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This report was created by Margaret Sullivan Studio for Sno-Isle Libraries

Acknowledgments:

Melanie Huggins, Executive Director, Richland Library Marc Futterman, President & CEO, Civic Technologies Roberta Phillips, Planning and Projects Manager, Richland Library Las Vegas-Clark County Library District

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Executive Summary

Public libraries all over the country are introducing new programs and services to execute strategic goals that positively impact the customer's experience. In some of the most innovative program models, library directors and leadership have redefined learning experiences and what they believe library programming can do. As a result of the transformation of public programs and services, public libraries need to create a new methodology for designing appropriate spaces.

This methodology, based on the library's strategic goals, its relevancy to the community being served, and its focus on design for positive customer experience, is outlined in the following document.

The goal of the document is to provide public library leadership, including directors and executive leadership, public library board members and trustees, and community leaders involved at any level of public library facility planning, with the tools to envision and design a successful physical environment to advance the community.

Will we continue to need physical libraries in the future?

How will emerging technologies impact library service delivery and library spaces?

What other societal trends are significant? For example, a shift toward collaborative work might point to a need for group study rooms of a particular size.

How much space should we call for when we size a new library? What factors will influence this decision? For example, do the age demographics of a community have a bearing on the projected size of a facility?

By specifically addressing these questions, this document presents a process that can be applied to library building and space design projects, on a small and large scale, effectively creating an environment customized and designed for 21st century library services.



Richland Library, Cooper Branch, Columbia, SC

Building for the 21st Century

Building for the 21st Century

A CHANGING MINDSET

In the 1980s and 1990s, library systems all over the country engaged in building projects that followed rules of equitable distribution with guiding principles, which included formulaic sizes for buildings, formulaic size and composition of collections, technology, reader seating and standardized programs and services. "Prototype" programs for "small," "medium" and "large" branches were created based on population served, state standards and national standards resulting in a single building design for every branch in the system.

Motivated by equitable distribution, this approach has proven not to serve a single community effectively. Guerrilla customization is evident through signage, decoration, furniture re-location and any number of do-it-yourself tactics to make a unique mark and differentiate. Increasingly, distinction is occurring organically through the ways the library is being used by customers and by how staff is responding to real customer needs and changing expectations.

By acknowledging changes to the service model that are naturally occurring, libraries can be designed to be more community-based and less place-based.

The challenge today is that most libraries were not built with contemporary learning, needs and activities of people in mind. They were designed to host transactions and for the delivery of the book to the patron. Sizes were determined not by how people would use the space but by how many linear feet of

shelving they needed to contain and standards such as "population served." Libraries built as recently as the 1990s lack the infrastructure—meeting areas, space and electrical support for computers and devices—that today's users expect.

Today's savvy users also expect more than the basics; they expect an exceptional, customer-centric experience. With more options of places to spend free time, libraries have to live up to expectations and standards set by the private sector. No matter how many items in our collection, citizens will lose interest if the Wi-Fi is not lightning fast, the space is not comfortable or conducive to their needs or the services and space are not highly customizable. If libraries continue to be under-resourced, they will be under-utilized; if facilities aren't current, customers will inevitably choose to spend their free time elsewhere.

Additionally, if the design of a library space hampers service delivery it thwarts the efforts of staff, making them work harder and less efficiently to get results. For any library system, innovative efforts and progressive vision of the library team cannot be fully realized unless investments are made to make the physical library facilities work just as hard for communities.

Designing the Contemporary Library

The Need for Public Libraries in the 21st Century

21st century public libraries are necessary for the same reason that public libraries were created in the 19th and 20th centuries: to provide platforms for social equity, income equality, social cohesion and pathways to economic success and opportunity.

"All libraries and museums—and the people they serve—stand to benefit from becoming more intentional and purposeful about accommodating the lifelong learning needs of people in the 21st Century and doing this work collaboratively in alignment of community needs." This statement hails from a 2009 report by the Institute of Museum and Library Services which served as a wake-up call about the importance of aligning library services to learning, educational opportunities and community needs.

