

**The Colony Public Library
Long Range Plan
2016-2020**

Approved for recommendation to the City Council by the Library Board on 01-28-2016

Approved by The Colony City Council on 02-16-2016

The Colony Public Library Long Range Plan 2016-2020

Summary:

To meet the needs of the residents of The Colony and to keep pace with advances in information and technology, The Colony Public Library has developed six strategic priorities:

- (1) Provide highly skilled staff to meet changing needs of the community;
- (2) Provide high quality reference services and be a reliable source for background materials and in-depth information;
- (3) Provide a variety of reading, viewing, and listening materials, and of technology-based services for personal enrichment and enjoyment;
- (4) Provide a high level of access to electronic information and technology-based services to people of all ages and abilities;
- (5) Increase Library support and resources;
- (6) Maintain ongoing focus on planning for a future library facility.

About The Colony:

The Colony is located on the southeast shore of Lake Lewisville, in the fastest-growing area of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, just 25 minutes north of downtown Dallas. Occupying 13.7 square miles in southeastern Denton County, The Colony includes lakeside parks, hike and bike trails, three golf courses, and an 80-acre sports complex.

The Colony has a reputation of being a young, progressive, family-oriented community, growing in residents and quality development. The 2015 estimated population is 42,292; with a projected growth rate of 11.44%, The Colony's population is projected to reach 47,130 by 2020.

The Colony is heavily populated by families. The March 2015 *Community Demographic Profile* prepared by The Retail Coach for The Colony Economic Development Corporation shows the estimated average age is 35.1 with individuals under the age of 21 making up 28.95% of the population, those between the ages of 21-44 at 37.22%, ages 45-64 at 26.82%, and age 65 or older at 7.03%.

According to the 2013 *American Community Survey Estimates*, of the "families with own children under 6 years of age in the household," 74.2% have all parents in the labor force.

The *Demographic Profile* reports that the 2015 estimated average household income in The Colony is over \$89,900; only 3.13% of families were estimated below the poverty level in 2015. The majority of employed residents commute; the estimated average travel time is 31.6 minutes.

The 2015 population by race according to the *Demographic Profile* is 72.43% White, 9.18% African American, 7.17% Asian, 3.8% two or more races, 0.78% American Indian and Alaska Native, 0.09% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and 6.54% other. Over 22% of the population is Hispanic. For 12.88% of the population age 5+, Spanish is the language spoken at home.

The 2015 *Demographic Profile* also reported approximately 72% of The Colony's population age 25+ has some college education; over 34% have a bachelor's or graduate degree. Of the employed civilian population, 41.2% are in management, professional, and related occupations; 28% are in sales and office occupations; 17.9% are in construction, maintenance, production, and transportation occupations; and 12.9% are in service occupations.

The Colony is served by the Lewisville Independent School District. Seven elementary schools, six of which are located in The Colony, feed into The Colony's two middle schools, which feed into The Colony High School.

With a large number of area opportunities for higher education, The Colony has a large number of college students. The Library has continued to see an increasing number of students involved in distance and online learning.

Although The Colony is a relatively new city, its land has a rich history. The Colony is located on the site of several predecessor communities, including Bridges Settlement, the oldest settlement in Denton County. Established in 1843, Bridges Settlement is named after the family of John and Mildred Bridges and became the first stop for many settlers coming into Texas after Willis T. Stewart moved the Peters Colony Land Grant Company headquarters nearby to Stewartsville, founded in 1844. In addition to Bridges Settlement and Stewartsville, The Colony is also the site of the following historic communities: Stewarts Creek, Rector, and Camey, also known as Camey Spur. Records indicate that Camey was the most successful community, as it was founded around the time the St. Louis-San Francisco railroad line began operations in 1902. Camey faded away in the early 1940s, and the area returned to its agricultural roots.

During the following years, the future City of The Colony would be positively impacted by two events: the construction of the Lake Lewisville dam and the founding of the community of Eastvale. The Lake Lewisville dam was constructed by the US Army Corp of Engineers and began collecting water in 1954. In the early 1960s, Eastvale, a small lakeside living community, developed along the eastern shore of Lake Lewisville. Eastvale grew to a population of 600 and would later consolidate with The Colony in 1987.

