SJIL Facilities: Information Summary and FAQs

**INTRODUCTION: THE LIBRARY IN THE COMMUNITY**

The Library is a vital community resource

In 2014---

The Library was open seven days a week throughout the year for a total of 2,783 hours.

Over 5800 adults, teens, and children had current library cards.

The Library collection included 72,553 print and e-books.

Readers could enjoy current subscriptions to over 280 magazines, many sponsored by local residents.

The library catalog and 52 on-line databases were accessed over 43,069 times at the library or from computers at home and work through the Library website, [www.sjlib.org](http://www.sjlib.org).

Residents and visitors made 113,340 visits to our Library.

They checked out over 169,542 items from the Library, a 42% increase over 2005.

Approximately 2670 items were obtained for local borrowers from other libraries through the Inter Library Loan service.

The Library’s 21 public access computers were used over 21,000 times by residents and visitors.

Over 9,724 adults and almost 6,000 children attended 533 public programs and classes at the Library.

More than 520 adults and children participated in the Library’s Summer Reading Programs.

Meeting room reservations totaled more than 1,100.

Committed volunteers contributed over 3,000 hours of assistance to assure that the Library could provide diverse, high quality services to the community every day of the week.

The Library is special because…

It Is the only community agency or organization that serves every day of the week as a community information hub, an educational facilitator for all ages, a recreational resource for children, teens, families, and adults, and a gathering place for community discussion and learning,

It offers equal access to materials and services for all members of the community, serving both within the Library and in the broader community,

The Library contributes to community living by …

Actively seeking to partner with other community groups to provide a variety of activities spanning a broad range of subjects,

Maintaining up-to-date print and non-print resources to support individual and group interests and activities and facilitating access to materials from other libraries in the state, region, and around the country,

Employing a knowledgeable staff to aid in finding information and resources, to assist in developing skills to evaluate and use print and online resources effectively, to select, prepare, and manage materials in many media in the Library’s collection, and to maintain numerous computers and digital services,

Providing many varied programs throughout the year with special offerings tailored to the interests of children, teens, adults and families,

Serving the community both inside the Library and through outreach activities (e.g. visits to schools and preschools, reading at convalescent center and Senior Center, website),

Offering classes and opportunities for enhancing skills as varied as computer usage, cooking, and Spanish and English language fluency,

Providing a meeting place and forum for numerous community groups.

**THE SJIL BUILDING TODAY**

Size and Age

The Library District purchased the present site, a 4,500 square foot former restaurant in 1983 and installed the Library with minimal remodeling of the site. The first substantial remodel of the building was undertaken in 1988. In 1994 construction began on a library addition/renovation, which doubled the size of the facility, from 4,500 sq. ft. to approximately 9,600 square feet. The expanded library reopened in February 1995. Then, in 2005, the interior of the Library was remodeled to increase shelf space, enlarge the community room, add a small quiet public workspace, and improve space for children’s and teen’s collections. Providing expanded services and technology and more collection resources for a growing population during the past ten years has resulted in an aging facility and site now used to maximum capacity and in need of major infrastructure repair and replacement.

Infrastructure Issues

In response to a growing number of unexpected, expensive maintenance and repair projects and the need for planning major future facility expenditures, a thorough professional assessment of the physical plant was undertaken in 2015. These are just some of the major problems noted:

* Roof: the building has two types of roofing material (asphalt shingles and hot mop) that have required a number of patches over the years to deal with leaks. It has also been determined that there are damp wood termites in one section of the roof and elimination of these requires cutting out all of the rotted infested wood. Because of continued deterioration, the age of the roof, and evidence of further leaks whose source is difficult to ascertain, a total re-roof is needed. At current prices cost will be approximately $70,000-$75,000.
* Insulation: Two areas of the ceiling have been found to have little or no insulation resulting in high heat loss and energy costs. Repair expenditures for installation and drywall are estimated at approximately $5000. Relocating the heat source away from the ceiling may require a complete remodel of the entire space which would be a major expense.
* HVAC: while the current heat pump/air exchanger may last another 10-15 years, the heat pump is in need of some major repair. It is anticipated that $30,000 should be included in planning for maintenance of the current system within the next 10 years. In addition, the library is not currently considered a public "cooling" center although there is that perception of public buildings in the community, an issue that may need to be addressed in the near future. And the library does not have a generator for back up during power outages.
* Storm water system: Repeated efforts to alleviate basement flooding issues have not been successful despite sump pump installation, reworking of drainage around the building, etc. The Library’s storm water system is not tied into the Town’s system and may need to be entirely redone to stop flooding episodes. Approximate cost at least $100,000.
* Flooring: Much of the flooring in public and staff areas is in need of replacement. The estimated cost for this project including moving shelving is $30,000.
* Lighting: current lighting levels are inconsistent throughout the building and in some areas inadequate. To upgrade lighting and change from fluorescent to energy-saving bulbs would cost approximately $30,000.
* Automatic fire extinguisher system: Because of its age and size, the **Library** is not required to have an automatic system. This may be an increasing safety issue moving forward in an aging facility. The drop ceiling of the current building would make the cost of retrofitting an automatic system extremely high.

