POUDRE RIVER PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT
STRATEGIC PLAN   2016-2018

INTRODUCTION

The Board of Trustees met in May 2015 and drafted four overarching goals around which the Library District's strategic planning team developed strategies and tactics to effectively re-brand the Poudre River Public Library District as a "Platform for Continuous Learning". The Strategic Planning Team identified three target audiences on which to focus effective program development, collection growth, modified services and facility usage to highlight a "continuous learning" brand. Based on current research, literature review and community data*, the three audiences are:

- Birth-3rd grade for school readiness
- Tweens and teens
- Nonprofits, job seekers and the business community

These three audiences were identified as groups with which library resources and strengths can best be aligned to provide a platform for continuous learning. For example:

- The parents and caretakers of birth-3rd grade will benefit from library programs, services and digital and print collections that can help them learn strategies for their children's school readiness and reading proficiency achievement by the end of 3rd grade.
- The Library can effectively serve the tweens and teens by providing a welcoming and comfortable place where they can meet and develop their STREAM skills, among other things.
- Nonprofits will benefit from a place to gather, network and attend business-type classes.

By targeting these three audiences, the Library District serves identified community needs and complements but does not duplicate services offered in the larger community. The addendum to this document includes a description of each target audience, the community need that is being addressed, potential tactics on how to realign library programs, services and collections and build on library strengths to effectively reach the respective audience.

The Library will continue to provide and improve services, programs and collections that support all users, including the adult and senior populations, the disabled, LGBTQIA, those experiencing homelessness, and non-English speaking and immigrant populations. Strategies to support continuous learning for all library users are addressed throughout this plan. These include prioritizing excellent customer service, convenience, ease-of-use and streamlined access, digital learning, designing the library to be a place to learn, create and share, promoting social and cultural diversity through programs, services, and collections, and aligning organizational culture to reflect the library as a place of continuous learning.

Targeting these three communities does not preclude the programs, services and digital and print collections that the library provides to adults and seniors, the disabled, LGBTQIA, those experiencing homelessness, and non-English-speaking and immigrant populations. Strategies to support continuous learning for non-target groups are addressed throughout this plan. These include prioritizing excellent customer service, improving staff training, removing physical, cultural, social and economic barriers in service, convenience, ease-of-use and stream-lined access, digital learning, and aligning organizational culture to reflect the library as a place of continuous learning.

This planning document for the Poudre River Public Library District reflects the hard work and dedication of the Library District Board of Trustees, the staff planning team and consultant, Laureen Trainer, Trainer Evaluation. It is a blueprint for rebranding the Library District as an organization of continuous learning that provides excellent value to the community and accessible, convenient services and programs that align with community needs.

Planning Team

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* Please see addendum for list of resources consulted.

Goal #1

Take proactive and sustained steps to brand the library as a platform of continuous learning.

Strategy #1 - Define the library as a place of continuous learning.

Tactics

1) Develop the brand beyond books
2) Find engaging ways to brand learning
3) Design the library to be a place to learn, create and share
4) Align organizational culture to reflect the library as a place of continuous learning

Strategy #2 - Be an open, welcoming place for all.

Tactics

1) Remove barriers to access, including physical, cultural, social and economic
2) Promote and celebrate social and cultural diversity through programs, services and collections
3) Prioritize convenience and ease of use in all areas of service
4) Create and define an expectation of excellent customer service
5) Train staff to be highly skilled so that no one leaves without an answer

Goal #2
Clarify, enhance and communicate the value of the library to the community.

Strategy #1 - Help people thrive through programming, services and collections.

Tactics

1) Define and evaluate core services for youth, adults and seniors
2) Reorganize priorities in relation to defined target communities
3) Be intentional about the scope of programming, services and collections
4) Ensure the defined target audiences are incorporated into programming, services and collections
5) Ensure digital literacy is incorporated into programming, services and collections
6) Ensure social and cultural diversity is incorporated into programming, services and collections

Strategy #2 - Develop an effective marketing campaign.

