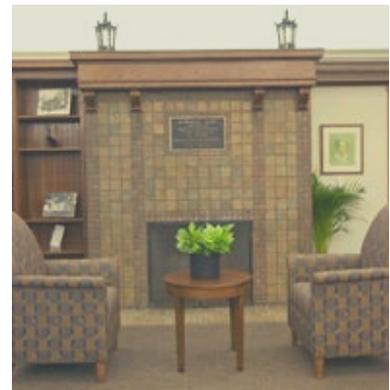




DWIGHT FOSTER PUBLIC LIBRARY

STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2023



APPROVED BY THE DWIGHT FOSTER PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD 12/14/2020

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WITH APPRECIATION

The Library Board of Trustees wishes to thank everyone who contributed to this process for the Dwight Foster Public Library.

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THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The Dwight Foster Public Library’s Strategic Plan for 2021–2023 provides a roadmap for the library to meet the needs of the community by delivering high-quality programs and services to individuals and families. It is a living document, giving the library flexibility to respond to both the community’s evolving needs and the resources available. The plan was developed with valuable input from the community, library staff, Friends of the Library, the library’s Board of Trustees and the Strategic Planning Committee.

The Strategic Planning Committee of the Dwight Foster Public Library Board of Trustees and Library Director Eric Robinson began meeting in January of 2020 to begin the process of developing the library’s strategic plan for the next three years. Originally, part of this process involved a community forum scheduled on August 28 and facilitated by Fort HealthCare CEO Mike Wallace. This half-day session was intended to gather input from community leaders and other stakeholders about how the DFPL can best meet the evolving needs of the community. As the COVID-19 pandemic spread throughout the state and case numbers began to rise locally, the Strategic Planning Committee and Board of Trustees decided to cancel the community forum.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

The committee continued to meet virtually, drafting a community survey about the library and its services. The survey was distributed widely, with the intent of receiving survey responses from both active and inactive library users. The survey, which ran from June 22, 2020 to August 4, 2020, was made available on the library’s website and social media platforms. In addition, local employers, including the City of Fort Atkinson and Fort HealthCare, distributed the survey to employees. It contained 27 questions and included both multiple choice and open-ended questions. Ultimately, the survey received 489 responses.

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Nearly 72% of respondents reside in Fort Atkinson. The remaining responses came from neighboring communities, with the highest numbers coming from Koshkonong, Jefferson, Oakland and Hebron.

72%
FORT ATKINSON
RESIDENTS

98%
HAVE A LIBRARY
CARD

Though survey respondents represent a wide age range, with responses coming from those under the age of 18 to those aged 85 and older, nearly 47% of respondents were between the ages of 55 and 74.

55%
NO CHILDREN LIVING AT
HOME

36%
USE THE LIBRARY
WEEKLY

Respondents use the library often – 36% use it weekly and 38% use the library 1-2 times a month.

47%
BETWEEN THE AGES OF
55-74

SURVEY RESULTS

Survey responses were overwhelmingly positive. Nearly 97% of respondents agreed that “**the library is important to me and/or my family and enhances our quality of life.**” Nearly 99% said that **the library itself is a clean and appealing facility.**

Using survey responses and best practices information available, the committee drafted the goals and objectives that will be the framework of the library’s work for the next three years. Survey responses were also summarized and shared with the library staff, who were asked for their input and suggestions for activities that align with the objectives and goals.

The plan was shared with the library’s board of trustees and the Friends of the Library for input and was adopted by the Board of Trustees on December 14, 2020.



SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

Many of the items below were chosen by reviewing the number of times a choice was selected and the addition of times it was identified as *extremely important*, *very important*, *very satisfied* or *'satisfied'*.

FACILITY

- The survey had a few negative comments about the noise level in the library.
- Some expressed interest in diversified computer and technology options for patrons (e.g. provide laptops along desktop computers).
- Nearly 99% of responders agree that the building is clean and appealing, and strongly disagree with the idea that it is old fashioned. They also strongly agree that the library is important for the community.
- The vast majority of patrons are happy with the current library hours. Patrons suggested prioritizing 'enhancing' the wireless access at the library, adding more computers, providing dedicated collaborative work and creation spaces.
- The library as a meeting space is valued by the respondents.
- A handful of respondents expressed interest in utilizing outdoor space.
- Respondents seem very satisfied with the staff and value the interaction. Self checkout wasn't listed as a high priority for most.

