FACILITIES MASTER PLAN
FOR
POUDRE RIVER PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT

June 10, 2009

Adopted by the
Poudre River Public Library District Board of Trustees
July 6, 2009
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Poudre River Public Library District (the District) was created in 2006 as a result of a successful ballot issue. Previously, library services had been provided by the City of Fort Collins. The District is governed by a seven-member board of trustees jointly appointed by the Fort Collins City Council and the Larimer County Commissioners. The District covers a large geographic area of 1,780 square miles and has boundaries substantially the same as Poudre School District. Population of the District is approximately 170,000. Ninety percent of that population lives within the City of Fort Collins or its growth management area.

Library services are provided by the Main Library in downtown Fort Collins; the Harmony Library, a joint use facility on the Front Range Community College Larimer Campus in southwest Fort Collins; and the new Council Tree Library in southeast Fort Collins.

This facilities master plan is the result of the District’s continuing long-range planning efforts. The board adopted a strategic plan in 2008 which sets service priorities through 2011. To help accomplish these service priorities, the District hired Aaron Cohen Associates to create a facilities master plan. The plan identifies the space needs of the District and recommends expanded and additional facilities needed to meet those needs. The plan also explores options to extend services to outlying areas.

Since its founding the District has worked to provide a complete range of excellent library services to residents in the limited spaces provided by its current facilities. The District offers broad collections of library materials, year-round programming for all ages, and reference services. The opening of the new Council Tree Library in March of 2009 greatly increased District services to the southeast area of the District. However the District’s ability to provide adequate seating, meeting and gathering areas and comfortable spaces throughout all its facilities requires additional physical space in both the short and long term.

In 2005, the Colorado State Library, Colorado Department of Education issued its Colorado Public Library Standards. The standards use square footage per capita to define library facilities as essential, enhanced or comprehensive. The District, with 81,700 square feet of library space, or 0.5 square feet per capita, currently has the space to provide only the essential, or most basic, services as defined by the Colorado Public Library Standards. However, the District currently operates at an enhanced level by providing many services above and beyond the basic services. The higher level of services offered to the community is straining the capacity of our existing facilities and limiting the ability to fully implement our strategic plan.

The District currently lacks the necessary space to satisfy the many library needs of our residents. Current seating and study areas are limited and frequently crowded, public computing space is constrained, many collections areas are congested and less than optimal for easy browsing, and program and meeting spaces are too small to meet increasing demands. The recommendations in this plan would increase the District’s facilities space by 54,625 square feet. The result would be 0.8 square feet per capita, which would bring the District’s space up to the enhanced level.
The eight specific recommendations for facility enhancements and additions contained within this plan are as follows:

1. The District should adopt a more comprehensive regional library strategy that can provide services to its entire community. The strategy should include the addition of a service center.

2. The District should undertake a modest expansion and full remodel of the Main Library building while preserving and enhancing Library Park. This should be accomplished with existing financing in the near term.

3. The District should perform a library service assessment of express kiosks, book drops and materials by mail, particularly for outlying areas, and develop a comprehensive plan for optimal services throughout the District.

4. The District should centralize its service operations in a service center.

5. The District should perform an operational analysis for acquiring an automated sorting system.

6. The District’s board of trustees should explore a Library Park plan by working with the City of Fort Collins and the Downtown Development Authority to integrate the Main Library and Carnegie Building into the Library Park’s landscaping and flow. This may include creating a semi-enclosed plaza area and walkway between the two buildings.

7. Within the next five to ten years, the District should construct an approximately 49,000 square foot complex that would contain a regional library and service center with an option for community meeting space as part of a shared facility.

8. Harmony Library’s meeting space should be expanded within the next five to ten years. The District does not own the Harmony Library building. Modifying or expanding the library will depend on cooperation between the District and Front Range Community College in all aspects of feasibility considerations, planning and potential implementation.

The total cost of the recommended improvements is approximately $23 million; partial funding for these improvements could come from funds on hand, grants and capital fundraising efforts. However, increased revenue to pay for the majority of this cost will be needed.

During Aaron Cohen Associates’ interaction with community members, the consulting team received very favorable comments about the services provided by the District. Comments were straightforward and critical concerning the need for updated and expanded facilities, but were very complimentary concerning services and operations of the libraries.
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INTRODUCTION

The focus of this facilities master plan is to determine how to best use the Poudre River Public Library District's existing facilities and to provide options to supply services to the District's current 165,972 residents. It includes ways to best serve the District's outlying areas; lists possible geographic locations for additional facilities; explores a new regional library and service center complex as an approach for an up-to-date service model; and includes a discussion about the Main Library, Library Park and the Carnegie Building.

Planning for Results
The Library District recently completed a long-range planning process entitled “Planning for Results.” That process identified seven service priorities that will focus the delivery of services from 2008 through 2011. The service priorities identified are included in the District Background Section of this report.

A Brief History of the Main Library in Old Town Fort Collins
For more than 100 years, the Fort Collins Library has melded old traditions with new technologies in order to offer books and educational materials to the public. The original library building was constructed in 1904 with funds supplied by the foundation established by Andrew Carnegie. It was created as a large, free, city-center municipal library. Located in Fort Collins' first park, this Fort Collins City Library building was expanded in 1939.

In 1976 a new library building was constructed in another part of Library Park and the original library building became a museum. In the near future, however:

- The museum will be leaving the park for a new location.
- The District will have an opportunity to rethink the 1976 Main Library building and Library Park, and to work with the City to consider alternative uses for the 1904 Carnegie building.

The District’s Mission and Current Characteristics
Poudre River Public Library District is an important gateway to early literacy, lifelong learning, children’s programs, cultural events and the world of information. It is a newly formed Library District consisting of the following library facilities:

- The Main Library (34,000 sq. ft.)
  - In Library Park in downtown Fort Collins
- The Harmony Library (31,100 sq. ft.)
  - A joint-use facility on the Front Range Community College Larimer Campus
- The Council Tree Library (16,600 sq. ft.)
  - In Front Range Village Shopping Complex, open March 2009

The total amount of available library space: 81,700 sq. ft.

The Plan to Meet the District's Facility Needs

As part of the District's commitment to develop a facilities master plan, Aaron Cohen Associates researched ways to expand the District's capabilities now and in the future. The consulting team worked with the community to consider methods for rebalancing the existing spaces of the Main and Harmony libraries. The team examined the central and branch model that began with the development of the Main Library (1904) and extended with the development of the Harmony Library (1997) and the Council Tree Library (2009). This plan identifies a regional system strategy that will help the District manage long-range capital costs, centralize operations for efficiency and leverage technology to dispense library materials in rural areas.

The Visual Scan©

As part of the information gathering process, Aaron Cohen Associates used a method called the Visual Scan® process. The Visual Scan® process provides public input to the facilities plan development by touring the library facilities with groups of people made up of different ages, interests and levels of familiarity with the District. The consensus of these groups was that more improvements were needed at the Main Library than at the Harmony Library and that those improvements should be made first. Patron seating, meeting space and staff space all were graded lower at Main than at Harmony. Council Tree Library, which was under construction at the time of the Visual Scans®, was not included in this process.
The Poudre River Public Library District was created in 2006 as a result of a successful ballot issue. Previously, library services were provided by the City of Fort Collins, and before that, jointly by the City and Larimer County. The District is governed by a seven-member board of trustees jointly appointed by the Fort Collins City Council and Larimer County Commissioners. Population of the District is approximately 170,000. The District covers a large geographic area of 1,780 square miles and has boundaries substantially the same as the Poudre School District. Library services are provided by the Main Library in downtown Fort Collins; the Harmony Library, a joint use facility on the Front Range Community College Larimer Campus in southwest Fort Collins; and the new Council Tree Library in southeast Fort Collins.

Ninety percent of the District’s residents live within the City of Fort Collins and the Fort Collins growth management area. Strategic placement of the existing three libraries has resulted in substantially the entire City, its growth management area and the population area of Timnath being within five miles of an existing library.

