

**Salt Lake City Public Library  
Performance Audit**

**July 2012**

**Management  
Partners**





# Management Partners



July 20, 2012

Mr. Soren Simonsen  
City Council Chair  
Salt Lake City Council  
P.O. Box 145476  
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

Dear Mr. Simonsen:

Management Partners is pleased to transmit this report containing the results of the Salt Lake City Public Library performance audit. The purpose of the audit was to objectively evaluate policies, organizational structure, operations, costs, and the management practices in the Salt Lake City Public Library System and to identify operational and organizational changes that, when implemented, will result in more efficient service delivery.

The recommendations contained in this report are intended to help the Library improve operations while operating as efficiently as possible. Once the report is accepted by Council, we will complete a draft Implementation Action Plan. The work involved in implementing the Action Plan recommendations must be integrated into the other work of the organization. The Action Plan will provide appropriate assignments of responsibility for implementation and also include an estimate of time required to complete each recommendation as well as a recommended priority for completion.

We appreciate the involvement of the City Council, Library Board members, and City and Library staff members who gave their time, insight and expertise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald E. Newfarmer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Gerald E. Newfarmer  
President and CEO



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## Table of Contents

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<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>Background</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Project Approach</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Document Review .....	6
Interviews .....	6
Benchmarking .....	7
Best Practice Research.....	8
Focus Groups .....	14
<b>Analysis and Recommendations</b> .....	<b>18</b>
Organizational Culture, Climate and Structure.....	18
<i>Decision Making</i> .....	19
<i>Implementation of the Strategic Plan</i> .....	22
<i>Management Structure and Staffing</i> .....	23
Administrative and Support Services .....	27
<i>Human Resources</i> .....	27
<i>Information Technology</i> .....	32
<i>Finance</i> .....	33
<i>Communications Function</i> .....	35
Facilities Maintenance and Capital Planning.....	36
Library Operations .....	38
<i>Radio Frequency Identification and Materials Handling Technology</i> .....	38
<i>Cataloging and Processing</i> .....	40
<i>Workload Measures, Cross-Training, System Standards and Process Improvement</i> .....	42
<i>Accommodating Needs of Homeless Patrons and the Spectrum of Library Users</i> .....	44
<i>Planning for Two New Branch Libraries</i> .....	45
<i>Providing Access to Information and Resources in Many Languages</i> .....	48
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>50</b>
<b>Attachment – List of Recommendations</b> .....	<b>51</b>

## Tables

---

Table 1. Utah Peer Agency Data .....	7
Table 2. Best Practice Library Data.....	9
Table 3. Decision-Making Roles.....	21

## Figures

---

Figure 1. Current Organizational Structure .....	4
Figure 2. Peer Data on Full-time Equivalent Employees.....	10
Figure 3. Peer Data on Operating Expenditures per Capita.....	11
Figure 4. Peer Data on Visits per Capita.....	12
Figure 5. Recommended Organizational Structure .....	24

## Executive Summary

Management Partners was retained by the City of Salt Lake City in April 2012 to conduct a performance audit of the Salt Lake City Public Library (SLCPL). The Library, a beloved community asset, has been faced with significant leadership challenges in recent years. A transitional leader is currently helping institute necessary policies, procedures, and a management system while a new director is being recruited. This is an opportune time to examine the Library's systems with a goal of improving its efficiency and effectiveness.

Management Partners used a variety of analytical techniques in completing this study. We examined a myriad of documents and conducted individual interviews with City Council members and staff, Library Board members, and Library executive team members. We also conducted three focus groups with SLCPL staff. In addition, we conducted benchmarking with several Utah public libraries and gathered best practice information from libraries known for innovation and excellence.

In preparing this report, we considered the organizational culture and climate as well as the organizational structure, including the management structure and staffing resources utilized to implement the Library's Strategic Plan. We examined administrative and support services as well as facilities maintenance and capital planning.

During the course of the performance audit, a significant amount of time was devoted to examining Library operations, including cataloging and processing functions; workload measures and system standards; accommodating homeless patrons as well as other library users; and planning for two new branch libraries. We have provided recommendations related to each of these areas based on solid management practices as well as best practices used by exemplary libraries.

Management Partners is also providing an Implementation Action Plan under separate cover. The Action Plan will be completed once Council has accepted the report. The recommendations provide a roadmap for

the future. When implemented, they will help the Salt Lake City Public Library continue to be an outstanding community asset while utilizing precious resources even more effectively.



## Background

The Salt Lake City Public Library (SLCPL) has a long history of providing excellent library services to the City's many eager and enthusiastic library users. The Library is a center of activity and learning, a source of information and entertainment, and a symbol of the community's value of being open to ideas. When surveyed about City services, residents gave the Library the highest rating of all public services.

The stunning Main Library building is a source of community pride and is frequently a destination for visitors to the area who appreciate architecture. In 2006, the Library was named *Library Journal's* Library of the Year, recognizing its high level of service to the community and its innovative services.

The Library's services, facilities and collections are robust when compared to other communities of comparable size across the nation. In 2010 the Salt Lake City Public Library was ranked number six among libraries in its population category in Hennen's American Public Library Rankings.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, compared to other libraries in its budget size category, in the 2011 *Library Journal* Star Ratings the Library is ranked fifth highest and earned a five star rating.<sup>2</sup>

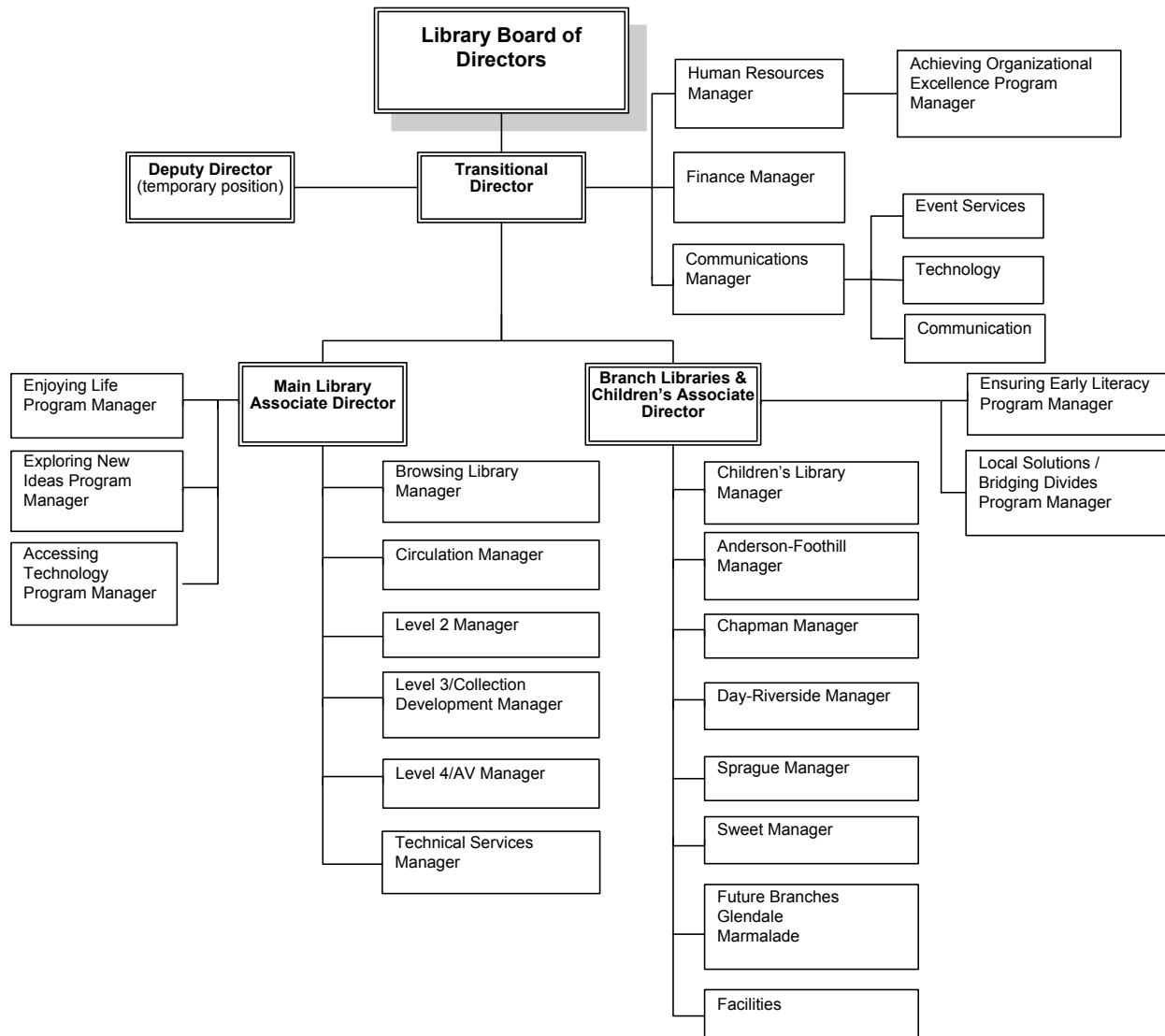
The library has approximately 181 full-time equivalent employees and an operating budget of \$13.8 million (Fiscal Year 2012-13). The director currently has six direct reports, as shown in Figure 1.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.haplr-index.com/HAPLR100.html>

<sup>2</sup><http://features.libraryjournal.com/star-libraries/class-of-2011/star-data-by-peer-group/>

Figure 1. Current Organizational Structure



In October 2011 the Salt Lake City Public library director resigned from her position to pursue other opportunities. She had been director for just over three years, succeeding a long-time director and career library employee. The Library is now managed by a transitional director.

The past few years have been difficult for the entire library organization. The public library field is operating in an environment of rapid and transformational change. Add to that a new, somewhat inexperienced library director with a markedly different management style than that of her predecessor and a staff that cares passionately about their work but

was unprepared for substantial and rapid change. The result was a period of painful turmoil within the organization, some of which became public. To the credit of all, the internal dissension did not affect the Library's exemplary quality of service nor the community's continuing high level of use and regard for the Library.

In addition, two new branch libraries are in the planning stages. Their operational models will, by necessity, be very different than the current models, as they are able to take advantage of new, improved technology and respond to community needs. These are exciting challenges for the Library.

In an effort to set the stage for the new director and in the spirit of continuous improvement, the Library Board of Directors requested the City Council conduct a performance audit of the library system to evaluate the organization structure and management systems. Doing so will help ensure the organization is optimized to efficiently deliver exceptional services to the public into the future.

## Project Approach

Management Partners used various analytical and management techniques in completing this performance audit. We reviewed numerous documents; conducted interviews with a variety of elected and appointed officials and staff members; conducted benchmarking with comparable agencies; researched best practices in selected areas; and conducted three focus groups. In addition, the project team members toured each facility to observe the operations and attributes of the facility. The following sections describe the major components of our approach.

### ***Document Review***

During the course of this study Management Partners analyzed numerous documents including organization charts, circulation data, library statistics for the main library and branches, library position descriptions and other HR data, budget and financial reports, the Strategic Plan, and Operating and Capital Budgets for FY 2011-12 and FY 2012-13, policies and procedures, and Library Board agendas and minutes.

