

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH LIBRARY BOARD

Chairperson – Diane Holl-Rambo -- Talkeetna	Big Lake – Paige Moore	Sutton -- Vacant
Vice Chair – Georgia Knazovich – At Large 2	Trapper Creek – Ann Yadon	Wasilla -- Vacant
Secretary – Susan Pougher -- Palmer	Willow – Carol Goltz	At Large 1 – Vacant

AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING Zoom

**April 17, 2021
10:00 am**

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. ROLL CALL – DETERMINATION OF QUORUM
- III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
- IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
- V. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING
 - A. March 20, 2021
- VI. BOROUGH STAFF REPORT
 - A. Hugh Leslie
 - B. Librarians
- VII. PERSONS TO BE HEARD / AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – 3 minutes per person
- VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
 - A. Assembly report
- IX. NEW BUSINESS
 - A. Review of Library Strategic Plan
- X. ADVOCACY
 - A. Current needs
- XI. CORRESPONDENCE
- XII. MEMBER COMMENTS
- XIII. NEXT MEETING
 - A. May 15, 2021 Trapper Creek Public Library and Zoom meeting

April 17, 2021

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

April 17, 2021

1 **MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH**
2 **LIBRARY BOARD**

3
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7
8

9 **Draft Minutes**

10 **REGULAR MEETING**
11 **Zoom**

March 20, 2021
 10:00 am

12 I. **CALL TO ORDER**

13 Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Holl-Rambo at 10:05

14 II. **ROLL CALL – DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

15 All members present a quorum was established.

16 III. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

17 Resolution to amend the agenda and add Borough Library Budget Resolution under new
18 business. Motion to approve as amended by Member Knazovich, seconded by Member
19 Yadon. Passed unanimously

20 IV. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** Led by Member Moore

21 V. **MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING**

22 February 20, 2021. Corrections suggested involving spelling and minor word changes,
23 not affecting the meaning of the minutes. Motion made to accept the minutes as
24 amended by Member Knazovich, seconded by Member Moore. Passed unanimously.

25 VI. **BOROUGH STAFF REPORT**

26 A. Hugh Leslie. Library Budgets to be reviewed by Mr. Phillips and Mr. Brown.
27 There is indication that no cuts will be requested in the operating budgets of the
28 Libraries. The Borough will be receiving some COVID monies. Some oncall positions
29 have been filled. Borough may make changes to COVID recommendations for borough
30 facilities.

31 B. Librarians:

32 Julie Mitchell, Willow shared pictures of the Willow Library Construction.

33 Juli Sutton Library. Planning summer programs to include outside activities. Having an Easter
34 basket auction fundraiser they have 15 or 16 to auction. Weekly storytime well attended online.
35 There is an increase of patrons through the door.

36 Beth Scow Palmer Library. Open for patrons in the Library 10 to 2 Tuesday to Saturday.

37 Curbside pick up until 4, many patrons continue to use this service. Average 60 to 80 in person

March 20, 2021

38 visits a day. Some patrons do not want to wear a mask. Summer reading program is planned for
39 outside.

40 VII. PERSONS TO BE HEARD / AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – 3 minutes per person

41 No persons to be heard.

42 VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

43 A. Assembly report. Changes and additions suggested to the report. Chairperson Holl-
44 Rambo will finish up the presentation and deliver it to the Assembly in April. She will include a
45 thank you to Nancy Burteles from Sutton, whose letter she uses in the presentation. Please get
46 any suggestions to her soon.

47 B. Changes to MSBLB Handbook .Motion by Member Knazovich and seconded by
48 Member Pougher. Suggested changes on page 3 section B1. New wording to be.

49
50 “Meetings should be held at least once a year at each library in the Mat-Su library network and
51 two times a year electronically. In unusual circumstances an electronic meeting may be
52 substituted for a face to face meeting.”

53
54 Resolution to approve handbook wording as above. Approved unanimously.

55
56 IX. NEW BUSINESS

57 A. Review borough library budgets. Resolution to Borough Assembly from The Library
58 Board indicating our review and approval of the Borough Library Budgets. Resolution 21-01
59 moved by Member Moore, seconded by Member Knazovich. Approved unanimously.
60 (Chairperson will sign and send to the Borough, Member Pougher will go to Borough to sign)

61
62 X. ADVOCACY

63 A. Current needs Member Yadon has sent emails with advocacy information to board
64 members. COVID rescue has some money from IMLS, the state library is considering options.
65 There is a virtual AKLA meeting that Anya from Big Lake is attending.

66 XI. CORRESPONDENCE None.

67 XII. MEMBER COMMENTS

68 Member Knazovich from Wasilla. The newspapers online are working well.

69 Member Goltz from Willow. Building project is going well. Crew had pizza to celebrate getting
70 the roof on. Yesterday the proposal submissions were due for art for the recognition wall. Would
71 like for a local artist to do the piece.

72 Member Yadon Trapper Creek. Continuing service, planning for summer with lots of outside
73 programming.

74 Member Pougher. 3 children programs a week. Open 10 to 2 for in person, and until 4 for
75 curbside pick up.

76 Member Moore Big Lake. Wondering if summer programs have been approved for gathering
77 outdoors. New hire started in the past week. Hoping to be back open on Mondays in April.
78 Everyone seems to be liking the rotating artist pieces. STEAM and craft kits, 38 STEAM kits
79 given out.

80 Chairperson Holl-Rambo Talkeetna. Had a Library Birthday party, with buttons that said "I love
81 my Library" and individually wrapped cookies. Trying to plan Summer Programs, and a
82 community garden.

83 XIII. NEXT MEETING

84 April 17 Wasilla Public Library and Zoom meeting. Chairperson Holl-Rambo may not
85 be available to lead the meeting, as she is traveling. Member Knazovich may Chair the meeting
86 if needed.

87 VIII. ADJOURNMENT

88 Motion by Member Goltz and seconded by Member Moore, all in favor. Meeting
89 adjourned at 11:08 a.m.
90

91
92
93 _____
94 Diane Holl-Rambo, Chairperson

95 Attest:
96
97

98 _____
99 Susan Pougher, Secretary
100

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH LIBRARY

BOARD HANDBOOK

Updated March 2021

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Matanuska-Susitna Library Board is to strengthen library services within the Borough by acting as an advocate to ensure adequate funding, review policies, and aid in the development of long-term plans for libraries within the Borough.

