

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **CLIENT**

The Board of Directors of The WICHITA PUBLIC LIBRARY has been the information clearinghouse and decision-making body for this Project. Other people/departments which have played supportive roles in the planning process include the Wichita Public Library Foundation and the Board of Governors of the Friends of the Wichita Public Library, the Director of Libraries, and various staff who participated in the interviews.

### **MISSION**

The mission of this programming effort was to explore the existing needs reaching as many users/non-users as feasibly possible and to develop the needs for improvements for the WICHITA PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM over the next 10 to 15 years.

### **PROGRAM SUMMARY**

During the process, a number of concepts and requirements were discussed and evaluated. These concepts and requirements will play important roles in influencing the final locations and functional layout of the facilities in the new master plan.

This program summary does not address architectural concepts in great detail, since any final decisions on new or renovated facilities will need to be programmed in greater detail.

There were two parts to the planning process. The intent of Part One was to gain input from the community and library staff and use that background information and research to develop a questionnaire that could be used to statistically project the needs for the public library system.

Part Two took the research information and allowed the planners to develop master plan options that were discussed and reviewed with the key decision makers prior to finalizing the phasing for the master plan. In Part Two, the planners also explored possible location options with the City of Wichita for the future needs of the library system.

#### Part One:

Part One involved 4 focus groups conducted with 8 to 10 individuals each to ensure active participation. The sessions were conducted by The Research Partnership as a consultant to the planning team for the Project. The focus groups were audio- and videotaped, and each session lasted approximately 2 hours. There were 2 groups of “users”

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of the library and 2 of “non-users.” One user group consisted of individuals 25 to 45 years of age, and one group consisted of individuals 46 to 70 years of age. The same age groups were repeated for the nonuser groups. The focus groups were conducted using a script prepared by the team to ensure that the research objectives would be met.

The results were transcribed along with findings that were presented to the planning team and client and should be viewed as strong indicators that show trends and direction within the Wichita marketplace. The results were used as a tool, along with the knowledge of the marketplace, to help prepare the telephone questionnaire.

Please refer to the Final Results, Focus Group Research, dated November 7, 2005, prepared by The Research Partnership, Inc., that is a part of this complete document, for a detailed explanation of the focus group process and findings.

Based on the findings from the focus groups, a telephone survey was prepared by The Research Partnership, reviewed with the team, and then pre-tested to determine if the survey questions were understood and that the responses yielded managerial useable information. The approved telephone survey was completed between November 10 and December 8, 2005. The telephone survey did not exceed 10 minutes and was administered to a sample large enough to yield 500 completions. The sample was randomly drawn from the Wichita area and had a maximum margin of error of  $\pm 4.4$  percent at the 95 percent confidence level.

Please refer to the Final Results, Telephone Survey Research, dated November 7, 2005, prepared by The Research Partnership, Inc., that is a part of this complete document, for a detailed explanation of the process, the telephone survey, aggregate responses, and results.

From both the focus groups and telephone survey, a list of key research conclusions was drafted by The Research Partnership and presented to the planning team and client for review comment. The key research conclusions include the following:

1. Ninety-four percent (**94%**) of the residents of Wichita polled in this research felt that it is **very important** for Wichita to have

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a public library. Their answers to “why” it is important for Wichita to have a library can be sorted into four major categories:

- a. Twenty-eight percent (**28%**) of the respondents felt that a library has importance because of the role libraries play in encouraging children (and adults) to enjoy reading, and the link between reading and the overall educational system within the community.
  - b. Twenty-six percent (**26%**) of the respondents felt that a library has importance because of the need to be able to provide access to books, information and research capabilities, regardless of the public’s ability to pay.
  - c. Fourteen percent (**14%**) of the respondents felt that a library has importance because of the role that the presence of a library system plays as a part of the fabric of a community.
  - d. Thirteen percent (**13%**) of the respondents felt that a library has importance because of the perceived need for a community to have an organized repository of knowledge and information.
2. In terms of the use of the existing library system, respondents were fairly evenly divided in their use of the Central and Branch libraries. Forty-five percent (**45%**) of the respondents indicated that they make use of the Central library, while **55 percent** indicated more frequent use of a Branch library.
  3. Seventy-two percent (**72%**) of the respondents to the survey indicated that they either drive (or would drive) between 5 and 15 minutes to reach a Wichita Public Library location, and **72 percent** of the respondents indicated they would rather drive a little further to reach a library that offered more services, that was larger, and that was open longer hours, than to drive a shorter distance to a library location that offered more limited hours and services.
  4. Respondents (both current users and non-users of the library system) were asked whether they might be motivated to use the Wichita library system more frequently if it offered certain services or amenities. For four out of the five services/amenities

