

North Plains Public Library

Strategic Plan 2016-2021

Presentation by Library Director Debbie Brodie, Library Consultant Linda Lybecker, and Library Board Vice Chairman Stephanie Farris to North Plains City Council on Monday, March 7, 2016.

Our Library has been a member of WCCLS since 2007, and with the passage of the county-wide levy last fall, we can forecast funding for the next five years. Because our income is now stable and will be known for each of those five years, we can make definitive plans for the future. It was determined that now would be the optimum time to ask the community what its highest priorities for library services would be.

We used a planning process designed specifically for public libraries, developed by the Public Library Association, a division of the American Library Association. This method has been successfully used around the country and was already utilized locally for the Hillsboro, Garden Home, and West Slope libraries.

We will first give some background and explain the process that was undertaken and then will share the results. Afterward, the Library Board asks that you adopt the GOALS of the Strategic Plan in the form of a Resolution.

Library Mission

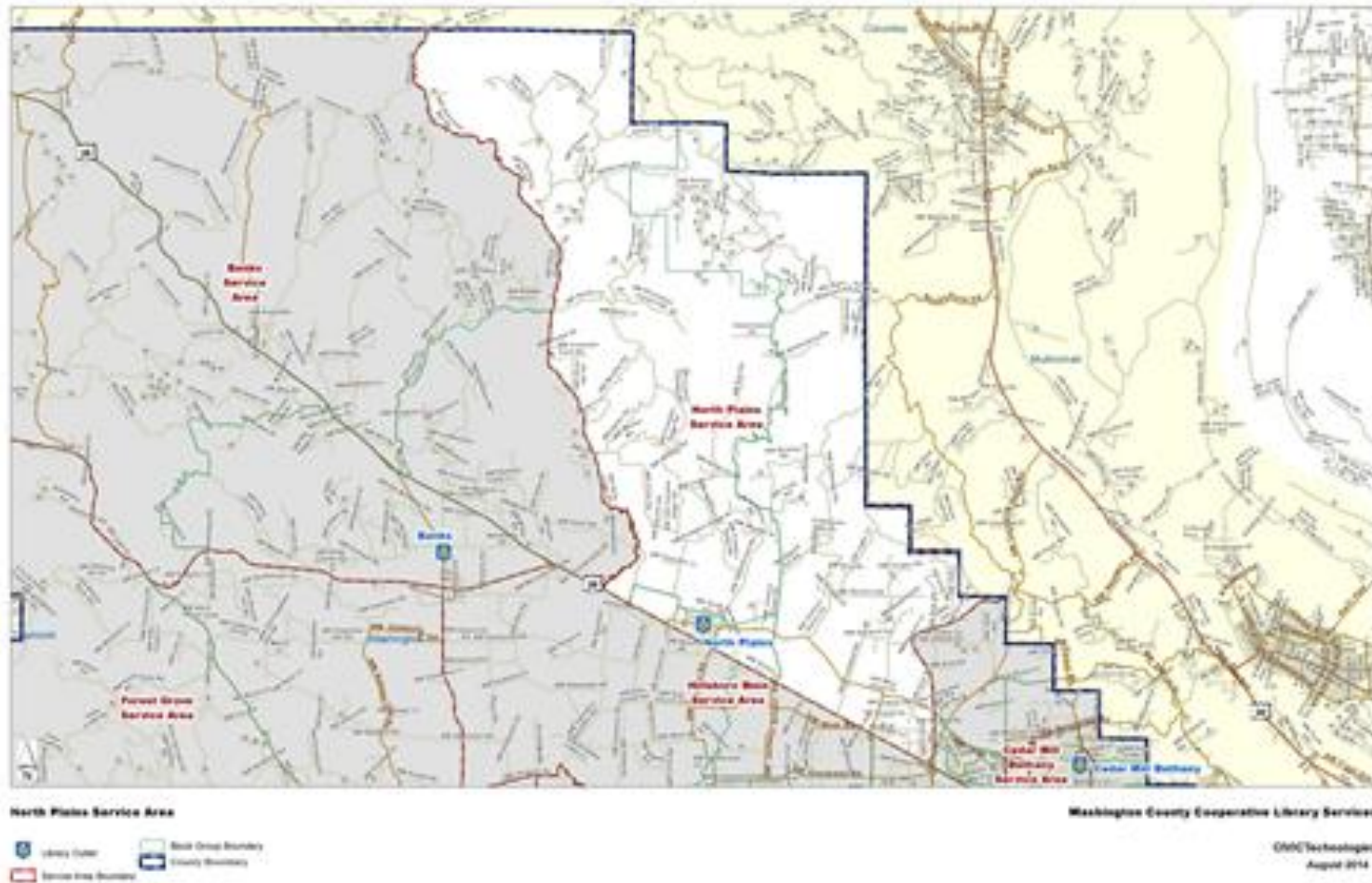
To connect people with information, resources, and experiences for personal enrichment and enjoyment and to engage and strengthen the community.



