

Chisholm Public Library 2011 – 2016 Strategic Plan

Adopted by the Library Board:
May 19, 2011

Adopted by the City Council:
May 24, 2011

*Prepared by:
Whitney Crettol Consulting*

THE PLANNING PROCESS:

The Chisholm Public Library completed a comprehensive strategic planning process between January and May 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, city officials, 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 Chisholm continues to experience a declining population, and has a disproportionate number of households with low or poverty-level incomes. At the core of community strengths, however, is a strong base of volunteers and organizations that serve the common good. In addition to the public library, the community has many active churches, maintains its own K-12 school district, has established a Community Foundation, and is home to the Minnesota Discovery Center.

Despite a declining population and decreases in hours the library is open, utilization of library resources has trended gradually upward over the past five years. This increasing need for the library's free services coincides with a lagging economy and is consistent with national trends. Perhaps the most significant growth has occurred in usage of the library's public access computers, which has increased by 51% since 2005. The library is also a gathering place for the community through its well-utilized meeting room.

Several themes emerged through our environmental scan process. Community leaders emphasized technology access, supporting children and families, and collaboration as top priorities. The growing importance of access to the digital world for all community members was acknowledged, and will be an essential part of future library services. A need was also identified for alternative "family-friendly" activities, to create more opportunities for parents to spend time with their children. The library is seen as a key player in providing these types of events. Community members also want and expect greater communication and collaboration between local organizations. In particular, building and strengthening working relationships between the library and other youth-serving entities (such as Kids Plus, the schools, and the youth center) will be pursued as a strategy to increase the library's engagement with young people.

ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES:

Know & Serve –

Our library provides knowledgeable guidance and credible resources.

Equal & Open Atmosphere –

Our library is a safe, friendly environment where everyone is treated equally. We maintain a broad range of materials that cover issues in a balanced, unbiased way.

Cherishing the Past While Embracing the Future –

Our library is an historical presence and repository of the community's heritage, while providing up-to-date resources.

Community Investment –

Our library is energized by a universal sense of ownership among all sectors of the community.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Chisholm Public Library adds value to our community by providing engaging programs and an information and technology center where people of all ages find enjoyment, connect to the online world, and children begin a lifetime of reading and learning.

LIBRARY GOALS (In order of priority):

1. The Chisholm community has access to the digital world and all of its online resources.
2. Children, parents, and caregivers have positive experiences that foster early literacy skills and an enjoyment of reading.
3. Chisholm community members will stimulate their imaginations and enhance their leisure time.

PROGRESS INDICATORS:

Goal 1 (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.

Goal 2 (Create Young Readers)

- ✓ Number of program participants.
- ✓ Annual parent/caregiver feedback surveys for preschool story hour.

Goal 3 (Stimulate Imagination)

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

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS:

<i>Implementation Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Present strategic plan to Library Board and City Council for adoption.	May - June 2011
2. Communicate the new plan to other stakeholders and the public.	June – August 2011
3. Review strategic plan progress as a regular agenda item at staff meetings; 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 (September)
7. Staff develop action plans for the next year.	Annually 2012 - 2015 (October - December)
8. Full round of strategic planning.	Fall 2016 (New plan in place by January 2017)

Appendix A:

YEAR 1 Action Plans
July 1, 2011 – December 31, 2012

GOAL # 1: The Chisholm community has access to the digital world and all of its online resources.

<u>Strategy A: Wireless Access</u>		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Develop policies for patron use of wireless: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review by Library Board. ▪ Review by City Council. 	Library Board (Mary)	May 31, 2011 August 31, 2011
2. Work with City staff /Council to establish Wi-Fi vendor agreement, with the goal of no-cost service.	Mary	September 1, 2011
3. Installation of wireless equipment and launch service at the Library.	Mary (Vendor, City staff)	December 31, 2011
4. Purchase and set up 4 wireless work stations.	Mary	December 31, 2011

