

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For more than a century, the Columbus Metropolitan Library (CML) has been a vital contributor to central Ohio's educational and civic life. Today CML is one of the nation's leading public library systems, providing service to approximately 800,000 residents through a network of libraries, bookmobiles and on-line services. CML facilities include a 255,400 square foot Main Library in downtown Columbus, 20 branch libraries ranging from 6,000 to almost 23,000 square feet, and a 55,000 square foot Operations Center in Gahanna. Columbus Metropolitan Library is a separate district independent from the City of Columbus and Franklin County. CML owns all of its facilities except for the Whetstone branch and is responsible for maintaining, renovating and/or building new facilities across its district. CML jointly owns and operates the Northwest library with Worthington libraries, which is responsible for the operations and facility planning of that branch.

CML's last comprehensive facilities plan was developed in 1987. To date all elements of that plan have been realized along with additional new or remodeled facilities that were possible due to excellent fiscal management. This Vision Plan for Services and Facilities addresses service and capital project needs through 2030.

Vision Plan Process

The Vision Plan scope included current service and facility evaluations, a community needs assessment, customer mapping, strategic visioning, service level and facilities recommendations and implementation planning. The plan was developed through ongoing collaboration of the library's Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and a consultant team led by Group 4 Architecture Research + Planning, Inc., library futurist Joan Frye Williams, and library programmers Page + Moris, Inc. A project steering committee was composed of the ELT, and representatives of the library Board of Trustees, Library Foundation and Friends of the Library, as well as three younger CML staff members representing the next generation of library leadership. The steering committee met regularly with the consultants and gave advice on each part of the plan. The plan benefited from the contributions of hundreds of individuals and dozens of civic and business organizations whose views were obtained through a day long Strategic Vision Workshop, focus groups, market research, staff workshops and community meetings held in each branch.

Current Environment

A commitment to customer service, ongoing investments in materials and technology, dynamic staff and strong leadership have resulted in a vibrant, active library system that in 2008 set records with more than 8.5 million customer visits and 17,400,000 books and media circulated. The library's public access computers were used in almost 3,000,000 sessions and CML's digital services were accessed via the library's website more than 9.6 million times. More than 12,000 programs for the public were offered by CML in 2008, with a combined audience of 375,000 people. More than 84,000 children participated in Summer Reading Club last year. CML will open three more Homework Help Centers in fall of 2009 bringing the total to 18. These extremely popular centers are intensely used by students at all levels and serve as Job Help Centers to assist job seekers with navigating online applications and other job resources. CML provides substantial service hours ranging from 70 hours per week for Main and the largest branches to 56 hours per week for the smaller branches.



CML's facilities range from the 1907 Carnegie at Main Library to the 2004 Linden Branch.



Learning is increasingly a collaborative experience, and CML needs to create environments where this can thrive.

Societal Trends

CML is committed to continually updating its tools and techniques to stay relevant to the needs and preferences of the communities it serves. A number of broad societal trends will have an impact on the demands placed on CML in the future, with the following trends having the greatest impact on library facilities:

- *Time is scarce*, and customers want services that are both high in quality and extremely convenient.
- *Information is everywhere*, and the challenge for CML is to draw from and contribute to the stream of content that surrounds us all.
- *Learning is an increasingly collaborative experience*, and CML needs to create environments where participatory, conversational styles of learning can thrive without eliminating opportunities for solo study.
- *Technology is changing exponentially*, requiring library service and spaces that must be sufficiently flexible to allow ongoing repurposing and reconfiguration.

Strategic Vision – Shared Discovery

In contrast to a world where information is everywhere but the personal touch is lacking, customers resoundingly report that what is great about this library is its people. The next step in CML service is an approach that focuses attention on the interaction between library staff and members of the community in an approach called shared discovery. In this approach the library will play an increasingly active, higher-profile role in the co-creation and stewardship of the community's individual and collective intellectual, social, and cultural capital. Shared discovery also includes increasing the connections between the library and the community. The library will increase participation by community organizations and strategic partners in the library's planning and processes, and offer physical space for collaborative activities. The library will also expand its outreach into the community and will provide more activities and content to strategic partners in non-library locations, both physical and virtual.

