EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Value of the Public Library

Public opinion regarding U.S. public libraries has found:

- 91 percent of Americans 16 or older believe that public libraries are important to their communities;
- 76 percent say libraries are important to them and their families;
- 92 percent believed libraries will be needed in the future, even with all of the information available on the Internet;
- 85%indicated that public libraries deserve more funding; and
- 60 percent of Americans under the age of 30 used the public library in the past year.

The economic impact of libraries on their communities is profound:

- A 2012 study conducted by the University of Texas at Austin found that for every dollar invested in public libraries the return was $4.42 – a 350% return on investment; and
- Similar studies showed returns on investment in Ohio of $2.56, in South Carolina of $ 4.48, and in Florida of $6.54.

Strong economics result in quality education and healthcare, accessible retail, restaurants, parks, libraries, and neighborhoods – adding to the quality of life in a given community. The Round Rock Public Library (RRPL) has the potential to be a major contributor to economic development in the City. A good quality of life entices businesses to come to Round Rock, and encourages them and their employees to stay and make Round Rock their home.

Community Economics, Demographics & Growth

The Round Rock community is:

Wealthy: The average annual income is $98,000.
- 73% make over $50,000 per year; and
- Only 16% make less than $35,000.

Highly educated: Almost 32% have a college degree – the number one predictor of library usage.
- Over 67 % of residents over 25 years old have college credits.

Young: The median age is 32.3.
- Only 5% of the population is retirement age; and
- 34% are pre-kindergarten or school age – the number two predictor of library usage.

Family-dominated: 56 % of households have children – the number three predictor of library usage.

A high growth area: From 2000 to 2010, growth was 47%.
- From 2010 to 2015, growth is expected to be as high as 23%;
- The projected service populations for RRPL are 142,833 in 2023, and 173,785 in 2033 – up from 110,487 in 2010 (29% and 57% increases, respectively).

A highly mobile population: 50.5% have two cars.
- Only 3 % of households do not own a car.

A consumer society: Residents spend almost 50% more than the national average on most items, except for apparel, which ranks at the national average.

Round Rock is growing and all indications are that growth will continue. As the city grows, so must RRPL. A market segment analysis of RRPL's customer data found the following traits to be prevalent among cardholder households:

- Age range of 35 to 54;
- Income level of $75,000+;
- Three or more persons in the household;
- Presence of children in the household; and
- Length of residency is six or more years.

RRPL customers have interests in children's products, reading, personal travel, online shopping, and fitness – data to improve understanding of cardholder lifestyles– fostering effective communication and targeted prospecting efforts.

Since 2008, Round Rock has been named in a number of the "best places to live" in the country, including rankings by *Money* magazine, Kiplinger, and *CNN Money*. Statistically, Round Rock compares favorably in many areas, and not so well in others:

Executive Summary

page 1

Strategic Master Plan 2013
Round Rock Public Library
prepared by Godfrey's Associates, Inc.

best places measurement	Round Rock	best places average
Median family income	$85,059	$93,313
Family purchasing power	$101,381	$84,862
Job growth	45.2%	18.6%
Median price home	$193,931	$293,712
Average property tax	$3,850	$4,072
Higher education institutions within 30 miles	10	40
Libraries within 15 mile radius	46	90
Accredited museums	1	11
Median age	30.5	36.0
Married	62.2%	57.5%
Divorced	8.5%	8.3%
Racial diversity	105.3	104.0

There is little doubt that the economy in Round Rock is strong. However, for quality of life issues primarily funded by taxes are to be strengthened, then tax rates will likely need to rise.

Analysis of Public Opinion of Current Library Services

The RRPL is used a great deal by the community, and there is real support for the Library. To gauge public opinion, the Consultants received input from approximately 1,000 respondents regarding preferred library service priorities:

- Seven Focus Group discussions with 66 participants;
- Interviews with 12 key stakeholders;
- A telephone survey of 401 non-users – 25% were cell phone users, not land lines – 28% spoke Spanish;
- An In-Library survey with 166 respondents; and
- An online survey with 399 respondents.

A summary of the Focus Group responses follows, with all comments available in Appendix 2.1.

What is good about RRPL?
- Children's services (programming and collections);
- Library staff is outstanding; and
- Genealogy collection and service.

