



**STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2021**



*Barge on the Mississippi at La Crosse*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This strategic plan to guide the future of the La Crosse Public Library was developed through a process of citizen participation between February and June 2016 involving representatives from the board, staff, city executive and political leadership and as well as members of the business, neighborhood, cultural, not-for-profit and education communities.

## OUR VISION

We envision the La Crosse Public Library as **the knowledge creation center of a vibrant community, offering experience-rich spaces developed by and for our citizens and visitors.**

## OUR MISSION

Our mission is to **help the La Crosse community evolve, adapt and thrive.**

## OUR GOALS

**1. Collection Building, Services Innovation and Services Delivery:** Become the collections, talents and idea innovation center of La Crosse and the surrounding region so that all patrons discover more than what they were seeking

**2. Creative Sourcing and Partnerships:** Grow the library through partnerships with community, business and government organizations that are seeking to more effectively deal with the challenges they face

**3. Community Access:** Co-locate with or be embedded in new and existing community partners to offer a one-stop shop experience that generates greater traffic for all of the

partners and/or convenient access to services for citizens and visitors

**4. Marketing, Promotion and Advocacy:** Become widely-known and highly regarded for our programs, partnerships and events, which serve as a creative catalyst for community and personal growth

**5. Leadership, Staffing and Professional Development:** Create a culture of change and proactive, collaborative leadership via professional and personal development and the recruitment of top talent



*Reading Boat*

**6. Resources, Buildings, Technology and Systems:** Adapt or re-invent our systems, technologies and buildings to serve the changing needs of our citizens

**7. Governance, Funding and Managing Change:** Regularly review the progress of the library to ensure that the quality and efficiency of delivery of programs, collections and services to our citizens and visitors is the best that can be achieved

## WHAT WE ARE KNOWN FOR

The La Crosse Public Library is proud to be known for these qualities, values and principles:

- **Welcoming to All:** We serve the entire community: the very young to the elderly, people of diverse economic means, those connected to “the cloud” and not, and the full spectrum of political and religious beliefs, lifestyles and cultures.
- **Equity for All:** We recognize and embrace the need for solutions that integrate diverse interests into new and better solutions, and where that is not possible, to achieve effective and equitable compromise.
- **Universal Literacy:** We recognize that literacy is the foundation on which a thriving community is built, as it empowers every citizen to live a rich, rewarding and engaged life.
- **Evidence-based Decision Making:** We value decisions based on data, facts and professional and scientific knowledge.
- **Providing a Safe Place:** We value a healthy and safe place to encourage communication, practicable solutions, new ideas and transparency.
- **Being Fiscally Responsible and Responsive:** We strive to achieve an appropriate balance between fiscal responsibility and the evolving needs and desires of the community.
- **Anticipating Change:** We provide users with data, information and knowledge in a diverse range of formats. We track and implement technological advances as they emerge and continue to provide services for media types in decline as the need remains.
- **Helping People Participate Fully in Society:** We value social responsibility, making resources accessible to all so that everyone can participate fully in society.
- **Transparency:** We value open and honest communication and the sharing of information, ideas and knowledge.
- **Providing Access to All:** We value expanded access and services through our abilities, talents, and resources.
- **Serving Diverse Interests:** We serve the needs of all users and we are proactive in seeking diverse perspectives from both the community and staff.
- **Being A Facilitator of Change:** We are a facilitator of change and partnerships in the community.



- **Serving as a Hub:** We are a hub for community members to utilize and embrace what the library has to offer.
- **Available for Free:** We provide free and open access to data, information, knowledge and processes to enable its wise application.
- **Fostering a Passion for Reading:** We encourage and foster a love of reading in people of all ages and of diverse backgrounds.
- **Preserving Our Community's History:** We are a valued place for people to learn about our community's history.



*Food drive*



## STRATEGIES

Comprehensive strategies were developed for each of our goals:

### GOAL 1: COLLECTION BUILDING, SERVICES INNOVATION AND SERVICES DELIVERY

1. **Develop Programming with Partners:** Involve our stakeholders, partners, and the community in the design, development and promotion of new services
2. **Tackle Community Challenges:** Operate as a community systems integrator, helping to bring talents, techniques, methods, processes, information and knowledge to address the challenges our community faces
3. **Build New Kinds of Collections:** Identify new kinds of collections - tools, talents, methods, community problem solving issues/solutions etc. and mentor partners to build and offer those collections
4. **Launch a Multipurpose Platform:** Develop a platform that provides access to new partnership collections, talents, processes and programs “for free” in the interests of community development, and “for fee”, in the interests of economic development of the community
5. **Expand the Discovery Layer:** Expand the "discovery layer" on top of our catalog and databases to include new offerings

### GOAL 2. CREATIVE SOURCING AND PARTNERSHIPS

1. **Become a Community Integrator:** Work with a wide range of community organizations to identify what their members or constituents need and how the library can expand its role to serve as a community capacity builder and integrator
2. **Help At-risk Populations:** Collaborate with the school district to serve young at risk people
3. **Serve Non-Traditional Education:** Conduct outreach to the growing non-traditional education sector to provide support services for learning materials and programs
4. **Launch a Joint Library Card:** Develop and implement a collaborative library card between the library, school district and higher education institutions
5. **Develop Integrated Collections:** Work with the school district and higher education institutions to develop an integrated collections strategy to achieve savings from consolidating duplicated efforts

6. **Grow New Businesses:** Collaborate with the Downtown, Universities and Colleges to help start and grow new and existing businesses and other entrepreneurial activities
7. **Bridge the Skills Gap:** Partner with the non-profit sector to develop programs that

develop the capacity in all our citizens to actively participate in the workforce and community.

8. **Tackle Early Childhood Literacy:** Collaborate with the CESA and seek grant funding to launch a sustained program of early childhood literacy.