Community Input Findings

Community input from community meetings and focus groups confirmed what is known to most library customers: that the popularity of the library has made most of the buildings very crowded. Customers value the services the library offers; however customers want more books, computers and seating. Customers see the library as an important family and community gathering space, and see a need for more space for children and teens as well as more comfortable and quiet spaces for study. Community leaders involved in the Strategic Vision Workshop expressed the view that people in the Columbus area are strongly associated with their neighborhoods and cities and want a balance between regional resources and local identity. They also believe that institutions like CML can and should work to improve the quality of life in central Ohio.

Demographic Trends

According to the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's 2006 population projections the library's service area is projected to grow at twice the state average rate, to approximately 940,000 people by 2030 – a total increase of 17%. This will drive a major increase in the demand for and pressure on CML services and facilities. The region's population is becoming more ethnically and culturally diverse. Almost one quarter of the district is African American and small but growing Hispanic and Somali populations create an opportunity for special cultural flagship services. Children and youth represent a quarter of the population, but at the same time the overall population is aging with gradual increases in the median age over the past decade.

Service Evaluation

CML’s ongoing investments in the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of its services and facilities have had a profoundly positive impact on library use. The cumulative impact of increased customer visits, increased circulation and demand for computer access has strained buildings, the public and staff. Significant improvements are needed to sustain current levels and to prepare for the next wave of service innovations.

Facility Evaluations

Columbus Metropolitan Library’s facilities are in good physical condition and are well-maintained. By 2030 the median age of branch facilities will be 44 years, long past the 20 to 30 year age where facilities are in need of major renewal. Existing facilities are geared towards traditional library services, with spaces for adult services and children’s services and community meeting rooms; however, most buildings offer inadequate spatial arrangement for teen areas, computer areas, homework centers, group study areas or flexible spaces that can accommodate multiple uses. Recent retrofits to the branches accommodate areas for computers and Homework Help Centers, which are functional but have negative impact on other areas due to inadequate physical or acoustical separation between different uses. All of the facilities except the New Albany branch are undersized and struggle to provide enough traditional library services (materials, programs, seating, and computers) to existing customers, let alone accommodate new services or expanded populations.

Service Level Recommendations

Collections and Shelving Recommendations

CML invests heavily in providing the materials that customers want, which is reflected in the high circulation rates. Today’s heavy use and the steadily increasing population are driving the recommendation for increased collection size. Shelving needs to be increased to hold more materials, facilitate increased bookstore-style browsing and hold materials that are reserved on-line. The core of the collections will be books and periodicals, with media at approximately 20%. Future increases in downloadable content mean that shelving areas need to be reconfigurable to serve new library uses or additional people spaces.

Seating Recommendations

A lack of seating and people space is the single most noticeable service deficit inhibiting customers from fully utilizing library services. More seating is needed for children and their parents, students, teens and adults. In addition, seating areas need to be zoned to create separate acoustical areas for contemplative reading and research, group study and tutoring. As the library’s role in the community grows, the need for varied meeting room and collaborative space will continue to increase.

Public Computers and Technology

Computer access is a primary and essential library service at CML. Demand for this service ranges from brisk to extraordinary. In many areas, the library is the public’s only resource for free computer access. All facilities need more computers to serve children and/or teens, for individual use, training, and collaborative use. As this technology evolves over time, facilities must continue to offer appropriate space for people to use, no matter what technology is used.

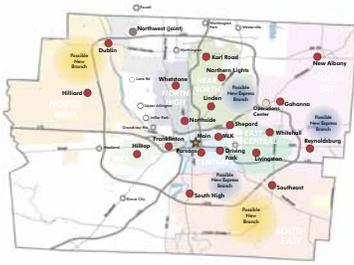
Total Space Recommendations for Branches

The recommendations in this report are built component by component, with appropriate space allocated for each item. These recommendations summarized above, plus



More seating and technology is needed at all locations.

