SECTION 2: LIBRARY SERVICES ANALYSIS

The Consultants were charged with these primary tasks related to engaging and understanding the Round Rock community:

- Utilize existing planning documents to conduct an assessment of the community that represents the widest possible range of Round Rock' diverse citizenry; and
- Gather and report public opinion regarding preferred library service priorities through public meetings and community surveys.

In order to address these tasks, the Consultant team gathered data and prepared analysis for these distinct areas:

- ***Community Engagement Report.*** Analysis of customer opinion from stakeholders, focus groups, and survey results;
- ***Similar Community Comparison.*** A comparison with other similar and adjacent communities, including those Round Rock benchmarks against, and Peer Libraries in similar markets nation-wide; and
- ***Best Practices Comparison.*** Identification of industry standards against which to compare and contrast the Round Rock Public Library in subsequent Sections of this Report.

Subsections for each of these headings are included in this Section of the Report.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

A most important part of the Consultant work plan for the Round Rock Public Library (RRPL) Strategic Master Plan project was to obtain the thoughts, the ideas, the concerns, and the complaints of as many Round Rock area residents as possible. The Consultants employed the following methods:

- Seven Focus Group discussions with 66 participants;
- Twelve interviews with key stakeholders;
- A telephone survey of 401 non-users, 25 percent of whom were persons who use cell phones and not land lines, and 28 percent who were Spanish- speaking;
- An In-Library survey with 166 respondents; and
- An online survey with 399 respondents.

In total, the Consultants received input from approximately 1,000 persons regarding preferred library service priorities.

Focus Group Discussions

Seven focus group discussions were held with a total of 66 participants. A series of eight questions were asked of each group. A summary of the responses follows. All comments are available in Appendix 2.1.

What is Good About RRPL?
- Children's services (programming and collections);
- Library staff is outstanding;
- Genealogy collection and service;
- Overall collection of library materials;
- Location; and
- Library in integrated into the community.

What is Not so Good About RRPL?
- Inadequate amount of space;
- Inadequate parking;
- Computers in Children's Services; and
- Hours of service (not open on Sundays).[1]

Why Doesn't Everyone Use the Library?
- Lack of awareness and adequate publicity;
- Nonresident fees;
- Lack of transportation options in the city; and
- Intimidating (to some).

What is the Role of Library to Provide Services to People with Special Needs?
- Library has a role and could provide assisted technology, staff trained in sign language, have books in Braille, and seek grants and sponsorships for adaptive technology.

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[1] Despite the opinion of some Round Rock residents, the Library is open on Sundays, from 1:00 PM to 6:00 PM.

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What Contributions Would You Make to Improve the Library?

- Volunteer;
- Donate money; and
- Increase taxes.

What Improvements Would You Make?

- Coffee bar;
- Move library;
- Delivery service and better transportation system;
- Bookmobile;
- Partnerships; and
- More programming.

How Should we Market the Library to You?

- Round Rock Independent School District;
- Water bill;
- Home Owner Associations;
- Social media, e.g. Facebook; and
- Email.

What is the Future of the Public Library?

- Become information interpreters, provide guidance and research;
- More than just books;
- Quality of life, Important for; and
- Must show return on investment and its value.

Stakeholder Interviews

The Consultants interviewed twelve stakeholders. A list of these individuals is contained in Appendix 2.2. Several of the interviews were held in the Library, others were held in City Hall, such as with the Mayor, City Manager, and Assistant City Manager; and still others in the offices of those interviewed, such as County Commissioner Birkman. All of stakeholders were supportive of RRPL. Their comments, in response to questions asked by the Consultant, are as follows:

What is the Future of Round Rock?

- The City will continue to grow in population and diversity;
- The transportation system must be addressed;
- The growth will be focused in the northeast quadrant – but the southeast will also experience growth; and
- Downtown will expand.

How Does the Library Fit into that Future?

- A good public library is very important;
- The public library is a contributor to the educational fabric of the City;
- For many people it is their source of information, education, and entertainment; and
- Its future will depend in large part on how much and how well it handles technology.

Where Should a New Library be Located If There Is to Be a New Library?

- Downtown;
- 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.

What Type of Library Does Round Rock Need?

- Strong program for children and families;
- Technologically sophisticated;
- Perhaps not as large as one might think, given technology;
- Space for the performing and visual arts; and
- A lot of meeting space.

What About Branch Libraries?

- As the City continues to grow will probably be needed.

In-Library Survey

A survey for library customers was completed by 168 persons. The complete survey results are contained in Appendix 2.3. Here are survey result highlights:

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Frequency of Use Past Year?
- Weekly – 43.9%; and
- Monthly – 28.0%; and
- Balance (included daily, 2/3 times a week, 4-5 times a week, and first time) – 28.1%

What Services Used?
- Checking out materials the most used service followed by consulting a librarian and checking the library catalog. Use of the library's computers was the fifth most used service.

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

What Improvements Were Requested?
- More library materials, books, DVDs, CDs were the most frequently listed improvements, 163 times;
- More hours of services, especially weekends, cited 54 times; and
- More computers, printers, scanners, etc., was requested by 48 respondents.

