

# Strategic Plan 2014-2017

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Mahomet Public Library District

**Approved October 13, 2014**

**Mahomet Public Library Board of Trustees**

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# Executive Summary

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Our mission is to ***serve our community by nurturing and facilitating learning and the pursuit of diverse interests***. There is good reason to be proud of the way we fulfill that mission. The data included in this report highlight many of the ways that our staff, our new facility, our programs, and our services each contribute to fulfilling this mission. In fact, our library is among the busiest in comparably sized communities - especially in the growing area of digital material usage. There is also reason to be proud not only of the way the library serves the community, but also of the way the community supports the library. The library excels, and will continue to excel, in fulfilling its mission as the community embraces and supports that mission.

Though there is much of which to be proud, there are also significant ways to improve and strengthen our service to the community. Through an analysis of hard data, a SWOT (Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats) analysis by the board, staff input, and community input, a common cluster of issues surfaced that marked both important opportunities to seize and also weaknesses to address. These categories included facility issues, materials, programs, technology, communication/awareness, and collaboration with other organizations. If we are to continue to be an institution of importance and relevance to our community we must listen to all who have had a voice in suggesting how we can be better. And so in each of those categories we have identified specific objectives that will improve our ability to fulfill our mission.

Yet, even as we intend to improve the quality and service of the library over the next three years, we have to be mindful of what lies further out than that. Just as important as it is to make specific and tangible improvements in the next three years, it is equally important to end that time-frame in a strong position for the new challenges and opportunities that we anticipate (not to mention those we cannot anticipate!). For example, looking beyond the three-year scope of this plan we anticipate a need to hire a second full-time employee, possibly expand our facilities, and build our endowment fund. It is not in our long-term interests to find ourselves in a position too weak to respond adequately to those needs.

So we are striving to maintain and improve our ability to fulfill our mission in the near term without weakening our long-term capacity to do the same. The biggest challenges we will face as we seek to do that are those that involve the limitations of resources. Therefore this report devotes significant attention to this reality. In fact, the most significant recommendation of this report is the creation of an advocacy committee to develop a regular and growing base of community donor support. More than any other single recommendation contained in this report, the future of the library will be most affected by the earnestness and commitment with which the board and the community accept this challenge.

This strategic plan does not point the way from mediocrity to excellence or from failure to success, for there is already much to be proud of in the library as we know it today. It is a tremendous, if often undervalued, asset to the community. However, there are challenges confronting us as well as opportunities. Faced with those challenges and opportunities, this plan reveals a path to sustained excellence and improvement. With a community rising to the occasion to support one of its great institutions there is every reason to be hopeful about where we will find ourselves in three years – having maintained our current quality, improved in significant ways, and become well positioned for whatever opportunities await us.

# The Library in 2014

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## Facility

The library moved into a new, 13,113 square foot facility in July 2010. The facility includes:

- The Edgar Meeting Room, with seating for up to 65 people and a fully equipped A/V system.
- The Schmit Study Room, with seating for up to 6 people.
- A reading area with gas fireplace.
- Work and study seating throughout the building.
- A dedicated area for young children, with age appropriate seating.

## Collection

As of June 30, 2014, the library's collection consisted of:

Books	36,828
DVDs	2,654
Music CDs and Audiobooks on CD	3,687
Magazine Titles	86
Licensed Databases	33
Digital Materials (shared through consortia)	
– eBooks	20,666
– Audiobooks	7,854
– Videos	133
– Magazines	169

## Library Programs

- Year-round story times
- Regular programs and events
  - Valentine Bingo (for adults)
  - Beach Blanket Bingo (for children)
  - Summer reading program (all ages)
  - Drop in Crafts and Games on early dismissal days (for children)
  - Family reading nights (for families)
  - Make- and-Take Ornaments (for all ages )
  - Finals study weeks (the meeting room is reserved after school for teens to study for exams)
- Special programs and events, scheduled throughout the year

## In-Library Services

- Patron computers and WiFi
- Copy/print/fax/scan services
- Voter registration
- Notary public
- After-hours pickup lockers
- Homebound delivery
- Magnifying reader for the visually impaired

## Mahomet Library 24/7: Online Services

- SHARE: Online Catalog with over ten million books, music, and movies from over 420 libraries, plus access to the patron's library account.
- Digital Materials for checkout to computers, tablets, and smartphones
- Databases for online research
- BookNews booklists and newsletters
- Online Registration for upcoming events

