



Mount Prospect
Public Library

Strategic Plan

July 2022 – June 2025

Approved by the MPPL Board of Trustees June 16, 2022

Introduction

Strategic planning is the systematic process of envisioning a desired future and translating that vision into broadly defined goals and a sequence of steps to achieve them.

Over the past two years, there have been changes in the world at large due to the global pandemic that have made it essential for the Mount Prospect Public Library (MPPL) to seriously evaluate if the needs of the community are being met. This strategic plan is meant to be used as a roadmap for meaningful change. The ultimate goal of this process was to hear directly from the community how the library can best serve them.

Background

The library last completed a strategic plan in 2019. That plan, effective from 2019 through 2023, was a hybrid strategic and operational plan created primarily by staff. In March 2020, when the pandemic emerged, the plan was put on hiatus. In 2021, the Board of Trustees approved a set of short-term goals designed to address the current environment. In late 2021 the Board approved a new strategic planning timeline and agreed to separate the strategic plan from the operational plan.

ReThinking Libraries, a professional strategic planning consulting firm, was hired to coordinate and facilitate the activities. The planning process was kicked off in January 2022 and the final plan was officially approved by the library board in June 2022. This plan will be effective from July 2022 through June 2025.

Approach to Planning

To ensure a thorough and positive planning experience, the library engaged in a collaborative, in-depth data gathering process with the community, library board, and library staff. These activities included:

- All-community, staff, and trustee survey (over 2,000 received)
- Strategic Retreat (11 staff, 4 trustees, 4 community members)
- Staff and Board input sessions (6 sessions, 120 attendees)
- Community input sessions (12 sessions, 165 attendees)
- Mount Prospect demographic data and maps
- Key library related results from the Village of Mount Prospect 2020 survey
- Library benchmark analysis
- Collection utilization analysis

See the supplemental “Findings Book” for a comprehensive overview of the input received during the strategic planning process.

Mission Statement

A mission statement answers the question, “Why do we exist?” The library’s current mission statement was reviewed during input sessions, and a new statement was written based on feedback.

- Cultivating community connections, inspiring learning, and enriching lives.

Vision Statement

A vision statement answers the question, “What do we want to achieve?” The library’s current vision statement was reviewed during input sessions, and a new statement was written based on feedback.

- A connected community with opportunities for exploration and growth.

Values

Values define the culture and character of the library, and answers the question, “How do we behave?” The library’s current values were reviewed during input sessions, and new values were written based on feedback.

- Community focus. Providing relevant services and fostering community connections.
- Adaptability. Being nimble and flexible to creatively meet changing needs.
- Inclusivity. Supporting and valuing the diverse needs of all.
- Welcoming. Creating an inviting, safe, and easy to use environment.
- Accessibility. Ensuring easy access to materials and services whenever and wherever needed.
- Learning. Encouraging an ongoing pursuit of knowledge and discovery that enriches lives.

Initiatives, Goals, Activities

The strategic initiatives, goals, and activities are the outcome of the data-gathering process and comprise the core of the strategic plan. They answer the questions, “What are our priorities and how are we going to address them?”

Strategic Initiatives

The strategic initiatives guide our actions in allocating financial resources and staff time. They do not eliminate efforts in other areas, but they receive the most focused attention of all the activities we undertake for the next three years.

- A. User Focused Spaces
- B. Community Focused Services and Awareness
- C. Improved and More Available Materials and Resources

Goals

Goals are designed to focus on what the community receives and not on the resources the library needs to deliver the service.

Activities

Activities are meant to illustrate possible actions the library will complete in order to meet the goals of the plan. They are not intended to be absolute, but rather realistic suggestions that reflect the current environment. As the environment changes, and more information is discovered during the research phase of each activity, changes are possible. The aim of the activities is to meet the identified goals.

Strategic Initiative A: User Focused Spaces

Goal A1: Provide residents with user-focused, comfortable, and inviting spaces that prioritize usage based on community needs and are furnished with modern, comfortable, and accessible furniture and fixtures.

Activities:

- A. Contract with an architect to create a facility Master Plan for the Main Library.
- B. Identify implementation timeline and funding of the facility Master Plan for the Main Library.
- C. Collaborate with the Village of Mount Prospect to expand, improve, or relocate the Community Connections Center that houses South Branch and Human Services.
- D. Evaluate the partnership with the Village and Human Services to define the benefits and requirements of sharing the Community Connections Center space.
- E. Identify expanded services and resources necessary to occupy an expanded, improved, or relocated South Branch.
- F. Identify and implement short-term improvements to the South Branch space, including minor space reutilization and improved furniture and fixtures.

