



San Francisco Public Library

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY

STRATEGIC PLAN

2003 – 2006

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by the
San Francisco Public Library Commission

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY

STRATEGIC PLAN 2003 – 2006

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Topic	Page
Introduction	3
Mission and Values	5
History	6
Methodology	8
How to use the Plan	9
Goals, Objectives and Activities	11-23.
• <i>General Information</i>	11
• <i>Lifelong Learning</i>	15
• <i>Current Topics and Titles</i>	20
Implementation	24
Conclusion	24

INTRODUCTION

The principles of library service are the same today as they were at the beginning of the 20th century. However, library services and their methods of delivery have expanded in ways unimagined by our predecessors. Libraries are changing because society, culture and the people we serve are changing. Strategic planning is what has allowed the San Francisco Public Library to manage these changes without losing sight of our values and our commitment to our community. The Strategic Plan 2003 -2006 is intended to continue to build on our past success by prioritizing and refocusing our energy and resources. Its development and implementation requires us to assess and adjust our efforts in response to a changing environment both within and outside the organization.

The San Francisco Public Library is the community's repository for books and materials about a wide variety of subjects and interests. The provision of information, in books, other print and non-print formats, or electronic form, is the primary role and service of the San Francisco Public Library. Although technology has become a significant factor in the provision of library services, it is not an end in itself. It is only one of the many means to provide information. Books and information are the heart of the library.

We are fortunate in San Francisco to have a wonderful Main Library facility that acts as the repository for all types of information and serves as a support collection for all our branches. The twenty-six branches of the Library, because of their size and community-based nature, provide books, information and recreational reading that serve the immediate needs of their users. Like the branches, the Main Library also serves a neighborhood community and provides that function primarily with services and materials in the First Stop¹ collection and the Children's Center. The roles of the Main Library and the branches complement each other and allow the Library to provide its users with information ranging from in-depth, historical treatment of subjects, to ready reference and current best-sellers. Our system is truly one library collection with twenty-seven entry points; and, with the Library's delivery system, materials move from building to building on a daily basis to satisfy the needs of library users.

The 21st century library serves as a gateway to the exciting and complex world of information. With the pervasive availability and use of the Internet, many people believe that they can serve the same function as a librarian, but librarians are trained to be information-seekers and can find answers to questions in electronic, paper or any other form. The role of the librarian is transitioning from one who provides information to users to one who serves as an information navigator or trainer, assisting users to effectively identify and judge the quality of the myriad of information available on the Internet today. Even though the role of the librarian has expanded to include that of the Internet expert, the role of the librarian as expert selector and developer of print collections remains very important.

¹ First Stop is located on the main entry floor and includes a collection of books, videos, DVD's, CD's and other materials on a variety of popular and current topics and interests.

Although the functions of providing an exciting and balanced book collection and access to the world of information are important, the Library also holds a special place in our neighborhoods as a venue for many types of public programs, from story times to book groups, as well as a gathering place for friends and neighbors, a meeting place for community groups and the repository for the history and culture of our neighborhoods. In addition to being a destination point, the Library seeks to become part of the communities we serve by reaching out to diverse populations, such as students, seniors, new immigrants and disabled users. We hope to better meet the needs of our users by interacting with them in their own situations and going beyond the library walls to provide services.

This strategic plan was developed with input from community members and Library staff. By engaging the community in the planning process, we hope that we have produced a plan that is responsive to the needs of the community and goes beyond what the Library, without that community input, may have projected as its role in the community. By combining the knowledge and guidance of community members and the professional expertise of Library staff, we believe that we can effectively put the Library to work for the community. The San Francisco Public Library is here to meet the needs of its users and to serve as a partner with other agencies and the community at large in strengthening the quality of life in San Francisco.

MISSION

The San Francisco Public Library is dedicated to free and equal access to information, knowledge, independent learning, and the joys of reading for our diverse community.

VALUES

The values statement provides the framework that supports the planning and implementation of all the library service responses.

