

From: Jorge Boone
To: [Farnan, David](#)
Cc: [Council; info@boulderlibraryfoundation.org](mailto:info@boulderlibraryfoundation.org); [BPL-COM](#)
Subject: Re: Transients Overrunning Public Library - Including one watching child pornography on public computer
Date: Monday, October 16, 2017 7:43:08 AM

David,

Thank you so much for your thoughtful response. To your suggestion, I will attend the meeting on Monday to lend my voice to the library master plan. As far as our different experiences on Saturday, they are not too far off, we enjoyed our time at the library too, reading to our girls, playing in the children's area and borrowing a few books. That said, the pictures I sent speak for themselves. Every booth, except one empty one was filled with transient men - half dosing off, hanging out or sleeping all together. Every occupied computer station upstairs (except for maybe one) was similarly occupied by transient men.

As mentioned below, beyond the man watching videos of 8-year old girls in their underwear, other screens had gambling games like video poker and almost as disturbing as the videos of children, where the aggressive first person shooter games being played...my question is what place do any of these things have our public library? Why not remove the computers or at minimum restrict the internet on the computers entirely to remove this element (except perhaps for library research, news sites, email and word processing, etc.)

Having gone to the library regularly, the booths and computers in particular seem to be a design issue (I'm sure not being used as originally intended). I would guess that if I were to do a photographic study in any two week period, it wouldn't look a whole lot different from the photos attached. Addressing and refining the design of these areas could eliminate some of the issues pointed out in the email below. Peoples accessibility to computers (most of the transient men were charging their own smart phones and laptops at the booths), along with rapid changes in the internet are potentially outdated the original design intent of the computer stations upstairs. The booths seem to serve as an area for transients to congregate more than anything else.

I agree with you that the library is an overwhelmingly positive thing for the community and these are difficult issues - that said, as a parent of two small children yourself, I'm sure you too understand the serious concerns we have over:

- (1) spotting a man drooling over a computer watching girls in their underwear (on a public computer),
- (2) or another playing aggressive bloody first person shooters (on a public computer),
- (3) or taking my child into the bathroom to wash their hands only to encounter homeless men bathing in the sink,
- (4) or to walk by the booths and literally encounter only transients hanging out and sleeping at every booth.

Thanks again for your response and taking these suggestions into consideration - I look forward to meeting you on Monday.

- Jorge

On Oct 15, 2017, at 10:37 AM, Farnan, David <FarnanD@boulderlibrary.org> wrote:

Dear Mr Boone -

Thank you for taking the time to write. Each member of City Council, the Library Commission and the Library Foundation Directors has received your message. Some or all may individually respond. If you would like to discuss this in person with the members of the Library Commission, we have a previously scheduled work session which will include the topic of safety, security and homelessness on Monday evening October 16th at 6 pm at the Main library in the Canyon meeting room. We are discussing it in the context of the Library Master Plan, which is scheduled to go to City Council in early 2018. You are welcome to attend.

I apologize for the experience you had in the library yesterday. And I do appreciate your suggestions. I think that I speak for all of us when I say that the City of Boulder, the Library Commission and library administration are all open to dialogue and in search of a working solution that broadens our sense of creating an inclusive environment while at the same time having zero tolerance for illegal activity and deterring behavior disruptive of everyone's experience.

The library is currently in the midst of our master planning process. We have spent the last 12 months gathering feedback from the community on a host of topics including safety in the library and perceptions of "transient" and other "unhoused" populations. We hope to have actionable suggestions for City Council to consider. As I am certain you are well aware, the library is free and open to all and serves a vital role of providing public space and access to information and common tools like internet for everyone in our community to enjoy. This provision of space and access to information is both a premium value in our society and an increasingly complicated venture.

Without commenting on the individual you have photographed in the library, obviously viewing child pornography is an illegal act and subject to criminal prosecution. Sleeping and bathing in the library are both violations of library behavioral guidelines. Staff does speak to individuals who are sleeping or bathing. If they continue the behavior they can lose their library privileges for up to one

year. Public internet access at the library is provided through the city of Boulder's public wireless network. Computers are filtered for illegal activity. Sites such as illegal file sharing, known hacking sites and child pornography are blocked. Pornography [where it is not depicting children] is protected under the first amendment. 'Obscenity' however is not protected. Known child pornography and obscene sites are blocked. This in no way is meant to suggest that filtering software is perfect. It is not. We continue to be vigilant and refine it.

One last personal note. I also happened to be in the library yesterday morning with my wife and 2 young sons and had a very different experience. We went to the gallery, met up with friends in the café and enjoyed a great storytime in the children's area with live chickens. We played in the Sanitas room where community members were setting up for a Go Tournament and tossed pennies in the fountain and made a wish. All of this is of course beside the point with regard to you and your family's experience. But I do think it does suggest that we all need to question the concept of "overrun," when we are speaking of public space. The Boulder Public Library is currently the one of the busiest public libraries in the state of Colorado. With nearly 1 million visitors annually we are indeed very busy, and in a sense 'overrun' on any given day. But overrun in many more positive ways than negative ones.