When Asked to Rank the Benefits of RRPL Compared to Other Tax-Supported Services?
- 67.3% ranked the library "at the top of the list;" and
- 33.7% indicated "in the middle."

When Asked About a Tax Increase for Improved Services and/or Facilities?
Yes - 39.9%;
No – 13.1%;
Depends – 40.0%; and
Do not know – 7.0%.

Online Survey

An online survey was mounted on the RRPL website and 399 persons responded. The complete survey results are contained in Appendix 2.4. Here are the highlights of the online survey:

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%.

What Improvements Were Requested?
- More EBooks and other downloadable materials – 48.0%;
- More books – 39.0%;
- More media (DVDs, CDs, non-print materials – 35.0%; and
- More programs for adults – 33.0%.

When Asked to Rank the Benefits of RRPL Compared to Other Tax-Supported Services?
- 60.0% ranked the library "at the top of the list;" and
- 36.0% indicated "in the middle."

Telephone Survey of Non-Users

Omitting calls to persons who were registered borrowers, and using Random Digital Dialing (RRD), 401 residents within the RRPL service area were called. Twenty-five percent of the calls were to cell phones and 28 percent were to Spanish-speaking households. The confidence factor of the survey is 95 percent. The complete survey results are contained in Appendix 2.5 (presented in portrait format). Here are the highlights of the telephone survey:

Primary Reasons for Non-Use.
- Have computer and Internet access at home – 87.0%;
- Buy own books and magazines - 75.0%;
- Do not have time – 45.0%; and
- Lack of interest – 33.0%.

Demographics of the Non-Users
- Females – 52.0%;
- Males – 48.0%;
- High school or less education – 20.0%;
- Some college – 31.0% and
- College degree – 49.0%.

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SIMILAR COMMUNITY COMPARARISON

The Consultants procured a list of seven "peer community" Texas cities that the City of Round Rock typically uses for benchmarking. These cities are Allen, Carrollton, Denton, Frisco, Lewisville, Richardson, and Sugar Land. Using 2011 U.S. Census data, the Consultants were able to develop a demographic analysis of all seven cities plus Round Rock.

Within Texas, the analysis compared RRPL with the following seven communities and their libraries.[2]

community	population served
Allen	96,124
Carrollton	133,187
Denton	113,383
Frisco	136,277
Lewisville	114,372
Richardson	99,223
Sugar Land[3]	81,700

The population for Round Rock was listed at 110,487. The average population served of the eight communities, including Round Rock, is 110,594.[4]

Appendix 2.6 provides detailed information for each of the eight communities used for these peer comparisons. Here is a summary of the highlights:

- ***Percent of Population Under Age 5:*** At 7.9 percent, the peer group average is lower than Round Rock at 8.8 percent;
- ***Percent of Population Age 65 Plus:*** The group average is 7.7 percent, compared to Round Rock at 5.4 percent;

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[2] The list of communities was proposed by the RRPL Director and endorsed by the Consultant team.
[3] Sugar Land is located in Fort Bend County and Sugar Land Public Library is a branch of the Fort Bend County Library system.
[4] The Round Rock population served figure includes 5,676 non-residents who are registered borrowers and customers of the RRPL.

- ***Ethnicity:*** The White population average of the peer group is 70.7 percent, and the Hispanic/Latino Origin average is 23.7 percent. Round Rock compares at 70.8 percent and 29.0 percent, respectively;
- ***High School Education:*** The group average is 89.4 percent, Round Rock is above the average at 91.1 percent;
- ***College Degree:*** Group average – 41.2 percent, Round Rock – 36.8 percent; and
- ***Home Ownership:*** The group average of 68.0 percent is higher than Round Rock's 62.1 percent.

Similar Community Demographic Conclusions. Round Rock is neither first nor last in any of the demographic comparisons. It is tied with Frisco, in terms of the smallest percentage of population age 65 and above. When compared to the seven peer communities, Round Rock is average – which in this case is a good attribute.

Library Benchmarking Comparisons

How does RRPL compare with other libraries in Texas – and outside the borders of the Lone Star state? To answer this question the Consultants, with assistance from RRPL and the 2011 statistics from the Texas State Library, undertook an analysis of a group of peer libraries in Texas and nationally.

For the purposes of benchmarking RRPL with its peers, we compared the libraries on matters of these general categories of statistics:

- Square Footage;
- Collections;
- Staff;
- Usage;
- Revenue; and
- Expenditures.

To level the playing field, we developed per capita data. Below is a summary of what we found when comparing RRPL with the six of the seven peer communities. Appendix 2.7 provides

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detailed information for each of the eight libraries used for these peer comparisons.

A comparison with Sugar Land on all categories is not possible as that community is, as previously indicated, part of the Fort Bend County Library system, and much of the data is embedded in with the entire countywide system.