<u>Strategy B: Computer Training</u>		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Basic computer skills classes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seek out a partner (e.g. Community Education) to teach basic computer skills classes in the Library. ▪ Conduct 2 classes during the Winter Reading Program. 	Jessica Instructor (TBD)	October 31, 2011 February 28, 2012
2. Other technology workshops: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seek out a partner to provide instruction on relevant technologies. ▪ Conduct 2 workshops on tech gadgets (e.g. iPhones, iPods, digital photography, eBooks, tablet computing, etc.) 	Jessica Instructor (TBD)	December 31, 2011 December 31, 2012
3. Staff will participate in technology training to enhance their ability to help patrons, and to stay current with this rapidly changing area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attend ALS and/or NCLC technology trainings as available. 	Jessica & Tiffany	December 31, 2012

<u>Strategy C: Hardware / Software / Connection</u>		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Add a wireless printer for patron use.	Mary	March 1, 2012
2. Consult with vendor prior to replacement of all public access rented computers to ensure consistent software (including Microsoft Office Suite and audio capability).	Mary (Jessica)	February 1, 2012

GOAL # 2: Children, parents, and caregivers have positive experiences that foster early literacy skills and an enjoyment of reading. (Focus on ages 0 – 12)

Strategy D: Children's Programming		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Story time: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct weekly, year-round preschool story time. ▪ Host an annual ECFE story time visit to the Library. 	Tiffany Tiffany	Weekly (July 2011 – December 2012) May 31, 2012
2. Summer Reading Program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plan, promote & conduct a 6-week program, including a Read-to-Me option, with incentives and prizes. ▪ Plan and conduct 6 weekly craft days. ▪ Host 2 Kid Stuff programs. 	Tiffany “ “	June – July 2011 & 2012
3. Imagination Library: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Display promotional materials in a prominent location. ▪ Hand out brochures to all families with children ages 0-5 when they get library cards. ▪ Make referrals to parents and grandparents of children ages 0-5. 	Tiffany All Staff All Staff	August 31, 2011 Ongoing Ongoing
4. Explore partnerships to hold an early literacy event / workshop for families (e.g. ECFE, Kids Plus, etc.).	Tiffany	December 31, 2012

Strategy E: Children's Materials		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Research options for child-specific computer and software (e.g. AWE early literacy computer), their cost, and available grant opportunities.	Tiffany	July 31, 2012
2. Research other technological resources for children.	Tiffany	December 31, 2012

Strategy F: Family-Friendly Facility Improvements		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Diaper changing stations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research cost of changing stations. ▪ Purchase and install in women's and men's main level bathrooms as funds allow. 	Mary “	December 31, 2011 December 31, 2011

GOAL # 3: Chisholm community members will stimulate their imaginations and enhance their leisure time.

Strategy G: Programming		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Winter Reading Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involve Kids Plus in planning Winter Reading Program for teens and adults. ▪ Promote and conduct 6-week program with new and improved prizes. 	Jessica (Kids Plus) “	January 31, 2012 February – March 2012
2. Help generate interest and provide start-up support to launch a Book Club for adults; offer the Library as a meeting location.	Jessica (Mary)	December 31, 2012
3. Legacy programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Display, promote, and distribute museum passes. ▪ Host Legacy programs as available. 	Mary (All Staff) Mary	Ongoing TBD by Legacy
4. Host author visit with Andriana Triaginni at a larger community location.	Mary (Veda Ponikvar)	December 31, 2012

Strategy H: Music in the Library		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
1. Background music: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research a way to play background music in the Library. ▪ Begin CD collection (e.g. harp, flute) and begin playing music during open hours. 	Linda “	December 31, 2011 December 31, 2011

Appendix B:

