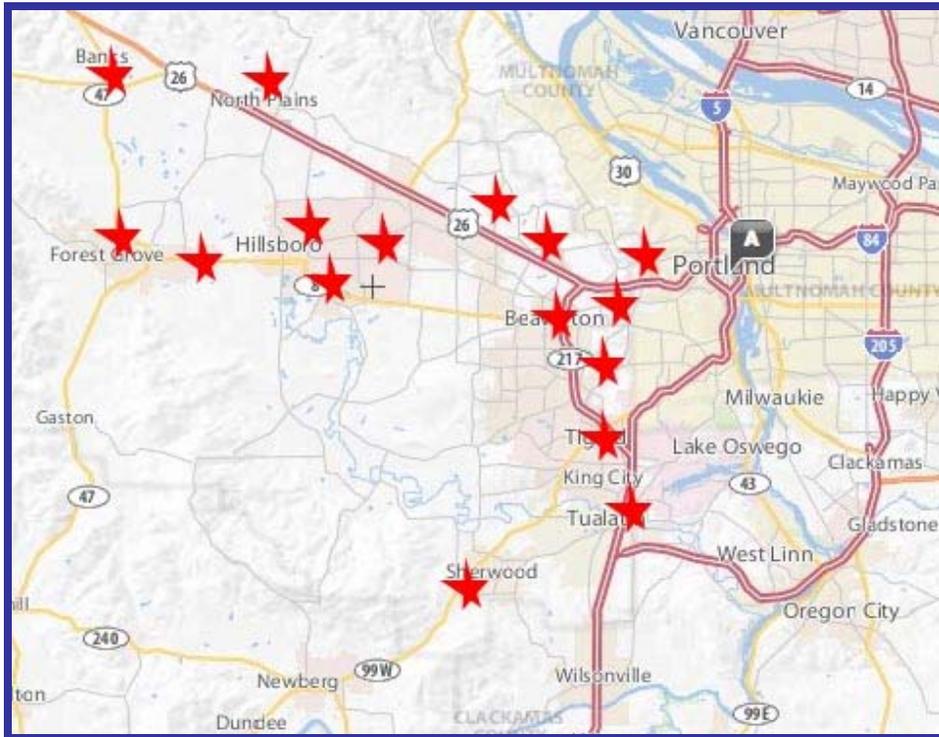


Final Summary Report

WCCLS Funding & Governance: A Platform for Future Action



Presented by Consensus
to the WCCLS Executive Board
and Policy Group,
May 2009.

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What was the purpose of this study?

When Washington County voters approved a local option levy in November of 2006, it bought some breathing space for local libraries. Along with adding staff, hours and materials, the libraries of WCCLS decided they would take the opportunity to look at new options for funding and governing themselves. After all, libraries suffered terribly when two earlier levies failed to get a majority or double majority of votes. They hoped to find a model that would provide a more stable source of funding.

So began a conversation that ended with library leaders recommitting to the existing cooperative structure while also identifying ways to improve it. They recognized that changing the funding method would also require changing governance, and concluded that the funding system wasn't broken enough to make governance changes worthwhile. They also recognized that they needed to prepare to take action if the funding system begins to fail.

In the beginning, all libraries in Washington County were independent municipal libraries. Then Beaverton initiated a study of countywide library service in 1974, and in 1976 voters approved the first countywide property tax levy for WCCLS. Since then, library services have moved farther down the track that runs from independent to consolidated.

No matter how library services are organized, the important thing is for the model to hit that sweet spot where the benefits to various stakeholders are balanced and maximized. While there is agreement within Washington County that, in general, the current system has not yet found the sweet spot, there is also agreement that the funding picture is not dire enough to push people towards making changes in governance.

Since it started work with WCCLS in August of 2008, Consensus has produced two detailed interim reports. This final report is intended to provide, in one place, the key points from the interim reports as well as a fleshed-out picture of what WCCLS and its member libraries consider to be an ideal library system, and examples and advice that can help them as they move forward. The report provides major findings related to:

- The current state of libraries in Washington County (details in Appendix A);
- Options for funding and governance allowed by Oregon state law (details in Appendix B);
- What Washington Countians told us in meetings and via an online survey about new options for funding and governance (details in Appendix C); and

- The elements WCCLS and library leaders said should be included in libraries of the future along with their analysis of the current situation.

In addition, Consensus has gathered information and conducted interviews related to several areas about which library leaders said they wanted to know more. For example, we interviewed library directors of consolidated libraries of a similar size, we talked with library directors about mergers that their systems had undergone, and we interviewed leaders of other cooperative and federated systems to find out how they do what they do. We also gathered information on how to market library services in preparation for changing funding or structure, and looked at options for paying for new library buildings.

Our goal was to provide information WCCLS and its member libraries could pick up and use in case of a new and urgent need to find stable sources of funding, despite the fact it would mean changing how libraries are governed.

Throughout this report, you will see direct quotes in boxes like this. The quotes are from library supporters, librarians and members of the public who attended meetings during this project.

What were the major findings?

What we learned about WCCLS and its member libraries is offered in great detail in previous reports and is summarized in appendices to this report. A few findings are especially important to keep in mind as library leaders consider how to reach their picture of the ideal library.

The current situation

- County taxes cover an average of 65 percent of libraries' operating costs, although that varies widely from library to library. City taxes or community library funds pay the remainder of operating costs and all capital costs for that city's library. Cities are not required to pay any of the costs of library services, nor is the County required to pay a particular amount or percentage.
- There is no proactive method or authority for siting new libraries or for determining which libraries should expand or offer particular services. Any municipality can open a new library or expand an existing library. When that happens, existing county funds, which are distributed to libraries based largely on circulation, must stretch further.
- Countywide, libraries provide significantly less space than needed. In 2007-08, libraries had only 59 percent of the square footage recommended by the Oregon Library Association, and that shortfall will only grow with the expected boom in population.
- Residents of cities with libraries pay different amounts for different levels of service, as measured by indicators such as expenditures, materials expenditures, circulation, and square feet per capita. The rate that a municipal taxpayer pays ranges from \$.58 in Cornelius to \$1.11 in Banks.
- Unincorporated residents pay a lower rate, \$.48, than municipal residents. That lower rate can amount to a sizeable tax bite for large landowners in rural areas, many of whom are miles from the nearest library. Inside the urban growth boundary, unincorporated residents can use a nearby library or start a new nonprofit library. Unincorporated taxpayers without home libraries are not directly represented in WCCLS leadership groups.

Other options for library funding & governance

Oregon law allows for municipal libraries, cooperatives, and consolidated options such as county libraries, county service districts, and special districts. When presented with the

last three options, plus the idea of an alternative tax to replace the local option levy, WCCLS leaders in the Executive Board and Policy Group discarded all but the county service district and special district options. Consensus took those preferred options to the public and to each library community. We presented the county service district as both consolidated and cooperative, and presented the special district as consolidated.

- When asked which option would provide the best quality of service to the entire county, participants were most interested by far in the special district. The biggest selling point was that the district could focus only on library services, which many said had worked well for other special districts in Washington County. The biggest drawback to a special district was the five-person board, which many said could not fairly represent each library.
- By and large, though, meeting participants weren't concerned with providing service to the entire county. They were much more concerned about maintaining or improving the quality of their own libraries, or assuring that their own libraries would not be closed. Local control was the most important issue in library governance, and this was consistent in large and small, rich and poor libraries.
- A survey of the public, which netted about 1,200 responses, found:
 - About 65 percent said most decisions should be made locally by individual libraries. The most-popular value was that centralizing decision-making could break the connection between library and community.
 - A little more than 75 percent said a special district would be better than a consolidated county library, with the most popular value being that the independent district could focus only on library services.
 - The public was almost exactly split between "everybody should pay the same tax rate for library services" (51 percent) and "Each city or community should decide how much it spends, even if that means residents pay different rates" (49 percent). The two most popular values were, "Since anyone can use any library, it would make more sense if everybody paid the same rate," and "Residents should be able to spend more if they want a better library."
 - Asked what would compel them to pay an additional \$20 per year for libraries, about 59 percent said if they were paying the same rate as everyone else, 88 percent said if they would receive better library services, and 49 percent said if their own city or town had control.

How important is the library structure?

During a library meeting, one participant kept asking for guarantees. “Can you guarantee this option would allow local control?” “Can you guarantee that this option would improve quality?” Our reply, every time, was that there are no guarantees. That is the truth, Scout’s honor.

The structure of libraries is important. A workable structure can make high quality easier to attain. But the structure doesn’t matter as much as the culture of the community and the skill and values of the people who operate and govern their libraries. There are great (and horrible) municipal libraries. There are great (and horrible) county libraries. There are great (and horrible) special district libraries. The structure itself provides no guarantees.

“Most cities see it as their role to build community. They see libraries as having a role in building community.”

Oftentimes, when we met with library groups, people had what can only be called knee-jerk responses to different options for structuring and funding libraries. A consolidated system would make all libraries plain vanilla. A five-person board would kill off small libraries. A five-person board would make the wealthy libraries average. None of those statements are true and all of these statements are true, depending.

The reality is, structure matters but not as much as people. Can a community’s leaders work together productively? Is there trust? Can everyone pull together for the good of the whole or is it every town for itself? Does the culture honor local differences? Does library quality matter to citizens and their political leaders?

During our last meeting with them, WCCLS leaders said the current system is not broken enough to push them towards change. The group wants a permanent tax rate, but there is enough funding now, and, with the elimination of the double majority requirement, leaders are optimistic that the next local option levy will pass. County commissioners reliably increase library funding by 4 percent per year. Having city administrators on the WCCLS Executive Board has dramatically improved governance. There are wide differences in the resources available to each library, but patrons can visit any library for free; nobody with access to transportation is locked out of service. It’s working well enough, overall.

Library leaders realize, though, that there are no guarantees that the current system will continue to serve. New county commissioners or city councilpersons may not be library supporters, or the faltering economy may take its toll and funding may drop. New residents may strain the current libraries’ ability to provide adequate service. New residents may increase the wealth in some areas but not others. There are no guarantees.

What if there is a crisis? WCCLS and its member libraries initiated this project to gather information and begin the conversation so that they are ready to take action. Instead of waiting for a crisis and then trying to figure out what to do in the middle of it, library leaders have been proactive. They now understand the tradeoffs and consequences, they know the options that are most palatable to their people, and they know what other communities have done. Library leaders in Washington County are prepared.

Also during the last session, library leaders identified improvements that can be made within the current structure. Those ideas, like including unincorporated areas in governance and doing more centrally so that libraries can focus on service, generated energy and excitement. More about that further in this report.

The next section compares libraries that, like Washington County, have 500,000+ residents. The libraries all take in wider units of service, covering at least one county. The libraries use different structures and each structure is a bit different. The comparison is not intended to suggest that any particular structure is going to *guarantee* a particular result. Rather, it is to provide a sense of what others are doing and what results they are getting, and to stack those up against the current structure in Washington County.

Again, it's all about the people. There are no guarantees.

How does WCCLS compare to wider unit libraries?

What might be the result if the many libraries in Washington County became one library serving the entire county? Looking to other libraries can be instructive. This section provides information about libraries similar in population size to Washington County, Oregon, which are organized as special districts, city-county libraries, and county libraries as defined by the federal Institute for Museums and Libraries (IMLS).

Note: The latest statistics available were filed with IMLS during 2007 and cover 2006 data. Washington County voters passed the latest local option levy late in 2006, so the data for that year don't include the higher level of funding.

There are 9,211 library entities in the U.S., according to IMLS, operating in 1,658 counties. Of these, 2,831 are "wider unit" libraries. These wider unit libraries, which cover at least one county, serve the majority (57%) of the population with about a third (31%) of the library agencies. Of the 2,831 wider unit libraries, just 26 serve populations of between 500,000 and 750,000, close to the current and expected future size of Washington County.

"Get libraries out of municipal government altogether because it breeds competition among the libraries and because it means there's no way to site libraries in unincorporated areas."

The data provide a picture of libraries in Washington County in comparison to the 26 libraries serving comparable populations. Keep in mind that, with one exception, it's a good thing to be at a high percentile. It's like a score in school in that it shows the percentage you got right. Scoring at the 95th percentile would be roughly equivalent to an "A," for example.

Indicator	Percentile ranking of Washington County libraries compared to wider-unit libraries nationally
Per capita expenditures in Washington County libraries as a whole (\$40.45 per capita)	73 rd
Percent of budgets to materials (9.2%)	2 nd
Materials spending per capita	27 th
Staffing levels	62 nd
Periodicals owned	52 nd
Volumes per capita	68 th

Cost per circulation.	10 th (A low percentile for this indicator is positive.)
Visits per capita	91 st
Collection turnover (the number of times the average book is checked out)	82 nd
Circulation per staff hour	7 th
Circulation per capita	89 th
Reference	44 th
Items checked out per open hour (216.9 items)	84 th
Visits per open hour	89 th
Circulation per visit	82 nd
Program attendance and public internet users per capita	64 th

Overall, Washington County libraries in 2006 spent more per capita, and for the most part, the measures show taxpayers getting more than their counterparts. However, other wider unit libraries spent a larger percentage of their budgets on materials. They also spent significantly more per capita for materials. Comparable library systems also had much better staff productivity as measured by circulation per FTE staff.

More detail about these libraries is provided in Appendix D.

Library directors talk about the structures they use

Consensus spoke to the directors of (five) libraries of comparable size to Washington County’s population. These libraries are organized as special districts, city-county libraries, and county libraries as defined by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). We asked what challenges and opportunities they found in their funding and governance models.

Salt Lake County Library Services

Jim Cooper, director

www.slco.lib.ut.us

Salt Lake County Library Services is a rapidly growing county library district serving all of Salt Lake County except the municipalities of Salt Lake City and Murray. The district serves 14 municipalities and additional unincorporated areas. There is no main library and each 20,000-square-foot branch serves its communities in a unique way. Per-capita

expenditures (and per-capita taxes) are \$37. The system cooperates with the Salt Lake City and Murray libraries to provide reciprocal borrowing and there is one library card that gains patrons access to any library. However, the libraries do not provide delivery between systems.

Over the past decade, Salt Lake County’s service area population has grown 30 percent and library cardholders have increased by 85 percent. Library visits have also increased more than 200 percent over the past ten years. In addition, library holdings have increased by 38 percent, circulation by 235 percent and program attendance by 448 percent.

“We’re already fighting for our identity. If we lose our library, we lose our identity.”

Director Jim Cooper points with pride to the high customer satisfaction rating the libraries receive. “In fact, a recent Salt Lake County poll indicated that 98 percent of the citizens were satisfied or extremely satisfied with the library services they receive. We are also the 15th busiest library system in North America. This past year we circulated close to 14,500,000 items; in addition, more than 4,500,000 people physically visited a Salt Lake County Library and tens of millions of people visited our web site,” he said.

Origin of the district

Salt Lake County Library Services was formed in 1939. Under Utah law, any city can establish a library and levy taxes for library services. Salt Lake City and Murray both set up library districts many years ago. The law also allows counties to establish and levy taxes for libraries outside of the city library service areas. The Salt Lake County Library System was established in 1939 to serve the smaller municipalities and unincorporated areas of the county.

“In the recent past a few other city governments have considered the option of establishing their own library system,” Cooper said. “After carefully evaluating their options, however, those cities have determined that they are best served by the Salt Lake County Library System.”

Overall philosophy

The county library has served the people of Salt Lake County well, according to Cooper. “I think it’s the right model for our citizens,” he said. “The people in unincorporated areas deserve the same service as people in cities.” This focus on equality of service drives decision-making in the district.

The library system was set up to serve the unincorporated areas and smaller cities, and the philosophy of the system has been to ignore municipal boundaries. The goal, Cooper says, is “to have a library within two miles of each resident of the county.” The library wants each resident to be able to drive to a library within 5 minutes, or walk or bike to a facility in a short time. “We do not have a ‘main library’ and we are committed to delivering equality of service throughout the valley, whether you live in Herriman or East Millcreek, Magna or Draper or somewhere in between,” Cooper said.

Governance

The library is part of the executive branch of the county government. Sometimes, Cooper reports to the elected county mayor’s office through the Department of Human Services; he also reports to the county council, a legislative branch of the county government.

This nine-member board sets the property tax, appropriates funds and establishes certain district-wide policies. In addition, the district has a nine-member policy board. Cooper said the board members are elected at large, but they bring nuances based upon their backgrounds. As director of the system, Cooper oversees three associate directors. The branch managers answer to those associate directors. “As you can see, in addition to the 750,000 citizens in our service area, I have many bosses,” Cooper said.

“Are we still a town if we don’t have a library?”

Funding

Cooper calls the county tax “incredibly stable.” Libraries are funded by a dedicated revenue fund from property taxes. This is also true of the Salt Lake City and Murray libraries. One of the main advantages is that libraries do not compete against police, fire and other essential services. The current rate is \$36 per capita. During the current economic downturn, other county services are looking at cuts because of a sagging sales tax rate, but libraries are stable.

Local control

Cooper said the Salt Lake system works hard to ensure each library meets the needs of its local community. “But our libraries are not cookie cutter,” he adds. Branches are given the ability to make choices about their collections, and they are expected to serve their communities.

The library system has developed its own priorities based on input from citizens. “In response to our constituents, Salt Lake County has identified our top service priorities

as current topics and titles, lifelong learning and (serving as a) commons,” Cooper said. But while nearby Salt Lake City has built a 265,000-square-foot main downtown library, the Salt Lake County system is focused on developing what Cooper calls “community-based libraries.”

Branch managers at each library have a great deal of autonomy. “The goal is to have consistency in operations but let programming and collections reflect the community,” he said.

Siting of new libraries

In order to meet current and projected needs, the district has made plans to build four new libraries. The process began with the county’s facilities management department evaluating potential library sites to make sure new libraries would be convenient and accessible. Community groups and municipal officials were asked for input. The library district wanted to ensure the new facilities would become anchors in the community, both to become a resource for children and adults and to foster economic development in local communities.

Once sites were selected, the district put out an RFP for architectural firms to build the new libraries. Architects were instructed to be sensitive to the individual characteristics of each community. The proposals were reviewed and graded by a selection committee made up of employees from the Salt Lake County Division of Facilities Management, the library, a member of the volunteer library board, a county mayoral appointee, Salt Lake County Division of Contracts and Procurement and other community members. Cooper said a local person, usually the mayor or another strong community leader, is always appointed to this committee. That person is expected to meet with the community, share progress and provide feedback from the community as the project progresses.

The construction of new libraries is paid for by savings in the library fund and a municipal building authority bond that will be repaid from the existing library fund tax.

Friends

The district no longer has a Friends group. While each branch still does a book sale, Cooper said the Friends group became hard to manage and ineffective, so it was disbanded.

Staffing

One of the greatest advantages to a county system, from Cooper’s perspective, is the collaboration among branch staff people. “We get to share in the talents of every branch’s

staff,” he says. “There are some great opportunities to find staff and some great ideas come from outlying areas that we can all model. We have more people with good ideas working together.”

Sno-Isle Library District, Washington

Jonalyn Woolf-Ivory, director

<http://www.sno-isle.org>

The Sno-Isle Library District was formed in 1945 and expanded in 1962. It covers a 2000-square-mile area. Governance is provided by a seven-member board appointed by county commissioners of the two counties in the district. A local advisory board in each city in the district represents the interests of community libraries. The current levy rate is set at 31 cents and can be raised to the 50-cent maximum allowed by Washington State law.

The state of Washington has fewer library systems than most states and tends to use wider units of service. A library district can be put to a vote after certification of a petition signed by 10 percent of registered voters in an unincorporated area. Also, a municipality with a population of 100,000 or less may annex to an contiguous rural, island or inter-county library by adopting an ordinance which is approved by library board trustees of the city and then by a majority vote of registered city voters. Currently 70 percent of Washington State residents are served by special-purpose library districts, according to the Washington State Library Association.

“It was eye-opening to me that two-thirds of the money (for my library) comes from the County.”

Origin of the district

The Snohomish County Library District operated as a one-county district from 1945 to 1962, when Island County joined. Director Jonalyn Woolf-Ivory said almost as soon as the district was formed, cities began asking if they could contract with the district to provide services. Woolf-Ivory said that contracting with the cities, as opposed to having them join the district, was problematic. The relationship between the district and the cities was adversarial, with cities wanting to pay less for services and the district feeling the need to charge more.

Over the years, many cities and town voted to be annexed into the district, with a major wave of annexation during the economic downturn of the 1980s. The major compelling reason was that cities felt they were paying too much out of their operating

budgets to support libraries. They preferred to support libraries through property taxes. By 2009, almost all of the cities in the two counties have joined the district.

Overall philosophy

“The goal of the district was to provide library services to unincorporated areas outside of cities,” Woolf-Ivory said. The library district is organized into a number of library service areas (LSAs); each incorporates the area served by a single library in both incorporated and unincorporated areas. As the population grows, future planning calls for additional libraries in some LSAs.

Governance

The Sno-Isle Library District is governed by a seven-member board. Members are appointed by a joint action of the county commissioners of both counties. The trustees are limited to two consecutive terms in office for either five or seven years a term. The commissioners can also remove library board members for just cause.

Two board members are chosen from Island County and five from the larger Snohomish County. Under state statute, the trustees have the power to: adopt bylaws, rules and regulations for their own governance; hire a district librarian; submit an annual budget to legislative body; control the finances of libraries; lease or purchase land for buildings; and purchase all collection materials.

The board sets policy and the county commissioners do not have the authority to approve or reject policies set by the board. The commissioners also may not require reports from the board. In addition to setting policy, the board hires the library director, who is responsible for hiring and managing 500 employees.

Woolf-Ivory said that currently, “People are not lining up to be on the board.” There was a time when people showed interest in getting on the board so they could control Internet access, but that issue has cooled down. She also said that lack of representation of certain geographic areas has not been an issue in the Sno-Isle District, although it has been the source of controversy in the neighboring Timberland District.