Square Footage: Three of the seven peers – Carrollton, Denton, and Sugar Land – have branch libraries in addition to a main, or central, library. Therefore, the library space data reflects all locations. Round Rock is last in total amount of space and has only slightly more space per capita than Frisco (because Frisco has a population served base about 26,000 larger than Round Rock). RRPL's square feet per capita of 0.39 is well below the average of 0.58 and the median of 0.59.

Collections: Round Rock has 1.58 items per capita, below the average of 1.81. However, with 331 current periodical (journals, magazines, and newspapers), it ranks first, well above the average of 210. The cost of the collections, as a percentage of the total of all expenditures, was 17.99 percent, exceeded only by Sugar Land.

Staff: Round Rock is quite understaffed with compared with six of the seven peers. With 11.75 FTE librarians, it ranks seventh. The 17.75 other staff also ranks seventh. It also ranks seventh for the total number of staff per 1,000 persons served – ratio of 1 FTE for every 3,745 persons. The average is 1:3,028.

Usage: The Consultants believe the best measurement of usage is to consider the total customer transactions of a public library. For this comparison, the aggregate transaction data available included the number of items borrowed, visits (persons walking through the doors), reference transactions, and program attendance. When added together they produce a total number of customer contacts. Concerning total contacts, Round Rock had not quite 1,276,000, or 11.55 per capita, ranking fifth and fifth respectively among the peer group.

Revenue: Round Rock receives 99.02 percent of its operating revenue from local sources. Only Frisco (99.91%) receives more. RRPL receives less state revenue than four of the other six, and RRPL receives no (0.00%) revenue from "Other" sources (gifts, grants, etc.). None of the peers receive any Federal revenue. Round Rock Public Library expended 100.34 percent of its revenue. The peer average was 99.45 percent.

Expenditures: On a per capita basis, Round Rock's $20.85 was about $6.50 below the average of $27.16[5]. Lewisville had the lowest per capita figure, $15.69. Round Rock's cost per FTE (full-time equivalent) staff member of $54,882 was $2,471 above the average. RRPL figure ranked third among the peer group.[6]

The Most Important Comparisons

We believe the most telling data for comparative purposes is the following:

- Total staff per 1,000 persons served;
- Cost per FTE (full-time equivalent);
- Percentage of total operating budget expended for staff (salaries, wages, and benefits);
- Collection turnover (the average number of times in a year a collection item is borrowed);
- Collections per capita;
- Total contacts (circulation + visits + reference transactions + program attendance) per capita;
- Percentage of total revenue provided locally; and
- Total expenditures per capita.

Total Staff. RRPL had a staff of 29.50 FTE in 2011, ranking sixth among the eight peers. The average for the Texas peer group was 38.28, with an average population served of 110,594 – very close to the Round Rock population. The average for the

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[5] Round Rock's expenditures per capita rose to $23.34 in FY2012.
[6] Sugar Land's cost per FTE is much lower because the data reflects only the staff in the branch libraries and therefore does not include administrative or support services costs.

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national group, was 81.00 FTE, serving an average population of 161,612 – or similar to the year 2031 population projection for Round Rock.

Cost per FTE. The average cost for each of Round Rock's full-time equivalent staff was $54,882. If one determines that the higher the total the better the library, then RRPL ranked third among the eight peers. If a lower cost per FTE is the measuring stick, RRPL ranked sixth.

Percentage of Total Operating Budget Expended for Staff. This can be where "rubber meets the road." The higher the percentage the fewer dollars there are for everything else. It does take, of course, an adequate number of staff to deliver quality service, and that staff should be compensated in a fair and equitable manner. Round Rock expenditures were very near the average (68.15%) of its total operating budget for personnel with a percentage expenditure of 70.27. Three libraries had a higher percentage than RRPL.

Collection Turnover. Here is where quality measurements comes into play. RRPL has a turnover rate of 4.63, which is also the peer average. However, four of the peers had a higher rate, from 5.24 in Richardson to 7.19 in Frisco.

Collections Per Capita. Even though the Internet and the World Wide Web are important toolkits for today's public libraries, collections still count. The Round Rock Public Library has less than the widely accepted minimum standard, 2.00 items per capita. RRPL has but 1.77 items – below the peer average of 1.81. This is one tool in the toolkit that needs serious attention. Not, however, just more books, but a well-developed Collection Development Plan drawing upon the data provided by the Buxton Company, other demographic factors, growth projections, and historic usage data should all be mined to arrive at a plan. That done – and it will take at least a year to develop – the Collection Development Plan must be accompanied by a sound set of plan policies and procedures and then updated on at last an every three-year cycle.

Total Contacts. Aside from circulation, almost all other statistics gathered and reported by public libraries are "soft." Not because of "cooking the books" but because the counts depend upon staff counting accurately and consistently. Nonetheless, the Consultants believe that total contacts are a valid measurement of public library workload. For Round Rock, the per capita count was 11.55. What does that signify? Each resident used the RRPL an average of over eleven times during the reporting year. The peer average was 13.18.

