

Main



The first public library opened in Fort Wayne in 1895 in City Hall. Three years later the Board purchased the Breckenridge home at the corner of Webster and Wayne streets, where it remained until 1901. That year the Women’s Club League petitioned philanthropist Andrew Carnegie for funding for a proper building. After refusing the first request, he agreed to provide \$75,000 for a library proposal that had the endorsement of the mayor, an agreement from the city to provide land for the site, and \$7,000 annual commitment for its maintenance. The new building opened in 1904 at a total cost of \$110,000. By the 1960s, the collection had outgrown its space with many books stored in surrounding buildings. The old Carnegie building was demolished and a new building constructed at a cost of \$3 million. An addition for Genealogy, Young Adults, and a public access television studio was completed in 1981. Then in 2001, Allen County taxpayers approved a bond for the financing of \$84 million to expand and completely renovate the Main library. Construction was completed in 2007 with a grand opening in January.

GENERAL INFORMATION

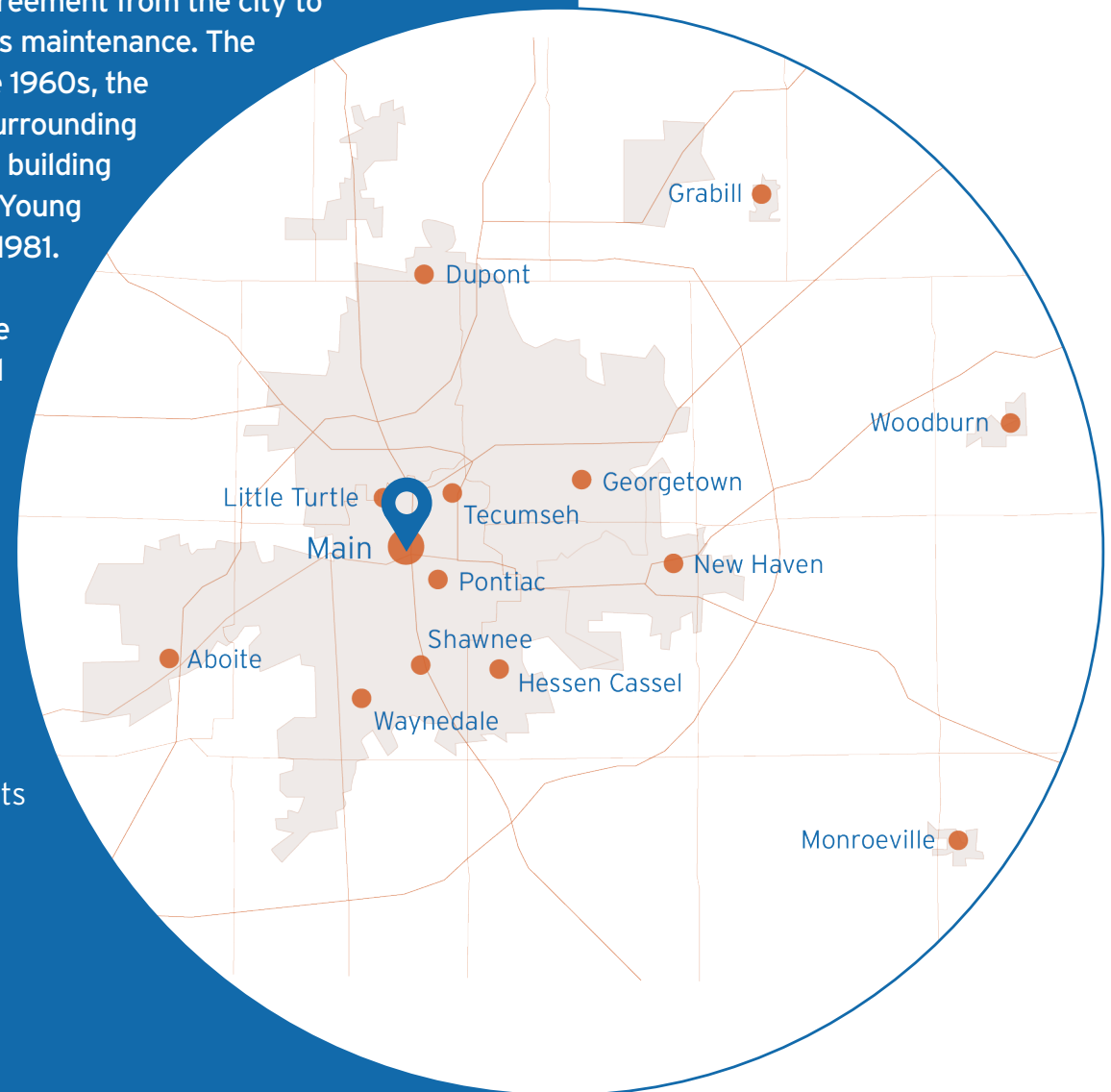
Address	900 Library Plaza Fort Wayne, IN 46802
Building Size	367,000 SF
Site Area	4.53 Acres
On Site Parking	125
Year Built	1968/1979/2007
Original Architect	Bradley & Bradley Architects

