NORTHLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

Strategic Plan 2021-2024

MISSION Northland Public Library enables, empowers and encourages lifelong learning and discovery in a safe, welcoming space for all.

VISION Northland will serve as a positive influence on society by ensuring our library is welcoming and inclusive to all.

- KNOWLEDGE
- QUALITY
- CUSTOMER FOCUS
- TEAMWORK
- INTEGRITY
- FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY
- RESPECT
- DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion)



NORTHLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY
www.northlandlibrary.org

BOROUGH OF BRADFORD WOODS • FRANKLIN PARK BOROUGH • MARSHALL TOWNSHIP • ROSS TOWNSHIP • TOWN OF MCCANDLESS

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Mission

Northland Public Library enables, empowers and encourages lifelong learning and discovery in a safe, welcoming space for all.

Vision

Northland will serve as a positive influence on society by ensuring our library is welcoming and inclusive to all.

Values

Knowledge: We will provide easy and open access to information as well as programs, technology and services that connect people with each other and with the world of ideas.

Quality: We will ensure our services, collections, programming, staff and facility adapt to meet or exceed the ever-changing needs of our diverse community.

Customer Focus: We will provide all library patrons with services that are courteous, prompt, efficient, friendly and innovative.

Teamwork: Northland staff will partner with each other, other libraries and community organizations to deliver high-quality, equitable and inclusive services.

Integrity: We will be honest, open, fair, ethical and accountable.

Fiscal Responsibility: We will continue to provide a fiscally responsible return on investment to our municipalities, other funders and residents.

Respect: Library patrons and staff will treat each other with dignity and respect, and will commit to solve problems in a fair and ethical way.

DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion): Northland Public Library is uniquely positioned to fight inequity and exclusion through free and open access to resources, programs and services. It is critical that Library staff are empowered with the training and development needed to reach individuals and communities that may be marginalized, undervalued or underserved; to create welcoming and inclusive environments; and to respond to community needs.

SWOT Analysis
(Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

Internal

External

Strengths

1. Staff: specifically, their resilience and resourcefulness, drive to understand and serve our patrons and ability to work as a team
2. Hours of operation
3. Location: we serve a vibrant community
4. Collection
5. Programs

Opportunities

1. Customer satisfaction (we do well but there's always room for improvement)
2. Outreach-go to more community spaces
3. Evaluate all opportunities to best meet the needs of patrons/ROI
4. Building: improvement projects and finding new ways to use the spaces we have now
5. Attract more 20- to 50-year-old patrons
6. Funding from grants
7. Hybrid model of service can enable us to engage with more patrons
8. New technology
9. Resources exist to address diversity amongst staff and the collection

Weaknesses

1. Lack of space/storage space/building limitations in both staff and public areas
2. Our resilience and resourcefulness lead to us constantly being asked to do more with less
3. Need more effective mechanisms for promoting the Library's services and outcomes.
4. Sustainability of funding
5. Trying to be everything to everyone
6. Systemic and geographic obstacles to diversity

Threats

1. Deterioration of respect
2. Publishing companies' prices and practices, especially regarding e-resources
3. Being asked to do more with less
4. Technology moving fast and we don't want to be left behind
5. Decline in library use due to Covid-19 and its variants
6. Cyberattacks
7. Saturation of entertainment options for patrons
8. Not being able to reach kids where they are, and when they can resume regular activities, they may choose to do other (non-library) things
9. Funding that doesn't meet the needs of the services/resources demanded by residents
    a. Myth: The internet has made the library obsolete
        i. May result in reduced/inadequate funding
        ii. May result in reduced use of services/resources and residents paying for similar services/resources when they can get them for free at the library.

Guiding Principles

Our guiding principles are to adhere to our mission, strive to realize our vision, and live out our values while recognizing that staff is our greatest asset and backing up our decisions with data and research.



