

GENERAL PROPOSAL QUESTIONS

Q: Why was this Capital Facilities Proposal created in 2018?

A: In recent years, Timberland Regional Library leadership and its Board of Trustees recognized a need to transform the organization to ensure it continues delivering on its commitment to library services excellence for the next 50 years and beyond. To begin addressing that topic, TRL leadership commenced a comprehensive evaluation of every factor that contributes to the library's success; reviewed regional, national, and international trends in library services; and identified key benchmarks to aim for in the short-, medium-, and long term. As a result of that assessment, TRL leadership delivered a Capital Facilities Proposal to the Facilities Committee.

Q: What is in the Capital Facilities Proposal?

A: The Capital Facilities Proposal includes the results of the comprehensive evaluation, which included trends and best practices in library services, financial analyses, economic and demographic forecasting, usage patterns, and employee services. It proposes a number of focus areas for the future, including smart recommendations for staffing and ideal methods for adaptation to marketplace trends.

Q: Who wrote the Capital Facilities Proposal?

A: This work was developed by the TRL leadership team in response to a request to deliver a Capital Facilities Proposal to the Facilities Committee.

Q: Why is this proposal necessary?

A: When compared to many neighboring library systems, TRL faces multiple unique challenges, not the least of which is 7,000 square miles of service area. In addition, shifting demographics, the evolution of patrons' expectations for library offerings, and a goal of being as financially sustainable as possible made this undertaking a valuable one for TRL leadership and its Board of Trustees.

Q: Who is responsible for making the decisions in the Capital Facilities Proposal?

A: All decisions about service points, such as libraries, kiosks, or book drops, including the new service points described in the proposal, are Board of Trustee decisions.

GENERAL PROPOSAL QUESTIONS – con't

Q: What is the process for making decisions in the Capital Facilities Proposal?

A: At this time, the Facilities Committee and complete Board of Trustees are evaluating the proposal, and will share additional next steps and decisions in the future. We have shared the timeline on our website, TRL.org, and will update it as needed.

Q: What's wrong with current library usage? It seems like people are using my library regularly.

A: For the first six months of 2018, approximately 10% of residents used their library card in some fashion. Since 2016, only 26% of the region's population have held "active" library cards. We're trying to do better, and reach metrics and benchmarks that other regional and national library systems are tracking at.

Q: Why wasn't the community consulted on everything in the Capital Facilities Proposal?

A: Our team absolutely values input and feedback from the communities we serve, and we planned for community input to happen once the proposal was made public, as we are following our process for delivery of strategic recommendations for our organization. Also, to ensure long-term success, TRL leadership built workshops, training, community conversations, and stakeholder interviews into the proposal. Touching more on the proposal's development, TRL leadership performed an internal audit, assessed marketplace and third-party data, and surveyed our employees, with the short-term goal of delivering it to our Facilities Committee for review. Now that the Committee has reviewed it and it has been passed on to our full Board of Trustees, it has been shared with the public for review and comment.

Q: How long is all of this going to take?

A: Once the Board of Trustees evaluates the proposal and makes decisions, some of the elements from the Capital Facilities Proposal could begin in the following weeks and months. Our long-term vision is for these to begin and build a proper foundation for our 2020 – 2022 Strategic Proposal.

Q: What case studies or best practices did TRL use in developing this proposal?

A: There were a wide variety of communities and library systems that we investigated as part of our comprehensive audit of the marketplace. Notable communities included Fort Vancouver (Washington), Spokane County (Washington), Gwinnett County Library (Georgia), Bexar County Digital Public Library (Texas), King County Library System (Washington), and a host of others both domestically and internationally.

FACILITY-RELATED QUESTIONS

Q: Is my library closing? What libraries are closing?

A: At this time, the Board of Trustees has not made any decisions to close any facilities or make any other material changes to levels of service at our libraries. We ask that you review the Capital Facilities Proposal to understand the suggestions made by our leadership team, and how we plan to deliver better service to more residents through the proposal.

