Omaha's Public Libraries

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OMAHA'S PUBLIC LIBRARIES

An Action Plan
For Achieving Excellence

October, 1996
OMAHA'S PUBLIC LIBRARIES

An Action Plan
For Achieving Excellence

October, 1996
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Introduction

Background

The Omaha Public Library began as a subscription library in 1872. The "library" was located in a rented room on 14th Street between Douglas and Dodge with a collection of 2,600 donated books. The Library Association charged an annual fee of $3.00 for membership. In 1877 the State Legislature approved an act allowing the establishment of "free public libraries and reading rooms." That same year the Omaha City Council established the Omaha Public Library at the urging of the Omaha Library Association. The Library opened with a budget of $1,274.80, a librarian, and nine appointed directors, the precursor of the Library Board of Trustees.

During the ensuing 119 years since Miss Jean Allan was hired as Librarian, the Omaha Public Library has grown to 180 part- and full-time staff aided by 598 volunteers. The Omaha Public Library Board still has nine members who volunteer their time for the cause. In addition to the Library Board, the Library is also served by the Omaha Public Library Foundation and the Friends of the Omaha Public Library. These latter organizations provide both money and advocacy.

The collection that began so modestly is now up to 755,000 books and other types of materials such as cassettes, CD ROMS, videos, and compact discs. The Library has a genealogy collection, a local history collection, government documents, magazines and journals, and children and young adult collections in all formats. The library--beginning with no technology--now depends on computers, microfilm reader/printers, microfiche readers, and special equipment that "reads" to blind people. There are also videos with captions for hard of hearing people, large print books for the hard of seeing, and board books for babies.

The modest annual circulation of 200,000 items is now over 2,000,000 items. The budget has grown from its truly humble beginning to over $9,000,000 (including capital improvement and indirect costs from other departments).

Services to the people of Omaha and Douglas County include a large Summer Reading Club effort to entice children to read. Children’s librarians have story times for toddlers and preschoolers. Special programs encourage the use of the library’s resources, an interest in literature, and special displays throughout the year to highlight some portion of the library’s collection. The Library publishes a monthly "Large Print Notes," mails it to people on request, and provides library materials through the mail or in traveling collections to nursing homes and Omaha Housing Authority retirement towers. The Library prints newsletters for business people, bibliography on a wide assortment of
topics, and answers over 361,000 reference and other questions each year. Currently, the Library Foundation is raising money to install computers for school-age children to use in an attempt to level the playing field for those without technology at home. Little children's computers will be installed soon in all library branches, as will access to the Internet.

Currently, 143,000 people have library cards and have used them at least once in the last 3 years.

Another major change is the size of the Library's service area. The Library was established to serve residents of the City of Omaha. Now it serves residents of unincorporated areas of Douglas County through an agreement with the Douglas County Board.

While a number of things have changed since 1872, the involvement of the community in support of the Library has not waned. The community initiated the Omaha Public Library and it is the community that continues to ensure that the Library meets its obligations to all citizens of Omaha. The most recent example of community support is exemplified by the willingness of a large number of people to come together and work on a Strategic Plan for the Library. It is this generous involvement of all the participants that keeps the Omaha Public Library a living, breathing and dynamic institution that continues to respond to the community's library needs.

Despite all of the above advantages, the Omaha Public Library still needs to address several major "opportunities" in the coming years. How does the Omaha Public Library obtain the resources that will enable it to keep up with rapid advances in technology? How can the Library best support the fundamentals of our democratic society? How can the Library provide those without adequate resources with major information suppliers, such as the Internet? How can the Library better partner with other community players to meet needs? How can the Library ensure adequate staffing levels to enable it to continue providing quality service to the public? These are just some of the questions with which the Library and its advocates have been struggling in recent years.

It was against this challenging and exciting backdrop that the Omaha Public Library Board established a committee to think about whether or not to undertake a strategic planning process. The goal of the board was to ensure that the future is one which is faced in a purposeful and responsible posture, not in a reactive fashion only.

During 1995 The Omaha Public Library Board established a strategic planning committee (see Attachment 1 for the committee's membership). The committee spent 6-8 months reviewing and discussing current funding, service and governance challenges facing the library. During the August-December period the committee worked with a
UNO faculty member, Dr. Russell Smith, to explore if the timing was right for a strategic planning process for the Omaha Public Library. Over several months, the group discussed several issues, including:

- what strategic planning is and what it means in practice
- the likely implications of strategic planning for the library organization
- whether or not the timing was right for a strategic planning initiative
- what type of strategic planning process should be used

In addressing the last point, the committee focused on who should be involved; the composition of the team managing and nurturing the strategic planning process; how much time to allocate to strategic planning; and what types of information to use in assessing the library’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (Attachment 2 presents the questions addressed in these early planning sessions).

Ultimately, the Omaha Public Library’s Strategic Planning Committee recommended that a strategic planning process be undertaken. It was agreed that the “sponsor” of the process would be the Omaha Public Library Board. It was also agreed that the process should involve 25-30 persons drawn from the library board, elected officials from city, county and state government, as well as members of the business and education sectors. Greatest emphasis, however, was given to the involvement of library patrons and members of the Omaha Public Library Foundation and Friends of the Library. Finally, it was agreed that the process would be guided by a management team comprised of:

- Process Leader: Deborah Kohler, Director, Hastings College Foundation
- Communications Coordinator: Dr. Russell Smith, UNO
- Meetings/Arrangements Coordinator: Deborah Kohler
- Information Coordinator: Lon Dickerson, Director, Omaha Public Library

Process Used

1. **General Information.** Consultant John Bryson (1995) defines strategic planning as a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does and why it does it. Strategic planning is:

   - *systematic*—the process draws on data, discussion and outlook to explore alternatives with an emphasis on the future directions and impacts of today’s decisions
• *fundamental*—it focuses on those things which can “make a difference” or lead to “significant changes” (e.g., what an organization is, what it does and why it does it) for an organization rather than the ordinary operating decisions which are addressed daily

• *organization-focused*—all discussions and deliberations are done with an eye toward a specific organization, not the community in general

Strategic planning was first used in the private sector to adjust organizational strategies to rapid environmental change. By examining organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats—with an eye to how these fit with organizational mission, mandates and stakeholder groups—it was felt organizations would be in a better position to identify and resolve key issues standing in the way of success.

