

Midpeninsula Community Media Center

Strategic Priorities 2008 through 2011



**MEDIA CENTER**

**Lights! Camera! Community Action!**

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## 1. SUMMARY AND GOALS

Over the last few years, we have been focusing on making the Media Center a strong and stable organization, well positioned to face the demands of an increasingly technical media savvy community. The Media Center was highly successful in this effort. We made substantial progress in placing the organization in a position of long term financial sustainability, we developed a deep set of youth oriented programs, we tested several new services and we put together programming that is more relevant to the community. As a result, our viewer and producer numbers are growing, our revenue is growing and we are now in a much stronger position to support our community.

For this planning period and going forward, we identified a framework in which we would identify specific priorities:

1. Ensuring the future of the Media Center
2. Contributing to our community
3. Growing our fee for service work

Most important is ensuring the future of the Media Center. Our priorities are two-fold:

1. Determine our place in cyberspace to stay relevant and
2. Develop a resource framework to support our continuing work and the priorities identified in this document.

Our community-based priorities include partnering with community-based clusters, ethnic communities, companies focusing on climate change and continuing our work with youth. Additionally, we will support the high-speed, fiber optic institutional network that connects public facilities and we will share ideas for how to make the network relevant to the community.

In the area of fee for service, we have an opportunity to extend our reach into several growth sectors of the community who would gain from our services. If we learn to engage these growth sectors by partnering with them, we will have the model for our future growth. Moving forward, we can simply apply similar partnering lessons and remain a relevant entity in the Silicon Valley. We identified entrepreneurs, climate change businesses and ethnic non-profits as the areas for concentration.

If we can execute our strategies in partnership with the local community, the results will be quite positive. It will require engaged resources, creativity, innovation and relationship building. Here are some indicators to show that we are successful:

1. We will expand our reach into our diverse community by bringing in 10 new producers each year.
2. We will build our reputation as an outstanding media training facility. We will develop new classes and graduate at least 800 students from our classes between 2008 and 2011.
3. We will build a deep partnership with the new Campus for Jewish Life now under construction across the street.
4. We will have a successful I-Net demonstration leading to its broad use and support.
5. We will reduce the Center's carbon footprint and develop programs to support the growing climate change movement,
6. We will have a set of packaged products for entrepreneurs in our community.

The next four years will bring many challenges. We will need the support, feedback, and inspiration of the community coupled with innovative, creative internal resources to help us deliver on this vision. This is a living document that will be reviewed and updated each year.

## **2. ABOUT THE MEDIA CENTER**

The Midpeninsula Community Media Center helps local individuals and groups use the power of video, television and the Internet to build community. The Media Center was created in 2001 through a merger of Mid-Peninsula Access Corporation (MPAC) and Silicon Valley Community Communications, Inc. (SVCC). SVCC brought significant funding from Cable Co-op that enabled the Media Center to buy and operate its state of the art facility. The Media Center is a 501(c)(3) public benefit corporation.

### **MISSION**

The mission of the Media Center is to use video to inform, inspire and empower people to speak and act on behalf of themselves and their communities.

### **COMMUNITY SERVED**

The service area includes Atherton, East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Palo Alto, Stanford, and parts of San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. The Media Center is officially designated as the Cable Access Organization to bring community media services to the communities serviced by the Cable Joint Powers Authority. This gives the Media Center the right to use the cable access channels and receive \$0.88 per subscriber per month, per the franchise agreement.

## POTENTIAL VIEWERS

	Population <sup>1</sup> (1/1/2008)	Households <sup>2</sup> (1/1/2008)	Penetration Rate 2/2006
Atherton	7,475	2,603	62%
East Palo Alto	32,897	7,906	44%
Menlo Park	31,490	13,005	52%
Palo Alto	<u>63,387</u>	<u>28,177</u>	50%
Total	135,249	51,874	

In addition, there are potential viewers in portions of unincorporated San Mateo and Santa Clara County, including Stanford University. As of April 2008, Comcast had about 31,540 subscribers and AT&T had about 170 subscribers in the communities we serve.

## SERVICES

The Media Center is best known for the programming seen on channels 26 through 30 on the Comcast cable system. Our most popular shows are city council and other public meetings, candidate forums, music and cultural performances by local talent, and sporting events at local schools.

Behind the scenes, the Media Center provides a variety of equipment, facilities, training programs, and video production services. These services are coordinated and delivered by a skilled professional staff supplemented by a loyal cadre of volunteers.

### Equipment and Facilities:

- 1,050 square foot, sound insulated, production studio with modern control room for live and recorded productions
- Access to five television channels carried throughout the service area by Comcast cable and AT&T's U-verse service
- Access to five channels streamed live via the Internet
- A video server with a high-speed connection to the Internet hosting archived content for city government and in-house productions
- Portable video production equipment available to be checked out for use in the field
- Van outfitted for field productions
- Video editing equipment available for use at the Media Center
- Fully licensed music and sounds library
- Equipment for duplicating video tapes and DVDs
- "Auto Pilot Studio" for simple one camera announcements or productions
- Fully-equipped classroom

<sup>1</sup> State of California, Department of Finance, E-1 Population Estimate for Cities, Counties and the State with Annual Percentage Change – January 1, 2007 and 2008, Sacramento, California. May 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Extrapolated from State of California, Department of Finance data.

