



THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF CINCINNATI AND HAMILTON COUNTY FACILITY MASTER PLAN

REPORT PART I | DECEMBER 9 2019



THE PUBLIC LIBRARY
of Cincinnati and Hamilton County



GROUP 4

cincinnati.library.org/NextGenerationLibrary

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OPENING LETTER

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF CINCINNATI AND HAMILTON COUNTY



BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION LIBRARY

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Cincinnati, Ohio
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Coombe Director
Paula Brehm-Heeger

Fiscal Officer
Molly DeFosse



The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County spent 2019 working on our Facility Master Plan. We held community listening sessions at every Library location and heard from over 3,000 residents and library users. Our Facility Master Plan will serve as a roadmap to our Building the Next Generation Library initiative, providing the Library with recommendations and a strategic direction for upgrading our facilities over the next 10 years. We've never undertaken such a comprehensive plan as this, which will enable us to make informed decisions and maximize the dollars given to us by the taxpayers.

All 40 branches and the downtown Main Library will receive improvements over the next 10 years. Readers will not find closure or consolidation recommendations in this 10 year plan. While we may consider consolidations at some later point, our year of careful study revealed that locations sometimes considered for closure or consolidation provide a very high impact for communities in need without consuming significant resources and funding. They operate very efficiently, particularly in light of the service provided.

The extensive assessment and engagement process revealed that our need is substantial; greater than we thought. The levy funds made available in annual allotments over the next 10 years will certainly enable us to make great strides towards Building the Next Generation Library, and we deeply appreciate the support from our residents. We take that support seriously and we will need additional funds in the years ahead to fully address the needs that were identified when architects and engineers conducted an assessment of all our spaces during the past year. This is a generational moment for our Library and our county. We have a rich tradition of truly outstanding public library service and a community that supports and appreciates the many benefits a strong and healthy public library offers the community. Past generations helped foster a community of readers and learners by providing buildings that have outlived their expected lifetime and usability – in many cases by perhaps more than half a century. We seek to honor this tradition of constructing long-lasting, flexible facilities that will support our generation and the next and the next, just as has been the tradition in our community. This is a once-in-a-generation chance to contribute to re-envisioning our city and county for residents for years to come.

This is not the end of our conversations and collaborations – it's just the beginning. To realize our vision for our Next Generation Library we will need everyone's help and ideas. Thank you again and I believe the best is yet to be realized!

Paula Brehm-Heeger
Eva Jane Romaine Coombe Director

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ENDORSEMENT LETTER

Mr. Robert Hendon, President
Board of Trustees
Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County
800 Vine St.
Cincinnati, OH 45202

November 18, 2019

Dear Mr. Hendon:

The Community Advisory Council and Staff Advisory Team for the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County has been advising the Library throughout its facility master planning process, which began in February 2019. We have worked with the lead consultant on the project, Group 4 Architecture, Research + Planning, Inc., and a group of local consultants identify what the Library needs in order to provide the best services and spaces for and with all city and county residents.

For over 165 years the Library has been a trusted and vital institution that supports lifelong learning, transforms lives, and provides an essential community space where residents learn, connect and collaborate. This is a legacy the Library intends to continue; however, the critical services the Library provides are happening in aging spaces: across the system, the average length of time since a branch has been renovated is over 40 years. In that time community needs and demographics have changed significantly.

In order to create a vision for our Next Generation Library, the Library held 41 community listening sessions, 15 focus groups, and conducted surveys in the summer of 2019. Over 3,000 residents were engaged in this process and their feedback helped inform the development of the facilities planning framework. Additionally, the Community Advisory Council and Staff Advisory Team have met throughout the process and are two diverse groups that represents local governments, nonprofits, businesses, learning institutions, staff, and other stakeholder groups.

To remain a vital contributor to the health and success of the city and county, our Library needs an informed, innovative and implementable framework to guide its future work. We believe the Facility Master Plan achieves this and endorse and support the Plan's recommendations. The Plan speaks to our shared community goals, including the city's five priority areas and the county's policy agenda. We acknowledge that the Library's work is not complete with the publication of the Plan, and support the Library as it continues to the engage the community, staff and Library partners to implement the Plan's recommendations.

Sincerely,

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

- **Cathy Allison**, Board Secretary, Crossport Cincinnati
- **Michael Beck**, President, Code For Kids
- **Paul W. Brehm**, Economic Development Director, City of Forest Park, OH

STAFF ADVISORY TEAM

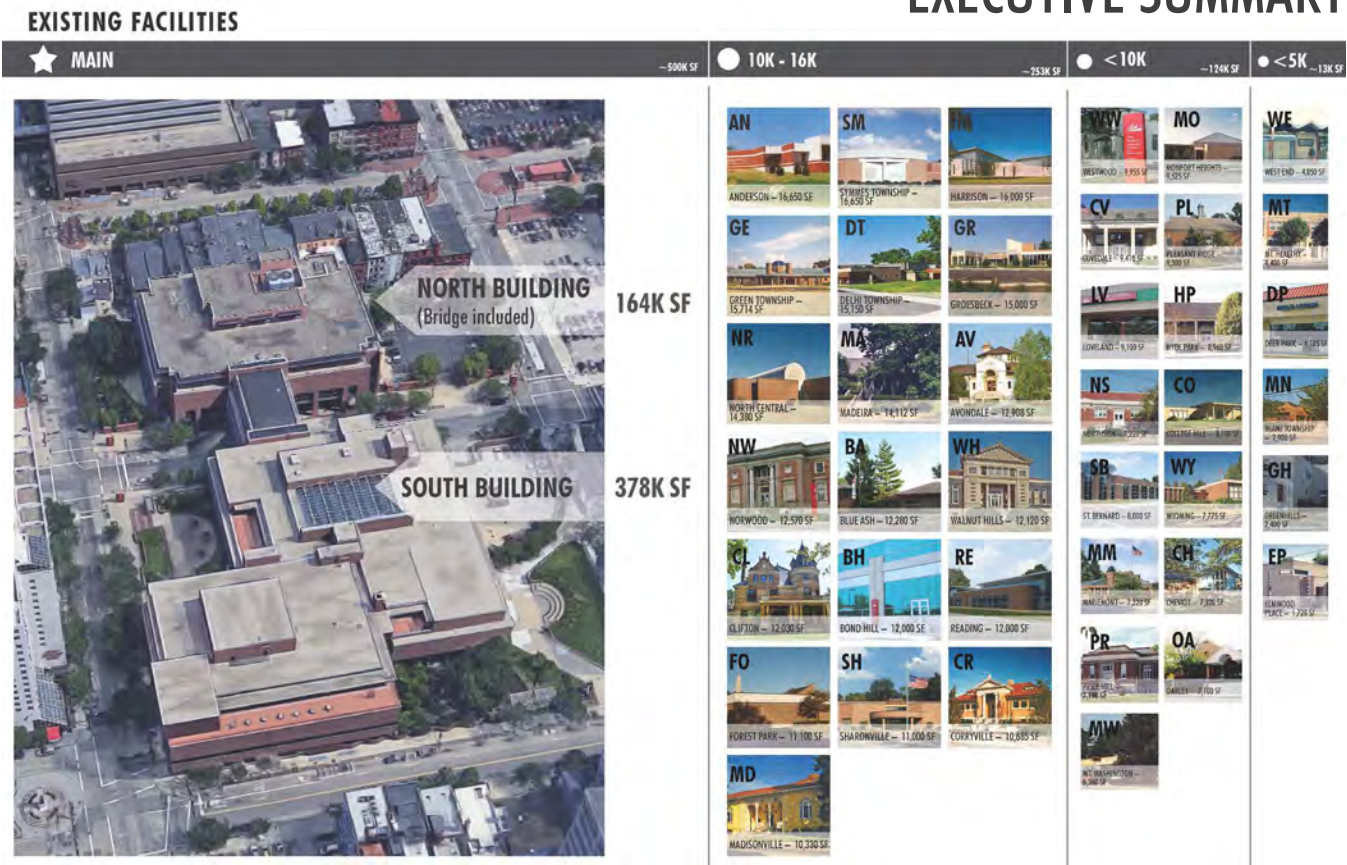
- **Aimee Pennington**
- **Andrew Cox**
- **Antuan Walker**
- **Beth Yoke**

CAC (CONT'D)

- **Janet Rehling Buening**, President, Women's City Club of Greater Cincinnati
- **Valerie Daley**, Associate Director, Community Building Institute
- **Sarah Day**, Individual Giving Officer, Cooperative For Education
- **Ella I. Frye**, Director of the Greater Cincinnati Women Center, Ohio Economic and Community Development Institute (ECDI)
- **Michelle Otten Guenther**, President, Literacy Network of Greater Cincinnati
- **Claista Hargrove**, Vice President of Programs, Cincinnati Works
- **Steve Johns**, Interim Director, Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission
- **Shannon Kemen**, Reference Librarian, University of Cincinnati Robert S. Marx Law Library
- **Allison McKenzie**, President, American Institute of Architects Cincinnati Chapter
- **H.A. Musser Jr.**, President and CEO, Santa Maria Community Services
- **Rosie Polter**, Grants Associate, Greater Cincinnati Foundation
- **Genell Stephens**, Volunteer Coordinator, Shelter House
- **Brad Warren**, Associate Dean of Library Services, University of Cincinnati Libraries

SAT (CONT'D)

- Bill Lane
- Brett Bonfield
- Caitlin Snyder
- Cate Crusham
- Chris Holt
- Chris Rice
- Chris Smith
- Christine D. Mercurio
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- Justyn Rampa
- Karen Davis
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- Maria Sferra
- Marissa Clardy
- Molly DeFosse
- Nate Pelley
- Paula Brehm-Heeger
- Robin LaRue
- Ryan Bley
- Shauntrell Schneider
- Staci Dennison
- Steve Causey
- Terry Barnum



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Founded in 1853, the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County today is one of the busiest and most highly acclaimed library systems in the United States, providing service to over 800,000 residents through a network of 40 branch libraries, a major downtown Main Library, and a Distribution Center. The average age of a library branch is over 40 years. In the first two decades of the 21st century, the Library had to confront funding challenges as the great recession set in. Funding from the state shrank significantly, which led to budget cuts in the short term and a longer term strategy of obtaining local funding. As a result, there is a very large backlog of repairs – many libraries are not fully accessible to those with disabilities, and most libraries have designs that reflect outdated service models.

In 2018, Hamilton County voters approved a 1 mil levy, a portion of which will be used to fund deferred maintenance, renovations, and expansions. These funds will be distributed in annual allotments over a 10-year period from 2019 – 2028 and will enable many branches to meet community needs for the next twenty years.

This report is the product of a year-long planning process whose scope included identifying a vision for future services, evaluating facilities, determining community needs through an extensive engagement process, designing a system strategy, and recommending improvement projects.

All 41 existing Library locations organized by size. Snapshots scaled in rough proportion to their relative size.



Various activities at Library locations

Following the direction of the Library Board of Trustees to have an inclusive and transparent process, over 90 meetings were held including Community Listening Sessions and open houses for every library as well as advisory groups, workshops, focus groups, surveys, and more. Over 3,000 community members, stakeholders, and staff members contributed to the plan development through their participation in these activities. Many local plans and strategies from governmental, educational, and, institutional sources were consulted. The Facility Master Plan recommendations complement broader community goals and initiatives related to equity, inclusion, and environmental sustainability.

Community priorities are more than just making critical repairs and improving library accessibility, but also renovating and expanding libraries so that they may provide the full range of next generation library spaces. This Facility Master Plan proposes improvements at all locations ranging from small strategic investments that will provide low cost, high impact improvements, to moderate capital maintenance projects, to larger design projects. These projects also range from light makeovers to modest renovations, major renovations, additions, replacements, and relocations.

Today there is not a clear organizational structure related to branch size and the types of services and hours that customers can expect. The plan proposes four library types:

- **Main Library**, which has flagship services and supports the entire library system;
- **Next Generation Libraries**, which are the larger branches from 12,000 to 25,000 square feet, and, because of their larger size, can provide a full range of traditional, contemporary, and emerging services and will serve as regional destinations within their planning zones;
- **Neighborhood Libraries**, sized from 6,000-12,000 square feet, can contain a good cross section of library services and provide important access to services in their communities;
- **Focused Libraries**, which are the smallest at less than 6,000 square feet, but despite their size, can be run efficiently to deliver important targeted, impactful services tailored to neighborhood needs.

Over the coming years, the Library will refine its service model to correspond better to these library types and evolving community needs.

The plan identified a capital facility need in the range of \$300M - \$350M in today's dollars. If the Library's funding does not change, these needs will take 20 years to address. Building upon the finding that a majority of Library customers use multiple libraries and the knowledge that all libraries work together as a network supporting service everywhere, the plan's recommendations are organized according to planning zones as a tool to ensure that investments are equitably distributed and deliver the maximum impact.

The planning process identified the 10-year priority projects, amounting to: \$120M-\$130M in design projects; \$20M - \$25M in capital maintenance projects; as well as approximately \$2M in strategic investments. A total of \$98M is projected to be available in the first five years, and the plan identifies the initial projects anticipated to launch through 2023. The balance of projects and funding will be conditional on continued funding streams including state and local funding.

This 10-year plan should be seen as a framework that is intended to set clear directions yet also be adaptable. New opportunities and constraints will likely emerge as this plan is implemented, as the Library seeks additional land and partnerships for expansions or relocations, as new input is gathered as projects proceed through planning and design, and as external factors arise. Individual project size and improvement strategy may be changed to achieve overall planning zone and systemwide goals.

This Facility Master Plan is organized into three parts:

- Part I – Executive Summary and Facility Master Plan;
- Part II – Branch and Main Library Recommendation Summaries; and
- Part III – Implementation Strategy.

