

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
LIBRARY BOARD**

Chairperson – Georgia Knazovich - Wasilla	Karen Crandall – Big Lake	Sally Pollen - Palmer
Vice Chair – Kathy Kysar - Sutton	Mary Fischer - Talkeetna	Virginia Robson – Trapper Creek
Secretary – Chad Scott – At Large 1	Mark Spohn - Willow	Martha Kincaid – At Large 2



AGENDA

**Trapper Creek Public Library and Teams
Meeting ID: 289 421 144 590 Passcode: Zw9Cj63Y**

REGULAR MEETING

1:00 PM

MAY 13, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. AGENDA APPROVAL

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

V. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING

A. April 8, 2025

VI. STAFF REPORTS

- A. Hugh Leslie – Recreation & Library Services Manager
- B. Librarians

VII. PERSONS TO BE HEARD/AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – (3 Minutes Per Person)

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Borough Presentation – report
- B. Positive comments on libraries
- C. Budget Comments

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Board member attendance
- B. Master calendar for libraries
- C. Public welcome in libraries

X. ADVOCACY

XI. CORRESPONDANCE

XII. MEMBER COMMENTS

XIII. NEXT MEETING

- A. August 12, 2025 Big Lake Library

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
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Mary Fischer - Talkeetna
Mark Spohn - Willow

Vacant - Palmer
Virginia Robson – Trapper Creek
Martha Kincaid – At Large 2

Meeting Minutes

**REGULAR MEETING
Talkeetna Public Library and Teams**

**April 8, 2025
1:00 PM**

I. CALL TO ORDER

- A. The Meeting on April 8, 2025 was called to order at 1:00 PM by Chairperson Georgia Knazovich at the Talkeetna Public Library.

II. ROLL CALL – DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

- A. Present were Georgia Knazovich, Kathy Kysar, Karen Crandall, Mary Fischer, Mark Spohn, and Marty Kincaid. A quorum was present.

III. AGENDA APPROVAL

- A. Kathy Kysar moved to accept the agenda; seconded by Karen Crandall. Agenda was approved.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- A. The Pledge of Allegiance was made.

V. MINUTES OF THE PRECEDING MEETING

- A. Mary Fischer moved to accept the February minutes; seconded by Karen Crandall. The minutes were accepted unanimously.

VI. BOROUGH STAFF REPORTS

- A. Hugh Leslie – Recreation & Library Services Manager: Mr. Leslie gave updates on public meetings and budget discussions. Informed the Board of a new member, Sally Pollen, who will begin at the May meeting. Discussed an online library survey, the Community Development Department’s initiation of the strategic plan,
- B. Zane Treesh - Wasilla: Discussed progress and process for library expansion. Gave updates on events; kids concerts, fundraisers, books sales.

- C. Cassidy Drake - Big Lake Library: Discussed a successful book sale, kids programs, upgraded DVD cases, Lava lamp event, and a silent auction raising money for kids programs and a future remodel.
- D. Juli Buzby-Sutton: Gave updates on Easter programs and fundraisers, baskets, and silent auctions. They have a community movie night, community garden programs, as well as homeschool events.
- E. Julie Mitchell - Willow: Gave updates for herself and Willow, and Marita at Trapper Creek. Trapper Creek has been well attended and has begun planting seeds for Mother's Day flowers. They are fundraising, selling pins at the Cabin Fever Reliever Festival and a bookmark contest raffle.
- F. Geri Denkewalter - Talkeetna: Talkeetna has two new hires, Christina and Geron. They have had a book sale and are continuing the summer reading program, refurbishing the community herb garden, poetry activities, and a Molly of Denali event.

VII. PERSONS TO BE HEARD/AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – 3 minutes per person

- A. Sandra Eldridge: Talked about the importance of the Library and great memories made there.
- B. Peg Vas: Described local nonprofits gathering at the library to collaborate and the importance of the Library for the community to have a place to interact.
- C. Jackie Goforth: expressed her love for libraries and concerns about X-rated content, the Rose Group, and libraries losing patrons to internet and cell phone usage.
- D. Karen Lewis: Commented in favor of positive statements about the library, except for what she called obscene books, stating this was the only problem with the libraries. She also expressed concerns with the Rose Group verbally disparaging the conservative board members and committees publicly.
- E. (unintelligible) Schoenberger: Spoke in favor of retaining books that have been challenged, saying the community has a choice and children should have a choice to chose books for themselves because children need to be exposed to the world.
- F. Corinne Smith: Spoke in support of the Libraries and thanked the Board for traveling through the borough to attend meetings. As a reading mentor, she has seen how the The library is a good, quiet place for them to come and read or do schoolwork.
- G. Trisha Costello: Expressed concerns about the Library Citizens Advisory Board and shared support for librarians.

- H. Mary Oliver: Shared support for the library's facilities, librarians, and programs, and the community her and her children have enjoyed at the Library.
- I. Ruth Wood: Spoke in support of the Rose Group and claimed statements made by Jackie Goforth and Karen Lewis specifically were untrue.
- J. Christie: Talked about the importance of community meeting places and expressed confidence in the librarians to provide appropriate materials for the Library.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Minutes from January 14, 2025, meeting: A motion was made to approve the minutes, which was seconded and passed 3-3.
- B. Borough Presentation: A motion was made to approve the presentation, which was seconded and passed.
- C. Robert's Rules of Order: Discussion was held about the Clerk and Staff's input regarding RRO as it applies to borough boards, it was agreed that changes had been made would be followed going forward.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. LCAC Scorecard: Discussion was made concerning questions on the LCAC scorecard card and having the board write a letter suggesting possible edits. A motion was made and passed that Kathy Kysar would prepare suggested changes and submit them to the board at the next meeting.
- B. Information from the Alaska Library Association: Marty Kincaid expressed concern and curiosity about the nature and availability of funding sources for Libraries through the Alaska Library Association. She warned that due to the national trend of spending cuts, we should attempt to ensure that Libraries are not harmed.

Zane Treesh Stated that the possible cuts so far represented about \$7,000.00 per Library but it has been implied to him that work is being done to restore that funding.

- C. Affirmations of the Libraries: Mary Fischer discussed the possibility of asking the assembly to put on the agenda an opportunity. Staff replied that the Library is allotted time once every 6 months to present updates on the Library.

X. ADVOCACY

- A. Check articles in papers and blogs

XI. CORRESPONDENCE

- A. None

XII. MEMBER COMMENTS

- A. Kathy Kysar: Expressed gratitude to the Talkeetna Library for hosting the Board. She shared her disappointment that Talkeetna is not more represented in the Assembly and LCAC.
- B. Marty Kincaid: Made comments in support of further promotion of the Libraries and expressed concerns about the dangers of AI and sexually explicit materials for minors.
- C. Karen Crandell: Talked about the importance of everyone being able to express their feelings on important issues. She discussed a desire to get past the issue of pornographic materials in the libraries so that families could be protected and get back to the business of supporting libraries.
- D. Mark Spohn: inquired openly about the Board's role in reviewing the budget.

XIII. NEXT MEETING

- A. May 13, 2025 Trapper Creek Library

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

- A. Meeting adjourned at 2:55 PM

COMPANY OVERVIEW

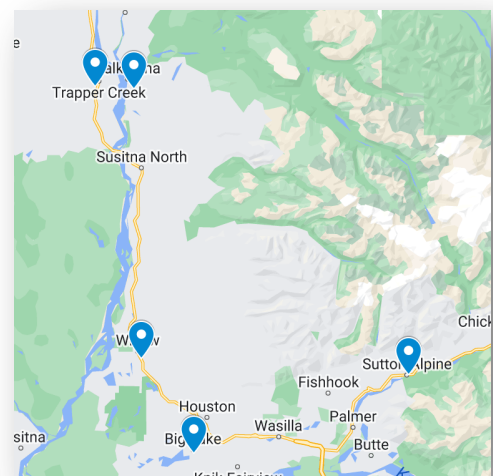
Rose Group International (RGI) is a boutique consultancy headquartered in Spearfish, South Dakota, that specializes in strategic planning, leadership development, and project and change management. We are women-owned, and our founders were raised in South Dakota farm and ranch families, which is reflected in our commitment to excellence and integrity. Our consultancy was deliberately designed to support a wide variety of industries, so we have built a team that has professional experience ranging from NASA to mining administration, higher education, manufacturing, the US military, and more. With this rich background, we can customize our offerings, working with teams large and small; in a variety of contexts, including government agencies, corporate entities, and nonprofit organizations; from facilitating multinational projects to borough library system strategic plans.

RGI is different from other consultancies as it has both a robust operational focus that partners with a people-center approach. It is the people that make our organizations thrive, be that patrons, staff, or kids we see grow up and thrive through our library services. For strategic plans to succeed, plans must be practical and powerful, doable and inspirational, allow staff to succeed while encouraging partners to give. Too many strategic plans are put on a shelf and gather dust. It is our goal that MSB Libraries have a strategic plan that lives and breathes for public good for years to come.

1. OBJECTIVES AND SERVICES

RGI has proven frameworks for strategic planning best practices that closely align with the Scope of Services required by Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) Libraries. The unique aspects of MSB Libraries, such as their role in rural communities in Alaska, are what makes the MSB Libraries strategic plan interesting, and requires the bespoke approach that we offer.

Rural libraries are the hub of a community. Eighty percent of our consultants live and work in a rural area, with populations similar to the MSB Library communities – in areas such as Groton, South Dakota (population 1,688). Upon reviewing the MSB Libraries sites, the breadth of activities offered (beyond making available the joy of reading) for all ages demonstrate their engagement with, and commitment to, their communities. However, with the Mat-Su as a growing area of Alaska, strategic planning will play a vital role in how the future of the MSB Libraries grows and thrives.



Rural libraries have been early adopters of technology that supports expanded access to resources, new ways of learning, and offer the ability to use digital materials. With the advent of AI, and other emerging technologies, MSB Libraries will want to have strategic plans in place regarding what trends will be here to stay, and which will be a flash in the pan. RGI's Dr. Rachel MK Headley is uniquely positioned to support MSB Libraries with her technology background.

