



**Chattanooga**

**Public**

**Library**

**TOWARD A TWENTY FIRST CENTURY**

**SERVICE PLAN**

Recommendations by MJ Gómez Associates | January 2019



## **Background**

Chattanooga Public Library (CPL) issued a request for proposals (RFP) for a consultant to conduct a “System Wide-Service Needs/Service Delivery Master Plan Study.” CPL, through the RFP, sought to answer the following questions:

- What are the most important existing uses of the various library branches?
- Where do the users of the various branches come from?
- How are emerging and anticipated development and transportation patterns in the city affecting access to needed services, programs, and facilities across the community?
- How can the Library system most cost-effectively optimize delivery of the services, programs, and resources needed and wanted by the community during the period of this plan and beyond and ensure adequate access?
- To what extent can and should such services be delivered virtually?
- How feasible and desirable would it be to co-locate branches or satellite unites of the public library with or near other public use facilities (such as recreation centers, high schools, senior centers, children and youth centers, and/or neighborhood centers)?
- What steps might be taken to best serve currently under-served portions of the community?

On August 24, 2018, MJ Gómez Associates was awarded the contract. The project team assembled for this effort includes the following consultants: Sam McBane Mulford, Ideation Collaborative; Richard “Dick” Waters, Principal Consultant, Godfrey’s Associates, Inc.; and,

Jason Griffey, Library Technologist, Evenly Distributed, LLC. Martín Gómez served as the principal managing consultant for the project.

Organization of the 90-day project began informally via conference call with the CPL Project Steering Committee, (see Appendix 1 for a list of members of the Project Steering Committee). and officially launched on October 15, 2018.

### **Methodology**

In October, using information provided by the Library, the consultants conducted a comprehensive review of the library's organization, operations, services, programs, and facilities. In order to better understand public perception of the services and programs offered by CPL, we conducted on-site interviews with representatives from the Library Board of Trustees, the Office of Mayor, selected community organizations and the Hamilton County Department of Education.

In November, project consultant Dick Waters, conducted an on-site assessment of the main library and three library branches. His evaluation focused on facility locations, related use patterns, and the functional capacity of each library to support or limit the delivery of contemporary models of public library services and programs. During the same period, project consultant Jason Griffey, conducted an on-site evaluation of the library's current technology applications and related digital services.

In late November, project consultants Martín Gómez and Sam McBane Mulford, conducted two on-site community focus groups and a scenario planning workshop that was attended by representatives from various community organizations and selected library staff. The purpose of the scenario planning workshop was to ask participants to imagine various future scenarios about Chattanooga and to identify ways in which CPL might develop its programs and services accordingly.

In addition, the consultants worked with library staff to release a general community survey (English and Spanish) on the CPL's website and an internal staff survey. Approximately 1,300 responses to the community survey were received. Approximately 65% of CPL staff responded to the internal "staff only" anonymous survey. A summary of the responses to both surveys have been attached to this report as appendices. Complete copies of the surveys have been provided to Library administration.

### **Findings**

As part of our discovery process, library stakeholders were asked to give their opinions about the quality of life in Chattanooga, describe what it's like to live and work in Chattanooga, identify challenges residents face, and share their thoughts about what CPL might do to be a more valuable community resource. In general, library stakeholders described Chattanooga as a vibrant, livable city that offers numerous cultural and recreational amenities. Due to its relatively small population, stakeholders characterized Chattanooga as a place where it is easy

to engage in civic life, where local foundations, civic-minded businesses and organizations often work together to address local challenges.

Some described Chattanooga as a divided city – a place that struggles to find ways to connect neighborhood life with downtown and characterized this phenomenon as “two Chattanooga’s”. Stakeholders speculated that this “divide” may be amplified by the perception that economic development has focused more on downtown redevelopment rather than the neighborhoods and that a lack of an easy to use, efficient public transportation system between the two areas is a contributing factor. Stakeholders postulated that Chattanooga Public Library, with its three neighborhood locations and downtown “flagship” presence has the potential to help bridge the divide.

The U.S. Census estimates the 2017 population for Chattanooga at 179,139. The median age in Chattanooga is 37 and a little over one-quarter of the population is under the age of 18. Nearly 58% of the population is between 18 and 65 years of age and 15.6% of the population is 65 or older. Additionally, 56.5% of the population is identified as “white alone” (not Hispanic or Latino); 33.3% are Black or African American, and 5.6% are Hispanic or Latino. Approximately 28.7% of the population 25 years or older have a bachelor’s degree or higher. Based on a median household income of \$41,911, (in 2017 dollars), a little over one out of five (20.7%) Chattanooga residents live in poverty. In households with related children under the age 18 the

rate rises to 46.7% and in households with related children under 5 years only, the rate rises to 53.8% <sup>1</sup>

Chattanooga is the largest municipality in Hamilton County, Tennessee and serves as the county seat. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the Hamilton County Department of Education reported a student enrollment of 44,413 students across 76 schools consisting of 41 elementary schools, 13 middle schools, 12 high schools. Per agreement between Hamilton County and the City of Chattanooga, students who are non-Chattanooga residents but live in Hamilton County, may qualify for a CPL library card. Adults living outside the City of Chattanooga must pay an annual fee for a Library card.

Major institutions of higher education located in Chattanooga include the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga, Chattanooga State Community College and Miller-Motte Technical College-Chattanooga. In 2015, The University of Tennessee-Chattanooga reported a total of 3,444 graduates. Five hundred thirty-six (536) of the graduates were Black or African American.

Chattanooga Public Library (CPL) is currently governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees, (bylaws allow up to 11 members), appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. The FY 2018 – 2019 budget for CPL is just over \$7 million.

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<sup>1</sup> American Community Survey, American Fact Finder 2013-2017 5-year estimates

CPL is one of four major urban public libraries in Tennessee that includes Knoxville, Memphis, and Nashville. In 2017, the average per capita expenditure of the four libraries was \$34.50. Nashville's per capita expenditure was highest at \$52.37 and Memphis, the lowest at \$19.85 per capita. Chattanooga Public Library, serving the smallest population of the four, had a 2017 per capita expenditure of \$35.05.

The Chattanooga Public Library consists of a Downtown "main" Library and 3 branches: Eastgate, Northgate and South Chattanooga. CPL has 85 full-time regular employees.

Publicly-accessible digital technology platforms, specifically the Internet, have revolutionized, and disrupted, the ways in which people search for and receive information, read books, access entertainment, magazines, and newspapers, conduct research and connect with expert reference resources on a variety of topics. As a result, public libraries are adapting to and continuously experimenting with a variety of new services and programs offered to their constituents, on-site and virtually.

### Services

Traditional library services include public access to circulating collections, reference service, (via telephone, email or in-person question handling), and interlibrary loan. In fiscal year 2017 – 2018, CPL reported that it circulated 1,085,565 items (adult materials - 602,017, children's materials - 486,585), and provided access to approximately 45 online databases. Circulation transactions for electronic publications such as eBooks, and online streaming of film and music services during the same time period totaled 121,195 transactions and are included in the

overall circulation count listed above. During the same period, Library staff conducted nearly 132,000 reference transactions.

As the result of the partnership between the Library and the University of Tennessee – Chattanooga, CPL offers a host of specialized local history and genealogical services at the Downtown Library. As a local resource, Chattanooga residents are able to locate historic photographs, request copies of obituaries and receive instruction on how to use tools such as Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org and other library-based resources.

Services offered for children (0 – 8 years of age) have a strong pedagogical focus with an emphasis on the development of early literacy skills. Examples include *Pre-school Storytime*, *Family Storytime*, *Baby Bounce*, and *Toddler Time*. Variations include *Spanish Playtime*, *Signing Storytime*, and *Paws to Read*. More recently, the Library has developed STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) oriented services geared toward children ages 5 – 8 such as *KidsQuest* (presently available at the Northgate Library) and STEAM Team (Downtown), STEAM in the Park and STEAM Study Breaks (Eastgate).

CPL offers a handful of innovative services not typically associated with public libraries. CPL is perhaps best known for its two signature services offered in the Downtown Library - “**The 4<sup>th</sup> Floor**” maker space and **The Studio**.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Floor is described “a public laboratory and educational facility with a focus on information, design, technology, and the applied arts. The more than 12,000 square foot space hosts equipment, expertise, programs, events, and meetings that work within this scope”. The 4<sup>th</sup> Floor programs are offered on a scheduled, supervised basis and take advantage of a wide range of “DIY” equipment located in that space. The Library further describes its rationale for the 4th Floor as follows: “while traditional library spaces support the consumption of knowledge by offering access to media, the 4th Floor is unique because it supports the production, connection, and sharing of knowledge by offering access to tools and instruction.”

