



STRATEGIC PLAN

DECEMBER 2018

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The West Branch Public Library's Strategic Plan is created to guide the library staff and board of trustees in what direction the library should be headed. It describes the correlation between community interests and library services and provides a measurable timeline for meeting its goals and objectives.

In 2018, the library began the strategic planning process in March and April of 2018 with two community focus groups. The first session looked to establish the community's needs, strengths, and weaknesses. The full list of these may be found under Appendix A. In the second community meeting, the participants reviewed these community needs, discussed them, and chose what responses the library could take to help address them. From these, three library service responses were chosen:

- **Satisfy Curiosity / Make Informed Decisions**, focusing on making sure that members of our community will have access to a wide variety of resources needed to learn and make decisions in their lives.
- **Know Your Community / Be an Informed Citizen** which emphasizes providing community information so that residents will know about services and events as well as making informed decisions on local issues.
- **Visit a Comfortable Place** ensures that all community residents can find a place to learn new things, enjoy a wide variety of activities, and gather comfortably.

With these service responses, the library board of trustees, a group of seven community representatives, selected goals for each which aim to declare what items the community will receive within the service responses. Within the goals, the library staff selected objectives to meet these goals. The objectives include specific actions and timeframes which allow the measurement of success within the strategic plan.

The Strategic Plan is intended to be a dynamic document, reviewed at least annually by the staff and board of trustees to meet the changing needs and interests of the community. The plan is intended to cover a period of three financial years, covering July 2018 through June 2021.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission statement of the West Branch Public Library is as follows:

The West Branch Public Library is committed to being a welcoming environment where members of the community can connect to resources, learning opportunities, and one another.

The Mission Statement of the library is the primary goal of the library. All goals and objectives provided here within try to meet and ensure success of the mission.

OVERVIEW

The overview of the Strategic Plan is referential listing of Community Service Responses, Library Board Goals, and staff objectives.

SATISFY CURIOSITY / MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS

Goal 1: Residents receive information and resources about financial literacy.

- OBJECTIVE 1. By 2020, the library will provide at least four annual programs for a variety of library user age groups on financial literacy using community resources.
- OBJECTIVE 2. By June 2019, aspects of financial literacy will be incorporated into the implementation of the youth summer library program.

Goal 2: All Residents find fulfillment through programs and resources at the library.

- OBJECTIVE 1. A teen advisory group will be created by January 2019
- OBJECTIVE 2. Programming for seniors will be implemented by January 2019
- OBJECTIVE 3. By June 2019, the library will expand after-hours programming by experimenting with a variety of topics/programming and work to discover the needs of this target group.
- OBJECTIVE 4. The library will investigate interactive youth services webpage by September 2019.

KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY / BE AN INFORMED CITIZEN

Goal 1: Newcomers and other residents in the community are informed about community services and resources.

- OBJECTIVE 1. The library will partner with city social media outlets by July 2020
- OBJECTIVE 2. By July 2020, the library will create and utilize a library YouTube channel to provide community information.
- OBJECTIVE 3. The library will partner with the Parks & Recreation Department in the implementation of a semi-annual community newsletter by July 2019.

Goal 2: Citizens look to the library for current, non-biased information on community issues.

- OBJECTIVE 1. The library will ask for accurate information (and post) from champions of issues and provide to the public, voting information including where, how, and when voting is available.

Goal 3: The library helps create and promote a positive image of the community

- OBJECTIVE 1. The library will become more involved with the Community Development Group by July 2019

VISIT A COMFORTABLE PLACE

Goal 1: Citizens find upgraded, inviting spaces at the library

- OBJECTIVE 1. The library will explore potential for a new facility by 2021
- OBJECTIVE 2. The library will replace the cabinet doors in the children's area by January 2019
- OBJECTIVE 3. The library will investigate repurposing the quiet room to make it more attractive to teen and small meeting use by January 2020.
- OBJECTIVE 4. The library will add an express computer terminal by March 2019
- OBJECTIVE 5. Computer waiting time will be addressed by March 2019

Goal 2: Patrons experience positive interactions and a barrier free environment at the library

- OBJECTIVE 1. By 2019, the library staff will evaluate the success of going fine-free.
- OBJECTIVE 2. The concept of fine-free at the library will be promoted and a banner added at city hall by November 2018.
- OBJECTIVE 3. Signage will be added near Downey St. to direct people to Poplar for parking and accessible access by September 2020.
- OBJECTIVE 4. Services to care providers will be explored by library staff by June 2019

Goal 3: Library users enjoy outdoor amenities through sustainable green spaces

- OBJECTIVE 1. A seating space will be created near the front of the building, trees trimmed down, banners used, and outdoor internet use considered by 2020.
- OBJECTIVE 2. In the preceding space, cover will be provided by 2020.
- OBJECTIVE 3. Partnerships with schools and other community organizations will be explored by 2021
- OBJECTIVE 4. A community garden will be explored in regards to possible local partnerships by 2021.

