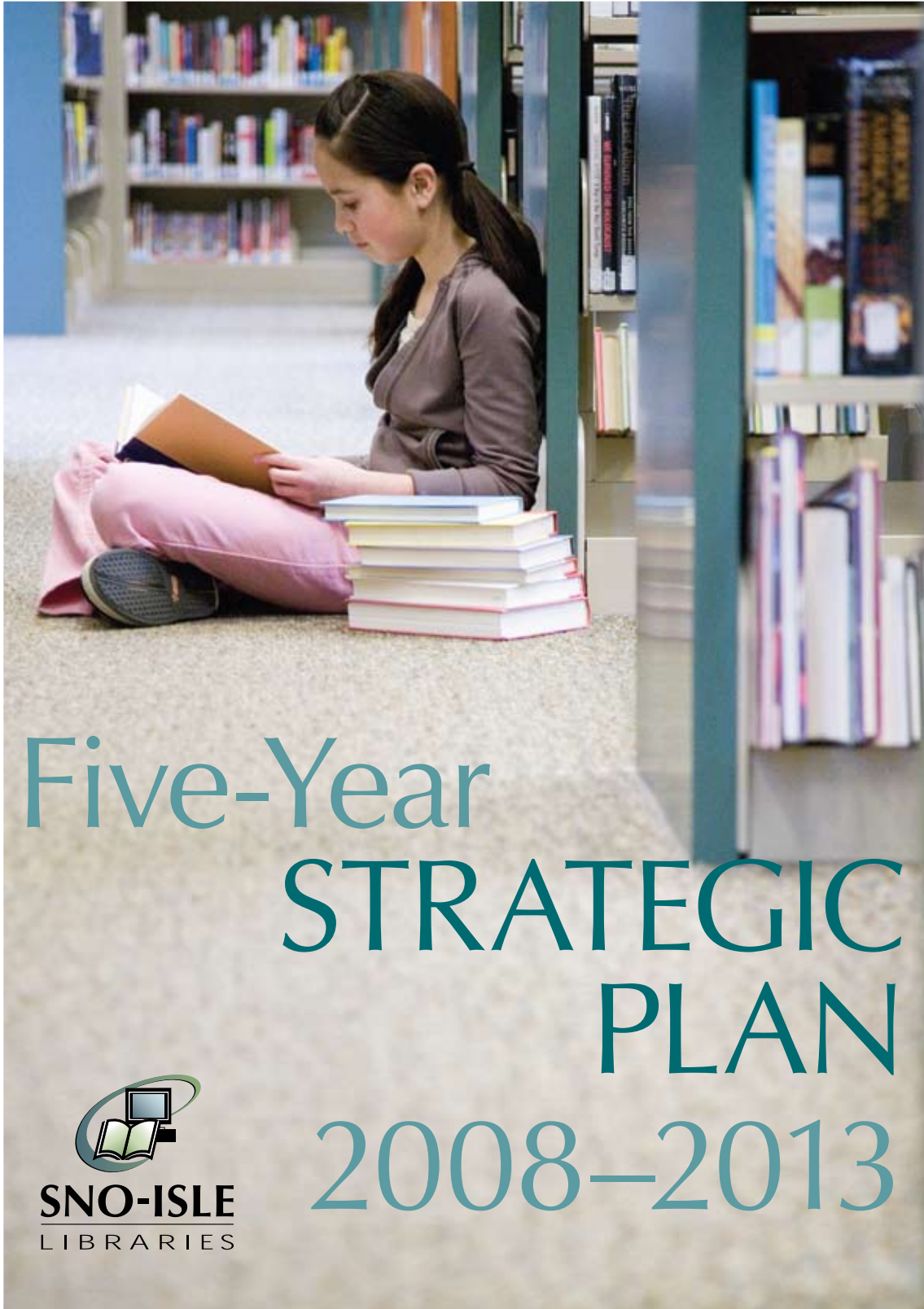
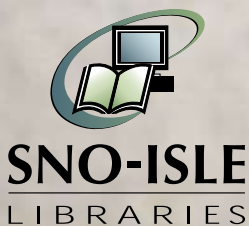


June, 2008



Five-Year STRATEGIC PLAN 2008–2013



It is the mission of the Sno-Isle Libraries to be a community doorway to reading, resources, and lifelong learning, and a center for people, ideas, and culture.

