

Cornwall Public Library

Strategic Plan

2017-2022

PLANNING SUMMARY

In the fall of 2016, we began this process with a board retreat to assess the outcome of the 2011-2016 Long Range Strategic Plan, and to begin the planning process for the next five years. The strategic planning core committee was formed in October 2016, comprised of 3 current board trustees, a member of the Cornwall Public Library Foundation, 2 staff members and the library director. The committee was tasked with creating surveys and designing focus groups to gather community input for the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan. The revised mission, vision, values and strategic objectives reflect the feedback received.

MISSION

The Cornwall Public Library connects people, information and ideas to inspire learning, provoke curiosity, advance knowledge and strengthen our community. We rely on three great resources – our staff, our collections and our physical and virtual spaces - to promote an engaged and informed citizenry.

VISION

Our library is integral to the education and development of our community. We are a catalyst for civic, cultural and academic education and involvement by creating a thinking and gathering place for all. We provide open access to information, conversation, innovative programming, state of the art technology, and a vibrant collection of print and digital resources.

VALUES

The library serves the Cornwall community and each of its members according to their needs and interests.

The library provides equal and open access to all members of our community. By providing excellent, personal customer service, we are responsive, confidential, and un-biased in recognizing the diverse needs and interests of the community we serve. The library respects the privacy and confidentiality of its library members and visitors.

The library provides a safe, comfortable and efficient facility that offers a welcoming environment for all.

The library is committed to practicing sustainability in all its operational, financial and building management practices. The library is governed by sound policies, plans, financial management and oversight.

The library strives to continually assess, and stay current with, the growing and changing requirements of our community and to respond progressively to its intellectual, social, artistic and cultural needs. We respond with innovative approaches supported by the most current technologies our fiscal landscape can support.

The library provides its staff with the support, training, and professional development opportunities necessary to continue offering quality and relevant services.

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC ISSUES

I. Innovative, Customer-Centered Services, Collections, Programming, & Technology.

To fulfill our mission, the Cornwall Public Library must be able to provide services that are innovative, compelling, convenient and easy to use for the library member. The library will develop and/or enhance methods to assess and evaluate the usage of print and digital collections; manage requests for new or upgraded services; respond to the ongoing changes in state-of-the-art technology; explore self-service options; expanded hours; and provide enhanced technology training opportunities for all ages as the budget allows.

II. A Building Reimagined to meet the Needs of the Community.

Our library will create a more flexible floor plan that can host a variety of functions and activities. Innovative library design that repurposes the current space to accommodate mobile furniture, enhanced quiet spaces, and comfortable seating are a priority. Specific attention will be paid to maximizing the main lobby space for display and information sharing, creating dedicated space for teens, reimagining the layout of the children's area, renovating space to create an enclosed study/reading room, improved lighting, redesign of staff work area for maximum efficiency, and making accommodations throughout for ease of use for technology in all its forms. Within realistic budget parameters, we are committed to creating and maintaining sustainable, environmentally friendly designs and practices in all aspects of building management and maintenance to create a healthy space for all to enjoy.

III. Expanded Community Awareness, Changing Perceptions, Focus on Outreach.

Enhancing the library's role as a catalyst for connection, conversation and participation is critical to upgrade the perception and relevance of the library to both users and non-users, and to actively engage our community. Participation in community events, increasing visibility of library offerings by all forms of marketing venues and signage, and developing ongoing methods to develop relationships and collaborations will enable us to best serve the needs of the community and build strong channels of support, partnerships and collaborations.

IV. Investment in Staff – Skill Development and Training.

To meet its commitment to providing excellent service deserved by the community, the library must hire future staff with technological proficiency as well as provide current staff with the time and

opportunity to develop their technological skills, proficiency with online database tools, customer service best practices, and outreach skill development.

