Perhaps no place in any community is so totally democratic as the town library. The only entrance requirement is interest.

Lady Bird Johnson

Carson City Library:
A Place for Everyone

Strategic Plan
2009-2013

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the twenty years I have spent in libraries, this needs assessment and strategic plan represents the most thorough and comprehensive planning effort I have ever been involved in. This includes oversight of two statewide master plans for library services in Nevada.

This process represents an extremely thorough analysis of the Carson City community and would never have been possible without the support of Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funding from the Nevada State Library and Archives. In particular I would like to extend a thank you to Guy Rocha, the Acting Administrator of the Nevada State Library and Archives, for supporting this funding and also to Diane Baker, the LSTA Coordinator who provided valuable input and support for the project.

This funding allowed for an intense look at not only the status of the library building, but its services to the present community and its hopes to serve the community better in the future.

The Library staff, Board of Trustees, volunteers, Friends of the Library and the Library Foundation spent many hours in meetings and discussions about the library, its services and its future. Their time is sincerely appreciated.

In addition, the four professional consultants: John Shelton of Impresario Management, Ron Baker of JFG Systems, Linda Mielke of LSSI, Inc. and Rob Lauder of RL Engineering provided significant contribution in their areas of expertise and their efforts to complete this project are sincerely appreciated.

Finally to the community, thank you for your time, support and continued interest in the library and in making it better.

Sara Jones
Library Director
VISION:
The library is the central gathering place for Carson City, celebrating the community’s capital stature by promoting through example a vibrant, comfortable, safe and compelling place for everyone to be a part of, visit and explore.

MISSION:
The Carson City Library strives to be the cultural center of the community by providing free and equal access to information, technology and resources for entertainment and life-long learning.
CARSON CITY LIBRARY STRATEGIC GOALS
2009-2013

✓ **Strategic Goal 1**: The Carson City Library will be the community gathering place.

✓ **Strategic Goal 2**: The Carson City Library will provide exceptional customer service to everyone.

✓ **Strategic Goal 3**: The Carson City Library will proactively seek, expand and maintain collaborations.

✓ **Strategic Goal 4**: The Carson City Library will dramatically increase awareness of the library’s resources and services.

✓ **Strategic Goal 5**: The Carson City Library will train, encourage, reward and celebrate a knowledgeable and dedicated staff, generous volunteers and vital support organizations.

✓ **Strategic Goal 6**: The Carson City Library will provide the materials and resources the community needs and wants.

✓ **Strategic Goal 7**: The Carson City Library will continuously expand and improve technology and access to the Internet.

✓ **Strategic Goal 8**: The Carson City Library will provide a place that improves and enhances the quality of life for everyone in Carson City and for every visitor to the Capital City.
INTRODUCTION

Carson City Library (formerly known as the Ormsby Public Library) was established in 1969 when the public library and the state library separated into two distinct libraries. The library was housed in temporary locations until the present library, located at 900 N. Roop Street was built in 1971; an addition to that library was completed in 1982. Since that time the library has utilized a building with a square footage of 21,532 on a lot of 1.687 acres.

The Carson City Library has been and continues to be a vital, busy and important community service. This year, Carson City Library will check out 400,000 items. In 2008, Carson City Library had nearly 300,000 visits with more than 60% of the community having library cards.

The current estimated population of Carson City is 57,600. The population is estimated to increase to 59,212 by 2018 and 62,078 by 2028, demonstrating that growth over the next twenty years will be moderate, less than 8% in the next two decades. (Nevada State Demographers Office, October 2008)

Strategic Plan 2005-2009

The current strategic plan, adopted May 24, 2005, covered the years from 2005-2009. While this plan provided objectives to help the library “provide the finest possible public services, resources, and programming to satisfy the informational needs of the entire community” it did not provide a thorough enough road map to accomplish the very ambitious goal to build a world class public library to serve the Carson City community in the 21st century.

Sara Jones, the former Nevada State Librarian, was hired as Library Director in 2007 to assist the library with the ambitious goal to plan, fund and build a new library. Ms. Jones sought a process that would go directly to the community to ascertain needs and expectations, and to include perspectives from all stakeholders - including staff, trustees, members of the Friends of the Library and the Library Foundation, city officials and most importantly, the members of the community.

Needs Assessment Process

As a result of a successful $65,000 Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant funded from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) through the Nevada State Library and Archives, the library was able to complete a comprehensive and thorough needs assessment of the library and information needs of Carson City.

