



2019-2023 STRATEGIC PLAN

.....

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Manitowoc Public Library is to promote a culture of reading and to provide access to information. Through services we strive to foster an environment that meets the educational, recreational and cultural needs of the community.



INTRODUCTION

Though we face the same challenges that many other libraries face nationally, our outstanding staff and committed board members have been focused on providing resources and learning opportunities to meet the growing needs of those we serve. Now, we turn our vision toward the future. While closely adhering to the public library's values of access, inclusion, and freedom of information, we entered the strategic planning process with open minds.

Through thoughtful discussion and careful analysis of our services, resources, and community's needs, we have committed ourselves to five comprehensive goals and have outlined corresponding objectives for each. This plan is not a full listing of all of the resources, services and programs that Manitowoc Public Library offers. Instead, it provides a vision for the next five years with a focus on service areas that we believe aligns the library, an essential cornerstone institution in our community, as a key partner in the development of Manitowoc's growth and prosperity.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In August of 2018, the Manitowoc Public Library Board formed a Strategic Planning Steering Committee composed of representatives from the library board, staff, Friends of Manitowoc Public Library, Manitowoc Public Library Foundation, and community members. Under the direction and guidance of a strategic planning consultant, the committee gathered and reviewed a number of data sources between October 2018 and January 2019.

Over the first four months of 2019, the committee and consultants assessed the data gathered in an effort to develop the strategic goals and objectives that will guide the library's work over the next five years. The result is this final strategic plan report approved by the Manitowoc Public Library Board of Trustees on May 20, 2019.

The following data and information formed the bedrock upon which the goals and objectives of the strategic plan were built:

- Annual library operations and service data submitted to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) for the years 2008-2017.
- Results of a survey of the community conducted between November 1, 2018 and December 9, 2018 that garnered a total of 1,374 responses.
- Three focus group conversations with area residents to learn more about how the library can support the needs of the community.
- Results of a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis with staff.
- Results of an Issues and Needs Questionnaire, completed by members of the Strategic Planning Committee.
- Demographic and economic data from the American Community Survey and the 2000 and 2010 US Census.
- Other local information from the city's Downtown Master Plan and Vision 2022

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Strategic Goal I - Assessment

Through the development of processes for ongoing assessment and the thoughtful stewardship of the investments made in the library, we will continually strive to ensure the services, programs, and resources we provide are achieving their optimal impact and delivering opportunities that meet the diverse needs of our community.

Objectives	Possible Activities
A. Develop measurable assessment methods for resources, services, and programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with staff to create and complete assessment plans for the following service areas:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Programming◦ Electronic resources/collection◦ Physical resources/collection◦ Other in-house services and offerings◦ Outreach & partnerships
B. Reallocation of resources and services based on assessments from Objective A, Strategic Goal I within our capacity to accomplish	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify users and nonusers of services and programs• Determine funds and time allocated to providing the resources, services, or programs• Reallocate resources and services to optimize impact of offerings• Increase, as is feasible, equatability of library service opportunities, while maintaining inclusivity
C. Annual environmental scan of local issues, needs and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement an ongoing procedure to gather information regarding new innovative service ideas and trends• Identification of new service needs and opportunities based on the annual environmental scan

Supporting Data and Information

Respondents to our survey indicated they love what we are doing, but would also like to see us doing even more.

"I feel it is a wonderful resource for the community! Keep up the advances and great work!"

"More cultural and historical events relating to the people of Manitowoc County."

"It would be nice to have kids programs offered to special needs children like kids with autism."

