The Nobles County Library Board

Guiding Document

for the W.E.L.L. Project

July 2019
Dedicated Library Entrance

- The library has an electronic eye that counts patrons as they enter. The State requires an annual submission of this head count. A shared entrance, or multiple entrances, would impact the electronic eye count.

- The library enjoys vibrant children's programming that requires immediate access to outside green space and access to a dedicated library entrance/exit. Specifically, there needs to be a dedicated library ground floor entrance where children can be monitored while they are waiting to be picked up by parents or guardians. A facility with a dedicated library entrance/exit will experience little disruption as children move about or through it. Children's program objectives will be easier to obtain with ground floor access to the outdoors.

- A dedicated library entrance would expedite library services like pick up and drop off of library materials by patrons.

- A back door (service entrance) will be needed for Plum Creek deliveries. Plum Creek deliveries happen 4 days a week, and twice on Tuesdays. Each delivery involves multiple trips carting library materials in, and other library materials out to the truck.

- Fulda, Brewster, Adrian, and Worthington all have kids that get dropped off by bus at the library (War Memorial Building). A dedicated library entrance would allow them to be safely escorted immediately to the children's program area of the library.

- Without a dedicated library entrance, parents would need to escort the children through the Welcome lobby, into the library, to the programming area.

- The design of the W.E.L.L. building would ideally have a separate entrance to the public library to eliminate the possibility of an unauthorized person gaining access to ECFE or preschool students in or near their classrooms.
Dedicated Library Entrance page 2

• If the topography of the site would allow, it might be possible for early childhood/adult basic ed (coming in off 2nd Ave) to have their own entrance AND for the library, which would be on the “top” floor, to be all on one floor with its dedicated entrance from the parking lot.

• Is there a place in the Minnesota Department of Education criteria that addresses a separate entrance for public libraries that are co-located within schools? Public libraries are open to all, while schools are restricted to students, staff, and registered visitors. For security, the general public is not allowed free access to schools in the same way as public libraries. The location of the library and school entrances should support the distinctions between each institution: Would the school parts be locked down and the public library not locked down?
Square Footage

- The Nobles County Library has completed several significant studies with multiple iterations since 2007. Each of the studies has concluded the Library needs 28,000 to 32,000 square feet to provide the services and programs appropriate for a community the size of Nobles County.

- In 2012, Nobles County and Northland Securities, Inc. while preparing a draft for the capital improvement plan said: “Based on work performed to date, the County believes there are no alternatives for providing library services more efficiently than through shared facilities with other counties or local government units.” On the next page in the packet it reads: “Further, the Building Program and Space Needs Estimate identified the need for a library with a total area of 34,000 to 36,500 square feet to adequately provide for the community’s library service needs through the year 2034.”

- A critical need for the library is designed space for children’s programs and young adult services. Programs for children and teens include an active series of literacy and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math)-based learning programs. Programs from 2016 through 2018 had 30,000 participants involved in over 1,200 programs.

- Due to present space limitations, we have not been able to expand our program offerings to meet the needs of the youth, teens, and adults in our community.

- The creation, and high usage, of the teen room (in the War Memorial Building) demonstrates the need for a place for teens to collaborate on projects.

- Of the 9,568 square feet allocated to the library in the War Memorial Building, only 350 square feet are available to accommodate such an important and thriving educational program. In the proposed collaborative project, the library hopes to gain over 1,600 square feet in children’s programming space to help advance literacy and educational achievement.
• The Library Board’s vision of shared space in the collaborative includes: HVAC, public restrooms, parking, hallways, mechanical room, lobby, and a lactation room.

The following paragraph is from the W.E.L.L. document. The highlighted part is not supported by the Library Board:

• Additional library space is required to address the needs of a diverse adult community attempting to expand its educational and career horizons. The Nobles County Library is unable to develop continuing education programs that effectively open the door of opportunity for adult patrons because it does not have public meeting rooms, study rooms, or a technology center. **In the proposed collaborative project, space is allocated for a shared technology center which will promote digital literacy and awareness of online resources. Furthermore, space has been allocated for joint community resource rooms which will aid the library in providing workforce literacy instruction and specialized workshops. The additional space will permit the library to better connect patrons and immigrants with community resources that will aid in self-sufficiency.**

Reasons the highlighted part is not supported by the Library Board:

• The school district and the public library are two different entities, with two different systems, and two different administrators/administrations.

• Community Education computers are more filtered/protected. The Public Library system computers are filtered, but to a lesser extent.