In preparing a new strategic plan the library engaged John Shelton of Impresario Management, a consulting and management firm that specializes in nonprofits that are developing, troubled or on the threshold of transition. Mr. Shelton worked with the library from June of 2007 through the completion of the plan in 2009. In addition to the work performed by Impresario Management, the Carson City Library engaged three other professional consultants to provide assessment of the library and its services:

- JFG Systems- Technology Systems Assessment
- LSSI, Inc.- Technical Services/Operations Assessment
- RL Engineering- Assessment of current building on 900 N. Roop
JFG Systems is a Carson City technology firm with significant experience in library technology. Ron Baker, as the Principal Investigator for JFG systems, completed a comprehensive assessment of all internal and external technology systems, services and equipment in use at the library. This included technology services provided by Carson City IT department, the Cooperative Libraries Automated Network (CLAN) and internal technology staff, equipment, programs and services.

LSSI-Library Systems & Services, Inc is a management and consulting firm founded by library professionals. LSSI is the country's premier provider of library management services. LSSI services are designed to help libraries successfully surmount their challenges and create a brighter future for their library. Since 1981, LSSI has been partnering with communities to provide more efficient and effective ways to manage new and existing library operations. Linda Mielke acted as the Principal Investigator and prepared a report on the status of technical services operations - including the processes of book and material selection, acquiring the materials, processing the materials and shelving the materials. All aspects were analyzed and recommendations for improved efficiencies in all areas were provided.

RL Engineering, a Carson City professional engineering firm, specializing in structural engineering, completed a Site and Structure Assessment for the building located on 900 N. Roop Street. Rob Lauder, P.E., provided professional services to complete a thorough analysis of the building and the property to assist the library in the process of developing alternatives for future operations of library services. The report was generated in order to provide information about the existing facilities in a format to allow comparison with possible alternatives.

The needs assessment of library services was completed over a year and a half and was by far the most comprehensive planning process ever done by the Carson City Library to plan for its future. The process started with a day long planning retreat which was a first ever opportunity for the stakeholders in the Carson City Library to get together and discuss the future. This session began an effort lasting more than a year to assess the library and information needs of the Carson City community. The retreat was attended by 4 trustees; 26 library staff; 4 volunteers; 3 Library Foundation members and 6 Friends of the Library. All participants were interviewed prior to the retreat. The former Library Director, Associate Director and 8 critical stakeholders were also interviewed for their input.

Following the retreat, a survey instrument was deployed throughout the Carson City community. 5,000 surveys were mailed to a representative sampling of households. Approximately 1,000 surveys were distributed from the library and other locations. Surveys in Spanish were also distributed in the community. In addition, the survey could be completed online using Survey Monkey. 1,206 surveys were completed which represents nearly a 20% return. Library stakeholders understand that survey respondents are biased towards older, long-term residents who take the time to respond to public surveys.

The library made significant efforts to increase community awareness of the survey in order to insure a good response. These efforts included:

- Securing the www.carsoncitylibrary.org domain for the library to have a distinct web presence.
- Professional brochures printed and distributed discussing hours, services and policies.
- Video on services and need for a new building.
- Significant media exposure in print, television and the Internet.
- In-house promotion of needs assessment provided through a video screen encouraging input regarding user’s opinions about the library.

Following completion of the survey, Impresario Management conducted a second staff retreat with key staff, the Board of Trustees, Friends and Foundation members. An additional visioning and mission statement session was held with all library staff.

Following that, Impresario Management conducted a series of seven focus groups in October and November of 2008 as a follow-up to findings and patterns associated with mail surveys administered in the spring and early summer of 2008. Survey findings suggested that six distinct demographic citizen pools be matched against a seventh
control group to further explore the patterns of community attitudes about services and programs provided by the Carson City Library.

In addition to the control group, these groups included:

1. Non-users of the Carson City Library
2. New Carson City residents (5 years or less)
3. Long-term Carson City residents (20 years or more)
4. Families that use the library
5. Hispanic users
6. Young people that use the library

After this thorough and comprehensive assessment, taking over 18 months to complete, all details, reports and data were collated and analyzed and provide the foundation for this strategic plan.

