



Strategic Plan 2011—2014
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Dear Patrons of the Ypsilanti District Library,

The Board and staff of the Ypsilanti District Library (YDL) are proud to share with you our Strategic Plan for 2011-2014. We are able to plan for the future, confident in the successes of prior planning, and more so with the spirit of support our community demonstrated by the passage of the 2010 Library Millage.

We believe this to be a forward-thinking, practical and flexible plan for the future of YDL, and worthy of the trust placed in us by the voters. It builds on the goals we've reached through the implementation of the 2007-2010 Strategic Plan, which was a result of the rigorous work undertaken by our active patrons, community members, Library staff and trustees.

Those achieved goals include:

- Establishing a convenient interim library location in Superior Township
- Creating a website that acts as a 'virtual branch,' performing many convenience functions - such as renewing materials - and enabling residents to access the Library without leaving home
- Launching our bookmobile, the fully-loaded Navigator, to provide library services to the many residents who are not able to visit our facilities
- Expanding the Library's hours of operation
- Opening the Primo coffee shop at YDL-Whittaker
- Installing after-hours lockers so patrons may pick up materials when the Library is closed
- Increasing email communication with patrons on topics such as due-date reminders for materials and suggestions for programs and materials that might be of interest

This round of planning resulted in identifying several critical goals, including the establishment of dedicated teen spaces, improving the speed and functionality of public computers in our facilities, and more.

The planning process for 2011 - 2014 has a strong internal focus to help enhance sustainability in unpredictable economic times. We've developed comprehensive capital and maintenance plans for library buildings, and have crafted a plan for technology investments that will help the Library remain current and relevant to our patrons. All of the goals developed in this strategic plan are data-driven, calculated with demographic projections created by the U.S Census, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG), and patron profile information gleaned from the Library's own internal systems. We were also able to learn a great deal about our patrons' preferences and values through the responses to a targeted patron survey.

We wish to thank you, our patrons, for helping the Ypsilanti District Library continue to be a progressive and creative resource for our community!

Jill Morey
Director
Ypsilanti District Library

Suzanne Gray
President
Board of Trustees





As the executive summary of the Ypsilanti District Library's 2011–2014 Strategic Plan, this is a living document. It will be reviewed and updated by the Library Board and staff as we stretch forward towards new goals. We feel supported by our community, and well-anchored by our stated Mission and Values in the work we do.

Our Mission:

As a community resource, our mission is to enrich life, stimulate intellectual curiosity, foster literacy, and encourage an informed citizenry.

Our Values:

Public Trust: We commit to being fiscally responsible with public resources, to protecting patron confidentiality, and to providing safe, well maintained and accessible facilities.

Equal Access: We believe in equal access to all YDL resources.

Diversity: We are committed to reflecting the diversity of our community through our collections, services and staff.

Excellent Service: We commit to providing excellent service by providing accurate and reliable information in a respectful interaction between well trained, friendly and efficient staff and all members of our community.

Outreach and Partnership: We will actively develop partnerships and joint activities with community groups to further the YDL mission.

Idea Gathering Place: As an idea-gathering place, the Library promotes the democratic ideals of intellectual freedom by providing for a free exchange of information and ideas from a wide variety of viewpoints.



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The planning process included a comprehensive review of external data.

The development of the previous strategic plan, whose goals were implemented over the past three years, was guided by a Steering Committee composed of active library supporters from the community, current and past Board members, and staff. That planning process included a comprehensive review of external data: research on national library trends and best practices, benchmarking key metrics against similarly-sized libraries nationwide, and in-person interviews of stakeholders - including community members who were not library users.

Those external data remain relevant today, and helped guide our process for the 2011 – 2014 Strategic Plan. For this round of planning, the Strategic Planning Committee was comprised of the YDL administrative team, led by Director Jill Morey, and Trustees Kay Williams and Angela Moloney. This internal team reflects the focus on fundamentals in this plan, with greater attention to organizational elements such as developing infrastructure, investment plans in our facilities and information technology (IT) systems, and identifying achievable programming of greatest community appeal.