While AI discussions will be much more in depth throughout the strategic planning efforts, some aspects of AI to consider include:

- Personalized literary programming
- Data-driven resource evaluation and expansion
- Foreign-language (or ESL) translation
- New communication approaches for staff and patrons

Strategic planning for public libraries requires a community-centered approach, focusing on services and resources tailored to the specific needs of the library's patrons. RGI would include the following consideration in MSB Libraries Mission, Vision, Core Values, Priorities, Goals, Objectives, and assessment of each library's environment and services:

1. Community-Driven Approach: Public libraries must prioritize community engagement in the planning process, with an emphasis on public service and inclusivity.
2. Focus on Accessibility and Inclusivity: Public libraries serve diverse populations, including marginalized groups. Strategic planning must include accessibility and inclusivity.
3. Educational and Cultural Mission: Public libraries are centers for lifelong learning and cultural enrichment, so strategic plans must focus on educational programs, literacy, and cultural initiatives.
4. Adapting to Technological Changes: Libraries must continually assess and respond to new technology trends and digital needs.
5. Building Community Partnerships: Public libraries rely heavily on partnerships to expand their reach and resource offerings without incurring excessive costs.
6. Measurement of Social Impact: Public libraries measure success by social impact—factors like increased literacy rates, community satisfaction, and library engagement.
7. Promoting Library Advocacy and Community Awareness: Libraries depend on public perception and local government support. Strategic planning often includes initiatives to boost library awareness and advocacy.

Strategic planning in public libraries combines community engagement, inclusivity, resource stewardship, and educational advancement, setting them apart from the profit-driven strategies found in many other sectors.

At RGI, we know the power of effective strategic planning. The development of a mission-based strategic plan will help the MSB Libraries continue to evolve as community needs change.

Community research qualitative and quantitative data gathering will be done through typical means – focus groups, 1:1 interviews, online surveys, review of patronage and services popularity, and so forth. The most important aspect of data gathering will be making it as easy as possible for the community to contribute their thoughts. This strategy will be co-created in partnership with MSB Library staff to ensure each community library has opportunities to represent their particular needs and will be included in a Communication Management Plan (CMP). Some ideas include:

- Gathering information in-person at established events/activities/meetings
- Working with Library board members to encourage patrons filling out online surveys
- Providing QR codes to online surveys at popular venues, such as coffee shops, gyms, or homeschool events.
- Visiting community partners in person to conduct individual or small-group interviews

Including this co-created approach into the CMP ensures a comprehensive view of current perceptions and future desires for library services, capturing a wide range of community voices.

RGI consultant will conduct strategic meetings at each library location in the borough. These community meetings are fun and engaging, creating an environment of possibility and future-focus. We also ensure specific, actionable data is gathered that can heavily inform the strategic plan.

Key Deliverables

1. **Communication Management Plan** – This plan is created after detailed discussions with the MSB Library leadership to determine an overall communication strategy to the communities, community library staff, patrons, and partners. This will be a guiding document throughout the life of the project.
2. **Comprehensive Strategic Plan** – This document needs to be useful, practical, and helpful to MSB Libraries in making operational decisions. This begins with a clear mission, vision, and set of core values for the libraries and establish measurable, well-defined goals. A flexible review and adjustment process will also be established to ensure the plan remains responsive to shifts in economic, demographic, and political landscapes. This document will incorporate detailed community profiles for each of the five libraries in Big Lake, Sutton, Talkeetna, Trapper Creek, and Willow. It will also include an assessment of each library's strengths, challenges, service quality, community reputation, management, and budget structure.
3. **Implementation Plan** – Once the future is established, a gap analysis can be conducted to determine how that future will be achieved. Tasks can range from massive undertakings (a new building) to more manageable (more STEM programming). RGI has a robust project

management practice and can provide a plan that can be progressively elaborated as tasks are accomplished or situations change.

4. **Community Presentation** – If done correctly, by the time the draft strategic plan is unveiled, the entire interested community of the Mat-Su should be aware it's coming. Sharing the strategic plan with the community is an opportunity to showcase all the work the patrons and members have contributed and demonstrate to the Mat-Su Borough Assembly the desired direction the stakeholders are eager for the MSB Libraries to pursue.

This approach is designed to create a community-centered, sustainable strategic plan that will elevate library services across the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, ensuring these public spaces continue to thrive and evolve in response to community needs.

RGI works with universities, municipalities, and nonprofit organizations, and a unifying factor is that the organizations need to forecast the needs of the community members they serve. Community libraries all over the country are evolving their services to include expanding digital and remote services, providing spaces for community and collaboration, supporting digital literacy and bridging the digital divide, launching inclusion initiatives and ensuring diverse collections, and even launching health and wellness initiatives, as are reflected at the MSB Libraries of Big Lake, Trapper Creek, Sutton, Willow, and Talkeetna.

RGI consultants are self-professed book nerds, educators, and life-long learners, so we are delighted by the opportunity to collaborate with library staff, community members, and the Mat-Su Borough Assembly to build a strategic plan that ensures the libraries are well-equipped to meet the needs of their communities.

2. RELEVANT PROJECT EXPERIENCE

RGI provides services for strategic plan development to over 12 organizations each year. Below are three examples:

1. **ANTHC**: An Alaskan client, demonstrating our ability to work in the region
2. **SDSU**: A land-grant, public-education client, demonstrating our ability to work with educators and those who support communities.
3. **City of Austin**, Texas: a municipal client (10th largest municipality in the US), demonstrating our ability to work with public departments to the service of their communities.

ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM (ANTHC) is a healthcare system that is a collaboration between Indian Health Service (IHS), Tribal Health Organizations (THOs), and other state and federal organizations to provide healthcare preventive education, and major development

projects to improve the lives for native Alaskans from across the region. Having been founded in the late 1990's, the organization was faced with their first major infrastructure refresh, as well as recovery from COVID-focused processes and the need for expansion.

This project included a comprehensive analysis, strategy plan development, and implementation of project processes and required a high level of communication and collaboration with ANTHC executive-level leaders and operational managers, in addition to high levels of stakeholder engagement. RGI personnel developed operational flowcharts for project proposal, evaluation, and approval; designed processes and procedures and the manual describing them; established a governance structure; and overall improved the entire organization's ability to execute large, multi-departmental projects.

Deliverables included summary reports of large stakeholder data gathering efforts, documented current state, desired future state, recommended strategies and phasing for implementation, operationalizing tasks and activities, interfacing with numerous, weekly updates to ANTHC leadership.

RGI has been collaborating with ANTHC since December 2022, also demonstrating our capabilities to combine on-site and remote work effectively to achieve the objectives. ANTHC leadership is highly satisfied with RGI performance, repeatedly exercising extension options.

- RGI Consultants: Dr. Rachel MK Headley (lead), Troy Moore, Meg McNeese
- Length of Engagement: 12 months + extension option by quarter (95% complete)
- Contract value: \$1.6M+
- Heidi Wailand, Vice President of Strategy & Analytics: (907) 729-2607

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY (SDSU) is a land-grant university institution located in Brookings, South Dakota. The current President emphasizes the land-grant mission of accessible education for all.

RGI was selected to provide facilitation and advisory services to support the implementation of their new 2030 strategic plan. This effort includes the facilitation of professional development workshops, as well as one-on-one coaching with the 20 top leaders. Particular emphasis was placed on generating buy-in and "bottom up" development of strategic initiatives, which required a high level of engagement with personnel and regular communication.

At the conclusion of the summer 2023 workshops, SDSU's President, Dr. Barry Dunn, remarked, "We hit a homerun hiring Rose Group." Survey results showed 4.8/5 stars satisfaction rating for RGI facilitators.

Deliverables included: white paper summaries of interviews, stakeholder surveys, KPI recommendations; comparative analysis report of similar institutions' goals and KPIs; workshop

facilitation (3); template materials for action plan development; recommendations for reporting and governance cycle; and presentation of findings for Senior Staff. All deliverables were completed on schedule, most over the first six months, with ongoing consultation for the remaining six.

- RGI Consultants: Dr. Rachel MK Headley (lead), Deb Schuelke
- Length of Engagement: 12 months, 3 months
- Amount: \$146,000
- Dr. Barry Dunn, University President: (605) 688-4165

City of Austin, Texas. RGI was selected by the Financial Services Department to evaluate current practices, share best practices, and develop city personnel to improve service to vendors and the Austin community. This contract is entirely remote and uses virtual meetings and sessions and an online portal for document access and review.

Deliverables include: Best practices and how they align with City of Austin's processes (submitted for review and approval by both the Financial Services Department and City of Austin communication standards committee), anonymous participant feedback reports.

The City is highly satisfied with RGI's work, providing a 4.8 of 5.0 stars on a recent anonymous feedback survey.

- RGI Consultants: Deb Schuelke (lead), Meg McNeese, Troy Moore
- Length of Engagement: 3 years with optional 2, 1-year extensions (20% complete)
- Amount: \$300,000
- Michelle Pierre, Financial Services Department: (512) 978-1752

3. PROPOSED PROJECT STAFF

Dr. Rachel MK Headley - Project Lead

For the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Public Libraries Strategic Plan project, Rachel will serve as the project lead. This includes conducting interviews and stakeholder sessions, analyzing the branch libraries (SWOT format), collaborating with Borough staff, and finalizing the strategic plan and associated deliverables. These functions will be performed in-person and remote, as indicated by the function. Her state of residence is South Dakota.

In her 8 years as CEO of Rose Group International, Rachel has helped leaders in numerous industries with strategic planning efforts. She is well-versed in the mission-driven environment of municipal services, as well as the need for deliberate planning and documentation. With decades of experience leading complex projects, Rachel connects action plans with strategic goals, always evaluating an organization's ability to implement the strategies. She serves as the lead consultant for many strategic planning clients annually, including RGI's engagement with South Dakota State University. With that

engagement, she conducted 1-on-1 interviews, wrote summary reports, conducted data analysis, facilitated workshops, and provided expert recommendations.

As a certified Project Management Professional (PMP), Rachel approaches engagements with deliberation and professionalism, ensuring that each milestone is met on-schedule. She has been serving as the lead consultant for RGI's engagement with ANTHC, so she has a connection to the Alaska community and its people.

Professional References:

Dr. Barry Dunn, University President SDSU Barry.Dunn@sdstate.edu (605) 688-4165	Heidi Wailand, VP of Strategy & Analytics ANTHC htwailand@anthc.org (907) 729-2607	Dorothy Voorhees, CEO Sentinel Federal Credit Union DorothyV@sentinelfcu.org 605-923-6745
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Deb Schuelke – Project Support

For the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Public Libraries Strategic Plan project, Deb will complete supporting tasks, such as survey development, data collection and analysis, and deliverable drafts. As RGI's communication expert, she will also develop custom materials as needed for the engagement. With a state of residence of South Dakota, her work will primarily be remote.