Powers and Duties (MSB Code 4.40.040)

(A) The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Library Board (MSBLB) shall have the following powers and duties:

- (1) act in an advisory capacity to the Manager and the Assembly in the administration of the Borough non-area-wide library power;
- (2) initiate and recommend to the Manager and the Assembly proposed ordinances and regulations pertaining to libraries;
- (3) review the budget of the libraries and make recommendations to the Manager with regard to the proposed annual budget to be submitted to the Assembly;
- (4) make investigations and reviews in the general field of libraries considered beneficial to providing library services within the Borough at the request of the Manager, Assembly, or on its own initiative;
- (5) receive and consider recommendations from individuals and groups with regard to libraries and evaluate and refer these to the Manager and Assembly;
- (6) recommend to the Manager and Assembly needed programs and expenditures for the promotion of library services in connections with any local, state or federal program; and
- (7) review and make recommendations to the Manager and the Assembly in regard to the long-range library capital improvement program.

(Ord. 00-127, § 4, 2000; Ord. 84-34, § 25 (part), 1984)

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH LIBRARY

BOARD HANDBOOK

Updated March 2021

Membership (MSB Code 4.40.020)

The MSBLB is a nine-member board appointed by the Mayor with approval of the assembly. The members represent the public libraries and library patrons of the Borough with due consideration given to geographical distribution. A majority of the membership shall not be representative of a single profession. Appointments are chronologically staggered to promote continuity.

- (A) The mayor may appoint board members as follows:
 - (1) One member shall be selected from a list of names presented by the:
 - (a) Big Lake Librarian and Big Lake Library Advocates;
 - (b) Palmer Librarian and Friends of the Palmer Library;
 - (c) Sutton Librarian and Friends of the Sutton Library;
 - (d) Talkeetna Librarian and Friends of the Talkeetna Public Library;
 - (e) Wasilla Librarian and Friends of the Wasilla Public Library;
 - (f) Willow Librarian and Willow Library Association;
 - (g) Trapper Creek Librarian and Trapper Creek Library Association.
 - (B) Two members may be appointed at-large by nomination of the Mayor and confirmation by the Assembly and may be recommended by Borough librarians and from library advocates.
 - (C) Each of the nine positions shall have one vote on the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Library Board.
 - (D) Membership consideration shall be given geographical distribution.
- (Ord. 00-127, § 2, 2000; Ord. 94-109, § 2, 1994; Ord. 94-001AM, § 5(part), 1994; Ord. 87-106, § 2, 1987; Ord. 84-34, § 25 (part), 1984)

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH LIBRARY

BOARD HANDBOOK

Updated March 2021

Organization and Compensation of MSLB Members (MSB Code 4.40.030 & 4.40.025)

1. Meetings shall be held at regularly designated times and locations. The chairperson or vote of the Board can change meeting dates, time and location. All meetings are open to the public with public notice coordinated through the Clerk's Office.
 - (A) Regular meetings begin at 10:00 a.m. the third Saturday of each month except June, July, and December, when no meetings are held. Special meetings may be called as needed.
 - (B) Meetings should be held at least once a year at each library in the Mat-Su Library Network (MSLN) and two (2) times a year electronically. In unusual circumstances an electronic meeting may be substituted for a face to face meeting.
 - (C) Majority establishes a quorum, which are five members of this nine-member board. A vote of five is necessary for the board to take action.
 - (D) The Board shall use an adopted agenda format, Parliamentary Procedure, and Robert's Rules of Order.
 - (E) Minutes will be recorded by the Board secretary and approved by the Board.
2. Officers shall include Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary
 - (A) Elections are to be held during the meeting in September each year. Officers shall be elected by a majority of the Board members for a term of one year. Election of officers shall be the first order of business at any time that an officer's seat is not filled. As appointed board members, officers have full voting rights.
 - (B) Job Descriptions:
 - Chairperson
 - a. see that the purpose and duties of the Board are fulfilled
 - b. preside at all meeting of the Board
 - c. plan meetings and develop agenda
 - d. appoint committees and serve as ex-officio member of them
 - e. organize and supervise elections
 - f. receive and handle Board correspondence

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH LIBRARY

BOARD HANDBOOK

Updated March 2021

- g. prepare and deliver Board report to the MSB Assembly, approximately twice a year or as needed
- h. maintain file of pertinent documents pertaining to MSBLB during the current year plus one additional full year. Permanent records shall be archived by the MSB Recreation and Library Services Staff.

Vice-Chairperson

- a. perform duties of the chair in his/her absence
- b. perform such duties as the chair requests
- c. assist the secretary in writing correspondence as needed
- d. serve as Parliamentarian at all meetings
- e. be responsible for maintaining and reviewing the MSBLB Handbook and Borough Codes and recommend updates to the Board.
- f. Facilitate updating phone/e-mail list for communication between board members, as needed

Secretary

- a. record minutes and proceedings of all meetings
- b. transmit draft minutes to the Recreation and Library Services staff to include in MSBLB agenda packet for next meeting
- c. write and send correspondence as requested by the board and / or chair
- d. maintain file for pertinent documents pertaining to MSBLB during the current year plus one additional full year. Permanent records shall be archived by the MSB Recreation and Library Services Staff

3. Board members shall be reimbursed for mileage incurred in connection with meetings of the board in accordance with MSB Code. Board members are compensated for mileage expenses upon presentation of completed monthly mileage claim form to the Recreational & Library Services Manager. Mileage reimbursement based on availability of funding.

Procedural Considerations for Use of Committees

1. MSB Assembly

- a. correspondence sent to Assembly and Mayor directly or through Clerk's Office
- b. correspondence sent to MSB Manager for immediate attention and copied to the Recreational & Library Services Manager
- c. presentations to the MSB Assembly are done as needed by one of three methods:
 - Board Report – request the Mayor, through the Clerk's Office, to be placed on the Assembly agenda

