



City of Woodland

REPORT TO MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

DATE: February 23, 2010

SUBJECT: Woodland Public Library Planning – Joint Study Session of Woodland City Council and City of Woodland Library Board of Trustees

Report in Brief

The Woodland Library Board of Trustees is sensitive to the current economic climate and the continuing shortfalls in revenues based on lower than anticipated sales and property tax. During the last budget cycle, the Woodland Public Library reduced its budget by 18.5%, reduced permanent employees by 27% (from 11 to 8—none from retirement incentives), reduced operational hours by 26% from 54 to 40 hours per week (31% when furloughs are factored), and eliminated non-core services and activities including closing the community meeting room, discontinuing adult programming, and drastically reducing children's programming and reference service. Additional retirements resulting from the City's offering of Golden Handshakes has further reduced the permanent staff to six—a cumulative 45% reduction in one calendar year.

Although there have been accompanying reductions in levels of services, the day-to-day levels of activity impacting staff—number of visitors and number of books and materials checked out—have decreased only marginally. The library averages over 800 visitors per day, and it is not uncommon to serve over 1,000 visitors per day. With reduction in hours to eight hours per day, the library averages over 100 visitors per hour.

The Woodland Public Library is an incredible community resource. It is doubtlessly used more frequently by more citizens in a voluntary and positive manner than any other single community resource. The public library is the cornerstone of democracy where free and open access to information guarantees opportunity for lifelong education and full participation in the community. Generations of children have been inspired in their reading and nurtured through their educational experiences at Woodland Public Library. Teens have found the gateway to new worlds and opportunities. New immigrants regularly test out language skills and prepare for citizenship. Non-reading adults find a second chance in literacy services. Scores of adults daily find the answers to their questions regarding employment, health, government, and self-help as well as enjoy the pleasures of recreational reading. The digital divide is being bridged with free public access computers and wireless connectivity. Finally, the Woodland Public Library is open and available to the homeless who adhere to the library behavioral policies.

As the oldest Carnegie in California still operating as a public library, Woodland Public Library provides a downtown anchor in much the same way that Wayne Senville described this past summer in an article entitled “Libraries at the Heart of our Communities” in the *Planning Commissioners Journal*. Senville asserts that “libraries...are key to strong communities...Libraries and community. They’re really inseparable.” (pp.12, 18). Full text is available at: http://midhudson.org/funding/advocacy/heart_community.pdf and is included as Attachment A. The City of Woodland Library Board of Trustees is committed to the library, its mission, and the community of Woodland.

Despite the dramatic reductions in the preparation of the current budget cycle, a citywide deficit of \$2 million exists for the current year with an additional significant shortfall anticipated in FY 2010-2011. As an administrative board, Woodland Library Board of Trustees is responsible for both approval and oversight of the library budget once the allocation is received from the City. With grave concerns regarding the future of the library, the Woodland Library Board of Trustees has actively researched for the past eight months alternatives to secure more stable funding for the library. The Woodland Library Board of Trustees requested a joint study session with the Woodland City Council in order to review the funding cuts and service reductions to date, to discuss and plan for anticipated reductions for 2010-2011, and to determine a course of action to secure library services for the community of Woodland. The February 9, 2010 Woodland City Council action was an unanticipated and welcomed alternative which places a ¼ cent temporary general sales tax before the voters in June 2010 with an accompanying advisory measure which, if passed, would allocate 30% of the collected revenues to Woodland Public Library to return and sustain 54 hours per week of operations.

Background

The Woodland City Library Board of Trustees is a five member administrative board created in 1984 by amendment to the 1955 Code of the City of Woodland, California by Ordinance No. 1044 in 1983. Consistent with Education Code Section 18900 through 18965, the principal act for municipal libraries, the code and the ordinance define the creation, appointment, term, meetings, quorum, and responsibilities. Sec. 2-7-64 states, “Pursuant to the provisions of Education Code Section 18910, et. seq., as amended from time to time, the Board of Library Trustees may make and enforce all rules, regulations, and by-laws necessary for the administration, government, and protection of the libraries under its management, and all property belonging thereto.”

In his essay entitled “Libraries and Andrew Carnegie’s Challenge,” Vartan Gregorian eloquently summarized the value of libraries in the following manner. The full text of the article is included as Attachment B.

Carnegie, more than most, understood the value of libraries as the primary institution for the cultivation of the mind. To Carnegie the library symbolized the unity and summit of all knowledge, the bones, the binding sinews, the flesh and heart of any society that could call itself strong. No city could sustain progress without a great public library — and not just as a font of knowledge for scholars, but as a creation for and of the people, free and accessible to

all. To him it was no exaggeration to say that the public library "outranks any other one thing that a community can do to help its people."

Today the existence of libraries in our midst is so much taken for granted that their significance as living institutions is almost lost to us. Why are libraries important, and why will they ever be so? I will attempt an answer — one that I hope can give fresh meaning to the word "library." Libraries contain the heritage of humanity: the record of its triumphs and failures, its intellectual, scientific, and artistic achievements, and its collective memory. They are a source of knowledge, scholarship, and wisdom. They are an institution, withal, where the left and the right, God and the Devil, are together classified and retained, in order to teach us what to emulate and what not to repeat. Libraries are, in short, the mirror held up to the face of humankind, the diary of the human race.

Libraries are not only repositories of past human endeavor, they are instruments of civilization. They provide tools for learning, understanding, and progress. They are the wellspring of action, a laboratory of human aspiration, a window to the future. They are a source of self-renewal, intellectual growth, and hope. In this land and everywhere on earth, they are a medium of progress, autonomy, empowerment, independence, and self-determination. They have always provided, and I would suggest always will provide, place and space for imaginative re-creation, for imaginative rebirth.

More than this, the library is the University of Universities, the symbol of our universal community, of the unity of all knowledge, of the commonwealth of learning. It is the only true and free university there is. In this university there are no entrance examinations, no subsequent examinations, no diplomas, and no graduations. Ralph Waldo Emerson had it right when he called the library the People's University. Thomas Carlyle, too, called it the True University or The House of Intellect. By the same token, no university in the world has ever risen to greatness without having a corresponding great library, and no university is greater than its library.

Above all else, the library constitutes an act of faith in the continuity of life. It represents — embodies — the spirit of humanity in all ages. The library is not, therefore, an ossified institution or a historical relic. Together with the museum, the library is the DNA of our culture. Cemeteries do not provide earthly immortality to men and women or preserve their memories; libraries and museums do.

The City of Woodland Library Board of Trustees is unanimous in its position that the City of Woodland deserves and must have free and open access to library services.

Strategic Planning

The Woodland City Library Board of Trustees embarked upon a strategic planning process mid-2008 in order to clearly identify and prioritize desired directions and to align all resources (staff, budget, space, collections, programs, web site, and measurement/evaluation) to support the

prioritized directions. Historical context was reviewed as well as Woodland Public Library performance measures. Community input based upon library users' survey responses and demographics were explored as well as trends and best practices in public libraries. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were identified and analyzed for both the library and the community. The existing Library Vision Statement was examined and reaffirmed:

Vision Statement: The Woodland Public Library embraces the diversity of the community and provides a central resource for information, learning, recreation and enrichment. Its broad goal is to offer opportunities for all people to participate fully in a rapidly changing world.

To achieve this vision, the Woodland Public Library Strategic Planning Committee recommends that the Woodland Public Library:

- Make basic library services readily available to the community.
- Build alliances with the schools to deliver enriched services to the children of Woodland.
- Provide a broad range of reliable information to the community.
- Become a key focus of access to information technology resources in the community.
- Build stronger community ties by enabling remote access to the library.

In addition, the following ***Mission Statement*** was developed and adopted:

The Woodland Public Library endeavors to serve as the primary information resource for all residents of the community by providing a current and comprehensive variety of printed and electronic materials along with professional librarian guidance and assistance in order to ensure free and efficient access to information, to support and stimulate education, and to increase community awareness, integration and interaction.

Goals and objectives focused upon obtaining staff efficiencies in an effort to prepare for the planned 10,000 SF expansion to be funded by Measure E. Major projects related to automation and outsourcing were implemented. The challenges of the economy resulted in the library expansion being placed "below the line" or in an unfunded capacity in 2008-2009. As a result, the Board focused upon a more modest interim plan of finishing an existing 2,000 SF of space for computer and library use.

Although the anticipated efficiencies were obtained, the ever worsening economic climate absorbed and exceeded the staff savings in FY 2008-2009 as three of the eleven library positions were eliminated when vacancies occurred.

Discussion

Recent Budgetary, Staff and Service Level Reductions.

The 2009-2010 budget process was grueling. Beginning with the initial report from the City Manager to the Woodland City Council on March 31, 2009, all three tiers of the recommended actions to solve an anticipated budget shortfall of approximately 18% last year included a 33.58% cut to the library budget, and a reduction in service hours from 54 hours per week to 20-25 hours per week. The Board of Trustees directed research and determined that 35 hours per week was the minimum standard for a main library in a community of comparable size. An outpouring of community support coupled with dedicated work on the part of the City Council, the City Manager, the Board of Trustees, and staff in Human Resources, Finance and Library led to the creation of other alternatives, allowing Woodland Public Library to share in the necessary budget reductions at an equitable 18%, and the cuts to library operational hours to be kept to 40 hours per week. Using the strategic planning process and focusing on core library services as the basis for decisions, the Board made difficult decisions throughout the spring 2009 and throughout 2009-2010. Closure of the Leake Community Room, reduction of hours, elimination of non-core services, and reduction of labor intensive services that are core were necessary.