- ♣ Our library users are the reason the Library exists. We provide quality service and treat all library users fairly and equally. Services are provided in a non-judgmental manner that is sensitive to, and supportive of, human differences. Our goal is always to provide excellent customer service.
- ♣ We use professional judgment, knowledge, and experience to develop and maintain collections, services and staff that respect and reflect the diversity in our city.
- ♣ We provide convenient access to facilities, resources and services that meet the needs of library users.
- ♣ We advocate for and support policies and procedures that protect privacy of all library user records.² We value and provide free and equal access to all types of information.³
- ♣ Our employees are valued as individuals for their important contributions to the organization. An open exchange of ideas is encouraged throughout the library system. We encourage teamwork and collaboration. We support our staff by providing opportunities for growth and professional development.
- ♣ We are a learning organization that is not afraid to change and take appropriate risks in pursuit of meeting community needs. We constantly reassess our services and methods and attempt to see ourselves through the public's eyes.

² The San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed Resolution 53-03 on January 21, 2003. The San Francisco Public Library Commission passed Resolution 2/03 on February 4, 2003 supporting library users' rights to privacy and confidentiality.

³ The San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed Resolution 206-01 on October 1, 2001 which prohibits the use of Internet filtering or content blocking technology on City-owned computers used as public Internet access terminals.

HISTORY

The San Francisco Public Library, established in 1877, has had a fairly turbulent past, not unlike other famous institutions of our City. In 1888, the Main Library was situated in the City Hall on Marshall Square, which is the site of the current Main Library. Also, three branches were open in the Mission, North Beach (Chinatown) and Potrero Hill districts. In 1901, Andrew Carnegie awarded the City \$750,000 to support the construction of a new Main Library and several branches. Because Carnegie was perceived as not supportive of labor, this gift created much controversy and was not immediately used. The Main Library and two branches were destroyed in the 1906 earthquake, although in 1907 a temporary Main Library opened. In 1912, the Carnegie grant again became an issue; the designated use of the funds was placed on the ballot and overwhelmingly approved by the voters. This led to the construction of the Main Library, now the Asian Art Museum, and five branches. Currently, the Library system is comprised of the Main Library and twenty-six branches, with a new Mission Bay Branch slated for construction in the near future.

The Library was not well-supported by the City for many years. A bond issue for construction of a new Main Library and new branches failed in 1948, which led to enhanced grassroots efforts to increase support for the system. The Friends of the San Francisco Public Library was founded in 1962. Years of citizen support were behind the success in 1988 of the \$109.5 million bond issue that funded the construction of the new Main Library, a magnificent, 376,000 square foot facility that opened in April 1996. Even though the concept was controversial and not supported by City Hall, the Friends of the Library led the charge to support Proposition E, a ballot initiative passed in 1994 that secured dedicated funding for the Library. Finally, in 2000, further Friends of the Library efforts resulted in the passage of the \$106 million bond issue to support the renovation of most branches and the construction of five new branches.

Planning efforts were seriously undertaken by the Library system as early as 1958 when Emerson Greenaway, director of the Free Library of Philadelphia, was retained to survey the Library system. Another planning report was commissioned in 1982 by Columbia University library expert Lowell Martin.

One of the first examples of plans that incorporated the needs of the community was the strategic plan approved by the Library Commission in 1992. This important plan urged stable sources of funding and the creation of new focused collections based on community need and interest. In 1997, the Mayor commissioned an audit of the Library; and one of the key recommendations, among many other organizational and service improvement recommendations, was the development of a strategic plan. That effort was begun in 1998 by former City Librarian Regina Minudri. The Public Library Association's *Planning for Results* model was used as a basis for that plan. A draft plan was completed in 1999; and, although never officially approved by the Library Commission, that plan has guided the work of library staff over the last several years. Currently, the Board of Supervisors requires that every City department prepare a

strategic plan.⁴ Because of the City requirement and also due to the changing nature of society and new priorities for the library system, a new planning effort was begun in 2003, again based on the Public Library Association model.

⁴ Charter Section 9.114 regarding Mission Driven Budgets and Charter Section 16.120 regarding Customer Service Plans as part of Chapter 88 of the City Administrative Code.