The 20/20 Vision Plan proposes an increase in the total area dedicated to branches from today’s system wide total of 286,055 square feet (.36 square feet per capita) to 701,000-862,000 square feet (a system wide average of .83 square feet/capita +/- 10%) to meet 2030 needs.



Draft recommendations were done to determine expanded branches and potential new branches as well as Main Library.

recommendations (for the other smaller components of the library including staff and building support spaces), can be totaled on a branch by branch basis to a range of 0.75 to 1.4 square feet per capita. The recommendation range fluctuates due to economies of scale that are inherent in larger facilities.

System Design Principles

System design describes the types of library facilities and how they relate to one another and function as a system. Key system design principles include:

- Building on existing infrastructure where possible to leverage existing investments.
- Recognizing the needs of a diverse population within the district. Provide equitable, though not identical, library services throughout the district.
- Maintaining an economically efficient system that takes advantage of economies of scale and operates fewer, larger branches where possible.

System Design Recommendations

At the core of the proposed system design is a network of robust branches that are distributed equitably throughout the district measured on a per capita basis applied to each branch's service area projected population. For optimal mix of services and economies of scale, preferred minimum branch sizes are 15,000 square feet for high density residential service areas with 12,000 or more people, and 25,000 square feet in lower density residential service areas with 30,000 or more people. To promote convenient access and avoid aggregating too much service in too few locations, the preferred maximum branch size is 60,000 square feet serving approximately 90,000 people.

Expanded Branches and Possible New Service Areas

Rather than considering each branch in isolation, the needs and the proposed improvements are considered by geographic analysis areas consisting of groupings of nearby branches providing flexibility and balance. To meet 2030 needs, expansions are proposed for all branches and Main Library. For each location a range of facility improvement options are to be considered, beginning with renovations and additions. Where more practical, some branches may be replaced with new, larger buildings. Where existing sites do not have capacity for the proposed expansion, new sites should also be considered. In the northwestern and southwestern parts of the district there is projected to be sufficient population growth to consider new branches along with area branch expansions.

Possible New Express Branch

Three somewhat isolated or emerging population centers are not as well served by an existing or proposed service area (north of Reynoldsburg, east of Linden and south of Driving Park branches) that have too few people to warrant the minimum branch size. For each of these a smaller Express / Branch of 5,000 to 7,500 square feet may be considered. This facility type will provide targeted services to meet priority needs. It is intended to be located in leased spaces that can be opened and operated for lower cost than full service branches. This model provides the library with more agility to test service approaches and adjust locations to respond to future development and nearby branch improvements.

Project Cost Planning and Phasing

Representative facility improvement costs were calculated that included the full range

of hard and soft construction costs. Proposed improvements and new facilities should be built with high quality, durable and easy to maintain materials. Projects should be highly sustainable and be built to a LEED Silver rating or higher representing high energy efficiency, judicious use of natural resources and minimized environmental impact. The 20/20 Vision Plan proposes that the facility improvements be implemented as funds become available. The oldest and smallest buildings as well as some of the busiest and most crowded branches will be improved earlier. Some of the most recently constructed branches and others whose need is tied to future population growth will come later.

Funding Options

Throughout the years CML has benefited from community support as realized through a voter-approved property tax levy that provides close to half of the library’s revenue through 2011. The library is considering a funding ballot measure to be placed before district voters in November 2010. Levy funds may be used for operations and capital projects. Other potential sources of project funding include a capital campaign, sale of surplus property, revenue bonds or a voter-approved facility bond. The amount and timing of funds available to implement the 2030 Vision Plan will be determined at a later date.

The 20/20 Vision Plan proposal framework is dynamic and will be refined over time to incorporate new service developments and adjusted to respond to funding strategies.



20/20 Vision Plan recommendations will help CML continue to serve its residents for decades to come and continue to be a nationally recognized library system.



