

Leonardtown Library Capital Project Update

November 2009

County Needs More Library Space

The Board of County Commissioners for St. Mary's County (BOCC) and the Board of Library Trustees hired a consultant in 2006 to conduct a countywide library facilities study to determine the need for library facilities through 2025.

The consultant's report, *St. Mary's County Library Comprehensive & Integrated System Analysis & Recommendations* (hereafter, referred to as *The Facilities Study*), was approved by the Board of Library Trustees in March 2007.

The recommendations in *The Facilities Study* were based upon the following information: countywide analysis using input from site visits, focus groups of customers and staff, community presentations, usage reports, and demographic profiles; as well as a physical assessment of Leonardtown Library by an engineer.

Using the American Library Association's standard of 1 square foot (SF) per resident, the study concluded St. Mary's County would need 124,000 SF of library space by 2025. Currently the county has 53,000 SF: Charlotte Hall-10,000 SF; Leonardtown-19,000 SF; Lexington Park-24,000 SF.

The report's specific recommendations include:

- Leonardtown Library should be 44,000 SF
- Charlotte Hall Library should be 24,000 SF
- A 30,000 SF library should be built in California / Hollywood area.

The Library Board recommended Leonardtown Library be the first priority, but with less square footage, in light of the county's other capital needs.



The Need for a New Library

The Leonardtown Library is 15,000 SF. The system's administrative offices located on the 2nd floor total 4,000 SF. The facility was built in 1954 as a National Guard Armory and is the oldest library facility in the county.

A customer survey conducted in December 2007 revealed a significant number of complaints:

- Excessive noise level
- Lack of space for study, computer work, and meetings
- Desire for more convenient services, such as a drive-up window.

Problems of the current facility include:

- Insufficient space for books, DVDs and audio books to meet the customers' needs
- Insufficient space for children and parents/ caregivers using the children's area
- Insufficient space for community meetings and library programs
 - Summer library programs must be held off-site at a local church or in Leonard Hall on the Governmental campus
 - Meeting rooms are currently booked 80% of the time
- No exhibit display area
- Inefficient work flow due to 4 separate, very small work areas for staff and two entrances
- Antiquated plumbing and mechanical systems

create foul odors in restrooms and hallways

- ADA (American Disability Act) compliance issues—no access to 2nd floor, small restrooms, and narrow book aisles
- Technology limitations due to the structure of the building.

Leonardtwn Library Usage

- St. Mary's County has the 5th highest circulation per capita in the state with Leonardtown Library experiencing the fastest growth of the three branches.
- Leonardtown Library provides library services to residents throughout the county: 66% of items checked out are to customers who live outside the Leonardtown zip code, 20650.
- FY 09 circulation was 438,000. Thus far, in FY 10, circulation is up by 19%.
- FY 09 number of computer users saw a 37% increase over FY 08 for a total of 21,500 users. Thus far, in FY 10, there is a 42% increase for a monthly average of 4,000 users.
- FY 09 number of visitors increased 12%, totaling 264,000, for an average of 800 to 1,000 visitors per day.

Should we expand and renovate the current facility?

The engineer conducting the physical assessment for *The Facilities Study* confirmed the current facility has obsolescent and deficient space. The findings included a variety of mechanical, technology, electrical, infrastructure and code issues that would be too costly to correct; ADA compliance issues due to two stories with no elevator and very small bathrooms and book aisles. The building was designed to be an Armory; thus, the management of technology cabling and networking is next to impossible.

Cost for Renovation/Expansion

A renovation/expansion of the current facility was estimated to be \$12.8 M. This cost does NOT include the cost to relocate the library during renovation and expansion. The cost to build a new library is estimated to be \$15.9 M.



The FY 2010 Capital Budget

The Board of County Commissioner's FY 10 Capital Budget includes a project to design and build a 39,000 square foot Leonardtown Library and administrative offices for the St. Mary's County Library system

The BOCC purchased land (the "Hayden Family Farm") in December 2008 to build an elementary school and a library. This land is located at the entrance to Leonard's Grant development, 1/2 mile from the current library, and is in the county's Leonardtown development district, where more than 650 new homes are projected to be built in the next 10 years.

The design has not yet been done. The architect will be hired early in calendar year 2010. Design work will occur during FY 10 & FY 11 with opportunity for community input.

Projected Cost of New Facility

Cost per SF is estimated to be \$240. Total estimated cost is \$15.9 M which could actually be less due to the economy. In addition to county funding of \$13 M, we are searching for other sources of funding. Maryland has a library capital grant program which will support this project:

- Applied for a FY 09 grant and received approval for \$72,000.
- Applied for a FY 11 grant and received preliminary approval for \$765,000.
- Intend to apply for a grant in FY 12 and FY 13.

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