SERVICES

- Some interest in expanded services to seniors.
- Respondents who used the library in the past 6 months took advantage of the following services the most:
 - Checking out library materials
 - Attending a program
 - Computer usage.
- Respondents were most satisfied with:
 - Locating materials for personal enjoyment
 - Getting help from a librarian (including research, book recommendations or technical help)
 - Using the Wi-Fi.
- The following were the most important services to patrons:
 - Access to a well-rounded collection
 - Comfortable spaces throughout the library to sit, read and enjoy the library
 - Being connected to resources both inside and outside the library
 - The option of having one-on-one service at checkout.
- Library programs are important to respondents.
- Respondents use ebooks and would like the service expanded.
- Some interest in additional teen programming.

COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

- Most respondents hear about services and programs via the library website, social media and email notifications.
- Nearly half understood that we have online subscription services, programming and book discussions.
- One common comment was that it is a challenge to navigate the website and it is "old."
- Some interest in an email newsletter.

STRATEGIC STATEMENTS

LIBRARY MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Dwight Foster Public Library to help people achieve their full potential by being a leading resource for information, education, culture and recreation.

LIBRARY COMMITMENTS AND VALUES

We believe these values will drive our culture, priorities and community-focused decisions:

- Learning in all forms
- Diverse perspectives
- Intellectual freedom
- Customer experience
- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Making a difference



STRATEGIC NARRATIVE

WHAT IS THE DWIGHT FOSTER PUBLIC LIBRARY'S ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY?

Libraries are community destinations, providing access to materials in a variety of formats, as well as programs and services for all ages. The Dwight Foster Public Library now, and in the future, strives to play a vital role as a community gathering place, knowledge enhancer and safe place to learn.

The strategic planning process led to the identification of three key areas for the DFPL to focus on over the life of the strategic plan to enhance our role in the community:

- Facility
- Services
- Communications and Outreach

The Library needs to be inviting and accommodating to patrons of all ages by providing a variety of spaces for quiet reading and studying, meetings and group work and for engaging programming. Public service desks and staff work areas need to be functional, accessible and equipped with the technology necessary to serve the public effectively.

One of the cornerstones of an excellent library continues to be a well-trained, passionate staff, and the Library remains committed to staff development.

The Library needs to be a center for early literacy, and an engaging place for our children.

The Library must provide a relevant collection in a variety of formats to meet the needs of the community.

The Library strives to ensure broad awareness of all Library offerings, and collaborates with other organizations to meet community ideals. As a community stakeholder itself, the Library has been and always will be a good steward of its resources, and will seek to maximize funding opportunities. To best serve our community, we must know what our patrons want, adapt accordingly and inform stakeholders of all of our activities in this direction.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE - FACILITY

We aim to ensure our facilities are welcoming, comfortable and accessible. We adapt the physical space to meet the changing needs of our community and the Library's evolving role within the framework of our mission, vision and resources.

GOALS AND POTENTIAL OBJECTIVES

- 1. Update the Library facility to increase patron comfort and functionality, encouraging increased usage of all Library areas, both inside and outside the perimeter of our building.**
 - a. Explore possible library improvements to vacant lot to the east of the building; explore making this lot an outdoor reading area.
 - b. Replace comfortable and functional furniture throughout the library for patrons and staff.
 - c. Improve wayfinding signage to designate specific library areas.
 - d. Explore soundproofing on the second floor of the library.
 - e. Replace carpeting in high traffic patrons areas and staff areas of the library.

- 2. Make physical and technological improvements to support new and existing services and programs.**
 - a. Explore replacing projection and sound equipment in the Community Room.
 - b. Identify potential areas for external cameras for security.
 - c. Explore an additional self-checkout machine in the children's department.
 - d. Provide up-to-date computer and printing equipment for staff and patron needs.
 - e. Explore laptop checkout for patrons, which may help abate issues of congregated groups of patrons distracting one another in the computer lab.
 - f. Establish tools for video creation and live streaming programs and events that are either virtual only or physically hosted at the library.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE - SERVICES

We focus on providing lifelong learning opportunities and resources with exceptional customer service. We provide an excellent collection in a variety of formats. We continue to create superior educational and recreational programming, incorporating the technology required due to ever-changing community needs.

