

**Board of Trustees  
of the  
Willingboro Public Library**

**2021 - 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN**

**Be Inspired, be an Inspiration:  
Communication, Sustainability, Growth**

**December 2020**

## Background

The Willingboro Public Library 2020-2025 Strategic Plan presents a picture of the current state of Library and a vision for the future of the library that is informed by diverse constituents, including the Board of Trustees, staff of the library, the Friends of the Willingboro Public library, and community members. The process of plan development began with a Board of Trustees retreat during the summer of 2020. During the initial planning process, the Board established a new Purpose, Mission, Vision and values Statements, and began the process of conducting an analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of our current operations. The plan was developed through engagement with key constituents through diverse methods of engagement, including focus groups, virtual conversations, and online and paper surveys. These forums involved staff, community members, and the Friends of the Willingboro Public Library to further inform the SWOT analysis, and provide guidance on goals for the coming years.

This planning took place amidst a season of dramatic change to the structures of many of the institutions in our community. During this time, the library was called upon to maintain services and a community connection without access to the building, supporting the community through hardship and social unrest. Library leadership was inspired to envision a future in which our presence provides a physical and digital space to help our residents navigate change and be best equipped for an uncertain future. This plan reflects a key perspective on the role that a library can play, through times of change and challenge, in the lives of individuals and in the community, through our central theme: *Be inspired; be an inspiration.*

This Plan aims to guide the Willingboro Public Library in providing inspiration and developing the perspectives, resources and talents of our current and future leaders. This will be accomplished through three guiding principles, or pillars, around which goals and objectives are organized.

1. Excellence in Communication
2. Stewardship & Sustainability
3. Growth & Adaptation

The goals are grounded in an organizational purpose, mission, vision, and values, and are designed to maximize strengths to address weaknesses, minimize threats, and seize opportunities.

THE FOLLOWING FOUR ELEMENTS ARE AT THE CENTER OF THE PLAN:

1. Purpose – our alignment to the same focus of our why; what we do now and plans for the future.
2. Mission – our unifying principle that drives everything we do.
3. Vision – our image of utopia for the future which pictures how the Library will look and feel.
4. Values – our unwavering operating beliefs and principles that energize the culture of the library in all of our decision-making.

### **Purpose:**

*The purpose of Willingboro Public Library shall be:*

- *To provide information, connection, cultural, entertainment and intellectual exchange.*
- *To be a welcoming community space and learning center for citizens of all ages.*
- *To support the long-term growth, sustainability and economic development of the Willingboro community.*

**Vision:**

*The vision of the Willingboro Public Library is to be a model for the future libraries of the region and beyond that attracts varied funders, volunteers and supporters.*

**Mission:**

*It is our mission to serve as a diverse interactive digital and physical knowledge hub that is built by and for the Willingboro community.*

**Values:**

- *Accountability to self and others (compassion, empathy, loyalty, trust, honesty, integrity, Golden Rule and mindfulness)*
- *Responsible stewardship*
- *Equality, diversity, inclusion and intellectual freedom*
- *Collaboration and community engagement*
- *Future focus and resiliency*
- *Standards of excellence*
- *Safety*

The strategic plan is grounded in three elements that keep our attention on why we do what we do, for whom we do it, where we are going and how we will focus our energy to get there. These include:

1. SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (internal and external analysis).
2. Theme – Overarching guiding principles (pillars) that structure and guide the planning process & its implementation.
3. Goals – The specific measurable goals, objectives and action items, related to the guiding principles.

**THEME**

*Be Inspired, Be an Inspiration: Communication, Sustainability and Growth*

**PILLARS & GOALS**

1. Excellence in Communication
  - a. Increase and target external marketing to analyze and outperform the competition.
    - i. Implement a comprehensive communication and outreach and engagement initiative to include benchmarks for social media activities, regular publication in Township publications and social media, and a presence within regional press and community events for planned activities.
    - ii. Increase joint ventures with local businesses.
    - iii. Reinstitute “Town Center Day”

- b. Increase partnerships & shared services
  - i. Establish a shared services agreement with the Township outlining responsibilities related to
    - Security
    - Cleaning
    - Maintenance of facilities and major systems.
  - ii. Maintain & increase school district communication partnerships
  - iii. Increase communication between Willingboro Public Library & Friends of the Willingboro Library group.
  - iv. Explore joint ventures with Burlington County Library System.
- c. Create meaningful opportunities for dialogue and shared messaging between staff, board and support partners.
  - i. Brand the Library as a leader in new library use trends.
  - ii. Engage youth and young adults in an advisory and outreach capacity to define and champion library initiatives.

