

St. Joseph County
Public Library
South Bend, Indiana

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South Bend, Indiana



Long Range Plan

**A Vision
for the
Beginnings of a New Century**

2000 – 2004

*Approved by
St. Joseph County Public Library Board
On Monday, December 13, 1999*

Vision Statement

*To be recognized as the best public library,
meeting and anticipating the needs and wants
of our community.*

*“You’re going to want a library card
when you see what we have!”*

Responding
to our community's needs,

our Mission is to be
this Community's

Information Literacy
and
Information Access
Center,

Current Topics & Titles
and
Lifelong Learning
Resource,

and its

Commons

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INTRODUCTION

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Why did we plan?

As the world moves rapidly toward an electronic global economy at the beginning of the twenty-first century, an important question confronting communities is how public library services will meet the demands. There is a widening gap between those who know how to survive in this new information rich environment and those who do not. This gap dramatically affects nearly every profession, business, and aspect of our lives. This includes the way we shop and carry out our daily activities, to the way we educate ourselves and our children, conduct our business, communicate and collaborate with others, and use our libraries. The public library is at a crossroads and can play a key role for its community to assist, guide and lead its citizens in every walk of life and at every age level to embrace and flourish in this new milieu.

In January of 1999, as we entered the last year of the library's current five-year plan, we started a year-long process of planning for the beginning years of the next century. Using the Public Library Association's most recent planning process manual, titled *Planning for Results* (published in two volumes by the American Library Association, Chicago, IL, in the summer of 1998), we started with the formation of a task force of approximately 21 people. The task force included staff members, Library Board members, Friends of the Library Board members, and Community leaders, as well as the assistance of a training and development facilitator who had special training with the new PLA planning process. SJCPL is one of the first public libraries in the U. S. to use this new planning process.

What was the process?

Using the steps and worksheets contained in the *Planning for Results* manuals, the Task Force members met nearly every month from January through November, 1999, and completed a series of planning tasks contained in the manual. To summarize, the tasks included developing a **community vision statement** of what the members of the task force believed this community would like to look like ten years from now if all or most of its dreams could be fulfilled. The task force then did a **community scan** to determine the community's **strengths** and **weaknesses** and to identify **needs** and **opportunities** for growth, as well as **threats** to that growth. Based on the community scan, the **community vision statement** was again honed and refined until the task force was in total agreement.

We followed these tasks with a **scan of our library** to determine **its strengths and weaknesses**, looking for **opportunities** as to how the library might be best suited to address some of the community's needs. **Threats** to the library's ability to meet those needs were also considered. The task force then honed a **library vision statement** that related to the community vision and the needs that the public library would be best suited to address. A **library mission statement** was then developed that defined the direction in which the library should move to meet those community needs.

Finally, the eight task force members who represented the staff, joined by seven more key staff members who had not been directly involved in the planning process, went on a two-day retreat to work out specific **library goals, objectives, and strategies (activities)** that would move the library toward *its* vision of helping the community to realize its vision of its future. The staff retreat was also facilitated by Ms. Wiseman. These goals, objectives, and strategies were then brought back to the entire task force for approval before being submitted to the Library Board for final approval at the end of 1999.

Who was involved?

Following the advice of the manuals, the purpose was to have as much input from as many different stakeholders of the Library and the community as we could possibly while keeping the task force productive. Input from community leaders who were very much involved in the planning and direction of the community was critical and was emphasized in PLA's new planning process manual.

The stakeholders who followed this process for nearly a year and developed this new five-year plan included (by grouping and alphabetically by last name) the following:

Task Force Facilitator:

- **Sharon Wiseman**, Training & Development Consultant, of Prospect Heights, IL

Representing Community Leaders:

- **Bruce Bancroft**, Attorney, Barnes & Thornburg
- **Dr. Mark Green**, Dentist in South Bend and Member of SJCPL Friends Board
- **Pete Mullen**, owner of Eckler-Lahey Lumber Co. and President of St. Joseph County Chamber of Commerce
- **Charlotte Pfeifer**, Common Council Member, South Bend, 2nd District, and Professor at IUSB
- **Ernestine Raclin**, former Chairman of the Board, 1st Source Bank and Chairperson of numerous community committees and task forces
- **Rick Rice**, President, Teachers' Credit Union, and resident of Mishawaka, IN
- **Todd Schurz**, Editor and Publisher, *The South Bend Tribune*