Percentage of Total Revenue Provided Locally. With the exception of Hawaii, where the State pays for all public library services, local revenues primarily fund all public libraries in the United States. That is certainly true in Texas, where state aid is practically non-existent. There has been minimal direct federal aid for several years. Only 0.08 percent of RRPL's revenue came from a source other that local taxes and fees. The peer group average from non-local sources was 1.85 percent.

Total Expenditures Per Capita. Round Rock does not look good in comparison with its peers in this measurement. A per capita expenditure of $20.85 compares to the peer average of $27.16. Looked at another way, $20.85 will not buy one hardcover work of fiction, or dinner for a family of three – without beverages or desert – at a family restaurant.

Benchmarking Conclusions: Setting Sugar Land aside because that community is a part of the Fort Bend County Library system and administrative and support services costs are absorbed by the County Library, Round Rock lags behind five of the other six peers. Lewisville is the exception. Given that Round Rock has been one of the fastest growing cities in the country, it will be hard pressed to "keep up" without significant boosts in financial support for both operations and capital projects. If the quality of service should begin to decline, there will be a negative impact on the Round Rock economy and the overall quality of life. That would be – to say the least – most unfortunate.

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BEST PRACTICES COMPARISON

The Consultants indentified these primary standards related to establishing a datum line for best practices pertinent to the Round Rock Public Library:

- Texas Public Library Standards;
- National library standards; and
- Other applicable statewide standards.

In order to address this task, the Consultants assembled data for consideration by RRPL in two distinct areas:

1. Definition of Terms; and
2. Applicable Standards.

Subsections for each of these headings are included in this Section of the Report.

Definition of Terms

Square Footage. For the purposes of the Strategic Master Plan, Godfrey's Associates uses four distinct definitions for square footage, based on what is being measured, as follows:

- ***Net Square Feet (NSF):*** The amount of floor space required to properly house a given item, e.g. a 4-place table (a table plus four reader chairs) requires 100 NSF of floor space. The total net square feet of all items in a library are added together and a factor for aisle ways is applied, to determine the total useable square footage of the building.
- ***Net Assignable Square Feet (NASF):*** The total square footage of interior spaces that can be used for library service, or "assigned" to a given library function or division.
- ***Building Gross Square Feet (BGSF):*** The total size of a building as measured from exterior wall to exterior wall of enclosed, conditioned space. Square footage under a building roof but not enclosed by exterior walls is not included.

- ***Building Footprint Square Feet (BFSF):*** The total size of the building footprint under the building roof, as measured from the perimeter edges of all roof overhangs.

Types of Libraries. For a permanent public library facility, whether to be owned or leased, we recommend that the population of the area to be served, within an eight minute drive time, be at least 30,000 persons. Different types and sizes of libraries:

- ***Full Service Library:*** A full service library provides collections for all ages (print and non-print, circulating and reference), a full array of information technology (express Internet stations – often with 15-mminute time limit, public computer stations seating one customer, others seating two customers either sharing one computer or perhaps with two computers where the customers can access each others computer, or collaborative stations where three or four persons are using toggling back and forth working together or a project), a multi-purpose meeting room seating at least 75, conference rooms seating from 8 to 12 each, 4- and 6-place group study rooms, and tutoring/research rooms for 2-3 people.
- ***Regional Library:*** A Regional Library is a full-service facility with collections shaped by the population and geographic size of the region it serves. This type of library will also serve as a "back-up" to Community and Neighborhood libraries within its 12 to 15 minute drive time sphere of influence.

Regional libraries will normally range in size from 30,000 to 50,000 BGSF. Region population and demographics determine the collections and technologies. The materials provide support for curricula through the community college level. The programs offered to children are also designed with the demographics in mind, and many are provided in a program/storytelling room within the children's section. The collections for adults include in-depth circulating and

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reference materials, a popular materials collection, and large print books. There is also a space with materials and seating for teens. There are large adult, teen, and children's media collections, e.g. CDs, books-on-CD, and DVDs.

- ***Community Library:*** A Community Library is a full-service facility whose collections and technologies are shaped by community population and demographics. The materials for children and young people provide support for curricula through high school. The programs offered are designed per demographics, and many are provided in a program/storytelling room with the children's section. The collections for adults include circulating and limited reference materials, a popular materials collection, and large print books. There is also a space with materials and seating for teens. There are adult, teen, and children's media collections, e.g. CDs, books-on-CD, and DVDs. The media collection size will depend upon the community being served.

A Community Library will range in size from approximately 16,000 to 25,000 BGSF and would expect to serve persons living within eight to ten minutes drive time of the facility. The Consultants recommend no new libraries be smaller than a Community Library.

- ***Neighborhood Library:*** A Neighborhood Library is a full-service facility, but its technology and collections are not intended to provide the depth of a Community Library. The collection is determined by the demographics within the neighborhood(s). The materials for children and young people provide support for curricula through middle school. The programs offered for children, young people, and teens and are designed with the demographics in mind, and may be provided in a special program/storytelling room with the children's section – assuming there is space for such in the building.