Library & Community Profile

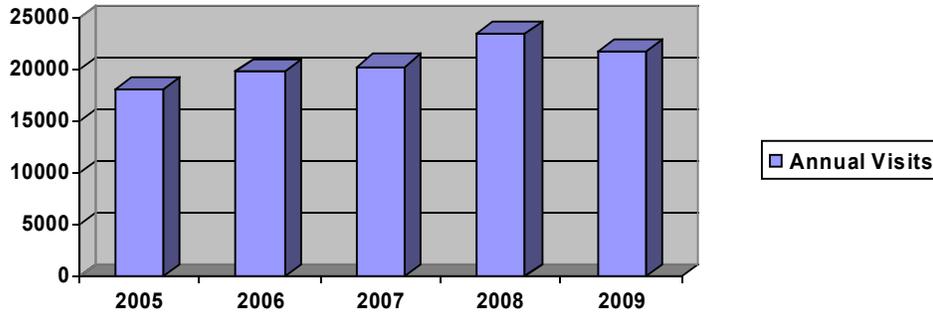
February 2011

Library & Community Profile: Chisholm Public Library

I. LIBRARY STATISTICS

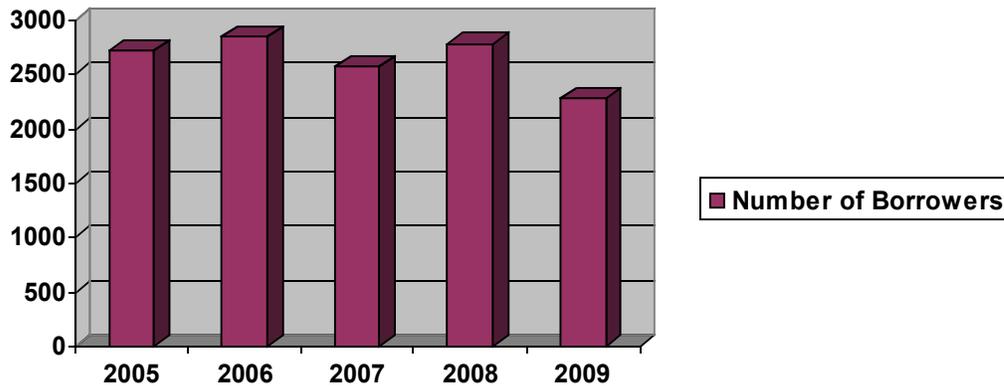
Library Traffic

The Chisholm Library has decreased its annual hours of operation by 13 % over the past five years. However, traffic into the library has been generally rising during this timeframe.



Number of Resident Borrowers

In the past, all library card holders were maintained in the system regardless of whether they were active. In 2004/2005, ALS began purging inactive users on a periodic schedule. The dips in odd-numbered years are reflective of the purge process. According to current population estimates, approximately 50 % of Chisholm residents have library cards.