METHODOLOGY

This Strategic Plan uses the model found in *The New Planning for Results, a Streamlined Approach* by Sandra Nelson for the Public Library Association (Chicago, American Library Association, 2001). The *New Planning for Results* was built on three basic assumptions:

1. Excellence must be defined locally – it results when library services match community needs, interests, and priorities.
2. Excellence is possible for both small and large libraries – it rests more on commitment than on unlimited resources.
3. Excellence is a moving target – even when achieved, excellence must be continually maintained.

This method acknowledges there is no national standard for exceptional library service. Just as each community is unique, each library is unique in how it may best meet the needs of its community. To this end, members of the San Francisco community and selected staff, in two separate groups, were invited to a series of meetings devoted to creating a vision of San Francisco and discussing the Library's ability to help make the vision a reality.

First, the Community Planning Group⁵ was asked to define a vision of San Francisco as a place to live, work and visit. Members were asked to consider the social, economic, political, cultural and demographic make-up of the City. Next, members were asked to consider the needs to be met if that vision of San Francisco were to be attained. It came as no surprise that members desired to improve such situations as homelessness, education, and cultural, political and socioeconomic issues encountered by residents and visitors on a daily basis. After defining these needs, members were asked to identify which of those issues the Library could help address.

Second, the Staff Focus Group⁶ responded to the identified needs the Library could address by reviewing all library services. With a goal of helping the community achieve its vision, the staff group reviewed services such as collections, reading spaces, facilities improvements, websites, programs and exhibits and much more. Members used this opportunity to brainstorm new services and integrate services that have long been requested by members of the public. The resulting dialogue identified three service responses that would serve as the framework for existing and upcoming library services: General Information, Lifelong Learning and Current Topics and Titles.

Out of this dialogue grew the service responses, goals, objectives, and activities presented here. The Strategic Plan confirms the community and the Library's commitment to excellent library service for all who live and work in this great City.

⁵ See Attachment A for a list of participants

⁶ See Attachment A for a list of participants

How to Use The Plan

As mentioned above, the Community Planning Group and library staff, in an ongoing dialogue, identified three service responses and community-specific goals that best meet the overall needs of the San Francisco community.⁷ The service responses, including a definition from *New Planning for Results* and the corresponding Library goals, are summarized here for quick reference:

- **General Information** - A library that offers General Information helps meet the need for information and answers to questions on a broad array of topics related to work, school, and personal life. Incorporated into this service response is the foundation of the Library -- a collection that reflects the array of human experience.

Goal 1: San Franciscans will have access to books, literature, research and other library materials in a variety of formats to meet their need for information, and will have questions answered on a broad array of topics related to work, school, social, civic and personal life.

- **Lifelong Learning** - A library that provides Lifelong Learning service helps address the desire for self-directed personal growth and development opportunities.

Goal 2: San Franciscans will have access to library services that address the need for effective skills relating to finding, evaluating and using information in a variety of formats.

Goal 3: San Franciscans who have a desire to grow and learn throughout their lives will have the support they need to fulfill their goals.

- **Current Topics and Titles** - A library that provides Current Topics and Titles helps to fulfill community residents' appetite for information about popular cultural and social trends and their desire for satisfying reading experiences.

Goal 4: San Franciscans will have ready access to current books and library materials in a variety of formats to meet their need for literature and for information about popular culture and social trends.

Goal 5: San Franciscans will have access and opportunity to experience the diverse cultural activities the City embodies.

Each service response is expanded upon in the following sections. Readers will find each response has corresponding goals, objectives and activities. Additionally, the service responses were subdivided into four resource areas: services, collections, information

⁷ See Attachment B for a list of all library service responses considered during this process.

infrastructure and access technology, and facilities. By subdividing each service response, the groups hoped to ensure that the planning activities were balanced throughout the Library so that all library services are represented.

One final note:

Readers will find the order of the service responses are:

1. General Information;
2. Lifelong Learning; and
3. Current Topics and Titles.

This order represents the priorities identified by the planning groups. While maintaining the order to preserve the identified priorities, the plan itself strives to create three services of equal importance. This is to say, library staff will strive to treat Current Topics and Titles with the same focus and dedication as are awarded to General Information and Lifelong Learning.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

*A library that offers **General Information** helps meet the need for information and answers to questions on a broad array of topics related to work, school, and personal life.*

Goal 1: San Franciscans will have access to books, literature, research and other library materials in a variety of formats to meet their need for information, and will have questions answered on a broad array of topics related to work, school, social, civic and personal life.

