

# **Wells Branch Community Library District Long Range Plan 2016-2020**

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- **Programs & Services**
- **Personnel (including training)**
- **Technology**
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## **Vision Statement**

Wells Branch Community Library enriches and engages our community with a friendly environment of information services and resources. Everyone is welcome to experience the joy of learning, the empowerment of literacy, diverse entertainment, cultural appreciation, lifelong curiosity, and continual growth opportunities.

## **Core Ideology**

- We provide equal access to everyone.
- We protect the privacy of all patrons.
- We demonstrate the honesty, integrity, and accountability necessary to hold the public trust.
- We foster a love of reading for all ages and interests with a responsive collection.
- We promote literacy with early literacy programming.
- We promote life-long learning by opening the doors of exploration and discovery to all ages through print and electronic media.
- We foster a sense of community through development of programs and services that address the diverse needs and interests of residents.
- We strive to understand and meet the changing needs of the community.
- We serve as a means for our neighbors to access computers and Internet resources.

- We provide homework support for students of all ages.
- We support continuing education for staff to keep abreast of changing service trends and community needs.
- We continually solicit input from patrons and other stakeholders.

### **Population Information**

The library is a special purpose taxing district with boundaries that roughly follow the boundaries of zip code 78728 minus the areas that have been annexed by the City of Austin or cross into Williamson County. There are no residency requirements for membership. Roughly 48% of cardholders, 15327/31804, live within the zip code. When expired accounts are removed from the equation, 3216/7545, or 43% of cardholders, reside in 78728.

The census assigned a population of 20299 for the zip code in 2010, up 17% from 17289 in 2000. That trend is roughly 1.75% increase annually. Using that formula for the estimates in this document, the population will be assumed to be 20299 for 2010, 21017 for 2012 and 21385 for 2014. However, with the number of houses and apartments currently under construction, these numbers will most likely be much higher.

The population of Wells Branch, as compared to state averages, is younger, more educated, and living in a smaller household. This area has a higher than average percentage of homes that are rented instead of owner occupied. The household income in the area is lower than state average, but the percentage of households operating below the poverty level is significantly lower than the average.

### **Idealized Vision of the Future**

The Wells Branch Community Library will be the most complete resource for the community's enrichment, entertainment, and enlightenment needs. Every year, our collection grows stronger and more fully developed. We will increase our digital offerings to meet changing needs. We will facilitate patron access to technology with a MakerSpace collection. We will offer in-house training for technology and wireless access to printing to encourage patrons to experience different platforms and access digital resources.

The Wells Branch Community Library will be a wonderful place to work. We will augment our staff with a full-time digital librarian to manage social media, technology, and training for patrons and staff. Every manager will attend at least 2 professional conferences per year and have a dedicated workspace. The majority of staff positions will evolve from part-time to full-time with benefits to encourage longevity. We will offer the best compensation packages to attract and retain the best employees.

The Wells Branch Community Library is an exciting, welcoming, pleasant and enriching place to spend time. We will continue to expand our program offerings and increase special presentations and performances. We will improve the comfortable seating areas to encourage social gatherings. We will evaluate and expand service hours. We will reach out to the community with multiple tools to ensure that everyone knows we are here to help.

