

2012 Community Input Interviews Report and Recommendations



Jefferson County
PUBLIC LIBRARY

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Executive Summary

Jefferson County Public Library (JCPL) recently completed an ambitious Community Input Initiative. Over the past few months, members of the JCPL's Senior Management Team interviewed nearly 70 community leaders throughout the county, including elected officials, city managers, major employers and key stakeholders in early literacy, education and economic development.

The goal of this initiative was to ensure that the Library is providing the resources, programs and services that community residents want and need, and that we continue to deliver maximum value to our stakeholders and communities.

We used these confidential interviews to solicit input on the greatest challenges facing our communities and to brainstorm ways in which JCPL could help to address these challenges. We also asked how we ought to think about measuring and demonstrating success, and how to keep libraries at the center of community life.

Following is a brief summary of the most pertinent findings and recommendations.

Challenges

Despite significant diversity among our stakeholders, there was broad consensus about the key challenges facing Jefferson County. In order of priority, the top challenges identified included:

- the economy;
- infrastructure;
- changing demographics;
- changing needs in education and workforce development;
- community engagement and development; and
- communications.

Opportunities

There was also broad agreement about the role of libraries in helping to meet these challenges. A majority of respondents cited the value and potential of JCPL programs in the following areas:

- early literacy and education;
- access to technology and digital information;
- workforce development, career exploration and small business development;
- community engagement and development;
- outreach to special populations; and
- cross-promotion and partnership opportunities.

Respondents offered valuable feedback about our current programs and resources and also offered specific suggestions as to how we might enhance and extend library services.

Measures and Outcomes

We asked how we would know if we were being successful in delivering value to our communities. Many participants cited quantitative measures, such as usage statistics (visitors, circulation, computer and database use, etc.); others suggested that the Library be included in city/community surveys or do surveys of our own to measure awareness and customer satisfaction. Most interesting were discussions that helped us think through how to measure the impact of our services in terms of positive community outcomes, suggesting measures such as improvements in kindergarten/school readiness, third-grade reading scores or high-school graduation rates. This is an exciting area of development for JCPL, and we'll be evaluating opportunities to pursue outcome-based measurements in our own programs and in partnership with others.

Inputs to Our New Service Model

In the course of these interviews, we received a lot of feedback about what community leaders would like to see in JCPL libraries, including input on facilities, locations, hours of operation, materials and resources, technology, programs, outreach and partnerships.

There is much enthusiasm for JCPL's proposed new service model, and feedback received will help to inform the implementation of that model, beginning in 2014. There is also much enthusiasm for locating library services in planned/proposed developments in a number of communities, including Edgewater, North West Arvada, South County, Wheat Ridge and Westminster.

Other key themes included the need for the Library to extend its reach beyond existing facilities, offer more outreach services in the community, take a collaborative approach to addressing community challenges, and develop productive partnerships to expand our reach and contribute to positive community outcomes.

Conclusion and Next Steps

This Community Input Initiative confirmed that JCPL is well positioned to deliver value to the community, through focused programs and services, a more collaborative approach to addressing community challenges, and a strong commitment to positive community outcomes.

We are excited about the opportunities presented here, and we look forward to turning these ideas into reality. We'll be using this input to guide our strategic planning in 2014 and beyond, and to ensure that we continue to deliver value to our stakeholders and communities.

Introduction

In 2012, Jefferson County Public Library embarked on an ambitious Community Input Initiative. Members of the Senior Management Team interviewed nearly 70 community leaders throughout Jefferson County, including elected officials, city managers and staff, major employers and key stakeholders in early literacy, education and economic development.

The goal of this initiative was to solicit input on the greatest challenges facing our communities and to brainstorm ways in which Jefferson County Public Library (JCPL) might help to address these challenges. We also asked how we ought to think about measuring and demonstrating success, and how to keep libraries at the center of community life.

We were humbled by the energy and enthusiasm demonstrated by these stakeholders. Their inputs were thoughtful, incisive, challenging and educational, and we are grateful for their interest and support.

This report summarizes key findings from those interviews. We'll be using this input to guide our strategic planning in 2014 and beyond, and to ensure that we continue to deliver value to our stakeholders and communities.

Key Challenges

Despite significant diversity among our stakeholders, there was broad consensus about the key challenges facing Jefferson County. In order of priority, the top challenges identified included:

- the economy;
- infrastructure;
- changing demographics;
- changing needs in education and workforce development;
- community engagement and development; and
- communications.

The Economy

The county continues to suffer from the economic downturn that began in 2008. Tax revenues have declined while the need for services continues to increase. The county, our cities and municipalities and many of our agencies are struggling to meet growing (and competing) demands for services. There is an increased emphasis on economic development, from attracting new businesses to Jefferson County, to creating jobs, to helping residents find employment. There is less tolerance for wasteful spending and redundant services. Agencies, including the Library, are being asked to do more with less, to focus attention on core and priority services, and to extend their resources through innovative partnerships and collaborative program management.