V. Create a system of sustainable and diverse financial support.

The library will develop a fiscally sustainable staffing plan and operating budget that adequately supports library needs. We will draw on financial support from taxes, as well as fines, fundraisers, grants, private donations, and community funding partnerships to deliver services. The library will work with the Friends of the Cornwall Public Library and the Cornwall Public Library Foundation to explore additional sources of public and private funding to diversify and maximize its financial base and to support future capital projects.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

I. Innovative, Customer-Centered Services, Collections, Programming, & Technology.

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A. Enhance technology offerings, access and training.

- Seek to procure long term funding to keep technology maintained, easily accessed and current.
- Develop staff and library member's technology training plan.

B. Adopt plans to ensure that social media and on-line technology is utilized for all promotions.

C. Explore additional self-service options such as check-out and credit card payments

D. Develop an innovative collection plan to address acquisition methods to maintain a vibrant collection of materials and technology consistent with current trends and future expectations.

E. Examine current hours of operation and develop budget to expand hours to meet the service needs of the community.

II. A Building Reimagined to meet the Needs of the Community.

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accommodations throughout for ease of use for technology in all its forms. Within realistic budget parameters, we are committed to creating and maintaining sustainable, environmentally friendly designs and practices in all aspects of building management and maintenance, to create a healthy space for all to enjoy.

- A. Enhance displays, carrels, shelving and seating for maximum flexibility and comfort.**
- B. Re-imagine the current space for most efficient, flexible and maximized use of floor plan.**
 - Redesign and relocate service desk and reference desk areas to better meet service needs.
 - Consider options for dividing community room space to allow space to be used for more than one activity simultaneously.
 - Clear path off lobby to allow for direct, unencumbered access to the Community Room.
- C. Dedicate and create a vibrant space for Young Adults in the library.**
 - Explore needs and interests by engaging teens in design process.
 - Explore “green screen” studio to create a Makerspace video space.
- D. Design floor plan to provide maximum ease of use and customer service.**
 - Consider all service areas, traffic patterns, lines of sight and staff access.
- E. Develop an annual building maintenance plan and budget.**
 - Hire a Maintenance Person to attend to daily building repair needs.
 - Create a calendar of expected maintenance to anticipate and mitigate high cost repairs.
- F. Review existing service contracts and staff benefit contractual obligations with vendors to maximize cost effectiveness and to meet current needs.**

III. Expanded Community Awareness, Changing Perceptions, Focus on Outreach.

Enhancing the library’s role as a catalyst for connection, conversation and participation is critical to upgrade the perception and relevance of the library to both users and non-users, and to actively engage our community. Participation in community events, increasing visibility of library offerings by all forms of marketing venues and signage, and developing ongoing methods to develop relationships and collaborations will enable us to best serve the needs of the community and build strong channels of support, partnerships and collaborations.

- A. Enhance website for easy searching, access to databases, community-focused.**
- B. Develop a multi-generational Volunteer Program.**
- C. Create inter-generational programming.**
- D. Expand Hours to accommodate community needs and programming.**
- E. Develop programming for special populations such as special needs, vision-impaired, hearing-impaired etc.**

F. Develop plan for outdoor signage.

G. Explore coffee/tea station option.

H. Develop plan for Community Conversations program

-Solicit ongoing ideas from the community for topics and presenters.

I. Utilize storefronts downtown, and other off-sites, for library programming and displays.

IV. Invest in Staff Skill Development and Training.

To meet its commitment to providing excellent service deserved by the community, the library must hire future staff with technological proficiency as well as provide current staff with the time and opportunity to develop their technological skills, proficiency with online database tools, customer service best practices, and outreach skill development.

A. Hire staff who are technologically proficient; train current staff in pertinent technologies and how to maximize use of social media.

B. Provide all staff with ongoing, intensive customer service training and program and webinar trainings, as appropriate for specific job responsibilities.

C. Encompass service desk and reference services in the most efficient location and cross train all staff in customer service, technology, research and how to cross promote/market library services and programming.

D. Begin process of implementing a revised organizational plan to maximize fiscal resources by July 1, 2017.

V. Create a system of sustainable and diverse financial support.

The library will develop a fiscally sustainable staffing plan and operating budget that adequately supports library needs. We will draw on financial support from taxes, as well as fines, fundraisers, grants, private donations, and community funding partnerships to deliver services. The library will work with the Friends of the Cornwall Public Library and the Cornwall Public Library Foundation to explore additional sources of public and private funding to diversify and maximize its financial base and to support future capital projects.

