

## **PROLOGUE: A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE ANCHORAGE PUBLIC LIBRARY - 2011**

It's 7:55 on a crisp sunny morning in October, 2011 in Anchorage, Alaska. Every few minutes another car pulls up to the library's drive-through book-drop and deposits books, CDs and DVDs. A small group of people is gathering in the Loussac Library's new ground-level front lobby awaiting the 8:00 AM opening time. A woman in a business suit glances at her watch as two older gentlemen share their observations on the weather, Washington, and the world. A man in his mid-thirties carrying a bundle of overstuffed file folders walks around a kiosk filled with notices of community events. He looks at the notices and glances at a video display on the top of the kiosk that announces the library programs scheduled for the coming week.

A mother and her eight-year old daughter sit on a bench pouring over what appears to be a text book. A woman in a hotel housekeeper's uniform joins the group and a middle-aged man drives up in a pick-up truck and parks near the library's entrance just as a staff member approaches the interior door with keys in hand. Another day is about to begin at the public library.

As the door opens, the gathered group streams into the building, each with a specific purpose in mind. The senior men head for the comfortable chairs in the periodicals section where the staff has just put out today's morning newspapers. They'll soon be joined by three or four other "regulars" who will sip coffee, scan the newspapers and discuss the issues of the day. Occasionally they glance up at four flat screen TVs mounted on a nearby wall that are set to closed captioning and are tuned to CNN Headline News, the Weather Channel, CNBC, and Fox News.

The woman in the business suit heads to a study table, opens her briefcase, takes out her laptop computer and spreads some papers out next to it. It takes her only a moment to log on to the library's wireless network so she can check her e-mail and updated information from her home office in Seattle. This library serves as her office away from home whenever she's servicing clients in Alaska. The man with the file folders heads to an area under a sign that reads "Foundation Collection." He opens his files and sits down at a computer terminal to continue researching potential sources for the grant application that he's preparing for a local non-profit organization.

The hotel housekeeper and the man in the pick-up truck both head to the computer reservation terminals and are quickly assigned a computer to use. Before she leaves the library, the woman will update her resume, scour several job sites, and submit her qualifications to three prospective employers. She's pleased that she's able to include the fact that she recently completed an online course in hospitality management using library computers as her classroom.

The pick-up truck man also checks his e-mail. He does so every morning at opening time. He's exceptionally pleased today when he finds a response to a message he sent yesterday. The email was to his daughter, a Second Lieutenant in the Army, who has

been stationed in Iraq for the last seven months. Assured that his daughter is safe and sound for another day, he sends off his daily message and then moves on to several websites. He checks the Seattle Times, New York Times, and Washington Post headlines and then proceeds to the Anchorage Daily News site to check the final score in last night's Seawolves' hockey game.

By now, the mom and her home-schooled child have already picked out several books on Alaska native cultures. They had checked the library's catalog online from home and were able to go directly to specific materials including a book based on Tlingit folklore entitled "A Totem Tale." The Youth Services Librarian asks if they're familiar with the "Cultural Outreach" programs sponsored by the Alaska Native Heritage Center and they quickly connect to the Heritage Center's website to explore this exciting possibility. The mother and daughter will be joined in a few minutes by two other home-schoolers and their parents for a weekly study session held in one of the library's group study rooms.

Meanwhile, the first of several class visits for the day is arriving. A group of 24 fifth-graders gather in one of the conference rooms for a brief orientation session. A reference librarian is about to present a program that covers how to use both online and print reference resources. After the presentation, half of the class will go to the library's "Tech Center" to gain some hands-on experience using the quality electronic resources available through the Statewide Library Electronic Doorway (SLED) program. The balance of the class gets a similar opportunity to learn more about some of the library's print reference tools. After an hour, the groups will switch places. By the end of the visit, the students will understand that research involves much more than doing a Google™ or Yahoo™ keyword search.

Across town at a pre-school, a teacher is opening a "Ready to Read" tub from the library's Ready to Read Resource Center. The materials are a key part of efforts designed to prepare children to be "ready to learn" when they enter school.

Back at the library, a group of emergency medical technicians is gathering in the conference room that was recently vacated by the fifth graders. They're about to participate in a video teleconference program on emergency preparedness. The session is part of a series of distance education classes offered by the Emergency Medical Services Unit of the State of Alaska's Injury Prevention & Emergency Medical Services (IPEMS).

At the same time in the Chugiak-Eagle River Branch Library, a computer user is logged on to a session of an online Construction Management course he's taking through the University of Alaska's Distance Education program. The woman at the next workstation is researching used car ratings and prices. A pre-school story hour has just started in the program area and a "regular" is at the circulation desk discussing her favorite authors as she checks out a biography.

Back at the Loussac Library, eight or nine people are scattered among the tables at the expanded library café. A woman sitting at a table by herself is lost in a new treasure

she found in the new book section as she sips her cappuccino. At another table, a man pages through a book that he just bought at the Friends of the Library bookshop that adjoins the café area. A lawyer and her client sit at a third table and sip coffee as they review contract language before heading to a real estate closing.