The process for developing the strategic plan included several key phases:

Gather Demographic and Usage Data: Staff collected and analyzed US Census data and demographic projections available through the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) to identify population trends that may influence Library materials selection, program choices and delivery, and design of the physical spaces of facilities. Staff also compiled information on program topics and attendance, Library use by location and materials type, along with the gender, age, and residence of Library users.





The 2010 YDL Patron Survey generated good data on library use by the community.

Develop Internal Plans: Technical experts - including the original architect for the Whittaker Road facility and a technology consultant from the non-profit The Library Network – worked with the Steering Committee to identify upcoming infrastructure investment needed in our facilities and IT systems.

Conduct Targeted Patron Outreach: The 2010 YDL Patron Survey generated 158 responses. We were able to gather good data on community use of the Library; technologic improvements most prized by our patrons; highly valued program topics and overall patron satisfaction.

Test Patron Experience: Library staff visited more than a dozen libraries in Michigan and Ohio, completing four tasks at each facility and answering a standard set of questions afterward to describe their experiences. These visits were designed to identify opportunities for improving the “user experience” of patrons at YDL. A small number of “mystery shoppers” also visited and assessed the Library experience at the Whittaker Road, Michigan Avenue, and Superior Township YDL locations to help compare our own performance in these same areas.

Hold Strategic Conversations: At regular intervals through the Planning Process, the Steering Committee, staff, and Board participated in a series of strategic discussions to develop the goals and strategies for 2011 – 2014.

Develop Implementation Plans and Measures of Success: Staff work teams developed action plans for the prioritized goals, helping ensure smooth implementation. They also incorporated measures vital to tracking success.



Quick Statistics: Growth and More Growth

CIRCULATION?

Quadrupled - 209,000 in 2000 to 843,630 in 2009

PROGRAM ATTENDANCE?

Nearly tripled - 12,000 in 2000 to over 40,000 in 2009

REFERENCE QUESTIONS?

A more than tenfold increase - from 12,900 in 2000 to 178,555 in 2009

LIBRARY CARDS?

More than 50% increase in potential patrons in 2009 - up from 31% in 2000

“The Library seems really concerned about being the best it can be. It is an extremely valuable community resource.”

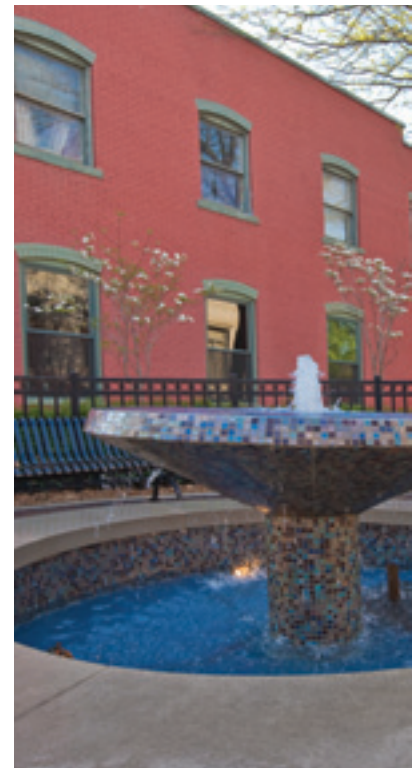
(Patron Survey Respondent)

Our Performance:

Patron satisfaction with the Library's locations, services, programs, and collections is extremely positive. Responses denoting satisfaction with support from Library staff were extraordinarily high - 94% are satisfied or very satisfied.

Comments added to the Patron Survey – from more than a third of those responding – were effusive in their praise for YDL and its “wonderful, helpful, friendly and knowledgeable” staff; the “beautiful, safe and accessible spaces” and the “diverse, abundant and current materials.”

