OLATHE
KANSAS

OlathePublicLibrary
your hometown library

Olathe Public Library
Master Plan

Final Report 2012-12-12

GROUP 4

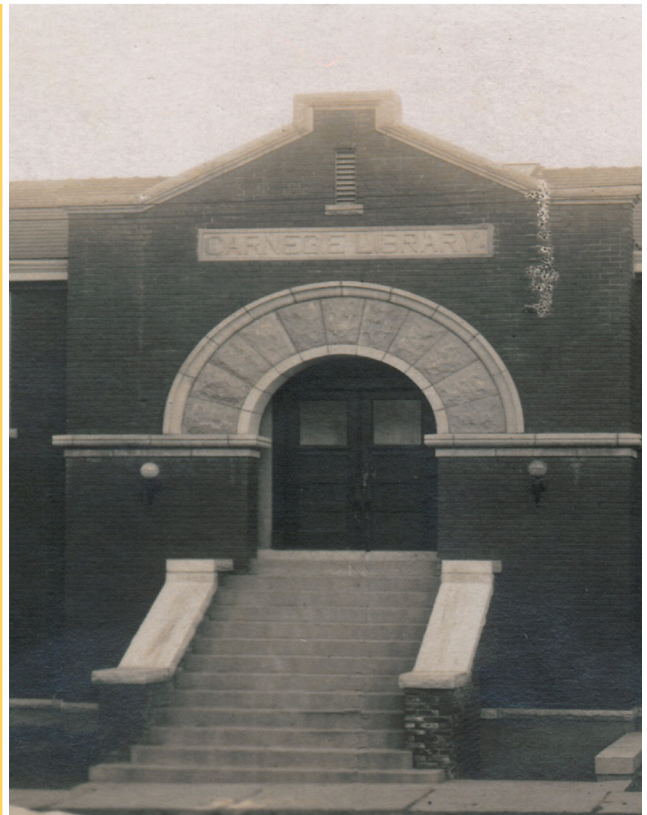**GROUP 4**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Olathe Downtown Main Library

Olathe Indian Creek Library

TABLE OF CONTENTS

December 18, 2012

Honorable Mayor Michael E. Copeland
Olathe City Council Members
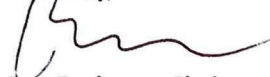P.O. Box 768
Olathe, KS 66051-0768

Mr. Mayor & Members of the City Council,

The Olathe Public Library Joint Task Force has worked in tandem with Group 4 Architecture, Research + Planning, Inc. since June of this year to present a new vision for the provision of library services in Olathe. This vision is articulated in the Master Plan being presented to the City Council this evening. The Master Plan identifies what Olathe needs to provide the best library services at the most economical costs for Olathe residents.

The process to develop this Master Plan has been a truly rewarding experience for each member of the Task Force as well as the staff members appointed to serve the Joint Task Force. The Joint Task Force is indebted to Group 4 and all members of the consultant team for their diligence in researching, listening, and provoking thought over the last seven months.

It is with great pleasure that the members of the Olathe Public Library Joint Task Force express their endorsement and support of this Master Plan.
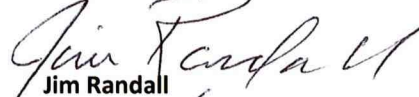
Sincerely,

Ron Ryckman, Chair
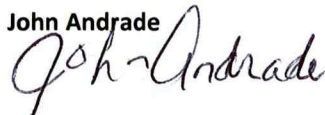
Dana Lambert, Vice Chair

Jim Randall

Jack Hansen

John Andrade

Sara Nelson

Larry Campbell

Emily Baker, Library Director

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PROJECT BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

For more than a century, the Olathe Public Library (OPL) has played a vital role in the civic, cultural, educational, and economic life of Olathe – the fastest-growing community in Kansas. As Olathe's population has grown in both size and diversity over time, the Library has strived to meet the community's needs by providing an increasingly broad array of services, materials, and technology in-house as well as through cooperative agreements with partner agencies such as the neighboring Johnson County Library and the State Library of Kansas.

Despite worries by some that the Internet and increasing use of personal technologies would make libraries irrelevant, today the Olathe Public Library is busier than ever. The Library serves Olathe's more than 127,000 residents through two facilities, the 24,000 square foot Main Library and the 12,000 square foot Indian Creek Branch. For customer convenience, the Library has established supplemental materials return stations in other areas of the city.

In 2012, the City of Olathe and the Olathe Public Library initiated a library master plan to answer the question: **What do we need to provide the best library services for Olathe residents at the most economical cost?** The City commissioned a consultant team led by Group 4 Architecture, Research + Planning (Group 4), a firm with experience helping libraries nationwide develop sustainable service and facility plans. Joining Group 4 was leading library futurist Joan Frye Williams, who provided powerful insights about service trends and best practices, and Kansas City-based SFS Architecture, who provided meeting and facilitation support.

The City appointed a Library Joint Task Force (JTF) as the primary oversight committee for the Master Plan, composed of City Council representatives, Library Board members, and community residents. During the planning process with Group 4, the JTF and selected Library and City staff ex-officio members convened for three consultant-led workshops to review project progress at key milestones: service and facility assessments; library system design; and recommendations.

What do we need to provide the best library services for Olathe residents at the most economical cost?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LIBRARY VISION

The process to develop this Master Plan began with establishing a vision for the future of library services in Olathe. At the heart of this process was a day-long Strategic Vision Workshop at the K-State Olathe Campus in which City, Library, and community leaders developed visionary thinking and ideas about the future. Workshop participants developed a vision for OPL that emphasizes:

• **Service** — The library will be a vibrant destination and community gathering place that encourages active learning, civic engagement, and a strong sense of Olathe as a place.

• **Technology** — The library will provide equipment and coaching to ensure that all Olatheans can take advantage of the vital informational, educational, economic, and communications opportunities afforded by our networked world. The library will also leverage technology to achieve cost-effective operations.

• **Partnerships** — Strong partnerships with other local and international agencies, both public and private, will increase service to library customers while improving operational efficiency.

• **Value** — The library will continually seek innovative ways of doing business in order to provide modern services that are prudently managed, fiscally sustainable, and conveniently available citywide.

The vision established at the workshop reflects and reemphasizes many of OPL's core service principles, including:

• Developing early childhood literacy in Olathe's diverse community;

• Providing materials and services to ensure school success;

• Offering space and resources to support small businesses and entrepreneurs;

• Providing a "third place" for the community to gather; and

• Encouraging and supporting lifelong learning.

SERVICE AND FACILITY ASSESSMENTS

Information gathering and analysis included review of City- and Library-supplied documents and data, library site visits and observation, and review of trends and best practices used by libraries in comparable communities. New data sources included GIS maps of library circulation, computer use, and material returns data. The City conducted additional analysis of the data collected in 2011 by Olathe-based opinion research firm ETC Institute for the City's annual Olathe DirectionFinder citizen survey.

Assessment findings include:

- Despite budget-driven reductions in staff and hours of operation, library use continues to increase in Olathe, and staff continue to provide a high level of service.

- Both of Olathe's libraries have been well maintained and are generally in good condition. At both locations there are design opportunities to improve the customer experience as well as to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of staff in providing service.

- Customer mapping confirmed that both the downtown Main and the Indian Creek locations are significant destination libraries that draw customers from all across Olathe and that there are no geographic barriers to service.

In general, the Library is highly valued and well used by the community. It is well positioned to achieve positive results through facility enhancements and continue to contribute to the high quality of life in Olathe.

Both of Olathe's libraries are highly valued and well used by community members throughout the city.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CUSTOMER MAPPING

The home addresses of customers who checked out materials from the Downtown Main Library (above) and Indian Creek Branch (below) in April 2012 were plotted on a map of Olathe. The maps show that citizens throughout Olathe can — and do — use both libraries, and that there are no geographic barriers preventing access to library services.
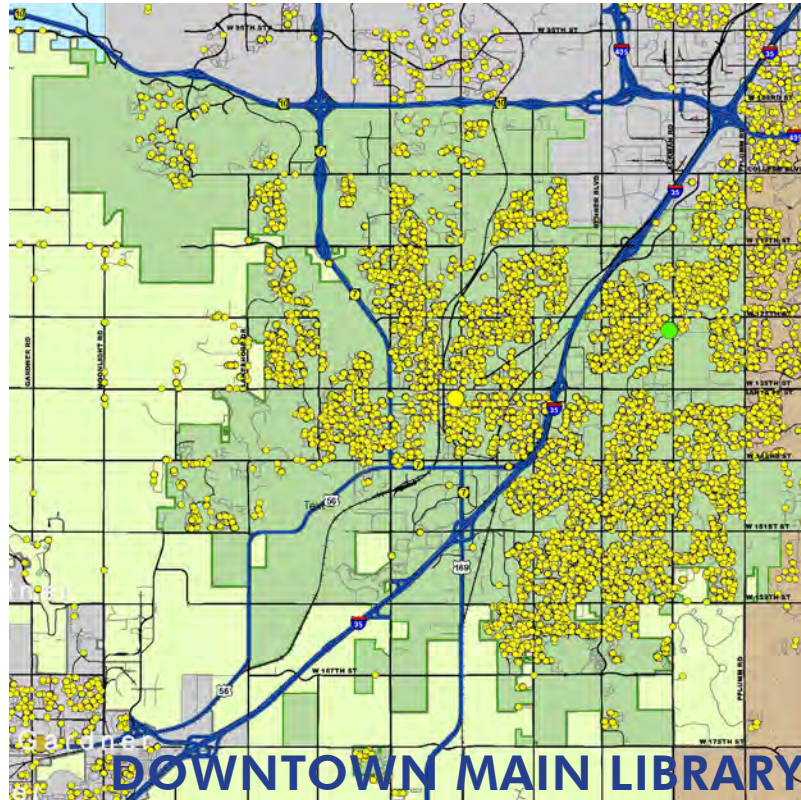
Material checkouts, April 2012: Downtown Library (above); Indian Creek (below)
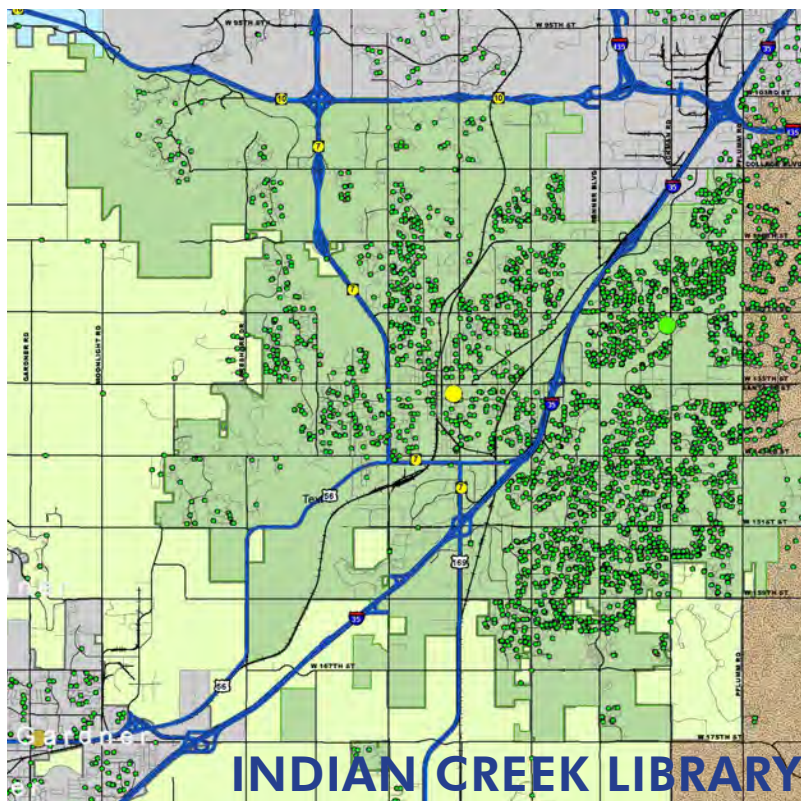
RECOMMENDATIONS

After more than a century of service, the Library is looking toward a bright future, continuing to provide high-quality and relevant services to the vibrant Olathe community. The recommendations of this Master Plan embrace the Library's future vision of its service priorities and role in the community.

This Master Plan developed a new set of planning principles and assumptions upon which Olathe's long-term library facility recommendations are built. It is recommended that Olathe explore ways to provide larger "destination" libraries that have sufficient space and resources to attract people from throughout Olathe – a system model that is, in fact, already in place and successful, according to the analysis of current customer use patterns. To reflect this shift away from the former "main and branches" system model, it is recommended that the Main Library be renamed. The remainder of this report will refer to this library as the "Downtown Library."

As there is no geographic need to provide additional libraries, this Master Plan eliminates the previously proposed new branches in northwest and southeast Olathe, and recommends that the Library maintain staffed locations only at Downtown and Indian Creek. However, the City and OPL should continue to evaluate opportunities to supplement service through unstaffed means, such as a "kiosk" located strategically within the offices of one or more business partners in the community, or included in Olathe's forthcoming community center, which is currently under construction.
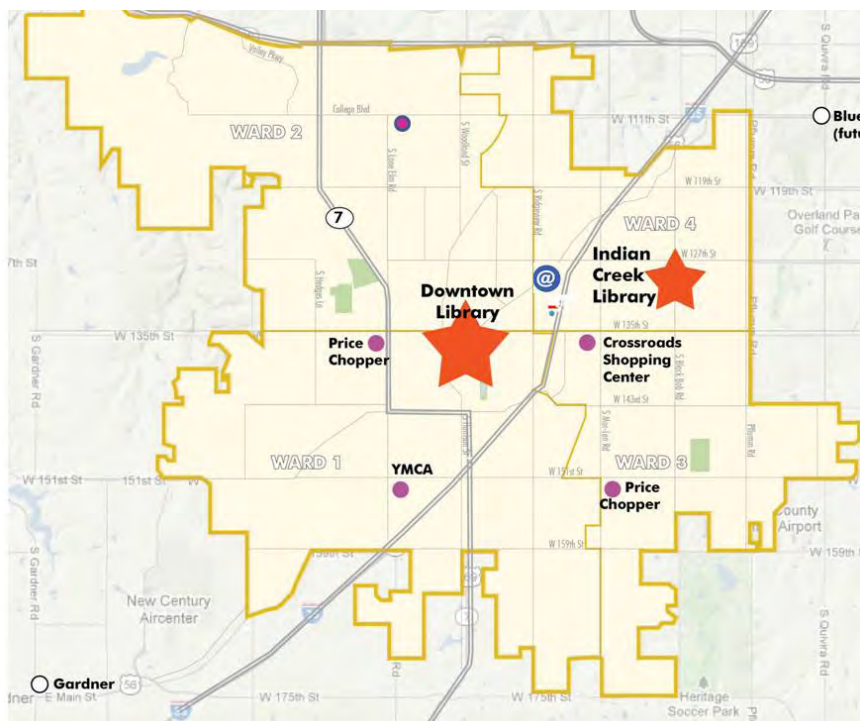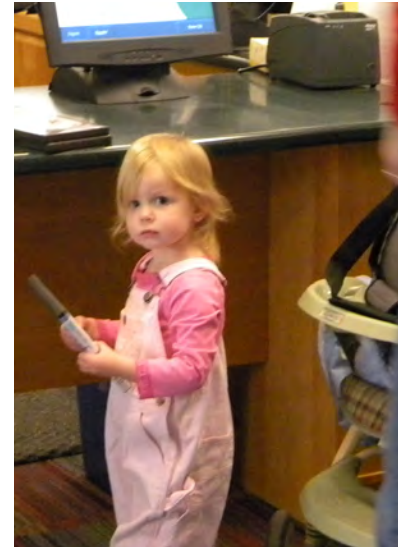
SYSTEM STRATEGY

Destination Libraries

- The Library's current Downtown and Indian Creek library locations serve the community well

- Recommendation: maintain full-service destination libraries in these two locations

- No staffed libraries are needed in other areas of the city

@ Unstaffed kiosks may be implemented based on opportunity and operational feasibility – e.g., kiosk at new community center

> ## LIBRARY SPACE PLANNING
>
> - OPL at 0.35 SF/capita today
> - Neighboring libraries planning for 0.65-0.76 SF/capita
>   - 0.65 Mid-Continent Public Library
>   - 0.70 Johnson County Library *(does not include Olathe population or libraries)*
>   - 0.75 Kansas City, Kansas Public Library
>   - 0.76 Lawrence PL *(after library expansion)*
> - *Previous OPL MP recommendation = 0.8 SF/capita*
> - *What is the right level for OPL moving forward?*

Review of relevant library trends and best practices, the development of new planning principles, and the recommended system model of destination libraries for Olathe facilitated a downward adjustment of the planning target for the amount of library space needed to serve Olathe's population. This Master Plan recommends a new target of 0.5 to 0.6 square feet of library space per capita, divided between downtown Olathe and Indian Creek. Based on the projected population of approximately 155,000 Olathe residents by 2025, this results in a recommendation for a total of approximately 70,000 to 95,000 square feet of library space to meet community needs. For comparison, other libraries in the Kansas City Metro area have set targets of 0.65 to 0.76 square feet per capita based on their respective communities' vision and needs, and are moving forward with their plans to add more library space as resources become available.

