

Strategic Plan  
FY 2016 - FY 2018

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NOTE: The library's fiscal year (FY) ends on June 30. The "FY" dates in the plan refer to the fiscal year that ends on June 30 of that year.

## Introduction

Strategic planning is the systematic process of envisioning a desired future and translating that vision into broadly defined goals and potential activities to achieve them.

The ultimate goal of the planning process is to ensure that Cook Memorial Public Library District (CMPLD) provides innovative services and engaging collections that will meet or exceed the needs, wants and expectations of the community and our patrons. The strategic plan is the roadmap that will facilitate the accomplishment of that goal.

## Background

The Cook Memorial Public Library District serves nearly 60,000 residents in Libertyville, Green Oaks, Mettawa, Indian Creek, most of Vernon Hills, and neighborhoods in eastern Mundelein and western Lake Forest. It is the highest circulating library in Lake County and the eighth highest circulating library in Illinois. There are two full-service libraries: Cook Park Library (built in 1968; renovated and expanded in 2011), a 46,000-square-foot building in the heart of downtown Libertyville; and Aspen Drive Library (built in 2010), a 20,000-square-foot building just south of Townline Road in Vernon Hills. Additionally, a Bookmobile and Outreach Department bring library collections and services to area day centers, senior centers, and neighborhoods along the edges of the library district, ensuring access for all residents and those students attending schools within district boundaries.

The Board of Trustees along with the Senior Management staff determined that it was necessary to develop a new strategic plan covering the next three years, July 2015 through June 2018 (FY 2016-FY 2018), in order to stay focused on what the community wants and expects from the library. The library board hired Donna E. Fletcher Consulting, Inc., a market research professional and strategic planning facilitator. Ms. Fletcher specializes in creating data-based strategic plans for libraries. The planning process was kicked off in August 2014 and was completed in February 2015.

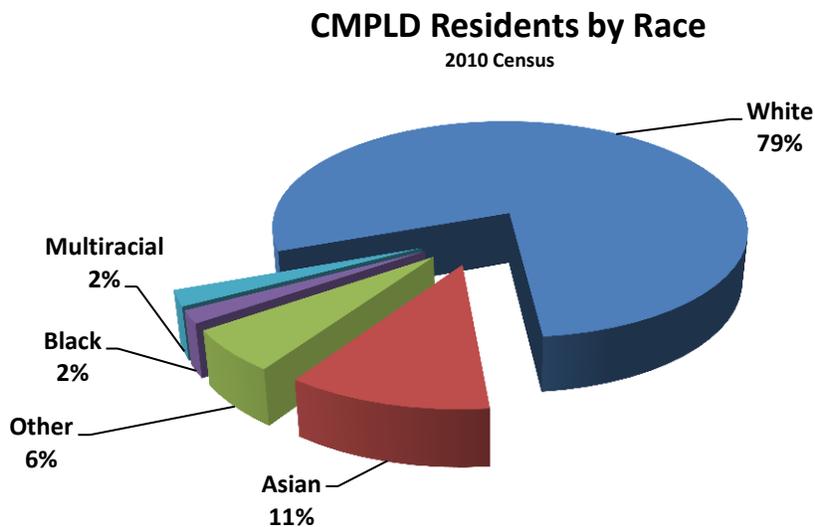
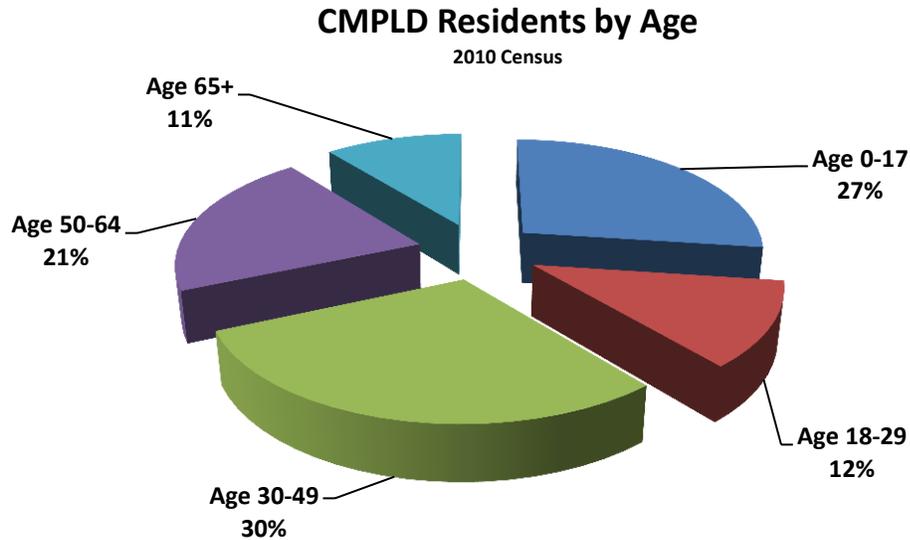
## Approach to Planning

