



STRATEGIC PLAN

2016 – 2018

Adopted January 27, 2016

Extended through June 30, 2020

(WRL Board of Trustees, 10/30/19)

WILLIAMSBURG REGIONAL LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2018

Executive Summary

The Williamsburg Regional Library (WRL) began our fourth strategic planning process in March of 2015. The 2016-2018 Strategic Plan is an update of the library's 2012-2015 plan; it includes refreshed Mission and Vision statements, new Strategic Priorities, redefined Core Functions, and clear connections to the library's Financial Framework. The Strategic Plan Steering Committee worked with BERK Consulting to review the 2012-2015 plan and gather input from library staff members, key stakeholders, and the community as a whole.

This information served as a foundation for the Strategic Priorities and Core Function updates. The Strategic Priorities for 2016-2018 are: 1) Strengthening community connections and partnerships; 2) Communicating and raising awareness; and 3) Rethinking library spaces. In addition, BERK and WRL worked together to develop the 2016-2018 Financial Framework, which serves as a bridge between our Strategic Plan and our annual budgeting and decision-making processes.

The Williamsburg Regional Library continues to benefit from the support of our funding jurisdictions and the loyalty of our users. The new Priorities and updated Core Functions will allow the library to continue to provide excellent collections, programs, services, and facilities that fulfill the needs and expectations of our community.

Genevieve S. Owens
Library Director

William C. Porter, Jr.
Chair, Library Board of Trustees

Introduction

The Williamsburg Regional Library's 2016-2018 Strategic Plan builds on the library's three previous strategic plans (2002-2005, 2006-2010, and 2012-2015). The updates to the Mission and Vision statements in the 2016-2018 plan clarify the library's role in the community and set clear goals for the library. Along with the Core Values, the library's Mission and Vision provide the foundation from which all library activities flow.

In the course of developing the plan, strategic plan workgroups examined community demographics and library use data; surveyed community members, library staff members, and stakeholders; and developed a planning context that lays out the assumptions on which the plan is built. More information on the planning process can be found on page 12.

The library's Strategic Priorities and the new strategies outlined in the library's Core Functions are based on the Mission, Vision, and Core Values, and give library users, staff members, boards, and funding agencies a clear indication of the organization's plans for the coming three years.

Mission

The Williamsburg Regional Library informs, enriches, and strengthens our community. The City of Williamsburg, James City County, and York County value our work and fund the Library as a basic service for their residents.

Vision

The Williamsburg Regional Library provides excellent collections, programs, services, and facilities that fulfill our community's needs and expectations.

Core Values

We value all residents in our community.

Each resident will receive the best library service possible. Everyone will be treated with courtesy and respect. We value community input on collections, programs, services, and facilities.

We value ethical and fiscally responsible stewardship of public resources.

Each Williamsburg Regional Library Trustee and staff member is a steward of the public trust. All Trustees and staff members exercise prudence with library resources.

We value our staff.

An excellent library requires a talented, well-trained, and knowledgeable staff. The Williamsburg Regional Library provides opportunities for continuing education and training for all staff members. The library offers a positive workplace culture.

We value working collaboratively with groups in our community.

Collaboration with community organizations helps the library achieve our Vision and fulfill the needs and expectations of all community residents.

We value a literate community.

All forms of literacy are crucial to the life of our community. The Williamsburg Regional Library promotes literacy through collections, programs, services, and collaboration with schools and community organizations.

We value privacy.

The Williamsburg Regional Library supports freedom of speech and users' right to select the information appropriate for their needs. Users' borrowing records are confidential and protected from disclosure by Virginia law.

Planning Context

This section describes the circumstances shaping the plan update and provides helpful context for the update to be fully understood. For the complete Situation Assessment, refer to the Appendix.

Demographics

- Population trends in greater Williamsburg are similar to those identified in the 2012-2015 Strategic Plan. All localities continued to see a population increase from the 2010 Census.
- One new statistic that may be of interest to the library's planning is the increased percentage of households where a language other than English is spoken at home in both the City of Williamsburg and York County.
- All three jurisdictions saw increases in the number of individuals living below the poverty level between 2010 and 2013.

Assumptions

User needs and preferences.

- Users will continue to expect excellent library collections, programs, services, and facilities.
- User demand for digital content will continue to grow, as will the expectation for library communication through social media.
- Users will continue to expect library staff members to provide personal service and assistance with technology.

Funding and support.

- The City of Williamsburg, James City County, and York County will renew the contract for library services which currently runs through June 30, 2018. All three jurisdictions will continue to fund the Williamsburg Regional Library for their residents.
- The library will be affected by changes in the administration of our funding jurisdictions as well as those localities' strategic plans.
- The Friends of Williamsburg Regional Library and the Williamsburg Regional Library Foundation will continue to provide non-budgeted resources that allow the library to achieve and maintain the margin of excellence that residents expect from the library.
- The library will continue to collaborate with local businesses, nonprofits, and community organizations.