Throughout the day, a constant stream of people combine their visit to the library to select books, books-on-CD and DVDs with a viewing of the new exhibit of a local artist's work in the gallery area. Reference librarians are busy answering questions that arrive in person, by telephone, and through the library's website.

About a dozen people are in the Alaska Collection area. One is methodically working his way through microfilm reels for a long discontinued newspaper. He's doing research for a local history column he writes for a genealogy newsletter. At another table, a published author is pouring over several volumes that are open on a large table in front of her as she sorts out the chronology of events leading up to Alaska's statehood.

Mid-afternoon, a school class arrives at the library. They're headed to the children's program area to listen to a story entitled "The Eye of the Needle," a story based on a Yup'ik folktale. After the story, they'll have a chance to pick out some books to take home. The middle of the afternoon also brings a tour that includes local elected officials, the President of the Chamber of Commerce and the advance team of a high-tech firm that is considering relocating to the Anchorage area. The library is one of the premiere sites on the community's "economic development" tour that is given to commercial prospects.

After school, the teens arrive and quickly head to the Teen Area. Three begin to work on a PowerPoint™ presentation at an oversized computer workstation in a group study area. The presentation will be their report for a group project they're doing for their social studies class.

At the Muldoon Branch Library, the after school hours also signal the arrival of a host of younger schoolchildren, some of whom arrive with a parent or grandparent. Other children arrive by themselves and quickly choose their spots in the children's room. Several spread out and start working on their homework while others head directly for the "series" books to see if they can find the next episode in the lives of their favorite characters. A retired teacher who volunteers four afternoons each week during the school year makes the rounds providing homework help. Other children are connecting to online Homework Help through the Tutor.com program.

The meeting rooms at the Loussac Library are busy throughout the evening. A group of 15 would-be entrepreneurs are meeting in a large conference room with representatives of the Small Business Administration and the Senior Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE). Among other things, they learn that they can attend a class later in the week in the library's Tech Center on how to develop a business plan. In another conference room, a group of 12 mystery fans are gathered to discuss "A Night Too Dark," the newly published "Kate Shugak" novel by Dana Stabenow.

Several of the tutoring rooms are in use. In one, a literacy volunteer tutors a young man in his twenties who is working toward a Graduate Equivalency Diploma (G.E.D.). In another tutoring room, a second volunteer who is fluent in Korean works with a woman who has recently arrived in Alaska and who is beginning to learn English.

A public hearing about a proposed highway expansion is taking place in the Assembly Chambers and a chamber music concert has just started in the Wilda Marston Theatre. A family “bedtime” story hour is being held in the children’s program room. The interactive session helps parents learn how to engage their children in important pre-literacy activities that help develop speech and motor skills.

Adults and young adults continue to pass through the library doors all evening long. Some are looking for a good bestseller; others search for a book to help them deal with a health issue or to give them decorating ideas. College students occupy several study carrels scattered throughout the building. The Tech Center is offering a training session in how to use Microsoft Excel™. Every computer workstation is filled.

At 9 PM, the library finally closes its outer doors for the day, but library service doesn’t end. Well into the night, people are stopping in the Library lobby to pick up reserved items in the automated book lockers. Other individuals are accessing the library’s web site to download audio books, reserve and renew books and to access the “SLED” databases. Reference service also continues after hours because the “Ask-A-Librarian” service has been expanded through cooperation with other libraries throughout the United States and Canada to offer virtual reference service on a “24X7” basis. The virtual reference service also answers reference questions online in “real time.”

Far-fetched? Not really. The scenario portrayed above isn’t a dream. Some of the services and activities are already provided by the Anchorage Public Library. Others are realities in many U.S. and Canadian libraries. Why not in Anchorage?

## INTRODUCTION

In January 2009, the Anchorage Library Foundation issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for assistance in the development of a “Community Plan for the Anchorage Public Library (APL).” The RFP specified that the desired outcome of the project was to “create a long-term community plan that is guided by a clear vision encompassing:

- outreach,
- modernization, and
- enhanced library experience.”

The RFP went on to call for the development of “An inspiring long-term vision that defines the Library’s purpose in Anchorage, including its role in the gathering and dispersion of knowledge and in creating and fostering community relationships.”

Himmel & Wilson, Library Consultants, in partnership with Agnew::Beck Consulting and RIM Architects submitted a proposal in February and was subsequently selected to carry out the project. Work on the project began in the first week of April 2009.

The preliminary report that follows recounts activities that have been undertaken to date and reflects a considerable amount of interaction between the consulting team and the people of Anchorage. However, it should be noted that initial efforts have targeted individuals who are already associated with APL. Included have been members of the Anchorage Library Foundation Board, the Library Advisory Board, the Friends of the Library Board, Library staff, frequent library users, and a “Sounding Board” comprised of community members who are keenly interested in the Library’s future.