Tactics

1) Reallocate resources to meet the priority of an effective marketing campaign
2) Research outside firms to develop campaign
3) Hire outside firm to perform communications audit
4) Create internal communication plan
5) Modify external communication plan to match new strategies
6) Evaluate the social media campaign

Strategy #3 - Evaluate outcomes.

Tactics

1) Using logic models, outcomes and/or evaluation tools:
   a. Demonstrate the value of school readiness programming and services
   b. Demonstrate the value of tween/teen programming and services
   c. Demonstrate the value of assisting nonprofit, job seekers and small business programming and services
   d. Demonstrate the value of social and cultural diversity components of our programming and services to our defined target communities

e. Demonstrate the value of digital literacy components of our programming and services to our defined target communities

Strategy #4 - Be a platform for discussion of community issues.

Tactics

1) Provide the venue for civic engagement discussions
2) Decide when to engage as a partner
3) Decide when to initiate the civic engagement discussions
4) Enlist the help of outside experts and facilitators as necessary

Goal #3

Refine the scope of the library's programs, services and collections around community priorities to develop the most effective response to community needs.

Strategy #1 - Be intentional in the reallocation of resources.

Tactics

1) Define focus and priorities based on identified needs of target audience
2) Continuously evaluate programs, services and collections based on identified needs of target audience
3) Remove internal barriers to achieve stated goals; be nimble
4) Be fiscally responsible

Strategy #2 - Cultivate the defined target audiences.

Tactics

1) Be a leader in school readiness Birth-3rd grade
2) Be a leader in tween/teen out-of-school programming
3) Be a leader in assisting nonprofits, job seekers and small businesses
4) Be intentional about programming, services and collections
5) Provide opportunities for creative activities including STREAM

Goal #4

Evaluate space and partnerships in order to maximize stakeholders access to all services.

Strategy #1 - Develop a physical facilities plan.

Tactics

1) Evaluate space in response to the specifics of the strategic plan and the Community Needs Assessment
2) Hire outside firm to conduct facilities plan and evaluate use of space

Strategy #2 - Strive for seamless virtual presence.

Tactics

1) Evaluate current digital collection, including databases, apps and e-media
2) Ensure virtual presence in community

Strategy #3 - Identify unique spaces for library presence in the community.

Tactics

1) Explore and pursue locations that provide library space, visibility and convenient access to library resources
2) Explore and pursue alternatives for services and the distribution of library materials

Strategy #4 - Define and prioritize partnerships.

Tactics

1) Evaluate current partnerships in relation to defined target communities
2) Explore and pursue potential, valuable partnerships

What are community needs that match the Library's strengths?

Target audience: Birth-3rd grade for school readiness and reading proficiency

What do they need?

- A place to reinforce school readiness and out-of-school literacy;
- Literacy support tools to enable kindergarten readiness and elementary school reading proficiency;
- A place where parents and caregivers of young children can learn to give their children an early literacy component that is focused on ensuring that every child achieve reading proficiency by the end of third grade;
- Being read to, having access to books, and learning opportunities out of school are critical for children to develop oral language skills, creative thinking, memory development and the ability to read;
- Re-enforce United Way's Smart Start for Kids campaign's common and consistent message and targeted interventions for all at-risk children.

How can the library shift resources to become "the place?"

- Understand that parents are the most important factor in ensuring a young child gets the stimulation he or she needs to succeed in reading and language readiness.
- Refocus story time and summer learning programs to equip parents, daycare providers and childcare givers with the tools they need to ensure their children's reading and language success.
- Maintain a common language and consistent message to parents, daycare providers and child caregivers at all three libraries and Outreach that stresses the structural tools of language and literacy learning, with the intention to remove the barriers and confusion as to what the parents and caregivers need to do to promote language and literacy in their children's early years.
- Commit to out-of-school literacy and reading programs to complement, not duplicate services, programs and collections offered elsewhere.
- Fit the needs of the Libraries' respective school readiness populations.
- Provide programs, services and collections that match the Library District's various school readiness communities.
- Develop a language and literacy volunteer corps that reads aloud to children.

