St. Clairsville Public Library
Strategic Plan 2017-2019

INTRODUCTION

The library has not had a strategic plan for years. Starting in April of 2016, library staff began seeking community input for a strategic plan. Working with the State Library of Ohio, we designed a survey and scheduled a series of focus groups. Surveys were distributed in the library, at local civic organizations, and as an insert into the Times Leader. Three focus groups were held for community members and library staff; meetings were facilitated by staff of the State Library. Also, the library board had several brainstorming sessions discussing library challenges and opportunities.

This Strategic Plan has 2 parts:

1. INPUT. Pages 1-8 - summarizes input collected from surveys and focus groups.
2. PLAN. Pages 9-12 - lists major goals for the library and our steps over the next 3 years toward each goal.

ABOUT THE ST. CLAIRSVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The St. Clairsville Public Library has a service area population of approximately 16,500 – about 24% of Belmont county-- and includes parts of 6 townships and the communities of St. Clairsville, Fairpoint, Bannock, Blainesville, Glencoe, and Warnock. The library is part of the SEO consortium of 92 Library systems throughout 46 Ohio counties.
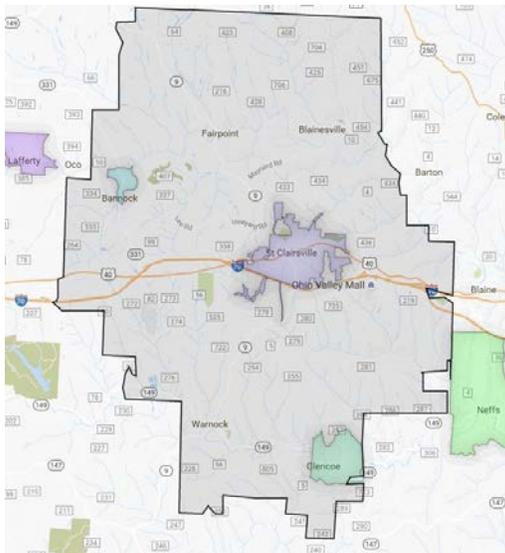
Service area of the St. Clairsville Public Library

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE ST. CLAIRSVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Library strives to provide materials and services that augment the recreational, leisure, cultural, historical, social, educational and intellectual needs of the residents of its service area. The library serves as a learning center for all ages and places special emphasis on stimulating the young child's interest and appreciation for reading and learning.
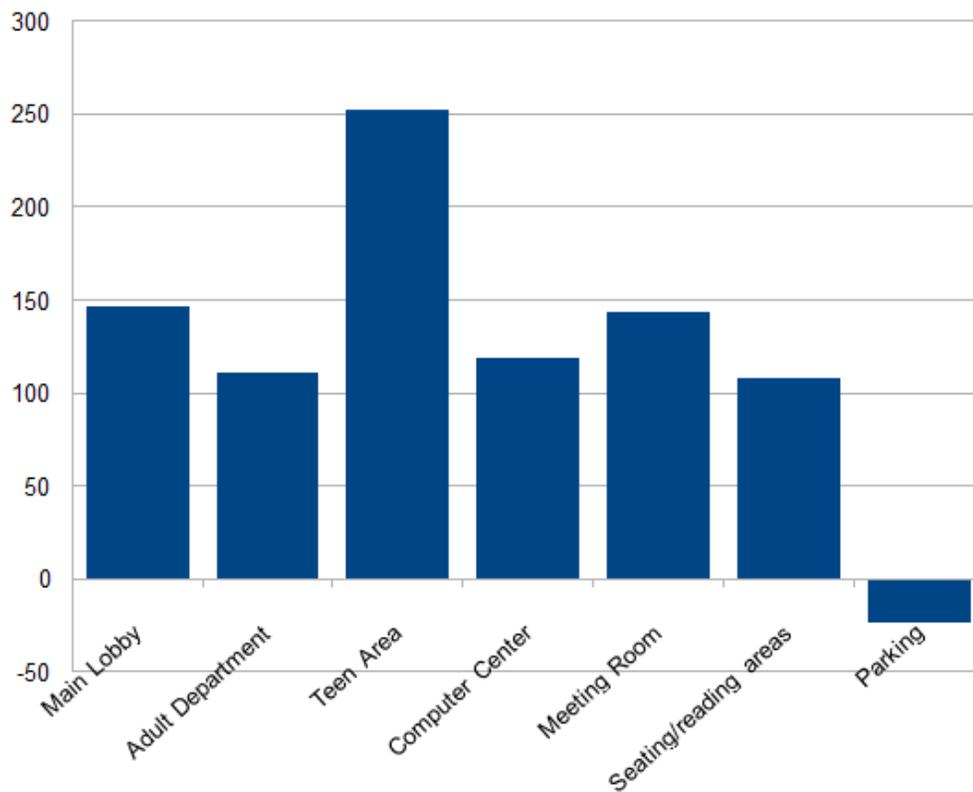
SURVEYS

Surveys were made available in print at the library, as a newspaper insert, and on the library webpage, resulting in 125 participants in the survey. Results are summarized below.