Despite all of the positive features of strategic planning, its success (like all other planning and decision making routines) rests on the ability of the process to lead to concrete actionable steps which can move the organization from the present to future desired states. With this in mind, the Library Board’s Strategic Planning Committee concluded that the focus of the strategic planning effort should be on short-term (2-3 year) strategies which would move the Omaha Public Library toward its goal of excellence.

2. **Process Steps.** Because the process would rely on citizen volunteers, the strategic planning committee wanted to keep the number of sessions to as few as necessary. It was also felt that the main part of the process should be completed in as short a time as possible. To meet these requirements, a process was developed which would require approximately 17 hours of meeting time over 3 sessions. Sessions 1 and 2 took place on May 31 and June 1, 1996. Session 3 was held on June 22, 1996. Fig. 1 summarizes the strategic planning process used for the Omaha Public Library. The sessions and their focus included:

• **Session 1:**
  - Introductions and team building activities
  - Review of national library trends and issues
  - Discussion of mandates the library faces
  - Identification of important library stakeholders
  - Discussion of participant of participants aspirations or goals for the library

• **Session 2:**
  - Discussion of external threats and opportunities
  - Discussion of internal strengths and weaknesses
  - Statement of strategic issues
  - Identification of issue priorities

• **Session 3:**
  - Action planning and discussion of proposed actions
OMAHA PUBLIC LIBRARY
STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

**Session 1:**
Library Trends and Issues
Mandates
Stakeholders
Mission/Vision

**Session 2:**
Review of External Environment
Review of Internal Environment
Development of Strategic Issues
Prioritization of Issues

**Session 3:**
Action Planning

**Fine Tune and Review Action Plan:**
Meet With Key Decision Leaders/Groups
Review and Revise Action Plan
Strategic Planning Committee Final Review and Approval (9/96)
Each of these steps and their results is discussed in greater detail in subsequent sections of this report.

3. **Participants.** As indicated earlier, the process involved 28 people representing a variety of perspectives. In identifying and approaching potential participants, care was taken to ensure that each person understood that their role would be to work as one member of a “team” of people focusing on improving the delivery of library services; not to merely represent a particular sector or interest. A complete list of participants is contained in Attachment 3.

**Mission/Vision Statement for the Omaha Public Library**

A mission statement should clarify an organization’s purpose and indicate why it is doing what it does. Because the Omaha Public Library’s current mission statement had not been updated since its approval by the Board in 1990, the strategic planning process included time to discuss expectations and aspirations for the library.

As a backdrop for visioning, library director Lon Dickerson summarized the recent renaissance of many big city libraries (e.g., new programs, enhanced quality, new facilities, partnerships). Lon also introduced a short video focusing on the historical roots of the nation’s urban libraries (making reading materials available to low income city residents) and current challenges and opportunities facing urban libraries. Some of the important themes which left an imprint on participants included:

- changing technologies
- library roles are changing
- changes in the various “publics” served
- libraries are “living” things
- the important role of library staff
- libraries are “in tune” with people and information
- library staff have become active “navigators”
- language
- libraries are evolving

With these trends in mind, participants spent time brainstorming different visions for the Omaha Public Library. Visions for Omaha’s public libraries included the following:

1. Branch libraries work with neighborhood businesses to make new types and sources of information available to patrons
2. Utilization of technology to its greatest extent
3. Accessible technology
4. Vibrant branch libraries
5. The library serves as a community center
7. A library which works with and has a defined role relative to other libraries in the Omaha area
8. An emphasis on partnerships
9. Aggressive marketing
10. Broad commitment to measurement and analysis of library performance
11. Stability in branch operations
12. Excellent, qualified staff
13. Adequate staff
14. Focused resource utilization
15. Meeting special needs
16. Interactive
17. Partnerships
18. Strong leadership
19. "Virtual" services
20. Buildings that are pleasing and inspiring
21. Contribution to economic growth
22. Linkage to education
23. Intellectual growth
24. Efficiency
25. Buildings which function well for their role
26. Free services
27. One location to serve as a "showcase" for the best in library services
28. Accessible

Using this set of visions and other resource materials, a task force of participants developed a new mission statement. The proposed new mission statement is contained in Figure 2.
**Fig. 2: Mission Statement: Omaha Public Library**

The mission of the Omaha Public Library is to educate, inform, enlighten, enrich, and entertain.

