



Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries Comprehensive Facilities Plan

Final Report | 15 December 2025





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Fort Vancouver Regional Library District (FVRLibraries, FVRL) is one of the largest library systems in the nation, serving more than 550,000 residents of Clark, Klickitat, Skamania, and Cowlitz counties.¹ FVRLibraries provides public service today through 15 branch locations, a digital branch, two bookmobiles, and diverse outreach programs. It also maintains an Operations Center that houses Library administrative and support services.

In 2025, FVRLibraries marked 75 years of service as an independent library district. In appreciation of the Library's service and importance to the community, District voters approved a measure to restore FVRL's funding so it can continue investing in programs, services, staff, and spaces to meet growing community needs. The Library's last facilities master plan was published in 2013, and its last Strategic Plan expired in 2024. The need to update both plans as well as the success of the levy lid lift provided a significant opportunity to collaborate with the community to build a new vision and plan for the future of library service in the District.

In April 2025, FVRL initiated a process to develop a new strategic plan to guide programs, services, and organizational development as well as a new long-range plan for its library facilities. The consultant team was led by Group 4 Architecture, which has decades of experience leading planning and design projects for large library systems across the nation. Vancouver-based strategic planning firm PointNorth brought deep local knowledge as well as a commitment to robust engagement of FVRL's staff, stakeholders, and communities.

This nine-month effort represents the most complex and comprehensive planning process for FVRL services and facilities in its 75-year history. The plan includes the voices of more than 2,400 District residents and staff who were engaged through a variety of activities including a multilingual survey, interviews, and community listening sessions in Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat counties. Most of FVRL's staff participated through a survey and focus groups. A staff, stakeholder, and community-based working group, called the Next Chapter Advisory Committee, also convened at key intervals to serve as a sounding board for findings, themes, and emerging priorities.

¹ FVRL's service area excludes the City of Camas and includes only the City of Woodland and the Yale Valley Library District in Cowlitz County.



Vancouver Community Library



La Center Community Library



Three Creeks Community Library



Goldendale Community Library



Cascade Park Community Library



White Salmon Valley Community Library



Stevenson Community Library



Ridgefield Community Library



Woodland Community Library



Operations Center



Vancouver Mall Library



La Center Community Library



Washougal Community Library



Yale Valley Community Library



Yacolt Library Express



North Bonneville Community Library

CURRENT LIBRARY INVENTORY

Extensive community and staff input as well as analysis of service, space, and community development data formed the foundation of FVRL's new strategic and facilities plans. Along with goals and priorities for services, operations, and organizational development, FVRL's new strategic plan offers clear implications for facilities, including:

- Welcoming, innovative, and adaptable spaces that connect people, expand access, empower discovery, and reflect the evolving needs of FVRL communities;
- Physical environments that are welcoming, accessible, and flexible for diverse community uses; and
- Sustainably designed and well-maintained facilities that demonstrate good stewardship of community resources and ensure long-term vitality of library spaces.

One consistent theme through this process was the need to build capacity for the strong population growth projected in FVRL's service area over the next 20 years. Most of the anticipated 35% growth in District communities will be concentrated in Clark County, which is expected to add at least 170,000 people by 2045.

FVRL's facilities are well-maintained, with a very low backlog of deferred maintenance and needed repairs. However, they provide less than 80% of the space needed to meet current community demands for library services, collections, and programs. Unless library capacity is expanded, the pressure on existing library space will continue to grow with the population, and FVRL libraries will be increasingly limited in the programs, services, and resources it can offer to the community.

FUTURE NEEDS

In order to support the Library's priorities and fulfill the community's vision, it is recommended that FVRL provide at least 0.5 square feet of library space per District resident. At this threshold level, FVRL will be able to expand the people and program spaces that communities have asked for without having to reduce the footprint of its materials collection. At higher levels, FVRL libraries would be able to build up its collection as well as providing generous space for people and programs as the community grows.

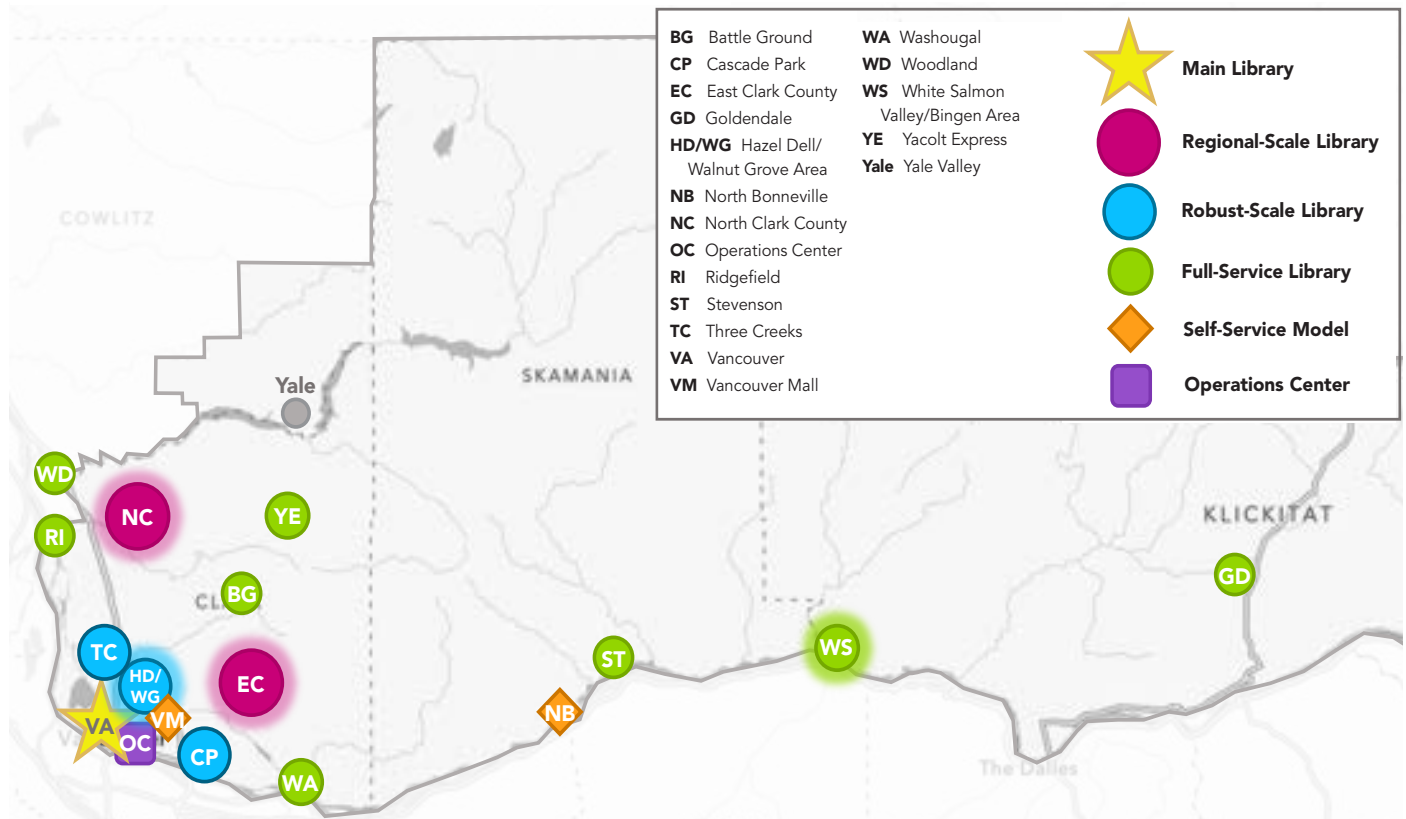
For a projected District population approaching 750,000 by 2045, this means providing a minimum of 375,000 square feet of library space – at least 60% more space than FVRL operates today. To improve its capacity for service while maintaining operational and financial sustainability, FVRL should develop larger facilities that can provide more service and space with an efficient staffing model.

Recommended guidelines include:

- Building capacity through expansion or replacement of smaller facilities;
- Striving for new and expanded full-service branches of 25,000 to 30,000 square feet;
- Developing regional-scale libraries of 35,000 square feet or more in strategic locations to provide more depth and breadth of services, spaces, and resources;
- Not building any new branches smaller than 15,000 square feet; and
- Maintaining a maximum of 15 staffed full-service locations.

Most of FVRL's current branches are smaller than the recommended new minimum size. However, not all of these necessarily need to be expanded or replaced within the 20-year timeframe of this plan. For very small branches that are not planned for expansion, FVRL should evaluate the benefits and feasibility of conversion to a self-service model or alternative service strategy.

20-YEAR FACILITIES VISION



PRIORITY PROJECTS 2026-2035

FVRL will continue to proactively address maintenance to keep all of its facilities fresh, welcoming, and performing well.

Priority capital projects over the next 10 years include:

- Moving forward with design and construction of the planned new Washougal Community Library;
- Renovating Three Creeks Community Library and Cascade Park Community Library for the next generation of library service;
- Securing sites in the north Clark County and east Clark County areas, and building new regional-scale libraries on one or both sites;
- Adding a modest expansion at the Operations Center to enable better staff collaboration as well as to provide space for the FVRL Foundation; and
- Developing a new parking solution for the downtown Vancouver Community Library before the current parking lot is redeveloped as anticipated as part of the I-5 Interstate Bridge Replacement project and related transit improvements.

As funding allows, other opportunities during the next 10 years include adding weather-protective exterior canopies at the Battle Ground Community Library and Woodland Community Library to create more usable outdoor spaces for programs and events; and securing sites in Yacolt, White Salmon Valley/Bingen, and the area between I-5 and I-205 north of SR-500 (e.g., Hazel Dell) to accommodate new branches in the 2036-2045 timeframe.



INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND PROJECT PURPOSE

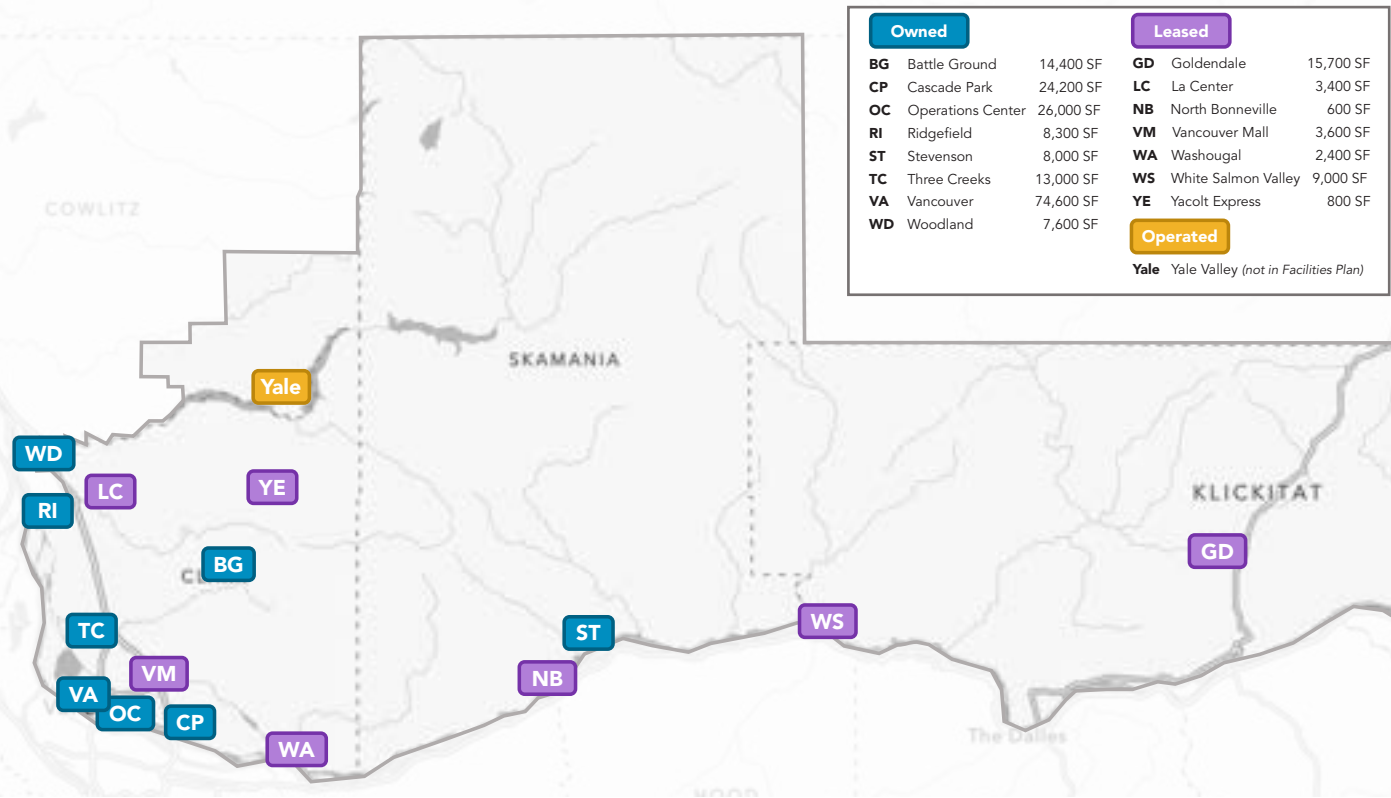
The Fort Vancouver Regional Library District encompasses 4,231 square miles of southwest Washington along the Columbia River, and includes a range of unique urban, suburban, and rural communities. It serves the residents of Clark County (excluding the City of Camas, which provides its own library services), the City of Woodland that straddles the Clark County-Cowlitz County border, Skamania County, and Klickitat County. FVRLibraries began in 1950 as Washington's first intercounty rural library district and today is one of the five largest libraries in the state by population.

Public libraries have been serving the region for more than 130 years. Through the efforts of community members and local leaders, the first free public library was established in Vancouver in 1891. Over the following decades, local communities' enthusiasm for libraries led to the founding of independent libraries across Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat Counties and in the City of Woodland. Recognizing the power of collaboration to better serve the region's residents, library advocates in Clark County worked together to create the Fort Vancouver Regional Library District in 1950.

"I really just adore the library. We are so fortunate to have this gem in our community. They provide so much more to our community than just things to read or listen to. They are truly the heart of our community. And the staff is phenomenal!"

– Community survey respondent

FVRL FACILITIES TODAY



The Library District grew over the next 50 years into its current service area and library organization, which provides highly valued library services to more than 550,000 residents through 15 public service locations, its Operations Center, two bookmobiles, digital and online services, and wide-ranging outreach services. FVRLibraries also operates the Yale Valley Community Library in Cowlitz County on a contract basis for the Yale Valley Library District.

The library facilities serving FVRL patrons today range in age from the 1-year-old Woodland Community Library to the more than 120-year-old La Center Community Library (housed in a historic home that was converted to library use in 2004). Keeping the facilities in good condition, well-configured to support modern and efficient library service, and welcoming and attractive is a continual process.

In the spring of 2025, FVRLibraries kicked off the development of a 10-year facilities capital plan for the 14 FVRL-owned or -leased public service locations and its Operations Center, concurrent and integrated with the development of a new library strategic plan. Key objectives for the facilities plan include:

- Identifying and evaluating options for improving library access, library spaces and their condition, and library service and meeting the needs of anticipated population growth,
- Recommending facility improvement strategies and priorities, and
- Developing phasing options for implementing the improvements within the Library District’s anticipated funding resources.

METHODOLOGY

To facilitate the concurrent and coordinated facilities and strategic planning processes, FVRLibraries engaged a consultant team led by Group 4 Architecture, Research + Planning, Inc., and PointNorth Consulting, Inc. Group 4, the facilities planning lead, is a California-based planning and design practice with extensive experience in system-wide facilities planning for large public library systems. PointNorth, the strategic planning and community engagement lead, is a Vancouver-based firm with specialties in organizational development, community outreach and engagement facilitation, and strategic communications.

Methods utilized in the planning process include:

- Tours and interviews at FVRL's 15 facilities¹ by consultant team members, focusing on each building's capacity to support high-quality library service, modern operations, and a positive patron experience;
- Facility condition assessments (FCAs) of most of FVRL's facilities² to identify deferred and anticipated life cycle maintenance needs and costs;
- Gathering input from library trustee and leadership interviews, Next Chapter Advisory Committee meetings, in-person community events, community and library staff surveys, and library staff focus groups;
- Analysis of library service metrics for FVRLibraries and selected regional and national peers; and
- Compiling information and data on population demographics and projected future district population, community development conditions and growth planning, and community conditions, needs, and resources.

Refer to Appendix A for a list of information sources consulted.



Consultant team members toured each facility and interviewed branch staff. Shown here is the attic staff space at La Center Community Library.

"Many rural areas don't have year-round public spaces, especially ones that are free and welcoming to everyone. I'd love to see more investment in local resources — like libraries — that can serve as hubs for learning, technology access, community events, and multilingual programming. Strengthening these connections would help bridge gaps between our smaller towns and more urban areas in the region."

– Community survey respondent



Community members shared their library needs, interests, and aspirations through five Community Conversations events and an online survey.

¹ The Yale Valley Community Library facility was not assessed in this process.

² FCAs were not completed for the North Bonneville, Vancouver Mall, Washougal, and Yale Valley library facilities, due to the circumstances of those facilities.



The Next Chapter Advisory Committee (NCAC) met five times over the course of the planning process to provide input on the facilities and strategic planning.

"Appreciate all you do for the community, like asking for people's needs coming up in the future – very thoughtful of you to ask."
– Community survey respondent



Community Conversation participants at the Battle Ground Community Library session.

ENGAGEMENT

To ensure that the strategic and facilities planning processes reflect community desires and aspirations, engagement with community members, stakeholders, and library staff were integral project components. Key stakeholders include the Library District's Board of Trustees, whose seven members are residents of and appointed by the City of Vancouver and Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat Counties. Board members were engaged through individual interviews and presentations at regular Board meetings.

Three Library Board members also participated in a stakeholder committee formed to help guide the development of the strategic and facilities plans. The Next Chapter Advisory Committee (NCAC) also included representatives of community-based and workforce development organizations, youth, businesses, tribal and local governments, educational institutions, the Fort Vancouver Regional Library Foundation and Friends of the Library groups, and FVRLibraries staff and leadership. This committee played an important role in promoting the community engagement opportunities and reviewing engagement findings; providing community-centered input on strategic and facilities plan components; and advising on the Library's next strategic direction.

Refer to Appendix B for a list of staff and stakeholders who participated in this planning process. Refer to Appendix C for the Engagement Summary for the integrated strategic and facilities planning process.

CORE PROJECT TEAM

The strategic and facilities planning process was guided by a collaborative Core Project Team (CPT) composed of representatives of FVRL's administrative team as well as core consultant team members. The CPT met approximately twice per month to review project progress, confirm findings and recommendations, and make decisions.

- Jennifer Giltrop, FVRLibraries Executive Director
- Julian Mendez, FVRLibraries Communications & Marketing Director
- Miranda Holtmann, FVRLibraries Executive Assistant
- Jill Eyres, Group 4 Principal-in-Charge
- Vickie White, Group 4 Senior Planner
- Lisa Keohokalole, PointNorth President
- Cadie Dye, PointNorth Director of Strategy



COMMUNITY CONTEXT

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

Community context is important for understanding needs and planning library services and facilities. FVRLibraries serves a large and varied area – Klickitat County, Skamania County, the City of Woodland and the Yale Valley Library District in Cowlitz County, and all of Clark County except for the City of Camas.

An environmental scan was prepared to provide population and demographic information on current Library District residents, as well as the projected future population of the District. Resources referenced in the development of this environmental scan are listed in Appendix A.

FVRLibraries serves a total of 550,000 people, with 91.7% living in Clark County, 1.5% living in Cowlitz County, 2.3% living in Skamania County, and 4.4% living in Klickitat County. The population has grown by 21% since the Library's last facilities plan in 2013. Clark County experienced the bulk of that growth (87,000 residents), while Skamania and Klickitat counties grew by 15% each (1,700 and 3,000 residents respectively).

Overall, the District population is approximately evenly split within the age groups of under 20, 20 to 39, 40 to 59, and 60 years and older. A notable variation across the District is that one in three Skamania and Klickitat County residents is age 60 or older, compared to fewer than one in four Clark County residents.

About 28% of the District's 210,400 households include one or more youth under 18 years of age. Households in Clark County are approximately one-third more likely to have children in the K-12 age range than households in Skamania and Klickitat Counties. More than 93,000 school-age students live in the Library District, including 6,600 children attending preschool and close to 87,000 K-12 students. Around 3,400 K-12 students (3.6%) are homeschooled across the District (more than 3,100 in Clark County, about 60 in Skamania County, and about 180 in Klickitat County).



FVRLibraries provides many resources, programs, and activities that support early learning and K-12 students.



An FVRLibraries community member is excited to find a book written about her and her childhood best friend at Vancouver Community Library.



Danza Azteca performers at a Summer at Your Library 2025 event.

FVRLibraries serves residents of a range of races including White (comprising 75.9% of the population), Asian (4.3%), Black (2.0%), Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (1.1%), American Indian or Native Alaskan (0.5%), Two or more races/ethnicities (11.0%) and Another race/ethnicity (5.2%). One in eight Library District residents of any race are of Hispanic or Latino/a/e ethnicity. Residents of Klickitat County and Clark County are twice as likely to be of Hispanic or Latino/a/e ethnicity compared to Skamania County residents.

Nine out of 10 FVRLibraries District residents were born in the U.S., and most residents over five years old speak English at home. Fifteen percent of residents speak a language other than English at home; among these residents, about 50% speak Spanish at home and 16% speak Russian, Polish, or another Slavic language. About one in 20 residents speaks English less than “very well.”

Other important community characteristics related to library services include income, employment, and home access to a computer and the internet. Of the areas served by FVRL, Klickitat County has the lowest median household income at \$70,400 – about 78% of Skamania County’s median income (\$90,085) and 72% of the Clark County median income (\$97,678).