Why is it important for the library to dedicate resources to that need?

- United Way has developed a community-wide school readiness project, with which the Library District is a partner.
- In Larimer County 22% of fourth graders are not reading at grade level; 17% do not graduate high school on time.
- Research consistently links early language and literacy development with academic achievement, higher graduation rates, and enhanced productivity in life.
- For the last twenty years, libraries have been leaders in committing to the importance of children being read to, having access to books, and providing learning opportunities for out-of-school time, and knowing that these are critical for kids to develop oral language skills, creative thinking, memory development and the ability to read.
- Across the country and locally, after-school and summer literacy programs that get books into the hands and homes of all children are expanding, as are those that increase the number of volunteers reading aloud to children.
- Matches Community Needs Assessment #1, #4, #5 and # 6.

How does addressing that need support the role and strengths of the library?

- The Library District has been a United Way partner in the school readiness campaign since its inception in 2012, and a funded "impact partner" since 2014.
- The Library employs at least 5-6 FTE librarians to early-childhood, school readiness, out of school programs, services and collections.
- The Library is already seen as a community leader in out-of-school story times and reading aloud projects.
- The Library has strong programs, services and collections in all three of its libraries and in Outreach.
- Partnerships – Untied Way, Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy (CLEL), Colorado State Library, Matthews House, Family Center.

Target audience: <u>Teen and Tweens</u>

What do they need?

- A safe and comfortable place to go after school and on the weekends to play games, pursue STREAM projects;
- A safe place to interact with other teens;
- Access to books and resources that match their interests;
- Summer learning opportunities to maintain academic knowledge over summer breaks;
- Get homework help

How can the Library shift resources to become "the place?"

- Each library could rearrange space to create an enclosed/engaging Teen Area with a computer lab and creative projects space;
- Expand the juvenile and teen book collection that complement popular online games;
- Dedicate a teen librarian in each building that markets to that population and provides programming to that population.
- Dedicated grant-writing to support programming and materials
- Work with business librarian and jobs and career librarian to offer programs to teens and tweens for business startup and career opportunities
- Provide volunteer opportunities for tweens and teens to promote leadership and philanthropic skills and interest.

Why is it important for the Library to dedicate resources to that need?

- Attendance in after-school enrichment programs promote youth engagement in school and extra-curricular activities
- Early-grade mentoring programs and reading engagement programs provide exposure to positive mentors, and supports success in transitions to middle school
- Opportunities for career exploration and internships enable successful transition into to post-secondary opportunities
- Support programs for at-risk teen behaviors ensure age-appropriate social/emotional behavior
- Creates lifelong library supporters – teens and tweens are only 10 years away from having disposable incomes and only 15 years away from families
- Gives tweens and teens a safe place to go out-of-school – they are not on the streets looking for ways to pass the time; continues their learning in a safe, comfortable, supervised atmosphere.
- Identifies the library as a place teens and tweens can find a safe, comfortable, supervised place to gather, re-enforce learning in a fun and social atmosphere, provide creative and learning activities, just relax, read and interact;
- Teens and tweens will discover that the library offers more than just books;
- According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, younger Americans' media and technology behaviors straddle the print and digital environments and they use and appreciate library spaces as both places for quiet study and as places to collaborate and hang out.

- Tweens and teens who grow up in low-income communities, who are immigrants or the children of immigrants, or who simply have alternate preferences may not have experienced the same level of digital and technological influences in their early lives. For example, within a 1 mi. radius of OTL, 44% of teen boys are below the income level of $25,000; 10% are aged 10-19 year olds; 6.42% of these are boys. 1 mi. radius of Harmony Library, 24.7% are below the $25,000 income level; 16.1% are in the 10-19 age group; 15.7% are boys; 1 mi. radius of Council Tree Library, 11.6% of the population are below the $25,000 income level; 16.2% are in the 10-19 age group; 14.9% are boys.
- Each Library and Outreach can target their respective groups for programs and services that match the respective populations
- Positive staff restructure and enhanced teen librarian focus
- Matches Community Needs Assessment #1,#3, #4, #5, #6, #7

How does addressing that need support the role and strengths of the library?

