

THE DALLAS PUBLIC LIBRARY FACILITIES

The Dallas Public Library Master Plan 2000-2010 provides comprehensive assessments and recommendations for the Library's physical plant, which address the following objectives:

- Perform surveys and analysis of all library facilities with appropriate recommendations.
- Develop planning and design guidelines for existing and future library facilities.
- Develop site selection criteria for future library facilities.
- Prioritize and recommend library capital improvements needs with cost estimates.

The facilities study utilized the information gathered in a comprehensive market analysis to identify current and future service demands. It also considered the many new forces affecting public libraries today, such as advancements in computer technologies and heightened customer expectations. The proposed facilities master plan takes advantage of opportunities to link much-needed repairs and renovations with innovative planning and design improvements that will enhance library services. It also coordinates recommendations for facilities improvements with those for collections, technology and staffing, to maximize the return on investment in all aspects of the library system.

In a relatively short period of time, the Dallas Public Library has become a large and complex service organization occupying 927,087 SF in twenty-three locations and serving a population of over 1,100,000 within an area of 378 square miles.

However, a public library building is much more than a mere repository of books. The library building reflects the importance of the library to the community and of a community's commitment to its citizens. The Library:

- Is an information center offering convenient expert help and training to customers of all ages, providing access to about twice as many computers as is available today.
- Provides a truly wonderful place for children that taps into their natural curiosity and thirst for learning
- Includes a special place for young adults
- Is a more comfortable and quiet recreational retreat for adults
- Becomes a focal point of community activity providing improved meeting and exhibit facilities.

Therefore, each facility should be an architectural feature that helps strengthen the residential neighborhoods and commercial and institutional establishments of its community. It should be more open and inviting, engaging the citizen's interest and located on easily accessible, well lighted and attractively landscaped sites. Many of the recommendations of the master plan are focused on creating a stronger and more vital image for the Central Library and the branches and for enhancing the communities experience of using these facilities.

THE VISION FOR THE DALLAS PUBLIC LIBRARY FACILITIES

To continue to move beyond what is termed the traditional library services, fully integrating new technology services and providing facilities that will enrich the library experience for the communities of Dallas in the 21st Century.

THE VISION FOR THE BRANCH LIBRARY SYSTEM

The vision of the branch system should be to provide safe and convenient access to the highest quality resources and services tailored to reflect its community's needs and interests within an attractive and inviting building. To do so, there should be a more evenly distributed network of friendly community libraries, effectively linked to the Central Library and the world through increased use of information technology. Each branch should serve a clearly defined geographic area.

THE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE BRANCHES

A branch library is a neighborhood center that provides informational, recreational, educational, and cultural services to the community. Probably more than any other public institution, the branch library is the peoples' place. Unlike most other group-use facilities such as schools, churches, and community based organizations, the library serves the needs of people of all ages, backgrounds and interests. Each branch should reflect the diversity and interests of its community and should be an inviting place that encourages public use.