A. Develop an annual fundraising plan and calendar to incorporate grant schedules, underwriting opportunities, and potential financial assistance from the Foundation and Friends.

B. The newly created position of Outreach Project Coordinator will work closely with the Director to serve as a liaison to the community, as well as the Foundation and Friends; to

assist with the creation and implementation of innovative and diverse funding and outreach opportunities; and build community support for the library.

- C. Review annual budget and adjust the Strategic Plan to ensure resources are properly applied and aligned with the library's goals.**
- D. Maximize the cost effectiveness of all expenditures throughout the fiscal year.**
- E. The strategic plan will be reviewed on a quarterly basis to stay on target and will be updated as appropriate.**

Appendix

I. About the Cornwall Community

The Cornwall Public Library service area is made up of some 6,000 households in the town of Cornwall, the village of Cornwall-on-Hudson, the hamlet of Mountainville, and parts of New Windsor, Salisbury Mills, and Highland Mills. The library's service area is concurrent with that of the Cornwall Central School District. Most of the households (over 4,000) are considered family households as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau and of those family households, 2,476 are households that include children under 18 years old. Over 1,700 households have at least one person over 65 years old.

Of the population over the age of 25 years (10,673), 5,262 have either received a bachelor's degree or have had some college as their highest level of education and 2,007 possess a graduate or professional degree. 2,565 have attained a high school diploma with no college. Ninety-two percent of the population over the age of 25 has a high school diploma and 40% of the same population attained a bachelor's degree or higher. The majority of residents (87.5%) speak only English at home.¹

Many Cornwall residents commute to work, with an average commute of about 36 minutes. Of the almost 8,000 employed persons in Cornwall, almost 4,000 are in "management, professional, or related occupations," and over 2,000 are in the fields of education and healthcare. Another 2,000 workers are in sales or office work. The median household income in Cornwall was \$80,636 and the median family income was \$97,724².

II. Library History

The Cornwall Public Library can trace its roots back to 1869, when a group of forward-looking Cornwall citizens formed the Cornwall Circulating Library in Library Hall in Cornwall-on-Hudson. Throughout most of the twentieth-century, the Cornwall community was served by three libraries: the Cornwall-on-Hudson library, the Town of Cornwall library, and the Mountainville library. In the 1950s, the three independent libraries were rechartered by the New York State Department of Education and became three branches of the Cornwall Public Library. In 1989, a proposition for a \$3.2 million building which would have consolidated the services of the three branch libraries was defeated. To consolidate services, the Mountainville branch was closed in 1990. As library services grew and space became an issue for the two remaining branches, the Trustees of the library board put forward another plan for a new building. The proposition for a scaled-down \$2.6 million building was defeated in 1990. In 1997, the Trustees put forward another plan to build a 10,000-square foot building in Riverlight Park for \$2.2 million, consolidating library services and offering a modernized space for growth. The voters approved the proposal and the building was completed in 2000³. Since the building's completion, the library has seen consistent growth in patron demand for services. This demand led to another proposal

¹ United States. U.S. Census Bureau. "2004-2009 American Community Survey." 9/6/2011 <http://factfinder.census.gov>.

² United States. US Census Bureau.

³ Dempsey, Janet. "Cornwall Public Library."

14 years later to increase the footprint of the current library by an additional 3,300 square feet to include an expanded community room, designated local history room, increased gallery space, meeting rooms and roof replacement. The public referendum to approve \$3.68 million bond financing necessary for the renovation was narrowly defeated by a 529 to 514 vote, in November 2014. In 2017, the library became one of 15 recipients of a national “Small Libraries, Smart Spaces,” grant to re-imagine the current space for maximum efficiency and innovative new use within the current square footage. Significant efforts have also been focused outside the building to change perception, create awareness, and develop a strong foundation of community support to move the library forward into a bright and prosperous future.