## FY 2013-14 Usage

Total checkouts	
– Print items	97,533
– Non print items (DVDs, CDs, etc.)	44,859
– Digital checkouts (eBooks, audiobooks, magazines):	9,076
Library visits:	80,719
Program Attendance	3,103
Patrons with Active Cards	4,589
Online Catalog Use	
– Logins to patron accounts	36,398
– Holds placed by patrons	21,674
Web site visits	25,273
Patron Computer Usage (in hours)	9,287
Copying and Printing	\$4,799
Faxing	\$2,816

## Financial Position

The library has operated the new and larger facility since 2010 without additional funding. Strict control of operating expenses has limited losses over the past 4 years, but alternate sources of funding are clearly needed. Projected financial positions, including costs associated with the objectives outlined in this plan, include:

	FY 2014-15	FY2015-16	FY2016-17	FY 2017-18
<b>Fund Balances, End of Year</b>				
Operating Funds	654,465	648,202	662,494	676,148
Special Reserves (building use only)	498,878	468,590	428,325	394,769
Total	1,153,343	1,116,792	1,090,819	1,070,917

Given the current fund balances, the library can withstand a minimal amount of deficit spending in the near term but without alternate sources of funding there is a risk of draining the library's reserves. The role of the advocacy committee and community support is critical in bringing deficit spending to an end in FY 2017-2018. In this case, reserves remain above \$1,000,000 at the end of the three year period. The strategic planning committee recommends maintaining reserves above this level to allow at least \$500,000 to be available for building expansion needs and at least \$500,000 additional for general reserves.

# The Strategic Planning Process

The Board of Trustees formed a Strategic Planning Committee in June 2013. The committee gathered information from the sources below before creating a new Mission Statement and determining the goals and objectives for 2014-2017.

## Board of Trustees SWOT Analysis

The Board conducted a SWOT Analysis (Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats) at the July 2013 regular meeting.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p><b>Cooperating with schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Summer Reading Program link</li> <li>– Sangamon school summer reading packets at MPL</li> </ul> <p><b>Facility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Beautiful &amp; inviting</li> <li>– Landscaping</li> <li>– Interior Design</li> <li>– Good location</li> <li>– Bike path and traffic light</li> <li>– Safe atmosphere</li> <li>– Meeting Room for community and staff</li> </ul> <p><b>Staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Well-informed</li> <li>– Enthusiastic</li> <li>– Good customer service</li> <li>– Proactive</li> </ul> <p><b>Materials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Access to newest materials</li> <li>– My Media Mall -- short wait times, long loan periods</li> <li>– Good selection of magazines and newspapers</li> <li>– YA &amp; J selections are great</li> <li>– SHARE online catalog</li> </ul> <p><b>Online presence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Good online presence</li> <li>– Interactive website</li> <li>– Facebook page</li> </ul> <p><b>Technology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Scott Davis</li> <li>– Up-to-date technology</li> <li>– WiFi</li> </ul> <p><b>Community Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 70% of our population have library cards</li> <li>– Friends of the Library</li> <li>– Volunteers</li> </ul> <p><b>Programs and Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Good program schedule</li> <li>– Homebound Delivery</li> <li>– Summer Reading Programs</li> <li>– After hours lockers</li> </ul> <p><b>Finances</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Strong financial position and oversight</li> <li>– Transparency (nothing hidden from the public)</li> <li>– Endowment fund</li> <li>– Grants</li> </ul>	<p><b>Community Perceptions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Location inaccessible</li> <li>– Unaware of what we have to offer</li> </ul> <p><b>Publicity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Difficult to get the word out in this community</li> <li>– Limited by staff time and cost</li> </ul> <p><b>Finances</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Need more diversity of income</li> <li>– Lack of support for endowment fund</li> </ul> <p><b>Staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Need more training on technology and research</li> <li>– Sufficient staffing difficult due in great part to finances</li> </ul> <p><b>Facility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Noise issues</li> <li>– Lack of good signage</li> <li>– Space issues (DVDs, Books on CD, large print)</li> </ul> <p>System mergers resulted in <b>loss of consultants and continuing education training.</b></p>	<p><b>Promoting Programs and Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Young families</li> <li>– Homeschoolers</li> <li>– Teens</li> <li>– Social Media (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter)</li> </ul> <p><b>Technology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– New technology may require less space for AV</li> <li>– CIRBN/Dark Fiber project (high speed internet access)</li> </ul> <p><b>Community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Volunteers -- HS shelvers?</li> <li>– Encourage HS students to join Friends</li> <li>– Work with schools to support libraries (budget cuts)</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic Planning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Time to create a new strategic plan</li> <li>– Edge initiative (technology planning resources)</li> </ul> <p><b>Endowment Fund</b></p>	<p><b>Finances</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Property tax dependency</li> <li>– Pension issues uncertainty</li> <li>– Need for commercial development to balance housing development</li> </ul> <p><b>Community Perceptions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Competition for attention</li> <li>– Lack of a consistent way to reach Mahomet residents</li> <li>– Public doesn't understand taxation and how/why we are funded</li> <li>– Schools are viewed as most important asset</li> <li>– Bedroom community/sprawl; residents don't feel part of a village or community</li> </ul> <p><b>Technology</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Viruses and hacking</li> <li>– Rapidly changing technology</li> </ul> <p><b>Future Changes in Library Sharing in Illinois</b></p>

## Task Force

A task force of community leaders gathered to create and promote staff and public surveys and review the results. The extensive reach of the public survey was due in large part to the efforts of this group.

