



St. Charles City-County
Library

St. Charles City-County Library Facilities Master Plan

FINAL REPORT | 25 November 2019





CONTENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
<i>Assessment Summary</i>	2
<i>Recommendations Summary</i>	3
<i>Next Steps</i>	6
2. INTRODUCTION	7
<i>Project Background</i>	7
<i>Master Plan Objectives and Methodology</i>	8
<i>Project Participation</i>	8
3. PLANNING CONTEXT	11
<i>About St. Charles County</i>	11
<i>Library Use in St. Charles County</i>	12
4. LIBRARY NETWORK	13
<i>Library Branch Network</i>	13
<i>Access to Library Services</i>	15
<i>Collection Density</i>	16
<i>Capacity for Service</i>	18
<i>Sustainable Service Delivery</i>	20
<i>District Administration and Operations</i>	21

5. LIBRARY FACILITIES.....23

Library Facilities Vision..... 23

Library Facilities Today..... 24

6. RECOMMENDATIONS27

Effective and Sustainable Network..... 27

Build Capacity..... 28

Improve the Experience 30

Go Beyond the Branch 31

Priorities 32

7. IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING.....33

Capital Funding Strategy..... 33

Site Selection and Acquisition 34

Build Community Support..... 36

8. BRANCH FACILITY SUMMARIES37

Augusta Branch 38

Boone’s Trail Branch..... 40

Corporate Parkway Branch..... 42

Deer Run Branch 44

Kathryn Linnemann Branch..... 46

Kisker Road Branch 48

M^cClay Branch 50

Middendorf-Kredell Branch..... 52

Portage des Sioux Branch 54

Spencer Road Branch 56

Library Express at Winghaven..... 60

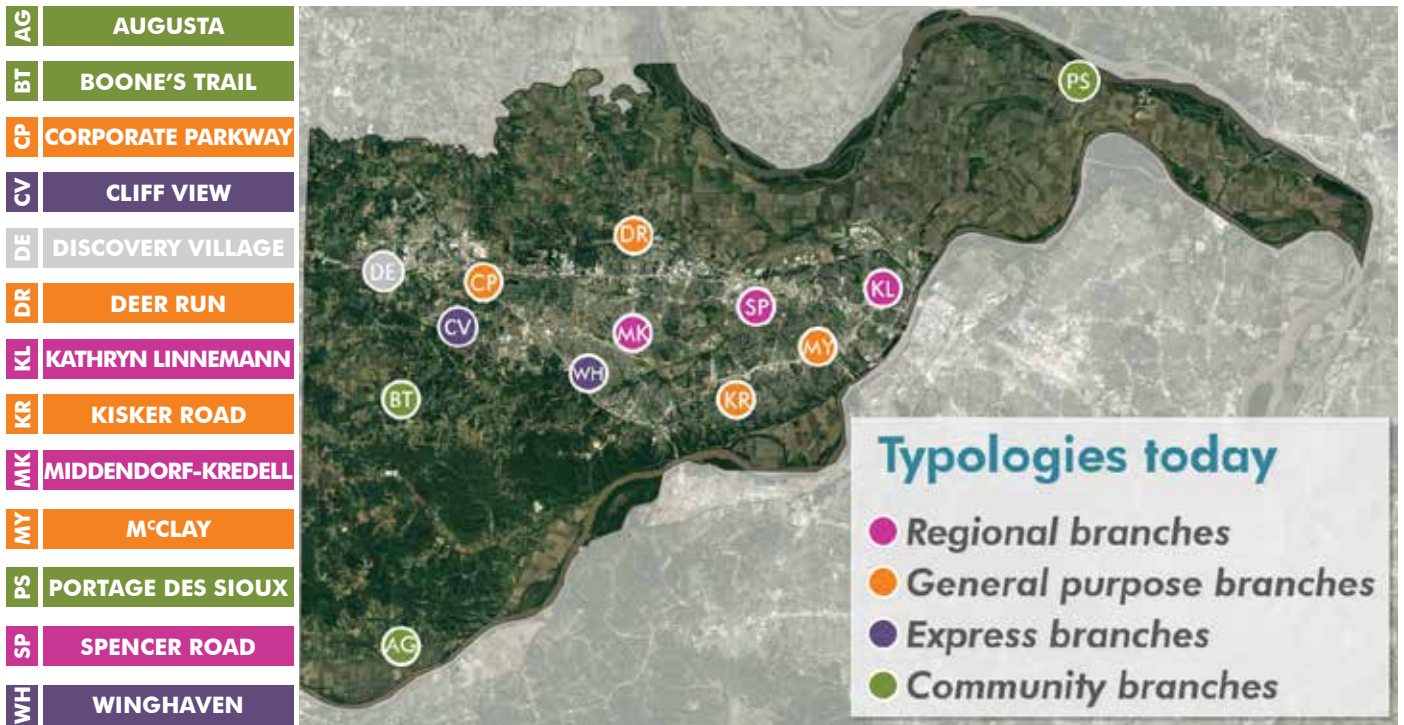


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With its rich history, thriving economy, excellent schools and amenities, and beautiful setting at the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, it is no wonder that St. Charles County is one of the fastest growing communities in the state. Over the past two decades, much of the growth has occurred on the western side of the county; O’Fallon has nearly doubled in size since 2000, and Wentzville has more than quadrupled its population during the same timeframe. Continued growth is anticipated to add another 14% to 17% to the county’s overall population by 2030 – much of it in western county communities.

The St. Charles City-County Library (SCCCL or the Library) was established as an independent district in 1973. For nearly 50 years, it has worked to improve the lives of all county residents, helping them build successful lives, families, and communities. It is guided by a clear mission and vision, as well as a recent strategic plan that identifies key goals for service, impact, and facilities.

In 2019, the Library embarked on a seven-month master planning process for its facilities. The process built upon the results of previous studies, including a 2016 facility condition assessment and the extensive community input gathered in 2018 for the strategic plan. The engagement strategy for the facilities master plan included close collaboration with SCCCL’s executive leadership team; a series of workshops with Library administrative and branch staff; and meetings with representatives of the County of St. Charles, the City of Wentzville, and the Orchard Farm School District.



ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

As SCCCL had completed a facility condition assessment of all of its buildings in 2016, this master plan assessment focused on issues of service, operations, and customer experience.

NETWORK ASSESSMENT

At the network level, SCCCL’s branch libraries are well-distributed to serve St. Charles County communities. Geographic analysis of Library data reveals no populated areas of the county where residents simply cannot get to a branch. Rather, residents of all county communities can access at least one SCCCL branch, and in many cases multiple branches. The Library’s largest branches do appear to have the broadest reach – Spencer Road, Kathryn Linnemann, and Middendorf-Kredell all draw customers even from the Portage des Sioux and Augusta communities.

What SCCCL’s network lacks is enough branch capacity for service to current and projected future county populations. Many of its branches were designed and built before the explosive growth of the last 20 years. Particularly in west county areas, the Library’s branches are much too small to meet the community’s needs for programs, services, and collections.

As the population continues to expand to the west, the current Administration building is becoming less centrally located within the district. This will have implications for the long-range efficiency and effectiveness of the network – including operations and support for mobile and outreach services.

FACILITY ASSESSMENT

At the individual facility level, SCCCL’s branches are generally well-maintained, clean, and tidy. However, most branches are simply overwhelmed by the collection, which has grown faster than the amount of space needed to house it comfortably. The customer’s experience in many branches is of a crowded, confusing, and often dark space without many comfortable places to sit. Children’s areas and meeting/program rooms are almost universally too small. Staff desks and back-of-house work areas are often out of alignment with the amount and type of space needed to support new models of service.



RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

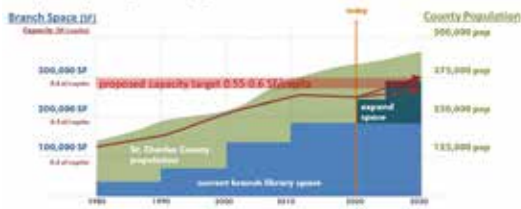
MASTER PLAN PRINCIPLES AND PLANNING TARGETS

Principles underpinning the facilities master plan and recommendations for capital improvements include:

- **Superior customer experiences** – All library customers deserve facilities that are attractive, comfortable, accessible, and easy to use. SCCCL’s facilities should support the full range of services that the community needs – including space for learning and discovery, collaboration and innovation, and social engagement as well as rich collections.
- **Equitability of access** – The Library should build its capacity to serve current and projected future populations striving to reach a more equitable level of service between western and eastern areas of the county. While not all of the Library’s branches need to provide the exact same services, every branch should provide well-balanced space for diverse people and programs as well as the collection.
- **Stewardship of resources** – The Library’s practice over time has been to build capacity through expansion and replacement where possible, rather than by opening additional facilities; this fundamentally sustainable approach will enable the Library to continue maintaining a modest number of facilities that can be operated for a generous number of hours. The Library should seek opportunities to build network capacity in strategic locations, and improve the balance of its facilities cost-effectively through renovation and ongoing maintenance program.



Capacity target range



Collection density target



In order to achieve a better balance of space for people, programs, and collections countywide and at each branch, it is recommended that SCCCL adopt the following planning targets:

- Branch capacity planning target of 0.55 to 0.60 branch square feet per capita based on the projected 2030 population of up to 470,000. The lower end of the recommended range assumes little to no growth in the size of the collection, which library staff currently feel is reasonable given emerging customer circulation patterns and collection development practices. The higher end of the planning target range would support additional growth in the physical collection. The Library should strive to build most (if not all) of its additional capacity in western areas of the county in order to improve equitability of access with east county communities.
- Countywide collection density of up to 2.5 on-shelf volumes per square foot of branch space. The target for individual branches will vary based on size; smaller branches should have a lower target density (1-2 vol/SF), while the regional-scale branches should be able to comfortably accommodate up to 2.75 vol/SF.

→ LIBRARY AS DESTINATION; NOT JUST AN ERRANDS STOP.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED PROJECTS

The master plan-recommended improvements fall into three broad categories:

- projects that expand SCCCL’s capacity for service;
- projects that update and improve the customer experience in the Library’s existing branch facilities; and
- leveraging outreach, alternative service delivery (ASD), and partnership strategies to respond efficiently to emerging community needs throughout the district.

Library staff divided the plan-recommended capital improvement projects into three groups according to priority for implementation, represented by the three columns in the table below:

Strategy	Group 1 – First Wave	Group 2 – Second Wave	Group 3 – Opportunities
Build Capacity: Replace and Expand Branches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Parkway – relocate and expand to 50,000-60,000 square feet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middendorf-Kredell – relocate and expand to 30,000-40,000 square feet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deer Run – relocate and expand option (depending on community growth, capacity needs, and opportunity)
Improve Experience: Repair, Rebalance, and Revitalize Existing Branches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deer Run – renovate • Kisker Road – renovate • McClay – renovate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kathryn Linnemann – refresh and reorganize • Spencer Road – refresh and reorganize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boone’s Trail – rebalance and maintain; optional expansion • WingHaven – rebalance and maintain • Cliff View – maintain
Go Beyond the Branch: Leverage Outreach, ASD, and Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portage des Sioux – develop ASD strategies • Districtwide – build capacity for outreach, mobile services, and partnerships to address specific needs 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Augusta – rebalance and maintain partner facility • North County – consider partner facility opportunities

As it looks for sites in central and western St. Charles County for expanded branches, the Library should also evaluate the potential to also move districtwide administration and operations out of the current Administration building in St. Peters. Moving these functions to a more central location could not only support improved operational efficiency over time, but also make the current Administration site available for overflow parking for the currently constrained Spencer Road Branch.