Advisory boards

The Sno-Isle District also has advisory boards that advocate for the interests of annexed or contracting cities, and represent the community and its perspectives to the larger library system. The roles of these local boards are to: assist in long-range and annual planning; participate in strategic planning for library; serve on library committees; recommend and advocate for budgets and policies that support the community library; and assist the library director in policy-making decisions in appropriate areas.

Funding

In general, everyone in Snohomish and Island County pays the same rate, 31 cents. The only exceptions are the few areas that still contract with the district for library services. Woolf-Ivory reports that there is some discontent within the system. Since the libraries are funded through property taxes, people in wealthier areas pay higher amounts because their property is worth more. She said she explains to them that libraries are funded through property taxes in Washington, so this “inequality” is built into the system.

The levy rate of 31 cents can, theoretically be raised to 50 cents, but a Washington referendum requires any tax increase of more than one percent to be approved by voters. The library board is considering asking voters for an increase this year because it has not had an increase in five years. The district will have to reduce services if voters don’t approve the increase.

Local control

Woolf-Ivory believes strongly in the distinction between community libraries and branch libraries. She considers the Sno-Isle libraries a network of libraries that serve their local populations. “When I go to libraries, I talk about their community,” she says.

One subtle way the district has conveyed this idea is through its name. The district used to be called Sno-Isle Regional Library. But ten years ago, the name was changed to Sno-Isle Libraries. “The idea,” said Woolf-Ivory, “is that we are a community of libraries, not one library with multiple branches.”

Woolf-Ivory feels that the libraries are very diverse. “No two libraries are alike,” she said. “Each building feels completely different. What is common throughout the district is the collections, the ability to move staff, and the technology available.”

Woolf-Ivory said she has seen districts and cities that work well together in Washington and other places where more problems exist. She believes the key to a successful district is cooperation and keeping egos in check. She said over the years, she has come to see that it is important to allow local libraries to make their own decisions.

For example, for a while she objected to letting Friends’ groups use valuable library space for book sales. But now, she says, she sees their point of view about why the sales are important. One key reason to keep local supporters happy, she said, “is we’ll be going to voters for a tax increase and we’ll need that local support.”

“(Patrons) hope it’s open when they want to go, but don’t have that much interest in how it’s organized.”

Ownership of buildings

The 20 community libraries range in size from 1,300 to nearly 26,000 square feet. Because libraries serve as community gathering spaces, many have multi-purpose rooms used for community meetings and library programs. Most of the facilities are owned by the respective cities and towns. Four libraries are owned by Sno-Isle, and one is owned by a local Friends group. The library district and other owners keep facilities maintained. District planning documents said that while most are in good condition, some show signs of age and wear; most are too small for the population served.

Some cities continue to own their library buildings in the Sno-Isle system through agreements with the district. The district also has passed bonds to build new buildings, and in these cases it owns the buildings. One city has transferred ownership to the district.

Siting of new libraries

New buildings can be funded in two ways: by voter-approved bonds or by local capital facilities areas. In either case, there is a local building committee made up of staff, Friends and community members. The committees are responsible for creating a new library that fits the needs of the community. Although the local advisory boards do not have official policy-making capacity, they are always heavily involved in planning new libraries.

Sno-Isle recognizes the importance of libraries as civic anchors. The library district said it will continue partnering with local governments to find library locations that serve library customers well. Sno-Isle will investigate high traffic locations such as civic and retail centers where a community library can contribute to local vitality.

Friends and foundation

Each library has a Friends group. They all have book sales to raise money. The Friends use their proceeds to purchase items for their local libraries, such as furniture and programming. A district-wide foundation also raises money but is restricted from going after sources the Friends would like to approach.

Albuquerque/Bernalillo Library System

Julia Clarke, director

<http://www.cabq.gov/library/>

The Albuquerque/Bernalillo Library system is a city/county library system serving all of Albuquerque and Bernalillo County with 17 branches. The main downtown Albuquerque

Library serves as the main branch, with additional branches across the county. The district also operates three libraries in unincorporated areas of the county under a memo of understanding signed in 1990. The district is somewhat unusual in that all of its materials are purchased through bonds. The district is the largest in the state.

Origin of the district

Julia Clarke, the current director, credits former director Alan Clark for being a visionary. “He thought libraries in the central part of state should function as a unit,” she said. In addition to the large city library in Albuquerque, Bernalillo County has a number of very small libraries. Clarke believes unifying them as one district has brought strength to the system.

Overall philosophy

In terms of service to all residents of the county, “we try not to have any stepchildren,” Clarke said. That means the district strives to provide an equal level of service to all residents. But, Clarke adds, that doesn’t mean policies have to be the same across the board. “In our system, we have always had five of seventeen really busy libraries, with the rest not so busy or moderately busy. What works in a busy library doesn’t work in a small library. You just can’t set policies across the board,” she said.

Governance

The library director reports to the director of the Cultural Services Department of the City of Albuquerque. That department also oversees the zoo, museums and cultural activities. The libraries also receive support and oversight from the county government.

Advisory boards

The library advisory board consists of eleven members, seven of whom are appointed by the mayor with the advice and consent of the city council, and four of whom are appointed by the county commission. The board meets each month at one of the library branches. Clarke explained that the library board is really a support and advocacy group. “They approve things like the computer use policy, although the district could still have a computer use policy without their approval,” she said.

Funding

Funding for the operating expenses of 14 of the libraries comes from the city general fund, with the county allocating funds for the three libraries in the unincorporated areas.

The libraries have not had an increase in funding since 2004, and Clarke said right now the libraries are losing out to pressing needs for jail services, roads and bridges.

She considers it a big weakness that library funding is complex and most people don't understand it. "We've been putting information out there for 15 years," she said, yet people still don't understand. "It's too complicated. They don't want to think about it. They think 'it just ought to be.' Also the ability to engage in the civic process is more and more limited."

"As control gets further away from the individual, the less input you feel you have and the less interest."

Clarke also thinks the system of governance in the Albuquerque/ Bernalillo is flawed because she does not sit at the budget-making table. "I would like to see libraries flourish but we have not had a funding increase in six years," she said.

The collections are all jointly owned by all libraries, since they are acquired through bond funds.

Local control

There has been some complaining about the differences in taxes paid by patrons of the district. While county residents pay one rate, those in cities pay both a city and a county tax. And while some people have attempted to make a change, Clarke said the mayor of Albuquerque, a strong library advocate, has said that he refuses to jeopardize the children in the unincorporated areas by trying to even out the rates.

Siting of new libraries

When new libraries are built, the city utilizes its facilities department and facilities plan. The city has identified criteria for new libraries, such as high visibility, proximity to other destination points and a size of no less than 20,000 feet. The county used a bond issue in 1994 to replace some of its older facilities.

Friends and foundation

The system has a Friends' group that serves the entire district. The Friends do an annual book sale and use proceeds to provide programming for the libraries.

Staff

Clarks sees the fact that all library staff work for the district as a major advantage of her governing system. "What's important is serving patrons," she said. All library employees are employees of the city, so they are generally paid at a higher rate than the individual

libraries might offer. They also belong to two unions. Clarke said staff are told when they are hired that they may be asked to move to another location.

Cuyahoga County Library District

Sari Feldman, executive director

www.cuyahogalibrary.org

The Cuyahoga County Library District in Ohio serves 47 communities, is one of the ten busiest libraries in the United States and consistently ranks in the top three libraries of the HAPLR Index. The district has no main library but maintains 28 branches. The city of Cleveland has its own district as do seven suburbs in Cuyahoga County; these libraries operate within school district boundaries. Director Sari Feldman said the county is a mix of rich and poor communities, racial and ethnic groups, so it is “not homogenous.”

Feldman said cardholders borrowed 17.8 million items and customers visited branches more than 7.4 million times in 2008. In addition to books, DVDs, magazines, research materials, etc., every branch offers a variety of programs for users of all ages, including early learning sessions that offer development opportunities for children and parents, after-school homework centers with tutors, summer learning workshops that keep children engaged during school vacation, career centers for job seekers, and lifelong learning opportunities for senior citizens.

Origin of district

From early times, the State of Ohio wanted to encourage library districts and, in fact, required all libraries be part of a district from the 1920s. The Cuyahoga County Library District was formed in 1922 to serve any Cuyahoga County community that did not already have a library. Cuyahoga County includes Cleveland, which started a public library in 1869, and runs the downtown library and 28 branches throughout the city.

As communities in Cuyahoga County grew and developed, some asked to join the Cuyahoga County Library District and asked the district to build them a library. Other communities joined the district but built their own libraries. Director Sari Feldman said the inconsistent ownership has caused problems for the district. One large library in the county, well-to-do Shaker Heights, rejected merger proposals in 1988 and 1989.

Overall philosophy

The Cuyahoga County Library District has defined its missions as supporting initiatives and efforts that impact the quality of life for all in Cuyahoga County. It places the highest value on being the most convenient public library in the nation and wants to be known for

the quality of its customer service. According to its mission statement, the library strives to make both its branches and website centers of excellence and gathering places. The library emphasizes the use of innovative services and collaborations to satisfy the community's needs and exceed expectations.

Governance

The Cuyahoga County Library District is governed by a seven-member board of trustees that establishes policies and develops an annual budget. The library district is an independent political subdivision, not part of the county government. However, the library board has no taxing authority, so the board of county commissioners must place ballot issues before the voters on behalf of the library in the 47 communities in its service district. Library board members are appointed to seven-year terms alternately by the Cuyahoga County Commissioners and the Common Pleas Court judges.

A challenge: one county with eight library entities

The East Cleveland Library System, which is currently independent, wants to join the Cuyahoga County Library District. For some people in the Cuyahoga district, this raises concerns because East Cleveland is one of the poorest cities in the United States. The East Cleveland director has asked for a study to show whether his library would get lower tax rates and better services if it joined Cuyahoga. Feldman has told her staff she sees an opportunity in annexing East Cleveland. “Even though it’s the poorest city, they come with assets,” she said.

“You might say in a nutshell we really don’t trust the County to know our best interests.”

In fact, Feldman believes the Cuyahoga system would be stronger if all of the suburbs became one system. She pointed out that Cuyahoga is Cleveland’s only county with an urban city that does not have a city-county system. She said a county-wide system would be more cost-effective, citing the fact that currently, the county has nine library directors each making nearly six figures.

Funding

Ohio has a unique system of funding public libraries, guaranteeing state support of libraries through monies that are distributed to local library districts. State support can be supplemented by local taxes if local communities choose to do so. In Cuyahoga County, this has caused some problems because the state money passed to the county must be divided between Cleveland, the seven suburbs with library districts, and the Cuyahoga

District. There is no formula for the doling out the money, so Feldman said the libraries have to fight for their share each year.

The Cuyahoga County Library District is among the best-funded in Ohio. In November of 2008, the voters in the district approved both a renewal of the two-mill operating levy and a new half-mill capital improvements levy to finance building and program improvements. The per capita cost to taxpayers for the levy is \$61.25, with an additional \$15.31 going to the capital improvements funding.

A challenge: Ownership of library facilities

Although funding has been fairly stable in Cuyahoga, the district has struggled with getting its facilities up to standards. In the past, individual libraries were required to finance their own capital improvements. In 2006, a task force studying this issue made a recommendation to change to a system-wide capital funding system based on a permanent half-mill levy.

Feldman said that, like Washington County, Cuyahoga library supporters struggled with the issue of built-in inequities in what some communities can afford.

One example of the difficulties in this system, Feldman said, became apparent in a bond issue passed in one community to build a new building. After voters approved the funds, the local commissioners started building, but were concerned about cost overruns so they held back \$1 million. That meant that the library was completed without many of the amenities that had been in the original plans. The commissioners finally agreed to release the held-back money, but required the library district to use part of it to build a fence on the property instead of to complete the planned amenities. Feldman sees this as a problem because the district cannot control whether or not the funding is used to bring the new facility up to its preferred standard.

In 2006, a task force made up of 45 community representatives studied the issue of capital financing for facilities. Feldman said the task force members, who included municipal officials as well as library personnel and other stakeholders, initially were concerned that changing the system would require richer libraries to subsidize the poorer ones. Yet once the group studied national trends, they had a “light bulb” moment: they decided that not all libraries would have to be the same, but that each should contain a “center of excellence.” That meant the system would demand a high level of service from each library, but each library would excel in one area that was important to the community around it. The group agreed that this philosophy would lead to greater libraries across the system.

“I don’t think it’s our responsibility to bring other libraries up to standards.”

Feldman said the new funding mechanism, approved by voters in Nov. 2008, will decrease the cost of new facilities, because the system can achieve economies of scale that individual cities could not. The district will continue to receive its operating money from the voter-approved levy and the state. When it wants to build new facilities, it will sell bonds using the state monies as collateral and repay the debt service on the bonds from the operating budget.

What is the path to wider units of service?

Library leaders were interested in knowing how, if a change was necessary, they would go about merging the many libraries of Washington County into one county-wide library. They also wanted to know the experience of other libraries that have moved from municipal to consolidated wider-unit libraries.

Consolidated libraries that serve a wider area can offer benefits that include economies of scale, increased efficiency, equality of service as the wider units smooth over differences in tax capacity from town to town, and fewer gaps in service as the wider unit allows planning to be conducted for the entire area.

The process of consolidating smaller libraries into a wider unit of service can be a challenge, as efforts to restructure libraries may collapse around issues of tax equity and power sharing, Consensus has found.

Some communities are more affluent than others, and affluent communities may balk at sending tax dollars outside the jurisdiction. Autonomy is also an issue, as communities seek to maintain control over their institutions. Buildings and capital expenses are also impediments to mergers. The impact on donations, though, is a mixed bag. Individual donors are more inclined to give to an independent library in their home town than to a branch of a larger organization. Philanthropic donors, on the other hand, may tire of requests from many libraries and be more willing to fund a consolidated system or large-scale projects.

“Collections vary widely. Some can't buy bestsellers; others can buy 20 copies of bestsellers.”

After a consolidated library is formed, it doesn't pay to get complacent because keeping the thing together can be a challenge. A significant trend nationwide is for affluent communities to withdraw from consolidated libraries (although rarely from special district libraries, which typically provide a higher quality of service and more stable funding). In Wisconsin, California, Illinois and other states, citizens in affluent communities have chosen to secede or threaten to secede from consolidated libraries, rather than send tax dollars away or use tax dollars to provide reciprocal borrowing for residents of other communities. Often these secessions are prompted by budget cuts at the state and local level that reduce funds for programs that compensate for reciprocal borrowing or other shared services.

Secessions also happen when towns are dissatisfied with library services they receive for the amount of funding they provide. If those towns have the financial resources to open their own libraries, they sometimes do so.

One county library in California found a creative way to keep things together in the face of draconian budget cuts.

Santa Clara County Library, California

The library survived a 1993 funding crisis by creating a new governance structure. In 1999, when its director was named “Librarian of the Year” by Library Journal, the Santa Clara County Library had eight libraries in nine cities, along with a bookmobile. About 300,000 persons lived in incorporated areas and nearly 100,000 in unincorporated areas, with rural citizens taxed to help support the county’s libraries.

Six years earlier, in 1993, the library had lost about 40 percent of its revenue when the California legislature appropriated \$1.5 billion in property taxes from cities and counties. The library had to cut hours and lay off staff.

The director brought together nine city managers and city councils to look for alternatives for funding and governance. For 13 months, she met every week with city managers while they hammered out a compromise. The first area of agreement was that the county library provided good value; none of the cities chose to leave the system.

The team developed a joint powers authority to govern the library, which, along with an annual assessment, was approved by 68 percent of voters. The new jurisdiction is governed by 11 elected officials and includes nine of the 15 cities in the county and all of the incorporated areas. Salary budgets are allocated to each library by a formula based on circulation, population, and the assessed value of the community.

Each of the eight community libraries has a director and a citizen library commission that is appointed by the city, and each has a strong Friends group. The county library pays the leases and maintains the library buildings, most of which are owned by the cities. The county library spends no more than 10 percent of its budget on administration, which includes debt payment for library buildings.

City/County Public Libraries

While still a relatively small group, the percentage of public libraries that are city/county systems doubled between 2004 and 2009, from 0.6 percent to 1.2 percent. The 113 city/county systems serve 2.9 percent of the U.S. population. Many of these libraries were created by mergers.

Typically, the merger happens when a cash-strapped large urban library seeks the protection of the affluent suburban county system. Washington County differs from the examples we found in that it has a much smaller population with no urban center.

It’s also important to note that these city/county mergers are usually between just two library agencies. The agencies are much larger than any in Washington County and

contain many more branches, so they can be complicated enough. And, there's a whole different level of complexity when the merger involves 12 library agencies, each with its own board, staff, and elected officials.

Because the motivations and circumstances for a merger in Washington County would be quite different, the politics and challenges would likely be quite different, as well.

Hennepin County Library

On January 2, 2008, the Minneapolis Public Library joined the Hennepin County Library. When they joined together, according to an article in *American Libraries*, it was believed to be the largest public library consolidation in North America since the 1997 amalgamation of five suburban systems into Toronto Public Library. Two city-county study committees recommended the merger.

Hennepin County runs the consolidated system. The merger was necessary because of reduced library finances that caused three city libraries to be closed a year earlier. The city sought authorization from the Minnesota legislature for a merger, provided it was approved by the Minneapolis City Council, Hennepin County Board and the library board. No public referendum was held, according to an article in the *Star Tribune*, and the city's elected library board was replaced with three seats on the county's library board, which expanded from seven to 11 members. The library board is advisory and reports to the Hennepin County Board.

"Under this (special district) model, after some time we will have a core equal level of service and better service."

The merger agreement included a provision that none of the 800 staff members would be laid off. No library closures were planned and district leaders said they intended to build new and remodel existing libraries. The two Friends groups would remain active. The merged 41-library system has 900 employees and a budget of \$73 million and is preparing to consolidate human resources, communications and other services.

According to the *Star Tribune*, "The city will bring a substantial dowry to the wedding of the systems," including the \$13.9 million it planned to levy for libraries. Starting in 2009, the paper reported, city residents would pay the county library levy. The city would also pay the county almost \$8 million from state aid that it used to support libraries, an amount that will shrink every year until the last payment in 2017. Minneapolis residents will also pay \$10.6 for annual payments for capital bonds and pensions, and \$18.1 million in city debt planned to support library construction.

The *Star Tribune* noted that merger talks between the two libraries had taken place sporadically since the 1960s. By 2007, though, city officials had acknowledged that they would have to give up political control of the library system. Officials said control was no longer an issue, and that improving service was paramount. There were concerns, though, as some feared that the county was only interested in the city's new downtown library and would neglect the 14 neighborhood libraries.

Lois Langer, who worked for the county system for 20 years, was named library director of the merged system in February, 2009. She said the technical and emotional aspects of merging different library catalogs, computer systems and staff continued to be issues for the combined system.

Miami-Dade Public Library System

The route it used to become a city/county library is fairly typical for these kinds of systems. In 1965, the City of Miami and Metropolitan Dade County agreed that Miami would provide public library service to unincorporated Dade County and to municipalities that did not provide their own municipal library service. Within a year, three of the municipal libraries also entered into the agreement and were included in the new library system.

In 1971, the City of Miami transferred its library system to Metropolitan Dade County, which created a new Department of Libraries with a director reporting directly to the county manager. The County has retained responsibility in the years since.

Since then, the library system has grown with the county's population. In 2001, the Board of County Commissioners approved a new capital plan, calling for the immediate opening of a new wave of small storefront libraries located in shopping centers, along with the construction of 10 new libraries. The system now serves a population of almost two million patrons, with 650,000 active cardholders, a main library and 47 regional and branch libraries.

"Rich libraries get richer with the (funding) system we have."

Buffalo and Erie County Public Library

In 1953, three existing libraries – Grosvenor (a reference library), Erie County (with 22 separate libraries), and Buffalo – were merged by New York State special legislation. Responsibility was transferred to Erie County government, which pays all operating costs. The County owns the Buffalo library building, which is the system's central library. It doesn't own the 15 urban branch buildings, which are the responsibility of the City of Buffalo, or the buildings of the 22 separate county libraries, some with their own

branches, which contract with Erie County for service. Each of the 22 county libraries has its own governing board appointed by its municipality.

Former Director Diane Chrisman told Consensus, “Since many of the libraries were small and not well funded, it made sense to get them together for purposes of resource sharing and economy of scale. At that time, the point was not only to provide equitable library service, but to get a better organization, efficiency and consistency.” She said the only remaining area of inequity was in the library buildings, which are much nicer in the wealthy suburban areas.

Atlanta-Fulton County Library

The City of Atlanta began providing library service to Fulton County in 1935, and in 1982, Georgia voters passed a constitutional amendment that transferred responsibility for the library system from the City of Atlanta to Fulton County. Since 1982, the library has been funded entirely from Fulton County taxes.

Former Director Mary Kay Hooker told Consensus, “The advantage is that there’s a view that’s over the entire county, an effort to have equity of services throughout the county. Traditionally wealthy areas have high quality, but now so do poor areas. There are not two levels of service.”

“People feel they raise money for their own library, not a county system.”

Hooker’s philosophy emphasized a grassroots approach that took decision-making close to the patrons. Branch managers selected materials, and branches were divided into clusters that included wealthy large branches working with small inner-city branches to create programs that appealed to the whole cluster. This provided a support network for branch managers and created a management perspective that had been missing, she said. In addition, every library was charged with having a Friends group, and the 20 groups together become a very strong advocacy organization for the library.

In December of 2008, voters passed a \$275-million bond issue to update the 33-branch library system and build a new \$170-million central library, with 50 percent of funding to be raised from private donations.

Special districts

As of 2005, 20 states allowed library districts. States using library districts extensively include Illinois (300 libraries, or about 48 percent), Kentucky (90 percent), Delaware (about half), Idaho (48 percent), and Colorado (43 percent). In Missouri, all libraries

function as special districts because they all have taxing authority. Other states with substantial portions of library districts are Arizona, Michigan, Nevada and Washington.

