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# La Grange Public Library Strategic Plan 2010 - 2014

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## The Process

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The strategic planning process was led by consultant Jamie Bukovac of JSB Solutions and included participation by community members, Library Board trustees and staff. The input we received was invaluable in formulating a comprehensive plan.

### *Surveys*

Surveys were mailed in May 2009 to all 6400 households in La Grange. Surveys were also available in the Library and on the Library's website during the months of May and June 2009. In addition, Library Trustees took laptops to a variety of community locations to offer residents the option of completing the survey. Over 650 surveys were completed online or in paper format, for a return rate of 10.2%.

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### *Focus Groups*

Twenty residents participated in two focus groups in May and June 2009. Participants commented on how their lives and community have changed in the past five years. They offered feedback on how they currently use the library, and what they would like to see the library do in the future.

Trustees and staff participated in an analysis of the library's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) and a visioning exercise.



### *Community Interviews*

Seventeen community leaders were interviewed for their input into the community. Organizations that participated include local churches and private schools; School Districts 102, 105, and 204; the Park District of La Grange; LaGrange Business Association; and the Village of La Grange. They provided feedback on the changes they see in the community and within their own organizations.

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## What We Learned

A number of themes arose from the focus groups and interviews:

- Many see the library as a place of community.
- Community involvement and community partnering are necessary.
- Convenience is very important.
- Customer service is essential.
- Marketing, publicity, and promotion are all very important.
- The library needs to address technology overall: improved website, more public computers, using technology with patrons (communication and marketing), and technological innovation.
- Patrons want help using the library: guides, booklists, recommendations, and help with browsing.
- Wise management of resources and the library's budget is essential.

*"Keep stressing 'library as community center' with free programs and meetings amply publicized."*

Key findings from the surveys indicated that overall, patrons are fairly satisfied with the library. People were **most satisfied** with the facilities, restrooms, hours, interlibrary loan, and children's programming. People were **least satisfied** with the website, the availability of computers, and parking.

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**Who:** The survey respondents were 72% female vs. 28% male. Approximately 94% were residents of La Grange. The largest category represented was people in the workforce (40%), followed by stay-at-home parents (21%) and retired people (21%.) A surprising **52% of respondents have been using the Library for 10 years or more.**

**What:** The survey results show that **21% of people primarily use the Library to borrow items.** More than 17% come to the Library to use our facilities, such as tables and meeting rooms, while 16% use materials at the Library. More than 9% of people attend events at the Library.

**Why:** When asked why people use the Library, the most frequent response was for leisure, followed by education and self-improvement in all groups of users except for students, whose response was education.

“The new library is welcoming, the atmosphere is relaxed and I love all it has to offer.”

**How:** Forty-two percent of people who responded to the survey prefer to find information without assistance. Only 6% said that their preferred method was accessing the Library remotely. Approximately 30% of respondents use the Library twenty times a year, with **24% using the Library fifty times per year.**

**Overall:** More than 60% said that staff initiated contact with them during their visit to the Library. When asked about overall satisfaction with Library staff, people rated staff with an average of 8.4 out of 10 possible points. Users seemed pleased with the Library’s value compared to other libraries, with more than **20% answering that the Library provides more value than other libraries.** Indicating a positive and busy future for the Library, more than 28% of people said that they would use the Library more often in the future.

Utilizing all this feedback, the Library Board of Trustees, along with a seven-member team of staff, developed a mission, vision, and initiatives for the library’s future.

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# Strategic Plan

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## Mission

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Learn. Explore. Connect.

The La Grange Public Library provides the community the inspiration and the means to learn, explore, and connect throughout their lives.

## Vision

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La Grange Public Library is a welcoming gateway to the community, providing inspirational and creative services that exceed expectations. As the cornerstone of La Grange, the Library actively participates in bringing the Village together. Our community understands and values how the library fits into their lifestyles and enriches their daily lives.

## Initiatives

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The 2010-2014 Strategic Plan is built on five initiatives that will guide the library over the next five years and move us in the desired direction:

### *Partner with the Community*

Work with other agencies and organizations in La Grange to maximize resources.

### *Enhance Customer Service and Convenience*

Look for new and innovative ways to make the library's services more friendly and accessible.

### *Enrich Collections and Services*

Provide collections and services that are responsive to community needs and interests.

### *Create Awareness*

Increase recognition of the library and its services throughout the community.

### *Manage Resources*

Provide a strong financial base to achieve the library's mission and strategic plan.

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## Goals and Objectives

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The Strategic Planning Team developed goals and objectives to help us achieve each of these five initiatives.

### *Partner with the Community*

- Increase Community Involvement in Library
  - Increase Friends membership and participation in library activities
  - Develop structured volunteer program
- Provide Community Resources for Patrons
  - Provide civic information
  - Provide information about local organizations
- Collaborate with Community Organizations
  - Work collaboratively with community organizations
  - Work with nearby libraries for collaborative programming



"I would like to see the library more visible in the community and I would like to see them work with other agencies like the Park District."

### *Enhance Customer Service and Convenience*

- Focus on Customer Service
  - Emphasize a proactive approach to customer service
  - Adapt current policies and procedures to enhance patron experience
- Improve Convenience for Patrons
  - Use technology to respond to patron needs
  - Add amenities to create a more welcoming environment

### *Enrich Collections and Services*

- Enhance Collections
  - Examine collection management procedures to improve efficiency
  - Create a plan to develop and evaluate collections
- Expand Services
  - Increase service to targeted populations
  - Provide responsive programming



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### *Create Awareness*

Increase Recognition of the Library in the Community

Develop a library brand

Design interactive website

Explore exterior signage

Promote Collections and Services

Create and improve print support materials

Create and improve electronic support materials

Use staff to promote collections and services

Develop interior signage strategy

### *Manage Resources*

Evaluate Budget and Fundraising Opportunities

Develop a fundraising plan

Prioritize budget according to strategic initiatives

Ensure sound investments

Redirect and Prioritize Staff Time

Re-examine workflow patterns

Utilize volunteers more strategically

Create a culture of enhanced cooperation

Address Technology Needs

Revise the Library's Technology Plan

Explore ways to offer more technology for patron use

Increase IT assistance

Evaluate Use of Building and Plan for Current and Future Needs

Explore ways to improve usability and enhance the aesthetic experience

Improve exterior convenience and safety

"The library provides a multitude of services that are usually readily accessible. We need to increase cd, dvd, books on cd and alternative media resources. But, I realize that budgetary concerns also play an important role."

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### *Strategic Planning Team*

#### **Library Board of Trustees:**

Jane Byczek

Bill Coffee

Caroline Coryell

Mary Nelson

Becky Spratford

Rose Taylor

Steve Wolf

#### **La Grange Public Library Staff:**

Nancy Bent

Bridget Bittman

Jeannie Dilger-Hill

Patty Prodanich

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