NEXT STEPS

This master plan process established the vision and direction for SCCCL in improving its facilities to meet community needs and strategic library goals. Next steps for the Library as it embarks on its journey toward revitalized and expanded facilities include:

- **Confirm capital funding capacity and strategies.** Some of the smaller rebalancing/revitalization projects may be feasible within the Library's current revenue stream, whereas the capacity-building projects and more complex renovations may require supplemental funding strategies.
- **Acquire sites.** Finding sites for large new libraries can be one of the longest lead-time items in any capital program. Even for projects that may seem a long way off (such as the optional Deer Run expansion), the Library is encouraged to start looking for – and saving money for – sites as early as possible. The Library need not look only at undeveloped sites; it may be able to acquire previously-developed properties with existing buildings that can be transformed into wonderful libraries.
- **Confirm project scopes, timing, and budgets.** Each proposed project will require more focused planning to confirm the scope of improvements, the potential timeline for implementation, and the capital budget. Moderate to significant construction market escalation in the St. Louis metropolitan area is anticipated to continue for at least the next few years, which can quickly impact what the Library can afford to build. SCCCL is encouraged to revisit and update budgets regularly to stay abreast of construction market changes and escalation over time.
- **Building community awareness and support.** For successful implementation, the proposed master plan projects will require public support– not just fiscal, but also enthusiasm for what improved libraries will mean for the community. The new Cliff View Branch will offer a great opportunity to show what the future of libraries in St. Charles County looks like, and help build excitement and momentum for implementation of changes at other branches.

Unanticipated changes and new opportunities will almost inevitably occur over the course of implementing the plan. This master plan is intended to be flexible, and the recommendations adaptable to changing needs and circumstances.



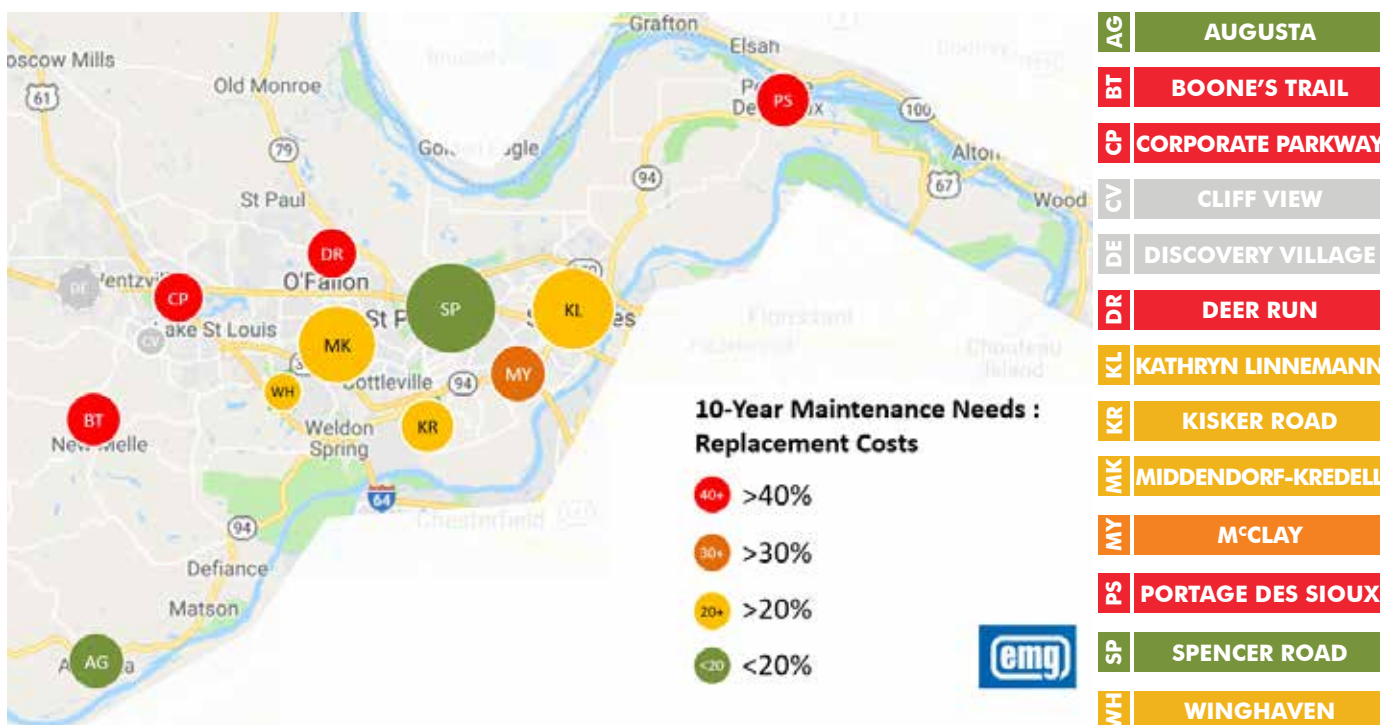
INTRODUCTION

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The St. Charles City-County Library District (SCCCL or the Library) was formed in 1973 as a merger of the St. Charles city and St. Charles county libraries. It has the second highest library service area population in the region after St. Louis County Library. The primary revenue source is property taxes, with a voter-approved maximum tax rate of \$0.26 per \$1,000 assessed value. With an annual budget of more than \$18 million, the Library is able to make significant investments in high-quality collections, technology, and staff.

The Library is proactive about maintaining its assets, assessing community needs, and planning for the future. In 2016, SCCCL commissioned a Facility Condition Assessment (FCA) of all of its branch library buildings as well as the Administration building. The FCA study showed that most of the Library’s facilities are well-maintained and do not have significant backlog of deferred capital maintenance needs. However, the FCA study also revealed that a number of the Library’s older and most heavily-used facilities will require significant investment over the next decade to address life-cycle maintenance needs and keep them in good condition. The Library has proceeded to address some of the most critical issues, but delayed other improvements pending an evaluation of its facilities from a service and operations perspective.

In 2018, the Library underwent a robust strategic planning process that identified key goals for service, organizational development, and community impact. The strategic planning process was informed by extensive engagement of staff, stakeholders, and community members sharing their ideas and priorities for library service in St. Charles County. One of the top strategic goals was the revitalization and expansion of library facilities to accommodate changing service and community growth.



The map above shows the ratio of projected 10-year maintenance costs relative to the estimated replacement value of the entire building (data source: 2016 EMG Facility Condition Assessment study).

MASTER PLAN OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

In 2019, SCCCL followed up its strategic planning process with a facilities master planning process. Objectives for the facilities master plan process included:

- Confirming the vision for library spaces and facilities in St. Charles County;
- Assessing how current branches support access, service, efficiency, and a positive customer experience;
- Identifying opportunities to revitalize, expand, consolidate, and relocate branches;
- Exploring alternative service delivery strategies with the potential to enhance access and moderate space needs; and
- Recommending capital improvement projects, including budgets and priorities for implementation.

SCCCL selected Group 4 Architecture, Research + Planning, Inc. to facilitate development of the facilities master plan. The six-month planning process included:

- Close collaboration with the Library's core leadership team;
- Tours of SCCCL facilities to observe current services, operations, and the current user experience;
- Workshops with a Library Staff/Administration Team composed of 23 senior staff members;
- Meetings with representatives of the Library Board and select city/community partners; and
- A final presentation to the Library Board of Trustees.

PROJECT PARTICIPATION

ST. CHARLES CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY

Library Board of Trustees

Joann Leykam, President

Georganne MacNab, Vice President

Staci Alvarez, Secretary

Nevada Smith, Treasurer

Julie Bartch

Justin Collier

Myra Crook

Mary Reese

Gail Zumwalt

Master Plan Project Management Team

Jason Kuhl, Director and CEO

Laurie St. Laurent, Deputy Director and Chief Customer Experience Officer

Julie Wolfe, Chief Financial Officer



Library Staff Participants

Tiffany Barke, Chief Talent Officer

Gary Brinker, Information Technology Manager

Aaron Eller, Regional Branch Manager, Middendorf-Kredell

Alison Griffith, Branch Manager, McClay

Asia Gross, Regional Branch Manager, Kathryn-Linnemann

Jennifer Jung, Regional Branch Manager, Spencer Road

Erica Land, Director of Development

Elizabeth Lippoldt, Youth Services Librarian

Robin Lunatto, Executive Administrative Assistant

Maggie Melson, Director of Youth Services

Cindy Miller, Branch Manager, Deer Run

Madison Morris, Branch Manager, Corporate Parkway

Tauquincy Neal, Facilities Manager

Sara Nielsen, Director of Adult Services

Michele Nolan, Paraprofessional

Trevor Rees, Assistant Branch Manager, WingHaven

Jim Rhodes, Information Resource Manager, Genealogy & Local History

Carol Schrey, Director of Collection Services

Kristen Sherry, Outreach Services Manager

Diana Tucker, Branch Manager, Kisker Road

Melissa Whatley, Assistant Branch Manager, Middendorf-Kredell



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PLANNING CONTEXT

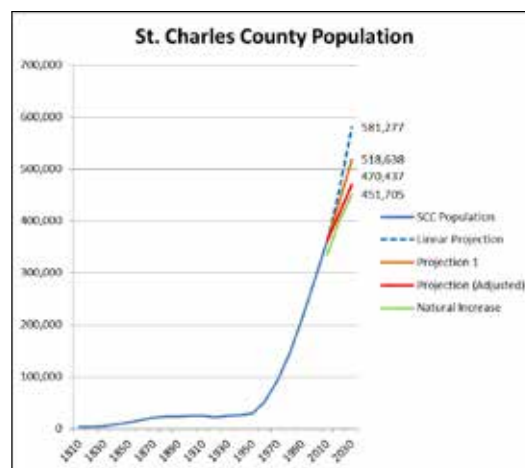
ABOUT ST. CHARLES COUNTY

Nestled between the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, St. Charles County is a community of choice in the greater St. Louis area. With almost 400,000 residents in 560 square miles, St. Charles is the second-largest county in the St. Louis Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), and one of the fastest growing counties in Missouri. Its population has multiplied more than tenfold since the 1950s; according to the St. Charles county master plan, the population grew by nearly 70% during the 1990s – greatly outpacing the under-10% growth in the rest of the MSA.

Not all areas of the county have experienced the same rate of population growth, however. Between 2000 and 2010, O’Fallon grew by more than 70%, and Wentzville more than quadrupled in size; together these two cities now represent nearly one-third of the county’s total population. The cities of St. Charles and St. Peters experienced more modest growth during this same period (9% and 2%, respectively). According to the county master plan, several areas of the county actually experienced a decrease in population during this time, including portions of the city of St. Charles and the “Golden Triangle.” As a result, the center of population has shifted significantly to the west of where it was at the turn of the 21st century.

Recent population growth has been driven in large part by a thriving economy. St. Charles County has experienced the fastest job growth in the St. Louis region¹, attracting major employers such as General Motors, Citi, MasterCard, and Boeing. Important job sectors include manufacturing, educational services, and transportation and warehousing. Significant housing and commercial development has accompanied this economic growth, in particular in west county communities such as Wentzville.

Growth in St. Charles County is expected to continue, with the population exceeding 470,000 by 2030. In order to address growing needs, the county master plan’s primary objectives include expanding public facilities and services – particularly in the west of the county. Growth and development are anticipated to continue to the west, while the northeast and southwest areas of the county are expected to retain their rural and agricultural character.



Population projections from St. Charles County’s “Master Plan: Envision 2030.”

¹ David Nicklaus, “City leads region in wage growth; St. Charles County has fastest job growth,” February 21, 2019, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

https://www.stltoday.com/business/columns/david-nicklaus/city-leads-region-in-wage-growth-st-charles-county-has/article_624e7c29-6883-5bb5-a1c2-8609882866de.html



LIBRARY USE IN ST. CHARLES COUNTY

SCCCL is a high-performance library that is clearly cherished by the communities it serves. On an average day, over 5,200 people walk through the doors of one of SCCCL's branches – adding up to more than 1.8 million visits annually.² Last year, more than 130,000 people in St. Charles County participated in over 6,500 library programs.


The Library boasts higher circulation rates than its regional and state average peers, which is a credit to the Library's responsiveness to its customers' interests. In FY2018, the Library checked out more than 5.3 million physical items and another almost 800,000 digital downloadable items. That translates to more than 15 items per year for the typical St. Charles County resident, compared to about 11 items per year at other libraries in the St. Louis metro region and across the state.

