



LIBRARY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION # 20230327-4 Support for Austin Public Library FY24 Budget

Date: March 27, 2023

Subject: Support for Austin Public Library FY24 Budget

Motioned By: Vice-Chair Infante-Huerta

Seconded By: Commissioner Masters

Recommendation

Support for Austin Public Library proposed budget for FY2024

Description of Recommendation to Council

Requesting that the Austin City Council approve the proposed Austin Public Library budget for FY2024, which includes an increase of 6% to the materials budget.

Rationale:

Three weeks before the start of the current Fiscal Year, Sunday Hours returned to the Central Library and four APL branches, making this year the first one since FY 2019 in which the library is open to the public with a full schedule. With this change, the return of in-person programming to library facilities, and visitor numbers reaching their highest point since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, FY 2023 has marked in many ways a “return to normal” for Austin Public Library.

But “normal” is relative, as APL continues to adapt and respond to the challenges of a growing, dynamic city like Austin.

In FY 2023, the Austin Public Library completed a year-long strategic planning process to shape the work of the library for years to come. Input was provided for the plan through a community survey that received more than 5,400 responses, pop-up community events in 20 locations throughout Austin, as well as a series of surveys, workshops, and listening sessions with APL staff and external community stakeholders. The Austin Public Library Comprehensive Library Strategic and Facilities Plan, adopted by the City Council in March 2023, lays out new strategic goals for the Austin Public Library, aligned with the City of Austin’s *Imagine Austin* 30-year strategic plan and the SD28 5-year strategic plan.

Our recommended budget provides Austin Public Library with the resources needed to advance the five strategic goals laid out in that plan document, as well as to achieve the Library’s new Mission Statement: “Inspiring all to discover, learn, and create.”

The proposed budget includes a 6% increase in the budget for materials, including digital materials, subscriptions and databases. Austin’s population growth, and the increased cost of materials – especially e-books, which represent a fast-growing share of APL’s circulation and

require expensive licenses. These proposed increases are necessary to keep up with inflation, but do not represent a growth budget and may, in fact, lead to a reduction of e-resources and increased patron wait times to access materials. The Commission also supports funding of the listed unmet needs of the library.

Vote

For: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Infante-Huerta, Commissioners Haupt, Rosenthal, Dwyer, and Masters

Against: None

Abstain:

Absent: Commissioners Vogel and Aguilar

Attest: 