

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION

Update from the King County Library System

Joyce Nichols, Director of Intergovernmental Relations, 452-4225
City Manager's Office

Kate Henry, Senior Budget Analyst, 452-4870
Finance and Asset Management

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL**INFORMATION
ONLY**

King County Library System Executive Director Lisa Rosenblum will provide an update on the King County Library System (KCLS). Tonight's briefing is an opportunity for Council to learn more about the KCLS and recent initiatives and programs. No formal Council action is required.

RECOMMENDATION

N/A

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

The King County Rural Library District was established by voter approval in 1943 as a special purpose district to provide library service to residents of rural King County. While the original name still exists, the district currently operates as the KCLS and serves all of King County except Seattle (the Seattle Public Library System is not affiliated with the KCLS). The KCLS operates 50 libraries, serving 10 million library visitors annually. Four branches of the KCLS are located in Bellevue: Lake Hills, Newport Way, Library Connection @ Crossroads, and Bellevue Library (located in Downtown). The Bellevue, Crossroads, Lake Hills, and Newport Way branches represented 15% of circulation systemwide in 2017. The Bellevue branch recorded over 1.1 million checkouts in 2017, making it the second busiest branch behind Redmond.

Governance

A seven-member Board of Trustees governs the KCLS. Board members are appointed by the King County Executive and confirmed by the King County Council, and while Trustees serve at-large, geographic distribution and diversity are considerations. Trustees serve for no more than two consecutive five-year terms. There is currently one vacancy on the Board. The Board was expanded from five to seven members by State legislation in 2017 in order to provide more opportunities for representation.

The Bellevue Library Board is comprised of seven Bellevue residents appointed by the Mayor with the concurrence of the City Council. While appointed by Council, the Library Board serves as an advisory

body to the KCLS and makes periodic reports and recommendations to the Council and City Manager regarding the scope and quality of library services provided to the residents of Bellevue.

KCLS Funding

The KCLS annual budget is 97% funded through property tax revenues, and the revenue is distributed among all 50 libraries to ensure equitable service for the urban, suburban, and rural communities served. County residents have approved ballot measures supporting KCLS operating and capital levies five times since 1943.

Levies and Capital Bonds

The KCLS uses both levies and capital bonds to operate and expand the system. Levies provide funding for the operating budget, which is for the operation and maintenance of the library system and its facilities. Capital bonds can only be used for construction to expand and build new facilities and infrastructure.

In 2019 the KCLS property tax rate is \$0.37 per \$1,000 of assessed value (\$0.33 for the operating levy and \$0.04 for the capital bonds). This raises approximately \$120 million in property tax dedicated for the KCLS, with Bellevue contributing \$22.3 million. The 2019 median assessed value for a home in Bellevue is \$931,000, resulting in \$344 for library collections, programs, and services, provided by KCLS. The operating levy is capped at \$0.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

The last capital bond was approved by voters in 2004 for \$172 million. Those capital bond funds were used to construct 16 new libraries, renovate 14 libraries, expand 11 libraries and two parking lots. All projects included in the 2004 capital levy are completed. Specific projects in Bellevue include:

- Lake Hills Library renovation was completed in September 2010. The \$2.8 million library is located in the redeveloped Lake Hills Shopping Center. Six months after the library opened, circulation increased 21 percent and patron visits increased 10 percent compared to the same six-month period at the former library.
- Newport Way Library expansion and renovation was completed in April 2011. The \$3.4 million project added more space to the meeting room and reading area, increasing the size of the library by 600 square feet.
- Bellevue Library Parking Garage was completed in June 2013. The \$11.1 million project added 163 parking spaces, for a total of 362 spaces.
- Library Connection @ Crossroads underwent interior improvements that were completed in January 2014. Enhancements included new carpet, furniture, computers, the installation of new systems for improved access to library materials and expanded public seating.

Strategic Initiatives

IdeaX Makerspace

Bellevue Library hosted the first IdeaX Makerspace Xperience Music and Technology Festival event focusing on a community-gathering place where patrons of all ages could explore Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM). IdeaX aligns with the KCLS mission to “create opportunities through meaningful connections.” The event offered attendees the opportunity to explore innovations in music, art, video games, and virtual reality with various artist and experts from the music and technology industries. The event was such a success that funding was included in the 2019 budget to establish a second space at the Federal Way Library.

Green Initiative

The Green Initiative was introduced in 2019 with a target to reduce paper and plastic waste, reduce supply and maintenance costs, and improve operational efficiencies for both the public and staff. The 2019 budget includes Phase One of the initiative, a ‘pay-to-print’ system in libraries to encourage Cloud-based options (e.g. scan/send) instead of paper printing. A cashless option will be established eliminating the facilitation by staff of financial transactions. Phase Two, in a future year, is planned to address other library-related charges, such as fines and fees.

POLICY & FISCAL IMPACTS

There is no additional fiscal impact other than the current amount included in property taxes at this time. In 2019 the KCLS property tax rate is \$0.37 per \$1,000 of assessed value (\$0.33 for the operating levy and \$0.04 for the capital bonds). This raises approximately \$120 million in property tax dedicated for the KCLS, with Bellevue contributing \$22.3 million. The 2019 median assessed value for a home in Bellevue is \$931,000, resulting in \$344 for library collections, programs, and services, provided by KCLS.

OPTIONS

N/A

ATTACHMENTS & AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

N/A

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL LIBRARY

N/A