Washington: King County Library System

One of the largest libraries in the U.S., the King County, Washington, system operated 47 libraries and served almost 1.2 million residents in 2007. Its revenue that year was \$77 million or \$108 for each household in the county. The special-district library is governed by a five-member board of trustees appointed for up to two, five-year terms. The King County executive nominates trustees and the nominations are confirmed by the county council.

Washington state law allows for two types of libraries: municipal and special district. In 1942, when voters established the King County Rural Library District, it was to provide library services to people in rural areas who had limited access to city libraries. Funding was provided by a property tax on residents of unincorporated areas of a maximum of \$.50, and contracts with cities and towns for the provision of library services. The first to join the system were small community libraries run by volunteers.

By the 1960s, King County operated 39 libraries, none with more than 5,000 square feet. In 1966, a \$6 million bond issue passed, and the King County system built new libraries in 18 cities, including Bellevue and Bothell. In 1985, Bellevue, the most affluent community in King County, became the first city to vote to annex to the library district. In 1986, Bothell voted to annex. Both had yes votes of more than 80 percent. In 1990, ten more cities voted to annex to the library district, and these annexations continue through to the present day. Throughout this time, both the library system and cities in King County passed bond issues to pay for capital expenses. Today, the system has 44 libraries.

“We’re being asked if we would change this system we love, and we’re not too willing to give that up for people who chose to live in unincorporated Washington County.”

Bill Ptacek, director of the King County Library System, talked with Consensus about how annexation works. All but three cities in King County (one of them is Seattle) have chosen to annex into the library district. The process, he says, is driven by the municipality. “We’ve annexed 33 or 35 cities into our district in the last 20 years,” he said. “They join for really good reasons. They look at what we can do and we can provide better service for much less money. Every city that has investigated has said it’s better to join the system. They said that local control means limited hours and limited staff, while joining the district provides more hours and more staff.”

Before annexation, a city can either run its own library or contract with KCLS to provide library services. Cities that contract pay the same mill levy as people in unincorporated areas, so contracting or annexing cost the same. It has only been in the last 30-40 years, Ptacek said, that cities had begun asking the district to annex them, and today there are no cities that contract for services.

When a city decides it wants to join the KCLS, the city conducts and pays for the election, which Ptacek said is important to assure that it's really the city's decision. After the election, KCLS becomes responsible for capital. "Once the city is out of the library business, they're out," Ptacek said.

The district's board of trustees is very sensitive to local interests, Ptacek said. Each library has a local advisory board that is a liaison between the city and district, and it takes part in the budget process. When it comes to buildings, the district works closely with the community. One library opening soon is a combined library and city hall; another library was built across from city hall at the city's request. The City of Auburn said if voters would agree to annex into KCLS, the city would use bonds to finance a new library and turn the money over to the district. "We built the library where they wanted it, in a park area, where we probably wouldn't have otherwise," Ptacek said, "but the city felt strongly about the location."

"People chose to live in unincorporated areas. They knew where they were moving. I don't want us to give the impression they're being cheated because they aren't getting services."

The solution, though, is not always so easy. In another community, the city wanted a new library built in a park on the same site as the old library. The KCLS board said the community would be better served with a building twice as large, which wouldn't fit on the current lot. The board decided to build on another site, not a popular decision with city leaders. "It does put us in conflict at times, and sometimes we have to compromise to keep the peace."

The district also tries to assure that programming reflects the local community. Ptacek cites an April 2009 program as a county-wide effort with local flavor. He said all the libraries in the county would open an hour early every day during the week to provide programs for people dealing with the hard economic times. Classes would be offered on topics like how to get unemployment, manage a budget or go back to school. "Each library will partner with different people, like the United Way or whatever agency in their own cities, but they're part of a bigger effort that will bring a lot of attention to them," Ptacek said.

Prior to directing KCLS, Ptacek directed municipal and regional libraries. He is enthusiastic about the special district model because governance is vested in a board

charged only with providing good library services. “We don’t have all the money in the world,” Ptacek said (the current mill levy is \$.36), “but we’re able to plan and budget and forecast so we know what we’ll be able to do. It’s stable and doesn’t change a lot. We have reserves and a whole separate capital budget funded by bond issues.”

The county also includes the Seattle Public Library, which operates separately. The Seattle and King County libraries have a reciprocal borrowing agreement. The agreement was modified in 2006 due to a \$1 million cross-use imbalance to say that Seattle patrons can no longer place holds.

Colorado Special District Libraries

The number of special district libraries in Colorado continues to grow, and the Colorado State Library website (www.cde.state.co.us) offers a variety of publications designed to help municipal or county libraries that want to form special districts.

Douglas County, Colorado, Public Library System. In 1990, the library went to voters to approve a special district and to fund it at a higher level than the mill rate it received as a county library. The measure was passed with 65 percent of the vote.

Prior to the vote, the library faced a fiscal crisis. Circulation had climbed by 37 percent but the library expected a deficit of about \$130,000 of its \$655,000 budget by 1992. The County wanted the special district because “the increasing demand for library services, and the inability of the County to provide them, had made the library a political liability.” According to a library document, “the County may have believed that if we succeeded, we would be out of their hair, and if we failed, we would have shown we did not have sufficient political clout to merit any special attention.” The library, for its part, wanted a higher tax rate so it could provide better service, along with the total financial autonomy that it believed would allow it to save money.

The library’s process for getting the special district vote passed included the following.

1. It formed a political committee that included library board members, a public relations consultant, and members of the Friends group, meeting outside the library on their own time.
2. The committee paid for a telephone poll to find out how much people would pay for library services and which services most needed improvement. The survey found that the odds of voters approving the district were 50-50. The list of needed improvements formed the key points in the campaign.

3. The committee analyzed five years of voting records, precinct by precinct, focusing on school-related issues. They saved money by concentrating on a few specific precincts.
4. The committee raised very little money, so it conducted a grassroots, word-of-mouth campaign aimed at the library's heaviest users: young families, particularly women with small children. They told a consistent story, just the facts without a lot of emotion. They emphasized the ability to do long-range planning as a benefit of the district.
5. Committee members spoke to thousands of people, concentrating on baby-sitting cooperatives and women's groups. They published bookmarks, brochures, flyers, yard signs, even Halloween handouts.
6. The committee sought and received official endorsements from every municipality in the county, and county government itself.

After the vote passed, the County transferred building titles to the library districts at no charge. The district hired a risk consultant to analyze and broker its insurance needs in preparation for taking on the buildings.

In this case, the new district had to pay for services like maintenance, legal and financial services that the County used to provide for free. In Washington County, WCCLS and municipal libraries are charged for those kinds of services by their governments. The district estimated that it added \$60,000 in new costs, but saved \$100,000 by buying its own computer system.

The library director wrote that the advantages of being a district far outweighed the disadvantages. There was more responsibility, but also more money, more reliable funding, removal from political squabbles, and the autonomy to provide library services as they saw fit. "The sole concern of the Douglas Public Library District is the provision and development of library services. Now we don't have to follow county procedures that never applied to libraries very well. We can do more, and do it faster. We only have to convince ourselves, and can tailor our rules to fit our needs exactly."

Multnomah County Library

As Washington County continues to consider the options for changing its funding or governance model, WCCLS will want to stay in touch with the neighboring Multnomah County Library, which is somewhat further along in the process of potentially asking voters for a change, in this case, to a county service district.

According to just-retired Director Molly Raphael, the idea for forming a library district in Multnomah County has been kicked around for decades, beginning back in the

'80s with the original idea to form a tri-county district with Washington, Clackamas and Multnomah Counties. This led to the creation of the reciprocal borrowing agreement known as MIX. In May of 2007, at the request of the library's advisory board, foundation, Friends and other library constituents, the county board of commissioners appointed a task force to study funding options.

The push for a change in funding is driven by a concern about the stability of the current system. The supporters who have worked to get voters to re-approve local levies worry that support may one day disappear. Raphael said the goal has always been to ensure future funding will be "adequate, permanent and stable."

The library task force worked for more than a year, meeting with key stakeholders, Friends groups, library unions and others to discuss options for a library district. It adopted a set of guiding principals, which included:

- The library provides essential services to county residents.
- The library must maintain and improve accessibility to the diverse populations it serves.
- The goal of the task force is to ensure stable and adequate funding for Multnomah County Library. A realistic objective is stable and adequate funding for ten years - through 2020.
- Library employees should maintain their current benefits and working conditions.
- Library employees must be able to continue their participation in PERS.
- To the extent possible, our recommendations should be revenue neutral for the other jurisdictions, and expense neutral to the taxpayers. (Note: Multnomah County and the jurisdictions within it experience significant Measure 5 tax compression issues, so creating a new, permanent tax base would adversely affect other taxing jurisdictions.)

Current funding and governance

The county owns and operates the Portland Central Library and 16 neighborhood libraries. The Library Advisory Board, appointed by the county, gives advice to the library director and the chair of the county commissioners.

The library has historically been funded through the county general fund. Since the late 1970s, three- or five-year local option levies have supplemented general fund monies. According to the task force report, "the current funding system requires a return every four years to the voters to approval another serial levy."

In particular, the Task Force on Library Funding told the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners in a 2008 report:

“This fiscal year (2008-2009) will see levy support of 65.2% and County general fund support of 27.1%. The Task Force sees this trend as continuing and is greatly concerned about the need of the levy rate to increase each time it goes before the voters. The Library’s first five-year local option levy passed in 1997 at a rate of 59.5 cents and general fund support was about 40% of the Library’s budget. The most recent levy, passed in 2006, is at 89 cents and general fund support is less than 30%. Operating costs will continue to increase. If the general fund support is not maintained with an inflationary factor for each year of the next levy, the rate will have to increase again correspondingly. **At some point, the levy rate will potentially increase to a level that will become unacceptable to voters and the levy could fail. Should this happen, it would mean the end of library service as we know it today. This form of "levy roulette" is unacceptable to the Task Force and should, if at all possible, be replaced with a more stable funding mechanism.**”

Task force decisions

After researching various tax options and legal issues, the task force considered three options in 2007:

1. **A dedicated library tax**, such as a personal income tax, increase in the county’s business income tax, a sales tax, an excise tax, a utility tax or a payroll tax.
2. **User fees.** However, the task force found user fees could not generate enough income to fund the system.
3. **A permanent property tax rate**, created by establishing a library special district or a county service district. The task force also looked at the option of forming a district by amendment to the county charter. The task force found this to be the most viable option because voters are used to paying for libraries through a property tax.

Discussion of types of districts

The task force looked at two options for districts, a 357 Library District governed by a five-member governing body and a 451 County Service District governed by the existing county commission. The group preferred the second option.

“The Task Force has rejected the use of the library district under ORS 357 primarily because it creates an entirely new layer of government and requires the election of five new library board members. The Task Force believes that the

current governance by Multnomah County is an acceptable form of governance and therefore desires to look at either ORS 451 or a charter amendment.”

The task force also expressed strong support for using a charter amendment as the vehicle to create a library district. This option is not available to most other counties in Oregon.

In 2008, the task force unanimously supported establishing a county service district with authority to establish a permanent tax rate, but noted that the permanent rate will be limited to a three percent increase each year and additional funds will be necessary to meet the estimated 4.5 percent increase in library budgets per year.

Therefore, the district may still need to depend upon the county general fund for support.

Status of the movement to form a Multnomah district

Raphael said a decision about moving ahead with a district is on hold while a new board of county commissioners struggles with a budget shortfall. She thinks it is possible a citizens’ group will put the issue on the ballot sometime between now and May 2012.

Lessons from the task force process

For Raphael, there are a number of important lessons from the task force process that may also be instructional for Washington County.

For one thing, “the task force convened in May 2007, and thought they’d make a recommendation in six months. We had some very seasoned people on the task force, yet it just kept getting harder and harder to figure out,” Raphael says. She suggests allowing a lot of time for decision-making.

Personally, Raphael said, she thinks getting voters to approve a new form of governance will be difficult. “We’re a county system already so we would have to make a compelling argument for changing,” she says. And right now, libraries seem to be doing okay to voters, so they might not see a compelling reason to make a change.

She also is still concerned about the permanent rate being limited to a three percent increase a year. “I think we have to be careful about setting up something for the future. Libraries that have done districts well have developed some mechanism for changing the amount of the rate,” she says.

Finally, she points out that it is extremely difficult to predict the future of libraries right now, making it harder to plan for what will be needed.

“If unincorporated people want those services let them vote themselves into a city.”

What does Washington County's ideal library system include?

The WCCLS Executive Board and Policy Group met together on March 11, 2009, to create their picture of the ideal library system. As part of that process, the group agreed on the essential elements of a library system, the areas of tension, and the major building blocks they would need to address in order to build their preferred library system.

Essential elements of a library system

The group considered a list created by the Consensus team, based on meetings with libraries and the public. With changes, the final list includes:

- Access to all libraries
- Local differences
- Extensive local governance
- Reduced competition between/among libraries
- Guarantee that existing libraries will not be closed
- Balance between the needs of large and small libraries
- Preference for getting to stable funding
- Service for both incorporated and unincorporated populations

Areas of tension

Areas of tension are those where solving the problem for one group will make things worse for another, where values are in conflict, or where the group hasn't yet decided whether progress is worth the tradeoffs and consequences. This list includes changes to an initial list provided by Consensus.

- Local control
- City or county government role in libraries, or special district role
- Standardization
- Stable funding as well as how to pay for capital costs
- Urban and rural unincorporated areas
- Five-person board

- Impact on volunteers, etc., of any changes, as well as staff changes and collective bargaining
- Big and small libraries

Building blocks

The group accepted a list of five building blocks for library service presented by the Consensus team. The building blocks included:

- Funding
- Governance
- Operations
- Siting of libraries / Capitalization
- Politics and perceptions

The large group then divided into five small groups, one to deal with each of the five building blocks. Each small group included representatives from at least one small, medium and large library. The groups agree on the three most important questions that need to be answered in order to determine whether a new kind of system can incorporate the elements of a preferred library system. They answered as many questions as they could, and noted when more information was needed. Whenever possible and practical, we have provided that information in this report.

Building Block #1: Governance

Summary: This small group identified the benefits of the current structure and the benefits to a district/consolidated structure with a five-person board. It agreed that a permanent tax was needed and that funding drives the governance model. It agreed that, except for funding, the current system isn't broken and that there are ways of addressing other issues within the current system if those issues are brought to the table.

What are the advantages to a district / consolidated structure (with a five-person board)?

- Convenience / Standard policies
- Economy of scale (esp. for book processing)
- Access for everyone
- Representation for non-cities. (Rural areas, like Gaston, don't have representation to speak of. It's up to the individuals in the executive board to bring that to the table to figure out how to better service those areas. Could we have a bookmobile?)
- More stable funding (if the county decided to use the money it contributed in other places.)
- Funding for those who have none
- Greater equity in terms of staff salaries

What are the benefits of the current structure?

- Greater local control
- Flexibility at micro-level
- Structure in place and working
- Local flavor

What does Oregon’s special district option allow?

What follows shows what aspects of the special district model are given and which can be changed, provides information about two special districts in Oregon, and some options for Washington County.

What is given*	What is optional*
5-person elected board, although the law could be amended to allow a larger board.	Can be at large or from zones.
Permanent tax levy. Can’t raise it and it can’t go away. Permanent in every sense of the word.	Can be set wherever libraries choose to set it, if voters approve. Can supplement the permanent tax levy with a local option levy, if needed.
Special district is a separate unit of government.	The district doesn’t have to be consolidated. The district can contract with municipalities to provide library service.
Residents of incorporated cities have to vote to be in the district. Any city that doesn’t vote itself in wouldn’t be taxed and wouldn’t be part of the district.	The district does not have to correspond to any existing jurisdictional boundary. Can take in more or less than one county.

*Based on conversations with Jim Scheppke, Oregon State Librarian, March 4 and April 21, 2009.

Deschutes Public Library

Deschutes Public Library serves 160,000 persons in one of the fastest growing areas of the state. In 1939 the municipal libraries all became part of Deschutes County Library, which became a special district in 1999. (The catalyst was when county government cut off funds to the library.) It has five libraries and a levy of 55 cents. The library’s 2008 HAPLR rating is 756, which puts it at the 89th percentile for libraries of its size.

Todd Dunkelberg, the director, said that there was a lot of territorialism at first and a feeling of competition among cities. Part of passing the district was making commitments to each of the communities, including promising to build libraries in two of the smaller communities. Another promise was that the district would treat each library as a full-service library.

“Trust-building has to happen once you have a district,” he said. “By having stable funding, you can do long-range planning and you can show each community that

here's the benefit you're getting from this. That's what it takes to ease those concerns." He said it helped that the libraries were already connected as a county library. Before becoming a special district, though, library service was fairly poor. For example, there was just one children's librarian serving the whole county.

The district started off with local advisory boards, but phased them out after awhile because they were no longer necessary. The five-person board includes two representatives from Bend, the largest city, one each from two medium-sized communities, and one who represents two smaller communities.

The district is challenged now by the economy. Usage is up by 20 percent, but the assessment rate is down. Dunkelberg said that being a special district allowed them to set aside money to get through a crisis like this. "If we were still part of the county system, I'm sure I'd be looking at laying off a lot of staff because they're slashing their budgets. It gets you out of the situation where it's you or the fire department."

Umatilla County Special Library District

The Umatilla County Special Library District is a county-wide special district that contracts with cities to provide public library service. Of the funds raised by the permanent tax levy, the district distributes about 80 percent to the cities and uses 20 percent for central services. The district requires libraries to file annual service plans and meet certain service goals.

The library district includes a dozen libraries to serve a total population of about 74,000. Several of the libraries serve fewer than 1,000 persons and only two of the libraries have a 2008 HAPLR score above the 50th percentile.

Adams Public Library	312 / 16%
Athena Public Library	453 / 40%
Echo Public Library	455 / 41%
Helix Public Library	608 / 72%
Hermiston Public Library	254 / 10%
Milton-Freewater Public Library	403 / 32%
Pendleton Public Library	459 / 42%
Pilot Rock Public Library	358 / 24%
Stanfield Public Library	130 / 2%
Ukiah Public/School Library	831 / 98%
Umatilla Public Library	221 / 8%
Weston Public Library	494 / 48%

The problem is not the cooperative special district structure, according to the state librarian. For years, the libraries were part of a city/county library, where both the county

and all the cities helped provide funding. The verbal agreement was for that to continue when county residents passed special district legislation in 1986. What happened instead is that as soon as the district passed, cities began to withdraw funding from the libraries. Some cities have even used district library money for other purposes.

“What they should have done is set up a situation where the cities were required, as a condition of receiving funding, to keep their funds in to maintain what they were doing, and to meet some standards,” Scheppke said. “But they didn’t do that. It was all a handshake. They may have tightened it up a bit, but the damage had been done.”

What opportunities are available to change the rules of governance?

Washington County libraries don’t have to settle for what’s currently available and do have some options for tailoring the governance structures to their wishes.

Change state law mandating a five-member board.

While the size of the five-member board is problematic for Washington County library leaders, it could be changed. One option is for WCCLS and its members to take the lead in modifying the Oregon law governing the number of board members for a special district. Other communities considering special districts, especially those considering multi-county special districts, also question whether a five-member board is large enough. According to Jim Scheppke, it would be possible to amend the state law to expand the size of the special district board.

Build in equity by carefully structuring the board.

Currently, Oregon law allows a special district board to be elected at-large or from districts. As with a school board, a library board needs to be able to work on behalf of the entire area and it needs to understand the distinct needs of various communities without descending into parochialism or factions. It’s a balancing act. While the way the board is structured can have an impact on its effectiveness, it is also important to note that there are examples of high- and low-functioning boards of all types. Again, no guarantees.

- If everyone is elected at-large, it is possible that most directors would be elected from the larger cities and that the less-populated rural areas and small towns would be underrepresented.
- If Washington County is divided into districts, with each member elected within his or her own district, it is possible that board members would play to their own constituents and lose sight of the needs of the whole.

There are other possibilities that are worth considering, recognizing that these, too, come with benefits and disadvantages.

- Local residents talk about the county having three distinct regions (East, West, South). The board could have one representative from each of the three regions. The other two board members could either be elected at large or could be from the two of the three regions with the largest populations.
- In order to encourage board members to represent their constituents while at the same time serving the whole county, the library could divide the county into five districts with about the same population and require that each district be represented on the board. Rather than electing board members only within that district, though, the entire county could vote on each race. For example, the Hillsboro City Council is elected in this way.

Delegate governing power to a county service district board.

If Washington County chose the county service district option, Scheppke said, the Washington County Board of Commissioners could delegate to it more power than usual, so that it would be a governing, rather than advisory, board. A governing board is responsible for setting policies, while an advisory board represents the community and acts only in an advisory capacity to the governmental body.

A county service district can have a board of up to 15 members, which would allow every library in the county to have a representative on the board. A county service district with a powerful board would function somewhere between a typical county service district and a special district. While it has never been done, the state librarian said he thought it would be possible under Oregon state law because the law says that a library board can have any powers that are delegated to it by a city council or county commission. While the tradition is for city councils and county commissioners to appoint advisory rather than governing boards, Scheppke says, that's tradition rather than a requirement of Oregon law.

"I live on Bull Mountain. People said I chose to live out there because I didn't want to pay taxes. I had no idea I was buying in an urban unincorporated area."

How do other library boards work?

A review of other libraries finds a wide range of traditions when it comes to the size of boards and the manner in which board members are selected.

Interestingly, after checking about half of the 26 wider-unit libraries that serve about the same population as Washington County, we could find none that elected trustees. This holds true for special districts as well as county or city-county libraries. This is surprising because special districts are units of government that operate separate from any other jurisdiction, yet elected officials are often charged with appointing library board members.

The results of an Internet search for elected library boards would seem to indicate that smaller libraries are much more likely to elect board members than larger ones.

