



# 2022 Annual Report

**tacoma** public library



# Introduction

The end of 2022 signals a third year of operating libraries in a pandemic, and Tacoma Public Library staff continued to show their determination to serve by adjusting services to meet community needs.

We supported community health by distributing thousands of COVID-19 test kits. When the mask mandate lifted in March, we transitioned back to in-person programs. Amazingly, we were actually able to expand our regular program offerings thanks to our partnership with Tacoma Creates. This collaboration continues to provide opportunities for TPL to host a variety of arts, culture, and heritage events in our libraries that we would not be able to offer otherwise.

An important 2022 project was the Feasibility Study for the Restoration of Library Services to the Eastside and Hilltop neighborhoods. I am proud of the community engagement work that contributed to a solid final report, a tool that is critical to seeing these services restored.

All of TPL'S accomplishments are due to the commitment and hard work of our staff to realize our mission, values, and strategic priorities in all they do, every day. I continue to be grateful for the support provided by the Board of Trustees, the TPL Foundation, and you, our incredible community.



Kate Larsen, Library Director



## Mission, Vision, and Values

### Mission (Our purpose and why we exist)

We empower our community by bringing people together to discover, connect, create, learn, and thrive.

### Vision (Aspirations we have for our library)

We are radically welcoming: a trusted community hub where all people can find joy, compassion, and inspiration.

### Values (What we believe in)

#### **We work to break down barriers of access.**

Our commitment to racial equity and social justice guides our work, allowing us to learn about and respond to Tacoma's diverse communities' needs and opportunities.

#### **We believe that learning is a human right.**

We work to provide free access to information and ideas from diverse points of view and encourage our community to explore new ideas, perspectives, and experiences.

#### **We foster a culture of teamwork.**

We engage with our community, our partners, and one another to cultivate collaboration and innovation.

#### **We are committed stewards of our human, environmental, and financial resources.**

We practice equitable decision-making and resource allocation, and take an active, visible role in supporting sustainable and resilient communities.



**Responsible and Resilient**



**Cultivate and Engage Community**



**Equity and Access**



**Investment in Youth**



**Learning, Creativity, and Innovation**

Cover Photo: Brian Cox



# Equity and Access



***We are committed to racial equity and social justice. It guides our work in serving Tacoma's diverse communities, especially the most vulnerable and underserved.***

Spanish is the second most common language spoken in Tacoma. In 2022, Tacoma Public Library emphasized expanding our engagement with Spanish speakers. Multilingual staff located at Moore and Mottet help Spanish-speaking patrons with using technology, filing taxes online and in-person, reader's advisory, and navigating community and library resources. Spanish-speaking staff have designed and offered bilingual programs and programs in Spanish. TPL also partners with Mi Centro to expand services and resources for the Latinx community in our libraries.



