

CHAPTER 7: LIBRARIES

The Fort Worth Public Library is in its second century of service to its communities. The Long Range Services Plan, along with the service priorities identified, shapes the nature, scope, and depth of library collections and services. The mission of the Fort Worth Public Library is “to welcome and support all people in their enjoyment of reading and recreational materials, and their pursuit of learning and information.”

This chapter provides information on current library facilities, material collections, technology, programming, and general user services. It also highlights services provided through the Library Department’s three support groups: Library Advisory Board, Friends of the Fort Worth Public Library, Inc., and The Fort Worth Public Library Foundation.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

Facilities: Libraries as Community Builders and Destination Places

Library facilities should be designed specifically to speak to a community and to serve as the heart of the community; to be a focal point, a gathering place, a destination or “commons” to its users. As such, the buildings should be warm, inviting, and attractive, with lots of light and color, comfortable seating, and several material access points so that customers easily find available resources. The Library Department is making an aggressive effort to redesign its branch libraries, most of which were built in the 1960s. To date, four of the ten branch libraries have undergone cosmetic renovations with support from the City and the private sector.

Responding to its role as a community builder, the Library is changing its image as it incorporates integrative, holistic concepts that bring people together, using ideas from retail, and partnering with the private sector. The Ella Mae Shamblee Branch Library, part of an Urban Village concept, is one such example. As a destination place, the Shamblee Branch will open with a public gallery, a performance hall, a literary garden, and a Legacy Project providing a historical perspective on the Evans/Rosedale community. Two public art pieces will also assure the branch’s role as a destination. The planned mural will depict the community and its leaders, while the permanent photographic exhibition in the Tommy Tucker building is a panoramic view of the activities and happenings at the school during its heyday. With a historic landmark designation for the Tommy Tucker building adjoined to the new portion of the Ella Mae Shamblee Branch, the Library is assured its role as a destination place. Ideas to transform existing space at the Central Library to include retail and to couple the existing Art Study Center with a concrete programmatic aspect are also examples of the Library’s effort to continue to re-define its communities and to match its services with community needs that are very different from traditional needs.

As the neighborhood branch system grows, the Library is exercising foresight and planning for non-traditional service offerings and delivery options. Opportunities exist in the plans for the new Northwest Branch Library, expected to open in 2009, as well as facilities currently in the very early planning stages.

Fort Worth Central Library



The street level floor of the Central Library opened to the public in 1999. The architectural plan for the facility provides for additional expansions. If funding is available, a second floor should be completed by 2015. (Source: Fort Worth Public Library, 2007.)

Ella Mae Shamblee Branch Library



New Ella Mae Shamblee Branch Library located in the Evans/Rosedale Urban Village is anticipated to open in Spring 2008. (Source: Fort Worth Public Library, 2007.)

The Library system currently consists of 15 community facilities that include one central library, two regional libraries, ten neighborhood libraries, and two library stations in public housing communities. The Downtown Central Library serves the entire city and county as a reference and information resource center through the Inter-Library Loan Program funded by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

Most areas in the Far West, Far Northwest, Far North, Far South, and Far Southwest Sectors are not served by a neighborhood library. The 2004 Bond Program included a neighborhood branch library for the Far Northwest sector in City Council District 7, currently in the planning phase. Additional neighborhood facilities and delivery options are necessary in an effort to better respond to the needs of under/served communities. The Long Range Services Plan aids in determining the level and type of services required to meet the needs of the existing and projected populations.

While the LRSP information helps determine facility location and/or mode of service delivery, the Library is also developing a comprehensive plan focused on facility needs only, including facility relocations, replacements, renovations, expansions, and/or new construction as well as alternative service delivery options. During FY 2007/2008 the Library plans to assess the results of the 2003 LRSP. Mixed-Use Growth Centers, with dense residential development and commercial activity, are ideal locations for libraries.

Technology

Computers with High Speed Internet access are fundamental components of today's public library services. New and emerging as well as existing standard technologies are under review as service delivery alternatives. The Library will begin to improve its response and services to the Generation X and Millennial generations through better and increased use of technology. To this end, a new position, Technology Manager, will oversee and make policy decisions about technologies to be provided. During FY 2006/2007 the Library installed WiFi (wireless internet), self-check machines, and a children's online catalog, as well as purchased downloadable audio books. Patron registration information, circulation records, holdings inventory and maintenance are computerized. Enhanced online library card registration and the capability to accept credit cards are technology enhancements certain to be enjoyed by the public.

Collections

The Library's collection enables Fort Worth residents to enrich their personal lives; educate themselves in areas of personal interest; develop informed opinions about issues of the day; gather, use, and evaluate information successfully; and gain an appreciation and understanding of other people, cultures, and viewpoints.