Six years later, the Aspen Institute, in its "Re-Imagining Libraries" report, reframed this discussion for libraries to work more intentionally to level the playing field so that anyone, regardless of race, class or gender etc., can enter the knowledge economy. The report challenges today's libraries to understand that "lifelong learning must be abundant and people need skills as knowledge creators, not simply information consumers."

Public librarians throughout the country recognize that libraries are not only providing different services to customers, but customers' needs and expectations are also changing, forcing the library's physical spaces to support a variety of activities and programs unimagined even ten years ago. As a result, 21st century libraries must not only advance the library, but more importantly the community.

The Aspen Institute's report is an integral tool and resource to help local communities articulate their proposed values to community leadership and constituencies. This allows for community buy-in, and it encourages public libraries to work with community leadership, such as government leaders, trustees and community partners. Together, they can articulate the needs of the communities being served, as well how the public library can serve the community most effectively.

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

Re-Envisioning Public Libraries







It is the community's responsibility and opportunity to articulate the public library's value for its users. Only once it has been defined, the service-design methodology can be used to create the library.

National Trends, Future Direction and Best Practices

A public library is not a commercial enterprise, and yet, public libraries of the 21st century are operating more like retail operations competing for a community of users with limited time and limited resources. These users will judge transactions in the public library based on positive and negative experiences that they have daily with other commercial enterprises (i.e. cafes and bookstores) and other learning institutions, such as museums and arts centers. The goal of the public library is to create a positive transactional experience for every customer. Libraries must assume every customer will come to the public library with a specific need and expectation of services.

As a result, a more complex toolkit is required to design a public library to best service its community. A new strategy is emerging that combines traditional, cultural, library and non-profit strategic planning and programming with best practices and trends from the service design industry. Currently there is less reliance on standard benchmarks, but rather on an emerging methodology that provides the tools to design the most effective customer experience for the community served.



UdK Bookshop, Berlin, Germany

This methodology is rooted in the Service Design Methodology. Service Design is a method for improving the quality of an institution's services, especially when significant institutional transformations and innovations are impacting an organization's ability to reach its audience effectively. Central to the service design approach is the humancentered, human driven design thinking process, where real customer needs and requirements of users are utilized to provide real solutions to inform real institutional change. Firms such as IDEO and Adaptive Path have been applying this highly interactive and stakeholder driven methodology to large corporations for the last 30 years. This methodology is now being applied to Public Libraries and having positive results in Strategic Planning, Visioning, Building Programming and Public Library Building Design.

"The purpose of service design methodologies is to design according to the needs of customers or participants so that the service is userfriendly, competitive and relevant to the customers."

- The Service Design Network

At the core of the new trends is the question: What are the needs of the specific community and how will the 21st century public library fulfill its institutional mission in achieving these needs?

A shifting mindset must be assumed in order to maximize the potential of the 21st century library to achieve an optimized experience for the customer and an optimized building design.

This mindset assumes:

The public library is a network, especially in a system where there are multiple branches. The buildings do not have to be "containers" of equitable distribution; the public library branch can be regarded as a unique institution with unique characteristics, both its physical characteristics and service model.

Emerging technologies enable this network in a variety of ways: the public library has a virtual presence to complement the physical presence.

Libraries are utilizing new services for collections management and display intended to assist in getting the material into the hands of the customer faster. (Anecdotally, almost all library directors, when asked about the collections size upon completion of a new library building, say they wish they had weeded more materials and devoted more floor space to public programming and activities).

Libraries are learning institutions and how learning occurs is being re-defined. Therefore, spaces in public libraries need to be redesigned to support this variety of learning experiences, including spaces for social learning, active learning and collaborative learning. Another shift in services has been an increase in public library programming to support lifelong learning. As a result, spaces in a library need to be flexible to accommodate new tools and special equipment such as 3D printers, ready animators and sewing machines, not envisioned even 10 years ago.

