

Wilmette Public Library District
Strategic Plan 2023-2027 Update

Tuesday, June 20, 2023

The Board and Leadership Team began the latest phase of the Library's strategic planning in March 2022, and is nearing completion the final steps of the project this spring. The past year's work has included two community surveys, compiled feedback from nearly 1,000 stakeholders, analysis of the results of the surveys, comparative study of relevant industry and area benchmarks, and the subsequent drafting and discussion of dozens of applicable goals.

With this raw material compiled, staff reflected on the structure and utility of the prior plan and, with guidance from the Board, identified objectives for the new plan's presentation and layout. In alignment with industry trends for current strategic plans, the library sought to reduce the document size in an effort to make it more accessible and memorable. Staff sought to design and present the plan as single page as many peer agencies have recently done, though this aspiration currently appears unattainable while preserving the accessibility and coherence of the document.

While not a single page document, staff was able to more clearly present the plan's objectives by articulating and differentiating the library's values from the goals, allowing for the creation of concise, broadly-stated goals in support of the draft updates to the Mission, Vision, and Values. The new plan structure provides 6 outcomes across 3 goal areas, with 16 key priorities, and several specific initiatives for the first fiscal year of the plan. Going forward, during the development phase for each subsequent fiscal year's budget, staff will reflect on the prior year's progress toward those initiatives and identify and recommend the initiatives for the next year.

The draft plan took its current shape in early March, and has been steadily refined in the weeks since. Leadership Team staff met to review the draft plan, reflect on the library's current needs, emerging trends, and to explore our operations and aspirations for the near future. All staff were introduced to the draft plan document via email, had the opportunity to explore the plan with the Director via 2 separate meetings (virtual and in-person), to learn about the development process, the big picture, and to see where their departments' details fit within the broader goals.

Individual trustees met with the Director to explore the plan's progress. At the April 18 Regular Board Meeting, trustees reviewed the draft plan for the first time in a public meeting. To further ensure the draft plan reflects the community's aspirations for the library and the organization's capacity and steps to meet those goals, the library hosted 2 events to present the draft plan and collect feedback:

- Monday, 5/1 from 6:30pm-8:00pm in the Auditorium and Small Meeting Room
- Saturday, 5/6 from 10:00am-11:30am in the Small Meeting Room

Across the 2 community forums, trustees and staff met with 8 residents. Together, all reviewed the library's history and role, our community demographics, national and regional library trends, the library's successes and challenges, and organizational goals and plans. Following review of feedback, several grammatical updates were incorporated into the attached plan, though the goals and structure remained affirmed. Following further discussion at the May 16 Regular Meeting, the Board recommended that the final plan will be presented for approval at the June 20 Regular Meeting.

The final draft of the plan is attached behind this cover page.



Mission

Wilmette Public Library welcomes everyone with collections, resources, and experiences that enrich the lives of individuals and our community.

Vision

Inspiring lifelong curiosity, exploration, and discovery

Values

At Wilmette Public Library, we:

- Champion intellectual freedom
- Advance inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility
- Promote literacy and a lifelong love of reading
- Curate vibrant collections and experiences
- Deliver specialized services and programming
- Cultivate strong community connections
- Establish and maintain valued partnerships
- Promote stewardship of sustainable practices
- Continuously evaluate, adapt, and innovate
- Act with courtesy, initiative, creativity, and flexibility



Welcoming Environment

Outcomes

- Reflect the diverse interests and needs of our community
- Enhance and simplify the library experience

Priorities

- Bridge gaps in services through outreach, digital resources, and partnerships
- Highlight the wealth of resources offered in our building and collections in more accessible and visually appealing ways
- Curate and promote quality collections in a variety of formats
- Provide welcoming spaces to meet the evolving needs of our community
- Foster a positive, collaborative work environment for all employees
- Prepare staff with professional development resources and leadership opportunities, and support individual paths for career growth

Initiatives for FY23-24

- Evaluate and maintain personnel and compensation policies to equitably recruit, retain, and recognize talented staff
- Digitize, preserve, and enhance access to rare and unique local history resources
- Reallocate spaces for patron computer services to accommodate implementation of emerging technologies in a flexible, creative space



Connected Community

Outcomes

- Empower individual growth and an expanded mindset
- Foster belonging and understanding

Priorities

- Increase awareness and use of the library and its programs, resources, and services using existing popular channels of communication
- Explore and facilitate opportunities to grow and strengthen strategic partnerships
- Participate in community events, committees, and service organizations to demonstrate and promote the library's role in the community
- Develop and present valuable, outcome-oriented programs and events
- Enhance early literacy, experiential, and lifelong learning opportunities
- Host and promote public forums for residents to explore and discuss topics affecting our community

Initiatives for FY23-24

- Develop and implement a unified branding and style manual to guide staff in creating library communications that are consistent, creative, and effective
- Develop and implement a framework for collecting feedback about services and programs
- Optimize accessibility to our collections and services through the website and app



Sustainable Future

Outcomes

- Meet and anticipate future needs
- Preserve and promote the assets of the district

Priorities

- Prepare trustees to represent the interests of stakeholders through comprehensive orientation and continued development
- Conduct responsive and informed long-range capital planning
- Maintain building, grounds, and physical operations with sustainable and environmentally responsible practices
- Revitalize and reimagine the first floor and lower level of the library

Initiatives for FY23-24

- Continuously evaluate technological assets to optimize efficient system solutions, including building automation, networked communication, and computing environments
- Complete responsive space needs assessment to inform and establish priorities for service design and capital planning