STRATEGIC PLAN
WARWICK PUBLIC LIBRARY
2015-2020

Introduction

This strategic plan is the culmination of much research. Information was gleaned from focus groups and questionnaires. Two major studies were conducted by Godfrey's Associates, Inc.: one of the central library and another of the three branches. 356 people completed a survey this year which was available on-line via the Library's web page and in paper format at the Central Library and its three branches. We are confident that this plan incorporates good data.

Background Information

The city of Warwick is located in Kent County, and is the second largest city in Rhode Island, with a 2014 population estimated by the Census Bureau as 81,963 and encompasses a total area of 49.6 sq. miles. It is situated on Narragansett Bay, is intersected north and south by Interstate 95, and is home to the state's airport.

The population of 81,963 represents a 4.6% decline from the 2000 census. The population under the age of 18 is 19% of the total population, and those over the age of 65 represent 17% of the population. There is a dropping number of school-aged children, resulting in the planned closure of several public school buildings over the next couple of years. Warwick has an aging population, as does the rest of the state.

The city has five libraries serving its population, which include: Warwick Public Library (central) on Sandy Lane, branches in Apponaug, Conimicut, and Norwood, and Pontiac Free Library, an independent, privately endowed facility. The three branches are small neighborhood libraries (1,780 average sq. ft.) whose staff are shared with the Central Library. The Central Library building is over 62,000 sq. ft and is the second largest library in the state. It was built in 1965, renovated in 1978, and underwent a major renovation and addition in 1998. The Library was further modified over the past several years as it converted its service model to the San José Way, a system that empowers the public to pick up holds and check out materials themselves, freeing up staff to provide one-on-one patron assistance as needed. Additional public space for seating, reading, and group gatherings was created by reducing stack shelving. Material displays mimic book stores. The children’s room was recently renovated, incorporating touch screen computers, children’s learning areas, new furniture, and other items that make it a fun and educational destination.
Library Usage

According to the 2014 annual report of the Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services, Warwick Public Library:

- Served a population of 82,672 (2010 census) in a 62,918 square foot building
- Had $3,689,205 in revenue and expended $3,469,770.
- Expended $273,743 on print and media collections.
- Had a print and media collection totaling 163,773.
- Loaned out 558,313 items.
- Had contacts, excluding web site hits, totaling 1,110,716 (total of checkouts, visits, reference requests, computer use and program attendance).
- Had 36,813 registered card holders (45% of the service area population).
- Was open a total of 3,344 hours during the year.

On a Warwick per capita basis:

- Operating revenue = $44.63
- Expenditures from all sources = $41.97
- Collections = 2 items
- Checkouts = 7
- Contacts = 13.4

State-wide averages from 2014 RI OLIS annual reports

- Served a population of 29,831 in a building 18,622 sq. ft.
- Had $1,082,884 in revenues and expended $1,067,560.
- Expended $75,779 on print and media collections.
- Had a print and media collection totaling 104,814 items.
- Loaned out 149,202 items.
- Had contacts, excluding web site hits, totaling 327,388 (total of checkouts, visits, reference requests, computer use and program attendance).
- Had 9,721 registered card holders (33% of the service area population).
- Was open a total of 3,317 hours during the year.

State-wide on a per capita basis:

- Operating revenue = $36.30
- Expenditures from all sources = $35.79
- Collections = 3.5
- Checkouts = 5
- Contacts = 11
A Look Back Four Years

Using data for fiscal years 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015 we find:

- Operating revenues from the city of Warwick have remained flat, with a standard deviation of less than $10,000 per year. Salaries were also mostly level. This was due to repercussions of the Great Recession that resulted in no pay or staff hour increases for four years.
- FY2016 has seen an increase in the book and audiovisual budget as well as 3% salary increases.
- Several grants were obtained for the creation of a makerspace, called the Idea Studio, and the TeenSpace, children’s room renovations, and renovations to the reference and circulation areas making them more patron oriented and accessible.