**LOOKING FORWARD: MAINTAINING THE CURRENT SJIL FACILITY**

Current Status

All spaces in library are being used capacity. The 2005 renovation focused on creating space for additional shelving and some work stations, but collection growth and public usage in the past 10 years have filled these areas. Not enough table space is available at times of peak usage, and most tables are crowded on aisles or close to desks where little quiet is available for concentrated work. Not enough comfortable seating in quiet areas is available for readers. Spaces are not available for the expansion of current technologies or the introduction of new technologies and services. Spaces for children’s materials and services and materials and programming for teens are no longer adequate, while these services have become increasingly popular in the community. Increased Library use has intensified the activities of the staff who have more and more diverse responsibilities but who are working in a small, extremely cramped, and inadequate space that negatively affects productivity and efficiency.

Expansion

The Library has reached the limit of possible expansion, and despite thoughtful reorganization of the spaces, the building is now fully occupied. The building infrastructure does not have the strength capacity for the addition of a second floor. The site is too small to allow further expansion of the building beyond its current footprint. Parking is already a major problem.

Looking forward

Because there is no room for growth in the current building, and because the building infrastructure and equipment are deteriorating, many difficult decisions about services and collection development will have to be made in the near future. As a tax- funded agency, the Library has obligations to meet the varying needs of our diverse community. And the community expects the Library to have both print materials and current technologies as well as an array of services for children, teens, and adults. Budget that must be devoted to maintaining the building restricts funds available for collections and services. Space needed for additional technologies must be carved out of space currently used for other materials and services which would have to be reduced or eliminated. Any additional materials and services will have to be balanced by reductions of materials and services that the community has benefited from and has reason to expect to be available. The library's value to the community as a hub of education, information, and recreation services and activities and community gathering will be negatively impacted.

**LOOKING FORWARD: BUILDING A NEW SJIL FACILITY**

Goal

Recognizing that the Island’s growing population needs increasing services in this period of rapidly expanding resources and technologies, the Library seeks to provide a facility with adequate space, organization, and infrastructure to support current and evolving community education, information, and recreation activities and opportunities for community dialog and sharing.

Why does the community need a new Library facility?

The current Library building

* Is being used to capacity; aisles are narrow and workspaces are crowded
* Requires constant and expensive repair and replacement of outdated, and poorly functioning infrastructure
* Has no space for additional books and other materials
* Cannot meet the demand for meeting room space for public functions nor to house all Library programs
* Is noisy because of necessary proximity of public service areas to work, study, and reading spaces
* Does not have the technical capacity to support all user and staff needs
* Has inadequate, often difficult-to-access parking
* Can not provide sufficient workstations and outlets in quiet areas for individuals using computers-- their own, or the Library’s
* Has limited comfortable seating for readers
* Does not have adequate space for children's materials and activities and teen users
* Has far too little space for staff to efficiently complete work assignments, process books and other media, prepare programs for children, teens, and adults

What benefits would the community gain from a new Library facility?

