

# **Washington County Library**

**Strategic 2030 Facility Plan**

**August 2009**

## Mission

The Mission of the Washington County Library is to enrich both the individual and the community by assisting people in their search for information, ideas, education and recreation.

### **Background and Planning Process**

Washington County identified the need to develop a coordinated, long-range Library facilities plan. The concept of a long-range facility plan for the library was incorporated into the most recent Library Strategic Plan covering the years 2004-2009. Goals included in the Library Strategic Plan include:

- Locate library buildings in convenient locations for residents
  - Objective: Ensure residents have access within a reasonable distance to their homes
  - Objective: Locate branches in government owned facilities
  - Objective: Locate buildings with other governmental services when possible
  - Objective: Locate branches near center of commerce and government on or near major thoroughfares.
- Maintain a network of different types of facilities from small community libraries with limited or special services to large libraries with a broader array of services
  - Objective: Develop special collections/uses/focus for small community libraries
  - Objective: Maintain buildings in good working order
  - Objective: Maintain systems for delivery/transport of materials and services, e.g. delivery trucks in service for materials, access to services via website, etc.
- Develop a capital improvement plan that is approved by the County Board as a part of the County's Capital Improvement Plan
  - Objective: Develop criteria for placement of new facilities
  - Objective: Prepare an annual report to the Library Board on status and needs of current facilities
  - Objective: Develop criteria for placement of new facilities
    - ✓ Review current policy on placement
    - ✓ Review policies in other Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA) libraries
    - ✓ Recommend changes as needed to the Library Board

The most recent long-range facilities plan for the Library was completed in 1989 for the years 1990 – 2000. The plan is no longer effective as a Library facilities planning guide, but does provide historical context for the current Library facilities. Washington County would like their new Library plan to incorporate the rich history of library service in Washington County with a thorough understanding of anticipated growth patterns and research into the changing role of library services to develop a plan that will be as good for Washington County when it expires as it is when it is drafted.

The purpose of the planning phase is to establish a Long-Range Capital Improvement Plan for the Washington County Library. Washington County's facility goal included in the 2030 Comprehensive Plan is to:

"Provide the necessary facility infrastructure to provide efficient, effective, and high quality public services in order to meet the needs of the current and future population of the county."

This plan incorporates current Library facility locations, primary users by branch, travel time to library facilities, population growth projections, public input, technological advances in library service delivery and historic library usage throughout the Washington County Library system to ensure that Library facilities continue to meet the stated county facility goal. The Strategic Library Facility Plan is intended to meet the county's projected service needs through 2030 and provide the county with a clear vision for Library facility improvements.

### **Technology**

The creation of satellite services using self-service library kiosks that are fully automated may be a viable model for expanding service in a growing suburban area such as Washington County. These satellites can be placed in existing facilities, such as city halls, or can be placed in partnership with new businesses or community places, such as coffee houses or community centers.

The challenge of providing library service in less populated but quickly expanding areas of Washington County is compounded by limited service hours. First, building and staffing new libraries is difficult especially where the projected service population does not meet criteria for new buildings. Kiosk service may be an alternative to providing traditional services in these communities by exploring non-traditional access points. Second, kiosks provide an opportunity to reach new users if they are placed in areas where people usually congregate, such as shopping malls, transit centers, community centers or city halls. Kiosks may prove to be a useful tool to reach out to underserved residents who frequent these locations. Third, kiosk services are far less expensive and much quicker to install than building and maintaining new library buildings and may potentially serve as a bridge or "stop gap" service while new facilities are being considered.

In addition to kiosks, Washington County Library users continue to use the internet with more frequency and for more purposes when seeking to fulfill their library needs. Washington County will continue to pursue opportunities to improve the online library experience for residents.

### **Partnerships and Strategic Location**

Strategically locating library facilities within the county and forming partnerships to maximize the user experience while also ensuring optimized access within a planning zone will be critical for the Washington County Library as new facilities are planned. The most recent additions to the library system were strategically located near transit, high volume businesses, and other government services in close proximity to maximize both user ship and the user experience. Meeting with Washington County Library goals and the current strategic plan, future facility siting will incorporate the same concepts to ensure the location of Washington County Libraries are optimized for the current residents and for projected population growth for the entire anticipated life of the library facility.

### **Planning Zones**

Planning zones were developed as part of the library facility planning process to establish a structured guideline for facility development. The planning zones were determined based on their current population, population growth estimates, population density, travel time to library facilities, location of current library facilities, transit development, usage patterns and geographic location.

Four county planning zones were developed, including North, North Central, South Central, and South Planning Zones. The Planning Zone borders were determined based on geography, library use patterns, anticipated population growth, population density, travel time to a library facility and capacity of current library facilities.

