

WE ARE



“THE PLACE” ...

DISCOVER!



EXPERIENCE!



CONNECT!



INTRODUCTION

On March 20, 2023, the Cuyahoga Falls Library Board of Trustees launched its second strategic planning process to shape a renewed direction for the next three years. This plan is the result of a significant level of Board of Trustee and community engagement over a seven-month period that embraced the spirit of the library's most recent mission to connect people with the world of ideas, information, and imagination to inspire, enrich, and support our community. As the library takes additional steps to serve the evolving needs of its users and the larger community, it seeks to *empower people* to utilize the library as *the place to discover, experience, and connect*.

The plan is organized around four areas of strategic focus, each guided by one over-arching goal that is supported by several strategies. Specific outcomes establish clear direction for how progress will be monitored and quantified. The Board of Trustees and staff will utilize the document as a guide for decision-making and allocation of resources.

The Process

The Board of Trustees, Director, and Assistant Director held an initial retreat on May 1, 2023, where priority issues of interest and key strategic questions were identified. The Board of Trustees' Strategic Planning Committee, library staff representing various areas of library operations, and several community members were identified to guide the process by serving on a Strategic Planning Team.

The Strategic Planning Team met two times to determine priorities and identify key questions which could be explored in focus groups representing key constituent groups. A sub-group of the Strategic Planning Team was also established to design and disseminate user and non-user survey instruments. The team reviewed insights from seven focus groups (a total of approximately 70 participants) and an initial report of survey responses (1,367) to shape emerging priority areas.

Strategic Planning Team members met a third time for a day-long retreat, taking into consideration the results of a Market Opportunity Analysis conducted by OrangeBoy, additional analysis of survey results, and focus group insights to generate draft foundational statements (mission, vision, values), areas of strategic focus, initiatives, and desired outcomes.

The Director, Assistant Director, and project consultants incorporated Strategic Planning Team recommendations to draft a plan for review by the Strategic Planning Team and for final revision by the Board of Trustee's Strategic Planning Committee. The final draft was presented for discussion and approval to the Board of Trustees on October 17, 2023.

Board of Trustees

Sean Blake, President

Nikki Cebula*, Vice President

Sandy Zirke, Treasurer

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Rick Rubin*, Strategic Planning Committee Chair

Cheryl Bruce

Mike Dunton

Bradley LeBoeuf

Karen Schofield*

Robin Worthington*

Debbie Ziccardi*

(* Members of Strategic Planning Committee)

Library Administration

Andrew Harant, Director

Jennifer Reynard, Assistant Director

Kevin Gemmell, Fiscal Officer

Thank you to the staff and community member who also served on the Strategic Planning Team

Angela Fioramonti

Elizabeth Morrison

Akasha Walker

Tammy Richardson, Cuyahoga Falls Library Supporters

Kathy Romito, Western Reserve Hospital

Strategic Planning Facilitator

Round River Consulting LLC

STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION

Cuyahoga Falls Library connects people with the world of ideas, information, and imagination, to inspire and empower our community.

VISION

We are "The Place"...

Discover!

Experience!

Connect!

VALUES

Access: Providing free and equitable opportunities to use our services and resources for everyone in the community.

Intellectual Freedom: Ensuring people can form their own ideas by questioning the world around them and accessing information from different viewpoints and formats without restrictions.

Service Excellence: Creating outstanding user experiences by providing the highest levels of responsive service.

Innovation: Imagining a library that goes beyond "what is" to "what might be."

Life-Long Learning: Supporting learning and literacy in all forms for all ages and abilities.

PASSION

We love the library, and we love our community! We are here each day inspired and ready to work together to create a place of *reading, learning, creativity, and fun!*

FOCUS AREA I: OUR SERVICES

GOAL: To provide library resources and services that are convenient, current, impactful, known to, and utilized by our community.

STRATEGIES:

- Use analytical tools to ensure the collection is diverse, well-maintained, and reflective of community use.
- Expand digital collections and offerings.
- Ensure programs are diverse, inclusive, and address community wants and needs.
- Expand outreach efforts and programs for all ages, particularly in areas of low market penetration.
- Position the MakerSpace and Library of Things more prominently as valuable resources.
- Review and implement opportunities to increase convenience of library services for working adults, parents, and other targeted populations.
- Develop and implement a strategic marketing and communications plan to tell our story.

