Oxford Public Library
Long Range Plan
2006-2012
Executive Summary

Oxford Public Library
Long Range Plan
2006-2012

Prepared by Lushington Associates
with the assistance of
Library Director Lois Hiller
The Long Range Planning Committee
and
Oxford Citizens
who Participated in Focus Groups and Interviews

Oxford Library Board of Directors
09/20/2006

Oxford Library Long Range Plan
Table of Contents

- Rapid recent population growth
- The need for community meeting facilities
- Annual additions to the library's collections for the next twenty years
- The need for electronic workstations
- The need for young adults to have an attractive place to meet
- The town's financial resources for a building bond issue
- Available resources from the State of Connecticut and other grant resources
- Fund raising potential for a new library

Alternatives to our recommendations have been considered. However, building a smaller facility will result in poorer services unsuitable for a well educated and growing population. A smaller facility would then have to be redesigned again at greater expense to the community. Meanwhile children, adults, and young adults will receive fewer services and the town would lose the opportunity to improve its educational and cultural values.

Facility Evaluation

The existing library has many limitations:
- The library is not handicapped accessible.
- No separate children's facilities
- No program or meeting facilities
- Few computers —jammed into tiny corners of the library
- No area for young adults
- No quiet study facilities
- No group study facilities
- Few DVDs, videos, or music
- Materials are jammed together and there is minimum space for additional materials.
- Lighting is too glary or too dark.
- There is insufficient seating for long-term study.
- The library is one-fifth the size it should be by Connecticut standards for communities of its present population size.

Objectives for a New Oxford Public Library

To fulfill its mission of independent learning with an emphasis on children's services, current topics and titles, and information services, the library needs to focus on improving its facilities. From the inception of library services in Oxford in the nineteenth century, citizens have wanted the library to be a cultural and information center. A well planned library should provide patrons with the ability to view art displays, to listen to music, and to join in book discussion groups. All of this will motivate patrons to use the library's collections.

The new library should have:
- A separate children's area
- Space for growing collections
- More seating
- Quiet study areas and comfortable places to read.
- An area for young adults

- Small and large meeting facilities
- Efficient staff work facilities
- Space for more computers
- Secure space for local history and Connecticut collections
- Activities space for The Friends of the Library in Oxford
- Outdoor library space
- Room for expansion

The following chart, prepared by Lushington Associates, compares the present and future areas and capacities of our Oxford Public Library.

Present and Future Library Space

Oxford Library Functional Areas	Present Area	Shelf Capacity	Present Seats	**Future Area**	**Future Materials**	**Future Seats**
Adult books and reading	1400	16225	14	**6630**	**52652**	**52**
Young adult				**740**	**2000**	**8**
Children's Services	525	2800	12	**2560**	**9000**	**22**
Meeting Rooms						
Program room				**1800**		**150**
Meeting room				**400**		**15**
Total Meetings				**2200**		
Public Library Totals	1925	19025	26	**12130**	**63652**	**82**
Staff service Areas	450			**1700**		
Library Total	2375		26	**13830**		
Non assignable	699			**4149**		
Grand Total	3074	19025	26	**17979**	**63652**	**82**

Oxford is growing rapidly and is becoming a highly desirable place to live. The town's beautiful setting and open spaces have already attracted increasingly well-educated and affluent newcomers. To accommodate the needs of all its residents, Oxford will need to expand and improve its library services in a building large enough to serve the town for many years to come.

Chapter One —
The Planning Process and the Town of Oxford

The Planning Process

Library improvement planning is a highly interactive and complex task. It involves the Library Board of Directors, staff, consultant and architect in a wide variety of interdependent activities. Its goal is to provide a sound basis for improving library services firmly based on community needs and library capabilities. The planning process serves these varying purposes:

- Identifies overall size and general cost of the project

- Assists Library Board, staff, and committee members in determining library objectives

- Provides the architect with a program for designing the renovation, addition or new building

- Provides Library Board, staff, and committee members with a document for the review of architectural plans

The process, in brief, includes these steps:

Mission, Goals and Objectives

1. Review and discuss existing mission, goals and objectives with the staff and Library Planning Committee in order to understand the town, library and overall priorities

Community Analysis

1. Review existing community and library information

2. Analyze library history and community demographics in order to place the present conditions in an evolutionary perspective and relate project goals to community development

3. Conduct focus groups in the community to understand individual perceptions of library services and their related facility requirements

4. Interview library and political/economic community leaders to understand the political and economic potential for obtaining resources for library improvement

Library Analysis

1. Work closely with library staff and Library Planning Committee to evaluate facilities

2. Analyze library use and existing physical facilities in relation to the community and to the mission, goals and objectives of the library in order to develop objectives

Library Building Program Preparation

1. With extensive staff participation, the consultants prepare a preliminary library building program for library improvements based on the evaluation above.