CPL describes The Studio as a “state-of-the-art recording studio and educational facility with industry standard equipment and resources to help inspire, educate, and spark creativity.”

Patrons with a valid library card can reserve The Studio for a 3-hour session to work on projects, learn the art of recording, and refine their audio recording skills. Chattanooga Public Library has received national attention for the services offered on the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor and “The Studio”.

### Programs

CPL reports that it sponsored 3,292 programs attended by 65,735 people in FY 2017-2018. Children accounted for seventy-one per cent (71%) of the attendance at library-sponsored programs.

Some programs, such as *Sew What*, are offered on a “systemwide” basis, meaning that the programs are scheduled and available at every branch library. A number of unscheduled

programs are offered at the Downtown and branch libraries, such as “Game On” (on-demand access to classic board games, card games, video games and more) and “After Hours Game Night” (Northgate and Downtown Library).

According to the Neighborhood Associations Registry, there are 132 “active” neighborhood associations and organizations in Chattanooga. CPL reported that it has a formal partnership with approximately 14 of those organizations.

As a result of these partnerships the Library is able to expand its reach to meet community needs that it might not otherwise be able to do alone. Some efforts require minimal use of Library resources such as simply providing free meeting room space for organizations. Other partnerships require greater use of Library resources such as staff expertise when working with organizations like the Chattanooga Police Department (Blue Books Reading Club), the League of Women Voters, Chattanooga Girls Rock! (workshops and lending library collections for CGR campers), and La Paz (Passport Fairs).

Perhaps one of the more interesting and innovative program partnerships is Tech Goes Home, (also known as TGH CHA). TGH CHA, is a separate nonprofit organization that partners with several community-based Chattanooga organizations, including CPL, to promote digital literacy and bridge the digital divide.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Defined by the American Library Association as “the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills”.

Tech Goes Home, was adapted from a Boston-based program and further developed for Chattanooga by the Enterprise Center. TGH CHA offers computer and Internet use instruction for adults, school-aged children and preschoolers and their parents. Upon completion of the course, participants have the option to purchase a new Chromebook for only \$50. The program also offers assistance in securing low-cost home Internet service. The Downtown Library hosts a TGH CHA class for small business entrepreneurs. Scheduled TGH CHA programs are also held at Eastgate and planned for Avondale when it opens later this year.

The Chattanooga Public Library offers U.S. Passport Acceptance service, by appointment only, at the Downtown Library, Monday through Saturday. The Downtown Library also has a tool lending service that allows cardholders, (18 years and up), to check out tools, such as socket wrench sets, cordless drills, and power sanders. Personal fax services are available at all library locations and free notary services are also available at the Downtown Library.

According to the CPL webpage, the Library offers a variety of “Homework Help” resources which are primarily online reference resources.

### **Facilities**

Today, newly constructed or renovated public libraries offer patrons spaces for group study, multiple public access computing workstations, space devoted for private tutoring, “quiet” reading space for adults, multi-media rooms for group projects, and dedicated adaptable space

for lectures, workshops, programs, and presentations. Libraries with significant historical collections such as community archives, or other valuable objects (such as art works or other three-dimensional items) also provide secure, climate-sensitive space for the storage of special collections.

Although there are no longer national public library standards for size and space, a widely followed guideline is one (1) square foot of library space for every resident within the library’s service area.

On the basis of Chattanooga’s current population of nearly 180,000, we have concluded that, with the exception of the Downtown and the Eastgate libraries, the CPL footprint is undersized for the population that it is designed to serve. Further exacerbating this finding is learning that demographers expect the population of Chattanooga to grow by at least another 10% over the next decade.

We have used zip codes as the basis for calculating the service population of the three (3) existing branch libraries. Chart 2 below highlights population growth each of the zip code zones served by CPL.

**Chart 1 - CHATTANOOGA PUBLIC LIBRARY – Population by Zip Code**

<i>Zip Code</i>	2000	2010	2016	# Change 2010 - 2016	% Change 2011 - 2016	Notes
37421	40,827	46,728	48,895	2,167	4.64%	Hamilton Mall Zip Code*
37411	17,778	17,587	18,005	418	2.38%	Eastgate Branch Library **

37515	23,112	23,873	25,864	1,991	8.34%	Northgate Branch Library
37410	4,822	3,886	3,873	-13	-0.33	South Chattanooga
*Excellent location for a replacement facility in 37411 if close to boundary of 37411 and 37421						
** 37411 is adjacent to 37421						
						Prepared by Godfrey's Associates, Inc.
						30-Nov-18

Chart 2 below shows the current square footage at each library and compares the current

Library	Population Served 2018	Square Feet (SF)	SF @ 0.6	SF @ 0.8	SF @ 1.0	Population Served 2038
<b>Downtown</b>	180,000	124,500	108,000	144,000	180,000	218,000
<b>Avondale</b>	13,600	2,000	8,160	10,880	16,500	16,500
<b>Eastgate</b>	18,300	9,084	10,980	19,640	22,140	22,140
<b>Northgate</b>	23,500	8,800	14,600	18,800	28,430	28,430
<b>South Chattanooga</b>	4,700	3,000	2,820	3,760	5,690	5,690
<b>TOTAL</b>	180,00	147,384	144,650	197,080	290,760	218,000

population to current Library square footage in 2018 and the projected population in 2038.

Based on the projected 2038 population growth, CPL would need a total of 290,760 square feet @ 1 square foot per capita.

Between 2010 and 2016, the Northgate area, zip code 37515, experienced the greatest population growth (8.34%) since 2011. However, the population of the Northgate area is approximately 23,000 smaller than the population located in zip code 37421, the location of the Hamilton Mall.

**Chart 2 - Comparison of current and future population growth to Library square footage**

Three of the four current library buildings are 40 years or older. The newest facility, South Chattanooga, is the smallest branch (3,000 square feet) and serves a population of less than

4,000 who reside in zip code 37410.<sup>3</sup> South Chattanooga opened in 1992 and will soon reach its 30<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Due to their age, the two oldest branch libraries, (Eastgate and Northgate), and the Downtown Library, are expected to continue to experience increasingly higher costs for building maintenance and repairs. This, coupled with the very high rental cost of the Eastgate facility, strongly suggests a need for CPL to re-think its approach to facility management.

Additional constraints of CPL's branch library facilities include the:

- Absence of a multi-purpose meeting room that seats at least 50 persons in theatre-style arrangement;
- No group study room(s);
- Lack of age separation in the spaces designated for Children's Services – the "big" and "small" children are cross-sharing the space;
- Children's picture books are shelved the same as all other books and not in bins, making them difficult for young children to easily browse (South Chattanooga excepting);
- Inadequate number of collaborative computer workstations among the three branch libraries;
- Clutter in staff work rooms which impedes productivity; and
- Lack of directional street signage informing persons the general location of the libraries.

For the most part, bookstacks are (a) overcrowded<sup>4</sup> and (b) much too tall. Both Eastgate and Northgate branches have upright shelving that measures between 84" and 90" high. These

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<sup>3</sup> The consultants fully recognize that Chattanooga residents can and do use libraries that are located outside their residential zip code. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to believe that a majority of users of any of the branch libraries primarily make use of the library within the zip code where they live.

<sup>4</sup> A three-foot shelf, the standard for all steel shelving, should have empty space of at least eight inches at the right end of the shelf to be within capacity – meaning the shelves are roughly 80 percent full.

heights result in making about a fifth of the shelved materials out of reach for a significant number of customers. This height, coupled with the bottom shelf not being a tilt shelf, places another 10 to 20 percent of the collection non-browsable. A tilt shelf would allow spine labels to be more easily read.

Furthermore, in addition to being too small, the round shape of the Northgate facility does not allow maximum use of all of the space in the building.

The Downtown Library presents its own unique challenges. We found that there is considerable underused space. Inadequate space in and of itself is not a significant issue at this time, however, the interior layout and arrangement of the space is an issue. For example, each floor has areas that cannot be easily supervised, creating what amounts to underutilized space.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Floor maker space takes up about one-half of the 21,500 square feet on that floor.

Much of the remaining space is used for “special events.”

Basement space is shared between the Facilities Department and the Collection Services Department. The Collection Services Department occupies about 4,000 SF and the Facilities Department occupies the balance of the basement space.<sup>5</sup> About 1/3 of the 16,000 SF in the basement is taken up by the loading dock and ramps and includes several smaller spaces that

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<sup>5</sup> These numbers do not include the unassignable spaces, e.g. rest rooms, columns, wall thicknesses, etc.

serve as “home” to a mix of furniture, equipment, supplies, and tools, the latter the responsibility of the Facilities Department.

