



Community Services Department • Library Services Division



# ***Moving Ahead*** **St. John's Library Project**

# ***Moving Ahead***

## **St. John's Library Project**

Prepared by the St. John's Library Task Force  
and  
Library Services Division  
Community Services Department  
City of Winnipeg

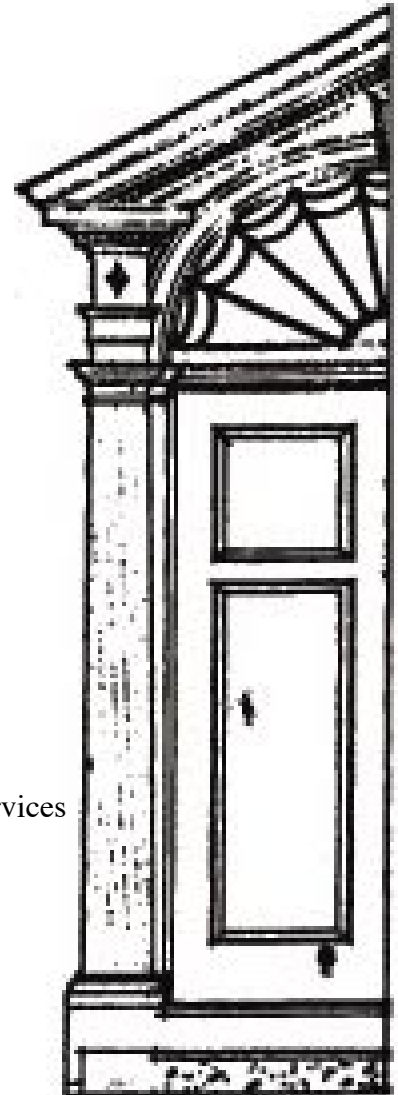
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## INTRODUCTION

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The St. John's Library opened its doors in 1915 as the first branch of the Winnipeg Public Library. The surrounding neighbourhoods grew rapidly with the arrival of immigrants to Winnipeg and the St. John's branch played a pivotal role in satisfying the newcomers thirst for knowledge and their desire to understand their new country. This dynamic role continued well into the twentieth century and many citizens of Winnipeg have fond memories of how St. John's Library served their needs.

The library continues to be highly valued by the area residents and is viewed as an icon in the community. However, during the past several years, statistical data has indicated that use of St. John's Library is declining. The "provision of quality, responsive and innovative services which foster the individual pursuit of knowledge and enhance the cultural, economic and intellectual vitality of the community" is fundamental to the delivery of Library Services. There was a growing recognition that the branch was being challenged to provide services and programs that would be more responsive to local needs.

*"Our library is old and could use some love and attention".*

• **Public Comment**

In response to this challenge, Library Services decided to conduct a community consultation initiative. This project was launched in May 2003 and is called ***Moving Ahead St. John's Library Project***. The goal of the ***Moving Ahead Project*** is to involve St. John's Library area residents to work on producing a strategic plan that includes short and long term projects, including partnership opportunities that will set a new direction for the branch. The projects outlined in this document are intended to suggest new and innovative ways for the Library to provide more responsive services and programs that will better serve this diverse community.

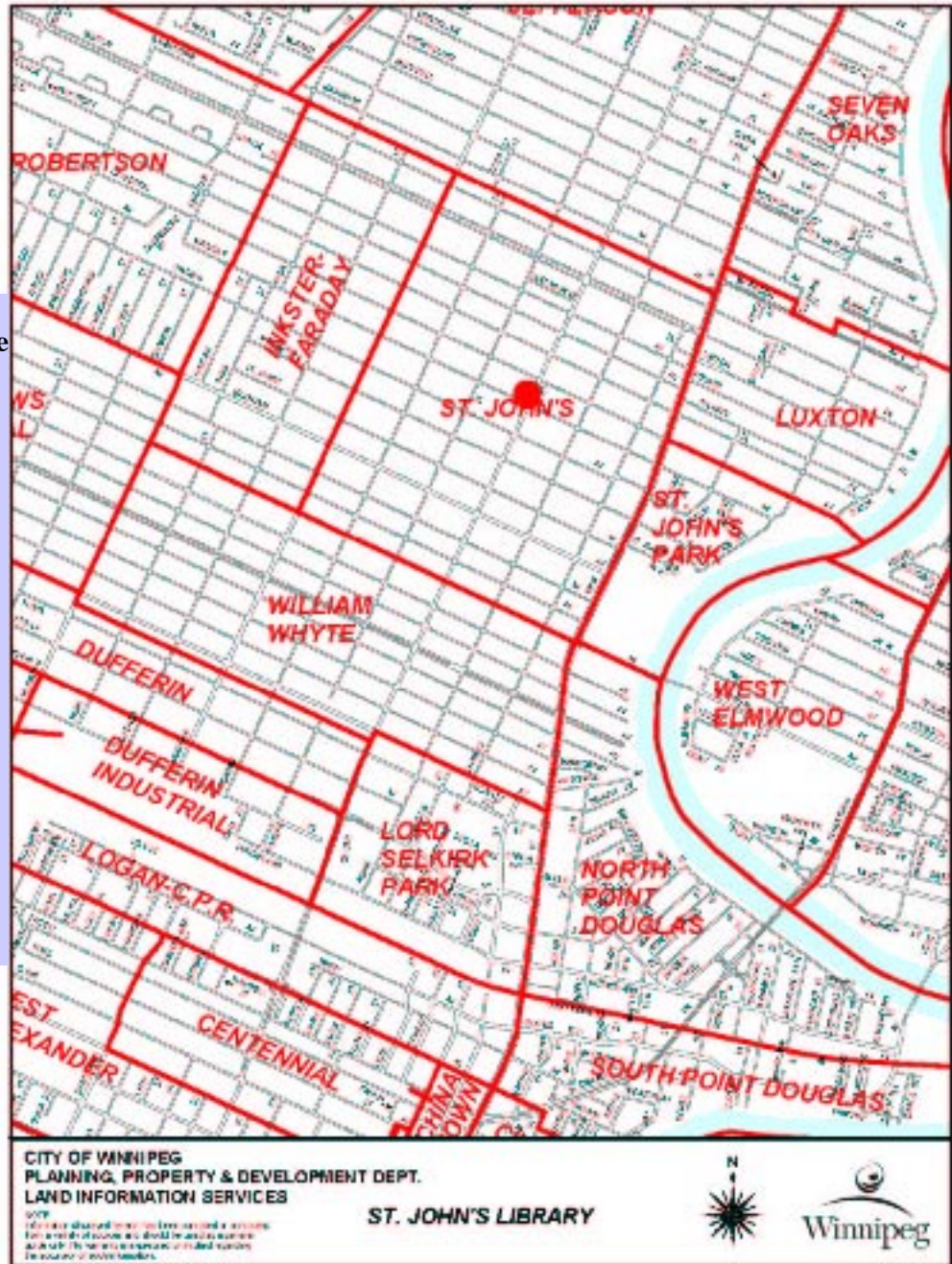
This community based project also supports the policy direction provided by ***Plan Winnipeg Vision 2020*** for the Library to "support neighborhood revitalization" and "commit to citizen engagement". ***Plan Winnipeg*** addresses the need for the Library to place emphasis on "addressing the needs of targeted communities including the multicultural community, people in need of enhanced literacy and English-as-a-Second language skills, Aboriginal community..." and "acquire materials to ensure collections reflect community needs".

