

Warsaw Community Public Library 2021-2025 Strategic Plan



Approved by the Library Board on November 9, 2020

Executive Summary

The Warsaw Community Public Library Board elected to work with consultants at the Midwest Collaborative for Library Services (MCLS) of Lansing, MI to facilitate a strategic planning process that would help to align library services with the aspirations and needs of the community.

A ***Statement of Community Needs*** was created by MCLS based on recent documents published in the community. The documents used to create this statement of community needs were the ***Kosciusko County Community Foundation Hometown Chats*** and the ***OrthoWorx Kosciusko County Welcomeness Study***.

Ann Zydek, Library Director, recommended that the Library Board adopt three strategic service priorities for the period 2021-2025. The priorities are:

PRIORITY 1: Reimagine Physical Space

Enhance in-person experiences by transforming traditional library spaces.

PRIORITY 2: Expand Virtual Presence

Create a seamless, full-service virtual library experience.

PRIORITY 3: Cultivate Community Engagement

Develop deeper connections and enhance collaboration within the community.

Overview of the Planning Process

1. The Library Board approved working with a consultant from the Midwest Collaborative for Library Services (MCLS) to facilitate the creation of a new strategic plan that would be based on community needs. MCLS, based in Lansing, MI, is a non-profit, member-driven organization whose mission is to facilitate sharing resources and to collaborate with other organizations to benefit Michigan and Indiana libraries.
2. The MCLS consultant compiled a statement of community needs to summarize the public knowledge that had already been collected and recently published in the community to identify common themes. The documents used to create this summary were the Kosciusko County Community Foundation Hometown Chats and the OrthoWorx Kosciusko County Welcomeness Study.
3. In addition, the library conducted a patron survey and compiled library statistics; examining uses such as circulation of materials, library visits, collection holdings, program attendance, etc. to identify trends.
4. A twelve-person Strategic Planning Committee was assembled, which included representatives from the Library Board, the Library Staff, and the Friends of the Library.
5. The Strategic Planning Committee were sent the community needs summary, library survey results and library statistics to review prior to meeting on August 6, 2020. The group participated in a SOAR analysis of the library, identifying strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results. The strengths provided the basis for the development of the library's core values. Aspirations became the basis of the library's vision statement, and opportunities resulted in the identification of three key strategic priorities.
6. On August 13, 2020, the MCLS consultant returned to the library to work with key library staff on the creation of a tactical plan to address the key strategic priorities that were identified by the strategic planning committee. The group answered the questions for each priority: "What will the customer experience?"; "How will the community benefit?"; "What activities might occur?" "What will success look like?"; "What organizational issues will need to be addressed including facilities, technology, policies, staffing, etc.?" This work created the basis for the development of goals, objectives, and activities that make up the five-year strategic plan.

Assessment of Facilities, Services, Technology, and Operations

Facilities: The facility located in Warsaw, Indiana was last expanded in 1998 from 14,000 square feet to 41,000 square feet to improve accessibility to upper level reading rooms, book collections and computer stations. The then state-of-the-art data cabling created a seamless network connecting facility phones, the online library card catalog and the Internet from any library space including the new public meeting rooms and study areas. Since then our phone system was upgraded to Voice over IP (VoIP).

The library continues to work off on the October 2010 MSKTD Library Retro-Commissioning Energy Reduction Study. While the building overall is in fair condition, repairs/replacements are needed to upgrade the mechanical systems (e.g., dry fire protection system) and reduce energy consumption (e.g., transition to LED lighting and solar). Working with the HVAC service provider representatives, Havel-Shambaugh, the majority of the proactive small to mid-range cost repairs and maintenance are done. Larger HVAC system projects will be tackled as part of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan (e.g., humidity evaluation/controls, boiler upgrades).

The list of capital projects grows. The interior building décor is showing signs of heavy patron use (e.g., banged up walls, worn carpets, discolored vinyl flooring, damaged chairs, and out-of-date data connections, rusting shelves.) The exterior building needs tuck-pointing and the west staff entrance's cement wall base has begun to crumble with the concrete sidewalk cracking. The existing trees and shrubs in our landscaping layout have lasted beyond their normal length of time. Recent storms and emerald bore insects have caused the loss of several key foundational trees in our existing landscape plan. A new landscape master plan is needed with worked in phases to develop new outside interactive and reading areas for residents, starting with the west entrance "slope". The Library parking lots need to be repaired and redesigned.