Representing the Friends of the St. Joseph County Public Library Board:

- **Dr. Mark Green**, Dentist in South Bend and Member of SJCPL Friends Board
- **Tony Luber**, Attorney, Public Defender; Vice Pres. of SJCPL Friends Board; and member of the Library Board, SJCPL
- **Christine Pochert**, Educator and Public Relations Administrator, South Bend Community School Corporation

Representing the Library Board:

- **Julie Annis**, Educator, Union North United School Corporation, and President of the Library Board (ex officio member of the Task Force)
- **Dr. Robert M. Sweeney**, Pediatrician, President of the SJCPL Board and Member of the Library Board, SJCPL
- **Christyne M. Woolridge**, Educator, South Bend Community School Corporation, and Secretary of the Library Board, SJCPL

Representing the Library Staff:

- **Becky Bahu**, Coordinator of Extension Services (Branches & Special Services)
- **Linda Broyles**, Coordinator of Networking Services
- **Paula Dale**, Branch Librarian, Western Branch
- **Shirley Eger**, Head Clerical, Francis Branch
- **Debra Futa**, Assistant Director, Administration
- **Julia Hill**, Reference Librarian, Main Information & Reference Services
- **Nancy Korpai**, Coordinator of Main Library Public Services
- **Don Napoli**, Director, Administration

Other staff members were very much involved in this planning process. Those who did substantial work in developing the plan included:

For Community Data and Demographic Research:

- **Joyce Hug**, Web Developer Specialist, Networking Resources and Training Services, SJCPL

For the Oakwood 2-Day Planning Retreat held October 21-22, 1999:

The following staff participated in a two-day planning retreat at the Oakwood Inn, Syracuse, Indiana, with the Task Force members representing the staff (listed above) and facilitator Sharon Wiseman. This retreat was to work out the goals, measurable objectives, and practical strategies for the Library Vision and Mission Statements that were developed by the Task Force. These goals, objectives and strategies constitute a major portion of the new long range plan. These staff members included:

- **Linda Conyers**, Area Branch Librarian, Francis Branch
- **Carole Fowler**, Head Clerical, Centre Township Branch
- **Dave Haslett**, Head of Automated Services
- **Shirleen Martens**, Financial Services Administrator
- **Connie Nicely**, Personnel Services Administrator
- **Joe Sipocz**, Head of Adult Reference & Information Services, Main Library
- **Ralph Takach**, Facilities Manager, SJCPL
-

The next section of this document will describe what we developed and are proposing to the Library Board and staff as a working Vision and Mission Statement toward which the library plans to commit its present and future resources and our best energies over the next five years. Your feedback is critical as we try to complete the first full cycle of a continuous, long range planning process. We hope to have your support and approval at the December 13, 1999 Library Board meeting.

A Vision Statement For the South Bend Community

“Vision comes from the heart, not the head. Our purpose in creating the vision is to clarify what we wish to create, knowing all along that we may never get there.” --Peter Block

The SJCPL Long Range Planning Task Force 2000 needed to identify what kind of future the residents of our community would want and how the Library might focus its finite resources on what is most important to these residents. As defined by the planning manual, a vision statement should contain declarations that describe an ideal future. It should consist of six (6) to eight (8) declarative sentences that embody the dreams that the members of the Task Force, as representatives of all the people of the community, have for the place that they, their children, and the residents of the entire community will inhabit in the future.

Borrowing directly from the PLA *Planning for Results* manual, we have tried to include the following elements in each of the following declarations:

- Who will benefit if the ideal state is achieved?
- What benefit they will receive?
- What will result from the benefit?

All the members of the Long Range Planning Task Force have agreed to the following “Community Vision Statement”:

By achieving the following ideals, the South Bend area will ensure a high quality of life in our community. We seek to achieve these ideals through the following community goals:

Statement #1:

“All residents, at various economic levels, will be able to find a variety of adequate housing that is affordable and will be financially able to own their own homes, if they so desire.”

Statement #2:

“Amid continuing cultural and multigenerational diversity, all residents will celebrate each others’ differences, eliminating racial prejudice, discord, and violence.”

Statement #3:

“Equal employment opportunities will be plentiful and will be accessible at all levels.”

Statement #4:

“All residents will share or appreciate strong values and virtues such as mutual respect, fairness, honesty, responsibility, dependability, empathy, compassion, and no resident will be homeless and/or not feel valued.”