2. Discuss this preliminary program with the Library Board of Directors and town fiscal representatives

3. Revise outline program

4. Work with the staff to prepare detailed functional area sheets for each library functional area including:
   - Name, function, and square footage
   - Occupants, equipment, furniture and storage capacity
   - Acoustical, computer, equipment, lighting, shelving, flexibility
   - Area relationships

5. Revise functional area sheets based on staff review

6. Analyze renovation and addition alternatives to determine how preliminary program could fit into the existing building environment with or without an addition

7. Modify the preliminary program

8. Work with the architect to prepare schematic plans for chosen alternative

9. Prepare the final building program

10. Present the final document to the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance

Tentative Timetable

Mission, Goals and Objectives

Review and discuss existing mission, goals
and objectives   (completed May 2006)

Community Analysis

Review existing community and library
information   (completed March/April 2006)

Conduct focus groups   (held May 13, 2006 and September 16, 2006)

Interview leaders   (conducted April 8, 20, 22 and May 6 and 11, 2006)

Library Analysis

Evaluate use and facilities   (completed March 9, 2006)

Develop objectives for the program   (completed in May)

Library Building Program Preparation

Prepare a preliminary library building program   (completed in June)

Revise outline program   (completed in July)

Prepare detailed functional area sheets   (completed in July)

Revise functional area sheets based on staff review   (completed in July)

Analyze alternatives   (completed in July)

Modify the preliminary program   (not yet completed)

Work with the architect to prepare schematic plans   (not yet completed)

Prepare the final building program   (not yet completed)

Present the final document   (not yet completed)

The Town of Oxford
in the All American Valley

Population - There are two Official State Population Projections for Oxford, as follows:

1. **Office of Policy and Management**, **September 1995, Connecticut Population Projections, Series 95.1**

Town	2000 Census	2010 Projected	2015 Projected	2020 Projected
Oxford	9,821	11,400	11,800	12,200

Adding 400 people every five years projects 12,600 population in 2025,
and 12,680 in 2026.

2. **Connecticut Economic Resource Center: CERC Demographics**

    Click on Oxford at http://www.cerc.com/detpages/resources378.html
    2005 – 10,634
    2010 – 11,444 with the 05-10 growth/yr at 1.5%

    Projected forward at the same rate:
    2015 – 12,328
    2020 – 13,281
    2025 – 14,304
    2026 – 14,518

In 2004 Oxford's population was already 11,112, close to the projections for 2010. In 2005, two hundred forty-four new homes were built in Oxford. Oxford is one of the fastest growing towns in the state. Rapid development is expected to continue over the next several years, so the actual population in 2026 is expected to be much higher than either of these official projections. There is some indication that the trend towards multiple housing developments may result in even more rapid population growth. Some citizens and town officials predict as high as 20,000 in twenty years.

Location — Oxford is situated Southwest of Waterbury. Adjoining towns include Beacon Falls on the East; Shelton, and Seymour on the South; Middlebury, Southbury, and Naugatuck on the North; and Newtown and Monroe on the West. Oxford is 33 miles from Hartford and 68 miles from New York City. Major roads easily accessible from town include Interstate 84 and Route 8. The Major North south roads include Routes 67 and 188. The library is located on Route 67.

Area — The land area of Oxford is 33 square miles and the population density is 323 people per square mile compared with 706 people per square mile for the state of Connecticut.

Income — According to the U. S. Census Bureau, the median household income was $89,463 in 2005 compared with $53,935 for Connecticut. About 1.6% of families and 2.1% of the population were below the poverty line. Oxford is comparatively affluent.

Education — A key indicator of potential library use is educational attainment. In Oxford over 91% of persons age 25 and over have graduated from High School, while the state average is 83%. Currently there are three public schools: Quaker Farms School for pre-school through 2nd grade, Oxford Center School for grades 3 to 5, and Great Oak Middle School for grades 6 to 8. Oxford High School, the new $40 million+ facility, is scheduled to open in 2007.

Economics — Aside from 141 service businesses, there are many construction firms in town and some of the largest businesses are construction-related.

There are no major shopping centers in town at present.

There are three proposed shopping centers under consideration:

1. Julian Enterprises, Inc. is planning a shopping center at Twin Brooks, about 2 miles north of the present library location in the Town Hall.

2. A shopping center, about 2 miles south of Town Hall on Route 67, is under consideration for development by William Griffin.

3. Haynes Construction has proposed a shopping center adjacent to Rt. 67 on Echo Valley Road.

Town Bond rating of A-1 indicates a good ability to borrow at favorable rates for capital projects such as library construction.

