

Library Director Report

October 2024

Prepared by Tana Elias, October 31, 2024



In the Libraries



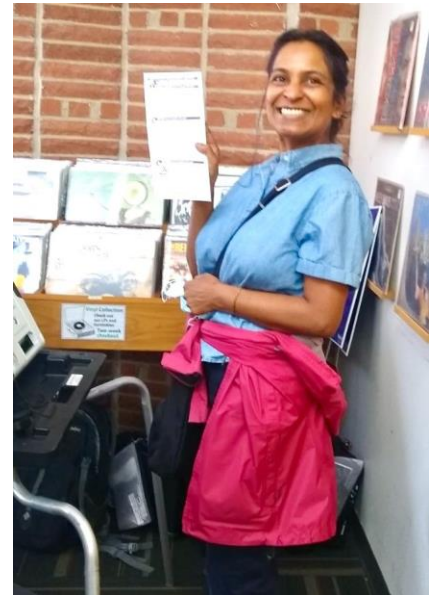
Top left: a family explores a Ho-Chunk dugout canoe at Pinney Library as part of a Teejop and Beyond program. Top right: An east side power outage sent dozens of folks to Pinney Library in the middle of October. Bottom: Group photo of youth whose writings were chosen for the Youth Voices anthology.

October was an exceptionally busy month for Madison's libraries. We hosted the Wisconsin Book Festival at the Central Library, welcoming more than 4,000 visitors over four days (look for a full report in December), including Saturday's We Read Youth Voices Writing Contest author reception. More than 200 proud kids and their families packed the Central Library's youth services floor to celebrate literacy and support young writers.

We also launched the Teejop & Beyond event series celebrating Native nations, hosted our usual hundreds of events, and uplifted city and community partnerships by hosting alder listening sessions, Go By Metro events, Go Big Read book discussions, Red Cross book drives, and more.

And then there's voting...

Voting at the Library



Top: In-person absentee voters at Hawthorne Library. Right: Shalini (pictured) is a first-time voter who just became an American citizen earlier this year. She voted in her first presidential election on the first day of in-person absentee voting, and when she cast her ballot, everyone in line at the Monroe Street Library applauded!

Did you know that most public services staff members have also been trained to register voters, and that we worked with the Clerk's office to serve as a voter registration outlet all year round? Our library card welcome packets include voting information so that we are always connecting library patrons to election resources.

This fall, our libraries have been especially busy supporting voter registration, followed by in-person absentee voting, which one recent news report indicated has seen a 45% increase over the previous general election. We've welcomed thousands of visitors during the thirteen-day IPAV time period and stayed in constant communication with the Clerk's office on messaging and logistics. I am deeply grateful to all library managers and staff who've dealt with long lines, juggled schedules to stay late to accommodate voters still in line when their libraries closed, and fielded questions from voters, poll workers, and the media. Anecdotally I'm told that staff have registered hundreds of voters and signed many voters up for library cards in October, but we won't have final monthly numbers until mid-November. But one example: the Pinney Library poll workers recently reported 742 absentee ballots in one day – a record for that location!

Libraries are key partners in supporting democracy in our city and I'm especially proud of this partnership. By bringing voters into libraries for voter registration and voting, we also have the opportunity to connect with new residents so they can discover the library's free resources.

Budget Update

By the time the Board meets, we'll know the outcome of the referendum, but not the final budget. I will keep you updated on any last minute amendments that affect the library's budget before Council discussion & adoption.

Upcoming important dates include:

- Nov 5 – election day; after this day, we'll know if the referendum is approved or not.
- Nov 12-14 – Council discusses & approves final operating budget for 2025

How can you advocate for the library's 2025 operating budget at this point?