SURVEY RESULTS: PHYSICAL SPACES

Six aspects of the library were included in the survey (see attached copy of the survey).

Rate the Library's Physical Spaces

Conclusion: Survey results show people were least satisfied with these three physical aspects of the library:

1. Parking
2. Seating/reading areas
3. Adult department

SURVEY RESULTS: SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

The survey listed a number of possible library services and programs and asked people to indicate which would be essential to me, nice to have, don't use but good for the community, or not needed. The top preferences are shown in the table below.

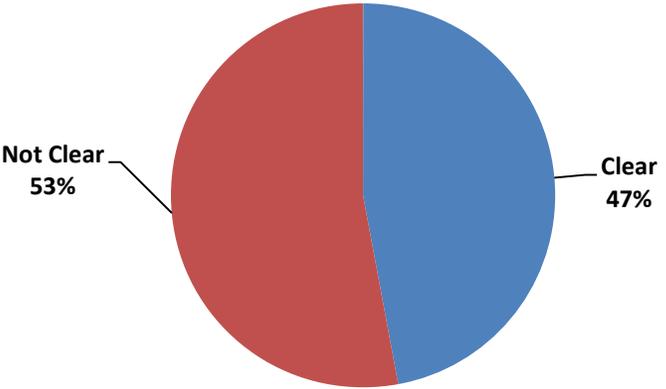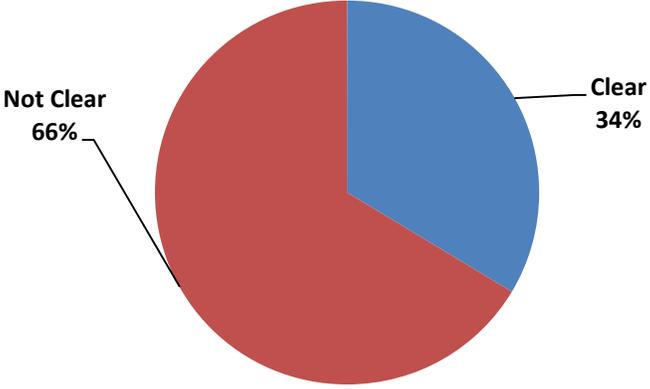| Response	#1 Answer	#2 Answer	#3 Answer	#4 Answer
Essential to me personally	Computer help	Newsletter	Family activities	Volunteers
Nice to have	Volunteers	Newsletter	Computer help	Family activities
I don't use, but good for the community	(tie →) Homework assistance	(←tie) Parenting groups	(tie →) After-school programs	(←tie) Teen groups

Conclusion: Priority should be given to programs/services indicated as "essential to me" since they are ones people say they would use.

Top priorities for planning:

1. Computer help
2. Newsletter
3. Family activities
4. Volunteers

SURVEY RESULTS: ORGANIZATION AND SUPPORT

The survey asked a question related to understanding how the library is supported. Many people indicated they are unclear about the purpose of the Friends and, to a greater extent, people are unclear about the purpose of the Foundation.

Friends of the Library - 53% said its purpose was unclear to some extent.	**Friends of the Library** Not Clear 53% Clear 47%
Foundation - 66.4% said its purpose was unclear to some extent.	**Library Foundation** Not Clear 66% Clear 34%

Conclusion: Distinguish the library and its supporting organizations. Clarify the separate organization's roles for the public.

FOCUS GROUPS

In addition to surveys, State Library employees led and gathered input from three focus groups - two public and one staff, conducted August 4 and September 13, 2016 in the library Board room. Feedback focused on the topic areas summarized below.

FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK: **RESOURCES**

Both focus groups mentioned that the condition of resources in the library is important. Specific resource suggestions to consider:

- Newer and more large print
- Larger teen and children's collections
- Higher quality toys in the Children's area

FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK: **FACILITIES**

Parking was repeatedly mentioned as a challenge with comments such as:

- Many older people struggle with parking and walking to the building
- Elderly do not visit the library because of parking
- Rear door and parking are not used because you are required to use the steps anyway
- Dislike the parking
- Need to focus on transportation challenges. Take the library to them.