TIMELINE

YEAR	MONTH	OBJECTIVE
2018	JUNE	
	JULY	
	AUGUST	
	SEPTEMBER	
	OCTOBER	
	NOVEMBER	Fine Free Banner Used at Town Hall
	DECEMBER	
2019	JANUARY	Teen Advisory Group Created Programming for Seniors Implemented Children's Area Cabinet Doors Replaced Fine Free Success Evaluated
	FEBRUARY	
	MARCH	Express Computer Terminal Added
	APRIL	
	MAY	
	JUNE	Financial Literacy Program Held Financial Literacy Included in Summer Library Program Library... After Hours Programming Expanded Services to Care Providers Explored
	JULY	Semi-Annual Newsletter Implemented Greater Involvement with Community Development Group
	AUGUST	
	SEPTEMBER	Financial Literacy Program Held Youth Services Webpage Investigated
	OCTOBER	
	NOVEMBER	
	DECEMBER	Financial Literacy Program Held
2020	JANUARY	Repurposing of the Quiet Room Investigated Outdoor Area with Cover Added
	FEBRUARY	
	MARCH	Financial Literacy Program Held

APRIL

MAY

JUNE Financial Literacy Program Held

JULY Partnered with City Social Media Outlets
YouTube Channel Utilized to Provide Community Information

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER Financial Literacy Program Held
Directional Signage to Parking Added on Downey St. Side of Library

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER Financial Literacy Program Held

2021

JANUARY Potential for New Facility Explored
Partnerships with Community Organizations Explored
Community Garden Explored

FEBRUARY

MARCH Financial Literacy Program Held

APRIL

MAY

JUNE Financial Literacy Program Held

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

SATISFY CURIOSITY / MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS

Definitions

Satisfy Curiosity - Residents will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

Make Informed Decisions - Residents will have the resources they need to identify and analyze risks, benefits, and alternatives before making decisions that affect their lives.

Goal 1: Residents receive information and resources about financial literacy.

- OBJECTIVE 1. By 2020, the library will provide at least four annual programs for a variety of library user age groups on financial literacy using community resources.**

The library will work with local partners to provide financial literacy programs. These may be fit into the Library... After Hours programs for adults, afterschool programming for Teens, or be offered during the day for Seniors.

Potential partners include AARP, County Extension, Financial Planners, or other social service agencies.

- OBJECTIVE 2. By June 2019, aspects of financial literacy will be incorporated into the implementation of the youth summer library program.**

A past popular part of the Summer Library Program were the use of coins to buy prizes as part of the reading and learning incentives. This will be reincorporated. This practice taught youth about saving, spending, and counting. Further efforts may be made to incorporate different types of prize “money” to further improve financial literacy objectives.

Potential partners include local banks.

Goal 2: All Residents find fulfillment through programs and resources at the library.

- OBJECTIVE 1. A teen advisory group will be created by January 2019**

An underserved population of the community at the library is teens. The library will look to create a group of teenagers who will help guide teen services, programs and spaces at the library such that they feel better served and find a welcome place at the library.

Potential partners include the local schools and school staff as well as the Parks & Recreation Department

- OBJECTIVE 2. Programming for seniors will be implemented by January 2019**

The library looks to better serve retirement-aged members of the community by offering programming and events targeted towards their interests. This will often include activities

to help bring this population together, giving them methods to interact with those who share a common interest. Time will be a consideration in planning these programs and events knowing that many of this population prefer not to drive after dark.

Possible partners for this objective include the AARP, the Lions Club, American Legion, and Parks & Recreation department.

OBJECTIVE 3. By June 2019, the library will expand after-hours programming by experimenting with a variety of topics/programming and work to discover the needs of this target group.

The Library... After Hours programs are intended for adults, generally aged 21 and over, though some may be held which are only 18 and over. Currently, the most commonly offered event of this category are movie nights, though success has been found in the past from topics including home organization, gardening, and crock pot recipes.