Deb is a lifelong communications student and expert, with decades of experience working in the field. Her experience includes participation in strategic planning, accreditation documentation, and leadership. She has both annual and strategic planning and assessment, including the leadership and training of staff. She frequently supports strategic planning efforts, most recently with South Dakota State University. With that engagement, she conducted 1-on-1 interviews, wrote summary reports, conducted data analysis, facilitated workshops, and generated custom templates and graphics.

Professional References:

Karyn Weber, Chief of Staff SDSU Karyn.Weber@sdstate.edu (605) 688-4165	Dr. Brenda Merkel, Assistant Professor Dakota State University Brenda.Merkel@dsu.edu (605) 380-7015	Dr. Daniel Scholl, Vice President SDSU Daniel.Scholl@sdstate.edu (605) 688-617
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4. METHODS

RGI is confident we can work effectively with stakeholders and key personnel in the Public Library Strategic Plan project, both in-person and remotely. RGI will not engage any subcontractors on this project.

Phase 1: Orientation and Stakeholder Engagement

RGI consultants will:

- Hold a Kick-Off Meeting with MSB Libraries POC and community library leaders
- Create a Communication Management Plan
- Review any existing strategic plan and associated documents
- Review any existing annual planning, reporting procedures, shared governance responsibilities, and community impact information
- Conduct up to 20, 1:1 interviews with key stakeholders, including selected staff, board members, or partners
- Schedule community meetings at each community library
- Online survey will be developed and distributed to gather insights related to the current state and strategic direction of the community libraries (with MSB Libraries approval)

Key Deliverables/Milestones	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project Kick-Off Meeting 2. Community Management Plan 3. Interviews completed 4. Community meetings scheduled 5. Survey Instrument approved 6. Survey deployed
Timeline	November
Format	Remote

Phase 2: Stakeholder Engagement, Environmental Scan, & SWOT

RGI consultants will:

- Complete environmental scan to include broad library trends, technology trends, and Alaska demographic trends.
- Complete a SWOT analysis and environmental scan for each library branch
- Create a Stakeholder Feedback white paper that includes analysis from 1:1 interviews and online surveys.
- If possible, community meetings will be held (they may have to be in January, depending on holidays, etc.).

Key Deliverables/Milestones	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Environmental Scan – including community profiles 2. SWOT analysis for each community library 3. Stakeholder Feedback white paper draft
Timeline	December
Format	Hybrid - On-site facilitation of community meetings, if possible

Phase 3: Draft Development

RGI consultants will:

- Hold community meetings at community libraries, if schedules haven't allowed before this.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Vision, Mission, and Core Values • Develop Service Priorities and Goals, guided by stakeholder input, environmental scan, and SWOT analysis • Collaborate with community library key personnel to identify Objectives and action plans that will support the Service Priorities and Goals • Identify appropriate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure Goals and Objectives are measurable 	
Key Deliverables/Milestones	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete community meetings and adjust Stakeholder Feedback white paper as needed 2. Vision, Mission, and Core Values Draft 3. Service Priorities, Goals, and Objectives draft 4. KPIs draft
Timeline	January
Format	RGI In-person for community engagement, remote otherwise
Phase 4: Completion and presentation of final drafts	
RGI consultants will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop governance strategies, including process of regular review, evaluation and adjustment to the plan • Develop cost estimates related to service improvements to service and facilities outlined in the Strategic Plan, with input from Mat-Su Borough key personnel • Develop implementation plan with timelines and cost estimates 	
Key Deliverables/Milestones	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete community meetings and adjust Stakeholder Feedback white paper as needed 2. Vision, Mission, and Core Values Draft 3. Service Priorities, Goals, and Objectives draft 4. KPIs draft
Timeline	Completed by February 14, 2025
Format	RGI in-person for draft presentation (if desired), remote otherwise

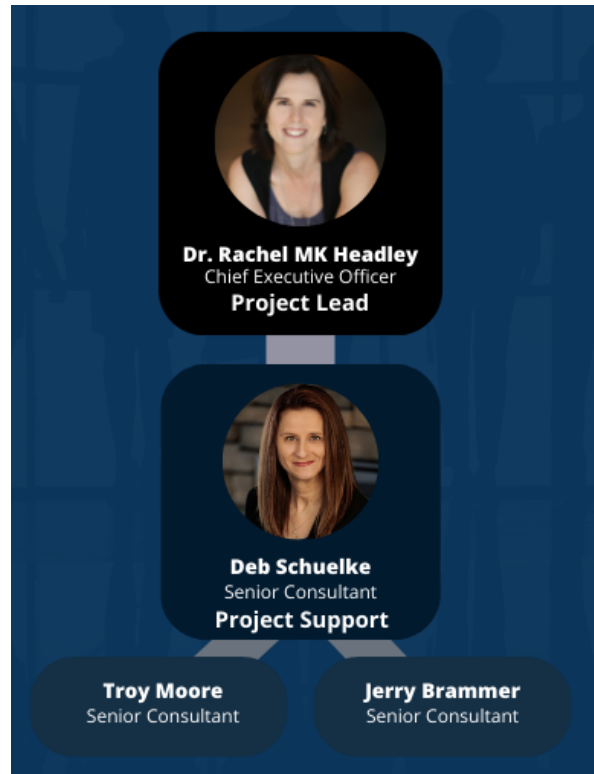
5. MANAGEMENT

Dr. Rachel MK Headley will be the Project Lead for this engagement. As the CEO of RGI, she has authority to make decisions on behalf of the organization. She is also the designated point of contact, so Mat-Su Borough leadership and staff will always have her direct contact as the project progresses. Rachel will be leading the in-person activities with the community libraries, MSB Library leadership, and the Mat-Su Borough Assembly.

Deb Schuelke will be the Project Support for this engagement and will complete tasks as assigned by Rachel. She will be drafting the Communication Management Plan and will be responsible for ensuring its coordination. She will also be actively interacting with Mat-Su community libraries and will be summarizing qualitative and quantitative data from stakeholder engagement and other documentation provided by the community libraries. Deb can also reach down into our organization for additional support, if necessary.

At the start of the engagement, RGI will collaborate with Mat-Su Borough personnel to establish a cadence of regular communication designed to build relationships and monitor project progress, but also providing Mat-Su Borough personnel open channels of communication to ask questions or provide feedback. This will be included in the Communication Management Plan as outlined above. Ensuring open lines of communication and regular updates means we can address any client concerns early.

If an issue does arise, personnel on either team can elevate those issues to a meeting of the MSB Library POC and RGI's COO, Meg McNeese (since our CEO is engaged in this effort). The opportunity to official call attention to a conflict or problem allows the project team to manage issues when they are much smaller than they can otherwise become. That being said, RGI clients have never felt the need to use this option since RGI's founding in 2017.



SUMMARY AND AUTHORIZATION

We understand the power of strategic planning, but also understand that it can feel threatening to some of our leadership, staff, partners, and community members. We will represent MSB Libraries and the community libraries with the professionalism and courtesy that your process demands, always representing the Mat-Su, MSB Libraries, and the communities in a way you can be proud of. Thank you for the opportunity to support this important work.


Dr. Rachel MK Headley, CEO | Rose Group International | 605.323.9650 | rachel@rosegrouptl.com

LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

Matanuska-Susitna Borough, AK



OBJECTIVES AND SERVICES

Since Matanuska-Susitna Borough's strategic plan developed in partnership with Library Systems & Services (LS&S) in 2017-2018, LS&S has evolved, particularly with the introduction of LibraryIQ in 2018. Based in Rockville, Maryland, LibraryIQ is dedicated to helping public libraries achieve excellence through data-driven insights and cutting-edge consulting services and was established with one goal: To help libraries realize their full potential for service to the community. By integrating advanced data analytics with strategic and community-related assessments, LibraryIQ supports over 1,300 public library clients and numerous consulting projects across the country. LibraryIQ professionals, nearly 50 specialists in public libraries, most of whom have MLS or MLIS degrees, believe that public libraries are crucial resources for life enrichment, education, entertainment, and community connection. **All team members care deeply about public libraries and the people they serve.**

LibraryIQ believes that in order to advance core values of open access to information and community service, libraries must evolve and embrace new service models, technologies - including AI - and operations, all while retaining high-quality collections and excellent patron service. With nationwide public library experience, LibraryIQ has helped a variety of libraries - from single branch rural locations to sprawling multi-branch systems - thrive with detailed, successful strategic plans that chart short and long-term goals and objectives.

With the LibraryIQ Analytics Platform, the strategic planning team will analyze operational and local data to uncover key library insights and gain a deep, thorough understanding of Matanuska-Susitna Borough. **We will develop a strategic plan for Matanuska-Susitna Borough Libraries that will: be responsive to Alaska and national library trends, examine community growth patterns and demographics, and identify the need for services and facilities with respect to future trends in collections, programming services, and technologies. The plan will also analyze funding needs to respond to goals, objectives, and activities.**

RELEVANT PROJECT EXPERIENCE

LibraryIQ is dedicated to helping public libraries achieve excellence through data-driven insights and cutting-edge consulting services. Through our history and strategies learned in our work with communities across the nation, we will develop a comprehensive and forward-thinking strategic plan that will guide the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Libraries into the future. Examples of LibraryIQ expertise is demonstrated by the strategic plans developed in collaboration with the following libraries and communities:

Siouxland Libraries: Post-Pandemic Boom Creates New Service Needs

Location: Sioux Falls, SD

Service: Strategic Plan

Completion Date: May 2022

Client Reference: Jodi Fick, Library Director

200 North Dakota Ave

Sioux Falls SD 57117

605-367-8713

jfick@siouxfalls.org

Challenges

Balancing service to an influx of new residents arriving after the pandemic while meeting the needs of urban and rural communities meant South Dakota's Siouxland Libraries needed innovative solutions.

Project

Through a highly-collaborative process with Library, City, and community leaders, LibraryIQ led an inclusive and thorough process of input and feedback from a diverse group of residents from Sioux Falls and Minnehaha County combined with careful data and operational environment analysis. Using the LibraryIQ Analytics Platform to collect resident and patron consumer segmentation along with key library operation and collection performance information, the team balanced data with experience to best understand Sioux Falls' needs. LibraryIQ's strategic deep-dive into Siouxland's operations revealed the Libraries' high levels of trust and value among residents. Appreciation for the hardworking staff, affirmation of current services and programs, and strong desire for even more services emerged. Some significant challenges were also uncovered. Fast growth meant new residents did not have adequate information about the community. Residents in rural, suburban, and urban areas assumed the only way to access Library services was through brick and mortar locations and outreach services were decentralized.

