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-Muldrow 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

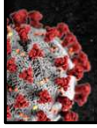
Attachments:

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

Bellingham Public Library

Statistical Trends

Inputs and Outputs through 2024



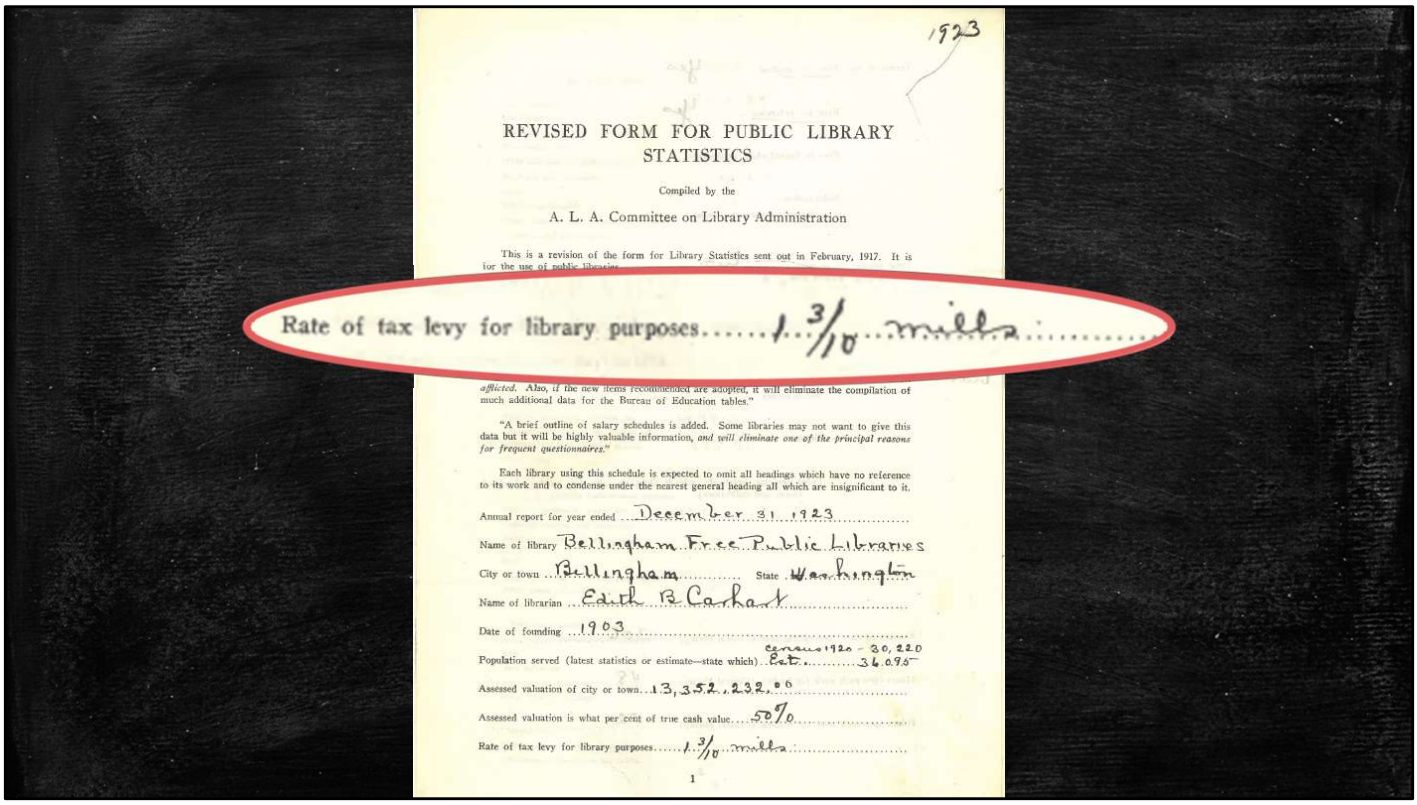
It is statistics time! The Washington State Library is getting ready to open up the annual stats survey for 2024 metrics, and we thought it would be helpful to provide an update to the run-down shared the past few years of some of the statistics we report. Last year we reported through 2022 plus some 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 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 ...Edith B Carhart.....

Date of founding ...1903.....

Population served (latest statistics or estimate—state which) ...census 1920 - 30,220 Est. ...36,075

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

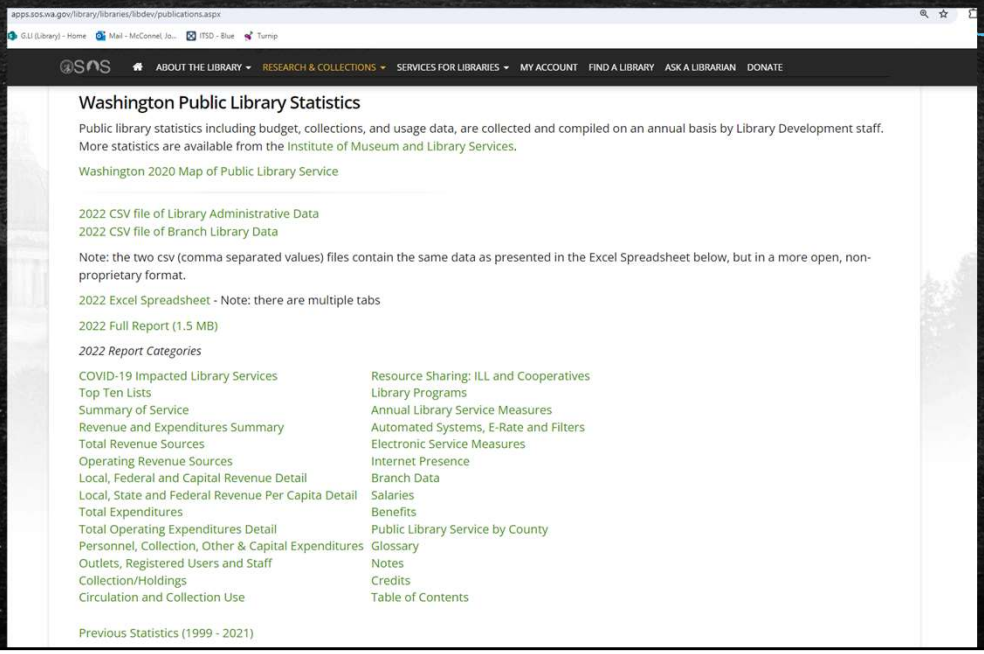
Assessed valuation is what per cent of true cash value....50%.....

Rate of tax levy for library purposes.....1 3/10...mills.....

1

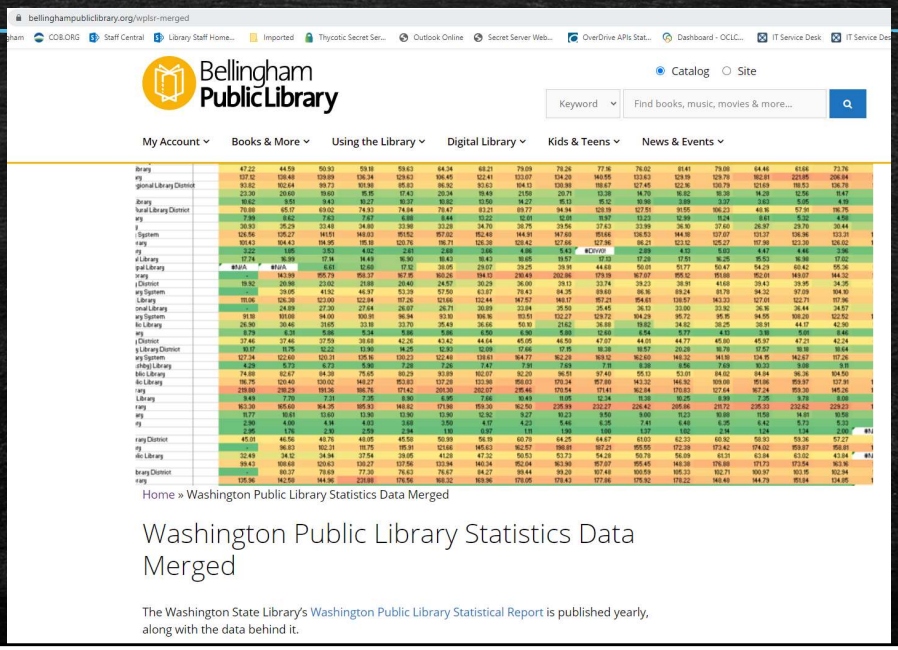
BPL has copies of its paper forms back to 1923!
And back then there was an operating levy…

Washington Public Library Statistics



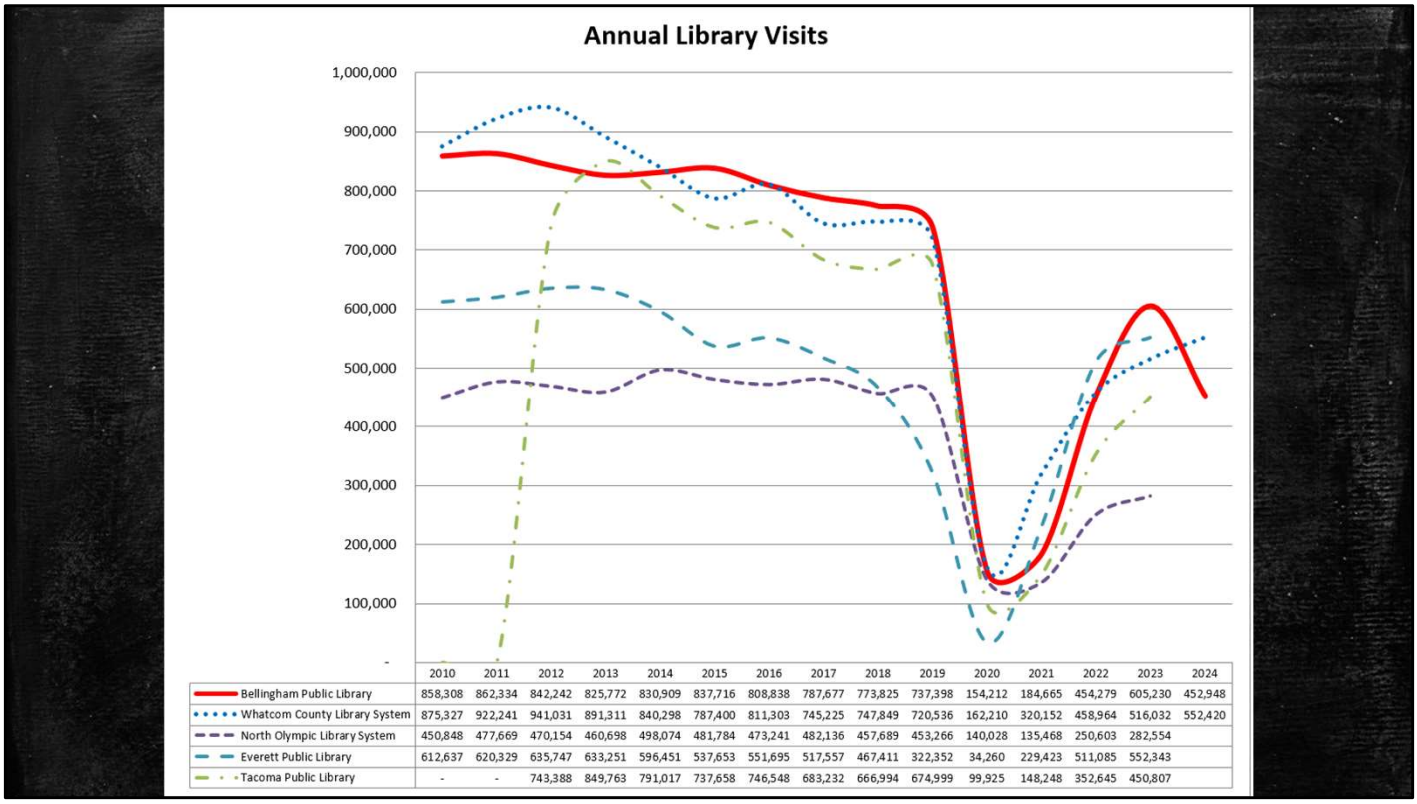
The Washington State Library collects the submitted data, cleans it up, does some analysis, and publishes each year's data online. They also pass the data along to the federal Institute for Museum and Library Services for their Public Libraries Survey.

Merged!



Search for 'public library statistics' on BPL's website.

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.



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Bellingham Public Library	858,308	862,334	842,242	825,772	830,909	837,716	808,838	787,677	773,825	737,398	154,212	184,665	454,279	605,230	452,948
Whatcom County Library System	875,327	922,241	941,031	891,311	840,298	787,400	811,303	745,225	747,849	720,536	162,210	320,152	458,964	516,032	552,420
North Olympic Library System	450,848	477,669	470,154	460,698	498,074	481,784	473,241	482,136	457,689	453,266	140,028	135,468	250,603	282,554	
Everett Public Library	612,637	620,329	635,747	633,251	596,451	537,653	551,695	517,557	467,411	322,352	34,260	229,423	511,085	552,343	
Tacoma Public Library	-	-	743,388	849,763	791,017	737,658	746,548	683,232	666,994	674,999	99,925	148,248	352,645	450,807	

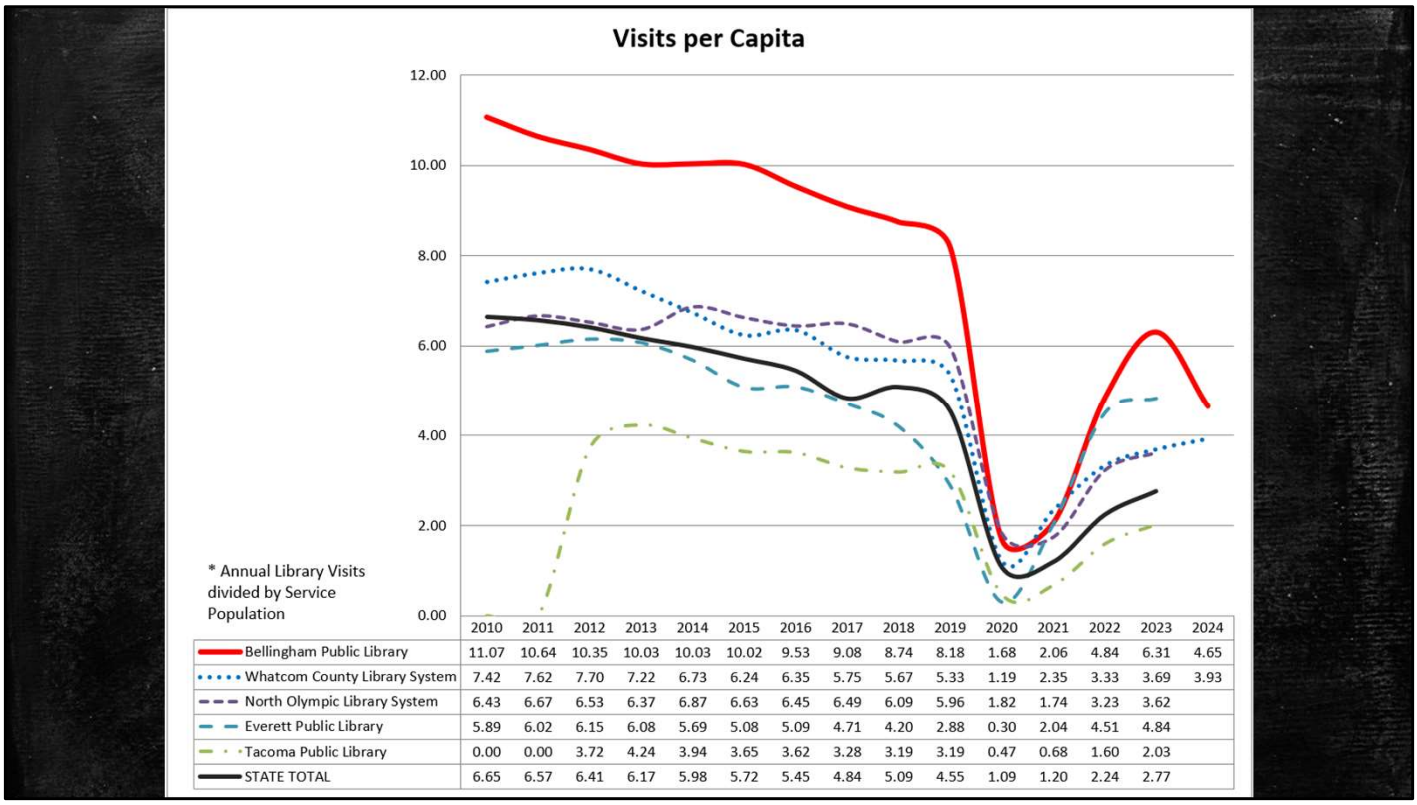
FIRST, this is the default chart format I've been using for the State data. BPL is the heavy red line, and these charts include a variety of other peer libraries. Charts that are normalized also typically include the State average.

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.

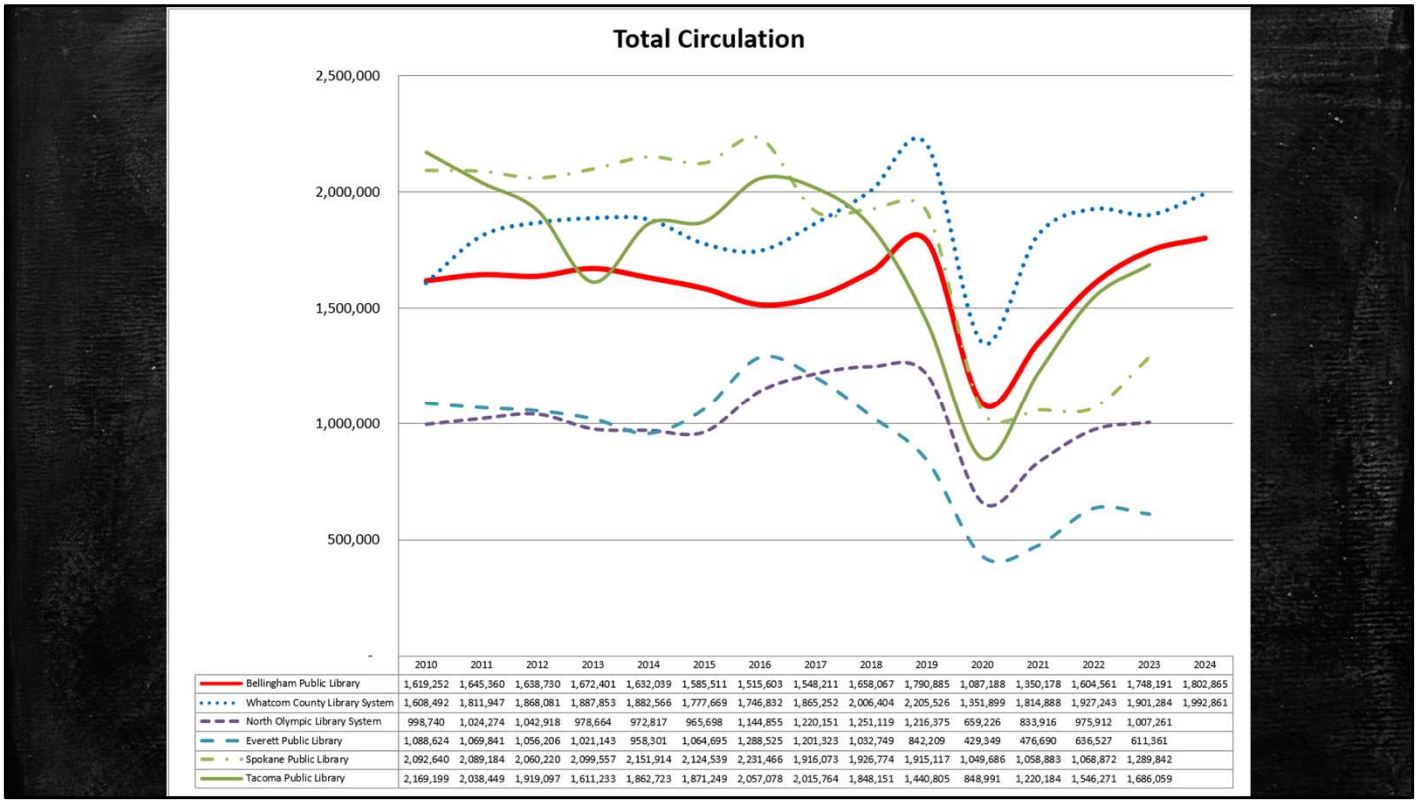
2021-3 showed strong recovery from the COVID crisis for all these libraries, to varying degrees.

