

In February 2015, under the guidance of a strategic planning committee consisting of the library director, a library board member, and four staff members, the Anderson Public Library (APL) began strategic planning for years 2016 – 2021. Library consultants Kimberly Bolan and Associates, LLC facilitated the process.

The Process

APL's approach to strategic planning was based on collaboration, open communication, and showing community stakeholders "the possibilities" for today's successful 21st century public libraries. Simply stated, the process focused on

- 1) **Community Input** - showing the Anderson community the possibilities for APL as a thriving 21st century library and gathering their input
- 2) **Ideas and Solutions** - developing ideas and solutions (i.e., the strategic foci, goals, and the investments that will be required to implement the goals) to help the Library thrive over the next three years and beyond
- 3) **Results** - developing a mission, vision and plan that the APL staff and board can live, breathe, and readily implement on a day-to-day basis

In total, eighteen interactive stakeholder sessions were held between May 11 and May 20, 2015. Overall, 159 stakeholders participated in the discussions regarding APL's services, facility, and strategic future. Stakeholders included the general public as well as community leaders, parents, educators, students, staff members, and trustees. In addition, a supplemental online survey was conducted between May 11 and June 1, 2015. 378 were completed. Survey participants included a mix of library users and non-users with 77% being regular users (i.e., using the library multiple times a month or more) and ranged in ages and backgrounds. There was a wide representation of ages taking the survey (21.6% were 56 – 65 years of age, 19.2% were 26 – 35, 18.9% were 36 – 45, and 18.3% were 46 – 55. The remainder of the age groups were 18 and under or 66 and older.

In addition, benchmark, demographic, and collection analyzes were completed. As a result of all the findings, two additional exploration committees were formed to further investigate the topics that repeatedly came up as potential "issues" during the focus group discussion. These topics included: 1) Collections and weeding 2) The Lapel Branch and its services.

What We Heard

The community focus groups and online survey explored several topics including customer service, programming, outreach, marketing, technology, collections, overall physical library space, and children's and teen services. As a result of all stakeholder input, data analysis, and follow-up exploration work, priorities for APL were determined and outlined on page 2.

Evaluation & Collaboration

With the goal of achieving all outlined goals over the next five years, APL administration, staff, and board of trustees will regularly evaluate their progress and achievements. Objectives set forth in this plan will be reviewed on a monthly basis at APL board meetings. A work plan was also created by the planning team to assist staff in best carrying out the plan. The keys to Anderson Public Library's implementation, evaluation and, ultimately, the success of its strategic plan will be:

- A thorough understanding of the plan as well as active involvement in implementing the plan by staff and the board of trustees
- Frequent and ongoing communication between administration and staff
- Frequent and ongoing communication between APL staff and the public
- Active collaboration between APL's board of trustees, administration, staff, outside organizations, and the community

Our Mission:
Inform, Connect, Engage, Empower

Strategic Plan for 2016-2021

Strategic Focus	Goal	Investments / Objectives	Outcome
Programming for All Ages	Deliver well-rounded and forward-thinking programming that engages the public at all age levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase partnerships with outside community groups to deliver more age and interest targeted programs, particularly for adults, teens & tweens • Continue commitment to strong youth programs • Increase Lapel programming • Increase offsite programming • Explore ways to create co-working space • Consider maker and digital creativity type programs and ad-hoc spaces • Reopen program opportunities to all staff 	An increased number of delighted patrons provided with desirable programming delivered by enthusiastic staff and community partners
Space Improvements	Better align the allocation and design of library space to facilitate optimum use for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase and improve the space intended for teenagers • Devote part of the children's area to older children and pre-teens • Create more interactive opportunities, for ages 0 – 12, in the children's area • Add quiet study/reading rooms and/or areas • Rethink and adjust service points (design, location, etc.) throughout the facility 	Intuitive and welcoming spaces that invite and positively engage APL users
Collections	Continue to develop a quality collection focusing on increasing circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish consistent best practice standards for weeding of all collections and implement in all departments • Use data more heavily in collection analysis and development • Consider new shelving options that help increase circulation • Increase digitization projects for the Indiana Room 	A highly circulating collection that meet the evolving needs and expectations of the community
Community Awareness	Create a culture of community engagement and awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate new investments in staffing (e.g., staff time allocations) related to marketing and community engagement • Upgrade tools/systems and the emphasis on digital marketing • Develop additional community partnerships that help raise the profile of APL in the community • Empower all staff to be APL community ambassadors • Increase engagement with all community schools including, but not limited to, reaching out to all educators at all grade levels, not just the school media specialists 	Library users who have a deep understanding of APL's offerings and a general public who has an improved appreciation of library services
Customer Service	Provide APL users of all ages and types the same high-level customer service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to foster the importance and value of quality pro-active customer service and user engagement • Develop an emphasis on equal service and attitudes toward all users regardless of age, appearance, etc. • Explore new strategies for engaging the loitering public, seeking out successful approaches from other libraries and public institutions 	APL is recognized as a warm and friendly place to visit by all of its citizens