Special Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees
Monday, June 01, 2026 – Library Board Room
3 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:	Not present
Library Management Staff:	Rebecca Judd, Annette Bagley, 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 3:04 p.m. by Chair Rebecca Craven.

Level of Service (LOS) Gap Analysis:
The Bellingham Public Library Board of Trustees held a special work session on June 1, 2026, to conduct a Level of Service (LOS) Gap Analysis, aiming to move beyond a decade of low-standard funding toward medium or high service benchmarks for 2028–2037. The session highlighted that the library has remained, with few exceptions, at or below low service standards since a 2017 Council vote directed an increase to the Medium or High level across all benchmarks.

As part of the work session, the board gauged preliminary preferences. Trustees strongly leaned toward a High standard for materials to counter the soaring costs of digital media. For open hours, opinions favored a "Medium Plus" or High model to ensure adequate access to Library services. Regarding facilities, the consensus leaned toward a Medium standard. This target would address immediate space deficits and renovations within an achievable timeframe of 10 years. Moving forward, the Trustees will consult with City leadership to discuss the gap analysis and final Trustee recommendations.

Rebecca Craven adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Chair, Library Board of Trustees

ATTEST
Secretary, Library Board of Trustees

Attachments: Attachment #1: Level of Service Standards, Gap Analysis presentation

May 19, 2026
Special Meeting Minutes
Attachment #1

Bellingham Public Library

Level of Service Standards, Gap Analysis

June 1, 2026

Purpose of Gap Analysis

Bellingham Public Library

- Quantify how much funding and FTE are needed to move the Bellingham Public Library to the **Low level** on four level of service standards

- Quantify how much funding and FTE are needed to move the Bellingham Public Library to the **Medium level** on four level of service standards

- Quantify how much funding and FTE are needed to move the Bellingham Public Library to the **High level** on four level of service standards

Review of 2016-18 Standards

BPL Level of Service Standards 2018

Standard	Date of Adoption	Low/ Minimal	Medium/ Operational	High/ Optimal
Library Facilities-- square ft./capita	1/19/2016	0.6 sf/cap	0.8 sf/cap	1.0 sf/cap
Open hours per week-- Central Library	6/21/2016	56 hr/wk	64 hr/wk	68 hr/wk
Open hours per week-- Branch Libraries	6/21/2016	28 hr/wk	36 hr/wk	40 hr/wk
Library Materials-- Expenditures per capita	3/21/2017	$5.00/cap	$7.50/cap	$10.00/cap
Library Staff FTE	3/13/2018	50 FTE	58 FTE	64 FTE

City Council Commitment

In 2017, BPL and the City of Bellingham initiated a sustainability funding study for the library's future. The consulting firm BERK was hired to conduct the study and produce a report—"Bellingham Public Library Services and Funding Models Study", published December 2017.

On November 13, 2017, BERK presented findings from the report to the Bellingham City Council. At that meeting the City Council voted unanimously on the motion **"…moved to direct the Administration to give recommendations to the Library Board of Trustees to move forward to Goal 2 *{i.e., medium/operational}* or 3 *{i.e., high/optimal}* as a priority."**

Level of Service 2018-2026

City of Bellingham Washington | Bellingham Public Library

Standard	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Library Facilities sf/cap	0.63	0.62	0.61	0.62	**0.59**	0.60	**0.59**	**0.58**	**0.58**
Open hours Central	56	56	57	56	56	56	56	**52**	48** **24 FH** **24 BA** **23 BF**
Open hours Branches	28 FH 28 BA	28 FH 28 BA	28 FH 28 BA	28 FH 28 BA	**24 FH** **24 BA**	**24 FH** **24 BA**	**24 FH** **24 BA** **23 BF**	**24 FH** **24 BA** **27 BF**	
Library Materials exp/cap	$6.25	$6.96	$6.81	$7.02	$9.23	$7.40	$7.54*	$5.88*	$6.24*
Library total FTE	**48.7**	**45.4**	**42.8**	50.6	**47.6**	**47.6**	57	53.5	50.3

