



Staff Report

To: Library Board of Trustees
From: Sequim Feasibility Study Committee: Elaine Fredrickson, Betty Gordon, Margaret Jakubcin, Lauren Dahlgren, Paula Barnes
Date: September 20, 2013
Subject: A larger library for Sequim? Needs assessment and feasibility study: Interim report

Consultants from SHKS Architects and Berk Consulting have been working with NOLS to assess the Sequim Branch Library's infrastructure needs, and to examine the feasibility of expanding the building if an expansion is warranted. The committee recommends that NOLS project a useful life of thirty years for the building.

POPULATION ANALYSIS. The Sequim Branch Library's service area cannot be strictly defined, but its clientele comes mostly from the easternmost point of Clallam County to the Blue Mountain Road/Lewis Road area. NOLS asked Berk Consulting to project the population likely to be served by the Sequim Branch in the future. Berk used Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) *2012 Growth Management Act* county projections. OFM makes high, medium and low range projections for each county based on demographic trends, standard population dynamics and the strength of Washington's economy compared to California and the rest of the states. OFM's Small Area Estimate Program makes population estimates for school districts in the years between national censuses. NOLS has already tentatively defined the Sequim Branch's service area as that of the Sequim School District. OFM used data from the 2010 census to estimate a 2012/2013 school year population of 29,728 for the Sequim School District. The midpoint between OFM's projected high and low points for the service area's population in 2043 is approximately 34,300 people. This is the population figure that the consultants and the committee recommend NOLS use as its target.

COMMUNITY INPUT. To hear directly from the community about peoples' interests and needs, NOLS has conducted two community meetings and an online survey. These avenues solicited input about the role of the library in the community, now and in the future. The first community meeting was in May. Representatives of many agencies and organizations in the Sequim-Dungeness Valley area were invited, including the City of Sequim, the Sequim School District, the Chamber of Commerce, the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, Clallam County Commission, the Museum and Art Center, and the Rotary Club. There was general agreement that the Library is an important civic and community resource that serves a wide range of ages from infants to seniors, and there was also widespread acknowledgement of the library as the community's "third space". The second meeting was in July. It was an open house event that gave attendees several opportunities to share their ideas about library services and programs. The survey ran during June and July. It consisted of a series of multiple choice questions to learn more about priorities for library services. The consultants will discuss the findings from the meetings and the survey at the September Board meeting. The findings can be summarized as follows:

1. Books and collections are central to the Library's role.
2. A strong and vibrant Library contributes to the quality of life in the Sequim-Dungeness Valley area.

3. The Library plays an important educational role: complementing the schools, supplementing resources for homeschoolers, and supporting lifelong learning for all ages.

ESTABLISHED STANDARDS. For comparison purposes, the consultants looked for standards established by other Library Districts similar to NOLS. They found that Whatcom County Library and Sno-Isle Regional Library System both use .5 sq ft per capita as a guideline when planning new or expanded facilities. Of course this number may flex upwards or downwards based on varying local needs. The existing Sequim Branch currently provides .2 sq ft per capita, and in 2043, according to the population analysis described above, the space allocation for a projected population of 34,300 would be .18 sq ft/capita. For NOLS, .5 sq ft/capita is a useful number to keep in mind as our planning moves forward.

STUDY OF EXISTING BUILDING. Kevin Kane and Katey Ricker of SHKS Architects have studied the existing library facility, which consists of 6,000 sq ft, to see how well it is meeting current needs and to what extent it will be able to meet anticipated service needs. They worked with officials at the City of Sequim to determine building and parking regulations that would govern the size of an expanded library on the existing site. Their preliminary research indicates the existing site could potentially accommodate a building of up to 20,000 sq ft in size.

By all accounts, the existing Sequim Branch Library is too small to meet current operational needs and will be even less functional in the future, as the need for flexible spaces increases and the population of the service area grows. The building is not ADA-accessible. It juxtaposes conflicting uses in too-cramped spaces. For example, it is not able to provide areas where children can freely enjoy and experience the library without disrupting others who want quiet surroundings to read or study. It does not allow for small groups to work together without disturbing other library users. The staff work space does not support efficient workflow or allow for the use of automated materials handling equipment which would maximize efficiency. The top priority for survey respondents and many library customers is to see a bigger collection of books and other materials, and yet the library is too cramped and crowded to allow any collection growth. These observations by administrators, staff and the consultants are validated by the square footage standards used by neighboring library districts. By these standards, the Sequim Library is less than half the size it should be to adequately serve the existing population.

