



Frequently Asked Questions Regarding a New Central Library

1. Why does the John Henry Faulk Central Library need to be replaced with a new central library?

More than 500,000 customers visit the Faulk Central Library each year to use its many resources. However, the current building has many deficiencies:

- The collection outgrew the building's capacity 15 years ago and there is no room for expansion of the collection.
- There is no space for additional Internet workstations. The Central Library was built before the Internet and other electronic resources were considered essential to library services.
- It has no room to add additional seating.
- There is no dedicated youth programming area or separate teen space.
- It has minimal space for exhibits and displays that complement and promote collections.
- It has no auditorium or meeting rooms for community use.

2. How will the \$90 million be spent?

The \$90 million will fund construction of a 250,000 square foot facility (170,000 square feet finished, 80,000 square feet unfinished). Besides creating additional space, the package also includes funding for:

- 81,510 new books and materials (the current collection is 400,609 volumes)
- 100 state-of-the-art computer workstations (56 computers currently)
- 12 meeting and study rooms (there are none now)
- A 300-seat auditorium (there is none now)
- 250 parking spaces (there are currently 40 metered parking spaces)
- An expanded youth area with dedicated programming space.
- A separate teen area

3. Why do we need a new central library when we have branch libraries?

- The Central Library was built to support a branch system half the size of the present system.
- The Central Library provides a core collection of materials available to branch customers.
- Branch libraries provide convenient access to the library system's resources.
- Branch libraries cannot function without essential services from the Central Library.
- A central library is the hub of any good library system. Branch libraries rely on the Central Library for selection, acquisition, cataloging, and reference of the collection.
- In order to have a strong library system you need a fully functioning central library. Branch libraries typically hold books and audiovisual materials that cater to general interest. Branch library collections focus on the most popular titles and topics. Unlike branch libraries, a central library should have the space to house a more in depth collection of research materials and an extensive circulating collection available to customers at any of our locations.
- The Faulk Central Library annually delivers approximately 70,000 books and other materials requested by branch customers to their neighborhood branch for pick-up.

4. Why is the Central Library essential?

The Central Library is the hub of the Library system. It provides a centralized operating system for 20 branch libraries.

- The expanded materials collection will be available for check out from any library location.
- The new Central Library will provide a more comprehensive reference collection with unique titles. These collections are prohibitively expensive to duplicate at branches, yet necessary for meeting the information needs of the Austin community.
- Professional librarians at the Central Library will provide subject expertise to support the information needs of branch library customers.
- The new Central Library will be a community center with the following public spaces:
 - o A dedicated youth programming area
 - o A separate teen area
 - o Public meeting and study rooms



Frequently Asked Questions Regarding a New Central Library

- o Exhibition space
- o An auditorium for literary and cultural programs.
- The Central Library will serve the entire Austin region, but will also function as the library location for the increasing downtown population.

5. Will the new Central Library take money away from the branches?

- The new building will be built with general obligation bonds, not from the Library's operating budget.
- The City of Austin and the Austin Public Library Foundation are forging a unique agreement whereby private contributions will be leveraged to provide the additional financial resources needed to operate the new Central Library.
- No funding will be diverted from branch operations.

6. Will there be parking and easy access to public transit at the new Central Library?

The new Central Library will have adequate public parking, and be near public transit.

- Unlike the Faulk Central Library, which has only 40 metered parking spaces, the new facility will have 250 parking spaces.
- The proposed Central Library will be located on the site of the old Seaholm Substation (704 W. Cesar Chavez) on the North side of Cesar Chavez, across from Lady Bird Lake, to the west of the Green Water Treatment site and to the East of the old Seaholm Power Plant site. In addition, Capitol Metro has proposed a major transit hub bringing together bus lines, commercial rail, and streetcars in close proximity to the new library. The proposed location is near two major highways: Mopac/Loop 1 and IH 35.

7. How will the Main Library project be financed?

The \$90 million project will be paid for with voter approved general obligation bonds. The Austin Public Library Foundation plans to raise additional funds for building enhancements and has created an operating trust with a combination of City and private funds.

8. Shouldn't the funds go to improve the Branch Libraries?

The City's Library Building Program has previously focused on rejuvenating the entire branch library system by renovating, expanding, and building branch libraries.

- Over the last four bond elections the community invested in branch libraries.
 - o 10 new facilities were added.
 - o 7 more facilities were relocated from lease spaces to new facilities.
 - o 3 facilities were expanded
- Branch libraries provide convenient access to the system's resources.
 - o Branch libraries rely on the Central Library for selection, acquisition, cataloging, and reference of the collection.
- The Faulk Central Library annually delivers approximately 70,000 books and other materials requested by branch customers to their neighborhood branch for pick-up.
- In order to have a strong branch library system, you need a fully functioning central library. Branch libraries typically hold books and audiovisual materials that cater to general interest. Branch library collections focus on the most popular titles and topics. Unlike branch libraries, a central library has the space to house a more in depth collection of research materials and an extensive circulating collection available to customers at all locations.

