Huron Public Library
Strategic Plan
2023–2027
Huron, OH

As approved by the Board of Trustees: 9 November 2022

This document is the 2023-2027 Strategic Plan for the Huron Public Library and represents the Library's aspirational vision for the next four years. The Library's ability to fully enact this plan is dependent on available funding and other resources.

Introduction

In 2021, after a year-long delay due to the global Covid-19 pandemic, the Huron Public Library 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 Strategic Planning Committee initially included three Library Trustees, and the Library Director. Midway through the planning process, two Trustees were replaced on the committee and a new Library Director was also added to the planning team. The Strategic Planning Committee, with the approval of the Board, selected a consulting partner–The State Library of Ohio–to assist with data gathering and the planning process.

Planning Model

The Committee selected The State Library of Ohio (SLO) as a partner in order to implement a library-specific model of strategic planning, called *Planning for Results*. Developed in 1998 by Sandra Nelson for the Public Library Association–and refined and updated by SLO–*Planning for Results* is a community-centered model of planning designed to maximize input from various stakeholders as to a library's future goals, as well as to be responsive to community needs in general. The *Planning for Results* methodology is built upon three assumptions:

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

SLO assists libraries with the data gathering process by employing a standard set of services, offered by all public libraries in some form, called "Service Responses." These 18 Service Responses represent the work of a public library in a community, but based on community needs and library resources, not all Service Responses receive equal focus.

The Services Responses are:

- **Adult, Teen, and Family Literacy: Reading and Writing Fluency**
  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.

- **Accessibility for All**
Library users will have access to all library materials, facilities, programming, and technology, regardless of ability, minority classification, socioeconomic situation, education level, background information, or any other factor that may be a barrier to library users.

- **Be an Informed Citizen: Local, National and World Affairs**
Community 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 community decision making. Efforts will be made to offer information and programming pertaining to local civic issues and timely community matters.

- **Build Successful Enterprises: Business and Nonprofit Support**
Area business owners and nonprofit organizations will collaborate with the library to cultivate beneficial community resources.

- **Celebrate Diversity: Cultural Awareness**
The community will have access to programs and services that promote appreciation and understanding of their heritage and their neighbor's heritage. There will also be programs to expand knowledge of other cultures in the United States and around the world.

- **Connect Online: Public Internet Access**
Library users will have a variety of high-speed Internet connectivity options to access the digital world with no unnecessary restrictions or fees, ensuring that everyone can take advantage of the 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**
Library users will have the electronic and physical resources needed to research family and local histories. Further understanding of community traditions and history will influence public programming or library collections.

- **Emerging Technology**
Patrons will have the opportunity to engage with emerging technology through access provided by the library and/or its partners. Introduction to advanced types of software, hardware, and devices will expose library users to new learning experiences and inform future library planning.

- **Express Creativity: Create and Share Content**
Community members will have the service and support they need to create original content, focusing on curiosity, and innovation.

- **Fiscal Stewardship**
The library will serve as a fiscal steward of public funding and actively seek alternative funding sources as needed.

- **Get Facts Fast: Ready Reference**
The community will see the library as a convenient and reliable source of information for research, community resources, and lifelong learning.

- **Intergenerational Services and Programming**
Kids, teens, adults, seniors, and families will have programs that integrate multiple age groups to foster community, understanding, and fun.

- **Know Your Community: Community Resources and Services**
  Library users will have a central source for information about the wide variety of programs and activities provided by community organizations. Library staff will be knowledgeable of partnerships with the library, as well those community offerings that stand alone.

- **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.

- **Marketing/Communication: Internal and External**
  The library will prioritize effective communication internally and externally, relaying timely, useful, and appealing information.

- **Non-Traditional Collections and Services**
  Community will have access to relevant non-traditional collections and services that reflect their community needs.

- **Optimizing our Assets**
  Library staff and board will be empowered to create informed analysis of internal and external processes and procedures. Streamlining and updating departmental and organizational processes to reflect present day library services will positively improve patron experiences.

- **Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning**
  The community will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives. The library can surprise and delight residents with programs and resources on new topics in an ever-changing world.

- **Senior Programming**
  The library will provide programming and services to senior citizens and their caregivers at the library and/or through outreach initiatives. Senior citizens will have access to information, technology, materials, and relevant community resources to help them navigate an ever-changing world.

- **Social Services**
  The library can develop partnerships with and provide space for local social service agencies to have resources and programming for the community.

- **Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing and Listening for Pleasure**
  Library users who want materials to enhance their leisure time will find what they want when and where they want them, in the users' desired formats, and will have the help they need from library staff to make choices from among the options.

- **Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces**
  Users will have safe and welcoming physical spaces to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read.

- **Welcome to the United States: Services Immigrants and Refugees**
  Immigrants and refugees will have information on citizenship, English Language Learning, employment, public schooling, health and safety, social services, and any other topics that they need to participate successfully in their community.