The collections for adults include circulating and very limited reference materials, a popular materials collections, and large print books. There is also a space with materials and seating for teens. There are adult, teen, and children's media collections – CDs, books-on-CD, and DVDs – the sizes of which depend upon the demographics of the neighborhood(s) being served.

A Neighborhood Library will range in size from approximately 3,000 to 15,999 BGSF and would expect to serve persons with a drive time of five to seven minutes to the facility. The Consultants recommend that no new libraries be designed and/or implemented at this size on a permanent basis – so this category would only apply to temporary libraries, such as a leased pilot branch, or existing facilities determined to remain in operation.

- ***Express Library:*** A small facility, housed in a leased space, in or near an underserved area with a small collection of popular materials for all ages, limited technology, and a staff of two or three. An Express Library will range in size from approximately 400 to 2,999 BGSF. See the Alternative Models report for additional information.
- ***Supermarket Library:*** A type of Express Library, this is a small service outlet located within a large supermarket with a small collection of popular materials for all ages, limited technology, and a staff of two or three. See the Alternative Models report for further information.
- ***After School Center:*** An After School Center Library has service hours, collections, and staff that focus on assisting school-age persons, especially middle and high school students. See the Alternative Models report for further information.
- ***Vending Library:*** A service outlet with a small collection of materials, located in a place with considerable pedestrian traffic. See the Alternative Models report for further information.

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Population. For the purposes of the *RRPL Plan*, Godfrey's has used two definitions for population based on what is being measured:

- ***Actual Population:*** Population for the City of Round Rock as determined by the City Planning Department for 2010, and projected for 2015 and 2020. As the "official" city population, these figures are applied to library system-wide planning parameters only, such as square feet per capita.
- ***Service Area Population:*** The number of people within the trade area of a given library.

Public-Use Computers. Public use computers are available to the general public at each library and include online **public access computers** (PACs) and **Internet access** computers.

Public Seating Types. For the purposes of this Plan, the following definitions are for various types of seating for the public, based on NSF per seat:

- ***Reader Chair:*** Chair, un-upholstered, four legs, placed at tables.
- ***Lounge Chair:*** Soft seat, fabric, usually one side table accompanies two lounge chairs.
- ***Task Chair:*** Ergonomic office chair, casters, adjustable seat heights, public use with computers, staff use at workstations, desks, and worktables. NSF is included with workstations.
- ***Bench:*** Usually seats two persons.
- ***Read Aloud:*** Lounge chair sized for an adult and a young child.
- ***Floor Seat:*** Cushion/pillow on floor, very young children.
- ***Café Booth:*** Banquet seating with a table, similar to a restaurant booth, usually for teen spaces.

Service Hours. The number of hours per week a library is open for public use.

Per Capita Measures. The *RRPL Plan* uses two primary measures based on population:

- ***Collections per Capita:*** The number of items (books, periodicals, CDs, DVDs) a library houses for each person served. An example, a library serving 42,356 persons with a total collection of 79,345, its Collections per Capita would be 1.87 (79,345 divided by 42,356).
- ***BGSF per Capita:*** The total amount of enclosed library space a library system has for the total population of the area to be served. An example, a library system serving 623,793 persons with 12 libraries and 335,750 BGSF, it would have 0.54 BGSF per Capita (335,750 divided by 623,793).

These measures apply the actual total Round Rock population to total library system-wide planning parameters, because the quantities of both collections and square footage contained at the Main Library skew such calculations made on a branch library basis. Trade area population figures (see above) are used for branch-by-branch planning parameters.

Modern Library Factors. A list of eight factors that the Consultants believe determines if an existing library facility can be judged to be a "modern library," capable of housing and delivering 21st century library service is presented on the following pages, under the heading Applicable Standards.

21st Century Library Service would include current, up-to-date collections of materials in all formats plus selected classic titles, a wide array of technology for public and staff use, meeting rooms of different sizes and for different ages, each with state-of-the-art technology, a building infrastructure that both protects and enhances the library experience for all who both use and work in the facility, maintainable landscaping, effective interior and exterior signage, sustainability in design, furnishings, and construction, and adequate parking. With respect to the age range of services for non-adults (youth), the Consultants use these definitions:

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- **Early Childhood:** The age range is from 0 through 5 years old (infants and toddlers up to kindergarten);
- **Kids:** The range is from 5 to 11 years old (grades 1 to 5);
- **Tweens:** The age range is from 11 to 12 (grades 6 and 7); and
- **Teens:** The ages can range from 13 to 19 (grades 8 to 12), though by age 18, many consider themselves as adults.

Applicable Standards

In order to execute a fair methodology for producing the Round Rock Public Library 10-Year *Strategic Master Plan,* guidelines for future planning were established and documented at the outset of the project. The Consultants propose the following standards be used for analysis:

- Texas Public Library Standards (TPLS), as defined by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC), in cooperation with the Texas Library Association (TLA);
- Texas Accessibility Standards (TAS), of the Architectural Barriers Act, Article 9102, Texas Civil Statutes, prepared and administered by the Policies and Standards Division of the Architectural Barriers Section of the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR);
- Modern library facility standards developed by Godfrey's Associates, Library Planners & Consultants; and
- Evaluation criteria for potential library facility sites, also developed by Godfrey's Associates.