Chapter Two —
The Oxford Public Library
Introduction, History, Mission, Facility Evaluation, Objectives, Design Goals

Introduction

People use libraries for a variety of reasons:

- ♦ Borrowing materials

- ♦ Using materials in the library

- ♦ Seeking assistance from expert library staff on what to read or study

- ♦ Reading and studying

- ♦ Attending library programs

- ♦ Attending community and organization meetings

- ♦ Viewing art exhibits

- ♦ Using computers

- ♦ Making copies

- ♦ Learning how to use a computer

- ♦ Getting passes for museums and other statewide attractions

- ♦ Reading local news, magazines, and periodicals

- ♦ Getting e-mail

- ♦ Getting tax, student aid, and other forms

- ♦ Collaborative learning

- ♦ Meeting friends and neighbors

Traditional library services such as borrowing materials and reading and studying in the library are still the mainstays of library services. However, today's library has become a vibrant

information and community center offering computer resources and assistance, preschool story-time, summer reading activities, programs and cultural events for people of all ages, community meeting space, and much more.

Oxford Public Library History

(adapted from History of the Town of Oxford, Connecticut by Norman Litchfield and Sabina Connolly Hoyt, PhD, and updated by Lois Hiller and The Long Range Planning Committee)

The town's first library was known as the Oxford "Circulating Library." St. Peter's Episcopal Church, under the leadership of Rev. S. R. Bailey, instituted the idea in December of 1883. A year later, the library was established by the St. Peter's Women's Guild.

Not long after, Mr. W. W. Hughes became the town's voluntary librarian and maintained 700 books at his Oxford Valley farmhouse (located on the west side of Little River just north of Lounsbury Road and facing the Town Green). The popular library soon gained a supportive membership of 150 people.

Mr. Hughes's home also became the headquarters for literary, musical and other entertainments. The Oxford Valley farmhouse gradually evolved into a virtual town cultural center. Records indicate that Mr. Hughes ran the library until at least 1892.

There are no records of library activity between Mr. Hughes death in 1904 and 1926 except for a 1925 School Supervisor report that "the public library greatly benefited the schools." A total of 1,119 books were read from an approved list, and Library Reading Certificates were awarded to all who read five books or more.

In 1926, a library association was formed with Mr. Hubert E. Stoddard as the first and only president. The town appropriated $100 to the town library that was then located in the Congregational parish house. There were 200 very old books preserved in the library, and Mrs. Eames, the Librarian, was paid $50 per year. The library remained in the parish house until 1933.

Soon after, the Town Hall on the Green at Governor's Hill Road was erected, and the town set aside a room for the library. The library remained as a private membership organization until 1951, when it was turned over to the town and a six panel Library Board of Directors was appointed.

By 1952, it was felt that larger quarters would be needed, and a vote at a town meeting assigned the library to the north room of the Center Fire House. The town voted $520 for the library renovation and 1,100 books were added. The library was opened as frequently as funds permitted, with board members volunteering their time one night a week and school children filling in during the day.

In Feb. 1958 the "Friends of the Library" was established. The Friends helped with story hours, lectures, and exhibits, maintaining the library's role as both a cultural center and a book library. In 1960 the library contained about 6,000 books.

The library was "temporarily" moved to the basement of town hall in 1978, with the First Selectman promising a library building within five years. Library collections and services expanded, and a Children's Librarian position was added in 1986.

Several planning and building committees were developed during this period, but all efforts to fund a new library building were defeated. With a grant from the State of Connecticut's "This Old Library" program in 1995, the library was renovated to make the best use of all its available space. Two years later the library initiated an automated catalog system.

In 1999 a combined Library and Senior Center building was planned for a selected site on Governor's Hill Road. The Library Board sold bricks and held a polka fest to raise funds (the bricks are still stored at the Public Works Garage).

The Friends of the Library in Oxford deposit all of the proceeds from their yearly holiday raffle into a Friend's building fund savings account. They also use money derived from book sales and other activities to fund library programs, passes to museums and State attractions, and other special needs.

During its existence a nonprofit Oxford Library Foundation held three car shows and raffled off a vintage car to raise a sizeable amount of money for the proposed new building. When the Foundation was dissolved in 2005, the money left in its account was given to The Friends of the Library in Oxford. A Connecticut State Library grant for $500,000 was also awarded the town, but had to be returned when the new library resolution was defeated at referendum by 47 votes.

In 2004 a grant was received from the Katherine Matthies Foundation to enable the Library to join Bibliomation, a consortium of over 40 public libraries that provides for the technological and automation needs of its member libraries. Volunteers helped convert materials, barcodes, and patron records into the new catalog system to enhance operational efficiency and automation compatibility.

The library added over 800 new borrowers in 2005. The library now has four computers available for patron use, access to databases through the iCONN digital library, and a collection of over 30,000 books, CDs, videos, DVDs, and audio books.

The library had many programs twenty years ago. Today, it has become increasingly more difficult to schedule or find room for them. Population growth and civic meeting demands limit the town's ability to find adequate space for these programs and many other community activities.