#### Training Programs:

- Affordable classes in studio and field production, and editing, as well as in “new media” tools, such as posting videos on the web
- Week-long summer camps for local youth
- Hands-on video production experience to support internship and degree programs

#### Community Services:

- Scheduling and management of three public access channels and two government channels (cable channels 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30)
- Publication of schedules on our website, by e-mail to subscribers, on Comcast’s TV Guide, and through daily listings in the Palo Alto Daily News, and highlights in the Palo Alto Weekly
- Coverage of public meetings, including city council meetings for East Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Palo Alto, and, in addition, committee and commission, and school board meetings for Palo Alto
- Staff productions providing a venue for the community, such as:
  - Candidate Forums
  - Game of the Week
  - Local Heroes
  - NGO Platforms
  - Performance Series
- Collaborations with community organizations to promote community discourse, for example:
  - Earth Day Film Festival
  - Hot Media Trends Speaker Events
  - Training and support for teachers and youth in five school districts

#### Services for Hire:

- Full-service television studio with and without crews
- Mobile “Studio-in-a-Box”
- Location shooting packages
- Editing and duplicating facilities
- Internet streaming
- Event and meeting coverage
- Promotional and fund raising videos
- Documentaries
- Instructional videos
- Issue/advocacy programs
- Video and audio clips for web sites
- Fully-equipped classroom

### 3. ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2005 – 2007

In the 2005 – 2007 Strategic Plan we identified four strategic priorities and achieved all of our goals. However, in many ways, they all are still priorities.

#### 1. Achieve and maintain long-term financial sustainability.

At the end of the three-year period, the Media Center's financial position remained very strong with net assets totaling nearly \$8.8 million, including our building:

- Our 2005 break-even budget goal was not only achieved, it was actually exceeded on an operating basis. For an organization that has always demonstrated fiscal responsibility and therefore did not have easy targets for budget reductions, this was not a trivial task. All key services were retained.
- We exceeded break even on an operating basis for 2006 as well, generating a small profit that was carried forward to 2007.
- In 2007, we out-performed our revenue budget by over \$100,000.

#### 2. Develop youth oriented programming and services.

We played a key role in engaging and empowering the public speech of local youth starting at age 12 through 21 with a wide array of opportunities including:

- We worked in partnership with the Leagues of Women Voters of South San Mateo County and Palo Alto to train local youth
- We launched our Digiquest Summer Camp program, offering 17 week-long digital media workshops.
- At the annual GREENLIGHT Earth Day Film Festival, we created an "Academy Awards" ceremonial event featuring student-produced projects that explore environmental citizenship
- We established Youth Services by hiring a Coordinator in 2007. We started off by creating an Idea Room and forming the Youth Advisory Council (YAC), an after-school video production program for high school students. The YAC also advises the Board on youth-centered video opportunities.

#### 3. Test and launch new services that can be self-supporting.

The Media Center tested the market for a number of new services:

- By the end of 2005 anyone with Internet access around the world could tune in to our channels via links on our website. We started putting archives of the Menlo Park Council meetings on the web. Now, we contract with multiple cities within and beyond our service area, providing indexing and archiving of city meetings.

- We began offering Technical Consulting services. We were hired as video streaming consultants by a nearby city. We also replicated our multiple-channel streaming system for CMAP in Gilroy. In addition, we assisted with project management of the I-Net, testing it and then working with various municipal agencies to connect and activate it.
  - In 2007, we developed a menu of digital media classes, including Podcasting and Publishing Your Media on the Web. We marketed these classes using advertising, flyers and new initiatives. Despite these efforts, the new media classes have had little success in attracting students.
4. Develop cost effective programming for the cable channels and Internet that is useful and valued by target audiences within our community.

We succeeded in bringing in new producers and programming targeted toward non-profits, youth, musicians and other performing artists, seniors, and new media enthusiasts, through a variety of events and productions:

- We worked with producers to build skills and boost their production values. The fact that a record number of 19 entries were finalists in the WAVE (Western Area Video Excellence) Awards attests to the improved quality of our community productions. We encourage and assist producers in promoting their shows.
- We promoted our channel brands and focused on our YES (Youth, Education and Sports) Channel. We organized and promoted thematic weeks such as Youth Video Week.
- We also initiated a number of on-ramp activities, including a New Media Speaker series, designed to bring new faces to our door to hear about our channels, classes and professional services. We choose non-profits that are connected to other groups in the community, such as Senior New Ways and Abilities United (CAR), and helped them develop the pilot for a series they produce on-going. We produce an annual Faces of Local Heroes series that garners wide local interest and coverage. Producer spotlight screenings and film festivals reach out to specific audiences, such as local issues and the environment.
- We offered local groups the ability to sponsor free programming available via satellite. We also down link various national media conferences such as the National Conference on Media Reform featuring Bill Moyers.
- We started working with the City of Palo Alto to build a coalition of green community organizations and individuals.
- We focused local issues coverage on violence prevention in East Palo Alto.

We have increased our reach and viewership tremendously by webcasting all five of our channels 24/7 on our website. Web site usage reports indicate that we currently average approximately 2,500 unique visitors to our web site each month. Overall the most popular pages are the TV schedule and our webcasts. Government meetings routinely draw viewers to our site.