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH LIBRARY

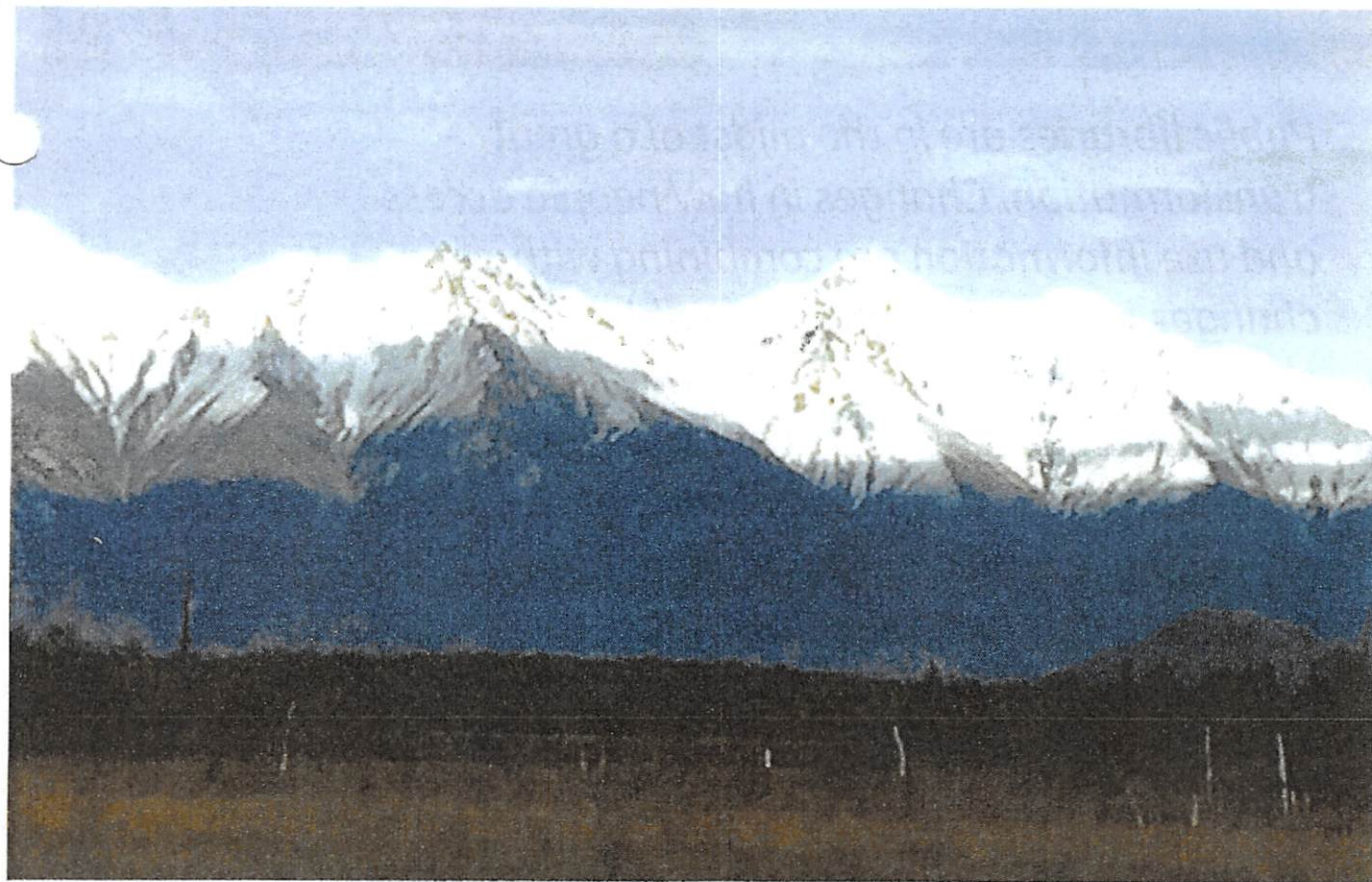
BOARD HANDBOOK

Updated March 2021

- Persons to be Heard – notify Clerk’s Office in advance
 - Audience Participation – no prior notification necessary
2. Resolutions/Proclamations developed and written by the MSBLB are forwarded
 - a. to Recreation Services Administrative Secretary for distribution to the Clerk’s Office, MSB Administration, Mayor, and Assembly, as needed
 - b. through appropriate department to request corresponding resolution/proclamation from another board, as needed
 - c. through Recreation Services Administrative Secretary for distribution to the Clerk’s Office to request corresponding resolution/proclamation from the Assembly, as needed
 3. Approved MSBLB meeting minutes should be sent from the Secretary to the Recreation Services Administrative Secretary to be distributed to the Clerk’s Office to be included in the Assembly packet.
 4. Packets for board meetings shall include meeting agenda, draft minutes of proceeding meeting, and copies of all communications sent from or received by the board and/or members. Board packets will be mailed by the Recreation Services Administrative Secretary.
 5. Library Board members will adhere to standards set by Alaska’s Open Meetings Act (AS 44.62.310) for advisory bodies.

Board Responsibilities

1. Annually
 - a. review Library Strategic Plan
 - b. review MSBLB Handbook
 - c. make recommendations to Capital Improvement Program
 - d. review and make recommendations for library budgets
2. Periodically
 - a. Conduct a Board self-evaluation.
 - b. recommend updates of Library Strategic Plan to Assembly
3. As Needed
 - a. initiate and propose ordinances and policies for libraries
 - b. review all proposed ordinance and policies affecting libraries
 - c. appoint and suspend standing and special committees of the MSBLB



Strategic Plan 2018-2022

Matanuska-Susitna Borough

Public Libraries

March, 2018



Public libraries are in the midst of a great transformation. Changes in how people access and use information are combining with changes in the critical thinking ability and skills necessary to operate in today's society. These changes require new approaches to library services. The public library must evolve to keep pace with change, while remaining a safe and comfortable public space for community and connection.



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The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Public Libraries are high-performing, critical public resources. Citizens from a large geographic area in South Central Alaska depend on the libraries for information, books, electronic resources, technology and Internet access. Librarians and staff at all locations go the extra mile to provide patrons with service of the highest quality. Patrons appreciate this service and many make visits to a Mat-Su Borough Public Library part of their weekly routine.

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough's Community Development, Recreation and Library Services Department launched a strategic planning process in July 2017 with a Request for Proposals for a comprehensive strategic plan for the Borough's five libraries located in Big Lake, Sutton, Talkeetna, Trapper Creek and Willow.

Library Systems & Services (LS&S) was selected to develop the strategic plan and complete work in August 2017-January 2018. LS&S identified strengths and challenges at the libraries and developed key themes, followed by a five-year roadmap.

During the 2018-2022 planning term, Matanuska-Susitna Borough Public Libraries will serve patrons with emerging material formats, technology and ideas. Borough Public Libraries will embrace innovation and implement the latest best practices to improve library service. Key themes emerged to guide the development of the strategic plan. Borough public libraries will:

- Be focal points and resource hubs for individuals and communities
- Play a central role in the education of members of the community from pre-schoolers through seniors
- Maintain a collection that meets community needs
- Support a love of reading, personal growth and lifelong learning

The Matanuska-Susitna Public Libraries Strategic Plan is a guide that prioritizes the work of library staff and the Matanuska-Susitna Library Board, Friends and Advocates groups. It was developed with careful consideration of the five unique Borough communities and needs of citizens in rural Alaska. The plan is shaped with the understanding that change is inevitable, and that library services will adapt as necessary. At the same time, the libraries will maintain core values, work to achieve the mission and remain focused on serving the community.