North West analysis area

Service Improvement Recommendations:

- Expansion
- Possible New Branch
- Possible New Express Branch

ANALYSIS AREA NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

This area is experiencing the largest total population increase in the County. Most of the growth in this area is occurring along the I-270 corridor and in the northern part of the area. The western side of this area includes the Darby Watershed, which has limited development potential due to its sensitive wetland habitat. There is a high percentage of out-of-district use at the libraries in this region, particularly the Dublin Branch, and this should be taken into account when determining the recommended sizes for facilities. The service and facility needs in this area can be met in several ways, including increasing the sizes of the two existing libraries and providing one new branch.

This growing area includes a high number of families, children, and youth. Academic achievement and educational support are high community priorities that place intense pressure on branch space and services. Attendance at children’s and family programming outpaces all other library district areas, especially at the Hilliard Branch.

Demographically, the area population was reported as predominantly caucasian in the 2000 US Census. However, the presence of several major corporate and commercial headquarters has attracted staff from many countries, providing a multicultural aspect to the population not yet revealed in census data.

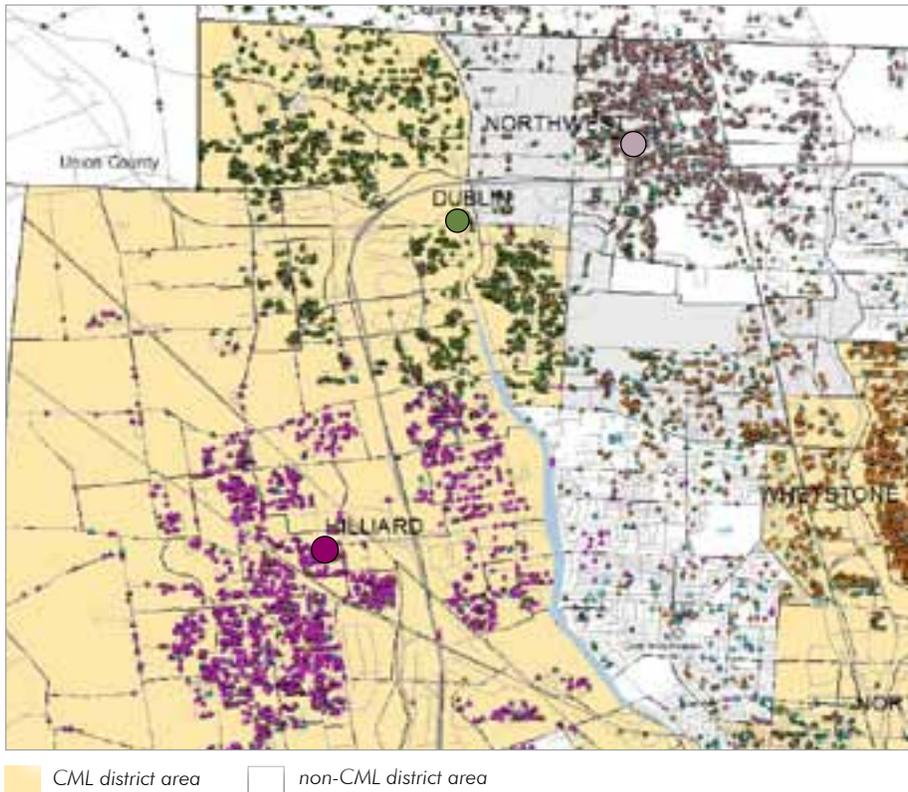


Dublin Branch



Hilliard Branch

North West area	Current	2030 proposed
population: growth 27%	135,500 (2005 pop.)	171,500 (MORPC projected)
collection	337,324 vol.	343,000 - 514,500 vol.
seating	214 seats	447 - 619 seats
computers	91 computers	138 - 233 computers
meeting room seats	135 seats	425 - 550 seats
group study	6 seats	66 - 108 seats
total square footage	40,152 sf	127,000 - 155,000 sf
parking spaces	307 spaces	650 - 706 spaces



Home location of customers who borrowed materials from CML or used a computer during a typical week in Fall 2008.