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discussed in the survey, those who strongly agreed/agreed with the statement were in the majority of the responses made, and are shown as follows:

- a. Fifty-three percent (**53%**) of the respondents agreed that the provision of a café, like at a bookstore, would motivate them to use the library more frequently.
  - b. Forty-nine percent (**49%**) of the respondents agreed that providing stations for listening to music and books on tape/CDs would motivate them to use the library more frequently.
  - c. Forty-one percent (**41%**) of the respondents agreed that the library's accepting credit/debit cards for paying fees or buying services would motivate them to use the library more frequently.
  - d. Forty-three percent (**43%**) of the respondents agreed that the library's developing a self-checkout system like at a grocery store would motivate them to use the library more frequently.
5. The survey asked respondents to indicate any changes that they would like to see made to the Wichita Public Libraries. Responses were as follows:
- a. Thirty-nine percent (**39%**) of the respondents indicated that they were **satisfied** with the libraries, and would not recommend any changes.
  - b. Twenty percent (**20%**) of the respondents indicated that they were **not familiar enough** with the Library System to recommend changes.
  - c. Forty-four percent (**44%**) **recommended changes** to either an individual library or to the Library System as a whole.
  - d. Although many ideas for modifications were provided, perhaps the most frequent category of responses (**made by 14 percent of those offering suggestions**) dealt with extending the hours of operation, particularly for the branch libraries.
6. For residents to be able to take full advantage of the services offered by the Wichita Public Library, they need to be aware of these services. When queried as to how they would most like to

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be communicated with regarding the services offered by the library, **29 percent** of the respondents indicated by the newspaper, **17 percent** indicated through the library's website, and **15 percent** through television.

Please refer to the key research conclusions in the Appendix section of this document for a complete copy of the conclusions including the questions and backup graphs.

### Part Two:

Based on all of the information gathered, the planning team and the client held a review session before going forward with planning options. As a part of that discussion, a list of recurring themes was developed from the research. These themes include, in no particular order:

- Longer hours of operation
- More amenities
- More free parking
- Willing to travel up to 15 minutes for better branch
- Improved programs
- Accessibility

As a basis for understanding how large the system could be in the future, we discussed the current facilities. The existing library system contains the following main and branch facilities. These facilities occupy approximately 160,000 to 165,000 square feet of space.

- Central Library
- Lionel Alford regional branch
- Westlink district branch
- Ford Rockwell district branch
- Evergreen district branch
- Linwood Park neighborhood branch
- Maya Angelou Northeast neighborhood branch
- Orchard Park neighborhood branch
- Comotara popular materials outlet
- Planeview Community Library (located in Planeview Elementary School and operated in partnership with the Wichita Public Schools)

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As the team looked to begin planning options for the library system, there were various planning assumptions that were discussed and reviewed. The final planning assumptions include the following, in no particular order:

- Planning options should include new facilities as well as the expansion/remodel of existing facilities.
- Assume the Lionel Alford regional branch is to remain.
- Exact locations for the facilities have not been determined.
- Assume the following parking ratios for the planning options: 1 stall per 250 square feet of building and 320 square feet per stall.
- Preliminary budget estimates were prepared using 2006 dollars.
- The site costs for demolition and acquisition were not included in the preliminary budget estimates.
- Assume the cost for asbestos removal is not included in the preliminary budget estimates.
- Assume the cost for the sale of existing buildings is not included in the preliminary budget estimates.
- Assume inflation is not included in the preliminary budget estimates.
- Assume that a new regional branch will be a 1-story facility and will need a minimum of 1.5 acres of land to support parking, landscape and service access.
- Assume that a new central library will be a 3-floor facility and will need a minimum of 5.5 acres of land to support parking, landscape and service access.

Based on this review with the Master Plan Committee and the research that had been completed, six master plan options were prepared and presented to the Library Board of Directors on Wednesday, May 10, 2006. The options included a brief narrative, a graphic location, pros and cons for the option, and a preliminary estimate of cost.