With regard to Collection Services, there are a considerable number of book trucks and worktables presently occupying quite a bit of floor space. Book trucks take up 240 – 250 SF and the worktables use over 1,000 SF. In addition, there are a number of boxes occupying floor space as well as several sections of shelving.

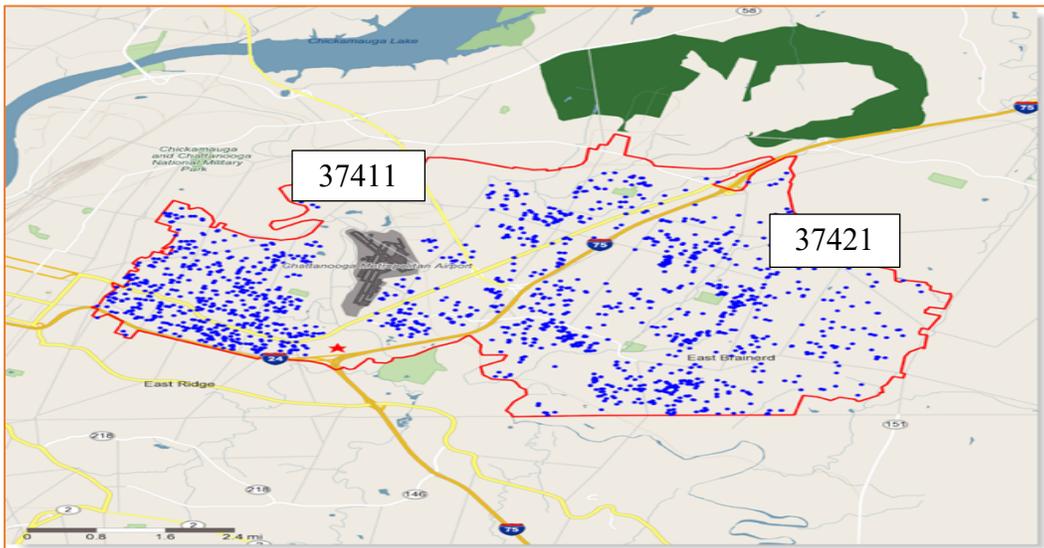
The Local History and Genealogy Department occupies a good deal of space on the third floor including about 4,300 SF for the open bookstacks. While an important Library service, the daily demand for the materials shelved on the third-floor stacks may not warrant taking up valuable space that could be used for seating or other public functions.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, The Studio, and Passport services are all excellent and needed services that may well account for a considerable percentage of the foot traffic in and out of the Downtown Library.

Given the important role library facilities play in the delivery of 21<sup>st</sup> century library services, the consultant team offers the following recommendations regarding future library building projects, capital improvements, library locations, joint-use options, and possible public/private funded projects.

1. We recommend replacing the existing Eastgate Branch Library.

Currently, no library exists to serve the 48,895 residents who live within 37421 zip code area, which includes the Hamilton Mall. Assuming that funding is not available for the construction and operation of a fourth branch library, re-siting a replacement for the Eastgate facility that is in closer proximity to the residents of area code 37421 could not only continue to serve the patrons living in the 37411 zip code area (Eastgate) but also benefit the growing population of 37421 area.



**Chart 3 - Map of patron households in zip codes 37411 (left of Interstate 75) and 37421. The red star indicates the location of the Eastgate Branch Library.**

2. Additionally, we recommend that given the annual lease expense of \$100,000 for Eastgate and knowing that the lease is on a short-term extension, we believe that lease dollars could be better spent to retire a debt for a future CPL-owned facility that would be larger, user-friendly, and ADA compliant.

Short of a major renovation and/or expansion of current library facilities, or the wholesale construction of any new libraries, there are several low-cost intermediate steps that could be taken to improve the use of existing buildings. For example, each of the three branch libraries should:

1. Thin their collections so that no adult or YA (teens/tweens) collection item is on a shelf more than 66" from the floor to the top of the item on the top shelf. No new shelving is needed. The space above the top shelf of books – approximately 12 – 14 inches could be effectively used for tailored marketing and merchandising of collections and services.
2. Conduct a thorough review of shelving and replace with "universal access" shelving that includes tilt shelving and display type shelving for children's picture books.
3. Add collaborative public computer workstations at Eastgate and South Chattanooga.
4. Carefully examine staff work and break spaces to ensure that only those items that are needed on a regular basis remain stored at a branch library. Seldom used items, (decorations, etc.), should be labeled and transferred to the Downtown Library where they can be housed and sent to branch library(ies) on an as needed basis – and then returned to a central storage space when the use is over.
5. Use existing shelving at Eastgate and Northgate for to create at least one group study "room" for four (4) persons at those locations. Normal conversations take place in a

group study room so there will be, in all likelihood, customer complaints from time to time.

6. Install, if allowed by the City of Chattanooga, signage codes, selectively placed “International Library” signage in three to four locations near each library informing the public of the general location of the library.
  
7. For service and security, we recommend the installation of mirrors in the corners of the public spaces of the buildings (random placement at Northgate) to assist staff at the service desks supervise the spaces; install a panic alarm in each library that is directly connected to the nearest Chattanooga police substation.

Over the longer term, we further recommend that the Library consider the following options for expanding the public library footprint to meet projected population growth.

1. Seek public funding for a capital improvements program. This option would give the Library the greatest control over the outcomes of any CIP initiative and would require the participation, or at minimum, the cooperation of the City of Chattanooga and/or Hamilton County to provide the majority of the funding or at least a guarantee of the repayment of any debt the Library would accrue. Assuming a 25,000 SF building, the project cost (design, construction, furnishings, etc.), would range from \$11,724,250 if completed in 2020 to \$13,390,750 if completed in 2023. The project cost per square

foot is estimated to be \$469.00 in 2020 to \$535.00 in 2023 based on data in the Architectural issue of *Library Journal*. The attached spreadsheet (Appendix 3) provides details on recent public library projects in Tennessee, Georgia, and Kentucky.<sup>6</sup>

2. Continue the option of leased facilities - Given the current experience of the Library with the Eastgate branch, leasing may not be a viable option. However, this option should not be taken off the table until discussions with other potential “landlords” are held with the possibility of securing much “tighter” and favorable lease terms. This would be the fastest way to add new and/or replace existing facilities. There would be capital costs for furniture, fixtures, & equipment (FF&E) and likely some design costs. Within the same time frame referenced above, capital improvements for these costs would range from \$29.04 per SF in 2020 to \$31.77 per SF in 2023. Design fees might range from \$5.00 to \$7.50 per SF, or \$125,000 - \$187,500.
  
3. Explore the creation of joint-use facilities with another institution(s) - There are notable joint-use facilities scattered throughout the country, and notable failures – or at least unhappy partners. In very general terms, successful projects have usually involved partnerships between community colleges and a public library. Unsuccessful projects have often occurred between a school library and a public library. The primary reason for the lack of success with school/public library projects has been the conflict between school policies as it pertains to security, and to a lesser, but no less important degree,

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<sup>6</sup> Public Library Capital Costs New Buildings 215 – 2018 Reported in Architectural Issue of *Library Journal*.

the issue of collection development (at times the shadow of censorship) and public library policies.

4. In Chattanooga, a possible viable partnership might be explored between CPL and the Chattanooga State Community College (CSCC). Perhaps one of the most successful joint-use partnerships involves the Broward County (FL) Libraries and Broward County Community College. There are a number of examples of joint use libraries on college campuses, all used extensively by college students, faculty, and the general public. Broward County Libraries also has a branch library on the first level of Nova Southeastern University. San José Public Library (California), has a joint-use facility (Martin Luther King Central Library) that serves the general public and the students of San José State University. Another example is the joint-use library effort between Tidewater Community College and Virginia Beach Public Library. A copy of the joint use agreement for this project can be found at <http://libguides.tcc.edu/JUL>.
5. Public/private project - A public partnership with a private developer can be viable. A highly successful venture is the Rondo Community Library in Saint Paul, MN. The public library and a developer cooperated on a public-private venture that resulted in a new 36,000 SF branch library (replacing a library that was housed in a former cinema) at street level, underground parking, public parking on the second above grade level, and apartments above the second level parking. Planned, programmed, designed, constructed, and opened in the early part of this century the capital cost for the City of Saint Paul was about \$9 million. Santa Cruz Public Library (California) is in the beginning

stages of developing a joint-use downtown library that will include low-income housing, retail services and a parking structure.

A developer-sponsored project could provide programming, design, construction, furnishings and equipment for a totally new Downtown Library. A project of this magnitude could function as an anchor for a skyscraper-type building or parking garage, (with a Library user parking discount) on a site to be determined. If it was determined that it would be best to relocate the Downtown Library, CPL could use proceeds from sale of existing building to help pay for or defray some of the costs for a new facility.