The Library's rich collection of physical materials includes not just print and media items, but also an expanding "Library of Things" like cake pans, telescopes, sun spotters, fitness equipment, and instant pots. (In the 2018 survey, community members asked for an even broader variety of items to borrow, from gardening tools and fishing equipment to art supplies and musical instruments.)

The Library has been building its program offerings; its bi-monthly program catalog has an impressively diverse list of activities for all ages and interests, from Storybook Walks and STEM classes to passport services and concerts. In the 2018 survey, respondents requested a diverse range of expanded enrichment and lifelong learning opportunities they would like to see at the library, including language education, crafting activities, technology assistance, special literary events, and professional development resources.

SCCCL's programs are so popular that it has instituted a system of advance sign-ups and reservations. And yet, Missouri State Library statistics show that the Library under-performs on program metrics relative to its peers in the St. Louis metropolitan area and across the state. This suggests that the Library's ability to offer programs and maximize participation are significantly limited by the quantity and size of program spaces in its branches.

² For comparison, SCCCL branches serve at least three times as many visitors per square foot as any of the Walmart Supercenters in St. Charles County.



SCCCL's network should support:

- excellent community **access** to high quality library programs, services, and collections
- **capacity** for current and future populations
- **sustainable** service delivery and operations

LIBRARY NETWORK

This chapter describes how the Library's facilities function as a service delivery network. Information about each individual library facility is included later in this report.

LIBRARY BRANCH NETWORK

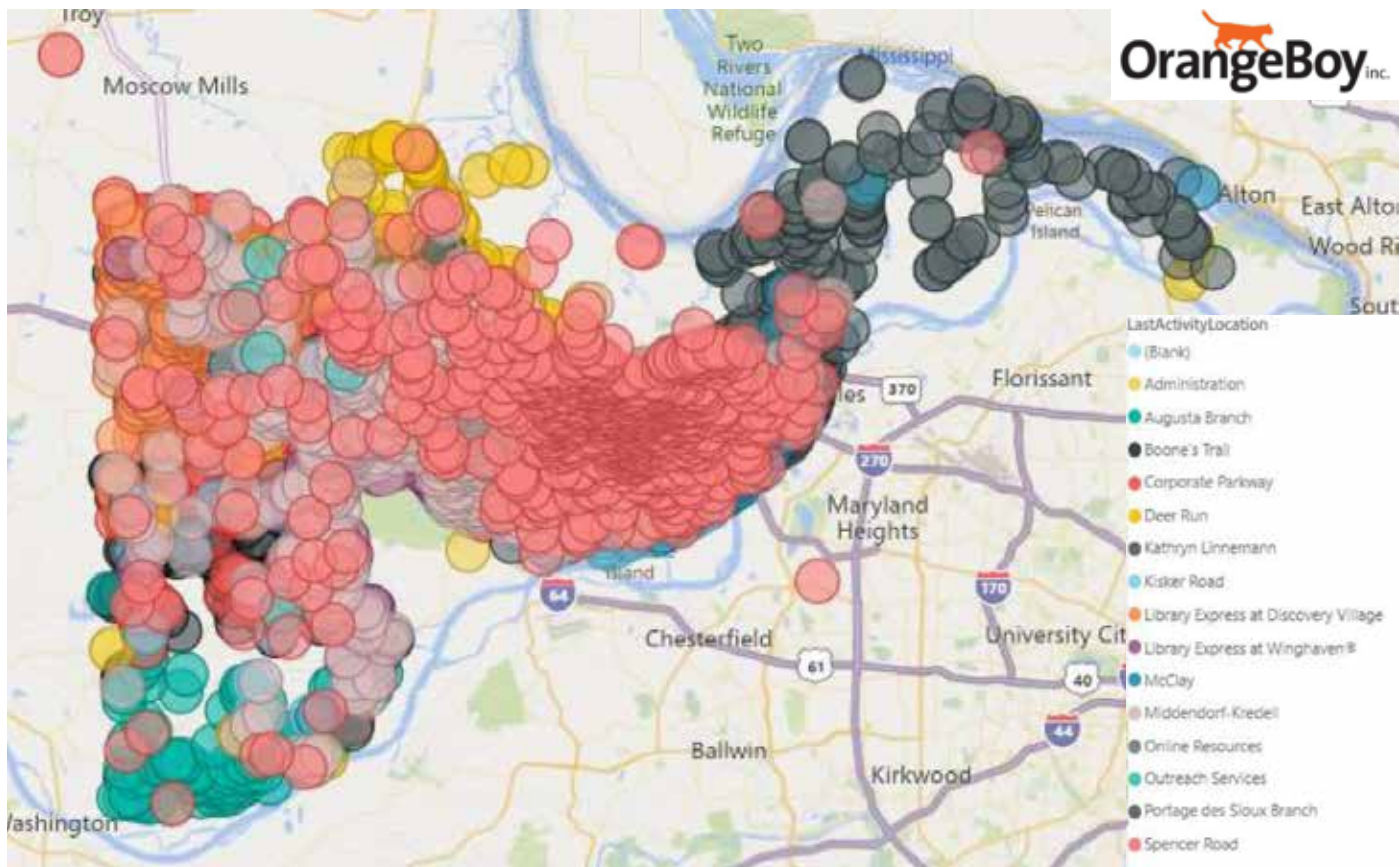
The majority of SCCCL's services are provided through its network of 12 library branches,³ ranging from the 1,000-square-foot Portage des Sioux Branch to the 58,000 square foot Spencer Road Branch. The Library loosely considers its branch facilities in terms of the categories described below:

- **Regional** – large branches with large and specialty collections; open 70 hours and 7 days per week; more than 50% of SCCCL's programs are offered through Regional libraries.
- **General Purpose** – medium-sized branches; open 70 hours and 7 days per week; more than 40% of SCCCL's programs are offered through GP branches.
- **Community** – small/mini-branches located in low-density/rural areas; open 3-4 days per week; limited programming.
- **Express** – small/mini-branches in easily-accessible locations, emphasizing quick materials pick-up and drop-off; open 70 hours and 7 days per week; limited programming.

³ SCCCL's network experienced two transitions of note during the master plan process. In the summer of 2019, the Portage des Sioux Branch was heavily damaged by flooding from the Mississippi River and was closed indefinitely. Also during that time, SCCCL purchased an approximately 5,000 square foot former coffee shop not far from the Library Express at Discovery Village as a replacement for that leased facility.

The following table lists SCCCL's current facilities:

	Branch	Year Built/ Updated	Current Size	Current Category
	Kathryn Linnemann (KL)	Built 1982; expanded 1992	28,000 SF	Regional
	Middendorf-Kredell (MK)	Built 1995; expanded 2006	30,000 SF	Regional
	Spencer Road (SP)	Built 2012	58,000 SF	Regional
	Corporate Parkway (CP)	Built 1984; expanded 1995	12,000 SF	General Purpose
	Deer Run (DR)	Built 1995	11,000 SF	General Purpose
	Kisker Road (KR)	Built 1990; expanded 1999	16,000 SF	General Purpose
	McClay (MY)	Built 1998; expanded 2003; renovated 2013	14,400 SF	General Purpose
	Augusta (AG)	Built 2002	2,800 SF	Community
	Boone's Trail (BT)	Built 2002	2,300 SF	Community
	Portage des Sioux (PS)	Opened 1975	1,000 SF	Community
	Library Express at Discovery Village (DE) [will be replaced by Cliff View Branch (CV)]	DE opened 2006; CV opening 2020	5,000 SF	Express
	Library Express at WingHaven (WH)	Built 2003; expanded 2010 & 2018	3,300 SF	Express



Map graphic by OrangeBoy, Inc.

ACCESS TO LIBRARY SERVICES

Data supplied by Orangeboy were used to assess how SCCCL's facilities provide access to service at the network level. The Library subscribes to Orangeboy's Savannah data platform, which among other things tracks what library services customers use – and where. For this facilities master plan, Orangeboy prepared maps based on its “last branch visited” dataset, which marks the last checkout location for each active library cardholder. The maps of this dataset showed that:

- SCCCL customers do not exclusively use the branch closest to their home. In fact, most SCCCL branches attract customers from a wide geographic area.
- There are no obvious geographic gaps or barriers to accessing library facilities. Residents of all areas of St. Charles County are able to access at least one branch library.
- SCCCL's digital collections are used by residents throughout the county as a complement to physical collections and other services.

This analysis confirms that St. Charles residents have excellent access to library collections. It suggests that St. Charles communities are reasonably mobile, and that SCCCL's customers make decisions about which branch to visit based on multiple factors (not just proximity to home). It supports SCCCL's practice of strategically locating certain services and collections (such as government documents and local history) rather than diluting or duplicating them at multiple locations. Based on these findings, this master planning process found no clear need for additional branches to address geographic gaps or barriers to access in St. Charles County.



Spencer Road Branch

COLLECTION DENSITY

By far, SCCCL's collection is the service with the largest facility footprint. Overall, SCCCL has a current collection density (see facing page) of approximately 3.3 volumes per square foot (vol/SF) averaged across all of its branches. Excluding Spencer Road Branch from the calculation raises the countywide density average from 3.3 to 3.9 vol/SF.⁴

However, the actual density – and the customer's experience of service and space – varies significantly from branch to branch. A few branches that represent the range of densities in St. Charles County:

- **Spencer Road** is SCCCL's least collection-dense branch at 2.0 vol/SF. Overall, this branch was designed with a generous amount of space for programs, events, small group collaboration, and casual social engagement. However, customers tend to experience it as a much more dense branch because most of the collection at Spencer Road is located on the first floor.
- The **WingHaven Library Express** comes in at just under 2.7 vol/SF. Winghaven's low density ratio is due to a relatively high circulation rate as well as a comparatively large program space for the size of the branch.
- At 3.3. vol/SF, **Middendorf-Kredell** represents the system average. It concentrates much of its shelving in distinct areas, which allows space for people and programs in others – including a few specialized spaces such as a quiet room and technology lab. That said, the branch would benefit from still more people and program space to support SCCCL's strategic priorities and community needs.
- **Boone's Trail** (4.7 vol/SF) and **Corporate Parkway** (4.6 vol/SF) represent the highest end of SCCCL's branch density range. Despite the difference in their sizes, tall shelving dominates both of these libraries – offering customers a crowded experience and few places to sit. At Boone's Trail, the collection even extends into the small meeting room, which conflicts with programs.



Boone's Trail Branch

As a building, Spencer Road offers a good mix of space for people and collections that is well-aligned with the Library's vision and strategic plan. Spencer Road may even be able to accommodate some relocated materials in order to alleviate crowding and improve customers' experience at one or two smaller branches. However, SCCCL's overall collection density is out of alignment with its strategic goals. Additional capacity will be needed in order to achieve the Library's and community's vision for programs, services, and spaces.

⁴ Because of its size and significantly lower collection density, Spencer Road is a notable outlier among SCCCL's branches that disproportionately affects the districtwide density average.

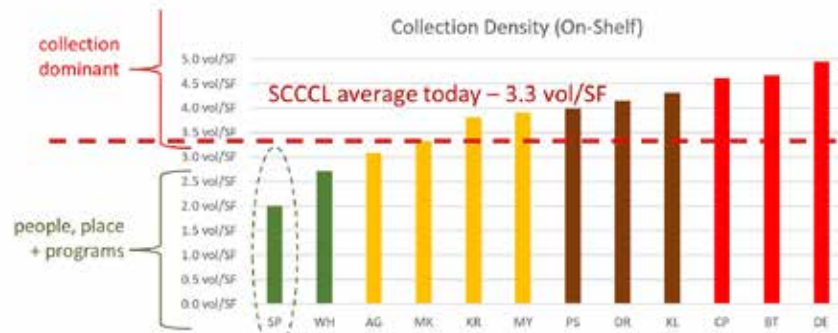
COLLECTION DENSITY

“Collection density” is calculated as the simple ratio of the number of physical items on the shelf to the overall size of the building (volumes per square foot, or vol/SF). In individual library facilities, this metric provides an objective benchmark of the footprint of the physical collection relative to space for programs and people. It is one way to quantify current and proposed future conditions, and can even be used as a target or guideline for future use of space.

