Carlton Area
Public Library
2012 – 2016 Strategic Plan

Adopted by the Library Board:
December 8, 2011

Prepared by:
Whitney Crettol Consulting

THE PLANNING PROCESS:

The Carlton Area Public Library completed a comprehensive strategic planning process between August and December 2011. This process was made possible through financial support from the Arrowhead Library System. Composition of the Planning Team included representatives from the library board, library staff, and Friends of the Library.

A community-based process was utilized, which centered on answering the questions: 1) *What are the pressing needs in our community?* and, 2) *What is the library's role in helping to address those needs?* Major steps included conducting a focus group with community leaders, reviewing community demographic data and library statistics, discussing organizational values and mission, identifying service priorities, and developing detailed action plans for the first year of implementation. In addition, preliminary indicators were established to track progress toward achieving the library's new goals.

The resulting strategic plan is intended to guide the library for the next five years, with action plans to be revised annually.

WHAT WE FOUND:

The City of Carlton has seen a small increase in population over the last decade. It is the county seat, which draws people into town regularly. Although only the City's tax base contributes financially, the library serves a significant number of patrons who live in surrounding rural areas. Carlton has a small business district, but employment here is largely in public sector jobs. The school district is stressed and experiencing declining enrollment. The on-time graduation rate is low compared to other districts in the region. In addition, the adult population has disproportionately low post-secondary education levels and the median household income is below county and state averages.

Despite a limited number of open hours, utilization of library resources has trended upward over the past three years. Library visits, circulation, and participation in library programming have all risen rapidly. Children have been the most active group of patrons, with juvenile items accounting for 55% of the library's circulation. The library maintains a good collaborative relationship with the school.

Several themes emerged through our environmental scan process. Community leaders emphasized the importance of everyone having access to computer technology and high speed connection to the Internet. In low-income communities, residents are less likely to have their own access and are more reliant on public libraries for this service. Another top issue was concern for success of the community's children. The library can play important roles both in development of early literacy skills, and in supporting older children's success in school. The community also identified a need to strengthen volunteerism and connection between community members. The library echoed this need in terms of engaging the involvement of more adults both as patrons and volunteer supporters. One specific effort is to expand the capacity of the Friends of the Library group by engaging the involvement of new members. Finally, community leaders indicated the need to stimulate small business development, and noted that proximity to the much larger community of Cloquet can be considered either a threat or an opportunity. There was a desire to focus on the latter - building on previous efforts to work together and developing a more single-community feeling.

ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES:

Welcoming Place to Gather –
>   The Library provides a friendly gathering place where all community members are made to feel welcome.

Staying Current –
>   The Library keeps pace with how people become informed and approach reading, offering up-to-date resources that are relevant in the digital age.

Service to the Community –
>   The Library is an essential public service. Our staff provides individualized assistance to connect community members with the information they need.

All Ages & Interests–
>   The Library is a place for all ages, and supports exploration of a variety of interests throughout an individual's lifetime.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Carlton Area Public Library strengthens our community and supports the success of generations to come by engaging community members with progressive programming and technology that increases literacy, enjoyment, and creativity.

LIBRARY GOALS (In order of priority):

1. Community members of all ages will stimulate their imaginations, exercise their creativity, and enrich their leisure time.

2. Young children and their caregivers will discover the joy of reading, and students will be enthusiastic about learning and succeeding in school.

3. Community members will connect to the online world and all of its resources.

PROGRESS INDICATORS:

Goal 1 (Stimulate Imagination)

- ✓ Number of program participants.
- ✓ Participant evaluations of Legacy events.

Goal 2 (Create Young Readers)

- ✓ Number of program participants.
- ✓ Annual parent/caregiver feedback surveys for preschool story hour (*e.g. Has participation in story time increased your enjoyment in doing reading activities with your child? Has participation in story time increased your child's enjoyment of books and reading?*).
- ✓ Number of children's library card applications made after class visits.

