Lakewood Memorial Library
Strategic Plan

2017-2022

Introduction

WE ARE PLEASED TO PRESENT the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan for the Lakewood Memorial Library. As outlined in our mission statement, the Lakewood Memorial Library is dedicated to helping community members of all ages improve their quality of life by providing access to materials and services that meet their personal, educational, and professional needs. Our plan reflects the principles **READ GROW SERVE MEET EXPLORE** and our goals and objectives provide a map for the library, community members, and local governments to follow in order to advance into the future, accomplish our mission more successfully, and offer our community the type of library it has asked for and deserves.

In creating this plan, we consulted similar plans from many other libraries throughout the country and consulted research regarding libraries and the future role of libraries in our society. We also used statistics from the Village of Lakewood Comprehensive Plan Survey and data collected from our library itself. Input from our community members, patrons, library staff, local governments, and our library board members were taken into consideration. The information has been channeled and distilled into this plan so that the vision and goals of the Lakewood Memorial Library are clear to all, and we may successfully work together to provide the kind of library our community desires.

Your Current Library

Libraries must change to keep up with the times. Lakewood Memorial Library has adapted to meet those changes. With the help of a dedicated board and an excellent director, reliable staff, our local governments, and our supportive community, we have grown into a 21st century library. From increased computer usage on site and an expanding eBook collection, to free classes for the public focused on computer skills, we have transformed from the print library of the twentieth century into the community hub and center for life improvement in the many ways expected of libraries in this century. The incorporation of internet and computers allows us to provide opportunities for people who cannot afford

this technology for themselves, opening up public access to Facebook, YouTube, and other forms of internet entertainment, but, more importantly, allowing for many other uses including job searches and research, filing applications, and creating resumes.

In addition to these vital services, the Lakewood Memorial Library also serves as a gathering place for our community. For the past few years, we have worked to create annual events that bring our community together, showcasing authors, artists, and craft artisans in our region, and offering special programs for a broad range of audiences from children to seniors. We have storytimes for children throughout the year, and "Making Connections," a group where students and parents, children and adults can engage in a diversity of activities. Community-wide groups rely on our meeting rooms. The library offers classes in digital literacy, as well as classes on subjects ranging from Art to Gardening, holds book group meetings, aids discussions on local political and social issues, and each month features local artwork in our gallery.

Community Feedback

Our community is pleased with the existing programs and opportunities provided by the library. Information gathered from the Village of Lakewood Comprehensive Plan Survey provides statistical evidence confirming the library's success and the community's approval. In this survey, the library received an 82% satisfaction rate, the highest of all community services rated in the survey. Perhaps because of this, our community is looking to us to do even more. The recent closing of our local community center has left a missing piece in our town and village. The Village of Lakewood Comprehensive Plan recommends the creation of a new community center, and many are looking to the library to be its home. The public has also expressed interest in extending the library's operating hours and increasing the number of days that the library is open.

Additional proof of our success and the approval of our community can be provided through statistical data. One of the most significant ways the community has voiced its satisfaction with our library is through the increased usage trend we have seen over the last few years. According to our Annual Report, when comparing 2015 to 2014, total library visits have increased 10%, with memberships growing by 17%. We increased the number of programs offered for children and adults by a total of 30%. Attendance for adult programs increased by 30%, and the attendance for children's programs increased 51%. We have recorded 16,817 website visits, an increase of 180% from 2014. And our number of Wi-Fi sessions increased 130% to 2,280.

These trends continued in 2016. There has been an explosion in the number of visitors to the Lakewood Library. This growth is up 50% in the last two years, and website visits are

up 130%. Programs and scheduled meetings and events held at the library are growing in popularity, with attendance increasing 25% annually. Our focus on outreach, connecting people of all ages, and encouraging arts, science and cultural activities is attracting many new library users: on average, we register 30 new library members per month. Our computers for public use continue to provide access for over 6,000 users per year.