For more and updated information visit:

www.cincinnati.ibrary.org/NextGenerationLibrary



UPDATED 12/08/2019

Legend

BIG NEXTGEN:

Big Next Generation Library
more than 20,000 Square Feet

NEXT GEN:

Next Generation Library
12,000 to 20,000 Square Feet

NBHD:

Neighborhood Library
5,000 to 12,000 Square Feet

FOCUSED:

Focused Library
less than 5,000 Square Feet

Branch	Branch Type
AN Anderson	NEXT GEN
AV Avondale	NBHD
BA Blue Ash	FOCUSED
BH Bond Hill	NEXT GEN
CH Cheviot	NBHD
CL Clifton	NBHD
CO College Hill	NBHD
CR Corryville	NBHD
CV Covedale	NBHD
DP Deer Park	BIGNEXTGEN
DT Delhi Township	BIGNEXTGEN
EP Elmwood Place	FOCUSED
FO Forest Park	BIGNEXTGEN
GE Green Township	NEXT GEN
GH Greenhills	FOCUSED
GR Groesbeck	NEXT GEN
HA Harrison	NEXT GEN
HP Hyde Park	NBHD
LV Loveland	NBHD
MA Madeira	NEXT GEN
MD Madisonville	NBHD
MM Mariemont	NBHD
MN Miami Township	FOCUSED
MO Monfort Heights	NBHD
MT Mt. Healthy	FOCUSED
MW Mt. Washington	NBHD
NC North Central	NEXT GEN
NS Northside	NBHD
NW Norwood	NEXT GEN
OA Oakley	NBHD
PL Pleasant Ridge	NBHD
PR Price Hill	NEXT GEN
RE Reading	NBHD
SH Sharonville	NEXT GEN
SB St. Bernard	NBHD
SM Symmes Township	NEXT GEN
WH Walnut Hills	BIGNEXTGEN
WT West End	FOCUSED
WW Westwood	NBHD
WY Wyoming	NBHD
MAIN	
North & South Building	MAIN
South Building	MAIN
North & South Building	MAIN
Vine St. Plaza	MAIN
New Stairs in Atrium	MAIN

10 - YEAR PROPOSED PROJECTS

Strategy - Option A	Strategy - Option B
Strategic Investment	
Waterproofing + Strategic Investment	
Relocation to Summit	
Strategic Investment	
Major Renovation, Accessibility Expansion	
Strategic Investment	
HVAC, Electr. Upgrade + Strategic Investment	
Roof Repairing + Strategic Investment	
Strategic Investment	
Replacement with New, Expansion	
Replacement with New, Expansion	
Makeover	
Relocation with New, Expansion, Accessibility	
Strategic Investment	
Strategic Investment	
Strategic Investment	
Strategic Investment	
Elevator Replacements + Strategic Investment	
Strategic Investment	
Strategic Investment	
Major Renovation , Accessibility	Relocation with New
HVAC, Electr. Upgrade + Strategic Investment	
Relocation with New, Expansion	
Strategic Investment	
Relocation with New, Accessibility	
HVAC, Electr. Upgrade + Strategic Investment	
HVAC + Strategic Investment	
Exterior Tuckpointing + Interior Painting + Strategic Investment	
3rd Floor Renovation, Expansion, Accessibility	
Strategic Investment	
Exterior Tuckpointing + Interior Painting + Strategic Investment	
Major Renovation, Expansion, Accessibility	
Strategic Investment	
Strategic Investment	
Strategic Investment	
Makeover + Parking Expansion	
Major Renovation, Expansion, Accessibility	
Makeover	
Strategic Investment	
HVAC, Electrical Upgrade + Strategic Investment	
Strategy	
South Building Electrical Upgrade, HVAC, FP	
South Building Skylight, Elevator Replacement	
Small Scale Reorganization (100,000 SF)	
Vine Plaza Extensive Reconstruction	
New Stairs in the Atrium	

NOTICE / ADVISORY regarding DRAFT **RECOMMENDATIONS**: This list of projects, proposed improvements, and budgets are subject to change. Scope, size and schedule will be determined based on funds being collected and matching to project costs. Draft recommendations will be adjusted based on market conditions, fund availability, critical repairs and other factors beyond the Library's control.

The list of projects that are projected to be started within the first five years can be found in Part III.



BRANCH TYPE



MAIN LIBRARY



BIG NEXT
GEN
BRANCH



NEXT GEN
BRANCH



NEIGHBORHOOD
BRANCH



FOCUSED
BRANCH

STRATEGY



STRATEGIC
INVESTMENT



CAPITAL
MAINTENANCE
+ STRATEGIC
INVESTMENT



MAKEOVER



EXTENSIVE
RENOVATION



REPLACEMENT/
RELOCATION



STRATEGY TO BE
DETERMINED IN
IMPLEMENTATION
PHASE

BACKGROUND MAP



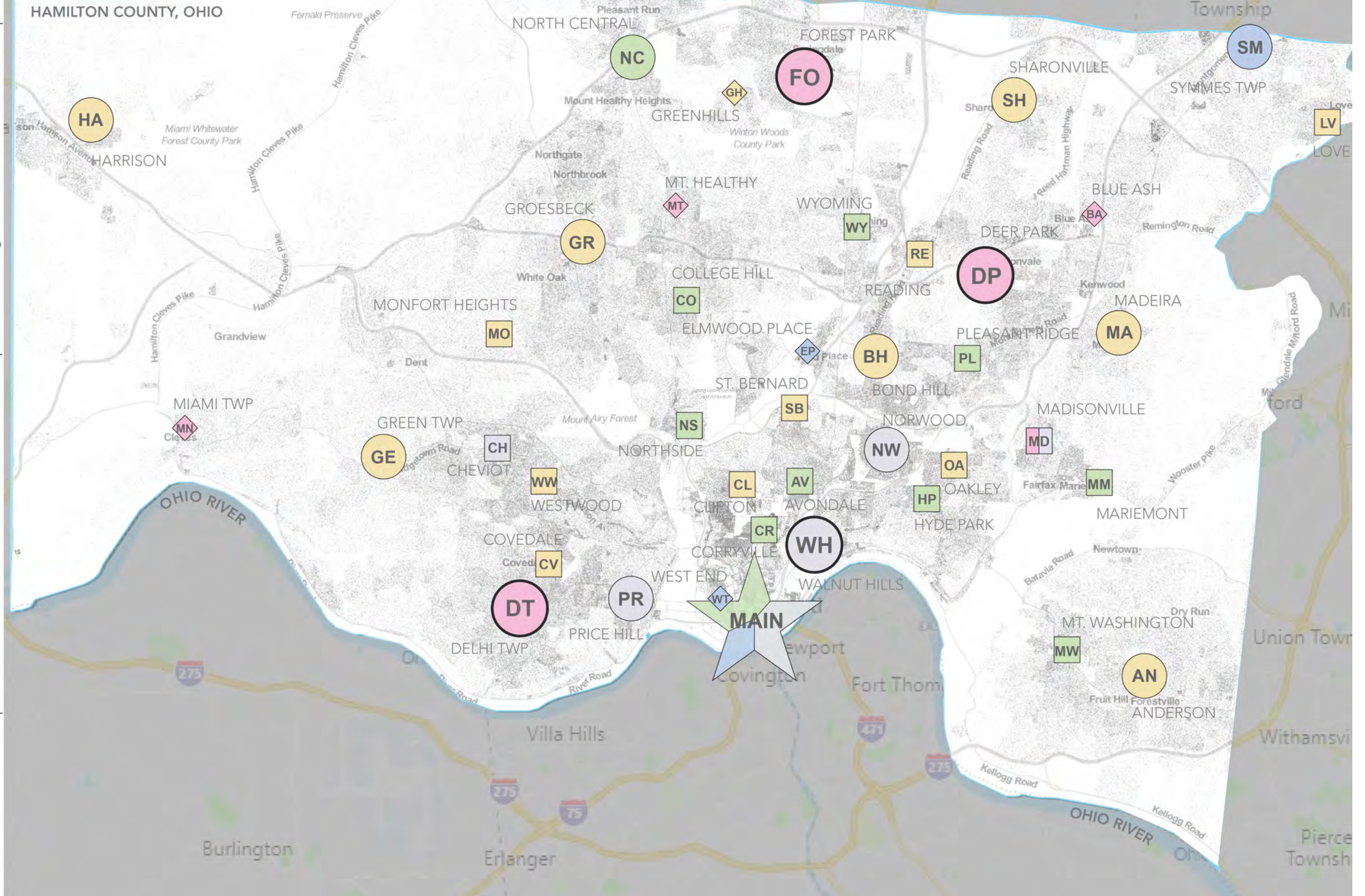
1 Dot = 1 Person

Geographic Distribution and Population Density of the American People
2010 Census Block Data

Source of Background Map:
creator: Dustin Cable, Weldon
Cooper Center for Public Service,
University of Virginia
Accessed 12/2/2019

10 - YEAR PROPOSED PROJECTS

HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO



10 - YEAR PROPOSED PROJECTS

★ MAIN

~500K SF

● NEXT GENERATION

~265K SF

■ NEIGHBORHOOD

~170K SF

◆ FOCUSED

~23K SF

BIG NEXT GENERATION

~95K SF

DT
DELHI TOWNSHIP — 25,000 SF
REPLACEMENT

FO
FOREST PARK — 25,000 SF
RELOCATION

DP
DEER PARK — 25,000 SF
REPLACEMENT

WH
WALNUT HILLS — 20,000 SF
MAJOR RENOVATION

NEXT GENERATION

~170K SF

AN
ANDERSON — 16,650 SF
STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

BH
BOND HILL — 12,000 SF
STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

GE
GREEN TOWNSHIP — 15,700 SF
STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

GR
GROESBECK — 15,000 SF
STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

HA
HARRISON — 16,000 SF
STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

MA
MADEIRA — 14,100 SF
STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

NC
NORTH CENTRAL — 14,400 SF
CAPITAL MAINTENANCE + STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

NW
NORWOOD — 14,790 SF
MAJOR RENOVATION

PR
PRICE HILL — 12,100 SF
MAJOR RENOVATION

SH
SHARONVILLE — 11,000 SF
STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

SM
SYMME'S TOWNSHIP — 16,650 SF
MAKEOVER

RE
READING — 12,000 SF
STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

AV
AVONDALE — 12,900 SF
CAPITAL MAINTENANCE + STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

CH
CHEVLOT — 10,000 SF
MAJOR RENOVATION

CL
CLIFTON — 12,000 SF
STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

CO
COLLEGE HILL — 8,100 SF
CAPITAL MAINTENANCE + STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

CR
CORYVILLE — 10,700 SF
CAPITAL MAINTENANCE + STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

CV
COVEDALE — 9,410 SF
STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

HP
HYDE PARK — 8,950 SF
CAPITAL MAINTENANCE + STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

LV
LOVELAND — 9,100 SF
STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

MD
MADISONVILLE — 10,300 SF
MAJOR RENOVATION

MM
MARIEMONT — 7,300 SF
CAPITAL MAINTENANCE + STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

MO
MONFORT HEIGHTS — 9,525 SF
STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

MW
MT. WASHINGTON — 6,400 SF
CAPITAL MAINTENANCE + STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

NS
NORTHSIDE — 8,200 SF
CAPITAL MAINTENANCE + STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

OA
OAKLEY — 7,100 SF
STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

PL
PLEASANT RIDGE — 9,300 SF
CAPITAL MAINTENANCE + STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

SB
ST. BERNARD — 8,000 SF
STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

WW
WESTWOOD — 9,955 SF
STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

WY
WYOMING — 7,775 SF
CAPITAL MAINTENANCE + STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