Key: Level of Service standards:

* Materials standard revised 8/24

**Open hours standard revised 5/26

Dark red: Below low LOS
Red: Low LOS
Green: Medium LOS

Level of Service 2026 Standard

Bellingham Public Library Level of Service Summary – April 2026 update

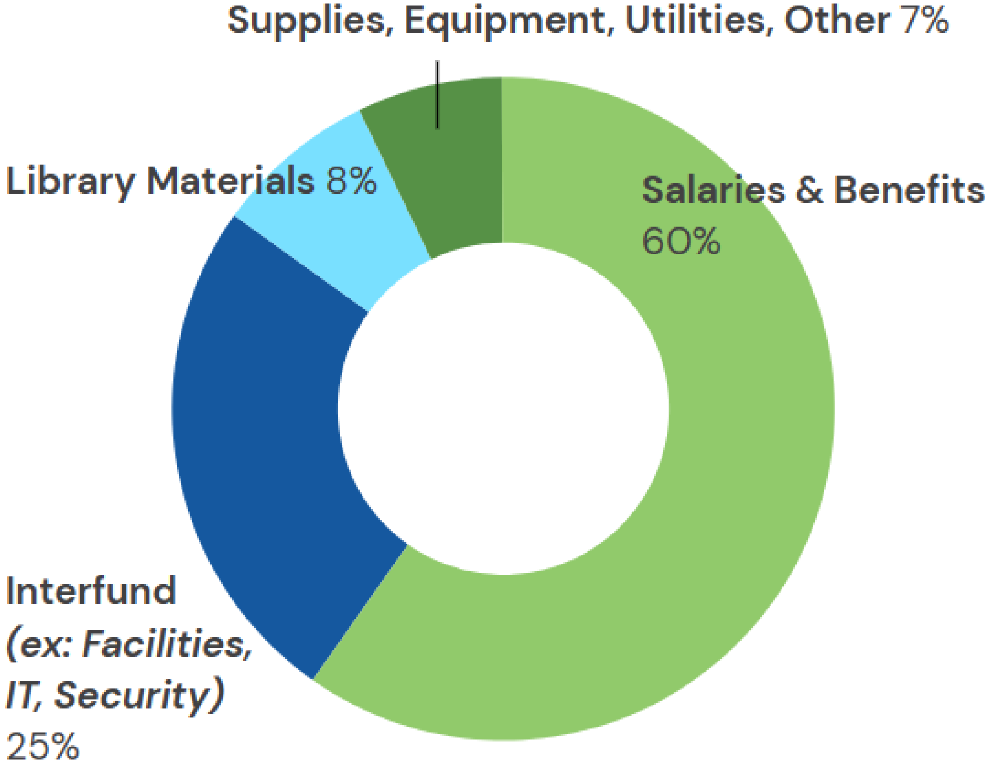
Standard	Date of Adoption	Low/ Minimal 1	Medium/ Operational 2	High/ Optimal 3	Current Levels 2026 (pop 98,340)
Library Facilities--Square ft/capita	01/19/2016, Renewed 9/2022	0.6	0.8	1.0	.58
Open hours per week--Total number per location	06/21/2016 Revised 5/2026	45	56	67	Central: 48 Fairhaven: 24 Barkley: 24 Bellis Fair: 23
Access hours per location:	06/21/2016 Revised 5/2026	Evening after 6 pm: 2 hours/week	Evening after 6 pm: 4 hours/week	Evening after 6 pm: 6 hours/week	Central: 0 Fairhaven: 0 Barkley: 0 Bellis Fair: 0
		Weekend: 8 hours	Weekend: 12 hours	Weekend: 16 hours	Central: 8 Fairhaven: 4 Barkley: 4 Bellis Fair: 7
		Weekday before 6 pm: 7 hours/day	Weekday before 6 pm: 8 hours/day	Weekday before 6 pm: 9 hours/day	Central: 8 Fairhaven: 4 Barkley: 4 Bellis Fair: 4 (Tues-Friday)
Library Materials--Expenditures/capita	03/21/2017, Revised 8/2024	$5.87	$8.81	$11.74	$6.24
Library Staff Total FTE	03/13/2018	50	58	64	50.3