Services

1. Develop and maintain Library programs that are community-based, providing programming of interest to neighborhoods. [Goal 1]
 - 1.1 Expand adult programs and exhibits in the branches so residents may attend programs convenient to their home or work.
 - 1.1.1 Incorporate into outreach strategy to be developed and implemented by 2004/2005.
2. Reach out to targeted audiences throughout the City to inform residents about the information opportunities provided by the Library.
 - 2.1 Use focus groups to bring members of the public to the table to explore needs, and ways in which the Library might respond to the needs identified through this process.
 - 2.2 Enhance outreach services to schools (K-12), preschools and day care centers to encourage reading and love of learning in children.
 - 2.2.1 Incorporate into outreach strategy to be developed and implemented by 2004/2005.
 - 2.3 Enhance outreach services to adults, seniors, teens, families, persons with disabilities, residents new to the country, and areas of the City identified as low income to inform residents about the information opportunities provided by the Library.
 - 2.3.1 Incorporate into outreach strategy to be developed and implemented by 2004/2005.

General Information: Services *continued*

- 2.4 Improve library services delivered to locations throughout the community, using the Library's bookmobiles and other mobile services that will benefit seniors, adults and children.
 - 2.4.1 Incorporate into outreach strategy and Branch Library Improvement Program⁸ an interim service plan, to be developed and implemented by 2004/2005.
 - 2.4.2 Incorporate advertising of library services on bookmobiles and other library and City vehicles. Incorporate into outreach strategy to be developed and implemented by 2004/2005.
 - 2.4.3 Insure that mobile services are reaching new residents from other countries, economically disadvantaged people, potential users and persons with disabilities by reviewing the demographics and target clientele where visits are scheduled by 2004/05.

Collections

- 3. Improve information resources available for the general public. [Goal 1]
 - 3.1 Collect books and library materials in a variety of formats relevant to each neighborhood, reflecting the history, linguistic diversity and cultural mosaic of the City.
 - 3.1.1 Create demographic and unique characteristics profile of users, potential users, and online users while also maintaining the Library's commitment to ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of all personal data gathered. To be implemented in 2004/2005.
 - 3.1.2 Respond to outcome of 3.1.1 with ongoing collection monitoring, adjusting purchasing priorities and funds as appropriate, providing each local library with the capability to quickly respond to changes in community needs. To be implemented in 2004/2005 and annually thereafter.
 - 3.2 Remain a state-of-the-art information center providing timely and up-to-date books and materials in the format preferred by individuals.

⁸ In November 2000, the voters of San Francisco approved Proposition A, a \$106 million bond to support the seismic, ADA, and technological renovation of nineteen branches, the construction of four new branches to replace branches currently in leased facilities and the construction of a new branch in Mission Bay.

General Information: Collections *continued*

- 3.2.1 Enhance professional growth opportunities for staff training to keep current and identify new trends in publishing and services. To be incorporated into annual staff training plan beginning with 2004/2005.

Information Infrastructure and Access Technology

- 4. Improve access to information and collections by developing and maintaining a robust technological environment. [Goal 1]
 - 4.1 Install wireless capabilities in library facilities so residents may use library services with their own computing devices, in addition to providing plug-in access.
 - 4.1.1 Create a secure and robust network environment that is safe for users and staff that provides for use of wireless devices by June 2005.
 - 4.1.2 Provide wired and wireless devices for in-library use, thus increasing the technological capacity for accessing library services. To be implemented in 2005/2006.
 - 4.1.3 Explore staff use of emerging technologies, such as headsets and hand-held devices, to enhance public service opportunities. Develop recommendations by January 2005.
 - 4.2 Provide remote access to library services, including information resources and materials, so residents may use the Library from their home or office anytime day or night.
 - 4.2.1 Continue to develop services for electronic users and potential online users by making all procedures to access library services available in an electronic format. Services will include but are not limited to online library forms (homebound, library card application, suggestion form, and comment form) so that services provided within library facilities are also fully available to online users. To be completed by June 2004.
 - 4.2.2 Continue to develop the Library's website as the primary means of electronic access to information in order to ensure quick and easy retrieval of resources.
 - 4.2.3 Remain diligent in insuring that persons with disabilities have access to all collections and services.

