

## **Delivery Report for SCLS Board of Trustees September, 2022**

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### **Holiday (Labor Day) Challenges:**

Delivery is in the process of working through an unprecedented staffing challenge that led to two route cancellations, numerous extra hours, and route substitutions from the weeks before, during, and after the week of the Labor Day holiday.

The two route cancellations occurred on Thursday, September 8 and Friday, September 9. The first one was the morning route to Madison's east side and the second one was the return route on Friday afternoon to 4 libraries that generate some of the larger returns for us late in the week. There were no libraries in SCLS that were missed on either day in full. Every library received at least one stop on those days. What it caused was a build-up of materials needing to be sorted at SCLS over the coming days after.

Typically, we average between 450 and 850 bins to be sorted daily depending on the day. We got to a point where we had nearly 300 bins held over from the day before. It began to mimic the quarantine hold that we kept in our garage in 2020 and 2021. Materials were palletized to keep our equipment free for moving our loads (carts) and moved inside at the close of each day. We would then begin each day trying to prioritize the oldest materials first and catch up slowly. As of this writing, we have cut that 300 bin count hold-over by more than half.

The staffing challenge was a series of unprecedented circumstances where we lost staff members on a daily basis for a number of reasons on top of full vacation quotas during the days near the Labor Day holiday. This left us in some circumstances with every possible staff member operating the daily routes (our primary responsibility). Secondly, it imperiled our ability to satisfactorily keep up with the material sorting flow, which peaked on Tuesday, September 13. The transit times for some materials were likely increased by a day or two for up to 25% of our daily volume.

The concerning part for our department is primarily two key things: (1) missing details and (2) the stress and frustration of our staff.

When we are stretched thin as a management staff, we have outcomes that are undesirable. Small details getting overlooked, emails are late to be responded to, and delays happen. We make decisions and priorities are decided and some sacrifices occur. Impact to libraries is hopefully minimized, but likely visible.

On the internal side, we are concerned about stress and feeling stretched too thin. Our staff took a lot of responsibility to cover gaps and creatively solve the difficulties we had during this time. As easy as it can sound to “do only what we can do,” it can be overwhelming to see the wave of incoming materials drop you further behind.

Frustration and overwork is very concerning to me. Yet, we all fall victim to it, including myself. I commend our manager group and staff for doing our best to stay in control and find small victories every day. Brad Guenther worked tirelessly to creatively schedule and direct incoming traffic for the majority of these troubling days and continues to do so. Jeff Grandt-Turke has also added some extra time and stood in admirably in countless ways. Additionally, a number of driver staff added shifts or subbed on longer routes with longer hours.

We expect to be largely caught up by Friday, September 16. However, we will be back in to heavy early-week volume on Monday again.

Library and SCLS headquarters staff have been patient and understanding of this.

How does this reflect our staffing overall at this point? We are down one full-time staff member and our part-time group is at its lowest level ever. The staffing as it is currently structured can get through most days barring multiple absences. We had prioritized staffing for routine and “normal” as opposed to the infrequent chaos. If we can pick-up a new full-time staffer to augment our team and perhaps another dependable part-timer, we would see more comfort and space for the occasional volume wave.