As this report is being written, a second phase of interaction with the community is beginning that targets segments of the population that have not traditionally availed themselves of the Library’s resources and services. These outreach efforts are intended to supplement the information that has already been collected and to offer insight into how the Library can serve an even larger percentage of the population.

Although the report is characterized as a “preliminary” report, it is more accurately an “interim” report. The information it contains provides valuable baseline data and information; nevertheless, the picture that it provides of the library and information needs and desires of the Anchorage community is incomplete. The report offers insight into the library services that are valued by existing users (approximately 60% of Anchorage residents have active library cards) and into some of the trends in library service that are occurring in the United States and Canada. However, the product of this effort is intended to be a “community” plan. All Anchorage residents, whether or not they are currently using APL’s services, are stakeholders in the Library and deserve to be heard. The process that is underway will ensure that these voices will be added to those who have already spoken to enable the Library to develop a program of service that is relevant to the entire community.

## **BACKGROUND**

### Municipality of Anchorage

Anchorage is a young City both historically and demographically. In the course of less than sixty years, it has grown from a small town into a major metropolitan area. The population of the City of Anchorage was slightly more than 11,000 in 1950. Even when the population of Anchorage Borough (which merged with the City of Anchorage to become the Municipality of Anchorage in 1976) is included, the area population did not reach 100,000 until the late 1960s.

The Alaska Department of Labor projects that the Municipality of Anchorage's population will exceed 293,000 by the time of the 2010 census and that nearly 307,000 people will reside within the Municipality's boundaries in the year 2015. The number of people in Anchorage will have very nearly tripled in a period of approximately 40 years.

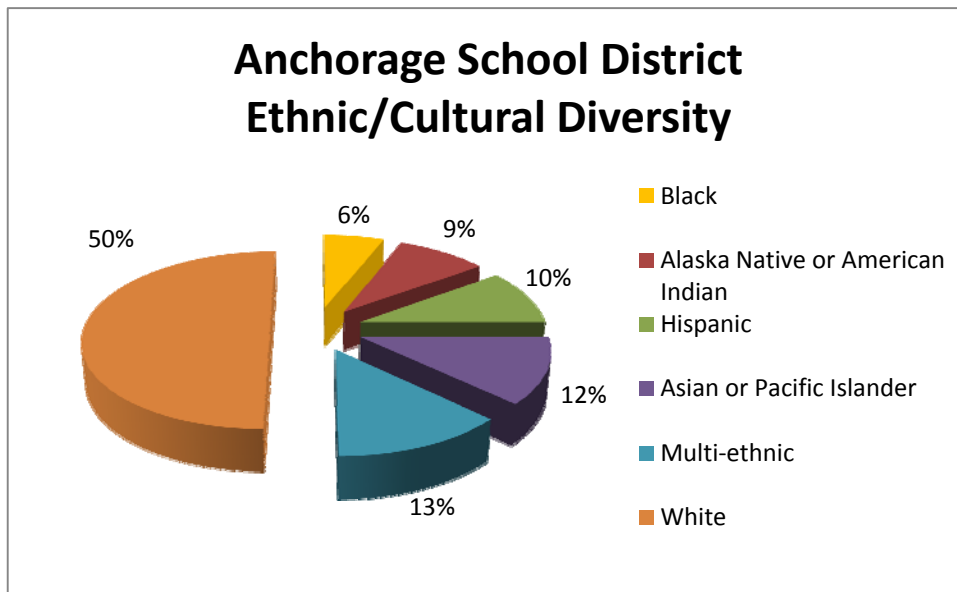
The majority of the growth has been the result of in-migration. People have moved to Anchorage from other places. Less than one-third (32%) of Anchorage's population was born in Alaska. Nationally, nearly two-thirds (64%) of the population lives in the state in which they were born. The so-called "Cheechako Factor" (the large percentage of relatively new arrivals to Alaska), may account for a weaker sense of "ownership" of the community and its institutions.

The median age of Anchorage residents (32.4 years) is a bit lower than the national average (35.3). The percentage of the population between the ages of 0 and 19 is particularly high. Almost one-third (32%) of Anchorage residents fall in this age group compared to a national percentage of 27%. The percentage of the Municipality's population that is over the age of 60 (10%) is considerably lower than the national percentage (17%). However, the senior cohort is expected to grow faster than any other age group in the next 10 years. The number of individuals 65 years of age or older is expected to increase from about 16,000 in 2004 to approximately 36,000 in the year 2018. It is important to note that an individual reaching the age of 65 would have been born in 1953. Much of the growing senior population will be comprised of so-called "baby-boomers."

The population of Anchorage is very diverse. The Anchorage School District's website reports that 94 different languages are spoken by District school children. After English, the five most common languages spoken are Spanish, Hmong, Tagalog, Samoan and Korean. The School District also reports that approximately half (50%) of the students in the district are non-white. The graph that follows shows the makeup of the ASD's student population.

