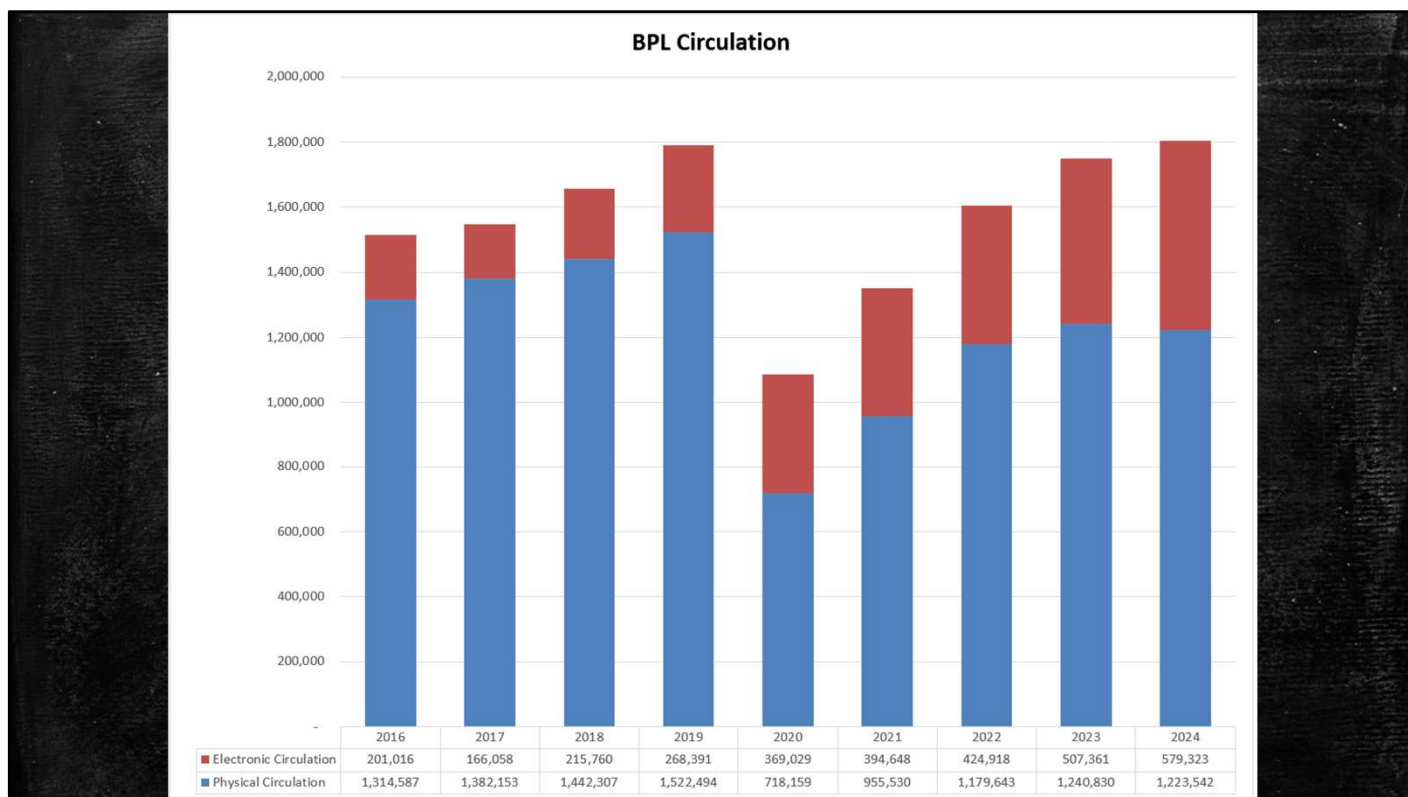
BPL has been taking part in this transition, too. Our collection has been decreasing the number of physical items we own, and increasing the number of licensed or cloud-based digital titles we make available to patrons. In the long-run this gives us the potential to increase our collection size past what could have ever been housed in our physical spaces. It also changes the ownership model from purchasing to licensing (against our will).

The Video Materials, Downloadable Units metric includes USE of the Kanopy streaming video platform, which was allowed for reporting. But Audio Materials, Downloadable Units does not include the millions of songs available to stream via Freegal. There are pain points in this transition to digital as the stats-holders try to come up with cleanly-comparable stats for different types of media. Because they are packages of titles rather than individual purchase decisions, we don't always get to count them as part of our collection.

The 2024 data is incomplete. Our physical materials declined slightly, but we're expecting the digital counts to have increased again.



Here is how BPL has distributed its Materials Expenditure across formats over the years. The long-term trend is a shift from physical purchases to digital licenses. Licenses were about 10% for several years; now it's 40%.



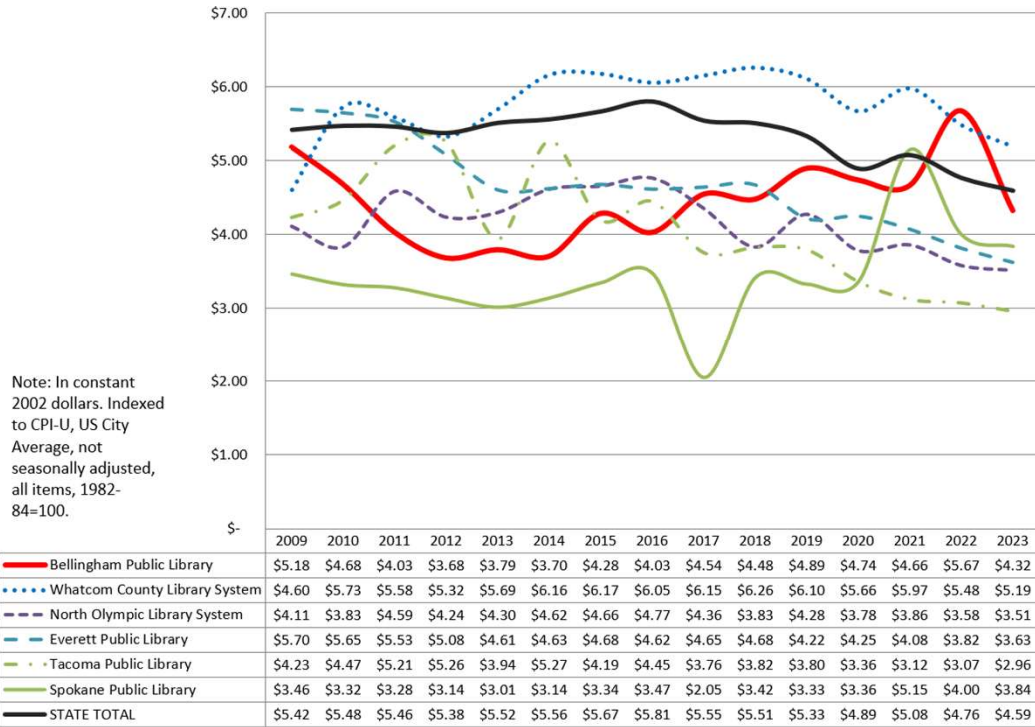
Our circulation split between physical and digital is changing, too, with the COVID pandemic giving a big boost to Electronic Circulation.

Note that our physical circulation benefits from automatic renewals, while digital things don't. However, 2023 was the year that digital circ. (521k) passed renewals (508k).

In 2024 physical circ. declined a smidge while electronic continued to increase.

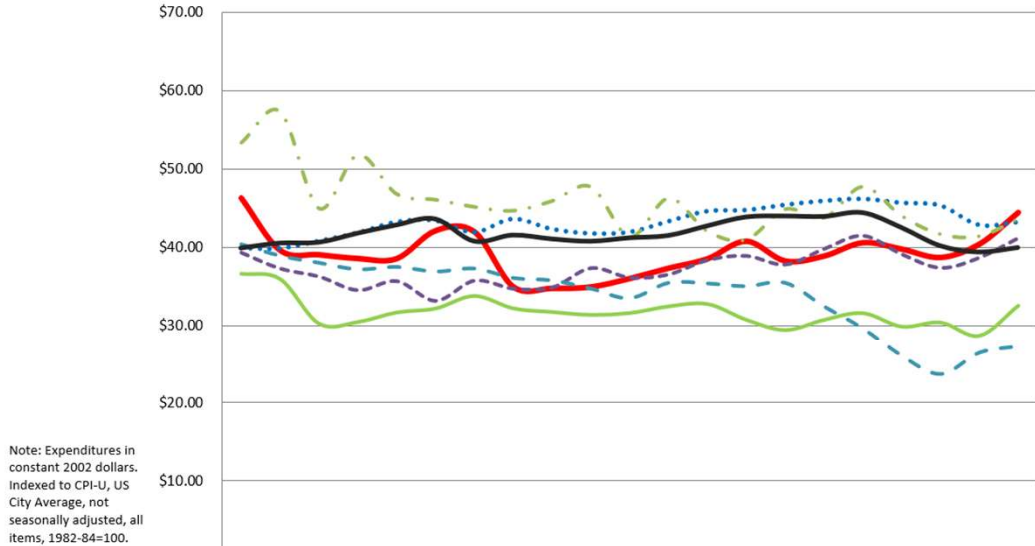
2016 is the first year the stats included this split between physical and electronic circulation, so we don't have comparable numbers any further back.

Per Capita Expenditure on Materials, adjusted for inflation



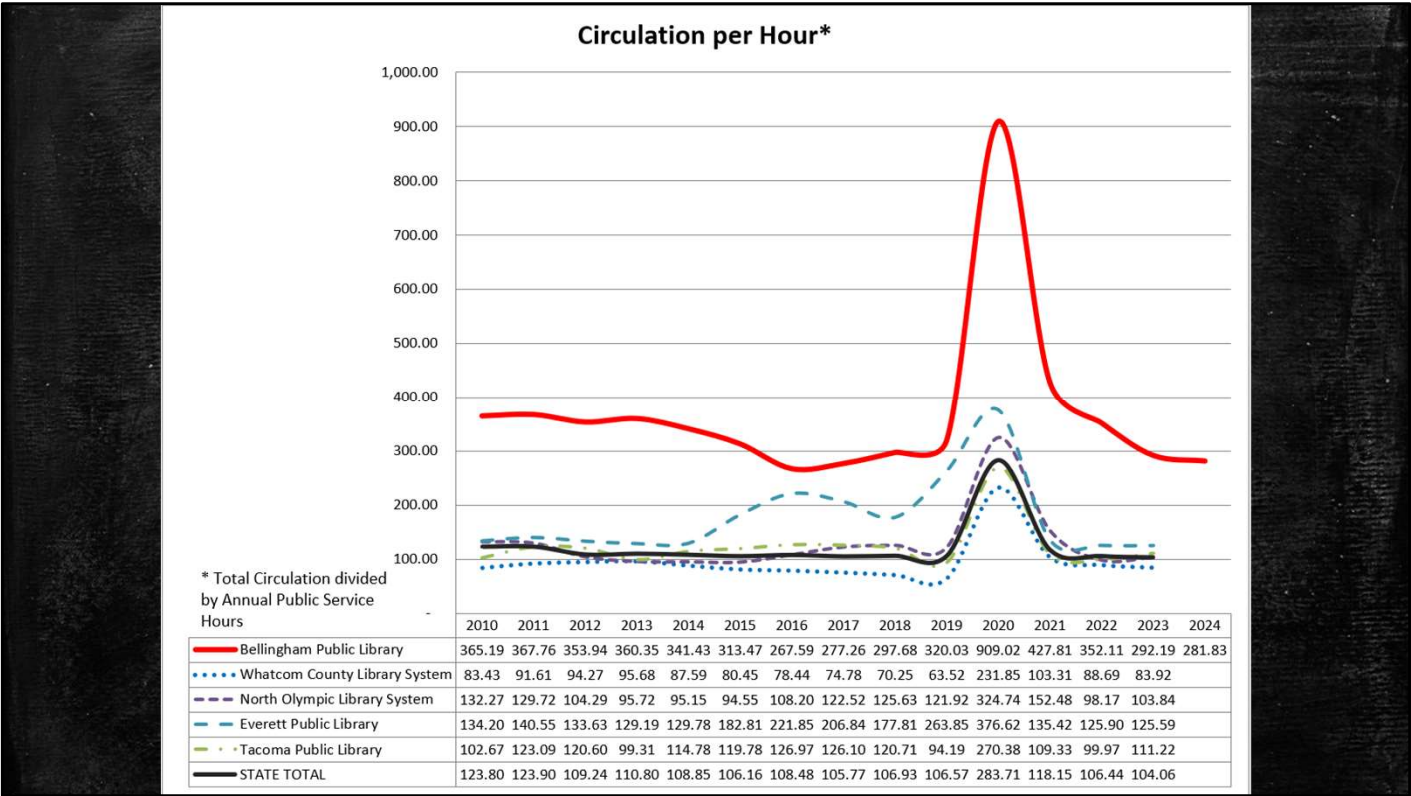
Long-term there isn't a discernable trend in expenditure per capita for materials when viewed in inflation-adjusted dollars, though most of these libraries have had decreases since 2019, and the state average has been trending down since a high in 2016. BPL's big increase in 2022 apparently stems from a windfall due to salary savings. It's not currently budgeted to continue, as demonstrated with the 2023 reversion

