



Johnson City Public Library

Strategic Plan

2009-2012

Approved by the Board of Directors - September 8, 2009

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Introduction

Why strategic planning and why now? In the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2009, Johnson City Public Library experienced the largest increase in visits and usage in the ten years of operation in the current facility. There is no doubt that current economic factors are a major contributing factor, but other factors must also be considered. The library has a skilled, service-oriented staff, and a good collection with a broad range of choices available, all housed in a high-tech state of the art facility. With the current surge in usage, the question of where and how best to apply the limited resources of the library becomes even more applicable and more critical.

To address what the focus of JCPL should be in the future, input from a wide range of perspectives was needed. This process engaged not only the library staff and library board, but members of the community from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives.

These three groups (library board, staff and community members) formed the core of the planning process. Everyone involved considered trends that will affect the future of library service. Many of these trends deal with rapidly changing technologies and the equally fast changing mindset of library users. Also, great care was taken to not generalize and to look specifically at the resources and services the Johnson City community and surrounding areas require from the library.

When beginning to conceptualize and plan a library for the future, one obvious question is why does the library, as a physical place, play such an important role in a community's social, cultural, and educational life? The answer is that the library is the only centralized location where new and emerging information technologies can be combined with traditional knowledge resources in an environment that is user-focused and service-oriented. For some members of the community the Internet is isolating. However the library, as a physical place, does just the opposite. Johnson City Public Library is well suited to serving as a connective thread in our community.

A good public library adds value to the community and offers many of the tools and experiences that users seek in meeting individual and community needs. An excellent public library searches out ways to engage the community and to help promote a better quality of life.

My deepest thanks to all involved for giving this planning process your best effort and full attention. The next volume in the life of Johnson City Public Library is being written. Join us as we begin the first chapter.

Bob Swanay, Library Director
August 31, 2009

About the Planning Process

The planning process being used is based on the “Planning for Results” model developed by Sandra Nelson. Ms. Nelson, former Assistant State Librarian for Planning and Development, currently works as a library consultant. She has modified her planning model several times over the past decade and is widely considered to have a visionary and leading approach to library planning.

The Planning for Results model outlines a process involving three distinct groups: a planning committee formed by various members of the community, the library staff, and the library board. The initial phase of the process heavily involved the community planning group. Responsibility for the plan shifted as the process developed from the community group to the library staff and board.

The community planning committee performed a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of Johnson City and developed a list of community needs and a community vision statement. Using this information, the committee recommended major areas of library service responses that would best address the needs identified in the SWOT analysis. The library staff and library board also provided input on community needs and made recommendations.

The service response areas identified as most relevant to our community were:

- ❖ Current topics and titles
- ❖ Finding a comfortable space
- ❖ Career choices
- ❖ Information fluency
- ❖ Know your community

Planning Consultant Mark McCalman led the library staff in a session to develop organizational values and to consider a new mission statement. Next, he facilitated goals and objective sessions surrounding the five service response categories.

The final written plan was reviewed by the library staff before being submitted for approval by the community planning committee. Final approval will be given by the library board.

Strategic Planning Members

Library Director: Bob Swanay

Planning Consultant: Mark McCalman

Community Planning Committee:

Kathy Hall, Committee Chair
Robbie Anderson
Neil Boling
Anne Brading
Elisa Britt
Susan Burkey
Lori Cogan

Patsy Meredith
Steve Neilson
Trish Patterson
Mark Sirois
Joanna Swinehart
Nancy Renfro

Library Administrative Staff

Linda Blanton, Betty Cobb, Cathy Griffith, Eric Job, Linda Johnson, Esther Pawlowicz, Holly Russo, Bob Swanay, Gina Thayer-Coleman, Lisa Williams

2009/2010 Library Board of Directors

Polly Peterson, President; Gary Mabrey, Vice President; Donna McCalman, Secretary; Phil McPeak, Treasurer; Jane Myron; John Taylor; Carol Transou

Johnson City Public Library Mission Statement

Through both traditional materials and emerging technologies, Johnson City Public Library offers a multitude of learning opportunities and entertainment choices in a dynamic center for the community.