Services: The library continues to offer high quality collections, programming and other services. There is an increased emphasis on offering outreach/traveling programs and creating makerspace opportunities for patrons. Virtual library services are expanding rapidly especially in response to the COVID-19 pandemic hitting this year.

Technology & Computer Rotation: The library meets or exceeds Indiana public library standards for technology and public access. Many unique databases and public access services are offered (e.g., Internet, wireless inside and out into our parking lot). The library will keep library hardware and software on a *five year rotation*. This will not only ensure that we maximize our investment, but will also keep us aligned with emerging technology. The library will continue to explore all virtual technology as well. By doing so, this allows us to fulfill our commitment to community access and engagement.

Operations: WCPL maintains and updates general operating, personnel, and administrative policies to ensure smooth library operations.

Ongoing Annual Evaluation Process

The Board of Trustees, Library Administration and staff will study the goals, objectives and activities outlined in the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan and will strive to implement future activities and initiatives in line with the direction set (e.g., preparing the annual budget for Board approval, job descriptions.) Whether purchasing more copies of popular titles, reorganizing public service areas, or expanding virtual and off-site outreach services the implications for staff, collections, facilities, and technology critical resources will be closely examined before decisions are made.

In 2020 library employees will receive a copy of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan and during Staff Development Days annually will have learning/training opportunities to help further the direction of 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. An online copy of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan will also be available for staff and the public. Yearly physical and virtual copies of the Library's Annual Report will be available before or during National Library Week. This Annual Report showcases the library services/resources growth during the past year toward implementation of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.

Before an annual February Library Board review of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, the director and key administration staff will complete progress reports on prior year and current year long-range goals and objectives. The Library Board will review and/or revise/update the Strategic Plan annually before the end of the first quarter of the calendar year at a regular board meeting and/or during a board retreat and provide direction for the next calendar year (e.g., short-term and mid-term goals)

Based on the Library Board's Strategic Plan annual review and revisions and updates approved, the Director and key administration staff will review and update short-term and mid-term goals and objectives for the upcoming year. A Measurement Plan (objectives focus) spreadsheet and an Implementation Plan (activities focus) spreadsheet were created in Google Drive for staff use over the next five years.

The Board will review monthly progress reports completed by key administration staff that indicate ongoing reallocation and building of resources/services and monitor progress made toward implementation of 2021-2025 Strategic Plan priorities, goals, objectives and activities. Monthly Library Board progress reports are posted on the Library's website. A Measurement Plan (objectives focus) and an Implementation Plan (activities focus) were created in Google Drive for staff to use over the next five years.

Annual surveys of the library public will be held for ongoing development of visitor satisfaction; library programs, collections, and services.

Financial Resources and Sustainability

Even with the recent economic downturn due to COVID-19, the local economy has remained fairly stable. Financial resources are reported in annual reports to the state (e.g., Gateway). The library's main revenue stream is property taxes followed by local income tax. Property caps have added uncertainty to a once stable revenue stream and made budget planning less predictable. Like other government units, Warsaw Community Public Library continues to adjust when faced with budget reductions large or small.

The library's facility and grounds continue to age and impact patron service. Ongoing HVAC systems issues and obsolete mechanical and electrical systems are just a few concerns. In response to COVID-19 the library's new permanent hours are: open 48 hours per week (Monday, Tuesday from 10:00 A.M. to

8:00 P.M.; Wednesday-Friday from 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M., Saturday from 10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.) For the foreseeable future, slow budget growth will limit staff development. As openings in staff positions occur, each position will be evaluated with internal adjustments made to provide the highest level of service within existing funds. The library currently has over 30 employees. Currently a full-time work week is set at 40 hours per week.

As the revenue stream allows, WCPL has a long-term goal to strive to maintain in the operating fund a reserve equal to a typical one to two months in addition to the twelve months needed for expected annual expenditures. As the local economy regains strength the library will increase a reserve to four to six months. The library plans to explore issuing construction bonds for capital projects and repairs/maintenance. The Kosciusko County Council recommends that unit levies be held at or below the annual property tax levy growth quotient as calculated by the State Budget Agency. The library follows this guideline. The library's 2021 operating budget approved by the board is estimated to be about \$3,500,000. Appropriated Rainy Day Funds are done as part of the budget process. For 2021 the Board approved appropriating \$200,000 for annual renovation/repair projects.