Collections

- Collections were evaluated and heavily weeded, with an eye to keeping materials that are relevant and are in good condition.
- There is an ever greater demand for books and audiovisual titles in electronic format, putting a strain on a materials budget that is already not adequate to meet the needs of the community.

Statistics

- The print collection size has shrunk by 30,000 items, mainly due to weeding.
- Electronic collection size has increased by approximately 20,000 items.
- Downloads of electronic books and audio books nearly tripled between 2012 and 2014, an increase of 165%.
- Print book checkouts have increased 19% during the same time period.
- Program attendance has increased 11% during the same period, 11,119 in fiscal 2012 compared to 12,342 in fiscal 2014.
- Reference questions answered were 41,889 in fiscal 2012 and 42,000 in fiscal 2014, a very slight increase.
- Interlibrary loans, both borrowed and loaned totaled 133,317 in fiscal 2012 and 103,390 in fiscal 2014, a decrease of 23%.
- Walk-in users, not including meeting room users, were 420,125 in fiscal 2012 and 417,761 fiscal 2014, a slight drop of 1%. Not too much in light of the fact that much more information is available via the Library’s website than in the past.

Focus Group and Survey Results

- Most respondents (71%) use the Library (Central and Branches) on a weekly basis.
• Most (92%) check out materials from the Library.
• 92% are very satisfied with the Library and its staff and 7% are somewhat satisfied for a total 99% satisfaction.
• 40% want more books and 38% want more hours (later on Friday and Saturday and year round on Sunday, as well as more branch hours).
• 85% ranked the Library near the top of tax supported city services.
• Respondents cited the Library’s strengths as its staff, book collection, ability to obtain materials via interlibrary loan, and branches.
• Areas needing attention were said to be insufficient branch hours, lack of a café, and insufficient numbers of DVD and Blu-ray titles.
• Staff were concerned about how to adequately serve those with special needs and the homebound, the need for more staff, the need for larger programming and material budgets, and a lack of adequate and safe (free of base balls) parking at the central library.
• Staff are concerned with how thinly they have been spread in order to cover new spaces and provide additional services.

Interpreting the Plan
Goals are numbered and objectives are lettered. Objectives are denoted by an [S] or short term (1-2 year time frame), [M] or medium term (2-3 year time frame), and [L] or long term (3-5 year time frame).
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
2015-2020

Vision
The Warwick Public Library is the hub of community learning where every child can be a reader; every resident can connect to the digital world; and every life is enriched by lifelong learning. The Warwick Library is your open door to learning and the world online.

Mission
Our mission is to improve the quality of life in Warwick through learning, personal discovery and the free flow of information and ideas.

Trustees’ Statement
The Board of Trustees of the Warwick Public Library acknowledges and embraces the mission of the public library, and supports the use of new technologies to empower the public and offer services more efficiently. It is recognized that the public library’s role is evolving and the Trustees want to stay on the cutting edge.

Goals and Objectives

1. Enhance Customer Services

   **Short Term**
   a. Assess organizational capacity utilizing McKinsey and Co., or other such tools.
   b. Materials Budget—increase the materials budget by at least 5% annually.
   c. Hotspot loans—increase the number of wireless hotspots available for loan based on a determination of city need.
   d. Classification—add BISAC (Book Industry Standards and Communications) subject headings to all non-fiction books at the branches.
   e. Reference desk—move reference desk closer to public computers to make monitoring of that area easier.
   f. Telephone Reference—offer call-back reference service during peak hours to allow more staff on the floor.
   g. Library cards—have a library card registration area away from the welcome desk to avoid crowding.
   h. Welcome desk staffing—have at least one staff member at the welcome desk at all times to greet and assist patrons.
   i. TeenSpace staffing—utilize roaming reference staff to monitor teen room during non-peak hours.
j. Adult Education—maintain a list of adult education sites in Warwick.

k. Readers Advisory—maintain book reviews and reading lists of the most popular books, updated monthly, available at central and branches.

