

Space Needs Assessment Cedar Rapids Public Library

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Executive Summary

The space needs assessment's primary goal is to describe the minimum space required to provide for the community's library collections and services at the end of a planning horizon. To provide a general orientation, the study begins with a brief profile of the library's service program and comparative data. The body of the study deals with calculating the community's library service space needs through the year 2030.

Service trends at the Cedar Rapids Public Library were examined as part of the library's profile. The Library's service trends have been mixed, indicating a change in use patterns, priorities, and funding. Broadly speaking the library has seen a number of successes. Over the past five years library registrations are up by 22.8%, children's program attendance has increased by 36.6%, customer visits to the library have increased by 9.9% and the combined media holdings have grown by 5.4%

An appropriate re-evaluation of the library's print collections has caused a short-term decline in that collections' size, down 1.4%. Loans at the Downtown library are in a slight, 1.2%, decline. This down-tick may well be a reflection of the need to re-invigorate the Downtown Library's floor plan, services and collection, issues the library is actively pursuing.

To estimate Cedar Rapids' library space requirements the study utilized a methodology that focuses on seven types of space utilization commonly found in public libraries and the forecasted projections for the library service population.

- Collection Space
- User Seating
- Work Space
- Programming Space
- Computing Space
- Special Use Space
- Structure/Support Space

Another factor that is included in this analysis is the potential need for a full service West Side Branch Library. For that reason the space calculation includes additional program spaces and staff work stations that the analysis would not otherwise include.

Today, the Cedar Rapids Public Library has a total of 87,600 square feet, 85,000 square feet at the Downtown Library, and 2,600 square feet at the West Side Branch. Looking through the year 2030, the residents of Cedar Rapids will need access to between 127,552 and 136,662 square feet of library facilities.

This space need may be mitigated to some small degree by the cooperation of public libraries in Linn County. Currently, Cedar Rapids, Hiawatha, and Marion Public Libraries all participate in a shared on-line catalog and information access system, they utilize a common delivery system, and they provide reciprocal borrowing privileges. The net effect to the customer is largely as if each library is a branch of single system. The Fairfax Public Library may also become a more complete partner with area libraries as it grows and matures. Each of the other libraries also faces space constraints from growing customer demand and are actively planning for facility improvements.