Challenge: Staffing needs & changes



1. Videographer/program assistant needed
2. Compensation concerns/minimum wage changes
    a. Half of our current job grades start below $15/hour which is being discussed as a potential new minimum wage
    b. Reduction in staff morale as jobs and job duties are modified as needed in response to changes in funding, changes in library usage, evolving services, automation or other factors
    c. Library workers in general are undercompensated compared with workers in other industries.
3. Need to ensure staff are trained appropriately for future makerspace
4. Need to address the lack of diversity amongst staff
    a. Hiring process needs to be more welcoming and inclusive, including job descriptions
    b. Need to ensure policies and procedures are equitable and inclusive
5. Need to continue options for working from home
6. Need to do a better job of educating staff about other departments & positions
7. Need to keep all staff informed about:
    a. How space is being used
    b. Library policies
    c. Departmental procedures—especially those that affect other departments
    d. Library services and programs
    e. Library governance and funding

Actions to address staffing needs and changes: we will:



1. Add a videographer—possibly an intern or volunteer.
2. Compensation/minimum wage:
    a. Consider shifting or combining job duties as appropriate for the needs of the Library.
    b. Explore automation options to improve efficiencies and services.
    c. Advocate for increasing library workers' salaries.
3. Ensure staff have the new technologies, tools, knowledge and information needed to do their jobs effectively.
4. Improve Staff Diversity:
    a. Create and implement a plan to increase staff diversity through a full review of our hiring process.
    b. Streamline and clarify policies and procedures, making sure they meet DEI objectives. Review on a regular basis.
    c. As part of the full hiring process review, develop and implement a plan to revise all job descriptions to better attract more diverse and qualified applicants.
5. Allow staff to continue to work from home as long as it benefits both Northland and the employee, and falls within the parameters defined by the Teleworking Policy.
6. Educating staff:
    a. Find ways for departments to collaborate.
    b. Develop plan to educate staff about work done in other departments.
7. Develop a plan to keep staff better informed about items 7a-e, above.
8. Form a taskforce to explore the possibility of a staff scholarship to support professional development in library and information sciences and internal promotion opportunities.

Challenge: Funding concerns

National and local consortium pressure to eliminate overdue fines will eventually eliminate an internal revenue source

Impact of 2021 RAD formula change and pandemic related funding reduction

On-going need to inform government funders at all levels about the library's ever evolving services and resources in order to ensure more adequate funding.

On-going need to inform government funders at all levels about residents' use of and reliance upon new and existing library services and resources in order to ensure more adequate funding.

Municipal funding reduction due to economic factors

Library- & Foundation-generated income down

- Donations down
- In-person fundraisers curtailed
- Book sales & Book Nook income loss
- Fine & replacements fees

State funding is still below 2005 funding level

Actions to address funding concerns: we will:

Continue to reduce the fines budget with the goal of reducing it to zero within the next three years.

Maintain capital budget, including fully funding depreciation costs, in order to cover building issues, but continue to seek outside funding and grants for projects.

Seek out meetings with local, state and federal elected officials, invite them to the library, and educate them on the value of libraries. Welcome newly elected officials into service.

Return to providing annual presentations about library services/resources at municipal meetings at least once per year.

In partnership with the NPLF, fundraise in a variety of ways in order to appeal to different demographic groups.

Engage patrons more in advocacy efforts with all levels of funders.

Challenge: Facility/space

1. General lack of adequate space in staff and public areas of the Library
2. Patio/staircase deficiencies need to be addressed
3. Need flexible spaces
4. Intention to create a makerspace: A makerspace is a place where patrons have access to tools and services that can be used to create and innovate while simultaneously inspiring one another as a community.
5. Need to remodel lobby in ways that better enable Circulation staff to welcome and serve patrons
6. Noise level in lower lobby needs to be reduced
7. Need well-defined Learning Garden plan
8. Need a sustainability plan
9. Accessibility
10. Need to prepare for possible cyber attacks

Actions to address the facility/space: we will:

1. Plan for future space needs and building projects so that the groundwork can be laid now.
2. Ensure funding is secured in order to complete the new entrance project.
3. Look at ways to create flexible spaces, incorporating ideas identified during the strategic planning process.
4. Makerspace:
    a. Include room for a makerspace area in the remodeling project.
    b. Plan and identify funding for furnishing and equipping a makerspace.
5. Include revamping circulation work spaces in the remodeling project.
6. Include noise-reducing flooring for lower lobby in the remodeling project.
7. Develop clear and specific goals and guidelines for the Learning Garden through the newly formed Learning Garden Task Force.
8. Develop a specific sustainability plan with clear goals.
9. Accessibility:
    a. Develop a plan to make the building more accessible.
    b. Improve wayfinding signage.
10. Maintain cybersecurity insurance.