A high number of patrons (76% of respondents) have used the new YDL website and more than 80% of those are satisfied or very satisfied with the site, with an even larger majority (87%) responding that they have found everything they needed through the website.





As of 2009, the YDL had 65,535 cardholders, or 82% of all citizens in the YDL service district - a nationally recognized success.

Demographic Changes and Projections of Note:

- The 2010 Census revealed Ypsilanti City's population to be 19,419, which is a decrease of almost 13% from the year 2000.
- Superior Township, on the contrary, has increased 26% since 2000, to 13,548 citizens.
- Ypsilanti Township is the most populous municipality in the YDL service district, with a population of 53,017 - up 8% since 2000.
- Infant/preschool populations are projected to decrease between 3-10% over the next five years in the three school districts YDL serves.
- The most dramatic projected population change will be senior citizens, aged 65 and older. This population is projected to increase between 28-39% by the year 2015.

Our Patrons and Our Opportunities: As of 2009, the YDL had 65,535 cardholders, or 82% of all citizens in the YDL service district. This is a nationally recognized success and is a critical baseline measuring our service to the community. Of these cardholders, about 20,000 are "active patrons"—traditionally defined as those who have borrowed YDL materials at least once in the past two years. The Library seeks to cultivate more active patrons, while understanding that borrowing materials is only one way of measuring library use: patrons also visit the Library to use the public computers, meeting rooms, and simply as a gathering space. Tracking these elements of patron usage is more challenging.

Most active in terms of borrowing materials are women ages 31-45, representing 26% of all checkouts. Men, senior citizens, and teens use the Library far less. Surveyed patrons also told us that transportation is an obstacle for many who want to use the programs and services of the Whittaker Road facility. These and other statistics offer opportunities for innovation in the next three years to increase the numbers and the diversity of people who use the Ypsilanti District Library.

Charting the Course: After analysis of the Patron Survey and the user experience testing, along with YDL staff and Trustee discussion, distinct strategic themes became apparent. These themes align with current best practices used in the most innovative libraries in America today.

- Be prepared to meet the growing demand in our service district
- Design programs based on community needs and desires
- Help patrons help themselves with best communication and intuitive technology
- Keep pace with rapidly changing technology and media
- Engage the teen population
- Maintain current assets and infrastructure
- Understand YDL's changing demographics, especially a growing senior population



“As a new mom,
I am thrilled with
the children’s
section staff.”

(Patron Survey Respondent)



Our Strategic Goals



Easy access to information is part of our commitment to the community.

Secure and develop a larger Library space in Superior Township and reach out to Augusta Township

The high level of usage at the current interim facility in Superior Township and the population growth expected in that area over the next five years lead us to believe that the permanent location needs to be larger.

Also, citizens in Augusta Township are not in the YDL service district, though for many, YDL is their nearest library. Although Augusta Township residents are eligible to use the Milan Library system, YDL's Whittaker Road location would be more convenient for many. YDL would welcome the addition of Augusta Township residents to the Library's service district.

Improve access and increase the functionality of public computers

Easy access to information is part of our commitment to the community. To meet this growing demand, we will invest in additional, reliable and speedy computers at all locations, helping our patrons access a wide range of online materials, information and resources.

Implement "Teen Zones" at YDL facilities

There are few "safe places" for young people to congregate - where they can be themselves while pursuing productive, educational, and fun activities. All indicators show that this is an "if we build it, they will come" proposition. The Library intends to be one of these destinations for positive youth development, and we need properly designed spaces in order for young people to feel comfortable in our facilities.

Final design for a teen space at the Michigan Avenue facility is complete, and active fundraising is underway to enable implementation. A preliminary plan for a dedicated teen space at the Whittaker Road location is underway as well.





As a welcoming, useful community resource, YDL must be able to anticipate community needs.