Resource constraints.

- The library will make the most of our existing buildings (including the Stryker Center) for users and staff members. The library will not pursue a new stand-alone building during this plan's time frame.
- Local governments' ability to fund capital improvements will affect our ability to rework our space.
- The library card policy is likely to remain the same.
- The library will continue to repurpose staff vacancies to address our most compelling priorities. Given our limited resources, we may have to cut back in some areas so we can expand in other directions.

2016-2018 Strategic Priorities

The Williamsburg Regional Library (WRL) is focused on three Strategic Priorities for the 2016-2018 timeframe.

1. Strengthening community connections and partnerships.

WRL has a strong, successful, and long-running tradition of working with community partners. Building on this firm foundation, WRL will identify where in the community the library will lead, partner, or support. Given the need to prioritize our efforts, there may be some areas that are not a good fit for the library and where we choose not to be involved at this time. By making these choices, WRL can clarify expectations of the library for staff, community members, and the library's Board of Trustees. WRL's Mission, Vision, and Core Values, and WRL staff members' strengths, skills, and expertise will inform this process.

2. Communicating and raising awareness.

It will be critically important for WRL to continue to make residents aware of our role in the community and the value we bring. We will focus staff time and financial resources on evaluating current communication tools and processes and on strengthening and improving the library's communication efforts. This ongoing effort will involve library staff members, the Trustees, and the boards of the Williamsburg Regional Library Foundation and the Friends of Williamsburg Regional Library working together to build awareness of WRL's collections, programs, services, and facilities.

3. Rethinking library spaces.

WRL has three physical spaces to serve the community: the James City County Library, the Williamsburg Library, and the Stryker Center. Each one offers unique potential to provide excellent collections, programs, and services. These facilities need to work as one in order to achieve excellence, reflect good stewardship, and fulfill community needs and expectations. The opening of the Stryker Center offers new options for Williamsburg Regional Library programming. Using professional judgment, knowledge of best practices, and information gained from experience with users, WRL will evaluate the spaces available at the Williamsburg and James City County libraries to ensure that these spaces balance the community's interest in collections (physical and digital) with an interest in spaces in which to create, discover, and engage.

Core Functions

Core Functions are the critical elements that support the library’s Mission, Vision, and Core Values. The 2016-2018 Strategic Priorities, and other timely opportunities or needs, will guide the implementation strategies within these Core Functions. The library will continue to build upon our reputation for excellence in collections, programs, services, and facilities.

The table below summarizes how the library’s three priorities for 2016-2018 will be advanced through the five operational Core Functions presented on the following pages.

		Core Functions				
		 Service	 Collections	 Programs	 Facilities	 Operations
Strategic Priorities	Strengthening community connections and partnerships.	✓	✓	✓		
	Communicating and raising awareness.	✓		✓		✓
	Rethinking library spaces.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Provide excellent service.



We will continue to:

- Put users' needs and expectations first.
- Treat all users with courtesy and respect.
- Provide service to users outside library buildings.

We will implement new strategies to:

- Determine the right role for the library in serving users with specific needs, identifying where to lead, partner, or support.
- Evaluate service to user groups such as:
 - Youth and families.
 - People needing to build technology skills to access both library resources and information.
 - Readers, viewers, and listeners who use the library's collections.
 - Local government and business.
 - Newcomers to the community.
- Explore options for delivering outreach services electronically.

Provide excellent collections.



We will continue to:

- Ensure collections are up-to-date, reflect local interests, circulate, and are available in formats that fulfill users' needs and expectations.
- Enhance collection access and use through technology.

We will implement new strategies to:

- Tie the selection and retention of materials to community needs and interests.
- Review the model for collection development and maintenance for all library collections.
- Explore ways to increase access to library collections through the library's public school partnership.
- Develop our offerings of digital content.



Provide excellent programs.

We will continue to:

- Offer programs that advance the library's function as a center for the community.
- Emphasize programs for youth and families.
- Develop teen-focused programming.
- Offer programs for all ages through outreach.

We will implement new strategies to:

- Increase adult programming that informs, enriches, and strengthens the community.
- Build on our strong reputation for providing excellent programs for all ages to make the most of the opportunities that present themselves over the course of this plan.



Provide excellent facilities.

We will continue to:

- Maintain clean, attractive, and safe library facilities.
- Ensure that meeting spaces and the Williamsburg Library Theatre are well maintained, equipped with appropriate technology, and available to all groups.
- Ensure that library vehicles are reliable and equipped to provide efficient, effective service.