The Library Board of Trustees has been carefully monitoring the impact to services and is gravely concerned regarding the trends. Chart 1 below demonstrates the steady growth in outputs (visitors, programs, computer use, material checked out, etc) in the previous three years despite the modest declines in inputs (budget, staff, materials). However, the dramatic reductions in inputs for the current year, has taken a tremendous toll and eroded the gains in most of the service areas. Although number of visitors, materials borrowed and public computer use have decreased at a rate less than the reduction in hours, they remain at an alarming 15-27% reduction. Programming and reference services, as the most labor intensive, have taken the hardest hits at 61% and 54% reductions. From a purely cost/benefit standpoint, the losses seem to far outweigh the budget savings of \$258,528.

Chart 1
Woodland Public Library
Key Workload Factors/Outputs
Cost Benefit Analysis

	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009 Change/Rate from 2006/2007	2009-2010 ½ year x 2 amortized	2010 Change/Rate from 2008-2009
Inputs	A		B	<u>A-B</u> A	C	<u>B-C</u> B
Budget—101	\$1,400,463	\$1,383,694	\$1,389,297	-\$11,166 -1%	\$1,130,769	-\$258,528 -18.6%
FTE	12	11	11	-1 -8%	8- 6	-5 FTE -45.5%
GF Materials Budget	\$50,562	\$52,100	\$50,000 \$25,000	-\$25,562 -50.55%	\$25,000	0
Public Service SF	23,000/	23,000/	23,000/	0	23,000/	0
Outputs				Growth		Reductions
Hours per week Operational hours	54	54	54	0	40 (plus 12 days furlough)	-14 -25.92% -5% days (-31%)
Visitors	218,392	240,205	262,865	+44,473 +20%	96,216 x 2 = 192,432	-70,433 -26.8%
Materials Borrowed by Patrons	272,822	334,037	351,731	+78,909 +29%	148,342 x2 = 296,684	-55,047 -15.7%
Public Computer Uses	22,774	33,566	43,285	+20,511 +90%	15,655 x 2 = 31,310	-11,975 -26.7%
Total # Programs	268	279	304	+36 +13.4%	86 x 2 = 172	-132 -43.4%
Total # Attendees	9,717	10,340	11,814	+2,097 +21.6%	2,314 x 2 – 4,628	-7,186 -61%
Registered Borrowers	22,987	25,222	27,640	+4,653 +20%	29,240	+1,600 +6%
Reference Questions Answered	12,578	14,268	15,632	+3,054 +24%	3,588 x 2 = 7,176	-8,456 -54%
Population	52,972	54,060	55,867	+2,895 +5.5%	56,399	+532 +1%

Budget Trends

While the City of Woodland Library Board of Trustees has been diligent in working with library staff to achieve every possible staff efficiency, to reduce every possible budget line item feasible and to shift budget items to non-general fund accounts wherever possible, the subsequent cost savings seem minimal when compared with the demonstrated losses. A careful examination of budget trends over the past five years illustrates in Charts 2 and 3 the challenges. Until FY 2008, retiree medical cost was a separate administrative cost attributed to the City as a whole and therefore not included in individual department budgets. Beginning in FY 2008, that historical burden was shifted to individual departments. For the library, that burden ranges from \$68,400 to \$84,816 per year—6.8% of the annual budget in FY 2010. In addition, administrative costs fixed by the City and assessed to individual departments have risen dramatically. Cost of IT support for FY 2010 was 6.4% of the total library budget, and indirect costs have risen by 136% in a five year period—now comprising 11% of the library’s annual budget. Employee costs are 67% of the budget and are fixed as binding as defined by MOUs. Less than 10% of the department’s budget is discretionary and includes utilities.

The stacked and color coded graph (Chart 3) which follows the chart provides a visual depiction of the overall trends.

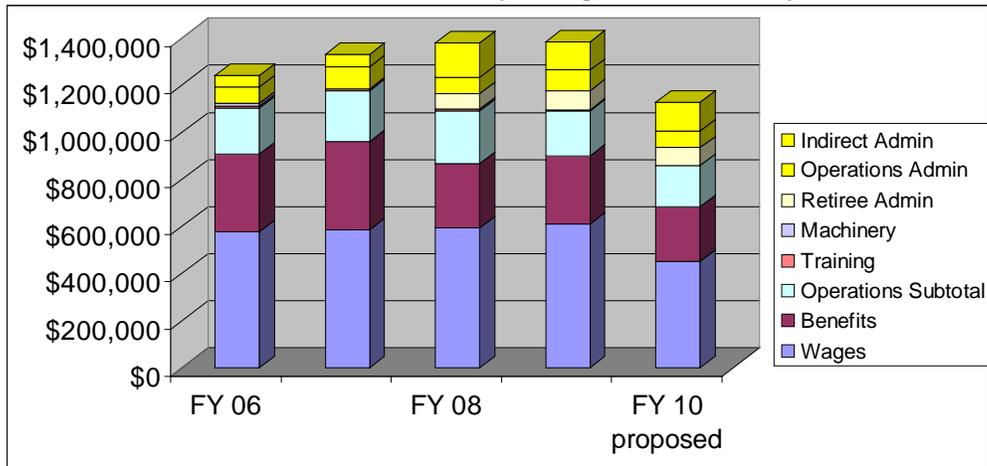
Chart 2

General Fund Library Budget 5-Year Trend Analysis

Account	Account Title	FY 06	FY 07	FY 08	FY 09	FY 10
5110	Salaries--Perm Full Time*	\$445,109	\$480,126	\$543,878	\$540,571	\$415,568
5111	Hourly Wages--Permanent	\$86,519	\$58,008	\$26,195	\$28,098	\$0
5113	Hourly Wages-Temporary	\$47,104	\$48,017	\$80,177	\$80,067	\$36,032
5135	Other Pay			\$18,223		
5138	Acting Pay	\$700	\$700	\$700	\$700	\$700
5199	Personnel Offset (Frozen)			-\$74,744	-\$37,433	
	Wages Subtotal	\$579,432	\$586,851	\$594,429	\$612,003	\$452,300
5136	Defer Comp City Match	\$3,210	\$3,371	\$3,472		\$3,618
5140	Wkers Comp/Liability Insur	\$24,707	\$27,012	\$18,204	\$6,378	\$36,430
5141	Retirement	\$109,076	\$129,796	\$116,495	\$136,401	\$99,919
5145	Health In-Lieu	\$34,655	\$30,466	\$29,976	\$27,180	\$18,420
5150	Health/Life/Vision Ins	\$151,564	\$174,852	\$94,552	\$109,224	\$66,369
5151	Unemployment Insurance	\$1,992	\$2,309	\$2,968	\$2,208	\$2,740
5157	Medicare Insurance	\$4,435	\$5,480	\$6,095	\$5,992	\$5,275
5162	125 K				\$60	
	Benefits Subtotal	\$329,639	\$373,286	\$271,762	\$287,443	\$232,770
5148	Life/Vision/Dent Retiree Admin			\$68,400	\$84,816	\$76,590
	Employee Subtotal	\$909,071	\$960,137	\$934,591	\$984,262	\$761,660
5215	Membership & Dues	\$3,150	\$3,610	\$3,650	\$2,950	\$1,000
5220	Office Supplies	\$4,100	\$4,500	\$4,400	\$4,040	\$3,030
5221	Postage	\$7,880	\$6,900	\$7,910	\$7,010	\$6,010
5222	Janitorial Supplies	\$2,000	\$2,500	\$2,700	\$2,700	\$2,025
5224	Printing	\$200	\$700	\$1,000	\$900	\$900
5226	Special Dept Supplies	\$22,473	\$50,000	\$52,100	\$25,000	\$25,000
5231	Small Tools	\$100	\$200	\$150	\$100	\$100
5232	Spec Dept Expense	\$15,830	\$4,000	\$6,400	\$6,000	\$4,500
5235	Utilities	\$36,000	\$36,000	\$38,563	\$37,599	\$28,875
5236	Telephone	\$12,000	\$12,000	\$11,000	\$11,500	\$11,500
5240	Maintenance Grounds	\$42,000	\$43,200	\$44,672	\$41,265	\$36,265
5241	Maintenance Office Equip	\$1,100	\$1,100	\$2,700	\$2,700	\$2,700
5243	Maintenance Other Equip	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$800	\$800
5260	Data Proc Services	\$48,000	\$51,560	\$50,340	\$49,940	\$49,940
	Operations Subtotal	\$195,333	\$216,770	\$226,085	\$192,504	\$172,645
5249	Data Proc Admin	\$69,088	\$91,358	\$69,176	\$85,934	\$72,318
	Operations Total	\$264,421	\$308,128	\$295,261	\$278,438	\$244,963
5320	Conf & Mtgs	\$4,165	\$4,435	\$3,570	\$1,549	\$0
5330	Education Training	\$2,516	\$4,200	\$1,766		
	Training Subtotal	\$6,681	\$8,635	\$5,336	\$1,549	0
5340	Educ Incent Reimburse	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
	Training Total	\$9,181	\$11,135	\$7,838	\$4,049	\$2,500
5540	Machinery & Equipment	\$11,000				
5630	Indirect Expense Admin	\$51,477	\$54,359	\$146,006	\$121,464	\$121,646
	Total Budget	\$1,245,151	\$1,333,758	\$1,383,694	\$1,388,396	\$1,130,769

Chart 3

Woodland Public Library Budget Trend Analysis



Volunteerism

One year ago, library operations were staffed by 11 permanent FTE for 54 hours per week of operation. At the beginning of 2009-2010 the authorized positions had been reduced to eight as a result of separations and retirements (not receiving retirement incentives) in FY 2009. Today, the number of permanent FTE has been further reduced to six as a result of two golden handshakes, bringing the staff reduction in one calendar year to 45%. The struggle to maintain 40 hours per week with the current six FTE is unsustainable despite the significant increase in the use of volunteers. Four highly skilled people are required on the floor during every open hour to insure safety and service, and four hours per day of public service desk time is considered the maximum standard. Skill and comfort level limit the effectiveness of part-time staff and volunteers in dealing with crises such as malfunctioning equipment, facility or maintenance issues, or behavioral problems which are standard in public libraries.