- Rita Bartholomew, Friends of the Mahomet Public Library
- Sue Haley, Champaign Public Library employee (retired)
- Andy Harpst, Mahomet Village Board
- Mary Weaver, Mahomet-Seymour School District
- John Welch, Rotary Club of Mahomet
- Aaron Wheeler, Mahomet Township Board
- Margaret White, Mahomet Area Youth Club
- Val Woodruff, Mahomet-Seymour School Board
- Cheryl Zindars, Mahomet Chamber of Commerce

## Staff Survey

The staff survey results offered several points:

- The staff's biggest challenge is the lack of time to get everything done.
- Technology
  - It is overwhelming for staff to know every device, and platform, and everything patrons want to do on computers. They need more time to learn and practice technology skills.
  - Technical glitches are frustrating and it may be time for the library to hire IT staff.
  - Open Tech Help eases the technology support burden.
- Collection
  - There has not been much change in demand for particular genres and subjects, though graphic novels are in high demand.
  - The reference area is rarely used.
  - The library should consider rearranging the collection, e.g., placing newest children's books closer to the entrance.
- Programs and Services
  - The people who know about the library's services use them a lot. There are people who don't know various services are available.
  - A notary public is not available at all times.
  - After hours pickup lockers and YA programs require more promotion.
  - There is a sense that patrons are reluctant to ask for help from staff.
- Library Hours
  - Stay open later on Fridays.
  - Offer longer hours on Saturdays and Sundays.
  - Offer longer hours during finals weeks.
- Suggested Additions
  - Another study room
  - More A/V materials
  - More collaboration with schools and community, such as displaying school artwork or offering concerts from school groups
  - Lend devices to patrons
  - More tech help hours
  - Welcome package for new residents
  - More copies of popular items

## Public Survey

The public survey received 871 responses, representing 6.9% of the Library District population. The complete results are in Appendix A. The key points raised by the survey include:

- 44% of those responding visit the library at least once per month. The most frequent reasons given by those who visit the library less frequently include:
  - I prefer to buy what I want
  - The library does not have what I want
  - I was unaware of the library’s programs and services
  - The library hours are not convenient
  - I can’t get a library card/I don’t live in the library’s service area
- Program and service use responses included:

Most Used	Least Used	Did Not Know About
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Checking out items</li> <li>▪ Requesting items from other libraries</li> <li>▪ WiFi</li> <li>▪ Meeting and study rooms</li> <li>▪ Public computers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Story times and other programs</li> <li>▪ Public computers</li> <li>▪ Income tax forms</li> <li>▪ Technology help</li> <li>▪ Homebound delivery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Notary public</li> <li>▪ Homebound delivery</li> <li>▪ After hours pickup lockers</li> <li>▪ Voter registration</li> <li>▪ Book News booklists</li> </ul>

- The most frequent suggestions for changes or additions to the library included:
  - More technology, including more digital materials, a better website, and better WiFi
  - More physical materials, especially best sellers and juvenile nonfiction
  - Expanded hours on weekend and in the evenings
  - More study room and meeting room space and quiet work areas
  - More programs and community events
  - Improved friendliness and openness of staff

## Research Data

Library staff gathered information about public library trends from a number of sources. The full report to the Strategic Planning Committee is included in Appendix B. Key points uncovered by this research include:

- Information use is changing: More is available, more is shared, and more is created by users.
- Library users, especially those in their teens and twenties, expect to engage with libraries electronically, through social media, messaging, and apps.
- Libraries are increasingly serving as community centers, instead of merely information storehouses.
- Americans continue to value libraries, with 91% saying that public libraries are important to their communities, but 31% say they know little about what their local libraries offer.
- Americans suggest public libraries should emphasize the following:
  - Coordinating with local schools
  - Establishing literacy programs for young children
  - Providing comfortable spaces for reading, working, and relaxing
  - Providing more digital materials

## Serving Our Public: Standards for Illinois Public Libraries 3.0

The Illinois Library Association publishes standards for services provided by public libraries. The Board of Trustees regularly reviews the standards recommended for all Illinois public libraries to ensure the Mahomet Public Library is meeting these standards and to identify issues that need to be addressed.