The staff, collections, services, programs and facilities advance this mission and provide a diverse range of services which empower the citizens we serve in all facets of their life and work by our dedication to the following:

- to provide free and equal access to information in a variety of formats
- to foster lifelong learning, personal enrichment, and a literate society
- to stimulate, encourage, and foster interest in reading and learning among youth
- to utilize new technology
- to provide environments and resources that respect the diversity of cultures
- to support and defend the principles of intellectual freedom, the Library Bill of Rights, and the Freedom to Read Statement

The library is something more than a mere repository of the past, it is at the same time a living expression of the present and of the civic needs of the community. With their tradition of free communication of ideas, libraries are among the best mirrors of American democratic principles. The Omaha Public Library supports the empowerment of the citizens we serve with knowledge that strengthens this basis of democracy.
Mandates Facing the Omaha Public Library

Mandates can be viewed as “must do’s”; requirements that cannot be ignored. They can be formal (e.g., law, Library Board policy; library administrative rules; Nebraska Library Commission standards) or informal (e.g., library association or staff professional norms or recommendations, citizen expectations).

Library director Lon Dickerson reviewed several important mandates he had identified and summarized in advance of the session focusing on mandates. These are presented in Attachment 4 and include:

- prohibitions on censorship
- library patron privacy protections
- requirements for free public access for residents of political subdivisions supporting a library
- minimum hours of operation
- staffing requirements
- maintenance of an independent library board

After working in small groups to further discuss mandates facing the library, the entire strategic planning committee concluded that the mandates summarized in Table 1 should be considered as the library seeks to enhance or refine its services, staffing and budget.

Stakeholder Groups and Priority Responses

Strategic planning focuses on aligning (or fitting) the organization with the environment. To do this requires an understanding of the individuals and organizations that have a “stake” in the organization. Participants looked at two major types of stakeholders:

External Stakeholder: Any person or group outside the organization that can make a claim on the organization's attention, resources, or output or is affected by the organization's output.

Internal Stakeholder: Any person or group inside the organization that can make a claim on the organization's attention, resources, or output or affects or is affected by the organization's output.

Table 1
Summary of Mandates Facing the Omaha Public Libraries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Mandate</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Must serve only Omaha-Douglas County residents</td>
<td>Omaha charter and Douglas County policy</td>
<td>Not meeting would violate law. Meeting this mandate drives library usage; service is really higher than just county and Omaha residents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Must provide branch libraries</td>
<td>Public preference supported by Library Board actions</td>
<td>Meeting this stretches resources, leads to public expectation of branch equity, yet there are differences. Promotes access to library services at neighborhood level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Staffing which meets Nebraska Library Commission and American Library Association recommendations</td>
<td>Nebraska Library Commission and American Library Association</td>
<td>If not met, may result in funding losses (approx. $100,000/yr.), lower staff morale, reduced levels of services and usage, and loss of customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Provide public access to information (through hours or operation, collections, locations and staffing)</td>
<td>Expectation of the public</td>
<td>Not meeting may lower usage, lead to public dissatisfaction, customers may go elsewhere for information needs. May reinforce inequities in access to information for those with low incomes or low mobility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>To coordinate and cooperate with other information providers</td>
<td>Expectation of the public</td>
<td>If done, leverages resources, enhances efficiency, expands the user base (could be negative), builds the area's &quot;infrastructure&quot; for information access, and may take away time/resources from other services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>To be a leader in the use of technology for accessing information</td>
<td>Expectation of the public and area businesses</td>
<td>Not currently close to being met; will require significant and continuing expenditure of funds for necessary staffing, technology and services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1

Summary of Mandates Facing the Omaha Public Libraries
(continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Mandate</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Children's Reading Program</td>
<td>Expectation of the public</td>
<td>If not met, loss of usage and parental support for the library. If met, provides a positive view of the library and gets children involved in reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Meeting requirements of the</td>
<td>Federal law</td>
<td>Meeting this is requiring expenditure of funds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>American's with Disabilities Act</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Reduce Tax Growth</td>
<td>State law and expectation of the public</td>
<td>Conforming to this will mean the library will have to do more with less, pay more attention to performance indicators and take corrective action, develop more partnerships with other organizations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A number of the mandates may be viewed as not all that "big" as issues; there is a perceived lack of user preference information to guide the library as it tries to deal with mandated activities; and hours of operation appear to be critical to many of the above areas.

Participants were asked to first develop a list of internal stakeholders using the scheme depicted in Figure 3. For each type of stakeholder (external and internal), the following questions were considered: (1) how does the stakeholder influence the Omaha Public Library; (2) what does the library need from the stakeholder; and (3) how important is the stakeholder to the library? Efforts were also made to rank each stakeholder. A summary of the stakeholder discussion is presented in Table 2.

Environmental Analysis and Review of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (S.W.O.T.)

A critical part of any strategic planning process is the S.W.O.T. analysis which can rely either on “objective” (e.g., library circulation levels, budgets, user evaluation of services) or “subjective” data (e.g., experiences and attitudes held by the strategic planning participants). This process used a limited amount of objective data pertaining to library operations, capital needs, and user evaluations. However, greatest weight was placed on bringing the expectations, experiences and evaluations of participants into the discussion process.
Fig. 3 Stakeholder Identification Sheet
Table 2
Summary Of Library Stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>E/I*</th>
<th>How Influence the Library</th>
<th>What is Needed from Stakeholder</th>
<th>Stakeholder View of Library Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Library Users:</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Use collections and services of library; drive facility needs as a result of usage</td>
<td>Patronage; support and advocacy</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-card holders (live in Omaha/Douglas County and pay taxes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-non-card holders (live in Omaha/Douglas County and pay taxes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Library Users:</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Use collections and services of library; drive facility needs as a result of usage</td>
<td>Patronage; support and advocacy from non-card holding Omaha/Douglas County residents; Financial support from non-cardholder users not paying taxes for the library.</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-non-card holders (do not live in Omaha/Douglas County and do not pay to support the library)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kids</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Use collections and services of library; drive facility needs as a result of usage. May require more intensive assistance because of age.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Immigrant/Ethnic Groups</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Need special collections and programs; may need different delivery and marketing approaches</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Homeless</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Increase security; may drive away other types users if too numerous</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Elected City and County Officials</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Set budget, appoint Library Board, receive citizen/user feedback on the library, determine governance structure</td>
<td>Budgetary support, leadership, support for implementing the vision for the library.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>State Officials</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Set state law, provide $100,000 in funding each year.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Library Board</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Implement budget, set policy, oversee all operations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Library Staff</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Determine the skills available within the library, deliver programs, determine customer reactions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2
Summary Of Library Stakeholders
(continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>E/I</th>
<th>How Influence the Library</th>
<th>What is Needed from Stakeholder</th>
<th>Stakeholder View of Library Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Omaha Public Library Foundation</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Friends of the Omaha Public Library</td>
<td>I</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Seniors</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Civic Leaders</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Publishers</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>K-12 Schools</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Have their own libraries and media centers; students do work for school that often requires going to city library since school library is closed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*E=External to the library organization; I=Internal to the library organization.

