

## Community Focus Group Meeting for RCL – White Bear Lake

White Bear Lake City Hall

October 25, 2012, 7:00 PM.

Ann Voda of Bentz/Thompson/Rietow gave presentations on 'White Bear Lake Library Context' and 'Top Trends in Library Service and the Spaces to Support Them'. Three questions were discussed in small groups and then shared with the entire group. (Tally marks show multiple groups made the same points.)

### What is the character of your community?

#### People

##### *Identity*

- Aging Population- in place (III)
  - Activity passes for seniors to high school events
- Generations of families/ Long- time residents (III)
- Changing demographics (II)
- Middle Class
- Economically diverse
- Anticipating a turnover to younger families
- Cross County Users

##### *Mindset*

- Community spirit/ strong sense of pride (III)
- Progressive/ Forward thinking with respect to the past (II)
- Value education (III)
  - Largest community college
  - Well educated community with expectations
- Fiscally conservative- doesn't like change/ needs to own change
- Practical
- Loyalty/ Protective
- Innovative

##### *Interests*

- Arts Community/ Art Center/ Theater (II)
- Volunteerism/ Public Service (II)
- Community events
- Diversified- draw
- Active

#### City

- Strong downtown identity (IIIIII)
  - Variety of businesses
  - Vibrant
- Fully developed
- Strong sense of place/ History/ Culture (III)
  - Library dates back to 1880s
- Small town culture/ community (III)
  - Feels like a rural community surrounded by suburbs
- Great commute
- Walkable
- YMCA
- Natural Resources
  - Lake (III)

- Scenic
- Parks and rec
- Renewal of resources
  
- Side question discussed by one group: What makes WBL attractive?
  - Safe
  - Road infrastructure
  - Affordable- taxes, housing
  - Fighting blight/ maintain housing stock
  - Strong schools, service clubs, YMCA, churches
  - Community giving
  - Housing diversity
  - Attract new middle class families



### What are the issues facing the community in the next ten years?

#### People

- Aging population (III)
- Public transportation (III)
- Recession/ difficult economic time (II)
- Adjusting to changing diversity
- Community expectations (use & design)
- Growing poverty
- Economically diverse
- Growing homelessness
- Lack of diversity in people making decisions for all
- Attract younger demographic/ Get younger people involved (II)
  - Need to foster kids/ teens use of the library

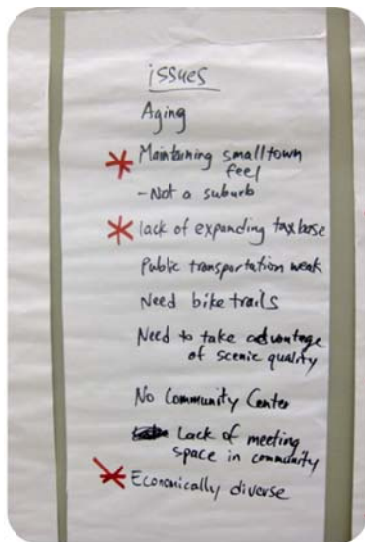
#### City

- Public transportation (III)
- Evaporating lake (II)
- Aging Infrastructure (II)

- Lack of expanding tax base (II)
- Lack of meeting space in the community (II)
- Divisions- south of lake, west of highway & downtown (related to access)
- Maintaining small town feel (not a suburb)
- Need bike trails
- Need to take advantage of scenic quality
- No community center
- Proactive on affordable housing
- City owns and operates senior living center
- City needs to continue to develop amenities to keep people here
- Influx of apartments on the boat works site

### Library

- Technology/ access to computers (IIII)
- Inadequate space in library (II)
- Location of library- parking, Hwy 61
- Dark library
- Safe out of school places
- Tutoring/ Homework help
- Too small storytimes
- Collaborative/ partnerships- schools as reading sponsor, non profits, outreach, WB Center Arts



### What programs and services should the library offer to reflect the character and address the issues of your community?

#### Programming/ Services

- Job/ employment help/ counseling (IIII)
- Multi- generational programming (IIII)
- Day time programs

- Special programs/ entertainment (II)
- Book Clubs/ Reading groups (II)
- MN history day/ "check out a senior"- oral history
- Cultural Programs- "center for interactions"
- Hands on Math & Science Programs
- Art Programs
- Speakers
- Pub crawl
- Classes
- Robust programs for kids & teens (beyond storytime) (III)
- High value after school and weekend programs
- Programming for Seniors
- Tutoring/ Homework help (II)
- Dog reading

#### **Collaborative Partnerships**

- Partner with local businesses/ Community organizations for educational programs (III)
- Building may be too small to share with another entity
- Collaboration with schools, YMCA, Center for the Arts, Lakeshore Players, Historical Society
- Resource for business community

#### **Community outreach**

- Market programs that are offered; more publicity- grow public awareness of library services (III)
- Community outreach- Health care for the aging
- Library as community center
- Meet a social community's need for a safe place to connect with people
- Immediate info as you walk in, more than newsletter

#### **Technology**

- Computer space/ tutoring/ tech classes (IIII)
- Build technology into building

#### **Display/ Collections**

- Loans from special libraries
- Gallery space/ display ability
- Bigger collection
- Archive/ history room
- Expanded children's area with more interactive elements

#### **Friend's store/ space**

#### **Building Qualities**

- Natural light (II)
- Line of sight from wall to wall
- Open, comfortable spaces
- Increase square footage
- Flexibility (II)
- Accessibility
- Simple, clean, warm, welcoming, inviting (II)
- Public art that reflects the community
- Long term sustainability- green spaces (II)
- Acoustics (especially in the meeting room)

- Somewhat hip to attract the young; encourage young folks (II)
- Warm and cozy feeling, fireplace
- View of the lake
- Meeting space, small group spaces (III)
- Kitchen space for meeting room
- Drive through book drop (II)
- Grouped comfy seating/ cozy areas (II)
- Fireplace
- Gathering spaces encourage conversation/ discussion
- Possibly consider other sites downtown (& with community buy-in)
- Parking considerations
- Quiet reading/study areas (II)
- Transportation-easy access
- Building location should be downtown (II)
- Coffee shop/cart, a second group said don't need coffee

**Have to visualize plan for the long term**

