



# WORK SESSION

## WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**Session Date:** August 20, 2024 **Length of Time Requested:** 30  
**Department(s):** Cooperative Library Services  
**Presented by:** Lisa Tattersall, Cooperative Library Services Manager

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<b>Title of Topic:</b>	<b>West Slope Library Operational Transition Recommendation</b>
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### **ATTACHMENTS:**

[West Slope Library Operational Transition Presentation](#)

### **PURPOSE & DESIRED OUTCOME:**

The purpose of this presentation is to provide staff's positive recommendation to move forward with executing an operational transition for the West Slope Library from a County-operated facility to one operated by the Garden Home Community Library Association. This is in alignment with the workplan acknowledged in the Board's [Resolution and Order 24-35](#). This report summarizes the process of the operational analysis and stakeholder engagement, and the benefits of the operational transition, should the Board support this transition moving forward.

### **POLICY QUESTIONS FOR THE BOARD TO CONSIDER:**

Does the Board support moving forward with implementation of the operational transition of the West Slope Library from a County operated facility to being operated by the Garden Home Community Library Association? If so, staff will return to your Board with an action item on September 17, 2024 with a draft memorandum of agreement between the parties, for the Board's review and authorization.

### **SUMMARY OF TOPIC:**

#### **Summary & Purpose**

The West Slope Library, located in the unincorporated Raleigh Hills/West Slope area, has been operated directly by Washington County Cooperative Library Services (WCCLS) since 1978. Other public libraries in Washington County urban unincorporated areas (UUAs) are operated by nonprofit agencies. Under the Board of County Commissioners' leadership, and in alignment with the County's Four Fundamentals of the Strategic Plan Update, staff developed a workplan to recommend the transition of West Slope Library (WSL) operations to the nonprofit Garden Home Community Library Association (GHCLA). Aligning with the operational model for public library services in urban unincorporated areas of Washington County and eliminating General Fund support for direct West Slope Library operations by the end of fiscal year 2024-2025, supports the fourth fundamental that states "Countywide property tax dollars will be primarily expended on countywide services." This was memorialized in the Board's [Resolution and Order 24-35](#), which acknowledged the workplan recommending the transition of West Slope Library operations to Garden Home Community Library Association.

**The purpose of this report is to provide staff's positive recommendation to implement the transition plan,** based on the analysis from the Library Strategies Consulting Group, which WCCLS engaged for this project. The project remains on track with the timeline acknowledged by the Board in Resolution and Order 24-35. This report summarizes the process of the operational analysis and stakeholder engagement, and the benefits of the operational transition, should your Board support this transition moving forward.

### **Historical Background**

West Slope has been operated by the County since 1978, when it was taken on as part of the serial levy passed at the time. Before 1978, West Slope was operated by local volunteers. The Banks Library was also operated by the County at the time, as part of the same serial levy. Eventually the City of Banks took on management of the Banks Library. There was no "parent organization" to take on the West Slope Library in urban unincorporated Washington County, so WCCLS has continued to operate the library.

West Slope is currently funded by a transfer of operating funds from WCCLS and receives support services from WCCLS and Washington County. West Slope Library staff are county employees. West Slope Library has a library advisory board, appointed by the Board of Commissioners. They also have a nonprofit Friends of the Library, which fundraises for the library. The library building is sited on Beaverton School District (BSD) property, on the grounds of Raleigh Park Elementary School. Per the terms of the BSD lease, Washington County does not pay a fee for using this site. The building is currently owned by Washington County.

### **Process and Stakeholder Engagement**

Library Strategies Consulting Group, a national-level nonprofit organization, was engaged for a two-phase process. Phase 1 laid the groundwork and resulted in a report on current state of service and staffing levels at the Garden Home and West Slope Libraries, a forecast of how a transition may impact service levels in the short-term, as well as a roadmap for the implementation of Phase 2.

Phase 2 has been completed and included:

- Stakeholder engagement with the West Slope Library Advisory Board, the Friends of the West Slope Library and the Garden Home Community Library Association Board.
- Informational interviews with library directors, library staff, school district staff, other nonprofit and small library directors in the cooperative, and WCCLS staff.
- Deep analysis of library operations, including usage statistics, budget information, organizational charts, schedules, and so on.

### **Benefits of the Recommended Transition**

**Continuity of service:** Library Strategies' report concludes that "The West Slope Library and Garden Home Community Library are both beloved libraries in their communities. They have similar open hours, service levels, community demographics, and are located within 2.5 miles of each other.... Based on the information gathered throughout this project, it is our assessment that the transition of operations of the West Slope Library from WCCLS to GHCLA is a viable option for retaining West Slope Library operations."

**Budgetary savings:** After analyzing the recommendations and associated costs necessary for a viable transition of WSL operations to GHCLA, Library Strategies calculated a recommended WCCLS allocation amount of \$1,361,015 to GHCLA for the operation of the Garden Home and West Slope Libraries based on 2024-25 budget information. This is approximately a 12% savings to WCCLS for operation of these two library locations. The County would experience additional savings in internal service functions such as Facilities.

