

**BOULDER PUBLIC LIBRARY MASTER PLANNING PROCESS
STAKEHOLDER INPUT ON KEY PLANNING ISSUES**

**SUMMARY OF EMAIL QUESTIONS
September 19, 2006**

An email questionnaire was sent to members of the extended Master Planning Committee on August 31, 2006, with responses requested by September 11. Responses were received from Lisa Sobieniak, Tom Spencer, Rhonda Wallen, John Culshaw, Steve Clason, Nadia Haddad, Bruce Staff and Darren Smith. (Note: Participants did not necessary respond to every question.)

Summary of Key Themes

The following are the key themes identified in the questionnaire responses. These are followed by the specific responses to each question, which include some interesting specific ideas.

- Participants have access to information they need to make important decisions in their lives.
- Uses of the BPL vary, but there seems to be a shift to using the library more for recreational reading/resources, hobby information, etc. and less for basic research, as individuals are getting more information online from home or locations other than the library.
- Although most participants see the BPL as a necessary component in their lives, most also have ways to get the information and resources they need, if the library were not available.
- The internet and online resources have had an incredible impact on how people get needed information.
- The role of the BPL as a cultural, social community center is very important.
- Collaborations, partnerships and consortiums are seen as very important for the BPL to pursue.
- The private sector should be a key part of the strategy to develop partnerships and collaborations.

Specific responses are listed below.

Meeting the Community's Information Needs

1. Are you able to access enough trusted information to make well informed decisions?

- Yes
- Yes
- The few times I've needed to do this – yes, absolutely.
- Usually

- Yes. . . through the internet and library.
- Although I don't use the library as actively as I have in the past for investment information or for decisions related to my business when I do use it I am able to find what I need to make well informed decisions.
- In most cases, yes. Finding reliable information to choose professionals in construction, real estate, and other services is difficult.

2. What types of information needs do you meet through use of the Boulder Public Library?

- Biographies, fiction, nonfiction including geography and history
- The main information needs that I meet through the use of the Boulder Public Library relate to the "recreational" reading that my wife and I do.
- I increasingly meet my information needs elsewhere and use the library for recreational reading. Not that that's trivial.
- Books on hobbies, areas on interest – novels for my book club, information on application process to medical school...
- Investment, Health, Entertainment, Computers with web and database access.
- Boulder county/city laws, regulations. Corporate/company information (once).
- I use the library to meet almost all of my needs in some way, including professional education, general knowledge, hobbies and projects, major and minor purchase decisions, etc. The only area in which the library plays a secondary role is in the professional education I require for my engineering/information technology career.

3. If the Boulder Public Library (BPL) did not exist, how would you meet those needs?

- Wouldn't
- There is NO substitute for the vast non-fiction resources, or the wonderful fiction book collection of the library. I can imagine NO substitute for the large audio book collection.
- Subscriptions, NetFlix, neighbor's computer
- Go to the city directly (for law info). Internet or primary research for other info.
- I would join or organize a book swap for the kind of books I like to read and probably spend more money at the bookstore (used and new) and adopt free time activities other than recreational reading.
- Internet for hobbies/interest, buy the novels (not my favorite idea).
- Online and by purchasing more books from the Boulder Book Store, something that not everyone could do.

- Buy entertainment by renting DVDs or joining Netflix, etc. Browse Barnes & Noble bookstore weekly and buy often (I do anyway).
- Attend more concerts and events at The Dairy Center and local galleries (maybe). Browse music in 30 second clips at Amazon.com to find new artists.

4. As you think about the next five years, do you see the Library as a necessary component in meeting your information needs? If so, in what form? If not, why not?

- Yes, books and databases
- Yes – subscriptions, books, DVD's, computers
- As I learn more about the information databases the library subscribes to, I imagine I will be using them increasingly instead of the Norlin Library at CU for some 'scholarly' interests I have. That is probably not a necessary component but a matter of convenience—as long as the stacks at Norlin are available to me.
- Yes – I can't imagine a world without books – I love perusing the stacks and knowing there's no risk in checking out something of interest since if I don't like it, I just bring it back unread.
- The library will always be an important part of providing recreational reading for my wife and me. Since I have a computer at home with broadband access I assume I will do most of my basic research from home.
- Yes, absolutely!
 - I will continue to use the library as my primary method for learning anything outside of my vocation (art, architecture, camping, gardening, home repair, etc.)
 - I will continue to use the library as my favorite form of entertainment (audio books, fiction books, DVD movies, music CDs).
 - I will use the library as a source of information for financial planning (books, newspapers, online databases).
 - I will continue to visit the library in person for lectures, concerts, and just to feel part of the community.
- Not really. My info needs are generally met by trade publications (which are too specialized for the library to carry), the internet, and newspapers that I get delivered to my home. I don't foresee needing or wanting to give up the convenience of subscriptions to these trade pubs.