Please refer to the APPENDIX section of this document for the graphics and more detail of each of the options presented. An overview of the six options includes the following:

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Option 1 - This option was the base option for the planning study and used existing locations for expansion, except the Central library. This option included:

- A new Central Library
- Expand Westlink, Evergreen and Rockwell to regional branches
- Alford regional branch stays
- Close Orchard, Angelou, Comotara, Linwood and Planeview

The result is a system with 1 new central library and 4 regional library branches. The preliminary construction budget was approximately \$36.6 million; the total Project budget was \$46.7 million and accommodated approximately 201,000 square feet in the plan. This option accommodated growth within the system but did not consider new facilities that move further west and east as the city limits grow. This would be a middle range option from a cost standpoint.

Option 2 - This option considered all of the facilities to be “regional” in size and reused existing facilities where possible, except for the Central Library. This option included:

- More services at each branch
- A new smaller “regional” Central Library
- Expand Westlink, Evergreen, and Rockwell to regional branches
- Alford regional branch stays and expands
- Close Orchard, Angelou, Comotara, Linwood, and Planeview

The result is a system with 1 new “regional” central branch, 1 existing regional branch, and 3 expanded regional branches. The preliminary construction budget was approximately \$34.0 million; the total Project budget was \$44.6 million and accommodated approximately 203,000 square feet in the plan. This option accommodated growth within the system and reused existing facilities. This option did not consider new facilities that move further west and east as the city limits grow. This would be one of the less expensive options.

Option 3 - This option considered all of the facilities to be “regional” in size and new construction instead of reusing existing facilities. This option included:

- More services at each branch
- A new smaller “regional” Central Library

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- New “regional” Westlink, Evergreen, and Rockwell branches
- Alford regional branch stays and expands
- Close Orchard, Angelou, Comotara, Linwood, and Planeview

The result is a system with 4 new “regional” branches and 1 expanded/existing regional branch. The preliminary construction budget was approximately \$38.7 million; the total Project budget was \$50.7 million and accommodated approximately 203,000 square feet in the plan. This option accommodated growth within the system and did not reuse existing facilities. This option considered new facilities that move further west and east as the city limits grow. This would be one of the more expensive options.

Option 4 - This option considered fewer “regional” branches and one central facility with all to be new construction. This option included:

- A new Central Library
- New northeast and northwest regional branches
- Alford regional branch stays and expands
- Close Orchard, Evergreen, Angelou, Comotara, Linwood, and Planeview

The result is a system with 1 central library and 3 new regional branches. The thinking of the northwest and northeast branches would be to move them closer to the population growth which is anticipated to be further west and east as the city limits grow. The preliminary construction budget was approximately \$36.5 million; the total Project budget was \$47.8 million and accommodated approximately 192,500 square feet in the plan. This option accommodated growth within the system, reduced the number of facilities in the system, and did not reuse existing facilities. This option considered new facilities that move further west and east as the city limits grow. This would be a middle range option from a cost standpoint.

Option 5 - This option considered adding smaller (district and Popular Material Outlet) facilities to Option 4 with most of the facilities being new construction. This option included:

- A new central library
- New northeast and northwest regional branches
- Alford regional branch stays and expands

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- Evergreen stays
- New southeast Popular Material Outlet (PMO)
- Close Orchard, Angelou, Comotara, Linwood, and Planeview

The result is a system with 1 central library, 2 new regional branches, 1 existing regional branch, 1 district branch and 1 PMO. This option built on the previous option by adding smaller support facilities if the previous option was not large enough or well accepted. The preliminary construction budget was approximately \$35.8 million; the total Project budget was \$47.0 million and accommodated approximately 195,000 square feet in the plan. This option accommodated growth within the system, reduced the number of facilities in the system, and reused some of the smaller existing facilities to better address cultural diversity. In addition, this option considered new regional facilities that move further west and east as the city limits grow. This would be a middle range option from a cost standpoint.

Option 6 - This option considered adding district and neighborhood facilities to the previous option with most of the facilities being new construction and a slight variation from a northeast and east regional branch. This option included:

- A new Central Library
- New northwest and east regional branches
- Alford regional branch stays and expands
- Evergreen stays
- Angelou stays
- Close Orchard, Comotara, Linwood, and Planeview

The result is a system with 1 central library, 2 new regional branches, 1 existing regional branch, 1 district branch and 1 neighborhood branch. This option built on the previous option by adding support facilities if the previous option was not large enough or well accepted. The preliminary construction budget was approximately \$36.3 million; the total Project budget was \$47.5 million and accommodated approximately 198,000 square feet in the plan. This option accommodated growth within the system, reduced the number of facilities in the system, and reused some of the smaller existing facilities to better address cultural diversity and political considerations. In addition, this option considered new regional

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facilities that move further west and east as the city limits grow. This would be a middle range option from a cost standpoint.

