

Florida Public Library 2015-2020 Long Range Plan

Planning the Plan

The staff and board of the FPL began the planning process for their fourth Long Range Plan in the summer of 2014 by gathering the names of individuals who would be asked to share their thoughts on the role of the Library in the community, now and in the future. People of all ages, from teens to senior citizens, from local organizations, businesses, school and government, newcomers and longtime residents, as well as both Library users and non-users, were invited to attend a focus group meeting. The focus group meetings were led by Diane Arcieri, Board of Trustees Vice President and a retired training and management consultant. To make the meetings as accessible as possible, they were scheduled at various times and days of the week.

Five focus groups with a total of over fifty people met in August and September in 2 ½ hour sessions to examine Library use statistics and to discuss their library experiences, questions, frustrations and hopes. Participants were asked to consider these six questions:

- What is the current community environment in Florida?
- The Library – What’s working?
- The Library – What are the challenges and obstacles?
- The Library – What are and should be its programs and services?
- The Library – What technology do we have and do we need?
- The Library – What physical space do we have and do we need?

During the lively sessions, a total of 473 comments were offered in response to these questions. Each comment, brief or lengthy, was recorded. After the sessions, this material was collated and analyzed by the Library staff and comments by the staff and the board of trustees were included. Like comments were grouped together, consolidated and their frequency was noted. These agreements voiced by participants pointed the way to priorities that should be addressed by the Plan.

What is the current community environment in Florida?

Although the description of the community offered by participants is too wide in scope for the Library to address in whole, it offers some direction for the goals of our Plan. The most frequent comments made by participants are summarized here:

- Florida is very family oriented.
- Florida’s population has become more diverse and Library programs reflect this.
- Fewer older children are using the Library.
- Computer use in the Library has greatly increased.
- Florida has a big senior population with three groups meeting in the Senior Center.

The Library – What’s working?

Responses to this question are summarized in order of their frequency:

- FPL has a friendly staff with employees who are sensitive, good listeners, great people and who go out of their way to help, do outreach and collaborate.
- FPL has a huge variety of programming for all ages. Staff members are willing to try new things and promote diversity in programs. Attendance at programs is a challenge.
- Library hours and location are convenient.
- Patrons enjoy coming to FPL for human interaction. A service for homebound patrons would be welcome.
- FPL has a diverse collection and Inter-Library Loan (ILL) service is good.

The Library – What are the challenges and obstacles?

Responses to this question are summarized in order of their frequency:

- Lack of space is an obstacle. The Children’s Room is closed during programs. At minimum, a meeting room or multipurpose room is needed.
- Keeping up with technology is a challenge for staff and can’t be handled by just one person. Staff members need technology development, training and competency.
- FPL must clearly define what we do and who we are and share that information with the public.
- We need a bigger library. There is not enough work area for employees or space for users.

The Library – What are and should be its programs and services?

Responses to this question generated the most comments and are summarized in order of their frequency:

- Senior citizens lack evening transportation and prefer daytime programs.
- FPL is a safe haven for solitary teens, although some come here in groups to hang out and collaborate on projects. How can we reach this age group?
- Printed flyers and swinger sign are awesome. Explore other media outlets to publicize programs.
- Create an orientation tour and welcome packet for new and existing patrons.

The Library – What technology do we have and do we need?

Responses to this question are summarized in order of their frequency:

- Identify technology services the Library will provide.
- Provide more tech help through cross training and scheduling of tech staff. Identify roles and responsibilities.
- Provide personal service and a human connection. Help patrons who don't understand technology.

The Library – What physical space do we have and do we need?

Responses to this question are summarized in order of their frequency.

- Re-invent space that we have. Address worn areas. Use every space.
- Reconfigure staff room.
- The Library needs quiet areas and work space for patrons and staff.
- There is no open space. Comfy chairs are good.

Based on the above responses, the board and staff proceeded to divide the priorities identified above into five areas in order to develop goals and objectives for the Plan:

- Staff Development
- Library Collections
- Programs and Services
- Technology
- Building (Physical Space)

Our intent was to create realistic, achievable, broad goals and more narrowly focused objectives that would bring together the priorities identified by our focus group participants, our board and our staff. The Long Range Plan is intended to guide the Library during its next five fiscal years, from July 2015 through June 2020. To that end, some of the objectives have stated timelines coming due fairly soon, while others do not and may be deferred until later in the life of the Plan.

As work on the Plan continues, lists of activities will be developed to support the objectives in greater and more specific detail, as well as assigning these activities to specific staff members and constructing realistic timelines, budget costs and measurements to gauge our success at reaching our goals.

One overriding concern has emerged in our last Plan and this new one, too – the issue of space. Florida Public Library does not have the physical space to meet the demands of our customers, our workers and our community. While much of the Plan is focused on other areas, our dominant preoccupation for the future must be to address how to provide the programs and services that our users and taxpayers need and want in an expanded space that accommodates their vision of what their Library can and should be.

Florida Public Library 2015-2020 Long Range Plan

Mission Statement:

The Florida Public Library is the community center for personal growth. We support learning for all residents by providing library materials, information, technology and programs for education, enrichment and entertainment.

1. Staff Development

Goal: The Library will continue to provide excellent customer service to meet the needs of our users.

Objectives:

Schedule two staff development training sessions in 2015 and four sessions in each of the following years of this plan (2016-2020) to support and meet library goals.

Review work responsibilities and schedules to provide more technology help to both staff and patrons as part of the annual budget process, beginning December 2015.

Conduct monthly meetings for staff members who have major responsibility for the areas of programming, technology training, circulation and readers advisory, beginning September 2015.

2. Collections

Goal: The Library will provide a diverse, updated collection of materials for all ages.

Objectives:

Evaluate all collections for relevance and condition and weed regularly by a schedule to be developed by the end of 2015.

Staff with collection development responsibilities will submit to the Director lists of suggested purchases on a monthly basis.

Staff will reach out to FUFSD librarians annually for suggested purchases relevant to the needs of local students and teachers.

3. Programs and Services

Goal: The Library will offer a variety of programs for all ages.

Objectives:

Plan a homebound service for patrons and define its functions, costs and staffing for implementation in the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

Explore new and existing media outlets and social media to publicize and market programs.

Create an orientation tour of the Library and welcome packets for new patrons for the 2016-2017 fiscal year and update regularly.

Expand technology programs and help sessions for patrons.

4. Technology

Goal: The Library will be a community leader for technology.

Objectives:

Use the results of the 2015 staff technology survey to identify desired competencies for technology training for staff.

Develop a yearly technology plan, identifying services to be offered and purchases needed to implement the plan.

Update the Library's website information and keep its design current.

5. Building

Goal: Reorganize the Library's current physical space to meet staff and community needs.

Objectives:

Develop a strategy plan to address library space needs by reconfiguring interior design.

Form a committee of three by October 2015 to evaluate library space.

Goal: Develop a strategy plan to expand the Library to meet community needs.

Objectives:

Write a building program based on community, staff and board input by the end of 2015.

Research professional assistance needed to guide and develop the legal and construction processes for expansion.

Become informed on various phases of building expansion including NYS construction grants, bonding and referendums.

5.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees 5/11/2015