Although volunteers provide an invaluable service to the library and the community, it is necessary to devote staff time to recruiting, scheduling, training, supervising, etc. In addition, there are numerous library tasks which cannot be performed by volunteers based upon MOUs with Sacramento Public Library as well as national standards regarding privacy and confidentiality of library records as well as City of Woodland policies. Lack of funding for fingerprinting and Department of Justice background checks further limits the use of volunteers. While the library has worked diligently to triple the use of volunteers, the Board of Trustees supports the mission and guiding principles of the volunteer program which is posted on the website (<http://www.cityofwoodland.org/gov/depts/library/volunteers.asp>)

Woodland Public Library Volunteer Mission Statement

The Woodland Public Library's Mission is to inform and to enhance the quality of life and to foster lifelong learning. The library is committed to the idea that involving volunteers in its operation will assist it in carrying out its mission for the community.

Therefore, we believe that:

- Volunteers allow the library to provide enhanced services to the community.
- Volunteers provide a vital link between the library and the community both by informing the community about the services the library has to offer and by bringing valuable community input to the library planning process.
- A thoughtfully planned and well managed volunteer program can bring a wealth of benefits to the library, its staff, the community and the volunteers.
- A successful volunteer program requires that staff and volunteers work as a team to implement the mission and goals of the library.
- Volunteers supplement but do not supplant, library staff; volunteers complement but do not replace library staff.

Collaboration with Schools

Schools and libraries are natural partners with similar missions and goals. Although the Library Board supports the current efforts at collaboration, several concerns arise necessarily when considering the extent of the collaboration. The Council has already heard public comment regarding some of the concerns:

1. The number one priority of schools is safety and security of students and school premises. As a result, access is restricted. This naturally impedes the goal of “free and open access” charged to public libraries. All visitors to school campuses are required to sign in. In addition, officials report that libraries on all campuses are located at the center of campus as opposed to a more accessible edge.
2. School campuses/libraries are not open to all adults. Local school officials report that although Title I requires that public schools offer library services to the parents of enrolled services; there is no requirement to offer services to other adults. Limitations in personnel and resources would be a serious barrier.
3. The disparity in collection purposes. School libraries necessarily limit the collection of books and materials to a narrowly defined age group and to content designed specifically to support the school curriculum. As a result, the mission of the public library could not be fulfilled within a school library setting.
4. The disparity of collection sizes. School libraries recently reported collections averaging 10,000 items. The Woodland Public Library collection is over 100,000 items with an estimated insurance value of \$5 million. The collection has been carefully selected, weeded and maintained to offer the greatest diversity of ideas and subjects to the public.

The most promising collaboration may be with Woodland Community College. Older adults who traditionally use the library in the morning hours for newspapers, magazines and recreational reading may find opportunities at WCC. Unfortunately, the community college indicates an inability to accommodate the second traditional morning users—parents of pre-schoolers who are looking for early literacy services.

The results of the current collaboration meetings should be available in March of 2010.

Looking Ahead—FY 2010-2011

The City of Woodland Library Board of Trustees is enthusiastic regarding the potential to return to 54 hours per week of service for the Woodland community. In looking at library standards as indicated in Attachment C, the recommended level of service for a community of 50,000 is 50-60 hours per week. Initial reticence can be attributed to the library's past experience with Measure E as a general tax with advisory measures. Although the Woodland City Council has repeatedly designated 14% of Measure E revenues for the library expansion project, it has been placed in an unfunded capacity in the capital projects for the past two years. The City of Woodland Library Board of Trustees is gravely concerned about the future availability of funds based upon the City's practice of utilizing pooled cash coupled with the recent drains on Measure E funds to cover debt service.

While acknowledging the challenge ahead in public education, the Board is ready to support the City Council in passing the proposed June 2010 temporary general tax and advisory measures with assurance of adherence to advisory measures (if passed).

Despite the possibility of welcomed relief in this economic climate, the City of Woodland Library Board of Trustees has directed staff to prepare a budget based upon the remaining six FTE. Given the additional job requirements of library staff beyond direct public service during open hours (i.e., selecting, ordering, processing, cataloging, loaning, borrowing, inventorying and weeding materials; developing and delivering children's literacy programming; managing databases for library patrons and holdings; developing and maintaining the library website; recruiting, training, and supervising volunteers; statistical analysis and performance evaluation; Board support; budget preparation, financial monitoring, accounts payable/receivable; participating in mandatory and collaborative meetings, etc.) indicate that 20-25 hours per week is the maximum level of service that could be provided long term with the remaining six staff. Any further staff reductions would necessarily required additional reductions in public service hours.

Fiscal Impact

If the ¼ cent temporary general sales tax is successful in June 2010, City staff has estimated that revenue generation would be \$1.5 million in the first (partial) fiscal year and \$1.75 to \$2 million in the subsequent years. If advisory Measure A is successful, the Woodland Public Library is

designated for 30% of the revenue generation sufficient “to restore educational and literacy programs and maintain library operating hours at 54 hours per week.”

If the ¼ cent temporary general sales tax is not successful in June 2010, the outlook is very bleak. At best, additional two vacancies at the library will remain unfilled, resulting in savings. However, the preliminary budgets were not available for analysis by the deadline for this report.

Public Contact

Posting of the Joint City Council and Library Board of Trustees Study Session agenda.

Alternative Courses of Action

1. Express support for the community’s opportunity to choose between significant budget reductions or implementation of a measure to maintain designated high priority public services, including the Woodland Public Library.
2. Direct staff to develop resolutions that express support for the quarter-cent sales tax measure.
3. Specify 2010-2011 budget allocation for both alternatives (passage of general sales tax and advisory measure and failure of general sales tax and advisory measure) in order that City of Woodland Library Board of Trustees may direct staff to develop FY 2010-2011 departmental budget in line with strategic plan.

Recommended for Action

Staff recommends that the City Council and Library Board of Trustees approve any combination of the three alternatives described herein.

Prepared by: Sandra Briggs
Library Services Director

Mark G. Deven
City Manager

Attachments:

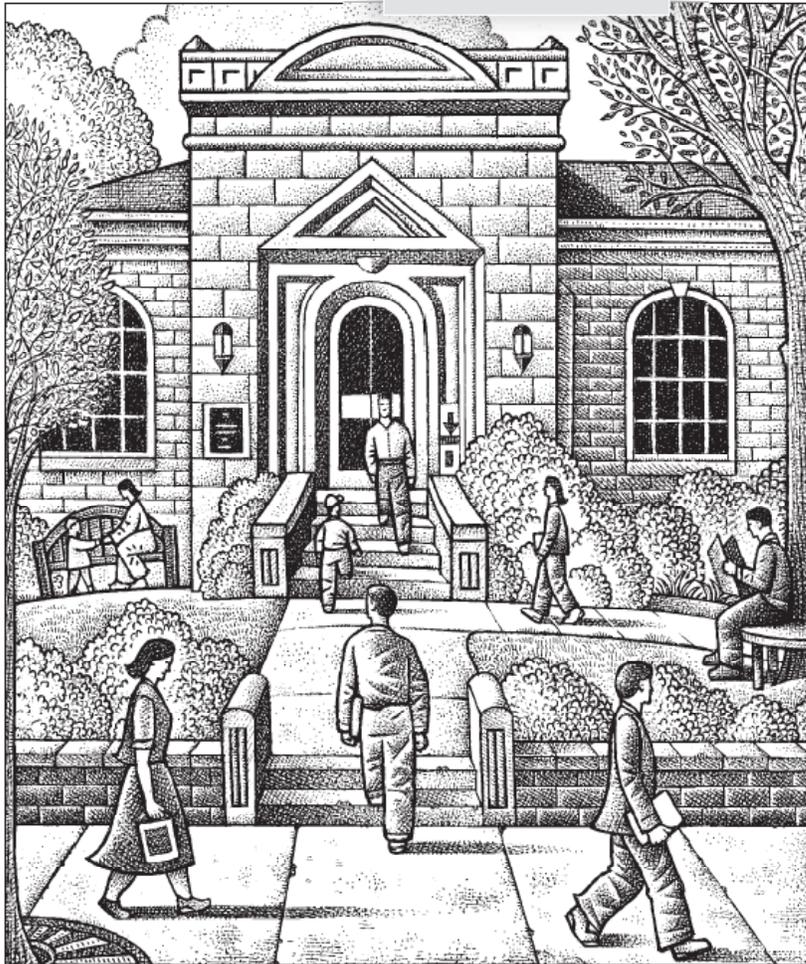
- A—“Libraries at the Heart of Our Communities,” *Planning Commissioners Journal*, Summer 2009
- B—“Libraries and Andrew Carnegie’s Challenge,” *Report of the President*, 1998.
- C—Woodland Public Library Inputs C

PLANNING
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NEWS & INFORMATION FOR CITIZEN PLANNERS

Libraries AT THE HEART OF OUR COMMUNITIES



PLANNING COMMISSIONERS JOURNAL / NUMBER 75 / SUMMER 2009

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Check out our web site for a variety of information & resources on planning and land use related topics ... and follow PCJ Editor Wayne Senville's travels across America at: www.CircleTheUSA.com

Circle the USA

Reports on: adaptive reuse; downtown parking; and connections between college and community.

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Planetizen Update

Six books of special interest to citizen planners.

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Libraries at the Heart of Our Communities

Why libraries can be one of the best "economic engines" for downtowns.

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The Nine Circles of Planning Commission Hell

But are there are ways to escape?

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Follow PCJ Editor Wayne Senville's reports on planning and land use issues.

Libraries Bring Value to Our Communities

Sometimes the key to a vibrant, healthy community can lie right under our nose, hidden in plain sight, so to speak.