PLANNING PROCESS

Many individuals and groups shared ideas, insights and passions in the development of this plan. A great deal of effort was made by LS&S and library staff to ask the community what it needs and wants from Borough libraries. Input was gathered from:

- Librarians
- Library staff
- Mat-Su Borough staff
- Mat-Su Borough Library Board members
- Mat-Su Assembly members
- Library Friends and Advocates group members
- Library patrons

The five Borough Librarians and Recreation and Library staff prepared and submitted a host of information about library history, operations and stakeholders. In September, 2017 an online survey went live and community members across the Borough were encouraged to share thoughts and feedback through a comprehensive outreach campaign.

During the week of October 9, 2017, input from staff, library stakeholders and the community was gathered at 15 meetings. More feedback was gathered during an additional 13 one-to-one phone interviews. All in all, nearly 300 community voices provided input about the Matanuska-Susitna Public Libraries and their desired priorities.



HISTORY



The five Matanuska Susitna Borough (MSB) libraries at Big Lake, Sutton, Talkeetna, Trapper Creek and Willow were all established independently—usually by volunteers—to serve the needs and desires of local residents. Public libraries in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough have worked with varying degrees of collaboration since 1965, when the Mat-Su Borough Library Association (MSBLA) was formed. The MSBLA continued work until it was dissolved by the Alaska Department of Commerce in 1982.

In 1978, the Mat-Su Borough Library Board (MSBLB) was established with representatives from the five Borough libraries, the Palmer and Wasilla libraries and the public. The MSBLB supports, recommends and reviews library operations. MSB libraries, excluding the Palmer and Wasilla libraries, are managed by the Borough's Community Development Department, Recreation and Library Services Division.

By 1995, the Mat-Su Library Network (MSLN), comprising the five Borough libraries as well as the Palmer and Wasilla libraries, was formally managing a newly acquired integrated library automation system. The MSLN's goal was to provide more consistent public library service to MSB library users at a lower cost. Other intended benefits included collective buying power for online databases and other electronic resources. In 2004, Mat-Su Borough School District libraries also joined with the MSLN and together these libraries converted to the current library automation system.

The MSLN led to consistent policies, procedures and fees, and eliminated some duplicate efforts. The formal MSLN was disbanded in 2016 and the five libraries now operate as a Borough entity. Collaboration continues among the seven libraries through monthly meetings of the Borough and City librarians, the "totes" courier system and participation in the Alaska Library Catalog consortium.

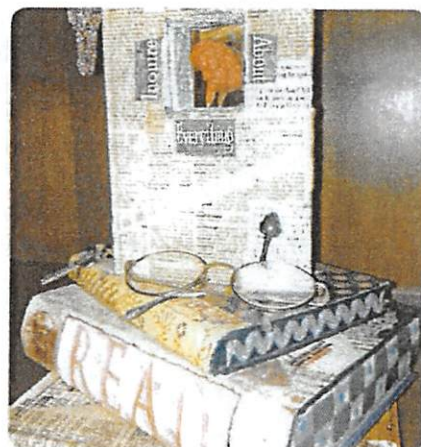
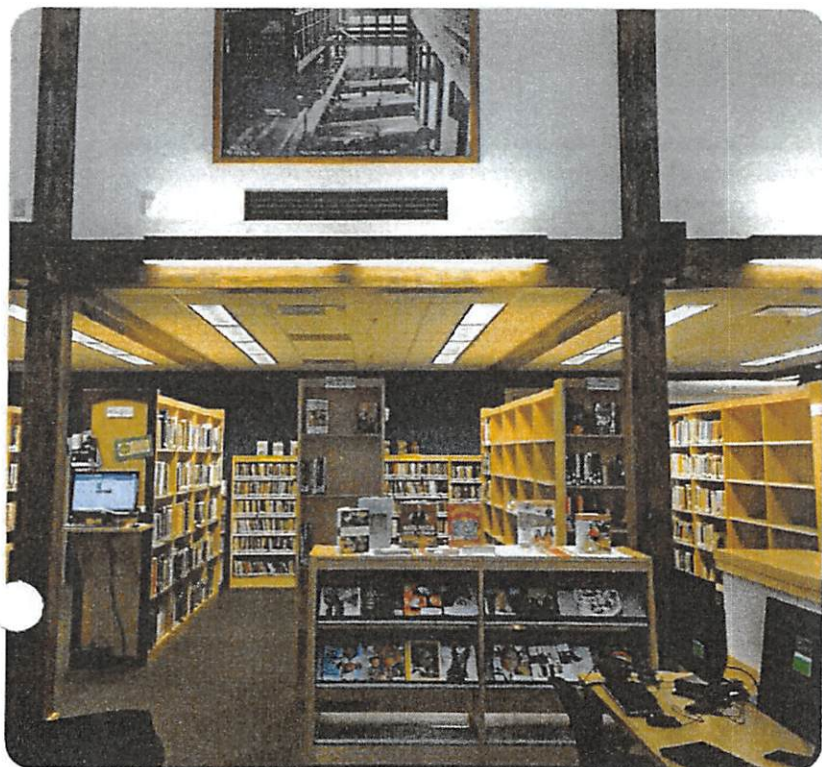
Earlier strategic planning initiatives for the Mat-Su Borough libraries were conducted by the Christenson Library Council in 1993 and the MSBLB in 2014.

The Christenson report suggested the creation of a "library service area" governed by a Board of Supervisors with the long-term goal of a unified library system and dedicated funding. The report further suggested continuing the contract between the Borough and cities of Palmer and Wasilla to deliver library services.