In the FVRLibraries District, 3.6% of adults aged 25-64 are unemployed, which matches the state unemployment rate. Unemployment rates are higher in Skamania and Klickitat Counties, and adult residents in these counties who did not complete high school or whose formal education stopped at a high school diploma experience higher unemployment in particular. About a third of District residents over 25, as well as Clark County and Skamania County residents, have a high school diploma or less, compared to nearly 40% of Klickitat County residents.

Internet service availability, both fixed-location and mobile/cellular broadband service, varies across the Library District. Areas with less availability of fixed internet service (DSL, cable, fiber, or satellite) include north central, northeastern, and eastern Clark County; Skamania County areas north of the Washougal River and the Columbia River-adjacent communities; and along the western and northern county borders and east of Goldendale in Klickitat County. Similar areas have limited mobile broadband availability.

More than three quarters of households across all areas of the Library District have access to the internet via a cellular data plan or a fixed broadband internet connection. At the same time, substantial numbers of households rely on a cellular data plan for access to the internet or have no internet connection at all. More than twice as many households in Skamania and Klickitat Counties lack an internet connection compared to Clark County.

Access to technology, including a desktop or laptop computer, smartphone, tablet, or other computer, is widespread, allowing Library District residents to access the internet, access computer- and internet-based services, and do other technology-based tasks. Nevertheless, compared to Clark County households, more than twice as many Skamania County households and more than three times as many Klickitat County households have no access to a computer. Also, 50% more Klickitat County households rely on a smartphone and have no other computing device.

COMMUNITY LIBRARY USE

FVRLibraries is a vital, vibrant, and impactful community resource for District residents who come to one of its libraries looking for a wide range of services. On an average day over the past year:

- Nearly 4,000 people visited an FVRL location
- Patrons checked out and renewed more than 8,200 physical items and nearly 6,200 digital items
- More than 400 people used a computer and 1,300 used Wi-Fi at an FVRL branch
- 250 people enjoyed library programs
- Meetings and events of community groups, clubs, tutors, study groups, homeschoolers, and individuals were held at library locations
- Bookmobiles made multiple stops throughout Skamania and Klickitat Counties, connecting with patrons of all ages at schools, key community destinations, and local events



Children enjoying the library's learning computers.

"I don't currently struggle with access to computers, printers, and internet, but I lived for years without them and during that time the library was such an important resource for me, and played a huge role in my being able to have those things in my home today. I think it's important for those things to continue to be supported."

– Community survey respondent

"I love how much is going on at the library!! There is always something new to do and things to take advantage of!!"

– Community survey respondent



This strategic and facilities planning process engaged more than 2,400 community residents, stakeholders, and library staff about their perspectives, needs, and aspirations for library services and locations in the Library District. The following high-level themes emerged in the input they provided:

"The library has become more of a gathering place. Often all of the tables are full of patrons studying, working remotely, conducting tutoring session and business meeting along with just enjoying the library for a space to relax and read."

- Staff survey participant

- District residents love all the resources that FVRL provides, including library staff, and all the ways to access them – in-person, online, and via a bookmobile. Community members are eager for more library hours that fit their schedules, more materials to enjoy (including a Library of Things), and more in-person and digital learning opportunities. Staff are also seeing more community demand for technology and technology assistance, lifelong learning and creativity opportunities, and space to spend time, as well as for the community connections that the Library offers.
- FVRL locations are open-to-all, free-to-use spaces that are full of possibilities. Residents are coming to libraries to read, study, work, play, learn, create, connect with each other and with resources, use and explore technology, and hold meetings and gatherings – and they identify a broad need for more space to support these goals.



- Children's and youth learning are high priorities for community members. Local libraries are seeing more children's and family use, including homeschoolers. Children and caregivers greatly appreciate the children's areas and programming provided by FVRLibraries and hoped for more children's and tween/teen space, educational opportunities and resources, and programming.
- FVRL serves a wide range of communities – rural, suburban, and urban – that are home to all kinds of people. The Library District strives for its locations to be accessible, welcoming, and comfortable spaces that serve everyone in the community in both good and challenging times (economic, hot/cold weather, and wildfire/smoke). Residents and staff highlighted the importance of FVRL providing flexible spaces to serve both fast-growing and rural communities; serving community members with a range of ages, needs, identities, and abilities; and reflecting local communities' identities in its library facilities.

More detail on the community input received can be found in the Engagement Summary (see Appendix C).

"FVRL is a great resource for everyone to use. The community is blessed to have a library to go to learn, have fun, and enjoy things in life. Having many branches keeps everyone happy. If there were one thing to remind FVRL is that the community is always growing and every part of it must grow together as well."

– Community survey participant



FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH

Southwest Washington is an appealing and vibrant region and, as such, state and county planning agencies foresee substantial population growth in coming decades. The FVRLibraries service area is projected to have 21% more residents (over 115,000 people) by 2035 and a total of 35% more residents (over 190,000 people) within its service area by 2045, reaching a population of around 734,000.

Most of these new residents are anticipated to call Clark County home. Skamania and Klickitat Counties are expected to see population increases of approximately 10% (1,300 residents) and 12% (3,000 residents) respectively by 2045.

To manage its growth and related development over the next 20 years, Clark County is currently preparing an update to its Comprehensive Plan. The planning process anticipates that close to 75% of the County's population growth will happen within Vancouver's city limits (generally south of Vancouver Lake and WA-500) and its Urban Growth Area (areas north of current city limits including Felida, Starcrest, Three Creeks, Hazel Dell, Minnehaha, Walnut Grove, Barberton, Five Corners, and Orchards).

Cities and rural areas within central, northern, and eastern Clark County are also anticipated to grow – some quite substantially compared to their current populations. Near I-5 and the Cowlitz County border, La Center's population is estimated to grow by 73% (3,500 residents) and Ridgefield's by 55% (9,700 residents). Battle Ground, in the county's center, is anticipated to grow by around 50% (11,600 residents). Washougal, in southeastern Clark County, may grow by 33% (6,200 residents). The northeastern corner of the county around the town of Yacolt has grown by close to 50% since 2000 and is projected grow another 13% to over 11,000 residents by 2045. Overall, the county's rural population is anticipated to grow by 12%.



INVENTORY OF CURRENT FACILITIES

FVRLibraries currently operates the 16 facilities listed below. Of these, FVRL owns or leases all but one – the Yale Valley Community Library, which is operated on a contract basis for the Yale Valley Library District. As such, while the Yale Valley community was included in the library strategic planning process, the Yale Valley facility was not assessed in the facilities planning process.

Branch	Square Feet	Ownership
Battle Ground Community Library	14,360 SF	FVRL-owned
Cascade Park Community Library	24,200 SF	FVRL-owned
Goldendale Community Library	15,660 SF	Leased
La Center Community Library	3,380 SF	Leased
North Bonneville Community Library	570 SF	Leased
Ridgefield Community Library	7,870 SF	FVRL-owned
Stevenson Community Library	7,980 SF	FVRL-owned
Three Creeks Community Library	12,930 SF	FVRL-owned
Vancouver Community Library	83,000 SF	FVRL-owned
Vancouver Mall Library	3,530 SF	Leased
Washougal Community Library	2,400 SF	Leased
White Salmon Valley Community Library	9,020 SF	Leased
Woodland Community Library	7,560 SF	FVRL-owned
Yacolt Library Express	1,260 SF	Leased
Yale Valley Community Library	2,170 SF	Yale Valley Library District
Operations Center	26,000 SF	FVRL-owned



VISION

Through engagement in this planning process, FVRL District residents shared their vision of robust, community-focused library services that are delivered in library branches, online, and through bookmobiles and outreach strategies. Place-based services that Library District residents enthusiastically support and desire more of include:

- Space for individual and group pursuits like reading, studying, working, participating in remote meetings, and gathering;
- Programming for all ages that fosters early literacy and supports lifelong learning;
- Places and events that create and strengthen community connections;
- High-interest library collections, including a “Library of Things”;
- Access to technology;
- Maker and creative programs; and
- Diverse library resources, including technology, expanded Library of Things collections, video games, and more.

The modern facility vision for FVRL includes well-maintained, spacious, and agile spaces and buildings that can adapt to changing community needs and evolving library services over time. In this planning process, FVRL’s current facilities were assessed to determine how well aligned they are with this vision today and how factors like condition, capacity, and location affect equitable access to high-quality library services within the District.



CONDITION

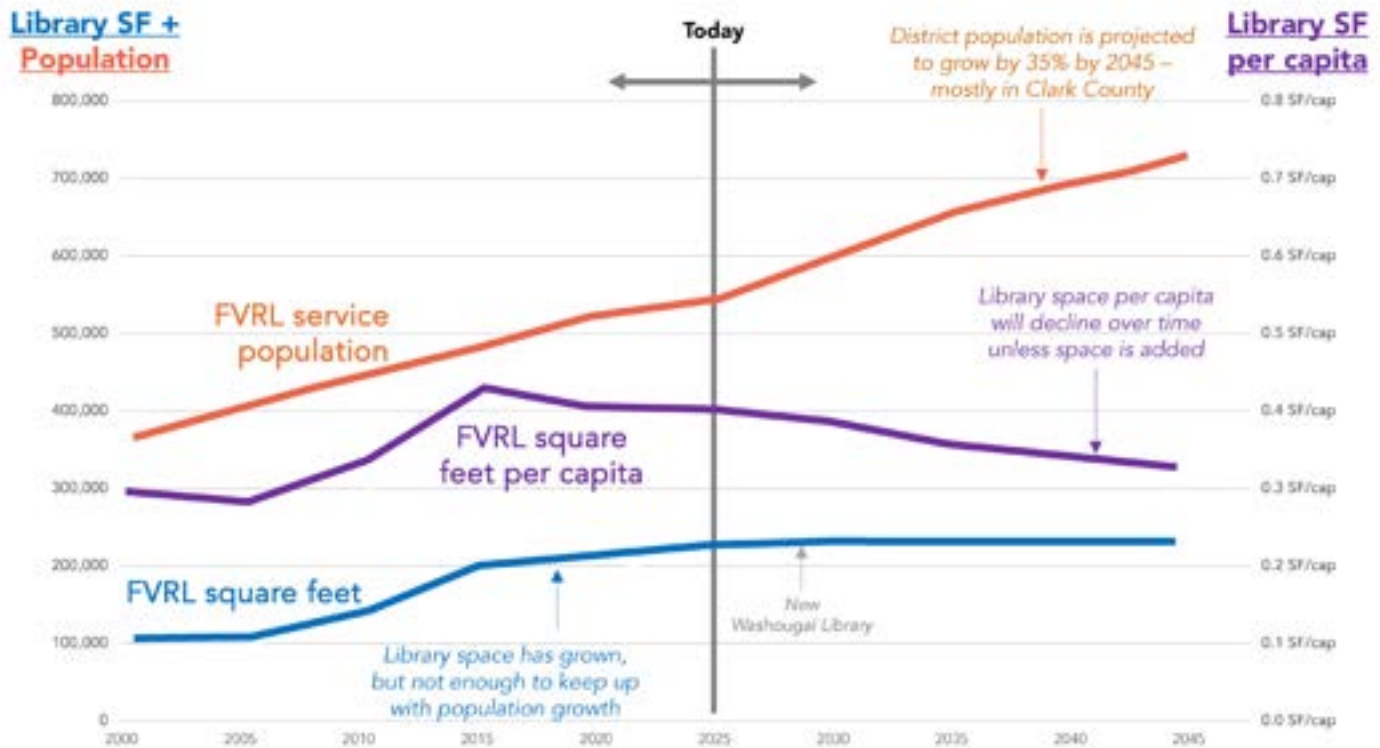
In general, FVRLibraries has been a good steward of public funds in taking care of the facilities it owns. Detailed facility condition assessments (FCA) were prepared for most of FVRL's facilities⁵, encompassing site and building systems, equipment, materials, and finishes. The FCAs demonstrate that these facilities have been well-maintained over time, with a very low backlog of repairs and replacements that are due or overdue now. During tours, the architectural team also found FVRL's facilities to be well-kept overall, with few visible examples of the wear and tear that often comes with heavy public use.

