

**Duluth Library Facilities Alternatives Plan
Citizen Steering Committee Recommendation**

Citizen Steering Committee Charge

In August 2013 the City Council passed Resolution 13-0425R recognizing the need for significant improvements in the Main Library facility and supporting a Library Board initiative to establish a citizen committee to conduct a needs assessment and recommend steps for improving the facility.

Citizen Members

Lila Boehland	Greg Fox	Angie Miller	Rick Smith
Jane Brissett	Rogier Gregoire	Jeremy Osgood	Sue Solin
Roberta Cich	Richmond Kinney	Matt Rosendahl	Bruce Stender

City Planning Team

Carla Powers	Jim Filby Williams	Councilor Emily Larson
Eric Birkeland	Keith Hamre	Ben VanTassel

Citizen Steering Committee Process

Library Board members and city staff identified and recruited 10 Duluth citizens representing a cross section of the community and providing relevant expertise to the facility study process. At the same time, a team from MSR Architecture was hired to work in partnership with this committee to develop, describe and assess four facility options:

- A. Minor renovation of current facility
- B. Major renovation of current facility
- C. A new building of similar size and function
- D. A new, perhaps smaller building with a potential for enhancement of the branch libraries

In September 2014, a Citizen Steering Committee began meeting in partnership with MSR and the city library planning team. The group met five times to analyze facility data, assess library needs, and solicit input through a public meeting held on December 4, 2014 attended by 80 people. MSR issued their findings to the Citizen Steering Committee in a series of draft reports.

Findings

- The existing building is severely inefficient to heat and staff. An estimated \$75,000 is lost each year due to wasted energy because of poor insulation.
- The building requires approximately \$12 million in obligatory upgrades of end-of-life-cycle systems in the next five years.

- The cost to renovate the building would be very high, approaching the cost of building a new/better designed facility.
- The current building layout, even with substantial rehabilitation, would remain inflexible and inefficient for library operations. Renovating the current building would not be feasible in meeting emerging programming needs including, meeting space, technology, and children’s areas. Numerous columns on all levels of the building are a major barrier in flexible use of the space.
- Overwhelming majority (75%) of public input received at the open house or through written responses preferred the library be replaced with a new building.

Recommendation

The Citizens Advisory Committee recommends that the City of Duluth:

1. Build a new main library in downtown Duluth, rather than renovating the existing building.
2. Develop a schematic design for a new main library that will, to the greatest extent possible, fulfill the aim of Option C in the Duluth Library Facilities Alternatives Plan to fully provide what Duluth needs from its main library.
3. Identify, assess, and recommend potential sites for a new main library in downtown Duluth.
4. Assess the need for associated enhancements in the branch libraries.