Specific facility recommendations for Olathe include:

- Expand the Main/Downtown Library from its current 24,000 square feet to approximately 40,000-55,000 square feet, through either renovation/expansion or reconstruction.

- Expand the Indian Creek Library from 12,000 square feet to approximately 30,000-40,000 square feet. The current site and adjacent City-owned parcel offer sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed increase in size, and the current building was designed with expansion in mind.

	TODAY	2025
Downtown Library	24,000 square feet	40,000-55,000 square feet
Indian Creek Library	12,000 square feet	30,000-40,000 square feet
Total	36,000 square feet	70,000-95,000 square feet
	~0.35 sf/capita	0.5-0.6 sf/capita

SERVICE LEVELS

Added library space will address both the current space deficit and the needs of Olathe's population as it grows
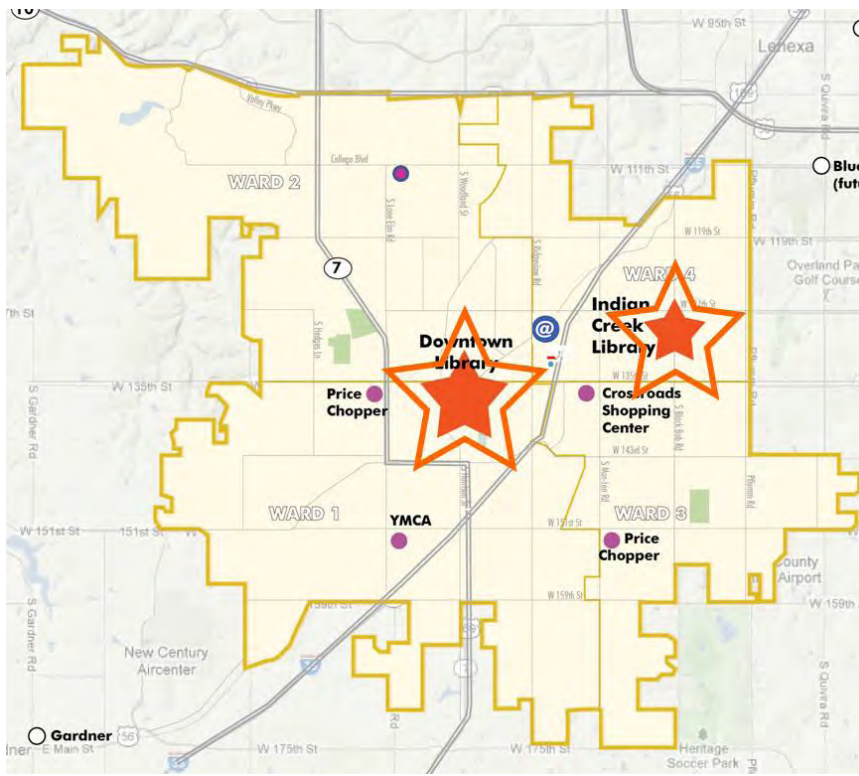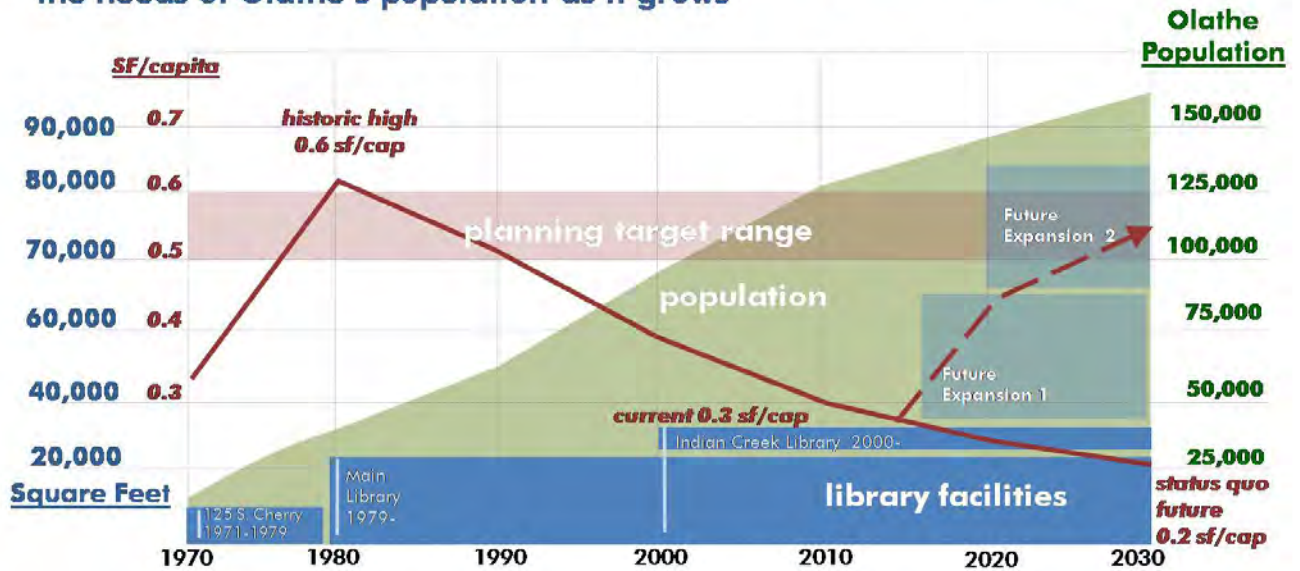
Library Space

- The recommended system strategy will allow the Library to provide service in less space than was previously planned

- Recommendation: new planning target range **0.5-0.6 square feet/capita**

- Approximately **70,000-95,000 SF** are needed to address current deficit + accommodate future population growth (2025 projection)

- Includes centralized space needs for a two location system

- Distribute additional capacity between downtown and Indian Creek
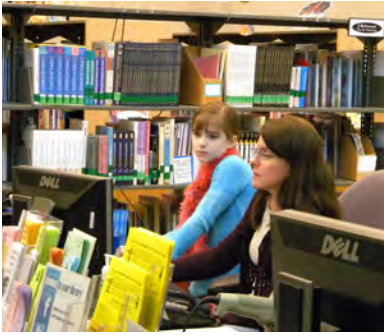
NEXT STEPS

The Library's and the City's commitment to service excellence and proactive outreach will be strong assets in the development of creative partnerships for both service and funding as well as in the implementation of the facility recommendations.

Further study will be required to refine the size, program, design, and budget for the proposed expansions, as well as to determine the appropriate location for the expanded Downtown Library. Careful design of both facilities will support efficiency in operations in order to minimize the need for additional staff and avoid increased utility costs.

Recognizing that resources to implement the recommendations may not be immediately available, the City and the Library may wish to evaluate cost-effective opportunities to supplement library service in the interim. Possible strategies include selective minor facility remodels to improve service; securing temporary space near the Downtown Library for additional public service and/or staff back-of-house functions; and developing unstaffed library "kiosks" in partner locations.

With competing pressures for more and better service and tightening financial resources, OPL must aggressively evaluate how it does business and refine how it delivers service. An earlier model by which public libraries responded to increased costs and/or reduced funding was to cut open hours — a strategy often met by public outcry. In this era, smaller budgets are the "new normal" and public services must be delivered and managed differently. Services need to be reevaluated and prioritized. Service delivery methods need to be streamlined. Existing and new technologies and partnerships need to be leveraged to the greatest extent possible. There are now many examples of other library systems that have changed their service models to maintain (or even increase) open hours and operate greatly expanded facilities within existing or reduced budgets. An extensive and ongoing process of operational assessment and refinement will be necessary in order for OPL to capitalize on the opportunities discussed in this Master Plan.

ABOUT OLATHE

Olathe is located approximately 20 miles southwest of downtown Kansas City. The city grew rapidly over the past half century, with its population increasing more than tenfold since 1960. In 2010, the US Census reported that Olathe's population was approximately 125,872, with increased diversity in ethnicity since the 2000 Census as well as a slight increase in the average age. Today, it is the second largest city in Johnson County, the fourth largest city in the Kansas City metropolitan area, and the fifth largest city in Kansas.
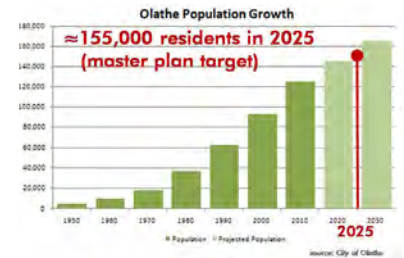
Although the City is projecting slower growth than was predicted in the 2000s, it projects that its population will increase to approximately 155,000 by 2025 (the target planning year for this Master Plan) and more than 166,000 by the year 2030. Future annexation is also planned to increase Olathe's land area by about 50%, from its current 60.5 square miles to 90 square miles. In 2010, the City adopted a strong Comprehensive Plan which serves as a guide for both the City's current land area and future growth areas. The Comprehensive Plan emphasizes a high quality of life through strategies such as higher density, preservation of green space, and increased connectivity, all of which can be enhanced by executing a 21st century vision for the provision of library services in Olathe.

Olathe Population Growth
≈155,000 residents in 2025 (master plan target)

US Census	Olathe	Johnson County	State of Kansas
Race			
White	83.1%	88.2%	83.8%
Black/African-American	5.3%	4.7%	5.9%
Asian	4.1%	4.3%	2.4%
Other	7.5%	2.8%	7.9%
Hispanic/Latino	10.2%	7.3%	10.5%
Population Characteristics			
% population growth since 2000	35.4%	20.5%	6.1%
% other language spoken at home	13.5%	10.9%	10.5%
% high school graduates (age 25+)	94.0%	95.6%	89.2%
% college degree (bachelor/higher)	45.0%	51.5%	29.3%
Median household income	$75,228	$71,513	$49,424
% below poverty level	5.9%	5.5%	12.4%

Olathe is growing more diverse

- Black and Asian populations both doubled as a percent of overall residents since 2000

- Hispanic/ Latino population increased more than 150% since 2000

- 13.5% of residents speak a language other than English at home

INTRODUCTION

HISTORY OF THE OLATHE PUBLIC LIBRARY

After 20 years as a volunteer organization operated by the Ladies Reading Circle, in 1909 the City of Olathe formally established the Olathe Public Library with a Board of Directors and its own mill levy. Soon thereafter Andrew Carnegie agreed to donate $10,000 toward the construction of a new library building. The new library opened in 1914 on a site on North Chestnut donated by the City, and served the community for more than 50 years.

By the 1960s it was clear that a larger building was needed to serve the growing population of Olathe. In 1971, the Library sold the Carnegie building and moved into the former Patrons Bank building on South Cherry Street. However, although the Patrons Bank building had been expected to meet community needs for at least a decade, within only a few years the rapidly growing population of Olathe led the Library Board to start thinking again about expansion. In 1977 voters approved a $1.6 million bond measure to construct a new 24,000 square foot library on East Park Street. The new Main Library opened in 1979, and continues to serve the Olathe community to this day.

In the early 1990s, the Library began to look at ways to expand service to the growing community east of I-35. A plan was developed to lease space for a new branch library in east Olathe, but in 1994 the voters rejected a proposed mill levy increase that would have financed the plan. Determined to find a way, the Library developed a plan for a new branch library to be built on land donated by the City. In 1997, voters approved a $1.6 million bond measure to fund construction of the new library. The 12,000 square foot first phase of the Indian Creek Branch opened to the public in 2000. The planned second phase, which would add another 12,000 square feet, has not yet been implemented.

Olathe's Carnegie Library served the community for more than 50 years, from 1914 to 1971.

Olathe's Carnegie Library — 1914-1971

Rapid population growth in the 1990s and 2000s also led the Library to look at ways to expand access to library services throughout Olathe. The Library developed a long-range plan for facilities known as the "Four Corners Plan" which proposed to improve the Main Library and add two more library branches. A mill levy increase to fund construction was put before voters in 2004 but was narrowly defeated by fewer than 900 votes.

In 2008, the Library commissioned a new 20 year master plan to guide services and facilities. The plan recommended that the Library expand its current space by more than triple over the next two decades, and more than double its staff in order to operate the expanded facilities. The plan maintained the "Four Corners" approach to providing library facilities in Olathe, proposing the relocation of the Main Library, expansion of the Indian Creek Branch, and development of two new branches in the northwest and southeast regions of the city.

Meanwhile, public entities throughout the country had begun to experience increasing budget challenges as a result of the local impacts of the global economic recession. Like many libraries throughout the United States, OPL faced the need to cut expenditures at the same time that community demand for library services was growing. OPL implemented some of the 2008 master plan recommendations to improve services and streamline operations, and made other strategic adjustments to services and hours of operations in order to balance its budget. But the feasibility of the 2008 master plan's recommended staffing increases diminished significantly in the face of the community's new fiscal reality.

In 2011, the Library proposed to City Council to use its capital reserves to build the originally-conceived expansion to the Indian Creek Library. However, the City Council was not ready to move forward with that project. Instead, the City Council appointed a Joint Task Force composed of City Council representatives, Library Board members, and community residents to reexamine the long-term plan for the Library and make recommendations to improve equity of access to library services for all Olathe residents.

Downtown Main Library

Indian Creek Branch

INTRODUCTION

MASTER PLAN PROJECT PURPOSE

At the recommendation of the Joint Task Force, the City commissioned a new visioning master plan to answer the following question:

What do we need to provide the best library services for Olathe residents at the most economical cost?

The purpose of this Master Plan was to re-define the vision of library service for Olathe residents; identify gaps in services and geographic access for the community; evaluate opportunities for enhanced, non-traditional services; and recommend solutions for services, facilities, and operations over the next two decades. Among the objectives for this plan were to analyze:

- the geographic and demographic equitability of service delivery in Olathe;
- library trends and best practices that could benefit the Olathe community;
- how to maximize the Library's role in enhancing community life, such as through lifelong learning, workforce development, and facilitating community connections;
- strategies for – and possible alternatives to – library facility expansion;
- the feasibility of locating new library facilities on current City- or Library-owned land;
- potential partnerships with public and private organizations to strengthen service delivery; and
- opportunities to leverage the City's resources to improve library facilities and services.

This Master Plan maintains and builds on other recent strategic and service planning work conducted by the City and OPL. This master plan process did not revisit the strategic, service, and technology priorities and plans developed over the past five years.

METHODOLOGY

The project was completed over a seven month period from June to December 2012. Information gathering included review of documents and information provided by the Library and the City, library site visits and observation, and the direct participation of community leaders as well as Library and City staff. General roles and responsibilities of participants in the planning process are described in this section. Individual participant names are listed separately in the Acknowledgments section of this report.

Key to the master plan process was a series of three workshops with the Library Joint Task Force. The Library Joint Task Force was the primary oversight committee for the Master Plan, from formation of a request for proposals through consultant selection and approval by the City Council, and finally through completion of the plan. During the planning process the JTF convened for three consultant-led workshops to review project progress at key milestones: service and facility assessments; library system design; and recommendations. Selected other Library and City staff participated in these workshops as ex-officio members.

Project management for the City and the Library was provided by Olathe's Deputy City Attorney and the Olathe Public Library Director, who met and corresponded with the consultant team regularly to review project progress and provide day-to-day project direction.