The diversity of the general population of the Municipality is also significant and is growing. In the 1990 U.S. Census, 21% of the population identified themselves as being something other than “White.” This percentage had grown to 28% in the 2000 U.S. Census. Projections developed by the State of Alaska indicate that the percentage has already exceeded 30%.

Several demographic characteristics that are frequently cited as being correlated with higher than average library usage are present in the Anchorage population. Both the educational attainment (percentage of the adult population with at least a Bachelor’s degree) and the median household income in Anchorage are higher than the national norm.



## Anchorage Public Library History

Compared to the public libraries in other major municipalities in the United States (U.S.) and Canada, the Anchorage Public Library's history is a rather short one. Many public libraries can trace their roots back to the late 1800s and some lay claim to beginnings in the 1700s as subscription libraries, mercantile libraries, or other non-tax supported entities.

In contrast, the first library service in Anchorage dates back to 1916 when a volunteer library effort, independent of local government, was formed in what was then a frontier town of less than 2,000 people. The first paid librarian was hired in 1925 and, although the library occupied space in a corner of the City Hall, no tax dollars were budgeted for library purposes until 1946. It is important to recognize that in 1946, the population of Anchorage area was only about 15,000 and the municipal population was less than 10,000.

In fact, the Anchorage Public Library as a "system of libraries" has an even shorter history. At various times, public library services in what is now the Municipality of Anchorage area operated under the City, the Greater Anchorage Borough, the Spenard Public Utilities District and under a City-Borough contract. In some ways, fully unified library services in the area did not become a reality until City-Borough unification in 1976-77.

Library service in the City of Anchorage grew with the community in the 1950s. The original Loussac Library opened at Fifth Avenue and F Street in the Downtown area in 1952. The original Loussac Library was the first facility designed as a public library in Anchorage and was the only public library in the area until a volunteer/social library opened in Spenard (not then a part of the City) in 1960. The Spenard Public Utilities District provided modest tax funding for the Spenard Library until it joined with the Anchorage Library in 1965.

Fledgling libraries without direct tax-support also existed in other areas outside the City boundaries in Chugiak and Eagle River in the 1960s. Federal Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) funding resulted in the establishment of formal, tax-supported "station" libraries in 1965 in Chugiak-Eagle River and Girdwood under a City-Borough contract. LSCA also contributed to the development of branch locations in the Grandview Gardens area in 1967 and in Mountain View in 1968. Some of these "libraries" were little more than deposit collections when they began. A full service library was opened in Mountain View in 1973. Between 1970 and 1980, the population of the City/Municipality exploded from 48,081 to 174,431 and libraries were opened to meet a growing demand. In 1973, a Sand Lake Library was added followed by the Samson-Diamond Branch in 1977.

Several studies were conducted in the 1960s and 1970s that looked at library needs in the Anchorage area. A "Library Plan" that was published in 1977 by the brand new Municipality of Anchorage reflected the unification of the City of Anchorage and the

Greater Anchorage Area Borough. The Plan called for ten libraries, including a “headquarters location” in the Central Business District (CBD).

Population growth continued in the early 1980s. The original Loussac Library was demolished in 1981 to make way for the William A. Egan Civic and Convention Center. A Downtown Branch was opened in 1981 and planning began for the new, much larger, Loussac Library in Midtown. A full service library was opened in the Muldoon area in 1984.

The present Loussac Library opened with great fanfare in 1986 in Midtown Anchorage as the great oil-bust of the 1980s was unfolding. Budgetary pressures related to the recession continued to grow and in 1988, the Downtown, Grandview Gardens, Mountain View, Sand Lake, and Spenard Branches were all closed.

The library facilities serving Anchorage residents changed very little during the decade of the 1990s. However, electronic access to library resources grew. Of particular note was the work that went into forming the alliance that led to the shared online catalog system used by the Anchorage Public Library, the Consortium Library (The University of Alaska Anchorage and Alaska Pacific University), Alaska Resources Library & Information Services (ARLIS), the Anchorage Museum Atwood Resource Center, and several other academic institutions.

The Municipality of Anchorage continued to grow rapidly and by the year 2000, the municipal population had reached more than 260,000 people. The Anchorage Library Renewal Initiative was launched in 2006 to “...to improve Anchorage Public Library operations, increase outreach to the community and create state-of-the-art facilities.” The Initiative includes upgrades to the technology and all five branch facilities as well as improvements to the Z.J. Loussac Library. Also included is the creation of a sixth branch library in the Downtown area.

As a result of the Initiative, the Muldoon Library moved into new quarters in 2007 and all APL libraries became wireless hotspots. The Samson-Diamond Library recently upgraded its furniture and installed a new computer lab. The new Scott and Wesley Gerrish Girdwood Branch Library, which benefitted from significant local efforts as well as from inclusion in the Initiative, opened in 2008. At the time of the writing of this report, the old Chugiak- Eagle River Library is closed as it prepares to move to its new facility in a revitalized Eagle River Town Center. In Mountain View, construction is underway on the renovation and expansion of the original library building that was closed in 1988 due to budget cuts.

