

## Lincoln City Libraries' Main Library Vision and Concept Study

### Executive Summary from Downtown Library Development Committee

This summary is a condensed version of the full study report, which can be found online at [http://lincolnlibraries.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/2012\\_Concept\\_Study.pdf](http://lincolnlibraries.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/2012_Concept_Study.pdf) [*address updated and corrected Feb. 27, 2018*]. Additional information is included to provide insight into the committee's process, answer Library Board questions, and allow for additional comment by committee members and consultants.

Pages 1-3	Summary
Pages 4 - 5	Section A: Consultant Recommendations
Pages 6 - 7	Section B: Library Board Questions
Pages 8 - 9	Section C: Committee Comments
Page 10 - 11	Section D: Library Comparative Report

**Executive Summary from Downtown Library Development Committee  
August 2012**

**Goal:** The Lincoln City Libraries Board of Trustees engaged with Sinclair Hille Architects to complete a Main Library Vision and Concept Study.

Study results were to include:

- Evaluate potential site for the new main library, to include the Bennett Martin Public Library and the Pershing Auditorium site.
- Determine space needs for future library service.
- Define material and program needs to best serve future constituency needs.
- Involve the community in the process to best meet the goals
- Determine financial needs to build the new main library.

Lincoln City Libraries conducted a main library study in 2003 that determined that Bennett Martin Public Library was not a suitable site for a new main library. The Library Board at that time designated the Pershing site as a potential suitable site for the new main library and indicated its interest in that site. With the building of the new arena and potential changes for Pershing Auditorium, Lincoln City Libraries and the Library Board determined that a new study should be conducted as library needs and usage have changed dramatically since the 2003 study.

**Activities relating to the Main Library Vision and Concept Study:**

- Private funding was secured from the Lincoln Community Foundation and the Woods Charitable Fund, Inc. to be added to monies donated to Lincoln City Libraries from the Foundation for Lincoln City Libraries.
- The Library Board Downtown Library Development Committee began work on the Vision and Concept Study in August, 2011. Committee: Library Board: Maja Harris, Kathy McKillip, Herb Schimeck. Lincoln City Libraries Staff: Pat Leach, Greg Mickells, Julie Beno. Foundation for Lincoln City Libraries: Norm Langemach, Ed Tricker, Gail McNair.
- A Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued by Lincoln City Libraries to select a professional firm, with expertise in building libraries to conduct the study. Eight firms, both local design experts and national library design planning experts, submitted proposals. Lincoln's Sinclair Hille Architects was hired, along with their consultants, Jack Poling of Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle of Minneapolis, national library design experts, and Susan Kent of S.R. Kent, LLC, national consultant with experience as a public library director and extensive experience in planning public libraries.
- After public meetings, community stakeholder interviews, meetings with library staff and boards, it was determined that a new main library building would need approximately 107,285 square feet on a full city block to meet future library needs. Such a facility would include computer stations, special areas for children and adults, special collections, possible partner offices, and public spaces, such as study and meeting rooms, auditoriums, gallery spaces, with the overall goal to provide space to serve our community
- Parking opportunities were an expressed need and expectation from all constituencies. It was determined that 250 parking spots were necessary to serve the public.