That's the sense I got after researching and writing the article about public libraries that starts on page 12. For too long, libraries have been under-appreciated, often drawing less interest and attention than a new sports arena, shopping complex, office tower, or theater. But the good news is that this has begun to change, as more communities are recognizing the value that having a strong library brings.

Not only do libraries provide valuable services for residents of all ages, incomes, and ethnic backgrounds, but they can also inject a healthy dose of vitality into downtowns, main streets, and neighborhood centers.

In times of economic stress like we're currently experiencing, libraries provide especially important services to those trying to find a job, or residents just looking for a place to read a book, listen to a CD, or go online, without racking up a bill.

But the most interesting thing I discovered is that libraries in cities big and small are becoming dynamic places, actively seeking to engage the community. Instead of simply providing a place to read or take out a book (as important as these services are), libraries are expanding their mission.

There's one troublesome cloud over this bright picture. In almost every state (the most notable exception being Ohio), libraries receive close to no state financial assistance. Yet our states lavish support on many "economic development" projects, of sometimes questionable value.

Visit your public library, and help it become the hub of your community.

Please feel free to share a copy of our article with your local librarian.



Wayne M. Senville
Wayne M. Senville,
Editor

3 Learn to Speak So People Will Listen

by Elaine Cogan

Planning commissioners can be of great service in speaking to community groups and organizations. Some tips to help you become a more effective speaker.

4 Are We There Yet?

by Jim Segedy and Lisa Hollingsworth-Segedy

Taking on the tasks identified in your community's plan may be a little like riding in the back seat of a car for a road trip where you don't know the landmarks. That's where benchmarks and indicators show their value.

6 Circle the USA

PCJ Editor Wayne Senville is hitting the road to report on local planning and land use issues. Three reports from the first leg of his travels:

- how the adaptive reuse of an old factory is key to a Vermont town's future.
- why a city in upstate New York has eliminated downtown parking requirements.
- a look at the connections between college and community in a small western Pennsylvania city.

10 Planetizen Update

The Editors of Planetizen highlight six books of special interest to citizen planners.

12 Libraries at the Heart of Our Communities

by Wayne Senville

There's been a dramatic change in the mission of a growing number of libraries across the country. No longer just static repositories of books and reference materials, libraries are increasingly at the heart of our communities, providing a broad range of services and activities. They are also becoming important "economic engines" of downtowns and neighborhood districts.

19 The Nine Circles of Planning Commission Hell

by Ric Stephens

Planning commission hearings can sometimes bear an uncomfortable resemblance to the descriptions in Dante's epic poem. But there are ways to escape, explains PCJ columnist Ric Stephens.

Journal

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Libraries at the Heart of Our Communities

by Wayne Senville

Is there a place in your community:

- where residents of all ages and incomes visit and enjoy spending their time?
 - where people go to hear interesting speakers discuss new ideas, books, travel, and a broad range of topics?
 - where comprehensive databases are available free of charge?
 - where you can get help when applying for a job?
 - where you can stop by and take home a book, CD, or DVD at virtually no cost?
- That's also a place:
- that's "owned" by everyone in the community?
 - and can be counted on, day after day, to draw people downtown or to main street?

In a growing number of cities and towns, there's one answer to all these questions: the public library.

ANCHORS FOR OUR CITIES & TOWNS

Dramatic new or renovated libraries have become cornerstones of downtown in dozens of cities, including Denver, San Antonio, Des Moines, Indianapolis, and Salt Lake City, to name a few.

Noted architect and writer Witold Rybczynski offers an online slide show titled, "How do you build a public library in the age of Google?"¹ His main point: libraries are far from dead in today's Internet age – in fact, they're making a comeback as key anchors in our downtowns. Indeed, they're bringing us full circle to the "end of the 19th century and the beginning of

the 20th, when cities such as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, and Chicago built ambitious public libraries."

It's important to recognize, however, that it's not just big cities that benefit from libraries. In fact, smaller cities and towns may have even more to gain from having a thriving library as they don't have the range of community gathering places that larger cities often have.

Reporter Annie Stamper writes that: "No more just a place to find books, today's library is a place that extends far beyond its physical walls with the addition of digital information and access. Particularly in small towns, the library is



The central rotunda inside the Hudson, Ohio library.

often the hub of the community, providing a place for residents to meet, as well as to learn."²

Libraries, like city halls and post offices, are key to strong communities. Ed McMahon, a senior fellow at the Urban Land Institute, has pointed out that "public buildings and spaces create identity and a sense of place. They give communities something to remember and admire. The challenge facing public architecture is to provide every generation with structures that link them with

"THERE IS NOT SUCH A CRADLE OF DEMOCRACY UPON THE EARTH AS THE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY, THIS REPUBLIC OF LETTERS, WHERE NEITHER RANK, OFFICE, NOR WEALTH RECEIVES THE SLIGHTEST CONSIDERATION."



—Andrew Carnegie

their past, fill them with pride, and reinforce their sense of belonging."³

Keeping libraries in the center of town, and having them reflect high standards of design, is a challenge a growing number of communities are successfully meeting.

Hudson's Star Attraction

I stopped in Hudson, Ohio, this April as part of my "Circle The USA" trip to learn about their library. Hudson is a small city (population 22,439), midway between Cleveland and Akron. It has elements of both a suburb and a small town. In the center of Hudson is its historic Main Street business district, home to the city's library.

Opened in 2005, the library is housed in a stately brick building, with functional but very attractively-designed interior spaces. The focal point of the library is its rotunda, proof that the design of libraries today can match that of the classic Carnegie library buildings of a century ago.

New libraries tend to need considerably more space than their earlier counterparts. That's the case in Hudson, where the new library building (at 50,000 square feet) is much bigger than

1 Available online at: www.slate.com/vid/2184927/

2 In an article in the June 2006 *Champlain Business Journal*, "Libraries Anchor Small Communities."

3 From "Public Buildings Should Set the Standard" (*PCJ* #41, Winter 2001); available to order & download at: www.plannersweb.com/wfiles/w206.html

the old building (at 17,000 square feet).

At first blush, this seems counter-intuitive. Why in today's Internet and digital age would libraries need to be larger? More importantly, why do they seem in even greater demand?

I asked Assistant Director Margie Smith what draws people to the Hudson library. "It's become the cultural, entertainment, and social hub of Hudson," she replied. "The library programs a lot of readings, there are musical performances every week, and we also have meeting rooms."

The library also provides over 50 public computer terminals, access to state and local databases, and a collection of more than 7,000 DVDs. There's also a coffee shop to hang out in, and an outdoor patio. You can even borrow laptops from the library, and use them anywhere in the building or on the patio. What's more, the Hudson library doesn't close till 9 pm, Monday through Thursday, and is open a total of 69 hours each week, making it even more accessible.



Mark Richardson in front of the Hudson library.

The library is funded primarily through a property tax levy (raising \$1.4 million), with just over \$1 million more from the State of Ohio. The library also makes extensive use of volunteers, including "tech wizards" who help out in the computer center.

The residents of Hudson have decided that the library is a key service they want for their community. The numbers attest to this, as there are more than 23,000 registered library users, who checked out 736,000 items last year. The library counted more than 700,000 visits, an average of well over 2,000 every day it was open.

For planners, however, I want to touch on what may be the most interesting aspect of the Hudson library: its location. It is part of an expansion of Hudson's Main Street district.

Indeed, you could say the library is Main Street's star attraction. As Hudson City Planner Mark Richardson told me, "you can't just rely on retail in downtown expansion, you need an activity center like a library." "The library," Richardson continued, "fulfills its role as the anchor by creating opportunities for multi-stop trips downtown."

The Main Street extension (called First & Main) consists of a mix of retail, office, and housing. The City has architectural design standards for the area. As Richardson notes, "the idea was for it to be a natural extension, not a replication, of Main Street." The streets are laid out in a grid, connecting with the old village.

From Richardson's perspective as a planner, having the library downtown is also cost-effective. As he explains, "the library's location downtown has helped facilitate numerous partnerships and collaborations with the merchants; the public, private, and parochial schools; and the City of Hudson because they are all located in close proximity ... these collaborations have allowed the library to stretch its tax dollars and, at the same time, more effectively serve the needs of Hudson."

The Economic Benefits of Libraries

As is the case in Hudson, libraries can bring substantial benefits to downtowns and main street districts. Planning consultant Robert Gibbs has observed that "a typical public library draws 500 to 1,500 people a day, that's close to the draw of a small department store." Public buildings like libraries, he notes, "add to the authenticity of a town ... they make

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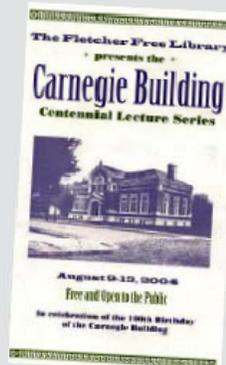
Carnegie's Legacy to America's Cities & Towns

Many cities and towns across America are still blessed by what was perhaps the greatest philanthropic legacy this country ever received: Andrew Carnegie's grants program to help fund the construction of libraries in communities large and small.

From 1896 to 1925 Carnegie provided grants for the construction of 1,681 libraries in 49 states (plus 156 in Canada) – only Rhode Island was somehow left out! About 70 percent of the Carnegie libraries were built in small towns with fewer than 10,000 people – with the first of the typical Carnegie-funded libraries being constructed in Fairfield, Iowa.

Invariably, a Carnegie library was a well-designed building, often a local landmark in the center of town. Fortunately, most of the Carnegie libraries are still standing, many remaining in active use as local libraries, treasured by generations of residents.

In my hometown of Burlington, Vermont, that's certainly the case – the Fletcher Free Library was built with a \$50,000 gift from Andrew Carnegie in 1904.



The Fletcher Free Library in Burlington, Vermont.

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Left, view of Hudson's Main Street. Right, commercial development is adjacent to the library in the Main Street extension.