General Information: Facilities

Facilities

5. Renovate facilities to reflect the unique characteristics of the neighborhoods they serve and to enhance the library as an inviting and useful place to visit. [Goal 1]
 - 5.1 Enhance teen services, a recognized age group that is currently underserved,⁹ by creating unique physical spaces in appropriate library facilities.
 - 5.1.1 Engage the community, particularly teens, in the local neighborhood to gather input as part of the community needs assessment for the degree of emphasis for teen services in their local library facility. To be completed prior to facility renovation.
 - 5.2 Design environments that encourage a positive physical experience to browse, sit, read and study.
 - 5.2.1 Establish a staff task force to develop system-wide guidelines for creating a positive experience for library users across the system (coordinate with 17.2.1). Guidelines to be implemented by January 2005.
 - 5.3 Develop long term facility maintenance plan by November 2003 for implementation in 2004/2005.

⁹ While all library locations have recognizable areas to welcome adults and children, similar spaces for teens generally are not present. At the very age when we start losing them as readers, teens become an invisible population within the library. In order to encourage them to see the Library as relevant to their lives, it is important that we provide a setting that welcomes them and lets them know that their needs and interests are important and valued.

LIFELONG LEARNING

*A library that provides **Lifelong Learning** service helps address the desire for self-directed personal growth and development opportunities.*

Goal 2: San Franciscans will have access to library services that address the need for effective skills relating to finding, evaluating, and using information in a variety of formats.

Goal 3: San Franciscans who have a desire to grow and learn throughout their lives will have the support they need to fulfill their goals.

Services

6. Provide opportunities for library users to learn how to use the Library's catalog, databases and Internet resources, and to develop their research and computer skills. Emphasize responding to the needs of special population groups, as appropriate. [Goal 2; Goal 3]
 - 6.1 Ensure that persons with disabilities have easy access to information by upgrading ADA-compatible workstations as new technology becomes available, as well as designing online access to library resources for persons with disabilities.
 - 6.2 Provide focused training opportunities to support the development of technology skills of seniors. Develop partnerships with community and civic groups to facilitate and broaden the array of training opportunities available for seniors. To begin by June 2004 and become ongoing thereafter.
 - 6.3 Continue to train staff in instruction techniques and subject-specific topics to enable staff to provide relevant classes and one-on-one guidance to users. Enhanced training program to be incorporated into the 2004/2005 Library budget.
7. Improve collaboration and communication with educational institutions and preschools to position children and young adults for school and life success. [Goal 2]
 - 7.1 Create learning opportunities for educators and students to incorporate comprehensive instruction on using library resources, including books and materials, and in all formats.

Lifelong Learning: Services *continued*

- 7.2 Expand library outreach programs with San Francisco Unified School District to incorporate new partnerships in learning and reading among the youth in the City.
 - 7.2.1 Create cooperative agreements with key schools to more fully integrate lifelong learning opportunities for children and youth. To be completed by January 2005.
 - 7.2.2 Enrich the content of formal education by supporting class visits to library facilities as well as library staff regularly visiting classes at strategic times during the school year. Outreach strategy to be developed and implemented by fiscal 2004/2005.
8. Improve programs and services for residents for whom English is not their native language. [Goal 2; Goal 3]
 - 8.1 An overall system-wide outreach strategy will be developed by staff and administration that will provide the umbrella structure to enable staff at each library facility to implement targeted programs and services to respond to the needs of residents in their neighborhood for whom English is not their native language. Outreach strategy to be developed and implemented by 2004/2005.
9. Provide opportunities for residents to attend and participate in a wide variety of library programs designed to contribute to the individual learning experience. [Goal 3]
 - 9.1 Document the history of San Francisco by expanding community history collections celebrating the uniqueness of neighborhoods. Incorporate into outreach strategy to be developed and implemented by 2004/2005.
 - 9.2 Enhance the availability of neighborhood photographic archives by digitizing the photographs and making the collections available through the Library's online catalog.
 - 9.3 Expand in-library programs and events such as book talks, book groups, story hours, literacy training, and job fairs to increase personal learning and growth opportunities for library users. Outreach strategy to be developed and implemented by 2004/2005.
 - 9.4 Enhance and maintain the depth of Main Library research and special collections to assist researchers and identify other collections that are of interest to significant segments of the community.