Goal 3 (Connect to the Online World)

- ✓ Number of participants in technology-related workshops.
- ✓ Participant evaluations of technology workshops.
- ✓ Number of wireless users.
- ✓ Number of hours completed by staff in continuing education on technology.

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS:

Implementation Steps	*Timeline*
1. Present strategic plan to Library Board for adoption. Present newly adopted plan to the City Council.	December 2011 – January 2012
2. Communicate the new plan to other stakeholders and the public.	January – February 2012
3. Staff review strategic plan progress; make mid-course corrections.	**Monthly**
4. Discuss strategic plan progress as regular agenda item at Library Board meetings.	**Quarterly**
5. Compile progress indicator data for annual review.	**Annually 2012 - 2016** (September)
6. Board/staff annual 'retreat' to review implementation successes and challenges (including indicator data), review goals, revise strategies, and project budget needs.	**Annually 2012 - 2015** (October)
7. Staff develop action plans for the next year.	**Annually 2012 - 2015** (November)
8. Full round of strategic planning.	**Fall 2016** (New plan in place by January 2017)

Appendix A:

YEAR 1 Action Plans
January 1, 2012 – December 31, 2012

GOAL # 1: Community members of all ages will stimulate their imaginations, exercise their creativity, and enrich their leisure time.

Strategy A: Programming to Stimulate Imagination

ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Begin a book club for adults: • Organize a format for an adult book club and recruit participants. • Hold/facilitate monthly book club meetings. • Provide support to the book club (e.g. arrange for multiple copies of books).	Volunteer Volunteer Jodie	October 1, 2012 Monthly – beginning October Monthly – beginning October
2. Host 2 Legacy programs that support Goal 1 (as available - through Arrowhead Library System).	Jodie	December 31, 2012
3. Build capacity of *Friends of the Library* as an autonomous group to support library activities through volunteerism and fundraising: • Set and pursue a target for new membership (e.g. 5 new members by mid-year; additional 5 new members by year-end). • Set and pursue a target for fundraising to support the library's 2012 action plan.	Heidi (Friends members)	June 1 & December 31, 2012 December 31, 2012

Strategy B: Welcoming Facility

ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Keep the library's Main Street presence: • Follow up with school district regarding library board position on facility location.	Jodie	January 15, 2012
2. Request consultation from ALS on maximizing space/library layout in relation to established priorities (when available).	Jodie	December 31, 2012
3. Exhibit local art: • Display coloring and bookmark contest entries. • Display children's art in juvenile area. • Solicit local artists to display art pieces in library, rotating materials every 6 months.	Jodie Jodie Jodie	April & October 2012 Monthly (Jan – Dec) April 1 & October 1, 2012
4. Build a puppet theater for the children's area.	Sheri (Boy Scout Troop)	September 1, 2012

Strategy C: Materials

ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Maintain display of new books for adults.	Jodie	Monthly (Jan – Dec)

2. Add a display for children: ■ Select and purchase suitable display unit (request funding from Friends). ■ Maintain display of new books for children.	Jodie (Friends) Jodie	April 1, 2012 Monthly (May – Dec)
3. Rotate available games, puzzles, and toys twice per year.	Jodie	January 31 & July 31, 2012

GOAL # 2: Young children and their caregivers will discover the joy of reading, and students will be enthusiastic about learning and succeeding in school.

