

Huron Public Library  
Huron, Ohio  
Strategic Plan  
2017-2020

*As approved by the Board of Trustees 4/12/2017*

## Introduction

In 2016, the Huron Public Library (HPL) began the process of creating a new Strategic Plan. The previous five-year plan had reached its conclusion, both in its timeframe and in the completion of its stated goals and objectives. The Huron Public Library Board expanded their Strategic Planning committee to include three Trustees, the Library Director, a supervising staff member, and a former Library director, unaffiliated with the HPL. This Committee, with the approval of the Board, selected a consulting partner, the State Library of Ohio, to assist in preparing this plan.

## Planning Model

The State Library of Ohio recommended and the committee adopted a library-specific planning model, called *Planning for Results*. Developed in 1998 by Library Scientist Sandra Nelson for the Public Library Association, the *Planning for Results* methodology is community-centered and designed to maximize input from various stakeholders, so that the Plan not only encompasses the Library's needs, but also those of the Huron Library community, which includes the city of Huron and Huron Township.

The *Planning for Results* methodology is predicated on the following:

1. Excellence must be defined locally and results when library services match community needs, interests, and priorities.
2. Excellence is possible for both small and large libraries and rests more on commitment than on unlimited resources.
3. Excellence is a "moving target:" even when achieved, excellence must be continually maintained.

*Planning for Results* defines a "library" by a set of 18 *Service Responses*, which reduce the library to 18 essential functions (the "Responses"). The emphasis placed on each response during the planning process varies according to the size, needs, and available resources of the particular library of interest.

The Services Responses are:

- **Be an Informed Citizen: Local, National and World Affairs**  
Residents will have the information they need to support and promote democracy, to fulfill their civic responsibilities at the local, state, and national levels, and to fully participate in the community decision making.
- **Build Successful Enterprises: Business and Nonprofit Support**  
Business owners and nonprofit organization directors and their managers will have the resources they need to develop and maintain strong, viable organizations.
- **Celebrate Diversity: Cultural Awareness**  
Residents will have programs and services that promote appreciation and understanding of their personal heritage and the heritage of others in the community.

- **Connect to the Online World: Public Internet Access**  
Residents will have high-speed access to the digital world with no unnecessary restrictions or fees to ensure that everyone can take advantage of the ever-growing resources and services available through the Internet.
- **Create Young Readers: Early Literacy**  
Children from birth to five will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write, and listen.
- **Discover Your Roots: Genealogy and Local History**  
Residents and visitors will have the resources they need to connect the past with the present through their family histories and to understand the history and traditions of the community.
- **Express Creativity: Create and Share Content**  
Residents will have the service and support they need to express themselves by creating original print, video, audio, or visual content in a real-world or online environment.
- **Get Facts Fast: Ready Reference**  
Residents will have someone to answer their questions on a wide array of topics of personal interest.
- **Know Your Community: Community Resources and Services**  
Residents will have a central source for information about the wide variety of programs, services, and activities provided by community agencies and organizations.
- **Learn to Read and Write: Adult, Teen and Family Literacy**  
Adults and teens will have the support they need to improve their literacy skills in order to meet their personal goals and fulfill their responsibilities as parents, citizens, and workers.
- **Make Career Choices: Job and Career Development**  
Adults and teens will have the skills and resources they need to identify career opportunities that suit their individual strengths and interests.
- **Make Informed Decisions: Health, Wealth, and Other Life Choices**  
Residents will have the resources they need to identify and analyze risks, benefits, and alternatives before making decisions that affect their lives.
- **Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning**  
Residents will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.
- **Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing and Listening for Pleasure**  
Residents who want materials to enhance their leisure time will find what they want when and where they want them and will have the help they need to make choices from among the options.

- **Succeed in School: Homework Help**  
Students will have the resources they need to succeed in school.
- **Understand How to Find, Evaluate and Use Information: Information Fluency**  
Residents will know when they need information to resolve an issue or answer a question and will have the skills to search for, locate, evaluate, and effectively use information to meet their needs.
- **Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces**  
Residents will have safe and welcoming physical spaces to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read and will have open and accessible virtual spaces to support networking.
- **Welcome to the United States: Services for New Immigrants**  
New immigrants and refugees will have information on citizenship, English Language Learning, employment, public schooling, health and safety, available social services, and any other topics that they need to participate successfully in American life.