PRELIMINARY BUILDING PROGRAM FOR PLANNING PURPOSES. If the decision is made to build a larger library in Sequim, the ultimate design will be based on community input, best practices in the world of public libraries, and observation of current and evolving use patterns. The design will be influenced by site requirements and available funding. In this case, this very basic building program will help the consultants determine approximate square footage requirements. This in turn will tell us if the proposed building would fit on the existing site, and how much it would cost to construct.

A building program is an outline and discussion of the functional areas of a building. It is used by architects as an analytical starting point for designing a new or expanded building. It literally programs the building, discussing the purpose and use of component rooms and areas, seating capacity, etc. A building program can be very detailed, including square footage requirements, wiring and other considerations, and may propose some relative adjacencies of building spaces, but it is not an architectural design.

Based on the results of the population analysis, the community meetings and the survey, the Board is asked to consider the following initial guiding elements of the proposed building program for the Sequim Library.

General considerations.

- a) Make the entire building as flexible as possible. It is impossible to predict how public libraries will evolve over the next three decades. The key to having a library building that continues to be highly functional throughout its life is to make it extremely flexible, limiting the number of fixed interior walls and making necessary walls modular; make it highly adaptable to new and changing technology needs.
- b) Provide for modest growth in collections and user seating to address obvious existing limitations in the current building;
- c) Apply Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) building standards throughout the building; this will automatically provide for adequate aisle widths, spaces around tables and chairs, turning radiuses in rest rooms and other small spaces. For adult collections, shelving capacity calculations should be based on shelving materials no lower than 12" and no higher than 66" above the floor;
- d) Make wayfinding and orientation as intuitive as possible; this will minimize the need for signage and empower visitors to use the library on their own without staff assistance unless they want it.
- e) Make the building as staff-efficient as possible; to minimize staffing costs, keep the number of staffed service points as low as possible; provide clear sight-lines throughout the building.

Collection space.

The top priority for survey respondents was bigger and better collections. Board members may recall that collections was a significantly important point for people considering the levy lid lift, as well, second only to more convenient hours of operation. As e-books become more popular and prevalent in society, libraries are re-thinking the amount of space allocated to collections in the future. The exponential growth of e-books and e-readers suggests that print book collections will not require significantly more physical space in the decades to come. Libraries will be able to build broader, deeper collections as funding permits, but they won't be as severely limited by space considerations.

Adult collections. Includes fiction, non-fiction, large print, music, DVDs, magazines and newspapers. Increase overall collection size by 10%, and apply ADA-accessibility standards. Plan collection housing that does not require materials to be shelved lower than 12" or higher than 66" above the floor. It is expected that the growth of e-books and other digital resources over the next 20 years will greatly exceed 10%, but of course additional space is not required to store these materials.

Children's collections. Includes fiction, non-fiction, picture books, music, DVDs, multi-media kits and magazines. Increase overall collection size by 8%, and apply ADA-accessibility standards. Shelving for youth materials should be no taller than 48", shelving for picture books should be no taller than 42".

Teen collections. Increase collection size by 8%, and apply ADA-accessibility standards to all aisles.

Popular/topical collections. This area is for new materials and topical/seasonal displays. Materials in this area can be organized by subject, like a bookstore, not by Dewey. It should be able to accommodate up to 350 linear feet of materials. It should be adjacent to/co-located with the *Living Room*.

Customer service space.

Express check-out stations. Currently there are two stations; three should suffice in the future. Should be most prominent feature in customer service area. Traffic patterns should cause customers to naturally flow to these stations for check-out.

Express check-in stations? This space would be required if Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) and automated materials handling are implemented. These stations would be for customers to return/check-in their own materials. Should be adjacent to *service desk*. Possibly adjacent to exterior book returns.

Service desk. Customer service with accounts and basic assistance. Two staffed stations, one at sitting height, one at standing height. Should be easy to find and identify, centrally located, with good sightlines to other areas in the building.

Consultation desk. One station with seating for one staff person and one customer, staffed when necessary, partially screened for privacy. Should be adjacent to *service desk*.

Self-service holds. Should be adjacent to *express check-out stations*.

Computers/electronic workstations.

Catalog computers. Access to the Library's catalog provided through desktop computers and tablets at standing and sitting heights. Currently: 3 computers. Projected: 5-8 devices.

Internet workstations. Access to the Internet through desktop and laptop computers and tablets. Most at sitting height; some express stations at standing height. Space should also be allowed for public printers, scanners and other devices. Currently 15 stations. Projected: 18.

Technology lab. Flexible space for computer classes, maker-space workshops, etc. Should seat 4-6 people. Moveable walls for maximum flexibility?

