FROM GOOD TO GREAT

A Competitive Library for a Competitive City

An Assessment of
Louisville Free Public Library

by

Americans for Libraries Council

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Executive Summary

For nearly a decade the Louisville Free Public Library (LFPL) has been preparing to provide Louisville with a world-class library. Each improvement, plan, and innovation has been important in re-imagining the library as an educational, cultural, and economic cornerstone for Metropolitan Louisville. Another more definitive step will be taken toward its vision for library excellence in November 2007, when the library will put its plan for a higher level of support to the voters. An affirmative vote will enable new facilities construction and branch renovation, improvements to staff and collections, and funding stability over the long term. At this juncture LFPL has asked Americans for Libraries Council (ALC) to situate the library in relation to trends in library development, library rankings, and peer libraries, and to assess its potential to move from good to great.

The ALC assessment is designed to answer two key questions: (1) Can LFPL move from good to great; and (2) If so, what will it take? In answering these questions ALC has drawn on the extensive planning carried out by LFPL, recent studies by ALC and other national associations, and its own deep knowledge of current library developments. ALC has also drawn on planning studies concerning the future of Louisville.

The ALC assessment examines the library's capacity to move from its current state to an improved state through a variety of lenses:

- Degree of alignment between the library and the city's stated goals
- Readiness of staff, director, and other key players to embrace change
- National standards and rankings, including two prominent national awards
- Peer comparisons
- National trends
- International trends

Based on an examination of LFPL in these contexts, the ALC team has concluded that:

- Despite significant infrastructural and funding constraints, LFPL is ahead of the curve in demonstrating the attitudes and practices required for 21st century librarianship particularly in terms of its commitment to education and lifelong learning.
- The fact that LFPL has been able to do so much with so little suggests the possibility for LFPL not only to be a top-tier library but also to be a global leader
- LFPL is poised to make a quantum leap. With new public investment commensurate with the city's needs and vision, LFPL is ready to convert its intellectual capacities, planning competence, program experience, and community connections into a world-class library system that will be a major asset for Metropolitan Louisville.

In addition, ALC has concluded that a successful transformation of LFPL from good to great will depend on leadership, coordination, and investment. While investment is key to the transformation, investment cannot be achieved without strong external and internal leadership and careful coordination of the communications and support processes linked to the upcoming vote. With the requisite public investment, private investment will follow.

With leadership, coordination, and investment, LFPL will be able to leverage the best of its past and transform itself as an engine for the future of Metropolitan Louisville.

1. FAST FACTS: LOUISVILLE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

- Serves the nation's 16th largest city, with a population of over 700,000
- Has 17 locations, including the first African American library in the country
- Provides over 1.3 million books and other learning materials for recreation and reference
- Offers four computer learning centers and over 400 public access computers
- Has 450,000 active library cardholders, more than one-half of the city's population
- Serves 10,000+ visitors each day and 3.6 million visitors a year, up from 2.6 million in 2000
- Draws overflowing audiences to cultural and civic programs and exhibitions
- Is committed to reaching international newcomers through outreach and programming
- Is a key partner in *Every1Reads* and other citywide literacy initiatives
- Is recognized nationally: Susan Irving, St. Matthews Branch Manager, selected to be one of 23 National Lifelong Access Fellows; "Cooking Up Culture" by Michael Steinmacher of the Iroquois Branch featured in *American Libraries* (Nov. 06)
- Offers an *Innovation Lab* online to encourage creative use of new media
- Recently expanded its audio collections and hosted an Anime Convention attracting nearly 300 teens
- Circulated 4.06 million books and other materials in 2006
- Partners with the local school system and other educational institutions to offer free GED preparation and testing
- Outdraws University of Louisville basketball and football, the baseball Bats, both racing seasons at Churchill Downs, and the Kentucky Derby – combined

2. Background

During the last eight years Louisville Free Public Library (LFPL) has taken essential steps to transform itself from a good urban library to a world-class library.

For nearly a decade LFPL has been preparing to provide Louisville with a first-class library.* Each improvement, plan, and innovation has been important in re-imagining the library as an educational and economic keystone for Metropolitan Louisville. That the steps have been intentional rather than reactive is testimony to the foresight and commitment of the library's leaders, advisors, and supporters.

> ***The Louisville Free Public Library is among our community's most valued – and underfunded – public services… It does so much with so little; just imagine what could happen if we were able to fund it at levels comparable to other cities our size.***
>
> *Louisville Courier Journal*, Editorial, September 2006

The library will take another, even more definitive step toward its vision for library excellence in November 2007. It will put its plan for the future before the voters, asking for a higher level of support for construction, staffing, and collections commensurate with the stated needs and desires of Louisville's citizens. An affirmative vote will be the culmination of intensive planning and communications *and* the beginning of an equally challenging process of executing the vision of a world-class library.

At this critical juncture, LFPL has asked Americans for Libraries Council (ALC) to situate the library in relation to trends in library development, library standards, and peer libraries, and to assess its potential for realizing its goals for moving from good to outstanding. The assessment is intended to inform library planning, communications, and fund development during the process of transition.

The ALC assessment has been conducted by a team consisting of Diantha D. Schull, President of ALC; Dr. William Zeisel, Managing Director; and Dr. Susan Imholz, Research Consultant. They began their work in spring 2006, in the process of which they visited LFPL for observation and discussion, and in spring 2007 drafted the current report. The views expressed in this report are those of ALC staff and do not necessarily reflect those of LFPL.

* For the purposes of this report "world-class" and "first class" are interchangeable, meaning a library whose services, physical and electronic collections, designs, programs, and partnerships have a demonstrably positive impact on its community's development but also influence the wider field of library and information services.

3. Goals of the Report

This report aims to assess the status of the Louisville Free Public Library and its capacity to develop into a great 21st century library.

The purpose of this report is to answer two fundamental questions: (1) Can LFPL move from good to great; and 2) If so, what will the move require? These fundamental questions capture the essential issues confronting not only the library but the community which it serves and in which it is embedded.

Louisville has taken an historic step by expanding its political/fiscal jurisdiction to encompass the entire county. The city is poised to enter a new social and civic place, where it is being measured against cities that have traditionally been regarded as world leaders. Louisville now has a larger population than Boston. But does that larger scale of population and governance necessarily translate into the greatness long associated with a city like Boston? That is the challenge facing Louisville.

> ***If we believe that education and lifelong learning are keys to opportunity for individuals and our entire community, no local government institution serves all those needs better than the public library.***
>
> Jerry E. Abramson, Mayor of Louisville, *Long Overdue* (Public Agenda, 2006)

Similarly, it is a challenge for LFPL. The political consolidation has opened the way for construction of new libraries and a basic rethinking of library services, as part of the city's larger reach for greatness. Louisville's residents have said repeatedly in polls that they regard the library as a keystone institution for the city's future, especially in the area of lifelong education opportunities so essential for an engaged, enlightened citizenry and a productive workforce. Clearly, the library is an essential part of the community's aspirations.

A second question follows inevitably from the first. If the city and the library are to move to greatness, what will be needed to accomplish the job? Answering this for the whole city, in all its many parts and aspects, would require a far larger assessment than is possible here. For the library, however, providing an answer to the question is a more finite and manageable task that can draw on a large body of data and a variety of analytical tools and approaches.

In carrying out its analysis of the status of LFPL, the ALC team has drawn on its prior knowledge of LFPL as well as its knowledge of other libraries around the country. It

has also drawn on documentation concerning trends and best practices in library development and library services and on recent reports concerning public perceptions of libraries, library valuation, and the economic benefits of libraries. Local resources for the study include the numerous reports commissioned by LFPL concerning operations, facilities, and community opinions, documentation of a "community engagement process" carried out in fall 2006, and extensive data amassed regarding library expansion.

Since 1999, LFPL has been engaged in a planning process that has involved nearly a dozen reports and studies, starting with a *Facilities Needs Study* by Luckett & Farley and continuing through a fall 2006 study by Meyer, Scherer and Rockcastle analyzing the costs of incorporating environmental standards into the new regional libraries. The most recent is an April 2007 online poll surveying what residents want in their new libraries.

In addition there are a *Strategic Plan* (2000), an annual comparison of LFPL performance measures against fifteen regional benchmark cities, a *Facilities Long-Range Plan* (2001), and "Branch Library Site Criteria" (2004).

The most important of the planning studies is the *Master Facilities Plan* prepared by Providence Associates in 2003. This plan helped the library qualify for state capital grants and also outlined a scope of work that is the basis for the current library plan. In addition, the ALC team has drawn on future-oriented materials published by the Greater Louisville Project.

Each of these studies has provided a piece of the puzzle. Some have focused on learning what the community wants or on local leaders' perceptions of the library and its plans. Some have been undertaken to ascertain expert opinion on a specific issue, while others have been more tactical, with the goal of helping the library and its supporters determine the best ways to communicate and build support for their next steps.

Libraries, and their iconic architecture, can change the landscape of a downtown, or a neighborhood. There is integrity associated with the values the library brings to the community. Other cities use libraries as anchors for neighborhood development. Louisville can do this too. The library can be a symbol of community stability.

Mary Griffith, Library Foundation Chairman, *Library Foundation Annual Report, 2004-05*

4. Assessment

The ALC assessment situates Louisville Free Public Library in relation to its community and its capacity to change, as well as well more traditional measures.

The ALC assessment examines the library's capacity to move from its current state to an improved state through a variety of lenses, starting with community alignment and capacity for change. More than a decade of intensive research and hands-on experience with public libraries and library planning has enabled ALC staff to identify two qualities that must be evaluated to understand whether a library is capable of achieving an outstanding level of service:

(a) *Degree of alignment* between the library and the local community's stated goals.

(b) *Readiness* of staff, director, and other key players to embrace change.

These qualities are the most important factors in defining the library's capacity to respond to new trends, meet higher standards, and support the goals of its community.

Beyond these two key determinants of capacity, ALC examines LFPL in the context of:

(c) *National standards and rankings,* which are the basis on which comparisons are usually made.

(d) *Peer comparison* to situate the library in relation to others of comparable size or nature.

(e) *National trends* to situate the library in the U.S. context.

(f) *International trends* to examine how the library relates to recent developments, particularly in Europe.

> ***Improvements should be viewed as meeting a long-term need, as an investment in the community, as an investment in the children of Louisville.***
>
> Community Leader,
> *Master Facilities Plan*, 2003

a. Alignment with Metropolitan Louisville

The symbiotic relationship between a library and the surrounding community is critically important. It is no accident that library literature is rife with variations on the adage "a library is a reflection of its community," or that an institution such as the Nashville Public Library includes "a great city has a great library" as a part of its branding messages. Far from evolving in a vacuum or a static situation, libraries reflect and respond to their economic, social, technological, and cultural environments.