## 2. Commitment to Sustainability & Stewardship

- a. Maximize impact of budgeted resources
  - i. Establish a sustainability plan to maintain excellence in fiscal management and integrity, and establish benchmarks for increased efficiency.
  - ii. Serve as a clearinghouse for community resources and services (county, state and federal).
- b. Expand & diversify sources of funding
  - i. Increase joint outreach and coordinated activities with the Friends group.
  - ii. Identify available grant funds to support new initiatives and submit at least four new funding proposals per year.
  - iii. Explore the establishment of a foundation.
- c. Maintain and increase technology to ensure continued community access in a digital future
  - i. Conduct a technology audit, and recommend new tools.

## 3. Growth & Adaptation

- a. Increase professional development to highlight new growth areas and increase community engagement.
  - i. Be Ready! To be the creator of future information exchange through ongoing staff talent development and community planning engagement.
  - ii. Increase board training & development.
  - iii. Establish community-driven benchmarks to ensure diversity, accessibility, and equity through:
    - a. staff development through the community
    - b. community access to resources; and
    - c. geographic accessibility.

- b. Expand high-performing programs and develop new services to address community needs.
  - i. Expand credentials and badging for existing and new certification programs, in partnership with identified community entities.
  - ii. Optimize use of our innovative learning environments, including makerspace, co-working space, and meeting spaces, to serve as a destination for creative learning.
  
- c. Be future-ready & growth-minded.
  - i. Promote innovation & access to virtual tools to expand training & certification programs, and career pathways programs throughout age groups for emerging industry needs.
  - ii. Expand community engagements to empower and transform individuals and the community.
  - iii. Implement best practice models (from examples such as the NYPL, ALA Center for the Future of Libraries) to drive at least one new service line on an annual basis.

**APPENDIX A: IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY – Year One**

<b>GOALS</b>	<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBLE PARTY</b>	<b>RESOURCES</b>
<b>Pillar I: Excellence in Communication</b>				
<i>Goal 1.A: Increase and Target External Marketing to analyze and outperform the competition</i>	<i>i. Comprehensive communication &amp; outreach initiative (To include a “your tax dollars at work” annual report).</i>	2021	<i>Library Director, Strategic Planning Committee (staff)</i>	<i>Existing</i>
	<i>ii. Increase joint ventures with local businesses</i>	2021	<i>Library Director, Strategic Planning Committee (staff)</i>	<i>Existing</i>
	<i>iii. Reinstitute “Town Center Day”</i>	2022	<i>Library Director, Staff, Board</i>	<i>Existing; Additional sponsorships to be explored</i>
<i>Goal 1.B: Increase Partnerships &amp; Shared Services.</i>	<i>i. Establish Shared Services with the Township outlining responsibilities relative to maintenance of facilities &amp; major systems.</i>	2021	<i>Library Director, Township Manager, Finance Committee, Facilities Committee</i>	<i>Existing</i>
	<i>ii. Maintain &amp; increase school district communication partnerships</i>	2021	<i>Library Director, Strategic Planning Committee</i>	<i>Existing</i>
	<i>iii. Increase communication between Willingboro Public Library &amp; the Friends of the Willingboro Public Library group.</i>	2021	<i>Library Director, Strategic Planning Committee</i>	<i>Existing</i>
	<i>iv. Explore joint ventures with Burlington County Library System.</i>	2022	<i>Library Director, Strategic Planning Committee.</i>	<i>Existing</i>

