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From: Jim Scheppke <jscheppke@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, July 01, 2019 11:13 AM
To: citycouncil
Subject: Advance Testimony on the Proposed Resumption of the Big Weed
Attachments: Why the Big Weed Must End.docx

Categories: Follow-up

Dear Mayor and Councilors:

My understanding is that at your meeting on July 8th you will hear of a plan to resume the mass book removal project at our library (aka "The Big Weed") that saw thousands of books of enduring value removed last fall before several Councilors intervened.

Attached is my written testimony for the July 8th meeting. I apologize for the length and complexity of the testimony, but this is a very serious issue, involving hundreds of thousands of dollars of city assets, that demands a careful and detailed evaluation.

I provide my testimony in advance in hopes that you will have time to read it and think about it before your decision-making on July 8th.

Thank you for your service,

Jim

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WHY "THE BIG WEED" MUST END

Testimony by Jim Scheppke, Oregon State Librarian Emeritus

Background

At a Salem Public Library "Selector's Meeting" on September 29, 2018 the City Librarian announced to adult services staff involved in collection maintenance that "a big weeding project is upcoming as bond preparations come together." Staff was told that an analysis done by the State Library showed that the library collection was 30% larger than national peers and that "shelf space will be reduced as we move back into the building." She stated that "use will be the most reliable indicator that an item should remain the collection." Longtime adult services librarians who had spent a career carefully building a quality core collection were shocked by this directive. They were left with the impression that their job would now be to reduce the library book collection by about one third.

The "Big Weed" got underway in October and November, and by the end of the November over 2,000 books had been removed, mostly from the religion, philosophy, computer science, poetry and literature collections. One of the librarians described her work this way:

The 800s [poetry and literature] will also be cut by a large percentage by the time we are through. We already weeded everything to 3 or 3.5 years for the last circulation. And now the strict condition weeding will wipe out a lot more. None of us are opposed to weeding in general — but this is clear cutting — not thinning.

Opposition from library users was building as the word got out about what was happening. City Councilors received numerous communications from alarmed library users, so much so that in December Councilors Cook and Hoy met with City Manager Steve Powers and convinced him to direct the library to suspend the Big Weed until after the Library Advisory Board could discuss it at their meeting on January 9, 2019.

I made a public records request and received a list of the 2,078 books that were removed in the Big Weed in October and November. I compared the list to the books included in a well-respected reference guide to "core collection" books that, in the professional judgement of librarians, belong in every library of any size. I found that 222 books, about 10% of those removed, were considered to be "core collection" books.

On January 9th a standing room only crowd packed the Anderson Room of the library. Most were there to tell the Library Advisory Board that they opposed the Big Weed. Testimony was passionate and emotional as book lovers lamented the fact that thousands of books were gone from our library and many thousands more would be removed if the Big Weed were to continue. The LAB listened to the testimony and announced that they would make a decision about whether to recommend a continuation of the Big Weed at their next meeting on February 13th. That meeting was moved to Loucks Auditorium to accommodate the crowd of library users opposed to the Big Weed. But all of the passionate testimony over two meetings fell on deaf ears. With next to no discussion the LAB passed a motion to recommend the resumption of the Big Weed to the Salem City Council.

The Council met on April 22, 2019 to hear the LAB recommendation. A few weeks earlier the Friends of the Library held their spring book sale that featured hundreds of books that were victims of the Big Weed. Hardback books sold for \$1.25 each and paperbacks for 75¢. At the meeting on April 22nd Councilor Hoy made a motion to continue the suspension of the Big Weed until the Library Advisory Board received what they called a "tracking study" of all the books removed from the library in May. The LAB wanted to see an item by item accounting of the reasons for book removal. Hoy's motion stated that until this study is completed books should only be removed due to poor condition. He said he hoped to bring the two sides together for some kind of compromise. He was quoted in the *Salem Reporter* as saying, "Everybody agrees that we want a great library, so we should be able to build off that and create a library everybody can live with."

The LAB met on June 12th and reviewed the results of the "tracking study." Following their review they approved a motion to resume the Big Weed which presumably will go to the City Council on July 8th.

Was the Collection Development Policy Properly Adopted?