In addition, a preliminary phasing plan was presented along with Option 6. The preliminary phasing was based on the research and analysis that had taken place and included:

1. Replace the Central Library in 3 to 5 years
2. New northwest regional library in 3 to 7 years
3. New east regional library in 10+ years
4. Remodel the Alford regional branch in 15 years
5. Remodel Angelou and Evergreen branches in 15+ years

It should be noted that the options did not contain the exact locations for new facilities. It was decided early in the process that specific locations would be too difficult to pinpoint during the planning, and exact locations would be determined as each phase is started. The team did visit with the City of Wichita's Property Management Director to discuss properties that are currently owned or under consideration to be purchased by the City of Wichita. The purpose was to discuss preliminary locations to be considered during the planning of the options.

At the conclusion of this presentation, it was decided that the Master Plan Committee and Board members wanted to study the options before making any recommendations. Copies of the presentation were distributed to the members, and it was decided that the Board needed approximately one month to review the options and hear from various constituents on the subject.

A City Council workshop was held on Tuesday, June 27, to present the library master plan options and allow feedback from the Council members. As a result of the City Council workshop, it was decided to prepare an Option 7 for Library Board review and consideration.

Option 7 - This option was the result of feedback from the City Council workshop and additional discussions among the Library Board members, the Director of Libraries, and the planning team. It was based on Option 5 with additional modifications. In this option most of the facilities would be in new locations. This option included:

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- A new Central Library
- New northwest and northeast regional branches
- Alford regional branch stays and expands
- Evergreen stays
- Angelou stays
- New southeast neighborhood branch, near the vicinity of Pawnee and George Washington Boulevard
- Close Orchard, Linwood, Planeview and Comotara

The result is a system with 1 central library, 2 new regional branches, 1 existing regional branch, 1 district branch and 2 neighborhood branches. This revised option accommodates growth within the system, reduces the overall number of facilities in the system, and reuses some of the smaller existing facilities to better address cultural diversity and political considerations. In addition, this option considers new regional facilities that move further west and east and a southeast neighborhood branch as the city limits grow. The preliminary construction budget is approximately \$37.3 million; the total Project budget is \$48.8 million and accommodates approximately 203,000 square feet in the plan. This would be a middle range option from a cost standpoint.

The pros of this option include (in no particular order)

- New larger Central Library
- Option fits population/home expansion for the city limits
- New southeast neighborhood branch
- Lower overhead costs
- Fewer facilities within the system
- This option should better address cultural diversity
- This option should be politically viable
- This option is a middle range option (\$)

The cons for this option include (in no particular order)

- Four land acquisitions are needed for this option
- Closes some existing branches

In addition, a revised phasing plan was presented along with Option 7. The preliminary phasing includes:

1. Replace the Central Library in 3 to 5 years

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2. New northwest regional library in 3 to 7 years
3. New southeast neighborhood library in 7 to 10 years
4. New northeast regional library in 10+ years
5. Remodel/expand Alford regional branch in 15 years
6. Remodel Angelou and Evergreen branches in 15+ years

This plan was presented to each of the City's 6 District Advisory Boards during July and August for comment and feedback. As a result of these presentations, the planning team made a recommendation to increase the size of the Central Library from 120,000 square feet to 135,000 square feet to ensure adequate space for new programs and the expansion for existing departments and areas. In addition the regional branches were increased from 22,000 square feet to 25,000 square feet. Since both of these facilities were not in the phasing for the next several years, it is prudent to make sure there will be adequate square footage to accommodate any programmatic changes that have not yet been anticipated. Based on that decision, the preliminary construction budget for this revised Option 7 is approximately \$43.2 million, the total Project budget is \$56.5 million, and the option now accommodates approximately 233,000 square feet.

A preliminary total Project cost estimate was also developed for each of the phases of the Project. They include the following

1. Phase 1 - Central Library - ±\$35.0 million
2. Phase 2 - Northwest regional - ±\$6.5 million
3. Phase 3 - Southeast neighborhood - ±\$1.9 million
4. Phase 4 - Northeast regional - ±\$6.5 million
5. Phase 5 and 6 - Expand/remodel Alford, Angelou, and Evergreen - ±\$6.7 million

The Library Board adopted the revised Option 7 at its meeting on Tuesday, August 15, 2006.

The master plan was then presented to the City Council on Tuesday, September 12, 2006, and was endorsed.

Please refer to the APPENDIX section of this document for the graphics and more detail of Option 7.