**Mi Centro** holds monthly events at Moore Library to provide services for Latine/x families and businesses.



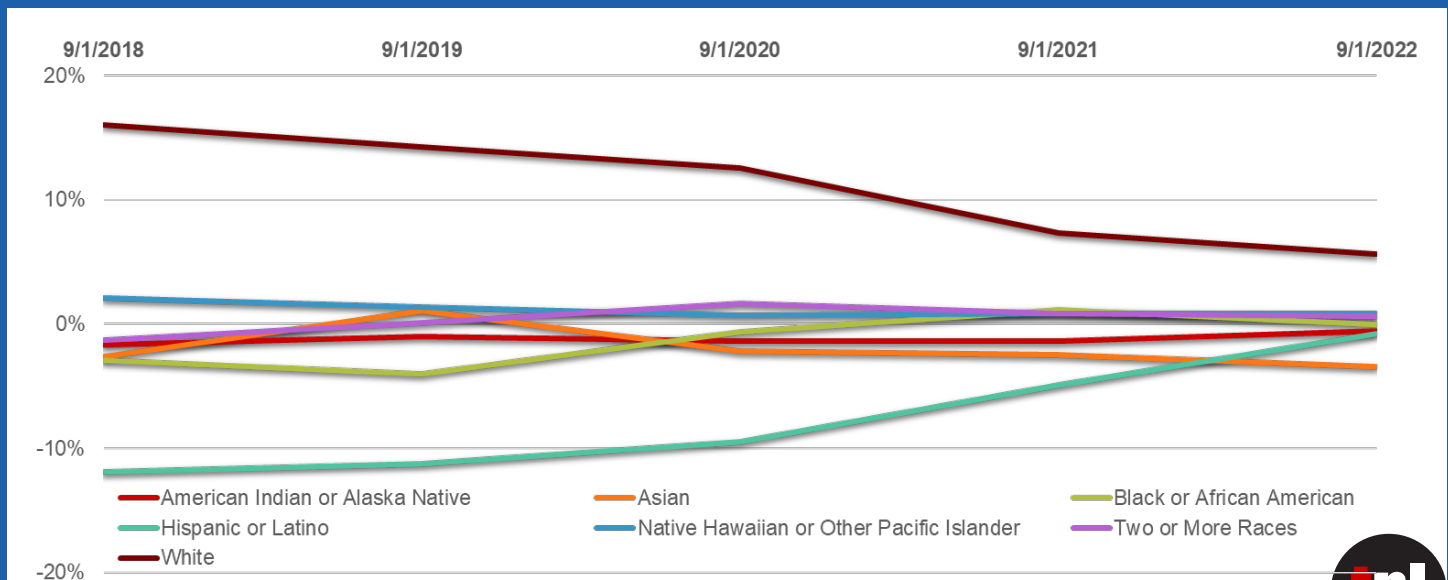
Weekly **Spanish-language Storytimes** are offered for families with young children.



Screen printing station with Mi Centro and Oaxacan artist Edgar Martinez at Moore Library during the **Little Literary Festival**.

## Diversity of Hires: TPL workforce compared to City of Tacoma population

Over the past five years, TPL's workforce has been making steady progress towards reflecting the city we serve.





## Equity and Access, cont.

Program priorities in 2022 expanded access to vital services.



Mobile Hotspot Kit  
Checkouts

243



Podcast Kit  
Checkouts

81

### TPL hosted:

- **Free legal aid and housing help** drop-in sessions with Tacomaprobono and Pierce County Human Services
- **Citizenship classes** with Tacoma Community House



### TPL provided:

- **Sensory Accessibility Kits** creating a better library experience for all patrons
- Expansion of our **Museum and Local Attraction Passes**



Rhododendron Species Botanical Garden



# Learning, Creativity, and Innovation



*We will be the place for learning, discovery, and innovation.*

## Poetry Picnic: A Celebration of Poetry and Community

was presented in partnership with Tacoma Creates, Write253, Creative Colloquy, and Asia Pacific Cultural Center.

*Photo: Brian Cox*



## Digital Literacy and Continued Education

Learning is ongoing at TPL with many opportunities to gain a new skill with the support of staff and available resources:

- **Digital Literacy** assessments and workshops for improving basic computer skills
- **Podcast Café** and **Be Your Own Record Label** online learning cohorts with the Digital Media Lab
- **Discovering Your Family Tree** event series
- **Microsoft LinkedIn Learning** and **Imagine Academy**





## Learning, Creativity, and Innovation, cont.

### Grants and Awards

TPL's excellence in several areas was awarded through either new or ongoing grant funding in 2022, equipping us with the necessary resources to expand or create new services, programs, and resources. We diligently pursued funding where available to bolster our growing services.