The District’s commitment is to serve all of its residents. The unincorporated communities of LaPorte/Bellvue, Waverly, Livermore, Lower Rist Canyon, Stove Prairie, Poudre Park, Upper Poudre Canyon and Virginia Dale are all located more than five miles from a District facility. The LaPorte community represents the most populated of these areas with a population of 2,691 in the 2000 census.

Research on the residents of these areas reveals several trends. Even in the most remote communities with a commute of more than an hour, residents report travelling into Fort Collins at least once a week. An estimated 75 percent of them have regular Internet access.

Strategic Planning

The District’s long-range planning process, called “Planning for Results,” resulted in a strategic plan that identified the following seven service priorities:

- **Create Young Readers: Early Literacy**
  - Young children (age five and under) will have programs and services designed to ensure that they enter school ready to learn to read, write and listen.

- **Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning**
  - Children, teens and adults will have the books, media and electronic resources they need to satisfy their curiosity, explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

- **Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing and Listening for Pleasure**
  - Children, teens and adults will have materials and programs that excite their imaginations, respond to their current interests and provide pleasurable reading, viewing and listening experiences.
• **Connect to the Online World: Public Internet and Information Fluency**
  o Residents will have access to information technology resources via the library and will have the opportunity to gain the skills necessary to use library resources.

• **Be an Informed Citizen: Local, National and World Affairs**
  o Adults and teens will have the resources they need to fully participate in the democratic process.

• **Express Creativity: Create and Share Content**
  o Children, teens and adults will have the services and support they need to express themselves by creating original print, video, audio or visual content in a real-world or online environment.

• **Build Successful Enterprises: Business and Non-Profit Support**
  o Business owners, non-profit managers, entrepreneurs and small investors will have the resources and services they need to develop and maintain strong businesses.

**The first three service priorities were all extremely close in order of priority.**

**General Statistics**

From a quantitative point of view, the District provides a good service to the community. Approximately 3,000 people visit the Main, Harmony and Council Tree libraries each day. The system offers a broad collection of books, movies, audio books and music, and sponsors diverse exhibits, presentations and performances. The following is a set of statistics illustrating the value of the District’s library services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Area</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration as Percentage of Population</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population of the District</td>
<td>165,972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Library Visits Per Capita</td>
<td>5.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Card Holders</td>
<td>115,293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnover Rate (physical collection)*</td>
<td>5.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Circulation of Materials</td>
<td>2,337,891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Attendance per 1000 population served</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Reference Assistance to the Public</td>
<td>138,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Interlibrary Loan Transactions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Materials Borrowed</td>
<td>62,392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Materials Loaned</td>
<td>40,225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Holds Requested and Filled</td>
<td>250,000 (approx.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Programs Held</td>
<td>1,076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Attendance at Programs**</td>
<td>40,304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Summer Reading Program Participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Children</td>
<td>6,661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Adults</td>
<td>1,667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teens</td>
<td>1,166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Statistical information provided by District Staff.
### Service Area Totals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual Volunteer Hours</td>
<td>13,778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Homebound Deliveries</td>
<td>5,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 Square Feet Per Capita</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Facility Space at All Three Libraries</td>
<td>81,700 square feet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Turnover Rate is over 5: this means that print material usage is high.
- It indicates that the library needs to develop operational efficiencies in its facilities to continue to provide high levels of service.

** Attendance at Programs: 40,304 community members visited the library for programs.
- This indicates that the library has outgrown its meeting spaces and that program space is vital to the growth of library services.

### Current Facilities

The total square footage available in all of the District's facilities adds up to 81,700 gross square feet, or slightly less than 0.5 square feet per capita:

- Main Library: 34,000 square feet
- Harmony Library: 31,100 square feet
- Council Tree Library: 16,600 square feet

81,700 square feet

The District also leases 2,270 square feet of space from the City of Fort Collins for $1 per year. The leased space is used by the Friends of the Library and for the District's technical services operations.

In 2005, the Colorado State Library, Colorado Department of Education issued its Colorado Public Library Standards. Those standards define facilities based on square footage per capita as essential, enhanced or comprehensive. Essential facilities should have space for accessing and utilizing materials; adequate programming space and storage space; separate staff workspace areas; and adequate restroom facilities. Essential facilities also should meet current safety and fire codes, conform to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards; and have well-lit exteriors with clearly visible signage, sufficient parking and convenient book returns. Enhanced facilities provide space for some specialized library usage (i.e. storytime space, study rooms, etc.). Comprehensive facilities provide space which enables the library to serve as a community meeting space (i.e. meeting rooms, larger group seating areas, etc.). At 0.5 square feet per capita, the District meets the essential standards but is providing services at the enhanced level.

### Main Library

The Main Library is located in downtown Fort Collins at 201 Peterson Street.
- It is in the center of Old Town Fort Collins.
- It was built in 1976 and contains 34,000 square feet.
- The facility houses a collection of more than 230,000 items.
- It has a bank of public access computers.
- The Main Library and the Library Park are part of a 100-year history of providing library services to Fort Collins.
Harmony Library
The Harmony Library is located in southwest Fort Collins at 4616 S. Shields Street.
- It is a unique joint-use facility with Front Range Community College Larimer Campus.
- It was opened in 1998, at the beginning of the Internet age.
- It contains 31,100 square feet.
- It houses a collection of more than 146,000 items.
- It contains an electronic learning center.
- Any expansion plan would require collaboration with and authorization from Front Range Community College.

Council Tree Library
Council Tree Library is located in southeast Fort Collins at Front Range Village 2733 Council Tree Avenue, Suite 200.
- It is in a retail development at the corner of Ziegler Road and Harmony Road.
- It opened in March 2009 and contains 16,600 square feet.
- There may be additional space available on the ground floor in the future.
- The branch is a unique neighborhood library with an emphasis on serving young families.
- Construction, furnishings and the collection were funded by development fees collected by the City of Fort Collins under the management of the City in collaboration with District staff.

Library Park
- Originally named Lincoln Park, Library Park was established in 1899 as one of the first city parks in Fort Collins.
- The Park is approximately 2.9 acres.
- In April, 1975 a restriction on building in the Park was passed by the voters. As a result, no more than 5% of the park’s area devoted to open space park purpose can be used as the site for additional buildings or parking facilities. This available 5% was used for the building of the Main Library in 1976. If the District wants to pursue the recommendation of building down the overhangs of the current Main Library, Fort Collins residents would need to approve an amendment to or repeal of this restriction.
- The Park has a history of community events such as festivals and concerts.
- There are a number of historically significant trees, plaques and sculptures placed in the Park as memorials.
- As part of the transfer of library assets from the City of Fort Collins, The Library District took possession of part of the park. The remainder, which consists of the Carnegie Building, historic structures and children’s playground, still belongs to the City. (See map in Appendix Section)

Funding
- The District is funded through a 3 mill property tax (approximately $59 per year on a $250,000 home). Taxpayer approval is required for an increase in the mill levy in order to provide additional revenue to the District to fund its capital needs and the additional operating costs that would accompany any new facilities.
• The accumulation of impact fees provided funding to build the new Council Tree Library.

**Library Collections**

• The Main Library collection occupies approximately 18,460 gross square feet of the building’s total 34,000 gross square feet. Assuming the collection doesn’t grow, this represents more than 50 percent of the total building area.

• In comparison, the Harmony Library collection occupies approximately 35 percent of the total building space. Harmony Library has 146,000 volumes and circulates almost as many materials as the Main Library.