5. Over the last five years, what has changed regarding how you get the information you need in your life?

- On line sources
- Get more directly from the internet, either via public sources or proprietary sources which use the internet to deliver their content.
- Mostly the internet. I find I can get answers to certain questions immediately.

- I have come to rely increasingly on on-line access to information, and to depend on Internet-enabled peer communications for professional development, whereas I once used the library extensively for professional development.
- Much more of my research is done online from my computer at home.
- Far greater emphasis on using world wide web, especially for news. All my work related research is done online.
- For most of my shopping, I gather info online and make purchases online. Changed to purchasing groceries online and using home delivery.
- Almost quit watching any television. Switched from watching video cassettes to DVDs for movies and documentaries. I listen to library's audio books on cassette almost daily (prefer cassettes to audio CD for books because they are smaller, more transportable, and more robust when walking).
- I'm more careful about financial research after the market crash of 2001.
- But novels I would not enjoy reading on a screen.
- Use of Library computers and databases.

6. Would your life be enhanced if the Library were better able to provide you with information? If so, what is (are) the information improvement(s) you see as most important?

- Meta search of databases
- I would appreciate more current material on admissions to college/graduate programs, business books like Freakonomics, The Tipping Point – books on current information that can't be adequately addressed with the internet.
- Yes. I'd like to see a "Citizen Center" web page where Boulder City residents can find links to all the ordinary sort of things they need. This would be especially helpful for new residents. It's a matter of tying together all the existing resources that are out there, so they're easy to find.
- Personally, I'd love to see a web site (or book) where I can find information to make informed choices about selecting home contractors for repair or construction. Even though this activity is so common in Boulder, I've not found a highly reliable source of information to help simplify the remodeling process. Perhaps that's not appropriate for the library, but if someone else could create the resource, it should be searchable from the library.
- Partner with local branches of major investment and financial consulting firms to have a "financial resource" center, where people have easy access to good information on financial planning (If people either do well, or do poorly, they are more likely to seek professional assistance later, which is why these companies might help the library). This

center could include prominent placement of a special collection, and computer workstations to access financial databases.

- I believe I will continue to meet my information needs in ways that the library cannot match, but I believe the library will continue to be very important to me as a place. The social life of information is what the library provides that other sources lack.
- All of the questions in this section imply that the only role the library plays in our community is to provide information. My life is enhanced because the Boulder Public Library is a facility that provides cultural and social activities that allow me to learn and interact and grow. I think it is important to view the library as a “community center,” a place where everybody in the community can share in what is offered, without cost creating a division between the haves and the have-nots.
- Current information is adequate.
- I think the library does a pretty good job as is.
- Not really.
- I am lucky enough to be able to take care of most of my current information needs from home. I can’t envision the circumstance where the library’s ability to provide more information would be “enhancing” to my life.

Collaborations & Partnerships

7. Given limited resources in the foreseeable future and the desire to provide services as efficiently and effectively as possible, what types of collaborations and/or partnerships should the Boulder Public Library pursue?

- School District
- Collaborating with the schools is obvious, of course, but I believe difficult.
- Maybe an exchange program with the academic libraries... but since these are relatively close by, might not be a whole lot of value in that for the (maybe?) small number of people who would benefit.
- Expand PROSPECTOR, NetFlix for broader and more efficient access to DVD’s, including new HD formats.
- Foundation support
- Although I know the library probably already does a great deal of this, I’d recommend taking even further advantage of consortial or group purchasing power. This has certainly become a significant piece of how we do business in academic libraries. I think the library might also explore new relationships with other public or even academic libraries. This may not be the traditional way of doing business but service models are changing in ALL types of libraries.

- The library should first collaborate more closely with other city departments. There is often demand for trusted, comprehensive information about very specific subjects related to initiatives and task forces, and even while struggling to find resources no one ever thinks of the library and the librarians working there as a resource.
- Partner with the City of Boulder Energy Conservation Office for “green building” projects.
- Perhaps, collaborations with companies like The Princeton Review for donations of admissions books, with public schools to augment children’s and young adult collections...
- I think a countywide funding model makes sense.
- Partner with business sponsors to pay for magazine subscriptions.
- Partner with Boulder businesses and local colleges for web development services (internships, etc.)
- Partner with day care centers and parents who are willing to donate time to the children’s library.
- Partner with local institutions like NCAR, CU, NIST, IBM, etc. for a technology investment review board to help the library make sound strategic choices.
- Partner with financial firms to create the financial resource center mentioned above.