We will implement new strategies to:

- Leverage our experience with library users and usage data to inform a phased Master Plan for the Williamsburg Regional Library. We anticipate taking full advantage of opportunities presented by the Stryker Center, and the decreasing need for space for reference materials, magazines, and public access computers. We will use these opportunities to rethink the library's physical spaces, and open them up to the public for gathering, reading, quiet study, and tutoring.

Provide for excellence in daily operations.



We will continue to:

- Provide regular opportunities for staff members to develop and improve knowledge and skills.
- Use technology where appropriate to enhance users' experience.

We will implement new strategies to:

- Raise awareness of the library's resources, services, and value to the community.
- Update the library's Communication Plan to address how to best communicate with users, non-users, and the community as a whole.
- Improve staff communication mechanisms.
- Improve the user experience throughout the library, in our facilities, online, and in the community, ensuring a consistent, welcoming environment with a focus on personal service.

Implementation

The Strategic Priorities and Core Functions outlined in the 2016-2018 Williamsburg Regional Library Strategic Plan will allow the library to build on a well-deserved reputation for providing excellent collections, programs, services, and facilities that fulfill our community's needs and expectations. They will also guide WRL's allocation of resources as described in the Financial Framework. Library staff members and members of the library's Board of Trustees and the boards of the Friends of WRL and the WRL Foundation will all be involved in the implementation of these priorities.

Overseen by the Library Director, implementation workgroups will be responsible for developing procedures for converting the plan's strategic priorities into actions. The list below further describes who at WRL is responsible for leading implementation of each Strategic Priority.

- Strengthening community connections and partnerships:
 - Assistant Director

- Communicating and raising awareness:
 - Special Projects Director

- Rethinking library spaces:
 - LEAD group

This implementation will be a multi-year process, with each year's work laying the foundation for future processes. The Library Director and the Finance & General Services Director will update the Financial Framework annually to reflect the areas of focus and related funding mechanisms.

Summary of Planning Process

The 2016-2018 Strategic Plan, an update of the previous plan, was adopted by the Williamsburg Regional Library Board of Trustees at their January 2016 meeting. The recommended plan was produced by the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, which included members of the Board of Trustees, the Library Director and WRL staff members, and representatives of the boards of the Friends of Williamsburg Regional Library and the Williamsburg Regional Library Foundation. The library contracted with BERK Consulting (www.berkconsulting.com) to assist and advise with the planning process and the development of the plan.

The library sought opinions on our current and future roles from the public, key community stakeholders (including all members of the Board of Trustees), all library staff members, and the library's management team. Four different library workgroups gathered input through surveys, group and individual interviews, and data assessment. BERK conducted the stakeholder interviews. A situation assessment of the inputs, drafted by BERK, was reviewed by the Steering Committee and influenced the initial draft plan (the Situation Assessment may be found in the Appendix). The draft plan was shared with the public and library staff members and a final recommended plan was presented in January 2016 to the Board of Trustees for consideration.

Updates to Mission, Vision, and Core Values

During the strategic plan update process, the Steering Committee acknowledged that the library's Mission and Vision lacked clarity and would benefit from revision. Working together, select members of the Steering Committee, including library staff, a member of the Board of Trustees, and the BERK project team drafted revised Mission and Vision statements. The group's goal was to maintain the intent of the original statements while using more specific language. The revised statements, along with a reordering of the existing Core Values, were brought to the entire Committee for review and adoption.

A more thorough review and revision of these statements may be considered when the library develops our next strategic plan, involving members of the public and key stakeholders in this important discussion.

Strategic Plan Steering Committee

Library Board of Trustees: William C. Porter, Jr., James Axtell, Pam Franz, Natalie Miller-Moore, Jorge Rivas.

Library Foundation Board: Barry Marten.

Library Friends Board: Michael Westfall.

Library Staff: Genevieve S. Owens, Carrie Binsfield, Janet Crowther, Avery Hicks, Tova Johnson, Micah Lewis, Barry Trott.

Work Group Teams

Budget and Finance: Genevieve S. Owens and Carrie Binsfeld (chairs), Barry Marten, William C. Porter, Jr., Michael Westfall.

Community Engagement: Barry Trott (chair), Pam Franz, Heather Hamblin, Tova Johnson, Barbara Jones, Jorge Rivas.

Data: Laura Morales (chair), Avery Hicks, Natalie Miller-Moore, Barry Trott.

Staff Engagement: Janet Crowther (chair), Nancy Cludinski, Micah Lewis, Rachael Nelson, Trish Walker.

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The library extends our appreciation to the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, the work groups, and to all staff and community members who participated in the development of this plan.



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