



Executive Summary

The stakeholders of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System have realized for some time that a comprehensive master plan for library facilities is needed. It was clear that our Board of Commissioners and Library Board of Trustees needed and wanted a plan to guide decisions on facilities: identifying where citizens are unserved, where they are underserved, where libraries are most needed, what is the optimal size, and what improvements need to be made to our existing facilities—a plan that will examine these issues for the entire service area, not just one neighborhood or community. Most importantly, this much needed and desired plan must be fair, unbiased, and based on good information and valid, authoritative data. I believe this plan accomplishes this.

With the excellent assistance of the Sizemore Group, the Fulton County General Services Department, the Department of Environment and Community Development, the Atlanta Housing Authority and many others, this plan makes recommendations for:

- Eight new branch libraries—three of which will replace services at five existing facilities.
- Major expansion and improvements of the Auburn Avenue Research Library
- Complete reprogramming and renovation of the Central Library
- Renovations and improvements at most existing branch facilities.

The Facility Master Plan is exclusively focused on facilities, not on collections, services, or programs within our libraries. Determining these service needs is ongoing—and the input of our citizens and library staff is critical as we evaluate and plan for new and renovated libraries. As new facilities are planned, community involvement will be essential.

Branch libraries should not be mirrors of each other. A cookie-cutter approach will not work for our urban, suburban and rural system where we serve diverse communities with different needs. It is also important to note that superb library service can be delivered from all library sizes. Smaller, neighborhood libraries have smaller service areas and are typically located in more densely populated areas while larger, regional libraries serve larger geographic areas in suburban communities. Determining library size should consider service area and population served, understanding that the entire system's collections and services are available to all—the books at Roswell Branch belong to residents of Bowen Homes and the books at Adams Park Branch belong to those who live in Buckhead. This plan reflects this approach.

The Central Library has the potential to be an even more important asset to downtown Atlanta. It must effectively serve those who live and work downtown as well as visitors and tourists. While this is a critical role, it must be only part of the mission of the Central Library. Central has a valuable role to play as a countywide resource and should be of value to all residents of Fulton County and Atlanta-in-DeKalb. Central libraries in major metropolitan areas across the country are vibrant, dynamic cultural institutions with a broad array of programming, activities, exhibits and collections that bring value—culturally, educationally, and economically—to their respective downtowns. They also serve everyone within the library system's service area and often beyond. With reference and research services, extensive collections with significant breadth, expertise and service not available at branch libraries, and special collections and archives, the Central Library serves everyone from Alpharetta, Birmingham, and Shakerag to Palmetto, Fairburn, and Rico. The Central Library's existing square footage is poorly utilized and not functional in many instances. The current configuration of public spaces and offices needs to be completely re-evaluated with a new building program and redesign of interior spaces.



The current Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History is an immensely valuable institution that all in metro Atlanta should celebrate. It is a leading national and international institution supporting the study and research of the culture and history of African Americans and peoples of the African Diaspora. Unlike our 33 other libraries, Auburn Avenue serves the world—scholars and researchers across the country and around the world as well as residents and visitors of metro Atlanta. The existing facility is attractive and functions well in many respects, however, there are significant facility needs: upgraded HVAC systems that are designed for archival environments; additional archival storage space; expansion of exhibition and gallery areas; and additional program space to allow for larger special events, lectures, and symposia.

The Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System has not completed a thorough, comprehensive analysis of facility needs since the mid-1980s when a bond referendum was approved by voters. This bond issue built many of our existing library facilities. This important, multi-year construction effort resulted in facilities that have served the public well. However, 20 years later, there are notable facility needs—infrastructure improvements, interior updates, and reprogramming of spaces.

This plan, with facts and good data, recognizes many inadequacies and needs that have been previously discussed and recognized anecdotally:

- Bowen Homes, Bankhead Courts, and Thomasville Heights are in buildings that were originally intended to have a 10-year lifespan and are now severely inadequate.
- The leased spaces currently occupied by Perry Homes and Carver Homes are not long term solutions for providing library service to those communities.
- Major growth in South Fulton requires new libraries for the Chattahoochee Hill Country and the Wolf Creek area.
- Populated areas like the Old National corridor and the Red Oak community are not adequately served by existing facilities.
- The current Alpharetta Branch does not adequately serve all Northwest Fulton communities.

The Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System has a proven record of customer satisfaction with over 90% of our citizens who use our services. All of our 34 locations are open gateways to one library, one collection. Our talented, well-trained and empowered staff team is committed to providing excellent library service delivered equitably and with community needs and input at the forefront. We are sustained by strongly supportive elected officials; an effective, policy-making Board of Trustees; enthusiastic, engaged Friends of the Library; and a dedicated Library Foundation.

Thank you for your support of our libraries and for your commitment to literacy and lifelong learning through public library service.

John F. Szabo
Director
Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System

**Total Development Budget Estimates:**

The total development budget estimates for all new libraries is approximately \$51,000,000, adjusted for escalation. The total renovation development budget for existing libraries is approximately \$60,700,000, also adjusted for escalation. Square foot cost has been developed to include LEED Certification, in recognition of lowered operating cost and better environmental stewardship. All new construction and renovation projects have been placed on one of two implementation timelines: Phase 1 to be built between 2006 – 2010, and Phase 2 with a construction window of 2011 – 2015.

| Total Development Project Budget Projection | | | |
|---|----------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Proposed Budgets for New Library Construction and Renovation | | | |
| Phase 1: 2006 - 2010 | | Phase 2: 2011 - 2015 | |
| New Libraries | | New Libraries | |
| Birmingham | \$ 12,510,679 | Donald Lee Hollowell | \$ 2,846,065 |
| Carver / Thomasville Heights | \$ 2,622,136 | Northwest Atlanta | \$ 8,663,294 |
| Chattahoochee Hills | \$ 12,510,679 | Old National Highway | \$ 4,431,647 |
| Wolf Creek | \$ 4,574,272 | Red Oak | \$ 2,846,065 |
| Renovations | | Renovations | |
| Peachtree | \$ 690,516 | Washington | \$ 544,164 |
| Roswell | \$ 1,718,145 | Dogwood | \$ 515,029 |
| Stewart Lakewood | \$ 886,114 | Cleveland | \$ 679,742 |
| West End | \$ 582,354 | Hapeville | \$ 391,418 |
| Adamsville | \$ 809,058 | D. Robert E. Fulton | \$ 144,595 |
| Ponce de Leon | \$ 674,412 | Fairburn | \$ 789,587 |
| Alpharetta | \$ 667,953 | Northeast Spruill | \$ 1,511,276 |
| Georgia Hill | \$ 455,066 | Adams Park | \$ 522,307 |
| Sandy Springs | \$ 1,855,576 | Mechanicsville | \$ 22,579 |
| Southwest | \$ 1,789,724 | MLK | \$ 26,028 |
| Buckhead | \$ 1,277,357 | College Park | \$ 475,648 |
| South Fulton | \$ 943,057 | Kirkwood | \$ 559,955 |
| East Point | \$ 703,639 | East Atlanta | \$ 10,822 |
| Northside | \$ 865,833 | Expansion | |
| Central | \$ 20,612,406 | Auburn Avenue | \$ 20,000,000 |
| Phase I Development Budget | \$ 66,748,974 | Phase II Development Budget | \$ 44,980,220 |
| Grand Total (Both Phases) | | \$ 111,729,194 | |

The amounts shown are based on 2006 cost plus 3% inflation for each year to target construction start year.