6. Explore participation in Chattanooga's Opportunity Zone – Opportunity Zones are a new community development tool established by Congress in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017. This new tool is designed to drive long-term capital to low-income communities. The new law provides a federal tax incentive for investors to re-invest their capital gains into Opportunity Funds, which are specialized vehicles dedicated to investing in designated low-income areas. From our research we have surmised that the Downtown Library and the South Chattanooga branch library are located in Opportunity Zones.
7. Expand existing facilities - All three of the existing branch libraries could be expanded as follows:
  - a. **Eastgate** – IF the existing lease was re-negotiated and IF additional adjoining space is made available the facility could be expanded. In all

probability it would result in a long “skinny” facility, but additional needed space could be acquired.

- b. **Northgate** – An appendage to the building would be constructed that would eliminate some of the problems a round structure presents.
- c. **South Chattanooga** – Now, there is an abundance of parking. However, a 200 percent increase in space – from 3,000 to 9,000 SF – would mean more parking if parking guidelines (1 space for every 350 SF of building) are followed.

The Downtown Library is in a “prime” downtown location. Because of its location, it has the potential to be an attractive destination for downtown workers to hear a lecture or hear a concert. The building has been expanded once with the addition of a fourth floor above grade level. At 124,500 SF the space per capita (library space / total city population) is 0.73.<sup>7</sup> On the surface, this appears to be a good number. However, as noted there is quite a bit of underutilized space in the Downtown facility. In addition, parking is either metered street or payment for a specific block of time in the adjacent garage parking. There is no “free time” or discount for Library customers.

In addition, as noted earlier, the Downtown Library is fast approaching “middle age.” This will result in greater costs for maintenance and repairs going forward.

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<sup>7</sup> City population 179,139 as of July 1, 2017 estimate as stated in *CensusQuickFacts*.

For the Downtown Library, if a replacement facility is not an option, we offer the following strategies for consideration:

- A. Do nothing, just keep on keeping on. This is always an option.
- B. Undertake a floor-by-floor refurbishment and renovation, allowing the floors that are not being touched to stay in business.
- C. Re-arrange the placement of some of the services. For example, re-locate the Local History and Genealogy book collection to the basement and use the dumbwaiter to fulfill requested items.
- D. Consolidate the Passport Services space so it has a smaller footprint. This could be combined with recommendation item B above.

### **Technology**

As noted earlier in this report, Chattanooga Public Library has a history of being technologically innovative. For example, its partnership with the Chattanooga Enterprise Center, CPL has garnered wide-ranging praise for its 4<sup>th</sup> Floor maker space and its partnerships with the Chattanooga Enterprise Center, and Tech Goes Home. The Library has established a solid foundation for technology-based services in Chattanooga but there are identifiable gaps that remain to be addressed. Some of these service gaps, once filled, can be easily remedied and have the potential to positively benefit other aspects of the Library's technology service program.

During our investigation of CPL's technology program two service gaps became immediately apparent. The first is the specific technology - the hardware and software applications that is installed and being used by the public. The second relates to the promotion of the Library's existing technology-based services. While there is overlap between the two, we have treated them separately in this section whenever possible.

In terms of specific library technology, CPL is on par with other libraries of its size and service area. The primary digital entry point into the collection, Polaris ILS, has been set up well and presents a clean and clear interface for patrons. There is a limited amount of digital media available for public use from three providers (Hoopla, Overdrive, and RBDigital), which covers streaming video, eBooks, and magazines. However, there appears to be no provider for patrons to access digital music, even though, from a services perspective, The Studio is perhaps the most animated technological audio-centered space in the Library.

The types of technology hardware available from branch to branch varies significantly. For example, laptops for teens are available only at the Downtown Library, while South Chattanooga is the only branch with iPads available for patrons. Branch libraries have Chromebooks for patron use, but the Downtown Library does not, and only one branch (South Chattanooga) has Apple computers available for the public. In discussions with the CPL staff, this doesn't appear to be explicitly intentional, but rather a historical accident arising from a series of different experiments with differing technology types (tablet computers, Chromebooks, etc.).

While these experiments are worth performing and a necessary part of how a library operates, we recommend that the Library adopt a technology service plan that ensures a uniform set of technological experiences for patrons at every branch. It is true that patrons do not often “branch hop” and tend to visit the most convenient location for their needs, which mediates whether they are aware of technological options at each branch and thus unlikely to complain. But for the purposes of equity of access, creating a baseline of the type of technology available at every branch allows for a system-wide service plan that isn’t impacted by a lack of access in particular areas.

Therefore, we also recommend CPL explore the use of Chromebooks as circulating technology and that if feasible, be established as a baseline standard for circulating patron hardware. Low-cost Chromebooks are part of the Tech Goes Home (TGH CHA) hardware made available to graduates of the program. The Hamilton County Department of Education uses Google for Education, making Chromebooks a huge circulation and use opportunity for school children. Chromebooks are extremely low-cost computing devices and could allay some of fears about the circulation of laptops for home use. Provision of a standard computing platform that all public-school children use in the classroom and have pre-existing accounts for, but which may not be accessible outside the schoolhouse, has the potential to increase digital literacy skills in

Chattanooga. By example, the Carnegie Library of Pittsburg offers uses Chromebooks as its public hardware platform.<sup>8</sup>

This recommendation extends not only to the physical technology available to patrons at each branch, but also to the network infrastructure as well. Currently, patrons at the Downtown Library enjoy extraordinary bandwidth speeds of more than a Gigabit while the branches are limited to 50 Megabit connections that flow back to the Downtown Library. While current usage may not frequently saturate branch location bandwidth, this is highly unlikely to continue with the advances in digital demand by patrons for video streaming and games. Having such low bandwidth connections to the branch libraries, places unneeded limitations on possible future Library-based technology service applications.

Therefore, we recommend that CPL aggressively position the Library to take advantage of new opportunities presented by Chattanooga's plan to upgrade to a gigabyte infrastructure.

The most vibrant current service that intersects with technology usage is The Studio. There are multiple events and training sessions that focus on The Studio, for a wide variety of patron ages and skill levels. In fact, with the exception of unstructured one-on-one drop in time for the 4th Floor maker space, The Studio events are the only Library sponsored technology-focused activities offered for adults by CPL. In discussions with staff, there seems to be a disconnect

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.bizjournals.com/pittsburgh/news/2018/12/17/carnegie-library-google-team-up-for-laptop-lending.html>

between Library sponsored technology programs and training activities that support the use of that technology.

We recommend that the Library offer regular, focused instructional sessions that support the technology that is available for circulation, (laptops, tablets, Wi-Fi hotspot usage, and more).

One of the primary ways that public libraries differentiate themselves from other libraries is by collecting and providing access to unique local collections that are not held anywhere else.

These collections represent the collective memory of their own communities and are often the reason why patrons (students, local researchers, and budding historians) seek out specific libraries. One way for the Chattanooga Public Library to distinguish itself from other libraries and cultural heritage institutions, and to get patrons invested in the CPL, is to make more of these holdings available online.

While not currently perceived as a digital-first service offering, there is an incredible amount of community value hiding in the Local History and Genealogy Department in the Downtown Library. The collection held there, if unlocked, could give birth to an active and engaged city-wide digitization project. A service of this type could also strengthen ties between the Chattanooga History Center and the Chattanooga Memory Project. In our experience, community-based digitization efforts provide opportunities for all segments of the community to engage with the Library.

We recommend that CPL invest in its local history collections by positioning this service as an active, engaged and inter-active community digitization project.

The bandwidth infrastructure available to Chattanooga Public Library is unparalleled in the United States. Chattanooga itself has taken on the moniker “GigCity” and proudly uses this name as part of its “brand” and promises entrepreneurs and established businesses a new sort of online experience. In the past the Library has done more to embrace this opportunity. The current state of these efforts appears to be languishing. The Library itself has opportunities to enhance its own service offerings and should do more to take advantage of this local effort.

The existing infrastructure choices made by the Library, (especially the provision of such meager bandwidth to branches), are insufficient for any future transformative library service. Just one example of the sort of technology-enabled service that we are thinking of would be the use of the Gig infrastructure in Chattanooga to connect the library branches via HD video links that could be used to great effect for the distribution of existing instructional and literacy services to the entirety of the system at once. For instance, programs or lectures occurring at any library location could be simulcast to all branches, resulting in a much broader impact, and greater opportunity for patron participation. Live interactions between the branches could enhance the feeling of connectivity within the Library system and among the broader community. This type of connectivity could also enhance the CPL “brand” by strengthening the ties between downtown Chattanooga and the neighborhoods. This sort of network-based programming is being experimented with in other public library systems, but none has the promise that Chattanooga’s technological infrastructure provides.

