

JANUARY 1, 2022



Lower Providence
Community Library
LIBRARIES GROW COMMUNITIES

Strategic Plan 2022-2026

The Lower Providence
Community Library
50 Parklane Drive
Eagleville, PA 19403
Phone: 610-666-6640

www.lowerprovidencelibrary.org

Executive Summary

The Lower Providence Community Library has been actively serving Lower Providence Township residents for nearly thirty years. It is a living collection of information and provides educational, social and cultural programs and services for adults, families, students, and working professionals. Like the community the library serves, it grows and changes over time.

In 2022, the Lower Providence Community Library will begin to implement a five-year strategic plan based on the findings of a year-long planning and community needs assessment process. The strategic plan is designed to respond to new and emerging community trends and improve the Library's quality of service to Lower Providence Township while maintaining its commitment to being good stewards of the public's resources and trust.

In response to community demand, social and demographic trends, and emerging technologies, the Lower Providence Community Library Strategic Plan 2022-2026 establishes an exciting vision for the library's future. The Library's vision is to be a center of culture, intellect and learning in Lower Providence Township. To achieve this vision, the Library will continue to fulfill its mission of providing the highest quality library services to its patrons, including materials, resources, and services that meet community needs for education, recreation, technology, and enrichment. In addition, the Library will focus on creating opportunities for community members to use the Library as an essential gathering place, a haven for quiet study, and a portal for discovery. This vision will be achieved through the successful completion of the goals identified in the Library's strategic plan:

*The Library is a
cultural and
intellectual center of
Lower Providence
Township.*

- Persistently improve the library user experience.
- Develop and maintain a collection responsive to the needs and interest of the community.
- Develop programming that reflects the Lower Providence Township community and the patronage of the Lower Providence Community Library
- Expand and reconfigure library space to reflect the growth of the Lower Providence Township Community and the broadened role of the library.
- Strengthen the library position as a part of the Lower Providence Township community.

Given its commitment to excellence, strong leadership, record of success and enthusiastic community support, the Library is well-positioned to achieve its vision and fulfill its mission for the benefit of all Lower Providence Township residents. The Library

invites all community residents and patrons to get involved in helping accomplish the goals set forth in its strategic plan for 2022-2026.

Section One: Library Profile

NOTE: This profile contains statistics from both 2019 and 2020. In 2020 the world was hit with a Global Pandemic which greatly impacted the way society, and the library functions. During that year the library worked to continue to provide service for patrons in new creative ways. Because of this shift in how we serve our community there were also changes in attendance levels, circulation levels, and how the library maintained funding. These differences are all reflected in the below statistics for 2020, which can be compared to 2019.

At the time of this writing, November 2021, the library has been open for full browsing and service for the majority of 2021. Each month the library has been able to expand hours and programming as the community returns to a more normal lifestyle living within the confines of Covid-19. By the end of 2021, the library expects to be close to our 2019 circulation, attendance and programming statistics, with full intention to return to pre-Covid hours in 2022.

Mission

The Lower Providence Community Library provides the highest quality library services to its patrons of all ages. The materials, resources, services and facility meet community needs for education, recreation, technology, and cultural enrichment.

Vision

Lower Providence Community Library is an essential gathering place; a center of culture, intellect and technology; and a portal for discovery of information and enlightenment for its community.

Membership

The Lower Providence Community Library primarily serves Lower Providence Township and surrounding communities, and is open to all. In 2019, the Library had approximately 10,050 active members and in 2020 10,250 active members. Lower Providence Community Library cards are available to anyone who resides or pays property taxes in Lower Providence Township. A Library card entitles members to use most other Pennsylvania public libraries through the ACCESS PA program. Items can be checked out and/or returned at any of these libraries.

In addition, the Library participates in the Montgomery County Library and Information Network Consortium (MCLINC), allowing Library members to search and request materials online from any participating library in the county.

Board of Trustees, Staff, and Volunteers

The Library is governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees, which is appointed by the Township Board of Supervisors. A full-time library director heads a staff of two full-time and 17 part-time employees, as well as volunteers, who serve during the library's 60 hours of operation per week.

The Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Lower Providence Community Library is a nonprofit organization that has a three-fold mission:

- Support the growth of the Library's collection through fundraising activities specifically earmarked toward the purchase of books and reference materials.
- Sponsor programs of community interest to all age groups.
- Act as advocates and community liaisons on the library's behalf.

Since its incorporation in 1995, The Friends of the Lower Providence Community Library has raised approximately \$300,000. Each year the Friends of the Library donate an average of \$10,000 to the library which helps fund programming and collections available to patrons. The Teen Advisory Board, an arm/division of the Friends of the Lower Providence Community Library, is a group of young adults who help plan and assist with Library programs and events.

Financial Information

2019

The Library's annual operating budget for 2019 was approximately \$767,500. The Library depends on Lower Providence Township as its largest single source of support. In 2019, the township provided approximately \$550,000 in operating funds from property tax revenue. Due to the large investment made by the Township, and because the Library meets all current PA library standards, these local funds were leveraged to bring in an additional \$71,291 in state funding from Pennsylvania in 2019.

2020

The Library's annual operating budget for 2020 was approximately \$740,000. The Library depends on Lower Providence Township as its largest single source of support. In 2020, the township provided approximately \$560,000 in operating funds from property tax revenue. Due to the large investment made by the Township, and because the Library meets all current PA library standards, these local funds were leveraged to bring in an additional \$77,835 in state funding from Pennsylvania in 2020.

In 2020 the library received additional grants and loans due to the Covid-19 pandemic that began in March of 2020. These funds included \$89,740 from the Pay Roll

Protection Plan, a federal loan to support small business payroll; \$7,000 from the Pennsylvania Humanities Council to help pay for expenses accrued due to the pandemic and \$30,000 in MontCo Strong grant funds, designated for non-profits in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania to help defray operational costs in the year 2020. All of these additional funding opportunities were onetime events in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic and were restricted to specific use; they were not considered part of the library's 2020 general operating budget.

Facilities

The Library has one facility, located at 50 Parklane Drive in Eagleville, Pennsylvania. Built in 1996, the two-story, 11,760 square foot building houses all of the Library's collections, programs and services, equipment, and staff. Forty-two parking spaces are available outside the Library. The Library is open seven days a week year-round, except during the summer when it is closed on Sundays.

Library Usage

On March 12, 2020 the Governor of Pennsylvania closed all non-essential businesses until June 8, 2020. During that time the Lower Providence Community Library was unable to serve patrons in person, but built a strong online presence and continued to loan materials through online resources. When the library re-opened in June 2020, it was for curbside pick-up only, which continued for the duration of the year, with limited in building browsing in September through November. Due to these restrictions the libraries circulation and patron attendance was impacted.

Library attendance in 2019 averaged 15,535 individuals per month and 7,832 in 2020. Circulation averaged 19,313 items per month or 635 items per day in 2019. In 2020 circulation averaged 11,390 items per month or 374 items per day. During 2020 the library increased its digital circulation by 29% from 2019.

Collections

As of December 31, 2019, the Library's collection included 51,553 physical items; The physical collection available at the library includes the following items:

- Print materials – Adult, teen, and children's fiction, nonfiction, periodicals, and reference materials (44,710 items)
- Electronic Media – DVDs, music on CD, audiobooks, preloaded digital videos (6,823 items)

As of December 31, 2020, the Library's collection included 51,363 physical items; The physical collection available at the library includes the following items:

- Print materials – Adult, teen, and children’s fiction, nonfiction, periodicals, and reference materials (44,721 items)
- Electronic Media – DVDs, music on CD, audiobooks, preloaded digital videos (6,642 items)

The Lower Providence Community Library also provides access to over 50,000 digital books, audiobooks, and magazines to digital content through the following e-resources:

- Digital collections of ebooks, audiobook, magazines, music, television and movies through Overdrive Advantage and Hoopla digital
- Electronic Resources, for reference use and online learning, available to Lower Providence residents include World Book Online, LearningExpress Library, Delaware Valley Consumer Reports, Morningstar Investment Research Center, ConsumerReports, Gale Virtual Reference Library.