Salem Public Library management views the Big Weed merely as implementation of the Collection Development Policy that was proposed by management and approved by the LAB in 2018 and presented to the City Council as an information item on August 27, 2018. Given the uproar from library users that the implementation of the policy has caused, it appears to me in hindsight that its adoption process was very flawed. The Salem Revised Code Chapter 18 appears to set out two levels of policy-making for the library. At the highest level are policies recommended by the LAB to the City Council and approved by the Council "for the governance of the library" (SRC 18.050(a)). At a lower level are "internal administrative policies and procedures" set at the staff level, one of which is for "maintenance of general books."

On the Salem Public Library webpage entitled "Library Use Policies" there are five policies, one of which is the Collection Development Policy. These policies all appear to be "internal administrative policies and procedures." However, three of the policies were adopted as Administrative Rules which under SRC 20J requires certain procedures be followed including public notice, the opportunity for public comment and the opportunity for Council review.

The three library policies that were adopted as Administrative Rules deal with the library "Code of Conduct," the "Children's Safety and Unattended Child Policy" and the "Children's and Teen Area Use." It's hard to understand why the Collection Development Policy was not considered to merit the same adoption procedure as these policies. It is certainly at least equal to them in importance, dealing, as it does, with millions of dollars of public assets and their disposition. The fact that about 70 citizens turned out at the LAB meeting on January 9th and again on February 13th shows the high degree of public concern with collection development policy at our library.

I question whether the Collection Development Policy should not be considered to be null and void because it was not properly adopted as an Administrative Rule, as the other library policies were. I believe the policy should go back to the LAB for reconsideration and proper adoption as an Administrative Rule under SRC 20J.

Is the Big Weed "Deferred Maintenance"?

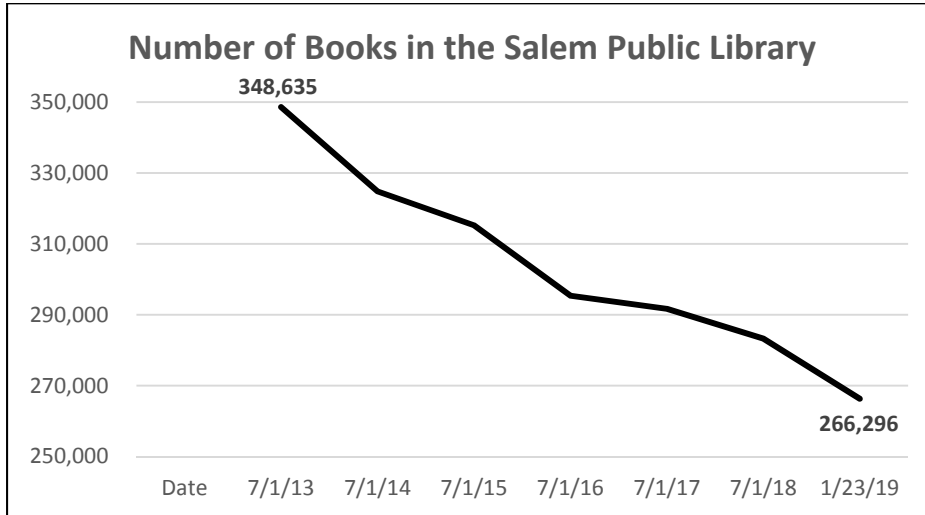
Several of the reasons given by library management about the need for the Big Weed are not grounded in reality. At the "Selectors" meeting on September 29, 2018, where the Big Weed was announced, a lot was made of an analysis commissioned from the State Library of Oregon a few years ago that purportedly showed that the book collection was 30% larger than "peer libraries" in the U.S. The analysis, done by Ross Fuqua, used national library data from the Institute of Museum and Library Services for 2016 (the latest national data available) to compare the size of Salem's book collection to other libraries serving populations between 150,000 and 170,000 and with three or fewer library branches. Using these criteria resulted in a very strange comparison, since it turns out to be fairly rare that libraries serving this population range do not have *more* branches. Many of the 16 libraries in the comparison were in relatively new, fast-growing suburbs with larger populations, but covering a limited area, where more branches are not needed. These included cities like Carrollton (TX), Corona (CA), Peoria (AZ), and Frisco (TX). These are hardly "peers" of the capital city of Oregon with one of the oldest libraries on the West coast.

