



PORTAGE LAKE DISTRICT LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN

FY 2019—2022

Adopted February 27, 2019

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Portage Lake District Library began work on the 2019-2021 strategic plan in March 2018. A committee was formed, made up of members of the PLDL Board, staff, Friends of the Library, and community members. A community survey that asked users to rate current services and submit ideas for future programs and resources was filled out by nearly 200 community members. Focus groups hosted by strategic planning committee members collected additional insight into library services from senior citizens, teens, teachers, families, and adults without children.

Over the next several months, the committee worked to identify common themes from the survey results and focus group conversations. Those commonalities laid the groundwork for three strategic initiatives identified in this plan: Discover, Imagine, and Connect. Each initiative details a number of goals that are meant to improve our collections, enhance the user's experience, and increase opportunities for community connection and engagement.

This plan is an ambitious set of improvements and innovations that represent a renewed commitment to exceptional service at the library. Many of the goals listed ask the library to commit further to patron- and data-driven decision making. These commitments will ensure that services and resources at PLDL represent the diverse wants and needs of our community. PLDL has long been a community anchor for educational and recreational materials and engagement, and we're thrilled to have a community-informed strategic plan to drive this necessary work.

Dillon Geshel, *Library Director*



The mission of the Portage Lake District Library is to inspire our diverse community to discover, imagine and connect.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Jennifer Donovan, Library Board President
Lora Repp, Library Board Secretary
Emily Raffaelli, Friends of the Library Member
Shannon Healy, Community Member
Susan Burack, Community Member
Susan Autio, Circulation Supervisor
Jennifer Miller, Business Manager
Dillon Geshel, Library Director

LIBRARY STAFF

Dillon Geshel, Library Director
Jennifer Miller, Business Manager
Susan Autio, Circulation Supervisor
Andra Ziemnick, InterLibrary Loan Specialist
Michael Stanitis, Program Coordinator
Leonard Schwandt, Building Specialist
Rachele Lambert, Library Assistant
Nancy Svacina, Library Assistant
Holly Nemiroff, Library Assistant
Peggy Larson, Library Assistant
Catie Gardner, Library Assistant
Mia Brodeur, Library Page
Kellan Heikkila, Library Page
Sarah Eles, Substitute Library Assistant
Anna Leppanen, Substitute Library Assistant
Ellie Alexander, Substitute Library Assistant
Richard Strang, Substitute Maintenance

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Jennifer Donovan, President
Joan Suits, Vice President
Tom Suchenek, Treasurer
Lora Repp, Secretary
Robert Kinnunen, Trustee
Sylvia Matthews, Trustee
Christopher Archer, Trustee



2019 —2022 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Considering input from the Houghton/Keweenaw community, the library staff and members of the Strategic Planning Committee will focus on improvements and innovations in the following key areas:

1. Discover

Strategic Initiative: Through virtual and physical collections, PLDL will provide patrons with the materials needed for engagement, education, and inspiration.

2. Imagine

Strategic Initiative: PLDL will facilitate experiences that engage, educate, and inspire individuals of all ages and backgrounds, and create flexible spaces that are welcoming, easy to navigate, and appropriate for a wide range of activities and community interactions.

3. Connect

Strategic Initiative: PLDL will engage community partners, volunteers, and staff to maximize the library's impact as a community resource, information center, and meeting place.



Discover

Through virtual and physical collections, PLDL will provide patrons with the materials needed for engagement, education, and inspiration. This process requires a balance between providing the library's patrons with materials, while also utilizing staff expertise to help patrons explore new genres, formats, and ideas.

Goal #1: PLDL will provide a diverse collection to patrons

Success Measurements:

- Materials provided are up-to-date and reflect a larger range of viewpoints
- The number of formats available increased

Activities:

- Review and evaluate all collections in terms of organization, materials, formats, ease of access, and diversity
- Expand the options provided, in both format and variety
- Evaluate the process as needed for acquiring new materials

Impact:

- Patrons become life-long learners and have access to a diverse range of materials
-

Goal #2: PLDL will highlight specific collections relevant to time of year and community events

Success Measurements:

- The number of collaborative displays increased
- Collection displays were regularly updated and kept current

Activities:

- Promote local and cultural holidays and history
- Provide local organizations an opportunity to use the display spaces on a rotating bases to publicize their activities and services
- Ensure displays and promoted collections are relevant to library and community happenings

Impact:

- Patrons and community members feel recognized. Their support of the Library is increased, and our local partnerships are strengthened

Discover

Goal #3: PLDL will create collections responsive to community input

Success Measurements:

- Increased circulation
- Increased use of materials within the library
- When surveyed, patrons indicated that materials were more accessible

Activities:

- Survey patrons on additions or changes to collections and services and provide on-going methods for patrons to make collection suggestions
- Work with community groups to determine common needs, and provide materials based on those needs

Impact:

- Collections are accessible and relevant. The decisions we make are patron-driven



Imagine

PLDL will facilitate experiences that engage, educate, and inspire individuals of all ages and backgrounds, and create flexible spaces that are welcoming, easy to navigate, and appropriate for a wide range of activities and community interactions. This process will require creating more flexible areas that enable the library to adapt quickly to users throughout the day for various activities.