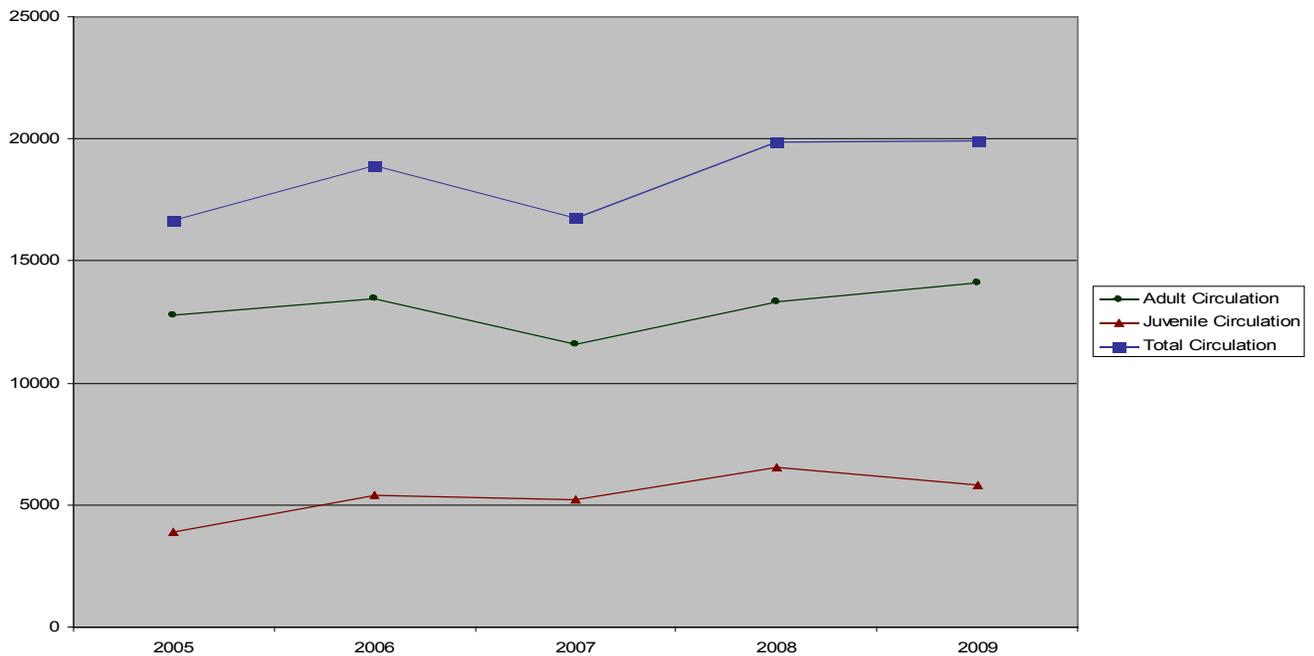
Collection Size

Type of Material	2005	2009	Change
Print	15,855	17,959	+ 2,104
Audio Books	240	382	+ 142
Video	324	658	+ 334
Other	0	0	-
Total Collection:	16,419	18,999	+ 2,580

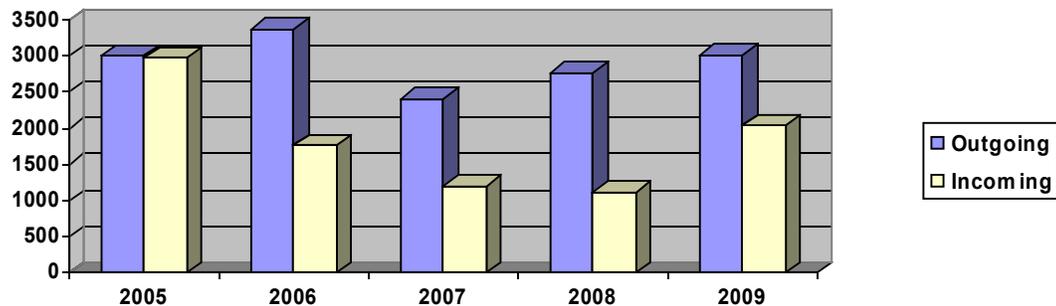
A January 2011 review of last check-out date identified 3,176 items, approximately 17 % of the library's total collection, that have not circulated during the past three years.

Circulation

The overall circulation trend in Chisholm is increasing. Total circulation for 2009 was 19 % higher than five years earlier. Although juvenile usage is rising, it accounts for only 29 % of total circulation.



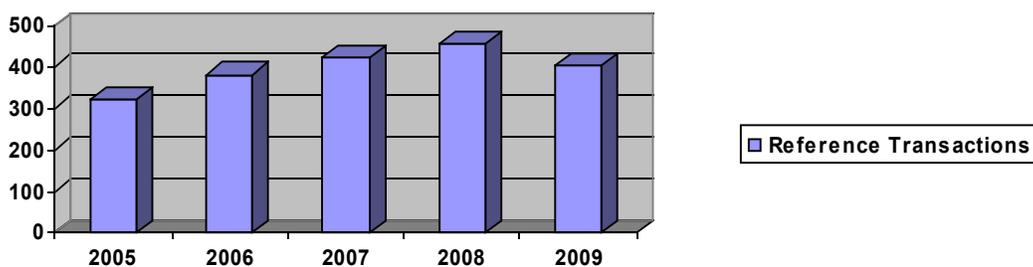
Inter-Library Loans



In recent years, the Chisholm Library has been a net provider in the Inter-Library Loan system.

Reference Requests

The number of reference transactions has increased over the past five years, contrary to the national trend for this service.