Anticipated library's funds to allow development of resources and services based on the direction of the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan will be very modest unless a general obligation bond for needed capital projects is issued in the next few years. Library resources development is subject to modification depending on budget reductions due to tax caps and other unforeseen circumstances.

Collaboration with Other Public Libraries and Community Partners

Other Public Libraries: The Warsaw Community Public Library is a member of Northern Indiana Computer Consortium for Libraries (NICCL) and is active in Libraries Serving Communities (LSC), consortium made up of directors of 18 public libraries in Northeast Indiana. Information, knowledge, resources and training opportunities are shared to mutually benefit all member libraries.

The Library Director and key library employees are personal members of the Indiana Library Federation and participate in ILF's planned events (e.g., workshops, conferences). The library is an institutional member of the Indiana Library Federation, the American Library Association and belongs to the Public Library Association subdivision.

Community Partners:

The Warsaw Community Public Library is the heart of our community. It has been embedded in the Wayne township community of 27,551 residents (2010 census) in Warsaw, Indiana, for over 100 years. The library, integrated in the community as a valuable resource, serves learners of all ages in their ongoing development of interests, wants, needs and skills. After home and work, the library is that "Third Place" where people gather to learn and connect. The WCPL strives to align excellence in learning and education with economic by creating an environment that is conducive to a trained workforce.

Warsaw Community Public Library Strategic Plan 2021-2025

MISSION (original, no changes)

- To provide cultural, informational, and recreational services for all.
- To build a basic collection of print and non-print materials with access to lesser used materials through library networks.
- To provide services, that promote lifelong education, communication of ideas, enlightened citizenship and enrichment of personal lives.

VISION

WCPL engages and equips our community by providing inclusive, innovative and relevant services without barriers.

CORE VALUES

Welcoming

We provide a space where patrons can feel supported and accepted.

Inclusive

We offer a wide variety of collections, programs and services that contribute to the success of all members of our community.

Accessible

We seek convenient ways to make our collections, programs and services available to patrons in a variety of formats.

Knowledgeable

We are dedicated to providing timely and accurate information that informs and empowers our patrons.

Enthusiastic

We are passionate about our work and helping patrons discover all that the library has to offer.

Adaptable

We strive to be responsive to the ever-changing needs of our patrons and our community.

Forward Thinking

We continually pursue new and better ways to serve our community.

KEY STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS AND GOALS

Reimagine Physical Space

Enhance in-person experiences by transforming traditional library spaces.

- Modernize the library to make it bright, comfortable and barrier free.
- Streamline in-house access to materials and services and enrich face-to-face engagement and hands on opportunities.

Expand Virtual Presence

Create a seamless, full-service virtual library experience.

- Provide instant 24/7 access to a wide array of digital materials, original content and virtual programs available on multi-platforms from anywhere.
- Develop an online presence that creates an engaging library experience.

Cultivate Community Engagement

Develop deeper connections and enhance collaboration within the community.

- Reinvent library outreach throughout the community.
- Strengthen community ties through engagement and partnerships.

Priority 1 Reimagine Physical Space

Enhance in-person experiences by transforming traditional library spaces.

Goal 1 Modernize the library to make it bright, comfortable and barrier free.

Objectives

- Library patrons will report that they see the library building as welcoming and comfortable.
- Library patrons will report being very satisfied with the accessibility and convenience of the building and grounds.
- The number of people using the physical library will increase annually.
- The number of community meetings held at the library will increase.

Possible Activities

- Create a plan to fund future capital needs and repairs.
- Collaborate with hired professionals (e.g., architect) to create a capital improvement plan.
- Issue library bonds to finance capital improvement projects (e.g., refresh interior/exterior building and furnishings, update mechanical systems.)
- Explore feasibility of a street level addition containing a new entrance, adjacent circulation services, a full elevator accessing all levels, and after-hours meeting/program space.
- Transition to sustainable "green" energy saving initiatives (e.g., LED lighting, solar) and take advantage of natural light and outside views.
- Reconfigure existing floor plan to include innovative flexible spaces (e.g., makerspace, AV/art studio, café, quiet enclosed study rooms).
- Rethink parking to enhance traffic flow, improve handicap access, repair drainage issues and meet patron book drop and curbside needs.
- Create outdoor interactive and/or reading spaces.

Goal 2 Streamline in-house access to materials and services, and enrich face-to-face engagement and hands on opportunities.