BA
BLUE ASH — 5,000 SF
RELOCATION

EP
ELMWOOD PLACE — 5,000 SF
MAKEOVER

GH
GREENHILLS — 2,400 SF
STRATEGIC INVESTMENT

MN
MIAMI TOWNSHIP — 5,000 SF
RELOCATION

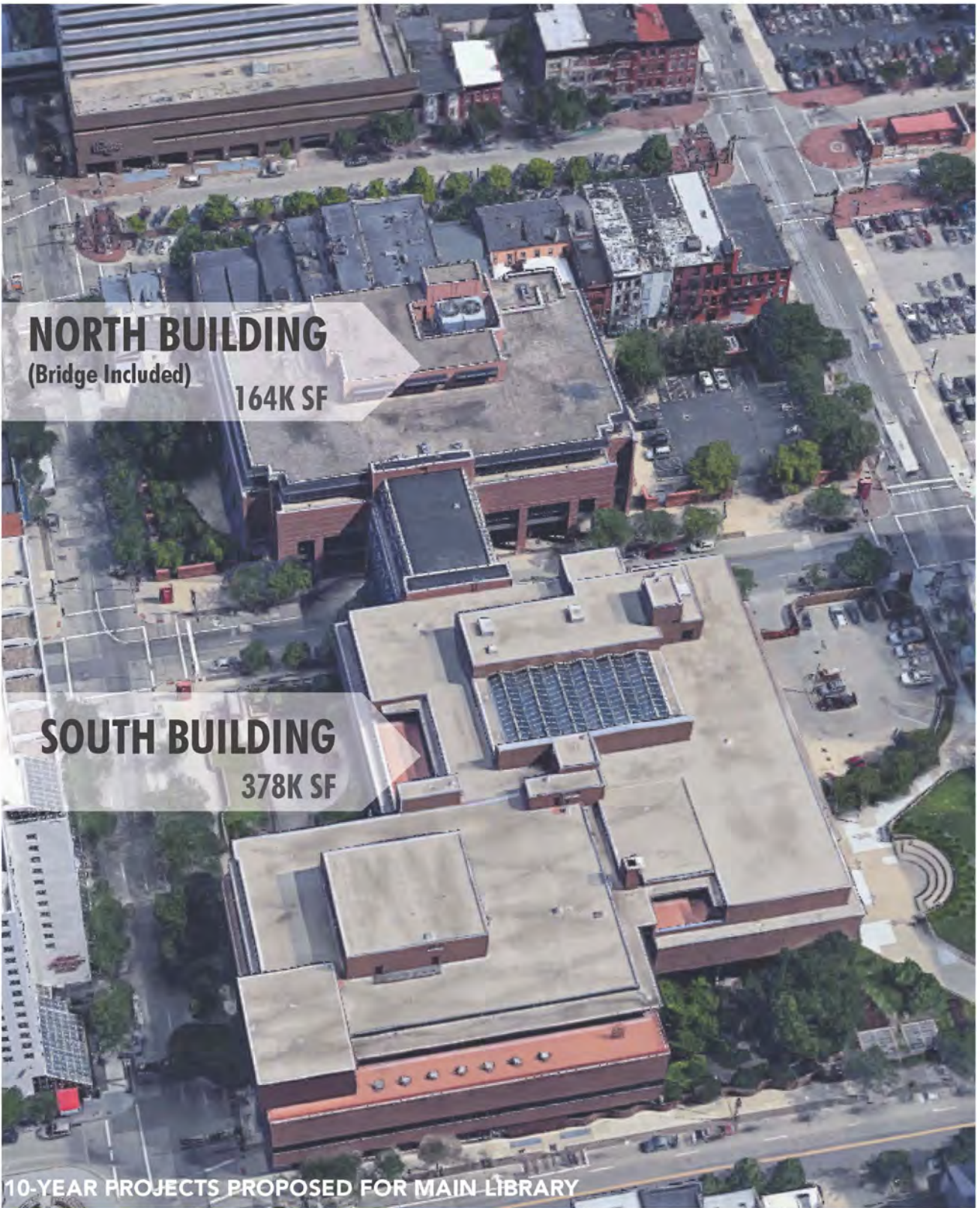
MT
MT. HEALTHY — 5,000 SF
RELOCATION

WE
WEST END — 4,850 SF
MAKEOVER

LEGEND

AB — Branch Library Code
— Picture of Library Today
PLCH1 — 00,000 SF — Branch Name and Proposed Size
IMPROVEMENT — Recommended Improvement Strategies

NOTICE/ADVISORY regarding DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS: This list of projects, proposed improvements, and budgets are subject to change. Scope, size and schedule will be determined based on funds being collected and matching to project costs. Draft recommendations will be adjusted based on market conditions, fund availability, critical repairs and other factors beyond the Library's control.



10-YEAR PROJECTS PROPOSED FOR MAIN LIBRARY

- SOUTH BUILDING ELECTRICAL UPGRADES HVAC AND FP
- SOUTH BUILDING SKYLIGHT AND ELEVATOR REPLACEMENT
- SMALL SCALE REORGANIZATION (100,000 SF)
- VINE PLAZA EXTENSIVE RECONSTRUCTION
- NEW STAIRS IN THE ATRIUM

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE LIBRARY

The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, while its service area comprises the entire county, is fiscally independent of the county. It is governed by a Board of Trustees, four of whom are appointed by the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners and three by the Hamilton County Board of Common Pleas. The Library Board of Trustees has the principal responsibility for fulfillment of the Library's mission and accountability for its operations, including appointing the Library's Eva Jane Romaine Coombe Director.

Amongst its many honors and awards, the Library has been recognized as a *Library Journal* Five-Star library for six years in a row. This reflects the many impressive performance metrics sustained by the Library year after year. In 2018, there were more than 5.5 million visits, 20 million items borrowed, and 400,000 programs attendees. Beyond these traditional transactional metrics, recognitions, and deep community support, other measures of success are reflected through the transformations the library supports – promoting student success, a love of reading, workforce development, lifelong learning, and personal and professional development.

In 2019 the Library's annual budget was approximately \$80.5 million, which included \$17.5 million being transferred to the Building and Repair Fund for capital projects. Approximately half of its funding comes via the state of Ohio's Public Library Fund, which is a portion of all general revenue taxes, currently set at 1.7%. An additional 46% of the funding comes from two 1-mill operating levies supported by Hamilton County voters in 2013 and 2018, with the remaining 4% from other sources, including fines and fees, contributions, and interest-earning. The Library's services are provided by a dedicated staff of approximately 850 individuals working the equivalent of 691 full-time employees.

INSIDE/OUTSIDE/TECHNOLOGY

The Library provides services through three interrelated channels: **inside** a network of library buildings; **outside** through services provided in diverse settings; and **online** through mobile, digital, and virtual services and resources. The "inside" bricks and mortar library experience remains the dominant way the community interacts with the Library



LIBRARY MISSION STATEMENT

Connecting people with the world of ideas and information.

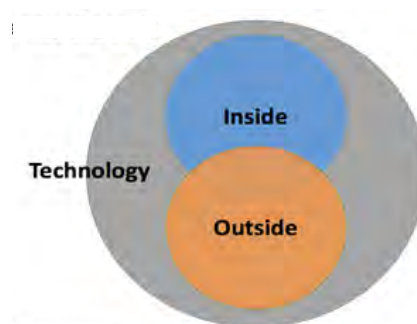
VISION STATEMENT

It is the Library's vision to:

- Excel in customer service
- Be the first choice for information
- Anticipate and meet changing needs
- Assure equitable access to the Library's resources and services
- Be a dynamic force in the community

2019 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- Robert G. Hendon, President
- Monica Donath Kohnen, Vice President
- Elizabeth H. LaMacchia, Secretary
- Nadine L. Allen
- Karen R. Clemons
- William J. Moran (retired from the Board, 10/31/19)
- Diane Cunningham Redden



Three interrelated channels of library services

and is the primary focus of this plan; recognizing the important role of technology, a technology assessment and strategy was also part of the planning scope. As the library continues to evolve its service model, staff roles related to each of these channels will also be addressed.

OUTSIDE SERVICES

Outside services include outreach efforts, where library staff travel to meet customers where they are, especially those Library customers who are unable to come to Library locations. The library provides services at partner locations and maintains deposit collections in places such as recreation centers, coffee shops, and barber shops, increasing the reach of the library to communities where transportation can be an issue. In 2018 the Library's Outreach Department served over 14,000 customers in area retirement homes, daycare centers, and other facilities, making a total of nearly 2,000 trips to these locations. In 2018 the Outreach Department also served 552 teachers at 88 schools, loaning a total of 136,515 items to support student learning.

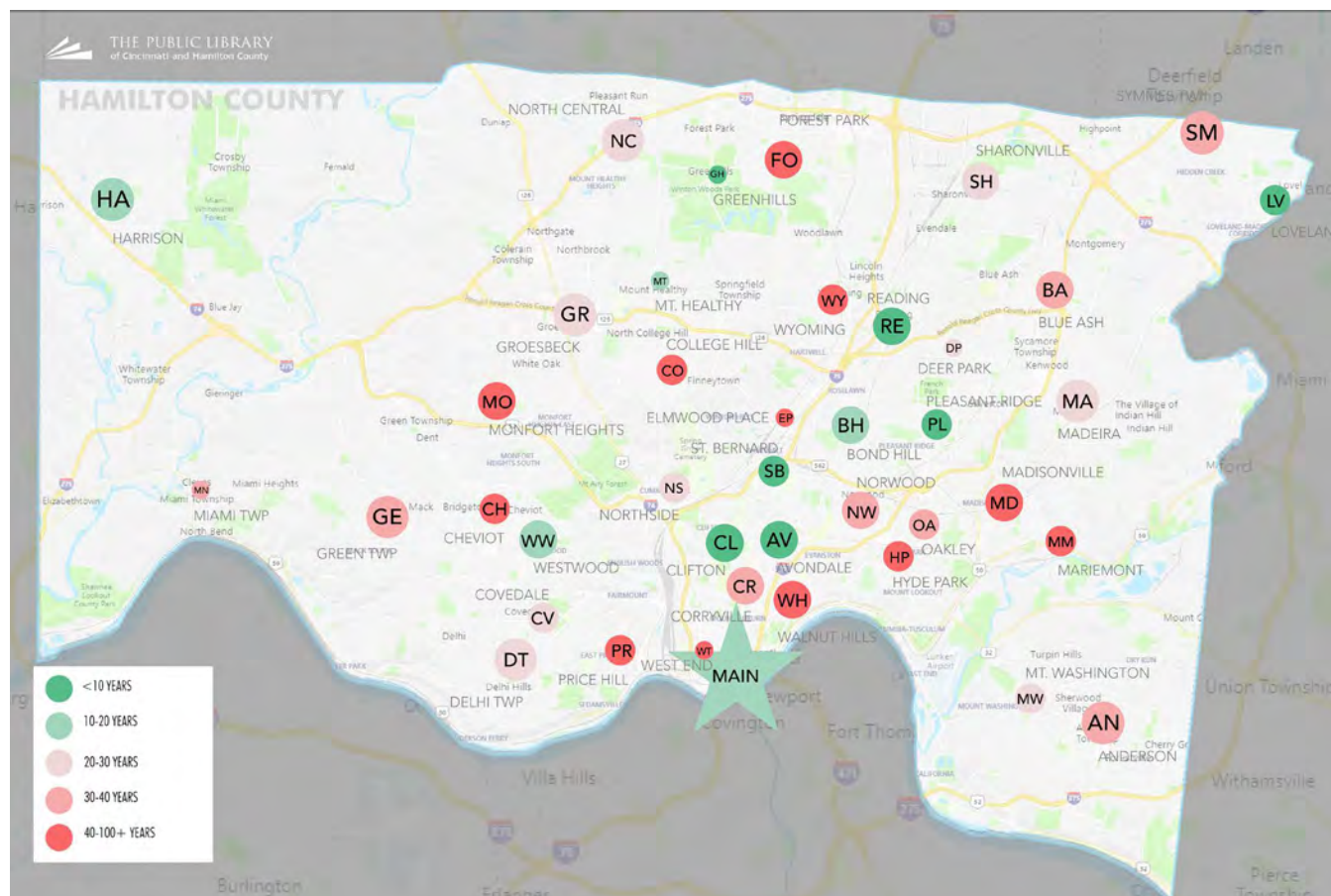
The library is currently exploring the addition of a bookmobile or mobile technology vans to further extend the reach of the library to those with limited access and provide highly targeted services to meet important customer needs.

TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE AND USER EXPERIENCE

Library customers today engage with content in many formats beyond the traditional book, such as e-books, audio books, media and streaming content, to learn new skills. In our modern world, technology has permeated nearly every basic aspect of life, from paying a bill to applying for college, jobs and health benefits, to communicating with loved ones who live far away. The Library is committed to digital inclusion, providing access to devices, connectivity, knowledge, and skills to empower and enable community members, especially the 134,000 Hamilton County residents living below the poverty line who cannot afford the latest technologies or Internet access at home.

The downtown Main Library is also a leader in the library industry with one of the most robust makerspaces in the country, with practical and low tech devices like button makers, to visionary tech like a UV printer, vinyl printer, and laser engraver, a recording studio, and publishing on demand right in the library. In 2018 the MakerSpace helped over 1,700 small businesses and 2,100 nonprofits create marketing materials, product prototypes, and other resources. A goal of the library, based on findings from the community listening sessions that were held in the summer of 2019, is to democratize access to more and varied technologies, and find opportunities to locate them in strategic locations throughout the county, as often wait times for equipment in the Main Library's MakerSpace can be up to six weeks. Space for varied technologies is one of the drivers for expanding select Library branches to big Next Generation size.

The Library also places a high priority on applying technology to improve library operations. The library has recently refreshed user interfaces with improved self-



service and wifi technologies in the branches to offer higher levels of service, and more improvements are forthcoming in online and mobile resources.

Library facilities categorized by age

The Library has leveraged its involvement with the nation-leading Ohio Public Library Information Network (OPLIN) to provide fast and scalable data connections to ensure fast Internet connections and support the building-to-building needs to share data.

INSIDE SERVICES – FACILITIES TODAY

The flagship of the Library system is the downtown Main Library, which is well-located between the business district and an area of urban renewal. Spanning one and a half city blocks, and containing over a half million square feet, it is one of the largest public libraries in the United States. An extensive network of 40 branch libraries and a Distribution Center provides wide geographic coverage and convenient access to many residents across all Hamilton County municipalities and unincorporated areas.

Library branches range in size from the tiny but impactful 1,700 square foot (SF) Elmwood Place Library to the modestly sized 16,600 SF Anderson Branch Library. On average, a Library branch is 9,900 SF – too small to provide the full range of contemporary service offerings that community members asked for in focus groups and community listening sessions. Many library customers regularly use more than one library branch to meet their needs.



Automated materials handling machine in the new distribution center

A new Distribution Center opened in 2019, relocating technical services, sorting, and delivery services from cramped and awkward basement space in the Main to a refurbished larger warehouse space with better highway access. The very popular hold service and efficient distribution system, aided by one of the largest public library automated materials handling systems in the nation, delivers requested materials to customers' library branch of choice in as little as a day. The upgraded technology at the Distribution Center also allows for "smart distribution," and provides real-time data to Library staff so they can easily tailor branch collections to neighborhood needs.

Library buildings range in age from the three newest branches (Reading, St. Bernard, and Clifton) that opened in 2015, to the two oldest branches (Walnut Hills and Price Hill) that are both over a century old, and have never been renovated. This master plan refers to the effective age measured from branch libraries when major building systems were last renewed (such as furnace, roof, etc.), or if still original, when built. In many libraries, even those over a hundred years old, building systems are original, are well past their useful lifespan, and are in need of replacement. On average, the branch libraries have an effective age of over 40 years, reflecting the tremendous backlog in capital maintenance needs, including critical roof and basement leaks, outdated heating, air conditioning, and electrical systems, and accessibility problems of varying degrees.