Before the Strategic Planning process was even begun, the Library Board spent time – years – laying the groundwork.

- The library's mission statement was reworked. It is simply written but speaks volumes.
- The Library Board also completed creating and updating all 24 of the library's policies, formatting them in a standardized manner according to professional guidelines. These are reviewed annually.
- Library open hours have been expanded to 50 per week, and there is a consistent opening time each day – 10 a.m.
- The library workforce has been developed to match staff skills with service areas and within WCCLS committees – youth services; adult services; cataloging and circulation; technology; reference and readers' advisory; publicity; programming.

With these things in place, the library board was ready to tackle the strategic planning process.



North Plains Library Service Area Map

As a reminder, North Plains is a contracting member of WCCLS, and therefore, we serve more people than just those within our city limits. The North Plains Library service area consists of three census blocks, one that coincides with the city limits and two north of the city limits that stretch to the Multnomah County border. Our Strategic Plan focus is on the entire service area. This consists of about 5,000 residents, 1,600 of whom hold library cards which represents about 31% of the service area population.

Strategic Planning Stakeholders

- ∞ Mark Perkins
- ∞ Laura Templin
- ∞ Mark Susbauer
- ∞ Stephanie Farris
- ∞ German Marquez Montoya
- ∞ Mark Perkins
- ∞ Karen Murphy
- ∞ Sheila Nelson
- ∞ Thomas Tsui
- ∞ Sherrie Simmons
- ∞ Makayla Kemper
- ∞ Deena Lee
- ∞ Laura Moradi
- ∞ Sheri Johnson
- ∞ Diane Van Grunsven

REPRESENTING: Library Board, Friends of the Library, seniors, Latino residents, library staff, City Council, North Plains Events Association, Chamber of Commerce, business owners, North Plains Elementary School administration, elementary school parents, homeschool parents, PTO members, youth, library volunteers, non-library users

At the same time the city was holding community workshops to “Envision North Plains’ Future,” the library was also engaging citizens in analyzing library services and prioritizing areas of focus for the next five years.

This slide lists the stakeholders who were invited to participate and the various segments of our library service area that they represented.

Two meetings were held, one in August and one in September.

At the first meeting, the stakeholders discussed the community’s needs and conducted a SWOT exercise of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Ten focus areas for possible library activity were described. By the end of the meeting, the stakeholders had chosen seven of them for further analysis for the needs of North Plains.

At the second meeting, the seven areas were reviewed with comments from staff on resources, potential partners and implementation. The stakeholders prioritized these focus areas, and from that, the final list of five goals was developed.

Goal 1

The library will enable residents to connect online using modern technology.



As we go through these five goals, you will notice that each GOAL is written from the standpoint of the LIBRARY being the catalyst for action. Each OBJECTIVE is written from the standpoint of the RESIDENTS receiving a specific benefit, and each ACTIVITY is written from the standpoint of the STAFF performing it.

Having Council approve the Goals gives staff flexibility to review and pursue new opportunities as they arise in the next five years.

These goals are in priority order, and technology was identified as number one.

Technology is a core role of public libraries now, and North Plains' membership in WCCLS helps meet the demand.

Goal 1 Objectives

Objective 1: Residents will have high-speed access to the Internet using up-to-date library computers and other devices.

Objective 2: Residents can learn about emerging technology and will receive basic technical assistance with computer applications, online searching, Wi-Fi access, and e-book downloads.

Objective 3: Residents will be able to create their own digital content.

Objective 4: Residents will have use of technology and databases for career development, entrepreneurship, educational opportunities, legal purposes, homework help, health and wellness purposes, and general interest topics such as genealogy and auto repair.

Goal 1 has four objectives, presented here.

Each objective has a number of potential activities (not specifically listed) that could be implemented over the next five years.

For example....

