Falmouth Memorial Library

Consultant Report

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Falmouth Memorial Library Consultant's Report

This report is based on observation of library activities, a complete tour of the existing facility, meetings with the library director and staff, the Board of Trustees and an open public meeting attended by many town residents.

The report also takes into consideration the Lucker report and Maine standards for public library buildings.

Public libraries are resource rich community centers freely available to children, teens adults and seniors. The Falmouth Memorial library is heavily used by all of these population groups. It is open 54 hours per week including evenings and Saturdays year round. Yet it costs the people of Falmouth less than 2% of their local tax dollars.

Hundreds of people use the library each day. They come for a wide variety of purposes:

- Elderly people come to read the daily paper and magazines and to seek companionship.
- Young adults come to read paperbacks and graphic novels to enjoy music and videos, do their homework, surf the Internet and meet their friends.
- Consumers come to compare potential purchases.
- Local business people come to find ways to improve their operations.
- Investors come to seek investment advice and to check on their stock's performance and current evaluation.
- Mothers and children come for story hours to get a break in their daily chores of caring for young children.
- Students come to do research for their term papers.
- People come for genealogical and local historical research.
- Families come to find a video for the weekend.
- Vacationers come to plan trips and find out about their destinations.
- People come for a variety of programs on topics of local and regional interest.

A Typical Day at a Public Library

When the door opens patrons are waiting to get in to attend a program, to check their email, facebook, or apply for jobs, make copies,.

Patrons come in to check the help wanted ads, their financial portfolios, and to catch up with the daily newspapers.

People come to the circulation desk looking for the next good read, filling out requests for bestsellers, and interlibrary loan requests. Books, magazines, books on CD, and videos/DVDs are checked out continuously.

Reference questions come in by telephone, email, and in person. Many visitors stop in to work on their family histories..

Computer questions come in throughout the day. Patrons need help with Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, downloading photos, sending email, setting up email, buying and selling on ebay, finding sites, trying to figure out how to get information off sites, learning how to use the various MARVEL databases.

Research for school projects, finding summer reading books, and satisfying hobby desires are ongoing. Children are, working and reading throughout the day.

Recently, the library has been used for a home office – patrons bring their laptops.

Many programs are offered here – morning, noon, and night. For children there is story time. Summer reading fun has rewards for every child who participates. Adults stop in for a book chat. Other special programs occur with the seasons.

People meet and greet friends or come in informal groups. Libraries are used as a central place for information retrieval between group or club members. Informational flyers on community events are brought here for display, and the public knows they can call the library to find out what is going on. Scholarship applications can also be found at the library. Tutoring occurs if a small corner can be found. The public uses the library to escape the heat, the cold, or if it is raining. As closing time approaches patrons race to get through their final emails, computer searches, and DVD selections. Approximately 700 items are checked out from the library each day.

What's happening behind the scenes?

The Director is ordering books, reading reviews, writing purchase orders for materials and building maintenance, booking the art gallery, and accepting purchase requests from patrons. Boxes of new materials are unpacked, and readied for cataloguing.

The library staff does research for programs, handles reference requests, and interlibrary loan materials. Book club selections are made and multiple copies of books are secured. Blogs on our website are constantly updated as new programs are added.

There is a constant stream of returning materials from the book drop and circulation desks, which must then be re-shelved. Overdue notices are generated, bills sent out for damaged and missing materials.
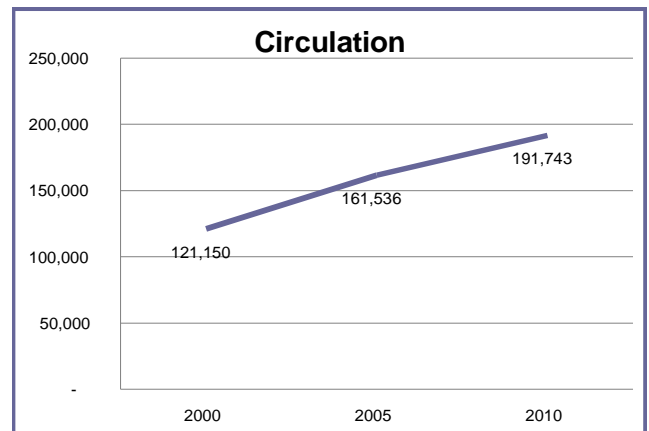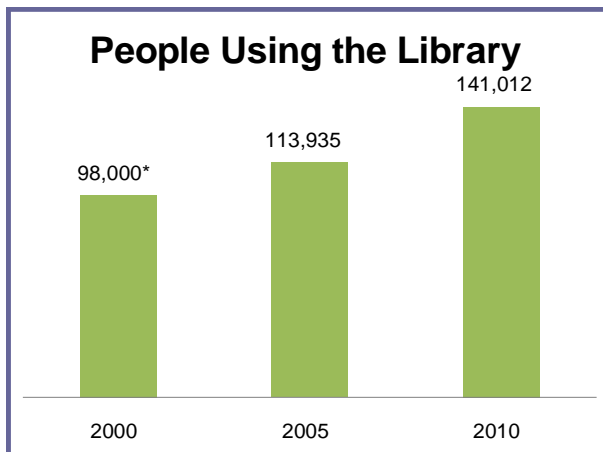
The technical services department is processing books, books on CD, and DVDs. This includes cataloguing, as well as physically preparing the items. Materials are also repaired and deleted from this department.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Falmouth Memorial Library is to enrich the community by providing resources and services that foster a love of reading and inspire imagination, curiosity and an open exchange of ideas and information.