### **Data Gathering Process**

Led by consultants Katy Klettlinger and Gregg Gassman, The State Library of Ohio offered the following services to the Committee as part of its mission under the Ohio State Board of Education:

- Local city and county demographic data
- Editing services for the paper and online community survey
- Training to prepare facilitators of interest based focus groups with stakeholders in the community
- Organized and tabulated data received from the community survey
- A final report of suggested Service Responses and sample objectives
- Input on draft goals and objectives once the data collection period had ended.

The Huron Public Library mailed a community survey to every household in the service area, which was simultaneously accessible online, and presented to high school students to retrieve opinions from younger library patrons. Nearly 600 returned surveys—about 7.5% of the population of Huron Ohio (2010 U.S. Census)—resulted from mailed and online survey submissions. The survey assessed various aspects of the HPL's functioning, including in relation to the *Service Responses*. In addition to numerical ratings (quantitative data), respondents also provided written comments (qualitative data). The State Library of Ohio compiled the results of these surveys (selected results in Appendix A).

In order to hear directly from particular stakeholders, the Library scheduled interest-based focus groups with representative community members to collect additional qualitative data. The focus groups began by discussing general questions about the strengths, deficiencies, and needs of the larger Huron Library community. Focus groups then confined their discussions to similar questions, but in relation to the HPL. The Library completed 10 interest-based focus groups for the following stakeholder groups:

- Clergy and Service Group | 2 attendees
- Power Users Group (frequent library patrons) | 8 attendees
- Young Professionals Group | 8 attendees
- Parents Group | 5 attendees
- Business Community Group | 6 attendees
- Teen Group | 6 attendees
- Education Community Group | 12 attendees
- City Leaders Focus Group | 4 attendees
- Library Staff Focus Group | 12 attendees
- Library Board of Trustees Focus Group | 6 Attendees

Focus group discussions were led by a facilitator and documented by a note taker, taking anonymous transcriptions of the conversations. All focus groups (except for the staff group) were guided through the discussion using the same questions. At the end of each focus group, individual discussants selected three *Services Responses* which they felt were most important and deserving of focus and resources. The results of these selections are located in Appendix B. The State Library of Ohio compiled the qualitative and quantitative data in the form of a report of suggestions for the development of the strategic plan.

### **Setting Goals**

The Library Director and Strategic Planning Committee drafted goals with subsidiary objectives based on the results of the survey, as well as insights offered by the State Library of Ohio. That draft was shared with an ample comment period with State Library Consultants, the Library's staff, and Board of Trustees.

### **Implementation**

The administration and staff have undertaken the implementation of this Strategic Plan. Plan Objectives are translated into individual and organizational tasks and a timeline focuses those efforts. In some cases, the success of the Strategic Plan may depend on obtaining adequate resources to fully fund the objectives. Nevertheless, the point of this goal-setting period was to assess needs without concern for budgetary constraints.

### **Strategic Plan 2017-2020**

The result of the processes described above created the framework for the Huron Public Library 2017-2020 Strategic Plan, approved by the Board of Trustees on 4/12/2017. The Service Responses, goals, and objectives follow:

**1. Service Response: Create Young Readers** | Children from birth to five will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write, and listen.

Build upon departmental success to create programming, policies, and a facility devoted to providing early literacy training and information to every child and family in the community.

1.1 Offer Huron residents membership to the Imagination Library program, which provides free books for children through age 4.

1.2 Set goals for expanding 1000 Books before Kindergarten to every active library family.

1.3 Expand storytime availability for families that are unable to attend during traditional hours.

1.4 Work towards a 100% percent success rate for offering library cards to students in Kindergarten in all Huron schools.

1.5 Create an emergency storytime kit for outreach or substitution situations.

1.6 Update the children's play area, with the addition of new developmental appropriate toys and interactive displays.

**2. Service Response: Satisfy Curiosity** | Residents will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

Promote a culture of lifelong learning by providing resources, programming, and meeting space for residents of all ages to explore their unique interests and support continued learning throughout their lives.

