

Space planning recommendations for



Amherst Libraries

Jones Library

MLS

Prepared by Anna Popp
Massachusetts Library System
www.masslibsystem.org

Jones Library Space Planning Report

Introduction

Thank you for asking the Massachusetts Library System for assistance with your space planning project. Please note that MLS Advisory services are offered without stipulation or expectations. Your organization and your staff are not required to implement all or any of the suggestions included herein. I can continue to assist you to interpret and adjust this plan to suit your unique needs. I appreciate the individual personality of each library in the Commonwealth and value the opportunity to maintain and define each library's character.

I recommend that whatever space planning changes Jones decides on, you work to incorporate those goals in your Strategic Plan under the facilities section. In this way, the organization as a whole is directed to the common goal of redefining and repurposing the Jones site.

A roadmap to change

Because budgets, needs and opportunities are so uncertain, I advocate the Roadmap approach to rearranging and redesigning space. This approach begins by creating a Master Plan for the final product. From that Master Plan the Jones would identify stages which are defined by what is accomplished, not when. The stages exist independently of one another and can be implemented in any order. (For instance a relocation of a collection and a renovation & repurposing of the vacated space could be a stage.) You can then determine the resources needed to complete each stage and, by being flexible, tackle a stage when the necessary resources become available. I always recommend having a timeline in place, but the realities of life frequently interrupt the best laid plans.

Jones Library Space Planning Report

Collection assessment

The Amherst Jones collection is very large. The Jones must implement an aggressive weeding project if you wish to increase your available space. Overall, a reduction of over 64,000 items is in order. Because of the magnitude of this recommendation, I have devoted a good deal of this space plan to addressing the collection. This aspect alone is intimidating. That being said, the staff at the Jones should be very proud of the collections they have built. These collections boast an impressive circulation, and that accomplishment is not to be overlooked. However, weeding must happen. It is one of the most commonly overlooked fundamentals of librarianship. We librarians work so hard to build powerful, meaningful collections, it is admittedly difficult to undo our work.

In this report I will address targets for reduction in certain segments of your collection. I don't make recommendations for how to choose the items to be discarded. For that, I defer to generally accepted library practices of reviewing items for use, age, format, condition and "ick" factor (yellowed, dirty or damaged).

For purposes of this collection assessment, I am relying upon the Wisconsin Public Library Standards, a nationally recognized benchmark for public library services and collections. In keeping with the practices of my colleagues at the MBLC, I use the data corresponding with the Basic level of service. If the Jones were to look to a large scale renovation in the future, the collection must be brought into line with the Basic Level of the Wisconsin Standards to meet MBLC funding requirements.

This assessment is based solely on the collection of the Jones Library, main branch. When assessing a library's collection in terms of Wisconsin standards, all branches holdings should be considered. This point will be noted where appropriate. Further, the holdings of the Jones Special Collections were not considered because of the nature of the archival collection.

Service targets for Amherst Libraries Based on Municipal population of 37,800

	Wisconsin Standard	Jones	
Volumes held (print)	128,520	162,872	+34,352
Audio Recordings Held	8,694	14,211	+5,517
Video Recordings Held	8,694	7,165	-1,529
Collection size	151,200	216,048	+64,848

Amherst Jones needs to see a substantial reduction in collection size, in order to see the desired goal of increased space. 34,000 books represents between 600 and 1100 empty shelves. Those shelves represent space that can be organized and repurposed.

Jones Library Space Planning Report

Data was aggregated to lump data reported across multiple locations, but representing similar I-types. Without a close familiarity of the Jones collection, I may have erroneously aggregated some data. Aggregated data was then plotted on charts comparing holdings (x axis) to circulation (y axis) (considered a turnover ratio). This offers a visual aid to understand the relationship between holdings and use in the Jones. I use this method because I believe that the trends which become evident vary from library to library, and that is part of each library's character. We can see what the standard rollover of a collection is and quickly identify the segments which perform remarkably well or poorly. See the attached appendix for the data and charts used to assess this collection.