The collections emphasize current, popular, up-to-date materials for all age levels in a variety of formats, including books, CDs, videos, DVDs, and books on tape and CD, as well as electronic and internet resources. The Library will continue to increase its Spanish and Vietnamese language holdings in order to better serve these populations.

Collections are also one aspect of the Library's role as "destination place". Customers come to research special collections and to see parts of collections on display. Plans

Comparison of Public Library Statistics for 2006

	Fort Worth	Dallas	Arlington	Austin	Houston	El Paso	San Antonio
Circulation per Capita	5.64	5.92	4.63	1.11	2.54	2.35	3.82
Visits per Capita	3.70	3.58	3.37	4.61	1.86	3.11	2.59
Questions per Capita	1.76	0.28	0.75	0.39	0.98	2.09	0.64
Total Square Feet per Capita	0.46	0.76	0.33	0.53	0.37	0.40	0.31
Materials Budget per Capita	\$3.64	\$3.14	\$2.36	\$2.32	\$2.19	\$1.95	\$2.01
Annual Budget FY 2005/2006 per Capita	\$23.95	\$17.82	\$16.94	\$27.00	\$14.08	\$14.20	\$14.46
2006 Population	661,850	1,260,950	348,965	707,952	2,198,883	592,099	1,578,700
Total Facilities	15	24	6	22	38	12	23

* Number of materials checked out. Does not include materials used in library.

When compared with other large cities in Texas, the Fort Worth Public Library ranked second-highest in circulation in 2006. (Sources: Fort Worth Public Library, Dallas Public Library, Austin Public Library, El Paso Public Library, and San Antonio Public Library, 2007.)

for the Art Study Area and the expanded Genealogy/Local History Unit will reinforce the Library's role as a destination point through collections.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Library's overarching goal is to provide a welcoming environment and respond to the reading and learning/informational needs of its customers. To fulfill this purpose, the Library set the following goals and objectives for FY 2007-2008:

Provide materials and collections that are timely and accurate and that best respond to user needs.

- Increase circulation to over 3.8 million items checked out.
- Improve website design to generate 2.8 million remote transactions.
- Enhance electronic services to attract 408,000 public PC users.
- Improve the delivery of materials with the purchase of a new delivery truck.

Continue to improve services via technology.

- Expand internet bandwidth to accommodate filtering.
- Complete Horizon computer program migration, including server upgrade.

Provide facilities that are conducive to the delivery of quality library and information services.

- Renovate Central Library lower level.
- Expand and remodel the Genealogy/Local History Unit.
- Write an action plan for teen services.
- Develop a plan of service to support the Art Study Area.

Focus on strategic and operational issues in the Library Department.

- Assess and update the Long Range Services Plan.
- Identify, evaluate, and modify processes within the department to assure high performance.
- Develop a five-year Business Plan.

Increase Library's visibility and presence in the community.

- Develop a plan to implement recommendations from the Branding/Marketing Committee.

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

The Fort Worth Public Library's services will be guided by the following policy and strategies:

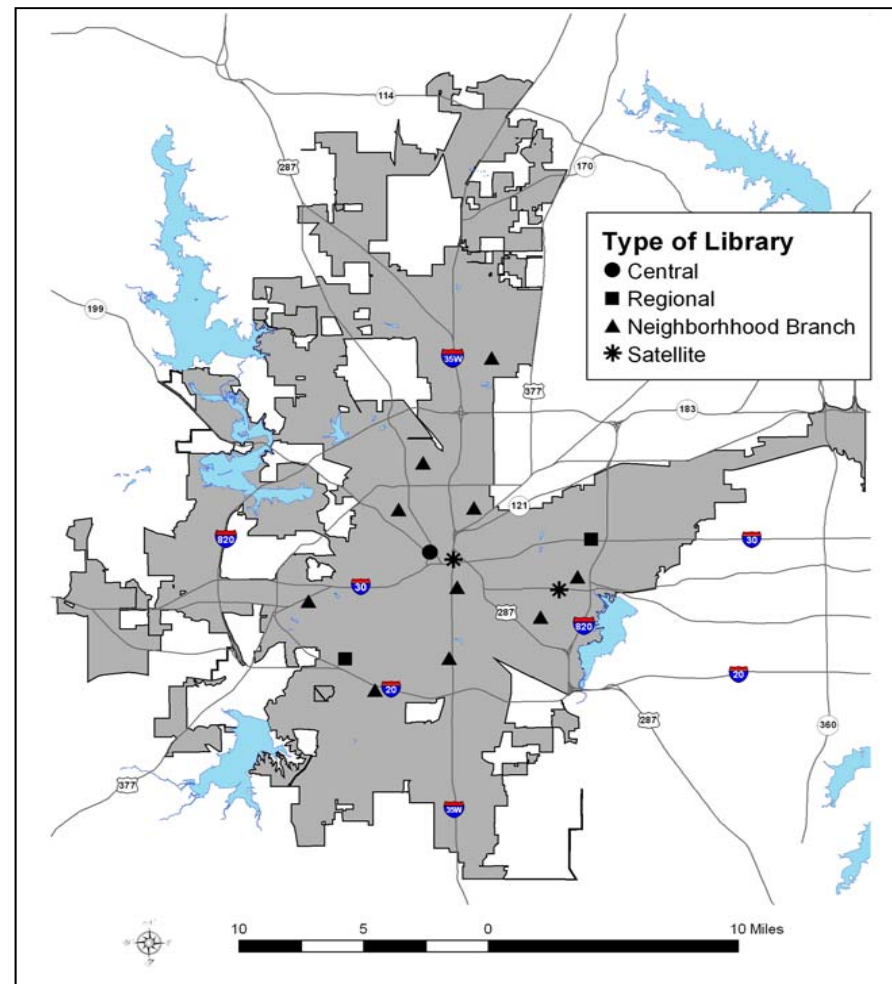
Policy

- Provide services that are responsive to the needs and desires of the community.

Strategies

- Assure Library's role as "community builder" and "destination place" by promoting integrative, holistic concepts for facility planning and service delivery options.
- Provide facilities in conveniently located, easily accessible areas of the city.
- Pursue all possible funding sources to augment program planning, facility

Location of Existing Library Facilities



The map above shows the location of the fifteen (15) existing library facilities. General areas of the city that are not served by existing facilities are mostly outside Loop 820. The 2004 bond program included a neighborhood branch library to be located in the Far Northwest sector. The E.M. Shamblee Branch Library is scheduled for relocation from the Southside Community Center to the Evans/Rosedale Business District in 2006. (Sources: Fort Worth Public Library and Planning and Development Department, 2007.)

- maintenance, and collection management.
- Seek cooperative relationships in service delivery and expand resource sharing partnerships among area libraries.
- Make available diverse materials and resources, including electronic and online services.
- Provide diverse programming to mirror the populations served.
- Provide and enable staff to serve diverse populations effectively.

PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

Community Programs and Partnerships

The Library offers system-wide programs through community partnerships and private sector support. These program opportunities recognize the Library's collaborative role and suggest new ways of building communities by combining neighborhood assets to create a new synergy benefiting the customers. In addition to its traditional programming partners, the Library works with museums, arts institutions and organizations, as well as health and faith based organizations. Examples include Jazz on the Boulevard, a partnership with Historic Camp Bowie Inc.; the Owsley Author series, a partnership with the Library Foundation, FWISD, and local private schools; and the Books-Give-Away project, a partnership with the Friends and Habitat for the Humanities, where families moving into new homes will have a collection of books selected for their individual use.

Programs responding to the Library's priorities such as genealogy and local history, cultural awareness, lifelong learning, information literacy, and general information are provided citywide. The Central Library's teen center, called Our Place, attracts teens/young adults 14-19 years of age. The Teen Advisory Council provides input to support programming for the center as well as teen programming, materials, and services system wide. The individual branch libraries offer programs that change based on the needs of the community.

Also, the Cities of Fort Worth, Benbrook, Burleson, Haltom City, Keller, Richland Hills, and Watauga have an agreement (Metropac) by which residents of the seven cities may use their library card at each respective library. Fort Worth provides automation services to these libraries for a fee. The grant funded TexShare card and Interlibrary Loan programs are additional avenues for reciprocal borrowing and resource sharing as a benefit to our customers.

Capital Improvement Projects

Capital improvements identified for fiscal years 2008-2027 are listed in the capital improvement tables, along with estimated costs and potential funding sources. The list includes the Northwest Branch Library project, which is scheduled for completion in 2009. Small scale capital projects include expanding and updating the Genealogy/Local History Unit and the lower level of the Central Library.

In the future, the City may expand the Northwest Branch Library to a Regional Library/Community Center. Preliminary discussions are also underway for a Far North branch library as well as a new facility in far Southwest as part of an agreement with the Crowley Independent School District.

Library Programs



Destination for free family programming courtesy of Disney on Ice. (Source: Fort Worth Public Library, 2007.)



Destination for free Internet access, computer classes, DVDs and books. (Source: Fort Worth Public Library, 2007.)