Alameda Free Library

STRATEGIC PLAN, 2009-2014

June 2008

Prepared with the assistance of
Ruth Metz Associates
1001 SW 5th Avenue Suite 1100
Portland OR

In Association with
Page + Moris LLC
130 Sutter Street
Suite 480
San Francisco CA 94104

ALAMEDA FREE LIBRARY

STRATEGIC PLAN, 2009- 2014

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Introduction

In December 2007, the City of Alameda authorized a 7-month, multi-faceted library planning project. This project included the development of a strategic plan and recommendations for the improvement of neighborhood libraries. A community survey and a technology review were also conducted to document existing conditions for planning purpose.

The project resulted in four separate, interdependent documents. The strategic plan is contained in this document while the recommendations for neighborhood libraries are presented in a companion document. Likewise, the community survey report and the technology review are each separate documents.

Key to the strategic planning process was the Library Board-appointed Library Strategic Planning Committee (Committee). This citizen-based Committee was intentionally representative of a broad cross-section of Alameda residents. The Committee included Library Director, Jane Chisaki, and Deputy City Manager, Lisa Goldman, as *ex officio* members.

The purpose of the Committee was to set service priorities for the Library based on its analysis of community input and data. Community input included a community-wide telephone survey, interviews of community stakeholders, focus groups, and an online survey to test the Committee's conclusions about service priorities.

The Library Management Team and staff assessed the Library's readiness to undertake the recommended service priorities. Library consultants Ruth Metz and Kathryn Page assisted the Committee and the Library Management Team in the collection of input and data and in its analysis.

Library Values

Underlying the strategic direction of the library are these core institutional values:

> *Public Trust:* We commit to being fiscally responsible with public resources, to protecting customer confidentiality, and to providing safe, well maintained, and accessible facilities.
>
> *Equal Access:* We believe in equal access to all Alameda Free Library resources.
>
> *Diversity:* We are committed to reflecting the diversity of our community through our collections, services and staff.
>
> *Excellent Service:* We commit to providing excellent service by providing accurate and reliable information in a respectful interaction between well trained, friendly and efficient staff and all members of our community.
>
> *Outreach and Partnership:* We will actively develop partnerships and joint activities with community institutions and organizations to further the Alameda Free Library mission.

Library Mission Statement

The Alameda Public Library is an inviting and comfortable place where people of all ages develop and enjoy a love of learning and reading, connect to the online world, and find the information they need for daily living.

Goals, Objectives, and Activities Under Consideration

The following interdependent goals underpin the service priorities the Library will emphasize in the next five years. The goals are listed in order relative to the effort and resources that will be required to achieve them. The activities listed are examples under consideration by the Library Management Team and staff at this time.

GOAL 1: Alameda residents will find the Library to be a customer-centered and welcoming place.

Objective 1: Eighty-five percent of Alameda residents will express in a community survey that the Alameda libraries are welcoming, dynamic, and engaging places to use, meet, and engage with others.

Objective 2: Library card registrations will increase by 5% per year

Activities under consideration:

1. Short term goal to remodel the interiors of both neighborhood branches and long term goal to plan and build a new west Alameda library facility and enlarge the Bay Farm Island Library.
2. Maintain welcoming atmosphere and physical space at the Main library
3. Create "Welcome" packets for new Alameda residents that include a library card application
4. Continue "First grade, First card" campaign

GOAL 2: Alameda residents will use the library website as a virtual branch.

Objective 1: Use of general web site visit statistics will increase by 10% per year.

Objective 2: Use of the databases will increase by 10% per year.

Objective 3: Use of the catalog/reserve/renewal remote user statistics will increase by 10%.

Activities under consideration:

1. Provide Alameda residents with a more user-friendly library website.
2. Encourage use of the library website among Alameda residents by promoting its use in news releases, flyers and online surveys and word of mouth.
3. Provide workshops on using catalog, circulation, and databases.
4. Monitor use statistics of the library's virtual branch.

GOAL 3: Visitors to the neighborhood libraries will have safe, welcoming, and comfortable spaces to use the libraries' resources and programs and to interact with each other.

Objective 1: Eighty-five percent of Alameda residents will express in a community survey that the neighborhood libraries are safe, welcoming, and comfortable spaces.

Objective 2: Attendance at the neighborhood libraries as measured by door count will increase by 10% per year.

Objective 3: Use of the neighborhood library collections will increase by 10% per year.

Objective 4: The number of programs offered at neighborhood libraries will increase by 5% per year.

Activities under consideration:

1. Provide library visitors with remodeled or redesigned libraries in which to use the resources and attend programs.
2. Provide library visitors with comfortable seating in which to read and relax.
3. Provide library users with an attractive display area for new books or themed displays.
4. Provide library visitors with additional computers at the neighborhood libraries.

