COMMUNITY PLANS IN PROCESS.

At the time of this study, some library jurisdictions were in the process of reviewing options and formulating both long-term system-wide plans and facilities programs for individual buildings. These plans may embody different assumptions about space needs, approaches to construction, service area boundaries, costs, phasing, and other options for service provision. While the study team does not intend to slight these planning efforts or imply any criticism of their conclusions, it was not feasible to modify a study of this scope to reflect these multiple concurrent efforts. By making the underlying assumptions of this study clear, providing broadsheets with individual library data, and filing technical reports and calculations with the State Library Division, the study team hopes to offer these jurisdictions an additional resource that can be modified as necessary for use in their ongoing planning processes.

MEETING FACILITIES NEEDS THROUGH ONGOING MAINTENANCE BUDGETS

Many libraries and library systems also have formal or informal plans to address facilities issues, replace worn furnishings, improve accessibility, and upgrade security as part of an ongoing maintenance process. Some items identified as needs in this study may, in fact, have been addressed by the time when the community considers a major facilities project.

Thus community planners would be well-advised to review the results of this study early in their planning process, verify whether these data include overlap items that they have addressed in the interim, and modify these findings as appropriate to their circumstances.

Many libraries have plans to use maintenance budgets to replace worn and outdated furnishings, address problem areas, or provide better access, signage, and site improvements.

Many libraries have planned ADA upgrades and security improvements as part of ongoing maintenance.

Some have long-term plans to finish existing basement and storage areas or to expand an existing building.

In the coming decade, many Utah communities will confront the reality that their existing public library facilities can no longer support the services they need or provide a safe and comfortable environment for patrons, staff, and collections. The decisions local librarians, boards, and communities will have to make at that point will not be easy ones.

RENOVATION ISSUES

Generally the extent and complexity of structural, mechanical, and electrical upgrades required to bring an aging facility up to current standards can be directly correlated to age. The occupants of many of Utah's older libraries – particularly those in seismically hazardous areas – are likely to find that the cost of renovating older structures to meet current codes and life-safety standards will be disproportionate to the potential benefits. For little more – and quite possibly, in some cases, less – expenditure per square foot, they would be able to construct a new facility, designed specifically to meet the needs of the 21st century library.[40] Communities with older libraries would be well advised to consider, *before* they invest in extensive technical reviews and planning studies, whether they have a serious commitment to renovating the existing building.

Institutional facility managers typically use a benchmark known as the Facilities Condition Index (FCI) to evaluate the feasibility of renovating or expanding an existing structure. As the cost of renovation approaches 60% of the cost of replacement, most consider renovation a questionable option unless the facility has particular historic value, special status in the community, or some other circumstance that would warrant preservation. At that point, planners then evaluate how successfully the building can be renovated to meet the needs of the proposed occupants.

Sixty-three percent of Utah's public libraries were constructed prior to 1980, and 19% were constructed between 1980 and 1990. Since 1985 there have been major changes to building codes and standards. As a result, the cost involved in bring these older libraries into compliance is likely to be significant, particularly in areas of high seismic risk.

Among Utah's pre-1980 libraries, nearly half were constructed prior to 1950. A number of these, including the nine remaining original Carnegie libraries, have been listed on the National Register of Historic Buildings. These buildings are architectural treasures and represent an important part of the state's heritage. Most, however, have dimensions and layouts inherently ill-suited to the functional needs of the 21st century library, and many are in tenuous condition. Planners note that "the cost of renovating such libraries is often prohibitive. Few communities can afford to restore their historic jewel boxes while providing for the vastly expanded needs of a modern library."[41] In a seismically critical area, the cost of renovating a historic building may easily exceed the cost of new construction and result in a space that still does not function very effectively for its original use.

This decision-making process may also require consideration of the ongoing costs of operating an inefficient facility, the security risks of spaces not conducive to monitoring with limited staff, and the limitations on programs and services imposed by buildings not designed for library use.