Challenge: Services

1. Pressure to resume former services, continue and improve current services, and add new services.
2. Need to keep up with new/faster delivery methods
3. Need to stay abreast of technology trends
4. Need to help patrons learn how to use new technology
5. Need to find ways to attract non-users

Actions to address services: we will:

1. Providing services:
    a. Ensure departments have the tools, knowledge and personnel needed to maintain and improve virtual programs.
    b. Need to balance community needs with staff time & ability; be mindful of ROI and be willing to let go of activities with less impact
    c. Strive to connect patrons to programs and services they need and want by staying informed about other community services and events rather than trying to provide all services.
2. Explore options to deliver materials and services to patrons where they are.
3. Stay current with technology trends (mobile app development, automation tools, new software, 10G opportunities, etc.).
4. Educate patrons about new technology:
    a. Increase access and support for tech-limited patrons and differently-abled patrons both in-person and remotely.
    b. Continue to educate people about the e-resources and other library services available to them, and make every effort to get outside groups to link to Northland's video tutorials.
    c. Expand computer classes as needed.
5. Attract non-users:
    a. Partner with ethnic organizations.
    b. Continue to partner with local businesses and organizations, such as North Park, North Hills Community Outreach, North Hills Art Center, etc., and develop new partnerships.
    c. Develop more intergenerational and drop-in programs.

Challenge: Collection

1. Need to respond to new formats and changes to current formats of library materials
2. Need to reallocate space as the collection changes
3. Need to add more lendable technology to collection such as more hotspots, laptops, tablets, etc.
4. Need to promote the collection more effectively
5. Need to ensure our collection is diverse

Actions to address the collection: we will:

1. Monitor trends to ensure we are purchasing the types of materials that patrons want.
    a. Work with Technical Services, Adult Services and Children & Teen Services to develop procedures for lending new items.
    b. Follow CAG (Circulation Advisory Group) and TSAG (Technical Services Advisory Group) best practices.
    c. Continue to be guided by our Collection Development Policy in order to maintain the high standards of our collection while evaluating new collection formats, technology collections and reviewing space needs.
2. Continue to review usage statistics on a regular basis and add or remove collections as demand indicates.
3. Dedicate more collection funds specifically for technology lendables.
4. Explore new and innovative ways to promote the collection, for example, at programs and outreach events.
5. Address the diversity of the collection:
    a. Continue the diversity audit of the adult collection and plan to perform a diversity audit of other collections and the rest of the building within the next three years.
    b. Participate in consortium work on diversity in library collections.
    c. Revise our Collection Development Policy, incorporating ideas identified during the strategic planning process, especially regarding diversity.





Challenge: Promoting the Library

1. Need to educate the RAD and our municipalities about library partnerships and current shared services
2. Need to educate the RAD and our municipalities about the ways in which Northland serves the hyper-local and regional communities and ROI.
3. Need to continue to find ways to communicate to the public about library services.

Actions to address promoting the Library: we will:

1. Use data, affirmative stories and outcome-based information to showcase how Northland is serving the community through current partnerships, innovative services and programs that reach people where they are.
2. Share this information more widely, targeting the RAD Library Committee, executive director and liaison of the RAD; county executive officers and elected officials, using a variety of communication methods, including in-person presentations.
3. Invite the above people and the ACLA Board members to special programs and fundraisers.
4. Include Northland's Annual Report and latest newsletter with an annual letter to the RAD thanking them for their funding.
5. Encourage ACLA, each ACLA region and individual libraries in the county to send reports to RAD about shared services resulting from the Hill group report and, more importantly, others generated by the ACLA libraries on their own initiative.
6. Continue to improve signage and communication with the public.
7. Apply for local, state & national recognitions and celebrate them if/when we receive them.
8. Engage Authority Board members in educating local municipalities' elected officials about library services and functions.
9. Invite patrons to share their library stories.
10. Keep staff well-informed so they can advocate for the Library and educate the public.



