According to Professor R. David Lankes, "Bad libraries build collections. Good libraries build services. Great libraries build communities." At the Longview Public Library, our goal is to help build the community that people envision for the future.

To achieve this goal, our Library needs a roadmap that outlines where we are headed and what the intended destination looks like. The strategic planning process enables stakeholders, library staff, and support organizations to understand the community’s needs and desires, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the library.

With this knowledge, the plan guides the Library in the right direction. Our library is committed to using this planning process to ensure that we provide services that meet the needs of our community and help build the future.

Libraries transform lives through service, connection, and resources. By transforming individual lives, the library transforms the community as a whole. The Library itself is being transformed to be innovative, modern, reflective of all members of the community, as well as responsive to the community’s vision.
In the past, library metrics have focused on outputs such as attendance, circulation, and service hours. However, libraries are constantly striving to be creative and innovative in all areas, including measurement.

**How We Started**

In the fall of 2022, a strategic planning committee was formed to guide the Longview Public Library’s future direction. The committee was composed of library staff, Friends of the Library members, Longview Library Foundation members, Board of Trustee members, Cowlitz County Mini District board members, community school specialists, and staff from other City departments.

To begin the planning process, the committee conducted a thorough analysis of the library’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. We examined the library’s current mission and vision, comparing and contrasting it with those of other public libraries. After extensive discussion, the committee developed a new mission and vision, along with a set of values to guide future planning.

**Listening to Our Community**

To gather input, the committee conducted several focus group sessions, including one with library staff, one with the strategic planning committee, and two open "Community Listening Sessions." We also conducted 15 interviews with individuals and groups selected by the committee and a community survey about Library services with 200+ participants. The committee reviewed and analyzed the responses, identifying repeated phrases and themes, and generated a word cloud from the responses.

Based on this input, the committee developed three goals with objectives derived from community priorities. Library staff assigned metrics to each objective to measure progress and set targets to be achieved over the five-year period. Every year, library staff will create action plans outlining how their work will contribute to achieving these goals.

The Longview Public Library is committed to using this plan to provide services that meet the needs of the community and build a stronger and more vibrant future for all.
Marketing supports the library's efforts with social media, web displays, signage, community engagement and promotion.

**Libraries have three key areas of focus, collections, programs, and services. Marketing strategies are used to highlight and bring about change to the focus areas.**

At the Library, we aim to measure outcomes, not just outputs, and have identified specific targets to track our progress. In setting these targets, we have taken into account staffing and volunteer availability, which we refer to as our "capacity." We aim to stretch ourselves while also being realistic about what we can achieve.

By measuring outcomes, we hope to better understand the impact of our collections, programs, and services on the community. We will continue to seek new and innovative ways to engage and serve our patrons, while also tracking our progress and making adjustments as needed.

Our goal is to provide the best possible service to the community and to continue to evolve and grow with its needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>COLLECTIONS</strong></th>
<th>The items purchased for lending, such as books, databases, magazines, and videos.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROGRAMS</strong></td>
<td>Library or community driven programming including book clubs, crafts, events, and speakers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SERVICES</strong></td>
<td>Library customer service encompasses assistance, instruction, and research.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marketing supports libraries' efforts with social media, web displays, signage, community engagement and promotion.
By 2028, the Library hopes to achieve specific goals and objectives outlined in this strategic plan. Funding, staff, and time are allocated first to core services and then to the three community priority areas, with resources available for opportunities and innovations.
Mission, Vision & Values

MISSION
Educate minds. Empower people. Enrich lives.
Encourage life-long learning. Enhance connection.

VISION
Offer a welcoming destination that encourages people and ideas to come together. Nurture a joy of reading and discovery by meeting the needs and interests of our diverse community. Celebrate the history of Longview while embracing the future.

VALUES
ACCESS, DIVERSITY, & EQUITY
We ensure all people have free and equal access to information and library spaces. We create collections and programs that represent diverse experiences and viewpoints.