Results

LibraryIQ devised a strategic plan to ensure the Libraries realize their potential as a hub for civic connection, information, education, and fun. The plan emphasized awareness and accessibility for residents – new and longtime – in central and rural locations. Specific, actionable objectives ensured the Libraries provided inviting spaces for in-person library visits and enhanced the outreach experience. All of this was underscored by strategies for robust marketing and communication to get the word out about the Libraries' valuable offerings. Today, the Libraries play a more prominent role as a destination for community events and activities and continue to serve as the go-to source for literacy and life enrichment.

New Port Richey Public Library: Meeting Urgent Resident Needs in a Diverse Community

Location: New Port Richey, FL
Service: Strategic Plan
Completion Date: September 2022
Client Reference: Andrea Figart, Library Director
5939 Main St
New Port Richey, FL 34652
727-853-1262
FigartA@cityofnewportrichey.org

Challenges

Recently renovated and beautifully welcoming, the New Port Richey Public Library serves a highly diverse population. From retirees enjoying the area's natural beauty to families with young children to low-income immigrants, the entire community depends on the Library. Requests for help with immediate food and shelter needs are balanced with providing literacy services for children and students as well as engaging social activities for seniors. The Library also serves as a key information source during heat, hurricanes, and other weather events.

Project

LibraryIQ led a robust strategic planning that evaluated engagement with the collection and programs, identified opportunities for partnerships and out-of-building services, and developed objectives to support Library sustainability and local economic growth. In collaboration with Library and City leaders, LibraryIQ reached out to nearly 500 people with an online survey, focus groups, individual interviews and direct staff participation. Ideas and feedback were gathered from business, education, and nonprofit leaders, patrons, and volunteers. Respondents affirmed some current services and communicated desire for even more, especially opportunities for social connection, tactics to help those in immediate need of social services, and Main Street business partnership. These findings formed the framework for the plan's strategic goals. LibraryIQ tailored the plan to address the diverse socioeconomic population by focusing goals on increased library awareness, population-reflective programs, and creating a sense of community and culture in the library's space.

Results

After just one year of strategic plan execution, the Library raised significant funds toward a mobile library unit, increased usage through targeted marketing, and helped low-income residents access reliable public transportation. The Library is firmly established as a central hub for connection, culture, and support, especially during weather events.

Yuba County Library: Creating Effective Operations and Maximizing Budget

Location: Yuba County, CA
Service: Library Operations Assessment, Strategic Plan
Completion Date: May 2018
Client Reference: Kevin Mallon, Director, Yuba County Community Development & Services Agency
915 8th St
Marysville, CA 95901
530-749-5430
kmallen@CO.YUBA.CA.US

The Challenge

In 2013, staffing and budget cuts resulted in reduced hours of operation - to just four days a week - for Northern California's Yuba County Library. Five years later, the Library was still struggling to return to service levels to meet resident needs. Library leaders needed precise understanding of current operations, where efficiencies could be realized, and how to deploy resources to best meet community needs. And all this needed to happen in a fast-changing landscape.

The Project

LibraryIQ consultants partnered with Library leaders to develop a locally-tailored strategic planning process. Data analysis from the LibraryIQ Analytics Platform revealed specific areas where the collection and budget could be adjusted for greater impact. Patron segmentation data provided insight into the best ways to better engage Library cardholders and reach new users. LibraryIQ combined this data analysis with extensive community input and library expertise. This methodology – blending the art and science of strategic planning – resulted in a plan that was both visionary and achievable. LibraryIQ managed the process, facilitating community engagements, conducting individual interviews, and synthesizing the gathered information to ensure the plan reflected community need. Regular meetings with the project team kept communication flowing freely and the work on schedule. Crucial to the success was access to the LibraryIQ Analytics Platform, which harvested data regarding all areas of library operation, print, and electronic collection performance. Also included was Yuba County resident and library patron consumer segmentation and collection use. **Only LibraryIQ offers the combination of data analytics, community input, and consultants who are experts in successful modern library operation.**

The Result

By executing plan objectives, the Library - formerly closed every Monday – added a full day of operation. New services, partnerships programs, and technology improvements meant more educational and enrichment programs for the community, and all-important patron service improved.

PROPOSED PROJECT STAFF

LibraryIQ is eminently qualified to provide strategic planning services to Matanuska-Susitna Borough. LibraryIQ professionals will carefully analyze the five libraries' current operations and capacities for growth and will help ensure the libraries grow with the Borough. Below is our team for this project:



**Deborah Joy, MLS, Managing Director
Project Lead (Primary Point of Contact)**

Phone: 410-456-5881 | Email: debbie.joy@lsslibraries.com

Debbie, based in South Carolina, is a library professional focused on public library strategy, innovation and operational excellence. Debbie manages LibraryIQ Advisory services, including strategic planning, facility assessment and planning, operations assessment and community needs assessment. She previously managed strategic planning and marketing for LS&S-operated libraries. At the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, Debbie's work

included funding of literacy programs for children, teens, and adults. Debbie brings a collaborative, focused, results-driven approach. Her strategy, assessment, marketing and funding experience combines with a deep dedication to the mission of the public library. She earned a Master of Library Science from the University of Maryland and a Bachelor of Science in Journalism from the University of Kansas.



Henry Tracy, Information Technology Systems Administrator

Phone: 530-339-1099 | Email: henry.tracy@lsslibraries.com

An IT specialist for over 14 years, Henry, based in California, demonstrates leadership in systems, network, and server administration along with IT service management. He has previously worked in mental health administration, IT systems design, and private security. Henry is a veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan, where he served as an Airborne Artilleryman, and is passionate about improving libraries and designing effective and innovative information systems.



Amy Johnson, MLS, Director, Collection Management

Phone: 570-660-4298 | Email: amy.johnson@lsslibraries.com

Amy, based in California, is an accomplished library professional with decades of experience in cataloging and collection development. She specializes in transforming library collections through data-driven insights and streamlined workflows. Amy brings a unique blend of analytical expertise and user-centric focus to every project, consistently delivering innovative solutions for libraries of all sizes. She earned a Master of Library Science from the State University of New York at Buffalo and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Penn State, Erie.



Rebecca Piazza, Content Marketing Specialist

Phone: 443-910-4994 | Email: rebecca.piazza@lsslibraries.com

Rebecca, based in Maryland, creates compelling content to drive engagement and fulfill the needs and interests of a variety of target audiences. From case studies, presentations, promotional copy, proposals, and social media posts, Rebecca delivers consistency in the LS&S and LibraryIQ voice, style, and tone. She has her Master of Fine Arts in Writing from Hollins University and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art and Design and a Bachelor of Science in English from Towson University.

REFERENCES

GRAYSLAKE AREA PUBLIC LIBRARY, ILLINOIS

[Strategic Plan \(2024\)](#)

Tim Longo

Library Director

Grayslake Area Public Library District

100 Library Lane

Grayslake, Illinois 60030

tlongo@grayslake.info

LIVONIA PUBLIC LIBRARY

[Strategic Plan 2024](#)

Kristen Edson | Library Director

Kristen Edson | Library Director

32777 Five Mile Road | Livonia, MI 48154

(734) 466-2491 | kedson@livoniapubliclibrary.org

ST. MARY'S COUNTY LIBRARY, MARYLAND

[Strategic Plan 2024](#)

Michael Blackwell

Director

23630 Hayden Farm Lane

Leonardtown, MD 20650

301-475-2151

mblackwell@stmalib.org

METHODS

Matanuska-Susitna Borough's strategic plan will include comprehensive analysis of library operational data, incorporation of the needs of the community, analysis of where the libraries' can have the greatest impact, and identification for collaborative opportunities and administrative requirements for executing the strategic plan. The plan will include a vision and mission statement, goals, measurable objectives, and proposed activities to meet expressed community needs for library service over the next five years. The Borough's strategic plan will also specify strategic goals and detailed objectives for reaching them. **No subcontractors will be used for this project.**

PROJECT APPROACH

Phase One: Discovery and Analysis

November 22 - December 20, 2024

Please note these dates are subject to change pending project start date.

Library administrator will identify a strategic planning team to collaborate on the project. A virtual project kickoff meeting will be held to share the data collection and analysis approach and to confirm project scope, schedule, and methodology. The Matanuska-Susitna Borough's history, business climate, educational opportunities, and projections for growth will all be studied, as will existing public resources. LibraryIQ consultants will perform a community demographic analysis resulting in an overall market view.

Matanuska-Susitna Borough factors will be reviewed including: Population demographics, growth projections, economic and educational climate (including local community colleges and universities), cultural climate, civic engagement, and historical context

LibraryIQ consultants will use proprietary technology to compare the libraries with selected peer libraries of similar size and budget including spending analysis, staff per 1,000 population and cost, visits, library use, and five-year service and funding trends.

LibraryIQ Analytics Platform Access: LibraryIQ will perform patron analysis and consumer segmentation during Phase One. This segmentation data is also provided for Matanuska-Susitna Borough households who are non-users. The Analytics Platform will also provide data about collection performance (including electronic materials), the diversity, equity, and inclusion of the collection, and real-time budget tracking.

This exclusive access to the LibraryIQ Data Analytics Platform highlights library use patterns and supports data-driven decision-making.

Phase Two: Community Engagement

December 21, 2024 - January 31, 2025

LibraryIQ will execute an inclusive public engagement strategy designed to ensure broad and equitable community input. A strategic planning project webpage will be built to offer a variety of engagement methods. The website link and QR code will be shared and promoted via library marketing channels (in-library signage and flyers, library websites, Borough websites if possible, partner websites if possible, social media, and local media). This wide-ranging approach will yield the largest number of engagement participants.

Website engagement tools can include:

- Social Map
- Visioner
- Forum
- Library Priorities
- Focus Group Registration
- Survey: The survey will be prepared by LibraryIQ with approval by the strategic planning team and will be conducted online.
 - Note: **The survey link will be shared and promoted** via library marketing channels (in-library signage and flyers, library websites, Borough and partner websites if possible, social media, and local media).

LibraryIQ facilitators will conduct several days of onsite engagement via focus groups, workshops, and interviews.

Focus Groups: Sessions for stakeholders and the public will be employed to gather a broad cross-section of input. The strategic planning team will identify key stakeholders and work with the LibraryIQ project lead to schedule. LibraryIQ facilitators will listen carefully, ensure that all voices are heard, capture nuance, and dig deep to reach the heart of participant comments for authentic input. LibraryIQ will facilitate public sessions along with private sessions for Library Board members, Friends, Partners and education, business, government, and nonprofit representatives.

