

APPENDIX C

IN-PERSON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT





Visioning Workshop

Kimley»Horn

HERNANDO LIBRARY WORKSHOP NOTES & SUMMARY

Hernando County
Library Master Plan

Workshop Date: February 26, 2026
Staff Workshop: 9:00am to 12:00 pm
Community Open House: 5:30pm – 7:30pm
Location: Hernando County Utilities Department
15365 Cortez Boulevard, Brooksville, FL 34613
Consultant Team: Kimley-Horn: David Thayer, Jennifer Daoulas, Hanna Shaffer

Brief Description of the workshops

Public Engagement Workshop: BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Staff Workshop: BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The following notes document the written input of the Vision Workshop exercises. Written information that was emphasized (underlined, circled, or with a check mark) by participants have been emphasized within the format of these notes. A summary of Vision Workshop input is included at the beginning of the following notes summary. Detailed record of input is included in the following pages.

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SUMMARY:
Public Engagement Workshop

Summary of Exercise 1: One word Exercise

- Public feedback reflects that the county library system is viewed as necessary, vital, and essential—a trusted community resource that provides meaningful value and serves an important role for residents of all ages. At the same time, words like underfunded, crowded, and underused point to unmet potential, suggesting the community sees the library as fundamentally good and community-centered, but in need of greater investment and strategic growth to fully realize its promise.

Summary of Exercise 2: Comments

Key Findings Identified by Public Participants:

PROGRAMS:

- Books are heavily used, but users note limited selection, especially for children, and value interlibrary loans to expand access.
- Strong interest in youth, teen, and homeschool programming, including educational classes, creative writing, book clubs, and craft activities.
- Desire for more evening and weekend access, with expanded open hours for studying and events such as language classes, exercise, and author talks.
- Feedback highlights accessibility concerns at the main library, mixed perceptions of leadership approachability, and support for fine reduction or book amnesty to remove barriers to use.

FACILITIES:

- Strong desire for a larger main library with significantly more space, including study rooms, group spaces, and isolated areas to increase usage.
- Emphasis on welcoming, functional interior spaces, such as comfortable seating, collaborative tables, separate computer areas, and dedicated reading zones.
- Clear need for family-focused improvements, including kid-friendly engaging areas, separate children's spaces, a curriculum library, and a stronger children's book selection.
- Interest in expanded access and usability, including Saturday and late-night hours, and a library environment that feels safe and welcoming.
- Support for enhanced outdoor and site features, such as low-maintenance landscaping with drought-tolerant plants, a sensory garden, and outdoor meeting areas, while maintaining access to physical books.

PARTNERSHIP

- Interest in stronger partnerships with homeschool families, parents, and community groups to better support shared programming needs.
- Desire for new, flexible spaces that can host clubs and hands-on events such as cooking, sewing, and board games.





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Page 3

- Support for third-party business sponsorships to help create, maintain, and activate specialized areas within the library.

AWARENESS:

- Residents most often learn about library programs through **social media**
- **Digital resources** are valued but need greater awareness and promotion
- Physical books, browsing, and in-person programs remain strong reasons people visit libraries.
- Respondents note that event descriptions are often unclear and recommend **improved digital marketing** through radio, podcasts, and popular social media platforms.

Summary of Exercise 3: Branch Comments

Key Findings Identified by Public Participants:

MAIN LIBRARY:

- The responses emphasize the need for **more flexible and expanded space**, including separate areas for computers, children, and studying, as well as relocating offices to prioritize public use. There is strong interest in **outdoor programming, partnerships with schools, and free community spaces** that can support meetings, clubs, educational events, and broader community engagement.

SPRING HILL BRANCH:

- The feedback suggests that the current circulation desk setup limits communication with staff, even though self-checkout is seen as convenient. Respondents value human interaction and feel the library should better encourage engagement between patrons and staff through a more open, interactive design.

WEST HERNANDO BRANCH

- The feedback highlights the value of **study rooms, small meeting spaces, and clear separation between kids, teens, and adults**, which helps manage noise and provides appropriate study environments. Staff are described as **very welcoming**, and the adult/children separation model is seen as successful, supported by a good selection of books.

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Page 4

County Staff Workshop

Key Findings Identified by County Staff Participants:

PROGRAMS:

- Strong consensus on the need to expand and diversify programming across all ages, with particular emphasis on adult services, youth programs, and technology classes.
- Staff identified capacity and consistency challenges, calling for more staffing, training, mentorship, standardized program expectations, and repeat offerings at varied times.
- There is a clear push to increase attendance and engagement through better outreach, innovative formats (passive programs, off-site delivery), and expanded hours.
- Multiple groups highlighted the importance of meeting patrons where they are, using surveys, feedback, and targeted approaches to reach underserved or less-connected demographics.