But another fatal flaw in the Fuqua report was discovered by me in consultation with Mr. Fuqua and John Goodyear who directs the Chemeketa Cooperative Library Services (CCRLS). CCRLS runs the computer system that serves the Salem Public Library and other libraries in the three-county CCRLS region. The CCRLS computer tracks the number of books and other library materials at the regional libraries and provides these numbers, and others, to libraries that then report them to the State Library which reports them to the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The 341,088 "print materials" (i.e., books) in the Fuqua report seemed far off the number that the CCRLS computer was showing as the current count of books in the library. Upon further investigation we discovered that nearly 46,000 periodicals had been erroneously included in the count of "print materials" in 2016 and in the years since then. The State Library has now corrected the number of books reported by the library as of July 1, 2018 to 283,289. The State Library has no plans to try to correct the number reported to the IMLS in 2016. Be that as it may, the bottom line is that the Fuqua report that library management used to justify the Big Weed no longer has any credibility because of the bad data.

So if the Fuqua report does not provide a rationale for the Big Weed, is there another reason to justify it? In an email that I obtained from a concerned library user, the City Librarian states: "Basically, a lot of this boils down to the library version of deferred maintenance. Library collections are dynamic and should be consistently and constantly evaluated. Some of our collections have had that attention to varying degrees, and some have not."

So is the Big Weed just "deferred maintenance?" Absolutely not!

Here is an estimate of what has happened to the library book collection in the past six years:



I call this an estimate, because the numbers for 2013 to 2017 were adjusted to take out an estimated number of periodicals that were erroneously included in the numbers reported to the State Library. The number for 1/23/16 which I obtained from John Goodyear at CCRLS is accurate.

What this shows is our library was not in need of "deferred maintenance" when the Big Weed began last October. What this shows is that our library has been aggressively "maintained" in each of the past six years, at least. *We have lost about 24% of our book collection.* My analysis further shows that in each of these years, more books were discarded from our library than were added to our library. The present City Librarian is the third one in a row who has been enthusiastic about weeding. The claim that the Big Weed is just "deferred maintenance" is not true.

A Real Peer Analysis

The aggressive weeding that has resulted in a 24% reduction of our book collection in the past six years has left us with one of the smallest library book collections per capita in Oregon. Here is how our collection compares to our real "peers" in our own state (not to suburban libraries in other states).

Library	Pop. served in 2017-18	Print Items in 2017-18	Print items per capital in 2017-18
CORVALLIS-BENTON CO. PUBLIC LIBRARY	84,928	273,469	3.22
BEAVERTON CITY LIBRARY	145,118	275,347	1.90
HILLSBORO PUBLIC LIBRARY	154,197	234,718	1.52
SALEM PUBLIC LIBRARY*	163,480	266,296	1.63
EUGENE PUBLIC LIBRARY	167,780	377,001	2.25
PEER AVERAGE		290,134	2.10

*Count as of 1-23-19

Only one other library has a smaller collection size per capita and that is in fast growing Hillsboro (18% population growth in the past decade). The average size book collection of these peers is 2.1 books per capita compared to only 1.63 in our library.

There is a good case to be made that the situation is even worse than this. That's because anyone in the three-county CCRLS region can use our library and check out up to 10 books at a time (25 for children). And many do! Keizer, with a population approaching 40,000 may be the largest city in the U.S. without a real tax-supported public library (it has a very poor non-profit library run by volunteers with donated books). And nearby Turner and Aumsville do not have public libraries. The Salem Public Library is the de facto public library for these cities. So if you just add the combined population of these three cities (44,565) to the Salem population, the number of books per capita drops to only 1.28. And this does not even include the rural population that lives outside of Salem and the three other cities that use our library.

There are 29 libraries in Oregon that serve populations over 25,000. On average they have book collections of 2.25 per capita. Only five of these libraries have per capita collections smaller than Salem's, using the city population to calculate the per capita figure of 1.63. And using the larger population number that includes Keizer, Turner and Aumsville, only three libraries have smaller book collections per capita than we do.