### GOAL 3: COMMUNITY ACCESS

1. **Partner with City Departments:** Work with other city departments including fire, police, parks and recreation and the school district to develop and offer integrated/complementary programs that add value to existing services
2. **Re-invent how the Library Serves Neighborhoods:** Redefine the concept of a neighborhood library to include other parties and consider offering services in all of the city's neighborhoods
3. **Provide Services Where You Are:** Explore opportunities to engage with patrons wherever they are
4. **Offer Access from Home:** Deploy an interactive technology platform to bring the library and its services into the homes of citizens
5. **Address the Needs of the Homeless:** Work closely with community agencies serving disadvantaged and homeless members of the community to better address their needs
6. **Conduct Crucial Community Conversations:** Host, facilitate and provide vital research support for crucial conversations about challenges facing the community
7. **Offer Internships:** Develop a program with higher education institutes and local schools to provide students with

opportunities to start new enterprises, build collections and mentor others, or acquire valuable work/project experience

8. **Collect Talents:** Act as a coordinator or integrator of a collection of community talents, methods, and processes, which all can be checked out like a book
9. **Start an Incubator:** Provide spaces and support services for incubating an enterprise, developing new skills, designing new products and services, and creating/curating a collection
10. **Repurpose the Museum Space:** Remodel the former museum space, and acquire new tenants or services, such as a coffee shop or cafe, book store or maker/design space
11. **Establish a Makerspace:** Develop or host a makerspace and/or incubator facility at the main library or one of the branches in order to support the development of professional/life skills and entrepreneurial activities
12. **Train Young People as Facilitators:** Partner with Western Technical College to offer a facilitator training and certificate program to train young people in how to offer planning and problem solving services to small business and not-for profits at a no or low-fee

## GOAL 4: MARKETING, PROMOTION AND ADVOCACY

1. **Delight Patrons:** Develop and offer refreshingly new and different learning experiences that attract attention, invite participation, and delight our patrons
2. **Build Our Brand as an Integrator:** Become recognized for our role as a community systems integrator, talent coordinator, and knowledge, information and entertainment portal and venue
3. **Promote via a Mix of Media:** Promote the library and its activities through a mix of social media, print, radio, television and partnership relationships
4. **Develop New Places/Spaces:** Develop new places and spaces for the community to engage with the library and its services with a focus on civic discourse, deliberation and program development
5. **Collaborate on New Programs:** Involve all departments in the design, development and promotion of new products and services, especially new partner collections
6. **Remove Barriers such as No Fines:** Remove disincentives and barriers that discourage citizens from being patrons and partners of the library, e.g. discontinue students' fees for library cards

## GOAL 5: LEADERSHIP & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. **Become Community Catalysts:** Encourage staff to become the catalysts of community growth and wealth and health creation
2. **Develop a Team Culture:** Build and maintain a healthy and supportive team culture within the organization, with team building exercises including the entire staff
3. **Re-organize:** Change the way the library operates for increased flexibility, opportunities for personal growth and variety of work
4. **Become Networkers:** Encourage staff to develop networks to promote the library and library partner activities
5. **Reward Achievement:** Recognize staff for their achievements and contributions to the library and the community
6. **Promote Learning:** Reward staff for starting and growing new initiatives and learning from mistakes
7. **Attract/Grow Talent:** Attract or develop talent for new or expanded roles in marketing, programming, partnership development and community systems integration

## GOAL 6: RESOURCES, BUILDINGS, TECHNOLOGY AND SYSTEMS

1. **Adapt to Change:** Develop an adaptive information technology and knowledge creation/management platform that meets the needs of patrons, both mainstream and emerging
2. **Create New Space Formats:** Begin planning a transition to new library space formats, including buildings that enable greater flexibility, adaptability and the potential for co-location with key community partners
3. **Pilot new Services:** Experiment with new services and models of service delivery, both virtually and physically to test out new collections and services, especially for those developed through partnerships

4. **Serve Niche Needs with Partners:** Partner with new collection owners to offer services in less popular, niche or unique formats, including ways for the library to offer access to non-library collections
5. **Develop Flexibility:** Encourage staff to become multi-skilled in existing and new technologies
6. **Create Welcoming Spaces:** Continually update our spaces to be friendly and welcoming

## **GOAL 7: GOVERNANCE, FUNDING AND MANAGING CHANGE**

1. **Anticipate Change:** Develop the capacity in the library staff and board to anticipate change, in order to continually reinvent the library, its offerings and its processes
2. **Diversify and Expand Funding:** Increase and diversify funding through existing and new sources- state and federal grant, foundations and other funding opportunities with new and existing partners- in order to develop programs that help solve community challenges
3. **Develop Stronger Relationships with the City:** Foster stronger, more productive relationships between the board, senior staff and city officials/administrators to better define ways to align the library programs with long term strategies for rejuvenating the city
4. **Use Strategy as a Daily Way of Operating:** Use project planning as a regular way of working for both the board and the staff, both internally and with stakeholders, to regularly reinvent the role of the library in order to anticipate change
5. **Influence changes in Library Law to Try New Roles:** Explore ways to influence the structure of library law to reflect the new roles for libraries in developing the quality of life and economic wealth/health of the community





## THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The citizens of La Crosse, Wisconsin met from February through June 2016 to develop a strategic plan for the La Crosse Public Library.

Over 400 people participated in the process via interviews, in workshops and through on-line contributions, surveys and personal communications. Twenty staff, board members, city leaders and citizens participated in an interview process to deeply understand the issues.

The library staff, the library board members, senior city officials and citizens representing business and community organizations or themselves, participated in strategic planning workshops, a complete end-to-to-end conversation-based process that explored the context and trends, stakeholder and personal interests, a strategic analysis of the library's capability to implement the desired changes, desirable initiatives and the values the library might live by. Some 237 people contributed to the on-line version of the strategic planning process or the paper version available in the library. The workshops and on-line survey generated over 100 pages of ideas, opinions and analysis.

A list of 230 project ideas were created and assigned to seven tentative goals areas. The

project ideas were circulated to senior staff who were invited to comment on the feasibility of the proposals and the capacity of the library to implement the proposed changes.

A team of seven students from the University of Wisconsin at La Crosse conducted a series of surveys to support the workshop process. These included a survey of organization readiness for change, surveys of new partners to explore what new services would be desirable for the members of their community, a non-user survey, and a library as a community anchor institution survey which considered what other facilities such as a restaurant, cinema, offices or gym might be advantageously co-located with the library or what new services they might jointly offer.

The staff, board members and citizens joined forces to work in project teams that developed 21 priority projects in considerable detail. At a subsequent Deep Dive workshop, staff and board members explored the main issues facing the library and developed vision and mission statements as well as goal statements and strategies to achieve the goals.



## OUR NEW PRIORITY PROJECTS

Fifteen new priority projects, additional to the current services, were developed by the staff, board and citizens to address each of the seven goal areas.

### GOAL 1: COLLECTION BUILDING, SERVICES INNOVATION AND SERVICES DELIVERY

**Job Prep:** 1. Dedicate resources to help homeless find employment and financial security. 2. Include computer training to help people with job search and to develop the necessary skills for computer related employment. 3. Assist with resume preparation, prepare people for job interviews, introducing job availability through government job programs, private job fairs and working with existing organizations that promote workplace readiness, i.e. Kelly Services, Chamber of Commerce.

**Human Library: Coulee Conversations:** An initiative to create a Human Library will

comprise a group of people willing to serve as subject matter experts and share a) life experiences, b) skills, methods and processes and c) cultural knowledge.

The resource people will share information via a) large group presentations b) one-on-one discussions c) a community speaker's bureau that would be established to make the speakers available to other community groups, and d) a YouTube Channel where the Presentations will be recorded and presented online as short 15 minute skill-enhancing presentations.