In addition, library users had access to these electronic resources provided through Montgomery County Library District and Commonwealth Libraries:

- Electronic resources available to Montgomery County residents – OverDrive downloadable ebooks, audiobooks and magazines, Reference USA, Mango Languages, Ancestry.com, Tumblebooks, and Booklist.
- Electronic resources available to Pennsylvanians through Access PA POWER Library – access to thousands of full text periodical articles, newspapers, photographs, medical information, general reference, auto repair and more, for all age groups.

Programs and Services

The Library offers a variety of programs and services to the community. Programs include educational classes, book clubs, technology instruction, cultural presentations, special events, and early literacy programs, on a regular basis to adults, teens, and children. The Library offers patrons a number of services including:

- On-site Internet and computer access
- Interlibrary loan
- Reference service
- Fax service
- Proctor service
- Comfortable space to read and study
- Meeting rooms
- Self-service photocopying
- AskHerePA 24/7 online live reference service

Information Technology

The Library provides the following information technology:

- Internet access via Library computer workstations or wireless access for patrons' own portable computing devices
- Nine desktop workstations and three laptop workstations equipped with Microsoft Office, Internet and other software, an Early Literacy Station and 2 desktop computers dedicated to accessing the Library's catalogue

Section Two: Methodology

In 2021, the Library Board began the process of gathering information to write a new strategic plan for the next five years for the Lower Providence Community Library. A Strategic Planning Committee comprised of Library Trustees and the Library Director oversaw the project and information gathering in order to provide a strategic plan that reflects the will and judgment of the community. The *Lower Providence Community Library Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026* articulates an institutional vision for the Library's future and establishes a set of relevant, measurable goals and objectives to guide the organization in pursuit of this vision and its mission over the next five years.

The strategic planning process was organized into two stages:

1. Community needs/visioning assessment
2. Goal setting

Strategic Planning Committee

Karen Stine, Committee Chair, Board President

Tejal Mehta, Board Vice President

Florence Li-Maldonado, Trustee at Large

Marija L. Skoog, Library Director

Community Needs Assessment

In the summer of 2021 the Strategic Planning Committee released a Patron Survey to gather information on who is using the library, how they are using the library and how the library can better serve the community. The Patron Survey was distributed to the public using the library's email distribution list, Social Media outlets including Facebook and Instagram, and physical marketing (bookmarks, posters and the township newsletter) which included a QR code for easy internet access. Access to the survey was open from July 2021 through the beginning of October.

The data and findings of the visioning survey were used to guide the Library's Board of Trustees and Library Director in setting strategic goals and making informed decisions

regarding the allocation of resources and the development of programs, services, and infrastructure improvements. The following methods were used to build the goals and measurable objectives found in this plan:

- A community-wide survey to which 530 community members responded;
- Staff Discussions on the needs of the staff and patrons, all staff members were also encouraged to complete the vision survey;
- Discussion among Library Board members;
- External secondary research on trends in the public library sector; and,
- Internal review of the Library's operations, facility, and collections.

Key findings from the visioning survey and focus groups were used to inform the goal setting stages of the strategic planning process. These findings appear in the next section of the strategic plan (Section 3, "Context for Planning").

Visioning

The Patron Survey, staff recommendations, and discussion among the board members, formed a consensus that the library will continue to be a cultural and intellectual center of Lower Providence Township. The primary goal of the next 5 years, will be to support and represent the growing and diverse community of Lower Providence. This Strategic Plan reflects the wants and needs of the community in regards to physical space, collections and programming.

Board of Trustees

Karen Stine, President
Tejal Mehta, Vice President
Arthur Miller, Secretary
Nancy Klein, Treasurer
Shannon Chase
Florence Li-Maldonado
Ben Simkin

Section Three: Context for Planning Decisions

Patron Survey 2021

Planning decisions were driven by the requests of Lower Providence Township residents and Library patrons. The Lower Providence Community Library *Patron Survey 2021* explored the future library-related needs of Lower Providence Township. The survey, staff input and discussions with the Board of Trustees indicated the needs of the community of the present and future with recommendations for five major strategic

issues for the Library's future growth and continued development as a cultural institution.

