

2019 Strategic Plan Final Review

Strategic Theme #1

Evaluation of building and collection layouts to encourage maximum access to library resources and reduce patron confusion.

Goal

Create tools for each library in the CPL system to assess and modify floor layout, collections, and equipment in order to enhance the patron experience; offer clear navigation of library resources both in the library and online; and consistently evaluate and modify the appearance of the library to accommodate changing patron needs.

Results

The committee felt we achieved this theme; but had also identified a few potential strategies for further planning in 2018-2019.

- 1- Children's Room renovation at the Central Library
- 2- Signage audits at all locations. These audits removed old, out of date and misleading signage and replaced with new, consistent signage.
- 3- Creation of a Style Guide. These guide created a format for all signage and online postings to have a consistent design, font and message that could be used at all locations. This allowed for the same consistent signage across all locations.
- 4- New furniture was installed at both the Knightsville and Auburn branches for a more comfortable experience using the library including both public computer furniture and reading areas.
- 5- Modified collections at all locations. We have changed locations codes, relabeled collections, changed call numbers and changed physical layout to make material both easier to find in the library catalog and in the library itself.

While we improved the layout of the collections and updated and upgraded many of our physical spaces, we did not survey patrons or work with the community assessment revelation that “intimidation” was the number one barrier to use in the CPL system. This is something we will work on for the next strategic plan.

Additional Results 2018-2019

- 1- Reorganize the teen area at the Central Library with a new layout, shelving and furniture. This project has already been funded in the library capital budget and is underway as of 10/7/2019.
- 2- Created early literacy areas at Auburn and Hall, with soft furniture and interactive toys and games for ages 0-5. This project was funded by a legislative grant from Speaker Nick Mattiello.

Strategic Theme #2

Evaluate the continued viability of the branch library system.

Goal

Conduct an environmental scan of each branch location, as well as their relationship with the library system as a whole.

Results

SWOT Analysis was completed for the Knightsville and Oaklawn branches using URI Graduate students as a project for a library research class. We did not have that resource to complete a SWOT analysis for the other three branches. With the improving economic conditions in the city and increased funding to the library on both the municipal and state levels; the committee decided to move forward with recommendations from the completed analysis and identify other ways to strengthen the branch system.

- 1- Completed SWOT analysis at Knightsville and Oaklawn branches.
- 2- Added additional service hours at Arlington, Auburn, Knightsville and William Hall Library locations.
- 3- Completed major renovations at Knightsville branch including new roof, new carpeting, basement flooring and new furniture as recommended in SWOT analysis.

Additional Results 2018-2019

- 1- Completed renovation of Knightsville branch basement including new lighting and ceiling to make the space a more inviting place for programming. This project was funded by the Champlin Foundation.
- 2- Completed renovation of Oaklawn branch basement program room.
- 3- A major renovation is scheduled for 4th quarter 2019 at William Hall Library. This will include the entire first floor of the building including painting, lighting and a

new study/classroom space. This project is funded by the Champlin Foundation. The Hall Trustees are also undertaking a landscaping master plan which includes a redesigned parking lot and improved drainage for the building exterior.

Strategic Theme #3

Foster Community Connections

Goal

Youth and adults of the community will have opportunities outside the library to develop literacy skills, and enjoy educational, recreational and cultural programs.

Results

The committee reported that we definitely increased our community connections both in and out of the library. Budget and space constraints have prevented us from being able to add full or part-time staff that are dedicated fully to assist in community outreach and programming. The committee recommends that increasing our community connections remain an ongoing goal of the library in future strategic plans.

- 1- Established a web team to coordinate dissemination of the library's message via the library website, social media, library newsletter, and other outlets. The web team meets once a year to evaluate the website and decide on new strategies and removal of outdated content.
- 2- We expanded collaborations between Cranston Public Library and Cranston Public Schools. The Library started several initiatives and partnerships to further this collaboration. CPL and the schools launched a first in the nation collaboration to fund and offer the Tutor.com service to any student with a Cranston library card. Mayor Fung, Superintendent Nota-Masse and Director Garcia partnered for the Leaders Library Card Challenge. This initiative launched by President Obama to get a library card in the hands of every student was the genesis for the very successful Fresh Start campaign.
- 3- We developed good communication between the school department and the library, as well as easy access to classrooms, to promote public library resources and programming for students and educators. Library Director Ed Garcia was asked by the previous Superintendent to serve on an "Attendance Counts" committee to help improve attendance at schools citywide. Ed also meets regularly with the new Superintendent Nota-Masse to discuss strategy and collaboration. Emily Brown, Coordinator of Youth Services has strengthened the working relationship between the library and the Cranston school librarians and

regularly meets with Susan Rose, Coordinator of School Librarians. The Youth Services Department visit the schools on a regular basis to promote Summer Reading Program and some of the initiatives mentioned above. The library also utilizes the school's Friday Flyers email listserv to parents and students to market library services and upcoming programs.

