2016-2018 Strategic Plan—Year Two Review

The Poudre River Public Library District plays a critical role in the quality of life and continued growth of our community. We understand this important role and are committed to remaining a relevant service organization by anticipating the future and adapting accordingly.

Guiding us in this effort is our strategic plan, a living document that is reviewed annually. To create the strategic plan, we draw not only on best practices and innovations from high-achieving libraries around the country, but also from a thorough analysis of the Library's service areas and valuable input from our community. The following is a review of year 2 of the PRPLD Strategic Plan

Goal #1—Take Proactive and Sustained Steps to Brand the Library as a Platform for Continuous Learning

Define the Library as a Place of Continuous Learning

The Library initiated several activities to reach the goal of the Library as a place of continuous learning:

- In February, 2017, the board approved the **Marketing Plan**, and the plan was rolled out to the community in April 2017. This plan represents a road map for the Library's four priorities and their stated strategies. This plan is focused on marketing strategies and tactics that will enable the Library to build capacity, scale quickly, and explore new ideas, all in the service of achieving the goals of the strategic plan.

- In August, 2017, the **Advocacy Toolkit** was finalized and will be presented to the Library Board in January, 2018. The purpose of this toolkit is to help build public awareness of the library and to engage in public advocacy. The toolkit provides action-oriented guidance for library leaders, staff, and stakeholders to engage in building public awareness about the Library's value through its people, resources, places, and partners or in advocating for a particular issue, action, or decision. The Library Board will tentatively receive a presentation at the January, 2018 board meeting.

- The Library Leadership Team approved three statements this year that defined digital literacy, continuous learning and social and cultural diversity. These statements are important as we align our culture to reflect the library as a place of continuous learning. Here are the three statements:
  - ✓ Continuous Learning —"As a dynamic, responsive and integral part of our community, the Poudre River Public Library District provides opportunities for continuous learning for all ages. Those who continue learning throughout their lives are happier and healthier and feel more productive and useful".

  - ✓ Social and Cultural Diversity —"Poudre River Public Library District is an institution firmly rooted in the promotion of universal access to information and ideas committed to the Library Bill of Rights. We believe that diversity enriches our library and our community with vitality, dynamism, and a multiplicity of narratives and perspectives. Therefore, as a culturally competent organization, we strive to provide diverse,

inclusive, and multicultural services, collections and programs that emphasize our obligation to serve and advocate for inclusion, diversity, and social equity".

✓ Digital Literacy—"Digital Literacy is the ability to appropriately and responsibly use digital technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information".

- The Library District has increased the budget and developed revised protocols for **training opportunities**. The Library District is using the quarterly personnel review process (QPA) for managers to make staff aware of training opportunities. Staff training that is completed (workshop, conference, webinars) are tracked on the City of Fort Collins Career Connect module. For library conferences, the Library Leadership Team meets annually in November/December to filter requests to approve/deny based on the needs of the Library. For 2018, the maximum library obligation for a national conference was raised to $1,800 from $1,500, the first adjustment in 5 years. 2017 saw a large increase in the number of staff taking webinars (free or minimal costs). These webinars are also archived, so Library staff can watch the webinar at a time best for the staff person and the library district. When appropriate, the Library District has invited staff from our neighbor libraries to various speakers, thereby increasing the impact of training opportunities. In September, Dr. Dipesh Navsaria, of the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine, spoke to a full room at the Harmony Library on September 12th on early literacy Dr. Navsaria commented on how reading aloud to children from birth can reduce academic disparities later in life. "If we can get that first 1,000 days of life right," he said, "we're really going to save a lot of trouble later on and have to do far less remediation."

- At a time when polarization is the defining and dividing feature of American politics, public libraries are the place to bring communities together to solve local problems both big and small. Through **civic engagement**, the Library District has able to address civic engagement through additional training for library staff, innovative programs and partnerships such as the Civics @ Your Library series, the Great Decisions series with the Foreign Policy Association, or the community session "Moving Beyond Partisan Politics", held in partnership with CSU's Center for Public Deliberation. By offering opportunities to gather as a community to discuss ideas and engage in open dialogue, we can enhance understanding and problem-solving. We are very proud of our role in supporting civil discourse and believe that the contribution of the Library District in ensuring an informed and engaged community is critical to our society and our democracy. In December, the Library District, partnering with the Fort Collins Human Rights Commission and Ignite Fort Collins, convened the first FoCo Speaks Out, a multicultural performance addressing issues of equity and inclusion in Fort Collins.

Be a Welcoming Place for All--Remove Cultural, Social, and Economic Barriers

The Library initiated several activities to reach the goal of the Library as a welcoming place for all.