The needs assessment process identified eight areas for the Carson City Library to develop strategic goals to improve and expand library services. These areas are categorized as follows:

1. Community Gathering Place
2. Customer Service
3. Collaboration
4. Marketing/Awareness
5. Staff
6. Resources /Collections
7. Technology
8. Facility

The strategic plan is broken into 8 strategic goals, with initiatives and actions for each strategic goal and both quantitative and qualitative measurements to determine their success.

**Working Definitions**

- A strategic goal is defined as the overall goal for the library in terms of its position in both the medium and the long term. A strategic goal is part of the library's strategy and acts as a motivating force as well as a measure of performance and achievement for those working in the library.
- Initiatives are used to indicate broader and more comprehensive activities that are best measured qualitatively. An example would be “improving the quality of life in Carson City”.
- Actions are specific and measurable, quantitatively, in numbers and percentages. An example would be to increase library card holders by 25%.
- Measurement is the means used to determine success of the plan both quantitatively (in numbers) and qualitatively (in outcomes).

In addition to being strategic, the goals in the plans are ambitious - more ambitious than any plan to date for the Carson City Library. While each goal has some specific actions and initiatives in many cases the actions overlap because they fit a variety of goals, for example increasing hours of operation accomplishes several strategic goals.

In the book *Built to Last* the authors Jim Collins and Jerry Porras coined the term **big, hairy, audacious goal (BHAG)** which they describe as follows: “A BHAG engages people – it reaches out and grabs them in the gut. It is tangible, energizing, highly focused. People ‘get it’ right away; it takes little or no explanation.”

A BHAG is different from traditional organizational goals and objectives in that they are significantly **bigger**. You will know a BHAG by the following characteristics:

- A BHAG should be so clear and compelling that it requires little or no explanation.
- A BHAG should fall well outside the comfort zone. People in the organization should have reason to believe they can pull it off, yet it should require heroic effort and perhaps even a little luck.
- A BHAG should be so bold and **exciting in its own right** that it would continue to stimulate progress even if the organization’s leaders disappeared before it had been completed. ([http://www.thepracticeofleadership.net/2009/01/04/what-is-your-bhag/](http://www.thepracticeofleadership.net/2009/01/04/what-is-your-bhag/), 2009, The Practice of Leadership)

This strategic plan is about BHAG’s - **big, hairy, audacious goals** - and striving for them should be viewed as important as achieving them.
STRATEGIC GOAL 1
THE CARSON CITY LIBRARY WILL BE THE COMMUNITY GATHERING PLACE.

Initiatives
• Establish the Carson City Library as the primary center of community social activity, programs and events.
  ▪ Facilitate community-based programs and events that promote improved community awareness, cultural interaction and stimulate community dialogue.
  ▪ Programming and services will be inclusive and broad and support everyone in our community, all ages and all cultural and ethnic groups.
  ▪ Provide programming that supports the highest level of community involvement with a focus on cultural enrichment and public education programs.
  ▪ Expand and create a greater social context around public programming like one book/one community reading event.

Actions
• Increase library card holders and users.
• Increase hours of operation:
  ▪ Restore Friday a.m. (10-12) and Saturday p.m. (4-6)
  ▪ Open on Sunday (minimum of four hours)
  ▪ Open on Monday evening (6-8)
• Expand all ages of children’s and youth programming including:
  ▪ More formalized liaisons with schools
  ▪ Reading incentive programs
  ▪ Homework clubs/ Helping kids with study habits/research
  ▪ Special interest clubs-like the current Lego Club
  ▪ Other video and non-video gaming opportunities and tournaments
  ▪ Teen/Youth book clubs
  ▪ Implement library tours for kids by kids
  ▪ Assist with programs for troubled youth
• Provide reference assistance to job seekers on local employment options, resume development and placement consideration.
• Assist local immigrants with citizenship process and approval, including assistance with consulate contact.
• Provide relocation information assistance for residents and businesses planning to move into the Carson City area.
• Assist parents with information about family development services, social service programs and other community service providers.
• Provide patrons with health or legal related research and assistance with finding related providers and services.

