



**Corvallis-Benton County Public Library**

**Ten Strategies for Achieving Higher Levels of Service**

**Long Range Strategic Plan  
FY 2010-FY 2015**

*Executive Summary*



May, 2009

## **Executive Summary**

The new strategic plan for the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library (CBCPL) is customer-focused and research-driven. More than 400 individuals—residents, city and county leaders, Library Board members, and staff—voiced their opinions and shared their perceptions of public library service in our communities. Their invaluable input became the foundation of the Library’s plans for the future service delivery.

Conceived in an environment of fiscal constraint and uncertainty, the plan is not a “business-as usual” document. Rather than focusing on lock-step goals, responses, and measurements traditionally found in library strategic plans, new initiatives set forth in the 2010-2015 strategic plan challenge the CBCPL to commit to continuous improvement at all levels and in all areas of Library operation.

This plan is not driven by numbers and percentage increases nor does it concentrate exclusively on the next five years. Instead, the plan’s strategic initiatives engineer fundamental changes that are designed to have a positive impact on service delivery beyond the year 2015.

The Planning Committee reviewed the results of the research and identified ten opportunities for achieving even higher levels of public library services. The Committee believes that the new initiatives are realistic and make the maximum use of available staff and financial resources.

## **Our Mission**

“Bringing People and Information Together”

## **Our Vision**

For over 100 years, the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library (CBCPL) has been a focal point of our community, bringing people and information together. Our vision of the Library is one of possibility, of looking to the future while building on our tradition of responsive service. The Library is on a path of continuous development, embracing changes in our community, in society, and in technology so that we can continue to be a vibrant and useful community institution. We believe in partnerships and collaboration in order to provide the broadest, most beneficial, and most cost-effective services.

The Library is a familiar place, open and welcoming to all people. Books are shared with users of all ages and cultures, from babies in storytime to homebound seniors. A wide variety of library materials is made available to all. Diverse viewpoints are represented at the Library as part of our heritage and obligation as a free people. Questions are answered and curiosity is rewarded with new discoveries. A community of learners, whether children in school or adults pursuing personal interests, is nurtured. Technology brings the latest information to everyone regardless of circumstances. Programs enrich our lives. Gathering places bring us together to learn from each other. Library service is convenient to all users in Benton County, through the main library in Corvallis; branches in Philomath, Monroe, and Alsea; the bookmobile; outreach services; electronically; and in other ways that meet community needs.

## Ten Strategic Initiatives

- A. Board Advocacy and Partnerships:** Strengthen the capacity of the CBCPL Board members to advocate for the Library and to cultivate partnerships.
- B. Staffing:** Expand current staffing levels and create a succession plan for the future leadership of CBCPL.
- C. Technology:** Increase CBCPL's ability to keep up with and adopt rapidly evolving technology and to support existing technology to meet or exceed customer expectations.
- D. Educational Partnerships:** Leverage CBCPL's role as an educational partner in order to better serve school-age children.
- E. Outreach:** Increase the effectiveness of the bookmobile to generate more visibility for the Library and offer improved access to more residents of the County.
- F. Public Relations:** Provide residents of Corvallis and Benton County with better information about the services available to them at their public libraries.
- G. Service and Access:** Create efficiencies that put books and other library materials into the hands of customers more quickly.
- H. High Quality Collections:** Adopt a more holistic approach and consistent procedures for sustaining the quality of the collection.
- I. Facilities:** Maximize current space and anticipate and plan for future space requirements.
- J. Going Forward:** Build momentum for moving the CBCPL to even higher levels of service.

## STRATEGIES CHARTS

Page numbers refer to complete plan narrative

### ***A. Board Advocacy and Partnerships: Strengthen the capacity of the Library Board to advocate for the library and to cultivate partnerships.***

<b>Strategy A: pp. 33-34</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Budget Implications</b>
1. Research the ways in which boards function in similar libraries and use the information to adopt best practices and to create a new vision and role for the CBCPL Board	Board Committee, Management, and Board as a whole	2009-2010	Medium	No
2. Craft a strategic plan for the Board that supports new strategic directions detailed in the 2010-2015 plan	Board and Management	2009-2010	High	Under \$2,500
3. Assess the professional skills and “connections” of board members to help elected officials strategically appoint new members who are representative of the whole community	Board and Management	Ongoing	Medium	No
4. Institute a procedure whereby the Board participates in an annual Board retreat and self-assessment of its performance	Board, Management, Facilitator	Begin Spring 2010	High	Under \$1,000
5. Provide the Board as well as library supporters in Alsea, Monroe, and Philomath with a formal training program that focuses on advocacy training	Management and Facilitator	Fall 2010, then biennially	High	Under \$2,500
6. Identify more occasions when Board members can communicate directly with elected officials regarding the accomplishments and needs of the library	Board and Management	Ongoing	High	No
7. Collaborate with the Friends of the Library Board and the Foundation Board to ensure all three groups are working together to support new strategic directions for the CBCPL.	Board, Friends Board, Foundation Board	Begin Fall 2009	High	No
8. Increase opportunities for Board members to become better informed about the CBCPL and about the current over arching trends and issues in public library service and to have more visibility with library staff.	Board and Management	Begin Fall 2009	Medium	No

