



Meaningful, Convenient, Connected, Growing: La Grange Park Public Library Strategic Plan

Introduction

When La Grange Park Public Library's most recent strategic plan expired, our world was in the midst of a global pandemic whose ripple effects impacted every aspect of societal life. Throughout 2020 and much of 2021, it was difficult to see more than a few weeks ahead; planning three years into the future felt impossible. But in mid-2021, the staff and board began to sense that the most disruptive period had passed. Even so, we recognized that libraries, along with the people that use them, are different because of the pandemic. What pivots are now required, we wondered, in order to move toward our vision of enriching lives?

With that question in mind, the board of library trustees commissioned a strategic planning committee to help LPPL plan for the future. The committee began by exploring the strategic plans of comparable libraries, considering the demographics and culture of our community, and studying the best insights and practices of libraries around the world. Then, working with a consultant, we began to ask questions about what we want and need for the future. Key themes were identified, and action initiatives in support of these themes were developed. This document outlines the themes and initiatives springing from our work. A timeline of our process can be found in the Appendix.

Mission

The La Grange Park Public Library is a welcoming and inclusive community center connecting residents to informational, cultural, and educational resources.

Vision

Enriching Lives.

Strategic Themes

1. Grow library use: Target hard-to-reach non-users while also improving the experience of the library for regular users.
2. Curate social spaces: Position ourselves as a community center for La Grange Park, offering neighbors a place to meet and interact in ways that enhance positive social connection.
3. Meet people where they are: Make services and collections convenient and accessible through outreach partnerships, off-site programming, and digital access.

Guiding Principles

1. Sharing our story
2. Integrating equity, diversity, and inclusion in our work
3. Caring for our staff

Phase 1 Projects

Entice first-time users (Strategic Theme 1)

Purpose: In our desire to be a community hub for social connection, to delight the community, and to meet people where they are, we propose a growing focus on attracting first-time users and converting those users into regular library patrons.

- Offer more large scale events that attract notice on site while maintaining a seasonal calendar of outreach opportunities.
- Provide convenient access to library card registration in person, off-site, and online.
- Promote reward systems to encourage repeat use of services. **(V1)**

Engage through multi-generational opportunities (Strategic Theme 2)

Purpose: Bring people together who wouldn't normally connect inside these walls and beyond in order to enrich lives and help families.

- Create cross-generational programming that is culturally educational or entertaining. **(V2)**
- Design physical spaces that promote multi-age activities for differing abilities. **(V2)**
- Curate resources for community members going through significant life transitions.

Expand community impact through partnerships (Strategic Theme 3)

Purpose: Create win-win partnership relationships that give us exposure to our partner's network while also helping the partner meet their organizational needs. We will build a framework for creating partnerships, test it in the business community, and then expand to other organizational networks throughout La Grange Park.

- Design a framework for engaging with local partners.
- Launch a business membership program offering tangible benefits such as a media package and personalized business items created in our makerspace.

Evolve collections for modern user needs (Mission, Strategic Themes 1, 2, 3)

Purpose: We remain committed to our mission of connecting residents to informational, cultural, and educational resources while continuously evolving to best meet the needs of our community and to delight our patrons. In addition to our regular work to maintain and improve the collection and services, we will focus our attention on two specific initiatives.

- Develop a plan for a content creation studio including cost estimates.
- Research and test opt-in customizable recommendations for patrons to receive materials and programming suggestions based on prior use.

Appendix A: Research Packet

The strategic planning committee gathered a significant amount of data through patron and employee surveys, community demographic resources, and library associations and networks. This data was distilled into a research packet that served as a pre-read for the focus groups. A copy of this pre-read research packet can be found by clicking the image below.



Appendix B: Strategic Planning Committee Members

The strategic planning process was guided by the following committee members:

- Allison Demes-O'Brien, Trustee
- Karen Snow, Trustee
- Kate Buckson, Executive Director
- Gabe Oppenheim, Adult Services Director
- Rose Hopkins-LaRocco, Children's Services Director
- Samantha Farruggia, Young Adult Librarian
- Catie Synowicz, Librarian
- Susan Fagan, Librarian
- Pamela Klimas, Circulation Assistant

The committee was supported by an external consultant, Amber Johnson of [Amber A Johnson LLC](#).

Appendix C: Strategic Planning Timeline

Work for the strategic planning process occurred on the following timeline:

September 2021	Board approves the formation of a strategic planning committee
October 2021	Committee forms, begins research
December 2021	Patron survey conducted
January 2022	Employee survey conducted
Jan/Feb 2022	Proposals requested/received by external consultant candidates
March 2022	External consultant selected
April 2022	Research packet compiled and shared with staff and board Focus groups conducted, strategic directions identified Two evening summits held to design action initiatives
May 2022	Strategic directions and action initiatives revised Plan drafted and reviewed by committee, board
June 2022	Board approves strategic plan
July 2022	Strategic plan is activated