Bold face stakeholder entry indicates "most important".

To get the S.W.O.T. underway, Dr. Smith reviewed examples of external opportunities and threats, and internal strengths and weaknesses. Internal strengths are resources or capabilities that help the library accomplish its mandates or mission (e.g., professional staff, adequate budget/revenues, leadership). Internal weaknesses are deficiencies in resources and capabilities that hinder the library's ability to accomplish its mandate or mission (e.g., lack of effective communications, absence of clear vision or mission, flawed organization structure, noncompetitive pay structure, low employee morale). External opportunities are outside factors or situations that can affect the library in a favorable way (e.g., new funding from a federal program, political support for a new project, a chance to modify an outdated mandate, new technologies). External threats are outside factors or situations that can affect the library in a negative way (e.g., loss of funding, increasing demand for a specific service, rapidly increasing costs for publications, competition with other agencies or jurisdictions.

Next, participants were oriented to a "snow card" process used to develop a list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Participants addressed each of the following four questions:
1. What major external or future opportunities do we have for Omaha's library services?
2. What major external or future threats do we face in delivering library services?
3. What are Omaha's major internal or present strengths for library services?
4. What are Omaha's major internal or present weaknesses for delivering library services?

For each of the S.W.O.T. questions, participants first worked on their own to develop a list of possible answers. Next, each person wrote their five best answers down on post-a-notes. These were then shared in small group sessions where the post-a-note ideas were synthesized, sorted into categories and discussed. Finally, each group's work was shared, clarified and discussed in a meeting of the entire strategic planning committee. As the discussion proceeded, overlaps and duplications were dealt with by consolidating answers.

When complete, the S.W.O.T. analysis yielded a list of 8 external opportunities, 9 external threats, 8 internal strengths, and 9 internal weaknesses. These items are presented below for each of the four S.W.O.T. categories:

**External Opportunities**

External opportunities identified by the small groups were:

1. Good public awareness and support, with the opportunity to increase both.
2. Growth in and dependence on information and technology.
3. Availability of alternative funding sources.
4. Community involvement in the libraries.
5. Local organizations willing to help with marketing.
6. Positive community support for the libraries.
7. Community needs information and education.
8. Supportive partnership environment.

**External Threats**

External threats included facing the Omaha Public Library include:

1. Competition for dollars and customers.
2. Recent movement/efforts to reorganize the libraries governance and funding.
3. Competition with other employers for staff.
4. Resistance to continued reliance on property taxes for library support.
5. Changes in population and location of population in Omaha and Douglas County.

6. Efforts to censor library acquisitions and holdings.
7. Shift in how people view libraries (cultural paradigm shift).
8. Potential for continued political conflict within city government over the library.

Internal Strengths

Important internal strengths which should be considered in developing a strategic plan included:

1. Dedicated and knowledgeable staff and volunteers.
2. Evolving and developing use of technology.
3. Efficient use of funds; limited dollars are stretched a long ways.
4. Information services are "free" and accessible to the public.
5. Buildings and facilities are accessible to the community.
6. Committed supporters in the Friends, Foundation, and Board.
7. Good system for sharing and moving library collection/materials between branches.
8. Recognition of need to plan for the future.

Internal Weaknesses

1. Outdated, limited and deteriorating collection.
2. No clear strategic direction.
3. Staffing problems (lack of training, low morale, insufficient numbers, lack of shared vision, lack of communication, resistance to change).
4. Technology need updating.
5. Limited services and operations, particularly limited hours at some branches and no county branches.
6. Lack of marketing efforts.
7. Turbulent political and funding environment within city and Board.
8. Technology and systems for internal decision making.
9. Condition and location of branch facilities.
Strategic Issues Facing the Omaha Public Library

Issues Identified by Participants

The heart of the strategic planning process is the identification of strategic issues. The information on mission, mandates, stakeholders, and the S.W.O.T. analysis provide information that can help frame strategic issues in the most constructive way. A strategic issue can be defined as a fundamental challenge affecting the library’s mandates, mission, product(s) or service level(s) and mix, clients or users, costs, financing, organization, or management and governance.

To be most useful, strategic issues should be phrased as questions for which there is more than one answer. Participants were given several examples and approximately 45 minutes to frame their own list of strategic issue statements. During this time, each was encouraged to walk around and look at the S.W.O.T. list on the conference room walls, talk with other committee members, and to simply relax while thinking about and forming their issues.

After their allotted “thinking time” participants were asked to write their best strategic issue statement on a note card. These were handed in and read anonymously to the group, with brief clarification and discussion. Altogether, 25 strategic issues were approved for final prioritization by the strategic planning committee. These issues are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Strategic Issues

1. How can the library's supporters find ways to encourage community leaders (non-governmental) to promote and maintain significant financial support for the library?