- Staff will budget for regularly scheduled hardware and software upgrades.
- Staff skills will be evaluated, and further training in the use of electronic devices and applications will be given so that all staff can provide residents with individual assistance in using these.
- Photo-editing software (such as Photoshop) and Web design software (such as Coffee Cup) will be purchased for public use, and staff will be trained to help patrons use these.
- Staff will become familiar with WCCLS-provided online databases. Classes and/or one-on-one instruction may be provided in these areas.

Goal 2

The library will be residents' first choice for finding and using materials and information to make informed decisions.



The contemporary English author, Neil Gaiman, is famous for his short fiction, novels, and films. He wrote *Coraline* which was made into the Laika film by the same name. He is also famous for his quotes, especially this one:

“A Google search can bring you back 100,000 answers. A librarian can bring you back the right one.”

Goal 1 (previous) was about having technology and knowledgeable staff available to help the public to access and use it.

Goal 2 is about having resources (materials, online databases) and knowledgeable staff to help the public to find answers to research questions, to find the next good book to read, to find information within our North Plains' collection, and to identify sources for referrals.

Goal 2 Objective

Residents will be guided in effectively locating and using information and will receive appropriate reading recommendations.

The one objective for this goal is all about customer service, about the library being viewed by the public as THE go-to place for information and resources. Not only will residents know to come TO the library for these services, but they will also receive information and resources remotely, through the monthly e-newsletter, through an effective website presence, and via social media such as Facebook and Instagram. The library's use of these latter tools is becoming more and more popular with our patrons.

Potential Activities:

- Staff will participate in continuing education regarding reference interviewing, readers' advisory, and resources available in Washington County.
- Staff competencies in various areas will be assessed, training needs will be determined, and instruction will be scheduled (webinars, personal instruction from experts, extranet videos, classes, tutorials).
- Staff will keep up-to-date with library trends and will perfect skills such as those involving customer service and referring patrons to appropriate area resources.
- Staff will be proficient in readers' advisory, in conducting reference interviews, in using database and print resources, in knowledge of NPPL collections, and in referral options.

Staff will investigate, and if appropriate, use newsletter software that in addition to highlighting library activities will also offer book recommendations for readers with links to the WCCLS catalog.

Goal 3

The library will stimulate imagination and learning by providing new and popular library materials for all ages.



This Goal, just as it is stated here, is basic to our purpose for being.

Goal 3 Objectives

Objective 1: Residents will find the number and types of current materials they should expect in a community library according to Oregon Library Association standards.

Objective 2: Residents will find browsing and finding attractive materials easy due to the organization in the Library.

These two objectives address keeping up with the purchase of materials and with marketing those materials.

Objective 1 highlights the library's need to keep the collection current. The OLA benchmark of 3 items per capita within the service area means that NPPL should own about 15,000 items. (Current holdings are around 12,000 items. Space to accommodate them is an issue.) Membership in WCCLS provides patrons with access to more items through borrowing than can be purchased and housed.

Objective 2 can help with Objective 1 through effective marketing. Staff will look at innovative ways to present materials that invite more checkouts.

Imagine a bookstore model with books of popular subjects arranged by topic rather than by Dewey Decimal number, and utilizing display techniques such as facing the books outward to show the covers rather than spine-out to show the Dewey numbers. Then, housing all the holdings won't be an issue. PATRONS will find them intriguing and have these books checked out – being housed for 3 weeks at a time on THEIR shelves at home.

Goal 4

The library will inspire children to read.



This goal is paramount to a library's existence.

There are two areas of focus involved:

One is an early literacy component, that is, reaching children before they begin Kindergarten.

The other is engaging in partnerships with local schools, in our case, the North Plains Elementary School.

Goal 4 Objectives

Objective 1: Children will enter school ready to learn through expanded early literacy learning opportunities.

Objective 2: Elementary school-aged students will learn where and how to find quality information for their studies and find plentiful materials for pleasure-reading.

The library has already embarked upon activities for preschoolers beyond the once-weekly storytime. Pre-readers participate in the Summer Reading Program with a kickoff event and read-to-me activities. In April 2016, the library will introduce a new, weekly Book Babies Storytime for children not yet walking.

For school-aged children, several ideas have been percolating.

Besides our already successful Summer Reading Program for grades K-12, library staff have been identified who, with more hours available to them, could initiate a lunch-time book club at the elementary school, could expand school field-trip opportunities, and could offer instruction to teachers in how to access and utilize homework databases so children will learn how to use them – from school or home or in the library.

Goal 5

The library will provide welcoming spaces in which the community will come to connect, learn, and read.



