STRATEGIC PLAN 2020–2023

The Plainsboro Public Library has a proven track record in responding to the needs of the residents of Plainsboro. Since opening its new facility, the Library has become a destination for residents seeking library services, materials, programs, and community. The Library Board, director, and staff are committed to seeking input from the community about Library services so that we can continue to meet Plainsboro residents’ needs and interests.

Plainsboro Library formulated its first strategic plan in 2015. As part of the strategic plan process, the Library adopted a vision statement and a set of shared values to support the mission statement. The vision statement created a beacon for the Library to use as a guide into the future and the shared values defined the standards to which the Library and its staff will adhere. The vision, shared values, and mission statement formed the foundation for the new strategic plan for the years 2020 through 2023.

Vision

Plainsboro Public Library: The community’s center for learning, connections, and discovery

Mission

Plainsboro Public Library inspires life-long learning, creates understanding, and makes our community a better place.

Shared Values

◆ We put patrons first.
◆ We support knowledge, education, and learning for all.
◆ We provide an innovative and supportive environment that facilitates life-long learning.
◆ We create a climate for intellectual freedom.
◆ We celebrate the rich diversity of our community.
◆ We offer an inspiring shared atmosphere that encourages communication, education, and engagement.
◆ We value our community’s suggestions.
◆ We welcome change and continually improve.
◆ We safeguard the intellectual, human, physical, and fiscal resources entrusted to us by the people of Plainsboro.
The Library Board of Trustees appointed a Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) to formulate the Library’s strategic plan for the next three years. The SPC gathered data using a variety of techniques: an environmental scan, in-depth interviews with cohort libraries, staff and patron focus groups, workshops with key stakeholders, and a community online survey. Four strategic themes emerged.

1. **Patron Experience**
   The Library is the community’s literary and cultural center. As a board, we are committed to providing our patrons with the best experience across all the services of the Library in their pursuit of life-long learning, personal and career development, and engagement with their community.

2. **Inclusivity**
   We welcome all members of our community. We believe that the diversity of our community is one of our greatest strengths. We seek to design our spaces, collections, and services to create opportunities for engagement and cross-cultural learning for every member of our community.

3. **Digital Resources**
   We strive to have what our patrons want to read, when they want to read it, and in their preferred format. We are committed to providing our patrons with the tools to enhance their ability to discover and exploit all of the Library’s resources.

4. **Environmental Responsibility**
   We believe in our responsibility to the environment. We are committed to designing our facilities and collections in an environmentally responsible way. We will design programs that educate our patrons and to better understand environmental issues and challenges.
The four strategic themes will advance through the four core components of Library service; Staff, Facilities, Collections, Programs. The strategic themes will act as the guiding principles to inform how we design and deliver existing and future programs, services, and collections.

To transform the four components of Library service, we will apply the strategic themes as follows:

- **Empower staff** with the right tools, the latest technology, and the resources to deliver an exceptional patron experience, improve their operational efficiency and create more meaningful patron interactions.

- **Design facilities** that respond better to the changing needs of patrons. The facilities will be welcoming, attractive, functional, and environmentally sustainable, and they will recognize the Library building’s unique value to the community.

- **Develop collections** in a thoughtfully curated manner. Collections will be appropriately sized to meet and anticipate the evolving needs and interests of our patrons and organized in an easy-to-navigate way.

- **Create programs** that address our community’s diverse and global interests. The programs should stimulate our patrons’ curiosity, enrich their lives, and create unique experiences.
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Patron Experience

Goal I: We will provide our patrons with the best experience across all Library services as they pursue life-long learning, develop their personal and career lives, and engage with their community.

Objectives

- Improve our patrons’ awareness and knowledge of Library services through tools such as video tours, orientation classes, and Library directory
- Improve discoverability of Library materials
- Upgrade signage (physical and digital) to improve our patrons’ ability to navigate Library resources
- Redesign public spaces to improve the usability
- Create a separate teen space within the Library
- Implement patron self-service, including self-checkout
- Investigate the feasibility of increasing access to the Library building
- Survey the community annually to identify needs and assess progress
- Design new programs for older adults and children
- Improve current channels of Library marketing and communication
- Create cross-training opportunities for staff across departments

Inclusivity

Goal II: We seek to design our spaces, collections, and services to create opportunities for engagement and cross-cultural learning for every member of our community.

Objectives

- Increase outreach to and develop programs for underserved segments of the community
- Implement multilingual signage where appropriate
- Improve the cultural relevance of our collection to align with our diverse community
- Design programs to meet the cultural and global interests of our community
- Provide diversity and cultural awareness training for all Library staff
Digital Resources

Goal III: We strive to have what our patrons want to read, when they want to read it, and in their preferred format. We will provide our patrons with the tools to enhance the discoverability of the Library’s resources.

Objectives

- Improve awareness and discoverability of digital collections
- Redesign the Library website to improve ease of use and accessibility
- Support and develop robust, high-quality digital collections
- Improve the Library’s broadband connection and strengthen the network

Environmental Responsibility

Goal IV: We are committed to designing our facilities and collections in an environmentally responsible way. We will design programs that educate our patrons and to better understand environmental issues and challenges.

Objectives

- Continually work to improve energy efficiency, increase recycling capabilities, and provide environmentally responsible public services
- Develop a collection and programs focused on environmental responsibility
- Train staff to be environmental champions
Measuring Success

This plan provides a clear road map for the Library director and staff to ensure the Library remains a responsive and dynamic organization. Success depends upon the Library director and staff creating annual action plans that directly correspond to the stated strategic goals. Each year, the Library director will present this plan of specific tactical and measurable objectives to the Library Board of Trustees for approval. The Board will develop the annual Library budget with the needs and challenges of the current planning cycle in mind. Each year, the Library staff and board members will schedule time to assess the progress in meeting the goals and objectives in this plan.

The Library will adhere to the management adage, if you can’t measure it, you can’t improve it. The Library director and staff will strive to collect and provide qualitative and quantitative data to help measure success for each objective in the annual action plan. They and staff will continue to record, analyze, and report general statistics each month. Together, these data will measure baseline health of the Library as a whole and enable us to measure our progress toward achieving the goals and objectives of the strategic plan. The general statistics staff will record include:

- Library visits
- Library cardholders
- Program participants
- Circulation (physical and digital)
- Social media and e-newsletter followers
- Survey results

The Library staff will continue to measure our progress along the various aspects of the strategic plan, providing transparency about our progress to relevant community stakeholders. Doing so will improve our ability to deliver on our objectives.
Thank you to …

Strategic Planning Committee

- Rishi Agarwal
- Maryann Ralph
- Peter Cantu
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- Beonica McClanahan
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Library Board of Trustees

- E. Karen Kennedy, President
- Rishi Agarwal, Vice President
- Deborah Brett, Secretary
- Vincent Vecchia, Treasurer
- Peter Cantu, Mayor
- Rick Cave, WW-P School Representative
- Greta Kiernan, Trustee
- Beonica McClanahan, Trustee
- Rekha Rao, Trustee

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