Strategy D: Programming for Young Children		
ACTION STEPS	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**COMPLETION DATE**
1. Conduct weekly Saturday story times with finger plays and songs; targeted toward toddler/preschool age level.	Volunteer	Weekly (Jan – May & Sept – Dec)
2. Add evening family story times: ■ Promote new story time offering. ■ Conduct story time one evening per week.	 Jodie Jodie	 January 31, 2012 Weekly (Feb – May & Sept – Dec)
3. Convert story kits to compact disc format: ■ Purchase USB cassette converter (request funding from Friends). ■ Complete conversion of all kits.	 Jodie (Friends) Jodie	 August 1, 2012 September 1, 2012
4. *Jodie -- Do you want to plan for a program that uses the puppet theater once it is built – e.g. older kids plan and put on a puppet show for younger kids over Christmas break????*		

Strategy E: Programming for School-Age & Teens		
ACTION STEPS	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**COMPLETION DATE**
1. Third grade visit: ■ Contact teaching staff to schedule class visit to the library. ■ Provide library presentation/tour and library card application forms with an incentive for children to return with their parents.	 Jodie Jodie	 September 10, 2012 October 31, 2012
2. Coordination with summer latch-key program: ■ Arrange for latch-key monthly field trips to the library and attendance at special events. ■ Facilitate checkout of books to latch-key program.	 Jodie Jodie	 June – August 2012 June – August 2012
3. Sharing books with school classrooms: ■ Promote book availability to K – 5 teaching staff. ■ Collect and check out books to classroom teachers on special themes.	 Jodie Jodie	 January 15 & August 31, 2012 Monthly (as requested)

ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE

4. Initiate a kids' book club:
  ▪ Recruit 5th graders to participate in a book group.
  ▪ Hold monthly afterschool meetings with book discussion, activities, and snack.
	Jodie (5th grade teachers)
	Jodie
		January 31, 2012
		Monthly (Feb – Dec)

5. Contests:
  ▪ Promote contests through local media and the school.
  ▪ Solicit support for prizes through Community Education and local business donations.
  ▪ Conduct a bookmark design contest with judging and prizes.
  ▪ Conduct a coloring contest with judging and prizes.
	Jodie
	Jodie
	
	Jodie (Volunteer Judges)
	Jodie (Volunteer Judges)
		March & September 2012
		March & September 2012
		
		April 30, 2012
		October 31, 2012

6. Recruit a volunteer to develop future teen club and/or tutoring program at the library.	Jodie (Library Board)	December 31, 2012

Strategy F: Programming for the Whole Family		
ACTION STEPS	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**COMPLETION DATE**

1. Summer Reading Program:
  ▪ Promote program through local media, posters in visible locations, and the schools.
  ▪ Run a 6-week program with 4-5 craft activities and prizes for reading (including Read-to-Me for preschool).
  ▪ Host 2 Kid Stuff programs.
	Jodie	May 31, 2012
		
		July 31, 2012
		
		August 31, 2012

2. Winter Reading Program:
  ▪ Promote program through local media, posters in visible locations, and the schools.
  ▪ Run a 5-week program with 3-4 craft activities and prizes for reading (including Read-to-Me for preschool).
	Jodie	January 15, 2012
		
		February 29, 2012

3. Movie showings:
  ▪ Research cost and length of movie license.
  ▪ If cost-effective, purchase license (request funding from Friends).
  ▪ Hold monthly Friday night family movie showings.
  ▪ Show movies in conjunction with kids' book club.
	Jodie
	Jodie (Friends)
	Jodie
	Jodie
		February 29, 2012
		May 31, 2012
		Monthly (June – Dec)
		TBD (June – Dec)

4. Contests:
  ▪ Promote contests through local media and visits to K – 5 classrooms.
  ▪ Solicit support for prizes through Community Education and local business donations.
  ▪ Conduct an individual & classroom poetry contest with judging and prizes.
  ▪ Conduct a short story contest with judging and prizes.
	Jodie
	
	Jodie
	
	Jodie (Teachers & Volunteer Judges)
	Jodie (Volunteer Judges)
		March & September 2012
		
		March & September 2012
		
		April 30, 2012
		
		October 31, 2012

ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
5. Game days: ▪ Promote and hold a board game event on National Gaming Day. ▪ Promote and hold a board game event during school break. ▪ Promote and hold a Wii event during school break.	Jodie	November 30, 2012 December 31, 2012 December 31, 2012

GOAL # 3: Community members will connect to the online world and all of its resources.