Print

Among large print collection groupings, Jones boasts Mystery and J Picture Hardcover collections which perform remarkably well. The Fiction and Juvenile Book collections also perform well. In the smaller groupings, the YA, Science Fiction and Paperback collections deserve recognition. The three most underperforming collections are nonfiction, juvenile nonfiction and magazines.

- The nonfiction collection has an impressive circulation, however, the size of the collection is an anomaly in the Jones collection. By far the largest collection, it is more than twice the size of the next smallest collection. I recommend a goal of eliminating 10,000 items from this collection.
- The juvenile nonfiction collection has moderate circulation, but not enough to justify the size. I recommend targeting 5,000 items for weeding.
- Wisconsin standards address the number of periodical titles that a library should hold, but they do not suggest holding periods. In a survey of MA libraries, our colleagues usually report holding the current year and one or two years back. In many cases, libraries favored an a la carte approach to holdings based on title. Based on performance, I recommend reducing periodical holdings from 17,000 to 7,000.
- Beyond these drastic steps, consider the changing face of reference collections. The Jones reference collection should be reduced, perhaps by half.
- After large reductions are taken, I suggest that the collections be uniformly reduced to achieve the final print goal.

Audio & Video Collections

The Jones A/V collection is a major contributor to the circulation numbers. Strong performers should be fostered and new delivery models explored to maintain the collection's contribution.

Audio

The J Book on CD collection performs strongly and should be developed.

Jones Library Space Planning Report

- Curiously, the adult CD collection is underperforming for its size when taking into consideration the trend of the overall collection. I recommend a movement toward reducing the collection to 6,000 items, and reassessing the collection trend. Frequently reducing a collection's size improves performance. The Jones CD collection is valued in the community. Improving the turnover rate of this collection should be a goal.
- I recommend exploring alternate delivery models in order to keep this respected collection accessible to an increasingly mobile user group.
- Predictably, the audio cassette and J Book on Tape collections are underperforming. I recommend an elimination of 300 and 400 items, respectively.

Video

The DVD and J DVD collections perform very strongly and should be grown.

- Reflecting the use of the audio collection, the JVideo and Video collection are losing momentum. The collections should be reduced by 500 and 300 items, respectively.

Disclaimer

Please note, that reducing the Amherst Jones print collection to 151,200 items is not considered in keeping with Wisconsin standards, as stated earlier. All Amherst Libraries collections, in all branches, account for the total Amherst Libraries holdings.

Jones Library Space Planning Report

Space reassignments.

As the Jones collection is refreshed, the conditions are perfect to redesign how space is used at the Jones. Currently, collections are well defined by space, which is an important quality not to be lost. However, collections and space needs change with each new generation of users. Current studies of library users show that users are looking for certain things in a library:

- Comfortable space to work, read and play
 - No one type of seating appeals to all individuals or works for all tasks. Varied seating and working areas should be provided.
- Library users want space to be welcoming, allowing conversation, food and drink.
 - Because of the unique holdings of the Jones, food and drink certainly cannot be permitted in all areas. But the architecture of the Jones lends itself to designated areas for silence, conversation, cellphones or refreshments.
- Technology should be current.
 - Consider expanding laptop, tablet and gadget loaning (on site) to augment your internet options for users.

Changes suggested here will require elements of contract work, either to restructure entry ways, provide electricity or to facilitate wiring.

Efforts should be made to coordinate storage needs and space. There are so many interesting areas in the Jones, and each department seems to have carved out its own storage spaces. While it makes sense to have storage near offices, centralized storage would be more efficient and economical.

Office space will need to be recovered from various underused areas of the building.

Further, the Trustees could consider recovering some of these interesting spaces and renting secure space to scholars, writers and the like, which fits the community profile.

Staff requests

Jones staff had constructive and valuable contributions to be considered. Not all requests or suggestions could be honored in these recommendations.

I understand that staff value a clean, well lit and attractive work space. However, some of the "prime real estate" in the Jones is currently limited to staff areas. This is space that is not available to the patrons, the people for whom the building was erected. I have attempted to make these areas available to users and find alternate attractive and functional areas for staff.