2. How can the library do a better job of promoting itself?

3. How can the library cooperate with other libraries in the area to meet information needs and eliminate duplication of collections and services?

4. How can the library develop an effective communication and information network, both for internal and external use?

5. How can the library create an environment of confidence, trust, stability, purpose and cooperation among the library staff?

6. How can the library draw more young people through its doors and therefore develop library uses in the future?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strategic Issues (cont.)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>How can the library better serve county residents and, at the same time, improve services in the river corridor?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>How can the library market its current and future services with little or no funds?</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>If branch hours continue to be reduced or ultimately, close, how can the library provide fair and equitable access to inner city neighborhoods?</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>How can the library maintain the present level of funding for the next two years?</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>How can we entice more qualified volunteers to minimize the current staffing crunch?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Can branch library hours be increased by a better utilization of the budget?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>In what ways can community support be mobilized to stabilize the political and funding issues?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>How can the library ensure the continued development of its collections (e.g., new, up-to-date materials to replace old ones)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Can the library meet the needs of the community despite a demands to decrease taxation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Can the library tailor its operations for each branch, based on statistical data currently available (e.g., play up each branches strengths and downplay weaknesses)?</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>Should we encourage commercial sponsorship of individual branches or system-wide programs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>How can staff teamwork and cooperation be built, encouraged and required?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>How can the one best function of a library be determined?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Should the library be developing or marketing collections which will have limited use in the future?</td>
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<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>How can a marketing strategy be used to raise funds?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>How can adequate-sized facilities be built and maintained in all parts of the city and county?</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>How can state-of-the-art technology be implemented?</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>How can the library prepare staff for change?</td>
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<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>How can we implement a community book donation of &quot;outgrown&quot; books to increase our collections?</td>
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</table>
Prioritization of Strategic Issues

1. **Voting Results.** Each strategic issue was taped to a flip chart page and arrayed on a wall. Each participant was given six stick-on dots to place next to the issues they felt should be top priorities for the strategic plan. The six issues with the largest number of votes (number of votes is in parentheses) were:

<table>
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<th>Rank</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>How can the library's supporters find ways to encourage community leaders (non-governmental) to promote and maintain significant financial support for the library? (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>How can the library do a better job of promoting itself? (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>How can the library cooperate with other libraries in the area to meet information needs and eliminate duplication of collections and services? (14)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>How can the library develop an effective communication and information network, both for internal and external use? (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>How can the library create an environment of confidence, trust, stability, purpose and cooperation among the library staff? (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>How can the library draw more young people through its doors and therefore develop library users in the future? (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>How can the library address issues of governance and funding within Omaha and Douglas County? (added)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next, the committee looked at the results of the voting. Several Library Board members noted that nothing had been included which addressed library governance and funding as a strategic issue. Several other members agreed this was important and that they had assumed that one or more of the examples provided by Dr. Smith would be included in the final voting. It was agreed that such an issue was of importance and should be included in the next round of prioritization.

2. **Final Prioritization.** The final step in prioritizing the strategic issues was to score each one on the basis of: (1) its importance to Omaha's library services and (2) Omaha's performance in addressing the issue. Smith noted that this would identify issues where there is a consensus that the issue is both important to library services AND that Omaha is doing a poor job of addressing the issue.
Using a matrix built around these two dimensions, participants placed each of the 7 top strategic issues on the matrix. Two issues had well over one-half of the committee membership saying the issue was "important" or "very important" to Omaha's library services AND that either a "below average" or "poor" job was being done in addressing it (see Attachment 5 for results of the second round of voting).

Results were reviewed and discussed. Once again, the issue of library governance and funding was not highly ranked, as evidenced by the fact that just 9 of 18 persons completing the ranking of this issue rated it in the "important/very important" and "below average/poor" quadrant of the issue matrix. Further discussion and clarification of this issue resulted in 15 of 21 committee members present voting to include library governance and funding as a priority issue for the strategic plan.

**Priority Issues for the Omaha Public Library’s Strategic Plan**

Four issues were agreed to for action planning and implementation work. These are:

1. How can the library do a better job promoting itself?

2. How can the library's supporters find ways to encourage community leaders (non-governmental) to promote and maintain significant financial support for the library?

3. How can the library create an environment of confidence, trust, stability, purpose and cooperation among the library staff?

4. How can the library address issues of governance and funding within Omaha and Douglas County?
Issue-Specific Strategies and Action Plans

**STRATEGIC ISSUE A—HOW CAN THE LIBRARY DO A BETTER JOB OF PROMOTING ITSELF?**

*Goal:* To help the Omaha Public Library promote itself. A fine line exists between governmental entities promoting themselves with tax dollars versus using volunteer and other community resources (e.g., donated public relations expertise) to expand community awareness of library programs and opportunities for citizen access to information. Our emphasis is on the latter.

**Objective 1:** Develop and implement an advertising campaign

**Activity 1:** Brief OPL’s Special Projects Coordinator on the action plan and identify activities which can be carried out by the coordinator

Who: Issue work group members with Library Director
When: September 1996

**Activity 2:** Encourage the Omaha Library Board to establish a standing committee to address marketing of the library, as well as the issues and actions addressed in this action plan. Through this standing committee, the Board would establish marketing policies and directions for the library. The standing committee could also stay informed of the policies and activities of other organizations such as the Foundation and Friends. In addition, through this standing committee, the Board could work with an ad hoc library marketing committee that might be comprised of members of the strategic issue work group and public relations professionals, among others.