Total Operating Expenditures per Capita, adjusted for inflation

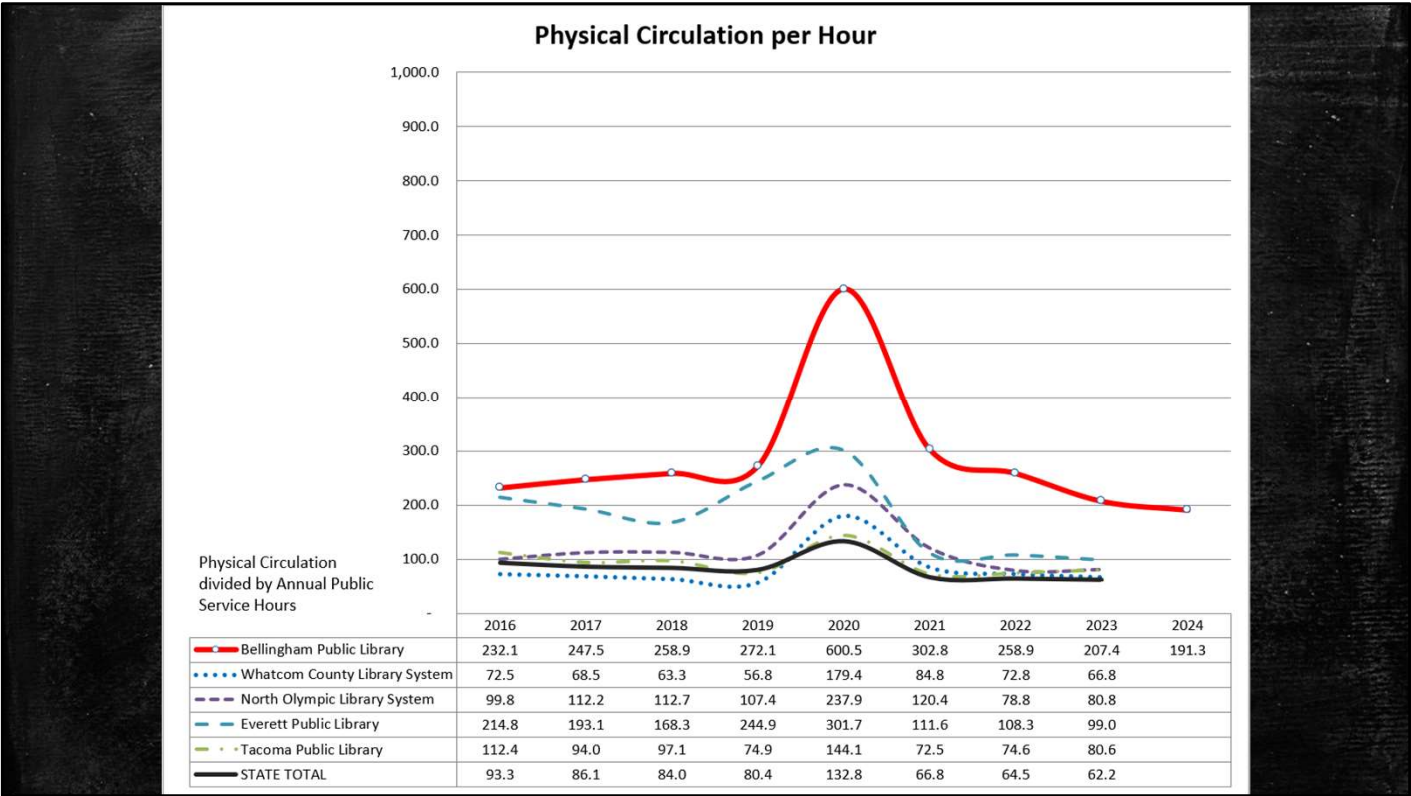


	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Bellingham Public Library	\$46.24	\$39.59	\$39.02	\$38.55	\$38.52	\$42.08	\$41.94	\$34.95	\$34.75	\$34.93	\$36.00	\$37.31	\$38.50	\$40.74	\$38.23	\$38.85	\$40.55	\$39.74	\$38.68	\$40.37	\$44.39
Whatcom County Library System	\$39.91	\$39.88	\$40.80	\$41.83	\$43.21	\$43.39	\$41.90	\$43.60	\$42.32	\$41.76	\$41.93	\$43.28	\$44.57	\$44.71	\$45.37	\$45.87	\$46.13	\$45.62	\$45.29	\$42.83	\$43.20
North Olympic Library System	\$39.31	\$37.26	\$36.24	\$34.48	\$35.66	\$33.12	\$35.72	\$34.69	\$34.82	\$37.33	\$36.10	\$36.51	\$38.36	\$38.90	\$37.78	\$39.79	\$41.49	\$39.11	\$37.36	\$38.67	\$41.19
Everett Public Library	\$40.33	\$38.87	\$37.98	\$37.14	\$37.45	\$36.86	\$37.24	\$36.04	\$35.73	\$34.69	\$33.47	\$35.42	\$35.34	\$34.98	\$35.42	\$32.40	\$29.59	\$26.02	\$23.67	\$26.42	\$27.23
Tacoma Public Library	\$53.30	\$57.24	\$44.94	\$51.75	\$46.77	\$46.05	\$45.13	\$44.65	\$45.89	\$47.68	\$41.33	\$46.24	\$42.03	\$40.97	\$44.84	\$43.75	\$47.71	\$43.97	\$41.65	\$41.41	\$43.62
Spokane Public Library	\$36.66	\$35.98	\$30.23	\$30.43	\$31.67	\$32.18	\$33.80	\$32.20	\$31.73	\$31.36	\$31.59	\$32.45	\$32.75	\$30.72	\$29.39	\$30.70	\$31.58	\$29.84	\$30.37	\$28.65	\$32.54
STATE TOTAL	\$39.92	\$40.56	\$40.66	\$41.82	\$42.87	\$43.65	\$40.80	\$41.58	\$41.09	\$40.79	\$41.23	\$41.52	\$42.76	\$43.90	\$44.02	\$43.97	\$44.46	\$42.55	\$40.21	\$39.41	\$39.98

This ties in with overall expenditures per capita, which are essentially flat over the past 20+ years when adjusted for inflation. BPL did rise above the State average in 2022 & '23, but the 2025 numbers likely won't be so positive.

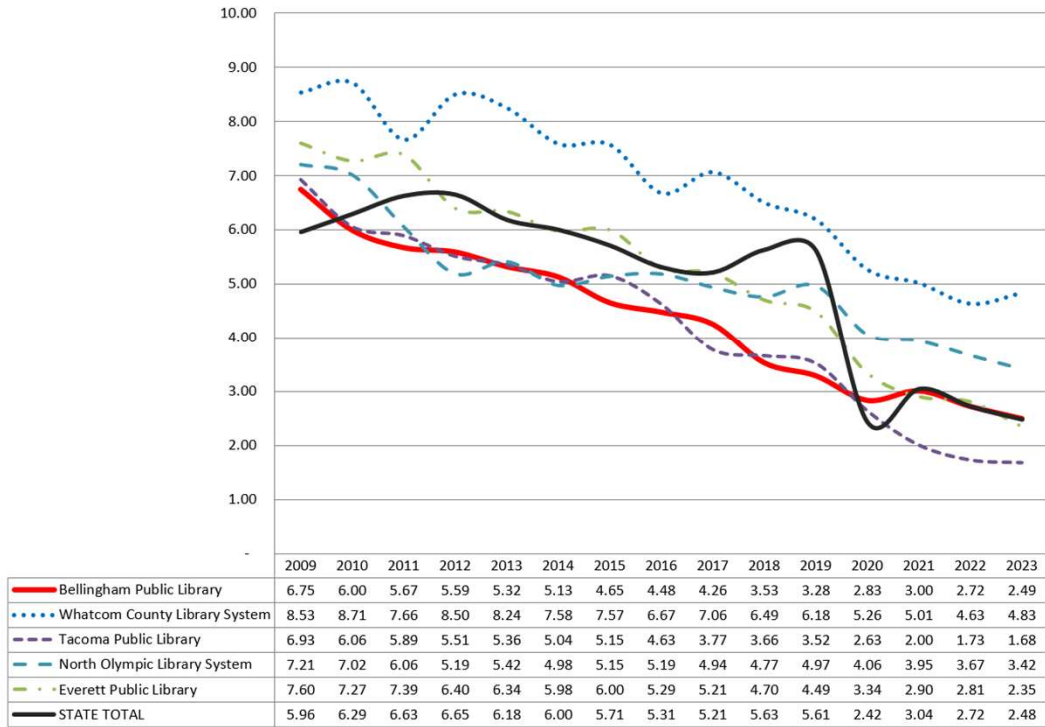


But remember this slide? How does the shift in circulation from physical to digital impact how we understand this? Patrons can access digital materials 24/7 so open hours have less and less importance to this metric as the Electronic Circulation makes up a more substantial percentage of overall circulation.