The Library's remarkable longevity and success are a direct reflection of its staff, values, and culture of growth and innovation, adapting to the continually changing needs of the community. However, the upkeep and modernization of the physical buildings has fallen significantly behind and is severely limiting the Library's ability to be successful into the future.

THE NEED



- Accessibility, repair, size, changing customer needs
- Average Library is over 40 years old since built or last major renovation
- Existing challenges increased by recent deterioration of older facilities including roof leak at the Main Library, ceiling collapse at Price Hill
- 3 branches are not ADA accessible and many more present accessibility challenges
- 8 branches are over 100 years old; 2 of these have never been renovated
- 3 branches built in the 20's and 30's, one of these never renovated
- 10 branches built in the 50's and 70's, 7 never renovated



*Bill Nye event in the
Main Library atrium*

METHODOLOGY

FACILITY MASTER PLAN PROJECT

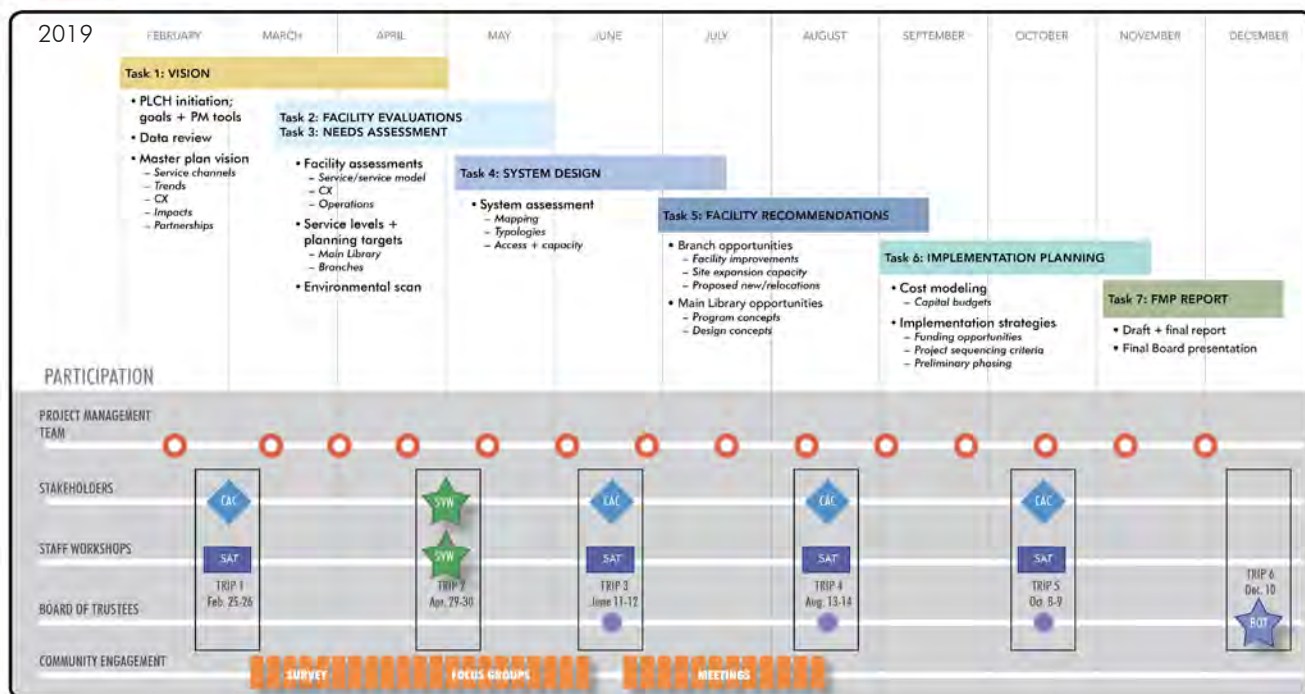
Recognizing that existing operating funding was inadequate to address the magnitude of facility needs, in 2018 the Library Board of Trustees placed on the ballot Issue 3, a 1 mill levy that received 63% voter approval. Providing up to \$19 million/year over 10 years, a large portion of this funding enables the library to meet approximately one-third of its anticipated facility needs. To guide the facility improvements, the Library initiated a year-long planning process with extensive community input. This Facility Master Plan (FMP) is the result of that process and presents a framework for facility improvements for the next decade and beyond.

The Library Board of Trustees established the following principles to guide the plan development. These principles were consulted in all the aspects of plan development and its recommendations:

- Maximized Access
- Transparency
- Customer Focus
- Operational Sustainability
- Industry-Leading Excellence
- Diversity and Inclusion

PUBLIC LIBRARY OF CINCINNATI AND HAMILTON COUNTY
FACILITY MASTER PLAN WORK PLAN

WORK PLAN



CONSULTANT TEAM

Selected through a Request For Proposals process, the Facility Master Plan project was led by Group 4 Architecture, Research + Planning, Inc., a South San Francisco-based firm with experience consulting metropolitan library systems across the nation. Group 4 was joined by associated architect Champlin Architecture, of Cincinnati, whose diverse portfolio includes the most recent branch libraries. Library technologist Carson Block contributed insights on technology applications in modern libraries, and renowned library futurist Susan Kent worked with the advisory committees on opportunities for future roles of the Main Library.

Cincinnati-based specialists in community engagement, social justice, and leadership, Design Impact, directed the focus group portion of the engagement process. Their processes investigated how to address pressing issues, equip communities, and inspire social change.

Information on cost planning and analysis was supported by Browne Engineering & Construction of Cincinnati. They were able to bring construction expertise and local knowledge and resources to validate cost models for capital implementation.

APPROACH

The Facility Master Plan process spanned most of 2019 and proceeded through the following tasks:

- **Task 1: Vision** – Current strengths and opportunities in the Library were identified to create FMP guiding principles and goals which reflect the values of the Library.
- **Task 2: Facility Evaluations** – Individual facilities were assessed, through site-by-site observation and conversation, to identify where library service functions might be inhibited by interior arrangement, facility system efficiency, and confinements of their site and context.
- **Task 3: Needs Assessment** – Community priorities were compared to current facilities, and general space strategies were developed. Distribution of space across the system was evaluated.
- **Task 4: System Design** – Customer usage patterns were mapped and geographic coverage was evaluated. Planning zones and neighborhood networks were identified.
- **Task 5: Facility Recommendations** – Multiple facility improvement options were identified and projects were prioritized for maximum impact and equity.
- **Task 6: Implementation Planning** – Project budgets were prepared and groupings of projects and phasing was proposed.
- **Task 7: FMP Report** – This document is the primary deliverable of this process.
- **Engagement** – Key methods of engagement are summarized below, and a partial list of project participants is summarized in Appendix A. The project's 90+ meetings included:
 - » 41 Community Listening Sessions
 - » 15 Community Focus Groups
 - » 12 Staff Focus Groups and staff workshops
 - » 2 Strategic Vision Workshops
 - » 4 Community Advisory Council meetings
 - » 4 Staff Advisory Team meetings
 - » 10+ Leadership meetings
 - » 7 Board of Trustees workshops

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Open Houses and Community Listening Sessions were held for every library from June through August 2019. Where access and meeting room space allowed, these events were hosted at the branches; otherwise they were held at nearby accessible locations. These widely publicized events were well attended by a cross section of community members, Community Council members, and/or other stakeholders, as well as the Library Trustees. Key themes that emerged from these sessions include:

- **Invest in facility upgrades** – The community welcomes the opportunity for updated facilities that increase convenience and accessibility. However, customers also desire equitable upgrades and ongoing maintenance, not just one-time changes.
- **Build flexible spaces for work and play** – Because our community spaces and personal spaces are changing, the community wants the Library to play two roles: a resource for work and focus and a social hub to connect with others. These conflicting needs require flexible areas and designated areas within the Library.
- **Maximize access** – Many individuals struggle to get to the Library because of transportation challenges, family responsibilities, or physical limitations. People struggle to fully take part in all the Library has to offer, whether that's getting in the front door or utilizing all of the resources that are available.
- **Operational sustainability and green space** – Better utilization of outdoor space by cultivating the area around the Library or in some cases expanding the Library to put those spaces inside the building. This also included a lot of discussion around green energy and LEED certification.
- **Diversity and inclusion** – Consider the overall Library experience with particular focus on consideration for flexibility in space so that the Library could adapt and stay relevant, communities can see themselves reflected in the space, and attempt to design space for everyone no matter how they use the Library. This ranged from a discussion around ADA accessibility to customers who primarily use the Library online and really want to improve the online experience.
- **Library as a community destination** – Many people talked about how the Library is such an anchor for the community and an inextricable part of the community identity. Community members shared how much they appreciated how welcoming their branch is and would like to see the Library position itself more as a community destination.

Focus Groups were conducted to gather input from specific demographic groups who are typically underrepresented in scheduled evening and weekend meetings like the Community Listening Sessions, and included many who were not active library users. The focus groups were planned and facilitated by local engagement non-profit Design Impact with the support of, and at the locations of, community partner organizations. Groups that were engaged included:

- Low- Income residents

- Parents with young children
- Young professionals
- People experiencing homelessness
- Community members returning from incarceration
- Teens
- African-American community members
- Refugees
- Entrepreneurs
- Latinx Communities
- Individuals who speak English as a second language
- Sayler Park residents
- Miamitown area residents
- Tweens
- Entry level job seekers
- People with disabilities

Findings of the community engagement are referenced in various sections of this plan. Summary reports of community engagement activities can be found at:

www.cincinnati.library.org/NextGenerationLibrary/findings.asp

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

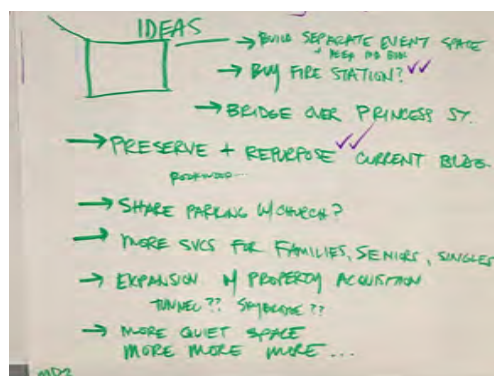
A **Community Advisory Committee (CAC)** convened over 40 community leaders to serve as one of the primary sounding boards to the analyses and development of plan recommendations. The CAC met four times for three-hour workshops. CAC members were given the opportunity to endorse the plan recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

A partial list of organizations who provided representatives:

- University of Cincinnati
- The Library Foundation of Cincinnati and Hamilton County
- Hamilton County Planning & Development
- Cincinnati Recreation Commission
- Hispanic Chamber Cincinnati USA
- Ohio State University Extension 4-H
- Community Building Institute
- GBBN Architects
- Transgender Advocacy Council
- Women's City Club
- Shelter House
- YMCA
- U.S. Department of Veterans
- United Way of Greater Cincinnati
- Cincinnati Preservation Association
- Great Parks of Hamilton County



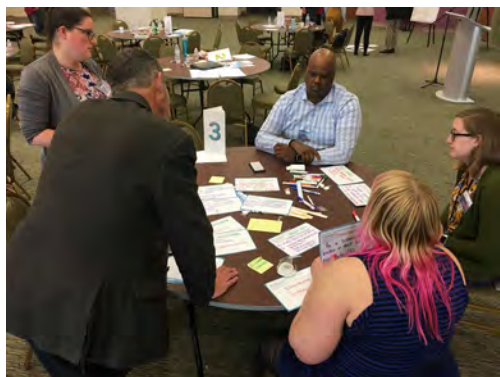
Main Library Open House



The Madisonville Community Listening Session, hosted at the local arts center, was attended by children, young adults, families, and seniors, as well as by members of the Community Council and a local community developer.



The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County extends its sincere gratitude to the Library Foundation of Cincinnati and Hamilton County for providing the refreshments for the community listening sessions and focus groups, as well as the gift cards for focus group participants.



The community and staff Strategic Vision Workshops are summarized in a document separate from this Facility Master Plan.



IRF visioning session

A day-long, highly interactive **Community Strategic Vision Workshop** was held with invited community leaders from local government, business, educational, arts, and community organizations.

A **lunchtime roundtable** was held with area business leaders, exploring the current and emerging role of the library and opportunities to reinvest in the Main Library.

Online Surveys were collected from more than 1,300 individuals, from the general public and also from Library staff.

STAFF ENGAGEMENT

The planning process was greatly enriched by the valuable insights shared by a large cross section of Library staff members gathered in a variety of forums described below.

A **Project Management Team** consisting of the Eva Jane Romaine Coombe Director, Chief Finance and Facilities Officer, Chief Strategy Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Customer Experience Manager, Facilities Manager, and Capital Project Manager, plus the architectural consultants.

A **Staff Advisory Team (SAT)** included a cross section of Library staff and were the primary staff sounding board to the analyses and development of recommendations. SAT members were asked to act as ambassadors to their colleagues through the FMP process, participating in four three-hour-long workshops. Every SAT member endorsed the plan recommendations via a letter to the Board of Trustees.

Staff Focus Groups included sessions with each of the Library's departments. Technology-related sessions were facilitated by Carson Block. Sessions relating to collections were facilitated by Susan Kent. Sessions on Main Library service groups were facilitated by Group 4 and Susan Kent.

Staff Surveys were distributed during eight staff development days at the beginning of the FMP process. A Dot Survey was shared at Staff Development Day trainings, which asked the question: "Which of the following are the highest priority for the Library to increase its focus on over the next five years?" Approximately 636 staff members engaged in selecting top-priority library services. These results are discussed further in the Vision section.