### GOAL 2: CREATIVE SOURCING AND PARTNERSHIPS

**Early Childhood Literacy Initiative:** Continue early childhood literacy programming (0-5 years) to daycares and expand to healthcare providers, stay-at-home care providers, underserved populations (families at Salvation Army), churches, places of worship, etc. The program would have a staff person (grant funded and possibly a continuation of the current AmeriCorps position) who would go out

to each locations, rather than expect people to visit the library.

#### **Government Services Collaboration:**

Hub/resource center. Helps refer citizens to agencies/services. City Council and community connections. One-stop shop for Government services.

### **GOAL 3: COMMUNITY ACCESS.**

**Start-up@yourlibrary:** Business and community groups would use available library space for multi-purpose meetings, collaboration and start-up businesses. It would act as a nexus for growing supply/demand for information resources.

**Creating Connections:** Invite existing agencies and leaders to form a coalition and be involved

with socially challenged library clientele who might benefit from social services. By dealing with some issues these folks might be more successful in using the job center resources that the library already provides (basic computer classes, resume building, finding jobs online, etc.)

### **GOAL 4: MARKETING, PROMOTION AND ADVOCACY**

**Free is Key – We're Unlocked:** The library will remove fines on all materials across all communities. We will re-engage with the community, helping people discover ways to contribute that are not punitive and in doing so change the cultural perception of libraries from rule-bound, shushing, bun-haired to open, free, accessible to all. Build relationships in community and welcome new groups to the library. We will improve ease of access, use and accessibility focusing on discovery and ownership of the library. We will develop new ways of looking at responsibility.

**Home-Town-Door-to-the-World-Value-Card:** Integrate library services/resources to enhance La Crosse Hometown and visitor experience.

**Get to Know Your Library:** An internal "In the loop-What's going on?" activity to support an external "Get to Know Your Library" project. The Internal project will comprise 2-3 sentences delivered to all staff via a weekly internal e-update, about what the library is doing to build relationships with local business partners. Internal and External: Hire a Public Relations person and establish a permanent budget. External: Improve how we communicate about what the library does (programs, materials, community outreach). Work with neighborhood groups, non-profits and local organizations. Design new marketing techniques, for example information on drink coasters. Website - how do promote to get people using it. Utilize Hoopla marketing budget. Promote e-mailing lists and subscriptions.

### **GOAL 5: LEADERSHIP, STAFFING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**We are Value-able:** An in-depth training and team building development days/day. This day would help staff not only learn new information and ways of conducting business but also serve as a way to bridge the gaps between departments and positions. It would begin to

build a healthy and supportive team culture within LPL. It may also include mini-sessions throughout the year in addition to whole day sessions when the library would close.

## **GOAL 6: RESOURCES, BUILDINGS, TECHNOLOGY AND SYSTEMS**

**Community Integrator:** Redevelop the main library site, to facilitate co-location and partnering with other community services, including Youth Resources, the Disability Community, Civic Functions, Special Interest Groups and the City to provide access to information and services. As necessary, where there is a need, bringing the resources together to develop a new solution. An additional focus of South Branch might be to specialize in needs for the disability community (autism, behavioral needs, physical needs, sensory needs, etc.) exceeding ADA requirements (universal design). New Main Library might include a shared community space with other service delivery partners

**The End of Brutalism A.K.A. More Inviting Entrances:** Create a more inviting entrance both inside and outside of the Main Library. Offer coffee and/or food carts in the space. Provide more inviting seating and more bike parking. Display banners on the building façade to promote/celebrate events. Undertake the same kinds of activities at the branches. Lighten up entry ways and better define space. Use more flexible signage to promote library services and patron participation. Offer wayfinding/map:

where are you, what's nearby (including bus stops). Change the way the patrons are greeted and how staff interact.

**Building the Library of the Future:** A new building for main would solve many issues related to space allocation that is limited by 60-year old physical infrastructure, difficulty in remodeling (electric and web services due to brickwork, configuration, and HVAC), not enough toilet facilities and little flexibility in layout due to "niche" design. The building needs more space for YS collections and programming space, and gather space that is flexible and functional for today's (modern and future) needs.

**The P.I.T.S. – The Public Imagination Tinker Station:** We would offer patrons an experience to create or enhance digital photos, movies, animation, author their own books, create objects with a 3D printer, program the next Artificial Intelligence platform, design and program robotics, create 360 degree Virtual Reality content, learn to fly drones, and create items out of wood and metal using our Lathes, saws, welders, etc..

## **GOAL 7: GOVERNANCE, FUNDING AND MANAGING CHANGE**

**One County, One Library:** The La Crosse and County Library boards would conduct a study to

analyze the benefits and drawbacks of a merger of county and city library system.





*iPad Station in Youth Services*

## THE CONTEXT

Strategic plans help organizations prepare for the future. But the rate of change is now so fast that any plans created today will be out-of-date before they are committed to paper. That is why, this written plan is a Living Plan, a snapshot of what the La Crosse Library has committed to for the immediate future. The greater part of the plan is contained in working documents that support the plan.

The La Crosse community identified numerous local, national and global trends that are having an impact on its citizens which determine the kinds of services needed to meet emerging challenges, as well as influence how the library will interact differently in the future with patrons, partners and stakeholders.

This is what our citizens said were the most important trends that directly affect the library:

## THE WORLD

### **Automation of Jobs by Big Technology**

**Disruptions:** Over the past century the advanced economies of the world have experienced four major market and technological disruptions. The new technologies have automated many jobs. Agriculture and mining now employ just 3% of all workers, manufacturing around 10%. Services jobs are now about 40% of the economy and knowledge jobs 32%. Few jobs are immune to automation.

### **Employment Gaps at Both Ends of the Jobs**

**Markets:** At the same time that employment opportunities for low-skilled workers is in decline, many high paying jobs remain vacant. The high-level jobs often require technical and people skills that many unemployed citizens do not have nor are likely to acquire quickly. Many

low-skilled jobs are either low-paying or have been reduced to the tasks needed just-in-time via Gig-economy service providers.

**Growth in Freelancing:** There is a trend toward freelancing and entrepreneurial work as career opportunities diminish, resulting in a new contracting class that makes increasing use of the library's internet access, research and meeting place resources.

**Anticipatory, On-demand Economy:** The Big Box store retail system continues to be challenged by the likes of Amazon and their "anticipatory" logistics strategy that deliver goods to warehouses near in the expectation that you are statistically likely to buy them. A similar shift is underway in how spare parts are provided, from



maintaining a stock of parts “just in case” to printing the part on demand using a 3D printer.

**Increased in Stress and Mental Illness:** Stagnant wages and job

losses are causing increased stress in families, leading to economic collapse, family breakdown, hunger, drug use and homelessness.

**Declining Respect for Institutions:** The library is one of the few institutions to remain immune to the growing distrust in government.