Statement #5:

“All residents at various economic levels and all businesses will be able to access and compete effectively in the global economy through the Internet and telecommunications and will be financially solvent and prosperous.”

Statement #6:

“All residents, at various economic levels, will have access to high quality educational services that are affordable and that will prepare themselves and their children for jobs and career opportunities that meet their future needs.”

Statement #7:

“All residents, at various economic levels, will be able to find diverse family cultural activities that meet their needs and expand their knowledge and appreciation of others.”

Statement #8:

“All residents, at various economic levels, will be able to find affordable health care that meets their health needs.”

The Five Critical Community Needs or Obstacles to the Community Vision Identified by the Task Force

What did the Task Force identify as the Community's most critical needs?

While creating the community vision statement, the task force identified the following community needs:

- Improve K-12 education results.
- Improve transportation at all levels, including local and regional.
- Improve intergovernmental cooperation.
- Change in parochial thinking (i.e., white/ black tensions, relationships between county/city government, ethnic groups, religions, schools, police, etc.)
- Prepare for global electronic communications.

How can the Library, with its resources, meet these community needs to help reach the community's vision?

The task force focused on areas of these community needs that could best be incorporated into a library vision statement. The library's vision statement also had to be compatible with the community's vision statement and the community needs identified by the task force.

Key concepts discussed by the task force included the following:

Education

Education was an issue with the task force. The Library supports formal education as well as readiness for formal education. This includes getting the youngest children ready to go to school as well as helping people to continue their education after they finish formal schooling. The real key is lifelong learning and this was an area in which the task force believed very strongly that the Library had a definite role. Education breaks down many of the barriers we face as a community.

Partnerships

While partnerships are not a goal in and of themselves, they help us accomplish our goals. They are becoming more and more a part of everything we do. While many of our partnerships in the past have had more of a direct benefit on the partnering agency, we may begin to look for equality in our partnerships. The time may come when we seek corporate funding for projects that benefit the community at large (this can help with changing parochial thinking and improving government communication).

Global Information Access

This is a direct response to one of the community needs. The Library has a large role here. Even though the manner in which we access information continues to change, we are still the broker or navigator of information needed by the community. Sorting and deciphering information is critical. "Push technology" which would create individualized profiles of what people want to read and what kinds of information they need may be in our future.

The Library as a Gathering Place

Libraries can be destinations in themselves. This concept includes programming, public meetings and re-making our libraries into "fun" places (an essential concept that went into the building program of the Centre Township Branch). Even though futurists predict people will be afraid to leave their houses and will seek information as well as goods and services through their home computers, there is still the need to interact with other people. Libraries can fill a part of that need.

Training

People need to acquire information literacy in order to access the information in our society. Training in how to use our resources will be important, especially in a rapidly changing technological environment.

Marketing

To use Peter Drucker's words: "Marketing is so basic that it cannot be considered a separate function...It is the whole business seen from the point of view of its final result, that is, from the customer's point of view." Using this definition, everything a patron sees, smells, hears or touches in a library is marketing. Marketing then becomes a part of every facility, every service and every employee's job. Over the next five years, the library will make more concentrated efforts to improve our products and services to better meet our customers' needs. We will also pursue increased promotion of library services.

SJCPL's Vision Statement

As the result of the discussions about these key concepts, the task force created the following overall “working” vision statement:

“To be recognized as the best public library, meeting and anticipating the needs and wants of our community!”

What makes a library great? Over time, that question has had a variety of answers for libraries. A hundred years ago, it might have been answered by how many works of great literature a library held. Today, our definition of a great library comes through a combination of people, materials, setting and technology, all operating at peak quality.

For SJCPL to be the best it can be for our community, there will need to be a strong combination of high technology and high touch. All of the elements contained in our service responses will flow into a seamless blend of knowledge, courtesy and friendliness, which will not just meet, but exceed our customers' expectations. In beginning to redefine library services for the next five years, we'll be working toward the kind of quality that transcends traditional library stereotypes and creates a new image of fully integrated services that go the extra mile and ensure that customers keep coming back. Such integration involves everything we do: from creating imaginative and useful physical spaces to inspiring the smile on the face of the three-year-old with his first library card; from providing whatever the latest technology might be to the friendliness of the clerk at the front desk who understands people may be intimidated by that very technology; from acquiring the newest bestsellers to the dedication of branch staff who stay past closing because someone needs to finish a report. These are the images of our future.