## 4. ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

### 4.1. LEGISLATIVE CHANGES – A NEW PLAYING FIELD

#### New Franchising Formula Enacted

In late 2006, a new state law was enacted that changes the regulatory and funding formulas for Public, Educational and Government (PEG) Media Centers. In December 2007, Comcast applied for a statewide franchise to operate in our area. While Comcast's state franchise will terminate its JPA franchise, particular Comcast JPA franchise obligations – including its I-Net obligations – will survive until the JPA franchise would have expired in July 2010.

#### **Implications for the Media Center**

Financial impact of the new law is mixed:

- There are new costs of services that used to be borne by the cable company.
- We will get additional revenues if other companies compete with the cable operator and pay a pass through fee – assuming the overall number of cable TV subscribers increases.

#### **Threats for the Media Center**

- The Media Center might have to deal with funding limitations restricting the pass through fee received from Comcast and AT&T for capital expenditures only, and not for operations – starting in July 2010. However, work is underway to amend federal legislation to fix the problem.
- There are new costs for community media centers:
  - Free basic cable and cable modem service for public institutions ends.
  - Free inclusion of PEG programming information on cablecast channel guide and in their print guide ends.
  - Comcast will own the Community I-Net and must be paid to maintain it.
- There is a legal battle in the making. Recently AT&T, a state franchisee, launched its video services. PEG channels are currently very difficult to access on their system and are no longer even “channels” with the same broadband as the other commercial channels.

### 4.2. TECHNOLOGY CHANGES REQUIRE NEW ROLES

#### The Internet Changes the Whole Picture

With the rapid adoption of broadband connectivity nationwide and the plethora of media on the web, a profound shift has occurred in the ways that grassroots communicators can publish and consume media. *Now, media producers can*

*publish video online that is available to viewers on a 24/7 basis.* The media is easily shared via email tools provided by the free, online repositories and can be viewed by people anywhere in the world.

### **Implications for the Media Center**

- Producers will put their work online as well as on our cable channels.
- Cable TV channels are no longer a key offering of a community media center – especially as more video web sites allow lengthier video content.
- More and more people will view programming from our web site.
- The Media Center needs to help producers build an online presence.
- The Media Center needs to re-think studio timeslots and training to be relevant for producers making shorter clips for the internet.
- The Media Center needs to re-evaluate what kinds of cameras to have available for the public.
- Producers should be taught how to leverage their long-form video programs by uploading excerpts with tagwords.
- For the time being, full events (i.e. sports, meetings, lectures) are still more easily viewed on TV channels that provide a higher quality picture and no limitations on length.

### **Opportunities for the Media Center**

- More reach (audience) for program content as we put shows online.
- Viewership of online program content is measureable (as opposed to PEG-TV channels).
- Grant opportunities increase as content can reach more people. Also there are Digital Divide grant opportunities.
- Outreach to potential program producers will be more attractive with enhanced distribution capacities.
- If the Media Center can market its classes to people who publish videos online and would like to improve the technical quality of their work, we would find new class-takers and perhaps new types of classes to offer (such as how to upload videos, how to drive traffic to your videos and how to videoblog).
- Studio shows can incorporate call-ins from people with webcams on their computers and include visual locations and participants worldwide.
- The Media Center can provide public access internet terminals and related internet usage classes at various sites where there are people without home internet access – perhaps in partnership with libraries.

### **Threats for the Media Center**

- People could bypass media centers to publish their content directly online (on sites such as YouTube) and not be interested in cable channel playbacks.

- New video cameras on either end of the spectrum, from our videotape-based camcorders (i.e. flip cameras) on one side and High Definition (HD) cameras on the other, may make our cameras undesirable to many.

### **Equipment and Software at Home**

*Many people now own the media production equipment and software that previously they came to the Media Center to use or borrow. Statistics indicate a huge surge in user-generated videos appearing online. It appears that the overwhelming majority are producing and editing these videos with their own equipment.*

### **Implications for the Media Center**

- The need for our cameras and editing suites continues to decrease.
- The Media Center must have a wider range of expertise if we want to help people with the various equipment and software that they own themselves.
- People with their own equipment may prefer tutoring on specific questions rather than basic classes. Witness the popularity of the “Genius Bar” in Apple stores.

### **Opportunities for the Media Center**

- There may be more needs for borrowing accessory items from the Media Center such as audio mixers, wireless mics, quality tripods, light kits, etc.
- A tutoring service could be a new revenue generator for the Media Center.
- The Media Center can work with contractors to expand the range of classes we teach and to build a pool of tutors.
- There is a boom in the production of user-generated media other than video (i.e. audio podcasts and digital photography). The Media Center can target such producers and offer them tutoring or classes.
- The Media Center classroom could have additional openings for people who bring their own laptops.
- The Media Center might provide very high-end training on software that people do not often own – for example as an Authorized Apple Training Center or Adobe Training Center for advanced applications.
- The Media Center might target independent producers for high-end classes.
- In addition to classes, the Media Center can serve as a gathering space for a variety of media-related “meetup” of groups.
- Media Center could host peer support groups for people who have a specific type of software or equipment, or who engage in a particular activity such as blogging.