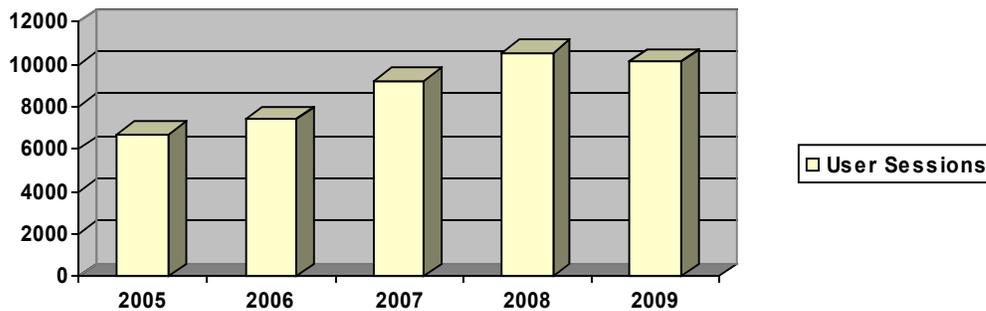


Programs & Meeting Room Usage

The Library has increased its focus on children’s programs, while decreasing the number targeted toward adults. In addition, the library’s public gathering space which was utilized for 99 community meetings in 2009.

Target Audience	Number of Programs	Type of Programs	2009 Attendance
Adults	1	Winter Reading Program	72
Children	67	Summer & Winter Reading Programs, story times, movie days, live performances.	1,781
		<i>Total Attendance:</i>	1,853

Public Computer/Internet Usage



The library has a total of six public access computer terminals. Usage has increased by 51 % since 2005. Wireless service is not available at this location, nor does the library have its own webpage.

Operating Expenditures

Year	Staffing	Collection	Other	Total
2005	\$ 131,805	\$ 21,847	\$ 83,865	\$ 237,517
2009	\$ 159,907	\$ 22,118	\$ 18,567	\$ 200,592

Current staff include a full-time Library Supervisor and three Library Technicians for a total of 2.74 FTEs.

COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

The City of Chisholm has experienced a 12 % decrease in population since 1990. Below are some key demographic indicators [*Figures taken from the 2000 U.S. Census unless otherwise noted*].

Time of Count	Number of Residents	Change from Previous Period
1990 Census	5,290	
2000 Census	4,960	- 330
2009 Estimate	4,594	- 366

Race & Age

The vast majority (98 %) of residents are Caucasian, but the 2000 Census recorded 103 persons of color residing here. In addition, 36 individuals identified themselves as Hispanic.

Age Group	Number of Residents	Percentage of Total Population
Children 0-17	1,111	22 %
Adults 18-64	2,742	55 %
Adults 65 & over	1,107	23 %

Education

The Chisholm Public Schools operate an elementary, middle, and high school. The District's 2009 on-time graduation rate was 86.5 % [*Source: MN Department of Education*]. In addition, there are 16 children being home-schooled in the district. Of the population age 25 and over, 9 % have an associate's degree and 12.5 % have a bachelor's degree or higher.

School	Number of Students [January 2011]
Vaughan-Steffensrud Elementary (K-3)	244
Chisholm Middle School (4-6)	180
Chisholm High School (7-12)	306
Total Students:	730

Income

At \$ 28,472, the median household income in Chisholm was significantly lower than the statewide figure of \$ 47,111. The 2000 Census also indicated that 12 % of Chisholm residents, or 583 individuals, were living below the poverty line. The County's current unemployment rate of 7.4 % is higher than the state's overall figure of 6.6 % [*November 2010, DEED*].

Housing

Housing Type	Percentage of Total
Homeowner (% of all occupied housing units)	78 %
Rental (% of all occupied housing units)	22 %
Vacant housing units	8 %

In the year 2000, the City's median assessed home value was \$ 47,300, and average rent was \$ 314.

Appendix C:

Community Focus Group Summary

February 2011

Community Focus Group – Summary of Responses

Chisholm Public Library

2-9-11

A total of 6 community leaders participated in the focus group. Representation included education, local media, businesses, youth services and the faith community. 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	Result
Students	Are prepared for any type of post-secondary education they are interested in.
Single-parent & Two-earner Families	Parenting skills and support.
Families	Have a greater sense of satisfaction with our town / community pride.
Young & Old	Intergenerational respect and interaction.
Seniors	Are happy, comfortable, and have their needs met.
All Community Members	Are invested in our community institutions and work together to make improvements.
All Community Members	Economic opportunity, housing, and family-friendly amenities that attract and retain young families.
All Community Members	A clean lake that we can swim in.
All Community Members	Attractive, well-maintained residences and businesses with increased property values (no blight).
All Community Members	Full storefronts / a vibrant downtown.
All Community Members	A community that promotes better health (e.g. fitness events, recreation opportunities – rec area south of Ironworld).

