



Library Agreement Good for All

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“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.” What place better brings to life these words of wisdom from Dr. Seuss than the public library?

Library services in Fort Collins are in the midst of a significant change. Earlier this month, the City of Fort Collins and the Fort Collins Regional Library District entered into an intergovernmental agreement that finalizes the public library's transition from city library to library district. We now have an agreement that benefits all of the involved parties – the district, the city, and most importantly, you.

You may recall that funding shortfalls in the city budget had forced us to gradually reduce service levels at the public library. In November 2006 voters demonstrated their support for library services and created a new library district, funded with three mills of a property tax. The dedicated funding has significantly improved the public library's ability to serve the community. Since its formation, the library district has restored hours of operation at the Main and Harmony Libraries, restored staff positions, added library materials, and improved programs for children, teens and adults.

Up to this point we've been working under an interim agreement. Now, after nearly a year of conversation and negotiation, we have an intergovernmental agreement that lays the foundation for an ongoing relationship between the city and district. Here are a few of the highlights from the recently approved intergovernmental agreement which goes into effect on January 1, 2008:

- The city will transfer the title of the Main Library at 201 S. Peterson St. to the district. The city will also transfer ownership of the park surrounding the Main Library, which could be used as possible expansion space at some point in the future. The adjacent playground and Carnegie Library Building and grounds (currently the Fort Collins Museum) will all remain city property.
- All library books, materials and real property, including computers, fixtures and furniture go to the district.
- The city retains ownership of the Poudre Creamery property located on the northwest corner of Laporte Avenue and Howes Street, which was originally purchased as a possible site for a larger downtown library. This preserves the option for the city to use the land for another purpose compatible with the other city facilities located in the area.
- Using library impact fees, the city is funding construction of a 17,000 square foot Southeast Branch Library in the Bayer Front Range Village project, located near Ziegler and Harmony Roads. The district will become the owner of this new library and will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Southeast Branch once construction is completed.

- The city will assign its existing contract with Front Range Community College to the district, which will enable the Harmony Library Branch located on the college's campus to continue operation uninterrupted.
- Library staff members will transfer from city employees to district employees as of Dec. 31, 2007.
- Voters approved the Building on Basics (BOB) capital program in 2005 and provided \$5.95 million in sales tax revenue for library technology. Honoring the wishes of the voters, the IGA provides for these funds to be given to the district in eight annual installments - \$744,000 annually--to be used for library technology.
- The district will provide annual reports to the city and county and the community and will meet with the city and county periodically to discuss library operations, goals and accomplishments.

The agreement was negotiated in a spirit of collaboration and with a commitment from both parties to be good stewards of the public assets. The final agreement reflects those priorities. For more information on the future of library services, go to fcgov.com/library.