

During the spring of 2017, Lake Forest Library conducted a community needs assessment to solicit community feedback and evaluate trends regarding current and future use of the library. The needs assessment process included a community survey, series of focus groups with library stakeholders, and conversations with library administration and the Board of Trustees. Following analysis of this community feedback, the following overarching goals emerged for the library's work going forward:

1. Enhance the user experience
2. Ensure accessibility for all users
3. Improve library space to ensure accessibility and desired functionality
4. Raise the visibility of the library and its work in the Lake Forest community

In addition to these goals, the community feedback reflected that the Library is a valued asset that plays a vital role in the Lake Forest community, a community that identified family, education, philanthropy, and tradition as its cornerstones.

The four goals are set out with corresponding objectives that are responsive to the themes in the feedback received and conversations held during the community needs assessment process. In identifying the objectives, the Library focused on fiscally responsible actions that are both aspirational and achievable.

The goals together with the identified objectives provide the Library with a strategic direction for the period September 2017 – September 2019. This two-year time line provides the Library a fast approaching opportunity to measure its progress and realign objectives as needed.

ENHANCE THE USER EXPERIENCE.

In today's world, people are increasingly able to individualize their experiences based on interest, need, and convenience. In delivering services, resources, and programs, the Library seeks to respond to patron expectations of personalized service.

- A. Determine optimal hours of operation.
 - a. Experiment with expanded and/or alternative hours on weeknights and weekends.
 - b. Evaluate usage and related costs to determine ongoing feasibility of expanded and/or alternative hours.
- B. Enhance functionality of library website.
 - a. Retain web design firm to design and deliver a website that is current, mobile responsive, easy to navigate, easy to maintain, and provides user analytics.
 - b. Implement program/event calendar with online registration, waitlist, and other functionality.
 - c. Analyze user analytics to assess continued relevance of web content.
- C. Develop additional options and topics for adult, teen, and children's programming.
 - a. Offer programs that encourage reflection and discussion of current issues.
 - b. Offer additional STEAM programs for children.
 - c. Expand teen programming options.
 - d. Develop and offer programs tailored to special needs individuals.
 - e. Continue experimentation of offering programs at a variety of days and times.
- D. Update library use policies.
 - a. Review and update Collection Development Policy to ensure collection adequately addresses needs and interests of all Library users.

- b. Evaluate current library policies that impact on how users experience the Library.
- c. Amend those Library policies that unnecessarily limit or adversely impact on how users experience the Library.
- E. Evaluate service desk and program staff development needs to meet increased service standards.
 - a. Offer staff development opportunities.
 - b. Identify staff training needs and develop responsive training.
 - c. Develop staff orientation checklist and orientation materials that reinforce service level standards.
- F. Explore options for automation.
 - a. Select, trial, and evaluate self-check options.
 - b. Investigate options for RFID and credit/debit card payments for printing, photocopying, and payment of fines.

ENSURE ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL USERS

The Library increasingly plays a vital role in providing access to technologies that make important learning resources available outside the Library's physical space. In doing so, the Library seeks to ensure all ages have access to and understand emerging technology and digital learning opportunities. In addition, the Library wants to ensure that its print resources are fully accessible.

- A. Provide in-depth online resource training for all public services team members.
- B. Launch outreach campaign promoting electronic resources available through the library.
- C. Provide online and print user-friendly instructional materials and in-person instructional opportunities.
 - a. Create and staff highly visible desks with drop-in and by-appointment options.
 - b. Develop traveling librarian to teach at locations other than the Library (e.g., senior center).
- D. Expand homebound outreach efforts.
 - a. Identify and market to relevant patron groups.
- E. Evaluate location and classifications of adult fiction collection and update signage to improve access.
- F. Assess functionality of audiovisual shelving and display units and replace as needed.
- G. Investigate and assess opportunities to deliver services to West Side residents.

IMPROVE LIBRARY SPACE TO ENSURE ACCESSIBILITY AND DESIRED FUNCTIONALITY

A 21st century institution that serves individuals of all ages and interests, the Library wants to improve its spaces to respond to changing needs while respecting its historic building and role in the community.

- A. Improve accessibility and usability of exterior and interior space to improve quality of library visits.
 - a. Retain a consultant to evaluate capital infrastructure and prepare a capital assessment plan.
 - b. Prepare timeline and budget estimates to address capital infrastructure needs, including ADA compliance actions.
 - c. Complete the crosswalk improvements.
 - d. Evaluate options for alleviating parking challenges.
- B. Redesign interior spaces that reflect differing user needs for social and collaborative activities with quiet work, study, and reflection.
 - a. Retain a consultant to assess current space and prepare building improvement plan.
 - b. Explore and assess need for a dedicated space for teens.
 - c. Explore and assess need for meeting space(s) that will accommodate small groups.
 - d. Explore and assess additional entrance points to the library.
 - e. Prepare timeline and budget estimates to provide the desired building improvements.
- C. Investigate public-private partnerships and sponsorships to support desired building improvements.

RAISE THE VISIBILITY OF THE LIBRARY AND ITS WORK IN THE LAKE FOREST COMMUNITY

The Library wants to develop a more robust marketing effort to ensure all members of the community are aware of its services, resources, programs and interest in collaborating.

- A. Enrich and expand marketing and communications activities.
 - a. Hire a part-time marketing coordinator.
 - b. Develop a sustainable print and e-marketing strategy.
 - c. Develop regular e-blasts targeted to niche interests.
 - d. Retain marketing firm to design new logo that reflects the past and future of the Library.
 - e. Increase library presence and engagement on social media.
 - f. Update all marketing materials to incorporate new logo and brand consistency.
- B. Develop more robust relationships with local media, both print and e-outlets.
- C. Evaluate effectiveness of quarterly newsletter.
- D. Increase library presence in the community through participation in community events.
 - a. Evaluate the community events in which the Library currently participates to determine effectiveness.
 - b. Research and identify other community events in which to participate.
 - c. Prioritize participation based on the Library's mission and impact of the event.
- E. Purchase upright display banners with Library name and logo for use at outside events.
- F. Increase Library presence in the community through partnerships with community organizations to deliver programs and activities.
 - a. Continue Lake Forest Reads Ragdale (one community one read).
 - b. Investigate other partnerships with community businesses similar to "Love Your Library" and joint-sponsorship of programs and events.
 - c. Develop and provide supporting bibliographies for Lake Forest Historical Society, Dickinson Hall Senior Center, and other organizations.
- G. Explore and develop ideas to engage potential new users.