Lifelong Learning: Services *continued*

- 9.5 Affinity centers were developed as part of the Main Library service program in the early 1990's in recognition of the diverse community that we serve and to provide collections and services that are of great interest to specific segments of our community. In order to build on the initial foundation and current programming of the centers, reinvigorate and further develop collections and programming integral to the Affinity Centers in the Main Library. Engage scholars, community members, donors and other stakeholders to develop a vision statement and service plan for each center.

- 10. Continue to enhance programs that support the Library's role as a clearinghouse for cultural and educational programs, events and exhibitions. [Goal 5]
 - 10.1 Ensure that San Franciscans are aware of the full array of library collections and services available by expanding the Library's outreach strategy throughout the City and in collaboration with selected partners in the community.
 - 10.1.1 Establish a staff task force to develop guidelines and specific targets for expanding outreach with a focus on reaching new residents from other countries, economically disadvantaged people, and persons with disabilities. Outreach strategy to be developed and implementation begun by 2004/2005.
 - 10.1.2 Increase representation at street fairs and other community events to encourage neighborhood involvement and to promote library services throughout each year. Incorporate into outreach strategy to be developed and implementation begun by 2004/2005.

Collections

- 11. Inspire library users and potential users with the joy of reading and learning as core values. [Goal 3]
 - 11.1 Support the individual learning experience by developing and maintaining an extensive collection of books and library materials in a variety of formats on a wide array of topics in an easily accessible manner.
 - 11.1.1 Establish collection goals to reflect the outcomes generated from 14.1.1 and ongoing community input at the local level that is included in the community needs assessment (14.1.2). To be ongoing beginning in fiscal 2004/2005.

Lifelong Learning: Collections *continued*

- 11.1.2 Enhance the collections of materials that reflect the linguistic goal of 10%¹⁰ of book and materials collection budget dedicated to books in languages other than English. This goal is driven by detailed analysis of demographic make-up of each neighborhood. Develop a strategy in 2003/2004 to reach this target in 2005/2006.
- 11.1.3 Continue to develop access to Library website in Spanish and Chinese and plan for access in Russian, Japanese and other languages.

Information Infrastructure and Access Technology

- 12. Facilitate the public's ability to effectively use new materials and technologies to enhance research skills and stay abreast of trends in the delivery of information. [Goal 2]
 - 12.1 Provide expanded technology opportunities for self-directed learning.
 - 12.1.1 Ensure that the Library's technological infrastructure and systems support the development of a comprehensive online learning environment in a variety of subject areas and incorporating the highest attainable quality of learning aids such as online tutorials, pathfinders, webcasts, and/or web links to tutorials in a variety of subjects that will facilitate users access and learning. To begin by June 2004 and ongoing thereafter.
 - 12.2 Expand the Library's program of instruction to include subject-specific topics.
 - 12.2.1 Train staff in instruction techniques and subject-specific topics and provide the technological infrastructure and systems to enable staff to provide relevant classes and one-on-one guidance to users. Enhanced training program to be incorporated into the 2004/2005 Library budget.

¹⁰ The level of funding in 2002/2003 was approximately 6% for books and library materials in non-English languages.

Facilities

13. Create vibrant learning environments to encourage use of the Library as a center of learning and fostering a climate of learning and reading. [Goal 3]
 - 13.1 Create reading areas and/or study space to increase the usability, quiet study opportunities and comfort of library facilities by the completion of the Branch Library Improvement Program.
 - 13.1.1 Engage the community in each local neighborhood to gather input as part of the community needs assessment on optimal use of library space for reading areas and/or study space.
 - 13.2 Create flexible Program Rooms, incorporating opportunities for learning labs and homework assistance, in at least 70% of library facilities by the completion of the Branch Library Improvement Program.
 - 13.2.1 Engage the community in each local neighborhood to gather input as part of the community needs assessment on optimal use of library space for library programs.

