

# The Evolution of a Capital Improvements Program

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The Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library has been an active force in the community since 1873. The library staff and collection have helped make Indianapolis a better place to live for more than 110 years.

In a historical sense, the library is 110 years old. However, since the merger and creation of an expanded county-wide library system in 1968, we can think of the library in terms of being new and young, because the library has been in a continuous state of expansion since the merger.

The following narrative highlights some of the planning factors that had to be taken into consideration as the library board and administrative staff developed the capital improvement program. The capital improvement program, reviewed and revised annually, has been the basis for three bond issues over the last ten years.

Prior to 1966, Marion County outside of the school city of Indianapolis and the city of Beech Grove had no library service. Subsequent to the formation of a county library board and the merger in 1968, the physical service area was increased seven-fold to 380 square miles.

The merger resulted in a potential clientele of 740,000 people, 200,000 having no previous library service.

The total number of library service agencies increased from 19 in 1965 to 22 operating in 1983. Five agencies were closed. To make library service more accessible and convenient for the public to use, ten new library agencies were opened—seven new libraries were built—four libraries relocated—one completely renovated—and parking facilities and physical quarters improved at six libraries.

A new 40,000 sq. ft. addition to the Central Library opened in 1975 and 12,000 sq. ft. of additional public service space became available at the Central Library in 1977 upon completion of an extensive renovation project. In 1980 the relandscaping of Central Library was completed. The project included the demolition of adjacent properties and the development of new parking areas increasing the capacity from 52 to 84 spaces.

The \$4,500,000 bond issue of 1981 (sold at a very favorable rate of 8.42%) will provide funds for system-wide computerization and build new libraries in the Lawrence, Wayne, Broad Ripple, Spades Park and West Indianapolis areas as well as to complete the final stages of the Central Library restoration project.

The number of hours open to the public has increased from 41,236 hours in 1965 to 61,563 hours in 1983. The number of volumes has increased from 861,256 in 1966 to 1,403,317 in 1982, a net growth of 63 percent. The present per capita book stock is 1.89 volumes. We are working toward an immediate goal of 2.0. Since 1966 the staff has increased from 266 to 354 (F.T.E.) in 1982—an increase of 33 percent. During this same period, circulation has increased 65 percent, service to patrons 343 percent, and the number of registered borrowers has gone up 58 percent. The number of registered borrowers has grown from 130,000 in 1965 to 205,655 in 1982, and circulation has grown from 2,323,000 in 1966 to 3,829,511 in 1982. In 1966 library personnel answered 308,638 in-person and phone inquiries; in 1982, this has increased to 1,368,209. In 1982 door counters registered 2,736,395 patron visits, an increase of 632,615 in the last 8 years. In 1982, 1,691 adult and 4,912 children's programs were presented by staff, inside and outside library agencies. 1,187 displays and exhibits were prepared; 3,809 contacts were made with community groups; service was provided to 683 shut-ins; and 1,652 bookings were made by groups using library auditorium facilities. A tremendous increase has resulted from the expansion of our film holdings. In 1966, 6,331 film showings were attended by 309,270 people; in 1982, 45,458 film showings were attended by 2,013,063 people, a growth in use of the expanded collection of over 700 percent.

The public library has a clearly stated public service policy. In addition to the responsibility to acquire library materials needed and desired by the citizens of the library district, the library staff recognizes its obligation to assist individuals and must have not only the materials and facilities that the public wants but also must inform and educate them about services as well as solicit their use of services. A philosophy of service based on the above principle cannot be achieved passively. The goal must be actively pursued in order to be attained.

Library service in a community does not just happen. Effective service requires careful planning and assessing of community information and service needs, thus giving the library staff valuable information for setting priorities and for designing services to fit the needs and wants of the community.

To determine these needs, an in-depth survey of our library community was begun in 1975 and has continued into 1983. The goals of the survey are to determine what books and other materials we need to buy; to enable us to set goals for planning our services; to enable us to develop an effective public relations program; to establish working relationships with other agencies and organizations; to give the staff insight and understanding about the community; and to locate unserved people in the community.

The library board needs to know the reasons for service priorities so policies and budgets can be changed to accommodate the needed services. The community assessment will help them estimate future budget needs for specialized services and provide them with facts that can be used in fund raising with local government.

