

LIBRARY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2023

BENNETT MARTIN PUBLIC LIBRARY

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Dan Sloan, Joe Shaw, Jackie Ostrowicki, Rhonda Seacrest, Lisa Hale, Morgan Gerteisen, Patty Beutler, Nichole Bogen, present.

CALL TO ORDER AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF POSTING OF OPEN MEETINGS ACT

President Dan Sloan noted that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. He announced the Open Meetings Act was posted and available for review.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

President Sloan noted that the Agenda and Meeting Notice were posted according to the Open Meetings Act of the State of Nebraska. Shaw motioned approval. Seacrest seconded. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Gerteisen, Hale, Beutler, Ostrowicki, Seacrest, Shaw, Sloan – AYE. Motion carried 7-0

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

President Sloan asked if there was any public comment on items on the Agenda.

John Janovy, Jr., 421 Sycamore Dr, (10) spoke in opposition to the Appeal of the Request for Reconsideration.

Herb Friedman, 1700 Memorial Dr, (02) spoke in opposition to the Appeal of the Request for Reconsideration.

Vicki Wood, 4045 Mohawk St, (10) spoke in opposition to the Appeal of the Request for Reconsideration.

Kathryn Kelley, 4310 Washington St, (06) spoke in opposition to the Appeal of the Request for Reconsideration.

Kees Uiterwaal, 7924 Yellow Knife Dr, (05) spoke in opposition to the Appeal of the Request for Reconsideration.

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 17, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

President Sloan called for a motion to approve the minutes. Seacrest moved approval. Ostrowicki seconded.

There was no discussion. Sloan asked for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Hale, Beutler, Ostrowicki, Seacrest, Shaw, Sloan, Gerteisen – AYE. Motion carried 7-0.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee on Administration

Request for Reconsideration Appeal

President Sloan noted that the Committee on Administration consists of Hale, Seacrest, and himself. The book in question is "Flamer" by Mike Curato. Director wieber denied a patron's request to relocate the book from the Young Adult (YA) section to Adult. Sloan reported that the Committee on Administration also unanimously agreed to keep the book in the Young Adult section. Sloan asked for a motion. Shaw moved to deny the Appeal and keep the book in YA. Beutler seconded. Discussion: Sloan thanked the public speakers for their powerful and relevant comments. He found the book to be realistic to the reality of teen boys, but not offensive. He observed that the content felt relevant to him, even as a white, CIS male and stated his support for the book. Hale added that she's

now read it twice, and noted that in a 365 page book, the objections she has seen point to only four or five specific pages taken out of context of the whole story.

Director Wieber offered clarification of the request – that it was to reclassify the book as an Adult item and move it out of the Young Adult section. He shared that once a Request for Reconsideration is received in Administration, it's sent to him, and he then sends it to the LCL Request for Reconsideration Committee. The Committee consists of 7-8 staff holding various positions at different branches who are all familiar with the Materials Selection Policy and the weight of what they're considering. The entire committee reads the work in question, which sometimes requires the purchase of additional copies. They discuss the work and the patron's request as a group and send their decision to the Director. Their report in this instance noted that the publishers and professional reviewers are in agreement that this book is properly made available to teens and Young Adults. Their professional review of the text also concluded it was accurate placement. They submitted their report to the Director, and in this instance, he upheld their conclusion and denied the request. Upon receiving his response, the patron exercised their right to appeal his decision to the Board.

President Sloan asked if the committee was divided in this instance and was informed, no, the LCL committee's response was unanimous. Shaw shared, as a member of the LGBTQ community he found it heartening that books like these were available to young people now, as when he was young books addressing these issues were not available. He stated that a book like this would have been life changing in normalizing what he was feeling and could have helped explain it. He recalled that in the 1960's and 70's there were no books that spoke to young people like this book does. He reiterated the importance of books that speak to young LGBTQ people to keep them from feeling alone and isolated and commended LCL for having books like this in the collection.

Sloan clarified that an AYE vote will uphold Director Wieber's denial of the request to relocate this title to the Adult section and called for the vote. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Beutler, Ostrowicki, Seacrest, Shaw, Sloan, Gerteisen, Hale – AYE. Motion carried 7-0.

Committee on Finance

Approval of Monthly Recap of Expenditures for October, 2023

Treasurer Ostrowicki shared that the Library Operational Budget for October was \$1,081,334.19. Additionally, the Heritage Room Fund used \$2,619.99 and Polley Music Library used \$8,694.29, totaling \$1,092,648.47. Expenditures from other funds included grants at \$5,026.69, Keno at \$4,097.99 and from miscellaneous donations \$21,379.73, totaling \$30,504.41 for Total Expenditures of \$1,123,152.88. Ostrowicki motioned to approve the expenditures. Hale seconded. There was no discussion. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Ostrowicki, Seacrest, Shaw, Sloan, Gerteisen, Hale, Beutler – AYE. Motion carried 7-0.

Committee on Buildings and Grounds

Approval of Expenditure of no more than \$67,131.00 to MJAG Construction Services, LLC for new first floor carpet at Bennett Martin Public Library.

Director Wieber shared that the Library was allotted \$75,000 for the project in the biennial budget. The job was bid out, and three bids were received. The addition of a performance bond necessitated a second bid, and the same three companies rebid. The job was awarded to MJAG Construction of Bellevue. The job is scheduled to happen this winter, possibly as early as December. He shared that every effort will be made to minimize

disruption, but Bennett Martin will need to be closed for at least three days for the project. Seacrest moved approval. Gerteisen seconded. There was no discussion. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Seacrest, Shaw, Sloan, Gerteisen, Hale, Beutler, Ostrowicki – AYE. Motion carried 7-0.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Foundation Executive Director Report

Gail McNair absent – no report.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of the Polley Music Library Annual Report.

President Sloan noted that the report had been sent out for review and noted that it was good reading, and that many good events have happened this year. Ostrowicki motioned approval. Hale seconded. Polley Librarian Scott Scholz was invited to elaborate on the report. Scholz noted that the increase in programming post-COVID has been exciting and satisfactory. Programs have included bringing in varied musicians to discuss their work as well as hosting a regular songwriting club. They celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Polley music library which garnered some press attention. The Zagers have donated more guitars to the popular circulating collection and Scholz has continued to participate in community outreach to publicize the collection. There was no further discussion. **ROLL CALL VOTE:** Shaw, Sloan, Gerteisen, Hale, Beutler, Ostrowicki, Seacrest – AYE. Motion carried 7-0. Wieber expressed gratitude for Scholz, calling him “a genius at what he does” and that we’re lucky to have him at Polley. Sloan commended the diversity of Scholz’s programming choices

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Sloan shared that he didn’t have a formal report, but that his month was spent working on the library system upgrade and book challenges.

ASSISTANT LIBRARY DIRECTOR’S REPORT

In Assistant Director Traci Glass’s absence, Director Wieber gave a brief update. He shared that in addition to the new carpet being planned at Bennett Martin, the new exterior signage at Eiseley, Walt, South and Bethany Branches is happening this week. Bookmobile consultant has drawn up new specs. We’re going back out to bid for two gas vehicles, instead of an EV Ford Transit. We will accept bids on the smaller, more agile, Mercedes-Benz Sprinters which are commonly used by other libraries. Once the order is placed, it will take 18-24 months to receive the vehicles. He shared that the ballot box installation has been approved by the City Council and the County Board. Those will be located at Gere, Eiseley, Anderson and Walt branches, likely before the end of the year.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Future Libraries Engagement Update with BVH and MSR Design.

Director Wieber shared that his report will be to share the final Phase 1 Report from BVH/MSR design. BVH architects Cleve Reeves and Mark Bacon attended in person, and MSR architect Matthew Kruntorad attended via

Zoom to present the report. Wieber thanked Virtual Services staff, Rod Cummings and Andrew Inbody for their help setting up the new Zoom technology in the Bennett Martin auditorium for which funds were granted by Lincoln Rotary Club #14.