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.



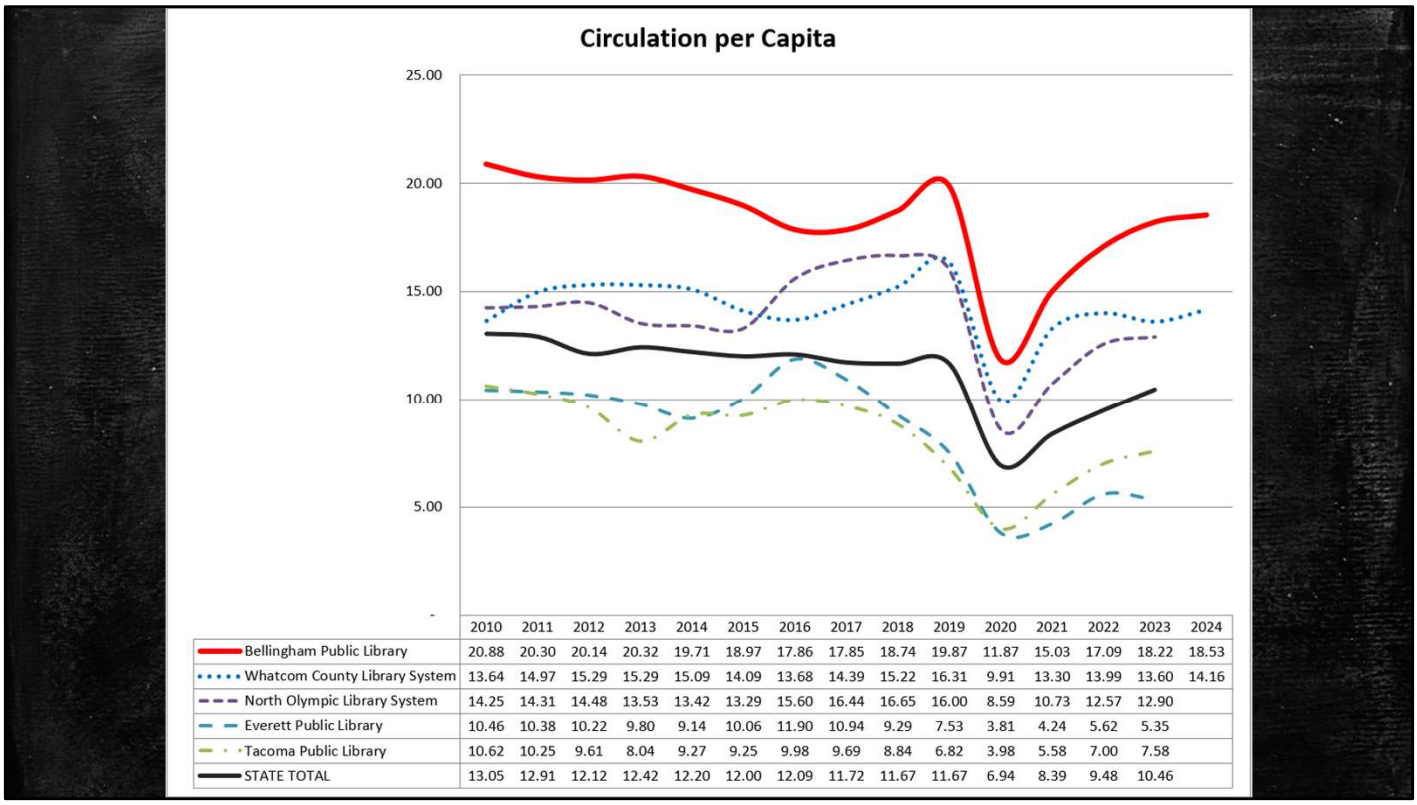
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Bellingham Public Library	11.07	10.64	10.35	10.03	10.03	10.02	9.53	9.08	8.74	8.18	1.68	2.06	4.84	6.31	4.65
Whatcom County Library System	7.42	7.62	7.70	7.22	6.73	6.24	6.35	5.75	5.67	5.33	1.19	2.35	3.33	3.69	3.93
North Olympic Library System	6.43	6.67	6.53	6.37	6.87	6.63	6.45	6.49	6.09	5.96	1.82	1.74	3.23	3.62	
Everett Public Library	5.89	6.02	6.15	6.08	5.69	5.08	5.09	4.71	4.20	2.88	0.30	2.04	4.51	4.84	
Tacoma Public Library	0.00	0.00	3.72	4.24	3.94	3.65	3.62	3.28	3.19	3.19	0.47	0.68	1.60	2.03	
STATE TOTAL	6.65	6.57	6.41	6.17	5.98	5.72	5.45	4.84	5.09	4.55	1.09	1.20	2.24	2.77	

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!



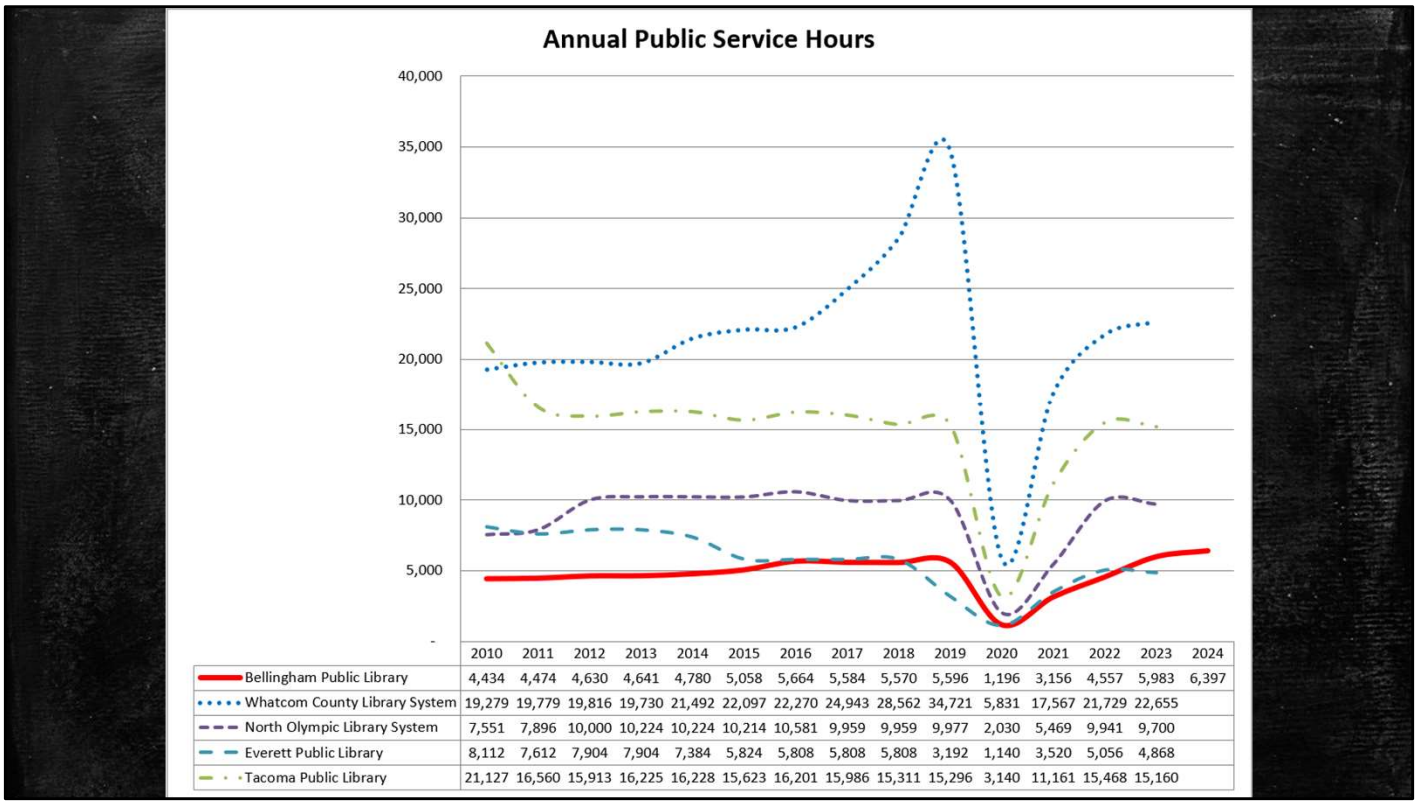
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Bellingham Public Library	1,619,252	1,645,360	1,638,730	1,672,401	1,632,039	1,585,511	1,515,603	1,548,211	1,658,067	1,790,885	1,087,188	1,350,178	1,604,561	1,748,191	1,802,865
Whatcom County Library System	1,608,492	1,811,947	1,868,081	1,887,853	1,882,566	1,777,669	1,746,832	1,865,252	2,006,404	2,205,526	1,351,899	1,814,888	1,927,243	1,901,284	1,992,861
North Olympic Library System	998,740	1,024,274	1,042,918	978,664	972,817	965,698	1,144,855	1,220,151	1,251,119	1,216,375	659,226	833,916	975,912	1,007,261	
Everett Public Library	1,088,624	1,069,841	1,056,206	1,021,143	958,301	1,064,695	1,288,525	1,201,323	1,032,749	842,209	429,349	476,690	636,527	611,361	
Spokane Public Library	2,092,640	2,089,184	2,060,220	2,099,557	2,151,914	2,124,539	2,231,466	1,916,073	1,926,774	1,915,117	1,049,686	1,058,883	1,068,872	1,289,842	
Tacoma Public Library	2,169,199	2,038,449	1,919,097	1,611,233	1,862,723	1,871,249	2,057,078	2,015,764	1,848,151	1,440,805	848,991	1,220,184	1,546,271	1,686,059	

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….



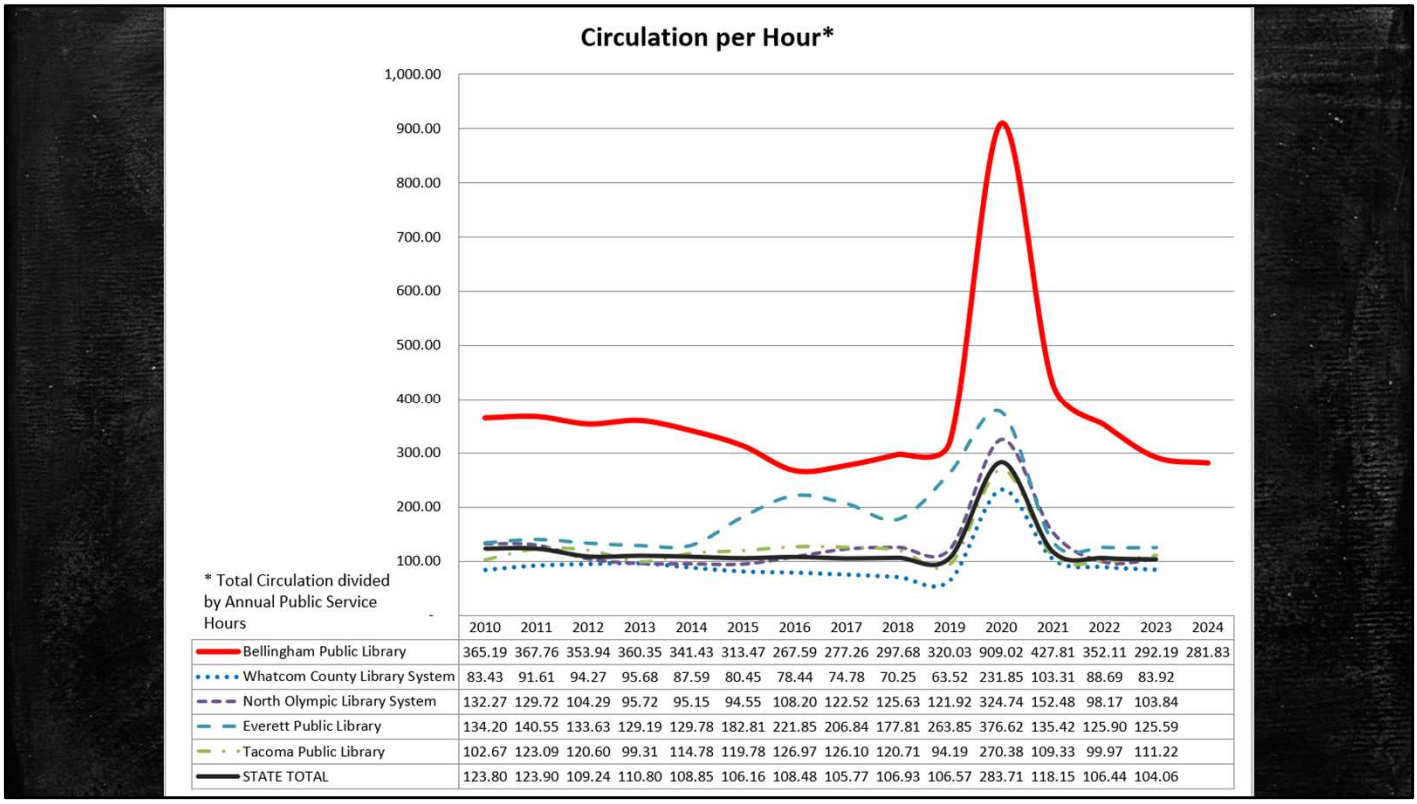
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Bellingham Public Library	20.88	20.30	20.14	20.32	19.71	18.97	17.86	17.85	18.74	19.87	11.87	15.03	17.09	18.22	18.53
Whatcom County Library System	13.64	14.97	15.29	15.29	15.09	14.09	13.68	14.39	15.22	16.31	9.91	13.30	13.99	13.60	14.16
North Olympic Library System	14.25	14.31	14.48	13.53	13.42	13.29	15.60	16.44	16.65	16.00	8.59	10.73	12.57	12.90	
Everett Public Library	10.46	10.38	10.22	9.80	9.14	10.06	11.90	10.94	9.29	7.53	3.81	4.24	5.62	5.35	
Tacoma Public Library	10.62	10.25	9.61	8.04	9.27	9.25	9.98	9.69	8.84	6.82	3.98	5.58	7.00	7.58	
STATE TOTAL	13.05	12.91	12.12	12.42	12.20	12.00	12.09	11.72	11.67	11.67	6.94	8.39	9.48	10.46	

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.



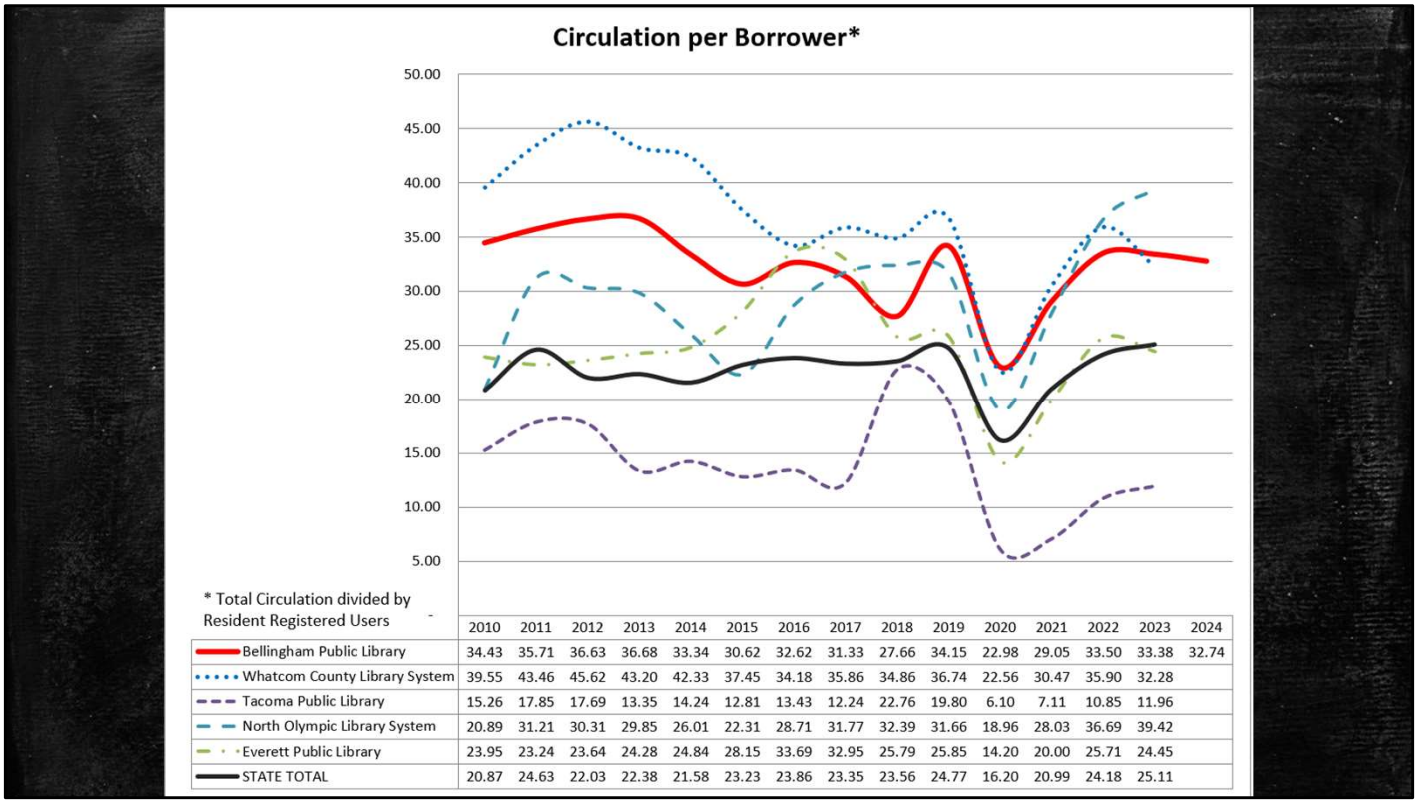
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Bellingham Public Library	4,434	4,474	4,630	4,641	4,780	5,058	5,664	5,584	5,570	5,596	1,196	3,156	4,557	5,983	6,397
Whatcom County Library System	19,279	19,779	19,816	19,730	21,492	22,097	22,270	24,943	28,562	34,721	5,831	17,567	21,729	22,655	
North Olympic Library System	7,551	7,896	10,000	10,224	10,224	10,214	10,581	9,959	9,959	9,977	2,030	5,469	9,941	9,700	
Everett Public Library	8,112	7,612	7,904	7,904	7,384	5,824	5,808	5,808	5,808	3,192	1,140	3,520	5,056	4,868	
Tacoma Public Library	21,127	16,560	15,913	16,225	16,228	15,623	16,201	15,986	15,311	15,296	3,140	11,161	15,468	15,160	

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.