l. Non-users—poll non-users to determine why they don’t use the Library and what services they would like.

m. RFID (Radio Frequency IDentification)—implement RFID
   i. Tag all new materials [S]
   ii. Establish a retrospective tagging plan [L]
   iii. Replace security gates with RFID gates [M]

   **Medium Term**

n. iPad and laptop loans—purchase a self-service automated vending machine to loan iPads and laptops to the public. The vending machine would also check-in and reformat equipment upon return.

o. Classification—consider adding BISAC subject headings to all non-fiction books at the central library.

p. Subject Collections—continue to determine collections that would be easier for patrons to find if grouped by subject rather than LC, and separate them from the main non-fiction collection.

q. Self Check-in— institute a patron activated check-in area to speed the check-in and shelving of 7-day books and 1-day movies.

r. Emphasis on childhood development—develop more programs and increase resources in this area.

s. Children’s Outreach—continue to develop relationships with schools and non-profits that provide services to children.

**Long Term**

t. Homebound services—create a program to provide library materials to homebound residents.

u. Service Hours—increase branch hours to 30 per week and investigate the feasibility of year-round Sunday hours at the central library.

v. Emphasis on senior services—develop more programs and services for an aging population. Commit more resources and spaces in the central library to this expanding group.

w. Business resources—increase resources specifically for small businesses and create an outreach and marketing plan.

2. Building Enhancements and Equipment

   **Short Term**

   a. Protect cars from stray baseballs—install a net between the ball field and the Library’s parking lot to protect cars from errant balls.

   b. Increase parking spots—develop a plan to utilize the parking spaces adjacent to the ball field, thus increasing the number of spots for automobile parking.

   c. Serve refreshments in the Library building—install vending machines or beverage/food kiosks in the adult and teen areas of the building.

   d. Increase shelving area for Blu-ray discs.
e. Institute a program to accept credit card payments from patrons.
f. Lease to own or rent a van to move items between the central library and branches.
g. Replace all public computers with VDIs and establish a staff computer replacement schedule and budget.
h. Develop a staffing and oversight plan for the Idea Studio to have it function at full capacity all the hours the Library is open.

**Medium Term**
i. Develop an HVAC system replacement schedule.
j. Replace carpet in staff work areas with linoleum or vinyl for better durability and safety.
k. Install energy efficient, low maintenance, replacement windows in all the branches.
l. Replace all the lights and emergency light batteries in the central library and establish a replacement schedule.
m. Replace the telephone system with a hosted PBX platform.

**Long Term**
n. Replace carpet that is more than ten years old.
o. Install or replace a handicapped ramp at each branch.

3. Diversify Funding Sources

**Short Term**
a. Establish an annual fund raising campaign to fund collections and programs.
b. Memorial book funds will be actively solicited via the Library’s website and newsletter.

**Medium Term**
c. Establish a planned giving program.

**Long Term**
d. The Trustees and Friends will work together on a fundraising strategy for the next five years.

4. Market the Library and its Services

**Short Term**
a. Create a print newsletter advertising upcoming programs and disseminate around the city.
b. Create a new logo and branding for the Library.
c. Offer support and assistance to other local non-profits.

5. Library Staff Support

**Short Term**
a. Staff will be trained to use new electronic databases and equipment, merchandising, and customer service on an annual basis.
b. Staff will be cross trained as necessary.
   i. Branch staff will be trained to assist with technical services within the branches.
ii. Reference and circulation staff will assist one another in limited situations.

iii. There will be regular staff meetings within departments.

c. Librarians will create, annually, goals and objectives for themselves with the assistance of administration.

   i. Administration will meet regularly with librarians to review progress and determine support required to meet individual goals.

Medium Term

d. There is a need for additional staff:

   i. Part-time librarian to manage the Idea Studio.
   ii. Part-time librarian to perform outreach services.
   iii. Part-time library aide to assist with processing new materials.
   iv. Temporary part-time library aide to assist with converting to RFID.