Kruntorad reviewed the attached summary report. He noted that more than 250 people participated in the community engagements, 567 online surveys were completed and there were 250+ contributions to the heat mapping exercises. A potential Phase 2 was outlined. There were no questions. Director Wieber shared that the committee will continue to meet to address Phase 2. Ostrowicki commended the value of the research done and the evidence based reporting that resulted. Sloan and Ostrowicki both noted that the community engagement has added excellent data to the process, and many folks expressed their thanks for LCL asking the questions and seeking out their participation, showcasing how engaged Lincolnites are in their libraries. Kruntorad reiterated the observation that compared to other cities, Lincolnites are highly engaged and participatory, enabling their report to be extremely reflective of Lincoln's wants and needs for their library system. Seacrest commented that Lincoln's sense of ownership of their libraries will help move the project forward. Bogen asked if there was a good diversity of people attending. Reeves replied that the full report reflects the diversity of respondents and agreed that it was broadly representative. He noted that the surveys were offered in multiple languages.

Impact of Fine-Free Libraries.

President Sloan reminded the Board of a community member's concerns about the process and shared that Wieber and Library Coordinator Rebecca Aracena and her team had researched the impacts and were prepared to submit a report. Wieber reminded all that LCL has been entirely fine-free for over a year and was pleased to be able to report that despite a reduction in revenue, he was satisfied with the results shown by the attached report. Before turning the floor over to Aracena for a high level look at the data, he reminded the board it's a known fact that library fines create an unintentional barrier to access. He noted that fine free policies at libraries have been implemented nationwide for over ten years, and that LCL made youth items fine-free in 2019 with no detrimental effects to service.

Aracena shared that the immediate direct impact was that over 30,000 customers had fines waived, encouraging them to return to the library. Staff at every branch received positive feedback from customers. Staff and customers' immediate concern was if going fine free would negatively impact the time spent waiting on hold for popular books. Aracena's department has been closely monitoring hold times and the ratios of available titles to the number of folks on hold and using that information to reorder when needed. The results are positive. In FY 22-23, placement of holds increased by 3.05% and fulfillment of holds increased by 5.37%. In fact, there has been an improvement of hold fulfillment time since going fine free. 76% of holds placed were filled within the first week, and less than 17% of holds took over four weeks to fill. She went on to report that older lost items are being returned at a greater rate, the accounts submitted for collection reflected much lower totals, and the value of items returned was higher. Further, the number of overdue items was .04% less than the previous year.

Aracena reported that work is being done to further improve speedy returns of overdue items by adding an additional notice to customers, reminding them that all fees are waived upon the materials' return. She also shared that LCL staff report fewer daily, negative interactions with patrons regarding fines. There was no further discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No further public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:29 a.m.

Impact of Fine Free Libraries

LINCOLN CITY LIBRARIES

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Contents

1. Why Go Fine Free?
2. Direct Immediate Impact – Fines Forgiven
3. Library Use
 - Circulation and Library Visits
 - Holds
 - New Patron Registrations
 - Patrons Blocked from Checkout
 - Collections Statistics
4. Lost and Returned Items
5. Percent of Items Overdue
6. Conclusion

Why Go Fine Free?

Lincoln City Libraries went fine-free on September 1, 2022, in recognition of the impact that fines played in limiting library usage among low-income families and caregivers.

Overdue fines often unintentionally create a barrier to access for many residents. The practice of assessing fines has long been justified as an effective prompt for borrowers to return materials in a timely manner, so others can enjoy the library collection. Research has shown that while many users incur late fees, the ability to pay them depends greatly on income. Those who are able to pay can keep visiting and borrowing, however, those who are unable to pay, simply stop using the library—and in many instances fail to return overdue materials. Experience and data from other fine free libraries (see: Colorado Department of Education: *Removing Barriers to Access*, 2016) showed that the rate of return is not higher when people are fined for overdue materials.

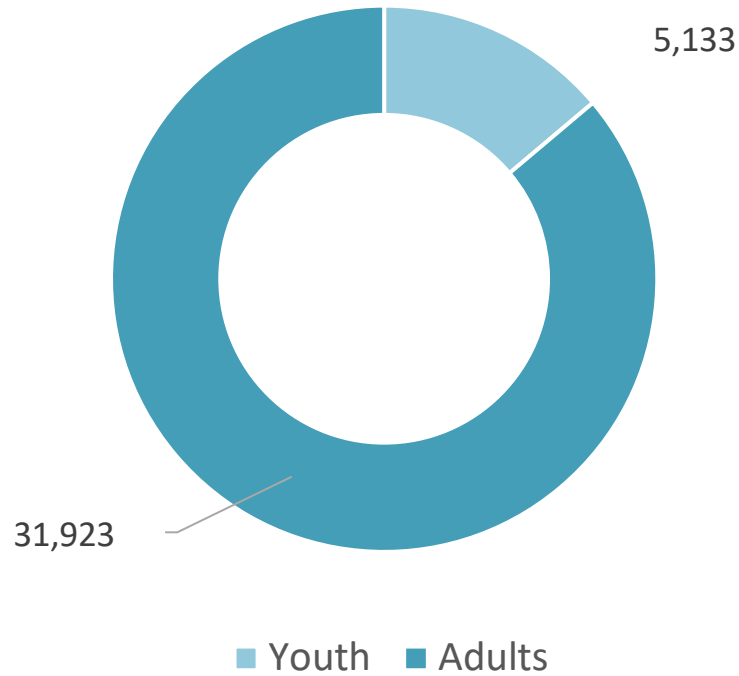
Lincoln City Libraries first established a fine-free policy for overdue children's items in 2019, and subsequently, there was not a *noticeable* decline in materials availability or increase in the rate of loss of items, however, no data was monitored nor collected during the succeeding years (2020-2022) due to the volatility and unreliability of library usage and data during the COVID pandemic.

Beginning in September 2022 and on a monthly basis, LCL collected data in several key areas to measure the effect of fine-free. The following data and charts help provide a general overview of the first year without fines— and for the foreseeable future LCL will continue to collect and report key data points to identify trends and determine solutions where appropriate for improved access to collections.

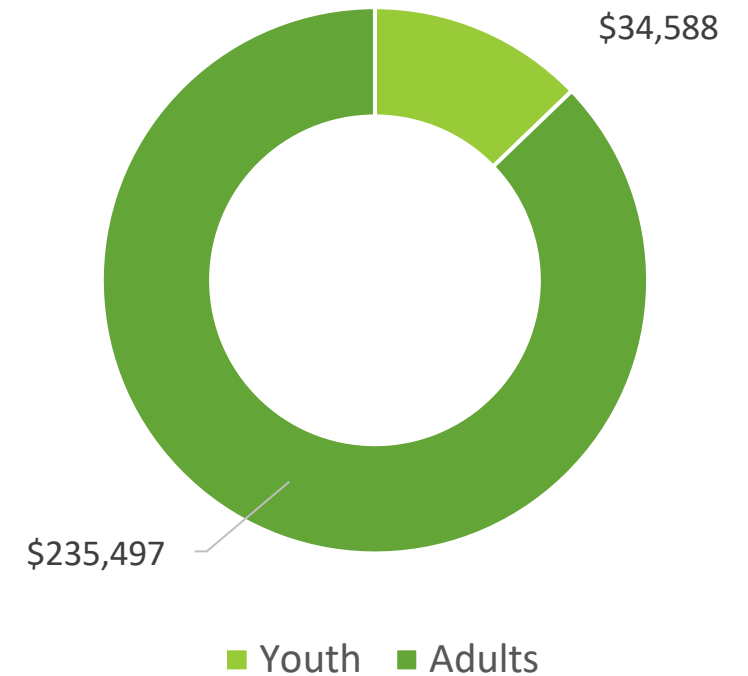
Immediate Direct Impact on Library Patrons

- *37,056 library customers had their old library fines waived on September 1, 2022.*
- *A total of \$270,085 in library fines were waived.*