Jones Library Space Planning Report

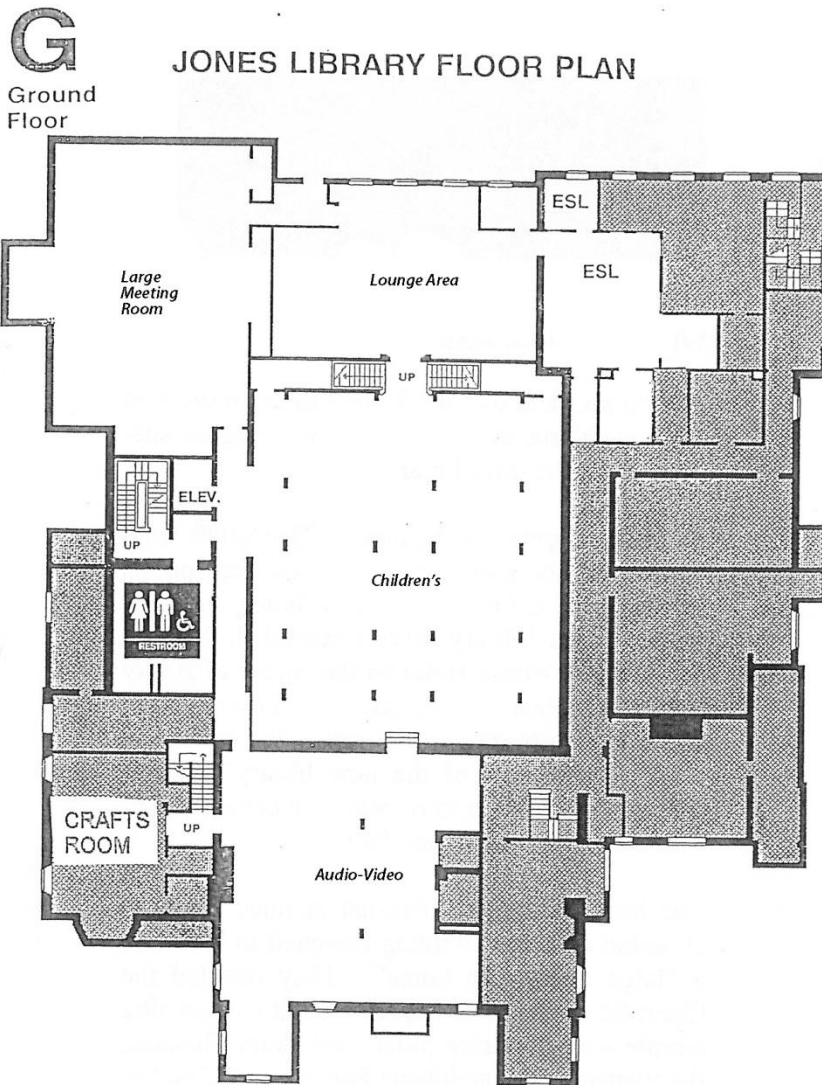
In these recommendations, I have tried to accommodate enough flexibility for self – check kiosks and related self-services to be offered, should Amherst Libraries choose to follow that path.

I was unable to place the Circulation and Reference staff in immediate proximity of each other. I felt this was a goal that could be sacrificed simply because there are many options for internal communications systems (pagers, talkies, etc.) and I advocate for service staff to be moving about the building whenever possible, ready to assist patrons on point. The repositioning of the Circ Desk serves a few purposes. First, it positions staff a bit closer to the door, making that long entryway seem a bit briefer. Secondly, the positioning adjacent to the outer courtyard offers an option to create separate drop off and check out areas, which Circ staff requested. If more space is required by circulation staff, the office and bathroom adjacent to the proposed location could be annexed. I didn't include this as a formal recommendation because of the low-light and quaintness of the space. I judged that the space wouldn't be valued by staff and it was judged better suited to public use.