LFPL is embedded in a rapidly changing urban-suburban environment, highlighted by a new city-county governance structure, a greatly enlarged population base, and a shift in the economic infrastructure to a more diversified, service-oriented economy. The library is serving a population that reflects the economic changes, including new workforce expectations, as well as demographic shifts such as increased numbers of older residents and increased numbers of newcomers. Many Louisville adults need basic education, English literacy, GED preparation, welfare-to-work transition training, and opportunities to read and discuss the texts that form the basis of American culture and citizenship.

> ***The major challenge we face is how to make this a learning community. Being a learning community has economic ramifications, of course.***
>
> Community leader,
> *Master Facilities Plan*, 2003

The city's pressing needs in vital areas are presented in a 2007 report by the Greater Louisville Project, *Fix, Build, Create, Invest, Balance. A 2007 Competitive City Report*. It describes three "Deep Drivers: Key Steps to Strengthen the Community," including education, and sets out three goals to "Improve Education at All Levels":

- *Double projected growth in the number of young adults with a bachelor's degree to 10,000.*
- *Attain the goal of Every1Reads and adopt world-class standards in math and science education.*
- *Bring about comparable increases in high school graduation, associate's degrees, and technical certificates.*

LFPL is a strong city partner in the goal of "improving education at all levels." The examples cited under *Innovation in Action* (Appendix A) illustrate the library's commitment to supporting formal education and enhancing opportunities for lifelong learning for all.

Besides education, *Fix, Build, Create, Invest, Balance. A 2007 Competitive City Report* focuses on five additional goals. LFPL responds to each of these both directly and indirectly. Table 1 shows the connections between the city's stated agenda and selected library services or plans.

Table 1. LFPL Alignment with City Goals*

Metro Louisville Goal	Sample Library Service or Program in Support of Goal
Fix the Basics (K-12 education) To ensure a solid education for all children accelerated with measurable progress.	***Summer Reading Program*** LFPL Summer Reading Program is a core library function, offered annually. In summer 2006, more than 28,000 children completed the program by reading at least ten books each. Summer reading directly supports classroom learning. Recent research demonstrates that summer reading is a means of sustaining reading levels and gains in comprehension made during the school year.
Higher Education To address the lag with other cities with respect to overall education levels and preparation of residents who have completed post-secondary education.	***GED Test Preparation at the Library*** LFPL is working with the Jefferson County School Board of Adult Education and other educational institutions to offer GED preparation classes at select branches. The library increased the number of class locations and added Saturday classes to the schedule options starting in fall 2006. The GED test preparation adds an important dimension to the newest LFPL initiative in support of adult learning, namely, its provision of free GED tests at multiple library locations.
Invest in Working Families To reverse high levels of poverty, homelessness, and poor health.	***Books, Reference Assistance, Computer Training, Job and Career Information*** These core library functions are a bulwark for low-income residents who may have few opportunities for training or advancement, lack skills in online communications, or suffer from ill health or other problems. LFPL continually upgrades services to strengthen the social fabric while addressing the information and learning needs of specific constituencies.
Build on Assets To address economic development, downtown revitalization, culture, and recreation	***Plans for Upgrading Library Facilities, Operations, Technology, and Services*** Louisville's plans for a competitive library system are in the forefront of urban thinking *and* directly address local officials' aims to advance a competitive city by building on assets. There are a number of recent studies that document libraries' impacts on local economies and urban growth. They underscore the growing recognition that a library is a multidimensional asset, affecting economic development, downtown revitalization, access to culture, and recreation. The current proposal for increased investment in libraries across Metropolitan Louisville, including the plan for improving or replacing the Central Library with a 21st century "destination library," will bring Louisville up to par with libraries in comparable cities. From Vancouver to Phoenix to

Metro Louisville Goal	Sample Library Service or Program in Support of Goal
	Nashville, construction of a new main library has helped stimulate urban redevelopment by attracting employers and visitors, supporting efforts to recruit and retain knowledge workers, and offering a menu of public programs that foster community and cultural exchange.
Create Quality Neighborhoods By increasing rates of ownership, reducing crime, and creating livable neighborhoods.	***Plans for Constructing or Improving Every Branch Library in Louisville*** The library's *Master Facilities Plan* addresses a basic deficiency: the amount of library square footage per capita. Throughout the planning process, community leaders and members of the public commented on the importance of branches as cornerstones of community life that help reduce crime, strengthen ties between neighbors, and raise property values. However, many branches have severe space limitations and cannot accommodate the services and programs their communities would like. Moreover, some newer neighborhoods have no ready access to a library. Adoption of the funding proposal in fall 07 will enable the library to improve and expand its branch infrastructure for the benefit of *all* the city's neighborhoods and people.
Balance Metropolitan Growth	***Plans to Distribute Libraries Equitably across the Region and to Incorporate Environmental Safeguards into the Design of New Library Structures*** Implementation of the library's *Master Facilities Plan* will ensure that each resident lives within 5 miles of a major resource library and even closer to their neighborhood branch. Branches are envisioned as community centers and focal points for lifelong learning. The plan includes new regional libraries in areas where there has been virtually no library service.

*Source: *Fix, Build, Create, Invest, Balance. A 2007Competitive City Report* (The Greater Louisville Project, 2006)

b. Readiness for Change

LFPL's leaders have not only stated their desire for making the library into an outstanding institution, they are acting on those statements through plans, events, and collaborative efforts with city leaders. (See *Innovation in Action*, Appendix A.) The library's professional staff has also demonstrated a desire and capacity for innovation. Library Director Craig Buthod has set the tone through his commitment, creativity, and forward-looking perspective, which have helped prepare all who are associated with the library for rapid and exciting change. In answer to the question, "What is the Library doing today to prepare for the future?" he replied:

Everything! I believe every decision we make in the short term helps create our future. Our library is very different from our library 30 years ago. The library is putting itself out to the community and delivering information far beyond its own doors with bookmobiles and outreach. We're learning to change quickly.

> ***We are laying the groundwork for a whole new library system. Every decision we make is with a big future in mind.***
>
> Craig Buthod, LFPL Director
> *LFPL Foundation Annual Report, 2005-06*

Planning for the library started soon after Buthod arrived in 1998. The planning is steady, comprehensive, and goes beyond the usual approaches and design paradigms. The library has steadily been preparing itself and its community to move to a model more suited for a city that will spread its wings in the 21st century.

Planning has been so thorough that when Mayor Jerry Abramson announced in the summer of 2006 that the metropolitan Louisville government would spend $2 million to purchase land for three new regional libraries, a facilities plan had already been adopted by the Library Advisory Commission – the citizen oversight board for the library charged with long-range planning and policymaking.

The *Master Facilities Plan* prepared by Providence Associates in 2003 outlines a scope of work that is the basis for the library's plan today. As stated in a September 2003 briefing, the *Plan*

- assumes that Metro Louisville will have a first-class library system across the entire community;
- outlines a complete re-working of the library system – not just a "tinkering around the edges";
- asserts that the residents of Louisville deserve libraries as good as those in peer communities such as Nashville, Memphis, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, and Lexington;
- meets all state requirements;
- is based on an exhaustive, inclusive public process over three years, involving more than 1,400 citizens through focus groups, town meetings, professional consumer polling, and a web survey of Internet users;

- sets forth options for major capital, programmatic, service, and technological improvements to meet state standards and the region's educational, informational, and cultural needs well into the future;
- makes the case for three new regional libraries as well as refurbishment of all of the branches; and
- considers options for a new Central Library.

Planning has gone beyond facilities. Deficiencies in the number of professional staff, basic book and reference collections, and levels of operating support have been taken into account. In addition, given the need to provide for underserved areas, the planning included assessment of sites and negotiations of property purchases by the city.

As part of its planning process, LFPL has engaged hundreds of residents, including representative of neighborhood organizations, in dialogues about the future library. Most recently, during fall 2006 and winter 2007, library staff conducted more than 100 community meetings to garner public input on the Master Plan.

> ***No longer a passive repository of books and information or an outpost of culture, quiet and decorum in a noisy world, the new library is an active and responsive part of the community and an agent for change.***
>
> Robert Putnam and Lewis Feldstein, *Better Together, Restoring the American Community* (2003)

Beyond community outreach, LFPL has also engaged library experts from other communities and states, information-business experts, and even professionals from other disciplines and fields in planning discussions that have expanded the generally accepted ideas regarding the roles, designs, and functions of libraries. Realizing that traditional approaches to planning are not enough in today's dynamic environment, library leaders organized a design charrette with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Media Lab, in July 2006, that focused on the three new regional libraries. The charrette resulted in twelve "principles" for future libraries that were then publicly presented to Louisville community members.

The library's leaders also recognize the critical role of staff in embracing and creating change. Facing the persistent problem of relatively few staff with degrees in librarianship, the Library Foundation has provided scholarships for advanced degree training. Senior management has promoted a culture of change, through reorganization of staff, new assignments, and an emphasis on community librarianship through personal service and outreach. The services outlined as models in *Innovation in Action* (Appendix A) are but one indication of the extent to which staff are working in new ways to carry out service changes. Staff are responsible for the high marks the library invariably gets from community members for its services. Increased investment will enable the staff to turn a good library into a great one.

c. Standards and Rankings

The discussion about LFPL's desire to achieve outstanding quality implies the existence of standards or benchmarks by which the institution can be measured. Library standards do exist but they are often less useful than might be expected, sometimes because they don't seem to fit the local situation, other times because there is no agreement on whether a given set of standards is the best available.

In the final analysis the reason for this inadequacy may rest in the fact that our nation does not have a national public library system, with a single funder and administrative head. Rather, libraries exist as independent entities or parts of city, county, or regional systems, each with its own governance structure and funding. Not surprisingly, in the absence of a supervening federal mandate, it is the states and in some case individual librarians that attempt to define library "standards." The result is a patchwork of approaches, none of which has won universal acceptance.

> ***The business of rating public libraries is very complicated, primarily because in the last few decades, libraries have been encouraged to be institutions that are unique to their own communities.***
>
> Keith Curry Lance, Colorado Library Research Service, *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel,* 2001

Before examining current approaches to rating libraries, it is helpful to make a distinction between standards and organized data. The library world is awash in data, including annually published statistics collected by the U.S. Department of Education through the Federal-State Cooperative System. These data describe library basics such as holdings or local government support per capita. From the data it is possible to extract averages, such as the average number of books in a library or the average level of public funding per capita. The data can also be analyzed to provide ranges, from, say, the best to worst funded.