## **Threats for the Media Center**

- People could bypass Media Center classes to master the equipment and software they own via online tutorials and forums.
- The Media Center may not be able to develop a successful method to find and market its services to those who are making videos specifically to publish online at sites like YouTube.
- Because of the huge disparity of people who have PCs vs. Macs at home, fewer people might want the current Mac-based editing software training we offer.
- There are many other providers of classes and there are better-known sites for certain types of tutoring – like the Genius Bar at Apple Stores.

## **Digital Divide**

According to a 2007 Pew report, over *40% of Americans do not have access to broadband internet* – primarily among senior citizens and the poor.

## **Implications for the Media Center**

- The Media Center's traditional role – conducting targeted outreach and providing resources to those who don't have media access – should continue with these populations foremost in our strategies.

## **Opportunities for the Media Center**

- The Media Center could provide quick tutoring or troubleshooting services to the various school districts and organizations.
- There are grant opportunities that increase access and communications for under-resourced communities.
- There may be a need for training in basic computer applications and resume building/posting that help people acquire entry-level jobs. Our classroom is well suited for such classes.

## **Web 2.0 Tools and Training**

An organization's web site is evolving from an electronic, updatable brochure - to a hub of interactive communication and services. Web 2.0 tools enable a vastly richer and more interactive web presence. To the extent that a media center wants to play a key role as a media support agency for local nonprofits, there is a new niche to step into, but it requires new expertise on the media center's staff.

## **Implications for the Media Center**

- Organizations need new media training that the Media Center could begin to provide.
- The Media Center needs new expertise on staff, particularly for production services.
- The Media Center should model this expertise with its own web site features and functionality.

### **Opportunities for the Media Center**

- A new niche providing Web 2.0 consulting and training for nonprofits.
- A new revenue stream – particularly with the production of web media and teaching Web 2.0 classes.
- Create a new Media Center web site with many Web 2.0/social networking features and video on demand to drive much more traffic our way.
- Grant opportunities in concert with nonprofits that seek comprehensive help revamping their web presence with video and other Web 2.0 dynamics.
- Instead or in addition to providing consulting and training, the Media Center can become a provider of new media/Web 2.0 lectures, demos, and events.
- Partnerships with web developers.

### **Threats for the Media Center**

- Developing this capacity could turn out to be a resource drain that yields little new business.

## **4.3. OTHER PLAYERS AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS**

### **Other Bay Area PEG Operations**

Two formerly thriving community access centers in Cupertino and Los Altos closed down. The remaining eight PEG operations on the Peninsula (excluding San Francisco and San Jose) are all struggling with their budgets though Gilroy and Pen TV have a broader base of revenue streams than the others. San Francisco and San Jose may do very well under state franchising, but probably no public access media center will survive in the long run if the state franchises limit PEG funding to capital expenditures.

### **Opportunities for the Media Center**

- There may be an interest among PEG operators, municipalities and cable providers in creating a regional channel.
- With Web 2.0 tools, the Media Center can explore joint regional programming projects with other media center staffs.
- Los Altos and even Cupertino might be interested in community media services from the Media Center if, at some point, Mountain View's KMVT cannot provide adequate services.

### **Media Arts Centers**

There have been some major changes to other near-by media centers. BAVC, in San Francisco, reinvented itself as a high-end training facility and tapped into a robust revenue stream. FilmArts went under after thirty two years in business.

## **Opportunities for the Media Center**

- There may be an opportunity to serve the former FilmArts clientele. We already have most of the necessary equipment and software for classes and we can also become a fiscal agent for more independent documentary productions. It would require targeted marketing efforts.

## **Community Technology Centers**

Plugged-In, an East Palo Alto provider of computer and internet access, as well as multi-level computer application classes, went under, spinning off its online journal, EPA.net.

## **Opportunities for the Media Center**

- There may be an opportunity to fill some of the gap left by the demise of Plugged In. Other media centers have included a computer tech center under their umbrella offering basic skills instruction geared to job seekers. There are grants available for this activity and we already have the hardware and software. It would require exploration with community leaders and funders.

## **New Players Providing Media Resources**

There are an ever-increasing number of local organizations and institutions who are taking advantage of the low cost threshold on digital hardware and software and developing their own computer labs. Some of these organizations are also offering affordable classes to the public or their clientele. Many of the public schools in our service area now have their own TV studios, camcorders, and editing facilities, thanks in part to Cable Co-op's Legacy Grants.

## **Implications for the Media Center**

- Some previous users of Media Center equipment and studio facilities now have other options.
- School classes that used to bring students to the Media Center for instruction and use of the production facilities now use their own equipment and new media teachers.
- There are more class providers nearby whose classes are sometimes cheaper than the ones at the Media Center.

## **Opportunities for the Media Center**

- Find out what the new providers need in the way of training, maintenance and other support and explore grant opportunities and contracts.
- The Media Center can find additional programming at these outlets to aggregate on our cable TV channels and web site.
- Concentrate more on the resources we have that are unique or better, including our TV Studio, high-end classroom, and high-end software.
- Continue video festival events with an ever growing number of partners.

- Provide on site tutoring or short-term workshops at these schools and agencies.
- Build on our relationships with public school media teachers in the YBC organization that the Media Center launched. We can provide services, classes, and collaborative proposals through this network.

