

**BOULDER PUBLIC LIBRARY
SWOT ASSESSMENT SUMMARY**

Revised 9/27/06

Input for the SWOT Assessment Summary was gathered from BPL senior staff, the Library Commission, stakeholder representatives and several scientific and non-scientific surveys. The surveys were conducted between April 2004 and February 2006. Meetings with staff, Library Commissioners and stakeholder representatives occurred during the spring and summer of 2006

MAJOR STRENGTHS	MAJOR WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BPL has defined “information” and its role broadly, resulting in a wide-range of valued offerings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Traditional services are well used. - The integration of traditional services and cultural programming is a model for other libraries. - Electronic resources, including wireless internet, are heavily used. - There is strong programming (Literacy Program, outreach programs, Children’s Services, etc.) • There is strong community support and a good reputation, both locally and regionally. • The BPL is well-used as a community center. • Staff is knowledgeable, helpful and customer-oriented. • There is a strong Main and neighborhood Branch System. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Main building is large and attractive. - Neighborhood branches are supported and appreciated by neighborhood residents. - There is positive feedback on library locations. - Branches are seen as a safe, secure environment. • There is extensive resource sharing with other libraries. • The Library Foundation helps fund arts and cultural programming. • BPL has good resources for a community of this size. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of adequate funding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cutting positions has resulted in existing staff being stretched very thin. - Customer service hours have been reduced (one day/week in branches). - There is minimal time for outreach to schools and community groups. - There is a lack of staff time and financial resources for staff to be as professionally involved and as visible (within the community and the library field) as desired. - There is a lack of resources to optimally keep up with technology. There is unmet demand for more word processing computers, internet-access computers and licenses for electronic databases. - There is demand for more materials in the adult collection, especially print materials and DVDs; and more Spanish-language materials at Meadows Branch. • The Main Library’s design causes operational problems. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is not adequate space for collaborative work spaces, computers and meeting rooms. - It is difficult to maintain building security and enforce building rules. There is no staff trained to deal with problem patrons. • Library branches are not sited ideally. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carnegie feels isolated and there is no parking. - The other branches are not spread geographically, based on the distribution of the population. - There is no branch in North Boulder. • Staff diversity is limited. There is a need to bring in staff from a variety of cultural backgrounds, with an emphasis on Spanish-speaking staff. • There are some efficiency and operational limitations inherent with the 3-Library Consortium that limit BPL’s ability to independently serve Boulder’s needs; however, it does allow for technology cost sharing.

SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITIES	SIGNIFICANT THREATS/CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boulder is a well-educated, literate community. • Information Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technology is providing faster, more efficient ways to access information. - There is an ongoing need to educate people how to access, evaluate and use the available information and technologies. - If Boulder were to become a wireless city, there might be less need for BPL's wireless capability, but there would still be a need for free access to library computers. - BPL's website could become a "virtual branch." • Partnerships & Collaborations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are organizations with which the Library could form new or stronger partnerships and collaborations (other libraries, school districts, CU, Boulder History Museum, City Departments, etc.) - Neighboring communities have developed new libraries and expanded their services; BPL could explore more resource sharing. - Business Relationships: Although there is a good relationship with the Chamber, beneficial relationships could be developed with individual businesses, especially technology firms (for sponsorships, donations, etc.) • Outreach Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is an ongoing need to increase awareness of BPL programs and services. - The growing senior population could result in a larger pool of volunteers and users of library services. - If children become users of the library early in their lives, the chance of becoming life-long library users/ supporters increases. - Interest has been expressed for teen space and programming. - There is an ongoing need to help immigrants integrate into the community. • Alternative Funding Mechanisms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating a Regional Library Authority (RLA) would provide opportunities for collaboration, more sustainable funding - A Library District is another possibility - Expand role of private funding sources, including library foundation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining the Relevancy of the Library <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a need for on-going assessment to determine the BPL's highest value to the community: "What should we be doing and how do we offer these services?" - There is a lack of community knowledge regarding the range of services offered by the BPL. It is a challenge to know how best to inform the public and to promote BPL services. - People take for granted that the Library will be here. - It's easy for some people to assume that all informational needs can be met via the internet. • Changing Demographics – The needs and expectations will change as the users change. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The growing senior population may not be as able to access physical libraries, but may not have the technology skills to access information remotely. More seniors may be home-bound or living in senior housing facilities. - There is an increasingly diverse community to serve: Boulder has a growing population of low-income and non-English speaking residents. - Generations growing up with computers and search engines such as Google, have different expectations about how to access information than previous generations. • Information Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is a significant challenge to keep up with changes in technology and new technologies are expensive. - The BPL often has to offer and support multiple generations of technology simultaneously. - People need education on how to access, evaluate and use all of the available information. This need may grow as the pace of change continues to accelerate. - ILS (Integrated Library System) and information technology vendors providing services to public libraries lag behind Google and Amazon type services in their ease of use. • Funding – It is anticipated that there will continue to be strong competition for limited financial resources. • Leadership Transition – Senior Library staff could retire within a relatively short time-span of each other, resulting in a loss of institutional memory and important skill sets.