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

Days Open	7 / week
Hours Open	71 / week
Full Time Staff	165.75

STATISTICS 2020

Door Count	640,976
Programs	219
Program Attendance	4,985
Collection Size	755,439
Circulation	1,317,168
Computer Usage	141



Regional Location Map

Adequately sized for current service demands

Yes No

Overall building condition

1 2 3 **4** 5

Scale: 1 = Poor to 5 = Good

Site allows for future expansion

Yes **No**

Renovation and/or expansion can meet 10-year service demand

Yes No



Site Plan

SITE

The Main Library occupies an excellent spot in downtown Fort Wayne, with easily recognizable entrances on Ewing Street to the west and facing Library Plaza to the east. The building is clearly identifiable as a civic building, but other than windows along the curving Children’s Area wall at the northwest corner, the façade offers no views to the interior to highlight services or activity inside.

The building benefits from convenient adjacent parking to the northeast, immediately south across Washington Blvd, and at a lower-level garage within the building footprint accessed from Wayne Street. Parking to the south requires patrons to cross Washington Blvd to access the entrance.

There is a convenient drop-off/pick-up drive at the main west entrance facing Ewing Street. The east entrance is access by pedestrians only from the plaza, although very near two adjacent parking lots as noted above.

The urban plaza to the east is a welcoming and functional space, and successful for hosting events. There is an outdoor café seating area adjacent to the former Dunkin Donuts at the southeast corner of the building, which is an asset even with no tenant in the adjacent interior space.

The property has no viable space for significant building expansion, without sacrificing either the east drop-off drive or plaza space to the west.

	main entrance
	number of parking spaces
	property line



CONDITION

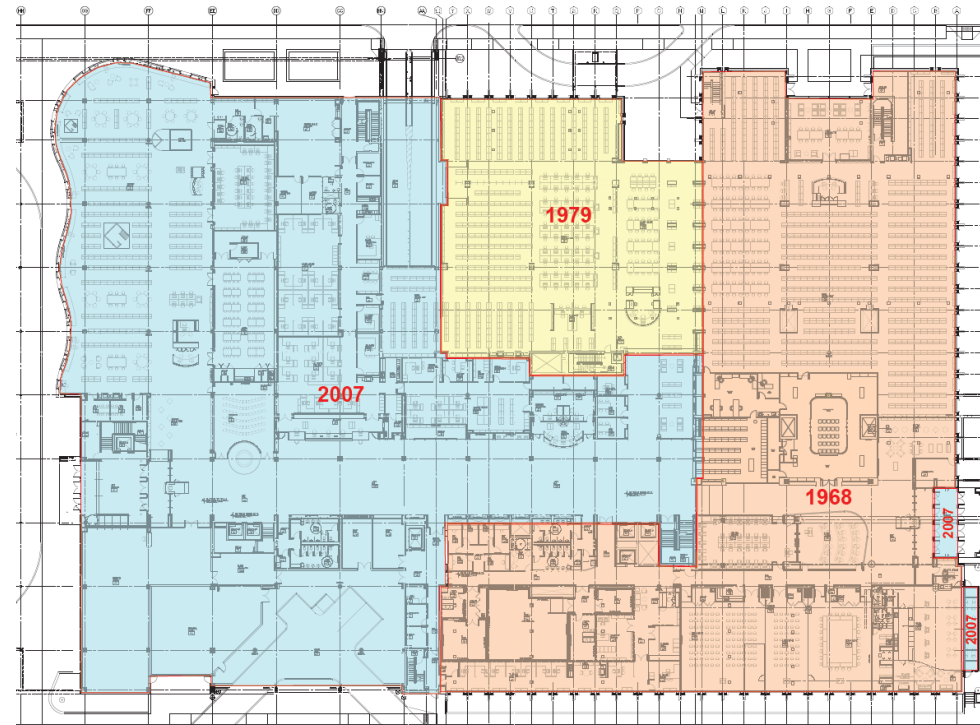
A complete renovation and significant expansion in 2007 updated the original 1968 building and 1979 expansion, and increased the Main Library to its current size and configuration at 367,000 SF.