2.1 Expand adult programming to cover expanding interests in the community, including but not limited to nature, science, food and cooking, agriculture, local history, visual and performing arts, and diverse communities.

2.2 Partner with local business, organizations, and institutions to offer expanded learning opportunities for residents.

2.3 Create a book club targeting Teens, in grades 9-12, to expand upon those offered to tweens.

2.4 Join the ConnectEd Library Challenge to provide a library card to every student in a Huron school.

2.5 Expand merchandising techniques to promote resources with shelf talkers, staff reviews, and more active readers' advisory.

2.6 Offer library tours to teach basic library procedures and help residents feel comfortable acquiring information at the Huron Public Library

2.7 Expand available software on public computers to include creative software

**3. Service Response: Visit a Comfortable Place** | Residents will have safe and welcoming physical spaces to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read and will have open and accessible virtual spaces to support networking.

Support varied uses of the library building by creating a safe and comfortable space for the community with different usage goals. Update the virtual presence of the library for the mobile era.

3.1 Refresh social media accounts to create a stronger online presence, for marketing and community building.

3.2 Consider major updates to the website, including a re-design to streamline content of a modern library website.

3.3 Explore fine reduction policies for segments of the public in order to promote usage and change the image of library fines

3.4 Create a replacement schedule to update public furniture.

3.5 Work with the Friends group to support the addition of a permanent location for used book sales, paid for and restocked by the Friends of the Library.

3.6 Explore funding to renovate and upgrade the public meeting rooms to offer access to modern presentation technology.

**4. Service Response: Know Your Community** | Residents will have a central source for information about the wide variety of programs, services, and activities provided by community agencies and organizations.

Accept the role of central information provider in the community by supporting the work of community organizations, government, and businesses promoting common causes in Huron.

4.1 Create a welcome packet for new residents with library information for the real estate community.

4.2 Re-design library printed materials to update programs, services, and brand.

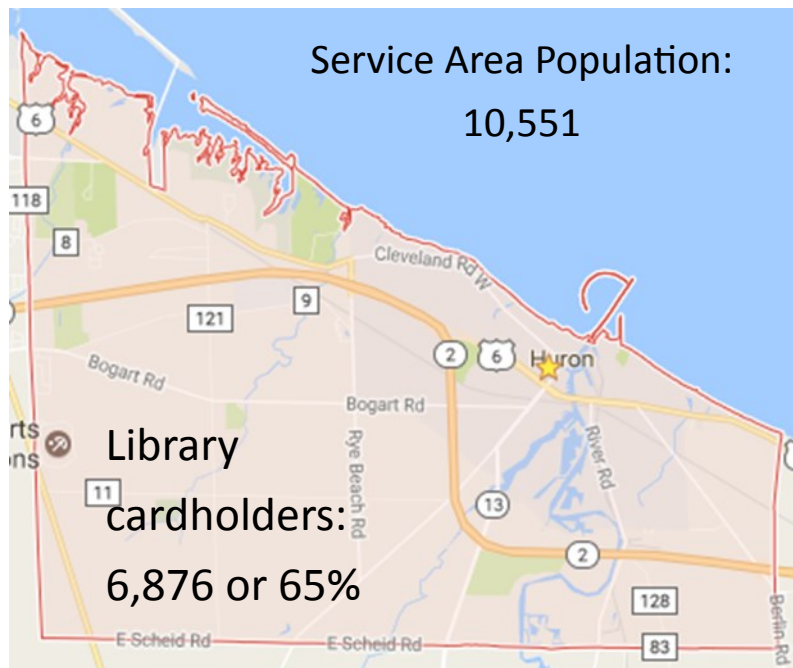
4.3 Offer more information to the public through themed information fairs, i.e. health, food, gardening etc.

