

Sun Prairie Public Library

Strategic Plan
2017-2022



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We sincerely appreciate all the community members who contributed to this strategic plan. We are especially thankful to those who responded to the survey and those who joined us in conversations about our community and our library.

Members of the Strategic Planning Committee have exhibited a great passion for the Sun Prairie Public Library. This is evident by their commitment and dedication to this process. The Library Director and Library Board are grateful for their time, thoughtfulness and experience, as well as their excitement and anticipation of the many possibilities that lie ahead.

Excitement and enthusiasm from the library staff is essential to successfully implement the Strategic Library Plan. Input from the staff has been invaluable to the planning committee because they provide our patrons and the community with daily service. Their dedication and commitment to the needs of the community is critical to the library's success.

The Sun Prairie Public Library and Board of Trustees would like to thank Melissa McLimans and Bruce Smith from WILS (Wisconsin Library Services) for providing planning process management and facilitation services in developing this strategic plan.

Sun Prairie Public Library Strategic Planning Committee

Rex Owens, Strategic Planning Committee Chair
Margene Anderson, Library Board President
Deborah Bissonnette, Friends of the Library Secretary
Judy Eisinger, Library Board Treasurer
Barbara Loftus, Library Foundation Board Treasurer
Tracy Williams-Maclin
Steev Baker, Head of Circulation Services
Debra Bird, Head of Technical Services
Lynn Montague, Head of Youth Services
Carol Iwanowski, Head of Adult Services
Svetha Hetzler, Library Director

At the June 8, 2017 meeting, the Sun Prairie Public Library Board adopted the Strategic Plan. The 2017 Board of Trustees includes:

Sun Prairie Public Library Board of Trustees

Margene Anderson, President
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Judy Eisinger, Treasurer
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Tiffany Thiede, Sun Prairie Area School District Representative
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Rex Owens
Ken Wenzel

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INTRODUCTION

Public libraries in the United States have a long and rich history dating from 1732 when Benjamin Franklin founded the Library Company to aid in the quest for knowledge. This shared collection removed the costly barriers that prevented curious minds from having access to books. In that same spirit, the public library today is a community asset which provides the opportunities for intellectual, social, and economic growth. This commitment to provide access to resources and services can be a transformative experience for patrons and is critical to the promotion of equity.

To meet a variety of needs and interests through programming experiences, resources, opportunities for discovery and creation, and by providing a sense of place, the public library is welcoming to all. The public library symbolizes socioeconomic prosperity as residents use the services and resources to enrich themselves and their community.

In 2016, the Sun Prairie Public Library Board established a Strategic Planning Committee comprised of library staff, library board members, and residents. WILS, Wisconsin Library Services, provided professional consultation and facilitation that directed the development of this plan. The committee met monthly for nearly a year to determine methods for gathering information and data to use in assessing the library's current needs and future direction.

- Gathered and assessed data from a community-wide survey. 1,375 survey responses were received.
- Collected and reviewed data from library usage statistics and annual report data.
- Held community conversations to learn about the community's goals, aspirations, and needs.
- Reviewed and assessed the value of current Sun Prairie Public Library services and resources.
- Held a staff conversation to encourage feedback from all employees.

The Strategic Plan will assist the library staff and trustees to develop an action plan and prioritize library projects for the coming five years. Keeping in mind unexpected trends and changes in the profession, the plan has been drafted to allow the library flexibility to adapt its offerings to best meet its goals. Community conditions are also subject to change and as Sun Prairie grows and evolves, we expect the library's activities may need to adjust, in order to respond to those shifts. Despite anticipated changes, the Sun Prairie Public Library will maintain its organizational mission, which guides this plan. We will measure all we do against the foundation of this plan and remain focused on serving the community.

MISSION STATEMENT

Sun Prairie Public Library serves the community as an activity center to support lifelong learning by providing educational, cultural and recreational opportunities for all people.



Resources for Workforce Development includes resume and interview tips, websites, training classes, and job postings.



