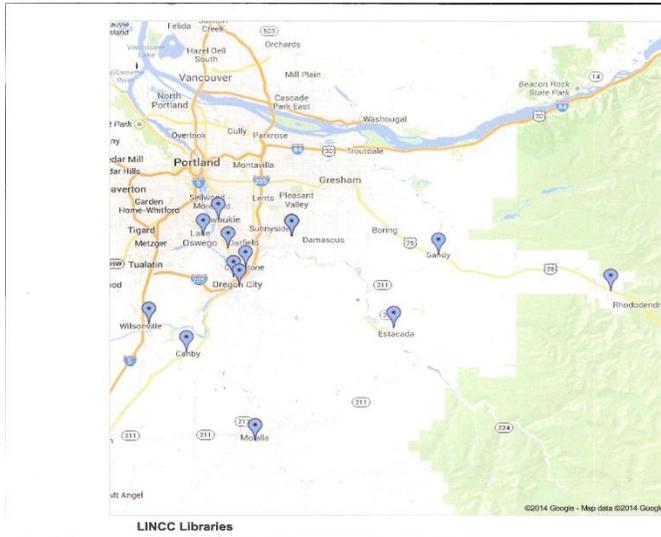


LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CLACKAMAS COUNTY
(LWVCC)
LIBRARY STUDY
2014

The League has been involved with libraries since 1998. The West Clackamas County League began studying the Lake Oswego library in 1998. A position was adopted in 1999. In 1999, another study on Library Facilities and Services resulted in a new position.



In 2010-2011, LWVCC proposed an update to the existing position by studying the impact of the newly created Clackamas County Library District. Based on this study and member consensus, LWVCC adopted our *position that supports quality library facilities and services with maximum public involvement in decision making in the areas of maintaining and expanding library services and facilities, including the allocation of funds; supports adequate funding from the library district for maintaining at least a threshold (basic) level of library service as defined*

by the current version of the Oregon Library Standards; encourages additional support by cities in order to achieve a higher level of library services; supports bond issues for needed capital improvement; encourages maintenance and development of other supplemental revenue sources; and supports new avenues of funding sources, such as a library capital improvement district.

When an election for a new library facility in Lake Oswego was proposed in 2012, LWVCC could not support it because our existing position from 1999 stated that we wanted the library to remain at its present location. At the LWVCC May 2, 2013, Annual Meeting, the 1999 position was dropped. A new study was adopted on **Local Library Purposes and Siting Criteria**. Neither of the issues were previously examined.

SCOPE of the study: to study current library purposes and siting criteria in light of population growth and technological changes. Purposes could include community meeting rooms, lounges, age-specific gathering centers, computer centers, event spaces, and study cubicles. Siting criteria should include, but not be limited to, parking access, public transportation, proximity to public and commercial facilities and adequate space to expand.

OUTLOOK FOR WORK: A one-year study in which all libraries of the Library Service District are surveyed in terms of size, usage and access.

HISTORY

The CLACKAMAS COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT (District) consists of 13 libraries in 11 library systems bound together by an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA). Since the formation of the District in 2008, the County has continued to be one of the 11 library systems and operates the libraries serving the urbanized unincorporated areas known as Oak Lodge and Sunnyside, as well as the Happy Valley area. It is the intent of Clackamas County to ultimately transition out of the retail library business. The remaining libraries of the District are operated by the cities of Canby, Estacada, Gladstone, Lake Oswego, Milwaukie, Molalla, Oregon City, Sandy (including a branch in Hoodland), West Linn and Wilsonville.

Some changes have occurred in the District since its formation. In 2010, voters in a small area of the City of Tualatin located within Clackamas County voted to join the District and an Amendment to the IGA is now in place with the City of Tualatin. Voters of the Damascus area voted to be included in the District and via an Amendment to the IGA have been absorbed as users of existing library services located in the surrounding areas. As noted in the Clackamas County Library District Proposed Budget, Fiscal Year 2013-2014, the County continues working toward turning the operations of the library servicing the Sunnyside area over to the City of Happy Valley, and turning the operations of the Oak Lodge Library over to the City of Gladstone or another operating entity while ensuring quality library service continues to be provided to both areas.