Library Patrons with Fines Waived Sept. 1, 2022



Amount of Fines Forgiven



Library Use

Library Visits

➤ FY 2022 – 2023: **785,119**

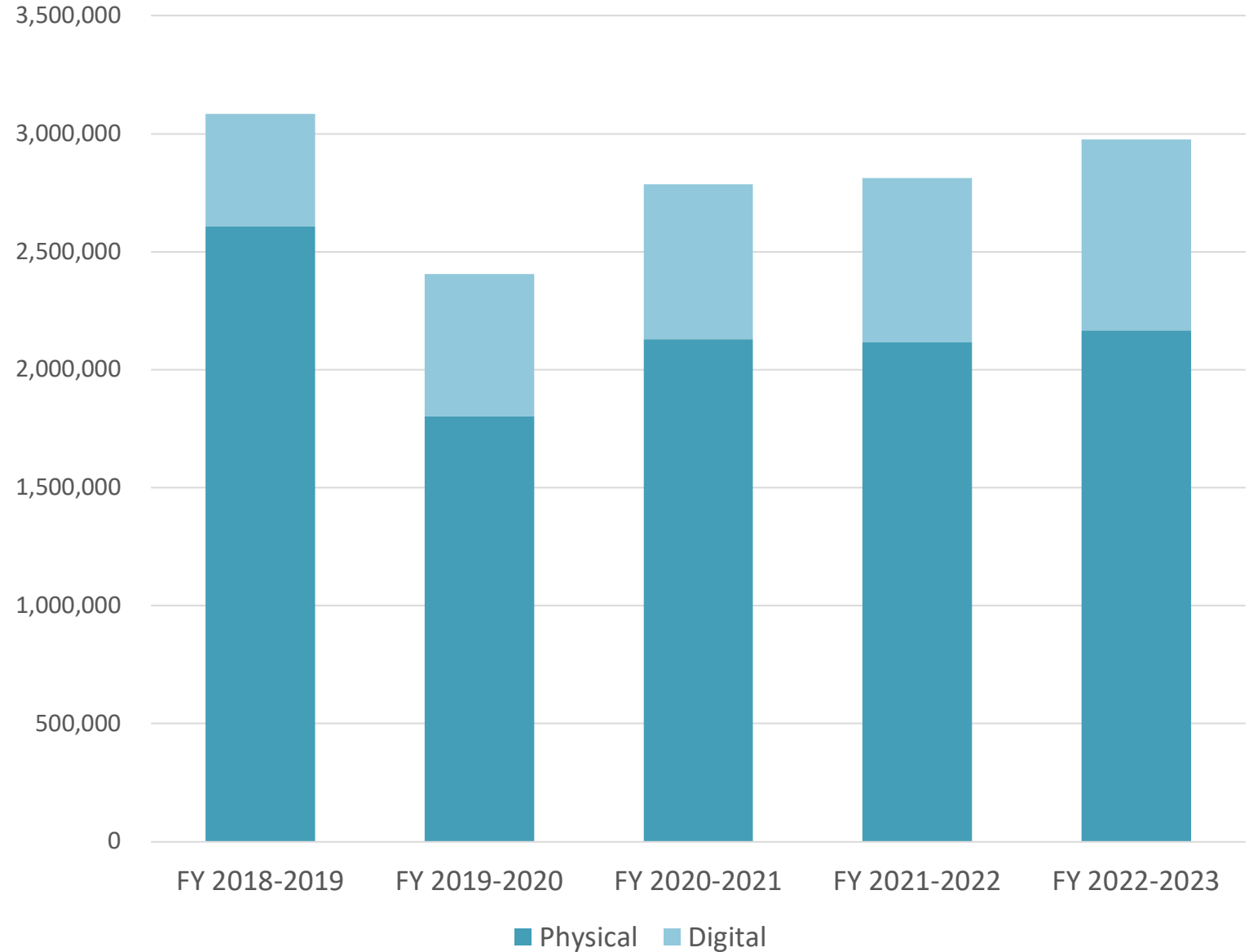
➤ FY 2021 – 2022: **691,298**

Population from 2020 Census

➤ City of Lincoln: **291,082**

➤ Lancaster County: **322,608**

Circulation by Fiscal Year



Hold

- There has been an improvement in hold fulfillment time since we went fine free and an increase in the number of holds filled.
- In FY 22-23, 76% of holds were filled the same week. Less than 17% of holds took more than 4 weeks to fill.

Hold

Hold

Placed and Filled by Fiscal Year

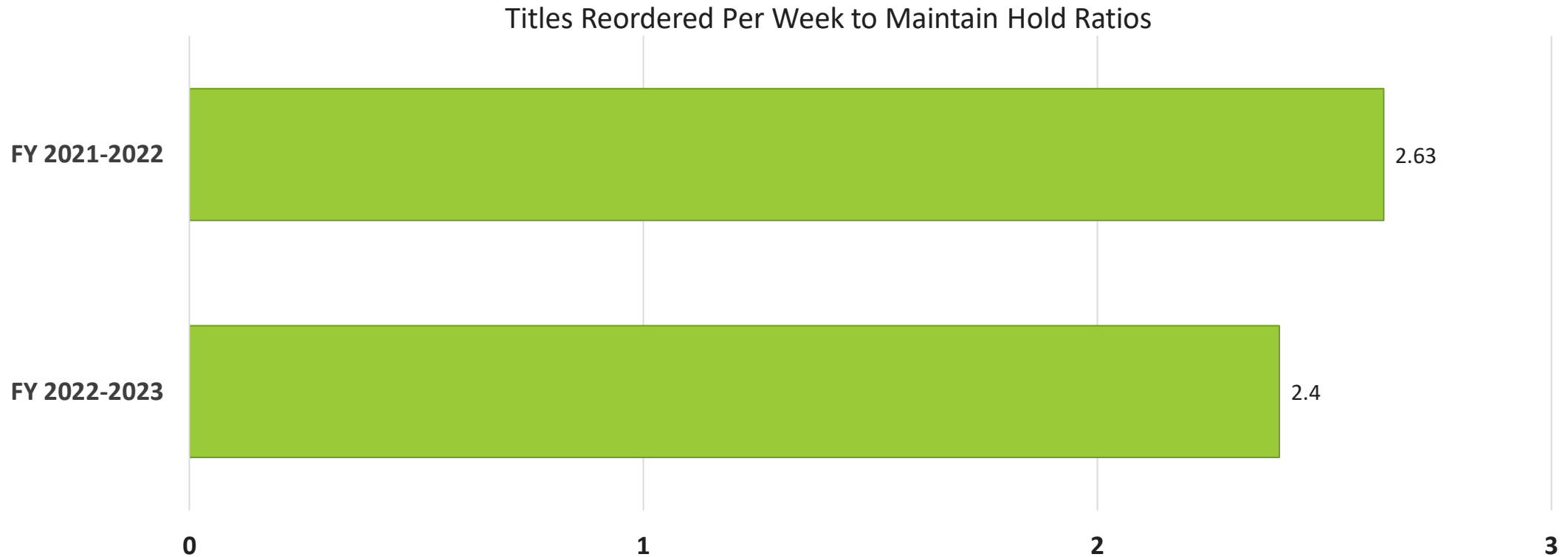
	Hold	Placed
	Filled	
FY 2021-2022	287,283	343,510
FY 2022-2023	303,756	353,999
Percent change	5.73%	3.05%

Change in Hold fulfillment time from FY21-22 to FY22-23

	Same Week	2nd week	3rd week	4th week+
FY 2021-2022	75.27%	4.18%	3.18%	17.37%
FY 2022-2023	76.17%	4.39%	3.03%	16.42%
Difference	0.90%	0.21%	-0.16%	-0.95%

** Hold fulfillment is affected by delayed publication and delayed delivery of titles by vendors. waiting for popular titles checked out, patron suspending hold*