User seating. Seating is integrated into collection areas and the *Living Room*.

Seating for adults. Currently 15 seats, a mixture of lounge chairs and study tables. Projected 24 seats, mixture of lounge and study seating, ADA-accessibility standards fully applied. 80% of seats should have easy access to an electrical outlet.

Collaborative study/quiet reading rooms. 2-3 rooms accommodating up to 3 people each. Moveable walls for maximum flexibility?

Living room. Comfortable seating with table lamps, side tables, laptop tables, footstools and a propane fireplace. Wing chairs are also very popular. Taller chairs like the ones you see in hospital/doctors' offices should be included. Flexibility to allow seating to be re-formed into different groupings to allow different types of group/community interactions.

Seating for teens. Currently 6 seats: lounge seating and bistro table. Projected 10 seats, mixture of lounge and study seating, ADA-accessibility standards fully applied. All seats should have easy access to an electrical outlet and/or recharging stations.

Seating for children and parents. Currently 10 seats (shared with north bay seating). Projected 16 seats, assorted heights, lounge, hassock, study table and floor seating. At least one adult-height love seat.

Fun reading structure/seating to accommodate 2-4 children.

Discover/explore area for toddlers and preschoolers; could also be used to for small or impromptu storytimes? Up to 100 sq ft?

Meeting room space.

Community meeting room. Currently seats 44 and is divide-able into two sections, but only one side is accessible from the foyer. Should be situated so that both sides of room can be used when Library is closed. Maximum capacity for theater-style non-fixed seating should be 100 people. Needs to be adjacent to *foyer* and *public restrooms*.

Community conference room. Should seat up to 12 people around a conference table divide-able into two or three sections. Should be adjacent to *foyer* and *public restrooms*.

Also see *collaborative study/quiet reading rooms* in **User Seating** section, above.

Special use spaces.

Foyer. Should be adjacent to *Friends Store and work area*, *community meeting room* and *community conference room*. Should be large enough for civic information, bulletin boards and displays, information kiosk, and to house at least two battery-charged scooters.

Friends Store and work area. Retail space for Friends of Sequim Library; storage and work space adjacent to Store.

Community partner space. Even though NOLS does not have a community partner at this time, it would be great to offer small co-located space to another organization such as the School District, the Museum and Art Center or the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe.

Staff areas.

Branch Manager's office. Should be adjacent to staff work area.

Youth Services storage. Staff who work with children and teens always have a huge amount of gear to store, such as puppets, crafts supplies and props. This space should be adjacent to the Youth Services staff work areas. Flexible walls?

Staff work area. This area should include workspaces for staff as well as an area for checking in and handling materials returned by patrons at the branch and through shipments. Space should be allowed

for automated materials handling, storage of shipment crates, extra book carts, the staff copier, a laptop cart and other possible technology.

Delivery/receiving area. Should be adjacent to staff work area.

IT/data communications room. Needs to be secure; should be in or adjacent to staff-only area.

Facilities office, storage and work area. Should be adjacent to branch staff work area.

Public restrooms. Should be accessible after hours by users of meeting room and conference room.

NEXT STEPS.

The Committee will work with the architects to determine rough square footage requirements for the building program as described above and as it may be modified by the Board after reading this report, hearing the presentation and receiving public comment. With approximate square footage requirements, it will be possible for the architects to develop a very rough schematic drawing of possible adjacencies and a possible building footprint. This will help us understand whether or not the building can be placed on the existing site, and provide the square footage information we need to develop a tentative project budget. The Committee and consultants will bring recommendations back to the Board later this year, after which the needs assessment and feasibility study will be finalized.

The information in the study will be used by the Library Board to decide whether or not to pursue a larger library for the Sequim-Dungeness Valley area. If the Board decides to proceed, the results of this study will provide square footage requirements for the branch, and that information can be used to develop a funding plan.

If the Board moves forward on this project, here is a brief summary of key decision points for the Library Board:

- Approve results of this study
- Direct staff to develop budget and funding plan
- Vote to pursue Library Capital Facilities Area (LCFA) and bond issue
- Vote to hire an architect to develop schematic design
- Vote to approve schematic design
- Vote to approve final design
- Vote to put formation of LCFA and bond issue on ballot (if the necessary partnerships can be put in place)

Alternatively, the development of schematic and final designs could be postponed until after a successful bond issue election, and the design costs could be funded by the bond issue. This summary of decision points is meant to illustrate to the Board and to the public that there will be many more opportunities for public input and Board deliberation if this project goes forward.