Many Stories, One Future

Strategic Plan: 2019–2022
Dear Reader,

In January 2018, we set out to gather public opinion to influence our 2019-22 Strategic Plan. We held sessions with the public, small community groups, staff, and our boards to explore a central question: “What would make our community the most viable and livable place it can possibly be?”

Though many of the answers we heard were not directly related to library service, several overarching themes arose where the library could play an integral role in expanding community progress. The Community and Planning Committee of the Library Board of Trustees reviewed the results of our community conversations and recommended that the library focus on four primary themes for the strategic plan: Building Community Connections, Promoting Education and Lifelong Learning, Improving Buildings and Infrastructure, and Marketing Library Services.

With the goals finalized by the Library Board, the library again brought in the community, holding sessions with the public, small groups, staff, and board members to discuss projects and tasks that would help us fulfill these goals. From this information, staff compiled all the information gathered and created measurable strategies and tasks.

We did not hire an outside firm for this process. Instead, key staff educated themselves in the “Transforming Communities: Turning Outward” strategic planning method, as designed by the Public Library Association and Harwood Institute for Public Information. This cost-efficient, mindful method, helped us develop the following plan, which we are extremely proud to share with you. The lofty goals, objectives, and strategies within this plan are designed to propel the Rock Island Public Library, and the community we serve, into the next decade. Our goal is always excellence, and providing vital and essential services to our residents help make our community a great place to live.

Thank you to the more than 200 public attendees, staff, and board members who volunteered their time to give us their opinions of the community and library. We couldn’t have done it without your help!

Sincerely,

Angela Campbell, Library Director
Mission

The Rock Island Public Library makes our community stronger by connecting people to resources, services, events, and each other.

Vision

The Rock Island Public Library is a bastion of democracy, where people of all ages, backgrounds, and cultures can engage in self-directed or group-learning activities that foster education, literacy, and community participation.

Values

- Providing Equal Access to Resources
- Facilitating Community Engagement Opportunities
- Fostering Education and Lifelong Learning
- Offering Vibrant Spaces Where All Are Welcome
Goal #1

Community Connections

Our community will value the library as a hub to connect with diverse interests, resources, and cultures.
As a direct result from our community, staff, and Board strategic planning sessions, the following objectives and tasks were chosen by participants as the most effective and efficient way to meet the first goal, “Community Connections.”

   - Secure funding sources
   - Release a request for proposals by mid-2019
   - Establish permanent routes
   - Create a budget for outreach operations
   - Develop a sustainable staffing model
   - Create a brand for outreach operations

2. Increase outreach program attendance by 10% each year.
   - Redesign organizational structure to accommodate for planned outreach
   - Develop a baseline for current outreach
   - Implement scheduled outreach events based on community needs
   - Do at least 3 pop-up programs each month in the community
   - Attend no less than 5 offsite community events per year, offering library card registration and programs

3. Enhance current partnerships by evaluating efforts at least every six months.
   - Create a master list of current partners
   - Evaluate each partnership
   - Create a marketing plan for library partnerships
   - Incorporate City Departments into programs and outreach

4. Designated staff serves on at least one arts/cultural, or community-based committee in the library service area.
   - Create a list of current committee/board attendance by staff
   - Survey the available committees in the library service area
   - Assign staff to a committee with like-interest
   - Staff will summarize meetings with the library programming committee monthly
   - The Library Director will report to the Board on staff engagement efforts
Goal #2

Education & Lifelong Learning

Our community will have equal access to resources to explore topics of personal interest and meet lifelong learning goals.
1. Increase the number of programs/events offered by 10% each year.
   - Accurately count the number of programs and attendees
   - Offer programs at the Southwest Library each week, rotating between adult/teen/children’s themes
   - Redefine organizational structure to accommodate for additional programs
   - Investigate after-hour programs at all library locations
   - Each librarian will do at least twelve programs per year
   - Incorporate community discussions into programming lineup

2. Increase in-house program attendance by 10% each year.
   - Investigate additional ways to provide transportation to the library
   - Create small collaboration spaces for public use
   - Incentivize program attendance during annual reading challenges
   - Create programs for specific groups (built-in audience), while also inviting the public
   - Using marketing software, send personal email invitations to library patrons who are most likely to be interested in the program
   - Create a paid-advertising plan for large-scale programs