These averages and ranges can be understood, in a non-rigorous way, as constituting measures of a sort. However, the numbers do not represent policy or conscious achievement of specific goals or levels of funding, service, or collections. Library standards, strictly speaking, should be understood as carefully reasoned arguments in favor of specific levels of service, facilities, staffing, governance, funding, and so forth. In this understanding of standards, it is important to examine the data with a set of articulated values already in mind.

As long as it is understood that averages are not benchmarks, upper/lower ranges are not standards, and merely collecting data and organizing it is not sufficient by itself to constitute standards or benchmarks, it is possible to make constructive use of the national and state data. For example, they can suggest whether a library is performing efficiently, from a cost/benefit perspective. A later section of this report, *Peer Libraries,*

describes how LFPL has mined data about peer libraries to provide a rough measure of comparability. Yet another example is offered in Table 2, which shows that in a recent year LFPL received significantly lower local financial support than the national average. Given that LFPL is praised for its excellent staff and services, it is reasonable to conclude that the library operates very cost effectively. (That conclusion does not, of course, address the issue of whether the services are sufficient for the community's needs.)

Table 2. Selected Per Capita Data for Public Libraries in a Recent Year.

	Local Revenue Per Capita	State Revenue Per Capita	Total Revenue Per Capita
National Average	$26.44	$2.92	$34.62
Louisville	$21.75	$0.71	$23.99

National Rankings

The most internally consistent and consulted system of scoring for libraries is Hennen's American Public Libraries Ratings Index (HAPLR). Developed by a librarian named Hennen, the scores draw from the federal-state data and analyze 15 weighted indicators (6 inputs; 9 outputs) including materials, funding levels, circulation figures, reference queries, and staffing. Some library professionals question the validity of Hennen's assumptions and approach, others note the long lag in generation of the statistics on which they are based, and still others feel they lack measures for some key services. Louisville's score on the 2006 Hennen Ratings Index for libraries serving over 500,000 was 462. This compares, for instance, with the Columbus Metropolitan Library (OH), the third highest ranking in that category, at 848. Based on the Hennen measures, LFPL rates quite low, and the rating has hardly budged in seven years (see Table 3).

Awards: IMLS

Another way to situate a library nationally is to examine it in relation to the criteria of major awards programs. The most prominent is the award of excellence conferred on a library every year by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the federal agency responsible for library funding. Award recipients are chosen "for their innovative approaches to public service, and for their success in improving communities and making a difference in peoples' lives." This is an entirely different kind of measurement than, for instance, the Hennen ratings. It emphasizes *attributes* – rather than inputs and outputs – that make the library effective and innovative in its local context. It leaves documentation and evaluation of operational aspects to the states or library systems.

In their awards selections IMLS puts a premium on two characteristics: (1) the extent to which the institution understands and reflects its role in supporting communities of learners and (2) the extent to which the institution functions collaboratively through partnerships and as part of "communities of practice." These values reflect the goals of IMLS to strengthen cultural

institutions in support of a "nation of learners" (www.imls.gov).

The emphasis on learning activities and collaboration is a strategic decision that has long-range implications for public library programming and policy and the ways in which libraries measure programmatic success. Recent IMLS awards praised the San Antonio Public Library in Texas and the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County in North Carolina, among others, for their outreach services to the underserved, unique partnerships with local institutions and organizations such as hospitals and health agencies, and dedication to promoting literacy. LFPL, with its extensive outreach, partnerships, and early reading initiatives, and a conscious focus on support for education, exemplifies the characteristics cited by IMLS for its annual awards.

Library of the Year Awards

A second influential national honor is the Gale/*Library Journal* Library of the Year Award. The $10,000 prize celebrates the library that

"Most profoundly demonstrates:

- service to the community;
- creativity and innovation in developing specific community programs or a dramatic increase in library usage; and
- leadership in creating programs that can be emulated by other libraries."

Two very different institutions received the award in the last two years: the Blair Library in Fayetteville, Arkansas, and the Salt Lake City Public Library in Utah. Each, coincidentally, had just opened an acclaimed new main library.

- The Blair Library serves a population of just under 60,000 in Fayetteville, with an 88,000-square-foot new main building at a cost of $23 M. Fayetteville had previously faced a grim outlook, without any possibility for expanding services in its small and antiquated buildings, until the community was persuaded to increase per capita support to $45.73.

The award cited the Blair Library for five "steps to success": 1) constructing a model building to the specifications of the community; 2) achieving maximum benefits from all funding and developing new sources of revenue; 3) developing a unique and full collection; 4) being technologically innovative; and 5) having a "top-flight" staff of congenial people who like to interact with customers and enjoy creative service development.

- The Salt Lake City situation is dominated by a new main library designed by architect Moishe Safdie. That library was cited for its quality as an urban "place" where "democracy happens." The library houses an NPR radio affiliate and a film center, as well as a coffee house and deli that encourage people to linger and talk. The Salt Lake City Library was also cited for its varied public programs, providing a civic and cultural forum for the city.

Beyond space and programs, the Gale/*Library Journal* assessment of Salt Lake City cited several keys to success, including its "multidimensional" qualities and the Director's "varied and high-risk management style."

> ***The library has even transcended …. ambitious expectations and gone beyond being the "placemaker" Safdie (Architect) intended. It has become a crucial center for the city, the agency to start and sustain the celebration of diversity and the deep and difficult effort to understand, enjoy, and learn from all that has changed Salt Lake City.***
>
> Citation from *Library Journal* for *Library of the Year Award*, June 2006

State Standards

State standards, yet another approach to measuring libraries, usually focus on measurable services and features that can be tracked comparatively over time. Some states promulgate library service standards, usually voluntary, or maintain an accrediting process. In Kentucky, enforcement of standards has relied on a library's eligibility for capital grants. Until very recently, LFPL did not qualify for capital support from the Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives (KDLA) because of its deficiencies in facilities, staff, and collections and lack of a plan to address those deficiencies.

The KDLA Standards were revised in April 2002 and a new version of the tools used to help libraries carry out their own assessment was published in 2006. LFPL undertook its own assessment, done in relation to the highest possible rating: Exemplary. Based on that standard, the achievement rate was 20%, indicating that the library could meet only 20 out of a possible 71 performance measures.

A special report, *State Standards and Local Performance*, was prepared for LFPL by James Nelson, former Kentucky State Librarian. That report compares Louisville's assessment to state standards. After noting that the LFPL Library Advisory Commission had formally adopted a master plan and begun to implement it – thus qualifying for state capital support – Nelson remarks:

While strictly voluntary and self-administered, the "Kentucky Public Library Standards" have helped several other libraries in the state to re-tool their planning efforts and begin to build services for the 21st century. LFPL leadership is to be complimented on taking this initiative to do this for the people of Louisville.

One aspect of the Nelson report has implications for LFPL's capacity to "demonstrate high levels of performance in all categories": its lack of a governing board. Alone in Kentucky, LFPL answers to the metropolitan government. While there is a Library Advisory Commission, that group is not an elected board that represents the library's local constituencies. The LFPL form of governance will change if voters pass the proposed plan for library governance and funding next fall. An independent local board would strengthen the library's ability to meet state standards and to move from good to great.

How LFPL Ranks

When viewed in relation to IMLS "standards" and the criteria for the Library of the Year awards, LFPL is in the top tier. It reflects the very qualities sought by IMLS and Gale/*Library Journal*: programmatic creativity, community partnerships, use of resources to promote learning, willingness to experiment, and increasing public use.

Despite its deficiencies in the Hennen ratings, and its deficiencies with respect to the Kentucky standards – both of which relate directly to nuts and bolts infrastructural issues that can only be addressed through expanded funding – **when it comes to demonstrating the attitudes and practices required for 21st century urban librarianship, LFPL comes out at the top.**

For instance, LFPL recently altered job descriptions for library staff, adding a "Community Engagement" position and an outreach position requiring language skills in Vietnamese or Spanish. The goal was to expand community connections and more effectively engage international newcomers. The outcomes were positive: LFPL saw a notable increase in use by these newcomer populations. Similarly, LFPL's program of welcoming newborns by working with hospitals to provide their mothers with library cards is another way that the library is showing its leadership in creating library-community partnerships. LFPL's participation in the multi-partner, citywide *Every1Reads* Program has contributed to a substantial reduction in the number of children reading below grade level.

As another example of the library's success in meeting new needs, a branch library director in a neighborhood with a high proportion of baby boomers was selected by ALC in 2006 as one of 23 National Lifelong Access Fellows. She is now a leader in a new national community of practice focused on strengthening programming with and for active older adults.

These examples demonstrate how LFPL is doing a great deal more with less, and fulfilling the programmatic "standards" of IMLS despite lacking sufficient staff, collections, or meeting spaces.

Table 3. Selected HAPLR Rankings, 2006			
State	**Public Library**	**Population Category**	**Score in Category**
Kentucky	Lexington Public Library	b) 250 K	655
	Louisville Free Public Library	a) 500 K	462
Georgia	Atlanta Fulton Public Library System	a) 500 K	441
Alabama	Birmingham Public Library	b) 250 K	415
Tennessee	Memphis/Shelby County Public Library and Info Center	a) 500 K	385
	Nashville Public Library	a) 500 K	482
North Carolina	Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County	a) 500 K	593

d. Peer Libraries

The brief overview of the IMLS and Gale/*Library Journal* awards programs suggests there is no such thing as a firm set of indicators or benchmarks for excellence. At the national level, the tendency is to assess libraries based on relatively subjective qualities and relationships such as partnerships, rather than the more traditional nuts and bolts functions.

Without clear national standards to rely on, many library managers extract statistics from the federal database to measure their own performance and infrastructure against similar libraries. This has been an important method for Louisville. Each year the library completes an *Annual Benchmark Cities Report,* in which it ranks itself with 15 libraries serving comparable populations. As noted in Director Buthod's memorandum to the Library Advisory Committee on September 11, 2006, "Louisville's standing in these comparisons changed very little this year." In fact, data show relatively little change over the past seven years (Table 3).

- Total income per capita was the same in 1999 as in 2007, ranking Louisville 15 of 16.
- Library holdings per capita remained steady, starting and ending at 15.
- Total square footage per capita decreased relative to the other libraries.

Another way of looking at peer rankings is to measure a library against a particular sub-set of libraries. For the purposes of this report ALC selected six out of the 15 peer libraries with which to compare Louisville.