8. Should private sector partners be considered? If so, under what conditions or situations?

- No, just donors
- Definitely, but only as part of the process to get efficient delivery of the service in the most cost effective manner (hard to be specific here when it’s not clear what kind of products or services are being considered for partnership...)
- Yes. Some current databases are provided by the private sector and libraries obtain special prices for books. DVD’s and subscriptions. Does the Grillo Center represent such a partnership?
- Yes, I think partners from the business community might be able to provide funding for informational items that the library needs. A business could fund an expensive subscription that relates to the industry in which it functions (financial, legal, construction, etc.) thus freeing up dollars that the library could use to provide basic resources.
- Long term relationships with private-sector partners should certainly be considered when there is a case of mutual interest in collecting information about a subject. It is easy to imagine collaborating with Boulder Community Hospital in a “Cardiology” collection because the missions of the two institutions overlap. Collaborating with McDonald's in the same collection would probably be unwise, since because the missions do not overlap McDonalds would be attempting to buy some credibility from the library.

- I think this is an intriguing concept. Some ideas might be working with local businesses to have them sponsor specific resources (print or electronic). Perhaps the library and business could work together, for example, to co-license an electronic resource that a business already licenses for itself. I don't know if the e-resource vendors would buy this model but it might be worth a shot.
- How broadly have naming opportunities been explored within the library? "The Smith Corporation Conference Room" or "Wireless Services Provided By Brown Communications" etc.
- Yes, if they are willing to donate time or materials as a community service.
- Yes, private sector partnerships should absolutely be explored!
 - The conditions should be spelled out very clearly at the beginning.
 - Negotiate for a win-win solution. Businesses like exposure and recognition, but too much is considered vulgar by the public.
 - Start very small, and build with experience.
 - Check with a control group of library patrons surveyed randomly before doing anything really large or visible
 - Don't let it get out of control – recall the furor over "Invesco Mile High" stadium.

Reaching Non-Users

The Boulder Public Library cannot afford a major marketing campaign, so it must reach those who might have interest and could benefit from its services in other ways.

9. How can the BPL reach those who would use the Library electronically (if they were aware of the electronic services), even though they might never come physically to the Library?

- Through the school system, retirement homes, Rotary, churches, business groups
- One might assume also that people who really want to have electronic access/services also have the ability to do so – e.g. some kind of high-speed or cable internet access. So, maybe you could convince Comcast to let you put a bright, noticeable flyer in their monthly billing statements that just has a pithy catch phrase and the library's URL on it.
- Library Staff should read "Guerrilla Marketing" and then establish a presence in electronic communities. For instance, sending a representative to city task force meetings to determine their information needs, joining the usual email list and then helping out with providing relevant credible information would create the conditions where local activists could begin to gain an understanding of the resources available and how to get at them. I understand "We don't have the staff." Neither does the rest of the city departments, that's why they appoint citizen task forces.
- Make sure the website is adequately linked in Google and other search engines. Make sure the website is clear and easy to navigate.
- How about an opt-in request for email addresses...creating an email blast list. Periodic email blasts could be used to inform people on the list about ways that the library is changing or expanding the electronic services.

- City of Boulder water billings often include pamphlets with other citizen information.
- Driver's license renewal, voting, and other government functions provide an opportunity to acquaint community members with library services (maybe a poster at polling places).
- Post information at King Soopers and Safeway customer service desks.
- Does Google currently provide adequate information? Does the Daily Camera? Can the Monthly Calendar be delivered with the weekly supermarket flyers? Why does the BPL need to market its electronic access? (A chart at the 30 August meeting showed current electronic visits nearly matching physical visits.) Is this a question of receiving increased City/government funding?
- I just get the feeling that those who would be most interested and most benefit from electronic library services are also those who have their own info needs met by their home or work computer set ups and various on-line accounts w/ content providers.

10. Are there other groups who might have interest in Library services who could be targeted in an affordable way?

- Perhaps a partnership with non-profit organizations would be good. I get the sense that non-profits might be a good target audience either because of the large amount of research they need to do for grant writing purposes, or because the communities they serve might be those who can't easily access info from a home computer or don't have corporate jobs w/ the computer/internet/info accounts set up. You could do a mailing to them inviting them to a reception or just even a tour and chat about all of the services you provide.
- Networking into various ethnic communities through the schools and community leaders might help spread the word without significant expense.
- Maybe there could be some ways to market BPL services to CU-Boulder faculty, staff, and students? Or maybe there are some joint marketing possibilities between BPL and the CU Libraries? (This is way out of my realm here in the Libraries so consider this brainstorming at the keyboard...)
- Schools and universities through partnership programs.
- AARP would be a good place to start.
- Meals on Wheels
- Try the local association of Obstetricians to let parents know about the Children's library at the time of birth – and get them started early!
- Why look for non-users? Are current services under-used?