Libraries

Goals

The City will:

- Provide adequate public facilities and services for all services which the City provides.

- Coordinate the location and design of all City public facilities with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

Overview

The Department of Libraries and Research Services is responsible for the operation of the Central Library, five area libraries, and a bookmobile. As an educational and cultural repository for the City, the library serves citizens of all ages and interests by providing free access to a wide range of materials, programs and services. The library strives to select, preserve, and make accessible a balanced collection and programs which stimulate an interest in literature, reading and lifelong learning. Responding to the needs of the Chesapeake community, the library focuses on its primary roles of formal education support center, popular materials library, reference center, preschoolers' door to learning, and independent learning center. A City Council-appointed Library Board advises City Council regarding community library issues.

Within the Chesapeake Public Library System, the Central Library contains the most comprehensive collection and serves as the reference resource center, including computerized information services. The area libraries and the bookmobile assist in serving the citizens of this large city. The area libraries contain current and popular books, as well as a basic reference collection, newspapers, magazines, videos, DVDs, CDs, and a computerized information service.

A detailed description of each of the Library System components follows:

Library Administration plans and implements the strategies necessary to meet citizen expectations for innovative library service. Administration is responsible for financial/budget operations; personnel issues; strategic planning; promoting the services of the library; and for other management functions of the library system. The Library Director, with guidance from the Library Board and citizens, provides leadership to the library staff.

The *Central Library* houses a materials collection of over 289,000 items, including a Public Law Library and the Wallace Memorial Room, which is home to the local history collection. The library is also a partial depository for Commonwealth of Virginia and United States Government Federal documents. The library also houses a large periodicals collection and provides patron access to the Internet, typewriters, and computers. The enlarged and completely renovated 67,838 square foot Central Library opened in January 1993 and now has more than 500,000 visits annually. It has the largest circulation (over 662,000) and seats (342) of all library branches.

The 19,500 square foot *Greenbrier Library* has a collection of more than 87,000 items, including CDs, Videos, Audio books and Print books. The Reference Department includes an Online Database and Internet access. Other services provided by the Library include meeting room availability, typewriter and personal computer access, and an Adult Literacy Tutoring Room. A coin operated photo copier is also available. This library has a circulation of nearly 269,000 books and 160 seats.

Greenbrier Library

The 17,053 square foot *Russell Memorial Library*, originally known as the Western Branch Library, had its beginnings in a small room at the rear of A.W. Johnson's store in Churchland in the Fall of 1963 as an experiment. With the opening of the small stationary library, bookmobile service to the area was discontinued. About a year after the successful experimental library opened, a new branch was leased in the Churchland Shopping Center, replacing the small, one-room library. In January of 1968, 10 square miles of the Western Branch Borough became part of Portsmouth in the court annexation agreement and the Churchland Library became a Portsmouth library. Charles Russell, in memory of his late wife, Parthenis Russell, donated .73 acres at 2408 Taylor Road for the City's first new library building. The Russell Memorial Library quickly outgrew its new space, so a wing was added in the summer of 1984. Within a year, however, the library was again in need of expansion. A new Library was constructed at 2808 Taylor Road. The relocated and expanded library opened for business on September 4, 1992. It contains over 91,000 volumes, 115 seats, and has a book circulation of over 296,000.

Russell Memorial Library

The *Major Hillard Library* was opened on June 5, 1977 with a collection of 7,264 items. The 5,000 square foot building was named in honor of Judge Major Hillard, a long time Deep Creek resident and now holds over 53,000 items. The Major Hillard Library was later moved to a five acre site on Old George Washington Highway adjacent to the Washington Square Shopping Center. The new library comprises 22,430 square feet and maintains a volume of over 57,000 items. It will eventually hold a collection of 100,000 volumes. It has 126 seats and a circulation of over 168,000 books.