This is the last goal identified for this 5-year plan and perhaps the most challenging. The physical building is warm, welcoming, and charming. However, space is an issue.

Except for the room pictured here, where there are nine computers and this large table (which is popular for working puzzles), patrons have few places to sit. So they don't. They come, pick up their items, and leave.

This goal is all about the LIBRARY being the “third place” in residents’ minds – the place besides home (number 1) and work (number 2) where people automatically know to go for meetings, to take classes, to hang out. This is about the LIBRARY being the living room or the front porch of the community.

Goal 5 Objectives

Objective 1: Residents will be offered an active calendar of entertaining and educational events in which to engage.

Objective 2: Residents will be able to meet and interact with each other in a welcoming environment with expanded amenities that highlight the library as the community's "third place."

Objective 3: Residents will be able to utilize additional or alternate library building space for quiet reading or studying, meeting in groups, using technology, accessing expanded collections, and class or program attendance.

Most of the questions in the annual Patron Survey were about Objective 1. The survey questions were devised to elicit what activities residents would attend if offered. So far, requested programs at the top include:

- Master Gardener presentations
- Drawing/painting classes
- History lectures and author lectures
- Guitar music and folk music concerts
- Photography workshop
- Emergency preparedness
- Travelogue presentations
- Outdoor survival skills

Holding library activities at the Jessie Mays Community Hall or Pumpkin Ridge Golf Club is necessary for large crowds, but there is a disconnect from the library in doing so. People don't linger afterwards to check out books on the topic of the program or to continue conversations sparked by the activity offered. They don't necessarily even "get" that the library has provided the program. So, a conscious decision has been made that, in spite of the lack of space, library staff will endeavor to offer more programs on site. Folding chairs and TV trays may need to be employed, but we feel it is important that the library be recognized as the organizer/provider of these offerings.

A first step in achieving Objective 2 will begin in April 2016, when library doors will be opened at 8 a.m. for public access before regular hours. A coffee service will be provided by volunteers during this time, and patrons may check out holds and other library materials using the SelfCheck machine. Computer access and reference assistance will not be available until 10 a.m., but residents will be welcome to read the newspaper or magazines while enjoying their coffee, and classes or meetings may be conducted on site within that 2-hour timeframe. This strategy will help residents to recognize the LIBRARY as their "third place."

Objective 3 addresses the physical building and lack of space for patrons, collections, computers, and staff. Staff, Library Board, and/or Friends of the Library members will work with appropriate City personnel to identify architectural options for a library building expansion or relocation, will engage an architect of libraries in the study of possibilities and to prepare a design concept, and will conduct the steps necessary to financing and constructing a building expansion or relocation. (Plans must be communicated to WCCLS one year in advance of the next levy election in order to be included in the WCCLS levy cycle that would begin in fiscal year 2020/2021.)

Library Goals

- 1 The library will enable residents to connect online using modern technology.**
- 2 The library will be residents' first choice for finding and using materials and information to make informed decisions.**
- 3 The library will stimulate imagination and learning by providing new and popular library materials for all ages.**
- 4 The library will inspire children to read.**
- 5 The library will provide welcoming spaces in which the community will come to connect, learn, and read.**

In review, these are the five goals, in priority order, upon which the library will focus during the next five years. Progress will be reviewed annually by the Library Board and staff, patron input will be gathered, and objectives and activities will be updated.

The Library Board seeks Council approval of these Strategic Plan Goals in the form of a resolution, thus:

WHEREAS, the mission of the North Plains Public Library is to connect people with information, resources, and experiences for personal enrichment and enjoyment and to engage and strengthen the community; and

WHEREAS, the North Plains Public Library has been a member of the Washington County Cooperative Library Services since 2007 and will receive stable funding from levy proceeds for the next five fiscal years, 2016-2021; and

WHEREAS, a Library Strategic Plan has been developed by community stakeholders, including library board members, library staff, and library patrons which identifies the highest priorities and goals for library services in the next five years; and

WHEREAS, the goals established in the Library Strategic Plan are the following:

- 1 The library will enable residents to connect online using modern technology.
- 2 The library will be residents' first choice for finding and using materials and information to make informed decisions.
- 3 The library will stimulate imagination and learning by providing new and popular library materials for all ages.
- 4 The library will inspire children to read.
- 5 The library will provide welcoming spaces in which the community will come to connect, learn, and read;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTH PLAINS, OREGON, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1: The goals set forth in the Library Strategic Plan 2016-2021 are approved by the City Council.

Section 2: This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the City Council.