COMMUNITY
We maintain a library that is safe, welcoming, and responsive to community needs. We provide excellent service that is confidential, nonjudgmental, and nonpartisan.

DISCOVERY
We create collections that entertain and allow for serendipity. We create programs that introduce new connections, ideas, and resources.

LEARNING
We actively facilitate and promote literacy and life-long learning. We are a partner in community efforts to improve educational outcomes.
Community Priority: Literacy

Goal: The Library will work to increase access to reading resources and programs that develop literacy for all.

1. Increase the number of resources to teach and improve reading.
   - Update and increase collection materials in literacy, homeschooling, and parenting topics.
   - Increase circulation in these areas by 10% per year.

2. Develop a program to increase adult literacy.
   - Revitalize our Project READ programming efforts to serve an average of 100 participants who reached their goal or have made significant progress per year.
   - Increase adult literacy volunteer hours by 5% per year.

3. Provide additional opportunities for early literacy.
   - Grow the number of opportunities and participants while improving early learning outcomes.
   - Increase early literacy participation by 10% per year.
   - Increase number of early literacy programs offered at night and on weekends by 3% per year.

4. Increase diverse and equitable offerings.
   - Grow the number of programs and collection items that feature BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, disability, or neurodivergent content by 30% by 2028.
   - Increase number of materials donated to organizations that support socially excluded communities to 1000 items by 2028.

5. Increase access inside and outside the library, especially in underserved areas using the mobile library.
   - Grow the number of Longview and Rural Mini District households having a library card to 45% by 2028.
   - Increase number of outreach visits and number of patron interactions outside of the library by 8% per year.
Community Priority: Education

Goal: The Library will provide increased opportunities to gain the skills needed to learn and grow.

1. Teach technology skills through direct assistance and programs.
   - Revitalize our technology one-on-one assistance / programming efforts to serve an average of 100 people per year.

2. Provide horticultural education through collection items, displays and programs.
   - Increase seed library participation by 10% per year.
   - Provide 8 horticulture programs and/or displays per year.
   - Increase horticulture collection by 10% per year.

3. Encourage kindergarten readiness through programs in the building, online and through the mobile library.
   - Increase number of programs with an early learning or kindergarten readiness component and program participation by 50% by 2028.
   - Survey participants, with a goal of having 90% or more of surveyed participants reporting that they will increase interactions with their children (reading, talking, singing, writing, and playing.)
   - Increase number of "1000 Books before Kindergarten" participants by 10% per year.

4. Teach skills needed for all ages through programs and resources.
   - Grow the number of educational programs (not counting literacy) per year that teach skills needed for all ages such as high school equivalency exams, math skills, naturalization, professional licensing and more.
   - Increase use of educational databases by 10% per year.
   - Increase spending on education collections by 15% per year.

5. Offer small business and employee assistance skills through programming and collections.
   - Increase spending on FEDC collection by 10% per year.
   - Increase number of business and employment activities by 10% per year.
Community Priority: Engagement

Goal: The Library will provide opportunities for the community to meet and participate in meaningful dialogue.

1. **Serve as a local connection to organizations and volunteers.**
   - Host an annual volunteer fair and contact resource to connect community members to local organizations.
   - Investigate ways to promote and increase community volunteerism.
   - Record number of volunteer hours in the Library (outreach services, literacy and program / shelving volunteers) and with our partner organizations (Friends and Foundation) with a goal of increasing efforts 10% per year.

2. **Develop programming that facilitates connection with community members.**
   - Provide 100 program opportunities per year, that explicitly promote community participation and connection.
   - Increase number of participants in programs by 10% per year.

3. **Expand programming that highlights diverse voices and experiences and/or enables conversations on difficult topics.**
   - Increase the number of programs and participation featuring diverse voices or difficult conversations by 10% per year.

4. **Showcase displays, programs, and services that teach the history of Longview and inspire pride in our community.**
   - Showcase at least one display or program per month with a Longview focus.
   - Fulfill 25 research requests or more per year.
   - Increase the number of hours the Longview Room is open to the public to 3 days or more per week.