Table 4. Federal 2006 Public Library Statistics for Louisville and Selected Peer Cities

City	Branches	Total Circ	Circ Per Capita	Library Visits	Lib Visits Per Cap	Total Programs Attendance	Reference Transactions	Users of Electronic Resources	Total Staff	Librarians on Staff	Population Service Area
Louisville	16	3,827,835	5.5	3,541,961	5.1	234,293	990,092	1,372,704	295	65	693,604
Lexington	5	2,331,545	8.8	1,754,187	6.6	52,970	218,901	n/a	147.3	48.5	266,388
Birmingham	20	2,043,684	8.4	581,310	2.4	50,667	n/a	n/a	243.2	74	242,820
Atlanta	33	3,117,535	3.2	3,091,163	3.2	211,621	2,151,728	3,056,581	394	143	969,033
Nashville	20	4,087,080	7.2	3,374,359	5.9	163,799	329,568	2,535,712	291.9	85	569,842
Memphis	18	2,759,905	3.4	3,229,788	3.9	92,646	2,252,484	n/a	391	108	820,275
Charlotte, NC	23	6,725,456	8.7	4,456,520	5.8	541,303	3,593,028	17,000,254	485	139	768,789

Source: *PLDS Statistical Report*, 2006

Table 4 shows that LFPL is doing more with less in regard to:

- *PROGRAMMING* – Has more attendance than peers except for Charlotte, NC, an award-winning IMLS library which reportedly offers 23,000 programs.
- *LIBRARIANS* – With fewer librarians, it meets a very high demand expressed in number of library visits and total circulation.
- *LIBRARY USAGE* – Users rely heavily on electronic resources of all kinds.

The use of peer statistics may be telling for some library managers. In Louisville's case they point up the contrast between the level of services and programs that the library provides compared with the meager amounts of public support. However, there are other ways to determine how the library is positioned with peers.

In 2002, Providence Associates interviewed directors of peer libraries, with a special emphasis on services. While the interviews focused primarily on issues of library construction, including supervisory oversight, and on the impacts of new buildings, the qualitative approach gave a more rounded picture of each institution than HAPLR. The interviews underscored the extent to which each community must work with its own unique circumstances.

> ***Our new and expanded libraries will do much more than store books. They will provide an environment in which people and ideas in all formats can come together. This environment will foster intellectual exploration and the pursuit of knowledge.***
>
> Allen County Public Library (IN), *Peer Community Library*

One theme that cropped up in almost all the interviews was the extent of impact on library use as a result of a new building, especially a new central library. In Nashville the director stated:

> *New cardholders at the Central Library increased by 400 percent in the first two months. The statistics show that circulation doubled. The Library hired additional pages to handle re-shelving, but they are still not keeping up with the increased volume of shelving. The number of computers increased from 8 in the old facility to 200 now. It was also necessary to increase security staff…the new Central Library is located only a couple of miles from the old site, but the service population is totally different. Similar things happened at the new Branch libraries.*

The consistency of this finding should help LFPL communicate the potential impact of carrying out a similarly ambitious building program. There is strong evidence from nearly all peers that the investment will pay off exactly as Louisville's leaders would like to see, namely, in people using learning resources for skills development, achievement, and economic betterment.

Another finding is that investment is the key to moving to a higher level of service. Without significant investment by the community, there is little hope of having a major long-term impact of the kind described in the peer-leader interviews. If Louisville's leaders want to replicate the successes outlined, they will have to help the library convince voters that the investment will pay large dividends. The Lexington Library, which serves a population less than half that of Louisville's, has achieved a funding level which is double that of Louisville's and has constructed a large main library that has become a destination for residents and visitors alike.

e. National Trends

There are numerous trends afoot at any one time in the world of libraries. No one index, inventory, or assessment can capture them all, as is clear from the discussion of standards. Similarly, there are wide variations in perspectives about what is a "trend." (This report uses trend to mean an emerging approach to service or institutional development that is influential enough to be promoted or analyzed through the library field's various organs of influence and dissemination, such as library literature, continuing education, and research.)

To capture the variety of library features and qualities that can be tracked for "trends," ALC has developed the ALC *21st Century Library Assessment Framework.* The framework synthesizes current trends based on analysis of library literature, government grants (federal, state), new coursework at schools of library and information science, interviews with library leaders, websites and blogs, and presentations at library conferences and vendor meetings. It also reflects twenty years of direct observation and analysis of public libraries by senior ALC staff.

The *ALC 21st Century Library Assessment Framework* is organized around four core aspects of a library:

- Purpose and Position
- Resources and Functions
- Facilities
- Community Connections

For each of these primary spheres of library activity the framework identifies the trend, provides an example of the trend in action, and describes Louisville in relation to the trend. Finally, a ranking is provided for each feature or trend, based on three levels of capacity: Outstanding, Adequate, Poor. The framework is presented in four tables in Appendix B. The rankings express the best professional judgment of the ALC team.

Of the 25 factors examined in the *ALC 21st Century Libraries Assessment Framework*, Louisville ranks outstanding in 13, adequate in 7, and poor in 5. It is important to examine these rankings to understanding their implications. The "poor" rankings are all matters of infrastructure, related to levels of public support. The plans for the library's redevelopment that are reflected in what is being put before voters this coming fall are designed to address the very factors that are ranked at the bottom, including facilities (space per capita; distance between a resident and a branch), staff (% of staff with MLS degrees), and collections. These factors are a reflection not of the library's capacity, per se, but of the level of public support.

The “Adequate” rankings, likewise, are all dependent on increased funding. Without adequate budget lines for specialized staff and new technologies, the library cannot maximize its potential in these areas.

The important aspect of these rankings is that in so many areas, especially services and programs, the library rates at the top. Despite the severe constraints of space and dollars, library staff have been able to demonstrate quality at the highest level. This makes it all the more likely that new investment will enable the library to move all of its rankings upwards and to become a world class library.

f. International Trends

Metropolitan Louisville regards its future as part of the global economy, in which cities with well-educated and information-literate populations have a competitive advantage. This view is clearly expressed in *Fix, Build, Create, Invest, Balance* by the Greater Louisville Project. In this context, a metropolitan library such as LFPL must examine what it is doing not only in terms of local relevance, or its profession and peers, but in terms of library and information services developments across the globe. This report highlights some current thinking about the future of libraries, particularly in Europe, and identifies overarching trends that provide reference points for understanding where LFPL is on the global innovation curve.

a. Rankings

The only approaches to library measurement taken abroad that are similar to efforts in the United States have been developed in Great Britain and Germany. Great Britain adopted national standards in the late 1990s, and in 2000 the Audit Commission, an independent body, started to publish annual reports of library "conditions" and rankings of individual libraries.

Public Libraries in England:

- ***Provide safe, neutral, shared environments for people from all walks of life***
- ***Support formal education and learning at all times of life***
- ***Act as centers of creativity***
- ***Serve as focal points for their neighborhood***
- ***Are at the forefront of universal access to the internet and e-government***

Framework for the Future, the New National Vision for Libraries, British Council on Museums, Libraries and Archives (MLA)

Four key factors influence the rankings: local government commitment to the library; a qualitative review based on a site visit; long-range plans; and statistical data (www.bestvalueinspections.gov.uk/).

A more targeted benchmarking framework has been developed by the MLA (British Council on Museums, Libraries and Archives). "Inspiring Learning for All," www.inspiringlearningforall.org, emphasizes the roles of libraries, museums, and archives in relation to different stages of education. It offers a common language for identifying and measuring learning outcomes – a language that could have relevance to LFPL as it evolves its focus on education.

MLA is also proposing a new public libraries performance management framework to be implemented in April 2008. This tool will help library managers measure and understand their performance in the key areas of access, resources, quality, and efficiency.

Beyond Great Britain, only Germany has tried systematically to rank public libraries. The German Library Index, BIX, was developed

initially by the Bertelsmann Foundation as part of an international program to foster models of public library service. BIX is now situated with the German Library Association. The BIX rankings, which are similar to the HAPLR rankings, focus on measurable functions such as circulation and reference questions.

b. Trends

In looking at LFPL in the context of international trends, ALC reviewed current developments at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) including its "Public Library Manifesto" and International Network of Model Libraries (UNET). ALC also consulted statements and studies by commissions associated with the Council of Europe, reports by relevant divisions of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), and current initiatives and vision statements by national library authorities in Europe and Canada. While many trends could be cited, six cross-cutting themes stand out that are consistent not only with national and international thinking but also with the plans being put in place in Louisville.

First, libraries are increasingly recognized for their multidimensional educational roles in a lifelong learning society. Decision-makers outside as well as within the library community realize that public libraries are assets that can be leveraged to advance learning at all ages and in all sizes and types of communities. This recognition is reflected in IFLA's section on "Public Libraries and Lifelong Learning" and in other sections looking at libraries' work in support of adult education and postsecondary education.

Second, libraries are recognized as part of the solution to the global challenge of ensuring that all people have equal opportunity to become fully literate. While many countries are struggling with basic print literacy – as are many communities in the United States – they are also struggling with the challenges of information literacy and media literacy. Libraries in developing countries and the developed world are integrating public access computers (often with funds from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation), helping people use them for individual and community development, and demonstrating their use for functions such as e-government and small business development. These trends are embedded in the goals and practices of UNESCO and UNET, seen in the work of influential libraries in such cities as Dublin, Toronto, Frankfurt, and Barcelona, and described in papers on libraries in the information age produced by or in response to the Council on Europe and national library authorities.

Third, public libraries continue to be regarded as community cornerstones for children and families. Even as remote reference assistance, downloadable audio books, and blogging become part of daily practice, many librarians are continuing their important work of introducing children to language and literature. This work continues to be recognized as a core role.

Fourth, libraries are increasingly recognized as centers for cultural, social, and civic exchange. From

performance spaces in Scandinavian libraries to centers for new citizens in Canadian libraries, the trend is the same, namely, for libraries creatively to respond to needs for spaces and places for artistic expression, community problem solving, and civic engagement. In Singapore, for example, where the library is a model of innovation in terms of high-tech services and digital access, the mission of the National Library Board is expressed as follows: "To expand the learning capacity of the nation so as to enhance national competitiveness *and* to promote a gracious society."

Fifth, while libraries continue to help ameliorate basic "digital divides," they are also introducing people to new uses of technology for problem solving, research, communications, and creativity. From national library authorities to municipalities, there is growing understanding that technology offers more than access to information, it offers new tools for knowledge creation. Libraries are expanding efforts to help people become familiar with constantly changing communications technologies. UNESCO's network of model libraries is cited for "testing new media." Other international entities are working on helping libraries "live up to the standards of the digital age" though virtual space development, social networking tools, digital collections development, and e-learning services.

