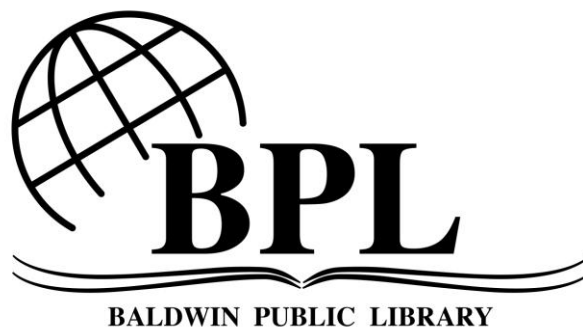


# Future of the Baldwin Public Library Building

Report for the Long-Range Planning Session of the  
Birmingham City Commission  
January 21, 2012

Prepared by:

Doug Koschik - Director, Baldwin Public Library  
Matt Church - Associate Director, Baldwin Public Library



## INTRODUCTION

What follows is a start to a conversation that, we believe, needs to be held among the members of the Baldwin Public Library Board, the Birmingham City Commission, the staffs of the Baldwin Library and the City of Birmingham, and the residents of Baldwin's service communities. The purpose of the conversation is to discuss the future of the building that houses the Baldwin Public Library. The concepts presented in this document will inevitably be honed and modified as the conversation regarding the building's future unfolds.

An abbreviated version of this report will be presented to the Birmingham City Commission at its long-range planning session on January 21, 2012. The visual presentation will feature renderings of the Fanning Howey and Victor Saroki plans, which are not included in this written report, but can be seen on Baldwin's website at:

<http://baldwinlib.org/assets/PDFs/LibraryBoard/Building-Presentation-12-19-11.pdf>

The report on January 21 will probably offer additional information that will become available between the writing of this report, in late December, and the date of the long-range planning session. At the long-range planning session, City Commissioners should expect a number of comments from the public about this issue.

The Baldwin Public Library's 2011-13 Strategic Plan calls for the development of a comprehensive master plan for the building:

*Strategic Goal VI: Facilities and Technology—Adapt the existing facility for more flexible use and employ technology more effectively in order to improve internal operating efficiency and better serve Library patrons*

*Strategic Objective A: Establish and implement, as feasible, a comprehensive master plan for the facility.*

In addition, the Baldwin Public Library Board understands that the Birmingham City Commission would welcome a discussion of the Baldwin Library facility and how to improve it in a cost effective manner.

In the spring of 2011, the Library conducted a customer survey which included a section pertaining to the building. The size, location, age, and layout of the building received a lot of separate comments in the survey. 54% of the survey participants reported using the Library building weekly, with an additional 31% using it monthly. This would indicate that even with

the rise of e-books and e-music, as well as the increasing use of other electronic resources, the building is still important to our users and its usefulness needs to be seriously addressed. Issues with the physical layout, accessibility, and convenience ranked high among the written comments.

Additional comments about the facility include the following, often made more than once:

- The first floor should be remodeled with a better layout.
- Signage needs to be improved.
- There are not enough areas that are quiet in the building. These comments included issues with children, teens, students, cell phones, noisy staff, and talkers in general.
- The handicapped access on Merrill is difficult.
- There are lighting issues, mostly in the Grand Hall.
- One person suggested community murals on the walls.
- Several responses mentioned that the building needs to be updated and that it is looking outdated and shabby. Many of these were very complimentary of the Library in general and appear to be from loyal patrons who want something they love and use to be updated. Typical of this type of comment is “The library is a wonderful resource, which we use regularly but is sorely outdated.”
- The Youth Room was mentioned specifically several times as needing updating.
- “I have a hard time finding what I want in Baldwin...too many scattered areas.”
- “I often go to the twp. library because it is visually more appealing. Baldwin's main area just isn't inviting and the way books are shelved (in a number of areas for same type collection) is not user friendly.”

In the survey, some critics of the physical condition of the building said that it had an impact on their visits to the Library visits and that they actively seek out other libraries in the area even though they have Baldwin cards.