### **Threats for the Media Center**

- Further erosion of those who need our equipment or classes.
- Potential loss of producers and volunteers needed at the Media Center.

### **Printing Press is Online and Incorporating Video and Audio; TV News and Online Sites Feature Citizen Journalism**

As the print media improve their online presence, there is more media convergence and overlap with what the Media Center does. Broadcast media are also overlapping traditional Media Center activities with new citizen-journalism initiatives. The Palo Alto Weekly and the Paly Voice, for example, now feature short videos on their web sites. NBC-11 hosts viewer-produced videos. There is a burgeoning number of citizen journalism sites online such as the one for San Francisco Bay Area IndyMedia ([www.indybar.org](http://www.indybar.org)), that are providing online training and repositories for news-related short videos.

### **Implications for the Media Center**

- The community cable channels are no longer the only dedicated local video source, particularly in the areas of news, sports and voter resources.

### **Opportunities for Media Center**

- Explore a partnership with print media to provide video content that will credit and link back to the Media Center site.
- Explore partnerships with all of these new initiatives to provide training and guidance for citizen journalists.
- Explore citizen journalism collaborative grant opportunities.
- Embed and aggregate video pieces with relevant content (or producers) to our own web site (with permission of course) to enhance the content value of our own site.
- Support citizen journalist producers by lending accessory equipment and providing tutoring services on their specific equipment.
- Add citizen journalism classes to our mix and see if they take off.

### **Threats for the Media Center**

- These new, local, media-rich news web sites compete for the same viewers as the Media Center cable channels and web site.
- Many folks with their own equipment may continue to bypass media centers if their needs are fully met in terms of training online and the ease of publishing to sites that target the audience they seek.

## **5. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND CHALLENGES**

### **5.1 MAJOR STRENGTHS**

- A beautiful, green certified facility that is clean, welcoming and safe
- A studio with quality equipment, including chroma-key and teleprompters
- Five channels on the cable system with simultaneous webcast
- A diverse staff, well appreciated by community members and volunteers, and skilled in studio and remote productions
- An activist community that cares about local issues
- Partnerships with the Palo Alto Weekly and the Palo Alto Daily News, and the League of Women Voters
- Active youth programs including a partnership with the five public school districts in our service area
- Speaker series on “new media”
- Website that keep us on the cutting edge
- Affordable classes
- Targeted services that help community groups raise awareness
- Financial strength and stability

### **5.2 MAJOR WEAKNESSES**

- Location does not provide visibility and foot traffic
- Lack of Internet and video engineering skills on staff
- Lack of staff for outreach and promotion of services
- Difficulties in getting community feedback on viewing preferences

### **5.3 CHALLENGES**

- There has been a long-term drop-off in our class registrations though we have had decent success with our TV studio class.
- Our new digital production classes have not caught on.
- Camera equipment keeps changing rapidly on both the high and low ends of the spectrum. It is difficult to know what to provide for the public.
- We do not have the full range of new media expertise for the range of services and workshops we'd like to provide.
- We have little funding available for staff production that could fill gaps in content about the community.
- Fund raising is challenging given foundation biases against media projects, and lack of viewership statistics for program underwriters.

- It is challenging to market new services without a big budget for market research and promotion.

## 6. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Given uncertain times as outlined in the Environmental Scan section, our primary priority is **ensuring the future of the Media Center** during a time of tremendous change in video-based technologies for self expression and in the newspaper industry.

Our second priority is supporting the activities we need to **stay relevant to our community**. We identified two areas of focus for this period: partnership with community groups and the activation and use of the I-Net.

Lastly, we want to **grow our fee for service work** and support the entrepreneurial mindset of the community by creating products for small businesses, non-profits and other entities. We especially want to collaborate with 1) small entrepreneurial enterprises, 2) small businesses developing climate change solutions, and 3) non-profits such as the Taube-Koret Campus for Jewish Life.

We believe that these strategies will help us increase the number of organizations and people of all ages who take advantage of our community resources.

These strategic priorities should take us through 2011. The staff will develop specific objectives and tactical plans that are based on these priorities.

### 6.1 ENSURING THE FUTURE OF THE MEDIA CENTER

#### Our Place in Cyberspace

*The era of personal electronic communication and broadband networks is at hand, and every aspect of our media culture is undergoing change.*  
– Benton Foundation<sup>3</sup>

#### The Opportunity

Community media centers have lost their monopoly position in the distribution of locally produced video material. It started with community bulletin boards and evolved into blogs. Then, as broadband access to the Internet became widely available, YouTube became a hugely popular tool for self-expression and citizen journalism using video. The process of video creation and distribution is now as easy and inexpensive as photography.

Is the need for community access to television channels going away? Will people still want to use a professional studio and high quality cameras to produce

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<sup>3</sup> *What's Going on in Community Media*, Fred Johnson, Karen Benichelli, Benton Foundation, 2007

shows? Has the technology become so easy to use that demand for our classes will fade away?

#### Strategic Plan for 2008–2011

1. During the next three years we will examine the question of what our role in the community should be in an era of easy access to mass communications channels. We will consult with experts in the field, talk to community leaders, and ask questions of our producers and viewers.
2. By the end of 2011 we will issue a report with our conclusions. We will not wait for the report to make changes. The Media Center has a tradition of embracing new technologies and we expect that to continue.