Johnson City Public Library Organizational Values

1. Customer Focus: We value delivering high quality and speedy customer service in a friendly, good-humored atmosphere.
2. Freedom of Information: We value providing materials of sound factual data and honest opinion representing all points of view on topics of public interest and importance.
3. Quality: We value quality in all aspects of the library experience, including delivering knowledgeable service and maintaining the best possible collection of materials.
4. Respect and Integrity: We value upholding the highest standards of integrity and credibility and place a high premium on honesty and responsibility, respecting our patrons and each other. We make every effort to be the best possible stewards of public resources.
5. Education and Learning: We value learning opportunities and support formal education and lifelong learning.
6. Adaptability: We value our willingness and ability to recognize and adapt to new circumstances and opportunities. We accept change as a natural element of our 21st century library.

Summary of Strategic Planning Goals:

- Adults, teens and children will be able to find materials quickly and will experience short wait times for popular items.
- Adults, teens and children will have ready access to current and up-to-date collections.
- Adults and teens will have ready access to videos and audio materials wide in both scope and size.
- Adults and teens will have access to a job and career center and related career training from key area agencies at the library.

- Adults, teens and children will have access to quality training sessions on a variety of information related subjects provided by both library staff and area subject specialists.
- Visitors to the library will enjoy a centralized place of community information that offers a wide variety of materials and community activities.
- Children will develop literacy skills through programs and services at the library.
- Seniors, adults, teens, and children will enjoy a modern, comfortable environment both inside the facility and outside on the library campus.

Strategic Plan: Goals and Objectives

Goal: Adults, teens and children will be able to find materials quickly and will experience short wait times for popular items.

Objectives:

1. Beginning in the third quarter of 2009, the library will reduce wait time for popular materials in half by ordering one copy in any given format per every 2.5 holds placed by JCPL card holders.
2. Beginning in the third quarter of 2009, 20% of popular new fiction will be automatically pre-ordered in advance of publication.
3. Beginning in the second quarter of 2010, patrons with a valid email address will receive notifications by email informing them of their items checked out and due dates to help them remember to return materials on time.
4. Beginning in the third quarter of 2010, items with the current year's copyright date listed as lost or missing will be replaced within two weeks.
5. By the second quarter of 2012, the library will transition to RFID (Radio Frequency ID) technology to enable speedier checkout times and speedier turnaround on popular items when returned.

Possible activities:

- Provide instructional sessions on how to use the catalog
- Market the plan to communicate that wait times have been reduced
- Implement RFID technology

Goal: Adults, teens and children will have ready access to current and up-to-date collections.

Objectives:

1. By the fourth quarter of 2009, a strategy of weeding priorities will be mapped out.
2. By the fourth quarter of 2010, identified key areas of the collection will have been aggressively weeded, including but not limited to the following areas: reference, science and technology, and medical. These areas will be weeded by approximately 20 to 50%.
3. By the first quarter of 2011, 15% of adult patrons will indicate on a survey that they are familiar with and either satisfied or very satisfied with the reader's advisory service provided by the library.
4. By the second quarter of 2012, patrons will reliably utilize one or more self-check stations.

Possible activities:

- Provide reader's advisory services on both floors
- Increase available shelf space for browsing of new popular materials
- Increase number of displays and display areas

Goal: Adults and teens will have ready access to videos and audio materials wide in both scope and size.

Objectives:

1. By the second quarter of 2012, users of the adult DVD collection will have more choices with access to a collection 33% larger in size.
2. By the second quarter of 2012, users of the adult audio CD collection will have double the current collection size to choose from.
3. By the second quarter of 2012, 10% of the library's audio book collection will be in newer technology formats.
4. By the first quarter of 2012, adults will access all media (video, music, audio books) in a media center.
5. By the first quarter of 2012, adults and teens will be able to access additional video and audio media content from the library's web site.