Library Use at Falmouth

During the past ten years library use has increased steadily. The library is visited over 140,000 times a year and circulates almost 200,000 books to a population of 12,000 residents. In addition to its own collections it delivers to the people of Falmouth over 10,000 materials each year from other libraries. It is one of the most heavily used public libraries in Maine in its population category.

People Using the Library

Year	People
2000	98,000*
2005	113,935
2010	141,012

Circulation

Year	Circulation
2000	121,150
2005	161,536
2010	191,743

The People of Falmouth

Population in July 2009: 10,823.

Population change since 2000: +5.0%
 Estimated median household income in 2008: $81,770 (it was $66,855 in 2000)
Falmouth: $81,770
Maine: $46,581
Estimated median house or condo value in 2008: $429,646 (it was $219,300 in 2000)
Falmouth: $429,646
Maine: $180,200
For population 25 years and over in Falmouth
- High school or higher: 95.5%
- Bachelor's degree or higher: 53.2%
- Graduate or professional degree: 20.8%
An unusually high level of education means that the library will be heavily used.

Library Facilities

Library use has outgrown the size of the facility. If all materials in circulation were to be returned there would be no place to put them.

The teen area is tiny and the children's library has no homework quiet study area and no place for staff to prepare exhibits, process materials or do their office work. There is no children's storytime space. Children's shelves are overcrowded and there is no space for parents to sit.

There are very few electronic workstations and they are crowded together with little privacy and no comfortable seats.

Adults have few quiet areas to sit and the adult collections are overflowing their shelves so it is difficult for staff to find a place for new materials. The bottom shelves are difficult for older people to access.

Basement storage areas are inaccessible, moldy and cramped.

Staff service areas are filled with storage functions and the staff eating area is shared with processing functions. The network server room is in the basement next to the boiler.

Recommendations

Expand the teen space so that teenagers will be encouraged to use the library for homework as well as for gaming, recreation and social networking.

Expand children's facilities to provide electronic access for children, create a storytime area and a staff work area for children's staff. Reorganize collections to encourage children to browse by displaying some picture books in bins and create a place for parents to sit and watch their children.

Add ergonomically designed electronic workstations to encourage electronic access to information. Locate books near electronic workstations distributed in many parts of the library for easy access and privacy.

Add book stacks to eliminate bottom shelves that are difficult to reach for the elderly and to accommodate the expanding collections.

Create efficiently design staff work areas to improve staff effectiveness and avoid carpal tunnel syndrome and other injuries that might interfere with efficient work.

Expanded and redesigned areas are needed for:

- Ordering and processing materials

- Interlibrary loan

- Staff work areas

- Book sale activities.

- Meetings

- Tutorials

- Group study activities especially for teens.

Comparison of Existing and New Library Capacities and Areas

Functional Areas	Existing Shelves	New Shelves	Existing Seats	New Seats	Square feet		Change
					Existing Area	New Area	
Adults							
Adult totals	1138	1250	46	56	3093	5370	1750
Young adult	42	72	2	8	164	500	336
Children's							
Child Totals	212	360	21	28	984	2550	1566
Programs							
Program total					1270	2290	1020
Staff							
Staff total					926	2200	1274
Library total	1392	1682	69	92	6437	12910	5946

The spreadsheet above does not include non-assignable space that will be the product of the actual building design by an architect and will depend on a variety of factors including whether the building is an addition, a new building or a converted school.

Non-assignable space is needed for lobbies, arrival space, walls, elevators, stairs, halls, heating, ventilating and air conditioning, electrical risers, bathrooms and non-library storage.

Appendix

Spreadsheet explanations

The spreadsheet shows the approximate capacities and area sizes of the present library compared with future needs. Standard American Library Association formulas are used to calculate space necessary for public library functions and staff support services.

Material storage considerations:

Children's picture books and CDs with very thin spines that are difficult to read are sometimes shelved in bins that often result in higher circulation rates than conventional shelving. If bins are used, alphabetical separators and bin lettering will be essential as sequencing and finding guides.

Book stack shelving often consists of ranges of shelving 6-7 shelves high spaced 5' to 6' on centers allowing for a 40" or 52" aisle. The area size in this program is based on six shelf stacks spaced 6 feet on centers with 52" aisles.

If the building columns are spaced 30 feet on centers, the stack spacing can in the future be reduced to 5 feet on centers and additional stacks added to increase stack capacity.