#### **Resource Framework**

##### The Opportunity

In order to stay relevant, we need to be able to provide the latest equipment and software to our customers. To do this we also need the appropriate staff to teach customers how to use the equipment effectively.

We are also stewards of the assets we already have. We must anticipate the maintenance that our building will require and the improvements that will help us operate more efficiently. An example of the latter is reducing our use of energy and water. In 2007, we began paying a small premium for 100% renewable electricity from the City of Palo Alto Utilities. We also became a Santa Clara County certified Green Business. In 2008, we installed solar panels on our roof to generate clean, renewable, energy and reduce our electricity bill.

#### Strategic Plan for 2008–2011

1. Continually monitor strategic technology and software opportunities. Take High Definition (HD) video production for example. After reviewing available equipment, the Technology Committee has recommended that converting the Media Center studio to High Definition (HD) video production should occur as soon as the equipment is within the reach of our budget.
2. Set up a Facilities Committee in 2009. The Committee will be responsible for maintaining an inventory of facilities and equipment, and maintaining a plan to keep everything in good working order, replacing components as they wear out.

Within one year the Facilities Committee will take the following steps:

- a. Inventory assets associated with our building and all equipment associated with the studio, classes, and our other programs.
- b. Prepare a facility maintenance and replacement plan.

3. Evaluate our carbon footprint, develop a plan to reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases, and begin implementation of that plan. The Facilities Committee will lead the work and report regularly to the Board.

By the end of 2011 we will have taken the following steps:

- a. Conduct an energy audit during 2008 and 2009, and establish a baseline carbon footprint.
  - b. Analyze opportunities to reduce our emissions by looking at costs, financial and operational savings, and potential reductions of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
  - c. Set goals for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in 2010, 2015, and 2020.
  - d. Prepare a three year plan of action for approval by the Board
  - e. Begin tracking and reporting to the community our progress toward our goals.
3. Realign, and potentially expand, staffing to support project and administration needs. Currently the Media Center staff is overextended. There are areas that have little or no resources. Our challenge is to look at ways to expand our expertise and capacity with limited resources. Some options include grants and using contractors for revenue related projects.

## **6.2 STAY RELEVANT TO OUR COMMUNITY**

### **Partnerships with Community Groups**

We have chosen three focus areas for this planning period: **youth**, **ethnic communities** and **climate change**. The Media Center is already making progress with youth, because we targeted this segment three years ago and we were able to resource this effort appropriately to ensure its success. We will use our youth efforts as a model and target various ethnic communities. We will also encourage the development and dissemination of information to fight climate change.

#### **Youth**

##### The Opportunity

In 2005, we identified a “perfect storm of opportunity” brewing with the convergence of smaller, more portable equipment, a societal focus on youth issues, and the infusion of video equipment through the Youth Broadcasting Collaborative. As mentioned in the Accomplishments section, we have made a good start but there is more that can be done, especially to include the youth of East Palo Alto (EPA) and Menlo Park.

## Strategic Plan for 2008–2011

1. Develop a feeder system to the various youth programs at schools, non-profits, etc.
2. Outreach into EPA and Menlo Park by collaborating with the various youth organizations in EPA and Menlo Park and building an EPA satellite studio.

### **Ethnic Communities**

#### The Opportunity

In the near future there will be one, and perhaps two ethnic community centers located very close to our facility. Our neighborhood is expanding to include the Taube-Koret Campus for Jewish Life, directly across the street from our facility. Their campus will include activities for the very young to the very old, including a child care center and a cultural and arts center. Most importantly, it will include eight buildings containing 193 apartments for seniors and their families. The campus is scheduled to open in the fall of 2009.

In addition, a mosque is being planned at 998 San Antonio Road, a few doors down from the Media Center. The 10,000+ square-foot building will contain a mosque, adjacent to a two-story community center. The new mosque will be a home for a community that has spent a decade bouncing between temporary spaces, searching for a site to build a permanent worship hall.

Strong programmatic partnerships will build awareness of the Media Center to new groups, and bring new faces to our doors. This is an opportunity for us to expand our community building efforts by introducing our new neighbors to the wider community through our channels and our website.

For the Taube-Koret Campus, there is an additional opportunity to bring in the seniors living across the street. Historically, seniors have been an important element in the Media Center's successes. In the earliest days, our senior volunteers were almost like employees when our staff was very small. Today, seniors continue to have a significant presence among our volunteer studio crew. In addition, senior producers have contributed regular program series that have encompassed a wide variety of interests including: poetry, square dancing and local and international issues.

## Strategic Plan for 2008–2011

1. Meet with the organization's staff to introduce ourselves as neighbors and describe the resources we have to offer and brainstorm collaborations.
2. Develop specific programs
  - a. We don't have to wait for the facilities to be built to start working together. Some opportunities include production of training and

- marketing videos, use of our facility, and marketing of our YAC and internship program to their teen programs.
- b. After they open, we can do outreach to our neighbors, especially the seniors, to become trained volunteers and producers, perhaps doing intergenerational training with our YAC and interns.