3. Create a Library of Things in a specific zone of each building by 2022.
   - Brand the Library of Things concept
   - Identify “things” to loan, based on service area population needs/wants
   - Designate a portion of the selection budget to the Library of Things collection
   - Create sponsored kits to promote the item and how to use it
   - Divide duties among selectors, choosing one selector to oversee the entire collection

4. Schedule all staff for continuing education time each week, beginning in 2019.
   - Supervisors will assign specific training opportunities for each staff each week, using a variety of learning methods
   - Supervisors will report at weekly manager meetings about the training opportunities the staff have attended/viewed/read
   - Continue monthly staff meetings and annual in-service day
   - Each library staff person will attend 1 library program on work time each year.
   - Create a required staff competency program

The “Education & Lifelong Learning” goal is a pillar of public library service. The following objectives and tasks were chosen to focus our efforts in this otherwise very broad goal.
Goal #3

Infrastructure & Facilities

Our community will have a vibrant and safe library for positive personal and virtual engagement.
1. Create an interim plan for cosmetic improvements for all locations by early 2019, complementing the master plan.

- Define and prioritize areas of focus at the Downtown Library:
  - Rotunda
  - Community Room
  - Cohort and Meeting Spaces
  - Staff areas
  - Public service desks
  - Storytime area in Children’s Room
  - Ground level entrance
  - Circulation Workroom / Server Room
- Southwest Library Meeting Room technology
- Identify funding options
- Create a timeline for completing the projects

2. Close the 30/31 Library by the end of 2019 to phase in the Mobile Library, and prepare for a capital campaign for the master plan.

- Create a timeline and plan for closing the branch and opening the Mobile Library
- Build community support for the project
- Create a budget with the following considerations:
  - Transitional funds for the general maintenance of the building until sold
  - Reallocating material selection budgets to represent available space for collection
  - Operation of the Mobile Library
- Create a timeline for selling the property

3. Implement the Art Committee recommendations by the end of 2019.

- Create an accurate inventory spreadsheet of all art in the library
- Use a newly-created library advocacy group to contact all living artists and/or families of artists to get a statement of value for insurance purposes.
- Analyze which pieces should be restored, kept, or sold for fundraising purposes
- Review the Donation Policy with the Board for future donations
Goal #4

Marketing

Our community will feel more connected and aware of library services and resources.
We commonly hear, “I didn’t know you had that?” This goal intends to make “not knowing” about library services a thing of the past. The objectives & tasks reflect a proactive approach to marketing.

1. Work with the Library Foundation to create a volunteer advocacy group by the end of 2019.
   - Create a “Library Leadership Committee” as an arm of the Foundation, focusing on the following tasks/projects:
     - Art Inventory
     - Used book sales
     - Advocacy meetings
     - Volunteer speakers bureau to promote the library
   - Develop an easy-giving plan, using online resources such as Go-Fund-Me

2. Create a “My Library Rewards” campaign by mid-2019
   - Purchase the My Library Rewards software by the beginning of 2019
   - Purchase the My Promo Receipt printing service software by mid-2019
   - Create a marketing plan specifically for the My Library Rewards initiative
   - Contact local businesses to explain the process and the benefits they will receive by participating

3. Purchase the Savannah marketing software by early 2019.
   - Using the software capabilities, develop segmented target marketing strategies for specific cardholder groups for use in a library marketing plan
   - Develop a staged/staggered welcome messaging series, introducing cardholders to the various benefits and services available to them
   - Analyze checkout data, as it relates to patron geography (where do they live v. which library they use)
   - Evaluate library statistics for library-use trends as they relate to emails sent

4. Use marketing software and survey methods to create a targeted advertising plan by 2020.
   - Compile data after one year to define trends
   - Create plan based on marketing data
   - Solicit companies to help with cause-marketing on our behalf
   - Update the library website based on marketing data
As a result of our last strategic plan we have...

- Finished a Master Building Plan
- Conducted a Financial Feasibility Study
- Rewired and installed new lighting in the Rotunda
- Restored and waterproofed the exterior of the Downtown Library
- Replaced the roof at the Downtown Library
- Restored and painted the exterior of the Southwest Library
- Updated the Community Room and restrooms at the Southwest Library
- Increased registered borrowers by nearly 3,000 people
- Increased program attendance more than 50%
- Doubled electronic circulation to nearly 50,000 items
- Implemented a “My First Library Card” program for our youngest users
- ...And much more!

We look forward to implementing this plan and serving our patrons in the future!