Q: Why wasn't the community consulted about the closure of any library facilities?

A: At this time, the Board of Trustees has not made any decisions to close any facilities or make any other material changes to levels of service at our libraries beyond the renewal of a lease for the Mountain View (Randle) library. We most certainly appreciate comments from our patrons and the communities we serve, and absolutely consider that feedback in any decision or recommendation we make as an organization. Additionally, the proposal incorporates workshops, training, community conversations, and stakeholder interviews to ensure success.

Q: Are LibraryExpress / Open+ / Lockers / Mobile Services / Expanded Digital Public Libraries / Hubs really what we need for TRL patrons?

A: Our leadership team performed an extremely comprehensive audit of regional, national, and international best practices, technologies, and marketplace trends that are applicable to our service area. We believe that each of those elements, when appropriately selected for a community, would make a quality addition to the library services TRL is able to offer.

Q: What is happening with the lease of the Randle library?

A: On September 26, 2018, the Board of Trustees elected to renew the lease of the Randle library for one more year.

Q: What is happening with the South Bend library?

A: At this time, the South Bend library is closed for multiple reasons, including lead paint, mold, asbestos, and structural issues in the building. No further decisions have been made regarding the South Bend library, and all decisions about service points, such as libraries, kiosks, or book drops, including the new service points described in the proposal, are Board of Trustee decisions.

FINANCIAL QUESTIONS

Q: What is the current financial situation of the Timberland Regional Library system?

A: TRL has been able to withstand budget challenges in recent years, but is forecasting fairly significant shortfalls in the next two calendar years. As expenditures are currently forecasted to continue outpacing revenues, it is critical that we are vigilant in managing the financial situation of the entire system.

Q: What expenditures are putting such a strain on TRL?

A: There are multiple financial expenditures that have an impact on our annual budgets, but a prime example would be that annual revenues increase by approximately \$400,000 in recent years, while salaries and benefits have increased by approximately \$500,000 over that period.

Q: Are you planning on cutting staff?

A: One of the most important components of Timberland Regional Library is our people. We recognize that they represent friendly faces that our community members enjoy interacting with. As part of our Capital Facilities Proposal, we have laid out a suggestion for adjusting our staffing model that results in longer opening hours, and appropriately staffs locations using a consistent method across our facilities, helping us manage our salaries and benefits more effectively.

FINANCIAL QUESTIONS – con't

Q: How much is all of this going to cost?

A: Each of the core elements of the Capital Facilities Proposal features expected costs, but they can be broken down as follows:

- LibraryExpress service points: approximately \$30-60K one-time investment, ~75K annually, primarily for salary and benefits
- Open+ Expanded Access: for the libraries we recommended implementing Open+, which will significantly increase opening hours, costs are typically \$12,500 for installation (per location), plus a \$900/month subscription, which covers management and maintenance of as many cameras or other devices needed for that service location.
- Remote Lockers: current pricing requires \$30-60K for installation of these service points, but there is also a leased option that has favorable pricing. Ongoing maintenance (which would include branding and marketing elements) estimates are TBD, and would vary based on service location and other factors.
- Mobile Services: Initial unit costs for new, comparable vehicles in recent years has been approximately \$165K, but we are recommending an initial retrofit of existing courier vans as they are rotated out in order to manage our costs and ensure we're designing vehicles that meet our audiences' needs. Upon delivery or implementation, costs incurred on this fleet would be staffing, fuel, and maintenance.
- Digital Public Libraries: we are estimating annual costs of \$95,740 in staffing annually, but could vary to as much as \$153,184 annually based on changes to our recommended staffing model. Initial costs would be dependent on scope, and TRL could also investigate grants, partnerships, and other efforts to reduce initial and future costs.
- Hub Libraries: Featuring hub libraries that are staffed at a consistent model and focusing community attention on these locations, in combination with the other elements of this proposal, we could reduce staffing costs by more than \$180K annually by developing hub locations. Full investment estimates would vary based on feedback from our Board of Trustees and the community.