Some upgrades to the Z. J. Loussac building have been made and others are underway; however, other improvements, including the redesign of the Library entrance, are on hold because of the failure of an April ballot proposition that would have partially funded that project. Planning for a new Downtown Library is currently on hold because a site that was considered for the facility is no longer available. Furthermore, the economy continues to have a negative impact on the Library’s efforts to make progress.

As this report was being written, the Library has just announced that all of its libraries will be closed on Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays through the summer months in order to cope with staff furloughs designed to help the Municipality balance its budget.

As was illustrated in the “prologue” to this report, public library service is far more than buildings. However, the chronology of public library facilities in Anchorage provides a fairly accurate picture of the constantly changing fortunes faced by the Anchorage Public Library. The combination of a relatively short history, rapid population growth, and an economy characterized by boom and bust cycles has made it very difficult for APL to realize its full potential in spite of considerable effort that has gone into planning.

That said, the Anchorage Public Library has much of which to be proud. Circulation of materials reached an all time high of 1,599,025 items in 2008. That translates into 5.61 items checked out by every man, woman, and child in the Municipality. Over 170,000 (60%) of Anchorage residents have active library cards. A total of 871,036 people walked through the doors of APL’s facilities (more than the approximately 500,000 people who passed through the turnstiles for all events at the Sullivan Arena during the year).

Furthermore, a 2007 study conducted by the University of Alaska Anchorage’s Institute of Social and Economic Research concluded that residents of the Municipality receive an outstanding return on every tax dollar invested in library services. The report concluded that residents of the community receive between \$ 1.42 and \$ 2.46 of value for every tax dollar expended by the Library. The report cites multiple qualitative benefits to the community in addition to those that can be quantified. Benefits specifically mentioned included:

- Strengthening communities
- Fostering economic growth
- Serving as a center for humanities
- Cultivating the workforce of the future
- Improving children’s literacy

The Anchorage Public Library has faced a number of significant challenges in its relatively short history and undoubtedly will need to confront adverse conditions in the future. Nevertheless, Anchorage Public Library has proven itself to be a priceless community asset.

# LIBRARY ASSESSMENT

## Statistical and Peer Analyses

A review of historic data for the Anchorage Public Library reveals that statistical record keeping has not always been a priority. Data through the 1990s are characterized by inconsistencies between and among different sources as well as by inexplicable extremes on some measures from one year to the next. Fortunately, more recent data appears to be somewhat more reliable.

The consultants identified a set of peer libraries in the United States to develop a set of benchmarks that could be used to analyze APL's performance in comparison to other libraries. A total of 44 public libraries in the United States serving populations of between 250,000 and 350,000 people were identified through the Public Library Data Service (PLDS). Nine of the 44 libraries did not report a number of important data elements and were withdrawn from the set. Statistics from the remaining 35 libraries (Fiscal Year 2008) were used to assess the relative performance of the Anchorage Public Library. Following is a table that presents Anchorage Public Library's performance in comparison to the mean for the 35 "peer" libraries:

Anchorage Public Library Performance  
Measured Against the Performance of 35 'Peer' Libraries  
Serving Populations of 250,000 – 350,000

Category	Anchorage Public Library (FY 2008)	Mean for 35 Libraries Serving Populations of 250,000 – 350,000 (FY 2008)
Population	284,994	293,033
Circulation	1,599,025	2,563,341
Library Visits	871,036	1,387,530
Number of Registered Borrowers	170,686	161,831
Reference Questions Answered	219,043	327,145
Circulation per Capita	5.61	8.84
Holdings (# of Volumes)	605,000	763,842
Total Operating Expenditures	\$ 11,895,415	\$ 10,269,556
Circulation per Registered Borrower	9.37	15.46
Total Staff (Full-Time Equivalents)	86.0	142.97
Library Visits per Capita	3.06	4.75
Library Visits per Registered Borrower	5.10	8.86
Registered Borrowers as a Percentage of Total Population	59.89%	55.83%
Reference Questions Answered per Capita	0.77	1.13
Volumes per Capita	2.12	2.61
Operating Expenditures per Capita	\$ 41.74	\$ 35.53
Materials Expenditures per Capita	\$ 3.58	\$ 4.58
Circulation per Staff Member	18,593	17,636

The picture that is created through this analysis is mixed. There are bright spots such as the high productivity of staff (18,593 items circulated per Full-Time Equivalent staff [FTE] vs. an average of 17,636 items per FTE) and the relatively high percentage of the population with a current library card (59.89% vs. 55.83%). However, on many measures, and particularly measures related to the number of transactions, APL appears to perform at a lower level than the other U.S. libraries serving a similar population base. Circulation per capita is lower (5.61 vs. 8.84) as are reference questions answered per capita (0.77 vs. 1.13) and visits per capita (3.06 vs. 4.75).

Some of the negatives undoubtedly reflect APL's lower staffing level. In 2008, Anchorage operated its library with 86.0 full-time equivalent staff members. The average for the group of 35 libraries was 142.97 FTEs. It is interesting to note that APL staffing reached 114 FTEs ten years ago and that the number of staff has been constantly reduced since that time. The majority of the staff reductions have been in the professional ranks (individuals holding a master's degree in library science).