Against these negatives, communities will have to consider special conditions that weigh heavily against "starting over," such as historic building status, patron and donor loyalty, community attachment to small neighborhood libraries, availability of a site with comparable advantages, and the difficulty of interim operations if the facility is to be torn down and rebuilt on its existing site. The availability of an appropriate alternate use for important historic buildings may also be a significant consideration, since "moth-balling" these old buildings might lead to further, and perhaps ultimately irreparable, decay.

CONSIDERING AN ADDITION

In a number of Utah communities, aging libraries have been expanded piecemeal over the years with small ad hoc additions designed to address an immediate crisis. The result of this process, unfortunately, tends to be structures that are inefficient in space and energy use, difficult for staff to operate, only nominally accessible, and lacking the flexibility to allow reconfiguration for changing uses.

As Leighton and Weber note, "Some librarians have found that poorly planned and hastily constructed additions have exhausted the possibility for later expansions." They suggest that "how far to go in such projects needs careful study." And they add that "decisions of this sort require a determination of whether this is the best time in the history of the institution to bring the old structure up to date, whether fund-raising for remodeling costs is feasible, and whether the resultant building will have the old and the new parts work well together."[42] As Holt notes, " if the space that can be created is not located where it is needed, the remodeling may produce more problems than it solves."[43] In many cases, it may be that an older structure can better be converted to a new function that "fits" the space better, allowing the library to build a new facility.

CONVERTING AN EXISTING BUILDING FOR LIBRARY USE

Recycling an existing facility may provide a community with a cost-effective way of meeting library needs, but the facility should be thoroughly evaluated for suitability and hidden costs. As with older library facilities, renovating a structure designed for other purposes to meet current code criteria can be cost prohibitive. Structurally, library facilities must have the capability to support the heavy loads generated by stacks – loads that most commercial and civic buildings were not designed for. Libraries also have specific dimensional requirements to accommodate ranges of stacks and aisles efficiently. A building with inappropriate dimensions or structural walls in inappropriate locations may be difficult to convert to library use effectively. Holt notes that "just because the building seemed to function well in terms of its former use does not mean that it will do so as a library without substantial modification of its systems."[44]

FACING DIFFICULT ISSUES

Even raising the prospect of replacing an existing library will be controversial in many communities, and these will not be easy decisions. It is difficult for hard-pressed residents to contemplate "abandoning" facilities in which they have invested precious resources – even when doing so might, in the long run, produce a more functional and cost-effective library space. The funds to build, equip, and furnish existing public libraries have been hard-won in many struggling Utah communities, and there is a natural reluctance to discard what was obtained with such effort. Residents love their libraries, whatever their flaws, and the public library is often a cornerstone of the community. Some are important historic buildings or buildings that occupy key locations adjacent to city office, public parks, and community schools.

But the lessons of the last century's public library development suggests that – whatever their decisions – communities will be best served by facing these issues. If history provides a precedent, those best equipped to meet community needs will be those that conduct a thorough review of their options, plan for long- term as well as immediate needs, commit the time and funds necessary to conduct thorough programming studies, and engage professional services to ensure that their facilities will provide lasting value and useful flexibility well into the next century. As they do so, it is the hope of the study team that this project will help all Utah public librarians to share the successes and avoid the mistakes of the past.

The *21st Century Library Needs Assessment* has documented a series of key facts about Utah's public library circumstances.

Demand for public library services in Utah will increase significantly in the next ten years, and continue to increase well into the 21st century.

Population projections indicate that Utah's population will increase by nearly 475,000 in the first decade of the twenty-first century. In the next two decades, Utah will gain an additional million residents. Demand for library services grows in tandem with population growth. In addition, community demand for library services will be fueled by the high level of interest in computer services, the role of libraries as community centers, and the pent-up demand for services that libraries cannot provide now because of limitations in funding and facilities.