The space needs of the special collection pose a challenge to address. There is no available space adjoining the climate controlled storage. Off-site storage options should be researched.

Jones Library Space Planning Report

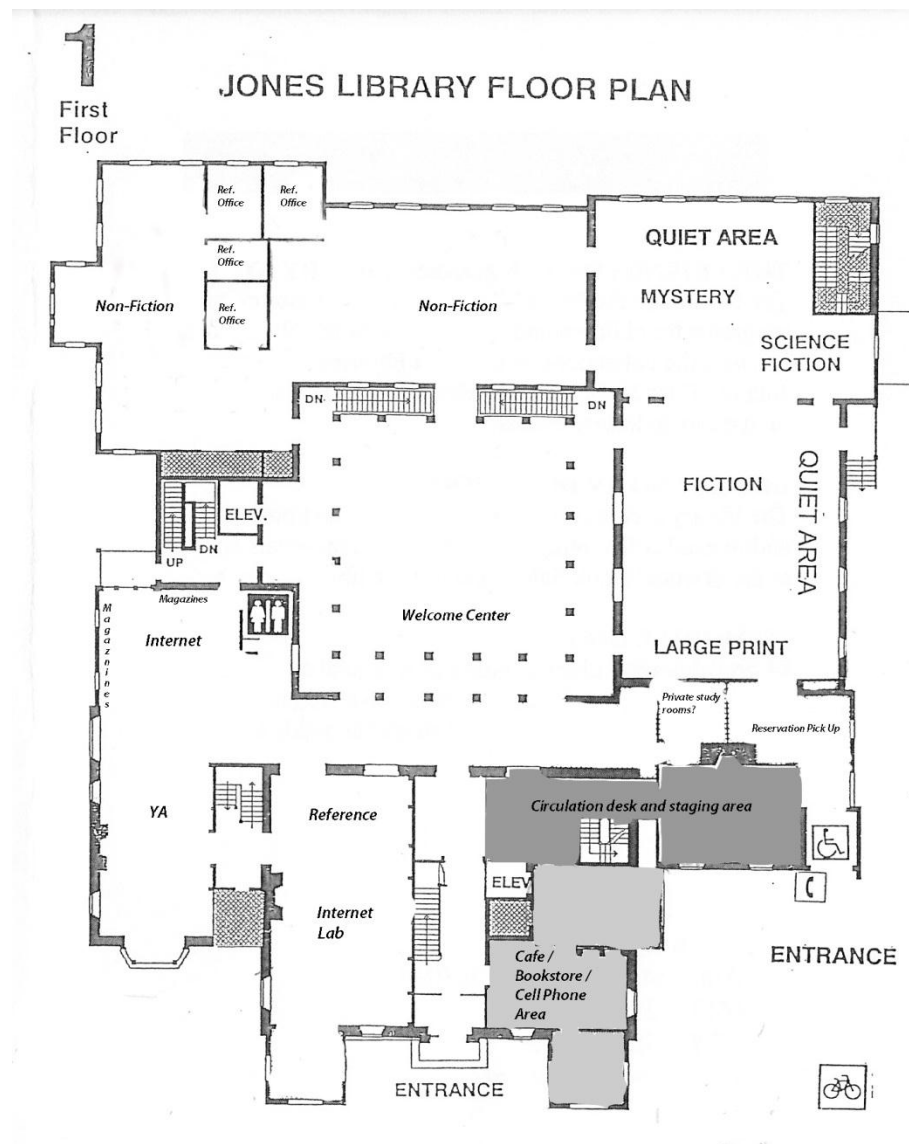
Ground floor



- Magazines, Career Center and non-fiction are relocated
- Lounge area or storytime space established.
- Children's collection centralized
- AV area relocated. All AV material for all collections, age groups, demographics, etc. are centralized in one location. There is a possible need for construction to create office space.