Name	Type and HAPLR score/%	Board size	How appointed
Albuquerque/ Bernalillo County Library System	City-County. HAPLR 498/47 th %	11-member advisory board	Seven members appointed by the Albuquerque mayor with the advice and consent of the city council, and four members appointed by the county commission.
DeKalb County Public Library (GA)	County. HAPLR 402/33 rd %	10-member board of trustees	One each appointed by the cities of Doraville and Decatur, and the rest appointed by the County.
Gwinnett County Public Library System (Lawrenceville, GA)	County. HAPLR 625/74 th %	5-member board of trustees	Each trustee is appointed by one of the five-member board of county commissioners.
Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Public Library	County. HAPLR 871/99 th %	7-member board of trustees	Appointed for 7-year terms alternately by the Cuyahoga County Commissioners and the Common Pleas Court judges. (The library is a separate political subdivision, but unlike a special district it has no taxing authority itself. Instead, the board of county commissioners must place ballot issues before the public on the library's behalf.)
Pierce County Library System	Special district. HAPLR	4-member board of	Appointed by county executive and confirmed by county council.

(Tacoma, WA)	650/77 th %	trustees	
Kansas City Public Library	Special district. HAPLR 660/78 th %	9-member governing board	Appointed by the mayors of three cities. Kansas City appoints seven members, and Independence & Sugar Creek appoint one each.
Mid-Continent Public Library (Consolidated District #3)	Special district. HAPLR 720/	12-member governing board	Four members each appointed by the Jackson County executive and the boards of commissioners for Clay and Platte counties.

Building Block #2: Funding

Summary: The group agreed that library funding is not stable. It also agreed that the current County general fund contribution is okay, but whether the County can or will continue that level of funding is unknown. The struggling economy causes worry, as some cities are already cutting back on general fund dollars devoted to libraries. The group said the ideal future would include a permanent levy to cover a base level of service and facilities, and local funds to provide a higher level of quality. It said the current economic crisis makes setting the permanent rate difficult.

What should stable funding cover? Operations & capital.

Current funding sources include:

- County general fund contribution
- Local option levy (county)
- City general fund (and other local funding)
- Local option levy (city)
- Capital bonds or lease or ?

Future funding sources should include:

- Permanent rate to cover established base of service and facilities
- Allowance for local contribution

What's broken?

- Is this the time to be talking about replacing tax rates and funding mechanisms? According to Consensus, it would take 75 cents to stabilize funding countywide. When we have large urban unincorporated areas, is it something we can address through a county-wide system? We said that's not something we can address through a countywide tax.
- Setting the permanent rate is difficult, particularly in terms of the current economic situation. What part can be stabilized if we couldn't stabilize all of it? What is the likely voter response?

Building Block #3: Siting/Capitalization

Summary: The group expects that new areas built within the urban growth boundary will be part of cities, but the existing urban unincorporated areas probably will stay unincorporated for the foreseeable future. It considered the pros and cons of building new bricks-and-mortar into a district's permanent rate. It suggests using the permanent levy for operations and using some of the county and city general funds that the permanent levy would replace to build or upgrade libraries. Future libraries should be sited by the district's governing board based on spatial and demographic data. The system would need to agree to maintain existing libraries or voters wouldn't vote for it.

Where will the anticipated population increase live?

- General consensus that new areas in urban growth boundary will be part of cities
- Not resolved: existing urban unincorporated areas. Annexation tools are few, so they will remain unincorporated.

What is the funding mechanism for buildings / upgrades?

Issue: Do you try to build new bricks-and-mortar into the permanent rate?

- What about existing bonded debt? Include? Not fair to pay twice, but...
- Uneven playing field between libraries re: debts, costs, needs, etc.
- Or does the district buy the buildings? Or the Clackamas contribution option, where the County will help pay some of the bonded debt?

Issue: How do you sell a new tax base unless you get something new? Can we sell this if it's the exact same libraries?

- Idea: instead of including capital in the permanent rate, a portion of the county and city general fund dollars now used for operations would go into a capital fund for XX time for new libraries, upgrades, etc. (a tradeoff – what you get out of this).

Who decides where new libraries will be built and how is that decided?

- Ideal is that future siting is based on spatial and demographic data in a proactive way, based on best practices, and the decision is made by the governing board.

Issue: This creates conflict. There will be winners and losers. Some communities might want libraries but, looking at it analytically, it wouldn't be the best place.

- We agree that the system would have to maintain existing libraries. Would be politically impossible to go to voters for support of a new form of governance that could close libraries.

How do other libraries handle consolidation and capital costs?

This section provides background information on several library systems regarding consolidation and the issues involved. The details of the transfer of building ownership and/or public debt are not available in documents intended for the public. If the libraries of Washington County decide to consolidate, they will profit from talking with the directors of the seven libraries included here.

What are the options for capital transfer?

The transfer and ownership of buildings and capital assets do not have to be part of a library service consolidation. There are many examples of libraries that have consolidated their operating budgets but have left the matter of buildings to another authority, usually a local unit of government but sometimes a non-profit foundation. The reverse, a situation in which a wider unit, usually a county, owns and pays for the buildings but allows local units to be independent for operational purposes is almost never seen. There are a few examples on the east coast where the city owns the building while a non-profit runs the operation but none, to our knowledge, are county or regional library organizations.

In a consolidation it is important to consider both ownership of the buildings and responsibility for the debt for those buildings. Frequently the county (or other larger unit like a district) will want to take over the buildings but will be reluctant to take on the debt for those buildings.

Local cities may be happy to turn over their buildings if there is little or no debt or if the buildings were the result of a major bequest if they can stop being responsible for the operating costs. But most municipalities will balk at turning over the building to the county while continuing to have local taxpayers stuck with long-term debt.

This becomes a very real problem in Washington County because the debt burden is all over the place in terms of the size and terms. Cornelius, with no debt and a building that needs replacing, would find it much easier to turn over its operation than Beaverton, with \$2.2 million in debt remaining on an up-to-date facility.

Allowing ownership of the building and retirement of the debt to remain a local issue is the path of least resistance but doing so inevitably results in service dislocations in future years. Cuyahoga County Library, for instance, found that some municipalities built larger buildings than needed in the wrong place for overall planning out of distorted

“Our (tax rate) is really fair for what we’re getting. We don’t have anybody who is going to bat for people in the unincorporated areas, so they’ll continue to pay for library services they don’t use that they have to drive a half hour to get to.”

civic pride. Meanwhile, areas that cried out for new libraries were left unserved because those municipalities had other priorities. Issues like these inspired Cuyahoga County Library to seek the referendum on capital that passed in November of 2008.

Why did we investigate these specific libraries?

For purposes of this report we have selected seven library systems for consideration.

No report of this nature could fail to include Hennepin County or Toronto Public. These were the two largest and most-watched consolidations in our history. Great River Regional represents a regional system in the “exurban” area of the Twin Cities in Minnesota. Cuyahoga has been a top rated HAPLR library for many years and has recently managed to pass a referendum to turn capital spending and building planning over to the county library system. For that singular achievement alone, if WCCLS pursues consolidation, staff there should be consulted for advice.

Blue Earth County Library and Gwinnett County Library are examples of libraries that broke off from larger library units to form smaller ones. Both dissolutions (they could almost be called divorces) were prominently displayed in the library press at the time and talked about within the library community. For both Blue Earth and Gwinnett it became clear that the lack of a “pre-nuptial agreement” about the distribution of capital assets was a major flaw in their marriage and so perforce now in their divorces.

Library	Reason
Hennepin County Library	Consolidated Minneapolis and Hennepin County in 2008. Most recent consolidation in U.S. Minneapolis merged with county library system.
Toronto Public Library	Consolidated multiple libraries in metro Toronto in 1997. Resulting library system became largest single library system in North America.
Great River Regional Library	Developed multi-county consolidated system in 1960s.
Cuyahoga County Library	Developed multi-county consolidated system in 1960s. Passed capital referendum in 2008.
Gwinnett County	Part of dissolution between Gwinnett and Forsyth Counties in Georgia in 1996-97
Blue Earth County Library (Minnesota Valley Regional)	Part of dissolution in 2000 of three-county, three-city regional library system in Minnesota.
Waukesha County Federated Library System	Developed consolidation report in 2006

Cuyahoga County Library System

<http://www.cuyahogalibrary.org>

Cuyahoga County Library includes the suburban area around Cleveland, Ohio. Ohio libraries are nearly universally recognized as the best in the U.S. Because of library law and state library policy over many decades, the library units in Ohio are much larger than in most states. For example, with 8 million residents Ohio has about 200 library units while Iowa, with just 5 million residents, has almost 600 library units.

Cuyahoga County Library serves almost 600,000 residents in the Cleveland Ohio area and was rated number one in the HAPLR ratings for 2008.

Cuyahoga County Library found that some municipalities built larger buildings than needed in the wrong place for overall planning out of distorted civic pride. Meanwhile areas that cried out for a new library were left unserved because local municipalities had other priorities. Issues like these inspired Cuyahoga County Library to seek the referendum on capital that passed in November of 2008.

Toronto Metropolitan Library

<http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca>

Toronto is a bit problematic because Canadian law differs substantially from U.S. law when it comes to municipal organization. Prior to consolidation in 1997 there were seven “boroughs” all over Toronto that each ran a library. Central Toronto had what was called a Research Library. This is a very common form of organization in England, Canada, and Australia. We get a comparable situation in most urban areas with a major city library and many independent suburban libraries. The difference is that in this English system, the central library in Toronto serves a much smaller legal jurisdiction and the boroughs are more numerous and tend to be of about the same size.

The Toronto consolidation was forced by the Ontario government and the consolidation included all types of government services provided by the formerly independent municipalities, not just library services.

In 1997, when the Government of Ontario amalgamated the former municipalities, the individual library boards (plus the Toronto Reference Library) merged into the Toronto Public Library. In 1998, the Toronto Public Library became the largest library system in North America, serving a population of 2.3 million people with 98 branches and a collection of over 9 million items.

“If there is a group that would like a library, they can create one like Cedar Mill has done or they can ask to be annexed.”

One observer, who wished to remain anonymous, related that most of the public and the politicians saw the result as a resounding success in providing a seamless service at a better cost. Some staff members were delighted because the resulting “harmonization of wages” resulted in substantial raises. But other TPL workers lamented what they perceived as the new distance between professional staff and administration on service development issues.

Hennepin County Library

<http://www.hclib.org>

Minneapolis Public Library was merged with the Hennepin County Library January 2, 2008. The merger combines Minnesota’s two largest public library systems into a 41-branch operation with more than 5 million items and 1,600 computers.

An important element of the agreement between the city and county was a provision that none of the 800 staff members could be laid off. At the time of the merger no library buildings were slated for closure. In fact, the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners approved \$15 million for replacement of one building and there are discussions of future upgrades.

Surveys of all library properties were done and reports on the condition of properties were submitted to the county. The city attorney provided an overview of the terms for the transfer of real and personal property for the merger to the Minneapolis Public Library Board.

A library steering committee was established and developed a list of “Phase One” priorities and assignments for Day One and shortly thereafter. The team assigned critical priorities for Day One as well as committee members charged with ensuring completion of the various tasks.

Back in the 1950’s, Minneapolis was a premier library and Hennepin County more of a bookmobile and small suburban cooperative of libraries. During the 1960’s the suburbs exploded. Minnesota library law has better provisions for consolidated libraries than most states and there are quite a few of them as a result, including Great River Regional.

Another advantage in Minnesota for consolidated libraries is that it has a county commissioner form of government. That means there are just five (or seven for major counties like Hennepin) county commissioners. Commissioners are elected in districts rather than at large; with just five per county the commissioners are more likely to consider the county as a whole than just their own district, as happens in states with

“In my case, in Aloha, I don’t know how we would initiate something new, without tools for creating a new library.”

county legislative forms of boards. Most counties in Wisconsin have 20 to 40 county supervisors that tend to look to more fragmented and local concerns.

Hennepin County Library's HAPLR rating is among the best in the nation for libraries serving over 500,000.

Great River Regional Library

<http://www.griver.org>

This library includes 32 libraries in 6 counties in Minnesota. The counties are north and west of the Twin Cities. Total population is over 400,000 and the largest city is St. Cloud, the fastest growing city in the state. Rumor has it that Garrison Keillor's Lake Wobegon is located somewhere in the Great River territory.

The HAPLR rating for the library puts it at the 48th percentile. The library's outputs are better overall than its inputs, usually indicating an efficient operation.

Waukesha County Federated Library System

<http://www.wcfls.lib.wi.us/lgo/index.htm>

In October of 2005, Waukesha County embarked on a project to: "...examine library services... and provide decision makers and the public at large with the clear information for making a proper public judgment on library funding and governance issues and devise library service structures that are fair to all groups of taxpayers and library users."

Blue Earth County Library

<http://www.co.blue-earth.mn.us/dept/library.php>

The Minnesota Valley Regional Library System was in the news a lot during 1999-2000. Disagreements over who should pay what for both operational and building costs among the three counties and three cities that had constituted the system since the 1970's caused a meltdown of the entire operation. Each of the three counties went their separate ways.

If WCCLS moves toward a consolidation, it would be instructive to talk to the director about how the buildings and collections were distributed in this library "divorce."

Gwinnett County Library

<http://www.gwinnettpl.org/index.html>

The Gwinnett-Forsyth Library System went through a long dissolution in about 1996. The divorce appeared to have been a result of fast growing exurban areas not knowing how to divvy up their collections and space. There was also a fair component of

ensorship involved, with one county more willing to suppress intellectual freedom than the other.

As with Blue Earth County Library, it would be instructive to talk to the director about how the buildings and collections were distributed in this library “divorce.”

Hennepin County offers some documents that could be useful when planning for a consolidation. The documents are included in Appendix E.

Building Block #4: Operations

Summary: The group identified several ways in which the system was under stress. Operations funding was stressed because city funding is voluntary and variable, and because of the funding formula, which focuses on circulation. The funding formula drives operations and pushes libraries to short-term gain rather than a long term plan. The group identified things that could be done centrally instead of locally, so that libraries could hire more specialized staff and that small libraries could focus on public service. Ideas for central operations included: patron billing, materials processing, tech services, information technology, human resources, training and professional development, materials handling and storage, and standardization of salaries and benefits.

Is the system broken?

- The system is under stress. Courier, materials handling and other aspects are especially under stress.
- Each city's contribution is voluntary and it varies. There is a problem with inability to contribute. This makes planning difficult.
- There are too many meetings.
- There is the pressure to buy books and use up resources to process those books and get them out because we'll get more money back due to the funding formula. That takes away from public service.
- There are people on the edges of our boundary / outside service area and without reciprocal borrowing. Can we get those people incorporated into our tax base and service population?

Does the WCCLS funding formula drive operations?

Yes. If we didn't have to do some of these things on our own, maybe we could hire more specialized staff. Libraries compete instead of cooperate and the formula drives us to short-term gain rather than a long-term plan.

What should be done centrally versus locally?

- Patron billing with one-stop resolution. Currently, patrons have to run all over the county to pay bills for missing or late materials.
- Local materials selection with centralized tech services and processing.

- Have small libraries focus on customer service. Currently, they are doing everything – the back room stuff and support activities – when they should be spending time on public services.
- Standardized computers with central I.T.
- Interviewing and hiring local; HR recruitment done centrally.
- Training and professional development done centrally.
- Standardize salaries and benefits.
- Improve materials handling by doing things centrally, and do storage of materials at a separate location.

How do other cooperative & federated systems work?

WCCLS leaders were interested in learning more about other cooperative systems, to find out what services they provide centrally and what services are provided by the member libraries.

We gathered information from several cooperative and federated library systems to get a sense of how they operate and the services they provide. They were different from WCCLS in that almost all of those we found serve more than one county (the largest serves 12 counties in northern California) and many were part of cooperatives funded by state government as part of a statewide system. What they share with WCCLS is that a larger unit of government – the county or state – created the agency to increase the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of municipal libraries. While the scale is different, most of the dynamics are identical.

All of the systems experience the same tensions as WCCLS between urban and rural, smaller and larger, wealthier and poorer libraries. Interestingly, every system we contacted has evolved in its thinking about how best to serve its diverse libraries. While they used to provide the same services to everyone, increasingly they tailor services to subsets of their libraries.

The definitions of cooperative and federated library systems are generally accepted but don't reflect the variations among different agencies. "Consortium," "federation," and "cooperative" are often used interchangeably.

Cooperative library systems

Cooperative library systems are created by the boards of several libraries that retain their autonomy. Cooperative systems may provide services such as joint interlibrary loan, centralized book processing, and joint training, among others.

We found cooperatives in many states, including New Jersey, California, Minnesota, Iowa (although the state provides so little money they only provide minimal services), Illinois, and Indiana (with one coop serving the entire state).

Federated library systems

This type of structure allows individual libraries to retain their independence, but with a "headquarters" that serves the system.

Federated library systems are used extensively in Wisconsin. Some federated systems include a mechanism for reimbursing net lenders for reciprocal borrowing. Two counties, Waukesha and Milwaukee, have struggled with budget cuts that have reduced funds available to compensate net lenders.

We investigated several agencies in depth.

Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA), Saint Paul, Minnesota

Chris D. Olson, Executive Director

www.melsa.org

MELSA is a multi-jurisdictional federation of the one city and seven county public libraries in the seven-county Twin City metro area. It organized to provide cooperative services and cost-saving programs to the participants. MELSA is the administrative agency for receiving and equitable sharing of state and federal grant appropriations made available through the State of Minnesota. It was established in 1969 and is one of 12 library systems in the state. The board is made up of one trustee appointed by each of the eight libraries, with an advisory board composed of library directors. The eight libraries have 105 sites.

MELSA provides core services including:

- Technology (E-rate and information sharing)
- Cooperative services (delivery, youth/summer programs, literacy)
- Marketing and community relations
- Education and development (training; networking)
- Funding and financial services (collaborative purchasing/shared databases; funding/resource development)

The system is funded by the state, and is the organization eligible for federal funds, some of which goes to MELSA member libraries. The organization supplies about 5 percent of the operating dollars for each library. The funding formula compensates libraries for crossover borrowing, with about a quarter of its \$1 million in formula funds going to three net lenders. The formula also encourages libraries to take part in the statewide interlibrary loan program.

In marketing and public relations, MELSA finds that bigger really is better. “If we do a large program across the metro area,” Chris Olson, executive director, said, “we get much better media coverage than if one library does it.” That holds true for things like the summer reading program, homework help, and the museum adventure pass, through which 25 museums contribute passes that people can check out for a day for free. “Individual libraries do the program, but we promote it.”

When it comes to technology, cost savings are significant. Olson said MELSA spent \$1 million on cooperative technology projects that would have cost \$10-\$15 million if the libraries paid for them separately.

Staff development is one of the largest benefits. “Often, the individual libraries have just one cataloguer or one children’s librarian. If you bring them together, the staff really do benefit from networking with colleagues. There’s lots of problem solving, and they know they can call Joe in the next county over and work through a question.” MELSA also does a lot of continuing education based on the needs of member libraries.

MELSA attracts funding due to its regional scope, Olson says. “We find that corporate funders really like the idea of giving money to us because we affect 105 libraries.”

There are a few barriers to providing services centrally. Olson has a reputation for being able to get large and small libraries to play well together. He said that one county library has 41 branches and another has five, and one has a budget of \$4 million while another has a \$30 million budget. The old philosophy of “One for all” is slowly changing. “It used to be that if everybody doesn’t do it, we don’t do it. We are moving, though, towards saying, if four or five libraries are interested in something, we move ahead and do what we can do.”

It’s important to keep the large libraries happy, Olson said. “We’re always looking for ways we can help out the larger libraries because they don’t need us as much as the smaller ones do. They can do a lot of the things we do by themselves.”

The differences between rich and poor libraries are not as evident within his system, Olson said, although that is the case with rural versus urban libraries in other systems. Within MELSA, support for libraries is fairly equal. Occasionally a big library wants something that a poorer library can’t afford, and then MELSA can use state funding to help pay for cooperative projects.

An important management tool, Olson said, is to keep libraries alive by tying them to the needs of the whole community. “St. Paul is looking at massive local cuts this year and the library has positioned itself by saying, we’re in the book business, but we’re really in the business of helping children get ready for school, helping people get jobs, helping businesses survive. Those are the three issues the mayor and city focus on. (As a result) there are groundswells of city leaders saying, we think the library is valuable because they’re doing what is important.” Olson said what was anticipated to be a \$2 million budget cut may disappear entirely because the library positioned itself as

“I grew up in Southern California with a library on every street corner. Now I’m horrified when I find there aren’t libraries for kids to use. You can’t have a community without a library.”

valuable. “Instead of yelling and saying you can’t cut library services, the approach was, how do you help citizens get through this hard time?”

Winnefox Library System, Oshkosh, Wisconsin

Jeff Gilderson-Duwe, Executive Officer

Mark Arend, Assistant Director

www.winnefox.org

Winnefox Library System is a consortium that provides services to 30 public libraries in five counties. The libraries are mostly municipal, with a few township libraries. Its communities range in size from 300 to 66,000; more than half are under 1,500 and only four are above 15,000 in population. A majority of the libraries in each county have to agree to join a library system. Individual libraries can’t leave or join on their own.

Winnefox is primarily state-funded, with additional funding for ILS coming from member libraries. The Winnefox director is also the director of the Oshkosh Public Library.

Winnefox provides these services:

- WAN for public and staff internet access
- ILS with centralized cataloguing
- Email
- PC purchase and support
- Website design and hosting
- ILL clearinghouse
- Van delivery (which also allows delivery of printed materials, PCs and furniture)
- Graphic design and printing of things like event announcements, bookmarks and program materials.

Three of the five counties support a cooperative technical services agency that is funded by the counties but administered by Winnefox. The agency orders and processes books and videos.

The Winnefox governing board is appointed by member counties. Two of the counties have a county executive who appoints the board member, and the others are appointed by the chair of the county board. Board appointments are proportional to the population. Each member library also has its own governing board.

The director, Jeff Gilderson-Duwe, said that the services provided are, to a fair extent, driven by the fact that most libraries are small and serve rural areas. Whereas larger libraries have more expertise on staff, Winnefox libraries appreciate the tech person who purchases and configures new PCs, and who will do maintenance on site.