The full customer survey results can be viewed on Baldwin’s website at:

<http://baldwinlib.org/assets/PDFs/Customer-Survey-Report-2011.pdf>

It should be noted that most other libraries in the area have completely updated their facilities since Baldwin last did so 30 years ago. Among the libraries that have undergone renovations or expansions during this period are Bloomfield Township (twice), Southfield, Berkley, Huntington Woods, Royal Oak, Ferndale, Clawson, Rochester Hills, Auburn Hills, West Bloomfield, Independence Township, Farmington and Canton. These buildings have the up-to-date features and conveniences that most people now expect to find when they go to a public library. Baldwin’s efforts at renovation have been limited to specific areas of the Library—the Grand Hall in 2002 and the Lower Level in 2008.

## PROCESS

The Library's governing board and administration are committed to having the improvement of the Library's physical plant involve the following:

- Transparency
- Adherence to City of Birmingham policies
- Active involvement of the City Commission, Library Board, staff, and public
- A thorough review of all options

Necessary steps in the process will include:

- Needs analysis and benchmarking
- Library Board/City Commission discussions
- Input and review from all constituents
- Analysis of cost estimates
- Aesthetic considerations (The section of the Library that was designed by Gunnar Birkerts in the early 1980s is especially contentious. Many people harbor strong passions about that design.)

The decisions we need to make are:

- What to do
- When to do it
- How to fund it

## CONSIDERATIONS

Overall goals:

- Arrange the Library's space in a logical, usable manner.
- Make the building aesthetically pleasing.
- Provide enough space for a library of this size and caliber. Below is a chart showing how Baldwin compares to some of its peer libraries in southeast Michigan in terms of square footage and study rooms. It should be noted that Baldwin's service area population includes the residents of its three contract communities—Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms and Bloomfield Hills. (Rochester Hills, Southfield and West Bloomfield also have contract communities.) When looking at this chart, people should keep in mind that Baldwin is actually busier than many of its peers; its circulation per capita, visits per capita and program attendance per capita are higher than at most of the other libraries listed below. In addition, the space within the Baldwin Library—divided as it is between three structures constructed in different decades and not especially well integrated—is inevitably less efficient than the space in more recent and less “disjointed” library buildings.

<b>Library</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Square Footage</b>	<b>Number of Study Rooms</b>	<b>Square Footage Per Capita</b>	<b>Study Rooms Per 10,000 Population</b>
<b>Ann Arbor</b>	163,590	162,900	17	1.0	1.0
<b>Baldwin</b>	35,350	40,174	2	1.1	0.6
<b>Bloomfield Township</b>	41,070	102,505	20	2.5	4.9
<b>Canton</b>	90,173	53,000	3	0.6	0.3
<b>Clinton-Macomb</b>	169,833	105,400	5	0.6	0.3
<b>Farmington</b>	90,112	90,000	6	1.0	0.7
<b>Grosse Pointe</b>	51,060	61,000	4	1.2	0.8
<b>Novi</b>	55,374	59,314	9	1.1	1.6
<b>Rochester Hills</b>	100,485	70,000	2	0.7	0.2
<b>Southfield</b>	75,814	124,495	19	1.6	2.5
<b>Troy</b>	80,980	50,000	0	0.6	0.0
<b>West Bloomfield</b>	71,755	76,000	8	1.1	1.1

Specific space needs:

- Youth – More space is needed. Youth accounts for 33% of Baldwin’s circulation, yet has only 27% of the square footage allotted to the public in the building.
- Teen – A dedicated area should be provided.
- Adult – We need increased space for “public use” (study and discussion areas, meeting rooms, etc.).
- It may be acceptable to trim the Library’s shelf space slightly since more materials are becoming available in electronic format.
- It is not necessary to expand the number of public computers available in the building as more people are bringing in their own laptops to access the Library’s wireless network. What these people need is adequate desk space and excellent wireless service.
- The Library currently has two very small study rooms. There is a need and demand for more study rooms—for both individuals and small groups.
- It may be possible to capture more space on the first floor for public use and move existing staff work areas elsewhere in the building.

Functional improvements:

- Make the entire building comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and improve access into the building for both the public and staff.
- Improve the lighting both inside and outside the building.
- Enhance the main entrance and make it more inviting, both inside and outside.
- Muffle sound from patrons and staff, and create quiet places for study.