In addition to the Joint Task Force workshops, a special Strategic Vision Workshop was held at the K-State Olathe Campus in support of the Master Plan. City, Library, and community leaders participated in a day-long series of focused activities to develop ideas about the future and encourage visionary thinking. The vision and values that came out of the Strategic Vision Workshop helped confirm and shape the development of the Master Plan.
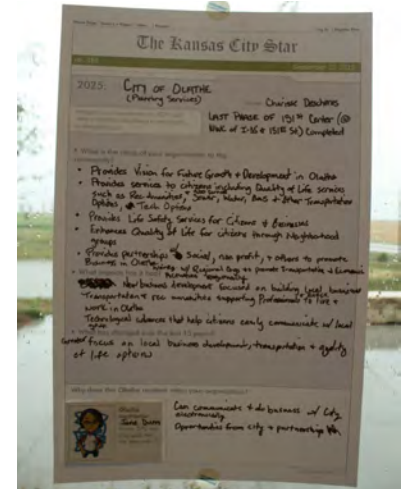
*Strategic Vision Workshop
vision exercise*
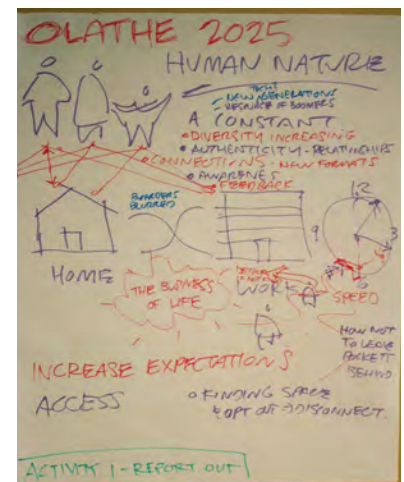
*Strategic Vision Workshop
facilitation sheet*

INTRODUCTION

The Olathe City Council and the Library Board, along with City and OPL staff, were kept informed during the course of the study through their respective liaisons on the Joint Task Force. The City Council provided ultimate oversight and approval of the Master Plan.

The prime planning consultant was Group 4 Architecture, Research + Planning, Inc., a firm that has developed library master plans for city, county, and library clients nationwide. Joining Group 4 as part of the consultant team was internationally recognized Library futurist Joan Frye Williams, who participated in strategic visioning and helped the Library identify and evaluate appropriate trends and best practices, and Kansas City-based SFS Architecture, who provided local event/meeting facilitation and support as well as input on the Olathe construction climate.
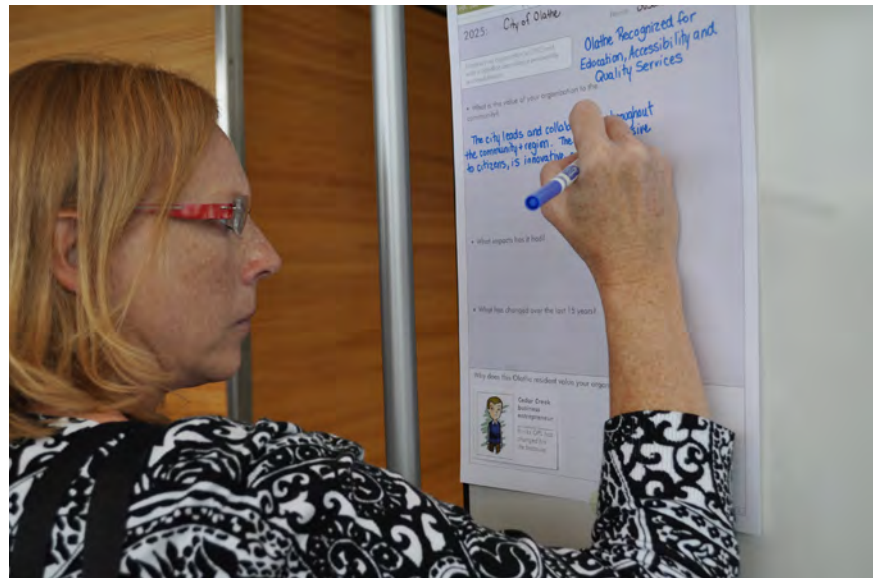
OLATHE PUBLIC LIBRARY – A NEW VISION

The Olathe Public Library has a long history of excellent service and high levels of customer satisfaction. However, OPL must change with the times if it is to remain a relevant resource for the community. Maintaining excellence in a changing environment will require continuous improvement and close attention to local priorities.

STRATEGIC VISION WORKSHOP

Imagine Olathe in 2025. Where do people live? How do they interact with one another? How do they learn? Where do they go for recreation, and for inspiration? How do they successfully navigate everyday life?

This was the challenge presented to participants in a Strategic Vision Workshop held in support of the master plan process. On September 13, 2012, more than 50 community leaders representing for-profit, not-for-profit, educational, religious, charitable, and governmental entities throughout Olathe gathered at K-State Olathe to envision how the Library could align its services and facilities planning to support the vision.

Mayor Michael Copeland kicked off the Workshop by welcoming the participants who had chosen to engage in the master plan process, and encouraging them to be visionary in their thinking and in their expectations for library services in Olathe. Joint Task Force Chair and City Councilmember Ron Ryckman followed up Mayor Copeland's remarks, challenging the group to get out of their comfort zones and think outside-of-the-box about what Olathe's libraries could be well into the future.

Group 4 Principal David Schnee then led the group through a series of focused activities to develop ideas about the future using backcasting, role-playing, and metaphors to encourage visionary thinking. Participants compared the Library to other community symbols and icons, and used the attributes of other well-regarded destinations, brands, and services to identify what residents want from their Library.

Library futurist Joan Frye Williams synthesized the comments throughout the program, linking the participants' ideas to examples of successes in other communities. Ms. Williams, Mr. Schnee, and Dr. Dan Richardson, CEO of K-State Olathe, challenged the group to incorporate emerging trends in technology, industry, communications, public spaces, and library facilities into their discussions.

LIBRARY VISION

The community representatives who participated in the Strategic Vision Workshop pointed the way towards a new way of looking at the role of libraries in Olathe and priorities for delivery of 21st century library services into the future. These suggested outcomes established the foundation for the recommendations of this Master Plan.

Service

The library will create a vibrant destination and gathering place for residents of all ages and backgrounds. Library programs and services will foster communications and connections between residents to encourage active learning, civic engagement, and a strong sense of Olathe as place. The library's primary product will be the customer experience, and residents will have options to personalize library services to reflect their own needs, interests, and contributions. All of this will take place in attractive and comfortable spaces, suitable for groups as well as individual use.

Technology

The library will continue to offer public access to Internet service and related new technology for the entire community. By providing mainstream equipment and software, broadband connections, and introductory training and coaching, the library will ensure that no resident will have to miss out on the vital informational, educational, economic, and communications opportunities afforded by a networked world. The library will also make use of technology tools to streamline its own processes for cost-effective operations, and will augment its collections with e-books and other new media to keep pace with residents' demand for materials in the full range of published formats.
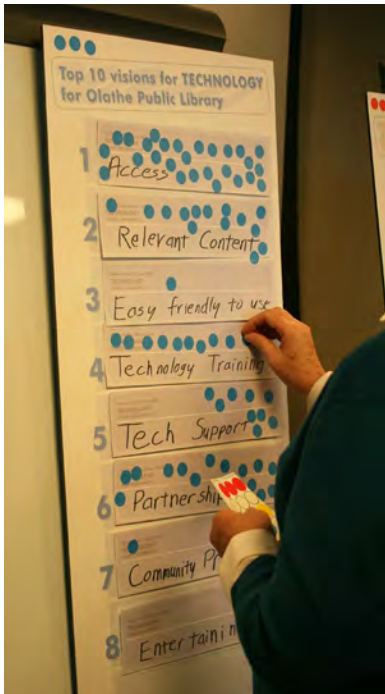
Partnerships

The library will leverage its own strengths to greater advantage by partnering with other agencies, both locally and globally. It will pursue public and private partnerships to address residents' needs in areas such as education, wellness, and economic development, as well as to tackle operational challenges in areas such as fundraising and technology. As a result of these efforts, Olathe residents will benefit from more seamless service, provided with minimal duplication of effort.

Value

The library will provide modern services that are prudently managed, fiscally sustainable, and conveniently available to residents citywide. To this end, the library will continually seek innovative ways to provide optimum value to Olathe residents, routinely pursuing new ideas, information, and ways of doing business.

LIBRARY VISION

21ST CENTURY LIBRARY TRENDS

As part of the development of the new vision for libraries in Olathe, the consultant team also led discussions at the Strategic Vision Workshop and with the Joint Task Force about trends in technology, material formats, and customer expectations that affect how libraries throughout the nation both do business today and plan for the future. Our increasingly technological world has led to many different predictions and opinions about what libraries might look like in the future. While some of these predictions are based on market hype, there are many clearly established trends that are well understood to impact library service significantly in the years to come.

CHANGES IN TECHNOLOGY

"Trickle Up" Innovation

In the past, new technology found its way into the library from the top down. New information retrieval and management systems were developed by the military, the telecommunications industry, and major universities. These projects were eventually commercialized, adapted for the library environment, and made more affordable. Libraries watched and waited as this process unfolded, embracing the new technologies only after years of preliminary development, refinement, and exposure.

Nowadays, libraries are far more impacted by consumer technology, which "trickles up." Home users get iPads and Kindles for Christmas, and expect the library to be ready to connect to them before the new year begins. The development cycle is, for competitive reasons, largely invisible; product unveilings are followed immediately by rapid roll-out. This will require that OPL stay abreast of a constantly changing consumer market, adapt library techniques to popular mainstream interfaces, and plan for a much shorter equipment obsolescence and replacement schedule.

Ambient Information

There has been no slowdown in the social, political, economic and cultural changes caused by the spread of networked digital information and communications technologies. Broadband Internet reaches more households every day, making it possible to download or stream masses of content directly to consumers on demand. People are inundated with information from an ever increasing variety of sources. Wireless connectivity and handheld devices have made it possible for people to access information anytime, anywhere.

The library is no longer a finite collection of scarce materials; now the challenge is to draw from and contribute to the stream of content that surrounds us all. In this environment, libraries are adopting the goal of helping residents carry the library with them wherever they go. Tools such as library applications for the iPhone enable library customers to have a truly portable, seamless library experience.

As "ambient" access to both services and content becomes more pervasive, questions of security and privacy of data also begin to arise. Due diligence will be needed on OPL's part to make sure providers of ambient content operate in compliance with laws and best practices related to data encryption, authentication, rights, access, and disposal of data.

The shift to ambient information also frees up the Library to allocate space more efficiently. Rather than define library space primarily by collection and subject, they can now allocate space by activity (for example: solo vs. group spaces, stationary vs. kinetic spaces, express use vs. sustained use spaces).

Diversification of Indexing and Retrieval Tools

Increases in computing power have made it possible to categorize and retrieve large quantities of published information in very short order. The traditional library catalog arranged by author, title, subject heading, and call number has already been augmented by tools that allow look-up by keyword, search entire texts for words and phrases, correct for users' misspellings, and suggest related materials based on patterns of inquiry.

The next generation of information retrieval is expanding into non-verbal indexing – making it possible to find information by its visual, audible, kinetic, or mathematical properties. Look-up options now include searchable lab notebooks and scientific notations, image comparisons, map/GPS coordinates, and other non-word research opportunities. Though OPL will continue to celebrate the written word, helping customers find and apply knowledge in all formats will be increasingly important.
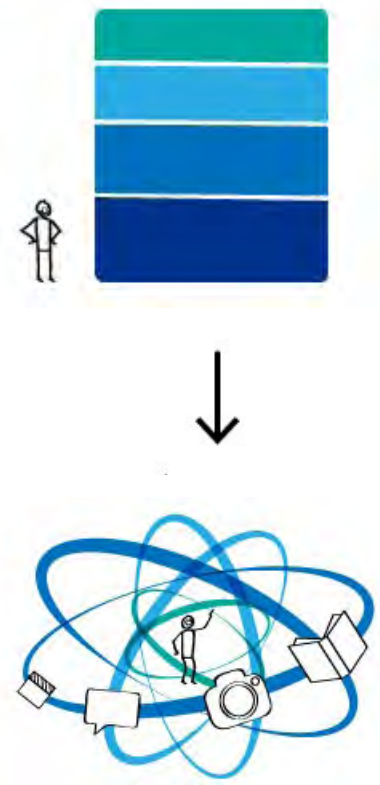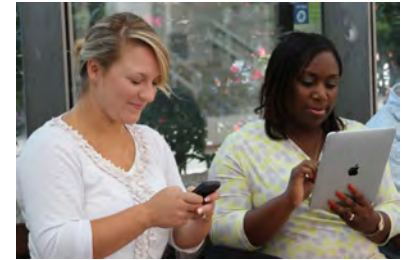
Handheld Devices and Portable Apps

A quick look around in any social setting will effectively demonstrate the rapidly growing acceptance of and reliance upon mobile technology. The laptop, introduced more than 20 years ago, is no longer considered the most convenient and "mobile" option for computing. Residents are now utilizing net books, cell phones, smart phones, tablets, and a growing variety of other handheld devices to provide instant online access to whatever they need, whenever they need it, wherever they are.

Within the mobile market, the dominant handheld device is the smartphone. The smartphone appeals to a growing group of the population because it means carrying only one device from which one can phone, text, access the internet, read e-books, listen to music, watch videos and more. By 2020, the mobile smartphone is expected to be the only Internet connection for a majority of people around the world. The smart phone with apps is also much more likely than the personal computer to be the key to bridging the digital divide.

Libraries are acknowledging this shift, rethinking their primary points of access, and beginning to move resources into app development. Customer-driven interface designs attract and engage users, and improve both usability and opportunities for participation.

"Creative Commons"

Solo study has given way to active collaboration and group projects. Learning activities are now being redesigned to engage all the senses, not just silent listening and reading. And creativity is often a highly social activity. Residents are increasingly looking to libraries to provide space for active learning, highly interactive computing, and both formal and informal work areas and meeting places.

Shared learning experiences are now recognized as an excellent way to build community. The library is no longer the grocery store – shelves stocked with "ingredients" that people take elsewhere to use. It is becoming the kitchen – a place where people stay to make things. Shared recording studios, workshop areas that encourage tinkering and creating, and conversation-friendly seating are all becoming part of the modern library landscape.

CHANGES IN PUBLISHING

Diversification of Reading

Publishing is not just about printed books anymore. Some argue that the proliferation of e-books and self-published web content signals an end to the world of print, and by extension, an end to the need for libraries. There is no question that traditional printed books represent a decreasing percentage of the publishing market, but there is no evidence that print will become obsolete any time soon. Readers are not abandoning print; rather, they are diversifying – reading more than ever, in multiple formats. The primary divide in the consumption of published content is not between print consumers vs. electronic consumers, but between readers vs. non-readers.

At the same time we are seeing a rise in trans-media storytelling – using different media types and technologies to tell a single story. This goes beyond the movie-with-a-book-and-videogame-tie-in; it's a way to give messages more credibility by reinforcing them across many different platforms and information sources. Video, apps, HTML, embedded software, print, live presentations – when strategically orchestrated, there is much more power to harness in telling a story these days. Progressive libraries are rebranding around readers, reading, and stories rather than printed books, and championing reading for all ages. They are also diversifying collections of library materials to keep pace with the diversification of publishing formats. By 2025 we expect that at least 30% of public library collections will be presented in e-formats.

Access, Not Ownership

With the movement to e-formats there has also been a significant shift in how published material is being priced and distributed. Many e-publishers are following the lead of mainstream software companies; rather than selling a product outright, they are licensing the right to access that product. Digital Rights Management (DRM) refers to access technologies that can be used by hardware manufacturers, publishers and copyright holders to retain control of – and sometimes impose limitations on – the use of digital content and devices. While much of the digital content available on the Internet is not protected by copyright, the e-book industry (including distributors) is leveraging technology to control the loaning and sharing of digital content more closely.

The publishing industry has not yet settled on a consistent library pricing model for e-content, and increasing competition means that they may not do so any time soon. In general, access costs are comparable to the cost of purchasing print materials.

Just In Time Inventory

Modern libraries are benefiting from the experience of commercial manufacturing and distribution industries and are adapting new techniques for managing their large inventories across multiple locations. Circulation data can now be analyzed to track and rebalance the flow of materials, and "floating" collections in response to demand throughout the library system, rather than assigning each item to a single home branch, is both speeding fulfillment and reducing materials delivery costs.

It is worth remembering that the ideal location for a library book is not on the shelf at the library, but out in the community, in the hands of a reader. Progressive libraries are actively seeking ways to increase "findability," reduce wait times for desired materials, and feed circulation data back into the system to predict demand and improve purchasing decisions. Investing in e-books is also contributing to improved efficiency and reduced costs for inventory control, as there are no delivery delays, no packing and shipping costs, and no overdues associated with electronic materials.