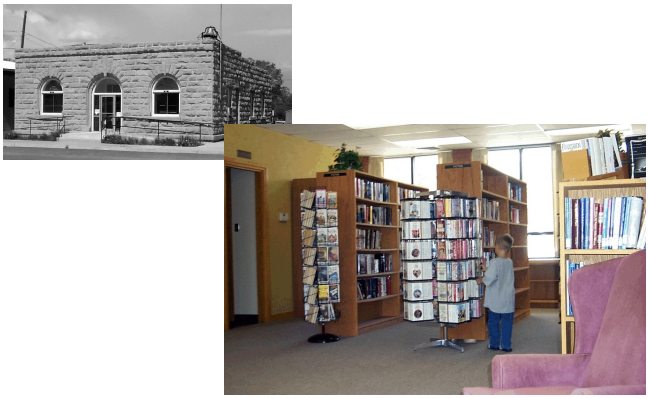
Utahns love their libraries, use them heavily, and overwhelmingly believe that providing library services and facilities that comply with current codes and standards should be a high priority for the state.

Utah residents use their local public libraries heavily and rely on them for essential services. Eighty-seven percent of respondents in the statewide survey believed that libraries should have a higher than average priority, and 52% ranked library services in the two highest categories. Seventy-one percent supported providing state funding "to help cities and counties improve existing library buildings or build new library buildings." Forty percent considered it very important to improve library facilities to meet current codes and standards, provide full access, and incorporate computer technology, and 82% ranked these improvements above the median in importance.

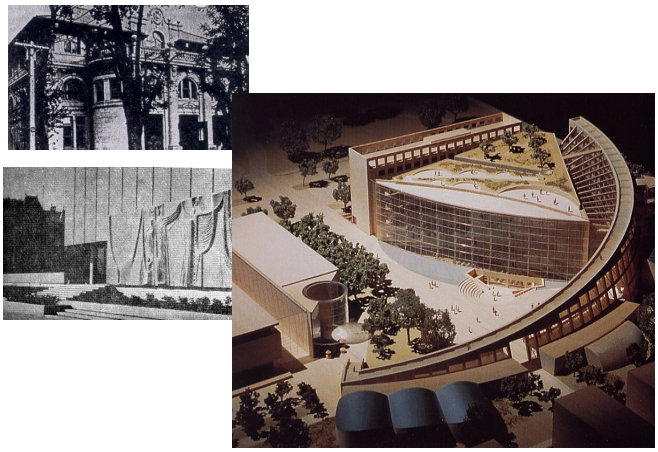
Utah's public library buildings have served the state well in the 20th century, but most are no longer adequate to meet the needs of the 21st.

Many libraries are housed in aging buildings that do

Tooele City Public Library



Minersville Public Library



Salt Lake City Public Library, Main Library

not meet today's codes and standards, lack the capacity to support information technology, and are inefficient and costly to operate. Many lack adequate space for patron activities, collection storage, and staff work areas. The worst are grossly inadequate and potentially hazardous. While many older facilities have undergone sporadic renovation, only a handful have been renovated to fully comply with current codes and standards. Even those with comparatively new facilities may lack adequate space to provide new services that communities increasingly demand or to meet the growth anticipated for the next ten years.

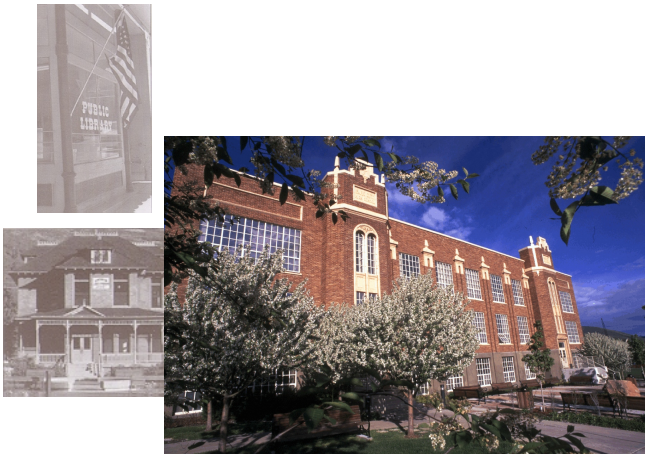
American Fork City Public Library

As large as the aggregate numbers may seem, the libraries' requests are modest. By any means used to calculate the space needed for library functions, Utah's public libraries currently fall below the sizes established by nationwide standards. Even if every library added all of the space identified for growth and functional needs in this study, Utah's libraries, on average, would still only reach the median levels established by national benchmarks.