- Add and improve signage, but strive to lay out the building in a more logical and user-friendly manner, so that less signage is needed.
- Make the signage that is needed both attractive and functional.
- Make shelving arrangements easier to browse by creating subject-oriented “neighborhoods” and reducing the height of shelves.
- Add seating and study space in the adult non-fiction area.
- Improve building safety and monitoring capability by adding security cameras inside and outside the Library.
- Provide appropriate desks for service points.

Various parties have raised other considerations and suggested the following:

- Establish an entrance on Martin Street, in accordance with Duany 2016 plan
- Install a café
- Allow more light into the facility, especially from southern exposures
- Capture the feel of the recently closed Borders book stores
- Enhance the aesthetics of downtown Birmingham
- Enhance property values by supporting a first-rate library
- Avoid harming library services by overextending ourselves on a physical building

Impacts on the Library’s heating and cooling system will need to be considered for any expansion of the Library’s building. The current system could likely accommodate renovations and very minor expansions, while a major expansion of the building would require an expansion of the heating and cooling system as well.

The long-term costs of operating a renovated or expanded building must be considered when looking at the financial costs of various building projects. Costs for things such as light bulbs, fixtures, replacement components and general maintenance need to be considered. A substantial expansion of the Library’s footprint will increase the need for staff to monitor and maintain the building and provide service to the public.

## **OPTIONS**

Baldwin’s administration has identified three major options for the building:

- A continuation and expansion of the current practice of maintaining the building and occasionally making piecemeal improvements
- A comprehensive renovation of the existing footprint
- A full building expansion and renovation

All three are discussed in more detail below.

## FUNDING

Each option calls for consideration of different funding possibilities. Below are preliminary thoughts on how each option might be able to get funded. It should be noted that the Library's physical plant is owned by the City of Birmingham, which is also responsible for its maintenance. The City Commission and the Library Board must work together closely to identify not only what should be done to the building, but also where the money for the work will come from.

- A ***piecemeal approach*** is the cheapest. It would probably rely on a use of a combination of the following:
  1. Ongoing operating funds – From either the Library or the City, depending on the nature of the expense.
  2. Withdrawal from the fund balance – From either the Library or the City, depending on the nature of the expense.
  3. Donations resulting from fund-raising.
  
- A ***renovation of the existing footprint*** would be the medium-priced solution. It would be too expensive to pay for out of operating funds, but not expensive enough to warrant a bond issue. It would have to rely on the use of a combination of the following:
  1. Withdrawal from the fund balance – Since the Library currently has a fund balance of less than \$900,000, relatively little can be taken out of it. It is unknown whether the City would be willing to use any of its fund balance on such a project.
  2. Increase in the Library's millage rate, the funds from which would be saved for several years to pay for the renovation.
  3. Donations resulting from fund-raising.
  
- ***An expansion*** would be the most costly solution. It could not be entirely paid for out of either operating funds or the fund balance. It would require a combination of the following:
  1. Approval of a bond issue.
  2. Donations resulting from fund-raising.

## BUILDING OPTIONS

If the community decides not to fund a comprehensive plan for the building, routine maintenance and piecemeal improvements will still need to occur. Among other things, carpet will need to be replaced, walls will have to be painted, furniture will require replacement, and signage will need

to be improved. If a more robust renovation or expansion is desired, two options have been developed.

Fanning Howey, an architectural firm with a division specializing in libraries, was contracted to create a plan utilizing the Library's current building footprint. Victor Saroki, a Birmingham architect, developed a plan for an expansion of the Library at the request of Birmingham resident Jeffery VanDorn. Below are summaries of each plan.

### **Fanning Howey Building Plan**

---

Fanning Howey was charged with evaluating the Library's current facility and making recommendations for changes within the Library's footprint. Library employees were involved with the creation of this plan and provided feedback along the way. Implementation of the Fanning Howey plan would bring the Library in compliance with the access components of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), although the plan does not address the issue of external access. Fanning Howey ended up offering two minor expansion possibilities as well—one in the Youth Room and the other in the Birkerts addition.

Fanning Howey focused their efforts on the Birkerts addition and the Youth Room. The Birkerts addition was designed by architect Gunnar Birkerts and was built in the early 1980s. It has not been renovated significantly since that time. The Youth Room addition was added in 1959 and last renovated in 2001. The Books & Bites at Baldwin event on November 17 raised over \$21,000, which will be applied toward a partial renovation of the Youth Room in the first half of 2012.

