

# PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, being responsible for providing library service to the county, has established a system of branches to supplement the services offered at the central library. The extension and improvement of services and facilities and the growing importance of the library as a medium of education and recreation has resulted in a rate of increase in circulation four times that of the population. The pattern of usage is not consistent and indicates imbalance in the system. This section of the plan examines the branch library system in relation to the population served and the pattern of usage. Certain standards are applied to evaluate the present system and to determine how it should be modified to meet the needs of the expanding area.

## Principles and Standards

Few standards have been established as to size and location of branch library facilities, but there is an evident trend toward fewer and stronger branches serving greater areas with larger collections and a wider scope of services. The spread of the urban population, and necessity for providing relief for the central facilities, has stimulated the concept of regional libraries to provide a greater depth of service to a group of related branches.

## Branch Libraries

A population of 25,000 to 50,000 justifies and can support a branch library, and, under normal urban densities, this amount of population can be expected within a radius of one to one and one-half miles. This is a satisfactory service radius for a branch. Accessibility is important. A location well related to the thoroughfare system is desirable, and some importance is attached to proximity to a commercial concentration where the branch will share in the activity and movement of people.

Local experience indicates a branch facility designed to serve a standard service area population, should contain approximately 8,000 square feet exclusive of community meeting rooms, and it should be on a site having a minimum area of one acre. Parking should be provided on the site at the ratio of one space per 1,000 persons ultimately in the service area population.

Conversion or adaptation of facilities designed for other uses is rarely satisfactory, and such quarters should be viewed as an interim means of supplying service to a rapidly growing area.

Every branch should generate a minimum annual circulation of 100,000 to maintain a desirable ratio between costs and service.

## Regional Libraries

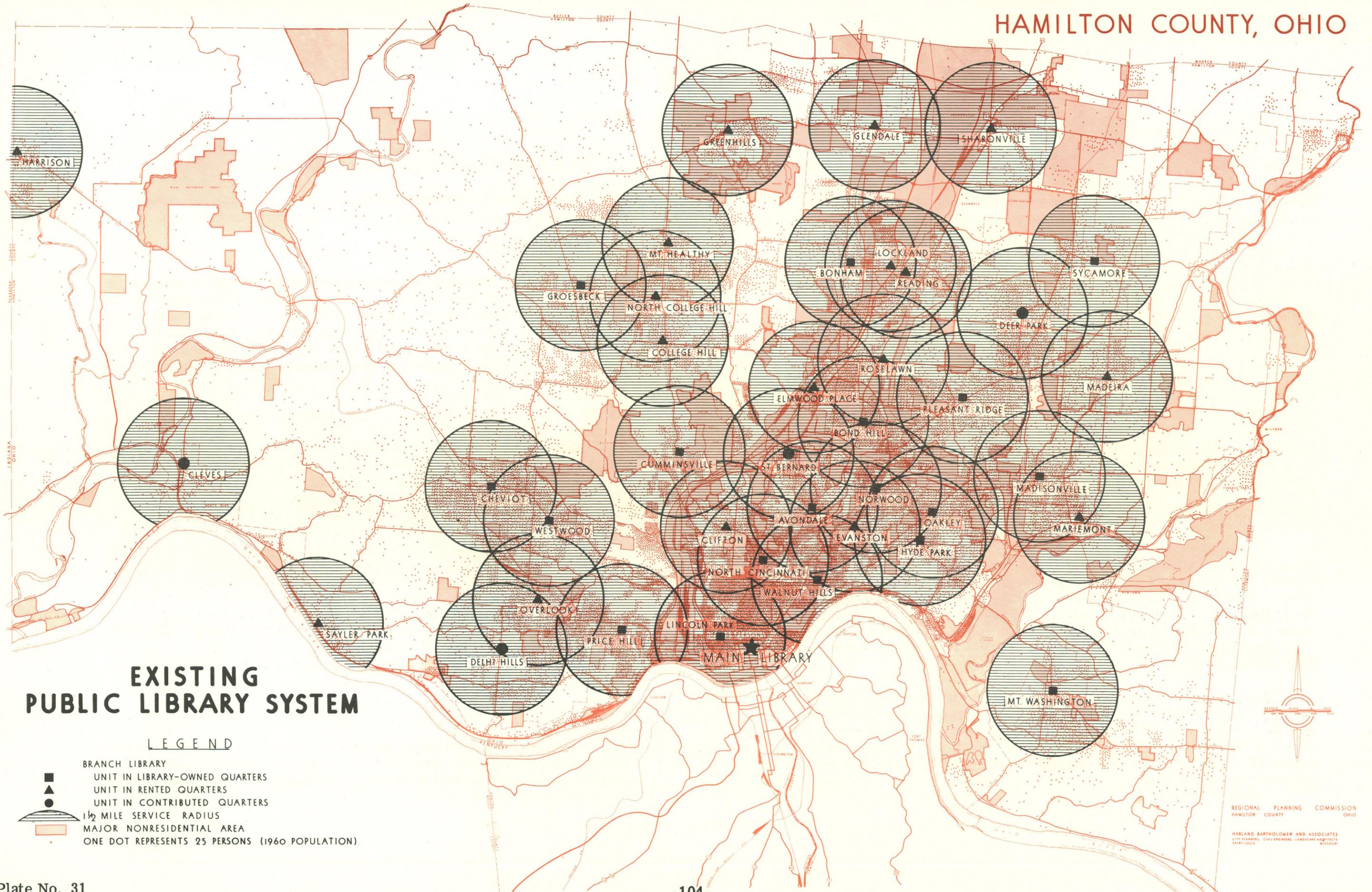
The regional library should provide a greater depth of service for a group of four or five related branches. While it will perform the normal branch function for population within a mile and one-half, it would give the back-up service to an area extending four to six miles in every direction and embracing a population of 150,000 or more. The minimum site area and parking requirements should be double that of the normal branch.