Representative Comments:

- *“The first challenge is budget and finances. There are a lot of good things going on, but not enough money to pay for it.”*
- *“The biggest challenge is budget. It’s not like there’s extra money anywhere, and until property values start to go up again, nothing’s going to change. We’re dealing with that ‘new normal’...and if things don’t change, we’re potentially looking at real cuts.”*
- *“I’m convinced that the next 20 years are going to be a whole lot tougher than the last 20 – both politically and financially. The growth that we’ve had in the local and national economy, I just don’t see it for the next 20 years. So, we’re all trying to respond to that and find better ways to do business.”*
- *“The biggest challenge is looking at the economic picture and making sure the unemployed and underemployed can get back to work.”*
- *“Job creation. We need to create more jobs and better jobs.”*
- *“Prioritizing. And doing more with less.”*
- *“There are about 150 non-profits in my community alone, and I just don’t see that being a sustainable model going into the future, especially as we see more and more budget cuts. Fundraising is starting to get a real painful feeling around our community these days; it’s overwhelming.”*
- *“The other challenge is how we as a community think strategically in terms of what our different governmental entities, non-profits, for-profits and community-based offerings can come together and rather than duplicate services, come together to complement and strengthen the services we’re able to offer, and how we might think creatively and innovatively about them.”*

Infrastructure

Jefferson County is struggling with a number of issues related to infrastructure, including structural limitations on land available for new commercial development, limited funds to support infill/redevelopment and aging housing stock and infrastructure (roads, bridges, water systems, parks, etc.) that will require significant investment to update and maintain. On the plus side, there are a number of initiatives to develop/redevelop key areas, including a new city services complex in Edgewater; the 40 West Arts District in Lakewood, a “town center” on 38th Avenue in Wheat Ridge; the Westminster Mall (88th and Sheridan); Candelas in North West Arvada, and a potential new development at Fehringer Ranch. There is also widespread enthusiasm for infill development opportunities created by light rail, with the recent opening of the West Line and the planned development of the Gold Line. Opinions differ on the proposed development of the beltway.

Representative Comments:

- *“A major challenge is the availability of commercial properties is getting tighter and tighter. There’s a lot of open space; there’s a lot of focus on retail at the city level; and right now the market is financing multi-family units and retirement units/villages. So what little land we have left is going to non-job producing elements or low-wage producing elements.”*
- *“How do we begin to attract primary businesses and the young families that go with primary industries? We know we have a housing stock issue, where our young professionals are leaving Jeffco, and if we’re going to have a renewal in the county, we need those young families.”*
- *“I look at infrastructure from the perspective of businesses who may be considering relocating to the Jefferson County area, and what things they think are important... They want to know what kind of schools are in place, what kind of libraries do we have, what kinds of roads and public transportation – those are things that play into the decision to relocate businesses. And I think it’s important that we continue to take care of these things.”*
- *“Our biggest challenge is funding infrastructure and meeting all of our infrastructure needs. Roads and bridges, utilities, traffic systems – all those kinds of things. We have sections of our city that are more than 50 years old, that need refreshing. Streets that need a more aggressive schedule for capital maintenance on an annual basis; utilities that are aging and need to be replaced. Water pipes, storm drains, all those kinds of things...”*
- *“So we have some advantages too. We have light rail coming, so we’ll get a different kind of housing project with that...”*

Changing Demographics

Demographic trends are creating significant challenges, with rapidly growing numbers of senior citizens, children living in poverty, and diverse and non-English speaking populations. At the same time, it is increasingly difficult to attract and retain younger residents (ages 20-30). Municipalities and services are struggling to meet the needs of aging residents while working to attract younger families into the area. Services are struggling to meet the basic needs of a growing number of families, children and non-English speaking residents living in poverty, while seeking innovative ways to ensure their assimilation and success.

Representative Comments:

- *“Our first challenge is our changing demographics, which falls into three different categories. First, we’re an aging county. We also have big demographic changes in racial makeup, with a rapidly growing Latino population. And the third demographic shift is poverty. People are amazed when I tell them our free and reduced lunch rate is now running at 35-36 percent. So when a third of your children are living in poverty, you have different challenges.”*
- *“Jeffco has one of the fastest aging populations in Colorado, and what does that mean for us as a community in making sure that they can get the care they need to live independently, and to have access to healthcare and other services?”*
- *“I think that changing demographics is one of our biggest challenges. I think Jefferson County has been a middle-to-upper class white county that has been very homogeneous, and I think that the people who still live here live here because they like it that way. But, I think that is changing whether they like it or not.”*
- *“Jeffco has large populations that are lower income, very diverse populations, with a high Latin population, and I think that’s something that, over time, has shifted even more so, and I think that’s a challenge for the county. I think we all need to remember that and recognize it, and elevate it, as business is being done and programs are being implemented...”*
- *“We have a large Hispanic population. But we’re also seeing lots of people from the Middle East who are landing here. A lot of people from Asia, Africa, Somalia, with almost no literacy...”*
- *“I guess I see shifting demographics as the number one challenge for all of us. We’ve gone from 80 percent white students to 68 percent white... That’s a significant change for our county!”*
- *“There’s been a huge increase in child poverty throughout the entire state of Colorado. People don’t believe that we have 33 percent poverty rates here. We had very low child poverty numbers and now they have gone up very, very much.”*
- *“Jefferson County has the fifth-highest child poverty rate in Colorado...”*

Changing Needs in Education and Workforce Development

Technology is evolving quickly and creating new challenges in education and workforce development. Residents who do not have access to (or competencies in) computers and other digital devices, the Internet and digital information channels risk being left out of the digital economy; teens and older, displaced workers require new skills to meet the needs of local, high-tech employers; and schools are working to integrate new opportunities in online learning. Funding for education is another major concern. Declining revenues, coupled with statewide changes to legislation, testing requirements and curriculum development, are creating challenges. In addition, the growing number of non-English speaking residents and families living in poverty requires increased efforts to ensure that children are ready to read when they enter school, meet new third-grade reading requirements, and graduate from high school with meaningful workforce skills.