Of course, ongoing maintenance will continue to be needed to keep the District's facilities fresh, welcoming, and performing well. According to the FCAs, the value of ongoing maintenance at FVRL's facilities over the next 10 years is projected at about 7% of their assumed replacement value – well within generally-accepted facility management guidelines.

That said, some of the Library's facilities will be due for major maintenance and updates over the next decade. For example, the Cascade Park Community Library and FVRL Operations Center are among the facilities due for normal roof replacement and mechanical system updates within the next five years, according to the FCA reports. The Vancouver Community Library's outdoor deck on the fifth floor also needs replacement.

⁵ FCAs were not prepared for the Washougal, North Bonneville, Vancouver Mall, and Yale Valley facilities.

LIBRARY SPACE AND POPULATION GROWTH



CAPACITY

Today, the Library District's facilities provide about 232,500 square feet of public and operations space in total. Divided into the District's current service population, this calculates to approximately 0.41 square feet of library space per resident. On this square-foot-per-capita metric, FVRLibraries is currently ranked 56th out of 60 libraries in the state of Washington.

FVRL's facilities in Klickitat and Skamania Counties currently provide more space per capita than those in Clark County. Less than 7% of the District's population lives in Klickitat and Skamania Counties combined. Together, the Goldendale, White Salmon Valley, Stevenson, and North Bonneville libraries together account for 17% of FVRL's space for public service – providing nearly three times as many square feet per capita as in Clark County.

The FVRLibraries service area is projected to grow by 35% over the next 20 years, reaching a population of around 734,000 residents by 2045 – most of whom will live in Clark County. This will place significant additional demand on FVRL's library facilities – particularly in Clark County, which will continue to be home to more than 90% of the Library District's population. Without expansion of public space, FVRL's library square foot per capita ratio could fall to 0.32 or less, representing a significant compromise to the Library's ability to meet the community's needs.



*Yacolt Library Express
(left) and La Center
Community Library
(right)*

FACILITY SIZE

Compounding the relative deficit of library capacity in Clark County is the small size of some of the branches serving this area:

- Toward the northeastern end of Clark County is Yacolt, which has grown substantially over the past 25 years to its current population of about 10,000. The 1,300-square-foot Yacolt Library Express building originally opened in 1908 as the town's city hall and jail. While the original jail cell doors are still a distinctive feature of the décor today, this branch offers a tiny collection of materials, very limited staffing, and no program space. This is the second-smallest branch in the FVRL fleet and is not equitably serving this portion of the county.
- La Center's library facility was originally built 120 years ago as a doctor's home and hospital, and in 2004 was moved to its current site and adapted for library service. The 3,400-square-foot building is very busy, with surprisingly high rates of circulation and program attendance – despite the fact that it has one of the smallest collections in the Library District and lacks any dedicated program space. Programs are offered outdoors during the summer season, and for the rest of the year programs are held inside on the second floor – displacing other uses in the tiny space.
- FVRL has operated a branch library in the Vancouver Mall for decades, leveraging the convenience of this commercial destination with generous parking as well as a public transit node. The Vancouver Mall Library is FVRL's only public service location within the area bounded by I-5, I-205, and Washington State Route 500 – an area that's currently home to more than 55,000 people living in diverse neighborhoods with denser housing and lower household incomes. The 3,500-square-foot retail space boasts high rates of library computer use and library card sign-ups but offers only a small collection and does not have a meeting/program room.



Vancouver Community Library (above and below) provides a depth and diversity of offerings, including a destination children's space, in its 83,000 square feet of space.



"The architecture of Vancouver Community Library is beautiful. The entire space and versatility of all that is provided is probably my favorite thing about it. The variety of places to sit and study or the amounts of books accessible is very convenient."

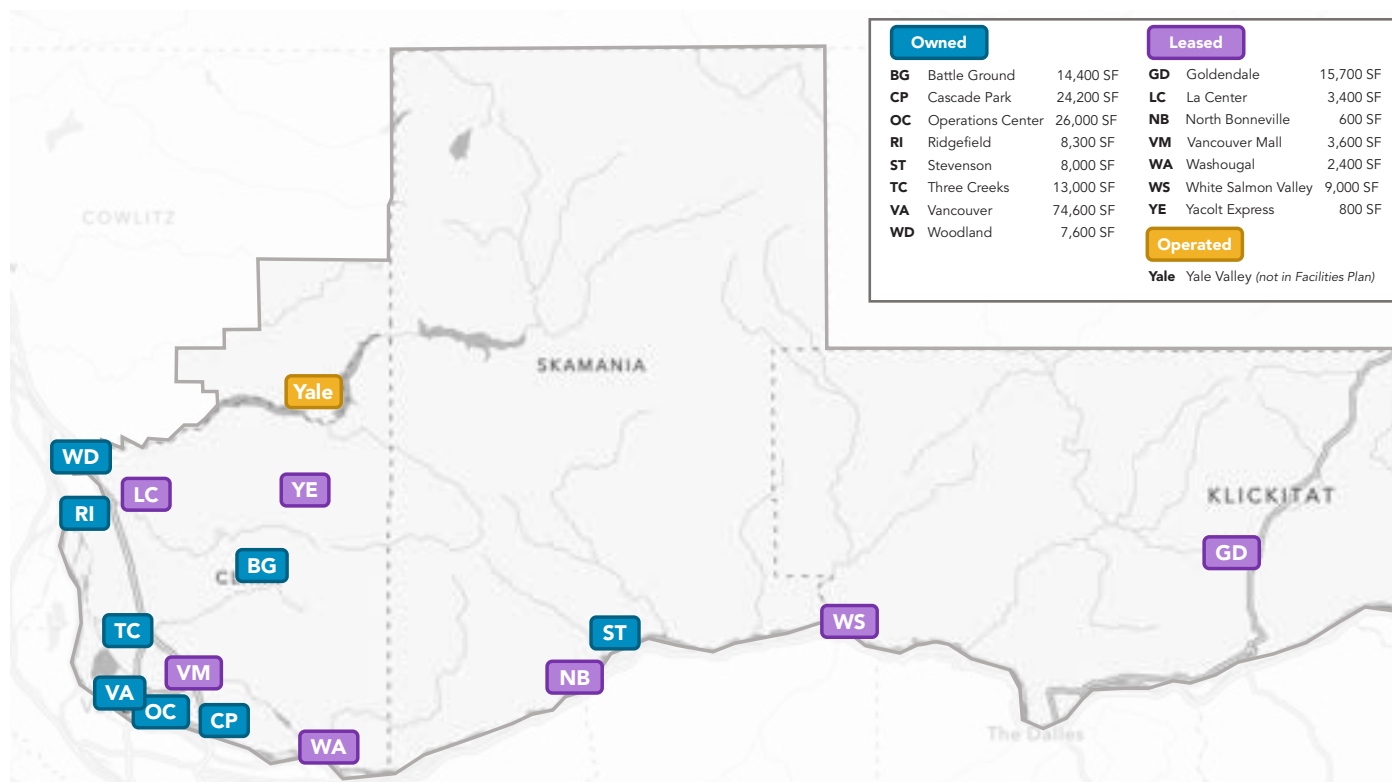
– Community survey participant

Most of FVRL's largest facilities are also located in Clark County. They demonstrate the higher levels of service and use that are possible with more library space:

- The Vancouver Community Library serves as the local branch for downtown and central Vancouver communities as well as the main library for the whole FVRL system. At more than 80,000 square feet it holds nearly one-third of FVRL's total materials collection; provides generous space for seating, programs, and technology; and houses destination children's and teen spaces. It tops the list on most library measures annually – including visits, circulation, computer and Wi-Fi use, and program attendance – which is a testament to the depth and diversity of its offerings as well as the accessibility of its downtown location.⁶
- The 24,400 square foot Cascade Park Community Library is FVRL's second largest public service location and is ranked second on most annual library service measures behind the downtown Vancouver Community Library. Last year, Cascade Park accounted for more than one-fifth of all FVRL visits, materials circulation, and program attendance.
- The Three Creeks (about 13,000 square feet) and Battle Ground (about 14,400 square feet) libraries are FVRL's third- and fourth-busiest branches including visits and materials checkouts. Both offer meeting rooms and generous seating as well as relatively large collections of materials. The proposed new Washougal Community Library will be in this same general size range, with similar offerings and amenities.

These larger facilities clearly support more service for the community – with larger and more diverse collections, more space for children's discovery and play, more technology, more seating, and more space for programs and meetings – among other amenities. They also offer the potential for more efficient operating models in larger facilities.

⁶ It should be noted that the community's access to and use of the Vancouver Community Library may change if its adjacent parking lot is redeveloped as anticipated as part of the Interstate Bridge Replacement project.



CURRENT LIBRARY ASSESSMENTS

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- GD** Goldendale Community Library – p. 26
- LC** La Center Community Library – p. 28
- NB** N. Bonneville Community Library – p. 30
- RI** Ridgefield Community Library – p. 32
- ST** Stevenson Community Library – p. 33
- TC** Three Creeks Community Library – p. 34

- VA** Vancouver Community Library – p. 36
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- YE** Yacolt Library Express – p. 43
- OC** FVRL Operations Center – p. 44

BATTLE GROUND COMMUNITY LIBRARY



Battle Ground Community Library

1207 SE 8th Way, Battle Ground

14,360 square feet

FVRL-owned

"I like that Battle Ground Library provides a variety of programs for kids, teens, and adults. A large meeting area available for all sorts of groups. The kids section allows kids to use the library at their level and the adult section has space for adults to work / read peacefully. Fantastic staff."

– Community survey respondent

Battle Ground Community Library, built in 2009, is FVRL's fourth-largest facility at approximately 14,400 square feet. Located in a mixed commercial and residential area near key travel corridors, patrons have easy access to the library. According to branch staff, the location's largest user group is families with young children; it also sees visits from seniors and other residents of nearby developments.

