
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

In 2002, the Oakland Public Library embarked on a Master Facilities Plan in response to the community's need for improved services, with the intent to plan for facilities to support these needs. This work is an outcome of the Library's Strategic Plan and from the unmet and growing needs of the community. It is also in response to recent fiscal crises and the community's outcry in support of the Library, which resulted in the Save Oakland Libraries organization and the recent support and passage of Measure Q, the library's dedicated parcel tax.

The Master Plan articulates a vision that is based on a highly participatory needs assessment process and includes overall service recommendations and improvements for a revitalized system. The Plan also identifies specific improvements to facilities (including submittal for State Prop. 14 funding for one of the recommended new libraries), including capital and operating costs, and implementation strategies for the overall plan, such as funding options and phasing of improvements.

A second round of community outreach will occur in the Fall of 2004 to receive feedback on the draft Master Plan which we will be incorporated into the Master Plan and Draft Master Plan Report.

THE NEED

Through the use of a variety of different methods to involve the community, the needs assessment attempted to try to reach as many people as possible. These included community meetings and focus groups held throughout the city, over 1,600 user surveys collected at the Main and all of the branch libraries, and a telephone survey by the City Auditor that reached 1,000 residents, both current library users and non-users alike. The needs assessment also mapped existing user patterns to look for underserved areas and studied technical demographic analysis of both current and future trends in the city to discern future needs. The Library's Community Action Committee, composed of community representatives, and its Youth Leadership Council, composed of youth representatives, were vital in confirming these needs as well as working with the project team to form the vision for the library's future - in services and facilities.

The voices of residents were loud and clear: The Oakland Public Library plays a vital role in meeting residents' needs – in terms of education, enrichment, and technology. The Needs Assessment has identified a lack of space, which constrains the size and diversity of the collection needed for our community. Many of the libraries are too small to accommodate the number of people using them and, at peak use times, library patrons cannot find places to sit. The libraries provide a vital link to technology for Oakland residents: citywide,

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25% of the population has no other access to computers, and there is a need for both technology access and training. Patrons see life-skills including literacy and job training, and enrichment programs – such as cultural and literary programs, as vital services for the Library to provide.

THE RECOMMENDATION

The existing libraries play a significant role in the day-to-day lives of Oakland residents and is a well-distributed system. However, many of these facilities are stretched beyond their capacity, and have little if any room to grow to accommodate the many needs of patrons. There are also a few under-served areas of the city without good access to any facility, such as the Laurel District and the San Antonio neighborhood. The vision for the Oakland Public Library system is to improve all the libraries in the system, to supplement the system with new branches in the underserved areas, and to revitalize and expand the Main Library. The Library proposes to do this with three different types of libraries.

Neighborhood Libraries

The vision for **Neighborhood Libraries** is to retain and improve the current network of libraries that provide safe, walkable libraries in local neighborhoods. Neighborhood Libraries will be enhanced to address specific service needs of the areas in which they are located. All of the neighborhood facilities will provide core services of materials, seating, and technology access; they will be further tailored to meet the specific needs of the local residents. For example, neighborhoods with a high children's population may have collections focused on children's materials and homework resources (MLK and Brookfield); and neighborhoods with multi-cultural populations may have collections focused on language materials (Asian, Chávez). This will allow the Library to keep and improve all existing branch libraries. This will also allow the Library to make more effective use of the limited space in many of these facilities in meeting local needs.

Community Libraries

The library will also improve and expand several libraries and add two new libraries to serve as **Community Libraries** that will provide both core services to their neighborhoods and supplement the Neighborhood Libraries with additional services that residents need, such as computer labs and program rooms. The Community Libraries will allow OPL to effectively and efficiently increase services. Community Libraries will provide a full-array of library services that cannot be offered at the Neighborhood Libraries due to space constraints: augmented materials in increased space; program space, including meeting room(s) for both library and community use; space to accommodate group study, diverse age groups, and recreational use, including areas for children, teens, and adults; and technology training in computer lab settings. These facilities will be geographically distributed throughout the city to ensure accessibility from all neighborhoods, and will be implemented

through expansion of existing libraries or new facilities, not consolidation.

Main Library

The **Main Library** plays a pivotal role in both supporting the system and providing a civic focal point within the city. It also has the opportunity to play a major role in the revitalization of downtown and an improved quality of life for all Oakland residents, including the many new and current downtown residents for whom it is their “branch.” While the vision for the Main Library continues to be formed, the preliminary vision is for a revitalized Main Library as a combination of traditional and new library services in a facility that serves as a physical and metaphorical beacon to all users. Providing “Everything Oakland” – from history, current events, and government to cultural enrichment and education – as well as a window to the rest of the world, all in an arena that supports the cross-fertilization of ideas and knowledge through programs, interaction, and resources.

The Main Library will provide technical system support for in-depth resources not available at the branches (more extensive collections, fragile historic materials, large scale programs, etc) as well as system-wide support, services including acquisitions, purchasing and processing of materials, technology services, program development resources, and library administration. Although all of these centralized services are important and ideally would be located directly in a Main Library building, these latter services could potentially be in a separate facility if needed due to space limitations.

There are also citywide services that are based out of *other* library facilities, such as special collections (Asian’s and Chávez’s language collections, AAMLO, etc.) as well as special services, including literacy. Many of these services will remain at their current locations to serve their local constituency while continuing to serve the city as a whole as well.