Who: Library Board
When: Fall 1996

**Activity 3:** Conduct a market survey to identify customers’ utilization of library services, evaluation of services and preferred services

Who: Library Board
When: Fall 1996
Activity 4: Enlist the assistance of public relations, advertising and marketing professionals in development and implementation of a marketing plan for the library.
Who: Special projects coordinator, working with issue work group
When: Winter 1997

Activity 5: Develop an “image” or vision of OPL to market
Who: Special projects coordinator, working with issue work group, Board marketing committee, and others. The possibility of using community resources or interns through local universities should be explored.
When: Winter 1997
Resources: In-kind donations

Activity 6: Increase news coverage (e.g., TV, radio, print) of the library and its programs
Who: Special projects coordinator, working with issue work group
When: ?
Resources: Get library on news beat, library updates, news spots with 15-30 second ads at aimed at specific groups, catchy approaches

Objective 2: Increase the number of City of Omaha residents holding a library card and able to access services requiring a card

Activity 1: Conduct special “sign up” campaigns at locations where card holders are (i.e. back to school nights, community newsletters)
Who: Special projects coordinator, working with strategic issue work group, volunteers, neighborhood groups, groups who use meeting rooms and services
When: Winter 1997
Resources: Volunteers, newsletters for publication
**Objective 3:** Increase the number of volunteers working for the Omaha Public Library

**Activity 1:** Brief the library’s volunteer coordinator on this action plan to identify areas of cooperation and joint efforts, and possible involvement of the Friends of the Omaha Library

Who: Members of the issue work group and the Library Director
When: Fall 1996

**Activity 2:** Develop a written volunteer plan with staff and recruiting campaign

Who: Volunteer coordinator, working with issue work group and community volunteers (e.g., Friends)
When: Winter 1997
Resources: Staff time, signs in each branch with volunteer needs (make the connection with saving taxes)
**STRATEGIC ISSUE B—HOW CAN THE LIBRARY’S SUPPORTERS FIND WAYS TO ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY LEADERS (NON-GOVERNMENTAL) TO PROMOTE AND MAINTAIN SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE LIBRARY?**

**Goal:** To increase private funding for the Omaha Public Library. Such funding would be in addition to (not replace) base funding from City of Omaha tax payers. Private funds can provide the “margin of excellence” to enable the library to undertake new initiatives (e.g., information technology) to better serve its many customers, whether they be adults and children in Omaha’s neighborhoods or businesses needing access to information. The Omaha Public Library Foundation is integral to this goal.

**Objective 1:** To increase corporate and private support for the library through the Omaha Public Library Foundation

**Objective 2:** To identify activities which can generate community support and raise funds at the same time
STRATEGIC ISSUE C—HOW CAN THE LIBRARY CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT OF CONFIDENCE, TRUST, STABILITY, PURPOSE AND COOPERATION AMONG LIBRARY STAFF?

**Goal**: To create an environment of confidence, trust, stability, purpose and cooperation among the library staff.

**Objective 1**: Identify the key morale issues among the library staff.

**Activity 1**: Identify an independent, outside consultant to conduct a confidential attitude survey.

- **Who**: Issue work group, working with Library Director
- **When**: Summer 1996
- **Resources**: Not yet determined

**Activity 2**: Form an advisory committee of library middle management and their staff.

- **Who**: Issue work group, working with Library Director
- **When**: Summer 1996
- **Resources**: Staff time

**Activity 3**: Conduct confidential employee attitude survey.

- **Who**: Consultant, working with advisory committee
- **When**: Summer 1996
- **Resources**: Not yet determined

**Objective 2**: Based on results of the survey, design and implement action plans to address issues identified.
STRATEGIC ISSUE D—HOW CAN THE LIBRARY ADDRESS ISSUES OF GOVERNANCE AND FUNDING WITH OMAHA AND DOUGLAS COUNTY?

Goal: To develop a funding and governance system that will provide adequate library services to its users.

**Objective 1:** Facilitate the development of an agreement for city/county residents

*Activity 1:* Offer the use of the issue work group as a sounding board, source of advice and information, and as a partner in exploring and discussing the various issues and options of how to serve City of Omaha and Douglas County residents with library services.

Who: Members of the issue work group
When: Summer and Fall 1996

*Activity 2:* Serve as a communication vehicle for keeping the Library Board, Foundation, Friends and others informed

Who: Members of the issue work group
When: As needed

**Objective 2:** Explore expanded library service areas, including countywide and regional options.
Implementing and Updating the Plan

The Library's strategic plan provides a road map for addressing several important issues. While some of these issues are very basic in nature, they are nonetheless issues which must be addressed. Once these items are attended to, the Omaha Public Library will be poised to continue moving forward, as in the past.

During the next six months, Dr. Ronald Roskens, Library Interim Executive Officer, will work with the Omaha Public Library Board and volunteers from the strategic planning committee in implementing the plan's action steps. A follow-up meeting will be held in April or May, 1997 to report on implementation successes and to identify new and emerging strategic issues for future action.
ATTACHMENT 1

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE,
OMAHA PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD
STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE,
OMAHA PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

Arlen Meadows
Deborah Kohler
Terry M. Weyna
Barbara J. McCusker
ATTACHMENT 2

INFORMATION USED IN CONSIDERING STRATEGIC PLANNING
Some Questions to Consider Prior to Making a Decision to Conduct Strategic Planning

Some Preliminary Comments

One of the most critical determinants of how successful a strategic planning initiative will be is the quality of the "pre-planning" that is done early on. To do this well requires open discussion and agreement on:

- what strategic planning is;
- what strategic planning means in practice;
- the likely implications of such a process for the organization; and
- the absence of compelling reasons to delay a strategic planning process.