Representative Comments:

- *“I think public schools and libraries and everyone else is going to have to deal with all the different delivery systems that are out there. And the fact of the matter is that there are many different ways to educate children, and the way that happens is going to change. It’s changing now and it’s going to continue.”*
- *“Our next measure may be how do we work together on the sea change (that’s coming) in how classrooms are going to work?”*
- *“How can and does JCPL shift services to meet changing needs of young students? I know that providing computer work stations is a major part of that, but what is the next step?”*
- *“I think that there is this growing tension that the educational system is not preparing these kids for the jobs of the future...”*
- *“I think kids today are socially inept. I wonder how this all happened so fast, where a conversation can’t be carried through at all. We need to help kids bridge the gap between what business owners need out of an employee, and match it with the skills needed and/or training required.”*
- *“Our demographics are definitely changing. So some of the questions we’re asking ourselves are – are we providing the right resources for these people to be skilled laborers for our city or county? And could the Library be helping us with workforce training kinds of stuff, as these people need to transition into this new economy?”*
- *“In some of our schools, we have very transient populations where kids are moving very frequently and not getting that stability and learning base. So I’m very concerned about that aspect of our community that is slipping through the cracks.”*
- *“Jefferson County has the fifth highest child poverty rate in Colorado. Twenty-six percent of Colorado fourth-graders are not reading at grade level; and statewide, graduation rates are only at 81 percent -- with black and Hispanic rates considerably lower.”*

Community Engagement and Development

Stakeholders expressed concern about the need for more citizen involvement (and constructive dialogue) in community issues. In particular, cities and municipalities were interested in finding new ways to inform residents about community issues, encourage citizens to participate in local community affairs, and promote civil discourse. There is also a county-wide interest in revitalizing neighborhoods to attract new businesses and younger families, accommodate increased diversity, maintain core community values, and create a vibrant sense of community.

Representative Comments:

- *“One of my major concerns is about the way local government interacts with its publics, its community. When we reach out to the community and ask them to tell us what they think, we get the most extreme, outlying opinions, and so the normal folks stay away... If we could just reach those folks who represent more of the norm...”*
- *“Getting our residents involved in the community is a major challenge. Letting our residents know what events are happening in the community. Letting organizations know. Having a central calendar for all organizations...”*
- *“We need to figure out a new way of community engagement. We’re looking at a population that’s 22-23 percent Latino, so we’re trying to engage one fifth of our population. We’re just not representing the people we should be representing.”*
- *“We’d like to be engaging a younger population.”*
- *“I think that because Jeffco is so huge that connections are a real challenge. In a small town, people know where to go to get information. I don’t think people in Jefferson County know where to go to get information. And that’s a big problem.”*
- *“The Library is a valuable source of communication for some hard-to-reach constituents. There are many people who use the Library who never go to city-sponsored events. Many use the Library to search for jobs, use the internet, etc., so it’s a great place to let them know about outreach and city-sponsored events.”*
- *“Economic development in aging areas needs to be extremely creative, and I’d say that the Library is a piece of the economic development of the areas in which it finds itself.”*
- *“With some of the transit-oriented development plans we have, we’re going to see more residents there. There are going to be more, younger residents, so, if we attract the younger demographic that we think we will, that could have a really big impact on the Library.”*
- *“I see the Library being able to help with developing a sense of community cohesiveness; being able to just be an advocate for community-wide types of initiatives.”*

Communications

Participants noted that communicating with stakeholders was becoming increasingly difficult, especially with the growing diversity of residents and the proliferation of communication channels (including social media). Many commented on the need for the Library to increase awareness of its services and value, especially in the business community.

Representative Comments:

- *“One of our biggest challenges is communications – just getting the word out.”*
- *“My biggest challenge is marketing to the business community and saying, ‘here we are.’”*
- *“One of our top challenges is communication. And I put that in the light of everything. We’re so small that we don’t have a lot of our own well-distributed communication systems.”*
- *“We have to rethink how we market and communicate. I think we sometimes haven’t done the best job in that...and when we have tough times and are trying to be good stewards of public resources, that’s often one of the first things we cut. I think being creative and getting our message out is key.”*
- *“I think we all struggle with communications. We all get bombarded with messages over different mediums, and because there are so many different outlets now, you can’t just say, ‘Oh, it was in the community newspaper so we’ve communicated’. That’s not how it works anymore.”*
- *“Social media issues are more and more important. As we’ve seen significant shifts over the last five or 10 years, we’re putting more money into our communications department, doing videos and stuff. It just takes more attention.”*
- *“I think there are a lot of business resources, and obviously, the Library has a wealth of these resources. Although I think people don’t know how to use them or they don’t know they exist.”*
- *“I’ve worked with city managers, some of the best in the country, who are highly thought of – including finance directors and others who have a lot of influence over public policy, and I think most of them have reflected on libraries as something much narrower than the way libraries would like to be understood.”*