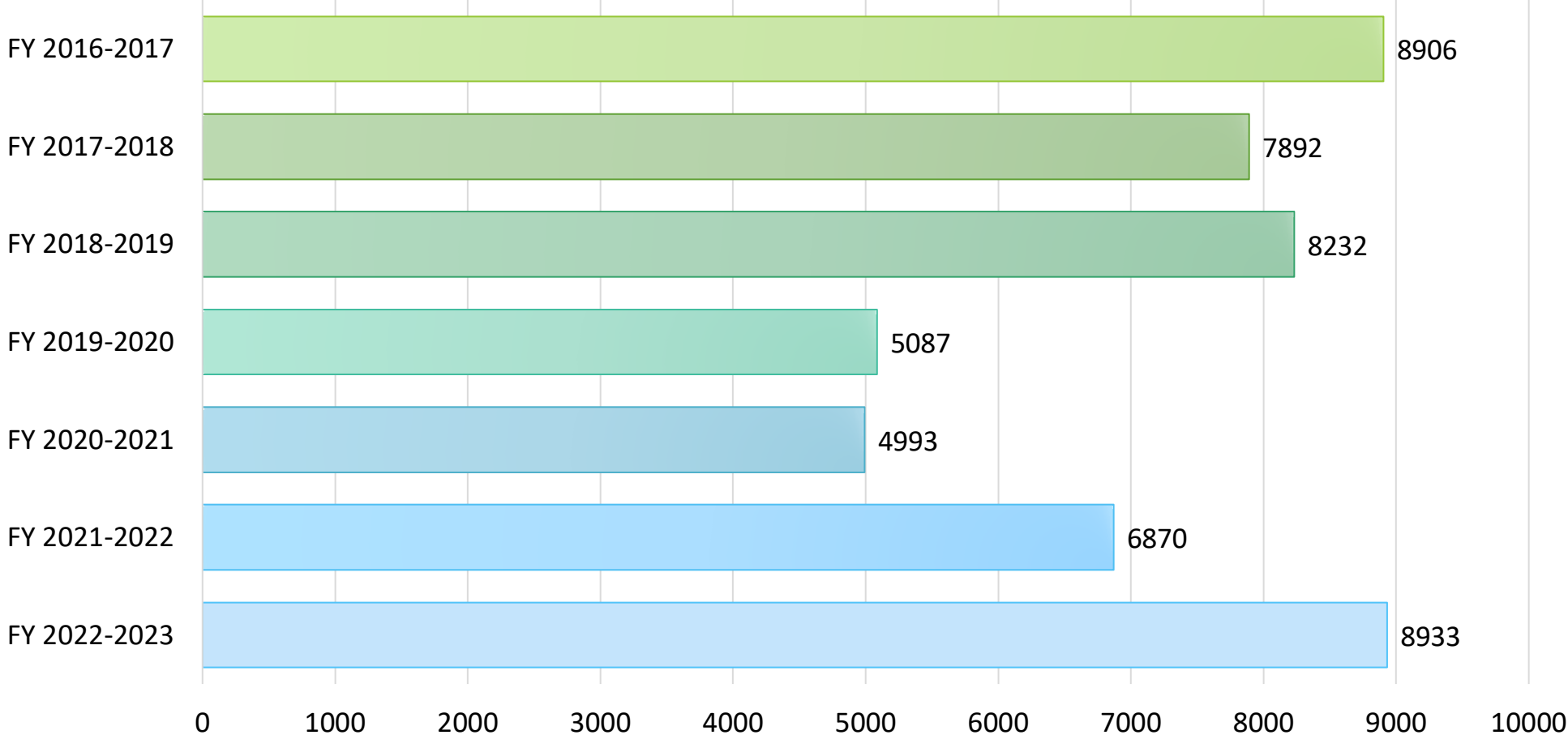
Hold Ratios



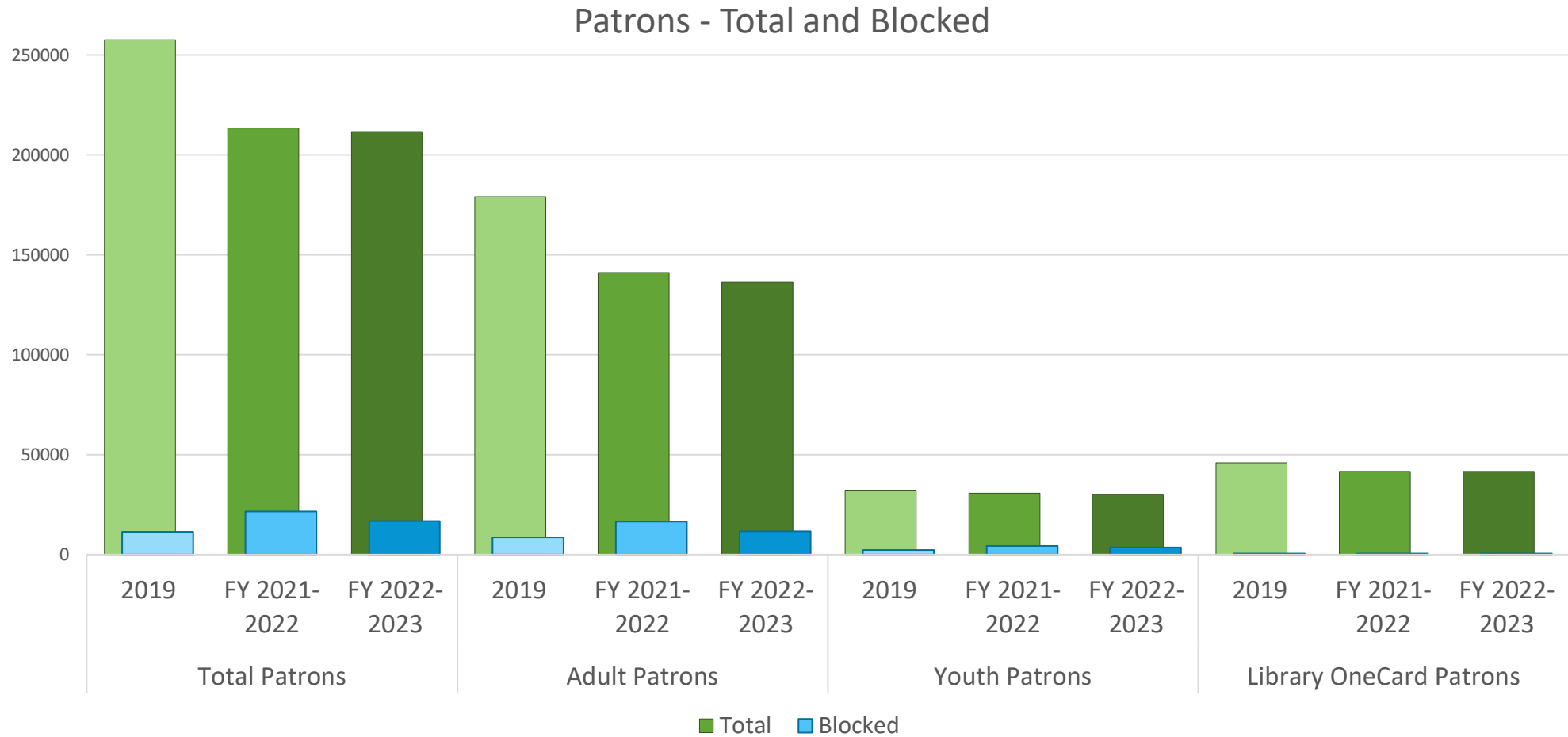
We do not have full years of data for FY 2020-2021 or FY 2023-2024.