LibraryIQ will also conduct a workshop with staff to review current successes and challenges and gather ideas about how the Library can innovate to fill education/technology/enrichment gaps in the community. **Individual in-depth interviews will be conducted with key stakeholders in person as possible and by phone as necessary.** Suggested interviewees include: Library Director, Library Board Chair, Friends Group Chair, Borough government leaders, and other key stakeholders as identified by the strategic planning team.

Note: This proposal assumes LibraryIQ will provide in-person sessions. Travel is included in the proposal cost.

Phase Three: Presentation of Findings

February 1 - February 18, 2025

Deliverable

- **Detailed discovery presentation of quantitative and qualitative findings from data analysis and public engagement**

Phase Four: Plan Development

February 19 - March 7, 2025

LibraryIQ consultants will work closely with the Library Director, project team, and stakeholders to draft goals and objectives and compile a dynamic and compelling draft strategic plan identifying clear strategies, measurable goals/objectives, and timelines. The draft plan will be shared with the team and stakeholders, and LibraryIQ consultants will incorporate all feedback into a final plan.

Deliverables

- **Draft plan shared with strategic planning team, library stakeholders, and Mat-Su Borough Assembly**
- **Final plan incorporating strategic planning team feedback shared with Library leadership**

PROJECT TIMELINE

Timeline subject to change pending project start date.

Phase One: Discovery and Analysis

November 22 - December 20, 2024

Phase Two: Community Engagement

December 21, 2024 - January 31, 2025

Phase Three: Presentation of Findings

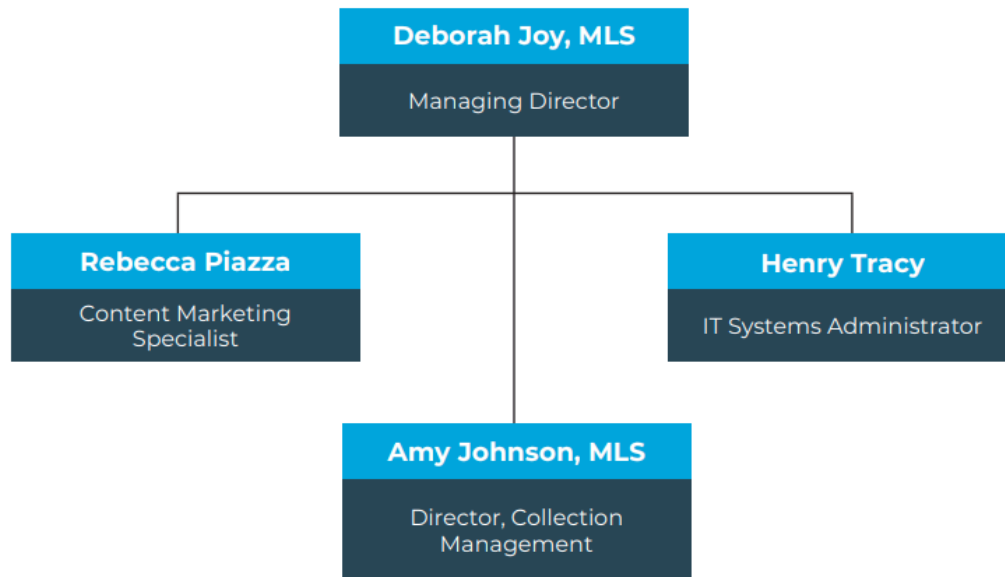
February 1 - February 18, 2025

Phase Four: Plan Development

February 19 - March 7, 2025

Please note: LibraryIQ will aim to have strategic plan complete by February 14, 2025, but advises early March as a more realistic timeframe for an optimal final deliverable.

MANAGEMENT



LibraryIQ's procedure for problem-solving and claim avoidance/resolution involves structured communication, collaboration, and proactive issue management should any issues arise. LibraryIQ and the strategic planning team will engage in regularly-scheduled meetings to monitor, report, and review the status of the project throughout the course of the contract.

POSITIONING YOU FOR SUCCESS.

Public Library Strategic Plan

ZILO
INTERNATIONAL GROUP

STRATEGIC CONSULTING

Submitted By:

Zilo International Group LLC
3939 East Arapahoe Road, Suite 210
Centennial, CO 80122
www.zilointernational.com

Milena Zilo

Founder and CEO
milena@zilointernational.com
(720) 295-0054

COVER LETTER

Dear Selection Committee,

Zilo International Group LLC is honored to submit this proposal to assist the Matanuska-Susitna Borough in creating a comprehensive, forward-looking strategic plan for its public libraries in Big Lake, Sutton, Talkeetna, Trapper Creek, and Willow. This five-year plan will define a clear vision, mission, goals, measurable objectives, and targeted activities to address each community's unique needs. We have received all Addendums.

Our approach combines robust community engagement, data-driven insights, and a commitment to inclusivity. By collaborating closely with Borough staff and residents, we aim to create a strategic plan that reflects shared priorities, aligns with community values, and provides a sustainable roadmap for future library services. Through active participation and open dialogue, we seek to empower each library to meet current needs while preparing for future growth. At Zilo, we prioritize:

- **Community-Centered Engagement:** Listening to and integrating the voices of community members to ensure their needs, preferences, and goals are the foundation of every recommendation.
- **Evidence-Based Planning:** Using data analysis and industry benchmarks to craft measurable objectives and activities that will drive meaningful outcomes and track progress effectively.
- **A Holistic Framework:** Covering all essential planning elements—from service development to facility enhancement—to ensure the libraries can respond dynamically to evolving community demands.

Zilo International will work as your trusted partner, establishing attainable milestones, timelines, and a phased implementation approach aligned with Borough goals. Our client-focused service, commitment to community, and expertise in strategic planning ensure we will deliver exceptional value to this project.

As Founder and CEO, I will serve as your primary point of contact and account manager. Please feel free to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,
Milena Zilo



Founder and Chief Executive Officer
Zilo International Group, LLC
3939 East Arapahoe Road, Suite 210 | Centennial, CO 80122
Mobile: 917-225-1851 | Office: 720-295-0054
milena@zilointernational.com | <http://www.zilointernational.com>

OBJECTIVE AND SERVICES

Our approach for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's strategic plan project is a collaborative partnership designed to create a forward-thinking, community-centered five-year plan for the public libraries in Big Lake, Sutton, Talkeetna, Trapper Creek, and Willow. We are committed to tailoring our process to meet your goals and provide actionable data insights that drive meaningful, community-aligned strategies. Our experienced team will provide comprehensive support, ensuring a seamless, thorough planning journey from start to finish.

This strategic plan will serve as a blueprint for delivering impactful library services in a dynamic environment. Our process involves active engagement with community members, library patrons, staff, Commissioners, the Library Advisory Committee, and City and Township Governments to craft a roadmap that aligns with Alaska's evolving library landscape, community demographics, and emerging technological advancements.

Library Assessment

- **Evaluate** current mission, vision, values, and the existing strategic framework to build a solid foundation.
- **Analyze** organizational structure, collection scope, services, and programs, identifying areas of strength and opportunity.
- **Identify** internal and external strengths and challenges, including political, economic, social, and technological trends affecting library operations and relevance.
- **Collaborate** with library stakeholders, including staff, Board of Commissioners, and local governments, to create a cohesive strategic vision.
- **Examine** library service and environmental trends in Alaska and nationally, with attention to rural library needs, to ground the plan in realistic and forward-looking goals.

Community Engagement

- **Assess** community-specific needs by engaging diverse stakeholder groups, including families, businesses, students, and underrepresented populations like BIPOC, youth, and individuals with disabilities.
- **Facilitate** inclusive, accessible engagement with patrons and non-users to understand their perspectives, priorities, and unmet needs. This includes various engagement formats like focus groups, online surveys, individual interviews, and public input sessions.
- **Develop** a multilingual, multi-platform communication strategy to accommodate diverse preferences and ensure equitable access to the engagement process.
- **Incorporate** insights into actionable objectives that reflect community growth patterns, technological advancements (such as AI's impact on libraries), and the evolution of library services, collections, and programming.

Strategic Planning Facilitation

Our team will guide every phase of the strategic planning process, fostering alignment among stakeholders as we define service priorities, measurable goals, and key activities. This structured approach will also identify funding requirements to sustain and expand library services. Once a draft is prepared, we will present it to stakeholders and the Mat-Su Borough Assembly, ensuring feedback is fully integrated before finalizing the strategic plan.

Through a flexible, client-centered approach, we are ready to adapt as needed, drawing on our expertise to craft a strategic plan that positions the Borough's libraries as anchor institutions that evolve alongside the communities they serve. At Zilo International, we are dedicated to providing a strategic vision that ensures Alaska's libraries remain dynamic, inclusive, and prepared for the future.

RELEVANT PROJECT EXPERIENCE

Zilo International Group boasts a robust track record in delivering tailored strategic planning and research services within the public sector. With over a decade of experience, we have effectively collaborated with various government agencies and organizations, enhancing operational efficiency, service quality, and stakeholder engagement through customized evaluation and data-driven insights.

Our work encompasses a wide range of critical services, including strategic planning, stakeholder outreach, and data collection methodologies. These services are designed to identify areas for improvement and align organizational goals with community needs. Our team's deep understanding of public sector challenges—particularly in fostering positive relationships with stakeholders and adapting to evolving community expectations—positions us well to support the Matanuska-Susitna Borough in developing a comprehensive strategic plan for its public libraries. Through prioritizing stakeholder engagement, we ensure that the perspectives of community members and organizational leaders are central to our analyses. Our commitment to rigorous data analysis guarantees that our findings are both reliable and actionable, empowering our clients to make informed decisions that drive their strategic objectives.

Our multifaceted approach combines quantitative and qualitative data gathering to provide in-depth insights, enabling us to identify trends and recommend actionable enhancements. This dual approach allows us to deliver targeted, data-informed recommendations aligned with each client's specific objectives. Our team excels at presenting findings in a clear and compelling format, facilitating the effective interpretation and application of insights.