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Bellingham Public Library	365.19	367.76	353.94	360.35	341.43	313.47	267.59	277.26	297.68	320.03	909.02	427.81	352.11	292.19	281.83
Whatcom County Library System	83.43	91.61	94.27	95.68	87.59	80.45	78.44	74.78	70.25	63.52	231.85	103.31	88.69	83.92	
North Olympic Library System	132.27	129.72	104.29	95.72	95.15	94.55	108.20	122.52	125.63	121.92	324.74	152.48	98.17	103.84	
Everett Public Library	134.20	140.55	133.63	129.19	129.78	182.81	221.85	206.84	177.81	263.85	376.62	135.42	125.90	125.59	
Tacoma Public Library	102.67	123.09	120.60	99.31	114.78	119.78	126.97	126.10	120.71	94.19	270.38	109.33	99.97	111.22	
STATE TOTAL	123.80	123.90	109.24	110.80	108.85	106.16	108.48	105.77	106.93	106.57	283.71	118.15	106.44	104.06	

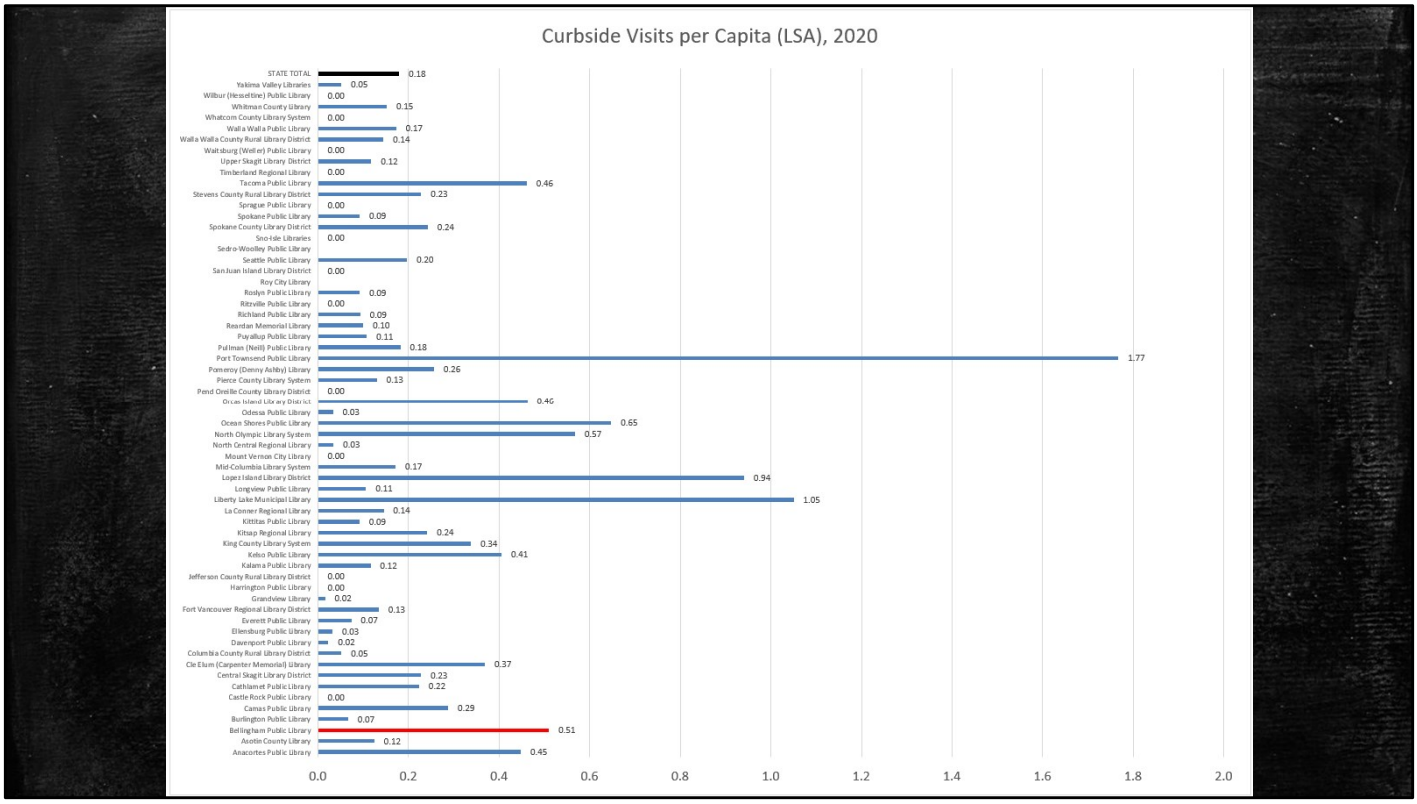
Another metric where the pandemic had a big impact was Circulation per Hour (Total Circulation divided by Annual Public Service Hours).
2020 was extraordinary, while 2021 returned to a point more in the realm of sustainable workload.
For 2024 we maintained pre-pandemic numbers, between where were in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



* Total Circulation divided by Resident Registered Users

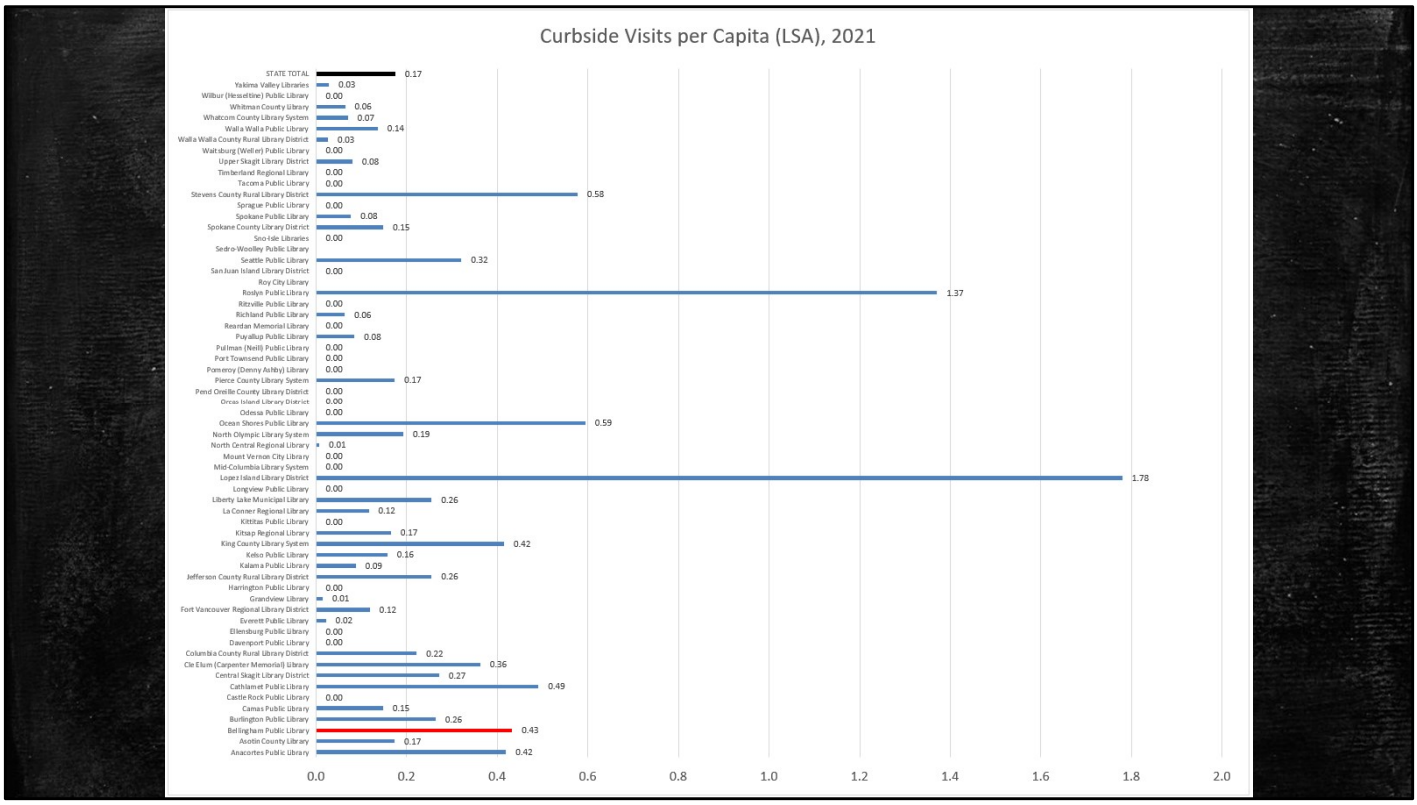
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Bellingham Public Library	34.43	35.71	36.63	36.68	33.34	30.62	32.62	31.33	27.66	34.15	22.98	29.05	33.50	33.38	32.74
Whatcom County Library System	39.55	43.46	45.62	43.20	42.33	37.45	34.18	35.86	34.86	36.74	22.56	30.47	35.90	32.28	
Tacoma Public Library	15.26	17.85	17.69	13.35	14.24	12.81	13.43	12.24	22.76	19.80	6.10	7.11	10.85	11.96	
North Olympic Library System	20.89	31.21	30.31	29.85	26.01	22.31	28.71	31.77	32.39	31.66	18.96	28.03	36.69	39.42	
Everett Public Library	23.95	23.24	23.64	24.28	24.84	28.15	33.69	32.95	25.79	25.85	14.20	20.00	25.71	24.45	
STATE TOTAL	20.87	24.63	22.03	22.38	21.58	23.23	23.86	23.35	23.56	24.77	16.20	20.99	24.18	25.11	

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.

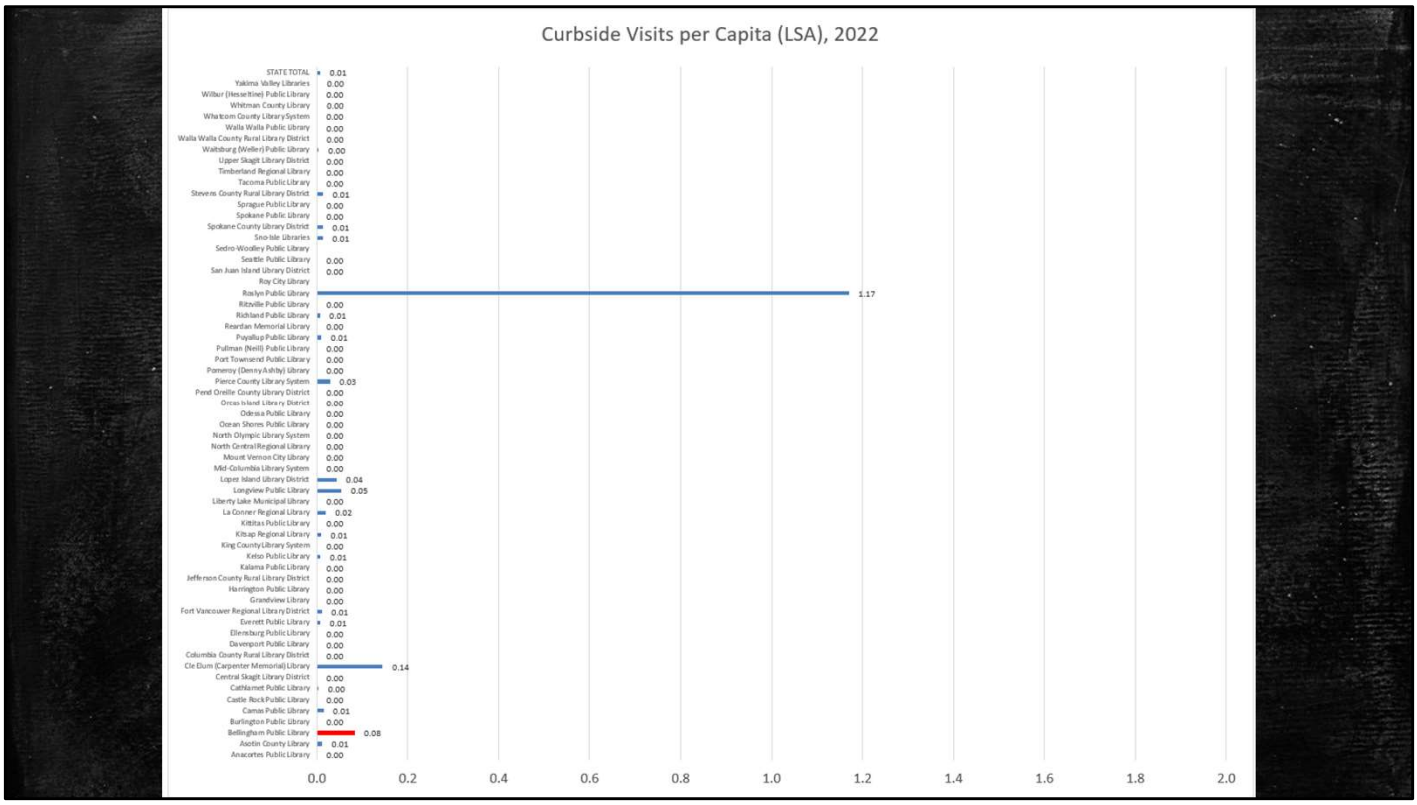


The pandemic has led to changes in what data the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and the State Libraries are asking libraries to report. Added for 2020 were over a dozen new questions specifically related to service during the pandemic. Offering 'curbside' service was a common option 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.

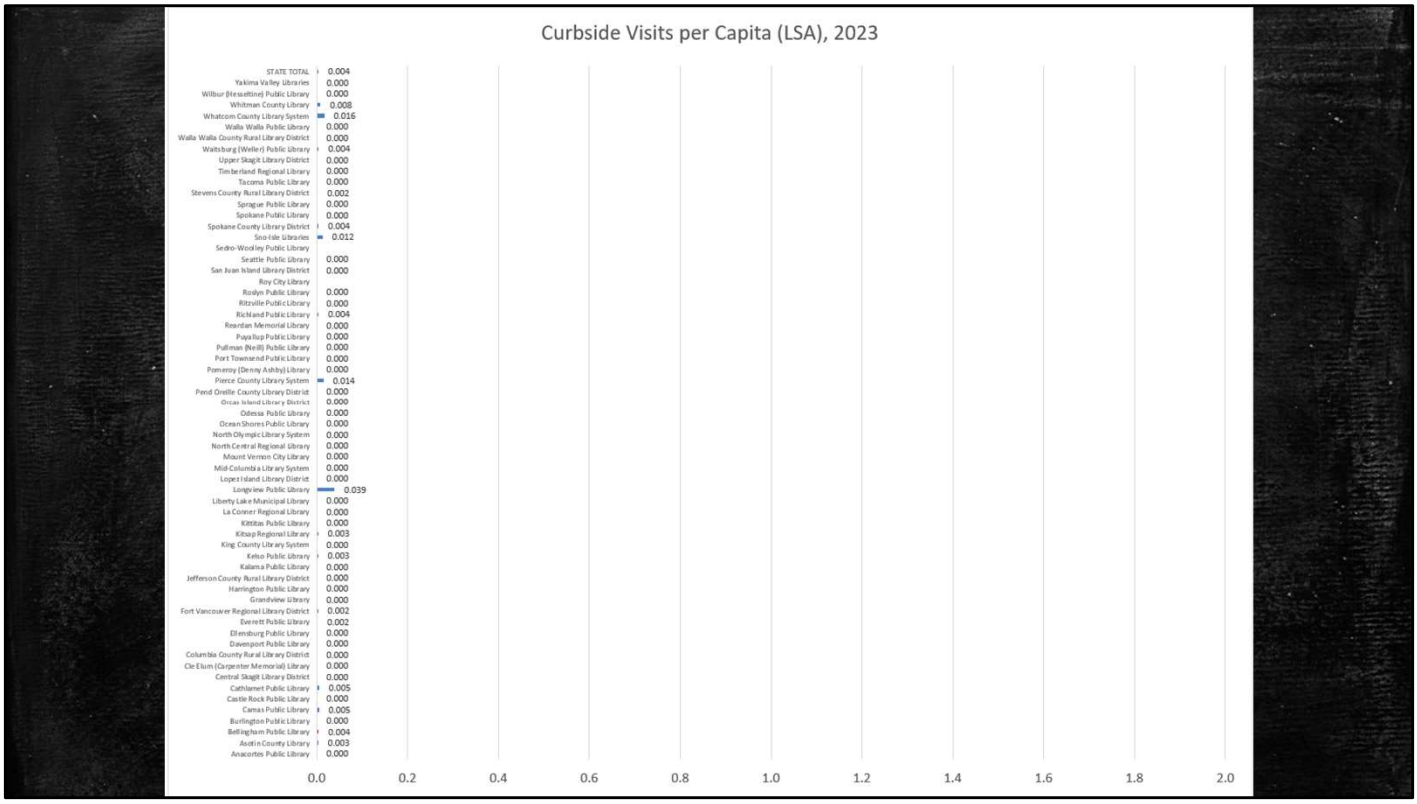
So here we have all 60 WA public libraries and a calculation of how many Curbside Visits per Capita each offered. BPL was in the top 10% (6th). WCLS did not report a count of curbside visits.



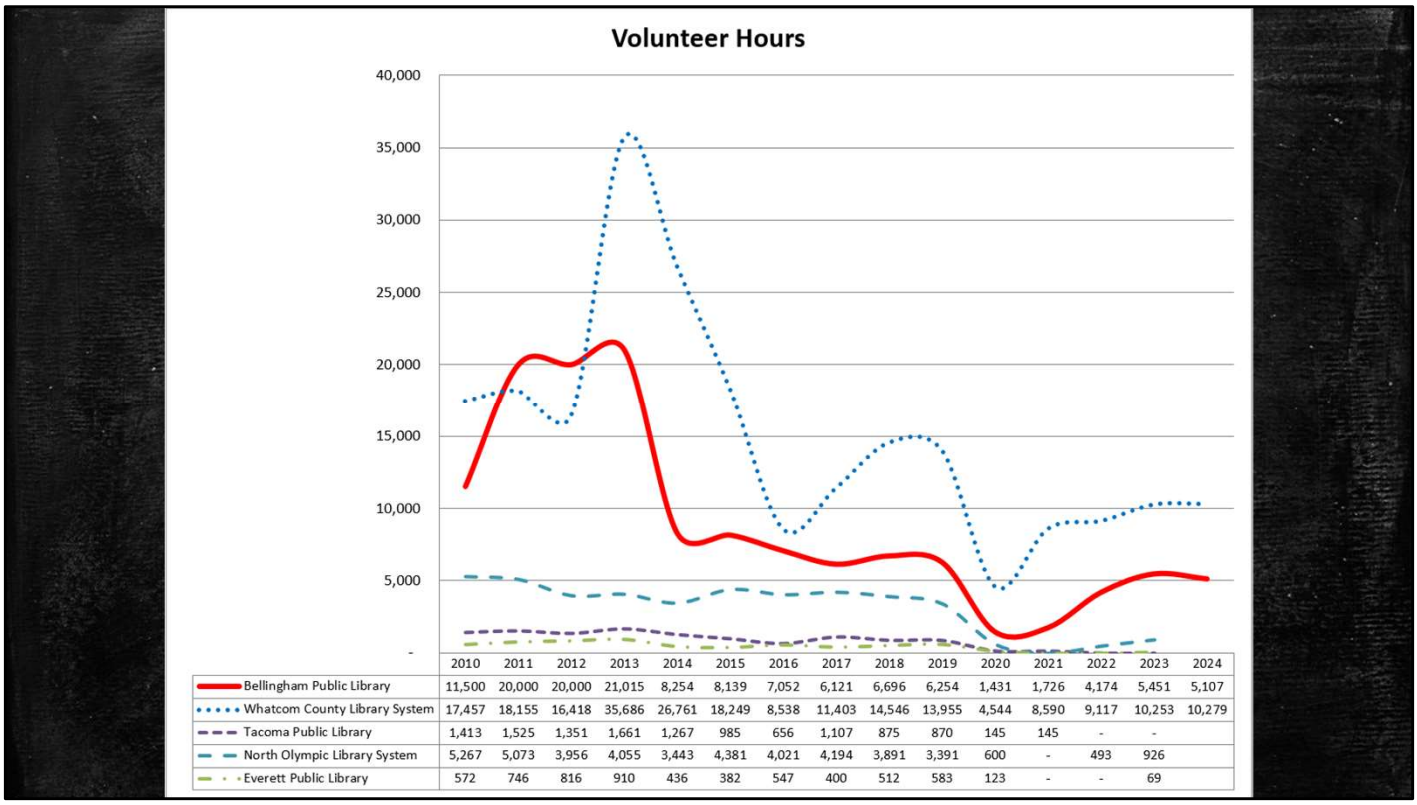
In 2021 BPL was 6th again, but out of 37 instead of 47, as some libraries apparently dropped curbside in 2021, or at least stopped reporting it.



