



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES STAFF REPORT

March 16, 2026
Agenda Item No. 5

TO: BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

FROM: Library Services Department
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PREPARED BY: Evelyn Rogers, Balboa Branch Librarian

TITLE: Balboa Branch Update

DISCUSSION:

Background

Balboa Branch (Balboa) is the founding branch of the Newport Beach Public Library (NBPL), established in May 1929. The original building was constructed around existing public restrooms. Since then, the building has been expanded two times. In 1952, the Spanish-style exterior was replaced by the present-day glass front entrance. In 1962, the branch was expanded again to its current size. Fire Station #1 joined the site with that expansion, being relocated from Washington Street and Bay Avenue. At that time, Balboa served as the City's main library. Today it is the third-largest branch in a four-branch library system.

Balboa and Fire Station #1 were scheduled for demolition and replacement in early fall 2025; due to some delays, the start date moved to late winter 2026. The actual closure date of the branch occurred on March 1, 2026.

Activity at the branch was very seasonal; summer was the busiest time of year. In addition to the usual business, the branch saw a lot of foot traffic, computer and printer use, and children participating in the Summer Reading Program (SRP).

Daily Operations

Prior to closing, Balboa was open 54 hours per week, Monday through Saturday, and closed on Sundays.

The branch housed a special collection, the Nautical Collection, which consisted of fiction, nonfiction, and DVDs. Staff moved this special collection to the Central Library prior to the branch closing.

For children's programming, the branch presented two storytimes per week, plus Toy Train Thursday. Daily Stay & Play numbers were also tracked.

Additionally, the branch hosted one special program per month such as a craft program or performer, along with weekly special programs held during the SRP. BARK: Read to a Dog occurred several times this year as well.

After the 2025 SRP ended, the branch began a modified programming schedule in anticipation of the rebuild. Special programming was suspended, Toy Train Thursdays made a very successful transfer to Corona del Mar Branch, and both storytimes continued on their regular schedule until the end of the year.

In January 2026, regular storytimes, along with special craft programs, moved to the Marina Park Community Center. Currently, Balboa staff present one Preschool Storytime per week and a seasonal craft program monthly at Marina Park.

Personnel

Balboa was staffed by one full-time librarian, one part-time library assistant, two part-time clerks, and one page. Due to vacancies, this year the branch welcomed a new library assistant and a new library clerk.

The staffing complement included Branch Librarian Evelyn Rogers, part-time Library Assistant Sara Bert, part-time Library Clerk Mike Payne, part-time Library Clerk Allyson Parry, and Library Page Chloe Nelson.

Facility Maintenance

Current Project

For some time, Balboa served as the oldest operating City building in Newport Beach. The facility will soon be replaced with a new Balboa Branch and Fire Station #1 on the site of their present location. At the time of writing this report, the branch is closed to the public, and cleanout is nearly complete.

Collection Maintenance

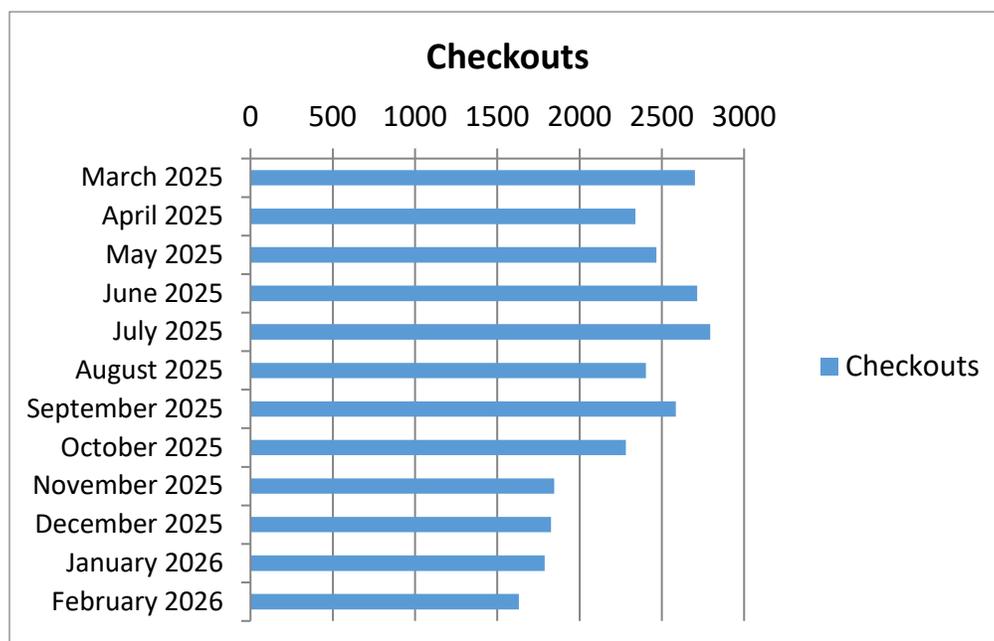
At this time, all Library materials have either been transferred to other branches or weeded. The Friends of the Library are planning a sale at the branch in March for all items that remained after transferring was finished.