# MAP OF ST. JOHN'S LIBRARY CATCHMENT AREA

The catchment area for the St. John's Branch includes the following 9 neighbourhoods:

- Dufferin\*
- Dufferin Industrial\*
- Inkster Faraday
- Lord Selkirk Park\*
- Luxton
- North Point Douglas\*
- St. John's\*
- St. John's Park
- William Whyte\*

\* Major Improvement Areas (see page 5)



## ST. JOHN'S LIBRARY COMMUNITY

The majority of St. John's Library patrons reside in the area bounded by the CPR tracks on the south, the Red River to the east, Carruthers Avenue to the north, and Arlington Street to the west (see map). All nine neighbourhoods located within these boundaries are characterized in **Plan Winnipeg 2020 Vision** (see Policy Plate D) as targeted high needs areas:

*"It's nice to come study, work and St. John's mostly has the right books."*

• **Public Comment**

**\* Major Improvement Areas:**

Older areas that have experienced significant decline to the point where housing and neighborhood infrastructure require complete renewal (Dufferin, Dufferin Industrial, Lord Selkirk Park, North Point Douglas, St. John's, and William Whyte).

**Rehabilitation Areas:**

Areas where decline is having a spillover effect to the extent that it is beginning to impact the overall stability of the neighborhood. Some intervention would be required in order to stimulate private reinvestment and improve infrastructure (Inkster Faraday, Luxton, and St. John's Park).

The Library Services Division is committed to support neighbourhood revitalization efforts that would address the physical, social, and economic needs of these communities in targeted high needs neighbourhoods and can contribute directly to enhancing the quality of life within these high needs neighbourhoods.

The following demographic data is a compilation of the City of Winnipeg Neighbourhood Profiles and Statistics Canada: 2001.

**TABLE 1  
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT LEVELS: 2001**

Educational Attainment Levels:2001	Catchment Area		Winnipeg	
	Population	Percentage	Population	Percentage
Total population 20 years and over	17790		453285	
Highest level of schooling, less than grade 9	2980	17%	35210	8%
Grades 9 -12 - Without secondary certificate	5760	32%	92375	20%
Grades 9 -12 - With secondary certificate	1985	11%	53040	12%
Trades certificate or diploma	2060	12%	50290	11%
Non-university-without certificate or diploma	1125	6%	27610	6%
Non-university-with certificate or diploma	1720	10%	68615	15%
University - Without degree	905	5%	43270	10%
University - With degree	1255	7%	82875	18%

Source: City of Winnipeg Neighbourhood Profiles/Statistics Canada:2001

**TABLE 2  
VISIBLE MINORITIES**

<b>Visible Minorities: 2001</b>	<b>St. John's Library Catchment Area</b>		<b>City</b>	
Black	550	13%	11275	14%
South Asian	125	3%	12165	15%
Chinese	260	6%	10890	13%
Korean	35	1%	945	1%
Japanese	0	0%	1555	2%
Southeast Asian	325	8%	5030	6%
Filipino	2450	58%	30000	37%
Arab	20	1%	1060	1%
West Asian	10	1%	820	1%
Latin American	310	7%	4500	6%
Visible Minority	50	1%	1960	2%
Multiple Visible Minority	60	1%	1710	2%
<b>Total Visible Minorities</b>	<b>4195</b>		<b>81910</b>	

Source: City of Winnipeg Neighbourhood Profiles/Statistics Canada:2001

<b>Aboriginal Origin: 2001</b>	<b>St. John's Library Catchment Area</b>		<b>City</b>	
Métis and non-aboriginal origins	1135	15%	19275	33%
North American Indian single origin	3305	42%	15170	26%
North American Indian and non-aboriginal origins	1480	19%	14585	25%
Métis single origin	1480	19%	7045	12%
Inuit and non-aboriginal origins	0	0%	125	0%
Inuit single origin	0	0%	110	0%
Other Aboriginal Multiple origins	415	5%	2465	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7815</b>		<b>58775</b>	

Source: City of Winnipeg Neighbourhood Profiles/Statistics Canada:2001

<b>2001</b>	<b>St. John's Library Catchment Area</b>		<b>City</b>	
Aboriginal Origin	7815	30%	58775	9.60%
Total Population	26040	100%	610440	100%

Source: City of Winnipeg Neighbourhood Profiles/Statistics Canada:2001

**TABLE 3  
POPULATION CHARTS: 1996 & 2001**

<b>Population By Age Group: 1996 Census*</b>	<b>St. John's Library Catchment Area</b>		<b>City</b>	
0-14	6840	25%	123165	21%
15-24	3530	13%	84235	14%
25-54	11435	42%	275200	44%
55+	5425	20%	129025	21%
<b>Total</b>	<b>27230</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>611625</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Excludes those individuals residing in institutions

Source: City of Winnipeg Neighbourhood Profiles/Statistics Canada:1996

<b>Population By Age Group: 2001 Census*</b>	<b>St. John's Library Catchment Area</b>		<b>City</b>	
0-14	6390	25%	116725	19%
15-24	3505	13%	84490	14%
25-54	11060	42%	274175	45%
55+	5085	20%	135050	22%
<b>Total</b>	<b>26040</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>610440</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Excludes those individuals residing in institutions