GOAL 4: Alameda teens will have space to socialize, to share thoughts and ideas, and to attend programs relevant to them.

Objective 1: Use of the teen collection will increase by 5% per year.

Objective 2: Attendance at programs for teens will increase by 5% per year.

Activities under consideration:

1. Create inviting and useful space at the neighborhood libraries for teen activities and collection.

2. Provide genre or other special interest book lists for teens.
3. Present 4 teen programs per year.
4. Host annual teacher orientation and invite (in writing) classes for visits.

GOAL 5: Children ages 0-5 and their caregivers will have programs and materials that promote school readiness.

Objective 1: Attendance at programs for children ages 0-5 will increase by 5% per year.

Objective 2: Presentation of programs for children ages 0-5 at off-site locations will increase by 5% per year.

Objective 3: Participation in the "Read To Me" summer program will increase by 5% per year.

Activities under consideration:

1. Provide online access to pod casts and e-Books for children ages 0-5.
2. Maintain displays of picture books and other materials of interest to children ages 0-5 and their caregivers.
3. Provide off-site class visits to centers for low-income and at-risk preschool children.
4. Provide workshops for early literacy for parents and caregivers.

GOAL # 6: Children in the neighborhood libraries will have adequate space for programs, interaction, and use of materials.

Objective 1: Attendance at neighborhood library programs for children will increase by 5% per year.

Objective 2: Use of materials for children at the neighborhood libraries will increase by 5% per year.

Objective 3: The majority of parents and caregivers will express in a targeted community survey that neighborhood libraries provide satisfactory programming and library materials for children.

Activities under consideration:

1. Increase the number of programs for children at neighborhood libraries.
2. Produce displays that highlight materials for children and their parents and caregivers.
3. Provide programs that address the needs of parents and caregivers of children.

4. Provide appropriate seating that encourages adults and young children to use library materials together.

GOAL #7: Alamedans will be able to more easily and effectively connect to the online world.

Objective 1: Use of databases will increase by 10% each year.

Objective 2: Each year, the number of unique visitors to the library portal web pages will increase by 10%.

Objective 3: The majority of Alameda residents will express in a community survey customer satisfaction with library technology.

Objective 4: Uptime for all computer systems will be 95% on an ongoing basis.

Activities under consideration:

1. Provide classes for the public on database use.
2. Run a "did you know?" campaign (did you know you can get reading recommendations through the AFL website, you can practice for the GED online, etc.).
3. Provide pathfinders to online resources and other electronic services.

GOAL #8: Visitors to the neighborhood libraries will have increased access to computers and internet resources.

Objective 1: Availability of public Internet computers will increase by 3 in each of the branches by December 2009.

Objective 2: Sufficient funds will be raised annually to progressively purchase the library consultant's recommended number of public access computers over the term of this plan.

Objective 3: Use of public Internet computers at the neighborhood libraries will Increase by 10% per year.

Activities under consideration:

1. Provide pathfinders for patrons to aid them in finding information on databases and the Internet.
2. Provide high speed Internet access.

GOAL #9: Alameda residents will have the skills to find, evaluate, and use print & online resources to meet their needs.

Objective 1: 180 Alameda residents will attend the library's information literacy workshops annually.

Objective 2: 100 Alameda residents will receive one-on-one information literacy assistance from library staff annually.

Objective 3: Attendance at basic computer skills & software application classes will increase by 5% annually.

Objective 4: At the conclusion of information literacy workshops offered by the library, 85% of participants will indicate that the workshop provided skills and confidence beneficial for finding, evaluating and using library resources.

Activities under consideration:

1. Information literacy workshops will be provided by the library.
2. Computer classes will be offered by the library in basic computer and internet searching skills.

GOAL #10: Students in Alameda will use electronic and print resources for both school and personal interests.

Objective 1: 500 students per year will attend a basic library orientation.

Objective 2: Use of electronic databases and print resources, introduced to students by the library will increase by 10% a year.

Objective 3: At the end of each school year a survey will show that 85% of students surveyed have found that library print and electronic resources were beneficial.

Activities under consideration:

1. Basic library orientation offered to students.
2. Workshop for print and electronic resources offered to students.
3. Safe Internet "surfing" workshop offered to students.

GOAL #11: Alameda adults and teens with low literacy skills will improve their ability to read and write in order to meet their personal goals.

Objective 1: *Alameda Reads* will maintain a minimum of 50 tutor-learner pairs annually.

Objective 2: Each year 90% of the learners in *Alameda Reads* will achieve at least one predetermined personal goal.

Objective 3: Use of the literacy collection will increase by 10% each year.