Sixth, library buildings are increasingly important as social and physical spaces, at the same time that digital collections and electronic services are increasing exponentially. The dual evolution of the library was affirmed n a conference in Helsinki in 2002, "A Space for the Future – Library Buildings in the 21st Century." Conference proceedings and a subsequent tour focused on how library premises are closely connected to the development of the whole society. In this context some library planners and architects argue that even though "the world is building bigger and better libraries," they do not necessarily have to be in the traditional mode. A report on the conference in Volume 35, No. 4, of the *Scandinavian Library Quarterly* stated:

> *The conference confirmed our belief that the physical library, library space, will remain by the side of the virtual library. A public space such as library space is becoming more and more important when so many other activities and services are now offered in the virtual form. Our real challenge as librarians is how we are able to change the image, the interior of the library according to the new activities and needs. How are the changes from collection to access and from preservation to communication reflected in the design of the library space?*

This brief review of international trends adds an important dimension to the discussion about Louisville's library. If Metropolitan Louisville is attempting to become a "competitive city," its library should be "competitive" with library developments in the cities of Europe, Canada, and beyond – the cities with which Louisville will be interacting and competing during the new century.

Analysis of these trends shows surprising and close congruity with the current planning at LFPL. Prior sections of this report discuss LFPL's emphases on collections and services in support of education and

lifelong learning; innovative applications of new technologies; services for children and families; quality facilities development; cultural programming; and outreach to all residents.

The Louisville Library Foundation's *Annual Report* for 2005-06 includes an introductory statement from Director Craig Buthod in which he outlines three focal areas that link these emphases:

> *"Right now, our library is about change for the future. We are focusing on three areas where the library will change the most in the coming years:*
>
> **Technology for Lifelong Learning** – *This means harnessing the power of technology to help people achieve their learning goals.*
>
> **Civic Engagement and Community Integration** – *The library needs to be out in the community, delivering services where they are needed.*
>
> **The Library is a Physical Place** – *We need to design library buildings for the way libraries operate in the 21st century."*

Just as the six trends in library development are consistent across national and regional borders, so are LFPL's emphases and priorities consistent through its planning documents and arguments for investment.

That the two strands are so similar is not necessarily surprising. LFPL has leaders on its foundation, Library Advisory Commission, and staff who are highly aware of their work in the global context. This congruence between LFPL plans and international trends is yet another reason to anticipate the library's success in becoming a "competitive library" for a "competitive city."

5. Conclusion

The library is ready to make a "quantum leap." Success will depend on leadership, coordination, and investment.

Potential to Become a Great library

Two key questions have framed the ALC analysis of LFPL: Can the library move from good to great? If so, what will it take? With respect to the first question, the preceding sections of this report provide strong evidence for concluding that LFPL is ready and able to seize the future. To reiterate some key points:

- The library's vision is well aligned with that of the city it serves.
- Despite infrastructural constraints due to long-term underfunding, the library is "ahead of the curve" in a number of its services and programs.
- The library is exceptionally well prepared for change.
- Investment in infrastructure will address the deficiencies that have shown up in comparative rankings.
- The library has the leadership necessary to steer change.

Other highly rated aspects of the library touched on in the *ALC 21ST Century Library* include:

- Creative public service
- Innovative library technology
- Commitment to outreach including dedicated staff
- Record of experimentation and thinking "out of the box"
- Extensive partnerships
- Strong community support
- Increases in circulation and use
- Demands for services that the library would like to have the facilities to provide
- Dedicated and informed Library Advisory Commission and Library Foundation
- Capacity for private fundraising
- Commitment to staff development
- Diverse and highly successful public programming

Although there are basic deficiencies that cannot be ignored, especially with respect to facilities, collections, and numbers of professional staff, they are born of the lack of local investment, not lack of capacity on the part of senior staff. The *Master Facilities Plan* and the support plan being put forward to voters in November 2007 are designed to address precisely these deficiencies.

LFPL is exceptionally well prepared to take full creative advantage of new investment in ways that will transform

the library from good to great. Without LFPL's intellectual capacity, extensive preparations, and dedicated staff and supporters, no amount of investment would make a difference.

What Will It Take?

Three factors must be in alignment for LFPL to succeed in its quest: strong leadership, good coordination, and sustained public investment.

Strong Leadership

Mayor Jerry Abramson has provided the initial jolt of leadership to start the process of educating the community about the library's importance and its need for support. His announcement in 2006, that the city would buy land for three regional libraries, changed the discourse about libraries from what it had been for more than 30 years. It signaled a new mindset on the part of the highest officials in Metro Louisville, and it opened the door for the library to move ahead with its long-stalled plans for renewal and transformation.

"The regional libraries will become hubs for lifelong learning," said Abramson. *"These locations were strategically chosen so that, together with our Main Library, nearly all of our citizens will be within five miles of significant and high-quality library resources."* The mayor's clear message has set the tone for city officials regarding their commitment to help renew the library.

The mayor's strong public commitment must now be augmented by support from other policymakers and persons of influence. Outreach to these officials and their endorsement of the Master Plan will be critical for sustaining and strengthening the new public mindset about the library as an asset worthy of investment.

Leadership must come from other places as well. The private sector, through the philanthropic community and the Library Foundation, must organize its support to be effective as united voices. The Library Foundation can make a difference by reaching out to another ring of peer supporters to create a "buzz" around the library vote.

Library support organizations must also take ownership of the library issue. Working in coordination with advocates at the neighborhood level, traditional and new library supporters can build on the work started by library staff to inform and engage community members.

Long-term citizen leadership in the form of an independent – and accountable – local Library Board is also a factor in the transformation. A vote for investment in Louisville's library of the future includes a vote for the form of governance that is the hallmark of local democracy and library vitality throughout the nation. In the words of former State Librarian Jim Nelson: "*It is widely held that boards of individuals representing the various service's communities of interest are the best qualified to determine how a library should be operated for the overall benefit of the community."*

Good Coordination

To achieve public support for the infrastructure investments that are essential to (1) bring Louisville up to par with peers and (2) fulfill its potential to be an outstanding 21st century urban library system, the library and its supporters will need to present their case effectively and through careful coordination. This is especially important in light of the past history of library votes in Louisville, and the length of time it has taken to gain leaders' understanding and acceptance of the concept for real library investment.

Campaigns for library referenda are complex and always require systematic and constant coordination. All too often library advocates and allies find themselves stumbling over one another in their zeal to build public support. Library campaigns need to be disciplined. The messages need to be simple, consistent, and clear. They need to be targeted to the stakeholders most likely to participate in the vote.

As plans are put in motion for a public vote, another coordination challenge will be to link public program communications, ongoing public engagement processes, and future-oriented communications. The library has many built-in opportunities to educate the public regarding its potential to go from good to great. It must make an explicit link in the minds of voters between expanded pubic programs (which are so very well received) and the investments required for spaces, staff, and stable funding at a level commensurate with a city of its size.

> ***The ambitious expansion and improvement plan for the Louisville Free Public Library is an overdue, essential priority for this community. Indeed, it is an extension of the same movement that brought about education reform.***
> *Louisville Courier-Journal,*
> Editorial, 2000

Another kind of coordination involves the interplay between public and private fundraising. The library must make careful distinction between those aspects of its future work that will be covered through private sector support and those that will be made possible through enlarged public investment. It is not unusual for the public and even community leaders to become confused about how public and private sector funding interact. Today, they are both necessary, and they should complement one another, but they have distinctive roles. In this equation, the public support is paramount.

Major Public Investment

No great library has come into being without significant investment, usually by a combination of the public and the private sectors. From Salt Lake City to Memphis to Milwaukee, public investment was the cornerstone for a larger project that brought about a highly valued, highly visited, and highly leveraged new destination library. From Seattle to San Jose to Phoenix, public investment was the catalyst for system-wide renovation and expansion.

LFPL needs an investment package that includes funds to expand and improve facilities – improvements to older branches, new libraries in regions without access, and a new Central Library. It must also increase the number of professional staff and strengthen collections and technology infrastructure. By addressing infrastructure through public investment LFPL will be on a direct path to become a 21st century library.

The public investment that is so crucial in Louisville has been successfully negotiated in any number of American cities in the last decade and a half – many having lower per capita income and lower rates of economic growth. In Lexington (KY), a city of less than half the population of Louisville and almost the same median household income, the library receives $39.65 in per capita local support – as opposed to $21.81 in Louisville. In Milwaukee (WI), with a slightly larger population than Louisville, and slightly lower household and family income level, the library receives $37.36 in per capita local support.

In all instances of new destination libraries or revamped library systems, the decision to commit public funds was the breakthrough, followed by private monies and special grants to put the finishing touches on a new marker of the 21st century city. Louisville is poised for a similar public-private partnership, if voters are willing to approve the proposed funding package.

With the requisite public investment, library leaders can speak to private funders with confidence about the infrastructure through which enhancements and experiments could take place. LFPL and the Library Foundation would be positioned to recruit other private and corporate sources.

This assessment concludes that LFPL is ready to leverage its assets, leadership, and extensive preparations to make what one community leader calls a "quantum leap." When it does, Metropolitan Louisville will benefit from a system of 21st century libraries that will support literacy, lifetime learning, cultural access, neighborhood stability, *and* economic development. Louisville will gain another asset to help move into the top tier of cities poised for competitive advantage in the new century.

Eventually, Louisville will join the ranks of leading cities that build great libraries. When we do, I expect we'll see the public fill every chair. All kinds of folks like to come together to do good things and to be among people. For one hundred years, that meant coming to the library. We're preparing for the next 100 years. We want the library to be central to life in Louisville for a long time to come.
Craig Buthod, LFPL Director

Appendix A

Innovation in Action: Louisville Public Library Service Models

Louisville Offers Service Models for the Nation

Louisville Free Public Library has a long history of providing service models for the nation. Its Western Branch, which celebrated 100 years of service in 2005, was one of the first libraries in the nation to be dedicated solely to the education and enrichment of African Americans. After World War II the library created a library radio station. In the 1960s the library extended its services to the entire county. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the library is in the forefront today, providing innovative programs in support of adult education and lifelong learning, reaching out to newcomers to engage them in the life of the community, distributing library cards to every elementary school child, and assisting residents to use new technologies for learning, communications, and scholarship.