Increasing Value of Locally Created Content and Intellectual Capital

New technology has made it easy for individuals to create and to participate actively in the management of information that is of interest to them. People are no longer limited to consuming information that has been prepared or assembled by experts, including libraries. Now it is possible for anyone to develop and curate a personalized collection of information – creating, compiling, remixing, broadcasting, commenting, sharing and recommending. From a consumer perspective, this adds value to the information in terms of both convenience and applicability to one's own specific locale or situation.

Modern libraries are coaching customers in self-directed information management, facilitating the process without mediating it. They are making it easier for entrepreneurs to participate in the creative economy. They are promoting critical thinking, responsible information use, and high standards for content accuracy and completeness. And they are helping to build local intellectual capital by facilitating the voluntary sharing of residents' personalized collections of information. This helps to ensure that the character of the community is documented, preserved, and shared.

CHANGES IN CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS

Before the Internet, cable TV, and video games, when information – both serious and recreational – was scarce and expensive, libraries did not have to compete for customers. They were the only game in town, and were in a position to set their own service priorities and dictate terms of use. Today's consumer has many choices, and evaluates the library in light of other mainstream service offerings.

Hospitality

Customers expect the library to welcome them and treat them as valued guests. This experience begins even before entering the building, and continues in a desire for ample "people space," creature comforts, and attentive staff. They expect everyone who works at the library to be trained to be a customer service first responder, offering service throughout the library at the point of need, and not just at fixed service desks.

Convenience

Busy consumers choose their day-to-day service providers based largely on perceived convenience. When forced to choose between quality and convenience, they still opt for convenience. If they just need orange juice, they don't usually make the trip to the store they know to have the finest quality groceries in the region; they stop at the store where they don't have to make a left turn. The challenge for modern libraries is to offer services that are both high in quality and extremely convenient. Full-service web sites, cashless transactions, and options for after-hours service are now part of the mainstream.

Timeliness

Nowadays everyone seems to be in a hurry, and residents want all service providers, including the library, to respect the value of their time. While there will always be a need for oases of peace and calm in this high-speed world, consumers want to make their own decisions about when they want to slow down the pace and when there's a need for speed. Many people, especially younger people, now expect a full range of services to be instantly available 24/7 online, whether they are at home, in the office, or on the run. Working families expect facilities to be open nights and weekends. And consumers everywhere have become accustomed to very short wait times for most transactions. Libraries ignore these expectations at their peril. "Slow but free" is not a viable service philosophy.

Independent Success

Increasingly, today's consumers want to be in the driver's seat, and opportunities for independent exploration and technology-supported self-directed service are a growth area for the service economy. For customers to achieve success without extensive staff intervention, ease of use has to be a top priority. User-initiated processes must be simple on the surface, with more depth/complexity available if desired.

In this environment, all staff function as facilitators. They are easy to spot and summon, display a positive customer service attitude, demonstrate excellent knowledge of what the library has to offer, where it can be found, and how to use it, and are ready to provide on-the-spot coaching and technology problem-solving.

This is not to say that self-directed, automated transactions are the preferred means of interaction in all situations. Consumers do not want to be abandoned. They look for a human face to accompany the technology as needed, but they want that human to be available as a coach and facilitator rather than a gatekeeper. They respond positively to service providers who can be welcoming and supportive but not controlling.

E-BOOKS AND THE FUTURE OF THE OLATHE PUBLIC LIBRARY

One-third of Olathe's population was born within the past 20 years, and have never known a world without technology. These so-called "digital natives" expect that information will be available to them in every format, at any time. From available formats, they choose based on convenience rather than inherent preference. For them, the library is the convergence of the physical and digital experience, providing the context and framework to help them understand and navigate the vast quantity (and inconsistent quality) of information available online. As in the retail world, the online and physical worlds each support and enhance the other.

But for the other two-thirds of Olatheans, the printed book is still very much at heart. These so-called "digital immigrants" still tend to navigate the world in a more physical way that engages the senses of touch, sound, and even smell in the process of discovering new ideas and information. The printed book has been — and will continue to be — a cornerstone of learning for these generations. It is not time for the Library to abandon these Olatheans just yet.

The Olathe Public Library has begun the transition, targeting 30% of its collection in digital format by 2025. For comparison, libraries such as the Pikes Peak Library District in Colorado and the Columbus Metropolitan Library in Ohio are targeting 25-75% of the collection in digital format by 2030.

So what will this reduction in the physical collection mean for Olathe's bricks-and-mortar libraries? As books leave the currently crowded shelves, the space that opens up will permit better access to the remaining materials. Shelf heights will come down, aisles will widen, and increased face-out display of materials will promote better browsability. Both the library and the community will have more opportunity to curate materials in new ways that reflect local interests and generate new ideas. As a result, despite the smaller number of printed materials in the collection, the floor area needed to house it will not necessarily decrease in direct proportion.

It will also be more important than ever that Olathe's library facilities be flexible and adaptable in order to accommodate change over time. The period of technological transformation is far from over, and no one can yet predict when — if ever — information devices and formats will stabilize and standardize. Library buildings and systems need to provide the flexibility to add, subtract, and rearrange walls, shelves, seating, and technology over the course of decades.

"The best way to predict the future is to invent it."
— Alan Kay

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LIBRARY PROFILE

The Olathe Public Library is a vital part of life in Olathe. Its vision is "to meet the lifelong informational, educational and recreational needs of the community through quality services and resources." Its mission includes active pursuit of a strong role in the community as an information center as well as materials, technology, and resources that encourage reading and lifelong learning for all ages. The Library maintains a rich collection of materials that is actively managed to keep it fresh and relevant. It offers activities for Olathe citizens of all ages, from story times and language programs for preschool children, to an anime club and safe babysitting classes for teens, to computer classes and even yoga programs for adults and seniors.

The Library maintains partnerships that seamlessly increase service to its customers. As part of a long-standing partnership, OPL shares its catalog and integrated library system with the Johnson County Library, which also provides IT support. The Kansas State Library is also a partner for both collection materials and online resources. The Library partners with the City of Olathe for a wide range of administrative services, including, but not limited to, human resources, purchasing, telecommunications, email, solid waste, recycling, and seasonal grounds maintenance.

GOVERNANCE

OPL is an independent entity of the City of Olathe, with governance divided between two bodies. Through its City Council, the City of Olathe approves the Library's annual maximum mill levy and oversees the expenditure of funds for real estate acquisition and facility improvements. Approval of the annual operating budget, oversight of library operations, programs, service contracts, and funding approval for routine library contracts and services is provided by a seven member Council-appointed Library Board, of which the Mayor is a member.

BUDGET AND FUNDING

The Library's primary funding source is a mill levy, which was set by the City in 1991 at 2.50 mills. An additional 0.267 mills is levied to support Library employee benefits. Although the total assessed valuation of property in Olathe has declined in recent years, it is anticipated to stabilize and begin to increase again over the next five years.

Approximately 6% of the Library's revenue comes from fines, fees, and miscellaneous income. State aid currently provides less than two percent of the Library's revenue, and this is expected to decline. The Olathe Public Library Foundation and the Friends of the Olathe Public Library each lead fundraising activities to supplement the Library's budget for furnishings, programs, and materials.
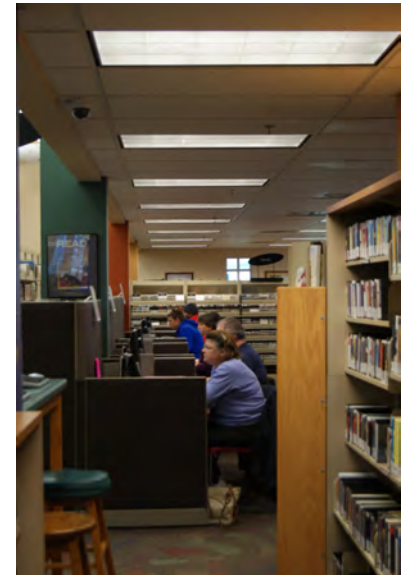
SERVICE ASSESSMENT

Today, the Library's budget is approximately $4 million. Personnel expenses make up approximately 69% of total expenditures; the next largest component of the budget is books and materials acquisition at approximately 12%. Today's budget represents a reduction of more than 9% since 2008.

The City's adopted 2013 General Fund operating budget is approximately $75.8 million, which represents a 5.7% increase from the previous year. However, it remains 2% below the 2008 period while the City has added about 4,759 new residents since that time. Between 2008 and 2012, the City has reduced the number of departments by 20%.

Approximately 51% of the City's general fund budget comes from sales tax revenues, 17% from property tax revenues, 13% from franchise fees, and the balance from sources such as intergovernmental transfers, fines, charges for services, and license and permit revenues.

The 2013 City General Fund budget focuses on building the City's foundation by restoring full payments that had been delayed the previous year including vehicle replacement funding and risk management, and it provides cash for funding street and building maintenance. The 2013 General Fund budget maintains the City's record of preparing for and proactively solving issues before they happen. It continues a conservative approach that emphasizes priorities and applies limited resources to address issues today while preventing challenges tomorrow.

In addition, the City's 2013 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) budget is approximately $56.2 million. The CIP includes a wide range of projects, including transportation infrastructure, utility services, and parks and recreation projects, the most noteworthy of which is construction of the City's first community center, which is expected to open in Spring, 2014. The CIP is funded by a combination of general obligation bonds, special assessment revenues, revenue bonds, federal and state funds, and parks sales tax funds.

The City's 2013 mill levy as approved by the City Council is 24.794 mills, which includes the City's general and debt service funds, Library employee benefits (as noted above), and fire levy. 58% of the City's general fund is spent on personnel, 17% on contractual services, and the balance on commodities, transfers, and capital outlay. As evidence of the City's strong financial decision-making, in 2012, Moody's re-affirmed the City's Aa1 credit rating and Standard and Poor's reaffirmed the City's AA+ credit rating for the City's general obligation bonds. As stated by City Manager Michael Wilkes when presenting the 2013 budget for approval by the City Council, "with the Council's strategic direction, Olathe will remain in its position of strength not only in 2013 but moving forward."

LIBRARY PERFORMANCE AND PERCEPTIONS

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

By all measures, the Olathe Public Library does brisk business and is well-used by the community. Both the Downtown Library and the Indian Creek Branch are alive with activity throughout the day with customers coming for books, media, programs, reference assistance, and other services as well as to use computers. According to Library statistics for 2011:

- Approximately 40% of Olathe residents are active library card holders.

- OPL has a collection of more than 183,000 items. On average, each item in OPL's collection is borrowed more than seven times per year. The collection is divided approximately 60:40 between the Downtown Library and Indian Creek.

- Total circulation of books and media was 1,614,198 – an average of more than 30 items per active library card holder, and an increase of 10% from the prior year. Approximately 84% of items circulated were part of OPL's own collection, while approximately 16% – more than 262,000 items – were borrowed from the Johnson County Library through its partnership with OPL. (In turn, OPL typically loans about the same number of materials to customers of the Johnson County Library.)

- Both Downtown and Indian Creek are open seven days per week for a total of 353 days. Both libraries saw a budget-driven reduction in daily hours of operation of 10% since 2009.

Total gate count at Olathe's libraries totaled more than 616,000 in 2011 – an average of nearly five visits per Olathe resident. Indian Creek accommodated nearly half of these visits, despite being half the size of the Downtown Library.

SERVICE ASSESSMENT

- Total gate count at Olathe's two libraries totaled more than 616,000 in 2011 – an average of nearly five visits per Olathe resident. Indian Creek accommodated nearly half of these visits, despite being half the size of the Downtown Library.

- Library staff assisted customers with more than 225,000 reference questions and other inquiries.

- Each of the Library's 87 computers was used more than 1,500 times, an average of over 17 users per computer per day.

- More than 300 storytime programs were held, with an average attendance of more than 21. An average of 16 people attended each of the more than 230 teen and adult programs.

Currently the Library has 93 employees in a total of 52.7 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. For budget reasons, this staff level is reduced by 13% from five years ago. The Library benefits greatly from the dedication and hard work of its volunteers; although their total number has dropped by 25% since 2009, the volunteers who remain have actually increased the number of total volunteer hours by 14% over the same time period.

LIBRARY USE PATTERNS

An important consideration in assessing library services in Olathe was whether and how the community travels for library services. Through a collaboration of Olathe's Planning Department, Johnson County Library Integrated Library System, OPL and the consultant team, Geographic Information System (GIS) maps were prepared to evaluate geographic library use patterns and to identify any underserved areas or barriers to library access. GIS maps were generated based on actual library customer use records for checkouts, returns, and library computer use in April 2012. For each map, the location of each marker corresponds with the customer's home address, while the color of the marker corresponds with which library the customer used.
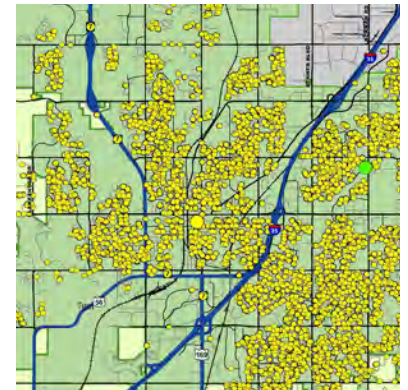
The consultant group's analysis revealed the following:

- Overall, the maps did not reveal any significant geographic gaps in library access in Olathe. I-35 does not appear to be a substantial barrier to travel between the east and west sides of the city.

- Residents of even the furthest corners of the community accessed both the Downtown and Indian Creek libraries to check out materials and use the computers.

It should be noted that the maps of library computer use do not capture customers' use of their own technologies within the library; for example, if a customer accessed the Library's wi-fi on her own laptop, this would not have been included in the data set. The maps also do not show customers who used the library for other services (e.g., story times, tutoring, programs, etc.). However, it is reasonable to assume that these library services and uses would be similar in terms of geographic accessibility as for material checkouts and computer use.

Library computers tend to have a slightly smaller geographic draw in Olathe than material checkouts. Possible reasons for this could include a higher reliance on library technology in neighborhoods located closer to the library, and/or that people are uncertain about whether computers will be available when they arrive at the library and therefore are less willing to drive a longer distance.

Residents of all areas of the city have convenient access to at least one location for library materials returns, whether at libraries or drop box locations throughout the City. The different returns locations are used at different levels, likely dependent on geographic convenience to other customer destinations as well as customers' use of the co-located partner or adjacent businesses.

Overall, the maps did not reveal any significant geographic gaps in library access in Olathe. I-35 does not appear to be a substantial barrier to travel between the east and west sides of the city.

SERVICE ASSESSMENT

UNDERSTANDING THE CUSTOMER MAPS

The home addresses of customers who checked out materials and/or used a public computer at the Downtown Library and Indian Creek Branch in April 2012 were plotted on a map of Olathe.

- *The location of each dot shows where the customer lives.*
- *The color of each dot corresponds to the library used (Downtown = yellow; Indian Creek = green).*

MATERIAL CHECKOUTS
DOWNTOWN LIBRARY

MATERIAL CHECKOUTS
INDIAN CREEK LIBRARY

MATERIAL CHECKOUTS

Residents of all areas of Olathe have access to services at both the Downtown Library and the Indian Creek Branch.

The maps did not reveal any significant geographic gaps, and I-35 does not appear to be a substantial barrier to travel between the east and west sides of the city.

SERVICE ASSESSMENT

UNDERSTANDING THE CUSTOMER MAPS

The home addresses of customers who checked out materials and/or used a public computer at the Downtown Library and Indian Creek Branch in April 2012 were plotted on a map of Olathe.

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LIBRARY COMPUTER USE
DOWNTOWN LIBRARY

LIBRARY COMPUTER USE
INDIAN CREEK LIBRARY

COMPUTER USE

Computers at the library tend to have a smaller geographic "draw" than its collections. This could mean that customers are not as willing to travel as far to use computers, and/or that there may be geographic areas of the city where residents have more better access to computers outside of the library.

