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Beginning in July 2019 and completed in December 2019, under the guidance of the Thorntown Public Library's (TPL) library director and board of trustees, the strategic planning process was completed for the Thorntown Public Library for years 2020 – 2024. Library consultant Rob Cullin of Kimberly Bolan and Associates (KBA) facilitated the process, fact finding, and analysis, but the library and its community made all of the choices and decisions in the process.

The Process

TPL's strategic planning process and review included the following key areas.

Gathering and analyzing community input and data, which involved benchmarking, demographic analysis, and collection analysis. In addition, TPL staff and northwest Boone County area residents were involved in exploring ideas and possibilities for the library as a thriving 21st century library. Stakeholder sessions were conducted by KBA in September and October of 2019. Participants included the general public, educators, community leaders, business leaders, senior citizens, high school students, TPL staff members, and library trustees. Participants included frequent library users and infrequent and non-users and ranged in ages and backgrounds. Overall, 168 stakeholders participated across seven (7) public sessions in the discussions regarding the TPL's services and strategic future. In addition to the stakeholder sessions, an online survey was conducted between September 26th and October 20th, 2019. One hundred and twenty-four (124) surveys were completed. Survey participants included frequent library users (70%) as well as infrequent and non-users (30%). Survey takers ranged from 16 to over 75 years of age; 63% of survey takers were between the ages of 36 and 56 years of age and 25% were over 65 years of age.

The Community Engagement Sessions covered all topics of current and future library operations, seeking both aspirational and pragmatic input from the community about the library, staffing, services, facilities, marketing, community participation, and programs. These sessions facilitated by KBA sought candid input from the community about all of these areas in addition to more open-ended input related to the community itself. Library facilities were discussed at length with participants to review the appropriateness of current spaces and help determine any needs or shifts that should be considered.

The Survey also covered these same issues in further detail. In addition, the survey sought more quantitative feedback on how the library is perceived to be doing and how important the community sees the various space, service, and programmatic offerings of the library.

Developing the high-level plan during a one-day Strategic Planning Retreat held on November 4, 2019. During the Retreat, all data and community input was reviewed with a planning team of eighteen people, consisting of the library director, staff members, library board members, community leaders, and the general public. From the data and community input the group reviewed and discussed as a large group and in smaller breakout groups all aspects of library services and facilities. The group worked though a variety of exercises to surface the potential ideas and approaches that could have made up the plan. Then through a series of voting exercises the group identified the most essential strategic areas, specific goals, and related investments required to implement the goals to help the library thrive over the next five years and beyond. Those elements are captured here in this high-level plan document. This plan was reviewed with library staff and board and then approved by the board of trustees.

A one-year detailed plan was then to be built by staff with assistance from KBA. This plan details all of the relevant activities that are to be completed in the time period to further the large goals highlighted in the high-level plan. This process of developing a twelve-month detailed action plan will be repeated each year by staff and reviewed by the board of trustees.

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What We Heard

The stakeholder sessions and online survey explored several topics including customer service, youth services, adult services, outreach services, programming, technology and digital services, the facility/building, collections and resources, and overall 21st century public library best practices. Detailed summaries of all stakeholder feedback and online survey results were provided in separate documents to the community and TPL's leadership and reviewed in depth during *the Strategic Planning Retreat*. All stakeholder input, data analysis, and follow-up exploration work led to the strategic focuses, goals, and investments outlined on page four (4) of this document. All of the aspects of Indiana's requirements for strategic planning were reviewed in this process.

Further Plan Development

With the goal of achieving all outlined goals over the next five years, TPL administration, staff, and board of trustees will regularly evaluate their progress and achievements. Objectives set forth in this plan will be further detailed each year in a 12-month detailed work plan which will developed by the library staff. These annual 12-month plans will address the specific actions, objectives, and goals in addition to specifying required staff and financial commitments.

Ongoing Evaluation

In addition, the high-level plan contained in this document will be re-evaluated each year by the board to ensure that the high-level goals still align with the needs and goals of the community, ahead of the staff's development of that years 12-month plan. This balanced and systematic process also emphasizes that the resulting plan will be iterative and evolve substantially over the next several years.

Collaboration and Communications

The keys to TPL's implementation, evaluation and, ultimately, the success of its strategic plan will be:
- A thorough understanding of the plan as well as active involvement in implementing the plan by staff and the board of trustees
- Frequent and ongoing communication between administration and staff
- Frequent and ongoing communication between TPL's staff and its community
- Active collaboration between TPL's board of trustees, administration, staff, outside organizations, and the community

Statement of Professional Development, Sustainability, and Collaboration

Professional Development

TPL's board and leadership has always prioritized professional development and budget for professional opportunities. Staff are encouraged to attend local, regional and national conferences, roundtables and seminars, as well as webinars that are frequently available for all areas of expertise and ability. Professional staff are required to meet ISL Certification requirements, and these professional development opportunities are key to meeting those requirements.