An important aspect of the consortial structure, according to Gilderson-Duwe, is the way it promotes collaboration. “The library directors get together every month or so, and if the libraries want to do a group project or do cooperative PR or have a single library card design, there’s a structure that makes it easy for libraries to collaborate.”

The leadership team said that there can be challenges to collaboration. Mark Arend, assistant director, said that when it comes to collections, some folks share better than others. “There’s a constant process of negotiation over who gets access to the newest materials,” he said. The other challenge is the need to make sure everyone gets a fair share. “It’s always, it never ends, the need to appeal to trust, to be even-handed, to put out processes and procedures that encourage equity and shared participation. Those are perceptions that have to be managed constantly.”

The team said that local control is “definitely alive and well in some ways and in some places.” The commitment to doing things in their own way may come from the library director or staff, or from the board or municipal government. And not every library has the same level of commitment or participation as every other library.

Rich and poor, large and small libraries “have varying levels of capacity to integrate change and try new things,” Gilderson-Duwe said. There are always issues with direction and not being able to move as fast as some would like. “We’re a herd, and we move as a herd,” he said.

“If older folks we know don’t show up for awhile, we go out to their houses with books we know they’ll like.”

It’s important to tailor services to the needs of individual libraries rather than try to serve everyone in just the same way, Gilderson Duwe said. “There may be an array of services and not everyone will benefit from every service at the same time as everyone else. It’s like a salad bar. Some people take more lettuce or more tomatoes, but everyone benefits from it.”

Outagamie Waupaca Library System (OWLS), Appleton, Wisconsin

Rick Krumwiede, executive director

www.owlsweb.info

The Outagamie Waupaca Library System (OWLS) is a federation of the public libraries in Outagamie and Waupaca counties. Each library contracts with OWLS for the purpose of coordinating and strengthening services. OWLS is one of 17 public library systems in

the state, funded primarily by state aid to carry out the service requirements mandated in state law. OWLS also requests county funds to reimburse member libraries for serving area residents who don't have municipal library service. The federation is governing by a 15-member board appointed by both counties. OWLS provides:

- Reciprocal borrowing
- Interlibrary loan
- Delivery
- Library development, consulting and continuing education
- Design and printing
- Original cataloguing of materials (contracted for with the Appleton Public Library)
- Shared, integrated library automation network, with services including circulation control, public access catalog, resource sharing, tech training, and Internet access.
- Outreach to local literacy groups.

Director Rick Krumwiede said that his services are, to a large extent, tailored to the many small, rural libraries in the two counties. It makes sense for OWLS to provide services that are too costly or specialized for local libraries to provide on their own. "Many libraries wouldn't have a web presence if we didn't provide it," he said, and he conducts planning for libraries that would never hire a consultant.

OWLS goes a step further by doing the eRate filing for member libraries for telephone service, none of whom were doing it themselves because it was paperwork intensive and only netted a couple hundred dollars a year. "We have one person here at OWLS who does it and it's efficient," Krumwiede said. "We wanted library members to be able to tell their city council members they were doing everything they could."

Krumwiede said that OWLS could conduct program planning, so one program could be offered throughout the whole system. "But libraries don't want us to be the face of the library, they want to be the face of the library," he said. "We've developed some services centrally and branded them generically so they're not associated with one library, and we could be doing public programs like training in the online catalog, but libraries haven't wanted us to do that. That's starting to change as libraries become overwhelmed." He said OWLS stays in the background.

There is a lot of respect and trust within the OWLS membership, Krumwiede said. The group almost never votes. "We just talk about things. When I started, I was amazed with the attitude of the libraries. They really seem to think that if one is stronger,

they're all stronger. They don't all have the same things to bring to the table, but they all respect and value one another and realize they're all doing the best they can."

It's a huge mistake, Krumwiede said, to treat different libraries as if they're all the same. "There's nothing more unequal than trying to treat unequals as equal, a mentor told me." Instead, OWLS accommodates individual needs. "We don't feel we have to provide the same dollar value to every library. We need to make belonging to the system more beneficial than the obligations. So long as we keep the scales tipped, we're okay." He said that individual agreements with libraries allow them to give everybody something they want.

He also advises developing a system of values. The OWLS statement of philosophy, created during the early 1980s, is updated every couple of years. "It's good to have something on paper that says here's what we believe in," Krumwiede told Consensus.

North Texas Library Partners

Carolyn Brewer, assistant director

www.ntrls2.org

North Texas Regional Library System (NTRLS) is one of the 10 regional library systems which, with the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, make up the Texas State Library System. The regional systems promote the development of strong community libraries. Any public library that meets state accreditation standards earns membership in their regional system, which provides benefits such as consulting, ongoing training and support for programs like automation and literacy.

NTRLS was established in 1969 as North Texas Library System, then in 1994 became the first (and still the only) Texas library system to become a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in order to expand its funding base. Part of NTRLS funding comes from the Texas State Library through IMLS grants, and the NTRLS library foundation accepts donations to support services to libraries in the NTRLS region.

NTRLS has more than 70 public library members in its 20-county region, with nearly 100 library buildings. It services more than 3 million persons in a geographic area of 16,489 square miles. NTRLS is itself divided into regions, with a board member elected by libraries within each region and two elected by libraries at-large. Recently, the state library has charged the systems with serving academic, special and school libraries along with public libraries.

"We're extremely responsive to the community and don't just buy materials that will get the highest circulation. We pay attention to things our patrons ask for."

Because NTRLS is a nonprofit organization, Assistant Director Carolyn Brewer said, it can do things that other regional systems can't do, such as pursue grant funding, hold fundraisers and conduct projects that aren't IMLS-related. She said that NTRLS is doing better than the other state systems because other sources of funding are available, which brings her total budget up to about \$650,000. She said the Austin system was switching to nonprofit status and some of the others were considering a switch. In addition, because NTRLS is itself a nonprofit, it works in partnership with other nonprofit organizations, something the other systems rarely do.

The central services include things like consortium purchasing of databases and materials, an ILS that includes 13 libraries so far, centralized continuing education credits, and a central IT person. She said the system would like to provide a development officer to help libraries with grantwriting; while it's not considered part of LSTA, the system can do some grantwriting assistance without using state funds. She said they work with libraries to help them understand what funders and governments need from them, and to help them use the nomenclature of the business world.

In addition, the system holds four all-day conferences a year, complete with a keynote speaker, which has been very popular. "Next week we have the technology conference, with 150 RSVPs from all kinds of libraries," Brewer said. "It's just \$15 for a full day, and soon we'll have to start limiting registration. Some of why we do this is survival. What can we do to make money that will affect the greatest number of people?"

Local control is an issue within NTRLS, although that is affected by the fact that libraries are very spread out. It takes four-and-a-half hours to drive from one end of the boundaries to another. In some counties, there is just one small library. Another county may have five little libraries with limited resources. Brewer said NTRLS strongly encourages partnerships among small rural libraries. "We don't want them to lose their identities, but we do encourage them to partner," she said. "If you had five small libraries serving five areas, and you close all but one, you end up only serving that one immediate area because in this age of the Internet people aren't willing to drive."

Brewer said that every library wants its catalog done their way, and they set their own policies for circulation and fees. She said the cities are often more interested in holding onto control than are the library directors, who want to save money and offer more services. NTRLS is sensitive when they do central services to keep the libraries

"How do we serve new residents? The current model won't do it, with the number of libraries and where they are. We're not in leadership mode, we're in reactive mode."

involved. “We are very membership-driven,” Brewer said. “We try to do what they need us to do.”

Like the other regional systems we interviewed, NTRLS has moved away from providing the same services for every library. “We have come to realize that not every service is valuable to everyone. Sometimes we offer a service just for Fort Worth libraries, or just for small rural libraries,” she said. That doesn’t save NTRLS from complaints that they only serve the large or the small libraries. “We can’t treat them the same and all we can do is try to be responsive. Like your children have different needs, our libraries have different needs.” She keeps communication open and uses anonymous surveys to ask libraries to weigh in on what’s going well or badly. She said that board members are people who understand that rural and urban libraries have different needs and make sure that NTRLS is providing services for all of its counties.

One unique program that NTRLS offers is “NTRLS @ Your Library.” Libraries can apply to have an NTRLS staff person come to the library to help create a teen section, paint the library, move collections around, or whatever. The goal is to build teamwork and cohesion, and NTRLS has one library day every quarter.

How can a countywide library build local support and local control?

When they considering forming a library district, folks in Washington County expressed concerns about the potential for loss of local control and local support. Our research and interviews for this report suggest that there are a number of ways libraries can build strong local support and local control into a library district.

It may be reassuring to those considering a library district that, politically, local support is ALWAYS going to be a key factor in getting a bond levy passed. In our interviews with library district directors, we were told again and again that library district administrators are very concerned about the way local patrons feel about their local libraries. They realize that, while the library district may be one step removed from dealing directly with patrons, its ongoing financial support relies upon happy patrons of local libraries, happy Friends boards and happy local advisory groups. This might be seen as a built-in “check and balance” that ensures local libraries will continue to have a voice.

“If the economy doesn’t do well, more people use libraries. But we have less money and have to cut hours.”

When a new library is being planned, it’s common for a library district to form a building committee. According to Jonalyn Woolf-Ivory of the Sno-Isle Library District in Washington State, “If we are building a new library, whether it’s a city or bond issue, there is a local building committee made up of staff, Friends and the community. They

are building a library that fits their community.” That means it is local people, not the entire district, which plays a key role in planning a new facility.

By giving citizens who will use the new library an active role in the planning process, library districts both strengthen the value of the new facility to its potential users and ensures local support for the project. Local citizen input almost always leads to a library that reflects the unique character of its community.

Here is some other advice from library district leaders on how to build in local control.

Use local Friends groups to raise funds for individual libraries

In many library districts, Friends’ groups continue to support their local libraries. They often sell used books and have other fundraising events, and it is the local Friends group that determines priorities for using the money in the local library. They may choose to provide unique local programming, purchase furniture, or make other improvements. If the district has a district-wide foundation, it may be restricted from going after sources of funding that the local Friends want to pursue.

Use an advisory group to advocate for each library

Even after a library district is formed, advisory groups from local communities (such as the cities that once ran the libraries) can be used to maintain local input. They play a variety of roles including:

- Assisting in long-range and annual planning;
- Participating in strategic planning for the library;
- Serving on library district committees;
- Recommending and advocating for budgets and policies that support the community library; and
- Assisting the library district director in policy-making decisions as they affect local areas.

For example, the Montgomery County, Maryland, library board has 12 members appointed by the county executive and confirmed by the county council. The library board functions as an advisory board, making recommendations to the county executive. Its members are also liaisons to 23 subcommittees that are called library advisory committees. There is one committee for each library branch.

The Sonoma County, California, Library operates under a joint powers agreement among the County, incorporated cities and the Sonoma County Library. The library commission is a governing body and is appointed by the county board of supervisors, the cities of Santa Rosa and Petaluma. The commission has advisory boards for regions

within the county that advise them on the issues affecting each branch. The library commissioner who represents the region can nominate one person from the applicants for each available position on that region's advisory board, and the appointments are confirmed by the library commission.

Use local building committees to plan new libraries

As discussed above, a local building committee is key to creating local support for a new library.

Structure the district's governing board to represent district interests

Library districts use different methods for structuring the representations on their boards. Some use school district boundaries and elect representatives from each school district. Others define service areas that make sense within their district and require representation from each service area, whether they are voted on by all residents or only by those in each service area.

Make sure members of each community are involved in ongoing political support committees

Library districts know that when they want to build new facilities, go to voters for funding or expand services, they will need the support of local communities. They often strive to make sure supporters of each library are included in the network of political and planning activities around the district.

Seek out opportunities for two-way conversations with library patrons

Ongoing planning efforts for a library district are always stronger and more effective when library patrons are involved. When forming a library district, it could be mandated that citizens will have input into strategic planning, new facility decisions and other important issues. The district could conduct an annual poll, require community meetings to feed into strategic planning on a yearly or bi-annual basis, or otherwise ensure citizen input.

Building Block #5: Politics and Perceptions

Summary: This group considered what would drive libraries to make a change and whether a crisis was required. They looked at the major selling point that could be presented to the public to help encourage them to vote for library funding. They also considered what they know about public opinion regarding the library and realized that there was much more they wanted to know.

Three questions:

1. Is there a desire to change and the will to do it? Do we have the will to make a change without a crisis?
2. How do we link funding streams to ensure community livability (e.g. support by public/elected officials)?
3. What does the general public think?

Is there a desire to change and the will to do it? Do we have the will to make a change without a crisis?

1. Desire & will:
 - Mixed review: some yes / some no
 - Voters would need to be convinced
 - Economy not necessarily a deterrent
 - Concept of the public good often overrides economic impact

How do we achieve commitment to consistent funding? How do we link funding streams to ensure community livability (e.g. support by public/elected officials)? Develop a marketing plan and branding for a campaign. Selling points include:

- Libraries contribute to the economy
- Library voters help pass other dollar measures / levies
- Create a quality of life (current term: livability)
- Libraries are the “face” of government (more contact)
- Libraries are becoming greater service providers of recreational activities
- Libraries are able to get support by adjunct groups – Friends, foundations

- Libraries invite civic engagement

What does the general public know/think/want?

Answer: We don't know

Want: Accurate data about:

- The importance of local control
- Willingness to pay and how much
- What's important now and in the future

What key marketing activities could position libraries for change?

Even if Washington County never moves ahead with forming a library district, there will always be a need to go to voters for funding decisions. And voters in general are ignorant about how libraries are funded and governed, in part because libraries do not do a very good job of educating them.

If you look at the average library web site, it's hard to find any information about the library's funding or governance, other than a list of board members. Adding that data to web sites would be a great way to start educating the public. We also would recommend adding a regular column to your newsletter or a feature to your websites, with the goal of beginning to build public awareness of how libraries are funded and how decreased funding reduces the services libraries can provide.

Step One: Basic building blocks of library marketing

Library Journal analyzed the results of 2008 library levies and concluded that the libraries that were successful worked hard to make a case for increased funding in an economic downturn. Community engagement is a critical component of successful campaigns, and it takes time and effort to engage potential voters.

OCLC issued a fascinating report called "From Awareness to Funding: A study of library support in America" in 2008. It asked a national research and advertising agency to use current marketing techniques and practices to analyze library marketing challenges and make recommendations for increasing support for funding. The quantitative study targeted two audiences: residents in U.S. communities of populations less than 200,000 and elected officials in the United States. Medford, Oregon, was one of the communities where research was conducted. This report is a treasure trove of information for any community hoping to seek voter approval for increased funding.

"People tell me if we lose city funding, there are grants out there. But grants won't pay for operating costs."

This report and our research into successful library marketing campaigns suggest some basic building blocks for increasing taxpayer support.

- **Know your audience and reach all of its segments.** One important finding is that people who will vote for library levies do not fit neatly into any demographic bucket. Most importantly, voter support does not break down along lines of library users versus non-users. Therefore, it is essential that you target your marketing campaigns both for levies and in advance of levies at segment target groups. Some of the strongest supporters, those who will always vote for library funding increases, rarely use the library. That means using inter-library

communication channels will not reach them. You must reach out to people who never visit the library.

- **Go beyond delivering announcements to telling important stories about libraries.** The OCLC report found that today’s support comes from those who believe libraries transform lives, whether or not they are library users themselves. This means you can shore up support by consistently finding ways to tell stories and show statistics about how lives are being changed. Too often, libraries get caught up in the day-to-day cycle of reminding patrons of programs and activities, and forget to tell the important stories of the people who use libraries. If you don’t have a marketing plan for the year, it’s important to make one so that you have a roadmap for the messages you want to deliver.

- **Develop a strategy for building awareness that libraries are more than books.** The next time you go to voters to ask for a tax increase or a change in governance, a key message will be that libraries are more than places that house books. So now is the time to start delivering that key message. Find ways to tell the story of the role your library plays in ensuring every member of your community has the ability to access the Internet. Take advantage of the media interest in the economic downturn to remind the public that libraries help people find jobs, find employees and get training for new careers.

Libraries might also rethink their logos. We have viewed many websites of libraries around the country lately and have noticed that almost every library logo includes an icon representing a book. The logos tend to look staid and old-fashioned. It may be time to look for a new way to graphically represent libraries.

“It’s more than a library. It’s a community gathering place.”

- **Incorporate messages about library funding into marketing programs and activities.** Library users and taxpayers are not aware of how libraries are funded and they are not aware that there is financial pressure that could lead to cuts in service. It’s hard to get the voter’s attention about how libraries are funded, but that’s no excuse not to try. By building a plan for delivering a consistent message and making the message part of your regular marketing activities, you can begin to build your case.
- **Develop a positive way to let taxpayers know libraries depend upon their support.** Libraries often do a good job of marketing their programs and services, but neglect to share financial challenges with the public. So when it becomes time to vote on a levy, voters have not been prepared for the message that libraries are

struggling. This does not mean that libraries should whine about funding or complain that politicians are not giving them their fair share, but you do need to develop a consistent message about the importance of support. Focus on the positive and reinforce what would be possible. Remember, 88 percent of the 1,200 residents who completed an online survey for WCCLS in 2008 said that they would be willing to pay \$20 more for libraries if they thought they would receive better library service.

- **Key activity: Begin gathering and sharing data about library use and the services you provide.** Although most libraries track the number of participants in programs and the number of people who use databases, not many do a good job of communicating the value the library provides. Think about developing fact sheets or monthly reports on the number of job seekers using the library, the number of folks who don't have computers who rely upon you, or the number of people who seek out health information at the library. Incorporate this message into all of your marketing efforts; share it with the city council and county commissioners; and put it on your web site.
- **Target marketing efforts at public officials who are vital to supporting libraries.** Marketing studies have shown that local public officials believe that libraries are an important community resource, but they are not aware of funding problems. Libraries have done such a good job of "making do" and not complaining about budget constraints that even their greatest supporters don't know they need help. Another key finding in a 2008 survey showed that elected officials across the country would be more likely to support funding initiatives for police, fire, and public schools than for the library. Libraries clearly need to do a better job of conveying their importance to the community to public officials. Whenever you have a chance to speak directly to elected officials, whether it's in writing or in person, use the opportunity to reinforce the importance of library funding, the value to taxpayers and the services you provide to the officials' constituents.
- **Key activity: Build social media networks now.** Younger library supporters have a different style of communication, and for them, marketing through social media networks will be most effective. So if your library hasn't put up its Facebook page or started tweeting on Twitter, it's time to start building those networks. Remember as you do that the same messages about how libraries are critical in their communities are important.

Step Two: Testing the waters

If the libraries of Washington County decide to further investigate forming a library district or county system, additional marketing efforts may be required to build voter support. These activities should be started as early as possible.

- **Refocus marketing efforts to raise awareness that funding is not keeping pace with demand for library services.** Develop updated fact sheets, talking points and compelling stories to back up your message.
- **Share success stories about other libraries that have formed districts.** WCCLS has already begun to study the successful efforts of other libraries in Oregon and across the nation. At some point, you may decide it is time to begin sharing those success stories with your library boards, key patrons or even the public. You could take first steps in introducing the idea of a district through a forum, bringing in library directors or supporters from recently-changed districts to talk directly to your supporters. Or you could interview library directors and include their success stories on your web pages, blogs, and newsletters.
- **Gather public input:** WCCLS has already begun the discussion of changes in governance and funding through this project. You might choose to continue gathering input from the public through a county-wide poll assessing likely voter support for a library district. A reliable pollster will help you pick the right time, not too early or too late.
- **Use the media as a trial balloon:** Politicians frequently test the waters by discussing ideas with the media and seeing what response they get. Libraries can do the same by meeting with editorial boards, talking to reporters, or offering to write guest editorials for daily newspapers or appear on local radio talk shows to discuss the various governance options available to library patrons in Oregon.
- **Keep your patrons updated on changes in Clackamas County and other Oregon counties that are forming districts.** As we all learned during our public meetings in Washington County, library staff and patrons look to other counties in Oregon for proof that districts can work. You have nearby examples and can keep your communities updated on the successes of other districts. You can do this through newsletters, your websites and even offer programs at the library. If those districts are unsuccessful, be prepared to identify why and to show that a

“People here have been receptive to funding libraries. That’s different from some other counties in Oregon.”

Washington County district would avoid those pitfalls. Likewise, WCCLS should look to non-library examples of county service districts or special districts to help build the case for whichever option they select.

- **Consider a joint lecture series on library funding and governance.** Your libraries have the opportunity to develop programming that heightens awareness of and discussion around changes in your funding and governance. Consider working together to create a lecture series about the future of libraries and bring in speakers who can talk about how other libraries are changing their governance and funding models. This would begin to prepare citizens for making decisions about the future based upon a body of shared knowledge.

Step Three: Asking voters to raise the levy or form a district

Whether Washington County goes to voters for a renewal or increase in the local option levy or asks them to approve a change in governance and funding, here are some proven marketing techniques to enhance support.

- **Communicate how the library is relevant for the 21st century.** Activate a conversation about how the library is a vital part of the community's infrastructure and future. Bring in speakers and share ideas about the great things other libraries have been able to do by creating new forms of funding. Remember to show your potential voters that libraries have the power to transform lives.
- **Understand and use your target audience segments.** The key to any successful campaign will be moving voters who fall into the probable category (those who say in early polling they are likely to vote for the change) into the category of definite supporters. Polling will help you define where your likely supporters are, and those you need to move into the probable category.
- **Develop key statistics about the impact on taxpayers and how money would be spent.** For some voters, seeing "the facts" is essential. These facts can be used as fact sheets for the media and the public, delivered online and even turned into informational DVDs.
- **Make the case for the library as an essential public service.** It's easy for voters to see what would happen if a police or fire levy failed, but not as clear what would happen if funding for libraries was reduced. You will need to make your case for the essential services your libraries provide to the poor, new immigrants, school children, local businesses and the economy of your county.