Key Opportunities

Just as there was broad agreement about the county's challenges, there was overwhelming consensus about the role of libraries in meeting these challenges. A majority of stakeholders interviewed cited the following:

- **Early Literacy and Education:** The Library can help to address challenges of poverty and economic development by supporting early literacy and education. A majority of respondents recognize and value the Library's critical role in supporting early literacy for children birth to five and their parents and caregivers. Respondents also believe the Library plays an important role in supporting education and helping teens develop the job and life-skills needed to meet the local employment needs of Jeffco businesses.
- **Equal Access to Technology and Digital Information:** Respondents acknowledge the Library's critical role in bridging the digital divide, promoting digital literacy and helping residents access and master evolving technologies.
- **Workforce Development, Career Exploration and Small Business Development:** Respondents believe the Library can play a role in the county's economic recovery by providing resources to support job-skills training, job-search assistance, career advancement and small-business development.
- **Community Engagement and Development:** The Library can help to address these challenges by promoting community information, education and involvement. Respondents recognized the potential for Libraries to host community discussions and support community initiatives. There was also broad acknowledgement of the Library's potential role in revitalizing neighborhoods (especially in new and infill developments) and attracting a younger demographic to our communities.
- **Outreach to Special Populations:** There was also broad acknowledgement of the Library's role in reaching out to special populations, including Seniors, people living in poverty, non-English speaking populations, the disabled and other disenfranchised residents.
- **Cross Promotion and Partnerships:** Finally, there was overwhelming support for more cross promotion of community and library services and the power of partnerships to enhance service delivery.

Early Literacy and Education

“That early learning and literacy piece is so critical! And when you have kids coming into schools who don’t know their names, or how to hold a pencil, it tells us how much work there is to do.”

“You can’t really do all the other things you need to do in a community unless you’re educating your youth and building a pipeline of educated people to take over and to take jobs that might be available. In my mind, educating the children and young adults in our community is our most critical need.”

Generally, stakeholders realize that the path to personal, social, academic and economic success begins long before children enter school. They recognize the Library’s critical role in promoting early literacy with our youngest residents (aged birth to five) and their caregivers, and acknowledge that, in many cases, the Library is the first (and only) provider of these services. Many suggested greater focus and outreach in these areas, as a way to counter the effects of a growing population of people living in poverty. Given ongoing budget challenges faced by area schools and colleges, there was also enthusiastic support for the Library’s role in supporting education by providing materials and resources that support R1 Schools’ evolving curriculum, by providing new opportunities for online learning and by encouraging learning outside of normal school hours. Finally, there is concern about meeting the changing education needs of young students, in terms of career readiness and workforce development.

Suggested Activities:

- Continue focus on early literacy storytimes, both in the library and in non-library venues
- Increase outreach and education on the value of early literacy for parents and caregivers, especially those that are non-English speaking
- Provide family literacy programs (pajama nights, character nights, etc.)
- Increase literacy outreach to children living in poverty (through partnerships with summer food programs, foster care organizations and other community outreach)
- Provide literacy outreach to childcare homes, childcare centers and families whose children 0-5 do not participate in Head Start or pre-school/childcare centers
- Continue participation in One Book 4 Colorado
- Continue focus on Summer Reading Club
- Partner with Parks and Rec and R1 Schools’ summer extended literacy and school-aged enrichment programs
- Host speaker series on the importance of early literacy
- Increase promotion of Homework Help and other educational resources
- Expand tutoring programs
- Create Makerspaces
- Enhance programs for teens to promote career options, workforce readiness and 21st century/STEM skills
- Strengthen ties to R1 schools for the sharing of online resources
- Promote/support R1 Schools’ Virtual Academy

Partnership Opportunities:

- [Board of Education](#)
- [Bright Beginnings](#)
- [Campaign for Grade Level Reading](#)
- Children and Youth Leadership Commission (CYLC)
- [Colorado Nurse/Family Partnership](#)
- [Colorado Parent and Child Foundation](#)
- Community Colleges and Universities
- [Community Education Outreach](#)
- [Denver Hackerspace](#)
- Foster Care Organizations
- [Hunger Free Colorado](#)
- [Jefferson County Human Services](#)
 - [Collaborative Foster Care](#)
 - [Head Start](#)
- [Jefferson County Public Health](#)
 - [Nurse Family Partnership](#)
 - [Prenatal Plus Program](#)
 - [WIC](#)
- [Lakewood Head Start](#)
- Local Service Clubs (Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.)
- [One Book 4 Colorado](#)
- [Parent Child Home Partnership \(Burkeholder Initiative\)](#)
- [Parents as Teachers](#)
- [R1 Schools](#)
 - [Adult Education Programs \(ESL\)](#)
 - [Community and Family Connections](#)
 - [Career and Technical Education \(District Advisory Committee\)](#)
 - [Early Childhood Education Team](#)
 - [Family Literacy](#)
 - [HIPPY](#)
 - [Warren Tech](#)
- [Salazar Family Foundation](#)
- St. Anthony's Visiting Nurse Program
- [Summer Food Service Program \(CDE\)](#)
- [The Jefferson Foundation](#)
 - [Summer of Early Literacy Project](#)
 - [The Prosperity Project](#)
- [The Learning Source](#)
- [The Literacy Coalition of Colorado](#)
- [TRIAD Early Childhood Council](#)
- United Way ECE (Diana Romero Campbell)
- WIC