In helping inspire dreams, our dream must be that we don't just have a building with books and computers inside. We must create experiences for first time users to make them lifelong users.

“You're going to want a library card when you see what we have!” seemed to be another statement that summed it all up for us.

SJCPL's Mission Statement



From this **vision**, the task force identified **four major areas** where the library could effectively **respond** to the identified needs of the community and concentrate its energies and resources. The following four statements represent **service responses** that comprise the **Mission Statement** of the St. Joseph County Public Library for the years 2000 through 2004:

Information Literacy

“We provide expert training and instruction so that you can use the latest technology to find what you need.”

Current Topics & Titles and Lifelong Learning

“We provide easy access to the most wanted and needed library materials of all types so you can reach your goals and satisfy your whims.”

Commons

“We provide a community gathering place to learn, to meet neighbors, to make new friends, and to have fun.”

General Information

“Whatever information you want, wherever it is, SJCPL, the Best public library anywhere, will find it.”

From these four service responses, the task force members representing the staff, along with seven other representatives of the staff, went on a two-day retreat to work out the goals and objectives for each of these five service responses. After some discussion of possible strategies under each service response, the staff felt that some of the service responses could easily be combined since they tended to generate the same types of objectives and strategies. The result was to combine the four service responses into three service responses, in the following way:

- Information Literacy with Information Access
- Current Topics & Titles with Lifelong Learning; and
- Commons

SJCPL's Service Response

Information Literacy and Information Access

In order for our community to thrive in a future where information is accessed in many ways and technology is increasingly prominent, Information Literacy and Information Access is one of our service responses. This response addresses the need for training and instruction in skills related to locating, evaluating, and using information effectively. Teaching the public to find and evaluate information will be stressed, and we will provide state-of-the art access to information resources.

Goal I

SJCPL will provide state of the art access to a variety of information resources to meet community needs.

Objective Ia

SJCPL will keep abreast of constantly changing technology by allocating 1% of the personnel budget to ongoing staff development.

Sample activity: Mandated debriefing sessions after every major conference (ex. ALA, PLA), open to all staff.

Objective Ib

By December 2002, SJCPL will provide a range of resources that effectively cover the information needs of the community, and provide state-of-the-art access to these resources.

Sample activity: Establish standing committee to assess current resources and research new ones.

Sample activity: Continue to upgrade 1/3 of our computer equipment per year.

Objective Ic

By December 2003, patron surveys (via kiosk, oral interviews, focus groups, etc.) will reflect a 90% satisfaction rate with our information resources.

Sample activity: Establish base rate of satisfaction during 2000.

Goal II

We will have an information literate community whose members are skilled in locating, evaluating, and using information effectively.

Objective IIa

By December 2002, no one will be turned away from information literacy training sessions, and the overall program will be comprehensive.

Sample activity: The staff providing information literacy training will include all public service professionals and paraprofessionals.

Objective IIb

By December 2002, SJCPL will develop measures to evaluate and improve patron searching effectiveness.

Sample activity: Contact SLIS at Indiana University for strategies.

Sample activity: Evaluate public catalog search reports and add cross references to increase searching effectiveness.

Objective IIc

By December 2003, the community will know that SJCPL is the place to go for excellent training and instruction in locating, evaluating, and using information effectively.

Sample activity: Have IUSB do an independent survey of users, non-users, and businesses by Fall of 2000, to establish baseline statistics for "name recognition."

Goal III

Skilled staff will provide accurate and reliable information and reference service, and public training in the use of information resources.

Objective IIIa

SJCPL will develop a customer service staff orientation/training profile and plan, to be approved by the Library Board in December 2000 and implemented in 2001-2004.

Sample activity: Mandate regularly scheduled ongoing customer service orientation and training sessions for all staff.

Objective IIIb

SJCPL will develop a staff technology assessment/training profile and plan, to be approved by the Library Board in December 2000 and implemented in 2001-2004.

Sample activity: Mandate regularly scheduled ongoing technology training and skills assessment for all staff.

SJCPL's Service Response

Current Topics & Titles and Lifelong Learning

The Current Topics & Titles service response will help fulfill the community residents' appetite for information about popular culture and social trends and their desire for satisfying recreational experiences.