Strategy G: Computers & Public Online Access		
ACTION STEPS	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**COMPLETION DATE**
1. Replace 2 oldest public access computers with new machines obtained through Walmart grant.	Jodie	January 31, 2012
2. WiFi: ▪ Research wireless options with goal of free service. ▪ Arrange for WiFi set up (purchase of equipment if necessary). ▪ Announce/promote availability of WiFi to the public.	Jodie	January 31, 2012 March 1, 2012 March 31, 2012
3. Workstations: ▪ Include computer station and laptop plug-in options in space consultation (See Goal 1). ▪ Provide power strips at round table and couch as short-term laptop 'workstation' options.	Jodie (ALS) Jodie	December 31, 2012 March 1, 2012
4. Develop a technology plan for funding the periodic upgrading of computer equipment and the purchase of new devices (e.g. iPads, e-book readers).	Jodie (Library Board)	December 31, 2012
5. Recruit professional technology support for occasional consultation on a volunteer basis.	Jodie (Library Board)	December 31, 2012

Strategy H: Technology Classes		
ACTION STEPS	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**COMPLETION DATE**
1. On-site classes for community members: ▪ Approach Community Education about co-sponsoring classes at the library. ▪ Plan one class on a current technology topic (e.g. digital photography, web use, word processing).	Jodie Jodie (Community Education)	April 1, 2012 December 31, 2012
2. Staff development: ▪ Participate in minimum of one computer related training.	Jodie	December 31, 2012

Appendix B:

# Library & Community Profile
October 2011

Library & Community Profile:
Carlton Public Library

I. LIBRARY STATISTICS

There is reason to believe that data reported for this library prior to 2008 is unreliable, therefore only the past three years are included here. In addition, the library was only automated for part of 2008, so figures for that year are a partial reflection of total activity.

<u>Library Traffic</u>

The Carlton Library has maintained 20 hours per week of operation for the past five years. Traffic into the library appears to be increasing.
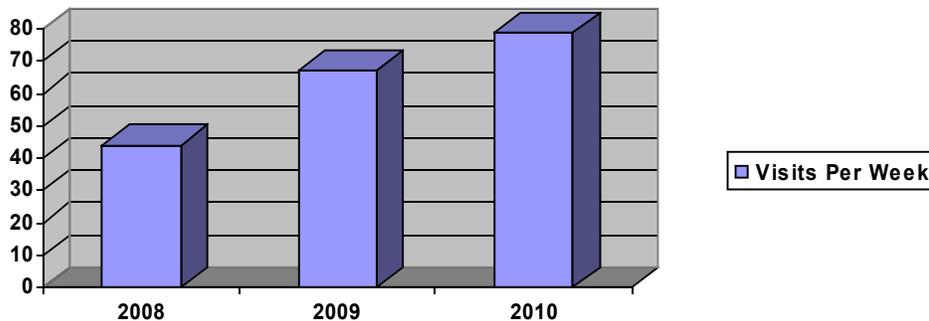
<u>Number of Resident Borrowers</u>

In the past, all library card holders were maintained in the system regardless of whether they were active. Beginning in 2005, ALS began purging inactive users on a periodic schedule. Dips in odd-numbered years may be due in part to the purge process. The number of borrowers in Carlton has declined by about 10% in the past three years.
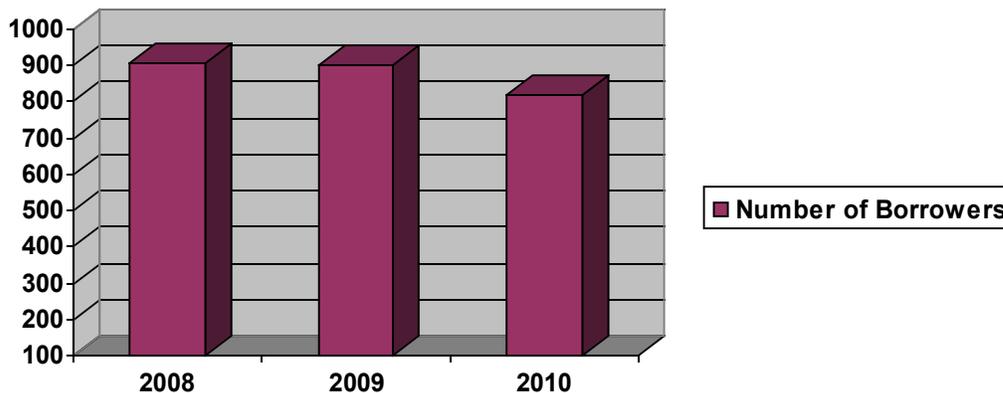
Collection Size

