

Matteson Public Library

STRATEGIC PLAN

2009-2012

Prepared by

The Matteson Public Library Board of Trustees

and the

Matteson Public Library Staff

801 SCHOOL ST - MATTESON, ILLINOIS - 60443-1897

PHONE: 708.748.4431 -- FAX 708.748.0579

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Mission Statement

The Mission of the Matteson Public Library (MPL) is to make a positive contribution in the community by providing popular materials and services to help meet informational, recreational, educational, and intellectual needs with timely, accurate information in a variety of formats.

Vision Statement

Our vision is to provide a library that is at the heart of the community. The Matteson Public Library will be an intellectual center of the Southland, providing access to the world.

We will be available either physically or electronically, 24/7 year-round.

We will keep in touch with the changes in technology; and provide those changes, which will enhance access to information for our patrons.

We believe the residents of Matteson deserve nothing less than the best in library service and that it is our job to provide it.

Value Statement

- We value our patrons' needs and individuality
- We value the love of knowledge and the journey to achieve
- We value fun in our work and believe that atmosphere brightens our patrons' day
- We look for ways to say yes; measuring our success by the loyalty of our patrons and the community
- We stand for intellectual freedom, providing a wide diversity of views including those that may be unpopular

Introduction

The Strategic Plan for 2006-2009 was developed with the assistance of a Metropolitan Library System consultant, Kathryn Deiss. The plan was intended to assist the library in setting goals and objectives from March 2006 to March 2009.

Using the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) method, three focus groups were conducted with the staff, board, and community members respectively. When determining the method to be used for a new strategic plan, it was decided to rely heavily on the comments received from a series of six community focus groups that met as part of a needs assessment

project in the fall of 2007. Comments and opinions from the staff and Board will be added to those from the community.

Current State of the Library

Collection: Since passing a tax rate increase in 2003, a great deal of time and money has gone into developing the collection. The biggest obstacle to enlarging the collection at this time is the lack of space for added shelving. The adult collection is maxed out on shelving even with 15 sections of double-sided shelves added to the existing stacks, wall-mounted shelving added to the audio/visual room, and another shelving range added to double available space for new books.

The large print collection is boxed in and unable to grow. The reference department is weeding out printed reference tools that can now be accessed online. As the reference collection is reduced, large print will move to the northern reference shelves. This will also allow for expansion of the stacks' collection. Non-fiction books for teens have been moved to the smaller shelves outside the audio-visual room. We are also adding floor stand magazine racks to this area to allow us to increase the teen magazine collection.

Books for teens have been housed in the children's room. Unfortunately, the kid's space which has never been sufficiently large enough is so overcrowded that many fiction books are housed on top of the shelving. Added space for the young adult collection will come from mounting shelving along the walls of the children's story hour room.

Six sections of shelving were added to the audio-visual (A/V) room for the youth collection along with six cabinets for CDs. There is no more space to add shelving in this room.

As the public continues to request more audio books, music, CDs, films and electronic games, the library constantly seeks creative ways to stretch our limited number of shelves. Videos are weeded as they fall into disrepair. Books on CD take less space than books on tape and so the tapes are being weeded.

The library is also seeking a user-friendly, financially feasible method of providing e-books for public access. This year we joined a new consortium, eMedia, which is replacing Listen Illinois that had been offered through the Metropolitan Library System.

Programming: The library has been expanding programs for the last four years. As staff changes are made, programs are re-assessed along with the capabilities of new staff and requests from patrons.

A new Outreach Librarian position was added to the staff. This has allowed us to increase programs for adults ten times over. Along with a designated staff member to work on adult programs, the library has also increased and improved how programs and services are marketed with documented success.

As conditions currently stand, the only thing restricting the amount of programs the library currently offers is the lack of space. With only one meeting room for all of the children, teen, and adult programs, it is a scheduling challenge and many community groups are feeling the pinch in the lack of availability of a community meeting room.

Technology: Much progress was made in the last year with the creation of the computer lab. While there was a demand for both more computers and more study rooms; the much higher demand for computers won out.

The study rooms were dismantled and the south end was opened up for a small computer lab utilizing thin client technology rather than PCs.

Unfortunately, even with the addition of a second T1 line, the library is unable to provide sufficient bandwidth to satisfy all staff and public users along with personal laptops utilizing the wireless access.

Besides slowing down staff connectivity, the reduction in speed during peak hours is causing a public relations issue that must be addressed.

We still need significantly more computer access for young adults. A family computer room and homework help center currently being implemented will be extremely beneficial but will also multiply the current connectivity speed concern.