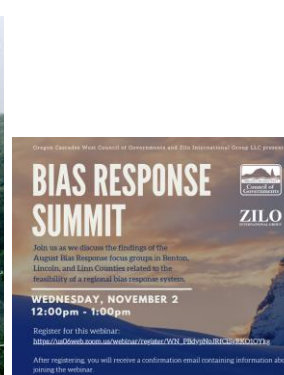
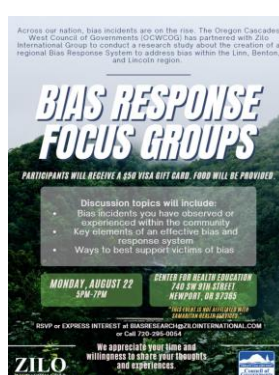
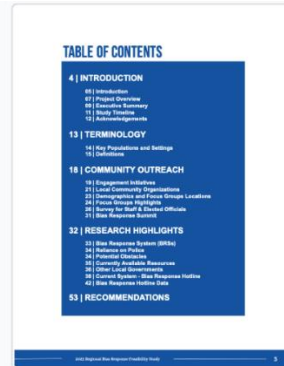
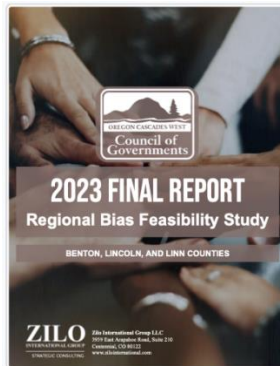
Dedicated to continuous improvement, we consistently refine our methodologies and stay informed on best practices, emerging technologies, and shifting community expectations. This commitment enables us to offer innovative, forward-thinking solutions that adapt to the dynamic needs of public organizations. Furthermore, our emphasis on fostering long-term partnerships drives us to maintain transparent, collaborative relationships with our clients, ensuring alignment with their objectives and responsiveness to their needs throughout the engagement.

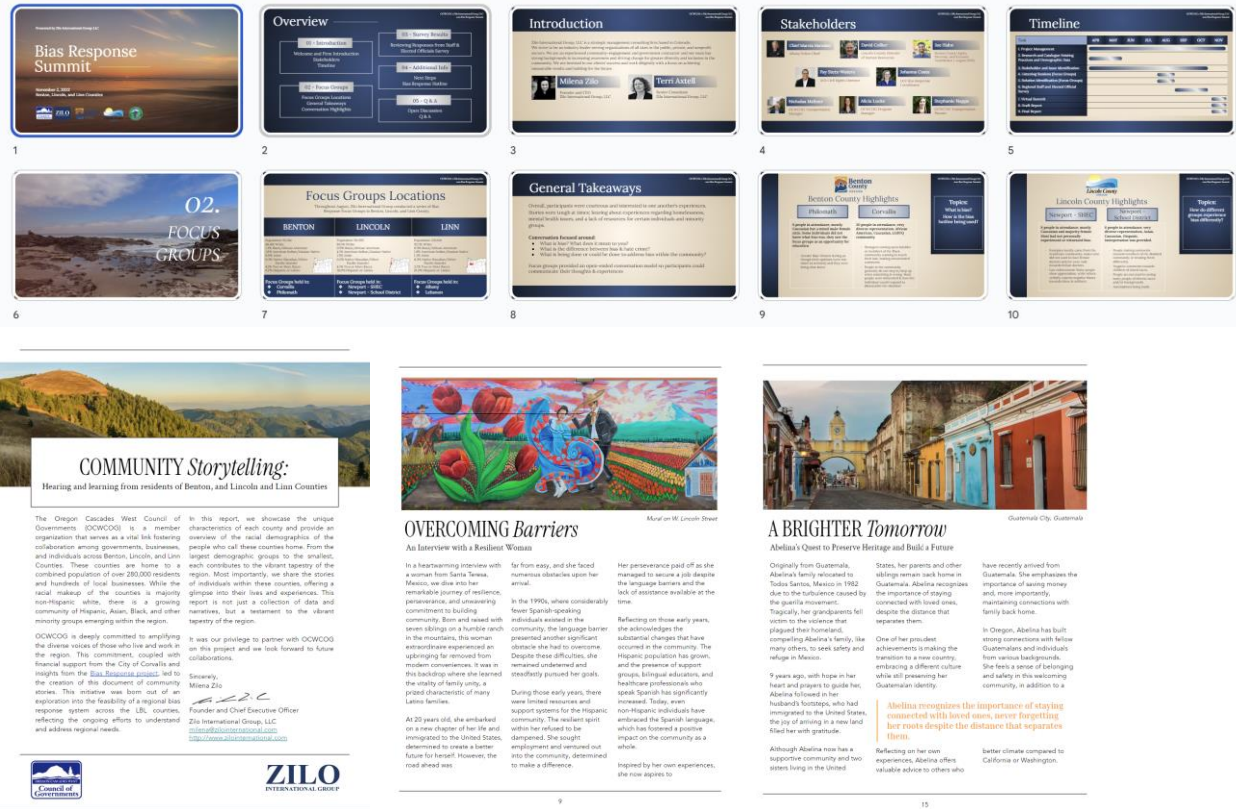
We take great pride in our successful collaborations across various public sector initiatives, where our contributions have led to measurable improvements in organizational effectiveness and community satisfaction. Our understanding that the success of any project relies on effective communication and strong partnerships underscores our dedication to upholding these values in every stage of our work with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

Below, please find references from some of our previous projects.

The Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments (OCWCOG)

The Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments (OCWCOG) is a voluntary association of twenty cities, three counties, the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians, and a port district. It serves as a forum for cross-jurisdictional cooperation and provides a wide array of services and resources to help communities solve problems and connects member governments, businesses, and individuals. Zilo was hired to research and facilitate discussions around the feasibility of a regional Bias Response System, and the subsequent public and regional support for a more localized system. The research includes bias response programs and approaches, research existing trainings, help facilitate community forums, and staff scheduled events.





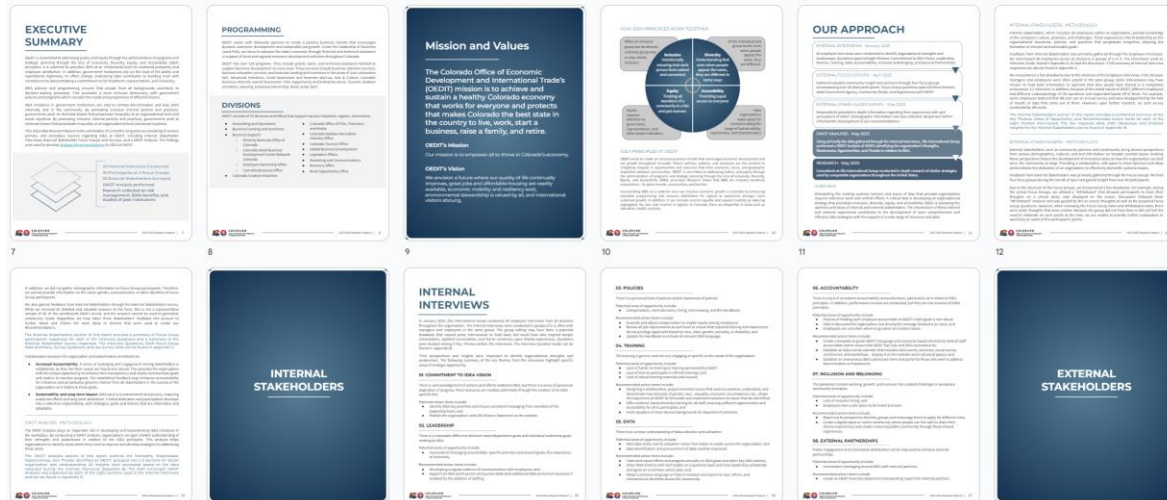
Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade

Zilo partnered with OEDIT and working closely with Leadership Team and various stakeholders both internally and externally to conduct strategic planning, research, policy/procedure/program review and revision, statement creation, facilitation, benchmarking, and data collection and analysis. Initiatives and priorities act as a compass for a multifaceted corporation moving in the direction of progress. Developing a more effective approach to inclusive excellence and strategic planning process will provide an organizational roadmap.

OEDIT Strategic Recommendations



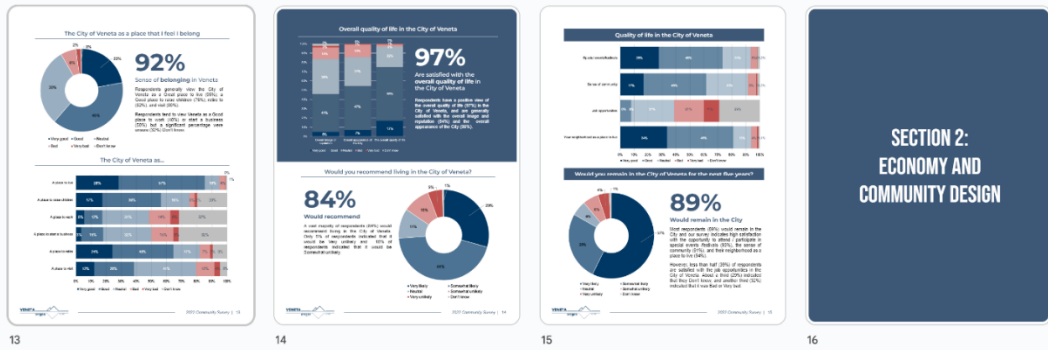
OEDIT Research 2023



City of Veneta, Oregon

Zilo was hired to design, administer, and analyze the results of a community survey for the City of Veneta, Oregon. There are approximately 2,100 households in the City of Veneta. Survey questions were designed to gauge community perceptions on: community needs, important issues facing the City, sense of community, quality of life, support for potential policy measures as well as support and preferences for City goals and services. It is anticipated that this survey shall serve as a baseline, with the expectation of conducting the survey every two years. All Final Reports include an Executive Summary, Table of Contents, Methodology, Implications, and Key Findings Summary along with any other deliverables requested by the client.





Community Survey Social Media Posts and Flyers for Outreach

Zilo International Group is pleased to draft multiple versions of flyers and/or social media posts: Facebook, Instagram, City webpage, in order to best align with the City's brand. This includes the use of specific fonts, colors, or sizes to match existing branding materials.

VENETA
oregon

2023 City of Veneta

Community Survey

Help us better understand our community's needs by taking this 10-minute survey!

Responses will be collected until February 10th.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/venetacommunitysurvey2023>

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VENETA
oregon

2023 CITY OF VENETA

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Help us better understand our community's needs by taking this 10-minute survey!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/venetacommunitysurvey2023>

Responses will be collected until February 10th.

ZILO
INTERNATIONAL GROUP

PROPOSED PROJECT STAFF AND MANAGEMENT

Founder and Chief Executive Officer Milena Zilo will be the primary point of contact and project lead on this engagement. Our team operates with a high degree of professionalism, characterized by seamless collaboration and effective communication. Each member brings their unique skill set to the table, contributing to a collective synergy that enhances our overall performance. In this collaborative environment, ideas are exchanged fluidly, and a sense of mutual respect prevails. The structure is designed to promote open dialogue, ensuring that every team member's perspective is considered valuable. This professional collaboration fosters a dynamic work culture where each individual's strengths are harnessed for the collective success of the team. Below please find biographies of the key consultants that will be assisting on this project and relevant experience.

