

AUSTIN PUBLIC LIBRARY



Director's Report

February 2022

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HIGHLIGHTS

Austin Public Library Eliminating Overdue Fines Following Historic City Council Vote

On February 17, the Austin City Council unanimously voted to eliminate fines for overdue library materials at Austin Public Library.

“The Austin Public Library is committed to providing free and equitable access to all of our resources for the citizens of Austin,” stated Austin Public Library director Roosevelt Weeks. “We want to make sure our resources are available to those impacted the most by fines.”

Late fines create a financial barrier for many people in accessing library materials, and have been found to be an ineffective way of encouraging materials returns. Studies of libraries in other communities that have eliminated late fines have found that ending late fines actually results in a higher rate of books being returned, as people are less likely to avoid the library if they are not concerned about having to pay money.

In 2019, in acknowledgement that monetary library fines are a form of social inequity, the American Library Association passed a resolution encouraging libraries throughout the nation to discontinue fees for overdue library materials as a mechanism to increase library usage and expand access for all populations. Over 400 libraries in the United States have already removed fines for overdue materials.

Earlier this year, the Austin Library Commission issued a unanimous recommendation to City Council that late fines be eliminated at Austin Public Library.

“The Library Commission is very excited for what this change means for ensuring more equitable access to our libraries,” stated Patricia Dabbert, Chair of the Austin Library Commission. “I am grateful for the work my fellow commissioners have done in taking the lead on this issue.

The move to going fine-free is not retroactive, but the Library is investigating equitable ways to help cardholders with existing fines so that they may continue using their cards.

In 2018, the Austin Public Library eliminated fines for overdue children’s materials. Also, in 2021, the Library exempted all children who are currently enrolled in a school in Travis County from the non-resident User Fee.

Austin Public Library has published an FAQ to help library customers understand what this change will mean for them.

APL COVID-19 Stage 5 Capacity and Service Restrictions

Austin Public Health has raised the Austin area's COVID-19 Risk-Based Guidance to Stage 5, its highest level. In response, Austin Public Library (APL) branches will be implementing the following risk reduction protocols effective January 10, 2022.

- All Austin Public Library locations will operate at 25% capacity. If a member of the public arrives at an APL location that is above 25% capacity, they may be required to wait before being admitted.
- Seating capacity and computer stations will be limited. We encourage library customers using computers or seating to complete their tasks quickly so that other customers can as well.
- We will return to all-virtual programming. All in-person programming, whether indoor or outdoor, is cancelled. Check our events page for updated information about upcoming virtual programs.
- Shared Learning Rooms at the Central Library will be closed.
- Sanitization of surfaces will be increased.

These will be on top of ongoing public health and safety protocols to reduce the spread of COVID-19 which are already in effect, including:

- Curbside pickup is available at four APL locations (Central, Manchaca, North Village, and Spicewood Springs). Customers are encouraged to use curbside hold pickup service as a way to safely access physical materials.
- City of Austin mask requirement is strictly enforced. All persons inside APL locations are required to wear a mask that covers their nose and mouth at all times. More info.
- Austin History Center and Recycled Reads Bookstore will continue to operate at current reduced hours and levels.

Curbside pickup is available at four APL locations (Central, Manchaca, North Village, and Spicewood Springs).

FACILITIES SERVICES

FY2018 Bond Program Summary

Description

The 2018 Bond Program for the Library Department consists of fifteen improvement projects located across the Library's facilities portfolio. The program is structured with a focus on project controls to ensure that overall objectives are met. July Program Summaries are as follows:

- CLMP180 2016 Site/Civil: Hampton at Oak Hill Parking Lot Expansion & Cepeda Branch Trail:

Current Phase: Design Development

Cepeda Branch Trail - Project was delayed while the site area was cleared from the homeless encampment and is approximately one year behind schedule. In addition, there was a change in design consultants. The new Consultant (Halff Engr's) is currently preparing site survey and electrical evaluation as part of the design process.