***B. Staffing: Expand current staffing levels to ensure safety and quality and to satisfy growing demand, and create a succession plan for future leadership***

<b>Strategy B: pp. 35-38</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Budget Implications</b>
1. Conduct an audit of current employees to identify future staffing needs	Management and Staff	2010	Medium	No
2. Secure the necessary funds to hire a sufficient number of staff to achieve acceptable professional staffing levels and to provide services needed by the public, commensurate with staffing levels in peer libraries	Management, Board present to Budget Commission and City Council	2010-2015	High	Major: Over \$200,000
3. Expand the staff in Alsea, Monroe, and on the bookmobile by adding one additional employee at each location (requires three additional staff)	Management, Board present to Budget Commission and City Council	2010-2012	Very High: Safety Issue	Major: \$100,000-\$200,000
4. Create job descriptions for a manager to oversee digital library services and a staff member responsible for marketing, event planning and community relations	Management	2009-2010	High	Reorganization of Existing Staff
5. Identify "stars" on the staff at the present time and develop a plan for nurturing their abilities	Management and Staff	2011	Medium	Under \$5,000
6. Identify training needs for every employee and a plan for addressing those needs	Management and Staff	2009, Ongoing	High	Incorporate in Present Training Budget
7. Commit to filling future vacancies by training existing staff and encouraging the completion of MLS degrees	Management and Staff	2009, Ongoing	Medium-High	Incorporate in Present Training Budget
8. As opportunities occur, strive to create more diversity on the staff with regard to ethnicity, gender, and age	Library Management, City Management	2009, Ongoing	High	Under \$2,500
9. Continue to offer market-worthy salaries and benefits for staff at all levels to remain competitive with peer libraries, reduce turnover, and attract a skilled and diversified workforce	Library Management, City Management, Support from Council	Ongoing	High	Normal Budget Process
10. Consider developing a mentoring program for young librarians, perhaps in cooperation with librarians in similar institutions and continue offering internships in cooperation with graduate library school programs	Management, Staff, Other Colleagues	Ongoing	Medium	No
11. Make more effective use of the Intranet for sharing of information among library staff	Management, Staff, City MIS Staff	2010	Medium	Under \$1,000
12. Re-institute the staff newsletter to facilitate timely and consistent communication throughout the system	Staff volunteering to take this on	2010	Medium	No

13. Boost staff morale by developing a suggestion award system, recognition program, and an internal blog.	Library and City Management and Staff	2011	Medium	Under \$2,500
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***C. Technology: Meet and exceed customer expectations for access to up-to-date, reliable technology at the library***

<b>Strategy C: pp. 39-41</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Budget Implication</b>
1. Secure the funds required to establish and staff a Technology Work Group focused on library-specific areas (requires two additional staff), with responsibility to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Maintain current public and library-specific technology</li> <li>o Provide staff and public training on library-specific technology</li> <li>o Research and advise library management and staff on new developments in information technology affecting the library and its users, and plan for and implement these developments</li> </ul>	Management, Board, Support from Budget Commission if necessary	2010	High	Currently attempting through reorganization
2. Re-evaluate the budget for technology to ensure it is sufficient to keep pace with changes and increased usage	Management, cooperation with City MIS and Finance	2010	Medium	Unknown at this time
3. Work with City MIS to assure that tech support is readily available 100% of the hours that libraries are open	Management, City MIS	2010	High	Unknown at this time
4. Provide staff with training that will enable them to do tech troubleshooting in specified situations where advanced skills are not required	Management, Staff, City MIS—in process now	2009 and ongoing	High	No
5. Adopt strategies that will help the library move away from hard wiring to wireless	Staff, City MIS—in process now	2009 and ongoing	High	Part of normal budget process
6. Address complaints of current customers that WIFI access is inconsistent	Staff, City MIS staff—mostly accomplished	2009	High	Already accomplished
7. Select 8-10 libraries with established reputations for excellence in technology and learn what steps they have taken to become leaders in the field	Management and staff	2011	Low	No
8. Bundle, brand and market all technology and electronic resources—especially since this has not been done at the state level	Management, staff, possible outside contractor	2011	Medium	Under \$5,000