Budget Picture, Library

2026 Budget: $10.4 million*

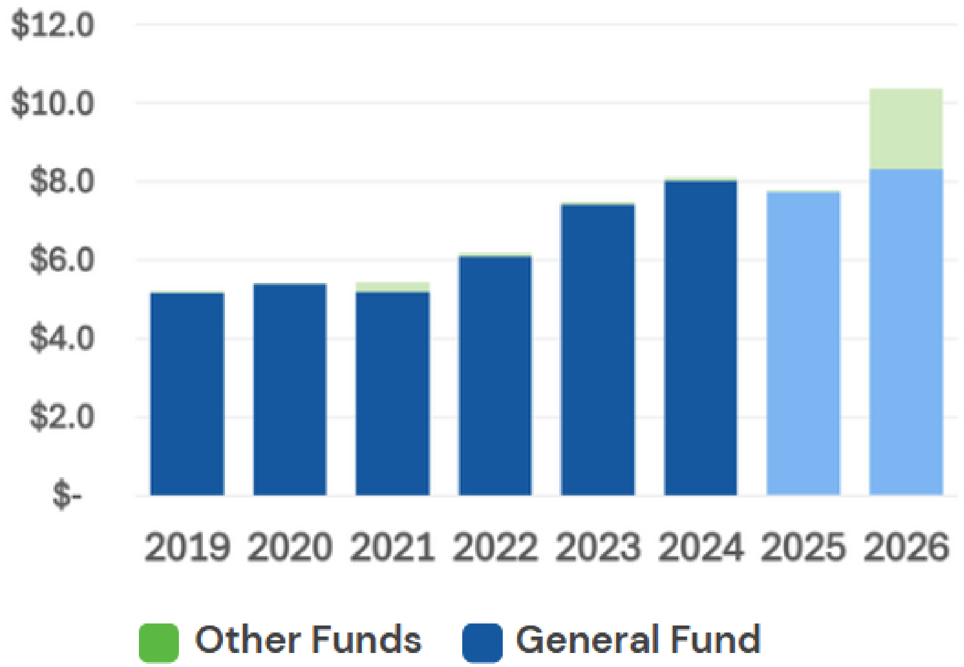
**Includes $2M for capital improvements*

