**THE PLAN**

**Invent the Future!**

The Anchorage Library Foundation and the Friends of the Library challenged us to imagine what would happen if we had a world-class, 21st Century library. We want to thank thousands of our Anchorage neighbors who shared ideas in more than 6,000 surveys, and through focus groups, community meetings and personal interviews.

- 15 Focus Groups
- 4 Sounding Board Meetings
- 1 Summit
- 2 Town Hall Meetings
- More than 6,000 surveys
- Interviews with community leaders
- Hundreds of e-newsletter subscriptions

The Anchorage Public Library Community Plan was released in December, 2009. Visit the project website to read the plan: www.AnchorageLibraryFoundation.org

**SOME SAID ...**

- The library of tomorrow will need to be more like the bookstores in Seattle – friendly; the card-catalog process uses a different approach. The Library website interface should be more like the Loussac and its four branches. Name five other buildings in Anchorage that are more like the bookstores in Seattle – fireplaces, comfortable seating, coffee and a book.
- Look at the Loussac and its four branches. Name five other buildings in town where anyone in the community can find so much knowledge, human enchantment, hope, entertainment, democracy and opportunity free for the asking – a universe, with a support staff in touch.
- “A public library outranks any other community partnership in selecting current fiction. The fiction/literature displays could be more like what one sees at the bookstore.”
- “The library is a trusted space ... People have knowledge, wisdom that is not in books, not online. A library could be a clearinghouse for people as resources.”
- “The library of tomorrow will need to not just be about books ... but a lively community center focused on arts, policies, and yes, even sports; a lively community center focused on arts, policies, and even sports; a lively community centered on social networking: People with common, shared interests gathering?”

**HIGHLIGHTS of the Anchorage Public Library Community Plan**

I would really appreciate more in the way of help in selecting current fiction. The fiction/literature displays could be more like what one sees at the bookstore. • The library of the future has to provide convenience and social spaces. Smaller, simpler meeting areas. • What if the library was a center/nexus point for social networking: People with common, shared interests gathering? • If the library was a center/nexus point for social networking: People have knowledge, wisdom that is not in books, not online. A library could be a clearinghouse for people as resources. • The library needs to prioritize having staff in the community and staff to build, nurture and maintain community partnerships.

**THE STRUGGLE**

Anchorage’s public libraries provide a good return on the dollars invested!

According to an ISER study, the library delivers $1.42-$2.46 in economic benefit for each $1 invested by:

- Strengthening communities
- Fostering economic growth
- Serving as a center for humanities
- Cultivating the workforce of the future
- Improving children’s literacy

**THE GOOD**

- **Record-High Usage**
  - 871,036 visits per year, compared to 500,000 at the Sullivan Arena.

- **Not enough books, non-print materials and electronic resources**
  - Not enough Internet computers and bandwidth to support public computer use
  - Not enough service outlets (We have only 4 branches compared to 9 in other similar communities.)

- **A lot of people have library cards but they don’t visit often.**

**THE BAD**

- Extremely low staffing level
  - 40% less full-time staff are employed at our libraries, 89% compared to 143 among peer libraries.
  - We spend 22% less per person on new library materials and don’t maintain collection quality.

- 32% of our budget pays the Muni for overhead charges for support services. These charges account for more than half of the increases in our budget since 2004.
  - Only 55% of our budget is allocated toward staffing vs. 66% among peers.

**THE UGLY**

- Municipal charges for support services include costs for overhead services like grounds keeping and IT costs, which are out of the library’s control.

**Our Library needs your help**

Spread the Word! Talk to community leaders, elected officials and neighbors—help get the entire community behind this effort.

Partner with the Library! Collaborate with the Library to expand your audience and broaden the impact of your community events.

Support the Library! Become a member of the Friends of the Library to buy materials and sponsor library programs. Donate to the Anchorage Library Foundation to invest in the long-term growth of the Anchorage Public Library.

www.friendsal.org

Call 343-2933 to learn more.

“A public library outranks any other community partnership in selecting current fiction. The fiction/literature displays could be more like what one sees at the bookstore.”

— Andrew Carnegie

This information is provided with funding from the Anchorage Library Foundation.

**ANCHORAGE 21ST CENTURY LIBRARIES**

The future of Anchorage Public Library: We can survive and thrive!

The Anchorage Library Foundation and the Friends of the Library developed the Anchorage Public Library Community Plan to shape the future of our city’s Public Library. The plan envisions that the Anchorage Public Library experiences record-high usage and provides more services with less resources. Our Library can help build an even more vibrant, strong and successful community.

We need your involvement and support to chart a course toward more relevant, innovative and community-oriented libraries in this 21st Century. Read on to learn how!

www.AnchorageLibraryFoundation.org
Our library is in a struggle for survival.