**WA State Dept of Commerce, pass-through from Federal Institute of Museum and Library Services**

**\$58,850**

used for new public computing desks and chairs



**National Endowment for the Humanities**

**\$10,000**

awarded for programming and supplies



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE  
HUMANITIES

**John Cotton Dana Library Public Relations Award**

**\$10k**



**WA Secretary of State, pass-through from Federal Institute of Museum and Library Services**

**\$3,000**

for online tracking (digital Summer Reading app Zoobean/ Beanstack)



**DC Public Library, pass-through from Federal Institute of Museum and Library Services**

**\$10k**

for equipment



**Gates Foundation  
\$50,000/year  
for 2023-2024**

unrestricted

BILL & MELINDA  
GATES foundation





# Investment in Youth



*We believe that youth are the future and we will prioritize services, programs, and partnerships that nurture and develop young minds.*



Continued support from the **Tacoma Creates** initiative brought exciting partnerships and a huge increase in events.  
Programs **63**  
Attendees **1283**  
Partner Organizations **25**



*Tiny Tots with Tacoma Little Theatre*

## The Pathway Partnership

The partnership between Tacoma Public Library and Tacoma Public School District (TPS) allows every TPS student (Pre-K–12) and teacher to have Tacoma Public Library access using their student or employee ID card.



## 21–22 School Year Overview

Active students (at least 1 checkout): **1,170**

Physical items checked out: **7,831**

Pathway Overdrive (digital) users: **4,486**

Pathway Overdrive (digital) checkouts: **18,568**

Pathway educator Overdrive (digital) users: **316**

Pathway educator checkouts: **1,007**



## Investment in Youth, cont.

### Summer Reading Challenge

The 2022 program drew increased community participation with a fantastic offering of in-person and virtual programs, both at libraries and offsite at parks and beaches.

#### Summer Reading Challenge **At-A-Glance:**

events **349**  
(237 in 2021)

attendees **7,118**  
(1,625 in 2021)

sign-ups **2,663**  
(1,859 in 2021)

completions **1,012**  
(604 in 2021)



Attendees at Mottet Library learn about tide pool creatures at one of three events with Harbor WildWatch. *Photo credit: Brian Cox*

### Storytime S.T.E.A.M. Backpacks

Backpacks with learning toys and activities began circulating in early 2022. They can be checked out from any library location and each backpack features books, toys, and activities.

**Total checkouts in 2022: 422**





# Cultivate and Engage Community



*We will be the center for connecting people, ideas, and places.*

TPL staff participated in a variety of community events and festivals to increase visibility for library services and reach new audiences.

Highlights include:

- Lunar New Year Festival in the Lincoln Business District
- South Sound Sustainability Expo
- Tacoma Ocean Fest at Thea Foss Waterway
- McKinley Neighborhood Fair
- Back to School Night at First Creek Middle School
- Tacoma Moon Festival with Chinese Reconciliation Project Foundation
- Festival Latinx with Tacoma Arts Live



## Tacoma Reads

Our theme for Tacoma Reads in 2022 was “hope, resilience, and community,” which we explored as a community through three reading selections for all ages of readers, with main title *Afterlife* by Julia Alvarez. The mask mandate expired just as our in-person programs began.



Book discussion with author Julia Alvarez and Mayor Woodards.



Filipino cooking demonstration with chef Jan Parker and author Cookie Hiponia.



Storytimes, arts activities, workshops, and live performances at the Little Literary Fest.

**TACOMA  
READS**





## Cultivate and Engage Community, cont.

### Community Archives Center

The **Community Archives Center (CAC) at Tacoma Public Library** was established with funding from a \$250K

IMLS grant to begin addressing the gaps and silences existing in the local history record through a community-driven, participatory process. CAC partnered with the community to collect, preserve, and make content available through the Northwest ORCA digital collections platform.