- Criteria was developed to help the committee and the consultants determine the best possible site for the library:
  - Proximity to downtown residents and workplaces
  - Proximity to public transportation, including bus lines and bike trails.
  - Proximity to public parking facilities
  - Compatibility with transportation patterns, one way streets, and pedestrian malls
  - Current city ownership to eliminate acquisition costs
- The current main library site, Bennett Martin Public Library, was eliminated because it was too small to allow for adequate square footage using existing staffing models to carry out the vision for the library of the future.
- The committee directed the consultants to evaluate three target zones: Zone 1- West Downtown; Zone 2-Central Downtown; and Zone 3 - Antelope Valley area.
- Additional sites were identified from the public, property owners, and developers and were examined as well. Those included sites near the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, neighboring Kaplan University, the block south of Gold’s Galleria, and additional Haymarket possibilities that would partner with private developers. The committee directed the consultants to explore as many options as possible at this point in the process, narrowing the options to those most suitable, with the understanding that there will never be the perfect location.
- Using the criteria above, as the committee’s work continued, it became evident to the majority of the committee that the Pershing site best met the criteria. The committee then directed the consultants to concentrate on the Pershing site to advise in depth whether to redesign the current structure or construct a new structure that would best fulfill future library needs and to determine the funds required. The aesthetics of the existing Pershing Center need to be addressed if a main library is to be relocated onto this site. This decision was partially driven by the IRFP (Invitation for Redevelopment Proposals) for the Pershing site with an October 2012 deadline.
- The strengths of the Pershing site include:
  - It is large enough, encompassing a city block, and the building could be redesigned or razed to create the new main library that would be a focal point for Lincoln
  - Underground parking would provide 180 spots with additional street parking
  - It is located close to a bus route and bike trail.
  - A pedestrian mall is under construction in front of the facility.
  - The city currently owns it, so additional funding would not be required for purchase.
  - It would allow for two floors of library space, which library staff determined is the best design to serve the public and to keep management costs as low as possible.
  - This site has potential for strong visual impact because of its location on the mall.
  - The Pershing site was frequently mentioned during both public meetings, as well as with community leaders with businesses operating in the downtown area.
- The committee voted to forward the following resolution to the Library Board:
 

**The Downtown Library Development Committee moves to direct the Library to submit a proposal for use of the Pershing site, in response to the Invitation for Redevelopment Proposals put forward by the City Urban Development department."**
- The committee also recognizes that the mayor may not select the Library’s proposal as his selection for Pershing redevelopment, so has kept open their interest in West Downtown sites.

- Sinclair Hille Architects and its consultants presented the completed Main Library Vision and Concept Study to the Library Board on July 17, 2012.
- This executive summary includes additional information requested by members of the Library Board, following that presentation.
- The full Main Library Vision and Concept Study report is available on the library's website at [http://www.lincolnlibraries.org/board/2012 Concept Study Electronic Presentation.pdf](http://www.lincolnlibraries.org/board/2012%20Concept%20Study%20Electronic%20Presentation.pdf).

**Future Activities:**

- Pershing Auditorium is being utilized as a performance space until 2014 (needs to be confirmed)
- Bonds will be issued at a yet to be determined date to provide public funding for the new main library.
- Private funds will also be raised to provide partial funding for the project.
- The city of Lincoln expects to release an IFRP for development ideas for the South Haymarket area in 2015. Library participation would be dependent upon the Pershing site selection.
- Foundation will identify and engage Fund Raising Consultant(s) and/or establishment of Fund Raising Committee.

## **Section A: Consultants Recommendations**

As the study was completed, the consultants were asked by Library Director Pat Leach “to share with us your two or three or four most critical reflections or pieces of advice for us in Lincoln as we move forward on our Main Library project? Of course your voices are clearly held within the report, but I think that our committee would appreciate hearing directly from each of you, given your nationwide experience and deep expertise.” Their responses follow:

### **Jack Poling, Meyer, Scherer, & Rockcastle** (In no particular order)

I think that the successful acquisition of Pershing, with where the project has wound up, is most critical. I also believe Pershing is the very best place for the library. I believe if the Library is successful in acquiring the Pershing site there is a strong likelihood that you will get your project funded and going in short order. Conversely I believe that if you are not successful with Pershing it will likely be a long time before you can rebuild momentum for a new main library – years.

I think that the south end of the West Haymarket area is the wrong side of the tracks, so to speak. I think that the viaduct is a huge barrier and putting the library on the other side of that is a critical mistake. There are numerous cities that have cut off parts of their city with elevated roadways (a lot of waterfronts are cut off with highways), and the results are devastating for what's on the other side. Elevated roadways are one of the most effective barriers in urban areas. And I don't believe that a library south of the viaduct will be a catalyst for development there for a very long time as I think the viaduct will act as a natural border to the Haymarket development.

I think the project needs very strong leadership and stewardship. The strong leadership and participation we witnessed with the committee must continue. The Board must be enthusiastically united behind a clear and easily understood vision for the project. The one thing that all successful projects (successfully funded and successfully designed and completed) have in common is strong, clear and unanimous leadership. You can provide a part of that but it mostly has to come from the Board.