### ***Interviews***

Management Partners conducted interviews with 21 individuals, including City Council members, Council staff, Library Board members, and Library staff. The purpose of the interviews was to understand the organizational structure, decision making and management systems, staffing, policies and procedures, library operations, and service delivery mechanisms to identify opportunities for improvement. In addition, interviewees elaborated on the Salt Lake City Public Library's challenges and strengths as well as what is going well currently and what might need improvement. City Council members and Library Board members also provided information about what they have been hearing from community members about the Library.

## Benchmarking

Benchmarking was conducted with the peer agencies identified by the City. These include Davis County Library, Salt Lake County Library, Utah County Library, and Weber County Library systems. The sources for the benchmarking data were *Public Library Association Database (published in 2011 for reference year 2010)* and *Public Library Statistics Database (2010)* published on the Utah State Library website.

Table 1 below shows data for the Utah peers, including population served, operating expenditures per capita, circulation per capita, and visits per capita. The Salt Lake City Public Library has approximately 964,193 print and audio/visual holdings and hosts about 3.86 million visits annually.

While the Salt Lake City Public Library serves the second smallest population on a per capita basis, it has the largest holdings per capita. It also far outweighs peer agencies on the number of visits per capita. In terms of circulation, the SLCPL has the largest circulation per capita (20.71), followed closely by the Salt Lake County Library with 19.51. The high number of visits and circulation comes with a cost, however, as the SLCPL's operating expenditures per capita is highest of all peer libraries at \$69.11 compared with \$37.25 for the Salt Lake County Library. These data (especially the high number of visits per capita) suggest the Salt Lake City Public Library is being utilized to a much greater extent than its Utah peers.

Table 1. Utah Peer Agency Data

Library	Population Served	Holdings per capita	Operating Expenditures	Operating Expenditures per Capita	Circulation per Capita	Visits per capita
<b>Salt Lake City Public Library</b>	186,440	5.17	\$12,884,617	\$69.11	20.71	20.70
<b>Davis County Library</b>	310,000	2.21	\$5,755,162	\$18.57	9.17	4.59
<b>Salt Lake County Library</b>	805,231	2.79	\$29,997,558	\$37.25	19.51	5.75
<b>Utah County Library (Bookmobile)</b>	82,069	0.30	\$192,211	\$ 2.34	0.91	0.37
<b>Weber County Library</b>	231,834	2.42	\$6,657,619	\$28.72	8.75	7.75

Source: *Public Library Association Database (Published 2011 for Reference Year 2010)*: [www.plametrics.org](http://www.plametrics.org) and *Public Library Statistics Database (2010)*, Utah State Library website: <http://library.utah.gov/programs/development/statistics/search.html>

Benchmarking is used to identify where an agency stands in comparison with similar organizations. It is useful to determine whether an agency is at the polar ends of a scale or somewhere in the middle and it is especially useful in identifying the reasons that others may be more efficient in performing the same operations. Although helpful, this benchmarking data should be used carefully. Every organization is unique and, consequently, attempts to compare are always imprecise. As a general rule benchmarking data provide information to assist in decision-making processes but should not be used to create formulas or ratios for determining budgeting or staffing allocations.

The Salt Lake City Public Library is different from all the Utah peer libraries in that its service model is a hub and spoke model. That is, it has a large Main Library located in the city center that serves as the hub of the system with five branch libraries as spokes.

The Main Library is 240,000 square feet and the five branches total 62,000 square feet. The Main Library houses a majority of the system's large collection and also includes several large public spaces as well as the Library's administrative and support services. The annual operating and maintenance costs for a large, flagship building are considerably higher per square foot than for single story branches. On the other hand, County libraries, such as the Salt Lake County Library, often have no main library and serve a large geographic area. Their service model is a network of libraries, each of which serves a distinct city or community.

Administrative and support services are often provided from a separate facility not designed to serve the public.

The Salt Lake City Public Library operates six facilities serving a population of 186,440, or one facility for every 31,073 residents. When the two new branches open, there will be one facility for every 23,305 residents. In contrast, the Salt Lake County Library has 19 libraries, or one for every 42,380 residents.

### ***Best Practice Research***

In cooperation with the Library transitional director and the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), the following libraries were chosen because they are nationally recognized for best practices: Ann Arbor, Michigan; San Jose, California; Richland County, South Carolina; and Columbus Metropolitan Library, Ohio.

San Jose, Richland County, and Columbus, like the Salt Lake City Public Library, have been named *Library Journal's* Library of the Year, an award

that recognizes one library each year for a high level of service to its community and for its record of innovation in the industry. Ann Arbor is also known for its use of web technology and its extremely high circulation. All four libraries, like SLCPL, provide services through a main library and a number of branches.

Of these, San Jose is an outlier in several ways. It is the only library that is a municipal department rather than an independent agency governed by a board. It is also the only organization that does not have a dedicated funding source for most of its operating funds. Instead it depends primarily on the City’s general fund supplemented by a time-limited special tax that provides about \$7 per capita. Its main library, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, is also San Jose State University’s library and its public service staffing and its operating costs are shared with the University. Although the King Library was open 7 days per week, the 18 branches were open only 47 hours (or five-and-a-half days) each week in FY 2009-10. San Jose Public Library was chosen by SLCPL as one of the best practice libraries because of its national reputation for efficiency coupled with high use.

Table 2 shows the national peers, their population served, number of registered borrowers and operating expenditures, number of full-time equivalent staff, as well as per capita holdings, circulation, and visits. Again, the Salt Lake City Public Library has the second lowest population served, and the highest holdings and visits per capita, among the peers. Although SLCPL has the second highest operating expenditures, the expenditures are more closely aligned than among the Utah agencies.

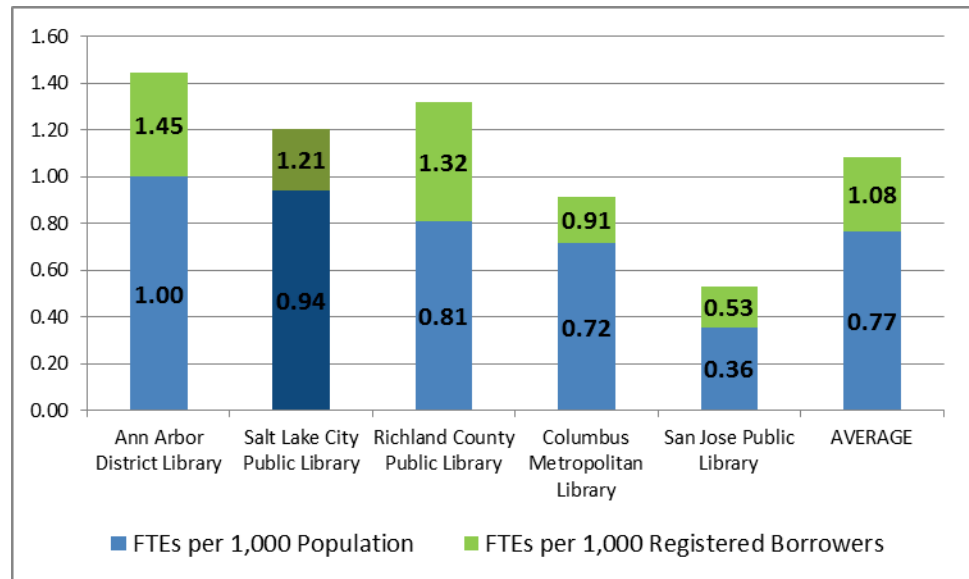
Table 2. Best Practice Library Data

Library	Population Served	Number of Registered Borrowers	Operating Expenditures	Number of Staff (FTE)	Holdings per Capita	Circulation per Capita	Visits per Capita
Salt Lake City Public Library	186,440	146,034	\$12,884,617	176.0	5.17	20.71	20.70
Ann Arbor District Library (Michigan)	155,611	107,801	\$12,382,273	156.0	3.82	57.08	11.36
Columbus Metropolitan Library (Ohio)	850,213	667,162	\$43,639,406	609.0	2.52	17.17	8.24
Richland County Public Library (South Carolina)	320,677	197,526	\$20,568,814	260.3	4.07	12.37	7.64
San Jose Public Library (California)	1,023,083	689,237	\$36,825,525	365.4	2.25	14.58	7.47

Source: Public Library Association Database (Published 2011 for Reference Year 2010): [www.plametrics.org](http://www.plametrics.org) and Public Library Statistics Database (2010)

In terms of staffing, Figure 2 shows that the SLCPL has slightly more full-time equivalent employees per 1,000 population than the average (0.94 FTE compared with 0.77) and is similarly positioned regarding FTEs per registered borrower (1.21 FTE compared with 1.08). The San Jose Public Library is clearly the outlier, with low FTEs in both categories.

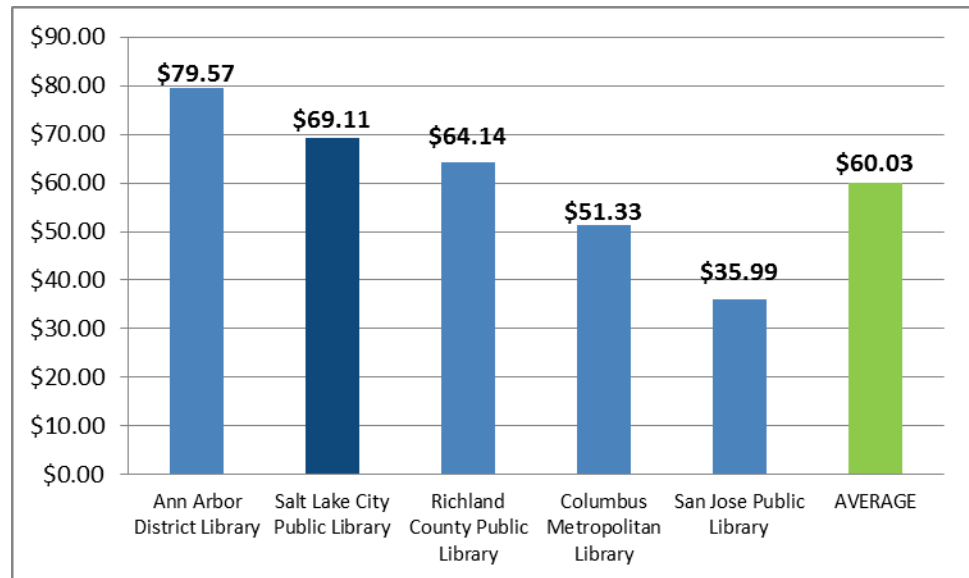
Figure 2. Peer Data on Full-time Equivalent Employees



When best practice libraries' operating expenditures are examined on a per capita basis, Figure 3 shows that SLCPL's operating expenditures per capita were above the average (\$69.11 compared with \$60.03). The San Jose Public Library was significantly lower than the other peers (\$35.99), which lowered the average considerably.

