

BULVERDE AREA RURAL LIBRARY DISTRICT

Strategic Plan 2025-2027

MISSION - The mission of the Bulverde Area Rural Library District is to promote literacy, inspire a lifelong love of learning, and support the arts, science and literary needs of our community.

VISION - Our vision is to provide welcoming, flexible and blended spaces, where community members can gather and have access to valuable resources, learning, and leisure pursuits, no matter what age or stage of life.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND COMMUNITY ANALYSIS - In January 2000, a special election established the Bulverde Area Rural Library District (BARLD), serving 200 square mile boundary in the Bulverde/Spring Branch area of western Comal County. Funded by a ½% sales tax in accordance with Texas Local Government Code 326, the Library District does not receive property taxes, relying instead on sales tax revenue generated within its boundaries. Governance is provided by a five-member elected Board of Trustees, with annual elections held to fill either two or three positions.

The Library District population served within its boundaries grew over 53% from 27,633 in 2015 to 42,410 in 2025. Comal county experienced an almost 43% population increase in the previous decade. From 2022-2023, the population in the area grew over 5% and is expected to continue this trend for the next two years. The Bulverde/Spring Branch region is described as an "economic axis" due to its strategic location between San Antonio, Boerne, and New Braunfels. The area is transitioning from a rural landscape to a more urban development, attracting both residents and businesses, especially since the completion of the 281 freeway corridor from San Antonio to Comal County.

The Library District currently encompasses one library, the Mammen Family Public Library, located near the intersection of Highway 281 and SH46 in western Comal County. Following a recent expansion, the facility now spans approximately 33,000 square feet, offering over 200 parking spaces on nearly 7 acres. The grounds feature a butterfly garden and Eagle Scout Park, a charming space created through Eagle Scout projects, with benches and a swing. The library also employs a rainwater catchment system for landscape irrigation and includes two large patios: one at the main entrance and another adjoining the children's area, which connects to Eagle Scout Park.

Inside, the library provides flexible meeting spaces, study rooms, a dedicated makerspace, and areas specifically designed for teens and children. Convenient window services are available for drive-up patrons. Cutting-edge RFID technology, an automated material handling system, and self-checkout kiosks enhance user convenience—made possible through a generous grant. The makerspace is equipped with over \$250,000 worth of tools and technology, including 3D printers and laser cutters, funded by grants from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

The Mammen Foundation, the library's naming rights donor, designated its contributions exclusively for library programming, ensuring the community continues to benefit from robust literacy and lifelong learning initiatives for years to come.

Expanding its reach beyond the facility, the library operates the Trekker, an outreach vehicle bringing programs and materials to seniors, youth, and underserved populations throughout the community. The Trekker was purchased through the Foundation of the BARLD, while ongoing maintenance is funded by the Friends of the BARLD—two active 501(c)(3) organizations that provide critical long- and short-term financial support beyond BARLD's sales tax revenue.

In 2023, the BARLD acquired the property adjacent to the current library facility, prompting an update to the 2016–2026 Master Facilities Plan to address the District's evolving needs. The revised plan prioritizes expanding the existing library to better serve the growing community, with an emphasis on creating additional youth spaces and study rooms to meet increasing patron demand. The plan also highlights the importance of expanding locker options throughout the District and exploring the feasibility of establishing a kiosk or leasing a smaller satellite space in the northern region to enhance accessibility and broaden services.

In 2024, the BARLD engaged an architectural firm to develop a conceptual plan for the proposed expansion. Additionally, a landscape architectural firm was contracted to design trails and outdoor facilities on the newly acquired property, ensuring connectivity with the existing library grounds.

The original chilled water HVAC system was upgraded in 2023. A generator was purchased in 2024 to ensure the existing library facility will be able to continue to serve the community during inclement weather or power outages.

STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Facility and Infrastructure Development

- Expand or upgrade physical spaces to accommodate growing patron needs (e.g., additional meeting rooms, study areas, makerspaces)
- Develop outdoor spaces, including trails, gardens, and community gathering areas
- Expand opportunities to access materials out in the community

Community Engagement and Outreach

- Continue to strengthen programming for youth, teens, and adults, focusing on STEM, literacy, and cultural programs
- Expand outreach efforts with mobile services and pop-up library events
- Explore partnerships with schools, local businesses, and nonprofits to reach underserved populations (e.g. additional locker locations)

Technology and Digital Services

- Invest in updated technology, including public computers, high-speed internet, and digital content creation tools
- Expand e-resources such as eBooks, databases, and online learning platforms
- Implement or improve RFID systems, self-checkout kiosks, and automated materials handling systems