III. Library Use

The Cornwall Public Library is chartered to serve the residents of the Cornwall Central School District – 16,841 residents according to the 2010 census. The total holdings for the library, according to the library’s 2016 NYS Annual Report, are 235,473 items, including print and electronic holdings (eBooks, downloadable audiobooks, and other electronic resources). The library counts 9,335 active cardholders and maintains a circulation of over 172,000 items per year. The library received 24,683 interlibrary loan items for patrons picking up at Cornwall Public Library and lent 24,623 items to other libraries for interlibrary loan. In 2016, the library counted an attendance of 167,438 library visits for the year and offered 623 program sessions, with program attendance at 9,058. The library maintains a staff of 13.73 full time equivalents.

IV. Strategic Planning Methodology

The Board of Trustees of the Cornwall Public Library embarked on the 2017-2022 long-range planning process in the fall of 2016, beginning with a board retreat and the formation of a Long Range Strategic Planning Committee. The committee consisted of trustees, the library director, and library staff members, with the inclusion of members from the Friends and Foundation of the Library. The committee solicited community input through both a paper and an online survey and through a series of focus groups, all of which took place from November, 2016 – February, 2017. The surveys and focus groups were publicized in all the local media outlets, including online outlets. Three hundred and thirty-five people filled out the survey and 85 people participated in the focus groups, which were moderated by Tom Weddell of Vanacore, DeBenedictus, DiGovanni, & Weddell, and Anna Tilley with the Cornwall Public Library Foundation. Several volunteers recorded the feedback from these sessions. Focus groups consisted of library users from all categories: business people and professionals, parents with children, non-library-users, teens, Friends of the Library, library staff and library trustees.

The survey results were compiled using an online survey tool through Survey Monkey, and focus group results were compiled by the Strategic Planning committee. The committee reviewed survey and focus group results in preparation for creating the Long Range Strategic Plan.

V. Survey Result Highlights

Survey respondents included 26 manual submissions, 181 via email, 119 through the weblink on Survey Monkey, and 9 by social media, for a total of 335 total responses.

90% were satisfied with customer service, 75% satisfied with all of our collections.
18% use CPL more than once a week, 25% weekly, 32% 1-2 times per month.
89% have a CPL card
60% use Inter Library Loan

Over 70% say CPL is extremely relevant/valuable to the community with 63% declaring that same value to their family. Staff, and survey comments, highlighted the importance of continued work on ways to engage and reach out to the community to maintain or enhance our relevancy.

Over 80% come into the library to access information and 70% get their information about the library via the website. 60% use the website to search the catalog and place holds, with 50% using it to search the calendar of events. Respondents noted that the website needs to be easier to navigate/more user friendly.

Although 90% say we are welcoming, only approximately 50% say we currently meet their needs on parking, computers and various other things like teen space, etc.

Over 51% want designated quiet/study space with over 73% saying they would be willing to digitize some print/reference materials to provide the floor space to enable that to occur. 53% of respondents requested online courses.

In summary, it was evident from responses received, that the majority are happy with the library and many view it as a “community” space. Because we are one of the only public places open 7 days/week, we are looked to for even more community gatherings and as a place to go to meet up and to study. Survey results emphasize the need for continued commitment to improvements in technology offerings, and to staff education in technology has been factored into the 2017-2022 plan.

VI. Gratitude

This process involved many in order to make it truly reflective of the community, as well as a fair, methodical, and open process. Special thanks to the committee: Trustees - Bruce Cohen, Christine McDonald and Carol Stein; CPL Foundation member - Anna Tilley; Staff members - Christine Fowler and Brenda Goldfarb, and Library Director - Mary Lou Carolan. Tom Weddell and Anna Tilley volunteered their time to moderate focus groups.

Special gratitude goes out to all the members of the Cornwall community who participated in whatever way possible to contribute their thoughts, ideas and suggestions so that this document will serve as a useful compass for us as we forge into these next few years with focus, vision, innovation and inspiration.