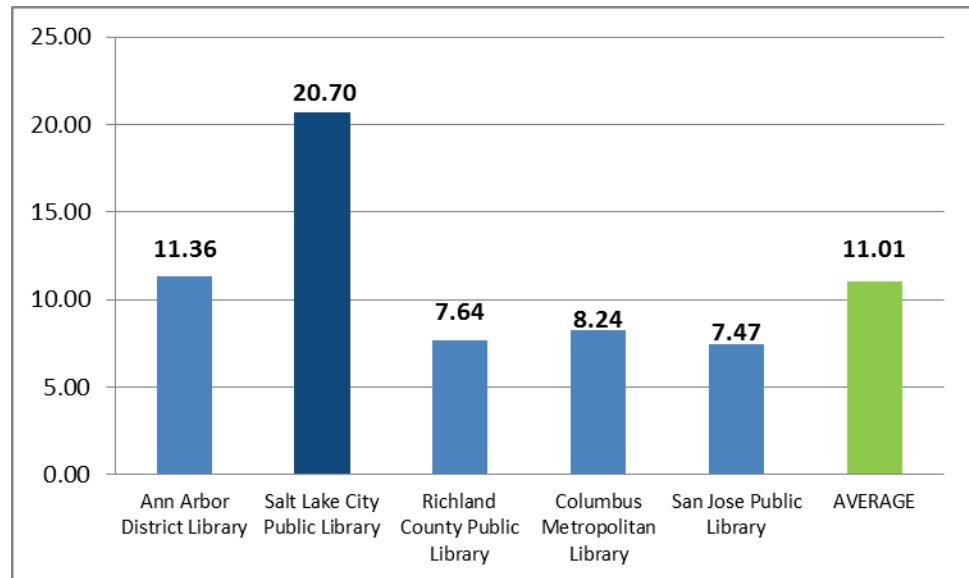


Figure 3. Peer Data on Operating Expenditures per Capita



One potential reason for higher operating expenditures per capita could be the large number of visitors the SLCPL hosts each year. One of the primary cost drivers to operating expenditures is the number of visitors in library facilities. (Other cost drivers are discussed later in this report.) High numbers of visitors translates into increased costs. As Figure 4 shows, the Salt Lake City Public Library has nearly twice the average number of visitors per capita than its peers. Even the Ann Arbor Library, with 11.36 visits per capita, is less than half of SLCPL's total.

Figure 4. Peer Data on Visits per Capita



Management Partners developed a questionnaire that focused on collecting information about best practices in a variety of specific areas included in the performance audit's modified scope of services.

The director of each of the national peer libraries was asked to provide information about their library's governance and funding structure and to refer specific questions about library operations, human resources, and financial management to the appropriate manager. Information received in this manner about best practices is incorporated and referenced throughout this report.

### Cost Drivers

As the comparative data show, SLCPL's costs per capita are much higher than those of the Utah peer libraries but similar to three of the four national best practice libraries. There are several reasons for this.

Operating costs for large, flagship main libraries are substantially greater than those for small- to medium-sized one-story branch libraries. For example, the joint use, nine-story, 445,000 square foot Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library in San Jose currently is budgeted at \$7.10 per square foot per year for utilities, cleaning, maintenance, minor painting and plumbing repairs, elevator and escalator repair and maintenance, exterior and interior window cleaning, and preventive maintenance on the other complex building systems such as HVAC, sprinkler and fire alarms that can protect archival and rare books and other holdings.

In contrast, the branch libraries average 20,000 square feet, and their building operations costs at about \$4.50 per square foot. The branch buildings generally do not have elevators, do not require special equipment to clean windows or replace lights and have much simpler building systems. Utility costs are much lower per square foot than at the main library because it is open fewer hours per week and cleaning crews are in the branches for only a few hours at night. In contrast, main library custodians work through the night, requiring many lights to be on even when the library is closed. The average San Jose branch serves about 270,000 visitors per year compared to the King Library, which serves about 2.3 million visitors. Therefore, the wear and tear at the King Library is substantially greater. Although operating cost data for each SLCPL facility were not available, it is clear that the Main Library is costly to maintain given the number of windows, elevators and other systems in this large, multi-story building.

A related cost factor is total square feet of library space. Salt Lake City Public Library currently maintains 302,000 square feet, with an additional 40,000 to be added when the two new branches are complete. This currently amounts to 1.6 square feet per capita. When the two additional branches are completed SLCPL will total 1.8 square feet for each resident. In comparison, Salt Lake County maintains approximately 378,750 square feet (or .47 square feet per capita).

Another significant cost driver is the number of hours libraries are open each week. The SLCPL Main Library is open seven days per week, a total of 68 hours. Two of the four branches are open 64 hours weekly, including Sundays. The other two branches are open 60 hours over six days per week. In contrast, the Salt Lake County Library branches are all open 60 hours and six days each week.

Employee salaries and the fringe benefits they receive are also one of the major cost drivers in any organization. Evaluating salaries was not part of the scope of this study, as the Library is currently involved in a compensation and classification study. However, the unusually generous amount of paid time off received by employees is another contributor to the operating costs of the Library.

Many SLCPL employees receive 22 days paid vacation from the date they are first employed. These employees are away from work the equivalent of one full working month each year. They are required to use their vacation within the fiscal year. The combination of very generous vacation leave and the need to use it each year by June 30 results in the library having to frequently backfill for vacationing employees.

Twenty-two days of annual vacation at the start of employment is higher than the norm for most libraries. More commonly employees earn two weeks of vacation during the first several years of employment and gradually earn more, receiving three weeks after five or more years. An employee who has completed 20 years of service may accrue 20 days of vacation per year.

As discussed above, the Library's major costs are largely driven by facility operations and maintenance, staffing, and the number of hours of service provided. Together, the Library's generous leave policy coupled with the number of hours and high level of service, account for its operating expenditures.

### ***Focus Groups***

Management Partners conducted three focus groups with a total of 30 employees. One focus group consisted of managers only while two were held with a combination of full- and part-time library staff working in a wide variety of locations, assignments and position classifications. The transitional director sent an email to all library employees inviting participation in one of the focus groups. Many themes expressed by participants in each of the focus groups were similar.

In general, the following themes emerged when employees were asked about what is working well in the Library:

- Things have improved under the transitional director's leadership. There is more transparency and much less fear and distrust of executive management than in the recent past.
- Staff members are proud of the quality customer service they provide.
- Collections are strong and programming for patrons is generally excellent.
- The Library has "awesome" facilities.
- Materials developed by the Communications Department are high quality.
- Employees report good communication with and support from supervisors and managers.

When discussing decision making, several different points of view were expressed.

- Some participants want a return to what they describe as the leadership team (LT) (all of the branch and unit managers with the director and assistant or associate director(s)) making decisions, and relaying them up and down the organization, with policies going to the Library Board for approval.
- Others think it is appropriate that executives get input as needed and make major decisions to move the organization forward.
- Decisions should be made at the lowest level; people should not have to get permission from above for everything.
- The transitional director has been clear and consistent about making decisions and explaining them but managers do not have as much say as in the past.

During the discussion about the Strategic Plan, several themes emerged.

- Implementation of the Plan is done through committees and by the program manager assigned to each outcome, not integrated into the daily work of staff.
- Many focus group participants reported feeling disconnected from the Plan and did not feel they have a role in making it successful.
- Committee meetings and related work take a great deal of time.
- Much of the Strategic Plan implementation has evolved into developing and providing programs for the public; some participants questioned whether there are too many programs, some with little attendance and uneven quality.
- Some participants felt that the Strategic Plan has evolved into a numbers game where program managers seek to report numbers rather than outcomes.
- Measures in the Strategic Plan emphasize quantity rather than quality.
- Some attendees want the Plan to be replaced with an entirely new one soon and want staff to be among those developing it and planning its implementation.

When asked about suggestions for improvement, focus group participants provided the following ideas:

- Staff training and career development need improvement; “people are invested in the library and want the library to be invested in them.”
- More training for staff, including substitutes, is needed regarding policies and procedures for delivering basic services to improve both service quality and consistency.
- Operational issues often take too long to resolve. Examples included furniture replacement taking a year and the time it takes to fill vacant positions.
- Technology upgrades are needed for staff and public.
- Internal communication needs improvement.
- Reinstate the assistant manager positions; branches are open 60 or 64 hours per week with no manager on site during much of that time.
- The Communications Department should seek more input from staff due to its significant role in the organization.
- The Library Board should understand what the staff wants in a new director and should relate to, understand, trust and value the staff.
- Identify skills, degrees, and track records that are needed for promotions so that career paths are clear.
- Provide regular communication from support/administrative services to staff.
- Link the Strategic Plan to the Library’s mission.
- Provide additional services to the general taxpaying public (including better availability of copiers, fax machines, scanners, etc.).
- Hold more get-togethers with administrative support staff and other staff.
- Provide better Board training (by staff) regarding mission and values of the library.
- Provide better support to tenants (i.e., better security, better enforcement of policies in the Urban Room).
- Improve the hiring process so it is faster.

- Develop a decision-making process when the new director is hired (daily, short-term and long-term decisions).
- Stop ignoring problem staff (under-producers).
- Improve technology for the public and staff, including providing technology training for staff.
- Update policies and procedures.
- Volunteer coordination needs attention (and someone to staff it).
- Build a foundation of trust.

## Analysis and Recommendations

The purpose of this performance audit is to provide the City Council with objective information regarding organizational structure, administrative processes and procedures, operations, costs, and policies in the Salt Lake City Public Library System. The results are organized in three primary sections below.

- Organizational Culture, Climate and Structure
- Administrative and Support Services
- Library Operations

### ***Organizational Culture, Climate and Structure***

There have been significant improvements in morale and in the organizational culture since the transitional leader and her deputy assumed their roles in November 2011. Participants in each of the three focus group stated there is now more transparency and less fear and distrust of executive management than was experienced with the previous leader. However, in interviews and focus groups it became clear there is still considerable hurt and anger on the part of staff, managers, and Board members. It has been about eight months since the resignation of the former Library director. It takes time to heal and rebuild trust and respect.

The transitional director clearly articulated her decision-making practices early in her tenure. She informed library staff in an email that some decisions would be made at the executive level and that in some, but not all of those cases, she would seek input from managers or others in the organization. Managers and staff seem to have accepted changes that the transitional director has made or recommended to the Library Board. Some of these are changes the former director attempted to make but were met with strong internal resistance.

Management Partners heard concerns expressed by City Council members, Library Board members, and Library executive team members that staff may be accepting the decision-making style and the decisions of



the transitional director because she is temporary. Her management style and practices are consistent with those of effective executives and aim to move the organization ahead in a timely, efficient and effective manner. Managers and employees are asked for ideas and input to decisions. Interviewees suggested that once a permanent director is in place, staff will once again expect to be deeply engaged in discussing every change and assume that decisions will not be made without the agreement of most of the Leadership Team.

The specific concern is that a new director, with direction and support from the Library Board, will begin making changes that staff will resist. If that were to happen, history could repeat itself. The community's confidence in the ability of the Library Board, the Library director, and the library staff to work together with the goal of providing the very best library service would be severely eroded. The Library's ability to meet the needs of the community as well as its reputation as a leading provider of informational, educational and cultural services could be jeopardized.