- FY 2020-2021: 3.69
- FY 2023-2024: 1.09

New Library Patron Registrations by Fiscal Year



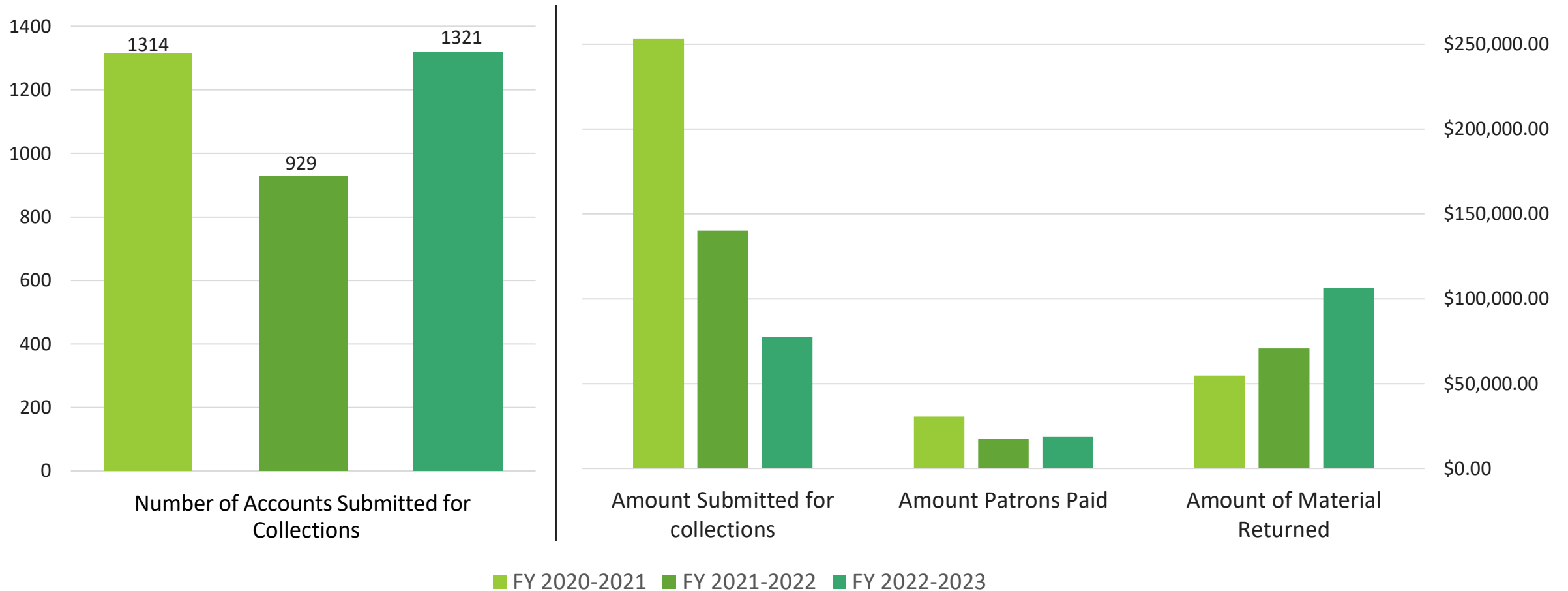
Patrons Blocked from Checkout



	After Eliminating Fines on Youth Items in 2019	FY 2021-2022	FY 2022-2023
% Total Blocked Patrons	4.46%	10.19%	8.01%
% Blocked Adult Patrons	4.80%	11.79%	8.60%
% Blocked Youth Patrons	7.39%	14.70%	12.17%
% Blocked Library OneCard Patrons	1.13%	1.43%	1.58%

➤ April 1, 2022 - 61536 inactive user records were removed

Collections Statistics from Unique Management Services



➤ The number of accounts submitted in FY 2022-2023 was on par with FY 2020-2021 but the total amount of those accounts was far lower, and the value of items returned was much higher.

Lost and Returned Items

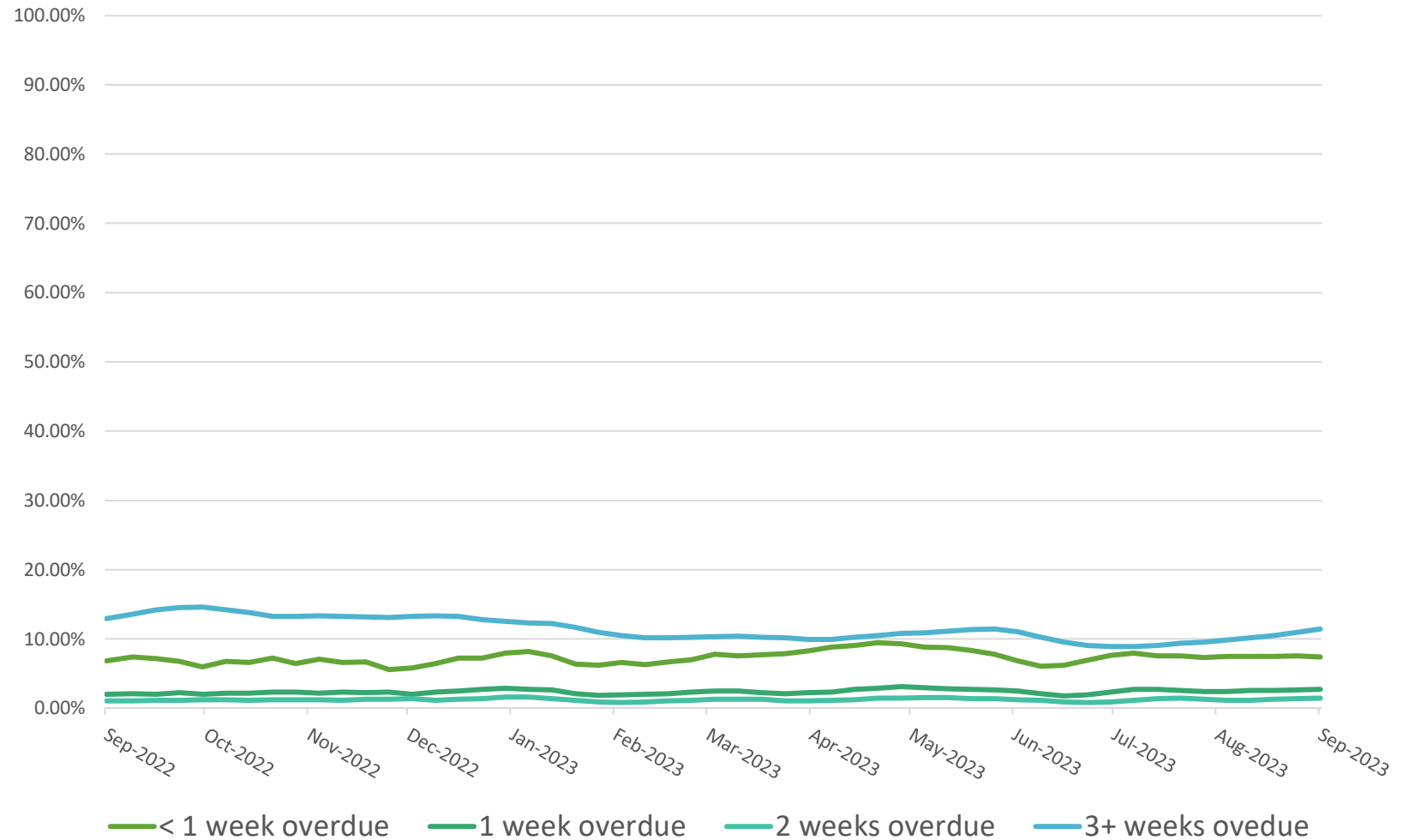
	FY 2017-2018	FY 2018-2019	FY 2019-2020	FY 2020-2021	FY 2021-2022	FY 2022-2023
% Returned in FY	49.22%	57.65%	64.76%	74.88%	70.49%	74.90%
% Returned after 1 year	9.29%	10.19%	13.24%	8.17%	9.60%	6.17%
% Returned after 2 years	0.91%	0.91%	1.01%	0.78%	0.14%	
% Returned after 3 years	0.49%	0.77%	0.58%	0.07%		
% Returned after 4 years	0.29%	0.47%	0.13%			
% Returned after 5 years	0.25%	0.03%				
% Returned after 6 years	0.06%					
% Returned to date	60.50%	70.02%	79.71%	83.90%	80.23%	81.07%

*FY 23-24 through
October

Percent of Items Overdue

- On average, only 16% of items checked out are 1 week or more overdue.
- Less than 13% of items checked out are over 3 weeks overdue. Items are set to Lost by the ILS at 3 weeks overdue.
- There was not a significant change in the percent of items overdue. The percent of items overdue at the end of FY 2022-2023 was only 0.04% less than the end FY 2021-2022.

Percent of Checked Out Items Overdue



Conclusion

- In FY 22-23, Placement of Holds increased by 3.05%; Fulfillment of Holds increased by 5.73%
- There has been an improvement in hold fulfillment time since we went fine free. In FY 22-23, 76% of holds were filled the same week. Less than 17% of holds took more than 4 weeks to fill.
- The number of accounts submitted for collection services in FY 2022-2023 was on par with FY 2020-2021, but the total amount of those accounts was far lower, and the value of items returned was much higher.
- The percentage of returned items was higher in 2022-2023 than any of the previous 5 years, indicating that being fine free most likely encouraged patrons to return materials even if late, without worry of fines.
- There was not a significant change in the percent of items overdue. The percent of items overdue at the end of FY 2022-2023 was 0.04% less than the end FY 2021-2022.
- Fewer daily, negative interactions with patrons regarding overdue fines.
- We will add a new, earlier communication to patrons who have items marked as lost to improve quicker returns.