The methodology of the survey involves the division of the library service area by census tract and assignment of each contiguous group of tracts to the library agency within that group. The survey comprises seventeen major study areas: population; housing; geographic barriers; business and industry; schools; community organization; clubs and groups; churches; recreational facilities; crime; zoning; capital improvements; transportation; health facilities; other libraries; cultural activities; and governmental agencies.

In the initial survey in 1975, over 150 library staff members in all library agencies were involved in gathering the appropriate data for each of the study areas. In-person and telephone contacts were made with 2,200 schools, churches, clubs and community organizations, health facilities, business and government agencies. These contacts revealed that the library is providing service of some kind to 790 of those groups of agencies contacted. As a result of these contacts an additional 457 groups or agencies expressed interest in, or the need for, new or additional library services. Our staff is unable to give this service to 360 of these groups or agencies due to workload limitations of currently available staff. However, every effort is being made to provide service when schedules permit.

Administrative staff members are instructed to use the data and information garnered from the surveys of their respective communities in setting the goals and service priorities of their agencies, and to relate these factors to specific budget needs.

Goals, needs, and priorities continue to be analyzed and set. The community survey is updated as additional contacts are made and as supplementary data become available. The survey is an ongoing project and serves as the basis for determining the libraries

long- and short-range budget priorities.

In 1980-82 the library served as a demonstration library for the Indiana Community Analysis Project conducted statewide by Dr. C. H. Kim of Indiana State University. The purpose of the project was to assess the information needs of the local population, groups, organizations, and agencies; to find out how well the public library is meeting such needs; and to plan for the improvement of library services locally as well as statewide. The project involved user surveys, collection analysis, circulation and reference statistical analysis, user profile analysis, and client interviews. It has served as a continuation of our community survey begun in 1975.

Financial planning is a vital aspect of any capital improvement program. The public library system's total 1982 real property tax collection was \$6,755,238 or 2.09 percent of the total amount levied and collected in Marion County from real property of \$323,049,344. A total of \$442,978 in property tax was received into the library's Bond and Interest Redemption Fund in 1982. The replacement of the personal property tax with the motor vehicle excise tax had the effect of lowering the tax rate on real property by approximately 2.0 cents. The amount of excise tax received in 1982 for the library's Operating Fund was \$642,224. The library's share of tax monies received from banks and savings and loan associations in 1982 includes \$186,616 for the Operating Fund. Fines and fees collected by the library in 1982 for overdue materials, reserved materials, lost and damaged materials, and non-resident library cards totaled \$196,911, and represents 2.4 percent of the total revenue received that year.

As a result of the efforts of the Indiana Library Association and the Indiana Library Trustees Association, the State Legislature in 1976, for the first time, appropriated \$800,000 for distribution to Indiana public libraries. Grants have been appropriated each year since 1976 with the public library receiving \$133,391 in 1982.

Beginning in 1980, the library received an annual grant of \$20,500 as part of \$50,000 Library Services and Construction Act (Federal) Grant-in-Aid to major urban resource libraries. In 1981, \$20,500 also was received, with \$21,328 being received in 1982.

The library received \$41,751 in 1982 under the terms of contracts with CIALSA, an eight county library cooperative, to provide reference and interlibrary loan service and film loan service to its 103 member libraries.

In 1982 the library received \$30,313 from a \$150,000 LSCA grant to provide reciprocal borrowing privileges to residents of other library districts which also agree to participate in this very successful program.

Library boards struggle with the annual question of "How



large should a library budget be?" No simple answer can be given to this question. Basically it should receive the amount that its program requires, and the program itself derives from what the community expects and its gratification with what the library provides. The cost of the program is determined by the funds needed to hire competent staff, to buy library materials, and to defray general running expenses.

The library board is aware of the fact that the library budget has increased over the last few years. However, the 1983 library operating fund rate of \$0.2355 is still far below the state law limit of \$0.55. If the library board is to carry out the responsibility of providing library service in all of Marion County an increase in income is necessary. There is still much to be done to establish and maintain library service, as indicated by the tremendous response to services now being offered.

The Library is faced with continued high levels of usage by the residents of Marion County and pressures for expanded service. Since the start of the property tax freeze, we have been faced with the debilitating effects of inflation and increased cost of operation. For example, since 1972, postage expenditures have increased 145 percent; steam heat 264 percent; electricity 161 percent; mechanical equipment repairs 185 percent; fuel oil 769 percent; hospitalization insurance 360 percent; social security 158 percent; and interest on temporary loans 710 percent.

