

Lessons Learned

Ocean View Branch

- Circulation and Reference Area

The Circulation Desk and area is very small and having the Reference Librarian share the same desk area exacerbates the problem. The space would be fine for two workers and two monitors, certainly not three. The staff members are cramped together in a very close working condition, which seems even more crowded when the patrons return and check out materials. The notion of sharing the space with Reference seems misguided to me, as patrons have no privacy when asking questions and when being assisted by the Reference Librarian. (Often patrons are researching important highly private subjects, divorce, STD's, and so on. Students have to research school reports, which demand concentration, not distractions from the Circ area.) Patrons are confused as to which staff member does which job. This situation leads to the pages attempting to help the patrons with reference questions when the librarians are occupied with checking out materials.

- Scale/Size

Due to the size restraints on the physical building itself there are a multitude of challenges and problems.

- The oversized furniture makes the space even smaller and more cramped.
- The tables are not large enough for patrons to have both a book and notebook easily accessible at the same time for talking notes. Often the books tumble to the floor as the patron takes notes in a notebook. Sharing the tables among patrons is a formidable challenge.
- The teen area has one table with two chairs. The chairs are for smaller children and do not fit teenage children. After school, it is common for 15 –20 teens to be in an area, which is not comfortable for more than perhaps 5 teens at most. Out of the 26 branches, Ocean View has the 16th highest teen circulation, but there is inadequate space to serve Ocean View's teen population.
- The children's area of the library has several nice computer 'cubbies'. However, if a child is sitting in a chair and using the computer, it is impossible for the other patrons to view the books on the shelves behind the child. As it is one must scoot sideways to get through. Viewing the spines to read the titles is basically not possible. This simply cannot be ADA compliant. Even without children using the computers, it is amazingly narrow and crowded.
- The bookshelves are very high to accommodate the branches collection, and impossible for the average human being to reach the top shelves without the aid of a stool. The branch does have several 'safe stools', but patrons usually reach for the first available chair to stand on to reach the bookshelves. Not safe, but common practice. The lighting is situated in such a way that there is a glare on the plastic covers of the books so that it is not possible to read the titles of the books on the top shelves.

- An interesting solution to the bottom shelves is that they shelve the books with the spine facing up. This makes it much easier to see the spine and read the titles of the books.
- The second floor is not used very much as there is not staff to monitor the second floor. The second floor has a lovely computer lab, cute children's area, and the bathrooms. These areas cannot be used frequently due to lack of staff. Patrons are allowed to use the bathrooms. It is a shame that only one half of the branch can be used on a daily basis.
- Security

There are security cameras and monitors for viewing behind the Circ. Desk (taking up valuable space.) Oddly the cameras are fixed and do not pan the areas upstairs, so it does not seem all that secure to me.

- Natural Light

There are some windows above the shelves, which provide natural light. This light brightens the library, which helps create a nice atmosphere. I believe that the windows are quite difficult to open, as there is no fresh air circulation in the building. The air quality is questionable due to this factor. Unfortunately, one window is totally grown over with vines, thus defeating the purpose. A trim would alleviate this problem in mere moments.

- Flooring

The choice of floor covering that the designers made was to carpet the branch. It is difficult to push heavy book trucks across the carpet. At this point in time the carpet is quite stained, and rather unattractive. Carpet is not easily cleaned and seems unsanitary; other flooring should be considered in the future.

- Collection

The collection seems to be brand new. The books are in lovely condition, quite exceptional really. The teen collection is of nice size. And the video collection is very big, and serves the community well. Also there are many videos about African Americans, which is nice. Also for the size of the collection the Chinese language books are well represented.