LFPL provides free GED tests as part of a Community Partnership in Adult Learning	**LFPL PROVIDES A POWER+PLUS CARDS FOR ALL SCHOOL CHILDREN IN JEFFERSON COUNTY**
Louisville Free Public Library is offering free GED testing for any qualified GED student who has a library card. The service is part of a partnership with the Jefferson County Public Schools and other agencies organized to promote adult education in Jefferson County. Partners include a Workforce Education Initiative, Jefferson County Technical College, local employers, local government, and Kentuckiana Works, a local Workforce Investment Board. The initiative is funded by the Library Foundation. Announced in the fall of 2006, there has been an overwhelmingly positive response. The library has already given GED tests to 500 individuals, who would otherwise have had to pay $40 for the test. 83% of those taking the test earn less than $10,000 per year. The Louisville Free Public Library is not only fulfilling its own educational mission but also leveraging its resources with other agencies to enrich educational opportunities for residents.	LFPL is offering all students in the Jefferson County Public Schools a "Power+Plus" Card, a multi-use card which will not only allow students to use library resources, but it will include the Transit Authority of River City's 50-cent student fare discount. Also, the cards will contain the school system's "Kidtrax" ID code, which helps schools track student attendance and performance. The card is now available to all public school children; the library is exploring ways to extend it to private and parochial schools. With their Power+Plus Cards students enjoy all the privileges of a LFPL member. They can check out books, videos, magazines, and reference materials; take practice tests for SAT, GED, and some AP exams; download audio books; use library computers to connect to the Internet; and take advantage of other library services. Power+Plus cards involve a partnership with the Jefferson County Public Schools and are sponsored by the Library Foundation.

Innovation in Action: Louisville Public Library Service Models

LFPL Engages Newcomers through an International Initiative

Immigrants and refugees make up approximately 10% of Louisville's population. Recognizing this trend, LFPL is "re-imagining services, programming and outreach" to attract new patrons and foster their connections with the library's traditional user base. Through an International Initiative the library has worked to translate its brochures and program announcements into many languages, and to enhance foreign language collections system-wide, with the result that new library card applications and material circulating among international groups has increased dramatically.

The Iroquois Branch was chosen to pilot other aspects of the Initiative, including programs and outreach. Programs have included Bilingual Café, Cultural Showcases, Conversations Clubs (Vietnamese, Spanish) and Cooking up Culture. The success of these programs has led the library to start implementing them at other branches. Programming has been reinforced by the efforts of a community outreach coordinator who works to spread information through agencies and organizations that service the international community. Through partnerships with Catholic Charities, Kentucky Refugees Ministry, and resettlement agencies, the library has been able to go to the community while also inviting newcomers back to the library.

LFPL's International Initiative was recognized in 2004 when it received one of Metro Louisville's first Mayor's International Awards, given to organizations that recognize the importance of multiculturalism in the city and its efforts to welcome international newcomers.

LFPL Offers Model Services for Baby Boomers

As baby boomers start to reach retirement age, and face the prospects for a longer and healthier life ahead, they are seeking to continue learning, to maintain social and civic connections, and, in some instances, to start new careers or volunteering. The public library is an obvious information and learning center for this age group.

LFPL is in the forefront of libraries nationwide that understand the need to develop a new approach for adult services, that focuses on active older adults rather than the frail elderly. It has taken on the challenge of developing and modeling programs that are meaningful for this new age group and for establishing partnerships with other organization working with those nearing retirement.

Susan Irving, Manager of the St. Matthews-Eline Branch, was selected from a large field of candidates last year to attend ALC's Lifelong Access Libraries Institute and to help build awareness of new service approaches. Irving introduced a series at St. Matthews-Eline that focused on recognition of the aging challenge which the area's baby boomers are facing. She organized monthly meetings with community experts entitled "Community Conversations: Find the Voice of Lifetime Opportunity." Irving has enlisted the support and participation of local aging professors, some of whom she has interviewed on local radio programming aimed at boomers.

Innovation in Action: Louisville Public Library Service Models

LFPL Promotes New Uses of Technology for Lifelong Learning and Communications

Like many libraries, LFPL is constantly exploring ways of using technology to help meet the needs of the community and support the library's mission. Unlike most, however, LFPL is also exploring technology in relation to its strategic vision for the future. According to Director Craig Buthod,

> *"Our library has made great progress in making computers and the Internet available to a large number of people. Approximately 2,500 people use a computer in one of our libraries every day. The challenge now is adding greater value to the experience. We need to reach the point where sophisticated technology matches up with personal learning needs and takes the user to higher achievement."*

Part of the library's work in this effort involves ensuring that young people and adults have the skills for educational achievement and economic self-sufficiency. Extensive classes are held, including some for newcomers. Another part of the effort involves use of technology to extend classroom learning and the teacher's reach into the community.

The use of technology to "push the envelope" can best be seen in the "LFPL Innovation Lab," an interactive section of the website that encourages people, particularly the young, to "be part of the creative process by providing feedback." The Innovation Lab has three major sections: *Join the Discussion; Be a Beta Tester*; and *Submit a Suggestion.* It includes *mobile.lfpl.org,* a reduced content version of the website designed to be viewed on a data-capable cellphone, pda, or smart phone.

The Innovation Lab introduces users to new tools for communicating, researching, and listening. Users gain new skills and a new understanding of how to use sophisticated research techniques. At the same time, IT staff are able to build on the feedback they get from the site to tailor future web-based activity.

Innovation in Action: Louisville Public Library Service Models

LFPL Public Programs Broaden Community Perspectives on Public Affairs, the Arts and the Humanities

Between 2004 and mid-2007, LFPL offered 67 Main Library Programs including exhibitions, concerts, lectures, performances, readings, and films. Many were well attended or sold out. Topics ranged from a lecture by the columnist David Brooks and a Human Rights Film Festival to an exhibit of photos documenting the 9/11 tragedy and concerts by the University of Louisville Jazz Café.

The public programs are part of the library's concerted effort to realize its potential as a "town center for the life of the mind, an institution for the civic exchange of ideas." Each year attendance has increased. Recent programs such as a talk by the writer Anna Quindlen have been sold out days before the event.

Many libraries offer public programs; few offer the array of topics or the variety of media that LFPL is now offering on a regular basis. That the events are held in the entrance area of the Main Library, an environment that was not designed for performance or public dialogue, is testimony to public desire for substantive cultural events *and* the library's success in organizing and promoting the events.

Libraries across the country are beginning to transform their spaces from storage areas for books to spaces for learning through group study, discussion, performance, and civic exchange. They are looking for service models that will help them in this transformation. Louisville's leadership – all the more remarkable given its space constraints – provides an instructive example.

Appendix B

ALC 21st Century Library Assessment Framework

A. PURPOSE AND POSITIONS

Trend	Examples	Louisville	Assessment
1. Mission			
The primary trend is to emphasize the mission of the library as a resource and center for **lifelong learning.** Other trends: the library's role as a gateway to information, a resource for children and youth, and a place for cultural exchange.	"*To provide equal access to information and services that support, empower, and enrich all who pursue knowledge, education, cultural enrichment, and lifelong learning.*" Mission Statement, *Enoch Pratt Free Library,* Baltimore (MD)	"*To provide the people of Metro Louisville with the broadest possible access to knowledge, ideas and information, and to support them in their pursuit of learning.*" Mission Statement, LFPL	**Outstanding** Through its focus on education and learning, Louisville is ahead of the curve. The emphasis on learning is reflected not only in its mission statement but also in its service goals and "Strategic Directions" statements.
2. Leaders' Opinions			
More and more municipal officials, business community leaders, educators, and local media representatives understand that libraries are a community asset. They see libraries as similar to parks, cultural institutions, schools, and other focal destinations or components of the local infrastructure.	"*In a time when we're constantly needing to retrain ourselves for the jobs of the 21st century, the library provides access to the kinds of tools needed for economic development.*" C. Vilsak, former First Lady, Iowa "*We go to city leaders and say, 'if you invest in libraries, you may not need as many police, and here are the kinds of activities that are going on in the library system.'*" Business Leader, Phoenix, AZ	The mayor of Louisville, the local newspaper, and many business and philanthropic leaders have expressed strong support for the library as a local asset.	**Outstanding** Leadership support for LFPL seems strong today, with every indication that it will help translate into the votes needed to pass the library redevelopment program on the fall ballot.

Trend	Examples	Louisville	Assessment
3. Community Perceptions			
Where local funding levels are high, they reflect positive public perceptions regarding the library as an educational resource and an enriching experience. They also reflect public recognition that the level of support translates into quality facilities, assistance, technology, and programs. When library leaders and advocates are effective in making these connections, community "satisfaction" converts to expanded public and private dollars.	"*In many ways, people believe that libraries are more important than ever… At a time of broad concern about wasteful public spending, 52% of public respondents say that if their local library needed additional funding they would favor tax increases to generate the necessary resources.*" *Long Overdue* (2006)	A 2001 report from the Urban Studies Institute at the University of Louisville on public perceptions found that users and non-users alike rated libraries as an essential community service. Other more recent polls and surveys bear this out, including extensive focus groups carried out for the Master Facilities Plan.	**Adequate** While polls and surveys indicate strong community "satisfaction," the strength of users' and voters' positive perceptions of LFPL will not be fully known until votes are cast in the fall. Will satisfaction convert into monetary support?

ALC 21st Century Library Assessment Framework

B. FACILITIES

Trend	Example	Louisville	Assessment
1. Total Sq Ft Per Cap			
Libraries being constructed today vary from .50 to .90 sq ft per cap. The total sq ft measure, which traditionally was tied in part to the size of the collection, is more variable today, depending much more on the kinds of functions library planners envision.	**Cleveland Public Library (OH)** has the highest amount of space in Louisville's benchmark group: 1.71 sq ft per cap.	LFPL has .45 sq ft per cap. Although Louisville is a larger city (the largest in KY), with higher income per cap than many of its benchmark cities, **it is lowest in its peer group with respect to space.**	**Poor** Public investment is required to move LFPL to the top of the tier in terms of facilities.
2. Total Sq Mi Per Branch			
Standards vary depending on suburban, urban, or rural environment. The goal for an urban library would be at most 5 miles.	**St. Louis Public Library (OH)** has a system that offers 4.1 sq miles per branch.	The LFPL system offers 24.2 miles per branch, placing it 12th out of 16 benchmark libraries.	**Poor** Public investment is required to move LFPL to the top of the tier.
3. Welcoming Public Space			
Trends include transparent exterior; open interiors with flexible components for multiple uses; and large central spaces for gatherings and to provide the sense of a "commons."	The new **Allen County Library in Fort Wayne (IN)** has a block-long Great Hall that serves as a focal point for the building. **Seattle Public Library** and other new libraries are glass-walled, enabling the public to see into the library as a living urban element.	LFPL is exploring at least three different scenarios for design and location of the Central Library. The three new regional libraries were the subject of the design charrette with MIT in 2006; their size offers possibilities for multiple uses and space allocations. Individual libraries remain to be designed.	**Adequate** (given current facilities) Public investment is required to move LFPL to the top of the tier.