In 1973, Fox and Jacobs (F&J), a Dallas-based residential land developer, purchased approximately 2,500 acres of land on the eastern shore of Lake Lewisville and south of Eastvale for a housing development. The name The Colony was chosen because F&J felt a strong sense of kinship with Texas's early developers and also to memorialize the spirit of Peters Colony providing a new way of life – a goal Fox and Jacobs wanted their new development to share. A Municipal Utility District was formed to provide public water services to the development. In 1974, streets were poured and the first families moved into their homes in October. By January 1977, The Colony had over 3,500 residents and voted to incorporate as a city. The Colony became a Home Rule city in 1979.

About The Colony Public Library:

The Colony Public Library, born of the efforts of a loyal group of volunteers, first opened its doors in February 1982.

The foundation of a free public library for the citizens of The Colony was a lengthy process beginning in 1980 with the determined efforts of then Councilman Bill Longo and a dedicated group of volunteers. Pushing for the establishment of a library in the abandoned Municipal Utility District trailer, Longo stated, “Public libraries are an incomparable social resource ... Libraries shape and enlarge and stimulate the faculties that alone differentiate us from any other species – reason and imagination.” Despite the labors of Longo and the newly founded Friends of the Library group, funding for a public library was not included in the FY 1980-81 budget.

It would be almost two years before The Colony Public Library would open to the public in a small 1,985 sq. ft. storefront, shared with the Parks and Recreation Department, in The Colony Square Shopping Center on South Colony Boulevard. Under the direction of Library Director Ann Beckel and librarian Sandi Gehrke, the library offered 6,000 volumes, many of which were donated by local citizens and businesses.

In December 1984, the citizens of The Colony passed a bond issue to build the 9,025 square foot facility at 5151 N. Colony Blvd., which became the Library's home in August 1987. At the time of opening, Library Director Joan L. Sveinsson led a staff of seven and the Library offered almost 24,000 volumes, which included books, tapes and records, and numerous programs, including story times, AARP tax assistance, film presentations, and book sales. It was at this facility that the Library completed automation of its circulation process in 1989 and saw its first patron use of an Internet-equipped public access computer in 1997.

In 2000, eighteen years after its founding, the Library outgrew the Municipal Complex facility and relocated to a renovated former grocery store at 6800 Main Street. Sharing the space with City Hall, the Library, now with 13 employees, gained an additional 6,200 sq. ft., which allowed for a large space for quiet study, a beautiful story time area, and room for the collection and services to grow. The Community Development Corporation funded the additional shelving, furnishings, and equipment for this new facility, as well as the relocation costs. A grant received from the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund Board established the Library's public access computer network, providing T1 access to the internet, as well as access to MS Office 2000 programs, via 22 public access computers.

Since then, the Library has outgrown the approximately 15,000 sq. ft. allotted to it in the current facility. Due to the widening of FM 423/Main Street, parking capacity has been reduced. Although the need for a new location and a larger facility is widely acknowledged, there is currently no funding in place for land acquisition, planning, design, and construction.

The City of The Colony is the primary funding source for the Library's services. Through an interlocal agreement with Denton County, the City receives some funding from the County to help support the provision of library services to county residents. Additional support is received through grants, donations, partnerships, and the fundraising efforts of Friends of The Colony Public Library (FOTCPL), a non-profit organization of volunteers working to promote and assist in developing the services of The Colony Public Library.

