

THE PLAN

Invent the Future!

The **Anchorage Library Foundation** challenges 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 have 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** is still being developed. Speak up for the library! Now is your chance to invent the future by sharing your ideas and insight. The plan will be released in December, 2009. Visit the project website:

www.Anchorage21stCenturyLibraries.org

SOME SAID ...

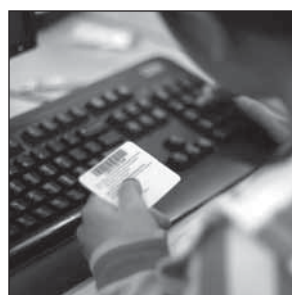
What if the library was a center/nexus point for social networking: People with common, shared interests gathering? The library is a trusted space ... People have knowledge, wisdom that is not in books, not online. A library could be a clearinghouse for people as resources.

– Focus Group participant



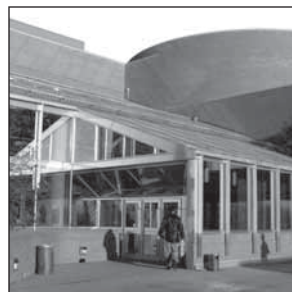
The library of tomorrow will need to not just be about books ... but a lively community center focused on arts, politics, and yes, even sports.

– Online Survey respondent



The library needs to prioritize having staff in the community and staff to build, nurture and maintain community partnerships.

– Focus Group participant



While we're infrequent users of the library, we would go there more often if the hours were more convenient, if the libraries (including the branches) were more like the bookstores in Seattle – with a bakery/coffee shop, and if there were more convenient places where you could drop off books.

– Focus Group participants



Look at the Loussac and its four branches. Name five other buildings in town where anyone in the community can find so much knowledge, beauty, enchantment, hope, entertainment, democracy and opportunity free for the asking – a universe, with a support staff to boot.

– ADN editorial (Oct. 11, 2009)

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 libraries peppered around town with social spaces – fireplace, 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, beauty, enchantment, hope, entertainment, democracy and opportunity free for the asking – a universe, with a support staff to boot. • This facility is nice and convenient, but it's expensive to rent this room. That creates a barrier; the library system needs smaller, simple meeting areas. • What if the library was a center/nexus point for social networking: People with common, shared interests gathering? 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, politics, and yes, even sports. • I loved music in the park this summer. • The library needs to prioritize having staff in the community and staff to build, nurture and maintain community partnerships. Google and Wikipedia are widely understood, user-friendly; the card-catalog process uses a different approach. The library website interface should be geared more toward Google-like search processes. • If we were frequent users of the library, we would go there more often if the hours were more convenient. • Libraries, including the branches, were more like the bookstores in Seattle with a bakery/coffee shop. • If there were more convenient places where you could drop off books.

Photos by Agnew::Beck, Bill Wilson or courtesy of the Anchorage Library Foundation.

HIGHLIGHTS of the Anchorage Public Library Community Plan

Anchorage Libraries need your help

Speak up! Comment through Sunday, Nov. 29.

- www.Anchorage21stCenturyLibraries.org
- E-mail wilson@libraryconsultant.com or call 608.868.1133

Visit www.muni.org

Tell your elected city leaders what you think about the **Anchorage Public Library Community Plan**.

- Contact your City Assembly representatives.
- E-mail the Mayor using a feedback form found on the homepage.

“A public library outranks any other thing a community can do to help its people.”

– Andrew Carnegie

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



ANCHORAGE 21st CENTURY LIBRARIES

Help invent the future of Anchorage's public library. We can survive and thrive!

The **Anchorage Library Foundation** and the **Friends of the Library** are developing the **Anchorage Public Library Community Plan** to shape the future of the city's public libraries. The plan comes as Anchorage libraries experience record-high usage and are providing more services with less resources. Our libraries can help build an even more vibrant, strong and successful community. The community plan needs your feedback and insight to chart a course toward more relevant, convenient, innovative and community-oriented libraries in this 21st Century.

www.Anchorage21stCenturyLibraries.org

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

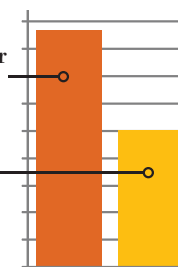
Record-High Usage

60% of Anchorage residents have a library card. Library-use is at an all-time high!

Highly productive staff members each process about **1,000** more items than their counterparts at similar “peer libraries.”

Our libraries are our most popular city facilities with **74 %** more visits to libraries than to the Sullivan Arena!

