

# Imperatives for Change

## Cedar Rapids Downtown Library

Early in 2006 the Library Board of Trustees, representatives of the Library Foundation and Friends, and members of the library staff completed a comprehensive effectiveness study of the Downtown Library. The unanimous consensus is that the Downtown Library is in urgent need of significant renewal.

### Contributing Factors

The location, size, and basic form of the building continues to be as successful as the day it opened. However, the building's layout, fixtures, furnishings, finishes, and building systems must be replaced, reorganized, and/or renewed due a number of important factors:

- Quantum changes in information formats and delivery methods.
- Significant changes in customer expectations.
- Relentless wear from heavy use.
- Changes in library operational and service methods.
- The completion of building system equipment life-cycles.

### Specific Recommendations

Looking to the future, some preliminary strategies have been identified for the renewal of this important Cedar Rapids asset:

- There is an overwhelming need to replace the existing aggregation of piecemeal changes by the development of a comprehensive set of solutions for the service and operational concerns identified in this evaluation.
- The layout of all public services must be reconsidered to reflect changes in collections, services, and customer use and staffing patterns. Customer seating locations and groupings, the organization of collection shelving, the relationship between public service desks and public computer stations, and the visibility of study and meeting rooms are examples of the layout concerns to be resolved. The public floor needs to be broken-down into more human spaces.
- All furnishings and finishes must be re-evaluated and, in many cases replaced, to enliven the public spaces, reflect trends in retail techniques, and make the library more welcoming.
- The children's department layout should change its emphasis from static shelving stacks to engaging seating and an active environment for children and their caregivers at center stage.
- Demand for the library's successful computer instruction program exceeds the program's physical limits. Space for that activity should be more visible and more flexible to maximize its benefit to the community.
- The lighting plan and portions of the mechanical systems are in need of replacement. There is deep customer and library dissatisfaction with the public floor lighting. The buildings heat pumps are slated for replacement in the immediate future.
- The whole building entry sequence should be re-considered. The distance customers must traverse to encounter the library's collections and services and where the customer is brought into the public floor should all be evaluated.
- Staff work spaces should be reorganized for effective workflow, security, logical grouping of tasks, and capacities.

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## Cedar Rapids West Side Branch Library

There is a growing perception that the West Side Branch is too limited in scope to meet customer demands for service. The West Side Branch is currently the only primary public library service point west of the Cedar River in the metropolitan area. Population forecasts for the west and southwest sectors of the metro area equal or exceed the rates for the other metro sectors. One library stakeholder recently succinctly stated:

“West is very crowded. We need to redefine the purpose/role of this branch. It seems we’re trying to be a full service library in a tiny space. Does the west side of town need a full service branch and if so, can that be provided in the mall?”

While the West Side Branch is inviting and well used, public service and operational issues raise questions that lead to concern:

- There is frequent public demand for additional public computing stations.
- Children’s program space is inadequate to support the branch’s more popular children’s offerings. During regular programs customers are unable to access children’s materials during the programs.
- Collections are limited due to the lack of space.
- Public seating and seating options are limited due to the lack of space.
- The Branch lacks common amenities such as a public restroom and public photocopier.
- There is no separation of functions so children’s activities bother many adult customers.
- The branch is not visible to the community from outside of the Mall and has no independent identity.

There is a body of trends and findings that suggest the Library Board of Trustees and City consider creating a more robust library presence in the western sector of the City.

- The current 2,600 square foot West Side Branch is a limited service library and there are recurring instances of customer demand that exceed the Branch’s capabilities.
- Peer benchmark data suggests it is appropriate to consider branch development.
- Public library service in the Cedar Rapids area has become a cooperative undertaking, with the major library providers working together to create an optimum environment for their customers.
- The majority of the primary library service outlets are, by historical fact, east of the Cedar River.
- Population forecasts for the West and Southwest segments of the metropolitan area are significant, a population increase of 90% over the 2000 Census population by the year 2040.
- Cedar Rapids should plan for a total of 127,500 to 136,700 square feet of library space at all service locations to serve the community through the year 2030. The library currently offers 85,000 square feet at the Downtown library and 2,600 square feet at the West Side Library.
- There is some concern regarding the vitality of the branch’s current retail environment.

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## Cedar Rapids Growth and Library Planning

The 2005 study, Linn County and Cedar Rapids Metropolitan Area Population and Employment Forecasts 2010-2040, prepared by the Linn County Regional Planning Commission, projects continued growth for Cedar Rapids. The study suggests the following growth rates by decade for the Metropolitan Planning Area.

### Metropolitan Planning Area Population Growth Forecasts

	<b>2000 – 2010</b>	<b>2010 – 2020</b>	<b>2020 – 2030</b>	<b>2030 – 2040</b>
<b>Growth rate</b>	14.8%	14.2%	13.7%	13.2%

The Metro growth rates suggest that Cedar Rapids will experience significant growth between 2000 and 2030, attaining a population of 180,005 in 2030. Today, the Cedar Rapids Public Library has a total of 87,600 square feet, 85,000 square feet at the Downtown Library, 2,600 square feet at the West Side Branch. Looking through the year 2030, the residents of Cedar Rapids will need access to between 127,552 and 136,662 square feet of library facilities.