The data set on which these maps are based includes only customers who use the library's computers. These maps do not capture customers' use of their own computers at the library.
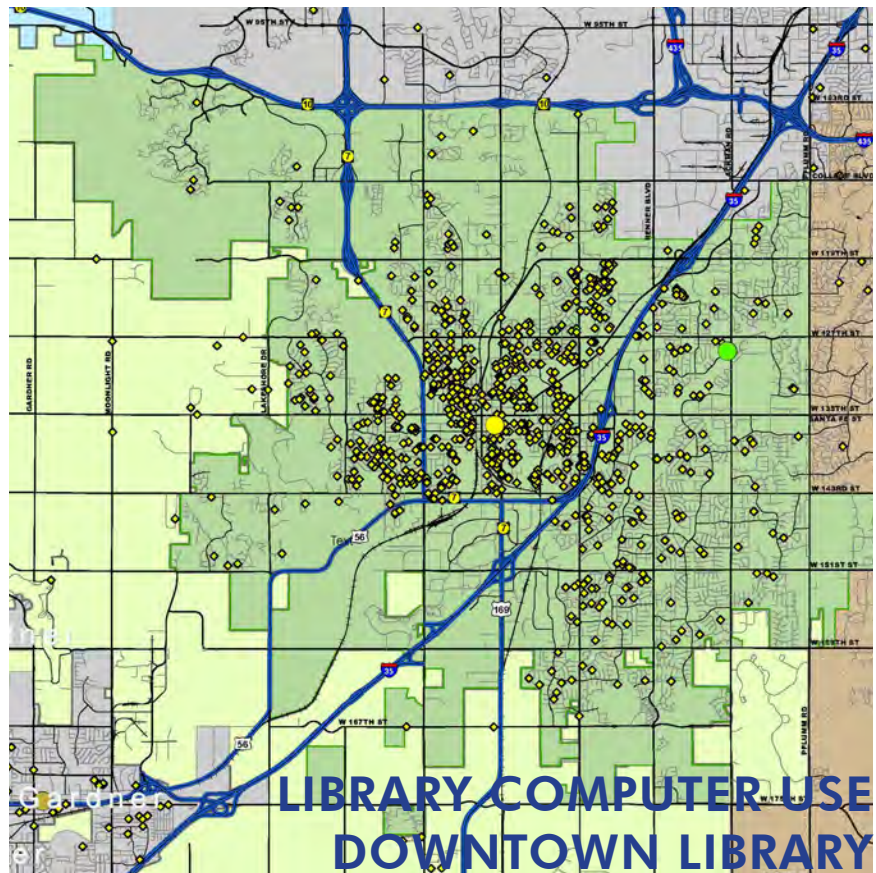
SERVICE ASSESSMENT

MATERIAL RETURNS

OPL accepts returned materials at both libraries as well as at four satellite drops in various locations. Material return activity at each of these locations in July 2012 was mapped.

- *The location of each dot shows where the customer lives.*
- *The color of each dot corresponds to the return location.*

This map shows a tendency toward more localized use of the satellite return locations. Customers may not be likely to make a special trip to the satellite drops, but rather may take advantage of the opportunity to return materials while they are doing other things such as shopping or visiting the YMCA.

MATERIAL RETURNS
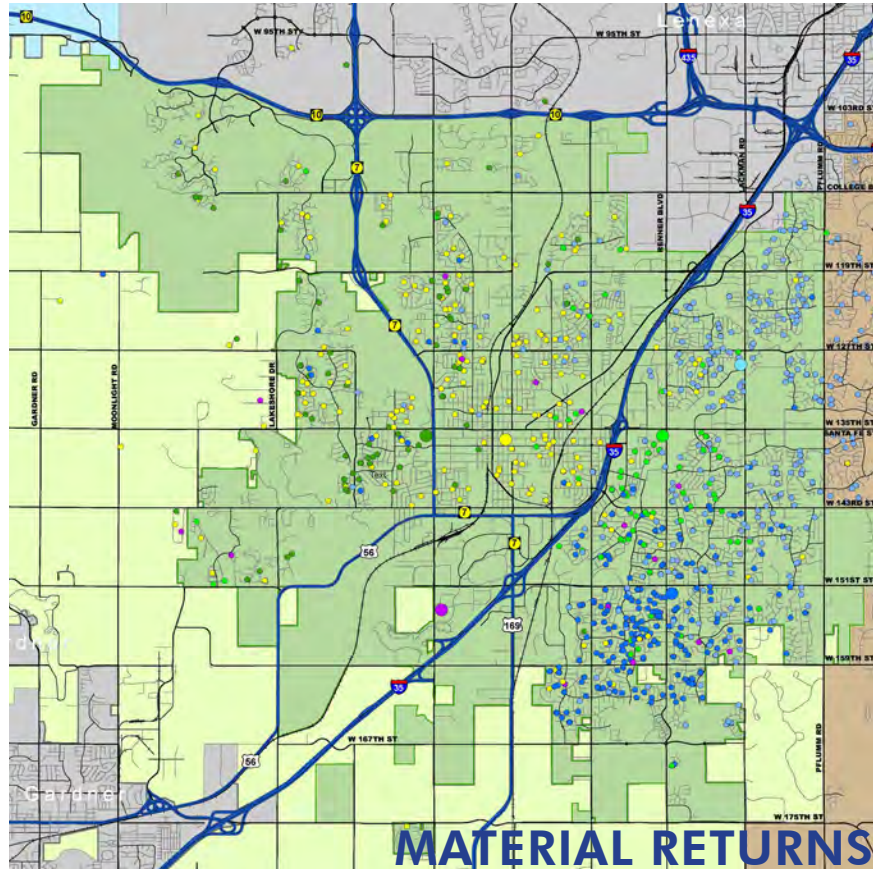
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Each year, the City of Olathe commissions a survey of citizen satisfaction with various city services by Olathe-based opinion research firm ETC Institute. In support of this Master Plan, the City performed additional cross-tabulation of the survey questions pertaining to library services in ETC's DirectionFinder survey, administered to more than 1,200 Olathe residents in 2011. Analysis of the data revealed:

• Olathe citizens are highly satisfied with their libraries. More than 83% of respondents said that they were either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the overall quality of Olathe's libraries.

• No significant differences in library satisfaction were found by ethnicity or gender. Geography also does not appear to be a significant factor in satisfaction with libraries in Olathe.

• Satisfaction with Olathe libraries is highest among families with children under age 19.

• Lower income households also tend to report the highest satisfaction ratings with Olathe's libraries.
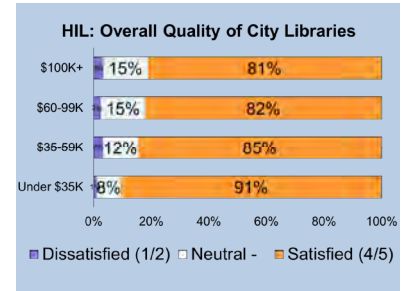
The 2011 citywide survey by ETC Institute found that Olatheans are generally very satisfied with the Library.

The map below shows no apparent geographic component between where people live and their level of satisfaction, which is consistent with the customer library use pattern maps.

Library: Overall, All Who Answered
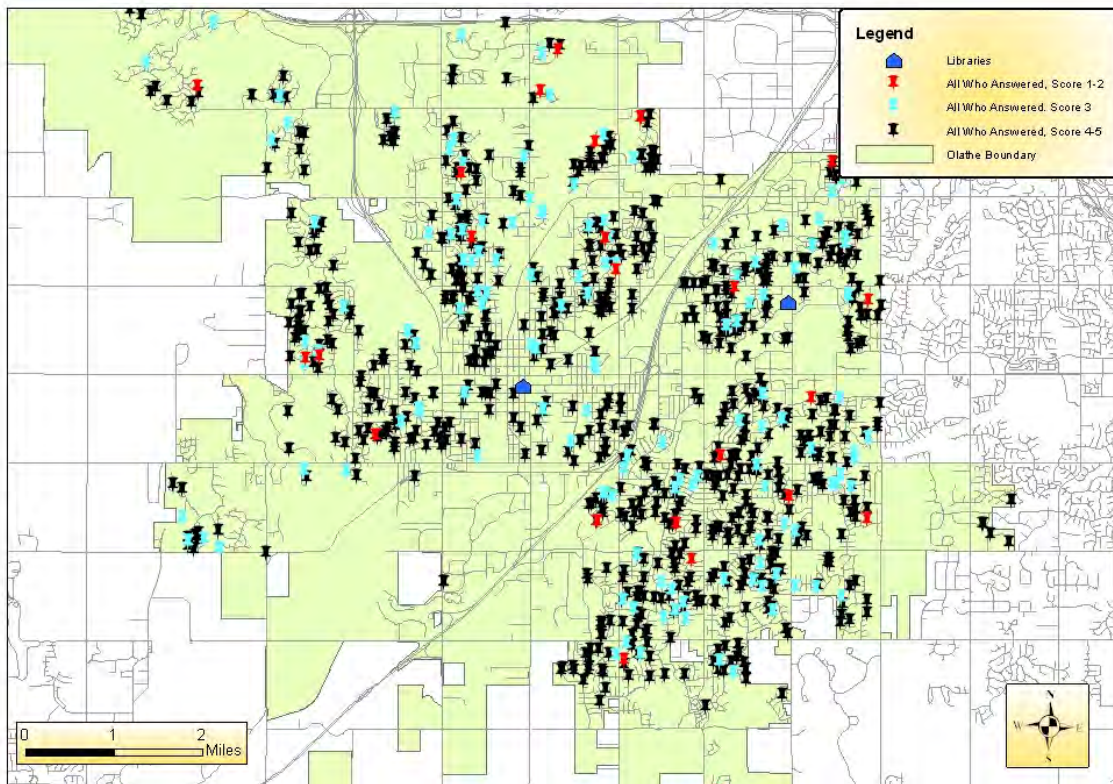
SERVICE ASSESSMENT

OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT

OPL staff analyzed its 2012 budget, categorizing staff time and personnel costs by general activity type.

- **Value-Added Service Delivery** – activities directly related to assisting customers, such as reader's advisory, information search assistance, tutoring, training, technology assistance, presentation of programs such as story time, and staff facilitated book discussions. In customer surveys across the country, library users routinely comment on how much they value the knowledgeable helpful support they receive from library staff. For this analysis, value-added service does not include circulation transactions.

- **Service Design** – back-of-house tasks required to support value-added service delivery. This includes program planning and preparation as well as staff training.

- **Materials Flow** – activities related to the full life-cycle of books, media, and other materials. This includes research, selection and purchase of items to add to the collections; preparing, tagging, and cataloging new materials; shelving; pulling materials for customer holds; check-out and check-in transactions; and transportation of materials between libraries and drop-off locations.

Materials flow traditionally has represented the majority of staff resources for most libraries. In the 21st century, the trend is to maximize the amount of time for staff to provide value-added service to the public, through strategies that improve the efficiency of service design and materials flow activities. One such strategy is to leverage each hour spent on service design, such as by delivering the same library program at both Olathe libraries as well as exchanging program delivery with the Johnson County Library.

Currently, nearly 40% of the Library's staff resources are spent on activities related to materials flow, while less than 25% is spent providing value-added service to customers. Over the past two decades, library industry best practices have developed much more efficient and streamlined materials flow procedures. Many libraries have been able to achieve customer self-check rates of up to 90% through a combination of effective facility design, intuitive self-check technology, and focused customer training. Today, OPL customers complete approximately 60% of check-out transactions at self check-out machines, leaving room for enhanced service with more efficient operations.

Allocation by Personnel Cost
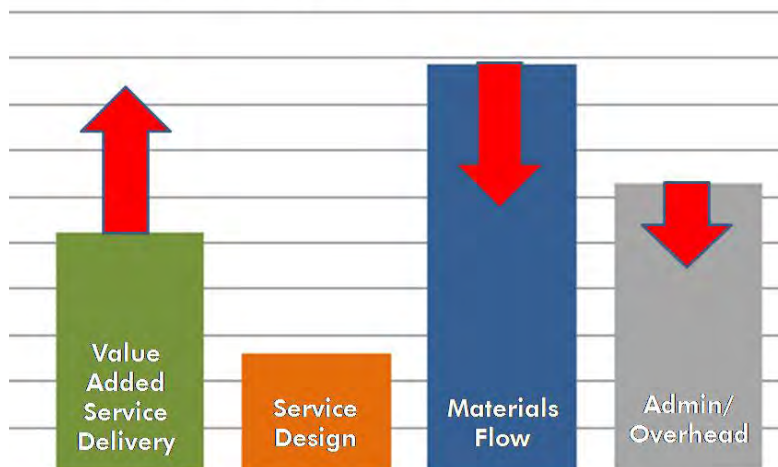
ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

The consultants assessed both Olathe libraries to determine how well they deliver service to the community. The assessment focused on three areas: customer experience, customer-staff service model, and materials flow. Each facility was toured on at least two occasions. Operations were discussed with the Library Director, supplemented by informal staff discussions, and confirmed by staff participants in the Joint Task Force.

The Downtown and Indian Creek libraries have been well maintained and are generally in good condition. The greatest limitation of both facilities is that they are too small for the number of people served. Both locations offer only a fraction of the space required for people – such as reader seats, study tables, technology, collaboration and training rooms and meeting spaces – as well as space for collections.

While both locations need a major expansion in the long term, there are also short term opportunities to adapt the existing facilities to provide 21st century service, improve the customer experience, and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of staff.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Today the customer experience of the Olathe Public Library is very much based around finding and borrowing books. There is some merchandising near the entry of both libraries, but the majority of the collections are housed in tall stacks. Most public libraries are shifting from a "book warehouse" to a "bookstore-like" experience where materials are attractively and thematically merchandised. Studies have shown that library circulation increases dramatically with more opportunities for browsing and display.

Customer opportunities to spend time in Olathe libraries reading, studying, and collaborating have decreased over time as general reader seats and tables have been replaced by computer workstations, and group study and meeting rooms have been converted to staff spaces. With so few places to sit, a majority of Olathe library users choose to grab their books and go. For those just using the library for transactions, requesting materials to be placed on hold is very popular and pick-up shelving is conveniently located. Returns may be made at the libraries or other locations located around the city.

At the Strategic Vision Workshop, library futurist Joan Frye Williams shared how libraries are transitioning from places to "get stuff" to places to "do stuff." She suggested a shift away from thinking of the library as the grocery store, and instead thinking of it more as the kitchen. The library of the future is a laboratory in which community members tinker, build, learn, and communicate. Library facilities should emphasize hospitality, comfort, and convenience, and offer collaborative work environments that invite exploration and creativity both virtually and physically.

"The library needs to stop being the grocery store and become the kitchen."
— Joan Frye Williams

FACILITY ASSESSMENTS

OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT

There are significant opportunities to improve check-in, sorting, and reshelving at both of Olathe's libraries. Customer rough sort at drop locations and automated materials handling machines are two options that should be explored. Olathe has implemented "floating collections," where borrowed materials are re-shelved at the location where they were returned, reducing the need to handle and transport the items back to their library of origin.

OPL's staff-customer service model is predominantly stationary and desk-oriented. The trend in public libraries is to follow a retail customer service model where assistance is given where most convenient and helpful to customers. Examples include reader's advisory in the "marketplace" new books section, roaming assistance around computers and stacks, and places for customers and a staff member to sit together for more in-depth assistance. Staff desk height is getting taller to be more convenient for standing service, monitors are visible to both customer and staff for better communication, and desk size and shape is more about collaboration than about transactions.

The large desks at both the Downtown and Indian Creek librariesencourage too much staff mediation of check-out transactions, keeping staff from more value-added services. Progress to a goal of higher use of self-checkout will be facilitated with more checkout stations in an improved configuration.

SPACE ALLOCATION ASSESSMENT

When Olathe's Downtown Library was built, the community was only a fraction of its current size, the service focus was predominantly books, and the personal computer had not yet been invented. Over the past decades, the community's needs have grown along with increased population and greater diversity. The collections have continued to grow, filling shelves to capacity. Collections – originally available only in print format – now have been supplemented with audiotapes, CDs, DVDs and other formats. Built to hold up to 100,000 items, the Downtown Library now houses 120,000 items; Indian Creek was built to hold 50,000 items, but now houses 80,000. In order to make room for new materials in the collection, staff must either remove other materials – many of which still have value – or remove other amenities such as seating in order to make room for more shelves.

Subscription databases, software, and Internet access have also become a central library service. In addition to library-provided computers, more and more customers are bringing in their own technology and need space to plug in and access wifi.

As new formats and technology have moved in, seating has been moved out. In both of Olathe's libraries, there is a fundamental need for significantly more seating for children, teens, and adults. Seating is needed for the full range of customer activities, from quiet reading and individual work tables to group study rooms and collaborative work areas.