Equal Access to Technology and Digital Information

*“Computer access is important because there are so many people out there who don’t have it. Most people will try to tell you that’s not true; but the reality is that it **is** true. There are a lot of families out there that don’t have access to computers, so it’s important to maintain that opportunity.”*

“The Library fulfills a real need for people. People are using it because they can’t get DSL at home. They can’t apply for jobs at home because there’s no Internet in the area...so that’s a true need.”

“Another thing I worry about is that as social media becomes the place where people connect and we have more and more things happening in a digital way, if we only have the ‘haves’ – and the ‘have nots’ have no way to participate in the community discourse; that’s a concern.”

“People who have computers in their homes have no idea of what it’s like for those who don’t...”

Stakeholders also recognize that, in some cases, the library may be the only place where residents can access computers and the Internet. Through these interviews, we learned that not only job applications – but also kindergarten readiness assessments and GED exams – are now being done online! Given the growing importance of digital literacy, there was broad support for the Library’s role in helping residents access and master evolving technologies, with special attention to low-income populations who may not own a computer or Internet-enabled device; teens who need to acquire 21st century skills; displaced older workers who must reskill in order to find employment; and many of our senior citizens. Many respondents also noted that the growth of digital information and devices will continue to have a powerful impact on the delivery of library services.

Suggested Activities:

- Continue and increase emphasis on digital services
- Continue to promote digital literacy through computer and Internet training
- Make sure librarians are trained to help patrons with digital devices and information
- Expand access to computers and the Internet
- Offer access to evolving technologies (smart phones, tablets, etc.)
- Provide “synchronous communications” technologies (i.e., Go to Meetings apps; Real Presence Rooms, etc.)
- Continue and expand eTrain outreach to displaced workers and senior citizens

Partnership Opportunities:

- [Community Education Outreach](#)
- [Jefferson County Workforce Center](#)
- [Senior Resource Center \(Evergreen, Wheat Ridge and South Satellite Office\)](#)
- Senior and Assisted Living Residences

Workforce Development, Career Exploration and Small Business Development

“The Library is a great source of information for individuals who are searching for jobs. They’re looking for resources to try to learn a new career or a new trade. Maybe they want to learn plumbing, maybe they were a CPA before and now they’ve decided welding is their passion...”

“I think anything the Library can do to provide entrepreneurs with resources to help them start up a company would be huge. Having lectures; having people come in to speak about how to start a company; here are the things you need to be worried about.”

Respondents recognize the value of library resources and programs that support economic development; however, they report that there is little awareness of the availability of these library resources. This suggests opportunities for increased outreach and partnerships with economic development organizations.

Suggested activities:

- Help adults find employment via digital services, job searching skills
- Continue focus on job/career training
- Provide resources for entrepreneurs and small business owners
- Offer research assistance on key city/economic development projects
- Host speaker series on economic development topics
- Sponsor Career Days offered by volunteer practitioners from various professions
- Embed Executive Director of Small Business Resource Center in libraries one day a week
- Increase outreach programs highlighting Library business resources and offer programs through area Chambers of Commerce and other economic development organizations
- Host or participate in job/resource fairs with community partners

Partnership Opportunities:

- [AddONE](#)
- [Alameda Gateway Association](#)
- [Arvada Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Arvada Economic Development Association](#)
- [BEST](#)
- Career Development Association Board
- [Conifer Chamber of Commerce](#)
- Consortium of Business Librarians
- [Downtown Evergreen Economic District](#)
- [Evergreen Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Golden Chamber of Commerce](#)
- [Golden Economic Development, City of Golden](#)
- [Innovation Pavillion, Entrepreneurs in Residence](#)
- [Jeffco Business Education Alliance](#)
- [Jeffco Economic Development Corporation](#)
- [Jeffco Workforce Center](#)
- [Jefferson County Business Resource Center](#)
- [Lakewood Economic Development Department, City of Lakewood](#)
- Local Merchants’ Associations (various cities)
- [West Chamber](#)
- [Wheat Ridge 2020](#)

Community Engagement and Development

“The library has a unique opportunity to be that community builder and consensus builder. People trust the library.”

“As an economic developer, I know that libraries are a major draw and anchor for those redevelopments, and we would love to be able to take advantage of something like that.”

