

NORTH SHELBY LIBRARY DISTRICT

LONG-RANGE PLAN

for

North Shelby Library &

Mt Laurel Public Library

Oct. 1, 2024 through Sept. 30, 2029

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NORTH SHELBY LIBRARY DISTRICT BACKGROUND

The North Shelby Library District was established in 1988 by Act 88-258 of the Legislature which authorized any residents of unincorporated Shelby County to bring petitions to the Probate Judge for an election to establish a Library District. Residents in northern Shelby County had noted the weekly visit by the Harrison Regional Library bookmobile left the bookmobile empty by early afternoon and that a library was needed for the 20,000 residents living in the area that were miles from the closest Shelby County Library.

An election was held in June 1988 and voters approved a Library District to be financed by an *ad valorem* assessment. The amount paid by a property owner who has a valid homestead exemption is \$15 per year and a property owner age 65 or older pays nothing. All other property owners pay based on 1.75 millage. This generates an income of around \$1,200,000 per year for the District. From that the District pays 29% off the top to send and collect the annual assessments and to maintain two library buildings, including a mortgage on the main Library. This approximately \$18 per year per resident to provide library services to District residents.

Between the time the petitions were filed in May 1988 and the election took place, Hoover and Birmingham began an annexation battle along Highway 280 which intersects the District from north to south. Portions of the District were annexed, at property owners request, by these municipalities so these areas were never included in the District. Over the next five years after the election, Hoover, Birmingham, Leeds, Pelham, Vestavia Hills, and Chelsea annexed land, again at owners' request, that was in the District at the time of the election and, thus, remains in the District today. These municipalities offer no financial support to the North Shelby Library District even though it is providing services to their residents as some District residents live 20 or more miles from their municipal library.

Property owners in these areas support two libraries, the one in their municipality which is physically located in Jefferson County, and the North Shelby Library District. This has decreased State Aid funding to the North Shelby Library District and also makes it impossible to obtain precise census figures from the Census Bureau. The North Shelby Library District does not follow census tracts or

blocks. The District boundary can run down the middle of a residential street. Each year in August, the Shelby County Department of Development Services estimates the service population for the North Shelby Library District based on US Census Bureau data from the previous year. The estimate for FY25, using 2023 Census data, showed that 72% of the District residents reside in unincorporated Shelby County.

In 1988 the North Shelby Library opened its doors in a donated building containing less than 5,000 square feet. A new building containing 27,000 square feet was completed in 1999. (Only 22,000 square feet was finished at that time). The additional 5,000 square feet was completed in 2008 with 2,500 being used by the library and 2,500 leased to the State. In 2010 a branch was established in Mt Laurel in donated storefront space. The Friends of the Mt Laurel Library funded and built a permanent branch that was opened in June 2014. The branch is 1,650 square feet and serves 10,000 District residents. In 2022, a 500 square foot addition to Mt Laurel Library was completed adding an activity room, a kitchenette, and an additional bathroom. In 2023, a major renovation of the Children's Department at North Shelby Library was completed. The renovation closed in the department, added an activity room, and windows to bring in natural light. New flooring was also added in the lobby. Both libraries have meeting rooms available for rent to the public and free for civic events.

As a member of Harrison Regional Library, the North Shelby Library District libraries serve all residents of Shelby County. As a member of HRL, e-books and audio books, databases, and online book reserving is available. Annual circulation in 2023 was 317,155 with the total print collection of 82,263 and digital collection of 80,459.

Masters-degreed librarians provide assistance directly to patrons at North Shelby Library and are available as needed to assist at Mt Laurel Library. Both libraries have free wireless internet for all patrons as well as public access computers. Both libraries have a good selection of DVDs and non-traditional items such as telescopes and memory kits. In addition, both North Shelby Library and Mt Laurel Library have wifi hotspots available for checkout to provide patrons with access to the internet from their home.

Summer reading programs are offered at both libraries for children, young adults, and adults. There are regular programs offered for all age groups. Regularly scheduled painting and gardening programs are popular with adult patrons, video game tournaments and a teen leadership group in

addition to other monthly programs attract a large number of young adults throughout the year. The Children’s Department offers a robust schedule of story-times, crafts and other special interest programs which draws thousands of visitors each year.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION NEEDS AND SERVICES

North Shelby is a geographical definition, not a community. The District residents of unincorporated Shelby County are surrounded by municipalities that wanted growth and “landlocked” each other (Hoover, Pelham, Chelsea, Birmingham) and those who annexed to stop their encroachment (Vestavia Hills, Leeds & Indian Springs Village). A drive down Valleydale Road, which intersects the District from east to west, has one enter and leave Hoover, unincorporated Shelby County, Indian Springs Village and Birmingham many times in just seven miles.

Our community is defined by our mission which is to:

to serve all citizens in the North Shelby Library district by offering library services, resources, and facilities to fulfill their informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs and/or interests. The term “citizens” includes all individuals and/or groups.