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



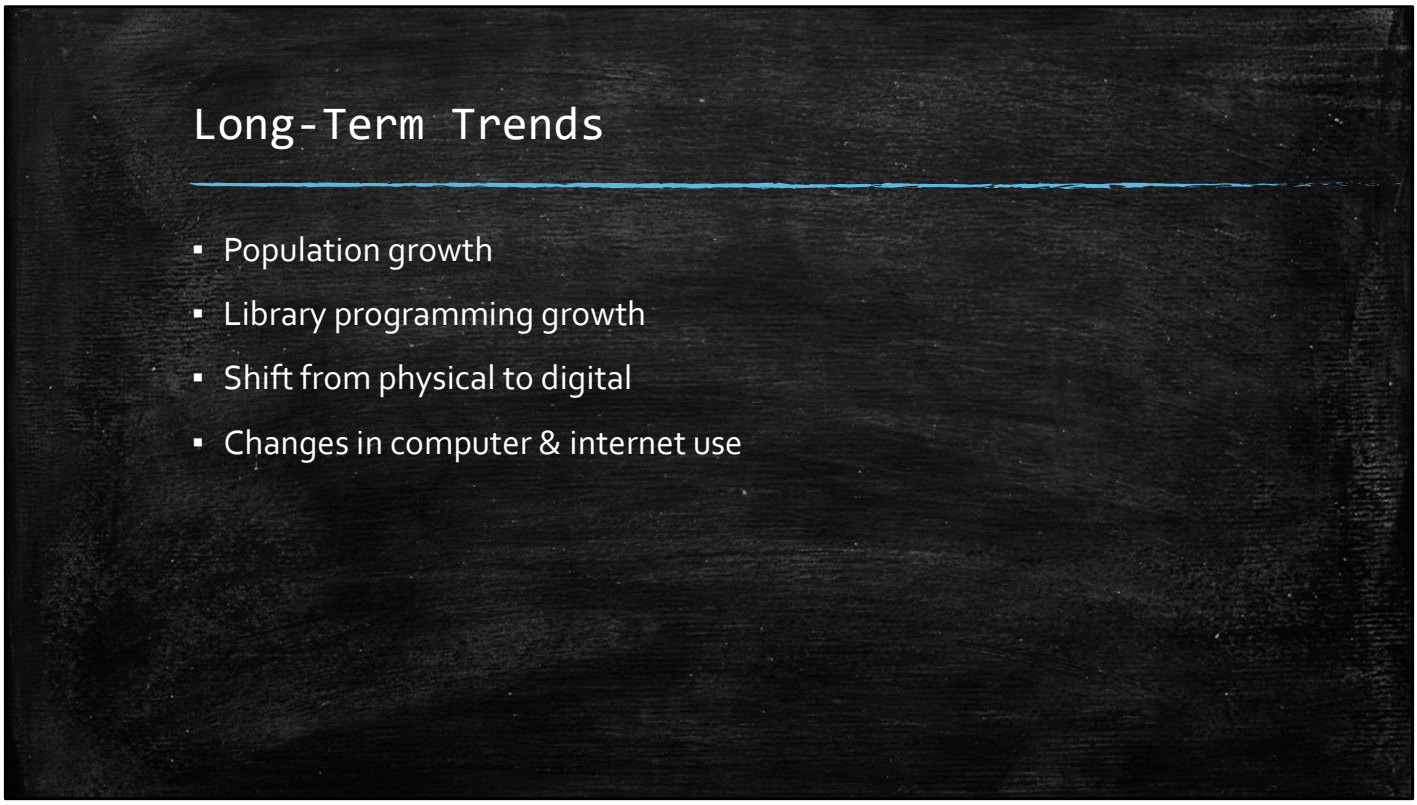
I had to add a 3rd decimal place in order to show much of anything for 2023. Curbside was basically over in 2023, and we ended our service during 2024.



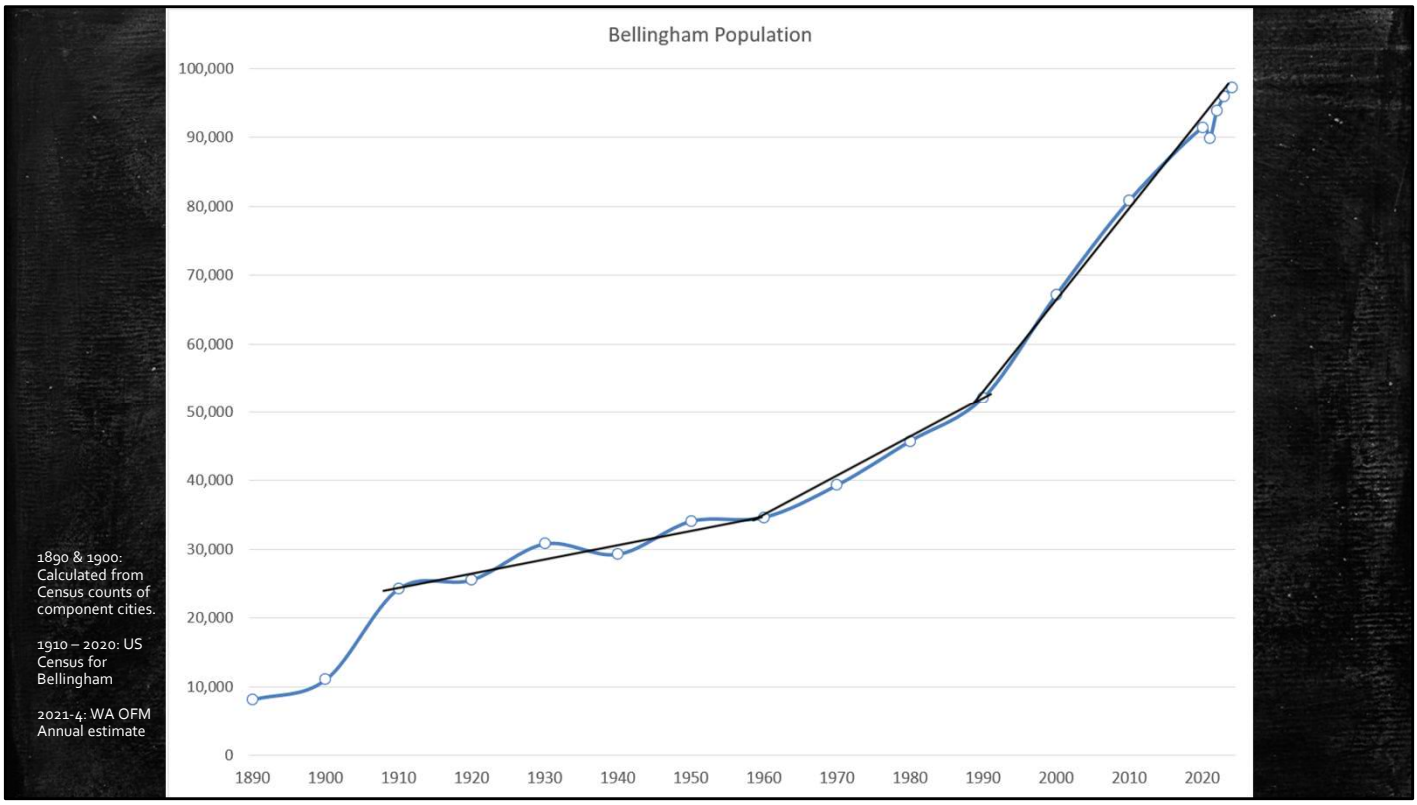
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Bellingham Public Library	11,500	20,000	20,000	21,015	8,254	8,139	7,052	6,121	6,696	6,254	1,431	1,726	4,174	5,451	5,107
Whatcom County Library System	17,457	18,155	16,418	35,686	26,761	18,249	8,538	11,403	14,546	13,955	4,544	8,590	9,117	10,253	10,279
Tacoma Public Library	1,413	1,525	1,351	1,661	1,267	985	656	1,107	875	870	145	145	-	-	
North Olympic Library System	5,267	5,073	3,956	4,055	3,443	4,381	4,021	4,194	3,891	3,391	600	-	493	926	
Everett Public Library	572	746	816	910	436	382	547	400	512	583	123	-	-	69	

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 …

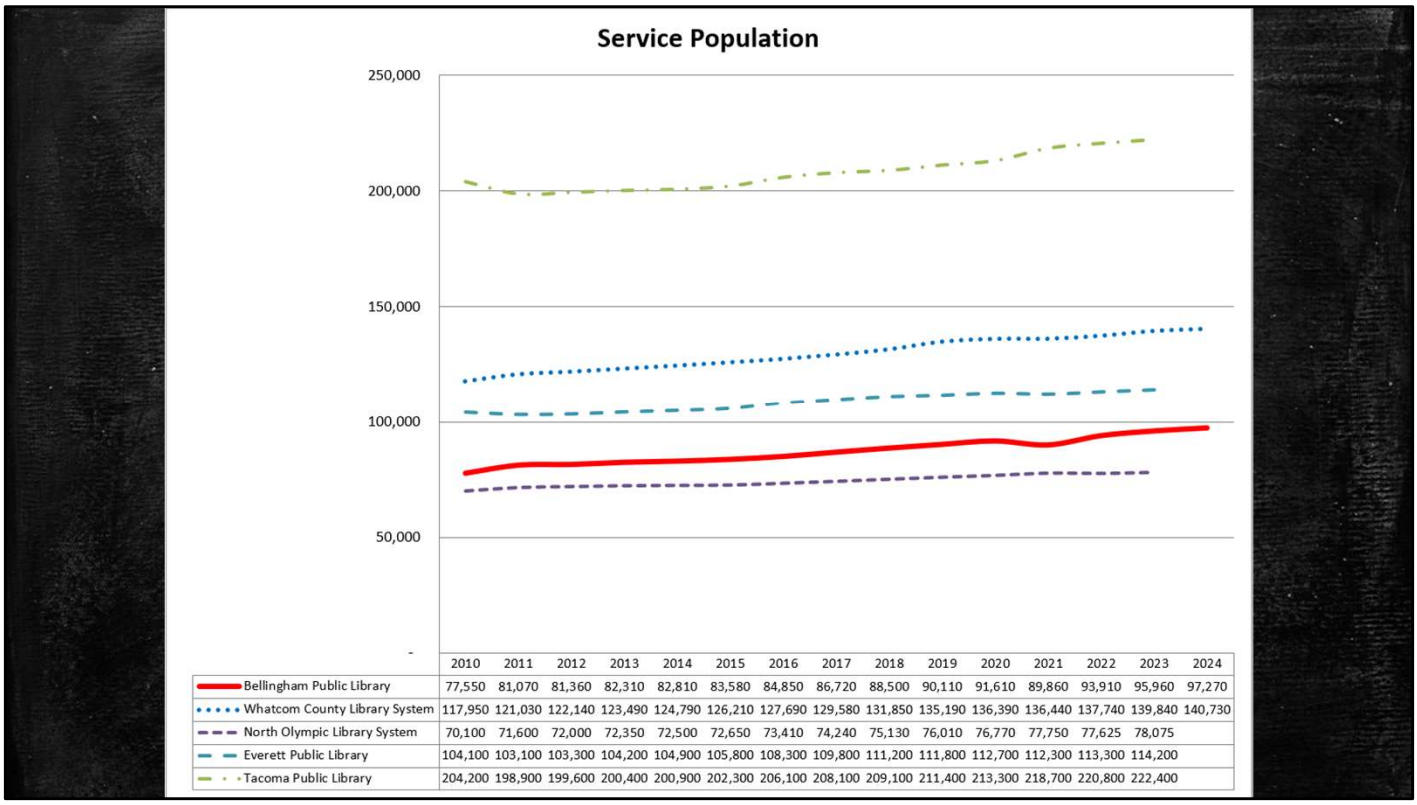


So those were some examples of impacts of the pandemic, and how we've recovered, or not, in the years since.
Moving on, we'll get into 4 long-term trends that have been impacting public libraries.



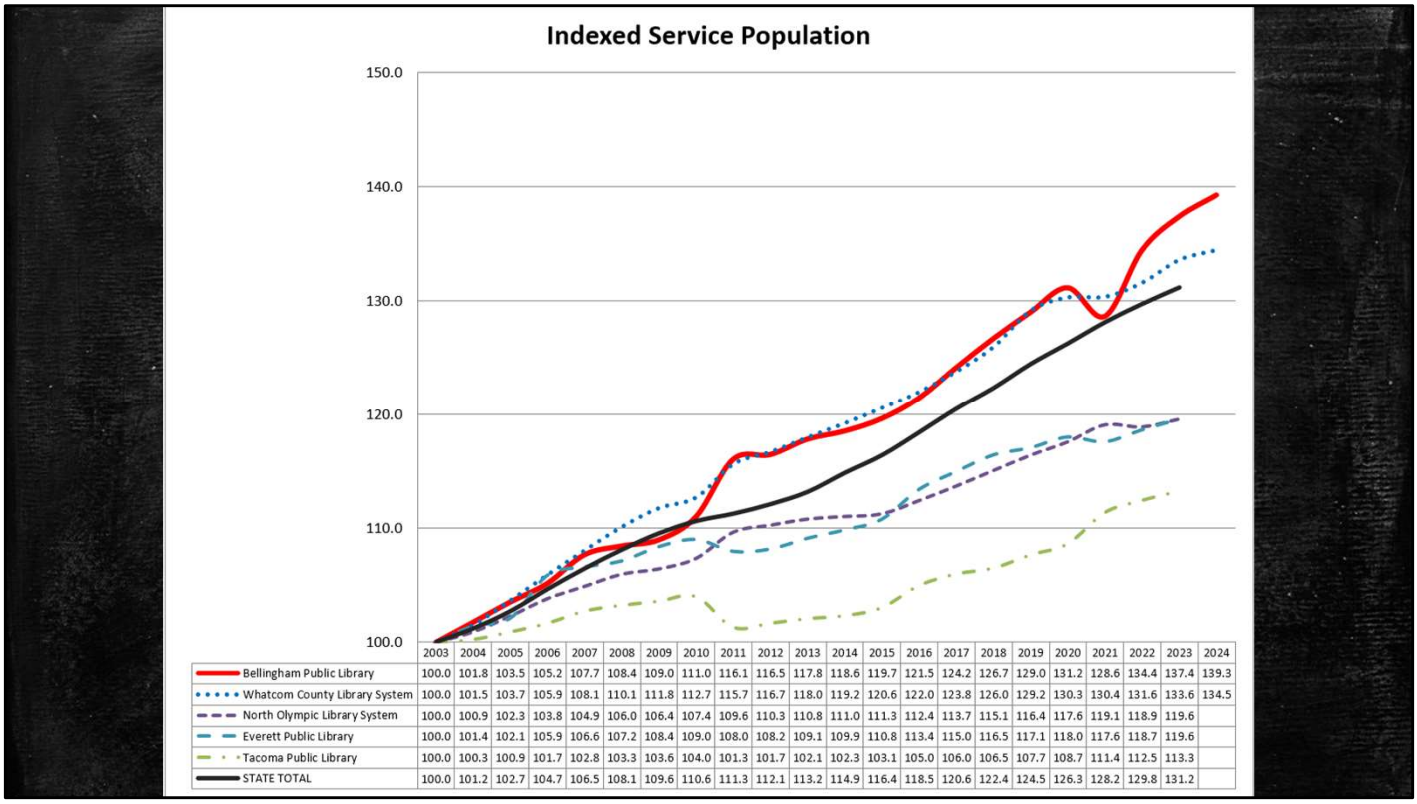
The first long-term trend is continued population increase.

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.



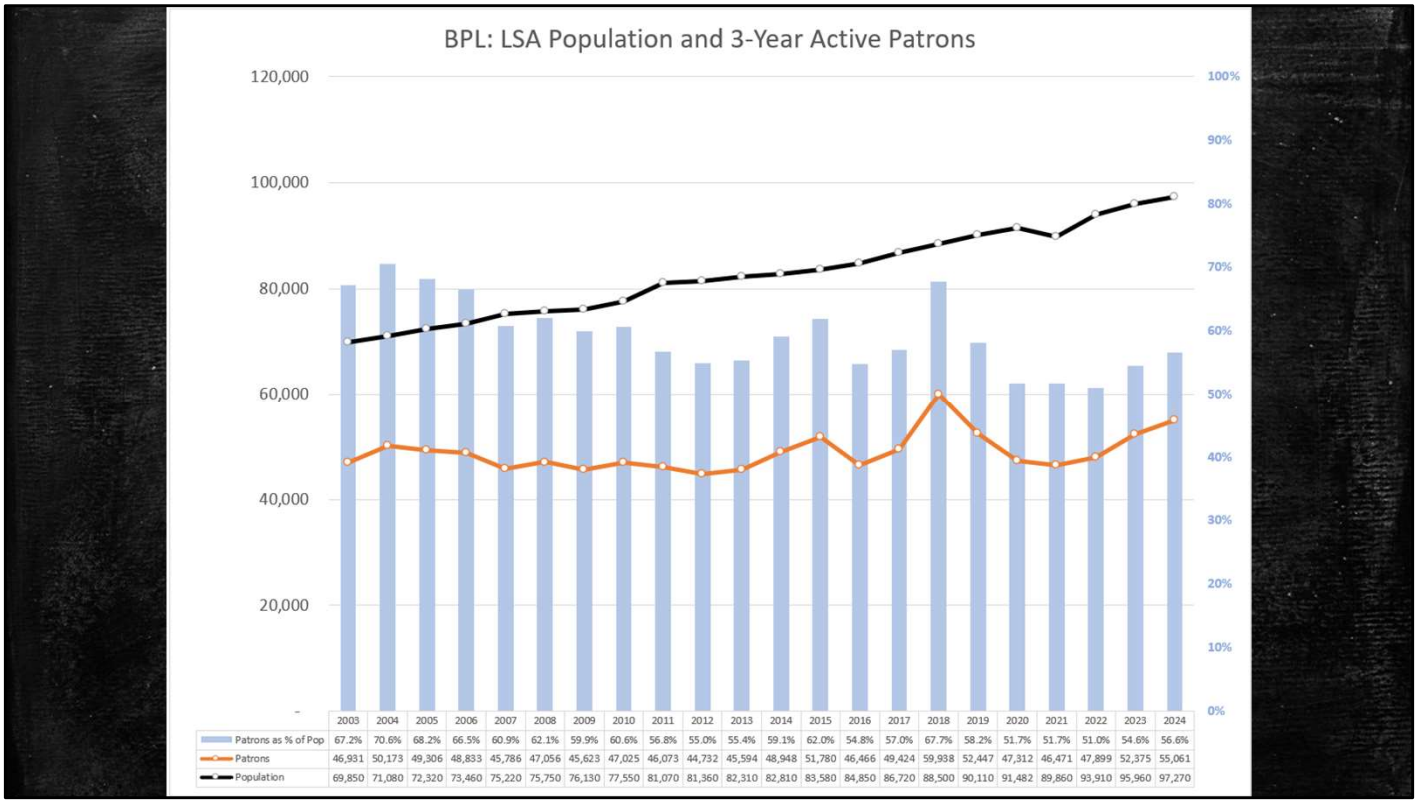
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Bellingham Public Library	77,550	81,070	81,360	82,310	82,810	83,580	84,850	86,720	88,500	90,110	91,610	89,860	93,910	95,960	97,270
Whatcom County Library System	117,950	121,030	122,140	123,490	124,790	126,210	127,690	129,580	131,850	135,190	136,390	136,440	137,740	139,840	140,730
North Olympic Library System	70,100	71,600	72,000	72,350	72,500	72,650	73,410	74,240	75,130	76,010	76,770	77,750	77,625	78,075	
Everett Public Library	104,100	103,100	103,300	104,200	104,900	105,800	108,300	109,800	111,200	111,800	112,700	112,300	113,300	114,200	
Tacoma Public Library	204,200	198,900	199,600	200,400	200,900	202,300	206,100	208,100	209,100	211,400	213,300	218,700	220,800	222,400	

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.



	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Bellingham Public Library	100.0	101.8	103.5	105.2	107.7	108.4	109.0	111.0	116.1	116.5	117.8	118.6	119.7	121.5	124.2	126.7	129.0	131.2	128.6	134.4	137.4	139.3
Whatcom County Library System	100.0	101.5	103.7	105.9	108.1	110.1	111.8	112.7	115.7	116.7	118.0	119.2	120.6	122.0	123.8	126.0	129.2	130.3	130.4	131.6	133.6	134.5
North Olympic Library System	100.0	100.9	102.3	103.8	104.9	106.0	106.4	107.4	109.6	110.3	110.8	111.0	111.3	112.4	113.7	115.1	116.4	117.6	119.1	118.9	119.6	
Everett Public Library	100.0	101.4	102.1	105.9	106.6	107.2	108.4	109.0	108.0	108.2	109.1	109.9	110.8	113.4	115.0	116.5	117.1	118.0	117.6	118.7	119.6	
Tacoma Public Library	100.0	100.3	100.9	101.7	102.8	103.3	103.6	104.0	101.3	101.7	102.1	102.3	103.1	105.0	106.0	106.5	107.7	108.7	111.4	112.5	113.3	
STATE TOTAL	100.0	101.2	102.7	104.7	106.5	108.1	109.6	110.6	111.3	112.1	113.2	114.9	116.4	118.5	120.6	122.4	124.5	126.3	128.2	129.8	131.2	

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.