<i>Goal 1.C. Create meaningful opportunities for dialogue and shared messaging that includes board, staff, and support partners.</i>	<i>i. Brand the Library as a leader in new library use trends.</i>	2021	<i>Board, Library Director, Strategic Planning Committee</i>	<i>Existing</i>
	<i>2. Engage youth and young adults in an advisory and outreach capacity to define and champion library initiatives.</i>	2022	<i>Director, Strategic Planning Committee,</i>	<i>Existing</i>
<b>Pillar 2. Commitment to Sustainability &amp; Stewardship</b>				
<i>Goal 2.A. Maximize impact of budgeted resources.</i>	<i>i. Establish a sustainability plan to maintain excellence in fiscal management and integrity, and establish benchmarks for increased efficiency.</i>	2022	<i>Director, Finance Committee</i>	<i>Existing</i>
	<i>ii. Serve as a clearinghouse for community resources and services (county, state and federal)</i>	<i>2021 and ongoing</i>	<i>Director, Strategic Planning Committee</i>	<i>Existing, Shared Services</i>
<i>Goals 2.B. Expand &amp; diversify sources of funding</i>	<i>i. Increase joint outreach and coordinated activities with the Friends of the Willingboro Public Library.</i>	2021	<i>Library Director, Planning Committee, Fundraising Committee</i>	<i>Existing</i>
	<i>ii. Identify available grant funds to support new initiatives and submit at least four new funding proposals per year.</i>	2021	<i>Library Director, Board, Strategic Planning Committee</i>	<i>Existing</i>
	<i>iii. Explore the establishment of a foundation.</i>	<i>2021 – Feasibility Study 2022 - Implementation</i>	<i>Fundraising Committee</i>	<i>Existing</i>

<i>Goal 2.C. Maintain and increase technology to ensure continued community access in a digital future</i>	<i>Conduct a technology audit, and recommend new tools.</i>	<i>2021-2022 - Audit 2023 - 2025 Implementation</i>	<i>Director, Strategic Planning Committee</i>	<i>Existing budget, grants, shared services</i>
<b>Pillar 3. Growth and Adaptation</b>				
<i>Goal 3.A. Increase Professional Development to highlight new growth areas and increase community engagement.</i>	<i>i. Be Ready! To be the creator of future information exchange through ongoing staff talent development and community planning engagement.</i>	<i>2021 &amp; ongoing</i>	<i>Director, Strategic Planning Committee, Personnel Committee, Finance Committee</i>	<i>Some in place; grants to be explored; shared services to be developed.</i>
	<i>ii. Increase board training &amp; development.</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>Board, Library Director</i>	<i>Existing; NJ State Library Trustee Institute</i>
	<i>iii. Establish community-driven benchmarks to ensure diversity, accessibility, and equity through: - staff development through the community - community access to resources; and - geographic accessibility.</i>	<i>2022 and ongoing</i>	<i>Strategic Planning Committee, Planning Committee.</i>	<i>Existing</i>
<i>Goal 3.B. Expand high-performing programs and develop new services to address community needs.</i>	<i>i. Expand credentials and badging for existing and new certification programs, in partnership with identified community entities.</i>	<i>2022 and ongoing</i>	<i>Director, Planning Committee, Strategic Planning Committee</i>	<i>Existing, Shared Services.</i>
	<i>ii. Optimize use of our innovative learning environments, including makerspace, co-working space, and</i>	<i>2022</i>	<i>Director, Strategic Planning Committee.</i>	<i>Existing, Grants, Shared Services, Additional resources to be determined.</i>

	<i>meeting spaces, to serve as a destination for creative learning</i>			
<i>Goal 3.C. Be Future-Ready and Growth-Minded</i>	<i>i. Promote innovation &amp; access to virtual tools to expand training &amp; certification programs, and career pathways programs throughout age groups for emerging industry needs</i>	<i>2023</i>	<i>Director, Strategic Plan Committee</i>	<i>Existing, Shared Services</i>
	<i>ii. Expand community engagements to empower and transform individuals and the community.</i>	<i>2021 and ongoing</i>	<i>Director, Strategic Planning Committee</i>	<i>Existing, Grants</i>
	<i>iii. Implement best practice models (from examples such as the NYPL, ALA Center for the Future of Libraries) to drive at least one new service line annually.</i>	<i>2022 and ongoing</i>	<i>Director, Strategic Plan Committee</i>	<i>Existing, Grants, Shared services</i>