Total FTE: 50



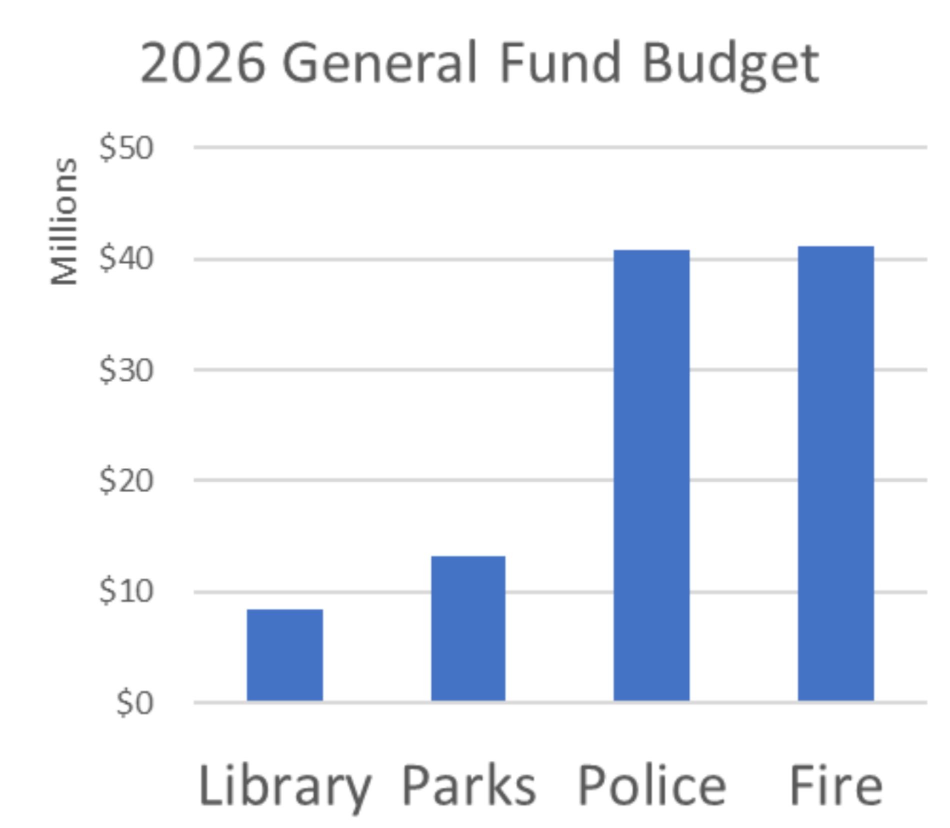
Expenditures, 2019-2026

In millions of dollars



Actual expenditures for 2019-24. Data for 2025 & 2026 represent budgeted expenditures.

Public-Facing Departments



	General Fund Budget (Expenditures)	Revenue (all funds) – not graphed
Library	$8,454,000	$176,000
Parks	$13,269,000	$16,002,000
Police	$40,705,000	$12,166,000
Fire	$41,078,000	$25,260,000

Assumptions

- 10-year planning horizon: 2028-2037
- Population increase projection: 1377 / year (source: COB Planning Dept.)
- Library Materials Expenditure/Capita, adjusted for inflation (1.6% annually) and population growth
- Salary figures are based on bargained 2026 salary charts. For Additional FTE, salary estimate based on Specialist II position
- Facility growth: Estimated total project cost, including construction, soft costs, FF&E, technology, and contingency:

• Library: Leased space, tenant improvements	$500 / sf
• Library: Owned building, renovation	$600 / sf
• Library: New Construction	$850 / sf

Materials Standard

Materials Standard – Low LOS

Bellingham Public Library

Cost to reach Low LOS for Materials Expenditure/Capita

Year	Population, estimate	Low Standard, estimate	Total Expenditure
2028	102,471	$6.06	$621,775
2029	103,848	$6.16	$639,704
2030	105,225	$6.26	$658,709
2031	106,602	$6.36	$678,789
2032	107,979	$6.46	$697,544
2033	109,356	$6.56	$717,380
2034	110,733	$6.66	$737,482
2035	112,110	$6.77	$758,385
2036	113,487	$6.88	$780,791
2037	114,864	$6.99	$802,899

2028 Low Standard estimate: $6.06 Materials Expenditure/Capita

2028 increase needed to reach Low LOS Materials Standard: **$8,310**

$8,310 = $621,775 (2028 estimate) - $613,465 (2026 budgeted)

Materials Standard – Medium LOS

Cost to reach Medium LOS for Materials Expenditure/Capita

Year	Population, estimate	Medium Standard, estimate	Total Expenditure
2028	102,471	$9.09	$931,461
2029	103,848	$9.24	$959,555
2030	105,225	$9.38	$987,010
2031	106,602	$9.53	$1,015,917
2032	107,979	$9.68	$1,045,237
2033	109,356	$9.83	$1,074,969
2034	110,733	$9.99	$1,106,223
2035	112,110	$10.15	$1,137,917
2036	113,487	$10.31	$1,170,051
2037	114,864	$10.47	$1,202,626

2028 Medium Standard estimate:
$9.09 Materials Expenditure/Capita

2028 increase needed to reach Medium LOS Materials Standard:
$317,996

$317,996 = $931,461 (2028 estimate) - $613,465 (2026 budgeted)

