



Carl Sagan, noted astronomer, astrophysicist and author, once said, “The health of our civilization, the depth of our awareness about the underpinnings of our culture, and our concern for the future can all be tested by how well we support our libraries.” Library advocates and our elected officials agree that in Saint Paul we value the contributions our library makes to the lives and education of our city.

Libraries Change Lives



EVERY YEAR, the Saint Paul Public Library contributes to the healthy development of the community by offering early-childhood opportunities for learning, reading fun in the summer so students return to school ready to learn, assistance for job-seekers and business owners, support for new Americans with expanded bilingual materials and services, access to the Internet and technology training, and infinite opportunities for lifelong learning. The Library delivers an incredible return on investment for its tax support and proves the positive outcomes that public and private partnerships promise.

Last year, more than 2.9 million visitors borrowed nearly 3.5 million items, made 403,539 information inquiries to staff, and used the 354 public access computers 807,476 times. Well over a million people attended programs for children, teens and adults, while thousands took advantage of its homework centers, learning centers, college prep and career resource centers. The Library was able to respond quickly to new waves of immigrant populations arriving from countries outside of our experience. Saint Paul Public Library is truly a 21st-century urban library system and an important piece of the economic recovery puzzle.

But our Library is at the limit of its capital capacity. Even as we strengthen our foundational work, we must continue to move forward, looking ahead and planning for the future. What does the library of the future look like?



FLEXIBLE INTERIOR SPACES

The building, interior spaces, furniture and fixtures are adaptable to multiple uses and changing priorities.

- Gathering spaces for use by individuals and groups of varying sizes.
- Different environments for children, teens, and adults.
- Portions of a building and certain services accessible when library is closed.

EFFICIENT OPERATIONS

The Library maximizes easy and convenient operations for the public and staff.

- A single service point supplemented by active, roving staff.
- Maximized self-service for patrons, including self check-out, self-check-in and holds pick-up.

- Easy-to-understand, uncluttered way-finding and signage.
- Efficient backroom functions in non-public spaces, including automated materials handling.



TECHNOLOGY

Technology infrastructure, furniture, fixtures, and power sources flexibly support a variety of standard and emerging, fixed and portable hardware with state-of-the-art, ultra high-speed broadband access.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Building design, furnishings, fixtures and operations use green and sustainable design standards and maximize energy efficiency.

Our Position:

The Advocacy Committee of The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library supports Mayor Coleman's proposed Library budget for 2011. Of special significance to The Friends is that all Library facilities will remain open for the same hours as this year; the materials budget is increasing by \$93,000; and the budget includes funding for a Library Physical Needs Assessment. When this assessment is completed, the City will have a clearer picture of the basic building improvements that will be needed over the next 10-15 years, and an evaluation and cost estimate of the required 21st century upgrades.

The Friends also supports the Mayor's proposed \$6 million in Library and Capital Improvement Bonds in future budget years. In addition to City funds already allocated for the Arlington Hills Branch at Payne Maryland Town Square, these funds will support projects at Sun Ray and Highland Park Branches, as well as Central Library. Many of these capital improvement projects offer an opportunity to make small investments with big impact. The Friends stands ready to assist the Library as it builds capacity to serve future generations by preparing a Capital Campaign to raise private funds for library enhancements.

Looking Ahead: A Match

We respectfully submit that the national standard for library collections budgets is generally 12% to 15% of the total operating budget. With the Mayor's proposed increase in the materials budget, for Saint Paul that figure is still just over eight percent. In order to raise it to the level recommended by industry norms, **the Advocacy Committee asks that the Mayor and Library Board consider future increases in the materials budget which will bring the Library's total collections budget to approximately \$1.9 million. The Friends will provide a private match to help the Library move toward this goal we feel must be reached as quickly as possible.**

The Advocacy Committee also asks that the Mayor and Library Board work to **restore Library hours** to their historic high levels of 2009.



SAINT PAUL
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

Produced and developed by the Advocacy Committee of
The Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library

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