9. Establish technology training goals for all job classifications	Management—in process now	2009	High	Incorporated in normal training budget
10. Develop the website as a user-friendly route to the best available online subscription and Web resources, and an even more sophisticated tool for self-managing library accounts on a 24/7 basis	Management, staff, vendor	2009 and ongoing	High	Unknown at this time
11. Assess capacity of the library to satisfy the needs for adaptive technology among growing number of senior citizens using facilities and other special needs groups	Management, staff, community partners	2011	Medium	No
12. Consider forming an ad hoc technology task force comprised of community members with expertise in information technology	Management, staff, community partners	2012	Medium	No
13. Include technology expertise in skill set needed For potential new board members	Management, board, appointing authorities	2009	Low	No
14. Explore the use of webinars and podcasts for staff training for replicating successful programs in more than one facility	Staff—already ongoing	Ongoing	Medium	No
15. Consider the possibility of making laptops available to customers in the library	Management, staff, City MIS, outside funders	2011	Medium	Grant or other outside funding

***D. Educational Partnerships: Leverage role as an educational partner to better serve school age children***

<b>Strategy D: pp. 42-43</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Budget Implication</b>
1. Package and sub-brand current programs and services for school age children so that the library can market programs and services that boost academic success to parents, educators, and students	Management, staff, possible consultant, school districts cooperation	2012	Medium	Under \$5,000
2. Initiate discussions with city government and the school districts about the possibility of a school-library liaison position on the Library Board or school boards	Board, management, school districts, appointing authorities	2013	Low-medium	No
3. Conduct training programs for classroom instructors that 1) provide information about programs and services that are available to them and to their students and 2) motivate them to refer their students to the CBCPL for help with homework and research assignments.	Management, staff, school districts buy-in, teacher interest	2011	Medium	Under \$2,500
4. Longer term, explore the possibility of developing a position for a coordinator of services for school age children	Management, staff, Budget Commission	2015	Low-medium	Over \$100,000

5. Revamp the bookmobile schedule to include more stops at schools	Management, staff, school districts buy in	2011	Medium	No
6. Develop a year-round reading program	Staff	2011	Medium	Under \$2,500
7. Use research conducted elsewhere to develop a presentation on the economic impact of summer reading and make presentations to elected officials, school boards and administrations, teachers, and parents	Management, staff	2010	Medium-high	No
8. Develop a portal on the website for parents and classroom instructors	Staff, some efforts already underway	2011	High	No
9. Establish goals for increased card registration for school children and increased participation in summer reading	Staff, school districts buy in	2011	High	Under \$2,500

***E. Outreach: Increase the bookmobile's effectiveness in supporting the CBCPL's strategic plan***

<b>Strategy E: pp. 44-45</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Budget Implication</b>
1. Create a strategic plan specifically for the bookmobile in order to better define the roles of the bookmobile and to better support new strategic directions of the CBCPL. Such a strategic plan would explore: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Partnerships</li> <li>o Ongoing analysis of bookmobile visitation and circulation for each stop</li> <li>o Programming</li> <li>o Scheduling</li> <li>o Selection of locations</li> <li>o Marketing</li> <li>o Alternate outreach service models</li> <li>o Alternate types of vehicles</li> </ul>	Management, staff, possible consultant	2010	High	Unknown at this time
2. Expand the staff of the bookmobile to ensure employee safety and to improve customer service	Management, Board, Budget Commission	2010-2012	Very high—safety issue	Addressed earlier in matrix
3. Implement immediate short term changes to enhance bookmobile service including discontinuing low use stops, instituting evening hours, making the printed schedule more customer friendly, and pilot testing the effectiveness of children's programming	Management and staff	2009-2010	High	Probably not

***F. Public Relations: Branding and marketing: putting Corvallis-Benton residents “in the know”***

<b>Strategy F: pp. 46-47</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Budget Implication</b>
1. Create a strategic marketing plan that supports the goals set forth in the new long-range strategic plan	Management, consultant	2010	Medium	About \$10,000
2. Create a professional quality logo and design system that will appeal to all age groups and articulate the library’s mission and vision	Management, consultant	2010	Medium	Incorporate with marketing plan
3. Create a new job description for an individual with marketing and PR experience and secure funding for the position (requires one additional staff person)	Management, board, Budget Commission support	2013	Medium-low	Over \$100,000 with benefits
4. Integrate training programs on branding and marketing to educate staff about new branding and marketing projects	Management and staff	2011	Medium	No, incorporate in normal training budget
5. Encourage staff attending library conferences to take advantage of programs on branding and marketing	Management and staff	2009 and ongoing	High	No, incorporate in normal training budget
6. Package and sub-brand existing service lines including those for seniors, teens, school services, and the new virtual library, etc.	Management, staff, possible consultant	2010	Medium	Incorporate with marketing plan
7. Include marketing and public relations in skill set needed for potential board members	Management, board, appointing authorities	2009 and ongoing	Medium, have some of those skills on board already	No