Milena Zilo - Founder and Chief Executive Officer

Milena Zilo is a strategic leader with 20 years of professional experience, specializing in developing and implementing analytical, data-driven strategies across diverse sectors. Her career has been marked by a proven ability to navigate complex challenges and cultivate public-private partnerships that drive organizational success. Milena has collaborated extensively with government agencies, business leaders, and stakeholders on both domestic and international fronts, employing her strategic insight to enhance project outcomes.

Central to Milena's expertise is her proficiency in survey-based research, stakeholder outreach, and community engagement. She excels in designing and executing comprehensive research initiatives that leverage both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Milena's leadership in focus groups and stakeholder interviews, coupled with her management of large-scale data collection projects, ensures that the insights derived are aligned with the strategic objectives of her clients. By translating complex data into actionable strategies, she empowers organizations to make informed decisions that resonate with their mission and vision.

Milena's analytical approach to problem-solving is a key aspect of her leadership style. She possesses a deep understanding of statistical and qualitative methods, which she utilizes to interpret data and extract meaningful insights. Her experience includes evaluating trends, benchmarking key performance indicators, and delivering predictive analyses that inform both capital and operational decisions. By grounding her work in evidence-based analysis, Milena plays a pivotal role in shaping long-term strategic planning for organizations, ensuring that they are well-prepared to meet future challenges.

Her leadership extends to guiding multidisciplinary teams, board members, and executive stakeholders through complex initiatives. Milena adopts a structured approach, ensuring that every aspect of research and data synthesis is executed with precision and aligned with the overarching strategic goals. Her ability to engage with a diverse array of stakeholders—from community members to high-level executives—has been instrumental in capturing various perspectives and translating them into coherent, strategic plans.

Milena's portfolio showcases numerous successful projects where she has applied data-driven methodologies to enhance organizational decision-making. Whether addressing public sector challenges for local governments or optimizing business processes for private entities, her strategic focus ensures that clients receive comprehensive insights that drive forward-thinking solutions.

Beyond her technical acumen, Milena is a passionate advocate for community engagement. She leverages her analytical expertise to develop research strategies that capture relevant data while addressing emerging social and economic trends. Her innovative approaches foster strong, resilient communities, enabling organizations to connect with and serve their constituencies through well-informed, data-centric decisions.

Milena holds a bachelor's degree in Finance, with minors in Economics and Legal Studies from the University of Denver, where she demonstrated her leadership capabilities in various roles. She remains actively involved in her community, serving on esteemed boards and committees, including the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition's Colorado Advisory Committee and the Denver Art Museum. Driven by a commitment to philanthropy, Milena is dedicated to making a lasting impact through both her professional and community-focused endeavors.

Lorena Batkalin, PMP, Strategic Director

Lorena Batkalin is a seasoned leader with 20 years of consulting experience, specializing in research-driven strategies and project management. As a certified Project Management Professional (PMP), she has successfully directed a diverse portfolio of complex projects across various sectors, including start-ups, Fortune 500 companies, and public sector organizations. Her deep expertise in data collection, stakeholder engagement, and community outreach enables her to develop actionable insights that inform strategic decision-making and drive measurable results.

At the core of Lorena's strategic approach is her mastery of engagement-based design methodologies, which are crucial for synthesizing data from a wide array of sources. She excels at integrating information from residents, stakeholders, site surveys, and regulatory frameworks, ensuring that her research is precisely aligned with the specific objectives of each initiative. By transforming complex data into clear, strategic recommendations, Lorena empowers organizations to make informed decisions that foster growth and amplify impact.

Throughout her career, Lorena has spearheaded high-profile initiatives that demand a comprehensive understanding of survey design, data analysis, and process optimization. She leverages her analytical skills to identify trends, evaluate performance metrics, and deliver data-driven forecasts that guide organizational planning. Her commitment to adhering to best practices in research ensures that projects remain tightly aligned with industry standards and client expectations, with a focus on delivering precision and clarity at every stage.

A standout strength in Lorena's work is her unwavering commitment to inclusivity and equity, particularly within community engagement and stakeholder outreach. She actively champions the integration of social justice principles into decision-making processes, ensuring that underrepresented and marginalized populations are meaningfully included. Her projects reflect a strong emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and she has played a pivotal role in creating frameworks that empower communities and elevate stakeholder representation.

Lorena's strategic mindset is evident in her ability to align initiatives with organizational goals while addressing the nuanced needs of local communities. Her analytical rigor, coupled with empathetic understanding of community dynamics, allows her to drive successful outcomes for a broad spectrum of clients, from technology firms to government agencies. In her role as Strategic Director, she ensures that every project is executed with a synthesis of technical expertise and community awareness. In addition to her project management and research capabilities, Lorena significantly influences the development of inclusive policies and practices through her committee engagements. She actively contributes to the City of Aurora in Colorado, serving on key committees that shape technology solutions while promoting equitable practices. This involvement highlights her dedication to fostering an inclusive environment that values diverse perspectives and promotes equitable outcomes.

Lorena holds a bachelor's degree from Metro State University of Denver and a postgraduate degree in Accounting from Raritan College. This strong academic foundation complements her extensive professional experience, equipping her with a holistic understanding of both analytical and financial frameworks. Her unique combination of skills enables her to craft comprehensive strategies that are both data-driven and fiscally responsible, further reinforcing her commitment to organizational excellence and community empowerment.

METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

Overview

Our approach for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's strategic plan project is a collaborative partnership designed to create a forward-thinking, community-centered five-year plan for the public libraries in Big Lake, Sutton, Talkeetna, Trapper Creek, and Willow. We are committed to tailoring our process to meet your goals and provide actionable data insights that drive meaningful, community-aligned strategies. Our experienced team will provide comprehensive support, ensuring a seamless, thorough planning journey from start to finish.

This strategic plan will serve as a blueprint for delivering impactful library services in a dynamic environment. Our process involves active engagement with community members, library patrons, staff, Commissioners, the Library Advisory Committee, and City and Township Governments to craft a roadmap that aligns with Alaska's evolving library landscape, community demographics, and emerging technological advancements.

Library Assessment

- **Evaluate** current mission, vision, values, and the existing strategic framework to build a solid foundation.
- **Analyze** organizational structure, collection scope, services, and programs, identifying areas of strength and opportunity.
- **Identify** internal and external strengths and challenges, including political, economic, social, and technological trends affecting library operations and relevance.
- **Collaborate** with library stakeholders, including staff, Board of Commissioners, and local governments, to create a cohesive strategic vision.
- **Examine** library service and environmental trends in Alaska and nationally, with attention to rural library needs, to ground the plan in realistic and forward-looking goals.

Community Engagement

- **Assess** community-specific needs by engaging diverse stakeholder groups, including families, businesses, students, and underrepresented populations like BIPOC, youth, and individuals with disabilities.
- **Facilitate** inclusive, accessible engagement with patrons and non-users to understand their perspectives, priorities, and unmet needs. This includes various engagement formats like focus groups, online surveys, individual interviews, and public input sessions.
- **Develop** a multilingual, multi-platform communication strategy to accommodate diverse preferences and ensure equitable access to the engagement process.
- **Incorporate** insights into actionable objectives that reflect community growth patterns, technological advancements (such as AI's impact on libraries), and the evolution of library services, collections, and programming.

Strategic Planning Facilitation

Our team will guide every phase of the strategic planning process, fostering alignment among stakeholders as we define service priorities, measurable goals, and key activities. This structured approach will also identify funding requirements to sustain and expand library services. Once a draft is prepared, we will present it to stakeholders and the Mat-Su Borough Assembly, ensuring feedback is fully integrated before finalizing the strategic plan.

Through a flexible, client-centered approach, we are ready to adapt as needed, drawing on our expertise to craft a strategic plan that positions the Borough's libraries as anchor institutions that evolve alongside the communities they serve. At Zilo International, we are dedicated to providing a strategic vision that ensures Alaska's libraries remain dynamic, inclusive, and prepared for the future.

Phase 1: Develop Work Plan and Finalize Schedule

In this initial phase, Zilo International Group will develop a detailed communications plan and project schedule tailored to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's needs for its public libraries in Big Lake, Sutton, Talkeetna, Trapper Creek, and Willow. We prioritize a collaborative approach that fosters open communication and aligns with the Borough's objectives for a comprehensive five-year strategic plan.

Our process begins with a kick-off meeting to understand your core goals, objectives, and priorities. Regular check-ins and updates will follow to ensure a transparent and responsive workflow throughout the project. We will also review previous reports, recommendations, and research relevant to the Borough's libraries to build on existing insights and address any identified gaps or challenges effectively. Together, we will finalize the project scope, key objectives, and a clear schedule to guide the strategic planning process. Zilo International is committed to meeting all outlined deadlines, delivering a structured, timely, and impactful strategic planning experience.

Phase 2: Strategy Formulation

In line with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's goal to develop a comprehensive, community-focused strategic plan for its five public libraries, our approach to Phase 2 centers on inclusive stakeholder engagement, informed goal-setting, and thorough analysis of both local and national library trends. This phase is designed to develop a roadmap that aligns with Alaska's library needs while embracing future-ready approaches to programming, technology, and service expansion.

Establishing a Collaborative Framework

To build a solid foundation for the strategic plan, we will hold preliminary meetings with library staff, patrons, community members, Library Board members, Borough officials, and other stakeholders. During these sessions, we will create a collaborative framework that establishes shared expectations, clarifies project goals, and identifies desired outcomes.

- **Kick-Off and Ongoing Meetings:** Our team will initiate a series of preliminary meetings and conduct regular check-ins to ensure transparency and cohesion. A detailed communication plan will be developed to keep all parties informed and engaged throughout each stage of the process.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** We will leverage both online and in-person methods to reach a wide audience, ensuring that perspectives from library users, non-users, and local organizations are represented. This will include community meetings, focus groups, individual interviews, online surveys, and phone interviews.

Community Needs Assessment and Data Collection

Understanding the needs and priorities of library patrons is essential for creating a responsive strategic plan. This phase will involve:

- **Data Collection Methods:** To capture a holistic view of community needs, we will employ diverse data collection techniques, such as:
 - **Focus Groups and Community Meetings:** These sessions will facilitate open discussions and allow participants to share their experiences, expectations, and hopes for library services.
 - **Individual Interviews and Surveys:** In-depth interviews and targeted surveys will provide specific insights from key demographics, including families, youth, seniors, and underrepresented groups.
- **Alaska and National Library Trends:** While focusing on Alaska's rural library needs, we will also examine national library trends, such as the integration of digital resources, technology-driven services (e.g., AI), and flexible user engagement strategies.
- **Exploring Technology Solutions:** As part of a future-focused approach, we will evaluate how technology, including artificial intelligence, can enhance user experience and streamline library management. This includes exploring solutions for responding to parental inquiries on material access in a way that respects privacy and is manageable for library staff.