Projecting into the future, the library board recognizes the rapid and complex pattern of social, economic, cultural and technological changes continuing to take place in the Indianapolis community. These changes have direct implication for library services and will continue to shape both the demands made on the library and the nature of the library's response. Specifically affecting the role of the public library, both quantitatively and qualitatively, are the following factors:

- 1) The continued in-migration of the culturally and economically disadvantaged, most of whom are not oriented to the effective use of books and the rewards of reading.
- 2) The continued out-migration of the better-educated middle class who are active consumers of information and who comprise the majority of those who buy, borrow and use books and other media of communication.
- 3) The increasing number of advanced students and technical specialists and other employees of industries located in Marion County whose needs for immediate access to reliable information are more complex and more expensive to meet than are those of the more traditional users of the public library.

- 4) The increasing need for expanded formal education and for more continuous training and retraining of individuals which will result in almost universal participation in some aspect of the educational process.
- 5) The proliferation of activities which generate huge increases in recorded knowledge and communication will require new techniques for organizing and providing access to information.
- 6) The rapid improvement of school and academic libraries which can meet more appropriately than the public library the curriculum-based needs of students and which will permit more effective interlibrary cooperation among libraries of different types.
- 7) Advances in electronic data processing which will allow the storage, handling and retrieval of information in a variety of new forms.
- 8) Advances in communications technology which will permit information transfer faster and more efficiently than do existing techniques.

These changes will augment present advances in paperback publishing, the growth in book club merchandising, and the ability of the affluent to acquire materials, in various media, for individual use.

An analysis of these and other relevant trends suggests that the public library staff must redesign its activities and programs if it is to function effectively in the years ahead. Special note, however, should be given to the fact that these trends do not invalidate the basic objective of the public library. What they do suggest is a reordering of emphasis so that the need of each individual for information on which to make his own decisions is fully recognized. Special priority is required for those efforts by the library staff to reach out to those who cannot or do not take full advantage of the public library. The major long-range goals of the public library may be summarized as follows: to select, acquire, organize and promote the use of a broad range of communications media. These materials are provided to meet the individual's need for information whatever the role he is fulfilling in the community; to help the individual attain maximum self-development through life-long intellectual and cultural growth, including the use of the library to advance comprehension, promote communication and improve the skills of reading, understanding, viewing and listening; to supplement the educational experience of individuals whether they are undertaking formal courses of study or are engaged in informal self-education; to provide the means for thoughtful and productive participation by groups and individuals in the affairs of the community, the nation and the world; to support educational, governmental, cultural and economic activities within

the community; to encourage productive diversity and to accommodate the library needs of a changing, dynamic, heterogeneous urban community; to offer to all a diverse recreational experience for the wholesome use of leisure time.

In the light of the foregoing trends and changes, the library board has endorsed the following types of activities as being consistent with the goals and policies of the Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library:

1) Promote maximum access to library facilities and resources through simplifying and streamlining the processes of borrower registration and circulation control; increasing the efficiency of acquisition and cataloging so that new materials are available to users as promptly as possible; improving site selection so that agencies are more highly visible and occupy locations at high volume traffic points; improving construction design to eliminate physical barriers to the handicapped or infirm and to present to all an attractive and inviting exterior and interior; increasing the hours of service in each agency for maximum convenience to users; refining and extending the library system plan so that reading centers can better serve as active distribution points at wide-spread, highly accessible locations.

2) Promote maximum awareness and use of the library by all Indianapolis-Marion County residents through expanded public information programs, conducted throughout the county, to develop a widespread awareness of the services of the library and their value to the individual; and expanded efforts by the library to reach out to those individuals and groups who can profit by use of the library.

3) Develop more effective, more flexible, administrative techniques which may better respond to changing conditions by conducting studies of library use and experimenting with physical layouts and interior decoration of branches, more appropriate location and shelving arrangement of all types of materials, and devising new library programs for individuals and groups; offering greater administrative latitude for initiative and innovation at the local library level so that activities and procedures can reflect the special characteristics of particular neighborhoods; revising policies affecting the selection and availability of materials so that changing demands are promptly recognized and reflected in the collection; achieving closer liaison with publishers and other producers of materials to assist in the development of new library materials and equipment, giving particular attention to those persons who do not read well or who are learning English as a second language; exploring more effective cooperation among libraries of all types through active participation in joint library ventures at the local, state, regional and national levels, new emphasis should be given to coordinated working relationships with school and college libraries in the county and related counties;

devising more accurate and more relevant measures of both the quality and quantity of library use so that meaningful cost analysis can be undertaken; participating with institutions of formal instruction in programs designed to help adults learn to read, and in training library employees; and developing more systematic, more efficient in-service training programs for both professional and clerical staff so that users may quickly and easily obtain materials appropriate to their interests and ability.