Texas Public Library Standards

The following two paragraphs have been excerpted from the 2004 TPLS.

Purpose. "The purpose of these standards is to promote quality library service to all Texans, to raise the expectations of library clientele, and to provide an authoritative document to which library administrators and supporters may refer when justifying requests for funds. Standards are a way to measure and growth

whereas Minimum Criteria are required for System Membership."

Levels of Service. "The Task Force elected to recognize three levels of service: basic, enhanced, and comprehensive. The enhanced level builds upon the basic and the comprehensive upon the enhanced. Libraries that achieve the enhanced or comprehensive level will be those where improvement is a proactive rather than reactive process."

The eight specific areas of evaluation defined by the Texas Public Library Standards include:

Administration Standards. These 11 standards cover mission, long-range planning, copyright compliance, annual reports, community analysis, policies and procedures such as collection development, interlibrary loan, public relations, frequency and content of Library Board meetings, and the need for policies and procedures to be reviewed and kept current.

Collections Standards. There are eight standards for Collections such as having a core reference collection, number items per capita, collection development plan, acquisition policies, and de-selection (weeding) policies, etc.

Facility Standards. These 17 standards cover building size, lighting, electrical and data connections, signage, parking, heating/humidity control, accessibility, furnishings and equipment, fire safety, etc.

Finance Standards. There are five standards dealing with finance, such as starting salary for a beginning librarian; annual operating budget for personnel (salaries, wages, benefits, training), library materials (print, non-print, electronic), and other (communications, supplies, utilities, etc.); ongoing revenue from local, state, federal, and other sources, including earned income (fines and fees, etc.), and seeking private sector and grant funds, etc.

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Marketing/Public Relations/Advocacy Standards. These ten standards address communicating and promoting the library, five each under two sub-headings of Marketing/Public Relations and Advocacy standards. Marketing/Public Relations standards cover publicity, signage and graphics, community evaluations through surveys, etc. Advocacy standards include stakeholder education, inclusion of elected officials, community communications plans, etc.

Personnel Standards. These five standards focus on educational level of the library director and professional staff, annual staff training, and adequate number of professional and support staff.

Service Standards. These 17 standards include having Internet access for public and staff; an online catalog of holdings; a system for reserving books; how the staff of a library serves and interacts with the customer(s) of the library; children's, teen, and adult programs; range of reference, reader's advisory, and information services; and staffing of service desks for in-person, telephone, fax, and email inquiries, etc.

Technology Standards. The two Technology Standards include the number of public use computers, printers, and scanners; and enhancements to current services such as providing venues for distance learning and satellite/video conferencing, audio/video editing capability, digital cameras for customer borrowing, PDA/handheld devices for checkout, iPods for checkout, availability of staff assistance, policies for public accessibility, software, bandwidth, and staff and public training capabilities and frequencies, etc.

Texas Accessibility Standards

Based upon the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), the Texas Accessibility Standards were originally adopted in 1994, and supersede ADA in the State of Texas, as intended by Federal law. TAS has established standards for accessibility to public buildings and facilities; places of public accommodation; commercial facilities occupied by individuals with disabilities; and privately owned buildings/facilities leased or occupied by state agencies. The Texas standards closely follow the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG).

Texas Accessibility Standards are applicable during the design and construction of new buildings, as well as the alteration of existing buildings/facilities. While TAS apply to all building types, one section applies specifically to Libraries.

Modern Library Facility Standards

Modern Library Factors. The Consultants believe there are eight factors needed for a library to be judged a Modern Library. See Section Four for specifics concerning how the Round Rock Public Library measures against these factors. The eight factors are:

1. ***Adequate Size.*** 16,000 BGSF is the minimum size to offer a fully responsive range of library services.[7]
2. ***User-Friendly Housing of Collections.*** No book stack should be taller than 72 inches (or 66 inches for Children's Services). All should have 48-inch clear aisles, and no more than 80 percent capacity (80% means there is 7 to 8 inches of clear space at the end of each shelf).
3. ***Proper Ratio of Seating to Collections.*** Neighborhood libraries ratio of 1:1,500 to 1:1,800; Community libraries ratio of 1:1,200 to 1:1,500; Regional libraries ratio of 1:1,000 to 1:1,200; and 1:800 to 1:1,000 for the Main Library exclusive of special collections, such as Local History, Genealogy, and Archives.

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[7] The 16,000 BGSF applies to any new building that is designed and constructed, or leased, to be a library facility. For a leased space that is intended to be temporary or interim in nature, we believe that 7,500 BGSF is the absolute minimum amount of space needed in order to provide a reasonable range of services.