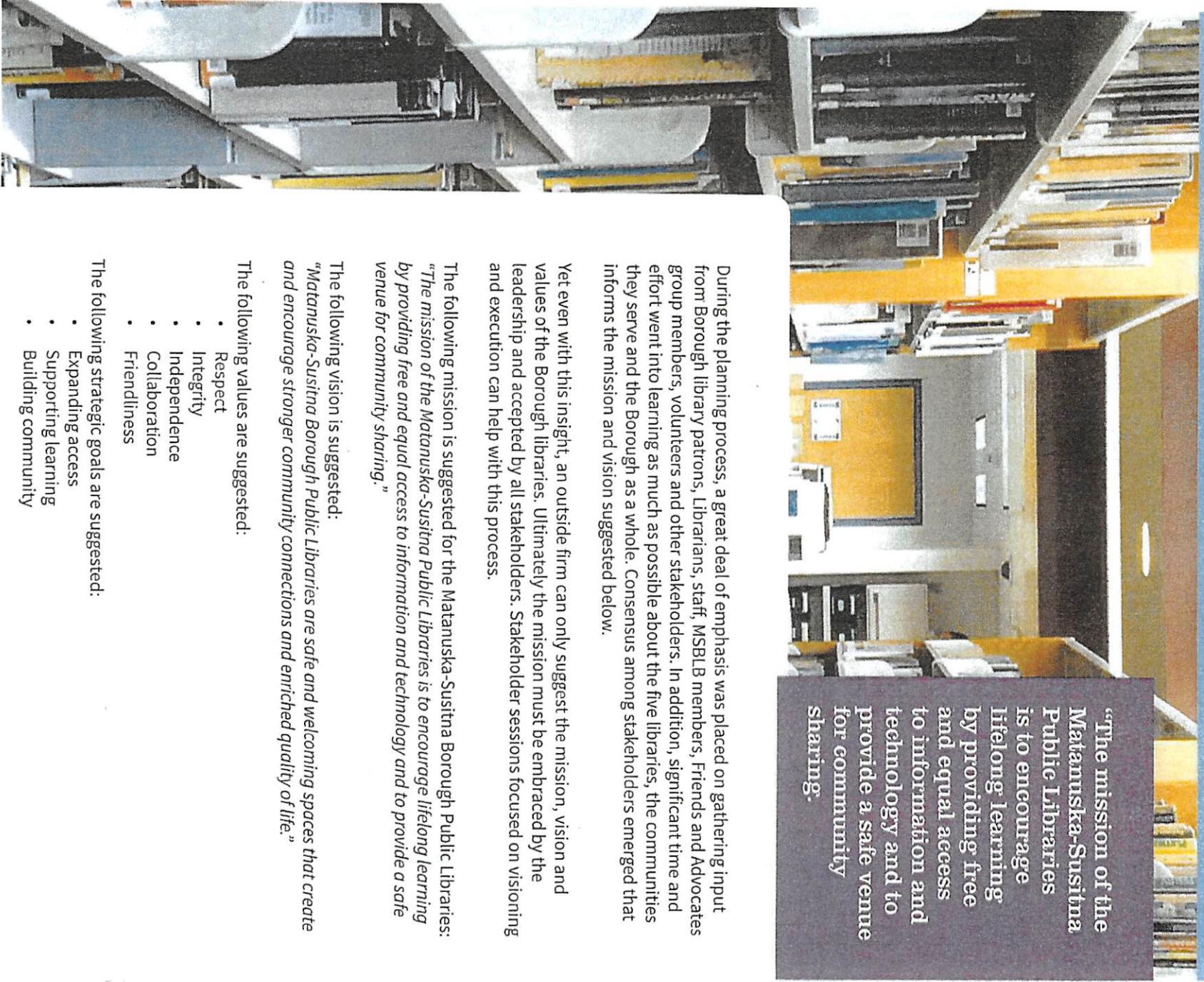
A new central library was suggested, along with the position of Library Coordinator to administer the library contract. While the Christenson report is dated and many of its observations, conclusions and recommendations are no longer applicable, a few observations and recommendations are true today. These consistencies are expanded upon in this plan.

Issues and concerns from the 2014 MSBLB report included:

1. Lack of stable funding
2. Aging and/or inadequate facilities and need for better facilities
3. Need for advocacy, to include not only the education of members of governing bodies but also the general public
4. Exponentially increasing technological requirements
5. Unique character of geographic area and service population



MISSION, VISION AND VALUES



"The mission of the Matanuska-Susitna Public Libraries is to encourage lifelong learning by providing free and equal access to information and technology and to provide a safe venue for community sharing."

During the planning process, a great deal of emphasis was placed on gathering input from Borough library patrons, Librarians, staff, MSBLB members, Friends and Advocates group members, volunteers and other stakeholders. In addition, significant time and effort went into learning as much as possible about the five libraries, the communities they serve and the Borough as a whole. Consensus among stakeholders emerged that informs the mission and vision suggested below.

Yet even with this insight, an outside firm can only suggest the mission, vision and values of the Borough libraries. Ultimately the mission must be embraced by the leadership and accepted by all stakeholders. Stakeholder sessions focused on visioning and execution can help with this process.

The following mission is suggested for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Public Libraries: *"The mission of the Matanuska-Susitna Public Libraries is to encourage lifelong learning by providing free and equal access to information and technology and to provide a safe venue for community sharing."*

The following vision is suggested: *"Matanuska-Susitna Borough Public Libraries are safe and welcoming spaces that create and encourage stronger community connections and enriched quality of life."*

The following values are suggested:

- Respect
- Integrity
- Independence
- Collaboration
- Friendliness

The following strategic goals are suggested:

- Expanding access
- Supporting learning
- Building community

The following strategic priorities are suggested:

- Excellent staff
- Increased collaboration
- Innovative best practices

This mission, vision and values build on the 1993 Christenson and 2014 MSLN Strategic Plans. The 1993 Christenson report endorses the purpose/mission of the MSBLB as stated in the 1993 MSLN Handbook/Policy Manual, "The purpose of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Library Board is to be an advocate for public library programs and public library patrons of the borough by eliciting common needs, proposing plans to meet those needs, and making the prioritized needs and the plans known."

The 2014 MSLN Strategic Plan states, "The goal of the Matanuska-Susitna Library Network is to support the educational, civic, and cultural services of the community, as well as the intellectual, creative, and inspirational endeavors of the individual. The MSLN combines technology and quality services to enrich lives of those living, working, or visiting within the Matanuska-Susitna Borough." Specific goals included encouraging adequate funding, expanding library services, addressing the increased use of the MSLN libraries and promoting public awareness of library services and funding needs.



**"Matanuska-Susitna
Borough Public Libraries
are safe and welcoming
spaces that create and
encourage stronger
community connections
and enriched quality
of life."**

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

The five Matanuska-Susitna Borough Public Libraries serve very large, very disparate geographic areas. From weekend visitors to long-term inhabitants and neighborhood dwellers to off-the-grid residents, the libraries ably provide information, programs and technology access to patrons who have a wide variety of needs and requests.

BIG LAKE

Big Lake's beautiful setting and central location led to its popularity during the mid-to-late 20th century as a weekend destination for Anchorage residents. While the weekend and vacation populations are still significant, Big Lake has come into its own during the past 15 years as a year-round community. Larger and more expensive second and year-round homes have replaced many cabins, and the community has become more family oriented.

Financially secure retirees and Anchorage commuters mix with low income populations and those who live year-round on summer earnings from tourism. Big Lake also serves the Meadow Lakes community and approximately 95 percent of Houston.