Strategic improvements over time have modernized aspects of the library, such as the new Rolland Center, but the library mostly remains as designed in 2007. A floor plan highlighting the three eras of construction is included here for reference.

- The major equipment is in fair condition, installed in the 2007 renovation
- The system includes central chillers and boiler feeding VAV air handling units
- The generator is 16 years into a 20-year expected useful life.
- The cooling tower is 16 years into a 20-year expected useful life but has benefitted from recent refurbishment.
- 2 water heaters recently replaced, the remainder all 16 years into an 18-year expected useful life.
- The boilers are 16 years into a 25-year expected useful life. Rework for reliability recently completed.
- The chillers are 16 years into a 23-year expected useful life, one benefitted from recent work.
- The motors for all air handling units are 16 years into their 18-year expected useful life. ACPL has entered into a maintenance agreement to attend to these.
- Humidifiers are all 16 years into a 17-year expected useful life.
- Lighting is mixed, some original with LED upgrades in some areas.

Additional observations

- The building envelope is generally in good shape and has been well maintained
- Most finish materials are original to the 2007, but they are well maintained and aging well.



“Main library reminds me of an airport. It isn’t welcoming or friendly especially for people who have a difficult time walking.”

Public Survey Response

“I want to see Main receive the LEAST priority. It received some of the most recent renos in the system & is already more “state-of-the-art” than most of our branches.”