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it less of a shopping center and more of a town center.”⁴

Seattle is another city that has gained substantial economic benefits from its new downtown library, opened in 2004. An economic assessment prepared for the City found that “the Library is associated with \$16 million in net new spending in Seattle in its first year of operations – equal to \$80 million for 5 years,” and that “nearby businesses report increases in spending associated with Library visitors.” As a result, “the increased number of Library visitors contributes to Downtown vitality and vibrancy, making Downtown a more attractive residential and commercial market.”⁵

As Brian Murphy of the Seattle-based Berk & Associates, which prepared the economic assessment, told me, “the library has become an important part of a network of attractions in Seattle.” In part, this is because of the library’s dramatic design. Its location close to downtown residential neighborhoods and the city’s retail core is also a big plus, he added.

Perhaps more surprising is another major draw that Murphy pointed to, the Seattle library’s extensive genealogical resources, which attract visitors from a wide area. Indeed, the library has more than 40,000 items in its collection, and three full-time genealogy reference librarians to provide assistance.

“A Harbor You Can Sail Into”

Those are the words that Stephen Coronella used to describe the role of the Putney, Vermont, public library. For Coronella, who’s the librarian in this

small Vermont town (population 2,600), a good library works a lot like a harbor. It provides a place where people can dock themselves for a while, socialize with others, and feel some comfort and security.

When I met with Coronella, he explained that over the years libraries have become more multi-faceted. They’re no longer just places to read and take out books (though that’s still a key function). Increasingly, libraries are providing a broader range of services, from access to research databases, to loaning videos and CDs, to providing Internet access, to offering space for lectures and public meetings.

The Putney library attracts one hundred or more people on a daily basis, and forty or fifty more often show up for evening programs. You’ll find people of all ages, incomes, and backgrounds using the Putney library. Its seven public access computers are very popular, and offer a

valuable service in this rural community where residential broadband service is limited. ⁶ Internet Access, p. 16.

The library’s beautiful new building is located within walking distance of the town center (less than half-a-mile away) and next to a co-op market and senior housing. The new building was made possible in part from a generous donor, but also through extensive fund-raising in the Putney community.

The importance of libraries like Putney’s to village and town centers was underscored in a public forum sponsored by the Windham Regional Commission (the WRC’s service area includes Putney, Brattleboro, and 25 other small towns in southeastern Vermont). As Kendall Gifford, a planner with the WRC, told me, it “opened up perceptions of what libraries have to offer.”

One by-product of the forum was the formation of a task force to develop recommendations for strengthening local libraries within the region. The task force’s report, *The New Heart of the Old Village Center: The Role of the Library in Community Development*, includes a series of recommendations centered on three goals: to achieve universal access to library services; to assure adequate funding for libraries; and to use libraries to strengthen village centers.

Susan McMahon, another planner with the WRC, has been struck by how often people have mentioned the value of their libraries “as community places, where you can see your neighbors,” and by the importance that seniors, in particular, place on having a library nearby.

One problem facing local libraries in Vermont – and many other states – is the



Views of the Seattle Public Library. Left: “Living Room” by Padriac, www.flickr.com/photos/padriacs_travels/2179049925. Right: “Seattle Public Library” by Rodefled, www.flickr.com/photos/rodefled/1622522316. Images licensed, Creative Commons.



A.J. HICKS/W. VERMONT



Patney library and librarian Stephen Coronella, below nearby food co-op.



lack of state financial support. This puts the burden on cities and towns to provide funding from their municipal budget. Not surprisingly, this can be a major hurdle, especially in communities with limited resources. *What's the State of Your Library?*

While private organizations like the Freeman Foundation (in Vermont) and the Gates Foundation (nationwide) have stepped up to provide financial support, this is not a long-term solution. Recognizing this, the Windham Regional Commission task force report points out the importance of educating legislators, community leaders, and residents about libraries' funding needs "in the context of all the positive community and economic benefits" they bring.

From a national perspective, why shouldn't libraries be more highly valued? In 2006, the most recent year for which data is available, there were some 1.4 billion visits to the nation's 9,208 public libraries.⁶

To put library visits in perspective, consider that in 2007 the attendance at

major league baseball games was 81 million and NFL football, 22 million – add in NCAA men's and women's basketball (43 million) and football (49 million) and the total is less than 15 percent the number of visits to public libraries.⁷

Yet libraries may well be the single most important civic institution in America today. As scholar Vartan Gregorian has noted, "Across America we are coming to realize the library's unsurpassed importance as a civic institution ... In our democratic society, the library stands for hope, for learning, for progress, for literacy, for self-improvement and for civic engagement. The library is a symbol of opportunity, citizenship, equality, freedom of speech and freedom of thought, and hence, is a symbol for democracy itself. It is a critical component in the free exchange of information, which is at the heart of our democracy."⁸

The Hub of Moab

Twenty-two hundred miles west of Putney, Vermont, is the small city of Moab, Utah. Their new library, opened in 2006, is just two blocks off Main Street in the heart of the city's compact downtown.

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What's the State of Your Library?

Due to the recession and hard economic times, many libraries have been cutting their hours, and some have even been forced to close down. In researching this article, I came across countless news reports from across the country with examples of this.

Ironically, it's during an economic downturn that libraries are in even more demand, both as a resource for job seekers, and as a place where people can borrow a book, video, or CD, or spend some time using the computer. Moreover, as you'll read elsewhere in this article, libraries are too often under-valued for the economic benefits they also bring to downtowns, main streets, and neighborhood commercial districts.

How much support do libraries receive from state government? Data from the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Educational Statistics (*Public Libraries in the United States: Fiscal Year 2004*) shows there's an extremely wide variation in state fiscal support for public libraries. On a per capita basis, it ranges from \$40.06 in Ohio and \$19.51 in Hawaii (the two highest) to virtually zero in South Dakota and just over 1 cent per person in Vermont (the two lowest). The national average is only \$3.21 per person, a very low figure.*

Once the economy is back to full strength, consider ways in which your state can better support local libraries. It can be done. Ohio, for one, provides substantial financial support to its libraries, with a dedicated 2.22% of all tax revenue from the state's General Revenue Fund going to public libraries. Perhaps this explains why Ohio has more public libraries – and higher levels of library use – per capita than any other state.

* This data is available online at: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2006/2006349_1.pdf (Table 16).

4 Quoted by journalist Phil Langdon in "Public Buildings Keep Town Centers Alive" (*PCJ* #49, Winter 2003); available to order & download at: www.plannersweb.com/wfiles/w144.html.

5 *The Seattle Public Library Central Library: Economic Benefits Assessment* (prepared for the City of Seattle Office of Economic Development and The Seattle Public Library Foundation by Berk & Associates, July 2005); available at: www.spl.org/pdfs/SPLCentral_Library_Economic_Impacts.pdf

6 *Public Libraries Survey, Fiscal Year 2005* (Institute of Museum & Library Services, Dec. 2008), pp. 4-6

7 Sports attendance data from *The 2009 Statistical Abstract* (U.S. Bureau of the Census), Tables 1204/1205. Unfortunately, the *Statistical Abstract* does not include attendance for all sports, but you get the picture.



Internet Access

One of the essentials of being informed today is having Internet access. That's still a problem in many rural areas, and for low-income households. Public libraries are a critically important resource in terms of broadening the availability of this access.

A nationwide survey conducted last year by the Florida State University's Information Institute focused on the Internet and libraries. Two of the most striking findings: 72.5 percent of libraries reported that they are the only provider of free public computer and Internet access in their community, while 98.9 percent of public libraries indicated that they offer Internet access.⁸ Moreover, according to the Institute of Museum & Library Service, in 2006 a total of 196,000 Internet computers were available in America's public libraries (3.4 per 5,000 people).⁹

Another sign of the times: the rapid increase in the number of libraries offering wireless access – an increase from 54 to 66 percent of libraries in just the past year.¹⁰ Wireless access is of value not just to residents, but to tourists and business travelers when they visit a community.

⁸ *Public Libraries and the Internet 2008: Study Results and Findings*.

⁹ *Public Libraries Survey Fiscal Year 2006* (Institute for Museum & Library Services, Dec. 2008), p. 5.

¹⁰ *Id. Public Libraries and the Internet ...*

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Moab is located in a remote, but spectacularly beautiful, corner of Utah, and is home to Arches National Park, a thriving recreational industry, and residents who love the outdoors.⁹ But it is also home to a fine new county library, at 15,000 square feet, triple the size of its former location.

The library itself is a delightful place. When I stepped inside, it was a beehive of activity, with people of all ages engrossed in reading and, yes, in using the Internet.

In fact, Internet use has been booming. When I followed up with Library Director Carrie Valdes this May, she told me that the number of online sessions last year exceeded 93,000, up from 75,000 in 2007. The library building is also wireless. In part, the growth in Internet use owes to the fact that anything faster than dial-up service is very costly in Moab. Valdes also believes that the economic downturn has led to increased use, especially as more people are looking to access online job search services.

The Grand County library is part of a small complex of public buildings, making it even more convenient for area residents. Right next door are the municipal offices, in a recently rehabbed former elementary school building.

The Library Board saw the need to purchase the property the library is now

since there are few large parcels available close to downtown). Valdes believes that keeping the library downtown was critically important. As she put it, "everything that happens in Moab, happens downtown."

Owing to its welcoming environment, expanded size (allowing for the addition of a dedicated children's room), and the state of the economy, library use has surged – from an annual average of about 90,000 visits before the new building opened to 150,000 last year. It has become, says Valdes, "a true community center."