Activities under consideration:

1. Provide resources for local literacy related agencies.
2. Provide life skills classes for learners with low literacy skills.
3. Provide one to one tutoring for learners with low literacy skills.
4. Provide access to core technology through specially designed computer skills classes for learners with low literacy skills.
5. Host an annual Library Literacy Event.

GOAL 12: Alameda residents will enjoy programs and materials that stimulate their thinking, satisfy their curiosity, and expand their knowledge.

Objective 1: Attendance at library programs will increase by 10% each year.

Objective 2: Circulation of all materials will increase by 10% each year.

Objective 3: Ten programs per year will be provided in collaboration with other agencies.

Activities under consideration:

1. Offer a greater variety of programs at the library.
2. Provide in-house displays of new materials and themed displays.
3. Provide genre or other special interest book lists.

Organizational Competencies and Initiatives

The Library Management Team identified several organizational components that need strengthening to meet the goals of this Plan. The Library Management Team will allocate or reallocate resources to achieve the following desired organizational competencies:

1. Marketing

   The Alameda Free Library will actively market the services of the library in the community.

2. Staff training and development

   The Alameda Free Library will provide training and development to enable staff to efficiently, effectively, and consistently perform the functions associated with the strategic plan.

3. External partnerships

   The Alameda Free Library will actively seek and maintain relationships with agencies, organizations, and institutions that will enable the library to enhance service to its customers.

4. Measurement and evaluation

   The Alameda Free Library will be able to accurately evaluate the goals of this strategic plan.

Organizational Initiatives

The Library Management Team has adopted these organizational initiatives to achieve the desired organizational competencies:

Marketing

1. By 2009, assign responsibility for marketing and public relations to a library manager and develop a marketing strategy with a budget.

Staff Training and Development

1. By December 2009, create a comprehensive, up-to-date employee handbook for the purposes of staff orientation of training.

2. Beginning in fiscal year 2009/10, train staff on policies, procedures, and customer service annually.

3. Beginning in 2009, create and present annual workshops for staff on early literacy, childhood development, and materials for children ages 0-5.

External Partnerships

1. By January 2009, create a comprehensive and accurate list of all organizations and agencies with which the library has or could have a formal or informal partnership to achieve this Plan's goals.

2. By January 2009, establish criteria that will be used when assessing existing or potential partnerships.

3. By January 2009, establish a core set of external partners and a clear protocol for establishing and maintaining these partnerships.

Measurement and Evaluation

1. By November 2008, create a comprehensive list of the data elements needed for the strategic plan.

2. By November 2008, create a comprehensive list of the data elements collected by the Library, evaluate the necessity of the elements, and refine the list for greatest efficiency and effectiveness.

Implementation of the Strategic Plan

This strategic plan is a flexible blueprint for Alameda's city and library leadership. It is also a point of reference for the Friends of the Library and the Library Foundation. Library management can direct the use of library resources to the stated priorities and goals and the Friends of the Library and Library Foundation can also orient their fund-raising and resource allocation accordingly. Throughout the five-year period, library leaders will monitor the objectives and activities and community and library user feedback, adjusting these to meet changing needs and conditions.

Acknowledgements

The Library Board wishes to especially acknowledge the enthusiastic, able, and dedicated participation of the individuals who served on the Strategic Planning Committee. The Library Board appreciates their participation and the expert leadership of Michael Hartigan, chair of the Committee, and outgoing Library Board President, Leslie Krongold. Further, the Library Board acknowledges with appreciation Li Volin and *ex officio* members Lisa Goldman and Jane Chisaki for their assistance to the Committee.

The Library Board gratefully acknowledges the Library Management Team for its purposeful and focused development of goals consistent with the community vision and service priorities: Arta Benzie-Youssef (Supervising Librarian, Branch Services), Laura Chaquette (Circulation Supervisor), Jordona Elderts (Literacy

Director), Eva Volin (Supervising Librarian, Childrens Services), Annemarie Meyer (Supervising Librarian, Adult Services), David Hall (Supervising Librarian, Technical Services), David Boxton (Computer Services Coordinator). Likewise, the Library Board thanks the library staff for its participation in the planning process at crucial points along the way.

City staff not previously named in these acknowledgments and several community members provided interviews to assist the consultant team in assessing the needs of the community. The Library Board gratefully acknowledges these individuals: City staffers Cynthia Eliason (Supervising City Planner), Leon King (IT Manager), Jackie Krause (Mastick Senior Center), Rachel Reed (Alameda Point Collaborative), and Andy Wong (Youth Commission) and community members Amapola Beenn, Teacher, Ruby Bridges School, and Kathy Moehring, Executive Director, West End Business Association.