A day-long **Staff Strategic Vision Workshop** was held that included one representative from each of the Library's 67 agencies.

Information and Reference Department (IRF) workshops engaged IRF staff members in small teams to explore customer journeys and how spaces and services could be improved from a customer experience perspective.

A two-day **Branch Manager Summit** was conducted to develop facility improvement options for every branch.

A **Main Library Staff Workshop** invited many library staff to explore opportunities at the Main Library. This was a variation of the Branch Summit specifically for department and initiative representation at the Main Library.



CAC Workshop Three focused on prioritizing library improvement options

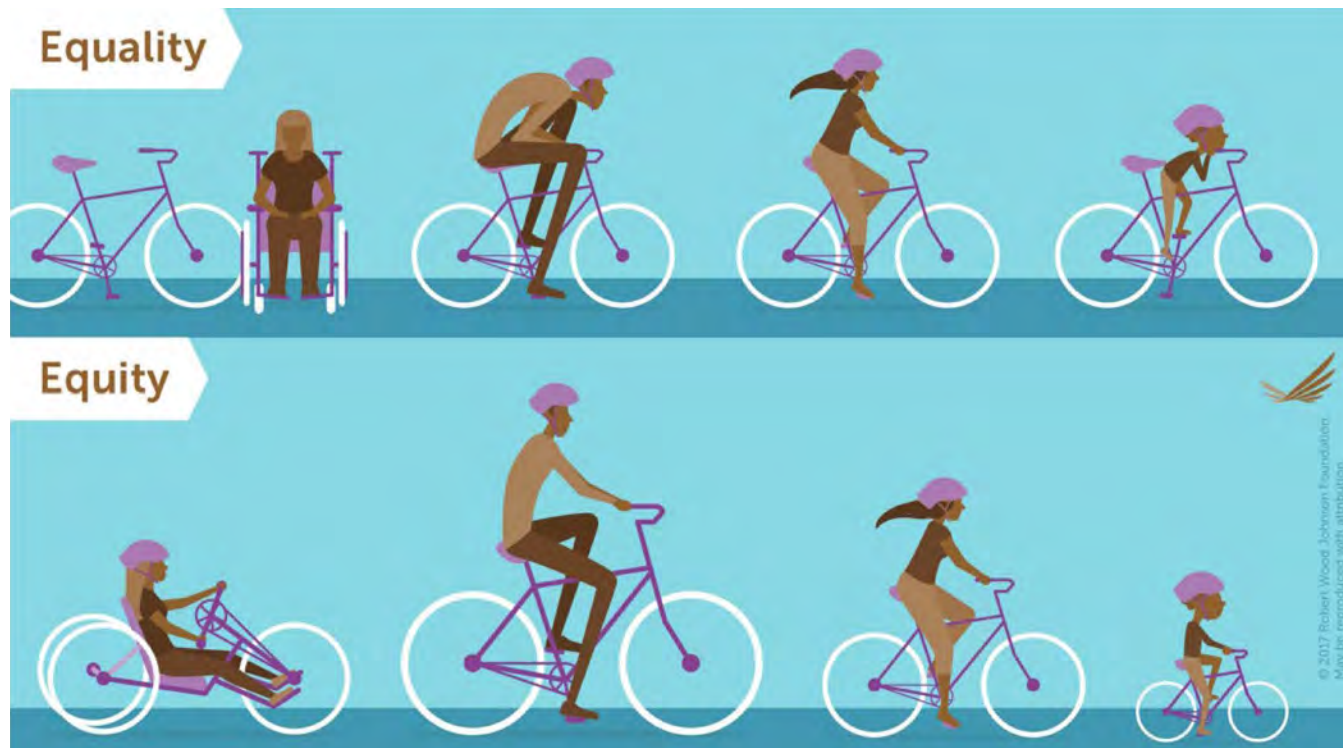
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Library staff seeks feedback from customers

VISION

While the question is often raised whether the Internet and electronic books will make public libraries obsolete, it tends to come from individuals who have the means to purchase the latest technologies and other educational and entertainment resources on their own. Studies from the Pew Research Center have confirmed that trends such as increasing poverty, a growing opportunity gap, and increased social isolation, combined with the constant stream of new technologies and materials formats, have only increased the importance of the public library's role in the community, where staff serve as curators of these digital resources and coaches to help community members learn new technologies. Consistent with these findings, the Library is busier today than ever before. Throughout its storied history, the Library has kept at its core the promotion of literacies, lifelong learning, access to information and resource, and providing the civic spaces and places for the community to gather and interact. These values are still true today, and are expected to be increasingly important in the future.



Multiple dimensions of Equity. Graphic by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

THE LIBRARY'S PLACE IN THE COMMUNITY

The library also plays a vital part in helping build a stronger Cincinnati and Hamilton County. The Library's strategic plan encompasses community-oriented service goals, including:

- support jobs seekers and continuous learning;
- prepare children to succeed in kindergarten and throughout their education;
- provide essential resources for entrepreneurs and the small business community.

In Community Listening Sessions, Library Director Paula Brehm-Heeger has described the Library as being "in the community business." As such, the Library seeks opportunities to align its services and resources with major community goals and initiatives, including the Cincinnati 2030 District. By joining as a community partner, the Library will help Cincinnati maintain and design more sustainable buildings.

The City of Cincinnati has a priority goal of "thriving and healthy neighborhoods." The improved libraries will enhance neighborhood revitalization and foster community engagement and cohesion. Public investment in library buildings will also be a catalyst for other public and private investments.

The Greater Cincinnati Foundation's "All-In Cincinnati" program addresses racial and economic inequality by promoting "equity as the path to inclusive prosperity." The Library's commitment to enhance services to low income areas and underserved communities, as well as the library's access to current technologies, provision of

literacies, and job support programs, helps build economic security of vulnerable individuals and their families.

Library staff interact with the public every day and develop deep understanding of community needs. This focus on community support is evident in the top staff service priorities gathered from a survey taken at 2019 staff development and training days:

- 1st Digital literacy skills/tech support
- 2nd Workforce development
- 3rd Meeting people at their point of need
- 4th Addressing access/equity issues
- 5th Wrap-around support/social services

Input from focus groups with underrepresented customers found four priorities that helped inform the Facility Master Plan:

- **Programs & Services**
 - » *Connect people to resources and others in the community*
 - » *Provide relevant programming*
- **Fostering a More Equitable Library Experience**
 - » *Increase access to the library*
 - » *Provide inclusive customer service and multicultural support*
 - » *Take a family-centered approach*
 - » *Create safe spaces; discourage negative behavior*
- **Physical Space**
 - » *Upgrade facilities and provide a wide range of amenities*
 - » *Provide diverse spaces for work and play*
- **Marketing & Communication**
 - » *Improve signage*
 - » *Promote existing programs*

Advisory groups explored societal, technological, educational, and economic trends. CAC and SAT members found that the Library is playing an increasingly significant role in trends related to supporting an aging community, STEM/STEAM education, coworking, and fandom. The implications are that the next-generation library needs an increasingly broad variety of types of spaces: quiet and active, comfortable and creative, for individuals and for groups.

In the Strategic Vision Workshops, participants explored how the Library can embrace in-demand elements of the customer experience from other organizations, market sectors, and disruptors such as Netflix, Lyft, the Cincinnati Zoo, and the Blink Cincinnati festival. As in other industries, the future of the library is to provide omni-channel services integrating the inside bricks and mortar, outside in the community, and online experiences.

Workshop guest speaker Rhiannon Hoeweler, Cincinnati Zoo Vice President of Visitor Experience, Strategy, and Fun, shared the “zoo access for all” strategy

serving the low-income population, translating resources for visitors for whom English is a second language, and providing access for the disabled. This resonated with many staff who thought these strategies directly apply to the Library.

Workshop guest speaker Tim Kambitsch, director of Dayton Metropolitan Library, reflected on that community's bond program strategies and recommended that the Library invest in under-resourced communities, right-size the collection, expand space for people and programs, host partners, and consolidate low performing branches.

Community representatives and staff proposed Library vision statements through the themes of Place, Service, Equity, and Sustainability, and prioritized the following:

The Library should...

- Embrace diversity
- Adapt and stay relevant
- Democratize access
- Empower customers and engage the community
- Be a community destination
- Provide safe, welcoming spaces
- Offer flexible spaces and services
- Maintain accessible and sustainable facilities
- Build partnerships

Studies show that robust and well-funded public libraries help cities thrive. In the Urban Libraries Council report, *Making Cities Stronger*, it was noted that public libraries are a trusted public space that:

- Support economic and social development
- Contribute to the physical environment
- Act as entrepreneurial hubs
- Drive civic engagement

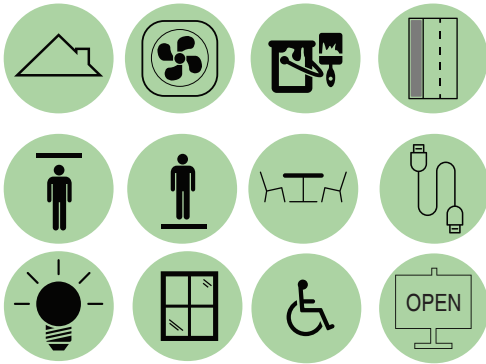
In addition, a 2016 Ohio Library Council report on the cost effectiveness of Ohio's public libraries found that they provided nearly \$2.7 billion in direct economic value to Ohio residents in 2014. The same report noted that for every \$1 spent by public libraries in Ohio, they delivered \$3.89 in benefit to Ohio residents. Yet in Hamilton County that number is even higher. For every \$1 the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County (PLCH) spends, the benefit to Hamilton County residents is \$6.37, according to PLCH data.

The Library not only provides traditional benefits directly to individuals, such as assisting an unemployed worker search for their next job and helping an English language learner build key skills, but the Library also provides benefits to cities as a business, through wage contributions for our 850+ employees, purchasing materials and contracted services, and library construction projects.

The Library also contributes community level benefits that strengthen the city and county, through its programs and services, including:

- Early literacy initiatives
- Workforce development efforts
- Small business and entrepreneurial support

FACILITY EVALUATIONS



	Roof	HVAC	Exterior Painting and Tuck Pointing	Sidewalk Replacement	Lighting	Interior Plaster and Paint	Windows	Ceiling replacement	Flooring	Furniture Replacement	Electric Upgrades	Accessibility
Bond Hill										#		
Cheviot			#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#
Clifton					#				#			
College Hill		#		#	#	#	#	#	#	#	#	

FACILITY EVALUATIONS

Per guidance of the Board of Trustees, Library facilities were evaluated for comprehensive needs, not limited to the funds projected to be available, and then out of those larger needs, to identify the highest priorities that can be accomplished in the next 10 years.

ACCESSIBILITY

The Library Board of Trustees guiding principles of maximizing access and inclusion directly translate to a Facility Master Plan goal of providing universal access. This means providing more than what is minimally mandated by building codes for those with disabilities, but also, to the greatest practical extent, providing an equitable library experience with dignity and respect for the widest range of ages, abilities, and needs.

Thirteen library branches currently have some level of accessibility deficiency. The Madisonville, Price Hill, and Walnut Hills libraries each have multiple barriers and lack basic access. The Cheviot, Hyde Park, Mt. Healthy, Norwood, and Wyoming branches have only partial accessibility, such as no accessible path to the lower level at Wyoming, or an elevator that is too small at Hyde Park. The College Hill, Northside, Pleasant Ridge, West End, and Westwood branches all have some access challenges, such as Northside that provides elevator access, but only from the rear and only by ringing a bell and summoning assistance.

Addressing accessibility needs was a major goal of the 2018 Issue 3 levy. A detailed technical accessibility evaluation was not included in the master plan project scope as it is anticipated that access improvements will be included as part of larger design or capital maintenance projects. See Part II for discussion of branch improvement recommendations.

Facility evaluation tools, detailed in Part II, were applied to the assessment of each library location



Walnut Hills branch library

CAPITAL MAINTENANCE

In 2018, many building deficiencies became critical. The Walnut Hills Library's lower level suffered from water damage, and during severe rainstorms, parts of the Main Library flooded. There was a partial ceiling collapse in the 110-year-old Price Hill Library that forced the building's indefinite closure and temporary relocation to the nearby recreation center.

The Library's Facility's Department assessed current maintenance needs across all facilities and their sites. These are summarized later in the report and detailed on branch summaries in Part II. \$20-\$25 million in today's dollars in priority capital maintenance projects are proposed for the next 10 years.

SERVICE EVALUATIONS

Each library branch was also reviewed for how well it supports the roles of traditional, contemporary, and emerging library services. Newer branches are excellent examples of next-generation service models, but the many branches that still have older interiors reflect an outdated model of service that predates the Internet and rise of digital tools and resources. Fixed spaces dominated by heavy furniture and immovable shelving prohibits community members from using the space in ways that they want to. This issue came to the fore repeatedly in Community Listening Sessions. Community members expressed a desire for study rooms, meeting rooms and other spaces where they could work, collaborate, and create. There is a shortage and limited range of seating and work spaces in almost every branch. Listening Session attendees also expressed a desire for designated spaces for adults, children and teens, which is challenging to achieve in the many small branches.

TECHNOLOGY EVALUATIONS

Access to the latest technologies is essential for community members to work, learn, and play. In the branches, technology offerings are very limited. Technology plays an important role in bridging the digital divide, providing access to up-to-date equipment, current digital resources, and fast connectivity. In 2018 customers at the Library logged more than 3.1 million computer and Wi-Fi sessions across the system, averaging 8,556 sessions per day. Library staff provide the help and guidance to use the machines, navigate, and develop the digital literacy skills to effectively engage with online and mobile resources for education, employment, social services, social connectivity, and entertainment. Community Listening Session attendees expressed a need for more access to digital tools and resources, but aging buildings with limited electrical capacity and lack of space for equipment and servers inhibit the Library's ability to meet this need.