***G. Service and Access: Create efficiencies to give customers more materials, faster***

<b>Strategy G: pp. 48-49</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Budget Implication</b>
1. Evaluate products and services offered by vendors and identify those which will expedite ordering and processing and reduce costs and solicit proposals from the vendors who best satisfy the CBCPL’s needs	Management, staff	2010, next RFP time	High	Probably not, likely incorporate in normal materials budget
2. Interview tech services staff in other libraries which have successfully migrated to the use of more vendor services to learn from their experiences	Staff	2009	High	No
3. Consolidate all selection and processing responsibilities so that they are under a single manager	Management	Not sure we want to do this at all	Low	No

4. Expand current standing order procedures	Management, staff	2009-2010	High	No
5. Examine current procedures for ordering additional copies of popular titles in order to reduce the lag time	Management, staff	2009-2010	High	No
6. Discontinue the practice of labeling and binding individual issues of periodicals	Management, staff	2009-2010	High	No
7. Adhere to the newly adopted retention schedule for periodicals which is one year plus the current year	Management, staff	Ongoing	High	No
8. Discontinue the practice of applying Dewey numbers to music materials	Management, staff	2010, ongoing	Medium	Under \$2,500

***H. High Quality Collections: Adapt a more holistic approach and consistent procedures for sustaining collection quality***

<b>Strategy H: pp. 50-51</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Budget Implication</b>
1. Conduct annual assessments and make collection development decisions incorporating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Circulation statistics for adult vs. juvenile, specific subjects, genres, or formats</li> <li>o Identified collection gaps</li> <li>o Trends</li> </ul>	Management	Begin 2009	High	No
2. Assess and standardize procedures for weeding including considerations related to recycling and sustainability	Management	Begin 2009	High	No
3. Sustain the quality of the reference collection by aggressively weeding the collection to eliminate outdated or infrequently used materials, by encouraging the use of reference titles now available online, and by maintaining a regular schedule for updating titles through standing order procedures	Management and staff	Now occurring, ongoing	High	No
4. Adopt a comprehensive collection development plan for the entire library that includes guides for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o All formats</li> <li>o Retention of materials that reflect the fact that the library is not an archival or research-based library but does serve a highly educated populace</li> <li>o Acquiring out-of-print materials</li> <li>o Budget allocations for replacements</li> <li>o Materials for older adults, non-English language speakers, hearing or sight impaired individuals, and others with special needs</li> </ul>	Management and staff	Now underway	High	No

5. Compute the Return On Investment for databases in order to make informed management decisions	Management	2010	Medium	No
6. Explore instituting floating collections at all library locations (items stay where they are returned)	Management, staff	Explore in 2010	Medium-low	No
7. Re-evaluate current budget practice of automatically increasing the amount for new materials at the same percentage for all subject areas	Management, staff	Part of plan noted above	Medium	No
8. Consider the practice that is being employed by more libraries (and in the children's collection at CBCPL) of interfiling more reference titles with the regular collection.	Management, staff	2009	High	No

***I. Facilities: Maximize available space and anticipate future needs for additional space***

<b>Strategy I: pp.52-53</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Budget Implication</b>
1. Develop a building program plan with a budget and timelines.	Management, staff, consultant, Community Library stakeholders	2011	High	Major, for Corvallis and Community Libraries

***J. Going Forward: Achieve even higher levels of service***

<b>Strategy J: pp.54-55</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Budget Implication</b>
1. Reflect the city's values of sustainability, diversity, customer engagement, and cost effectiveness in future decisions regarding service delivery	Everyone	Ongoing	High	No
2. Create a "data center" for the library where internal and external information pertaining to services is amassed and continuously analyzed and used by library management and the Board to make key decisions and make more effective use of library performance data to demonstrate the positive impact that the CBCPL has on economic development in the city and county	Management	2010	High	Under \$2,500
3. Collaborate with other city and county departments to take advantage of technology to develop a better profile of the library's customer base—i.e. use GIS software to map the locations of current library cardholders	Management, staff, city and county GIS	2011	Medium	No
4. Cultivate a new attitude among staff and library management that defuses the current emphasis on process while respecting the need for all to be heard	Management, staff		Low-not sure this is possible or desirable	No
5. Consider forming an "internal think tank" composed of employees who want to be futurists and have a keen interest in trends and new ideas, and charge them with the responsibility of feeding the Board and management staff information about what is happening in the public and private sectors that will affect the future of public libraries.	Management, staff	2011	Medium	No