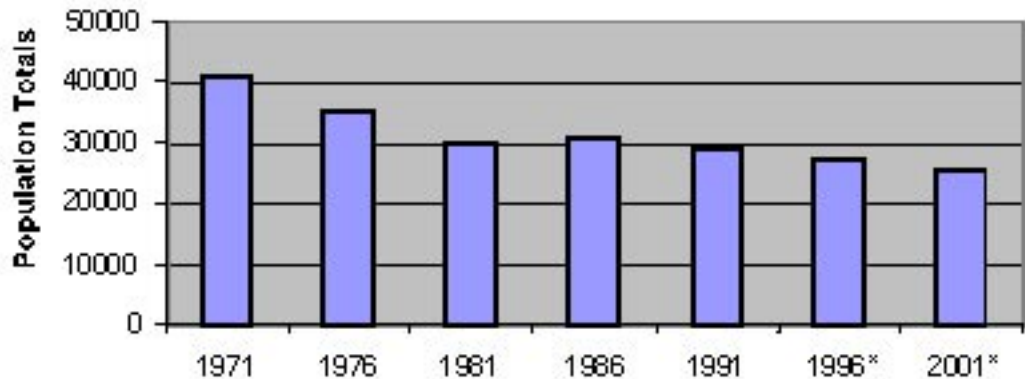
Source: City of Winnipeg Neighbourhood Profiles/Statistics Canada:2001

**TABLE 4  
CENSUS FAMILIES: 2001**

<b>Total Number of Census Families by Type: 2001</b>	<b>St. John's Library Catchment Area</b>		<b>City</b>	
Total number of census families	6425		167230	
Total married and common-law families	4060	63%	136155	81%
Without children at home	1650		59685	
With children at home	2300		76470	
Total lone-parent families	2345	37%	31075	19%
Male parent	495		5260	
Female parent	1850		25815	

Source: City of Winnipeg Neighbourhood Profiles/Statistics Canada:2001

**TABLE 5**  
**ST. JOHN'S LIBRARY CATCHMENT AREA**  
**POPULATION CHANGE: 1971-2001**



\* Excludes those individuals residing in institutions

Source: City of Winnipeg Neighbourhood Profiles/Statistics Canada: 2001

**Notes to the data in the tables/charts:**

The sources for the data included in the tables are from the City of Winnipeg Neighbourhood Profiles; the Community Data Network, and Statistics Canada.

Some of the definitions for the 2001 Census have changed (for example, “common-law” now includes same-sex marriages). Please refer to the definitions posted on the City of Winnipeg Neighbourhood Profiles web-site or go to the Statistics Canada 2001 Census Dictionary site for more information.

Population Data for 1996 and 2001 is based upon the non-institutional population, which excludes people living in hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, etc.

Variances in the data may be due to random rounding or area suppression by Statistics Canada.

**Random Rounding:**

A 20% sample was used to compile statistics. One in five households were surveyed and the results were then multiplied to obtain representative data for the whole community. Statistics Canada rounds numbers over ten to the nearest five, which may cause some totals to be off by five, ten or more. Numbers less than ten are rounded to zero or ten.

**Area suppression:**

Has been adopted to further protect the confidentiality of individual responses. Area suppression is the deletion of all characteristic data for geographic areas with populations below a specified size. The extent to which data are suppressed depends upon the following factors:

- If the data are tabulated from the 100% database, they are suppressed if the total population in the area is less than 40.
- If the data are tabulated from the 20% sample database, they are suppressed if the total non-institutional population in the area from either the 100% or 20% database is less than 40.

# THE PROCESS

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## Library Steering Committee

In February 2003, the Library Services Division of Community Services Department established a Library Steering Committee to lead the project over the next 18 months. This working committee was composed of several library staff members including the Branch Head for the St. John's Library and the Community Resources Coordinator (CRC) for the St John's area. Community Services Department provided several other key support staff and resources from various divisions including Strategic and Information Systems Services, Community Resource, Protection and Safety Services and Recreation Services. Members of the Library Steering Committee are:

*Patti Baker*, Community Resource Coordinator, Point Douglas  
*Carol Mahé*, Administrative Coordinator, Community Based Library Services  
*Angela Mehmel*, Administrative Coordinator, Outreach Services  
*Susan Palmer*, Branch Head, St. John's Library  
*Shelley Saunders*, Administrative Coordinator, Adult Programming  
*Olivia Sigfusson*, Outreach Librarian

*"This report, through its recommendations and insights, lays the foundation for the future development of the St. John's Library."*

• **Rick Walker,**  
Manager of  
Winnipeg Public  
Library

## Public Consultation

It was agreed that all communications about this project include the following key messages:

- There are no plans to close the St John's Library, but rather improve it.
- There are no plans to move the library from its present location.
- There are limited funds available for this project.

The project was launched at a public community meeting held at St. John's Library in May 2003. Over 100 invitations were sent to residents, local community groups and politicians and a general invitational ad was placed in the North End Times. Many people (40+) attended including area residents and representatives from local organizations and education institutions. The area's local MLA, the Honourable Gord Mackintosh was also in attendance. After listening to an overview of the project plan, the audience broke into smaller groups to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the St. John's Library. The smaller groups were also asked to provide suggestions of new programs and services that could help transform the branch to become more responsive to community. All of this feedback was collected and became part of the community input that would be used

later in the process - see Appendix A: *S.W.O.T. Exercise-Results of Public Input Meeting May 22, 2003.*

Part of the ***Moving Ahead Project*** was to launch a community task force composed of local area residents to help the Library work on creating a plan based on community input. People living and/or working in the St. John's area were invited to volunteer to become part of this working group.

*"I think that St. John's is a very cool place."*

• **Public Comment**

Over the summer months, the Library Steering Committee continued to collect community input in a variety of ways including the use focus groups. Demographic data was collected and analyzed. Library staff worked on building the community network contacts by making personal visits to the organizations in the community to inform them of the ***Moving Ahead Project*** and encourage them to get involved. A community bulletin board was placed in the public area of the St. John's Library to be used to keep the community informed about the progress of the project and to encourage further comments and suggestions from the citizens. This bulletin board will continue to serve as a community feedback resource for the library. A "Public Comments" form was created and distributed in the library and around the community so that people could either post their comments on the library bulletin board or place it in the suggestion box that was located nearby.

An overview of the project was presented to the Director of the Community Services Department, Ursula Stelman and to the local City Councillor Harry Lazerenko for their input and approval.

*"Get new books, make it bigger and get more computers."*

• **Public Comment**

A meeting was held for the St. John's Library staff members to solicit their opinions and ideas. This provided an opportunity to review the project plan with them so they would be knowledgeable and confident in speaking about the project over the coming months to the general public. In order to collect information on who was currently using the St. John's library, staff began collecting postal code information of registered library card holders who either checked out material or booked a library computer.

