

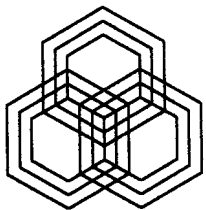
LIBRARY SPACE NEEDS

An examination of library resource goals,
space needs, and implementation issues

Plainfield Public Library District
Plainfield, IL

prepared by:

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November 13, 2007



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*METHODOLOGY &
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS*

Library Planning Associates, Inc. was retained by the Board of Trustees of the Plainfield Public Library District to examine prospective future service goals for the library and the implications of those service goals on library space needs.

Anders Dahlgren, principal with LPA, was assigned to conduct the study. An initial site visit was held on June 11, 2007. This visit afforded Dahlgren an opportunity to tour through the existing facility, to meet with library staff, library trustees, and other local officials to review a preliminary data analysis based on materials conveyed to LPA prior to the visit and to confirm the study's scope of inquiry. A second site visit, on July 10, allowed for further discussions with library staff in a series of small group meetings and separate meetings with the library's management staff.

On September 11, Dahlgren met with the library's administrative staff to review key preliminary findings and recommendations regarding prospective collection development and resource goals for the library. During this visit, the library board also conducted interviews with architects for a commission to conduct a site feasibility study based on the findings of the needs assessment report. On November 12, Dahlgren met with the library's administrative staff and with the library board to review the completed draft report. Based on the input from those discussions, the last changes were made to the report and the final draft was conveyed to the library.

The following individuals contributed directly to the direction of the study, and their efforts are noted here:

Sharon Kinley	President, Board of Trustees
Christopher Awalt	Vice-President, Board of Trustees
Robert Allen	Treasurer, Board of Trustees
Neil Narine	Secretary, Board of Trustees
Gwendolyn Krahn	Trustee
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Linda Casey	Plainfield Community Consolidated School District 202
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Nancy Lindemood	Plainfield Area Chamber of Commerce

Other staff members also provided input through their supervisors.

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on an examination of population growth patterns and expressed service needs of the community, the Plainfield Public Library District should plan to accommodate the following inventory of collections and services to meet the long-term needs of its growing community:

- a book collection of 450,000 volumes
- a magazine collection of 425 titles
- a nonprint collection of 45,000 items
- 150 computer network stations for public use
- 250 reader seats
- 100 staff work stations
- a formal auditorium to seat 300
- two multi-purpose rooms to seat 100 each
- a conference / board room to seat 12 (with a gallery to seat 10)
- two children's storytime rooms to seat 50 each
- a teen activity room to seat 50
- a computer training lab (room) to seat 15

These resources will be deployed in conventional departments and service areas such as adult services and children's services and teens services. Moreover, they will be distributed into a variety of spaces carefully designed to meet the needs of the community – small group study rooms, a local history room, a quiet study room, and a multi-media production area, to name but a few.

These service goals may be supported through the operation of a single facility, as is the case today. Given the projections for future population growth, it is likely that the library will develop a branch library service scenario. In this event, these resources would be deployed over multiple facilities, thereby affecting the space needs of each.

In a single-facility service scenario, the Plainfield Public Library will need a building of 134,600 square feet to support the resource and service inventory listed above.

In a traditional branch service scenario, with a main library and two “full-service” branches, the main library will house a portion of the library’s total resource and service inventory and the space needs will be reduced to 106,000 square feet. Two branches of 14,500 square feet each will house the remaining resources. An additional allocation of 9,250 square feet is needed to house the library’s administrative and central services functions. While these functions will ordinarily prefer to be co-located with the main library, conceptually they could be located at any of the library’s buildings.

In an alternate, multiple-facility service scenario, two buildings are provided, more or less “co-equal” in concept. In this scenario, the library’s resource and service inventory is divided more equally between the two facilities. As a result, the larger of the two will require 84,600 square feet while the smaller will require 52,900 square feet. Again, an additional 9,250 square feet is provided to support the library’s administrative and central service functions.

Of paramount importance is to evaluate expansion options at the present

site, guided by these preliminary findings regarding the library's space needs. Can the present site support an expansion of sufficient scale to support any of these main library space needs? Does it support some of these strategies but not others? If it does not provide sufficient support for the library's required expansion, can the site itself be expanded? If additional land is needed but cannot be acquired, are there alternate sites that the library can pursue and acquire?