The Lifelong Learning service response helps address the desire for self-directed personal growth and development opportunities for all community residents. While Lifelong Learning applies to people of all ages, special efforts will be made to encourage specific groups to use library resources to support their formal and informal learning.

Goal I

The Library is a resource that supports the educational/learning efforts of all community members to stimulate their interests, to explore imaginative possibilities, and to pursue their dreams.

Objective Ia

By 2004 the Library will serve ____% of the population in defined groups, measured by the number of card holders and program attendance.

Sample activity: Determine current library demographics by defined groups. Compare total demographics in age groups in our service area. Consider where the gaps may be. Explore the possibility of using census data to ensure the Library is reaching a diverse population.

Objective Ib

User satisfaction by predefined group will increase to 90% by 2004.

Sample activity: We will examine usage statistics and conduct annual focus groups from all predetermined groups, or target one group per year throughout this planning cycle, to determine user satisfaction with Library services, collections, and programs.

Goal II

Community members will have easy access to information in a variety of formats that will enlighten and inform them about current issues and topics and popular culture.

Objective IIa

Patron waiting time (for information, materials, checkout) will be reduced by ____% by 2004.

Sample activities: Determine current waiting times as a baseline measurement. Streamline checkout process.

Objective IIb

Increase usage of the SJCPL Hotlist by _____ hits per month by 200____.

Sample activities: Actively promote Hotlist to all users. Establish a "What's New & Current" spot on our web site.

Objective IIc

Increase circulation of new material by 1% each year by 2004.

Sample activities: Determine baseline circulation of new material during 2000. Conduct monthly Readers Advisory staff meetings. Promote NoveList use. Displays will reflect hot/current topics. Develop an Intranet "Current Topics" hotline

SJCPL's Service Response

Commons

A library that provides a COMMONS environment helps address the need of people to meet and interact with others in their community. This includes community participation or attendance at library programs and events, use of meeting rooms by community groups, and the use of the library as a gathering place for enjoyment or fun. We believe that providing a commons environment also includes offering a variety of spaces such as cafés, hands-on children's activity spaces, presentation spaces, videoconferencing or teleconferencing capabilities, and warm and inviting spaces for conversation and discussion.

Goal I

SJCPL will become a safe community destination to learn, to exchange information, to meet neighbors, to make new friends, and to have fun.

Objective Ia

____% of people using the library will indicate via survey or interview that they use the library as a destination;

Sample activity: Evaluate library surveys for results.

Objective Ib

100% of SJCPL staff will be trained in security and safety procedures within 3 months of employment.

Sample activity: Develop training program and schedule for training new staff.

Objective Ic

100% of SJCPL staff will receive at least one follow-up session per year on security or safety procedures.

Sample activity: Develop a range of programs dealing with security and safety issues and require attendance to at least one program per year.

Goal II

SJCPL provides a variety of inviting and technologically equipped, accessible meeting room spaces so that community members have a place to gather.

Objective IIa.

SJCPL will accept bookings from at least 90% of the groups requesting meetings.

Sample activity: Using statistics gathered from Objective 1a, evaluate % of refusals and why groups have been turned down. Revise meeting room policy to provide more flexibility in the Library's ability to accommodate groups.

Objective IIb

SJCPL will serve at least _____ people in our service area through their attendance at a public meeting or program.

Objective IIc

SJCPL will increase the number of meetings system-wide by _____%.

Sample activity: Promote meeting room space to the community. Develop promotional material to be used for a Chamber of Commerce distribution.

Objective IId

_____ % of the people attending meetings will indicate that they were satisfied with the rooms and that the space met their needs.

Sample activity: Use comment cards to evaluate meeting rooms for attractiveness, flexibility and usefulness. Wire all meeting rooms to accommodate technology.

Goal III

SJCPL provides diverse spaces to facilitate a variety of activities that meet the needs of our community.

Objective IIIa

Through observation conducted annually, SJCPL will determine what and how library spaces are being used.

Sample activity: Hire or train staff to use observation, which will be used to evaluate library facilities for ease of use, general attractiveness and accessibility.

Objective IIIb

Through staff journals and logs, SJCPL will track customer comments concerning library facilities.

Sample activity: Analyze logs for patterns which would aid in redesigning library spaces. Use data to make library spaces more attractive and functional.

Sample activities: Determine baseline circulation of new material during 2000. Displays will reflect hot/current topics.