

A Case Summary for the new



SEARCY
PUBLIC LIBRARY



What's in it for me?

The Case History

The Searcy Public Library is bursting at the seams and can no longer meet the demands for service. The population of Searcy as well as the number of items checked out from the library (books, movies, audio books) has more than doubled since 1966, when the current facility was constructed. Increased library traffic means that sometimes parking is unavailable for a would-be visitor. The library facility has no space for meeting rooms or study rooms, though the library is expected to offer this service.

In October 2020, the City of Searcy was presented with a unique opportunity to purchase the Searcy Athletic Club to repurpose as the new Searcy headquarters library at a price of \$1.7 million, approximately half its appraised value. With the White County Public Library System's help with half of the \$1.7 million purchase price, the City of Searcy moved forward with the purchase. At the same time, the White County Quorum Court stepped up to support the project with their appropriation of \$500,000 toward the renovation cost.

The Searcy Library Board recognized the need for a larger facility nearly 30 years ago and have pursued multiple alternatives for a new location since then but none ever came to fruition. In April of 2015, the Searcy Library Board requested and was granted the use of a piece of City property as the site for a new facility. A Needs Assessment and Building Program were completed. In December of 2016, SAPP Design was chosen as an architect to design a new library facility for Searcy and in May 2017, the City of Searcy held a special election to request a 3-mill property tax for City of Searcy residents to fund the \$13 million project. Voters turned down the request (68% against - 32% for). Reasons for voting no were 1) project was too expensive, 2) they did not want a property tax, and 3) some believed it should be a county, not just a City tax. A failed election did not eliminate the need for more space and many of those who voted against the project agreed that Searcy needed a new larger facility - they just did not approve the plan or the cost.

We have outgrown our Library!