## Existing Branch System

Over a 1960 population distribution map, Plate 31 shows the location of the 38 units which currently make up the branch library system, and it distinguishes between library-owned structures and those for which space is either rented or contributed. The extent of the standard service area is shown by the circle around each branch; in composite these show the service area for the entire system. A total of 745,000 - nearly three-fourths of the present population of the county - is within one and one-half miles of a branch library. This amount of population justifies a system of from 15 to 30 units. Within the service pattern, there are only two major voids. These are (1) the area which fans out from Fairmont west to Monfort Heights and (2) that following Winton Road from Spring Grove Cemetery to Winton Woods Park. Outside the service pattern, there are few significant concentrations of population, such as the Blue Ash-Montgomery area which will be served by the new Sycamore Branch.

## Population Served Per Branch

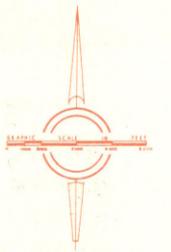
The plate shows a high degree of overlap in the service areas of the individual branches. Parts of the community, such as Norwood, are within a mile and one-half of as many as seven branches. The following



# EXISTING PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

## LEGEND

- BRANCH LIBRARY UNIT IN LIBRARY-OWNED QUARTERS
- ▲ BRANCH LIBRARY UNIT IN RENTED QUARTERS
- BRANCH LIBRARY UNIT IN CONTRIBUTED QUARTERS
- 1½ MILE SERVICE RADIUS
- MAJOR NONRESIDENTIAL AREA
- ONE DOT REPRESENTS 25 PERSONS (1960 POPULATION)



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table indicates the amount of population more readily accessible to one branch than to neighboring facilities. It demonstrates that the present distribution of branches results in service area populations below desirable standards for more than three-fourths of all units. It is evident that the population of the majority of these service areas is not likely to increase to the degree necessary to substantially modify this condition.