Participants offered suggestions for furnishings and equipment:

- Would like more comfortable seating
- Would like to have a teen-only computer
- Computer privacy: don't like when people look over my shoulder when using the computers.
- Would like adjustable height chairs at the computers.

FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK: **STAFF**

The staff was praised at multiple times in both focus groups. Comments about the staff included the following: people oriented; very patient, helpful; outstanding. They know your name and are welcoming. The staff sets it apart. They are so good to me. They anticipate what I need. They are wonderful. Staff is friendly. They are all so good.

Computer help was specifically praised multiple times in both public focus groups. This is appreciated as an important service of the library.

FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK: **PROGRAMMING & SERVICES**

Participants were asked about existing programs and services that are notable and popular:

1. Summer Reading
2. Book discussion groups
3. Drop-in computer help

Participants offered suggestions for program and services:
- Read aloud programs: Seniors, mentally disabled
- Longer story time cycles
- After school and homework assistance
- Volunteer programing
- Materials in addition to books for non-readers
- Spanish language books, ESL
- Author programs
- Have a puzzle, game, or book exchange day
- Would like volunteer program to return to the library
- Sunday afternoon hours

FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK: **PROMOTION**

Suggestions that were offered regarding promoting the library:
- Marquee sign. Chalkboard sign is not enough. The sidewalk sign is nice but I'm not often walking downtown.
- Flyer in the Sunday paper once a month.
- Reach seniors at senior centers, restaurant, senior transportation, meals on wheels

LIBRARY BOARD PLANNING SESSIONS

The library board provided input to the strategic planning process during two regular meetings.

BOARD: **RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

During the August 2016 meeting, the library board discussed risks and opportunities they see for the library over the next three years.

The risks they named were:
1. Elevator/Building (expensive; space limited; location; parking)
2. Funding could be cut by State
3. Lower wages affects staff
4. Possible decline in population over time
5. Changes in literacy, library use in K-12

The opportunities they named were:
1. Offering more books
2. More programming; we offer free programming
3. More space and better use of space
4. Funding opportunities through grants (if staff time allows)
5. School collaboration
6. Summer Reading
7. Seniors programming and services
8. Property, use of lot
9. Levy
10. Educating public – importance of library, reading

BOARD: **FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS**

The following were Library Board Focus Group Questions along with the answers the Board provided during the September 2016 board meeting:

1. How does the library fit into the community? What role does the library have? What do you do better than anyone else in the community?
   a. Library is a cornerstone of the community and an educational center.
   b. Things we do better: Children's programming, attracting a diverse crowd – open to all
2. What draws people into the library?
   a. Service/staff
   b. Books and reading
   c. Computers
   d. Programs
   e. Questions
   f. Tradition
3. What program or service does the library have that the community thinks is special?
   a. Technical support
   b. Technology center
   c. Story times
   d. Summer Reading
   e. Book sales
   f. Adult book clubs, adult programs
   g. School support
4. If you could have anything you want, and money was no object, what would the ideal St. Clairsville Public Library look like?
   a. One floor, easier layout
   b. More space for programs, books, displays, quiet areas, teen area
   c. 1000s more books on par with similar-sized communities
   d. More service locations – convenient to other parts of our service area
5. How is the community changing? How will the changes impact the library?
   a. More newcomers transient into area have more tech needs and more need for children's services
   b. Communications challenge – how to reach all the people?
6. Are there needs in the community not being met that the library can meet?
   a. More outreach needed – schools, seniors
   b. More hours, more convenient hours
7. What partnerships does the library currently have, and what partnerships could the library pursue? Are there organizations that the library is in competition with?
   a. Do more with schools to promote literacy, reading, library experience
   b. Do more with city – grants, resources
   c. Competition: Netflix, bookstores, technology stores

Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives

Goals	Objectives	Target Year	Budget Estimate
A. **Community Resources & Services -** Residents should have a library that is easy to access and open when most needed. Residents should have access to library services important to them. Residents should have a library that supports their involvement and participation.	1. To improve access to library services for those who live outside the city: propose several options for providing library access/services at other location(s) in our service area. Select one or more solutions based on costs vs. benefits. Implement as the budget allows.	2019	>10K
	2. To ensure library days and hours of operation are optimal for our library users: gather visitor data to assess busiest days and hours of operation. Report on data, consider costs vs. benefits, and make recommendations about hours of operation. Implement as the budget allows.	2018	1-10K
	3. To develop and sustain a volunteer program: assess policies and procedures, collaborative possibilities (Friends, area organizations) and staff resources needed for overseeing a program. Propose goals, a schedule and cost estimates for a volunteer program. Implement as the budget allows.	2019	1-10K
	4. Maintain computer help services and programs. Examine funding and tactics to continue meeting the demand for computer help beyond the end of Guiding Ohio Online grant (ending summer 2017).	2017	>10K