Public Survey Response

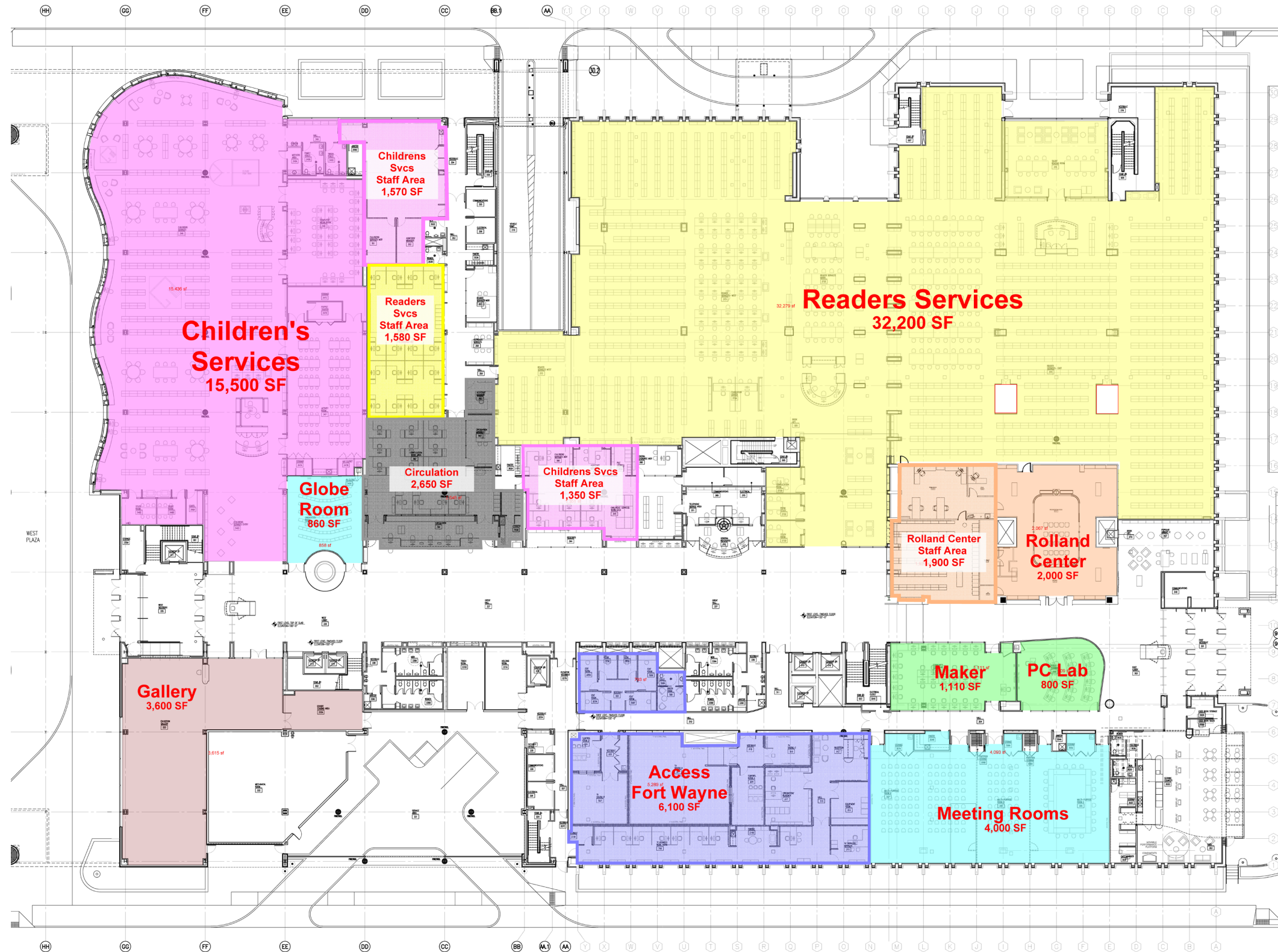




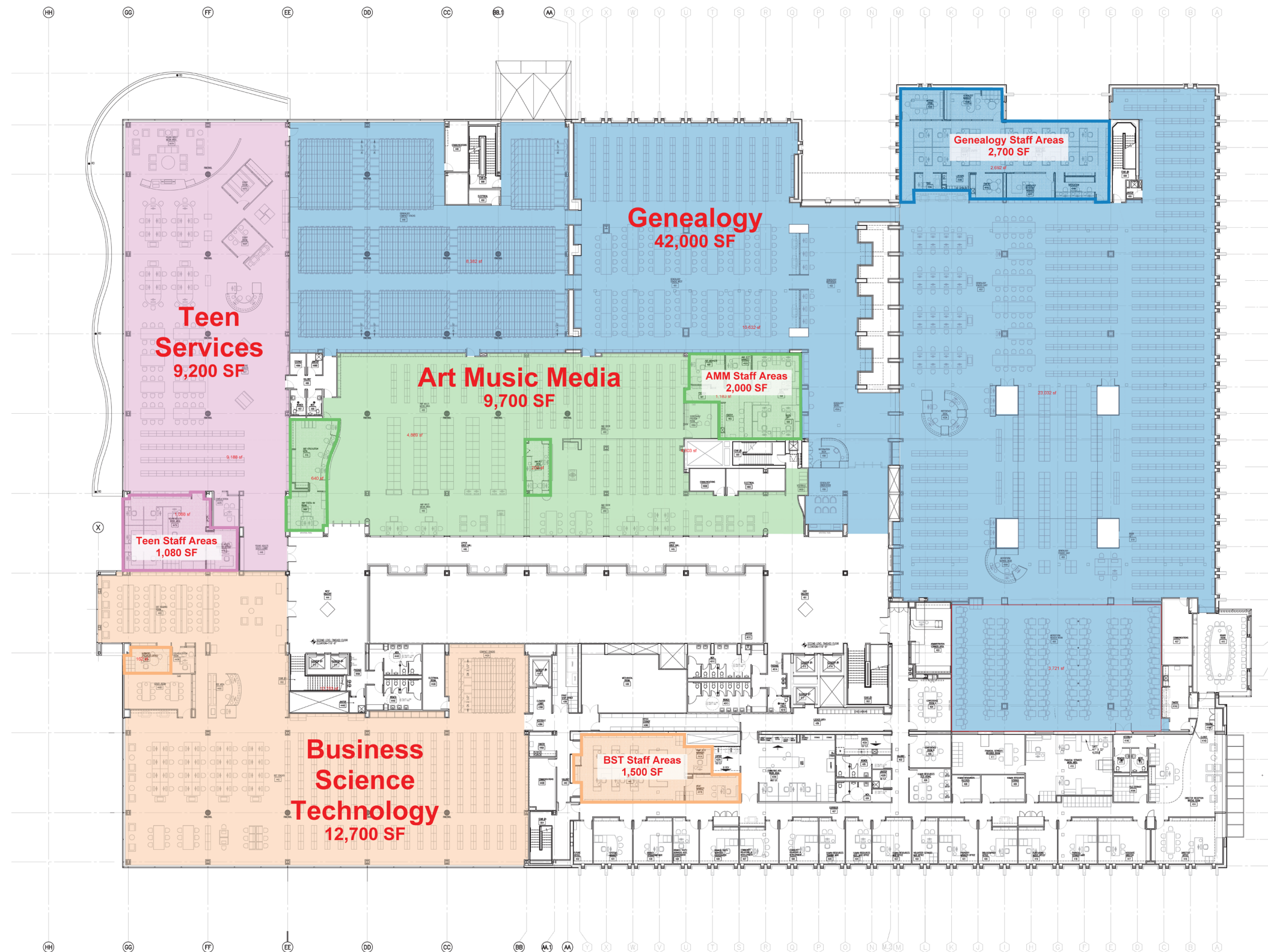
"Improved wayfinding, perhaps combining all non-fiction on one floor."
Public Survey Response



SPACE ALLOCATION



First Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan

FUNCTIONALITY

The building is large and spacious, serving as a true destination for events, large meetings, Children's Services, Research, and Genealogy. The building includes plenty of space to accommodate the local and regional demands, with ample shelving capacity for collections.

- The collection arrangement can be confusing, as materials collected by current subject matter categories create discontinuous numbering, sometimes on two different levels of the building.
- Large meeting room spaces are well-used, but the lack of medium-sizes and small public meeting rooms does not align with demand and adds significant scheduling pressure to the larger rooms.
- The children's library is convenient to the on-site parking and west entrance, and provides a destination space for families.
- Teen services occupies a large space in the northeast corner of the second-floor with great views to the city. The location disconnects it from the rest of Youth Services, and also places this more active space between the quieter Art, Music & Media and Business, Science & Technology spaces.
- Genealogy has and will continue to be a national destination. It is well located and offers a god mix of collection, technology, research, and collaboration space. The Rolland Center on the first floor is positioned to draw new audiences into the library as a destination.
- The library offers good places for browsing, reading, research, and technology use. The arrangement of these in relation to each other creates discontinuity and inefficiency, and finding your way comfortably to these spaces can be a challenge.