| Type of Material	2008	2010	Change
Print	3,528	7,573	+ 4,045
Audio	99	217	+ 118
Video	317	729	+ 412
Periodical	12	8	- 4
Total Collection:	**3,956**	**8,527**	**+ 4,571**

A September 2011 review of last check-out date identified 610 items, approximately 13 % of the library's total collection, that have not circulated during the past three years.

Circulation

The overall circulation trend in Carlton is one of growth, with juvenile usage increasing most rapidly.
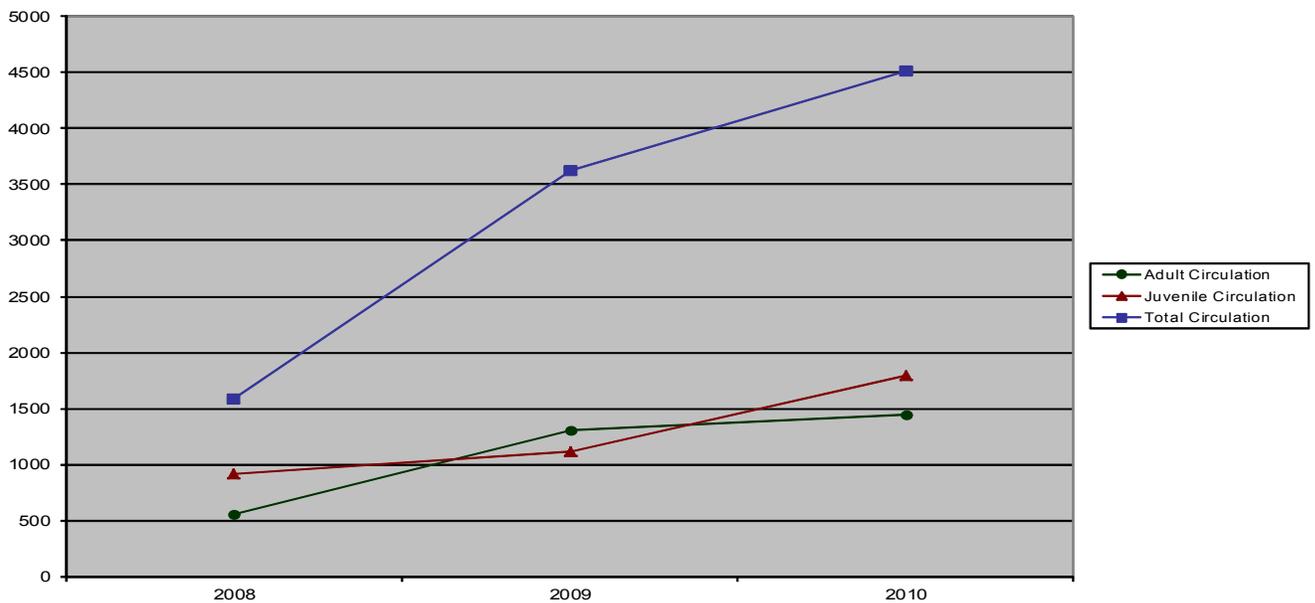
Inter-Library Loans
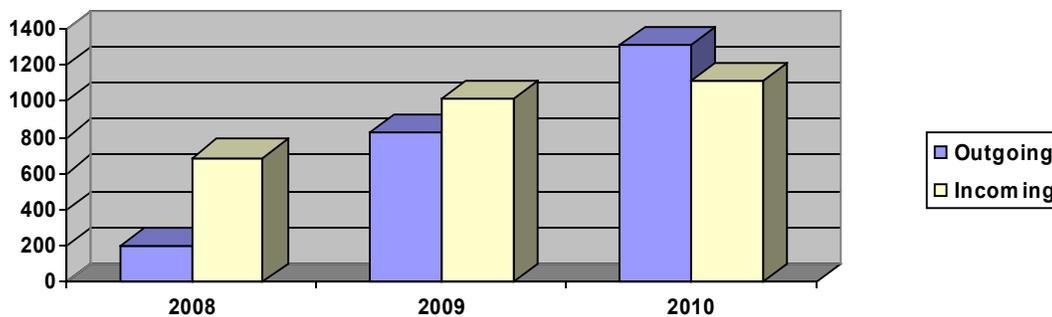
Inter-library loan activity has increased significantly, both incoming and outgoing.