Goals	Objectives	Target Year	Budget Estimate
B. **Community Awareness --** Promote the library to the public, keeping our community aware of the vital role the library can play in their lives and how to take advantage of these services. Residents should have a library where its funding, organization and support is easily understood and clearly defined.	1. To address the public's need to know how the library is organized, supported and funded, develop and implement a *Memorandum of Understanding* with the <u>Friends of the Library</u>.	2017	<1K
	2. To address the public's need to know how the library is organized, supported and funded, develop and implement a *Memorandum of Understanding* with the <u>Foundation</u>.	2018	<1K
C. **Materials Access & Management -** Provide a right-sized and well-maintained collection of books and other popular resources. Strengthen the library's collections of books, periodicals, audiovisual materials, and software.	1. Benchmark the size of the library's collection against peer libraries in Ohio and other libraries in the area. Use these benchmarks to set goals for collection size in children's, teen, and adult sections. Plan budget, staff time, and layout changes needed to reach goals. Implement this plan as the budget allows.	2018	>10K
D. **Facilities** – Residents should have a library that offers a clean, safe and welcoming physical place to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read. Evolve facilities to meet the changing needs of the community.	1. Provide 3 top proposals for additional and more convenient parking for the library. Select one solution based on costs and benefits; implement as the budget allows.	2019	1-10K
	2. To save money and to improve lighting, plan for lighting and energy efficiency upgrades to the facilities. Get cost estimates for an energy audit or consult with an expert in lighting and energy upgrades. If an audit is conducted, analyze results and determine funding for recommended upgrades. Perform upgrades as the budget allows.	2019	>10K
	3. Obtain, through consultation with experts, recommended upgrade and replacement costs and schedule for HVAC, elevator, roofing, and any other high-cost components of the facilities. Include costs in a long-term budget.	2019	<1K

Goals	Objectives	Target Year	Budget Estimate
	4. Consult with experts as needed and identify building improvements and costs to meet the following objectives: • Adult and Lobby - reading and quiet spaces • Technology Center – ergonomic and appealing • Children's – appealing, layout and furnishings for play/reading/seating, programming space • Adult – layout, appeal and access. • Meeting room – increase flexibility and appeal for programming Prioritize, budget for and implement improvements.	2019	>10K
	5. Utilize all potential library space efficiently by removing unused equipment, furnishings, and miscellaneous items that impact the primary use and the clean appearance of each library space.	2019	<1K
E. **Finance** – We will provide the community with an adequately funded library and plan for its future financial stability and growth. A multi-year plan establishes and budgets for the financial resources required to meet community needs for free library services and materials while maintaining fair compensation for highly-skilled staff.	1. Develop a financial plan/levy strategy for the next 3-5 years that is based on strategic plans and considers rising costs and decreased state funding. Incorporate in the plan costs for facilities, technology, services, materials, and staffing.	2018	<1K
	2. Benchmark with area libraries - employee pay and benefits. Using these benchmarks, create a wage scale based on current rates, job title, time in service, performance. Implement the wage scale as the budget allows.	2019	>10K

Goals	Objectives	Target Year	Budget Estimate
F. **Staffing and Administration –** Residents should have a library that has staff who provide quality library services and assistance. Staff are confident they have the training and resources needed to serve our community.	1. Ensure staff receive regular, on-going training so that they understand and can apply library policies in various situations.	2017	<1K
	2. List procedures that are still needed to ensure consistency and know-how. Prioritize and develop needed procedures.	2018	<1K
	3. Review, update, and practice emergency procedures. Set and follow a schedule for repeating practice sessions.	2017	<1K
H. **Technology** – Residents should have a library that gives free access to computers, internet, and other important technology beneficial to the community. We will use technology to make it easier for patrons of all ages to use the library. We will explore and offer new technology to prepare the library and community for the future.	1. Develop a Technology Plan for the library's technology, which will list, schedule and budget for regular technology upgrades, replacements and additions. Include patron and staff computers, printers, barcode scanners, receipt printers, increasing public use of mobile technologies, etc. Use as benchmarks wifi use and computer use in similar-sized libraries.	2017	<1K
	2. Follow the Technology Plan to upgrade, replace, and/or add technology as the budget allows, including: • public computers and peripherals • staff computers and peripherals • library equipment (fax, copiers, etc.) • servers/network • support for patron mobile devices: outlets, wireless access points, wifi printing	2018	>10K