What is not so good about RRPL?
- Inadequate amount of space and inadequate parking;
- Computers in Children's Services; and
- Hours of service.

Why doesn't everyone use the Library?
- Lack of awareness and adequate publicity;
- Nonresident fees; and
- Lack of transportation options in the city.

What improvements would you make?
- Add a coffee bar;
- Move the library;
- Delivery service and/or a bookmobile; and
- More programming.

What would you contribute to improve the Library?
- Volunteer;
- Donate money; and
- Increase taxes.

Stakeholder Interviews. The list of 12 individuals interviewed is contained in Appendix 2.2. Their summarized comments are:

What is the future of Round Rock?
- The City will continue to grow in population and diversity;
- Growth will be focused in the northeast and southeast; and
- The transportation system must be addressed.

How does the Library fit into that future?
- A good public library is very important – a source of information, education, and entertainment;
- The Library contributes to the educational fabric of the City;
- Its future depends on how how well it handles technology.

Where should a new Library be located if there is to be one?
- Downtown, but not at the present site;
- Not too far from the western part of Round Rock because that is where the votes are; and
- Northeast near the colleges and universities.

Surveys of Library Users. Appendices 2.3 and 2.4 have results of the in-library and online surveys. Highlights are:

Executive Summary

page 2

Strategic Master Plan 2013
Round Rock Public Library
prepared by Godfrey's Associates, Inc.

Frequency of Library in the use past year?
- Weekly – 43.9% and Monthly – 28.0%;
- Other – 28.1% (included daily, 2-5 times a week, first time).

What improvements would you make?
- More library materials, books, DVDs, CDs;
- More eBooks and other downloadable materials;
- More programs for adults;
- More hours of services, especially weekends; and
- More computers, printers, scanners, etc.

Why do you visit the website?
- Check online catalog – 74.0%;
- Renew or reserve a collection item - 65.0%;
- Check library calendar of events – 46.0% and
- Download eBooks – 26%.

Level of satisfaction with the Round Rock Public Library?
- Nine of 10 indicated they were "very satisfied."

The benefits of RRPL versus other tax-supported services?
- 67.3% of in-library and 60.0% of online respondents ranked the library "at the top of the list;" and
- 33.7% of in-library and 36.0% of online responses indicated "in the middle."

Support a tax increase for improved services/facilities?
Yes – 39.9% and No – 13.1%;
Depends – 40.0% and Do not know – 7.0%.

Telephone Survey of Non-Users. Using random digital dialing, the confidence factor is 95%. Complete survey results are contained in Appendix 2.5, with highlights as follows:

Primary reasons for non-use?
- Have computer and Internet access at home – 87.0%;
- Buy own books and magazines - 75.0%; and
- Do not have time – 45.0%, and lack of interest – 33.0%.

Demographics of the non-users
- Females – 52.0%, Males – 48.0%; and
- College degree – 49.0%, some college – 31.0%, and high school or less education – 20.0%.

Comparisons with Round Rock Peers

Using 2011 U.S. Census data, the Consultants developed demographic analyses of Texas peer communities that the City of Round Rock typically uses for benchmarking – Allen, Carrollton, Denton, Frisco, Lewisville, Richardson, and Sugar Land.

Community Demographics. Compared to their peers, Round Rock is about average – which in this case is a good attribute.

demographic	Round Rock	peer average
Population Under Age 5	8.8%	7.9%
Population Age 65	5.4%	7.7%
White	70.8%	70.7%
Hispanic/Latino	29.0%	23.7%
High School	91.1%	89.4%
College Degree	36.8%	41.2%
Home Ownership	62.1%	68.0%

Peer Library Comparisons. Excluding Sugar Land as an anomaly, Round Rock lags behind five of the other six peers. The most telling data is the following:

demographic	Round Rock	peer average	national[1] average
Staff per population served	29.50	38.28	81.00
Cost per full-time equivalent	$54,882	$52,411	$51,474
% of budget for staff costs	70.3	68.2	67.3
% of revenue from local sources	99.9	98.2	86.3
Collection turnover	4.63	4.63	3.50
Collections per capita	1.77	1.81	2.73
Customer transactions per capita	11.55	13.18	15.89
Total expenditures per capita	$20.85	$27.16	$38.62

Since Round Rock has been one of the fastest growing cities in the U.S., it will be hard pressed to keep up with its peers without a boost in financial support for operations and capital projects.