In light of these findings, Library Planning Associates, Inc. recommends that the Plainfield Public Library:

- **reaffirm the underlying service goals that lead to the space need for an expanded library facility of up to 134,600 square feet;**
- **work with the library's recently-designated architect to explore expansion options at the present site and identify potential constraints that might limit those options;**
- **consider branch library service options and which strategies offer the most effective means of delivering service to a rapidly-growing community;**
- **when ready to proceed to the design of an expansion of the existing building, authorize the development of building program statements describing the library's spatial and environmental requirements in the context of a new building**

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2 *ESSENTIAL PLANNING CONCEPTS*

The following sections discuss a variety of broad concepts that form a foundation for the subsequent examination of service goals and space needs for the Plainfield Public Library District. Included among these concepts are:

- 2.1 Service goals determine a library's space need
- 2.2 The planning horizon defines a long-range timetable
- 2.3 Design population defines a context for future library services
- 2.4 Standards for library service offer guidance for optimum service goals
- 2.5 Recent trends in services and inventory establish a foundation for future growth
- 2.6 Comparative benchmarks provide a perspective for assessing library service
- 2.7 Digital information resources will affect library collections

2.1 *SERVICE GOALS DETERMINE A LIBRARY'S SPACE NEED*

For the purpose of developing an estimate of a library's space need, Library Planning Associates, Inc. recommends a methodology that identifies six kinds of floor space found in most libraries, regardless of type:

- *Collection space:* to house the library's basic print and nonprint collection.
- *Reader seating space:* to provide a variety of comfortable seating for library patrons to use the library's resources in-house.
- *Staff space:* to provide staff work stations as needed to support the library's various routines and operations (circulation, technical services, public services, administration, etc.).
- *Programming / meeting space:* to accommodate library programming for the general public, meetings of the library board and/or staff, as well as meetings of other community groups.
- *Special use space:* to house those pieces of unique library furniture or special library functions that have not been accounted for in previous types of space (e.g., photocopiers, pamphlet files, microfilm readers, public typewriters, public lounge or coffee bar, staff lounge, etc.).
- *Nonassignable space:* to house those spaces which must be provided

to support a functioning building but which cannot be assigned directly to library purposes (e.g., vestibules, restrooms, stairwells, furnace rooms, etc.).

Regarding each of these six types of space, the library's program of service together with comparative benchmarks from peer libraries and standards documents issued by a state library agency or state library association are used to determine what that library's needs are, and a formula can be applied to translate those service needs into the corresponding spatial requirements. To greatly oversimplify the equation, all other things being equal a library will require more floor space if it establishes a service parameter to develop a collection of 250,000 volumes than would be the case if its collection development goal was 100,000 volumes; all other things being equal, a library will require more floor space if it establishes a service parameter to provide 200 reader seats than would be the case if it were to provide 120 reader seats.

2.2 *THE PLANNING HORIZON DEFINES A LONG-RANGE TIMETABLE*

Library space planning usually results in a capital project of significant scope and expense. In order to achieve the highest possible return on the community's capital investment, local authorities should strive to meet not only the present service needs of the community, but its future needs as well. A library should grow into its facility, with sufficient space provided for shelving and other resources so that the setting does not become too soon overcrowded.

The conventional planning timetable for library facilities planning is twenty years. Over the years, library planners have come to agree that a building designed to meet a twenty-year need will provide a suitable return on the community's investment, building to meet tomorrow's needs at today's pre-inflationary construction costs.

For the Plainfield study, the planning horizon is set to the year 2030. While this results in a period somewhat longer than the conventional twenty years, it assumes that the actual implementation of this report's recommendations to address the long-term needs is some time in the future. If that plan is completed by 2010 – or at least well underway – a planning horizon of 2030 will allow the community a full twenty years' occupation and use in the resulting facility.

The recommendations presented here are intended to define an environment from which the library may respond to the needs of the service community during the years to come, acknowledging that change is occurring so

quickly – socially, technologically, in every way – that the best strategy for dealing with the library’s future needs is to provide a plan that is flexible and can be adapted for different uses in the future.

2.3 *DESIGN POPULATION DEFINES A CONTEXT FOR FUTURE LIBRARY SERVICES*

The design population defines a key parameter for planning future library services. By identifying how the library's service community is expected to grow, a context is provided for the establishment of future library service goals and future space needs.

Two crucial elements must be considered in determining a library's design population:

- the design population should represent a *projection* of the service community's size, preferably twenty years hence. This corresponds with the axiom that facilities planning should meet the community's long-term needs.
- the design population should accommodate or recognize the *nonresident use* of the library.

The current population of the library's service area, as reported by the Illinois State Library, is 59,119. Recent growth in the area has been dramatic, to say the least. The reported population just one year ago, in 2005, was 49,441. In 2004, the reported population was 41,843. In the years prior to the 2000 decennial census, the reported population was 18,885. A new special census is being taken again this year to document the most recent growth in the service area.