- 4- Continued to expand work with homebound patrons and those with limitations that prevent them from visiting their local library branches. Karen McGrath, Auburn branch librarian manages this program. In an effort to market the program she has attended the Senior Living Expo at Warwick Mall for two years in partnership with Cranston Senior Services.
- 5- The library established new partnerships with several organizations. A free lunch program for children in partnership was launched with Aramark at the Knightsville branch. Emily Brown has established a regular outreach program at the Islamic School of Rhode Island (located in West Warwick). Katy Dorchies, Community Engagement Manager represented the library at the annual Artist Exchange "Fall Out of Summer" street festival promoting library services and programs.
- 6- The library partnered with the Providence Public Library on several major initiatives. CPL and PPL partnered for a state grant to established ESL digital literacy programs, a \$500,000 federal grant for ALLAccess in Libraries program and most recently on the Cranston Rhode Coders: adult computer coding instruction program.
- 7- We partnered with RIFLI to expand our citizenship class offerings and to establish an ESL conversation class. We also worked with RIFLI on a Community Block Development Grant to establish ESL classes at Gladstone School.
- 8- CPL partnered with the City of Cranston and the Cranston Historical Society on the Cranston Discovery Network. This project was funded by the RI Foundation and features informational signs at historic sites throughout the city.
- 9- The library was one of the founding agencies behind the OneCranston initiative which was successful in receiving a \$500,000 Working Cities grant from the Boston Federal Reserve. This three-year grant will work on social cohesion amongst the different populations in Cranston.
- 10-We received the LibraryAware Community Award in 2016 for our efforts in community outreach. CPL was one of three libraries to receive the award that year along with Louisville Public Library and the New York Public Library.

Additional Results for 2018-2019

- 1- The library deployed “Booklit,” a pop-up mobile reading hotspot, at the YMCA Summer Camp, the Roger Williams Park Zoo Urban Nature Explorers events, and the Kids Reading Across Rhode Island kick-off at the Statehouse. However, staff found it difficult to load and unload the heavy book cart, which can only be moved using the library van.
- 2- Partnering with the Center for Southeast Asians, youth services offered a series of family programs about the history and culture of Cambodia, culminating with a children’s traditional dance performance that was attended by more than 100 people.
- 3- Karen McGrath, Auburn branch librarian, has initiated a collaboration between the library and AgeFriendlyRI, a statewide initiative on aging.
- 4- The *You Are Here* grant-funded program that helps new and established immigrants to the United States navigate daily American life was launched.

Strategic Theme #4

Create a comprehensive marketing and public relations plan to raise the profile of the library in the community and the state.

Goal

Establish relevant guidelines and assign shared responsibility for all library locations.

Results

This objective was clearly achieved early on in the strategic plan timeframe. The most important achievement was creating the full-time Community Engagement Manager position and hiring Katy Dorchie. This hire has allowed us to be proactive and market our services and resources to effectively bring attention to our libraries, the services we offer and demonstrate our value to the community, our stakeholders, our financial supporters and the public.

- 1- Created a web team
- 2- Established a media strategy for press releases, website, social media postings, flyers, online calendars, etc.

- 3- Maintained consistency in paper flyers, posters, brochures & handouts
- 4- Implemented a yearly Annual Report which is sent to our stakeholders and highlights our achievements.
- 5- Created a CPL Identity Style Guide to instruct staff on library brand guidelines.

Strategic Theme #5

Develop assessment strategies for measuring the effectiveness of the library's services, programs, and technology that can be used to develop and maintain current and future library services.

Goal

To institute ongoing but simple assessment tools that can measure quantitative and qualitative data from programs, technology use, services, and staff that will help the library to create or modify programs and services for greater success and to help maximize library resources.

Results

We had some early success achieving some of the strategies for measuring library services; but the committee agreed more work needs to be done in this process.

- 1- Assessed patron technology by completing and implementing the Edge Initiative and the Impact Survey.
- 2- Participated in the initial sessions with the Public Library Association in the creation of Project Outcome. This was a project designed to measure library services.
- 3- Developed methods for gathering statistics and measuring program effectiveness with the ALLAccess in Libraries project.

Additional Results for 2018-2019

- 1- Surveyed library users and staff to evaluate the C-Lab, the current offerings and potential for new services.

- 2- Began implementation of the full Project Outcome toolkit for measuring library programs and services.
- 3- Conducted a re-assessment of patron technology by completing and implementing the Edge Initiative 2.0 in 2019.
- 4- Created data dashboards for youth program statistics using Google forms and sheets.

Strategic Theme #6

Provide technology access and training.

Goal 1

Offer staff trainings to improve staff technology competencies.

Goal 2

Evaluate current technology class offerings.

Results

The committee evaluation showed that we had achieved significant results for this theme but have more work to do in staff technology training. Library administration offered some staff technology trainings but found it cost prohibitive to bring in all part time library staff for regular training.

