MESSAGE FROM THE LIBRARY BOARD PRESIDENT

I am proud to say that over the last six years the Greenburgh Public Library has been second to none in bringing cutting edge library services and programs to the lower Westchester area. Our gifted staff and leadership, with the generous support of the Friends of the Greenburgh Library and the Greenburgh Library Foundation, have continued to provide our community with innovative programs and services. We have led the county in supporting digital literacy of our patrons, introducing digital services and building our digital collections. We have made incremental changes to our building layout in response to patron requests and the general changes in the way libraries are being used across the country. There is so much to celebrate – our library is a unique and valuable resource for our community.

This strategic plan is the starting point for the next phase of our library. I want to thank the Strategic Planning Committee and especially John Sexton, Jenny Engstrom, Megan Fenton, and Diana Lennon for their tireless efforts in putting together this thoughtful and creative plan. I also want to recognize the staff of the library for their participation in the process and commitment to not just getting a plan in place but getting it right! And thank you, the public, for your feedback and responses to our various surveys and requests for assistance. As you read through this plan I think you will be excited about what is to come. You can hear the GPL team’s commitment to the Library’s motto – Service First.

I can’t wait to see this plan come to life.

Mariquita Blumberg
President
Library Board of Trustees
MESSAGE FROM THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR

One of the wonders contained within my smart phone is the app that lets me open a map for just about anywhere on the planet as it identifies not only where I am standing, but also suggests the best possible route to my destination. With my phone always at hand I have seldom gotten lost. No matter how I proceed, I can check my direction with nearly every step. Consequently, I often find myself exploring new areas, neighborhoods and even countries with a great deal of confidence.

With this Strategic Plan, I feel similarly confident because it provides us direction in the coming years. Of course as technology continues to change our lives it also changes how libraries serve their communities. By listening to the many voices in our community we have created a plan of service that depends on our relationship with residents of Greenburgh, so that knowing who we serve leads us to how we serve.

This plan provides us with the map that we believe will engage curiosity, invite discovery, and foster delight. This is something I see every day when someone – from toddler to centenarian – experiences the opportunity that our library provides to learn and grow. As much as I may enjoy and depend on the map on my phone, I know this plan will be even more satisfying because it will engage us all on our journey forward.

I am enormously grateful for the many thoughtful and heartfelt responses to our surveys and interviews and for the tremendous work done by our Strategic Planning Committee, the Library Board of Trustees and all library staff, whose valuable input and guidance helped determine the direction our plan would take.

John Sexton
Library Director
MISSION | OUR PURPOSE

The Greenburgh Public Library is a source for learning, literacy, discovery and delight that enriches lives and strengthens our community.

SHARED VALUES | HOW WE RESPOND

Our professional service demonstrates the core values of the American Library Association and the Library Bill of Rights, as well as the following organizational values:

WELCOMING
We are open to all and we are here to help.
We create a dynamic environment that is safe and fun.

DIVERSITY
We respect individual experiences and differences.
We celebrate the diversity of community, collections, and ideas.

OPPORTUNITY
We nurture learning and literacy at every stage of life.
We invite you to discover, learn and grow.

RELATIONSHIPS
We share our talents and build connections.
We exemplify the abundance of community.

ACCOUNTABILITY
We inspire the public's trust through strong library service and responsible management of our resources.
Strategic Focus Areas
2016-19

During the next three years, the Library will focus our efforts in five key areas:

- Promote Learning
- Engage Our Community
- Cultivate Curiosity and Delight
- Welcoming Environment
- Organizational Health

We have identified our most important goals for each focus area, resulting in fifteen key priorities. For example, there are many ways we can and do promote learning. However, during the next three years, our top priorities in this area will be 1) Digital Citizenship, 2) Family/Early Childhood Literacy, and 3) Self-directed Learning.

Under each priority, the plan includes specific strategies intended to guide our work in this area. Each year, staff will determine individual and team goals, as well as specific measures of success, which support these strategies.
Focus Area 1
GPL PROMOTES LEARNING

Priority 1: Promote digital citizenship for all ages
- Incorporate technology as an aspect of program planning
- Model principles of digital citizenship in public programming
- Improve life skills through technology training and informational programming
- Continue to support transition to eGovernment
- Engage users with digital library resources

Priority 2: Expand and strengthen support for family/early childhood literacy
- Enhance staff expertise and familiarity with best practices for early literacy
- Collaborate with local childcare and early education programs
- Offer holistic family programming, including bilingual
- Redesign space to better support imaginative play

Priority 3: Support and encourage self-directed learning
- Create and enhance resources to support new technologies
- Incorporate principles of self-directed learning at every opportunity
- Promote reading as learning

“More one-on-one services for computer learning - iPad, etc., beyond the basics”

“A program where preschoolers (who don’t have many literacy opportunities) could be paired with a volunteer on a one-to-one basis to enjoy and learn on a regular basis”
Focus Area 2

