

AUSTIN PUBLIC LIBRARY



Director's Report

January 2022

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HIGHLIGHTS

Austin Public Library Statement on Book Banning and Library Censorship

The Austin Public Library stands with the entire library community in defense of the freedom to speak and the freedom to read, and opposed to censorship of any library materials. We remain committed to providing the entire Austin community with access to books, ideas, and knowledge, and to fostering a Library for All.

“Freedom to read is a right that must be protected in our schools and public libraries, and we must not give in to the vocal few that want to speak for the many,” stated Austin Public Library Director Roosevelt Weeks.

In October 2021, the Texas Library Association (TLA) noted a “substantial increase in censorship activity” in Texas libraries. In a statement from October 26, the TLA stated:

“The Texas Library Association (TLA) holds that the freedom to read is a human right, protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. TLA believes that individuals have the right to free inquiry and the equally important right to form their own opinions. Freedom in selecting materials is a necessary safeguard to the freedom to read and shall be protected against irresponsible attempts by self-appointed censors to abridge it. Therefore, TLA opposes efforts that restrict the freedom to read through banning, removing, or other forms of restricting access to books or other materials.”

In November 2021, the American Library Association’s (ALA) Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF) reported an “unprecedented volume” in challenges to books in the Fall of 2021. In a joint statement from the ALA’s Executive Board and the Boards of Directors for all of ALA’s eight divisions, the ALA said:

“In recent months, a few organizations have advanced the proposition that the voices of the marginalized have no place on library shelves. To this end, they have launched campaigns demanding the censorship of books and resources that mirror the lives of those who are gay, queer, or transgender or that tell the stories of persons who are Black, Indigenous, or persons of color... ALA strongly condemns these acts of censorship and intimidation.”

In the weeks that followed these statements, there have been further efforts to ban or censor books in libraries across the country, including here in Central Texas.

The Austin Public Library stands in agreement with the statements from the ALA and TLA. We also uphold the ALA’s Library Bill of Rights, which holds among other things that library materials should not be removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval, and that libraries should challenge censorship.

The Austin Public Library uses its Materials Selection Policy to develop responsive collections. Through that policy, we are committed to providing easy access to books and information for all ages. The Library also prioritizes a commitment to equity, ensuring that all members of the Austin community have equitable access to library services and programs.

APL COVID-19 Stage 5 Capacity and Service Restrictions, Effective Jan 10

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:



2018 BOND
OUR COMMUNITY. OUR FUTURE.

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

Current Phase: Design Development

Cepeda Branch Trail - A NTP was issued to the New Consultant (Halff Associates) in October 2021. The updated project schedule was submitted in December 2021. The consultant is actively working on construction documents. Cost Estimates for feasibility review due February 2022. The project is one year behind schedule due to consultant change. Tentative stakeholder update meeting February 2022.

Hampton at Oak Hill Parking Lot Expansion - Geotechnical results validating irrigation field parameters are due within one month. The results will be shared with APL Administration and stakeholders to determine project feasibility. Cost Estimates for feasibility review due February 2022. Tentative stakeholder update meeting February 2022.

- CLMP282 Archival Repository Faulk Building & History Center Renovation:

Current Phase: Design Development

Design Development 100% submitted and reviewed the week of December 7. APL and PWD will review along with the plumbing investigation to determine final alternates.

The plumbing investigation was completed last month on a City holiday and the report is pending. The pressure test was decided not to be done as it might have caused more immediate repair damage than the facility was prepared to handle at the time of proposed testing.

CMAR Spawglass: SG completed the plumbing investigation and should be supplying the report January 2022.

- 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

The ADPN cost estimate exceeded the project budget allocation. As not to exceed budget, APL gave direction to proceed with schematic design at this time. After the schematic design estimate is received, the scope will be evaluated, and a determination will be made regarding which project elements to proceed with.

The consultant submitted a revised cost proposal December 10 to show schematic design only; the CCO is working to incorporate this proposal into an amendment. NTP and schematic design schedule pending.

- CLMP287 Roof Replacement & System Upgrades - Carver Branch; Howson Branch; Yarborough Branch

Current Phase: Pre-Design

APL is awaiting the Consultant's revised proposal for Carver, Yarborough, and Howson Branches.

The next phase of the work includes schematic design and design development for the roof replacement and system upgrade projects. The new project proposal will be submitted to the CCO for an amendment that reflects the reduced scope of work.

Schedule

The FY18 Bond design and construction deliverables are scheduled for 36-months with program wide substantial completion goals 2023 Q3. All timelines however 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

Book A Teen Librarian Hours at Central - Teens are asking us for more support in navigating information of various kinds, so we're adding an in-person program for drop-in office hours to the calendar to further promote the help we offer for teens looking for work, needing research assistance, writing college application essays, and other life-skills information navigation. Teens have been making use of the drop-in hours for pitching ideas, getting job coaching, and adult life skills.

Milwood Youth Librarian Jane made 95 holiday book bundles (approximately 350 books) in a variety of genres for different ages. Book bundles were wrapped like holiday gifts for kids to enjoy during the holidays and winter break.

With so many Travis County students getting Austin Public Library cards, Windsor Park Branch has had an increase in requests from their neighborhood schools that want help teaching their students how to access all that their APL card unlocks.



Digital Inclusion & STEM

Yarborough Branch's *Enjoy the Night Sky* partnership display was an immense success. Yarborough partnered with The Austin Astronomical Society as well as The Hill Country Astronomers to curate a collection of stargazing and night sky themed materials to help inspire Austinites to take advantage of the long clear nights that the Texas winter has to offer and to look up and gaze at the stars.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Adult Services Librarian Kate provided a reader's advisory presentation at Westminster Senior Living Center on December 8, including an introduction to reader's advisory tools, recommended books, Virtual Library help and bookmarks designed specifically for the occasion.

In honor of International Human Rights Day, The St. John Branch set up a station for community members and staff to write letters of welcome to incoming refugee families.

Civic and Community Engagement

Beginning in January, Austin Public Health will operate a COVID vaccination clinic at Southeast Branch Library on Saturdays. This clinic will not affect library hours. Southeast and Little Walnut will return to the Express Services hours to be consistent with all other locations.

On Saturday, December 4, Pleasant Hill Library reopened to the public after renovations. The event kicked off with a ribbon cutting including remarks from Council Member Vanessa Fuentes. Other highlights included outdoor youth activities, food, and performances by the Akins High School mariachi band and the Minor Mishap Marching Band. Over 200 community members participated in the festivities.

Staff Development

APL will be getting over thirty new temporary employees as a result of our hiring fair held in December.

Workforce and Economic Development

The AP Virtual Job Assistance service is busy. During December, there was a 50% increase in job coaching requests.

APL BY THE NUMBERS

Collections Circulation

December

- Digital materials 222,013
- Physical materials 287,458

Cardholders

- Total cardholders 416,872
- New cardholders 1,287
- Active cardholders 308,534

Website Page Views

- Library website 1,609,222

WiFi Use

Connections 22,268



Revenue Year to Date FY22 as of 11/30/2021

- Parking \$31,372
- Event Space Rentals \$113,363
- Central Gift Shop \$35,250
- Passport Service \$10,486
- Recycled Reads Book Store \$18,032
- Total \$190,503

Roosevelt Weeks
Director of Libraries