Sustainable Funding

In order to continue to provide the quality services and programs, expand those services, and make improvements the community has requested, the Lakewood Memorial Library needs to acquire sustainable funding. Currently our local governments cooperate in supporting our operating expenses, but ongoing constraints to the Town of Busti and Village of Lakewood budgets have, and will likely continue to constrict our support. As a consequence, we have been forced to make cuts in our staffing and staff benefits and to operate with a depleted materials budget. Although we were fortunate enough to receive a sizable endowment this year, the amount does not cover our operating expenses. In order to move forward, we may need to explore alternative sustainable funding solutions, such as the New York State 259 Plan.

Libraries require funding from the communities in which they operate, and, in return, libraries give back countless services to their respective communities. For too long, Lakewood Memorial Library has had to make do with too little. By making many difficult financial decisions and, because of the dedication of our Director and our staff, we have succeeded in satisfying the needs of our community. But we need to grow. It is our hope that the long-term and short-term goals provided in this strategic plan will help the library work with our community, our local governments and school system to change this trend and allow us to provide the community with the exceptional library it deserves.

Implementation

The strategic plan presented here will serve as a guide to the Lakewood Memorial Library board of trustees, library staff, the governments who support us, and our community members for moving forward over the next five years. We believe that it will enable us to unite in achieving common and clearly articulated objectives. The library board, specifically, will use this document to guide our efforts and our discussions to bring us closer to achieving our stated goals. Over the course of the next five years, independent committees will be convened and tasked with creating and presenting detailed plans to execute and achieve these specific goals within the allotted time frame.

Core Values

READ - *We promote literacy and the joy of reading*

GROW - *We foster growth and life-long learning*

SERVE - *We provide quality of service*

MEET - *We embrace and support the entire community*

EXPLORE - *We maintain public access to current technology*

Strategic Plan

Goals & Objectives

R E A D

We promote literacy and the joy of reading

GOAL 1: Lakewood Memorial Library is the community's favorite place to borrow books and other materials and to discuss ideas inspired by reading, guest speakers and other personal sources.

Objectives

A. Enhance patron experience and encourage greater library usage by improving physical and virtual spaces providing access to programs, tools, and activities.
- o Continue the upkeep and enhancement of our library and its grounds.
- o Explore ways to increase energy savings and sustainability efforts in facility maintenance and improvements.
- o Conduct a comprehensive audit of library facilities in order to determine the best use of both physical and virtual spaces.
- o Design new spaces for usage, such as children's and teen's computer areas, and a quiet lounge with comfortable seating.

B. Make contemporary materials available to keep users up-to-date with current literature, films and other topics of discussion and interest.

C. Promote the enjoyment and value of reading with "book talks" and book discussion groups.

GOAL 2: Enhance reading, viewing, and learning opportunities through broadened library partnerships, programs, and promotions.

Objectives

A.   Encourage more people to take advantage of library services by getting library cards.
- o   Partner with local schools and retailers to make sure "Get a Library Card" is on every school supply list.
- o   Conduct semi-annual library card registration campaigns (Spring and Fall).

B.   Brand and market programs for greater visibility and to better connect with community interests.
- o   Work closely with the Village of Lakewood Events and Marketing Committee in order to become an integral part of Village events.
- o   Explore partnerships with Lakewood's Community Development Corporation (LCDC), Women's Club, and other non-profit organizations in the area.
- o   Advertise using social media.
- o   Acknowledge, encourage, and expand the "Fans of the Library" to give continued support to fundraising events, programming, and marketing.

G R O W

Fostering growth and learning
from birth through old age

GOAL 1: Provide services that meet individual and community needs for obtaining information, achieving educational goals and dealing effectively with technological challenges.

Objectives

A. Develop dynamic services, programs, and collections that address individuals' and community needs and interests.
- o Provide library collections and programs that introduce ideas, build skills, support lifelong learning, and spark creativity.
- o Improve the public's access to and use of the library's online catalog.
- o Stock current, diverse, and engaging books and digital content that are responsive to our patrons' needs and interests.
- o Continue to increase services the library provides to help those seeking employment.
- o Explore the possibility of "shared services" with the Hazeltine Library.