The public library serving Indianapolis and Marion County is a library system. The system is composed of the Central Library and 22 agencies. The branches provide a convenient outlet for library materials and services to residents. The branches provide reader assistance and limited reference services; all other library functions are performed for the system by the Central Library. In 1968, the library board made a studied decision to retain the Central Library-Branch concept.

The Central Library serves the entire district both directly and through the branch outlets. Because of limited shelving and reference facilities in branches, the majority of people using Central Library come to use the reference facilities. This stresses the importance of the Central Library's reference resources as used by serious readers and students. The Central Library is also the nerve center and service agency for the total library system for administration, book processing, buildings and grounds maintenance, reader coordination, reader reference service, inquirer referral service, central catalogue service, registration and overdue book procedures, and extension services—daily filling of agency requests and book deliveries. As the system grows, the need for central administrative services will grow.

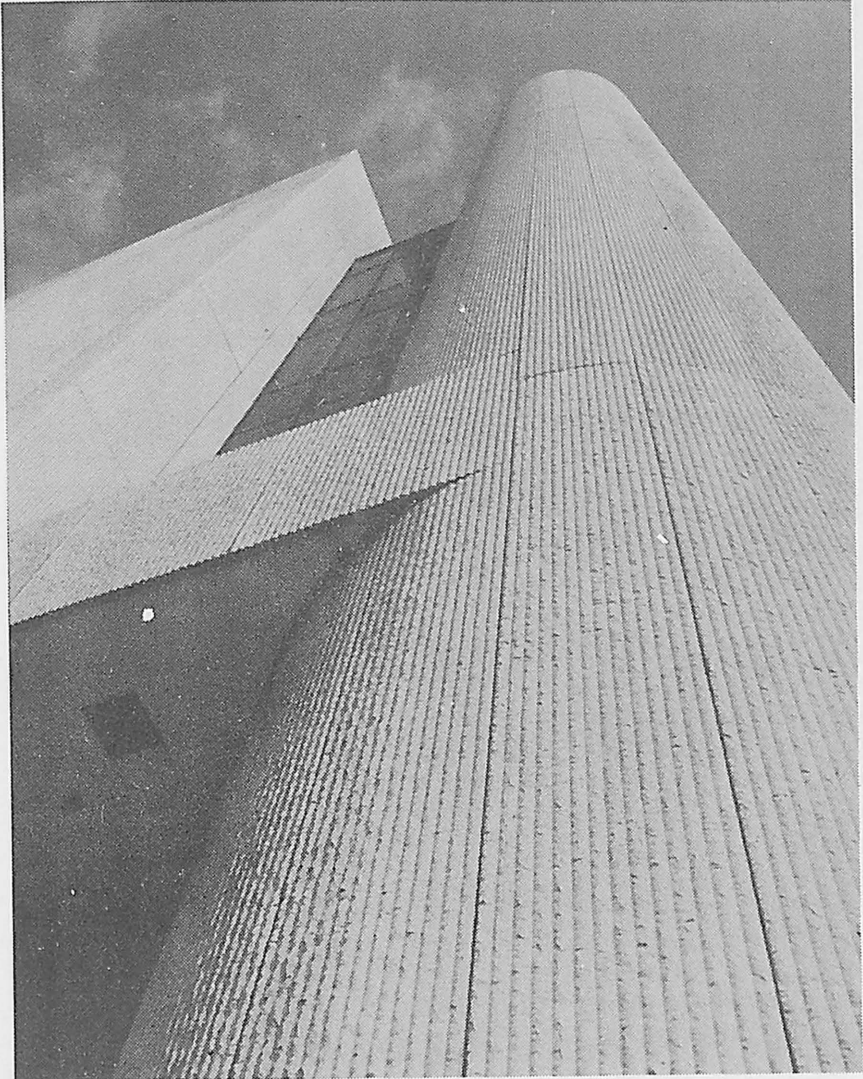
The 1968 decision to remodel and expand the Central Library was based upon the premise that the community and library board desired to retain the present location. This location is sound in that the central business district is in the process of dramatic revitalization; the downtown area will continue to develop in spite of the residential movement to the suburbs; interstate highway development will accelerate the development of the downtown area; urban renewal should provide stable, safe, healthy and pleasant surroundings for the downtown area; mass transportation developments should provide the means of carrying increased numbers of people in and out of downtown; the Commission For Downtown is developing commercial attractions for the people who are residing, working, or visiting in the downtown area.