APL Facilities Services is scheduling a public meeting to update stakeholders on the project's scope, schedule, budget, and next steps. The public meeting is tracking to take place June 2022

Schedule

- City submission of design for review March 2022
- 100% plans submission June 2022
- Bid opening August 2022
- Construction Period October 2022 to January 2023
- Final Completion January 2023

Hampton at Oak Hill Parking Lot Expansion - Geotechnical results validating irrigation field parameters revealed the irrigation field as not to current standards. Additional work is needed to expansion/rework the detention pond and various electrical work for the system's irrigation controls and metering system.

There is a projected funding shortage of \$100k - \$200k. The PER (Technical Summary Report) will better identify the cost and scope. APL Facilities Services is scheduling a public meeting to update stakeholders on the project's scope, schedule, budget, and next steps. The public meeting will be scheduled to occur after the PER is complete.



2018 BOND
OUR COMMUNITY. OUR FUTURE.

Schedule

- Hampton Geotechnical Report December 2021
- PER Complete late April 2022
- Public/Stakeholders meeting TBD

- CLMP282 Archival Repository Faulk Building & History Center Renovation:

Current Phase: Construction Documents @ 30% Complete

General: Final alternate decisions are underway. The design team is waiting on final plumbing number estimates from the CMAR. An RCA for SpawGlass to increase their allowable budget may be required.

Pitch Package / w Cost: to estimate the cost of Reimagining the Faulk Gensler Report is being finalized and reviewed by APL Facilities Services (ACFS). CMAR SpawGlass: The Design Development Estimate was reviewed and the design team making final alternate decision based on feedback received. The design build team is also discussing breaking out abatement and demo prior to renovation this summer 2022.

A masonry investigative GMP is also being reviewed and will be completed in the next two months. Sustainability Cx Specs and Hazardous Material Abatement Specs are pending from consultants as well.

Schedule

- Faulk move out February 2022
- Construction Documents 90% Complete May 2022
- Select Demolition August 2022
- Construction NTP August 2022

Impacts

The General Contractor, Spawglass recently stated that another alternate delivery project required additional Council approval of the “full” GMP. The PM is looking into this to confirm whether the RCA is needed or not.

- CLMP286 Interior Renovation Projects - Old Quarry Branch Renovation; Little Walnut Creek Branch Renovation; Willie Mae Kirk Branch Renovation; Manchaca Road Branch Roof Replacement & Renovation; St. John Branch Renovation

Current Phase: Schematic Design

A supplemental amendment for the consultant to provide schematic design services was executed in January 2022. A kick-off meeting with the Consultant MWD DesignGroup, Demco for Interior Design Services and the F, F and E Package for the five branches. Demco is one of the nation's

premier library supply companies. APL is seeking an economy of scale and design efficiencies for the renovations by adding Demco to the team.

Schedule

- Schematic Design Complete tentatively March 2022
 - Design & Construction Phase Negotiations/w Consultant June 2022
 - Design Phase Start June 2022
 - Competitive Sealed Proposal (CSP) Selection August 2023
-
- CLMP287 Roof Replacement & System Upgrades - Carver Branch; Howson Branch; Yarborough Branch
 Current Phase: Pre-Design
 APL is awaiting the Consultants, Baer Engineering revised proposal for Roof Replacement at Carver and Yarborough Branches and HVAC System Upgrades at the Howson Branch. The next phase of the work includes 30 / 60 / 90 percent construction documents for the roof replacement and system upgrade projects. The new project proposal will be submitted to the PM and CCO for an amendment that reflects Baer Engineering revised scope of work.
 Schedule: TBD

FY 18 Bond Program Schedule

All timelines are estimates and subject to change without notice. Construction starts will be staggered by branch location to minimize impacts to existing levels of service.

The 2018 Bond Program for the Library Department consists of fifteen improvement projects located across the City of Austin.

FY2012 Bond Program

Summary

Description

- Proposition 18: Library, Museums and Cultural Facilities



Cepeda Branch Library Renovation

Status

- Construction is nearing completion, with a Substantial Completion walk-through held on December 16.
- Interior signage needs to be installed as does a new pendant light fixture in the interior oculus ceiling feature.
- When new emergency light fixtures and door exit lights are installed the final fire inspection will be called.
- A change order and supply chain issues have resulted in a 16-week delay in the installation of 21 rows of new 66-in tall book shelving.
- Books and furniture not impacted by the 66-in shelving purchase / install will move forward.