A new and expanded Library facility would have

* An energy efficient, well designed, functional, user-friendly building
* Minimal need for expensive building repairs and replacements, a concern both now and into the future for the current Library building
* The technology infrastructure to support the growing demand for public availability of computer use support services
* The ability to meet the needs of a growing population with expanded services both traditional and innovative
* Well-equipped meeting spaces, a recognized community need
* Ample, flexible spaces for children's, teen’s, and adult materials and activities, considered by the community to be core library services and severely restricted in the current building
* Enough space for seating in quiet areas for reading and study (not now available in the Library or elsewhere in the community, and a need frequently expressed by users)
* Adequate, safely accessible parking, an ongoing problem at the current facility
* Outdoor spaces for library programming and use; currently outdoor programming must be done off-site
* New technologies and services
* Ample staff workspace designed for efficiency and productivity

Financing a New Library Building

Annual Library Budget: This is an operating budget based on anticipated income primarily from a tax levy collected twice a year by the County. It does not include funding for large capital projects such as construction, site acquisition etc. necessary for the creation of a new Library facility. By law, this budget may increase by no more than 1% each year. This would continue to be true in a new facility. The Library does not have a reserve fund dedicated to capital projects.

Funding New Construction: In order to have funds for property acquisition, architect services, construction, equipment and furnishings for a new Library facility, resources would be sought from

* A bond issue that would be approved by the voters; for a bond to be passed, it is necessary that 40% of voters from the previous general election vote and that 60% of those individuals vote “yes” on the bond issue.
* Grants from government and private entities that fund Library construction projects. Orcas Island Public Library, for example, received a substantial government grant for its expansion through the efforts of State Senator Kevin Ranker.
* Private donations from major sponsors
* Contributions from community stakeholders and supporters

**SOME ANTICIPATED (AND SOME ALREADY RECEIVED) COMMUNITY QUESTIONS**

1. Who needs libraries in the age of the internet? *The SJIL is much more than a collection of books. It is a community center for learning, information gathering, and recreational activities for all ages, and a meeting place for community discussion and sharing of interests and concerns. Knowledgeable professional staff offer assistance in using technology, finding appropriate materials, researching questions, and identifying resources. Public computers and other technology are heavily used. Programs on a wide variety of subjects for adults, children, seniors, teens, and families are freely available and well attended. The Library is a vital community hub, frequented by Islanders of all ages.*
2. Why should I pay for the Library if I don’t even use it? *Investment in the Library is an investment in the community. It is an important education and information resource for all Islanders: adults, children, teens, seniors, and families. It is available to all, seven days a week, and offers a breadth of services on which many individuals and families heavily depend. A good Library is indicative of an involved, educated community, and is considered a positive factor in the determination of community and home valuation.*
3. Why do you need so many librarians? Use volunteers instead. *The Library is fortunate to have a large and dedicated cadre of volunteers who undertake an array of tasks including checking out materials, replacing returned materials in the collection, processing, mending, assisting with programs, and many others. These volunteers provide hours of service equal to over 5 full time staff, and allow the small professional staff to focus on those tasks requiring professional knowledge and experience: public information and technology assistance; program development and presentation for adults, families, teens, children; materials selection—books, audio materials, reference books and databases, children’s books, DVDs, periodicals, etc.; technology evaluation, purchase, and maintenance; interlibrary loan services; outreach services in the community; services to and with other community organizations and agencies and the schools.*
4. Why is the Library a sound investment of taxpayer money? *The Library is the hub of the community for equal and extensive access to information, education, and recreation materials and services. It provides programming and a forum for community discussion on subjects spanning the range of community interest and concerns. It offers knowledgeable, professional assistance to those undertaking personal, business, educational, or special programs, projects, or inquiries. Families rely on the Library for a range of services from books and other media for borrowing, to activities and programs for parents and children to share and enjoy. The Library offers its free services to those of all ages, interests, ethnic and religious backgrounds, political persuasions, and economic conditions without discrimination, seven days a week. When communities are evaluated for livability and appeal, a library is considered to be a valuable key resource. The SJIL offers an exceptional level of service reaching a broad spectrum of Islanders (over 113, 000 visits were made to the Library in 2014) and is a vital part of the community. In 2015 it received the American Library Association’s national award of Excellence in Small Pubic Library Service.*
5. Who decides how the money is used? *Every year the Library Director, in consultation with the staff, prepares a draft budget that is carefully reviewed and discussed by the Board of Trustees of the Library in a public meeting. The Board of Trustees approves the final budget and all major expenditures.*
6. Why not just add another story to the current building? *This building was not originally constructed with the possibility of adding a second story, and consequently the framing and foundation structure are not strong enough to support the weight of a second-story and all of the necessary shelving, furnishings, equipment, etc. Having a two-story building would also require the Library to have additional staff to be able to supervise both floors during opening hours.*