With help from the Strategic and Information Systems Division of Community Services Department, three focus groups were conducted in June. Two groups were composed of non-users of the library. They were recruited at a neighborhood grocery store parking lot. Their comments and suggestions were very helpful in gaining a better understanding of the barriers that prevented them from using the library. The third focus group was intended for the local organizations especially those involved in education - see Appendix B: *Focus Group Report on the City of Winnipeg St. John's Library Branch.*

The most common suggestions were:

*"I wish overdue fines were not so heavy-10 cents-even free!"*

• **Public Comment**

- More advertising is needed to let the residents know what the library has to offer.
- Change the look of the library to enhance its visibility in the community, make the front brighter, less drab, more signage, more user friendly.
- Increase the selection of reading material and number of books.
- Change the policies on “fines” especially for children.
- Consider adding a “job kiosk”.
- Increase programs and material for the community’s many diverse cultural groups.

### **St. John’s Library Task Force**

In the fall of 2003, the St. John’s Library Task Force was launched. A group of 8 area residents was appointed for a one-year term. The members are:

*Jacqueline Baskier*

*Carolyn Buffie*

*Dina DelaRonde*

*Patti Germann*

*Nancy McKinnon*

*Corie Seburn*

*Nathan T. Wild*

*Julie Zatorsky*

Their role was to advise and make recommendations to the Library Steering Committee on traditional and non-traditional library services, programs and collections. Their purpose was to develop a plan of action based on community consultation and data gathering and analysis for improving the services and usage of the St. John’s Library. This strategic plan would be outlined in the ***Moving Ahead St. John’s Library Project*** final report.

Parameters of the St. John’s Library Task Force were set out as follows:

- Write “***Moving Ahead***”, a Strategic Plan that includes short and long term projects that include partnering opportunities.
- Library Steering Committee will assess and implement recommendations on an ongoing basis.
- Work within the existing Library budget.
- Work within existing policy framework and Library procedures.

Regular meetings of the Task Force were held over the course of the next year to discuss and formulate ideas on how to attract and keep the community coming to visit the Library. Several members of the Library’s Steering Committee attended

the meetings and acted as facilitators. The project was strengthened by the fact that all of the Task Force members currently live or work in the immediate St. John's area.

At the first few meetings, the Task Force members oriented themselves by reviewing the collection of data provided by the Library Steering Committee. This included an overview of the census data for the St. John's area, a report by postal code of who currently uses the branch and a tour of the branch.

As the Task Force began to review the data, the members concluded there were two important guiding principles to keep in mind:

*"I think you should have more computers and not allow children to log-on all day because others need the computers for school work."*

• **Public Comment**

***The Library is a Public space.***

- The public library remains one of the few meeting places in the community that is free to all people. Participation at your neighbourhood library builds a sense of belonging and this space can be viewed as the "living room of the community".

***The Library is a centre for learning and literacy.***

- One of the public library's major purposes is to provide information resources that offers reading and learning material for all ages and competencies. The promotion of literacy at the library goes beyond print material and requires a multi-faceted approach that is appropriate for the ever changing community.

As part of the orientation process, a meeting was devoted to "map out" all of the landmarks of the St. John's area including schools, literacy centers, daycares, senior's residences, etc. This large area map was helpful to the Task Force members to have a visual picture of where the Library was located in the context of other organizations that exist within the St. John's Community. It was also useful in identifying new and potential partners.



*Task Force members seated L to R: Julie Zatorsky, Corie Seburn, Nancy McKinnon, Jacqueline Baskier*

The next step for the Task Force was to review all of the suggestions and ideas that had been collected from the public over the previous months. A Strategic Planning Model process was used to assist the group during this phase. Members began by sifting through the many ideas and suggestions and began to group “like” ideas together. These groupings eventually were distilled into five issues, namely: programs and services; children and youth; collections; the building and marketing.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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Using the Strategic Planning Model, the Task Force carefully reviewed each of the five issues and identified a number of goals that outlined specific objectives, potential projects and potential partners that would improve services at St. John's Library.

This process was greatly enhanced by the community knowledge and diversity of the Task Force members, especially in identifying community organizations and groups that could be potential partners in assisting the library to deliver the programs and initiatives identified in *See Appendix C: Improve Services at St. John's Library*. Here are some highlights of the recommendations based on the five issues:

*"I think they need more kids programs at this library."*

• **Public Comment**

### **Programs and Services**

Expand programs and services to attract more non-traditional users. The St. John's Library catchment area has a relatively high rate of unemployment and a rate of 17% of citizens over the age of 20 with less than Grade 9. More programs and services need to be developed to respond to a variety of users that would be inclusive and inviting that builds on the idea of the library being a place where you can belong and feel respected.

Improve customer service by eliminating the financial barriers in using the library. Community research indicates there are potential library users, children and adults, living in the area that cannot borrow items from the library due to outstanding fines and fees that have accumulated on their membership card. In many instances, the fees are minimal however the outstanding balance on their record keeps them from entering the library. It is recommended the Library consider new and innovative ways to help decrease this barrier, especially for children.

Provide more computers for public use at the library to increase the community's knowledge in using new technology that many households in the area cannot afford.

There is a high incidence of low income families and a wide variety of cultural groups, especially Aboriginal and Filipino residents living in the area. Library staff should attend cultural awareness and sensitivity training since staff members must understand and embrace the diversity of the community.

The best way to understand the community is to be active in the community.

*"I think the staff at St. John's are wonderful and the service is prompt and very helpful."*

• **Public Comment**

Branch staff should attend and participate at local community meetings and events to become more knowledgeable about active groups in the area. This provides an opportunity for staff to promote the library's programs and encourage the use of the library's many resources. Library staff will be better informed to be able to plan library programs and services that are more responsive to community needs. Area residents, organizations and groups need to see how the library fits in as part of a larger network of resources.

### **Children and Youth**

Develop new and innovative programs for all age groups of youth including pre-schoolers, school aged children and teens - particularly programs that increase opportunities for reading and writing in a fun and creative way. Get parents involved by offering more family programs by either planning programs that involve the whole family or by offering separate programs (i.e. run one program of interest to parents and offer a second program for children at the same time).

Continue to operate and improve the Community Student Resource Centre (Homework Club) in partnership with the St. John's High School, the Parent Council of St. John's High School and Ndiniwe.

Ensure the Library is a warm and friendly space for all children, teens and their parents.

### **Collections**

The library should continue to serve and improve services to current users. This branch has served the area for many decades and there continues to be a number of loyal users who regularly visit the branch to borrow reading material and access information services.

Libraries have the potential to empower people. Collections at the branch need to be further enhanced to support adult literacy learners and job seekers.