- material check-outs
- △ computer sessions

Branches

- Dublin customers
- Hilliard customers
- Northwest customers
(joint-library with Worthington)

CUSTOMER USE PATTERNS

- The North West analysis area has usage throughout the service areas, without any significant drop-off due to geographic barriers. This area has a suburban geography, and customer mapping shows that the usage patterns of Dublin and Hilliard are not affected by geographic barriers nearly as much as other, more urban areas are. This is likely because, as suburban locations, these areas tend to embrace a vehicular-driven lifestyle; the location of most residential areas in these service areas are outside of walking distance to the branch locations.
- There are areas to the west of Hilliard and southwest of Dublin with very low density residential or non-residential areas, as shown by the sparseness of dots mapped, which are not yet developed but will become more developed through the time-frame of this plan.
- The mapping shows significant use (both computers and materials) of the Dublin Branch by residents of Delaware County. This use impacts the Dublin Branch in particular due to its proximity to County borders.
- The Northwest Branch, a joint-library between the Worthington library and CML systems functions very well serving the eastern part of this analysis area as well as the western part of the Worthington library district, with good coverage of the areas east of the Scioto River.
- Discussions have been held with Marysville (Union) and Delaware County Libraries. Resource sharing could be enhanced over time.



Dublin Branch
75 N High Street, Dublin

Built in 1980, renovated and expanded in 1990

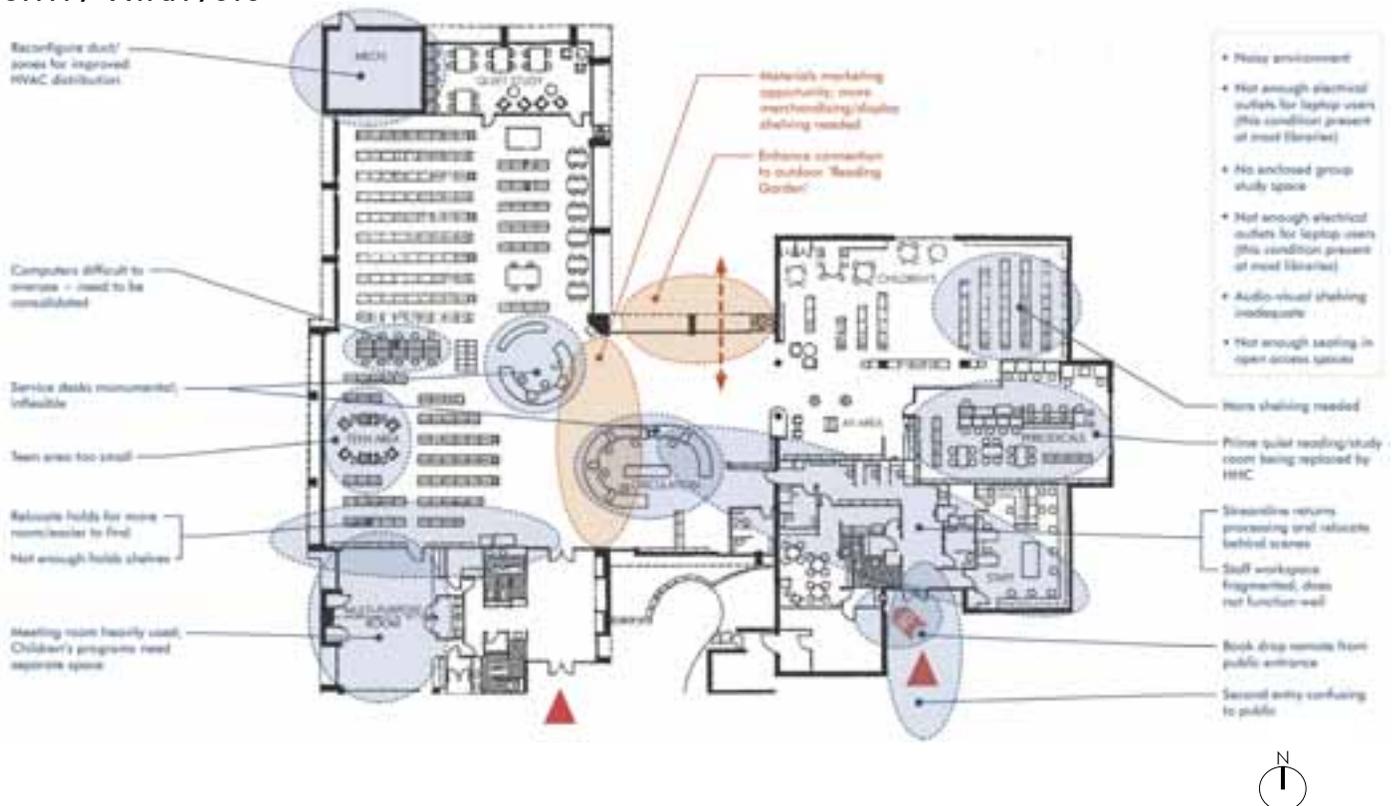
20,147 Square Foot Facility
3.64 Acre Site
119 parking spaces