## **Climate Change and the Media Center**

### The Opportunity

The Media Center is better positioned than any other organization to use our success going green to help others in the community to do the same.

### Strategic Plan for 2008–2011

1. Develop and launch a new communications program that will encourage residents, businesses and others in the community to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

Our communications program will have at least the following elements:

- a. We will showcase our own work to protect the climate, by installing an information display on our solar system and other green programs, and by speaking about our “green” projects to community groups whenever we can.
- b. We will solicit and produce educational video material on climate change and distribute it using our channels and the Internet.
- c. We will partner with community organizations such as Acterra and Sustainable Silicon Valley to support and encourage action.
- d. We will use the power of our channels, our website, and our facility to recognize the work of others through film competitions and awards programs.

## **Activate and Use the I-Net**

### The Opportunity

As part of its local franchise agreement, Comcast built an institutional fiber network that enables about 70 different public facilities (e.g. schools, municipal departments, senior centers, etc.) to send data of all sorts, including video, to each other, to the Internet, and/or to the cable TV channels, via fiber optic lines with the Media Center as a hub for the entire system. The new state franchise law removes Comcast’s obligation to continue to provide the I-Net after their local franchise expires in July 2010. At that time, Comcast will own the I-Net and be able to charge the cities for its maintenance. Comcast is not ready to talk with our JPA about what they plan to do.

At this point, the I-Net has not been utilized extensively for video programming.

Five I-Net subscriber entities use the I-Net – mostly for data transmission. The Media Center is trying to broaden the use of the I-Net by actively collaborating with I-Net subscribers to develop video program distribution ideas and provide technical assistance. These could include live training sessions from one fire station to others and to police stations. It could include guest speakers that could be cablecast into multiple school sites and multiple school districts simultaneously. It could include high school classes such as a foreign language with low enrollment at individual school sites being tied together to create a full class. There are grant opportunities for various programming projects. The Media Center can offer consulting services for production hardware and installation at the various sites that will originate video programming and video tele-conferences.

#### Strategic Plan for 2008–2011

##### 1. Activate and use the I-Net.

The Media Center will continue to take a leadership role in activating the I-Net for the five subscriber entities currently connected, providing the project management, documentation, and technical resources necessary to get the I-Net to a functional state. We will take leadership in demonstrating the viability of the I-Net as a community resource in case a debate emerges as to whether or not to maintain it as a resource beyond the change in Comcast's franchise status. As resources allow, the Media Center may design demonstration projects, enlist partners and publicize the projects to build interest and commitment in preserving the I-Net.

##### 2. Assure ongoing maintenance.

The JPA needs to propose a way to collect maintenance funds in order to keep the I-Net functional. As both an I-Net subscriber and implementation leader, the Media Center will be at the table to put forward ideas that will unite all of the subscriber entities connected to the I-Net. The Media Center's success in demonstrating the I-Net's usefulness is key to the I-Net remaining a community resource.

### **6.3. GROW OUR FEE FOR SERVICE WORK**

#### **The For-Profit Sector**

##### The Opportunity

With the growth of Internet marketing and the wide availability of media creation tools, the marketing landscape has changed for entrepreneurs. Small companies can now create websites, promote themselves via banners, build community, hold online meetings and share online demos with a wide audience. This media

availability for the masses gives the Media Center an opportunity to help these small businesses by providing them with the necessary media tools and knowledge to be more effective.

There are two reasons we are now interested in working with the for-profit sector. The first reason comes from our core mission – we are a community media center and we believe we can genuinely help businesses in our community achieve greater success as a result of a partnership with us.

Secondly, the for-profit sector will also benefit the Media Center because small businesses are willing to pay for the professional services we provide. We think we can give them an opportunity to “play” in the Internet world for a reasonable fee.

We are especially interested in working with green companies. The Silicon Valley is the epicenter of this sector and we think we can help them to cross-pollinate ideas, raise issues and grow their businesses.

The Media Center can offer these groups a less expensive solution than a marketing agency. We can provide groups with the expertise and support to allow them to focus on their messaging.

#### Strategic Plan for 2008–2011

Since businesspeople are not media experts, we need to promote our services in a results oriented style that is easy to understand.

We can target a for-profit sector (i.e. solar companies) and then approach individual companies within that sector. As we learn about the needs of an individual company, develop test projects to determine how their customers respond to media, and measure the results, we can create a formula that will help similar organizations.

We can also reach these businesses with group activities. For example:

- Creating roundtables highlighting issues relevant to the business sector.
- Hosting public events or exhibits to promote the sector. Perhaps a demo day where they all show their demos.
- Recognizing the success of the business sector by giving awards that promote their products/services, i.e. the Greenest Company Award, the small business that volunteers the most with the community, etc.

#### **The Non-Profit Sector - Taube-Koret Campus for Jewish Life**

##### The Opportunity

The Media Center has done outreach to non-profits in the past with limited success. However, there is a new opportunity for professional services because of our location – across the street from the Taube-Koret Campus for Jewish Life.

As described above, the campus includes a cultural and arts center and almost two hundred apartments for seniors and their families.