LINCOLN CITY LIBRARIES

FACILITIES PLANNING + CONDITION ASSESSMENT

NOVEMBER 21, 2023

LIBRARY BOARD – REPORT SUMMARY



BVH ARCHITECTURE

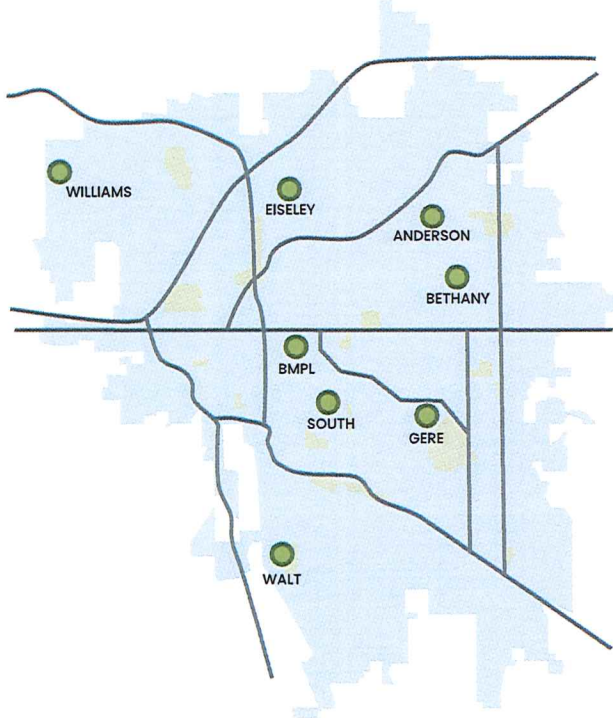
MSRDesign

Engagement Summary

One Lincoln - a common experience

Neighborhood - each branch is unique

All Together - all branches working together



5
Full-day sessions
(across all 7 branches)

250+
Participants

40+
Hours of In-Person
Discussion

5
Open, Public
Sessions

567
Survey Responses

25+
Local Organizations
Engaged

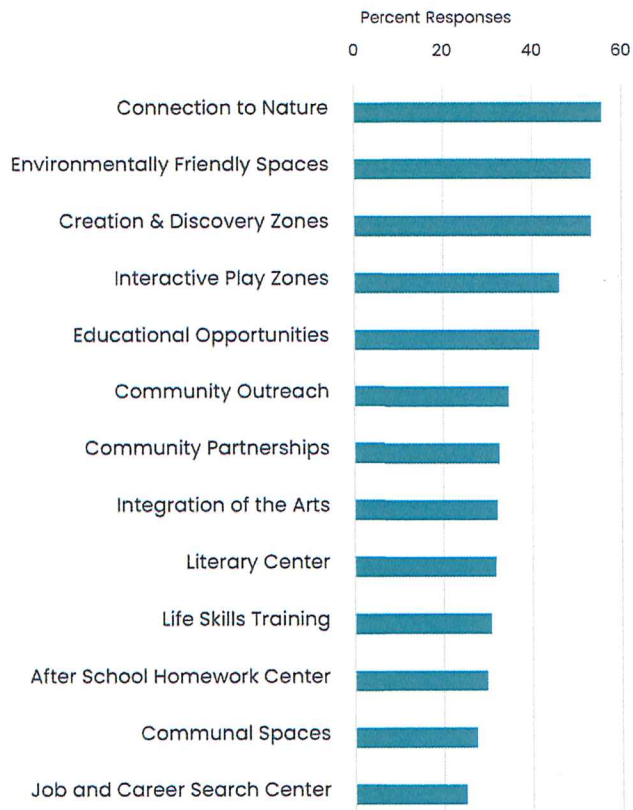
250+
Heat Mapping
Contributions



Current and past engagement events at LCL locations

Qualitative | Quantitative Analysis

What concepts and services are appealing?



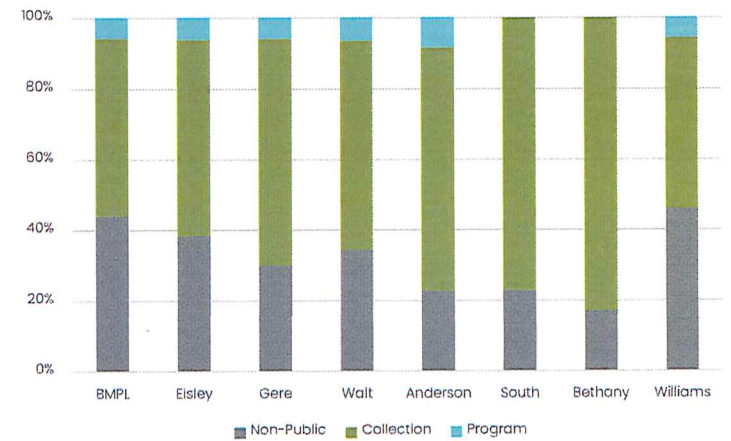
7
branches studied

6
outreach strategies

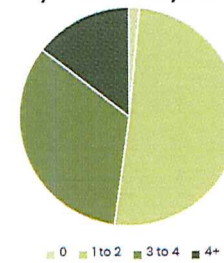
20+
data sets considered

250+
individuals providing input

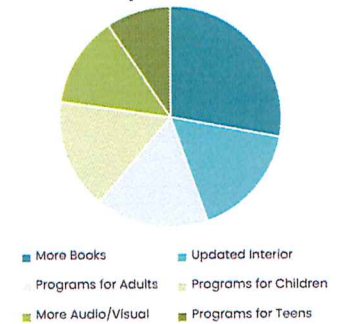
Library Square Footage Allocation



How many branches have you visited this year?

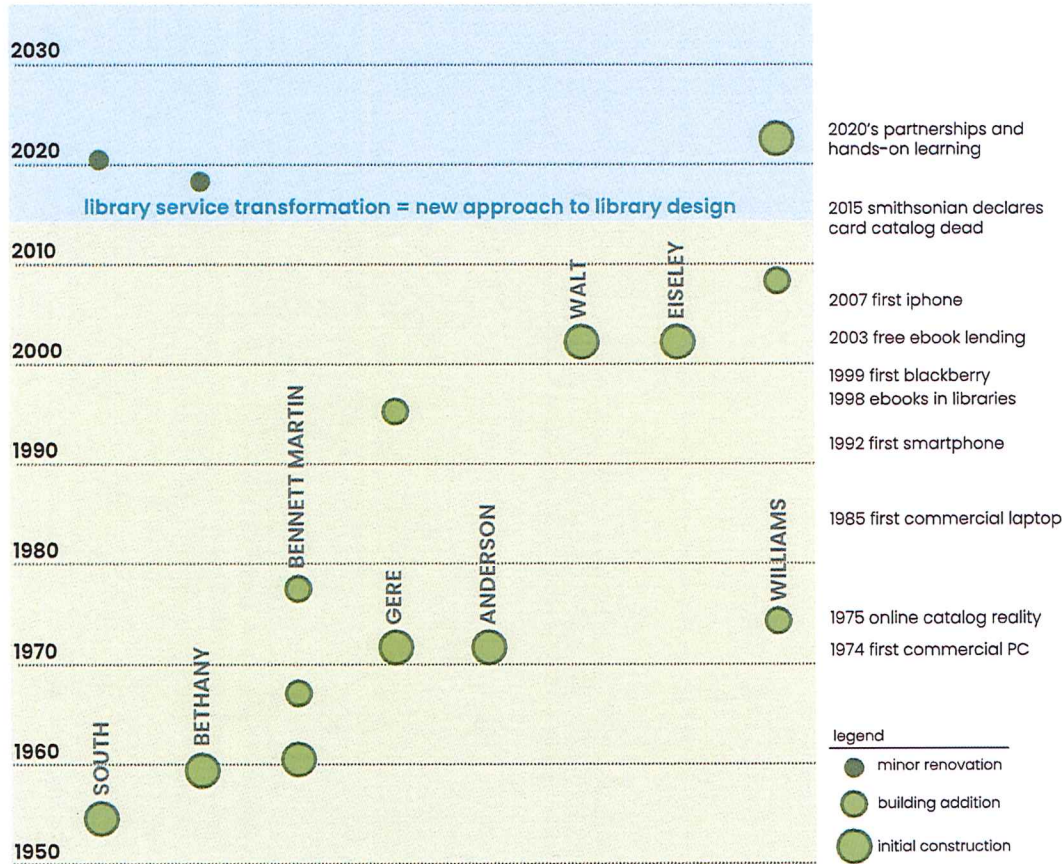


What improvements would you like?