COMMUNITY NEEDS

Dublin residents have generally higher than average education levels and are employed predominantly in white collar, management or professional occupations. While the population is primarily caucasian, area businesses attract an international work force. Branch visitors often reflect this trend, speaking and reading languages other than English.

Many Dublin Branch customers are intense users of the interlibrary request system, ordering more items than almost anywhere in the library system. The space needed to house and manage these customers' requests places significant pressure on the current facility. Seating space is inadequate for all age groups — children, students, teens and adults all need more seating. Children's programming space is also limited. Portions of the existing building layout are inflexible.

Facility Analysis



BRANCH IMPROVEMENT OPTIONS

The following are some of the branch improvement options for this facility. The preferred improvement strategy will be determined at the time of implementation.

DUBLIN EXPANSION

Addition to existing building

- Addition to existing building (not recommended due to issues with building configuration and site capacity)

Replace with new building on existing site

- Replace the existing building with a new, expanded facility on the existing site. The building would need to be a two-story branch to accommodate the square footage needed. Due to the configuration of the existing building with its previous addition, as well as the size of facility needed, the existing building would likely not be compatible with another expansion nor would it allow for the size of facility needed at the current site. However, the building is in good physical condition, and sale of the building may be preferred over replacement. Careful consideration should be done to determine the preferred and most cost-effective strategy.

Relocate to new Dublin Civic Center complex

- Relocate and significantly expand the branch as part of the Dublin Civic Center complex. This will relocate the building to be jointly-located with other civic uses, as well as allow for a larger building than the existing site can accommodate. Size facility to serve 2030 population of existing service area.

Relocate to new site

- Build a new, expanded facility at a site near the existing location on a site large enough to accommodate the needed square footage. (Existing building could be sold)