Measurements
• Patrons will experience inviting, comfortable spaces that facilitate lifelong learning and civic engagement.
• Patrons and staff report that the library is a welcoming, comfortable and safe place.
• Patrons find opportunities to engage in civic and community life at the library or via the library.
• The number of library card holders will increase 10% per year in the next five years, with a goal of 85% of residents having and using a library card.
• Increase attendance and use by 20% of ongoing services and programming; specifically these include Live Homework Help, Explore Your World @ the Library, cultural programming and author events.
**STRATEGIC GOAL 2**
**THE CARSON CITY LIBRARY WILL PROVIDE EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE TO EVERYONE**

**Initiatives**
- Raise the overall quality of existing customer service.
- Patrons learn about library services from a well informed staff that are proactive in promoting appropriate library resources.
- Provide effective communication that encourages staff participation and help foster a positive work culture.

**Actions**
- Restore three full time vacant positions and part time vacancies lost due to budget reductions.
- Increase library card holders and users.
- Increase hours of operation:
  - Restore Friday a.m. (10-12) and Saturday p.m. (4-6)
  - Open on Sunday (minimum of four hours)
  - Open on Monday evening (6-8)
- Make library services easy and convenient to use.
  - Implement Self-Check so limited staff can help the patrons directly
  - Library service desks reconfigured to provide better customer service to patrons
- Patrons find and obtain the library resources they want in the shortest possible time.
- Provide effective and responsive service to the Hispanic community.
- Staff is given opportunities, time away from work and funding to improve skills and knowledge in all areas of library service.
- Provide a place for everyone to get things done more economically and with greater assistance and services.
- Provide credit and debit card options for making copies, purchases and paying fines.
- Improve and expand notification practices on overdue materials, holds and availability of new acquisitions, including Self-Checkout of books on hold.
- Place an emphasis on relatively low-cost, but highly visible enhancements, including directional signage, more comfortable furniture, carpet replacement, new paint, wall detailing and shelving.
- Promote the use of the suggestion box for patrons and staff.

**Measurements**
- Staffing is adequate to provide exceptional customer service.
- Patrons of all ages report their library experience is exceptional.
- Patrons report that signage and staff assistance make the library and its resources easy to use.
- The Hispanic community reports that the library serves their needs in outreach and in materials.
- The Library Director and all managers are evaluated for efforts to promote and expand communication.
- The number of library card holders will increase 10% per year in the next five years, with a goal of 85% of residents having and using a library card.
- Library hours are increased.
- Self-Check machines provide 80% of all circulation.
- Wait lists for books are reduced significantly (by 30%).
STRATEGIC GOAL 3
THE CARSON CITY LIBRARY WILL PROACTIVELY SEEK, EXPAND AND MAINTAIN COLLABORATIONS

Initiatives
• Work beyond the walls of the library, engaging individuals from other programs and service providers from both similar and dissimilar organizations.

Actions
• Working in collaboration with the local education system, establish after school tutoring assistance and classes for students of all ages to reinforce school and home school curriculums, while also providing instruction in subjects unable to be addressed by educational institutions.
• Promote cultural awareness events that highlight customs, holiday celebrations, food and dress from the world community.
• Volunteer reading to seniors, hospitals, shut-ins.
• Increase senior services outreach.
• Align library goals and objectives with Carson City goals and objectives.
• Form partnerships with institutions and organizations that contribute to the library and community resources, for example, the Community Council on Youth, the Arts and Cultural Coalition, area museums and the Carson City School District.
• Continue collaborations to help the needy in the community like Food for Fines, Toys for Tots, the Mitten Tree, the Carson City Circles Initiative, and other community based non-profits helping community members in need.
• Collaborate with and support Hispanic communities, providing job resources, early literacy, English language skills and citizenship resources.
• Pursue public-private partnerships like the showing of Fahrenheit 451 with Galaxy Theatre.

Measurements
• Library goals and city goals are aligned in strategic plans.
• Projects with positive outcomes are a result of collaborations; these are reported to the community in reports, press releases and on the Internet.
• Public-private partnerships demonstrate value in pure economic terms, value to the library and measureable value to the private entity.
• Partnerships and collaborations increase in quantity and scope.

I have always imagined that Paradise will be a kind of library.

Jorge Luis Borges
Strategic Goal 4
The Carson City Library Will Dramatically Increase Awareness of the Library’s Resources and Services

Initiatives
- Market programs and services in every medium, including print, television, Internet and the library’s reader board.