**“Always on” Citizens:** Attention spans are getting shorter and shorter with immediate gratification increasingly the norm. Life has become much higher pressure due to the expectation that people are “always on” and available to receive and reply to communications.

**Polarized Citizen Discourse:** The exponential growth in information and knowledge has been accompanied by a growing divide between those who believe in science and those who do not, resulting in the polarization of civic conversations, making it more difficult for governments to deal with complex issues.

## LA CROSSE

**La Crosse Reinvents Itself Yet Again:** La Crosse is yet again a city in transition and is in the process of reinventing its role. The suburbs, and its grid layout, is no longer as attractive and property values are in decline. The Millennial generation that the city needs to attract to start/grow new industries prefer a more vibrant lifestyle, with a rich variety of services nearby, apartment dwellings and walkable space in the urban heart of the city.

**A Revitalizing Downtown:** The revival of the Downtown has been a very positive change, bringing new construction and energy to the heart of the city, particularly for visitors.

**Lack of Civility on the Web:** The widespread use of social media has resulted in the exponential growth in ways to and opportunities to share information, but at a cost – a lack of civility.

**Persistence of Low Literacy:** Children of lower socio-economic status frequently miss out on the opportunity to read books aloud with their parents or siblings, which can lead to a poor start at school, from which it is difficult to recover.

**A Desire for Slow Food and a Simpler Life:** While the rate of change is speeding up there is a countervailing trend, as some seek respite by slowing life down. The “slow food” movement - organic foods, Farmers Market, Seed Library, Cooking from Scratch. Simplifying Life is a good example of the emerging trend.

**Home Schooling on the Rise:** As parents become increasingly concerned about the direction that education is going, home schooling is on the increase. The main concern is that the mainstream education system places too much emphasis on rote memorization in order to students to pass tests and for schools to maintain funding rather than provide experiences and activities that prepare young people for life.



*Dark La Crosse*

**Becoming More Culturally Diverse:** Immigration has resulted in an influx of people of different cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds to the La Crosse community, enriching community life, but also requiring the library to develop collections and programs to serve their interests.

**Students Leave When They Graduate:** In any one year the La Crosse population is host to 10,000 young people who come to study at the universities/colleges but choose to leave for major cities and the employment and lifestyle opportunities they offer.

**An Expanding Regional Hub Financed by the City Tax Base:** At the same time that La Crosse has grown as a regional hub, communities in the surrounding area have become dependent on the services the City provides, but do not contribute adequately to the cost of providing them.

**Shift to a Knowledge Services Economy:** The shift to an economic mix more focused on “public good” knowledge-intensive enterprises – health and education particularly – that are

traditionally tax-exempt is having a major impact on funding operations via property taxes.

**Growing Homelessness:** Although the unemployment rate is a low 3.5 per cent, the homeless population in La Crosse continues to expand. Many members of this community are regular patrons of the library. The demand for some services, such as computer terminals to access the Internet, limits the ability of the library to provide adequate services to other patrons.



*Books'N Brunch*

## LIBRARIES

**Demand for Multiple Media Formats:** Demand for library titles spans several generations of technology - books, CD, DVD, microforms and the Cloud. This has a significant cost attached.

**Libraries Becoming Community Hubs:** The 2014 Report, *Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries*, the Aspen Institute Communication and Society Program suggests that public libraries are becoming “a key partner in sustaining the educational, economic and civic health of the community during a time of dramatic change.....a central hub for learning and community connections”

**Poor Cut-off from the Digital World:** Some citizens, who cannot afford the Internet, use libraries to access on-line for jobs or conduct

transactions with government services. Many use the library, not just for books, but for journals, periodicals, movies and other types of entertainment they otherwise are unable to afford. One in ten live in poverty, even while working one or two jobs. Some 38 % of students in La Crosse County were eligible in 2012 for free lunch and continues to rise.

### **Expecting More from Libraries, Not Just Books:**

Eminent librarian Professor R. David Lankes author of *Expect More*, says we should expect more than books from libraries. Libraries will offer new collections such as talents you can check out, help in improving society and a platform for knowledge creation and sharing. They will also be “skilled in transformative social engagement” in order to identify community

needs and "help guide a continuous change process".

**New Models of Library Service Delivery:** New library service models are also emerging, for example the little free library for books to share outside every home in a neighborhood or the library embedded in another organization or co-located with other services.

**Citizens Are Learning to Think-act Like**

**Librarians:** There is also a shift underway to

citizens acquiring the kinds of skills we expect of librarians, the ability to undertake research and develop collections from which to create and offer new programming.

**People Becoming More Time Poor:** Many citizens are increasingly time poor which can limit the times during the day when they can access the library. This means that libraries may need to open in the evening to provide universal access.



## STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

The citizens, staff and board members provided contributed the analysis of the La Crosse Public Library's capacity to meet the challenges ahead. This analysis relies most heavily on the Dynamic SWOT (What to Keep, Abandon, Invent or Re-Invent), discussions about the practicability of the projects/initiatives as well as a board and staff discussion about the critical issues facing the library.

## CHALLENGES TO ADDRESS

**Customer/patron Needs as Diverse as the Community:** The library is increasingly being asked to help tackle community challenges in areas as diverse as job seeking, skills development, early literacy, diversity, citizenship and business support.

### **Keeping up with New Technologies:**

Adopting new technology platforms comes at a cost, especially when the library is expected to support a plethora of earlier platforms including books, CDs and DVD.

### **Operations at Three Locations Remains an Issue:**

The decision to operate at three locations continues to impose strains on the ability to provide coverage of equitable services to all neighborhoods in the community. . However, the community continues to feel strongly that the branch libraries should remain operational. As the budget situation continues to decline with continuing demand and diminished

resources, the issue needs to be continually evaluated to meet community expectations.

### **Need for Greater Awareness of the Range of Services:**

Many citizens are unaware of the range of services offered by the library. Staff need to get out of the library to develop partnerships and tailor services to niche market needs.

**Better Serve Our Homeless Patrons:** The library will need to work closely with the homeless patrons and other agencies in La Crosse to develop solutions to the homeless challenge that better meets their needs.

**Buildings Are Out-of-date/inflexible:** The design of the main branch, and to a lesser degree the branches, make it difficult to provide office space, service areas and computer access points where they are now needed and restricts how the library can be

re-organized. A complete rebuild is estimated in cost in excess of \$30 million.

#### **Parking and Public Transport Need**

**Improvement:** A bus-stop and increased parking at main branch would improve accessibility.

#### **Need to Make the Main Library More**

**Physically Attractive:** Improving the entrance, as a courtyard and meeting space, with coffee shop and quiet space may attract more patrons.

**Funding in Decline:** The library budget continues to decline, and despite efforts to implement costs savings, continues be inadequate to meet demand for existing and new services.