Trend	Example	Louisville	Assessment
4. Landmark Architecture			
Trend for larger libraries is to construct a major architectural statement: a symbol of 21st century civic pride, a destination for visitors, and a focal point for community exchange.	**Salt Lake City's** new Main Library is considered both a destination for visitors and the city's "living room." Surrounded by retail space and other urban functions, the library also has outdoor spaces for viewing nearby mountains.	LFPL has not yet finalized designs for new buildings. However, some of the creative thinking that the library has encouraged by non-librarians and members of the public should serve well for the next stage of designing.	**Adequate** The historic section of the Central Library is an architectural landmark and a downtown asset.
5. Technology Integration			
Trend is to integrate new technologies so that they are seamless, embedded in surfaces and furniture, ubiquitous for access anywhere.	The new **Allen County library in Fort Wayne (IN)** is entirely Wi-Fi equipped. It has 238 public access computers, some distributed throughout the building and some in teaching areas.	LFPL has highly skilled IT staff who are bringing innovations to the webpage, especially the Innovation Lab. The design charrette with MIT Media Lab set the stage for the new libraries to be models for technology integration.	**Adequate** (given current facilities)
6. Environmental Conservation			
More and more libraries are incorporating different materials and design approaches to achieve the LEED standards for energy conservation and sustainable maintenance. Some are demonstrating new approaches to building public facilities that incorporate sustainable design.	**Blair Library in Fayetteville (AR)** ("Library of the Year" in 2006) is a "green" library that meets the LEED standards for sustainability and conservation.	LFPL commissioned a study by Meyer, Scherer and Rockcastle to examine options for achieving different levels of LEED standards in the new regional buildings and a new Central Library. Community members in focus groups and surveys have expressed strong interest in this aspect of the future library.	**Poor** New public investment is required to apply sustainable design principles in LFPL.
7. Reflection of Community			
Designs for new branches are less standardized, incorporating distinctive elements reflective of local cultures and environments.	**St. John's Branch Library in Austin (TX)** contains displays created by residents to reflect local cultural traditions.	LFPL has received substantial feedback from community members about aesthetic and design issues. More detailed input can be sought for branch library designs.	**Poor** Public investment will be required for a responsive design program.

Trend	Example	Louisville	Assessment
8. Space Allocation			
Most new libraries, even smaller ones, have the capacity to offer multimedia collections, and spaces for various age groups, group and individual study, performances, community meetings, and special events	The new **Allen County Central Library in Fort Wayne (IN)** opened in Jan. 2007. Among its features: Media Wall; 5 public meeting rooms to accommodate groups from 6 to 500; 6 small study rooms; a computer training room; and a Silent Reading Room.	One of the major handicaps for LFPL is its lack of space for services, programs, and displays. Residents have noted the need for public meeting space in the neighborhoods.	**Poor** Public investment is required to provide the sizes and types of space the public would like.
9. Amenities			
Libraries are taking much greater notice of their look and feel, and striving to incorporate amenities such as coffee bars, exhibit areas, or workshop spaces into building plans.	The new **Allen County Library in Fort Wayne (IN)** includes not only a café and art gallery but retail stores and a food court. A performing arts theatre is part of the complex.	It is assumed that LFPL will follow this new trend by incorporating amenities to encourage browsing and enjoying the library as a public space.	**Poor** Limited space inhibits use of the library for cultural and social functions.

ALC 21st Century Library Assessment Framework

C. RESOURCES AND FUNCTIONS

Trend	Example	Louisville	Ranking
1. Collections			
Digital downloadable books and audio collections. Online resources available through home, school, and portable computers. Topical collections such as Parents Collections, Small Business Centers, Higher Education collections and Health Information collections. Databases of specialized information available through state library arrangements with vendors or library consortia.	The **Harris County Public Library (TX)** offers an "e-Branch" through which patrons can download bestselling audio and print books 24/7 to a PC at home, in the office, or anywhere. Each year the **Allen County Public Library (IN)** purchases over 1 mile of books.	Louisville is trying to catch up with a backlog of deficiencies in books and other learning materials. Progress has been made in providing much desired audio books and foreign language collections. Louisville ranks low in holdings per capita in its16-member peer group.	**Adequate** Private support has helped upgrade and diversify collections. Further upgrades will be addressed through a new funding initiative.
2. Staff			
Libraries adding staff with particular expertise such as language capacities, teaching, social work or youth services, and knowledge of local community. Staff encouraged to develop people skills as well as reference, programming, and computer skills. Staff being deployed in teams and rotated to different locations. New assignments including outreach and community engagement. Libraries investing in staff development.	The **Cleveland Public Library (OH)**, which is often considered a model urban library, cites its staff as the key to success. The Director states: "The remarkable staff strives to provide exceptional customer services and highest quality information services to all area residents. Their talents and commitment have been recognized through many honors." **St. Paul Public Library (MN)** has an "outreach branch" and a Director of Outreach.	LFPL ranks low in its peer group for the number of professional staff in relation to the population; it is the next to last of 16 libraries. However, a consistent theme that runs through the library's many reports and assessments is that what staff don't have in credentials they make up for in commitment and customer friendly service. LFPL Senior Staff are exceptional, and "do so much with so little."	**Outstanding** (in terms of outputs) although "ranking" in terms of professionals with master's credentials is low in peer group.

Trend	Example	Louisville	Ranking
3. Services			
Special initiatives to focus attention on one or another library resource or to extend the reach of the library to meet new or unmet information and learning needs. Specific trends: › 24/7 online reference › e-government services › health information centers › community information center › partnerships such as SCORE and Labor Dept counseling › After-school activities for youth › Services for boomers in transition	**Columbus Public Library (OH)** offers an online Homeschoolers Resource Center for parents that includes web resources, notices of library events to supplement lessons, sample lesson plans, newsletters, and testing information. **Hartford Public Library (CT): The American Place (TAP)** is a focused suite of services for the city's ethnically diverse and immigrant populations. It involves multiple programs and partnerships with local agencies.	LFPL is partnering with Jefferson County Schools to provide library cards for **every school student.** St. Matthews-Aline Branch Director Susan Irving is one of 23 National Lifelong Access Fellows selected on the basis of the quality of her work to provide services targeted for active older adults. Outreach service to ensure broad participation in library activities has become a routine part of the library's work plan.	**Outstanding**
4. Programs			
Public programming is becoming far more common and more diverse in the nation's libraries. As a recent article in the *NYTimes* stated: "the library stands between art and commerce." It is venue for educational and cultural programs and civic exchange in neighborhoods of all income levels. The trend includes programs carried out in partnership with other groups and more sustained activities rather than short-term projects.	The rich array of programs carried out at the **Hartford Public Library (CT)** includes Homebuyer Education Seminars, Nature Story Times, "Poems as Stories," and Legal Issues Facing Nonprofits. **St. Paul Public Library** through its **Friends of the Library** is a leader in the movement to strengthen the public library as an educational and cultural forum. It is one of the few public libraries awarded a NEH challenge grant for programming.	LFPL has gained national prominence for the extent and success of its public programs including author discussions, public affairs debates, concerts, and health programs for older adults. The Iroquois Branch gained national attention with its "Cooking for Culture" program. Success is due to leadership, staff creativity, and effective marketing.	**Outstanding** *"LFPL is widely known and admired for its creative programming and marketing."* **Former state librarian Jim Nelson**

Trend	Example	Louisville	Ranking
5. Communications			
Libraries increasingly recognize that expert and strategic communications are essential for: (1) focusing public attention on the services the library provides; (2) building relationships with users; (3) reaching new users and funders; (4) involving public officials; and (6) supporting outreach and advocacy. They are allocating more resources and attention to communications than ever before, even including public awareness activities as part of their formal plans for library development.	In 2004 the **Saint Paul Public Library (MN)** and its Friends group received the John Cotton Dana Award, the library profession's highest award for public relations, for a multifaceted public awareness campaign to celebrate the reopening of their renovated historic Central Library. The **Norfolk Public Library (VA)** included communications in its new Strategic Directions Plan, shared with the community: **"Strategic Direction 10** – Increase awareness of library services and activities while highlighting the value of the library to the community, both users and non-users alike."	LFPL has focused energy and resources on quality media outreach. Skilled staff have developed effective public relations materials and disseminated them via diverse media. Senior staff have good relations with local media. Positive editorials in key newspapers, good media coverage of events and new initiatives, and new media interest in what the library is doing or planning are an indication of effective media outreach. Some of the results to date: increased materials circulation and overflow audiences at many library events.	**Outstanding** LFPL staff have shared their marketing expertise with other Kentucky libraries.
6. Technologies			
Beyond the provision of public access computers, now a necessary part of library infrastructure, libraries are either trying to keep up with or stay ahead of their customers – especially the younger ones – with respect to new communications and information technologies. Innovative libraries are integrating technology into nearly every aspect of library services, from online book clubs	**Denver Public Library (CO)** is in the forefront of integrating and experimenting with new technologies. Denver offers: › eFlicks › Audiobook downloads › Ask Colorado: 24/7 librarian › DPL Podcasts › *evolver*, a myspace area for teens **Schaumburg Public Library (IL)** has just opened its new "Digital Branch"	Innovative and educational uses of new technologies are hallmarks of LFPL's vision for the future, which it is starting to implement even while hampered by infrastructural limitations. For example, LFPL has created an Innovations Lab website, which involves young people and others in new forms of creative online communications. The 2006 Laboratory Library Charrette	**Outstanding** Given its current space and budgetary limitations, LFPL is offering high-quality technology services.

Trend	Example	Louisville	Ranking
and 24/7 reference to online tutoring assistance and downloadable audio recordings. Some are setting up branches on "Second Life." They are lending information devices, staying in touch with users through blogs and podcasts, broadcasting programs on video, and using webinars for staff development. Libraries are also realizing that different age groups use the Internet and the library's website differently; they are providing targeted online capacities for these age groups and reinforcing them with site-based activities.	through which residents can: › Listen to bestsellers › Read a book online (1500 are available in full text) › Explore books (samples) › Ask questions of online librarians › Do homework online › Find community groups › Explore local history	with the MIT Media Lab is another indication of the library's commitment to ensure that Louisville does not remain behind in terms of future applications of new technologies.	
7. Planning			
Libraries increasingly recognize that they cannot remain static. They are engaging in varied planning processes to identify changing needs and design responsive services. Some use the Public Library Association (PLA) "planning for results" process, which involves targeted planning around specific services. Many libraries are using renovation or expansion planning as a means of engaging constituents. They are employing focus groups, surveys, polls, town meetings, and design	The **Public Library of Charlotte-Mecklenberg County (NC)** has begun a restructuring effort titled "Imagine 2010: Collaboration, Community and Service." The library expects to emphasize partnerships in its future. **The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County (OH)** is implementing a four-part plan started in 2002. Components include: Relevant Services; Financial Strength; Community Awareness; Dynamic Organization.	LFPL has been in a planning mode for at least 10 years. The planning has been comprehensive and intensive and has involved many community members and library leaders. From the 1400 individuals that were involved in development of the 2003 *Master Facilities Plan* to more recent interviews with community leaders, LFPL has listened and reached out to many segments of Metropolitan Louisville.	**Outstanding** It is hard to imagine a library that could have done more or better planning for its future than LFPL.