**District Collection Breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Area Square Feet</th>
<th>Annual Circulation</th>
<th>Volumes</th>
<th>Shelves</th>
<th>Linear Feet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main</td>
<td>34,000</td>
<td>931,100</td>
<td>230,000</td>
<td>6,154</td>
<td>18,459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harmony</td>
<td>31,100</td>
<td>924,562</td>
<td>146,000</td>
<td>3,513</td>
<td>10,539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Tree</td>
<td>16,600</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>1,137</td>
<td>3,411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remote</td>
<td></td>
<td>482,229</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>81,700</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,337,891</strong></td>
<td><strong>441,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,804</strong></td>
<td><strong>32,409</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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3 Circulation numbers were provided by the circulation staff.
SERVICE MODEL APPROACH

Aaron Cohen Associates identified three different types of library service models and evaluated how each could support facility growth for the District.

1. Central Library and Branch System
2. Regional Libraries and Branch System
3. Regional Library, Service Center and Branch System

1: Central Library and Branch System

Most communities start with a central or main library that serves the entire community. As the population grows and the service area expands, the central or main library recognizes that it can no longer provide library services equally to all neighborhoods. The community then extends library services to a branch or series of branches. Branches are usually small and do not provide a full set of services, i.e., separate children’s library, story hour room, large collection, adult computer areas, periodical back files, teen area and historic collections. Once a branch is open, it is very difficult to close. Each branch duplicates library costs for staff, utilities, materials and operations. Overtime and increased costs limit the system’s ability to improve services (e.g., Buffalo and Erie County Public Library).

2: Regional Libraries and Branch System

After a community grows and develops its library system, certain branches are expanded to become regional libraries. Often these are central to a large population and used heavily by the region. The regional libraries provide support to the branch system by housing additional staff and providing additional subject-specific materials, sorting systems and interlibrary loan services. The regional library supports the branches by housing additional operational functions. The system does not have a unified materials handling system or service center. All operations are done in the regional library, thereby reducing usable space for a growing part of the community.

3: Regional Libraries, Service Center and Branch System

By adding a service center to the library system to house administrative and support services, the space devoted to public services at the library facilities is increased. The service center is an integrated facility that houses administration, operations, materials management, technical services, acquisitions and procurement systems under one roof. Relocating these activities away from a regional library can be particularly beneficial when an existing library (such as the District’s Main Library) is problematic to expand. Materials are handled at the service center in a purpose-built facility that is focused on the delivery of materials. Today’s service centers include RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) sorting systems so that materials move seamlessly and inexpensively from one location to another. Indeed, the regional libraries, service center and branch libraries approach focuses on managing operations efficiently. It streamlines operations and improves public services at the regional or branch library (e.g., Las Vegas-Clark County Library District).
FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Based on the service needs of the District, its current facilities and the dispersion of the District’s patrons within its geographical area, the following additions and enhancements are recommended. These eight recommendations would result in facilities adequate for the District to provide the enhanced level of service as defined by the Colorado State Library. The enhanced level of service reflects the level needed to achieve the District's strategic plan.

1. **Adopt the Regional Libraries, Service Center and Branch System Approach**
   - The District should consider a regional libraries, service center and branch system strategy.
   a. The service center would house all non-public library functions, thereby improving materials handling, lowering operational costs and streamlining management support.
   b. The Main Library and Harmony Library would remain regional libraries.
   c. The Council Tree Library would be a branch library.
   d. A new regional center building project should be combined with the service center to reduce new building costs.

2. **Expand Main Library**
   - The District should undertake a modest expansion and full remodel of the Main Library building while preserving and enhancing Library Park. This should be accomplished with existing financing in the near term.
   a. Build down the nine overhangs on the second floor. This modification would add 5,625 square feet and have little or no effect on Library Park. It also would reduce the amount of energy required to heat the second floor.
   b. Consider the addition of a semi-enclosed plaza area between the Main Library and the Carnegie Building.
   c. Estimated cost of the expansion at $250 per square foot is $1.4 million. Estimated cost of remodeling the existing 34,000 square feet at $75 per square foot is $2.55 million.

3. **Conduct a Library Service Assessment to Improve Services throughout the District**
   - Within the next two years, the District should perform a library service assessment of express kiosks, book drops and materials by mail as a means to provide greater library services throughout the District.

4. **Lease or Construct a Service Center**
   - The District should consider developing a service center.
   a. The District should study the potential logistical advantages and efficiencies that a service center would produce, including improving staff work space, outreach services, materials handling and delivery of library materials.
   b. The District should consider leasing an existing vacant structure in the short term (one to three years) and move a portion of staff/operations from the Main Library as part of the expansion/remodel project.
c. The District should investigate building a service center as part of a regional library plan (five to ten years).

d. Estimated annual cost of leasing space is $195,000 for 15,000 square feet at a lease cost of $10 per square foot and $3 per square foot for utilities and custodial services. Tenant finish needs to be considered and will vary depending on the specific space leased.

e. Estimated cost to construct a 15,000 square foot facility is $2.4 million at $160 per square foot.

5. **Perform a Library Service Assessment of Automated Sort System**
   The District should perform a library service assessment/operational analysis for automated sorting systems to be included in the centralized service center.

6. **Integrate the Main Library, Carnegie Building and Library Park**
   If the Carnegie Building becomes a joint use facility between the District and the City of Fort Collins, the District should work with City and the Downtown Development Authority to develop a plan designed to integrate the Main Library and Carnegie Building into Library Park’s landscaping and flow. This may include creating a semi-enclosed plaza area and walkway between the two buildings. Renovation costs for the Carnegie Building are estimated at $5.1 million for the 15,000 square foot facility at $340 per square foot.

7. **Add a New Regional Library**
   The District should consider building a new regional library complex within the next five to ten years.

   a. With 81,700 square feet of library space, the District has approximately 0.5 square feet per person and has adequate space to provide essential services. Additional space is needed in order to have adequate facilities to provide the service priorities determined by the District’s strategic planning. These service priorities require adequate space for enhanced services.

   b. In the next 10 years, a 34,000 square foot regional Library would help the lack of adequate space needed to provide enhanced services.

   c. Estimated cost of a regional library is $11.6 million at $340 per square foot.

   d. The service center mentioned above could be located adjacent to this new library as a library complex.

   e. The new regional library might additionally include a larger shared meeting space that would be available to the community. Estimated cost of a 10,500 square foot meeting space is $1.6 million at $160 per square foot. The actual size of this meeting space would be determined as part of the design/planning process. The District could develop partnerships with other cultural organizations to share the costs for construction and operation of the shared meeting space.

8. **Expand Harmony Library Meeting Space**
   Within the next five to ten years, in cooperation with Front Range Community College as owner of the Harmony Library building, Harmony Library’s meeting space should be expanded.
Detailed Review of Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Adopt a Regional Library System Approach with Service Center

Over the next 10 years, Aaron Cohen Associates recommends that the District change its service model from:

Regional Libraries and Branch System

to

Regional Libraries, Service Center and Branch System

We recommend the development of a regional library system approach for the following reasons:

A. Limit operations costs:
   1. Non-public functions will be moved to the service center.
   2. Technology support and hosting facilities will be improved.
   3. Staff space for acquisitions, technical services, friends of the library, etc., will be improved.

B. Support the library board’s strategic plan by:
   1. Allowing the District to offer more public space in regional and branch libraries.
   2. Providing more space for community meetings and programming in regional and branch libraries.
   3. Adding more browsable collection spaces.
   4. Expanding seating and improving seating options.


Recommendation 2: Remodel and Expand Main Library

The District should oversee a modest expansion and remodel of the Main Library building while preserving and enhancing Library Park. To improve services in the near term, we recommend that the District expand and remodel the Main Library for the following reasons:

A. Improve the library’s entrance, circulation and flow.

B. Expand the children’s library by 2,050 square feet to provide more space, reduce shelving height and reduce overcrowding.

C. Expand the meeting room by 1,250 square feet to increase capacity for community programs and events.

D. Expand staff and collection retention space by 2,500 square feet to improve staff office space and provide space for compact shelving.