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

- + County Fair located here.
- + Our Library.
- + Strong volunteer base.
- + Many talents among community members.
- + Good volunteer emergency services.
- + Many people are technologically savvy, travelers – up to date (younger and middle generations).
- + Extensive framework/infrastructure for growth (Fire Dept, school, newspaper, etc.).
- + Active local chamber.
- + Have a Community Foundation with visionary thinkers and effort on beautification.
- + School is maintaining facilities well despite declining enrollment.
- + Faith-based community that works together (8 churches).
- + Many recreation opportunities (trail, skating, soccer, basketball, etc.).

Weaknesses/Threats

- Lack of overall strategic plan for the City, or at least public is not aware of it.
- Major entities (school, city, chamber, etc.) no longer meeting to coordinate/collaborate.
- Budget cut-backs / tight economy.
- Lack of public transportation.
- Perceived increase in violent crimes.
- Alcohol is the focus of many community events and common gathering places; adults with casual attitudes about youth exposure to alcohol.
- Streets are rough.
- Not an environment that attracts and supports businesses (variety of reasons).
- People think bigger is better, shopping big box stores rather than supporting local businesses.
- Pessimism / “Town’s best days are behind us” perception.
- Naysayers halt new ideas / change.

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?

- Build on efforts to promote community pride, starting with youth (existing school initiative).
- Improved communication between government agencies and the public; add new methods of reaching people and bolster the traditional ones.
- Create reasons for people to come to Chisholm / Chisholm Schools.
- Public transportation to travel within town and to other communities.
- More involvement and coordination between different community organizations (e.g. around events).
- Develop more activities that focus on families and don’t involve alcohol / creating opportunities for parents to spend time with their children.

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

Appendix D:

Library SWOT Analysis

February 2011

STAFF FOCUS GROUP
SUMMARY OF RESULTS
Chisholm Public Library
2-18-11

A total of three (3) staff participated in a traditional SWOT analysis, with the following results.

STRENGTHS: *What does the library do best?*

- Follow-through until we get the answers to patron questions.
- Good sized collection with a little of everything and variety of formats.
- Inter-Library Loan.
- Have a regular group of patrons and good word-of-mouth.
- Still here serving this community; utilization figures show the public wants the library.
- Tax information.
- Coordinate with other organizations when planning programs (school, day cares, youth programs).
- Legacy tickets.
- Public access computers.
- Historic library building.
- Function as an information center, especially for tourists and seasonal residents (e.g. check their email, get information on local happenings, driving directions).

WEAKNESSES: *What do you think the library could improve?*

- Lack Wi-Fi___ 33.
- Need more public access computers; sometimes patrons have to wait for one.
- Over the years, children's participation has declined.
- Staff need to keep up with technology advances and gadgets, but lack time to self-train.
- No teen space.
- Coordination with school has declined.
- Small staff makes it difficult to go to training sessions, etc.

OPPORTUNITIES: *What needs do you see in the community that could be opportunities for the library to make a difference?*

- Bad economy creates more demand because our resources are free.
- Local business "competition" has shut down (video store).
- New Youth Center has opened across the street.
- Potential to move into more technology-based resources and services that the public wants.
- Opportunity to pursue more partnership with the school at all grade levels (e.g. resume class visits, etc.).

THREATS: *What outside forces do you feel could negatively affect the library?*

- People using e-readers and their own computers.
- People/students using online information search rather than coming in to the library and using books.
- Schools are not requiring students to use the library any more (e.g. for reports).
- Scholastic book orders through the schools give access to inexpensive books at home.
- Other nearby libraries (e.g. Hibbing has a bigger collection, greater selection of DVDs and access to more computers).
- Fewer people wanting to use the library/lack of interest in traditional library resources. Usage is shifting from books to technology. Seems like less traffic.