Goal A2: Enable patrons to intuitively find their way through library spaces with excellent wayfinding and signage at all locations.

Activities:

- A. Conduct a signage audit in conjunction with Goal A1 and implement recommendations as appropriate at all locations.
- B. Create a new patron-focused website with simplified navigation and standardized naming conventions.

Goal A3: Provide eye-catching and interesting displays throughout all locations to enable unexpected and organic discovery of materials and resources by patrons.

Activities:

- A. Conduct a display and shelving audit in conjunction with Goal A1 and implement recommendations as appropriate.

Strategic Initiative B: Community Focused Services and Awareness

Goal B1: Provide convenient, non-traditional services that add value to the library's contributions to the community.

Activities:

- A. Evaluate providing passports and/or license plate stickers.

Goal B2: Offer a wide variety of interesting adult programs that appeals to a range of audiences.

Activities:

- A. Evaluate current adult programming and incorporate new ideas from the strategic planning results.

- B. Increase the coordination of adult programs across MPPL departments, including South Branch.

Goal B3: Meet patrons where they are and further embed library services and outreach within the community.

Activities:

- A. Evaluate the feasibility of installing kiosks, vending machines, or other self-service systems within the community.
- B. Investigate purchasing an outreach vehicle, such as a bookmobile or van, including what services could be provided “on the road.”
- C. Identify and evaluate added outreach visits and/or programming to senior homes, multifamily dwelling units, churches, and other spaces where the community congregates.

Goal B4: Provide in-house library services at times that are convenient for patrons and utilize staff resources during the most popular times.

Activities:

- A. Evaluate library hours at all locations and adjust to meet community needs.
- B. Review the list of closed days and adjust to address new or changed state or federal holidays.

Goal B5: Patrons will be aware of library offerings through a variety of channels, tailored to meet community needs.

Activities:

- A. Develop standardized, evergreen service offering materials in a variety of mediums that are suitable for new residents, new cardholder orientation, outreach events, etc.
- B. Create library card campaigns that target a variety of audiences and remove barriers to library sign up and use.
- C. Assess current communication efforts and identify a strategy to create and implement a marketing plan that is targeted and curated to best distribute information to the community.

Strategic Initiative C: Improved and More Available Materials and Resources

Goal C1: Patrons will find the materials they want, when they want, for reading, viewing, and listening for pleasure and knowledge.

Activities:

- A. Evaluate joining a resource-sharing consortium or group and make a formal recommendation to the Board that includes an implementation timeline and funding solutions.
- B. Increase the budget allocation for electronic materials with the intent to reduce wait times for popular materials.
- C. Establish a non-holdable collection consisting of popular materials, targeted to the browsing patron.

Goal C2: A variety of practical, fun, and up to date technology and other resources will be available to patrons to use at the library and check out to use remotely.

Activities:

- A. Conduct public technology audit to identify opportunities for improvement, ensuring that public technology is comprehensive, up to date, and easy to use.
- B. Increase number and type of circulating resources (i.e. Library of Things).
- C. Create a limited Digital Media Lab at the Main library that includes some makerspace elements.
- D. Evaluate opportunities to provide dedicated space for technology and makerspace resources at all locations.

Organizational Competencies

Even the best-run libraries may have room for improvement in certain operational areas, and these issues can make it difficult to provide services regardless of the library's priorities. Organizational competencies are what the library must do in order to improve the ability to provide the desired services articulated in the goals and are meant to increase the library's effectiveness and efficiency. In this plan, the impact of the pandemic on staff resources is addressed.

A. Marketing/Public Relations/Communications/Graphic Design

1. Clarify the objective of the department and clearly identify the purpose and desired outcomes. Collaborate with other library departments to identify priorities and best practices in order to maximize patron awareness.
2. Conduct a departmental assessment, including divisions of responsibility and workload.
3. Evaluate staffing and resources and adjust to meet the identified needs of the library, including revising processes and procedures as necessary.

B. Public Services

1. As the majority of this plan includes additions, improvements, and increases to public services, each public service department will conduct an assessment to identify what existing offerings need to be adjusted, shifted, or reduced to accommodate the new and improved services. During the assessment, staff will identify services that are no longer adding value. These services will be ended gently, understanding that they may be brought back in the future as needed. This assessment should include an evaluation of current staffing and budget resources.

Evaluation Process

This plan is designed to be flexible and responsive to changes in the economic, demographic or sociopolitical climate. The strategic initiatives and goals are broad enough to allow for necessary modifications to the activities that are carried out. Library management will work closely with the Board of Trustees prior to finalizing and implementing activities over the next three years. Progress will be reported at each regular library board meeting.