### **Building**

The Library needs to be seen as a welcoming place in the community and although St. John's Library is an historic building, it has retained an "institutional" look that is uninviting to many area residents. The building is not accessible in many ways and it is recommended that a building review be conducted.

Since one of the guiding principles is *the library is a public place* in the community, improvements and upgrades need to be made to the public use program space in the lower level to create a multi-purpose space that is accessible and appropriate for all ages.

## Marketing

A marketing plan is needed to help raise the profile of St. John's Library within the catchment area. The community research indicates a lack of awareness among many area residents and organizations of what the library has to offer. At a recent community network meeting hosted by the library, several people commented they had never visited the library before and were not aware of the many resources the library had to offer them. Everyone agreed they would return and bring their families.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

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Over the past year, several new programs and services have been initiated in response to suggestions from the community and recommendations of the Task Force. A major accomplishment has been the establishment of the **St. John's Community Student Resource Center** that now operates in the library's program room twice a week during the school year. This homework room is the result of a successful partnership initially started by the St. John's Task Force that includes St. John's High School, the Parent Council of the school and Ndinawe, a Youth Resource Centre located on Selkirk Ave.

*"I simply wanted to say thank you for the Student Resource Centre and I hope this will be one of your many great achievements."*

• **Public Comment**

Other initiatives that have occurred are the introduction of the **Express Best Sellers** service that ensures popular library titles are prominently displayed in the branch. These items have a shorter loan period thereby ensuring more regular library users have bright, new titles more readily available to borrow.

An evening children's Storytime was introduced in the spring this year. This program broke away from the traditional library storytime sessions by encouraging all members of the family to come to the program.

Branch staff have attended and participated in several outreach community events including the community's annual Picnic in the Park held at St. John's Park and the annual fall BBQ held at St. John's High School.

The Community Resource Coordinator assisted the branch in hosting a community network meeting to further discuss what more can be done to help raise the

education and literacy levels in the community. This network has agreed that by keeping everyone better informed of local programs and new initiatives and working together will make a positive change for the community.

Circulation at the branch has begun to increase. The Library Steering Committee continues to evaluate and assess this process.

## **CONCLUSION**

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**F**inally the Task Force would like to commend the Library Services Division for embarking on this project of community consultation. Members of the St. John's Task Force acknowledges this community is in constant evolution and would strongly encourage the library to continue an active dialogue with area residents and organizations to work together to create a library that seeks to offer a variety of programs and services that are relevant and responsive to the changing needs of the community.

The St. John's Library Task Force now looks to the Library Services Division to review the recommendations contained in this report and continue to implement changes that will ensure that St. John's Library will thrive and grow in this next century as it has done so in the past 90 years.

# APPENDIX A

## RESULTS OF PUBLIC INPUT MEETING OF MAY 22, 2003 S.W.O.T. EXERCISE

### STRENGTHS

- Terrific staff.
  - Continuity of staff.
  - Knowing the folks at the library (i.e. librarian, assistant, etc.) as part of the community.
- Availability of material.
- Good location.
  - Center of area.
  - Within walking distance for many people.
  - Next to major high school.
  - On busy street.
  - Fixture in community.
- Multi-purpose room – could be utilized by community groups more.
- Community itself.
  - Creativity, potential.
- Opportunities for neighbourhood people to learn and to grow through literature.
- Good bus connection.
  - Close to Cathedral bus – handy for me.
  - Public transportation.
  - Schedules available.
- Good street parking.
- Community outreach good (e.g. Turtle Island Neighbourhood Centre).
- Place for children/youth in community to grow.
- Community strength is diversity.
- Active / vibrant children live in community.
- Strong Parent Council groups in community (could partner with library).
- Library reaches out to schools / book buddy program.
- Environment.
- Wonderfully diversified community – whether it be in ethnicity/culture, varied income groups.
- Able to order books if not here.
- Have many of the materials we need (computers, books, videos, and assistance from references).
- Inter-library loans.
- Lots of old books.
- Lots of Canadian publishers.
- Right number of books to look at shelves.
- Good selection and not too many to overwhelm you with choice.

- Schools visit library, library staff visit schools.
- Appeals to wide range of age groups.
- The use of computers for those who can't afford them at home.
- Used to have a Bookmobile – should use again.
- In addition to school life, children have this place as another aspect for growth in their lives.
- Many doctors, lawyers and politicians have used library in past.
- Historic building/architecture of library.
  - Beautiful.
  - Should be promoted more.
  - Interior design/furniture.
  - A reflection of history of the neighbourhood.
- Welcoming, peaceful atmosphere.
- Canadiana stickers.
- Community notice board and information.
- Star Trek collection.
- Local Manitoba history collection.
- Good meeting space – very “community friendly”.
- The community / library is rich in history.
- Enthusiastic volunteers in the area which could be used to improve services.

## WEAKNESSES

- Collection development based on and responsive to demand/usage.
- Limited hours of operation - not enough hours open.
  - Closed too early on Friday, prefer later hours on Friday evening (until 6:00 pm).
  - Wednesday a.m. & evening.
  - Sundays.
  - Saturdays in summer.
  - Irregular schedule.
  - No noon hour service.
  - Never open when I need it to be.
- Physical arrangement of library is intimidating / unwelcoming (counter is first thing one sees rather than books or chairs).
- Staff behind a barricade.
- Shelves too high.
- Glare from windows - makes it difficult to read the titles on the top shelves.
- Children's area promotes noise in library (i.e. location and / or physical arrangement).
  - Soundproofing on walls needed.
  - Partitions – child friendly.
- Vibrant children's programming needed.
- School visits should be at beginning of school year rather than end of year.

- Crafts as part of children’s Storytimes.
- Not coming out to schools enough.
- Bathroom key is a barrier.
- Building is not accessible for disabled, people with mobility limitations.
- Satellite collection at Turtle Island Neighbourhood Centre needs to be promoted more.
- Cheaper to buy books than ride the bus to get to a library (for a family).
- Need a bigger community notice board and to relocate it away from doors to allow more browsing.
- Chairs – need more cushions.
- Need more marketing of services / programs.
- Build a volunteer base for various projects.
- Could do with more books.
- Too few staff.
- Extended loan period.
- Limit of material (too high).
- Video fines / fees.
- No access for people with disabilities.
- Cost of replacement of material.
- Collection size (too small).
- Segmented communities difficult to serve.
- Security gates not in place.
- Lack of respect for children.
- Book chute not open.
- Too many computers.
- Geographic limitations – in this community people don’t go out of geographic “boxes” (i.e. people won’t cross McGregor for services, therefore need to do some connections with “satellites” – like Strathcona School).
- Not enough Outreach to communities without libraries.
- Not a large volunteer base to assist with events.
- Older buildings have maintenance issues / upgrades difficult.
- Not a large space for collections.
- Heavy traffic.
- Sometimes lack of respect to children from neighbourhood from staff.
- Need security system to check out books to ensure books not going missing.
- Have programs/materials to reach Aboriginal and Filipino community groups.
- Need more “How-to” books to improve life styles.