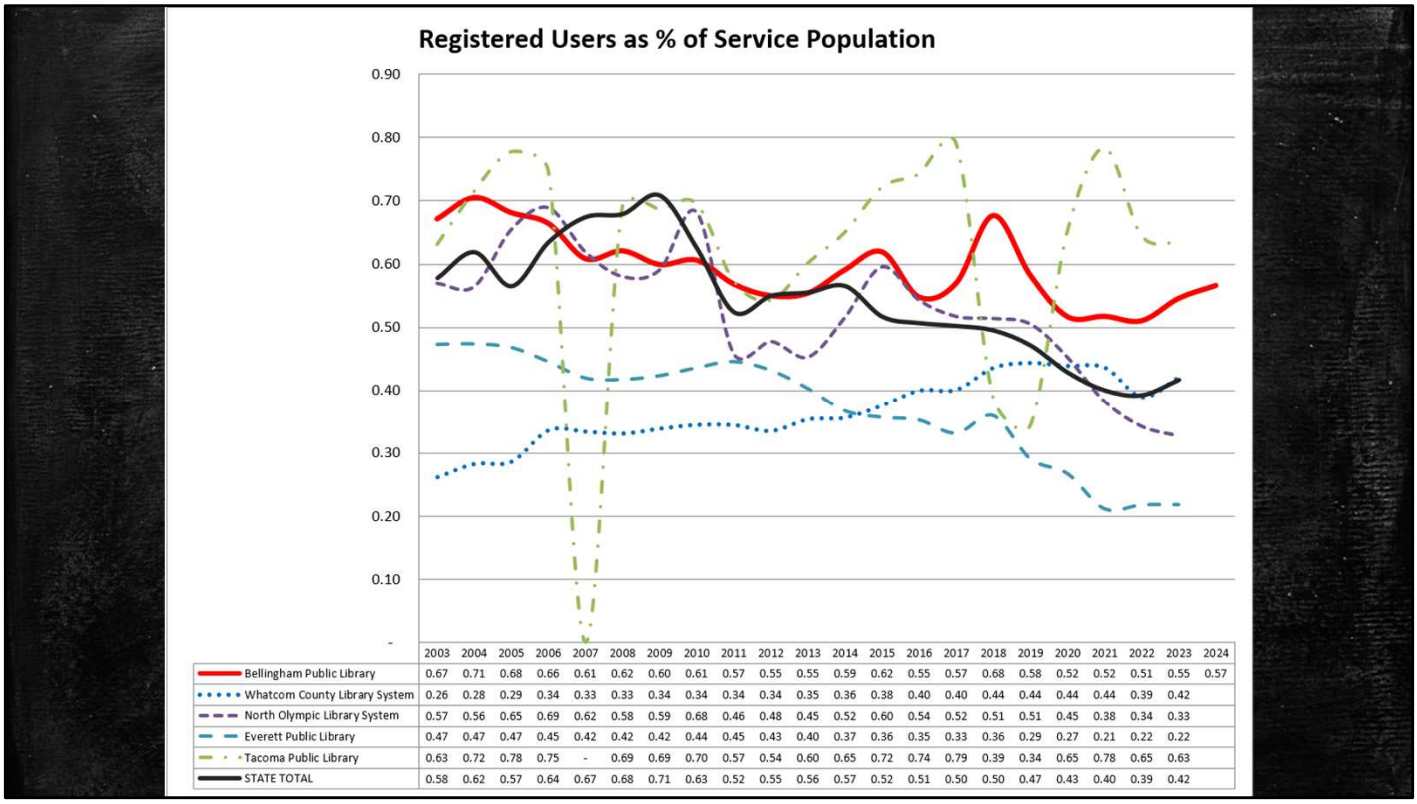


	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Patrons as % of Pop	67.2%	70.6%	68.2%	66.5%	60.9%	62.1%	59.9%	60.6%	56.8%	55.0%	55.4%	59.1%	62.0%	54.8%	57.0%	67.7%	58.2%	51.7%	51.7%	51.0%	54.6%	56.6%
Patrons	46,931	50,173	49,306	48,833	45,786	47,056	45,623	47,025	46,073	44,732	45,594	48,948	51,780	46,466	49,424	59,938	52,447	47,312	46,471	47,899	52,375	55,061
Population	69,850	71,080	72,320	73,460	75,220	75,750	76,130	77,550	81,070	81,360	82,310	82,810	83,580	84,850	86,720	88,500	90,110	91,482	89,860	93,910	95,960	97,270

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.

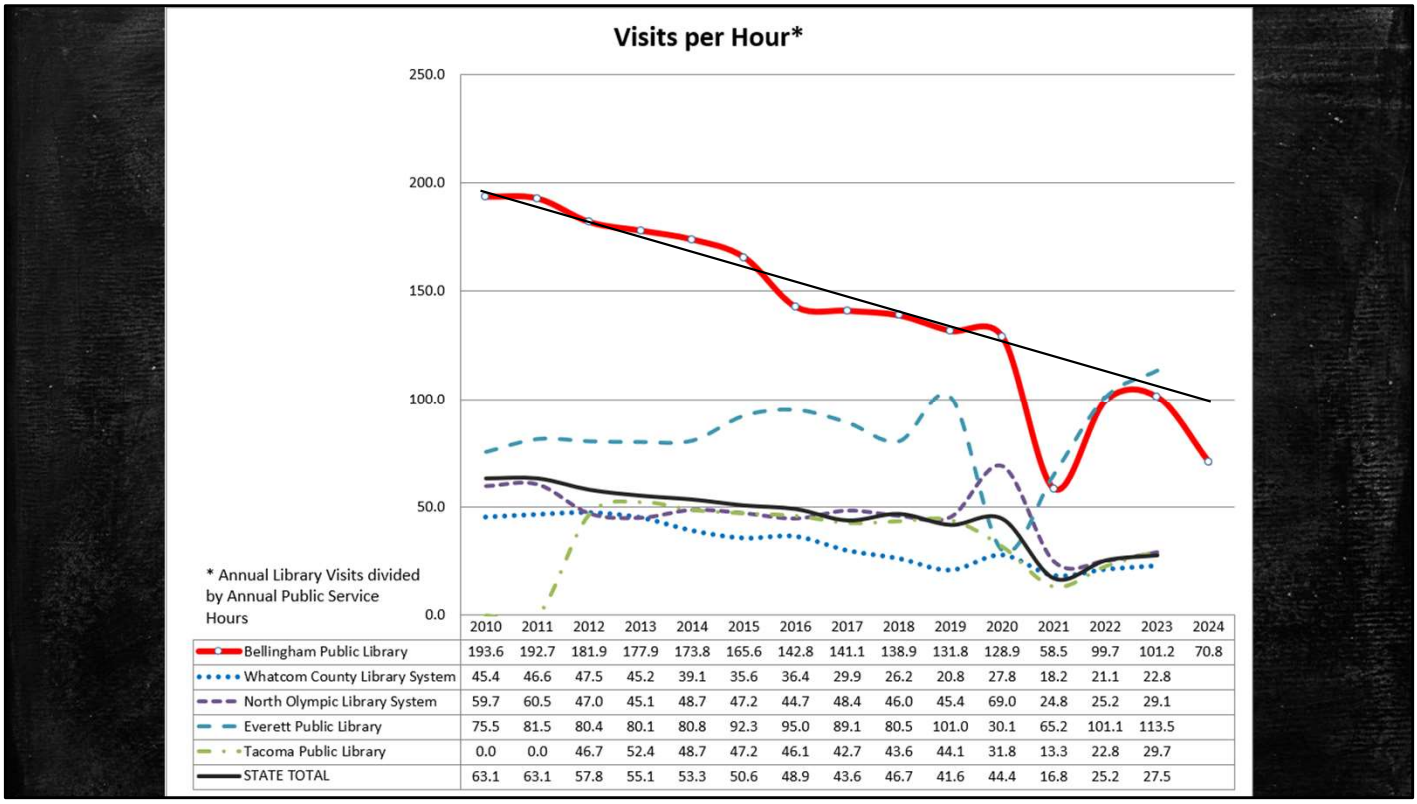
2018 was an anomaly caused by not de-duplicating students with both a personal card and a ConnectED card.

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!



	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Bellingham Public Library	0.67	0.71	0.68	0.66	0.61	0.62	0.60	0.61	0.57	0.55	0.55	0.59	0.62	0.55	0.57	0.68	0.58	0.52	0.52	0.51	0.55	0.57
Whatcom County Library System	0.26	0.28	0.29	0.34	0.33	0.33	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.35	0.36	0.38	0.40	0.40	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.39	0.42	
North Olympic Library System	0.57	0.56	0.65	0.69	0.62	0.58	0.59	0.68	0.46	0.48	0.45	0.52	0.60	0.54	0.52	0.51	0.51	0.45	0.38	0.34	0.33	
Everett Public Library	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.45	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.44	0.45	0.43	0.40	0.37	0.36	0.35	0.33	0.36	0.29	0.27	0.21	0.22	0.22	
Tacoma Public Library	0.63	0.72	0.78	0.75	-	0.69	0.69	0.70	0.57	0.54	0.60	0.65	0.72	0.74	0.79	0.39	0.34	0.65	0.78	0.65	0.63	
STATE TOTAL	0.58	0.62	0.57	0.64	0.67	0.68	0.71	0.63	0.52	0.55	0.56	0.57	0.52	0.51	0.50	0.50	0.47	0.43	0.40	0.39	0.42	

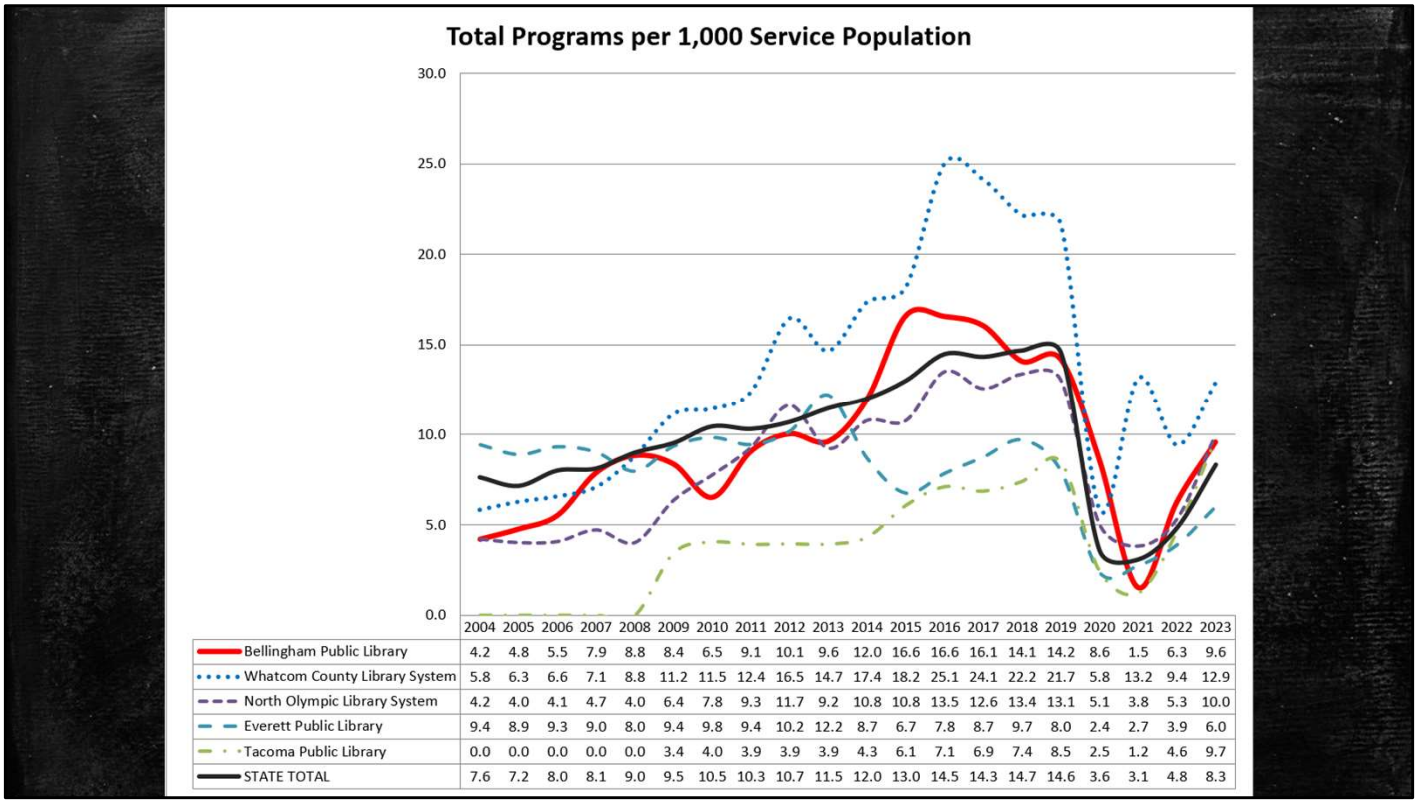
Here's that data from 2003-2023 compared to a few other libraries in the State. Over time, our cardholder base has held steadier than that of the state as a whole. WCLS caught up a bit. No big change due to the pandemic, apparently. Nothing obvious in the chart, anyway.



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Bellingham Public Library	193.6	192.7	181.9	177.9	173.8	165.6	142.8	141.1	138.9	131.8	128.9	58.5	99.7	101.2	70.8
Whatcom County Library System	45.4	46.6	47.5	45.2	39.1	35.6	36.4	29.9	26.2	20.8	27.8	18.2	21.1	22.8	
North Olympic Library System	59.7	60.5	47.0	45.1	48.7	47.2	44.7	48.4	46.0	45.4	69.0	24.8	25.2	29.1	
Everett Public Library	75.5	81.5	80.4	80.1	80.8	92.3	95.0	89.1	80.5	101.0	30.1	65.2	101.1	113.5	
Tacoma Public Library	0.0	0.0	46.7	52.4	48.7	47.2	46.1	42.7	43.6	44.1	31.8	13.3	22.8	29.7	
STATE TOTAL	63.1	63.1	57.8	55.1	53.3	50.6	48.9	43.6	46.7	41.6	44.4	16.8	25.2	27.5	

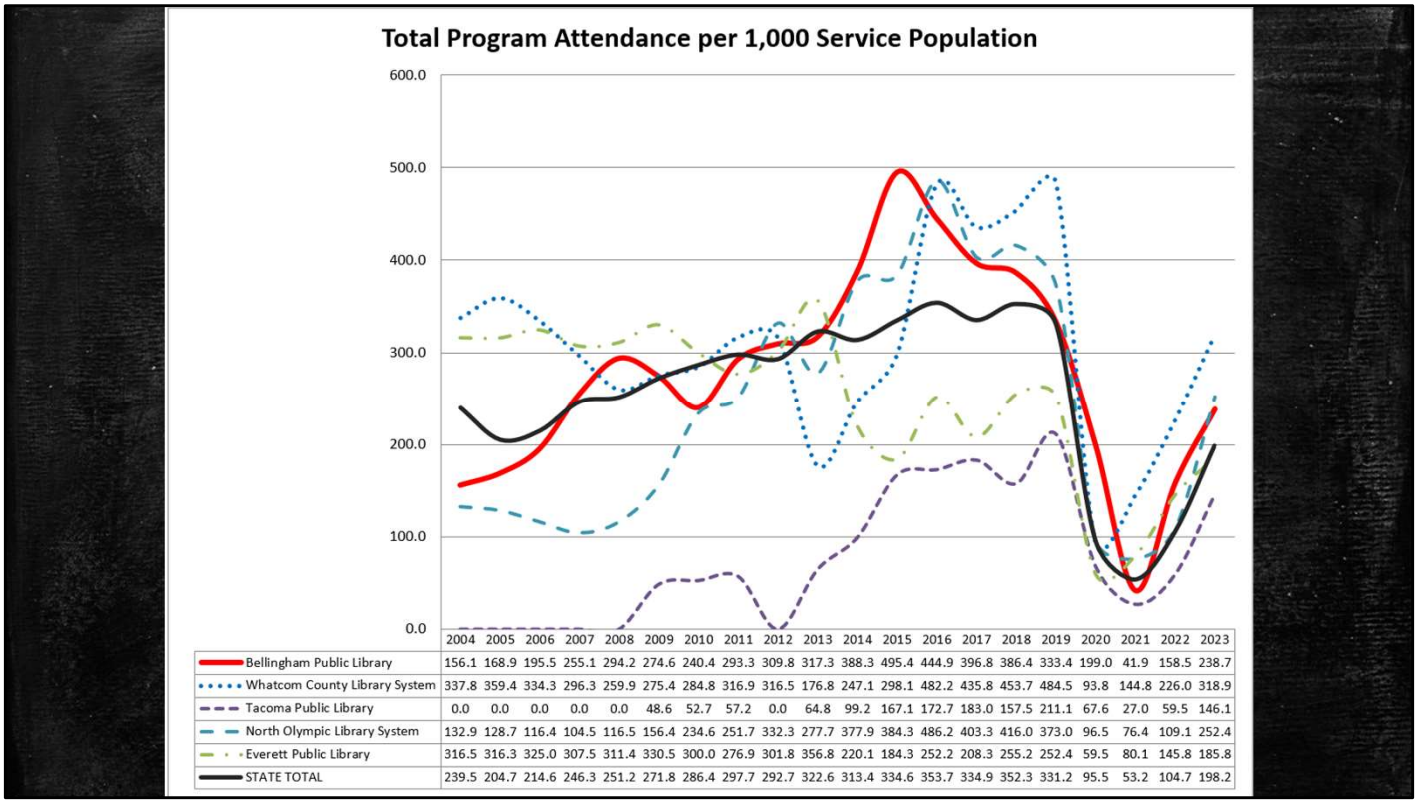
Visits per Hour are also dropping (as are Visits per Capita, as we saw previously).
In 2024 our visits were strongly impacted by the new people counting system.
Which puts us below our previous trend. [line]
My expectation is that the trend will continue at a similar rate, but on a new, lower, baseline.

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



	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Bellingham Public Library	4.2	4.8	5.5	7.9	8.8	8.4	6.5	9.1	10.1	9.6	12.0	16.6	16.6	16.1	14.1	14.2	8.6	1.5	6.3	9.6
Whatcom County Library System	5.8	6.3	6.6	7.1	8.8	11.2	11.5	12.4	16.5	14.7	17.4	18.2	25.1	24.1	22.2	21.7	5.8	13.2	9.4	12.9
North Olympic Library System	4.2	4.0	4.1	4.7	4.0	6.4	7.8	9.3	11.7	9.2	10.8	10.8	13.5	12.6	13.4	13.1	5.1	3.8	5.3	10.0
Everett Public Library	9.4	8.9	9.3	9.0	8.0	9.4	9.8	9.4	10.2	12.2	8.7	6.7	7.8	8.7	9.7	8.0	2.4	2.7	3.9	6.0
Tacoma Public Library	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.3	6.1	7.1	6.9	7.4	8.5	2.5	1.2	4.6	9.7
STATE TOTAL	7.6	7.2	8.0	8.1	9.0	9.5	10.5	10.3	10.7	11.5	12.0	13.0	14.5	14.3	14.7	14.6	3.6	3.1	4.8	8.3

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.