- **Instill a sense of urgency** by communicating the reason for a change in library funding and governance, why now is the time for a change, and the compelling reasons to make a change now.
- **Use key public officials to encourage support for increased/permanent funding.** Focus groups have shown that library patrons look to key public officials for advice about library funding and how they should vote. Therefore, it's all the more important to work extra hard to educate local officials early and have them ready to help out with your election campaign. *Library Journal* found that elected officials are important opinion leaders who can help convince voters to approve funding proposals.
- **Step up visibility during the campaign.** When the San Diego County Library got ready to go to voters in 2008, it formed a task force to plan special events geared at bringing people into the library. These events built up to the campaign. Libraries could further enhance the value of such a campaign by using the opportunity to deliver personal and printed messages about the upcoming vote through speakers' bureaus, media interviews and appearances and advertising.
- **Grassroots marketing can be effective.** The Cleveland Public Library used a door-to-door 'Citizens for the Cleveland Public Library' campaign to get voter approval in 2008. That campaign used volunteer phone banks, neighborhood canvassing and yard signs to reach potential voters. In Jackson County, Michigan, library branch staff made presentations to local government boards, parent teacher associations, or anywhere else they could get their message out.

What next steps could WCCLS take?

If WCCLS and its members choose to take action, those actions will fall under one of two categories: 1. improving the current system; and 2. changing the funding and governance structure.

This section provides some ideas and options for improving the current system and a process WCCLS could use to make a major change such as forming a special district or county service district.

How can we make the current system work even better?

Without a funding crisis to act as a catalyst, WCCLS and its member libraries will not change how they are funded and governed. That doesn't mean, however, that they intend to stand still. Municipal and library leaders were energized by possibilities that they identified to improve their work.

Their ideas for specific changes are contained in notes for the five building blocks. What follows are some ideas for how to address a few of the issues that were identified throughout the project. Some ideas are based on discussions among the Executive Board and Policy Group, and some are based on Consensus research and analysis.

Government funding

Neither the County or cities with municipal libraries are required to pay a particular amount or percentage of the costs of providing library services.

WCCLS members said they wanted a permanent rate to cover a base level of operations and capital, and they also wanted to allow cities to continue to contribute towards their libraries. The permanent rate, though, comes with changes in governance that some consider unacceptable. Libraries could change state law to allow for a larger special district board, or arrange with the County for a service district board to be delegated governance authority.

Short of seeking a permanent rate, WCCLS and its member libraries could seek a change in County rules governing WCCLS membership to restrict County funding to municipal libraries whose cities pay at least a certain percentage of library operations. It will be important to consider the consequences of this carefully, as some communities may opt to close a library altogether if they can't afford to fund it at a higher level. Opening the conversation in a low-conflict, problem-solving manner will help assure everyone stays at the table.

This issue illustrates why libraries should educate their customers about how libraries are funded. If libraries wish to influence elected officials, one great way to do it is to have a committed and well-informed group of voters making their voices heard. Libraries can build awareness over time by including a fact sheet on the website, sharing information in newsletters and such. That way, when it is time to request a change, people don't have massive amounts of information to learn all at once.

Siting libraries

There is no proactive method or authority for siting new libraries or for determining which libraries should expand or offer particular services.

Washington County libraries have only 59 percent of the square footage recommended by OLA standards, and that's before the influx of new residents that is expected to occur in the coming years. WCCLS and current member libraries should look for ways in which they can be proactive in encouraging new or expanded libraries where they are needed. Finding the right mechanism will, of course, take time and study. We suggest that the following steps be included in the exploration:

- Investigate whether and how the current funding allocation formula encourages or discourages library leaders to support the formation of new libraries.
- Determine how close is close enough. Like the Salt Lake County Library, set a goal for having a library within a particular distance from each resident of the county. In their case, the goal was a library within two miles or within a five-minute drive and the intention was to promote equality of service no matter where a person lives in the county. Because of the mix of urban and rural in Washington County, no one criterion is likely to work everywhere.
- Include as a principle for new libraries that they should be community anchors, in terms of both library service and fostering economic development. Look for places where that role especially needs to be filled.
- Consider how WCCLS and its members could serve as a catalyst for cities or unincorporated areas that are interested in starting a new library. Cedar Mill could hold a seminar on how to start a nonprofit library, for example, and invite people in leadership positions within urban unincorporated areas.

"You're going to have to wait for the new movie. We can't do instant fulfillment like private enterprise can."

Unincorporated residents

Unincorporated residents without home libraries help pay for 65% of library operating costs but have no direct representative within WCCLS.

Municipal libraries view urban unincorporated residents as a problem for two reasons: 1. they pay a lower tax rate than municipal residents, and 2. they live near municipal libraries and have ample access to library services. (To the extent that unincorporated residents boost a library's circulation figures, they also lead to the library receiving more County funds.) Rural unincorporated residents also pay a lower tax rate, but because they're often miles from a library and pay taxes on lots of farmland, they don't draw fire like their urban counterparts.

What is interesting is that libraries and unincorporated residents share something in common: a desire for independence. Residents of unincorporated areas don't want to be swallowed up by a bigger city any more than most of the library leaders we met with want their libraries swallowed up by a county-wide library. In both cases, the value of independence is paramount. Unincorporated residents seem no likelier than library leaders to shift their perspective. Why not ride the horse the direction it's headed and respect one another's desire for independence?

Doing this would allow for a new approach. Instead of viewing unincorporated residents as a problem, what if libraries looked at them as an untapped resource? What if unincorporated residents had representation within WCCLS that reflected their financial contribution towards library services?

Building the voice of unincorporated residents within WCCLS would provide several benefits. Libraries would understand the unincorporated residents' perspective and be better able to appeal to them as library users and taxpayers. They could seed relationships within communities ripe for new libraries, such as Aloha and Gaston, and perhaps serve as catalysts and advisors. They could build leaders who can speak to their fellow unincorporated residents authoritatively and persuasively.

Washington County commissioners could appoint enough unincorporated residents to the WCCLS Executive Board to reflect their financial contribution to libraries. Another option would be for WCCLS to form a nominating committee, like nonprofits do, and recommend candidates to the commissioners.

"There's no prerequisite to belong to the club. Anybody can come. Everyone waits in line, whether it's the mayor or someone who just moved here."

Different needs

There are tensions between large and small, rich and poor libraries, each of which have distinct needs.

Interviews with directors of other library systems showed that they are rethinking how to work with different libraries. Whereas most directors began their work expecting to

provide the same services for all libraries, that is no longer the case. Instead, they tailor services to the needs of each library in the system. To paraphrase one system director, there's nothing more unequal than pretending that unequals are equal.

WCCLS and its member libraries should explore whether they could reduce the tensions among their libraries by providing some services to all and other services to subsets of member libraries. To the extent that tensions are caused by trying to squish square pegs into round holes, being able to tailor services could reduce some of those tensions.

The operations subgroup at the March 2009 planning session developed a preliminary list of what could be done centrally. It would be worth exploring that list with the idea that not every library would need to use every service. It is also important that WCCLS be clear about what services must be common to all libraries so as not to risk losing the cooperative nature of the organization or eliminating important economies of scale.

Funding formula

The funding formula drives operations and leads libraries to compete instead of cooperate and focus on short-term gain rather than a long-term plan.

That is what the operations subgroup said at the planning session in March 2009. The best time to reconsider the library funding formula will be *after* WCCLS and its members more fully construct their picture of the ideal library operation in Washington County. With that picture in front of them, they will be able to construct a formula that rewards the action that leads to the changes they want. Without the picture, libraries would likely make small changes that don't get them far enough or that moves them in the wrong direction.

Shared process

WCCLS is lacking a statement of how its members will work together.

WCCLS could benefit from working with its members to create a statement of philosophy or guiding principles. By developing agreement regarding how they will work together, it could help reduce the time it takes to agree on specific issues and actions. This could address the complaint about too many meetings.

The Consensus team was impressed with how well WCCLS Executive Board and Policy Group members responded to the opportunity to create a picture of their ideal library system. There was energy, there was laughter, people were engaged and contributing. It was exciting to watch. A statement of philosophy or guiding principles can help keep that energy going by giving WCCLS leaders the opportunity to talk about

how they want to do what they do. What are their highest values? What principles govern their behavior as colleagues?

The folks at OWLS (Outagamie Waupaca Library System in Appleton, Wisconsin) created a statement of philosophy in the 1980s and update it every couple of years, which the director says is part of the reason for the high level of respect and trust among members.

Thinking about values and principles can help a group be its best self, consistently, even as members of the group inevitably move on and are replaced. It's worth the effort.

County-wide projects

Opportunities for county-wide projects have not been fully explored.

WCCLS and/or its member libraries should pursue philanthropic or corporate funding for special county-wide projects. Such projects would spotlight what libraries can accomplish when all are united towards a common goal and will likely attract more publicity (and more positive publicity) than any one library working on its own.

An example is the King County Library System project where each library opened an hour early to provide services to people dealing with the economy. One or more such projects could be an especially good idea the year before asking voters to approve a new levy or a permanent rate.

Philanthropic and corporate funders tend to be fans of collaborative work and would be likely to underwrite programs like this. WCCLS should look into the most efficient method of raising philanthropic and corporate funds. Depending on Washington County rules, it may be establishing a separate foundation or it may be contracting with a larger library for the services of its grantwriter or fundraiser.

What should WCCLS libraries do to become a library district?

While WCCLS members aren't ready to make an immediate change in funding and governance, they have completed the initial phases of a process that, if they wanted them to, could take them toward a change.

This section outlines the steps WCCLS has taken so far, the potential triggers for reconsidering a change in funding and/or governance, and the activities that would be involved in moving forward. In addition, we have suggested some steps WCCLS could take to prepare for a change, even before making a firm decision.

The activities in each phase may occur simultaneously or one after another. It's difficult to give a specific timetable for how long a change might take from the investigation phase to the startup phase, but we have given some general guidelines for how much time you might expect. Note that the decision-making phase can begin right after the investigation stage, or can be put off for a later date.

1 year	Investigation phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open discussion about changing funding and/or governance. • Study what is possible under state law. • Research other systems. • Get preliminary input from stakeholders.
(can happen immediately or at any time later)	Decision-making phase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wait-and-see activities. • Questions to ask before moving ahead.
1 year	Detailed planning phase
1 year	Election campaign phase
	Start-up phase

Investigation phase: study the options, assess the current system and gather public input

Sometimes an institution makes a change as the result of a crisis. Other times, a calm moment between challenges provides the breathing space needed to prepare for the future. WCCLS and its member libraries used the mid-point in the most recent local option levy cycle to assess their current system of funding and governance, and ask whether it is time for a change. While library leaders say there is still more information

they would need before making final decisions, as the result of this study the libraries of Washington County have substantially completed the investigation phase.

Decision-making phase: move ahead with a change, stay with the current system or wait and decide later

In our research, we have identified a number of reasons why libraries decided to move to a wider unit of service. Some of the reasons have included:

- As a city budget shrinks, city administrators see a cost saving in becoming part of a wider unit of service. This is most common when there is an economic downturn.
- City administrators expect that wider units of service will be more efficient.
- There is a desire to provide service to residents of unincorporated areas.
- Funding cuts at the state, county or city level prompt a search for cost savings.
- Libraries are forced to reduce hours, cut staff or close due to decreased revenues.
- Demand for library services increases without an increase in funding to support them.
- Libraries are not being built in areas where they are needed.
- Government authorities at the state, county or city level push consolidation of governments and government services of all types because they believe it will lead to greater efficiency.
- Concern about stability of the current system becomes strong enough to push people to call for a change.
- A community studies trends and options and determines it could provide better library service if it changed funding and/or governance.

In a number of communities around the U.S., libraries have investigated only to decide not to make a change, or that the timing was not right to make a change. This is normal. After investigation, the current system may look pretty decent compared with the unknowns of a new system. But as a result of the process, planners may find that they're thinking about things in a new way or are seeing possibilities that they didn't see before. And sometimes people simply need time to envision a new system before deciding to give it a try. Each community must make its own decisions in its own time.

"Your local library reflects your community and is part of your community."

If WCCLS decides that now is not the time to make a decision, we suggest some activities to pursue between the end of this study and the beginning of a more formal decision-making phase.

Activities to consider during the “wait-and-see” period:

- **Share thinking about the pros and cons of moving forward** with other groups. The discussions around changing funding and/or governance in Washington County have been eye-opening and thought-provoking for almost everyone who has been exposed to them. Take the opportunity to widen and deepen the knowledge about library systems by sharing the results of this study. Visit with groups you think might support a change, as well as those that might oppose a change.
- **Begin to run the idea of a change by opinion leaders who might support you.** Even without an election date in mind, it’s never too early to start talking to potential political supporters.
- **Talk to library staff.** Seek out additional opportunities to share the ideas that came out of this process with library staff, Friends groups, board members, trustees, and others within the library family.
- **Develop a plan to share your current thinking with key civic, cultural and community groups.** Some communities have found partnerships for change by sharing their issues and ideas with other arts and cultural organizations. Consider planning to share your preliminary thoughts with other key cultural leaders in the community.
- **Continue to test the waters** to see where support and opposition might lie.
- **Monitor progress** in other districts in Oregon and nationwide.
- **Do further public education.** Although many library staff people believe the public is not interested in funding and governance, it is possible to make the topic interesting and engaging, and with a little effort the public will pay attention. This budding interest can be nurtured by giving the community more opportunities to learn about and discuss various options for library service. You can continue this educational process through case studies of other library systems on your web site and in newsletters; making it a topic for blogs and library director’s letters in newsletters; or even develop a speakers’ series for all of your libraries that focuses on the future of libraries and the importance of funding and governance to their health.

- **Work to change Oregon law.** Consensus also believes that a small but dedicated group of involved citizens can make a change in public policy. If the makeup of a special district board is a stumbling point to a structure that would otherwise be appealing, work to change state law. Ask the state librarian to identify other libraries that want the same change, and form an alliance.
- **Add the question, “Is it time?” to your yearly strategic planning.**

You may never decide it’s time to move forward with a change in funding and/or governance, or you may decide later this year or next year. In any case, before you move ahead into the detailed planning phase, we suggest you ask yourselves the following questions. These questions are based upon interviews with directors of other districts as well as analysis of efforts that did not receive voter approval.

Questions to ask before moving forward:

- **Is your leadership 100 percent committed to making this change happen?** You face an even greater uphill battle if you have substantial numbers of doubters who will not support your efforts.
- **Can you make a compelling argument for why change is necessary,** and why it should happen now?
- **Do you have the funds to successfully support the battle for a change?** You may need legal assistance, outside consultants, funds for printing, public relations and advertising. Since public funds cannot be used, you will need to identify sources of private funds.
- **Will city and county government leaders support the change?** No change would happen without the support of the WCCLS Executive Board, and it is hard to imagine change without the support of the county commissioners. Take the time to build support within city and county government.

Detailed Planning Phase: after deciding to move ahead with a change, form a task force and make specific decisions about the new unit of governance

Once WCCLS decides to form a district or make another similarly major structural change, it must move on to next steps. Change triggers a series of activities to flesh out the details of the proposed change, develop information that will be required before the change goes to a public vote, and to simultaneously prepare the public for an election campaign. Some of these activities include:

- **Form a task force:** While you have made a decision about what type of change in funding and/or governance you will pursue, there are still many decisions and calculations to be made. Many libraries find it effective to form a task force made up of a broad representation of community stakeholders. The task force will need to resolve a number of important issues. A typical process the task force might follow could include:
 - a. **Develop general principals for how it will work together.** For example, the Multnomah task force decided that any change it recommended would have to improve library services. The general principals will form the ground rules that the task force will use while it is deliberating.
 - b. **Address specific issues including:**
 - **Tax equity.** The task force will need to reach consensus about what is fair and make sure that the argument for fairness will appeal to voters.
 - **Power sharing.** The task force will need to find a system of power sharing that allows cities to feel they are getting an appropriate value for the dollars they pay to the system or district to provide services. Some of the options they might consider could include developing a long-range plan that shows how each library or geographic area will benefit, or requiring the maintenance of local advisory committees at least during the initial years of a new type of system.
 - **Exact district boundaries.** If the county lines will not be the boundaries, what boundaries will be used?
 - **Board membership.** If a library district is the chosen form of change, the task force must agree upon whether the governing board will be made up of at-large representatives or whether board members will represent the entire county.
 - **How fundraising will be handled.** Whether Friends groups will continue, and how local fundraising will be handled must be worked out.
 - **Distribution of capital assets.** As our research indicates, the ownership and ongoing maintenance of capital assets can be a challenge for new districts.
 - **Union agreements regarding staff salaries and policies.**
 - c. **If the change involves setting a permanent rate, consider the upper limit and the initial rate.**

- Experts recommend creating a draft operational budget for the first year, estimating the cost of services and the amount expected from the tax and non-tax sources.
 - Check in with political experts or do polling to see what tax rate voters are likely to approve.
 - Develop a fact sheet that explains in simple and clear terms how the new district will be funded.
 - Develop agreements with cities and the county to issue statements that guarantee they will reduce or remove library taxes if a permanent rate is adopted.
 - Develop a cost analysis showing the current cost for programs and services versus spending and enhanced services within a wider unit of service.
- d. Develop a clear plan of service for the new district or system.**
- e. Enhance marketing efforts to prepare patrons, voters, elected officials and the media for the public election process.**
- f. Retain legal counsel.**
- g. Issue task force report.**
- If the report recommends a change in funding and/or governance, it will need to be approved by the board of county commissioners, local city councils and both WCCLS boards.
 - Allow for public input into the report.
 - Modify the report as necessary.

Election Campaign Phase: Once the details are worked out, get the issue on the ballot and ask voters for approval

Now that the task force has completed its work, you will need to start a campaign committee to spearhead the election campaign. The budget required for a public vote can vary widely. Some of the basic expenses will generally include legal counsel, consultants for polling and marketing or public relations, printing and distribution, advertising, and running the election campaign. Many activities can be handled by volunteers, recognizing that volunteer efforts require intensive support.

Some of the activities required during this phase may include:

- Draft a petition including the name of the district, boundaries and board makeup. Collect signatures of the percentage of voters required to get the measure on the ballot. Submit the petition for certification.
- Governing bodies may call for a public hearing to discuss the proposed change.
- Form a political committee made up of public relations consultants, members of Friends groups, library board members and others.
- Conduct a telephone poll to assess voters' positions.
- Analyze past voting records.
- Seek endorsements and contributions.
- Conduct a grassroots campaign.
- Develop an implementation committee to begin preparing for a successful outcome.
- Prepare for failure. Many campaigns for change are not successful the first time.

Start-up Phase: Activities required to transition from the old system to the new one

After voters approve your change, there is still work to be done. Your implementation committee should have gotten a head start on some of these tasks. Typical activities during the implementation phase may include:

- Dissolve the old governing agency if necessary
- Transfer building titles
- Purchase computer system
- Arrange contracts for services previously provided by cities or the county
- Hire administrative staff
- Merge library catalogues

And, finally, be sure to celebrate. If WCCLS and its libraries choose to form a district, it's a safe bet that this action is absolutely necessary or it would not be happening. If you've come this far, it means the group has worked together, struggled together, and successfully made its case to hundreds of government, library, and civic leaders, and thousands of Washington County voters. You have earned a party.

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Appendix A

What is the current state of libraries in Washington County?

What is the current method of funding and governing libraries?

Washington County Cooperative Library Services (WCCLS) is a county/city/nonprofit partnership that includes 14 public libraries. It is governed by the Washington County Board of Commissioners, which convenes the Executive Board to advise it. Among others, the Executive Board is composed of chief administrative officers of 11 municipal libraries. The commissioners also convene the Policy Group, which includes the directors of member libraries. The Executive Board deals with funding and long-term governance and funding strategies, while the Policy Group deals with operations and policy implementation.

WCCLS will receive a total of about \$21.4 million in FY08-09. About two-thirds comes from the Washington County general fund, and about one-third comes from a four-year local option levy, which expires in 2011. In general, county funds pay for WCCLS central services (website, catalog, publicity, courier, etc.) and for library operations (staff, books, occupancy). County funds cover an average of 65 percent of library revenue. Cities and nonprofits pay for some operations and all capital costs.

There is no central body that determines where libraries should be located, their size or what they should provide. Cities with existing libraries can expand or build branches whenever they choose, and cities without libraries can choose to build new ones. There is no government-driven method for siting libraries in unincorporated areas. This is complicated by the fact that Washington County's population is growing rapidly, in both cities and urban unincorporated areas.

How do WCCLS libraries compare to the state and the nation?

The most recent national data are for 2005, which was a low-funding year for WCCLS after the failure of a local option levy in 2002, so we also provide 2008 WCCLS figures for comparison.

Library-by-library breakdowns are available in the earlier report, *An Exploration: How should the libraries of Washington County be funded and governed?* It is important to note that the range varies widely from library to library. For example, for 2008 materials expenditure per capita the range was from \$2.14 in North Plains to \$7.18 in Tualatin, and visits per capita in 2008 ranged from 13.6 in Garden Home to 3.2 in Cornelius.

	National avg. 2005	Oregon avg. 2005	WCCLS avg. 2005	WCCLS avg. 2008
Expenditure per capita	\$30.11	\$40.25	\$40.11	\$43.83
Materials expenditure per capita	\$3.99	\$4.96	\$4.03	\$5.04
Volumes per capita	2.8	2.9	2.1	2.2
Expenditure per circulation	\$4.34	\$2.75	\$2.88	\$2.62
Visits per capita	4.6	6.1	6.6	6.9
Circulation per capita	6.9	14.6	13.9	16.8
Visits per hour	36.6	43.7	93.6	91.5
Square feet per capita	0.58	N/A		.51

How do WCCLS libraries stack up in relation to the OLA standards?

The standards are voluntary, for levels of quality that include threshold, adequate or excellent. The county's libraries are below OLA standards for adequate staff, buildings, materials and hours open.