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



THE BAD

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 UGLY

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.

Note: Our library's performance was measured against the performance of 35 “peer libraries” (serving populations of 250,000-350,000).

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 CAN SURVIVE and THRIVE INTO THE FUTURE

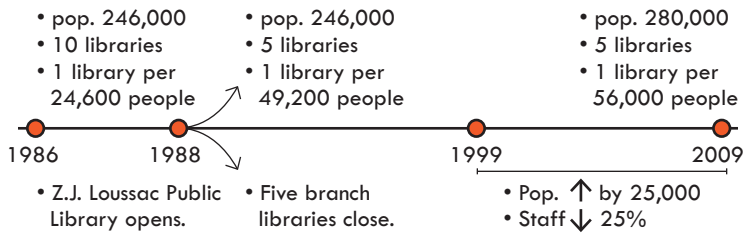
Here's how:

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



OVERCOME HISTORY

The library's fate hangs in the balance.



Our library's history is relatively short. The city first allocated tax dollars for a library in 1946 and since then, its fate has rested on the boom and bust nature of Alaska's economy. Our library has been stable in good times and faced severe cuts otherwise.

In 1986, when the Z.J. Loussac public library opened, library services were offered from ten facilities (one for every 24,614 people). But within two years, five branches were closed. The library still operates only five facilities (one for every 56,000 people now). Over the last decade, library staffing levels have fallen by 25% while the population increased by nearly 25,000. And additional staff cuts still hang in the balance.

The library becomes even more important during downturns. When jobs and dollars dwindle, people turn to libraries for help. Job-seekers access free online employment resources; and frugal folks find unbiased consumer information at the library. As incomes shrink, people flock to libraries for free recreational reading, listening, and viewing materials.

Unfortunately, even during economic booms, support for public library service in Anchorage seldom matches up. And during tough economic times, the library sees deep cuts. The result is that the library struggles to survive when we need it the most.

SURVIVE

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. 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.

2. Enhance customer service.

- Create opportunities for direct, ongoing feedback from users.
- Train staff to encourage enjoyment of library resources.
- House shared human knowledge (community groups) as well as books and informational materials.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. Create a more welcoming, community-center library.

- Require active involvement in community organizations as part of the job descriptions of all library managers/supervisors.

THRIVE

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. We must sustain the gains we achieve toward providing relevant information-services to our community. And, we must form new partnerships and new approaches to secure stable funding and support to operate our library and invest in innovation.

1. 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.

2. Enhance customer service.

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

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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 meld 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.

BUILD PARTNERSHIPS

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 nonprofit 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

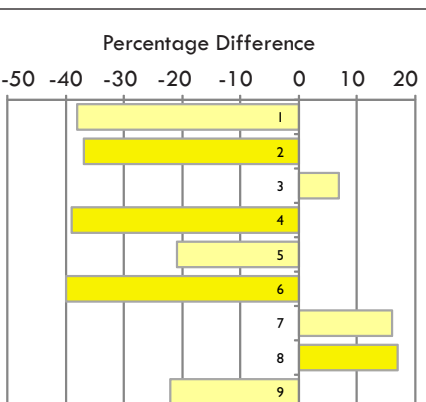
Take full advantage of the Anchorage Library Foundation as a link between the library and the broader philanthropic sector. Build partnerships to provide funding for innovative service models, capital projects, and, through endowments, for ongoing operational support.

the People of Anchorage

Improve library services to build a stronger base of loyal customers, including traditional and new library users.



How do we stack up?	Anchorage Public Library (FY 2008)	Mean for 35 Peer Libraries (FY 2008)	% Diff.
1. Circulation	1,599,025	2,563,341	-38
2. Library Visits	871,036	1,387,530	-37
3. Registered Borrowers as % of Pop.	59.89%	55.83%	7
4. Circulation per Registered Borrower	9.37	15.46	-39
5. Holdings (# of Volumes)	605,000	763,842	-21
6. Total Staff (Full-Time Equivalents)	86.0	142.97	-40
7. Total Operating Expenditures	\$ 11,895,415*	\$ 10,269,556	16
8. Operating Expenditures per Capita	\$ 41.74*	\$ 35.53	17
9. Materials Expenditures per Capita	\$ 3.58	\$ 4.58	-22



The 0% baseline marks the mean for "peer libraries." APL performance is displayed as a percentage difference from the baseline. * Includes Municipal charges for overhead services, which are out of the library's control. These charges account for more than one-third of the library's expenditures.