The library building has an approachable exterior appearance and easily visible signage to identify the library. Its welcoming interior has an open, easy-to-navigate layout, plentiful windows for natural light, and newer furniture throughout. Amenities in this facility's design include two study rooms, a fireside adult reading space, a teen area, and a community meeting room configuration that supports after-hours access. The lawn to the south of the building supports highly popular storytimes during the summer months that can attract as many as 100 children.

Noise overflow is the primary challenge reported at this location, with sound from exuberant youngsters in the children's area and activity at the service desk and teen area causing frustration for users of the adjacent technology area. Acoustical wall panels have been added to help mitigate but the conflicts persist to some degree.



Overall, the Battle Ground facility has adequate space to meet the community's needs over the next 20 years. It was renovated in 2019 and, with continued proactive maintenance, should continue to work well for community and staff. One future opportunity to explore would be to add a canopy to the outdoor patio on the building's west side to enhance and extend its usability.

"We always get comments on how beautiful a space the Battle Ground Library is. The fireplace area always has people enjoying the airy space and there are plenty of computers in the adult, kids, and teen areas. There are quiet study areas and places to meet. There are lots of programs for children and adults to attend."

– Staff survey respondent

CASCADE PARK COMMUNITY LIBRARY



Cascade Park Community Library

600 NE 136th Avenue, Vancouver

24,200 square feet

FVRL-owned

"I would like more meeting space, areas or times for quiet reading and work, bigger kids room for storytime."

– Community survey respondent

At 24,200 square feet, Cascade Park Community Library is FVRL's second largest and second busiest branch. Built in 2009, its adjacency to the Firstenberg Community Center provides a nice convenience and benefit to the community, and it is accessible by multiple transportation modes.

The interior of the branch is largely open, making it easy for users to navigate. The library's size allows it to offer a wider range of program and meeting spaces than some other locations, including large community room, a "family room" in the children's area which hosts storytimes, a smaller meeting room, and two study rooms, as well as a teen area. The community room is FVRL's second-largest event space after the Columbia Room at Vancouver Community Library. According to the library manager, the meeting room is well-sized for the programs and events it hosts but is consistently booked out as far as policy permits – and that even a second room of that size wouldn't be enough to meet the community's demand for program space at Cascade Park.

Staff report that the Cascade Park Library is very popular with children and families. According to staff, the children's area is frequently busy and daily storytimes are almost always full. The children's library is located more or less in the middle of the library, and the sounds of exuberant youth can travel far out into the main space.



Many people also come to Cascade Park to use library computers or to find a space to read or work. Those who come to use one of its study rooms – including tutors and homeschoolers – often find these spaces already occupied. People looking for a quieter experience in the main room tend to gravitate to the seating near the windows and in the fireplace lounge area, which fill up quickly.

While the Cascade Park building has been well maintained and still feels fresh and welcoming, its design did not fully anticipate the rapid evolution of library service over the past 20 years, nor the community's high levels of demand and use. Fortunately, the Cascade Park Community Library has "good bones" and a relatively flexible open plan that could enable reimagination and renovation for the next generation of library service.

According to the facility condition assessment, within the next five years this building will be due for roof and mechanical equipment replacement, which offers FVRL the opportunity to leverage the closure to make upgrades for library service and operations at the same time.

Opportunities to explore could include enclosing or relocating the children's area to reduce noise conflicts; adding more meeting and group study space; and updating staff work spaces.

"I would like another private study room or two at Cascade Park. I would like more variety and frequency of events for adults to find community. I would like more resources for job skills and workforce readiness."

– Community survey respondent

GOLDENDALE COMMUNITY LIBRARY



Goldendale Community Library

131 West Burgen Street, Goldendale

15,660 square feet

FVRL-owned

"Goldendale Community Library supports the community as a place for all community members to seek information & knowledge regardless if they have a library card. It provides access to technology (and staff to assist), digital and physical materials, and space for programs both staff-led and self-led."

– Staff survey respondent

The Goldendale Community Library is FVRL's third-largest branch. The original Carnegie-funded building opened in 1914 and was expanded in 1985 to its current size of nearly 15,700 square feet. Located in central Goldendale near Main Street, public schools, and key transportation routes, it is well sited to serve both nearby and outlying communities. It also serves as the home base of the Klickitat County Bookmobile.

This historic library is appealing and well used by community members of all ages, including homeschooling students and parents, seniors, and families. According to branch staff, children are its most prominent users and enjoy coming to the library to access books, video games, and other materials. The children's area is the largest space in the library and is often lively.

High-interest programs attract more attendees than Goldendale's meeting room can accommodate, even with the ability to overflow into the outdoor amphitheater during pleasant weather. The branch is also an essential resource for computer and Wi-Fi connectivity in Klickitat County, where residential internet service can be less reliable and where higher proportions of households lack an internet connection altogether than in Skamania or Clark Counties.



As is common with many Carnegie-era libraries, space at the Goldendale branch is divided over multiple floors. A 2018 refresh reorganized the floor plan layout to create two new study rooms, a lounge space, and a teen area. Despite efforts to mitigate, sound from the children's area still can bleed into the teen area above it. Adults frequently use the study rooms and hold tutoring sessions in quiet spots.

The Goldendale Community Library's 2018 refresh included updated lighting and furnishings as well as a new layout. The facility condition assessment completed for this planning process recommended additional maintenance over the next decade, including replacing the roof and elevator, repairing leaks at skylights and windows, cleaning and sealing the exterior brick, and investigating differential settlement on one side of the building.

"The Goldendale Library is a beautiful, inviting building and has a friendly staff. The staff has helped in requesting books through the regional network, navigate the computer and printing services, and provides a safe, clean environment for young people. As a retired teacher, I appreciate and value the programs, services and supports for the community's children, teens and families."

– Community survey respondent

LA CENTER COMMUNITY LIBRARY



La Center Community Library

1411 NE Lockwood Creek Road, La Center

3,380 square feet

Leased

"Due to La Center's small footprint it is hard to have large groups for programming during the winter months. Many programs that require registration quickly fill and book parties have a lot of people in a small space. Because there is not a dedicated programming space, programs can encroach on the enjoyment of other individuals using the library."

– Staff survey respondent

La Center Community Library, established in 2004 on the fast-growing community's east side, is a well-loved destination for community and learning. It tries to provide a lot of service within a very small package (around 3,400 square feet) – including materials collections, computer and internet access, and a variety of engaging programs for all ages.

The library is housed in a small, historic two-story building, constructed in 1905 as a doctor's residence and hospital. La Center has the fourth-highest rate of materials checkouts per visit – despite the small size of its collection – and surprisingly high program attendance for a branch without a dedicated meeting space. According to library staff, La Center is heavily used by young families and K-12 students during after-school hours. Internet access, printing, and fax services are also reported to be popular. Community members engaged through this planning process requested more library materials, programming, and people space at La Center.

The facility struggles to support sufficient service for every age group. The materials collection is constrained in both its size and its organization, with gaps in flow and little space for display. There are few computers and little seating. Summer reading programs are held outdoors on the lawn under a big tent. During the rest of the year, programs are held on the library's second floor – displacing any other uses and users who happen to be there. The tight layout and multiple floors can be difficult for patrons and families with strollers or mobility aids.



FVRLibraries does not own the La Center library building but is responsible for its maintenance – which could cost \$340,000 or more in the next few years according to the facility condition assessment completed for this planning process. Expansion is not recommended due to both the age and lingering residential characteristics of the original building as well as the low likelihood that the site can accommodate expansion sufficient to meet current and future community needs.

Over the next 20 years, La Center is anticipated to grow by more than 3,000 residents within city limits – and the population will further increase as the corridor out to I-5 continues to develop. This growth will increase demand for library services in the community and pressure on the already insufficient library building. A larger, modern library facility that provides a richer range of core, high-interest, and specialized library services, spaces, and programming is needed to serve this area.

“I love the La Center Library but eventually we probably need a bigger one. A larger outdoor space would be amazing and a comfy reading room would be so appreciated.”

– Community survey respondent

NORTH BONNEVILLE COMMUNITY LIBRARY



North Bonneville Community Library

214 CBD Mall N, North Bonneville

570 square feet

Leased

"I like that if I put books on hold, I can check them out from the book vending machine."

– Community survey respondent

The city of North Bonneville in the rural Columbia Gorge is home to around 1,400 residents. The North Bonneville Community Library is FVRL's smallest public service location, occupying a leased space in North Bonneville's City Hall.

The North Bonneville location operates on a hybrid staffed/self-service model. In less than 600 square feet, it can offer only a tiny collection, two computers, Wi-Fi, and printing/copying, scanning, and faxing equipment. It is open and staffed for just six hours per week. Self-service library amenities located in the City Hall lobby are available during the City's weekday business hours. They include a "Little Lending Library" vending machine, a "Lucky Day" materials shelf, and a Friends of the Library sale display.

According to FVRL staff, most customers use this location to pick up materials they have placed on hold. Even so, the North Bonneville Community Library doesn't do much business – even for the self-service amenities in the lobby. Over the past year, this location accounted for less than 0.2% of all FVRL visits, checkouts, and computer and Wi-Fi sessions. For comparison, FVRL's Yacolt Library Express – a fully self-service location located in an even more remote community – had nearly seven times as many Wi-Fi sessions, 10 times as many computer sessions, and 13 times as many checkouts as North Bonneville branch.



It may be that North Bonneville residents find it worth the seven-mile drive to the Stevenson Community Library for its expanded hours, space, programs, and collections. Some may also find it convenient to stop at the library in Washougal on their commute to or from Clark County. Whatever the reason, FVRL should evaluate the feasibility of converting the North Bonneville location to a fully self-service model or another more cost-effective strategy.

"North Bonneville has such limited access, it just isn't very convenient for patrons. It would be nice to have a self-service option like Yacolt and Yale Valley."

– Staff survey respondent

RIDGEFIELD COMMUNITY LIBRARY



Ridgefield Community Library

210 N Main Street, Ridgefield

7,870 square feet

FVRL-owned

"I love how Ridgefield Library has spaces to sit and read or do schoolwork, and the free Wi-Fi is really nice. The library is a cool haven from the summer heat, and a good place to take younger kids like my brothers who need to get out of the house. It's nice that there's also a park nearby for when the kids are done reading. The art displays are fun to look at and the staff are super kind. I also love checking out board games!"

– Community survey respondent

Ridgefield Community Library, located in the city's historic downtown area, opened in 1994 and was expanded in 2021. A modest 7,900 square feet in size, this modern and vibrant branch sees the Library District's fifth-highest visits, highest program attendance per visit, and strong materials circulation.

The library looks appealing both inside and out. It provides the key elements of a modern full-service library, including people space, a program room, and smaller meeting rooms. Children and young families are reported to be this branch's most frequent users and the children's area can feel small at times for the amount of use it gets. The library's programming also draws many seniors and English learners. Community demand for more and larger group study spaces is high – people are using these spaces not just for gathering and studying but for creative pursuits like podcasting and business startups.