Sustainability

Many of the goals outlined below will be funded by the Operating Fund of the library, while keeping in mind the availability of the Gift Fund and the Rainy Day fund. TPL has operated conservatively in years past to make sure that – should a need arise – the library could operate for up to a year on operational reserves rather than having to request advanced tax draws. In addition, TPL has a dedicated and profitable Friends of the Library group, who also provide significant financial support for any "out of the ordinary" costs.

Thorntown Public Library draws its property tax support from Sugar Creek, Washington, and Jefferson townships. As such, the assessed valuation of the library district affords the library a healthy budget with which to operate for a district of this size. The library has chosen to keep the budget flat over the last several years to keep property taxes reasonable, while in no way impacting library services to the public.

Collaboration: Other Public Libraries

TPL continues to rely on the knowledge and proximity of area libraries for possible program collaborations, as well as using the libraries as a resource for information sharing, area information, or to share innovative ideas. The Director meets regularly with library directors in Boone and Hamilton county; this informal group provides information, resources, sharing and support for obtaining goals. In addition, various library staff are involved in roundtables, district-level conversations, and regularly attend professional development events locally and regionally to continue education, collaboration and ideas-sharing. TPL has a long-standing history of resource sharing and has been an Evergreen Indiana member library since March 9, 2009.

Collaboration: Community Partners

Likewise, TPL frequently partners with community groups and businesses in putting on programs or special events; most notably is the community support found during our Summer Reading Program, in providing both monetary and in-kind sponsorship for the event. The library has an ongoing partnership with Central Indiana Council On Aging (CICOA) to provide low-cost lunches, programs and opportunities to seniors in the community. The Arc of Greater Boone County Next Chapter Book Club meets once a week at the library, and TPL serves as a Boone County Vote Center, Versiti Blood Drive site, and a donation site for several community collection drives. We also collaborate with many community groups in providing speakers and programs of interest to all ages, and our staff is often invited to speak at other community group events, fostering a spirit of "give and take".

TPL
THORNTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Strategic Plan for 2020-2024

Adopted by the Thorntown Public Library Board of Trustees on 1/13/2020

Share – Connect – Inspire

Our Mission: Thorntown Public Library serves our community and enriches lives by providing resources, connections, and inspiration.

Strategic Focus Areas	Goals	Key Investments & Initiatives
An Aware and Engaged Community	To drive better awareness and appreciation of library services and resources to the community	• Develop an Engagement & Awareness Plan to improve the consistency and effectiveness of Marketing and PR • Explore adding a street side outdoor electronic sign for advertising events and hours • Increase and improve the level of engagement and connections with the schools • Better communication between schools, library and museum, including direct teacher involvement • Develop a Volunteer program with an expanded focus on community engagement over simple labor tasks

First-Rate Library Services and Resources	To develop adult and teen-oriented programs that delight the community and keep them coming back for more	• Develop Adult and Teen Programming Strategy plans that look at how to develop, test, deploy, and best market programming to the community for these segments
		    • Implement a feedback and tracking system to better evaluate the success and suitability of library programs
		    • Increase local partnerships (both non-profit and for-profit) in developing and deploying programs inside and outside of the library building
		    • Explore the development of a closer partnership with Sugar Creek Art Center
		• Expand adult programming variety and experiment with program times to maximize accessibility to users
		• Upgrade and increase teen programming and teen engagement with library activities
		    • Expand teen programming and outreach (targeting initially middle school ages and build a following)
		    • Coordinate with other teen community groups and develop resources/services that support them

	To improve and expand resources and materials, to meet the community's needs and make them easier to find and access	• Expand non-traditional collections
		    • Expand the "library-of-things" based on usage, community needs and input (e.g. more hotspots, kits)
		    • Add video games to the circulating collection
		• Add new technology resources and services
		    • Add more STEM/STEAM/makerspace resources and services
		    • Evaluate the creation of an electronic gaming spot for teens and adults and program for this space
		• Increase/improve signage for collections to improve wayfinding and browsability

Engaging, Inviting, and Easy to Use Facilities	To reconfigure and improve the spaces of the library in order to make it a more inviting, warm, and engaging place for all	• Reduce unused/non-circ collections, weed and when appropriate shrink certain collections based on data related to need and usage, shift saved space to other functions/services
		• Shift public PC approach:
		    • Shift more public computers to laptops instead of fixed workstations
		    • Eliminate computer lab; focus on laptop use and make better use of lab space
		• Add Study Rooms/Quiet Areas: Evolve/modify space to create private study rooms and/or small meeting spaces
		• Upgrade the comfort and aesthetics of the adult areas seeking to create more gathering and dwelling spaces
		• Improve collection displays and increase the amount of materials merchandising (displays, books face out on shelves)
		    • List staff picks and highlight best sellers list and post
		    • Implement bookstore shelving ideas , display more book face out
		• Upgrade/integrate technology and resources in the meeting rooms (projectors, screens, white boards, etc.)
		• Add more power/charging towers throughout the building
		• Evaluate upgrading or rethinking the space resources for teens, considering other locations and options. Actively involve teens in this evaluation and planning