Another factor that undoubtedly accounts for some of APL's lower performance is its small number of service outlets. The Anchorage Public Library currently operates four branches and the Main (Loussac) Library. The average number of branch locations provided by the group of 57 libraries was 9 (8.71) in spite of the fact that the size of the service areas of most of the libraries was considerably smaller than the area served by APL. In addition, more than half of the libraries (54%) operated one or more bookmobiles. Anchorage residents have fewer opportunities to access library service near their homes.

Although the Z. J. Loussac facility is among the largest "central" or "main" libraries among its peers serving 250,000 – 350,000 people, both the geographic size of the Municipality of Anchorage and its relatively small number of branches mean that people typically travel a longer distance than in other communities to access library services. This likely accounts for the fact that Anchorage residents that are registered cardholders visit the library fewer times each year than residents of peer communities (5.10 visits per year vs. 8.86 visits per year). The gap between circulations per capita in Anchorage and in other peer communities is similar (5.61 circulations per capita vs. 8.84 circulations per capita).

A third factor that likely contributes to APL's lower performance is the Library's collection of materials. Although libraries, including APL, are offering more online and virtual services, books and non-print media such as CDs and DVDs are still important "stocks-in trade." The Anchorage system owns 20% fewer items than the average among peer libraries (605,000 items vs. 763,842 items). Anchorage's expenditures on new materials are considerably lower than its peers (\$ 3.58 per capita vs. \$ 4.58 per capita).

Given this data, it was therefore troubling to note that APL's total expenditures (\$11,895,415 vs. \$ 10,269,556) and expenditure per capita (\$ 41.74 per capita vs. \$35.53 per capita) were both higher than the peer average in 2008. If APL has a

considerably smaller staff and purchases significantly fewer materials, why is it more costly to operate? Because of the disparity between funding and performance, the consultants decided to examine library funding in greater detail. A very interesting picture emerged from this examination.

The data from the peer libraries shows that staffing levels are higher in 28 of the 35 peer libraries. Furthermore, in 2008, Anchorage Public Library expended only 54.9% of its total budget for salaries and benefits compared to an average among peer libraries of 66.3%. It is clear that APL's higher than average expenditure is not due to staffing.

APL's expenditures on materials are also among the lowest. Thirty of the 35 peer libraries spent a larger percentage of their budget for book and other library resources in 2008 (8.6% of APL's budget was spent on materials while the peer libraries averaged 12.8%). It is also obvious that spending on library resources is not the cause of the higher overall cost of library service in the Municipality.

The statistics available through the Public Library Data Service lump all remaining expenditures together in a category referred to simply as "other." In 2008, 36.5% of APL's budget was allocated to purposes other than staff and materials. This compares to a peer average of 20.9%. Only 2 libraries among the 35 peers expended a higher percentage in FY 2008. Clearly, the "other" category warrants additional examination.

Fortunately, considerable detailed information is available to analyze APL's other expenditures. The picture that emerges shows that the costs that appear to be higher than normal appear to be entirely out of the Library's control. Intergovernmental Charges, or "IGCs," levied by the Municipality of Anchorage for services provided ranging from facility maintenance to information technology services and from horticulture to communications account for the lion's share of expenditures in the "other" category.

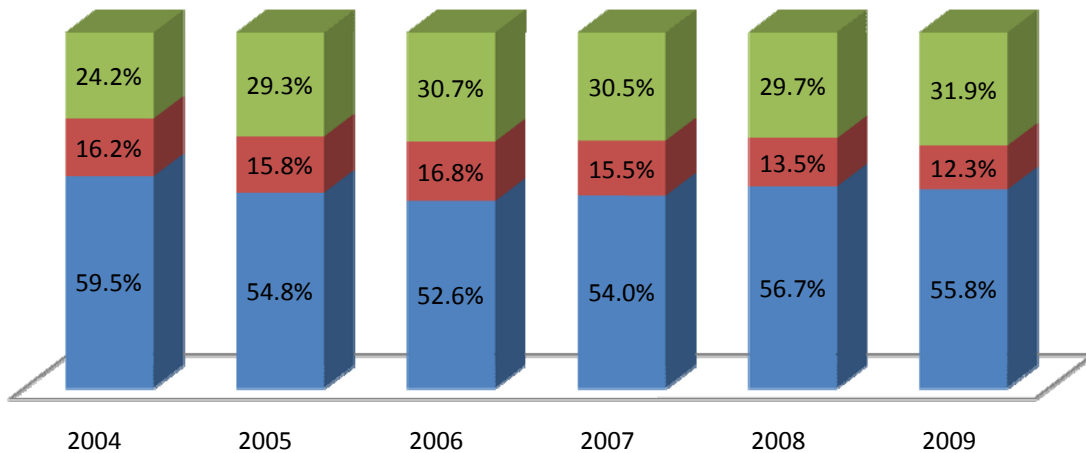
In 2004, Intergovernmental Charges assigned to the Library's budget amounted to \$2,050,960 or roughly 24% of the Library's overall budget. By 2009, IGCs had increased to \$3,633,205 or more than 32% of the overall budget. This increase in IGC charge-backs amounted to \$1,582,245 while the balance of the Library's budget (including staffing and library materials) increased by \$1,357,451. The increase in IGCs that accounted for 24% of the Library budget in 2004 accounted for almost fifty-four percent (53.82%) of the Library's total budget increase in the 2004 – 2008 period.