**POPULATION TRIBUTARY TO BRANCHES - 1960**  
Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County  
(Population rounded to nearest thousand)

Group I Over 25, 000		Group II 20, 000 to 25, 000		Group III 10, 000 to 20, 000		Group IV Under 10, 000	
North Cincinnati	48	Clifton	25	Delhi	20	Elmwood Place	9
Lincoln Park	41	Bonham	24	Madisonville	19	Lockland	8
Price Hill	37	Pleasant Ridge	24	Mt. Healthy	18	Glendale	7
Westwood	34	College Hill	23	Evenston	17	Cleves	7
Cheviot	33	St. Bernard	16	N. College	16	Sayler Park	7
Hyde Park	32	Cumminsville	23	N. College Hill	16	Sharonville	7
Walnut Hills	29	Deer Park	23	Oakley	16	Harrison	5
Norwood	27	Overlook	22	Hill	16		
Avondale	26	Mt. Wash- ton	21	Roselawn	14		
Groesbeck	26	Bond Hill	20	Reading	13		
				Greenhills	13		
				Madeira	12		
				Mariemont	12		

Source: Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County

Circulation

Whereas many related characteristics influence use of the library system, the measure of utility and the justification for providing the service are found in circulation. Circulation in the branch system increased by nearly 90 percent between 1950 and 1960, and, in the past three years, further increased at an average annual rate of about four percent. The total circulation of 3,200,000 in 1963 would seem to justify a system of not more than 32 units. The following tabulation shows the 1963 circulation in the various units of the system, and, since not all branches offer pictures, movies and records, the figures below represent only book circulation. A comparison of the figures in

this tabulation with those in the preceding one will show a high degree of coincidence in Groups III and IV of both.

**BOOK CIRCULATION IN BRANCH LIBRARIES - 1963**  
Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County  
(Circulation in thousands)

Group I Over 125, 000		Group II 75, 000 to 125, 000		Group III 50, 000 to 75, 000		Group IV Under 50, 000	
Cheviot	189	Mt. Healthy	116	Delhi Hills	74	St. Bernard	42
Mt. Wash- ington	170	Roselawn	105	Cumminsville	73	Sharonville*	34
Hyde Park	162	Greenhills	103	Bond Hill	67	Harrison	32
Deer Park	150	Mariemont	103	Clifton	64	Glendale	29
College Hill	145	Norwood	100	Madiera	62	Elmwood	
Groes- beck*	136	Madisonville	91	Avondale	55	Place	28
Bonham	135	Price Hill	88	N. College Hill	54	Sayler Park	24
Pleasant Ridge	131	Walnut Hills	84	Lincoln Park	53	Evanston	22
Westwood	129	N. Cincinnati	81	Reading	50	Lockland	18
		Overlook	78	Cleves	15		
		Oakley	76				

\*New libraries operating only ten months in 1963.

Source: Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County

Circulation in the nine branches in Group I averages 150,000 and each unit has a tributary service area population from 20,000 to 35,000. Population in most of these areas is increasing and circulation is growing more rapidly than both that of the system as a whole and its service area population. A part of this increase is related to the character of the facility. Seven of the nine branches are library-owned, and, while this group includes one of the oldest buildings, it also includes the four new branches added to the system since 1940. A more attractive structure and adequate floor area have a demonstrable effect on circulation.

Circulation in Group II ranges from 25 percent below to 25 percent in excess of the minimum annual standard of 100,000. Circulation in five branches exceeds the standard, but only one, Norwood, has a service area population in excess of 20,000. This indicates very heavy usage within the service area or the fact that subscribers come from other areas. Of the remaining branches in Group II, four have service area

populations in excess of 20,000, but a poor relationship between the gross circulation and population served - the converse of the condition relating to the first five in the group is indicated. It is concluded that all units in this group need attention either as to extension of service area or some revamping of the facility to encourage a better pattern of use.

Many of the facilities found in Groups III and IV have a gross deficiency in population served. The coincidence of a condition of poor or declining circulation and population of the service area, which is either static or well below desirable minimums, indicates improper placing of units. The size of the service areas of these units must be increased by the removal of competing facility or the unit should be dropped.