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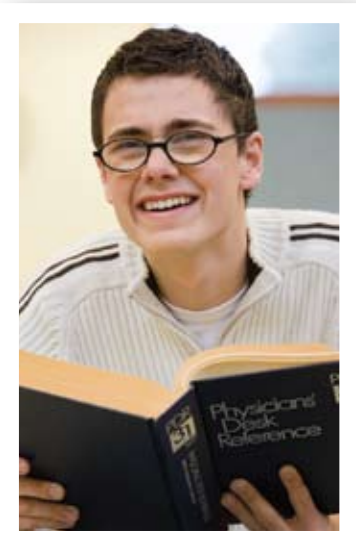


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The **Sno-Isle Libraries 2008-2013 Strategic Plan** charts a course to build upon traditional library service and move our libraries forward to address the 21st century needs of our customers.

Public libraries understand and provide for the needs of their communities. The Sno-Isle Libraries Strategic Plan is built on a foundation of community and staff feedback in each of Sno-Isle's 21 communities and online. Our strategic plan focuses on identifying, prioritizing and providing services that respond to the stated needs and expectations of our diverse communities.

Our strategic plan is a road map to reach a destination of excellent, contemporary, and relevant library service for more than 646,000 people who live throughout Snohomish and Island counties.* The plan includes many traditional library services: books, access to information, and a place for the community to gather. In addition, you will see opportunity for innovation, paths to new services, and a snapshot of the new ways your library will serve your community. Taken hand-in-hand with the *Sno-Isle Libraries Capital Facilities Plan: 2007-2025*, this plan establishes a comprehensive approach to providing library service and facilities now and into the future.

As our communities continue to grow and technology evolves, it is imperative that Sno-Isle Libraries be flexible to respond to changing community needs. Over the next five years, we look forward to an ongoing discussion with our customers, our stakeholders, and our staff to keep our strategic plan fresh and relevant.

It is the mission of the Sno-Isle Libraries to be a community doorway to reading, resources, and lifelong learning, and a center for people, ideas, and culture. That mission drives our strategic plan; it mirrors the world of 2008, and gives Sno-Isle Libraries the flexibility to respond to the needs of 2013.

Each goal and objective of the plan illustrates the reality that public libraries have a place in our world today and are essential to each community's quality of life.



Joel Selling
President, Board of Trustees

Jonalyn Woolf-Ivory
Library Director

* excluding the City of Everett and the Town of Woodway

In 2007, Sno-Isle Libraries began a strategic planning process. In partnership with PROVIDENCE Associates LLC, Sno-Isle Libraries approached the process with the premise that public libraries should understand and meet the needs and expectations of the people they serve.

Purpose

Traditionally, a planning process is an opportunity for an organization to turn to the future and develop a roadmap for new and exciting services and resources. For a two-county library district serving more than 646,000 people, creating a plan that provides something for everyone is challenging. But in fact, that is what libraries do: provide something for everyone. An important priority has been and will continue to be reaching out to provide service to the underserved, to new communities, and to established residents who are not currently using the library.

Community Feedback and Demographic Data

A staff-based *strategic planning committee* provided guidance in developing the plan. The starting point was an extensive community outreach effort that included stakeholder interviews, a random sample telephone survey, and public and staff focus groups. In this effort we heard that:

The library has an important role as a community center.

Libraries support and enhance learning and education for children and teens.

Access to popular materials is and will remain a cornerstone of library service.

Our customers have an expectation that their library will provide services and resources that support lifelong learning.

Technology—both the equipment and the online resources—is key to communities.

The library has an opportunity to elevate its visibility in the community through marketing and partnerships.

In addition, projected population growth and other demographic changes over the next five years can also help us shape future library services. We know that:

The population of the library district is projected to increase at a rate of 8.9% each year for the next five years.

The greatest increase in percent of population will occur among the 55- years- and-older age group. Between now and 2012, the over-55 population is expected to increase from 17.7% of the population to 23.5% of the population. This contrasts with a decrease in the percentage of the population in the 0-19 age range.

Family households with children under the age of 18 are estimated to make up 37.6% of all households by 2012.