E. Add seating space for adults and teens.

F. Improve Library Park landscaping and improve flow to and from Old Town.
Recommendation 3: Conduct a Library Service Assessment to Improve Services Throughout the District

In addition to facility changes recommended above, the District should conduct a library service assessment of express kiosks, book drops and materials by mail, particularly for outlying areas. We recommend that the District review the service options for the following reasons:

A. Improve delivery of services throughout the District.
B. Understand the options for efficient services.
C. Conduct a cost analysis of all options to understand investment requirements and ongoing operational costs for service delivery.
D. Enable the District to prototype distribution options for review and evaluation.

While it is not practical to build branch libraries or operate bookmobiles in sparsely populated areas of the District, library services could be extended throughout the District by implementing a number of additional services. Examples of these include:

- Additional book drops in convenient locations
- Rural services: library materials by mail
- Additional educational and cultural programs
- Virtual/enhanced library services for home-schoolers
- Neighborhood book sales
- Express Services for delivery and pick-up of items (dispensing stations throughout the District)

One way to extend services to outlying areas is a materials dispenser. This is a 24-hour vending type machine that can provide materials on demand from a rural location. It is an enhanced book, CD, DVD distribution technique that the District can locate in malls and shopping areas—for example, near a Wal-Mart or next to a post office.

Enhancements in technology enable the dispenser to extend the regional library approach with limited investment. For example, the Sacramento Public Library received $133,000 for a GoLibrary Book Dispenser with advanced mechanisms.4 If the District uses the GoLibrary Book Dispensers, it would not need to build small branch libraries.

In order to provide a blanket of these book dispensers to the entire District, funding is required. Costs include a software license fee of $3,200 per year per unit, and a support agreement at an approximate cost of $2,950 for year one and $5,900 for year two and each subsequent year. The system would need annual upgrading and also would need to be integrated with the District's Integrated Library System (III) at an approximate cost of $6,000.

The District should consider installation of Enhanced Book Dispensers in the following areas:

- Mountain Vista
- LaPorte
- Extreme southeast District location

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Recommendation 4: Lease or Construct a Service Center

Since the District's formation in 2006, branch services have been expanded and new outreach programs to rural areas have been developed. In order to manage the system's growth while keeping costs down, the District should centralize operations. We recommend leasing or constructing a service center of up to 15,000 square feet for the following reasons:

A. Improve logistical support by integrating into one building non-public staff space including administration, management, acquisitions, technical services, programming, friends of the library, etc.
   1. Acquisitions: A centralized space would reduce staff needs in the Main Library and open up more space in the adult seating area on the second floor.
   2. Technical Services: An integrated space would reduce overcrowding in the existing work space and added shelving would improve operations.
   3. Friends of the Library: This would reduce overcrowding in the existing space and add room to store more materials for book sales, resulting in an increase in donations.
   4. Friends of the Library Book Store: Moving staff from the Main Library might enable the Friends to have more space for a book store. This would result in increased donations to the District.
   5. Materials Handling and Management: The District could invest in a five-bin or seven-bin sorting machine for all library materials. This would improve materials management and reduce the pressure on staff space at Harmony Library.
   6. Administration: Reducing or eliminating office space in the Main Library would open up space for group study rooms or additional meeting/training spaces.
   7. Programming: Reducing office space in the Main Library opens up additional public space on the second floor for adults.

B. Ensure fiscal responsibility by limiting capital expenditures for operations and maintaining efficient acquisitions, procurement, management and delivery.

C. Improve library management, outreach and programming with professional office space.

In the short-term, the District should consider leasing available commercial space for a service center. When the next regional library is built, a permanent service center should be considered as part of a new library complex.

Recommendation 5: Perform a Library Service Assessment/Operational Analysis for Automated Sort System

In conjunction with the addition of a centralized service center, the District should consider the implementation of an automated sort system using its available RFID technology. In the short term, we recommend that the District perform a library service assessment/operational analysis for an automated sort system for the following reasons:

A. Understand the operational requirements of an automated sort system.
B. Investigate ways to reduce duplication of staff at current locations.
C. Research ways to lower costs for materials management and courier services.
D. Understand the ways a service center can improve library operations, lower costs and improve services.

All of the District's buildings can be fully integrated with small RFID sorting technology to improve materials flow. The small sorting systems have the ability to improve the efficiency of the materials check-in process. Sorting systems enable staff to speed up the materials flow (turnaround) for high demand materials. They result in dramatically faster return of materials to patrons and increase operational efficiency.

Other library systems have found that they can lower part-time staffing costs and improve the accuracy of inventories by using the small materials sorting systems. For example, at Las Vegas Clark County Library District, the automated sorts were installed and integrated into their new branch libraries. As a result, the district was able to increase the flow of circulation and limit costs over time.

The investments for automated sorting systems are as follows:

According to Pekka Vaisanen of P.V. Supa

- Front end: The installation and configuration of the readers. An opening is created in a wall where the patron can insert a book and have it read into the system.
  - The estimated price for the front end is $30,000-$38,000.
- Module: The technology to manage the user's account.
  - The estimated price for the module is $19,000-$21,000.
- Small Sorter:
  - Five-bin sorter including eight bins is $75,000-$80,000.
  - Seven-bin sorter including 12 bins is: $95,000-$115,000.

Recommendation 6: Integrate Main Library, Carnegie Building and Library Park

The City of Fort Collins Museum operations will be vacating the Carnegie Building in 2011. The District should participate in the process of determining the next use of this City-owned facility. If it is decided that this historic building will serve a joint use with the District and the City, the District should participate in developing a Library Park plan to integrate this area. We recommend such a Library Park plan integrate the Main Library and Carnegie Building within Library Park’s landscaping and flow for the following reasons:

A. Create an information-seeking destination in Old Town.
B. Improve park security.
C. Improve outdoor spaces for the public.

Recommendation 7: Add a New Regional Library

Within the next five to ten years, the District should construct an approximately 34,000 square foot regional library. To improve services in the near term, we recommend that the District develop a new regional library for the following reasons:

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5 Vaisanen, Pekka, P.V. Sup, LLC – www.pv-sup.com
A. The District currently has the essential amount of space as defined in the 2005 Colorado Library Standards issued by the Colorado State Library, Colorado Department of Education. The addition of another regional library, along with a service center would bring the amount of space up to the enhanced level. The enhanced level is required to provide adequate space based on the District’s service priorities.

B. The District will have three regional centers (Main, Harmony and a future Regional Library), improving coverage over the entire area of service.

C. The new library will help to distribute additional services throughout the District.

D. Another regional library of 34,000 square feet will improve the District's ability to handle future demands for library services.

E. The service center could be located adjacent to the future regional library, thus reducing building costs and limiting exposure to rising operational costs.

F. Additional community meeting spaces would be available to the public. An option of additional square footage for large meeting spaces should be considered based on the needs at the time the new facility is designed.

**Recommendation 8: Expand Harmony Library Meeting Space**

Within the next five to ten years, the Harmony Library’s meeting space should be expanded. We recommend that the Library District review the facility options at Harmony Library with Front Range Community College staff for the following reasons:

A. Understand the facility options for library expansion on campus.

B. Integrate District plans with Front Range Community College master planning.

C. Explore new uses for the meeting space.

**Geographic Analysis**

Poudre River Public Library District is a 1,780 square mile area within Northern Larimer County, Colorado, with boundaries that are essentially the same as those of Poudre School District. The Library District reaches into Thompson School District on the south following the City of Fort Collins boundaries. It does not include the town of Wellington or the Red Feather Lakes areas that operate their own libraries.

Each library building needs to respond to a different set of service needs. Physical workspaces should provide computer seats, staff help and collections in all formats, including online sources. There should be training programs, cultural heritage events and areas that contain conference room(s) that private organizations or individuals can reserve.