Because this programming can and should vary both on a short and long term basis, buildings should be designed to accommodate the variety of programming the library is doing now and in the unforeseen programming future. The library design should enable librarians to be innovative, flexible and adaptable to provide programs and activities the community would enjoy. The building should not hinder this potential.

As a result of these assumptions, a new criteria for defining program spaces based on the Service Design Methodology is being created by library programmers, as outlined in the following pages.



Idea Box, Oak Park Library, IL

Methodology

An Emerging Set of Values

EXPERIENCES DESIGNED TO SATISFY EVERYONE SATISFY NO ONE

The Library cannot be all things to all people, but if the design is based on serving real customers, current and future, a positive experience will be intentionally created for those who need or enjoy the services most. In addition, emerging technologies have an impact in an information age. Abundant content dissemination enables libraries to access and provide resources more broadly, freeing the building from being a repository of materials. This library building is part of a larger network of people, places and platforms, enabling the building to embody unique and customized characteristics, providing more relevant services and programs to its community of users.



Richland Library, Main Branch, Columbia, SC

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY BUILDING IS A FRAMEWORK

The public library building is most effective for the future if it is designed to be adaptable. The architects should develop this criteria at the beginning of the design project, but examples of characteristics for a flexible facility framework are the following:

30'x 30' structural grid

Raised floor system for electrical and mechanical distribution

Building intentionally designed for expansion and growth

Interior walls and mechanical, electrical and building systems designed to be as flexible as possible for easy and cost effective interior alterations

The library building is an extension of the strategic goals and brand promises of the library system. Services delivered to meet the goals and brand can and should adapt regularly to respond in real time to changing customer needs and expectations.

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY BUILDING IS PART OF A LIBRARY SYSTEM'S COMPLETE NETWORK OF SERVICES

Especially in a network of branch locations, the library building can be treated as a single entity, with a unique set of customers and services. The building design and interior space can embody an exclusive character, look and feel.

Before the library location is selected and the physical space design begins, a public library staff and its customers must answer the following questions:

Why is the public library and its location relevant in the community? What are the strategic goals of the location? How do these strategic goals support the library system's strategic goals?

Who are the customers being served?

What is the library's brand promise?

What services are you providing to this customer group?

What is the definition of success for serving this customer group? What outcomes and experiences are envisioned for the customer?

To most effectively serve the customer group, does the service model need to change? Do partnerships need to be developed and/or amplified? Do skills and talents of the staff need to be developed? What marketing and outreach effort will be required from the library?

The biggest shift in mindset is that developing programming for a contemporary library building requires a library system to embark on a visioning and strategic planning process. This process had not been necessary on the basis of standards and best practices that defined successful library building design of the 20th century. The charge for the successful 21st century library building is to provide a balance between the customized experience with spaces dedicated to specific types of activities and creating multi-purpose spaces that ensure future flexibility. This customization will enable staff to serve the customer's needs more effectively.

The methodology does not assume that standard benchmarks and best practices are not useful, but that they are only starting points. This methodology also assumes that the most effective results occur when stakeholders are included in the process. Each library will define who these stakeholders are and what format the community engagement occurs (i.e.: large community meetings, specifically defined focus groups, one-on-one conversations, etc.).



Fibre Space, Alexandria, VA

Alternate Service Models

Alternate Service Models

Libraries all over the country are introducing new programs and services to execute strategic goals and impact the customer's experience positively. In some of the most innovative program models, library directors and leadership have redefined learning experiences and re-defined what they believe library programming can be. Typically, this change in mindset stems from identifying real community needs and thinking strategically about what programs and activities can be most effective to create real impact.

Examples include:

The Bubbler at Madison Public Library

Anythink Libraries

Summer Lunches at Newark Library

Idea Box at Oak Park Library

Chattanooga Public Library: The 4th Floor

The Labs at Carnegie Library

Business Incubator, NYDesigns

Best Buy Teen Tech Lab at Hennepin Library

In all cases the consistent characteristics of the new program model include:

These programs support specific needs of the community.

These programs have been developed with community partners.

