

Section 2

EXTERIOR CONSIDERATIONS

Without question one of the major reasons for success of a public use facility is the availability of adequate parking for the users of the facility. Although urban libraries may be able to be quite successful – with success measured by the number of persons using the building – without much, if any, public parking, the libraries located in non-urban environments have found that the absence of adequate parking can be a significant barrier to achieving the level of usage desired.

PUBLIC LIBRARY PARKING GUIDELINES

Adequate off-street parking, accessible and convenient to the entrance of the library building, is a principal factor in user satisfaction. Godfrey's Associates, Inc. strongly believes that adequate parking is a major factor in choosing a site for a public library and in how the building is placed on the site.

Adequate parking must be available, convenient, and safe if library policy-makers expect their new public library to be utilized to its maximum potential. There are different ways to determine the number of spaces required. A review of these factors include:

Ratio of Square Footage to Parking. Parking requirements for public use and commercial facilities are often expressed as a ratio of the square footage of the building. For example;

- One parking space for every 150 to 250 building gross square feet (BGSF) of building space depending upon the total size of the building; or
- One square foot of parking (not parking spaces) for one square foot of building space.

Ratio of Parking to Seating. Another factor, or guideline, relates parking needs to seating requirements. Assuming a vehicle typically carries two people, the ratio of one parking space for every two reader seats within the library building has some rationale. This number must be supplemented by added parking for the meeting rooms in the building. The latter are often covered by local ordinance (even if library buildings are not covered). This type of guideline should include library seating for adults only, children not being automobile drivers.

Parking for Staff. Parking for staff may also be regulated by local ordinance. Failure to provide adequate and convenient staff parking may become a source of staff frustration and discontent. Staff parking should be provided in sufficient quantity for staff that consistently drives to work.

Parking for Volunteers. Parking for volunteers should also be considered. Local ordinances for staff may include volunteers. If not, volunteers should be included as part of staff on a full-time equivalent (FTE) basis for the purposes of calculating total parking needs.

SEARCY PUBLIC LIBRARY PARKING REQUIREMENTS

As library planning consultants, Godfrey's Associates, Inc. has assisted many library facilities throughout the United States. To provide adequate parking for library users, we recommend the following formula:

- One parking space for every 150 BGSF is necessary for buildings of up to 25,000 BGSF;
- One space for every 200 BGSF for buildings between 25,000 to 35,000 BGSF; and

- One space for every 250 BGSF for buildings between 35,000 to 50,000 BGSF.

For the new Searcy Public Library we recommend that parking be designed and built for the projected 20-year space needs of the facility, which is projected to be 40,125 BGSF. At one space for every 250 SF this produces a need for 160.5, say 160 spaces. These 160 spaces would include public parking, handicap parking per local ordinance, as well as parking for the staff and volunteers.

At least one of the public parking spaces should be provided with a for-fee electric vehicle charging station. Consideration should also be given to provision of spaces for very small vehicles, e.g. Smart Cars.

Land Requirements for Parking. Although many jurisdictions do not have public library parking requirements in their local codes, they often do have requirements for the amount of space per vehicle. The amount of land area required to meet the requirement for the new Searcy Public Library of 40,125 BGSF would be 56,000 SF (160 spaces x 350 SF per space = 56,000 SF) – or about 1.285 acres.

Signage. Provide signage that clearly directs drivers to entrance and exit and turning points.

Peak Parking Times. A public library's greatest need for parking is typically:

- Mid-morning when many senior citizens use the building and/or when story hours are held;
- Noon "hour" when many persons visit during their lunch break;
- After school until about 5:30 or 6:00 PM; and
- Mid-evening from 7:30 to 8:30 PM.

Of course, there are also great demands on parking on weekends, and when there is a popular program(s) planned for the multi-purpose meeting room.

These times sometimes conflict with the needs of other buildings, especially in the afternoon and weekends. Therefore, shared parking – while feasible – should not be viewed as an answer to more than 15 to 20 percent of the library's total needs.

Bicycle Parking. Provide a clearly identified and secure area for bicycle parking. Provide bicycle parking to accommodate at least 10 bicycles.

LIBRARY MATERIALS RETURN SERVICE

Of all of the resources that every man, woman, and child has – the one that is arguably most valuable – is time. Any second of time that goes by can never be regained. If one accepts this premise, the consultant believes that it behooves the Library to do everything that it reasonably can do to assist the Library's customers to make the very best use of their time. One way that this can be accomplished is by providing:

- A library materials return service whereby a person driving a vehicle can return a book or CD or DVD, etc. without having to get out of his/her vehicle.

Such a function also frees a small proportion of parking spaces that would otherwise be used by customers running into the Library to quickly pick-up and/or return items borrowed.

The key to the success of this "time saver" lies in its placement along the perimeter of the building and the layout of the vehicular circulation pattern of the Library's parking. This service is described in detail in Section 10: The Assignable Spaces of this Building Program.

LANDSCAPING

Provisions should be made for organic landscaping that does not require excessive maintenance and watering. Consideration should be given to plants near the windows of the building that can also serve as a deterrent to someone who may wish to attempt to enter the building via the windows, whether they are operable or not.

Consideration should be given to allow space for one or two 4-foot by 4-foot raised bed planting areas near the entrance to the building and another one or two raised beds as part of the outdoor spaces for the children's services space, the staff break room, and the Post Reading Room. These spaces are detailed in The Assignable Spaces section of this building program statement.

The landscaping for the parking area should be designed to offset the heat gain that a sea of concrete or asphalt can cause – which can be as much as 10 to 15 degrees Fahrenheit (F).

EXTERIOR SIGNAGE

Local sign ordinances permitting, a permanent electronic sign, placed perpendicular to the XXX frontage road, should be provided. The sign should clearly identify the building by name. It should also provide for rotating display of the following:

- Library street address, telephone number, and website address;
- Hours of operation stated clearly and boldly;
- Whether or not the Library is currently "Open" or "Closed" – visible as persons approach the building; and
- Brief information about any special events scheduled that day and/or forthcoming days.

The appearance of the signage should be consistent with the building's architecture. Wording should be able to be programmed remotely by Library staff. If the sign is "sponsored" then space needs to be provided for the "sponsor's" name and logo.

OUTDOOR SEATING

Provide for bench seating near the Entrance to the building. The benches should be such that they cannot be easily moved, but potentially with options to sit both in the sun and in a shaded area.