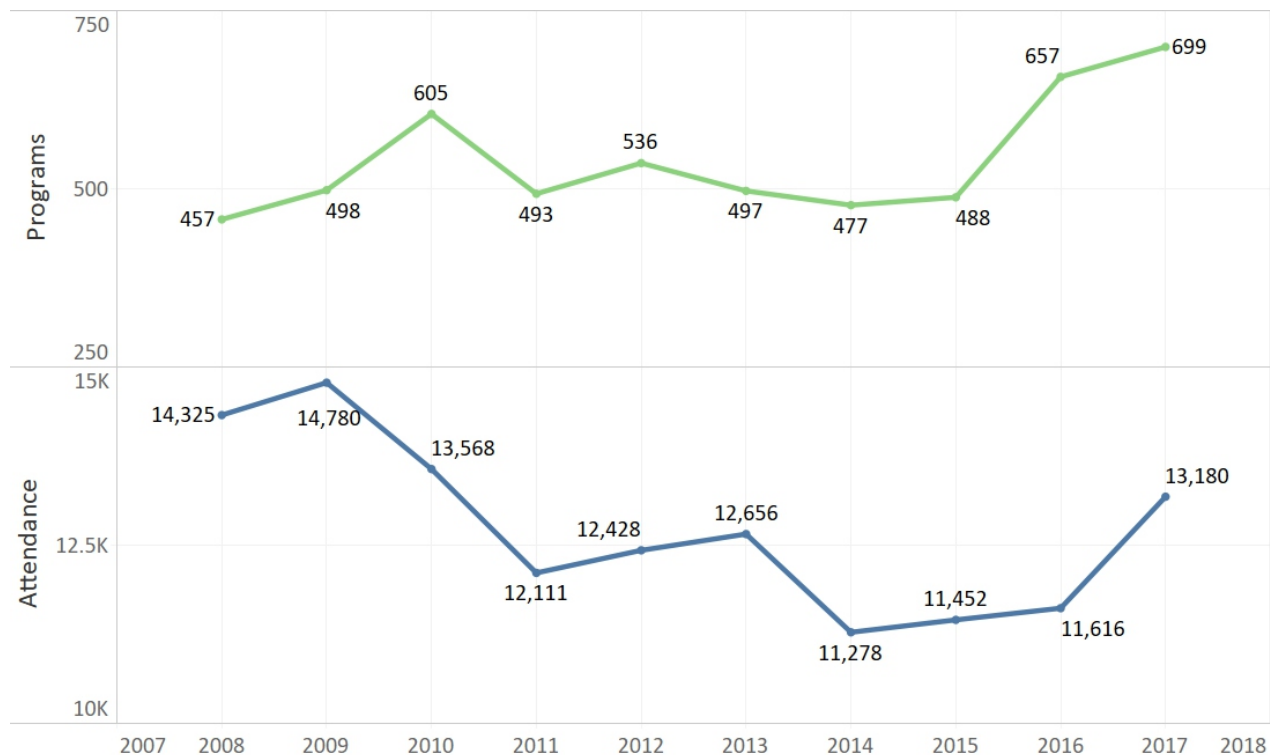
"I am so happy to see that the library is open 7 days a week again."

"I'd like to see more evening group activities for adults."

However, doing more of everything comes with a price, not only to our budget, but the potential burden to our staff. To increase our impact where we can and ensure there are opportunities for all in our community to have access to the library services they need, we need to continually assess what we are doing. The data and information we reviewed to develop this strategic plan provide us with benchmarks for improvement that will help us understand our capacities to reach this goal.

What we learned

- The total number of programs offered from 2015-2017 increased by 43% while the attendance only increased by 15%. The following chart shows programs offered and attendance by year.



- Developing and providing programming can involve a significant amount of staff time. The 15% reduction in overall staff FTE from 2012 to 2017 (35.83 FTE to 30.3 FTE) is a major constraint in the staff's ability to do more.
- This past year the children's department have focused on being more strategic about the number of programs they offer, using attendance data and feedback from attendees to drive their decision-making. The result has been positive with the attendance at children's programs being higher in 2018 than it was in 2017 though there were fewer children's programs provided in 2018.

Strategic Goal II - Service Priorities

The library will continually seek opportunities to evolve in its role as an important community resource, and we will strive to ensure that our collections, services, programs, and space are inclusive and optimally adapted to the needs of our community.

Objectives	Possible Activities
A. Increase access to use of physical and virtual spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continually assess access to use of physical and virtual space, making adaptations where appropriate• Implement final phase of 1st floor redesign• Evaluate 2nd floor layout and space needs• Review and update signage• Establish consistent and measurable customer service standards• Improve access to digital services and resources with a focus placed on mobile platforms
B. Expand reach of library services in the city and county	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify potential locations in the community for service points or outreach opportunities• Establish new and develop existing partnerships• Create a "library on the go" model for purposes of outreach and increasing patronage
C. Be known as a key partner for business collaboration, economic development, and skill building resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and strengthen partnerships for economic development• Identify and partner with members of the community to share expertise• Create entrepreneurship and business resources, services, programs and spaces in and outside of the library.• Implement Makerspace/Idea Box on 1st floor• Continue to develop National Library Week initiative with the intention of supporting the local economy