Cities and municipalities believe the Library can play a critical role in community engagement and development by providing information and education on community issues and events, hosting and encouraging public discussions and forums, and serving as a centralized resource for community resources and referrals. Many acknowledge that our community meeting rooms are a valuable asset. Development discussions centered around working with cities (Arvada, Golden, Edgewater, Lakewood, Wheat Ridge, and others) to help attract a younger demographic, especially to new/renewed developments surrounding light rail stops/stations and the Library’s potential role in other new and infill developments, including Arvada’s McIlvay Park, Arvada’s Candelas development, Edgewater’s efforts to consolidate city services in a new location (TBD); the proposed Fehringer Ranch development, Westminster’s efforts to redevelop Westminster Mall, and Wheat Ridge’s efforts to create a town center on 38th Avenue.

Suggested Activities:

- Provide resources on topics of interest to the community (i.e., infrastructure challenges, transportation, health literacy, beltway, zoning, land use, elections and other issues)
- Host panel discussions/forums on community issues in Jefferson County
- Seek/encourage feedback and engage patrons in discussions on community issues through surveys, community forums, etc.
- Sponsor a Civics 101 series
- Offer citizenship classes
- Offer One Book One City programs
- Promote voter turnout
- Develop/offer access to a centralized community calendar and cross promote community events
- Serve as a centralized resource for community resources/referrals
- Support Buy Local initiatives
- Offer Library programming outside the Library at rec centers and other community locations
- Offer libraries for other community groups to use – for meeting rooms, forums and after-hours events (Community Nights, Resource Fairs, fund raising events)
- Participate in community fairs/festivals
- Promote civil discourse
- Promote patron participation in Virtual Town Hall/Mind Mixer programs
- Offer innovative and compelling programs and resources for young adults (ages 20-30)
- Create a Library presence at key light rail stations and in new community developments

Partnership Opportunities:

- [40 West Arts District](#)
- [Arvada Urban Renewal Authority](#)
- [Brookfield Residential Properties](#)
- Chamber of Commerce Leadership Programs
- [Church Ranch/Candelas](#)
- [City of Arvada](#)
- [City of Edgewater](#)
- [City of Lakewood: Downtown Lakewood Connectivity and Urban Design Plan](#)
- [City of Golden](#) (Anti-Bullying Initiative)
- [City of Wheat Ridge](#)
- [Greater Edgewater Community Connection](#)
- [Edgewater Collective](#)
- Wheat Ridge 2020 Connecting the Dots

Outreach to Special Populations

“As people get older, they need more services. This is going to be a huge challenge, whether we’re talking about transportation, public safety, or increasing activities, like arts and cultural activities.”

“I think there’s tremendous opportunity to make sure that diverse populations are aware of libraries, the asset that they are and the opportunities they present – especially to populations that are sometimes forgotten in resource discussions.”

Changes in demographics were cited as reasons to examine our service delivery to special populations, including seniors, young families, non-English speaking populations, people with disabilities and other disenfranchised residents (including the homeless).

Suggested Activities:

- Offer homebound services to Jeffco residents living in Westminster
- Expand programs and outreach to Seniors
- Explore transportation options for Seniors and others who may not have transportation to the library
- Expand Spanish-language programs and outreach to Hispanic populations
- More children’s books and other materials in foreign languages
- Expand programs and outreach to disenfranchised (i.e., poor, homeless, disabled)
- Allow homeless residents who have no proof of address to get a library card
- Provide staff training to ensure that first-time Library visitors are made to feel welcome and safe

Partnership Opportunities:

- [Action Center](#)
- [Jefferson County Human Services](#)
 - [Aging Well in Jeffco Project](#)
 - [Disability Services](#)
- [Council on Aging](#)
- [RTD](#)
- [Westminster Public Library](#)

Cross Promotion of Community/Library Services

“The Library is such an important communication contact for people, because they may not know where else to go. That’s their one place to go for information.”

This was seen as a way to address communication challenges easily and cost effectively. By cross-promoting library and community services, we all significantly extend our communications reach. By partnering to deliver services, we extend the reach of our service delivery and gain access to new audiences and stakeholders. This opportunity could be extended to any/all of the potential partners listed in this document (and more), especially when strategic priorities and initiatives are fully aligned.

Suggested Activities:

- Promote literacy and educational resources to targeted literacy groups
- Promote resources for job-skills development, employment, career development and small-business support to Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Organizations
- Cross promote community events and resources via key Library channels
- Continue/increase the availability and display of community/agency materials in libraries
- Increase Library presence/participation at community/association meetings

Measures and Outcomes

“You’ll know you’re being successful when the first thought that comes into anyone’s mind when they’re trying to figure something out, is to go to the library.”

“One measure would be does the community see the library as valuable even if they’re not using it?”

When we asked how we should think about measuring success, many people cited traditional quantitative measures: number of visitors, circulation, number of program attendees, hours of computer use, and other usage statistics. Others suggested that the Library be included in city/community surveys or do surveys of our own to measure awareness and customer satisfaction. Others helped us think through how to measure the impact of our services in terms of community outcomes, suggesting measures such as improvements in school readiness, third-grade reading scores or high school graduation rates. This is an exciting area of development for JCPL, and we’ll be evaluating opportunities to pursue outcome-based measurements in our own programs and in partnership with others.

A surprising number of participants cited the same qualitative measure: being perceived as a player in community initiatives. As one stakeholder said, *“It’s making sure that the library is at the table and represented when discussions are occurring about the community and the county...”*

Inputs to Our New Service Model

“The new focus is redesign our buildings, redesign our thinking as to how a building should look, redesign how we give our services to the public, such as self-serve places at smaller locations that are community specific...”