Jones Library Space Planning Report

First Floor



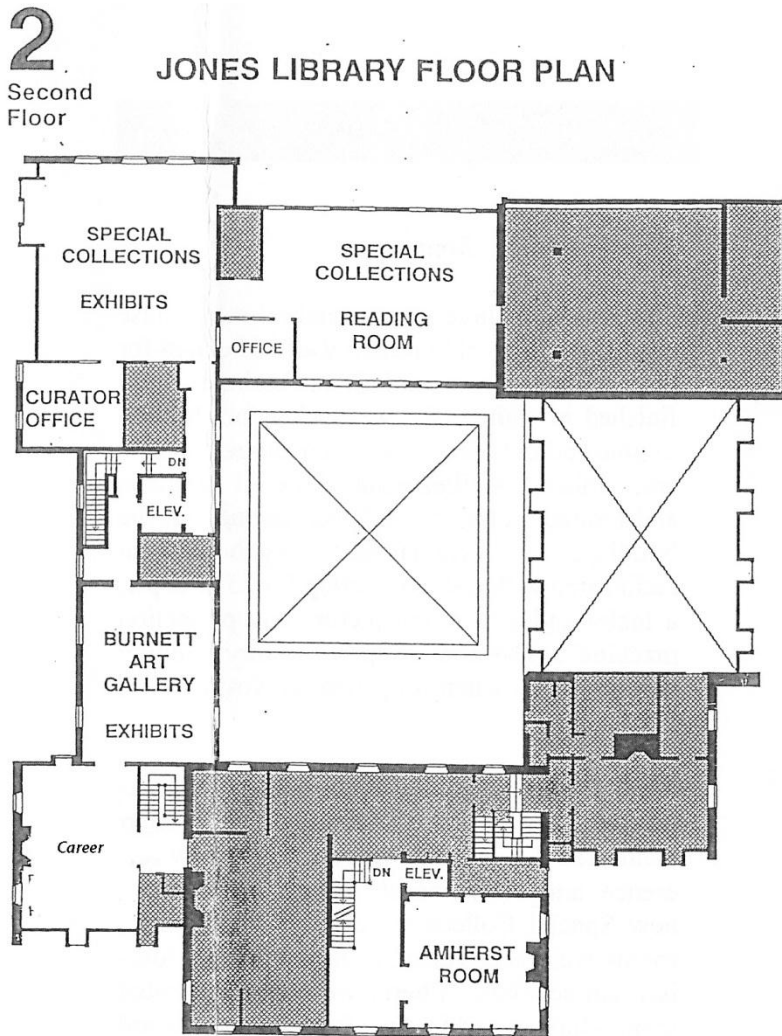
- Repurpose offices and information area. Create bookstore, cellphone, café lounge area. The space currently serving as the Director's office could be repurposed as the shop area, allowing it to be secured when not staffed, but leaving the lounging areas available to the public.
- Shift Circulation Desk toward the entry. Take over foyer space and current cell phone area. The public water cooler will need to be relocated. Move the staging area for easy access to the entrance. Some construction will be required.

Jones Library Space Planning Report

- Redirect handicap entrance to join Large Print collection. Integrate a self-service holds pick-up location.
- Previous staff areas can possibly be repurposed to make a few small group meeting spaces.
- The area currently dedicated to Children's becomes rededicated to multiple applications: YA, Internet and the magazine and reference collections. This is overseen by Reference staff.
 - What is currently AV offices are rededicated to Reference staff offices for their off-desk duties. In some cases, offices may house multiple desks. Reference staff on desk duty will have oversight of the YA area, as well as the computer support.
 - The internet options for the public will be spread among two locations in close enough proximity to be networked to the same public printers and equipment, but distinct enough that one grouping can be arranged and used in a lab setting for instruction, if desired. Comfortable and varied seating will encourage those with their own laptops to also use this area.
 - Non-fiction is moved the current AV and Reference areas, bringing the adult print materials to one location.
 - The YA area is in the hub of the activity, just where teens want to be, but with the required modicum of privacy. A set of stairs leads them directly down to the AV collection or up to staff areas.
- The courtyard can be set up with a small welcome station. Low shelving set at 45° angles can feature new or noteworthy materials. (Collections from the ground floor and second floor should feature prominently in order to not be overlooked by patrons.) The low shelving keeps the line of sight open. Because of the beauty of the area, seating areas should also be incorporated.