A goal of the library is to democratize access to some of the technologies located at the Main Library and to find opportunities to locate them in strategic locations throughout the county. Space for varied technologies is one of the drivers for expanding select branches to big Next Generation size.

The Library places a high priority on applying technology to improve library operations. The Library has recently refreshed its user interfaces with improved self-service and Wi-Fi technologies in the branches to offer higher levels of service, and more improvements are forthcoming in online and mobile resources.

The Library has leveraged its involvement with the nation-leading Ohio Public Library Information Network (OPLIN) to provide fast and scalable data connections to ensure fast Internet connections and supporting the building-to-building needs to share data.

CULTURAL RESOURCE EVALUATIONS

In Community Listening Sessions, many residents expressed the importance of preserving library buildings that have distinctive architecture that contributes to local character and identity. The Library has eight buildings over a century old, including seven Carnegie Foundation-funded libraries, three built in the 1920s – 1930s, four built in the 1950s, and seven built in the 1960s. At the Avondale, Clifton, Corryville, and Westwood branch libraries, the Library has demonstrated that well-designed renovations and some additions can provide universal access and contemporary library service while maintaining and enhancing a building's original architectural character. The Facility Master Plan 10-year recommendations include renovations to many library buildings of cultural value including Price Hill, Walnut Hills, West End, and others. At Community Listening Sessions, preferences were expressed by community members who wanted to preserve architecture as well as by those who wanted brand new facilities. To balance these differing views, the Library will strive to keep the character of buildings that have significance to the community as much as possible, while providing modern services and resources that meet the needs of today's community members.

Library recommendations align with Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation (3CDC) goals:

- preserve historic structures;
- improve streetscapes;
- create great civic spaces.



Model rendering of the Main Library atrium



The Vine Street entry with elevated plaza has been a source of persistent complaints. Using this entry is tantamount to running a gauntlet. See the Recommendations section for proposed improvements.

MAIN LIBRARY EVALUATION

The current 540,000 SF downtown Main Library is situated between the business district and an area of urban renewal. The 380,000 SF South Building includes portions built in 1953 and expanded in 1978; the 160,000 SF North Building, connected by multi-story bridge, opened in 1997. In 2007 and beyond, the Main Library underwent a service model redesign that created many innovative and successful “flagship” services, including a popular library, a large and vibrant maker space, a generous teen space, and expanded local history space with specialized genealogy collections. The Main Library also provides a systemwide role housing the majority of Library collections shelved in both accessible and closed stacks.

In December, 2017, the Library Board of Trustees confirmed the desire to retain the North Building, and to have both buildings of the Main Library re-envisioned to better meet customer needs.

The iconic five-story atrium in the South Building had for many years been in need of re-defining the space to meet changing customer needs. In 2019, a reflooring project replaced the brick floor finishes, provided new flexible furniture, and improved restroom access and visibility. Today, staff are experimenting with new types of pop-up services and layouts to bring both short-term and long-term vitality to the atrium’s ground level and to create convenience for customers. Much of the rest of the building’s public interior remains unimproved and in need of a refresh and reorganization. Community Listening Session attendees indicated a strong desire for quiet spaces to study, work, and relax, more meeting rooms of varying sizes and additional technology access to meet growing demand. They also requested parking options and the desire to make the Vine Street entrance safer, more welcoming, and family-friendly.

A Main Library staff summit and two Community Listening Sessions at Main were held to consider exterior and interior needs and opportunities. The western (Vine Street) entry plaza was identified as a major design problem, with frequent customer complaints and calls to law enforcement. A lack of convenient and affordable parking was another primary concern of library users. Wayfinding across the multiple floors and buildings is impaired by an awkward and small combination-ramp/stair between the first and second floors and no convenient stair access to the third floor.



NEEDS ASSESSMENT

While the population of Hamilton County has remained relatively steady for the past decade and is projected to remain steady in the years to come, there are some demographic shifts that were considered relative to the Board of Trustees planning principles of Equity and Inclusion. These are discussed in the planning zone summaries in Part II of this report.

While the total area of library space is, compared to peer libraries, at an acceptable level, there is a real imbalance in how the space is used and where that space is located. In the distant past, libraries functioned as warehouses of books – places to borrow books to be used elsewhere. Today libraries are places where individuals come to study, work, and create. As other public spaces in communities have disappeared, libraries have evolved into vibrant destinations to browse, gather, collaborate, learn, and connect.

Most branches reflect outdated service models and space priorities. From the smallest to the largest libraries there is a disproportionately large amount of space dedicated to books, and small amount of space for people. At every Community Listening Session, attendees expressed concerns about cramped spaces that created problems when people sharing the space wanted to use the space differently. Community members repeatedly requested designated quiet and noisy spaces as well as spaces distinctly for adults, children and teens, as each of these groups has different needs. In the Main Library, four of its seven floors are restricted access, and dedicated almost exclusively to closed stacks, and there are few group study rooms, a limited number of meeting rooms, and none with a capacity over 100 people.

Branch Library Types



LIBRARY TYPOLOGIES

In the past, the Library has attempted to have a one-size-fits-all approach for branches, but because of the great variety of sizes and large number of small branches, not all of them can provide the same services. To address this problem, this plan establishes these simple categories:

- **Main Library** is the flagship of the Library system, with over half the system's space, with the largest and most sophisticated service offerings, as well as specialized services. More than 53% of the system's collection is housed here. In addition to being a countywide destination, to many who live or work nearby, the Main Library also serves as their go-to location for day-to-day services. Library Administrative Services are also located here.
- **Next Generation Libraries** provide the fullest range of traditional, contemporary, and emerging services. These are the current large libraries in the 12,000-16,000 SF category and include expanded and replacement libraries in the larger 20,000-25,000 SF range. Next Generation Libraries are intended to be destinations within their planning zones (see further discussion below), have generous parking, and could in the future have the longest open hours. The recommendations are to maintain or expand libraries so that over a third of all locations are of Next Generation size.
- **Neighborhood Libraries** are more modestly sized in the 6,000-12,000 SF range. These can provide an excellent sampling of core services, but due to limited size, cannot practically provide all services – particularly the depth of technology, quantity of group study rooms, or a generous meeting room. In neighborhood libraries, flexibility will be a high priority to enable spaces to change use over the course of the day.

- **Focused Libraries**, the smallest libraries in the system, may fill important geographic or service gaps that other nearby libraries or community facilities do not fulfill. While they may be small, they can still have large impacts to those who use them. In addition to providing some core services, these libraries could become destinations for highly focused services based on specific neighborhood needs such as a technology hub, after-school services, workforce development, and more.

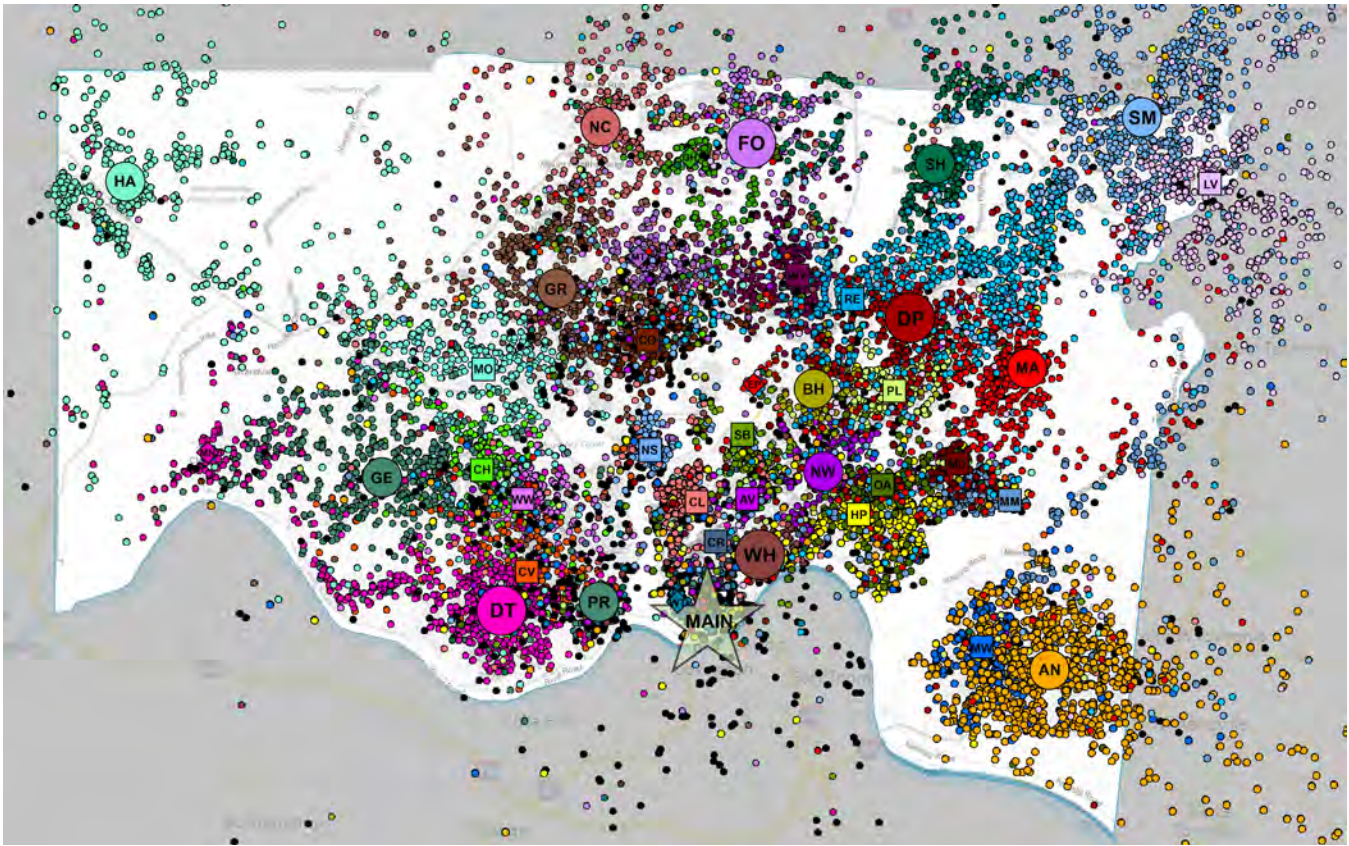
SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS

Operational sustainability was one of the Library Board's six planning principles. Over time, as renovated and expanded projects come online, the Library will evolve its service models, including open hours, services offered, and staffing models to correspond with the different library types.

Operating fewer larger libraries is generally more economical as the operation cost per square foot is somewhat higher for small branches. The experiences of Dayton Metro Library were considered, although it should be noted that their geographic service area and population are both smaller than the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. Dayton recently consolidated three small libraries into the new 30,000 SF Northwest Branch (opened in 2016) and two small branches into the new 24,000 SF West Branch (scheduled to open in 2021). Both relocations are more than double the size of their predecessors' combined sizes. These consolidations were done to provide an increased range of spaces, resources, and services. After expressing some initial concerns, Dayton's consolidations have received strong community support.

Consolidations of small branches, or those in very close proximity to other libraries, was explored. While the very small size of the smallest branches means they are not able to provide a full range of contemporary services, both the community and staff recognized the important, focused roles these libraries can provide – and a nickname of “small, lean, and mean” was suggested for the Focused Branch type. When added all together, the six smallest libraries total only 24,000 SF, which is only about 2% of total library space and presents a very small opportunity to reallocate operating budgets. These small branches tend to be in low-income neighborhoods and/or locations where public transportation is not currently robust. Also, as recommended improvement projects begin construction, those being renovated will need to be temporarily closed, and other libraries, even small ones, will help provide low-cost bridge services. After renovated and expanded libraries open, usage patterns will likely shift, and neighborhoods will continue to evolve; consolidations may then be more appropriate to consider further.

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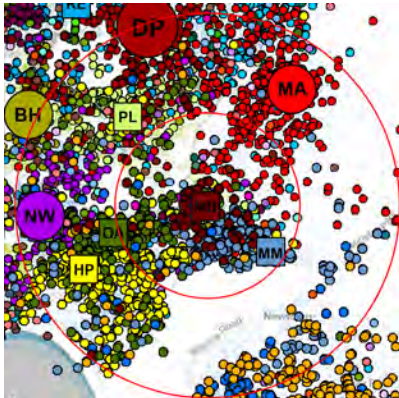
SYSTEM DESIGN

While customers most often have a strong affinity for the library nearest their home, circulation data, survey data, and input gathered in Community Listening Sessions showed that more than half of library customers regularly use more than one library, and many use three or more libraries. In addition to using the library closest to home, many customers also find it convenient to use other libraries close to work, school, shopping, entertainment, and family. Customers choose to travel to multiple locations to find what they want, such as specific programs like a Spanish language story time, particular materials such as a needed book for a research project, a unique technology such as a 3-D printer, a favorite space such as a group study room, or a specific staff member who has been helping with a customer's job search. The broad geographic coverage of branches and high level of many customers' mobility enable the library to plan facilities strategically, recognizing differences in facility size, and providing needed resources as complementary places in a network.

The Library has effective geographic coverage and no net-new libraries need to be added to the system.