SUTTON

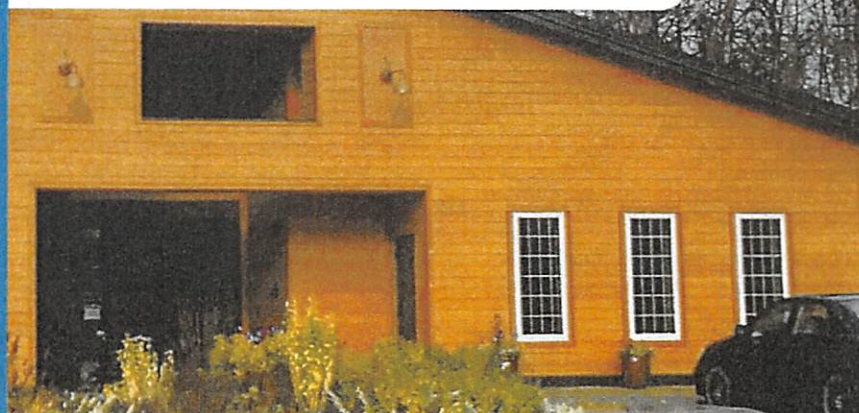
Sutton is a rural, commuter community nestled along the Matanuska River. Growing from a coal mining station on the Matanuska Branch of the Alaska Railroad (coal extraction equipment formerly used in the area is displayed at the adjacent Alpine Historical Park) and road construction camp, Sutton is known for its scenery and solitude. Sutton does not have the seasonal and tourist populations of Big Lake, Talkeetna, Trapper Creek and Willow. Sutton also serves the communities of Chickaloon, Glacier View and Lake Louise.

TALKEETNA

Situated at the base of Denali, Talkeetna is a magnet for tourists. During the summer, up to 1,000 day trippers emerge from buses, trains and cruise ships. Others stay several days to several weeks to enjoy the full Talkeetna experience. Residents and visitors enjoy easy access to outdoor activities ranging from mountain climbing, fishing and skiing to cultural pursuits like art galleries, concerts and crafting. Many residents in the service area live year-round on summer income. This low-income group comprises most families in the area. Talkeetna also serves the off-road, off-grid Chase area, remote areas along the Susitna, Talkeetna and Chulitna Rivers and approximately 75 percent of Susitna North.

"We're 18 miles from anything."

"We have three places to hang out in this community: The library, the bar and the church. Some people don't go to the bar or the church so that leaves the library. The library is a social business."



TRAPPER CREEK

Trapper Creek is a small community located in the northern portion of the Borough at the base of the Alaskan Range. A large part of Trapper Creek land is owned by the Borough and the State of Alaska. Trapper Creek is a young community with Federal homesteading beginning in 1948. Utilities and infrastructure to support economic development are limited. Phone and Internet services can be unreliable. Library staff estimate 35-40 percent of the population live off the grid, although many have generator-produced electricity. Trapper Creek also serves the Petersville community and approximately 10 percent of Susitna North.

WILLOW

Willow is a small, friendly community located centrally in the Borough. Self-described as laid-back, the community has significant family and senior populations. Thousands of tourists descend on the area in early March for the official start of the Iditarod. Willow is thought to be the most diverse of the five served by Borough libraries.

The attached community center has been a boon, with large space for events, and a burden, with staff spending significant time on facility maintenance. A new library at Willow is needed; the community is working hard to find funding for a new library and renovated community center. Willow also serves the Skwentna community and approximately five percent of Houston.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN:

The Matanuska-Susitna Borough Public Libraries are well-loved, critical public resources. Citizens from a large geographic area in South Central Alaska depend on the libraries for information, books, electronic resources, technology and Internet access. Citizens also depend on the libraries to provide safe and welcoming community spaces. Librarians and staff are devoted to their patrons. Patrons appreciate this service and highly value their libraries and library staff.

Alaska's oil-dependent economy has suffered with the fall of petroleum prices since 2014. With few taxes on individuals and low tax revenue overall, State budgets are tight and there is no new revenue source on the horizon. The State grant program that helped fund new facilities at Sutton and Talkeetna no longer exists. The budget situation is similar in the Mat-Su Borough.

Determination of service populations for all five libraries is a challenge. As noted in Hennen's American Public Library Ratings, "the population served often extends beyond the population of the community that established it [the library] and provided the initial support." The unique geography of Alaska underlines this statement. Service areas extend far beyond the town where the libraries are physically located, including additional unserved Census Designated Places (CDP) as well as remote areas. Legal service populations for each of these libraries reported by the State of Alaska to the IMLS further support this issue.



"People feel comfortable coming to the library. We know patrons' names and if we don't know we ask them. Winters get pretty quiet up here. There isn't really any other place to hang out so people bring their kids in after school as part of their routine."



The five libraries, Big Lake, Sutton, Talkeetna, Trapper Creek and Willow, are truly community gathering spaces for a population that can be isolated by geography and weather. The Internet access the libraries provide through desktop computers and wifi is crucial in areas where home Internet access is prohibitively expensive or unavailable.

Although each of the five communities served by Borough libraries are unique and special, there are some similarities.

- Each library serves a passionate core group of patrons for whom the library is an important part of daily life
- The majority of families and children served are low-income
- School libraries are losing staff and budget; the public library is increasingly important for school children
- Many citizens rely on the library for Internet access
- Many citizens rely on the library for social interaction
- The senior/retiree population is growing
- Drug use is prevalent in the Borough and drug users and vandalism are of increasing concern

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a strong positive energy in the Borough libraries. The following recommendations support expansion of libraries' strengths and provide a strong foundation for the future.

Short term: March 2018-October 2019

Medium term: November 2019-May 2021

Long term: June 2020-December 2022

RECOMMENDATIONS: COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

1. OPEN SHELF SPACE

SHORT TERM

Continue weeding as staff time allows, with a goal of opening shelf space for browsing and creating displays of books, periodicals and audio visual materials.

2. COLLECTION ACQUISITION MANAGEMENT

MEDIUM TERM

Centralizing collection management and processing is a key way to support increased efficiency. While each library serves a unique community, there is overlap in the collection.

Creating a new Borough-level position to assume these functions of collection management and processing would be a strong step towards efficiency. This position could also support programs and marketing.

Please note that individual needs/requests of each library and community will be honored with centralized acquisitions.

3. EMPHASIZE MOBILE ACCESS AND OUTREACH

MEDIUM TERM

Work with the Alaska Library Consortium to investigate applications for patron use that streamline browsing and checking out of electronic materials. Note that mobile device users spend more time with apps than browsers and consider a Borough Public Library app.

As larger numbers of citizens gain access to home Internet and remote access of library resources grows, consider shifting budget resources to heavier support of electronic materials. Including streaming services such as Hoopla and Kanopy. Use circulation reports to determine timing of this shift.

635.7

4. SEEK COLLECTION DONATIONS

MEDIUM TERM

Offset low collections budgets by soliciting donations of money or selected books for the collection. This effort would add popular fiction titles and increase variety for frequent borrowers.