### **Decision Making**

At the heart of these concerns is the past practice (or perceived past practice) of the long-time Library director bringing every decision to the Leadership Team for discussion and not moving forward without substantial agreement. Managers acknowledged that this director sometimes made decisions contrary to their collective opinion. Some interviewees also indicated that the director was able to adroitly obtain agreement to her preferred option or solution.

Nonetheless, the expectation of some Leadership Team members is that it should be (and has been in the past) the key decision-making body. Participants in one of the focus groups said the Leadership Team should make the decisions and communicate them up and down the organization, and that the Library Board would then adopt any related policies. A number of managers hope to return to the past practice when nearly every decision was discussed with them. These managers expressed that their input should be a primary factor in making decisions. Focus group participants described this as "the democratic way" or "participative management."

Although this management practice engaged all managers in discussing issues, changes and initiatives, Management Partners was told that the resulting decisions were neither timely nor bold. The result was often analysis paralysis. A great library cannot rest on its laurels; it must continually strive to live up to its reputation as an innovative, highly

responsive organization. That is difficult if not impossible to accomplish if decisions are made by an entire group of mid-managers.

For example, several focus group participants made it clear that some employees and managers are unhappy to see more of the Library's collections budget go to e-books and other digital resources. They would prefer that nearly all the funding continue to be for print and physical audio/visual materials. The demand for digital materials is growing rapidly and some libraries are striving to meet that demand and position their services and collections for the future by allocating considerably higher proportions of their budgets to acquiring e-resources. SLCPL is also moving in that direction but would not have done so if a consensus of the Leadership Team had been required.

All of the national peer libraries benchmarked for purposes of determining library best practices indicate that the governing body (a Library Board in three cases, a City Council in the fourth) sets policy. In the three cases with a Library Board, the Board sets the strategic direction and vision. The Library director, with input from the executive team, implements the strategic direction and makes major decisions about library operations. The Library director also develops, recommends, and monitors budgets. The management team (and individual managers and their teams) executes annual tactical plans and operations.

The directors from other agencies describe their management structures as collaborative, with myriad ways for staff to provide input and participate in cross-functional teams. Directors or other executives meet with the management group to solve problems and communicate decisions. Standing and ad hoc committees develop new programs and services that result from the strategic direction or plan and conduct staff development and training activities. Periodic all-staff meetings provide opportunities to learn about strategic initiatives and allow staff to ask the director questions.

All of the libraries indicated that employees have many opportunities to be involved in task forces or committees that develop recommendations or make operational decisions. For example, the Ann Arbor District Library director stated that she has appointed numerous cross-departmental teams that have specific charges and budgets and are empowered to make decisions and take action. Executives in the San Jose Public Library give direction to a Collection Development Advisory Committee that is then empowered to allocate the annual materials budget among the various formats, age levels, and languages.

However, none of the best practice libraries give the group of mid-managers primary decision-making responsibility.

They rely instead on a policy-making board as well as a director who frequently, but not always, seeks input from managers and staff and who ultimately makes decisions and develops strategies based on the information he or she has gathered.

The current decision-making processes implemented by the transitional director and the opportunities for SLCPL library managers and staff to participate by sharing ideas and providing input are in line with those of the best practice libraries.

**Recommendation 1. Clarify decision-making roles of the Library Board, library director, executive leadership team and line managers.**

Table 3 below provides suggested decision-making roles.

*Table 3. Decision-Making Roles*

<b>Library Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes policy decisions</li> <li>Supervises the executive director</li> <li>Establishes the vision of the library</li> <li>Establishes the strategic direction</li> <li>Approves budget</li> </ul>
<b>Executive Director</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides leadership to fulfill the vision, mission and strategic direction</li> <li>Makes decisions about library operations (in concert with Board policies)</li> <li>Recommends the budget and monitors expenses throughout the year</li> <li>Develops long-term capital and operating budgets and plans</li> <li>Oversees community relations</li> </ul>
<b>Executive Leadership Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes decisions about daily library operations</li> <li>Assists the director in fulfilling the vision and mission</li> <li>Provides specialized management expertise in substantive areas</li> <li>Communicates with mid-level managers</li> <li>Assures budget accountability</li> <li>Assures mid-level managers are accountable for their operations</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completes specific assignments</li> <li>Communicates with direct reports</li> <li>Participates in system-wide committees</li> <li>Provides ideas about improvements in library service</li> </ul>

**Recommendation 2. Frame discussions with the Leadership Team about ideas, policies, major operational changes, budget, or other decisions so it is clear the decision-making process will be predicated on listening to opinions, but the Library director will make the final decision.** The transitional director is currently implementing this recommendation.

### **Implementation of the Strategic Plan**

The Library Board supports the Strategic Plan and is open to modifying it based on the organization's experience with implementation. Concerns about some of the measures in the Strategic Plan were raised by staff and several Board members. Implementation of the plan is unusual because of the large staffing resource devoted to implementation. Although it was intended as a three-year plan, it has been extended at least one more year until a permanent director is hired.

For example, ELT and LT members question the efficacy of the outcome measures for several reasons. They are concerned there are too many measures, too many are quantitative not qualitative, data for some are not available, and as a whole, the measures do not adequately show progress toward achieving outcomes. In addition, according to the input received by Management Partners, the quantitative annual goals are unrealistically high. As a result, staff members are anxiously chasing numbers (e.g., number of programs), rather than focusing on quality.

Many of the objectives in the Plan are so broad that it is difficult to translate them into action. For example, an objective in the "Exploring New Ideas" outcome is "The Library is a place that sparks curiosity and an interest in learning something new." The Board may want staff to develop goals and strategies that are more specific and have a narrower focus to ensure progress can be measured.

**Recommendation 3. Engage program managers, the Leadership Team and ELT members in identifying proposed modifications to the Strategic Plan measures.** The director can then present proposed modifications to the Board for its approval. This is currently being implemented.

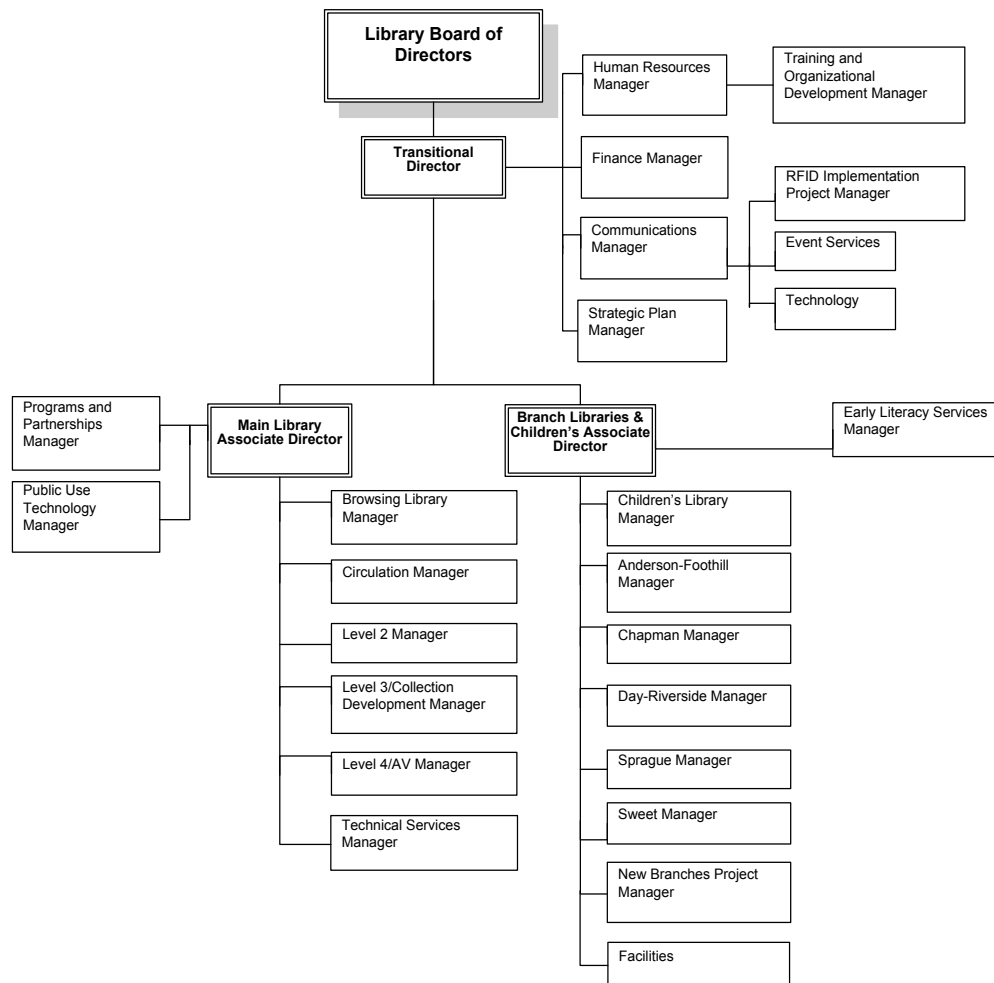
## **Management Structure and Staffing**

A parallel organizational structure was developed to implement the Strategic Plan with an outcome leader (now called a program manager) assigned to each of the plan's outcomes. Initially, the outcome leaders were to drive the implementation of their assigned outcome in all aspects of library service. For example, the "Enjoying Life" outcome leader would drive collections, outreach, partnerships, customer service, programming, etc. in this area. However, their time and effort, and that of the staff committees that work with them, now seem to be more narrowly focused on programming for the public.

Although this parallel structure ensured that considerable resources are dedicated to the Strategic Plan, it also separated the implementation from unit and branch managers who remain responsible for daily operations but are not directly connected to the Plan. This is a significant barrier to integrating the Strategic Plan into staff members' daily work and to holding all managers accountable for implementation.

Some program managers expressed concern about whether their positions will continue when a new Strategic Plan is developed. They also struggle to find the time to participate in Leadership Team meetings, branch manager meetings, and Main Library manager meetings. However, if they do not attend, they miss important information and cannot align their activities with that of other managers. Figure 5 below shows the organizational structure Management Partners recommends. Further discussion about the new assignments follows.

Figure 5. Recommended Organizational Structure



By reorganizing implementation of the Strategic Plan and the program manager positions, more staff will become engaged in achieving the Plan's goals and in doing so will share accountability for results. In addition, resources will be utilized more efficiently.

Management Partners is not recommending any cuts in staffing. The current number of positions is appropriate, especially since two new branches are in process. However, we are not suggesting the current incumbents are necessarily the best fit for each position, as they may or may not have the skill sets needed to fulfill the new roles recommended in this report. The transition from the current program manager positions should be made carefully. All affected staff should be incorporated into the organization in the appropriate positions and levels.

A new Strategic Plan manager position should be responsible for coordinating implementation across the library system and for developing, maintaining and sharing progress reports with the library director, managers, committees and the ELT. An annual work plan should be developed and shared with all staff, with specific accountability for execution by managers included in their annual performance evaluations.