Reference Requests

The number of reference transactions has remained consistent in recent years, despite the national downward trend for this service.
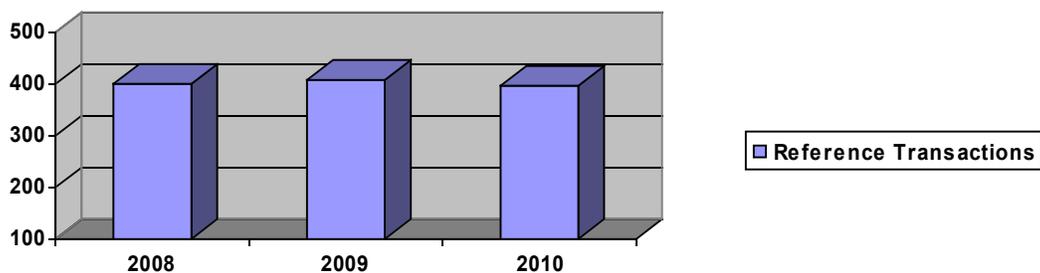

Programs & Meeting Room Usage

The number of programs has increased dramatically, with a special focus on children. There is no public meeting room available at the library.

Target Audience	Number of Programs	Type of Programs	2010 Attendance
Adults	6	Reading programs.	42
Teen	10	Game days, poetry & short story contests.	21
Children	49	Summer &Winter Reading Programs, story times, crafts and other hands-on activities, performances.	247
		Total Attendance:	**310**

Public Computer/Internet Usage
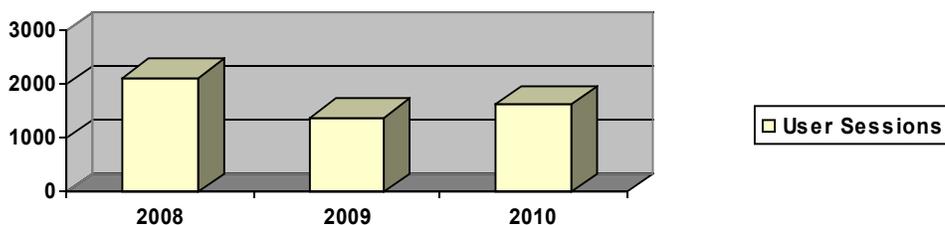
There are five public access computers in the library. Wireless service is not available at this site. The Library does not have its own webpage.

Operating Expenditures

Year	Staffing	Collection	Other	Total
2008	$ 11,661	$ 364	$ 15,869	**$ 27,894**
2010	$ 9,917	$ 654	$ 17,163	**$ 29,160**

Current staffing consists of a part-time (.5 FTE) Library Director. There is almost no budget for purchasing new materials.

