WHAT WE HEARD FROM YOU

- **Services:** The Library needs to offer new and expanded non-traditional services like collaborative work spaces, digital media creation, imaginative play space, small business support, parent networking opportunities, teacher support, etc.

- **Relevancy:** The Library needs to do more to meet the contemporary needs of the community

- **Meetings and events:** The Library needs more space for community events and a greater number of flexible meeting spaces for community gathering

- **Location:** The Library is an important part of downtown and the community

- **Parking:** The Library needs more parking and it needs to be more convenient for community members

Key Findings

**Libraries Have Changed:**
People need libraries for more than just books; they come to connect with one another and create in a digital world

**Our Library Is Not Providing Service for the 21st Century:**
Lack of space equals lack of services and amenities

**Our Building Is Inefficient and Expensive to Operate:**
Building age, layout and infrastructure result in high ongoing costs

**Expanding the Library at Our Current Site Is Not an Option:**
Zoning and site restrictions limit our ability to increase square footage in a meaningful way

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Bob Shiffler, President
Pat Lord, Vice President
Mark Adams, Treasurer
Zachary Craft, Secretary
Paul Conterato, Trustee
Dana Hintz, Trustee
Ellen Schmid, Trustee

Christine Lazaris, Director

*Connecting our community to discover, inspire and grow!*
INTRODUCTION

Recognizing the community needs space for high quality 21st century library service, the Board of Trustees of Geneva Public Library District (GPLD) hired StudioGC to conduct a Needs Assessment of the existing facility to analyze demographics, library usage, operational costs, patron service models, 21st century library norms, space use efficiency, and energy efficiency.

Presented here are highlights from the full Needs Assessment report by StudioGC. To see the full report visit: www.gpld.org/pressroom.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Libraries must keep pace with changes in society and technology. GPLD has a tremendous opportunity to create a forward-looking institution that addresses future needs and offers an expanded array of services. Libraries have evolved from operating as a “warehouse for books” to lively centers serving the community in ways previously unimaginable.

Digital natives (people growing up fully in the technological age) make up 29% of the community; their life experiences are very different from those of generations before them. If GPLD does not provide service that is relevant to this group now, it will not provide service that is relevant to the majority of its future users. Today’s children and teens are tomorrow’s adults.

UNDERSTANDING GENEVA

StudioGC conducted six focus groups with different segments of the community. Each meeting presented many of the new library service concepts discussed in this report followed by an open discussion of what resonated with each group. Focus groups findings include:

✓ Every group, with the exception of teens, stated more parking must be a priority
✓ Many people were surprised by new directions libraries have assumed. Once the groups understood what 21st-century libraries offer, nearly all were accepting of and excited by the potential for new and expanded services
✓ Although residents appreciate the historic aspects of the existing library facility, the prospect of building a new library was not alarming and was accepted by many as the best long-term solution
✓ Most participants believed the library must remain somewhere downtown. The potential 6th Street site was perceived as a downtown site
LIBRARIES HAVE CHANGED:
PEOPLE NEED LIBRARIES FOR MORE THAN JUST BOOKS

Consume-Connect-Create

Library planning now emphasizes more than housing and supporting traditional library collections. The new model for success is:

**Consume – Connect – Create**

**Consume.** People come to libraries to use materials such as physical books, e-books, e-magazines, periodicals, reference services and downloadable media.

**Connect.** Libraries are taking an active role in their communities. People come to libraries for small group interaction, tutoring, one-on-one continuing education spaces, small business-friendly meeting rooms, interactive gaming, and video conferencing. Teen spaces and cafés are examples of library spaces designed for people to connect and are now expected by patrons.

**Create.** Library “maker spaces” provide video and music editing equipment, recording facilities, graphics software, large format printers, laser cutters, arts and crafts materials, 3-D printers, etc., that allow people to use libraries to create.

People need libraries for more than just books. They also come to connect with one another and create in a digital world. New skills are needed for the 21st century marketplace.
OUR LIBRARY IS NOT PROVIDING SERVICE FOR THE 21\textsuperscript{ST} CENTURY:
LACK OF SPACE EQUALS LACK OF SERVICES AND AMENITIES

Site Problems

- **Size**: Square footage of the current building is not adequate for the size of our community
- **Accessibility**: Building is not ADA compliant; patrons with mobility challenges and parents with strollers have difficulty getting inside the building and around the facility
- **Parking**: No parking lot or drive up service makes visiting the library difficult or sometimes impossible, especially in bad weather

Service Limitations

- **Ages and stages of life**: GPLD should provide a wider range of services, such as: early literacy exploration, tween and teen engagement, one-on-one homework assistance, small business support, etc.
- **Modern conveniences**: GPLD does not provide options for eating and drinking, family bathrooms for parents and children or nursing moms, drive-up service for dropping off and picking up materials, handicapped accessible parking with easy building access
- **Community gathering space**: Library programs and options are hampered by lack of usable kitchen for culinary programs, performance space for music or performing arts programs, divisible spaces for hosting a variety of community groups, etc.
- **Technology**: GPLD needs to provide options for community members to acquire digital literacy skills and use technology-enabled spaces for video conferencing and digital media creation to compete and thrive in today’s world
- **Browsability**: Narrow aisles, tall shelving and little natural light make collections difficult to use; limited-mobility people have difficulty retrieving materials from top and bottom of existing shelving
- **Alternative services**: No space for community resources, such as 3D printers, telescopes, arts and craft resources, seed libraries, AV equipment, etc. These offerings have become the norm in today’s libraries