Mission of the Oxford Public Library

(Written by Oxford Public Library Board of Directors)

Mission Statement

The mission of the Oxford Public Library is to provide a dynamic resource of materials and services for the community, enabling the pursuit of personal, educational, business, and recreational interests for residents of all ages.

The library is responsible for being Oxford's information center and therefore strives to provide Oxford the best available technology for accessing information in whatever format it may exist, and ensure that patrons can become informed on the widest range of interests and concerns.

The library also recognizes that the exchange of information is a social activity and supports that exchange by providing for a variety of educational, civic, and cultural events.

Service Responses

(Chosen by the Oxford Public Library Long Range Planning Committee)

The following Primary service responses are those that entail heavy day-to–day major activity in the use of staff time, library budget, and facility use.

1. **Current Topics and Titles**
   The Oxford Public Library will help to fulfill community residents' appetite for information on current high-interest topics and popular cultural and social trends and their desire for satisfying recreational experiences.

2. **Services to Children**
   The Oxford Public Library will help encourage pre-reading skills and parental involvement in reading activities and provide high-interest materials and programs that encourage and nurture the love of reading and life-long learning in children and young adults.

The following Secondary service responses are those that entail continual activity in the use of staff time, library budget, and facility use.

1. **General Information**
    The Oxford Public Library will help meet the need for information and answers to questions on a broad array of topics related to work, school, and personal life.

2. **Local History and Genealogy**
    The Oxford Public Library will address the desire of community residents to know and better understand personal or community heritage.

3. **Commons**
    The Oxford Public Library will help address the needs of people to meet and interact with others in their community and to participate in public discourse about community issues.

Service Objectives

(Goals chosen by Oxford Public Library, Long Range Planning Committee and Objectives proposed by Lushington Associates)

Current Topics and Titles

Goal: All library patrons will have access to a variety of materials and programs to satisfy their interests in current topics, cultural and social trends and their desire for new recreational reading, viewing, and listening experiences**.**

> **Objective:** By 2012, the library will increase circulation of popular materials by 100% through:
>
> - Providing sufficient space to shelve and display new books, DVDs, audio books, magazines and newspapers in an attractive, eye-catching manner.
>
> - Providing comfortable seating for people to relax and read.

Services to Children

Goal: All Oxford children and young adults will have access to the materials and services they need to develop the lifelong learning interests and skills that will strengthen and enrich their lives.

> **Objective:**
>
> A. By 2012 the library will increase attendance in children's and young adult programs by 25% through:
>
> - Providing children's pre-school story time activities.
>
> - Encouraging parental involvement in reading activities.
>
> - Providing a separate children's program space.
>
> B. By 2012 the library will increase use of children's and young adult program services and collections by 25% through:
>
> - Providing sufficient space for attractive displays of children's materials.
>
> - Providing separate spaces with appropriate and sufficient seating for study, group projects, and computers in the children's area and young adult area.

General Information

Goal: All library patrons will have access to information on a broad array of general topics through a selection of print, non-print materials and electronic resources to satisfy their informational needs for work, school, or personal development and enjoyment.

Objective: By 2012 the library will increase use of the library's informational services and resources by 50% through:

- Providing sufficient space to expand the reference and nonfiction book collections that will offer patrons the opportunity for independent learning.
- Providing space for computers with access to the Internet and other electronic resources to be used independently and for collaborative learning opportunities (for patrons working together or staff assisting patrons).
- Providing more appropriate, comfortable, and ergonomic seating for users to have room to read, study, and use computers.
- Providing trained library staff to assist patrons with library information resources.

Local History

Goal: All library patrons will have access to resources and programs that will enrich and expand their awareness and understanding of personal and community heritage.

Objective: By 2012 the library will provide a secure space for the Oxford local history and Connecticut collection by:

- Providing a climate-controlled, secure room with controlled access to the collection.
- Providing sufficient appropriate furniture and equipment to use the collection.

Commons

Goal: All library patrons will have access to library facilities and enjoyable programs where they can meet and interact with others in town to increase their sense of community and awareness of Oxford's culture.

Objective: By 2012 the library will increase library programs by 50% and expand use of library facilities to include community organizations through:

- Providing a large meeting room with appropriate facilities, furniture and equipment for library programs and community use.
- Providing a small meeting room for small group use.

- Providing Friends of the Library space for fundraising and support activities.

2004 Library Survey

In 2004, the Oxford Library Board conducted a needs assessment on the state of the town's library. Six hundred sixty-four (664) residents responded. Eighty percent (80%) used the library and they thought the location was convenient. The majority felt that the library was too small and congested. They wanted longer hours and more emphasis on children's services

In addition, survey respondents felt that the library should offer additional programs, books, videos, and CDs and have more parking. Eighty-four percent (84%) supported a budget increase, and 64% thought $30 per capita would be a reasonable level of support.