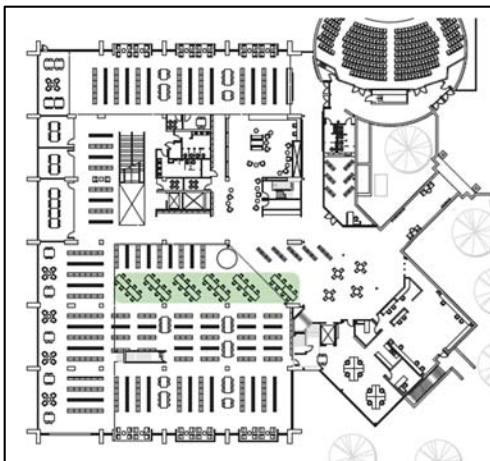
The Big Weed lasted only about two months before it was suspended by the City Manager. It only touched four of the ten Dewey ranges of the nonfiction collection (000-299 and 800s) We know that 2,078 books were removed. If the Big Weed were to resume and all of the remaining adult nonfiction and fiction were to receive the same "evaluation" as happened to just a small portion of the nonfiction collection last fall, it is likely that many tens of thousands of books would be lost and we might find ourselves, then, with the smallest book collection per capita in Oregon.

What Is Really Driving the Big Weed?

When the Big Weed was first announced at the "Selectors Meeting" last September, one of the reasons given was that "shelf space will be reduced as we move back into the building." At a public open house with the library renovation project Design Team on April 30th, we got a sense of what this really means.

Six years ago, when our library book collection was 24% larger, the adult collection was housed on all three floors of the library. The audiovisual collection (CDs, DVDs, etc.) was on the bottom floor, the 800s and 900s (e.g., travel, biography, history) were on the third floor, and the rest of the adult collection was on the main (2nd) floor. Since then the AV collection has been moved to the main floor, but there are still 13 ranges of shelves holding many thousands of nonfiction books on the third floor.

Here is what was shown on April 30th as the preliminary design for the main floor of the library after the renovation:



This shows that all of the public Internet computers from the bottom floor have been moved to the main floor. In addition, all of the adult fiction books in the 800s and 900s on the third floor have been moved to the main floor. We were led to understand at this meeting and subsequently that the entire adult book collection will be shelved on the main floor. What's more, we have been told that all of the new shelving will be only 5 1/2 feet tall. Most of the library shelving today is 7 feet tall.

If you count the number of shelving units in this floorplan, there are 811. Presently the adult library collection resides on 826 shelving units on the main floor and another 234 on the third floor, a total of 1,060.

I received a copy of the "Library Building Program," which the Design Team is using to plan the renovation, with a public records request. It states on page 5: "Overall, the proposed program includes capacity for collection, individual seating and computers that are *comparable to current levels*." I also received similar information in an email from the Project Manager for the City, Aaron Kimsey: "Again, the plan is to house the *existing collection* and services in the new space."

It is impossible that these statements could be true, judging from the floorplan presented on April 30th.

With 249 fewer units of adult collection shelving than the 1,060 now on the main floor and the third floor, and with all of the shelving being 1 1/2 feet shorter than most of the existing shelving, there is just no way to believe that it will be possible to shelve a "comparable" number of adult books on the main floor, or that the "existing collection" of adult books could be accommodated. The only way these statements could be true, in my estimation, is if the we are talking about a "comparable" collection and an "existing collection" after tens of thousands more books are removed in a resumption of the Big Weed.

So what really might be driving the Big Weed is the desire of library management to take a collection that just a few years ago was housed on all three floors of the library and shoehorn it onto the main floor, along with the Internet computers that used to be on the bottom floor, and to have it all on 5 1/2 foot shelves. Doing that will certainly require a Big Weed — a downsizing of our adult book collection to become the smallest per capita in the state of Oregon.

The Big Weed and the CREW Manual

There is a good case to be made for the fact that the Big Weed actually violates the Collection Development Policy that the library is supposed to be following. The Collection Development Policy states that something called the "CREW method" will be used "when evaluating the collection" ('evaluating' is often used by library management as a polite euphemism for weeding).