System Condition

Lincoln City Libraries: A System Overdue for Investment



Population + Library Area Distribution

facilities are severely outdated and lacking in space capacity to serve as modern libraries

North Lincoln

36%
Lincoln's
Population

33%
Library Square
Footage

Central Lincoln

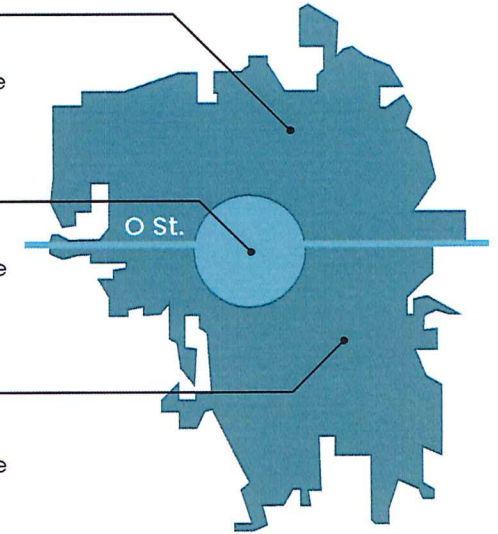
25%
Lincoln's
Population

20%
Library Square
Footage

South Lincoln

39%
Lincoln's
Population

46%
Library Square
Footage

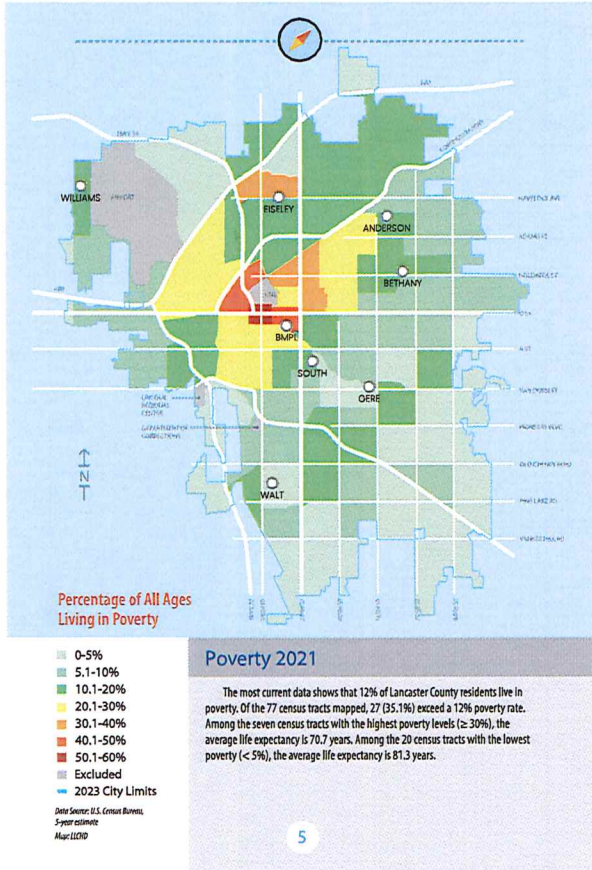


Overall Square Feet Per Capita

LCL Median: 0.43

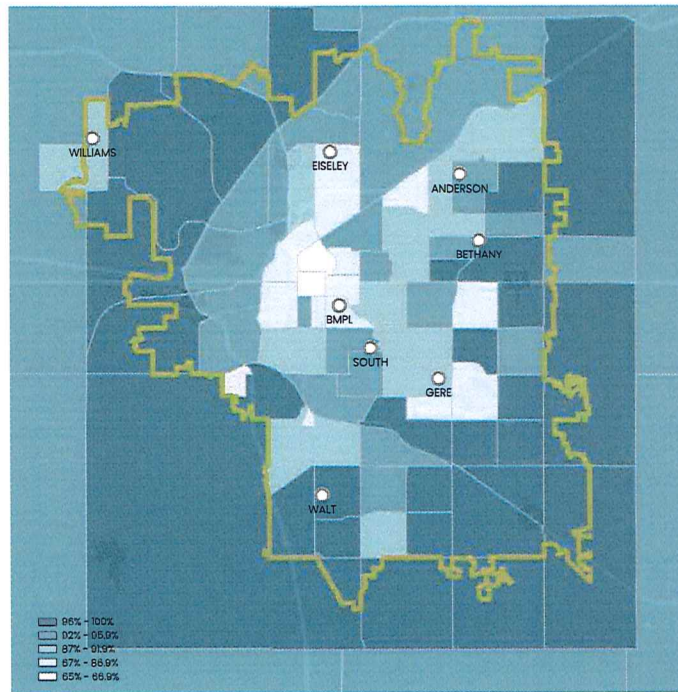
Ideal Range: 0.5 - 0.75

Underserved and Equity

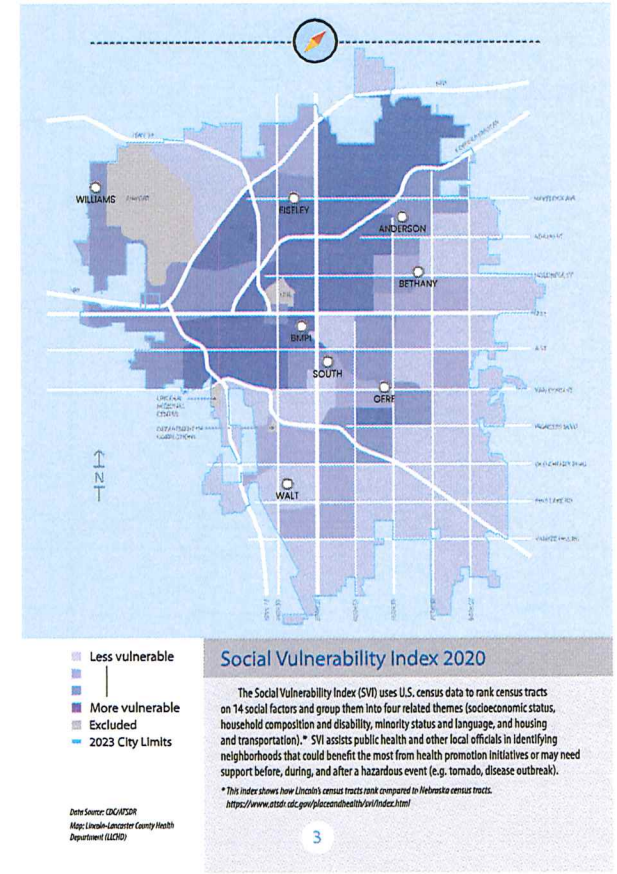


Graphic Source: Place Matters 5.0 report 2023, Community Health Endowment of Lincoln

central Lincoln has the most diverse needs and its facilities are the most behind



Households with Computer Access



Graphic Source: Place Matters 5.0 report 2023, Community Health Endowment of Lincoln

Preliminary Approach | System

each region of the Lincoln face challenges in service due to lack of investment - Central Lincoln faces the most challenges

1

assign target capital investment commitment for operations and facilities in North, Central, and South Lincoln

2

priority one is Central Lincoln, priority two is North Lincoln, priority three is South Lincoln

3

North and South priority recommendations ideally occur simultaneously or shortly after Central Lincoln

4

determine proper location of administrative space, collection, and special collections as part of priority one

5

remain diligent and build upon success to finish medium and long term recommendations