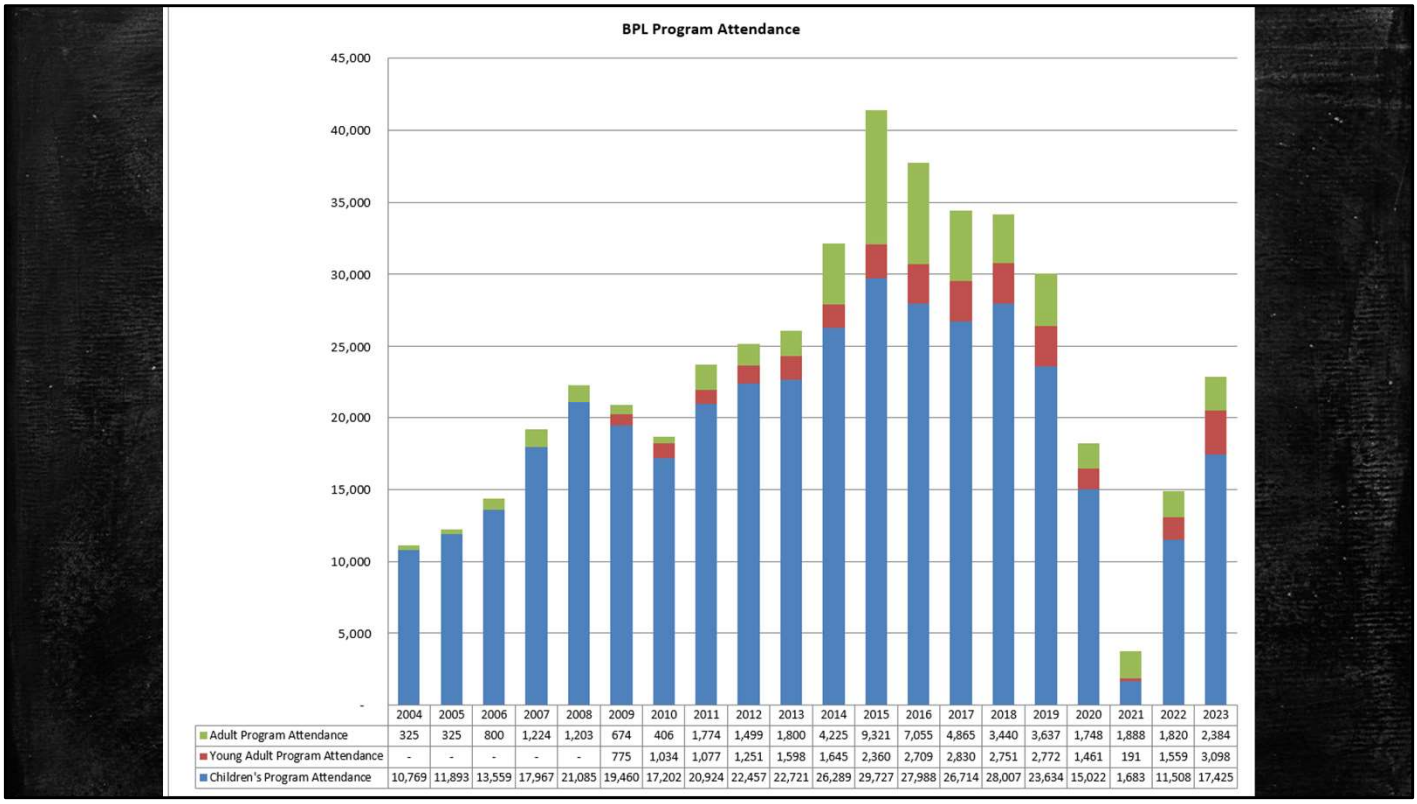
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Bellingham Public Library	156.1	168.9	195.5	255.1	294.2	274.6	240.4	293.3	309.8	317.3	388.3	495.4	444.9	396.8	386.4	333.4	199.0	41.9	158.5	238.7
Whatcom County Library System	337.8	359.4	334.3	296.3	259.9	275.4	284.8	316.9	316.5	176.8	247.1	298.1	482.2	435.8	453.7	484.5	93.8	144.8	226.0	318.9
Tacoma Public Library	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	48.6	52.7	57.2	0.0	64.8	99.2	167.1	172.7	183.0	157.5	211.1	67.6	27.0	59.5	146.1
North Olympic Library System	132.9	128.7	116.4	104.5	116.5	156.4	234.6	251.7	332.3	277.7	377.9	384.3	486.2	403.3	416.0	373.0	96.5	76.4	109.1	252.4
Everett Public Library	316.5	316.3	325.0	307.5	311.4	330.5	300.0	276.9	301.8	356.8	220.1	184.3	252.2	208.3	255.2	252.4	59.5	80.1	145.8	185.8
STATE TOTAL	239.5	204.7	214.6	246.3	251.2	271.8	286.4	297.7	292.7	322.6	313.4	334.6	353.7	334.9	352.3	331.2	95.5	53.2	104.7	198.2

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.

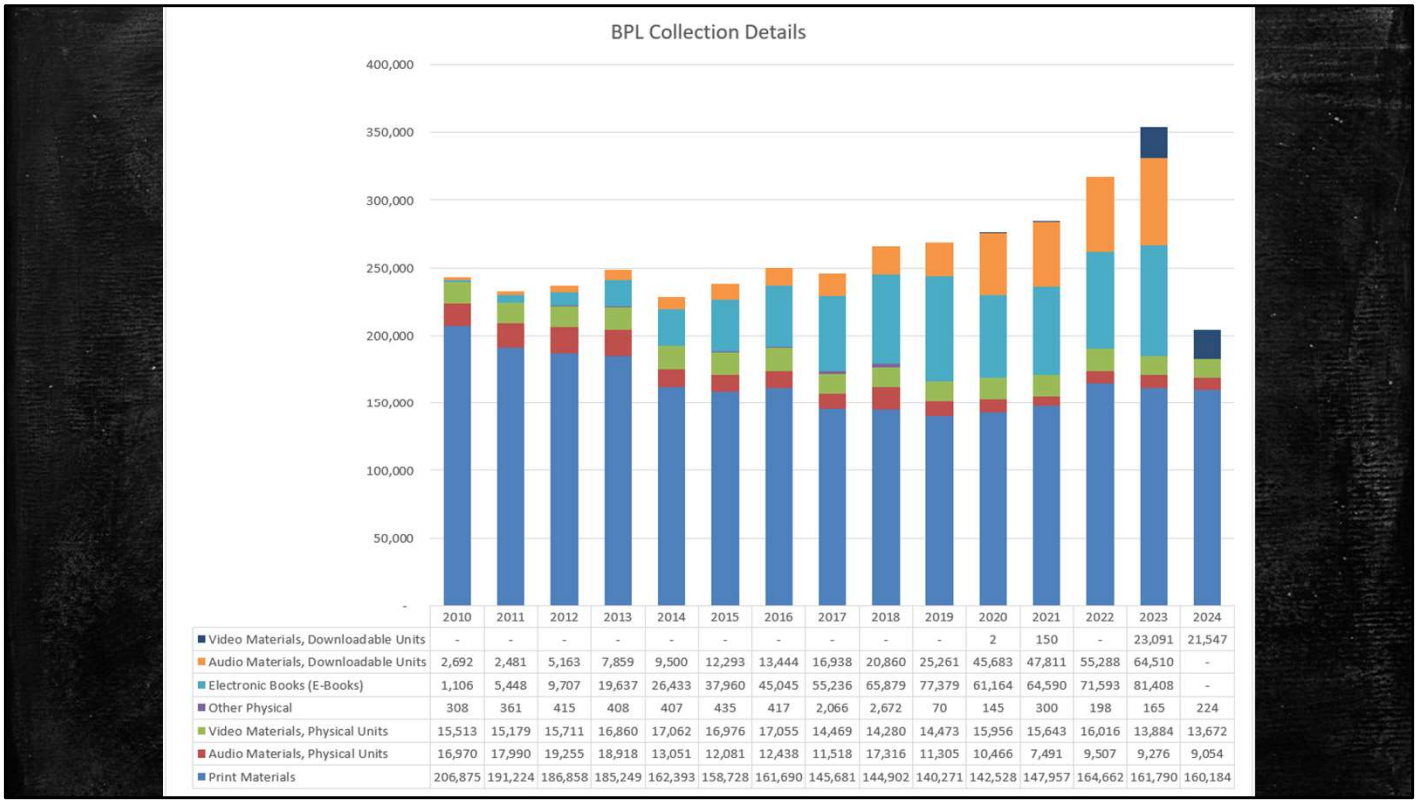
There has clearly been a shift in the library world to having more programs, and that has driven an increase in attendance despite the countervailing trend of fewer visits to library buildings. In part this is driven by library staff getting out in the community to hold programs outside of library spaces.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



	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Adult Program Attendance	325	325	800	1,224	1,203	674	406	1,774	1,499	1,800	4,225	9,321	7,055	4,865	3,440	3,637	1,748	1,888	1,820	2,384
Young Adult Program Attendance	-	-	-	-	-	775	1,034	1,077	1,251	1,598	1,645	2,360	2,709	2,830	2,751	2,772	1,461	191	1,559	3,098
Children's Program Attendance	10,769	11,893	13,559	17,967	21,085	19,460	17,202	20,924	22,457	22,721	26,289	29,727	27,988	26,714	28,007	23,634	15,022	1,683	11,508	17,425

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.

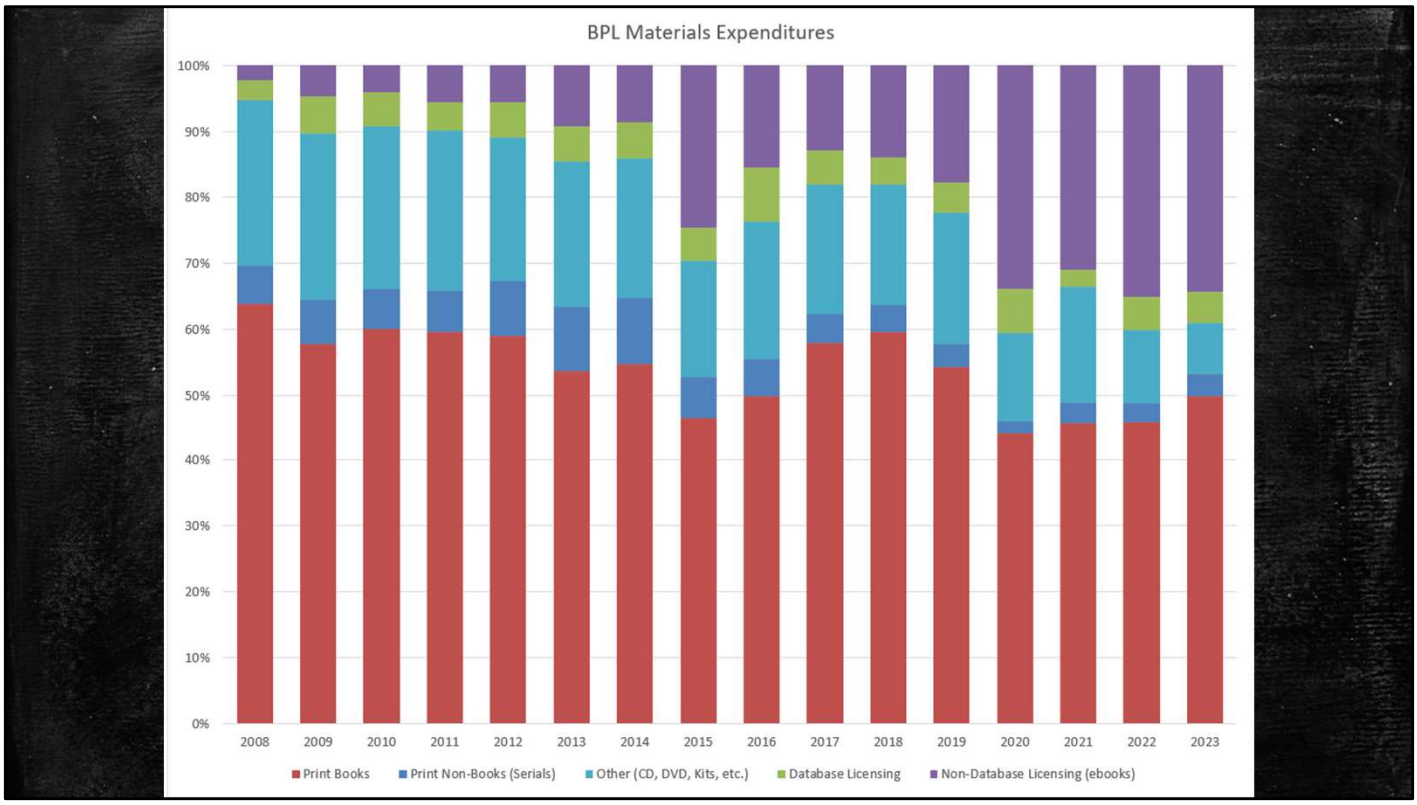
Moving along, the next trend is the shift from analog to digital.



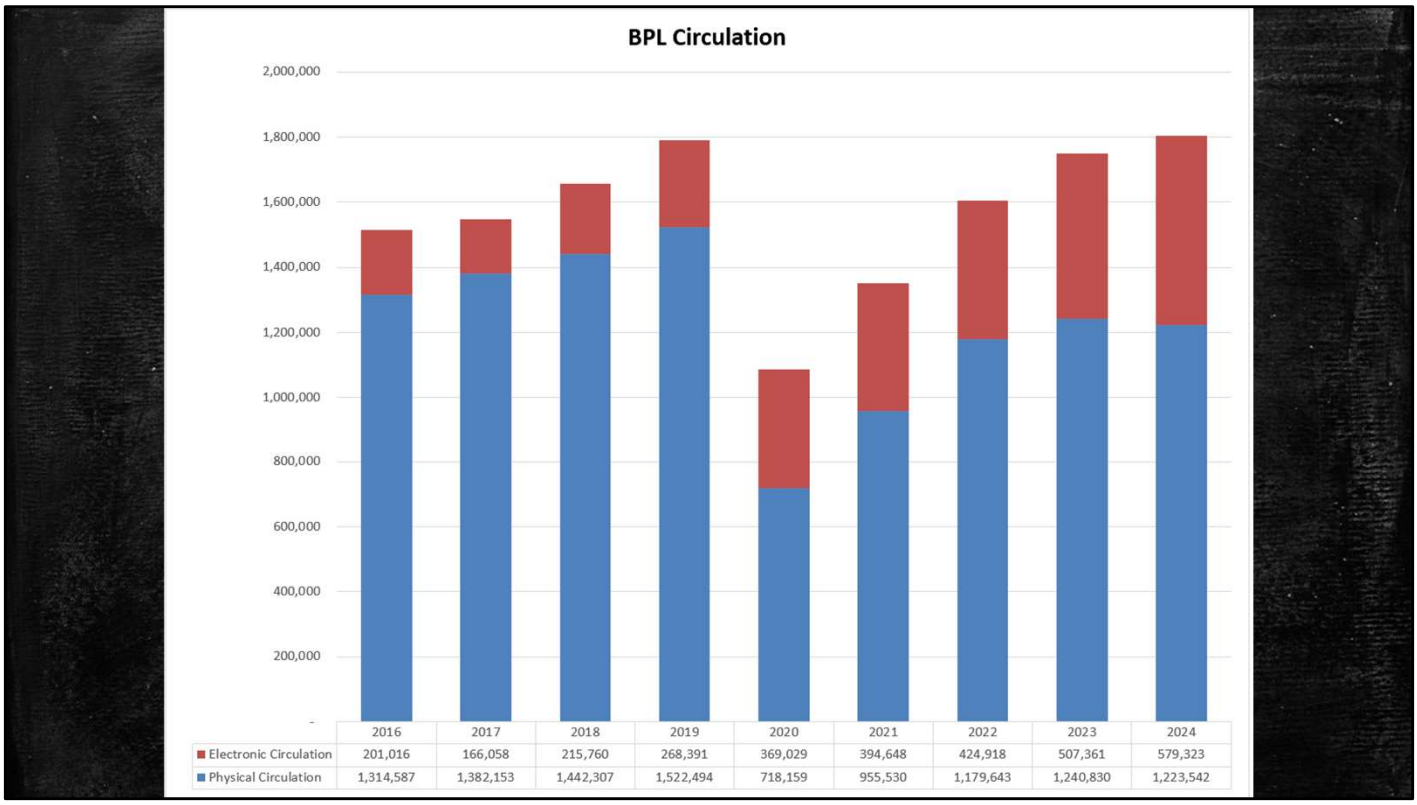
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Video Materials, Downloadable Units	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	150	-	23,091	21,547
Audio Materials, Downloadable Units	2,692	2,481	5,163	7,859	9,500	12,293	13,444	16,938	20,860	25,261	45,683	47,811	55,288	64,510	-
Electronic Books (E-Books)	1,106	5,448	9,707	19,637	26,433	37,960	45,045	55,236	65,879	77,379	61,164	64,590	71,593	81,408	-
Other Physical	308	361	415	408	407	435	417	2,066	2,672	70	145	300	198	165	224
Video Materials, Physical Units	15,513	15,179	15,711	16,860	17,062	16,976	17,055	14,469	14,280	14,473	15,956	15,643	16,016	13,884	13,672
Audio Materials, Physical Units	16,970	17,990	19,255	18,918	13,051	12,081	12,438	11,518	17,316	11,305	10,466	7,491	9,507	9,276	9,054
Print Materials	206,875	191,224	186,858	185,249	162,393	158,728	161,690	145,681	144,902	140,271	142,528	147,957	164,662	161,790	160,184

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.



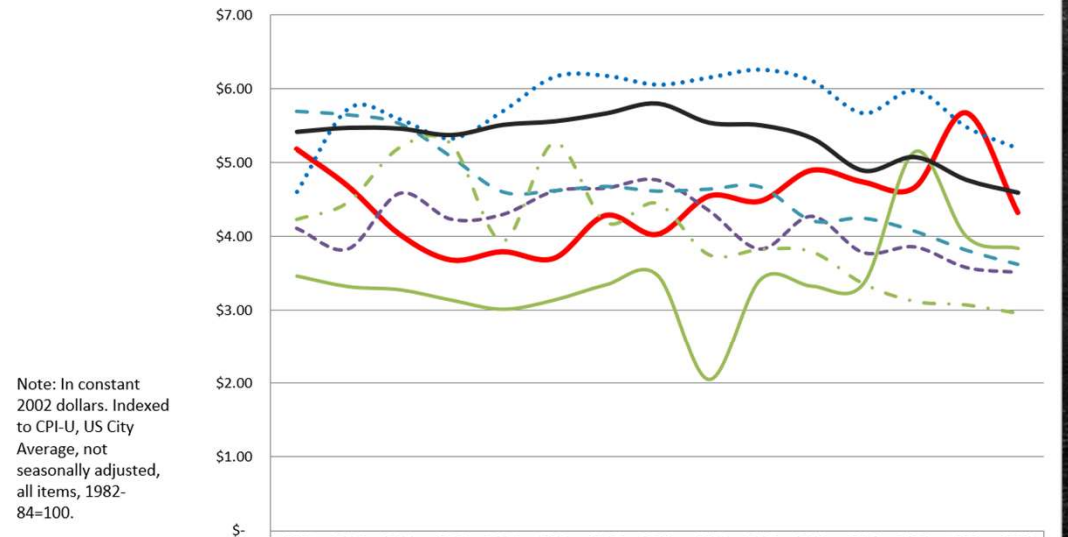
Here is how BPL has distributed its Materials Expenditure across formats over the years. The long-term trend is a shift from physical purchases to digital licenses. Licenses were about 10% for several years; now it's 40%.



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.