The 1968 decision has been justified. Comparing Central Library 1981 statistics with 1972, we find that circulation has increased 50 percent; in-person and telephone service has increased 277 percent; and patron visits have increased 114 percent. The



patron count at Central Library indicates that over 645,000 visits were made to the Central Library in 1981 compared to just 300,000 in 1972. The library is doing its share in attracting people to the center of the city.

This narrative summarizes the extensive planning and discussion that is necessary to define the functions that a new, expanded or remodeled library should provide. The library board is then in a position to develop a specific building program and to proceed with the selection of an architect to form these service concepts into concrete, brick and mortar.



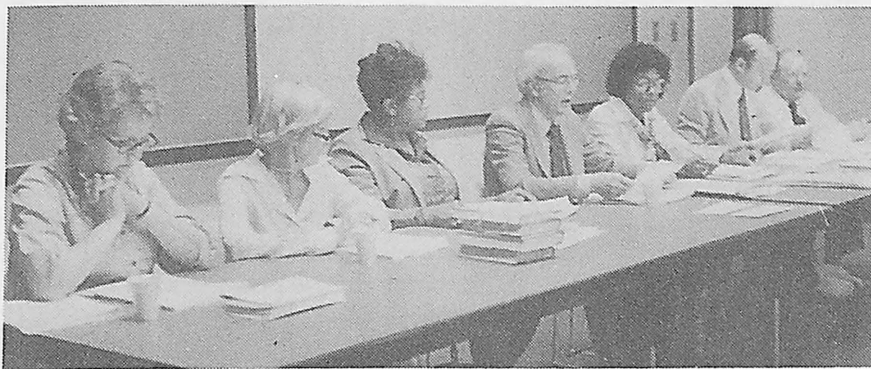
Dramatic architecture highlights the new addition to Central Library.



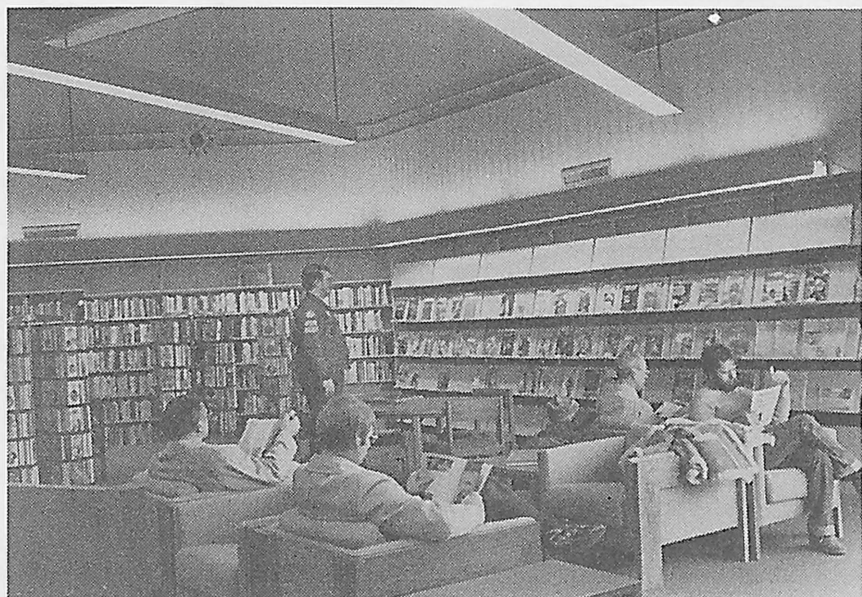
Benefits achieved through automation will result in more efficient use of public funds to reduce cost and improve public service.



Summer Reading Club is a happy experience for children at all libraries.



Library board members from left: Sally Otte, Elizabeth Strain, Bobbie Beckwith, Wayne Moss, Catherine Wallace, David McNamer, Joe Corbett.



The periodical reading area in the new Wayne Library attracts adult readers.