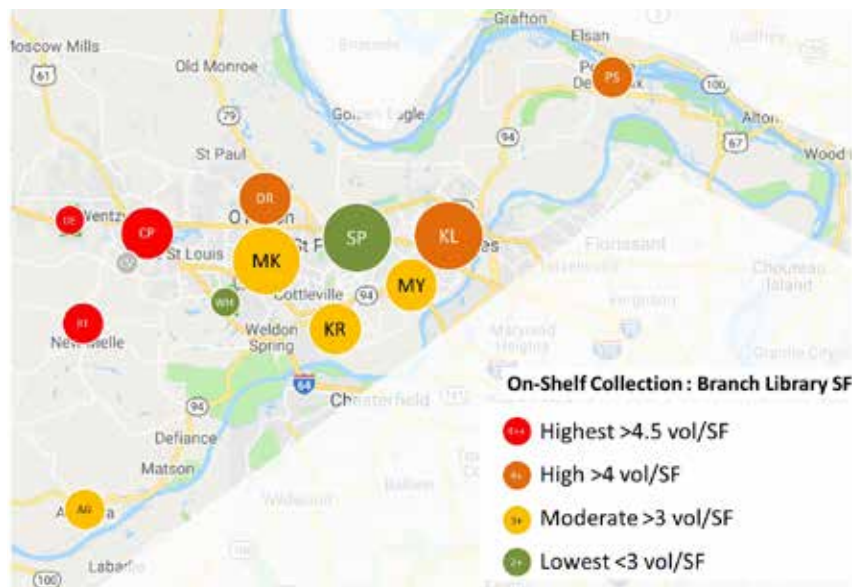
There is no universal standard for collection density. Whether any particular vol/SF ratio is appropriate or inadequate depends heavily on the type of services each library wants to deliver to its community. A lower on-shelf vol/SF ratio describes a library that is more weighted toward people and programs – with a “bookless” library at the extreme low end. A higher on-shelf vol/SF ratio is consistent with a more collection-focused set of services; as the ratio increases, so does the user’s perception of the collection’s dominance of space.

Each library should confirm and calibrate its own scale relative to the services and user experiences it wishes to support.

Collection density – volumes : library space



Spencer Road's large size and low density make it an outlier in the SCCCL system; excluding it from the calculation raises the systemwide average to 3.9 vol/SF.

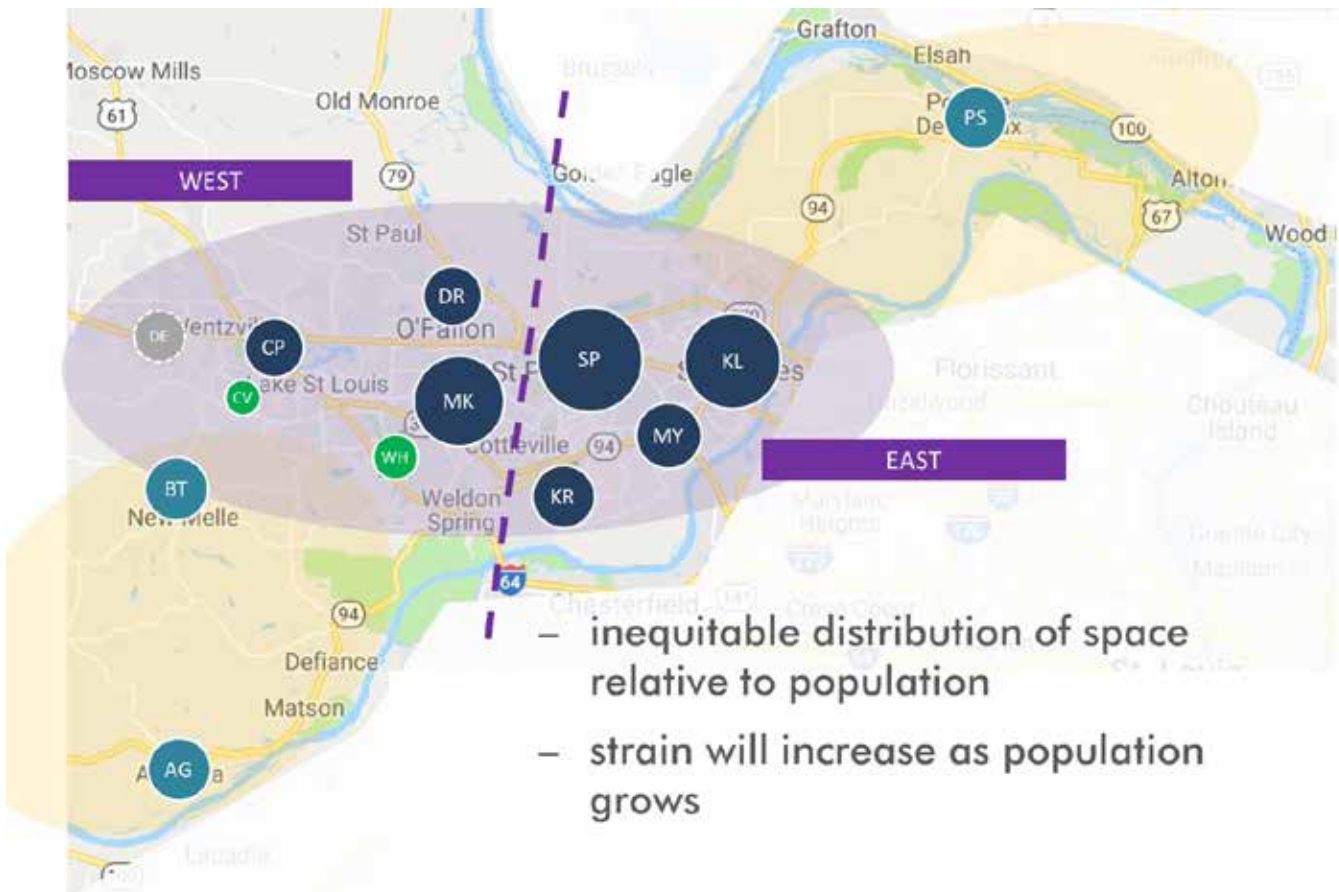


CAPACITY FOR SERVICE

When Library Express at Discovery Village moves to the new Cliff View Branch in 2020, SCCCL will have about 0.45 square feet of branch library space per capita (SF/capita) districtwide to serve a 2020 population of more than 400,000.⁵ As discussed in the Collection Density section, SCCCL’s current facilities do not provide enough space for people and programs in addition to the collection overall. Therefore, 0.45 square SF/capita is an inadequate level of capacity for branch library service for St. Charles County.

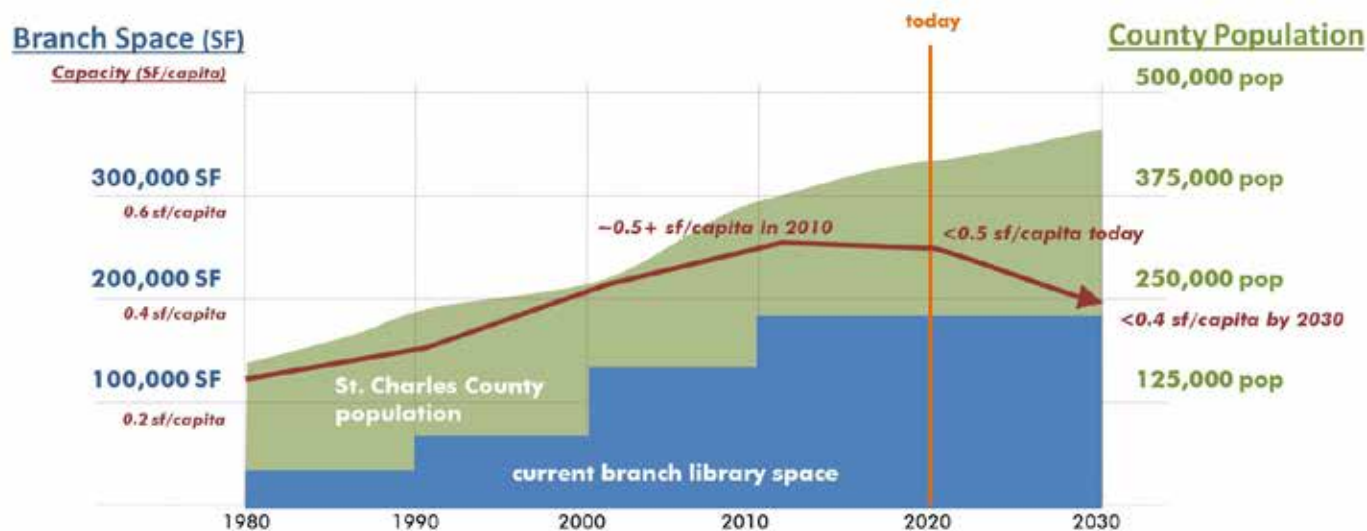
Spencer Road Branch and WingHaven Library Express offer models for a better mix of space for people, programs, and collections than SCCCL’s other branches. In order to achieve a similar level of collection density systemwide, the Library would need to expand its branch space by 30% or more. In capacity terms, this would be the equivalent of at least 0.6 SF/capita for the 2020 county population.

Additional branch library space would also be needed in order to build capacity for the projected 2030 population (and beyond). If SCCCL expects to continue growing its physical collection in direct proportion to population growth over time, then it would need to maintain a long-range branch space planning target of at least 0.6 SF/capita in order to ensure the right mix of space for people, programs, and the collection. However, if the Library is able to slow the growth of its physical collection relative to population growth, it may be able to reduce its long-range branch space capacity target.



⁵ This branch space is inequitably distributed, with greater capacity on the east side of the county (about 0.55 SF/capita) than on the west side (about 0.35 SF/capita).

Capacity – branch library space : population



The graph above plots population growth in St. Charles County (right-side Y-axis) against the amount of branch library space over time (left-side Y-axis). The red trend line shows this branch capacity ratio as a square feet per capita measure. Despite significant expansion of its branches over the past few decades, SCCCL's capacity is still declining against strong recent and projected population growth. If no additional branch library space is added, the Library's capacity for branch service will continue to decline.

SQUARE FEET PER CAPITA MEASURES

The ratio of library space to population size (square feet per capita, or SF/capita) is a time-tested metric for the capacity of library facilities to support service. But as with the collection density metric, there is no universal scale or target that is right for all libraries or communities. Rather, this metric is best used to measure current conditions, establish an appropriate capacity target relative to population size, and gauge progress in facility expansion compared to community growth over time.

Space for systemwide functions (such as library administration, technical services, IT, outreach, etc.) may or may not be included in library capacity calculations, depending on individual circumstances and opportunities. For the SCCCL master plan analysis, capacity calculations and targets are for branch service only, and exclude space for systemwide functions.

SUSTAINABLE SERVICE DELIVERY

Hours of operation are a key component of providing access to library services and facilities. The Library operates a modest number of strategically-located facilities, which enables it to open most of its branches for 70 hours and seven days per week (the exceptions are Boone’s Trail and Augusta, which are currently open four days per week).

BRANCH SERVICES

Per hour, SCCCL’s larger branches tend to require more staff to operate than smaller branches and therefore have higher operating costs per hour. However, when branch size is taken into consideration, SCCCL’s larger branches actually are significantly less expensive to operate per square foot than the smaller branches. For example, Spencer Road costs twice as much to operate as Corporate Parkway, but is five times the size. WingHaven is nearly twice the size of Discovery Village, but requires only about 25% more staffing for the same number of hours. Operating Portage des Sioux with the same staffing level as the other community branches — Augusta or Boone’s Trail — would have made it the most expensive branch in the system.

What this suggests is that – all other things being equal – the Library’s operating dollars stretch further in its larger branches. This is not meant to suggest that the Library should necessarily close its smaller branches; no single metric can communicate the true value and impact of any library branch. But as SCCCL looks for opportunities to expand space and build capacity for the future, replacing small branches with well-designed larger facilities will be a more cost-effective and sustainable strategy in the long term than simply adding more small branches.