The North and South planning zones are similar in population size today and will remain similar through 2030. The North and South Planning Zones are the fastest growing zones in the county as growth in each zone continues along the Highway 61 corridor.

The two county planning zones in the middle of the county bordering Interstate 94 include the South Central and North Central planning zones. The South Central planning zone includes the entire City of Woodbury, which on its own is about the same population as either the South or North Planning Zone. In addition to Woodbury, communities bordering the St. Croix River to the East of Woodbury are included in the South Central Planning Zone.

The North Central Planning Zone is growing the slowest, but has the highest current population and is expected to remain the most populated Planning Zone through 2030. Two city library facilities, Stillwater Public Library and Bayport Public Library, are included as part of the North Central Planning Zone due to their geographic location within the county.

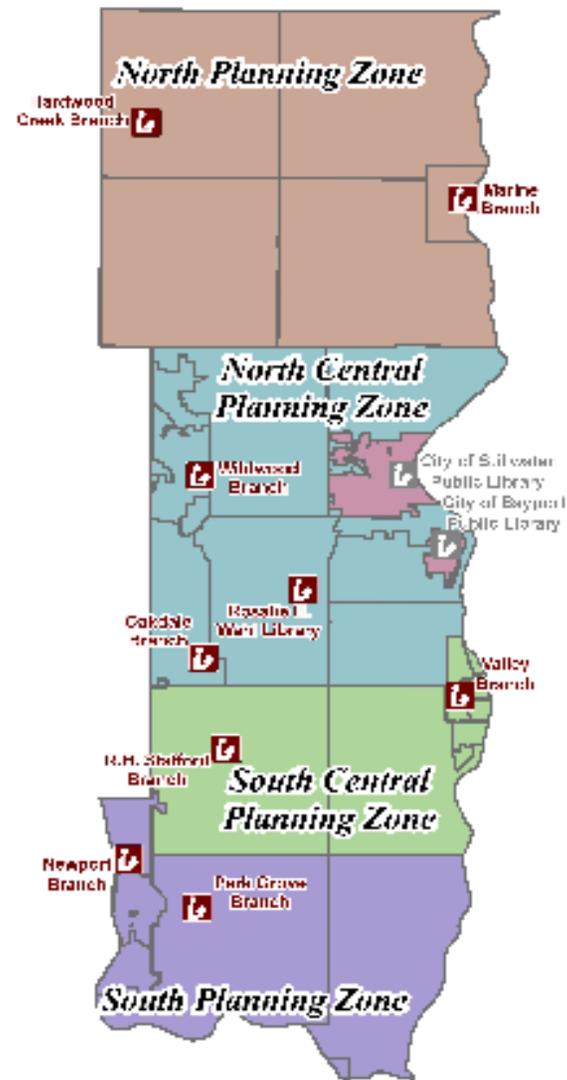
**Standard to initiate Capital Planning and Library Construction**

A standard of .45 square feet per resident of library space recommended as a minimum standard by the Library Board is intended to ensure each planning zone in the county receives equal library access and service. It is also recommended by the Library Board that each planning zone be subject to a .35 square foot threshold that would trigger planning for additional library space when the planning zone falls below the threshold. The recommendations approved by the Library Board are intended to serve as minimum standards for consideration by the County Board. The MELSA standard used by the seven county metropolitan area ranges from .6 to .65 square feet with a 2006 average of .72 square feet per resident. Washington County was at .38 square feet per resident in 2006 when the calculation was last made available.

In addition to the minimum standard and threshold, the Library Board also recommends that the size of new facilities or expanded facilities be based on meeting the minimum square foot standard for at least ten years following the date of their opening. The ten year period will allow for planning and development to occur in each of the four planning zones as the county's population grows. Achieving this recommended standard will ensure that the county, within the four planning zones, is able to achieve a consistent library service delivery model for residents throughout the county. The standard also provides a tangible benchmark to initiate planning for future needs and provides for a mechanism to include library facility planning in the county Capital Improvement Plan.

## Washington County Planning Zones with Current (2009) Library Facilities

Washington County Library facilities distributed throughout the county, with each planning zone including at least two library facilities. The two city library facilities are located in the North Central Planning Zone.