We recommend that CPL strengthen its engagement with EPB's planned upgrades to its fiber-optic WiFi service by offering its branch library system as a public distribution channel for library programs, city-sponsored campaigns, and educational content to students.

As noted previously, The Studio is an obviously popular service, with outside experts being leveraged for instruction and outreach. In other libraries with similar audio recording functionality, the technology is also being used to enhance library collections and to build extraordinary communities of interest. For example, the Carnegie Library of Pittsburg is in the process of launching The Stacks, a service that leverages both their internal audio capabilities and also makes connections for collection development in the area. Similar in design to the Library of Congress' Story Corp program, as individuals record stories, songs, podcasts, and the like in The Studio, and with little overhead, the Library could collect locally-produced media and make it publicly accessible as part of its circulating collection.

Building a local music collection can yield huge dividends by creating new relationships and unique collections created over time. For example, SoundSwell is a streaming database of local music that was created through a partnership between the [Santa Cruz Public Libraries](#) and the [Santa Cruz Rehearsal Studios](#). Santa Cruz library cardholders can download music by local musicians from this site for free. There is no charge to download this music and the music does not employ digital rights management software.

Finally, in our research we discovered that the City of Chattanooga has one of the worst ratios for household broadband connectivity of any city in the United States. The National Digital Inclusion Alliance used data from the 2017 American Community Survey to rank US cities by percentage of households that do not have broadband access, and Chattanooga is ranked as the 11<sup>th</sup> worst in the country. Twenty-three and a half percent (23.5% or 17,887) of Chattanooga households do not have broadband connectivity in their home. This statistic mirrors the findings from the community survey that was launched as part of this project and it provides a perfect reason for CPL to assume greater leadership for the provision of broadband into the community.

The typical way in which public libraries have begun to bridge this gap is through Wi-Fi hotspot lending programs, although other methodologies like participation in TV whitespace experiments are also being attempted. In our research we were surprised to learn that the existing Wi-Fi hotspot lending program at CPL was being wound down. While we understand the technological reasons given for this decision, working to find solutions to the downsides of the existing hardware and re-introducing a hotspot lending program could be a win-win for the community and CPL.

We recommend that CPL reinstate its Wi-Fi hotspot lending program. This could be phased in over time at select locations where household broadband is lowest.

As stated previously, technology is integral to nearly every aspect of library operations and services at this point in time, and that is highly unlikely to change. It is necessary to have a

focus on the practicalities of the technology, which needs regular attention to be maintained properly. However, it is just as important to have Library staff who are focused on encouraging the use of that technology. CPL cannot rely on a “build it and they will come” approach to technology use. The Library must have an advocate (or team) who focuses on promoting the use of technology-based services, and on exploring ways to leverage that technology with outside partners for the benefit the wider community. It is this latter aspect that appears to be most needed at Chattanooga Public Library. The hardware is being maintained, but CPL should do more to bridge the digital divide by offering the community more technology, Internet and application (software) instruction.

We recommend that CPL should re-energize its technology service offerings to the public by investing in the creation of robust technology team with the skills to serve as community ambassadors and to create, implement, and deliver a technology training and education program at all Library locations.

### **Conclusions and Additional Recommendations**

MJ Gómez Associates has spent the last 3 months studying the operations, services, programs, facilities and public perceptions regarding the Chattanooga Public Library. The primary objective of this study has been to “identify opportunities to improve the current system or recommend other service delivery models to best serve the citizens of Chattanooga.” Our overall impression is that CPL has done an excellent job of positioning itself as a public agency that has been willing to experiment with new types of programs and services that the

community may not have originally been viewed as a traditional public library service or program. Specific examples of these efforts have been cited throughout this report.

In our review, in addition to the specific service and program recommendations, we have concluded that there are three broad areas that Chattanooga Public Library should consider while developing improvements to its service delivery models. These areas should be viewed as an operational “framework” and considered before implementing any recommendations.

First, we believe that CPL should adopt an outcomes-based performance strategy that can be used to evaluate how well its current service offerings are meeting the needs of Chattanooga residents. Second, it is clear that CPL facilities are major barriers for the delivery of 21<sup>st</sup> century library service. Therefore, we believe that the Library should take immediate steps to begin crafting a strategy to improve the condition of its facilities.

Finally, as part of its service and program strategy, CPL should re-think its “brand” identity as an educational resource that offers opportunities for residents to gain 21<sup>st</sup> century literacy skills by developing a robust program of instruction that focuses on offering collections, workshops, programs, lectures, and classes for adults and enhanced reading and English-language skills for young children and students. A list of current 21<sup>st</sup> century skills are attached to this report as Appendix 2.

## **Goals 2023**

Goals, and related strategies and tactics, are essential tools for helping organizations measure their effectiveness. We recommend that CPL, working in conjunction with its senior management team, and through its Board of Directors, take immediate steps to create and adopt a set of service goals that are aligned with the challenges and aspirations of the community. These goals should be “outward” facing, meaning that they should be crafted to respond to large external community needs and focus less on library quantitative measures such as circulation and/or program attendance. New goals should be created for implementation as early as the 2019 – 2020 fiscal year. Based on our findings in this study, we have taken the liberty to develop a set of suggested goals below for your consideration.

As a prelude to this goal setting activity, we recommend that CPL managers immediately begin a process for the evaluation of a select, but limited, number of library services and/or programs. We recommend that the Library evaluate no more than 2 to 3 current services or programs at this time. The purpose of this exercise is to help the Library establish a set of management “best practices” that can be used to inform future decision-making about service program issues and needs. However, be forewarned. There are many types of program evaluation tools. The type of evaluation that CPL selects doesn’t have to be the same for each service or program. Instead, the type of evaluation tool that CPL uses should instead depend on what the Library wants to learn about the program being evaluated.

Recently, library service/program evaluation tools have been developed that focus on “outcomes”. Outcomes-based evaluations are used by nonprofit funding agencies to verify if Library efforts are meeting the needs of their constituents. In order to learn more about outcomes-based evaluations, we recommend that CPL consult *Five Steps of Outcome-Based Planning Evaluation for Public Libraries* by Melissa Gross, Cindy Mediavilla, and Virginia A. Walter, ALA Editions, 2016.<sup>9</sup>

**Goal 1 – Establish programs and services that align more strategically with, and build upon, Chattanooga’s aspirations.**

In our experience, we believe that in order to enhance its value in the local community, a library, regardless of type, should strive to align itself with the goals of its parent institution (city, county, university, hospital, etc.). Therefore, we recommend that CPL adopt goals that align with and build upon Chattanooga’s aspirations, as expressed by civic leadership, library stakeholders, library users and non-users, and students. For example, as a part of city government, the Library should give high priority to the aspirations for Chattanooga as defined by the Mayor and City Council. In our research, we were able to identify the following city-wide initiatives as highlighted on the Mayor’s website:

- Safer streets,
- Growing the economy,

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<sup>9</sup> For a broad overview regarding program evaluation, CPL may also want to consult the web-based Basic Guide to Program Evaluation (Including Outcomes Evaluation) at the Free Management Library (<https://managementhelp.org/evaluation/program-evaluation-guide.html>)

- Safer neighborhoods,
- Smarter students & stronger families,
- High performing government.

In this example, CPL doesn't have to focus on every area. However, it is more important that when choosing which goals to support, that the activities be bold, yet focused, aspirational, yet realistic.

By further example, based on the research conducted by our team, library stakeholders told us that they thought CPL could play a significant role in helping foster greater civic engagement.

In response, the Library could offer expert lectures on important topics such as the upcoming 2020 U.S. Census and what it means for Chattanooga; a candidate's forum for upcoming elections; 21<sup>st</sup> century skills for 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs; or "smart" growth in Chattanooga and Hamilton County. Any one of these examples could be easily accomplished alone or in conjunction with local or national partners.

As part of Chattanooga's campaign to support the development of "smarter students and stronger families", the Library could forge stronger ties with the Hamilton County Department of Education (HCDE) on its goal "to become the fastest improving district in Tennessee". TN Ready, an initiative of HCDE, is designed to continue its modest gains in literacy for elementary school students (grades 3 through 8), and English language arts and math for high school students. A partnership with TN Ready is an opportunity for CPL to align its resources in a way

that strengthens is community value and contributes to the academic achievement of participating students. Many public libraries offer after-school homework assistance programs (through volunteers or online vendors such as Tutor.com). To our knowledge, CPL does not offer such a service.

Currently CPL appears to offer limited programming that supports “growing the economy”.