FACILITIES:

- Across groups, the top facility priority is more and better-designed space, including study rooms, meeting rooms, age-specific areas, and flexible layouts that support different uses.
- Accessibility is a major theme, with calls for ADA improvements, better parking and signage, and expanded services such as bookmobiles, homebound delivery, and book drops in underserved areas.
- Staff emphasized the need to tailor facilities to local community needs, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, including makerspaces, technology access, and outdoor or mobile services.
- Several groups noted that adequate staffing, funding, and dedicated facility support are critical to making physical improvements successful.

PARTNERSHIP

- Staff consistently see partnerships as a way to extend library reach and capacity, particularly through collaboration with county departments, schools, nonprofits, businesses, and Friends of the Library.
- There is strong interest in clearer structures for partnerships, including designated points of contact, tracking partnerships, and better communication about shared needs and opportunities.
- Partnerships are viewed as key to improving accessibility and mobility, such as transportation support, shared spaces, community passes, and outreach to non-traditional library users.
- Several groups highlighted the opportunity to better leverage existing county resources and attractions through coordinated promotion and shared programming.



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Page 5

AWARENESS:

- A recurring theme is the need for stronger, more consistent system-wide marketing standards, ensuring messaging is clear, coordinated, and visible across all branches.
- Staff emphasized expanding awareness through diverse channels, including social media (TikTok, Facebook), traditional media (TV, radio), events, and in-branch promotion.
- There is a desire to move beyond basic promotion toward strategic branding, merchandise, and identifying missed opportunities to connect with different patron groups.
- Many groups stressed that awareness should be integrated into daily operations, not treated as a separate effort, so programs, services, and technology training are continuously reinforced.

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Page 6

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Exercise 1: Using one word, how would you describe the Hernando County Libraries?

- Necessary
- Vital
- Underfunded
- Essential
- Good
- Crowded
- Underused
- Community
- Potential

Exercise 2: Summary of Comments for boards

Board 1: Awareness

Guiding Questions:

1. How do you learn of the library programs and services offered?
2. What library services or resources do you think more people should know about?
3. What makes you decide to visit the library in person versus using it online (or not at all)?
4. Does library messaging clearly communicate who the library is for (all ages, backgrounds, needs)?

Responses:

- People often learn about library programs through Websites and Facebook
- More people should know about library resources such as hoopla and Libby/ Kindle
- Physical books and opportunity to browse and attend programs draw people to the libraries
- Event Descriptions are often vague and don't clearly communicate messaging
- Suggestions to update digital marketing through radio advertising, podcast ads, promoting library programs and resources on popular social media platforms

Board 2: Facilities

Guiding Questions:

1. What is one thing you would like to see improved at Hernando County Libraries?
2. What's one thing you wish the library had "more of" (space, seating, rooms, hours, outlets, quiet areas, tech, etc.)?
3. Are there any changes or improvements you'd suggest for the library's facilities?
4. What's the biggest barrier to use the library more often (time, transportation, hours, awareness, comfort, safety, accessibility, tech, etc.)?

Responses:



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Page 7

- A large facility for the main library
- More Space
- Updated landscaping with easy to maintain, drought tolerant plants and a sensory garden
- Outdoor meeting areas
- Kid friendly engaging areas
- Reading areas
- **Group Spaces**
- Desire to keep physical books
- **More Space and isolated rooms will increase usage**
- Study room
- Saturday hours and late-night library hours
- Separate spaces for kids
- Comfortable seating options
- **Table options for collaborative work**
- Computers in separate spaces
- A curriculum library
- Feeling safe and welcome
- Low selection of children's books

Board 3: Partnership

Guiding Questions:

1. Which partnerships should the library strengthen most (schools, homeschooling, civic groups, local government and public agencies, community groups)?
2. Are there any community, private, or public partnership opportunities that could enrich and support the Libraries?

Responses:

- Partnership with homeschool families
- Parents and Groups
- New spaces
- Clubs and events such as cooking, sewing, board games
- 3rd party business sponsorships of sections of library for creation and maintenance

Board 4: Programs

Guiding Questions:

1. What programs do you frequently use at the library?
2. Are the programs the library holds accessible and during convenient times of the day?
3. Are there any services you wish the library offered that it currently does not?
4. If you haven't attended programs, what's the main reason (awareness, time, transportation, interest, childcare, comfort)?
5. What is one program the library should offer more often?