Executive Summary

The statistical and anecdotal data we gathered drove the development of strategic goals which will define public library service for the next five years. These data mirror those collected in 2006 and 2007 during the development of the *Sno-Isle Libraries Capital Facilities Plan: 2007-2025*. That plan, which focuses on the future needs for new library space, identifies current space limitations and future space needs. Together, these plans map a path for enhanced library service in our communities.

Goals

All of these pieces came together as the foundation for our strategic plan. Between 2008-2013, our customers can expect to see these goals in action throughout the library district:

Customers experience convenient, inviting, and comfortable library facilities that reflect the diverse needs of children, teens, and adults.

Sno-Isle Libraries facilitates and nurtures reading and learning for children and teens.

Customers experience lifelong learning and enhanced quality of life through a variety of library resources and services.

Customers have timely access to popular materials in a variety of formats.

Customers have access to user-friendly and innovative electronic content and devices in response to the changing technology market and culture.

Sno-Isle Libraries engages the community to build positive relationships through marketing, communications, and community partnerships.

Sno-Isle Libraries continues to be a responsible steward of resources.

Next Steps

The *Sno-Isle Libraries Strategic Plan* is a living document. The plan consists of seven goals and related objectives. As part of the implementation process, our communities and staff will help us identify activities for achieving the goals and objectives set forth in the plan. In addition to community and staff involvement, we will evaluate best practices from peer libraries around the country and identify activities that could be successful in our communities. The successful completion of each activity will result in achieving measurable objectives.

The successful completion of each activity will result in achieving measurable objectives.

Over the course of the next five years, we will continue to test the success and relevance of our activities with our customers, our community leaders, and our staff.

Key FINDINGS



The *Public Library Association* developed a list of public service areas that libraries across the country refer to in strategic plan development. A subcommittee of the *Strategic Planning Committee* was charged with prioritizing the top six library service areas based on input from the public and staff, as well as community demographic data.

These *Public Library Association* service areas are:

Succeed in School: Homework Help,

Connect to the Online World: Public Internet Access,

Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces,

Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning,

Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure,

Create Young Readers: Early Literacy.

Sno-Isle Libraries Strategic Plan goals were built around analysis of public and staff comments and ranked against these nationally-identified service areas. This prioritization became the starting focus of our strategic plan development.



Succeed in School: Homework Help

Definition: Students will have the resources they need to succeed in school.

SUPPORTING DATA

Community Telephone Survey Summary

Books for adults and children are the most important service (91.2% and 90.9% respectively) – these books include materials to support K-12 and higher education.

Help finding answers to questions is very or somewhat important to 92% of library users (75% very important, 16.8% somewhat important). Library staff members indicate many of the questions asked relate to homework and school projects.



The need for more weekend hours of service was mentioned, as this is frequently the time students want to finish school projects.

The importance of providing color copiers, color printers, and scanners was highlighted in relationship to completing school projects.

Stakeholder Interview Summary

In Island County, the local libraries need to get out and work with the schools so that the schools and the students get to know them.

Employer representatives stated that one of the key factors for recruiting employees was an education system of which public libraries are a part, enabling people to learn about the world beyond their current location and supporting children entering school ready to learn.

Focus Group Summary

Parents express a need to connect with homeschool youth and families, a need to deliver books to schools and other locations, and a need to be more aggressive in working with schools.

Staff are able to provide strong support for homework, but schools are not aware of the extent or capability of the library's resources.

Teens indicate the library needs to promote databases as part of high school research assignments, and they value service that helps with homework.

Connect to the Online World: Public Internet Access

Definition: Residents will have high-speed access to the digital world with no unnecessary restrictions or fees to ensure that everyone can take advantage of the growing resources and services available through the Internet.

SUPPORTING DATA

Community Telephone Survey Summary

Forty-four percent of library users use the library's computers.

Two-thirds of library users rank access to computers for personal use as very or somewhat important (37% very important, 29.3% somewhat important). This ranks higher than providing movies, magazines, newspapers, or music.

Close to one-third (31.6%) of library users rank Wi-Fi access in the library as very important. This also ranks higher than providing movies, magazines, newspapers, or music. Nearly another third (30.67%) rank this as somewhat important.

