

**To:** Boulder City Council  
**Cc:** Jane Brautigam, Boulder City Manager  
**From:** Boulder Library Commission  
**Subject:** Annual Letter to City Council  
**Date:** December 15, 2017

Following our recent November 28th study session with Council, the Library Commissioners would like to revisit key themes from Director David Farnan's presentation. With nearly a million annual visits, the Boulder Public library serves Boulderites at five times that of the Chautauqua theater, four times that of the farmers market, and three times more than the rec. centers combined. In 2017, the library BLDG61 makerspace engaged 29,000 people through 700 programs, and fostered the development of nearly 40 businesses and ten patent applications.

These numbers testify to the success, impact, and role of the Boulder Public Library (BPL) in our community. While the close of 2017 concludes the BPL's current title as the Colorado Association of Libraries *Colorado Library of the Year*, we are eager to finalize the Library's draft Master Plan and define the next ten years of the BPL's direction and goals.

Our Master Plan balances an expansion of services to meet documented demand while maintaining our exemplary programming and quality. The voter approved funding 'win' of ballot items 2M & 2N to allocate facilities money for a long requested North Boulder branch library is tempered by the reality that long standing deficiencies in the City's funding of FTEs (staff) limit the Library's ability to not only maintain the quality of service our community members have come to expect, but also hamstrings the growth and expansion of services to meet demand in our neighborhoods to the North and East.

We must be very clear, even with new facilities being funded, the BPL will need to explore cutting services if this funding deficiency cannot be remedied. Adding books is easy and we can put more materials in more places, but doing so requires more staff to manage these resources and serve our community. Council agreed with our assessment that the Library is a keystone of our democratic society. Do we keep the public from the resources and information they want because operationally the city hasn't funded the Library adequately?

In addressing the funding deficiency during Council's study session, we presented the options of a regional library district, a regional library authority, a tax increase (sales or property), or a reallocation of general fund dollars to support the BPL. We urge Council to carefully consider these options and act with the Library director and staff to find and secure the funding strategies to foster our current level of service across the BPL landscape but to also accommodate our Master Plan goals and remedy the documented deficiency in funding library staffing / FTE requirements.

It is of utmost importance that the library remain present on Council's calendar and agenda over the next two years. To help frame your considerations and assign focus to more immediate aspects of the BPL Master Plan our specific asks for next two-three years are listed.

- Address deficiency of funding for all existing branches and accommodate activation of new branch(es).
  - Materials budget
  - FTEs staffing needs: in 2019 +4 additional, in 2020 +6 additional
  - Janitorial & security services
- Provide facilities budget for main library restroom renovations to support ADA compliance, environmental goals, patron requests for greater inclusivity, address aged infrastructure and utilization impacts from Civic Area activation.
- Larger maker space / expansion of BLDG61 programming
- Support service to Gunbarrel residents in the form of a corner library pilot project utilizing the methodology that proved successful in North Boulder
- Fund / Complete analysis of the main Library Campus North Building
- Institute pilot program to activate Canyon Theater to a goal of 80% utilization with necessary variances, adjustments to support mixed usage & programming
- 2020 Strategic Technology Plan

With respect to Council's question on how public engagement processes can be improved, we offer that the BPL is one of our best public engagement platforms. All are welcome and received here and our resources, programs and service efforts are an example of how good public engagement can yield positive results. Our master plan reflects what we heard from the Community in meeting both today's needs, as well as building our capacity for public service into the future. The library is viewed by the community as a trusted and neutral source and a welcoming space of possibilities. Each library branch also serves as point of intersection for our community. We encourage Council to recognize the opportunities and challenges presented by this intersection. Please support the BPL staff, resources, and facilities that serve our community. Gaps in services for any Boulder resident are too often visible in those needs being met by library staff--needs that often go beyond traditional library services and staffing.

The Library Commission believes that the updated library Master Plan speaks volumes on needs and desires across our community. As a trusted curator of our civic dialogue and identity, we look forward to the support and advocacy of Council to secure and further the future of the Boulder Public Library.

Sincerely,

The Library Commission

Alicia Gibb    Juana Gomez    Joel Koenig    Tim O'Shea    Joni Teter