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Page 8

Responses:

- Books are frequently used although selection is lacking
- **Youth Programs**
- Accessibility of main library and some concerns with leadership not being welcoming
- Educational classes for kids and teens
- Evening events such as language classes, exercise, and book clubs
- Interlibrary loans for enhanced book selection
- More writers/ author-based events
- **More open hours for studying, weekends and evenings**
- Homeschool programs and events such as creative writing, book clubs, and craft clubs
- Fine reduction or removal, and book amnesty



Main Library:

Responses and Ideas:

- Library outdoors programs with connected park
- Blend references desks within circulation space for more study desks
- Computers in separate room, age-appropriate areas
- Relocated offices to create additional library space
- Separate kids areas
- New spaces
- Public library partnership with public school spaces
- More Space
- Free spaces to attract community groups, meetings, clubs, events and educational events

Map:

Main Library - Frederick Eugene Lykes Jr. Memorial Library

238 Howell Avenue, Brooksville, FL

Place your dots on the spaces and services that matter to you.

● = I Use This ● = I Love This ● = I Want More of This

Add a sticky note to tell us more.



Responses and Ideas:

- New Desk circulation/ Setup
- Setup is restrictive to communication with staff
- Self-checkout convenient but still desire human connection
- **Library should encourage interaction**

Map:

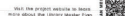
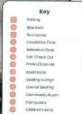
Spring Hill Branch - Harold G. Zopp Memorial Library

238 Howell Avenue, Brooksville, FL

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Page 11

West Hernando Branch:

Responses and Ideas:

- Study rooms and small meeting spaces
- Separate kids and teens areas to reduce spread of noise, and give teens designated study spaces
- Staffe very welcoming and good selection of books
- Adult/children separation is successful here.

Map:

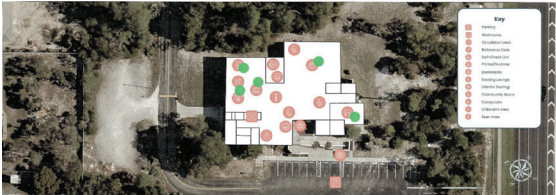
West Hernando Branch - Staffordene T. Foggia Memorial Library

6335 Blackbird Avenue, Brooksville, FL

Place your dots on the spaces and services that matter to you.

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HERNANDO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY MASTER PLAN

Visit the project website to learn more about the library master plan.



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Page 12

East Hernando Branch:

Map:

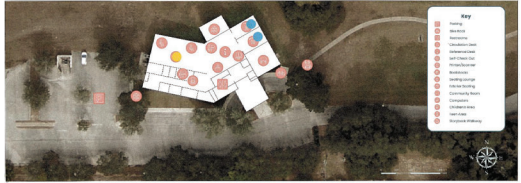
East Hernando Branch Library

8457 Windmere Road, Brooksville, FL

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Library Advisory Board Meeting

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HERNANDO LIBRARY ADVISORY BOARD NOTES & SUMMARY Hernando County Library Master Plan

Engagement Date: May 13, 2026
Meeting: 1:00pm to 2:00pm

Location: Hernando County Main Library

Consultant Team: Kimley-Horn: David Thayer, Jennifer Daoulas, Hanna Shaffer, Brynn Choplin

Summary

Consultant staff reviewed draft goals and strategies for the Hernando County Library Strategic Master Plan with the Hernando County advisory board, discussing key themes, opportunities, and challenges facing the library system. Overall, the system faces space, funding, and operational constraints that influence its ability to evolve and respond to community needs. Physical limitations, including parking, constrained flexible space, and targeted capital improvement needs, vary by branch, with floor plan updates more feasible at some locations than others. Awareness and outreach efforts are limited by staffing and resources, indicating a need for stronger marketing capacity and enhanced collaboration with schools and community partners. Additional challenges include addressing social service needs within library spaces while maintaining safety, accessibility, and overall functionality.

Meeting Notes

Programs

Must put programs into calendar 3 months in advance

- Must prepare ahead of time when implementing pilot studies
- Are there opportunities internally to input timing flexibility? - It's a library leadership requirement

Facilities

- Members confirm that parking is a concern (at library) and need additional facility spaces such as study rooms

Library expansion

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Page 2

- Main - only so much you can expand
 - Unless main is solely for administrative, programs, and technology resources
 - Concerns with structurally expanding main library to a second story + would be costly
 - Main doesn't have space for children to play - that'd be nice to have that space
- Envision east to expand?