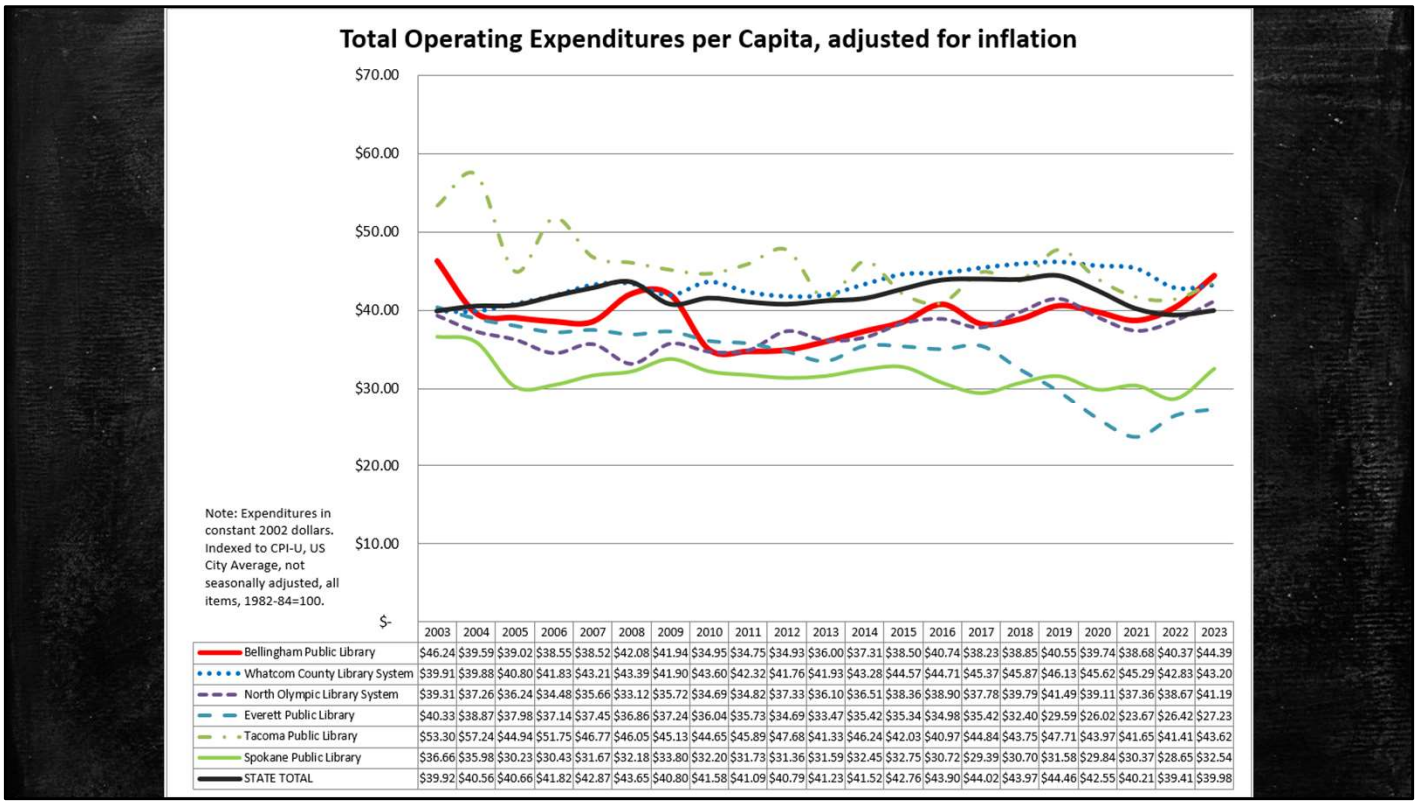
Per Capita Expenditure on Materials, adjusted for inflation



Note: In constant 2002 dollars. Indexed to CPI-U, US City Average, not seasonally adjusted, all items, 1982-84=100.

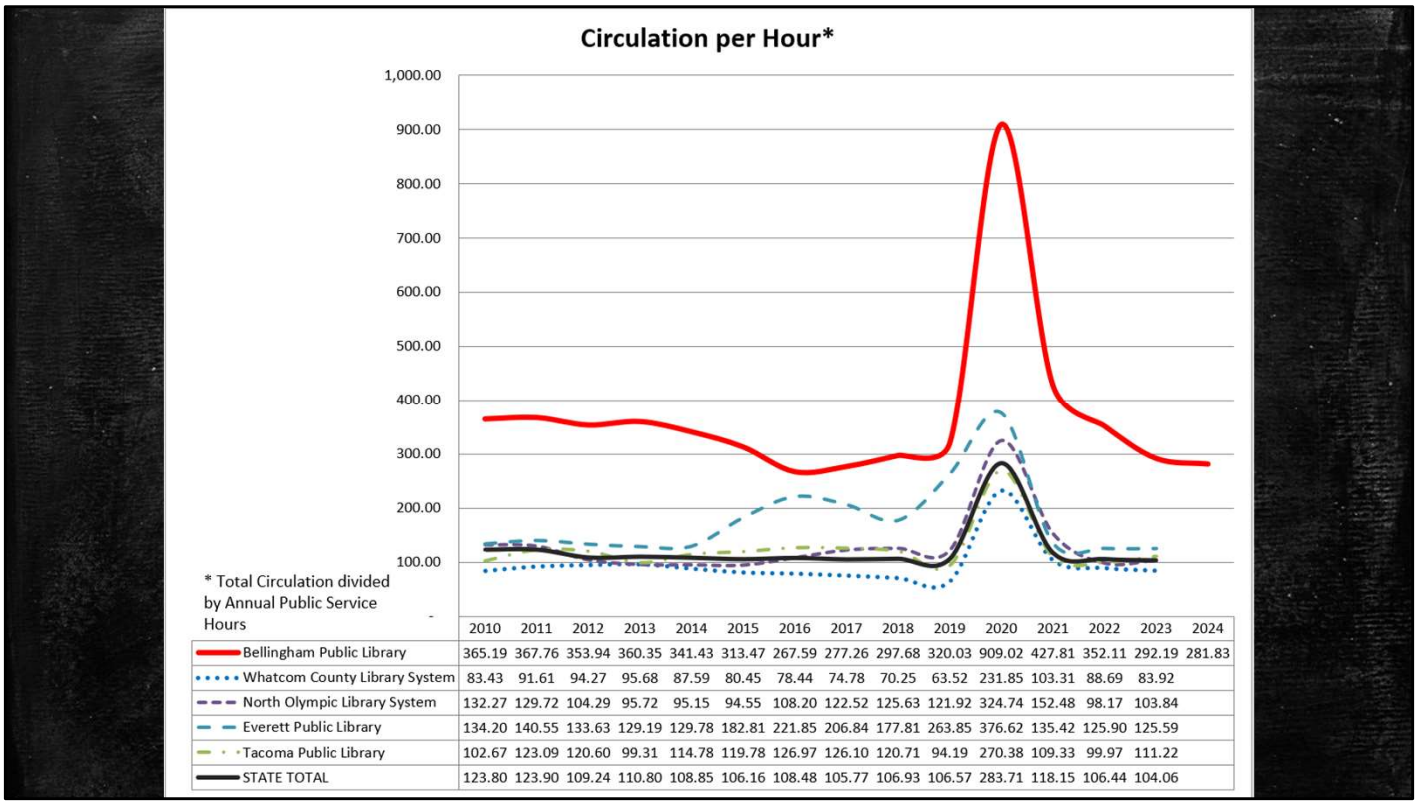
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Bellingham Public Library	$5.18	$4.68	$4.03	$3.68	$3.79	$3.70	$4.28	$4.03	$4.54	$4.48	$4.89	$4.74	$4.66	$5.67	$4.32
Whatcom County Library System	$4.60	$5.73	$5.58	$5.32	$5.69	$6.16	$6.17	$6.05	$6.15	$6.26	$6.10	$5.66	$5.97	$5.48	$5.19
North Olympic Library System	$4.11	$3.83	$4.59	$4.24	$4.30	$4.62	$4.66	$4.77	$4.36	$3.83	$4.28	$3.78	$3.86	$3.58	$3.51
Everett Public Library	$5.70	$5.65	$5.53	$5.08	$4.61	$4.63	$4.68	$4.62	$4.65	$4.68	$4.22	$4.25	$4.08	$3.82	$3.63
Tacoma Public Library	$4.23	$4.47	$5.21	$5.26	$3.94	$5.27	$4.19	$4.45	$3.76	$3.82	$3.80	$3.36	$3.12	$3.07	$2.96
Spokane Public Library	$3.46	$3.32	$3.28	$3.14	$3.01	$3.14	$3.34	$3.47	$2.05	$3.42	$3.33	$3.36	$5.15	$4.00	$3.84
STATE TOTAL	$5.42	$5.48	$5.46	$5.38	$5.52	$5.56	$5.67	$5.81	$5.55	$5.51	$5.33	$4.89	$5.08	$4.76	$4.59

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



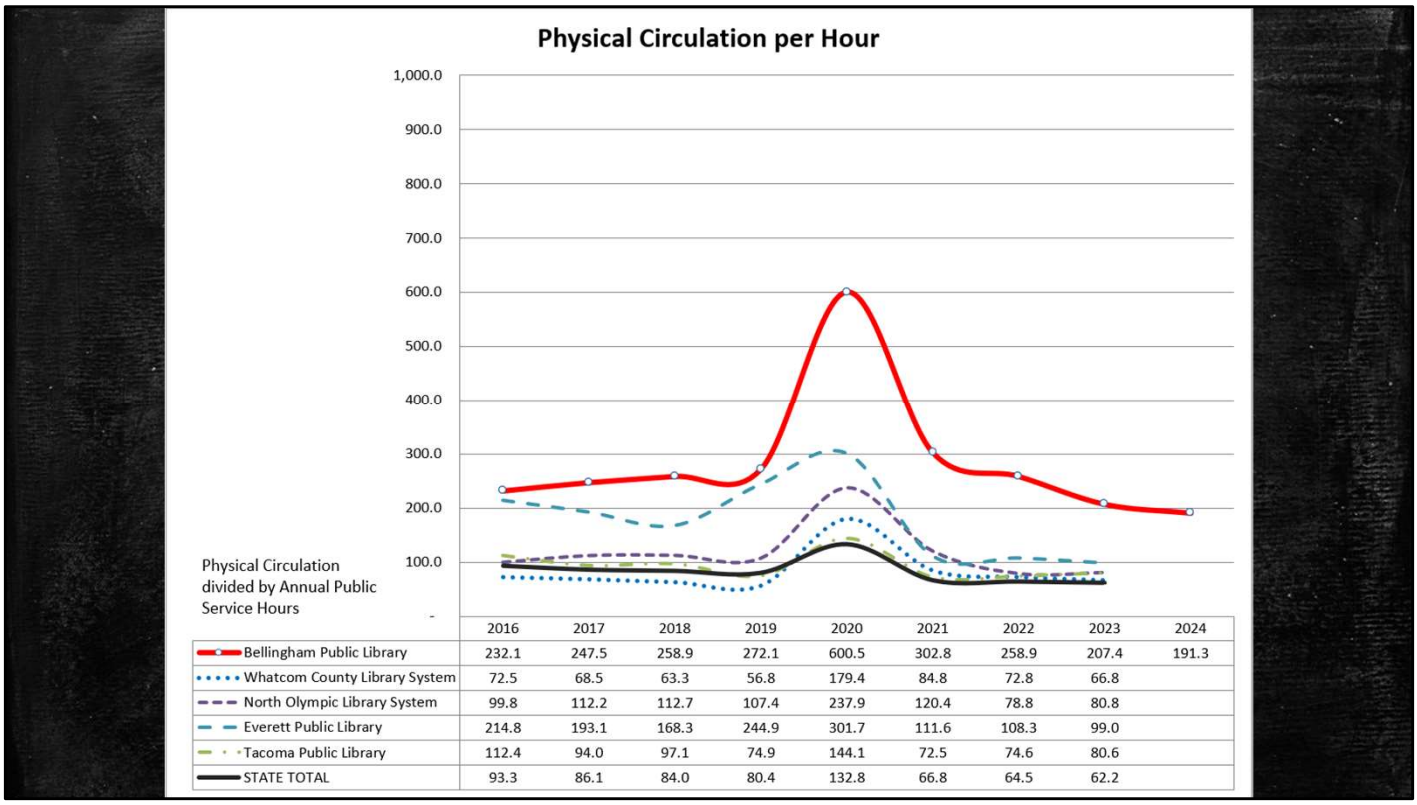
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Bellingham Public Library	$46.24	$39.59	$39.02	$38.55	$38.52	$42.08	$41.94	$34.95	$34.75	$34.93	$36.00	$37.31	$38.50	$40.74	$38.23	$38.85	$40.55	$39.74	$38.68	$40.37	$44.39
Whatcom County Library 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.



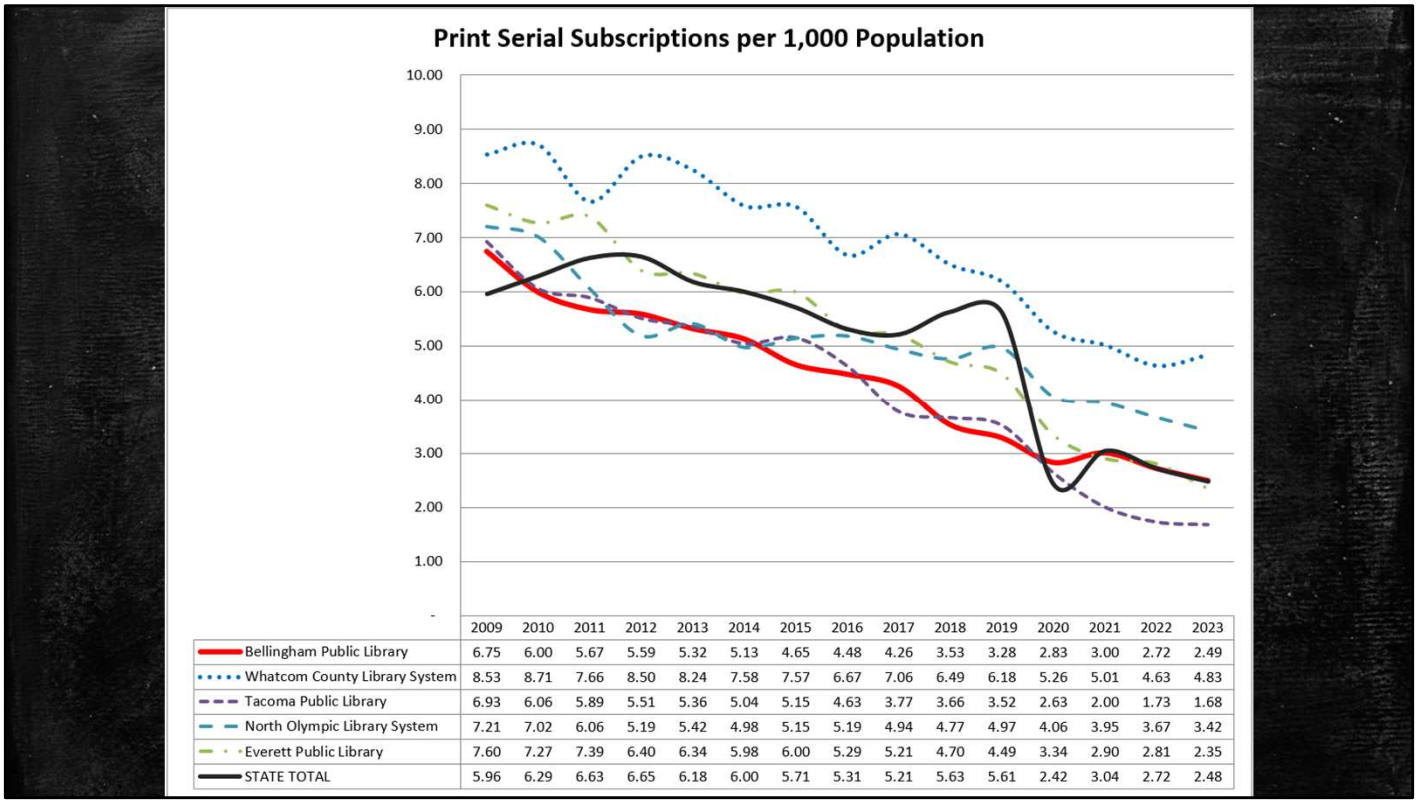
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Bellingham Public Library	365.19	367.76	353.94	360.35	341.43	313.47	267.59	277.26	297.68	320.03	909.02	427.81	352.11	292.19	281.83
Whatcom County Library System	83.43	91.61	94.27	95.68	87.59	80.45	78.44	74.78	70.25	63.52	231.85	103.31	88.69	83.92	
North Olympic Library System	132.27	129.72	104.29	95.72	95.15	94.55	108.20	122.52	125.63	121.92	324.74	152.48	98.17	103.84	
Everett Public Library	134.20	140.55	133.63	129.19	129.78	182.81	221.85	206.84	177.81	263.85	376.62	135.42	125.90	125.59	
Tacoma Public Library	102.67	123.09	120.60	99.31	114.78	119.78	126.97	126.10	120.71	94.19	270.38	109.33	99.97	111.22	
STATE TOTAL	123.80	123.90	109.24	110.80	108.85	106.16	108.48	105.77	106.93	106.57	283.71	118.15	106.44	104.06	

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.



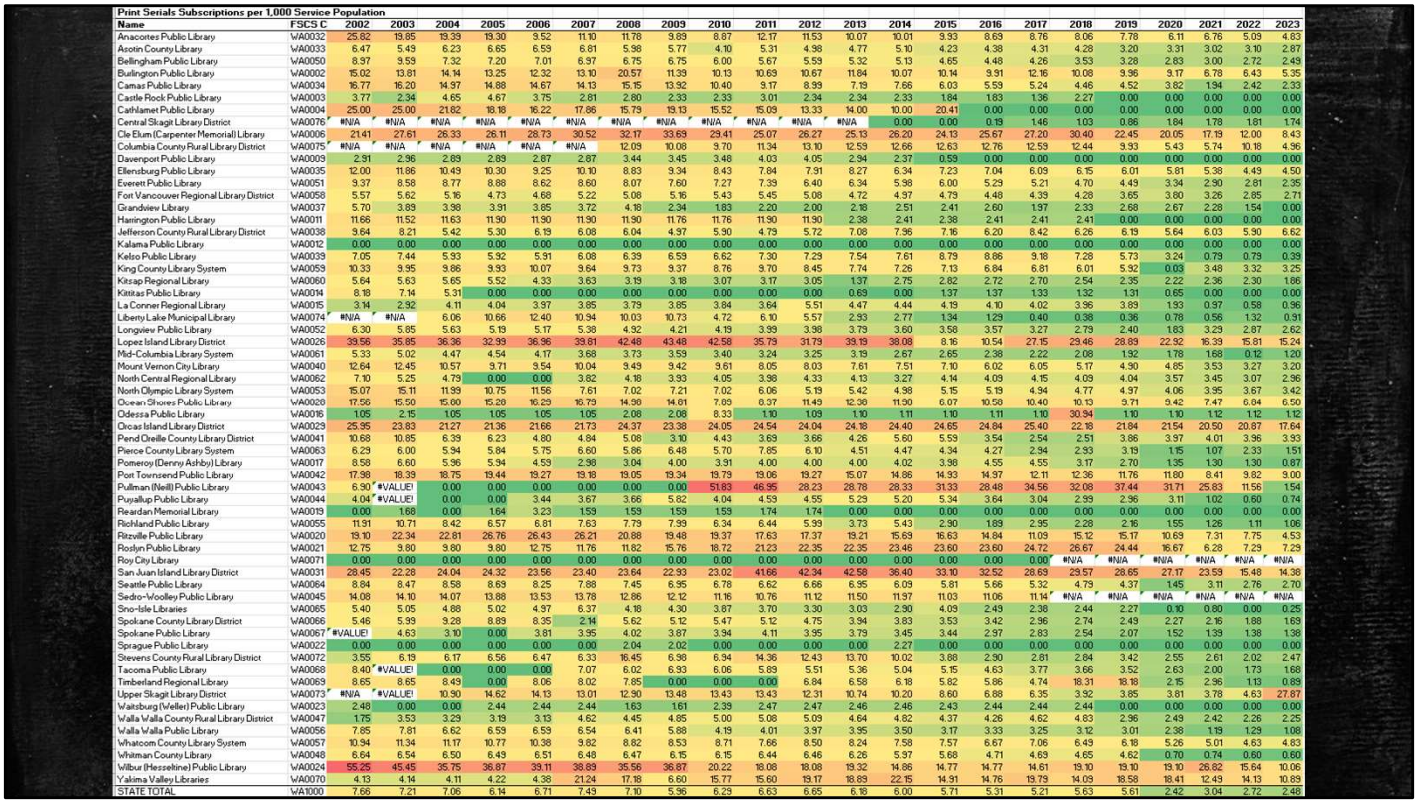
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Bellingham Public Library	232.1	247.5	258.9	272.1	600.5	302.8	258.9	207.4	191.3
Whatcom County Library System	72.5	68.5	63.3	56.8	179.4	84.8	72.8	66.8	
North Olympic Library System	99.8	112.2	112.7	107.4	237.9	120.4	78.8	80.8	
Everett Public Library	214.8	193.1	168.3	244.9	301.7	111.6	108.3	99.0	
Tacoma Public Library	112.4	94.0	97.1	74.9	144.1	72.5	74.6	80.6	
STATE TOTAL	93.3	86.1	84.0	80.4	132.8	66.8	64.5	62.2	

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.