Libraries are serving an increasingly important role in providing service to young adults. Beyond academic support, libraries provide important resources for teens to grow and develop into strong, public-minded citizens who value community as well as life-long learning. The most successful teen spaces in the nation's libraries celebrate the multiple facets of teen life with collection materials, technology, and seating that support academic and recreational activities in both individual and collaborative settings. By contrast, the current configuration of Olathe's libraries supports little more than a few seats and a small YA collection, with almost no sense of identity or place for teens to call their own.

Downtown Library's "Ask Here" desk is well located, but it could be more customer-centric.

Both libraries far exceed their originally-designed collection capacity, and shelves are overcrowded.

Olathe's libraries currently dedicate significantly more space to restrooms than to teens.

FACILITY ASSESSMENTS

SPACE TYPES

The previous section of this Master Plan report describes the Library's analysis of its budget by how much time staff spend on activities related to value-added customer service, service design, and materials flow. The consultant group's facility assessments looked at Olathe's library buildings through a similar lens to estimate the relative amounts of space allocated to three general types of activity – public service, staff, and materials flow.

•   **Public Service** – areas of the library regularly accessible to customers for library-related services. The analysis distinguishes between the amount of space for the collection and the amount of space available for other uses, such as reader seating, program room, and public computers. As libraries shift away from a primary focus on a physical collection, the amount of shelf space needed to house the collection tends to shrink. However, the corresponding reduction in space for the reduced collection tends to be tempered by the transition from tall, full shelves to lower density merchandising displays.

•   **Staff Areas** – areas of the library that support customer-staff interaction. These include staff work areas "on the floor," such as reference desks, as well as back-of-house work spaces and storage for Library administration and branch library staff. For the purpose of this analysis, space for materials flow-related activities (such as the circulation desk) is categorized separately.

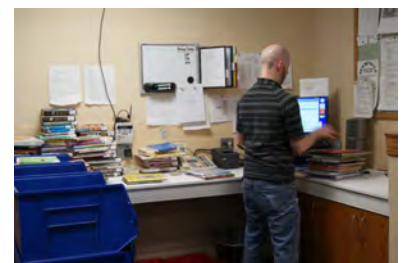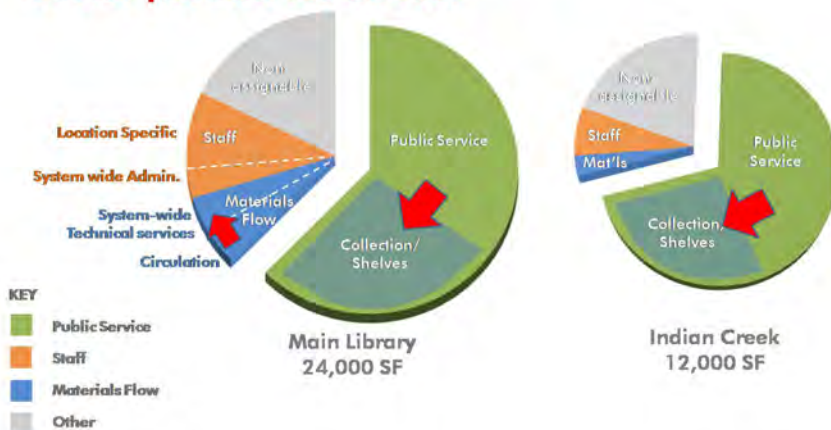- **Materials Flow** – spaces related to intake, processing, sorting, and checking in/checking out of collection materials. Most space for materials flow tends to be back-of-house, such as technical services and the sorting room, but this category also includes customer-accessible features such as the circulation desk, self-check stations, book drops, and holds pickup. Library industry best practices have developed improved technology and streamlined procedures that can reduce the amount of space required for materials flow activities. For example, expanded customer self-checkout reduces the level of staff needed at the circulation desk, which can in turn be reduced in size.

- **Non-assignable space** includes support spaces in the building, most of which are not regularly occupied, such as equipment rooms, custodial rooms, restrooms, etc.

Both Olathe Public Library locations have a reasonable allocation of space to public service, materials flow, and staff functions. Over time as the facilities are expanded, the proportion of space dedicated to public service should increase significantly, while staff, materials flow and back of house operations should decrease. As the size of the Library's material holdings of books, periodicals, and media of all types will increase modestly to serve a growing population, the approach to materials shelving will shift towards increased merchandising featuring lower shelving heights with additional display and browsing opportunities.
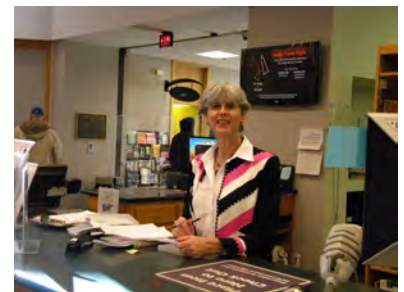
FACILITY TRENDS
Greater percent of space for people,
Lower percent for books.

Location Specific
System wide Admin.
System-wide Technical services
Circulation

Non-assignable
Staff
Materials Flow
Public Service
Collection/Shelves

Main Library
24,000 SF

Non-assignable
Staff
Mat'ls
Public Service
Collection/Shelves

Indian Creek
12,000 SF

KEY
- Public Service
- Staff
- Materials Flow
- Other

FACILITY
ASSESSMENTS

DOWNTOWN LIBRARY

201 EAST PARK STREET

The approximately 24,000 square foot Downtown Library was constructed in 1979. It is a one story stone-clad building with a high central reading room under a copper standing-seam roof. The library was sturdily built and has been well maintained.

While the building has full block frontage along East Park Street, the building turns its back to the street with no public entry and few windows. This is a missed opportunity to present active views that draw in passersby and help create a sense of place in downtown Olathe. The sides of the building on South Chestnut and South Water streets also have no windows. The main building entry is from the parking lot, which provides good short-term parking for easy pickup. The amount of parking for the library both in the lot and on the street is generally adequate to meet current demand.

The library interior has a straightforward organization with nicely proportioned spaces, a variety of ceiling heights, and high clerestory windows that bring in daylight. Lighting levels are adequate, but with almost no ground-level windows, the building feels darker than it is. Carpeting, signage, and service desks are relatively new, along with recent improvements to increase merchandising and expand the teen area. New interior lighting and miscellaneous exterior maintenance repairs were completed in 2012.

DOWNTOWN LIBRARY CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

A small lobby draws customers into the main reading room where good sightlines and large signage enable them to easily orient themselves to the library offerings. Near the entry are popular materials presented in merchandising displays that hint at a bookstore or marketplace feel. The "Ask Here" service desk is well located, but oriented more to staff work than to interaction and collaboration with customers.

The original community room in the building was converted to staff space some years ago. At the same time, a small children's story room was built. This small windowless room provides reasonable acoustical separation for programs but only supports limited use. If this room was able to be opened to the adjacent areas it could provide additional family reading and technology space.

DOWNTOWN LIBRARY OPERATIONS/SERVICE MODEL

In addition to the spaces and functions required to serve any library location, the Downtown Library also houses Library administration, technical services, and IT services. Staff areas have encroached upon and reduced public areas, with the elimination of the community meeting room and relocation and shrinking of the Library Board/public conference room. Weather permitting, the Library is able to provide some events outdoors. However, the lack of large meeting space inside the building greatly curtails the Library's ability to offer programs or provide a multipurpose space to community groups.

Customer holds and check-out stations are conveniently located. Although an oversized older style large circulation desk has been partially converted to support self check, it still encourages too much staff mediation of check-out transactions and creates a less welcoming dynamic between customers and staff.

The annotated diagrams on the following pages include observations about current conditions and opportunities to improve the customer experience, materials flow, and customer-staff interactions at the Downtown Library.

FACILITY ASSESSMENTS

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PUBLIC SERVICE

ASK HERE

STAFF

MATERIALS FLOW

CHECK OUT

No visibility of interior from street

Nice pour of light

(E. Park St.)

MEETING ROOM

TECH. SERVICES

ADMIN.

ADULT

COMPS.

Proportions limit flexibility

Public Service Area Rooms

Staff, Desk

Material Flow, Desk, Checkout, Stacks (med., high)

Other spaces

Clerestory windows above

Large centrally located staff desk. Consider single point of service

COMPUTERS

COMPS.

Explore more merchandising and browsing opportunities

E. PARK STREET

Passenger side park & drops

MARKETPLACE

Large axon circulation desk opportunity to self check

SELF CHECK

Efficient interior book drop location not available when closed

STORY

TEEN

Delivery and circ/sorting

SORT

CHILDREN

COMPS.

COMPS.

Acoustically separate
Low utilization
No daylight

No visibility of interior from street

Nice pour of light

Nice pour of light

Community meeting room was replaced with non-public functions

(Stacks and seating are approximate)

S. CHESTNUT STREET

GROUP 4

N

0'   25'   50'

FACILITY ASSESSMENTS

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INDIAN CREEK LIBRARY

12990 SOUTH BLACK BOB ROAD

The approximately 12,000 square feet Indian Creek Library was opened in 2000. It is a one story, brick-faced building with a high central reading room under a standing-seam metal roof. The library was attractively constructed and has been well maintained.

The building sits back from the road and has ample customer parking bordered by landscaping and mature trees in the front, and a service drive encircles the building with staff parking and a drive up service window on the back side. A small storage building located on the site's southwest corner is used primarily for storage of the off-season collection and Friends of the Library book sale materials.

The library is organized around a high-ceiling central stack area lined with lower seating, staff and support spaces. There is a community meeting room and two group study rooms.

The need for a larger Indian Creek Library was recognized even before the project started. Limited funding at that time required the Library to scale back what it could build and consider meeting the needs in phases. The first phase of the Indian Creek Library was hoped to be approximately 25% larger (15,000 square feet) with a geothermal heating/cooling system; however bond funds were not sufficient and the additional space and geothermal system were omitted. On suburban sites such as this, basement space is usually not ideal for public access, operations, and architectural quality; thus, little may have been lost by omitting the originally-planned basement.

The original library building and site design was planned to accommodate a second phase with future expansion of two new wings to be added to the north and south, doubling the area to approximately 24,000 square feet. In early 2012 the Library Board started to formulate plans to construct Indian Creek's second phase using approximately $2 million of available capital reserve funding. The idea of moving ahead with this expansion project in 2011 as the first physical enhancement to OPL's facilities in nearly a decade was a catalyst for creation of the Library Joint Task Force and development of this Master Plan. This Master Plan is intended to establish a broader vision for the equitable delivery of library services for Olathe residents into the foreseeable future than would have been achieved with only the previously-proposed expansion to the Indian Creek Library, which would not have been enough to effectively serve the community's needs.
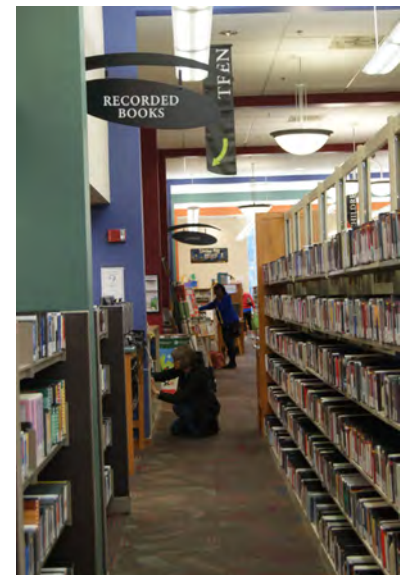
FACILITY
ASSESSMENTS

INDIAN CREEK CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Customers enter through a small, glass-enclosed vestibule that serves as a shared lobby to the library, community meeting room, and restrooms. This permits the meeting room to be used independently of the library for after-hours activities or events run by the Library or other community organizations. The lobby vestibule has a somewhat utilitarian feel, and customers don't experience a sense of arrival until they pass through the second set of automatic glass doors.

Once inside, customers arrive in a well-proportioned and attractive space that serves well for orientation to the primary organization of children's and adult collections. This open arrival area has limited merchandising and is used primarily for queuing for check outs.

INDIAN CREEK OPERATIONS/SERVICE MODEL

Indian Creek is most successful in its role as a book warehouse. Holds are an extremely popular service and the many sections of hold shelves are conveniently located near the entry and the check out desk. As at the Downtown Library, Indian Creek's original circulation desk has been modified to provide a combination of staff-mediated and self-service check-out. There is an opportunity to further improve the design of the circulation desk to better encourage self check-outs and speed up the high volume of circulation.

The "Ask Here" desk is centrally located, but is designed more for staff desk work than customer interaction. Given the library's size and layout, a single point of service desk could be considered along with a roaming service model for improved efficiency and service.

Back of house staff areas are compact and efficient. Circulation and sorting activities are cramped and require more handling steps than ideal. The volume of circulation at Indian Creek suggests that the Library should evaluate the potential benefits of an automated material handling system to shift staff time away from back-of-house materials flow tasks and toward providing more value-added service to customers. If such a system were deployed in the future, it is recommended that a communication strategy be prepared to convey the message that the system will allow not only for more efficient operations, but also for a more strategic deployment of staff resources to provide better service to Olathe library customers.

The annotated diagrams on the following pages include observations about current conditions and opportunities to improve the customer experience, materials flow, and customer-staff interactions at the Indian Creek Library.

OLATHE PUBLIC LIBRARY MASTER PLAN

MATERIALS FLOW

STAFF

PUBLIC SERVICE

TAPES/MOVIES

BOOKS

CHECKOUT

OLATHE PUBLIC LIBRARY
INDIAN CREEK BRANCH

Expansion potential

Drive-up, pick-up window

After hours drop

GROUP STUDY

HOLDS

ADULT

TEEN

COMPUTERS

SELF CHECK

CHILDREN

STORY

COMPUTERS

MEETING ROOM

Limited adult lounge seating

Nice seating clusters. Limited quantity

Staff oriented lobby

Poor first impression

Independent use of meeting room is possible

Opportunity for expanded marketplace

Opportunity to strengthen use of outdoor space

Limited sense of children's "place" due to height of stacks

Expansion potential

Public Service Area
Rooms

Staff, Desk

Material Flow, Desk,
Checkout, Stacks (med., high)

Other spaces

GROUP 4

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LIBRARY SPACE PLANNING

The process of developing the new master plan for libraries in Olathe was grounded in the foundation established in the Strategic Vision Workshop. Complementing this foundation, the recommendations set forth in this plan began with a reexamination of the principles and assumptions underlying the recommendations of previous master plans commissioned by OPL with little direct input from the City. This reexamination, along with analysis of actual library use conditions and resources in Olathe, led to a new approach to planning the future of the Olathe Public Library.

TRADITIONAL PLANNING PRINCIPLES

For decades, the traditional approach to planning library facilities in communities across America has been based on several common principles.

- **Population size**. Library space is provided in proportion to the population of its service area.

- **Geographic proximity by residence**. Libraries are located to minimize travel time from where people live.

- **Tiered services**. All libraries in the system do not necessarily provide all services. Small branch libraries focus on day-to-day needs at the neighborhood level. For their other needs, customers must travel to another library with greater breadth and depth of resources – perhaps the main library or a branch in a different neighborhood.
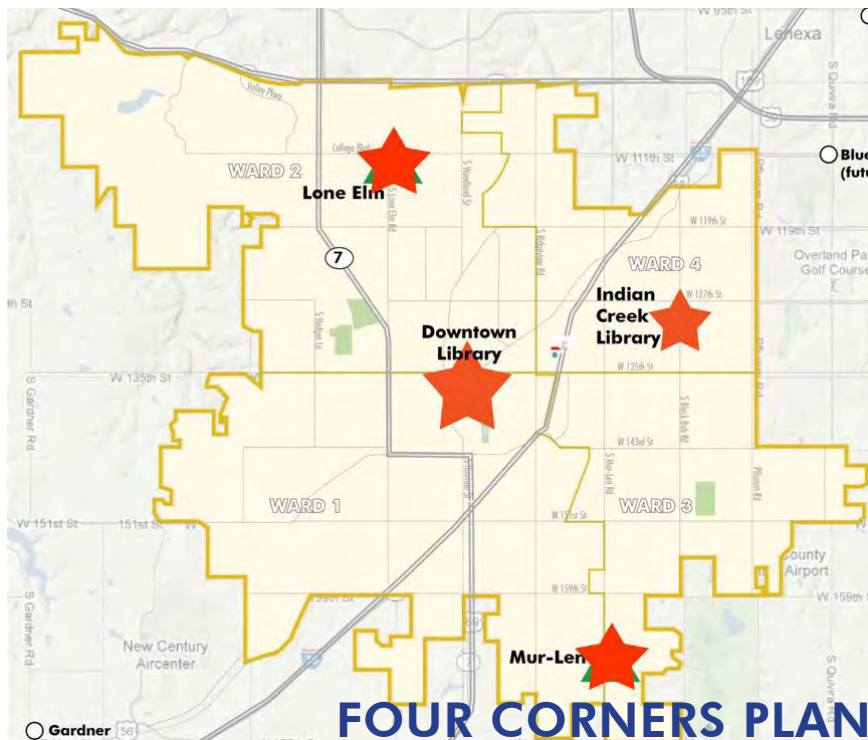
FOUR CORNERS PLAN

The Four Corners Plan, proposed in previous OPL master plans, was based on the assumption that available funding for both capital construction and operations would continue to grow.