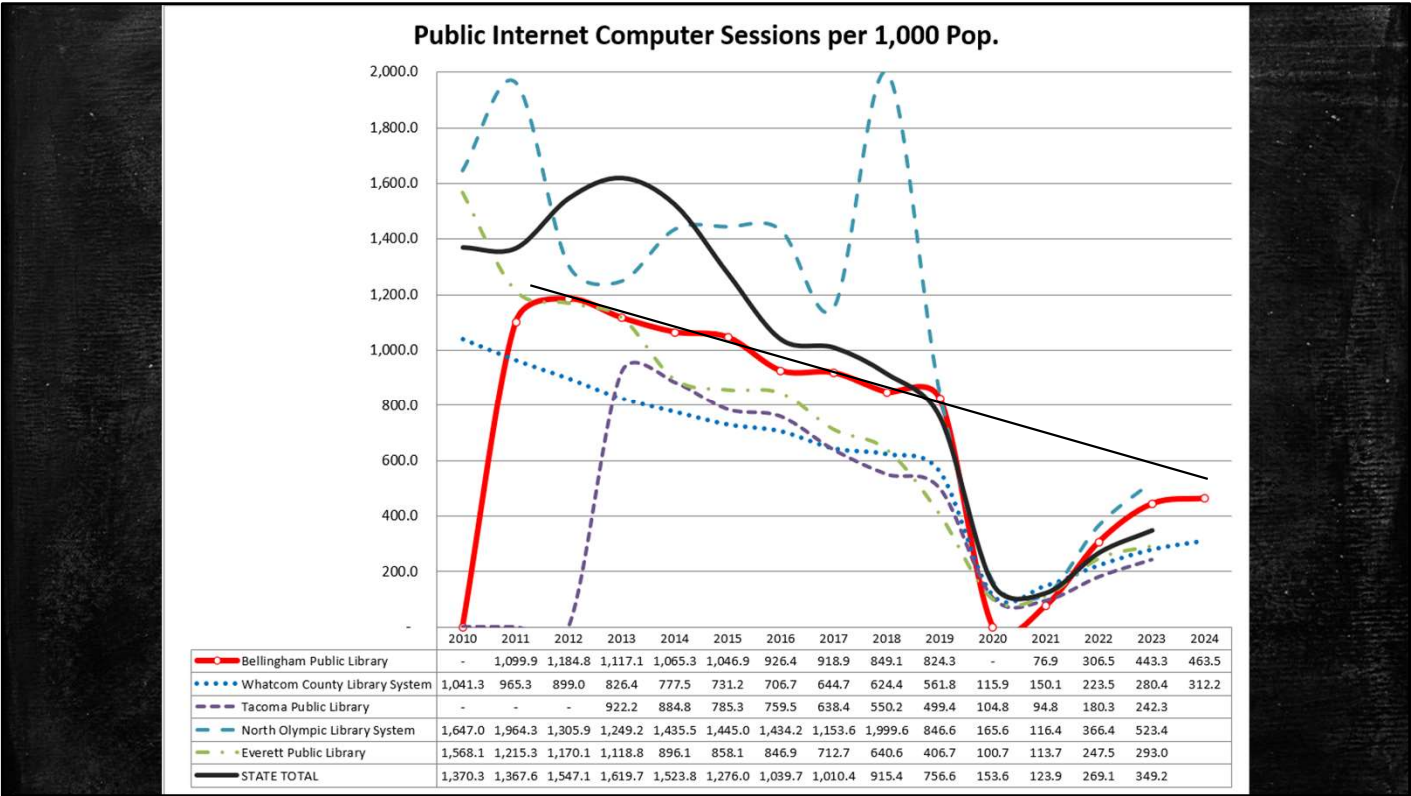
So let's look at only physical circulation against open hours. 2016 was when we hit bottom for Total Circ. per open hour; now 2024 is our low-point for Physical Circ per open hour. We expanded our hours in 2023 with the opening of Bellis Fair more than we recovered our physical circulation, so this isn't really all bad news. Being closer to the State average on this metric should be more sustainable for our staff.

Print Serial Subscriptions per 1,000 Population

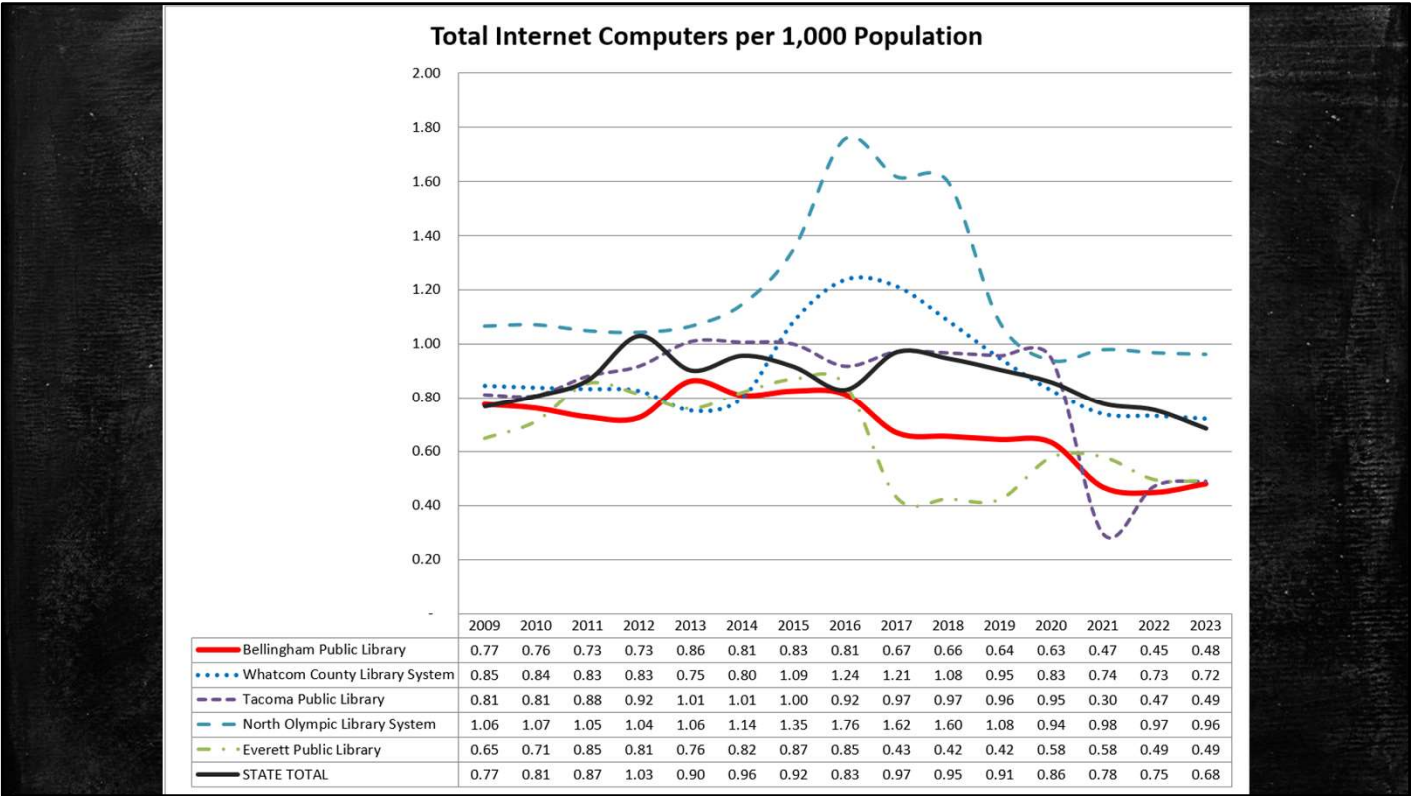


One component of the shift from analog to digital is major upheaval in the print serials market, both newspapers and magazines. We are having more and more trouble finding print magazines to subscribe to, and those that we do are nearly all in a process of decreasing their page-counts, their publication frequency, or either going digital-only or just ceasing publication entirely. While BPL had a slight uptick in 2021 due to the population estimate decreasing, the subsequent increase in population for 2022 has cancelled that out and put us back on the same downward trajectory, which is continued into 2023 along with most other libraries.