Recently, with the implementation of the Strategic Plan, programming responsibilities have been disbursed among a number of program managers. A more efficient method and one that will help assure consistency throughout the organization is to assign this function to a single Strategic Plan manager. The manager would work with existing staff committees to implement the goals in the Strategic Plan, including helping spearhead related programming and process improvements. In addition, the position could have responsibility for coordinating, developing and nurturing partnerships with other agencies and community groups.

**Recommendation 4. Designate implementation responsibility and accountability to a Strategic Plan manager who will work in concert with all managers and staff committees (using an annual work plan) to realize the Strategic Plan goals.**

The Ensuring Early Literacy program manager (whose title could simply become manager of early literacy services) would focus on coordinating system-wide services to young children and their families and to early care and education providers throughout the City. That position could also ensure that children's librarians are kept up to date with research and best practices in the area of early childhood development and library services for families with young children.

Similarly, the Achieving Organizational Excellence program manager should assume the role of training and organizational development manager, continuing to report to the human resources manager. The need for ongoing training and staff development is becoming more acute in the current library climate of extremely rapid change. Skill sets need constant upgrading and refreshing.

**Recommendation 5. Convert the Ensuring Early Learning and Achieving Organizational Excellence program manager positions into ongoing management**

**positions to ensure that these important functions are integrated into the library organization.**

Many libraries are starting to move from simply providing computers and some training in using the internet and other information resources to providing “creative commons” or “media labs” which provide equipment, software, and training for library users to access existing media and digital resources and to create their own digital content. The Skokie (Illinois) Public Library opened its digital media lab in 2009<sup>3</sup> and many other libraries are following suit. The San Jose Public Library, one of the best practice peer libraries, is planning similar installations in buildings now being built or planned.

Salt Lake City Public Library will have an opportunity to incorporate such a space in the two new branches now being planned and could begin to plan for one at the Main Library and at some or all of the current branches.

**Recommendation 6. Convert the Accessing Technology manager position to Public Use Technology Training manager.** Several best practices libraries have similar positions to provide training to patrons and assist them with the use of digital media.

One important undertaking, the radio-frequency identification (RFID) project, requires careful planning and management to ensure the desired results of much more efficient materials handling and inventory control. This will increase the capacity of the library to deliver its direct services to library users and to efficiently operate two additional branches. A full-time project manager during the planning and implementation phases is a key element to successfully managing the changes that will accompany the use of this technology.

**Recommendation 7. Assign a project manager responsibility for implementing RFID.**

With two new branches in the planning stage, another project manager could coordinate the opening day collections, ensure that both new branches are designed for efficient flow of materials and materials handling technology, coordinate procurement of furnishings and

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.skokie.lib.il.us/s\\_about/How/Tech\\_Resources/DML.asp](http://www.skokie.lib.il.us/s_about/How/Tech_Resources/DML.asp)



equipment, etc. under the direction of the associate director for branch and children's services.

As the new branches prepare to open and their projects are complete, these project managers could move into other positions, including possibly branch manager at these or other facilities. Doing so would help minimize the additional operating costs for the new branches.

**Recommendation 8. Assign a project manager to provide assistance to the associate director for branch libraries in planning for the design and operations of the two new branch libraries.**

The Library formerly had an additional level of management that included assistant managers for library branches and for public service units at the Main Library. These positions were eliminated as part of the reorganization that also created the outcome lead (now program manager) position. As part of the review of the Library's organization structure, Management Partners considered whether the assistant manager classification should be reinstated. Based on best practices, we feel it is not necessary since a Librarian-in-Charge program is in place.

## ***Administrative and Support Services***

### **Human Resources**

Having an experienced human resources professional manage this function has provided the library with the ability to bring its human resources policies and procedures to the standards needed by a public organization of its size and importance. For example, changes in the hiring and promotion process have been made to more effectively evaluate applicants and establish top candidates from which a selection is made by the hiring manager. This ensures that hiring decisions are based on objective criteria relating to qualifications rather than personal relationships. In addition, the Library has the opportunity to utilize the City's HR system, which will result in better information than is currently available and may allow HR processes to be streamlined.

Some focus group participants expressed concern that the HR function may be understaffed. Participants commented that the hiring process is very slow and some candidates are lost as a result. Others noted that responsiveness to emails and phone calls from HR is sometimes slow. In addition, volunteer coordination is a function assigned to HR but current staffing and other duties and responsibilities have resulted in little

support for an active volunteer program. Several process improvements to HR are planned including utilizing the City's HR system. These improvements will have an impact on HR staff workload and it may be wise to analyze HR staffing levels once improvements are in place.

The current organization structure includes several positions not typically found in other libraries, which are all related to the implementation of the Strategic Plan. When these positions are excluded, the staffing patterns assigned to each department and branch and the utilization of full- and part-time staff in SLCPL is comparable to the best practice libraries.

### **Employee Handbook and Orientation**

Focus group participants are looking forward to the completion of the employee handbook. All staff should receive an orientation and training so they are familiar with the policies in the handbook. Many focus group participants commented that the new employee orientation they received mainly dealt with completing paperwork. Providing an orientation along with the new handbook can reinforce behaviors and attitudes that are expected of employees.

**Recommendation 9. Introduce the new handbook to current staff through workshops so that all become familiar with its contents.**

**Recommendation 10. Redesign the orientation process for new employees to include basic information about policies, procedures, and expectations in addition to completing the required forms.**

### **Problem Resolution Best Practices**

The scope of work for this performance audit included an analysis of best practices in problem resolution. San Jose Public Library is a City department and most of its employees are represented by unions. The employee grievance procedures are stipulated in written memoranda of agreements (MOAs).

Richland County, Columbus Metropolitan Library and Ann Arbor District Library all are independent agencies with a governing board. Their employees are not represented by unions. In these three libraries, the library director has the responsibility for managing staff, including establishing any grievance procedures. None of them reported having a policy regarding staff concerns about the director's performance. One

director reported that she has recently instituted a 360-degree evaluation process so that her Board chair will receive comments about her performance from direct reports and some indirect reports.

The SLCPL transitional director is developing a grievance procedure in the event there is a grievance against the library director. It will be provided to the Board for their review and approval.

### **Use of Substitute Librarians**

Concern was expressed by Council members and Library Board members about retired managers working at the branches or main library units they formerly managed. Use of substitutes is a common practice in many libraries because it is an efficient way to provide public services during staff absences or vacancies.

However, the practice of hiring managers to work as substitutes in the same location they previously managed is not common and should be discontinued. All best practice peer libraries indicated they use substitutes to fill public service desk shifts when employees are absent or a position is vacant. Although some may be retired employees, they reported that retired managers rarely if ever return to work as substitutes for line staff. Currently only one retired manager is working as a substitute in the Salt Lake City Public Library system.

**Recommendation 11. Preclude retired managers from working as substitutes in the units or branches they formerly supervised.**

### **Interim Staffing**

During the focus groups, some concern was expressed about providing interim staff for situations in which a manager is on an extended absence or a position is otherwise temporarily vacant. It was unclear if this arose because of a specific recent occurrence or is of general concern. Regardless, a best management practice is to appoint an acting manager when a position is vacant for an extended period.

**Recommendation 12. Appoint an acting manager when a management position is temporarily vacant due to an extended absence or vacancy. This is currently underway.**

## Performance Evaluations

In the past, Library employees were at-will employees. This has been recently changed to align with the policies of other local public agencies. This change in status from at-will employees makes it important that managers are able to effectively identify poor performance and employ improvement techniques as needed. Focus group participants noted that, as in any organization, there are some poor performers and performance management is an area that needs improvement.

The HR manager is developing a new performance evaluation system. Managers will need to be trained to use the new system and to be held accountable for doing so. Staff members will need to know the policies and systems as well as the potential rewards and consequences of their performance.

**Recommendation 13. Update and improve the current performance evaluation system.** This is currently underway.

**Recommendation 14. Train managers in techniques for evaluating performance, use of the new performance evaluation system, and the use of progressive discipline.** Ensure that managers are accountable for using the system.

## Employee Suggestions

The scope of services for this audit included analyzing best practices for employee suggestion programs. The SLCPL transitional director currently maintains a regularly scheduled open door office hour during which any staff member can bring to her attention any ideas, suggestions or concerns. Management Partners surveyed the best practice libraries about their own employee suggestion programs and processes. Only two reported having a formal program.

The City of San Jose, of which the library is a department, has a web-based program called "e-Ideas." Employees submit their ideas or suggestions for service improvements or efficiencies. Any City employee who wishes to do so rates the ideas online each month. Ideas receiving the most favorable ratings from other employees are forwarded to the applicable department for evaluation and comment. Ideas accepted for implementation by the e-Ideas committee based on favorable ratings by their peers and by executive management of affected departments are

recognized through small, nonmonetary awards. For example, one employee recently received two tickets to a San Jose Sharks hockey game as a reward for suggesting a way to streamline mileage reimbursement.

The Richland County Library has an employee suggestion program called "Bright Ideas." Any staff member with an idea to improve services or efficiencies can send them directly to the library director using a form on the library intranet. All Bright Ideas are recognized during the library's annual staff education day and a few earn a trophy for the "Best and Brightest."

### **Email Usage**

This audit's scope of services also included researching information about libraries' practices regarding staff use of library email. The best practice libraries have policies regarding either employee use of email specifically or a general policy regarding employee use of library equipment, including computers and software. Use of library-owned equipment and use of paid time to comment on the actions or performance of other library employees is not permitted.

Richland County's policy states "Employees should not request or permit the use of library-owned equipment, materials, property, or services for personal convenience or profit." The Richland County Library also has a Staff Social Networking Policy. It states "All existing policies and employee behavior guidelines in the Employee Handbook apply to any online activity." And "Use good judgment. Behavior, opinions, and materials posted reflect on the Library and its reputation. What is posted will be viewed and archived and should represent RCPL in the most professional manner."

The City of San Jose has a policy regarding use of email, Internet services and other electronic media that applies to the San Jose Library as well as all other city departments. It prohibits the use of the city email system or city computers for any personal or other nonbusiness purpose.

The SLCPL recently adopted a policy on the use of email, Internet service and other electronic media by staff. It is consistent with the best practices of the libraries in this study.

**Recommendation 15. Include the recently adopted policy on the use of email, Internet service and other electronic media by staff in the employee handbook.** This is currently underway.

## **Benefit Payments for Retirees**

The SLCPL provides retirees with 15 or more years of service with financial assistance for health insurance. Until they turn 65, they receive a subsidy of \$250 per month to partially pay their costs of 102% of the actual premium during the first eighteen months. After that, until they are eligible for Medicare, they are charged 130% of the premium and continue to receive the subsidy. After enrolling in Medicare, retirees are required to enroll in the PEHP Medicare supplement plan and continue to receive a \$100 per month subsidy.

At retirement, employees receive a cash payout equivalent to 25% of their sick leave balance. The sick leave payout practice is in line with that of many libraries.