**OPPORTUNITIES**

- Involve parents/high school students in bringing kids to library.
- Children could be brought to the library for borrowing as part of their regular school curriculum.
- High school students doing volunteer / course credit work in library.

- Van service to schools.
- More family programming.
- Programs for children and youth.
- More Storytimes – parent & child together.
- Explore Sunday hours.
- Lengthen hours of operation - would be nice if it was open Wednesday and Friday evening in the summer.
- Suggestion box – how managed.
- Networking with schools more / school libraries.
- School library links.
- Have an overdue fines Amnesty Day every few months for patrons, since this is an economically challenged community.
- Meet needs of Aboriginal community and of multicultural communities i.e. Filipino.
- Enhance video collection.
- Rotate collection.
- More CD-ROM on computers.
- Re-allocate resource \$.
- More community involvement in collection development.
- Emphasize “free” source of information / program.
- Promote services more.
- Need to establish another way of reaching people to inform them of events at the library. Perhaps finding a Friend of the Library in each city block that would distribute leaflets as needed. (I would certainly be willing to do this.)
- Get the word out that it is a great place to get information, etc.
- Partnering with other agencies / groups / schools.
- Promote literacy.
- Invite groups like Brownies or Scouts to meet here.
- Outreach to seniors.
- Intergenerational partnerships/programs.
- Literacy programs for adults.
- Computer literacy.
- Free advertising with Community Connections.
- Is free source of recreation.
- Space for community to conduct meetings.
- Use of program room for community.
- Need better circulation over a few months time.
- More music / musicians for kids, connecting to book themes.
- Homework assistance.
- Reading clubs.
- Writer’s club.
- Larger magazine collections.
- Local author / celebrity visits.

- Build a volunteer base.
- Family/community group concerts.
- Newer collections.
- Meeting place for artists / groups.
- Advertise upcoming events in library programming.
- Do an interview sampling to gather information on what people want in their local library.
- Develop a local children's acting group.
- Kids are often at loose ends in this community – that's not a strength but could be capitalized upon: vibrant children's programming needed and could be really well attended.
- Bookmobiles; use to go to schools after hours.
- Seek out local adults / seniors to help students read.
- Develop a mother-child drop-in where children can play at books, games and other kinds of reading/ language oriented programming, while mother interact.
- Get the fireplaces going in winter and offer free hot chocolate with reading by invited guests and make these guests people that will bring out families / parents (i.e. sports or music celebrities, Aboriginal leaders, politicians, TV personalities, actors, etc.).
- Establish a local coffee shop in the library as a kind of on-going fundraiser.
- Expand/enrich video library by revolving the videos among libraries, otherwise very little selection at a small branch like St. John's.
- More family concerts / music in library.
- More kids & youth programming & mom and kid stuff.

## THREATS

- TV and other sources of entertainment.
- Closure.
- User fees.
- Area crime.
- Declining use.
- Less youth using libraries.
- Space is limited.
- Disabled access is a problem.
- Bus fares too high.
- Attitudes of staff – anti-child, classist. Something desperately needs to be done about this or all the programs and services won't matter!
- Loss of Bookmates.
- How to be culturally sensitive (i.e. not the place to wear a suit for a presentation).
- Enough staff to program events.
- Bus fare is cheaper than books.

## APPENDIX B

# Focus Group Report on the City of Winnipeg St. John's Library Branch

**Submitted to:** The Library Branch Management Group

**Submitted by:** Robert Douglas  
Gary Swanson  
Karen DelaRonde  
Bill Coble

**Date:** June 26, 2003

**Summary Report  
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# **I INTRODUCTION**

## **BACKGROUND**

This report was prepared for the City of Winnipeg's Library Branch, a division of the Community Services Department. This division has responsibility to provide a public service that provides access to information through library materials, services and programs. The goal of the focus groups was to involve the community in developing a plan of action for improving services and usage of the St John's Branch Library.

Robert Douglas, Bill Coble, Gary Swanson and Karen DeLaRonde coordinated the focus group process.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the focus groups were to provide the City of Winnipeg Library Branch with feedback on improving services and usage of the St John's Branch Library. The library wanted to solicit ideas and information from community residents and organizations on how to improve services and programs at the St John's Library.

A total of four groups were to be conducted. However due to a limited response, only three groups were filled. Participants for two groups were selected randomly from patrons of three area grocery stores and the third group was filled from a library database of local/ area organizations.

It was anticipated that the groups would provide feedback from users and non-users of the library.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Focus Groups as Data Collection Method**

Focus groups were the selected methodology as it provided an opportunity to get feedback from area residents as well as from area organizations, such as daycares, schools and resident association groups. Focus groups are a form of qualitative research with its main advantage of allowing for and providing a depth of response that will lead to better understanding.

### **Sample / Recruiting**

Participants for the focus group were **randomly** selected by two means. First, potential participants

were approached at three locations that area residents would frequent. They were the Safeway at Mountain and McGregor, and Main and Inkster and the Econmart at Main and Inkster. Participants were randomly approached and asked if they would be willing to participate in a focus group. If the individual agreed to participate a confirmation letter was given, providing the details in writing on the focus group time and location. A final phone call was made one to two days before the session as a final reminder. A total of 60 people were approached, of which 20 agreed to participate.

Second, a database of organizations in the St John's library area supplied by the Libraries Branch was utilized. All contacts on the list were sent a letter (see appendix) asking if a member of their organization could attend a session. One hundred and fifty five organizations were sent letters and 17 responded. Of the 17, only 13 were able to attend.

The focus groups were held on June 16<sup>th</sup>, 6:00pm to 7:30 pm, and June 17<sup>th</sup> 4:00 to 5:30 and 6:00 to 7:30 pm, at St John's Branch Library. This location was chosen, as it is a City of Winnipeg building, which is in the St John's area. Using this location limited the cost of renting space, and all appropriate and necessary equipment (audio, flip charts, tables, chairs, etc) was readily available.

Participants of the two residents groups received a remuneration of \$25.00 for their participation. The third group of local organizations did not receive remuneration as it was felt that it was part of their organizations mandate to attend such sessions and provide feedback.