- World Language Story time is a research based project of children's stories, crafts, puppets, and music presented by Library staff, CSU students and community volunteers. It invites fluent speakers as well as those interested in a new language, to enjoy a time with community and family. This past April, Ludy Rueda, of our Outreach Department, was the recipient of the *Exceptional Achievement in Service-Learning Community Partner Award* for her efforts with the World Languages Story time initiative. This award is presented to a CSU community partner for

their commitment to building university-community partnerships that meet community-articulated needs and challenges, while supporting the holistic education of the next generation of professionals, leaders, and citizens.

- Increase cultural awareness-25% of story times will have a cultural awareness component. This will be evaluated in the spring, 2018. The Outreach Department has already completed this goal, with other locations set to complete in 2018. These story times inspire learning of other cultures and general cultural knowledge, convey the richness and beauty of the diverse cultures in the United States, and provide positive role models for culturally diverse children. With Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead), the Library District invited the community to celebrate their individual cultural heritage through their ancestors. A holiday with ancient roots combining Mexican indigenous customs and European traditions, Dia de los Muertos is a joyful tribute to the memory of family and friends who have passed away.

- Increase the hiring of a bilingual and diverse work force—the Library has reviewed position descriptions in selected positions and added bi-lingual as a requirement for hiring. This year the Library hired bilingual staff for the Old Town Library (Spanish) and the Outreach Department (Spanish and Arabic). A team has been organized to review position descriptions for inclusivity.

- The Library District revised its lending policies in 2017 (with an effective date of January 1, 2018) and will be fine free for children and teen materials. A study commissioned by the Colorado State Library concluded that fines for children materials created a significant barrier for families facing economic challenges. The Library will also be offering a Teacher Card (with extended loan periods) and a limited card for patrons who have identification, but not with their current Colorado address.

- The Library District revised the3.6 Behavioral policy in order to provide staff with more discretion when assigning library suspensions. Beginning in mid- November, the Old Town Library hired off duty police officers for three hour shifts during high-incident times as a deterrent to criminal activity within the facility Incidents decreased by one-third between October, 2017 and November, 2017. In December, the Library District received unsolicited feedback from patrons, with one patron stating that the increased police presence has made a "tremendous difference" in how the library feels in regard to safety.

- The Old Town Library security cameras were installed and selected employees were granted access to archived video as needed. The Library District updated and renewed the contract with G4S Security for the Old Town Library . The 2017-2018 contract upgrades to more highly trained and experienced Custom Protection Officers (CPO), resulting in less turnover in guards assigned to the library. While CPO's cost more per hour, their training and experience allowed the library to eliminate double guard coverage up to 20 hours per week. These changes have led to a stable security workforce and a more welcoming environment for patrons.

Prioritize Convenience and Ease of Use in All Areas of Service

The following initiatives were acted on or postponed for the Master Plan due in 2018:

- In late 2016, Orange-Boy conducted a study at all three locations to observe customer behaviors and to conduct surveys with the public. The survey indicated a generally positive response from patrons using all three. Orange Boy did share summary notes about issues they saw and provided a list of key opportunities. The study was reviewed by the Library Leadership Team and limited implementations were made (those of an operational nature, rather than a capital expense), mostly at the Old Town Library. Part of the strategic plan called for internal and external customer service training and this aspect is being re-evaluated as we determine what our training needs are.

Goal #2—Clarify, Enhance, and Communicate the Value of the Library to the Community

Help People Thrive Through Programming, Services and Collections

- Working closely with the Poudre River Friends of the Library, the Library Leadership Team and the Programming Team annually revisit the percentage of resources allocated to each target audience, with a particular emphasis on the annual Summer Reading Challenge. This reassessment is important to insure programming funds are dispersed properly and in accordance with Strategic Plan activities.
- *Fort Collins Book Festival: Writings and Riffs,* a one-day, free-to-the-public literary festival centered on the music industry, took place Saturday, October 21, 2017. The book festival included 20 local, national, and international music industry authors and experts, as well as award-winning fiction writers and poets. The 26 sessions in 6 downtown Fort Collins venues included writers' workshops, author presentations, poetry and prose readings, panel discussions, book talks, and signings. The sessions brought over 1,000 participants to downtown Fort Collins.

Develop Effective Marketing campaign---Re-allocate or add resources to meet the priority of an effective marketing campaign: Internal Communications Plan and define staff expectations about staying informed

This past spring, The Library's new tagline "Connect To Curiosity" was released. This new tagline is
- Focused on the key element of lifelong and lifewide learning: Curiosity
- An open invitation to our community
- Alliterative, making it easier to remember
- Applicable or adaptable to all ages, audiences, programs, services, collections, etc.
- Easily translated into other languages (Spanish, French, Mandarin, Arabic, and Russian) for use with particular audiences/communities .