1. Will the operating budget have to increase in a new building? *Costs of constructing, furnishing, and equipping a new building would not come out of operating budget funds. The annual operating budget, limited by law to no more than a 1% increase per year, would continue to reflect costs conservatively balanced with current tax and other revenue.*
2. Will more staff be needed for service in a new building? *A new facility would continue to be operated with the current staff positions as funded through the annual operating budget.*
3. Why not just increase parking in the county lot? *Library patrons are only allowed to use the county parking lot after normal county work hours, as that is still an active facility. The Library is not a county agency or entitled to use county facilities except as authorized through a specific document of agreement.*
4. Why not just cut services? *The Library provides services based on community need and use. Services are reviewed often for usefulness and relevancy. Cutting services alone will not make available more space for study, computer use, small meetings, comfortable reading areas, collection shelving or much-needed staff work space.*
5. Why do we need such a big book collection when everyone uses the Internet and e-books? *Although digital resources are increasingly popular, many people still prefer to use traditional materials as noted in numerous studies. The Library receives many requests annually to purchase additional books for the collection. Because of limited space, frequent selection of materials to be removed from the library (despite their continued currency) must be undertaken if new books, audiobooks, and other resources are to be added.*
6. Costs for repair of the current building would be much less than for a new building. Why would we need an expensive new facility? *Repairs to the aging building would be ongoing even after major infrastructure replacements were done. Cost of these repairs must come out of the annual operating budget and could negatively affect funds available for services, collections, and staff. And current major problems of space inadequacy and parking will continue to become more acute as population and community use increase.*
7. What kinds of cuts would have to be made in services if the library stayed in its current facility? *Increasing maintenance and repair costs for the aging building may have a substantial impact on the yearly operating budget which is limited by law to an annual growth of no more than 1%. If more money is needed for the building, less money is available for materials (books, DVDs, audiobooks, databases and other digital resources and equipment) and programs for children and adults. Professional staff hours may need to be reduced, causing a lessening of productivity and activities necessary for public services such as interlibrary loan; the development, organization, and maintenance of the library's collections of books and other media, cooperation with other community organizations and agencies, and public services such as instruction and other assistance with new technologies, etc.*
8. How old is the current building? *The current building was originally constructed as a restaurant that opened in the 1970s. It was purchased by the Library and opened in 1983 and underwent a major renovation in 1988. An expanded and remodeled facility was open in 1995, and additional renovation was needed in 2005 to maximize usage of available space.*
9. Didn’t the library undergo a renovation not too long ago? *The most recent major renovation was undertaken in 2005 in an effort to create more shelf space, a small quiet workspace, and improved areas for children and teens. Continued maintenance work has been done, such as some flooring and furniture replacement needed as a result of heavy and constant use.*
10. Why do we need to have so many materials for kids? Can’t they just use the school libraries? *School libraries focus on offering materials closely tied to the school curricula, and they are available to young people only when schools are in session. The San Juan Island Library provides in a broad range of resources from picture books to materials of special interest to teens and families, and the Library is open seven days a week year-round. Materials and programming for children are among the Library’s most popular offerings.*
11. What would be gained by having a new facility? *A new facility would include space for quiet reading and study areas. It would have children's and teen areas both larger and more separated from the busy general public spaces. It would have small meeting spaces as well as a larger meeting room available to community groups. Better and more parking would be available. Facilities for computer use, both Library and personal, would be more extensive. Comfortable soft seating for reading would be available throughout the building. More space would be available for collections and for expansion and diversification of services as community needs evolve. Staff workspaces would be expanded resulting in better efficiency and productivity.*
12. How would the community pay for a new building? *Building a new library would require the community to pass a bond issue to cover a major portion of the construction and equipment costs. Additional funds would be provided by grants and community donations both large and small. The Library would undertake a major campaign of public information to encourage individual and family sponsorship in support of the library with appropriate recognition of each contribution.*
13. Can a new building be paid for out of the annual budget? *No; the annual budget covers the cost of one year's operation of the Library including purchases of books and digital materials and other media, personnel costs, building and grounds upkeep and maintenance, computer equipment, insurance, etc. It does not include major capital projects funding.*
14. How much would a new building cost?
15. How much would our taxes go up?