



West Allis Public Library

Strategic Plan 2020-2023

INTRODUCTION

For over 100 years, The West Allis Public Library has existed to enrich the community, inspire imagination and transform lives. Those are lofty and important responsibilities which the Library Team has never shied away from. The West Allis Public Library proudly serves as the heart and soul of a diverse and evolving community, and the services provided help enrich its citizens.

The WAPL Vision Statement emphatically attests to the role of the Library by “Fostering an Educated, Engaged, and Enriched Community.” Further, the Library Team’s mission, to provide a welcoming environment for all, offer equal access to Library services, promote personal and professional growth, build and maintain community partnerships, and inspire lifelong learning – points to the importance of the public library in a healthy community.

A Strategic Plan serves as a road map for any organization intent on identifying and successfully carrying out goals and visions to positively impact and augment those for which it serves. Similarly, a group of staff and board trustees from the West Allis Public Library embarked on crafting a blueprint that will provide guidance to ensure success in the coming years. The process commenced in June of 2019 with a commitment to identify and organize a Library Strategic Plan that would seamlessly mesh with that of the City of West Allis. Through a process of engagement with staff, citizens and other community stakeholders, committee members were able to identify the following points that make up the core of the plan:

- The Library growing as a center of importance and vitality in the City of West Allis
- Collaboration with business, schools, and other City departments
- Engagement through a strong commitment to community outreach
- Opportunities which offer dynamic and diverse programming for all ages
- Make available quality resources and access for all library users
- Manage Library collections to maximize use and reflect the needs of our community
- Ensure that WAPL takes a leadership role with digital and technological opportunities
- Continue to remain sensitive to and adapt services for the changing needs of the community
- Balance local control, and a firm identity while participating in a county library system
- Ensure that a motivated, engaged Library Team exists to carry out the principles of the plan

THE PROCESS

The planning process began on June 13, 2019 and ended with the West Allis Library Board of Trustees approving the Strategic Plan on February 26, 2020. In between, there was a great amount of work completed by the Strategic Planning Committee that encompassed all community stakeholders, Library staff, and of course citizens.

The committee met monthly and mapped out a process that would engage as many stakeholders as possible, and also take into account the City of West Allis Strategic Plan. It was imperative to the committee members that the goals of the Library mesh seamlessly with those of the City as well as other municipal departments.

Some highlights of the process include:

- A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis by Library staff
- Community surveys conducted at a number of Library Outreach events as well as online and in-house opportunities
- Surveys of community stakeholders asking how collaboration and partnerships could be strengthened
- Studies of City demographics to gain a better understanding about diversity and outreach opportunities
- SWOT analysis completed by the planning committee

The process produced clarity for the committee as to what core elements need to be addressed in the next three years. Additionally, the Vision and Mission of the West Allis Public Library coincides with the primary goal of providing the best possible Library services to our community. With a strong strategic plan in place, the West Allis Public Library forges a commitment to our users as well as to the community as a whole.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Every successful organization listens to those who use or benefit from it. The Library is no different, and great appreciation goes out to the many individuals who took the time to complete surveys and provide invaluable feedback. Without their input, it would be nearly impossible to gauge what elements are necessary to continue to meet the needs of the evolving City of West Allis.

Thanks as well go out to the staff of the Library for continuing to help identify ways to provide excellent services. One of the constants of a healthy public library is its ability to continue to adapt to growth and change within the community. It is imperative that the Library Team embrace change and have the ability to pivot quickly. The West Allis Public Library Team has demonstrated such skills numerous times, and is in a good position to carry out the principles of this plan.

Much appreciation is also extended to the West Allis Public Library Board of Trustees for their strong commitment to the role that the Library plays in the community, and their support of the staff. Each Board member brings their own knowledge and experience to the fore that allows for the Library Team to carry out our daily goals and achieve success.

Finally, a sincere thank you to the Strategic Planning Committee for devoting extra time, energy, ideas and devotion to a process that will guide the West Allis Public Library forward.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Ellen Dobrogowski, Head of Technical Services
Emily Rutter, Supervisor of Adult and Circulation Services
Beth Henika, Supervisor of Children's Services
Ashley Wagner, Administrative Support Specialist
Barbara Hart, Library Board Member
Michael Koszalka, Library Director

LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Adam Hengel, West Allis-West Milwaukee Schools
Barbara Hart, Financial Secretary
Kari Lerch
Jody Rymaszewski, Secretary
Elizabeth Suelzer, Vice President
Ray Turner
Michelle Wadewitz, President
Alderson Martin Weigel

WEST ALLIS PUBLIC LIBRARY MISSION STATEMENT

We are committed to:

- Providing a welcoming environment for all
- Offering equal access to Library services
- Promoting personal and professional growth
- Building and maintaining community partnerships
- Inspiring lifelong learning

WEST ALLIS PUBLIC LIBRARY VISION STATEMENT:

Fostering an Educated, Engaged, Enriched Community

Strategic Plan Goals and Activities 2020-2023

Library Environment:

GOAL = Create a welcoming and safe environment that results in high satisfaction

Activities:

- Devote a section of exterior for use as a Library Garden which volunteers maintain
- Continue to advocate for additional hours of operation on Tuesday and Thursday mornings
- Purchase and install digital sign on National Avenue side of building
- Improve signage throughout the building
- Explore opportunities to redesign and repurpose spaces throughout the library to meet the changing needs of the community
- Rename meeting rooms
- Work with the Department of Public Works to power wash the building's façade and remove gum residue at the concrete entrances

Library Collection:

GOAL = Strive to develop a diverse collection on all formats that satisfies users information, educational and entertainment needs

Activities:

- Display physical items using retail model
- Add additional Spanish language books
- Expand graphic novel and manga collection
- Continue to evaluate formats within the collection

Marketing:

GOAL = Promote our services to connect the Community

Activities:

- Continue to utilize Social Media platforms to better market available Library services and programs
- Use future digital signage to market services
- Promote the Library by continuing to be visible at community events
- Create innovative ways to market online resources
- Continue to seek funding for a full-time Marketing/Outreach Librarian
- Explore options for an official Library logo

Outreach and Programming:

GOAL = Engage the Community

Activities:

- Continue to nurture and develop partnerships with community entities
- Work to identify and expand innovative Library outreach opportunities and programming
- Research and consider revising times for programming to better engage our users
- Develop more vibrant Teen programming options
- Explore sensory friendly programs
- Present more author events and/or literary programming opportunities
- Develop new adult programming activities

Services:

GOAL = Anticipate needs of the user and strive for exceptional service to our community

Activities:

- Evaluate checkout policy to promote circulation
- Work to strengthen membership and advocate for the Friends of the West Allis Public Library
- Make brand items available for purchase at the Library
- Explore the viability of a "Fine Forgiveness" or amnesty program
- Improve services to homebound customers through increased and more personal interaction with Librarian staff
- Partner with appropriate City and Community stakeholders to successfully implement the Library as a Memory Café

The Library Team:

GOAL = Foster a dynamic, positive, and supportive community of colleagues driven to exceed our user's expectations

Activities:

- Implement an annual Library Team In-Service day
- Consider a Library intranet
- Explore innovative and effective ways to foster staff engagement both professionally and personally

Technology:

GOAL = Remain responsive to the needs of our users and ensure that the proper tools for success and engagement are available

Activities:

- Install EnvisionWare time management public access software with built-in printing capabilities
- Replace public computer processors and keyboards
- Upgrade self-checkout stations to Windows 10 operating system and replace original printers
- Revise the public access catalog computer software and hardware set-up
- Explore installation of improved projector in Constitution Room and potential for a monitor in the Conference Room