Materials Standard – High LOS

Cost to reach High LOS for Materials Expenditure/Capita

Year	Population, estimate	High Standard, estimate	Total Expenditure
2028	102,471	$12.12	$1,242,351
2029	103,848	$12.31	$1,278,069
2030	105,225	$12.51	$1,316,365
2031	106,602	$12.71	$1,354,710
2032	107,979	$12.91	$1,394,609
2033	109,356	$13.11	$1,433,657
2034	110,733	$13.32	$1,474,964
2035	112,110	$13.53	$1,516,848
2036	113,487	$13.75	$1,560,446
2037	114,864	$13.96	$1,603,501

2028 High Standard estimate: $12.12 Materials Expenditure/Capita

2028 increase needed to reach High LOS Materials Standard: **$628,886**

$628,886 = $1,242,351 (2028 est.) - $613,465 (2026 budgeted)

Open Hours Standard

Open Hours – Low LOS

Sample Hours Low LOS	Central	Fairhaven / South	Barkley / East	Bellis Fair / North
Monday	11-6	11-6	11-6	11-6
Tuesday	11-7	11-7	11-7	11-7
Wednesday	11-7	11-7	11-7	11-7
Thursday	11-6	11-6	11-6	11-6
Friday	11-6	11-6	11-6	11-6
Saturday	11-6	11-6	11-6	11-6
Sunday	Closed	Closed	Closed	Closed

Additional FTE needed for Low Open Hours standard from 2026 staffing levels:

Library Clerks: +3.8 FTE ($295,000)
Library Assistants: +4.2 FTE ($258,000)
Person In Charge: +0.5 FTE ($52,000)
Total Additional: **+8.5 FTE ($605,000)**

Facilities assumption:

Facility sf total does not necessitate additional staffing

Open Hours – Medium LOS

Sample Hours Medium LOS	Central	Fairhaven / South	Barkley / East	Bellis Fair / North
Monday	10-6	10-6	10-6	10-6
Tuesday	10-8	10-8	10-8	10-8
Wednesday	10-8	10-8	10-8	10-8
Thursday	10-6	10-6	10-6	10-6
Friday	10-6	10-6	10-6	10-6
Saturday	10-6	10-6	10-6	10-6
Sunday	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5

Additional FTE needed for Medium Open Hours standard from 2026 staffing levels:

Library Clerks: +7.5 FTE ($581,000)
Library Assistants: +9.5 FTE ($583,000)
Library Assistant Lead: +1 FTE ($69,000)
Person In Charge: +1 FTE ($105,000)
Total Additional: +19 FTE ($1,338,000)

Facilities assumption:

Facility sf total necessitates additional staffing (+2.5 FTE Clerk, +2.5 FTE Library Assistant, included in +19 FTE total)

Open Hours – High LOS

Sample Hours High LOS	Central	Fairhaven / South	Barkley / East	Bellis Fair / North
Monday	9-6	9-6	9-6	9-6
Tuesday	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-8
Wednesday	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-8
Thursday	9-8	9-8	9-8	9-8
Friday	9-6	9-6	9-6	9-6
Saturday	10-6	10-6	10-6	10-6
Sunday	10-6	10-6	10-6	10-6

Additional FTE needed for High Open Hours standard from 2026 staffing levels:

Library Clerks: 13.5 FTE ($1,046,000)
Library Assistants: 16.5 FTE ($1,013,000)
Library Assistant Lead: 1 FTE ($69,000)
Person In Charge: 1.5 FTE ($157,000)
Total Additional: 32.5 FTE ($2,285,000)

Facilities assumption:

Facility sf total necessitates additional staffing (+5 FTE Clerk, +5 FTE Library Assistant, included in +32.5 FTE total)

FTE Standard

CITY OF BELLINGHAM WASHINGTON

Bellingham Public Library

Additional FTE

These are additional FTE needed to support library services and functions, not tied to Open Hours:

1.5 Additional FTE ($125,000) for Low Standard

5 Additional FTE ($415,000) for Medium Standard

8.5 Additional FTE ($700,000) for High Standard

What you might see:

- Outreach specialist (reinstate)
- Collection maintenance / Book Club kits / collection support / WiFi Hotspot support (reinstate)
- Operational facilities support / contract specialist / project management (new)
- Social media / graphic design / marketing / public website (new)
- Digital Equity position (new)
- Adult Services librarian / programming (new)
- Children’s librarian (new)

FTE Standard

FTE LOS	Low (50 FTE)	Medium (58 FTE)	High (64 FTE)
Additional FTE, Open Hours	8.5 FTE $605,000	19 FTE $1,338,000	32.5 FTE $2,285,000
Additional FTE, not open hours	1.5 FTE $125,000	5 FTE $415,000	8.5 FTE $700,000
Additional Total FTE needed	**+10 FTE** **$730,000**	**+24 FTE** **$1,753,000**	**+41 FTE** **$2,985,000**
Current FTE, 2026 Budgeted	50.3 FTE	50.3 FTE	50.3 FTE
Additional FTE needed, TOTAL	10 FTE	24 FTE	41 FTE
Current FTE + Additional TOTAL	**60.3 FTE**	**74.3 FTE**	**91.3 FTE**

Current Standard for Total FTE:

- Low (50 FTE)
- Medium (58 FTE)
- High (64 FTE)

*Needs to be updated to reflect expanded Open Hours standard at branches

A revised Standard for Total FTE might be:

- Low (60 FTE)
- Medium (74 FTE)
- High (90 FTE)

Facilities Standard

A 75-Year-Old Building Serving a Growing City

- 1951: Central Library opened. Bellingham population ~34,000
- 1985: Last major remodel. Bellingham population ~50,000
- 2021: Phase 1 renovation completed
- Today: Serving 97,000 residents with nearly 400,000 annual visits to the Central Library
- 2026-2027: Phase 2 renovation underway

Facilities Needs

Year	Population, estimate	Low Standard, est (.6 x pop est) sf/cap	Medium Standard, est (.8 x pop est) sf/cap	High Standard, est (1 x pop est) sf/cap
2028	**102,471**	61,483	81,977	102,471
2029	**103,848**	62,309	83,078	103,848
2030	**105,225**	63,135	84,180	105,225
2031	**106,602**	63,961	85,282	106,602
2032	**107,979**	64,787	86,383	107,979
2033	**109,356**	65,614	87,485	109,356
2034	**110,733**	66,440	88,586	110,733
2035	**112,110**	67,266	89,688	112,110
2036	**113,487**	68,092	90,790	113,487
2037	**114,864**	**68,918 sf/cap**	**91,891 sf/cap**	**114,864 sf/cap**

Current Facilities: 57,223 sf

- Central Library: 44,000 sf
- Fairhaven Library, excluding auditorium: 7,250 sf
- Barkley Library: 1,420 sf
- Bellis Fair Library: 4,553 sf

Facilities – Low LOS

Year	Population, est	Low Standard, est (.6 x pop est) sf/cap
2028	**102,471**	61,483
2029	**103,848**	62,309
2030	**105,225**	63,135
2031	**106,602**	63,961
2032	**107,979**	64,787
2033	**109,356**	65,614
2034	**110,733**	66,440
2035	**112,110**	67,266
2036	**113,487**	68,092
2037	**114,864**	**68,918 sf/cap**

Current Facilities: 57,223 sf

Additional sf needed for Low Facilities standard by 2037:
11,695 sf

What you might see:

- +5,500 sf at Bellis Fair/North side (leased) $2.75M +$144,000 operating/yr
- +6,000 sf at Barkley/East side (leased) $3M + $156,000 operating/yr
- Central Library exterior renovation (owned) $4.25M

2028-2037 Capital investment: $10M or **$1M/year**
2028-2037 Additional operating : **$300,000/year**

Facilities – Medium LOS

Year	Population, est	Medium Standard, est (.8 x pop est) sf/cap
2028	**102,471**	81,977
2029	**103,848**	83,078
2030	**105,225**	84,180
2031	**106,602**	85,282
2032	**107,979**	86,383
2033	**109,356**	87,485
2034	**110,733**	88,586
2035	**112,110**	89,688
2036	**113,487**	90,790
2037	**114,864**	**91,891 sf/cap**