Strategic Assessment and SWOT Analysis

With community input and data in hand, our team will conduct a detailed SWOT analysis to evaluate the libraries' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. This analysis will focus on:

- **Community Growth and Demographics:** A close look at demographic trends will help identify changing needs and preferences among library users, ensuring that services are tailored to the evolving community landscape.
- **Service Gaps and Opportunities:** By assessing service gaps and potential growth areas, we will be able to develop specific goals and objectives to meet future demand for collections, programs, and technologies.
- **Rural Library Trends:** We will identify trends in rural libraries, such as the demand for remote access, mobile services, and multi-generational programming, to better serve Alaska's unique communities.

Vision and Goal Setting

Working alongside stakeholders, we will collaboratively define a vision that reflects the mission of each library as a community anchor, focusing on their role in promoting literacy, digital access, and lifelong learning.

- **SMART Goal Framework:** Utilizing the SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound), we will create a set of actionable, prioritized goals. These will serve as a bridge between strategic planning and daily operations, empowering each library to advance its services and community impact.
- **Long- and Short-Term Goals:** The plan will include a balanced approach with both immediate objectives and multi-year goals. Short-term goals will address urgent community needs, while long-term goals will position the libraries for sustainable growth and adaptability.

Synthesizing Community Input and Defining Strategic Priorities

Analyzing Community Insights

Through detailed data analysis, our team will identify recurring themes, service priorities, and key areas of community interest. This analysis will be summarized to provide stakeholders with a clear picture of the community's vision for library services.

- **Feedback Integration:** Feedback gathered from surveys, focus groups, and interviews will be synthesized into actionable insights that reflect the unique characteristics and needs of each library community.

Defining the Desired Future State

Based on the insights gathered, we will define a future-state vision that serves as a blueprint for the strategic plan.

- **Future Scenarios and Challenges:** By envisioning possible future scenarios and identifying potential challenges, we will help stakeholders understand what achieving the vision might entail. Questions like "What would the ideal library look like for your community in five years?" will guide this collaborative visioning.

Strategic Planning and Implementation Framework

The strategic plan will serve as a blueprint for advancing the libraries' missions and enhancing community services. This includes:

- **Actionable Initiatives:** Each goal will be supported by a clear initiative, defining specific steps, resources, and responsibilities needed for success.
- **Prioritization and Timeline Development:** We will prioritize initiatives based on impact and feasibility, establishing a well-structured timeline that outlines both immediate and long-term actions.

Financial Feasibility and Funding Opportunities

To support the plan's sustainability, our team will research potential funding sources, such as grants, public-private partnerships, and Borough budget allocations. Collaboration with local organizations will also be explored to foster support for key initiatives.

Performance Metrics and Monitoring

To ensure continuous progress, we will develop key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor each initiative's effectiveness.

- **Evaluation Framework:** Regular evaluations will track progress, allowing for adjustments and refinements as needed. We will create a framework for the Borough to conduct periodic reviews, ensuring that the strategic plan remains responsive and relevant.

Stakeholder Communication and Engagement

Throughout the planning process, we will maintain open communication with all stakeholders. Updates, progress reports, and milestone achievements will be shared to keep everyone informed and engaged in the process.

Phase 3: Recommendations and Final Report

In the final stage of the project for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough libraries, we will focus on synthesizing and analyzing all data gathered throughout the planning process to prepare a comprehensive final report. Before finalizing the report, our team will engage in a collaborative meeting with key stakeholders from the borough, including representatives from the Westland Public Library. This meeting will ensure that all project objectives have been met and that the report aligns with stakeholder expectations. During this session, we will discuss our findings and present our recommendations regarding the implementation of the strategic plan and the necessary support structures to achieve it.

The final report will include several key components, starting with an executive summary that encapsulates the overall findings and strategic recommendations. It will provide a detailed analysis of the data collected, including statistical descriptions and illustrative graphs to enhance understanding. A critical aspect of the report will be an organizational assessment of the current state of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough libraries, identifying strengths and weaknesses, quality of services, reputation, management structures, and budget considerations. Additionally, we will include a community engagement feedback analysis to capture the sentiments of existing and potential patrons, ensuring that the voices of the community are reflected in the strategic plan.

The report will also specify the mission, vision, and core values of the libraries and will feature clearly defined priorities, goals, and measurable objectives aligned with community needs. A process for regular review and evaluation will be outlined to ensure the plan remains responsive to changes in the economic, demographic, or political landscape. Current levels of service at each facility will be detailed, alongside projected improvements based on anticipated population growth trends. Cost estimates for suggested service enhancements will also be provided to support strategic resource allocation.

The final deliverable will include an actionable implementation plan with timelines and cost estimates to achieve the recommendations outlined in the strategic plan. We will conclude the project with an open house presentation, where we will present the plan to all interested stakeholder groups, including library users, staff members, the planning commission, and the borough assembly. This presentation will serve as an opportunity for collaboration and feedback, ensuring that the strategic plan is embraced by the community it aims to serve.

Our team is genuinely enthusiastic about this critical initiative and is committed to working collaboratively with you. We understand the profound impact this effort can have on the lives of community members, and it would be an honor to partner with you in enhancing the libraries' role as vital resources for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. By leveraging industry-leading practices and insights from successful projects, we will ensure that the strategic plan is forward-looking, innovative, and resilient, guiding the libraries toward a bright and sustainable future.

SCHEDULE

Zilo International Group proposes a **three-month timeline** for the comprehensive completion of the strategic planning project for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's public libraries, as detailed below. This timeline is flexible and may be adjusted based on feedback from stakeholders and any unforeseen circumstances that may arise during the process. We will ensure ongoing alignment by conducting regular check-ins with key stakeholders throughout the project.

Task	Duration	Key Milestones
1. Facilitate the Strategic Planning Process	3 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Kick-off Meeting: Establish project objectives and timeline with stakeholders.- Stakeholder Engagement: Identify key stakeholders and schedule initial meetings.- Facilitation Framework: Develop and share a facilitation framework for planning sessions.- Community Outreach: Initiate outreach to the community to raise awareness about the strategic planning process.- Scheduling Planning Meetings: Coordinate logistics for planning meetings at each library location.
2. Gather Data through Community Research	6 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Focus Groups: Conduct 3-4 focus groups at each library to gather qualitative insights.- Community Meetings: Hold community meetings in each area (Big Lake, Sutton, Talkeetna, Trapper Creek, Willow) to solicit input.- Online Survey: Launch an online survey targeting library users and non-users to gather quantitative data.- Phone Interviews: Conduct 10-15 phone interviews with key stakeholders and library patrons.- Data Analysis: Analyze data collected from focus groups, surveys, and interviews to identify trends and needs.- Preliminary Findings Report: Prepare a summary report of initial findings to share with stakeholders.
3. Draft and Present the Strategic Plan	4 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Drafting the Strategic Plan: Create a comprehensive draft of the strategic plan based on collected data, including vision, mission, goals, and measurable objectives.- Internal Review: Circulate the draft internally among the project team for feedback.- Stakeholder Presentation: Present the draft strategic plan to library stakeholders for discussion

Task	Duration	Key Milestones
		<p>and input.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revisions: Incorporate feedback from stakeholders into the final draft of the strategic plan. - Final Presentation: Prepare for and conduct a final presentation of the strategic plan to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly and other interested parties. - Submission of Final Plan: Submit the finalized strategic plan along with an implementation framework and timeline.

PRICE

Our proposed fee for the completion of all tasks outlined in the proposal is **\$36,000**. This fee encompasses all associated expenses, including travel, secretarial support, and report production. Below is a detailed breakdown of the flat fee allocation for each task:

Task	Description	Budget
Task 1: Facilitation of the Strategic Planning Process	Organizing and leading community meetings, focus groups, and individual interviews to gather input on library needs and preferences. Includes planning meetings at each library and ensuring stakeholder engagement throughout the process.	\$12,000
Task 2: Data Gathering and Analysis	Collecting and analyzing data on community profiles, service quality, strengths and weaknesses of each library, and evaluating funding needs. Drafting the strategic plan based on gathered data.	\$15,000
Task 3: Final Report Preparation and Presentation	Synthesizing all data into a comprehensive final report, including an executive summary, organizational assessment, implementation plan, and open house presentation.	\$9,000
Total Budget		\$36,000

It would be an honor to partner with you on this project and lead and assist you in achieving your goals. We are very excited about the prospect of working with you and providing you the resources and services needed. We are committed to serving our clients' needs and will be available at all times.

REQUIRED FORMS

SUBMITTAL PAGE

25-071P, PUBLIC LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN

By signing below, the Proposer hereby certifies to the following –

1. The individual signing below, or the firm associated or corporation of which they are a member, has not, either directly or indirectly, entered into any agreement, participated in any collusion, or otherwise taken any action in restraint of a free competitive process in connection with this solicitation.
2. The individual signed below is authorized by the firm association or corporation to bind such association or corporation to a legal contract.
3. The individual signing below, or the firm association or corporation of which they are a member, is not debarred or suspended from doing business with the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.
4. They are acknowledging receipt of the following Addenda Numbers (if no addenda have been issued, either leave blank or write "N/A" or "None").

1

(List Addenda numbers that you are acknowledging receipt of)

Zilo International Group LLC

Company Name

10/28/24

Date

3939 E. Arapahoe Rd, Ste 210,

Mailing Address



Signature

Centennial, CO 80122

City, State and Zip Code

Milena Zilo

Printed (or typed) Name

Milena Zilo

Contact Person (printed or typed)

Founder and CEO

Title (printed or typed)

917-225-1851

Phone Number

milena@zilointernational.com

Email Address (optional)

N/A

Facsimile Number

N/A

State and Professional License Numbers

*It shall be the responsibility of the Proposer to that their proposal is received at or before the date and time fixed for closing.

Proposers should include the following with their proposal.

- ✓ Signed Submittal Page (acknowledging Addenda if applicable)
- ✓ One signed Technical Proposal.
- ✓ Any other items required within the Instructions to Proposers & Specifications/Scope of Services



Thank you for your consideration!

Zilo International Group is held to the highest standard of excellence
when committing to our clients' success.

We would be honored to partner with you to achieve your goals.

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