The County continues to operate the *Library Information Network of Clackamas County* (LINCC) which maintains the *Library Information Network Automated System* (LINAS), the computer system shared by all the District libraries. LINAS facilitates the borrowing and returning of materials throughout the District. LINCC provides technical training and organizes the physical movement of materials between libraries. LINCC, supported by the County general fund, receives no funding from the District as specified by the IGA.

Historically, libraries in Clackamas County were supported by dedicated funds from voter-approved three-year levies, until the passage of Measure 50 in 1997. Measure 50 resulted in all separate levies, like those for county-wide fire, public safety and library services, being rolled into city and county general funds, forcing the various services to compete for funding. Initially, library services were rescued by being incorporated into the county general fund, with, however, a 20% reduction in funding. The County Commission furthered the rescue by formally agreeing to allocate about 14% of the county general fund to libraries for a period of 5 years, ending in 2002. The 14% equaled basically the amount of funds derived from the former library levy. The County Commission could not guarantee that the 2002 level of funding would be maintained. In November 2007, the County Commission approved a plan to eliminate funding for direct library services over a five-year period. This plan would have resulted in the immediate closure of County libraries, followed shortly by the closure of many of the county's municipal libraries.

In 2008, the voters' approval of the CLACKAMAS COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT alleviated the perpetual search for adequate funding and relieved the eternal competition among libraries for any funds available. The District is funded via a permanent tax rate of \$0.3974 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

LIBRARY SERVICES

As described in the Clackamas County 2008 General Election Voters' Pamphlet, the libraries of Clackamas County ... work together to provide important community services, including:

- educating youth: public libraries shoulder a greater proportion of this role today as school library budgets are cut;
- fostering literacy: libraries support literacy education efforts by providing teaching resources and space for tutoring;
- providing information and referral services: libraries provide information in areas of personal interest, research, business development, or to support recreational interests;
- serving pre-school children: libraries provide educational opportunities by supplying rotating collections of books to pre-school centers, holding weekly story hours and craft events and special programs directed at pre-school children;
- serving the elderly and home-bound: libraries provide rotating collections housed in retirement centers and direct loan service to home-bound, and provide large print and audio books;
- providing cultural opportunities: artistic, musical, and cultural experiences are held at libraries usually without fee

The libraries also offer unusual programs such as a read to dogs program, history nights, and internships. Wilsonville co-sponsors the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program which mails a book a month to young children, up to the age of five years, who sign up for the program.

SIZE and AGE

The eleven libraries surveyed vary greatly in size, with Wilsonville the largest (twice as big as Lake Oswego) and Gladstone and Oregon City the smallest (one-fifth the size of Wilsonville). Librarians are very creative in making full use of limited space, using every nook and cranny, even giving up their offices to accommodate other functions. Most librarians would like to have more space, hence the importance of determining library purposes and siting criteria for possible expansion or new construction.

The libraries also vary in age, with several very old. Oregon City and Gladstone are old, and Gladstone is not handicapped accessible. Sunnyside, Wilsonville and West Linn are fairly new and considered to be adequate in size and functionality.

One of the advantages of our county library system is that a county resident can use any district library if transportation is available. Resources of all the Clackamas County district libraries are available to those with library cards. It is also possible to receive resources from other counties.

SPACE

In every library we surveyed the amount of space available defines and determines what programs and uses could happen in that space. All the librarians mentioned the need for additional meeting space, seating and study areas. As types of usage change, more and different meeting and public spaces would allow them to make available additional numbers and types of programs.

TECHNOLOGY

Libraries in Clackamas County are continuing to add digital resources to their collections. The number of eBooks continues to rise though print books are more popular. Some libraries are considering adding magazines and videos in digital formats while others already provide these. Challenges for librarians include adding new e-content without sacrificing existing programs and the cost of digital materials. Several libraries are experimenting with lending e-readers.