B. Educate the public of available library programs and services.
- o Inform the public regularly about library e-book lending programs.
- o Pursue a plan to keep library news, personnel, and events in local papers, for those who are not computer users.

- o Improve public relations with community members in order to increase their satisfaction with the services the library provides.
- o Improve communication with local governments and the public to increase their awareness of the library's high satisfaction rates and usage numbers.
- o Provide regular updates of progress in implementing this strategic plan to the library board, Village of Lakewood and Town of Busti trustees, and the public.

GOAL 2: Inform and delight our community with a varied calendar of programs and events.

Objectives

A.   Identify and target community issues, interests, and audiences.
- o Develop and offer an annual signature event that is branded and identifiable as belonging to the library and will inspire community engagement.
- o Conduct local art events throughout the year.
- o Hold computer classes, painting classes, reading groups, etc.

B.   Strive to become the Town of Busti and Village of Lakewood center of community awareness.
- o Hold computer classes, painting classes, reading groups, etc.
- o Coordinate with the Town and Village on projects of mutual benefit.
- o Establish and maintain regular lines of communication with Village and Town officials.

S E R V E
Providing quality of service

GOAL 1: Explore all options for procuring sustainable future funding in order to provide continued and improved quality of service.

Objectives

A.   Identify and prepare to implement sustainable funding strategies in order to maintain existing programs, staffing, and services, and acquire the ability to expand upon them as needed.
- Evaluate the sustainability of both Town of Busti and Village of Lakewood support.
- Explore and evaluate alternative means of sustainability, such as the NYS 259 Plan, and prepare to pursue implementation if needed.
- Actively pursue growth of LML Capital/Maintenance Investment Fund.
- Actively promote contributions to LML Endowment Fund.
- Consider a capital development program to include one-time individual donations, a pledge system, and, potentially, the sale of library naming rights.
- Explore the potential for a matching gift program.
- Enhance business and residential annual campaign data, and continue revitalization of the annual contribution plan.

- o Create a plan to facilitate digital online donations via the website and social media.
- o Develop a list on our website of donation and volunteer needs.

B. Provide the community with the best possible service by keeping paid professional staff, and training supplemental volunteers to be effective promoters of library resources and services.
  - o Improve the system for recruiting, training, assigning, and evaluating volunteers.
  - o Develop the library's volunteer program in ways that help the library grow its services and programs while providing meaningful opportunities that engage the community's citizens.
  - o Increase staff and volunteers to enhance service capabilities as needed.

GOAL 2: Promote the Library's value to our community.

Objectives

A. Emphasize the importance of the library to the community by publicizing usage rates and services.
  - o Revamp essential library procedures to become more efficient.
  - o Automate to improve customer experience.
  - o Continue to keep the public apprised of library services offered and their value.

B. Increase involvement and communication with Town and Village governments regarding funding, community satisfaction, and services provided.

MEET

Embracing and supporting the entire community

GOAL 1: Become a destination for people of all ages and backgrounds.

Objectives

A. Explore and discuss the feasibility of expansion of the library to a multipurpose community center as part of the Municipal Campus.

B. Explore and evaluate specific steps required to sustainably finance a future expansion of library facilities.

EXPLORE

Providing and maintaining public access
to current technology

GOAL 1: Continue to advance the library's knowledge and use of technology.

Objectives

A. Seek grant or corporate funding to support improved technological infrastructure, i.e. wireless, website, social media, additional computers, and additional computer/technology training, etc.

B. Confirm annually that the library's website continues to be ADA compliant, including peripherals.

C. Conduct a technology needs assessment, identify strategic technology improvements, and implement a three-year Technology Strategic Plan.

GOAL 2: Encourage increased use of the library's website and social media.

Objectives

A. Promote the website's usefulness to the community.

B. Improve functionality by regularly reviewing and refreshing the content of the website and social media.