- Re-enforces learning in an out-of-school atmosphere
- Already a teen librarian in two of three libraries. A Youth librarian (children's and teen emphasis) will be hired for Council Tree Library
- Can be marketed in each library and in Outreach, which re-enforces out-of-school learning in four sites
- Outcomes are measureable
- Each Library and Outreach can target their respective groups for programming and services
- Partnerships – United Way, Pretty Brainy; CSU Engineering Dept.; local tech startups; Galvanize; Boys and Girls Club; Base Camp (fee-based)

Target Audience: <u>Nonprofit, Jobs and Career and Business Community</u>

What do they need?

- Nonprofits: A place for nonprofit programming and networking -- Northern Colorado Nonprofit Resource Center closed in 2014 so there is no central place for nonprofits to gather; a center where the nonprofits can learn business basics, board development, fundraising, grant writing, etc.; there are 743 registered nonprofits in Fort Collins, with no umbrella organization; an online presence – a Nonprofit Center webpage integrated into the PRPLD website;
- Jobs and Careers: A place for the unskilled to learn computer skills, resume –writing (complementing what is offered at the Larimer County Workforce Center); programs that focus on career changes and job skills, employment trends; interview and presentations; a point person to navigate through the workforce process; an online presence – a Jobs and Careers Center webpage integrated into the PRPLD website; and
- Business: Skilled market and industry, competition and customer research to complete business plans; a point person to navigate potential businesses to the right organization; access to high-level research databases; demographic information at their fingertips; online sample business plans; an online presence – The Business Center webpage that is integrated into the PRPLD website.

How can Library shift resources to become "the Place"?

- Dedicated learning lab in each of the libraries, especially OTL for classes, workshops, seminars;
- Grant-writing for programs and resources;
- Create virtual library center for Nonprofits, Jobs and Careers and Business; and
- Increase hours of the Jobs and Career Librarian

Why is it important for the Library to dedicate resources to that need?

- Nonprofit Center: It could be a good 3-year project on which the Library could focus its resources with the goal that another agency or a new agency take on the project; 743 registered nonprofits in Fort Collins with no central coordination; United Way no longer dedicates programs or services to this community; Northern Colorado Nonprofit Resource Center (which offered networking and instruction) went out of business in 2014; Can brand the Library as center for continuous learning;
- Jobs and Careers: No basic computer classes for the unskilled job seekers; Few public computers in Larimer County Workforce Center for online applications; Library is a safe, comfortable place for the unskilled to find books, mentoring in resume-writing, and learn job-seeking skills; Library is usually the first place a newcomer goes to get job-seeking

information. Workforce Innovation and opportunities Act (WIOA) includes public libraries as one-stop workforces ites, eligible for federal funds;

- Business: There is no inexpensive or free way for small business to compete with large businesses in research needs; levels the playing field; complements the SBDC offerings; provides high-level research databases for tech incubators. Provides natural communication chain regarding Library services and programs; reinforces the brand of the library beyond books; natural partnership opportunities; and
- Matches *Needs Assessment* #3, #4, #5, #6, #7

How does addressing that need support the role and strengths of the library?

- Re-enforces learning for outspoken, highly-placed Fort Collins community;
- The Library has a Nonprofit Librarian, a Jobs and Careers Librarian, and a Business Librarian;
- Library has already developed a good relationship with the local nonprofit community, business community, and jobs and career community;
- Library already has a strong partnership in place with Foundation Center, SBDC, Larimer County Workforce Center;
- Can reach 743 nonprofit groups, most of which are influential in the community – a good multiplying effect;
- Outcomes are measureable;
- Partnerships – Foundation Center; United Way; Estes Park Nonprofit Resource Center; Loveland Public Library; Small Business Development Center; Larimer County Workforce Center; NoCoNet; local career counseling firms, Rocky Mountain Innosphere; and
- Matches community Assessment needs: #1,#4,#5 and #6