#### Proposed Branch Library System

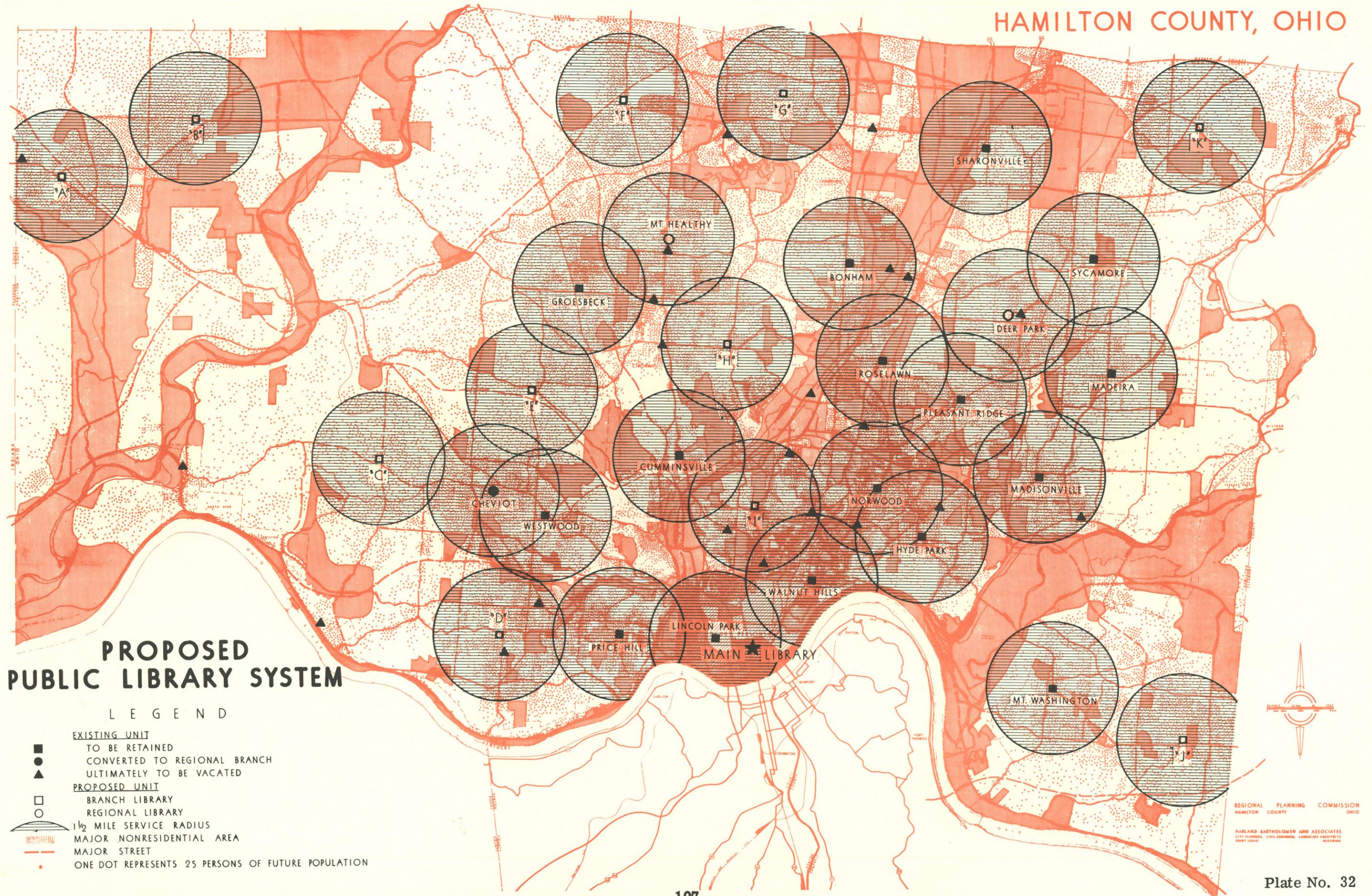
The proposed system of libraries consist of 26 normal branches supplemented by three regional libraries and a possible rental facility. These units are related to the pattern of future population on Plate 31, which also shows the area of service for the system as a whole and for the individual branches. A total of 989,000 or 76 percent of the 1990 population will be within one and one-half miles of one or more libraries. Another five percent is within one and one-half to two miles of a branch. Under the plan only two libraries would have a service area population under 25,000, and the average population per unit of the system will approximate 39,000 - almost double the average for the existing system. Significant overlap of service areas has been eliminated, except where several existing library-owned units dictate this condition be retained. In general, such overlap is confined to areas of high density where adequate service area population is maintained.