The library created the strategic plan using a data gathering process that included:

- Review of 2010 Census data.
- Telephone interviews of community stakeholders.
- Teen focus groups.
- An online community survey to determine usage and perceptions of the library and patrons' interest in potential new services.
- A survey of bookmobile users to understand their perceptions and usage of the bookmobile and interest in possible new bookmobile services.

## Community Profile

The Library District's service population of nearly 60,000 residents has remained steady from the 2000 and 2010 Census.



\*Note: 14% of CMPLD population is of Hispanic origin. The Census Bureau treats Hispanic origin separately from race. Persons who identify themselves as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be of any race, so they are spread across all race categories.

Libertyville and Vernon Hills demographics also indicate a large presence of children under 18 in households and high levels of education among adults. In Vernon Hills, a large segment speaks languages other than English at home.

Households with children under age 18	Vernon Hills and Libertyville: 38%
Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons age 5 +	Libertyville: 13% Vernon Hills: 40%
Adults with bachelor's degree or higher	Libertyville: 62% Vernon Hills: 59%

## Budget and Revenue

The library's fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30. The budget for the current fiscal year (FY 2015) is \$8,821,005. The Library's revenues are derived primarily from property taxes. Additional revenues consist primarily of fines, grants and donations, and personal property replacement taxes.

The anticipated revenues for FY 2015 are:

- \$8,469,279 (96.0%) from property taxes.
- \$132,000 (1.5%) from fines.
- \$86,000 (less than 1.0%) from grants and donations.
- \$75,000 (less than 1.0%) from personal property replacement taxes.
- \$58,726 (less than 1.0%) from other sources.

## Community Assessment of Library

The community views the library very positively. Among patrons, the community survey reveals that 70% are entirely satisfied with the library and visit the library on average 31 times per year. Non-users of the library do not visit the library buildings primarily because they prefer purchasing or accessing materials from other sources. The library's facilities and services are not a barrier to these residents.

In regard to the facilities, Aspen Drive patrons recognize that the building's capacity is limited. Patrons feel that this results in smaller collections and a lack of quiet areas, space for programs and dedicated children's areas. At both library buildings, more parking spaces are highly desired.

For services, patrons are most interested in popular and lifelong learning materials. Many patrons (55%) believe that eMaterials are important, but only 38% have accessed them. Parents are very familiar with children's programs and materials. They rate them favorably, but would like the library to offer more children's books and materials.

Community stakeholders express strong support for the library. School administrators recognize and highly appreciate that the library is a valuable partner. They note that the library collaborates with them to support the schools' curricula, provide needed materials, and create relevant programs.

## Mission Statement

Through dedicated personal service, we connect our diverse community to resources and experiences that educate, enrich, and inspire.

## **Service Initiatives, Goals, Potential Activities and Targets**

The service initiatives, goals, potential activities and targets are the outcome of the data-gathering process and are the core of the strategic plan.

### **Service Initiatives**

The service initiatives guide the library's actions in allocating financial resources and staff time. They do not eliminate efforts in other areas, but they receive the most focused attention of all the activities we undertake for the next three years. These initiatives are based on the data gathered through the community survey, stakeholder interviews and teen focus groups.

- A. Popular Collections
- B. Lifelong Learning
- C. Facilities and Spaces
- D. Technology

### **Goals**

Goals are designed to focus on what the community receives and not on the resources the library needs to deliver the service. Goals include the identity of the target user and how that user will benefit from the services identified.

### **Potential Activities**

Potential activities are meant to illustrate possible actions the library will complete in order to meet the goals of the plan. These potential activities are not intended to be absolute or inclusive but rather realistic suggestions that reflect the current library environment. As the environment evolves and more information is discovered during the research phase of each activity, changes are possible. The aim of the activities is to meet the identified goals.