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4. ***Significant Technology for Public and Staff.*** Internet Express and PAC stations, collaborative spaces, laser color printers, games for children and teens, etc.
5. ***Age-Specific Spaces.*** Spaces that "talk" to the age groups: e.g. with good space and furniture/equipment for very young and older children, youth, teens, adults, and seniors (chairs they can easily get in and out of).
6. ***Public Meeting Spaces.*** A variety rooms, or spaces, outfitted with quality technology and good visual access to the rooms.
7. ***Adequate Staff Work Space.*** Space in a range of 150 to 200 NASF per FTE staff member as a minimum.
8. ***Efficient Building Infrastructure.*** Excellent lighting, good HVAC, ADA compliant rest rooms, plumbing that consistently works, no roof leaks, double-pane windows, fire suppression system, etc.

BGSF per Capita. Godfrey's recommends a minimum standard of 0.60 BGSF per capita. Though there is no codified number for library square footage, this metric is widely recognized as a minimum standard nation-wide. In contrast, the State of Louisiana has a standard of 1.00 square feet per capita, and the State of Illinois has a 1.30 square feet per capita standard.

Collections. Godfrey's recommends a total collection of two items per capita (2.00). This number would be inclusive of special collections in the Main Library such as the Local History, Genealogy, and Archives collection(s).

Service Hours. The Consultants recommend service hours that support service delivery goals and that obtain value from the capital investments in library facilities. At least one public library in a community should be open every day of the week. Week day hours should extend to 9:00 PM at least two nights per week. At the least, the closing hour on Saturday and Sunday should be 6:00 PM to be consistent with Friday. In addition, a 9:00 PM Sunday closing time would likely be welcomed by many

students at the middle and high school levels, as well as those enrolled in higher education institutions.

Staffing. Godfrey's proposes public libraries deploy staff as follows:

- ***Manager:*** One manager in each Neighborhood and Community library, and each Main Library division. For public service units, the Manager should spend at least 25 percent of his/her time assisting customers and the balance devoted to managerial and/or library system responsibilities.
- ***Professional:*** A minimum of two professionals for each Community library and each Main Library division and a minimum of one professional for each Neighborhood library. A professional will have a master's degree in library service or in an appropriate field related to his/her primary responsibilities. For public service units, a professional should spend at least 50 percent of his/her time assisting customers. The balance of time should be devoted to collection development, marketing, and/or library system responsibilities.
- ***Paraprofessional:*** Assign a minimum of two para-professionals in each Community and Neighborhood library and each Main Library division. A paraprofessional will have a bachelor's degree or at least 10 years of library experience. For public service units, a paraprofessional should spend at least 50 percent of his/her time assisting customers. The balance of time should be devoted to collection development, marketing, and/or library system responsibilities.
- ***Clerical:*** Assign a minimum of two clerical positions in each Community and Neighborhood library and each Main Library division. Clerical staff will usually have a high school education, and preferably an associate (two-year) college degree or at least five years of library experience. For public service units, a clerical staff person should spend at least 75 percent of his/her time assisting customers. The balance of

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his/her time will be devoted to the assigned library's responsibilities.

- *Page:* Assign a minimum of at least one page (shelver) in each Community and Neighborhood library and each public service Main Library division. For public service units, the standard for determining the number of page hours required should be determined by the following formula:

  Page FTEs = (annual circulation x 1.3)/156,000

  A step-by-step description of the logic behind this equation is available upon request.

- *Staffing Public Service Units:* See Appendix 7.1 for recommended staffing levels for proposed new libraries.

Public-Use Computers. In the context of the Texas Public Library Standards, we recommend Texas public libraries provide public use computers at the Enhanced standard of one public use computer for every 2,000 residents, but should strive to reach the Comprehensive standard of one public use computer for every 1,500 residents within a reasonable timeframe.

Public-Use Computer Space Allocations. The Consultants recommend public libraries allocate these net square footages for public computer stations:

- *Public Access Computer (PAC):* Stand-up station, 24 NSF.
- *Express Computer Station:* Stand-up station, 24 NSF.
- *Computer Station:* One seat, 36 NSF for adults and teens, and 30 NSF for children (seat and table heights vary, depending upon age).
- *Dual Computer Station:* Two seats for two persons at one computer or perhaps two persons at two computers, 48 NSF for adults and teens, and 40 NSF for children (seat and table heights vary, depending upon age).
- *Collaborative Computer Station:* Three to six persons at one or two computers, with a large wall-mounted monitor, 24 NSF per seat.

Public-use computers would require reservations with these time limits:

- Express computer stations (15 minutes);
- Computer stations (60 minutes);
- Dual computer stations (60 minutes); and
- Collaborative computer stations (as reserved).

Public Seating Space Allocations. Godfrey's Associates recommends public libraries allocate net square footage for the various types of seats, based on one seat per person unless otherwise noted.

Gathering Spaces. Godfrey's Associates recommends public libraries provide these gathering spaces with quantities of seating based on building size:

- *Multi-Purpose Meeting Room:* Minimum capacity as follows:

  - 50-seat capacity for any building less than 12,000 BGSF;
  - 75 seats for buildings of 12,000 to 15,999 BGSF;
  - 100 seats for buildings of 16,000 to 24,999 BGSF; and
  - 150 seats for buildings of 25,000 BGSF and larger.

