



Strategic Plan

2022-2025

Strategic Plan

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Executive Summary

The global pandemic destabilized a number of core library services, and we are still emerging from that tumultuous period. During that time, we had to experiment in order to find alternative avenues to support our community. Community preferences and expectations were changing as well. In order to move forward in an intentional and sustainable manner, we have to pause and evaluate what matters most.

Staff undertook a number of research activities to assess the need for updates and the library's readiness to implement new service models. This investigation helped us learn more about the needs of our community. The resulting document presented here will act as a guide for the next three years. It will form the basis for our decision-making, budgeting, and staffing.

Mission

Plymouth District Library shares resources to create connection and opportunity for our entire community, because we are stronger together.

Vision

Plymouth District Library is the heart of an inclusive community that is engaged and empowered to shape a more vibrant future.

Values

- Comfort
- Generosity
- Quality
- Collaboration

Goals

- Promote equity across our community and contribute to a welcoming, inclusive environment for all.
- Increase awareness of library services and resources.
- Connect with patrons across multiple environments, prototyping services that extend beyond books.
- Become a convening space in our community for shared dialog and action.
- Establish benchmarks and formalize procedures in ways that increase organizational clarity and public transparency.

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Mission and Vision

We hope that this strategic plan will inspire both our staff and our community partners to utilize the platform of the library to improve the lives of our constituents in meaningful ways as we emerge from the pandemic.

Mission

Our mission statement speaks to the reasons why our library exists in the community. It builds the foundation for our services and spaces.

Plymouth District Library shares resources to create connection and opportunity for our entire community, because we are stronger together.

Vision

Our vision statement defines our aspirations for the community and outlines the library's role in making that vision a reality.

Plymouth District Library is the heart of an inclusive community that is engaged and empowered to shape a more vibrant future.

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Values

Our values are the guiding principles that direct how we will accomplish our vision for the community. Enduring values of public librarianship are outlined in various professional statements included in the appendices of this document. We affirm those principles and highlight the following values as unique to our institutional perspective.

Comfort

Whether it's the comfort that comes from sitting in a cozy chair by a warm fire or a conversation with someone who really sees you, Plymouth District Library strives to provide the stability, friendliness, and inclusivity that makes everyone in our community feel at home.

Generosity

Taking a cue from our community, we are generous with our time, talent, and resources. We are here; you can count on us. We give people what they need to succeed. We perform our work with a spirit of goodwill and a deep respect for the dignity of all people.

Quality

Built on the rich cultural heritage of our community, we strive for excellence and high standards in all that we do. Whether it's the personalized services we design or the resources we curate, our sources are trustworthy and thoughtful.

Collaboration

Strong communities are built on mutual trust. We strive to become active listeners and reliable partners so that we can generate ideas, find solutions, and achieve our community's shared goals. We stay transparent and accountable to stakeholders so that more people can be included in the library's work.

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Goals

The following goals outline our strategic priorities for the next three years. Potential strategies we will consider are listed below to provide a clearer picture of how we will approach these endeavors. Each year, we will develop measurable, time-bound objectives to help us reach these goals. These objectives will form the basis of our regular board reports, annual budget planning, and core service development going forward.

GOAL 1: Promote equity across our community and contribute to a welcoming, inclusive environment for all.

By far the most resounding piece of feedback we heard from our surveys focused on the desire to be a part of a diverse, connected community. One community member cited that their ideal community was, “An inclusive, welcoming community that uplifts its residents and provides positive pathways for everyone. [They] want to live in a community where positivity, collaboration, and fellowship are felt by all.” This sentiment was repeated over and over again and dovetails with a larger societal push to address systemic racism and institutional injustice. There are many ways that the library can contribute to this community aspiration.

Activities to support this goal may include auditing and creating benchmarks for diversity in our collections and programs, revisiting our policies and procedures to ensure resources are accessible for people of varying backgrounds, developing cultural sensitivity across our staff, and exploring ways to integrate anti-racism into the life of our institution.

By the end of 2025, we hope to be a visible partner in celebrating the diversity of our community and see residents of all backgrounds highlight the library as a welcoming institution.

GOAL 2: Increase awareness of library services and resources.

As we surveyed library patrons, we often received suggestions asking us to start services which we currently provide, letting us know that even regular library users are unaware of the extent of our offerings. In order to remain a valuable community resource, we need to ensure the public is aware of the breadth of opportunity available through the library. This will require us to think critically about our modes of communication and craft an inviting look and feel to our messaging.

Possible strategies to support this goal might include surveying non-library users, re-designing the library's website, creating a consistent brand experience, or investing in new communication tools. It is our hope that by the end of 2025, our community is better informed of the library's offerings and that each household knows how to make use of our services in meaningful ways.

GOAL 3: Connect with patrons across multiple environments, prototyping services that extend beyond books.

Over the past few years, we have learned that in order to reach the community, we have to invest in resources that go beyond our building. Digital learning has proven to be immensely popular at PDL. We also see avenues for increased engagement through hands-on learning experiences, social/community-building events, new collections, and alternative program venues.

Books and reading will always be at the heart of our organization. This goal is not meant to remove support or resources from our traditional services. Instead, we will utilize what we discover from new experiential/digital learning activities to create even more informed print collections, information services, and library spaces.

GOAL 4: Become a convening space in our community for shared dialog and action.

The library already has an established reputation as a meeting space, with various community groups from the Plymouth Chamber to Girl Scout troops utilizing library spaces every month for their own activities. We see potential in becoming more active partners in our relationships with outside groups. Multiple community leaders encouraged the library to invite community groups together to discuss important topics and collaborate together on activities.