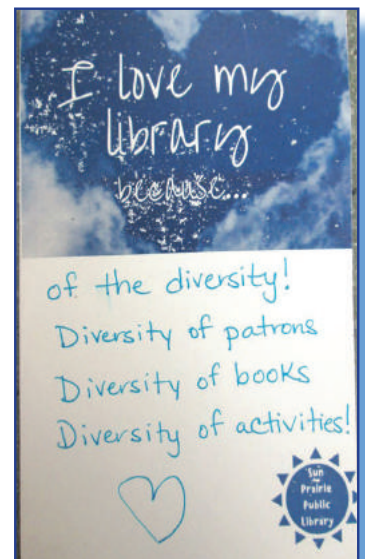
Partnerships with arts organizations. Free passes for Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra's subscription series concerts allow library card holders to take advantage of cultural and recreation opportunities.

The Sun Prairie Public Library provides resources and access to many life-long learning opportunities through our database subscriptions. Auto repair, foreign language, genealogy, and financial investments are just a few topics to explore.



New self-check kiosks for enhanced access using the latest technology.

Every child who completes the Summer Library Program is a proud Library Champion!



In February, patrons share why they love the Sun Prairie Public Library.

BACKGROUND

Sun Prairie is a growing and vibrant community. Since 2000, the community increased in population by approximately 50%. During community conversations, residents made it clear they love the city. Residents cited the following reasons they have found Sun Prairie a desirable place to live:

- an ideal place to raise a family
- excellent schools
- community orientated
- activities for seniors
- an active, vibrant and involved community library
- growth and opportunity

Right at the top of the list is the library.

“As a realtor in Sun Prairie I regularly talk about the quality of the community and the services that are available to the residents in Sun Prairie. I always take the time to show people around the community and one location I make sure they see is the Public Library. I am able to tell families what a commitment the community has made to ensure we not only have the beautiful building the library is housed in, but also the vibrant programming our library provides as a hub of the community. I speak from personal experience as well because of how impressed I was with the library 17 years ago when I moved to Sun Prairie.” —Chad Wiedmeyer, Stark Homes.

Growth brings opportunities and challenges. The challenge of growth is often measured in how to help community members find opportunities, address their needs, and achieve their potential. In all these areas, the library is an advocate for the community.

Overall, poverty has increased by nearly 50% in the last 14 years, though it is still at about half the average poverty rate for the state and Dane County. More significantly, the community has seen an increase of children in poverty, with rates increasing from 6.7% in 2000 to 15.3% in 2014. This level is slightly above the average for Dane County.

With the rise in poverty, the public library is a critical point of access and serves a significant role in providing support and aid to the community through these socio-economic struggles. Services and resources found at the library help residents overcome barriers associated with unemployment and under-employment by providing access to information to address health, housing, employment, and nutritional needs.

An interesting balance has occurred with population growth in Sun Prairie. The median age has stayed virtually the same in the last 14 years, however, there has been significant population changes within specific age groups. Those under the age of 15 increased in population by 48% and those aged 55-64 increased in population by 141%.

These age groups are frequent users of the library. This shift in age demographics over this time period has significantly increased demand for services and resources. The library has responded by increasing the number and quality of programs offered. In the last 5 years there has been a 300% growth in adult program attendance and in the past 15 years there has been a 503% increase in large print holdings and a 219% overall increase in circulation. The library is a place that provides essential literacy services to children. The Sun Prairie Public Library has seen a 58% increase in our youth summer library program participation over the past 10 years.

The demand for library services and resources is documented by library usage data. While many public libraries have been experiencing slight annual decreases in circulation in the last 6 to 8 years, circulation is increasing at the Sun Prairie Library. The community wants more from its library.

In the public survey, the community was asked to complete the following statement, “I would use the Sun Prairie Public Library more if...” Nearly 200 respondents left comments to this statement. These comments included the following suggestions:

- **Space**
Less crowded kid’s area; more/better seating; better separation of children’s space from other parts of the library; need a teen area
- **Hours**
Would like the library open Sundays all year; earlier open; later close; book drop open 24/7
- **Programming**
Larger space for programs; children’s programming offered not just during the day; programs book up quickly
- **Collections**
More new novels; More DVDs, More computer/DS/Video games; More large print books

Regardless if the survey respondent frequently or infrequently used the library, they strongly felt that that the library is very important to the community. Also, respondents overwhelmingly indicated that the Sun Prairie Public Library is the center of the community at a rate three times higher than responses gathered in a comparable Wisconsin Public Library Consortium statewide survey.