The last thing is to continue what you have been doing, which is to fashion a vision of the library of the future. It's very difficult to do lacking examples you can point to. But to get people in line to support the project they will need to be convinced that the project is visionary and not based on the tradition of the library.

If these things get worked out you'll figure out the rest later. If they don't you may not get the opportunity.

**Susan Kent, 8/2/2012:**

I agree with everything Jack has written. Here are some additional thoughts which really build on the report and all of our conversations.

1. You have to think boldly and with daring about the new library (and by YOU I mean you the staff, the Board, Mayor, supporters and the community in general). Through all the discussions with community and stakeholders, it seemed apparent to me that Lincoln is really proud of its city, its commitment to families, to education and its good economy. That all is part and parcel of what a new library is all about. Take a look at [www.youmedia.org](http://www.youmedia.org) and see the toolbox for building you media site at your library - all of this is possible today; everyone has to imagine the potential of this type of space and even more in the future.
2. Pershing - I don't think folks have really been able to imagine what Pershing might become as a library. Everyone has to really be not picturing the existing building but rather a "phoenix rising from the ashes" so to speak - a total transformation to a space/library that would be exciting, welcoming and a magnet for the community. Maybe a couple of examples of totally transformed spaces would help - Jack/Liz can give you some excellent examples.
3. Be able to clearly define the difference between the library as they see is today and what the new library will be.
4. Strong advocates that are not part of the library "family" - opinion makers in Lincoln who care about the future of the city and will speak out for the library.

**Sinclair Hille Architects:**

Sinclair Hille Architects agree with the above comments of Jack Poling and Susan Kent and the recommendation that Pershing is the primary site for a new main library.

**Section B: Library Board Questions addressed by Sinclair Hille Architects:**

August 7, 2012

1. What are the environmental issues that will need to be addressed for the West Haymarket sites?

*The JPA has enlisted the services of Alfred Benesch & Company to complete an environmental assessment and provide recommendations for potential remediation work for the West Haymarket sites that are south of O Street and west of Canopy Street. The time frame for the study is anticipated to be six to nine months. Results of the study include a report on the extent and kind of contaminants that are in the soil, recommended methods for remediation, and potential cost and schedule for cleanup. The goal for the JPA is to provide a pad ready site that is ready for development. At this time, it is not possible to identify all of the environmental issues that may be associated with the site. After the Benesch report is completed, a much better assessment of process, cost and schedule for potential remediation will be available.*

2. What are the environmental issues that will need to be addressed for the Antelope Valley sites?  
*An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was completed for the entire Antelope Valley area in August 2001 and provides the following information for the Antelope Valley sites that are under consideration.*

*No hazardous substances were identified on any of the sites under consideration. However, there is a potential for hazardous substances adjacent to two of the sites. There are no historic properties on any of the sites under consideration and none are national register eligible. Due to the date of the EIS and the potential project schedule for the Main Library, additional testing should be completed to confirm that conditions have not changed since the time of the original EIS. Phase 2 Environmental Assessment will most likely need to be completed on the sites.*

3. Are Basements and/or underground parking possible in either the West Haymarket or Antelope Valley sites?

*West Haymarket: Neither basements nor underground parking are possible due to the flood plain.*

*Antelope Valley: Both basements and underground parking are possible.*

4. Is the demolition cost of Pershing included in the project budgets noted within the Study?

*The project budgets provided within the Study are not based on detailed estimates because the project is not at a point that a detailed estimate can accurately be compiled. Rough square foot numbers were used for calculation of both the extensive renovation of Pershing and for the new construction of a library. Both numbers were based on ranges of cost for recent projects of similar size and scope. The renovation project numbers include selective demolition while the new construction numbers do not and therefore should not have demolition costs deducted from them for the West Haymarket and Antelope Valley sites.*

5. Compare the onsite parking between Pershing site, West Haymarket site and the Antelope Valley site?

*Pershing provides 180 onsite parking stalls*

*West Haymarket could provide up to 150 onsite parking stalls*

*Antelope Valley would provide the least amount of onsite parking stalls because the property is a standard block size. West Haymarket block is larger than a standard city block. Pershing is a standard city block size but has existing parking under the building.*