• Community Education computers are used for education purposes. The Public Library computer purposes are different: filling out an application form or a form for Social Security benefits, searching one’s genealogy, pulling up government documents, emailing home to possibly another country, etc.

• A library staff increase would be needed to take on the load of additional Community Education customers.
One Floor

- If the topography of the site would allow, it might be possible for early childhood/adult basic ed (coming in off 2nd Ave) to have their own entrance AND for the library, which would be on the “top” floor, to be all on one floor with its dedicated entrance from the parking lot.

- Spaces for children using the library require ground level access to have convenient and accessible exits to outdoor areas in case of an emergency such as a fire. Any children’s library space in a new facility will be over 1,000 sq. ft, which requires two exits. Second level exits require stairs, and children cannot be required to navigate stairs in an emergency.

- Often a parent comes in with children. With the library on one level, the parent can monitor their children in the children’s area and still be looking for a book for themselves.

- The elderly require ground level access and ground level evacuation routes in order to make the facility safe and easy to use. Also, obtaining library services must not be an inconvenience to the elderly.

- The disabled require ground level access and ground level evacuation routes in order to make the facility safe for their use. Furthermore, obtaining library services must not be an inconvenience to the disabled as that would be a possible ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) violation. For example, when the power goes out, the elevator is not useable.

- The library sends and receives nearly 3,000 items per month through the Plum Creek Library System delivery service. The library needs ground floor access in order to process, send, and receive deliveries. Relying on the stairs or moving delivery carts through a public elevator is neither efficient nor effective.

- Ground level access is needed to accommodate a drive-up book drop.
• The library enjoys vibrant children’s programs that require immediate access to outside green space and access to a dedicated library entrance/exit. Specifically, there needs to be a dedicated library first floor entrance where children can be monitored while they are waiting to be picked up by parents or guardians. A facility with a dedicated library entrance/exit will experience little disruption as children move about or through it.

• A library on two levels would require an even greater increase in staffing.
Viable Green Space

- *viable* means capable of functioning adequately.

- Grounds must be contaminant-free.

- The green space at the War Memorial Building is 8,200 sq.ft. That is also what we are asking for green space at the W.E.L.L. site.

- We're looking for open space with some trees where kids can disconnect from technology, interact with others, play, do games, have the carnival, etc. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) activities are included in the outdoor programming.

- Physical activity in a green space (green exercise) promotes well-being. By incorporating green space into the W.E.L.L. design, an area would be created which facilitates interaction, fosters well-being, and increases opportunities for green exercise.

- Benches can be placed in the green space for people to engage with other people. Some lower income individuals that do not have a green space attached to their residence utilize the library's green space.

- This green space is used year round, weather permitting, for patrons of all ages.

- An outdoor internet space would allow the number of people who sit outside when the library is closed, or open, to connect to WiFi. Other libraries and communities have created such spaces. This could be a semi-covered hardscape with seating/tables attached to the hardscape. This hardscape area and WiFi could also be used for programming or a gathering place.
Railroad Safety

Railroad tracks are private property. Property close to the tracks also belongs to the railroad. People who don't have permission to be on railroad property are trespassing. Railroad property may be posted with different types of "No Trespassing" signs. They all mean "stay off" and "stay away." Even if there isn't a sign, it's still illegal and dangerous to be on the property.

The Minnesota Safety Council lists 10 common mistakes people make when trespassing on railroad property:

- They're focused on what they're doing (walking, fishing off a bridge, etc.) and not paying attention to the tracks.

- They stand too close to the tracks, not realizing that the train is up to six feet wider than the tracks. They also may not realize that chains, straps and other equipment can swing loose from a train and hit them.

- They expect the train to be louder than it is, or they wear ear buds that drown out the sound of the train.

- They think the train is farther away and moving slower than it actually is.

- They think the train will be able to stop for them. However, by the time the engineer sees them, it's too late to stop.

- Some people throw objects at trains or put objects on the rails to see what might happen when a train comes. Besides being illegal, it can be deadly for people standing nearby and for the train crew.

- People have been struck by trains while placing objects on the tracks. They didn't get out of the way or they were struck by a train on another track.
Railroad Safety page 2

• Small objects like coins sometimes get flattened, but most often they get pinched by the wheel of the train and shot out with deadly force. They can hit the person who put the object on the track or other bystanders.

• Something thrown at a train can bounce back with deadly force.