4.4 Include community event information in the Between the Bookends newsletter.

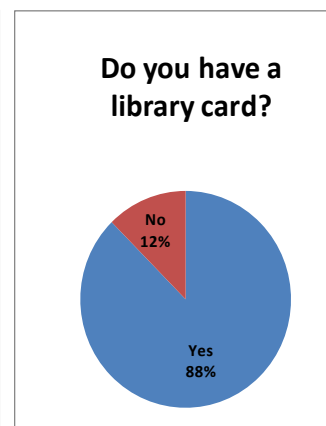
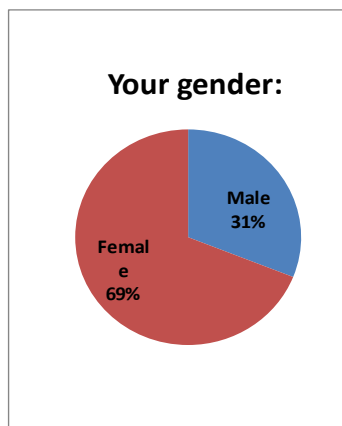
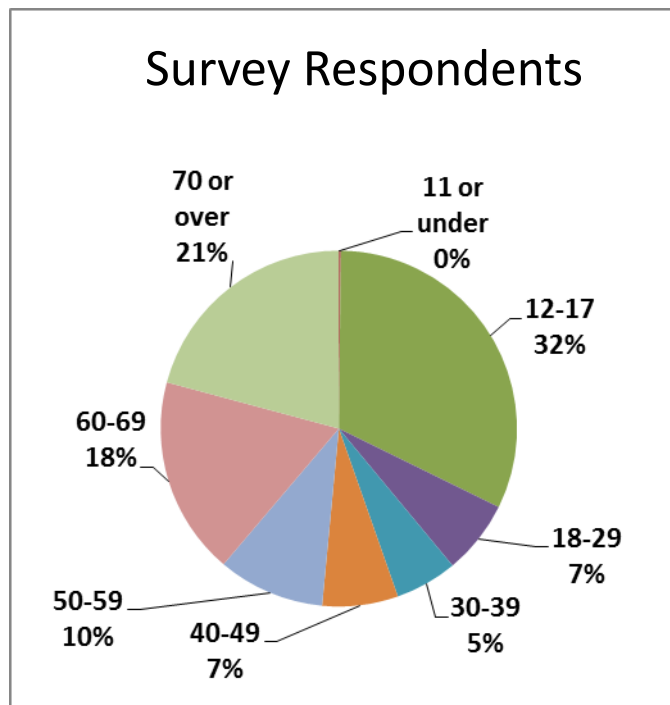
4.5 Consider multiple methods of expanding the Between the Bookends newsletter, potentially with freelance publishing assistance.

4.6 Install digital signage/TV screens to display promotional material for library and community programming

Appendix A: Survey Data

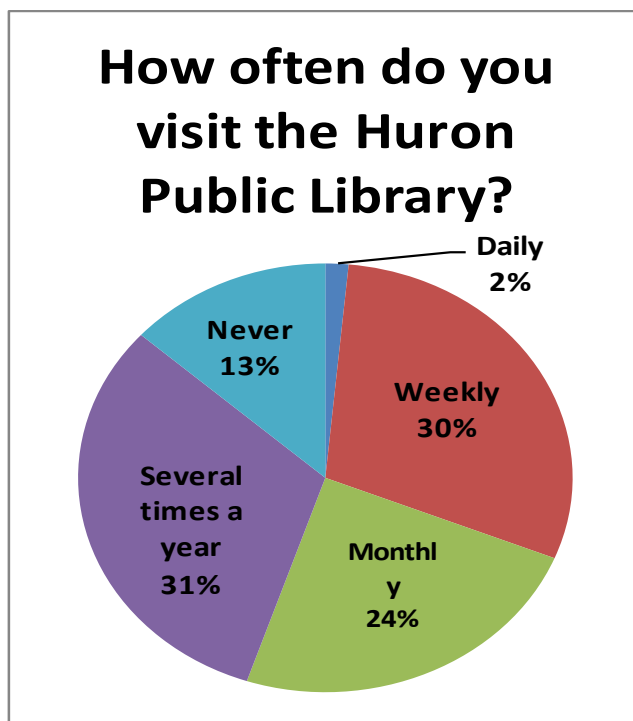


Nearly 600 surveys were returned- 7.5% of the population. The majority of the respondents were female and are cardholders.