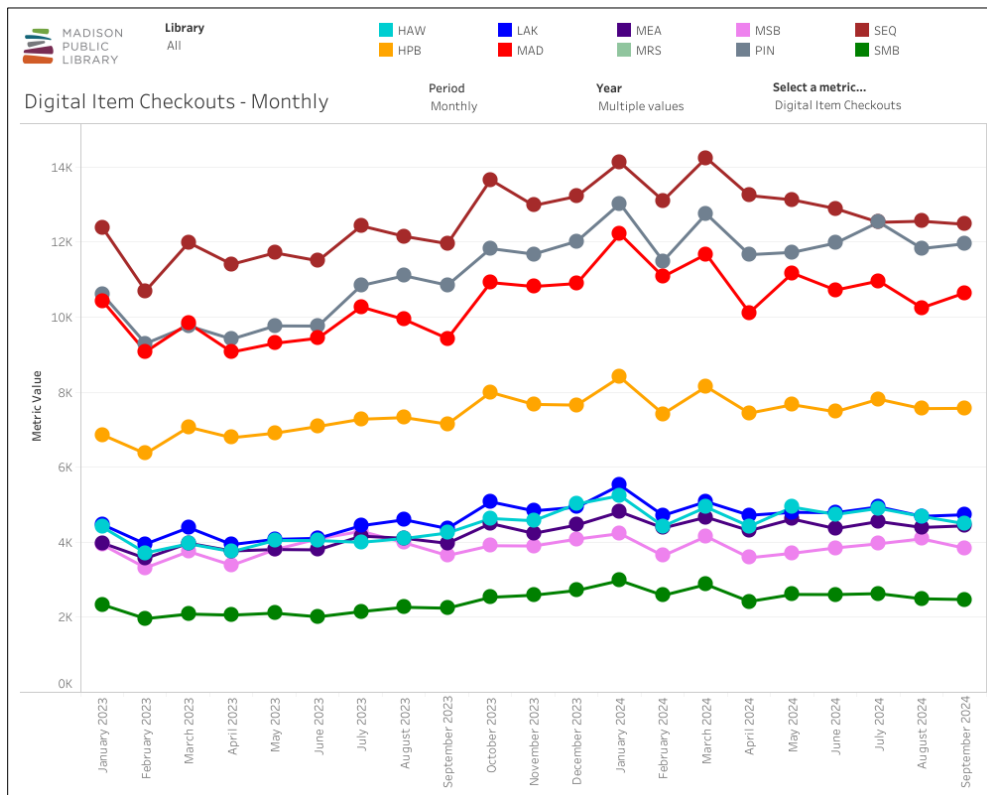
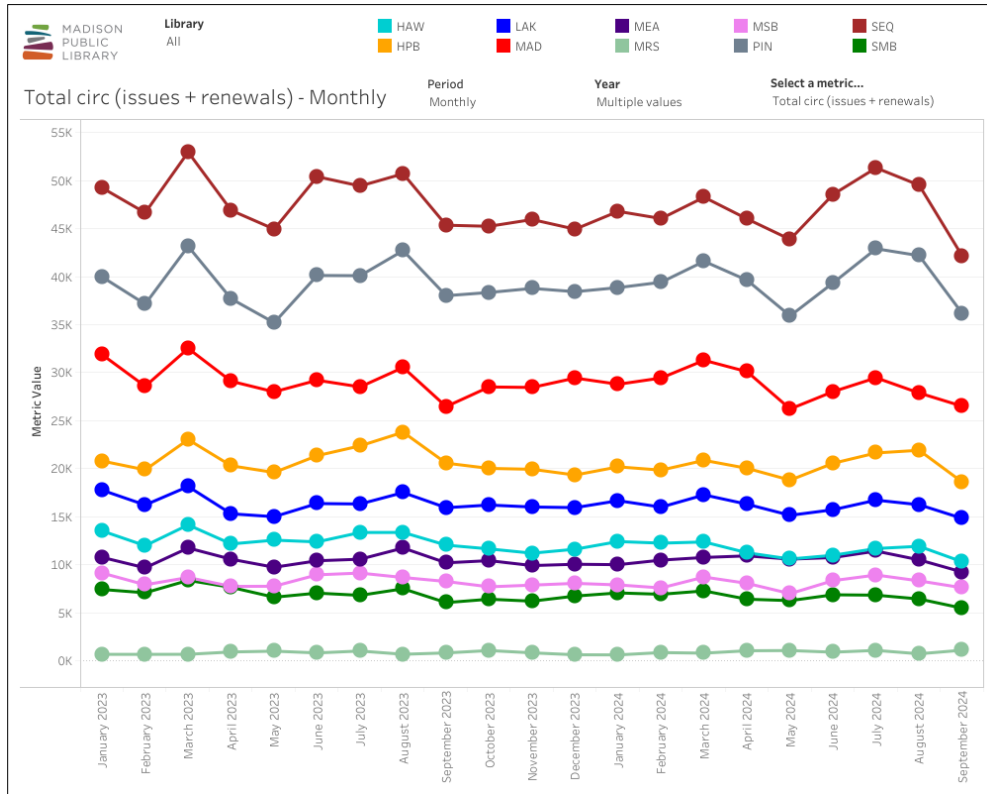
- Register to speak at Council meeting on November 12
- Contact [your alder](#) and/or allalders@cityofmadison.com