Only 26.5% of library users strongly agreed that library computers have the software they need. Only 32.4% strongly agreed they are allotted enough time to use the library's computers.

Stakeholder Interview Summary

Libraries are important to society, as they provide access to technology and computers for those who cannot afford them.

Keeping up with technology is a challenge faced by the library.

Access to technology and classes on computer literacy for senior citizens are strengths of the library.

Employers cite libraries as a quality-of-life factor, including making it possible for people to learn about the world beyond their current location.

Focus Group Summary

Desired service improvements include more computers and computers dedicated to teen use.

Access to computers is one of the five cited strengths of Sno-Isle Libraries.

Not enough computers and having to wait for a computer are cited as weaknesses.



Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces

Definition: 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 social networking.

SUPPORTING DATA

Community Telephone Survey Summary

Library users stated that, other than books, important services include an easy-to-use website (90%).

Eighty-five percent of respondents indicated that inviting, comfortable, functional space is very or somewhat important (53.5% very important, 31.5% somewhat important).

Users' number one requested technology improvement was offering classes on how to use computers and online resources.

Two thirds of library users visited library facilities at least once a month.

Stakeholder Interview Summary

By 2020, 22% of the population will be over 60 years of age, and libraries need to continue to provide opportunities for learning by offering computer literacy classes for senior citizens.

Incorporate more comfortable seating in libraries.

Provide cafes in the libraries.

Provide space for events.

Be a distribution site for information from other organizations.

Utilize library facilities as training sites for organizations.

Place more emphasis on the library as a community gathering place.

Increase size of library facilities.

Ensure cleanliness and a welcoming atmosphere in libraries.

Focus Group Summary

Provide study rooms and quiet areas.

Designate areas for adults, for children and for teens.

Offer dedicated teen areas decorated in ways that appeal to teens.

Increase the size of libraries - most are too small.

Provide cafes in libraries.



Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning

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

SUPPORTING DATA

Community Telephone Survey Summary

Over 90% of library users believe providing books for adults and children is the most important service.

The top three needed improvements among users are more books, quicker access to new popular materials, and more non-print/media materials, such as DVDs and CDs.

The five most important library services, as cited by non-library users, are books for children, programs for children, books for adults, programs for teens, and an easy-to-use library website.

Stakeholder Interview Summary

Employer representatives identified public libraries as a quality-of-life factor in recruiting employees to an area, by providing resources that enable people to learn about the world beyond their community, and supporting and promoting the importance of books and reading.

Libraries need to continue to provide opportunities for senior citizen learning.



Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure

Definition: Residents who want materials to enhance their leisure time will find what they want, when and where they want them, and will have the help they need to make choices from among the options.

SUPPORTING DATA

Community Telephone Survey Summary

Most library users (94%) check out books.

A large percentage (87%) of non-library users find books very or somewhat important (66.4% very important, 20.6% somewhat important).

More than 90% of library users value books for all ages.

The highest priorities for improvements among library users include providing more books and faster access to popular materials.

More than half of library users (52%) check out non-print formats, including movies and music.

Two-thirds of library users (67.9%) value the library providing magazines and newspapers in print (31.5% very important, 36.4% somewhat important).

Over half of library users (54%) value the provision of foreign language materials (17.9% very important, 36.5% somewhat important).

Over half of library users (56%) value downloadable services for books, movies, and music (18.7% very important, 37.7% somewhat important).

Stakeholder Interview Summary

Employer representatives report that an important factor in recruitment of

employees is that the library helps us understand our changing communities through books about other people and cultures.

Focus Group Summary

Provide ready access to popular materials.

Make available more downloadable materials.

Provide rapid delivery of popular materials.

Refresh collections more often in smaller buildings.



Create Young Readers: Early Literacy

Definition: Children from birth to age five will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write, and listen.

SUPPORTING DATA

Community Telephone Survey Summary

Almost all (97%) of library users think books for children are very or somewhat important (90.9% very important, 6% somewhat important).

Over 92% of library users think programs for children are very or somewhat important (76.9% very important, 15.9% somewhat important).

For non-library users, the top two most important library services are books for children and programs for children.

Stakeholder Interview Summary

Employer representatives stress the importance of the community education system, which includes public libraries.