These programs incorporate passions, hobbies and interests of the customers and staff.

These programs extend beyond the walls of the library.

These programs serve all ages.

These programs are catalysts to inform new uses and roles for the library.

These projects incorporate project-based learning.

These programs are a sub-branded entity of the institution taking on a character of their own.



Chattanooga Public Library, Chattanooga, TN

Components of a 21st Century Library

The following pages represent a Standard Program Template, using a non-specific library district as an example, which illustrates the use of the methodology in programming a 21st century library.

The Strategic Goals are executed through Services, Programs and Activities. These Activities require a set of Spaces. Components will bring the customer experience to life.

The relationship of the Components to each other will create purposeful and meaningful experiences for the customer.

These spaces are activated by Enablers: staff, collections, technologies and special equipment will serve as the tools to enable a positive customer experience.

STRATEGIC GOAL

ACTIVITIES

COMPONENTS



LIMITLESS LEARNING

BUSINESS& CAREER

SOCIAL & GOVERNMENT

Performances Children's Plays Birthday Party's Pick-Up Games Zumba Class **Crossfit Classes** Game Night **Cooking Classes** Art Making Gardening Car Shows Show and Tell Movies on the Lawn **Festivals** Informal Collaboration Idea Boards/Box Meditation Happiness Project Reflection Mindfulness Yoga Classes Lectures **Cooking Classes** Recipe Share **Art Making Pottery Throwing** Parenting Workshops Rehearsing for Life **Aerial Practice** Hands on Exploration Storytelling in the Round Family Readiness Early Lit Education **Summer Camps** Homework Help **Summer Reading Coding Classes**

Gaming Center

WELCOME AREA

- WELCOME DESK
- SELF- CHECK
- HOLDS
- INFO STATION
- RETURNS

POPULAR COLLECTIONS

BOOK BROWSING

VIBRANT CAFE

- HEALTHY SNACKS
- COFFEE
- DEMONSTRATIONS

BOOKSTORE

- LOCAL GOODS
- USED BOOKS/DVDS

COMMUNITY GALLERY

- COMMUNITY ART
- PATRON MATERIALS

LIVING ROOM

- COLLECTIONS
- EQUIPMENT

MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM

- PERFORMANCES
- TALENT SHOWS
- MUSIC SHOWS

QUIET ROOM

FOR X # OF PEOPLE

STUDY ROOMS

MOBILE COMPUTERS

TELEPHONE ROOMS

MAKERS SPACE/ DIY

- 3D PRINTERS
- VINYL CUTTERS
- CNC ROUTER
- ARDUINO

TECH ARTS LAB

- RECORDING BOOTH
- SOUND MIXING STATION
- VIDEO EDITING
- GREEN SCREEN

STRATEGIC GOAL

ACTIVITIES

COMPONENTS



LIMITLESS LEARNING

BUSINESS& CAREER

SOCIAL & GOVERNMENT

Technology Training Language Classes Studying Researching Writing Recording Music **Filming** Graphics Printing **Resume Writing** Job Searching **Client Meeting Career Specialist** Skyping **Town Hall Meetings Voter Registration** Free Meeting Space **Community Fairs** Marketing Classes Millennial Engagement Informal Collaboration Social Awareness Government Info **Partner Meeting** Citizenship Information Safe Meeting Ground **Voting Place** Local Politician Visits **Passport Services** Civic Clubs Social Services

Volunteering

MEETING ROOMS

COMPUTER CLASSROOM

- TRAINING ROOMS
- DEMONSTRATIONS
- PRINTING LAB

DEDICATED TO AGES

- TODDLERS PLAY SPACE STORYTELLING
- JUVENILE
 SCRIBBLE
 STATION
 PERFORMING
 SINGING
 ROLE PLAY
 BUILDING
- TWEEN SHARING TEACHING HOMEWORK HELP
- TEEN
 GAMING
 POETRY SLAM
 COMEDY
 NIGHT
 YOUTUBE
- ADULTS BOOK CLUB VOLUNTEER GROUPS WORKSHOPS/ HOW-TO'S
- SENIORS
 DIGITAL
 LITERACY
 MEET-UPS