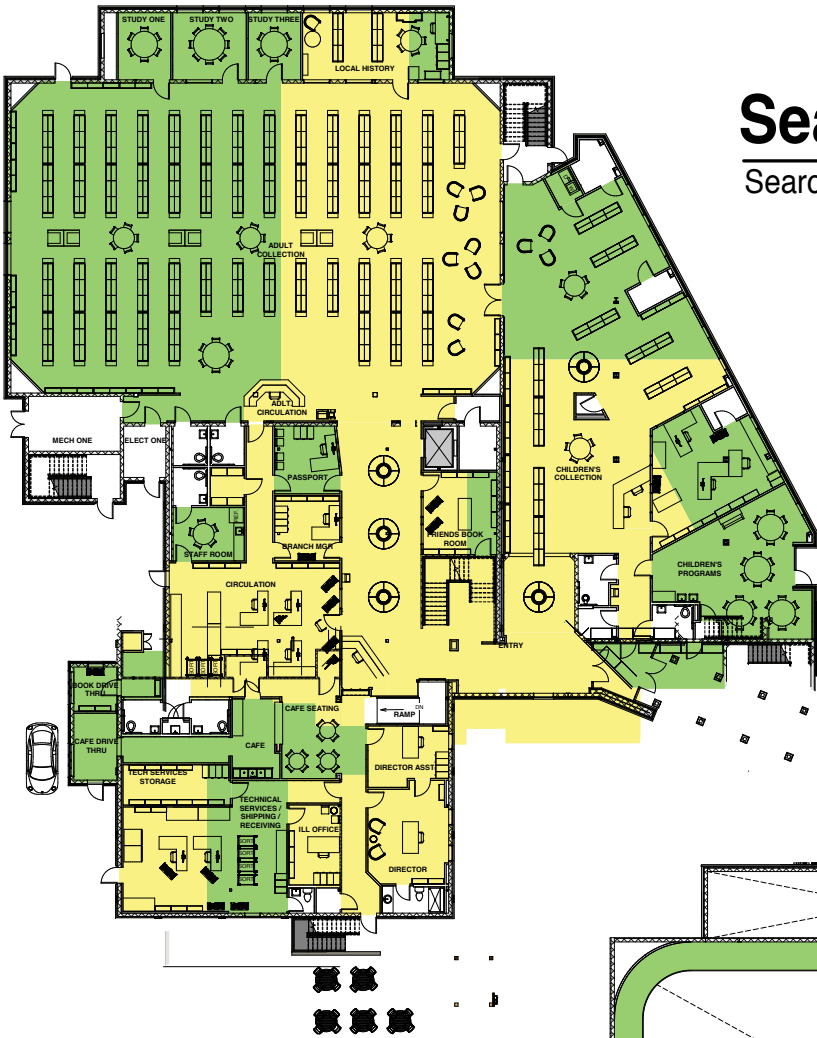
Searcy Public Library

Searcy, Arkansas

hoffmann
ARCHITECTURAL

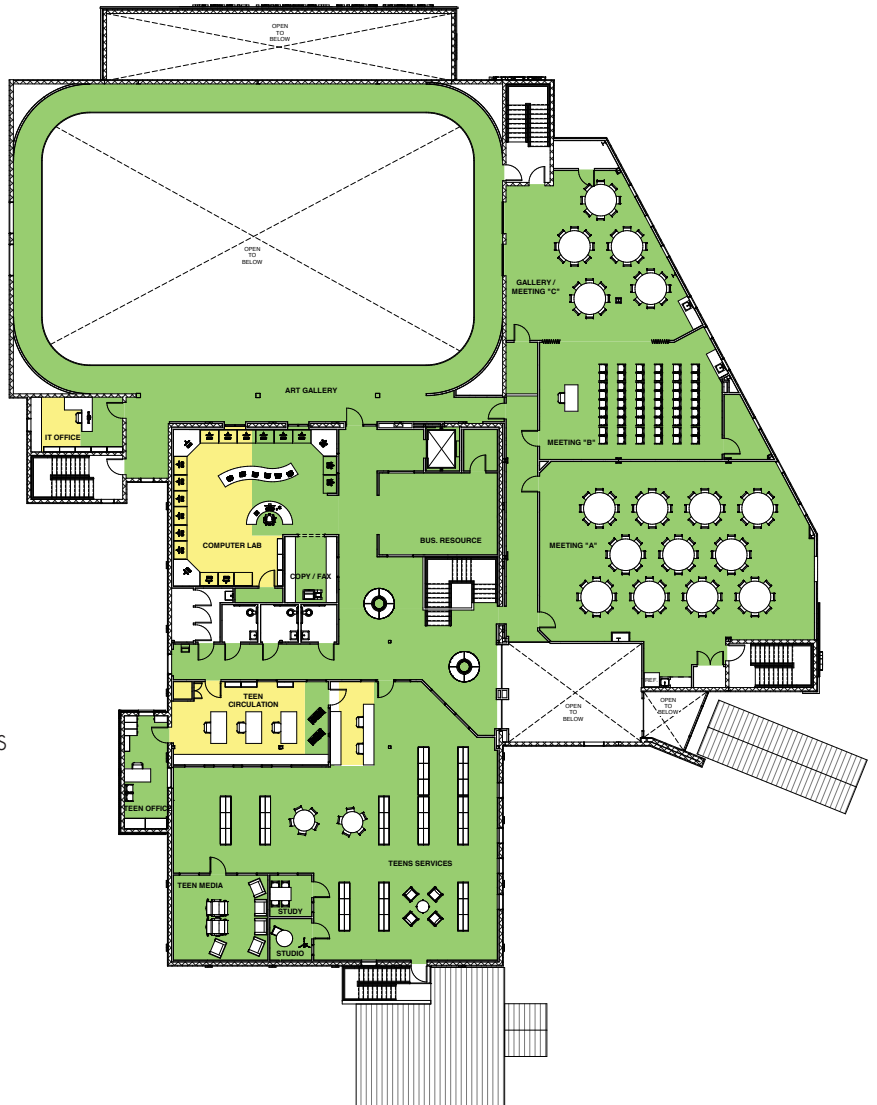
Preliminary Main Level Floor Plan

- Areas of new or expanded services
- Areas renovated for existing services



Preliminary Upper Level Floor Plan

- Areas of new or expanded services
- Areas renovated for existing services





Repurposing the Athletic Club as the Searcy Public Library includes:

- 33,000 sf facility increases library capacity by 300%
- Anticipates community needs for the next decade
- Provides space for public meetings, study and library programs
- Assures patrons convenient access and more parking spaces (99!)
- Adjacent to Yancey Park, a complimentary pairing of two city properties
- Walking distance to local schools

More space and additional parking!



The new expanded and enhanced library will include:

- Expanded children's area with a separate children's programming room
- Expanded teen area with special teen media/program room, study room, and recording studio
- Drive-through pickup window for library materials
- 25 public access computers and other designated places with charging stations and high-speed Wi-Fi for those bringing their own laptop or electronic devices
- Small Business and Career Center with specialized resources available for entrepreneurs and job seekers
- U.S. Passport Office

Expanded children and teen areas!



Expanded services and user friendly spaces for you:

- Three meeting rooms. The largest room will have a 90-person seating capacity
- Four study rooms and more areas where individuals can comfortably use the library's Wi-Fi with their own electronic devices
- An expanded genealogy/local history room
- Indoor walking track that also serves as an art exhibit space
- Vendor-leased coffee shop with indoor and outdoor seating and drive-through access
- Outdoor spaces for library use with a new bridge connection to Yancey Park
- A Friends of the Library Room for used book sales



Larger meeting and study rooms!



These changes benefit residents of Searcy and White County:

- Resolves a critical community need first identified in 1995 - Searcy outgrew its library
- The City of Searcy and White County administrations saw an affordable opportunity to meet the needs of a growing population who use library programs and services
- Provides library patrons with access, convenience, comfort and space
- Offers a forward-thinking approach to Searcy's literacy and information service needs
- Avoids a tax increase and engages the community by funding the renovation through public philanthropy

Sustainable growth for our future!

This project is important!

Our public library provides a valuable service to every age group and demographic in our community and is especially crucial to our underserved. According to current statistics, (Arkansas Department of Commerce) **28% of White County residents do not have access to broadband internet and 14.8% are living in poverty (U.S. Census).**

Valuable Impacts of this Project for White County Residents

Literacy and Educational Impact

- Space for an expanded book collection for adults, teens, and children
- More scheduled educational programs for all ages
- Literacy and educational support with free access to more library materials - supporting local K-12 school systems and homeschool students year round
- Study Rooms available to reserve
- Teen Media Room for library-led programs, a place to watch movies and engage in e-sports and learn to use a 3-D printer
- Teen study room and recording studio
- Meeting spaces available to reserve
- Genealogy research in an expanded local history room
- A teaching and catering kitchen

Technology Access and Economic Impact

- Twenty-five public access computers, double what is now available
- Charging stations, high-speed Wi-Fi, and more workspaces for laptops and mobile devices
- Print, scan, copy, and fax services
- Small Business and Career Center with specialized resources
- One-on-one assistance and small group training opportunities

Special Features

- Coffee shop
- Drive-through pick up window
- U.S. Passport Acceptance Facility
- Art exhibition space
- Outdoor pavilion with access to Yancey Park



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Meeting our growing needs!