The first *South Norfolk Library* was sponsored by the Women's Club of South Norfolk and opened its doors with a donated collection in Lakeside Park in 1953. In May 1956, the library moved to a rented building at 1015 Chesapeake Avenue, where it remained until 1958 when the building at the corner of Poindexter and Decatur Streets was constructed. Linwood L. Briggs, Jr., as Mayor of South Norfolk, was instrumental in proposing construction of the South Norfolk Library as a memorial to those who lost their lives during World War II. During his years of dedicated service, Mr. Briggs collected historic photographs of South Norfolk. Renovated in 1989, the 6,946 square foot facility was the first Chesapeake Library to have a room solely dedicated to training. On September 26, 1997, the literacy room was dedicated to Mr. Linwood L. Briggs. Many of his collected historic photographs of South Norfolk are displayed in the room. First Lady of Virginia, Mrs. Lindsay Almond, Jr., dedicated the first South Norfolk Library building in 1958. First Lady of Virginia, Mrs. Jeannie P. Baliles, dedicated the renovated South Norfolk Library in August 1989. The library currently has a collection of more than 44,000 items, including videos, CD's, audio books and printed books. Other services provided by the library include patron access to the Internet, typewriters, and computers. The library also houses a periodical and newspaper collection. It has 50 seats and a book circulation of over 51,000.

South Norfolk Library

The *Indian River Library* was first established in 1965, when the bookmobile could no longer keep up with the demands of the Indian River residents. A storefront library was opened on Sparrow Road in the Indian River Shopping Center in October 1965. In December of 1978, the present facility at 2320 Old Greenbrier Parkway was opened. Prior to its recent demolition, the library contained over 57,000 volumes, had a book circulation of over 104,000, and held 16 seats. An expansion of the library was completed in 2004. The new library now comprises 16,981 square feet and has a capacity of holding 70,000 items. It has 58 seats in the public area, 30 seats in the children's area, and 100 seats in the meeting room. Over 27,000 patrons visit the facility on a monthly basis. This library has one of the highest internet use rates of all the branch libraries, with over 7,000 internet customers using 22 computers in an average month. The average monthly book circulation is over 13,500.

The Chesapeake Public Law Library occupies a 600 square foot facility housed on the second floor of the Central Library. It affords a variety of seating in a quiet, comfortable environment conducive to research and study, as well as browsing. The library is self-sufficient with its own collection, online services, public access catalogs, photocopier, and fax machines. Its collection encompasses over 250 titles and 10,000 volumes which include federal law finding aids; legal encyclopedias, directories and handbooks; selected

state codes including the Code of Virginia; Supreme Court case records; and professional journals.

The Chesapeake Public Library System is also supported by two auxiliary organizations. The *Friends of the Chesapeake Public Library* is a non-profit organization devoted to improving the Library's services and resources. Members help support the Library through activities including volunteer service, cultural education and recreational events, and financial assistance for continuing improvements to library facilities and programs. The *Chesapeake Public Library Foundation* was established in 1997 to ensure the future provision of resource services at the libraries through building and managing endowment and capital funds, and providing grants to the Library System from these funds.

The Library System is recognized as an integral component of the overall fabric of the community. Chesapeake Public Libraries will continue to pursue its overarching goal of helping to improve the quality of life of Chesapeake citizens by providing the information and services that help them to manage and improve their lives. It will continue to adapt itself to remain a leading social institution in an ever-changing world. The Library System's current inventory of building square footages, volumes, seats and circulation have been compared with library standards from the Commonwealth of Virginia and have been found to exceed the state's minimum standards. It will strive to continue maintaining these high service standards.

In looking at future library needs based on anticipated growth in Chesapeake, certain planning standards should be kept in mind. According to the Development Impact Assessment Handbook published by the Urban Land Institute, for municipalities of 200,000 to 500,000, there should be 1.25 library seats per 1,000 population; 0.35 square feet of library space per capita; 7 book circulations per capita; and 1.25 volumes per capita.

