



Long Range Plan 2011 - 2016

Library Board

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Prepared with the assistance of
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Approved by Library Advisory Board August 17, 2011
Approved by Staunton City Council August 22, 2011

INTRODUCTION

The development of the Staunton Public Library's Long Range Plan for 2011-2016 offered the Library's staff and board a chance to consider up-to-date demographic information, indicate the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities facing the Library and address issues facing the Library now and in future years. The resulting document gives Staunton Public Library users, staff members, advisory board and funding entities a concise and clear understanding of the Library's plans for the next five years.

An electronic copy of the service plan is available on the Library's website www.stauntonlibrary.org

PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process began with both the staff and board conducting a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis (SWOT). These exercises were conducted by the Library Advisory Board on December 15, 2010, and by the Library Staff on January 21, 2011. A copy of this analysis is in Appendix A. The firm of Dominion Library Associates, LLC, was employed to assist in the development of the plan in early 2011. On March 24 and 25, 2011, John A. Moorman, principal and owner, and Charles Koutnik, associate with Dominion Library Associates, LLC, came to Staunton and held meetings with staff, community members and City Manager Stephen F. Owen. The purpose of these meetings was to solicit input concerning Library Services, programs, needs and challenges for the future. An online survey for public and staff was developed and made available for input during the period March 21 – April 30, 2011.

Using the information and data received during this process a draft document was prepared and delivered to Staunton Public Library Director. After discussions and revisions a final document was presented by Dominion Library Associates, LLC to Library Director Ruth Arnold on August 4, 2011, for approval by the Library Advisory Board and the Staunton City Council.

MEETING SUMMARY

Meetings were held with Staunton Public Library Staff – 12 in attendance, plus written comments from those who could not attend; Staunton Public Library Advisory Board – 4 in attendance, and Community Members – 7 in attendance, including one City Council member. There was an additional community meeting scheduled at which there was no attendance.

All three groups pointed out the following as positive qualities of the Library system:

- Personal assistance offered to the public
- SPL's Children Services
- Programs offered to all ages

All three groups perceived the following as major changes:

- Technology including the changes brought on by the Internet and local library service systems
- The creation of the consortium with Augusta County and Waynesboro Public Libraries and its effect on library services
- Development of new formats of materials and the public's demand for them

All three groups identified the following challenges for the future:

- Need of more physical space at the current site. All love the current building and do not see a new building as the answer.
- Library being on two floors with two checkout stations.
- Patrons do not want to see print sources reduced.

In general, staff emphasized more practical concerns like the increase of homeless patrons; decreases in funding resulting in not enough staff; the need for more staff training; better communication and cooperation with staff members of the other consortium libraries; the need for expanding adult literacy, computer literacy, and employment training programs; seeking more funding through grants; and the development of contingency plans for possible further funding reductions. Staff also pointed out the lack of office and storage space.

The four Board members in attendance and the Community attendees were more interested in the expansion of services. They would like to see increased hours of operation including the reestablishment of Sunday hours. Also desired were more programs, expanding services for the deaf, and reaching out to other cultures (including more non-English language materials). Board members emphasized advocacy to local government officials and the public.

The community representatives see the Library as the educational and community gathering center of the town. They love the building and all that the Library offers. In the future they would like to see the development of more instructional programs, forming more partnerships with other agencies, and increased Library publicity.

SURVEY SUMMARY

The online surveys produced such a small number of responses that definitive conclusions cannot be drawn from them. Survey results are available upon request to the Library Director.

HISTORY

The Staunton Public Library was organized in 1874 as part of the new Staunton Young Men's Christian Association. In 1929, the City of Staunton took over operation. The Library has never had a purpose-built facility of its own, but moved with the Y to several different locations and in 1940 to "Kalorama", when Mrs. Fannie Bayly King, a long time supporter, deeded her home to the City to be a public library. This historic building housed the Library for the next 55 years with several alterations and renovations, including a 1968-69 addition. In 1995, following a successful fundraising campaign and a year-long renovation, the Library moved to the former Thomas Jefferson Grammar School where it resides today. For over 135 years, the Library has served the public with books and more, changing with the demands of technology to offer new formats and systems and offering many programs for all ages.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Staunton Public Library is to acquire, organize, and make accessible a wide variety of information and materials which seek to fulfill the intellectual, educational, cultural and recreational needs of all Staunton citizens, and to provide guidance in the use of these resources.

VISION STATEMENT

The Staunton Public Library will remain a relevant source of ideas and information while responding to changes in our community and in the way people acquire information.

PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

- The population of Staunton will remain stable with an increase in the number of senior citizens.
- The digital divide will continue to exist with the Library being the sole or main source of internet access for some patrons.
- Library users will continue to expect convenient and free access to a wide variety of materials, formats and delivery options. The demand for new technologies will increase.
- Economic uncertainties will continue to affect the Library. The City of Staunton will maintain support of services while funding from the State of Virginia will remain static or decrease. The Friends of the Staunton Library will continue as a source of volunteers, funding and advocacy.
- The Staunton Public Library will continue in partnership with the Valley Libraries Connection and seek other ways for collaboration.
- Changes in materials and demand will necessitate renovation of the facility to accommodate new technology and better serve our patrons.

CORE VALUES

- The Library is a community center serving all residents regardless of race, age, abilities or economic status.
- Access to information is essential for our democratic society. We believe that the Library is the most impartial and honest broker and interpreter of information.
- Reading skills are critical for nearly all activities of life and must be developed early. The Library plays a significant role in fostering a love of reading in children.
- Our staff is committed to providing quality service to all patrons.
- The Library is an essential public service and it is the responsibility of government to provide adequate funding. In turn, the Library must be a responsible steward of public resources.

DEMOGRAPHICS

During the month of March 2011, the Library posted a map of Staunton on the first floor of the Library and invited patrons to place a pin on the approximate location of their homes. This informal survey demonstrated that Staunton Public Library patrons come from all over the City as well as from Augusta County.

The Library conducted a review of demographic material available from local, state, federal and private sources. Some figures were revised as new data became available from the 2010 U.S. Census. According to most recent figures from the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia, Staunton's population is now 23,746, a decrease of 0.4% from 2000. In contrast, Augusta County and Waynesboro both experienced increases of 12.4% and 7.6%, respectively. The City of Staunton Office of Economic Development expects that Staunton's population will increase in the next five years, provided that the many housing starts and developments in planning are completed.

The Weldon Cooper Center provides this 2010 data:

- 83.7% of Staunton's population is white compared with 68.6% of Virginia residents.
- 12.1% of the population is black compared with 19.4% of Virginia residents.
- Hispanics now comprise 2.2% of Staunton's population, up from 1.1% in 2000.

The Weldon Cooper Center or the U.S. Census American Community Survey provides the following estimates based on 2009 data:

- Median household income for Staunton residents is estimated at \$39,757 compared with \$52,425 for Virginia residents.
- Approximately 7.7% of families and 11.7% of the population were below the poverty line, including 15.9% of those under age 18 and 10.7% of those age 65

and over. 16.7% of Staunton residents are below the Federal poverty level compared with 10.1% of Virginia residents

- 11.1% of Staunton's population is classified "groups in quarters," due to the presence of Western State Hospital and the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind.
- 21.5% of Staunton residents are over 65 compared with 12.2% of Virginia residents. This age group has shown sustained growth since 1900.
- 58.7% of the Staunton labor force over age 16 is employed compared to 76.3% for Virginia.
- 26% of Staunton residents over age 25 have a bachelor's degree or higher compared with 33.4% for Virginia.

SERVICE GOALS

The development of goals and objectives is an essential part of any successful plan. The following goals and objectives are based upon the information and data collected during the planning process.

As a part of the annual planning process action steps for each objective within the plan will be developed by Staunton Public Library Staff and presented as a part of the plan for Advisory Board approval.

GOAL 1: Perform interior renovations in order to more efficiently utilize staff and improve services.

OBJECTIVE 1-A: Determine wall and floor load capacities in order to help identify options for renovation.

ACTION: Employ a structural engineer to determine current load capacities.

OBJECTIVE 1-B: Renovate Library interior to provide more effective use of available staffing and space.

ACTION: Employ an architect to develop a renovation plan utilizing information from the structural engineer's findings. Consideration should be given to a new security system, the use of RFID technology, and self-service options for the circulation of materials.

Goal 2: Remove unnecessary holdings to create more space and provide options for the Library's reorganization.

OBJECTIVE 2-A: Refine collection weeding process.

ACTION: Continue using the "Crew Manual" as a guide to develop new weeding procedures to provide for a thorough weeding

of current collection. Give special attention to the Print Reference Collection.

OBJECTIVE 2-B: Discontinue and remove collections in formats that are of low demand and no longer being mass produced.

ACTION: Unless warranted by public use (as determined by weeding policy and procedures) discontinue and remove audio-visual collections using magnetic tape technology.

GOAL 3. Strengthen the current consortium agreement and improve cooperative services shared with the Augusta County and the City of Waynesboro Public Library Systems.