To help determine the District’s future space needs, the Fort Collins GIS Department provided an analysis of 2006 library data and layered the information with geographical software. They were instructed to draw a circle around each of the library locations. This provides a view of the service population within a one-mile, three-mile and five-mile radius around each building’s address. Following is a chart that includes demographic information for the areas surrounding the District’s existing library locations. The chart also includes demographic information for a possible future library in the Mountain Vista area in north Fort Collins.
Facilities Master Plan
Poudre River Public Library District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population within one mile</th>
<th>Main</th>
<th>Harmony</th>
<th>Council Tree</th>
<th>Mountain Vista</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population within one mile</td>
<td>9,213</td>
<td>9,138</td>
<td>10,132</td>
<td>1,433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One mile - Households earning less than $15,000 annually</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One mile - Households earning $15,000-$25,000 annually</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual population growth rate within three miles</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>1.03%</td>
<td>2.34%</td>
<td>2.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population within three miles</td>
<td>78,885</td>
<td>63,478</td>
<td>49,620</td>
<td>14,416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three miles - Households earning $50,000-$74,000 annually</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three miles - Households earning $75,000-$99,000 annually</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household income within three miles</td>
<td>$46,121</td>
<td>$70,202</td>
<td>$78,384</td>
<td>$59,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library cardholders within three miles</td>
<td>44,618</td>
<td>39,357</td>
<td>24,221</td>
<td>7,483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age within three miles</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of children within three miles</td>
<td>(ages 0-4) 4.7%</td>
<td>(ages 0-4) 12.8%</td>
<td>(ages 0-4) 7.1%</td>
<td>(ages 0-4) 12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of children within three miles</td>
<td>(ages 5-14) 7.8%</td>
<td>(ages 5-14) 6.0%</td>
<td>(ages 5-14) 12.3%</td>
<td>(ages 5-14) 6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of college students within three miles</td>
<td>(ages 20-24) 20.9%</td>
<td>(ages 20-24) 9.9%</td>
<td>(ages 20-24) 7.0%</td>
<td>(ages 20-24) 13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of college students within three miles</td>
<td>(ages 25-34) 17.7%</td>
<td>(ages 25-34) 15.9%</td>
<td>(ages 25-34) 14.8%</td>
<td>(ages 25-34) 13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of seniors within three miles</td>
<td>(ages 65-74) 4.5%</td>
<td>(ages 65-74) 4.4%</td>
<td>(ages 65-74) 4.5%</td>
<td>(ages 65-74) 6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population within five miles</td>
<td>134,699</td>
<td>130,226</td>
<td>98,678</td>
<td>70,482</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cardholders within five miles</td>
<td>78,824</td>
<td>78,086</td>
<td>59,326</td>
<td>39,357</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Facility Analysis

- **Main Library:**
  - This library provides digital services to lower income patrons.
  - The population within one mile of the library is lower income than at Harmony and Council Tree.
  - A high percentage of college students live within three miles of the library.
  - Half of the District population lives within three miles of the library.

- **Harmony Library:**
  - It is located near a growing population.
  - The population within one mile of the library is almost the same as the Main Library’s population.
  - A high number of library cardholders live within three miles of the library, indicating high usage.
  - A high percentage of young children live within three miles of the library, indicating a heavy demand for storytime programs.
• **Council Tree Library:**
  - The population within one mile of the library is 10,132; in other words, it is close to a large residential area.
  - This library is in a fast growing area. The annual growth rate within three miles of the library is 2.34 percent.
  - A high percentage of teens live within three miles of the library.

• **Mountain Vista:**
  This area is a possible site for a service center/branch. A site study is required to confirm the location. We included the analysis to illustrate the need to provide services to the District’s suburban and rural residents in the county and in north Fort Collins.
  - Mountain Vista (northeast of downtown Fort Collins) is close to a suburban and rural population.
  - There are 70,482 people living within five miles of the proposed location for the new library, indicating that the location would enable the District to serve more residents.
  - In the Mountain Vista area, the District could serve 39,357 current cardholders within five miles.
  - The area is growing fast. The annual growth rate within three miles of the proposed area is 2.25 percent.
  - A high percentage of young children live within three miles of the library, requiring early childhood literacy support.

The three-mile analysis illustrates that each library building serves a different part of the community:
- The Main Library serves a different type of patron than the other libraries, mainly college students and adults.
- The Harmony Library serves a community college and families with young children.
- The Council Tree Library serves several neighborhoods that include many families with young children and teens.
- The proposed Mountain Vista location provides an option to support the rural and suburban population. It is also is close to I-25 and could be a good location for a service center.

**Meeting Space**
According to the consulting team’s Visual Scan®, the Library District’s meeting/programming rooms are inadequate for its populations needs. In the Main and Harmony libraries, the meeting spaces were graded as being poor. Each room required more space for flexibility.
- The Main Library meeting room was graded C-.
- The Harmony Library meeting room was graded C.

**Seating Considerations**
According to findings from the Visual Scan®, staff and stakeholders indicated that increased seating for cultural and educational activities is important to the future of the District. In addition, more seats need to be available for children’s storytime and programs, and different types of seats and/or multifunctional seats are required for quiet study, computer workstations, group study and meetings, etc.
Based on its current activity level, study seating for the Harmony Library is adequate.

Collaborative work areas (spaces for two to four people) are needed to support small, group-related activities. These collaborative spaces are increasingly important to patrons who wish to gather and work together in small groups.

The on-going integration of technologies and access to computers has become important library needs. As newspaper circulation continues to decline, people are getting their news elsewhere - increasingly via the Internet. More and more people go online regularly. Among the tasks are reading newspapers, periodicals, financial reports and blogs; perusing social networking sites; shopping web sites; checking e-mail; and conducting Internet searches. Neither the Main Library nor the Harmony Library has enough computer seats to serve this increasing demand.

The Main Library contains 192 seats.
- For a very active downtown library, 192 seats are inadequate to service 44,600 cardholders within a three-mile service area.
- Additional study is required to determine the optimal number of seats the site can provide.
- A renovation/upgrade should significantly increase the amount of seating available to the public.

Many library users are adjusting to the availability of low-cost laptops, cell phones and handheld electronic devices. In the near future, the District will need to rethink the ways it provides user seats and computer access. Any computer areas should be easily reconfigurable over time. Flexible seating and modular furniture may be an option to meet this changing environment and also the continuing need for ADA-accessible public computers. Rather than seats in front of computer screens, adequate seating throughout the library where patrons can access the wireless network with portable computer devices (either patron or library provided) would increase computer access and create maximum flexibility.

Providing Facilities that Foster the District’s Service Priorities

The service priorities defined by the library board enable the District to develop new facility planning goals and objectives. With the acceptance of the Planning for Results Strategic Plan, the board agreed to respond to the seven goals contained in “Section II – Goals and Objectives of the Strategic Plan 2008-2011.” Facility impacts of the strategic plan include:

- The Harmony Library needs more seating to support lifelong learning.
  - The Front Range Community College student population will continue to grow.
  - Patrons use Harmony Library for individual and group study and to attend larger meetings.
- The Main Library’s ability to meet all of the service responses will be improved by the addition of more public space and a complete remodel.
  - Main Library can be a hub that provides connectivity to people who don’t have home access or cannot afford connectivity.
  - Considerably expanded meeting room and collection spaces at Main Library will improve staff’s ability to meet the service priorities of creating young readers, stimulating imagination, satisfying curiosity, connecting to the online world, expressing creativity and fostering informed citizens.
With additional public space, Main Library’s children’s staff will expand their services to provide new ways to create and share content.

- A new library north of the District’s current facilities is needed to support all of the service priorities for the District’s northern populations and businesses.

**Technology/Facility Considerations**

The District’s need for enhanced electronic services is likely to accelerate in the future. This is a common trend that has been occurring in public libraries for some time. More video (multimedia) on-demand requests will increase the need for professional staff who can manage network bandwidth (both Internet and building-to-building connectivity). Due to its large geographic area and mixed urban and rural environment, the District's best opportunity for support will be in an efficient electronic outreach program. This program can be supported with grants and additional funding.