## Existing State of the Library

- **Facility**
  - On December 8, 2003, the library opened in its 16,000 square foot permanent facility. The facility provides a separate enclosed children's library with enclosed story room and study room, multiple public access computer areas, multiple soft seating areas, and a youth area.
  - There is a separate meeting facility with three private rooms, a catering kitchen and capacity for up to 90 people in the largest room.
  - The main library was constructed to house up to 50,000 materials and 25 public access computers.
  - The grounds are maintained with native xeriscaping.
  - We are open 61 hours per week throughout the year.
- **Collection & Circulation**
  - At the end of FY2014, the library collection housed more than fifty thousand physical items (50,368) with a value of just over a million dollars (\$1,042,298.07). Approximately 20% of the physical collection is eligible for de-selection according to accepted guidelines as defined in the CREW manual.
  - The library offers digital materials through Overdrive. There are over twelve thousand titles available to Wells Branch Library patrons for download.
  - Library patrons also have access to 53 paid research databases and 77 popular periodical subscriptions.
  - The library has seventeen public workstations for patrons with high speed internet and printing ability. Those workstations are used an average of 1088 times each month. Usage for public workstations has decreased annually since 2010.
  - Circulation in 2014 was 162,479 for print materials and 3480 for digital materials. The gate count (number of persons through the door) for 2014 was 107,113.
- **Programs & Services**
  - Youth programming includes six regular story times each week, after school enrichment programs, and special performers. Programs are focused on literacy, music, community, creative arts, and STEAM topics.
  - Adult recurring programs include 3 monthly book clubs, regular workshops for yoga and needlecrafts, and volunteer led computer classes. We also offer resume and job searching workshops and financial presentations.
  - Special programs are delivered for all ages to address interests that meet contemporary community requests. Topics for adults range from war stories to sustainability and Audubon presentations. Children's programs have included improv, movies, concerts, tea parties, and Lego workshops.

- A program proposal is submitted for approval for each program and evaluations are completed to determine whether programs meet goals and needs. We collect both quantitative and qualitative measurements.
- **Personnel (including training)**
  - The library has a director (MLS), four full-time managers (2 MLS), and seven part time employees. We augment service with volunteers, adding an average of 58 hours of effort per week.
  - The staff works a combined 334 hours per week.
  - All employees (and volunteers) are encouraged to take continuing education at library expense.
- **Technology**
  - The library has seventeen public access machines for the general public to use without charge; there are thirteen in the adult area, two in the teen area, and two in the children's area. These machines have broadband internet connection and printing capability.
  - The library has WiFi available throughout the building and meeting facility that is open 24/7.
  - There is a copier and fax machine/scanner that incurs a direct usage fee from the supplying vendor.
  - The library offers basic computer workshops for patrons that are taught by a volunteer.
  - The library subscribes to a collection of 51 research databases through a consortium called TexShare. We also offer independent paid subscriptions for language learning.
  - Library patrons have access to electronic books and audiobooks through our digital library. They can also access public domain titles digitally through the library catalog using Project Gutenberg or Librivox.
- **Budget**
  - Sales tax income has been very strong and increasing significantly over the years since 2011. As such, the library has been able to accrue a strong cushion and reserve.
  - Each year, the library secures an independent audit of financial reports, which is clean and favorable.
  - Current debts include funds to the comptroller for an erroneous payment over 2010-2012 and the mortgage. Both are on payment plans. The mortgage will be paid off in July of 2020, freeing ~\$100K annually. The comptroller will be paid off in July of 2018, freeing ~\$60K annually.
- **Problems and issues**
  - Staff turnover causes lapses in service and delays in bigger projects. Because of the complexity of tasks completed by all employees, it takes at least three months for entry level floor staff to be fully trained. For managers, that delay is double.
  - Library compensation is not competitive, which makes it difficult to attract and retain quality employees. The majority of staff is part time,

making them more likely to move onto other positions, which leads to turnover.

- The library has no on-site technician for technology issues. When there is a problem that regular staff cannot address, the system is down until a technician can be brought in to fix it.
- There is limited parking, which becomes a bigger issue during popular programs.
- The library uses the large meeting room for special programs and events. We have a number of regular out-of-district renters who rent for prime time each weekend, sometimes more than a year in advance. That makes the room unavailable for community use or library programs.
- The library is a freestanding independent government. As such, there is no city or county to manage tasks like landscape maintenance, human resources and facility repair.

### **Goals and Objectives for 2016-2020**

The Texas Library Association has developed and published standards above and beyond the basic requirements for accreditation for public libraries at two levels- enhanced and exemplary. The Wells Branch Community Library strives to be exemplary in every way possible.