#### Strategic Plan for 2008-2011

1. Before the facility opens, we could help the organization produce their employee training and marketing videos. We could also consult on video equipment for their auditorium in their Cultural and Arts Center if they choose to buy some.
2. After opening, potential professional services include:
  - a. Production services at their Cultural and Arts Center.
  - b. Marketing of our Digital Storytelling services to the seniors, both resident and non-resident, which dovetails with their “Creating your Jewish Memoir” program.

## 7. FINANCIAL PLAN

As we prepare this plan, the stock market has suffered its worst decline since this Great Depression and some economists are forecasting a very weak economy for the next few years. A weak economy could reduce our income while operating costs, such as electricity, continue to rise.

The following financial plan adheres to the Media Center's goal of operating at a break even level. The financial plan is conservative, forecasting low growth in base income and tight controls on costs. Management will make adjustments during the next three years to ensure that the organization remains financially sound by conserving the value of the capital account.

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

#### 1. Our Place in Cyberspace

- a. The plan assumes \$20,000 for consultants to assist with the analysis; \$5,000 for holding meetings with community leaders, producers, and viewers and \$15,000 for conducting a viewer survey.
- b. The plan assumes that half of this money will be spent in 2010 and half in 2011.

#### 2. Resource Framework

- a. Analytical work on facility projects, including reducing energy use, will be funded out of the regular budget.
- b. We will prepare a financial plan to ensure that we have reserves ready when building and equipment replacement is necessary.
- c. Individual projects that may require capital outlay, e.g. for the purchase of more energy efficient studio lights, are not reflected in this financial plan.

#### 3. Partnerships with Community Groups

- a. Work will be done within existing budgets or funded through grants.

#### 4. Climate Change and the Media Center

- a. Communications programs will be funded out of the normal operating budget or with grants.

#### 5. Activate and Use the I-Net

- a. The financial plan includes income and expenses for maintaining the I-Net under contract to the Joint Powers Authority.

- b. Demonstration projects will be funded out of operating funds, by the JPA, or with the aid of grant funding.

6. Grow our Fee for Service Work

- a. The plan assumes spending an additional \$20,000 in 2010 and 2011 on consultants or contractors for marketing and outreach.
- b. We assume the program will bring in at least an additional \$45,000 in 2010 for a net gain of \$5,000 after production and marketing costs are deducted. In 2011, we assume the program will bring in \$60,000 for a net gain of \$15,000.

**PEG INCOME**

The Comcast franchise agreement expires in 2010. Because the recent legislation that took franchising away from cities and gave it to the State did not clearly safeguard funding for community access organizations, our situation could change dramatically after 2010. The Media Center is financially stronger than most access centers so we believe we will be able to adapt to the new environment once the rules become clear. On-going support from the community will be essential.

	Actual 2005	Actual 2006	Actual 2007	Estimate 2008	Budget 2009	Plan 2010	Plan 2011
Operating Income							
PEG Fees	304,295	317,059	328,313	333,062	331,188	341,124	351,358
Contracted Gov. Mtg Coverage	113,444	112,055	160,434	185,617	185,300	194,565	204,293
Miscellaneous Media Services	108,992	50,044	83,795	81,358	73,200	120,396	184,008
Contrib/Memb/Grants/Underwrtng	32,585	30,132	48,939	30,679	41,100	43,155	45,313
Contributions-in-kind	73,102	60,874	47,244	40,719	40,000	40,000	40,000
Classes and Facility Use Fees	44,168	60,453	52,971	61,353	62,225	68,448	75,293
Checking/\$Market Acct. Interest	2,882	6,356	3,189	738	1,049	1,049	1,049
Tape Sales & Misc. Income	4,142	19,886	4,276	4,631	5,000	5,000	5,000
Funds Received from Prior Years	0	0	60,124	29,748	28,831	0	0
Distributions from Capital Account	72,560	102,173	121,420	124,027	83,490	83,490	83,490
	<u>756,170</u>	<u>759,032</u>	<u>910,705</u>	<u>891,932</u>	<u>851,383</u>	<u>897,227</u>	<u>989,804</u>
Expense							
Salaries and Benefits	548,770	528,707	580,560	568,989	555,656	572,326	589,496
Professional/Outside Services	117,102	104,512	108,187	161,911	174,639	239,878	312,074
Facility Expense	36,868	55,746	49,201	48,534	47,953	49,392	50,874
Operating Expenses & Supplies	17,130	15,843	26,868	19,492	18,240	18,787	19,351
Equipment Expenses	39,158	37,079	25,258	41,349	21,860	22,516	23,191
Advertising/PR/Outreach	11,328	14,422	20,427	7,822	8,136	8,380	8,631
Insurance and Vehicle	26,967	28,836	25,105	30,076	25,522	26,288	27,077
Conference/Training/Hospitality	6,296	10,342	8,476	11,337	11,620	11,969	12,328
							1,043,02
	<u>803,619</u>	<u>795,487</u>	<u>844,082</u>	<u>889,510</u>	<u>863,626</u>	<u>949,536</u>	<u>2</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>-47,449</u>	<u>-36,455</u>	<u>66,623</u>	<u>2,422</u>	<u>-12,243</u>	<u>-52,309</u>	<u>-53,218</u>

## **8. STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM**

Barbara Noparstak, Board President

Seth Fearey

Annie Folger

Lawrence Lee

Elliot Margolies

Andrew Mellows

Joanne Reed