

# Norfolk Insider

City of Norfolk, NE

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## “Library Space Needs Study Results”

The Norfolk Public Library is serving the public adequately but is restricted by the outdated features and furnishings in providing optimum services to Norfolk citizens. That was the main theme of the report on the library’s space needs given by Nancy Novak of Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture of Omaha. The firm was contracted by the City of Norfolk in October to assess the space needs of the library and a town hall meeting was held at the

library Tuesday night to obtain input from citizens and to report on the findings of the firm’s study.

Novak pointed out that the library was built in 1977 as a place for people to quietly read and study and that modern libraries are now places of interaction.

“A library is the community’s living room,” Novak said to a group of about a dozen people gathered at the meeting. “The library is the heart of the community connecting thought, information and services. Technology should be ubiquitous but not invasive or overwhelming,”



As part of the study, researchers looked at the current and future population of Norfolk, nearly 400 surveys that had been completed throughout the community, results of focus group meetings, library staff input and current library standards.

Several times she noted that security in the library was an issue.

“The restrooms are located at the entrance of the building. There is no direct line of sight from the service desk to the restrooms or from the children’s area to the restrooms,” said Novak noting that there is also a need for a family restroom.

Novak also pointed out that the Information Technology Department did not have appropriate working or storage space and that computer equipment could not be properly secured unless it was locked in a room where all library supplies stored.

Comments from people in the focus groups were overall positive, Novak said, but parents wished there was a more enclosed children’s area in the library and teens mentioned how they could currently use their handheld devices in their school libraries to search for materials but not in the Norfolk library.

Most of the 381 people who filled out the library space needs surveys said they had used the library but wished there were more books for adults, more DVDs, a larger children's area, more parking and more young adult materials.

"The community is pleased with the service they're getting. You're doing a good job of keeping a clean, organized, well serviced library. When a library gets about 40 years old, you'll see cities go into an investigative process to see if it is still adequately meeting the needs of the patrons," Novak said.

A City Council subcommittee will be looking over the results of the library space needs study and recommending if any changes are needed at the library at this time.