

# Wayne Public Library

## Strategic Plan

September 2019 – December 2021



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## Wayne Public Library Background

The first public library in Wayne, Michigan was opened in 1923, and over the last 96 years, the Wayne Public Library has grown and adapted to a changing world. Major world events, shifting demographics, changes in local governments, developments of new technologies, and the advancements in the field of librarianship have all left large and small impacts on the library.

Public libraries are subject to and respond to the economic well-being of the municipalities of which they are a part. Historically, the Wayne Public Library (in all of its iterations), has grown with the increase in population and agreements with neighboring libraries, whether through a shared library (such as with the Wayne-Westland Public Library) or the various local library cooperatives.

By April 2014, however, the city of Wayne was facing a financial crisis. Due to falling property values, the worth of the perpetual .99 mills in funding was halved and was no longer capable of funding the library at its full operation. The board was forced to cut hours, resources, and collection budgets.

The library has always supported its community and life-long learning, but due to two large changes in 2018, the library was given a serendipitous opportunity to reorient itself in the city and in the consciousness of its patrons. The first major event was the approval of an additional millage of one mil for ten years. The second was the hiring of a full-time Library Director.

The millage campaign was headed by the late Library Board President Ed Marman and on August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018, the millage passed with 69% of the vote.

In December 2018, Jody Wolak became the first full-time Director at the Wayne Public Library since 2014. She has since guided the library toward better manifesting the values associated with public librarianship as proposed by the American Library Association.

## Strategic Plan

A strategic plan is the document that guides the library toward continuous improvement. Its intent is to map future high-level goals and the smaller goals that can be met to achieve them. With its initiatives, it establishes its values and highest long-term priorities including examples of direct actions that can contribute to marked improvement.

With the passage of the millage, the new director, and changes within the Library Board itself, the library is in a transitional state and the changes that take place now can set the precedent for ongoing improvement.

The Wayne Public Library's Strategic Plan will organize the library's priorities while also intentionally reflecting the library's commitment to its community and the life-long learning of its patrons. The strategic plan will bring a level of achievability and practicality to the aspirations the library hopes to one day meet.

Some positive changes have already taken place since the developments in 2018, such as adding new staff members and increasing the hours the library is open. After several years of decline, library usage began to increase in early 2019 and we hope to continue this positive trend with the implementation of the strategic plan. The strategic plan will give the library the tools to evaluate and prioritize future initiatives as the library strives for ongoing improvement.

### Process

The Strategic Planning Committee included a board member, the library director, and a member of staff. It was important to the committee to address these differing perspectives to create a dynamic but common vision of the library and its values.

The committee held regular meetings approximately once per month. Each member attended the meeting with their own ideas, values, and experiences to share with the other members. Common themes were explored including how those ideas would benefit the library and how they would best be implemented.

The draft of the strategic plan was then given to other staff members for their feedback before being presented to the library board for their input and approval.

### Measuring Success

Measuring success is a critical part of the strategic plan because it allows the library to evaluate what is working and what can still be improved. Objective measurements can help the library quantify the impact of changes, while qualitative measurements can personalize the effects of new initiatives.

To measure the success of the strategic plan, the library will compare the statistics of active cardholders, patron visits, and circulations to those from previous years as well as to those from comparable libraries. To measure success with those objectives that relate to computer use, the library will monitor changes

in computer and wireless sessions. For qualitative measurements of success, the library will solicit feedback from patrons and staff in the forms of comment cards, program evaluations, and surveys.

## **Format**

The strategic plan is organized into initiatives, objectives, and actions.

### **Initiatives**

The initiatives are the large-scale overarching goals for the library. They are the library's top priorities for the upcoming years. Initiatives are goals for the library that best manifest its values and the values of public libraries as set forth by the American Library Association.

### **Objectives**

Under each initiative are several objectives. Objectives are the outcomes that, taken together, will indicate an initiative's success.

### **Actions**

Under each objective are several actions. Actions are examples of specific activities that support an objective. The actions listed in this plan are not intended to be an exhaustive list of everything the library will do; they are simply examples.

The Wayne Public Library's Strategic Plan follows an outline structure. Each initiative will be explained, relating it to the values of the library, followed by specific objectives, then a list of potential actions that can be taken to help bring the objectives to fruition.

## **Initiative 1: Make the library easier to use and remove barriers to access.**

The purpose of a library is to be used by the service area that supports it, and a library's staff should always strive to increase the usability and accessibility of the library's resources.

### **Objective: The library will have services that prevent directing patrons to other libraries or businesses.**

By offering services that prevent directing patrons to other libraries or businesses, the library is directly serving the patrons' stated needs. By offering services directly instead of directing patrons elsewhere, the library saves the patrons' time, garners their trust, and raises their expectations.

#### Actions:

- Allow paying by debit or credit card
- Offer faxing
- Offer color printing
- Sell commonly needed supplies (manila envelopes, etc.)
- Investigate adding notary services

### **Objective: The library will offer a variety of easily accessible and current technological resources.**

It is the responsibility of public libraries to adapt to technological changes. The library is capable of embracing advancements while also offering resources that are still accessible to the service area.

#### Actions:

- Improve Wi-Fi
- Update computers, operating systems, and programs
- Promote database usage
- Evaluate options for computer classes or one-on-one training
- Install a self-service print release station

### **Objective: The library will provide materials in a timely manner.**

The ease of use of the library not only includes technological resources, but also extends to the library's physical collections, organization, and related policies and procedures.

