

SECTION TWO: ALTERNATIVE LIBRARY FACILITY MODELS

A host of Alternative Facility Models have been addressed over the course of developing the *Library Facilities Plan*. Listed below in alphabetical order are discussions of each Alternative Facility Model. We include a recommendation, in terms of relevance for Fort Worth, for each Alternative Facility Model. Our recommendation for each has considered the work of Buxton Co. A detailed discussion of each Alternative Model is included in Appendix Two.

An **After School Center** is within a typical branch library. The After School Center will be staffed with the regular branch library staff. Its hours of service will be those hours that serve the total service area population.

Recommendation: Re-purpose the Northside Library to be an After School Center given its location across the street from both a middle school and a high school.

Bookmobiles are one of the oldest forms, if not the oldest, of Alternate Library models. They work best in rural areas or for very specific sites, e.g. a nursing home.

Recommendation: Not viable, due to high start-up cost and continuing operational costs.

A **Checkit Outlet** features new and best-selling books, DVD movies, books-on-CD, and music CDs. It would locate in a leased storefront/retail space, perhaps in the downtown area or a strip shopping plaza. The size would be in a range of 800 to 1,200 square feet. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg County Public Library in North Carolina operates such a facility in downtown Charlotte.

Recommendation: There is no need for this type of service at this time. However, as downtown Fort Worth expands and public transportation improves, the concept could be considered in the future.

An **Express Library** is a 450 square foot facility in downtown Houston, adjacent to the Convention Center and a large office-building complex. There are 10 laptops and four computers available that can be used for periods of two hours. In the last fiscal year, 696 citizens used the computers. There is a small collection of books suitable for browsing.



Express Library, Houston Public Library

Recommendation: Express Libraries should be considered for alternative sites identified by Buxton, areas of the city where transportation is an issue, or where there are physical barriers precluding good access to an existing facility.

A **Joint Use Library** is a facility that typically serves two, or in some cases three, different client groups. Those client groups can be:

- Public Library customers;
- Community College students, faculty, and staff;
- Elementary or Secondary School students, faculty, and staff; and
- Community Center customers.

Recommendation: This model has considerable merit if a workable agreement can be developed and adhered to by the two or more contracting parties. Either a partnership with the Tarrant County Community College and/or with the Fort Worth Independent School District, and perhaps the Fort Worth Parks & Recreation Department, should be considered for Far North, or South, Fort Worth where additional services are needed.

Leased Space for Public Library Buildings. The leasing, or renting, of space for a branch library facility is quite common. We estimate that about 10 to 15 percent of all branch libraries in the country are in leased space. There are usually three primary reasons that a community would elect to lease space for a branch library:

1. Capital funds are not available to build;
2. “Sudden” growth in an area of a city requires “immediate” action in order to meet community needs; or
3. The intended, or desired, location of a branch library is in a neighborhood/community area that is in, or perceived to be in transition and a sizeable capital investment is ill advised.

Recommendation: We believe leasing space for one or more branch libraries should be seriously considered by Fort Worth, as the need arises to replace existing facilities that are much too small and unable to be expanded and/or locate new services in areas of the city now un-served, or underserved. The amount of space is only limited by the cost of the lease(s).

A **Public/Private Partnership** involves the City and a private concern, perhaps a real estate developer. The Rondo Library in Saint Paul, Minnesota is a wonderful example of this model. It is a 38,000 square foot branch library, with several levels of apartments and parking above.



Public Library at street level, housing units on upper levels, two levels of parking, all in one building

Recommendation: A public/private partnership holds much promise for a city seeking to deliver library service and meet housing or other needs. A combination of a library and leased office space would be another viable partnership, as would one that combines office space, housing, and the library. As Fort Worth continues to grow, increasing growth will most likely be vertical. A project similar to Saint Paul could be a very viable addition to Fort Worth and its public library. Indeed, the Fort Worth Library is currently considering of private sector tenants for some of the vacant space in the Central Library.

A **Public Library within a Larger Library.** The Dayton’s Bluff Branch Library of the Saint Paul Public Library in Saint Paul, Minnesota is housed within the larger Metropolitan State University Library. The Dayton’s Bluff neighborhood has struggled with complex issues of aging, economic divestment, and cultural change, but has many active community organizations and a beautiful location overlooking downtown St. Paul and the river basin. The branch library has 6,734 square feet of space, is open six days a week, the collection numbers 39,360 items, and has 17 computer workstations.

Recommendation: This model has great promise provided the right “larger library” is a) available, and b) interested. No larger library in a location in Fort Worth that meets the library location criteria of Buxton Co. has been identified at this time.

A **Special Purpose Subject/Content Library**, if like the Clayton Library in Houston, the Center for Genealogical Research, is a library with a single purpose in mind.

Recommendation: Although very successful library in Houston it does seem feasible for Fort Worth at this time, if ever.

A Shopping Mall Library for Children

would be located in a leased storefront in an enclosed shopping mall or a storefront in a retail center. The size would range from 1,000 to 2,000 square feet. The collection would feature books and media for children from toddlers to fifth grade, and a small parenting collection. There would be computers sized for children of the same age of the collections. Hours of operation would be dependent upon location.

Bookmarks Children's Library, NorthPark Mall



Recommendation: Given the right location and a cooperative mall operator, this model could be a great success in Fort Worth.

A Supermarket Library would occupy a small amount of space, approximately 800 to 1,200 square feet, near the front entrance of a supermarket. The staff would be dependent upon the hours of operation. The supermarket would likely expect the library to be open at least from 10:00 AM to 8:00 PM, including weekends. The Wichita Public Library in Kansas has a 1,000 square foot branch library in a Dillon's Supermarket. It is averaging over 100,000 items checked-out per year. The operating cost is low; +/- 2.0 FTE staff, no rental/lease costs, no utility costs. The library pays for telephone and data.



Interior view of the library entrance

Recommendation: This alternative model has great potential for Fort Worth. As the Buxton Co. has stated, "everyone has to eat." There is no shortage of supermarkets in Fort Worth. We believe one or two supermarket libraries could be strategically located and operational within a two/three year period provided there is a willing partner. See also Express Library.

A Vending Library is an automated "facility" lending library material via a handling machine that has proved a tremendous aid in addressing underserved, or very mobile, segments of a community. There is minimal staffing (only that needed to stock and re-stock the vending machine); no utility costs (unless there are charges for power), and no maintenance costs. A location can be just about anywhere there is ample power.

Recommendation: With the right location(s) this Model could be a valuable addition to the FWL service delivery toolkit. The consultants believe that this model may be practical in the mid-phase of the 10-year plan.



Examples of book vending machine (left) and information kiosks (right)