Goals: what does success look like?

- Vibrant, diverse, accommodating, active library!
- Fulfilled, motivated, well-informed staff!
- Achieving our mission and vision by adhering to our values.

Statistics that will be used to determine the nature of the above actions and to measure success:

1. Library Usage Statistics
2. Budget and Financial Reports
3. Various Library Surveys
4. Holds v Borrowing Reports
5. Social Media & Website Statistics
6. Wage & Benefit Survey of SW PA
7. EIN Technology Reports
8. Northland Community Profile
9. Dept for Professional Employees Fact Sheet (2020, 2021, etc.)
10. Municipal Data from the Census (Bradford Woods)
11. State of America's Libraries
12. Data to collect:
    a. What is the current patron awareness of library funding?
    b. What percentage of residents have barriers to library use due to disabilities, and what can the Library do to reduce or remove those barriers?
    c. Which languages would be the most useful to add to the Library's world language holdings?
    d. What items would be most useful in the makerspace and how do patrons want staff to help (one-on-one training, no involvement except for questions, etc.)?
    e. What programming do our patrons attend most frequently? What might we add?
    f. Where and in what ways should library staff do outreach in order to raise awareness in the community of the amenities the library offers?
    g. How can we improve signage to direct patrons to the area of the library they are interested in as well as to the specific collection they are seeking?
    h. Determine Diversity Audit data and look at how it compares to other libraries.
    i. Programming Statistics: how do we compare to other libraries based on our size and population?
    j. Statistics regarding shared services: What services are currently shared by Northland and one or more other libraries in the county? What is the impact of that in terms of the services libraries can provide and in terms of cost savings?
    k. Data about partnerships: With whom does Northland partner? What are the benefits of those partnerships?
    l. Compile statistics regarding work performed by Northland staff for the benefit of the county libraries.
    m. Compute ROI for programs and services.
    n. Run various holds reports to learn how our patrons choose materials and which items they are requesting.
    o. NPL and our Municipalities: How is the library promoted by our municipalities? Do they provide any updates or literature to their residents about us? Is there a way to better promote us or be more of a partner?
    p. Seek feedback from businesses, community organizations, local school districts and local higher education institutions regarding their impression of/feelings toward/opinions on the reputation of our library.
    q. Reach out to prospective, lapsed, non-library-users and new residents to learn what would inspire them to visit Northland.

Strategic Planning Process

The Strategic Plan was developed by the Strategic Planning & Policy Committee and based upon recommendations from five Strategic Planning Subcommittees. Each subcommittee was chaired by a Strategic Planning & Policy Committee member and consisted of staff members from all departments as well as interested Authority Board and NPL Foundation Board members.

The five subcommittees and their charges were as follows:

1. Staffing
    - What are staff and departments currently doing (analyze results of Reverse Strategic Planning exercise to be done by staff)?
    - Do the job descriptions align with daily/weekly/monthly tasks?
    - Are department goals being met? Should they be modified?
    - Look at staff turnover and retention.
    - Should staff be allowed to continue to do some work from home, even after the pandemic?
    - Should the Library create a scholarship program for staff who wish to pursue their MLIS?
2. Data analysis
    - Look at the data we already have: what is it telling us?
    - What data do we still need to collect?
    - What are the best ways to present the data?
3. Outside forces
    - What are current and future funding sources?
    - What are ACLA and county initiatives and trends?
    - What could be the long-lasting effects of the pandemic?
4. Facility/Collection
    - What will our building needs be in the next 5 years? Include phones, security, energy, and the Learning Garden.
    - Look at current and future space needs.
    - Look at all aspects of collection:
        i. Collection Development Policy
        ii. Current and new formats
        iii. Other considerations
5. Future (what's coming, what are the trends, what does our community want, what do we want)
    - What new technologies should the Library be aware of?
    - What new tools are coming down the pike?
    - What new services do our communities want?
    - What new services do we want to offer?