**Service efficiencies:** The transition affords opportunities for efficiencies especially in the areas of collection development and technical services, administration, staffing coverage, and programming and outreach collaboration.

**Role clarity:** WCCLS would move from a library operator in the West Slope/Raleigh Hills neighborhood to a dynamic partner in service delivery, fully in alignment with the cooperative's current governance model. This alignment supports role clarity as WCCLS works with partners through our cooperative-wide funding and governance evaluation process.

### **Next Steps**

Should the Board support moving forward with implementation of the operational transition of the West Slope Library from a county operated facility to being operated by the Garden Home Community Library Association, staff will return to the Board with an action item on September 17. This would be a draft memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the County, the Garden Home Community Library Association, and the Beaverton School District. This would allow the partners to move forward with implementing the transition, to be effective no later than June 30, 2025, should the Board authorize signature.

Staff would engage with Library Strategies in the third and final phase of the process, to act as project managers for the transition, supporting staff in implementation. The transition itself would be formalized with contract revisions that would be brought to the Board closer to the time of the actual operational handover, later this fiscal year.



Washington County  
Cooperative Library Services

# West Slope Library Operational Transition Recommendation

Board of County Commissioners Work Session | August 20, 2024

# Policy Question

Does the Board support moving forward with implementation of the transition of the West Slope Library from a County operated facility to being operated by the Garden Home Community Library Association?



# Staff Recommendation

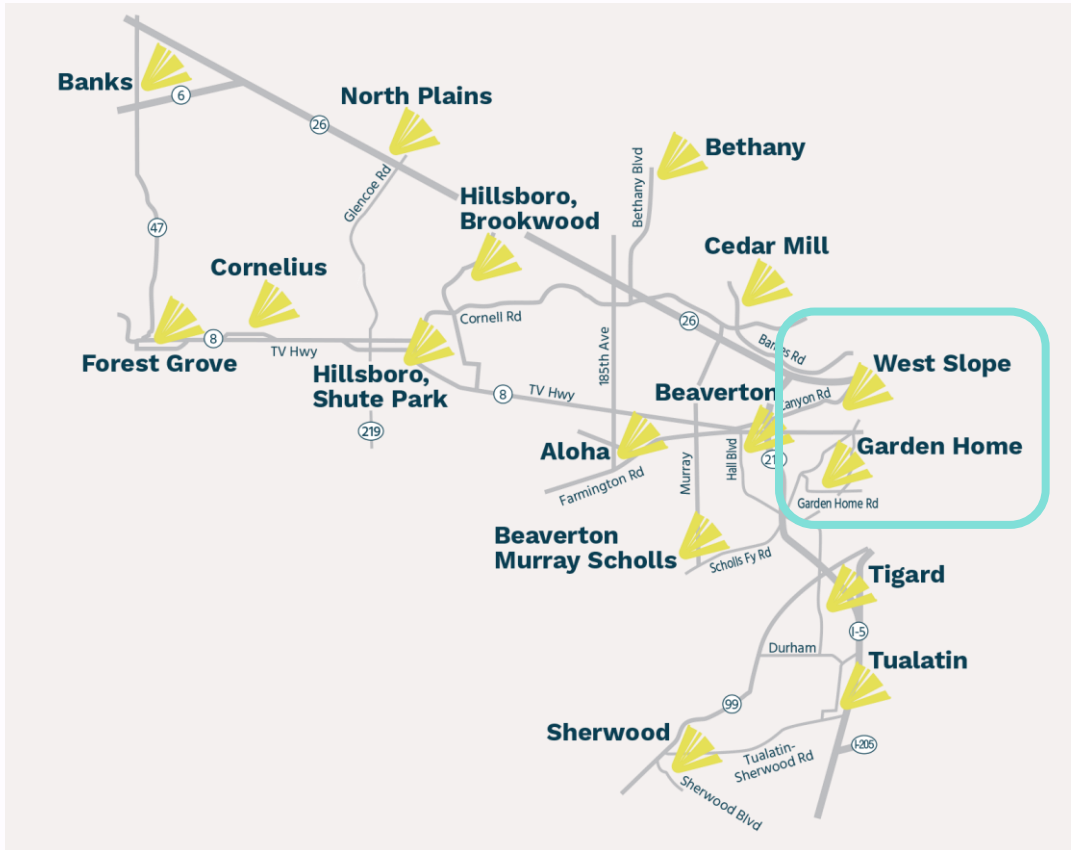
Staff recommend implementing an operational transition where the West Slope Library is operated by the Garden Home Community Library Association, an existing nonprofit partner agency in the cooperative.

