POTTSTOWN REGIONAL PUBLIC LIBRARY

STRATEGIC PLAN

2014-2017

PrPL-Discover Your Future

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Pottstown Library acknowledged its service to the surrounding communities when the name was formally changed to Pottstown Regional Public Library (PrPL) in 2010.

The Community:
The Pottstown Regional Public Library serves the Borough of Pottstown, Lower Pottsgrove Township, Upper Pottsgrove Township, and West Pottsgrove Township. In addition, a sizeable number of patrons are served from Berks County and Chester County. This occurs primarily because the Library is located at the junction of three counties, and is adjacent to a commuter corridor.

Strategic Planning:
Strategic planning is a systematic process of envisioning a desired future, and translating this vision into broadly defined goals or objectives with a sequence of steps to achieve them.

A strategic plan also focuses the resources of the organization on the stated goals. This is especially valid in times of limited funding. A strategic plan provides a roadmap when the organization is faced with decisions on how best to allocate organizational assets and efforts.

Background:
The last Strategic Plan for the Pottstown Regional Public Library was performed in 2005 with the help of a library consultant. However, because of limited funds along with staff and Board turnover, most goal targets remain viable today. However, the Library needs to consider community, regional, and cultural changes as decisions are made to upgrade the physical plant and Library programming; thus the need for this updated plan.

The Committee:
The Board of Directors appointed a Strategic Planning Committee which met during the summer/fall of 2013 and reviewed the 2005 plan; studied a number of resource documents highlighting the future of public libraries; and received comments from board members regarding the design of a 21st century public library.

Committee Members included: Reed Lindley, Library Board Member, former public school administrator, who chaired the Committee; Arthur Green, Library Board Member, former teacher, Michael Snyder, Library Board Member, former teacher, Civil War historian, lecturer and writer, Susan Davis, Executive Director of the Library; Leslie Stillings, Youth Director of the Library; John Armato, Communications Director of Pottstown School District, former teacher; Evan Brandt, journalist, and local reporter (Pottstown Mercury); Mary Maguire, Consultant Librarian, ex officio Montgomery

County-Norristown Public Library, and Michael Wagman, Director of Technology and Communications for the Pottstgrove School District.

The Board of Directors/Terms of Office
William H. Yohn, Jr.: President-2010-2012/2013-2015; James C. Phillips: Vice President -2010-2012/2013-2015; Michael J. Henzes: Treasurer-2011-2013/2014 -2016; James Cain-2012-2014; Susan Dolan-2009-2011/2012-2014; Christine Elliott-2012-2014; Arthur Green-2011-2013/2014-2016; Brad Hurlock-2012-2014; Reed Lindley-2011 - 2013/2014-2016; Stephanie Sager-2011-2013/2014-2016; Michael T. Snyder-2012- 2014; David Allebach-Solicitor; Susan E. Davis-Executive Director; Leslie Stillings- Director of Youth Services

The Process:
The Committee developed a plan in draft form, then followed up with a survey and an opportunity to comment on the draft plan from constituents via an online survey on the Library's website, as well as an article and survey promoted by the local newspaper.

The Committee reviewed the survey data along with follow-up comments from the Library Board of Directors and the Library staff. A final plan was presented to the Board of Directors that included consideration of the comments from the various constituent groups. On May 14, 2014, the Board of Directors voted unanimously to approve this Plan.

The Case for Support:
Public libraries inspire and empower. Historically, 'access for all' is what drove the establishment of public libraries. This mission still rings true today. For many Americans, the local library is an important source for public access to computers and the Internet—and for some, it is their only access.

Service to job seekers is a core commitment at PrPL. Online job application assistance and resume help is a daily function at the reference desk. JobNow, an online service, was added to the Library's website to help people prepare their resumes, practice interview techniques, and brush up on basic skills.

As PrPL supports the mission of other non-profits; the Library has been designated a Cooperating Collection of the Foundation Center. This designation gives non-profits local access to a database of over 80,000 U.S. grant-makers and training on the use of this database.

In addition to traditional library resources, such as books and children's programs; PrPL offers many other services. Live online homework help, genealogy research, and computer classes are such examples. The public library is an important part of the

economic engine. Dollars spent on libraries provide solid economic returns to the community.

Inspiring a lifetime of discovery through access to information, technology, social networking and collaboration for Pottstown and surrounding communities; the Library serves as a regional hub that enhances citizenship, entrepreneurship, and personal fulfillment.

Vision-Mission-Values-and Goals:

Clarification of the vision, mission, values, and goals is fundamental to the Strategic Plan. While action steps must adapt to day-to-day realities; it is important that the organization adhere to its core principles and values.

Vision:
PrPL-Discover Your Future

Mission:
Pottstown Regional Public Library, serving a changing and diverse region, is a continually evolving and dynamic organization that inspires a lifetime of discovery through access to information, technology, social networking and educational programming .

Values:
1. We value intellectual freedom.
2. We value friendly, prompt, and accurate service.
3. We value diversity.
4. We value equal access to information.
5. We value an informed and educated community.
6. We value effective stewardship of resources.
7. We value community partners.