The Grand Hall, renovated in 2002, serves the Library's clientele in an effective and attractive manner. Following the instructions given them, Fanning Howey proposed no changes to the Grand Hall as part of their plan.

#### ***Birkerts Addition***

The Birkerts addition houses the Library's adult non-fiction, teen, and adult audiovisual collections, as well as public access computers and the Adult Services desk. The curve of the main wall presents challenges to the effective use of this space. The current layout can be difficult to navigate and does not present a welcoming environment for the public. It is crowded, outdated and uninviting.

Fanning Howey proposes a number of changes in this space to improve access to the collection and expand the area's functionality. Their plan calls for the replacement of most furniture, shelving, flooring, ceiling, lighting and wall treatments in the space.

1. Relocate the Library's adult non-fiction collection shelving to follow the curve of the exterior wall. Shelving would be shorter to create a more open feeling to the space. This will make it easier to locate items in the collection and will improve navigate in this space.
2. Maintain the shelving on the interior of the curved wall for the Library's DVD and audio book collection for adults. Taking this approach allows the Library to maintain a robust adult audiovisual collection.
3. Update the space designated for teens and make it a more established presence. The size of the teen space will depend on space requirements for the adult non-fiction collection.
4. Relocate the Adult Services desk to a more central location. This will provide greater visibility of the staff and will allow them to monitor and provide service more effectively.
5. Create a group workspace that will provide both lounge seating and tables and chairs. Low walls will divide this space to provide some level of privacy and some separation without creating enclosed spaces.
6. Cluster public access computers around several round tables. This softens the appearance of the space and provides more privacy for their use.
7. Create passageways between the Birkerts addition and the Circulation Services desk by cutting doorways in the original building façade that separates the two spaces. This would allow for easier travel between the two parts of the building and would create new opportunities for traffic flow in the building.
8. Add two enclosed study rooms at the north end of Birkerts if it is determined that a further reduction in shelving is possible.
9. Utilize ceiling and floor treatments that would assist in wayfinding, sound reduction and the differentiation of spaces and functions within the building.

The cost to pursue all of the above would be roughly \$1,346,000.

Up to three small additions could be added to the curved wall in order to create additional study rooms. Each study room would be roughly 175 square feet. This would, however, probably reduce shelving space somewhat. The cost for this optional expansion would be roughly \$250,000 and is not included in the figure of \$1,350,000 above.

### ***Youth Room***

The Youth Room houses the Library's print and audiovisual collections for children, public access Internet computers, early literacy computers and the Youth Services desk. The current space is at capacity for both collections and patron use. It is both crowded and dated.

Fanning Howey proposes changes that will enlarge the space available for the public and will make it more effective overall. Their plan calls for the replacement of most furniture, shelving, flooring, ceiling, lighting and wall treatments in the space.

1. Reconfigure the staff offices in Circulation Services, Youth Services and Adult Services in order to capture additional space for the public. Circulation Services and Youth Services staff would continue to have office space on the first floor but Adult Services staff would need to be relocated to other locations within the Library.
2. Create shorter ranges of shelving in order to make the collection more accessible. New shelving arrangement with shelves running east to west would provide more natural light from the windows into the room.
3. Create established spaces for early literacy, young readers and pre-teen youth.
4. Relocate the Youth Services desk and update its appearance so that it has a more youthful feeling.
5. Relocate the Story Room to provide more space for the early literacy portion of the Youth Room.
6. Rework the hallway leading to the Youth Room to create a barrier between the restroom entrances and the walkway to the Youth Room.
7. Implement ceiling and floor treatments that would assist in wayfinding, sound reduction and the differentiation of spaces and functions within the building.

The cost to pursue all of the above would be roughly \$920,000. This cost estimate does not include costs associated with the relocation of Adult Services staff within the Library.

An optional and modest eight foot expansion to the Youth Room would provide an additional 600 square feet for shelving and seating. The cost for this expansion would be roughly \$275,000 and is not included in the figure of \$920,000 above.

#### ***Minor Additions to Birkerts and Youth Room***

If the proposed three study rooms were added to Birkerts and we expanded the Youth Room eight feet toward Bates Street, those changes combined would add 2.8% to the total space of the Library.