"I visit at least eight libraries. I have a big family located all across the County, and whenever I pay a visit, I include a stop at the nearest library"

— participant in Main Library Open House, September 2018



	Branch	Type	Strategy	Distance
MM	Mariemont	NBHD	S.Investment	2.2 mi
OA	Oakley	NBHD	S.Investment	2.3 mi
PL	Pl.Ridge	NBHD	Maint. + S.Investment	3.1 mi
MA	Madeira	NEXT GEN	S.Investment	3.3 mi
HP	Hyde Park	NBHD	Maint. + S.Investment	3.4 mi
DP	Deer Park	BIG NEXTGEN	Relocation	4.2 mi
NW	Norwood	NEXT GEN	Major Renovation	5.2 mi

Madisonville Neighborhood Network. As an example, Madisonville Library users also have convenient access to seven other libraries within a 10-minute drive, including the proposed 25,000 SF Deer Park branch.

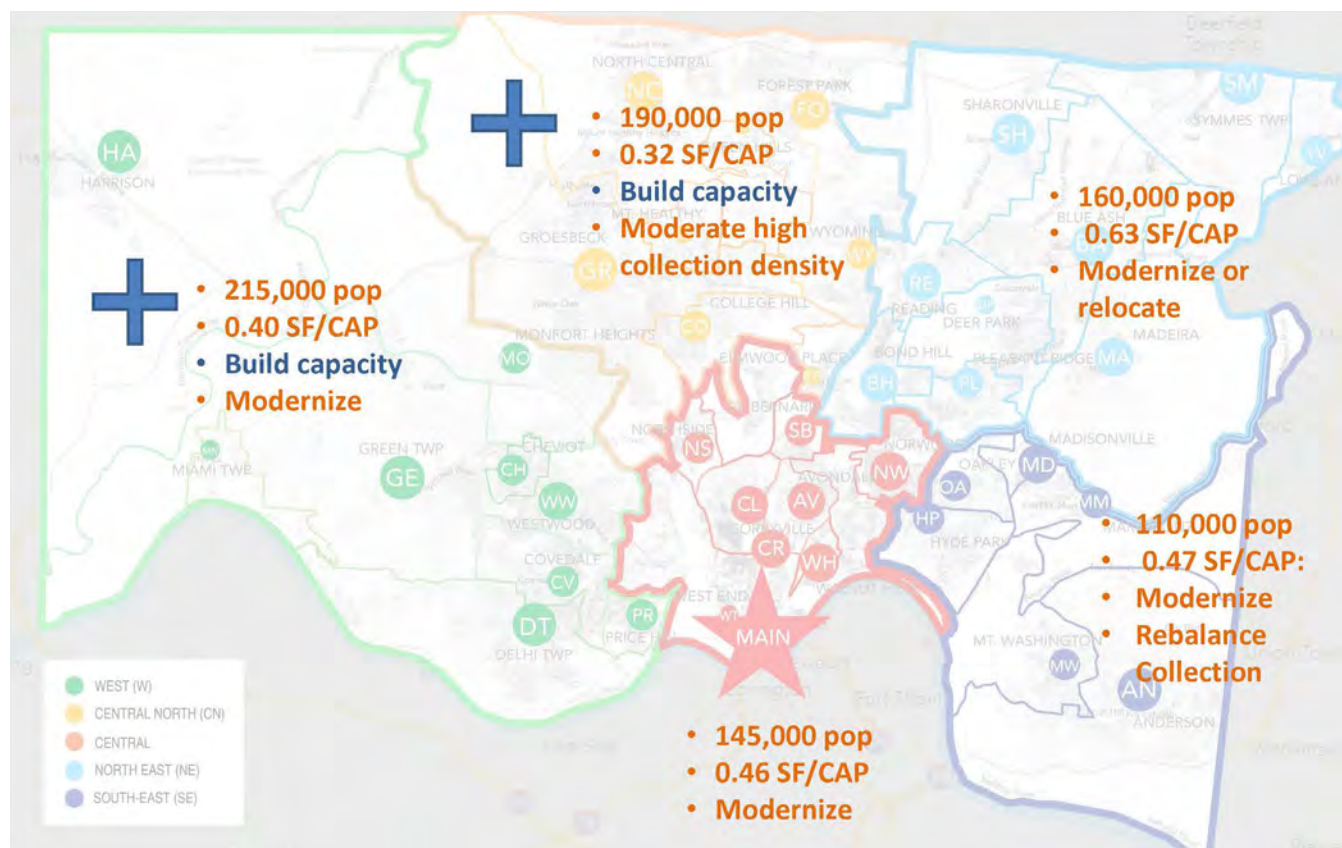
The Main Library, Distribution Center, and all 40 branches work together as a network. A single search in the Library’s catalog provides access to all circulating collections. Customers can request items from any of the locations to be delivered to their preferred branch. This hold request system is very popular and accounts for 31% of all circulation. Today the collection of the 40 branches consists of approximately 2.5 million items which float among branches, meaning the materials borrowed from one location generally remain in the location where they were returned until borrowed again. The size of Main’s collection is 2.8 million items, or 53% of the system’s collection. Customers can place holds on these items as well, but they return back to Main rather than float.

CUSTOMER MAPPING

As part of the analyses, the Library contracted with Cropper GIS Consulting to prepare maps of customer usage patterns. Maps were prepared that showed the home location of Library customers color coded according to which branch they borrowed materials from over a one-week period in December 2018, covering over 154,000 transactions. Analysis of these maps show that, with a couple of small exceptions, the branches offer effective geographic coverage in the county. The Library has significantly more branches than its dozen peer library systems, and while more space is needed, in order to promote operational sustainability this plan recommends that there should be no net-new libraries added to the system.

NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKS

Some customers use only a single library near home or work. Others visit libraries located across town. Still others regularly visit several libraries, such as those corresponding to the neighborhoods where relatives live, as one participant at a Main Library Open House shared. While every library customer has their own preferred use patterns – we have seen that there are more general patterns of multiple library use that can help us look at service distribution and equity. In the Community Listening Sessions the network of branches within two and four miles (or within 10- to 15-minute drives) of each other were considered and discussed and found a pattern of patronage among multiple nearby locations. While current funding is not sufficient to make all needed improvements, everyone in the county will see improvements in their local neighborhood network.



PLANNING ZONES

To ensure equitable distribution of resources across the entire county, the *Building the Next Generation Library* plan has identified five planning zones: Central, West, Central North, North East, and South East. These zones cluster branches based on customer travel patterns. Library market research firm OrangeBoy identified Areas of Dominant Influence (the unique geographies within which customers are more likely to use one library location more than any other) and these were aggregated into planning zones, providing the demographic data to measure equity. Through this analysis, Central North and West planning zones were identified as under-resourced and in need of more library expansions. For democratizing access to specialized spaces and technologies, the recommendations also try to find expansion opportunities for big Next Generation Libraries across the planning zones.

The Main Library serves as the “flagship” of the Library network. For those who use multiple libraries, Main is the most frequently visited additional library location.

The planning zones are also a tool to ensure equitable access to specialized resources such as larger meeting rooms, maker spaces, technology training, and convenient hours.

Planning zones map showing need to increase branch areas, particularly in the West and Central North zones.

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FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS



*Community Listening Session at the
Forest Park Branch*

FACILITY IMPROVEMENT NEEDS

Multiple improvement options were identified for each branch location and considered in the context of their planning zones and project goals. Two day-long summits with senior Library leadership and branch managers were held to evaluate these options.

The improvements were organized into the following design project categories.

BRANCH LIBRARY DESIGN PROJECT OPTIONS

- **Makeovers.** For branches that either have well-functioning building systems, or are in buildings that should be replaced or relocated sometime in the next 20 years, a more limited interior makeover is proposed that provides a low-cost but high-impact upgrade to interior finishes and furniture.
- **Renovations.** For buildings that still have significant practical, economic, or cultural value, renovations are proposed. These renovations include key capital maintenance as part of the proposed scope, and typically range from selective renewals of existing infrastructure to



Big Next Generation Library expansion potential. Purple circles are renovations and additions, red circles are possible replacements or relocations with new construction that have the potential to get to a minimum of 20,000 SF. Three to four locations are proposed as Next Generation Libraries as part of the 10-year recommendations.

major rehabilitation. For many of these projects, if there is space on site, an addition may also be proposed.

- **Replacements or Relocations.** In each planning zone, all branch locations were evaluated to identify opportunities to enlarge one or more branch locations to achieve a large Next Generation branch type of a minimum 20,000 square feet. In the event an undersized branch was well-located with adequate capacity, a replacement was recommended; others considered “landlocked” were identified for relocation. Community leaders and other community members and stakeholders offered suggestions of potential sites, and the Library will be actively looking to find sites that meet the identified selection criteria.

Service Model Improvements. In each of the categories above, library interiors will be upgraded to reflect a next generation customer experience. This includes easy wayfinding, accessible staff service points, comfortable and varied seating and work spaces, and acoustical zoning of quiet and active spaces. Technology will be improved to support library-provided and customer-provided devices including fast connectivity, wired, and wireless, and ample power, ideally at every seat. Library services will continue to evolve with societal, technological, and industry changes, and library improvement projects will make investments in flexibility and adaptability, such as wheeled furniture and retractable walls, that will maximize the utilization of spaces across the different daily use patterns in the library’s schedule. More extensive description of space requirements will be developed in building programs which will be an early implementation phase task.

Accessibility Improvements. All new work done as part of the Building the Next Generation Library program will be done, wherever possible to the highest standards of accessibility and universal design. The 10-year priority projects will correct accessibility deficiencies at each of the three locations that are not at all accessible and at several others that present lesser accessibility challenges. Any remaining accessibility issues will be addressed when future funding is obtained and those libraries undergo more extensive design or capital maintenance projects.

Cultural Resource Projects. The 10-year priority project list includes renovations and some additions to a few buildings with distinctive or culturally valued architecture, including

Price Hill and Walnut Hills libraries. These upgrades will install modern safety, accessibility, and environmental systems, while balancing, preserving, and restoring key character-defining features where possible, and providing contemporary functionality.

MAIN LIBRARY DESIGN PROJECT OPTIONS

Susan Kent, former director of major urban public libraries in New York, Minneapolis, and Los Angeles that all have major main libraries, engaged the advisory committees on the many opportunities and trends in contemporary main library construction. She showcased new libraries in Calgary and Halifax that have iconic architecture, dynamic interiors, and a wide range of programs and services that are actively engaged with city life. David Schnee, one of the designers of the Dayton Main Library, spoke about the transformations possible through major preconception and renovations. Boston, Columbus, and Cleveland are among a growing list of cities making sizeable investments in the renewal of their venerable main libraries.

MAIN LIBRARY EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENT OPTIONS

Vine Street Plaza Redevelopment. In 2016, FRCH Architects prepared a conceptual study for the reconstruction of the Vine Street entry plaza. Group 4 prepared complementary concepts for a more significant architectural rebranding of the south building to address safety concerns, create a more welcoming and family friendly space, enhance the building's curb appeal, and increase visibility from the Library to the street.

Walnut Street Frontage Development. The Walnut Street frontage of the South Building presents a significant development opportunity. The existing surface staff parking lot could be the site for a small multi-level parking structure. If the library entry plaza is included in the project a block-long development could provide much more parking and opportunities for new library spaces, such as 250- to 350-person capacity library multi-purpose room and/or auditorium which was identified by many stakeholders as a current deficiency. Further, as evidenced by the new Court and Walnut development a couple of blocks away that placed housing above parking above a Kroger's market, the library's Walnut Street frontage could be a higher-density mixed-use development. In many of these options, some modifications will likely be needed to the eastern edge of the



Vine Street Plaza improvement concepts



Walnut Street parking garage concepts



Halifax Central Library, Halivax, Nova Scotia



Calgary Central Library, Calgary, Alberta



San Francisco Public Library atrium staircase



Dayton Main Library, Dayton, Ohio

library, as well as the possibility of relocating one of the Main Library entries back to its previous orientation on 8th Street. A variety of project funding structures could be explored, such as a public-private partnership or land lease, either of which could provide funding for any library construction as well as ongoing revenue.

MAIN LIBRARY INTERIOR IMPROVEMENT OPTIONS

In 2007, the Main Library underwent a successful reorganization that changed the interior to a 21st century service model. Main Library open houses, Community Listening Session, and staff workshops identified many challenges with the current organization and opportunities to again improve the customer experience. Priorities included:

- Rethink the size, offerings, and location of the popular library and children's library (and consider locating them in the same building);
- Continue making improvements to the South Building atrium to support some of the more successful pop-up services tested in 2018;
- Improve the locations and types of spaces providing technology;
- Acoustically improve the varied spaces enjoyed for recreational, social, collaborative, and individual work;
- Improve wayfinding and options for traveling between floors;
- Improve sightlines for better functionality and security.

A major renovation of the Main Library could easily approach \$100 million, and knowing the magnitude of need in the branches, more modest renovation options were identified. There is approximately ~175,000 SF of publicly-accessible space located on Floors 1, 2, and 3, and multiple options for different levels of renovation and extents of such work were proposed. Other options to recapture some space along the atrium, on the non-public Floors C and D, were also considered. These spaces could be considered for use by community partners that share some of the same customer base as the library. These projects could also be potentials for new revenue.