#### **Facility**

##### **Maintenance and Improvement**

- Conduct annual survey of physical facilities by Sept board meeting to include recommended repairs, updates, maintenance, and furnishings costs.
- Increase and improve soft seating areas for patrons to encourage quiet reading and interactions. Furnishings and space allotment will be evaluated annually when setting the budget.
- Provide on-going facility maintenance (based on survey results and anticipated needs) at a level sufficient to optimize facility appearance and condition while adhering to environmentally friendly practices.
- Maintain a records management system that is documented and up to date including electronic records.

##### **New Initiatives**

- Create dedicated workspaces for each manager to accommodate necessary supplies and technology for tasks by EOY 2016. Evaluate annually whether these spaces are sufficient to perform administrative tasks.
- Perform an image audit every year between the end of summer reading and the annual retreat, preferably by an outside librarian, to give another perspective and catch things that we may not notice.
- Launch a community survey in 2017, specifically directed to non-users, to determine the feasibility and demand for an outlet/branch/pocket library.

## **Collection & Circulation**

### **Maintenance and Improvement**

- Follow a Collection Development Policy that is reviewed annually.
- Maintain the collection at the exemplary level in all possible categories following the Texas Library Association standards.
- Spend at least 10% of each year's operating budget on collection development.
- Weed aggressively according to CREW guidelines to maintain a current and attractive collection.
- Ensure that at least 20% of the collection has been published in the last 5 years.
- Grow the collection responsively, taking into account patron requests and contemporary interests.

### **New Initiatives**

- Add a series of personal electronic reading devices by EOY2016 to circulate under specific rules that will be set by management. These devices will be loaded with specific titles such as classic literature, book club selections or high school required reading.

## **Programs & Services**

Program offerings are set three times per year (January-May, June-August, September-December). Any potential changes, new programs, or program cancellations are discussed among the managers and Image Committee 60 days prior.

### **Maintenance and Improvement**

- Evaluate hours annually to determine whether we are meeting the community's needs.
- Offer more special programs as budget allows, specifically paid performers and speakers in line with community interests. Special programs draw people to the library that might not otherwise visit. These programs provide families and neighbors the chance to enjoy quality entertainment and enrichment locally.
- Nurture an active Teen Advisory Group with outreach by advertising specifically at teen venues (such as High School) and offering a special program three times per year. A Teen Advisory Group is a source for volunteers and gives teens and tweens ownership and pride with the library and its offerings. This can be a first leadership opportunity for students as well.
- Support local teachers by offering field trip tours, visiting the schools, and growing the collection to support classroom topics. The youth services librarian will contact the local public and charter schools each year in September to introduce our services and offer support.

### **New Initiatives**

- Expand early literacy programming (story time) to include a variety of languages based on patron request.
- Offer at least one regular enrichment program each program season for young students (ages 6-10) based in literacy and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) objectives.
- Investigate the possibility of developing a homebound delivery service for residents of the district in 2016. Wells Branch has two separate retirement

complexes and a number of patrons who, either permanently or temporarily, cannot physically come to the library. Evaluate annually.

- Launch a virtual reference service for patrons to be available during all open library hours. Program will be launched in 2017 and evaluated quarterly for effectiveness and usage.
- Create a systematic survey plan. Services will be evaluated for not just statistics, but outcomes using a standardized survey format starting in 2016. Results can then be combined for various programs to study overall impact.
- Create a small scale maker space, outfitted and available as staffing allows.
  - 2016: collect/borrow specific items and offer themed monthly programs (textiles, food, automotive, woodworking) for ages 14+. 2017: based on 2016 usage, determine whether program should be offered monthly, weekly, or adjusted to a new model for future years.
  - 2016: collect/borrow specific items for monthly STEM-based program for ages 6-14 (fashion design, basic circuitry, lego robotics). 2017: based on 2016 usage, determine whether program should be offered monthly, weekly, or adjusted to a new model for future years.
  - 2018-2020: continue to expand/adjust programming for both age groups in response to usage and patron interest.