Library Facilities

The present library location is in the Town Hall on Route 67 near the geographic center of the town. The library is in a small 2,000 square foot basement room of the Town Hall. There is some parking shared with other town facilities. The library shelves are filled to capacity. There are 34 seats, a small staff office, and a storage room. All of this is crowded into a small basement area.

Facility Evaluation

It is not surprising that residents prefer to use other nearby libraries, since this library has so many limitations:

- *Access is very limited*—State and Federal law mandate universal access. The restroom is not handicapped accessible. The Oxford Library, with materials jammed together and with no room for expansion, is already violating accessibility standards. Although the entrance is at ground level, there are no automatic operating doors. Aisles are narrow and seats in some cases project into the stack aisles so that a wheelchair cannot fit. Many materials are too high to reach. Lower bottom shelves are difficult for older users, or temporarily or permanently handicapped, people to reach.

- *No separate children's facilities*—Children study with adults in one crowded, noisy room. They have no place to listen to stories or enjoy programs.

- *No program or meeting facilities*—Many of the recently interviewed citizens and the focus group mentioned that there are too few meeting places in town. The library has been unable to sustain a cultural program because of space conflicts with the Town Hall meeting facilities. Many organizations in town also complain about the lack of meeting places in Oxford.

- *Few computers*--Computers combined with books are the key to independent learning. The few library computers are jammed into tiny corners of the library with no comfortable electronic workstations.

- *No area for young adults*—Young adults rarely use the Oxford Library because they do not have a space where they can listen to music, study with their friends or enjoy teenage materials.

- *No quiet study facilities*—The one room library has no place where people can study quietly for long periods of time.

- *No group study facilities*—Working together on school projects and sharing thoughts and ideas is impossible in the present one room facility.

- *Few videos or music*—Music, films and audio programs are essential elements of independent study that are not available in any reasonable quantity at the Oxford Library.

- *Limited space*—There is minimum space for new materials, so valuable materials will soon have to be discarded to make room for new materials.

- *Lighting*—The lighting is too glary or dark.

- *Insufficient seating*—There is insufficient seating, so people are discouraged from coming to the library for long term study.

- *Size too small*—The library is one-fifth the size it should be by state standards.

Facility Objectives for a New Oxford Public Library

To fulfill its mission of independent learning with an emphasis on children's and adult information services, the library needs to focus on improving its facilities. From the inception of library services in Oxford in the nineteenth century, users have wanted the library to be a cultural and information center. It should provide patrons with the ability to view art displays, to listen to music, and to join in book discussion groups. These types of services will motivate patrons to use the library's collections.

The new library should have:

- A separate children's area — Children need their own space for study, programs, and computers.

- Space for a growing collection — The library needs to have room to expand its range of materials to offer users the opportunity for independent learning.

- More seating is needed so that users will have room to read.

- Quiet study areas — Citizens need a comfortable and quiet place to read.

- Group study areas — Students need room to work together on projects.

- An area for young adults — Young adults need computers and study space.

- Meeting facilities — The lack of meeting places in Oxford is chronic. The library and community organizations need a choice of small and large meeting spaces to enhance cultural activities in Oxford.

- Efficient staff work facilities — Staff need well-designed and comfortable space to perform the support services needed in a library. They need to select order and process materials and do computer searches for users in a comfortable, well ventilated work area.

- Adequate staff coverage — Public areas and service desks need to be adequately staffed.

- Space for more computers —The Internet greatly facilitates the materials collection in searching for information for library users. In addition users need to be able to use a variety of computer programs in comfortable, ergonomically designed electronic workstations

- Secure space for local history and Connecticut collections — Unique Oxford materials need to be housed in a climate-controlled secure room with controlled access.

- Outdoor library space — The beautiful setting of Oxford and the town's emphasis in developing open space for enjoying nature should be part of the library experience.

- Activities space for The Friends of the Library (FOL) — A vital and active FOL organization that engages in library programs, assists with book sales and provides funds to expand the library's programs, needs a spacious location for its activities.

Other Benefits of a New Library Building

- A larger town library will improve the value of local real estate.

- Community culture and quality of life will be enhanced.

- An educated community will increase income.

- The Town Hall will be able to expand into the vacated space.

Financing a New Library

Multiple financing resources should be explored to pay for a new library:

- Julian Enterprises has offered to build a library shell as part of its new shopping center development on Route 67.

- The First Selectman has agreed to a town referendum for bonding funds. In the capital plan $3.5 million for the library has been scheduled to be funded by bonding in 2007-08.

- Support for this will need to be organized around a series of small group informational meetings.

- It may be possible to obtain state bonding funds by a coordinated effort on the part of the First Selectman and the town representatives to meet with the state legislature.

- The Connecticut State Library has funds for up to $500,000 from its public library construction grant process.

