

Bethel Park Public Library Strategic Plan 2014-2017

Vision: *To be a premier public library in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*

Mission: *Providing services to inform, inspire, and enrich the community*

Core Values:

Bethel Park Public Library:

- *Provides quality library service*
- *Provides a relevant collection (print and electronic)*
- *Provides access to current technology without restrictions and with training*
- *Promotes literacy (health, reading, technology, early literacy, cultural, civic, and financial)*
- *Provides programs that reflect community interests and needs*
- *Operates with ethical stewardship of resources*
- *Implements best practices as established by professional library organizations*

Introduction

While the Bethel Park Public Library has remained an important pillar of the community, profound changes have created an environment that demands reflection, innovation and action in order to succeed. In response, the library underwent an extensive Strategic Planning process.

In August 2013, Bethel Park Public Library initiated a strategic planning process to gather staff and community input into the future direction for the organization. The Library sought to test assumptions about stakeholder perceptions and develop a deeper understanding of the areas where the community most wants to see Bethel Park Public Library focus resources. The team interviewed area residents to collect data on resident perception of the public library. Results indicated that most residents were unaware of the resources available at the Library.

History of Library

The Countryside Book Club began planning the Bethel Park Public Library in 1952. All Bethel park civic organizations were invited to send a representative to organize a library board which first met on October 6, 1954. The library opened in October 1955 in the basement of the Bethel Grade School, now the School House Arts Center, and moved to its current location in 1967. The Bethel Park Public Library is now known as an innovator of many award-winning services and programs and is a proud member of the Allegheny County Library Association, a federated library system serving all residents of Allegheny County.

Strategic Direction

According to a recent study from the Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, the top three vital services provided by libraries are:

- Borrowing books
- Access to a reference librarian
- Free access to computers and the internet

In addition, the majority of Americans are strongly in favor of libraries coordinating more closely with local schools, and providing comfortable spaces for reading, working, and relaxing.

When it comes to removing printed materials to make more room for tech centers, reading/meeting rooms, and cultural events, opinions vary, with 36% of respondents stating libraries should "definitely not" move books out of public spaces.

With 77% of respondents admitting to not knowing the full range of services offered by their local library, the Pew study identifies the need for outreach and community relations from the library.

Based on the Pew study results, along with information gathered via public surveys and community outreach in 2013, the Bethel Park Public Library will pursue the following strategic direction:

Goal 1: Innovative Information Technology

1. Objective: Explore the procedures for lending of new technology such as Amazon Fire TV, laptops/tablets including how to solve the challenge of computer viruses/security and provide a report to the Board.
2. Objective: Survey a 1% (300 people) cross-section of the community about various technology interests and provide a final report to the Board.
3. Objective: Implement a program that teaches and supports technological skills in which all staff must become proficient for annual evaluation.
4. Objective: Expand the range of content and the number of technology classes offered to patrons.
5. Objective: Discuss the possibility of a shared IT staff position with other large libraries in the South Hills and provide a report to the Board.
6. Objective: Develop a comprehensive list of the components of a Library App and seek bids for the building of such app and other technology needs as they arise.

Goal 2: Support Educational and Learning Opportunities

1. Objective: Provide staff training for Youth Services Staff on PSSA objectives by grade level.
2. Objective: Provide staff training for Youth Services staff on STEM education objectives.

3. Objective: Obtain the BP School District Technology Plan; work with key school district staff to develop a program of support for technology skills for parents.
4. Objective: Expand the range of content and the number of technology classes.

Goal 3: Enhance the user experience by expanding expertise of library staff.

To position the Library for future success it is necessary for the library to fill in key skills sets in staff positions. Expertise includes:

- Information Technology
 1. Objective: Provide training opportunities for key staff members in latest software/applications for web design
 2. Objective: Discuss the possibility of a shared IT staff position with other large libraries in the South Hills and provide a report to the Board.
- Fundraising and Development
 1. Objective: Discuss the possibility of a shared staffing position with expertise in fundraising and development with other libraries in the South Hills and provide a report to the Board.
- Program development
 1. Objective: Approach area businesses, other non-profit organizations, municipal departments and community groups about the possibility of program partnerships (ie: Fall Speakers' Series with the Recreation Department) and provide a report to the Board.
- Outreach
 1. Objective: Approach area businesses, other non-profit organizations, municipal departments and community groups about partnership opportunities to expand Outreach programs (ie: Meals on Wheels to help deliver Homebound materials to patrons) and provide a report to the Board.

Goal 4: Innovate for Efficient and Sustainable Operations

1. Objective: Discuss the possibility of shared staffing positions for IT, fundraising and development and other opportunities as they arise with other libraries in the County, particularly with other South Hills libraries. Provide a report to the Board.
2. Objective: Discuss opportunities for collaborative marketing regionally and/or county-wide by talking with other libraries, particularly those in the South Hills, and with ACLA staff and Board. Provide a report to the Board.

Goal 5: Setting the Place

- Facility
 1. Objective: Seek bids for painting the interior of the library.
 2. Objective: Seek bids for electrical outlets around the library to support new technologies.

3. Objective: Seek bids for acoustical damping to cut down on noise in the main part of the library.
 4. Objective: Discuss with staff and a space planner ways to better utilize current space to develop a dedicated teen room.
- Online Presence
 1. Objective: Develop a comprehensive list of the components of a Library App and seek bids for the building of such app to enable virtual users access to information that is accessible, available, pertinent, and user friendly.

Strategic Action Plan Focus by Year

YEAR	FOCUS	ACTIVITY	NOTES
2015	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IT Innovation 2. Learning Support 3. Staff Expertise 4. Operations 5. Place 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand the range of content and number of patron technology classes; explore the lending of new technology. 2. Provide staff training on STEM education objectives; obtain BPSD Technology plan 3. Develop partnerships; implement staff technology training program 4. Seek collaborative marketing opportunities 5. Seek bids for interior painting of library and electrical tracks; develop list of components for a Library App; refresh Library web page 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In progress 2. In progress (begun 9/2014) 3. In progress 4. Not yet begun 5. In progress
2016	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IT Innovation 2. Learning Support 3. Staff Expertise 4. Operations 5. Place 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Survey community about technology interests; Discuss shared IT position 2. Develop and implement training technology program for parents based on BPSD Technology Plan; provide staff training on PSSA standards. 3. Continue to develop partnerships; Discuss shared staffing positions for fundraising and IT with other ACLA Libraries. 4. Discuss shared staffing positions for fundraising and IT with other ACLA Libraries. 5. Seek bids on the creation of a Library App 	
2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IT Innovation 2. Learning Support 3. Staff Expertise 4. Operations 5. Place 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate current technology needs and develop a plan to meet them 2. Refresh staff training on STEM and PSSA standards; continue to evaluate and expand the content and number of patron technology classes 3. Continue developing community partnerships; 4. Continue to develop a plan for collaborative marketing and shared staffing positions 5. Seek bids for acoustical damping; Work with staff and space planner on creating a dedicated teen space; evaluate online patron experience and update as needed 	