Jones Library Space Planning Report

Second floor

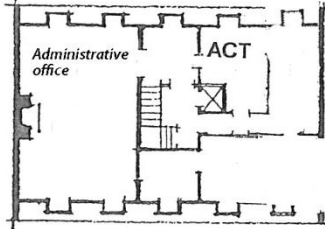


- The Children's collection is removed and the Career Center is relocated to the second floor.

Jones Library Space Planning Report

Third Floor

3 Third Floor



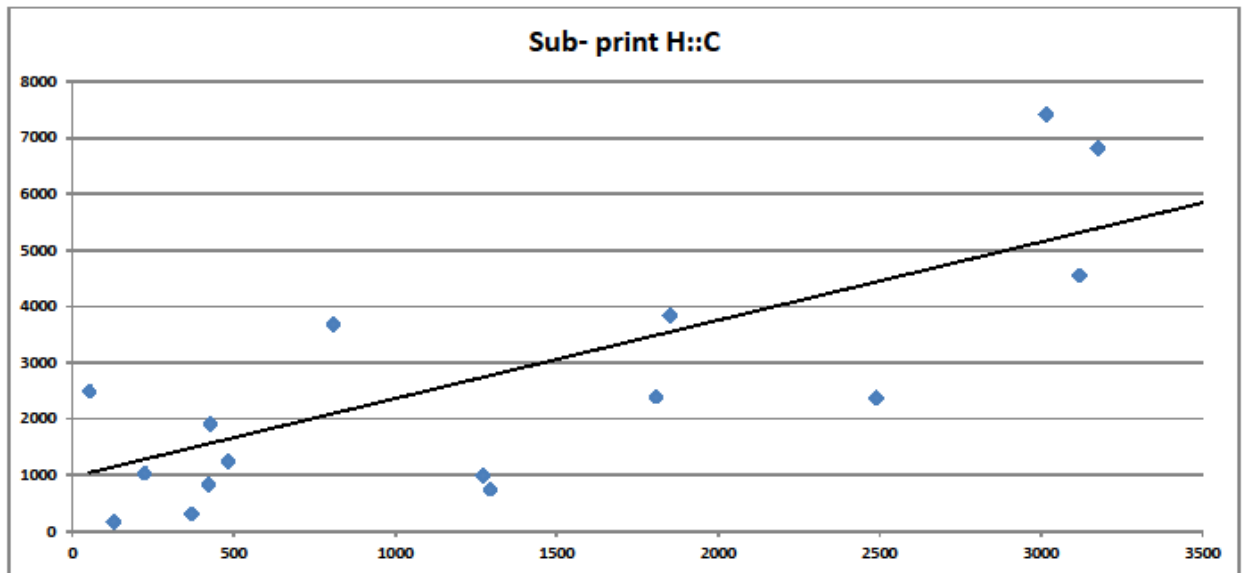
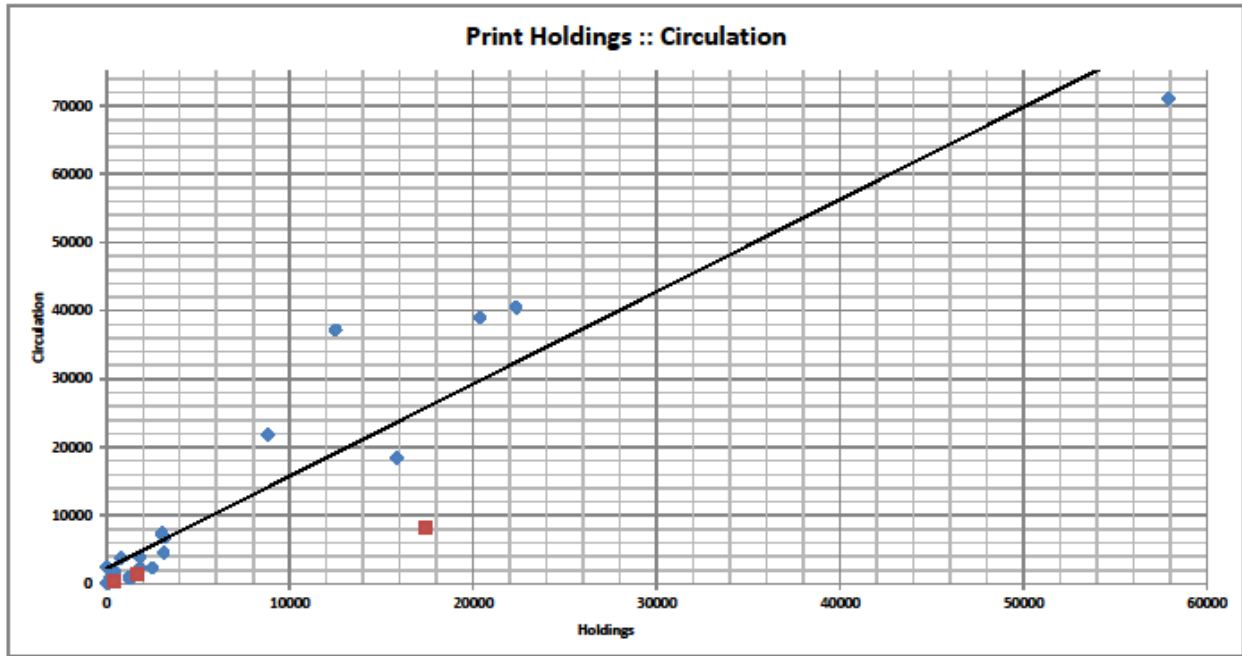
- With permission, repurpose the Trustees Room to the Director's office, with meeting room.
- Possible recapture of other areas for other staff or multipurpose (provided elevator access is available).