For purposes of this report we propose closing the materials gap by buying (at \$35 each) enough extra materials in a 10-year period to meet the adequate standards. The costs are substantial. The 2007-08 materials spending was just short of \$2 million, so adding \$609,809 annually would be a major expense. Current staff costs are about \$15 million, so the added \$802,047 for basic level staffing, while substantial, is less an impact than the materials changes. The largest cost would, of course, be capital. We calculated 4.5% bonds over 25 years and the standard size building for each community. We also used a very modest \$175 per-square-foot building cost. The sum total of estimates for meeting standards is more than \$6.5 million per year.

Who pays how much for libraries in Washington County?

Tax capacity, the property value per resident, varies within Washington County. Tax capacity ranges from Tualatin, with \$103,716 in assessed value per capita, to Cornelius, with \$45,354. Wealthier communities can raise more money with a lower tax rate than poorer communities. While wealthier communities may pay more for their libraries per capita, that may actually reflect a much smaller tax bite than a smaller per-capita rate in the poorer community next door.

We calculated the total library revenue from the county and city general funds and for capital to determine the 2008 tax rate per thousand of assessed value for communities with municipal libraries. Cedar Mill, Garden Home and West Slope are combined

because they, along with the unincorporated area, are all subject to only the county tax rate.

Library	2008 tax rate
Banks	\$1.11
Beaverton	\$0.95
Cornelius	\$0.58
Forest Grove	\$0.86
Hillsboro	\$0.85
North Plains	\$0.93
Sherwood	\$0.69
Tigard	\$0.92
Tualatin	\$0.76
Unincorporated & other	\$0.48
Average	\$0.68

What would it cost to harmonize salaries in a consolidated district?

The total staff expenditure per employee ranges 2.5 to 1 between Tigard (high) and Garden Home (low). If the libraries became part of one library district, salaries would need to be harmonized, and they are usually harmonized to the highest rather than lowest common denominator. To harmonize the salary structure to the highest common denominator would add \$2.4 million to the payroll costs, or 8.6%. In most consolidations, there is some attrition in total administrative costs, and a case could be made for paying managers of smaller branches less than those of larger ones, but the variances would still require a large infusion of salary dollars or a significant cut in the total workforce.

Why does a difference between municipal and service populations matter?

If you live in a city with a municipal library, you pay more for that library than does someone who lives in another city or in the unincorporated area. That's because you pay the county taxes that cover an average of 65% of libraries' operating costs, *plus* you pay city taxes that pay for the rest of your library's operations and all of its capital costs.

Because WCCLS distributes county funds based on circulation, a library does get reimbursed for usage by outsiders, but that only covers a portion of operating costs.

Every library circulates materials to residents of that community and to outsiders. For example, of total circulation at Hillsboro libraries, 58 percent was to Hillsboro residents, 32 percent to unincorporated residents, and 9 percent to residents of other cities in Washington County. At the Banks library, 33 percent of total circulation was to Banks residents, 63 percent to unincorporated residents and 4 percent to residents of other cities.

Leaders of Washington County's libraries tend to be most concerned about usage by residents of unincorporated areas, not about residents of other cities. Unincorporated residents make up about 42 percent of the total county population. The large number of unincorporated residents means that there can be a big difference between a library's municipal population and its service population. For example:

- At the Banks library, the total service population includes 28 percent Banks residents and 71 percent unincorporated residents.
- Hillsboro's total service population includes 54 percent Hillsboro and 46 percent unincorporated residents.
- The North Plains total service population includes 61 percent North Plains residents and 39 percent unincorporated residents.
- For the libraries in Forest Grove, Tigard and Beaverton, the total service population includes about 72 percent city residents and 28 percent unincorporated residents.

Appendix B

What are the major options for new models?

Oregon law allows for municipal libraries, cooperatives, and consolidated options such as county libraries, special districts and county service districts.

Nationwide, municipal libraries are the most common. They make up about 80 percent of all libraries, but they serve only about one-third of the population because they tend to serve smaller populations than the others. Within Washington County, most libraries are municipal libraries that are also members of the WCCLS cooperative. The libraries serve the public and WCCLS serves its member libraries.

Special district library: Special districts are units of government that have the power to levy taxes and issue bonds. They tend to have more stable funding than other types of libraries because they don't compete with other city or county departments and because funds remaining can be rolled forward and used the next year. Special districts in Oregon can be consolidated or cooperative, but all have a permanent tax levy. "Permanent" means it can't ever be increased or eliminated. Oregon law mandates a five-person elected board, which may be elected as a whole or by district. Eighteen public libraries in Oregon are special districts. The special district is the fastest-growing form of library nationwide, and is allowed in some 20 states.

County service district library: This option includes a board appointed by the Board of County Commissioners and a permanent tax levy, and it can be organized anywhere on the continuum between a consolidated library and a loosely cooperative system. Cities can continue to provide funds for capital and some operations. In 2008, Clackamas County voters approved a county service district that includes a \$0.39 permanent tax, enough to allow every municipal library in the county to reach the "threshold" OLA standard. The county's libraries are served by a cooperative, much like WCCLS, which provides centralized services. There are five Oregon libraries using the county service district model.

County library system. This option would require that the library system is a department of Washington County government, with the level of funding for operations and buildings decided by the county board of commissioners. The commissioners would govern the library and the commissioners would appoint citizens to a library advisory board to oversee library operations. There are four county libraries in Oregon, including Multnomah County Library. Nationwide, the most typical type of consolidated library is the county library system, which is allowed in 39 states.

Appendix C

What did Washington Countians say about changing libraries?

Consensus was tasked with finding out what model of library funding and governance WCCLS stakeholders find most compelling, and identifying the tradeoffs and consequences that people were and were not willing to accept on the road to an improved system. This required several steps.

Narrowing the options

The Executive Board and Policy Group reviewed the data and considered four options for changing governance and funding: special district, county system, county service district, and an alternative tax like a sales or income tax that would replace the local option levy. Leaders selected the special and service district models as being worth consideration. The other two options were set aside.

Conversations about the options, their tradeoffs and consequences

Consensus held 12 meetings with library groups and four with members of the public, and it posted online surveys that were completed by staff members and the public. In the meetings, people considered three options for changing funding and governance: consolidated special district, cooperative service district and consolidated service district. The conversation was structured to assure that people considered the major tradeoffs and areas of conflict related to how libraries are funded and governed. The online surveys were designed around those tradeoffs and areas of conflict, rather than around the three options.

Consensus previously provided the notes from each meeting to WCCLS. What follows are the major themes, areas of tension, and key points from various perspectives.

1. Local control is the most important issue in choosing a library system.

Tension: While some see local control as allowing a library to be responsive to its community, others see local control as hindering consistency and shared standards across the county.

- Local governments are not willing to give up libraries.
- Most patrons don't know or care who controls libraries.
- For funding, local control includes allowing local donors to fund individual libraries.

- For governance, local control means having the voice of each library represented in decision-making.
- The local flavor of each library should be built into any system.
- Local control can be cumbersome and inefficient.

2. Views about whether cities or the county should govern libraries are mixed.

Tension: While the current relationship between libraries and WCCLS is considered good, people put more trust in city control than county governance.

- Cities should own library buildings.
- Library governance should be as close to end-users as possible.
- Library service is essentially a city, not a county, function.
- The libraries have a good relationship with the County.

3. Standardization is seen by some as an advantage but raises fears in others.

Tension: While many participants spoke of the value to patrons of having consistent policies and standards for all libraries, many worry that standardization would lead to a watering-down of services at some libraries.

- Standardizing policies across Washington County could lead to a watering-down of services for some.
- Different communities have different standards for library excellence.
- Different standards mean patrons get unequal services.
- A consolidated system could standardize services across the county.
- Smaller libraries could be closed if they didn't meet standards.
- The best way to prepare for future growth is to develop a baseline standard across the county.
- The current funding formula emphasizes inequities.

4. Stable funding is an important long-term goal.

Tension: Stable funding is good, but not if the price is libraries closing, having to reduce the level of service they currently provide, or still needing to use a local option levy.

- A permanent levy is better than the local option levy.
- Setting the permanent rate will be difficult because the incorporated and unincorporated areas have different mindsets.
- People may not trust the permanent levy enough to vote for it, especially if the cities and county don't cut their taxes by the same amount.

- Maintaining local control and not closing existing libraries are more important than stable funding.
- If a permanent levy is chosen, there must be a way for local donors to fund local libraries.
- Few people understand how libraries are currently funded.

5. Opposing views of the urban unincorporated areas complicate the discussion of a better library system.

Tension: While some prefer to solve the larger problem of urban unincorporated areas before changing the library system, others believe a new library system must work around the urban unincorporated problem.

- Cities should not support libraries in unincorporated areas.
- The problem for libraries can be solved by bringing all urban unincorporated areas into cities.
- People don't necessarily choose unincorporated areas because they want to pay lower taxes and shouldn't be denied services because of where they live.
- Residents of urban unincorporated areas should be taxed for the library services they use.
- Residents of urban unincorporated areas would like to have more say in where libraries are located.
- The current system provides ample opportunities for interested groups to create new libraries.
- Urban unincorporated areas have no means of getting new libraries sited.
- Residents of unincorporated areas who don't use libraries shouldn't have to support them.
- The most important value is making sure everyone can use libraries, no matter who pays how much.

6. The biggest drawback to a special district is the five-person board.

Tension: A special district offers the most attractive funding model, but raises serious governance concerns because a five-member board is not seen as being able to fairly represent each local library.

- An elected board is better than an appointed board, but is still subject to the politics of getting elected and reelected.
- Local groups that serve as advisors to a five-person board might be a good option.
- A special district board needs to give a voice to both large and small libraries.
- Each city must be represented on a board.

- Voters won't have much recourse if elected board members are not responsive.

7. The impact of changes on volunteers, Friends group and staff members is a concern.

Tension: While changes in governance could lead to more efficiency, libraries value their current control over staff, volunteers and relationships with Friends groups.

- It is more efficient to be able to hire and move staff around in a county-wide library.
- Stable staff salaries would make the system stronger.
- Several libraries rely on volunteers to supplement staff and would not support a change that affected their ability to engage volunteers.
- Centralized hiring and management could threaten local support.
- In a centralized system, Friends' groups could take on an expanded role in ensuring the local flavor of libraries.

8. Big libraries and small libraries bring distinctly different values and concerns to the table.

Tension: Although big libraries and small libraries have distinctly different needs, participants prefer a system that caters to both.

- Big libraries say they will be asked to lower their standards to the lowest common denominator.
- Small libraries say that smaller libraries' voices will be left out of a system with an elected or appointed five-person board.
- Small libraries say that smaller libraries could be viewed as unnecessary and closed.

At the end of each meeting, we asked participants to complete surveys. The 147 participants in 12 library meetings provided the following responses.

	#1: Coop. Service Dist.	#2: Consol. Service Dist.	#3: Special District	Other: Three libraries created their own options.
Which of the three scenarios would best deal with the trends you identified?	35.9%	4.6%	37.4%	22.3%
Which would provide the best quality of service to residents of the whole county?	21.4%	10.7%	53.4%	12.3%

Which is fairest in terms of who pays how much for library services?	16.3%	9.8%	59.3%	14.6%	
Which scenario would best allow Washington County's libraries to serve the growing population?	18.4%	9.6%	56.8%	15.2%	
	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Libraries should be owned and operated at the local (city/community) level.	58.7%	21%	9.1%	9.8%	1.4%
Libraries should be governed at the county level.	4.2%	16.7%	16.7%	30.6%	31.9%
Every resident of Washington County should pay the same amount for library services.	27.1%	29.2%	11.8%	22.2%	9.7%
It is important to maintain the connection between libraries and county government.	14.7%	20.3%	28.7%	25.9%	10.5%

The public and staff members weigh in via an online survey

Consensus created deliberative surveys, which asked respondents to consider the values and considerations of those who may hold other views, and posted them online. The surveys, which were publicized by each library and in the WCCLS newsletter mailed to every household in the county, drew 1,192 public responses and 81 staff responses. Anyone could take the survey; the respondents do not represent a random sample of Washington County residents or library staff members.

Of all public respondents, 73.5 percent were women and 87.3 percent reported their race as white or Caucasian. Asian/Pacific Islanders made up 5.7 percent of respondents and Hispanic/Spanish or Latino included 1.5 percent of the total. Asked where they live, 58.6 percent said in an incorporated city and 31.4 percent said in an unincorporated area. The percent reporting that they visited each library most often was roughly the same as the percent in each library's service population. 76.5 percent said the library they visited most often was very important to their personal or work lives.

Of staff respondents, the average time worked at a library was 8.70 years, the average age was 43.34 years, and the vast majority of respondents were white/Caucasian females. All types of staff responded, including four library directors, 46 other full-time employees, six temporary or substitute employees, and 25 part-time employees.

Selected questions and answers from the survey include:

Currently, libraries in Washington County provide services on their own and are operated by a city or are operated as independent nonprofit libraries. All libraries have a high degree of local control with most decisions made locally. Where do you think library decisions SHOULD be made?	Public Percent (Number)	Staff members Percent (Number)
All decisions made centrally at the county level	3.3% (39)	5.1% (4)
Most decisions centrally at the county level	20.9% (244)	27.8% (22)
Most decisions made locally by individual libraries	64.2% (748)	63.3% (50)
All decisions made locally by individual libraries	11.5% (134)	3.8% (3)

In making your choice about library services, which one of the following values played the greatest role?	Public Percent (Number)	Staff Percent (Number)
Each library should control its own affairs, even if doing so means some library staffers do the same jobs at different libraries for different pay. <i>(Not in public survey.)</i>	N/A	5.1% (4)
Each library should control its own affairs, even if that's less efficient.	3.8% (43)	5.1% (4)
The libraries should centralize, even if it means that some employees could lose their jobs. <i>(Not in public survey.)</i>	N/A	2.6% (2)
Centralizing might break the connection between library and community.	42.3% (480)	44.9% (35)
Rapid population growth means local control is necessary so that decisions are responsive.	22.7% (258)	11.5% (9)
Rapid population growth means central control is necessary so we can locate libraries where people live.	12.6% (143)	17.9% (14)
Decisions made at the county level are more efficient.	10.4% (118)	10.3% (8)
Independent libraries mean better service. <i>(Not in staff survey.)</i>	8.3% (94)	N/A
Centralized decision-making will reduce library staff morale. <i>(Not in public survey.)</i>	N/A	2.6% (2)

No response	56	3
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Members of the public who thought decisions should be made at the local level were most likely to cite the value of the “connection between the library and the community,” while those who thought decisions should be made at the county level were most likely to cite the value that county-level decisions are more efficient.

Which one of the statements below best expresses your opinion about who should make library decisions?	Public Percent (Number)	Staff Percent (Number)
There should be one elected board of directors to govern all libraries in Washington County.	23.1% (247)	16.2% (12)
The Board of County Commissioners should appoint a board of directors to govern all libraries in Washington County.	21.6% (231)	23.0% (17)
Each library should have its own library board and there should be no central board over all libraries in the county.	55.2% (590)	60.8% (45)

If our county did opt for central planning, one way to do it is for the libraries to “consolidate” into one entity with many branches. The consolidated library could be part of county government or it could be its own independent unit of government. Even if you don’t agree with consolidation, which option do you think would be better?

Three quarters (75.6%) of public respondents and three quarters (75.3%) of staff respondents said that a consolidated county library should be its own independent unit of government separate from the county.

In making your choice about a library district’s connection to government, which one of the following considerations played the biggest role?	Public Percent (Number)	Staff Percent (Number)
I trust county government more than I would trust an independent district.	5.1% (54)	3.9% (3)
I trust an independent district more than I would trust county government.	24.9% (266)	15.8% (12)
Government will provide oversight and keep libraries accountable.	10.4% (111)	6.6% (5)

An independent district could focus only on library services.	41.5% (444)	59.2% (45)
Moving the library district outside county government may free up county tax dollars to be used for other services.	3.7% (40)	1.3% (1)
An independent district would be another layer of government and we don't need it.	14.4% (154)	13.2% (10)

Currently, County tax dollars pay about 65% of the cost to operate all the libraries in Washington County. To cover the rest of the cost, people in different parts of the county pay very different tax rates. Which of the following statements best reflects your opinion about this?	Public Percent (Number)	Staff Percent (Number)
Everybody should pay the same tax rate for library services.	51.0% (572)	66.7% (52)
Each city or community should decide how much it spends, even if that means that residents pay different rates for library services.	49.0% (550)	33.3% (26)

Whether a member of the public lived in an incorporated or unincorporated area made no difference in which answer they selected. For both, the responses were split evenly.

In making your choices about library funding, which one of the following considerations played the biggest role?	Public Percent (Number)	Staff Percent (Number)
If everyone paid the same tax rate, I would probably have to pay more.	1.8% (20)	1.3% (1)
It is fairer for everybody to pay the same rate.	10.7% (121)	10.3% (8)
Residents should be able to spend more if they want a better library.	37.3% (420)	25.6% (20)
If everyone paid the same tax rate, I would probably pay less.	2.1% (24)	2.6% (2)
Since anyone can use any library, it would make more sense if everybody paid the same rate.	41.6% (468)	55.1% (43)

If people don't want to spend more on libraries, they shouldn't have to.	6.5% (73)	3.8% (3)
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How important is it to you that libraries are controlled at the local (city/community) level rather than the county level?	Public Percent (Number)
Very important	21.9% (251)
Somewhat important	36.9% (424)
Neutral	24.0% (275)
Not very important	8.6% (99)
Not at all important	4.1% (47)
Don't know	4.5% (52)

The next question asked respondents to think about what would cause them to spend more on library services, because that provides a clear indication of what they consider most valuable.

I would be willing to pay an additional \$20 per year for libraries if...	Public Percent (Number)
My own city or town had control.	49.1% (452)
The library was operated by a countywide authority.	20.6% (184)
I was paying the same tax rate as everyone else.	58.7% (553)
I thought I would receive better library services.	87.8% (899)
I thought my city or town would receive better library services.	82.0% (809)
I thought everyone in the county would receive better services.	76.2% (757)
I would never be willing to pay more in taxes for libraries.	8.2% (73)

There were only very slight differences between people living in unincorporated and incorporated areas. Slightly more (2.5%) city residents favored a countywide authority, and slightly more (2.3%) of unincorporated residents said that receiving better library services would get them to pay \$20 more. More (5.3%) unincorporated residents said they would pay more if everyone in the county received better services, and more city residents said they would never pay more for libraries, by 9.1% to 5.4%.

If the county chose to consolidate libraries, staff members would have a special concern regarding their employment situation. We asked two questions, one about their current

situation versus being a County employee, and the second about being a County employee versus being a special district employee.

Depending on the option selected, library staff members could continue to be employed by their municipality or library, or they could be county employees. In thinking of your job, career or personal situation, which one of the following do you think would be better?	Staff Percent (Number)
Being a County employee	16.3% (13)
Continuing to be an employee of the municipality or library where I work	56.3% (45)
Don't know	27.5% (22)

Almost half said their biggest consideration was that they were not sure what to expect with the County, but they knew what to expect with their current employer.

Another option is for libraries to operate as a special district, which would be its own unit of government apart from the county or municipal governments. If it was a choice between being employed by a special district or by Washington County, which would you prefer?	Staff Percent (Number)
Being an employee of a special district	44.2% (34)
Being a County employee	14.3% (11)
Don't know	41.6% (32)
No response	4

When asked to think about the impact of a change on their colleagues, staff members said the current situation was preferable.

In thinking about how libraries are structured might affect the job, career or personal situations of your co-workers, which one of the following do you think would be better?	Staff Percent (Number)
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Making them county employees	6.3% (5)
Continuing not be employees of the municipality or library in which they work	46.8% (37)
Making them employees of a special district	15.2% (12)
Don't know	31.6% (25)
No response	2

APPENDIX D

Comparison of Wider Unit Libraries

Types of Libraries in the U.S.

There are 9,211 library entities in the U.S. according to IMLS.

IMLS defines nine basic types of library organization.

1. City-County
2. City (Municipal)
3. County
4. Library District
5. Multijurisdictional Library
6. Native Library
7. Non-Profit
8. Special Districts
9. Other type

Libraries in U.S. Sorted by Organizational Type

Legislative Basis	Population of Legal Service area	Number of Library Agencies	Percent of Population Served	Percent of Library Agencies
City-County	8,524,690	113	2.9%	1.2%
City (Municipal)	97,437,717	4,872	33.3%	52.9%
County	90,899,596	907	31.1%	9.8%
Library District	37,925,840	1,319	13.0%	14.3%
Multijurisdictional Library	24,551,897	310	8.4%	3.4%
Native Library	254,544	47	0.1%	0.5%
Non-Profit	25,787,679	1,371	8.8%	14.9%
Other type	3,222,642	90	1.1%	1.0%
Special Districts	3,957,425	182	1.4%	2.0%
Totals	292,562,030	9,211	100.0%	100.0%

Caveats

This document relies somewhat on counties as an entity to define peer communities, but several things must be noted about the use of counties in the U.S.

Counties as a jurisdictional unit are problematic because not all states use them uniformly. Rhode Island, for instance, has jurisdictions called counties and the federal data allow us to organize libraries into counties for Rhode Island, but counties have no legal or jurisdictional standing in Rhode Island. Conversely, all units of library service in Maryland are counties with the exception of Baltimore.

The validity of using county units varies by area of the country. County units prevail in the Old South but the structure and relevance of counties vary as we consider states that were added to the Union after the original thirteen. The inclusion of multi-jurisdictional libraries and city-county libraries only compounds the trouble.

Nevertheless, Consensus has developed a rough method for defining library entities that are close in size to Washington County, Oregon, but are organized as wider units rather than the municipal libraries found in Washington County. The comparisons cannot and will not be perfect because of the widely varied nature of U.S. jurisdictional definitions. Furthermore, many states do not even allow for wider units of library structure beyond municipal libraries so comparisons of this sort become problematic from their beginning.