RECOMMENDATIONS: PROGRAMS

1. SHARE AND REPLICATE PROGRAMS ACROSS LIBRARIES

SHORT TERM

Consider providing a collection of programs to be offered at all library locations. There is overlap in public interest in topics like hunter safety, water conservation, technology education, Alaska history and child and teen literacy; offering these programs Borough-wide would optimize staff time and increase traffic.

Developing a "catalog of programs" for libraries to share is recommended.

2. FOCUS ON TECHNOLOGY

SHORT TERM

Consider budgeting for a few items (described in Recommendations: Technology) and offer programs and workshop activities to help young patrons become comfortable with new technology and prepare them for 21st Century careers. Continue to budget for new technology as it emerges.

One-on-one technology instruction is in demand at all libraries; mining the Borough's growing senior population for volunteers to offer scheduled and individualized technology instruction is recommended.

3. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

SHORT TERM

As Alaska's economy changes, consider focus on programs geared toward career development. Examples include how to search and apply for jobs, resume building workshops or opportunities to conduct a practice interview.

4. STRENGTHEN SCHOOL AND HOMESCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

MEDIUM TERM

As funding for schools and public libraries stagnates, both need to find new ways to serve students. Outreach to local schools is desirable, including visits to local elementary schools. This would help cement relationships with schools.

The libraries are a critical source for socialization for homeschool children. Consider seeking program funding from the Alaska State Board of Education and Early Development.





5. INCREASE NONPROFIT PARTNERSHIPS

MEDIUM TERM

Maintain and increase partnerships with local nonprofits for programming and non-traditional library lending. Work with nonprofit partners to seek funding and physical space for technology and mechanical equipment. For example, investigate virtual and/or augmented reality equipment, coding equipment and curricula, hand tools and sewing machines. This equipment, located as centrally as possible, could be available for use by all library patrons.

6. FOCUS ON PARENTS AND SENIORS

LONG TERM

Programs for parents as their child's "first and most important teacher" are recommended. Seniors are a growing population in all five communities and are active library users and supporters. Increase programs targeted to seniors. "We are independent thinkers and want classes appropriate for us." Examples include woodworking, exercise, garden club, film screenings and instruction for downloading library materials.

RECOMMENDATIONS: MARKETING

1. FOCUS ON WEBSITE PRESENCE

SHORT TERM

Request Borough support in updating website including engaging design, an interactive program/calendar and more information about library services.

2. CENTRALIZE MARKETING FUNCTIONS

SHORT TERM

Borough-wide promotion of library services and programs is recommended; the Borough level position described in Recommendations: Collection Management could be responsible for this effort. Examples include design of fliers, writing of news releases, advertising of library services and centralized email management.



3. INCREASE SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

SHORT TERM

Request Borough support for more frequent and engaging use of social media.

4. OFF SITE PROMOTION

MEDIUM TERM

Kiosks with library information, including map/directions could be placed at local grocery stores, post offices and tourist destinations.

5. LEVERAGE STAKEHOLDERS

LONG TERM

Word of mouth is one of the most effective channels for library promotion.

Leveraging stakeholders that are already engaged and encouraging them to talk to friends and neighbors about the library is recommended.

Actively involving teens in program planning and execution, and encouraging them to participate in and act as “tutors” for children’s programs is another strategy to increase participation.

6. HOST A “BOROUGH LIBRARY CELEBRATION” EVENT

LONG TERM

Hosting a daytime event for families, adults and teens would bring all five library communities together. Use the event to promote library programs. Objective is to celebrate all five communities and libraries.

RECOMMENDATIONS: STAFFING

1. SUCCESSION PLANNING

SHORT TERM

As Borough librarian positions come open, it is necessary to start the replacement process early to allow for current staff to assist in training incoming staff. As learned in Talkeetna, hiring qualified librarians in the region can take many months.

The American Library Association provides a list of the Core Competences of Librarianship available at <http://www.ala.org/educationcareers/careers/corecomp/corecompetences>.

2. MINIMUM STAFF COVERAGE

SHORT TERM

For safety, working toward a minimum of two staff members during all operational hours is recommended.





"I would like to see more staff training. We have done this in the past, and done well, but I would also like training in new electronic technologies."

3. BOROUGH-LEVEL LIBRARY POSITION

SHORT TERM

The Borough-level library position described in Recommendations: Collection Management and Marketing would bring centralized support to the libraries, optimizing efficiency and enhancing patron service.

4. STAFF TRAINING

MEDIUM TERM

Renewed focus on staff training, particularly related to technology and how to serve patrons with addiction and mental health issues, will support employee satisfaction and retention. Training should be centralized to encourage collaboration and maximize time. Consider contracting with retired librarians to coordinate staff training or add this to Borough-level library position responsibilities.

5. ON-CALL STAFF

MEDIUM TERM

Hiring a smaller number of permanent part-time employees, cross-trained to work at several geographically close locations, is recommended.

6. STAFF DAY

MEDIUM TERM

Continue Mat-Su Borough Training Days, Inviting library staff from Palmer and Wasilla. Staff Day is an excellent opportunity to thank all library staff and remind them they are valued and important contributors to the Borough. Staff enjoy this opportunity to strengthen relationships, plan future collaboration and participate in training.

7. VOLUNTEERS

LONG TERM

Volunteers can help with the shelving and weeding (with proper training and oversight).



It is suggested that each library designate one staff member to manage recruitment, communication, training and appreciation of library volunteers. As the Borough's year-round retiree population grows, so grows the pool of potential volunteers.

8. CONSISTENT HOURS OF OPERATION

LONG TERM

Consistent and predictable hours of operation are recommended.

RECOMMENDATIONS: TECHNOLOGY

1. BUDGET FOR EXPANDED WIFI ACCESS

SHORT TERM

Demand for wifi will grow at all locations as increasing numbers of patrons use personal devices at the library. Focus on wifi rather than public access computers; desktop computer use is projected to remain flat or decrease.

2. STANDARDIZE WIRELESS PRINTING AT ALL LOCATIONS

SHORT TERM

Add self-service printing option; request Borough support to standardize equipment for ease of use and maintenance. Many wireless printing solutions allow patrons to print remotely. Self-service kiosks are also available.