Methodology

Led by SLO consultant Mandy Simon, the State Library offered the following services to the Committee:

- Provided local city and county demographic data
- Collaboration in the creation and administration of a community survey
- Conducting 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 and SLO created a community survey, which was mailed to every household in the service area as part of the quarterly newsletter and made available to residents online via a web-based survey. The distribution of the surveys resulted in ninety-three responses during the comment period, which was August–October 2021. SLO compiled the survey results and reported them to the Committee.

In order to hear directly from stakeholders, SLO conducted interest-based focus groups with representative community members to collect qualitative data, opinions, and observations representative of the community. The focus groups were asked about the Huron Library and its services, as well as more general questions about the community, in order to assess overall needs and areas to improve. Focus groups were conducted with members of the community, with Library Trustees, and with the Staff of the Library. These group discussions were facilitated by SLO consultant Mandy Simon, who also took transcriptions of the conversations. All of the groups engaged with the same set of questions. SLO used these qualitative data and the results from the community survey to generate a report of suggestions for the development of the strategic plan.

Setting Goals

Though data gathering is an important part of the *Planning for Results* methodology, it is a mere precursor to synthesizing those data into goals and objectives based on community needs. The Strategic Planning Committee and the Library Directors drafted goals and objectives based on the data collected and insights offered in the report from SLO.

Implementation

The work of the administration and staff continues with the implementation of the plan. Objectives become individual and organizational tasks and a timeline focuses those efforts. In some cases, the success of the Strategic Plan may rely on the ability to fully fund the objectives, but the goal-setting period addressed the needs first, without addressing the immediate reality for implementation.

Strategic Plan 2023-2027

The planning process created the framework for the Huron Public Library 2023-2027 Strategic Plan, approved by the Board of Trustees on 9 November 2022.

The Service Responses, goals, and objectives are as follows:

1. **Know your community: Community Resources & Services**
   Library users will have a central source for information about the wide variety of programs and activities provided by community organizations. Library staff will be knowledgeable of partnerships with the library, as well as those community offerings that stand alone.

   1.1. Develop new ways to disseminate information about Library programming, such as the expansion of email newsletters and social media posts, as well as signage in high-traffic locations in Huron.

   1.2. Host and promote the Huron City government, Township government, and Port Authority public forums, and expand the number and scope of candidate forums in connection with local elections.

   1.3. Partner with local digital news sources, and expand the Library's social media presence to include coverage of city, township, school board, and port authority meetings, aggregated into a "community news" tab on Facebook and the Library website.

   1.4. Expand collaborative programming with the Huron Historical Society and increase access to Society resources for use in genealogy and other research.

   1.5. Expand the scope of Library programing to better serve patrons for whom English is a second language, and promote multi-cultural engagement within our community.

   1.6. Offer a speaker series on current events and topics relevant to the Huron Community, including education and local governments.

   1.7. Provide periodic programming that provides the public with credible information and facts, and instruction on how to responsibly consume news and other media.

   1.8. Collaborate with Firelands College on programming and initiatives to benefit our shared community.

2. **Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning**
   The community will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives. The library can surprise and delight residents with programs and resources on new topics in an ever-changing world.

   2.1. Expand the Library's maker-space capabilities by procuring maker elements that emphasize engagement and creativity in addition to fabrication, and which can be stored and quickly deployed to maximize use of available space for programming.

   2.2. Initiate project-based learning series where patrons learn to complete projects across multiple sessions.

   2.3. Expand computer coding instruction to include more diverse populations– especially adults– and more advanced training in areas such as web development and data science.

   2.4. Expand the lending mission of the Library to include technology–such as gaming systems, eBook readers, tablet, and laptop computers–and less traditional items such as musical instruments, tools, vegetable and flower seeds, and yard tools.

   2.5. Expand technology-training to include (a) basic computer skills such as internet access, web-browsing, emailing, word processing, spreadsheets etc.; (b) safe and secure best-practices for parents and other users of social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tick-toc, etc.); (c) use of specific devices, such as Kindles, iPhones, eBook readers, Roku, smart TVs, iPads, Tablets, smart phones, gaming systems, and others.

   2.6. Establish video production and editing capabilities, including a green-screen, to empower patrons to create content–for YouTube, social media, video blogs, instructional videos–and develop content creation skills.

   2.7. Initiate a "technology petting-zoo" where patrons can preview new technology before buying it themselves.

3. **Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces**
   Users will have safe and welcoming physical spaces to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read.

   3.1.   Renovation and updating of the Library children's area, to create a dedicated child-themed entranceway, designating the space as especially for children, and renovation of the Story-Time room to include new technology, equipment, and furniture.

   3.2.   Establish the Huron Library Café, a place to purchase coffee, tea, and baked-goods, for enjoyment in a café-like space and atmosphere.

   3.3.   Upgrade the study rooms with artwork and decorations, re-painting, and improved device chargers.

   3.4.   Remodel communal spaces with café-style seating and smaller tables to promote remote work and intimate conversation and collaboration. Increase the number of plants in the Library.

   3.5.   Expand the Library into outdoor spaces to permit reading outside, on comfortable furniture, when the seasons and weather permit.