There appears to be room on the Ridgefield library's site for a small expansion. However, while Ridgefield's population is anticipated to grow by more than 50% over the next 20 years, most of the community development is planned eastward toward and beyond I-5. Growth in these areas may not result in significant additional demand for library service in downtown Ridgefield. Instead, a new regional-scale library facility is proposed for the north Clark County area to serve its residents.

With ongoing maintenance to keep it fresh and well-functioning, the current Ridgefield Community Library should continue to serve the community well over the next 10 to 20 years.

STEVENSON COMMUNITY LIBRARY



Stevenson Community Library was built in 1967 and renovated in 2017. The two-story, 8,000-square-foot library is conveniently located near Highway 14 and Stevenson's schools and is the base for the Skamania/West Klickitat Bookmobile.

This location is an important resource for Wi-Fi and computer access in this rural, mountainous county where internet access can be spotty. Branch staff have observed that young families, youth, and seniors are the library's most frequent users and that there is more use by homeschooling families. Attendance at popular summer reading events can exceed the meeting room's capacity, and in such cases Stevenson schools host the events.

The Stevenson facility has a modern mix of collections space and people space, including a lower-level meeting room and art gallery that supports the Gorge's creative spirit. Its open-feeling main room has abundant natural light and great views of the Columbia Gorge thanks to its large windows and lower-height shelving, and the outdoor reading decks are well-used in good weather.

Overall, this facility is in good condition and working well. FVRLibraries is planning to address some maintenance needs and upgrades, including replacing the single-pane windows and sliding doors and adding window shades improve energy efficiency and comfort. With continued maintenance and updates over time, the Stevenson Community Library should continue to serve the community well over the 10 to 20 year life of this plan.

Stevenson Community Library

120 NW Vancouver Avenue, Stevenson

7,980 square feet

FVRL-owned

"Stevenson Community Library is an incredible space with welcoming and helpful staff.

My kids love to go, and there is nothing intimidating about the library – how to find books, asking for help, checking things out, etc."

– Community survey respondent

THREE CREEKS COMMUNITY LIBRARY



Three Creeks Community Library

800-C NE Tenney Road, Vancouver

12,930 square feet

FVRL-owned

"More meeting space is needed, both for programming and to have space available for patrons to use for their own events and meetings. The collections space is very cramped and it is difficult for wheelchairs or strollers to navigate the space. The children's area is often very full and strollers frequently block the aisle and exits."

– Staff survey respondent

Three Creeks Community Library, FVRL's third-busiest location, was built in 2001. The nearly 13,000-square-foot library is located on a prominent corner lot in a shopping center in the Salmon Creek area, near I-5. The facility is a brick building with an exaggerated entrance canopy and two wings that enclose an interior courtyard. The open-plan main room has plentiful natural light and is easy to navigate, with seating and computer use areas concentrated along the courtyard windows and collections and staff areas closer to the parking lot.

Three Creeks' high-profile, easily accessible location is a big factor in its popularity. Over the past year, this branch had the third-highest rates of patron visits and materials circulation (especially children's and youth) in the FVRL system, as well as the second-highest program attendance. The largest user groups for Three Creeks are young families, youth, and seniors, according to branch staff. The children's area gets heavy use and the library typically has the highest summer reading sign-ups in the FVRL system.

Three Creeks' last refresh was in 2013, around the time that FVRL's last facilities plan was published. However, after nearly 25 years of community growth and evolution of library services since the building originally opened, the layout and allocation of space are no longer aligned with the community's needs. The meeting room is undersized for the crowds drawn by library programs, and there are no group study rooms or conference spaces. The enclosed reading room is larger than needed for



current periodical and newspaper subscriptions, while the children's area cannot accommodate the number of families visiting the library at peak times.

FVRLibraries is planning a refresh of Three Creeks to expand the children's library, update the shelving and layout for better wayfinding and accessibility, expand space for seating and group study, modernize the staff desk, and refresh finishes and furniture. FVRL also plans to incorporate major maintenance needs including replacing the roof and addressing stormwater drainage challenges. This project should prepare the Three Creeks facility for the next decade of library service at least.

That said, substantial growth is projected in the area north of Vancouver's city limits in the next 20 years, and the Three Creeks Community Library could be an excellent location for a larger facility providing more robust or even regional-scale service. FVRL should watch for opportunities that may arise to significantly expand space at or near this location (for example, should adjacent property become available).

"Three Creeks is welcoming, clean, and provides essentials. It would benefit from an update."

– Community survey respondent

VANCOUVER COMMUNITY LIBRARY



Vancouver Community Library

901 C Street, Vancouver

83,000 square feet

FVRL-owned

"I like that it's big and beautiful with a bit of something for the entire community. I love the bold architecture."

– Community survey respondent

Vancouver Community Library is the largest facility in the Library District and a resource for both downtown Vancouver neighborhoods and the District as a whole. The five-story, 83,000 square foot building stands out in downtown Vancouver with its glass, concrete, and terra cotta design. When it opened in 2011, the building won multiple awards and honors for design innovation, sustainability, and modern library service.

Even after nearly 15 years of service, this library is still considered to be "new" by the community and library staff. The interior of the library is very modern and is organized around a central atrium and stair, from which visitors can enjoy expansive views of downtown Vancouver to the south. Wood ceilings and details complement and soften the concrete and glass elements through the library.

The building is organized to offer distinct uses and/or collection types on each floor. The third-floor children's area features a themed "Land of Imagination" active play and learning area with several attractions for kids to engage with. The fifth-floor Vancouver Room, an open lounge space with a fireplace that overlooks the roof terrace, is popular with people who are searching for a quiet study space. The Teen Central space and the Computer Commons on the first floor are also heavily used.

The library's open-plan format and infrastructure were designed to be flexible and adaptable as needs and services evolve, and FVRL has made some changes since the building first opened. Examples include the conversion of a computer lab room into



a creative classroom and the transition of the former café space into a busy seating and browsing area. Future changes can also be made in response to evolving and growing community needs and interests.

This library's central location in downtown Vancouver is easy to reach for drivers, pedestrians, and bicycle and bus riders. One of the challenges for those who drive to the Vancouver Community Library is the shortage of parking. The building's original design anticipated a future parking garage on the lot directly to the south that has never materialized. The small surface parking lot on the east side of the library building is frequently full, and those who are able to find a space have a relatively long walk from there to the library's main entrance on the building's west side. This small lot is also temporary; it is proposed for redevelopment as part of the I-5 bridge replacement and regional transit project – after which there may not be any free parking for library patrons in downtown Vancouver.

The Vancouver Community Library has been an excellent investment, significantly expanding library service in southern Clark County and enhancing support for the entire FVRL branch network. Continued proactive maintenance will keep it fresh and functioning well for many years to come. The facility condition assessment conducted for this planning process identified the near-term need to replace the roof terrace's deck as well as normal maintenance upgrades and renewal needs over time.

"I like the way Vancouver Community Library provides a safe space for everyone in my community to learn and spend time."

– Community survey respondent

VANCOUVER MALL LIBRARY



Vancouver Mall Library

8700 NE Vancouver Mall Drive, Suite 285,
Vancouver

3,530 square feet

Leased

"Make it bigger! My kids are always so disappointed with how small it is and how few books it carries."

– Community survey respondent

"I would remove the library from the mall and put it in a stand-alone building. The mall location is technically the closest one to me but it's extremely hard for me to access due to mobility issues."

– Community survey respondent

FVRL opened its first Vancouver Mall location in 1983 in a generously sized, high-profile space on the second floor. In 2013, mall management significantly raised the lease rate. In order to keep its lease costs the same, FVRL agreed to cut the library space in half to its current size of about 3,500 square feet.

The library's current space is hard to find for new visitors – its entrance is hard to see and mall management limits wayfinding signage. Confusingly, there is a prominently located retail space called the "Little Free Library" that patrons must walk past in order to find the FVRL branch space.

Its interior is inviting but can only offer a limited collection, a few computers and tables, and a tiny children's area. There is no program space; the branch manager works with mall management to offer programs in other mall spaces, including the Little Free Library.

Residential neighborhoods near Van Mall are denser, more diverse, and lower income than the rest of Clark County and the FVRL District average. More than 57,000 people live in the area between I-5, I-205, and WA-500. The Vancouver Mall Library's current space is insufficient for the current and future needs of this densely populated area. Given the mall's high foot traffic and regional draw, there may be value in maintaining a presence there to increase community awareness of FVRL. However, a well-placed self-service option such as a kiosk or library vending machine (like the one at North Bonneville) might serve this function more cost-effectively while enabling these valuable branch staff and resources to be moved to other locations.

WASHOUGAL COMMUNITY LIBRARY



Housed in the Washougal City Hall complex, the 2,400-square-foot Washougal Community Library opened in 1981. It serves both the city and rural residents in southeastern Clark County and western Skamania County.

The facility's small size limits FVRL's ability to provide meaningful access to library materials and resources, and it has been recommended for replacement since the Library District's 2013 facilities plan. The space is only able to support a small, densely packed collection, a few tables and chairs, five computers, and a very small children's area. It cannot provide modern library elements including program, meeting, or study space to the community.

Washougal's projected population growth of 33% over the next 20 years highlights the importance of providing a full-service library in southeastern Clark County. The long-planned new library facility in downtown Washougal – delayed after the early planning stages due to lack of funding and high construction cost escalation – can now be fully funded thanks to the levy lid lift's passage. Once opened, the new 14,000-square-foot library will be a highly impactful resource for area residents, providing a children's storytime area, teen space, generous seating, conference and study rooms, and a community room.

Washougal Community Library

1661 C Street, Washougal

2,400 square feet

Leased

"So happy the levy passed to know that there will be FVRL funding available for building new Washougal Library facility! This community deserves a larger library facility for library goers to feel more comfortable hanging around in and to participate in more activities. Also have access to more library items – more books, tables & chairs, computers, activities, etc."

– Community survey respondent

WHITE SALMON VALLEY COMMUNITY LIBRARY



White Salmon Valley Community Library

77 NE Wauna Avenue, White Salmon

9,020 square feet

Leased

“People tell me that they wish the White Salmon Valley Library was in a bigger space. During the week when school gets out, the building is full of elementary and high school kids and it can get pretty crowded. We have moved kids into the gallery when it gets to be too noisy, so we can make it work for now.”

– Staff survey respondent

The White Salmon Valley Community Library, in the White Salmon/Bingen area in the southwest corner of Klickitat County, is FVRL's sixth-busiest branch. This approximately 9,000-square-foot library is located in a leased space in a shopping center. This smaller library sees high community demand for programs, events, and collections.

The large, shared shopping center parking lot is a positive for library users. According to library staff, a wide range of people visit the library, including many seniors, young families, home schoolers, youth, and tourists. Computer and internet access and materials are highly used, and library programs draw many attendees. The most popular programs are those for children and young families as well as nature and art programs for adults.