Actions
- Increase information and ease of use of the library’s website.
- Expand and promote teen advisory board.
- Collaborate with the Friends of the Library and the Library Foundation to fully utilize their websites to promote themselves and the library.
- Increase and expand visibility and awareness of the Friends of the Library, their bookstore and their book sales.
- Increase and expand visibility and awareness of the Library Foundation in their work to improve and expand the library.
- Promote and advertise Wi Fi in the library and the ability to use the public access computing printers with an individual’s laptop.
- Promote and advertise:
  - Live Homework Help
  - Research Databases
  - Homebound Services
- Better utilize word of mouth for programs and services—particularly virtual sharing of information in blogs, wikis, MySpace, Facebook, Flickr, YouTube, Second Life, etc.

Measurements
- All library websites are easy to navigate and get positive responses from users.
- Importance and value to the community is articulated by community members.
- Patrons report they hear more often of our services and programs.
- Internet searches show increased discussion and comments about the library on blogs and other social communication tools.
- Wi Fi usage goes up by 35%.
- Live Homework Help and research database usage goes up by 20%.
STRATEGIC GOAL 5
THE CARSON CITY LIBRARY WILL TRAIN, ENCOURAGE, REWARD AND CELEBRATE A KNOWLEDGEABLE AND DEDICATED STAFF, GENEROUS VOLUNTEERS AND VITAL SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

Initiatives
- Create and maintain an atmosphere that recognizes, rewards and empowers all staff.
- Establish library leadership forums that address management/library philosophy and feedback.

Actions
- Provide for more effective weekend work policies.
- Improve internal communications and operational policies.
- Staff attends professional conferences, all day staff training is continued, and individual needs for professional development are encouraged and financially supported whenever possible.
- Focus on improving staff work spaces to make their work easier to accomplish, resulting in increased morale and dedication to service.
- Utilize skilled volunteers who can help the library to grow its services without incurring increased burdens on library staff.

Measurements
- Staff reports that weekend work policies are fair and equitable.
- The library retains staff, volunteers and members of our support organizations.
- Staff reports their work spaces give them the work area and tools to complete their tasks and assignments.
- Patrons report library staff provide knowledgeable and excellent customer service.
- Recruitment for all types of positions receive plentiful applicants.
- Volunteers increase in both quantity and types of activities they pursue for the library.
- Use celebrations and activities to recognize, encourage and reward employees, volunteers and support organizations.

What is more important in a library than anything else - than everything else - is the fact that it exists.
Archibald MacLeish

You've got to be very careful if you don't know where you are going, because you might not get there.
Yogi Berra
Strategic Goal 6
The Carson City Library Will Provide the Materials and Resources the Community Needs and Wants

Initiatives
- Increase and expand materials in all formats—from magazines to audio books to electronic access and offer a significantly broader collection in size and variety.
- Provide special attention to expanded quality of youth and teen collections.

Actions
- Update collections with emphasis on acquisition of high demand materials and replacement of older and deteriorating materials.
- Provide more materials at a faster pace. Housing more copies of popular materials will reduce waiting periods and increase patron satisfaction.
- Provide clear signage to help patrons locate materials that they may now assume the library doesn’t own.
- Implement recommendations of technical services consultant that will increases efficiency and reduce human resource use.
- Outsource the processing of more materials to increase efficiency.
- Use acquisitions module for all aspects of collection management.
- Lease more popular items to maximize limited financial resources and to utilize the very limited space the current library has.
- Acquire off-site storage collections or satellite operations.
- Assess the use of materials based on patron check-outs and demand, designating low-use materials to off-site storage.
- Promote “amnesty from overdue fines” drive to re-acquire lost materials.
- Expand bilingual and special interest collections.
- Invest in more “series” books for kids, including more copies of popular series and more frequent replacement of damaged editions.
- Provide financial information on local and state tax law, filings, tax preparation and personal/business financial planning and management.

Measurements
- Collection increases in number and scope measured by analysis of quantity and use.
- Wait lists decrease by 30% or more.
- Patrons report they can easily find materials or are assisted when help is needed.
- Scarce financial resources for materials are utilized in the most effective manner.
STRATEGIC GOAL 7
THE CARSON CITY LIBRARY WILL CONTINUALLY EXPAND AND IMPROVE TECHNOLOGY AND ACCESS TO THE INTERNET.

Initiatives
- Continue to increase public access computing resource with more workstations and consider laptops for further expansion of technology resources.
- Significantly expand and increase web presence.
- Establish the library as a local center of technological advancement.