- West Slope Library continues to serve the community
- Aligns with the fourth fundamental of the County's strategic plan update
- Supports the Board's direction and the staff work plan memorialized in R&O 24-35



# Background

- West Slope Library has been operated by Washington County since 1978.
- All other libraries in urban unincorporated areas are operated by nonprofit agencies, and libraries within cities are operated by cities.
- Library is supported by the West Slope Library Advisory Board and Friends of West Slope Library
- Located on Beaverton School District property
- Closest neighbor is Garden Home Community Library, operated by the Garden Home Community Library Association (a 501(c)3) and located in the Garden Home Rec Center, operated by THPRD

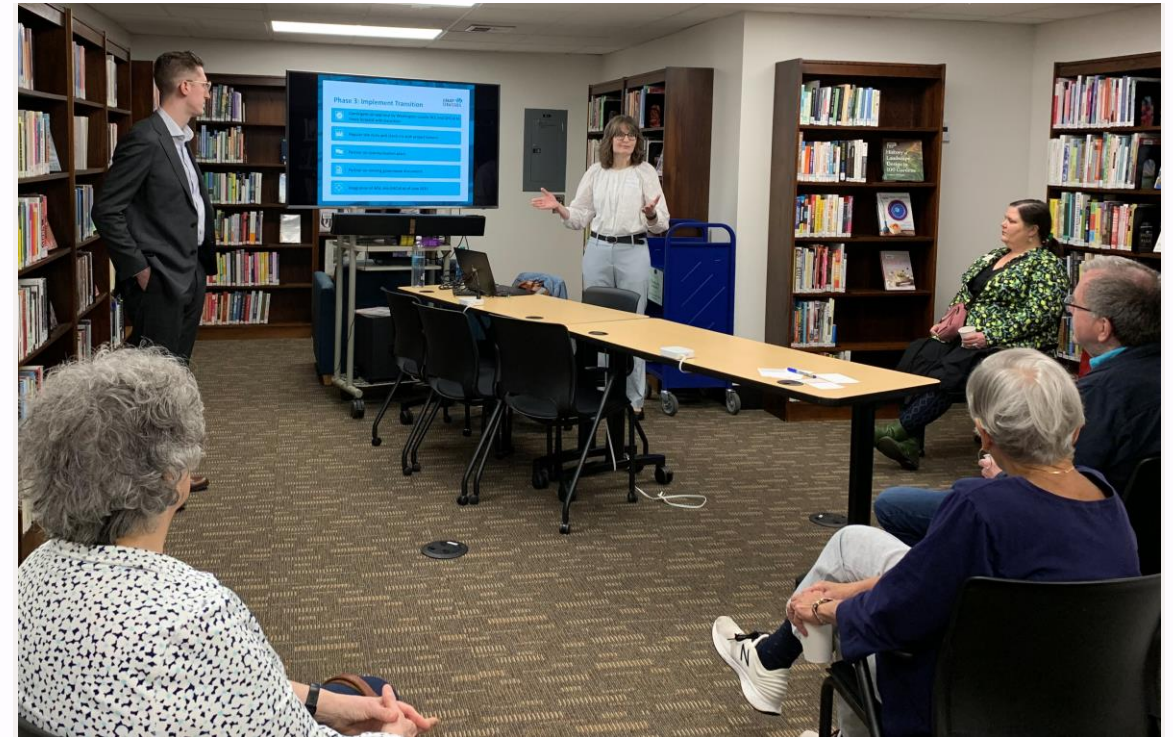




# Process to Date

WCCLS engaged with Library Strategies Consulting Group, who have done robust analysis and stakeholder engagement.

- Current state of staffing and services at both libraries
- Detailed reviews of historical and current operating budgets, statistical reports, etc.
- Informational interviews with neighboring libraries and nonprofit libraries, as well as WCCLS staff
- Stakeholder engagement with the Friends of the West Slope Library, the WSL Library Advisory Board, and the Garden Home Community Library Association Board



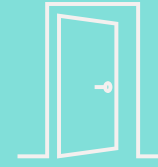


# Transition Benefits

“The West Slope Library and Garden Home Community Library are both beloved libraries in their communities. They have similar open hours, service levels, community demographics, and are located within 2.5 miles of each other....

Based on the information gathered throughout this project, it is our assessment that the transition of operations of the West Slope Library from WCCLS to GHCLA is a viable option for retaining West Slope Library operations.”

- Library Strategies Consulting Group



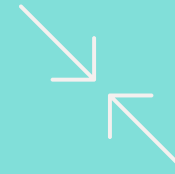
## Service Continuity

West Slope Library continues to serve community



## Budgetary Savings

12% reduction in costs



## Service Efficiencies

One operator for two locations



## Role Clarity

WCCLS moves from operator to partner



# Next Steps



Should your Board support moving forward with the transition, these are the next steps:

- Staff return with a Board action item on September 17, which would authorize the County to sign a Memorandum of Agreement with Garden Home Community Library Association and Beaverton School District, providing a framework to complete the transition by June 2025.
- Staff would then implement the transition, in accordance with the work plan in R&O 24-35: “integration of West Slope Library into Garden Home Community Library Association, and implementation of related changes within GHCLA, on the timetable concluding in June 2025; consulting firm will act as project managers for the transition, supporting staff in executing the transition tasks.”



# Policy Question

Does the Board support moving forward with implementation of the transition of the West Slope Library from a County operated facility to being operated by the Garden Home Community Library Association?



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