In light of these standards, future challenges and needs identified by the Library System include: covering under-served areas of the City, including Crestwood, Bowers Hill, Campostella Square, and Southern Chesapeake (which are now being served by the Bookmobile); providing at least one library per borough, according to demand; remodeling or renovating the South Norfolk, Russell Memorial, Central, and Greenbrier Libraries; maintaining and enhancing (as needed) the in-house daily courier service that shuttles books and other materials between the branch libraries, ensuring adequate and balanced circulation; and continuing to promote technology as a tool to enhance access to library services by patrons. This final challenge includes continued efforts to enhance Internet access, such as the recent Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grant that enabled the Library System to provide more Internet stations at all library branches.

Issue One: Impact of Growth on Services

Accessibility to library services is impacted by city growth and demographic changes. It is important for the Library System to consider trends in population growth patterns across the City, in order to plan for future library locations and services. For example, the Central Library currently serves the Southern Chesapeake Borough. Future growth patterns in this area will determine how long the Central Library will be able to serve that region.

The traditional rule of thumb for locating libraries is that they be built near residential areas, shopping centers and transit lines, so as to be within walking distance of large segments of the population. This rule of thumb has not been applicable to Chesapeake,

due to its size and orientation toward automobiles. The use of the Bookmobile can help to address this issue, but the changing demographics of Chesapeake will dictate how the Bookmobile is utilized in the future, as it strives to continue serving areas in need where transportation and poverty are issues, as well as serving growth areas.

Accessibility of library services is a big issue for the Library System, particularly for lower income citizens who face the biggest challenge in going online, buying books, and owning computers. The Library System continues to be on the lookout for underserved areas of the City as it relates to accessibility of library services, such as Campostella Square or Crestwood.

> **The City of Chesapeake will endeavor to develop a Library System that is sized adequately to serve a growing population, and that is accessible to the all citizens of Chesapeake regardless of age, handicap, location, or socio-economic status.**

Strategies:
- Planned future development will be considered when determining the future location of library facilities.

- The impact on libraries will be evaluated as a component of new development requests.

- Public-private partnerships will continue to be pursued.

- Libraries should be considered for co-location with other municipal facilities in order to increase their accessibility and functionality.

- The Library System should continue to develop multi-year capital project plans in anticipation of future growth.

Issue Two:	Technological Advancements

Changes in technology have had a profound effect on the manner in which library services are delivered. These changes will continue and libraries will have to adapt to these changes.   Public computer access is vital in an age where computers are used for many routine activities, such as searching/applying for jobs, shopping, paying bills, and doing research. Finding the right balance between online library services and "bricks and mortar" libraries to best meet the changing needs of the citizenry is a big issue. The Library System must make sure that future trends for library services, such as kiosks in malls or mini-branches in shopping centers, are meeting citizens' needs and not just creating a presence.

> **The City of Chesapeake will endeavor to utilize advancements in technology to improve the quality and availability of library resources wherever practical.**

Strategies:
- The Library System will continue to position itself to be a preferred location for conducting community surveys and forums.

- The Library System will increase its use of online services.

- The Library System will continue to explore new trends for reaching the community with its programs and services, such as online kiosks in malls and mini-branch libraries in shopping centers.

Issue Three: **Library Funding**

Limited funding resources will make construction of future library branches a major challenge. As the City's population continues to grow, the daily demands on existing library buildings will continue to grow, causing accelerated wear and tear. Unless a strategy is developed for routine maintenance and upkeep, the buildings will fall into disrepair and citizens will become disenchanted with the facilities.

The City of Chesapeake will pursue alternative funding opportunities to provide funding for the construction and maintenance of Library facilities.

Strategies:
- When considering possible funding sources for public libraries, opportunities for creative funding sources should be sought including possible public/private partnership options.

- In order to reduce costs, opportunities to co-locate library facilities with other public facilities should be considered when determining future library locations.

Major Hillard Library