Preliminary Findings | North Lincoln

Short Term Options

- Major renovation and addition to Eiseley
- Renovation and addition to Anderson

Medium Term Focus

- Moderate renovations to Bethany and Anderson

Long Term Goals

- Substantial expansion of Williams branch

major renovation + addition

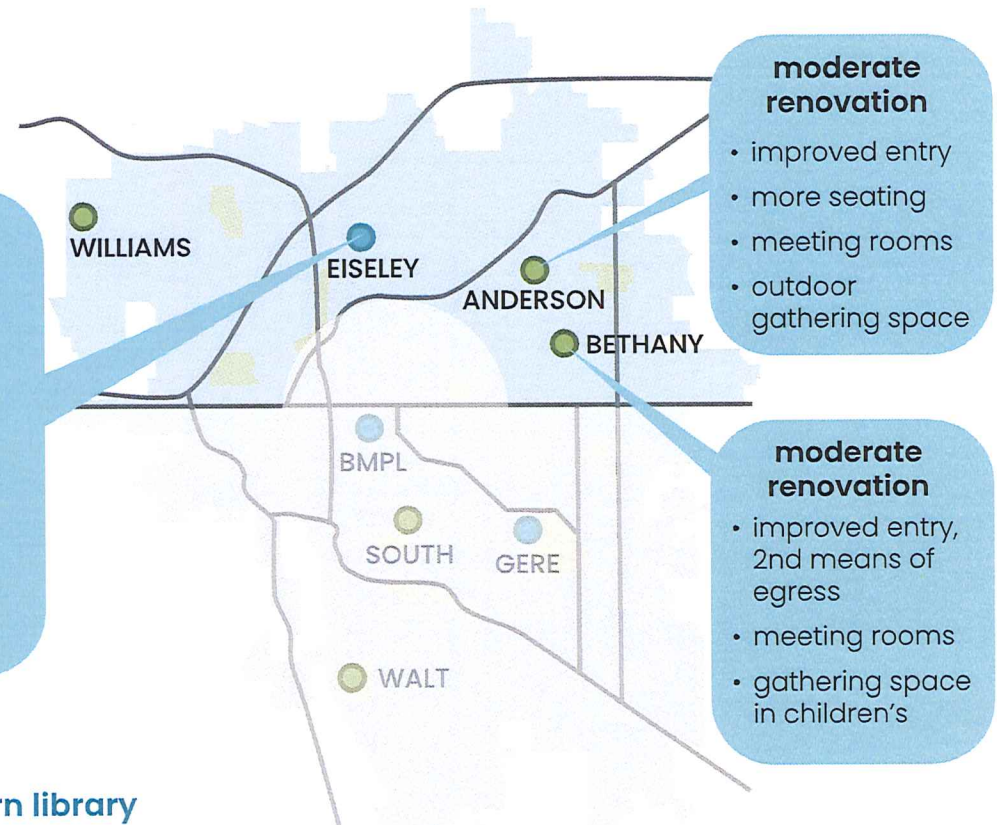
- hands-on learning spaces and access to technology
- workforce development and small business support
- teaching kitchen and garden
- outdoor space

moderate renovation

- improved entry
- more seating
- meeting rooms
- outdoor gathering space

moderate renovation

- improved entry, 2nd means of egress
- meeting rooms
- gathering space in children's



Eiseley poses substantial challenges for adaption to modern library services. Cost / value should be considered in the next phase considering a major renovation and addition to Anderson instead.

Preliminary Findings | Central Lincoln

Short Term Options

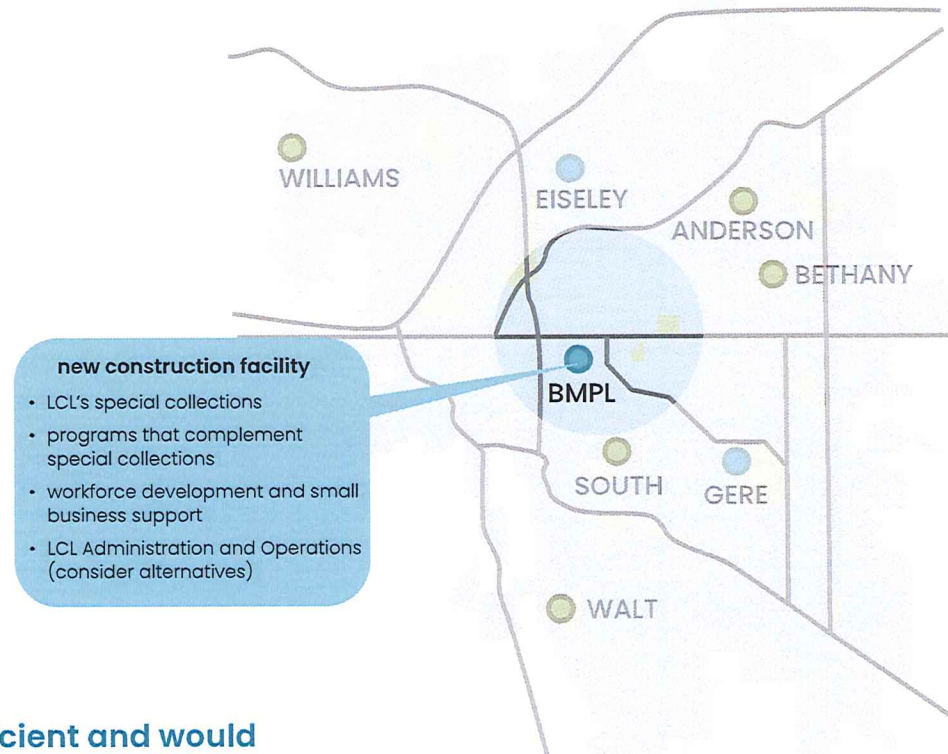
- Provide a replacement for Bennett Martin Public Library

Medium Term Focus

- revisit collection as new facility changes circulation dynamics

Long Term Goals

- promote upkeep and attention to new facility so it can serve as a decades-long solution



BMPL's existing structure is substantially inefficient and would require partial demolition along with upgrades to everything except the superstructure.

Preliminary Findings | South Lincoln

Short Term Options

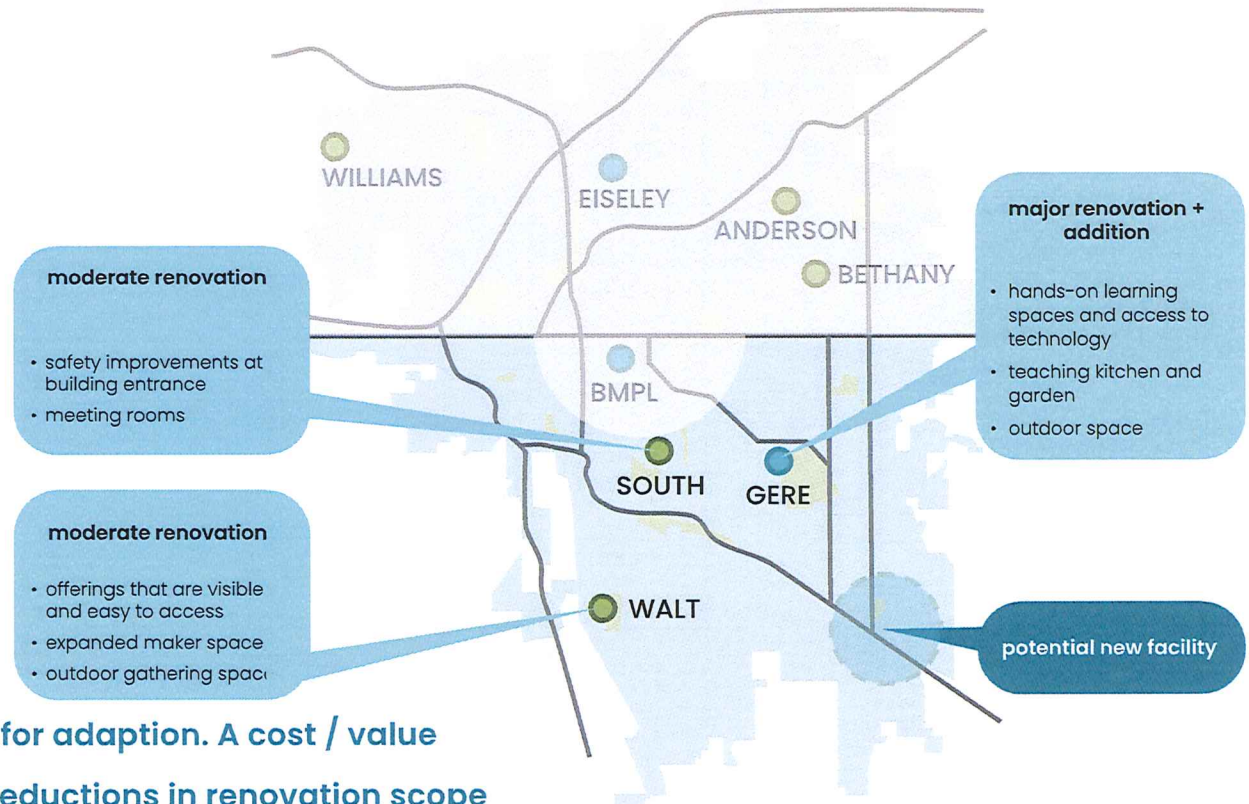
- Major renovation and addition to Gere Branch
- Moderate renovations of Walt and Gere

Medium Term Focus

- Major renovation of Walt

Long Term Goals

- New branch in the southeast to expand service potential



Gere and Walt pose substantial challenges for adaption. A cost / value analysis should be part of the next phase. Reductions in renovation scope for Gere and Walt while prioritizing a new branch may be warranted