# North Planning Zone

## North Planning Zone Communities

Marine on St. Croix    Hugo  
 May Township        Forest Lake  
 Scandia

## North Library Planning Zone Profile - 2008

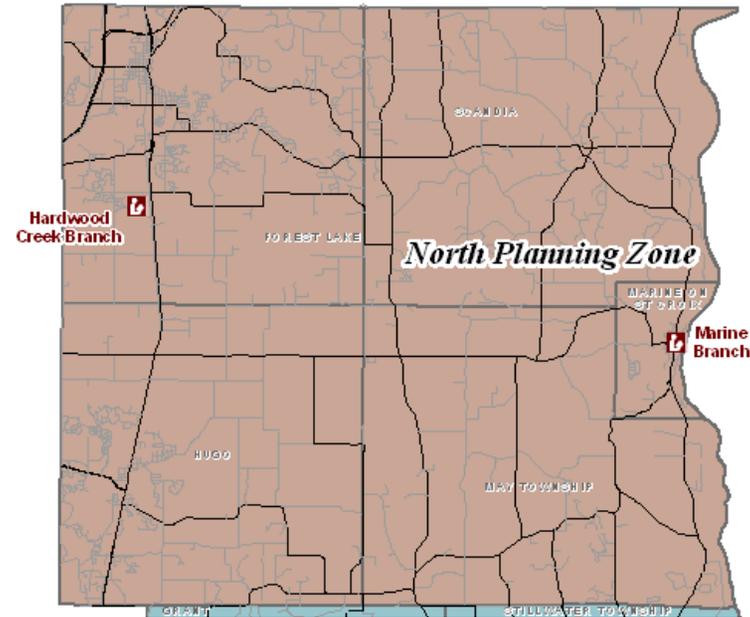
Hardwood Creek Branch Library, Forest Lake  
 Marine Branch Library, Marine on St. Croix

|                                |         |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| Total Library Square Feet      | 22,744  |
| 2007 Visits                    | 150,084 |
| 2007 Total Circulation         | 315,503 |
| Total Computer Hours Available | 85,552  |
| Loans/Population               | 9.6     |

The North Planning Zone experienced slower growth during the 1990s than the South Central and the South Planning Zones. From 2000 through 2030 it is expected to be the fastest growing zone more than tripling its 2000 population. Growth is expected to exceed 40% from 2000 to 2010, 26% from 2010 to 2020 and 22% from 2020 to 2030.

### Facilities Issues

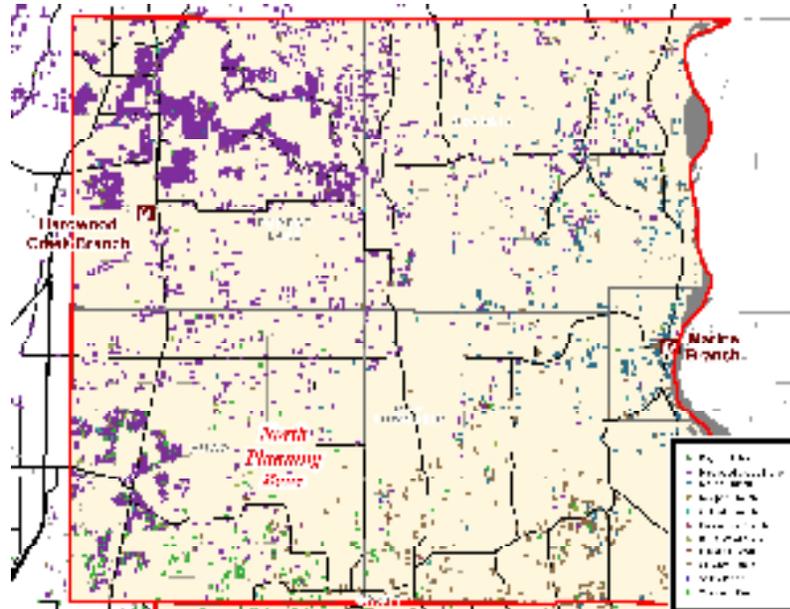
Based on population projections and Library Board minimum standards, library space in the North Planning Zone is sufficient to meet needs through 2018. The North Planning Zone falls below the 0.35 minimum threshold in about 2019.