The libraries offer free wireless internet and free computer stations. Many also offer classes on computers, and some offer one-on-one help with computers. Most of the librarians surveyed note that computers are well used.

ACCESS

Libraries in Clackamas County vary greatly in size, age, design and facilities, but most are very accessible to their users. Many are located in the center of their communities, often built many years ago with the town expanding around them. All have good access to public transportation (bus lines), most at the door. Bicycle racks are available at all libraries, although little usage was observed.

Parking, however, is a real impediment to accessing our libraries. All but one (Wilsonville) of the libraries have very limited parking. Several more have parking that is sufficient for daily use but not for events.

LIBRARY SITING CRITERIA

A majority of the surveyed librarians listed community need as an essential consideration when siting a new library facility or expanding an existing facility. The librarians collectively listed the following criteria as necessary to objectively evaluate a library siting: size; accessibility; visibility; location in service area; space for people, programs, study, classrooms, and technology area; current and potential use; educational and technology trends; staff; and needs based on strategic plan, feasibility and cost.

When asked what process should be used to make library siting decisions, the librarians' responses included: making a thorough examination of possible locations with a focus on those sites that best meet the local siting criteria; researching what other libraries locally and around the country have done; talking with colleagues and library advisory boards; conducting community/patron surveys; and involving supervising governmental entities (city council/elected officials) for their direction, input and support.

FUNDING of LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION

In Gladstone and Lake Oswego the voters turned down bonds designed for library construction. Last year, Canby's Urban Renewal Agency voted to cancel its capital project for a new library. In May 2014, an advisory ballot measure will ask citizens if urban renewal funds should be spent on a civic center, which would include a library on the first floor and city offices on the second floor. Oregon City will vote on a ballot measure in the May 2014 election to fund construction of a major addition to the existing Carnegie Library. The library building was updated in 2001 and serves a large number of users in an area of only 5000 square feet. Outcome is uncertain since the voters in Oregon City have recently been reluctant to fund any large projects that require bonding.

LIBRARIES of the CLACKAMAS COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT
2014

Library	Book-drop	Children's area	Staff work area	Listed phone number	ADA compliant	Adequate parking	Adequate signage	Safe, well lighted facility	Public restrooms	Technology location and adaptability	Other comments of interest
Canby	X	X	■	X	NO	NO	X	X	X	X	May 2014 ballot measure to allow using urban renewal funding for library and city offices
Estacada	X	X	■	X	X	NO	X	X	X	X	
Gladstone	X	X	■	X	NO	NO	X	X	X	X	City must make decision about new library construction by June 2014
●Oak Lodge	X	X	X	X	X	NO	X	X	X	X	County will operate until Gladstone builds a facility to serve both areas
●Sunnyside	X	X	X	X	X	NO	X	X	● X	X	Will eventually be turned over to City of Happy Valley
Lake Oswego	X	X	X	X	X	NO	X	X	X	X	Bond measure for new library failed
Milwaukie	X	X	X	X	X	NO	X	X	X	X	
Molalla	X	X	X	X	X	NO	X	X	X	X	
Oregon City	X	X	■	X	X	NO	X	X	X	X	Vote to approve a library addition on May 2014 ballot
Sandy	X	X	X	X	X	NO	X	X	X	X	New library recently completed
Hoodland	X	X	■	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	May be relocated to proposed community center
West Linn	X	X	X	X	X	NO	X	X	X	X	Built new parking lot; completed small remodel projects
Wilsonville	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

X Denotes YES
 ■ Denotes YES, but extremely small and allows less than optimal work area for staff
 ● Denotes libraries operated by Clackamas County

CONCLUSION

Although details may vary, lack of flexible-use space, and accessibility in the broadest sense are real concerns to all the District libraries with the possible exception of Wilsonville. Members of the LWVCC Library Study committee visited all the libraries and were once again impressed with the librarians' willingness to help and their dedication to making the most of their facilities for the users' benefit. The League believes that voters, users, students, librarians, planners and elected officials need to pay attention to the continuing needs of libraries.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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