Slate Community Needs Assessment: Slate

- Convenience – eliminate virtual and physical barriers
- Safety/Perceived Homeless Population – Reduce the safety risk while respecting the individual rights of all library users – Deal with transient populations
- Space/Facilities – "Community is clearly calling for increasing the number of places for quiet/individual study and improving the environments of the libraries to feel more cozy and welcoming." -- Provide more individual spaces; do we need to build a new library (rearrange space for better, more welcoming spaces?)
- Role in Education – Strengthen education in our community
- Lifelong learning – Define lifelong learning and the Library's role in it.
- Awareness and Marketing – improve customer services and promotional efforts.
- Community – Create sense of community – sense of place.

An Annotated List of Resources Consulted

ALA The Center of the Future of Libraries
> **Library of the Future – Trends**
> http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/future/trends

> The Center for the Future of Libraries works to identify trends relevant to libraries and librarianship. This collection is available to help libraries and librarians understand how trends are developing and why they matter.

> There are 20 trends listed on this page, each trend "bubble" leads to a one-page description of the trend and how it relates to libraries.

Aspen Institute Dialogue on Public Libraries Report
> **Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries**
> http://csreports.aspeninstitute.org/Dialogue-on-Public-Libraries/2014/report

> "This is a time of great opportunity for communities, institutions and individuals who are willing to champion new thinking and nurture new relationships. It is a time of particular opportunity for public libraries with their unique stature as trusted community hubs and repositories of knowledge and information."

Fort Collins Social Sustainability Gaps Analysis
> http://www.fcgov.com/sustainability/pdf/GAPSAnalysis.pdf

> The report provides a high-level overview of the current state of affairs to inform the City of Fort Collins' strategic planning process and decision-making related to social sustainability. This document may also inform other organizations and efforts within the community.

OrangeBoy Inc.
> **Using Customer Intelligence in Strategic Planning**
> Attached as a PDF

> The Orange Boy report which provides an overview of customer behavior trends from January 2104 to April 2015.

Pew Research Center. 2014
> **Libraries in the Digital Age.**
> http://libraries.pewinternet.org/category/libraries-in-the-digital-age/http://libraries.pewinternet.org/category/libraries-in-the-digital-age/

This 2014 opinion poll provides data on the various levels of library engagement by segmenting the American public into nine distinct user groups.

Slate Communications. 2015
Poudre River Public Library District: Needs Assessment Final Report

Feedback about current and future library services was gathered from over 1,000 community members who participated in either a focus group or online survey. Seven core themes emerged: convenience, safety/homeless population, space/facilities, role in education, lifelong learning, awareness and marketing and community.

Strategy Primer
http://www.tronviggroup.com/strategy-primer/?utm_source=Tronvig+Group+Post+Notification+List&utm_campaign=195bc0f322-Strategy+Primer&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_19e9323430-195bc0f322-75038353

This is a short blog post that highlights some marketing definitions and draws distinctions between common marketing terms.

United Way of Larimer County. 2014
Community Impact Plan. Version 2.0

This updated plan identifies the community-level outcomes United Way is striving to achieve to cut poverty in half Larimer County by 2025. It provides statistical information on poverty in the county and outlines the three impact areas of focus: education, income and health.

Urban Library Council
Leadership Brief: Libraries Ignite Learning
http://www.urbanlibraries.org/filebin/pdfs/Libraries_Igniting_Learing-ULC_Leadership_Brief.pdf

Libraries and learning have always been connected but libraries can serve a more intentional role in designing and delivering high-quality programs that lead to learning outcomes.

Urban Library Council
Leadership Brief: Partners for Education
http://www.urbanlibraries.org/filebin/pdfs/ULCLeadership_Brief_PartnersForEducation_Jan2015.pdf

This short brief highlights the changing education landscape and the progressive work of public libraries to meet the education needs of their communities.