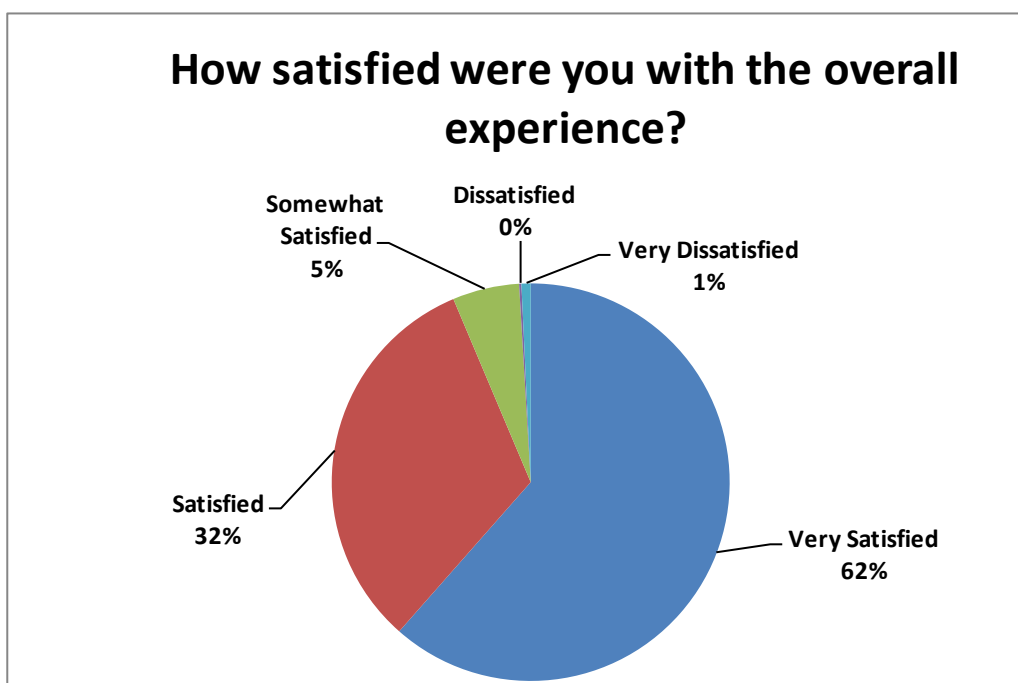




87% of respondents visit the Huron Public Library several times a year or more.



And of those, 94% were satisfied or better with their experience.



Rate the importance of each of the following <u>roles</u> of the library in our community, using the following scale: 0 = Completely Unnecessary - 5 = Neutral - 10 = Absolutely Necessary	Average Rating
Serving children and parents to encourage their interest in reading and learning	9.08
Supporting students and independent life-long learners	8.88
Providing computers and high speed internet access	8.46
Providing materials that match users' interests	8.00
Serving as a community gathering place to meet, work, and socialize	7.96

Respondents believe that early literacy and services for children and families is a nearly absolutely necessary role of the Huron Library, but

also indicated positive support for all the roles listed in the survey.