Objectives

- Library users report being very satisfied with their interactions with the library.
- Meeting room reservations will increase annually.
- The number of activities in the library will increase annually.
- The number of people participating in programs will increase annually.
- In-house usage of services and circulation statistics will increase annually.

Possible Activities

- Solicit input to determine the community's needs and interests.
- Develop collections, programs and services based on community needs.
- Survey all library staff and utilize their talents and interests to enhance onsite programming.
- Collaborate with a library space consultant to explore ways to optimize the library's current physical space to best meet community needs.
- Introduce new open-door programming (e.g., maker activities).
- Explore adapting library services to be more convenient for patrons who have difficulty accessing the traditional building during current hours.
- Develop a marketing plan for better message saturation.
- Explore new software to streamline traditional library services.
- Explore feasibility and desire for county wide reciprocal borrowing.
- Determine the possible need for library services in surrounding underserved areas.

Priority 2 Expand Virtual Presence

Create a seamless, full-service virtual library experience.

Goal 1 Provide instant 24/7 access to a wide array of digital materials, original content and virtual programs available on multi-platforms from anywhere.

Objectives

- Library patrons report the virtual library as one of their top choices when needing useful/usable information and looking for entertainment options.
- Digital circulation will increase annually.
- Virtual program attendance will increase annually.
- Requests for virtual collections, programs and services will increase annually.

Possible Activities

- Solicit input to determine the community's needs and interests.
- Develop virtual collections, programs and services based on community needs.
- Explore online borrower registration (OBR) and a "digital only" library card.
- Continuously assess and add e-resources.
- Offer and archive more virtual programs.
- Partner with high school, college students, and businesses to create content.
- Collaborate with area schools to help supplement curriculum annually.
- Explore producing content using trending media (e.g., podcasts).

Goal 2 Develop an online presence that replicates an engaging in-person library experience.

Objectives

- Library patrons report that the virtual library is a seamless extension of the traditional library.
- Total number of users reached via social media will increase annually.
- Total number of positive comments, shares, and tags on social media will increase annually.
- Marketing of virtual collections, programs and services will increase annually.

Possible Activities

- Expand the marketing of virtual collections, programs and services annually.
- Evaluate and expand social media/internet presence for maximum saturation.
- Reconfigure existing staff job descriptions to create a designated social media staff position.
- Create a permanent line item budget for online marketing.

- Survey all staff and utilize their talents and interests to enhance virtual programming.
- Purchase technology to improve professional virtual image.
- Partner with high school and college students, and business to assist with technical help and staff training.
- Create and share local digital content in conjunction with library programs and projects.

Priority 3 Cultivate Community Engagement

Develop deeper connections and enhance collaboration within the community.

• Goal 1 Reinvent library outreach throughout the community.

• Objectives

- Library patrons will report seeing the library as more visible in the community.
- Library patrons will report that they are more aware of library services.
- The number of off-site outreach programs and events will increase.
- Staff participation and membership in associations, committees and organizations will increase.

Possible Activities

- Determine the possible need for library outreach/traveling services in surrounding underserved areas of the library's territory.
- Build and maintain library outreach/traveling services where needed.
- Equip outreach staff with necessary resources and technology.
- Participate in community sponsored events.
- Offer off-site traditional programs with a twist.
- Promote the library's value and increase public awareness of library services.
- Enhance the ongoing relationship with school administration and educators for site visits, research assistance, and cross promotion.
- Encourage staff participation and membership in business and civic associations, city-wide committees and county organizations.

Goal 2 Strengthen community ties through engagement and partnerships.

Objectives

- Library staff, Board and Friends of the Library will report they feel a stronger sense of collaboration has formed between the groups.
- Library patrons will report that they feel more connected to the community after attending a library program or event.
- The number of collaborative relationships/partnerships will increase.
- The number of shared resources with partners and alliances will increase.
- The number of co-sponsored events will increase.

Possible Activities

- Build collaborative relationships/partnerships that strengthen the library's connection to the community by active involvement in key community groups and with individual experts.
- Co-sponsor programs events with non-traditional partners on relevant topic targeted to specific demographics.
- Create opportunities for community members to connect and explore issues of community-wide interest.

- Facilitate relationships among library staff, Friends of the Library, and Library Board in order to collaboratively work together to fulfill our shared vision.
- Form and/or maintain professional, practical library alliances to network and share resources.
- Collaborate to create safe social distanced opportunities for conversations and face-to-face interactions that promote community connections and togetherness.