Budget / Cost

Appropriation \$1,240,839; Obligated \$1,158,596.68; Balance \$99,603.382,242.32

Schedule

- Final walk-through for CIP construction related upgrades mid-January 2022
- Furniture installation February 2022
- Final shelving installation, estimated April 2022

Impacts

Final project completion and reopening hinges on the arrival and installation of shelving.

Zaragosa Technical Support Warehouse

Status

- The installation of code-required Emergency Lighting in the Warehouse is the only work remaining prior to calling for a Final Fire Inspection and full Certificate of Occupancy.
- Roof access hatch in mezzanine will be upgraded prior to APL Facilities Services move-in to address a safety issue.

Budget / Cost

Appropriation \$1,185,965; Obligated \$1,159,827.75; Balance \$26,137.25

Schedule

- Emergency lighting ship date January 19, 2022
- Final Fire Inspection & Certificate of Occupancy Issuance early February 2022
- Reassembly of mezzanine workstations late January 2022
- Facilities Services relocation back to the Zaragosa Warehouse early February 2022

Impacts

Safety upgrades to roof access in mezzanine may impact Facilities Services relocation schedule.

University Hills Interior Repairs & Roof Replacement

The unprecedented February 2021 winter weather event caused pipes to burst creating extensive interior damage to the branch.

The roof was slated to be replaced as part of the FY18 CIP Bond. The February 2021 weather event revealed mold and mildew damage within the drywall system because of the failed roofing system.

A decision was made to move forward with roof replacement while the branch was down for the February 2021 weather event. For the past 12 months the work included:

- Removal of all furniture, shelving, and books for drywall and carpet mold abatement.
- Installation of new TPO Roofing System. Repaired / replaced sheetrock walls and ceiling. Re-lamped all interior lighting in the library. Installed new luxury vinyl tile throughout the branch. Applied new paint to the interior walls and restrooms.
- Branch was selected to benchmark and pilot new customer entry counting technology.

University Hills Branch Parking Lot Expansion

Scope of Work

The University Hills parking lot expansion project was in the bid / award phase at the time of the February 2021 weather event. The work funded by FY12 Bond funds and led by our PWD PM partners comprises of constructing a new asphalt 25 parking space expansion for the existing University Hills Branch Library Parking Lot.

Status

The project General Contractor, QA Construction Services, Inc. was terminated without Cause by the Department of Public Works due to the issuance of a change directive for the replacement of the top 18 inches of topsoil and replacement with select-fill soil.

QA Construction Services did not return a Change Order Proposal below 25% of their original construction contract. Exceeding 25% of the contract is not allowed by Texas State law. The project construction is on hold while PWD negotiates a Job-Order Contractor (JOC) and contract assignment. The JOC will be tasked to continue and complete the original project scope of work.

Budget / Cost

Appropriation \$1,462,458; Obligated \$1,239,131.34; Balance \$223,326.66

Schedule

- Revision Pending Final JOC Contract Assignment
- Anticipated Final Parking Lot Construction March - April 2022

Impacts

Cost and timeline impacts due to contractor change, under evaluation.

Note: All program final completion dates are subject to change without notice

AUSTIN HISTORY CENTER

Programming & Outreach

- December 7, Digital Preservation in the state of Texas | Virtual Road Show - Preserving Texas' Cities. Nikole Koehlert
- December 8, Supporting Indigenous Communities at Austin Public Library, virtual presentation to APL Community of Practice group. Marina Islas
- December 10, "Then & Now: AAPI Communities in Our Work" presentation for Travis County Public Defenders Office. Presented with Austin Public Health staff, Gunjen Mittal. Ayshea Khan
- December 18, Archival Preservation 101 Workshop at the Asian American Resource Center. "Stories From the South: Archiving Your Family History," Ayshea Khan, Marina Islas, and Nikole Koehlert

Collections

- The collection of former Austin City Council Member Roger Duncan's papers were processed and made available to researchers. AR.W.013 Austin (Tex.) City Council.