Despite tight financial times over the past decade, local support for the Library's services has been strong. In FY 2009-2010, staffing was added to enable the expansion of operating hours to

include Sunday afternoon service, increasing the hours from 44 hours per week to 48 hours. In FY 2013-2014, support for the formerly grant-funded Early Literacy Outreach program was included in the budget, providing the stable staffing needed to continue to provide this outreach to children in local day care facilities. The Library's materials budget has grown from \$73,000 in FY 2005-2006 to \$102,000 in FY 2014-2015. The Library's physical and digital collections total over 116,000 items. The physical collection includes popular fiction and nonfiction materials in various formats (books, large-print books, books-on-CD, DVD and Blu-Ray materials, music CDs), and research materials. The majority of the digital collection is available 24/7 and offers a wide variety of resources to meet the needs of all ages and interests. In addition to downloadable audiobooks, ebooks, music, and magazines, and streaming music and films, it includes educational, career development, and informational sources for every aspect of life. The Library also provides online access to live tutors and live job search assistance daily from 3 to 10 p.m.

In addition to the physical and digital collections, the Library offers public access computers, WiFi, color printing, 3D printing, early literacy workstations, a grant-funded assistive technology workstation, micro-format reader, self-service fax and copier, and a variety of peripheral and mobile devices that can be checked out for in-library use.

Services available through the reference desk include electronic reference services, interlibrary loan, exam proctoring, and reader's advisory service. Customers may also request an appointment with a librarian for more in-depth assistance through the Library's *Book A Librarian* service. The Library hosts the AARP Foundation Tax Help program from February through mid-April. Exam proctoring is provided on a fee basis.

For the fiscal year ending September 2015, the Library's door count showed a total of 72,691 visits and 116,429 physical and digital items were checked out to cardholders. During this same fiscal year, 460 programs were offered to children, teens, and adults, with total attendance of 12,057. Library programs included early literacy classes and outreach, summer reading club activities, robotics and other STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) programs, continuing education programs for daycare providers, and a variety of educational and cultural programs. The Library's website received 40,613 visits, the public access computers logged 19,602 sessions, the Early Literacy computers logged 8,409 sessions, and 21,243 WiFi sessions were logged. New services in FY 2014-15 included computer classes, Spring Break Robotics Camp, and the *Book A Librarian* service. Partnership activities included hosting the Booktoberfest Family Reading event with The Colony Resource Center; working with Nebraska Furniture Mart of Texas for a book drive and in-store reading event; working with FOTCPL to complete the Jackson-Shaw fundraising challenge to raise funds needed to replace the early literacy workstations; and working with FOTCPL and Jackson-Shaw to plan the 2015 *Jazzed About The Library* benefit.

The Colony Public Library is a member of the Denton County Library Advisory Board (DCLAB). All residents of The Colony have borrowing privileges at all ten libraries participating in the funding program. Through DCLAB, the Library cooperates with the other sixteen member public libraries to increase library awareness in the County, promote the development of library services throughout the County, and share resources, ideas, information, and talents.

The Library is accredited by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission and is a member of the Texas Library System and CTLS, Inc.

Mission Statement:

The Colony Public Library is dedicated to improving its patrons' quality of life by facilitating their search for informational, educational, technological, and recreational resources and materials. The Library strives to select, organize, and provide access to a wide variety of resources and materials, to be responsive to the needs of the public, and to cultivate the maximum use of its resources and services.

Vision Statement:

The Colony Public Library shares a vision of our nation's founders that liberty and learning are inseparable and that a democratic people must have free, open, and equal access to information.

The people of The Colony will:

- have access to the information they need to enhance their employment outlook, lifelong learning, and personal growth opportunities;
- have access to reading, viewing, and listening materials, and to programs that stimulate their thinking, enhance their knowledge of the world, and improve the quality of their leisure time;
- be encouraged to discover the joy of reading and to develop a love of learning;
- enjoy a high level of access to electronic information resources, equipment, and tools;
- be encouraged to develop the technological, information seeking, and information evaluation skills needed in an increasingly complex world;
- experience excellent customer service, inspiring them to use The Colony Public Library's resources and services and to encourage others to do so.

Strategic Priorities:

Strategic Priority #1: Provide highly skilled staff to meet changing needs of the community.