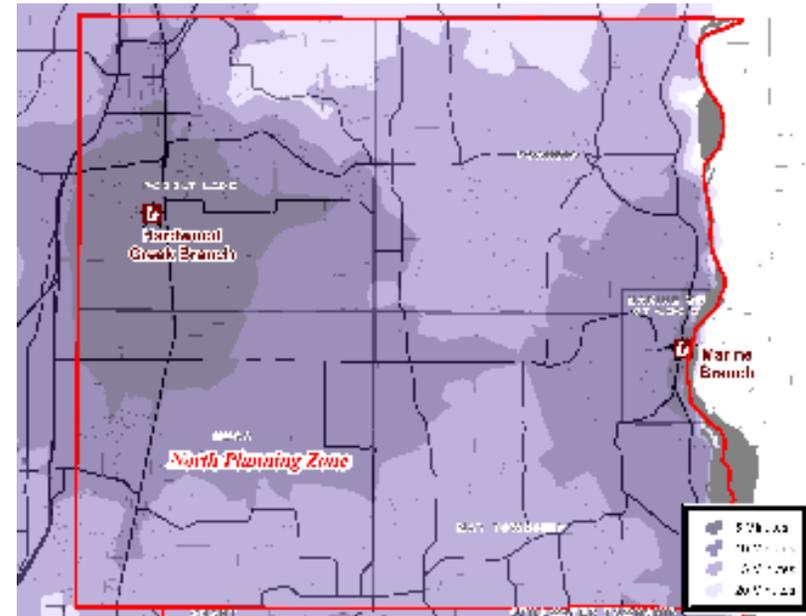
| Year                            | 2010   | 2020   | 2030   |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Population Estimate             | 49,130 | 66,280 | 84,600 |
| 2009 Square Feet                | 22,744 | 22,744 | 22,744 |
| Square Feet/Resident            | 0.46   | 0.34   | 0.27   |
| Square Feet using .35 Threshold | 17,196 | 23,198 | 29,610 |
| Square Feet using .45 Standard  | 22,109 | 29,826 | 38,070 |

The North Planning Zone is home to the newest library facility in Washington County, Hardwood Creek Library. The new Hardwood Creek facility replaced a much smaller facility in Forest Lake in 2007 and now provides residents with a larger, state of the art facility.

### Primary Library used by North Planning Zone Residents



### Travel Time to North Planning Zone Libraries



The primary issue for the North Planning Zone is the rapid population growth in Hugo and the surrounding area projected to continue through 2030. As the population grows, the travel time to the current facilities will continue to increase. Residents in the extreme north central portion of the North Planning Zone are 20 minutes from the nearest library, Hardwood Creek. To the north, residents have access to libraries in Chisago County, but most choose Hardwood Creek.

## North Central Planning Zone

### North Central Planning Zone Communities

|                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Dellwood            | Lake Elmo        |
| Stillwater Township | Landfall         |
| Grant               | Pine Springs     |
| Oakdale             | Bayport          |
| Stillwater          | Willernie        |
| White Bear Lake     | Mahtomedi        |
| Birchwood Village   | Oak Park Heights |
| West Lakeland       | Baytown Township |

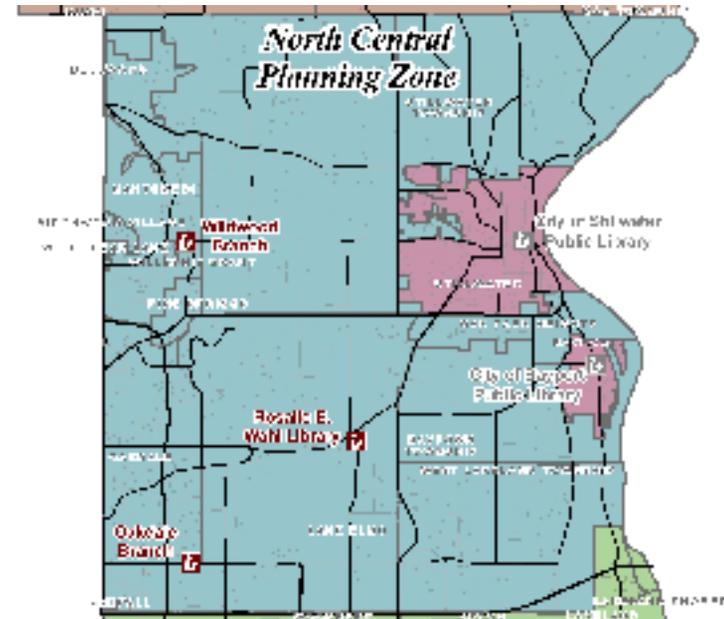
### North Central Library Planning Zone Profile - 2008

- Oakdale Branch Library, Oakdale
- Rosalie E. Wahl Branch Library, Lake Elmo
- Valley Branch Library, Lakeland
- Wildwood Branch Library, Mahtomedi
- Stillwater Public Library, Stillwater
- Bayport Public Library, Bayport

|                                |          |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| Total Library Square Feet      | 71,866   |
| 2007 Visits                    | 150,084* |
| 2007 Total Circulation         | 315,503* |
| Total Computer Hours Available | 85,552*  |
| Loans/Population               | 9.6*     |

\*County Facilities only

The North Central Planning Zone experienced the slowest growth during the 1990s and growth is expected to remain slower than the other three planning zones through 2030. Growth is expected to be about 18% from 2010 to 2030.