The library's main room is well laid-out, well-lit, and easy to navigate thanks to generally low-height shelving. The Gallery/Meeting Room space, which supports children's and adult programming and the local arts community, is small for the library's needs but can be operated independently for events. Currently, storytimes that attract more attendees than will fit in the meeting room are held in the nearby park when weather permits, and library staff arrange alternate locations for high-interest special events. Having more meeting spaces at the



library, including a larger-capacity room for programs, could support popular programming year-round, provide more capacity for partnerships with community service organizations, and offer more quiet-use space when the library is bustling with children and teens.

Given the high level of demand at this location, FVRLibraries has made some attempts in the past to secure more library space but so far has not found a workable solution. As the community continues to grow, FVRL should keep exploring opportunities to build more capacity for library service in the White Salmon Valley/Bingen area. In the near term, the current White Salmon Valley Library facility appears to be working well, managing to provide a surprising amount of service despite its space limitations.

"If anything were possible, I would expand the White Salmon Valley Community Library's space and services so it could be an even stronger hub for our rural area. This could include smaller meeting rooms, dedicated space for teens, and more quiet study or work areas with reliable high-speed internet. I'd love to see more multilingual materials and programming—especially in Spanish."

– Community survey respondent

WOODLAND COMMUNITY LIBRARY



Woodland Community Library

411 Lakeshore Drive, Woodland

7,560 square feet

FVRL-owned

"The Woodland community is drawn to the new library building. We are busier than we thought we would be now that we are in our new space."

– Staff survey respondent

Woodland Community Library is FVRL's newest facility, opened in Fall 2024. The nearly 7,600-square-foot library has a modern balance of collections space and people space, and sees robust materials checkouts as well as high Wi-Fi usage. It has an eye-catching design, with two wings that create a usable exterior courtyard. Its interior spaces are open, have plentiful natural light and low-height shelving for an open feeling.

Branch staff have observed that Woodland's largest user groups are young families and youth. The children's area offers easy materials browsing for young readers and fun play furniture. The teen room is popular for fun and socializing. A community room supports programs and larger meetings both during and after open hours, and two study rooms are in high demand for smaller gatherings, work, and study. The exterior courtyard is used for summer reading programs and various performers, but would be more usable if more shade were available.

This facility was originally planned to be twice the size, but in the face of rapid construction cost escalation, a choice was made to move forward with a smaller building rather than pause the project until additional funding could be secured. Though the new facility is well designed, it is much smaller than recommended for modern FVRL facilities and provides only half the service to the community that it could have provided. For the best long-term return on investment, the Library District will provide timely maintenance as needed and keep it fresh as community needs evolve.

YACOLT LIBRARY EXPRESS



Yacolt Library Express has been serving the town of Yacolt and surrounding rural areas in northeast Clark County since 2012. The tiny 1,260-square-foot library is located in the town's original city hall and jail, built in 1908. It is primarily self-service, with library staff on site 24 hours per week. Visitors access the library by scanning their FVRLibraries card and entering their PIN.

While this rural community greatly appreciates having a library, according to library staff, its small size supports only limited library services and collections. Communities in the Yacolt area are growing quickly and are home to numerous large families. Staff observe that library's largest user groups are kids in grades K-6 and their parents, including many homeschooling families.

The former city hall building's layout is not optimal for library service. There is no lobby space inside the entrance – visitors enter directly into the children's space. The primary collections space is in a separate room from the children's space, and the door to the collections space can be difficult to see from the entry. Old jail cells are used for teen space, Friends of the Library bookstore, and library storage, and the building's restroom is not up to modern standards. No meeting room is available or possible in the current building. Local residents are looking for more resources and services – the only programming possible in this facility is DIY children's arts and crafts – as well as additional space for teens, adult use, and community meetings and events. To support high-quality, equitable library service in northeast Clark County, a new full-service branch is recommended.

Yacolt Library Express

105 E Yacolt Road, Yacolt

1,260 square feet

Leased

"I would love to have more room for events or playgroups at Yacolt Library. The story times at Battle Ground and other branches have been instrumental in my child's learning and social skills."

– Community survey respondent

"Much as I love the uniqueness of the present setup, to provide appropriate service to the using population a larger facility would be needed."

– Community survey respondent

FVRL OPERATIONS CENTER



FVRL Operations Center

2018 Grand Boulevard, Vancouver

26,000 square feet

FVRL-owned

"The Operations Center needs more space for meetings – at this point the entire building is sharing two spaces, and none of them are big enough to host a district-wide meeting of staff of most groups."

– Staff survey respondent

The Operations Center building was acquired in 2021 after the City of Vancouver terminated FVRL's lease on its previous location. Formerly a hardware store and a transitional housing facility, the building now houses FVRL's administration, outreach, collections, technology, and other support services staff.

In general this has been a good investment for the Library District. The building's simple shape and structural system provide the potential to adapt and change interior spaces relatively easily as the organization evolves and grows. There appears to be plenty of parking for staff who work at the Operations Center and for fleet vehicles, as well as space for library storage. The facility's loading dock supports deliveries and courier operations.

One thing the Operations Center currently lacks is space for large gatherings. The largest meeting space today accommodates up to about 12 people. Larger meetings, trainings, conferences, etc. must be held off-site. FVRL would benefit from space designed to accommodate up to 100 people or so. FVRL would also like to add office space for staff of the Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries Foundation, which expands the Library's impact by raising private gifts and grants, providing support to Friends of the Library groups, and other essential functions. Moving the FVRL Foundation staff into the Operations Center would increase funding available to support library programs.

The facility condition assessment identified some major maintenance needs coming due soon, including replacement of the roof and a 30-ton rooftop HVAC unit.



FUTURE LIBRARY NEEDS

LEVELS OF SERVICE

Municipalities and districts in Washington State are encouraged to establish “levels of service” targets – minimum standards at which the agency provides services to residents – that reflect community and organizational goals and assist in assessing how the agency is doing in meeting these goals.

The Capacity section on page 18 of this report discussed a measure of library space relative to the service population’s size. This square foot per capita metric is commonly used in library facility planning because the size of the service population tends to be strongly correlated with the demand for library services – that is, as the community grows, so does use of its libraries. Therefore, it is appropriate to plan library space relative to the service population’s size.

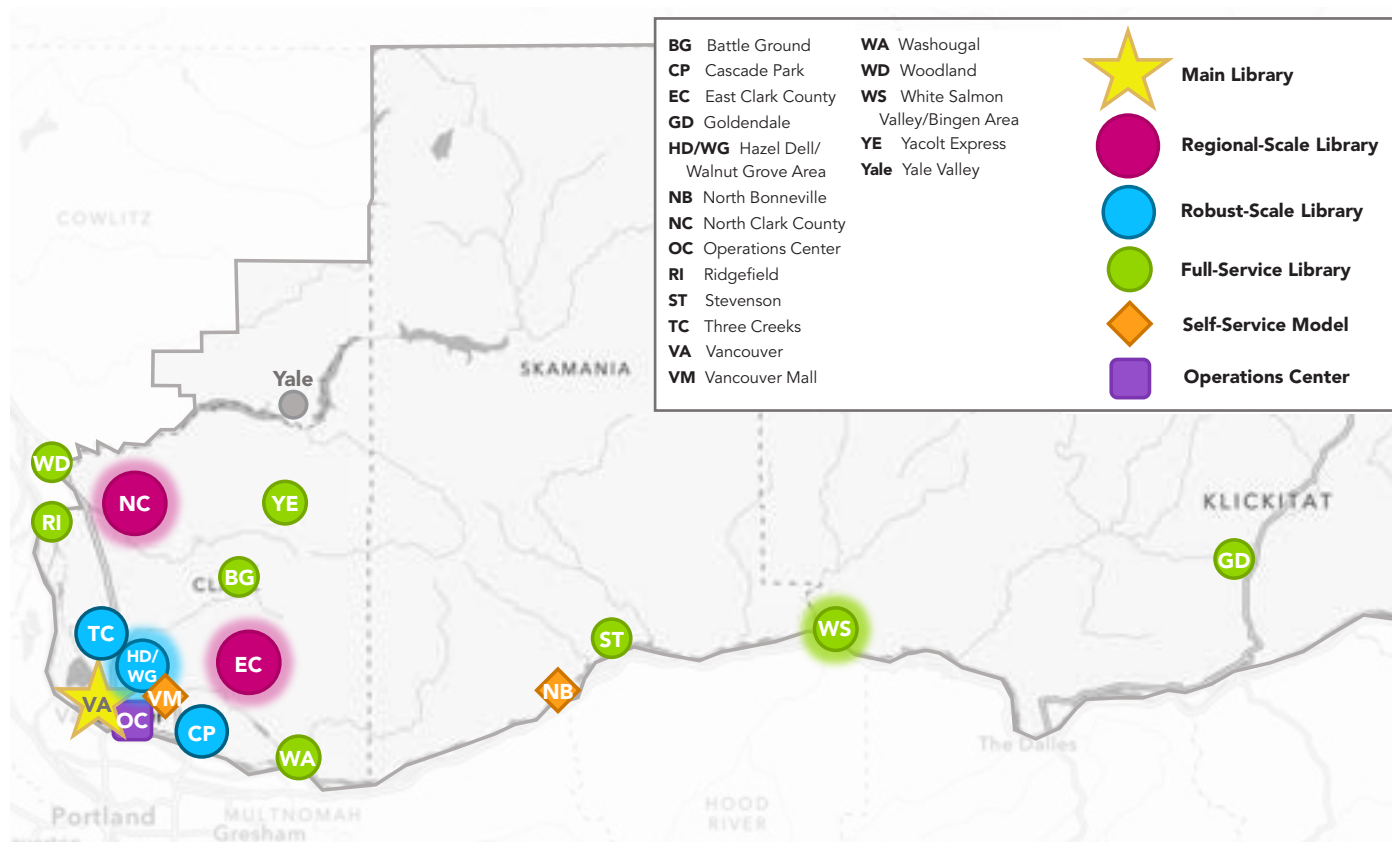
While this metric is commonly used in planning, there is no universal standard that applies to all libraries. There is a great deal of variability among public libraries, from the unique demographics and needs of the communities they serve, to their organizational characteristic and service priorities, and to their resources for building and operations – to name just a few.



Today, FVRL's facilities together provide just over 232,000 square feet with a current capacity measure of approximately 0.41 square feet per capita. Based on the Library District's profile, community engagement input, library vision, and facility assessments, the recommended level of service for FVRL library facilities is 0.5 to 0.6 square feet per capita.

- A minimum threshold service level of 0.5 square feet of library space per capita would enable FVRL to expand the people and program spaces that communities have asked for without having to reduce the footprint of its materials collection.
- As space is expanded toward 0.6 square feet per capita, FVRLibraries would be able to build up its collection as well as providing generous space for people and programs.

Based on this recommended range, about 40,000 to 90,000 more library square feet are needed today to address the current space deficit for FVRL's current service population.



20-YEAR LIBRARY NEEDS

To build capacity for the District's projected 2045 population, between 365,000 and 435,000 square feet of library space will be needed – at least 60% more space than FVRLibraries operates today. This level of service will support the community's vision of the library as a place for people to gather, learn, collaborate, discover, and work together toward a stronger future.