The only example that we are aware of is the Tech Goes Home (TGH CHA) initiative aimed at small business entrepreneurs. The Library should find ways to increase its partnership with TGH CHA and offer additional, more frequent workshops for seniors or teens in all library locations. Perhaps the Library could offer space to TGH CHA to set up shop at the Downtown library?

CPL can play an important role in support of workforce development. Library-based workforce development initiatives can include the creation of Job Information Centers, (consolidation of library resources including subject librarians who work closely with local businesses and chambers of commerce), hosting job fairs with employers, tech training such as basic computer skills and resumé workshops, to adult literacy training programs.

**Goal 2 - Re-brand the Library as a place for the public to gain information about and access to 21<sup>st</sup> century literacy skills.**

Over the past decade or more, public libraries have begun to position themselves to respond to the need for “new” 21<sup>st</sup> centuries literacy skills. According to the National Council of Teachers of English, twenty-first (21<sup>st</sup>) literacy skills are defined as the ability to:

- Develop proficiency and fluency with the tools of technology;
- Build intentional cross-cultural connections and relationships with others so to pose and solve problems collaboratively and strengthen independent thought;
- Design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes;
- Manage, analyze, and synthesize multiple streams of simultaneous information;
- Create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multimedia texts.

We received feedback from those who responded to the community survey about the need for “alternative education pathways” for adults, teens, and children. Many saw the public library as a potential resource for those who are not, or unable to enroll in a formal education program, to learn about 21<sup>st</sup> century literacies in a non-intimidating setting.

Public libraries, since their inception, have been recognized as institutions that promote and cultivate literacy for reading for children and adults. For the immediate future, we believe libraries will continue to be identified as places for the public to seek, find, and borrow books. Public library-based literacy programs have been in formal operation for decades. Reading clubs for children and specialized programs such as pre-school story-times are common offerings in nearly every public library in the country. But as information rapidly migrates from a print (or analog) to a digital format, and as more people acquire the information they need, (as well as entertainment), via their digital devices, public libraries are beginning to re-think their image as a place that focuses solely on providing access to books.

We recommend that the CPL begin to take steps to re-brand itself as a place for the public to gain 21<sup>st</sup> century literacy skills. The re-branding process can occur by developing programs and services that promote a handful of 21<sup>st</sup> century literacy initiatives. Public libraries - including Chattanooga Public Library – have been offering similar efforts in their communities. Many are being offered and/or co-sponsored with established national partners such as the American Library Association, the Federal Reserve Bank (financial literacy) and the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (health literacy).

Public library-based efforts such as these are not new. Some of the most established (and oldest) partnership programs offered in a public library setting include SCORE (Service Core of Retired Executives), which provides free business advice to new businesses (or those wanting to start a business), and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA – co-sponsored by United Way), offering free tax preparation assistance for low-income residents.

What is different about our recommended goal is the expectation that the Library take greater ownership of these 21<sup>st</sup> century literacy initiatives. The Library should not simply serve as a host for these efforts, but instead, assume a major leadership role by convening partners and by taking responsibility for the quality of the content and outcomes.

In order for the Library to be seen as a credible partner in these endeavors, it must lead by convening potential partners, (including funding agencies), and communicate a clear and consistent case for its efforts.

**Goal 3 – Develop a master facilities plan that responds to 21<sup>st</sup> century library service initiatives and anticipated population growth.**

The project consultants believe that the greatest impediment to the provision of 21<sup>st</sup> century programs and services are space limitations of the current library buildings. Branch libraries, as they currently exist, are not able to offer the type of public library service that many library patrons receive in communities with new or remodeled libraries.

As stated earlier in this report there are a handful of short term, low-cost remedies for CPL to consider. Perhaps the most urgently critical option is the need to adopt a replacement strategy for the existing Eastgate branch, followed by the development of a capital improvement program. These efforts may require a change in current policy and approval from the City of Chattanooga.

**Goal 4 – Position CPL as a leading sponsor for promoting greater access and support for public access to information technology and the distribution of low-cost digital content in Chattanooga.**

We believe that the planned upgrades to the EPB (Electric Power Board) fiber-optic network presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity for the Library to secure a leadership role (and public voice) as a cutting-edge advocate for a digitally connected community. This advanced high-speed network has the potential for the Library to be seen as a leader in bridging the digital divide and bridging the chasm between downtown and the neighborhoods. Smart use of this network doesn't just have to be solely about the distribution of library-based content. It

can also serve to strengthen the Library's standing as a channel for other government agencies, nonprofits, and community leaders to connect with the wider Chattanooga (and regional) audience. The Library, through its extensive reach to residents of all ages and connections to various neighborhoods, is in a strong position to serve as an effective platform for the distribution of information for all Chattanoogaans.

The City of Chattanooga and Hamilton County will continue to be an exceptional attractive place to live, raise a family, work, start and operate a business -- and retire. The greater Chattanooga area will grow and prosper in the years ahead. The Chattanooga Public Library is now and will be more so looking forward -- have a vitally exceptional role to play in the growth and future development in the region. Great cities have great libraries.

Through a strategic offering of "smart" services and programs, Chattanooga Public Library can fulfill its stated mission: ***to be the community's catalyst for lifelong learning.*** The future does indeed belong to those who plan for it!

**END**

**Members of the Project Steering Committee**

Corinne Hill – Executive Director

Sarah Anne Brewer – Head Librarian, Northgate Branch

Lee Hope – Head of Children’s Services

Meredith Levine – Head of Youth Services/4<sup>th</sup> Floor/The Studio

Ana McCranie – Public Relations Coordinator

Karen McMahan – Board of Directors

Mary Jane Spehar – Deputy Director of Operations

Jason Sullivan – Chief Administrative Officer

Rob Wichtman – ILS Administrator

## Examples of Public Library-based 21<sup>st</sup> Century Literacy Initiatives

- Financial literacy - the possession of the set of skills and knowledge that allows an individual to make informed and effective decisions with all of their financial resources.
- English-language skills (ESL classes) – helping non-native English speakers improve their English language skills. On the reverse side, some public libraries have been sponsoring “language conversation circles” which provide structured conversation activities for adults who want to learn a language other than English.
- Health literacy - the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.
- Food literacy - food literacy is defined as understanding the impact of your food choices on your health, the environment, and our economy.
- Nutritional literacy – (closely tied to food literacy) the degree to which people have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic **nutrition** information.
- Digital literacy - the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills.

<b>PUBLIC LIBRARY CAPITAL COSTS NEW BUILDINGS 2015 - 2018 REPORTED IN ARCHITECTURAL ISSUE OF LIBRARY JOURNAL</b>									
<b>2015</b>	Type *	Size **	Population ***	Construction Cost	FF&E **** Cost	Project Cost	Cost per SF		
							Construction	FF&E	Project
Georgia									
Atlanta	B	25,000	76,000	\$8,252,912	\$1,186,596	\$16,877,002	\$675.08	\$47.46	\$675.08
Palmetto	B	11,200	28,000	\$3,830,311	\$531,507	\$7,759,523	\$692.81	\$47.46	\$310.38
Roswell	B	17,370	200,000	\$6,125,156	\$617,149	\$12,524,891	\$721.06	\$35.53	\$1,118.29
Average GA		17,857	101,333	\$6,069,460	\$778,417	\$12,387,139	\$339.90	\$43.59	\$693.70
Kentucky									
Louisville	B	40,000	100,000	\$10,115,826	\$909,365	\$13,336,235	\$252.90	\$22.73	\$333.41
Tennessee									
Antioch	B	25,000	75,000	\$7,300,000	\$395,000	\$7,695,000	\$292.00	\$15.80	\$307.80
Nashville	B	24,800	36,000	\$8,197,052	\$624,845	\$8,821,052	\$330.53	\$25.20	\$355.69
Average TN		24,900	55,500	\$7,748,526	\$509,923	\$8,258,026	\$311.19	\$20.48	\$331.65
Average All		27,586	85,611	\$7,977,937	\$732,568	\$11,327,133	\$289.21	\$26.56	\$410.62
<b>2016</b>									
Georgia									
Alpharetta	B	25,543	79,000	\$9,970,145	\$1,360,000	\$16,276,000	\$325.16	\$53.24	\$637.20
Atlanta	B	23,606	138,000	\$8,305,549	\$1,105,000	\$16,179,000	\$355.78	\$46.81	\$685.38
Atlanta	B	25,570	61,000	\$8,398,528	\$1,278,836	\$19,755,743	\$217.03	\$50.01	\$772.61
Atlanta	B	15,200	152,000	\$5,549,351	\$1,019,777	\$11,982,033	\$548.87	\$67.09	\$788.29
Milton	B	25,000	132,000	\$8,342,820	\$1,236,580	\$17,708,207	\$333.71	\$49.46	\$708.33
Average GA		21,923	115,000	\$7,430,233	\$1,178,398	\$16,481,994	\$338.92	\$53.75	\$751.80
<b>2017</b>									
Georgia									
Hogansville	B	11,000	100,000	\$2,200,000	\$284,000	\$3,120,000	\$200.00	\$25.82	\$283.64
<b>2018</b>									
Georgia									
Maritta	B	31,000	756,000	\$11,900,000	\$1,000,000	\$14,050,000	\$383.87	\$32.26	\$453.23
Kentucky									
Louisville	O *****	38,191	178,000	\$11,883,507	\$858,153	\$15,474,139	\$311.16	\$22.47	\$405.18
Average All		34,596	467,000	\$11,891,754	\$929,077	\$14,762,070	\$347.52	\$27.36	\$429.20
\$ Difference 2015 - 2018				\$3,913,816	\$196,508	\$3,434,936	\$58.31	\$0.81	\$18.58
% Difference 2015 - 2018				49.06%	26.82%	30.32%	20.16%	3.04%	4.53%
* = Branch, M = Main									
** = total square feet (SF)									
*** = in thousands									
**** = Furniture, Fixtures, & equipment									
***** = Combined use space									
						Prepared by Godfrey's Associates, Inc. for M J Gomez Associates			
						4-Dec-18			