Supporting Data and Information

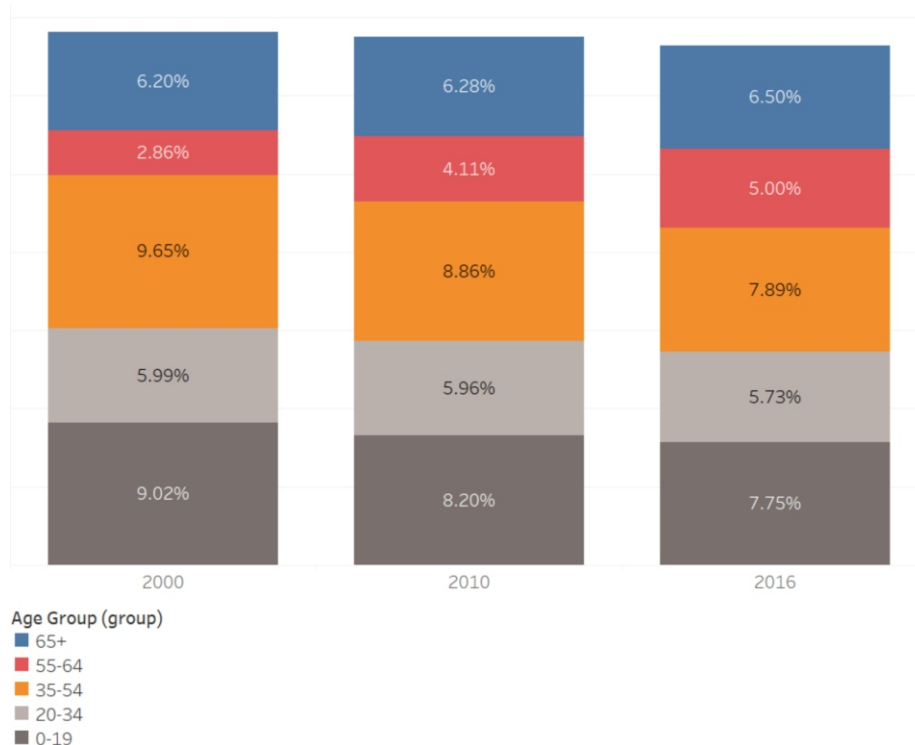
The library continues to demonstrate itself as a vital partner in our area's success, though in helping our community achieve its goals, room for improvement does exist. There are many ideas regarding how we might leverage our assets in elevating Manitowoc for those that call our community home. The objectives of this goal align both with what we heard as we developed this plan and with the efforts currently happening within the city, county, and other groups.