The map shows several minor and one major area of intense urban development outside the service area of the system. Most of the minor areas are within two miles of a branch, and, since emphasis has been placed on the relation of these units to the thoroughfare system, the minor additional travel is not considered a serious impediment to use. Another problem is imposed by the 25 square mile area in the upper Mill Creek Valley which embraces parts of Springdale, Glendale, Sharonville, Evendale, Reading and some unincorporated territory. The projected population for this area is 50,000, but it is fragmented into pockets of 10,000 - 20,000 by extensive non-residential uses. A rental facility within this area is justified, at least until the effects of the new Sycamore and proposed Deer Park branches can be assessed.

The plan envisions retention of 14 library-owned units of the present system. These are Bonham, Cheviot, Cumminsville, Groesbeck, Hyde Park, Lincoln Park, Madisonville, Mt. Washington, Norwood, Pleasant Ridge, Price Hill, Sycamore, Walnut Hills and Westwood. This group contains most of the recent additions to the system, as well as some of the more successful older branches. Of the latter, Hyde Park and Norwood will require extensive renovation or rebuilding on or near the present site within the planning period. Other units, such as Price Hill, Cumminsville and Madisonville, were retained, since they are exceptionally well related to the branch system as a whole and to a tributary area. The Price Hill branch is located on a satisfactory lot, but the structure is inadequate and needs to be replaced. The Cumminsville and Madisonville branches are well located, but both building and site conditions should be improved.

There are 20 units of the existing system for which a program of abandonment over the next 25 years should be established. This program should be related both to the trends in the pattern of usage, the amount of population served and the renovation or building of other facilities that can better serve the area. Only four library-owned structures are to be abandoned. These, like most of the rental facilities, are relatively close to other branches and they suffer both poor patronage and constriction of building or site space.

A total of 15 new units is recommended to replace the vacated units and to extend the service into growth areas of the county. These libraries are identified on Plate 32. Of special significance are the three regional libraries, two of which are proposed facilities. Each is located to serve several normal branches with more extensive book stocks and reference material, and they will relieve and supplement the services of the Main Library. The proposed regional library in Mt. Healthy would require a new site and building to serve an estimated 280,000 persons. A new Deer Park library is recommended to serve a region having an estimated population of 180,000. The present Cheviot branch is well located to function as a regional facility, but it would have to be expanded to serve the estimated 153,000 persons in the service area of the four branches surrounding it. Anderson Township and the Harrison area are not served by a regional facility since projected population in these areas do not justify the service.



# PROPOSED PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

## LEGEND

- EXISTING UNIT TO BE RETAINED
- EXISTING UNIT CONVERTED TO REGIONAL BRANCH
- ▲ EXISTING UNIT ULTIMATELY TO BE VACATED
- PROPOSED UNIT BRANCH LIBRARY
- PROPOSED UNIT REGIONAL LIBRARY
- 1 1/2 MILE SERVICE RADIUS
- ▬ MAJOR NONRESIDENTIAL AREA
- ▬ MAJOR STREET
- ONE DOT REPRESENTS 25 PERSONS OF FUTURE POPULATION

  
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