The District’s IT staff members support systems used directly by the library customers such as the website, E-commerce, public access computers and the circulation system. They also support other library systems through network management, staff computer support, electronic marketing of library services and training.

Members of the IT staff are also responsible for upgrading and system conversions such as the recent conversion to RFID technology.

**Facility Connectivity**

Reliable connectivity is crucial to cost-effective and efficient IT operations. Reliable connectivity allows the District’s systems to provide Internet access and function as an integrated system. Any new facility will need to meet IT requirements for connectivity with a high bandwidth.

The District’s computer servers are located at the Main Library. District-wide connectivity is accomplished using a fiber-optic system managed by Platte River Power Authority (PRPA). In the future, new building space for the District’s operations (including new or leased buildings) should be located as close to the PRPA fiber-optic network as possible.

The PRPA system currently does not provide redundant fiber to the Main Library and adding this reliability enhancement would be cost prohibitive. Including redundant fiber at the proposed service center and moving the servers to that location may be a more reasonable solution to this issue.

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**Staffing Analysis**

The following chart outlines the District’s staff profile.
### Existing Staff Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Part-Time</th>
<th>Full-Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main</strong></td>
<td>80</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harmony</strong></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Council Tree Library</strong></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mgt – Admin</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff Total</strong></td>
<td>180</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### General Characteristics
- District staff includes both permanent, classified personnel and hourly employees.
- District staff members who provide direct service to the public include hourly employees, library assistants, library services representatives, circulation supervisors, and full-time and part-time classified librarians.
- Public service in circulation is provided primarily by hourly employees. Shelvers and materials handlers who check in and reshelve returned materials are primarily hourly employees.
- Supervisory librarians coordinate branch and departmental services.
- Hourly librarians serve as substitutes at all three libraries on an as-needed basis.
- District administrative staff (including IT and District management) is located primarily at the Main Library, and Technical Services is located in a leased space in downtown Fort Collins.

The following outlines recommended changes that relate to staffing at the District:

### Operational Efficiencies and Technology
- Over time, operational efficiencies such as the small sorting system defined above will enable the library to reduce manual tasks that the staff must perform currently. The District is currently moving toward taking full advantage of RFID technology. Investing in small automated sorting systems should enable the District to reduce the space currently needed for manual processing. According to our research, the outcomes of small sorting system RFID integration include:
  - Reallocation of staff to provide direct customer service. Users who need extra help can be served more quickly.
  - Reallocation of staff to focus on programming and outreach efforts in support of the District’s service priorities. Fewer manual processing requirements can enable the library to refocus staff to planning and performing programs and activities for the public.
- Changes in library services and technology will result in ongoing staff changes. New and emerging services evolve from being novel and cutting-edge to being basic, expected services faster than ever.
Staff Workspace Analysis

Aaron Cohen Associates analyzed library staff space and determined that improvements could be implemented that would make the District a more integrated, efficient and flexible operation. Although the District has made recent, positive changes (e.g., library automation - RFID), further significant change is difficult without proper work areas. Optimal workspaces are vital to facilitate and support staff’s activities and workflows.

An assessment of staff spaces confirms that because the organization’s staff is separated, they work in silos because of space constraints.

- Some departments are in different buildings: for example, Technical Services is offsite, Adult Services is in the Main Library and Interlibrary Loan is in Harmony Library. Offices separated from one another by long distances can be problematic. A case in point: in order to meet with Technical Services staff to discuss computer issues, IT representatives must leave their offices and visit Technical Services, taking valuable time away from IT tasks.
- District operations, administrative staff and regional staff need efficient and professional work spaces. For example, the Interlibrary Loan team circulates most of the District's materials in a restricted space at the Harmony Library. Inadequate space may diminish the efficiency of interlibrary loan operations.
- A service center is required to develop operational efficiencies. Efficient operations within a service center will provide an integrated and efficient workplace. The outcome will result in improved workflows for Technical Services activities (acquisitions, materials handling), Interlibrary Loan and administrative services.
- Public services coordinators for programming and collection development currently work in their assigned libraries. In the future, some public administrative staff should work out of the regional library and service center complex. Here they can work to establish and standardize service delivery for the entire District and ensure that services will be delivered at the same high level at each library facility.
- The Friends of the Library struggle to handle their routine processes in currently available spaces.

Carnegie Building Analysis

The Carnegie Building is a City of Fort Collins facility and currently houses the City’s museum. Because of the upcoming relocation of the museum in 2011 and the history of the Carnegie Building as the region’s first municipal library, the Aaron Cohen Associates consulting team considered the reuse of the Carnegie building from a library perspective. The building is part of Library Park and is a vital link to Fort Collins' history. Built in 1904 and renovated in 1939, the building was the library’s home for almost 70 years until a new library building was constructed in 1976 on the other side of Library Park.

The team discussed possible uses for the building, including service functions that would support the District with limited funding. It was determined that the Carnegie Building does not provide the District with a simple solution. There is considerable distance between the Carnegie Building and the Main Library, and there is no way to combine the buildings without re-landscaping Library Park. There is a way to connect the buildings using a “green” pathway, however. Indeed, a possible design could include a plaza area with a pathway between the buildings. It is a solution that could be cost-effective for both the Library District and the City, and may be a way to reconnect the Main Library with Old Town.
The Carnegie Building’s heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are outdated and overworked. The building’s infrastructure needs a major overhaul if it is to be considered for future library services. The library’s original entrance was not ADA-compliant, so an additional entrance with a ramp had to be installed around the side of the building. Thus, the building has two entrances and an elevator system, all of which create security problems. Also, the original building and the addition are at different heights and levels, further complicating reuse.

During facilities planning research, the consulting team conducted a Visual Scan© of the Carnegie Building. Community members agreed that a grand meeting space could serve the District and downtown community with inexpensive group meeting spaces including an auditorium, large group function areas, conferencing facilities and small study areas. It could include a café and Friends of the Library bookstore. These ideas would require a feasibility study and building program for the Carnegie Building. The City and the District would have to develop a partnership for managing the property. Ownership might be transferred to the District or a leasing arrangement set up.

The Carnegie Building’s reuse would require considerable funding before any of the ideas described could become a reality. The installation of a modern HVAC system and elevator system would be costly. City and state governments might provide funding to correct the building’s infrastructure as they may want to contribute to the economic development of Old Town. An outpouring of community support would be required for an integrated Library, City and Library Park plan. This is not impossible, but it would require partnering, funding and excellent landscaping.

The best scenario would be an injection of private funding matched with city, state or federal funding. For example, a private campaign for the Carnegie Building that provides for a meeting place, Library Park landscaping and a “green” plaza with a walkway to the Main Library should be explored with private donors and the City of Fort Collins. This scenario could redevelop the Carnegie Building without the need for additional public funding.

Funding a Regional District: Future Capital Needs

When voters approved the Poudre River Public Library District, they also approved a 3-mill tax rate. Any additional tax increase for library services or capital requires another vote. To ensure that the residents in the District continue to enjoy sufficient and stable library services over the next 20 years, the District needs to provide affordable services within a reasonable budget. The District’s administration and its board need a mix of funding to provide sufficient revenue to operate present and future facilities and to support changes in technology. The following are funding options to support the District's capital projects:

- **General mill levy** – A sustainable strategy for operational budgets. Since any increase in levy requires voter approval, an intensive exercise must take place. It will require dedicated campaign management. Typically, it takes two to three votes over a span of five years to get capital projects passed.

- **Dedicated debt service mill levy** – Common practice for school districts but not being used by any Colorado library districts. For a capital project, it could be used on a section of the District that is growing or changing.