Exhibits

- Keeping Austin Cool is the current exhibit. It features advertising hand fans.
- A Smithsonian exhibit of African American History photos was installed at the Hampton Branch at Oak Hill

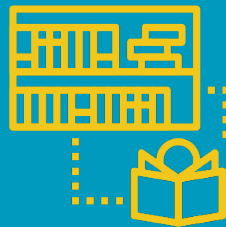
LIBRARY PRIORITIES

Literacy Advancement

More students used the Southeast Branch this month for leisure, materials, and sheltering from the weather while awaiting pickup. Youth librarian Alicia Niwagaba noted a sharp uptick in inquiries related to student library cards from students at Mendez Middle School as well as some of the local charter schools who are now eligible for student cards as well. Library staff have been able to connect dozens of those students with their preexisting accounts or information on how to obtain cards, and they are actively taking part in shaping the collections through their materials requests.

Virtual storytimes have been experiencing an uptick in attendees since last year showing that people have become more comfortable with our ever-shifting new normal as well as a willingness among patrons to enjoy what the library has to offer even through their screens at home (Windsor Park Branch's Jan 3 virtual storytime had 42 attendees!)

Yarborough Branch supported Austin PBS Kids in their creation of a series of short reader's advisory videos: If You Like... Their goals are to support literacy and encourage families to visit the library in person or virtually. The outro was filmed at the branch.



Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

The Central Youth Engagement & World Languages Librarian partnered with multiple businesses and organizations that serve French and Japanese language-speaking communities. These partners will help us advertise our world language storytimes.

Civic and Community Engagement

Howson Branch staff met with staff at the Austin State Supported Living Center (a residential campus in Howson's neighborhood) to discuss ways in which APL can serve our community members who live on this campus.

St. John Branch partnered with Emancipet Non-Profit Pet Clinics to bring Free Healthy Pet Services to the St. John Community Center twice this month. Free pet services and vouchers for Spaying/Neutering services were offered to Travis County Residents outside the community center from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. There was such a great demand on the first day that customers were lined up for services well before 9 a.m. and Emancipet continued to offer services past 6 p.m.

Staff Development

APL staff were offered the following virtual workshops in January: Homelessness: Understanding individuals experiencing homelessness; Psychology: How psychology can help people to follow the rules voluntarily; De-escalation Skills: Practical tools and techniques; and Copyright for Librarians: What You Need to Know.

Workforce and Economic Development

Adult Services saw an increase in the number of Job Coaching assignments and Book a Librarian requests in January.

The Central Teen Services Librarian supported a sometimes homeless teen with Job Coaching three times, via resume drafting in November, networking and job-hunting strategies in December, and Interview prep in January; and this teen was able to secure two paid internships this month—one with Austin Public Health's Healthy Adolescents program (\$17/hr) and one with the Youth Commission to End Homelessness (\$25/hr).

St. David's Foundation's Libraries for Health Grant Program kicks-off this month. We will participate in a 3-year learning cohort. Our program will support a workforce development pipeline for lay persons to become certified Community Health Workers to fill service gaps in under-resourced communities. Our partners, as of date, are Dell Medical School's Population Health, HACA, Austin Public Health, and Indeed.

APL BY THE NUMBERS

Collections Circulation January

- Digital materials 234,841
- Physical materials 229,686

Cardholders | Visitors

- Total cardholders 419,491
- New cardholders 2,679
- Active cardholders 295,973
- Visitors 97,470

Website Page Views

- Library website 1,802,291

WiFi Use

Connections 20,075



Revenue Year to Date FY22 as of 12/31/2021

- Parking \$88,585
- Event Space Rentals \$113,783
- Central Gift Shop \$56,795
- Passport Service \$14,512
- Recycled Reads Book Store \$32,966
- Total \$306,641

Volunteers

- 40 volunteers, 294 hours x \$26.43/hr = \$7,770 value



Roosevelt Weeks
Director of Libraries