Possible Partners include local service groups, business owners, and hobbyists.

OBJECTIVE 4. The library will investigate interactive youth services webpage by September 2019.

A portion of the library's website will be dedicated to providing information for youth who visit. This may include new materials of interest to them, book suggestions, updates on activities, and possibly fun things to do.

As the library's website is done internally, there are no suggested partners.

KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY / BE AN INFORMED CITIZEN

Definitions

Know Your Community - Residents will have a central source for information about the wide variety of programs, services, and activities provided by community agencies and organizations.

Be an Informed Citizen - Residents will have the information they need to support and promote democracy; fulfill their civic responsibilities at the local, state, and national levels; and fully participate in community decision-making.

Goal 1: Newcomers and other residents in the community are informed about community services and resources.

OBJECTIVE 1. The library will partner with city social media outlets by July 2020

The library works with the city office to provide some community information via online sources, primarily the website. City social media is still very new and in development with the Facebook page created in the summer of 2018. As a vital way to reach community members currently, the library will assist the other city departments to provide community information through this media. This may include training for other city staff as well as working with the city office to distribute and measure the effectiveness of this medium.

Suggested partners include other City of West Branch Departments.

OBJECTIVE 2. By July 2020, the library will create and utilize a library YouTube channel to provide community information.

To help provide information to the community, the library will look to create a Youtube channel of short videos that will provide routine updates on community events. Equipment is already available through the library's work with the cable access channel.

Suggested partners include other City of West Branch Departments, community event organizers, and the local schools.

OBJECTIVE 3. The library will partner with the Parks & Recreation Department in the implementation of a semi-annual community newsletter by July 2019.

Like the prior objective, the library looks to provide community information to those who prefer to find out information via print media. The Parks & Recreation Department is also interested in this activity so will assist in creating documents and information.

Suggested partners include other City of West Branch Departments, community event organizers, and the local schools.

Goal 2: Citizens look to the library for current, non-biased information on community issues.

OBJECTIVE 1. The library will ask for accurate information (and post) from champions of issues and provide to the public, voting information including where, how, and when voting is available.

At the community input forum, attendees felt that a great need existed in helping provide accurate information about community issues, noting that they felt past efforts had been harmed by misinformation. The library will work to provide non-biased and non-partisan information in regards to voting, community issues, and community events.

Possible Partners include the West Branch Times, local schools, community event organizers, and the other City of West Branch Departments.

Goal 3: The library helps create and promote a positive image of the community

OBJECTIVE 1. The library will become more involved with the Community Development Group by July 2019

To help promote the community, the library is looking to work with the Community Development Group as the primary possible partner who works to promote the West Branch Community. The library director will look to assist them with local/office needs as well as within community events and promotions.

VISIT A COMFORTABLE PLACE

Definitions

Visit a Comfortable Place - Residents will have safe and welcoming physical places to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read and will have open and accessible virtual spaces that support networking.

Goal 1: Citizens find upgraded, inviting spaces at the library

OBJECTIVE 1. The library will explore potential for a new facility by 2021

Considerable time and effort have been spent over the past 15 years evaluating the existing library space in conjunction with community needs and demographic trends. Through such evaluations, a recommended library facility size for the West Branch community should be approximately 11,000-14,000 square feet compared to the existing 5,000 square feet. This limits the services the library is able to offer, the methods in which the community may use the library, and staff operations.

As of 2018, existing City of West Branch borrowing has been used for other needed community improvements, and no such building project in the community has been completed without this financial backing. By 2021, this possibility will again be evaluated as the borrowing limit is alleviated.

OBJECTIVE 2. The library will replace the cabinet doors in the children's area by January 2019

The library's children's storage cabinet doors are weighted such that they have warped and pulled themselves from their hinges. Replacements have been purchased and are waiting for installation. When installed, the children's area will look much cleaner and inviting as the primary event and programming area.

OBJECTIVE 3. The library will investigate repurposing the quiet room to make it more attractive to teen and small meeting use by January 2020.

The glass-walled room in the library was initially intended to act as a place where library users could go when the library was busy to escape some of the commotion. Given the furniture in the room (comfortable chairs and cushions), it became a gathering place for teens after school. When school-aged library users are not present, the room also functions as a second, smaller meeting room.

Also, the furniture within the room is far too large for the space and severely limits the functionality of the space.