The difference between illegal and legal activity is not complicated. We know how to respond and do so promptly. Library behavioral guidelines are clearly defined. One could argue about how effective they are, but nevertheless, we do try our best given our current resources to enforce them. What is more difficult for me, Mr. Boone --and I mean difficult for me personally, as well as how to address it as an institution -- are those situations where as you allude to, patrons "feel" intimidated or uncomfortable. I am sincerely nonplussed as to how to address this. Different people experience the presence of homeless and transient individuals differently. It probably comes as no surprise to you that we have previously discussed removing or moving the booths. But if we removed the booths and replace it with an art gallery, wouldn't the individuals sitting there just move to another area? And I can attest, the booths are filled every day. In some instances they are occupied by some of the City Council members on this email. It is complicated. But, put simply, each day the diversity of the individuals sitting in the library is as diverse as the city at large.

I do sincerely appreciate your input and the opportunity to respond at length. I

hope I have not tried your patience with the length of the response. Further, I hope you will join us as we continue this conversation Monday night. I assure you we will be discussing your email at length as I think it helps clarify a number of issues the library and community faces.

Once again, I deeply regret that you and your family had a bad experience in the library. I assure you the City of Boulder, the Library Commission and library administration take this very seriously and are seeking a solution.

Sincerely,

David Farnan
Library & Arts Director
City of Boulder

From: Jorge Boone <jorge.boone@gmail.com>

Sent: Saturday, October 14, 2017 5:52 PM

To: Council; info@boulderlibraryfoundation.org

Subject: Transients Overrunning Public Library - Including one watching child pornography on public computer

Dear Council Members and Public Library Leadership,

We often go to the Boulder Public Library with our two small children and love having access to this great facility. That said, every time we go it appears more and more overrun with transient men. This morning when I went with my two small Children and wife we saw that every booth was taken up by transients, including some sleeping in place. On the second floor, the public computers appear to be almost exclusively used by transients. When I walked by their screens almost all were filed up not by library material but online poker, first person shooter games and in one case child pornography. Seeing the child pornography on the screen of the computer, I brought it up to a librarian who promptly went to call security.

In addition to this, the mens restroom again was filed with transients washing up in the sink and was very intimidating.

Attached are several pictures taken at approximately 11am today (Saturday October 14th). Here are my questions:

(1) At what point is enough, enough and the City and library get control of this situation?

(2) The type of activity taking place on the public computers is appalling and completely unrelated to library uses. Can these machines be restricted to use for research only and limit internet or cut it off completely so that sites like first person shooters, 8-year olds in underwear and poker card sites and not accessible?

(3) How can we allow people (anyone) sleep and sit in these booths all day....literally every single one? If these booths are being used only as a place to hang out by transients, remove them and replace it with an art gallery area or something else that is for public good and does not create a problem area in the library.

We find going to the library downtown less and less attractive and after coming across a transient pedofile firsthand today, I'm not sure we'll return without some of this being addressed. We love the library, are tax paying contributing members of the Boulder community and would love to be active visitors, I know the City and Library is aware of some of these issues....BUT more needs to be done to turn things around.

Please respond and let us know what can and is being done to address these issues.

See attached pictures:

<IMG_5842.JPG><IMG_5843.JPG><IMG_5845.JPG><IMG_5847.JPG><IMG_5846.JPG>

Behavioral Issues

Perception Issues

- Illegal activities
- Disruptive behaviors (aggressive/violent) (A)

- Behaviors that annoy/disturb other patrons (B)
- Bathing in bathrooms
- Sleeping

- People who look/dress like [x] = transient/homeless
- Transient/homeless people create behavioral problems
- I am uncomfortable/don't feel safe around transient/homeless because:
 - Dress
 - Behavior
 - What they are doing/viewing
 - Hygiene
 - Congregate in groups
 - I have kids
- [some people] don't belong in the library

How much overlap?

Steps taken in response to these issues:

- Security alerts BPD
- One-year suspensions by BPL

"zero tolerance" line

Steps taken in response to these issues:

- Library staff alerts security
- Warnings
- Suspensions (of varying length)
- "Discretion"

- Are there gaps in the security response to A?
- Should "zero tolerance" extend to B?
- Are there less drastic measures than suspension that could be used to address B?
- Would a social worker help with B? How?
- Would additional/different security help with B? How?
- Would additional training/support for library staff help with B? What kind and how?

What resources would be needed?

- FTE
- \$

Is it a problem? (stats)

Triggers for perceptions:

- Visibility: computers, banquet tables, congregating outside or inside
 - Reservation system for tables?
 - Is it a problem?
- Dress, hygiene, stuff, sleeping
 - Human Services (showers, storage, shelter)
 - Transients vs. homeless?

Lift up perception issues through community dialogue?

Can we minimize the friction? (space utilization)