LIBRARIES MIX IT UP

"Among private sector developers of malls, commercial corridors, mixed-use developments and joint-use facilities, libraries are gaining recognition for other qualities – their ability to attract tremendous foot traffic, provide long-term tenancy, and complement neighboring retail and cultural destinations." That's from a recent report, *Making Cities Stronger: Public Library Contributions to Local Economic Development*, prepared by the Urban Library Council.¹⁰

As the report continues, "Library buildings are versatile. They fit in a wide mix of public and private sector developments. Library leaders and private developers across the country are beginning to notice distinct advantages to incorporating public libraries into mixed use, retail and residential areas."

You can now find libraries not just in malls, but as part of residential developments, and other mixed-use projects.

In the Chicago suburb of Des Plaines, the new library – which opened in August 2000 – is located next to a stop on one of the METRA commuter rail lines. It is the central element of



located on several years ago. It wanted to "lock in" a downtown site for use when the time came for expansion (important

Views of the Grand County library in Moab, Utah.

⁸ Vartan Gregorian, "Libraries as Acts of Civic Renewal" (speech given in Kansas City, Missouri, July 4, 2002; available online at: www.carnegie.org/sub/pubs/gregorianspeech.html).

⁹ See also my report from Moab (part of my Crossing America on Route 50 trip) at: www.rte50.com/2007/07/two-moabs.html.

¹⁰ Prepared by the Urban Library Council (Jan. 2007); currently available at: www.urban.org/publications/1001075.html

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The Des Plaines library seen on right of above photo; adjacent housing on the left. Center photo shows library's interior.

a 6.2-acre redevelopment that also includes 30,000 square feet of retail, a 180-unit condominium, and a parking garage. This mix of complementary uses has created a hub of activity in the heart of this suburban city of 58,000.¹¹

In putting together the project, the library served as the traffic anchor, “much like a large retailer would” explained Stephen Friedman of S.B. Friedman & Co. His firm, which specializes in advising communities on public/private partnerships, worked with the City of Des Plaines on the redevelopment. Having a high quality library, Friedman adds, is also an important part of being a “full service” community, something that suburbs are increasingly focusing on as they seek to create a high quality of life for residents.

Another interesting point that Friedman makes is the importance of libraries in middle-income communities like Des Plaines. “People can’t always afford Barnes & Noble or Borders,” he notes, but many middle-income individuals are highly educated, “so the library becomes a critical public service for them.”

In St. Paul, Minnesota, the 31,000-square foot Rondo Community Outreach library is on the ground floor of a new building that includes three floors of mixed-income housing, plus a floor of parking immediately above the library (serving the apartments) and under-



ground parking below (for library patrons).

The project grew out of a desire by the City and neighborhood to redevelop what had been the site of an adult entertainment theater – a focal point of community anger – demolished after the City acquired the property. The idea of a mixed-use building emerged from a conjunction of interests: the City’s goal of providing more affordable housing and the fact that the existing neighborhood public library had outgrown its building.¹²

According to Alice Neve, Supervisor of the Rondo Area Libraries, having the library in the same building as the housing provided some significant economies of scale, allowing for more space than if the library had been built as a stand-alone building. Families living in the apartments above, Neve notes, are also (not surprisingly) frequent visitors to the library.

A HOME FOR ALL OF THE COMMUNITY

Libraries provide something increasingly scarce in our cities and towns, what Brattleboro, Vermont, library director Jerry Carbone described to me as “neutral public space.”

Carbone explained that Brattleboro’s Brooks Memorial Library, in the heart of

downtown, makes its community room available at no charge to local organizations three evenings every week. The fact that it is public space, Carbone notes, makes it a more comfortable meeting place for some than a church basement or a business office meeting room – even though these private spaces are typically made available for community meetings in a spirit of good will.

This message was reinforced in a conversation I had with David Lankes, Director of the Information Institute at Syracuse University. As Lankes observed, libraries are in a pivotal role because “there are very few civic organizations left today” that can provide a space accessible to everyone in the community.

But for Lankes, the role of today’s library goes beyond providing community space. Libraries, he argues, should also be actively seeking ways of “enriching and enhancing” issues people are most interested in.

To cite one example, Lankes told me how in several cities, librarians have developed training sessions – open to all – covering the basics of setting up a new business, and putting together a business plan. Along the same lines, some libraries are teaming up with local community development agencies to provide job counseling centers. This level of

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¹¹ The City of Des Plaines even offers a video tour of the library, accessible from their home page: www.desplaines.org/.

¹² For more on the Rondo library: www.stpaul.lib.mn.us/locations/rondo_about.html.

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engagement goes well beyond the “traditional” role of just providing books about how to set up a business or find a job.¹³

Another valuable role that libraries play is in integrating immigrants and other newcomers into our communities. As national columnist Neil Peirce reports: “In immigrant-heavy suburbs of Washington, D.C., many public libraries have recast themselves as welcome centers. Some checkout desks have signs in Korean, Chinese, Spanish and Vietnamese. A recent immigrant from the Dominican Republic said: ‘I come to the library almost every day. And two days a week I follow the conversation classes. We have the opportunity not only to improve our English but to get new friends from all over the world.’”¹⁴

At the other end of the country, Seattle’s Kent Kammerer points out that “Seniors now flood the libraries for many

reasons including taking computer classes and attending special programs. Young people find willing, friendly help at the library ... and yes, though, the library wasn’t designed to be a hygiene center or daytime shelter, some homeless people find the library the most welcoming place to spend their days.”¹⁵

There’s been a “sea change” in the past five to ten years in the role libraries are playing in communities, says Sari Feldman, Director of the Cuyahoga County, Ohio, Library, which operates 28 branches in Cleveland’s suburbs. Feldman, who is also President-elect of the Public Library Association, told me that “libraries have become vibrant centers of community interaction,” with librarians working more closely with community groups and businesses. In Cuyahoga County, notes Feldman, “the library does extensive focus groups, polling, and market research” to better learn what the community wants.

Libraries have been especially proving their worth during the current recession. As Feldman explains, “we’re clearly the place where people are coming for job information, for preparing online job applications, and for basic financial literacy ... and we provide them support in doing this.”

STIMMING UP:

The 21st century library has arrived. Its mission goes far beyond loaning out books and providing reference materials. In fact, in a growing number of cities and towns, the library has become the hub of the community, drawing large numbers of new users. This is happening because libraries are providing programs, meeting space, computer access, and resources that are responding to a broader array of community needs.

Moreover, when libraries are located in downtown, village, or neighborhood centers, there’s also a special synergy at work. Libraries generate increased business for local merchants, while those shopping or working downtown visit the library as part of their day.

Libraries and community. They’re really inseparable. ♦

Wayne Senville is Editor of the *Planning Commissioners Journal*. His previous articles and reports for the PCJ include “Downtown Futures” (PCJ #69, Winter 2008); “Crossing America” (PCJ #68, Fall 2007); “Bright Ideas” (PCJ #61, Winter 2006); and “Preservation Takes Center Stage” (PCJ #52, Fall 2003).



In the Neighborhood

While this article has focused on the positive impact that libraries can have on downtowns, let’s not forget the powerful benefits that libraries can bring to neighborhoods. Take a look at an excellent short report prepared by the Urban Library Council, *The Engaged Library: Chicago Stories of Community Building*.^{*} It tells of the importance Chicago has placed on strengthening neighborhood libraries:

“Libraries are uniquely positioned to contribute to the local economy. They are local employers. More often than not, libraries bring foot traffic to the neighborhood commercial district. ... The Chicago Public Library has built 40 new branch buildings in the last 11 years. Many of these buildings have gone into areas previously avoided ... Often, CPL has used its capital investments to buy sites that have been neighborhood eyesores. Liquor stores or abandoned buildings are torn down to be replaced with public libraries, changing the streetscape completely. For this strategy to be successful, library administration and planners have to tap into community knowledge and listen to community requests.”

^{*} *The Engaged Library* is available through the ULC web site: www.urbanlibraries.org.



Chicago’s Northtown Library is at the heart of a ethnically diverse neighborhood, and is located just a block from the neighborhood retail district.



¹³ To learn about other creative ways in which libraries can engage with their community, see the Project for Public Spaces’ “Libraries That Matter,” at: www.pps.org/info/newsletter/april2007/libraries_that_matter; and *Making Cities Stronger: Public Library Contributions to Local Economic Development* (cited in footnote 10).

¹⁴ “Libraries and New Americans: The Indispensable Link” (April 13, 2008, for The Washington Post Writers Group); available at: www.postwritersgroup.com/archives/peirc80413.htm.

¹⁵ Kent Kammerer, “A new librarian faces tough economic times,” on *Crosscut.com* (May 10, 2009); <http://crosscut.com/2009/05/19/seattle-city-hall/19003/>

As New York City concludes the celebration of its first 100 years of incorporation, Carnegie Corporation plans to mark another centennial year for the city, that of Andrew Carnegie's remarkable gift to New York to establish sixty-five branch libraries. This gift, by far the largest of any he made for library development, came to more than \$5.2 million around the turn of the twentieth century, offering vigorous testimony to his faith in the future of this great metropolis. While the city offered the sites and promised to maintain the libraries, Carnegie's money paid for the buildings. Carnegie's benefaction brought to the doorstep of a largely immigrant population not only the means for self-education and enlightenment, but opportunity for understanding our democracy, for the study of English, for instruction in new skills, for the enjoyment of community, for the exercise of the imagination, and for the pleasure of contemplation and silence. As one who was once a youth fresh off the plane from Lebanon, whose first stop in New York was the New York Public Library, and who later, as head of this same institution, made deep study of it, I can state unequivocally that the New York public library system, in which Carnegie played such a pivotal role, has profoundly affected the lives of millions of grateful people.

Libraries and Andrew Carnegie's Challenge

Carnegie, more than most, understood the value of libraries as the primary institution for the cultivation of the mind. To Carnegie the library symbolized the unity and summit of all knowledge, the bones, the binding sinews, the flesh and heart of any society that could call itself strong. No city could sustain progress without a great public library — and not just as a font of knowledge for scholars, but as a creation for and of the

people, free and accessible to all. To him it was no exaggeration to say that the public library "outranks any other one thing that a community can do to help its people."

