

Outreach Focus Group Neighborhood Association Members

Southwest Regional Library

Fort Worth, Texas

Thursday, May 30, 2002

Attendance: 8

1. FINDINGS

There were eight participants in this focus group, each representing a neighborhood association. The participants have lived an average of 19 years in Fort Worth.

The group's description of Fort Worth was glowing, focusing on its fast growth, history and charm. When asked what they liked most about the community, the respondents mentioned recreational and cultural activities that are like those of a large city but with a "friendly, country town" feeling.

The group had many suggestions for changes in Fort Worth. They felt the library could partner with Neighborhood Association groups to communicate these recommendations to city government.

The participants thought of bookstores and the Internet as information sources before they considered the library system.

2. SERVICE RESPONSES SUGGESTIONS

- Cultural
 - Free arts performances
 - Downtown amphitheater
- Recreational
 - Activities for youth - recreation centers - Skateboard Park
 - Activities in Heritage Park
- Library/Education
 - Coordinated use of technology; use kiosks for Library/city government activities
 - Better advertising of library services and locations.
 - Better locations for library facilities
 - Better availability of library collections
 - Increase materials in Spanish
 - Make libraries more user-friendly by using volunteer greeters and signage to guide patrons into the Main Library from parking lot

APPENDIX A. FLIP CHART SUMMARY

Number attending: 8

1. How would you describe Fort Worth to a newcomer?

- Lots of pride
- Charming
- Revival of downtown
- Fast
- Tourist attractions
- Big small town
- Standup for each other
- Not as fast as Boston, NY, LA
- Community conscious
- Fast growing, conservative town
- Good education
- Lots of history
- Still striving for modern identity; not Dallas.

2. What do you like most about the community?

- Lots of nice people
- Affordability
- Arts
- Entertainment
- Arts are outstanding
- Neighborhood
- Very polite (one of the best)
- Downtown
- Sincere vitalization
- Stockyards
- Nature center
- Trail system (running, biking, etc.)
- Botanic gardens/ Japanese Gardens
- Zoo
- Ease of getting around (10-minute city)
- Trinity Park train
- Not as much congestion

- More diverse
- Culturally rich
- Fort Worth has kept its identity as a small people, friendly country town with all benefits of large city.

3. What changes would you like to see in the community?

- City government
- Let citizens make decisions first
- Involve them in decision-making process
- Don't decide, then take it to citizens
- More police to stop crime; fewer?
- Process should evolve proactive rather than reactive
- Less economy segregation and more mixed, but planned (housing issue)
- Not many dark-skinned people at our school, make it open to everyone (Fort Worth For Community Change)
- Help people understand that change won't happen unless people get involved
- Get more churches involved in helping with truancy, kids won't need food, etc.
- Reduce, accept change
- Improve dropout rate
- More effective recycling program
- Need a community that values our youth, if it did we wouldn't have kids
- Dropping/hanging out; more public art
- Have the resources; have to turn them on
- More environmentally friendly; stop selling drugs, cigarettes, alcohol
- Get rid of billboards
- Decision-makers are exacerbating segregation (districts based on ethnicity)
- More sidewalks and bike lanes (get them into communities that don't have them)
- Be a more pedestrian-friendly community
- Longhorn art (like in Chicago)
- Address the pollution problem
- If commercial corridors go through, it will help with pedestrian problem
- How trashy people are, demand that City clean it up

4. What services and programs would you like to see in the community?

- More community centers
- More free arts performances for everybody
- Downtown amphitheater

- More elderly centers
- More for youth to do (recreation centers, skateboard park, things kids want to do)
- More activity in Heritage Park
- More public pools, parks
- Affordable childcare
- Use schools
- More programs like Courage to Teach (for other service providers)
- More research centers for info about different services
- Better use of technology for info (kiosks, license renewals, city hall, etc.)
- Better advertising for library - Trail Lake Library has shrubbery around the sign and you can't see it's a library; thought it was part of church
- Consistency (signage hours)
- Earlier and later hours (before/after work)
- Some communities not close to library (need a bookmobile)
- Oral interactive history/storytelling
- Collections (availability)
- TCU neighborhood (no convenient library)
- Need a twig! Not a branch (not enough libraries, don't have to be large)
- Rarely find anything here (don't want to wait for research/school)
- Not sure if books are equally distributed
- More churches (more Christian than anything else)
- More diversity
- ESL classes in neighborhoods
- Spanish collections/papers (currently very limited)

4. Where do you go to get information?

- Internet, neighbors, big brother Internet, library (rarely find it there); something on every subject and it's current on the Internet, phone book
- Don't know what library has for Internet; don't know what's available
- Web site? Does the library have one?
- Library should go out to community rather than community going to it (bookmobile); hasn't felt like it's part of the community
- Library should realize that world is changing; not a lot of reason to come; other places to get information
- Bookstores (more inclined to go there); more people enjoying reading in bookstores than in libraries
- Make libraries more like bookstores (coffee, become more social, will go to B & N just to look)

5. When you hear the word library, what comes immediately to your mind?

- Shhh...not a very friendly place
- Archives in downtown library
- Librarian (they're underutilized) know where everything is; you have to approach them)
- Make them more customer-friendly
- Get rid of microfiche/microfilm (there's got to be something better...Internet)
- Grant research

6. Think back to the last time you went to the public library. What do you remember about the experience?

- Month ago (couldn't find)
- Attended function (discovered it had an auditorium)
- 2 years ago, medical research, couldn't find anything
- Year ago, discovered daughter owed \$60; found book, but fines too high; buys at Border's now
- Customer service type service?
- Two weeks ago for videos, never what he wants but brings something home
- Mother uses it, likes books on tape (senior)
- Aren't as many movies for young adults (all for babies)

7. What would you like to see in your library?

- More newer videotapes
- Phoenix central library did things to bring people in; made it interesting, more excitement
- This library isn't appealing; don't like Library to use Congress [Dewey Decimal ?] arrangement; show me the section, arts, etc.; letters/numbers hard to use
- Diamond Hill (children's section) parents trying to keep kids quiet; should be in separate area; noise room for kids
- Music listening rooms
- If you're welcome and feel good, it doesn't matter if the book's not there; you'd stay and find something else
- Volunteer greeters "How may I help you?"
- Can't find anything in Central; intimidating; don't know where to go, what to do, how to find it; a welcoming person would help; signs showing where things are
- Sold bricks and it took years before they could see it; haven't been back

- Central used to be underground; now, went to evening meeting, had to walk whole periphery of building to know where to go in; didn't know where to park
- Needs banners and flags to ID the front
- Are people using libraries?
- What's the wave of the future for libraries (cyberlibrary)?
- Fort Worth tries to reinvent things without looking at what else is going on elsewhere. Is library looking at best practices in other libraries?
- Libraries try to base it on community; sometimes community doesn't know