With the teen advisory group, the library teen users will help redesign the area to best meet their needs and interests as well as better utilizing the room than it is now.

Potential partners include the local schools and community service groups.

OBJECTIVE 4. The library will add an express computer terminal by March 2019

During peak computer use time, all computers may be full. Frequently, a library user may come in at those times and need to complete a quick task (e.g., printing a single document).

To help solve this issue, a computer station will be added that only permits a short use time to ensure that it will be available or quickly thereafter.

OBJECTIVE 5. Computer waiting time will be addressed by March 2019

In order to alleviate computer waiting time, overall time limits are provided at 2 hours per day per library user which is managed by the library's computer management software.

While this can alleviate waiting times to some extent, it rarely has this benefit as peak use times are usually within users' time limits. The more common effect is that library users wish to use the computers, but are without time remaining. From this, computers frequently sit unused and underutilized. With an express terminal, the library will re-evaluate this policy to ensure that library users may use the computers as they see fit.

Goal 2: Patrons experience positive interactions and a barrier free environment at the library

OBJECTIVE 1. By 2019, the library staff will evaluate the success of going fine-free.

The library eliminated overdue fees in August of 2018. In early 2019, patron satisfaction over the program will be evaluated with data on overdue material rates.

OBJECTIVE 2. The concept of fine-free at the library will be promoted and a banner added at city hall by November 2018.

While there are many who know that the library has eliminated overdue fees, there are many in the community who will not know about this change through normal methods. As the primary access point to town, a banner will be created to help promote this change to members of our community who have not learned of this change through other avenues. The intention is that it may invite members of the community back who have avoided the library due to past overdue fees or fee problems.

OBJECTIVE 3. Signage will be added near Downey St. to direct people to Poplar for parking and accessible access by September 2020.

The library's official address suggests that access to the building is achieved through the Downey Street entrance which has limited parking, includes a steep hill, and three sets of stairs.

In an effort to be more inviting to these library users, signage will be added to direct them to the Poplar St. side of the library which is at building level, includes many parking spaces, and provides access to those who need mobility aids.

OBJECTIVE 4. Services to care providers will be explored by library staff by June 2019

The West Branch Community includes many care providers, typically those who watch groups of young children. Due to the difficulty and hazards of bringing young children in large groups to the library, many do not. The library will look to help provide services directly to these community members. Such services may include such things as stories, activities, and materials delivery.

Goal 3: Library users enjoy outdoor amenities through sustainable green spaces

OBJECTIVE 1. A seating space will be created near the front of the building, trees trimmed down, banners used, and outdoor internet use considered by 2020.

Many library users make use of library services outside including seating as well as the wireless internet that extends towards the parking lot. To help provide a welcoming environment for these users, more seating will be provided and the aesthetic of the area will be improved.

OBJECTIVE 2. In the preceding space, cover will be provided by 2020.

To further make the prior space inviting, a sun cover will be provided in some manner to help alleviate heat during the summer.

OBJECTIVE 3. Partnerships with schools and other community organizations will be explored by 2021

In an effort to be more involved with the community, the library will expand efforts to work with local organizations to provide library-based services.

OBJECTIVE 4. A community garden will be explored in regards to possible local partnerships by 2021.

A community garden has frequently been discussed within West Branch by a number of different entities. In an effort to provide this community service, providing educational opportunities, and providing a sustainable green space, the library will look to create community garden amenity(s) of some variety. Other considerations may be made for improving the library's outdoor aesthetic through the addition of planters containing a variety of edible crops rather than flowers or grasses.

Possible partners include local service groups and other City of West Branch Departments.

APPENDIX A

FIRST COMMUNITY INPUT MEETING NOTES

WEST BRANCH PUBLIC LIBRARY
STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR RESULTS
Community Meeting #1
March 4, 2018

Becky started the meeting by asking participants to introduce themselves with a story about their connection with a library. She explained they were all chosen as a representative of a particular group and she asked them to keep those residents in mind as they worked. She talked about the process of The Public Library Association's Planning for Results model and stated they would be using the 2008 version "Strategic Planning for Results." She emphasized they would not be talking about the library at this first meeting, but would be envisioning a future for the City of West Branch. The group started by listing their aspirations/visions for the city. Then participants then considered the strengths and weaknesses of the City of West Branch. This led to a list of "needs", which will form the basis for the next meeting, to determine the "library service responses" as outlined in the Strategic Planning for Results model.