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[1] The national average is for libraries serving an average population of 161,612, similar to the 2031 population projection for Round Rock.

Executive Summary

page 3

Strategic Master Plan 2013
Round Rock Public Library
prepared by Godfrey's Associates, Inc.

Trends in Public Libraries

As the 65+ population expands, there will be an increasing number coming to the Library, so collections and furniture will need to reflect the needs of this ever-increasing customer base. Conversely, as the country becomes more demographically diverse, there will be a steady increase in children ages 0 to 12. An important trend in education is the age that learning starts. The most critical years of a child's life are the first five. So much of a child's future is wrapped up in the 0 to 5 span that if real learning does not start at birth, by age 5 it is often too late.

Many persons are accustomed to the rapidity of change in technology, and now they expect their public library to be "up to speed" on these changes. This means the Library must be designed, constructed, and equipped for adaptability. Other trends that could be assimilated into RRPL are:

- Use of social media and e-commerce as business transaction/ marketing tools for the library;
- The reference desk is disappearing, in favor of roaming, identifiable staff with mobile devices who meet customers at the library entrance to offer service;
- Maker spaces and collaborative work stations with the latest in technology, including touch screen computers and 3-D printers;
- Delivering library services through non-traditional outlets; and
- Patron-driven acquisitions to build the library's collections, which are merchandised just like in any retail outlet – often purchased in library consortia with stronger buying power.

Library Partnerships

The potential for expanding the reach of the Library via mutually beneficial partnerships is significant. The Consultants believe meaningful partnerships with compatible organizations can strengthen RRPL.

Existing Partnerships. RRPL has ongoing partnerships with a significant number of organizations for community service, programming, presentations, volunteering opportunities, computer skill building, English as a Second Language (ESL) training, classes at the Library on gardening, organic foods, and the like.. Current local partners include:

- Businesses such as Barnes & Noble and the Book Spot;
- Service/education/culture institutions like Rotary Club, the Williamson Museum, Chamber of Commerce, RRISD, Round Rock Arts Council, and Round Rock Family History Center;
- City of Round Rock Departments of Fire, Police, Information Technology, and Parks and Recreation; and
- Williamson County organizations such as the Literacy Council, Genealogical Society, and Master Gardeners.

Potential Partnerships. Opportunities exist with various types of organizations, such as:

- Education and children-related entities of Austin Community College, Texas State University, Texas A&M Health Science Center, A World for Children, or Junior Achievement;
- Civic and Cultural organizations like Lions, YMCA, Local Legends Committee, El Amistad, or the Historic Commission;
- Businesses/Corporations such as Emerson or TechShop.

Effective partnerships will result from work on the part of the Library as well as the partner – not because they are considered to be important. The Library can only be responsible for itself, so it is incumbent that RRPL have adequate staff to implement a partnership development program.

SWOT Analysis

To conduct a complete Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats (SWOT) Analysis, the Consultants analyzed the eight areas of evaluation defined by the Texas Public Library Standards (TPLS), summarized in the table on the following page.

Executive Summary

page 4

Strategic Master Plan 2013
Round Rock Public Library
prepared by Godfrey's Associates, Inc.

