Dear Friends and Neighbors:

Altadena residents take pride in their community and its institutions. As a result, Altadenans have provided residents with one of the finest libraries in Los Angeles County. Both the Board of Library Trustees and staff believe the library’s future must be mapped to meet challenges ahead in order to develop a library that is timeless in its ability to meet your continually changing needs and lifestyles.

To this end, representatives from the Library Board, Staff and Community Strategic Planning Advisory Committee met with a Strategic Planning Consultant to develop a vision for the future of Altadena Library. The enclosed represents that vision. We have outlined broad goals which will guide our objectives for 2014/15.

We are now happy to share this vision with you and we invite you to help us make Altadena’s “Library of the Future” a reality.

Sincerely,

David Datz, President
Altadena Board of Library Trustees
The Altadena Board of Library Trustees recognizes that libraries are currently at the center of a revolution in information production and distribution, and in technology and communications. This revolution, coupled with trends in the economy, demographics, and government will surely impact library services during the 21st century to the extent that they may be unrecognizable as we know them today.

The commitment to quality collections and responsive services remains steadfast. However, the library must be in a position to satisfactorily respond to the current and future challenges which are transforming the vision and definition of the traditional library. It is within this context that the Community Strategic Planning Advisory Committee members, Library Board, and Staff developed a strategic plan for fiscal years 2014/15 – 18/19.

The Altadena Library District continually aspires to meet the present, future, and constantly changing needs and interests of its diverse clientele. It is becoming the cultural, informational, and technological hub of the community.

1. Funding: The Altadena Library District will seek to establish a stable source of funding to sustain current levels of customer service. The District will expand sources of revenue.

2. Outreach. The Altadena Library District will tell its story to the community through enhanced print, electronic and social media communications.

3. Facilities. The Altadena Library District will provide a facility that is comfortable, welcoming, safe, energy efficient, flexible, and fully disabled accessible.

4. The Altadena Library District will provide youth with the resources they need to succeed in school and to develop a life-long love of learning and reading.

5. The Altadena Library District will provide access to the digital world through state-of-the-art technologies.
The Altadena Library District provides library service to over 53,000 residents. The District has high property values, a high household income, high rate of home ownership, and a highly educated diverse population. The community appreciates and expects a high level of library service. Respondents to a well-received community survey praised the library staff, collections and services. Compared to similar institutions, the Library is noted to “do more with less.”

A number of challenges face the Library and its ability to continue to provide the highest level of service. Among these are: an aged facility, rapidly changing technology, escalating customer expectations, and increased operating costs and decreased funding. This Strategic Plan seeks to address these challenges.

FUNDING
The Library’s biggest challenge is securing stable funding. The library budget is funded from local property taxes (64%) and a parcel tax (28%) which sunsets in 2014. Without these two sources of income, the District Library cannot operate. Additional sources of income from the state have also been eliminated recently. The economic downturn resulted in staff reductions, frozen salaries and benefits, Sunday closure, and no increase in services.

OUTREACH
The Strategic Planning Advisory Committee noted that the community had a general lack of awareness about the library and its needs, and effective communication is needed to strengthen the community’s perception of the library. Strategies suggested, include utilizing technology and social media, a greater presence of library staff and board members in the community; better signage and presence of the facility; and development of a script to tell the library’s story, and a well-planned public information campaign.

FACILITIES
The much-loved Main library building is 46 years old. Its infrastructure is aging and the facility is not fully disabled accessible. Only half of the available floor area is accessible with 13,000 square feet of underutilized space on the lower level serving as staff support and storage space. A needs assessment found that the facility needs to be expanded and updated to continue to serve the community and an architectural and engineering study provided several options for expanding the building into a fully accessible, energy-efficient, safe and well-organized library.

TECHNOLOGY
Rapidly changing technology provides a challenge to all libraries. While new technologies provide options for self-service, efficient materials handling, and the ability to post, blog, twitter, and email information to patrons, it does not come without cost. Customers want the latest versions of software, cutting edge technology, and unlimited bandwidth for free high speed wireless Internet access. The Library will develop staff technology competencies, explore loaning portable equipment, and address infrastructure issues.

YOUTH
Service to children is consistently rated as the library’s most valuable service to the community. The development of early childhood literacy, support of school curriculum, welcoming space and relevant collections for teens, and providing a safe after school destination are among the most important services a public library can provide. The Strategic Planning Advisory Committee reaffirmed this priority, recognizing the need for adequate funding and facilities in support of youth services.
Acknowledgements:

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Strategic Planning Advisory Committee Members:

Alex Aghajanian, Esq., Attorney at Law
Alyson Beecher, Former Principal of San Rafael Elementary
John Benedict, Station Captain Altadena Sheriff's Department
Dr. Bernardean Broadous, Altadena Town Council
Marne Brown, President, Friends of the Library
Yvonne Brown, Resident and Community Activist
Michel Choban, Altadena Heritage
Marlene Forsberg, Friends of the Altadena Library
Mark Goldschmidt, Altadena Heritage
Jon Gundry, Superintendent Pasadena Unified School District
Bob Harrison, Former PUSD Board Member and Business Owner
Monica Hubbard, Publisher Altadena Women's Network/Non-profit Consultant
Thomas H. Hubbard, Former School Librarian/Board of Library Trustee
Mark Mariscal, Resident/Former ALD Board Member
Lorena Martinez, Principal Eliot Middle School
Suzi Martin, Volunteer/Editor Altadena Library Literacy Newsletter
Gwendolyn McMullins, Retired Teacher/Board of Library Trustee
Rachel Rehwald-Merriam, Home Schooling Mother/Resident
Michael Spina, Deputy Altadena Sheriff's Department
Joy Strayer, Attorney, Friends of the Library
David Tuck, Chamber of Commerce Representative; Board of Library Trustee
Kim Valentine, Altadena Library Foundation/Planned Giving Director, Scripps College
Jim Vitale, Architect State of CA/Volunteer/Resident
Harlan Ward, Resident

Library Staff:

Erica Buss, Librarian/Branch Services; Recorder; Pauli Dutton, Principal Librarian;
Roberta Lauderdale, Literacy Services; Laureen McCoy, Librarian/Adult Services;
Cassandra Stearns, Librarian/Youth Services; Ashley Rosenberg, Teen Librarian

Altadena Board of Library Trustees:

David Datz, President
Thomas H. Hubbard, Secretary
Dale E. LaCasella
David Tuck
Gwendolyn McMullins

District Director: Barbara J. Pearson

Approved by the Board of Library Trustees on ___ 2013

Main: 600 E. Mariposa Street, Altadena, CA 91001 626-798-0833
Branch: 2659 N. Lincoln Avenue, Altadena, CA 91001 626-798-8338

www.altadenalibrary.org