Percentage of materials in circulation

The percentage of materials in circulation is constantly changing. A library with a collection of 80,000 books that has 20,000 out in circulation will need space to house 60,000 books while a library with 45,000 books and only 3,000 in circulation will need to house 42,000 books. Variations in seasonal circulation should be considered when sizing the stack. When summer reading materials are returned in the fall the library may need many more book spaces.

Re-shelving and room for new materials

Empty space for at least five books must be reserved on each shelf so that materials out in circulation can be returned to their appropriate sequential location in the stack without the time consuming need to shift many shelves to make room for returns. Space throughout the collection must be reserved for additional materials added to the collection to cover new subjects.

Numbers in the materials column do not include materials in process or otherwise unavailable for public use. For standard fiction and non-fiction books we assume 25 books per shelf on average. For thin children's picture books that number might be as high as 50 books per shelf.

Oversize books are a special problem because if they are shelved with regular sized volumes they will reduce the number of shelves that can be accommodated in each

section and thus require more space for the same number of books. For this reason most libraries shelve oversized books in a separate sequence.

Seating

Seating is based on population and activity. The usual ratio is five seats per thousand people.

To determine space for seating these sizes were used:

Table seat	30 sq. ft.
Carrel and Seat	35 sq. ft.
Electronic Workstation	40 sq. ft.
Lounge Seat	40 sq. ft.

Many libraries have wireless zones to accommodate user's laptops in any seat in the library seating areas.

Meeting Room capacity was determined in consultation with the staff based on the library's mission, program attendance and community needs.

Architectural Layout

To some extent the architectural layout of functional areas and the combinations of functions will affect area requirements, so the area required may differ from the general estimates contained in the program.

Non-Assignable

Non-assignable space is required for arrival space, walls, elevators, stairs, halls, heating, ventilating and air conditioning, risers, bathrooms and non-library storage. Architectural designs differ in the amount of space for non-assignable functions. A high percentage of non-assignable space may make the building very attractive and spacious. However, the cost may be high. A low percentage of non- assignable space may accommodate more function at lower cost but it will make the building seem crowded.

Falmouth Memorial Library Capacity and Area Comparisons

Functional Areas	Existing Shelves	New Shelves	Existing Seats	New Seats	Existing Area	New Area	Change
Adults							
Fiction--	437	480	5	4	700	1340	640
Non Fiction	360	410	7	4	760	1165	405
Maine/Biog	116	150	9	20	540	975	435
Elect wk stat			6	12	250	480	230
Large Print	23	40			58	100	42
Audio Visual	114	240	2	4	386	600	214
Reference	52	40	2	6	311	340	29
Periodicals	36	40	15	6	88	310	222
Forecaster arch					0	60	60
Adult totals	1138	1250	46	56	3093	5370	1750
Young adult	42	72	2	8	164	500	336
Children's							
Picture	54	90	15	12	300	585	285
Fiction	68	120	2	6	320	480	160
Non Fiction	77	120	4	4	320	400	80
Elect worksta				6	0	210	210
Auidio Visual	13	30			44	75	31
Story/Display				*35	0	500	500
Staff/storage					0	300	300
Child Totals	212	360	21	28	984	2550	1566
Programs							
Large			88	*100	900	1500	600
Kitchen					250	250	0
Conference (2)				*40	120	240	120
Group study (4)				*16	0	300	300
Program total					1270	2290	1020
Staff							
Director					110	120	10
Assist Director					0	100	100
Admin Asst.					100	100	0
Tech Proc/Cat					275	480	205
Tech server					0	100	100
Lounge/Kitchen					shared	200	200
Circulation desk					341	500	159
ILL processing					100	200	100
Friends/ sale					0	400	400
Staff total					926	2200	1274
Library total	1392	1682	69	92	6437	12910	5946
Non Assign/base					6504	3873	
Grand Total					12940	16783	

* for meetings not included in seat count totals

Addendum

At the request of Council member Bonny Rodden the following space recommendations take into consideration the high usage of the library by the residents of Falmouth, which has the third highest income per capita in Maine (much like Greenwich but not as high income) without consideration of the political or economic climate in Falmouth today. They also ignore potential changes in the future use of libraries beyond 5 years.

My original space recommendations were for a building of approximately 13,000 net square feet of usable library space.

These recommendations included:

> Additional space for:
> Collections for children, adults and teens
> Electronic workstations
> Program and meeting areas for children and adults
> Staff service areas for more efficient staff work

In order to accommodate collections for a longer 20 year period of growth and to reflect the intense usage of the library by Falmouth residents, the building would include 15,300 net square feet of usable library space.

Additional space for:

> Collections for children, adults and teens
> Electronic workstations

Falmouth Library	Existing Shelves	New Shelves	Existing Seats	New Seats	Existing Area	New Area	Change
Adult totals	1138	1488	46	64	3093	6479	3386
Young adult	42	138	2	12	164	825	661
Child Totals	212	512	21	36	984	3499	2515
Program total					1270	2290	1020
Staff total					926	2200	1274
Library total	1392	2138	69	112	6437	15293	8856

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