SWOT Analysis	TPL standards compliance	strengths	weaknesses	opportunities	threats
Administration	9 of 11	Good leadership. Friends of the Library.	No Library Board. Does not publish an annual report.	Increase the number of administrative personnel. Revise organization chart.	No Board to perform checks and balances oversight
Resources/ Collections	8 of 8	Large collection of children's materials.	60% of total collection is over five years old.	Update the collection development plan. Remove old books from collection.	Improvements needed are very difficult with present funding constraints.
Facilities	16 of 18	Building is well maintained.	Building is too small. Building shape hinders public service. Inadequate parking.	Increase space from 0.39 square feet per capita to 0.60 with new facilities.	Physical limitations keep some people from using the Library.
Finance	4 of 5	Meets most TPL minimum standards.	Per capita funding is 76% of peer average.	A Library Foundation could raise significant funds.	Budget does not allow for services the public expects.
Marketing/ Public Relations	9 of 10	Good effort with limited resources.	Does not evaluate policies & procedures effect on public relations.	Add a Marketing Director to staff.	Lacks cohesive marketing/public relations plan.
Personnel/ Staffing	4 of 5	Meets all standards except providing part-time staff with annual training.	Total staff FTE is 77% of peer average.	Provide minimum starting salary for Librarians.	Current budget makes it difficult to attract and retain quality staff.
Programs & Services	17 of 17	Excellent children's programming & overall service.	Limited teen programs. Lack of diverse programs for adults.	Improve teen services & programming. Replace service desks with user-friendly options.	Too many programs for staff to provide consistent quality sought by public.
Technology	2 of 2	Good support from City IT.	Older technology is deployed throughout.	Procure a new ILS. RRPL control of its IT.	Lack of Library IT expert on staff.

Core Library Business Plan

Sustainability *must* be at the heart of good core library services. Sustainability means consistency, and consistency – which does *not* mean the absence of change – leads to a better quality for all concerned. The Consultants recommend the Core Library Business Plan for RRPL include:

- *Tiered Membership in the Library*: So non-residents can support RRPL as equally as residents, or at a lower amount for reduced services;
- *Service to Round Rock Youth:* Four distinct age groups including Early Childhood, Kids, Tweens, and Teens;

Executive Summary

page 5

Strategic Master Plan 2013
Round Rock Public Library
prepared by Godfrey's Associates, Inc.

- **Service to Round Rock Adults:** Focusing on interests of identified market segments, including health and wellness, do-it-yourself, financial planning and investments, and travel;
- **Service to Small Business:** Supporting the engine of job growth in the U.S., savvy small business owners flock to the Library to use resources they cannot afford on their own;
- **Service to Genealogists:** An expanding area of interest as retired baby boomers increase, this is also a tourist attraction;
- **Service to Local History Buffs:** "Cousins" to genealogists;
- **Increased Programming:** In addition to excellent children's programs, provide programs for Adults, Tweens, and Teens.

Service Delivery. The means to deliver service should become more diverse than the single building approach, to include:

- **In-Library Technology:** The same as customers expect from other service providers;
- **Remote Access:** Convenient 24/7/365 service from the Virtual Branch of RRPL – the Library's webpage;
- **Un-Staffed Kiosks:** Marketing services at high-traffic locations like Dell Diamond;
- **Multiple Library Buildings:** Replacing the current Library with a Main Library near the center of Round Rock and a Branch Library for the convenience of residents west of I-35;
- **Mobile Service:** Delivering library collections/services to customers who may not be able to get to a Library.

Library Facilities. After evaluating various future scenarios, the Consultants recommend an RRPL system to include new full-service Main and Branch Libraries that will approach the minimum standard of 0.60 square feet per capita, bringing Round Rock roughly in line with its Texas peer communities.

Funding Plan

Over the next 10 years, the Library's budget should increase $1.6 million, with per capita support rising from $22.16 currently to $28.85 – more closely in line with Round Rock peer libraries. The Consultants also surveyed potential revenue streams tapped by other public libraries, recommending:

- **Williamson County:** Approach the County about providing financial support to the eight public libraries in the County by paying non-resident library fees for County residents;
- **Grants:** A more aggressive pursuit of grants in conjunction with the City's Grants Coordinator;
- **Earned Income:** Opportunities to increase earned income include re-structured meeting room fees, smart card technology, mobile technology for credit cards, and a revised non-resident fee structure;
- **Increased State Aid:** Join a coordinated, state-wide lobbying effort to convince the Legislature that state aid for public libraries will benefit everyone;
- **Sponsorship of Magazine & Journal Subscriptions:** A private sector sponsorship with the sponsor's name being associated with the periodical(s) sponsored;
- **Friends of the Library:** Improving earning potential through joint marketing with RRPL and a revamped dues structure;
- **Library Foundation:** With goals of endowing library staff continuing education/training and children's programming.