Far and away the largest portion of the IGC charge-backs is for facility maintenance. This segment of the IGC more than doubled in the five-year period between 2004 and 2008 from \$864,790 in 2004 to \$1,899,471 in 2008. The percentage increase for "communications" increased from \$ 2,480 in 2004 to nearly \$100,000 (\$97,835) in 2009.

The following graph shows the relative increase in IGCs compared to Library expenses for personnel, materials, and other costs that are directly under the Library's control. Note that amounts differ somewhat from amounts presented earlier because the graph is based on budgeted amounts rather than on actual expenditures.

## The Library's Dwindling Stock-in-Trade

■ Budgeted Staffing ■ All Other Categories Including Books/Materials ■ Intergovernmental Charges



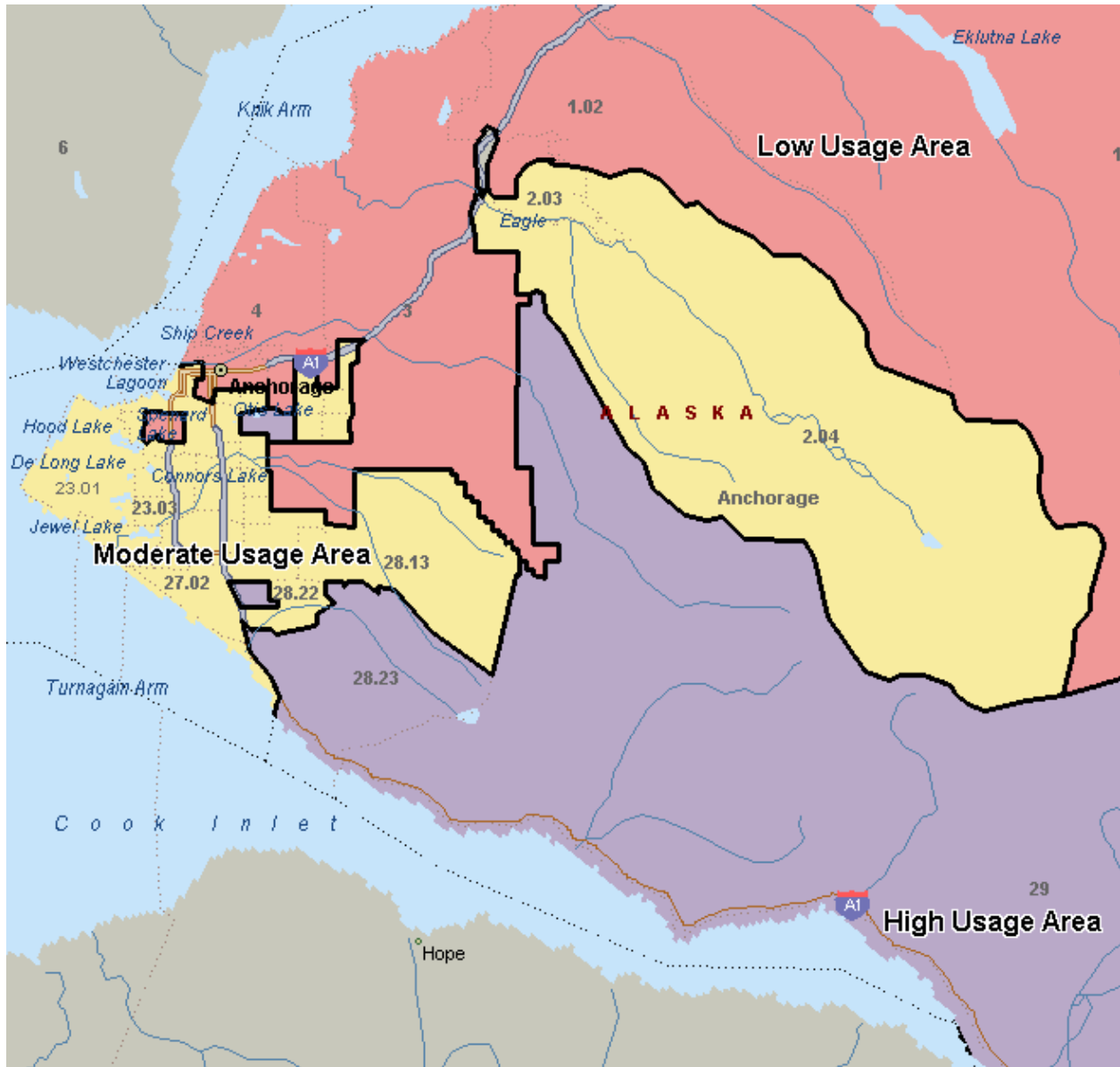
Over the past five years, the percentage of the Anchorage Public Library's budget that it has been able to expend on resources directly related to public services (staff and library materials) has dwindled while IGCs have accounted for an ever increasing percentage of the total. The erosion of the Library's buying power for service related resources severely limits its ability to maintain high-quality service to the people of Anchorage. A careful examination of ways to limit the growth or reverse the rapid upward trend of IGCs that impact the Library's budget is clearly in order. APL and the Municipality both have a stake in reducing the cost of support services in order to direct tax dollars to direct services that benefit Anchorage residents.