OBJECTIVE 3-A: Seek agreement by other consortium members to work together on Goal Number Three of this document. If agreement is reached continue with the following objectives and actions under this goal as may be revised by the mutual agreement of consortium members.

OBJECTIVE 3-B: Increase and improve communication between consortium members.

ACTION: Set up and enact a communication plan with consortium partners. This may involve once a month meetings or some other type of regularly scheduled communication.

OBJECTIVE 3-C: Create basic standard procedures to be followed by the consortium.

ACTION: Standardize procedures between consortium members utilizing input from staff. Procedures are to be written and adopted by the consortium members.

OBJECTIVE 3-D: Consider creating specialized tasks for each library.

ACTION: Members of the three consortium institutions will discuss the strengths of each library to determine possible specialized functions or collection strengths for each library. The libraries may consider an outside consultant to guide the members through this process.

GOAL 4: Create and implement a new staffing plan.

OBJECTIVE 4-A: Provide for equitable compensation and effective use of Library staff.

ACTION: Conduct a staffing study using a professional consultant. Involve all staff members in the study process. Once study is finished, use final report to work with Library Board and City of Staunton in the development of a new pay plan and

job descriptions.

- OBJECTIVE 4-B: Provide for additional staffing if indicated in staffing study.
ACTION: Work with Library Board and the City of Staunton to develop a plan for new staffing needs.

GOAL 5: Explore and initiate cooperative projects with other community organizations.

- OBJECTIVE 5-A: Develop a “short-list” of community groups that have the most in common with the Library in terms of mission, financial need, and other factors.
- OBJECTIVE 5-B: Request meetings, speaking engagements, and take advantage of any opportunity to meet with identified organizations.
- OBJECTIVE 5-C: Create joint projects with other groups ranging from one-time events to possible incorporation and merger of programs.

IMPLEMENTATION

To continue providing and expanding our services, the Staunton Public Library is committed to the implementation of the goals stated in this document. During the plan period information will be systematically sought from board, staff and our user community concerning Library services and programs. Progress towards achieving service plan goals and objectives will be measured on an annual basis as a part of the Library’s planning process. This process of continual evaluation will enable us to not only measure progress but make plan corrections and additions as the needs of our community change.

APPENDIX A: SWOT Analysis

Staunton Library Advisory Board
December 15, 2010

Staunton Public Library Staff
January 21, 2011

STRENGTHS

Building/Facility; reused old building; shelving; furnishing

Collections; Holdings; New materials

Technology

Staff: knowledgeable, accessible, make people feel welcome: customer service, works together

Plenty of parking

Regional collaboration: Valley Libraries Connection partnership

Location

- Sustained leadership
- Clean
- Great atmosphere
- Free
- Nice new book drops
- Clear, unambiguous policies
- Wi-Fi
- City support for IT
- Individual Service
- Large, varied population
- Reputation
- Hours
- Programs
- Resources
- Friends group
- Overdrive
- Talking Book Center

WEAKNESSES

Not fully staffed

Budget cut concerns

Need more space for shelving, storage, teen area, etc.

- At the mercy of the City
- Materials funding reliability (state & local)
- Technology reliability, maintenance, currency
- TLC
- Image
- Security
- Housekeeping
- VLC cooperation, Communication, continuity
- Configuration of old building
- Not enough plugs for laptops
- Not enough storage for Friends books
- Two circulation areas
- Multiple entrances

- PR
- Exterior signage restrictions (no moveable type)
- Homeless
- 16 year old carpeting

OPPORTUNITIES

Programs: staff is open to diverse ideas; serve all ages and special needs
 Increased access to online material, e.g., e-books, e-audio, music, film, Overdrive
 Outreach to homebound, seniors, homeless

- Classes: partner with BRCC, CEUs
- Genealogy: cemetery tours
- Coffee shop
- Self check
- Review collection: what do we really need to keep
- New technology
- Good IT assistance
- Involve Friends/volunteers with homeless
- Job hunting resources
- Importance of the role of the Library in fostering literacy (important for technology too), life skills

THREATS

Lack of funding for staff, collection, technology; specific staff cuts
 Growth of online materials (Kindle, Audible.com)

- Decline of books & printed materials, or the idea of the decline
- Aging infrastructure of the building
- Keeping up with growth
- Decreasing use of library materials because of technology
- Decreased tax revenue
- Lack of secure funding for Talking Book Center
- Affect on Talking Book Center usage because of increased use of online materials
- Lowered reputation, decline of value to society
- Lack of storage
- Loss of hours
- Competition with retail (mostly online)
- Security; personal safety of staff
- Technology
- Homeless
- Measuring our success (outputs vs. outcomes)
- General breakdown of society