• Playing on or under rail cars is very risky. Rail cars jerk when they start to move, and jolt without warning. Always use a designated pedestrian crossing to get across the tracks.
Railroad Noise

Airborne noise from a train is generated by a combination of noise from the propulsion of the rolling stock (usually diesel or electric locomotives) and from its interaction with the track. This type of noise generally comes from the operation of a surface rail line and reaches a receiver primarily through the air.

- There are ways to buffer railroad noise:
  - acoustical architectural design
  - acoustical construction (interior)
  - a barrier (wall or fence) near the railroad

Buffering the railroad noise would be welcomed because:

- The train horn, 96-114 decibels from 100 feet away, can interfere with conversation which occurs at 65 decibels.

- There is evidence that noise has an effect on children’s learning ability. The study reported that children exposed to high levels of environmental noise may display sustained and visual attention deficits, difficulty concentrating, reduced auditory discrimination and speech perception, poorer memory that requires high processing demands of semantic (of or relating to meaning in language) material, and reduced reading ability.

- Noise can be a source of annoyance, it can influence mood, and can otherwise detract from the quality of life.
Railroad Vibration

- Vibrations in buildings associated with rail network operations can cause disturbance and complaints in a similar manner to noise. It needs to be considered at the infrastructure planning stage as it is difficult to mitigate retrospectively.

- For railways, vibration is most often generated by the contact between the train wheel and the railway track. The vibration then travels from the track, through the ground and into the building foundation. Generally, the strength of ground vibration reduces as one moves away from the track. However, the strength of vibration may increase when moving up floors inside the building due to resonances of the building structure.

- The effects of ground-borne vibration include feelable movement of the building floors, rattling of windows, shaking of items on shelves or hanging on walls, and rumbling sounds. Some of these effects can be experienced in The Blue Building.
Involve a Library Architect

- A public library has a purpose and patrons that differ from the purpose and patrons of a school library. The architecture of a public library should address its purpose and needs.

- The following is not to suggest that this firm (Opening the Book) should be hired. However, we believe this criteria would be useful for designing a public library.

from https://www.openingthebook.com/library-design/library-space-planning

Architects & Contractors
Opening the Book brings a new approach to interior library design which harmonizes the interior layout with the shapes and volumes of the architecture. We work to maximize architectural features and play to the strengths of the building. Our research on people flow supports the creation of discovery layouts which ensure that the whole space is dynamic and well-used.

Library Space Planning
from Opening the Book- Library Consultants- Topics covered in their services

- Space planning consultancy
- Customer flow
- Wow factor
- Capacity
- Creative zoning (indoor)
- Integrating IT
- Collection layout and display
- Work flow
- Balancing aesthetics and functionality
Key Principles of Library Space Planning
from Opening the Book

- Work with your building not against it
- Maximize natural light
- Create a sense of arrival
- Mix intimate spaces with longer views through
- Showcase resources – everyone is used to retail presentation where products come out to meet the customer
- Offer a choice of where and how to sit or study
- Minimize barriers and control signs
- Use color and imagery to create ambience and stimulus
- Use curves to open up spaces
- Avoid traditional straight rows of desks and shelves which create a factory/warehouse feel
Marjorie Ferguson (Library Director) should be notified so she can participate as an equal partner in the collaboration meetings, representing the Library Board.

- The Library Director is the legal representative of the Nobles County Library Board.

- Meetings could include, but are not limited to: architect interviews, public meetings, work sessions, committee meetings, informal discussions by W.E.L.L. entities, etc.
Final approval on project
by Library Board and library staff
Added Concerns

At the July 15, 2019 Special Meeting of the Library Board, concerns came up during the discussion of the Guiding Document that weren't addressed in the previous topics of the Guiding Document. They are entered below.

Safety Concerns

Predators
• Not having a dedicated library entrance makes it difficult to monitor children from known predators.

Elevator
• It cannot be relied on during a power outage.
• It is an unsupervised area: Who’s watching the kids?

Restrooms
• These are unsupervised areas: Who’s watching the kids?

Contamination
• How free of contaminants is “contaminant free?”
• If the former gas station/bait shop eventually becomes part of the W.E.L.L. site, will it also have contaminants?

Lockdown
• In public schools, visitors are buzzed in. In public libraries, they are not.

Non-Safety Concerns

Hours of Use
• Hours a public library is open differ from the hours of a public school.
• If school is cancelled or late, the public library may still be open.

Parking
• Are there enough parking spaces for employees, patrons, and events?