### **OPPORTUNITIES TO LEVERAGE**

#### **Build on the Positive Regard for the Library:**

Most people are positively disposed towards the library, its' talented staff, the breadth of programs offered and the collections available. However, some want a greater focus on books while others prefer more digital/Cloud offerings and higher internet speeds.

#### **Develop New Partnerships and**

**Programming:** The library could play a greater role in economic and community development, particularly by curating talents, for both free and for fee.

**Closer Collaboration with the City:** There is enthusiasm for the library to work more closely with other city agencies/services i.e. police, schools, colleges to tackle common issues, for example programming with Parks & Recreation, or to develop products using the city records.

**Optimize the City's Public Collections:** The library is well placed to work with the

**Fines a Disincentive:** Fines, particularly children's fines are a disincentive and should be dropped.

#### **Need for a Customer/partner-centric**

**Service Model:** Getting out from behind the desk is critical to developing a new patron - focused service model. The current organization structure limits the ability of the library to become more flexible and adaptable. Under new, more flexible arrangements, managers might oversee new areas such as partner relations, collections innovation and project management. Collections support and front line-jobs might also be combined into more interesting work and attract better qualified candidates.

hospitals, colleges/universities and the schools district to optimize their joint collection strategy, especially to target specific needs e.g. new language collections, health information.

**Reverse the Millennial Brain Drain:** The library is in a unique position to facilitate job programs that involve university and college students starting up new entrepreneurial activities via the library, to slow the brain drain out of La Crosse. Ideally any new activities should be located in or near the downtown or in neighborhood hubs, supported by higher density housing. College students could play a role in offering new research and facilitation services to small business, community groups, and for be available to facilitate crucial community conversations.

**Create Local Maker Opportunities:** A popular new service would be a makerspace,



possibly associated with a business incubator space, or craft activities.

### **Create New Staff Roles and Undertake**

**Training for the New Strategy:** Adoption of the strategic plan will require staff to be deployed to an expanded range of activities, which may require significant training and job redesign. Some staff may be reluctant to take on new and more expanded roles, either lacking the necessary skills or interest, or being close to retirement and not keen on retraining or performing a new or richer more complex role. All staff will need to become regularly skilled/re-skilled in technologies that are rapidly changing.

### **Develop a Platform Approach to Service**

**Provision:** There is an opportunity for the library and the city, and departments of the library to work closely together to optimize the information technology strategy especially to assist in economic and community development, promote

teamwork and collaboration, pursue partnerships, or embed specialized library capability in other functions of the City, e.g. kiosks, one-stop shop services.

### **Design High-value-added Experiences for**

**Digital Natives.** Programming needs to focus on new “value-added” experiences for young people who have been using digital devices since they were born and have grown to expect more.

**Improve Childhood Literacy Early:** Getting books, materials and programs to young people to develop literacy from early age is essential in order to alter their life and career trajectory for the better.

**Add Value to the County Library System:** A more seamless approach to services delivery between the La Crosse Library and the County Library system would ensure that more citizens have access to the widest possible range of quality programming.

## **SURVEY RESULTS**

**Organization Alignment Survey:** A survey to explore the stage of organization development on eight dimensions shows that library is having to deliver solutions - books, CDs, DVDs and the Cloud - which bridge all of the past four major technological discontinuities.

The survey asked participants to rate the library and its readiness for change on eight dimensions including its use of technology, knowledge use, roles, coordination, structure, strategy, production methods and communication.

The survey found that the library, in order to implement this strategic plan, will need to create new work roles, adopt new work

methods and make more use of teamwork as a way of coordinating the work of the library.

### **Library as a Community Anchor Institution**

**Survey:** Thirty people responded to a survey of services that might co-locate with the library to drive additional patronage for the library and extra business for potential community partners.

The co-located services which respondents said would attract higher levels of visitation to the library were a bookstore, cafes/coffee shops, citizen meeting rooms, services provided by the City, or a one-stop Government shop as well as a Post Office or UPS/FedEx office.

Services, which if co-located the library, that respondents said would attract a moderate hypothetical increase in library visitation were after school center, art gallery, arts and crafts, audio recording, broadcast studio, cinema, computer repairs, counselor, food trucks, foundations, gift and hobby stores, a hydroponics garden, makerspace, music shop, office/training rooms, public health nurse and 3D printing.

Least likely to increase library visitation were agricultural/gardening support services, antique store, child care center, digital publishing, drug stores, emergency crisis management center, fitness center, laundromat, medical/dental offices and professional offices.

Asked what new collections would attract increased visitations, most respondent said that the ability to check out a person from a different culture, art works, information about solutions to problems and tools for weaving or other maker tools, would result in them visiting the library more often.

**Non-User Survey:** A survey of 70 infrequent or non-users found that the main reasons for not visiting the La Crosse Public Library were that the respondents already use a school or college library (48%), they do not read books (31%), they buy what they read or watch (27%), they already have the Internet (22%) or they have too many fines (18%).

The sample comprised 70 respondents, female (56%) and male (41%), aged under 12 (29%), 13-18 (23%), 19-23 (20%) and 25-64 (29%) whose current employment status was school students (55%), employed (40%) or homemaker (4%). Some 59% had a library card, 23% did not, and 14% previously had a card but did not now.

Most (84%) agreed the library was an important service. Comments from those who appreciated the library said it was useful "for knowledge", "it helps you learn", "appreciate literature" "helps people with homework", "for books", "for entertainment", "people can go there for free", "for the economically disadvantaged", "education classes" and "to educate future generations."

Those who did not value the library said "because I don't go do I don't know", "because it's boring" and "because no one uses it".

The most recent library visits, either in person or on-line, were this week (7%), last week (34%), within last six months (26%), within last year (8%), last two years (4%), last five years (11%) and never (4%).

Respondents got their information about the library from what they remember when they used it (39%), word-of-mouth (22%), library newsletter (8%), newspapers, TV or radio (6%). Some 14% or 1-in-7 knew nothing about the library.

Respondents said they would visit the library more often if there were more age appropriate programs (28%), if you could check-out tablets and laptops, help with a job search or business plan (24%), if there was a digital media lab (22%) or lower or no fines (20%).

**New Partner Survey:** A new partner survey of mainly teenagers and young adults found that respondents used the library most for pleasure and entertainment (91%), Internet or Wi-Fi (36%), newspapers and magazines (33%) and resources for homework and research (33%).



## FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT THE LA CROSSE LIBRARY IN 2016

The following selected statistics, mostly from the 2015 year, provide a snapshot of the activities of the La Crosse Public Library and the North and South branches at the time of the strategic planning process.

