



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Geneva Public Library is located 40 miles west of downtown Chicago on the Fox River in Kane County, Illinois and serves a population of 30,500. Currently, two-thirds of the population live within the City limits of Geneva, while the other one-third live southeast and southwest of the downtown Geneva area. While Geneva started out as a rural community, over the last 50 years, the area has acquired a more suburban character. The community is known for excellent schools, a thriving small business community with unique historic storefronts, and a friendly, neighborly character and charm. Community members are well-educated and mostly affluent.

In June 2014, the Library embarked upon a process of self-evaluation, including: an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; collection of demographic information; facilitation of community conversations; and use of an online and in-library community survey. Data was used from the self-evaluation tools to develop a strategic plan covering a three-year period. Strategic initiatives identified in the plan include: Flexible Space, Innovation, Convenience, and Connections. The Strategic Plan was officially adopted by the Board of Trustees on July 23, 2015 and is available to the public at: www.gpld.org/pressroom.

The current Library facility has severe limitations due to its age and size that have been anecdotally known to trustees and staff for many years. In an effort to understand the magnitude of the issues and plan for the future, the Library hired StudioGC, an architectural firm specializing in library planning, to conduct a Needs Assessment of the existing facility. The firm was directed to analyze demographics, library usage, operational costs, patron service models, 21st century library norms, space use efficiency, and energy efficiency.

As part of the research process, StudioGC conducted multiple focus groups with community members. The following is a sampling of what they found:

- **Services:** The Library needs to offer new and expanded non-traditional services like collaborative work spaces, digital media creation, imaginative play space, small business support, parent networking opportunities, teacher support, etc.
- **Relevancy:** The Library needs to do more to meet the contemporary needs of the community

- **Meetings and events:** The Library needs more space for community events and a greater number of flexible meeting spaces for community gathering
- **Location:** The Library is an important part of downtown and the community
- **Parking:** The Library needs more parking and it needs to be more convenient for community members

The full report of the Needs Assessment was presented to the Board of Trustees on October 22, 2015. Key findings from the report include:

- **Libraries have changed:** People need libraries for more than just books; they come to the library to connect with one another and create in a digital world
- **Our library is not providing service for the 21st century:** Lack of space is resulting in lack of services and amenities
- **Our building is inefficient and expensive to operate:** The age, layout, and infrastructure of the building results in high ongoing operational costs
- **Expanding the Library at our current site is not an option:** Zoning restrictions limit options for increasing square footage or adding on to the current facility

LIBRARY MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

During the strategic planning process, the Library defined its mission (why we exist), vision (what we aspire to be), and values (what we believe in) as presented below:

Mission: Connecting our community to discover, inspire and grow!

Vision: A valued and innovative community resource empowering residents to seek knowledge, create ideas, and achieve dreams.

Values: Service, Relevancy, Equal Access, Fiscal Responsibility

DEVELOPMENT OF MARKETING PLAN

With the digital revolution libraries have changed dramatically. Libraries have evolved from operating as “warehouses for books” to lively centers serving the community in ways previously unimaginable. Digital natives (people growing up fully in the technological age) make up 29% of the Library’s population. Today’s children and teens will become tomorrow’s adults. Yet public perceptions of libraries have not kept pace with changes experienced in forward-looking institutions.

In an effort to create greater awareness about our Library, including current resources and services as well as future needs, the Library has created this marketing plan. The plan was drafted by staff routinely involved in sharing information about the Library with our community. Paula Krapf, Marketing and PR

Manager, Ellen Anderson, Digital Resources Librarian, and Jean Maiorella, Customer Service Assistant, served on the planning committee.

The Marketing Plan is conceived as a two-year plan covering the current (2015/16) and next (2016/17) fiscal year. The Plan will be re-evaluated and updated as needed biannually. The intent of the Plan is to provide staff guidance on how to share information with community members about Library goals and objectives previously identified in the Library's Strategic Plan.

The Marketing Plan was officially adopted by the Library Board of Trustees on January 28, 2016.