While data and information indicates that the Sun Prairie Public Library is well thought of and used by the community, the library does lag behind other libraries in Dane County in space and support. The following table shows how the Sun Prairie Public Library compares to four other libraries in the area with a similarly sized library facility in regards to size of population served, total collection size, and per capita funding support.

Public Library	Square Footage of Library	Resident Population	Total Materials	Resident Support Per Capita
Sun Prairie Public Library	36,000*	31,810	129,622	\$39.23
DeForest Area Public Library	35,000	9,223	77,113	\$49.65
Fitchburg Public Library	38,000	26,321	100,977	\$60.94
Middleton Public Library	32,000	18,810	112,323	\$60.86
Verona Public Library	33,000	11,871	108,167	\$57.77

* The Sun Prairie Media Center occupies approximately 3,000 square feet and the Read Before Book Store occupies approximately 385 square feet. Actual public library space is approximately 32,000 net square feet. This data is from Department of Public Instruction Annual Library Report from 2015.

In the library usage data, responses from the public, the library survey and community conversations, it becomes apparent that now, more than ever, the library serves as a community center. It is a place of learning for all ages; a source for job seekers, a technology center for office needs, a trustworthy resource for facts and information, a place to connect digitally through broadband and wi-fi, a social gathering space, and a place to expand knowledge, skills and pursuits for personal growth and prosperity. It is also a digital space with access to vetted online resources and services.

The most important goal for the Sun Prairie Public Library is to grow along with the community. It is paramount that the library meet the demands for the resources and services that Sun Prairie residents clearly value. The library will help address the challenges the community is experiencing from a growing and changing demographic. The library will continue to be a cornerstone institution that makes Sun Prairie a desirable place for people to live and prosper.

STAFF INITIATIVES, GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

Strategic Initiative 1: Library Facility and Spaces

Ensure the library provides suitable spaces that meet the current and future needs of the community to deliver effective library services.

SERVICE GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Develop a plan to increase the physical space of the library, while improving the effectiveness of the current space to offer the services needed and wanted by the community.

- a. Identify location and space options and associated costs to increase the amount of physical library space.
- b. Explore the feasibility of enclosing the porches for year-round use.
- c. Explore the feasibility of expanding the library's space into the Sun Prairie Media Center.
- d. Explore the feasibility of library branches.
- e. Maintain sufficient spaces to provide a physical collection that can grow with the community and will meet the requirements of the county and community.
- f. Explore the feasibility of expanding the Library's space into the Read Before Bookstore.

2. Develop a dedicated and defined teen area in the library.

- a. Gather input from teen patrons.
- b. Get professional consultation for designing a dedicated teen space.

3. Update the library for aesthetics, efficiency, and comfort.

- a. Assess the current usage of the computer room.
- b. Assess the need for additional discussion rooms.
- c. Explore ways to create more effective programming spaces.
- d. Explore options for public restroom renovation.
- e. Explore possibilities for a separate children's space.
- f. Explore possibilities for a patron comfort room.
- g. Explore options for additional staff work space and storage.
- h. Purchase new furniture and equipment as needed.

4. Explore redesigning the point of service entrance to the library to improve the patron's experience and ease of getting help.

5. Develop an outdoor space dedicated to programming and explore options and associated costs.

Strategic Initiative 2: Funding and staffing

Increase funding to meet staffing and service needs.

SERVICE GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

STAFFING

1. Increase funding for current or potential staff to reach the goals of this strategic plan and meet the service needs of the community.

2. Continue to support staff.

- a. Continuing education opportunities.
- b. Promoting a healthy workplace culture.
- c. Competitive compensation to attract and retain exemplary library staff.

FUNDING

3. Communicate the library's role as integral to Sun Prairie.

- a. Demonstrate the value of the library to the community through quantitative and qualitative data collection.
- b. Provide information about opportunities for library supporters to be advocates for the library.