It is important to consider the operational implications of expanding library space as well as the capital investment. Building capacity by simply adding more branches will increase FVRL's costs of staffing and operations beyond sustainable levels.

To expand space and capacity for service while maintaining operational and financial sustainability, FVRL should develop larger facilities that can provide more service and space with an efficient staffing model. If possible, the Library District should strive to expand space while maintaining a maximum 15 staffed locations (not including branches operated on a contract basis like Yale Valley).



Cascade Park Library



Battle Ground Library

LIBRARY TYPOLOGIES

It is recommended that FVRL build capacity primarily through expansion or replacement of smaller facilities with larger libraries. This plan proposes to achieve the recommended level of service through a mix of the following size and service typologies:

- **Robust Libraries** are at least 25,000 square feet. Cascade Park Community Library demonstrates how branches of this size can support an expanded range of spaces and services. This library's location in a moderately dense urban / suburban community – and co-location with another popular community destination – is also a factor in the high levels of use and service it provides.
- **Regional Libraries** are 35,000 square feet and larger. These destination facilities provide a rich diversity of core, high-interest, and specialized library services, resources, and spaces to meet wide-ranging customer needs. While FVRL does not currently have any branches at this scale, it is possible to imagine that a strategically-located Regional Library could include some of the spaces and features currently offered only at the downtown Vancouver Community Library – such as a generous children's play and active learning space, for example.
- **Full-Service Libraries** are at least 15,000 square feet in size. These community-focused libraries can provide all core modern library services and spaces, including a diverse materials collection, meeting and group study rooms, and a welcoming experience for patrons of all ages. The Goldendale Community Library and Battle Ground Community Library demonstrate the range of services and spaces that are possible in a facility of this size.

FVRL should not build any new branches that are significantly smaller than 15,000 square feet. This does not mean that FVRL must expand or replace all of its current smaller facilities, which would be impractical as well as unnecessary. It simply means that the Library District should prioritize building larger branches as it strives to build capacity for service and prepare for population growth ahead.

For very small branches that are not planned for expansion, FVRL should evaluate the feasibility and benefits of implementing self-service models or other alternative strategies to enhance access and optimize operating costs.



10-YEAR CAPITAL PLAN

RECOMMENDED CAPITAL PROJECTS 2026-2035

This section describes the recommended capital projects for FVRLibraries over the next 10 years. These projects are listed by type and scope, not necessarily by proposed timing or priority. Where the timing of projects is proposed, it is preliminary based on what is known at this time and project sequencing considerations such as those in the Implementation Strategies chapter. All timing is subject to change depending on many factors.

Rendering of the new Washougal Community Library. Source: Hacker Architects

Maintenance + Modernization

FVRL will continue to proactively address maintenance to keep all of its facilities fresh, welcoming, and performing well. This plan recommends rolling major maintenance needs together with strategic updates to modernize service and operations into capital projects at:

- Three Creeks Community Library (2026-2028)
- Cascade Park Community Library (2026-2030)
- FVRL Operations Center (2026-2030)

Building Capacity

FVRLibraries needs to add significant space to address the current deficit and prepare for strong community growth ahead. Priority capacity-building projects include:

- Washougal Community Library – move forward with design and construction of the planned new facility (2026-2027)
- Secure appropriate sites and build two new regional-scale libraries in the North Clark County and East Clark County areas; complete at least one of these by 2030 and both by 2035

Strategic Investments

There are opportunities for strategic investments to address specific needs and circumstances at:

- Vancouver Community Library – develop a new parking solution before the current lot is redeveloped as proposed as part of the planned Interstate Bridge Replacement project's regional transit improvements (2026-2030)
- Battle Ground Community Library – evaluate the potential to add a shade structure / weather-protective canopy over the patio space on the west side of the building
- Woodland Community Library – evaluate the potential to add a shade structure / weather-protective canopy over the central patio space
- Vancouver Mall Library – evaluate the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of converting to a fully self-service model by the time the lease expires in 2028
- North Bonneville Community Library – evaluate the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of converting to a fully self-service model

20-Year Vision

This planning process established a 20-year vision and road map for FVRL's library spaces and facilities. The capital projects described above are recommended priorities for the first decade. Additional capital projects proposed in the 20-year vision include:

- New full-service library of at least 15,000 square feet in the Yacolt area
- New full-service library of at least 15,000 square feet in the Bingen/White Salmon Valley area
- New robust-scale library of at least 25,000 square feet in the Hazel Dell/Walnut Grove/Minnehaha area

While these have not been proposed as priorities for implementation over the next 10 years, they still need to be included in FVRL's capital planning over the next decade. Appropriate new sites will need to be secured for each of these new branches, and FVRL should not wait until 2035 to start looking. At any time, unanticipated opportunities for one or more of these projects may also arise that FVRL feels are worth moving forward before 2035.



Above: Woodland Community Library during its construction.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

CAPITAL FUNDING STRATEGIES

Funding for FVRL capital projects has typically come from multiple sources. For example:

- The FVRL Foundation, the Friends of the Washougal Community Library, and the State of Washington have pledged more than \$3.2 million toward the construction cost of the proposed new Washougal Community Library. Additional fundraising is underway to supplement contributions by FVRLibraries from its operating fund.
- The State of Washington authorizes the establishment of special-purpose taxing districts known as library capital facility areas (LCFAs) to fund library building projects. In 2005, Vancouver voters approved an LCFA for the purpose of site acquisition and construction of the new downtown Vancouver Community Library and the Cascade Park Community Library, as well as purchasing equipment for the Vancouver Mall Library. According to the November 4, 2025 meeting of the Vancouver LCFA Board, the bonds issued for these projects are due to be fully repaid by 2028.
- The Library Capital Improvement Program was created by the state Legislature in 2019 to assist libraries operated by governmental units, as defined in RCW 27.12.010, to acquire, construct, or rehabilitate their facilities. The Department of Commerce, in consultation with the Library Capital Improvement Program Committee, conducts a statewide competitive grant process to award up to \$10 million. The maximum grant amount to any one project will not exceed \$2 million. The program requires a 50% match of the total cost of the project. Priority is given to library facilities listed on local, state, or federal registers of historic places and those located in distressed or rural areas.

- As part of its annual budget process for operating expenditures, FVRLibraries establishes a budget for facility maintenance costs that are anticipated in the year ahead. Given the low backlog of deferred maintenance and the detailed 10-year projection of maintenance needs developed through this planning process, FVRL expects that it will continue to be able to fund repairs and renewals primarily through its existing revenue sources.

As of the date of this report, FVRL is in the early stages of determining funding strategies for design and construction of the recommended facilities projects.

PROJECT SEQUENCING CONSIDERATIONS

Once capital project funding strategies for the recommended projects are confirmed, it is still likely that FVRLibraries will choose to proceed with some projects before others. Considerations for sequencing and timing of projects include:

- **Building capacity for future growth.** FVRL is already operating with a deficit of space, and that deficit will continue to increase as the population grows rapidly over the next 10 to 20 years. Prioritizing projects that expand space can help FVRL build capacity for service to current and future populations.
- **Mitigating escalation.** Since 1940, the cost of construction in the United States has increased by an average of nearly 5% per year – or about 50% every decade – and this rate of escalation at a minimum is projected to continue over the next five to 10 years. Prioritizing larger projects, such as the proposed regional-scale libraries in Clark County, for earlier implementation could help mitigate the higher impacts of construction market escalation on the cost of these larger projects.
- **Availability of sites.** Some of the recommended projects will require FVRL to identify and acquire appropriate sites before design can begin. See the next section in this chapter for site selection guidelines.
- **Maintaining service.** Coordinating library capital projects to manage shifting usage levels and ensure sufficient available service capacity will help customers and staff through the inevitable but ultimately rewarding disruptions.
- **Maintenance and modernization needs.** According to the facility condition assessments, branches such as Cascade Park and Three Creeks are coming due for life cycle upgrades and replacements for major building systems. These offer the opportunity to also refresh and update interiors to enhance service, universal accessibility, and the patron experience.
- **Community expectations.** A new library in Washougal has been planned for more than a decade, and the community has been waiting eagerly to see this plan become reality. FVRL promised that the project would be fully funded if the levy lid lift passed in 2025, and now intends to make good on its promise.

SITE SELECTION CONSIDERATIONS AND CRITERIA

Acquiring appropriate sites can be one of the most challenging steps in developing new libraries. FVRL will need to find at least two new sites for new libraries in the next 10 years and another three to four sites to implement the full vision for improved and expanded facilities by 2045.

Considerations and evaluation criteria for potential new sites include:

Location and Access

- The site is well-located within the community it is intended to serve.
- The site is prominent and highly visible.
- The site is located along major transportation routes (current or planned), including public transit and bicycle as well as vehicles.

Capacity and Characteristics

- The site is large enough to accommodate the proposed library building footprint, associated parking (surface or structure, as appropriate), usable outdoor areas and landscaping, etc.
- Site proportions can accommodate a building floor plate that supports modern library service and efficient operations. Generally speaking, libraries smaller than 30,000 square feet should be single story, if possible. Multi-story libraries should strive for as few floors as possible.
- Site topography supports universal access for people of all abilities.

Compatibility

- The site is zoned (or can be re-zoned) for development as a library.
- Adjacent uses are compatible and complementary with a library.
- A library is compatible with the community's development plans and expectations for the site.

Acquisition and Development

- Cost of acquisition.
- Costs to improve / expand utilities and infrastructure (e.g., water, power, sewer, access).
- As applicable, costs to remediate poor soil, hazardous materials, or other unique conditions.
- Potential for partnerships to share the costs of acquisition, development, and/or ongoing operations.

It should be noted that "ground-up" new construction on a clean site is not the only way to build new libraries. Existing facilities with large, flexible, and open floor plates – such as grocery stores, drug stores, retail bank branches, and even commercial offices – can be relatively simple to convert into welcoming, flexible, and beautiful libraries. Retail and commercial facilities often also have the additional benefit of highly visible locations with good parking and transit access.

That said, not every building can be easily or appropriately converted for modern library service. There have been many less-than-successful attempts to convert less-suitable buildings into public library facilities – such as older civic and school buildings, historic homes (e.g. the La Center Community Library facility), and other cherished community assets. Making older buildings accessible and welcoming for visitors with disabilities can be a difficult and expensive challenge, as can redesigning them to support flexible and efficient library operations. FVRLibraries should evaluate adaptive reuse opportunities carefully to confirm that they will support its vision of library service, space, and patron experience.

DESIGNING WITH FVRL COMMUNITIES

It was beyond the scope of this strategic and facilities planning process to develop specific design solutions for any of FVRL's current or future facilities. All of the recommended library projects will provide opportunities for FVRL to engage the community in their planning and design. Involving library users and the broader community in building the vision, values, and priorities for each project will result in the best, more community-responsive project outcomes.

UPDATING THE PLAN

This plan was developed to serve as a flexible, living document that can be easily adjusted and adapted over time in response to changing circumstances and opportunities. FVRL should ideally revisit the plan at five-year intervals to confirm or update the needs, planned projects, and implementation timeline.