Print Serials Subscriptions per 1,000 Service Population		FISCAL YEAR																							
Name	FISCAL YEAR	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
Anacortes Public Library	VAD032	15.85	13.39	13.30	9.52	11.10	11.78	3.89	8.87	12.17	11.53	10.07	10.01	3.93	8.83	8.76	9.06	7.78	5.11	6.76	10.09	6.83			
Asotin County Library	VAD033	6.47	5.43	6.23	6.65	6.59	6.81	5.98	5.77	4.10	5.31	4.98	4.77	5.10	4.23	4.38	4.31	4.28	3.20	3.31	3.02	3.10	2.87		
Bellingham Public Library	VAD050	8.97	9.59	7.32	7.20	7.01	6.97	6.75	6.05	5.67	5.59	5.32	5.13	4.65	4.48	4.26	3.53	3.28	2.83	3.00	2.72	2.43			
Burlington Public Library	VAD002	15.02	13.81	14.34	13.25	12.32	13.10	20.57	11.39	10.13	10.69	10.67	11.04	10.07	10.14	9.91	12.16	10.08	9.96	9.17	8.78	6.43	5.35		
Camas Public Library	VAD034	16.20	14.97	14.88	14.67	14.13	15.15	13.92	10.40	9.17	8.99	7.19	7.86	6.03	5.59	5.24	4.46	4.52	3.82	3.94	2.90	2.91	2.35		
Castle Rock Public Library	VAD003	3.77	2.34	4.65	4.67	3.75	2.81	2.80	2.33	2.33	3.01	2.34	2.34	2.33	1.84	1.83	1.36	2.27	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
Castle Rock Public Library	VAD004	25.00	25.00	21.62	18.18	16.22	17.86	15.73	13.13	15.52	15.09	13.33	14.00	10.00	20.41	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
Central Stage Library District	VAD078	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.00	0.00	0.19	1.46	1.03	0.86	1.94	1.78	1.81	1.74		
Cle Elum (Carpenter Memorial) Library	VAD006	21.41	27.81	26.33	26.11	26.12	30.52	30.17	33.63	29.41	25.07	28.27	25.13	26.20	24.13	25.67	27.20	30.40	22.45	20.05	17.19	12.00	8.43		
Columbia County Rural Library District	VAD075	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	12.09	10.08	3.70	11.34	13.10	12.53	12.66	12.63	12.76	12.53	12.44	9.93	5.43	5.74	10.18	4.96		
Davenport Public Library	VAD009	2.91	2.96	2.89	2.89	2.87	2.87	3.44	3.45	3.48	4.03	4.05	2.94	2.37	0.59	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
Ellensburg Public Library	VAD035	12.00	11.86	10.49	10.30	9.25	10.10	8.83	9.34	8.43	7.84	7.91	8.27	6.34	7.23	7.04	6.09	6.15	6.01	5.81	5.36	4.49	4.50		
Everett Public Library	VAD051	9.37	8.50	8.77	8.88	8.62	8.60	8.07	7.60	7.27	7.39	8.40	8.34	5.96	6.00	5.29	5.21	4.70	4.49	3.94	2.90	2.91	2.35		
Fort Vancouver Regional Library District	VAD058	5.57	5.62	5.16	4.73	4.68	5.22	5.06	5.16	5.43	5.45	5.08	4.72	4.97	4.79	4.48	4.39	4.28	3.65	3.80	3.26	2.85	2.71		
Grandview Library	VAD037	5.70	3.89	3.98	3.91	3.85	3.72	4.18	2.34	1.83	2.20	2.00	2.18	2.51	2.41	2.60	1.97	2.33	2.68	2.67	2.28	1.54	0.00		
Harrington Public Library	VAD011	11.66	11.52	11.63	11.90	11.90	11.90	11.90	11.76	11.90	11.90	11.90	11.90	11.90	11.90	11.90	11.90	11.90	11.90	11.90	11.90	11.90	11.90		
Jefferson County Rural Library District	VAD038	9.64	8.21	5.42	5.30	6.19	6.08	6.04	4.97	5.30	4.79	5.72	7.08	7.96	7.16	6.20	8.42	6.26	6.19	5.64	6.03	8.00	6.62		
Kalama Public Library	VAD012	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
Kelso Public Library	VAD008	7.05	7.44	5.93	5.92	5.91	6.08	6.39	6.59	6.62	7.30	7.29	7.54	7.61	8.79	8.86	9.18	7.28	5.73	3.24	0.79	0.79	0.39		
King County Library System	VAD059	10.33	9.95	9.86	9.93	10.07	9.64	9.73	9.37	8.76	9.70	8.45	7.74	7.26	7.13	6.84	6.81	6.01	5.92	0.03	3.48	3.32	3.25		
Kitsap Regional Library	VAD060	5.64	5.63	5.65	5.52	4.33	3.63	3.19	3.18	3.07	3.17	3.05	1.37	2.75	2.82	2.72	2.70	2.54	2.35	2.22	2.36	2.30	1.86		
Kootenai Public Library	VAD014	8.18	7.14	5.31	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.69	0.00	1.37	1.37	1.33	1.32	1.01	0.65	0.00	0.00		
La Crosse Regional Library	VAD015	3.14	2.92	4.11	4.04	3.97	3.85	3.79	3.85	3.84	3.64	3.51	4.47	4.44	4.19	4.10	4.02	3.96	3.89	1.93	0.97	0.58	0.96		
Lacey Lake Municipal Library	VAD074	6.05	10.66	12.40	10.94	10.94	10.03	10.73	10.73	4.72	6.10	5.57	2.93	2.77	1.34	1.29	0.40	0.38	0.36	0.78	0.56	1.32	0.91		
Longview Public Library	VAD052	6.30	5.95	5.63	5.19	5.17	5.35	4.32	4.21	4.19	3.59	3.96	3.79	3.60	3.58	3.57	3.27	2.79	2.40	1.63	3.23	2.97	2.62		
Lopez Island Library District	VAD026	38.56	35.95	36.36	32.99	36.36	39.81	42.48	43.48	42.58	35.79	31.79	39.19	38.08	8.16	10.54	27.15	23.46	28.89	22.92	19.39	15.91	15.24		
Mid-Columbia Library System	VAD061	5.33	5.02	4.47	4.54	4.17	3.68	3.73	3.59	3.40	3.24	3.25	3.19	2.67	2.65	2.38	2.22	2.08	1.92	1.78	1.68	0.12	1.20		
Mount Vernon City Library	VAD040	12.64	12.45	10.57	9.71	3.54	10.04	9.49	9.42	9.61	8.05	8.03	7.61	7.51	7.10	6.02	6.05	5.17	4.30	4.85	3.53	3.27	3.20		
North Central Regional Library	VAD062	7.10	5.25	4.79	0.00	0.00	3.82	4.18	3.93	4.05	3.98	4.33	4.13	3.27	4.14	4.09	4.15	4.09	4.04	3.57	3.45	3.07	2.96		
North Olympic Library System	VAD036	15.07	15.11	15.95	15.56	15.51	15.61	15.02	17.21	17.02	16.05	15.19	15.42	4.98	5.19	4.94	4.92	4.92	4.92	4.92	4.92	4.92	4.92		
Ocean Shores Public Library	VAD020	17.56	15.50	15.00	15.20	16.29	16.79	14.90	14.81	7.69	6.37	11.49	12.36	11.90	6.07	10.50	10.40	10.10	9.71	9.42	7.47	6.94	6.50		
Odesa Public Library	VAD016	1.05	2.15	1.05	1.05	1.05	1.05	2.08	2.08	8.33	1.10	1.09	1.10	1.11	1.10	1.11	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.12	1.12	1.12		
Orcas Island Library District	VAD029	25.95	23.83	21.27	21.36	21.66	21.73	24.37	23.38	24.05	24.54	24.04	24.18	24.40	24.65	24.84	25.40	22.15	21.84	21.54	20.50	20.87	17.64		
Pend Oreille County Library District	VAD041	10.68	10.85	6.39	6.23	4.80	4.94	5.08	3.10	4.43	3.69	3.66	4.26	5.60	5.59	3.54	2.54	2.51	3.97	4.01	3.66	3.93			
Pierce County Library System	VAD063	6.29	6.00	5.94	5.84	5.75	6.60	5.86	6.48	5.70	7.85	6.10	4.51	4.47	4.34	4.27	2.94	2.93	3.19	1.95	1.07	2.33	1.51		
Pomeroy (Denny Ashby) Library	VAD017	8.58	6.60	5.94	5.94	4.53	2.98	3.04	4.00	3.91	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00		
Port Townsend Public Library	VAD042	17.98	16.39	16.75	19.44	19.27	19.19	19.05	19.34	19.79	19.06	19.27	15.07	14.86	14.93	14.97	12.11	12.36	11.76	11.80	11.40	11.41	9.62	9.00	
Pullman (West) Public Library	VAD043	6.90	N/A	N/A	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	51.68	46.96	29.23	28.76	28.53	31.33	28.48	34.56	32.06	37.44	31.71	25.63	11.56	1.54		
Puyallup Public Library	VAD044	4.04	N/A	N/A	0.00	0.00	3.44	3.67	3.66	5.82	4.04	4.53	4.55	5.29	5.20	5.34	3.64	3.04	2.99	2.96	3.11	1.02	0.60	0.74	
Reardan Memorial Library	VAD019	0.00	1.68	0.00	1.64	3.23	1.59	1.59	1.59	1.59	1.74	1.74	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
Richland Public Library	VAD055	11.31	10.71	8.42	6.57	6.81	7.63	7.79	7.99	6.34	6.44	5.99	3.73	5.43	2.90	1.89	2.95	2.28	2.16	1.65	1.28	1.11	1.08		
Ritzville Public Library	VAD020	13.10	22.34	22.81	26.76	26.43	26.21	20.88	19.48	19.37	17.63	17.37	12.21	15.89	16.63	14.94	11.09	15.12	15.17	10.69	1.71	7.75	4.53		
Roslyn Public Library	VAD021	12.75	3.80	3.80	3.80	12.75	11.76	11.82	15.76	18.72	21.23	22.35	22.35	23.46	23.60	23.60	24.72	26.67	26.67	6.28	7.29	7.29	7.29		
Roy City Library	VAD071	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
San Juan Island Library District	VAD031	28.45	22.28	24.04	24.32	23.56	23.40	23.64	22.93	23.02	41.66	42.94	42.58	36.40	33.10	32.52	28.69	29.57	28.65	27.17	23.59	15.48	14.38		
Seattle Public Library	VAD064	8.94	8.47	8.58	8.69	8.25	7.88	7.45	6.95	6.78	6.62	6.66	6.95	6.09	5.81	5.66	5.32	4.79	4.37	1.45	3.11	2.76	2.70		
Sedro-Woolley Public Library	VAD045	14.08	14.10	14.07	13.88	13.53	13.78	12.86	12.12	11.16	10.76	11.12	11.50	11.97	11.03	11.06	11.14	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Sno-Isle Libraries	VAD065	5.46	5.05	4.88	5.02	4.97	6.37	4.18	4.40	3.80	3.87	3.70	3.30	3.03	2.90	4.09	2.49	2.38	2.44	2.27	0.10	0.80	0.25		
Spokane County Library District	VAD066	5.46	5.99	9.28	8.89	8.35	2.14	5.62	5.12	5.47	5.12	4.75	3.94	3.63	3.53	3.42	2.96	2.74	2.49	2.27	2.16	1.88	1.69		
Spokane Public Library	VAD067	N/A	4.63	3.10	0.00	3.81	3.95	4.02	3.87	3.94	4.11	3.95	3.79	3.45	3.44	2.97	2.83	2.54	2.07	1.52	1.39	1.38	1.38		
Sprague Public Library	VAD022	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.04	2.02	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.27	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00		
Stevens County Rural Library District	VAD072	3.55	6.19	6.17	6.56	6.47	6.33	16.45	6.96	6.94	14.36	12.43	13.70	10.02	3.88	2.90	2.81	2.84	3.42	2.55	2.61	2.02	2.47		
Tacoma Public Library	VAD068	8.40	N/A	N/A	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.07	6.02	6.33	6.06	5.89	5.51												



Finally, I want to touch on one last trend – the increasing ubiquity of computing devices & internet access in everyone’s lives. Inexpensive smartphones and laptops have brought personal computing device ownership to more and more of the population, which is reducing the need for third parties like libraries to be the primary source of computing access. According to the metric of Public Internet Computer Sessions per 1,000 Population, BPL has been steadily declining in importance as a computing place since 2012. This is generally on-trend with other libraries in the state. The pandemic shut the public out from our computers, and numbers so far don’t look like use is going to come back to anywhere near where the trend was pre-pandemic. Use did increase again in 2024, but is still looks like the trend is resetting below the previous trend-line [line].



And it's not that most libraries were substantially reducing the number of computers available to the public throughout this time. Availability was basically flat over much of the teens. It has started to decline over the past few years since 2017, though – a downward trend may be starting to emerge.

What Else...?

500+ columns of data to play with!

<https://www.bellinghampubliclibrary.org/wplsr-merged>

So, there are some things to think about, like:

How far will we bounce-back from the COVID disruptions? What is 'normal' now?

What do we need to change if the population keeps increasing? Or, what if it stops increasing, or starts to decline?

How far will the shift from print to digital for collections and circulation go, and what does that mean for our operations?

Where will print serials bottom out? Seems unlikely they'll disappear completely, but there isn't an obvious stopping point.

What if the geopolitical conditions leading to cheaper computing devices changes, and instead they get more expensive?



Special Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Friday, March 28, 2025 – Central Library Lecture Room
11:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Minutes of Actions and Decisions of the Library Board of Trustees of the Bellingham Public Library as authorized by RCW 27.12.210 and SEC. 7.02 Charter of the City of Bellingham.

Board Members Present:	Rebecca Craven (virtual), Kristy Van Ness, Kendra Bradford, Deborra Garrett, and Shirin Deylami
City Council Library Liaison:	Hannah Stone
Library Management Staff:	Rebecca Judd, Annette Bagley, Katrina Buckman, Bethany Hoglund, Jon McConnel and Jennifer Vander Ploeg
FOBPL Representative:	Carol Comeau
BPL Staff:	Michelle Becker, Alison Kuiken

Call to order and introductions: Special session was called to order at 11:03 a.m. by Vice Chair, Kristy Van Ness. Due to Chair Rebecca Craven attending virtually, Rebecca asked Kristy to chair the meeting. All in attendance introduced themselves.

Approve/modify agenda: Deborah Garrett moved to approve the agenda. Kendra Bradford seconded. Motion carried.

Budget Reduction Proposal:

Library Director Rebecca Judd informed the Board of Mayor Lund's 3% budget reduction exercise for all General Fund departments. Staff's recommendations to achieve the 3% reduction are captured in the Budget Reduction Proposal (*see Attachment #1 at the end of the minutes*).