## **Personnel**

### **Maintenance and Improvement**

- Offer regular and meaningful training for staff and volunteers. The library recognizes the need to have an informed and capable staff and encourages participation in training programs. Training for staff and volunteers is available through CTLS, the state library, professional organizations such as TxLA and ALA, and several private vendors. Each employee should complete 10 hours of training per year based on FTE.
- Research and offer compensation packages to attract and retain quality staff. The library will evaluate compensation, benefits and holidays annually to determine whether WBCL offers a competitive compensation package and supportive professional work environment.
- Network with other libraries at conferences. Conferences are a valuable networking and training opportunity. The library will send all managers (and other staff as appropriate) to the Texas Library Association Annual Conference when it is held in Austin and send select (rotating) managers when it is held in other cities. The director will attend a national conference in alternating years.
- Enhance the paid staff with volunteers at the minimum rate of one volunteer hour for every available service hour. Volunteers are an invaluable source of additional help and increase community involvement and a sense of neighborhood ownership. We will hold recognition and appreciation events three times per year.

### **New Initiatives**

- Train, prepare and support trustees. Because trustees are empowered to have the final say in most library activities, they must be familiar with their role and the

library's functions. Each trustee will be trained and serve as a regular library volunteers throughout their tenure and will receive trustee training from CTLS or another source in their first six months on the board. Trustees are encouraged to join professional organizations and attend conferences and trainings.

- Hire a full-time library manager for digital library services who will also perform other manager duties, thus enabling an expansion of hours and services. Technology is a great need, worthy of a great employee. By EOY 2016, the library will hire a full-time digital services librarian to manage the computers, provide staff and patron training, and oversee the library's website, databases and social media.

## **Technology**

### **Maintenance and Improvement**

- Evaluate new technology and databases as they become available and budget allows. Annually at the budget meeting, the director will present suggested database additions and cancellations.
- Offer patron database training monthly to ensure that patrons have access to the tools they need to successfully navigate the library resources that are available digitally.
- Standardize and control public access machines to offer equal and fair service to all. This requires regular (quarterly) manual checking for updates and issues.
- Offer technology training for all stakeholders, including staff, volunteers and patrons.
- Reach out to the community through the website and social networking. Information is sent through multiple avenues each week.

### **New Initiatives**

- Set up a means for patrons to use their personal devices (laptops, tablets) with library equipment. Patrons are bringing in and using personal devices in the library more every year. To accommodate their needs, the library will set up a means for patrons to print from personal devices by year end 2016. We will set up a patron scanner by year end 2017.
- Provide regular monthly programs demonstrating common personal reading devices for patrons using library-owned machines and the Overdrive Digital Library to aid patrons in using the digital collection.
- Replace all computers, budget allowing, every five years. Computers are heavily used, completely vital to service, and quickly out of date. At the time of replacement, we will evaluate the number and configuration of machines to best meet the needs of our users.

## **Budget**

### **Maintenance and Improvement**

- Create and follow an annual budget that accurately reflects income and expenses, maximizing the quality of service we deliver.
- Review the budget continually throughout each year to allow for fluctuations.
- Maintain 6-9 months of operating expenses in reserve.



- Maintain a reserve fund to cover extraordinary repairs (\$50K) and an election (\$10K).

#### **New Initiatives**

- Pay off the comptroller debt and mortgage on schedule or early.

#### **Evaluation**

Patron satisfaction and needs will be monitored continuously through direct dialogue and surveys. Regular input from staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders will be solicited to determine needs and satisfaction with systems in place. The library will regularly solicit input to guide collection development, programs, services, and facilities. The library will use a combination of objective measures (statistics) and output based measures (program satisfaction) to evaluate all library offerings.

## Appendix A: significant potential upcoming expenditures

- HVAC system replacement. Our units use an outdated coolant. To replace the condensers, air handlers, etc. for everything all at once will most likely be \$75-\$90K. This is not a project that could be staged over years due to the interdependence of the system and the need to get gigantic machines into the attic, most likely through the roof.
- We could replace the large sign out front. Right now, we have to manually open the sign and place individual letters. LED models can be changed remotely, have more information because they scroll or fade into other screens, and include colors and graphics. The MUD is looking into changing out some of their signs for LED and if the library were to change at the same time, it could lead to discounts and a cohesive neighborhood look. Cost would likely be around \$35K. Community input seems to be mixed.