“Look at the hours that you’re open. You need to be open at the right time. You’ve got to be there.”

“Ultimately, I’d like to see the Library expand service levels; I’d like to see it serving all parts of the community equally.”

As our last question, we asked how to keep the Library at the center of community interaction and exchange. Much of the feedback we received is reflected in the Opportunities discussion; however, we also received a lot of input about what community leaders would like to see in JCPL libraries.

There is much enthusiasm around a new library model/library of the future. People see the value of locating libraries in development areas, and a number of communities (Edgewater, North West Arvada, Wheat Ridge and Westminster) would like to see us locate a library in planned/proposed developments. Another recurring theme was the need for the Library to extend its reach beyond existing facilities and offer more outreach services in the community, and many suggested that we offer libraries (after hours) for other community uses. Four respondents suggested we look for innovative ways to generate revenue through services; others believe strongly that people already pay for library services via taxes and that beyond pass-through costs, there should be no additional charge for library services.

Key themes:

- **New service model:**
 - New libraries with a smaller physical footprint, located in infill, mixed-use developments
 - Inviting, welcoming spaces
 - More collaborative spaces
 - More meeting rooms, with varied sizes
 - More popular items and reduced wait times
 - Keep traditional books
 - Keep DVDs, CDs
 - State-of-the-art technology and digital resources, including eBooks
 - Technology and research assistance
 - More outreach into the community
 - Productive partnerships
- **New transportation options:** including enhanced delivery options and special support for Seniors
- **New service delivery options:** Library presence at light rail stations and other key community venues

Conclusion/Next Steps

In an era of limited resources, organizations must focus their resources on their core mission and competencies, provide high-value programs and services, and seek innovative and cost effective ways to increase their impact.

After an ambitious community interview process, JCPL is well positioned to deliver value to the community, through focused programs and services, a more collaborative approach to addressing community challenges, and a strong commitment to delivering positive community outcomes.

Many of these interviews confirmed that we're on the right track, with our passionate commitment to early literacy and education and economic development. In other cases, we learned of exciting, new opportunities, especially in the area of community engagement and development.

The results of these interviews will be shared broadly with the Library Board of Trustees and employees, who will then be tasked with integrating many of these ideas into JCPL's long-term planning. Some of the highest needs are already being addressed. (For example, when we discovered that we were presenting barriers to getting a library card to our homeless residents, we took immediate steps to develop a new policy and approach to make sure we were providing optimal services to this population.) Many initiatives will be integrated into our 2014 strategic plan, especially those that build on existing programs in early literacy, education, economic development and community outreach. You'll also see many of these suggestions implemented with the Library's new service model, scheduled for debut in 2014. Other initiatives may take more time, as we tackle new ideas and seek innovative ways to support new and expanding initiatives.

As a next step, we intend to invite stakeholders who share our commitment to early literacy, education and economic development to meet together to brainstorm ways in which we might partner to extend our services and impact.

We are excited about the opportunities presented here, and we look forward to turning these ideas into reality. We believe these initiatives will strengthen our services, enhance our value to the community, and ensure that we do, in fact, "have a seat at the table" in Jefferson County.

We extend our special thanks to the community leaders who shared their time, perceptions and deep commitment to the community with us. We hope they will enjoy a sense pride and ownership as they see their ideas come to life.

EXHIBITS

Interview Participants

Ben Weiderholt, St. Anthony's/Centura Health
 Beth Crist, State Library, Youth & Family Services
 Bob Murphy, Lakewood Mayor
 Bonnie McNulty, Edgewater Mayor
 Brian DeLaet, JCPL Trustee
 Brian Willms, President/CEO, West Chamber
 Britta Fisher, Executive Director, Wheat Ridge 20/20
 Buddy Douglass, JCPL Trustee
 Casey Tighe, County Commissioner
 Charlie McKay and Gregg Bradbury, Church Ranch
 Christopher Price, Colorado Bright Beginnings
 Cindy Stevenson, Superintendent, R1 Schools
 Craig Elston, Integer Group
 Dawn Smith, Executive Director, Conifer Chamber
 Diane Drummond, Library Foundation Trustee
 Don Rosier, County Commissioner
 Don Tripp, Director, Westminster Parks and Rec
 Dot Wright, President, Arvada Chamber
 Dr. Mark B. Johnson, Executive Director, Jeffco Public Health
 Faye Griffin, County Commissioner
 Gary Wink, President, Golden Chamber
 Gayle Perryman, Director, Jefferson County Head Start
 George Valuck, Alameda Gateway Community Association
 Gwen Welch, Family Literacy Coordinator, R1
 Hazel Hartbarger, Director, Arvada Economic Development Association
 HJ Stalf, Edgewater City Manager
 Jayne Reiter, Exec Director, Jefferson County Business Resource Center
 Jeana Capel-Jones, Jefferson County Workforce Center
 Jessica Hansen, Community and Family Connections Coordinator, R1
 Jill Fellman, Board of Education
 Joan Whitford, Lisa Smith and Cathy Lytle, R1 Schools, Early Childhood Education Team