Public Service

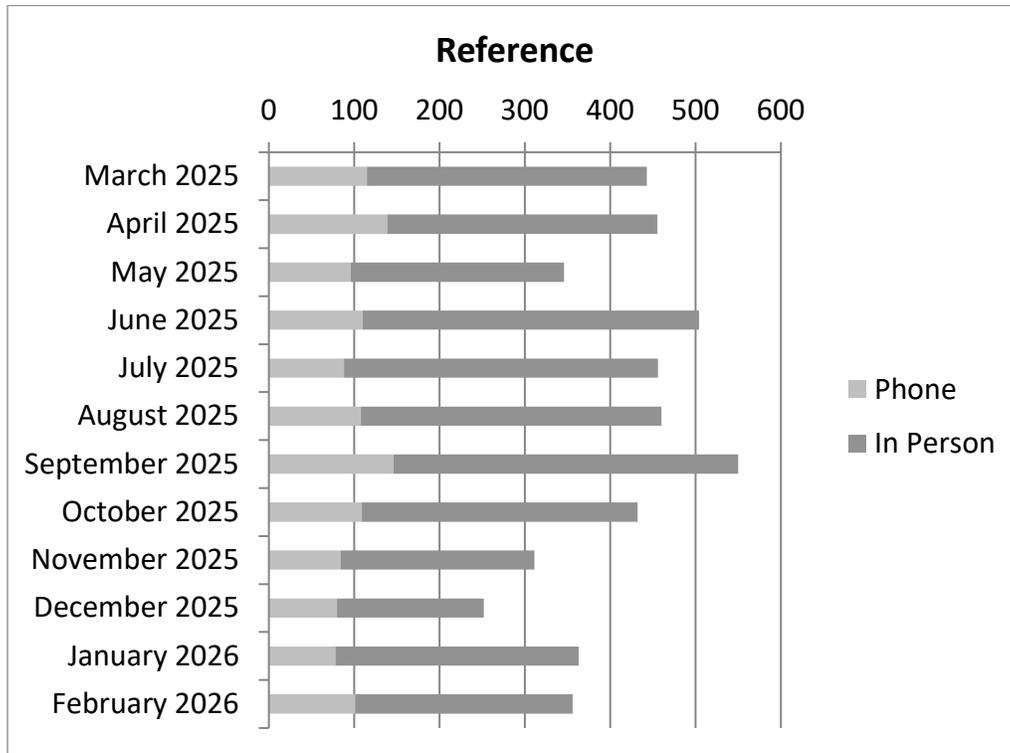
Circulation and Reference Services

Balboa’s service population is 12,033 (the area of Newport Beach City Council District 1, which includes Balboa Peninsula and Lido Isle). That number becomes significantly higher during summer with tourists and visitors who rent houses on the peninsula, many of whom obtained NBPL Non-Resident library cards when they visited.

