

RICHARDSON PUBLIC LIBRARY 2018-2023 STRATEGIC PLAN

History

The Richardson Public Library began in 1947 as a branch of the Dallas County Library. It occupied a few crowded shelves in the back room of Cash Dry Goods store at 108 East Main. Miss Jessie Durham, the proprietor of the store, served as librarian. The population of Richardson was then 1,200 and the library collection numbered four hundred volumes.

Eleven years later, a city ordinance authorized the library as an official city department. A \$100,000 bond issue was approved to cover the costs of construction of a new building. On November 22, 1959, citizens literally carried the books from Cash Dry Goods store to the new location at 310 East Tyler Street. This 5,800 square foot, red-brick building sat behind the police station and consisted of two rooms separated by the circulation desk. The population of Richardson was then about 12,000.

By 1965, the library had again outgrown its space. In July, the citizens approved bonds to finance a new location. The current library building opened its doors December 1, 1970, at an estimated cost of \$2 million. The city population was then nudging 50,000. The 81,650 square feet, four-story building opened with the use of two floors and a small portion of a third. By 1980, the basement reference department had been added. In 1993, a bond election was approved to finish the third floor, install a second public elevator, and totally renovate the remaining space. In February, 1995, the work was completed and the building opened to the public. The Library was renovated further in 2006, based on a 2001 space plan. In 2013 a materials handling/sorting system that utilizes RFID technology was installed. Since 2013 the library has created a makerspace – “C-Tech,” expanded programming and outreach, created “Darbey’s StoryWalk,” added various digital offerings, and begun work on upgrades to the facility funded in a 2015 COR Bond.

At present time the Library has 43,270 active, registered patrons; a collection of 269,896 items; and annually circulates more than 1 million materials. It is open seven days a week, offering 64 hours of full library service, and digital services 24/7.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Richardson Public Library is to make readily available to the community materials and services that will promote excellence in informational, recreational, and educational pursuits; and seeks to encourage activities and ideas that will stimulate, enrich and expand interests of patrons of all ages.

Guiding Principles

Intellectual Freedom

The Library supports the “Freedom to Read” initiative of the American Library Association and encourages life-long learning by making freely available the best materials (in a variety of formats) that explore different viewpoints and ideas.

Excellence

Library administration promotes a culture of excellence through hiring top professionals, providing on-going staff training, encouraging staff to actively participate in professional organizations, and by exercising responsible stewardship of community resources.

Trust

The Library is committed to operating transparently and with integrity. Accurate information is the goal of every transaction. Staff values the library’s role as a trusted source for information, resources, and programming in our community.

Strategic Priorities

PEOPLE

The Library is a community hub for reading, learning experiences, and sharing ideas – the center for life-long learning for its patrons. Programming initiatives that celebrate Richardson’s diversity in age, culture, and thought will be ongoing and material selection will reflect the evolving interests and lifestyles of the community. The Library will seek out additional opportunities to add to its current outreach library services in order to engage users who do not come to the physical library. The Library seeks to increase the sense of community and citizen engagement through providing physical and virtual destinations to read, learn, and experience new things.

The Library will:

- Continue to offer multiple opportunities to build skills in the areas of early literacy, adult literacy, and digital literacy
- Create “life skills” programming aimed at young people and New Americans; continue lectures as well as consider adding speakers from city services such as Parks and Fire and Police; plan more targeted programs for children (bilingual, ASL, sensory challenged)
- Implement more programs supporting local and self-published writers
- Expand C-Tech services and programming to teens and children, as well as add additional maker equipment for various arts and technology
- Expand services to seniors, such as “Books By Mail” and research best practices for outreach delivery and future addition of services; consider more one-on-one outreach to seniors to teach use of personal technology
- Expand services to seniors with online products that promote brain health and activity
- Continue to connect with underserved or new areas of the community, such as the “panhandle” and emerging housing developments
- Seek partnerships with City departments and other community entities to meet shared goals
- Anticipate and meet the informational, educational, cultural, and recreational needs of our diverse community with up-to-date, dynamic collection development
- Provide additional copies of high-demand items in all formats
- Consider adjusting the number of hours open for service and offer new program times and topics, in line with patron interests and expectations
- Make changes where possible in procedures and policies to ensure an excellent customer experience and continue to provide training and support to staff in making customer service their top priority.