LIBRARY MARKETING GOALS FOR 2015-2017

1. Promote the Library in the community
2. Raise awareness of Library services and resources
3. Develop community awareness about long-term space needs

GOAL 1: PROMOTE THE LIBRARY IN THE COMMUNITY

Strategies:

- A. Develop attractive and easily identifiable branding for the Library
 - a. Redesign Library logo
 - b. Establish uniform standards for promotional materials
 - c. Furnish branded items (pencils, pens, etc.) at service desks throughout the Library
 - d. Use uniform branding in all communications from the Library (business cards, renewal notices, staff email signatures, voicemail, etc.)
 - e. Redesign employee badges to make staff easily identifiable within the building as well as at events outside of the Library
- B. Develop a marketing toolkit (library card applications, branded items, brochures, etc.) for staff to use at events and meetings outside of the building
- C. Embark on library card registration campaign
 - a. Develop community signup campaign using the marketing toolkit
 - b. Partner with District 304 to offer library cards to all students
- D. Broaden the scope and reach of Summer Reading
 - a. Partner with other community organizations
 - b. Create promotional materials that generate community interest
- E. Perform targeted outreach to underserved library populations
 - a. Develop programming and outreach geared toward middle schoolers
 - b. Develop programming and outreach geared toward high schoolers
 - c. Develop programming and outreach geared toward 20s and 30s
 - d. Provide support to the small business community
- F. Participate in community events and meetings (Chamber lunches, Swedish Days, etc.)

Desired Outcome:

Community members will have positive feelings about the Library. The Library will have a strong patron base in the community covering a wide range of demographics.

Benchmarks:

- Increased cardholder rate
- Increased summer reading participation rates
- Increased outreach opportunities
- Increased community partnerships

GOAL 2: RAISE AWARENESS OF LIBRARY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Strategies:

- A. Engage with community members through digital avenues
 - a. Make website more user-friendly
 - i. Refresh front page of library website
 - ii. Provide topical arrangement of resources
 - iii. Highlight staff expertise
 - iv. Provide regular news and updates on Library happenings
 - b. Use social media consistently and strategically
 - i. Use Facebook advertising to increase reach of message
 - ii. Become more active on Twitter
 - iii. Encourage Yelp reviews by patrons
 - iv. Use online forums (Meetup.com, Facebook groups, etc.) to engage with targeted audiences
 - v. Cross promote offerings with key community organizations (Park District, City, Chamber, etc.)
 - c. Use email to reach targeted audiences
 - i. Produce twice monthly e-newsletter
 - ii. Use targeted email messaging
 - 1. New cardholder welcomes
 - 2. We've missed you, come back
- B. Use print resources to inform community members about library offerings
 - a. Produce quarterly print newsletter
 - b. Engage local media
 - i. Provide press releases
 - ii. Update community calendars with library events
 - iii. Write monthly column for *Kane County Chronicle*
 - iv. Advertise locally (newspaper, Chamber newsletter, District 304 backpack communications, etc.)
 - c. Use targeted mailings
- C. Promote library offerings to in-house audience
 - a. Train staff on word-of-mouth marketing
 - b. Use strategically placed posters, flyers, bookmarks, cards, etc. throughout the building
 - c. Promote resources and services to program attendees

Desired Outcome:

Community members will know what the Library offers and look to the Library as a trusted community partner.

Benchmarks:

- Increased use of library resources
- Increased program attendance
- Increased social media engagement
- Increased website traffic

GOAL 3: DEVELOP COMMUNITY AWARENESS ABOUT LONG-TERM SPACE NEEDS

Strategies:

- A. Train staff in how to respond to frequently asked question about space needs
 - a. Develop FAQ with questions and answers that are easily understandable to patrons and staff
 - b. Track patron comments and questions
 - c. Implement weekly staff communication plan (SCoop) with answers to new or evolving frequently asked questions
- B. Town Hall Meetings with Board members
 - a. Share information about needs with community members and local officials
 - b. Gather community input for preliminary building program
 - c. Determine funding needs and share EAV implications with community members when known
- C. Patron testimonials
 - a. Create short videos of why libraries matter
 - b. Develop pool of photos and impact stories
- D. Share planning information online, in print, and in the Library
 - a. Planning documents
 - i. Strategic Plan
 - ii. Needs Assessment
 - iii. Preliminary Building Program
 - b. Mind Mixer site
 - c. Vision and Interest Boards
- E. Engage local media
 - a. Provide press releases
 - b. Verify accuracy of information reported in the media
- F. Provide Information about the Library's space needs to library partners (Friends, Foundation, Citizens Group, etc.)

Desired outcome:

Community members will be aware of long-term space needs and actively participate in creating a solution. Staff will be knowledgeable about how to respond to community questions. Citizens Group will take an active role in promoting the needs of the Library to the community and respond to issues raised by community members in print and social media.

Benchmarks:

- Ongoing dialogue with community members
- Information transparency