- Gather data to determine needs of the community, including the business community; identify the skills needed by staff to meet those needs.
- Explore the feasibility of partnering with Denton Independent School District to offer formal ESL classes through the Library.
- Seek partnerships to develop the following resources for the Library: grant writing, events coordination, paid internships, marketing services, community liaison, and instructors for job search seminars.
- Enhance staff technology, electronic resource, and other library-related skills through regular online training provided by the Texas State Library, CTLS, Inc., and other agencies or vendors as training opportunities become available; enhance staff customer service skills through in-house training as provided through the Library's in-service training program and by the City of The Colony.
- Enhance staff knowledge of area resources and staff ability to network with other information providers through support of attendance at regional and area meetings and through support of online networking and training.
- Provide staff training in Spanish phrases needed for communicating with patrons regarding library services and resources.
- Evaluate staffing needs and seek funding required to expand operating hours.

Strategic Priority #2: Provide high quality reference services and be a reliable source for background materials and in-depth information.

- Publicize the newly implemented *Book A Librarian* service that offers in-depth customer assistance on an appointment basis.
- Train qualified paraprofessional staff to assist with front-line reference services; provide regular training on new reference resources to staff assigned to reference services.
- Utilize the newly implemented CollectionHQ service to improve collection evaluation and management, and facilitate targeted collection development.
- Survey selected areas of the non-fiction collection for currency each year; conduct annual evaluation of the digital collection for relevancy and usage.
- Give Library users optional means to receive Reference services (e.g., text message, chat, library app).
- Continue to collect and preserve local history materials and to seek funding for digitization and microfilming of local newspapers.

Strategic Priority #3: Provide a variety of reading, viewing, and listening materials, and of technology-based services for personal enrichment and enjoyment.

- Increase the ratio of items purchased pre-processed to reduce order-to-customer time.
- Survey selected areas of the fiction collections annually for items to be withdrawn or replaced to maintain current, attractive collections to encourage usage.
- Increase number and usage of downloadable audio books, ebooks, music, and magazines, as well as streaming music and films.
- Implement LibraryAware service to improve communication with the community about the materials and services offered.

Strategic Priority #4: Provide a high level of access to electronic information and technology-based services to people of all ages and abilities.

- Promote availability of wireless access point.
- Evaluate the feasibility of replacing selected print resources with electronic resources.
- Maintain participation in the TexShare database program.
- Take advantage of TexSelect and CTLS, Inc. pricing for electronic resources.
- Investigate alternate means of delivering electronic resources to users, e.g. mobile devices; include provision of alternate delivery to mobile devices as an evaluative criterion when selecting electronic resources.
- Investigate means of ensuring that users with disabilities are given equal opportunity to use the electronic resources provided by the Library.
- Ensure that electronic information provided by the Library is easy to discover and efficient to use by Library cardholders.
- Promote availability of electronic resources through Library catalog records.
- Investigate new technologies and provide educational opportunities for customers to understand and use these technologies effectively.
- Evaluate the effectiveness and maintain currency of the newly implemented version of the Library website.
- Seek options to provide additional power outlets for customer use within the facility; add another device charging station.
- Increase efforts to fund digitization of the Library's local newspaper collection and materials in The Colony Local History Collection.

Strategic Priority #5: Increase Library support and resources.

- Revitalize Adopt-A-Book program.
- Assist Friends of the Library in fund-raising and membership drive efforts.
- Seek additional grant funding opportunities.
- Maintain requirements for accreditation by the Texas State Library System, thus retaining eligibility for State funded services and grant programs.
- Maintain membership in CTLS, Inc. to take advantage of CTLS, Inc. services, grant programs, and negotiated vendor discounts.
- Build partnerships in the community to offer a broader range of educational opportunities.
- Evaluate the current facility layout, consider improvements needed, and seek funding needed to implement improvements.
- Seek opportunities to display the works of local artists and to introduce local authors to the community.

Strategic Priority #6: Maintain ongoing focus on planning for a future library facility.

- Gather community input as part of the planning process.
- Consider features, site selection criteria, and structural elements in the planning process; include consideration of earthquake readiness, tornado shelter space, LEED design, single story vs. multiple floors, flexible community meeting and maker spaces, elevators, and parking space requirements.

Resources

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