

Madison Public Library Branch Development

Branch libraries in Madison are valued neighborhood institutions. They serve as community centers, local meeting places, educational resources, neighborhood anchors. They are at once an economic stimulus and an important publicly supported community asset.

The Madison Public Library Board is committed to developing a system of successful branch libraries that provides the most convenient access to library services to the greatest number of people in Madison. The Board determines that a new branch is needed based on city growth projections, as well as input from the City of Madison Planning Director about current and future residential, commercial and retail development plans, and updates to the Peripheral Area Development Plan.

The key factor triggering new branch development is population growth. The library service area populations for branches in Madison currently range from 10,000 to 25,000 people. In practice, actual branch usage determines the service area population. This usage is based on the unique geography and traffic patterns of the neighborhoods served by the branch, ease of access to the branch site, and other local amenities, such as retail development. Madison's current branch library configuration and the presence of other neighboring libraries also impacts usage. The projected usage of a proposed new branch will determine the size of the site and building needed for its successful operation.

Since the impact of future ongoing costs to operate a new branch is another key factor in developing and maintaining branches, donations of land, construction and/or ongoing operating expenses will be sought and encouraged, provided the proposed new branch meets the guidelines for branch development set forth in this policy.

Decisions as to specific sites for new branches will be based on recommendations from City Planning, and on the following guidelines and criteria:

- Site is conveniently located to serve the projected service area, based on geographical location and on or near major travel arteries for the area.
- Location would be appealing and convenient to a majority of the targeted service area population.
- Site is easy to access by car, bicycle, or on foot and is on or near a current or planned public transportation route.
- Site is near a major residential development.
- Preference will be given to a site that would be owned by the Library.
- There is sufficient land for size of the building needed for the service area, and adequate space for off-street parking, and public and service entrances.
- Site is part of, or near, a retail shopping area or other neighborhood center development.
- Topography of the site would be suitable for easy construction.
- Site is considered a safe location.
- Site is relatively free from nuisances, such as noxious odors, distracting noise or unsightly view.
- Site is clearly visible from travel arteries.
- Site would offer enough area to allow shared space with other city agencies, if feasible.