



Staff Report

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TO: Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Steve Powers, City Manager

FROM: Norman Wright, Community Development Director

SUBJECT:

Library Advisory Board Update Report

Ward(s): All

Councilor(s): All

Neighborhood(s): All

Service Area(s): Welcoming and Livable Community

ISSUE:

Library Advisory Board Update.

RECOMMENDATION:

Information Only.

SUMMARY:

The Collection Development Policy and its implementation reflect the Library's mission to provide a popular, vibrant, diverse set of services that meet a broad range of the community's needs. (See Attachment 1: Salem Public Library Collection Development Policy). As the community continues to grow, its interests diversify. The Library's collection should grow and adapt in response. The policy recommended by the LAB and provided to Council facilitates this continuous improvement. Implementation of the policy is based on careful research on community preferences, professional expertise, data-driven insights, historical trends, best management practices, and other factors.

On February 13th, 2019, the Library Advisory Board (LAB) voted unanimously:

That the Salem Public Library continue full implementation of the Library's Collection Development Policy as had been conducted prior to December 2018.

LAB's decision followed two months of public meetings and comments from more than 40 people and was informed by analysis, third-party reports, and research on best practices in library science.

Next steps for LAB and the Library include:

1. Promote book purchase suggestions via the website, social media and in-person.
2. Develop strategies for the future of the Library's collections using key performance indicators that measure collection usage and vibrancy.
3. Evaluate and improve the diversity of the collection according to patron interests and activity data.
4. Continue gathering public input on the Library's collections and other ways to meet community needs and interests.
5. Implement the staff recommendation regarding collection decision tracking presented to the LAB on April 10th, 2019. (See Attachment 2: Summary of Research and Staff Recommendation).

In response to public input regarding transparency, LAB requested the collection decision tracking. Staff will conduct the tracking in May 2019 and report to the LAB and the community. The report will include the percentage of items withdrawn for condition versus lack of use and provide examples that communicate the full consideration of collection development decisions made by librarians for items withdrawn, retained, and repaired.

Reading opens doors to people of all ages by expanding worldviews and providing access to new ideas and skills. Salem Public Library can connect Salem residents of all ages to collections, programs, services and spaces that inspire, inform, and enrich their lives. The Library will continue to foster community feedback and public engagement regarding the collection and programs.

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

As a public resource, the Library exists to serve the Salem community with materials that match their changing needs and interests. The Collection Development Policy has been carefully crafted and researched by staff, and then thoroughly vetted by the LAB over a period of eight months. The LAB supported the policy at its August 2018 meeting and advised staff to begin implementation of the policy. On August 27, 2018, the Collection Development Policy was provided to Council as an information report.

The Policy recognizes that a fundamental mission of SPL is to *"maintain vibrant and appealing collections throughout the Library."* The Library's strategic plan calls for the collection to provide *"a wide range of reading and information resources that appeal to community residents."*

Under the Policy, the Library's collections are updated using criteria adopted by libraries all over the country. These criteria are known as the CREW professional best practices guidelines. Through these criteria, public libraries select core items that:

- Circulate widely
- Are of current interest to library users
- Reflect the community's uniqueness.

Books are removed if they are:

- In poor condition
- Inaccurate or not current
- No longer used
- Excess copies

To further SPL's mission for a vibrant and appealing collection, staff uses a collection maintenance software, "CollectionHQ," to track patron usage in each of its collections. (See Attachment 3: Special Collections and Patron Usage). Sub-collections unique to Salem have specific criteria different than for the general collections.

Staff also uses information from community surveys, the Chemeketa Cooperative Regional Library Services, and public listening sessions to provide insights into what residents are and are not using at Salem Public Library and why. Results confirm the diverse interests of a growing, changing Salem community, and the role of the Collection Development Policy in keeping Library resources and materials relevant to their lives. (See Attachment 4: Summary of Survey and Listening Session).

In addition to CollectionHQ, staff partnered with the research firm OrangeBoy in 2018 to develop detailed analysis of our community and its interests. Our experience and OrangeBoy's data both show that print will always be an important part of the Library's collection. Likewise, many users, or potential users, prefer literature through other mediums. Audiobooks, DVDs, e-Books, e-Magazines, e-Audio, and digital video are increasingly popular in libraries. Mobile devices and the increased ease of access to these formats have been game-changing in the past few years.

Additionally, we know the demand for e-resources and A/V materials is growing in Salem. These materials are of particular interest to younger SPL users, who show some of the strongest potential to become lifelong patrons of our service.

Finally, some of SPL's own measurements of circulation and turnover activity show that usage of the overall collection has increased by 2% year-over-year. While this may seem modest, it comes at a time when the most recent Public Library Data Service information shows Public Library circulation overall is decreasing across the nation. (See Figure 10 in Attachment 3).