CURRENT TOPICS AND TITLES

*A library that provides **Current Topics and Titles** helps to fulfill community residents' appetite for literature and information about popular cultural and social trends and their desire for satisfying reading experiences.*

Goal 4: San Franciscans will have ready access to current books and library materials in a variety of formats¹¹ to meet their need for literature and for information about popular culture and social trends.

Goal 5: San Franciscans will have access to information and the opportunity to experience through Library services the benefits of the diverse cultural activities the City embodies.

Services

14. Continue to enhance programs that support the Library's role as a clearing house for cultural and educational programs, events and exhibitions. [Goal 5]

14.1 Continue to partner with community, arts, educational, corporate, and cultural institutions in San Francisco and the Bay Area. Enhance the information and referral services provided by the Library about those agencies. To be completed by September 2005.

14.1.1 Continue to provide programs with partnering institutions such as schools, museums and the business community.

14.1.2 Increase the Library's visibility as a key stakeholder in the network of community, arts, educational and cultural institutions through the Library's *San Francisco Community Services Directory*¹² program.

14.2 Assist local residents and reach out to potential users in search of current information and events by developing and maintaining web exhibits featuring local activities, current interests and library services. To be implemented by June 2004.

¹¹ Formats include, for example, books, books on tape, DVD's, and CD's.

¹² This service, available from the Library's website, provides users with information about all San Francisco government agencies, health & human service providers, community-based organizations, museums, cultural institutions, community educational centers, neighborhood-oriented groups, and merchants' associations.

Current Topics and Titles: Services *continued*

- 14.2.1 Train technology, exhibitions, and web staff in the Library's online system and web capabilities to initiate ongoing web exhibits.

Collections

- 15. Ensure availability of books and library materials in an array of formats that are requested and needed by users. [Goal 4]
 - 15.1 Solicit broad-based community input to ensure book and library materials' collections both in English and non-English languages in all facilities reflect community needs for current topics and literature in a variety of formats and languages.
 - 15.1.1 Create a community based *Library Collection Development Advisory Committee*¹³ to facilitate communication of community needs and to explore the nature of collection development in an urban community. City Librarian to establish committee by January 2004, including stakeholders from Main Library Affinity Centers and other groups.
 - 15.1.2 Continue to gather community input at the neighborhood level on desired collections and services for each facility.
 - 15.1.3 Evaluate data annually on the use of selected collections to continue to fine tune collection needs, adjusting funding assigned to specific collection areas as appropriate.
 - 15.2 Respond to the expressed demand for books and library materials on current topics and titles.
 - 15.2.1 Institute a tracking system for reserve fulfillment to determine and improve reduction of wait time for requests of popular materials. To be established by January 2004.
 - 15.2.2 Establish library user self-service pick-up of reserve materials in selected locations by July 2004.
 - 15.2.3 Expand options for notification of reserves to include telephone notification, as well as by the current options of email or regular mail. To be completed by June 2004.

¹³ This committee will be charged with providing meaningful input to the Library regarding the overall relevancy of book and other library collections in meeting the needs of the communities served by the Library. Composition, meeting frequency, etc to be developed as part of completion of 13.1.1

Current Topics and Titles: Collections *continued*

- 15.2.4 Order more copies of popular titles in anticipation of reserve demands throughout each year.

Information Infrastructure and Access Technology

16. Provide library user self-help opportunities to facilitate ease of use of, and access to, literature and information. [Goal 4]

- 16.1 To facilitate library users' self-service check out of materials, as well as to improve inventory control and loss prevention, resulting in better public service, consider possible implementation of next-generation scanning technology (also known as RFID - Radio Frequency Identification¹⁴) for books and other library materials, subject to Library Commission approval after a public hearing.

- 16.1.1 Sponsor a community forum to present information on RFID in libraries and engage the public in a robust dialog on the topic.