## **Service Initiative A: Popular Collections<sup>1</sup>**

**Goal A1: Patrons will have better access to expanded and improved eLibrary<sup>2</sup> content.**

**Potential Activities:**

- a. Create a sustainable marketing strategy that includes addressing usability issues and communicating the depth and variety of eLibrary content.
- b. Investigate additional eLibrary resources to expand collection.
- c. Research alternatives to the current eBook consortium to improve patron ease of use.

**Goal A2: Patrons will be more aware of and satisfied with the quantity of, variety of, and access to new and popular materials in the library.**

**Potential Activities:**

- a. Reevaluate acquisition and withdrawal guidelines.
- b. Evaluate a modified-Dewey shelving system for adult and children's popular nonfiction materials and genre classification for CDs.
- c. Reevaluate perceived barriers to checking out AV materials.
- d. Add more culturally diverse materials to the collection, especially in the Young Adult areas.

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<sup>1</sup> Working definition of popular collections: eLibrary; best-sellers across fiction and nonfiction for Adults, Teens, and Children; new DVDs; new music; new video games; and high-circulating nonfiction subject areas (e.g., cookbooks, gardening, travel); and magazines.

<sup>2</sup> eLibrary content includes digital books, audiobooks, music, films, and magazines.

## **Service Initiative A: Popular Collections** *(continued)*

**Goal A3: Patrons at the Aspen Drive Library will discover more materials that meet their interests and needs.**

**Potential Activities:**

- a. Create ordering guidelines for Aspen Drive and Cook Park.
- b. Develop a refined collection focused on highest circulating materials.
- c. Improve display of and access to popular materials.

## **Service Initiative B: Lifelong Learning**

**Goal B1: Patrons will discover programs of interest and importance to them.**

**Potential Activities:**

- a. Investigate and develop balanced programming to meet the diverse needs of our community.
- b. Provide programs that develop information literacy and enhance technology skills needed to meet our patrons' recreational and professional needs.

**Goal B2: Patrons will find collections of importance and interest to them, which will support lifelong learning.**

**Potential Activities:**

- a. Deploy a systematic approach to keep collections relevant to patron's changing needs and interests.
- b. Offer a wide range of digital and print resources to encourage independent learning and technology literacy.
- c. Explore the possibility of circulating non-traditional items of relevance to the community.

## **Service Initiative B: Lifelong Learning** *(continued)*

**Goal B3: Patrons will have the opportunity to experience new technology that will enrich lifelong learning.**

**Potential Activities:**

- a. Create and sustain an environment where patrons can experience and interact with relevant technology.
- b. Develop a system to evaluate and meet the ever-changing technological needs in the community.
- c. Explore the possibility of circulating STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) related items and digital devices.

**Goal B4: Through targeted outreach activities, the community will learn about programs and services offered by the library that foster lifelong learning.**

**Potential Activities:**

- a. Create a plan for enhanced, interdepartmental and collaborative outreach efforts.
- b. Explore expanding targeted outreach activities.
- c. Examine ways in which the library can utilize volunteers to augment existing outreach services.

## Service Initiative C: Facilities and Spaces<sup>3</sup>

**Goal C1: Patrons will find welcoming spaces that enhance communication between patrons and library staff.**

**Potential Activities:**

- a. Evaluate spaces to promote a more welcoming environment while maintaining overall design cohesiveness.
- b. Make existing service desks more open and accessible.
- c. Install digital signage to promote library programs, events, and information.

**Goal C2: Patrons will have different types of work and reading environments to meet their needs for quiet spaces, collaboration, and technology.**

**Potential Activities:**

Quiet spaces for reading and work

- a. Increase Aspen Drive quiet study room capacity and enhance its aesthetics.
- b. Designate Fiction Room at Cook Park Library as a quiet area.

Collaborative space providing tools and resources

- a. Create more appealing and engaging space for teens at both libraries.
- b. Investigate ways to create multi-use or flexible space.
- c. Install digital monitors in study rooms.

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<sup>3</sup> Spaces are interior areas in the library buildings.