Rebecca Judd met with Mayor Lund and Deputy Administrators Forrest Longman and Janice Keller regarding potential open hour decreases, a proposed outcome of the 3% budget reduction. They voiced desire to maintain Library open hours. To achieve this, Rebecca shared that the frozen Clerk position, frozen LA position and 2 vacant LA positions would need to be unfrozen/filled. As part of that conversation, Rebecca conveyed that we won't be able to reach a 3% reduction without factoring in vacancies and reducing hours. The Executive team understood and agreed that the Library's reduction will be a lesser percentage. Instead of frontline staff, the Outreach specialist position will need to be frozen as a budget reduction strategy. Rebecca clarified that the Branch Specialist position is already planned to be frozen upon vacancy.

Shirin asked the cost of the four positions currently frozen/vacant needed to maintain open hours. Rebecca J. provided a rough estimate of \$120,000. Kendra asked if the three LA positions are benefitted; they are not. The three frozen/vacant LA positions are 16 hour/week Regular Non-Benefitted positions.

Referencing the Budget Reduction Proposal provided to the Board:

- The Library is planning to bring forward for the budget reduction exercise:
 - o Outreach Specialist freeze
 - o Voluntary staffing adjustments (already planned)
- Reducing the Materials Level of Service (LOS) standard to "low" is still to be determined; doing so would take us to the lowest level of materials service. Rebecca J. noted that the LOS for materials standard factors in an annual increase to account for inflation. This puts our LOS at risk of dipping below "low" in future years, if there are no corresponding increases for inflation.
 - o Carol Comeau re-iterated FOBPL's position of supporting/supplementing the library's materials budget but not replacing the City's responsibility to fund the materials budget.
- The proposed \$10,000 reduction in the General Operating budget is not a sustainable cut. It impacts the Library's ability to provide staff development and education, specifically attendance at national conferences.
 - o Deferring staff development opportunities for too long can be a slippery slope. It is important to provide staff learning opportunities.
 - o Hannah commented that all departments are looking at travel costs this year and that even small cuts collectively add up.
 - o Rebecca noted that there are no plans to send staff to national conferences in 2025. There is a plan to begin implementing a regular rotation for national conference attendance among staff beginning in 2026.
 - o Regional and local conference and professional opportunities remain in the budget.

Rebecca J. shared that the original goal of the Special Meeting was to discuss the Budget Reduction Proposal and decide what to bring forward for the 3% budget exercise. Based on the conversation with the Mayor, the freezing of the Outreach Specialist position is the only expected reduction to bring forward. If additional cuts are required, Rebecca will need the Board's direction on next cuts: lowering materials budget to LOS and/or the 10K in General Operating budget reduction.

Shirin's asked a clarification question – did Mayor Lund give a new percentage/number to bring forward? Rebecca J. clarified that the only expected reduction to bring forward is the freezing of the Outreach position. The Mayor did not provide a new target number.

Kristy moved, if needed for reductions, to go forward with: freezing the Outreach position, reducing the materials level to the Low LOS level of 5.78 for materials, and reduce general operating budget by 10k. Rebecca Craven seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Open Hours Discussion: Rebecca J. shared that having support from the Mayor's Office to unfreeze positions and support maintaining Library open hours is good. This news feels protective in a way, without promises, of library open hours. It is also complicated. The Management Team and Supervisors meet weekly to discuss staffing. This winter has been extremely challenging. The library's current open hours, even at the staffing level we would be at with the unfrozen/filled positions, has proven to be extremely challenging to staff and keep staffed. In particular, the M-Th hours from 6-7pm prove difficult as it is a 9-hour open day rather than an 8-hour day, which requires more staff to be scheduled per day. Additionally, we are holding a particularly challenging public space during that time. Rebecca J. is proposing a re-adjustment of open hours:

- Morning hours at the Bellis Fair branch have been, and continue to be, requested. Taking four hours from the Central Library (Monday – Thursday, 6-7pm) and re-allocating those hours to Tuesday morning hours at Bellis Fair (10am – 2pm) is the proposal.
- The library system would be open the same number of hours overall, but Central would be closed 4 hours per week more than the current schedule, and the Bellis Fair Branch would be open an additional 4 hours per week.

This adjustment won't necessarily result in budget savings but would have a positive scheduling impact as fewer staff are needed to open Bellis Fair than Central. One rationale for this recommendation is the need to re-allocate the duties of Branch Specialist position, which will be frozen upon vacancy this spring. Those duties will remain and Management explored where those tasks are most suited to be completed and absorbed. Additional schedule flexibility will aid in the continuation of this body of work.

Kendra inquired if we have a sense of the number of people served from 6-7pm at Central versus 4 hours at Bellis Fair? Kendra also voiced the need for a community solution for community members who might be getting meals from CAST and coming to the Library to eat during the 6-7pm hour. People need a different resource, other than the library, to have their basic needs met.

In response to Kendra's question, Jon showed door count numbers for Central. The 6-7pm hour is by far the hour of the day with the fewest people entering the building. Jon also showed door counts for Bellis Fair. The busiest times at Bellis Fair are morning hours, including Wednesday mornings which are storytime mornings, and not even regular open hours.

Rebecca Craven commented that when our Central Library renovation is underway, the public will need to start utilizing the branches more as Central will be closed. Making this adjustment will aid with that transition.

Other discussion included how additional morning hours might help bring families to the Bellis Fair branch, as families with young children are often looking for places and spaces to go in the morning hours.

A question was asked about when this change would be implemented. Rebecca J. responded that a date is still to be determined, as more information and work is needed. Shirin asked if there is other

data that would help shed light on the impacts of a 6-7pm closure at Central, and who might be impacted by this change in hours. Jon said that our people counter only gives in/out data rather than "dwell" (how long someone remains in the building) data. We can pull the circulation data for circs per hour for the 6-7pm hour. Rebecca J. agreed to have the stats compiled and shared with the Board at the April Board Meeting.

Service reduction conversation: The proposal is to reduce the number of purchase/ILL requests per month from 10 to 5. If approved, the effective start date can be altered if needed. Kendra asked for clarification about the ask and Rebecca J. clarified: the ask is a reduction from 10 purchase/ILL requests *per person, per month* to 5 purchase/ILL requests *per person, per month*. Jon provided a brief overview of the incoming request/ILL process which has many steps. Bethany shared that collection development during low-materials budget times is extremely difficult. Selectors have the duty to create the most well-rounded, robust collection possible with a very limited budget. We are unable to purchase/borrow every request, and it does not make sense to ask for a greater number of requests than we know we can consider approving. Additionally, we try to Interlibrary loan denied purchase requests. If the number of denied requests increases, it will in turn continue to increase the ILL workload, which Jon shared is currently at capacity. This proposal is a strategy to match service with the staffing resources we have. Discussion ensued about the reduction number and Jon shared that reducing to 8 would not make it a significant change for staff, but a reduction to 5 would make a significant change. There was acknowledgement that this would impact patrons. Hannah wondered how we can work collaboratively with WCLS and other regional libraries to help increase efficiency and eliminate redundancy. Bethany shared that there are already many processes and agreements established and automated to help ease workflow between the systems, but further collaboration is always welcome.

Kendra moved to reduce the number of purchase/ILL requests from 10 to 5 per user, per month. Shirin seconded. Motion carried.

Central Library Building Use/Renovation

Rebecca Judd reported that the state House and Senate Capital Budgets are being released next week. We will learn if the \$2 million Library Capital Improvement Grant and the \$1 million from the Local & Community Projects Programs Grant will be in the budgets.

Rebecca framed the conversation with: "What functions do we want the Central Library to serve, and how is the building design furthering these goals?" She introduced two big ideas to bring forward for conceptual discussion, one impacting the lower level, the other impacting the main floor:

LOWER LEVEL:

- Current design: Open up the hallway, create more open space, incorporate the Teen Area, add ADA accessibility in Children's bookstacks, ensure Children's Services staff have appropriate workspaces,
- Idea: How can we make this building shine for what it is? What if we took the lower floor and dedicated it fully to Children and Teens?

- Changes from schematic design include: Move ground floor lobby activities to the main floor. Move community meeting and gathering functions to the main floor, and consider size of meeting spaces. Create a youth services programming space, which can be used as a dedicated early learning space when not used for programming.
- These changes aren't necessarily cost savings considerations, rather a philosophical question about space utilization and usage on the lower level.
- Discussion ensued – there was a nod to Jon's statistics presentation at the March Board Meeting which reported high storytime and early learning program and attendance numbers. How can we truly make a space that makes kids feel like it is "theirs?". We bring a large number of people into the building for these activities. There are also safety considerations: co-location of age groups and activities can sometimes be and feel unsafe to families with children. Restrooms were also discussed. Rebecca J. to call Miller Hull to discuss public restroom requirements per floor for the Central Library

MAIN FLOOR:

- Current design: relocate the Help Desk, move the public computers to the current Teen Space.
- Idea: Relocate lower lobby functions and meeting spaces to the main floor.
 - Could the Skillshare Space be utilized by installing a closed glass door? The space could be a reservable space.
 - Current Skillshare space has community program and tabling uses; we could maintain both these functions.
 - This space would likely not be able to accommodate upwards of 50 people, as the lower level programming space will be able to.
 - Would we be better served by smaller meeting spaces (for instance Pods), over a larger community meeting room.
- Questions and discussion that emerged:
 - There are very few 1-4 person reservable spaces available downtown, or in our community in general. Larger spaces are more available. This is a trade-off conversation: we are not building additional space/adding square footage to the Central Library. This is also an opportunity to continue looking at our library as a system – if we want a 100+ capacity meeting room, does it have to be at Central? Could it be at the mall or even Barkley? If a large community room is valuable for us, this might be an invitation to think ahead/to the future and outside the Central Library.
- Impacts: Adding additional functions to the main floor will have impacts on the amount of public seating we have available on the main floor.

There are three ideas at play Rebecca J. would like direction on:

1. Dedicating the lower level to a Youth Services focus
2. Moving the lower level lobby functions to the main floor
3. Putting priority on smaller reserved spaces for 1 – 4 people on the main floor

Jen gave examples of "library pods" or "booths" that support meeting spaces for 1-4 people. WCLS currently has a 4-person unit at Blaine. The pods are:

- Private and secure, quite soundproof
- Equipped with power access and ventilation
- Modular
- ADA accessible

The pods also have the option of being installed with a coded entry system to eliminate the staff need to unlock for every use.

Discussion and questions ensued regarding the ability to clean the units, how much floor space is needed for the pods and how much of the open seating would need to be removed?

- Roughly a third of the open seating would need to be removed. Seating could be re-deployed to branches
- There is a community demand for small spaces that are private and soundproof.
- Would we consider having a pod with a computer for things like tele-health appointments?
- To address the need for a larger community use/programming space, would there be a way to combine the two existing study rooms and the Skillshare Space to make a slightly bigger program space?
 - o Yes – the Study Room walls are not structural.
 - o Also, for library-sponsored programming, we could hold our programming after-hours in our public space. Kristy shared that the Vashon Library does this and it is successful.

There was discussion about the role of providing a large public community room for free to the public. Is this a priority for us? Is after-hours use a priority?

- Are there other spaces in the City that could function as community room use?

Discussion ensued about potential pitfalls of not having a large public community room in the Central Library. Could we get a similarly sized room (49 people in current schematic design) on the main floor? Can we have a public meeting space that also serves other functions?