5. **Host festivals that invite celebration and community connection.**
   - Host at least 4 festivals / large community events per year.
Internal Goals and Strategies

BE A GREAT PLACE TO WORK

Goal: Foster an internal culture that promotes inclusion, teamwork, accountability, and opportunities for growth.

Create a comprehensive staff training program that ensures that all members of library staff have the tools, resources, and education to help people access the library’s collections, services, and programs in-person and online.

- Have all staff attend at least one annual early literacy training.
- Offer an annual staff training day that incorporates cross training opportunities.
- Ensure staff have consistent understanding of updated library policies and procedures for consistent and friendly service.

EXPAND AND ENGAGE THE LIBRARY COMMUNITY

Goal: Ensure that the LPL is a culturally responsive library that engages the community in our work.

- Ensure that staff have the cultural knowledge to treat all people respectfully and equitably regardless of age, disability, housing status, race, gender, and/or sexuality.
- Create a collection development plan that includes purposes and descriptions of each collection, targeted areas for growth or development, and schedules for weeding and assessment.
- Conduct a diversity audit of the Library’s collection.
- Improve the LPL website so patrons can better access their library accounts and find information about library collections, services, and programs.
- Create resource guides and directories to help patrons find information in the library and in the greater community.
- Prioritize Library Leadership participation in area groups that support literacy and create partnerships such as Early Literacy Council, Rotary, Lions, Altrusa.
- Improve marketing efforts by increasing the marketing budget to 2% of non-labor spending by 2028.
Internal Goals and Strategies

**A WELCOMING LIBRARY BUILDING**

Goal: The library building and grounds are a welcoming and comfortable place for patrons to meet.

Create a comprehensive building plan.
- HVAC replacement
- Interior repairs / restoration
- Updated modular shelving
- Dynamic shelving
- Comfortable seating
- Adequate electrical access
- Interactive play space
- Engaging displays and artwork
- Improved accessibility for those with disabilities
- Improved Wi-Fi
- Improved internet speed
- Improved exterior and interior lighting
- Manicured grounds
Library leadership will use the Strategic Plan as a roadmap. While we aim to follow the plan, there may be certain programs or opportunities that we feel are innovative and would benefit our community, even if they do not directly adhere to the plan. We call this "room for innovation" and will allocate 10% of our time and resources to pursue these opportunities.

Each full-time library staff member will be asked to create an annual action plan outlining their goals and how they align with the strategic plan. Supervisors will check in with their staff to monitor progress, and library leadership will review metrics to track progress toward the strategic plan goals and objectives.

By allowing for innovation and encouraging staff to think creatively, we hope to better serve our community and improve our offerings. We believe that by setting clear goals and regularly monitoring progress, we can stay on track and continue to evolve and grow as a library.

Committee Members

Jacob Cole, Director
Austin Brigden, Administrative Assistant
Justin Brown, Longview Recreation Manager
Jakob Collins, Youth Services Technician
Beverly Coryell, Library Foundation Member
Jane Ditewig, Library Foundation Chair
David Griggs, Library Foundation Member
Erik Halvorson, Board Trustee Member
Lisa Hedgpeth, Adult Services Librarian
Jennifer Jensen, Technical Services Librarian
Dave Knoyle, Board Trustee Secretary
Belinda Lowery, Friends of the Library President
Katy Olson, Mark Morris School Librarian
Heather Palow, Communications Specialist
Rosemary Powelson-Baily, Foundation Board Member
Bob Roth, Library Foundation Treasurer
Donita Sands, Cataloging Specialist
Christina Smith, Board Trustees Chair
Becky Standal, Youth Services Librarian
Paula Stepankowsky, Trustee Board Member
Lisa Sudar, Cowlitz Rural Mini District Board Member
Yeni Woodall, Friends of the Library Treasurer

We thank you for your continued support of our Longview Public Library.

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