A top priority identified improving wayfinding and vertical circulation. Conceptual options were prepared illustrating how a new visible and generously-sized staircase connecting

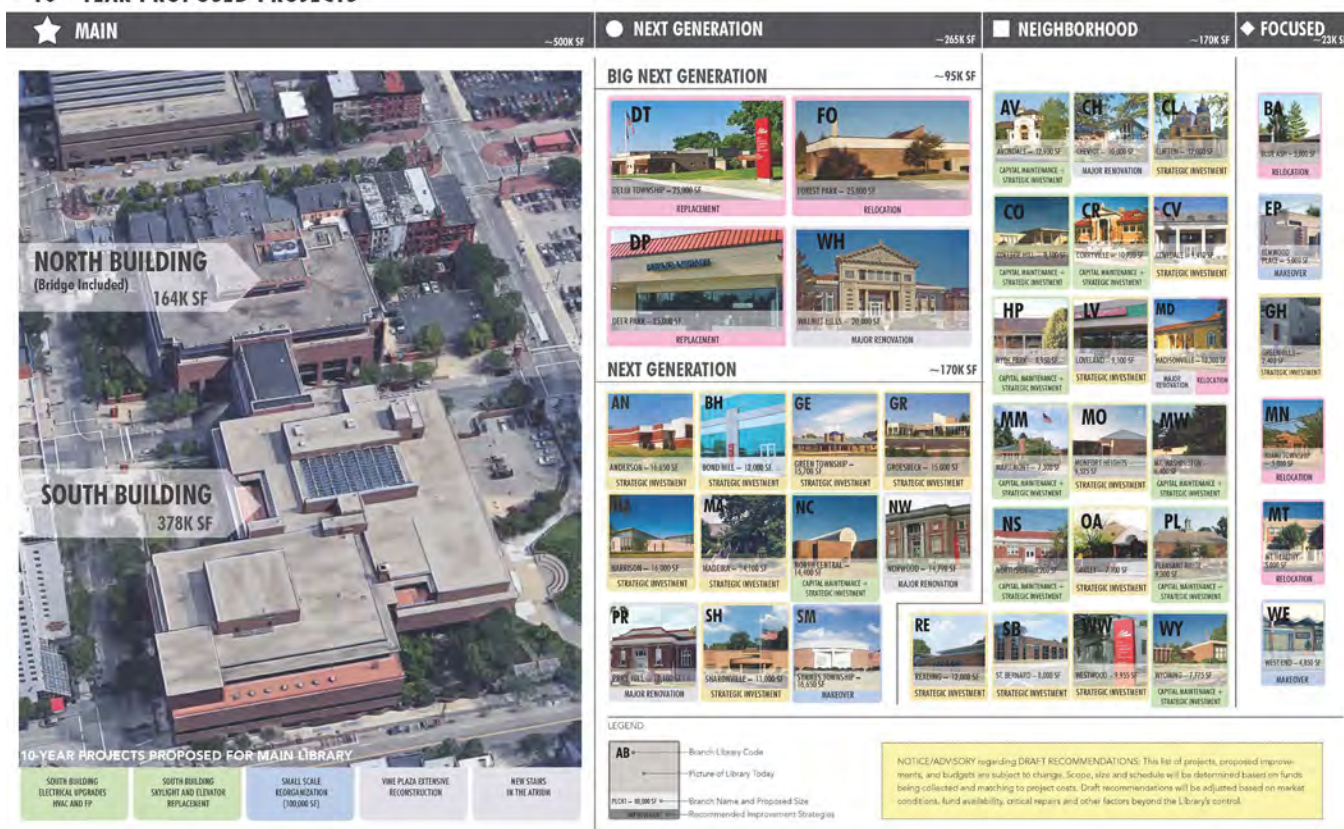
the public levels could greatly improve access and reduce some of the load on the elevators. The elevators will also undergo improvements. See Part II for more information.

ESTIMATED COSTS

Preliminary project budgets were prepared for the full range of project improvement options identified in the branch planning summit. These budgets used a rough order of magnitude methodology for four levels of construction intensity: makeover, moderate renovation and/or small addition, extensive renovation and/or larger addition, and replacement and/or relocation.

From this methodology, the total magnitude of the Library's comprehensive capital facility need was estimated to require funding between \$300 million and \$350 million in today's dollars.

10 - YEAR PROPOSED PROJECTS



TEN-YEAR LIBRARY IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Both the Community Advisory Committee and Staff Advisory Team participated in workshops that explored which recommendations were optimal to meet the project vision and that could be realized utilizing the 10-year funding. The input gathered in the Community Listening Sessions was considered and the consultants and Project Management Team reviewed multiple scenarios including presenting draft preliminary recommendations in a public forum to the Board of Trustees.

The criteria used to identify the 10-year projects included:

- Improve equitable access
 - » Address accessibility issues wherever possible
 - » Distribute geographically
 - » Consider area economic needs and availability of public transportation
- Physical Needs
 - » Age, condition of buildings
 - » Configuration to support the needs of today's customers
- Maximize opportunities for Next Generation service improvements
 - » From small and impactful to large destinations
- Feasibility to improve

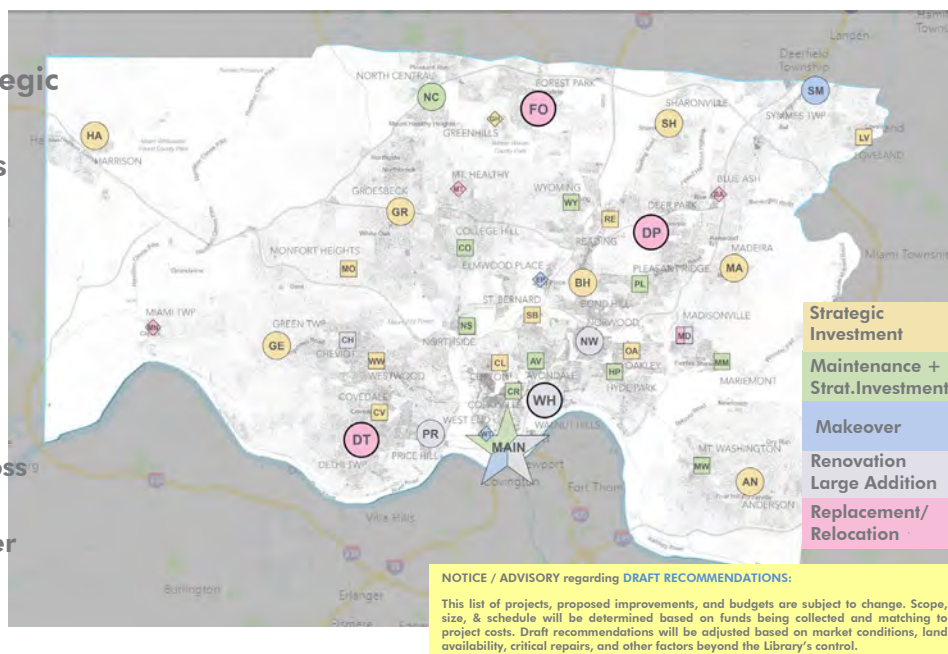
Prerequisite criteria included:

- Sustainable operations
 - » Maximize service delivery, responsive to community needs
 - » Not focusing on consolidations in initial phase

14 Design Projects
 5 Main Projects
 10 Maintenance + Strategic
 Investment Projects
 16 Strategic Investments

Equity measures

- Distributed projects across geography
- 8 of 14 areas with higher poverty rates included
- 7 accessibility projects



In addition to the categories of design projects listed above, the following investment categories were also integrated into the planning and project budgeting:

- **Capital Maintenance Projects.** Where there are identified capital maintenance needs, but a design project of the types described above is not identified as a near-term project, these locations will get much-needed repairs.
- **Strategic Investments.** A portion of Issue 3 funds are being reserved to fund lower-cost strategic investments. These could be special pieces of furniture, some new technology, a site improvement, or other small but high-impact purchase. One-fifth of the branches were constructed or underwent a significant renovation within the last 15 years, and generally all of these will provide many more years of continued service. For those locations identified to receive only a capital maintenance project, and for other locations that are not identified to receive a design project in the next ten years, a Strategic Investment is proposed. The Library will be developing a separate process for Strategic Investment branches, incorporating community and staff input to efficiently identify and deliver these investments.

Five Main Library projects were identified in the 10-year plan:

- The recently completed Main Library HVAC upgrades funded through Issue 3.
- South Building elevator upgrades and atrium skylight repair.
- A light makeover/interior reorganization of up to 100,000 SF of public space. This may include meeting and study spaces, paint and finishes, new furniture, and signage, but is not comprehensive in its scope.
- Extensive reconstruction of the Vine Street plaza, including the demolition of the raised plaza, and reengineering of the Level B below it and reconfiguration of the western building entry.
- The construction of a new staircase in the atrium to provide a convenient and intuitive alternative to the elevators.

The Walnut Street garage and mixed-use development is a future possibility and could be envisioned as a public private partnership that will utilize private funding with the intention of generating needed parking and meeting spaces as well as being a source of revenue for the library.

PART III IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

A total of \$98 million is projected to be available in the first five years, and the plan identifies the initial projects anticipated to launch through 2023.

UPDATED 12/08/2019

Planning Zone and Library		Existing Usable Square Feet	Effective Age* in 2020	10 - YEAR RECOMMENDATIONS		Proposed Square Feet
				Strategy - Option A	Strategy - Option B	
Central Planning Zone		ADI Population : 145,000				
Branches						
AV	Avondale	9,896 SF	6 yrs	Waterproofing + Strategic Investment		9,900 SF
CL	Clifton	8,189 SF	5 yrs	Strategic Investment		8,190 SF
CR	Corryville	9,839 SF	23 yrs	Roof Repairing + Strategic Investment		9,900 SF
NS	Northside	5,778 SF	21 yrs	Exterior Tuckpointing + Interior Painting + Strategic Investment		5,800 SF
NW	Norwood	10,237 SF	20 yrs	3rd Floor Renovation, Expansion, Accessibility		13,300 - 16,300 SF
SB	St. Bernard	7,145 SF	5 yrs	Strategic Investment		7,150 SF
WH	Walnut Hills	10,624 SF	114 yrs	Major Renovation, Expansion, Accessibility		18,000-22,000 SF
WT	West End	4,549 SF	59 yrs	Makeover		4,600 SF
Main						
North& South Building			12 yrs	South Building Electrical Upgrade, HVAC, FP		
South Building			12 yrs	South Building Skylight, Elevator Replacement		
North & South Building			12 yrs	Small Scale Reorganization (100,000 SF)		
Vine St. Plaza			22 yrs	Vine Plaza Extensive Reconstruction		
New Stairs in Atrium			22 yrs	New stairs in the Atrium		
Central North Planning Zone		ADI Population : 190,000				
CO	College Hill	7,187 SF	54 yrs	HVAC, Electr. Upgrade + Strategic Investment		7,200 SF
EP	Elmwood Place	1,429 SF	44 yrs	Makeover		1,500 SF
FO	Forest Park	9,620 SF	51 yrs	Relocation with New,Expansion, Accessibility		22,500-27,500 SF
GH	Greenhills	2,325 SF	4 yrs	Strategic Investment		2,330 SF
GR	Groesbeck	14,388 SF	21 yrs	Strategic Investment		14,390 SF
MT	Mt. Healthy	4,621 SF	19 yrs	Relocation with New, Accessibility		4,500-5,500 SF
NC	North Central	14,447 SF	29 yrs	HVAC + Strategic Investment		14,500 SF
WY	Wyoming	6,339 SF	61 yrs	HVAC,Electrical Upgrade + Strategic Investment		6,400 SF
North East Planning Zone		ADI Population : 160,000				
BA	Blue Ash	12,114 SF	32 yrs	Relocation to Summit		4,500-5,500 SF
BH	Bond Hill	12,903 SF	13 yrs	Strategic Investment		12,910 SF
DP	Deer Park	4,014 SF	22 yrs	Replacement with New, Expansion		22,500-27,500 SF
LV	Loveland	8,989 SF	4 yrs	Strategic Investment		8,990 SF
MA	Madeira	14,597 SF	27 yrs	Strategic Investment		14,600 SF
PL	Pleasant Ridge	8,846 SF	1 yrs	Exterior Tuckpointing, Interior Painting + Strategic Investment		8,850 SF
RE	Reading	10,935 SF	5 yrs	Strategic Investment		10,940 SF
SH	Sharonville	12,527 SF	28 yrs	Strategic Investment		12,530 SF
SM	Symmes Township	14,956 SF	30 yrs	Makeover + Parking Expansion		14,960 SF
South East Planning Zone		ADI Population : 110,000				
AN	Anderson	16,092 SF	22 yrs	Strategic Investment		16,100 SF
HP	Hyde Park	7,477 SF	23 yrs	Elevator Replacements + Strategic Investment		7,480 SF
MD	Madisonville	8,615 SF	6 yrs	Major Renovation , Accessibility Relocation with New		8,620 SF
MM	Mariemont	6,611 SF	5 yrs	HVAC, Electr. Upgrade + Strategic Investment		6,620 SF
MW	Mt. Washington	5,949 SF	21 yrs	HVAC, Electr. Upgrade + Strategic Investment		5,950 SF
OA	Oakley	6,307 SF	5 yrs	Strategic Investment		6,310 SF
West Planning Zone		ADI Population : 215,000				
CH	Cheviot	5,674 SF	58 yrs	Major Renovation, Accessibility, Expansion		9,000-11,000 SF
CV	Covedale	7,543 SF	22 yrs	Strategic Investment		7,550 SF
DT	Delhi Township	13,840 SF	21 yrs	Replacement with New, Expansion		22,500-27,500 SF
GE	Green Township	14,141 SF	30 yrs	Strategic Investment		14,150 SF
HA	Harrison	15,690 SF	19 yrs	Strategic Investment		15,690 SF
MN	Miami Township	2,587 SF	37 yrs	Relocation with New, Expansion		4,500-5,500 SF
MO	Monfort Heights	9,619 SF	49 yrs	Strategic Investment		9,620 SF
PR	Price Hill	5,266 SF	111 yrs	Major Renovation, Accessibility, Expansion		12,100 SF
WW	Westwood	9,603 SF	18 yrs	Strategic Investment		9,610 SF

*Effective Age : years since last repair or renovation.

NOTICE / ADVISORY regarding DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS: This list of projects, proposed improvements, and budgets are subject to change. Scope, size and schedule will be determined based on funds being collected and matching to project costs. Draft recommendations will be adjusted based on market conditions, fund availability, critical repairs and other factors beyond the Library's control.



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