Outreach and community events included:

- Black History Month Celebration at the Peoples Community Center
- Project Homeless Connect at St. Leo Parish
- Sustainability Expo at the University of Washington-Tacoma
- Salishan Outdoor Movie Night at the Salishan Family Investment Center
- Salishan National Night Out at the Salishan Family Investment Center
- Eastside Farmers Market
- Hilltop Street Fair



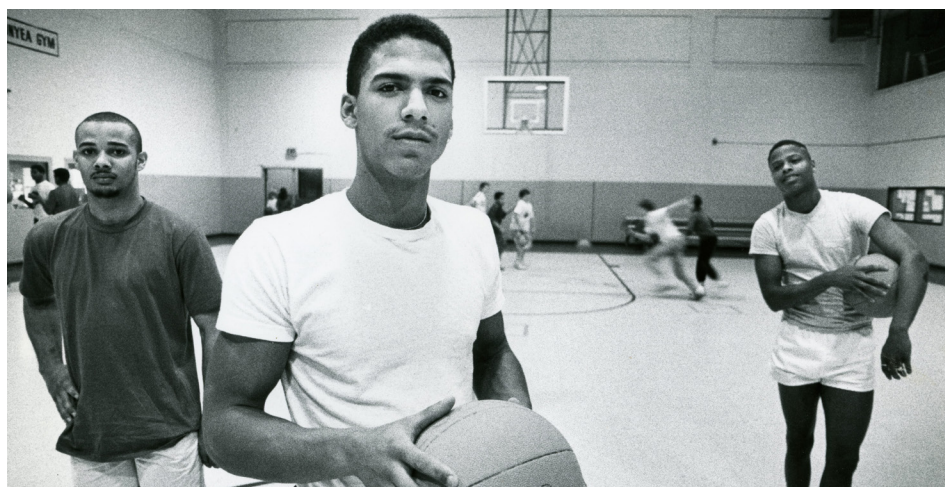
Rally for Reproductive Rights May 7: Kat Wood holds a sign at a protest outside the Union Station building in Tacoma.



Salishan Story Fest photo submission: Mr. Booker and Mr. Martin, best friends, 1966/67.



Black History Month Celebration at the Peoples Community Center.



*LEFT Charles Carson, 1970.*

Charles Carson donated his collection of documents and photographs related to his life in the Eastside of Tacoma, his experience of violence and juvenile incarceration, and his nationally-recognized work to support local underserved youth. Much of this content has been digitized and made available in Northwest ORCA. The Charles Carson Papers have also been used in several classes and educational programs.



## Cultivate and Engage Community, cont.

### Feasibility Study for Hilltop and Eastside Library Services

The Tacoma Public Library (TPL) once had libraries in the Eastside and Hilltop neighborhoods. Delayed by the Coronavirus Pandemic in 2020, this project studied the best way to restore library services to the Eastside and Hilltop neighborhoods. The study began in late 2021 and was completed in 2022.



[See the full report online.](#)



Photo: Brian Cox

### Project Overview and Timeline

	2021 (Q4)	2022 (Q1)	2022 (Q2)	2022 (Q3)
Market and Transportation/Access Study				
Facility Review				
Financial Study, Demographic Growth and Trend Analysis				
Community Input Sessions	Virtual and In-Person			
Community Visioning Workshops		Virtual and In-Person		
Community Listening Sessions			Virtual, In-Person, and Online Survey	
Final Report Published				Shared with Public and Stakeholders



# Responsible and Resilient



*We will be an integral partner in a sustainable network that supports a thriving Tacoma.*

## Northwest ORCA

Online Records and Collections Access

As in-building usage at the Northwest Room continues to be limited, Northwest ORCA is a new way to access unique local history collections. The Northwest Room team organized, arranged, and described large parts of their physical collections to build “Northwest Online Records and Collections Access” (ORCA). Simply put, ORCA is an online database that allows you to explore descriptions of the Northwest Room’s collections. With it, you can access both digitized and born-digital content, explore 3D images, mayor’s papers, letters, audio and video recordings, and much more! The online database launched in April of 2022 and continues to grow as more materials are digitized and created.



*Tacoma News Tribune, Image  
TNT0003V, Tacoma Public  
Library Northwest Room*

Pictured left: Son Deth, a Cambodian refugee, with two of her children on May 31, 1975. Son Deth moved with her family to Pierce County in 1975. This photo is one of thousands now available online as part of ORCA.