The CREW manual was developed about three decades ago at the Texas State Library (where I once worked) as a handbook for collection maintenance in public libraries. It has gone through several editions since then. It is used as a guideline for weeding in many public libraries, large and small, even though it was "designed for use primarily by librarians and staff in smaller community libraries and branches of larger systems."

So does the Salem Public Library actually follow the guidelines in the CREW manual? In two crucial instances, I believe our library does not.

Here is what the CREW manual says about "How much weeding is enough?":

Can we weed too much? That is a question that has to be answered locally. In general, you should weed about the same amount as you are adding to the collection unless you are in a developing mode, such as when a library first opens or has expanded. Your available shelf space establishes the upper parameter of the collection size and every item in the collection should be useful to the community being served. Once the collection has matured, it will remain fairly stable until something changes—such as adding on to the building. *A rule of thumb held by many library professionals is that about 5% of the collection be weeded every year.* This allows for turnover of the collection every twenty years (p. 17).

According to my analysis, an average of 10% of the adult book collection of the Salem Public Library has been weeded every year in the past six years. That is *double* the guideline in the CREW manual. We certainly have a "mature" collection. The Salem Public Library is one of the oldest public libraries on the West coast, having been started by the Salem Women's Club in 1904. And yet it has not been "fairly stable" in recent years. It has already been downsized by 24%. So our library has not been following the CREW manual guidelines as called for in the Collection Development Policy. We have been violating the guidelines and weeding our collection twice as much as we should.

And the Big Weed itself has also violated the CREW manual guidelines. You might recall that in the September 29th "Selectors Meeting" where the Big Weed was announced, staff was told that "use will be the most reliable indicator that an item should remain the collection." This means that when a book has not checked out recently, it was to be removed. But how do you define 'recently'?

In an email to a concerned citizen dated December 6, 2018, the City Librarian had this to say about it:

Materials selectors for the library are trained to use industry standard tools and national best practices for data-driven decision making. These tools help identify types of materials such as items that are no longer being used. This seems to be of particular concern. Our criteria is based on 1-3 years as set out in the CREW manual.

Trouble is, that is not what is "set out in the CREW manual." The CREW manual defines "unused material" this way: "Items that have not circulated within the past 3-5 years and not actually used for reference or in-house research" (p. 20).

So the CREW manual guidelines were not being followed when library staff was told to remove books in the Big Weed that had not checked out in less than three years. If the Big Weed resumes and the City Librarian's 1-3 year criterion for "unused material" is followed, it will result in the removal of tens of thousands more books from our library, in violation of the CREW manual guideline.

The Big Picture

In closing I want to step back from the Big Weed and make note of the fact that most Salem elected officials and library users do not realize how substandard our library has become. It's not just the adult book collection that has suffered a "death by 1,000 cuts" over several decades. When I moved to Oregon with my librarian wife in 1986, the Salem Public Library, under the outstanding leadership of George Happ, was regarded as one of the best public libraries in Oregon. The library was known as an innovator. It was the first to have an auditorium (and even today only one other public library, Beaverton City Library, has one). It was the first library to have an interactive space for children, the Discovery Room, which still draws children to the library today. There was a time with our library even offered low cost dial-up Internet service to make the Internet available to more citizens.

How far we have fallen from those glory days.

I recently used State Library data to develop an Oregon Public Library Report Card. Here is a summary of the report cards for the eight Oregon libraries serving the largest populations in the state:

Oregon Public Library Report Card Summary for Major Libraries in 2017-18

Paid Staff Per 1,000 Population	<i>Value</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Grade</i>
Multnomah County Library	0.67	5	A
Eugene Public Library	0.63	7	B
Corvallis-Benton Co. Library	0.52	10	B
Hillsboro Public Library	0.51	11	B
Deschutes Public Library	0.48	13	B
Beaverton City Library	0.45	17	C
Jackson County Library	0.36	21	D
Salem Public Library	0.27	26	D

E-books Per Capita	<i>Value</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Grade</i>
Eugene Public Library	1.87	4	A
Deschutes Public Library	1.83	5	A
Corvallis-Benton Co. Library	0.60	24	D
Multnomah County Library	0.46	25	D
Beaverton City Library	0.43	26	D
Hillsboro Public Library	0.41	27	F
Salem Public Library	0.30	28	F
Jackson County Library	0.21	29	F