### Summary

- **Budget:** \$4,9 million
- **Number of City Residents with Library Cards:** 43,537
- **Staff:** 73, 41 full-time and 32 part-time.
- **Main Building:** Opened in 1967, remodeled three times, an 86,494 square foot building including 10,000 square feet originally a museum. Holdings at Main Branch: 227,000 items
- **North Branch:** Opened in 1942, 6,160 square foot facility. Holdings: 15,000 items.
- **South Branch:** Opened in 1952, 7,200 square foot building. Holdings: 18,000 items

### Circulation

- **Annual Circulation:** 938,292. Main Library: 786,976. North: 51,787. South: 99,529.
- **Monthly Circulation:** 69,084
- **Self-checkout:** 35%
- **Highest Circulation Print in December 2015:** Depraved Heart: A Scarpetta novel, Patricia Cornwell
- **Highest Circulation Audio Visual in December 2015:** Insurgent (DVD)

### Collections

- **Expenditure on Collections:** Adult print, \$168,771. Adult non-print including Hoopla and Overdrive, \$165,640. Youth Services

print, \$59,929 and youth Services non-print, \$20,356.

- **Adult Collections:** Audiobooks: 2,107. DVD: 1,496. Music: 625. Fiction: 6,182.
- **Print Collection:** 16,884 items added in 2015, including: Books: 9,034. Children's books: 6,921. Teen books: 929.
- **Magazine and Other Serial Collections:** 5,074 items added
- **Audio Visual Collection:** 7,666 items added

### Technology

- **Staff Computers:** 98 computers
- **Public Computers:** 107 desktops, 14 laptops, 15 iPads, 4 AWE computers
- **Wi-Fi:** 23 access points.
- **Bandwidth:** Wide area network, 200MB; Internet, 100MB
- **Other Devices:** 51 printers, 6 copiers, 41 bar code scanners, seven projectors and three microfiche readers
- **Security:** 3 video surveillance servers and 57 IP cameras
- **Servers:** 25 computers hosting 45 servers
- **Support for:** Winding River Library System

### Adult Services

- **Facebook:** 2158 page likes
- **Website:** 8975 unique users Feb 2016
- **Computer Access 2015:** 66,067 sessions/more than 3.5 million minutes

- **Interlibrary Loan 2015:** WISCAT borrowed: 3587 WISCAT loaned: 4000
- **Reference Questions Answered at Ref Desk 2015:** 19,127
- **Instruction Questions Answered at Ref Desk 2015:** 6,268
- **Instruction 2015:** 57 classes with 504 students
- **On-line Resources 2015:** 24 resources accessed 232,414 times
- **Programs:** 4-500 guests and 21 vendors at our first ever Comic Con over 3 days
- **National History Day: Hosted** 796 middle school students on research tours for NHD project work.

#### Youth Services

- **Outreach Services at events:** 62 times serving 4,802 patrons including Back to School Bash, Child Care Centers, or Community BabyShowers:.
- **NEW PROGRAM - Americorp Play and Read Grant for early literacy:** 21 outreach Storytimes to local daycares, 597 children in February 2016
- **Educational Tours of Local Schools** 1,526 students and teachers at 41 tours., for all children in Kindergarten and Second Grade, some preschools and local youth serving organizations:
- **In-house Programming:** 400 programs serving 13,618 children and families, including 238 early literacy Storytimes reaching 5,424 patrons. Includes robotics Star Wars celebrations and pizza and book discussions
- **Get Up and Go Day in partnership with PBS and Local Businesses:** 10 organizations and 315 participants

#### FACTS & FIGURES ABOUT LA CROSSE IN 2016

The following selected statistics mostly provide a snapshot of the City of La Crosse in 2016.

#### Population

- **Population (2014 estimate):** 52,440
- **Age Distribution (2010 census):** Under 5 (5.0%), Under 18 (16.2%), 19-64 (65.7%), 65



*North Branch Library*

#### Programs

- **Monday Morning at Main:** 22 programs, 1625 attended
- **Monday Night Movies:** 38 programs, 1252 attended
- **Spring Concert Series:** 8 programs, 470 attended
- **Volunteer program:** 2134 hours given by 72 individual volunteers
- **Supported Book Discussion Groups and Home Delivery Service:** 45 programs or activities, 601 attended
- **AARP Collaboration:** 1887 tax returns filed through the free program for seniors and low-income people

#### Archives

- **Programs:** 104 activities and 2721 attended, up from 15/251 in 2010 to develop/promote a vital historical "connection" within the community between the past:
- **On-site Visits:** 3,225 for collecting, maintaining, and providing and promoting access to the local historical record
- **Photographic Images Scanned:** 1,950

and over (13.1%). Population is skewed by 10,000 students in higher education.

- **Households,** 20,783
- **Persons per Household:** 2.25

- **Racial Composition:** White: 89.8% African American: 2.3% Native American: 0.6% Asian 4.9% Other: 0.4%



*South Branch Library*

### **Workforce**

- **Unemployment Rate:** 3.5%
- **Sectors:** 80 percent of La Crosse's workforce are in professional, technical and service fields especially health, education and visitation.
- **Median household income:** \$40,457 (2013)

### **Business and Community Organizations**

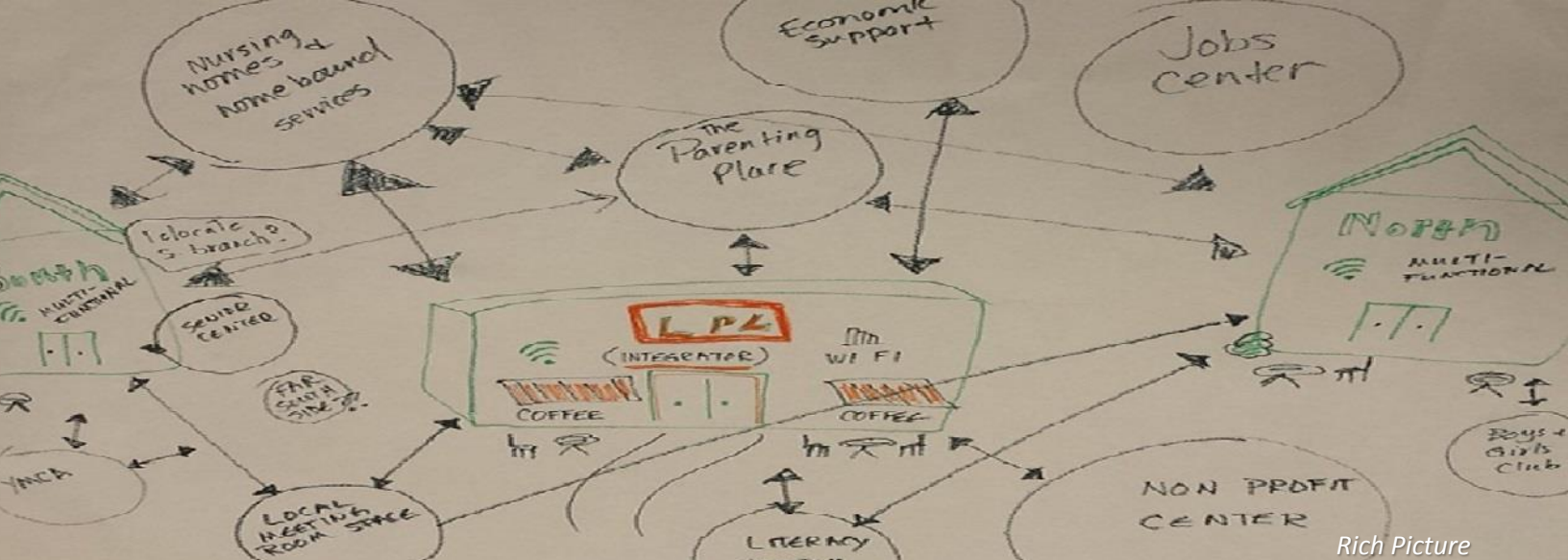
- **Civic Organizations:** 11 active neighborhood associations and many civic organizations including the Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Mainstreet, Salvation Army, AARP, La Crosse Community Foundation, Weber Center for the Performing Arts, Rotary, United Way etc.