Partnership/Funding

- Foundations Department - who's in charge of fundraising? - they're not allowed to fundraise?
 - They must utilize FOL to fundraise
- Improve payment system so people can easily donate remotely
- Membership tiers -
- Additional facility space - not allowed to rent out spaces, only allowed for non-profits (enforced by the county)
 - Potential opportunities to reimagine this? Something like Parks & Rec
 - Occasionally throughout the year they get requests by bridal showers or baby shower to rent rooms but can't

Awareness

- If they had enough funding, they would ideally have a marketing/outreach staff or interns
- Potential to add TikTok back
- Electronic sign outside that shows programs/events or partner with a nearby business
 - Bring flyers to local businesses to put up
- Schools are phasing out media centers in the county so they're looking to partner with libraries
 - Every student who signs up should get a library card (school board)
 - Age range policies?
 - Field trips to libraries - schools have difficulty renting school buses, if it's outside of school hours then have to rent a charter bus which is \$\$\$

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«Full_Address»

«Office_»



Barriers

- Issues with unhoused individuals coming into library - specifically those who don't want help
- Potential to bring programs into the library to support individuals struggling
 - Food drive?
 - People helping people - go to West Library
 - Library hands out resources to homeless
- CIP - wayfinding/ramp for bus ramp at West Branch

Library Staff Workshop: SWOT Boards Summary

STAFF ENGAGEMENT WORKSHOP NOTES & SUMMARY
HERNANDO COUNTY LIBRARY FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

Workshop Date:	December 12, 2025 Staff: 2pm to 4:00 pm
Location:	Hernando County West Branch 6335 Blackbird Ave, Brooksville, FL 34613
Consultant Team:	Kimley-Horn: David Thayer, Jennifer Daoulas, Hanna Shaffer

A Staff Workshop was conducted with all Library Staff at the Hernando West Branch on December 12, 2025. The workshop began with a presentation of current data collection findings and then asked participants to complete an exercise in groups of 5-8 people.

- Exercise: Ask participants to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) of the existing Hernando County Library system. The responses highlighted in **RED** were key areas of focus/ priority items.

LIBRARY STAFF SUMMARY:
Summary of SWOT Exercise:

- Strengths:
- **Community Trust & Service Quality** - Widely valued for strong customer service and deep, trusted community relationships.
 - **Broad, Inclusive Programming** - Consistently serves multiple age groups and community needs, including intergenerational and seasonal offerings.
 - **Access to Information & Technology** - Provides critical access to digital resources, technology, and materials that many patrons cannot otherwise obtain.
 - **Skilled and Dedicated Staff** - Strong reference, technology, and customer service expertise supported by ongoing training and collaboration.
 - **Accessible Physical Presence** - Multiple branches and welcoming spaces make the library a reliable and accessible community hub.
- Weaknesses:
- **Chronic Funding Constraints** - Limited and unstable funding restricts staffing levels, services, and long-term planning.
 - **Staffing Capacity Challenges** - Insufficient staffing, limited hours, and morale/retention issues strain daily operations and service delivery.
 - **Facility and Space Limitations** - Aging buildings, insufficient space, and maintenance and ADA issues limit program growth and patron comfort.



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- **Operational Inefficiencies** - Bureaucracy, reliance on external maintenance, and slow processes reduce flexibility and responsiveness.
- **Limited Feedback and Outreach** - Gaps in patron feedback, marketing, and outreach reduce awareness and informed service improvements.

Opportunities:

- **Deeper Engagement with Underserved Populations** - Strong potential to expand services for seniors, homebound patrons, unhoused individuals, and youth.
- **Service and Program Expansion** - Demand exists for literacy support, study space, mobile services, and practical services like notary and tech help.
- **Strategic Partnerships** - Collaborations with community organizations can extend reach, share resources, and address complex needs.
- **Digital and Virtual Growth** - Online programs and digital marketing can increase access, flexibility, and visibility of library services.
- **System Growth and Extended Access** - Expanded hours, new locations, and additional branches can better meet growing community demand.

Threats:

- **Political and Ideological Pressure** - Censorship efforts, opposition groups, and political agendas threaten intellectual freedom and library operations.
- **Public Misunderstanding of Library Value** - Misinformation and lack of awareness contribute to perceptions that libraries are unnecessary or outdated.
- **Financial and Privatization Risks** - Funding instability, privatization efforts, and vendor restrictions threaten access to materials and services.
- **Rapid Community Change and Growth** - Population growth and increasing diversity are outpacing the library's current capacity to respond.
- **Technology and Workforce Disruption** - Aging technology, rapid AI changes, and staff turnover challenge sustainability and service quality.