John Bandimere, Bandimere Speedway
 John Bodnar, JCPL Trustee
 John Odom, Former County Commissioner
 John Zabawa, Seniors' Resource Center
 Julia Hill-Nichols, JCPL Trustee
 Kate Skarbek, Library Services Manager (Westminster)
 Kathy Hartman, Jefferson Center for Mental Health
 Kathy Hodgson, City Manager, Lakewood
 Katie Tiernan, Executive Director, Jefferson Foundation
 Lesley Dahlkemper, President, Board of Education
 Lin Browning, President, Evergreen Chamber
 Linda Rockwell, Library Trustee
 Lisa Elliott, Executive Director, Jefferson County Education Association
 Lynn Johnson, Director, Jeffco Human Services
 Marc Williams, Arvada Mayor
 Marjorie Sloan, Golden Mayor
 Mark Deven, Arvada City Manager
 Michelle Claymore, Jeffco Economic Development Corporation
 Mike Bestor, Golden City Manager
 Monica Buhlig, Kaiser Permanente
 Nancy Lambott, Adult ESL/Literacy Coordinator, The Literacy Coalition
 Nancy McNally, Westminster Mayor
 Pat Bolton, Triad Early Childhood Council/ Red Rocks Community College
 Patrick Goff, Wheat Ridge City Manager
 Ralph Schell, County Administrator
 Ray Elliott, JCPL Trustee
 Ruth Anna, JCPL Trustee
 Ruth Wengrovius, Chair, The Literacy Coalition
 Sara Molden & Nita Brett, The Learning Source
 Sherry Peterson and Kathy Ireland, Lakewood Head Start
 Todd Leopold, Deputy County Administrator, Adams County

Interview Questions

1. What are the three biggest challenges facing (the county, your city, your organization?)
2. How can the Library help to address these challenges?
3. What positive changes would indicate to you that progress is being made on resolving these challenges?
4. How can we make the Library a catalyst for community interaction and development?

Methodology

In late 2012 and early 2013, members of the Library's Senior Management Team interviewed nearly 70 key stakeholders in Jefferson County. Interview participants included elected officials, city managers, library and library foundation trustees, major employers, and key players in early literacy, education and economic development.

All participants were asked the same four questions, and interviews were recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions were then reviewed for recurring themes by grouping responses by theme; counting mentions of challenges, opportunities, methods of measurement and community engagement; assigning priorities based on the number of mentions; and reporting details from those discussions.

Following are the results of the quantitative analysis.

Key Challenges

Economy				
Budget vs Increased Need for Services	Economic Development & Attracting Businesses	Job Creation	Doing More with Less	Redundant Services Competing for Funds
34	19	12	4	7
Total Mentions:				69

Infrastructure							
Housing Stock	Attracting Young Families to Jeffco	Creating/ Revitalizing neighborhoods	Greenfield Expansion	Infra-structure	Trans- portation	Land Use	Jefferson Parkway
6	6	10	4	14	7	1	5
Total Mentions:							53

Changing Demographics			
Child Poverty/ Support for Children & Families	Growing Diversity	Changing Demographics	Aging Population
16	8	7	18
Total Mentions:			49

Changing Needs in Education and Workforce Skills Development					
School Readiness/ Grade Level Reading	Low Graduation Rates	Digital Divide	Funding Education	Access to Technology	Change in Education/ Workforce Skills
4	1	2	11	2	6
Total Mentions:					26

Community Engagement and Development		
Individuality vs Community	Community/Political Engagement	Community Leadership Pipeline
2	9	3
Total Mentions:		14

Communications
Communications
Total: 8

Other issues receiving fewer than five mentions included: appropriate access to healthcare; healthy eating, active living; fall prevention; loss of faith in God; disintegration of the home; communicating with youth; sustaining our environment; finding employees; only three commissioners; less government regulation; financial literacy; censorship; meaningful data.

Key Opportunities

Literacy and Education			
Literacy	Support for Education	Programs for Kids & Teens	Outreach to 0-5 & Caregivers
28	26	38	15
Total:			107

Equal Access to Technology and Digital Information		
Access to Digital Services and Information	Tech Training/Support	Keeping Up with Evolving Technologies
37	4	25
Total:		66

Workforce Development, Career Exploration and Small Business Development		
Job Seeking/Job Readiness Skills	Research Assistance	Business Resources & Outreach
18	3	23
Total:		44

Community Engagement and Development		
Civil Discourse	Communicating Community Issues	Revitalizing Neighborhoods/ Creating Community
5	30	6
Total:		41

Outreach to Special Populations		
Outreach to Non-English Speaking	Outreach to Seniors	Outreach to Poor and Disenfranchised
11	12	10
Total:		33

Cross Promotion of Community/Library Programs and Services*	
Better Outreach/Communications	Enhanced Cross Promotion
36	27
Total: 63	

**Since this does not impact programming directly, it was reported last, despite broad agreement that this is a key area of focus/concern.*

Another opportunity (receiving fewer than five mentions) was health and wellness.

Measures and Outcomes

Success Indicators		
Quantitative/Usage Stats	Customer Awareness/ Satisfaction	Community Outcomes
60	35	15