### **Conduct and Dynamics of the Group**

Audiotape and a written record recorded each group. The three groups' sessions were similar in terms of intensity and dynamics.

All groups presented as very open and articulated their feelings from the onset. Several of the questions evoked a remarkably strong response and the conversations seemed to flow easily. The groups also utilized humor, which contributed to the relaxed atmosphere. No one person dominated the group sessions.

The first group of area residents consisted of four males and three females. The second group consisting of local/area organizations had six females and five males and all participated. The third group, made up area residents consisted of five males and three females. All participated except one, who was encouraged to do so on several occasions. Probes were used in all groups to in order to expand on their responses.

It is important to note that gender basis was not seen as a factor in any of the groups. It was observed that all groups were at ease.

### **LIMITATIONS**

The limitation of the focus group process is that it is primarily qualitative (descriptive) and as such cannot be viewed or reduced to statistical analysis. No statistical inferences can be drawn from this process. Other limitations of this process are:

1) The small sample, 26 participants, and the fact that only three groups were conducted, may not be representative of all area residents.

2) One of the groups was comprised of area organizations. Therefore their views may not be reflective or representative of all organizations in the area.

3) The mail out method may not be the most effective means to seek potential participants as the delivery time may vary. A respondent from an organization stated that they received the letter a few working days prior to the beginning of the groups, which left little time to consider if and who could attend.

4) Some respondents from organizations, notably a daycare, a First Nations group and a Faith group noted that they would have liked to attend but June is a busy month, in terms of the organizations operations. One respondent noted that they were busy setting up their summer camp program.

## **II DETAILED FINDINGS**

### **Characteristics Of Participants**

- Fifteen participants were residents of the St John's area. They represented a mixture in age and ethnicity. Seniors, Filipino's, First Nations were equally represented in both groups.
- Eleven participants were from community organizations.
- A variety of organizations were represented, for example a daycare, members of the Canadian Council of the Blind, local schools, the executive assistant to the area M.L.A., members from the St John's Residents Association, the Child Guidance Clinic, a member from the Community Education and Development Organization, and a member from North Point Douglas Area.
- It should be noted that the group for the area organizations was longer by 1/2 hour, but was conducted within the allotted time frame. This could be attributable to the fact that they were more analytical as they see this issue as part of their organizations' mandate.

### **Group Comments**

There was great similarity of comments between the residents groups and the organizations group. But because of the uniqueness of the two groups, the organizations comments will be noted separately. With only one group of eleven participants from the local/area organizations their comments will be outlined in full, where applicable.

## **Residents Responses**

### **Question 1** What do you know of library services now?

More than half of the residents responded that they did not currently use the library. Some had stated that they had in the past, but have stopped recently. Most were aware that the library offered a selection of books and resource materials as well as computers. Those that did use the library were aware that the library offered books and computers.

### **Question 2** What stops you from using the library?

There were a variety of reasons as to what prevented participants from using the library. The majority of participants stated that “their work” currently prevents them from using the library. Most participants stated that the library was not open enough hours and that the library should “be more convenient and reflect current lifestyles”. That is: take into account shift workers. Other reasons stated were health reasons, and insufficient selection of books.

In relation to what makes the library user friendly the majority of respondents noted that the library is part of the community and that it can “be seen as a meeting place”, that the library had “good atmosphere” and that it was smaller and quieter than larger libraries.

In relation to the probe “what would make the library a more welcoming space the majority of participants stated that the “entrance needed to be brightened”, and that it had a “depressing, dingy” look to it. Several noted that there is limited signage and that the “façade doesn’t speak library”. Most participants agreed that the library needed a “major facelift” to make it known (look) as a library.

Most respondents from both groups noted that the steps to the library entrance needed to be addressed. They were seen as “rather imposing” and that there “is no handicap access”. Several participants noted that a senior or mother with several toddlers and a stroller would find it difficult to access the building.

### **Question 3** What would you recommend that this library put in place in order to meet YOUR needs?

The majority of group participants indicated that some changes were needed and recommended changes in what would meet their needs and those of the community. The comments from both groups were consistent and are as follows:

- Most participants stated that the hours of operation needed to be extended to accommodate “the working class neighborhood” where the library is located.
- Several noted that a “job kiosk” be put in place.
- The majority stated that more computers were needed and that a “specific

- computer room be designated”.
- Most noted that the front entrance should be “more inviting”.
- The majority of respondents also stated that the front steps needed to be made more user friendly and accessible.
- Several participants stated that the library needed to increase their “technical books/magazines” as it directly related to their work.
- Most participants stated, “cultural programming and or material needs to be increased”.
- One participant noted that the library needed to have a “chess room or table or a chess program” as he believes that it is quite popular.

When asked what would they keep the same, nearly all participants from the resident groups responded that the building “needed a major facelift”...or”needed cosmetic changes but keep the building integrity the same”... or “new paint” and a “proper entrance way”. Some participants felt strongly that the library needed changes to “modernize, as it did not look like a library, in fact one participant felt that the building looked like “ a scary old building and that children might be scared to come into the building”.

**Question 4** What do you think would bring in more children?

In responding to how to get more children to use the library the majority of participants were consistent in their responses. They were as follows:

- Several noted that there should be reading programs for children.
- The majority of respondents stated that there is “a need for more advertising” about children’s’ programming.
- Most participants noted that there should be more community-based events aimed at children and that the library should be working with parents to bring in children.
- Several participants suggested that there should be “puppet plays” in the basement or turn a basement room into a “children’s area”.
- The majority of respondents stated that there be better access for parents, i.e. “it is too difficult to get a mom and toddlers into the building at once”.

**Question 5 and 6** What do you think would bring in more adults/seniors?

In responding to how to get more adults and seniors to use the library the majority of participants were consistent in their responses. They were as follows:

- The majority of participants stated that more computers were needed.
- Most felt that the hours of operation needed to be extended to accommodate

their work hours.

- Several stated that a “job kiosk” be placed in the library, as it would aid in job searching for adults and youth.
- The majority stated that some seniors require large print books.
- Most group members stated that a “bingo event “as well as cultural events would draw in seniors into the building.

One group member stated that he has noticed that the same children are on the computer most of the time and that this issue needs to be dealt with as it hinders his and other adult’s use of the computer.

### **Question 7** What do you think would attract your community?

This question elicited the least number of responses from group participants. Both groups offered the same two suggestions in terms of how to attract the community to the library. Participants agreed that either “some sort of talent night be introduced” or have more “cultural programming” in place to attract more adult users.