Libraries need to be more relevant to the individuals in the communities they serve.

The library's strengths include story times and other children's programming, kid-friendly spaces, and a place to socialize. Many stay-at-home mothers view the library as their place away from home—a second living room.

Demographic Data

Family households with children under the age of 18 are estimated to make up

37.6% of all households by 2012.

Individuals aged 25-44 are increasing in percentage and number, signifying that growth is likely to be in families with young children.

Trends show that immigrants and young people are those most likely to create growth in the western states, including Washington.



Sno-Isle Libraries Strategic Plan 2008-2013

Mission Statement

The mission of Sno-Isle Libraries is to be a community doorway to reading, resources, and lifelong learning, and a center for people, ideas, and culture.

Vision Statement

Sno-Isle Libraries will be a leader in connecting people and communities, inspiring ideas, and providing services and resources that improve the quality of life in Snohomish and Island counties.

Guiding Principles

Provide materials and services that are responsive to and reflect the diverse interests of individuals and the communities we serve.

Uphold First Amendment rights through freedom of expression, open exchange of ideas, and access to information.

Provide diverse staff who are skilled, well-trained, courteous, professional, and responsive to all customers.

Promote reading and literacy for all ages.

Act as responsible stewards of the Library District's financial resources.

Contribute to the preservation, enhancement, and vitality of our communities.

Respect the integrity and confidentiality of all customers.

Goals

Customers experience convenient, inviting, and comfortable library facilities that reflect the diverse needs of children, teens, and adults.

Sno-Isle Libraries facilitates and nurtures reading and learning for children and teens.

Customers experience lifelong learning and enhanced quality of life through a variety of library resources and services.

Customers have timely access to popular materials in a variety of formats.

Customers have access to user-friendly and innovative electronic content and devices in response to the changing technology market and culture.

Sno-Isle Libraries engages the community to build positive relationships through marketing, communications, and community partnerships.

Sno-Isle Libraries continues to be a responsible steward of resources.



Goals and Objectives

Goals and Objectives: 2008–2013

Goal I.

Customers experience convenient, inviting, and comfortable library facilities that reflect the diverse needs of children, teens, and adults.

Objective 1: Assess and implement a plan to reallocate the use of space in all community libraries to provide improved customer comfort, efficient service delivery, and to ensure a welcoming environment.

Assessment—2008

Implementation completed—2010

Objective 2: Revise hours of service to better meet the diverse lifestyle needs of the service area residents by 2009.

Objective 3: Study, develop, and implement models for library service based on library size and community needs by 2009.

Objective 4: Implement Phase One of the Capital Facilities Plan by 2013.



Goals and Objectives

Goal II.

Sno-Isle Libraries facilitates and nurtures reading and learning for children and teens.

Objective 1: Increase participation in the *Ready Reader* initiative by 10% annually.

Objective 2: Identify and implement additional opportunities to engage young people in reading, learning, and library activities when school is not in session.

Identification—2008

Implementation completed—2010

Objective 3: Implement additional programming opportunities for teenagers and engage teens in program development in every community library by 2012.

Objective 4: Expand collaboration with organizations that support education in grades K-12 by 15% annually.

Identification of partnerships—2009

Implementation completed—Annually after 2009



Goals and Objectives

Goal III.

Customers experience lifelong learning and enhanced quality of life through a variety of library resources and services.

Objective 1: Develop and implement a plan to increase customer satisfaction with and participation in adult programming by 20%.

Development—2009

Implementation completed—2010

Objective 2: Increase customer awareness of and access to materials representing a variety of subjects by 50% by 2010.

Objective 3: Develop and implement a Mobile Services plan that increases customers served by 20%.

Development—2009

Implementation completed—2010



Goals and Objectives

Goal IV.

Customers have timely access to popular materials in a variety of formats.

Objective 1: Ensure that customers receive high-demand books 50% faster by 2010.

Objective 2: Develop and implement a plan to improve customer satisfaction regarding the availability of popular media.

Development—2008

Implementation completed—2009



Goals and Objectives

Goal V.

Customers have access to user-friendly and innovative electronic content and devices in response to the changing technology market and culture.