GPL ENGAGES OUR COMMUNITY

Priority 1: Meet community needs by building **partnerships**
- Create a database of current and potential partners
- Collaborate with town departments
- Collaborate with local schools
- Continue to partner with local businesses, agencies, organizations, and residents

Priority 2: Promote library use among **non-users**
- Create marketing campaign for non-users
- Increase visibility of librarians in the community
- Develop programs and services to engage underserved audiences
- Provide service to remote/homebound users
- Continue community analysis and evaluation

Priority 3: Heighten **public awareness** of the library’s vast and diverse resources and services
- Cross-promote library programs, resources, services
- Enhance online presence and participation in digital engagement efforts
- Coordinate sustainable and consistent marketing approach
- Create opportunities for the community to participate in the Library’s vitality
- Increase advocacy efforts to communicate the value and impact of the library

“More connections to Greenburgh schools, partnerships to encourage literacy.”

“I am ignorant about all your eResources. Need help using all that you do have.”
Focus Area 3
GPL CULTIVATES CURIOSITY AND DELIGHT

Priority 1: Provide vibrant collections in all formats
- Update collection development strategy
- Anticipate and respond to demand for shifting formats in the media landscape
- Identify and promote access to digital reference sources
- Facilitate easy access to collections
- Experiment with one new non-traditional circulating collection

Priority 2: Inspire creativity and discovery to promote personal growth
- Provide stimulating and informative programs
- Incorporate principles of imagination and play at every opportunity
- Develop dynamic space/s in the library

Priority 3: Design programs and services that promote a love of reading
- Develop consistent readers advisory service
- Create community engagement around collections
- Increase number of literary events

“Book clubs that meet at times suitable for working people.”

“Museum passes and cooking classes!”

MORE – “books on CD, large print books, print books in current non-fiction, science fiction books, foreign language books, selection of ebooks, selection of audiobooks for kids and adults.”
Focus Area 4
GPL CREATES A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

Priority 1: Make the library easier to use - inside, outside, and virtually

- Evaluate open hours
- Improve signage/wayfinding
- Expand parking
- Improve materials return
- Enhance comfort, cleanliness and safety
- Create a dynamic online presence for GPL
- Ensure library spaces are disability friendly (not just ADA compliant)

Priority 2: Use space effectively to respond to patron needs

- Conduct experience audit/accessibility study
- Construct study rooms for individual/small group use
- Accommodate technology trends and needs

Priority 3: Maintain exceptional service

- Epitomize organizational and professional values
- Empower and support staff to solve problems

“I ADORE this library. I always look forward to coming here because it feels so calm, open, and clean.”

“I wish you were open late more often, Monday and Thursday 10am to 8pm would be fantastic!”
Focus Area 5
GPL STAFF ARE THE HEART OF THE LIBRARY

Priority 1: Support personal and professional growth
- Fund professional development
- Encourage team learning
- Promote self-directed learning opportunities

Priority 2: Foster innovation and fun
- Encourage curiosity and creativity
- Celebrate at every opportunity
- Cultivate humor, imagination, and play

Priority 3: Exemplify the mission and values of GPL
- Foster a diverse workforce
- Align performance management with mission and values
- Build open and honest relationships

“I love this library and staff. They are kind and helpful.”

“I appreciate the services offered and find the staff very helpful. I really enjoy feeling at home in the library.”
THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The Strategic Plan charts Greenburgh Public Library’s course for the next three years and beyond; essentially it serves as the Library’s vision statement. The plan was developed through the process outlined below, and provides a cohesive direction and specific strategies to ensure GPL patrons continue to experience exceptional 21st century library service.

Phase 1: Initial planning and research
- Appoint planning committee
- Review and update existing data and research
  - Community Profile
  - Library Profile
  - Trends Report
- Identify stakeholders

Phase 2: Foundation and needs assessment
- Craft new mission statement
- Articulate organizational core values
- Compile new data and research
  - Interview stakeholders
  - Conduct surveys (community, schools, staff)
  - Workshops/focus groups with staff

Phase 3: Strategic plan development
- Analyze new data
- Identify strategic focus areas
- Development of priorities and strategies for each focus area
- Feedback and direction from Library Board and staff

Phase 4: Finalize and approve plan
- Write strategic plan draft
- Feedback from internal and external stakeholders incorporated into plan
- Final plan approved, published, and disseminated
Methodology

The plan is a result of work by the Planning Committee, which consisted of members of the Library Board of Trustees, the Library Director, and library staff. The committee worked together over a period of nine months to engage stakeholders, conduct research and synthesize information, and identify priorities.