Expenditures on Collection Per Capita	<i>Value</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Grade</i>
Deschutes Public Library	\$9.87	1	A
Multnomah County Library	\$9.37	3	A
Corvallis-Benton Co. Library	\$8.65	4	B
Eugene Public Library	\$6.57	9	B
Hillsboro Public Library	\$4.03	13	C
Jackson County Library	\$3.91	15	C
Beaverton City Library	\$3.46	16	C
Salem Public Library	\$3.13	22	D

Annual Public Service Hours Per 1,000 Population	<i>Value</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Grade</i>
Corvallis-Benton Co. Library	98	9	B
Deschutes Public Library	91	13	B
Jackson County Library	84	16	C
Multnomah County Library	66	21	D
Eugene Public Library	48	24	D
Hillsboro Public Library	42	27	F
Beaverton City Library	40	28	F
Salem Public Library	26	29	F

Total Library Expenditures Per Capita	<i>Value</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Grade</i>
Multnomah County Library	\$95.66	3	A
Corvallis-Benton Co. Library	\$78.69	6	A
Eugene Public Library	\$77.97	7	B
Beaverton City Library	\$63.30	11	B
Deschutes Public Library	\$59.25	13	B
Hillsboro Public Library	\$47.45	15	C
Jackson County Library	\$38.45	20	D
Salem Public Library	\$28.52	27	F

Library Visits Per Capita	<i>Value</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Grade</i>
Corvallis-Benton Co. Library	7.12	5	A
Eugene Public Library	6.91	8	B
Hillsboro Public Library	5.68	11	B
Beaverton City Library	5.55	14	C
Multnomah County Library	4.70	20	D
Deschutes Public Library	4.56	21	D
Jackson County Library	4.91	22	D
Salem Public Library	3.15	25	D

Print Items Per Capita	<i>Value</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Grade</i>
Corvallis-Benton Co. Library	3.22	5	A
Eugene Public Library	2.25	16	C
Jackson County Library	2.21	17	C
Beaverton City Library	1.90	18	C
Multnomah County Library	1.82	20	D
Salem Public Library	1.73	22	D
Hillsboro Public Library	1.52	25	D
Deschutes Public Library	1.26	27	F

Circulation (Checkouts) Per Capita	<i>Value</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Grade</i>
Multnomah County Library	23.11	4	A
Corvallis-Benton Co. Library	19.51	6	A
Beaverton City Library	18.94	8	B
Hillsboro Public Library	16.31	10	B
Eugene Public Library	16.10	11	B
Deschutes Public Library	12.98	14	C
Jackson County Library	8.74	21	D
Salem Public Library	8.18	23	D

Print Items Added Per Capita	<i>Value</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Grade</i>
Corvallis-Benton Co. Library	0.28	7	B
Multnomah County Library	0.25	9	B
Deschutes Public Library	0.23	11	B
Beaverton City Library	0.22	13	B
Hillsboro Public Library	0.20	14	C
Salem Public Library	0.19	18	C
Eugene Public Library	0.18	20	D
Jackson County Library	0.12	28	F

Children's Program Attendance Per Capita	<i>Value</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Grade</i>
Beaverton City Library	0.53	4	A
Deschutes Public Library	0.47	7	B
Corvallis-Benton Co. Library	0.45	8	B
Salem Public Library	0.39	12	B
Hillsboro Public Library	0.34	15	C
Jackson County Library	0.32	17	C
Multnomah County Library	0.30	20	D
Eugene Public Library	0.29	22	D

Program Attendance Per Capita (All Ages)	<i>Value</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Grade</i>
Beaverton City Library	0.59	7	B
Deschutes Public Library	0.59	8	B
Corvallis-Benton Co. Library	0.56	9	B
Jackson County Library	0.50	11	B
Salem Public Library	0.48	14	C
Eugene Public Library	0.40	18	C
Multnomah County Library	0.39	19	C
Hillsboro Public Library	0.38	21	D

