HML
HUNTINGTON MEMORIAL
LIBRARY

62 Chestnut Street, Oneonta, NY 13820 607.432.1980

Long-range Plan 2016-2021
4/5/2016

Planning Process

HML embarked on a strategic planning process in 2015 that was used to develop the Long-range Plan 2016-2021. The process included a survey, focus groups, interviews, an environmental scan that was completed by a group of students from Hartwick College and a benchmark comparison of similarly sized libraries in the Four County Library System.

SURVEY

A total of 213 responses were collected in the survey. Only 4 responses were from people who do not have a library card and 14 respondents had not been in the library in the past 12 months. When asked why they didn't use the library, the largest response was that they buy their own materials. Respondents who do visit the library typically visit between 1 and 5 times per month. When asked what the impact would be if the public library closed, 86% reported a major impact on them and their family and 95% reported a major impact on the community as a whole. A total of 90% of the respondents reported that their use of the library has increased or stayed the same in the past five years.

The top 3 reasons that respondents visit the library is to borrow materials, to discover new authors and titles and for programs. When asked to rate the value of library materials, adult books were at the top of the list followed closely by children's books, magazines/newspapers, books on CD, DVDs, and downloadable material. When asked to rate the value of library services, the online catalog and the ability to place free online holds topped the list. The next most highly rated items were the Reading Room, public computers, children's programs and adult programs in that order.

The library was rated as excellent or good in all of the following areas: ease of checking out materials, comfort/cleanliness of facilities, ease in finding materials, convenience to my home, availability of materials, promotion of literacy, hours of operation, and technological advances. 96% of respondents also indicated that the customer service they receive at the library is excellent or good.

When asked what improvements could be made to create a better library, the most popular answer was to expand the print collection. Other top responses include increasing open hours, expanding the digital collection, improving library facilities and provide children's programs. The most important changes that could be made to create a more modern library as reported by the respondents were, in order, a larger digital collection of downloadable ebooks and audiobooks, the addition of a maker space for children where they can build things with Legos, tablets, puzzles, etc., stronger Wi-Fi, a café with coffee and

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snacks, self-check-out stations, more public computer stations and quiet study rooms. When asked what area of the library you would like to see enlarged, the most important area was the adult fiction area followed by the children's area, the adult nonfiction area, the juvenile area and parking.

The survey findings indicate that the library is seen as an important organization in the Oneonta community. The services that are provided are highly rated and the results show an emphasis on both print materials and technology. Print books are the top reason that people visit the library and the top rated service is the online catalog and the ability to place holds while using the online catalog. Respondents' top priority for improving the library was to expand the print collection. The two most important aspects of creating a more modern library are to create a larger digital download collection of ebooks and audiobooks and to create a maker space for children. Additionally, it seems that the community wants more space in the library for books and children's activities.

This community is truly a model of the 21st century as evidenced by the importance of traditional resources and the embrace of new formats in a technologically advanced era. These results are a good example of the difficulties of maintaining a library that meets the disparate needs of its community without comparable increases in revenue.

FOCUS GROUPS
Focus groups were used to elicit feedback that is in-depth and qualitative from a broad range of community members who are library users and non-users. Six focus groups were facilitated by an experienced library volunteer. The groups consisted of retired Hartwick College professors, a Trustee's friends group, the local Chamber of Commerce, the combined Library Board and Friends of HML Board, a local Tennis Club and Library Staff members.

The following questions were asked:
1. The library is a set of services and programs. It's an idea. It's a place. When you think of your library, what is your overall impression?
2. What are the most important services that HML offers?
3. Are there any service/program gaps?
4. What advice would you give us?
5. Dream big. Some libraries have maker spaces, community rooms that can be accessed after hours, cafes, and atriums. If the sky was the limit, what would you like your library to look like?
6. Is there anything that you would like to mention that I haven't asked about?

The combined results indicate that some of the favorite things at the library are interlibrary loan, librarian Sarah Livingston, all of the staff, the warm environment, that it's a safe place and open to all.

Some frustrations were that we closed too early on evenings when there are programs, that the handicap accessibility could be improved, that are is no room to grow, that the smell is bad, there is too much dust, not enough work space and the signage is poor.

When asked for advice, the responses indicated that the library logo should be on library cards, that we should market more to the community, we should do more outreach, we should have a fax machine for the public, we should collaborate with community groups, we should get public funds outside of the city and that we should make it a destination; a cool place to be.

Participants were asked to dream big for the library. Responses included developing a building or expansion project, getting outside funding, adding more bathrooms, more exhibit space, a café, better parking, improve the lighting in the park for security and usage, have nice meeting rooms, bigger spaces, better/different workstations (multi-device), tap into local authors, and make the library a venue, a destination or a landmark.

INTERVIEWS

One on one interviews were held with Joe Yelich, School Superintendent, Millie Parish, long time resident and developer of Plains at Parish Hall, Russ Southard, acting Mayor and City Councilman, Laurie Zimnewicz, community member and former charter commission member, and Brent Delanoy, Literacy Volunteers Executive Director.

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Overall, the respondents felt that the library is serving the community with technology and story times for children. Comment was made that we are outgrowing our space and that we should develop more equitable funding from the town and city. One person felt that the library is gloomy and unwelcoming. The most important services that were reported were quite varied from all services are equal to computers and technology, equal access and children's programs. When asked about service gaps, the responses included advice that we should reach out to the vibrant literary community more, that we should increase programs for parent education for early literacy and school readiness and that we should reach out to book clubs, improve digital literacy, include book drops throughout the community and improve customer service. Two respondents said that they saw no service gaps. When asked for advice, the responses included a recommendation to increase collaboration with the schools, to look to the future to make sure that our facility will meet the needs of the community, that communication with City Hall is very important, that would could expand the collection and have more up-to-date technology, and that we weren't doing enough. When asked to dream big about library services, the responses included more collaboration, unique collections, more technology, a building that meets the needs of the community and to utilize the park more.