Actions
- Implement Self-Check to provide relief to human resource demands.
- Technology support will be improved by developing a technology master plan. This plan will include specific steps to:
  - Make technology uniform for both public and staff.
  - Manage IT resources internally, and utilize CLAN (Cooperative Libraries Automated Network) resources to fully provide library technology.
  - Use Carson City IT resources only where they are required and are better than resources the library can manage internally.
  - Promote and expand Wi Fi in the library and the ability to use the public access computing printers with an individual’s laptop.
  - Continue to expand electrical and wiring capabilities of current facility.
- Get the word out in all ways possible to promote:
  - Live Homework Help
  - Research Databases
- Fully automate administrative functions, including:
  - Financial reports of all accounts
  - Use acquisitions module for all aspects of collection management
  - Automate staff calendar and schedules
- Conduct technology forums to discuss and promote progressive awareness of technological change in the community, highlighting new systems installed in the library.
- Provide computer use training classes and web primer to patrons with onsite tutors using volunteer instructors.
- Provide excellent teen and young adult computing resources.

Measurements
- All library websites are easy to navigate and get positive responses from users.
- Teens and young adults report computing resources help them with school and are adequate for their social networking and collaboration.
- Technology is stable and upgraded regularly; city financial support is given for improving technology for staff and the public.
- Wi Fi usage goes up by 35%.
- Usage goes up by 20% for:
  - Live Homework Help
  - Research Databases
- Self-Check machines provide 80% of all circulation usage.
STRATEGIC GOAL 8
THE CARSON CITY LIBRARY WILL PROVIDE A PLACE THAT IMPROVES AND ENHANCES THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR EVERYONE IN CARSON CITY AND FOR EVERY VISITOR TO THE CAPITAL CITY.

Current Facility - 900 N. Roop Street

Initiatives
• Provide the safest and cleanest operation possible.

Actions
• Maximize operations and services at the existing Roop Street facility to demonstrate need for the construction of a new facility.
• Provide teen/youth furniture that fits them.
• Where practical, modernize the overall dated look of the facility.
• Uphold existing basic aesthetic and safety issues in providing modest upgrades in roofing, electrical systems, carpets and HVAC.
• Reassess policies related to homeless persons and the homeless gathering area in front of the building, promoting the majority of patrons to feel secure while providing appropriately fair and improved attention to homeless needs.
• Minimize exterior improvements, focusing less on aesthetics and prioritizing basic cleanliness, maintenance and security.
• Prepare a transition plan that outlines what to fix and/or improve with new expenditures prioritized to favor asset acquisition intended to eventually transition into a new building.

Measurements
• Patrons report present facility is being improved and is more up-to-date.
• Patrons report present facility is clean and safe.
• New additions of furniture and fixtures can be utilized in new library to fully utilize limited resources.

Conceptual sketch by Hannafin Design Associates
FUTURE “STATE OF THE ART” LIBRARY FACILITY

Actions
• Conduct a building program plan for a new state of the art public library that is based on broad community input in design and services. The library will be designed to best serve the needs of Carson City, will serve as a catalyst for economic development and redevelopment, and will significantly improve the quality of life for residents and visitors to Carson City.
• Acquire land for new library building:
  ▪ Review and select a site that geographically feels central to all residents and:
    ▪ Is accessible to vehicle traffic, but easily promotes extended pedestrian activity from local business, state and local government campuses
    ▪ Is accessible from as many educational facilities as possible
• Acquire funding for new library
• Work with Carson City Economic Development and other organizations to collaborate on opportunities in the new library for:
  ▪ Expanded meeting facilities
  ▪ Partnerships with museums
  ▪ Performing and visual arts space
  ▪ Business incubator
  ▪ Artist work spaces
• Build a facility with architectural significance that establishes the library as an integral part of the fabric of the community, has a “landmark” status locally and is a library indicative of “capital city” stature.

Measurements
• A new centrally located full service, state of the art library is built.
The Carson City Library’s Strategic Plan is, and must be, a working and evolving plan. It will account for changes in economic shifts, fluctuate with changes in proposed building plans, keep pace with changing community needs, and adjust to challenges that arise. The components of this plan will be subject to any number of changes, and must therefore remain fluid, approachable and fresh if the plan is to be effective across a wide range of shifting conditions.

Recent and documented feedback from Carson City residents suggest that a new downtown library is both timely and will serve as a catalyst to proposed downtown redevelopment. This assumption is based on the dramatically changing traffic patterns impacting Carson City’s business district as freeway bypass plans are realized. A new library is believed to have a positive impact on the growth of downtown Carson City based on a new design that encompasses multiple uses and a profound architectural significance.