## Summary of Results from the Staff Survey

The successful delivery of Library services and programs depends on a knowledgeable and committed staff. In order to better understand how CPL staff feel about their work and workplace, an online staff engagement survey was offered to all Library employees. The survey period ran from November 5th and closed on December 19th, 2018.

Sixty-seven (67) responses were completed during the survey period from a total of eighty-five (85) CPL employees. All responses were anonymous, with no IP tracking. However, given the method of providing staff access to the survey, it was not possible to determine whether or not a staff member completed the survey more than once.

Using a scale from 1 to 5 to gauge staff attitudes about their work and workplace, the survey included a total of twenty-three (23) questions or statements. A rating of five (5) signified the highest level of support or agreement for the question or statement being asked. The weighted average for all responses was 3.44 out of 5 - a 69% score that reflects medium-high staff engagement. For example, Question 8 stated, "I have a good working relationship with my manager" received the highest weighted average at 3.85. Question 17, "The staff where I work are flexible and adapt quickly to new or difficult situations or changes at work." had the lowest weighted average at 2.84.

In addition to the questions/statements, the survey also had an open-ended component that allowed staff to provide general comments about work and workplace issues. The following themes were present in the comments. (These themes should not be viewed as conclusive, rather they should be seen as representing a "tone" or impression about the CPL work environment). Those who completed this section characterized CPL as a workplace:

1. That supports and encourages improvement, evolution, adaptation, innovation, and change as well as an environment of negativity characterized by an us (staff) vs. them (administration) culture;
2. Where there are concerns about not feeling appreciated and valued or being fearful of losing a job;
3. Where there is a culture of equality and willingness to help, but also a place where not all staff contribute at the same level;
4. That supports a positive culture on a small scale among co-workers, but is also seen as a workplace where there is a level of mistrust and tension between the staff and administration;
5. That supports a culture of experimentation and learning;
6. Where staff diversity does not reflect the diversity of the communities that it serves;
7. That is cohesive, well-organized, efficient, and friendly;

8. Where each branch has its own 'personality' but can also result the perception of a Library system that behaves as four separate entities, reflecting a disconnect between downtown and the branch libraries;
9. That is adaptive to community needs, which can result in a sense of instability due to change but also excitement about the work;
10. Where the ideas of some employees are appreciated and implemented but the ideas or suggestions of others may be ignored resulting in some employees feeling disenfranchised. Some characterized this last point as a struggle between those that want to move the Library forward and those who want to maintain the status quo.

To summarize, the survey results represent a snapshot regarding staff perceptions about CPL's culture (or personality) at this point in time. Although we have not compared the results of this survey with the results from other organizations, we believe that the results are not too dissimilar from the results that any organization or business would receive.

We recommend that Library leadership appoint a task force composed of a cross-section of staff to analyze the responses to the survey. The charge to the task force should be to

- Identify, create and recommend a manageable number of short-term workplace initiatives that have the greatest potential to yield results.

We further recommend that Library leadership use the results from this survey to establish a baseline to measure staff work and workplace attitudes and administer the survey on an annual basis.



b. I use the Library for its Wi-Fi or Internet access	48.69%
c. I use the Library as a workspace	36.78%
d. I use the Library to conduct research	32.33%
e. I use the Library to learn new things	31.54%

### User Satisfaction

Surveys are also used to gauge customer satisfaction by using a Net Promotor Score (NPS). The NPS is a management tool that can be used to gauge the loyalty of an organization’s customer relationships and their willingness to recommend it to others.

A positive NPS (i.e., one that is higher than zero) is generally deemed good, and an NPS of >50 is generally deemed excellent. For the Library we asked the question “How likely is it that you would recommend Chattanooga Public libraries to a friend or colleague?” Chattanooga Public Library received a rating of 65 from survey respondents.

### Themes that Inform Library Programs and Services

Based on the results from the community survey we identified several themes that can be used to help inform the Library’s effort that it offers to the community. This is an edited summary of the themes.

#### **1. Foster a sense of community**

Respondents stated that they see the Library as a safe, positive, information space for all Chattanooga. They find the staff to be helpful, showing empathy and kindness to all. The Library is perceived as an egalitarian learning resource which provides access to all kinds of learning opportunities. Through greater community involvement respondents believe that the Library can help bring the community together across genders, ages, and stages of life. Respondents believe that the Library is perceived as an institution that supports a common love of learning, education, reading and can make the community a better place for everyone. They value the fact that the Library is a neutral common space and as it evolves, it should continue to offer all the amazing resources to all walks of life and serve as an inviting space for locals to enjoy as a place to work and learn. Respondents want the Library to be more involved in the local community especially by supporting literacy programming, a safe learning environment for underprivileged families. “Keep the second floor and the fourth floor going at all costs”!

#### **2. Support those who seek knowledge and provide access to resources**

Respondents stated that when people are literate the community succeeds. The Library should promote reading for all ages and collect and store diverse works in multiple formats and make them available to the entire community without judgment. The Library should support lifelong learning and make a special effort to curate a collection that appeals to all age groups and helps educate others about the world around us. They appreciate the fact that there is free and convenient access to all kinds of information.

### **3. Broaden the community education base**

The Library should play a greater role in expanding the community education base provide by offering literacy tutoring to people of all ages. The Library should have more reading programs and G.E.D. workshops for people who need it. Can the Library helping people get jobs? Expand outreach so people know what the Library offers. The Library should serve as a repository for vital records and historical documents and to make these items accessible to clients. Instead of charging \$50.00 per person, (that should be per household), the Library should provide free library cards to everyone in Hamilton County.

### **4. Teach children to 'love' reading**

Provide books and programs for children. Consistently provide new materials and family-oriented programming like story hour. Allow all children in Hamilton County to have a free library card and engage young people with books and learning. Offer programs that keep kids engaged.

### **5. Be a catalyst for knowledge and communication**

in the community; the library is also knowledgeable about where we can get help if for some reason that Library can't help

### **6. Access to current technology**

Continue to offer free Internet access and expand training on technology use.

### **7. More books**

Expand book club and author signing events regardless of your financial status, keep physical books available -offer books to everyone.

## 8. Continue to be free

### Aspirations

In response to the questions about the hopes and dreams for yourself, family, friends and community, the following themes emerged.

## 9. Become more inclusive

Respondents stated that they wanted to:

“live in a connected community committed to building trust and opportunity for all; to succeed in life; to live a healthy life; to get a job as soon as possible; to have access to knowledge; to have an equal opportunity; be successful; I would like for people to have a love of learning, a love of reading, have a desire to experience new things and appreciate the resources the library provides; to be loved, well-read, and creative, along with healthy and happy lives; that we embrace our sense of community and take care of one another.



That we realize we are all connected and that our success and failures are the success and failures of Hixson and Chattanooga; that our community can stop demonizing the most vulnerable amongst us. In particular the homeless; I hope that as a whole, everyone in my life/community feels valued for what they uniquely offer to the world; I hope I can contribute to our community becoming an equitable, inclusive community that invests in its citizens success; for a more tolerant, respectful and open civil society; that they would become their best selves and also extend compassion to those unlike themselves; stronger, safer communities; HAPPINESS; I see myself as I have always been; cautious, forthright and unequivocally motivated to "do the right thing". My

innate desire was (always) to write. Type of content, I don't know because I never attempted to pursue the craft. My novice photography collection is something I hope to resume someday. Sadly, I cannot speak on behalf of my family, I truly wish them each, and all, the very best.