CALL CENTER

- TRAINING ROOMS
- DEMONSTRATIONS
- PRINTING LAB

BUSINESS & CAREER CENTER

- RESUME WRITING
- VIDEO CONFERENCING
- CONSULTATION ROOMS

SOCIAL SERVICE CENTER

- CONSULTATION ROOMS
- MEETING ROOMS
- INFORMATION SESSIONS

POP-UPS

CULINARY KITCHEN

TINKERING GARAGE

GARDENS

ART TRUCK

SPACE	LARGE	SMALL
SPACE		
Welcome Station	1,500 SqFt	900 SqFt
WELCOME DESKSELF-CHECK		
HOLDS		
INFO STATIONRETURNS		
Popular Collections	1,000 SqFt	1000 SqFt
BOOK BROWSING		
Vibrant Cafe	750 SqFt	500 SqFt
HEALTHY SNACKS		
COFFEEDEMONSTRATIONS		
Bookstore	500 SqFt	500 SqFt
Community Gallery	1,000 SqFt	200 SqFt
COMMUNITY ARTPATRON MATERIALS		
Living Room	1,500 SqFt	1,000 SqFt
COLLECTIONSEQUIPMENT		
Multi-Purpose Room		
PERFORMANCESTALENT SHOWSMUSIC SHOWS		
Quiet Room	600 SqFt	600 SqFt
DETERMINE # OF PEOPLE		
Study Rooms	50-200 SqFt (6)	50-200 SqFt (2)
Telephone Room	25 SqFt (4)	25 SqFt (1)
Makers Space	500 SqFt	250 SqFt
 3D PRINTERS VINYL CUTTERS		
CNC ROUTER		
ARDUINO		
Tech Arts Lab	500 SqFt	250 SqFt
 RECORDING BOOTH SOUND MIXING STATION VIDEO EDITING GREEN SCREEN 		

SPACE	LARGE	SMALL
Meeting Rooms	100 SqFt - 400 SqFt	100 SqFt - 400 SqFt
• 25 SF/PERSON	• # OF ROOMS	• # OF ROOMS
Computer Lab	1,500 SqFt	800 SqFt
TRAINING ROOMSDEMONSTRATIONSPRINTING LAB30 SF/PERSON	# OF ROOMS# OF PEOPLE	# OF ROOMS# OF PEOPLE
Early Childhood Play	1,000 SqFt	600 SqFt
PLAY SPACEMESSY SPACE		
Education Space	750 SqFt	400 SqFt
STEAM ACTIVITIES		
Storytelling	1,500 SqFt	500 SqFt
20 SF/PERSON		
Homework Help	800 SqFt	400 SqFt
• 30 SF/PERSON		
Children	1,500 SqFt	600 SqFt
DESTINATION FEATUREACTIVITY SPACEMESSY SPACE		
Tween	800 SqFt	300 SqFt
Teen	1,500 SqFt	750 SqFt
GAMING ROOMMAKERS STATIONHANG-OUT SPACE		
Adult	750 SqFt	400 SqFt
BOOK CLUB/CLUB ROOMSWORKSHOPS		
Language Center	5,000 SqFt	2,000 SqFt
TRAINING ROOMSDEMONSTRATIONSPRINTING LAB		
Business & Career Center	4,000 SqFt	1,000 SqFt
RESUME WRITINGVIDEO CONFERENCINGCONSULTATION ROOMS		
Social Service Center	600 SqFt	200 SqFt
CONSULTATION ROOMSMEETING ROOMSINFORMATION SESSIONS		

Programmatic Considerations

Special Considerations

During the design process the following questions should be considered: How does the space support activities to create desired outcomes? What are the tools, spaces, and conditions that foster desired outcomes? How do the tools—collections, technology, equipment, furnishings, and the look and feel of the space—enable positive user experiences?