In order to create the right conditions for these kind of cooperative endeavors to flourish, we need to invest in our outreach efforts. We need to be active contributors to the life of the community outside of our walls. Each year, we will commit the time and resources for various staff members to get out into the community and invite partners into collective action.

GOAL 5: Establish benchmarks and formalize procedures in ways that increase organizational clarity and public transparency.

The pandemic changed library operations in significant ways. As we emerge from the initial days of the pandemic, it has become clear that we need to update our internal procedures and revisit the ways in which we communicate as a workplace. Staff want to work collaboratively and share information more effectively. We will establish formal workplace norms and administrative systems to accomplish this.

A number of standardized benchmarks to measure library service quality already exist—from the Library of Michigan’s Quality Services Audit Checklist, to the American Library Association’s Equity Scorecard for Libraries. We seek to compile a list of discreet objectives each year that will ensure PDL policies and services are being updated on a regular basis to align with best practices in our field alongside the expressed needs of the staff. By the end of 2025, we hope to be fully certified at the Essential level of library quality through the Library of Michigan.

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Appendix A: Planning Process and Findings

Starting in July 2021, a Strategic Planning Committee was formed with representation from each library department. An introductory meeting was held to discuss the schedule of activities and brainstorm cultural trends that we might want to investigate as we plan for the future.

At the same time, the management team met to draft the revised mission, vision, and values statements after consulting a few professional articles for reference. The statements were presented to staff on multiple occasions over the course of the next few months to solicit feedback and arrive at a consensus.

Staff feedback was solicited on an ongoing basis using an interactive display in the staff lounge. Targeted questions were rotated throughout the course of the strategic planning process to ensure that employees had multiple entry points for contributing to the eventual plan.

Staff members Holly Hibner and Mary Kelly researched community demographics for the City of Plymouth and Plymouth Township and presented their findings to the Strategic Planning Committee. Staff learned about the preferences of key market segments in our community.

The library also worked with Gale Cengage to produce a dashboard for reviewing anonymized patron data from our library catalog. This Patron Insights Report helped us gain a better understanding of library user preferences and behaviors. One of the striking insights from this report is that a much higher proportion of our library users come from outside our community than we had originally thought (around 40% total), signifying that our library has a strong regional pull from neighboring communities. While our demographic data reinforced the relative homogeneity of our home community, our patron data showed us that library users are a more diverse collective.

Library Director, Shauna Anderson, and Community Relations Specialist, Heather Pacheco, met with a number of community leaders to learn more about their strategic priorities as we emerge from the pandemic. Leaders highlighted the amount of public goodwill that exists for the library as a longstanding Plymouth institution and the cross-promotional support which we have provided other groups over the years. Multiple leaders indicated that the library could act as a stronger leader in bringing together the City and Township along with other community institutions for partnerships. The role of the library as a neutral purveyor of information was considered an asset in this work. It was also recommended that the library engage more with the tremendous amount of experimentation in programming that came about as a result of the pandemic—through both outdoor and digital events.

The library embarked on a wide-scale surveying of patrons using various methods. An informal whiteboard display was setup in the lobby with a rotating set of questions related to library services and community needs. An online survey was also created to solicit feedback modeled after the Ask Exercises

from the Harwood Public Innovators model of community engagement. Both of these avenues produced suggestions that were strikingly similar, with individual comments echoed by many other participants in various formats. Key themes that emerged included: the importance of diversity and inclusion, the desire to lead more active and engaged lifestyles, the toll of pandemic-related isolation and burnout, a growing preference for outdoor activities, and a fondness for our current collections and spaces.

The Strategic Planning Committee reconvened a number of times to synthesize the data from our research and ultimately created a list of strategic priorities. This list became the basis for our goals.

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Appendix B: Acknowledgements

Strategic Planning Committee

Thank you to the following staff members who contributed their time and effort in producing the contents of this plan.

Shauna Anderson, Library Director
Dee Beaver, Adult Librarian
Melanie Bell, Head of IT
Sean Glasgow, Teen Librarian
Susan Grybb, Library Page
Keron Krol, Circulation Clerk
Audrey LeBlanc, Technical Services Clerk
Heather Pacheco, Community Relations Specialist
Katie Page, Technical Services Coordinator
Sarah Perry, Youth Librarian
Tim Sherman, Adult Librarian
Lynne Volker, Library Page
Sandy Young, Administrative Assistant

Board of Trustees

Thank you to the members of the Library Board for their continual support and guidance.

Yasir Khogali, Board President
Michael Pappas, Board Vice-President
Jacqueline George, Board Treasurer
Jean Walsh, Board Secretary
Brian Anderson, Trustee
John Morrison, Trustee
Beth Sexton, Trustee

Community Partners

Thank you to the community leaders who met with us to provide feedback for our planning efforts.

Tony Bruscato, Director, [Plymouth Downtown Development Authority](#)

G. Wesley Graff, President, [Plymouth Community Chamber of Commerce](#)
Kurt Heise, Township Supervisor, [Charter Township of Plymouth](#)
Nick Ortiz, Commissioner, [City of Plymouth](#)
Sam Plymale, Coordinator, [Plymouth Downtown Development Authority](#)
Paul Sincock, City Manager, [City of Plymouth](#)
Oliver Wolcott, Mayor, [City of Plymouth](#)

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Appendix C: Resources

[ALA Code of Ethics](#)

[Business Demographics Now](#) (Plymouth, MI & Plymouth Township, MI)

[Freedom to Read](#)

[Harwood Ask Exercise Tool](#)

[Library Bill of Rights](#)