Communications: In general, the public is aware that a public library exists; but, a large percentage of the populace is unaware of library services above and beyond the expected print and non-print circulation collection.

In an effort to correct this problem, the library has taken several steps such as mailing the newsletter to homes, advertising on a large screen monitor at the front desk, creating the position of Outreach Librarian, and redesigning our web page.

As we learned from the needs assessment focus groups, it is essential more work should be done targeting specific audiences. For instance, it is a waste of money purchasing online databases if individuals aren't aware that we have them. We require additional and improved publicity.

Staffing: The staff appears to remain MPL's greatest strength. In a continuing effort to improve services, we have added 20 more staff members in the last four years. This growth came from adding a second security guard, another custodian, and establishing new positions such as the computer lab attendants, dispatch clerks, Outreach Librarian, and a Floating Librarian.

Along with increasing the size of the staff, we have also increased the amount of training opportunities we provide the staff and have sent our first candidate to school to qualify as an LTA (Library Technical Assistant).

Future training for the staff needs to include skills for working with teens and ways to connect better with local residents.

The library also needs to address the lack of proper office and work space for the staff and the negative impact this has on job performance.

Even items such as a larger kitchen can impact staff's ability to provide better refreshments for programs and space for lunch times.

Funding: During the last three years the library has made great strides to become financially sound while utilizing the increased dollars from the levy rate increase to address long-standing maintenance issues.

A Capital Improvement Fund is designated for higher priced equipment and furnishings. This fund gets its revenue from donations and interest transferred from the General Fund.

The Special Reserve Fund which is set up from left over dollars at the end of the fiscal year, got a major deposit at the end of the first year of the new higher tax levy. As taxes were distributed late that year, the library had continued a very tight budget through most of the 2004-2005 fiscal year. This caused an excess of several thousand dollars that the library was able to move into Special Reserve where statute allows funds to accumulate for repair of buildings, and alterations of buildings or equipment.

Lacking a working cash fund, the library set aside interest paid on some funds to establish a non-levied cash fund. Interest on this account is rolled over allowing the fund to grow. The purpose of this fund is to allow the library access to dollars in an emergency such as when Cook County property taxes are late being collected and distributed.

The plan is to build this fund to meet inflation so that when needed the library have access to operating funds for up to three months. When used, these funds are to be replaced from the next tax season.

Where in the past there were no emergency funds to fall back on, these new funds are covering expenses above and beyond routine operating expenses. They do not however eliminate the need to establish endowment or trust funds to secure MPL's future.

Services: One area that was not separated out and specifically addressed in the last Strategic Plan is services. During the needs assessment focus groups however, services and programs were the main areas of concern for the public.

The biggest handicap MPL has for determining what services are offered is the building itself. For instance, one need that was demonstrated was the need for a homework help center. Space is needed for students to work on group projects with access to a computer. Students also need tutors who can step in to assist as needed.

Many interviewees were interested in more of almost everything; but again expanding services is prohibited by lack of space within the building.

Facilities: The solution to every major problem the library faces is tied to the current facilities. No matter how great the demand from the community, nor how willing the staff and board are to meet those demands, the lack of space in the current building prohibits any expansion of programs, services, work space, or the collection.

While the building design of the early nineties was expected to cover a 20 year growth period; the reality is that both the population and technology have exceeded predictions. The Youth Services area was never sufficient, and the rest of the library had maxed out space within eight years of opening.

The Library lacks sufficient space to meet the needs of the community. The Village's current population is 16,016 with a special census currently being conducted that is expected to raise the population another 2000 or more. Ultimately, Matteson is expected to reach a population of at least 30,000.

The Library building's 23,000 square feet are significantly less than the libraries located in comparable south suburban locations.

Library	Population	Square Footage	Sq.Ft./Population	%Larger
Matteson	16,016	23,000	1.44	
Homewood	19,543	34,000	1.74	21%
Park Forest	23,462	37,500	1.6	11%
New Lenox	17,771	56,000	2.15	49%

It should be noted here that Homewood is currently remodeling to better utilize more floor space, and Park Forest has been seeking another location in order to access more square footage than they currently have.

Lack of space has limited the MPL's abilities to:

- Increase the collection
- Provide a full schedule of programs for children, young adults, and adults at the same time
- Provide sufficient public and staff meeting room space and library programs
- Offer spacious computer labs for adults with classroom options
- Establish young adult computer labs and a homework help facility that can be easily staffed and monitored.
- Provide adequate office space for staff near or in their areas of responsibility.
- Provide a much larger A/V room with proper seating, and appropriate shelving; viewing and listening options; staffed for checkout.
- Provide an area for teens separate from adults and children
- Increase the children's room allowing for more seating, a story corner, larger collection space, storage, and more
- Far more space and storage is needed for the custodial staff
- Provide a space for refreshments where adults can drink their coffee while reading their newspapers and kids can get a snack after school
- Provide several small quiet study rooms as well as a larger quiet reading room

Context for Planning

Recognizing that while the library has successfully accomplished the bulk of the goals set in the previous Strategic Plan; the library cannot meet future needs without addressing the lack of space.