While these are positive signs, the OrangeBoy survey reveals that only 25% of Salem households currently use the Library. The Library would like to improve upon these usage rates. (A summary and link to the survey may be viewed at <https://www.cityofsalem.net/Pages/library-use-survey-provides-insight-to-develop-services.aspx>). While still providing service to our core users, the survey points at ways to increase the patronage of non-user or unreached community members. This guidance helps us become more strategic in our collection development activity. A curated collection reflects the interests of those new patrons and improves our ability to attract additional interest to our library.

Moving forward, the Library will continue to demonstrate its responsiveness and sensitivity to community needs. As implementation resumes, and with relocation looming on the horizon, the City's

and Library's policies and practices will ensure the collection is managed achieving three outcomes:

1. Attract the most usage possible from current and future patrons
2. Provide the highest quality materials
3. Offer the broadest range of resources for our diverse set of needs

The Library is evaluating other service improvements through new policies, programs, amenities, and improvements. These improvements will be developed with the guidance of the Library Advisory Board and be evaluated for operational and fiscal feasibility. Building improvements and relocation issues are included in scope for the Council Subcommittee for the Seismic Retrofit project for recommendations to City Council. Other initiatives include:

- Enhanced usage through new features like auto-renewals
- Expanded diversity in materials and formats (e.g., eBooks, CDs, audiobooks, DVDs. etc.).
- Expanded options for access, such as the eBook kiosk at Center 50+
- Further public engagement on the Seismic and Safety Upgrade
- Updating our Strategic Plan

BACKGROUND:

Implementation Efforts - October to December 2018

Staff began implementing the Collection Development Policy after Council's received an information report regarding the policy on August 27, 2018. Collection evaluation guidelines were developed using professional best practices standards and included a visual guide of what could be mended and what needed to be replaced or removed. (See Attachment 5: Works Cited and Attachment 6: Condition Guidelines). Collection review began for materials in: Adult Romance Fiction, Adult Mystery Fiction, Adult Music CDs, Adult Nonfiction (ranges 000-300 and 800), Juvenile Graphic Novels, Juvenile Audiobooks, Juvenile Spanish Language, Juvenile Nonfiction, Teen Fiction and Teen Audiobooks. Adult Nonfiction was the collection most in need of attention, with the worst usage indicators, with many books in poor condition. (See Collection Performance Graph on page 1 in Attachment 3).

Two weeks into the process, staff began fielding questions and concerns raised by members of the public. Library staff listened to each concern, answered each question directly or by providing information on the library webpage, and generated significant amounts of data and reports through in-person conversation, email, public records requests, and the webpage. This information was compiled in a series of reports and presentations shared with the LAB over the course of the next three months.

Library Advisory Board Meetings - January to March 2019

The LAB considered the broad range of concerns at its January 9th and February 13th meetings. After lengthy deliberations, the members unanimously recommended that SPL staff continue with full implementation of the Collection Development Policy. The LAB also recommended that Library staff research a more comprehensive level of collection decision tracking.

Staff Actions - January to March 2019

Throughout the LAB's deliberation process, staff continued to engage the public through Open House events, surveys, listening sessions and individual meetings to address questions about the Collection Development Policy. Working with the professional communications firm Barney and Worth, staff developed formal materials that explained the policy in plain language. (See Attachment 4 as well as Attachment 7: Salem Public Library's Core Collection FAQ, Attachment 8: Information on New Collection Data, and Attachment 9: Five Things to Know About Salem Public Library's Collection Development).

Staff also recorded data on their collection decisions (See Attachment 8 and Attachment 10: Decision Tracking), and implemented a method of tracking in-library usage statistics. Finally, staff created programs for the community to learn about the life-cycle of library materials and provide input into what they'd like to see in the collection.

Staff delivered all relevant findings and information to the LAB as its meetings continued. This includes a joint statement of support from the Oregon Library Association and the American Library Association's Office of Intellectual Freedom. (See Attachment 11: OLA OIF Statement 2019). Staff also used the information to aid the process for refining future implementation efforts. Most notable of all, staff combined this information with patron feedback in order to give a reasonable, fair reconsideration for books that had been initially removed.

Specifically, community concerns centered on a list of more than 200 books, referred to by the community as "core collection" items that had been deselected from the collection during initial policy implementation. Staff reviewed this list of items. Many were already accessible to patrons via CCRLS and some were reordered. (See Attachment 12: Requested Replacement Decision Tracking and Attachment 8).

Sarah Strahl
City Librarian

Attachments:

1. Salem Public Library Collection Development Policy
2. Summary of Research and Staff Recommendation
3. Special Collections and Patron Usage
4. Summary of Survey and Listening Session
5. Works Cited
6. Condition Guidelines
7. Salem Public Library's Core Collection FAQ
8. Information on New Collection Data
9. Five Things to Know About Salem Public Library's Collection Development
10. Decision Tracking
11. OLA OIF Statement 2019
12. Requested Replacement Decision Tracking
13. Public Comment