## Responsible and Resilient, cont.

Technology upgrades in our **IT Department** continue to improve library services and patron experiences.

new **self-service catalog stations**

established fleet of **projectors** for staff to use in programs



**expanded computing stations** with new furniture at every location

with Finance Office, modernized cash registers to a **tablet-based credit card system**

improved public printing experience in libraries and launched **ePrintIt remote printing**



*Expanded computer stations at Swasey Library.*

The **Facilities Department** tackled important safety and infrastructure projects in 2022.

**elevator modernization completed** at the Main Library

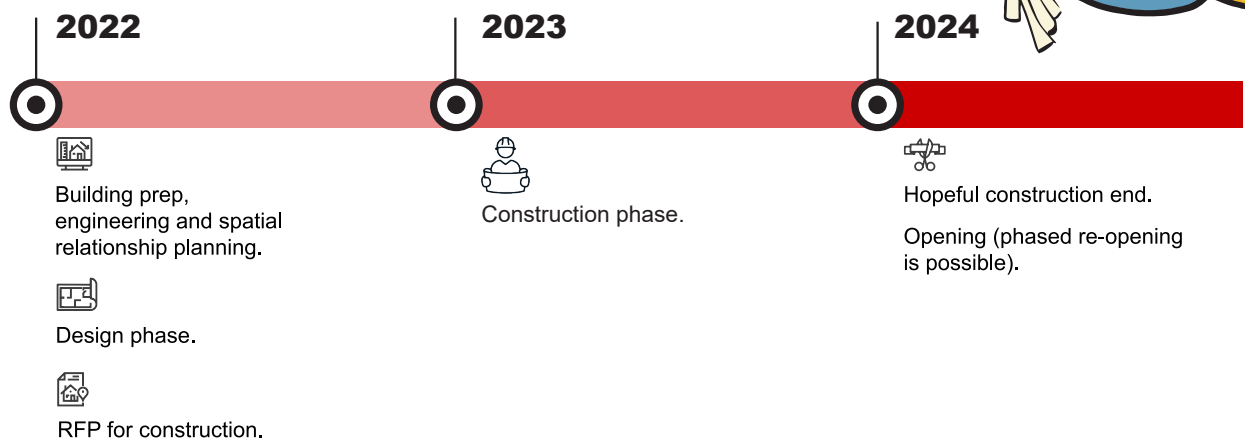
branch **parking lot lighting upgraded** to LED fixtures



