

## 59A - Athens-Clarke County Public Libraries

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**Original Project Total Cost: \$ 14,449,000**

**Total Operating Cost: \$ 753,000**

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**Alternate Project Total Cost: \$ 14,099,000**

**Alternate Total Operating Cost: No change**

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**Project Description:** The Library's Board of Trustees weighed all options before submitting the original and conservative SPLOST proposal for a Branch on the east side of Athens. The cost of the project was taken into consideration during the planning of our proposal. The Board believes that a 20,000 sq. ft. facility would be the minimum size to meet the needs of the current population. Even a 20,000 sq. ft. facility may need to be added to in the future, we were conservative with our estimates. Additionally, over \$1 million has already been subtracted from the original proposal for the purchase of land for the library.

The Athens Board of Trustees does not recommend changes to the current proposal. If we must make changes, it would be in the size of the facility. Rather than a 20,000 sq. ft. building, an 19,000 sq. ft. building may provide some savings. However, that size facility may not serve the current or future needs of residents on the east side.

Libraries of this approximate size in the Regional system serve populations between 29,000 and 36,000. The estimated (zip code) population for the east side is approximately 42,000.

There are three areas in the proposed facility that could be downsized to build an 19,000 sq. ft. library:

The first is the meeting room space. Instead of a larger meeting room that could be separated into smaller rooms, there would be one room. While a conceivable solution, we must keep in mind that the east side has no free meeting space for the community at this time.

Quiet study or individual/group study space could be eliminated. This may impact the student population on the east side, and small community group meetings could also be impacted by such a change. Residents could still come to the Baxter Street facility, but as was stated in the proposal that can be a two hour bus ride.

The children's section of the library could be made smaller. Given the importance of early childhood literacy to Athens residents, the library generally plans to offer a nice sized and inviting children's area with a storytime room and space for school aged crafts and reading. That area could be made smaller and/or the story room eliminated.

Those are the areas of difference between a 20,000 sq. ft. facility and an 19,000 sq. ft. facility. A smaller facility is not something the Athens Library Board of Trustees would recommend as the best outcome for east side residents. However, if necessary, it could work.