- A town-wide fund raising campaign

- Foundation Grants including the Katherine Matthies Foundation

- Additional grant programs with assistance from town's grants writer

The cost of operating a new public library in Oxford will require less than 2% of the town's budget of over thirty million dollars. It will serve all the people of Oxford for many years to come, and will symbolize the commitment of the town to educational and cultural activities for all ages.

Financing Advantages

Oxford's Finance Officer and Lushington Associates project that the annual cost of the bond for the new building for each household will be equivalent to any *ONE* of the following:

- Three months of basic Cable television service
- The purchase of 4 books per year
- Admission to 10 movies

This will give free access to:

- 50,000 books, CDs, DVDs
- Computer access to hundreds of databases
- Expert assistance in selecting materials on thousands of subjects
- Expert assistance in using computers and searching the Internet.
- Dozens of programs for children, adults and teenagers
- A quiet place to read and enjoy dozens of the latest newspapers and magazines

Design Goals for the New Oxford Library

An ideal library design is an effective combination of many related functions. The building gives people a wide range of choices and services. It accommodates many different needs.

Finding the Building

People can find the library easily; park in a well-lighted parking lot convenient to the entrance; and enter, comfortably carrying their materials, or pushing a baby carriage, or managing a wheelchair.

Design considerations: A large sign placed perpendicular to traffic, showing service hours; a parking lot sized for library activity including attendance at programs--one space for every 300 sq. ft. of building area; automatic doors.

Displaying New Materials

The display of materials should emulate a good bookstore. People select recent DVDs, books or audio books from a prominent, attractive display of new materials, well lighted for easy browsing. Display colorful and attractive covers for convenient browsing in alphabetic sequence, by title, so users can find what they want.

Design considerations: Slanted, lighted display shelving to display front covers.
Special shelving for particular materials and to meet ADA requirements. No shelves lower than 12", nor higher than 54"; wide aisles, at least 48".

Offering Choices in Materials and Electronic Resources

A public library is a multifunctional community center. It is ever growing and changing. The wide variety of services and activities that are offered require an understanding of how these functions relate to one another, and how different users find and use these functions.

Design considerations: Orientation for users and staff requires an intricate combination of signs, lighting and furnishings. Spatial zoning should suggest opportunities for alternative behaviors such as quiet conversation and silent reading. There should be an open area for conversation and acoustically separated group and individual study rooms. Electronic workstations should be readily available throughout the library in stand up and sit down configurations. There should be a wireless zone for laptop computers.

Finding a Book

Public libraries are fundamentally self-service institutions. Studies have shown that over 80% of users never contact a staff member except to check out materials. People can select a book on a particular subject from a large collection of materials on a wide variety of subjects. Users can locate a particular book in a collection of thousands because the library's collections are uniformly arranged in an easy-to-find sequence.

Design considerations: The book stack, containing tens of thousands of books, needs to be carefully laid out to suggest the sequence; end panels visible with line-of-sight signage in aisles need to be lighted for easy access to a particular book; online public access computers distributed conveniently in the stacks.

Getting Help

Experienced, well-trained librarians assist users to select a useful book, get an answer to a question, or learn how to search the Internet.

Design considerations: A prominently located, well-lighted, easily identified information/reference desk with computers, storage, telephone, reference tools; oversize collaborative electronic workstations, 48 inches wide with two chairs, within easy reach of a librarian.

A Place for Quiet Study

Students can find a quiet place in the library to read a book, study reference material, search databases or the Internet.

Design considerations: The library provides acoustically separated and comfortable study locations with glare free lighting and data transmission capabilities; ergonomically designed, long-term, mobile seating.

A Place to Meet

The library offers the community a range of meeting spaces for small groups and large programs. An area for casual meetings and book discussions with newspapers and magazines is open during library hours.

Design considerations: The program meeting area has a sound system, equipment for video and electronic projection; comfortable chairs; the room is available when the rest of the library is closed; restrooms are nearby, and there is space for food service and storage.

A Place for Children

An interesting, exciting and calming place for children where they can listen to stories, look at puppet shows, browse with a parent, get help from a librarian, or conduct research on the Internet.

Design considerations: Different sized tables and chairs; open activity areas; quiet study locations with chairs large enough for a parent to read to a child; picture books, with their thin spines, tiny spine lettering, and large colorful covers, suggest special shelving treatment for easy browsing by children and parents.

An Efficient Place to Work

Library staff can easily monitor the behavior of library users, and efficiently control the check out of materials. Staff can order, process and catalog a large volume of materials in a comfortable work place.

Design considerations: Clear sight lines for staff supervision; a central circulation desk close to the exit; an efficient processing area with ergonomically designed staff workstation

Chapter Three —
Space Needs Analysis and Recommendations

In this chapter existing areas and capacities are compared to space needs for materials, seating, staff services and meeting purposes based on the Oxford Public Library's population and mission. These capacities are then converted into square footage requirements for a building.