3. INVESTIGATE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

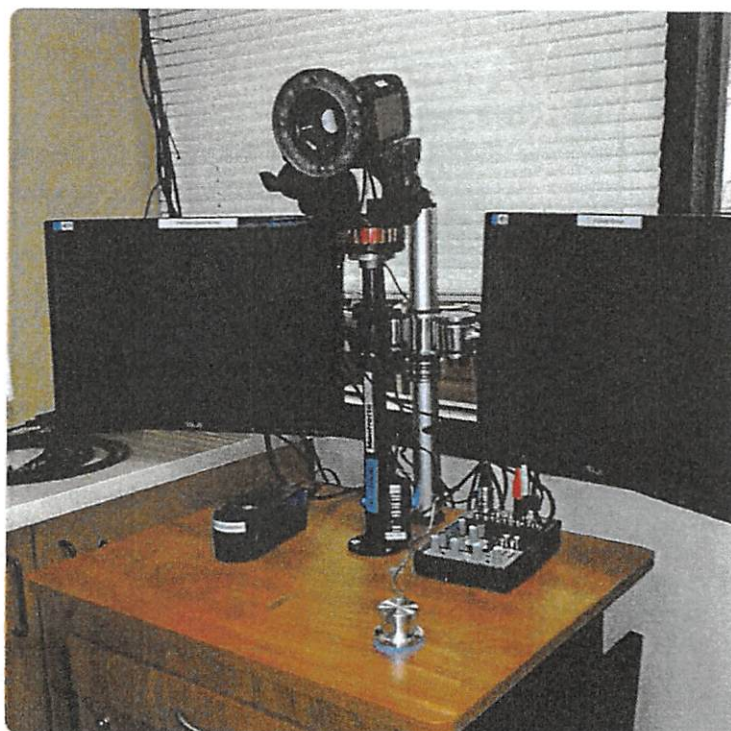
MEDIUM TERM

As the senior population in the Borough grows, investigate and budget for assistive technology to help aging patrons access library services. Examples include equipment to convert text to spoken word, USB screen magnifier and personal sound magnifier.

4. INCREASE TALKEETNA ONE-BUTTON STUDIO VIDEO RECORDING SYSTEM USE

MEDIUM TERM

Train new staff in how to use the system. Continue to increase patron use through classes and publicity.





RECOMMENDATIONS: FACILITIES

1. SECURITY

SHORT TERM

Security cameras help staff feel more comfortable, but cameras are not helpful during incidents. The best solution is to schedule two employees for each shift; while working toward this goal an alarm system is recommended. Staff need a way to get immediate help should a situation that endangers staff or patrons arise.

The current situation's liability risk to the Borough at present outweighs the cost of improved security.

The legalization of marijuana in Alaska provides an opportunity to seek funding for better library security. Approaching state officials regarding funding from marijuana sales tax is recommended. From October 2016 to June 2017 Alaska realized more than \$1 million in tax revenue. That number is expected to soar by the end of Fiscal Year 2018.

2. WILLOW: LEVERAGE MAT-SU FOUNDATION GRANT

SHORT TERM

Submit Rasmuson and Murdoch grant applications and continue to pursue grants and corporate support. Consider Gold Torrent, BP Alaska, Conoco Phillips and Matanuska Valley Federal Credit Union as potential donors.



3. WILLOW: PREPARE FOR BREAK IN GOVERNMENT FUNDING FOR NEW FACILITY**SHORT TERM**

Use all marketing channels to generate strong public awareness of the Mat-Su Health Foundation grant and the 30 month expenditure deadline. Encourage public officials not to "waste" \$1.68 million by not contributing to the Willow project.

4. WILLOW: SHIFT MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY CENTER**SHORT TERM**

Formalize and enforce expectations for the community center's building manager.

5. TALKEETNA: EXTERIOR**MEDIUM TERM**

Redesign driveway to address safety issues and expand parking lot. Support Talkeetna Friends' landscaping plan with Borough-supplied labor as possible.

6. BIG LAKE AND TRAPPER CREEK: RESET FURNITURE AND SHELVING**LONG TERM**

Create more open space for patron gathering by resetting existing furniture and shelving. Work toward budgeting for architectural consulting, furniture and drywall repair, painting and carpet replacement in preparation for this effort.



CALL TO ACTION

The 2016 Matanuska-Susitna Borough Metropolitan Planning Organization Self-Assessment summarizes the situation well:

"Change is occurring rapidly in the Mat-Su Borough. The growing pains being experienced by the Mat-Su Borough, its officials, staff and citizens, are not uncommon to many growing areas of the United States. Formerly rural areas that are rapidly transitioning to urban or suburban development patterns are stressed in terms of providing adequate transportation facilities and other public facilities."

Implementing the recommendations in this Strategic Plan will help Matanuska-Susitna Borough Public Libraries serve patrons with emerging material formats, technology and ideas as well as embrace innovative best practices.



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APPENDIX

MAT-SU PUBLIC LIBRARY DEMOGRAPHICS

Big Lake							
Library	Pop 2016	Households	Med HH Income	Poverty Rate	Median Age	H.S. Grad %	College Degree %
Big Lake	3,665	1,304	70,988	9.6%	38.6	93%	19%
Houston	2,163	731	50,438	14.8%	36.7	85%	11%
Meadow Lakes	8,540	2,717	65,850	12.9%	35.7	87%	10%
Total	14,368	4,752	62,425	12.4%	37.0	88.4%	13.1%

Sutton							
Library	Pop 2016	Households	Med HH Income	Poverty Rate	Median Age	H.S. Grad %	College Degree %
Sutton / Alpine	1,426	393	35,500	28.6%	40.6	92%	30%
Chickaloon	253	123	40,893	13.5%	56.0	75%	6%
Glacier View	245	99	43,000	9.2%	35.6	67%	12%
Lake Louise	40	25	N/A	46.7%	54.3	100%	30%
Total	1,964	640	39,798	24.5%	46.6	83%	20%

Talkeetna							
Library	Pop 2016	Households	Med HH Income	Poverty Rate	Median Age	H.S. Grad %	College Degree %
Talkeetna	903	449	49,861	6.6%	43.2	89%	32%
Chase	34	18	N/A	N/A	N/A	100%	0%
Susitna North .75	1,125	428	50,536	14.3%	49.9	81%	15%
Total	2,062	895	50,199	10.5%	46.6	90.1%	15.7%

Trapper Creek							
Library	Pop 2016	Households	Med HH Income	Poverty Rate	Median Age	H.S. Grad %	College Degree %
Trapper Creek	489	225	23,125	21.8%	48.5	91%	11%
Petersville	4	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Susitna North .10	150	57	50,536	14.3%	49.9	81%	15%
Total	643	286	36,831	18.1%	49.2	86.0%	13.0%

Willow							
Library	Pop 2016	Households	Med HH Income	Poverty Rate	Median Age	H.S. Grad %	College Degree %
Willow	2,047	893	61,970	13.4%	39.5	92%	19%
Skwentna	36	20	31,667	26.2%	52.5	100%	0%
Susitna North .15	225	86	50,536	14.3%	49.9	81%	15%
Total	2,308	999	48,058	18.0%	47.3	90.9%	11.4%



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