9. How will the new Central Library be an improvement over the John Henry Faulk Central Library?

The Central Library is 30 years old and was built for a population of only 700,000 people. Today the city has more than 600,000 people. There is no space to add depth to the collection. It has no auditorium or public meeting room space. Electrical systems are inadequate. The parking is not sufficient. There simply is not enough public space in the building to meet the needs of the community. By contrast, the new Central Library will have:

- space to accommodate 500,000 volumes (680,000 vols. when we expand to 250,000 s.f.)
- an expanded youth area with dedicated programming space



Frequently Asked Questions Regarding a New Central Library

- a separate teen area
- a 300-seat auditorium
- 12 study and meeting rooms with seating for 200
- a technology center with 100 computers – nearly twice as many as at the John Henry Faulk Central Library.
- 250 parking spaces.
- an exhibit space
- a Friends of Austin Public Library bookstore
- a gift shop
- a café

10. How is technology affecting the role of Public Libraries and why do we need a new Central Library when there's the Internet?

In our technological environment, libraries perform the same role they always have: they pool resources to increase access to information and recreational materials for everyone in the community. As technology has improved to make many aspects of our lives easier and more efficient, it has done the same for libraries.

- Librarians offer professional assistance in online research.
- Contrary to popular belief, only a very small fraction of information available in book form is also available electronically. Less than 1 percent of the more than 110 million items in the Library of Congress has been electronically formatted.
- The Internet has become a great informational resource for many people. Books, articles, audio recordings, and movies are all available for downloading from the Internet and a new central library would offer all of these online services to customers. Studies have shown that Internet use has not produced a reduction in the use of public libraries.
- There are still many citizens who do not have Internet access at home. The Library insures that Internet access is available to all. The Library also serves many people who have difficulty finding what they need on the Internet. Library staff guides customers through both print and electronic resources to find the best information available.

11. When will the new Central Library open?

City Council selected the architectural team of Lake/Flato Architects and Shepley Bulfinch Richardson and Abbot to design the new Central Library. The design for the new Central Library will be complete by February 2010 with the bid and award for the contractor complete. The new Central Library is targeted to open in August 2012.

12. Since the University of Texas has such a great library, why does Austin need a bigger Central Library?

The University of Texas has an excellent Library, however the UT Library's mission is different from that of a public library. UT Library's mission is to support the academic studies of UT's students. It does not have the general interest materials most often requested by Austin Public Library customers. UT's Library is not easily accessible, nor is it free to Austin citizens.

Austin citizens can access the UT libraries through TexShare (library sharing program) and Interlibrary Loan. Citizens have to visit the UT libraries or fill out a form to obtain materials. The Austin Public Library delivers materials requested by phone or online to branch libraries for convenient pickup.

Additionally, the UT Library does not have the appropriate resources to serve the children or the young teens of the Austin community. The Austin Public Library has over 100,000 registered youth library cardholders.

13. Why not just tear down the Faulk Central Library and rebuild a bigger library on the current site?

The Faulk Central Library was designed with the ability to expand vertically. However, expansion is not possible because of the Capitol View Corridor ordinance of 1984. In fact, if we tore down the current building, we would have to build a smaller building.



Frequently Asked Questions Regarding a New Central Library

14. Why not use the current Faulk Central Library and build a smaller annex?

This is not a cost effective or efficient approach to library service. Most citizens come to the library for several reasons and expect to find all the resources in one building.

15. Is the proposed square footage for the new Central Library enough for Austin?

Yes, the proposed plan will allow for almost twice as much square footage as the Faulk Central Library. The bond proposal of \$90 million will build a 170,000 square foot facility with an additional 80,000 square feet of unfinished space. In addition, the building will be designed with the capability for expansion.

16. Will you design the building to be expanded as population grows?

Yes, in addition to the 80,000 square feet of unfinished space the proposed plan will be designed to accommodate expansion for future growth.

17. Where will the new Central Library be located?

The new Central Library will be located on the site of the old Seaholm Substation (704 W. Cesar Chavez) on the North side of Cesar Chavez, across from Lady Bird Lake, to the west of the Green Water Treatment site and to the East of the old Seaholm Power Plant site. I

18. What will the building look like?

The COA/Library will have a series of design meetings with the public for community input, which will help the architects and library with the overall design, including features of the library. The overall look and feel will partly depend on the input architects receive from the community. However, the Library's intention is to design and build a library of landmark architecture that reflects the cultural values and heritage of the City of Austin and Central Texas.

19. How would a new central library help the downtown area?

The proposed site of the old Seaholm substation is a perfect location for the new Central Library in the opinion of library support groups and library administration because it will be right in the heart of the emerging cultural/civic district. Recent studies have shown that central libraries have significant economic benefits to downtown areas. Additionally a new central library will be an important contributor to repositioning the downtown area as a cultural district.

20. If the Austin Public Library Foundation raises money would the cost to the tax payer be less than the original \$90 million in bonds?

The bond amount has been set at \$90 million and will fund construction of a 250,000-square-foot (170,000 SF finished and 80,000 SF unfinished) new central along with furnishings and materials. Additional monies raised by the Library Foundation will go towards enhancements and an operating trust for the Library. For more information, go to www.austinlibrary.org.