- 1- Established the C Lab as a technology learning space.
- 2- Created the Mad Lab at the Auburn branch for after school homework help, the youth services mobile laptop lab that goes across the city for technology programs.
- 3- Completed improvements to broadband and wireless access at all locations. All six locations now have CAT6 network cabling, gigabyte switches and Bluesocket wireless systems. The Central Library is on the OSHEAN fiber optic network and has an exterior Bluesocket wireless node.
- 4- Offered youth services 3D Printing programming at several branch locations.
- 5- Offered several staff technology training opportunities including “Create List” training and eZone training. Tested staff technology competencies with the North Star training courses.

- 6- Established an ESL digital literacy class at William Hall Library in partnership with Providence Public Library and funding from a state grant. This program had two six week sessions and was not continued due to lack of funding.

Additional Results for 2018-2019

- 1- Installed charging stations to allow patrons the ability to plug in their devices at Central, Auburn and William Hall Library. These were funded by the Champlin Foundation.
- 2- Hired part-time staff for evening open tech time in the C Lab.
- 3- Offered the first Family Code Night at a public library in Rhode Island for grades 3-5 and created an original robotics curriculum for grades K-2 that was used in two 6-week programs at Knightsville and Auburn.
- 4- Reinforced use of OSL and OLIS continuing education offerings. Library Administration and the Board of Trustees developed a Staff Professional Development Statement and created a dedicated professional development fund to ensure support for staff continuing education.
- 5- Added Tuesday Tech Tutor service at William Hall Library. This program provides one on one technology help with a reference librarian.
- 6- Renovation of the “picture” room at William Hall Library into a study room/class room. This is part of the Champlin Foundation funded renovation at Hall. This will create the potential for future technology classes.
- 7- CPL launched the VR Lab, which offered virtual reality and augmented reality technology and programming to the public.

Strategic Theme # 7

Build a community of empowered young readers.

Goal

Children in kindergarten through grade 2 will have access to collections tailored to them and programs that emphasize choice and the social aspects of reading.

Results

The Youth Services Department has made progress in achieving this goal. More Potential strategies were identified for 2018-2019.

- 1- In 2016, we relabeled all beginning reader books with "J ER" call numbers rather than the green dots they had before. At Central, we also gave them a featured position near the hex wall in the newly renovated children's room.
- 2- In 2016 and 2017, we offered the Raising Readers workshop for families of children in grades K-3, in collaboration with the Kidventure after-school program. These workshops focused on helping children transition to reading independently.
- 3- In 2016, we simplified the summer reading program to emphasize choice and the social aspects of reading, and we made it so that you could be rewarded each time you read at least 4 books. This allowed families to start later or end earlier but still participate in summer reading.

Additional Results for 2018-2019

- 1- Started monthly "Family Fun Nights" on Monday evenings for ages 4-8 and created a summer kindergarten readiness storytime for ages 4-5, bridging the gap between preschool and elementary school programming.
- 2- Worked to remove barriers to access for young people (*see additional results for Strategic Theme #8*)
- 3- Created the "Standards for Youth Services", this document outlines the philosophy of how interactions with young people should happen to build a community of empowered readers.

Strategic Theme #8

Increase access to new and popular book titles

Goal

Reduce the wait time for popular titles and increase patron satisfaction by meeting the demands of our readers.

Results

Although there is always more that can be done to get materials into the hands of our patrons faster, the committee determined that we achieved the objectives of this theme.

- 1- The Express Collection was created at the Central Library with 2 day DVDs and 7 day books. This collection is extremely popular and allows for faster return times on popular items.
- 2- Since 2014, the budget for purchasing books has increased 32.6% to \$130,000.
- 3- We used statistics in the Annual Report and the state's Comparable Statistics, to highlight the discrepancy between our circulation figures and funding for new books and materials.
- 4- We increased the frequency with which we order new titles and evaluated tech services workflow to streamline processing & cataloging to reduce wait times. We designed our own in-house acquisitions process which allows for increased productivity in the tech services department and hired an MLIS Cataloging Librarian to reduce cataloging wait times and backlogs.

Additional Results for 2018-2019

In addition to the 8 strategic themes identified in 2015, library leadership noticed a need to remove barriers to library services, particularly for young people, during the time when this strategic plan was in effect. After setting the goal of increasing the number of Cranston young people with usable library cards, staff were able to achieve these results:

1. Implemented a "Fresh Start" campaign, in which school librarians distributed library card applications, and public librarians issued new cards and waived fines for more than 1,000 Cranston Public School students.
2. Removed overdue fines from children's and teen materials, with the support of the Board of Trustees, the Mayor, and the City Council. Also waived close to \$25,000 in existing fines on children's and teen materials.
3. Increased the number of services available online using just your library card, including Tutor.com, an online homework help service, and Kanopy, an online movie streaming service.