Rebecca J. acknowledged that these are very difficult decisions and trade-offs. The constraints of this building are challenging. Many of these questions also point to how we want to manage and expand our facilities over time. It's hard to try to fit everything we want into the Central Library with the current footprint. We are unable to accommodate all the basic functions our library can and should offer. How do we meet these ongoing community and facility needs? Part of this equation is figuring out a long-term funding mechanism so we can continue to do future planning for spaces, services and facilities.

Key points from the discussion:

- Is it a priority to have a public meeting space for the general community. Is it a useful and meaningful space if it is not accessible after hours?
 - o If the room is not available after-hours, then its public effectiveness isn't high, unless library hours are robust. Discussion ensued regarding the feasibility and cost of offering after-hours access, and how right now it is not realistic. Could we create a space/place

where that service could be expanded/doesn't preclude the after-hours option in the future?

- How we can carve out larger public/group meeting space on the main floor is an area to explore. Rebecca will bring this question/task into the process when re-opened with the architects.
- Children's services spaces and programming bring people to the library, and staff do a stellar job with programming and overall services to youth and their families. Currently, Children's Services has a footprint of 3500 sqft currently, whereas the main floor has a footprint of 10,000 sqft.
- Restroom access is another area to explore. How many restrooms are required for each floor. Rebecca J. to explore this and bring update to April Board meeting.

Robust discussion about the multitude of ways library spaces and meeting rooms are used by so many audiences: children, adults, etc. How do we get back to the library being a space for everyone? We have building challenges, and we also have community challenges.

The Board provided Rebecca J. with the following direction:

1. Engage the architects to explore, on the main floor, possible configurations of community spaces (different room sizes) and look at different options/trade-offs to help narrow in the final focus for the main floor.
2. Designate the lower level for Youth Services. There is concern about having the bulk of the public restrooms on the lower level, especially if it is designated for Children/Teens. Rebecca J. will ask Miller Hull about the number of public restrooms necessary on the lower level and investigate options based upon their answer.

Strategic Directions and Levels of Service (LOS)

Rebecca J. shared that the Level of Service standards were developed within the past 10 years and are used for planning and budget needs. The goal for the conversation today, as the meeting draws to a close, is to outline the questions for future study and consideration.

- Facilities
 - The Facilities Master Plan re-affirmed the level of service for facilities. It also helped identify the need for a North side branch and identified the need for larger branch facilities.
 - Rebecca J. re-affirmed how inefficient staffing a 1400 sq ft facility is. We are able to operate a much larger building without incurring additional staffing expense.
 - Our spaces are important for community climate resiliency.
 - Can we look at our facilities with a more systems lens?
 - As we go into difficult budget times, would we be open to closing a location if necessary? This question is not applicable right now but might be in the future.
- Materials
 - The Board updated the materials LOS in 2024
 - Looking at budgets, are we committed to staying at the lower budget numbers; are we willing to go below low?

- Open hours
 - Rebecca J. hopes we can spend some time updating this standard; it is the most misaligned of all the existing Levels of Service.
 - How is this LOS interpreted and used? Would we be better served to move to a model with more equitable hours and offerings?
 - Answering this question could mean more standardized hours across our four locations. If so, what would those standards be?
 - As it stands, this LOS doesn't give us a useable benchmark.
 - As we go into difficult budget times – how low would we go for hours? Are we willing to cut services so staff could preserve open hours?
 - How can we look at/explore materials access and delivery in new ways? Would after-hours book lockers be a possibility?
- Staffing FTE
 - This standard may also need to be revised. It is useful for us now, but is tied to open hours.

Rebecca J. posed some bigger picture LOS question for the future: How do we raise our Level of Service standards? What will it take to get us to the higher levels? Could we consider a dedicated property tax, similar to Greenways, for the library?

Wrap Up and Next Steps

Outstanding questions will be brought back to the April Meeting, most importantly the public restroom question for the Central Library lower level, meeting room spaces, and the circulation statistics for the 6-7pm hour at Central.

Rebecca Craven wanted to remind everyone of the desire to restore the original windows on the main floor. She encouraged Rebecca J, when talking with Miller Hull about pods and other main floor ideas, to retain the ability to restore the original windows if possible.

Rebecca J. provided the following update: BPL will not get the money that Rep. Rick Larsen was championing for the outer envelope of the building. Additionally, we will need to address the plaza sooner rather than later.

Kristy adjourned the meeting at 2:35 pm.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST

Secretary, Library Board of Trustees

Attachments:

- Attachment #1: Budget Reduction Proposal: March 2025

Budget Reduction Proposal: March 2025

At the end of February, Mayor Lund asked all City departments to identify 3% in spending reductions from budgeted 2025 operating costs paid out of the General Fund. For the Library, this equates to a possible \$230,000 reduction in funding. The plan below has three parts:

- A proposal to reduce spending
- A proposal to reduce open hours
- A proposal to reduce services

Reduce spending: For the proposal to reduce spending, we can reach the \$230,000 target with the following reductions. Of note, this is in addition to the reductions made as part of the 2025 budget process last year.

- Outreach Specialist vacancy. Freeze
- Library Assistant 16-hour vacancy. Freeze
- Library Assistant 16-hour vacancy. Freeze
- Voluntary staffing adjustments (reduced hours in several positions, already planned)
- Materials: reduce to 'Low' Level of Service standard for Materials, adjusted for inflation. \$16,244 reduction
- General operating budget. \$10,000 reduction

Reduce open hours: To address the high number of frozen and vacant positions, this proposal outlines a reduction in open hours, effective the week of May 4, 2025:

- Close Central at 6 pm instead of 7 pm on Monday-Thursday. These hours have the lowest patron use.
- Close Central and Bellis Fair at 2 pm instead of 6 pm on Saturday. This will align Saturday hours across locations.
- Add Bellis Fair hours 10 am – 2 pm on Tuesday and adjust Bellis Fair hours 10 am – 2 pm on Saturday. Bellis Fair Mall has approved the 10 am opening for the Library (the rest of the Mall opens at 11 am)

Reduce services: With the reduction in materials spending, we anticipate that purchase/ILL requests will increase. To mitigate the impact on CS staff and librarian selectors, this proposal includes the following reduction in services:

- Reduce number of purchase/ILL requests per month from 10 to 5, effective the week of May 4, 2025

Bellingham Public Library - Performance & Activity Measures, 2025

Library Board
April 15, 2025
Consent Agenda

	March		Year to Date		YTD comparison
	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025 with 2024
Holdings - Number of materials in the library's collection					
Physical copies added to the collection	1,867	2,043	5,321	5,928	-10.24%
Electronic copies purchased by BPL	97	198	400	382	4.71%
Physical copies withdrawn from collection	(408)	(445)	(5,541)	(1,326)	317.87%
Total physical holdings			183,192	180,669	1.40%
Total electronic holdings available to BPL			165,810	153,934	7.71%
Total Holdings (Physical and Electronic)			349,002	334,603	4.30%
Circulation - Number of items checked out or renewed; includes Interlibrary Loan and Outreach activity					
Central Library					
Adult	40,817	43,354	118,334	123,696	-4.33%
Youth	43,475	42,285	121,867	119,326	2.13%
Sub-Total Central	84,292	85,639	240,201	243,022	-1.16%
Fairhaven Branch					
Adult	5,250	5,203	14,761	14,718	0.29%
Youth	2,950	2,492	8,119	7,031	15.47%
Sub-Total Fairhaven	8,200	7,695	22,880	21,749	5.20%
Barkley Branch					
Adult	4,815	4,647	14,094	13,947	1.05%
Youth	5,333	4,237	14,767	11,966	23.41%
Sub-Total Barkley	10,148	8,884	28,861	25,913	11.38%
Bellis Fair Branch					
Adult	1,433	1,412	4,087	3,687	10.85%
Youth	2,350	2,247	6,345	5,717	10.98%
Sub-Total Bellis Fair	3,783	3,659	10,432	9,404	10.93%
Bellingham Technical College					
Adult	44	23	131	68	92.65%
Youth	7	8	14	23	-39.13%
Sub-Total BTC	51	31	145	91	59.34%
Whatcom Community College					
Adult	216	158	585	470	24.47%
Youth	28	34	71	65	9.23%
Sub-Total WCC	244	192	656	535	22.62%
Western Washington University					
Adult	335	222	921	571	61.30%
Youth	67	89	222	253	-12.25%
Sub-Total WWU	402	311	1,143	824	38.71%
Sub-Total Physical	107,120	106,411	304,318	301,538	0.92%
Online Services					
Kanopy	2,199	2,007	6,260	6,211	0.79%
NW Anytime Library Overdrive	42,169	41,860	124,104	124,087	0.01%
Overdrive Magazines	8,050	7,405	23,164	22,475	3.07%
Sub-Total Online	52,418	51,272	153,528	152,773	0.49%
Total Circulation	159,538	157,683	457,846	454,311	0.78%
Holds Activity					
Items pulled to fill holds	54,450	52,426	158,739	160,747	-1.25%
Services					
Persons Visiting - Number of persons counted as they enter the libraries					
Central Library	34,633	31,217	99,554	87,891	13.27%
Fairhaven Branch	3,610	3,244	10,101	9,228	9.46%
Barkley Branch	2,597	2,713	7,757	7,877	-1.52%
Bellis Fair Branch	2,462	2,560	6,953	7,180	-3.16%
Total Persons Visiting	43,302	39,734	117,412	112,176	4.67%
Website Visits					
This count reflects number of visits to www.bellinghampubliclibrary.org	44,490	42,762	128,760	132,611	-2.90%
Bibliocommons Visits					
This count reflects number of visits to Bibliocommons	27,604	34,671	77,330	87,982	-12.11%
Total Website Visits	72,094	77,433	206,090	220,593	-6.57%
Computer Usage - Number of sessions					
Central Library					
Adult & Teen (30 terminals)	3,721	3,404	10,847	9,475	14.48%
Childrens (3 terminals)	102	64	274	207	32.37%
Fairhaven Branch (7 terminals)	276	251	711	697	2.01%
Barkley Branch (4 terminals)	129	165	384	501	-23.35%
Bellis Fair Branch (4 terminals)	174	143	414	413	0.24%
Total Computer Usage	4,402	4,027	12,630	11,293	11.84%
New Borrowers Registered					
Central Library	520	526	1,832	1,925	-4.83%
Fairhaven Branch	44	31	124	91	36.26%
Barkley Branch	25	29	89	78	14.10%
Bellis Fair Branch	35	49	143	182	-21.43%
Total New Borrowers Registered	624	635	2,188	2,276	-3.87%
Programs - Library sponsored or co-sponsored educational, recreational, or cultural programs					
Programs	145	121	363	304	19.41%
Attendees	3,396	3,333	7,660	7,307	4.83%
Volunteer Hours	337	225	1,333	1,475	-9.60%

BELLINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY
Board of Library Trustees

MARCH 2025 CLAIMS

LIST OF CLAIMS AGAINST THE BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES AND THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM TO BE CONSIDERED AND APPROVED AT THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING OF APRIL 18, 2025, IN ACCORDANCE WITH RCW 27.12.210 AND 27.12.240.