Library lacks adequate space to provide a full array of 21\textsuperscript{st} century library services and community members are missing out on services they deserve.
OUR BUILDING IS INEFFICIENT AND EXPENSIVE TO OPERATE:
BUILDING AGE, LAYOUT AND INFRASTRUCTURE RESULT IN HIGH ONGOING COSTS

Why Operational Costs Are High

✓ Library operational costs directly relate to the age, layout and infrastructure of the facility

✓ Multiple building additions throughout the years resulted in choppy spaces and an inefficient layout. Limestone interior walls originally were the exterior of the building. These load bearing walls cannot be removed

✓ More staff are needed to operate the building because of the inefficient layout. There are six service desks, nearly double what would be planned for an open flexible space in the future; staffing costs contribute to high ongoing costs

✓ Disparate, inefficient work spaces for staff require both staff and materials to move repeatedly through the library and to offsite storage. This inefficiency also adds to high operational costs

✓ Insufficient wall insulation, poorly insulated attic space, and leaky windows result in high ongoing utility costs. Space heaters are even needed in the colder months to prevent pipes from freezing

✓ Building mechanicals (air conditioning, heating, lighting, plumbing, elevator, etc.) are beyond their life expectancy. These are expensive to maintain, and will require significant structural changes to replace. For example, replacing the elevator to bring it to code and make it large enough to properly maneuver a wheelchair or carry a stretcher requires moving the mechanical room, losing usable square footage, and shutting down the Library during the construction process

Using metrics for traditional library services only, such as material circulation and program attendance, GPLD provides 87% of services provided by peers at 130% of the cost.

An aging building and ineffective floorplan drive up operational costs. Community members receive fewer services than they deserve at a higher cost.
EXPANDING THE LIBRARY AT OUR CURRENT SITE IS NOT AN OPTION:
ZONING RESTRICTIONS LIMIT OUR ABILITY TO INCREASE SQUARE FOOTAGE

Expansion of the existing facility is unrealistic due to lack of land and the need to comply with City of Geneva's Zoning Ordinance and Historic Preservation Ordinance

Zoning Requirements for the Current Property
Maximum size an expanded building could be on existing site is approximately 60,000 square feet (current building is 27,000 square feet). To make this work the renovated building would have (as depicted by the clear box around the building in the image below):

- Zero setbacks for gardens and other important public space
- Maximum height of 45 feet with three stories of cramped and non-inviting space

A renovation may also trigger zoning requirements for parking which is not feasible at the current site.

Historical Review
The current site requires special review by the City Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) because the building is located in the Historic District. Those guidelines are directly applicable and likely restrict covering much of the exterior with new construction. While we might be able to hit the suggested size, as represented by the clear box in the illustration above, it would not meet HPC requirements. There are no viable expansion possibilities at the existing site.

Increasing square footage at the current site would be prohibitively expensive and aesthetically unpleasing. Expansion of the existing facility is not a realistic option.
IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE:
CREATING NEW SPACES FOR CONTEMPORARY NEEDS

To be competitive in today's world, community members need to be technologically literate and possess problem solving skills for 21st century living. StudioGC provided the Library with many recommendations for supporting these community efforts. Highlighted below are just a few of the ideas that we could incorporate into future planning initiatives.

Collaboration Spaces
- Provide technology enabled space and seating to facilitate 21st century needs
- Appeal to multiple ages, such as business users and teens, to encourage many uses of the space
- Conceptual idea for collaboration space in the current library is depicted in image on the left

Exciting Spaces for Children and Parents
- Stimulate imagination and curiosity in children with spaces designed for all ages and developmental phases
- Provide space for parents to connect with one another
- Floor-to-ceiling open design concept for children at Addison Public Library shown in image to the right
WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

After thorough analysis, StudioGC believes GPLD’s current home essentially has reached the limit of its potential. Additional investments in its infrastructure will not meaningfully increase the level of library service and will instead perpetuate an inefficient and expensive service model.

GPLD recently acquired land in the downtown area while it was available for purchase to ensure expansion possibilities for the future. A new library that is properly designed with new technologies will be, on a square foot basis, significantly less expensive to operate. Cost modeling and tax implications are not yet known and can be made after completion of a preliminary building program when square footage needs have been determined.

Short-term improvements to the existing facility, such as more options for browsing, greater reliance on self-service, and collaborative spaces designed for connecting in a digital world were recommended by StudioGC. Additional square footage for such endeavors may be realized by reducing collection sizes and eliminating large service desks. Expenditures for new furniture and equipment, most of which could be relocated to a new facility, can be viewed as the first step in the process of investing in a new library.

How libraries are changing may stretch our understanding of what libraries are, how people might use them and what services they should provide. The fundamental idea of “library” however, has not changed: a library is an institution devoted to sharing resources amongst the community. The real change is that in the 21st-century library users are sharing virtual tools, physical tools, events and social interaction as well as books.

_We have tremendous potential to offer the community a whole new level of library service: to really become a true destination point and a hub of civic activity._ Libraries offer direct benefits to all members of a community regardless of age or stage of life. Libraries transform lives.

Read more about the planning process at: [www.gpld.org/pressroom](http://www.gpld.org/pressroom).

Questions or comments? Email Board@gpld.org.