

Facilities Master Planning – Small Library

A small library's facilities master plan is a strategic road map that outlines future improvements to align the building with community needs, budget, and long-term goals. It should include an assessment of current facilities, community needs, and strategic goals. The plan should include an evaluation of existing spaces, an outline of future needs, and a phased approach for implementation that balances short-term fixes with long-term vision.

Why is a master plan important for a small library?

1. It ensures relevance helping the library adapt to changing community needs and technological advancements.
2. It improves efficiency by preventing haphazard improvements that can lead to an inconsistent and inefficient use of space and library funds.
3. It supports funding requests by providing a clear and strategic basis for requests for funding from the community or other stakeholders.
4. It prioritizes limited resources by guiding the allocation of a small library's budget to the most impactful improvements.

Key Steps

A. Discovery and Assessment

- Evaluate current facilities - Assess the physical condition of the building (e.g., roof, HVAC, lighting), functionality, accessibility, and security.
- Analyze current usage - Study how spaces are currently used and by whom. Identify bottlenecks and underutilized areas.
- Review strategic goals - Align the master plan with the library's mission, vision, and values.
- Gather community and staff input - Use surveys, focus groups, and feedback sessions to understand community needs and staff frustrations.

B. Vision and Needs

- Define future needs - Based on the assessment, determine desired features like meeting rooms, a makerspace, an early literacy area for children, etc.
- Prioritize space allocation - Determine how different types of spaces will be used. Consider flexible layouts that can be adapted over time.
- Integrate technology - Plan for technology needs such as public computer stations, collaborative workspaces, and reliable Wi-Fi.
- Consider a building statement - Estimate the total square footage needed to support the library's vision, which will be necessary for fundraising and further planning.

C. Action and Implementation

- Develop a phased approach - Outline short-term projects (e.g., rearranging furniture, painting) and long-term projects (e.g., building additions, major renovations).
- Create a budget and timeline - Work with a project timeline, outlining tasks, responsibilities, and resource allocation.
- Incorporate flexibility - Build the plan to be adaptable, recognizing that future needs will change over time.
- Develop a communication plan - Use the master plan as an advocacy tool to share the library's goals with stakeholders and the community.

See Facilities Master Planning Template for more details and guidance.