The current economic climate has made this library system model simply unachievable in Olathe from the perspectives of both capital and ongoing operational costs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Master plans based on these principles often recommend that as the population grows, new libraries should be added in conjunction with residential development as it spreads geographically. Their system maps typically show a large main library in a relatively central location, with medium- to smaller-sized branches distributed geographically throughout the service area in order to minimize people's travel time from even the most remotely-located homes. Underlying such master plans is the assumption that as communities grow, they can proportionately increase the amount of funding available not only for construction of new libraries, but also for the increased staff, utilities, and other expenses associated with operating them.

These same principles form the foundation of the Four Corners Plan set forth in previous OPL master plans, which recommended expanding the current libraries and adding new branches to serve new residential growth in northwest and southeast Olathe. However, with the onset of the economic downturn at the end of the 2000s, Olathe found itself without the resources to implement the Four Corners Plan, which in its latest iteration recommended building an additional 112,000 square feet of library space and more than doubling the Library's long term staffing costs. The current economic climate has made this traditional system model simply unachievable in Olathe from the perspectives of both capital and ongoing operational costs.

A "NEW" LIBRARY SYSTEM MODEL

This Master Plan proposes an adjusted set of principles for a more fiscally sustainable library system model. The principles underlying the new recommendations for Olathe include:

- **Population size**. The amount of library space is provided in proportion to population size. (This basic principle is unchanged.)

- **Fewer, larger libraries**. Large libraries are less expensive to build and significantly less expensive to operate than multiple smaller libraries adding up to the same total square footage.

- **Destination libraries**. Full service libraries that provide sufficient breadth and depth of resources will successfully attract and serve customers from throughout the community.

As the library customer mapping revealed, this more sustainable model of library service is essentially already in effect – and successful – in Olathe. The maps show that Downtown and Indian Creek are both "destination" libraries that offer sufficient materials, programs, computers, and spaces to attract customers from throughout the city rather than just from their immediate neighborhoods. I-35 does not appear to be a significant barrier to travel, nor does the relative distance from even the furthest northwest and southeast areas of the city.

As such, this Master Plan recommends that Olathe continue to maintain its two destination libraries in these locations. New libraries in other parts of the city are not needed. Rather, these two libraries should be enhanced to provide additional space required to accommodate population growth.

From the perspective of customer experience, both the Downtown and Indian Creek libraries should be seen as full service libraries offering robust resources and spaces for all ages. While both libraries could offer nearly identical services, there is also an opportunity for each location to develop unique areas of distinction or emphasis – such as local history, business incubator support, or advanced media creation facilities.

Overall Library administrative and technical services support functions should remain together in one location, and are ideally located downtown for enhanced partnership with the City.

No more "main and branch" — instead, full-service destination libraries for Olathe.
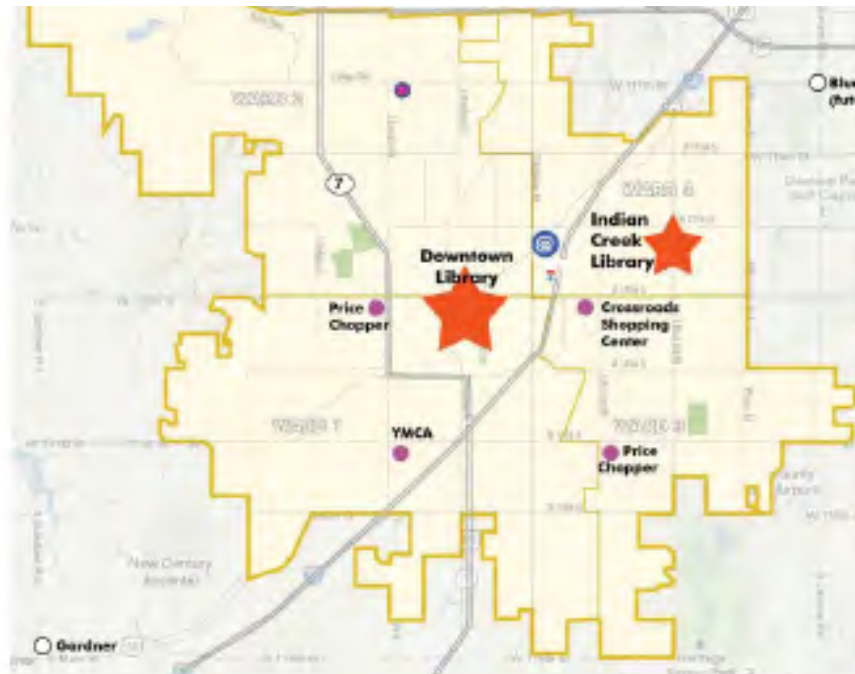
DESTINATION LIBRARY MODEL

SYSTEM MODEL

- **Destination Libraries**

  - *The Library's current Downtown and Indian Creek library locations serve the community well*

  - *Recommendation: maintain full-service destination libraries in these two locations*

  - *No staffed libraries are needed in other areas of the city*

  - *Unstaffed kiosks may be implemented based on opportunity and operational feasibility – e.g., kiosk at new community center*

RECOMMENDATIONS

SERVICE LEVELS

One of the most common measures used in master planning libraries is the ratio of space to population, usually expressed in terms of square feet per capita. Although this measure is used almost universally, in fact there is no universally-accepted standard or guideline for the appropriate ratio. Each library determines its own appropriate level based on the characteristics of its service population as well as of its own system model. The appropriate target level varies based on factors such as:

- Population size – smaller service populations tend to require a higher ratio of library space per capita than larger service populations
- Library system model – a system model with fewer, larger libraries is more space efficient than a system with many facilities
- Complementary services, facilities, and resources available in the community – strong service partnerships and supplemental service options can allow libraries to operate in less space
- Available resources for construction
- Available resources for long-term staffing and operations
- Volume and types of services and materials offered

Although many library systems' planning targets fall within the range of approximately 0.5 to 1.0 square feet per capita, there are examples of libraries who successfully deliver services in significantly less space than that, as well as libraries who plan to build more than that. Other libraries in the Kansas City Metro area have set targets of 0.65 to 0.75 square feet per capita based on their analysis of their respective communities' vision and needs, and are moving forward with their plans to add more library space as resources become available.

LIBRARY SPACE PLANNING

- OPL at 0.35 SF/capita today
- Neighboring libraries planning for 0.65-0.76 SF/capita
  - 0.65 Mid-Continent Public Library
  - 0.70 Johnson County Library (does not include Olathe population or libraries)
  - 0.75 Kansas City, Kansas Public Library
  - 0.76 Lawrence PL (after library expansion)
- Previous OPL MP recommendation = 0.8 SF/capita
- What is the right level for OPL moving forward?

SERVICE LEVELS

Added library space will address both the current space deficit and the needs of Olathe's population as it grows
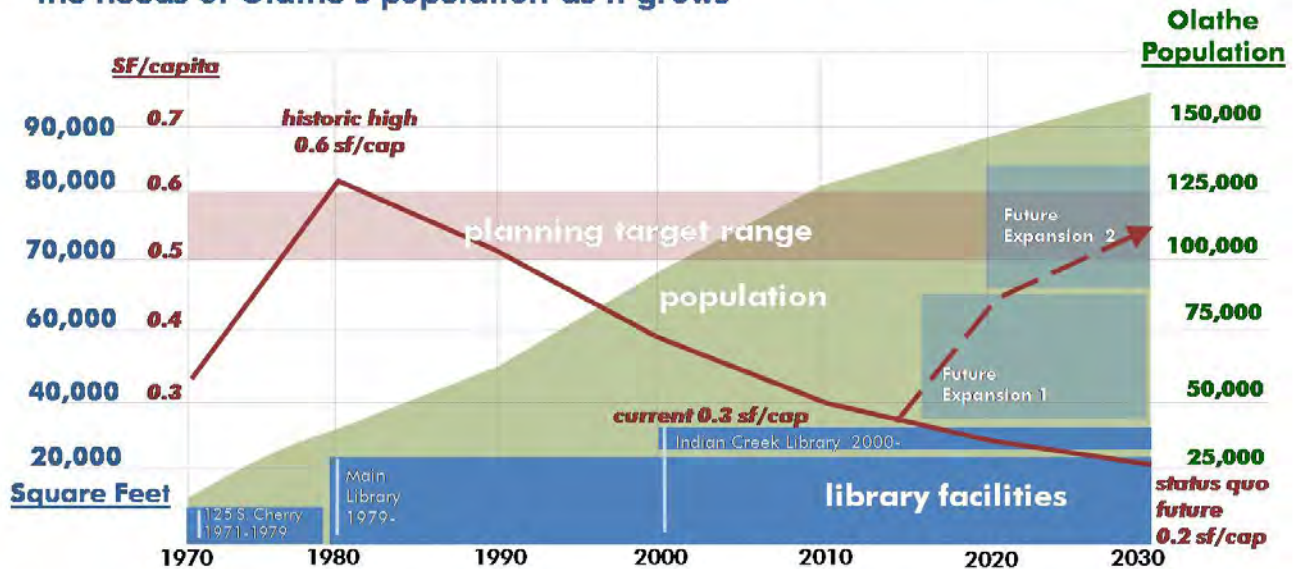
LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

Today, OPL's two library locations total approximately 36,000 square feet, which represents about 0.35 square feet per capita based on the current population size. Observation of conditions at each library, along with input from Library staff and members of the Joint Task Force, confirmed that this is not enough space to serve Olathe's current population. The space deficit has negative impacts on library service – the collection cannot grow, there is little space for programs, and customers cannot find enough space in the library to sit, read, and work. There is already a need for more space in Olathe's libraries to improve service to customers today; without improvements, this deficit will only grow as Olathe's population continues to increase over time.

In order to achieve Olathe's library vision, more library space is needed. Based on the analysis of the Olathe community, its characteristics, and its library service vision, this Master Plan recommends a new target service level range of 0.5 to 0.6 square feet per capita. This target range is facilitated by factors such as Olathe's large and highly mobile population as well as its already-successful destination library system model.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Expanding and improving Olathe's library facilities to this target level will provide opportunities for the Library to:

- create a vibrant destination and gathering place for Olatheans of all ages and backgrounds;

- provide programs and services that encourage active learning and civic engagement;

- increase public access to computers and technology;

- develop a collection to meet the needs of the growing community; and

- leverage existing staff to increase customer service without significantly increasing operating costs.

Consistent with Olathe's destination libraries system model, it is recommended that the additional space be distributed between the Downtown Library and the Indian Creek Library. The table below summarizes this recommendation; additional detail about the recommendations for each library follows.

|	TODAY	2025
Downtown Library	24,000 square feet	40,000-55,000 square feet
Indian Creek Library	12,000 square feet	30,000-40,000 square feet
Total	36,000 square feet	70,000-95,000 square feet
	~0.35 sf/capita	0.5-0.6 sf/capita

DOWNTOWN LIBRARY

The Downtown Library should be expanded to approximately 40,000 to 55,000 square feet. It should continue to be a destination library capable of serving customers from throughout Olathe. As the Indian Creek Library is expanded into a co-equal destination library, the Downtown Library will no longer be pressed to provide the same level of collection and program support for its sister library.

There are several options for expanding the Downtown Library that will be evaluated further as part of the next steps of implementation.

Renovation and expansion

The existing 24,000 square foot building could be retained and a new addition constructed in order to reach the full recommended size. The current site appears to provide sufficient capacity to accommodate a single-story addition to the south of the existing building. A major advantage of the renovation and expansion option is that it preserves and leverages the existing building as a significant asset.


RENOVATION AND EXPANSION
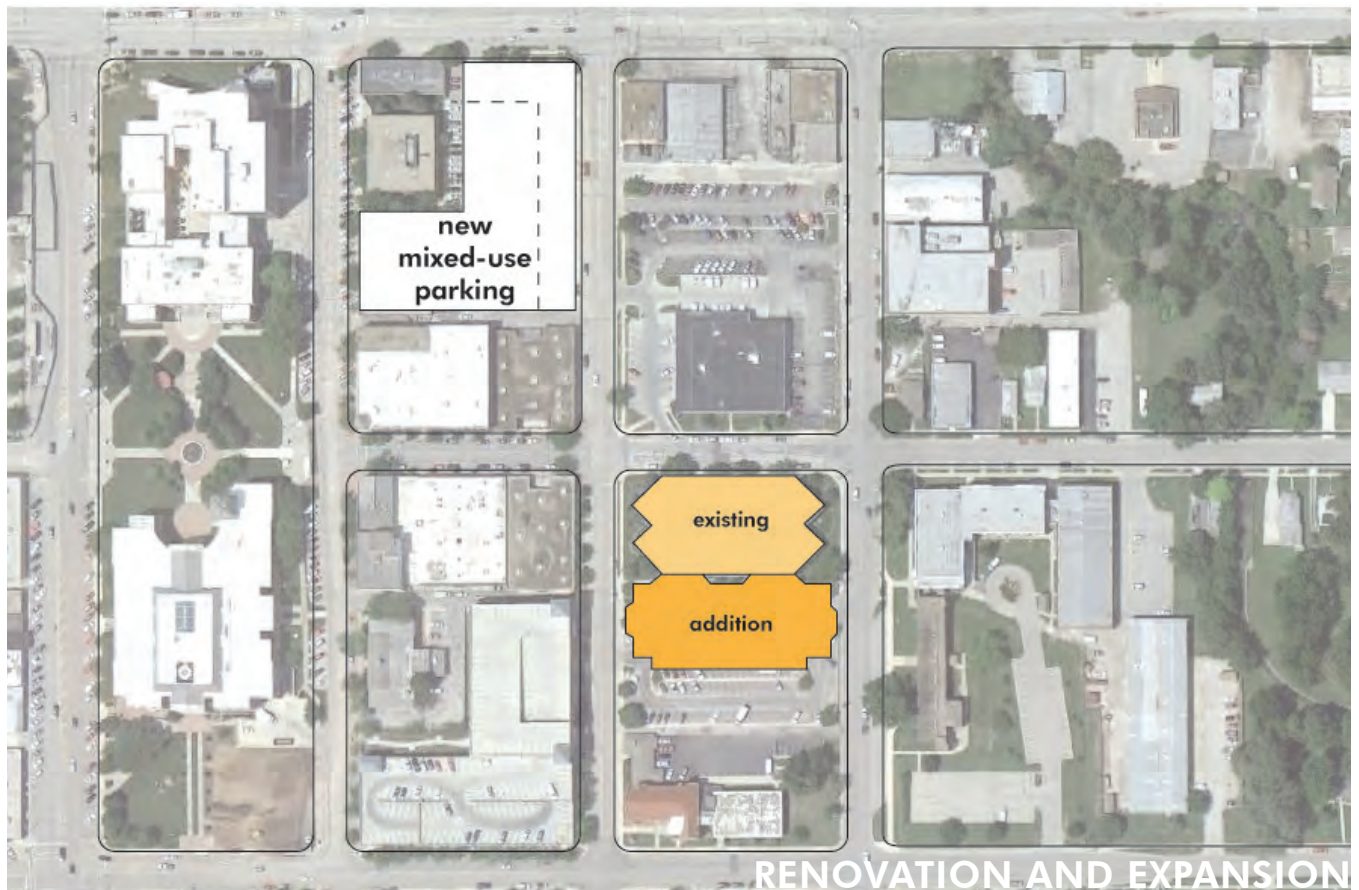
RECOMMENDATIONS

Renovation of the existing building could be as simple as an interior makeover, or a more extensive remodel depending on factors such as:

- how the building program is organized for both customer use and staff operations;

- the extent of integration of building structure and systems between the old and new wings;

- whether the project would trigger code-required upgrades to the structure, building systems, and/or accessibility accommodations; and/or

- whether the City wishes to voluntarily upgrade the building, such as to enhance it aesthetically and/or improve its energy performance and long-term sustainability.