A new service model that emphasizes customer service and more efficient delivery systems of both materials and services will be implemented in all facilities (utilizing partnerships, self-service and use of technology such as self-check out machines, radio frequency identification, etc.). Such service models will free up library staff from more repetitive tasks enabling them to assist patrons with value-added services such as information and referral and increased programming.

IMPLEMENTATION

Ongoing work will look at grant funding opportunities (such as the State Prop. 14 Library Construction Bond Grant, local Community Development Grants), as well as other potential funding strategies. This will also allow the Library to look at capital costs, operating costs, and the phasing of improvements in a way that allows it to move steadily towards its goal of full implementation of its vision for improved library services and facilities while being fiscally responsible to the residents of Oakland.

For further information on this project, please visit the Oakland Public Library’s Website, and click on the link for the Master Facilities Plan: www.oaklandlibrary.org

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Neighborhood Libraries

ASIAN
8,500 SF
Expansion
10,500-12,000 SF

BROOKFIELD
4,250 SF
Expansion
7,000-8,000 SF

CÉSAR E. CHÁVEZ
3,450 SF
Recently Completed
15,000 SF

ELMHURST
3,220 SF
Renovation

GOLDEN GATE
4,260 SF
Implement New Service Model

LAKEVIEW
3,800 SF
Expansion
5,800-6,300 SF

LAUREL
0 SF
New Construction
8,000-12,000 SF

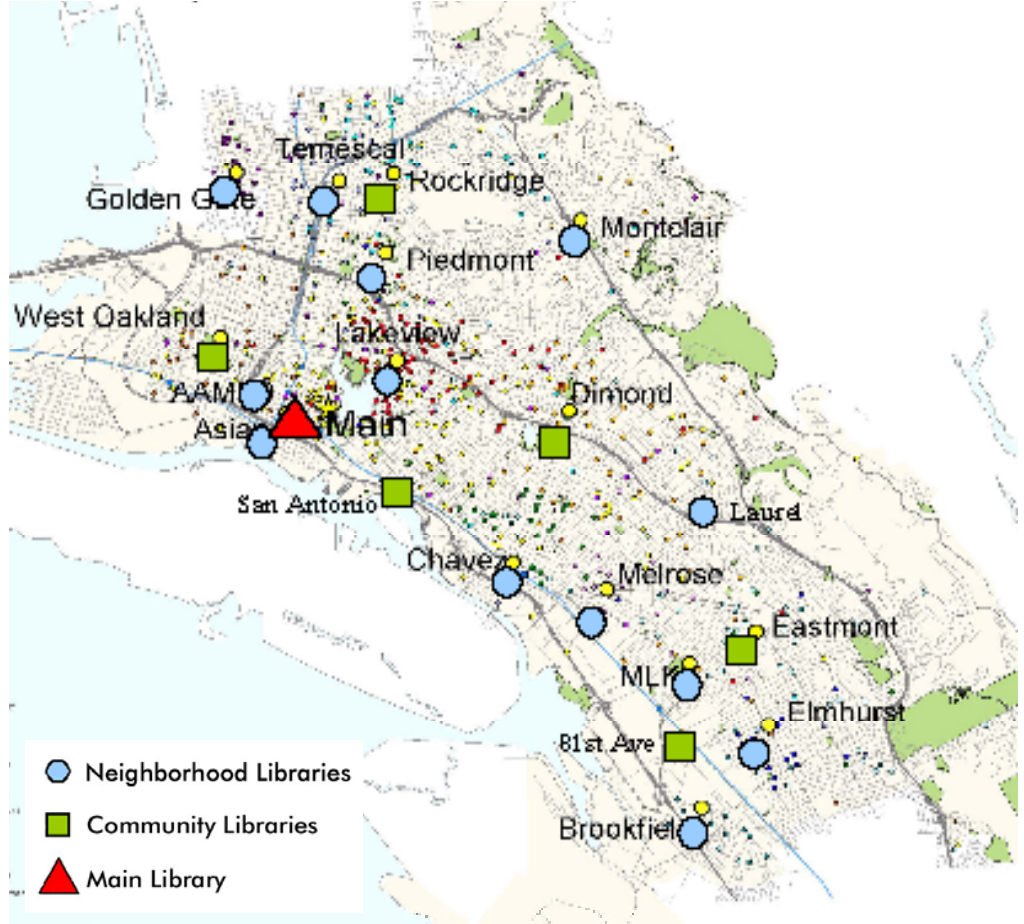
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
3,800 SF
Renovation

MELROSE
5,300 SF
Implement New Service Model

MONTCLAIR
3,800 SF
Implement New Service Model

PIEDMONT AVENUE
1,700 SF
Replace
9,000-12,000 SF

TEMESCAL
4,260 SF
Implement New Service Model



Community Libraries
DIMOND
10,000 SF
Expansion
16,000-19,000 SF

EASTMONT
9,200 SF
Expansion
16,000-19,000 SF

81st AVENUE BRANCH
0 SF
New Construction
21,500 SF

ROCKRIDGE
15,200 SF
Implement New Service Model

SAN ANTONIO
0 SF
New Construction
16,000-19,000 SF

WEST OAKLAND
8,000 SF
Expansion
16,000-19,000 SF

Main Library
82,500 SF
Expanded Services and Facility
120,000-160,000 SF

* The Library will be implementing the new service model at all libraries to improve customer service and increase efficiency.