Develop an integrated program strategy that aligns with community priorities and demographic changes

As a welcoming, useful community resource, YDL must be able to anticipate community needs – as in the increased need for computer training and employment support during this economic downturn. The projected increase in patrons aged 65 and older over the next five years will require a thoughtful, integrated approach to changing program needs.

Strengthen the self-directed user experience

Patrons have come to expect and appreciate the ability to navigate the Library with minimal assistance from staff. Strategies for maximizing the Library's accessibility include modifying the way materials are displayed so they are eye-catching and intuitively organized, expanding the use of self service checkouts and considering other conveniences such as curbside service for drop-off and pick-up of materials. An ancillary benefit of these modifications is that staff are available to attend to patrons with more involved reference questions and requests.



We are committed to an easy and reliable patron borrowing experience.



Research, purchase and implement an alternative RFID system

We are committed to an easy and reliable patron borrowing experience. YDL materials are equipped with RFID (Radio Frequency IDentification) technology, which provides security features and enables more efficient tracking throughout the Library. The current RFID system, however, was purchased in 2002. In recent years, there have been many improvements in pricing and effectiveness of these systems: easier and faster charge and discharge, inventorying, and materials handling with high, long term reliability. Now is the time to invest in this infrastructure to ensure consistently high functionality.

Implement a private fund development plan

Despite the strong endorsement of the voters with a .38 millage in November 2010, tenuous economic times and increasing need call out for diversified funding streams to protect needed growth and excellence in library services. YDL can do this by initiating a private fund development plan to help people extend their investment in the Library, via both an annual fund, made easy by Michigan tax credits, and via an endowment, designed to build a legacy for generations to come.

Strategic Plan appendices, including the complete technology, fund development, and the facility plans are available online at www.ypsilibrary.org.

The Standing Goals of the Board

The Trustees will ensure that they are well-informed of leading Library practices and will govern through the development of broad policies and objectives.

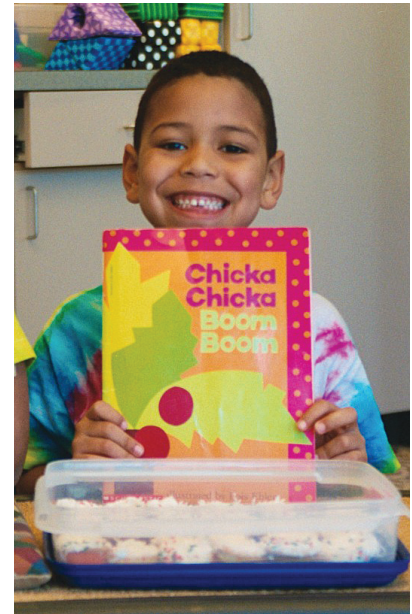
Through their hiring and oversight of an Executive Director, the Trustees will ensure that the Library has a skilled, diverse, and qualified staff that is committed to the core values of the Library.

The Ypsilanti District Library Board of Trustees is committed to provide effective stewardship of the Library and will ensure that policies and resources are aligned with the strategic goals for 2011-2014.

The following standing goals outline how that stewardship will occur as part of this strategic plan.

The Trustees will demonstrate excellent stewardship of public resources by:

- Ensuring reliable fiscal projections and sound annual budgets.
- Ensuring facilities and equipment are maintained in a manner that maximizes their long term value within the community.



The Ypsilanti District Library Board of Trustees is committed to provide effective stewardship of the Library.



Ypsilanti District Library

YDL-Whittaker
5577 Whittaker Road
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

YDL-Michigan Avenue
229 W. Michigan Avenue
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

YDL-Superior
8975 MacArthur Blvd. at Harris
Ypsilanti, MI 48198

YDL Navigator Bookmobile
734 482-4110 ext. 1316

YDL Website
www.ypsilibrary.org

YDL Board of Trustees:

Frances Doe
Suzanne Gray
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Angela Moloney
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Library Director:
Jill Morey