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

The City of Carlton has experienced a slight increase in population during the last decade. Below are some key demographic indicators [*Figures taken from the 2010 U.S. Census unless otherwise noted*].

Time of Count	Number of Residents	Change from Previous Period
1990 Census	923	
2000 Census	810	-113
2010 Census	862	+ 52

Race & Age

The vast majority (92 %) of residents are Caucasian, but the 2010 Census recorded 69 persons of color residing here. In addition, 13 individuals identified themselves as Hispanic.

Age Group	Number of Residents	Percentage of Total Population
Children 0-17	155	18 %
Adults 18-64	479	56 %
Adults 65 & over	228	26 %

Education

The Carlton School District operates two schools in the city. The District's 2010 on-time graduation rate was 82 % [*MN Department of Education*]. There are no children currently being home-schooled in the district. Of the population age 25 and over, 8 % have an associate's degree and 8% have a bachelor's degree or higher [*2000 U.S. Census*].

School	Number of Students [September 2011]
South Terrace Elementary	235
Carlton Secondary	248
Total:	483

Income

In 2009, the Census Bureau estimated the median household income in the City of Carlton at $ 40,278; significantly lower than the countywide figure of $ 51,552. The 2000 Census also indicated that 9.7 % of Carlton residents, or 70 individuals, were living below the poverty line. The County's current unemployment rate of 7.5 % is higher than the state's overall figure of 6.7 % [*August 2011, DEED*].

Housing

Housing Type	Percentage of Total
Homeowner (% of all occupied housing units)	60 %
Rental (% of all occupied housing units)	40 %
Vacant housing units	5 %

In the year 2000, the City's median assessed home value was $ 69,300, and average rent was $ 467.

Appendix C:

Community Focus Group Summary
September 2011

Community Focus Group – Summary of Responses
Carlton Public Library
9-23-11

A total of 6 community leaders participated in the focus group. Representation included early childhood, community education, emergency services, senior services, community/tribal college and an elected official. In addition, participants indicated active volunteerism in a wide range of community causes and events.

ELEMENTS OF A COMMUNITY VISION

Participants first imagined a time in the future when the community has achieved its full potential and everyone is proud to call it home. They then answered the question: *What does that success look like, and for whom?*

Who	Future Result We Want to See
Children 0 – 5	Have pre-reading skills and are ready to learn when they enter Kindergarten.
High school graduates	Are prepared for the next step whether that is work or further education (literate, writing and math skills).
Children & Seniors	Intergenerational connections / mutual helping between children and senior citizens.
Senior Citizens	Seniors have opportunities to socialize.
People with mobility handicaps	The community is more handicap accessible.
Potential entrepreneurs	Have the support they need to start small businesses here.
Everyone	The business community is thriving.
Everyone	There is regular interaction with Cloquet and more of a single-community feel.
Everyone	More people are drawn into volunteering.
Residents & Visitors	There is increased visibility of our community's history, including historic buildings.

STATE OF THE COMMUNITY TODAY

Considering the community's current situation, participants were asked to identify: 1) conditions that could help the community move toward the vision outlined above (strengths & opportunities), and 2) conditions that might impede progress toward that vision (weaknesses & threats).

Strengths/Opportunities
+ Jay Cooke State Park.

+ Bike trails and other outdoor recreation and events.
+ Sustainable local farming and the "Chicken swap".
+ Community celebrations put together through collaboration of many groups (Christmas arts & crafts, Carlton Days, Winter Fest).
+ Youth baseball.
+ School is small enough to know people.
+ History of the town and railroad – documented in a book.
+ Chamber of commerce.
+ Close to the Interstate.
+ Beautiful natural surroundings and close to Lake Superior.
+ County Seat – people come into town every day.
+ Continuum of senior housing (senior apartments, assisted living, nursing home).
+ Women's rehabilitation center.

