

# **Status of current programs and initiatives at the Library**

## **SUMMARY**

The library's primary focus for 2018 and 2019 has been on following through on commitments that previous administrations have made to the City of Salem partners and staff, City Council, and the Library Advisory Board. For instance, the seismic retrofit bond project, the Market Study Survey and report, and the Collection Development Policy had years of work with stakeholder and staff input. These initiatives are now informed by work towards outcomes under the promise of "renew our library" that continuously increase patron usage and improve patron experience

The first phase of work is continuing to drive forward initiatives that had been underway for months or even years including the seismic retrofit, creating and vetting a public-facing Collection Development Policy, and comparing where we have been to where we should be going with a market study paralleling a market study done in 2012. We've recently started to move into a new phase, particularly with the Collection Development Policy that includes the work to administer and implement the policy and bring the collections up to the standards the policy sets out.

Most important in both phases is exploring ideas to expand our reach while retaining our core users in response to the market study. This includes projects like the consolidated desk and meeting people where they are with roaming reference. This initiative to use our constraints as a launching point for creative solutions was first explored a few years ago, but expanded and explored now with staff-led teams. With this work the aim is to be more collaborative and build efficiencies with the idea of serving our community as one Library.

## **FACTS AND FINDINGS**

### **January 31st Community Meeting**

According to the results of our market study, population growth from 2012-2018 grew 11 percent for Salem, however the growth in cardholders was less than 1 percent and active cardholder engagement actually declined 3 percent.

Additionally, new cardholder retention rate (cardholders remaining active over a year after their signup) is at 44 percent and only 25 percent of households are estimated to have used the Library in the past year.

The Library will share these and other findings at an open house meeting on January 31, 2019, with the authors of our market study, Orange Boy, and the Seismic Retrofit

project team. This meeting will help us, LAB, and the community identify areas of opportunity to better meet the community's needs.

This meeting will also serve as the first introduction to the design team for the seismic retrofit project. Their attendance allows us to consider ways in which the building can be designed to address some of the challenges identified by the Orange Boy survey. The primary goal of the project is to provide major seismic safety upgrades to the structure, but the demolition and construction involved may also provide opportunities to renew the entire space.

### **Seismic Retrofit Project**

A Progressive Design Build (PDB) team, led by Howard S. Wright (general contractor) and Hacker (architect), has been selected for the project due to their track record of success with similar projects by a committee of staff and stakeholders. Programming and schematic design of the project will occur over the next four months to fine-tune the scope and schedule. During this time, the project team will be engaging the community to gather ideas and input about the possibilities of this project, starting with the Town Hall meeting in January. The collected community input will inform the continuing design of the project through the end of 2019.

Additional public outreach activities will be conducted during this time to demonstrate how the community's feedback is being implemented and to provide information about construction planned for 2020 and early 2021. During the programming and schematic design phase, the project team will also be analyzing how best to shape the interim library experience through construction to still provide quality core services to the public.

Now that the full team is onboard, a critical path for the project can be developed. Once established, the team can define the next steps of the project beyond the January 31<sup>st</sup> meeting. Critical milestones ahead include the formation of a Council subcommittee to advise the project and continued analysis of options for a potential relocation.

### **Successes and Service Enhancements**

We have had some really positive program and service responses including a very active Summer Reading Club program, Salem Reads program, and excellent teen and children circulation usage. We are getting great response on the removal of fees from DVD checkouts. The use of that collection is up 52 percent.

New digital library services have been added to our offerings. These include the e-video streaming service Kanopy, new crafting resources through Creative Bug, and magazines on Overdrive, an eBook, eAudiobook, and eMagazine platform. We continue

to see great patron experiences and high usage in the Reading Room. Patrons have responded well to having that renewed space in the library. Imagine the feeling people will get when seismic retrofit project is complete and the entire space has been renewed!

### **Collection Development Policy**

Efforts to evaluate, update, and improve our collections by having consistency and clarity via a Collection Development Policy. We're using data-driven tools like Collection HQ and time tested methodology like CREW to monitor and respond to usage patterns. Our ultimate goal is to reflect the diversity of the community by ensuring we carry up-to-date and in-demand materials that are well-used by the Salem community. We are also striving to answer the community's questions about this work by including new data points such as in-library use to our decision-making toolkit.

We are working on gathering further input from the community with SurveyStance, which is a tool to capture quality of experience in our services, programs, facilities, and resources. We will begin testing SurveyStance in February!

One very popular service that we've received a lot of positive feedback on and clamors for more availability is the Discovery Room in the Children's Area. The Youth Services staff are currently piloting some experimental unstaffed/limited staff/volunteer-run hours to offer the service as much as possible and with far more regularity. The newest theme for experiencing the Discovery Room is "Trip to Neverland" a Peter Pan-based pirate and fairy theme.

One of the many staff-led committees is the Outreach Committee. Recently they made a wonderful recommendation to the Library Leadership Team about increasing our Outreach services. The Leadership Team is carefully considering how to implement and foster partnerships to make as much of their vision happen as is possible.

### **Staffing and Team-Building Endeavors**

The City is working on centralizing volunteer management and Salem Public Library sees this as a wonderful chance to build stronger volunteer team coordination across the Library and the City. We hope that this will help foster communication and consistency and create some efficiencies that benefit the Library and the wonderful people who help us in a myriad of deeply needed ways. More details will arrive as the method for centralization is developing in the HR department.

Centralization to increase efficiency and build capacity is a big part of our push to become "One Library." Library Divisions often become very siloed which creates

communication and capacity issues. This is why we are slowly and with lots of staff-led input moving to a collaborative service model of service at our desks. We are also using a staff taskforce to create a Person In Charge model of handling various situations that may arise in the Library and to empower staff in how they work with each other and the public.

We are also working with the software that the Fire Department uses, called Crewsense, to help us with centralized scheduling so we're deploying our human resources as effectively as possible while protecting staff privacy. This exploration of different level of services may allow us to test new services and hours ahead of any relocation and inform a broader strategic plan discussion.

### **Exploring Options to Lower Financial Barriers**

Our experience with the DVD collection has shown that reducing financial barriers increases usage. To further improve our usage, we have developed a proposal to remove late fees on all items. This proposal has been reviewed by the Library Advisory Board. Following discussion and a review of additional research on this growing trend, the Board voted unanimously to eliminate all fines for late materials. Staff will move forward with a recommendation to Council. We intend to deliver this proposal for your consideration as soon as February.

### **BACKGROUND**

This report has been provided upon request of City Council. The information contained is a combination of the Library Leadership Team views, and information provided by staff. The self-examination process, and the writing of this report has been a good exercise in self-evaluation, and has benefitted leadership and staff.

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