Goals and Objectives:

Goal I: Strengthen the Library's Fundraising Potential

Implementation of the prior Strategic Plan was limited with scarce resources, which makes this a primary and critical goal for the stability and growth of the Library.

Objective:
    Design and implement a Comprehensive Fund Raising Program (Annual Projects/Capital Campaign) that includes the following components:
    - A strong case for support
    - Diversity of revenue sources

- Communication vehicles to report and recognize fundraising success.
- Strengthened development services.

When completed and approved by the Board, <u>The Comprehensive Fund Raising Program</u> will become an attachment to this document.

Goal II: Maintain and Modernize the Library Structure

The Board chose to remain in this building (circa 1915), which is central and historic to the community. An older building makes maintenance, space utilization, and customer appeal all significant priorities to be addressed over the life of this plan and beyond.

Objective A: Develop a <u>Space Utilization and Facility Development Plan</u> that addresses long term needs and includes a priority order of projects to be completed. The Plan should address the following components:
1. Building and Grounds
2. Space Expansion/Utilization
3. Aesthetics/ADA
4. Safety and Security
5. Maintenance

Objective B: Monitor and Adjust this plan systematically.

When completed and approved by the Board of Directors, the <u>Space Utilization and Facility Development Plan</u> will become an attachment to this document.

Goal III. Continually Improve Programs and Delivery

Pottstown Regional Public Library (PrPL) is a continually evolving and dynamic organization that provides information and resources to a changing and diverse region.

Objective A: Expand Relationships with Educational Partners

1. Expand a coordinated system of communication between schools and the public library.

2. Develop new programs that support the schools' mission and promote increased use of the public library.

3. Develop school library collaboration of various constituent groups.
   - Consider student advisory group

Objective B: Increase Birth-Adult Engagement

Objective C: Clarify and support eGovernment Role

Objective D: Enhance online components for resources and communication

Objective E: Expand Resource Management
   a. Medical Database (ex)
   b. Historic Resources (ex)

Objective F: Create a Staff Development Program

Objective G: Communicate progress of these community engagement objectives via the Library's website, newsletters, and various media outlets.

Goal IV. Manage for Results

The Board of Directors in collaboration with the Executive Director will implement a management plan that persistently and consistently addresses each of the Strategic Goals.

Objective A: Articulate a Coordinated Committee/Board Structure with Strategic Goals

Each Committee will operate in a manner to best put forth the values of the PrPL, with particular attention to diversity and community outreach. As each committee addresses its work, find ways to connect with educational and community partners in the PrPL region. Each Committee will also incorporate ideas from the technology plan, and the community engagement and regionalization resource document (Ideas compiled by the Strategic Plan Committee) as they find helpful. Priority Committee functions are noted below:

1. Fundraising Committee
   - Address Goal I.
   - Design a Comprehensive Fund Raising Program (Annual Projects/Capital Campaign)

2. Property Committee:
   - Produce a Space Utilization and Facility Development Plan that addresses long term needs to be addressed in a priority order; monitor and adjust this plan.

3. Finance Committee
   - Oversee Expenditures and Revenues, project funding possibilities for Goal implementation.

4. Nominating Committee
   - Recommend potential Board members with necessary skill sets to address Strategic Goals.

5. Personnel Committee
   - Meet regularly with Executive Director and bring personnel matters to the Board as necessary.

6. Strategic Plan Committee
   - Recommend a process that monitors and adjusts Strategic Plan implementation; develop and monitor a separate Technology Plan (see below) and bring "visioning" ideas to the Board for consideration; support other committees with community outreach ideas and projects.

Objective B: Position the Library as a Strategic Regional Service Hub

1. Maximize outreach to Borough and Township leaders and residents

2: Promote the library as a "regional" facility.

3: Expand involvement with regional educational institutions in the library.

4: Use local media outlets to promote regional aspects of the library.

5. Enhance relationship/partnerships with institutions not traditionally aligned with the Library that include but are not limited to: Tri County Network (TCN), Pottstown Health and Wellness Foundation, Tri County Chamber of Commerce, Pottstown Area Industrial Development (PAID).

6. Create Community Outreach Committee
   - Liaison to Friends
   - Liaison to Borough Council
   - Liaison to Townships

7. Create a Board Ambassador Program
   - An effective Key Communicators Group to work with governmental bodies, foundations, and organizations.

Objective C: Improve utilization of technology for online document development and management.

Objective D: Effectively incorporate patron feedback into the management structure.
1. Survey of Patron Comments to be posted on the PrPL Website.
2. **Patron Comments should be considered as decisions are made regarding the 4 Goals of the Strategic Plan.**

STRATEGIC PLAN RESOURCE DOCUMENTS

PrPL Technology Plan

Goal #1: Create a replacement cycle for computer equipment.

Goal #2: Secure effective technology in a cost effective manner.

1. Examine the use off-lease, open box or reconditioned but fully warranted computer and networking equipment .

2. Perform a biennial search for network and phone services consistent with the e-rate program calendar and guidelines for discounts on universal services to assure that current providers are offering the lowest available pricing for these services.