Panguitch City / Garfield County Public Library

A range of options for library funding and governance could provide tools to help communities support their libraries.

As local communities look for solutions to address their library needs, they may want to explore a broader range of governance and funding options that would be permissible under Utah statutes. While communities review these options, providing incentive funding for public library construction offers the most practical, and non-controversial, way to meet urgent needs immediately.



Park City Public Library

Utah's public libraries are local libraries, funded and governed by local jurisdictions. Many Utah communities– particularly those in rural areas – cannot address these needs without help.

Throughout the state's history, only a handful of cities and counties, primarily concentrated in the urban

Wasatch Front areas, have been able to meet the library needs of their residents without outside assistance. Residents in remote rural communities – where library services fulfill critical functions – simply do not have a resource base sufficient to address their library needs alone.

Three times in Utah history visionary efforts have supported the development of public library facilities for residents statewide. The enabling legislation for the Utah Territory provided funds for the first public library. The donations of Andrew Carnegie in the early twentieth century made it possible for more than twenty Utah communities to construct public libraries. From 1965 to 1974 and from 1984 to 1987, the federal Library Services and Construction Act made matching funds available to support construction and renovation of Utah public libraries.

Today the state's residents look to similarly visionary public leaders and private donors who share Andrew Carnegie's recognition that "free public libraries" are "the most socially important structures that can be built" and "America's greatest contribution to western civilization."

Provo City Library

Weber County Library System
Ogden Valley Branch

Salt Lake City Public Library
Day-Riverside Branch

[1] Nolan Lushington and Willis N. Mills, Jr., *Libraries Designed for Users: A Planning Handbook* (Hamden, Conn.: Library Professional Publications, 1980), p. 49.

[2] Anne Gervasi and Betty Kay Seibt, *Handbook for Small, Rural, and Emerging Public Libraries* (Phoenix and New York: Oryx Press, 1988) pp. 47, 52; Lushington and Mills, p. 48, suggest 1.0 sf for populations of 10,000 or less, 0.6 for populations of 100,000. Note that in many cases this recommended minimum is *net* square footage (i.e. not including mechanical and support space) and that it does not include an allocation for "special services."

[3] Philip D. Leighton and David C. Weber, *Planning Academic and Research Library Buildings*,3rd ed. (Chicago: American Library Association, 2000), p. 111.

[4]Jeannette Woodward, *Countdown to a New Library* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2000), p. 5.

[5]Lee B. Brawner and Donald K. Beck, Jr., *Determining Your Public Library's Future Size* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1996), p. 4.

[6]Leighton and Wood, pp. 53, 110-11.

[7] This section relies on data drawn from Bobbee M. Hepworth, *Utah Libraries: Heritage* (Salt Lake City: Utah Library Association, 1976), the Utah Centennial County History Series included in *Utah History Suite* CD, 1999 edition, and Joseph A. Geddes and Carmen D. Fredrickson, *Libraries as Social Institutions,* Utah Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin No. 393 (1956) unless noted otherwise.

[8] Hepworth states that there were 23, but lists only 22. Geddes and Fredrickson, p.14, identify 22 listed in the 1925 report.

[9] Geddes and Fredrickson, p. 14.

[10] Photographs used by permission, Utah State Historical Society, all rights reserved. Shipler photographs no. 16856 and no. 27698.

[11] Photographs from Hepworth, *Utah Libraries: Heritage*, the collections of the Utah State Historical Society, the facilities assessment survey, and individual librarians. See *Information Sources,* p. 81 below, for complete photo credits.

[12] Geddes and Fredrickson, pp. 5, 7, 9, 35.

[13]Hepworth, p. 54.

[14] Geddes and Fredrickson, pp. 5, 6, 35.