#### Actions:

- Review and revise circulation procedures
- Maintain collections that reflect the community
- Re-organize collections in an intuitive manner

**Objective: The library will respond to the needs of people in the Wayne community and maximize accessibility.**

The accessibility needs of the community that the Wayne Public Library serves are just as diverse as the community itself. By offering services and resources that address these needs, the library can better serve and advocate for its patrons.

**Actions:**

- Ensure that the building and its property are ADA-compliant
- Remove financial barriers to library usage
- Promote online resources that can be accessed remotely

## **Initiative 2: Increase visibility of the library within the community.**

The Wayne Public Library cannot be utilized to its full potential if the public is unaware of the library, its services, and its resources. Increasing the visibility of the library will help ensure the health and vitality of the library while also allowing the library to address the varied needs of the public.

### **Objective: The library will ensure community members are aware of all library resources.**

Taking steps to share the breadth of the library's resources with the community ensures that patrons can benefit from the resources that the library offers.

#### Actions:

- Create a newsletter
- Work with local media to promote the library
- Improve the online calendar

### **Objective: The library will improve and update its digital image.**

Updating the library's digital image will promote the Wayne Public Library as an institution that is receptive to technological changes and changes to the community's needs. The library's digital presence will become more accessible and interactive.

#### Actions:

- Redesign website
- Become regularly active on social media
- Create an easy to remember email and web address

### **Objective: The library will participate in events beyond its physical walls.**

By reaching out to the community, the library will share its values and dedication to the community that it serves.

#### Actions:

- Participate in school visits
- Participate in community events
- Participate in local government
- Investigate mobile circulation opportunities

## **Initiative 3: Provide relevant and up-to-date information for patrons and staff.**

One of the primary goals of public libraries is to offer relevant and up-to-date information to their respective communities. By prioritizing this goal and value, the Wayne Public Library will use this transitional time to better provide relevant and up-to-date information to both community members and staff.

### **Objective: The library will offer an up-to-date collection of materials.**

By updating materials, the library can better serve its patrons with new and updated information. By supplying staff with professional material, the library as a whole will stay up-to-date on ever-changing professional standards and best practices.

#### Actions:

- Engage in ongoing weeding, evaluation, and purchasing of materials
- Maintain a collection of up-to-date professional materials

### **Objective: The library will have clear and easy-to-understand policies, strategic plan, and other documentation that are easily accessible to both the staff and public.**

By updating documentation, the library will increase consistency among staff and make the library's policies and procedures easier to understand for the public.

#### Actions:

- Review, organize, revise, and rewrite policies
- Organize policies in a practical manner prioritizing the subjects and intended readers
- Make policies readily available and easy to distribute to the staff and public

### **Objective: Library patrons will have the skills necessary to make the most of the library resources.**

The library will make efforts to supply patrons with the skills necessary to use the library resources to the best of their ability. This includes updating the library's premises as well as offering learning opportunities for the patrons.

#### Actions:

- Improve signage and wayfinding
- Offer computer training
- Schedule school visits about information literacy
- Create tutorials for common tasks and library resources

**Objective: The library will provide dynamic continuing education for staff members.**

The implementation of updates and best practices is the end result of an informed staff. By providing continuing education opportunities to staff members, the library will benefit from up-to-date information and advancements in the field of public librarianship.

Actions:

- Add professional literature to the staff collection
- Support conference attendance
- Support webinar participation
- Encourage participation in TLN Committees
- Invite speakers for staff development

**Objective: The library will maximize efficiency by streamlining the organizational structure.**

By updating the organizational structure of the library, staff members will be able to better prioritize their duties and ultimately better serve the community. This will also directly improve communication, efficiency, and accountability.

Actions:

- Establish departments and reporting hierarchy
- Ensure sustainability of organizational changes using multi-year budget forecasting
- Update job descriptions

## **Initiative 4: Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion through our programs, collections, and services.**

The role of the public library not only includes reflecting the diverse communities that they serve, but also educating their communities about the diverse world of which they are a part.

### **Objective: The library will offer programs that reflect diverse experiences, identities, and interests.**

By offering diverse programming, the library asserts its position as an institution that reflects the world's diversity. Programming actively engages with the community by showing the validity of those diverse experiences, as well as creating spaces in which to share those diverse experiences with others.

#### Actions:

- Offer and promote programming that will appeal to new and returning patrons
- Actively expand our scope of program offerings

### **Objective: The library's collections will represent a diversity of experiences, opinions, and identities.**

Diverse collections strive to share not only information, but also entertainment, from differing lenses through which to view the world. By offering diverse collections, the library meets the diverse information needs of the community while also offering diverse representation in our items whose core purpose is to entertain.

#### Actions:

- Actively seek out materials that reflect diverse experiences, opinions, and identities

### **Objective: The library will ensure fair, kind, and equitable treatment for all patrons and staff.**

In addition to offering diverse programs and collections, the library is also dedicated to promoting inclusivity to the diverse communities that we serve. This extends to other resources that the library offers as well as the direct service provided.

#### Actions:

- Empower staff to use their discretion to give excellent customer service
- Make the library's stance on diversity, equity, and inclusion explicit in documentation
- Train staff on fair, kind, and equitable treatment for diverse populations