	VENDOR	AMOUNT
Materials, Equipment and Supplies		
Books; DVDs; supplies; masks	Amazon	1,745.10
Books	Baker & Taylor	14,331.87
Patron supply	Chefstore	6.74
Water (Barkley & Bellis Fair Branches)	Clearwater	21.26
Security uniforms	Curtis Blue	146.03
DVDs, CDs, recorded books	Midwest Tape	1,418.22
Vehicle fuel	Nelson-Reisner Distributor	269.25
Office supplies	ODP Business Solutions	329.05
Uniform embroidery	Tommy the Tailor	75.00
Materials, Equipment & Supplies Sub Total		\$18,342.52
Services and Interfund Charges		
Barkley Branch cleaning	Action Cleaning	628.07
Bellis Fair Branch cleaning	Advantage Building Services	1,477.66
eAudiobooks	Amazon	62.12
Signage	Applied Digital Imaging	23.61
Hotspot service	AT&T	18.24
Preprocessing	Baker & Taylor	3,882.55
Bellis Fair Branch lease	Bellis Fair Mall Territories	5,357.00
Pest management	BioBug	277.95
Natural gas service	Cascade Natural Gas	8,862.74
Banking & credit card fees	City of Bellingham Interfund	26.16
Computer replacement allocation	City of Bellingham Interfund	20,635.92
Facilities allocation	City of Bellingham Interfund	79,950.00
Fleet Services	City of Bellingham Interfund	1,510.00
IT Service allocation	City of Bellingham Interfund	60,676.72
Postage	City of Bellingham Interfund	1,383.28
Qualified Energy Conservation Bond sinking fund	City of Bellingham Interfund	2,275.59
Radio Communications Allocation	City of Bellingham Interfund	685.76
Risk Management	City of Bellingham Interfund	8,430.72
Technology replacement allocation	City of Bellingham Interfund	8,784.76
Telecom Services	City of Bellingham Interfund	3,006.36
Water/Sewer/SSW service (Central & Fairhaven)	City of Bellingham Interfund	1,324.29
Barkley & Bellis Fair branch water cooler rentals	Clearwater Systems	74.94
Digital archives	Corporation for Digital Scholarship	3,000.00
Alarm system maintenance	Guardian Security	176.10
Copier leases and copies	Kelley Create	111.39
Preprocessing	Midwest Tape	218.16

BELLINGHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY
Board of Library Trustees

MARCH 2025 CLAIMS

eBooks, eAudiobooks	Overdrive Inc	2,826.09
Bellis Fair internet service	Pogozone Wireless	367.49
Electricity service	Puget Sound Energy	4,184.51
Waste disposal service	Sanitary Service Company	1,351.99
Security sensor repair	Security solutions	209.83
Microfische machine lease	Technology Unlimited	340.08
Borrower notices	Unique Management	269.00
Hotspot service	Verizon Wireless	1,280.32
4th Q 2024 borrower notices	WCLS	2,743.61
B&O Taxes	WSDO Revenue	5.36

Services and Interfund Charges Sub Total	\$226,438.37
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Gift Fund

Teen programs	Amazon.com	197.43
Books	Baker & Taylor	939.59
Audiobooks	Midwest Tape	652.68
eBooks and eAudiobooks	Overdrive Inc	883.74

GIFT FUND OUTLAYS Sub Total	\$2,673.44
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Total General Fund claims \$244,780.89

Total General Fund & Gift Fund claims \$247,454.33

Library - Budget to Actual - General Fund

March 2025 25% YTD

	YTD Actuals	Budget	Remaining	% Complete
Revenues				
Grants		0		
Print and Copy Fees	4,150	15,000	10,850	28%
Lost, Damage & Non-resident Borrower Fees	3,732	16,100	12,368	23%
Fairhaven Auditorium Rental Fees	0	5,000	5,000	0%
Miscellaneous Revenues	326	0	(326)	
Total Revenue	8,208	36,100	27,892	23%
Expenses				
Salaries and Wages	862,392	3,369,234	2,506,842	26%
Personnel Benefits	355,935	1,368,283	1,012,348	26%
Physical Materials, Equipment and Supplies	43,085	307,932	264,847	14%
Services, Digital Materials and Interfund	855,025	2,672,160	1,817,135	32%
Total Expenditure	2,116,437	7,717,608	5,601,171	27%

Library - Budget to Actual - Gift Fund

March 2025 25% YTD

	YTD Actuals	Budget	Remaining	% Complete
Revenues				
Donations	10,193	150,000	139,807	7%
Total Revenue	10,193	150,000	139,807	7%
Expenses				
Gift Fund expenses	9,895	50,000	40,105	20%
Total Expenditure	9,895	50,000	40,105	20%

Patron Use of Databases and Learning Resources

			2024	2025				
			Q1				Q1	Year %
Vendor	Database	Metric	TOTAL	Jan	Feb	Mar	TOTAL	Change
Candid	Foundation Directory Online#	Profile Views	298	37	156	48	241	-19.1%
Data Axle	Reference Solutions*	Detail Records Viewed, Downloaded, and Printed	8	-	-	-	-	-100.0%
EBSCO	Consumer Reports	Page Views	10,053	3,453	2,996	3,734	10,183	1.3%
EBSCO	Ethnic Diversity Source	Requests	-	-	-	-	-	
EBSCO	NoveList Plus	Requests	314	15	1	71	87	-72.3%
EBSCO	NoveList K-8 Plus	Requests	8	-	-	-	-	-100.0%
Gale	Gale databases	Item Requests	503	101	122	221	444	-11.7%
Gale	ChiltonLibrary.com	Retrievals	139	55	99	84	238	71.2%
Grey House	Weiss Financial Ratings	Page Views	700	261	62	158	481	-31.3%
Library Ideas	Freegal	Songs Streamed or Downloaded	31,461	8,725	9,515	9,436	27,676	-12.0%
LinkedIn	LinkedIn Learning	Video Views	2,362	897	1,050	968	2,915	23.4%
Mango	Mango	Sessions	1,264	624	479	452	1,555	23.0%
NewsBank	NewsBank^	Documents Viewed	9,977	3,974	3,403	3,916	11,293	13.2%
ProQuest	Ancestry Library Edition#	Document Views	773	722	799	862	2,383	208.3%
ProQuest	CultureGrams	Pages Viewed	9,108	204	6,612	2,877	9,693	6.4%
ProQuest	HeritageQuest	Records Viewed	1,538	426	15	35	476	-69.1%
ProQuest	US Newsstream & US Dailies	Retrievals	590	294	167	469	930	57.6%
ProQuest	Newspapers.com - West	Retrievals	750	1,820	951	564	3,335	344.7%
TOTAL			69,846	21,608	26,427	23,895	71,930	3.0%

No remote access

* In-Library stats only. Remote access counted to WCLS

^ In-Library and some remote stats. Other remote access counted to WCLS



DIRECTOR'S REPORT FOR April 15, 2025

It's not often that we have the privilege of being in just the right place, at the right moment, in someone's greatest hour of need. But on March 31, our team was there. Enormous kudos to Security Specialist Tim Kelley, Security and Information Attendant Reo Maruyama, Deputy Library Director Bethany Hoglund, Teen Services Specialist Lesley Norman and Public Services Clerk Jeff Stamey who responded with such skill and teamwork to a life-threatening medical event outside the Children's entrance with CPR, Naloxone, and the AED machine. I have no doubt that a life was saved because of their incredible efforts. (Rebecca Judd, Library Director)

WELCOME & INCLUDE



Public Services Retirement: On April 30, 2025, Donna Grasdock will be retiring after 42 years at BPL. Donna was hired as a part-time Library Clerk II on March 1, 1983. She was promoted to a full-time employee within one year. Donna has worked as Mendery Clerk, Mendery Coordinator, Circulation Clerk, Fairhaven Library Specialist, and, for the last 18 years, as Library Branch Specialist. Many will remember Donna as the "Fairhaven Branch Manager" who took care of their families, the collections, and the building with special care, positivity, and customer service. Donna has earned praise and gratitude from her colleagues and a special place in the hearts of our Fairhaven patrons during her decades of dedicated support. **Photo: Donna celebrates Fairhaven Library 120th Birthday** (Katrina Buckman, Head of Public Services)

Lighthouse Mission visits Public Service Meetings: On March 18 and 20, Brittany Hargrove, Kellie-Anne Markell, and Alec Howard from Lighthouse Mission came to our Public Service Meetings to discuss their new shelter space and services. They gave a presentation on their Enhanced Shelter Model, followed by a Q&A. Library staff gained insights into the intentions behind the shelter practices and learned how we can assist patrons who are curious about Lighthouse Missions structure and policies. This is a great example of how open communication with community partners strengthens our understanding of organizational priorities, increases our effectiveness in responding to community needs, and identifies allies in the advocacy for additional community services. (Katrina Buckman, Head of Public Services)

Security Supervisor: Cameron Birman has accepted the position as the City's new Security Supervisor and will start on April 16, 2025. Increasing security concerns across the City have led to the decision to create a new Security Services group within the Public Works Transportation Division. Cameron will lead this new group which will focus on the larger City security needs and operations and ensure our buildings remain safe and secure for employees and the public. The current Security and Information Attendants and Specialists will report to him and will continue supporting the library. Through Cameron's career as a state trooper for over twenty years and his work as Cleanup Coordinator 2 in Public Works, he has acquired skills building teams, developing protocol, training staff, de-escalating incidents, and working with diverse populations including those experiencing homelessness, mental illness, and drug addiction. This extensive

background and experience will provide an excellent foundation as he guides the existing security team and develops our One City approach to overall building Security. We are excited to see him succeed in his new role and have him as part of our One City Team! (Katrina Buckman, Head of Public Services)

Evacuations and Fire Safety: We have been working with Public Works to ensure that evacuation route maps are current throughout our buildings. Public Works recently completed the maps for the Central Library, with plans to install them throughout the library soon. Fairhaven Library maps are next on the list, as the existing exit route maps are very outdated. In addition, Staff Development Coordinator Kate Dunphy has organized several Fire Safety staff training sessions in April and May. The sessions are facilitated by the City's Emergency Management team and will include a short refresher on updated library evacuation procedures. (Jen Vander Ploeg, Head of Operations)

ACCESS & OPPORTUNITY

Impacts from Cancellation of IMLS-Administered Grant: The Washington State Library recently received notice that their main federal grant was terminated. Litigation about it is underway. The State Library has shared details about the impacts to Washington Anytime Library should the grant not be reinstated:

- Supplemental funding for Washington Anytime Library eBook and eAudio collections would be eliminated – \$50k
- 50% staff position supporting Washington Anytime Library would be eliminated ~\$55k
- The Office of the Secretary of State's fiscal agent role for Washington Anytime Library might be eliminated.