#### ***Front Entrance Ramp***

In order to improve wheelchair and stroller access at the Library's front entrance, it is possible that the stone from the building that protrudes into the ramp space could be cut back. Further structural assessment would be needed to ensure this would not negatively impact the building. Making this change would cost roughly \$5,000.

#### ***External Front Entrance***

In order to improve the lighting and appearance of the front entrance, the lighting fixtures and ceiling materials could be replaced at a cost of roughly \$50,000. This would improve the external appearance of the building and make the Library's entrance more inviting.

### ***Wall Maintenance***

To improve the appearance of the Birkerts addition exterior, the stone could be cleaned and minor corrections to the horizontal bands could be performed at a cost of roughly \$30,000.

### ***Time Requirements for Project***

The Fanning Howey building plan could be accomplished in three separate phases coordinated to reduce the impact of service to the public. Renovations to the Birkerts addition and the Youth Room would take about 14 weeks per phase. The areas around the entrance could be accomplished in about two weeks. These time estimates assume there would be no restrictions on working while the Library is open and do not include time for the optional expansions to the Birkerts addition or Youth Room. To most effectively accomplish the work around the entrance, the Library may need to close for a short period of time—probably no more than two weeks.

### ***Cost Estimate***

Birkerts Addition Renovation	\$1,350,000
Youth Room Renovation	920,000
<u>Entrance and Exterior Work</u>	<u>80,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,350,000</b>

Small Optional Expansions:	
Birkerts Addition Study Rooms	\$250,000
<u>Youth Room Expansion</u>	<u>275,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$525,000</b>

<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$2,875,000</b>
--------------------	--------------------

### **Victor Saroki Building Plan**

---

At the request of Birmingham resident Jeffery Van Dorn, architect Victor Saroki has undertaken the creation of a vision for the Library's building and the role it could play in the future.

1. This plan seeks to connect the look of the building's exterior with the original 1927 building façade. The existing Youth Room addition and the existing Birkerts addition would be updated to match the Tudor Arts and Crafts style of the original Library building.
2. The second floor would be greatly expanded as part of the renovation and would provide the potential for a roof terrace, roof garden, large auditorium and additional space for study rooms, meeting space and offices.

3. The Library would have two entrances on the main floor. The existing Merrill Street door would be reworked to provide a grand entrance space and lobby. Ramp access to the building would be improved as well, and an alternate kind of entryway—probably involving an elevator—would be provided for physically handicapped people and for strollers. The original entrance along Martin Street would be reopened. Seating space in the Grand Hall, which would be displaced by this entrance, would be relocated to one of the new rooms created in the expansion.
4. The lower level would be expanded to include a café with outdoor seating and with access from the street level. Access to the lower level would also be possible through the Youth Room and the Library’s updated lobby.
5. A street-level staff entrance would be provided at the northwest corner of the building.

The plan would accomplish the following:

1. Increase the square footage of the Library by 42%, or 16,820 square feet. This would provide Baldwin with 1.6 square feet per capita, roughly equivalent to the Southfield Public Library, but still 36% less than the Bloomfield Township Library.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Existing Square Footage</b>	<b>Proposed Square Footage</b>	<b>Additional Square Footage</b>	<b>Percentage Increase</b>
<b>Lower Level</b>	12,451	15,689	3,238	26%
<b>Main Floor</b>	23,092	25,681	2,589	11%
<b>Second Floor</b>	4,076	15,069	10,993	270%
<b>Building Total</b>	<b>39,619</b>	<b>56,439</b>	<b>16,820</b>	<b>42%</b>

2. Increase the number of study rooms to close to approximately 18, or approximately 5.1 per 10,000 people, slightly more than the Bloomfield Township Library provides.
3. Create a large dedicated Teen Room.
4. Accomplish the above without reducing shelf space for books, magazines and audiovisual materials. (Note: The interior design of the Saroki plan is largely conceptual at this point. The details remain to be fleshed out.)
5. Add a bookstore and gift shop, operated by volunteers.
6. Create an atrium, which would invite sunlight into the building, accompanied by a grand staircase.
7. Re-open the Martin Street entrance in accordance with the Duany 2016 plan.

***Cost Estimate***

A cost estimate for the project has not been provided by Victor Saroki but the costs are expected to be upwards of \$10,000,000.