### **Question 8** What would make YOU use the library more?

The responses by both groups to this question were voiced throughout the sessions. Comments included:

- The majority of participants recommended that the library hours be extended.
- More computer access.
- Most respondents requested that there be better selection of books as well as a greater number of same titles.
- Most stated that there should be increased signage identifying the library, as well as a “cheerier entrance way”.
- Several suggested that a ‘job kiosk “be at the library.
- Several respondents stated that the fees/fines acted as a disincentive to use the library. Some suggested a better explanation of the fees and fines.
- One respondent suggested that library fines be worked off by volunteering.
- Several members from both groups suggested that “some type of incentive program” be put in place to encourage visits. For example, two people suggested that for every 10 visits you receive a reduced price on a hockey game.
- Most participants suggested that “better advertising” was needed. They felt that the community needed to know what the library was about and what it can offer.

## **Organizations Responses**

### **Question 1** What do you know of library services now?

The majority of respondents from this group stated that they are aware of the library services. Three participants noted that since there is no advertising nobody knows that the library exists and what is being offered from this location. Several participants stated that they are aware that there are some children's programming and a small collection of aboriginal books available.

When asked what they use at this library one person stated, "I guess that this library would offer same services as other libraries". A few others commented about using preschool books.

### **Question 2** What stops you from using the library?

Comments by this group regarding this question reflected those comments made by both resident groups. They felt that the hours of operation were not suitable, that it had a lack of wheel chair access that it was an imposing structure and that lighting and contrast needed to be better. One stated that I "forgot it (the library) was here".

One participant noted that the building was an imposing structure and another noted that staff needs more training. When asked to expand on this, the participant stated that more training was needed with regards to customer service. The user had the feeling that processing people was more important than being friendly to the customer. It was also noted that at the time there appeared to be few staff working.

### **Question 3** What would you recommend that this library put in place in order to meet YOUR needs?

The organization focus group was very expressive in outlining what they would recommend that this library put in place to meet their needs. Their individual comments are as follows:

- A systematic link between libraries and schools.
- More accessible ramp for seniors.
- A marquis sign, for identifying the library.
- Promote the library through resident newsletters.
- More selection and updated media, i.e. tapes, DVD's.
- Encourage literacy programs to use the library.
- Book circles or book clubs.
- Develop creative story making and use the library for community meetings.

In terms of what they would change at the library, the views stated in this group were also reflective of both residents groups.

**Question 4** What do you think would bring in more children?

In responding to how to get more children to use the library the majority of participants were consistent in their responses. They were as follows:

- Bring in celebrities like Fred Penner.
- The library should look at connecting with other service providers, such as daycares and schools.
- More advertising to let people know what is happening at the library.
- Two participants noted that the web site is a little overwhelming and that the library is not easily found on the web site.

The most telling comment offered by a participant was “that once you lose a kid...he/she most likely will not come back”, so focus on children’s programs and the means to attract them is important.

**Question 5 and 6** What do you think would bring in more adults/seniors?

These questions also invoked similar responses from this group as it did from the residents groups. Several members suggested that adult oriented themes (arts and crafts) could be used to bring more adults into the library. Several members suggested that “more community networking” and more “outreach to adult groups and ethnicities” would raise the profile of the library.

One group member suggested that there should be a link to the Age and Opportunity Centre to help attract seniors and one suggested that more technology be used, i.e. a CCTV reader be available to magnify print. Another group member suggested that there be book exchanges for seniors and the library should consider “book mobiles’ to bring books to the seniors.

**Question 7** What do you think would attract the community you represent?

The comments made by the organizations group reflected their need to enhance library usage by their organizations. Their comments are as follows:

- Members suggested that there be better links and marketing. One group member suggested that there be better networking and suggested that the city of Winnipeg’s Community Resource Coordinators be utilized.
- One participant suggested that posters or pamphlets should be distributed to schools or daycares outlining what the library has to offer and especially noting how close the library is to that organization.
- One member suggested that the library should send library cards to all children and that the card is activated when they come to the library.

- Another suggested that older children should teach younger children how to read.
- Expand the hours of operations by using volunteers, i.e. use red river college students.
- Another respondent noted that the policy on fines should to be changed for this community, especially for children.

**Question 8** What do you think would attract your Organization?

Responses from the members of this group were reflective of the statements made by other groups. Their responses are as follows:

- One member stated that more school age programs would attract their organization to use the library.
- Several respondents note that the library should be more aggressive and use different marketing tools in marketing the library. For example, the use of pamphlets and posters.
- One member stated that more convenient and consistent hours would make it easier for their organization.
- Have family events but not always together with children.

**Question 9** What would make YOU use the library more?

The comments made by the group are reflective of comments made by members throughout the session and are consistent with comments made by the residents groups. They are as follow:

- The majority of group members stated that better hours suited to working people would increase usage. Also better selection of books.
- More demonstrations and alternative programming.
- More computers and computer programs.
- More links to schools and perhaps other libraries be networked together.
- Promote the neighborliness of the St John's Library.
- One respondent stated that you should "tell people if you don't use it, you'll lose it".
- Like the quietness of the library.

### **III SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

#### **Most Common Participant Suggestions/Recommendations:**

- More advertising is needed to let the residents and organizations know what the library has to offer.
- Changes to the look of the library would only enhance its visibility in the community. Changes include making the front brighter less drab, more signage more user friendly.
- The selection of reading material and the number of books needs to be increased.
- Several participants noted that the staff are dedicated but are over whelmed.
- Policies on fines need to be changed for this community, especially for children.
- Several noted that a “job kiosk” be put in place.
- Most participants stated, “cultural programming and or material needs to be increased”.
- One member suggested that the library should send library cards to all children and that the card is activated when they come to the library.
- The majority of participants stated that better hours suited to working people would increase usage.

In conclusion the majority of participants for all groups felt that the library needed to make changes to increase the usage of the library. It is important to note that although participants offered points of improvement, they did so respectfully. No negative comments were made towards staff or the overall mission of library services. In fact comments that the staff are dedicated but sometimes overwhelmed were made by respondents. Some respondents noted that the library is part of the community and that it can “be seen as a meeting place”, and that the library had “good atmosphere” and that “the building is quiet and has a cozy atmosphere”.

The majority of feedback focused around accessibility in terms of hours of operation and the ability to gain access into the building for some groups. The majority of participants felt that more advertising was needed, both to the community and to organizations in the community to increase the library’s profile.

The majority of respondents also noted that the façade of the building needed to be changed, as one participant notes “to make it look like a library”.