What we learned

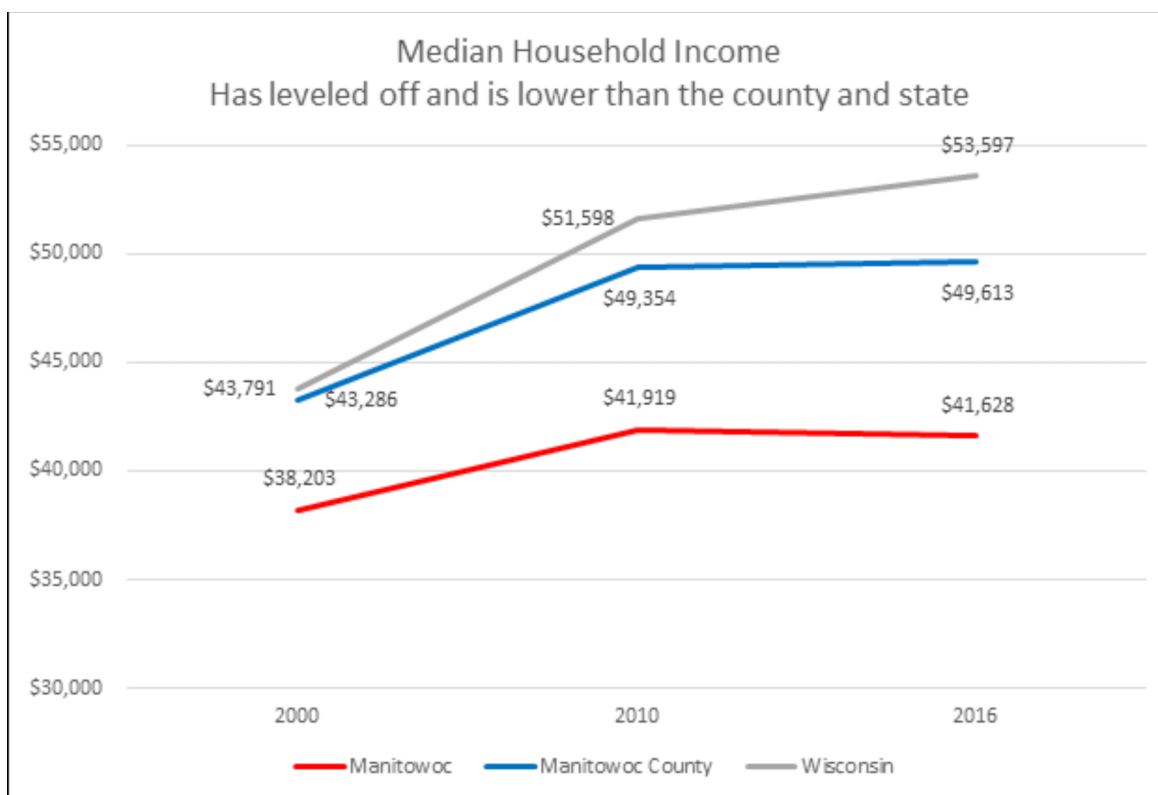
- The responses to our survey indicate that 96% of those that infrequently use the library (1-6 times per year) and 78% of those that never use the library see themselves using the library more if changes were that provide targeted programming and learning opportunities which better meet their needs and alleviate barriers for usage.
- Nearly half of those that infrequently use the library indicate that primary uses of the library are meeting spaces and materials for work, business, and school. Thus, both infrequent users and those that never use the library indicate a key area of enhanced services for them would include increasing the number of private study/meeting spaces and areas devoted to design, creation, and entrepreneurship.
- Our library recognizes we are part of a larger community ecosystem working toward the future of Manitowoc, and as a result, we should work toward aligning what we do to support the following organized community efforts:
 - The Downtown Master Plan calls for incremental steps to:
 - Improve Operational & Organizational Strength
 - Build local Mentorship Resources
 - Build local Entrepreneur Resources
 - Improve Land & Building Uses
 - Support Makerspaces & Micro-manufacturing
 - Vision 2022 is focused on:
 - Workforce and entrepreneurial development
 - Downtown collaboration
 - Leadership development
 - Healthy Manitowoc County
 - Community Pride

- Two demographic trends point to particular demographic opportunities
 - The average age of city and county residents is about four to five years older than the average age in the rest of the state

Median age increase is primarily reflected in fewer children 0-19 and more adults approach retirement age (55-64)



- The city has a lower median household income than the county and state, along with having higher poverty rates than the county and state for children, families, and seniors. There is concern regarding the loss of longtime manufacturing jobs in the area and the needs of those displaced to develop new skills to find new employment. Access to free library services, education, and learning resources are key to helping these community residents.



Strategic Goal III - Cardholders & Collection

We strive to ensure our eminent collection of materials is available in formats that meet needs of and are utilized by our community.