Trend	Example	Louisville	Ranking
workshops. Often, the goal is not only to learn what future services the community wants but to establish an ongoing community-library dialogue.			
8. Documentation and Evaluation			
Libraries have traditionally documented inputs -- numbers of visitors, size of collections, etc. They are now shifting to document their functions in ways that show impact on users. New methods are required for this and the field is evolving. Outcome-based evaluation is now considered necessary for all federal (IMLS) grants and many state grants. Library valuation is generally catching on, with a recent spate of new economic valuation or "return on investment" studies.	**St. Louis Public Library (OH)** was one of the first to study applying economic measurements to value public investment in public libraries. Former Director Glen Holt worked on an economic and cost-benefit analysis that has influenced many library managers. **Middle Country Public Library (NY)**, a leader in early childhood services, is working with a team of researchers on a federally funded project to assess the impact of the library's services for parents of young children in terms of early literacy development.	LFPL uses a number of indicators to gauge public response to its services, such as the overflow numbers of people at humanities programs, high registration for GED tests, high rates of participation in the Power Plus+ Card, and high rates of satisfaction in certain polls. The library is also highly aware of the importance of impact valuation. Over time such services as the Power Plus+ Card should translate into impact data. When the library has the facilities and staff to provide maximum services it will be in a better position to measure the full impact of particular programs and services.	**Outstanding**

ALC 21st Century Library Assessment Framework

D. COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AND SUPPORT

Trend	Example	Louisville	Assessment
1. Partnerships			
More partnerships and collaborations with other educational institutions, community organizations, government agencies, and cultural institutions. Awareness that partnerships leverage the assets of each organization for broader impact.	**Nashville Public Library (TN)** engages in numerous partnerships that benefit residents through enriched programming. As one example, the library's Civil Rights Room partners with the National League of Cities, Fisk University, the First Amendment Center, and the Winter Institute for Racial Conciliation.	LFPL works with numerous organizations and agencies. Partners range from the Kentucky Arts Council and the Jefferson County Schools to the University of Louisville and Kentuckiana Works. See *Innovation in Action* (Appendix A) for examples of Louisville partnerships.	**Outstanding** LFPL demonstrates an approach to library service that is cooperative and collaborative, rather than isolated. This is especially impressive in light of the current constraints of professional staff and programming space. LFPL is at the front of the curve in this.
2. Community Engagement			
Involvement of stakeholders, including library users and local agency personnel, in needs and assets assessments, focus groups, surveys, planning, *and* assistance with program delivery. Libraries are involving stakeholders in varied ways, from Teen Councils to Small Business Advisory Groups. They recognize the importance of "buy-in" as well as the value of users' perspectives and assistance.	**Chandler Public Library (AZ)** has a Next Chapter Advisory Council that helps its Next Chapter site offer baby boomers information and programming on life planning, volunteering, and re-careering. The Advisory Council plans activities and assists with outreach to peers and also with communications, events management, and documentation.	LFPL has involved stakeholders of many types and ages. It has solicited public opinions through surveys and polls; interviewed community leaders and government officials; and carried out community meetings to gain input from library users as well as non-users. During the fall of 2006, library officials met with more than 100 local groups as part of a community engagement process.	**Outstanding** LFPL is committed to community engagement, not only as part of its library planning process but in other spheres of activity with neighborhood groups, Friends, support groups, etc.

Trend	Example	Louisville	Assessment
3. Private Support			
Library foundations are continuing to grow, both in number and capacity to raise private funds for special initiatives and capital projects. Increasing understanding exists between the public and private sectors with respect to library development: private dollars, appropriately applied, can help to leverage public dollars. Private funds are also being used to enable services experimentation or enhancements that would otherwise not be possible.	**Newport Beach Public Library Foundation (CA)**, established in 1989 as a public-private partnership with the city of Newport, was instrumental in helping carry out a successful capital campaign for a new Central Library in the early 1990s. Today the foundation raises funds to "*support the library's priorities and drive its innovative community services and program…to help develop Newport Beach into a world-class facility.*"	The Louisville Free Public Library Foundation was established in 1980. It is exceptionally supportive and has been responsible for a number of the forward-moving activities undertaken by the library over the past few years, including Summer Reading programs, cultural programs, and scholar-ships for staff to obtain degrees in library science. Of the innovative services described in *Innovation in Action* (Appendix A), all but one have been supported by the foundation.	**Outstanding** The Louisville Library Foundation has been a critical partner to the library and the city, enabling the library to maintain a level of excellence and even of innovation despite its limited levels of public support. The foundation's capacity is an important criterion in assessing whether the library is ready to undertake the capital campaign required for expansion.
4. Public Support			
While the library funding picture is uneven across the country, and is dependent on local and state economies, there is a trend to gain more secure levels of public support through establishment of special taxing districts. This means the library is less vulnerable to year-to-year changes in its budget and more able to secure and sustain its future.	**Lexington Public Library (KY)** is supported by the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, which allocates $.05 from every $100.00 received in county property taxes. County funding puts the Lexington Library in the 4th highest position out of the 16 benchmark libraries of which Louisville is one.	In local support, LFPL ranks 13th out of 16 in its group of benchmark libraries. It has been at or below this ranking for years. It does a little better in state support – 11th out of 16 – but the amount is relatively low. Without increased and sustained public funding at levels commensurate with size and vision, LFPL will not be able to meet needs and expectations for 21st century service.	**Poor** Increased public support is essen-tial if LFPL is to evolve positively. It has reached its limit with current levels of support. It has filled in with considerable private support. However, basic infrastructure is the responsibility of the public sector. Other communities with lower levels of per capita income provide considerably higher support for libraries. **LFPL is long overdue for increased public investment.**

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Louisville Public Library Strategic Planning Process for the Library Improvement Plan
Project Milestones
1999-2007

Luckett & Farley Facilities Review of LFPL's library building conditions
1999

Publication of: "Economic Importance of Arts and Cultural Attractions in Louisville" LFPL attendance levels far exceed other cultural attractions
2000

Louisville Key Leader Interviews regarding expansion
09/2002

Metro Council Adoption of Master Facilities Plan
09/2003

Public Agenda Interviews LFPL Leaders for "LONG OVERDUE " report
Fall 2005

Extensive Public Communication Process
Fall 2005

Internet Survey of Library Users
04/2007

Annual Benchmark Libraries Report
Fall 2006

1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007

Kentucky State Librarian's office issues new State Standards - LFPL identifies major gaps in collection and library sq. ft per capita
1999

"The Community Speaks" Unv. of Louisville survey of 400 Louisville residents
2001

Providence Assoc. Long Range Facilities Assessment
2001

Providence Assoc. Master Facilities Plan completed
2002

Louisville Community Charrette
2006

Louisville/MIT Architecture Charrette
Summer 2006

MS&R Qualitative Economic Study of Sustainable Design for Planned Regional Libraries
09/2006

Beginning of extensive public briefings on the new library buildings; October, November,December which are ongoing through 2007
10/2006 onward

Appendix D

Strategy in Action: Partnerships

Louisville, KY

Louisville Free Public Library Provides Free GED Tests In Partnership for Adult Learning

In September, 2006, Mayor Jerry Abramson of Louisville, KY, announced that the Louisville Free Public Library and the Jefferson County Public Schools would be partnering to help residents advance their education and career potential. Rural Jefferson County has almost 700,000 residents, many of whom need adult basic education, English literacy, family literacy, GED preparation, welfare-to-work transition training, and workforce training services.

*For more on the partnership, see the **Louisville (KY) Free Public Library website***

The library is receiving support from the library foundation to help sponsor free GED testing for any qualified student who has a library card. The usual testing fee is $40.

"Education levels are tied directly to earning levels, and by expanding the number of citizens who have completed their GED, we are bolstering Louisville's workforce and competitive position," said Mayor Abramson, noting the importance of increasing the number of residents who hold the GED. He has also remarked on the library foundation's importance as a contributor to public education through the library: "Through this program as well as its funding of educational materials and new technology in our libraries, the Library Foundation has become an enabler of lifelong learning in this community."

Julie Scoskie, director of the school system's Adult and Continuing Education program, reports that "our students tell us that the testing fee can be a barrier to them earning a GED.... This free testing offer will have a big impact." In addition to the free GED tests, the library is working with JCPS Adult Education to offer GED preparation classes at select library branches and add Saturday classes to the schedule options.

For Craig Buthod, the Director of the Louisville Free Public Library, partnering with the schools on adult education is a "natural extension of our services. For several years now, the Library has provided excellent GED study aids on our website. This free GED testing offer is a powerful addition to our commitment to provide our community the kind of educational support that makes a real difference."

Strategic communications to promote awareness of the free GED testing includes commercials, print advertisements, flyers and mailers targeted to potential GED takers. KentuckianaWorks (the local Workforce Investment Board) is sponsoring a substantial radio ad campaign in support of the effort. The free GED classes are one aspect of the Louisville Library's participation in a many-layered partnership to promote adult education in Jefferson County, KY. Other members of Community Partnerships for Adult Learning (CAL-PARTNERSHIP) include the Workforce Education Initiative, Jefferson Community College and Jefferson Technical College, as well as local government and labor unions, the state department of adult education and literacy and community-and faith-based organizations. The work of the partnership is supported by the partners as well as state and federal grants, including Community Development Block grants.

Participation in the CAL-PARTNERSHIP is enabling the Louisville Free Public Library to fulfill its educational mission and leverage its resources with other agencies to enrich educational opportunities for all residents. The collaboration is also creating advocacy benefits to the library, including increased knowledge about the library among partner agencies; opportunities for new funding and new allies; new users, who may become future supporters of the library; and publicity that conveys the value of the library as an educational resource.

<Back to Action Strategy 6: Partnerships and Collaborations

Next Strategy>

Appendix E

Recent Publications that Provided Background for
From Good to Great: Assessment of the Louisville Free Public Library.

LONG OVERDUE: A Fresh Look at Public and Leadership Attitudes About Libraries in the 21st Century.
Prepared by Public Agenda, with support from Americans for Libraries Council and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, New York: June 2006

MAKING CITIES STRONGER: Public Library Contributions to Local Economic Development.
Urban Libraries Council, January 2007

THE ENGAGED LIBRARY: Chicago Stories of Community Building.
Urban Libraries Council, December 2005

WORTH THEIR WEIGHT: An Assessment of the Evolving Field of Library Valuation.
By Americans for Libraries Council with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, New York: May 2007