



ST. LOUIS' ORIGINAL SEARCH ENGINE®

STRATEGIC PLANNING PRINCIPLES

St. Louis Public Library

In the 150th year of its history as a free public library, the St. Louis Public Library went through an extensive strategic planning process to reorient our services around the needs and interests of St. Louis. We studied our community, sought their input, evaluated our financial position and developed an understanding of current usage patterns and trends.

This approach guided the creation of the 2017-2021 St. Louis Public Library Strategic Plan - a plan we feel maintains critical elements of what we do well and has earned respect and trust from St. Louis residents. We balance tradition with modern approaches: technology, personalization and automation are driving forces in our world today.

There are three key planning elements that guided the development of the plan. These principles also serve as the foundation for day-to-day decisions the Library and its governing board make over the next five years.

#1 Sustainability

The Library operates today in a deficit budget that must be brought within our predicted revenue. It is our responsibility to implement aspirational elements of our plan, but to operate within our resources. We cannot continue to operate as we are. Major transformation our city has undergone over the past decades, changing expectations our customers have for their Library and new possibilities brought about by technology, must all be taken into account to scale the organization toward sustainability, thoughtfully and respectfully.

#2 Outcome-based

Measurement is a common thread throughout the plan - one that relies on quantifiable information and data driven decision-making. We must evaluate and measure our work on our movement toward sustainability. It is our fiscal responsibility to use the dollars allocated to the Library wisely and effectively.

Many tools are currently available or being added to measure and manage internal efficiencies, purchasing decisions and customer impact. The first year of the plan will be focused on establishing benchmarks to note where we are today so that we can set quantifiable goals over the remaining years of the plan.

#3 A Customer-focused Culture

As Library facilities continue to change, so must the services and expertise the Library provides. This is evident throughout the plan. Examples include extensive hands-on support, particularly in technology, staff and volunteer interactions with our customers and a welcoming and inclusive approach in our Libraries with families and children.

We will devote significant effort to work with staff in navigating this shift, including training and education, making changes to the staff evaluation process and integrating new talent to serve these emerging needs.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Nurture Young Minds

Become a center of early childhood literacy, learning and discovery in St. Louis.

- Embrace a comprehensive approach throughout the Library to support parents and connect them to resources that improve the lives of preschool children
- Encourage family engagement in early literacy development
- Incorporate the five practices of Every Child Ready To Read® (Read, Write, Talk, Sing and Play) across all early childhood Library programs and services

Establish Central Library as a Premiere Cultural Destination

Develop Central Library as a recognized center of the arts, culture and research.

- Develop a unique offering of exhibits, programs, concerts and tours that feature Central Library's collections and unique strengths
- Create a place that fosters creativity and promotes a sense of community
- Promote Central Library as a tourist destination in the metropolitan area
- Address barriers that prevent use, including parking, wayfinding, safety, and staff involvement

Increase St. Louis' Connection and Innovation in the Digital World

Grow our digital collection of research and popular materials and leverage online and mobile technology to expand access to Library services.

- Increase staff providing technical support for Library customers
- Incorporate measurement and analysis tools to increase capacity and measure performance
- Offer innovative technology courses as an alternative to traditional educational paths
- Upgrade digital access to the Library, including a Content Management System (CMS) Website, Web apps and mobile
- Enhance technology services in Branches, including reservable computers and mobile printing
- Standardize software and hardware platforms in the Branches
- Explore the cost and viability of Digital Branches

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Empower and Strengthen Our City Neighborhoods

Position our Branches as community gathering spaces and as access points for technology and popular materials.

- Study and optimize hours of operation
- Develop relevant and inspiring collections that align with the needs and interests of our neighborhoods and are supported by thoughtful analytics
- Design a strategic and sustainable city-wide system that encourages effective access to services, collections and technology
- Establish the Branches as a civic focal point and resource hub for St. Louis' neighborhoods
- Explore the cost and viability of Digital Branches

Elevate Awareness of the Library

Market the Library offerings to our community.

- Develop and implement marketing plans to support the five strategic goals
- Incorporate ongoing ways for the public to provide feedback
- Engage casual and former users and bring them back to the Library