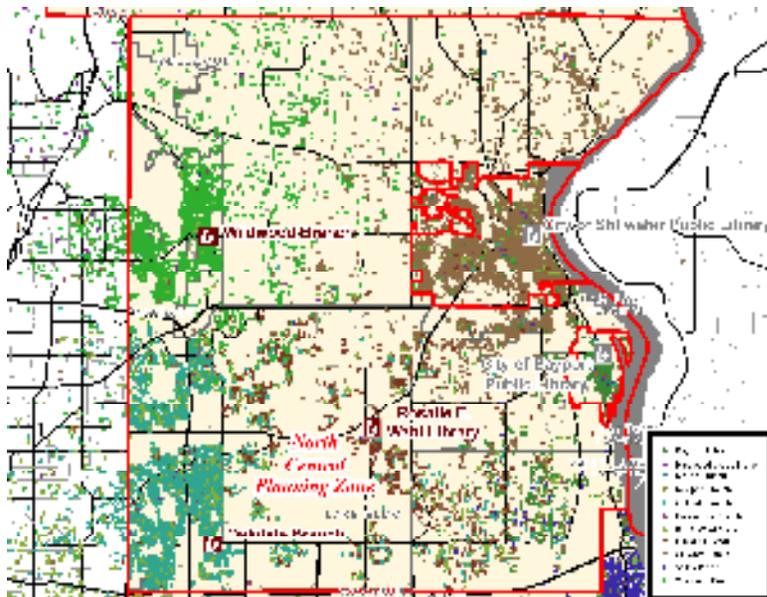
### Facilities Issues

Based on population projections and Library Board minimum standards, library space in the North Central Planning Zone is sufficient to meet needs through 2030 and beyond with the city libraries included in the formula. The primary issue for the North Central Planning Zone will be facility improvements and possible rebuild or remodel of county facilities. In addition, the city libraries are essential for library access in the North Central Planning Zone.

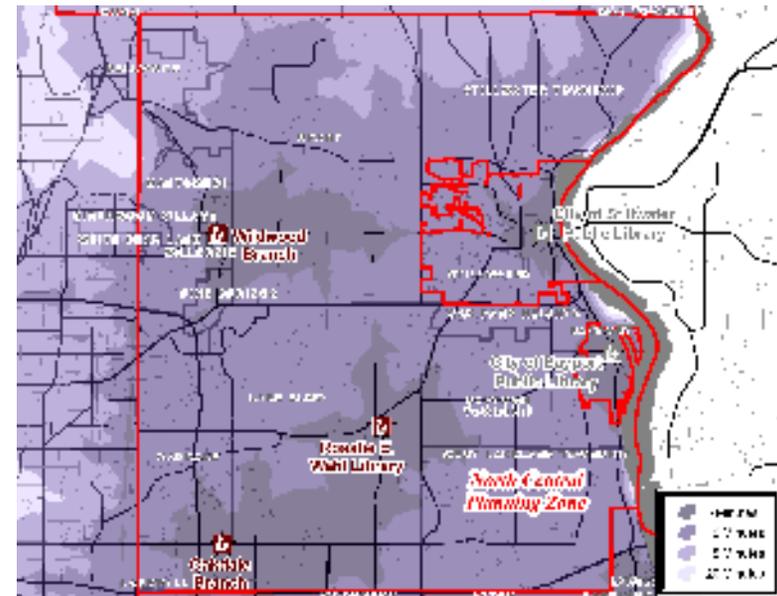
| Year                            | 2010   | 2020    | 2030    |
|---------------------------------|--------|---------|---------|
| Population Estimate             | 92,122 | 104,143 | 111,800 |
| 2009 Square Feet                | 71,866 | 71,866  | 71,866  |
| Square Feet/Resident            | 0.78   | 0.69    | 0.64    |
| Square Feet using .35 Threshold | 32,243 | 36,450  | 39,130  |
| Square Feet using .45 Standard  | 41,455 | 46,864  | 50,310  |

The North Central Planning Zone is unique because each of the two city facilities, not operated by the county, is located within this zone. Most residents in this western portion of this zone use the county facilities, and most residents in the eastern portion of the zone use the city facilities with a mix in the southeast portion of the zone.

### Primary Library used by North Central Planning Zone Residents



### Travel Time to North Central Planning Zone Libraries



Current travel times to libraries are 10 minutes or less for nearly the entire North Central Planning Zone. With population growth is slower than other zones, the travel times are expected to remain below 15 minutes for nearly the entire planning zone through 2030, but county facilities are small to mid-sized and are expected to need improvements prior to 2030 despite being above the .45 space standard.