Weaknesses/Threats
− The same people are always relied on to volunteer and make things happen; lack of widespread volunteerism is setting a bad example for the next generation.
− Lack of transportation; virtually no public system.
− Limited tax base – a lot of public employment but no large business anchor.
− School enrollment is declining – shrinking funding and offerings have followed; net outward flow due to open enrollment.
− People hold grudges.
− Transient population – especially young families with young children; less likely to know your neighbors.

COMMUNITY NEEDS

Given where we are today, and where we want to go, participants responded to the question:
What needs to be done to make progress toward the vision?

▪ Re-ignite the joint visioning work between the Chamber and City and take it forward to action.
▪ Support City/College project to encourage development of small businesses (e.g. coffee shop).
▪ Better promotion of volunteer opportunities to get the word out (in newspaper, community education newsletter, etc.).
▪ Make sure all relevant community websites are linked – utilize technology to raise awareness, especially with the younger generation.
▪ Create WiFi hot spots.
▪ Encourage know-your-neighbor efforts, especially events that do not feature alcohol (e.g. block parties by neighborhood).

LIBRARY PRIORITIES

Finally, participants were asked to vote on library priorities by answering: *What roles can the Library focus on to make the greatest contribution toward addressing community needs?*

Library "Service Responses"	Number of Votes
Connect to the Online World: Public Internet Access	6
Create Young Readers: Early Literacy	5
Succeed in School: Homework Help	4
Build Successful Enterprises: Business & Nonprofit Support	4
Learn to Read & Write: Adult, Teen, and Family Literacy	4
Know Your Community: Community Resources & Services	3
Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical & Virtual Spaces	3
Be an Informed Citizen: Local, National, and World Affairs	2
Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing & Listening for Pleasure	2
Express Creativity: Create and Share Content	1
Discover Your Roots: Genealogy & Local History	1
Make Career Choices: Job & Career Development	1
Understand How to Find, Evaluate, and Use Information: Information Fluency	0
Make Informed Decisions: Health, Wealth, and Other Life Choices	0
Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning	0
Celebrate Diversity: Cultural Awareness	0
Get Facts Fast: Ready Reference	0
Welcome to the United States: Services for New Immigrants	0

Appendix D:

Library SWOT Analysis
October 2011

SWOT ANALYSIS
Carlton Public Library
10-29-11

The Library's Strategic Planning Team completed a traditional SWOT analysis, with the following results.

STRENGTHS: *What does the library do best?*
- Friendly, welcoming place. (2)
- Bring in youth; connect with the school / children.
- Great Director (growth, vision, finances).
- Community input is sought.
- Work well with City Council.
- Good board.
- Provide a safe, comfortable place on Main Street.
- Internet for those without access.
- Selection we have here and available through Inter Library Loan.

WEAKNESSES: *What do you think the library could improve?*
- Hours. (4)
- Need to expand collection (e.g. best sellers).
- Need to collaborate with other entities and programs and get more people involved.
- Willingness to try new ideas / vision to improve.
- Limited tax base.
- Not enough PR.
- Need to bring in more outside activities for youth.
- Need better programs for adults.

OPPORTUNITIES: *What needs do you see in the community that could be opportunities for the library to make a difference?*
- WiFi. (3)
- More adult programs/speakers, increase adult involvement.(3)
- Reach out to seniors; get books to retirement / assisted living settings.(2)
- Work more with area schools.
- The arts.
- Outreach (like Unicef, etc.).
- Work with area businesses.
- Getting new users – attracting people to town.
- Use our facility for meetings and gatherings.

THREATS: *What outside forces do you feel could negatively affect the library?*
- Decrease in funding / bad economy. (4)
- Fragility of school system – request to combine public and school libraries.
- Loss of art education.
- Kids' use of video games.
- More and more online activity.
- E-books.
- Less leisure time for families.
- Lack of community support and patronage.
- Lack of volunteer support / don't have a separate Friends group.
- Proximity to Cloquet.