

Under the proposed project, funding will be used to refurbish and reorganize three main sections of the Hamner Public Library: the circulation desk and customer service area; adult seating and shelving areas, including computer work stations; and the addition of a small meeting room. As the demand for library services continues to increase at the Hamner Public Library, so do the demands on library spaces for the public to meet, study, utilize public wi-fi, access public computers, socialize, and take advantage of free public services and programs such as storytime, notary services, and craft workshops. The library also serves the day-to-day needs of the public for notary, faxing, copying, printing, and passport services.

Beginning in summer 2023, the library staff worked with Liberty Systems, Inc., a company specializing in library design and furnishings, to imagine a space that could accommodate a wide range of library audiences under one existing roof. The design includes pockets for quiet study, private meeting space, areas for middle and high schoolers to meet and socialize, computer work stations, spaces for storytime crafts, tutoring areas, and a variety of seating and work spaces to meet all of the demands placed on the library in an average day.

The primary areas of this proposal are:

Circulation desk: Three staff members of the Library utilize the main circulation desk as office space. It is where patrons check out books, receive notary, print, copying and fax services, and where books and other materials are processed for circulation or reshelving. The current desks and work spaces are 25 years old and do not provide adequate storage or work space for all of the circulation desk operations to function smoothly and in an organized way. The current arrangement also does not accommodate secure storage needs for media such as DVDs, video games and video game consoles.

Private meeting space: The library currently has one meeting room (the Hamner Room) that is available and open to the public for outside meetings, including during hours the library is otherwise closed to the public. Passport services, which must remain confidential, also function out of the Hamner Room. Often the library can not accommodate all requests for private or group meeting space because of the limited space.

The proposed design will include a walled area created by the Loftwall portable room dividers. The Loftwall system will include an acoustic ceiling panel to make the space private enough for telehealth meetings, passport services, tutoring sessions, grief counseling, board meetings,— essentially any meeting of up to 8-10 people. This will expand the library's capacity for hosting educational and recreational programs in the Hamner Room and reduce the number of times community members are turned away for meeting room usage.

Adult seating areas: On busy afternoons in the library there is often not enough seating space to accommodate the demands for multiple audiences. The new layout plan includes an area restricted for quiet study that is at the farthest point from the children's section in the building. It will also include more seating areas for people to sit alone or meet in small groups for completing homework, holding a meeting, or utilizing the library's resources.

Public computer stations: The library hosts an average of 2,500-3,000 individual computer use sessions on the public library computers each year. Amelia residents who do not have home computers or home internet access rely on the library's public computers and should be able to expect a comfortable, private environment in which to access personal information, complete job applications, or perform other functions home computer users take for granted. The addition of new computer carrels will provide a comfortable space that allows for some privacy within easy reach of the circulation desk so that staff can assist patrons with computers as needed.

Adult materials shelving: The current shelving system in the library was not designed for library use. The shelves are not deep enough or tall enough to accommodate some library materials and adjusting shelf height is very difficult. The shelving units are also difficult to keep clean and pose a safety threat as staff can not see anything through the shelving. The proposed shelving system will help to extend the useful life of library materials, improve overall cleanliness in the library, and increase safety for staff and patrons.

Liberty Systems, Inc., which has designed interior spaces and furnishing plans for dozens of libraries throughout Virginia, worked with the library staff on layout design and budget projections to plan a space that accommodates the Hamner Public Library's multiple audiences under one roof. Liberty Systems completed the attached CAD drawings of the Library interior with furnishing types selected by staff to maintain the character of the Hamner Public Library and last in excellent condition for many years to come. The current library furnishings are the same age as the library building—25 years—and, in addition to showing wear and tear, are difficult to keep clean to maintain the public comfort and safety standards Amelia residents should be able to expect from their library.

The attached estimate includes the cost for packing and storing the books and other library materials while the shelves are switched out, as well as the cost of removal of the old library furnishings and installation of the new furnishings.