To ensure the library has been meeting the recommended standards, the board of trustees and library staff have executed the following projects in the past two years:

- An updated policy manual
- An analysis of the payment and benefits structure for personnel
- An updated personnel manual
- An emergency succession plan
- This strategic plan

The technology plan is due to be updated in early 2015. The board reviews the technology plan annually and it must be certified by the state library every 3 years.

The strategic planning process considered the following recommended levels in setting future goals and objectives:

Standard	MPL Level as of 6/30/14	Recommended Minimum	Recommended for a Growing Library	Notes
Staffing Levels	6.16 FTEs	7.15 FTEs	10.3 FTEs	The library has sufficient front-line staff, but could use more librarian/administration hours.
Hours of Service	62, including Sundays all year	56	64, including Sundays all year	
# of Books in the Collection	35,594	42,574	60,246	The facility does not have the space to hold the recommendation for a growing library.

## Mission Statement

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***We serve our community by nurturing and facilitating learning and the pursuit of diverse interests.***

To serve our community in this way, we:

- Maintain an efficient and welcoming facility for work, study, library programs, and community meetings.
- Provide a variety of materials and resources in physical and digital formats.
- Offer educational and entertaining programs and services.
- Anticipate and provide access to technology that best serves our patrons' needs appropriate to our resources.
- Communicate with community members to ensure our resources meet their needs and that they are aware of our programs and services.
- Collaborate with the local school district and other community organizations to provide programs and services.

# Goals and Objectives

**Maintain an efficient and welcoming facility for work, study, library programs, and community meetings.**

	Budgetary Impact			Completion Date
	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	
<b>Increase hours in response to patron requests</b>				
Rearrange staff schedule to improve staff efficiency				FY 14-15
Add 3 weekend hours in FY 14-15	\$6,700	\$6,800	\$6,900	FY 14-15
Add 4 weeknight hours in FY 15-16		\$7,200	\$7,350	FY 15-16
<b>Improve Space Usage</b>				
Increase shelving space for YA materials by rearranging other collection				FY 14-15
Evaluate the need for seating annually	<i>No cost for evaluation; may lead to new purchases</i>			Annually
Add directional signage		\$1,500		FY 15-16
Purchase more shelving for the juvenile media		\$3,000		FY 15-16
Investigate the feasibility of making changes to the drive up circle	<i>No cost to evaluate; may lead to construction costs</i>			FY 14-15
<b>Plan for Long-Term Facility Use</b>				
Evaluate floor plan and layout in view of projected library use				FY 15-16
Create a long-range plan for facility design and use (may require use of consultant)		\$2,000		FY 15-16
<b>Improve and Expand Staff Development</b>				
Expand staff training				
Establish regular technology practice routines				FY 14-15
Provide customer service training alone or in collaboration with other libraries and establish regular procedures to evaluate customer service		\$3,000		FY 15-16
Establish consistency across staff by creating a manual of tasks				FY 14-15
Provide Feedback to Staff				
Perform annual staff evaluations				Annually
Revise job descriptions to include technical skill requirements				FY 14-15
Budget for professional training				
Enable staff and trustees to attend professional meetings	None	\$750	\$750	FY 15-16
Enable staff to attend professional development training	None	\$500	\$500	FY 15-16

## Provide a variety of materials and resources in physical and digital formats

	Budgetary Impact			Completion Date
	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	
<b>Increase digital materials and online services</b>				
Evaluate usage, cost for current services	<i>No cost for evaluation; may lead to new purchases</i>			Annually
Evaluate adding new options/ expanding current services	<i>No cost for evaluation; may lead to new purchases</i>			Annually
<b>Increase physical collection</b>				
Collaborate w/ school staff to ID materials needed for large units of study	None, assuming part of total allocated already			Annually
Purchase more copies of best sellers to reduce patron wait time	None, assuming part of total allocated already			Annually
Improve size, diversity of juvenile collection (net gain 1000 items)	None, assuming part of total allocated already			6/30/2017
Increase overall collection to 45,000 items	None, assuming part of total allocated already			6/30/2017

## Offer educational and entertaining programs and services

	Budgetary Impact			Completion Date
	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	
<b>Increase programming</b>				
Add programming for children & families on weekends or in the evenings		\$6,000	\$6,100	FY 15-16/Evaluate annually
Add programming for adults		Part of above	Part of above	FY 15-16/Evaluate annually
Collaborate programming w/ other groups		Part of above	Part of above	Evaluate annually
<b>Expand current services</b>				
Add at least one more notary	\$150/person initially; \$10/person after that			FY 14-15
Add Open Tech Help hours				FY 14-15