Sizes were calculated by Lushington Associates by:

- Estimating required seating based on population and library use.

- Using standard formulas to calculate space necessary for these functions as well as for public and staff support services.

Meeting Room capacity was determined in consultation with the community, and staff based on the library's mission, program attendance and community needs.

Material Storage Considerations

Intensively used browsing collections are often housed in bookstore-type low display shelving combining spine out and cover out display. This type of shelving may require a square foot of floor space for five volumes. A relatively small number of materials will need to be displayed in this way since most of them will be out in circulation.

Children's picture books and CDs with very thin spines that are difficult to read are sometimes shelved in bins that often result in higher circulation rates than conventional shelving. If bins are used, alphabetical separators and bin lettering will be essential as sequencing and finding guides.

Library shelving often consists of ranges of shelving 6-7 shelves high spaced 5' to 6' on centers, allowing for a 40" or 52" aisle. This type of shelving may accommodate approximately 10 books per square foot of floor space. The area size in this program is based on stacks spaced 6 feet on centers with six shelves. If the building columns are spaced 30 feet on centers, this provides greater flexibility, and the stack spacing can be reduced to 5 feet on centers to accommodate additional stacks to increase future shelving capacity.

Percentage of Materials in Circulation

The percentage of materials in circulation is constantly changing. A library with a collection of 80,000 books that has 20,000 out in circulation will need space to house 60,000 books while a library with 45,000 books and only 3,000 in circulation will need to house 42,000 books. Variations in seasonal circulation should be considered when sizing the stack. When summer reading materials are returned in the fall, the library may need many more book spaces.

Re-shelving and Room for New Materials

Empty space for at least five books must be reserved on each shelf. This will allow materials out in circulation to be returned to their appropriate sequential location and avoid the time consuming task of shifting materials to make room for returns. Space throughout the collection must be reserved for additional materials acquired to cover new subjects and materials in high demand.

Seating

Numbers of seats are derived from population size. The usual ratio is five seats per thousand population *minimum*.

To determine space for seating these sizes were used:

Table seat	30 sq. ft.
Carrel and Seat	35 sq. ft.
Electronic Workstation	40 sq. ft.
Lounge Seat	40 sq. ft.

Architectural Layout

To some extent the architectural layout of functional areas and the combinations of functions will affect capacities, and the area required may differ from the general estimates contained in the program.

Non-Assignable

Non-assignable space is required for arrival space, walls, elevators, stairs, halls, heating, ventilating and air conditioning, risers, restrooms and non-library storage. Architectural designs differ in the amount of space for non-assignable functions. A high percentage of non-assignable space may make the building very attractive and spacious. However, the cost may be high.

Highly efficient library designs with a low percentage of non-assignable space may appear very utilitarian and cramped. The percentage used in this program will result in an attractive but not overly expensive project. In Oxford's current library there is no basement and most of the mechanical equipment is located in attic space. It is assumed that the mechanical equipment for the new building will continue to be located in attic space or outside the building, although these plans may change.

Tentative Analysis of Present and Future Areas and Capacities

The following chart shows the approximate capacities and area sizes of the present Oxford Public Library compared with future needs. Numbers in the materials column do not include materials in process or otherwise unavailable for public use. The data is based on all of the proceeding information together with Nolan Lushington's three decades of experience in developing library plans for similar communities.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Oxford Library	Present	Shelf	Present	**Future Area**	**Future Materials**	**Future Seats**
2	Functional Areas	Area	Capacity	Seats			
3	Adult						
4	Reading				**300**		**10**
5	Browsing + Large Print		875	8	**500**	**1000**	**6**
6	Magazine Titles		60	3	**100**	**152**	**6**
7	Media		1500		**450**	**4500**	**4**
8	Bookstacks		12950		**4000**	**45000**	**6**
9	Reference		840	3	**750**	**500**	**10**
10	Oxford Room				**530**	**1500**	**10**
11	Total Adult area	1400	16225	14	**6630**	**52652**	**52**
12	Young adult				**740**	**2000**	**8**
13	Children's						
14	Children's staff				**500**		
15	Picture , easy readers		800		**660**	**3000**	**12**
16	Ref, fiction, nonfiction		2000		**900**	**6000**	**10**
17	Children's Programs				**500**		**30**
18	Children's totals	525	2800	12	**2560**	**9000**	**22**
19	Meeting Rooms						
20	Program room				**1800**		**150***
21	Meeting room				**400**		**15***
22	Total Meetings				**2200**		
23	Public Library Totals	1925	19025	26	**12130**	**63652**	**82**
24	Staff service areas						
25	Administration				**300**		
26	Tech services				**200**		
27	Circulation				**300**		
28	Storage	270			**500**		
29	Staff	180			**200**		
30	Friends				**200**		
31	Total staff service	450			**1700**		
32	Library Total	2375		26	**13830**		**82**
33	Non assignable	699			**4149**		
34	Grand Total	3074	19025	26	**17979**	**63652**	**82**

Notes: (1) Meeting room seats are not included in seating room totals since they are for programs only and are not generally available for individual library use.