## **Service Initiative C: Facilities and Spaces** *(continued)*

**Goal C3: Patrons will experience spaces that enhance convenience, comfort and improved access to collections and services.**

**Potential Activities:**

- a. Review logical flow of collections and spaces.
- b. Investigate the feasibility of opening year-round on Sundays.
- c. Create a welcoming popular materials area.
- d. Provide comfortable seating throughout the library.

**Goal C4: Patrons will find expanded spaces to meet current and future needs.**

**Potential Activities:**

- a. Expand parking lot at Aspen Drive.
- b. Evaluate the growth needs and plan for expansion at Aspen Drive and repurposed space at Cook Park.

## Service Initiative D: Technology

**Goal D1: Patrons will discover technology enhancements for creativity and collaboration throughout library facilities.**

**Potential Activities:**

- a. Continually identify emerging technologies in order to increase the types and quantities of electronic technologies offered in the library's digital studios.
- b. Identify new space and/or improve existing space to expand digital studio offerings.
- c. Identify appropriate space to build and furnish maker spaces that would provide patrons with state of the art creation tools and equipment.
- d. Ensure that all public library areas are comfortable and promote technology usage.

**Goal D2: Patrons will have expanded accessibility to relevant materials, services, and programs through technology.**

**Potential Activities:**

- a. Explore innovative technologies that will enhance discovery and improve access to materials.
- b. Ensure that patrons experience quality online services including responsive web design, reliable and consistent high-speed internet access at all library locations, and effective online patron communications.
- c. Expand the library's computer classes to offer a broader range of training on technology programs and equipment.
- d. Investigate and implement a virtual presence for the library's classes and programs.

## Service Initiative D: Technology *(continued)*

**Goal D3: Patrons will receive increased technology assistance.**

**Potential Activities:**

- a. Provide a sufficient number of staff to support technology assistance services.
- b. Define guidelines and procedures for technology assistance.
- c. Promote and enhance opportunities for patrons to use self-guided technology learning tools and applications.

## Internal Initiatives

Internal initiatives describe the conditions that the library will have to achieve or enhance in order to deliver effective services to the public. These initiatives address the library's infrastructure and operations.

### A. Staff Development and Training

1. All patrons will receive "consistent quality service that exceeds the expectations of the customer."
  - a. By January 1, 2016, develop a uniform standard of excellence.
  - b. Beginning July 1, 2016, provide staff training opportunities to achieve standard of excellence.
2. All staff will have a work environment that promotes innovation and technical competencies.
  - a. Beginning July 1, 2015, provide staff training opportunities to develop empowerment skills, innovation opportunities, and technological competence.
  - b. All staff will have the right and responsibility to know about library resources, programs, and services.
  - c. Beginning January 1, 2015, provide staff with information on library services in an ongoing manner.
3. All patrons will be treated with respect for and understanding of cultural differences.
  - a. Beginning October 1, 2015, provide staff training opportunities in multicultural communication.
  - b. By October 1, 2016, develop outreach methods for recruiting multilingual staff.

### B. Organizational Structure and Efficiencies

1. Staff will work in a collaborative, coordinated, cooperative manner.
  - a. Beginning July 1, 2015, explore expansion and modification of staff workspaces to support implementation of strategic priorities.
  - b. By January 1, 2016, develop a system of cross-departmental and cross-facility training for all staff and foster environment of interdepartmental impact awareness.
  - c. Beginning January 1, 2016, support regular interaction between public desk and support staff at both buildings and out-of-library.
2. Internal organization and processes will support excellent and responsive patron service in a flexible and efficient manner.
  - a. Beginning July 1, 2015, as part of the budget process, develop annual action plan to support service priorities.
  - b. Beginning July 1, 2015, implement a library-wide review of organizational structure and processes with special focus on accommodating initiatives arising out of strategic planning process.
  - c. By July 1, 2016, revise organizational structures and processes to support service priorities.

## **Internal Initiatives** *(continued)*

### **C. Marketing and Communications**

1. Patrons will receive information about library services and programs through a flexible and responsive system of print, electronic, and personal communication.
  - a. By January 1, 2016, develop library-wide marketing plan to support library priorities.
  - b. Beginning July 1, 2016, provide information in languages other than English.
  - c. Staff will understand and convey to the community the value of the library's services and materials.
  - d. By January 1, 2016, develop methods to collect and share quantitative and anecdotal data from patrons.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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