



Strategic Plan

March 2017

Adopted by the Library Board of Trustees

May 17, 2017



Introduction

The Strategic Planning Committee of the Sheridan County Library System (Libraries) met for a full day in February 2017 to develop a road map to guide the organization over the next 3-5 years. The committee included:

- Members of boards of directors from the Libraries, the Friends of the Library, the Sheridan County Library Foundation;
- Libraries staff; and
- Community volunteers interested in helping to guide the future of the Libraries.

The resulting Strategic Plan is intended to:

- Define leadership roles within the organization;
- Involve and invite input from the broader community;
- Create a common language for the organization;
- Develop an understanding and practical application of consensus building and collaboration;
- Develop or strengthen a culture of accountability;
- Develop a framework for goal setting and implementation throughout the organization; and
- Develop a framework for adaptation to changing conditions.

This Strategic Plan is intended to be a dynamic, adaptive document that will be further defined and refined as additional objectives and action items are identified, scheduled and assigned.



Strategic Planning Objectives

Committee members established the following objectives for the strategic plan:

- Create unified, cohesive vision for boards, staff and community, to serve as a road map for the future;
- Identify ways in which the Libraries can adapt and improve;
- Identify strategies for success given funding constraints;
- Establish measurable outcomes;
- Incorporate more direct input from community and employees;
- Better communicate to the community what resources are available through the Libraries;
- Identify ways to make the Libraries more visible and accessible to the community;
- Improve overall utilization of the Libraries within the community; and
- Identify ways in which the various boards involved with the Libraries can better work together to accomplish overarching goals

Mission

Sheridan County Libraries – Dynamic Gateways for Lifelong Learning

Vision

- Preferred platform/place for learning and connection, where everyone feels welcome and important
- Programming and atmosphere that helps members of the community connect and establish relationships, with peers and across generations



Major Goals

1. Establish the Libraries as an essential community asset
2. Establish the Libraries as a bridge to enhanced relationships, learning and entertainment
3. Increase engagement/active involvement by the public, patrons, schools and other organizations, staff, boards, and volunteers
4. Balance and diversify funding to ensure long-term sustainability
5. Maintain adaptive, flexible, well-kept facilities that can adapt to changing community needs

Objectives Development:

Goal #1: Establish the Libraries as an essential community asset.

Objectives in Support of Goal #1:

Objectives in support of this goal will be further developed by leadership and staff in collaboration with individual program directors.

- Focus on community service, making everyone who enters feel welcome and important
- Celebrate and recognize patrons
- Recognize and prioritize staff/patron interactions
- Conduct a community survey to better assess public attitudes toward the Libraries
- Develop and execute comprehensive, proactive marketing plan
 - Include both traditional and non-traditional (social media, etc.) methods
 - Special focus on converting non-users to patrons
 - Promote Wyoming Room as a tool for schools, relationship building, intergenerational connections
 - Annual report to community
- Build a culture of patronage around Libraries to encourage use, support, and stewardship
- Align expectations among boards involved in Libraries

Stewardship of Goal #1: Cameron Duff

Next Action: Cameron will meet w/staff to develop detailed objectives, action items, timelines and accountability, then will meet with Board(s) to refine.

Timeline for Next Action: Delivery of draft objectives, action items, timelines and accountability to Board(s) by end of July 2017

Goal #2: Establish the Libraries as a bridge to enhanced relationships, learning and entertainment

Objectives in Support of Goal #2:

- Enhanced use of existing resources
- Programming that attracts, serves and is relevant to a broad demographic
 - The following were listed as **examples** of ways in which this objective might be advanced:
 - Regular genealogy classes
 - Book groups/discussions
 - Tying programs and service offerings to community events, community-specific interest areas
 - Employment preparation program for youth (partnership with Chamber of Commerce)
 - Teen, emerging adult programming
 - Intergenerational programming
 - Greater variety in adult programming
- Partnerships with other organizations to identify and better serve greatest areas of need

Stewardship of Goal #2: Cameron Duff

Next Action: Cameron will meet w/staff to develop detailed objectives, action items, timelines and accountability, then will meet with Board(s) to refine.

Timeline for Next Action: Delivery of draft objectives, action items, timelines and accountability to Board(s) by end of July 2017

Goal #3: Increase engagement/active involvement by the public, patrons, schools and other organizations, staff, boards, and volunteers

Objectives in Support of Goal #3:

- Increase youth involvement, engagement, and use of library
- Develop partnership with schools toward increasing usage of/engagement with library
- Develop volunteer recruitment and management program to develop long-term volunteer relationships
- Work with community partners to increase usage of library by those without access to personal transportation

Stewardship of Goal #3: Cameron Duff

Next Action: Cameron will meet w/staff to develop detailed objectives, action items, timelines and accountability, then will meet with Board(s) to refine.

