MEETING DATE:    Thursday, January 23, 2014

AGENDA ITEM #:    11 B

ITEM:    LIBRARY'S STRATEGIC PLAN

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

None.
January 2, 2014

The development of a new Strategic Plan for Contra Costa County Library has been a central and exciting focus for Library Administration and staff during 2013. These efforts coincide with the Library’s 100th Birthday, and while many things have changed over the past century, it has been the past seven years that have been especially fulfilling for the Library and myself personally as the objectives and goals outlined in our 2006 Strategic Plan become a reality.

The 2006 Contra Costa County Library Strategic Plan saw the establishment of a peer library system in which the former Central Library in Pleasant Hill was transformed into one of twenty-six Community Libraries and core services were realigned to better serve the residents of each community. The 2006 Plan identified four strategic initiatives: Reading, Information for Lifelong Learning, Collaboration, and Branding. The plan also outlined new approaches in the following: Customer Service, Information Services, Collection Development, Staff Deployment, and Innovation.

In the intervening years, the Library has demonstrated its leadership in these areas through the promotion of reading and literacy for all ages through Project Second Chance, the Library’s adult literacy program; through early childhood literacy services in the Community Libraries and by way of collaborating with county agencies, cities, community groups and schools to implement new library programs throughout the county; via the annual Summer Reading Festival; One City/One Book programs in a growing number of communities; and by building a book collection that strengthens community interest in recreational reading and lifelong learning.

We have leveraged our resources by successfully partnering with museums and art centers to build our wildly successful and nationally recognized museum pass program, Discover & Go, which provides exciting cultural opportunities to families throughout the county. We implemented floating collections to efficiently build dynamic, diverse book and DVD collections in all twenty-six Community Libraries. We transformed collection development processes to better utilize staff strengths and interests to efficiently obtain materials our community members want, and, as a result, we saw annual circulation grow to almost eight million check-outs.

We implemented a variety of tools that let patrons interact with the Library when and where they want to including Library-a-Go-Go lending machines; online catalogs; easy computer reservations; library card registration systems; online fine payment;
downloadable eBooks; Snap & Go mobile apps; LINK+ interlibrary loan; LiveChat and SMS text services; and self-checkout and return stations. And the Library established a clear, consistent, recognizable and positive identity through a new library logo and mission of “Bringing People and Ideas Together”.

Now it’s time we refocus our efforts on a new Strategic Plan that will identify new goals and new objectives we will work to fulfill over the next three years to ensure we remain an accessible and vital resource to our residents and an anchor in each of our communities.

To this end, staff has undertaken extraordinary efforts to gather your input. From community surveys, to town hall meetings, to in-depth one-on-one interviews with community movers and shakers, we are in the final stages of pulling this research together into a clear way forward for your Library in 2014.

Enclosed please find an update on our progress to date and an outline for our 2014 Strategic Plan, one that aims to fulfill a bold new vision:

Contra Costa County Library is the pulse of our community. Working together, we spark imagination, fuel potential, and connect people with ideas and each other.

Many thanks to those of you who have contributed your ideas and your time to this process and we look forward to rolling out a new countywide Strategic Plan and twenty-six individual Community Library Service Plans in the coming year.

Cathy E. Sanford

Interim County Librarian
It's been several months since the library began a strategic planning process, with some exciting, encouraging and even surprising outcomes resulting from those efforts. As the planning process enters its final stages, we wanted to update you on progress to date. We are confident the work we've undertaken and input we've collected will lead to a stronger, more responsive and innovative library experience for all Contra Costa County residents.

Our top planning priority was to address the needs of the many and varied communities that Contra Costa County Library serves. To this end, library staff used three different research methods to collect input, ideas and direction from our constituents in every corner of the county. That research is being reviewed to help us plan for both countywide and local community actions.

- **Key Informant Interviews:** In-depth, one-on-one interviews were conducted with more than 270 community leaders in the political, business, non-profit and education sectors. These conversations not only revealed the community wants and needs for their library, but also opened up new opportunities for the library to develop and strengthen partnerships to accomplish even more.

- **Public Survey:** An online survey brought in more than 4,600 responses from every corner of the county, where library users and non-users alike provided their input, ideas and recommendations. The survey responses are being analyzed by age, gender, ethnicity, income and city.

- **Town Hall Meetings:** Community by community, we gathered valuable input from a series of 28 town hall meetings. These energetic forums opened the door to a more nuanced understanding of what individual communities like about their library -- and what they would like to see us do better. Attended by passionate citizens including mayors, supervisors, business and community leaders, these town hall meetings offered a chance for individual communities to come together and discuss the role they aspire for their local library.

**A New Focus**
Given this unprecedented level of research, the library's planning committee authored new goals and strategies to address the aspirations of the community.

We are in the homestretch now with the hope of rolling out a new countywide strategic plan supported by 26 individual community library service plans in 2014!
Exhaustive community research provided invaluable information. And, while the research was enormous in its scope, there were consistent and dominant themes that are informing the library's planning process.

While the planning team works on fine-tuning and completing the plan, they have already used the research to develop the plan’s foundation.

**Strategic Planning Vision Statement:** Contra Costa County Library is the pulse of our community. Working together, we spark imagination, fuel potential, and connect people with ideas and each other.

**Goals and Objectives:**

**GOAL: The library ensures easy, equitable access to library services for all County residents.**
- Expand library service use by 25 percent in identified underserved populations in each community.
- Explore and pilot three new approaches for improving library hours, facilities and services.

**GOAL: The library champions personal and community engagement in literacy and reading to enrich lives.**
- Increase opportunities for literacy and lifelong learning by 25 percent.
- Expand knowledge of collections to increase circulation by 10 percent.

**GOAL: The library delivers a consistent, high-quality and inviting experience at all points of contact.**
- Assess all facilities and develop methods to increase user satisfaction levels by 50 percent.
- Enact a "yes-we-can" customer service plan to improve user satisfaction levels by 20 percent.
- Develop and adopt technology to meet community needs.

**GOAL: The library successfully promotes its value, programs and opportunities to the community.**