Existing Site Capacity Diagram



Children’s programming



Magazine area



Hilliard Branch
4772 Cemetery Road, Hilliard

Built in 1996

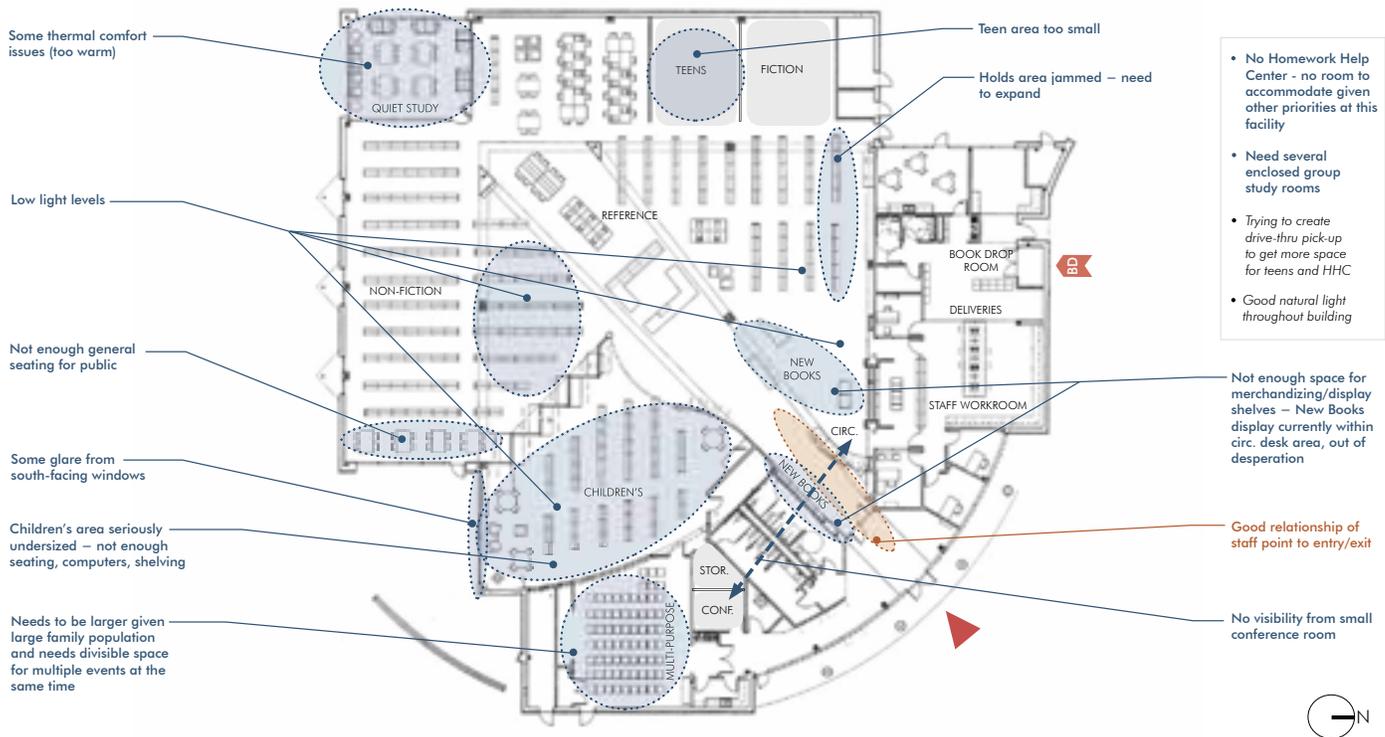
20,005 Square Foot Facility
4.55 Acre Site
188 parking spaces

COMMUNITY NEEDS

Families with young children are the prominent demographic component of the current service population in this growing community, which is expected to increase 9% over the next five years. Enrollment in Hilliard schools is the 9th highest in the state. New group residences for seniors are underway in the community; these new developments will account for some of the area's projected growth and will increase, to a degree, the future median age of residents. Ethnic diversity is increasing, with growing numbers of Spanish speakers and a new Islamic school that is a regional draw.

The existing Hilliard Branch experiences extremely high use, resulting in congestion throughout the facility and sustained high ambient noise levels. Service to children is also at high levels, with numerous programs and events and a high-use children's collection. Service cannot meet community demand, however, due to lack of space. The teen area is small. More tutoring space and small group study space is needed. Residents use the collection heavily and request many materials from other branches. Space for collection display and holds shelving cannot match current demand. This branch may have the highest circulation per square foot of any branch in the country.

Facility Analysis



BRANCH IMPROVEMENT OPTIONS

The following are some of the branch improvement options for this facility. The preferred improvement strategy will be determined at the time of implementation.

HILLIARD EXPANSION

Addition to existing building

- One story addition to the east to maximum capacity of site. This balance of building size and code-required parking will result in a small reduction of existing parking count. The service area will then be reduced to match the population to the proposed branch size. The remaining service area population is then to be formed into a new service area (see below).

Enlarge existing site

- If additional, adjacent land could be acquired adjacent to the existing site, the branch would have more flexibility in the size and/or configuration of an addition to this facility.

Relocate to new site

- Build a new, expanded facility at a site near the existing location and on a site large enough to accommodate the needed square footage. (Existing building could be sold).



Book aisle



Children's area

Existing Site Capacity Diagram

