

COMMUNITY & LIBRARY SERVICES COMMISSION

REQUEST FOR ACTION

SUBMITTED TO: MEMBERS OF COMMUNITY & LIBRARY SERVICES COMMISSION

SUBMITTED BY: ASHLEY WYSOCKI
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY & LIBRARY SERVICES

PREPARED BY: MARISA RODRIGUEZ, LIBRARY & CULTURAL SERVICES MANAGER

Subject:

Library Facilities Master Plan – Preliminary Recommendations and Framework

Statement of Issue:

Staff has worked with Johnson Favaro Architects, to complete an extensive community engagement and systemwide assessment process to develop recommendations for the City's Library Facilities Master Plan (Master Plan). There is a need for the Community & Library Services Commission to review the Master Plan and make a recommendation to City Council for approval.

Financial Impact:

Not applicable. No additional funds are needed to approve the Recommended Action.

Recommended Action:

Approve the Library Facilities Master Plan and forward to City Council for their consideration.

Alternative Action(s):

Do not approve the recommended action and direct staff on how to proceed.

Analysis:

Huntington Beach Public Library (HBPL) serves approximately 193,000 residents and over 83,000 registered users through Central Library and four branch locations that function as vital community spaces for learning, technology access, workforce and literacy services, and programs for all ages. In Fiscal Year 2024–2025, HBPL recorded more than 716,000 visits, over one million items circulated, and 1,445 programs serving more than 71,000 participants.

The system is anchored by Central Library, constructed in 1974 (expanded in 1994), with branch facilities built in earlier decades: Main Street Library (1951), Banning Library (1962, relocated in 1968), Helen Murphy Library (1967), and Oak View Library (1995). While these facilities have served the community for generations, they were designed for service models that differ significantly from today's programming, technology, and space needs. The Library Facilities Master Plan (Master Plan) establishes a framework to evaluate and modernize these aging facilities to meet current community demand and support long-term sustainability. The

Master Plan is intended to be a 10-30 year planning document, and does not require the City to make any financial investments as a result of the approval.

Development Background:

HBPL has experienced sustained growth in usage across core services, reflecting increasing community reliance on library facilities for both traditional resources and expanded programming. This growth has continued year over year across circulation, program participation, and registered users. Total circulation increased from approximately 1,014,937 items in Fiscal Year 2023–2024 to 1,078,171 items in Fiscal Year 2024–2025 (+6.2%), while registered users grew from approximately 79,937 to 83,853 (+4.9%). Program participation rose most significantly, increasing from approximately 63,445 attendees to 71,377 attendees (+12.5%).

Demand for youth and family programming, as well as access to programming related to technology resources and Makerspace equipment, has consistently met or exceeded available facility capacity, particularly at branch locations with limited square footage. Physical space constraints restrict participation levels and limit the library’s ability to fully meet community demand, even as staff expand offerings where feasible.

At the same time, much of the library system’s physical infrastructure is aging, requiring ongoing maintenance, repairs, and periodic upgrades. Without a coordinated long-term strategy, facility investments risk being made in isolation, potentially increasing costs over time or resulting in improvements that do not align with evolving service needs. These combined factors underscore the importance of a comprehensive facilities planning approach.

In response to these long-term trends and infrastructure considerations, staff initiated the Master Plan to evaluate current capacity, identify facility constraints, and establish a framework for modernization and future expansion aligned with community needs.

Community Outreach and Data Review

A comprehensive community engagement process was conducted to gather broad input and inform the preliminary recommendations of the Master Plan. Outreach activities included digital engagement, in-person meetings across service areas, targeted youth input, stakeholder consultation, and data analysis. Key components of the outreach process included:

- September – November 2025: Community Survey conducted, receiving 841 responses.
- Ongoing Digital Outreach:
 - Social media marketing coordinated through City channels and HBPL accounts
 - Livestreaming and recording of key meetings and presentations
 - Maintenance of a project website with access to all presentation materials and prior updates
 - Project website linked through the City’s main webpage
 - Email campaigns distributed to registered HBPL users, program participants, newsletter subscribers, and community partners
- Community Input Meetings at locations throughout Huntington Beach:

- Wednesday, August 6, 2025 – HBPL Systemwide Session (Central Library)
- Monday, October 13, 2025 – Oak View Branch Review (Oak View Family Resource Center)
- Tuesday, October 14, 2025 – Helen Murphy Branch Review (Murdy Community Center)
- Wednesday, October 15, 2025 – Banning Branch Review (Edison Community Center)
- Thursday, October 16, 2025 – Main Street Branch Review (Main Street Library)
- Thursday, October 30, 2025 – Central Library Review (Central Library)
- December 9, 2025 – Options Review (Central Library)
- Teen-Focused Listening Session:
 - Monday, October 6, 2025 – Open to students in grades 6–12 across all Huntington Beach school districts
- Staff and Stakeholder Engagement:
 - Internal staff input meetings
 - Meetings with branch leadership and library support groups
 - Stakeholder consultations and partner outreach
- Policy-Level Review and Updates:
 - City Council briefings
 - Community & Library Services Project Liaisons
 - Community & Library Services Commission briefings
- Data Review and Benchmarking:
 - System usage and participation data analysis
 - Benchmarking against comparable library systems and modern service standards

This multi-channel outreach approach ensured broad community representation, incorporated feedback from diverse age groups and service areas, and provided both qualitative and quantitative data to guide facility planning.

Key themes consistently identified include:

- Strong community attachment to branch libraries
- Significant space limitations across all branches
- High demand for children’s programming, teen space, and flexible meeting/study areas
- Need to modernize facilities beyond traditional book-focused layouts

Major Findings

- All branch libraries are significantly undersized when compared to modern standards and peer systems.
- Despite size constraints, branches demonstrate strong visitation and program participation, reflecting high community reliance.
- Current facilities lack adequate:

- Flexible program rooms
- Group study and collaboration spaces
- Dedicated teen/young adult areas
- Expanding branch capacity would help relieve program pressure at Central Library, particularly for children's services.

Recommended Systemwide Framework

To provide balanced geographic coverage and scalable services, the Master Plan contemplates:

- Two full-size neighborhood branches (~21,000 sq. ft.):
 - Helen Murphy (Northwest)
 - Banning (Southeast)
- Two medium-size branches (~14,000 sq. ft.):
 - Oak View
 - Main Street
- Central Library's phased modernization focused on:
 - Expanded and flexible children's services
 - Teen spaces and collaboration rooms
 - Makerspace opportunities
 - Structural and accessibility improvements

Site-Specific Direction (Preliminary)

Based on community input, systemwide data, and facility assessments, the Master Plan establishes preliminary site-specific planning direction for each library location. Recommendations focus on expanding space where demand consistently exceeds capacity, modernizing facilities to support contemporary library services, improving accessibility and parking, and strategically investing in sites that provide long-term operational sustainability. Collectively, these recommendations are intended to create a balanced system of neighborhood branches supported by a modernized Central Library, providing equitable geographic access while aligning facility size and functionality with community use patterns.

Helen Murphy:

- Replacement with a two-story full-service branch at Marina Park
- Improved parking and drop-off access
- Dedicated after-hours community meeting room
- Strong teen-focused amenities tied to proximity to Marina High School

Banning:

- Replacement with a two-story full-service branch to expand neighborhood access to modern library services at Eader Park
- Significant increase in dedicated parking to support library use and address existing school-related congestion

- Secure children’s outdoor learning and play area directly connected to the children’s library
- Ability to construct the new facility while maintaining current library operations and minimizing service disruption

Oak View:

- Co-location of the library and community center to preserve open space while expanding service capacity
- Relocation of the library to City-owned property, ensuring long-term site control and eliminating operational constraints associated with use of school district land
- Expanded program rooms, dedicated teen space, and group study and collaboration areas
- Improved parking, circulation, and long-term site security

Main Street:

- Two options explored: library-only renovation/expansion or a shared facility with the Surf Museum
- Historic designation and lack of on-site parking present higher complexity, higher costs, and operational limitations relative to other branch investments

Central Library:

- Phased renovations aligned with original architectural intent and modern service needs
- Structural and accessibility upgrades, including reconfiguration of outdated building elements
- Major focus on expanded children’s services, teen space, and flexible programming and collaboration areas

These preliminary concepts are not final designs, but rather a planning framework to guide future feasibility analysis, cost development, phasing strategies, and policy decisions as the City considers long-term library facility investments.

Next Steps

Following Commission input, staff and the consultant team from Johnson Favaro will incorporate any refinements and finalize the Master Plan for consideration by the City Council. Key next steps include:

Incorporation of Commission feedback, as necessary, into the final plan document

- Preparation of Commission recommendations for City Council consideration
- City Council review and potential adoption of the Master Plan

Future development of implementation strategies, including phasing, funding approaches, and capital planning

Attachment(s):