Volunteer Hours Per 1,000 Population	<i>Value</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Grade</i>
Hillsboro Public Library	191	8	B
Corvallis-Benton Co. Library	180	10	B
Beaverton City Library	172	12	B
Deschutes Public Library	109	16	C
Salem Public Library	106	17	C
Eugene Public Library	101	18	C
Multnomah County Library	80	20	D
Jackson County Library	74	22	D

Internet Computer Users Per 1,000 Population	<i>Value</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Grade</i>
Eugene Public Library	1,150	2	A
Multnomah County Library	841	9	B
Corvallis-Benton Co. Library	747	11	B
Deschutes Public Library	675	13	C
Hillsboro Public Library	621	14	C
Beaverton City Library	602	15	C
Jackson County Library	477	20	D
Salem Public Library	324	27	F

Square Feet of Library Facilities Per 1,000 Population	<i>Value</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Grade</i>
Deschutes Public Library	1,230	3	A
Corvallis-Benton Co. Library	873	7	B
Jackson County Library	841	9	B
Hillsboro Public Library	597	15	C
Salem Public Library	594	17	C
Eugene Public Library	591	18	C
Beaverton City Library	544	20	D
Multnomah County Library	346	26	D

The Oregon Public Library Report Card compares the 29 largest libraries in Oregon (those serving over 25,000 population) on 14 different key metrics that assess library quality and library performance. For each metric a grade is awarded based on how the library falls within a quintile ranking of the 29 libraries.

As shown in the comparison of the top eight libraries in the state, the Salem Public Library scores no better than a D or an F on 9 of the 14 metrics, worse than any other major library. Its best score is a B for *Children's Program Attendance Per Capita*. But all the other scores range from mediocre to poor.

What drives most of the poor scores for our library is the metric *Total Library Expenditures Per Capita* where our library scores an F, with expenditures of only \$28.52 per capita. Our library ranks third from the bottom of all 29 libraries serving over 25,000 population. Even the Jackson County Library, which has struggled for funding in the past decade with the dramatic decline in county timber receipts, manages to spend about \$10 more per capita than our library. And the top funded library, Multnomah County Library spends over three times the amount per capita as our library. Eugene spends more than twice as much. It should be clear that our library will stay at the bottom of the heap as the worst major library in Oregon unless some way is found to improve library funding.

The Big Weed just rubs salt into the wound. To me it's madness to set out to discard thousands of books when our library's ability to replace them and to grow our collection appears to be nonexistent at this time.

Conclusion

I hope this paper has convinced you that the Big Weed must end, and for these reasons:

- The Library Collection Development Policy was never properly adopted as an Administrative Rule like other library administrative policies were. The process should begin anew and allow for public notice, public comment and the opportunity for Council review.
- Our adult book collection was never in need of "deferred maintenance." To the contrary, it has been relentlessly "maintained" for the past six years to the point that about 24% of the collection we had six years ago is gone. We have only 1.6 books per capita compared to the Oregon norm of about 2 books per capita. If you include the populations of Keizer, Turner, and Aumsville in our service area population we have one of the smallest book collection per capita in the state — and that's before the resumption of the Big Weed.
- The Big Weed is inconsistent with the CREW manual guidelines which the Collection Development Policy says we are supposed to follow. The CREW manual says no more than 5% of a collection should be weeded annually and that a "mature" collection should not be downsized. Weeding at our library has averaged double that (10%) in the past six years and as a result we have lost 24% of our collection. Also, the CREW manual defines "unused materials" as those that have not checked out in 3 to 5 years, not 1 to 3 years — the criterion used for the Big Weed according to the City Librarian.

Here is what the City Council should do in response to the LAB recommendation to resume the Big Weed:

- End the Big Weed for all the reasons provided in this paper.
- Ask the Library Advisory Board to revisit the Collection Development Policy with an eye to any changes that might be needed in light of community response to the Big Weed. Then send it forward for proper adoption as an Administrative Rule including public notice, opportunity for public comment and opportunity for Council review.

These recommendations are made out of great affection for our library and for all Oregon public libraries which I spent a quarter century working to develop and improve. I hope they are taken in the constructive spirit in which they are offered. I only want the best for our library.