## South Central Planning Zone

### South Central Planning Zone Communities

|          |                      |
|----------|----------------------|
| Afton    | Lake St. Croix Beach |
| Lakeland | St. Mary's Point     |
| Woodbury | Lakeland Shores      |

### South Central Library Planning Zone Profile - 2008

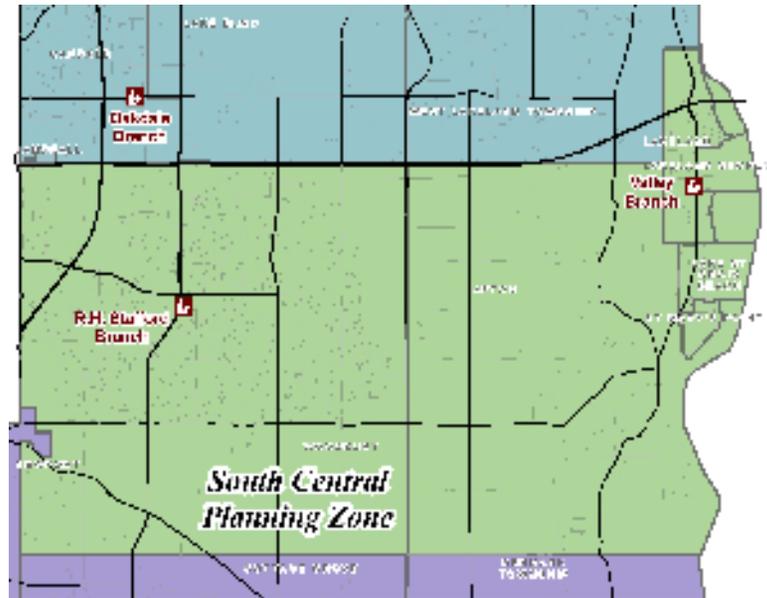
R.H. Stafford Branch Library, Woodbury  
Valley Branch Library, Lakeland

|                                |         |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| Total Library Square Feet      | 26,445  |
| 2007 Visits                    | 447,673 |
| 2007 Total Circulation         | 895,621 |
| Total Computer Hours Available | 103,234 |
| Loans/Population               | 12.9    |

The South Central Planning Zone experienced rapid growth during the 1990s with the population growing by about 50%. The rate of population growth is expected to slow to about 27% between 2010 and 2030, or about 25,000 additional residents

### Facilities Issues

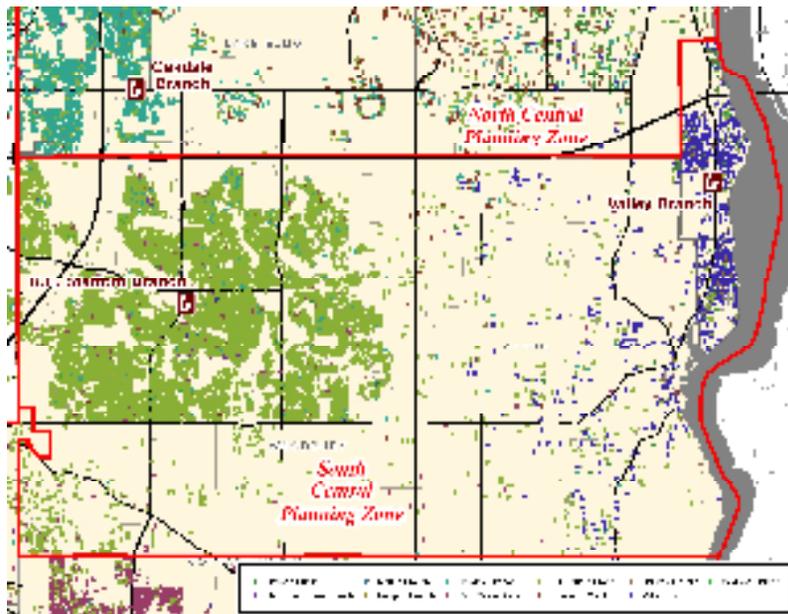
Based on population projections and Library Board minimum standards, library space in the South Central Planning Zone is sufficient to meet needs through about 2016 and falling below the .35 threshold in 2017. As growth continues south and east in and around Woodbury, new developments will become outside of the preferred 15 minute travel time to Stafford Branch Library and Valley Branch Library.