The library' service jurisdiction includes most, but not all, of the village of Plainfield and certain unincorporated areas nearby. Many, but not all, of those presently unincorporated areas are expected to be incorporated into the village of Plainfield. When the village of Plainfield reaches its projected full build-out there will be parts of the village that will lie outside of the library district and parts of the district that will lie outside the village. Library staff reports that the population of the village that will eventually fall outside the district will be largely offset by the population of the district that will eventually fall outside the village.

With this in mind, the population forecasts for the village of Plainfield can be used as the basis for a forecast of the population of the library district. Most forecasts anticipate continuing substantial growth in the area. Most show the village (and district) population growing to some 120,000.

Any estimate of the library's resident population should be adjusted to reflect a representation of the number of nonresidents who use the library. While the population of a library's primary service area can be enumerated within the boundaries of that service area, the nonresident population is less readily defined. Nonresident borrowers may be drawn to the Plainfield Public Library District for a variety of reasons – convenience to shopping or work, the availability of resources not otherwise available at their home library. In any case, nonresidents may come to the Plainfield Public Library from any number of points of origin and a headcount of this portion of the library's service population is difficult to accomplish.

For planning purposes, however, an estimate of the number of

“nonresident equivalent” borrowers can be made.¹ Given recent use patterns at the library – circulation activity by residents versus nonresidents, the rate of resident borrower registration as a percentage of total population – an estimate of 3,157 nonresident equivalents can be made for the Plainfield Public Library District.

Adding the nonresident borrower population to the projected local population produces a design population of 123,157 (120,000 residents + 3,157 nonresident equivalents). This projected service population is used to guide the assessment of various collection development and service options for the library.

2.4 *STANDARDS FOR LIBRARY
SERVICE OFFER GUIDANCE FOR
OPTIMUM SERVICE GOALS*

The Illinois Library Association, in cooperation with the Illinois State Library, issues standards for library service in Illinois. Standards can serve as a useful guideline for establishing future service goals. The most recent edition of these standards, *Serving Our Public*, was published in 1997, with an addendum in published in 2002.

The standards define recommended quantitative resource and service goals for libraries based either on a library's municipal population or an extended "service" population; libraries may choose whether to apply the standards based on their municipal population or their service population. The standards also define various "levels of effort" to reflect the fact that different communities may have different levels of expectation regarding library service. Based on the level of services demanded by their patrons, a library may elect to meet the standard at the "minimum" level, at a "growing" level, an "established" level, or an "advanced" level.

Current and projected service recommendations based on the standards appear on the following page in Figure 2(1), on the following page. In each case, the library's current resource inventory (drawn from the 2006 annual report) is shown as a point of reference.

Based on a design population of 123,157, the Illinois standards recommend a minimum book collection of 269,263 volumes and 846 periodical titles. More assertive levels of service recommend greater collection resources.

FIGURE 2(1)					
APPLICATION OF ILLINOIS PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS					
		<u>Year 2007</u>			
	<u>Held</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Growing</u>	<u>Established</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Current service population		59,119			
Volumes held	87,990	139,560	228,238	257,798	390,815
Periodicals held	207	486	605	782	1,314
Nonprint held @ 10% of print	8,109	13,956	22,824	25,780	39,082
Nonprint held @ 15% of print	8,109	20,934	34,236	38,670	58,622
Nonprint held @ 20% of print	8,109	27,912	45,648	51,560	78,163
Nonprint held @ 25% of print	8,109	34,890	57,060	64,449	97,704
Computer term/ patron & staff		59	118	169	236
Reader seating	91	180			
Staffing (FTEs)	34.10	44.78	59.56	74.34	89.12
		<u>Year 2030</u>			
Design population		123,157			
	<u>Held</u>	<u>Minimum</u>	<u>Growing</u>	<u>Established</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
Volumes held	87,990	269,263	435,525	497,103	712,628
Periodicals held	207	846	1,093	1,339	2,078
Nonprint held @ 10% of print	8,109	26,926	43,552	49,710	71,263
Nonprint held @ 15% of print	8,109	40,389	65,329	74,565	106,894
Nonprint held @ 20% of print	8,109	53,853	87,105	99,421	142,526
Nonprint held @ 25% of print	8,109	67,316	108,881	124,276	178,157
Computer term/ patron & staff		123	246	352	493
Reader seating	91	252			
Staffing (FTEs)	34.10	90.79	121.58	152.37	183.16

Successive recommended benchmarks for the book collection are 435,525 volumes at the “growing” level of effort, 497,103 volumes at the “established” level of effort, and 712,628 volumes at the “advanced” level of effort.