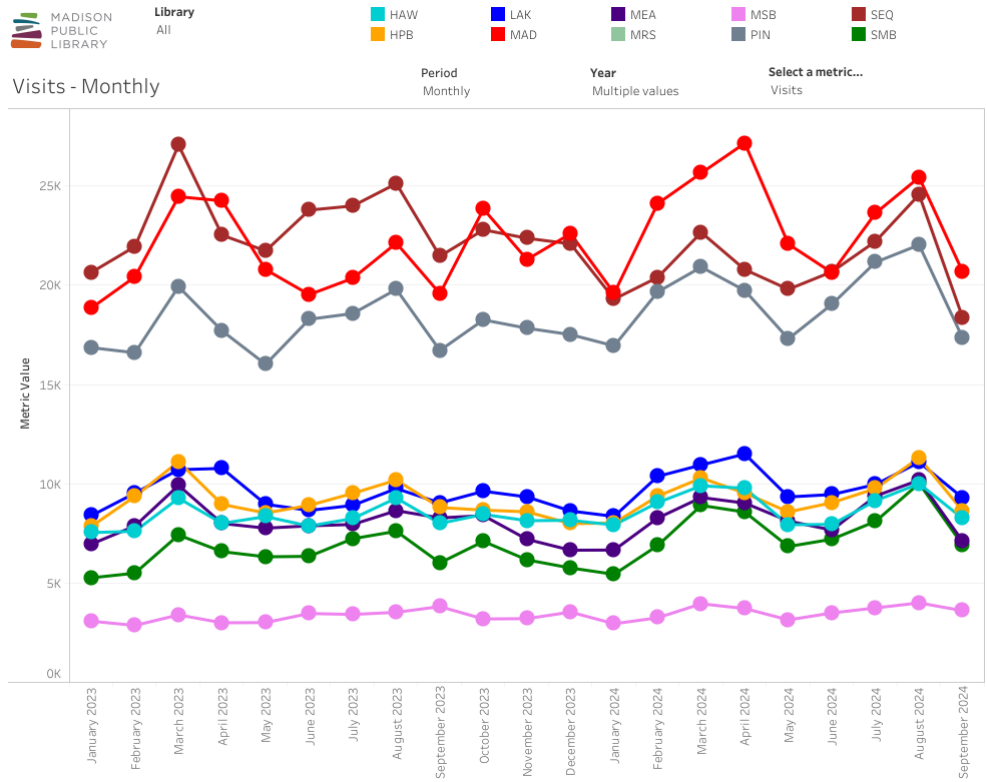
Imagination Center at Reindahl Park Update

Since my last report, we were awarded a Flexible Facilities Program grant for \$4.25 million and have also received all the approvals to accept it. Formal acceptance includes many steps and forms, and we have 45 days to formally accept. A small team is working through the logistics of this process, due November 22, and setting up timelines to make sure we meet all grant requirements once the grant is formally accepted.

This grant commits the project to a construction start date of July 1, 2025 and construction completion by September 20, 2026, so much of our budget conversation next year will revolve around making sure that we can support operations in 2026 and beyond.

Library Metrics





I'm including charts for three metrics we watch regularly at the library. The graphs above highlight print checkouts & renewals, digital checkouts, and visits since January 2023. You'll see that print checkouts are slowly trending down, despite seasonal peaks and valleys, digital checkouts are slowly trending up, and visits are also slowly trending up. We expect October and November visits to reflect a significant increase reflecting both Book Festival and election traffic.

Monthly key metrics, by month and library, from 2015 to the previous month, are always available on our interactive dashboard: [MPL Monthly Metrics | Tableau Public](#).

Policy Review

In line with the library's policy updating project, we're bringing the Collection Development Policy and Reconsideration Form to you for approval in November with the changes discussed at the last meeting. We'll work next on updating our lost materials refund guidelines, our Meeting Room and Study Policy, and our Behavior Policy, which will come before the board for approval in the first quarter of 2025.

Carra Davies, Krissy Wick, Craig Holler and Salud Garcia will work with a City of Madison representative to create formal guidance for how to respond to and support staff after critical incidents. This will be an extension of the City's policy around Critical Incident Stress Management and give managers and staff more guidance on how to best support staff after an incident that happens at a library.

Finally, the Board needs to update their bylaws. I'd recommend a small subcommittee work with me and/or our City's legal team to review the bylaws and make any necessary updates. According to the current bylaws, these are to be reviewed every two years, but they were last formally reviewed and approved by the Board in 2016.

Community Meetings & Appearances in October

- MMSD's Partners for Progress breakfast
- Goodman Community Center's This LIT Just Got Serious literacy event
- Ex Libris Beer Release fundraiser
- Community Budget Meeting with District 15 Alder Martinez-Rutherford
- Budget Exploration Session with District 19 Alder Guequierre
- Interviews with Wisconsin State Journal, WKOW, Spectrum News

Upcoming Events

We've always got hundreds of events happening each month – check out our event calendar at madpl.org/calendar! Here are a few I wanted to highlight for you coming up in the next month:

- [Teejop and Beyond series](#) – various dates and times
- Artist receptions
 - [Artist Reception and Talk with Henry Obeng](#), November 13, 6-8pm, Central Library
 - Sneak Peek of [I AM a Man exhibition](#), November 18, 4-6pm, Goodman South Madison Library – [registration required](#)
 - All library [art exhibitions](#)
- [Library Takeover: Pop Up Portraits](#) – November 30, Lakeview Library, registration required
- [Jazz at Sequoya](#) – monthly on Saturdays
- [Go By Metro events](#) – various dates and times
- and [hundreds more](#) youth literacy, adult classes and book clubs, and events