3. Consider student-interns with an interest in computers, web design, and networking to provide assistance with technology tasks currently contracted or assigned to paid library staff. The latter will permit professional staff more time in direct service to library clients.

Goal #3: Develop and deliver programs that encourage group participation and group responsibility for continued technology development.

1. Consider development and use of Library Guides http://springshare.com/libguides/ (Retains and reinforces the professional librarian as the broker of high quality, reliable resources on topics of interest. Additionally, these electronic guides are accessed remotely).

2. Investigate the development of a website through a commercial portal and/or provide tools to customize a mobile app to access essential library services (example: http://www.sirsidynix.com/bookmyne).

3. Investigate social networking as a tool to provide important library services to the Pottstown regional community ([A Social Networking Primer for Librarians (THE TECH SET® #7)](#) Cliff Landis). Ex: A virtual book club

4. Seek partnerships with area school districts to provide technology literacy and enhanced research training for adult communities.

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The Comprehensive Fund Raising Program

(To be inserted when completed)

Space Utilization and Facility Development Plan
for
Pottstown Regional Public library

Vision

Having made the decision for the Library to remain in the 1915 building, it was with the understanding that maintenance and structural renovations would be needed. The first priority being to ensure that it is structurally sound with an updated infrastructure.

A financial commitment will be made for phased-in completion of all remaining infrastructure upgrades, accessibility and design improvements, and for an on-going maintenance and repair budget.

A schedule of capital improvements and other renovations will be approved and implemented to provide spaces that are quiet for reading and study; spaces more accommodating for small group meetings and discussion; spaces appropriate for individual and group access to technology; and spaces to allow the staff to deliver desired services and programs.

The new layout will be designed as an entire-building concept, and implemented in designated phases. The new layout will be in keeping with current national trends and research, and is supported by the recent changes in collection requirements.

The renovated Library will reflect an atmosphere that is comfortable and aesthetically pleasing. The design goal is to maintain the feel of an historic library with the comforts and accessibility of a modern building.

Design Components

Accessibility
- Add ADA restroom(s)
- Add elevator access and east mezzanine extension to provide accessibility to the mezzanine level.
- Add and attractive and permanent ADA accessible entrance.
- Exterior book drop

Building Exterior
- Replace trench drain in parking lot, re-grade lot and repair stucco
- Install speed bumps
- Renovate front entrance (correct drainage, access, and aesthetic issues)
- Improve damaged concrete, old hardscaping
- Improve signage

Infrastructure Upgrades
Most recently the roof has been replaced along with the addition of new heating and air conditioning units and fresh air exchangers (lower level unit currently in process). Other infrastructure improvements that will be implemented as per the approved schedule include, but are not limited to:

- Electrical improvements, interior and exterior
- Telephone, security and systems,
- Thermal window protection for energy-conservation

Lower Level
- Update Reading/Meeting Room

Martha Porter Community Room (completed)

- Convert utility/maintenance area into a teen reading room.

"The Cave"(completed)

- Reconfigure storage areas and remove small staircase to create small group reading areas and to improve the use/flow.
- Correct dampness issues.
- Improve the staff break room.
- New paint, flooring finishes, other design finishes and furniture upgrades

Main Floor and Mezzanine
- Create office and reading space with new ceiling and lighting on the mezzanine level (in process)

- Expand the mezzanine on the East end of the Library to accommodate small group meeting and discussion area.
- Renovate the current office space to accommodate the "Passport Office".
- Relocate computers (along North wall), relocate shelving and the catalogue desk to offer more comfortable seating areas.
- Add new paint, flooring finishes, lighting, ceiling fans, furnishings and other design finishes.
- Possible storage or other space added on mezzanine level, built above existing restroom.

Upper Floor
- Add electrical outlets
- Repair stairwell (for leaks)
- Provide environment for quality storage

Financial Plan

The Library will use a combination of existing capital, grant-writing and fundraising through community-appeal to secure the required funds necessary to implement the phases of the Space Utilization and Facility Development Plan. (SEE Strategic Plan Goal #1: Comprehensive Fund Raising Program). The operating budget will reflect the need for ongoing property maintenance to protect the existing structure and the new improvements from neglect.

Review and Continued Research

The Library Board and its Property Committee will review its Space Utilization and Facility Development Plan periodically and will annually approve permanent modifications to the plan to reflect synthesis with the Board's financial planning. These plans will include the following items and budgets for each:
- Infrastructure and Capital Improvements
- Renovations and Repairs

- Periodic and on-going Property Maintenance

The Library Board will continue to research the condition of the building to become aware of potentially-required infrastructure improvements, additional ways to best maximize the existing space, and aesthetic improvements for long-range planning beyond the scope of this initial phase. Such projects may include, but are not limited to:

- Plumbing/sewer improvements or repairs
- Energy-saving insulation
- Further mezzanine expansion, west side for reading/meeting space
- Renovation and use of the second floor, including a stairwell above the existing stairwell
- Aesthetic improvements to exterior brick and other building components