Only three of the best practices libraries provided information about retiree health insurance benefits. Ann Arbor Library District does not provide any post-retirement health insurance benefits. Richland County Library currently provides fully paid health and dental insurance for retirees under age 65 that have 15 or more years of continuous full time employment. The Richland County Library reserves the right to amend, alter, or make exceptions to the plan or coverage. Retirees pay any premiums for dependent coverage. Effective July 1, 2012, retirees eligible for Medicare will receive a library-funded Health Reimbursement Account to help offset the cost of a supplemental plan.

San Jose also pays retiree health insurance costs for those with 15 years of full time employment. For those under 65 years of age, the City pays 100% of the City's lowest cost plan for the employee and any eligible dependents. At age 65, retirees and dependents are enrolled in Medicare and can choose a supplemental plan paid by the City. Currently, the City is planning to contract for a new lower cost, lesser benefit plan that will become the 100% paid plan. Those individuals wanting a higher level of coverage will pay the difference. The City also plans to gradually increase the number of years of service for eligibility for health insurance to 20 years.

## **Information Technology**

The management and maintenance of the Library's information technology infrastructure has recently been contracted to the City of Salt Lake City. The Library will make decisions about products, applications and resources that will be installed and maintained by the City's IT staff. Library IT staff have already transitioned to city employment.

Many of the focus group participants indicated the Library's small IT unit had been unable to keep up with the workload of maintaining the library computers and systems or with the many new products and tools available to improve the Library network's effectiveness and efficiency. They were optimistic about the level of service that would be forthcoming from the new contractual arrangement with the city.

### **Finance**

The Library has experienced turnover in the finance manager position in the last few years. The position was vacant for a time and was filled in April. The current finance manager has a good grasp on the full range of systems, policies and procedures needed to manage the Library's finances and budget and has begun to review them. These include contracting, tracking revenues, monitoring budgets and other functions expected of the position. As she gains experience with the current practices, she may recommend changes in policies and procedures to the Library director.

### **Contracting**

The scope of work for this project included collecting information about best practices regarding establishing contracts. These include obtaining multiple bids or proposals for contracts over a set amount, using a consistent contracting form, identifying a limited number of individuals with authority to sign contracts, and encumbering funds in the budget system when a contract is executed. All of these are current practices of the Library. In addition, the new finance manager has developed a new contracting form and method for ensuring that funds are encumbered when a contract is signed.

### **Revenues**

This audit's scope of services included assessing revenue sources such as fines and fees, fees for service, rental space, fundraising and potential options to diversify revenue in the future. The primary reason libraries charge overdue fines is to encourage patrons to return items so that others can borrow them. Fees for lost or damaged materials are generally set by SLCPL and other libraries to recover the replacement costs and handling costs for payment. SLCPL's schedule of fines and fees is in line with those of most other libraries.

The Main Library has wonderful meeting spaces in a variety of sizes. Rental rates vary according to a schedule that includes after-hour use, the specific room being rented, time of day, and the category of users (non-profit and government, commercial, etc.) and type of meeting or event (open or closed to the public). The Library is also fortunate to have rental spaces in the Shops at Library Square. The relatively small size of these rental spaces coupled with the lack of foot traffic other than from library visitors is a drawback to charging high rents. Some of the tenants are community organizations whose missions are compatible with the Library's and help to make the building a center of literacy and learning.

SLCPL is fortunate to have a very active and successful Friends of the Library organization. It holds used book sales and runs a gift shop on Library Square. It is a non-profit organization and makes substantial gifts to the library in support of its mission and programs. The Library's website solicits financial donations and gifts in honor of and in memory of individuals.

In the future, the Library may want to consider establishing a foundation to raise funds from corporate donors and philanthropic individuals and foundations as well as from planned giving and bequests. Three of the four best practice libraries have an affiliated library foundation, a separate 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Ann Arbor Library District does not have a foundation, but it is itself a 501(c)(3) organization. All of the best practice libraries have active Friends of the Library groups.

Libraries establish foundations for a number of reasons. Often an organization that may grant funds for a library program, building or other purpose is restricted under their own rules from making grants to government organizations. Some libraries want to bring a more professional approach to fundraising and recognize that a foundation with development staff and board members who are enthusiastic and well-connected fundraisers will achieve that. Friends groups are often happy to raise funds through used book sales but do not want to engage in grant writing, capital campaigns, planned giving, major fundraising solicitations, etc.

We do not recommend starting a foundation or even undertaking a foundation feasibility study at this time. When a new library director is hired and has established relationships in the community, he or she may want to work with the Library Board to evaluate whether starting a foundation for the Salt Lake City Public Library is a good idea.



## Communications Function

Having a communications professional leading the communications unit has resulted in good-looking print and web-based communications and recent improvements to the Library's website as well as better, more consistent relationships with the media. During the focus groups, some staff expressed concern that the communications function has rigid requirements for lead times and that requested changes to the website are not always implemented. They also commented about the longer lead times that are needed to publicize library programs and events when the marketing materials and program information are disseminated more broadly than simply at the libraries. However, the lead time is currently a very reasonable two months and the department now has a full-time position ensuring that publicity for specific programs is directed to the appropriate audiences and media.

Some staff members also indicated the communications manager should work for them to publicize library events and handle media relations. Although these are among the responsibilities of the communications department, its role is much larger than that.

Employees need help to understand that the communications function reports to the director and the manager serves on the ELT because it is strategically important to position the Library as an essential service now and in the future. ELT members can make a concerted effort to explain the strategic role of communications.

A staff advisory committee could provide feedback to the communications manager and committee members could become advocates to Library staff as they learn more about the importance of the function in its broader role and of the roles played by the positions in the department.

**Recommendation 16. Establish a staff Communications Advisory Team to provide input to the communications manager.** Committee members could also play a role in conveying the importance of the function in the public library setting.

We also inquired about communication between the associate directors and their direct reports. There seems to be good formal communication with regular staff meetings and one-on-one meetings scheduled appropriately. However, some managers expressed disappointment that the LT group is not being used the way it once was.

Formerly, the Leadership Team met with the director and ELT members two times each month. That has been changed to one meeting a month. Branch managers also have monthly meetings with their associate director as do Main Library managers with their associate director.

Focus group participants also commented that minutes or notes of the LT and ELT meetings are infrequently posted.

**Recommendation 17. Distribute a summary of key decisions following each ELT and LT meeting to keep staff informed.**

Library branch and unit managers' ability to perform their jobs are to a considerable degree dependent on the services they receive as customers of the support functions. These include facilities maintenance, IT, HR, finance and communications. It is a best practice for organizations to conduct regular customer surveys for support services that are provided in-house or by contract to identify improvements.

**Recommendation 18. Develop a customer service survey for internal services (HR, IT, finance, facilities maintenance and communication) to annually solicit feedback about what is working well and what could be improved.**

### **Facilities Maintenance and Capital Planning**

Salt Lake City Public Library currently has five branches of varying ages and the large flagship Main Library to maintain and keep in good repair. The Main Library is a source of great pride in the community and is one of the city's architectural masterpieces. The Main Library is 240,000 square feet and the branches total 62,000 square feet. The buildings are heavily used with an estimated 3.9 million visitors per year. All are open either six or seven days per week. Two additional branches of around 20,000 square feet each are now being planned. Building and grounds maintenance are performed both by in-house staff and through contracts for specialized services such as elevator maintenance and repair.

While touring the branch libraries and the Main Library, Management Partners' project team members observed that buildings and grounds appear to be clean and well maintained. However, focus group participants expressed concern about the difficulty of getting maintenance and repairs completed in a timely manner. Examples included light bulb replacement, repairs to a brick façade, and a variety of

other minor and major issues. They also indicated it is difficult to get status reports on outstanding work orders.

An online work order system could provide status reports on demand for the branch and unit managers and provide the facilities manager and staff with information they need. Such systems track preventive maintenance schedules, workload, expenditures, equipment repair rates, and other important measures to enable facilities management to be accomplished in the most efficient and timely way possible.

**Recommendation 19. Obtain a work order management system that will enable staff to enter service requests online and provide status reports on pending work.** This is currently underway.

The Main Library's infrastructure requires careful planning for both building management and planning for future operating and capital budgets. It is important to anticipate and plan for the future replacement of the building systems and components (HVAC, roofs, carpets and flooring, lighting, elevators, etc.) for the Main Library. Similar planning is needed for each of the branches.

The maintenance manager provided a detailed list (completed in Microsoft Word or Excel) of capital projects planned for FY 2012-13, by branch, as well as HVAC replacement needs. An automated system would be more efficient but the manager appears to be well aware of the maintenance needs of the Library.

Preventive maintenance is key to assuring the building systems last as long as possible. Therefore, maintenance must also be planned for both management and budgeting purposes. The same is true for IT systems and fleet management, although their life cycles are shorter than those related to building systems. A schedule of preventative maintenance and systems replacement will provide important information for the maintenance manager, finance manager, and Library director so adequate resources can be planned as budgets are prepared.

**Recommendation 20. Develop a five-year capital budget plan in addition to the annual capital budget to plan for capital infrastructure maintenance, repair, and replacement in the context of overall budget planning.**

**Recommendation 21. Develop a multi-year replacement and maintenance plan that identifies maintenance schedules and costs to maintain, repair, or replace the**

**Library's building systems, fleet and equipment.** The plan should include schedules for painting high traffic areas, window cleaning, etc., and a life cycle analysis for major building systems to identify anticipated replacement dates and costs.

### ***Library Operations***

Like many other library governing bodies, SLCPL's Board must balance a multitude of services and needs within a financial picture that is close to a zero sum game. The Board has been fortunate that even during the Great Recession, the Library's revenues (the great majority of which comes from property taxes) have remained fairly stable. However, property values are not expected to increase greatly in the future and the library's property tax rate, set annually by the City Council, is nearing the maximum allowed by state law.

Increased demands on the Library's budget will include capital maintenance and replacement costs to maintain the facilities (soon to be seven) and their associated furniture and equipment; the cost of purchasing and licensing library materials, including print, audio/visual and digital formats; and the need to attract and retain first rate staff. The operating costs of two additional branches expected to come on line in the next few years will stretch resources even more. Therefore, the Library needs to be both effective and efficient to continue providing the high levels of direct service that are so valued by the community.

### **Radio Frequency Identification and Materials Handling Technology**

The Library is already planning to use technological tools to improve efficiency and enhance its services and the management of its physical collection. As noted before, it is planning to implement radio frequency identification (RFID) technology at all facilities. Automated sorting at the Main Library and two of the branches is also planned to improve materials handling and provide simple, reliable customer self-service for materials check out and returns. The two new branches will also have automated sorting equipment.

The Library has also recently subscribed to CollectionHQ, a collection analysis and management tool. These and other technologies have great promise for helping staff be more efficient and provide better service to library users by shortening the time to re-shelve items, processing holds

and inter-library loans more quickly, allowing patrons to easily check out and return materials themselves, and providing improved inventory and collection management.

Some libraries are investing considerable money and staff time in implementing these technologies and are not seeing the staff efficiencies they expected. This can be caused by a lack of workflow improvements that take advantage of the technology as well as insufficient planning for the retraining and redeployment of staff resources.