BENCHMARKS

A comparison was made between HML and 2 other libraries in the Four County Library System that have similar population size. Data was collected from the most recent Annual Report to NYS that all chartered libraries must submit. It must be noted that the figures in the Annual Report cannot fully describe library activities because they are fraught with inconsistencies. For example, only 40% of card holders at HML reside in the chartered service area.

Some of the comparisons that were most noticeable are that the total revenue at HML is less than peer libraries. Peer libraries also receive more local public dollars. The material holdings and square footage varied widely. Circulation per item at HML was higher than peer libraries. Circulation per patron at HML

is also highest at approximately double the rate of peer libraries. Visits to the library were less at HML as were expenditures for print material.

S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS
Conducted by Dr. Peter's class at Hartwick College, spring 2015

Strengths	Weaknesses
● Growth in art and culture ● City park system ● Excellent healthcare resources ● Natural features ● Two Colleges ● Young people ● Diversity ● Accessible services	● Loitering ● Tax burden ● Service Industry ● City needs to be "kid" friendly ● Lack of Jobs for graduates ● Diversity of Professional Jobs
Opportunities	Threats
● Foothill Performing Arts Center ● Enhance Market St. ● Programs with 4H and Scouts ● Coordinate with local business ● Colleges ● Growth in arts/culture ● Utilize assets for marketing purposes ● Churches ● Youth Programs	● Technology ● College Libraries ● Children maturity ● IPAD Generation ● Lack of youth programs ● Book Popularity

Summary of User Assessments
The predominant responses from the community were grouped into categories that were used to build the following goals for the library.
1. Books and reading
2. Technology
3. Programs
4. Park and Building
5. Outreach and Collaboration
6. Local History

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The library as a resource: reading, programs, technology

The library as a place: park and building

The library as a community collaborator: outreach and collaboration

LIBRARY MISSION

To provide a creative environment that supports life-long learning by making information freely available in order to improve knowledge and strengthen the community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles are the foundation of the library's mission and will guide us in our interactions with the community:

- *Life-long learning*

- *Free access to information resources for ALL people in a community*

- *A safe place to read, research and participate in all forms of life-long learning*

STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Library as a resource

Goal 1. To inspire the Oneonta community to discover information in all formats by providing a relevant collection of materials and access to information beyond the library.

OBJECTIVES

1. Maintain a print collection based on the reading preferences of the community.
2. Focus on a visible Reader's Advisory project for our reading patrons.
   a. Help patrons locate and discover new materials by using displays and packaging strategies similar to the Book Club Kits.
   b. Incorporate regular staff education about genres and new collections.
   c. Continue to explore technology tools to enhance our ability to assist patrons.
3. Expand the promotion of digital books and the training required to master downloading.
4. Investigate and develop the appropriate use of the local history collection and services.
   a. Analyze user demand and interests.
   b. Continue to build a collection that is useful to the community.
   c. Establish new mechanisms for reaching the public with the existing collection.
      i. Participate in New York Heritage online archives project.
      ii. Collaborate with other like-minded organizations.

Goal 2. To provide life-long learning opportunities through enriching educational programs for all ages.

OBJECTIVES

1. Conduct regular programs for all ages of youth.
   a. Reach out to nursery schools, Head Start and the summer Free Lunch programs.
   b. Provide enriching programs focused on early literacy skills.
   c. Incorporate digital literacy into existing programs.
   d. Support school readiness by providing an interactive and enriching environment.
2. Provide a wide variety of adult programming to meet the varied needs of the Oneonta community.
   a. Collaborate with the Friends of HML to facilitate adult programs.
   b. Provide leadership, regular meeting space and outside speakers for the thriving Writer's Program.
   c. Utilize passive programming like Make It Mondays.
   d. Continue to listen to the community so relevant programs can be provided.
   e. Collaborate with community thought leaders and provide a forum for information dissemination.

Goal 3. To be community leaders in digital literacy by providing access to state of the art technology and by serving as knowledge leaders.

OBJECTIVES

1. Prioritize the Maker Space initiatives that are pervasive in a 21st century library by making state of the art technologies available to the community.
2. Create a Technology Steering Committee composed of local experts to help craft the best plan for the Maker Space efforts.
3. Provide adult programming that will increase participants' abilities to work in an increasingly technological world.
4. Build digital literacy programs into existing youth programs to both provide enriching programs and to test the community's interest in more digital literacy programming.

The Library as a place

Goal 4. To create a library space where a thriving community gathers, accesses library resources and attends programs.

OBJECTIVES

1. Honor the Oneonta community's great love of the library building while updating the interior to better reflect the 21st century uses.
   a. Improve seating and tables for today's library users
   b. Update electrical and network cables
   c. Insulate the building
2. Maintain the building exterior by continuing to paint and make minor repairs as needed.
3. Pursue a plan for the restoration of the grand old house and the addition of much needed space.
4. Develop a policy for use of the park that will encourage community use without overtaxing library resources.
5. Develop a plan for park improvement that enhances the community's use of the green space.

The Library as a community collaborator

Goal 5. To foster community connections by building partnerships and collaborations with organizations and institutions.

OBJECTIVES

1. Collaborate with local business organizations in an effort to foster cooperation and build a more robust network of library supporters.
    a. Join local organizations and actively participate in events
    b. Invite other organizations with an educational mission to form partnerships to develop resources for the community
2. Increase the community's awareness of the life-long learning opportunities at the library.
    a. Outreach to other locations by bringing digital services to the community with Pop-up Libraries in cafes, colleges, retirement centers, etc.