### Library Usage

The consultants used a sample of data extracted from the Library's circulation system to identify library usage patterns within the Anchorage community. Addresses representing households that had circulated materials during the period between May 1, 2009 and July 15, 2009 were processed using geographic information system software to develop electronic pin maps. These maps provide a fairly accurate picture of where the users of each library (Loussac and each of the four branches) live. It should be noted that the Chugiak-Eagle River Library is under-represented in the sample due to the fact that the old library was closed during much of the sample period and the new library has not yet opened.

The sample reveals that the Loussac Library is the library of choice for most library users. With the exception of the large census tract that includes Bird Point and Girdwood, a grouping of census tracts in the Chugiak-Eagle River area and a census

tract located near the Muldoon Library, Loussac was the predominant library. This is not to say that the branches are not providing services. For example, the Samson-Diamond Library showed activity from a very wide area of the municipality. Nevertheless, even in the areas immediately adjacent to the Samson-Diamond Library, residents used the Loussac Library more than they used their “neighborhood” branch.



The consultants estimate that the primary population served by each of the Library's locations is as follows:

Chugiak – Eagle River	28,000
Gerrish (Girdwood)	2,500
Muldoon	35,000
Samson-Diamond	40,000
Loussac	180,000

The consultants also compared the number of active households in the sample period to the total number of households in each census tract. The percentage that was derived was “annualized” and high, moderate, and low library usage areas of the municipality were identified. Note that some census tracts are very large geographically and that others are quite small. For example, all of census tract 29, the tract that includes Girdwood is identified as a high usage area. In fact, the active households are actually clustered in a few areas within that largely uninhabited geographic area. The coloring represents that a high percentage of the households (albeit clustered in the settled areas) checked out materials. The map below shows the high, moderate and low library use areas.

## Computer Availability

The consultants used the service populations derived from the usage analysis to determine whether the number of public access Internet accessible terminals at each library was above or below a commonly applied standard. The table on the next page compares the number of Internet terminals that are currently available against a “Basic,” “Enhanced,” and “Comprehensive” standard.

	Estimated Service Population	"Basic" Standard (1 Internet Computer per 2,000 Population)	"Enhanced" Standard (1 Internet Computer per 1,500 Population)	"Comprehensive" Standard (1 Internet Computer per 1000 Population)	Actual Number of Public Internet Computers
Chugiak-Eagle River	28000	14	19	28	7
Gerrish (Girdwood)	2500	2	2	3	4
Muldoon	35000	18	24	35	17
Samson-Diamond	40000	20	27	40	22
Loussac	180000	90	120	180	67
TOTAL	285500	144	192	286	117

As you can see, only Girdwood exceeds the “Comprehensive” standard. Three of the libraries (one of them being Loussac) fall below the “Basic” standard.

## **MOVING FORWARD**

A number of important themes have emerged that should guide the development of the Community Plan. As the community planning process continues, these principles will be incorporated into a shared vision that guides the Library in its efforts to help build a vibrant, strong, and successful Anchorage community.

### **Accessible**

The Library works to remove all barriers that hinder the public's access to information.

### **Dependable**

The Library is a dependable source of reliable information.

### **Efficient**

The Library is a good steward of the funding entrusted to it and strives to achieve excellence in everything it does.

### **Involved in the Community**

The Library is fully engaged in community life and collaborates with government, businesses and the non-profit sector to strengthen the Anchorage community.

### **Responsive**

The Library is constantly seeking new ways to respond to the library and information needs of the entire community.

### **Sustainable**

The Library works to ensure that the people of Anchorage will always have the information resources they need to live successful and productive lives.

### **Innovative/Dynamic**

The Library is a recognized leader in utilizing technology and innovative approaches to deliver information and library resources where and when they are wanted

### **Inclusive/Comfortable**

The Library welcomes all who wish to learn and grow and it provides conveniently located facilities that offer comfortable, stimulating learning environments.

In the coming months, the consulting team will interact with many more residents of the Anchorage area and will further explore their ideas and opinions regarding the future of the Anchorage Public Library. This information will be added to that already collected to create a "Community Plan for Library Service" that truly reflects community needs.