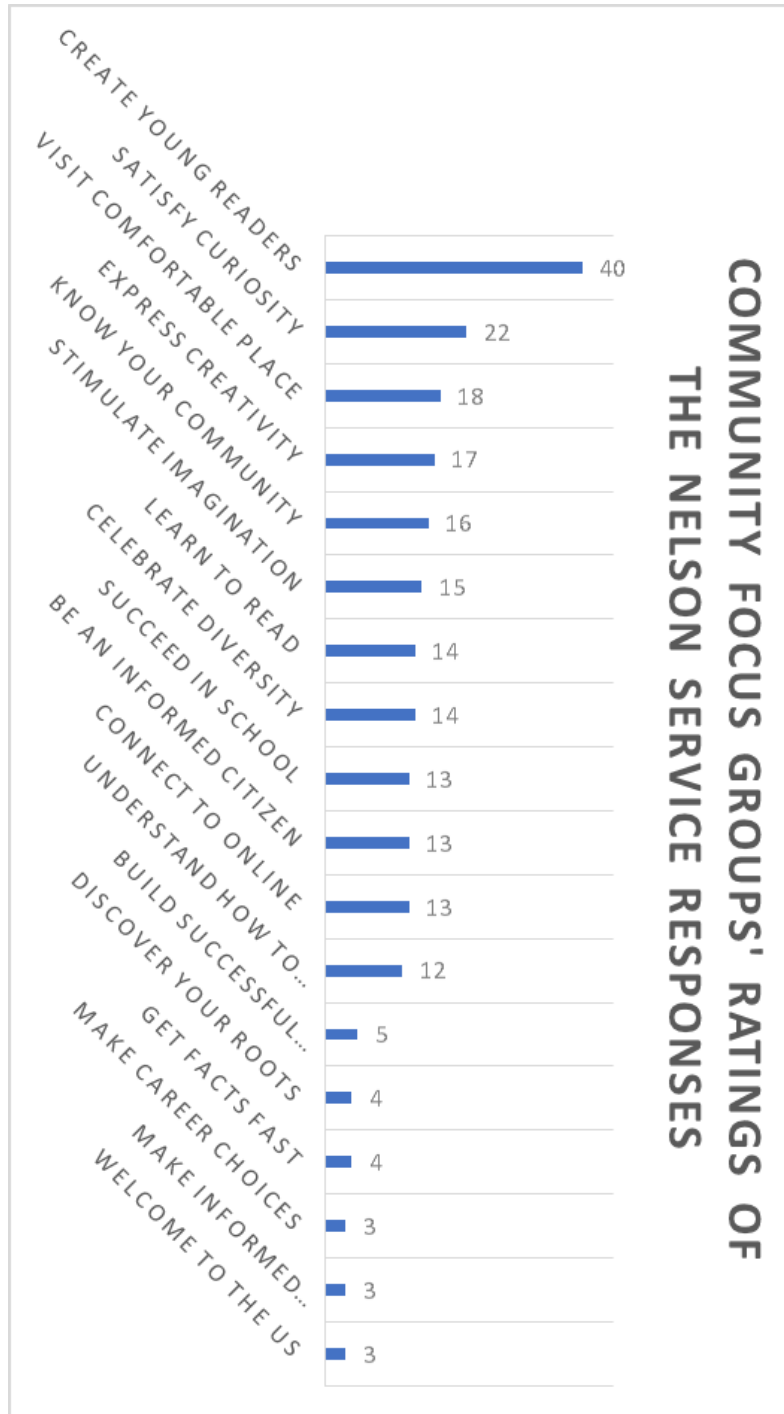
Rate the importance <u>to the community</u> of each of the following <u>library materials and/ or services</u> , using the same scale:	Average Rating
Books	9.52
Public WiFi access	8.97
Public computer / Internet access	8.90
Copier	8.85
Printers	8.78
Large print books	8.76
Reference help in person	8.61
Electronic resources / Research databases	8.60
Scanners	8.58
Community meeting rooms	8.56
Library website	8.47
Connection to CLEVNET libraries	8.47
Passport service	8.45
Placing holds online	8.43
Tax Forms	8.42
Notary service	8.41
Fax Service	8.37
Delivery to homebound patrons	8.34
Online calendar of events	8.29
One-on-one technology	8.21
Early literacy computers	8.20
Online catalog	8.19
Outreach visits to schools and pre-schools	8.18
Magazines and newspapers	8.15
Interlibrary loan	8.13
Downloadable ebooks (OverDrive)	8.02

When assessing services provided by the library, both traditional services (Books- 9.52) and more modern services (public WiFi access- 8.97, scanners- 8.58) were rated near absolutely necessary.

Using the same scale, respondents rated programs for toddlers and young children above an 8, followed by programs for teens and adults rated above a 7.

**Appendix B: Focus Groups**

Focus Groups selected three Library Service Responses they felt were most deserving of Huron Library focus and resources. The results are below:



Based on Focus Group conversations and survey data, the Strategic Planning Committee selected four Service Responses to provide the basis for goals and objectives, as listed on page 6 and 7.