Timeline for Next Action: Delivery of draft objectives, action items, timelines and accountability to Board(s) by end of July 2017



Goal #4: Balance and diversify funding to ensure long-term sustainability

Objectives in Support of Goal #4:

-

Stewardship of Goal #4: Board of Trustees

Next Action: Board of Trustees will host work session(s) with other Library boards to develop long-term funding objectives

Timeline for Next Action: Initial work session to be completed by end of summer 2017

Goal #5: Maintain adaptive, flexible, well-kept facilities that can adapt to changing community needs

Objectives in Support of Goal #5:

- Keep up with latest equipment and technology
- Develop long-term maintenance and capital improvement plan

Stewardship of Goal #5: Board of Trustees

Next Action: Board of Trustees will host work session(s) with other Library boards to begin discussion of long-term maintenance and capital improvement plan

Timeline for Next Action: Initial work session to be completed by end of summer 2017

Discussion Recap

Strengths

- Statewide system (cost sharing)
- Depth of roots of people in Sheridan County
- Knowledgeable, caring, creative, enthusiastic, forward thinking accessible and dedicated staff
- Amazing online resources
- Unity among branches
- Locations and facilities (meeting rooms, wifi, computers)
- Free resources
- Staff willing to help other branches
- Peripheral resources (programs, art display)
- Good work with constrained resources
- Programs successful
- Responsive to users
- Wide range of resources
- Great library for size of community
- Wyoming Room
- Strong community support – financial, patronage
- Recognized excellence
- Leadership stands behind staff
- Prepared, dedicated staff knows resources and helps community access
- Passionate, dedicated patrons
- Diversity of collection
- Facility
- Hours (given budget constraints)
- Library environment – quiet, open and comfortable
- Children's department
- Inter-library loan program
- Great services for all ages
- Technology and computer availability
- Branch managers who know their communities
- Strong leadership (proactive, knowledgeable)
- Staff cares and is friendly
- Ebooks
- Community asset
- Fulmer Trust

Discussion Recap (continued)

Challenges

- Aging buildings
- Large collection – space constraints
- Informing people who don't use – converting to patrons
- Common goals – no more “not my job”
- Declining checkout statistics
- Trying to keep up with a variety of demands
- Patron behavior – managing expectations
- Marketing – how to get word out
- Delivering a consistent message of need
- Teen, emerging adult programming
- Lack of variety in adult programming
- Limited intergenerational programs
- Alignment of vision expectations between commission and boards
- Maintaining level of service given funding constraints
- Doing more with less
- Staff pay not reflective of expertise
- At the mercy of county budget
- Limited knowledge on part of commission and community re: statutory requirements, etc.
- Helping community understand budgetary sources – where from, what for
- Complacency
- Downturn in volunteerism
- Showing value to those who make financial decisions
- No large meeting space
- Foundation strength
- Maintaining relevance in digital age
- Maintaining services
- Maintaining staffing without burnout
- Maintaining community, Commission support
- Board knowledge of resources available, use of libraries

Discussion Recap (continued)

Opportunities

- Continuing to utilize staff for new opportunities
- Making better use of staff knowledge
- Improving community outreach
- Building on community support – community believes in education reading, services
- Developing intergenerational programs
- Partnering with school systems (District, moms and dads)
- Partnering with other community organizations
- Redefining libraries as an exciting place to be
- Capitalizing on community talent
- Doing more to enhance digital literacy
- Exciting time to be alive (resources, access, etc.)
- Aligning programs with community makeup – young families, retirees, college students
- Building capacity – hours, volunteers – to take advantage of opportunities
- More tween activities/programs
- More structured volunteer recruitment and coordination (volunteer coordinator?)
- Different reading groups for younger population
- Expose community more to programs and resources through improved marketing program
- Telling our story – newspaper, anecdotal
- Inviting and applying more patron input
- Build Foundation toward more reliable income stream
- Get out into community more
- Present as vital and essential to community health

Discussion Recap (continued)

Threats

- Loss of experienced staff to retirements, etc.
- Shift in community/government attitudes toward nonessential services
- Regional perspective/expectations with regard to costs (relative to what services cost elsewhere in the country)
- Tax base
- Continuing state and federal funding for external resources (databases, etc.)
- Programs and collections without designated funding stream
- Being taken for granted
- Internet (relevancy)
- Apathy (cultural, staff, boards)
- Complacency
- Illiteracy
- Cultural anti-intellectualism
- Cultural shift in attitudes toward helping others