(2) Research and analysis prepared by Nolan Lushington Associates.

Alternatives

Efficient Vertical Distribution

		Future Areas
1	Ground Floor	
2	Adult Area	**6930**
3	Young Adult Area	**740**
4	Children's Area	**2560**
5	Total Ground Floor	**10230**
6		
7	Other Floors	
8	Meeting Room Area	**2200**
9	Staff Service Areas	**1400**
10	Non-Assignable	**4149**
11	Total Other Floors	**7749**
12	Grand Total	**17979**

Size of the Library May Be Reduced By

1. Decreasing materials capacity — This will result in the library reaching its capacity for materials in less than the 20-year planning period. Therefore useful materials will have to be discarded to make way for new materials.

2. Decreasing number of seats — This will discourage users who will be crowded into a small area.

3. Decreasing meeting room capacities — This will result in discouraging people who attend popular library programs.

4. Decreasing staff work space — Staff will not have an efficient area for useful work.

5. Decreasing non-assignable space allowance — This will result in a crowded appearance and insufficient room to work on maintaining mechanical systems.

Advantages of Locating Basic Library Services on One Level

If the site allows adequate space for a larger footprint, there are many advantages to having most, if not all, of the public areas of the library on one level. Storage, meeting rooms, and offices could be on the first or second level.

Maximum access to all materials — All materials will be equally accessible if they are all on one level. If materials are on a level above or below the entry level, they will be less used, since more effort will be required to find them.

Public Convenience — Services on one level will enhance public convenience since all services will be seen from the entrance and the public will be aware and have a clear choice of activities. The public is often unaware of services on other levels.

Staff productivity — Locating public services on a single level will enhance staff productivity since staff can be involved in a variety of public services, as they are needed, rather than having main floor staff be swamped with business while second floor staff is idle. Experienced staff can assist newer staff better if they work in close proximity.

Lower Cost — Elevators are costly to install and maintain, and require waiting when they are on other floors. They also deny access to other floors when they are broken. Libraries are often open many hours a week requiring two shifts. Staffing another level on a two-shift basis will greatly increase operating costs.

Improved security — Security of staff, public and materials is better in a single story library in which all activities are visible from a central service area.

Non Entry-level functions — Some functions can be located on other levels. They may include:

- *Program, multi-purpose and meeting rooms* are scheduled group activities that require access when other library services are closed therefore an entry level location is preferred. However, since they are scheduled they may be located on another level, without requiring staff supervision.

- *Mechanical building functions* such as heating, ventilation and air conditioning can be located on another level to provide acoustical separation, and separate maintenance.

- *Maintenance and custodial work areas*, offices, storage can be located on another level but may not be as well supervised in that location.

- *Staff work areas* such as deliveries, and processing can be located on another floor, but restricted communication and movement between levels may hinder productivity, and public service staff will not be easily available to assist at public service stations. Supervision of staff may not be as effective.

Library Planning Committee – February 2006

Dawn Higginson Children's Librarian
61 Zuella Drive Unit 3, Waterbury, CT 06704
203-305-1626
dhigginson@oxfordlib.org

Maryellen Joncyk Chairman of the Long Range Planning Committee
2 Hickory Lane, Oxford, CT 06478
203-888-7260 (h)   365-7142 (w)
CTYankee14@msn.com

Grace Hanneken — Husband was former President of the Library Board
34 Punkup Road, Oxford, CT 06478
203-888-0520
jhanneken@snet.net

Nancy Farnum — Former School Librarian. Responsible for Interviews and Focus Group
16 Barry Road, Oxford, CT 06478
203-888-0230
rsfarnum@alumni.union.edu

Dorothy DeBisschop — Longtime resident. Author of *Images of Oxford*
Secretary of the Oxford Historical Society, Oxford Municipal Historian
234 Chestnut Tree Hill Road, Oxford, CT 06478
203-888-4159
dottie@debisschop.net

C. Elspeth Lydon — Director of the Shelton Library and Secretary of the Planning Committee
410 Roosevelt Drive, Oxford, CT 06483
203-734-5606
elydon@biblio.org

James Hliva — Oxford Finance Director
138 Quaker Farms Road, Oxford, CT 06478
203-881-1796
financeassistant@oxford-ct.gov

Margaret Kutniewski — President of the Friends of the Library in Oxford
1 Heather Lane, Oxford, CT 06478
203-888-5095
jkutniewski@sbcglobal.net

Lois Hiller, Library Director   Nolan Lushington, Library Consultant