At our meeting, I will provide a brief review of what strategic planning is, what it means in practice, and the kinds of concrete action steps that might be produced by the planning process. This review will generate a number of questions about the process and how it works.

I want a portion of our time to focus on whether or not this is the best time to proceed with strategic planning for the Library Board. Questions that meeting participants might consider in advance of our discussion include:

- Is the roof "falling in"? Are there brush fires that need to be dealt with prior to undertaking any strategic thinking?
- Does the Board have the commitment of key decision makers to support recommended action steps? Or, do likely participants and key decision makers already have one or strategies in mind that would suggest undertaking a more narrowly focused initiative?
- Are we willing to identify and help implement decisions that cut across levels, functions and programs of the library?
- Will the strategic action plan we produce have a high likelihood of being implemented?
Building The Process You Want To Use

Assuming you reach agreement on the need to engage in strategic planning, discussion should next focus on the type of strategic planning process you feel would be most compatible with the Library Board. Questions and issues we will want to discuss include:

- Who should be involved?
  - which key decision makers?
  - external stakeholder groups?
  - staff (from which levels)?

- Do we want a sub-committee to go through the strategic planning process, in lieu of the entire Board?

- Who should be on the “team” that will manage and nurture the strategic planning process?

- How much time do we want to allocate to strategic planning?
  - a one day “retreat” session with follow-up to develop action steps?
  - three half-days spread over three weeks?
  - four days spread over four weeks?

- Do we want to use existing summary information and our own experiences for our assessment of internal strengths and weaknesses and external threats and opportunities? Or, do we want to develop whatever data is needed for our work?

- Do we want to be involved in the development and summary of information used in the strategic planning process, or do we want to delegate that to staff/support persons?
IMPORTANT ROLES OF STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Sponsor

The Omaha Library Board is sponsoring the process. It may be necessary, from time to time, for the president of the Board to “step out front” by: (1) emphasizing at the beginning of the process and at critical points that action and change will result from this initiative; (2) encouraging participants to get involved; (3) assisting in securing resources to support follow-up activities; and (4) being willing to use whatever power and authority she has to keep the process on track.

Process Leader and Champions

The Process Leader is the person who has primary responsibility for managing and overseeing the strategic planning process day to day. The Leader, with assistance from the facilitator/consultant will keep track of progress and pay attention to all the details. This person also models the type of behavior she hopes to get from the other participants (reasoned, committed, enthusiastic, good-spirited, committed to the common good). The Leader is a cheerleader who will help keep the process on track. In addition, the Leader will serve as the lead spokesperson for the process.

Process Champions should be drawn from the membership of the Coordinating Committee. For example, any members without specific role assignments should see themselves serving with the Process Leader as “champions” for the process. Process champions will want to keep the following guidelines in mind:

1. Try to do things that will keep strategic planning high on participant’s agendas. Circulate articles or “think pieces” that encourage strategic thought and action. We all tend to let daily routine drive out strategic thinking.
2. Be an advocate for the process and not for specific solutions.
3. Think about what has to come together (e.g., people, tasks, information) at or before key decision points. Think about how to bring things together at the right time.
4. Pay attention to the language used to describe the action plan. Be ready to jump in and help discuss similarities and differences between various concepts and strategies and how they do or do not relate to substantive concerns that participants may have.

**Communications Coordinator**

The Communications Coordinator will be responsible for working with the facilitator/consultant to produce accurate and complete printed materials to provide participants with a record of discussions, decisions and actions taking place at each of the strategic planning sessions. The facilitator/consultant will see that mailings are produced in a professional and timely manner, and that they go out on time so participants are kept up-to-date. The Communications Coordinator will have primary responsibility for drafting written minutes and reports on the sessions.

**Meetings/Arrangements Coordinator**

This role will be responsible for making all arrangements for meeting locations, necessary equipment, and food/refreshments for participants. The Meetings/Arrangements Coordinator will also ensure that meeting rooms are arranged as needed for the sessions. The facilitator/consultant will review needs and requirements with the Meetings/Arrangements Coordinator.

**Information Coordinator**

The Information Coordinator will support the entire strategic planning process with the information needed for success. Information is processed throughout the process. For example, during discussion of mission, mandates and stakeholders, a variety of information relating to the city charter, federal and state mandates, and other issues may be needed. The role of the Information Coordinator would be to have such information available for the session when it might be needed.

Information is particularly critical during the SWOT analysis. The exact approach that will be used for the SWOT analysis has not been determined, but we will keep it simple. In any case, the Information Coordinator would assemble relevant pieces of information relating to the external and internal
environments of the Omaha Public Library. This might include recent local and national surveys, recent planning documents and decisions of the Board, as well as other studies and information. In many cases, the work of the Information Coordinator will involve summarizing or pulling out only a few relevant items of information from these basic sources.