**Recommendation 22. Carefully plan implementation of RFID and automated sorting with the end in mind: to free staff resources to provide value-added services to users in person or virtually.** The Library should consider using the services of a library technology consultant to assist in developing or reviewing the implementation plan and expectations for results. This is currently underway.

Library collection management requires selecting and acquiring new materials, as well as frequently and comprehensively reviewing the existing collection and removing materials that are outdated, in poor condition, or no longer in demand. The library term for this process is “weeding.” Many studies have shown that weeding a collection actually results in increased circulation because patrons can more readily find the items they want when the shelves are less full.

The conversion to RFID means that every circulating item in the collection will require a tag (about \$.20 for a print item and up to \$.50 for an audio/visual item) plus the labor cost of applying the tag. These costs can be avoided for items that should be removed from the collection. Therefore, to be most efficient, discarding materials prior to or as part of the RFID conversion process is essential.

**Recommendation 23. Initiate a project to review the collection and discard outdated materials, items in poor condition, and items no longer in high demand to avoid the cost of converting them to RFID.**

### **National Trends Regarding Digital Content and Traditional Formats**

Reader demand for e-books and other e-resources has skyrocketed in the past 24 months. SLCPL, like many other libraries, is responding by purchasing more digital content and reducing expenditures for print materials and physical audio-visual items. Some libraries are

experiencing a drop in demand for print materials at the same time that demand for e-resources is rapidly increasing.

The readers are ahead of the publishers, however. Some of the major publishers will not sell e-books to libraries or charge libraries far more than the list price of the print version. In addition, several models for accessing e-content have emerged from the e-book vendors.

With demand rapidly increasing and a marketplace that is in flux, public libraries are providing a variety of digital content and methods of using it. Even in this rapidly changing and complex market, libraries are proceeding to purchase more digital content and also are helping patrons using e-readers and accessing the library's content. SLCPL's actions in this regard are in line with that of other large libraries.

### **Cataloging and Processing**

The Library's Technical Services Department is responsible for ordering materials, cataloging and processing newly acquired items, adding records of electronic holdings to the catalog, and maintaining the catalog. The elapsed time from receipt of new materials until they are ready for patron use averages five or six weeks. Items with patron requests are expedited and made available quickly.

Although this is comparatively prompt, turnaround time could be considerably improved by using vendor-supplied cataloging and processing for many materials. The vendor that supplies the book or other item also provides cataloging data, covers and labels, including RFID tags and bar codes as specified by the library. The item arrives at the library ready for patron use in a few days, cutting weeks off the elapsed time from date of order until it reaches the shelf.

This service is not available for all materials. Language materials purchased from smaller vendors and some audio/visual items, as well as items purchased directly from publishers or specialized vendors, have to be cataloged and processed by library staff. However, the technical services workload would decrease and some staff may be redeployed to direct public service to fill vacancies.

Many libraries have found that costs are low (often lower than when done in-house) and items are on the shelves very quickly. One of the national peer libraries, San Jose Public Library, is currently paying \$3.85 per print item and about \$5.50 per audio/visual item for cataloging and processing from its primary vendor. Salt Lake City Public Library has

obtained an estimate from that same vendor of \$5.10 per book and \$7.35 per audio/visual item.

The difference in cost is attributable to the fact that the SLCPL assigns lengthy Dewey decimal numbers and complex Cutter numbers (the line of letters and numbers beneath the Dewey number) in order to place each title in a unique location on the shelves. No two titles have the exact same classification numbers. This practice was once common among libraries but is now much less so. As a result, the vendor needs to customize the cataloging for each item to reflect this local practice (just as is currently done by Library staff), thereby adding to its costs.

The call numbers assigned by the Library's catalogers for adult fiction and non-fiction are unnecessarily long. Although intended to make it easier for patrons to locate items on the shelf and for shelvers to replace them, staff reports that patrons are often confused as they try to locate a title. For example, the Library's call number for the title *Indomitable Will, LBJ in the Presidency* by Mark K. Updegrove is 973.923092 U66. This nonfiction book was given the same lengthy call number only by Columbus Metropolitan Library. Richland County placed it in a Biography section, under Johnson, as did Ann Arbor. San Jose gave it the call number 973.923 Johnson.

The call number for the fiction title, *Calico Joe*, by John Grisham is fic G86895 cal. By comparison, the national best practice peers all assigned the Grisham book the simple term Fiction Grisham. Shelvers are trained to group fiction books by the same author in alphabetical order by title.

Salt Lake City Public Library's collection includes approximately 965,000 items, of which about 350,000 are located in the five branches and 615,000 at the Main Library. This collection size does not warrant lengthy call numbers. Instead, it makes it more difficult for many users to find titles and increases the Library's cost to catalog. It should be noted the Library currently uses simpler call numbers for children's and young adult's titles.

**Recommendation 24. Order items to be cataloged and processed before shipment by vendors when that service is available.**

**Recommendation 25. Simplify call numbers for new materials.** Use call numbers with no more than three digits after the decimal for Dewey numbers and eliminate Cutter numbers, replacing them as needed with author's last name, or in the case of biographies, name of the subject.

This recommendation means that new items will be shelved near but not immediately adjacent to older books on the same subject or by the same fiction author unless the current collection is converted to the new, simpler system. Over time, items with the new, simpler call numbers will grow to be the larger part of the collection. The two new branches opening with all new collections would start with the simpler call numbers.

**Recommendation 26. Interview staff members from libraries that have made the switch to assigning simpler call numbers to new items to learn how they shelve their collections.**

### **Workload Measures, Cross-Training, System Standards and Process Improvement**

Changes in services and patterns of use, as well as in technological tools, make frequent rebalancing of staffing allocations necessary. Concern was expressed in interviews and focus groups that workload and assignments need to be reviewed and realigned. For example, participants indicated some program managers had significantly larger workloads than others. They also noted that spans of control (numbers of direct reports) for managers varied considerably in some cases.

Rebalancing staff is difficult for many libraries. Some tasks lend themselves more readily to developing workload measures and standards for allocating staff resources. For example, standards can be set for number of items shelved per hour or number of returned items checked-in per hour. Staffing allocations can then be determined according to the actual workloads.

Other functions, often those performed by associate librarians and librarians, are more readily looked at as a percent of time. For example, a children's librarian may be expected to spend 20% of productive time planning and presenting programs; 5% weeding the collection; 50% on the floor or desk providing direct, one-on-one service; 10% on school and community outreach; and 15% on committee work, professional development (keeping up skills and knowledge by participating in webinars, reading blogs, etc.), and daily tasks such as email. Setting such standards requires time and analysis but can result in better allocation of staff resources.

**Recommendation 27. Determine workload measures and set standards for materials handling tasks such as check-**



**in, shelving, and pulling requested items for branches and the Main Library and determine appropriate staffing levels at each branch and the Main Library public service unit.**

Customers can often be served by the first person they approach by training clerical employees to assist with using the catalog, searching databases and responding to other basic information requests. In addition, it will be important to train librarians to renew accounts, take payments, and handle other circulation needs.

The San Jose Public Library learned by tracking the complexity of questions received by staff that about 80% of them could be answered by trained clerical staff. This information led to scheduling clerical employees to answer these questions when self-check-out freed them from the circulation desk.

Self-service check-out at San Jose Public Library has reached over 95% and clerks have been redeployed to assist customers in other ways. The other national peer libraries also report that the majority of items are checked out at self-service stations and clerical staff have been reassigned to a variety of other direct service tasks such as assisting library computer users and locating items on the shelf.

**Recommendation 28. Cross-train staff so they can assist with a greater variety of customer service tasks.**

All of the best practices libraries reported having one or at most two service points in their branches. When RFID is implemented at branches, the Library may decide to replace the large circulation desks and smaller librarian desks at the branches with one small service location. Large desks were needed in the past to handle check-outs and check-ins. As the library transitions to self-service for these functions, the large desks are not needed. Removing them frees up floor space as well as allows for more friendly, less fortress-like desks.

Many library processes, especially those involving materials handling and collection management, readily lend themselves to process improvement techniques. These include developing process maps (or flow charts) that identify every step in a process and then reducing the number of steps needed to accomplish that function. For example, careful analysis of the check-in and re-shelving process at a San Jose Public Library branch with the help of an industrial process management consultant resulted in changes that got materials back on the shelf and available to customers 60% faster.

Salt Lake City Public Library could benefit substantially from systematic process improvement in such functions as weeding and discarding materials, checking in and shelving returned materials, and handling patron requests to hold an item. Staff would require training in process improvement tools and techniques. Since in-house expertise is not available, a consultant is likely to be required. Using a train-the-trainer approach would build internal capacity and is likely to provide the greatest benefit to the Library.

**Recommendation 29. Set an annual goal for productivity improvements, identify specific processes to be analyzed, and provide training to a core group of staff in process improvement.**

### **Accommodating Needs of Homeless Patrons and the Spectrum of Library Users**

The scope of services for this performance audit included researching best practices for library policies, procedures and services that meet the needs of homeless patrons as well as providing for the needs of the broad spectrum of patrons.

Libraries throughout the country, especially those located in urban centers, are challenged to maintain this balancing act. A first step is to adopt a patron behavior policy (which is usually reviewed by legal counsel prior to adoption). Such a policy spells out the behaviors which all patrons must demonstrate as well as prohibited behaviors. For example, such policies frequently require patrons to refrain from eating, drinking or sleeping in the library. They often prohibit patrons from bringing shopping carts, suitcases, or large briefcases on wheels into the library to keep library aisles free of obstruction.

Enforcing the behavior policy for all patrons without exception is essential. Library staff and library security need to coordinate and be consistent. Most libraries work closely with their police department's beat officers or a specialized unit working with the homeless.

The SLCPL transitional director has entered into an agreement with the County of Salt Lake for three full-time outreach professionals to work with homeless library users at the Main Library and the Sprague branch. Their goal is to provide services to address the core issues causing them to be homeless. The outreach workers have recently provided SLCPL employees with training in de-escalating interactions between staff and patrons. This approach is very similar to that being

taken at a number of other urban libraries, except that often the libraries pay another agency for a professional to be on site and provide outreach services. SLCPL does not pay the County but is instead acting as a point of service delivery for the County's program. This approach is consistent with best practices.

Richland County Public Library, one of the best practice libraries, trained all main library staff on how best to work with the homeless. The training was provided by professionals who work daily with homeless individuals. The training improved the confidence and comfort level of the staff.

Full-time security personnel monitor the library and enforce the behavior policy. The library invited agencies that serve the homeless population to keep regular office hours there. These activities led to some main library staff volunteering at a nearby homeless shelter and setting up a library and computer center there.

The Pima County Library (Tucson, Arizona) contracted with a county public health agency for a full-time public health nurse who works mostly at the main library but travels weekly to select branches. She does not administer medication, but takes vital signs, counsels homeless patrons, gives out soap, and makes referrals to health and social services.

The Sacramento Public Library contracts with a downtown partnership for a full-time navigator who provides outreach and referral to homeless patrons. The San Francisco Public Library has a contract for a social worker to provide similar services and referrals.