The District is contained within two main zip codes (35242 & 35244) which have consistent demographics. The population is unknown but is estimated to be 90,000 (reduced to around 54,000 for state aid purposes). Children in the District attend the following public schools (*are in the District): Greystone Elementary* Berry Middle *, Spain Park High *, Vestavia Hills High, Vestavia Hills Elementary, Cahaba Heights, Vestavia Hills Middle, Hillview Elementary, Putnam Middle, Huffman High, Chelsea Elementary, Middle, Intermediate and High School, Mt Laurel Elementary*, Leeds Elementary, Intermediate and High, Pelham High, Pelham Park Middle School, Inverness Elementary*, Oak Mountain Elementary*, Middle*, Intermediate* and High*. The private schools in the District include Indian Springs, Briarwood, Westminster, Our Lady of the Valley, Hilltop Montessori, Guidepost Montessori, and Bruno Montessori. Jefferson State Community College has a campus within the District.

The District includes the lucrative 280 corridor and includes over 1,400 commercial enterprises. As the District receives no sales tax or occupational tax revenues, commercial activity has a limited impact on our operations. Our libraries are not located in the commercial zones but are in residential areas.

The education level in the District is high. For residents age 25 and over, approximately 96.2% have a high school diploma and 63.7% have a bachelor's degree or higher. The average family size is 2.55 people. 15% of the population is aged 65 or older and 20% are under age 18. The population is 78% white, 15% Black or African American, 3.5% Asian and 3.2% Hispanic. The average home value is \$416,175 and average income is \$118,799. 75% of the population lives in their own home. *

Residents of the local municipalities can use the facilities operated by their city. For those residing in unincorporated Shelby County, there are two public parks, the YMCA, and adjacent Oak Mountain State Park. Shelby County funds a senior citizens community center at Heardmont Park, in the District. The Library often partners with the Park and the Senior Center for programming and outreach.

The North Shelby Library District has a Board of five trustees elected by the Shelby County Legislative Delegation for four-year terms. Other than state aid and occasional donations from Indian Springs Village and legislators, we receive no other governmental financial funds.

* Data Source: Average of Census Bureau data for Brook Highland CDP, Meadowbrook CDP, Highland Lakes CDP, and Hoover (35244). Accessed 9/4/2024
(<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/brookhighlandcdpalabama,meadowbrookcdpalabama,highlandlakescdpalabama,hoovercityalabama,shelbycountyalabama/PST045223>)

SERVICE RESPONSES

The North Shelby Library District is committed to providing superior collections, services and programs that address the needs and desires of the District citizens and patrons. Based on funding issues, it has become an increasing challenge to meet all of our objectives.

INFORMATION NEEDS AND SERVICES

Goal: Serve as a community resource for identified or underserved communities within the District

Objective 1: Provide resources for dealing with aging parents, especially those with dementia or other memory loss.

- Develop more memory care kits*Each FY*
- Promote kits to individual patrons, not just local memory care facilities.....*FY26*
- Increase programming for dealing with caregiver issues..... *Biannually by FY26*
- Offer meeting space for support groups..... *Advertise in FY2025/Each FY*
- Increase physical and digital materials on caregiving *Each FY*
- Continue to partner with senior centers and retirement communities to offer programs and information.....*Each FY*

Objective 2: Increase services to New Adults (ages 18-24) to retain their patronage after graduating from the YA department

- Create programming specifically for the 18-24 age group*FY26*
- Partner with local colleges to develop programming.....*FY26*
- Encourage use of the library as a second space or community gathering point*Each FY*
- Develop book collections and/or guides to emphasize materials of special interest to this group*Each FY*
- Investigate best channels to reach this group via social media or other technologies
.....*Each FY*

Objective 3: Develop creativity for patrons through arts and crafts programming.

- Increase arts-related programs for all ages*One per quarter/age group by FY27*
- Partner with local art teachers to showcase student art.....*FY27*
- Include arts and crafts in outreach efforts to children, teens, and seniors*Each FY*

Objective 4: Introduce culinary arts programs in the Children's Department

- Host culinary arts programs *Quarterly by FY28*
- Reach out to Jefferson State Community College and other local entities to partner on programming.....*FY27*

- Increase cookbook collection in Children’s Department and include a variety of cuisines and diets*Each FY*

Objective 5: Increase community awareness of library services and programs

- Continue to build relationships with local schools, daycares, senior centers, and businesses to showcase library services that meet their needs.....*Each FY*
- Attend training to better utilize the marketing programs we already have (Library Aware, Canva, ReadSquared, etc.)*Each FY*
- Increase community engagement on social media.....*Each FY*
- Create and implement a library-wide marketing calendar to ensure all library assets are being advertised*FY27*

Objective 6: Continue to grow programming, collections, and engagement at Mt Laurel Public Library

- Reach out to community groups to use the library’s activity room for meetings*Each FY*
- Continue to maintain relationships with local schools and daycares*Each FY*
- Attend, when possible, parent nights at schools to promote library services*Each FY*
- Ensure patron requests for materials and programming are being met.....*Each FY*

Objective 7: Add additional Adult Education Seminars

- Survey adult patrons to determine interest in topics *August 2025*
- Partner with local colleges and business leaders to provide content*Each FY*

FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT

There are areas in North Shelby Library that could be modified to function more effectively for patrons

Goal 1: Address Lighting Issues

Improve lighting where needed and reroute controls for current use

- At North Shelby:
 - Remove the front porch lights and public bathroom lights from the main lobby light control.FY26
 - Install additional exterior lights on back porch and side driveway to support staff, patrons, and rentersFY27
 - Install light switch by side exit door of Meeting Room.....FY25
 - Address lighting needs in the dim areas of the library such as the atrium alcove and large print areaFY28
- At Mt Laurel:
 - Add additional outdoor lights for safety of staff, patrons, and rentersFY26

Goal 2: Improve accessibility to the Meeting Room

The meeting room is often used after hours and accessibility can be an issue. Right now, users have to go in through the side door and then unlock the front door of the building if needing a curb-less entry. This can also lead to the front door being left unlocked.

- Add a sidewalk from the handicapped spaces to the meeting room door.....FY28
- Improve side door to allow it to be locked open.....FY26

Goal 3: Add study rooms at North Shelby Library

Small 1-4 person study rooms are one of our most-requested amenities. Patrons would like a place to meet or study quietly.

- Investigate options for adding stand-alone capsule study rooms or building out available areas of the library.....FY27

Goal 4: Paint Mt Laurel Library – interior and exterior FY27

Goal 5: Fund Capital Reserves

- Add to Capital Reserves fund on a scheduled basis with a goal of \$25,000 per year
.....Each FY
- Utilize Fundraising Committee to raise additional funds for Capital Reserves and other library projectsEach FY

TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 1: Update computers and internet including wifi and hotspots for our patrons as needed

- Use LSTA funding to replace patron computers on the recommended schedule of every 5 years*FY2025*
- Work with current and new vendors to ensure the hotspot program is the best available for our patrons*Each FY*
- Investigate changes in E-Rate that might support our hotspot expenditures*Each FY*

GOAL 2: Invest in new/emerging library technologies to improve services and patron experience

- Identify training, publications, conferences, and/or professional associations that will increase staff awareness of library technologies*Each FY*
- Use grant funding and solicit donations when feasible to purchase technology*Each FY*
- Promote the new technologies and ensure they are used by patrons*Each FY*

GOAL 3: Ensure databases and virtual services are meeting patron needs.

- Evaluate current offerings and ensure usage justifies the expense.*Each FY*
- Keep abreast of new offerings and participate in trial runs when available.*Each FY*
- Choose virtual services that compliment existing programs and services.*Each FY*

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 1: Library staff will be well-trained in library service.

- Provide continuing education to the professional librarians and supervisory staff via outside vendors and conference attendance.*Each FY*
- Provide on-demand virtual training to all library staff through APLS and our library vendors.*Each FY*
- Provide staff training related to their job duties either in-person or virtually at least twice a year.*Each FY*
- Cross-train staff in other departments and participate in internal checks to ensure staff are familiar with library services, policies, and expectations*Each FY*

GOAL 2: In order to attract and retain the best staff, the library will continue to offer competitive pay, benefits, and educational opportunities.

- Continue to monitor financial realities of the district to improve staff pay when possible.*Each FY*
- Review the staffing structure on an on-going basis to ensure staffing levels are where they need to be. Tasks may be reassigned to improve work-flow.*Each FY*
- Investigate benefit plans to ensure we are offering the best plans for our costs.*Each FY*
- Ensure eligible staff members are aware of higher educational assistance offered by the library and grants available to them.....*Upon hiring*

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

GOAL: Increase the collection of books and materials, in a variety of formats, to meet the informational and recreational needs of the District.

- Continue to monitor trends in print and digital formats and adjust the collection as needed.*Each FY*
- Continue to weed collections. *Each FY*
- Continue to explore with vendors for new digital products.*Each FY*
- Continue to evaluate reference and informational needs and explore how this content is best provided to and used by District citizens.*Each FY*
- Maintain the tracking of e-book usage figures to make sure our book and materials selections reflect and satisfy District citizen needs.*Each FY*
- Maintain a collection that meets minimum APLS per capita standards.*Each FY*
- Continue to monitor patron requests and circulation statistics to improve collections and meet community needs.*Each FY*

MONITORING ACTIVITIES

The director and business office manager will be responsible for identifying and selecting activities to accomplish each objective. Department heads will oversee implementation process by assigning tasks and monitoring accomplishments. The status of tasks and/or degree to which objectives are accomplished will be reported to director and business office manager in the following ways:

- Informal discussion with the director and business office manager at department head meetings as necessary.
- Director and/or business office manager presents informal reports periodically at board meetings.
- Annual written report submitted to the board for review.

ASSESSING ACHIEVEMENT

Annually the long-range plan will be reviewed and updated eliminating specific goals that have been accomplished or determined to be unattainable or otherwise are no longer relevant. The Director, Business Office Manager, and Department Heads will meet annually to evaluate the library's long-range plan. Recommendations will be made for the revision of the plan and will be given to the Board of Trustees for approval at their next scheduled board meeting.