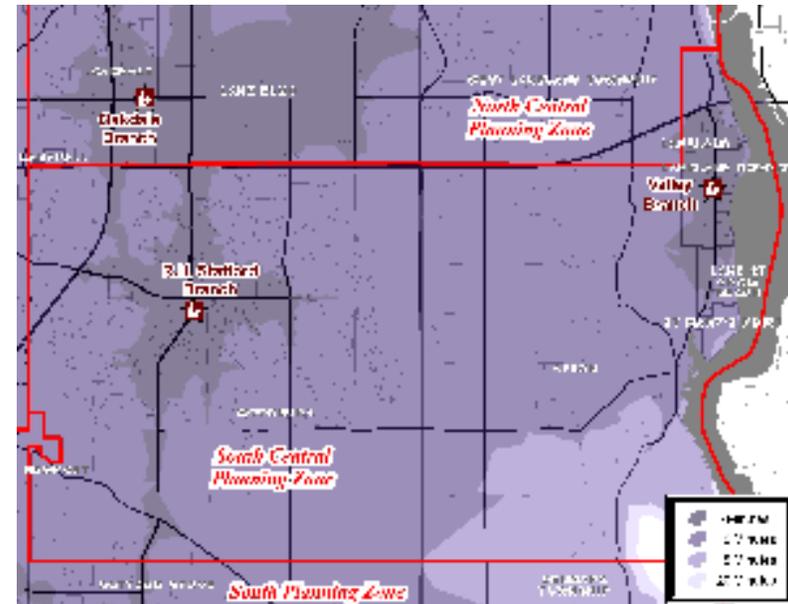
| Year                            | 2010   | 2020   | 2030   |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Population Estimate             | 66,990 | 80,710 | 91,550 |
| 2009 Square Feet                | 26,445 | 26,445 | 26,445 |
| Square Feet/Resident            | 0.39   | 0.33   | 0.29   |
| Square Feet using .35 Threshold | 23,447 | 28,249 | 32,043 |
| Square Feet using .45 Standard  | 30,146 | 36,320 | 41,198 |

The South Central Planning Zone is split with most of population in Woodbury, but an additional population concentration in the Lower St. Croix Valley communities.

**Primary Library used by South Central Planning Zone Residents**



**Travel Time to South Central Planning Zone Libraries**



Current travel times to libraries are 10 minutes or less for nearly the entire South Central Planning Zone. With population growth of nearly 30% through 2030, the travel times are expected to increase, especially for the new planned development in the south and east of Woodbury.

## South Planning Zone

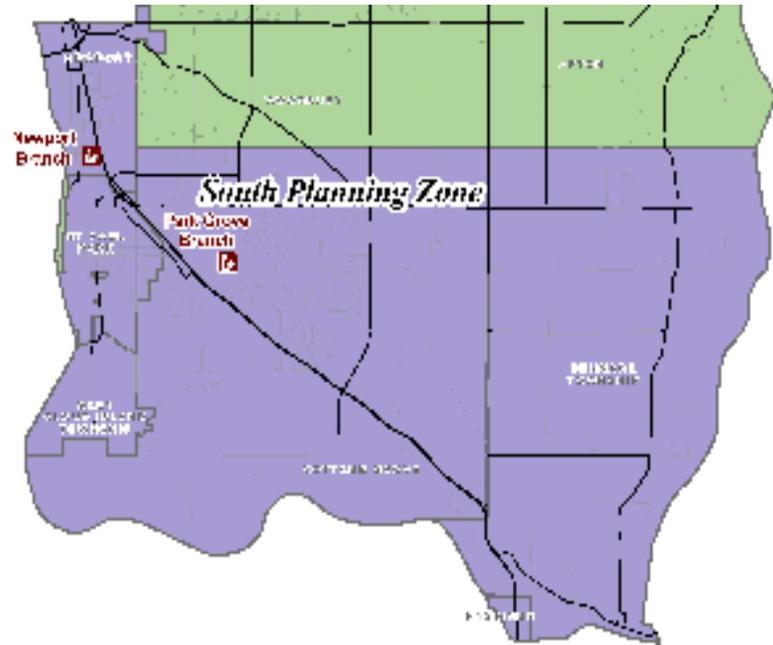
### South Planning Zone Communities

Cottage Grove          Denmark Township  
 Newport                St. Paul Park  
 Grey Cloud Island    Hastings

### South Library Planning Zone Profile - 2008

Park Grove Branch Library, Cottage Grove  
 Newport Branch Library, Newport

|                                |         |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| Total Library Square Feet      | 20,950  |
| 2007 Visits                    | 167,003 |
| 2007 Total Circulation         | 302,149 |
| Total Computer Hours Available | 37,809  |
| Loans/Population               | 6.9     |



This area of the county continues to experience population growth exceeding the rate experienced by the county as a whole. The South Planning Zone experienced 19% population growth between 1990 and 2000 and is expected to grow an additional 18% from 2000 to 2010. The rate of population growth is estimated to increase to 23% from 2010 to 2020 and slow somewhat to 16% growth from 2020 to 2030.