Action Plan

In addition to an Implementation Schedule that efficiently supports service improvements and recommended capital improvement projects, the Consultants analyzed:

- **Tiered Service Options.** Incremental service delivery opportunities that allow for a logical responses to changing economic circumstances, population growth, and/or demographic shifts over the short- and long-term are limited;
- **Measurable Objectives.** Quantitative goals with tools and methodologies for on-going assessment and public feedback – to evaluate success in achieving objectives.

Implementation Schedule. The timeline for implementing recommendations spans the fiscal years 2013 through 2018. Operational improvement costs are included in the 10-year Operational Budget Projections presented in Appendix 7.1.

Executive Summary

page 6

Strategic Master Plan 2013
Round Rock Public Library
prepared by Godfrey's Associates, Inc.

FY 2014. Operational improvement recommendations include:

1. **OI1:** Hire a new part-time Library Marketing Director.
2. Develop an RRPL marketing campaign.
3. Initiate steps to re-create a Round Rock Library Foundation.
4. Create a Small Business Center with existing resources.
5. Upgrade the Library's web presence.
6. Update the RRPL Collection Development Plan.
7. Prepare and publish an Annual Report.
8. Initiate improved e-commerce capabilities.

Capital improvement project recommendations include:

1. **CIP1:** Develop a detailed building program for the new 60,000 square foot Main Library.
2. **CIP2:** Develop a detailed building program for the new 16,000 square foot Westside Branch Library.[1]
3. Complete due diligence for candidate sites for new facilities.
4. Procure the sites for the new library buildings.

FY 2015. Operational improvement recommendations include:

1. **OI2:** Make the Library Marketing Director position full-time.
2. **OI3:** Locate a library kiosk at the Indoor Sport Complex.
3. **OI4:** Establish bookmobile service.
4. **OI5:** Budget for an online registration system for library programs and eBook readers available for checkout.
5. Launch the RRPL marketing campaign.
6. Initiate enhanced Teen/Tween programming.
7. Launch the new Library Foundation.
8. Initiate steps to secure additional funding for RRPL, over and above the annual City of Round Rock General Fund. Establish funding goals for sources including grants, private donations, the State of Texas, and Williamson County.

Capital improvement project recommendations include:

1. **CIP1:** Select an architect/engineer for the Main Library.
2. **CIP2:** Select an architect/engineer for the Westside Branch.

FY 2016. Operational improvement recommendations include:

1. **OI6:** Budget new collections for the two new libraries.
2. **OI7:** Budget for the staff for the new Branch.

3. **OI8:** Hire the staff to operate the new Branch Library.
4. **OI9:** Hire one new part-time Library Assistant and one full-time Librarian.
5. **OI10:** Budget for development of an RFP for a new Integrated Library System (ILS) for RRPL, initiate procurement of the system, and procure mobile devices for staff use away from service desks, as a pilot program.
6. Form a Teen Council as a consulting arm for Teen/Tween services, programs, and facilities.

Capital improvement project recommendations include:

1. **CIP1:** Complete the design for the Main Library.
2. **CIP2:** Complete the design for the Westside Branch.
3. Include Teen Council in the design process for new libraries.

FY 2017. Operational improvement recommendations include:

1. **OI11:** Budget new collections for the two new libraries.
2. **OI12:** Hire one additional full-time Librarian.
3. **OI13:** Locate a new library kiosk at the Dell Diamond.
4. **OI10:** Budget for completion of the new ILS.

Capital improvement project recommendations include:

1. **CIP1:** Publicize/hold a groundbreaking for the Main Library.
2. **CIP2:** Publicize/hold a groundbreaking for the Westside Branch.

FY2018. Operational improvement recommendations include:

1. **OI12:** Hire one new full-time Library Assistant and one full-time Librarian for the Main Library.
2. **OI13:** Budget new collections for the two new libraries.

Capital improvement project recommendations include:

1. **CIP1:** Dedicate the new Main Library.
2. **CIP2:** Dedicate the new Westside Branch.

Fiscal Years 2019 to 2023. Operational recommendations are not appropriate this far into the future. Pertinent improvements will be recommended through the Ongoing Assessment process delineated in Section 8. The only additional capital improvements recommended is **CIP3:** Expand the Westside Branch Library to 25,000 square feet in FY2023.

Executive Summary

page 7

Strategic Master Plan 2013
Round Rock Public Library
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