- **Higher Education:** University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, Viterbo University, and Western Technical College.
- **Major Employers:** Gundersen Health System, Mayo Clinic Health System - Franciscan Healthcare, Trane, Kwik Trip, La Crosse County, School District of La Crosse, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, CenturyLink, Logistics Health Incorporated, City of La Crosse. Other corporates include: Altra Federal Credit Union, City Brewing Company and La Crosse Technology
- **Total Number of Firms (2007):** 3,055

### **Other**

- **Recognition:** Voted by Outdoor Magazine in 2014 as one of the best 16 places to live, US News and World Report in 2009 listed La Crosse as a top ten places to live in the US.
- **Area:** 20.52 square miles, 2,501.5 people per square mile
- **Transport:** Interstate 90, Amtrak, La Crosse Regional Airport
- **Festivals and Events:** 20+ annual events including Oktoberfest. The La Crosse Center has an 8,000 seat arena and convention hall and hosts 200 events and 300,000-400,000 visitors a year





Rich Picture

## STAKEHOLDER INTERESTS MATRIX

Participants in the strategic planning process identified a substantial list of stakeholders and their interests in the library. The matrix below describes how the library, through the implementation of this strategic plan can serve the interests of stakeholders/patrons and/or the patrons serve the library's interests, and in doing so, "bake a bigger cake" together for the greater good of the citizens of La Crosse.

Stakeholder	Stakeholder Interest	Library Interest	The Greater Good
<b>AARP</b>	Provide seniors with a range of educational, social and other services that improves their quality of life in retirement.	Expand the AARP partnership beyond tax preparation. Check out a senior expert tutor, mentor, consultant or trainer.	Senior talents continuing to contribute their expertise to the community.
<b>African American Mutual Assistance Network</b>	Develop employment and educational opportunities for low-income families, inspiring children to learn and adults to teach.	Support programming that helps develop pathways to higher education, Pre-K reading and events to expose members to entrepreneurial and business practices and opportunities.	Making a vital contribution to the development of young African-American people.
<b>Artists</b>	Spaces for making, learning, teaching and showcasing.	Offer Makerspaces, host exhibits and artist-in-residence events.	Enrich the cultural experience of the community and promote local artists.
<b>Autism Community</b>	Information and support for families with a family member with autism spectrum disorder.	Help the autism community build collections of resources and information to support their members.	Better outcomes for both parents, guardians and their families.

<b>Banking Institutions</b>	Financial literacy, budgeting, opening and operating a bank account.	Partner with banks for financial literacy programs for children and low income workers especially.	Greater financial success or wealth creation.
<b>Boys and Girls Clubs</b>	Help young people in challenging circumstances learn and grow.	Develop programming and host activities to support the social and cognitive development of this community.	Greater success in life.
<b>Chamber of Commerce</b>	Grow and maintain a successful business, deal more efficiently with government	Research, meeting spaces, collaborative workspaces for start-ups, tax and regulations information.	A more vibrant economy.
<b>Children</b>	Reading skills, especially in the realm of imagination, cognitive, emotional and social development, interaction skills.	Programming designed for children for specific age ranges, around health, reading, the arts, hobbies, and reading/STEM literacy.	Improved literacy and life skills.
<b>Children and Their Families</b>	Events for whole families to attend.	Value added experiences.	Families learning together.
<b>Children Who Need a Place to Go After School</b>	Safe place to go after school, with study facilities and related programming, such as tutorials, or maker, healthy food preparation activities.	Help with studies, enrichment activities not provided by school e.g. music, art, theatre, making.	Support especially for those who are time poor or are working multiple jobs.
<b>Clients that are Homebound</b>	Access to library services.	Delivery of books, CDs and other materials to the disabled and elderly at low incremental cost.	Improved services particularly for the immobile.
<b>Citizens</b>	Opportunity to have direct input to solving difficult or complex community issues,	Research issues and facilitate civic conversations on behalf of the City in a neutral environment.	Reduce Partisanship and Gridlock.
<b>City Service Locations</b>	Offer kiosk or pick up for high interest services e.g. for the most popular book titles where another City department has a service location.	Align with any new taxpayer funded space for library technology to be available. Black River Beach, Southside Senior Center, etc.	Offer value-added city information and knowledge-based services at more accessible locations.

<b>Community Garden</b>	Grow plants, particularly unique varieties	Partner with the seed library to grow food and harvest seeds for the community.	Maintain community knowledge about gardening and farming.
<b>Day Care, e.g. Parenting Place</b>	Improve services, make their centers more desirable for the Young Star rating.	Coordinate family and child services and programming with other services and agencies like YMCA, daycare facilities, Parenting Place.	Provide support for families while children are young.
<b>Day-shift Workers and Time Poor</b>	Access library services in the evenings or at times when not busy.	Vary opening hours to accommodate people with different time constraints.	Expand library access.
<b>Downtown Business Owners</b>	Attract more visitors and citizens to the Downtown.	Develop joint programs around talents e.g. tax, food, entertainment, events. Possibly add pop-up pilots with some businesses.	Create a more vibrant downtown.
<b>Elected Officials</b>	Appreciated by citizens for helping to solve their problems; get re-elected.	Provide elected officials with a venue and the research to explore community issues in a collaborative way. Develop joint implementation plans.	Better informed citizens, appreciation of political leaders for tackling the difficult issues in a transparent way, more agreement about what to do.
<b>Employers</b>	Help workers develop new skills to adapt to change. Anticipate what new skills will be required in the mid-term to prepare for change.	Develop a program that offers a library card with each new hire. Help employers' access service providers or programs for their workers.	Expand the pool of people who are new job ready.
<b>Fitness Providers and Trainers</b>	Space to provide one-on-one services to clients.	Yoga, exercise classes.	Healthier community.
<b>Freelance or Gig Economy Workforce</b>	Access to resources, a place to work, hold meetings.	Meeting spaces, research, develop a pitch or resume.	A place to call "the office".
<b>Government Agencies, City, County, State</b>	Provide citizens with easy and reliable access to information or service.	A one-stop shop, partnering with other organizations to increase traffic to the library.	More convenient access to government services.