	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Bellingham Public Library	6.75	6.00	5.67	5.59	5.32	5.13	4.65	4.48	4.26	3.53	3.28	2.83	3.00	2.72	2.49
Whatcom County Library System	8.53	8.71	7.66	8.50	8.24	7.58	7.57	6.67	7.06	6.49	6.18	5.26	5.01	4.63	4.83
Tacoma Public Library	6.93	6.06	5.89	5.51	5.36	5.04	5.15	4.63	3.77	3.66	3.52	2.63	2.00	1.73	1.68
North Olympic Library System	7.21	7.02	6.06	5.19	5.42	4.98	5.15	5.19	4.94	4.77	4.97	4.06	3.95	3.67	3.42
Everett Public Library	7.60	7.27	7.39	6.40	6.34	5.98	6.00	5.29	5.21	4.70	4.49	3.34	2.90	2.81	2.35
STATE TOTAL	5.96	6.29	6.63	6.65	6.18	6.00	5.71	5.31	5.21	5.63	5.61	2.42	3.04	2.72	2.48

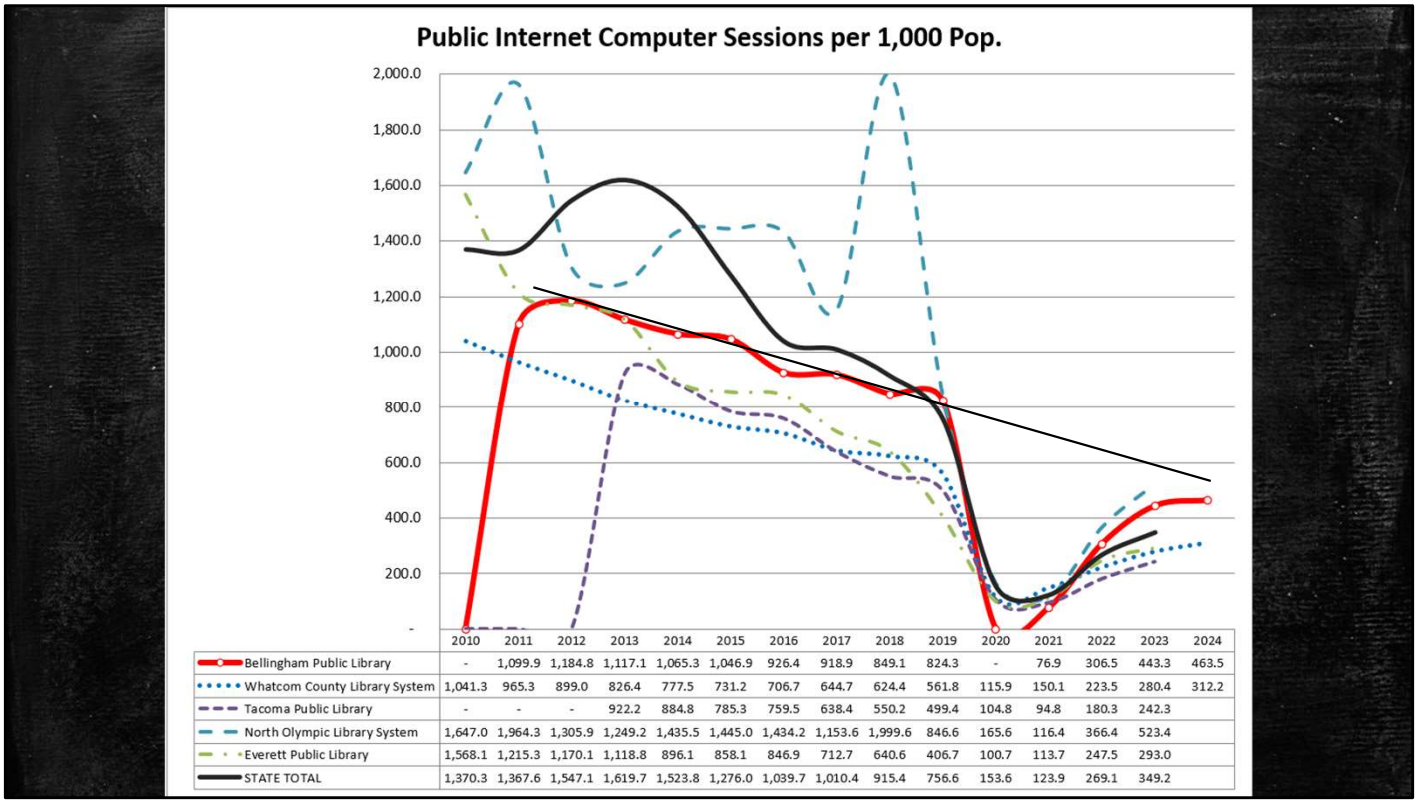
One component of the shift from analog to digital is major upheaval in the print serials market, both newspapers and magazines. We are having more and more trouble finding print magazines to subscribe to, and those that we do are nearly all in a process of decreasing their page-counts, their publication 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

Name	FSCS C	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	WA0032	25.82	19.85	19.39	19.30	9.52	11.10	11.78	9.69	8.87	12.17	11.53	10.07	10.01	9.93	8.69	8.76	8.06	7.78	6.11	6.76	5.09	4.83
Asotin County Library	WA0033	6.47	5.49	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	WA0050	8.37	9.59	7.32	7.20	7.01	6.97	6.75	6.75	6.00	5.67	5.59	5.32	5.13	4.65	4.48	4.26	3.53	3.28	2.83	3.00	2.72	2.49
Burlington Public Library	WA0002	15.02	13.81	14.14	13.25	12.32	13.10	20.57	11.39	10.13	10.69	10.67	11.84	10.07	10.14	9.91	12.16	10.08	9.96	9.17	6.78	6.43	5.35
Camas Public Library	WA0034	16.77	16.20	14.97	14.88	14.67	14.13	15.15	13.92	10.40	9.17	8.99	7.19	7.66	6.03	5.59	5.24	4.46	4.52	3.82	1.94	2.42	2.33
Castle Rock Public Library	WA0003	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	1.63	1.36	2.27	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cathlamet Public Library	WA0004	25.00	25.00	21.82	18.18	16.22	17.86	15.79	19.13	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 Skagit Library District	WA0076	#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	1.84	1.78	1.81	1.74
Cle Elum (Carpenter Memorial) Library	WA0006	21.41	27.61	26.33	26.11	28.73	30.52	32.17	33.69	29.41	25.07	26.27	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	WA0075	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	#N/A	12.09	10.08	9.70	11.34	13.10	12.59	12.66	12.63	12.76	12.59	12.44	9.93	5.43	5.74	10.18	4.96
Davenport Public Library	WA0009	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	WA0035	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	5.38	4.49	4.50
Everett Public Library	WA0051	9.37	8.58	8.77	8.88	8.62	8.60	8.07	7.60	7.27	7.39	6.40	6.34	5.98	6.00	5.29	5.21	4.70	4.49	3.34	2.90	2.81	2.35
Fort Vancouver Regional Library District	WA0058	5.57	5.62	5.16	4.73	4.68	5.22	5.08	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	WA0037	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	WA0011	11.66	11.52	11.63	11.90	11.90	11.90	11.90	11.76	11.76	11.90	11.90	2.38	2.41	2.38	2.41	2.41	2.41	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Jefferson County Rural Library District	WA0038	9.64	8.21	5.42	5.30	6.19	6.08	6.04	4.97	5.90	4.79	5.72	7.08	7.96	7.16	6.20	8.42	6.26	6.19	5.64	6.03	5.90	6.62
Kalama Public Library	WA0012	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	WA0039	7.05	7.44	5.93	5.92	5.31	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	WA0059	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	WA0060	5.64	5.63	5.65	5.52	4.33	3.63	3.19	3.18	3.07	3.17	3.05	1.97	2.75	2.82	2.72	2.70	2.54	2.35	2.22	2.36	2.30	1.66
Kittitas Public Library	WA0014	8.18	7.14	5.31	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	1.31	0.65	0.00	0.00	0.00
La Conner Regional Library	WA0015	3.14	2.92	4.11	4.04	3.97	3.85	3.79	3.85	3.84	3.64	5.51	4.47	4.44	4.19	4.10	4.02	3.96	3.89	1.93	0.97	0.58	0.96
Liberty Lake Municipal Library	WA0074	#N/A	#N/A	6.06	10.66	12.40	10.94	10.03	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	WA0052	6.30	5.85	5.63	5.19	5.17	5.38	4.92	4.21	4.19	3.99	3.98	3.79	3.60	3.58	3.57	3.27	2.79	2.40	1.83	3.23	2.87	2.62
Lopez Island Library District	WA0026	39.56	35.85	36.36	32.99	36.96	39.81	42.48	43.48	42.58	35.79	31.79	39.19	38.08	8.16	10.54	27.15	29.46	28.89	22.32	16.39	15.81	15.24
Mid-Columbia Library System	WA0061	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	WA0040	12.64	12.45	10.57	9.71	9.54	10.04	9.49	9.42	9.61	8.05	8.03	7.61	7.51	7.10	6.02	6.05	5.17	4.90	4.65	3.53	3.27	3.20
North Central Regional Library	WA0062	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	WA0053	15.07	15.11	11.99	10.75	11.56	7.61	7.02	7.21	7.02	6.06	5.19	5.42	4.98	5.15	5.19	4.94	4.77	4.97	4.06	3.35	3.67	3.42
Ocean Shores Public Library	WA0028	17.56	15.50	15.60	15.28	16.29	16.79	14.96	14.61	7.69	8.37	11.45	12.36	11.90	6.07	10.56	10.40	10.13	9.71	9.42	7.47	6.04	6.50
Odessa Public Library	WA0016	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	30.94	1.10	1.10	1.12	1.12	1.12
Orcas Island Library District	WA0029	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	22.18	21.84	21.54	20.50	20.87	17.64
Pend Oreille County Library District	WA0041	10.68	10.85	6.39	6.23	4.80	4.84	5.08	3.10	4.43	3.69	3.66	4.26	5.60	5.53	3.54	2.54	2.51	3.86	3.97	4.01	3.96	3.93
Pierce County Library System	WA0063	6.29	6.00	5.34	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	3.13	1.15	1.07	2.33	1.51
Pomeroy (Denny Ashby) Library	WA0017	8.58	6.60	5.36	5.94	4.53	2.38	3.04	4.00	3.91	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.02	3.98	4.55	4.55	3.17	2.70	1.35	1.30	1.30	0.87
Port Townsend Public Library	WA0042	17.36	18.39	18.75	19.44	19.27	19.18	19.05	19.34	19.79	19.06	19.27	15.07	14.86	14.93	14.97	12.11	12.36	11.76	11.60	8.41	9.82	9.00
Pullman (Neill) Public Library	WA0043	6.90	#VALUE!	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	51.83	46.95	28.23	28.78	28.33	31.33	28.48	34.56	32.08	37.44	31.71	25.83	11.56	1.54
Puyallup Public Library	WA0044	4.04	#VALUE!	0.00	0.00	3.44	3.67	3.66	5.82	4.04	4.59	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	WA0019	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	WA0055	11.91	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	1.55	1.26	1.11	1.06
Ritzville Public Library	WA0020	19.10	22.34	22.81	26.76	26.43	26.21	20.88	19.48	19.37	17.63	17.37	19.21	15.69	16.63	14.84	11.09	15.12	15.17	10.69	7.31	7.75	4.53
Roslyn Public Library	WA0021	12.75	9.80	9.80	9.80	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	24.44	16.67	6.28	7.29	7.29
Roy City Library	WA0071	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	#N/A
San Juan Island Library District	WA0031	28.45	22.28	24.04	24.32	23.56	23.40	23.64	22.93	23.02	41.66	42.34	42.58	36.40	33.10	32.52	28.69	29.57	28.65	27.17	23.53	15.48	14.36
Seattle Public Library	WA0064	8.84	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	WA0045	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	WA0065	5.40	5.05	4.88	5.02	4.97	6.37	4.18	4.30	3.87	3.70	3.30	3.03	2.90	4.09	2.49	2.38	2.44	2.27	0.10	0.80	0.00	0.25
Spokane County Library District	WA0066	5.46	5.39	3.28	8.89	8.35	2.14	5.62	5.12	5.47	5.12	4.75	3.94	3.83	3.53	3.42	2.96	2.74	2.49	2.27	2.16	1.88	1.69
Spokane Public Library	WA0067	#VALUE!	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	WA0022	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	WA0072	3.55	6.19	6.17	6.56	6.47	6.33	16.45	6.98	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	WA0068	8.40	#VALUE!	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.07	6.02	6.93	6.06	5.89	5.51	5.36	5.04	5.15	4.63	3.77	3.66	3.52	2.63	2.00	1.73	1.68
Timberland Regional Library	WA0069	8.65	8.65	8.43	0.00	8.06	8.02	7.85	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.84	6.58	6.18	5.82	5.86	4.74	18.31	18.18	2.15	2.96	1.13	0.89
Upper Skagit Library District	WA0073	#N/A	#VALUE!	10.90	14.62	14.13	13.01	12.90	13.48	13.43	13.43	12.31	10.74	10.20	8.60	6.88	6.35	3.92	3.85	3.81	3.78	4.63	27.87
Waitsburg (Weller) Public Library	WA0023	2.48	0.00	0.00	2.44	2.44	2.44	1.63	1.61	2.39	2.47	2.47	2.46	2.46	2.43	2.44	2.44	2.44	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Walla Walla County Rural Library District	WA0047	1.75	3.53	3.29	3.19	3.13	4.62	4.45	4.85	5.00	5.08	5.09	4.64	4.82	4.37	4.26	4.62	4.83	2.96	2.49	2.42	2.26	2.25
Walla Walla Public Library	WA0056	7.85	7.81	6.62	6.59	6.59	6.54	6.41	5.88	4.19	4.01	3.97	3.95	3.50	3.17	3.33	3.25	3.12	3.01	2.38	1.19	1.29	1.08
Whatcom County Library System	WA0057	10.94	11.34	11.17	10.77	10.38	9.62	8.82	8.53	8.71	7.66	8.50	8.24	7.58	7.57	6.67	7.06	6.43	6.18	5.26	5.01	4.63	4.83
Whitman County Library	WA0048	6.64	6.54	6.50	6.49	6.51	6.48	6.47	6.15	6.15	6.44	6.46	6.26	5.97	5.68	4.71	4.69	4.65	4.62	0.70	0.74	0.60	0.60
Wilbur (Hesseltine) Public Library	WA0024	55.25	45.45	35.75	36.87	39.11	38.89	35.56	36.87	20.22	18.08	18.08	13.32	14.86	14.77	14.77	14.61	13.10	13.10	13.10	26.82	15.64	10.06
Yakima Valley Libraries	WA0070	4.13	4.14	4.11	4.22	4.38	21.24	17.18	6.60	15.77	15.60	13.17	18.89	22.15	14.91	14.76	13.79	14.09	18.58	18.41	12.49	14.13	10.89
STATE TOTAL	WA1000	7.66	7.21	7.06	6.14	6.71	7.49	7.10	5.96	6.29	6.63	6.65	6.18	6.00	5.71	5.31	5.21	5.63	5.61	2.42	3.04	2.72	2.48

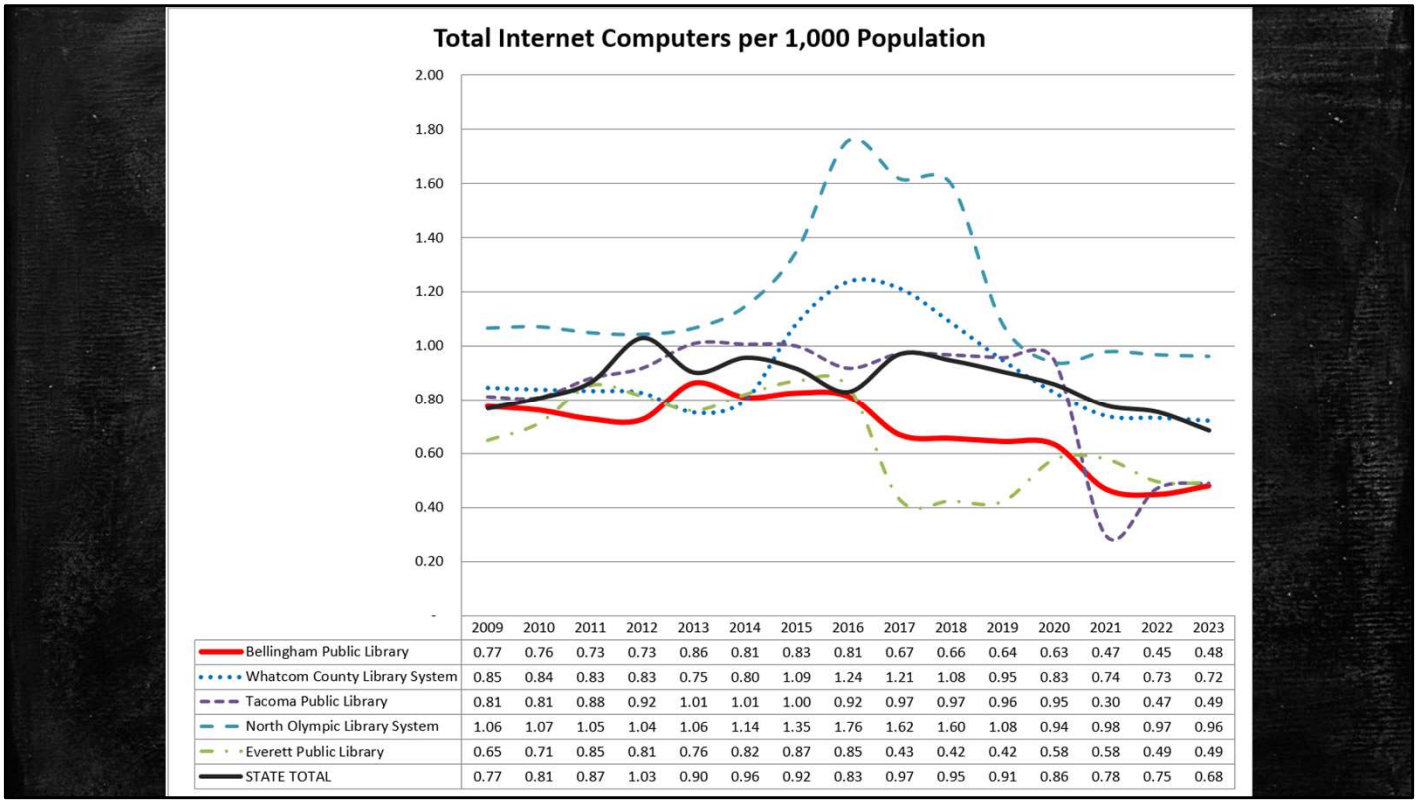
Looking at all the public libraries in the state, nearly every one used to offer more print serials per patron than they do today – more red & yellow (higher) on the left, more green (lower) on the right.



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Bellingham Public Library	-	1,099.9	1,184.8	1,117.1	1,065.3	1,046.9	926.4	918.9	849.1	824.3	-	76.9	306.5	443.3	463.5
Whatcom County Library System	1,041.3	965.3	899.0	826.4	777.5	731.2	706.7	644.7	624.4	561.8	115.9	150.1	223.5	280.4	312.2
Tacoma Public Library	-	-	-	922.2	884.8	785.3	759.5	638.4	550.2	499.4	104.8	94.8	180.3	242.3	
North Olympic Library System	1,647.0	1,964.3	1,305.9	1,249.2	1,435.5	1,445.0	1,434.2	1,153.6	1,999.6	846.6	165.6	116.4	366.4	523.4	
Everett Public Library	1,568.1	1,215.3	1,170.1	1,118.8	896.1	858.1	846.9	712.7	640.6	406.7	100.7	113.7	247.5	293.0	
STATE TOTAL	1,370.3	1,367.6	1,547.1	1,619.7	1,523.8	1,276.0	1,039.7	1,010.4	915.4	756.6	153.6	123.9	269.1	349.2	

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].



	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Bellingham Public Library	0.77	0.76	0.73	0.73	0.86	0.81	0.83	0.81	0.67	0.66	0.64	0.63	0.47	0.45	0.48
Whatcom County Library System	0.85	0.84	0.83	0.83	0.75	0.80	1.09	1.24	1.21	1.08	0.95	0.83	0.74	0.73	0.72
Tacoma Public Library	0.81	0.81	0.88	0.92	1.01	1.01	1.00	0.92	0.97	0.97	0.96	0.95	0.30	0.47	0.49
North Olympic Library System	1.06	1.07	1.05	1.04	1.06	1.14	1.35	1.76	1.62	1.60	1.08	0.94	0.98	0.97	0.96
Everett Public Library	0.65	0.71	0.85	0.81	0.76	0.82	0.87	0.85	0.43	0.42	0.42	0.58	0.58	0.49	0.49
STATE TOTAL	0.77	0.81	0.87	1.03	0.90	0.96	0.92	0.83	0.97	0.95	0.91	0.86	0.78	0.75	0.68

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.

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?