Possible activities:

- Produce video bibliographies
- Purchase new shelving for easier browsing of content

Goal: Adults and teens will have access to a job and career center and related career training from key area agencies at the library.

Objectives:

1. Beginning 2010, each year, 250 people will attend job training or otherwise use the career center.
2. By the fourth quarter of 2010, 15% of adult and teen patrons who use the career center will indicate on a survey that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the information assistance and resources of the job and career center.
3. Beginning 2010, each year, the library will host at least six career and job development programs, of which at least three will be presented by guest speakers.
4. Beginning 2010, each year, the library will answer over 250 reference questions relating to the job and career center.
5. Beginning 2010, each year, the library will generate over 1,000 visits on its job and career center web site.

Possible activities:

- Purchase additional shelving for career area
- Purchase additional related software for career center computers

- Partner with local schools and universities for training sessions
- Write a series of articles for local newspaper(s) on career resources available

Goal: Adults and teens will have access to quality training sessions on a variety of information related subjects (such as basic computing, genealogy, consumer health, etc.) provided by both library staff and area subject specialists.

Objectives:

1. Beginning in the third quarter of 2009, the library will partner with a minimum of four organizations annually to provide in-house programs and/or workshops relating to information fluency.
2. Beginning in the second quarter of 2009, residents of Johnson City will have access to computer training.
3. Beginning in the first quarter of 2010, library staff will visit at least two outside organizations annually to provide information-related training offsite from the library campus.

Possible activities:

- Create in-house interactive virtual training geared towards local resources
- Post related training materials from sessions on web site for downloading

Goal: Visitors to the library will enjoy a centralized place of community information that offers a wide variety of materials and community activities.

Objectives:

1. By the fourth quarter of 2010, 5% of adult and teen patrons will indicate on a survey that they are very satisfied with a new centralized area for community information.
2. By the third quarter of 2011, community organizations will utilize a clear process to partner with the library to provide materials to guests and visitors.
3. By the second quarter of 2012, the library will employ an electronic bulletin board as part of the community information environment.
4. By the fourth quarter of 2010, adults and teens will access an improved community information hub from the library's web site.

Possible activities:

- Identify a larger, more accessible bulletin board/information area
- Establish a clear process/application for outside organizations and individuals to add information to the information hub

Goal: Children will develop literacy skills through programs and services at the library.

Objectives:

1. By the fourth quarter of 2009, new parents will be able to visit or contact the library and enroll their child in the *Imagination Library* program.
2. The library will maintain the current level of high quality children's programming while remaining open to changing community needs and future trends.

Possible activities:

- Provide support for the Imagination Library program by asking for small donations from patrons at the Circulation Desk

Goal: Seniors, adults, teens, and children will enjoy a modern, comfortable environment both inside the facility and outside on the library campus.

Objectives:

1. By the third quarter of 2010, food and drink zones will be established in the library.
2. By the first quarter of 2012, patrons will have the option to purchase food and beverages from within the library.
3. By the second quarter of 2012, 25% of the library's furniture will be replaced.
4. By the fourth quarter of 2011, patrons will have access to a minimum of two additional study rooms in the library.
5. By the fourth quarter of 2011, a computer lab will be available in the library providing patrons with additional resources and work stations in a user friendly environment.
6. By the second quarter of 2012, 90% of participating adult and teen patrons will indicate on a survey that they enjoy the library's new outdoor furniture.
7. By the second quarter of 2012, at least 90% of participating children will indicate on a survey that they enjoy a more comfortable and secure outdoor amphitheater.

Possible activities:

- Partner with a vendor to provide food & beverage
- Make snack and drink vending machines available
- Convert an alcove into one or more study rooms
- Convert Foundation Room to study/exam room
- Find a sponsor for new outdoor furniture
- Find a sponsor to fence in outdoor amphitheater

Strategic Plan: Organizational Competencies

Johnson City Public Library will actively seek and maintain relationships with agencies, institutions and organizations that will enable the library to enhance service to patrons.