- **Capital Improvement Expansions Fees (Impact Fees)** – Funds from new residential construction. Conservative governments prefer to pass on capital costs to developers. Unfortunately, it may take 10 years to collect enough funding for a building project that is required today.
• **Cash-in-lieu of Land** – Fees on residential developments within rural subdivisions. Note: Larimer County uses this fee for parks and schools. This could be expanded to include spaces for book dispensers in parks or near schools.

• **Land Donations** – Made directly by developers. This provides land for future facilities when the need for a library building is part of the developer's plan for a "Chautauqua style" community. This can be time consuming because developers have different objectives than the District. There are often many hidden operational costs even when the developer is offering space for free.

• **Capital fundraising** – A campaign to raise funds for a building project. This would be required for the Carnegie building, Main Library and Library Park project. Matching funds would enable the District to leverage private monies for a grand project.

• **Grants** – May be available for a portion of the project. Harmony Library could be expanded with grants from the state for community college resources.

• **General Obligation Bonds** – A way to use government property taxes. Traditionally, in the East, libraries get a share of property tax money to provide local library services. In Colorado, they are limited to 1.5 percent of the assessed valuation and require voter approval.

• **Certificates of Participation (COP)** – A separate entity, such as a leasing company, agrees to make improvements for the Library District. The District agrees to lease these improvements. The leasing company then sells this rental income stream to investors in order to get the funds to make the improvements. Once the COPs are fully paid, ownership of the facilities transfer to the District. COPs would not be considered debt of the District. Therefore, they would not require voter approval and are not subject to the legal debt margin. This is the most popular way to finance new library facilities for Colorado library districts.

• **Lease/Purchase** – Similar to COPs. Improvements are financed by a leasing company. The leasing company rents the improvements to the District through a lease arrangement that pays for the costs of the improvements.

• **Cash Funding** – Improvements aren't made until funds are available to pay for the projects upfront. The District should use 3-5 percent of its cash as a reinvestment strategy for small capital improvements.

• **Library Foundation (Trust)**
  - Additional support must come from private donors. The District should invest time to develop a functioning foundation with a separate board.
  - The foundation can raise funds for short-term capital and operational improvements. (Successful examples of other library systems gaining private funding include St. Paul Public Library Foundation in Minnesota, Teton County Library District in Wyoming, and Jackson Hole District in Wyoming.)
IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

The facilities master plan outlines the work that must be done in order to deliver specific services and functions. We know through experience that changes are made through consensus building exercises. For the District to accomplish the service priorities as outlined in this document, it is essential that:

- The 1976 Main Library is renovated and expanded in the near term.
- A comprehensive plan for increased services throughout the District is developed.
- A regional library and service center complex is planned and constructed within the next five to ten years.

When and Where Should the District Build a New Facility?

Before the District selects a location for the new regional library, the District will need to agree on the criteria for building any new libraries in the District. This process will address the requirements for expansion and enable the board to manage and control its finances as new facilities are added.

We determined that the District does not meet our minimum standard of one square foot of library building space per capita for its population. We recommended that the board use this figure to determine regional expansion requirements. However, the Colorado State Library has also issued space standards which vary based on the level of service provided. The Library District has chosen to develop its long range facilities plan based on the “enhanced” level of service standard contained in the Colorado State Library standards.

To understand the District’s current library building distribution within the community, Aaron Cohen Associates requested that GIS maps be developed for all branch libraries. The consulting team requested that the City of Fort Collins GIS Department draw radiuses of one, three, and five miles around each library location to better understand the community served by each library. We are confident that GIS maps, along with simple planning criteria, can be used to trigger regional expansion decisions.

The size and location of the new regional library and service center complex ultimately will depend on the District’s demographic and service needs. The library board should adopt standards that guide the timing and placement of additional facilities. These standards should set guidelines for minimum library size, populations served, minimum distances from other libraries and patron access and drive times. For example, new libraries should serve a minimum of 30,000 people within a three-mile service area and provide access for most residents within the service area within 15-20 minutes. New libraries should be a minimum of 30,000 square feet and be a minimum of five miles away from another library.

Proposed Schedule

The following outlines a schedule for new construction, renovation and facility enhancement over the next 10 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Time Line</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Library</td>
<td>One to Three Years</td>
<td>• Renovate the Main Library, expand under cantilevers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Start the architectural building pro-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Carnegie Building</strong></td>
<td>Three to Five Years</td>
<td>• Complete the Carnegie Building, Main Library and Library Park Improvement Project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **New Regional Library and Service Center** | Five to Ten Years | • Perform a site study to determine the location of the new regional library and service center complex. This would enable the library board to compare options for service delivery.  
• Preliminary locations/options: Mountain Vista, Timnath and LaPorte.  
• Undertake the site study and purchase the land (one to three years).  
• Start the campaign to build a regional library and service center complex (three to five years).  
• Open a new regional library and service center complex.  
Note: a new regional library depends on successful long-range funding for capital and operational costs. |
| **Harmony Library** | Five to Ten Years | • Review the facility plan in cooperation with Front Range Community College.  
• Explore potential capital improvements and funding options with Front Range Community College. |

### Site Selection

#### Preliminary Site Selection

Based on discussions with the City of Fort Collins Economic Planning Department and on available demographic data and forecasts, the following areas are suggested as possible sites for a Regional Library:

- Mountain Vista
- Timnath
- LaPorte
- Other Locations

#### Site Study

One recommendation of this master facility plan is selection of a site for a future regional library and service center complex. The District will need a site study to confirm the best possible location for the new library and to determine the costs, technology linkups and purchase or lease options.

- The District will need a planning consultant to research locations that fit the selection criteria for a regional library and service center. Once the site selection is completed, the District should purchase or negotiate donation of the site and begin planning for its future use. As part of the site selection process, the District should also investigate vacant, available retail or commercial buildings for the
proposed service center. Such sites may provide a cost-effective, centrally located facility for the District's administrative functions.

The long-range plan for a regional library and service center will require a site of six acres.

Sample site selection criteria are as follows:

- Size of site
- Shape of site
- Ownership
- Availability
- Major Highway/Arterial Access
- Identity/Image
- Ability to Provide for Future Expansion
- Parking
- Distance from Other Libraries
- Topography and Drainage
- Access to:
  - Utilities
  - Cell Towers
  - Fiber-Optic Network

**Develop an Architectural Building Program**

The architectural building program must identify the space needs for a regional library and a service center.

- The program must identify specific activities and functions that will be included in the individual spaces.
- Implicit in this process is the need to define the activities and project objectives that will be met.
- The space requirements for each activity must be composed of a series of elements: collection, user seating, staff and program space.
- The size and location of the new regional library and service center complex ultimately will depend on the District's demographic and service needs.
- Funding for these additional facilities will require voter approval of additional District revenue.

**Public Involvement and Long-Range Financial Planning**

The library administration should develop an operational budget that includes costs for a regional library, a service center and potential use of the Carnegie Building. The budget projection forecasts operating costs based on the current level of service and growth anticipated over the next 20 years.

The library board should develop a financial plan that uses the options described above to provide adequate funding for capital projects. To ensure financial stability, a combination of funding streams is preferred so that there are adequate funding options that would not rely solely on voter approval of revenue increases.
Parking

The Harmony Library shares parking with the rest of the Front Range Community College campus and common parking for the Front Range Village shopping area provides parking for the Council Tree Library.

Providing parking for the Main Library is a major library user concern. Currently, there is no designated parking for library users. Solutions for the Main Library’s parking issue should be developed in the context of adequate parking for downtown Fort Collins in general and is beyond the scope of the facilities plan.
APPENDIX A: VISUAL SCAN PROCESS

Visual Scan©

Our team visited the Poudre River Public Library District on November 17-19, 2008, and conducted two Visual Scans©. We analyzed ways to upgrade children’s spaces, teen and adult seating, collection shelving and programming activities; considered ways to repurpose existing buildings so that the District could maximize the use of limited resources; toured with groups and reviewed the use of library spaces. This is a process that enables the community to develop consensus by building on logical options for the future space.