The Planning Committee conducted research and analysis of:

- Greenburgh demographics, economic profile, and educational attainment
- GPL statistics; Existing programs, collections, staffing, and technology available
- Trends and key issues impacting Greenburgh and Westchester County
- Nationwide trends relevant to library use

The Planning Committee identified key community stakeholders and divided into teams to gather community and staff input through:

- A community survey offered in both English and Spanish, online and in-library
- School visits/outreach and a survey targeted to local educators
- A survey targeted to staff and staff focus groups with Trustees
- Interviews of local nonprofit and business leaders
- Staff workshops to identify shared values

The Planning Committee then held a series of working meetings to review the data, analyze key trends and determine strategic focus areas and priorities. The resulting plan is grounded in a clear understanding of GPL's strengths and challenges, the needs and aspirations of library users, and the key trends and strategic opportunities we can harness as we continue to be a source for learning, literacy, discovery and delight that enriches lives and strengthens our community.

Key Findings

98% of survey respondents (554 total) have used the library in the past year. The responses made clear that the majority of library users feel the most important services for our community are:

- Providing materials to borrow
- Offering public programs
- Providing access to technology
- Promoting learning and literacy for all ages

Respondents said the three most important program areas for adults are literary events (author readings, book discussions), cultural events, and consumer info programs (health, finance, how-to).

For youth and families, the most important program areas are book and reading clubs, pre-school storytimes, creative activities and computer training.
There were two free-text questions on the survey:
  What service, program, resource do you wish GPL offered?
  What additional comments, if any, would you like to share?

We received 150 responses to the question requesting additional comments; 78 (52%) expressed positive feedback -- thanks or gratitude for the library and specific programs and services.

  “I love the Greenburgh Library. I love the ‘workers,’ the atmosphere. It’s like going to another world... under one roof.”
  “What a wonderful library this is and what a great benefit it has been to my family.”
  “You are a lifeline indispensable to the wellbeing of the community.”
  “The library has become our community center.”
  “The library truly is the heart of Greenburgh.”

Across both questions, the following patterns emerged:
- 24 responses noted need for more technology training (including using library resources, Apple products/Macs, training for specific audiences - kids, seniors, etc)
- 14 responses noted parking or the front circle/entrance/book drop as an area of frustration
- 12 responses were related to holding programs at different times of day or scheduling more programs; 9 responses noted need for additional open hours
- 11 responses around awareness and understanding of library offerings
- 10 responses around having more author/book club type programming
- 9 responses noted need for study rooms, small group meeting space, free use of meeting space

School visits and outreach echoed the findings of the survey which prioritized literary events, author and book clubs, and creative activities, as well as making the library more welcoming and easier to use.

The main takeaway from interviews with business and nonprofit leaders was a need to increase awareness of library services and resources. There was a sense, echoed in survey responses, that the library has so much to offer that they don’t even know about.
**Trends**

In looking at national library trends, the key findings are:

The range and array of **programs and services** is evolving and expanding. Supporting the learning and social interests of all age groups continues to be a priority, with an increased focus on developing new literacies, celebrating cultural diversity, and supporting economic development. Twenty-first century libraries are supporting the knowledge and creative economy in ways that position the library as a community catalyst.

There is a shift from outreach as an activity to **community engagement** as an ongoing state of being. Libraries are experimenting with new models which are oriented more externally, while also being more selective and strategic, and moving beyond traditional partners and collaborations.

A huge challenge is increasing **public awareness** of all we have to offer. Libraries are tackling this through market research, refreshed brand/visual identity, targeted marketing to specific segments of the population, diversifying marketing strategies and innovative approaches to community engagement.

**Technology** is changing rapidly, **digital content** is transforming the way we do business, and the demand on libraries to provide access to a wide variety of technology and digital content, and on staff to support the use of both, is increasing.

Print circulation is slowly but steadily declining, while use of e-collections is increasing. We’re at a point where many library users take advantage of both, and tell us they want more of everything! Libraries are challenged to anticipate preferences to develop **responsive collections** which meet a wide variety of needs for different ages in different formats.

Libraries are increasingly being used as community gathering spaces. As digital content displaces some print collections, more and more libraries are **re-imagining spaces** to offer places for individual and group work as well as piloting innovative library services. Library design is focusing more on creating spaces that are inviting and comfortable, flexible, experiential, and “green.”

The profession is under stress. Many libraries are still feeling the effects of the recession, which has resulted in a loss of staff, outdated technology and facilities, and limited support for professional development. At the same time, many libraries have experienced an increase in use alongside the expansion of library services (as described above.) **Investing and supporting staff** to ensure organizational health is critical for producing great library service and promoting job satisfaction and productivity.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Planning Committee
Mariquita Blumberg, Library Board President
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Barbara DiTata, Library Board
Hope Heyman, Library Board
Tomas Saez, Library Board
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Library Board of Trustees
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Tomas Saez
Diana Juettner, Town Board/ Liaison to the Board

APPENDICES

Community Profile
Library Profile
Trends Report

Community Survey
Educators Survey
Staff Survey