## APPENDIX B

### SWOT ANALYSIS

#### Strengths:

- Well known in the community
- Community outreach
- Collections and programs targeted specifically towards our community
- Available technology/resources for patrons:
  - Chromebook
  - Wi-fi
  - Mobile hot spot
  - Computers
- Programming and resources for teens
- Accessible, right off Rte 130
- Flexible, varied space options
- Dedicated, passionate & competent staff
- Passionate individuals and board
- Over \$1M budget
- Engaged council and township
- Rich history
- Diversity/representation
- Good communication – input on collections
- Programming – know our customers
- Established community relationships
- Social services coordination
- Confidence in the community
- Standalone independent library
- Access to technology
- Variety of collection
- Customer service policies & training well documented

#### Weaknesses:

- Technology refresh
- Association of libraries with books. Libraries are about information and information access.
- Age & variety of collection
- Lack of (community/public) knowledge of resources and support
- Staff development/expertise.
- Board resistance to exploring alternative funding entities i.e. foundation
- No clear board policy and procedures (ie new board members information packet)
- Lack of succession planning
- Lack of business-driven processes and operations
- Lack of focus on optimizing revenue to offset cost
- Out of scope activities
- Stale/stagnant perspectives
- Updating library website and public information
- More review & updates of policies
- Unclear afterschool programming
- Digital communication in schools – emails & overall communication plan
- General township communication
- Remote access

#### Opportunities:

- External foundation (Friends, etc.) for additional revenue source
- Formal program/partnership with school district:
  - Early Childhood Learning Literacy
- Potential to serve as a knowledge commons hub in the center of a vibrant commercial/retail district
- Expanded audience and participation through partnership for programming and services with community partners (School district, College, senior center, area nonprofits, & businesses)
- Virtual and remote services
- Becoming a full service, connected learning commons.
- Maker movement/makerspace
- Enhancing badging and certification programs
- Monthly training programs (resume writing, technology, etc.)
- Weekly book studies
- New leadership and perspectives
- Shared services with the Township – improving and clarifying roles relative to building operations/maintenance
- Leadership training to gain business insights
- Become a part of BCLS
- Reduce/eliminate out of scope activities
- Research low libraries optimize their budgets
- Remote service delivery

- Technology: security, video games, new computers, software, 3D printers
- Reimagining "Community Days"
- Serve as a central clearinghouse, "safe haven" public space
- Bus trips, community activities
- Drive through service and outreach to homebound
- Food pantry (and related social service activities)

### Threats:

- Reduced funding from local government
- Potential reduction in state funding
- Staffing reductions will impact hours of service to public
- Invisibility and becoming disposable in the eyes of the community
- Expanded scope and visibility of other library systems (especially Burlington County Library System)
- Limited to space-based services.
- Impact of Township budget allocation reduction
- Building aesthetics (marks on walls and tables; spots on floors and ceilings)
- Closing the library
- Limitations of an external funding arm to generate an appropriate amount of money to offset costs
- Burlington County Library
- Inexperienced leaders
- "Often forgotten" as a community resource
- Lack of clarity and responsibility in building operations
- Extreme self sufficiency
- Fear that the board is "not for us" inconsistent sense of board support visible and present
- Lack of clearinghouse for information to those who are disconnected from resources
- Resources limited
- Technology is outdated
- Desperately needed face-to-face services are lacking during remote operations.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Participants**

Board of Trustee Planning Committee:

- Anna Payanzo Cotton, Chair
- Patricia Lindsay-Harvey, Member

Board of Trustees Retreat Participants & Contributors:

- Harry W. Kendall, Board President
- Grover McKenzie, Treasurer
- Dr. Tiffani Worthy, Mayor (Council Liaison)
- Dr. Sharon Rogers, (former) Township Manager
- Dr. Neely Hackett, Superintendent, Willingboro Public Schools
- Corvena Francis-Denton, Trustee

Library Staff Lead by:

- Sandra Cronce, Executive Director
- Susan Hacker, Assistant Director

Surveys from the Friends of Willingboro Public Library lead by:

- Kay Fairchild, President

Community Focus Groups and Surveys