GOALS AND POTENTIAL OBJECTIVES

- 1. An ever-evolving collection serves to educate, enrich, and entertain patrons of all ages. We consistently explore innovative materials to meet the needs of the public. As a core service, the Library will continue to provide diverse physical and digital collections.**
 - a. Provide updated and remove outdated formats in response to changes in technology and user habits.
 - b. Evaluate circulation trends to identify borrowing habits and provide relevant collections.
 - c. Commit to ensuring that we continue to offer supplemental streaming services like Hoopla to our patrons even if Bridges stops funding it. Streaming services allow us to provide more immediate content if other materials aren't available for our patrons.

- 2. As a core service, the Library will continue to provide relevant and engaging programs and services for all constituents.**
 - a. Adults:
 - i. Offer regular adult level movie and documentary screenings.
 - ii. Continue to offer adult book clubs in-person and virtually.
 - iii. Explore creating programming targeted towards patrons in their 20s and 30s.
 - iv. Emphasize programming for senior citizens (e.g. Memory Cafes, Caregiver kits).
 - v. Explore expanding homebound delivery services.
 - b. Children:
 - i. Continue to provide storytimes for a variety of children's age groups.
 - c. Young adults:
 - i. Offer drop-in programming for young adults after school.
 - ii. Offer gaming activities for teens.
 - iii. For all programming, we will integrate technology to record or live stream events when it makes sense to do so.

- 3. Develop all staff by providing high-quality professional development and continuing education opportunities.**
 - a. Provide annual staff training sessions.
 - b. Provide memberships to professional organizations.
 - c. Provide access to online and off site training.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE - COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

We inform the community so stakeholders are actively aware of and engaged with all the Library has to offer. We engage community organizations so they recognize the Library as a vital resource and valuable partner. We ensure stakeholders view their Library as a community hub and wise investment.

GOALS AND POTENTIAL OBJECTIVES

- 1. Explore new ways to bolster awareness and communicate Library resources, services, programs and opportunities.**
 - a. Offer email newsletters for different target groups (such as parents of young children, teachers, adults).
 - b. Use LibraryAware, or other email services, to highlight our collections in social media and newsletters.
 - c. Make sure that the website (both desktop and mobile versions) is effectively communicating information about the library and our programs and services.
 - i. Conduct an annual website content audit.
 - ii. Review website design in 2021, make recommendations for changes and implement changes within one year. Review website design once every three years.

- 2. Collaborate and build partnerships with schools, non-profits, businesses, organizations and community groups to expand service capacities and increase engagement with the Library.**
 - a. Assess our current collaborations and develop ways to build opportunities to create new partnerships.
 - b. Collaborate with Fort HealthCare on wellness initiatives and share information about wellness resources and programs in our community.
 - c. Continue school visits at public and parochial schools.
 - d. Continue and expand collaboration with community businesses such as daycare centers, medical providers and senior living facilities.

- 3. Increase library advocacy and secure funding resources to maintain desired service levels.**
 - a. Library staff and library board trustees participate in legislative advocacy events.
 - b. Apply for grants when it is essential to support additional services and programs.
 - c. Communicate the value and needs of the Library to the Fort Atkinson City Council and other county elected officials through meetings and annual reports.

ASSESSMENT

The Strategic Plan will be complemented by annual action plans incorporated as part of this document. We will conduct an annual plan assessment to review service goals and determine if any adjustments need to be made to identify plan initiatives based on changing conditions or new challenges and opportunities. For this purpose, the Strategic Planning Committee will reconvene in summer, in advance of the Library beginning its annual budget planning process.

The Director and Library staff will consult with the Strategic Planning Committee to determine needed resources, establish timelines and identify benchmarks and measurements to monitor the impact on the Library's metrics for different plan components. Initiatives and activities for each year will be prioritized, factoring in available resources and capacities.

As part of the Strategic Plan review, the Strategic Planning Committee will communicate to the Library Board two times per year to update its members on developments regarding the strategic plan. Verbal updates will be given at the May and September Board meetings, and an annual written summary will be presented at the December Board meeting.