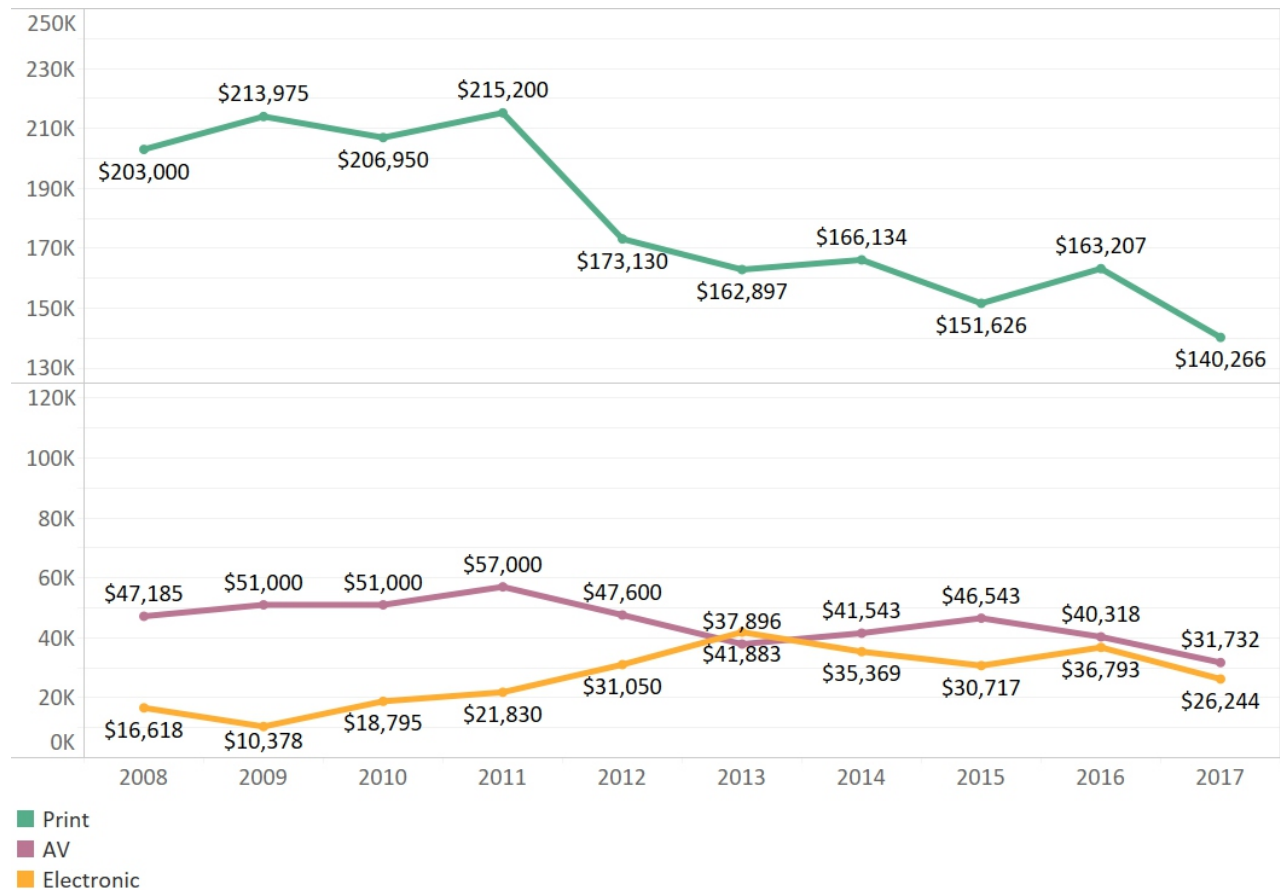
Objectives	Possible Activities
A. Align collection development according to assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance development of E-content collections by evaluating use of existing online resources and digital collections. We may turn in work with library system and member MCLS libraries to cooperatively expand and better promote E-content collections• Develop new types of collections based on needs of the community
B. Improve merchandising of the collection throughout the library	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider more effective ways to display items throughout the library, utilizing point of purchase and point of sales strategies• Curate and promote resources related to services and programming• Explore highlighting underutilized collections• Research read-a-likes in the shared catalog• Staff implement upselling initiatives, personalized reader's advisory assistance, and read-a-like suggestions
C. Increase the number of active library card holders (those that have used their library card within the past 3 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote use of the library in the community and throughout the county• Develop card holder sign up campaigns• Consider community partnerships for sign-up promotions