My community is important to me. In this 21st century we live in, I find the majority of people are illimitably preoccupied upon every step made in their daily life; the alarming consequence of this reality is the ever-increasing divide of person-to-person

communication/interaction. The population continues to expand, and we continue to grow apart. If the library were to be more proactive for bringing communities together, I would participate; to live a happy and healthy life where my family and I can pursue our interests freely and without judgement; the library serves as wonderful analogy for my hopes and dreams—that we can all get along and share space and resources while supporting each other and nurturing young people. I hope that my family, friends and community members can read, learn and grow with incredibly useful resources like the library. I hope that people unplug, put down their devices and pick up a book or start a meaningful conversation with a neighbor; for the community to have safe and fun places where they can learn and spend time as a family; to find things that bring us together and give us knowledge’ unity; I don't have any. My hope is to clean out evil politicians and turn things around to being welcoming to everyone, not just the rich and powerful. To be free to be me in all areas of my life. To be truly free, loved, and accepted; I want everyone to feel comfortable in our community, I want people to be healthy and happy and be able to work and find jobs. I want them to not worry about racism and other political problems; to live in harmony, work together instead of against each other. Drop the line of division and start crossing the line and compromising with one another instead of treating our daily lives as if it were a sports team and only one side gets to win.

#### **10. Justice, to live in love and peace with all people**

I hope to see Chattanooga grow into a thriving metropolis where there's a safe place for everyone; to see that everyone gets a good education, basic healthcare, and a level playing field; no one ever worries about being cold or hungry; for everyone to help one another, to be able to take care of each other; I hope to see our community support one another and provide for those less fortunate; comfortable & safe living in retirement; greater educational opportunities to keep the mind fresh; that my family will receive a quality education and get a stable full time jobs; to come up in life; that my family, me, and my friends can all live at our peak, in that we reach even part of our potentials; My fervent hope is that the library will be a valuable resource to connect and advance our community: that reading and education and understanding will become valued things in our community, and that through that, many people can be freed from poverty and inspired to use their talents to continue the cycle of education, wisdom, love, beauty, and encouragement in Chattanooga; that we all can be kind and helpful to one another and when you rise help somebody else; my hope for all is to be able to better ourselves, despite what life we've been put in, so that we can achieve the goals that we set; My dream is to just be a grandad to my grandkids and hopefully inspire them to learn as much as they can about whatever their interests are as well as love their fellow man. My hope is to make a positive impact somehow. To be used in whatever manner is useful to make the world a better place for everyone. My hopes for my friends and family are that they do well in life and are happy. As far as the community I look forward to the day when poor people and minorities aren't second class citizens especially in terms of the legal systems at the county and state levels where they are at a disadvantage in terms of equal protection under the law due to the fact that are not able to afford lawyers to speak and make moves for them in courthouses across America; hope for

wisdom and love to pervade the society, preserving what is good and adding to it; a country that cares about people; equal opportunity to jobs and public services; to realize everyone's potential to the extent that is possible and in a positive fashion; to treat each other as trusted members of society.

That we all can take advantage of the opportunity to learn new things and to **never stop learning**; Kids should start being read to and become literate at an early age. They should also have space to play, imagine, and create. Continue to have the library services available to grow our young people and for all to learn more, enjoy community, and have all services remain as new ones are added; access of resources, events, learning, meaningful time spent to all who need it; to be engaged and thrive; being an entrepreneur and being successful at starting my own business

That everyone has access to solid educational materials; to be knowledgeable about events; that everyone will interact in the services that are provided by the Library; that the library will stay a progressive and neutral source of information for everyone; Great education, successful careers, relatively comfortable life and be able to give back to others as we have been blessed; **education for all; to be an informed citizen**, to utilize free speech and freedoms provided by the Constitution for the betterment of society, to proactively counter prejudice and discrimination, and to maintain American values and principles that have propelled the U.S. to be the greatest country in the world (even in the face of a president who represents hatred, discrimination, and prejudice in some form every day); access to information for everyone; learning about today's issues in a safe, honest environment; I hope to learn the new technology and be able to implement in my life. I hope my children will look to the library to further their dreams and curiosities; all people should have affordable education and access to the most current technology; that even though we are living in a Post-Truth world we might use the experiences of our collective past to gain Wisdom and move forward without losing our Democracy; increase knowledge/awareness of the future economically/politically; for my children to be able to make better decisions in life by being around others who follow good examples of what a responsible, informed citizen is. To be able to educate themselves and have a tremendous desire to learn

In answer to the question: “**What do you believe are the most critical issues facing your community at this time?**”, survey respondents said the following:

### **11. Societal and Socio-cultural Issues**



the key to freedom from poverty. I believe that in order to free my community from all kinds of poverty, stronger connections must be formed: first with a solid spiritual life, but second with involvement in enriching activities like reading, telling stories, teaching others, and contributing to human culture; Prejudice and nationalism, willful ignorance

## **12. Access and Equity**

Access to information; There are too many people that don't have access to the internet or computers; access to quality and ability appropriate education across the whole spectrum; Access; equality; equal access; access to justice and legal resources; fair opportunity of all parties; Accessibility for all people. I work with ESL. These people aren't really "residents" and I doubt that they can get a library card; Achieving genuine community; Adults and children do not read or consider great thoughts; Affordable housing; High cost of housing; Unemployment and housing for low income and disabled veterans; Chattanooga is not expanding its services (library, police, fire, etc.) in response to rapid population growth; Civil Unrest; Climate change; there's not enough help for the homeless community while there are hundreds of new condos and apartments being built that no one can afford; lack of knowledge about resources and events to many of the people who need it or could benefit; word is not spread as thoroughly and effectively as it could be; Lack of resources and transportation to get to these places that could offer help

## **13. Education**

Access to quality public K-12 education in Hamilton County is a very hit or miss resource which varies wildly depending on socioeconomic background; quality education is getting priced out of the range of most people. Public Libraries help fill the gaps. Access to wi-fi is huge; The inequities that impact the school system in its attempt to provide a quality education for all; education inequality; Employment; Job opportunities; job training; Jobs that provide a living wage; everyone needs to take more interest in learning new things on how to improve a healthy lifestyle; A lack of free educational services should be seen as a daunting, formidable possibility that if able to manifest itself could lead to an increase of poverty, more crime, and a degradation of society as a whole; fellowship and opportunity thru education by education; GED; Not enough free or low cost learning opportunities for children. Not enough positive extra-curricular activities in the community and opportunities for tutoring; Low public school performance by students and teachers; Graduating students who are prepared for 21st century jobs available in Hamilton County; I believe the most critical issues facing my community at this time is not enough people believe in enhancing their knowledge and that they don't utilize the available resources to help them enhance their lives; I definitely think there is an atmosphere of anti-intellectualism in our country and this is reflected in those who have taken political office. I think we need to cure that by making sure everyone has access to knowledge and that education is not equated with elitism; I feel that the one of the most critical issues facing Chattanooga at this time is public education; I think in my community the lack of education to get decent paying jobs; job security and poverty; keeping children interested in going to school; illiteracy; I think support for public education is a crucial issue for Chattanooga and Hamilton County; cost of education

## **14. Livability and Community**

Health Equity for all its citizens; cost of medical care; access to affordable healthcare; Maintaining, improving, and funding infrastructure that impacts every citizen in Hamilton County; Crime (most especially in the inner city); crime not only my community the whole city; crimes – burglaries; Corruption; Lack of gainful employment with living wages of all; Not enough free parking; More events for children of all ages to connect with; Not enough good paying jobs, inexpensive training and retraining and affordable housing; it is hard to find a good job; job opportunities; Competing with nearby metro areas and offering things that you can't find anywhere else so that people will continue to want to visit and move here from other places; Being able to care about and trust each other; Cost of living; Strong leadership; Sharing knowledge; Respect for one another, helping each other; Few positive places for kids to spend free time; gathering places for the young; Having discussions that we learn from each other; Irresponsible land development; Corrupt politicians serving themselves and not its poor constituents; shrinking middle class job base; Maintaining a growing economy and economic conditions for the betterment of every citizen in Hamilton County; Chattanooga has decided to become a service-oriented economy. This will have dire consequences; unrestricted growth and traffic congestion; Too much growth too quickly. I feel the city has focused on bringing in new including tourism and not taking care of the people that are here; road development; rent being too much; lack of community connection; lack of funding

#### **15. Safety and security**

Safety in our schools. Simply being unsocial and uncaring; Safety; Security in public places; Identity theft; crime; gun violence and gun control.