## Anticipate and provide access to technology that best serves our patrons' needs appropriate to our resources

	Budgetary Impact			Completion Date
	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	
<b>Offer fast, reliable access to the internet</b>				
Attach to the village fiber backbone	in budget	decreased expenses		July, 2015
Continue to monitor metrics	<i>No cost to evaluate; may lead to new purchases</i>			Continual
<b>Improve the Library's website</b>				
Create a new layout that is attractive, modern, and easy to navigate	\$10,000			FY 14-15
<b>Anticipate new uses for technology at the library</b>				
Monitor new uses for technology at leading libraries to identify trends	<i>No cost to monitor; may lead to new purchases</i>			Continual
Participate in webinars and other training on library use of technology	<i>No cost to participate; may lead to new purchases</i>			Continual
Develop methodology to evaluate potential new technology resources				FY 15-16

## Communicate with community members to ensure our resources meet their needs and that they are aware of our programs and services

	Budgetary Impact			Completion Date
	FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	
<b>Create plans for communication</b>				
Create a Marketing Plan	\$7,800	Increase PR costs per plan		Plan FY 14-15;
Develop a plan for advocacy and long-term funding alternatives		Increase PR costs per plan		FY 15-16
Collaborate w/ Friends of the Library on a plan to expand membership & involvement				Begin FY 14-15
<b>Establish practices for easy communication with the community</b>				
Expand collaborative efforts with schools, and community organizations		Possible time increase for YSL		FY 15-16
Establish methods for community to provide feedback and suggestions				FY 14-15 (part of marketing plan)
Make presentations about the library to groups and solicit feedback				Annual, beginning FY 15-16
<b>Improve research skills</b>				
Develop workshops for students and parents on research resources at the library		Possible time increase for YSL		
Design research-related web pages for easy use	part of new web site			FY 14-15

### Prioritization of Objectives

To avoid more deficit spending than necessary, objectives with associated expenses will be completed as funding allows, according to the following priorities:

FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional weekend hours</li> <li>• Marketing plan</li> <li>• New website design</li> <li>• Directional signage and shelving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain weekend hours</li> <li>• Additional programming</li> <li>• Customer service training and professional development</li> <li>• Additional evening hours</li> <li>• Consultant fees for facility planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain additional hours</li> <li>• Maintain additional programming</li> <li>• Maintain professional development</li> <li>• Remaining objectives postponed from previous years due to lack of funding</li> </ul>

# Advocacy Committee and Alternate Sources of Revenue

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As described in an earlier section, the library cannot maintain existing services and add the basic costs outlined in the objectives above without deficit spending. While library reserves can withstand minimal deficit spending in the near term, alternate sources of revenue are needed to prevent long-term drain on these reserves.

In order to meet this challenge, the library board will establish an advocacy committee, headed by trustee representatives and including other community representatives. The committee will be charged with developing an annual fundraising campaign, with the goal of being able to fully fund (without deficit spending) the existing level of services, as well as the objectives listed in this plan, by FY 2017-2018. The committee’s secondary objective will be to encourage and provide opportunities for giving to the endowment fund.

Because it is unrealistic to expect the advocacy committee to raise the full amount necessary to eliminate projected deficits immediately, the following schedule is planned:

FY 14-15	FY 15-16	FY 16-17	FY 17-18
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish committee and develop plans for fundraising for operating expenses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise \$6,000 for expenses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise \$16,000 for expenses</li> <li>Develop plans for large-scale fundraising</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise \$26,000 for expenses</li> <li>Begin large-scale fundraising</li> </ul>

## Looking Beyond 2017

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The board of trustees has identified several long-term goals that are outside the scope of this plan, but need to be considered during the 2014-2017 time period as the library prepares for the future:

### Second Full-Time Position

At this time, the library director is the only full-time employee and the library is growing. A second full-time position is needed to assist the director, preferably a full-time librarian or an assistant director. The current financial position of the library does not allow for this position during the time frame covered by this plan, but if more funds become available this is the next objective on the list.

### Expanding the Facility

Library use is growing beyond the size of the current facility and the survey results showed clearly that the public wants more meeting and collaborative workspace. More space is also needed if the library is to meet the goal of increasing the collection size. The trustees will need to consider If, how, and when to expand the facility and how to raise the necessary funds.

### Large-Scale Financial Needs

Long-term projected financial needs include:

- Bringing the endowment fund to its minimum \$500,000 level
- Expanding the facility