A LIVING INSTITUTION

Today the existence of libraries in our midst is so much taken for granted that their significance as living institutions is almost lost to us. Why are libraries important, and why will they ever be

so? I will attempt an answer — one that I hope can give fresh meaning to the word "library." Libraries contain the heritage of humanity: the record of its triumphs and failures, its intellectual, scientific, and artistic achievements, and its collective memory. They are a source of knowledge, scholarship, and wisdom. They are an institution, withal, where the left and the right, God and the Devil, are together classified and retained, in order

to teach us what to emulate and what not to repeat. Libraries are, in short, the mirror held up to the face of humankind, the diary of the human race.

Libraries are not only repositories of past human endeavor, they are instruments of civilization. They provide tools for learning, understanding, and progress. They are the wellspring of action, a laboratory of human aspiration, a window to the future. They are a source of self-renewal, intellectual growth, and hope. In this land and everywhere on earth, they are a medium of progress, autonomy, empowerment, independence, and self-determination. They have always provided, and I would suggest always will provide, place and space for imaginative re-creation, for imaginative rebirth.

More than this, the library is the University of Universities, the symbol of our universal community, of the unity of all knowledge, of the commonwealth of learning. It is the only true and free university there is. In this university there are no entrance examinations, no subsequent examinations, no diplomas, no graduations. Ralph Waldo Emerson had it right when he called the library the People's University. Thomas Carlyle, too, called it the True University or The House of Intellect. By the same token, no university in the world has ever risen to greatness without having a corresponding great library, and no university is greater than its library.

Above all else, the library constitutes an act of faith in the continuity of life. It represents — embodies — the spirit of humanity in all ages. The library is not, therefore, an ossified institution or a historical relic. Together with the museum, the library is the DNA of our culture. Cemeteries do not provide earthly immortality to men and women or preserve their memories; libraries and museums do.

The historian Joseph Frazier Wall has written in his biography of Andrew Carnegie that it is important for children in their early years to acquire a sense of the continuity of time, for it is only in the realization that the verb "to live" has past, present, and future tenses that they successfully establish their own identity, their

own place in the complex world of which they find themselves a part. Where better to attain the sense of the continuity of time than in a library? I savored past, present, and future during my boyhood in the Armenian public library of my hometown in Tabriz, Iran. My first glimpse of life beyond my neighborhood was through that library. Andrew Carnegie experienced the three tenses in the lending library that his father helped establish in his birthplace of Dunfermline, Scotland. His formal education ended on his arrival in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, at age twelve, but he pursued his self-education first in the private library of a local benefactor, where he learned Shakespeare by heart, studied the Renaissance artists, and honed a memory that was to serve him superbly all his business life.

BOOKS AND READING

The late Jorge Luis Borges, one of the world's great contemporary writers and himself a former librarian, paid a moving tribute to the book: "Down through the ages, Man has imagined and forged no end of tools. He has created the key, a tiny metal rod that allows a person to enter an enormous palace. He has created the sword and the plowshare, extensions of the arm of the man who uses them. He has created the telescope, which has enabled him to investigate the firmament on high." But it is the book, Borges observed, that is "a worldly extension of his imagination and his memory." He went on to say, "I am unable to imagine a world without books.... Now, as always, the unstable and precious world may pass away. Only books, which are the best memory of our species, can save it."

John Milton wrote that "books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul whose progeny they are." Not only do they bestow knowledge and power upon the reader, but they offer solace, distraction, and delight to the spiritually wounded and whole alike. A book needs no defense. Its spokespersons come and go; its readers live and die; what remains constant is the book.

The act of reading is universal, transcending time and space. Reading is a source of renewal. What is renewed is the imagination, which takes us to points

beyond reach of the everyday. Reading forces us to see the ways we would be poorer, what kinds of experience we would be missing, and what strengths we would lack if we did not read. Because what we do when we read is indeed very much more complex than the getting of new facts. The qualities we would miss by not reading (active, imaginative collaboration and critical distance) have implications for what a library is and what it ought to be and ought to do.

Reading and writing are not merely cosmetic skills, comparable to good manners. The European and English philosophical traditions have taught us that language and thought are inseparable. Reading and writing are the essence of thinking. In a memorable essay on the decay of language, George Orwell, of 1984 fame, observed that, when we begin to prefer the vague to the exact, we reduce the range of our consciousness. Eventually, he predicted, we will not know, and then we will not care. The late A. Bartlett Giametti, former president of Yale University, eloquently summed it up, "There can be no transmission of values, no sharing of perspectives on human nature; no common good aggregated from the shared convictions of disparate individuals, no unique design in words imposed on chaos, or consciousness: there can be no legitimate aesthetic or intellectual or civic gratification alone for literary study, without the primary recognition that the *language* [italics mine], its defense, nurture, and dignity, is our first and our special responsibility. For ours is a culture radically imbued with logocentricity, with the ancient, enduring, and finally numinous awe of writing and what is written."

Throughout history, the relationship between the book, as container of information and knowledge and insight, and the reader — the receiver — has been dialectical, dynamic, and collaborative; it is not passive but constructive. Reading always, at once, entails the effort to comprehend and the effort to incorporate: it involves in its essence a process of digestion. Rabelais, during the epoch of the Renaissance, advised the reader of his *Pantagruel* to "eat the book." In other words, books cannot nourish or even be said to exist until they are digested. "We are of the ruminating kind,"

wrote John Locke late in his life. "and it is not enough to cram ourselves with a great load of collections. Unless we chew them over again, they will not give us strength and nourishment."

It is not wholly accurate to say one *reads* a book; one can only *reread* it. A good reader, an active reader, a creative reader, is thus a rereader. The reader completes a job only begun by an author. There are modern authors who take great pains to recall our original responsibility as readers. For we make the book as the book makes us.

The other aspect of the collaboration between the book and the reader is its intimacy, its privacy. We must not forget that pleasure, discretion, silence, and creative solitude are the primary aspects of a life of reading, its most tangible justification and its most immediate reward. This solitude may appear now as an unaffordable luxury, and yet any book creates for its reader "a place elsewhere." A person reading is a person suspended between the immediate and the timeless. This suspension serves a purpose that has little to do with escape from "the real world" — the sin avid readers are most commonly accused of. Being able to transcend the limitations of time and space oneself allows not only the renewal of one's imagination but also the development of one's mind. Whether it is a work of fiction or a work of science, a book appeals first of all to the mind.

Virginia Woolf, in an essay on reading, concludes: "I have sometimes dreamt, at least, that when the Day of Judgment dawns and the great conquerors and lawyers and statesmen come to receive their rewards — their crowns, their laurels, their names carved indelibly upon imperishable marble — the Almighty will turn to Peter and will say, not without a certain envy, when He sees us coming with our books under our arms, 'Look, these need no reward. We have nothing to give them here. They have loved reading.'" If I were to paraphrase Virginia Woolf, I would substitute the following lines. "Look, these need no reward. We have nothing to give them here. They built libraries, they loved libraries, they were readers."

A SHORT HISTORY

Libraries are as old as civilization, the object of pride, envy, and sometimes senseless destruction throughout the ages. Between the clay tablets of Babylon and the computers of a modern library stretch more than 5,000 years of man's and woman's insatiable desire to ensure their immortality through the written word, to transmit the fruits of culture and civilization, and to share memory, experience, wisdom, fantasy, and longing with the whole of humankind and with future generations.

The first "libraries" in Mesopotamia contained clay tablets stamped with wedge-shaped marks and baked in the sun. Tens of thousands of them are now stored in museums, many still awaiting translation. These early collections included myths, commercial records, and documents of state that were housed in the temple under the custody of the priest. There were "libraries" of a sort in ancient Greece. Around 300 B.C., Ptolemy I built the renowned library at Alexandria, Egypt, which was destroyed in the seventh century A.D.

The Book of Maccabees in the Old Testament refers to a treasury of books — implying the kind of "library" that may have been kept in the Holy Temple. According to the Dead Sea Scrolls, the ascetic Jews who lived in Qumran near the Dead Sea maintained a "library."

In Rome, the Bibliotheca Ulpia, established around 100 A.D., continued until the fifth century, serving as the Public Record Office of Rome. By the fourth century A.D., Rome, reportedly, had some twenty-eight public "libraries."

Following the advent of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad and the Quran singled out Jews and Christians as "People of the Book." In the Islamic realm from the ninth century on, there were libraries in Baghdad, Cairo, and Alexandria. The Muslims built a network of public libraries in Toledo, Cordoba, and Granada.

With the emergence of medieval institutions of higher learning in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, scholarly collections and libraries arose in the Vatican, the Sorbonne, Oxford, Prague, and Heidelberg,

among the most important. In the next two centuries, during the Renaissance and the Reformation, the Escorial of Madrid, the Herzog August Bibliothek at Wolfenbuttel, the Library of Uppsala University, and the State Library of Prussia came into being.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw the emergence of the great research and national libraries of England — Corpus Christi College at Cambridge, the Bodleian Library at Oxford, the British Museum — and of France, the Germanies, Austria, and Russia.

The rise of libraries in America — public, university research, and privately endowed — is an extraordinary phenomenon. No other nation has made available both to the scholarly community and to the general public such an array of libraries. This has been possible thanks to the generosity of public and private funds and the efforts of bibliophiles, private collectors, and philanthropists such as Andrew Carnegie as well as to the municipalities that braved objection to the dedication of tax money for library support.

The early "social libraries" had their beginnings in New England in the fourth decade of the eighteenth century, and their golden age of expansion occurred between 1790 and 1850. Based on the ability of the user to pay for the service, they formed the foundation for the first true public libraries in America. Massachusetts, in 1848, was the first state to pass an act authorizing one of its cities, Boston, to levy a tax for the establishment of a free public library service. Other states were soon to follow. By 1896, twenty-nine of the then forty-five states and the District of Columbia had such laws in effect.