If left unchecked, current funding trends will lead to a library that is at best mediocre and at worst irrelevant. Although the library is among Anchorage’s most heavily used public services and has numerous supporters, it will suffer irreparable damage if it fails in the short-term to maximize the value of existing resources, to better meet the needs of traditional users, and offer the technology-based services needed to engage a new generation of users.

1. Create a more welcoming, community-centered library.
   - Require active involvement in community organizations as part of the job descriptions of all library managers/supervisors.
   - Collaborate with community groups to co-host programs/events.

2. Encourage a new generation of library users while engaging traditional users.
   - Upgrade tech resources (bandwidth, electrical outlets).
   - Improve convenience of finding, checking out and returning books and materials and provide more drop-off points.
   - Create a teen center.
   - Expand and promote foreign language resources.

3. Enhance customer service.
   - Create opportunities for direct, ongoing feedback from users.
   - Train staff to encourage enjoyment of library resources.

4. Let people know what the library offers.
   - Create prominent book display sections for popular materials.
   - Use big outdoor signs and the library website and calendar to showcase services and programs.
   - Use social networking tools to reach specific groups.

5. Reduce operating costs and secure new sources of funding.
   - Reduce Municipal charges for support services (32% of the library budget) serve as a test site for Municipal cost-cutting.

Our Library

Survive

1. Create a more welcoming, community-centered library.
2. Encourage a new generation of library users while engaging traditional users.
3. Enhance customer service.
4. Let people know what the library offers.
5. Reduce operating costs and secure new sources of funding.

Thrive

1. Create a more welcoming, community-centered library.
2. Encourage a new generation of library users while engaging traditional users.
3. Enhance customer service.
4. Let people know what the library offers.
5. Reduce operating costs and secure new sources of funding.

Here’s how:

1. Create a more welcoming, community-centered library.
2. Encourage a new generation of library users while engaging traditional users.
3. Enhance customer service.
4. Let people know what the library offers.
5. Reduce operating costs and secure new sources of funding.

We can strive beyond the status quo to become a strong, stable library of tomorrow. In order to thrive, we must embrace a new sense of purpose and diversify our funding sources to become the library Anchorage needs and envisions.

1. Create a more welcoming, community-centered library.
   - Create an inviting entrance to Loussac library and more engaging learning environments for kids and adults.
   - Extend and need library and neighboring Cuddy Family Midtown Park to create a flow of services between the two.
   - Sponsor meetings and lectures. Offer space for trainings, study groups, book club events and announce via library calendar.

2. Encourage a new generation of library users while engaging traditional users.
   - Create programs with the help of civic and neighborhood organizations, cultural and ethnic groups.
   - Designate staff to reach out to people and groups who don’t regularly use the library.
   - Target library materials and resources to appeal to wide range of diverse Anchorage residents.

3. Enhance customer service.
   - Explore a range of options, from bustling, traditional neighborhood branches to virtual (online) libraries.

4. Let people know what the library offers.
   - Link to our next generation of library users via smart-phone applications, working with the Consortium Library and other exemplary library organizations like Urban Libraries Council.

5. Reduce operating costs and secure new sources of funding.
   - Increase cost-efficiency with radio-frequency identification (RFID) technology and automated materials handling systems (AMHS). Use the savings to improve public library services.
   - Establish a core of partners to address community needs (literacy, job training, accessing media).
   - Partner with the Municipality to stabilize long-term funding in accord with population growth and service needs.
   - Explore alternative public funding mechanisms.
   - Design a method for determining which programs/services are funded by taxes, one-time gifts, grants, or long-term funds.
   - Create endowments for ongoing services such as storytelling/youth programs and Alaska Collection services.

Together, we can thrive.

The Anchorage Public Library is faced with an enormous task if it wishes to transform itself into a world-class, 21st Century library. While the library can improve a few things on its own, lasting success requires evolving into a new kind of institution, with strong ties to a range of partners.

The Municipality of Anchorage

Secure stable funding reflecting population growth and service needs; address the rapid increase of Municipal overhead charges.

Other Governmental Entities

Partner with the Alaska Legislature, the State Library, the School District and others to implement innovative service models and secure needed funding.

The Private Sector

Develop new products and services that support business needs such as job training.

Community Organizations

Proactively reach out to non-profit and other community organizations to connect with segments of the population that have not traditionally used library services; work so the library can realize its promise as an organization that spans boundaries to address community problems.

Other Libraries

Continue the close relationship with the Consortium Library and add new alliances to improve access to traditional library resources and new technology-based products and services.

Philanthropists

Take full advantage of the Anchorage Library Foundation as a link between the library and the philanthropic sector. Build partnerships to provide funding for innovative service models, capital projects, and endowments for operational support.

The People of Anchorage

Serve as a catalyst for individual and community improvement by helping people and ideas together. Be an active, integral part of the community, guided by customers and their needs.