OUTREACH AND ALTERNATIVE SERVICE DELIVERY (ASD)

Consistent with its strategic plan goals, SCCCL is developing its capacity for outreach and alternative service delivery (ASD) as a complement to the services available in its branches. At the time of this report, SCCCL is planning (among other things) a new bookmobile to enhance access to service and expand the Library’s reach. Library leadership and staff are excited about the potential to use such strategies to address specific community needs — such as those left in the wake of Portage des Sioux Branch’s indefinite closure — creatively, quickly, and cost-effectively.

While it was beyond the scope of this master planning process to make specific recommendations about outreach and ASD, these network strategies do have implications for the amount and location of space needed to support them. For example, mobile and outreach services typically require docks and equipment for frequent loading and unloading of collections and supplies onto and off of vehicles. They also benefit from having their operations and support spaces in a central location for efficiency of access.

Although the current Administration building does have some capacity for the vehicular loading and service aspects of outreach and ASD strategies, its location in St. Peters is not ideally located for efficient access to the whole county, particularly western communities.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Most of the Library's systemwide functions (e.g., Administration, Technical Services, IT, etc.) are currently located in a separate building adjacent to the Spencer Road Branch in St. Peters. Until recently, SCCCL occupied only a portion of the approximately 55,000-square-foot building; now that the previous tenant has moved out, it is currently expanding into the full building. This expansion will be a significant improvement for the Library, which among other things will provide the space to grow network services such as outreach and ASD.

A detailed assessment of space needs for systemwide functions was beyond the scope of this master planning project. At a high level, the Library anticipates that the amount of space provided in the current building should be enough to support anticipated growth and change in systemwide functions over time.

However, the current Administration building presents some challenges for long-term effectiveness. In addition to its limitations relative to mobile services and ASD, the current building is also detached from a public service point. Systemwide library functions often benefit from co-location with branch services, giving leadership and central operations personnel more opportunities to directly observe how customers are accessing and experiencing their library services.

The Library may see long-term value from co-locating some or all of its district-wide functions with branch services in a more central location. Vacating the current Administration building site could also offer the opportunity to add overflow parking capacity for the parking-constrained Spencer Road Branch.





“WHAT’S THE COOLEST THING YOU’VE SEEN IN A LIBRARY ANYWHERE?”

Above left: SCCCL staff praised Salt Lake City’s Main Library, where the rooftop serves as an informal event space.
 Above right: The 24-hour lobby in Dayton, Ohio’s Main Library (above right) makes materials accessible 24/7 with the swipe of a card.
 Below: The Oak Park Public Library (IL) features a flexible, multipurpose space called the “Idea Box,” shown transformed into a gallery for Youth Art Month.





SCCCL's facilities should support:

- comfortable, accessible, and inviting library spaces for all ages
- staff productivity, innovation, and wellness
- value for capital investment

LIBRARY FACILITIES

This chapter summarizes the vision for modern library spaces and buildings in St. Charles County as well as the facility assessment findings from this master plan process. More detail about each of the Library's facilities is included later in this report.

LIBRARY FACILITIES VISION

St. Charles County residents and library staff alike share a vision for improved library spaces and facilities. In the 2018 community survey conducted for the Strategic Plan, patrons envisioned the library as an inclusive, multigenerational space that supports both traditional library services and expanded new programs. Many requested more diverse educational classes, events, and hands-on activities for all ages in appropriately-equipped spaces. Ideas included improved meeting rooms, study rooms, and space for maker/creative programs as well as space for casual gatherings and informal activities. More comfortable reading areas were also a high priority.

During both the strategic plan and this facilities master planning process, SCCCL staff spoke of the desire to serve all demographics equitably and expand the Library's reach. The Library aims to provide a superior customer experience, welcoming all visitors and providing opportunities to learn, collaborate, and innovate. With improved facilities that accommodate expanded programs, staff hope to transform all branches into high-value community destinations.

All visitors should have easy access to meeting and event spaces, study rooms, creative spaces, and emerging technologies. Staff envision beautiful, light-filled, comfortable spaces that people want to be in. Branches should also be intuitive for both customers and staff to use, with good visibility, clear wayfinding, and a high degree of flexibility.



Spencer Road (above); Deer Run (below)



LIBRARY FACILITIES TODAY

Except for Portage des Sioux, all of the Library's branch facilities are less than 40 years old. The oldest branches still in operation – Kathryn Linnemann, Corporate Parkway – date to the early 1980s. A big branch building boom in the 1990s added five new branches in St. Charles County and expanded several others – including both Linnemann and Corporate Parkway. In the 2000s, the Library Express model was introduced at Discovery Village and WingHaven, and the Linnemann branch was expanded again. In the early 2010s, SCCCL replaced a smaller building with the new Spencer Road Branch – which at 55,000 SF remains the largest public service location in SCCCL's branch fleet.

In general, SCCCL's facilities have been well-maintained, with regular investments to keep them in good condition. Staff take care in keeping them neat and tidy, and in enhancing interior spaces with themed displays and decorations. Although the 2016 FCA study identified several million dollars' worth of maintenance needs, the vast majority of the recommended projects are typical for library buildings of that age and heavy level of community use.



Kathryn Linnemann

That said, SCCCL's branches are notably out of alignment with the Library's strategic goals for service as well as the community's vision for space:

- **Insufficient space for people and programs.** In order to keep up with community demand, SCCCL's physical collection has grown to the point that its branches are overstuffed with books and shelving. Towering canyons of tall shelves dominate the interior of most branches, leaving little room for much-requested meeting and study spaces, work/reader seating, technology, and social engagement. The meeting/program rooms at most branches are too small to accommodate the level of community interest. In the 2018 community survey, respondents complained about overcrowding and long waitlists for programs; the Library has instituted a system of advance sign-ups for programs in order to manage expectations as well as attendance.
- **Hard to read.** Many modern library buildings have copious windows which – in addition to bringing light into interior spaces – enable passersby to glimpse the people and activity inside. By contrast, many of the Library's branches have relatively few windows, creating dark interior spaces as well as presenting an opaque face to the street. Dark interiors are also a particular issue for some of the branches that were expanded, such as Middendorf-Kredell and Corporate Parkway.



"What's the coolest thing you've seen in a library anywhere?" SCCCL staff liked Dayton Metro Library's flexible, people-oriented spaces for programs, reading, and working.

- **Hard to navigate.** Some of the branch interiors are hard to understand, which makes navigation and wayfinding more difficult for patrons. Staff report that people regularly get lost in the labyrinthine Kathryn-Linnemann branch, for example. In many cases, interior signage has been added with good intentions but inconsistent or even counter-productive effects (e.g., increased visual clutter).
- **Noise.** SCCCL's facilities often lack the acoustic treatments and separations that would enable lively programming and social engagement to co-exist in harmony with quieter activities. In McClay Branch for example, the clerestory that brings in light also creates an echo chamber in the middle of the branch. At Spencer Road, program and event spaces on the second floor do not adequately prevent sound transmission to adjacent spaces and the first floor.
- **Outdated staff desk model.** Visitors who enter SCCCL branches are usually confronted with an oversized staff desk, and often encounter more big desks on their journey through the library. In addition to taking up a lot of space, big desks can unintentionally create an expectation that a staff member will always be stationed there. They also can reduce staff mobility and make it more difficult to get out and actively roam the floor; SCCCL staff compared the big desks to "fortresses" that separate them from their customers.

As the Library undertakes maintenance projects at its current branches, it may have the opportunity to implement some service, operations, and customer experience improvements as well. However, some of the deficiencies and mis-alignments described above will likely require a broader capital improvement strategy.



The McClay information desk just a few yards away from the circulation desk.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes the master-plan recommended strategies for improved library facilities in St. Charles County. More specific recommendations for each SCCCL facility are included in the eighth section (Branch Facility Summaries).

EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE NETWORK

The following planning targets will ensure that SCCCL facilities provide sufficient capacity for service, including space for people and programs as well as well-developed, responsive collections:

- A branch capacity target of 0.55 to 0.60 square feet per capita for a projected 2030 population of up to 470,000. The higher end of this range will support additional growth in the physical collection; the lower end assumes little to no growth in the size of the collection. SCCCL should strive for reasonably equitable distribution of branch capacity relative to the population of east and west county communities.
- A systemwide on-shelf collection density target¹ of approximately 2.5 volumes per square foot of branch space, in order to ensure a good balance of space for people and programs. Mini- and express branches should plan for a maximum on-shelf density of 2.0 vol/SF. Branches over 30,000 square feet may be planned for an on-shelf density of up to 2.75 vol/SF so that smaller branches can maintain a lower density.

In building capacity, SCCCL should continue to maintain a manageable number of branches that can be operated cost-effectively. Where practical, relocating small branches to sites that can accommodate significant expansion will be a more efficient and cost-effective long-term operating strategy than simply adding more small branches.

SCCCL's sustainable network should also include expanded outreach and alternative service delivery (ASD) strategies² to complement and supplement what is available in the branches. Perhaps the most immediate application for such strategies is in Portage des Sioux, where the former branch has been closed indefinitely due to flooding. The Library anticipates that such strategies will be particularly needed in west county communities in response to strong growth and development over at least the next decade. SCCCL may wish to consider developing operations and support space at least for these services (and perhaps other districtwide functions as well) to a more central location within the district.



¹ See page 16 for a discussion of collection density.

² See page 20 for a discussion of ASD.



BUILD CAPACITY

Western St. Charles County currently has the most significant deficits relative to the recommended system planning targets, as well as the most projected community growth over the next decade. The primary master plan strategy for western county areas is to build capacity and increase access for current and future communities.

Recommendations include:

- **Replace Corporate Parkway** with a larger new branch of least 50,000-60,000 square feet. Given the potential for this project to not only greatly improve capacity and access in west county but also to alleviate some of the density and crowding in other branches, SCCCL staff ranked this project as the highest priority for early implementation. The current CP site cannot accommodate expansion, so SCCCL will need to find an alternate location in west county. As of the date of this master plan report, the City of Wentzville has initiated discussions with SCCCL about the potential for incorporating a large branch library in its proposed new recreation center campus west of its city hall.
- **Relocate Middendorf-Kredell** to a site in west central county that can accommodate a branch of at least 30,000-40,000 square feet. As an option, SCCCL could also co-locate some or all of its systemwide functions (e.g., Administration, Outreach, etc.) with relocated MK branch services, potentially creating a new “main library” for the district.



- **Consider expanding Deer Run.** Depending on community growth as well as the location and size of the expanded CP and MK branches, SCCCL may find that it would also be beneficial to expand Deer Run. Expansion of DR will likely require a new site. In the meantime, Deer Run is one of the branches most in need of maintenance, and would be a good candidate for at least a modest interior refresh to improve the service model, allocation of space, and customer experience.
- **Consider expanding Boone’s Trail.** As the surrounding population grows, SCCCL may consider recategorizing Boone’s Trail to an express or general purpose branch, and extending hours and days of operation. The Boone’s Trail site appears to offer some capacity for expansion which – depending on community growth and library access patterns in the area – may be an option worth exploring. In the meantime, the Library has the opportunity to expand service at Boone’s Trail by reducing the collection density and reallocating more space for people.

Because the small branches in western county communities are generally in good condition, Library staff felt that they were not a high priority for near-term renovation. There is the opportunity to make big changes at Augusta, Boone’s Trail, and WingHaven through relatively simple interventions such as right-sizing the collection, rebalancing space, and replacing furniture. Many of these changes can be implemented by SCCCL’s facilities team in coordination with its ongoing maintenance program.



