Consultant’s Report: Waikiki-Kapahulu Public Library
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The Community, Collection, and Programs

Waikiki-Kapahulu Public Library serves a community that includes Jefferson Elementary, Waikiki Elementary, and Hawaii Center for the Deaf and Blind. Because of its proximity to Waikiki, the library also aids numerous tourists along with the residents of the community. Each year, the library serves approximately 35,000 patrons, with over 120,000 items circulated. Originally opened in 1952, Waikiki Library has undergone several major renovation projects over the years, including the installation of air conditioning and, more recently, changes to conform to ADA regulations.

As of 2002, Waikiki Library had 66 magazine subscriptions and 50,453 items in its collection, including books and audiovisual materials. The librarians at the branch confirmed that this is still an accurate number. Branch manager Stephanie Strickland is particular about keeping the collection weeded. In the Annual Summary for Fiscal Year 1999-2000, Waikiki Library’s collection was estimated to have a little less than 50,000 items. In the following year’s Annual Summary, statistics show that approximately 5000 items were added and 5000 items were weeded from the collection. The total number of items in the collection is always near 50,000.
Waikiki Library employs three librarians, five technicians, one janitor, one security guard, and three part-time student helpers. The three librarians are the children’s librarian, young adult librarian, and branch manager.

These three librarians are responsible for planning library programs. In fiscal year 2000-2001, the library hosted eighty-five programs with over three thousand people attending in all that year (Annual Summary). The weekly children’s story hour was one program that met with great success. In recent years, however, the community has changed. Several families have moved and some of the children have started school and so are unable to come to the morning story times. Children’s story hour no longer drew enough children to keep it active. Children’s librarian Cheryl Robinson noted that Waikiki is currently the only library in the state to not have a regularly scheduled story hour. Although other libraries may hold their story hours on a monthly basis, these are still consistently held and attended. Last fall, in an effort to attract more families to the program, Cheryl experimented with holding a story hour each week for six weeks. She planned to hold these six-week programs once a quarter, reasoning that families might it easier to come out specially when they knew story hour would only be held quarterly.

In recent months, Cheryl, in conjunction with the YA librarian, has planned several programs for older, school-aged children. On November 16, Cheryl planned an after-school program as a part of Children’s Book Week. Among the activities planned were games and a skit put on by a Jefferson Elementary class. This program drew a number of children from the elementary schools.

**Mission and Goals**

Waikiki Library is a small branch library under the Hawaii State Public Library System (hereafter referred to as HSPLS). The fact that it is a part of this system, the only system in the
state, greatly affects its operations. Waikiki Library and its staff are part of a complex, bureaucratic state system. While the branch manager of Waikiki Library ultimately answers to state librarian Jo Ann Schindler, the state librarian must also answer to the Board of Education and its public library committee. Thus, the budget of Waikiki Library is determined by the budget for HSPLS, which is determined by the state. The library’s mission, goals, objectives, and policies are also determined by the statewide system. While the library may have its own unique goals and objectives, we were unable to determine them. Please refer to the LSTA Five-Year Plan, 2003-2007, included in this portfolio for HSPLS’s goals and objectives.

Mission Statement:

The mission statement of the Hawaii State Public Library System is to provide Hawaii’s residents, in all walks of life, and at each stage of their lives, with access to education, information, programs and services, and to teach and nurture the love of reading and the habit of life-long learning.

Waikiki Library seems to be striving toward its mission with some success. While the collection at the library is small, patrons are able to request items from any branch in the statewide system and have it delivered to the Waikiki Library free of charge. While there is much room for improvement of the services of the library (more diverse programming, a larger space, etc), the Needs Assessment section of the 2005 revision of the LSTA Five-Year Plan, 2003-2007, by state librarian Jo Ann Schindler sheds some light on the struggles the entire system has faced. She states, “All libraries are experiencing financial constraints, and most are competing for scarce funds from the same funding authority…Because budgets have been limited for so many years, there is no money available for sophisticated studies of library needs in Hawaii.” Schindler goes on to identify staffing, technology enhancements, training, and
outreach, as areas where improvement is needed throughout the system. It is safe to conclude that Waikiki Library has felt the affects of this tight budget. The fact that areas for improvement have been targeted and a plan is in place is a positive step for all libraries in the HSPLS.

The public libraries section of the document entitled, Joint Informational Briefing House Committee on Finance & Senate Ways & Means Committee, shows that HSPLS is working with the state to increase its budget. In addition, HSPLS is monitoring legislation that may affect the public libraries in Hawaii (List of House and Senate Bills).

In terms of policies, Waikiki Library’s policies are dictated by the policies of HSPLS, which are developed by the state librarian and the Board of Education. Each branch library has a copy of the Collection Development Policy, which covers general policy as well as policy regarding weeding, access, and challenges. The policy frequently refers to the “Library Bill of Rights,” and is a detailed resource for librarians in the system to inform themselves about appropriate practices in the profession.

**“Model” Library**

Is Waikiki-Kapahulu Public Library a “model” library? Although it is a well-used small public library, maintaining its position in the community, we would not go so far as to call it a “model” library, or a library that other similar libraries would look to for ideas and inspiration.

Hawaii is unique in the fact that the HSPLS is the only public library system in the state; other states have one public library system in each county. Perhaps this one statewide system limits the ability of a small library like Waikiki to be well funded because it is sharing resources with libraries throughout the entire state.

As far as the goals of the HSPLS, they are good steps towards an improved library system but it is difficult to find out if the steps towards reaching the stated goals and objectives
are being actively achieved. Also, the Waikiki Library does not have an individual plan for its future, and that would be very helpful in terms of addressing the specific needs of its community. For example, the Waikiki Library could really tap into the tourist population in Waikiki in terms of providing information services about the island and the state.

There are four main goals stated in the Hawaii State Public Library System LSTA Five-Year Plan: access and resource sharing, staffing and infrastructure, outreach, and digitization. All of these goals are wonderful in that they will make a better library system because they are focused on making access easier with a farther and faster reach to the people of Hawaii. Although these are great goals for the HSPLS they are not necessarily the goals of Waikiki Library.

The only goal that would really benefit the Waikiki Library is the first one focusing on access and resource sharing. This is great goal because of the objectives involved. Some of the objectives include looking at self-checkout systems, continued advancement of hold system, self-renewals, and wireless access for customers and staff (pp.6-10). These objectives would greatly enhance the services of the Waikiki Library.

Self-checkout would be helpful in that it would free staff to do other tasks. The state’s hold system is the most important part of access for its patrons and what makes it possible for small libraries like the Waikiki Library to provide access to the most current and popular items. Any improvements in the area would benefit all of the libraries and their patrons. Self-renewals would be a great help to all of the state’s patrons. Right now patrons can only renew books in person or on the phone during business hours. This is a great disadvantage to most patrons because of the limited hours of the library. Wireless Internet access would be great for the Waikiki Library because they currently only have 4 computers with Internet access in their
library. Wireless Internet would provide more people access to the Internet and at the same time free up the computers the library already has.

The Five-Year Plan is good document to see what the future of HSPLS might look like. There are very exciting and challenging objectives for HSPLS included in its pages. How these will work out we will not know for a couple of years. However it is clear that the Administration is aware of the needs and concerns of the patrons and staff of HSPLS.

Works Cited


State of Hawaii, Board of Education. Collection Development Policy. 14 Nov. 2005

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Works Consulted