The impetus for this efflorescence was the popular Enlightenment idea that all people are endowed with unlimited rational capacity and that everyone possesses a natural right to knowledge. The urge for self-improvement was linked with the idea of progress, which in turn spurred the growth of free public education. Industrialization, urbanization, and rising prosperity were still other developments influencing public library growth. The forward march of science and technology in the late nineteenth century and increasing specialization in occupations placed further emphasis

on reading for self-improvement. Public libraries were increasingly hailed as agencies for the benefit and improvement of all.

Over the course of this century, the library has grown to occupy a central role in our democratic society. Not only is it a critical component of the free exchange of information, which lies at the heart of our democracy, in both the actual and symbolic sense, the library in America is the guardian of freedom of thought and freedom of choice and a bulwark against manipulation by demagogues. Hence, it constitutes the finest symbol of the First Amendment of our Constitution. What would be the result of a political system if a majority of the people were ignorant of their past and of the ideals, traditions, and purposes of our democracy? "A nation that expects to be ignorant and free," wrote Thomas Jefferson in a letter to Charles Yancy in 1816, "expects what never was and never will be."

ANDREW CARNEGIE'S LEGACY

Andrew Carnegie never forgot the time when as a boy he had been unable to pay the subscription fee of \$2 a year to borrow books from one of the country's first public libraries. Public, he learned, does not always mean free. Though, by 1887, twenty-five states had passed public library enabling laws, laws alone were not enough to bring those libraries into existence. By 1896 there were still only 971 public libraries in the United States having 1,000 volumes or more. Out of his own experience—the measure by which he judged the worth of almost everything—Carnegie determined to make free library services available to all who needed and wanted them. His great interest was not in library buildings as such but in the opportunities that circulating libraries afforded men and women, young, old, and in-between, for knowledge and understanding. "Only in popular education," he asseverated, "can man erect the structure of an enduring civilization." Beginning in 1886, he used much of his personal fortune to establish free public libraries throughout America. In all, he spent \$56 million to create 1,681 public libraries in nearly as many U.S. communities and 828 libraries in other

parts of the English-speaking world. Thirty-four big towns and cities received at least a main building and one or more branches, for a total of 138 libraries. The majority of the 1,349 other communities that received only one building were small towns.

The significance of Andrew Carnegie's gifts for the development of libraries in America can scarcely be overestimated. According to two distinguished historians, Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commager, the most effective impetus to the public library movement in the United States did not come from official sources or from public demand but from Andrew Carnegie's generosity. This generosity was, in turn, the result of Carnegie's genuine passion for education, his persuasion that the public library was the most democratic of all roads to learning, and his mindfulness of the debt he owed to books and the love he felt for them. Another scholar, Harold Underwood Faulkner, went further, crediting Carnegie with being the greatest single incentive to library growth in the United States.

The scope of Carnegie Corporation's subsequent grants for public and academic library development and services and for training of librarians cannot be encompassed in these pages, but a few highlights will serve. Beginning in 1926, the foundation embarked on a large-scale expansion of its library program aimed mainly at strengthening the library profession but also at the enhancement of central services. In these efforts, the Corporation spent an average of about \$830,000 a year until 1941. The American Library Association, founded in 1876, received an endowment of \$100,000 from Andrew Carnegie in 1902, general support from the Corporation during the 1920s, \$2 million in endowment in 1926, and numerous other grants for special purposes since then. The first graduate library school was established on the foundation's initiative at the University of Chicago.

Rural library services were greatly enhanced under Corporation grants in the 1920s and 1930s, especially in the South. As to academic libraries, between 1930 and 1943 the Corporation appropriated

nearly \$2.5 million to more than 200 liberal arts colleges in a series of grants for library development and services and for the purchase of books for undergraduate reading. The Corporation began promoting the concept of free library services in sub-Saharan Africa in 1928. The majority of the funds went to the central State Library of South Africa, which stimulated the development of free library services throughout the Union. Substantial grants also went for the development of libraries, the purchase of books, and training in the Gambia, Nigeria, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and other Commonwealth African countries. The Library of Congress received a \$200,000 grant in 1959 to establish an Africana unit.

After World War II, the Corporation's support for individual public and academic libraries (except for Africa) began to abate. More emphasis was placed on grants for central services provided by the American Library Association, the Association of Research Libraries, the Library of Congress, and other organizations and for the use of new technologies and equipment to facilitate library use. A \$750,000 grant was given toward the building and equipment of a joint library in Chicago for twelve Midwestern universities. In the past twenty-five years, Corporation support for libraries has been confined to a few grants for specific purposes including, most recently, those to establish electronic information systems in research institution libraries in Africa.

Altogether, it seems fair to say that Andrew Carnegie and Carnegie Corporation have been associated in the past with nearly every major development in library services in the United States and in most parts of the Commonwealth.

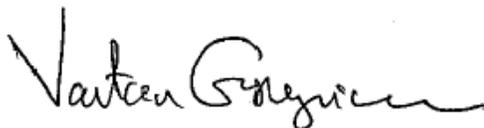
CARNEGIE'S LIBRARY GIFT TO NEW YORK

I began by noting that the year 1999 marks the 100th anniversary of Andrew Carnegie's support for the planning and development of sixty-five branch libraries of the New York Public Library system. A small payment was made on December 8, 1899, with a full \$5.2 million awarded on December 4, 1901, representing an average operating cost of about \$80,000 per branch.

The year 1999 finds public libraries in a very different situation from a century ago, when their potential was just beginning to be appreciated by ordinary Americans. Today they are mature institutions numbering more than 8,000. In the main these libraries have shown remarkable resilience in the face of repeated challenges to their viability and a remarkable ability to transform themselves to meet changing needs. They continue to adapt to one of the most astonishing shifts in the technology of communication ever to take place: the rapidly spreading use of networked computers bringing vast amounts of information (and misinformation) directly to the home, school, and office. The breathtaking pace of these developments has led some proponents of the Internet to wonder whether brick-and-mortar libraries are any longer relevant. Never fear. Libraries have always found a way to fit new media to their fundamental purposes, bringing information and knowledge to the user in a multiplicity of ways, from radio to slides to film to television to the computer to CD-ROMS to the World Wide Web, while remaining the essential place for the book. No experience of reading online, in any case, will ever replace the visceral excitement of holding a book in hand and experiencing its totemic power; no technology can yet match the convenience of a book's portability and easy proximity; no electronic medium can provide the intimacy of private communion or collaboration between the reader and the book. It is dismaying to hear of some students conducting all their research online these days, for no search engine as yet can replace the library or the experts within it, whose role it is in this age of knowledge fragmentation and information overload to distill the best, to separate fact from opinion, to provide a structure for knowledge.

The new technologies stand to deliver unheard-of benefits to seekers of information, instruction, knowledge, and community, but integrating these tools into the historical identity of the library and, conversely, accommodating the library's traditional organizational and social structures to these media will take time. I am optimistic about the possibility of a lively coexistence between the library and the computer, and between the computer and the book, provided that public access is protected, that services remain free to one and all, and that learning is not permitted to become an isolated, isolating experience but part of a community of learning.

Which brings me to the question of how Carnegie Corporation can assist in the transformations under way in public library systems, so that they become even more visible and vital institutions among the people they serve. How can libraries be helped to integrate the new tools of communication into their services and operations without jeopardizing their traditional functions? What will induce states and localities to give libraries and books, among our most important cultural artifacts, and reading more vigorous public support? Certainly one place to start is to revitalize the concept of what a library is, what a book is, what reading is, as I have tried to do in these brief pages, and then to determine the place of technology in promoting the unity of knowledge. The emphasis on historical preservation in the White House's millennium initiative overlaps with the centennial celebrations in New York. The conjunction of these events offers Carnegie Corporation a unique opportunity to remember Andrew Carnegie, "the Patron Saint of American Public Libraries," with a series of one-time-only gifts to selected libraries. The funds, to be negotiated, will be used for the promotion of literacy, the preservation of texts, and the improvement of children's library services — in a word, reading.



PRESIDENT

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Attachment C
Woodland Public Library Comparison with Library Standards for Inputs

	Woodland Public Library Actual 2009-2010	Criteria established for library inputs	Standard based upon local population	Current 2010 WPL deficit
Population	56,399 2009 California State Library certified population (Dept of Finance)	56,399	56,399	--
Size/Space Requirement	25,000 (23,000 finished)	.75-1.0 sf/capita	42,299-56,399 SF	-19,299 SF to -33,399
Books	88,008	2.5 per capita	140,998	-52,990 books
Media	10,726	15-20% of holdings	21,150-28,200	-10,424 to -17,474 AV items
Reader Seating	98 reader	3 per 1,000	169	-71 seats
Public Computers	18	1 per 1,000	56	-38 computers
Public Service Hrs	40	(50-60)	50-60	-10 to -20 hours per week
Parking	Shared Use 11 street 2 hr. Back lot 2 loading, 4 Handicapped, 4 30-min., 18 2-hr., 70 unlimited	3 spaces per 1,000 SF	125-168	With shared use, it is impossible to calculate
Group Study Space	0	(16)	16	-16 study spaces
Tutoring Space	Friends & Mezzanine	(8)	8	-8 tutor spaces
Story telling Space	25	35 seats	35	-10 story spaces
Tech Training Computers	0	10-12	10-12	-10 to -12 computer lab
International Lang	3,778 Spanish	10% of books	14,100	-10,322 international language items
Materials Spending Per Capita	\$220,550 divided by 56,399 = \$3.91 per capita	\$5.35 per capita 2007 PLA <i>Statistical Report</i>	\$301,735	-\$81,185 -\$1.44 per capita