The nonprint collection, according to the ILA standards, should be predicated on a percentage of the print collection – 10% at the lowest level of effort, 15% at the next, 20% and 25% at the highest level of effort. As an example, a library of comparable size to Plainfield choosing to set its book collection development goal at the “established” level (497,103 volumes) would have a “minimum” nonprint collection size of 49,710 items (10% of 497,103), a “growing” nonprint collection of 74,565 items, an “established” nonprint collection of 99,421 items or an “advanced” nonprint collection of 123,276 items.

As noted in Figure 2(1), the latest revision of the standards also provides a recommendation regarding the inventory of computer terminals the library should provide (for the public + staff), the number of reader seats, and the number of staff FTEs.

Although the standards offer a useful point of view regarding possible future targets for collection and service growth, the application of such a standard must be conditioned by the following concerns:

- the ability of a single statewide standard may not be able to reasonably address the wide variability of local library service needs that exists on the level of individual local service jurisdictions

- these standards are “frozen” at the time of their adoption or publication by the Illinois Library Association and as a result may not address more recent developments in library service. In particular, the Illinois standards recommend how many magazine titles a library should provide. But more recently, this literature increasingly has become available in electronic form. Some libraries now wonder whether the existing standard, having been issued some time ago, can provide meaningful direction in the current service setting.

2.5 RECENT TRENDS IN SERVICES AND INVENTORY ESTABLISH A FOUNDATION FOR FUTURE GROWTH

A review of the library's annual reports to the Illinois state library agency provides an overview of the current status of library services at the Plainfield Public Library District and an understanding of recent trends in the development of the library's resources and use.

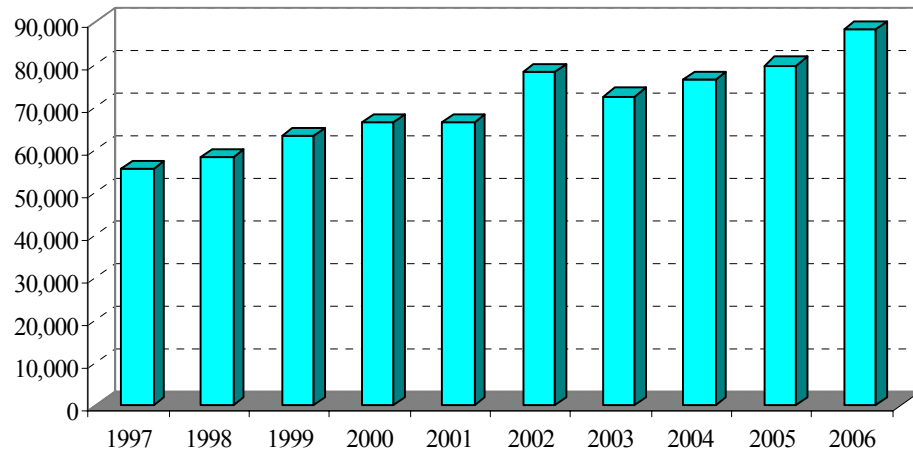
2.5.1 Collections

According to the latest available annual report data, the library maintains a collection of 87,990 volumes, 5,064 audio recordings and 3,045 video recordings. A complete summary of data relating to the library's collection inventory is presented in Appendix A.

Over the last decade, the library's book collection has generally increased (see Figure 2(2), next page). In 2003 the library completed a substantial weeding project and recorded a net decrease in the book collection. Even factoring in that one year, the collections have grown steadily, averaging 2,800+ net adds per year. Gross additions to the collection averaged 6,800+ volumes per year, ranging from a high of 12,700+ (in 2006) to a low of 3,800+ volumes (in 1997).

In recent years, the library has maintained a modest collection of magazines, maintaining a subscription list of slightly over 200 titles. The collection has grown consistently over the last ten years. In 1997, the subscription list numbered 166 titles. Today's collection marks an increase of roughly 25%. The library's service population has grown at a much faster rate.