## **Section C: Library Committee Comments:**

### **Kathy McKillip, Committee Chair**

The objective of this study can be defined simply as providing a sense of community in the twenty-first century. Our libraries need to do that, our libraries should do that. They are more than brick and mortar. They provide a sense of belonging that a community searches for and thrives upon. This study reflects the diversity of our community and the need for change. Libraries have the ability to positively affect their communities more now than ever and in ways that are also more demanding on resources and current capabilities.

The Downtown Library Study Committee worked extremely hard to complete the due diligence necessary for making a recommendation worthy of public consideration and financial support. Committee members met more often than originally designed and approached the process with stimulating and intriguing conversations. The Committee considered all data presented which resulted in gathering and reviewing the most current and adequate information available to make sound decisions, a thorough selection, and a collective decision for a consensus recommendation.

Change is ever occurring and no doubt that before the ink is dry some concepts may have to be tweaked and freshened before final decision(s) can be made. However, as a result of the hard work completed by the Committee members and the foundational work that has been laid by the process, one can rest easy that due diligence was adhered to.

The Downtown Library Study Committee is proud of the work that has been completed, the collaborative spirit that has embraced the process and the recommendation being presented.

### **Maja Harris**

The repurposing of Pershing is an important and worthwhile undertaking. I do not believe, however, that the Pershing site would allow a new main library to fulfill its maximum potential in terms of boosting downtown economic and civic development, nor in terms of enjoying the full benefits of a downtown Lincoln renaissance, while accomplishing its mission of reaching and positively affecting the maximum number of people downtown.

As a board, we have a unique opportunity to take advantage of the forward momentum downtown Lincoln is experiencing today. I believe that the best way to capture that opportunity, and to ensure that the new main library will provide maximum access and community benefit, would be to locate the proposed structure in one of the areas experiencing the highest growth.

As a downtown resident, a business owner with a downtown presence, and a member of the Library Board, I am in favor of securing a site in the Haymarket area. I am also open to continued exploration of Antelope Valley, and would give serious consideration to any other viable site that embraces the clear paths of development in downtown Lincoln.

The new main library is intended to be an inspiring architectural landmark that would become a bustling community meeting space, dramatically boost downtown patronage, and be a source of pride and enjoyment for all Lincoln residents. The first step toward that goal, in my opinion, would be to locate the building in a part of downtown that is already a dynamic and attractive destination. In addition to maximizing the library's ability to positively influence its surroundings, this would give the citizens of Lincoln the greatest assurance that the proposed building would remain strategically located as downtown Lincoln evolves over the next several decades.

In order to justify an investment of this magnitude, especially during a time of recession, the Library Board must make the case to the taxpayers and any potential benefactors that a new main library would not only complement and enhance existing development downtown, but that it would have a positive catalytic effect on surrounding housing, businesses, and community projects. If located at the Pershing site, the library's ability to act as such a catalyst would be hampered by the fact that potential surrounding development is largely capped by static permanent structures, such as parking garages. As a result, the maximum community benefits of a new main library would not be realized.

The city, private enterprise, and the tax-paying public have already indicated their support for the Haymarket. This would give us a strong positive platform to build on, and a compelling argument for the bond issue we must secure. Furthermore, by locating the new main library in an area where private enterprise is already vested, and where the addition of a library could arguably enhance those investments, we would maximize our long-term public and private financing alternatives and their viability. These elements, in my opinion, are the most crucial to making a new landmark library a reality.