## Responsible and Resilient, cont.

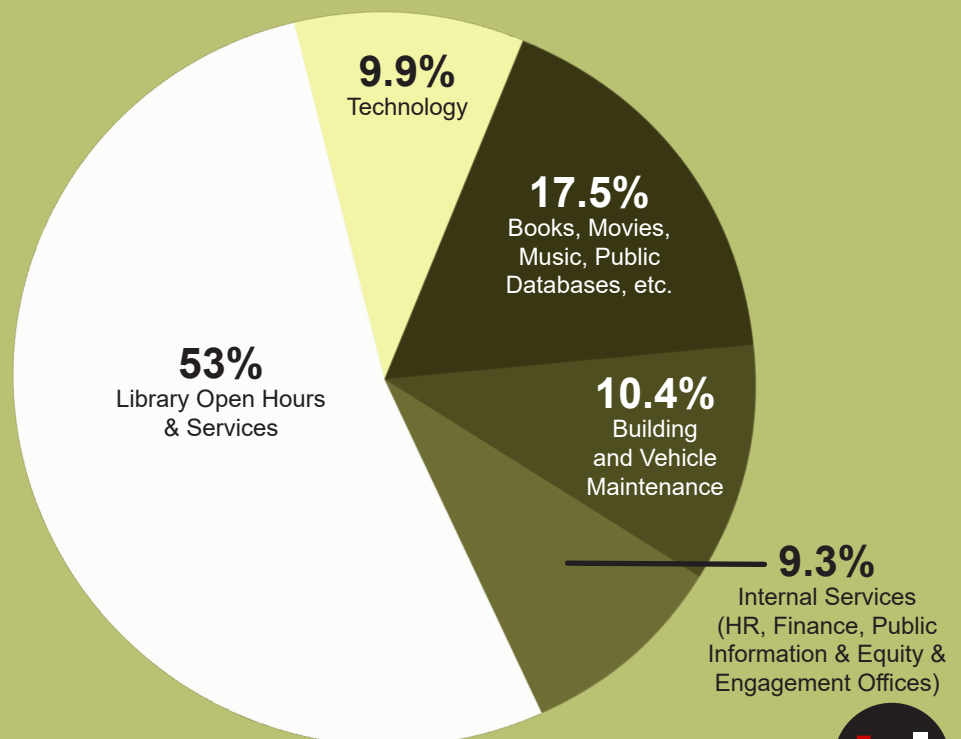
The Main Library, located at 1102 Tacoma Avenue South, is undergoing a refresh to update the facility and create space for community partner tenants. While construction is underway, the lobby of Main Library remains open for limited services. Main Library's Digital Media Lab and Northwest Room are open for appointment-based visits.

### Main Library Construction Timeline



### TPL 2022 Budget

Total: \$14,912,967





# Board of Trustees

Tacoma Public Library is governed by a five-member Board of Trustees appointed by the city's Mayor, and confirmed by a vote of the Tacoma City Council.



**Sara Irish**  
*President*



**Donna LaFrance**  
*Vice President  
January–August*



**Andrea Cobb**  
*Trustee  
Vice President,  
September–December*



**Theresa Pan Hosley**  
*Trustee*



**J. Manny Santiago**  
*Trustee*

## tplfoundation

The Tacoma Public Library Foundation strengthens Tacoma's thriving communities by fueling our library system through philanthropy and outreach.

**Rafael Saucedo**, Interim-President | Community Relations Specialist, Gesa Credit Union

**Cortney Leach**, Treasurer | Grants Manager, Tacoma Public Schools

**Jamika Scott**, Board of Directors | Founder, Tacoma Action Collective

**JR. Nobles**, Board of Directors | Executive Director, Friends of the Children Tacoma

**Wayne Williams**, Board of Directors | President Emeritus, Tacoma Public Library Board of Trustees

**Megan Smedsrud**, Board of Directors | Senior Program Officer, Greater Tacoma Community Foundation

**Erin Bethel**, Board of Directors | Teacher Librarian, Tacoma Public Schools

**Yazmin Carretero Aguilar**, Board of Directors | Executive Director, Cielo Centro

**Bill Ryberg**, Board of Directors | Vice President for College Advancement/Director of Foundation, Tacoma Community College

# TPL At a Glance



**Fern Hill Library**  
765 South 84th  
Street



**Kobetich  
Library**  
212 Browns Point  
Blvd NE



**Main Library**  
1102 Tacoma  
Avenue South



**Moore Library**  
215 South 56th  
Street



**Mottet Library**  
3523 East G Street



**South Tacoma  
Library**  
3411 South 56th  
Street



**Swasey Library**  
7001 6th Avenue



**Wheelock  
Library**  
3722 North 26th  
Street

established in

# 1894

# locations

8

staff

119

**Also offered at the Main Library:**



The **Digital Media Lab** is a creative makerspace, providing access to digital media tools and collaboration in an inclusive and supportive space.



The **Northwest Room** collections and services are dedicated to offering comprehensive and accessible local and regional history information to the public.



The **Thomas Handforth Gallery** provides an opportunity for local, regional, and national artists to exhibit their work.



**Tacoma Tool Library**—a community partner offering low-cost access to shared tools—moved its operations to the second floor of the Main Library in 2020.