The meetings were framed thusly:

- Note the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats revealed by each of the 6 topics.
- Ask the following questions:
    - What should we keep doing?
    - What should we do more of?
    - What should we do less of?
    - What should we stop doing?

- What should we do differently?
- Consider diversity and inclusion when planning next steps.
- What will success look like? What will excellence look like?

Staff were asked the following questions via a survey:

1. What do we know is coming?
2. What do we fear?
3. What do we hope?
4. What do we expect?
5. What have we failed to prepare for?
6. What can't we avoid?
7. What will we still be dealing with?
8. What isn't finished yet?
9. If we achieve only one thing in the next three years, it should be . . . ?
10. Examples of actions we could take that would help us to achieve this are . . . ?

Timeline

November 2020

- Amy Steele and Kelley Moten presented plans for strategic planning to the Strategic Planning & Policy Committee and solicited feedback.
- Divided staff into groups and gave overview of the Reverse Strategic Planning exercise.

December 2020-March 2021

- Staff completed the Reverse Strategic Planning exercise.
- Staff responded to the survey.
- Subcommittees had first and some second meetings. All meetings throughout this process took place virtually, via Zoom.

March-April 2021

- Subcommittees continued to meet and worked on charges.
- Staff survey results were shared with the subcommittees.

May 2021

- Subcommittees gave presentations to staff and solicited feedback on Staff Development Day on May 21.
- Strategic Planning & Policy Committee met on May 25 and discussed progress.

June-July 2021

- Subcommittees finalized their work.
- Subcommittee chairs assembled findings and worked on Strategic Plan drafts.

August-September 2021

- Strategic Planning & Policy Committee met to finalize the draft of the Strategic Plan and to ready the Plan for approval by the NPLA Board.

October 2021

- Strategic Planning & Policy Committee presented the Strategic Plan draft to the NPLA Board for approval (October 26).

Strategic Planning Subcommittee Members

Staffing
Irene Caliendo (Chair)
Courtney Bonnet
Trina Boyd
Leigha Lamont
Annemarie Lamperski
Kelley Moten
Amy Steele

Data Analysis
Kelley Moten (Chair)
Susan Claus
Heidi Coltin
Ellen DiMartini
Mary Ann Johns
Karrie Lukin
Mehak Saeed
Amy Steele
Whitney Wright

Outside Forces
Jack Murtagh (Chair)
Kim Englert
Valerie Golik
Kelley Moten
Karen Puff
Casey Sample
Amy Steele

Facility/Collection
Tom Kosmala (Chair)
Lisa Akenhead
Bill Bittner
Jeanne Bondi
Lorenzo Dellagiovanna
Andrea Georgic
Bob Lukitsch
Kelley Moten
Kim Ann Smith
Amy Steele
Nicholas Yon

Future
Cindy Potter (Co-Chair)
Adrianne Krings (Co-Chair)
Mary Ann Bove
Kati Coleman
Beverly Dunlop
Dana Getz
Raeann MacNeil
Kelley Moten
Rebecca Munoz
Karen Nootbaar
Amy Steele

Strategic Planning & Policy Committee Members

Dan DeMarco (Chair)
Irene Caliendo
Tom Kosmala
Jack Murtagh
Cindy Potter
Adrianne Krings
Kelley Moten
Amy Steele

Northland Public Library Authority Board Members

Casey Sample (Ross Township), President
Tom Kosmala (Borough of Bradford Woods), Vice President
Karrie Lukin (Franklin Park Borough), Secretary
Heidi Coltin (Marshall Township), Treasurer
Irene Caliendo (Town of McCandless)
Dan DeMarco (Ross Township)
Dana Getz (Town of McCandless)