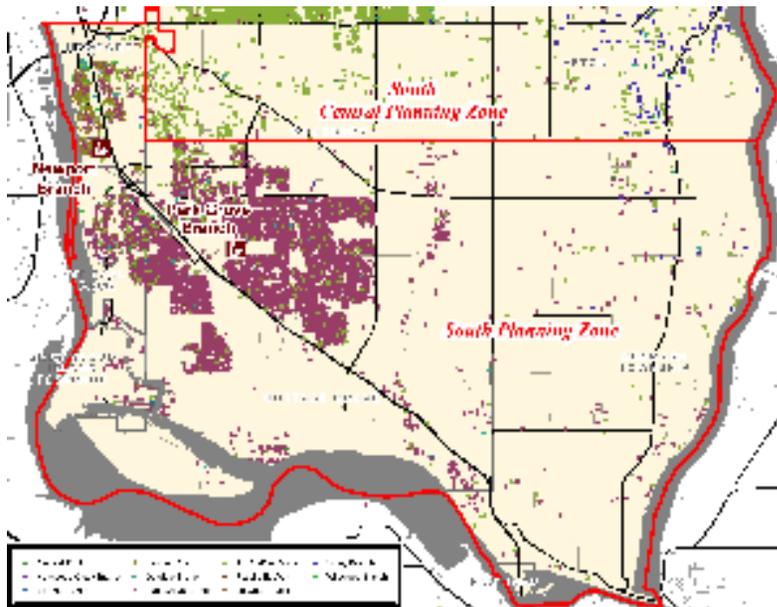
### Facilities Issues

The South Planning Zone will meet the minimum threshold of .35 square feet per resident in late 2016 or early 2017. The facility in Cottage Grove is in need of renovation because the design does not facilitate today's service needs. The South Planning Zone is the highest priority for a new facility.

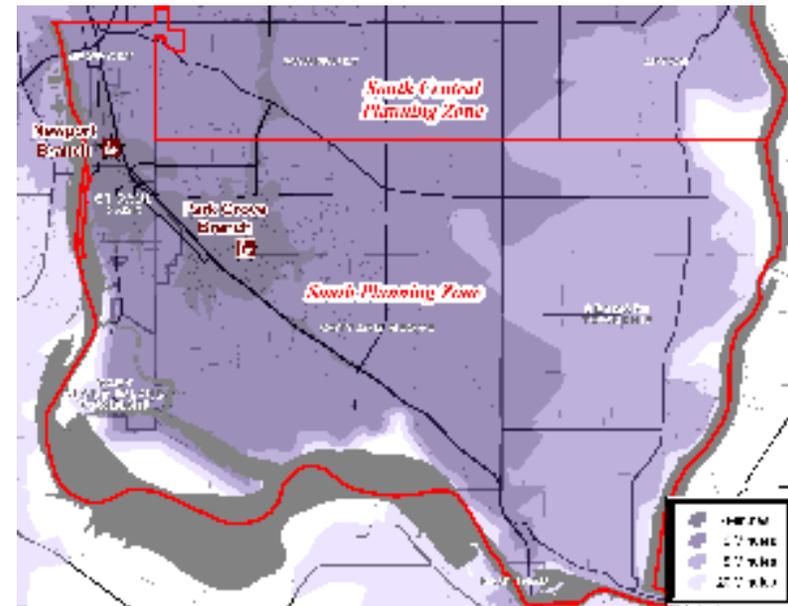
| Year                            | 2010   | 2020   | 2030   |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Population Estimate             | 50,300 | 64,950 | 77,640 |
| 2009 Square Feet                | 20,950 | 20,950 | 20,950 |
| Square Feet/Resident            | 0.42   | 0.32   | 0.27   |
| Square Feet using .35 Threshold | 17,605 | 22,733 | 27,174 |
| Square Feet using .45 Standard  | 22,635 | 29,228 | 34,938 |

The South Planning Zone is growing rapidly from west to east with most of the current residents using Park Grove Branch Library in Cottage Grove as their primary library. The primary issue with the South Planning Zone is the Park Grove facility will require renovation and additional space for it to provide the same level of service as anchor libraries in the other planning zones. The Newport Branch provides library service to residents residing between Park Grove and the county's largest library, Stafford Branch along Highway 61.

**Primary Library used by South Planning Zone Residents**



**Travel Time to South Planning Zone Libraries**



Current travel times to Park Grove Branch and Newport Branch west of Manning are under 10 minutes. East of Manning in Denmark Township the travel times can reach more than 20 minutes, but population density is very low. Travel times for the rest of the South Planning Zone will continue to increase as the population is expected to grow rapidly through 2030.