4. Continue to pursue diverse funding sources.

5. Prepare for a capital campaign to improve and increase the library's physical space.

- a. Establish fundraising efforts.
- b. Add a position or contract with an expert to manage fundraising efforts for a capital campaign.

Strategic Initiative 3: Access

Provide equitable access to all physical and digital library services and resources for residents of all ages and abilities.

SERVICE GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Increase hours of library operation to meet the community's expectations and needs.

- a. Explore the feasibility to extend current Friday hours of operation.
- b. Explore the feasibility to have year-round Sunday hours.

2. Improve digital accessibility to meet ADA compliance and Universal Design requirements.

- a. Explore website redesign.
- b. Work with digital content providers and partners to reach this goal.

3. Identify barriers to use.

- a. Review and adjust policies and procedures.
- b. Explore the expansion of outreach efforts.
- c. Explore tools for increased digital access.
- d. Explore ways to increase awareness of the library's resources and services.

4. Explore redesigning the point of service entrance to the library to improve the patron's experience, physical navigation, and ease of obtaining assistance.

5. Identify options for additional point or points of service to assist with issues related to transportation barriers.

- a. Explore options and associated costs of a branch.
- b. Explore options and associated costs of a bookmobile.
- c. Explore options and associated costs of library kiosks and pop-up libraries.

Strategic Initiative 4: Partnerships and collaborations

Collaborate and build partnerships to expand service capacities and leverage resources to increase engagement with the library.

SERVICE GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Collaborate with other city departments, community service organizations and local businesses.

a. Explore opportunities that fit within the mission of the library.

b. Offer library services and resources to non-users.

2. Continue to strengthen relationships with the local schools and homeschoolers.

3. Expand collaboration between internal library departments.

4. Expand collaboration with other libraries and library organizations.

5. Identify business and community experts to share knowledge.

Strategic Initiative 5: Marketing and communications

Increase awareness and use of the Sun Prairie Public Library by crafting a clear and recognizable brand including development of a vision statement and organizational values that tie into the mission statement.

SERVICE GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Craft a clear and recognizable brand.

- a. Create a public relations plan.
- b. Maintain an updated website.
- c. Review all communication channels, including social media.
- d. Explore ways to increase awareness of the library's resources and services.

2. Communicate the library's role as integral to Sun Prairie.

- a. Demonstrate the value of the library to the community through quantitative and qualitative data collection.
- b. Provide information about opportunities for library supporters to be advocates for the library.

3. Reach non-users through improved outreach efforts.

- a. Use data to identify gaps in service.
- b. Add a dedicated PR/Marketing position.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Library Director and staff, in consultation with the Library Board, will annually prioritize, identify service goals and coordinate activities from this plan. These projects will be determined based on the activities needed to reach long-term goals. Activities will also include projects that will have the most impact for the community and those that can easily be implemented. Available resources and capacities will be a major factor.

The library will develop action plans for the prioritized projects. Action plans may include:

- staff responsibilities and timelines
- necessary resources
- data and information gathering
- assessment of progress communicated to stakeholders

ASSESSMENT AND COMMUNICATION

The Library Director will regularly update the Library Board on the progress of implementing the strategic plan. The timeline for progress and assessment will be communicated to the Library Board. The annual review of service goals and prioritization of activities will be as follows:

- **March** – The Library Director and staff provide a verbal report to the Library Board assessing progress in implementing current year’s priorities from the plan.
- **July** – A standing Strategic Planning Committee is formed by the Library Board to implement the plan. The committee will determine progress on the plan’s service goals; determine if there is any need for any adjustments to the plan based on changing conditions or new challenges and opportunities; and will identify and prioritize the activities that will be the focus of the library’s efforts the next year. The work of this committee will be reflected in the budget planning process for the library and reported to the board throughout the budget development process.
- **December** – The Library Director, with input from staff, will prepare a written update for the Library Board. This report will include the status of plan implementation from the current year and activities slated for the upcoming year.



**Sun Prairie
Public Library**

1350 Linnerud Drive
Sun Prairie WI 53590
(608) 825-7323 (READ)
www.sunprairiepubliclibrary.org