Patrons checked out 27,381 Balboa items from March 2025 to February 2026:



For the same period, the branch saw a total of 4,928 walk-in and telephone reference questions:



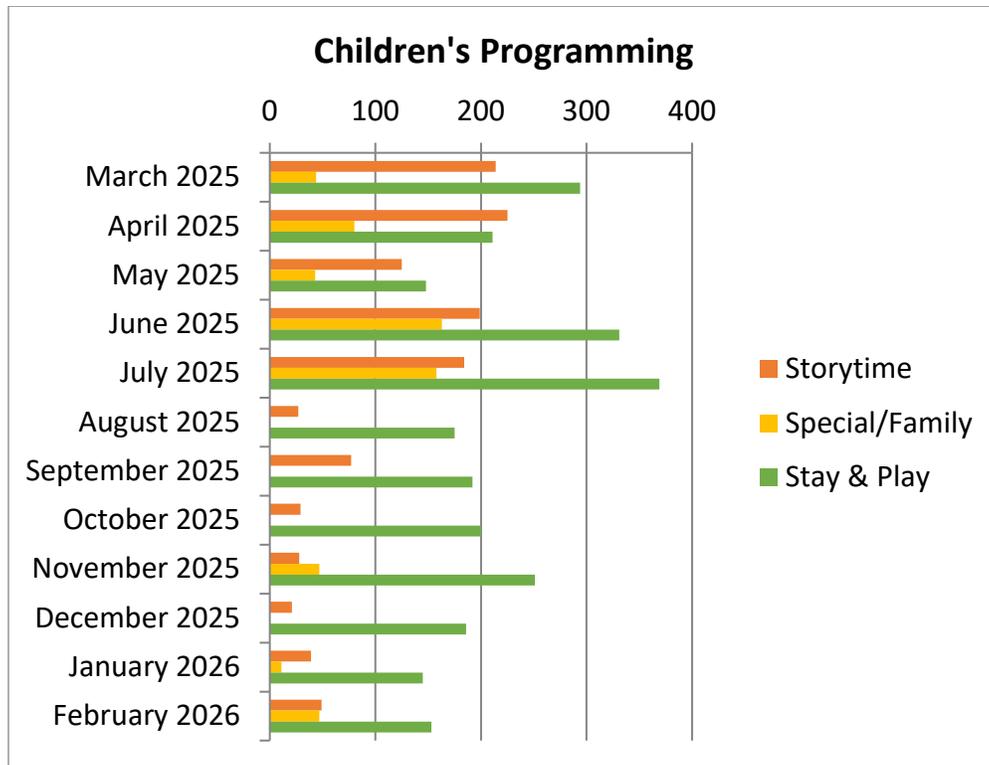
Children’s Services and Program Attendance

Balboa’s weekly programs prior to August 2025 were Preschool Storytime, Books & Babies Storytime, and Toy Train Thursday. Just the two storytimes remained until the end of the year. Storytime attendance fluctuated with the imminent branch replacement on the horizon. Since January, Preschool Storytime at Marina Park has given the Library an excellent way to continue providing this service.

Special programs featuring crafts or performers were offered for children each month, through the end of summer. Some highlights from this year included the summer programs Wild Wonders and Juggler Michael Rayner, and seasonal favorite Hearts & Hugs, presented at Marina Park. Seasonal craft programs continue to be a reliable draw for the branch even when presented off-site.

This year, 2,655 people enjoyed educational toys and games at their own pace, logged as Stay & Play.

The graph below shows Children’s Storytimes attended by 1,217 people and special afterschool programs, attended by 593:



Outreach

Toward the end of the school year each spring, Children’s Services staff visit elementary schools to present information and promote enthusiasm for SRP. As usual this year, Balboa staff visited Newport Elementary School.

Storytimes and craft programs presented off-site at Marina Park provide the opportunity for outreach as well. These programs let people in the area know that the Balboa Branch is still present on the peninsula and provide a connection with local families.

Summary Comments

Throughout the year, staff prepared for closing the branch while maintaining high customer service. Staff addressed patron questions and concerns to the best of their ability and knowledge with a positive attitude. Many patrons expressed thanks to staff for all the help over the years and were in turn assured that the closure of their beloved Balboa is only temporary.

NOTICING:

This agenda item has been noticed according to the Brown Act (72 hours in advance of the meeting at which the Board of Library Trustees considers the item).