Key Findings

The survey yielded several key findings, including:

Overall Satisfaction

- Most patrons desire the enhancement and expansion of the Library's current programs, services, and collections rather than a radical shift in the Library's mission and core operations
- Opportunities exist to improve customer service and communications

The Lower Providence Community Library is part of the community

- The Township population is growing and Library usage is increasing
- The Library is a community center and should be recognized as such
- Additional coordination between local schools, museums and/or historical centers, and the township is desirable
- All library patrons have a greater need for Library materials and services to help them learn and conduct research

Programming, Services, and Collections Needs

- Provide programming that reflects the diversity of Lower Providence Township and the patrons of the library
- More hands-on programs for all ages focusing on technology related areas, and for varying age groups
- Increase the collection, specifically digital collections and online services, to continue to support the increased use due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Increased staff training, specifically computer related, to better assist patrons both in the library and over the phone

Library patrons are very satisfied with the Library's current programs, services, and collections.

Library as Place

- More indoor seating and addition of outdoor seating with accessible Wi-Fi for patrons to work, study and read.
- Larger space to accommodate library programs
- Larger work areas for computers.
- Expanded and separate children's area and Friends of the Library Book sale.

Section Four: Strategic Goals and Objectives 2022 – 2026

PHYSICAL SPACE

Goal 1: Reconfigure the Library space to meet community growth and needs

Objective 1: Expansion/Renovation of the current library location at 50 Parklane Drive			
Strategies/Tactics	Responsible	Timeframe	Resources/notes
Define the spatial needs of the library in terms of collections, patron spaces and staff spaces to create renovation goals.			
Engage professionals (planner, architect, engineer) to help draft an expansion plan for the library based on the spatial needs defined in part 1			
Work with Lower Providence Township on what is feasible land and space wise for renovation and expansion.			
Objective 2: Staff Needs			
Strategies/Tactics	Responsible	Timeframe	Resources/notes
Create larger more distinct staff areas including offices, staff bathroom, and break room			
Increase storage space for staff use for collections, programming and general library needs			
Staff Growth: potentially add more staff to accommodate expanded building and programming			
Objective 3: Creation of Separate Children's Area and Friends Book Sale			
Strategies/Tactics	Responsible	Timeframe	Resources/notes
Separate the Friends book sale from the Children's Section creating two distinct areas.			

Addition of a new Children's programming room for story times and programs with included storage for all programming materials.			
Expand/Separate the children's section to add shelving for additional items and create a space specifically for children in the library			
Objective 4: Additional in library seating for reading, studying and work, as well as an outdoor area for patrons and library programming			
Strategies/Tactics	Responsible	Timeframe	Resources/notes
Create an outdoor space (patio with awning and seating) for patrons to utilize with electric and Wi-Fi off the children's side beside the barn			
Create more seating for patrons throughout the library including comfortable reading chairs, as well as tables for patrons to work independently			
Update all of the current furnishings throughout the library with new upholstery and more modern finishes			

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Goal 2: Develop and maintain a collection responsive to the needs and interests of the community

Objective 1: eBooks and digital collections			
Strategies/Tactics	Responsible	Timeframe	Resources/notes
Increase the number of books available through Overdrive/Libby through purchasing more items for the LPCL Advantage account			
Research and potentially offer other online resources such as Kanopy, Cloud and other available resources			
Objective 2: Diversify collections			

Strategies/Tactics	Responsible	Timeframe	Resources/notes
Create opportunities to engage patrons in what materials they want in the library collection. Create engagement options in the library and online.			
Review the current non-fiction collections and identify topics that are lacking and those that are over developed to create well rounded collections.			

Objective 3: Increase availability of physical items for patron access			
Strategies/Tactics	Responsible	Timeframe	Resources/notes
Increase the physical book collection across all reading levels			
Curate a Library of Things for patrons to check out nontraditional library materials, including increased Museum passes			

PROGRAMMING

Goal 3: Expand and develop programming that reflects the demographics and interests of Lower Providence

Residents

Objective 1: Host regular cultural activities such as performances, speakers, and exhibits that reflect the diversity of our community and emerging areas of interests.			
Strategies/Tactics	Responsible	Timeframe	Resources/notes
Host events highlighting important cultural/religious festivals; music performances, art exhibits, and guest authors.			
Host TEDx type lectures on scientific, historical and cultural topics.			