Goal #1: PLDL will offer diverse, interactive, and community focused programs

Success Measurements:

- Program attendance increased
- Programs presented address a wide range of topics
- Programs were rated favorably by a majority of attendees

Activities:

- Host programs presented by community experts
- Increase the scope and variety of programs offered
- Develop a program evaluation survey to be completed by program attendees

Impact: There is more participation in Library programs and events, and attendees are expanding their knowledge and broadening their horizons

Goal #2: PLDL will offer flexible spaces to meet community and patron needs

Success Measurements:

- Increased space was created to meet individual and group needs
- Space was rated favorably by patrons and community groups

Activities:

- Establish more meeting and quiet spaces in the library
- Share space with community partners
- Utilize outdoor space adjacent to the library

Impact: Spaces available respond to a variety of needs, enabling patrons and community members to feel welcome at the Library

Connect

PLDL will engage community partners, volunteers, and staff to maximize the library's impact as a community resource, information center, and meeting place. The library will better publicize and promote available resources and improve wayfinding signage throughout the building.

Goal #1: PLDL will improve technology assistance for library patrons

Success Measurements:

- When surveyed, patrons rated the use of self-service printing favorably
- When surveyed, staff and patrons rated technology assistance as helpful and effective

Activities

- Implement self-service printing in coordination with the Superiorland Library Cooperative
- Create instructional signage to assist patrons and staff with self-service printing
- Train circulation staff to use self-service printing
- Hire a library assistant who will assist with technology reference and IT work as well as provide training to staff and patrons

Impact: Patrons are independently printing materials, allowing staff more time for other duties. PLDL staff possess increased technology skills and are easily able to access technology support

Goal #2: PLDL will ensure a consistent and exceptional customer service experience for all patrons

Success Measurements:

- Survey results indicated that staff feel better prepared and more confident in providing high quality service to patrons and visitors to the library
- When surveyed, patrons responded favorably to self-service checkout and provided useful feedback regarding the system

Activities

- Develop a customer service plan that details PLDL's commitment to excellent service
- Create a staff development program that enables staff to manage challenging situations
- Provide staff with training in assisting patrons with special needs
- Provide self-checkout kiosks

Impact: Library patrons experience an excellent level of customer service, and PLDL staff feel confident in the provision of this service. Utilization of self-service checkout provides convenience for patrons and allows staff to have more time for other duties

Connect

Goal #3: PLDL will connect with partners to promote mutually beneficial community activities

Success Measurements:

- New partnerships were established with schools and universities
- Relationships were developed between PLDL, local businesses, and community service agencies or organizations

Activities

- Partner with schools, local businesses, and other community agencies and organizations
- Reach out to senior citizens and area students
- Collaborate with Friends of the Library

Impact: More community members of all ages, schools, and local businesses and organizations are engaged with the library

Goal #4: PLDL will develop an engaging volunteer program that benefits the library

Success Measurements:

- New tasks were identified for volunteers
- More students began volunteering in the library
- More volunteers worked in the library

Activities

- Recruit more volunteers of all ages
- Develop engaging tasks for volunteers
- Survey volunteers and staff regularly to determine volunteer interests and concerns

Impact: More community members are engaged with the library, and staff have more time to work with patrons on higher-level tasks

Connect

Goal #5: PLDL will share information that communicates a clear identity and is easily accessible to library patrons and the community

Success Measurements:

- A single email list was created with a sign-up sheet at the circulation desk
- A separate bulletin board for library programs and information was set up
- New informational signs were put up throughout the library
- Patrons surveyed about website navigability rated it favorably
- A comprehensive social media plan was developed
- Publicity about the library increased in local media

Activities

- Merge email lists to send library events and announcements
- Improve signage throughout the building
- Develop regular orientations to library services
- Improve website navigation
- Create a more active social media presence
- Establish a bulletin board dedicated to library information
- Publicize services available to non-members
- Work on branding the library by promoting a clear, consistent identity

Impact: Through clear communication and orientation programs, patrons and the community will be more comfortable and informed using library services

What Comes Next?

Over the course of the next three years, the activities of this strategic plan will be carried out with support from Library staff, Board and Friends members, and community volunteers. The Library Director and Board of Trustees will periodically assess our progress toward our success measurements and course correct as needed. The evaluation process will be guided by the goals and success measurements outlined in this plan.

Some success measurements include patron surveys, and that data will also be reviewed while evaluating our progress as we work to reach our goals. Our new strategic plan is set to expire in early 2022, and by that time work will begin on a new strategic plan initiative.

The success of this plan is in large part dependent on our community's willingness to participate. If you have an interest in volunteering at the library, joining the Friends of the Library group, hosting a public program, or new partnership opportunities, we would love to hear from you. Stop by the Library, contact us by phone at 906-482-4570, or reach out via email at info@pldl.org.

You can find a printable version of our strategic plan at www.pldl.org

Dillon Geshel, Library Director