**Section D: Library Comparison Chart**

**Lincoln City Libraries**

**Main Library Vision and Concept Study**

**Regional Library Comparison - Richland County, Madison, Evansville-Vanderburgh Added**

Revised August 6, 2012 - Barbara Hansen

POPULATION & SIZE					
Library	Population Served	Central Library SQ. FT.	Number of Branches	Square Footage Branches	SQ. FT. Per Person
Omaha NE	489,732	122,490	11	182,762	0.623
Johnson County KS	421,500	99,547	12	190,158	0.687
<b>Richland County (SC)</b>	<b>384,504</b>	<b>242,000</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>93,883</b>	<b>0.87</b>
Wichita KS	372,186	89,000	8	62,639	0.407
Lexington KY	296,545	110,400	5	94,762	0.691
Lincoln NE	281,531	67,910	7	120,490	0.669
Saint Paul MN	278,384	93,000	12	185,039	0.998
Lubbock TX	269,140	72,100	3	31,996	0.386
Chandler AZ	252,856	64,000	3	60,500	0.492
<b>Madison (WI)</b>	<b>233,209</b>	<b>95,000</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>82,704</b>	<b>0.76</b>
Des Moines IA	198,682	110,000	5	63,577	0.873
Siouxland SD	192,697	62,000	11	57,400	0.619
<b>Evansville-Vanderburgh (IN)</b>	<b>171,922</b>	<b>145,000</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>75,328</b>	<b>1.28</b>
Boulder CO	103,600	92,164	3	21,450	1.09

INCOME & STAFF				
Library	Total Revenue	Revenue Per Capita	Total Paid Staff (FTE)	Total Service Hours Per Year
Omaha NE	\$12,720,719.00	\$27.72	174.8	32,468
Johnson County KS	\$20,567,871.00	\$48.80	267.8	37,136
<b>Richland County (SC)</b>	<b>\$21,190,929.00</b>	<b>\$55.11</b>	<b>272.0</b>	<b>36,110</b>
Wichita KS	\$8,350,288.00	\$21.84	102.3	24,726
Lexington KY	\$15,073,860.00	\$50.83	165.4	20,748
Lincoln NE	\$8,357,622.00	\$29.28	107.5	24,232
Saint Paul MN	\$16,305,419.00	\$57.20	162.0	34,129
Lubbock TX	\$3,503,871.00	\$13.01	52.5	11,908
Chandler AZ	\$6,762,327.00	\$28.84	77.8	12,740
<b>Madison (WI)</b>	<b>\$14,266,865.00</b>	<b>\$61.17</b>	<b>149.9</b>	<b>28,804</b>
Des Moines IA	\$7,667,405.00	\$38.59	94.9	15,997
Siouxland SD	\$5,995,093.00	\$31.66	91.8	23,037
<b>Evansville-Vanderburgh (IN)</b>	<b>\$11,039,618.00</b>	<b>\$64.21</b>	<b>152.2</b>	<b>25,212</b>
Boulder CO	\$7,215,161.00	\$73.50	75.1	10,654

## Lincoln City Libraries

### Main Library Vision and Concept Study

#### Regional Library Comparison - Richland County, Madison, Evansville-Vanderburgh Added

Revised August 6, 2012 - Barbara Hansen

LIBRARY ACTIVITY				
Library	Annual Circulation	Circulation Per Capita	Annual Visits	Visits Per Capita
Omaha NE	3,148,969	6.86	2,401,214	4.90
Johnson County KS	6,490,670	15.40	2,750,890	6.52
<b>Richland County (SC)</b>	<b>2,898,100</b>	<b>7.53</b>	<b>2,713,044</b>	<b>7.05</b>
Wichita KS	2,304,924	6.03	1,164,091	3.12
Lexington KY	2,860,711	9.65	1,957,471	6.60
Lincoln NE	3,364,288	11.79	1,527,167	5.52
Saint Paul MN	2,932,513	10.29	2,437,261	8.75
Lubbock TX	951,150	3.53	583,932	2.16
Chandler AZ	3,267,996	13.94	1,432,067	5.66
<b>Madison (WI)</b>	<b>4,407,363</b>	<b>18.89</b>	<b>2,241,086</b>	<b>9.60</b>
Des Moines IA	1,520,381	7.65	1,344,334	6.76
Siouxland SD	1,906,372	10.37	1,181,109	6.12
<b>Evansville-Vanderburgh (IN)</b>	<b>1,872,534</b>	<b>10.89</b>	<b>1,896,014</b>	<b>11.01</b>
Boulder CO	1,363,545	14.11	988,491	9.54