### Cedar Rapids Public Library 2006 Space Needs Assessment

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2030</b>
<b>Total Library Square Footage</b>	87,600 square feet	127,552 to 136,662 square feet
<b>Collection Size</b>	302,921 items	442,812 items
<b>Jurisdiction Population</b>	* 120,758	** 180,005

This space need may be mitigated to some small degree by the cooperation of public libraries in Linn County. Currently Cedar Rapids, Hiawatha, and Marion Public Libraries all participate in a shared on-line catalog and information access system, they utilize a common delivery system, and they provide reciprocal borrowing privileges. The net effect to the customer is largely as if each library is a branch of single system. The Fairfax Public Library may also become a more complete partner with area libraries as it grows and matures. Each of the other libraries also faces space constraints from growing customer demand and are actively planning for facility improvements.

Notes:     \* 2000 Census  
          \*\* Extrapolation of data prepared by the Linn County Regional Planning Commission

# Cooperative Metropolitan Public Library Service

The three primary public libraries in Linn County, Cedar Rapids, Hiawatha, and Marion Public Libraries, cooperate in numerous meaningful ways. The three libraries and the Iowa Substance Abuse Information Center all participate in a shared on-line catalog and information access system called the Metro Library Network. A delivery system provides transfer of interlibrary loan materials on a daily basis. The libraries also offer reciprocal borrowing privileges to borrowers from each of the participating libraries.

To the benefit of the libraries' customers, it is in many ways as if each library is a branch of single system. In FY 2005, 27.6% of loans to Cedar Rapids residents by the three libraries were by Hiawatha and Marion Public Libraries. Cedar Rapids Public Library provided 13.1% of the loans to Marion residents and 30.1% of the loans to Hiawatha residents that same year. The following tables provide more detailed information on the transparency of boundaries in library service among the three libraries.

## Loans To Cedar Rapids Borrowers by Library FY 2005

Lending Library	Loans to Cedar Rapids Borrowers FY 2005	Per Cent of Total
Hiawatha Public Library	93,333	8.7%
Marion Public Library	202,848	18.9%
Cedar Rapids Public Library	775,862	72.4%
<b>3 Library Total</b>	<b>1,072,043</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Loans To Marion Borrowers by Library FY 2005

Lending Library	Loans to Marion Borrowers FY 2005	Per Cent of Total
Hiawatha Public Library	8,420	2.2%
Marion Public Library	330,041	84.7%
Cedar Rapids Public Library	51,181	13.1%
<b>3 Library Total</b>	<b>389,642</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## Loans To Hiawatha Borrowers by Library FY 2005

Lending Library	Loans to Hiawatha Borrowers FY 2005	Per Cent of Total
Hiawatha Public Library	37,922	54.3%
Marion Public Library	10,932	15.6%
Cedar Rapids Public Library	20,990	30.1%
<b>3 Library Total</b>	<b>69,844</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

# Cooperative Metropolitan Facility Planning

All of the communities in Linn County are experiencing population growth and changing patterns of library service. These dynamics have led each community's library to consider future facility requirements to meet their community's library service needs. The following tables describe each library's current and proposed building, collection size, and jurisdictional population based on recently completed library planning studies.

## Hiawatha Public Library 2005 Space Needs Assessment

	2004	2030
<b>Total Library Square Footage</b>	8,543 square feet	30,576 to 32,760 square feet
<b>Collection Size</b>	41,908 items 94 periodical titles	110,308 items 161 periodical titles
<b>Jurisdiction Population</b>	6,480 200 Census	9,500 projection

## Marion Public Library 2005 Space Needs Assessment

	2004	2030
<b>Total Library Square Footage</b>	24,500 square feet	56,721 square feet
<b>Collection Size</b>	152,942 items 310 periodical titles	184,217 items 400 periodical titles
<b>Jurisdiction Population</b>	26,294 2000 Census	46,527 projection

## Cedar Rapids Public Library 2005 Space Needs Assessment

	2005	2030
<b>Total Library Square Footage</b>	87,600 square feet	Not yet determined
<b>Collection Size</b>	302,921 items 401 periodical titles	442,812 items
<b>Jurisdiction Population</b>	120,758 2000 Census	180,005 projection

## Fairfax Public Library 2005 Space Needs Assessment

	2005	2030
<b>Total Library Square Footage</b>	3,690 square feet	13 to 14,000 square feet
<b>Collection Size</b>	13,025 items 31 periodical titles	35,520 items 100 periodical titles
<b>Jurisdiction Population</b>	1,642 (2005 Census)	4,337 projection