Integrate cultural story times and programs for children that reflect the diversity of the community. Ensure that ALL children can see themselves reflected at the library			
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Objective 2: Curate programming to meet the needs of our evolving age demographics			
Strategies/Tactics	Responsible	Timeframe	Resources/notes
Offer life skills classes such Personal Finance, Adulting, Doing a Job Search, Preparing Simple Meals, etc. for our teen, young adult patrons and older patrons			
Host programming that is accessible to all patrons including those with special needs. Programming can include but is not limited to fitness and lifestyle classes, gaming groups, craft classes and writing groups.			
Offer technology classes focusing on computer literacy, current tech trends and cyber security intended for senior citizens			

Objective 3: General programming needs			
Strategies/Tactics	Responsible	Timeframe	Resources/notes
Increase frequency of programming, adult, teen and children's, to accommodate all schedules. i.e. additional regular programming in the evenings for those who work and cannot attend morning and afternoon			
Upgrade available technology in the community room to elevate the level of programs and classes that can be offered			This is a great grant opportunity to upgrade our community room technology
Continue to offer Zoom program options and provide streaming of in-person programming for those unable to attend.			

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Goal 4: Strengthen the library position as a part of the Lower Providence Township community.

Objective 1: Advance and improve the relationship between the Township and the library.			
Strategies/Tactics	Responsible	Timeframe	Resources/notes
Create open channels of communication between the library and the township.			
Communicate with the Township Supervisors and township staff on “Happenings” at the library, potentially collaborating on a community calendar			Cut down on duplicate programming, and promote the role of the library in the community

Objective 2: Continue to develop our relationships with local business, schools and other non-profits			
Strategies/Tactics	Responsible	Timeframe	Resources/notes
Work with Methacton School District to develop collections, programs and relationships to reflect the school curriculum.			May be a good place to help develop relationships with immigrant communities in LP Township
Participate in the Local Business Association and Non-Profit Organizations to create local relationships and increase visibility within the business community			
Identify local associations, places of worship and ethnic education centers to help reach out to and develop relationships with immigrant communities			

Objective 3: Strengthen the training, knowledge and customer service of staff to better serve patrons			
Strategies/Tactics	Responsible	Timeframe	Resources/notes
Instate a staff in-service day for staff to participate in training and promote staff unity.			Possibility to work with other libraries in the county for a larger in-service day that would be more comprehensive
Identify areas of staff weakness and set up appropriate training options for staff to better assist patrons. Maybe necessary outside of in-service day	Director, head of Circulation	Ongoing	Initial focus on computer training to better help patrons with the computers.

Section Five: Implementation

Implementation Guidelines

The Lower Providence Community Library's Strategic Plan is a management tool to guide the work of the Board of Trustees, management and staff to develop effective programs, make better management and financial decisions, evaluate performance, and increase the value of the organization to its constituents.

The Board designates the Strategic Planning Committee of the Board to evaluate progress on an ongoing basis. Ideally, every Board and staff member will be involved in helping to achieve one or more of the strategic goals in the plan.

Board Responsibilities

- Championing the strategic plan
- Fundraising to support the strategic plan and related capacity-building initiatives
- Providing guidance and support to staff
- Evaluating progress on a quarterly basis

Staff Responsibilities

- Championing the strategic plan
- Integrating strategic goals and objectives into programs and services
- Evaluating progress on an annual basis

Section Six: Evaluation

Evaluation Guidelines

The Library's Board of Trustees is responsible for monitoring and evaluating progress on implementation of the Strategic Plan. Evaluation guidelines include the following:

- Conduct evaluations on a quarterly basis
- Be responsive to community feedback.
- Document achievements and completion of goals within the Strategic Plan
- Terminate strategies (and programs) that are not working. Think of termination as part of a cycle of change for the better

Evaluation Questions

1. What have we achieved in the last evaluation period?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this strategy?
3. What changes could we make to improve this strategy?

4. Based on the answers to these questions, should this strategy be: 1) maintained, 2) revised or, 3) replaced?

Quarterly Review

- Convene quarterly strategic planning review meeting of the strategic planning committee to assess on-going progress. This will allow the organization to build on its successes, identify challenges or barriers to the implementation of specific goals or objectives, and have the flexibility to alter the Strategic Plan to reflect changes in the organization's operating environment.
- In 2026, begin preparations for the next strategic planning cycle to commence the following year.