Key messages and talking points:

- Encourages our community to be inquisitive and ask Questions—a key feature of lifelong and lifewide learning.
- Invites members of the community to pursue their unique questions, ideas, interests or passions at the library.
- Promotes the value and benefits of a curious nature, a "hungry mind," and a "spirit of wonder."

In early 2018 the Communications Department will be releasing their strategies for more effective way to conduct internal communication. The training will be available to all staff, with staff completing the training independently via our staff webpages. The Communications Department will also be working with library staff to identify bottlenecks in our communication processes and the Library Leadership team will be tasked with finding short and long term solutions to internal communication bottlenecks.

While email is our most effective way to communicate throughout the library system, bottlenecks do occur sometimes. An example is when a "Library-All" email is sent to every library employee (let's say the announcement of a promotion for an employee), then multiple staff respond to ALL and it creates a potential email bottleneck. Clear communication of expectations will help and allows our team members to prioritize work in such a way that no one impedes the progress of others.

Evaluate Outcomes

With the 2016-2018 Strategic Plan, the Library District began the implementation process of using logic models to prioritize activities, focus on desired outcomes and impacts, guide decision making for future initiatives, and demonstrate value.   There are four primary objectives for our logic models:

- Demonstrate the value of school readiness programming and services.
- Demonstrate the value of teen/tween programming and services.
- Demonstrate the value of assisting nonprofit, job seekers, and small business programming and services.
- Demonstrate the value of social and cultural diversity components of our programming and services to our defined target communities.

For the 2016-2018 Strategic Plan, the Library created an **Impact Team** to evaluate and measure logic models being used in our library programming. The first two years of this project have been spent training library staff on how to implement a logic model for Library programming. The Impact Team is now gathering evidence of programs and will begin an evaluation process in year 3 of programs and services. Evaluations, observations, and surveys will be conducted in 2018 to report on specific outcomes. New ways of thinking about program design and assessment take time to implement, but the rewards will be tangible. It will allow staff members to see the value in the outcomes for people served, for managers who have a tool for continuous innovation and improvement, and for the library that can clearly demonstrate to community leaders the real value our library is delivering to the public every day.

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

Be Intentional in the Allocation of Resources

For the entire history of libraries, we have lived in a world of information scarcity. What's happened in the last two decades is that it has been turned completely on its head. Now we're living in a world of information superabundance. The shift from print to digital resources, our patrons' high demand for meeting and conference room space, and the burgeoning requests from agencies to partner with us are just a sample where the Library needs to be intentional in the allocation of resources.

It is critical that all library staff and volunteers maximize the impact of our delivery of services. The rapidly changing information landscapes, coupled with the economic realities of limited resources, as well as our responsibility to be good stewards of community tax dollars, require that we effectively **align our actions and our resources with the strategic vision** and institutional goals. We must continue to evolve our priorities, programs, and implementation efforts to meet our customer developing needs. In the future, we fully expect that we will need to adjust, add, and even discontinue initiatives and methods as we evolve and as the landscape shifts. These circumstances are not daunting, but, rather, are invigorating.

In the second year of the strategic plan, the Library District addressed three issues:

- Prior to this year, the Outreach Manager reported directly to the Executive Director, while all other branch managers reported to the Deputy Director. Having all public service managers report to one supervisor allows public service managers to have a shared, unified approach in the delivery of library services. Effective March 1, 2017, **all branch managers and outreach manager** began reporting directly to the Deputy Director.

- Evaluating redundancies in services, programs and collections allows the Library make the most of our resources. The past year Freading, an eBook application, was dropped, due to redundancy. Multiple service points at Old Town Library were either dropped or re-positioned for maximum impact for our patrons. Members of the leadership team have been working on a staffing study with the end goal of not automatically filling open positions, but reviewing each position opening, and making necessary changes in position descriptions to best serve our customers.

- We are auditing and **prioritizing partnerships** in relation to our defined target audiences. The leadership team has created a database of partnerships and will conduct periodic partnership audits to insure we are entering partnerships where appropriate.

Cultivate the Defined Target Audiences

Our three target audiences (birth through third grade, teens and tweens, nonprofits/job seekers/business community) were identified as groups with which library resources and strengths can best be aligned to provide a platform for continuous learning. By targeting these three audiences that the Library serves identified community needs, but does not duplicate services offered in the library district. For the second year of the strategic plan:

- The Library identified staff and teams who officially serve the target audience as the primary part of their job.
- Library audited programs, services, and collections related to the target audiences.
- In early, 2018, the Library will gather feedback and ideas from library staff for future planning.

De-selection of Materials Initiative

Over the past five years, managing the collection has been on a one item in, one item out process. Last year the library saw a decrease in circulation of physical items, and part of the decrease can be attributed to overcrowded shelves. This current practice of one item in, one item out is simply not sustainable and will only make our collection and facilities more crowded and unmanageable. In order

to address the crowded shelves, I have allocated additional resources for the Collections Department to step up the weeding process. Weeding the collection is a standard part of the collection management process. A broad knowledge of collection management principles and use of guidelines and statistics go into each judgment.