- By the fourth quarter of 2010, the library will identify current partnerships and the obligations that the library has as part of those partnerships.
- By the third quarter of 2010, the library will establish criteria to be used to assess current and potential partnerships.
- By the first quarter of 2011, the library will initiate a review and approval process for the establishment of new partnerships.

Johnson City Public Library will refer to a master fundraising blueprint that covers a broad spectrum of fundraising potential.

- By the third quarter of 2011, the library will provide support materials and training to staff and support personnel on fundraising.
- By the fourth quarter of 2011, the library will develop a master fundraising plan that incorporates the library's strategic plan.

Johnson City Public Library will actively market library services and materials to the public.

- By the first quarter of 2010, the library will overhaul its web site and incorporate new elements such as video.
- By the fourth quarter of 2010, the library will adopt a new logo and tagline.
- By the fourth quarter of 2011, the library will establish criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of marketing and public relations.

Johnson City Public Library will utilize the best tools and methods available to deliver quality library service in the most efficient and cost effective way.

- By the first quarter of 2010, Circulation will check DVDs out more efficiently.
- By the fourth quarter of 2010, a self-checkout station will be available for patrons to use.
- By the fourth quarter of 2011, Reference service will be available from both floors of the library.
- By the fourth quarter of 2012, the library will have successfully transitioned to RFID technology.

Johnson City Public Library will provide support both internal and external for training for staff in all classifications.

- By the third quarter of 2010, all employees will receive an updated employee handbook with information relating to the library's policies, mission and strategic plan.
- By the fourth quarter of 2010, the library will have a training and continuing education plan that addresses the needs of staff. The library will also establish standardized introductions and training for all new employees, including learning the Dewey system and how to shelve materials.

Key Strategic Planning Dates

- January 13, 2009: library Board of Directors endorsed a plan to move forward with the strategic planning process
- February 20: the community planning committee met for the first planning session
- March 4: library administrative staff considered recommendations and findings from the community planning committee's first session
- March 10: library Board of Directors considered recommendations and findings from the community planning committee's first session and the additional input from the library staff
- April 17: the community planning committee met for a second session and made final recommendations
- April 29: library administrative staff considered recommendations and findings from the community planning committee's second session
- May 7: planning consultant and library administrative staff developed organizational values and a new mission statement
- May 12: library board considered recommendations and findings of the community planning committee's second session and the additional input from the library staff
- May 20: planning consultant and library administrative staff developed preliminary goals and objectives associated with major areas of focus as determined by the planning process
- June 10: library administrative staff met again to continue development of goals and objectives associated with major areas of focus as determined by the planning process
- July 14: library Board of Directors approved the statement of organizational values and a new mission statement
- August 19: library staff reviewed a draft of strategic planning document
- August 21: the community planning committee met for the third and final time and reviewed the draft of the written strategic planning document and made final recommendations
- September 8: the 2009-2012 strategic plan is submitted to the library's Board of Directors for approval

Summary

This plan represents the library's best efforts to prepare for the future. It incorporates trends in local library use. The plan considers comments and suggestions from library customers, the planning committee, staff and library board. Almost certainly, unforeseen events will influence the implementation of the plan. Annual reviews will be conducted during the course of this three-year plan to make necessary adjustments and to assess our progress. We cannot guarantee that every aspect of the plan will come to fruition. We will, however, make every effort to implement as much of the plan as is practically and reasonably possible to do so.

For nearly 115 years, Johnson City Public Library has provided excellent service to the community. This plan enables us to continue the tradition. Let's get started!

References

Nelson, Sandra. *The New Planning for Results: a Streamlined Approach*. American Library Association; Chicago IL; 2001.

Nelson, Sandra. *Strategic Planning for Results*. American Library Association; Chicago IL; 2008.