IMPROVE THE EXPERIENCE

The master plan strategy for library branches in eastern parts of St. Charles County emphasizes rebalancing and revitalization to modernize service, right-size the physical collection, expand space for people and programs, and improve the customer experience. Recommendations include:

- Revitalize McClay and Kisker Road.** SCCCL staff identified MY and KR as near-term opportunities to make significant changes through renovation. Reducing the on-shelf collection density of these branches to 2.25 vol/SF or less would free up significant space for other uses. Opportunities to explore through renovation include improving the flexibility and capacity of meeting rooms; increased seating for reading, collaboration, and social engagement; modernized staff desks and work spaces; and improved signage and wayfinding (among others).
- Rebalance Kathryn Linnemann.** KL was renovated and expanded in 2008; it is currently undergoing selected improvements (such as to expand space for teens). Opportunities to explore during KL's next renovation cycle include refreshing the interior design, furnishings, and lighting; right-sizing the collection to increase space and flexibility for programming; improved layout and wayfinding; and modernizing staff desks and work spaces.
- Rebalance Spencer Road.** In addition to being the largest and newest branch (at least until Cliff View comes online), Spencer Road also has the best balance of space for people, programs, and collection of any SCCCL branch. As such, there are few obvious reasons to prioritize improvements at SP earlier than most other branches. In the near-term, SP is a logical candidate for absorbing some collection materials from smaller branches as they work to reduce their density and rebalance space for people. During the next renovation cycle, the Library will have the opportunity to address several notable deficiencies at SP – such as expanding space for children; improving acoustics (reducing mechanical system noise and sound transmission between program spaces); and enhancing interior wayfinding.

On a SF/capita basis, the four branches in eastern St. Charles County appear to provide sufficient capacity for the population size. Given the modest amount of growth projected in this part of the county, these four branches are expected to continue to provide sufficient capacity over the next decade – as long as they are not over-stuffed with collections. That said, should growth in the eastern part of the county occur faster or greater than projected at the time of this master plan, SCCCL may wish to look at opportunities to expand its capacity. The McClay site appears able to accommodate a larger replacement library with a more prominent street presence and improved community connectivity (as well as modern library services and spaces).

GO BEYOND THE BRANCH

SCCCL should build and leverage its capacity for services outside of its branches, through strategies such as outreach, alternative service delivery (ASD), and partnerships. Such strategies will significantly increase SCCCL’s agility and responsiveness to changing and evolving community needs over time.

As it builds up its outside services, SCCCL may wish to reevaluate its current “community branch” model for low-density and rural communities. The Library may find that it can provide better service more cost-effectively through outside strategies than through building, maintaining, and operating a branch facility for limited hours.



Book club at senior living community

PRIORITIES

Library leadership and staff were remarkably aligned in their thinking about which projects should be prioritized for implementation early in the capital program, and those that could be implemented later or on an opportunity basis. The table below shows the recommended projects sorted according to these priority groups; however, these should not be considered “phases” until projects are confirmed and funded.

The “First Wave” projects are those that Library staff felt would have a significant impact not only for public service, but also in laying the groundwork for later projects. For example, replacing Corporate Parkway with a much larger branch would enable SCCCL to absorb a significant amount of the physical collection from other branches, freeing up space in other facilities for people and programs. In addition to customer service and experience improvements in these busy branches, early renovations of Deer Run, Kisker Road, and McClay would also take care of significant deferred and upcoming life cycle maintenance needs.

Strategy	Group 1 – First Wave	Group 2 – Second Wave	Group 3 – Opportunities
Build Capacity: Replace and Expand Branches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Parkway – relocate and expand to 50,000-60,000 square feet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middendorf-Kredell – relocate and expand to 30,000-40,000 square feet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deer Run – relocate and expand option (depending on community growth, capacity needs, and opportunity)
Improve Experience: Repair, Rebalance, and Revitalize Existing Branches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deer Run – renovate • Kisker Road – renovate • McClay – renovate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kathryn Linnemann – refresh and reorganize • Spencer Road – refresh and reorganize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boone’s Trail – rebalance and maintain; optional expansion • WingHaven – rebalance and maintain • Cliff View – maintain
Go Beyond the Branch: Leverage Outreach, ASD, and Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portage des Sioux – develop ASD strategies • Districtwide – build capacity for outreach, mobile services, and partnerships to address specific needs 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Augusta – rebalance and maintain partner facility • North County – consider partner facility opportunities



Spencer Road Branch

IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

This master plan is just the beginning of the road to improved library facilities in St. Charles County. This chapter discusses some of the considerations for SCCCL as it develops its implementation strategy and plan.

CAPITAL FUNDING STRATEGY

As of this report, SCCCL has not yet confirmed its funding strategy, capacity, and timeline for the proposed capital projects. As it works to develop its implementation strategy, the Library may determine that some of the smaller revitalization projects may be feasible within current revenue stream. For example, the Library could make big changes at one of the small branches by simply downsizing the collection and swapping out some shelving for other furniture – changes that may even be possible within the Library’s ongoing maintenance program and budget. However, the new construction projects (such as Corporate Parkway replacement) and more complex renovations may require supplemental funding strategies.

Once the Library has confirmed its funding capacity and timeline, each proposed capital project will require focused planning to confirm the scope of improvements, the potential timeline for implementation, and the capital budget. Moderate to significant construction market escalation in the St. Louis metropolitan area is anticipated to continue for at least the next few years, which can significantly affect what the Library can afford to build. Even after budgets are established, SCCCL is encouraged to revisit and update them regularly to reflect construction market conditions and escalation over time, as well as to adjust for changing project conditions.



The City of Olathe KS purchased a former grocery store for its new Indian Creek Branch Library (above and below).



SITE SELECTION AND ACQUISITION

The recommended expansions of Corporate Parkway and Middendorf-Kredell, and the optional expansion of Deer Run, will all require the acquisition of larger sites. Site acquisition can take a long time. The Library should start looking for – and saving money for – new sites as early as possible in the capital improvement program.

Considerations and criteria for evaluating potential sites include:

- **Location.** The proposed new branches will be significant community destinations, and should be planned for regional-scale access. Large commercial/retail stores invest heavily in research about the ideal location to maximize access for their customers, and SCCCL can consider whether sites in the same area might be similarly accessible for library patrons.
- **Capacity.** A suitable site will provide enough space to accommodate the building, parking, outdoor program space, and landscaping. Generally speaking, a branch of less than 30,000 square feet should be built on a single level to support operational efficiency; over that size, multiple stories may be more appropriate. A site that offers additional capacity for future expansion will give the Library even more flexibility in the long-term.

- **Visibility.** A prominent site with good visibility will help customers locate the branch and build broader awareness among passersby. A lower-profile site (such as behind other buildings, or on a low-traffic street) will require enhanced strategies to help customers recognize and navigate to the branch.
- **Cost.** Cost is of course a crucial consideration in site selection. In addition to the first cost of purchase, it is also important to understand the potential costs of development, as well as any implications for ongoing operational and maintenance costs. For example, over the long term, the Library may get more value out of a larger parcel that can accommodate a single-story building than to pay less for a smaller parcel that will require multiple floors and higher staffing costs. Some sites may also require special treatments or measures to prepare them for development, such as sloping conditions requiring extensive grading or complex structural foundations.
- **Partnerships.** Because of their broad appeal and community reach, libraries are excellent partners. Their large customer base and daily foot traffic can make them attractive to retail and mixed-use space developers and management. Public and community facilities such as recreation centers can also be good neighbors and partners, with co-location creating synergies of use and a shared multigenerational destination.

In addition to looking at undeveloped sites, the Library should also consider opportunities to acquire and adapt developed properties into expanded branch libraries. There are many creative examples of other communities that have transformed existing buildings into modern, beautiful, and operationally effective libraries. One recent example is in Olathe Kansas, where an empty grocery store has been completely transformed into a 21st century branch library with copious space for programs, collaboration, technology, and civic and social engagement.

SCCCL can also consider existing buildings for districtwide functions; in Dayton OH, a former brewery and warehouse operation was purchased by the Dayton Metro Library for a new Operations Center.



Dayton Metro Library bought a former brewery and warehouse for its new Operations Center.



BUILD COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Successful implementation of the recommended projects will require public support – not just in fiscal terms, but also in enthusiasm for improved libraries. An information strategy to build awareness and excitement will help the Library communicate with its customers and staff about the need and plan for library improvements. The new Cliff View Branch will offer a great opportunity to show what the future of libraries in St. Charles County looks like, and help build excitement and momentum for implementation of changes at other branches.

The Foundation and Friends organizations are often outstanding partners for communications and information campaigns. In many cases, they have the capacity, resources, and perspective to craft and tell the library’s story in a highly compelling way.

BRANCH FACILITY SUMMARIES

This section describes current conditions at each of the Library's branches as well as the opportunities and master plan recommendations for improvement. Branches in this section are in alphabetical order.



Cliff View to replace Discovery Village soon



AUGUSTA BRANCH



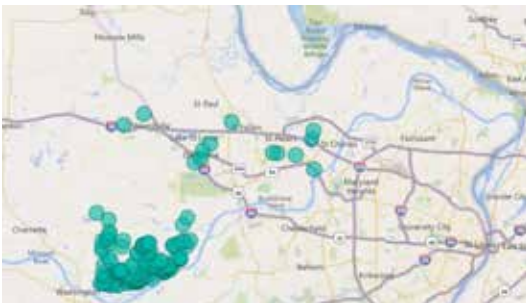
AUGUSTA BRANCH

198 Jackson Street, Augusta, Missouri

The attractive, 2,800-square-foot Augusta Branch is located within a small, but vibrant community in the southwest corner of the county. The branch is currently open to the public for 36 hours and four days per week.

The building is owned by the City of Augusta and is SCCCL's only leased facility (after the closure of Discovery Village). The facility was built in 2002, and through regular maintenance (shared with the City of Augusta) is in good condition overall; Augusta Branch had one of the best condition scores in the 2016 FCA study of SCCCL branches.

The current building serves the community well and should continue do so in the future. No expansion or relocation is recommended (unless made necessary by changes to the lease terms or partnership with the City of Augusta). With continued proactive maintenance, it should not require major renovation during the next decade.

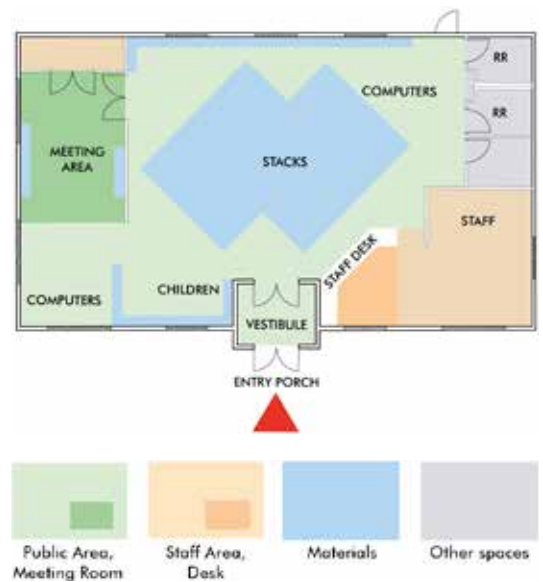


Map of Augusta users from OrangeBoy's last branch visited dataset



Meeting room area with computers and materials

That said, relatively simple interventions can have dramatic impacts on service and the customer experience at Augusta. Reducing the on-shelf collection density to less than 2.0 vol/SF (i.e., fewer than about 5,600 items) would enable the relocation of computers and periodicals out of the meeting room, reducing conflicts between browsers and program participants. Selective replacement of shelving and furniture could increase collection display and browsability, and provide more flexibility and choice in individual and collaborative seating. Acoustic treatments could be implemented to reduce sound transmission between the meeting room and main space.



BOONE'S TRAIL BRANCH



BOONE'S TRAIL BRANCH

10 Fiddlecreek Ridge Road, Wentzville, Missouri

Boone's Trail Branch is a cherished community asset, attracting visitors from a surprisingly large area in the western part of the county. Located just off Highway Z and right next to a new county park, Boone's Trail is a convenient stop for locals to grab a new bestseller or attend a game of crazy rummy.

Built in 2002, the cozy 2,300-square-foot branch features soaring ceilings. Abundant windows and skylights transform the interior into a bright, welcoming space. However, Boone's Trail is stuffed full of books. With the highest collection density in the SCCCL system (4.7 vol/SF), it lacks room for people to do much of anything beyond checking out materials; only a handful of seats and a pair of computers fit around the edges of the shelving. The collection even flows into the meeting room, causing conflicts and further reducing the capacity of the room for group use.