Service Points

Consider Service Points as any touch-point in the library that enables a user to achieve their goals. Service Points may be expert-assisted or self-directed. Consider the function of the Service Point, and design to achieve those transactional goals.

Collections

Consider designing to prioritize program and activity space over space dedicated to collections. This may require the design team and client to verify collections quantities at each iteration of the design process. The Library should develop a Collections Philosophy to help guide the design team.

Technology and Equipment

Consider the plethora of technology and equipment that a public library now houses. Consider special electrical and ventilation requirements.

Primary Program Spaces

Welcome Station

A place that is inviting, approachable on all sides, and full of information or someone who knows where to find it!

Popular Collections

A dedicated area for browsing the popular collection and offering serendipitous discovery in a store-like atmosphere.

Vibrant Cafe

A place to casually meet, converse, and/or have solitary time to relax.

Bookstore

An area where books and other related material can be sold. This area can be a partnership or sell goods made by community members.

Community Gallery

A museum-like open area that gives locals and traveling artists a place to display, giving visitors a new reason to come every time the show changes!

Living Room

A vibrant place for all members of the community to come together. It promotes intergenerational interaction, exchange and connections.

Multi-Purpose Room

A large open room with varying program functions. This space can be used by other members of the community for after hour activities.

Quiet Room

A peaceful place to look for books, study, or work with reduced noise.

Study Rooms

Rooms or spaces with varying types of seating that promote group collaboration or solitary studying.

Telephone Room

Designated room(s) for telephone conversations and video conferencing.

Makers Space

A space for messy projects where users can work together, alone, or with librarians on special projects, with easy access to tools and supplies.

Tech Arts Lab

A room or area dedicated to digital arts. The space will be equipped with the latest technology and printers.

Meeting Rooms

Open and Closed Spaces that can be used to varying types of meetings, both formal and informal.

Computer Lab

A dedicated room that supports digital learning and exploring in groups or individually and can also facilitate classes.

Areas Dedicated To Age Groups

Early Childhood Play

A place for Early Literacy development, interactive learning and play.

Education Spaces

Thoughtful spaces and rooms that promote multiple styles of learning for all different ages.

Storytelling

A fun, creative space that promotes lecture-like seating for youth, but still allows them to have room to stand, dance and roam.

Children's Computers

A dedicated space that supports digital learning and exploring for children.

Homework Help

A place where children and teens can get personal assistance from librarians or tutors.

Tween Area

A dedicated area to bridge the gap between childhood and teenagers, giving a place for tweens to hang out, play games, study and teach.

Teen Space

A dedicated area for teens to escape the chaos of younger age groups. This is a place for them to hang out, play games, study and teach.

Adult

A cleaner, quieter, more sophisticated area designed for a mature audience that is similar to a traditional library setting.

Spaces to Support Strategic Goals

Language Center

A dedicated area of the library for English as a Second Language. A combination of meeting rooms, classrooms, and open spaces.

Business & Career Center

A space that resembles an officelike structure for entrepreneurs, job seekers, and upcoming or recent graduates.

Social Services Center

A more privatized meeting space for individuals or family counseling/guidance on social and government issues.

Destination Features

Pop-ups

Carts or smaller mobile units that can be used for multiple functions such as a store, cafe or makers station. Pop-ups are a great tool to prototype alternate service models.

Culinary Kitchen

A space/room dedicated to culinary study. This can be anything from a fully functioning culinary kitchen to a mobile culinary demo cart.

Tinkering Garage

A place for hands-on activities that explore art/science and encourage tinkering, curiosity and creative thinking.

Garden

An outdoor space that invites relaxation, community gathering and sustainable living.

Art Trucks

Mobile trucks that have been reconfigured for art-related events, both inside and outside the truck, that can be set up anywhere in town.



Hjørring Central Library, Hjørring, Denmark



307 7th Avenue, STE 504 New York, NY 10001

Margaret Sullivan p. 646 687 7923 e. margaret@margaretsullivanllc.com

www.margaretsullivanllc.com