Objective 1: Improve and increase customer access to public computing in community libraries by at least 20% annually.

Objective 2: Provide customers with robust, seamless access to a variety of online resources including the library catalog, materials and services, and licensed databases by 2011.

Objective 3: Engage and participate with customers through social networking tools to enhance services and resources (ongoing).



Goals and Objectives

Goal VI.

Sno-Isle Libraries engages the community to build positive relationships through marketing, communications, and community partnerships.

Objective 1: Develop and implement a process to build and sustain awareness of Sno-Isle Libraries among community leaders, decision makers, and regional stakeholders by 2009.

Objective 2: Expand and improve community engagement with the library through a comprehensive marketing and communications program by 2009.

Objective 3: Develop and implement a community and business partnership program by 2010.

Development—2008

Implementation completed—2010



Goals and Objectives

Goal VII.

Sno-Isle Libraries continues to be a responsible steward of resources.

Objective 1: Increase methods and tools to monitor and improve Sno-Isle Libraries' stewardship of resources by 2010.

Objective 2: Employ a diverse, service-oriented staff and provide them with a positive work environment (ongoing).

Objective 3: Develop and implement a plan to provide leadership development opportunities for library staff.

Development—2008

Implementation completed—2009

Objective 4: Develop and implement a system to provide customers with point-of-service library financial transactions.

Development—2008

Implementation completed—2009

Objective 5: Secure funding by 2013 to implement at least *Phase One* of the *Capital Facilities Plan*.

Objective 6: Incorporate sustainable and "green" building designs in all remodel, expansion, and new construction projects (ongoing).



Implementation

The completion of a written strategic plan document marks an important milestone in the planning process, but major benefits accrue to the organization when the plan is put into operation. The Strategic Plan goals we developed are intended to be transformational goals to strengthen the library district over the next five years, to increase the number of library customers, and to enhance service to existing customers. Our plan builds on the successes of the past as well as the needs of the future.

Year One Priorities

During 2008 an organizational framework for implementing our strategic plan will be created. Achieving the established goals will require effort and attention throughout the library district. A comprehensive implementation plan will be created to guide the day-to-day tasks and long-range projects necessary to accomplish the plan goals.

The implementation plan will include the following:

- Action Plan Development,
- Timeline and Schedule,
- Budget Integration and Resource Allocation,
- Training and Development,
- Evaluation,
- Reporting and Communication.

Action Plans

In the next phase of our strategic plan, detailed action plans will be developed for each goal and objective. Communication throughout the library district is vital to the success of the plan. Openness to new ideas and approaches to achieving goals is a requirement for every staff member. The action plan will include:

- Goals and Objectives,
- Strategies and Activities,
- Timeline,
- Resources,
- Evaluation.



Timeline and Schedule

There are two phases for implementation:

Phase One: creation of the overall implementation plan, and

Phase Two: annual cycle for evaluation and updates.

Action plans will be drafted by various task forces and planning groups for final review. Benchmarks and measurements will be developed for each of the action plans. We will begin implementing strategies and activities as action plans are developed and approved.

Budget Integration and Resource Allocation

The allocation of resources will be directly linked to our strategic plan. Funding requests and allocations will be guided by the strategic priorities. Budget needs will be assessed in three general areas: supporting basic operations and infrastructure, ensuring competency in core areas, and advancing new strategic initiatives.

Training and Development

As activities and new service models are developed, staff training needs will be identified. These needs will be addressed as part of the implementation process.

Evaluation

There are three levels of evaluation in the implementation process. A variety of tools and techniques will be used to improve efficiency and to measure our success in meeting each goal. Evaluating the outcomes and impact of our plan does not mark the end of the journey for the planning cycle. Once our strategic plan is embedded throughout the library district, it is time to review and evaluate what works well, and just as importantly, what needs to be adjusted. We will build in opportunities to make adjustments, to shift focus, and to continually improve.

The implementation plan will include methods for evaluating:

Specific programs, projects, and activities;

Progress toward strategic planning goals and objectives;

Overall strategic plan effectiveness.

Reporting and Updates

Regular reports and updates will be provided to the Board of Trustees, community, and staff. Annually, the Library Director will report to the Board of Trustees on progress made in achieving the goals of our strategic plan.



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