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LIBRARY PROGRAM AND PLANNING REPORT

for

ONONDAGA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

January 13, 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Onondaga County Public Library's (OCPL) Central Library and Library System Operations Center ("the System") occupy 111,820 gross square feet (GSF) in the Galleries of Syracuse Mall. In 2010, the OCPL embarked on a library space planning study to determine the most effective ways to improve library services at this location. The Galleries of Syracuse was analyzed to determine long- and short-term space planning options.

Aaron Cohen Associates (ACA) collected qualitative and quantitative data to determine the most efficient ways to deliver Central Library and System services. ACA conducted the Visual Scan[®], a facilitated stakeholder tour to determine the best parts of the existing library. Overall, the Central Library and the System were graded at a C+, indicating that a reorganization of OPCL is required in the near future. The plan that was developed with OPCL will reorganize the functional elements owned by the Central Library and the System to be a total of 85,520 GSF.

The Galleries of Syracuse was built in the 1980s. It was designed to house a Library in a Mall, with the public space being shared by the tenants in the condo/building. The library planners located the Library entrance on the 2nd Level in order to take advantage of the shared space in the Mall. Indeed, the building planners wanted to create a modern community space, one that contained a Library, Food Court, offices and shops.

Perhaps the biggest challenge facing the OCPL is the need to improve access without alienating different user groups in the County. The neighborhoods within a mile radius of the building have high levels of poverty and joblessness. Homeless shelters are nearby. Many in the community just need a warm place to stay on a cold day. The lack of space is reinforcing dysfunctional relationships, illustrating a need for space for the disadvantaged. On the other hand, there is a growing community of professionals who have moved back to the City. They enjoy the City's events, restaurants and entertainment.

From a community development point of view, it was necessary to determine whether the Central Library should be moved out of the Galleries of Syracuse or if the offices of the Central Library and the System should be split up to reduce its footprint. Our team analyzed the costs for moving, leasing or purchasing. It compared these expenses against the community's desire for the Library to stay in the current location and reconfigure the space. We investigated whether services might improve with a dedicated service center or if a grand vision for a new building emerged. The consensus among almost all stakeholders was that the library's current configuration needed to improve, a solution requiring a renovation and not a new building.

Further examination of the Galleries' architectural plans showed that the 3rd, 4th and 5th Levels of the Library contain compact shelving. The engineers reinforced the building to carry the load of the Library's 19,152 linear feet of collection in compact storage. The storage bays placed strategically throughout a section of the building create a valuable asset for long-term collection storage.

During the analysis, ACA developed a series of concepts for space reorganization. The concept or "project fit" reorganizes a total of 85,520 GSF of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and Lower Levels. The plan will reduce space requirements by 26,300 GSF. The preliminary cost estimate for this project is approximately \$8.5 million. This estimate is based on a cost of \$100/gross square foot and includes upgrading of the heating, ventilating and air conditioning system (85,520 GSF @ \$100 per sq. ft). This assumes that 55,970 GSF from the 3rd and 4th Levels space can be traded for 34,470 GSF of 1st and 2nd Levels space.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The eight specific recommendations for facility enhancements and additions contained within this Plan are as follows:

1. OCPL (the Central Library and the System) should reside at The Galleries of Syracuse for the next 10-20 years. To support this endeavor the library should:
 - a. Provide more space on the Ground Level and improve access from the street.
 - b. Invest in new technology to reduce operational costs over the long-term.
2. OCPL should adopt a comprehensive funding strategy to reorganize the Central Library and System. This should be accomplished with financing in the near-term.
3. In the next 1-3 years, OCPL should undertake a remodel of the Central Library. The reorganization should consolidate, improve and enhance the children's library, adult reading area, program/meeting space, materials handling and system operations.
4. OCPL should improve access to library services on the 1st Level. The plan should create a new entrance on Salina Street.
5. OCPL should improve space on the 2nd Level to provide Local History/Genealogy services, meetings rooms/collaborative space and Literacy/STAR offices.
6. OCPL System Headquarters offices should remain on the 5th Level to reduce renovation/reorganization costs.
7. OCPL should retain the library collection repository on the 3rd, 4th and 5th Levels.
8. OCPL should perform an operational analysis that results in the integration of RFID technology and the acquisition of an automated sorting system (see Appendix 3). The technology would enable patrons to check-in and check-out books without staff intervention.

DESIGN PLAN

The plan recommended by ACA seeks to improve access, consolidate the Library and retain the book repository on the 3rd, 4th and 5th Levels. The plan focuses on reorganizing the library to maximize public services.

The Basement or Loading Level will be reorganized to accommodate a new sorting system and storage of incoming and outgoing material.

The plan adds 27,780 GSF of space to the Entrance or 1st Level, which will have the following services:

- Browse-About Area.
- Adult Services
- Young Adult
- Children's Library.
- Circulation and Operations.
- Meeting Room.

The 2nd Level will have an additional 1,490 GSF of space for the following services:

- Local History/Genealogy
- Literacy/Learning Clusters/Group Study

The total additional space for the 1st and 2nd Levels will be 29,270 GSF.

Staircase and Elevators

An open stair connecting the 1st and 2nd Levels should be added near the entrance to improve the functionality of the existing staircase. On the 2nd Level, the existing staircase needs to be redesigned and redirected toward the middle of the user space. The new stair will dramatically improve the connection between the two main library levels – 1st and 2nd.

- The connection between the 1st and 2nd levels will be improved via the new open stair and 2 elevators. The existing entrance to the 2nd Level should be closed and used for emergencies only.
- One of the elevators will be provided to the Galleries to connect tenants to their leased space. This elevator will be programmed not to open in the Library.

System Headquarters Area

The System Headquarters offices and areas will remain on the 5th Level.

Collection Storage Areas

Collection Storage/Retention in compact shelving will be retained in the same location throughout the building with no access for patrons. Collection space may be shared with partner institutions, e.g., University of Syracuse.

Library Space Reductions

The spaces on the 3rd and 4th Levels will be traded with the Galleries for space on the 1st and 2nd Levels:

3 rd Level:	27,700 GSF
4 th Level:	28,270 GSF
Total	55,970 GSF

The 3rd and 4th Levels will retain only collections in Compact Storage.

Access

The Library will use only two of the three existing elevators. The third elevator can be used by other tenants of the Galleries. The Galleries may add a fourth elevator to improve access to office spaces.

1st Level

The 1st Level provides the most opportunity to improve access to the library's services. Access to and visibility of the Central Library is a strategic service priority.

This plan identified eleven (11) recommended actions for the 1st Level:

1. Expand the Library space by adding 27,780 GSF.
2. Provide a new entrance to increase access to services.
3. Provide a new open stair from the 1st to the 2nd Level.
4. Provide new/larger toilets on this level.
5. Provide easy access to the library's two elevators.
6. Provide a self-service circulation desk and RFID security gates.
7. Provide an improved Browse-About area.
8. Improve Adult Services with new seating, collections and public access computers.
9. Improve Young Adult services with a new service area.
10. Create a new Children's service in the Central Library, one that better supports families that visit the library from Onondaga County.
11. Provide a single point of information to the public. Improve sightline for safety and security. Create a space that monitors the entrance, where staff can handle inquiries and provide localized support. (See map.)

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