OUTCOMES:

- Increased number of active users.
- Increased market penetration in target areas.
- Increased community awareness of resources, programs, and services.
- Reduced wait times for physical and digital items.
- Increased use of the MakerSpace and Library of Things.
- Use of measured key user outcomes from programs to enhance program planning.

ACTION EXAMPLES:

(Complete operational plan to be developed and implemented by the library leadership team)

- Expand use of Collection HQ in collection development.
- Review and improve upon orientation opportunities to MakerSpace equipment.
- Measure impact of programming using Public Library Association's Project Outcome.
- Develop marketing campaign to send each new cardholder a series of welcome messages.
- Expand programming opportunities into the eastside of Cuyahoga Falls.

FOCUS AREA II: OUR SPACES

GOAL: To create accessible, welcoming, and aesthetically pleasing spaces that support the library's programming and services.

STRATEGIES:

- Identify and prioritize high impact indoor areas for improvement.
- Develop and implement a plan to improve the appearance and functionality of the outdoor space.
- Optimize virtual spaces.
- Utilize community spaces to extend the reach of library programs and services.

OUTCOMES:

- Increased in-person visits.
- Increased outdoor space usage and aesthetics.
- Users are satisfied that the library's digital and online spaces meet their needs and are user-friendly, intuitive, and current.
- Increased active use of library services and programs in underserved areas.

ACTION EXAMPLES:

(Complete operational plan to be developed and implemented by the library leadership team)

- Create a safe teen space that is increasingly more welcoming and engaging.
- Implement a design improvement plan for the outdoor space.
- Evaluate and upgrade the website, catalog, events calendar, and app.
- Identify and utilize locations where target populations live/gather.
- Evaluate and improve the aesthetics and functionality of study rooms.

FOCUS AREA III: OUR TEAM

GOAL: To foster a workforce that embodies the library’s mission, vision, values, and passion in a supportive and productive work environment that encourages long-term commitment and empowers employees to grow and thrive.

STRATEGIES:

- Engage in practices that encourage recruitment and retention of outstanding employees and anticipate staffing needs.
- Ensure effective internal communications.
- Examine ways to further develop teamwork and interdepartmental collaboration.
- Provide a range of orientation, training, and professional development opportunities, including involvement in regional, state, and national professional organizations.
- Evaluate ways to promote healthy work/life balance for staff.
- Incorporate a focus on our values into orientations and workspaces.
- Support board orientation and development.

OUTCOMES:

- Increased retention rate of outstanding employees.
- Staff have the information they need, when they need it, and have opportunities to provide input and share ideas.
- Increased participation in training sessions, professional development opportunities, and professional organizations.
- All decisions, services, and interactions with patrons, partners, and colleagues align with our values and passion.
- Board members are oriented and have received professional development.

ACTION EXAMPLES:

(Complete operational plan to be developed and implemented by the library leadership team)

- Review staff orientation to include training on our values.
- Offer Director/Assistant Director “office hours” sessions for staff.
- Increase the number of training and professional development opportunities.
- Board reviews its orientation and professional development practices.
- Staff intranet redesigned.

FOCUS AREA IV: OUR CONNECTIONS & SUPPORT

GOAL: To build strong strategic community and other external partnerships that generate aligned action to cultivate community empowerment and leverage resources for the library.

STRATEGIES:

- Increase participation in community organizations and events.
- Identify and engage with local, regional, statewide, and national organizations that complement, augment, or amplify the library's mission.
- Leverage local, state, and national resources that contribute to the library's economic vitality.
- Develop new independent entities that include key community leaders who publicly support the library, and who have the capacity to leverage new funds.

OUTCOMES:

- Increased involvement by relevant library staff in more organizations across the community and within the library profession.
- Increased partnerships with community members who can provide additional support for staff training and growth, marketing and communication, and materials and supplies.
- Increased application for new grants, matching funds, and the generation of donor-advised investments.

ACTION EXAMPLES:

(Complete operational plan to be developed and implemented by the library leadership team)

- Target community event participation to support partners who can help the library reach larger numbers of residents who aren't library users and to reach audiences that may directly benefit from library resources, programs, and services.
- Establish a strong communications network with outside organizations and agencies to increase awareness of and utilization of library resources and programs. (e.g. senior community, business, education)
- Rebrand/Redesign "Friends of the Library."
- Investigate the creation of a foundation.