Map of Boone's Trail users from OrangeBoy's last branch visited dataset

Thanks to regular maintenance, Boone’s Trail Branch is in good condition, and is not anticipated to be a priority for major renovation or expansion within the next decade. The site appears to offer the capacity for a small expansion which – depending on community growth and evolving library access patterns in the area – may be an option worth exploring in the long term.

In the meantime, intermediate strategies to expand access at Boone’s Trail could include increasing the hours of operation. Reducing the on-shelf collection density to 2.0 vol/SF or less (max ~4,600 volumes) would enable the Library to move periodicals out of the meeting room, as well as to increase the amount of flexible seating for people in the main space.



Meeting room with magazines and other materials

CORPORATE PARKWAY BRANCH



CORPORATE PARKWAY BRANCH

1200 Corporate Parkway, Wentzville, Missouri

The 12,000-square-foot Corporate Parkway Branch ("CP") is one of SCCCL's oldest facilities, built in 1984 and expanded a decade later – when the Wentzville population was an eighth of its current size. It is described by SCCCL staff as one of the most overcrowded and challenging branches in the system.

Although CP is open 70 hours and seven days per week, it struggles to adequately serve the booming population. Its programs attract the highest number of attendees, and the meeting room and study rooms are frequently used. The branch boasts high circulation and visits, and the numbers continue to climb despite the branch's pedestrian-unfriendly location.

Corporate Parkway's staff offer a multitude of exceptional programs and services, but are severely constrained by the facility. Over-stuffed with books, CP is a close second to Boone's Trail for the highest collection density in the system (~4.6 vol/SF). Programming is restricted by the branch's small meeting room and children's area. There is no dedicated space for the extremely popular passport services; staff use bookcarts to set up an impromptu passport processing area. Staff spaces are cramped and poorly organized, and supervision of public areas is a challenge. A fenced patio tempts patrons to head outside in pleasant weather, but the door locks behind them once they're out of the building.



Map of Corporate Parkway users from OrangeBoy's last branch visited dataset



Moreover, Corporate Parkway faces many deferred and upcoming maintenance needs. The 2016 FCA study found that it has one of the lowest condition scores in the system; according to its findings, SCCCL will need to spend a significant portion of the building's replacement value just to maintain it in its current size and configuration. Modifications to improve library service and the customer experience would be in addition to the cost of basic maintenance.

Library staff ranked replacement and expansion of the Corporate Parkway Branch as the highest priority for near-term implementation. This master plan recommends that CP be relocated to a site that can accommodate a new branch of at least 50,000 to 60,000 square feet. A new library of this size would provide improved and expanded core library services and special, high-interest programs to rapidly growing west county communities. It would also significantly boost the service capacity of SCCCL's network.

As of the date of this report, the City of Wentzville has initiated discussions with SCCCL about an 80-acre development project with a recreation center, retail, residential buildings, and parks near its city hall. Co-located libraries and community recreation centers tend to boost access and use of both partners, and there are many different models and successful examples of this type of partnership.



DEER RUN BRANCH



DEER RUN BRANCH

1300 North Main, O'Fallon, Missouri

Since it opened in 1995, the 11,000 square foot Deer Run Branch (DR) has been a vital resource for the community. Staff report that the branch acts as a type of community center where area residents of all ages meet and connect. The fireplace area – offering plush seating and bathed in natural light – is often the site of impromptu conversation and social engagement among seniors who come to read newspapers and magazines. The recent conversion of a small collaboration space into a teen area is also considered a success, although Deer Run does not see as much teen use these days as some other branches.

Despite having one of the highest collection densities in the system, Deer Run has a surprisingly organized and legible interior. However, the building clearly strains to serve the number of users. Its popularity as a community destination means that it is an active and often noisy space. Children's programs at DR are popular and well-attended, but the children's area is very small and lacks seating for adult guardians. The program room is also quite small.

With one of the lowest facility condition scores in the 2016 study, Deer Run is due for significant maintenance. However, staff are uncertain about what future community development will bring, and whether this building will be the right size and in the right location in the long term.



Map of Deer Run users from OrangeBoy's last branch visited dataset



As such, the master plan recommendation for DR is for renovation early in the capital program to address maintenance needs and improve the customer experience. Opportunities through renovation include downsizing the on-shelf collection in order to free up space for other uses; expanding the size and flexibility of the children’s area; and increasing the amount and diversity of seating for reading, collaboration, and social engagement. Back-of-house work and support areas appear to be disproportionately large for the size of the branch overall, and through a renovation project, there may be opportunities to reorganize and recapture some of this space for public use.

Over time, SCCCL can continue to monitor community development and growth, and assess whether (and how much) expansion of the Deer Run Branch would be beneficial. The current DR site does not appear to offer much capacity for expansion, so the Library would need to find an alternate site.



KATHRYN LINNEMANN BRANCH



Local History area



KATHRYN LINNEMANN BRANCH

2323 Elm Street, St. Charles, Missouri

At 28,600 square feet, the beloved Kathryn Linnemann Branch (KL) is the system's third largest branch. It is located in a walkable neighborhood that includes two high schools, two elementary schools, and one middle school, resulting in many teen visitors. The sizeable Spanish language collection reflects the diversity of the branch's patrons. Special collections at this regional branch also include local history and genealogy.

The building originally opened in 1982. It was expanded in 1992, and again in 2008. While these expansions added a significant amount of space, they also reduced the amount of daylight in parts of the building and created interior wayfinding challenges. Wayfinding and daylighting challenges are both exacerbated by long rows of tall stack shelving, particularly in the adult and local history sections. The main entry was also moved to face the parking lot, putting the building's back to the street and creating an awkward dead zone both inside and outside the former front door.

KL's current organization and allocation of space appears to be out of alignment with new user patterns and customer priorities. Kathryn Linnemann has the largest on-shelf collection in the SCCCL system – larger even than Spencer Road Branch, which is more than twice KL's size. Staff desks are much larger than needed for today's service model, and make it more difficult for



Map of Kathryn Linnemann users from OrangeBoy's last branch visited dataset

staff to easily move out onto the public floor. Both the original and new entry areas are awkward and underutilized.

Programming at KL is constrained by lack of space. Although it is one of a handful of SCCCL branches with dedicated children’s program space, KL’s activity space for children is too small and narrow to accommodate community interest and demand. The branch’s main meeting space is modestly sized, and cannot host big popular events.

KL has been kept in good condition since its last renovation in 2008. SCCCL has also been making strategic improvements, such as removing big legacy staff desks and creating expanded space for teens.

The master plan recommendation for Kathryn Linnemann is for revitalization through renovation. Opportunities for improvement include right-sizing the collection and updating shelving for improved merchandising and browsability, and increasing the amount, diversity, and flexibility of seating for individual work and group collaboration. The experience could also potentially be improved through increased daylighting and supplemental lighting strategies.



Children’s program room



Empty window area by former front entrance



KISKER ROAD BRANCH



KISKER ROAD BRANCH

1000 Kisker Road, St. Charles, Missouri

Kisker Road Branch (KR) is a popular, well-maintained library. The 16,000-square-foot branch is located across the street from the new Veterans Tribute Park, and surrounded by primarily residential neighborhoods. The branch was built in 1990 and expanded in 1999. It has not undergone significant renovation in the last 20 years, although regular maintenance has kept it in good condition.

The main interior space in KR is neat and orderly. However, upon entering the building, visitors are confronted with a great deal of visual clutter that makes the space challenging to understand and navigate. Tall stacks, the suspended ACT ceiling, and the relative lack of windows make the space feel very long, low, and dark. Signage identifying major areas, staff service points, and collection subcategories (e.g., “biographies”) dangles from above throughout the space. And most surfaces – horizontal and vertical – are covered with a dazzling array of signs, plants, displays, library swag, and other decorations.

KR staff report that the community turns out in large numbers for events at this branch, which boasts the second highest average program attendance rate of any SCCCL branch. This is impressive given the relatively small size of the meeting room. While the meeting room has a divider, it provides no acoustic separation – limiting the activities that can reasonably be scheduled at the same time in the two subdivided spaces.



Map of Kisker Road users from OrangeBoy's last branch visited dataset



Children's area and reference desk

The master plan recommendation for Kisker Road is for renovation. Staff consider this to be a good opportunity for early implementation, as relatively simple changes could significantly improve service and the customer experience. Reducing the density of the on-shelf collection at this location would provide opportunities to reorganize and open up the interior space; update shelving for improved merchandising and browsability, and expand seating for reading, work, and social engagement.

One opportunity to explore would be to open up the wall between the meeting room and the children's area. A flexible partition could be used to close off the meeting room when needed, while leaving the space open between programs. This type of intervention could dramatically improve both the flexibility and programming capacity of the Kisker Road Branch.



Meeting room



M^cCLAY BRANCH



Clerestory



M^cCLAY BRANCH

2760 McClay Road, St. Charles, Missouri

When the 14,400 square foot McClay Branch (MY) first opened in 1998, it was surrounded by grassy fields and forested areas in the midst of a single-family residential area. Now, the open space being developed into multi-family and higher-density housing – which is anticipated to only increase use of this already busy library.

In terms of total annual visits, MY ranks fifth among SCCCL branches. However, when adjusted for building size, MY is the third-busiest SCCCL branch (behind Corporate Parkway and Discovery Village). Part of its success is due to its popular new teen space featuring comfortable seating, materials and activities, and gaming equipment. McClay also offers a significant amount of programming.

The main space is tidy, organized, and fairly legible for customers entering the branch. Taller stacks are arranged around the outside of the space, leaving the middle of the space more open. Although it is one of the purest examples of a windowless façade in SCCCL's branch fleet, McClay does have a clerestory that brings height and light into to the main space; however, staff report that the clerestory also amplifies noise during busy times in the branch. The conversion of the former quiet/study room into a teen space is considered a success, but staff feel the loss of the enclosed collaboration space and wish they still had one (or more) to offer to customers.



Map of McClay users from OrangeBoy's last branch visited dataset

Library staff ranked renovation of the McClay Branch as a high priority for near-term implementation, with opportunities to make significant impacts through the relatively simple interventions. Improvements include rebalancing space for people, programs, and collections; updating shelving and furniture for expanded choice and flexibility; adding acoustic treatments in the main space, etc. As at Kisker Road, SCCCL could also investigate the possibility of adding a movable partition between the meeting room and the main space at McClay to add flexibility and increase programming capacity.

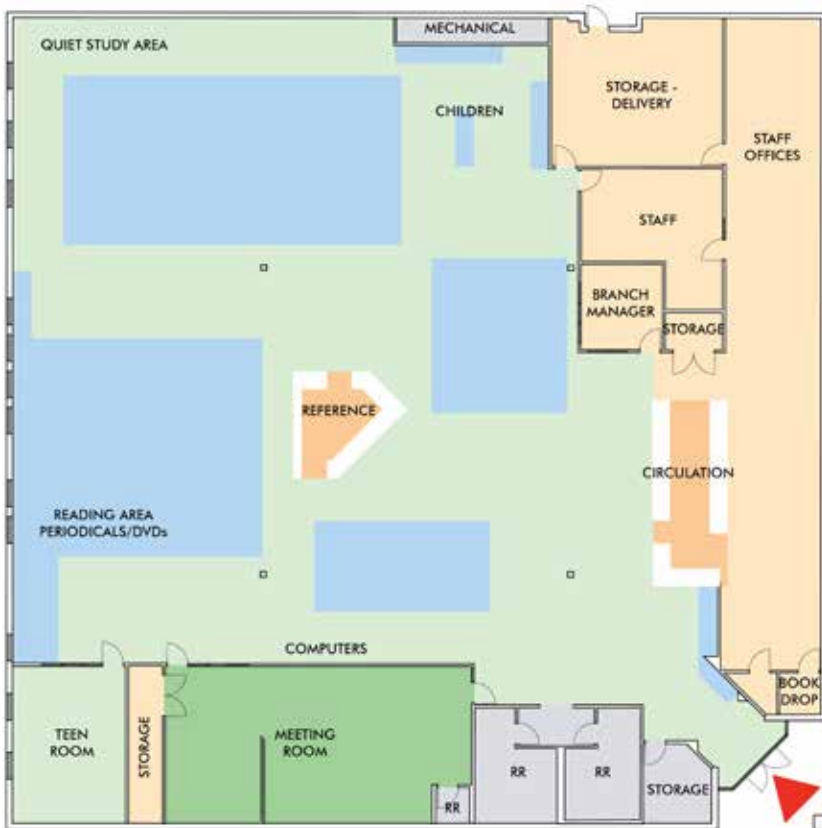
This master plan does not anticipate that additional capacity will be needed on the east side of St. Charles County over the next decade. It should be noted that the McClay site may have the capacity to accommodate a larger replacement building, should SCCCL determine the need for more space in the long term. Staff describe the current building as sitting "in a hole," and refer to the steep driveway as a "deathtrap." Replacing MY would raise the building's visibility and accessibility from the street, among other opportunities



Teen room



Computer area in aisle



MIDDENDORF-KREDELL BRANCH



Map of Middendorf-Kredell users from OrangeBoy's last branch visited dataset

MIDDENDORF-KREDELL BRANCH

2750 Hwy K, O'Fallon, Missouri

Middendorf-Kredell Branch (MK) was originally built in 1995 and expanded in 2006. At 30,000 square feet, it is the second-largest branch in the SCCCL system. It is the Library's second-most visited branch, and offers the second most programs – from children's storytimes and book discussions to chess club meet-ups and open mic nights. MK does come out on top in terms of circulation, with more check-outs than any other branch in St. Charles County for the last three years running. Special collections include government documents, as well as a growing Library of Things including cake pans.

