

TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

DRAFT Budget Planning for FY11: A Discussion Document

Thinking Ahead to 2015

The Boston Public Library will be:

- a 21st century library that touches every Bostonian – online, in libraries, and in the community
- a leader in delivering core services: hours, books, technology, virtual content, lifelong learning for children and adults
- a leader in closing the digital divide
- transformed to meet changing needs of the citizens of Boston, our primary customer base
- committed to the preservation of cultural treasures
- driven by the Compass Principles for Excellence
- financially sustainable and the right size for Boston

Customer Demand

Since 2006, there has been a 31% increase in books, CDs, and DVDs borrowed from the Boston Public Library (BPL). In FY09, the BPL crossed three thresholds: more than 5 million hits to its website, more than 300,000 Boston residents using library cards, and more than 40,000 Boston residents newly registering for library cards.

During the first six months of FY10, the Boston Public Library has already seen more than 3.8M hits to its website; more than 95,000 public wireless internet sessions, which is 20,000 more than occurred over the same time period in FY09; and a 9% increase in teens using their library cards as compared to same time period last year. In addition, the use of downloadable media continues to climb. If there were an official “digital branch” of the BPL, it would be the branch with the sixth highest circulation, system-wide.

The FY11 budget positions the BPL to anticipate the ever-increasing demand and respond to the evolving needs of the citizens of Boston.

Budget Principles

FY11 will position the BPL for the future and begin transformation of services for 2015. Spending reductions will take place across the board – in system-wide operations, at the Central Library, and in the neighborhood branches. The BPL will take a planful approach that factors in the cumulative impact of back-to-back years of budget reductions. The BPL will be financially sound and fiscally responsible, minimizing reliance on one-time solutions.

Funding Environment

The current funding environment is the result of back-to-back years of sharply reduced revenues.

- Overall funding for FY09 was \$48M, overall funding for FY10 is \$41.1M, and overall funding for FY11 is anticipated to be \$38.7M.
- Over FY2010 and FY2011, state funding is estimated to decrease by 73%.
- **Projected FY11 shortfall is approximately \$3.6M**, including deferred collective bargaining costs, personnel increases, standard operating costs, technology requirements, and critical needs.

Preliminary Budget Options

Copley Square, Central Library

1. Public Service

- Consolidation of service points for walk-in, telephone, and online customers
 - Unify complementary subject departments
 - Relocate customer service points for streamlined access to materials
 - Reduce total number of service points to approximately 14 from 20
- Central Library Schedule
 - Keep all Sundays open except for the five Sundays before Monday holidays and the Sundays following Christmas Day and New Year's Day
 - Continue reduced hours in Children's, Teen (effective January 19, 2010) and Music, and Fine Arts Departments (effective June 29, 2009)

Public impact

- Central Library remains open 7 days per week (October – May), 6 during the summer
- Hours sustain the Central Library's role as a community gathering place
- Unified service points for walk-in customers
- "Collections of Distinction" identified and strengthened
- Digitization efforts to provide information and entertainment that reach beyond library walls

Estimated position reduction: up to 38 FTEs

Neighborhood Branches

The BPL is committed to delivering 21st century library services that respond to the changing needs of the citizens of Boston in buildings, online, and in the community. There are two plausible public service options for the BPL's neighborhood branches in FY11: hours reduction and consolidation/closing.

1. **Public Service Option 1: Hours reduction**

Reduce hours at 18 branches by 50-85%

- 8 large branches remain open at current levels
- 18 other branches "paired" and each open 1-3 days per week
- Saturday hours reduced or eliminated at the 18 "paired" branches
- "Paired" branches share staff among locations
- Staff may work at up to 3 different locations per week

Public impact

- Loss of approximately 600 public service hours per week at branches
- 26 existing branches remain open
- Potential confusion about branch hours and pick-up of books on hold
- Less convenient hours for children, families, and working adults
- Some Homework Assistance Program mentors transferred to other locations
- Buildings closed a majority of the time

Estimated position reduction: up to 35 FTEs

2. **Public Service Option 2: Transform Branch Services**

Strengthen services at 16-18 branches

- 8-10 branches to be identified for closure
- 16-18 branches strengthened by adding staff, computers, collections, and technological access
 - Branches continue to be open 6 days per week
 - Increase Saturday schedule to year-round
 - Add public computers to open branches
 - Add staff to open branches
 - Add books, CDs, DVDs to open branches
 - Add popular programs and services to open branches

Public impact

- Improvement in staff-to-customer ratio
- Enhanced selection of books, CDs, and DVDs
- Shorter wait for public computers and increased computer training for public
- Library buildings in use six days each week
- Additional Homework Assistance Program mentors available
- Popular programs offered through outreach and collaboration
- Increased travel time to branches for some Boston residents

Estimated position reduction: up to 35 FTEs

System-wide Operations & Support

1. System-wide Operations

- Reductions in contracted services including reducing the number of leased vehicles, reducing and eliminating equipment service contracts, changing HVAC contractual arrangements to achieve savings, and continuing to implement a variety of energy conservation measures to reduce utility costs
- Continue to reduce, streamline, and consolidate administrative and system-wide support activities including facilities maintenance and cleaning, operational modifications in technical services (ordering, cataloging and processing of books, DVDs, CDs, etc), administrative support, telephone system operations, staff development, programs, and information technology services
- Reduce state-funded services such as interlibrary loan, reference and research services, and the procurement of electronic databases

Public impact

- Some facility maintenance and cleaning may occur in public view and less frequently
- Potential delay in distribution of new books, DVDs, CDs
- Access to non-BPL materials and electronic databases as well as access to BPL resources by non-Bostonians may be curtailed
- Fewer new books and A/V
- Longer wait for popular books and bestsellers

Estimated position reduction: up to 31 FTEs

Summary

- In order to meet the anticipated FY11 budget shortfall, preliminary estimates indicate that up to 104 positions will be eliminated.
- The recommendations and either of the two public service options in the neighborhood branches described above will meet the estimated budget shortfall.
- The Boston Public Library has contractual obligations with its unions. Some of these proposed options will require bargaining over the impact of changes.

Note

This document is for discussion purposes only. FY11 operating budget decisions have not been made at this time. The budget options will continue to be discussed and analyzed, and will move forward accordingly.

This document will be published online at www.bpl.org/budget.