- 16.1.2 Establish staff task force to research, analyze and make recommendations to Library Administration and the Library Commission regarding RFID implementation, including privacy issues.

- 16.1.3 Consider incorporation of funding for implementation as part of the 2004/2005 Library budget process with Library Commission approval. Implementation to begin in 2005/2006.

- 16.2 Assist users in fulfilling their individual information needs by developing a *My Library*¹⁵ service for customized library services. To be implemented by September 2004.

- 16.2.1 Continue to develop library services for electronic users who cannot or choose not to visit library buildings by making all library services available in an electronic format. Services to include, but are not limited to, online library forms (such as homebound, library card application, suggestion form, and comment form) in a variety of languages.

¹⁴ A growing standard for inventory control in the commercial sector, RFID replaces barcode or "zebra" label on books and other library materials with a chip that contains information on the item that facilitates fast and easy checkout of each item.

¹⁵ *My Library* incorporates library user flexibility and options in designing personal library accounts, such as receiving electronic recommendations for reading as new books arrive in interest areas designated by the user.

Current Topics and Titles: Information Infrastructure and Access Technology *continued*

- 16.2.2 Train technology and web staff in the Library's online system's capabilities to initiate *My Library* service.
- 16.2.3 Develop an outreach strategy to educate library users on the use of *My Library* and implement in 2004/2005.

Facilities

- 17. Improve ability of residents to obtain books and library materials in a variety of formats in a timely manner. [Goal 4]
 - 17.1 Improve delivery of materials throughout the system so that 80%¹⁶ of items requested and available on-shelf are received within three business days at the designated pick-up location.
 - 17.1.1 Restructure delivery services to all locations to improve efficiency and reduce time needed for materials to reach their destination. Incorporate implementation as part of the 2004/2005 Library budget process.
 - 17.2 Implement collection display and organization guidelines to enhance the user experience across the library system.
 - 17.2.1 Establish a staff task force to develop system-wide guidelines for display and organization of books and other materials. Guidelines to be implemented by January 2005 (coordinate with 5.2.1).
 - 17.2.2 Create *Staff Recommends* sections in select locations, as well as virtually on the SFPL website, by January 2004.

¹⁶ Data and analysis from a 2002/2003 delivery study suggests that currently items take up to 4 to 6 days to reach their destination.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Strategic Plan 2003 – 2006 will be realized through the activities, services and resources we provide. Each library facility, program area, and staff member is charged with developing and carrying out this Strategic Plan.

The City Librarian will convene a staff task force to develop measurable results for each of the activities listed in the Strategic Plan. Measurable results will be key to knowing how well each of the objectives is met over time. Also, as called out in the Strategic Plan, additional task forces will be convened to develop system-wide guidelines to create a positive experience and environment for library users, to develop an outreach strategy to further enhance the Library's connection with the community, and to develop an implementation plan for conversion to radio-frequency identification technology. Also, a broad-based committee will be convened to provide an opportunity for a community-based discussion about the Library's collection development policies and procedures.

Resource allocation is a critical element in accomplishing this plan. Each year, as part of the annual budget process, we will return to the Strategic Plan to measure our progress toward achieving our goals, craft new efforts for the coming year, and reallocate resources as needed.

The success of the plan is strongly based upon the continued development of the knowledge, skills and abilities of all library staff, as well as insuring that the broad and rich diversity of the City in language and culture is mirrored by the Library's staff.

CONCLUSION

The San Francisco Public Library has operated in a constantly evolving and changing environment for many years. The Library is dedicated to reviewing and modifying its collections and services to meet the evolving informational and cultural needs of the diverse community we serve. The Strategic Plan 2003 -2006 renews our commitment to excellent public library service. While providing every library facility and program with a unifying organizational vision and system-wide goals, this Strategic Plan is intended to be broad and flexible enough to tailor services to each unique neighborhood. The Strategic Plan also provides a framework to consider opportunities for new programs and services.

The best way to assure that we have an excellent library system well into the future is to continuously reinvent and revitalize ourselves, based on a good understanding of community needs and the ways in which we can respond to those needs. A library that plans makes better decisions, which leads to better library service.

For the coming three years, this plan will shape and guide what we are, what we do, and why we do it.