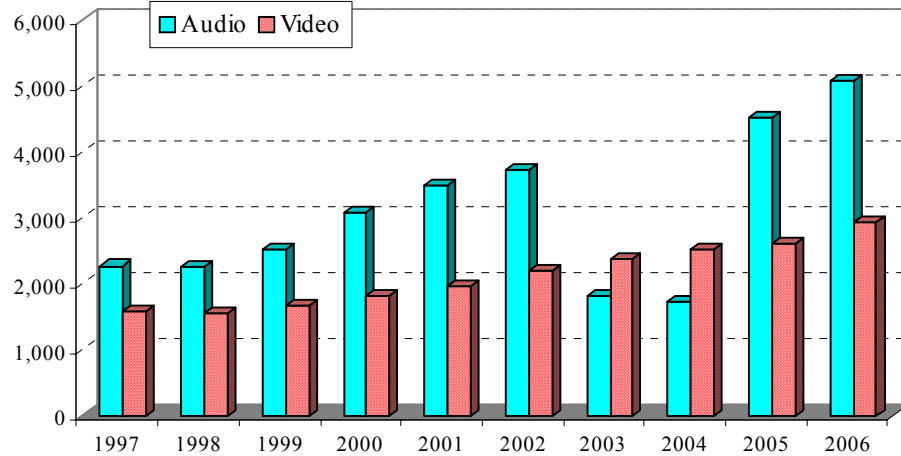
**FIGURE 2(2)
VOLUMES HELD**



The library's nonprint collections have also grown at a more assertive pace. Holdings of audio recordings have increased by over 123% over the last ten years, from 2,200+ items to 5,000+ items; video holdings have increased by more than 50%, from 1,900+ items to 3,000+ items (see Figure 2(3), next page).

The balance of the library's holdings has experienced a notable shift over time with the development of the nonprint collection. In 1997, the ratio of nonprint holdings to print holdings was 7.6% – for every 100 items in the print collection, there were about 7.6 nonprint items held. By 2006, that ratio had increased to 9.2%. *Within* the nonprint collection, another subtle shift has

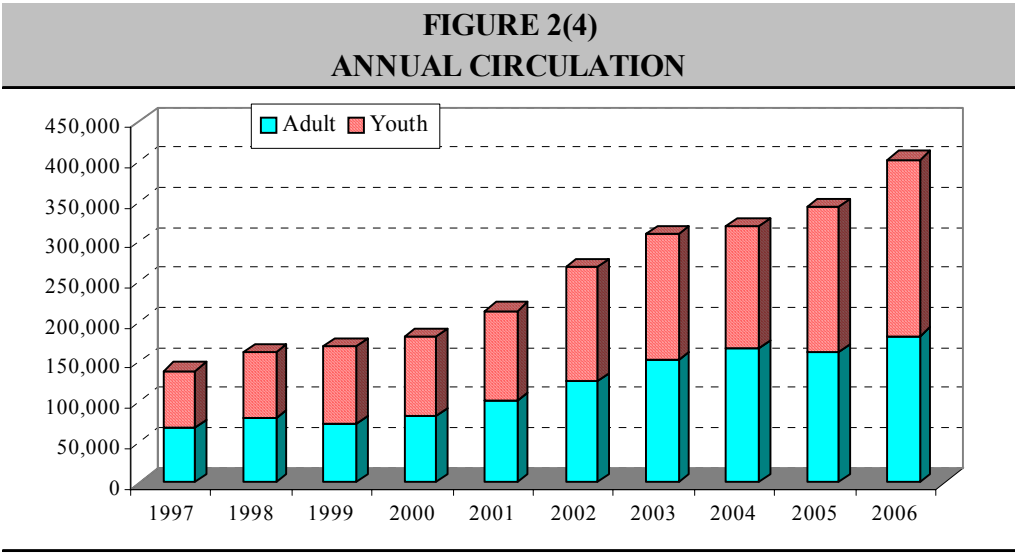
FIGURE 2(3)
NONPRINT HOLDINGS



occurred. In 1997, video holdings represented 46.9% of the nonprint collection; by 2006, video holdings had come to represent 37.5% of the nonprint collection. The increase in the ratio between nonprint and print is a commonly-seen pattern among public libraries today. The decrease in video's share of the nonprint collection is a less common pattern.

2.5.2 Collection use

Circulation is a traditional measure of library use. At the Plainfield Public Library, use has tracked consistently upward during the past ten years (see Figure



2(4)). In 1997, total circulation was 139,000+ items. By 2006, total circulation had grown to 402,000+, an increase of almost 190%. In five of the last ten years, there was a double-digit percentage increase in total circulation.

Circulation per capita – often interpreted as a measure of overall activity levels at a library – has decreased from 8.2 in 1997 to just over 6.8 in 2006; this indicates that while circulation has increased during this period, it has increased at a slower rate than the rate of population growth. On the other hand, circulation per volume held – often interpreted as a measure of the overall efficiency of the collection – has grown from 2.5 in 1997 to 4.5 in 2006, increasing in eight of the ten years in this period.