In the fall of 2007, six different focus groups were held by CenterPointe Institute to try to measure the community's expectations of their public library.

While recognizing the great strides the library has made in the last three years, it was clear that a great deal more in programs, services, and the collection were desired. It was also clear that participants identified the lack of space required to meet expectations.

MPL needs to take action to ensure the formation of a public library the community wants and requires.

Goals and Objectives

Goal #1: Advocacy

The Board and Staff of the MPL will work with the state and national associations to promote libraries and legislation beneficial to the library community.

Objectives:

- The Board will work to connect with other library trustees to advocate on a regional basis
- The Board and Staff will support the American and Illinois Library Associations, as well as the Metropolitan Library System, by actively participating in advocacy projects and programs
- The Board and Staff will work actively with the Illinois Library Association to restore reduced library funds in Illinois
- The Board and Staff will work with the Village of Matteson, as well as local businesses, to bring an understanding of the economic impact the library has upon the village and continue to seek assistance from the village and merchants in lining up supplemental library funding

Goal #2: Building and Grounds

The Board and Staff will work towards completion of a larger facility for the MPL.

Objectives:

- Declare the library is *Going Green* and to that end, audit the building and current procedures to designate where changes need to occur in order to reach this goal and then follow through on those changes. For instance, replace all remaining magnetic ballasts with new electronic ballasts and then replace the fluorescent bulbs with the newer energy efficient bulbs
- Work with a building planner to develop a design to provide for an efficient and cost effective library, and its programs and services
- Hire the appropriate professionals (i.e. architect or realtor) and go out to bids

Goal #3: Collection

The library will increase the size of the collection to exceed state standards, continue to update outmoded materials, and improve the quality of the collection as a whole.

Objectives:

- Increase the size of the collection and the number of available formats to exceed state standards

- Actively work to reduce collection losses
- Switch to photo ID library cards, digital signature registration, Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags and related checkout system
- In line with budget constraints and limited shelving, weigh the need for print versus online options for the reference collection and weed accordingly

Goal #4: Finances

Pursue alternative avenues of revenue sources to offset tax cap losses and reduce our dependency on property taxes.

Objectives:

- Establish an endowment fund and launch a campaign to seek donors
- Establish an annual fund raising event
- Hire a financial planner to assist with a referendum campaign to secure the funds for an expansion project

Goal #5: Marketing

Designate sufficient resources in dollars and man-hours to marketing in order to increase circulation, raise attendance and membership, and increase donations.

Objectives:

- Map out and institute a formal plan to spread the word of available library services to both school personnel and Matteson residents
- Set up a patron email database
- Expand on publicity sources and frequency
- Do more exploratory surveys to pin-point what services the public wants and what they need
- Provide more interaction opportunities between the Board and the community

Goal #6: Programming

Increase the presence of the library within the community.

Objectives:

- Provide increased community outreach and programs for individuals of all ages
- Schedule regular visits to preschool and daycare centers
- Conduct a series of workshops on intellectual freedom
- Establish an evening book discussion group
- Establish computer classes for public and staff

- Assist the Friends of the Library as appropriate to aid them in growing their membership and activities

Goal #7: Technology

With oversight and assistance from the Staff's technology team, MPL will keep our equipment as current as financially possible, regularly updating software, and continually training staff in the use of the new technology.

Objectives:

- Expanding computer infrastructure to meet future demands
- Evaluate subscription databases annually to keep current with evolving databases designed for research and self-education
- Construct a schedule of continuing education on changing software and equipment for the staff and the public
- Use modern technology to improve communication between the library and the community
- Utilize technology to improve security and services throughout the building and in all departments

Goal #8: Personnel

Annually evaluate the need for staff as well as the needs of the Staff and Board to meet the needs of the community.

Objectives:

- Establish a new department, create a position for and hire an IT Manager
- Increase the size of the Outreach Department
- Review all positions on the staff and develop a succession plan for each

Goal #9 Board

Enhance the skills-set of the Board.

Objectives:

- Encourage all Board members to become certified through a training program such as the one offered by the North Suburban Library System
- Board members will encourage qualified residents to get involved with library governance