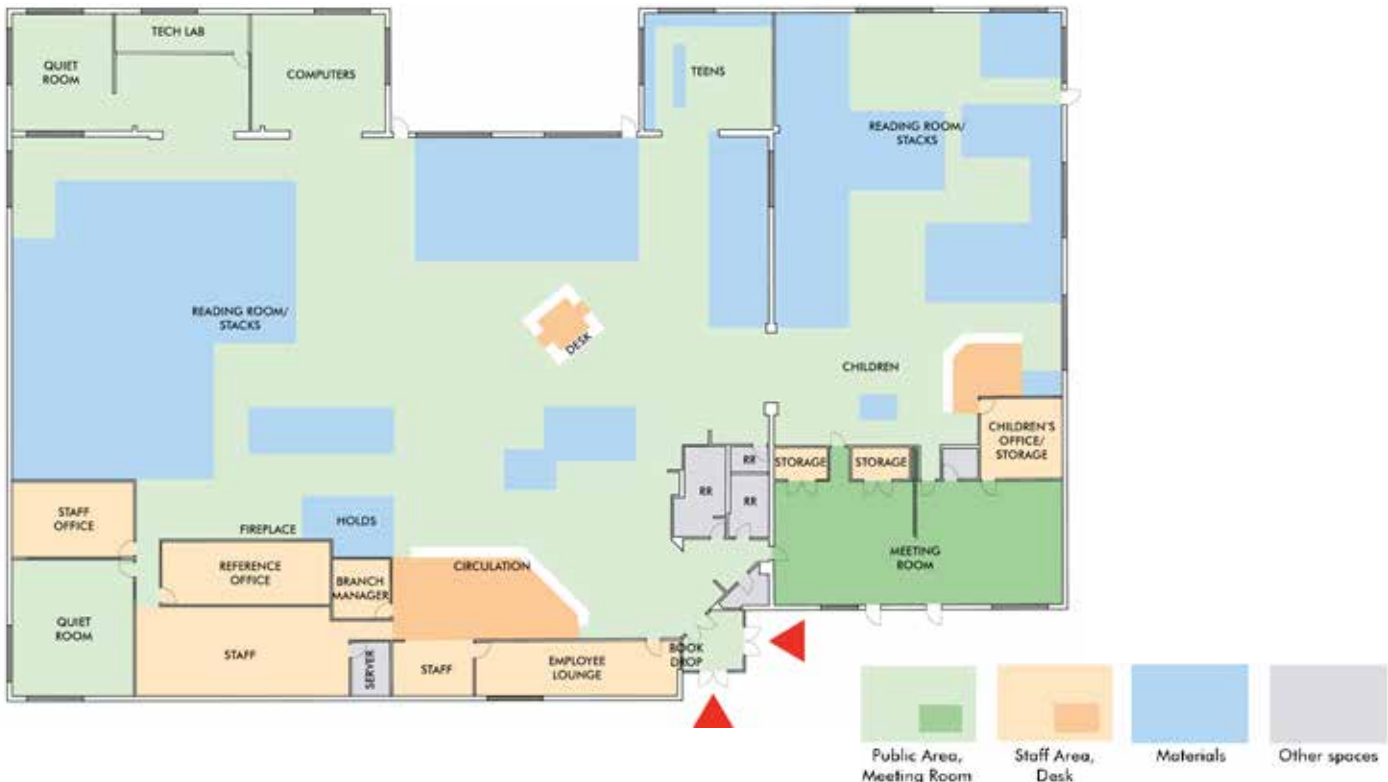
With one of the lower collection densities in the system, MK feels relatively spacious compared to many of the other SCCCL branches. The 2006 expansion extended the building to the east and north, creating a larger main space. Much of the shelving is aggregated in distinct areas that – while still large and difficult to see around – allow more floor area for people and programs. Customers are offered a choice of seating, from traditional reader tables to a fireside lounge area. Around the perimeter of the main space are specialized spaces such as a quiet room and technology lab.

Beyond the building, the MK site faces some challenges. When approaching on Highway K from the north, there is no traffic signal to assist vehicles with the left turn into the site; during high traffic periods, this can present a long and harrowing wait. Parking is insufficient to meet demand even during moderately busy times. The site cannot accommodate any more expansion of the building without further reducing parking.

Library staff ranked replacement and expansion of the Middendorf-Kredell Branch as an important “second wave” project for building capacity. This master plan recommends that MK be relocated to a larger site in west central county that can accommodate a new branch of at least 40,000 to 50,000 square feet. If feasible, SCCCL may wish to consider a site that can also accommodate relocation of some or all of the district’s administrative and systemwide functions as well.



Children's area



PORTAGE DES SIOUX BRANCH



PORTAGE DES SIOUX BRANCH

1825 Commonfield Road, Portage des Sioux, Missouri

Originally called the North County Branch, Portage des Sioux (PS) was the first branch SCCCL opened after it became an independent district. SCCCL converted the 1,000 square foot former one-room schoolhouse into a branch in 1975, and operated it as a library for more than 40 years.

As a branch, PS provided only the most basic of services – a small physical collection; Wi-Fi and internet access; and fax, copy, and scanning equipment. Without a meeting room or even movable shelving in the main space, almost no programming was provided. By 2018, PS ranked the lowest of any SCCCL branch on most service measures, including visits and circulation; SCCCL estimates that PS had only about 200 unique visitors during 2018. PS also was one of the Library’s most expensive branches to operate per visit and per square foot, along with the Augusta and Boone’s Trail community branches.

The high costs of operating PS were compounded by the increasing expense of maintenance and repairs on the aging building. The 2016 facility condition assessment by EMG found the outlook for Portage des Sioux to be “poor,” forecasting that SCCCL would need to reinvest more than half the building’s total replacement value on maintenance over the next decade.



Orangeboy’s last branch visited dataset shows that north county residents do make their way to other SCCCL branches – including Kathryn Linnemann, Spencer Road, and even Deer Run.



Photos are from before the 2019 flood.

EMG's 2016 estimate did not even include the costs of some other long-known maintenance and operational problems, such as an aging plumbing system that supplied undrinkable water; unreliable power and technology infrastructure; and building settlement caused by repeated community flooding over the years.

In the summer of 2019, the banks of the Missouri River overflowed once again. At first, the PS branch was closed for several weeks simply because staff could not get to the building through the flooded roads. Eventually the waters reached the branch library site, causing significant damage to the building and its contents. As of the date of this master plan, the PS branch remains closed.

Given the high cost of building and maintaining small branches generally – and the high cost of operating the Portage des Sioux Branch in particular – this master plan recommends that SCCCL not reinvest in *building* a branch library in north St. Charles County. If opportunities to operate a partner-owned facility (such as the Augusta Branch model) arise, SCCCL can evaluate the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of delivering branch services on a case-by-case basis.

In the meantime, the Library is currently developing options for serving northern county communities through outreach, alternative service delivery (ASD), and partnership strategies – with the goal of not just replacing, but expanding access and service.

SPENCER ROAD BRANCH



Atrium



SPENCER ROAD BRANCH

427 Spencer Road, St. Peters, Missouri

Built in 2012, SCCCL's newest and largest branch is approximately 58,000 square feet. SP attracts the most annual visitors, houses the largest collection, and offers the most programs of any SCCCL branch.

In many ways, Spencer Road represents the future of library service in St. Charles County. With a collection density of 2.0 on-shelf volumes per square foot, it balances space for the collection with copious space for people, including a wide variety of seating as well as more than 15 collaboration, meeting, and large event spaces. A non-profit partner, Community Council, occupies a small amount of office space, and shares the meeting and event spaces on the second floor. A drive-through service window is available for customers to pick up holds. SP is highly efficient to operate – on a per square foot basis, it has the lowest staffing costs of any SCCCL branch.

With continued good maintenance, SP should continue to be a significant asset for SCCCL and regional destination for the community for decades to come. That said, there are opportunities to make improvements through renovation to further enhance service and the customer experience:

- Although it is a soaring and impressive space, the atrium has a lot going on that can be confusing for entering patrons. There is an opportunity to re-think this area from multiple perspectives, including flexibility, visibility, circulation, and



Map of Spencer Road users from OrangeBoy's last branch visited dataset



Teen area

wayfinding – as well as the role of staff in the space and how they interact with customers entering the building.

- Almost all of SP’s collection is located on the first floor, while the second floor has most of the branch’s meeting, collaboration, and public technology spaces. Re-distributing the collection across both levels could dramatically reduce the perception of collection density on the ground floor (which currently feels like a much more collection-dense space). Bringing more of the collection to the second floor could help activate and draw customers upstairs. The children’s library and teen area – both of which are reported to be too small to serve daily demand – could expand and become more flexible.
- Supplemental sound attenuation strategies could be used to reduce transmission of noise from the meeting and event spaces into other parts of the library. The building’s mechanical system is also very loud, particularly on the second floor.

Given the need for significant improvements at most of SCCCL’s other medium and large branches, full renovation of the Spencer Road Branch can likely wait until later in the proposed capital improvement program. That said, the Library may be able to make strategic changes along the way through its ongoing capital maintenance program. As an interim strategy, SP may be able to absorb some of the collection from SCCCL’s smaller branches as needed to support near-term improvements there.

Staff report that parking at SP is inadequate to support programming and events. In the event that SCCCL’s administrative and districtwide operations functions move to a more central county location, the Library could evaluate the opportunity to redevelop the current Administration building site as additional parking for Spencer Road.



Children’s area



Second-floor PCs and individual study cubicles



First-floor seating area





First-floor reading area



Event in the atrium

LIBRARY EXPRESS AT WINGHAVEN



LIBRARY EXPRESS AT WINGHAVEN

7435 Village Center Drive, O'Fallon, Missouri

The popular Library Express at WingHaven is a great example of a small, busy branch in a convenient location. When it opened in 2003, the vision was of a “grab-and-go” model; however, customers wanted more services. In 2010 and 2018, WingHaven was expanded to its current size of 5,700 in order to support more programming and people space.

That said, WingHaven is still a very small branch. A single consolidated staff desk preserves space for public use. Storage for programming and supplies is extremely limited. To make up for limited space, during pleasant weather, staff take programs and activities out into the amphitheater in the community park.

Given its relatively recent expansion and good maintenance, WingHaven is not anticipated to be a priority for major renovation or expansion within the next decade. In the meantime, in coordination with its ongoing maintenance program, SCCCL does have the opportunity to make strategic improvements (e.g., rebalancing space and updating furniture).



Map of WingHaven users from OrangeBoy's last branch visited dataset



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