At each library facility, during the Visual Scans©, mature adults, parents with children, students and young professionals were interviewed while touring the facility. Discussions revolved around the specific building’s short-, medium- and long-range options. Also discussed were strategies to improve delivery of services to the people of the Poudre River Public Library District. Each library group agreed that an improvement of the infrastructure and proper integration of Library Park would support and improve the community as a whole.

During the Visual Scan©, the community stressed the importance to identify and plan for short-range as well as long-range capital needs. For example, the Main Library was graded “C”, indicating that a renovation should begin within one-to-three years. Harmony Library was graded “B,” indicating that the building should be modified in five to ten years. It is clear that the Main Library has a pressing need for a larger meeting room and space for enhanced services. It will require capital funding in the near future so that it can be more flexible to counter increased demands for electronic research, meeting space and children’s programs.

Throughout the Visual Scan©, adult seating consistently received a low grade of “C-”. Staff areas received the lowest grades: “D”. A modest change to the Main Library should include staff reorganization, including moving staff off-site to a service center. The library’s management should determine the correct balance of resources. It should investigate leasing options for offices that are less than three miles from any of the District’s libraries. It also should consider combining services to limit costs where possible.

During the Visual Scan©, it became obvious that the priority of the current Main Library’s interior has been to maximize collection space. There are no areas on the first floor in which adults may gather; the Children’s Library is undersized for the community; meeting space is inadequate for current programming needs. Our calculations show that the collection occupies approximately 18,460 gross square feet (GSF) of the building’s total of 34,000 GSF. Assuming the collection doesn’t grow, the book shelving -- including children’s, teens, adults and media -- occupies more than 54% of the interior’s total. Patron seating amounts to 6,085 square feet or only 17% while the staff occupies 7,175 square feet or 21%. The rest of the space, 2,280 GSF, is used for mechanicals, corridors, lavatories, building code requirements, etc. At the very least, the Visual Scan© and our facility analysis clearly indicate that the Main Library needs an increased amount of user seating: computer, lounge, table and carrel.
The Visual Scan© helped our consultants obtain an understanding of basic facility requirements for library services, collections, staff and user-centered spaces.

- **Overall, the Main Library was rated “C”**, indicating that improvements to the library’s infrastructure are required in the short-term (1-3 years).

- **The Harmony Library was rated “B”**, indicating that the library infrastructure is adequate in the short-term (1-3 years), but that additional investments will need to be made to keep up with changes in technology and patron use, i.e., a major renovation should begin in the next 5-10 years.

**Quotations from Participant Interviews**

“If you come in on a Sunday every seat will be full. Last Monday not an empty seat in the library.” – Main Library

“The District needs Technology solutions that apply to collections. Technology needs to support staff better.”

“The meeting rooms in the District are inadequate. We need more study rooms including tutoring rooms. The Children’s area has no place for parents.”

“We are starting Book Express. This is a grant unique to children. We are sending catalogs to children and families in rural areas in the north. The children will be able to use catalogs and select books. We will mail the books to them. Books by mail for kids.”

The following is an example of statements from the Visual Scan© with Young Professionals at 10 am on November 19, 2008.

**Library Park** (The following are not library functions, but important to the overall plan for the Main Library.)

- Really is a great outdoor space. We have activities here.
- Need a coherent space.
- Integrating festivals with park (ex. Annie Walk: dog festival). Nice to have more festivals.
- Landscaping: we love old trees.
- It would be interesting to build kids path with themes between the buildings.
- We need a better pathway.
- This is a destination more than a library destination.

**Grade: C**

**Library Entrance and Park**

- Kids trip on the plaza.
- Kids can’t ride a scooter on the plaza.
- Everything is so dated.
- Building matches the sidewalk.
- It is like walking into a cave.
- Dark and foreboding.
- Have to address homeless issue.
- Courtyard entrance?

**Grade: C**
APPENDIX B: METHODOLOGY

Needs Assessment

Our consulting team conducted "space audits" and Visual Scans© of the Main Library and Harmony Library. We reviewed demographic data and studied the conditions of the Library District's buildings, site and geography.

Assessment of Library Park

Today's libraries and museums are destinations for school children, families and adults who love to learn. According to the Library Research Service (LRS), approximately 8,000 children participate each summer in the library's programs. Indeed, the widespread demand for additional activities in Fort Collins in the summer compels the museum and library services to be rethought. Their roles must be adapted to promote better use of space in downtown Fort Collins, including Library Park in Old Town.

Overall, the groups graded the Park “C”, indicating that the Park's landscaping needs to be upgraded in the short-term (1-3 years).

Strategic Planning

In order to understand how the District would like to best use the existing library systems spaces for the next five-to-twenty years, we reviewed the District's service priorities from its strategic planning document.

Assessment of Library Resources

We assessed the current resources of the District in order to develop a master facilities plan. The plan will be used to develop options for future services.

The District's collection consists of three major components: core resources, flexible elements and on-demand resources.

Core resources are elements that are essential to the library’s mission such as collections, basic information services and staff.

- The collections should be integrated into patron space for browsing ready-reference and research.
- Collections that circulate within a specified time period should be deemed "core resources."
- Less-used collections should be deemed resource or supporting collections. Access to them should be limited with safeguards against deterioration from environmental elements.

Flexible elements are elements of potential change. They can be moved or rearranged based upon strategic initiatives and changes in information technologies.

- To provide sufficient space for twenty-year needs, elements within the library should be flexible enough to be easily reconfigured or removed. Interior design examples are modular furnishings, low shelving, tables on wheels, etc.
• Information technology should embrace a flexible, user-oriented strategy to deliver streaming media, databases and electronic delivery of documents. As technology changes, the interfaces will mature and provide additional flexibility for connectivity within the library environment.

**On-demand resources** offer the greatest challenge. They are resources that are needed now but can be relocated based upon priority needs.

• Issues related to on-demand resources include operational partnerships, sharing and connectivity with other public libraries. On-demand resources are changing the library environment at a rapid pace, requiring good interlibrary loan and operating procedures.
APPENDIX C: PRELIMINARY FACILITY COST ESTIMATE 1-3 YEARS

Aaron Cohen Associates (ACA) recommends that a budget be developed for the following library building projects to be undertaken by the District within the next 1-3 years:

- Main Library Renovation & Addition
- Site Study for a Regional Library

Preliminary Cost Estimate for Main Library Renovation & Addition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEVEL</th>
<th>AREA SQ.FT.</th>
<th>COST PER SQ.FT.</th>
<th>TOTAL COST</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Floor Expansion</td>
<td>5,625 sq.ft.</td>
<td>$250</td>
<td>$1,406,250</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 overhanging bays @ 625</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Floor Renovation</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>$1,050,000</td>
<td>ACA recommends reorganization of entire floor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Floor Renovation</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>$1,500,000</td>
<td>ACA recommends reorganization of entire floor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL PRELIMINARY BUDGET ESTIMATE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$3,956,250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Preliminary Cost Estimate for Site Study for a Regional Library

In the next 1 to 3 years, the Poudre River Public Library District will also need to invest in a site study to determine library site requirements, parking capacity, traffic issues and building size options for a regional library. The District must undertake the site study in order to determine whether to lease or buy a site. The approximate cost for the study is $50,000 - $75,000.
APPENDIX E: PRELIMINARY PLAN FOR MAIN LIBRARY

POUDRE RIVER PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT
FIRST FLOOR PLAN
EXISTING FLOOR AREA - 14,000 SQ FT.
PROPOSED EXPANSION AREA - 6,000 SQ FT.
COLLECTION - 3,350 SQ FT
SEATING - 4,500 SQ FT
STAFF AREAS - 3,630 SQ FT
MEETING ROOM - 1,350 SQ FT
CIRCULATION - 1,320 SQ FT
GROSS TONET RATIO 81.15%

February 9, 2009
No Scale