EFFICIENCY

- The Great Hall occupies a large amount of space in the building but remains underutilized for public service.
- The empty space where Dunkin Donuts was a tenant offers as yet unrealized opportunity for patron amenities or new/expanded public service area.
- The maker space is a positive asset but remains underutilized in its current location and configuration.
- Staff work areas are distributed among the corresponding departments they serve, which misses the opportunity for enhanced staff cohesion and serendipitous collaboration.
- Materials sorting remains a manual operation, and while efficient it has lost the benefit of a small automated materials handling system that no longer functions.
- Access Fort Wayne is a unique asset and occupies a central spot on the first floor. Some infrastructure and functional improvements are needed, and the reception area by default acts as a welcome center for patrons looking for meeting rooms.



"Less showpiece, more function-- more books, bigger hold space so you can allow more holds per person, more maker space, meeting space, more books!"

Public Survey Response





“Patrons enjoy trying new and high-quality tech at the library. They would like more options for what they can check out in and out of the buildings. For example, laptops that they can use in the library or out of the library. They like having tech for completing school assignments and gaming. They do some social media (but usually on their own phones). They want charging stations and wifi and well-equipped study and meeting rooms.”

Public Survey Response

“Most of the IT architecture in the building was from a building plan conceived in the 1990s, and was not built for heavy WiFi use or personal device use. Laptops for both patrons and staff have to compete for power outlets, and the meeting rooms especially could stand to have better wiring. WiFi within the building is pretty good, but there are still some dead spots. Computing needs to move from desktop only computing for patrons to mobile friendly options such as circulating laptops, and seating/tables designed for collaboration or single use while being wired for both needs. The meeting rooms especially are dated. The ceiling projectors have a horrible speaker system that is way too quiet.”

Public Survey Response



TECHNOLOGY

- The building generally accommodates the need for network connectivity throughout, with the exception of Children’s and Art, Music & Media.
- Wi-Fi coverage is inconsistent, with some areas experience strong and full coverage and others do not. The existing WiFi does not cover the needs of patrons outside of the building.
- Most areas in the Main Library do not provide enough power for charging mobile devices to meet the demand.
- The amount of workspace provided at PCs is adequate in the building with the exception of Genealogy.
- There are not enough small or medium-sized meeting spaces in the building, and the large meeting rooms on the first floor are not equipped with Audio-Visual equipment adequate to meet evolving presentation demands.
- Except for Genealogy, there are no collaborative computing spaces in the building.
- The first floor PC lab is tiered and inflexible, and was purpose-built for what is now an outdated mode of computer learning.
- The maker space on the first floor is a valuable asset, but the space was not originally designed specific to the kinds of technology now being offered, and what is anticipated.
- Staff computing and technology needs are generally adequate, with inconsistencies offset by equipment updates over time. The building and current technology available does not support a roaming service model favored by many staff.

AMBIANCE

- The building is impressive in scale and scope, and the interior wood and terrazzo finishes are timeless and durable. Aesthetically, the building projects a conservative academic or corporate feel, lacking the color and environmental vibrancy preferred by many staff and county residents.
- The great hall is light-filled but loud and echoey even with small crowds. This creates acoustical problems for all adjacent spaces on both levels, in particular the quiet reading area in Business Science & Technology.
- The plaza-side main entrance from the east is dark and much less welcoming than the open and light west entrance.
- The second-floor openings between Genealogy and Readers' Services allow daylight to reach the first floor but are also a path for noise, generating complaints in both spaces.
- As noted above, the departmental distribution creates navigation challenges which the existing wayfinding does not effectively address.
- Investments in the Children's area will continue to improve the look and feel of the space as an exploratory play and learn environment for parents and families.



"I recommend that additional attractive, inspiring and high-quality artwork be added to the walls throughout the Main library."

Public Survey Response

"I'm proud of the main branch, it's a beautiful building, but since the major renovation the layout is VERY funky and doesn't make a lot of sense. The long "great hall" model just doesn't work for several reasons. Also, there should be more areas for quiet private (or semi-private) reading/researching and there should be a coffee shop (either reopen Dunkin'Donuts or some equivalent). Additionally, you should be able to pass freely from one part of art and music to the other without having to literally leave one side to get to the other. Finally, the genealogy department should be more inviting/conducive to newbies and amateurs."

Public Survey Response