Current Facilities: 57,223 sf

Additional sf needed for Medium Facilities standard by 2037: **34,668 sf**

What you might see:

- +5,500 sf at Bellis Fair/North side (leased) $2.75M +$144,000 operating/yr
- +25,000 sf at Barkley/East side (leased) $12.5M + $600,000 operating/yr
- +3,000 sf, Fairhaven auditorium renovation, library interior renovation, seismic retrofit (owned) $7.5M
- Central Library exterior renovation (owned) $4.25M

2028-2037 Capital investment: $27M or **$2.7/year**

2028-2037 Additional operating : **$744,000/year**

Facilities – High LOS

Year	Population, est	High Standard, est (1 x pop est) sf/cap
2028	**102,471**	102,471
2029	**103,848**	103,848
2030	**105,225**	105,225
2031	**106,602**	106,602
2032	**107,979**	107,979
2033	**109,356**	109,356
2034	**110,733**	110,733
2035	**112,110**	112,110
2036	**113,487**	113,487
2037	**114,864**	**114,864 sf/cap**

Current Facilities: 57,223 sf

Additional sf needed for High Facilities standard by 2037: **57,641 sf**

What you might see:

- +15,000 sf at Bellis Fair/North side (leased) $7.5M +$400,000 operating/yr
- +25,000 sf at Barkley/East side (leased) $12.5M + $600,000 operating/yr
- +3,000 sf, Fairhaven auditorium renovation, library interior renovation, seismic retrofit (owned) $7.5M
- +10,000 sf : Central Library exterior renovation $4.25; after-hours meeting space addition (owned, new) $8.5M and HVAC upgrade (renovated): $3.5M
- +5,000 sf : Consider New Community Recreation Center Branch (owned, new) $4.25M

2028-2037 Capital investment: $48M or **$4.8M/year**
2028-2037 Additional operating : **$1M/year**

Supplies, Equipment, Other

Additional Costs: Low Standard: $150,000
Additional Costs: Medium Standard: $500,000
Additional Costs: High Standard: $850,000

What you might see:

- Inflationary adjustment for supplies, contracts
- Increased training and conference budget
- Marketing budget
- Increased collection of WiFi hotspots
- Additional public technology offerings and digital platforms
- After-hours book lockers
- Additional delivery vehicle
- Additional Community Book return location(s)
- Additional small sorter at second location

LOS Total increase: 2028-2037

LOS Total Increase, est.	Low Standard	Medium Standard	High Standard
Open Hours	+$605,000 (8.5 FTE)	+1,338,000 (19 FTE)	+$2,285,000 (32.5 FTE)
Additional FTE	+$125,000 (1.5 FTE)	+$415,000 (5 FTE)	+$700,000 (8.5 FTE)
Materials	+$8,310 (2028)	+$317,996 (2028)	+$628,886 (2028)
Facilities – operating	+$300,000	+$744,000	+$1,000,000
Supplies/Equipment	+$150,000	+$500,000	+$850,000
Facilities – capital	+$1,000,000 /yr	+$2,700,000 /yr	+$4,800,000 /yr

LOS Summary Total $ Increase, est.	Low Standard	Medium Standard	High Standard
Total FTE	+$730,000 (10 FTE)	+$1,753,000 (24 FTE)	+$2,985,000 (41 FTE)
Total Materials/Other	+$458,000 (2028)	+$1,562,000 (2028)	+$2,479,000 (2028)
Total Operating, rounded	**+$1,200,000**	**+$3,300,000**	**+$5,500,000**
Total Capital	+$1,000,000/year	+$2,700,000/year	+$4,800,000 /yr
Grand Total in 2028	**+$2,200,000**	**+$6,000,000**	**+$10,300,000**

Next Steps

- Identify recommended Level of Service goal
- Identify funding avenue(s) to achieve recommended Level of Service goal
- Discuss strategies for funding success