The Executive Committee of the Washington Digital Library Consortium is working with the Washington State Library and the Office of the Secretary of State to plan for how to continue Washington Anytime Library without that support. (Jon McConnel, Head of Digital Services)

Annual Stats Reporting: At a meeting on April 9, staff at the Washington State Library who coordinate the annual stats reporting shared that IMLS has cancelled the contract with the company that hosts the national Public Libraries Survey data collection system. A meeting of state data coordinators recently discussed how to continue the national data collection that has been going on for over 30 years, so it's possible the effort will continue. Meanwhile, all of the staff at the Washington State Library who work with data collection are currently funded by the recently-discontinued IMLS grant. While the Washington State Library has collected state library data for over 100 years, it is at present unclear how that effort will continue after the end of this fiscal year, despite it being a statutory requirement for libraries to report annually to the State Library. (Jon McConnel, Head of Digital Services)

READ & LEARN

Community Voices Kits - Celebrations!: Children's Services Librarians Ali Kubeny and Bernice Chang curated two additional Community Voices Kits on the topic of celebrations. Community Voices Kits center and celebrate diverse voices and experiences in our community. The books and resources in the *Celebrations* kits are starting points for talking and learning about traditions and holidays from a rich variety of backgrounds. Each kit, intended to use with children ages 3 – 8 years, contain 12 picture books and a parent/caregiver/educator guide for how to use the kits. Two copies of each of the new kits were put in circulation, and are currently all checked out or on hold. (Bethany Hogle, Deputy Library Director)



Whatcom READS: Whatcom READS hosted another successful season in 2025 featuring the book *No Two Persons* by Erica Bauermeister. The keynote event "An Evening with Erica Bauermeister and Friends" on Friday, March 14 at Mount Baker Theatre included six local musical acts curated by The Bushwick Book Club Seattle, as well as an author talk and Q&A. The theatre recorded 1,134 free tickets reserved for the event, and estimated an

attendance of 750. BTV also reports 118 livestream views on the night of the program. After the event Erica Bauermeister wrote, "I just want to thank you for last night. As life-gifts go, I think it's right up there at the top of the list. Hearing that incredible music, seeing the community that all your work gathered together, feeling the comfort of knowing every moment of the evening was going to go smoothly. Wow. Writing is a quiet and usually solitary profession. You brought in the world, and it brought me joy." The culmination of the evening was the announcement of the 2026 Whatcom READS title, *Solito* by Javier Zamora. (Annette Bagley, Head of Community Relations)



Collaboration with Sea Mar: In January, we announced that Children's Services Librarian Ali Kubeny applied for and received a \$500 grant from Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy to purchase board books in Spanish and English to be distributed in partnership with Sea Mar Maternity Support Services home health nurses. Ali held a special bilingual storytime to kick-off the collaboration in January and, at the end of March, held another storytime for Maternity Support Services clients at the Bellis Fair Library. Each

attending family was able to select a book, purchased with the grant money, to take home and keep. Everyone in attendance had a wonderfully fun bilingual storytime with Ali, and four families signed their babies up for a library card! This is a fantastic collaboration and Ali looks forward to continuing to build relationships with Sea Mar nurses, staff and, most importantly, the families they serve. (Bethany Hoglund, Deputy Library Director)



Salmon Release: On Saturday, March 29, the chum salmon raised in the Children's Library were released into Whatcom Creek. Whiteswan Environmental welcomed the crowd of over 300, and each family present participated in the program by carefully releasing one chum salmon into the water. Thank you to Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association and Children's Services staff for all their assistance raising the salmon at the Library and helping families on release day. Salmon themed stories, crafts and a game were also offered at the event in Maritime Heritage Park. (Bethany Hoglund, Deputy Library Director)



INFORM & INVOLVE



Library Giving Day: Library Giving Day on April 1, 2025 was a successful kick-off to the \$3.5 million private fundraising effort for the Bellingham Central Library Renovation project. In the first week, \$30,000 has been gifted by more than 200 donors. In addition, this amount will be matched by an anonymous donor to bring the total to \$60,000 so far. This fundraising will continue throughout the year, and the matching donor has pledged up to \$100,000. Communication about the project has been achieved through the [Library Giving Day webpage](#), emails from Bellingham Public Library, the Whatcom Community Foundation and Friends of the Library, social

media posts, a story in Cascadia Daily News, and video distribution on YouTube through BTV. (Annette Bagley, Head of Community Relations)



"I love my Library - Because All the Books We Read Give Us HUUUUUGE Imaginations!": National Library Week was celebrated April 6 – 12 with an email to all Library patrons and special posts on social media. The Children's Department also collected photos of families who visited that week, holding messages saying what they love about the library. Thank you to the Friends of the Library for providing delicious baked goods for library staff on National Library Workers Day, celebrated on the Tuesday of National Library Week. (Annette Bagley, Head of Community Relations)

Free For All: The Public Library documentary premiere on PBS: On April 29, PBS will premiere the documentary *Free for All: Inside the Public Library*. This documentary, part of PBS' Independent Lens series, explores the history of the public library, highlights the instrumental people who worked to make libraries free and accessible to all, and explores some of the contemporary issues and opportunities facing public libraries today. In January, the Pickford Film Center hosted a free viewing of an abridged version of the documentary, which was very well received by the audience and library staff in attendance. (Bethany Hoglund, Deputy Library Director)

Library Truck Trading Card: As part of the Library's annual partnership with Bellingham Public Works to celebrate Meet A Truck Day, we have created a trading card (see packet materials) for the Library Delivery Truck that will be given away to kids and families at the event in May, and can also be given away throughout the year to kids who may encounter the delivery truck when it is out and about on its deliveries. (Annette Bagley, Head of Community Relations)

Media Coverage: Two recent news stories included Bellingham Public Library. Cascadia Daily News published an article on April 1, 2025 titled "Bellingham Public Library Seeks Funding to Upgrade the Children's Department." On April 2, The Bellingham Herald covered the elimination of the Institute for Museum and Library Services in an article titled, "How the Gutting of IMLS Will Affect Whatcom County Libraries, Museums." (Annette Bagley, Head of Community Relations)

THRIVE & GROW

Roundup of major ITSD projects: The City's IT Services Department has several major projects underway to upgrade the systems they support for all City departments. Several will impact the Library, including:

- **Data Migration:** this project will move each department's shared files from local servers to the Microsoft 365 Copilot OneDrive online file sharing service. The first departments to migrate were Hearing Examiner on 3/27 and Legal on 4/1. No date has been scheduled for the Library, but ITSD hopes to complete all departments by the end of 2025. Training for staff on using Microsoft 365 OneDrive began in March. They have contracted with a local consultant to provide a half-day training for every staff member.
- **Phone System Replacement:** The City's internal phone system is aging and faces a support cutoff in a few years, so ITSD has begun the process of replacing it. So far they have selected the new system – Microsoft Teams – and have begun building the new datacenter infrastructure. That'll finish up later this year, and then they'll work with Departments to complete a migration by the end of 2026. We'll end up with fewer traditional telephone handsets, and more staff who just access the phone via their computer. But where needed for the work, traditional handsets will still be available.
- **HR System Replacement:** The City's HR system is nearing end-of-life, so ITSD & HR are working to replace it. They have selected the new system – Workday – and the implementation project started earlier this year. The current timeline calls for the new system to go live Q2 2026. ITSD Applications Manager Scott Elsner is transferring over to HR to work on the project, starting May 1.

(Jon McConnel, Head of Digital Services)

Facilities Update: One of the clear acrylic panels on our Community Resources bulletin board (outside the Central Library main doors) was recently vandalized. I'm currently exploring options to replace the broken panel through the vendor or other suppliers. (Jen Vander Ploeg, Head of Operations)

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Judd

2025 Annual Action Plan**WELCOME & INCLUDE: We offer welcoming, safe places and experiences, where connections and understanding flourish.**

- **Q1** Focus on two key goals identified by Library staff:
 - Top internal goal: stronger advocacy for employee/staff safety and mental health
 - Top external goal: make the Library feel safe for everyone
- **Q1** Support the transition of Security to a Citywide division
- **Q1** Update Emergency Management plans and procedures for all Library locations, addressing fire, lethal threats, inclement weather, hazardous materials, and air quality

ACCESS & OPPORTUNITY: We connect people with opportunities and resources to solve problems and help them achieve their aspirations.

- **Q1** Evaluate service priorities and develop strategies to maximize community access to library services in a period of limited fiscal and staffing resources.
- Finalize the purchase and installation of the Barkley Community Drop Box to improve community accessibility
- Research options for improving print services for patrons and provide recommendations
- Update the confidentiality policy to ensure clarity and alignment with best practices
- **Q1** Enhance website accessibility as part of a Citywide project

READ & LEARN: We inspire a lifetime of reading, learning, curiosity, and discovery.

- **Q1** Plan and host two large-scale events for adults focused on important community topics

INFORM & INVOLVE: We provide information and activities to stay abreast of community issues and events, fostering informed, active participation in civic life.

- Collaborate with the City planning team to develop programming for the mens' soccer World Cup, fostering community engagement through cultural events
- Deliver a National Library Week presentation to the City Council

THRIVE & GROW: We are a valued community partner and trusted city service, playing a central role in Bellingham life.

- **Q1** Finalize the design and successfully bid the Central Library renovation project
- Establish a "Learning Hours" system to support ongoing staff education and professional development
- **Q1** Complete annual performance reviews for all benefitted Library staff
- **Q1** Develop and implement funding strategies focused on capital projects and planned giving, including an expanded Library Giving Day campaign to support the Children and Teen remodel
- Develop a schedule of Board training sessions, including a collaborative session with WCLS Trustees
- Track achievements from the 2020-2025 strategic plan and report on trends in preparation for 2026 strategic planning

Summary Report: 2025 Staff Priorities Follow-up Survey

Between March 14 and March 24, 2025, Library employees outside of M-team were asked to provide feedback on the action path Library management identified to meet staff-voted goals in 2025. 52 of 69 invited participants responded to the survey (75% response rate).

2025 Staff-voted Goals

Internal: “Stronger advocacy for employee/staff safety and mental health”

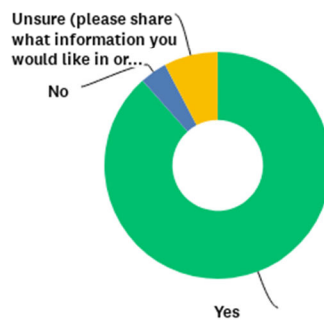
External: “Make the library feel safe for everyone”

Survey questions

1. So far this year, the Library management team has prioritized advocacy for more day shelter options in Bellingham in order to alleviate the burden of heavy use on library spaces and staff. With the employee-created goals above in mind, do you agree with this advocacy priority?
 - Answer options: Yes/No/Unsure
2. If you answered no, what should the Library management team prioritize *instead* of increased day shelter options in Bellingham in order to support the goals above? (Please answer n/a to skip this question.)
3. If you could add one *additional* priority that the Library management team should pursue in order to support these goals, what would it be?

Questions 1 & 2

Q1 So far this year, the Library management team has prioritized advocacy for more day shelter options in Bellingham in order to alleviate the burden of heavy use on library spaces and staff. With the employee-created goals above in mind, do you agree with this advocacy priority?



Questions 1 & 2 (cont'd)

- 46 of 52 respondents report agreement with prioritizing day shelter advocacy. (88.5%)
- 2 of 52 respondents report disagreement with prioritizing day shelter advocacy. (3.9%)
 - When asked what the Library management team should prioritize to support the goals above *instead* of increased day shelter advocacy, only one respondent offered a suggestion (extend hours).
- 4 of 52 respondents report being unsure about prioritizing day shelter advocacy. (7.7%)
 - When asked what information they would like in order to feel more sure about answering yes or no, answers included: a review of the food policy and a covered picnic table in Lee Memorial Park, studies from other cities, and visible improvements as a result of these efforts.

Question 3

- 24 of 52 respondents suggested an additional priority for Library management to pursue alongside advocacy for more day shelter options. (46.2%)
- Trends in responses include:
 - Increased consistency of ROC enforcement and/or increased restrictions
 - Adjustments to staffing levels/models, and/or internal policies
 - Increased training and/or staff enrichment activities
 - Changes to physical environment of Library and surrounding areas