The facilitator/consultant will assist the Information Coordinator in planning and organizing for this role.
ATTACHMENT 3

STRATEGIC PLANNING PARTICIPANTS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>FirstName</strong></th>
<th><strong>LastName</strong></th>
<th><strong>Company</strong></th>
<th><strong>Address1</strong></th>
<th><strong>Address2</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Enid</td>
<td>Blumenthal</td>
<td></td>
<td>16230 Grover St.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Omaha</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>68130</td>
<td>334-5555</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pam</td>
<td>Brown</td>
<td></td>
<td>525 North 72nd Ave.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Omaha</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>68114</td>
<td>393-0887</td>
<td>393-0887</td>
<td>Nebraska State Legislature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt</td>
<td>Butler</td>
<td>Butler Holdings, Inc.</td>
<td>10770 &quot;T&quot; St</td>
<td></td>
<td>Omaha</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>68127</td>
<td>593-9474</td>
<td>339-3003</td>
<td>Library Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ken</td>
<td>Carlson</td>
<td></td>
<td>407 North 61st St.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Omaha</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>68132</td>
<td>558-3743</td>
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<td>A. V. Sorensen Branch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joanne</td>
<td>Cook</td>
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<td>Omaha/Douglas Civic Center, Suite 300</td>
<td>1819 Farnam</td>
<td>Omaha</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>68183</td>
<td>444-4770</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brenda</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>Omaha City Council</td>
<td>Omaha/Douglas Civic Center, Suite LC-1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verda H.</td>
<td>Blumenthal</td>
<td>Omaha Public Library</td>
<td>215 South 15th St.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Omaha</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>68102</td>
<td>558-9349</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clare</td>
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<td>Douglas County Commission</td>
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<tr>
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<td>W. Dale Clark Library</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Christine</td>
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<td>John</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connie</td>
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<td>Omaha Chamber of Commerce</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sherry</td>
<td>Clure</td>
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<td>Brenda</td>
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<td>Tsunya</td>
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<td>Kathleen</td>
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<td>6247 Underwood Ave.</td>
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<td>399-4082</td>
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<td>Rick</td>
<td>Rthusell</td>
<td>Millard Lumber Inc.</td>
<td>500 South 135th St.</td>
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<td>Terry</td>
<td>Weynna</td>
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<td>6005 Lafayette Ave.</td>
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<td>558-8525</td>
<td>399-1710</td>
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**FACILITATOR:**
Dr. Russell Smith | Center for Public Affairs Research | University of Nebraska at Omaha 1313 Farnam | Omaha | NE | 68102 | 595-2311 | UNO Facilitator
ATTACHMENT 4

MANDATES THE LIBRARY MUST MEET
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mandate</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Key Requirements</th>
<th>Current Status</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library Bill of Rights</td>
<td>American Library Association</td>
<td>No censorship of what’s included in library collection or access to library resources &amp; services</td>
<td>Children not allowed to borrow videos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality of library records</td>
<td>Revised Statutes of Nebraska</td>
<td>Do not identify library users or what use they make of the library and its resources</td>
<td>OK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Free public access</td>
<td>Revised Statutes of Nebraska</td>
<td>Basic services available to all residents of political subdivision which provides the primary tax support, including at least free loan of materials plus free general reference and information services</td>
<td>OK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Levels of use</td>
<td>National norms</td>
<td>50%-67% residents have library card; annual circulation equal to 7-10 items per capita</td>
<td>32% of Omaha/Douglas County residents have library cards; 4.8 items borrowed annually per capita</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hours of opening</td>
<td>Nebraska Library Commission</td>
<td>6 days/week, 64 hours/week; hours of children’s dept must be same as adult dept.</td>
<td>OK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library Director must be certified librarian</td>
<td>Nebraska Library Commission - eligibility for NE &amp; US funds</td>
<td>ALA-accredited master’s degree</td>
<td>OK</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staffing equal to 0.5 FTE per 1,000 residents</td>
<td>American Library Association’s Minimum Standards for Public Library Systems (1966)</td>
<td>217.5 FTE currently recommended</td>
<td>131.4 FTE (40% below guideline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staffing equal to 0.35 FTE per 1,000 residents</td>
<td>NE Library Commission guideline</td>
<td>152.2 FTE currently</td>
<td>24% below guideline</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/3 staff of staff should be professional librarians</td>
<td>ALA’s 1966 public lib. standards</td>
<td>ALA-accredited MLS</td>
<td>OK</td>
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<tr>
<td>GOVERNANCE &amp; FUNDING</td>
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<td><strong>Mandate</strong></td>
<td><strong>Source</strong></td>
<td><strong>Key Requirements</strong></td>
<td><strong>Current Status</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent library board</td>
<td>Revised Statutes of Nebraska</td>
<td>Citizen board to have “exclusive control” over administration of library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintenance of local effort</td>
<td>Nebraska Library Commission eligibility for NE &amp; US funds</td>
<td>Local income must be at least equal to the lowest annual local income from the 3 previous years</td>
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ATTACHMENT 5

RATING OF TOP STRATEGIC ISSUES BY THEIR “IMPORTANCE TO OMAHA’S LIBRARY SERVICES” AND “OMAHA’S PERFORMANCE”
RATING OF TOP STRATEGIC ISSUES BY THEIR "IMPORTANCE TO OMAHA'S LIBRARY SERVICES" AND "OMAHA'S PERFORMANCE"

Following is the rank order of the strategic issues when scored according to their "importance to Omaha's library services" and "Omaha's performance" in addressing the issue. The scores indicate the number of participants saying the issue is either "very important" or "vital" to library services AND Omaha's effort at addressing the issue is either "below average" or "poor".

1. How can the library to a better job of promoting itself? (15)

2. How can the library's supporters find ways to encourage community leaders (non-governmental) to promote and maintain significant financial support for the library? (14)

3. How can the library create an environment of confidence, trust, stability, purpose and cooperation among the library staff? (12)

4. How can the library develop an effective communication and information network, both for internal and external use? (12)

5. How can the library provide services to county residents who do not live within the City of Omaha? (9)

6. How can the library cooperate with other libraries in the area to meet information needs and eliminate duplication of collections and services? (9)

7. How can the library draw more young people through its doors and therefore develop library users in the future? (0)