- Consider eliminating late fees on library materials in keeping with regional trends
- Raise awareness and visibility about the range of services offered
- Lead the community in the acquisition, sharing, and safekeeping of materials related to the history of Richardson and its founding families

PLACE

The challenges of keeping a 48 year old building looking well maintained and up to date will continue to be addressed over the next five years. Intensified basic maintenance of the Library will be critical as well as planning for some refreshing of program spaces that are showing their age. Patrons are very interested in upgraded beverage and snack options in the building, addition of a lounge area, replacement of furniture and carpet, and additional space in the form of classrooms or program rooms. Longer range dreams for a possible bond project include planning for a Library presence close to the panhandle/east side of Richardson as well as adding space to the existing main Library.

The Library will:

- Continue to create welcoming, safe spaces that promote a sense of community pride and are responsive to public access concerns
- Refresh current program and study spaces by increased cleaning, painting, adding new carpet/flooring, and promoting greater attention to facility issues
- Address the continuing need for well-lit areas for reading, study, and security
- Consider the addition of a separate space for the East Richardson community that provides both space for programs as well as public internet computers and a small recreational reading collection
- Respond to the continuing need for power for both public and personal devices being used throughout the building
- Enhance the major program room space in the basement to make it more comfortable and appealing for programs

- Consider establishing a business center in the library basement that guides small business owners, entrepreneurs, and job seekers to available free resources; and seek partnerships with other nonprofit entities that are involved with small businesses
- Add a separate C-Tech center for teens to work on music, movies, and other creative technology projects
- Continue to devote significant classroom space to basic adult English language instruction to best serve the 10,000 residents who do not speak English well and to help them engage with their children's education

TECHNOLOGY

The Library's online presence serves as a virtual branch, offering information and services 24/7. The Library strives to be current on the best technologies for delivering content to patrons as well as providing current materials, programs and services to explore new topics in digital literacy. The Library will continue to seek out new and better digital platforms for providing content and will be adding enhancements to the on-line catalog to improve the customer experience. The Library's website is the City's second most popular landing site after the City's main home page. The Library will maximize potential web site opportunities for easier citizen engagement and better marketing of popular library materials and services.

The Library will:

- Offer a virtual presence online that is user friendly, clear, fluid, and relevant
- Respond to the evolving need of the community to receive information in new formats, recognizing that rapidly changing digital and web-based service will drive space needs and adaptations
- Add more e-books, digital audio books, and streaming media to the current collection and will investigate additional platforms for downloadable digital products that could add variety to the Library's offerings
- Add online services such as automatic renewals and online payment methods for better customer service and to respond to patron expectations

- Make all print and digital information collections more user friendly through innovations such as a single point of access
- Provide our community with the knowledge and tools needed to succeed in an information society by offering a variety of computer classes based on current community need as well as offering instruction in the use of unique online learning products
- Expand support for patrons learning how to use new devices and software by actively offering book-a-librarian sessions
- Connect with more tech experts in the community for advice and programs
- Add services and materials for gaming enthusiasts
- Continue to utilize new and existing social media outlets to better communicate with new generations of library users
- Partner with the City IT department in exploring upgrades to our ILS (Information Library Systems) to enhance customer experiences and services and maximize use of 21st century products
- Use technology in community outreach utilizing the ability to issue library cards off-site
- Continue to expand awareness of the library webpage as our “virtual branch” by adding customer service options such as online payments of fines and registration for library cards

Our Vision

Richardson is a dynamic city, deeply rooted in education, technology and the arts, with the Library serving as a community hub. The Library is a vibrant, welcoming space for people to learn, play, connect, and engage. The Library’s collections are the best materials available that reflect the interests and needs of Richardson’s richly diverse community and enhance the quality of life for Richardson residents. Recognizing the importance of technology in the city’s history, the Library strives to deliver the best in programs and services to meet the needs of a 21st century community. Dreaming and planning for future expansions and renovations to the physical Library is a cornerstone to providing excellent library services to all the neighborhoods in the City and to supporting the Library’s core mission.