**Recommendation 30. Articulate the services being provided by Salt Lake County in a memorandum of understanding between the County and SLCPL.**

### **Planning for Two New Branch Libraries**

The SLCPL is currently in the early planning stages for two new branches. The Main Library is the most recently built facility and was designed about a decade ago. Few, if any, current staff members have been deeply involved in planning, designing, and operating new facilities.

A building committee is often formed with members from the library board and library executive staff, and in some cases community members. Glendale Branch has a building committee with two Board

members and three staff (one is an associate director). An architect has been hired and design is beginning.

Marmalade Branch is part of a multi-use four-acre site being developed by the Redevelopment Agency. An architect has not yet been selected. A different associate director is also the ELT member assigned to this building committee which includes two Board members and two other staff. Building committees usually focus on the exterior elevations and materials and very generally on the interior.

Having two different ELT members lead these projects runs a risk that each project will be developed in a silo, with little cross-learning and consistent decision making between them. Continuing on this path would be a missed opportunity for the Library. Appointing a staff technical committee to work on both buildings would allay the risk. The ideas, learning and decisions from the first facility can then be applied to the second.

### **Use of a Technical Committee**

A technical committee works with the architect and his/her design and engineering team to ensure that the design of the library meets the library's needs for function, flexibility, and maintenance. The technical committee members provide information to the architect and review and comment on the plans and specifications throughout the design process as it becomes progressively more detailed.

For example, the technical team would review and ask questions about lighting, including how many types of light fixtures are planned, how many different type of bulbs would be used and needed to be kept in stock, how easily light bulbs could be replaced, which bulbs could be replaced by custodians and which would require special equipment such as a lift. They would ask for information about the building's acoustics and how noise would be controlled and managed. They would review the movement of materials through the building for efficiency. They would provide input into flooring choices, furniture selections and fabrics, particularly from the point of view of safety, durability, and ease of maintenance.

Technical committee members typically include a senior staff member who can be the decision maker when opinions of the technical team differ and the architect is unclear about the direction being given; the facilities manager; a branch manager with an interest in operational efficiency and the ability to be detail-oriented; and one or two other staff members who

have experience and aptitude with practical matters, such as how materials move into and out of the building (including delivery). If any team members have experience planning new branches or major remodeling projects, that is a plus.

### **Designing Branches to Provide Excellent and Efficient Service**

Use of self-check-out and self-check-in with automated sorting will be designed into both buildings. Ideally, both branches should also incorporate some of the most current trends, such as a small single point of service rather than multiple service desks, with staff also "roving" to help patrons where they happen to be, using tablets and mobile devices.

The library building program is a document that describes the space and functional requirements of each building (such as community spaces, seating, public technology spaces, collection size divided by children's, teen, audio/visual, and adult nonfiction), its spatial relationships and required adjacencies, the flow of materials and people throughout the facility, etc. The current building programs may need to be updated to reflect the more efficient materials handling processes enabled by RFID, self-check-out and check-in, and automated sorting. The building program is the primary tool for communicating the necessary functional requirements to the architectural design team.

Many libraries have moved away from planning multiple, large service desks at branch libraries and are instead going to one, or perhaps two, multi-purpose small service points. When faced with several desks, patrons are often confused about which one they should approach. Implementing self-service check-in and check-out makes a large circulation desk unnecessary. All of the national best practice libraries reported that their branches have only one or two service points.

**Recommendation 31. Supplement the two building committees with one staff technical committee for both branches to revise the existing library building programs and work with the architects to review the plans throughout the design process.** This will help ensure that the architects incorporate the efficiencies and functionality needed into the new facilities.

## Opening Day Collections

The two new branches will need to have new collections on the shelves when they open. Funds have been identified for these collections. Fully stocking two new branches of approximately 20,000 square feet each will require an investment of up to \$2.4 million.

An opening day collection is selected from among titles currently available and covers all topics, formats, and age levels. It is tailored to meet the needs of the neighborhood it serves. Generally, a library's existing collection development, cataloging, and processing staff cannot handle the workload involved in addition to their ongoing responsibilities. In SLCPL's case the two opening day collections will equal approximately the same amount of investment and number of items as its annual budget for library materials.

Several vendors that supply library materials provide a specialized opening day collection service. They make suggested selections based on a profile created by the library and the library then reviews and approves them. The vendor can catalog, process and store the materials, deliver them to the new building, and may even shelve them. Some language items and other specialized titles may have to be selected, ordered and processed by the Library, but that effort should be minimized.

**Recommendation 32. Fully utilize the opening day collection services of a vendor for selection, cataloging, processing, and delivering materials directly to the new facilities for as many items as possible.** This is currently underway.

## Providing Access to Information and Resources in Many Languages

Salt Lake City has a diverse population with residents who have emigrated from all over the world. New Americans often discover the library soon after arriving in a city and become heavy library users. They gravitate to a free resource where the staff is eager to help them and their families learn English, use computers, have Internet access, find jobs, and study for citizenship as well as stay in touch with their former home.

SLCPL has a substantial collection of materials in world languages, particularly in Spanish and Vietnamese. These materials can be difficult and expensive to purchase and catalog, but the technical services department has learned to do so.

The new Glendale branch will serve a neighborhood whose residents speak many languages at home. It is extremely difficult to locate books, magazines and audio/visual materials to purchase in some of these languages in a quantity that would provide adequate choices for readers and viewers. In addition, many people use the library primarily as a way for their children and themselves to learn to speak and read English and want strong English language collections.

Planning for a new building presents an opportunity to use new technologies and e-resources to provide access to information and entertainment in many languages. For example, the SLCPL could set up iPads or other tablets preloaded with links to newspapers, social media sites, music, and books and other items in one or more languages. They could also have links to English as a Second Language resources. The tablets could be used in the library on its wireless network or even be checked out for home use.

**Recommendation 33. Develop mobile access language materials to be used at the Glendale Branch when it opens and other libraries as demand warrants.**

Community members can assist in identifying the resources of interest for each of the languages. Use of such new technology provides simple-to-use access to newspapers, websites, social media sites, music and other resources in the languages community members recommend.

## Conclusion

The mission of the Salt Lake City Public Library states:

*The City Library is a dynamic civic resource that promotes free and open access to information, materials and services to all members of the community to advance knowledge, foster creativity, encourage the exchange of ideas, build community and enhance the quality of life.*

Even as Library staff members strive to fulfill the mission, they have dealt with significant changes in recent years. With the transitional leader and a new director coming soon, the Library has the opportunity to position itself for improved organizational effectiveness.

The recommendations contained in this report are intended to suggest ways operations can be improved by adopting best practices found in other high performing library organizations, clarifying decision-making roles and responsibilities, and fostering a culture of teamwork and collaboration. Careful and thoughtful implementation of the recommendations will have a significant impact and benefit to the Library's employees and the internal and external customers it serves.



## Attachment – List of Recommendations

**Recommendation 1.** Clarify decision-making roles of the Library Board, library director, executive leadership team and line managers.

**Recommendation 2.** Frame discussions with the Leadership Team about ideas, policies, major operational changes, budget, or other decisions so it is clear the decision-making process will be predicated on listening to opinions, but the Library director will make the final decision.

**Recommendation 3.** Engage program managers, the Leadership Team and ELT members in identifying proposed modifications to the Strategic Plan measures.

**Recommendation 4.** Designate implementation responsibility and accountability to a Strategic Plan manager who will work in concert with all managers and staff committees (using an annual work plan) to realize the Strategic Plan goals.

**Recommendation 5.** Convert the Ensuring Early Learning and Achieving Organizational Excellence program manager positions into ongoing management positions to ensure that these important functions are integrated into the library organization.

**Recommendation 6.** Convert the Accessing Technology manager position to Public Use Technology Training manager.

**Recommendation 7.** Assign a project manager responsibility for implementing RFID.

**Recommendation 8.** Assign a project manager to provide assistance to the associate director for branch libraries in planning for the design and operations of the two new branch libraries.

**Recommendation 9.** Introduce the new handbook to current staff through workshops so that all become familiar with its contents.

**Recommendation 10.** Redesign the orientation process for new employees to include basic information about policies, procedures, and expectations in addition to completing the required forms.

**Recommendation 11.** Preclude retired managers from working as substitutes in the units or branches they formerly supervised.

**Recommendation 12.** Appoint an acting manager when a management position is temporarily vacant due to an extended absence or vacancy.

**Recommendation 13.** Update and improve the current performance evaluation system. This is currently underway.

**Recommendation 14.** Train managers in techniques for evaluating performance, use of the new performance evaluation system, and the use of progressive discipline.

**Recommendation 15.** Include the recently adopted policy on the use of email, Internet service and other electronic media by staff in the employee handbook.

**Recommendation 16.** Establish a staff Communications Advisory Team to provide input to the communications manager.

**Recommendation 17.** Distribute a summary of key decisions following each ELT and LT meeting to keep staff informed.

**Recommendation 18.** Develop a customer service survey for internal services (HR, IT, finance, facilities maintenance and communication) to annually solicit feedback about what is working well and what could be improved.

**Recommendation 19.** Obtain a work order management system that will enable staff to enter service requests online and provide status reports on pending work.

**Recommendation 20.** Develop a five-year capital budget plan in addition to the annual capital budget to plan for capital infrastructure maintenance, repair, and replacement in the context of overall budget planning.

**Recommendation 21.** Develop a multi-year replacement and maintenance plan that identifies maintenance schedules and costs to maintain, repair, or replace the Library's building systems, fleet and equipment.

**Recommendation 22.** Carefully plan implementation of RFID and automated sorting with the end in mind: to free staff resources to provide value-added services to users in person or virtually.

**Recommendation 23.** Initiate a project to review the collection and discard outdated materials, items in poor condition, and items no longer in high demand to avoid the cost of converting them to RFID.

**Recommendation 24.** Order items to be cataloged and processed before shipment by vendors when that service is available.

**Recommendation 25.** Simplify call numbers for new materials. Use call numbers with no more than three digits after the decimal for Dewey numbers and eliminate Cutter numbers, replacing them as needed with author's last name, or in the case of biographies, name of the subject.

**Recommendation 26.** Interview staff members from libraries that have made the switch to assigning simpler call numbers to new items to learn how they shelve their collections.

**Recommendation 27.** Determine workload measures and set standards for materials handling tasks such as check-in, shelving, and pulling requested items for branches and the Main Library and determine appropriate staffing levels at each branch and the Main Library public service unit.

**Recommendation 28.** Cross-train staff so they can assist with a greater variety of customer service tasks.

**Recommendation 29.** Set an annual goal for productivity improvements, identify specific processes to be analyzed, and provide training to a core group of staff in process improvement.

**Recommendation 30.** Articulate the services being provided by Salt Lake County in a memorandum of understanding between the County and SLCPL.

**Recommendation 31. Supplement the two building committees with one staff technical committee for both branches to revise the existing library building programs and work with the architects to review the plans throughout the design process.**

**Recommendation 32. Fully utilize the opening day collection services of a vendor for selection, cataloging, processing, and delivering materials directly to the new facilities for as many items as possible.**

**Recommendation 33. Develop mobile access language materials to be used at the Glendale Branch when it opens and other libraries as demand warrants.**