Expansion of the existing Downtown Library would eliminate a significant amount of parking; the City could potentially increase the capacity of the parking garages planned as part of the development of downtown Olathe, and/or find a nearby site to provide additional surface parking for library customer use.

This option would also likely require the closure of the Downtown Library during construction. A temporary library facility could be established at a nearby location in order to maintain core services to the community.

The new Walnut Creek Library in downtown Walnut Creek, California is an example of a destination library that attracts customers from throughout the city. The new library enhances — and shares parking with — the adjacent civic center and downtown commercial district.
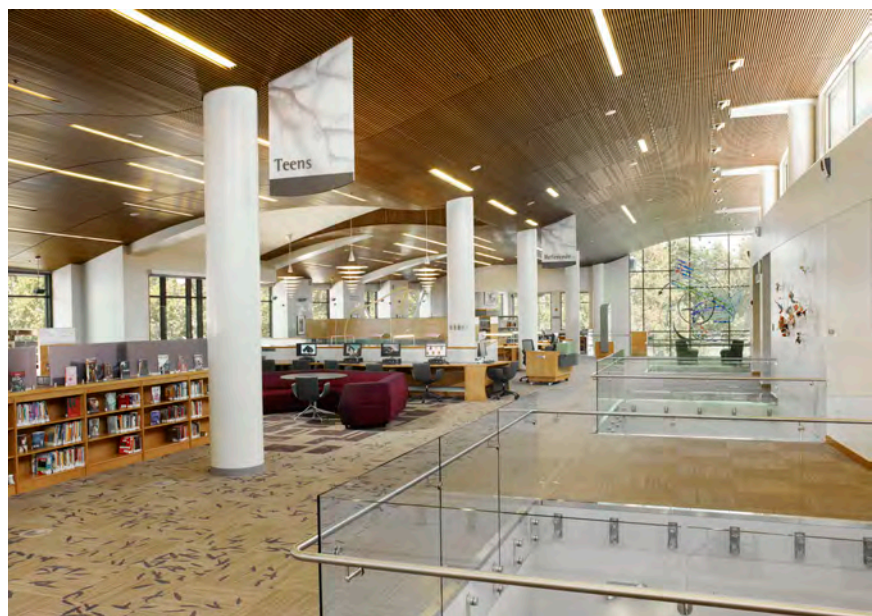
Replacement

The existing Downtown Library could be replaced with a new structure at its recommended full size, on either the current site or an alternate location within downtown Olathe. Although this option is likely to have higher first costs than renovation/expansion, it does provide a number of advantages, including:

- A new two-story library with an efficient building footprint may enable the current site to accommodate most or all of the required parking.

- A new building could be designed for maximum staff efficiency, reducing long-term operating costs – which can easily exceed construction costs over time.

- A new building could facilitate a highly energy efficient and environmentally sustainable building that reduces both energy and ecological costs.

- A new building could provide the opportunity for a stronger connection with East Park Street and better integration into the City's vision for urban development in downtown Olathe.

Replacement on the current site would likely require the closure of the Downtown Library during construction.

building + landscape
40,000-55,000 SF building
approx. 0.9-2.1 acres (two story)

+

parking
100-130 spaces
approx. 0.8-1.2 acres (surface)
less for parking structure

Downtown Library site criteria

- Location – high profile, visible; convenient, central location; compatible with land use/community development goals; close to complementary activity/service nodes
- Capacity – ~0.9-2.1 acres for building + ~0.8-1.2 acres for surface parking
- Characteristics – appropriate shape, access, circulation/flow
- Practical: available, affordable, free of economic/environmental liabilities

The 42,000 square foot Walnut Creek Library is four times the size of its predecessor, but can be operated seven days per week with just 14 staff FTE. The new library is also highly energy efficient, saving significant operating costs for the City of Walnut Creek.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Adaptive reuse

Many communities are finding that adaptive reuse of existing non-library buildings can be a cost-effective way to meet their communities' need for 21st century libraries. If there are existing buildings in downtown Olathe with sufficient capacity to accommodate a library of 40,000 to 55,000 square feet and its associated parking requirements, it may be to the City's advantage to evaluate this opportunity. In addition to the first costs of acquisition and construction, factors to consider in evaluating such opportunities include whether the building can be effectively transformed into a functional, efficient, and beautiful library consistent with Olathe's vision for library service and urban development.

In addition to potential construction cost savings, the adaptive reuse of an existing building would offer the advantage of keeping the current Downtown Library open during construction in order to maintain uninterrupted service to the community.

This new library in Scotts Valley, California is an example of adaptive reuse of an existing building. The community's indoor roller rink was transformed into a modern library for a fraction of the cost of new construction.
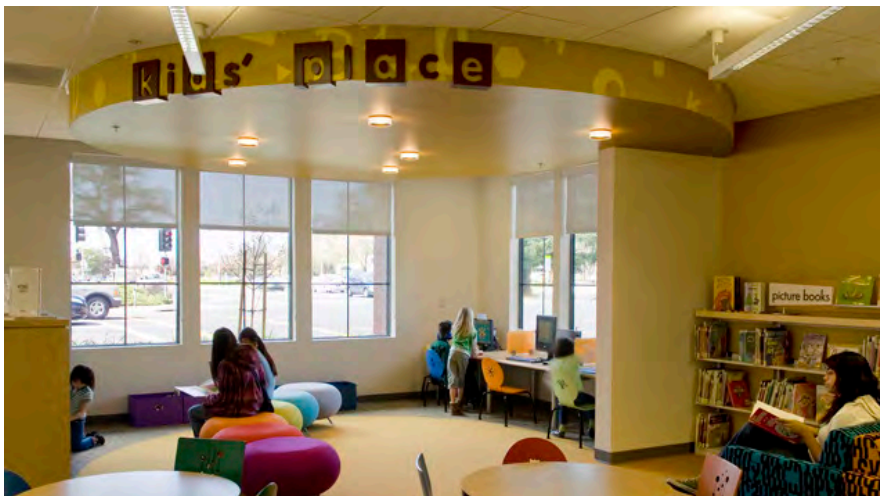
The City of Elk Grove, California adapted a former office building for its new Old Town Library.
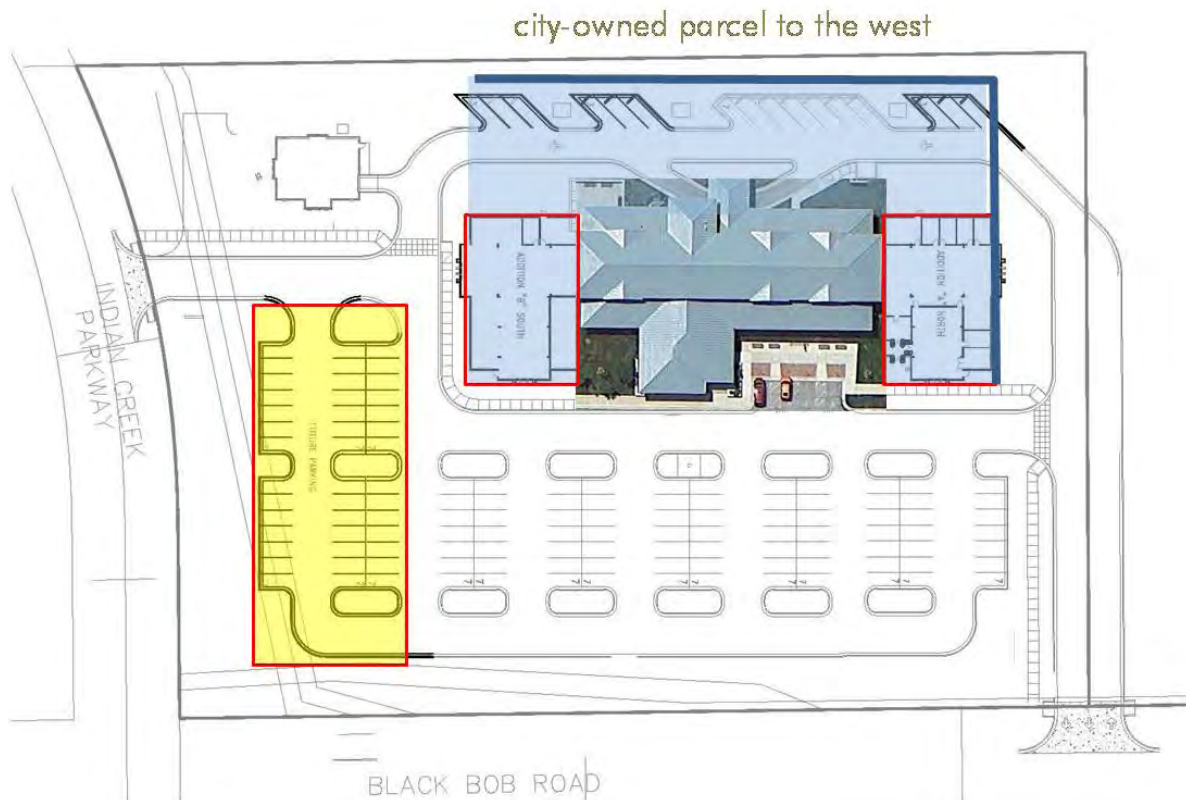
INDIAN CREEK LIBRARY

The Indian Creek Library should be expanded to approximately 30,000 to 40,000 square feet. No longer a "branch" secondary to another library location, the Indian Creek Library will be a full-service destination library offering customers access to the full range of collections, programs, and services. This is not to say that Indian Creek must be an identical copy of the Downtown Library. There are likely to be many opportunities to tailor Indian Creek to reflect specific community interests and local partnerships.

The Indian Creek Library can be maintained and expanded on its current site. The building was designed for future expansion to 24,000 square feet through the extension of the north and south wings, which will not be sufficient to meet the new recommendation of at least 30,000 square feet. There appears to be an opportunity to also expand the building to the west, on the site of the current driveway loop. The City owns the adjacent parcel to the west, so it may be possible to shift the driveway loop if the Library wishes to continue to provide drive-up access to the book drops.

The previously designed expansion also planned for providing additional parking on site, which appears capable of meeting the increased parking needs of an expanded library.

ADMINISTRATION AND SYSTEMWIDE SERVICES

As Olathe moves forward with the planning and design of the expanded buildings, the Library can evaluate whether to relocate any or all of its systemwide service functions, such as technical services, to the Indian Creek Library on either an interim or permanent basis. The Library may find it advantageous to keep administrative functions downtown for proximity to its partners at City Hall.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The long-term recommendations for library facilities in Olathe do not include any staffed locations other than at the Downtown Library and the Indian Creek Library. However, the Library may wish to consider supplementing the services available at its two destination facilities with services at other unstaffed locations. In fact, the Library already offers satellite locations where customers may return borrowed items — an excellent example of the Library's commitment to supplementing its service to the community.

Examples of other supplemental services that the Library may wish to evaluate providing in non-library partner locations include:

• Material vending. More and more libraries throughout the world are offering automated vending of collection materials, which customers can access with the swipe of a library card. Transit hubs are an example of a popular location for material vending machines.

• Material lockers. For customers who reserve books online but have difficulty getting to the library during normal operating hours, the locker system can make holds available 24/7. Lockers can be incorporated in the design of new purpose-built libraries for access from the exterior as well as in non-library partner locations.

• Quick access terminals. Customers can interface with library systems, including the collection catalog, registration, account status, the materials reserve system, and databases. These can also be configured for previewing electronic materials

Any of these options can work as a stand-alone amenity or in combination with others. An excellent example of a highly complementary partner location for a library kiosk would be the forthcoming Olathe Community Center. In addition, there are many other public and private entities in Olathe that could be ideal partners for a kiosk location as well. All options and partnerships will require more detailed evaluation of feasibility, appropriateness of response to community service needs, and cost-benefit analysis. However, building upon and leveraging existing relationships with strategic community partners can be an important way to quickly enhance the presence of library facilities in Olathe.

Concept for library kiosk in the Olathe Community Center (courtesy SFS Architecture)

PLANNING FOR IMPLEMENTATION

This Master Plan is intended as a foundation for planning the future of libraries in Olathe. The principles, recommendations, and overall planning timeline are guides – not a mandate – for improving the Library's facilities and ability to serve the community in the future. Periodic reevaluation and updating of this Master Plan is encouraged in order to accommodate any significant changes in needs, resources, and opportunities that may occur during the timeline for implementation.

PARTNERSHIPS AND FUNDING

Communities throughout the nation are taking a creative approach to getting library projects funded and built. Partnerships are becoming an increasingly important strategy for library capital projects, including public-public, public-nonprofit, and public-private partnerships. For some communities, these partnerships take the form of a commitment from Library Foundations and Friends groups to raise a certain amount of money for capital projects. In others, it may involve more formal agreements to jointly build and operate facilities.

In addition to existing partners such as the City of Olathe and the Johnson County Library, participants in the Joint Task Force workshops and the Strategic Vision Workshop identified a variety of potential new partners for the Library, such as the Olathe Unified School District, Kansas State University, the Chamber of Commerce, the YMCA, the business community, faith-based organizations, and local health care providers. Opportunities for partnerships could include services as well as facilities. The Library's commitment to service excellence, as well as proactive outreach on the part of both OPL and the City, will be strong assets in the development of effective partnerships that benefit all parties.

To effectively implement the recommendations set forth in this plan, strong, visionary leadership must be provided for libraries in Olathe to leverage available resources and meet the community's ever-expanding needs, objectives, and expectations.

IMPLEMENTATION

DETAILED FACILITY PLANNING AND DESIGN

Each of the recommended facility projects will require further study in order to define the program, budget, and timeline. In the case of the expanded Downtown Library, the City will also need to determine whether the current site or a new location will be most appropriate and feasible.

In addition to the impacts of expanded buildings on the community fabric and the environment, there are many aspects of library design that affect the quality, volume, and cost of delivering effective library service. For example, the Library's ongoing operations budget can be maximized through careful design and the effective use of technology to support highly efficient staffing and low energy use. The proposed expansions of the Downtown and Indian Creek libraries will require a qualified architectural team experienced in the planning and design of modern, sustainable libraries that support excellent and efficient service.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

Throughout the implementation stages, the City and the Library should continue outreach to the community in order to build support for the recommended projects. Unfortunately, some communities have found that a lack of public support – even if capital funding is in place – can delay library projects or even derail them entirely. It will be important to continue the dialogue in order to ensure that the Olathe community understands the need for enhancements to Olathe's libraries and the rationale behind the recommendations.

INTERIM MEASURES

Recognizing that resources to implement the long-term recommendations may not be immediately available, the City and the Library may wish to evaluate cost-effective opportunities to supplement library service in the interim. Possible strategies include:

• Selective minor facility remodels to improve service. For example, portions of each library's interior could be renovated to increase meeting/program space; create a "marketplace" that makes new and popular materials more accessible; and/or implement a more efficient service model with a consolidated staff service point and expanded customer self-service options.

• Securing additional space to temporarily supplement public service and/or staff back-of-house functions. Ideally, additional space should be located close to the current Downtown Library in order to minimize increases to operational costs as well as to reinforce and support Olathe's "destination library" system model.

Some of these options are illustrated graphically below and on the following page. All opportunities for interim measures in Olathe should be assessed carefully to ensure that any improvements will have lasting value within the context of the long-term master plan recommendations and available resources for implementation.

INTERIM OPTIONS

Option: add space in downtown Olathe for programs, teens, technology, and/or other public services

+ *leverage City or partner facilities*

+ *minimal or no construction intervention at existing Downtown Library*

– *decentralized/"fractured" public services*

– *may require additional/shifted staff and/or budget resources*

INTERIM OPTIONS

- **Option: move some staff functions out; renovate Downtown Library to expand public service space**

    + *expanded public service in single location – "one stop shop"*
    – *requires renovation of existing building*
    – *make sure any interim investments will have long term value*

option: move Technical Services out; create larger meeting/program space

- **Option: service model "makeovers"**

    + *improve customer experience*
    + *boost customer base*
    + *increase operational sustainability*
    – *make sure any interim investments will have long term value*

option: implement new service desk and increased customer self-service opportunities

CITY, LIBRARY, AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS

The Olathe Public Library Master Plan is built on the participation and generous contributions of many City, Library, and community stakeholders.

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Dana Lambert, JTF Vice-Chair	Library Board of Directors
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Larry Campbell	Olathe City Council, Kansas House of Representatives
Jack Hansen	Library Board of Directors, Chair
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