Supporting Data and Information

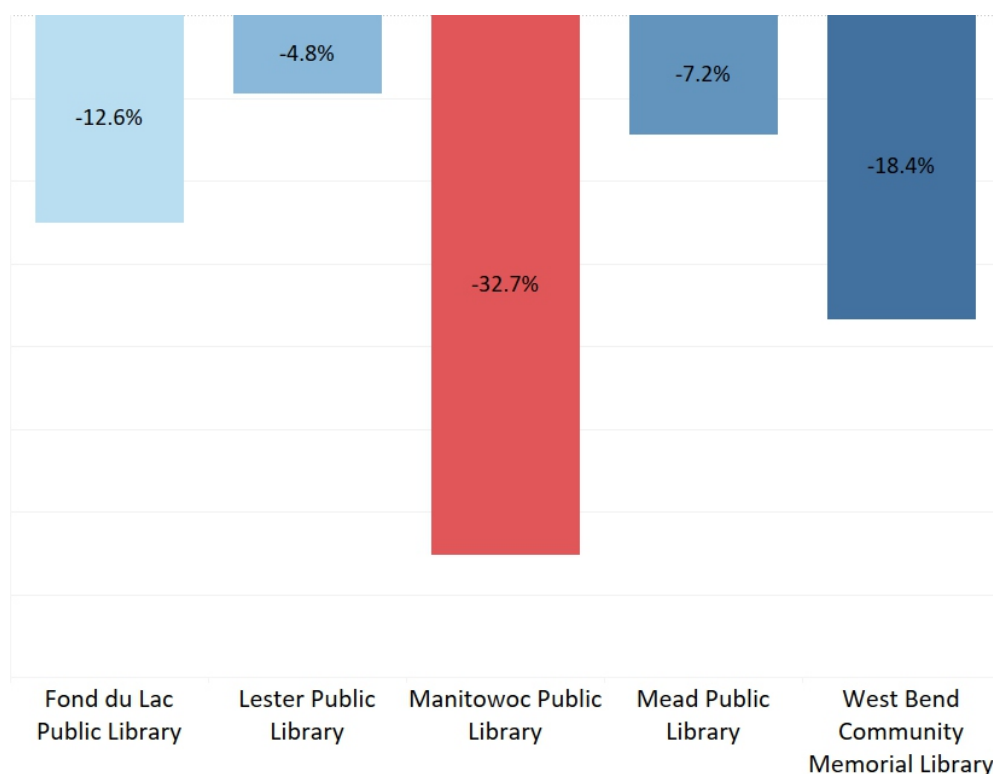
Over the past seven years, the library has experienced cuts to funding from the city that resulted in reductions in materials purchased for library collections. This has contributed to a decline in the circulation of our materials and has thus impacted our funding from the county. Along with a misguided reduction in its open hours by closing on Thursdays (restored in 2018), measures of collection usage plummeted. As a resource library for both the county and the Manitowoc-Calumet library system, it is vital that our library maintain a rich collection that is easily accessible to residents from Manitowoc, the rest of the county, and beyond.

What we learned

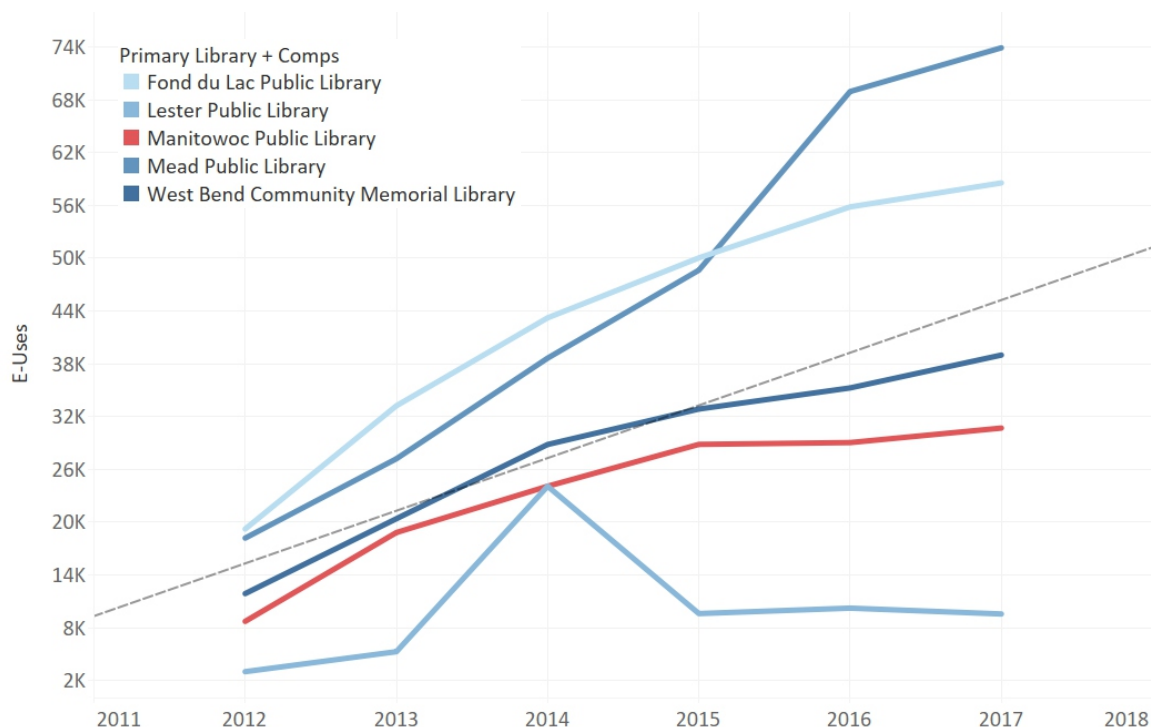
- We have cut our collection spending to maintain staffing to have the library hours better meet the needs of the community and provide our other services and programs. The following graph shows collection spending at the library from 2008-2017.