Carson City is currently experiencing limited residential development, tight financing and stalled commercial development due in part to a recessionary economy. With as much as 45% of the city’s budget coming from sales tax, there is a dependence on retail operations that must be mitigated through economic diversity – looking also towards improved quality of life enhancements that promote new residential development, tourism and reinforcement of existing infrastructure that ensures Carson City is not just a place to work when commuting from Reno, but is in fact a desirable place to take up residence.

Libraries help support these efforts, by helping to grow the tax base in the long term, promoting improved property values and prompting a more secure retail confidence. A library is an essential component to the core of a community that reintroduces the original “town square” concept that symbolizes and becomes the epitome of where a community lives, works, shops and plays.

The primary reason for using the Carson City Library is for reading, recreation, exploring areas of personal interest, followed by research conducted for professional or educational development. However, there is growing demand for public use of the library as something more than its traditional roots. Citizens now perceive the library as a communal gathering and information center -- an extension of the community itself. It is an essential place that addresses the information needs of everyday life, expands existing education infrastructures, and is a place to congregate on important community issues or simply socialize in a safe and controlled, yet a stimulating and inviting environment. This is especially true as felt by families and minorities using the library.

Survey and focus group data indicates that patrons visit the Carson City Library primarily for access to up-to-date and extensive collections of books, magazines, audio-visual materials, reference materials and Internet access. Overall, today’s existing collections are perceived as inadequate and outdated given the current size of the community. Patrons frequently cannot find what they are looking for.

Carson City Library staff is already regarded as very friendly, helpful and quick in providing service, and accessible to all library patrons. However, recent financial cutbacks, congested work environments and the need to advance in service and technology have pushed staff resources to the maximum. In preparation of potential new facility development, added skills development, redefined job functions, professional development options and technological advancement training are needed now more than ever.

Current users of the Roop Street facility are generally satisfied with basic amenities, such as parking, appearance, and its quiet environment and fee policies, though budget cutbacks have forced reductions in library service hours, limiting desired public access into the evening and on weekends. Patrons believe that operational funding should not be cut back, though support for expanded funding at Roop Street is mixed.
Those using the library cite less personal time, home access to a personal computer and a preference to buy books commercially in the environment of modern “bookstore” amenities as primary reasons for not visiting the facility. Lapsed users are generally older empty nesters, long-term Caucasian Carson City residents with higher incomes. When they visit libraries, it’s generally the more research-oriented libraries. However, there is also a perception among infrequent “busy” users that the library’s current inadequacies are perhaps greater than they really are, thus anticipating inconveniences that would compromise their time even further.

There is a broad public consensus that a new library facility is definitely needed in Carson City primarily due to the existing facility’s inadequate size and its lack of modern technological and programming spaces and service capacity. More than a third of all survey respondents believe a ballot initiative for a new facility is appropriate. Newer residents to the Carson City area are prone to be more familiar with modern library facilities based on their experiences in the communities they came from. They favor this expanded concept; want more space, more collections and a broader base of services and activities. These users are among the most educated in the community and generally are in support of a ballot initiative for a new building.

The context behind developing a long range plan for the Carson City Library, points at providing services and resources that provide a place for everyone—assisting patrons with the coping mechanisms of everyday work, life and play -- whether it’s technological, informational, entertainment, social or educational.

**Strategic Plan Resources**
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**Make no small plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood and probably themselves will not be realized.**

**Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will not die.**

Daniel H. Burnham
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the twenty years I have spent in libraries, this needs assessment and strategic plan represents the most thorough and comprehensive planning effort I have ever been involved in. This includes oversight of two statewide master plans for library services in Nevada.

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This funding allowed for an intense look at not only the status of the library building, but its services to the present community and its hopes to serve the community better in the future.

The Library staff, Board of Trustees, volunteers, Friends of the Library and the Library Foundation spent many hours in meetings and discussions about the library, its services and its future. Their time is sincerely appreciated.

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Finally to the community, thank you for your time, support and continued interest in the library and in making it better.

Sara Jones
Library Director
Perhaps no place in any community is so totally democratic as the town library. The only entrance requirement is interest.

Lady Bird Johnson

Carson City Library: A Place for Everyone

Strategic Plan 2009-2013

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