It is important to have the collection right-sized to promote browsing and to support efficiencies in Circulation. Because the library, just as in a garden, taking out unwanted items or duplicate copies of older titles makes those left behind stand out. Multiple studies have shown that weeding a collection will lead to higher circulation.

Weeding is a complex process. The material selectors will be using professional standards and tools to decide which materials to weed. Circulation will be processing the materials to send to the Friends of the Library for consideration for their sales. The items that leave the library collection continue to benefit the library and the community. The additional revenue generated by the sale of these de-selected items are returned to the Library for enhanced programs and services.

After this project is completed, the end goal is to have the Collections Department, building managers, and circulation supervisors work together to maintain an appropriate size of the collection, and not have to undertake a major weeding project—this will be better for the collection and better for our patrons.

Goal 4—Evaluate Space and Partnerships in Order to Maximize Stakeholders Access to All Services

Develop Facilities Plan

In late, 2016, the Library entered into an agreement for **master facilities planning** services with Humphries/Poli Architects and Dick Waters consulting. The agreement was voided in July, 2017 and the following steps have been taken. The Library provided the board with successful library master plan RFPs (Request for Proposal) and completed library master plans to give the board as the board moved forward.

- The Library board and several leadership team members met with Jacqueline Murphy of the Colorado State Library to develop a RFP for a Master Plan (facilities and strategic). A committee was created and a RFP proposal is awaiting board approval at the January, 2018 board meeting.

Disaster and Emergency Response Plan

The purpose of the Library District Disaster and Emergency Response Plan is to provide staff direction for responding to emergencies in or near District facilities. The procedures are intended to contribute to outcomes that guide staff effectively during emergency situations. The procedures maximize human safety, while minimizing damage to District facilities collections, equipment and data. This plan is intended to minimize disruptions to the District's normal operations and restore compromised operations as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Additionally, the plan defines the District's support of our community's health, welfare, safety and recovery during more widespread emergency situations impacting the District's service area. The plan includes quick, grab-and-go information, available to all staff, as well as detailed plans for emergency response and recovery.

Strive for a Seamless Virtual Presence

One of the most important aspects of the library's digital presence concerns building engagement with patrons. A library website must be able to do many different things simultaneously. It needs to provide all sorts of information about the library, such as its hours, programs, services, and myriad other details. It serves as a delivery vehicle for content and collections, made even more complicated as libraries become involved with electronic and digital materials in addition to their print offerings.

The overriding concern must be to go beyond these utilitarian functions and **strengthen ties between** the library and its digital users, not only fulfilling their immediate questions, but doing so in a way that helps shape a more positive image of the library and increases the possibility that they will return many times over. A library website that doesn't work well, that frustrates its users, or that is simply uninteresting may drive users away. Libraries have a vital interest in sparking engagement in ways that will increase the use of their collections and services and improve the user perception of libraries and their relevancy. The library website also can't be seen in isolation, but as being part of the broader ecosystem of the web and social media. For the second year of the strategic plan, the Library took the following actions:

This past year, library staff created a definition of our virtual seamless presence:

- As a customer-centric organization, Poudre River Public Library District regularly pursues opportunities to improve its customer experiences and interact with our community wherever they might be. This includes both physical and digital library spaces and operations. By strategically building a seamless virtual presence, the Library District seeks to provide extended access to the Library's various digital components that are secure, consistent, and intuitive to our customers regardless of the user's technology channel, connection source, or service/application.

- Digital components include the Library District website, online databases, eMedia collection, catalog, event calendar, social media channels and mobile app. In developing a seamless virtual presence, the Library will use its technology to re-create the best of the in-person experience virtually and deliver upon its stated Mission and Vision. This includes providing cohesive, accessible, and standards-compliant user experiences across systems and services; maintaining systems and services in ways that are responsive to the community's present and future needs; and contributing toward an overall satisfying experience for library users who access library services and resources remotely, via the Internet.

- Many Library teams (CATS, Web team, Communications, digital librarian) **continually evaluate the current digital collection**, including databases, apps, website, and eMedia. This past year the Library introduced Biblioboard, which allows library patrons to upload their works (books and music) and have it accessible via our website. Due to popular demand, the Library increased it's funding for Hoopla, and dropped Freading, as its contents were accessible in other databases. Our redesigned history website, in collaboration with Fort Collins Museum of Discovery, was unveiled to the public in July.

- Library staff continues to explore new trends, products, and ideas related to a seamless virtual presence. The Library District now has pages in Spanish and we are working on Arabic content.