- In 2012, the library borrowed one item from another library for every item it loaned to another. The ratio has changed to three items borrowed for every two items lent, and indicates that patrons are not finding the materials they are looking for in the library's catalog. It also indirectly indicates an impact on staff time in that they need to request and process a larger volume of materials coming from other libraries.
- The share of our active card holders that are not city residents is shrinking. In 2013, the share of active card holders from outside city limits was 37%. By 2017, this fell to a 10-year low of 29%. This directly impacts circulation generated by non-resident users of the library. The following chart illustrates the percentage change in non-resident circulation from 2013 to 2017 of comparable libraries:



- An opportunity to better meet the E-content needs of MPL patrons in the Wisconsin Digital Library (OverDrive/Libby) exists as well. The following graph shows how MPL lags behind other comparable libraries in the growth in the use of ebook usage and audiobook streaming from 2012 through 2017.



Strategic Goal IV - Marketing & Communication

We strive to inform all area residents about the library, its offerings, and its essential role as a cornerstone institution in our community through our marketing campaigns and engagement with the public.

Objectives	Possible Activities
A. Intentional, cohesive branding and marketing of the library and its services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draw symmetry in branding across the library, the Foundation, and Friends, including review of mission and vision statements• Complete and implement a marketing plan• Create a streamlined, branded Summer Reading Program across all age levels• Create a timeline to assess and update all marketing materials on a regular basis - i.e. brochures, digital signage, etc.
B. Increase advocacy and understanding of the library's value and importance to the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop an advocacy plan that engages new stakeholders and existing advocates (city leaders, volunteers, donors, and others)• Hone staff and board members' abilities to be advocates• Explore non-traditional marketing avenues both on-site, throughout the community, and via digital platforms• Implement a calculator on the website to showcase to the value in using the library• Continue with staff updates at monthly Board meetings

Supporting Data and Information

It was apparent from those that responded to our survey and attended our community conversations that a lack of awareness regarding the Library's offerings exists.

*"We are really blessed in our community to have this wonderful resource.
I am sure it is under-used by many, including myself."*

What we learned

- The library needs a varied communications plan that best targets audiences through the communication channels the different audiences use.
 - Those that infrequently or never use the library indicated in their survey responses that they find out about library activities, programs or news primarily through the library website (44%), social media (44%) and email (32%).
 - While those that frequently use the library also get their information about the library through online communications, they primarily get their information about the library through word of mouth and signage in the library.

Strategic Goal V - Staff Support

We will make the most effective use of staff time, experience, and expertise resulting in service excellence while striving to find the right balance of service and resource allocation.

Achievement of this goal, and by extension all others, must inherently incorporate the following tenets:

- Recognizing and developing everyone's talents
- Recruiting and retaining an inspired and engaged workforce
- Celebrating diversity and mutual respect in the workplace
- Creating opportunities and fostering an environment that recognizes success and failure in those opportunities as learning experiences and part of greater professional growth