OUTCOMES

ASPIRATIONS/VISIONS

Award winning school system
Amenities for all ages, including recreation and educational activities
Retirement facilities
Variety of restaurants
Entertainment options including; pool, multipurpose facility, walking and biking trails, outdoor facilities
Community where people are interested in more than themselves
Mindfulness
Community that is welcoming to newcomers
Vibrant retail-grocery store, hardware store, downtown Casey's, Dollar General,
Students are successful, comfortable in school and all know how to read
Carnegie style library
Safe community
A variety of quality, affordable housing
A diverse community-one with different viewpoint, all kids understand diversity, thinking toward the future
Private/Public cooperative ventures (YMCA?)
Local affordable movie theatre
Cooperation between public and school libraries
Community provides some type of shared living space-shared resources, shared responsibilities
Everyone in town feels connected
A green community
Pharmacy (maybe tele-pharmacy)
Expanded local clinic with doctor
"Social" exercise/workout spot-especially for millennials
Improved communication about current resources (weekly newsletter)
Interactive calendar
Event center
Second band room in the High School

Controlled growth

STRENGTHS

+

Library-programming staff, environment, responsive to issues
Friendly, helpful community members
Strong school system-education, sports and arts
Unique businesses
Access to medical care
Crestview Care Center
Creative community with lots of ideas
Safe community, strong Police department and Fire Department
Improved, clean and attractive downtown
Proximity to I-80 and Iowa City and Coralville Mall
National Historic Site and presidential library
Strong community festivals
Historic buildings
Local paper
Football
Community pride (especially football)
Day cares-both centers and in-home

CHALLENGES

-

Lack of individual wealth (donors)
Property tax rollback
Loss of major business, potential loss of jobs and loss of tax revenue
Hoover land doesn't pay a lot of tax
Accessibility-historic buildings are hard to retrofit for handicap accessibility
School and library facilities
Retirement and assisted living facility, also activities, programs and living space
East downtown needs work
Not enough daycares
Bedroom community-means a lack of connectedness-people don't interact because no one is home
Need more information for new residents
Improved positive information sharing
People need to promote the town more
Flooding/water issues
Location (near 80 and Iowa City) makes it hard to keep businesses
Location-close, but not in the corridor
"Soft spot" for crime
Improvement as a green community

NEW CONDITIONS/NEEDS

Improved school facility (safety)
How to find the right bond to get passed
Communication
Activities for all ages: teens, families, seniors, millennials
Diversity-different viewpoints
Multipurpose facility-indoor and outdoor, pool, tennis courts, trails

Quality, affordable housing
Private/public cooperation
Money-individual donors and tax, referendum
More teen activities
Retirement and assisted living facility and things to do for seniors
Improved east downtown
Need people connected to each other and to the community
Better communication-info for new residents, positive info,
Need to promote the town better-positive image
Improve safety
Improve as a green community

APPENDIX B

SECOND COMMUNITY INPUT MEETING NOTES

April 15, 2018

At the second stakeholder's meeting, we reviewed the aspirations, strengths and challenges identified for the community, ending with the list of needs or new conditions. Members then heard a little bit about the 18 library service responses. Becky broke the community members into several small groups, where they read in depth descriptions of the library service responses. They were asked to suggest their top choices, narrowing them down to 9. Based on the instructions from the board, at the very first meeting, the committee voted for their top choices, merging several of their choices into 4 categories.

SATISFY CURIOSITY/MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS 11 Votes

* Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning

Residents will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

* Make Informed Decisions: Health, Wealth, and Other Life Choices

Residents will have the resources they need to identify and analyze risks, benefits, and alternatives before making decisions that affect their lives.

KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY/BE AN INFORMED CITIZEN 9 votes

*Know Your Community: Community Resources and Services

Residents will have a central source for information about the wide variety of programs, services, and activities provided by community agencies and organizations.

*Be an Informed Citizen: Local, National, and World Affairs Residents will have the information they need to support and promote democracy; fulfill their civic responsibilities at the local, state, and national levels; and fully participate in community decision-making.

VISIT A COMFORTABLE PLACE 8 votes

*Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces

Residents will have safe and welcoming physical places to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read and will have open and accessible virtual spaces that support networking.

CREATE YOUNG READERS 2 votes

EXPRESS CREATIVITY 2 votes

UNDERSTAND HOW TO FIND, EVALUATE, AND USE INFORMATION 1 vote