Sorting by library type

For purposes of this report, we have excluded the city (municipal) libraries, native libraries, non-profit, and other types of libraries. Only City-County, County, Library District, Multijurisdictional, and Special District libraries have been included.

Of the 9,211 libraries in the U.S. 2,831 are wider unit libraries. These wider unit libraries serve the majority (57%) of the population with about a third (31%) of the library agencies.

County, City-County, Multijurisdictional, and Special District Libraries in the U.S.

Legislative Basis	Population of Legal Service area	Number of Library Agencies	Percent of Population Served	Percent of Library Agencies
City-County	8,524,690	113	5.1%	4.0%
County	90,899,596	907	54.8%	32.0%
Library District	37,925,840	1,319	22.9%	46.6%
Multijurisdictional Library	24,551,897	310	14.8%	11.0%
Special Districts	3,957,425	182	2.4%	6.4%
Total Wider Unit Libraries	165,859,448	2,831	100.0%	100.0%
Library Districts as % all	57%	31%		

Wider unit libraries chosen as peers to Washington County libraries

The peer libraries chosen range from just over 500,000 to 750,000 population. Washington County is just under the lowest population for this grouping of wider unit libraries, but the county’s population is expected to grow rapidly in the next several years.

Of the 2,831 wider unit libraries, just 25 serve populations of between 500,000 and 750,000 population. They are listed below.

Library	City	State	Population
ALAMEDA COUNTY LIBRARY	FREMONT	CA	522,431
ALBUQUERQUE/BERNALILLO COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	ALBUQUERQUE	NM	593,765
ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	ANNE ARUNDEL	MD	506,620
BREVARD COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	COCOA	FL	543,050
COBB COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM	MARIETTA	GA	701,335
CONSOLIDATED LIBRARY DISTRICT #3	INDEPENDENCE	MO	668,428
CUYAHOGA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	CUY. CO.-PARMA	OH	589,298
DEKALB COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM	DECATUR	GA	650,682
GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM	LAWRENCEVILLE	GA	721,575
JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	LAKEWOOD	CO	532,608
LEE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	FORT MYERS	FL	585,608
LOUISVILLE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY	LOUISVILLE	KY	699,827
MARICOPA COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT	PHOENIX	AZ	635,431
METROPOLITAN LIBRARY SYSTEM	OKLA CITY	OK	684,543
MULTNOMAH COUNTY LIBRARY	PORTLAND	OR	692,825
NASHVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY	NASHVILLE	TN	572,475
OCEAN COUNTY LIBRARY	TOMS RIVER	NJ	509,638
PIERCE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	TACOMA	WA	518,429
PIKES PEAK LIBRARY DISTRICT	COLORADO SPRINGS	CO	516,366
POLK COUNTY LIBRARY COOPERATIVE	BARTOW	FL	565,049
SALT LAKE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	SALT LAKE CITY	UT	725,520
SNO-ISLE LIBRARIES	MARYSVILLE	WA	631,645
STANISLAUS COUNTY FREE LIBRARY	MODESTO	CA	514,370
STOCKTON-SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	STOCKTON	CA	605,448
TULSA CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	TULSA	OK	572,059
Grand Total			15,059,025

Libraries by type and HAPLR score

The table below indicates the library systems ranked by HAPLR score and identified by organizational type. Tom Hennen created the HAPLR Index, which rates the public libraries in the United States using the latest federal data. He rates, scores and ranks libraries on 15 input and output measures. For more information, visit www.haplr-index.com.

Note that there are more “County” organizations than “Library Districts” or “City-County” organizations. Note also that the various states allow for different formats of organization. Most states have statutory provisions for County libraries but only a few allow for City-County or Library District organizational forms. There are no libraries that are formed in the “Multi-jurisdictional” organizational format in libraries in the 500,000 to 750,000 population category.

The chart below shows that library districts cluster towards the top of the rankings, although the top spots go to county libraries. City-county libraries cluster towards the bottom of the rankings, although the bottom spots go to county libraries.

Type	Library Name	City	State	HAPLR Score
County	CUYAHOGA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	CUY. CO.-PARMA	OH	871
County	MULTNOMAH COUNTY LIBRARY	PORTLAND	OR	830
County	SALT LAKE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	SALT LAKE CITY	UT	802
Library District	PIKES PEAK LIBRARY DISTRICT	COLORADO SPRINGS	CO	747
Library District	SNO-ISLE LIBRARIES	MARYSVILLE	WA	741
Library District	CONSOLIDATED LIBRARY DISTRICT #3	INDEPENDENCE	MO	720
County	JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	LAKEWOOD	CO	678
County	ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	ANNAPOLIS	MD	657
Library District	PIERCE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	TACOMA	WA	650
County	GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM	LAWRENCEVILLE	GA	625
County	OCEAN COUNTY LIBRARY	TOMS RIVER	NJ	613
County	ALAMEDA COUNTY LIBRARY	FREMONT	CA	611
County	TULSA CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	TULSA	OK	592
County	BREVARD COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	COCOA	FL	549
County	LEE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	FORT MYERS	FL	542
County	METROPOLITAN LIBRARY SYSTEM	OKLA CITY	OK	527
City-County	NASHVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY	NASHVILLE	TN	515
City-County	ALBUQUERQUE/BERNALILLO COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	ALBUQUERQUE	NM	498
County	LOUISVILLE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY	LOUISVILLE	KY	455
County	DEKALB COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM	DECATUR	GA	402
County	COBB COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM	MARIETTA	GA	349
County	STANISLAUS COUNTY FREE LIBRARY	MODESTO	CA	323
City-County	STOCKTON-SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	STOCKTON	CA	259
County	POLK COUNTY LIBRARY COOPERATIVE	BARTOW	FL	220

Measures for comparable libraries (part 1)

Washington County libraries as a whole spent \$40.45 per capita in 2006. That would put them in the 73rd percentile for comparable Wider Unit libraries nationally. The percent of their budgets that went to materials (9.2%) puts them at the 2nd percentile. Materials spending per capita was at the 27th percentile. Staffing levels were at the 62nd percentile. Periodicals owned were at the 52nd percentile. The volumes per capita rate was at the 68th percentile.

Library	Expend per capita	Percent Budget to materials	Materials Expend Per capita	FTE staff per 1000 popul	Periodicals per 1000 residents	Volumes per Capita
ALAMEDA COUNTY LIBRARY	36.43	7.7%	2.79	0.39	4.60	1.97
ALBUQUERQUE/BERNALILLO COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	21.41	20.1%	4.29	0.27	6.02	2.27
ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	38.58	15.3%	5.92	0.59	6.21	1.81
BREVARD COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	31.68	11.2%	3.55	0.52	4.83	2.26
COBB COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM	16.33	17.4%	2.84	0.31	3.07	1.44
CONSOLIDATED LIBRARY DISTRICT #3	53.35	27.7%	14.77	0.70	22.49	4.63
CUYAHOGA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	99.34	15.1%	14.98	1.10	15.27	4.31
DEKALB COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM	21.45	14.0%	3.00	0.35	2.92	1.25
GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM	24.80	15.7%	3.88	0.40	5.08	1.04
JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	42.24	14.7%	6.20	0.38	9.95	2.02
LEE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	41.06	17.5%	7.17	0.45	9.50	1.91
LOUISVILLE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY	24.55	17.4%	4.27	0.43	7.06	1.93
MARICOPA COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT	24.70	24.5%	6.06	0.29	2.00	0.72
METROPOLITAN LIBRARY SYSTEM	29.67	16.1%	4.77	0.44	3.87	1.48
MULTNOMAH COUNTY LIBRARY	66.43	11.9%	7.87	0.65	4.37	2.01
NASHVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY	40.78	12.4%	5.07	0.58	5.31	2.94
OCEAN COUNTY LIBRARY	54.81	13.1%	7.18	0.74	6.34	2.01
PIERCE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	34.38	16.5%	5.68	0.43	5.75	2.17
PIKES PEAK LIBRARY DISTRICT	34.85	15.8%	5.50	0.54	3.88	1.79
POLK COUNTY LIBRARY COOPERATIVE	13.94	16.0%	2.23	0.24	2.09	1.30
SALT LAKE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	37.35	22.4%	8.37	0.49	9.28	2.20
SNO-ISLE LIBRARIES	40.10	18.6%	7.45	0.46	4.97	1.95
STANISLAUS COUNTY FREE LIBRARY	20.33	15.8%	3.22	0.24	1.98	1.52
STOCKTON-SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	19.85	10.6%	2.11	0.17	2.87	1.52
TULSA CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	33.30	15.9%	5.30	0.48	5.78	2.71
Washington County Libraries	40.45	9.2%	3.71	0.48	5.17	2.06
Minimum	13.94	7.7%	2.11	0.17	1.98	0.72
5th percentile	17.03	10.7%	2.34	0.24	2.02	1.08
25th percentile	24.55	14.0%	3.55	0.35	3.87	1.52
50th percentile	34.38	15.8%	5.30	0.44	5.08	1.95
75th Percentile	40.78	17.4%	7.17	0.54	6.34	2.20
95th percentile	64.11	24.1%	13.49	0.73	14.21	4.03
Maximum	99.34	27.7%	14.98	1.10	22.49	4.63
WCCLS Percentile	73%	2%	27%	62%	52%	68%

Measures for comparable libraries (part 2)

Cost per circulation was at the 10th percentile. A low percentile on this measure is a positive. The visits per capita score for the county was at a very high 91st percentile. Collection turnover (the number of times the average book is checked out) was high, at the 82nd percentile. Circulation per staff hour was very low at the 7th percentile level. Circulation per capita is at the 89th percentile. Reference clocks in at the 44th percentile level.

Library	Cost per circulation	Visits per capita	Collection turnover	Circulation per FTE Staff Hour	Circulation per Capita	Reference per capita
ALAMEDA COUNTY LIBRARY	3.48	4.29	5.30	13.02	10.46	1.03
ALBUQUERQUE/BERNALILLO COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	2.93	3.63	3.22	12.81	7.29	1.00
ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	3.58	5.69	5.96	8.83	10.79	0.59
BREVARD COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	3.76	5.85	3.74	7.79	8.43	2.79
COBB COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM	3.13	2.94	3.63	8.08	5.22	0.66
CONSOLIDATED LIBRARY DISTRICT #3	4.29	5.50	2.69	8.55	12.45	2.99
CUYAHOGA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	3.67	11.58	6.28	11.84	27.06	3.11
DEKALB COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM	4.10	4.94	4.18	7.09	5.23	1.55
GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM	3.12	4.86	7.62	9.50	7.94	0.62
JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	4.31	4.96	4.85	12.31	9.80	0.78
LEE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	6.73	4.08	3.20	6.50	6.11	1.67
LOUISVILLE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY	4.23	5.35	3.01	6.54	5.81	1.46
MARICOPA COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT	3.68	3.35	9.28	11.07	6.72	0.25
METROPOLITAN LIBRARY SYSTEM	3.32	4.35	6.05	9.75	8.95	0.53
MULTNOMAH COUNTY LIBRARY	2.35	6.71	14.07	20.92	28.27	1.12
NASHVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY	5.54	5.86	2.50	6.07	7.36	0.58
OCEAN COUNTY LIBRARY	6.03	6.31	4.53	5.88	9.10	2.94
PIERCE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	3.21	4.65	4.94	12.03	10.72	0.55
PIKES PEAK LIBRARY DISTRICT	2.67	6.24	7.29	11.64	13.03	1.51
POLK COUNTY LIBRARY COOPERATIVE	4.29	3.00	2.50	6.43	3.25	0.58
SALT LAKE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	1.97	6.23	8.59	18.67	18.93	0.68
SNO-ISLE LIBRARIES	3.22	5.37	6.38	13.11	12.46	2.13
STANISLAUS COUNTY FREE LIBRARY	4.96	3.99	2.70	8.36	4.10	0.31
STOCKTON-SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	5.79	2.75	2.25	9.59	3.43	0.27
TULSA CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	3.79	6.14	3.24	8.76	8.78	1.00
Washington County Libraries	2.78	6.29	7.06	6.33	14.57	0.73
Minimum	1.97	2.75	2.25	5.88	3.25	0.25
5th percentile	2.41	2.95	2.50	6.14	3.56	0.28
25th percentile	3.21	4.08	3.20	7.79	6.11	0.58
50th percentile	3.68	4.96	4.53	9.50	8.78	1.00
75th Percentile	4.29	5.86	6.28	12.03	10.79	1.55
95th percentile	5.98	6.63	9.14	17.56	25.43	2.98
Maximum	6.73	11.58	14.07	20.92	28.27	3.11
WCCLS Percentile	10%	91%	82%	7%	89%	44%

Measures for comparable libraries (part 3)

For every hour a Washington County library is open there are 216.9 items checked out; that is the 84th percentile for comparable wider units. Visits per open hour hit the 89th percentile, while circulation per visit hits the 82nd percentile. When it comes to program attendance and public internet users per capita, Washington County libraries clock in at 64th percentile rates.

Library	Circulation per open hour	Visits per open hour	Circulation per visit	Program Attendance per capita	Public Internet Users per Capita
ALAMEDA COUNTY LIBRARY	291.23	119.35	2.44	0.11	0.68
ALBUQUERQUE/BERNALILLO COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	110.30	54.87	2.01	0.10	0.53
ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	134.41	70.87	1.90	0.11	1.84
BREVARD COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	83.01	57.61	1.44	0.26	0.94
COBB COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM	71.40	40.17	1.78	0.14	1.78
CONSOLIDATED LIBRARY DISTRICT #3	83.82	37.01	2.26	0.36	0.87
CUYAHOGA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	214.01	91.58	2.34	0.61	2.01
DEKALB COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM	67.41	63.75	1.06	0.09	1.76
GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM	109.18	66.79	1.63	0.14	1.61
JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	243.80	123.46	1.97	0.23	0.78
LEE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	109.37	73.16	1.49	0.17	1.44
LOUISVILLE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY	77.61	71.51	1.09	0.39	1.73
MARICOPA COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT	112.52	56.03	2.01	0.16	0.05
METROPOLITAN LIBRARY SYSTEM	118.76	57.73	2.06	0.23	0.87
MULTNOMAH COUNTY LIBRARY	417.06	98.99	4.21	0.53	0.14
NASHVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY	73.35	58.43	1.26	0.28	1.27
OCEAN COUNTY LIBRARY	92.43	64.14	1.44	0.47	0.35
PIERCE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	130.23	56.48	2.31	0.13	0.51
PIKES PEAK LIBRARY DISTRICT	190.84	91.42	2.09	0.29	0.99
POLK COUNTY LIBRARY COOPERATIVE	40.21	37.14	1.08	0.16	0.61
SALT LAKE COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	257.11	84.58	3.04	0.09	0.31
SNO-ISLE LIBRARIES	137.56	59.27	2.32	0.28	1.04
STANISLAUS COUNTY FREE LIBRARY	71.00	69.20	1.03	0.13	0.51
STOCKTON-SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY	110.94	88.95	1.25	0.09	0.29
TULSA CITY-COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM	72.22	50.48	1.43	0.35	4.79
Washington County Libraries	216.90	93.70	2.31	0.26	1.12
Minimum	40.21	37.01	1.03	0.09	0.05
5th percentile	68.13	37.75	1.06	0.09	0.17
25th percentile	77.61	56.48	1.43	0.13	0.51
50th percentile	110.30	64.14	1.90	0.17	0.87
75th Percentile	137.56	84.58	2.26	0.29	1.61
95th percentile	284.41	115.27	2.92	0.52	1.97
Maximum	417.06	123.46	4.21	0.61	4.79
WCCLS Percentile	84%	89%	82%	64%	64%

Appendix E Hennepin County Documents

Hennepin County library timeline for consolidation

Critical Path	Activity	Timeline
1. Recommendation by Committee on the Future of Libraries in Hennepin County	Committee on the Future of Libraries provides a recommendation on Guiding Principles and Major Issues: Governance, Finance, Asset Transfer and Labor and Employment.	2/15/07 (or subsequent meeting)
2. Approval by County Board, City Council and Minneapolis Library Board	County Board, City Council and Minneapolis Library Board approve a resolution to consolidate libraries consistent with Committee recommendations on Guiding Principles and Major Issues. Staff is directed by resolution to draft enabling legislation.	
3. Legislation	<p>a. Legislation drafted by staff and approved by County Board and City Council to include in County and City legislative agendas in time to meet Legislature's Committee deadline.</p> <p>b. Bill authors are identified and legislation is jacketed and submitted in time to meet applicable deadlines.</p> <p>c. Legislation is passed, signed by Governor;</p> <p>[Deadline for County Board and City Council to accept legislation, if not otherwise specified in the bill, is the start of the next biennial legislative session (1/09)].</p>	<p>Committee deadlines have not yet been set (assume March - April).</p> <p>Session ends 5/21/07</p>
4. Approval of Legislation	County Board, City Council and Minneapolis Library Board approve a resolution to implement legislation and direct staff to take all necessary steps to finalize consolidation.	July 2007
5. Transactional Documents	All needed transactional documents are negotiated, drafted and reviewed.	October 2008
6. Final Approvals and Closing	County Board and City Council approve the transactional documents, the documents are executed and certificates of local approval are filed.	On or before 12/31/08
7. Complete Implementation	Complete consolidation of operations consistent with implementation plan.	As per implementation plan

Hennepin County library merger questionnaire for planners

Consolidation of two systems	
Advantages	Single responsibility for all library services across entire county; comparable with other metro areas. Seamless customer service - improved, consistent and better coordinated services for all county residents. Long-term efficiencies in operations, catalog, computer and administrative systems. Stable and growing tax base to support county-wide library services. Easier coordination of services to residents who need support.
Disadvantages	Integration challenges associated with consolidation (e.g. organizational structure and administration, personnel, computer network). Public's perceived loss of local identity and concerns about diminished services.
Financial Feasibility	Operating costs would require new county-wide taxing authority. Mpls could contribute declining LGA/property tax amount during transition period. Transitional state funding may be possible; ongoing operational state contribution unlikely. Share of county-wide stadium tax would be available. To enable clean asset transfer, Mpls could retain responsibility for existing MPL debt, including unissued bonds. Future debt would be determined through county-wide CIP process. Mpls could retain responsibility for MERF contributions. Planetarium and foundations might be left to future mutual decisions.
Suggested scoring measures: 0=does not meet objectives; 1-5= Potential for short term improvement; 6-10=Some short term improvements likely; 11-15=Potential for long term improvements; 16-20=long term success likely	
Category	Score
1. HCL & MPL are both valuable community assets for all county residents and businesses and beyond.	
2. Any changes in the two systems should improve library services.	
3. The collections at MPL Central Library and HCL complement one another. They are valued and should be preserved and strengthened.	
4. The capacity to provide 21st Century library services throughout the county should be assured with sound, long-term financing.	
Total Score	

Hennepin County public hearing notice

The public is invited to comment on the consolidation of the Hennepin County Library and Minneapolis Public Library systems, as recommended by the Committee on the Future of Libraries in Hennepin County, at two upcoming meetings:

Hennepin County Library Board Meeting

Feb. 28, 2007, 5:00 pm - 6:30 pm

Public comment portion of meeting begins at 5:15 pm

Brookdale Library

6125 Shingle Creek Parkway, Brooklyn Center

Information Session

Hosted by Hennepin County Library Board

March 7, 2007, 5:00 pm -6:30 pm

Eden Prairie Library

565 Prairie Center Dr, Eden Prairie

With a vision to be a premier library system in the country by building on strengths and talents of both library systems, the Committee on the Future of Libraries in Hennepin County approved a resolution on Feb. 15, 2007 to recommend a consolidation of the libraries. The two public library systems in Hennepin County include 26 libraries in suburban Hennepin County and 15 libraries (of which three sites are temporarily closed) in the city of Minneapolis.

The committee recommended that guiding principles to consolidate library services in Hennepin County into a united library system be forwarded to the Hennepin County Library Board for review and to the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners, the Minneapolis City Council and Mayor, and the Minneapolis Public Library Board for approvals. To read the guiding principles and other information related to the committee, or to comment, visit hclib.org/futureoflibraries or call 952-847-8500.

It is anticipated that the Hennepin County Board and other governing bodies will review the committee's guiding principles and other issues and take action some time in March. The committee was created by the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners last November to examine a possible merger of the Hennepin County and Minneapolis Public Library systems.

Appendix F

WCCLS & Consensus

WCCLS Executive Board (and alternate participants):

Christine Fore, Banks (resigned)

Stephanie Jones, Banks

Mayor Rob Drake, Beaverton

Janice Deardorff, Beaverton

Peter Leonard, Cedar Mill

David Waffle, Cornelius

Michael Sykes, Forest Grove

Robert Goetz, Garden Home

Sara Jo Chaplen, Hillsboro

Don Otterman, North Plains

Jim Patterson, Sherwood

Kristen Switzer, Sherwood

Craig Prosser, Tigard

Liz Newton, Tigard

Sherilyn Lombos, Tualatin

Becky Clark, West Slope

Robert Davis, Washington County

Rob Massar, Washington County

WCCLS Policy Group:

Denise Holmes, Banks

Ed House, Beaverton

Peter Leonard, Cedar Mill

Rita Rivera, Cedar Mill

Karen Hill, Cornelius

Colleen Winters, Forest Grove

Cooky Abrams, Garden Home

Mike Smith, Hillsboro

Linda Landi, North Plains

Aaron Schmidt, North Plains

Pam North, Sherwood

Margaret Barnes, Tigard

Abigail Elder, Tualatin
Veronica Eden, West Slope
Eva Calcagno, WCCLS manager

WCCLS staff:

Karen Crawford, Administration and Courier
Barbara O'Neill, Reference and Interlibrary Loan
Stephanie Lind, Outreach and Youth Services
Sylvia Lee, Automation
Jodi Nielsen, Publicity and Promotions

The Consensus team:

Therese Bigelow
Mary Jo Draper
Tom Hennen
Martha Kropf
Jennifer Wilding

For more information about Consensus, see www.consensuskc.org.