Objectives	Possible Activities
A. Staff have the time to plan, execute, and evaluate the work they do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create strategic work plans for departments, the library, and individual goals • Annual assessment and realignment of work plans with performance reviews • Reinforce staff accountability to service standards and work commitments • Increase staff awareness of other roles and departments through continued offering of MPL 360 • Improve the staff conference room for better meeting facilitation
B. Staff have opportunities to learn about new technologies, develop new skills, and practice techniques that will lead to improved service and job satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help staff learn how to better gather data and information from their work and interactions with the community to inform ongoing and new development of services, programs and collections. • Give staff the opportunity to learn from others and each other by visiting other libraries, staying up to date on emerging trends, attending conferences, education offerings, and sharing the information they have learned with one another • Provide achievable leadership and growth opportunities to develop skills • Align staff experience, passion and skills within the work of the library • Continue funding annual internal grant opportunity for staff to support innovative ideas (SILLI) • Conduct a regular culture survey to improve working conditions • Support FISH (internal employee engagement committee) initiatives to enhance MPL culture • Create a thorough staff training model for new and current staff (orientation, training, mentoring)

Supporting Data and Information

The process of developing this strategic plan began with our staff engaging in a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis. We heard throughout the process that the communities think our staff are doing an amazing job. We know too, though, that with the 15% reduction in the full-time equivalent made for purposes of cost control, that many of our staff members, including those who work part-time, feel they are stretched to capacity in their many individual responsibilities. Our commitment to supporting them is the key to our success and the success of achieving the other four goals of this strategic plan.

MEASURES FOR SUCCESS

- Increase in usage metrics to assess provision of resources, services and programs including, but not limited to material circulation, use of e-content, number of active cardholders, and programming participants
- Improved utilization of staff capacity
- An array of diverse library services provided, with a marked increase in those specifically devoted to business collaboration, workforce development, and skill building
- 1st floor redesign completed
- New partnerships established and current partnerships expanded to reach objectives
- Staff time allocated for assessment and planning
- Professional development opportunities provided for and utilized by staff
- Increased support for the library including fiscal support, volunteer participation, etc.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES NEEDED

- Staff time
- Professional development funds
- Increased collection funding
- Material, equipment, space, etc. needs for potential changes to existing offerings or providing new offerings
- Promotional materials and other marketing expenses
- Funding for additional staff and full time opportunities to bring FTE up to Wisconsin State Standards of 34.35.

ONGOING PLANNING

The complete activity and implementation plan is being created by the staff management team and will serve as a guide for execution during the life of this plan. The ongoing planning process for the library will include project management, assessment, communication and prioritization of activities to ensure the goals of the plan are realized with an amount of flexibility to adapt as needed.

This will include the director and staff working in tandem with the Library Board of Trustees to prioritize and coordinate activities identified in this plan. The library will consider available resources including funding and staff time, fluctuating external conditions that govern public libraries, and any opportunities for innovation during the time of this plan's implementation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people to thank who gave their time to share their thoughts, ideas, and hopes for the library. We want to thank the nearly 1,400 community members that responded to our survey or attended one of our community conversation gatherings. The primary focus of this strategic plan's development has foremost been the residents with the intention being confirmation that our services, programs, and resources align with the needs of the community.

We would like to thank the staff for encouraging people to take our survey and sharing their knowledge, experience, and ideas as part of the SWOT session. Much gratitude goes to those staff members in particular who gave their time and energy as part of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee.

The library director is grateful for the time given by and enthusiasm of all those who served on the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, as their commitment and thoughtfulness was instrumental in the development of this plan. Certainly, too, the Planning Committee members extend their appreciation to Library Board for supporting the entire strategic planning process.

2018-19 Strategic Planning Committee

- Ashley Bender (Community Representative – United Way Manitowoc County Executive Director)
- Pat Brandel (MPL Foundation Board Trustee)
- Lynn Christiansen (Library Staff – Youth Library Associate)
- Linda Hunter (Library Board – Long Range Planning Committee Chair)
- Jordan Kabat (Library Staff – Public Services Library Assistant)
- Todd Lotz (Library Board – Council Representative)
- Katie Schamburek (Community Representative – Owner of Glaze and Paint)
- Kristin Stoeger (Library Director)
- Catherine Wallen (Friends of MPL Board President)

2018-19 Library Board of Trustees

- Todd Holschbach – President
- Todd Lotz – Vice President
- Barb Bundy-Jost – Secretary/Treasurer
- Chris Able
- Michelle Doneff
- Fred Hazlewood
- Linda Hunter
- Patrick Neuenfeldt
- Abbey Quistorf
- Heidi Schroderus
- Lee Thennes

Finally, the library thanks Melissa McLimans and Bruce Smith from WILS (Wisconsin Library Services) for providing planning process management and facilitation services.