- *Conference Rooms:* Minimum capacity follows:

  - 14-seats for Neighborhood Libraries;
  - 30-seats, divided between two rooms, for Community Libraries; and
  - 50-seats, divided between three or four rooms, for Regional Libraries.

- *Group Study Rooms:* Minimum capacity as follows:

  - 10-seats, divided between 4- and 6-seat rooms, for Neighborhood Libraries;
  - 20-seats, divided between two 4-seat rooms and two 6-seat rooms, for Community Libraries; and
  - 40-seats, divided between four 4-seat rooms and four 6-seat rooms, for Regional Libraries.

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- ***Tutoring/Research Rooms:*** These rooms can be "built" using office system furniture, thus be reconfigured, with each room accommodating two persons. Provide a minimum of:

  - Two rooms for Neighborhood Libraries;
  - Three rooms for Community Libraries; and
  - Six rooms for Regional Libraries.

Library Site Evaluation Criteria

Once the general location of each library is determined, any new parcel of land identified as a potential library site should be selected based on a list of criteria that reinforces the goals of RRPL. It is critical to approach the site selection process for a new public library with care. The ultimate success of any new library facility will be largely determined by where it is located. Acquiring anything less than a good site will prove a false economy in terms of the life-cycle costs of the facility. The wrong site will hinder public use of this important community resource.

Criteria for Site Evaluation. The criteria listed below should be taken into account as each candidate site is evaluated, in the following order of priority:

- ***Site Capacity, Now & Future:*** The site ***must*** be large enough to provide sufficient land for:

  - The projected library footprint;
  - Required parking for users, staff, and volunteers, on- or off-site. Any restrictions to having an adequate number of parking spaces will prove to be detrimental;
  - Necessary allowances for zoning-required setbacks and suitable landscaping; and
  - Future expansion.

- ***Legal Matters:*** If a candidate site proves to be large enough, then legal impediments to site ownership and/or development ***must*** be identified, such as:

- The existence of easements, restrictive covenants, or other restrictions can serve to minimize the amount of land on which a building can be located, i.e. the "buildable" area of the site; or
- A site owned by several persons and/or entities could be difficult to acquire and/or take an extended period of time.

- ***Development Cost:*** Once the above figurative hurdles have been cleared, the costs to develop a given site become a driving factor in the selection process. Issues to consider include:

  - The dollar value of the site;
  - Revenue loss if tax- or income-producing property is replaced;
  - Demolition costs;
  - Relocation costs for any existing site occupants;
  - The cost of providing or extending utility service;
  - Construction of drives and roads needed to fully access the site.
  - Any unusual site development and/or extra construction costs such as:

    - Poor soil conditions;
    - Limitations of the site such as requiring underground versus above grade parking,
    - Excessive drainage and/or earthwork; and
    - Site configuration resulting in a less efficient layout and a corresponding more expensive building solution.

- ***Physiography:*** Issues such as the topography of the site and solar orientation are important considerations when considering operational costs. Orientation considerations include excessive heat gain, the avoidance of west sun on books, and/or an entrance exposed to prevailing winter winds;

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- *Accessibility:* The site should be easily accessible by automobile and public transit, and within walking distance of some potential users;
- *Visibility by Passersby:* A highly visible site, along a major street (but *not* a major highway), along with easy accessibility, is ideal;
- *Building "Fit" into the Fabric of the Community:* How will the library fit into the community and its neighborhoods, now and in the future?
- *Views, Distant & Close:* What does one see from the library site looking outward, across the street, and several blocks away?

Ranking the Sites. Once the site selection criteria have been agreed upon, the next step in the process is to assign a point value to each of the above criteria. Each factor and sub-factor should be given a point value. The Consultants suggest the sum total of points should be 100. The site that receives the most points is determined to be the best site. If the development costs of two or more sites were within close proximity of each other, then the total site scores should be taken into consideration.

Tie-Breaking Factors. The last five criteria can serve as tie breakers. Purchase price of the site should not be the first consideration, inasmuch as the cost of the site will most likely be a fraction of the project costs for a new or replacement library. Property cost could be considered in addition to the 100 points of the other criteria, as a tie-breaking factor.

Conclusions

Definition of Terms the Consultants use in this report apply universally to all public libraries regardless of size or type of library.

Modern Library Standards the Consultants use in this report apply universally to all public libraries regardless of community size.

Accessibility Standards. In the opinion of the Consultants, the intent of all accessibility standards is to eliminate barriers in order to make it possible for all people to go everywhere. Elimination of barriers makes for more user-friendly libraries. Elimination of special accommodations for physically challenged individuals eliminates any stigma that might be attached to such challenges.

Library Site Evaluation criteria are applicable to all public libraries. The importance of an objective site evaluation process cannot be over-emphasized. There is nothing which will have a greater impact upon the overall success of a library facility, aside from the informational content within, than where it is located. Since success of a library is, or should be, measured by usage, the more a building is used, the more cost effective it is. A good site will go a long way toward ensuring the operational success of any public library facility for Round Rock residents.

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