Jones Library Space Planning Report

Appendix

A/V	Combined	CIRCS										
DVD	3157	67940				ESL pamphlet	15	4				
Juv DVD	923	14630				reference	3689	6				
YA DVD	132	881	Juv Magazine			western	302	24				
Video	1039	3183	Juv Magazine	1695	1389	Juv nonfic pbk	16	26				
Juv Video	1738	5567	Magazine (LL)	17370	8241	fiction pbk	37	69	Museum pass	28	330	
Misc	97	213	magazine (mf)	395	418	YA non fiction	35	114	Toy	3	9	
YA video	67	146				Sheet music (LL)	128	167	Game	8	5	
Juv CD/Rom	57	93				Foreign language (LL)	370	310	Puppet	20	74	
CD Rom	58	86				large type nonfic	1294	743	Juv kit	34	11	
YA CD	4	7				Drama	421	831	Puzzle	38	231	
Book on CD	3078	21382				Nonfiction pbk (LL)	1271	988	eReader	5		
Juv Book on CD	522	9626				Career	224	1032			136	
YA Book on CD	398	1099				graphic novel	484	1243				
Juv Book on Tape	675	1394				poetry (LL)	429	1902				
Audio Cassette	1051	2539				ESL	2491	2375				
Playaway	201	877				7 day	1807	2387				
Juv Book & CD	65	567				YA graphic novel	54	2486				
Juv audio cass	96	165				paperback	808	3674				
YA book on tape	85	170				Large type book	1851	3842				
Book and cassette	2	6				Science fiction	3119	4558				
YA playaway	48	90				YA Book	3176	6810				
Juv book & cass	68	38				Juv non fiction	3016	7414				
Juv playaway	12	41				mystery	15871	18437				
CD	7671	27269				Juv Pic Hardcover	8825	21867				
Juv CD	230	1130				Fiction	12514	37149				
	21474					Juv Book	20372	39012				
						nonfiction (LL)	22325	40448				
							57894	70992				
							162838					

Jones Library Space Planning Report



Jones Library Space Planning Report