<b>Health Care Applicants</b>	Help with applying and re-applying for health insurance cover. Understand what is available and how the systems works.	With changes to health insurance many patrons need help applying for insurance and navigating those issues (which require computer literacy skills they may lack).	More citizens with access to health care.
<b>Health Care Providers</b>	Educate health consumers about ways to improve health outcomes.	Present health classes to lower the rate at which patrons need medical attention. Provide opportunities for health and wellness sessions screenings.	Improved health outcomes, focus on health prevention.
<b>Health System Patients and Consumers</b>	Access to timely and reliable health information.	Develop employee health incentive programs around Fitbits, moderate health challenges, etc.	Better informed patients.
<b>Hmong Community</b>	Access to books, movies, magazines and programming in their language.	Work with the community to develop collections, including language specific titles of interest to their members.	The Hmong culture is valued by the community
<b>Ho-Chunk Community</b>	Learn about their cultural heritage and practices.	Help the community develop collections to celebrate and help others engage with their culture.	Value the Ho-Chunk cultural heritage.
<b>Home Schooled Children and Their Parents</b>	Convenient alternatives to public education.	Provide educational resources.	Improved educational outcomes as a result of better support.
<b>Homeless People of La Crosse</b>	Develop new skills that improve their life outcomes. Get access to services, or connect to family.	Provide a social worker with time and space at the library to deliver targeted programs.	Better outcomes for both the homeless and the community.
<b>Illiterate Adults</b>	Learn to read and write, study to complete High School.	Literacy programs in a neutral setting.	Increase employability.
<b>Incarcerated, Current, Recently or Formerly</b>	Help getting back into society, identification, apply for and get a job, reconnect into the system.	Books and materials for local prison. Help with IDs and resumes on release. Skills training.	Better reintegration into the community.

<b>Latino Community</b>	Access to books, movies, magazines and programming in their language.	Work with the community to build language collections and programming.	Hispanic culture valued by the community.
<b>Library Staff</b>	Secure, rewarding jobs/career, serving the community.	Teamwork, multi-skilled, work flexibility, flexibility, adaptability lead and manage projects, outreach.	Able to adapt to change, and help the community do the same.
<b>Local Food Organizations</b>	Encourage consumption of locally grown and organic foods.	Food education. Perhaps a food preparation makerspace to teach culinary skills.	Healthy eating.
<b>Low Income Workers</b>	Skills to get a better job, help with resumes, job applications.	Training for non-credit classes no longer offered by Western Technical College (WTC)	Improved employment prospects.
<b>Millennials</b>	Walkable spaces, apartment living, close to services and the action.	New kinds of spaces and co-located services at the library that appeal to this age group.	Fill in the talent and age gap in La Crosse. Contribute to increased vibrancy.
<b>Minimalists</b>	Live with as few possessions as possible.	Tools, talents and techniques. Borrow works of art.	Reduce consumption and waste.
<b>Neighborhood Associations</b>	Neighborhood preservation and improvement, safety and town planning issues.	Provide members with a place to meet, and opportunities to plan and redevelop library function in their areas.	Experiment with new localized library models to suit the needs of different neighborhoods.
<b>New Foreign Arrivals in the Community</b>	Want to feel welcome, some wish to learn English or orient themselves to the city and its customs and how things work.	Provide a warm and welcoming environment and develop collections with their community representatives.	Integrate new arrivals into the community, make them feel welcome.
<b>New Home Owners and Renovators, and Handymen/women</b>	Borrow rarely required tools, learn how to use the tools. Try new tools before investing in them.	Partner with community business or WTC to offer introductory tool use programs	Develop opportunities for citizens to learn new technical skills.
<b>Non-English Speaking Citizens and Visitors</b>	Local information in a range of languages, translations, as well as a selection of popular works to borrow.	Signage in multiple languages, recruit staff who speak the main languages spoken in La Crosse.	Celebrate diversity.



<b>Not-for-Profits</b>	Serve the under-served in a variety of segments, offer public outreach programs.	Provide a gathering or meeting space, develop joint programming.	Extend the reach of not-for-profits.
<b>Nursing Home Residents and People Who Are not Mobile</b>	Access to the same library services as everyone else.	Arrange volunteer readers to visit nursing home and homebound elderly and disabled.	Connect volunteers with difficult to serve patrons.
<b>People with Social and Emotional Challenges</b>	Advise or guidance for dealing with autism, dementia etc.	Develop collections and/or access to advisors who can provide relatives and friends with helpful advice/support	Citizens become more aware of the needs of people with social and emotional challenges, particular autism and dementia.
<b>Potential Makers</b>	Access to design and production tools, business planning, marketing and financial/funding advice.	Offer demonstration sites for other community members to share knowledge. Example: How to repair something, etc.	New businesses and jobs created.
<b>Parks &amp; Recreation Department</b>	Offer new programs that attract citizens to parks, gardens and trails	Develop new programs that help the Department achieve its goals.	Become a model for inter-agency collaboration.
<b>Readers of Local News</b>	News reports of current events.	Develop a program for citizen journalism.	Increase in local news reporting at a time when it is in decline
<b>Remote Users of the Library</b>	Download eBooks and movies remotely, or access databases.	Expand access to services including databases, Hoopla, genealogy resources.	Expand the library beyond the four walls.
<b>South La Crosse Area Aging unit</b>	Age in good health, in better financial shape or in good spirits	Setup a space to help baby boomers with aging, health and retirement issues.	Improve the mental and fiscal health of elders.
<b>Salvation Army</b>	Help serve the transient population with new more targeted programs based on their needs.	Host Salvation Army programs. Improve access to support services for their clients.	Help develop the capacity of the transient population to deal successfully with their challenges.
<b>La Crosse School District and Schools</b>	Enrichment programs for students during the summer break for continuity, or after school to support school learning.	Offering specific programming at the schools or when schools are closed. Offer a library card automatically to every student.	Increased participation in non-school time learning activities. Better integrated collections and programming.

<b>La Crosse County Library</b>	Provide a broader range of programming and services to patrons	Work with the County Library System to develop and offer an expanded range of services for the region	Broader reach of the library and its collections and programs
<b>Seniors</b>	Lifelong learning, relaxation, travel--programs and materials.	Offer larger print books, audio books and books on CD. Health information, tax advice, opportunities to volunteer.	Happy, healthy and productive retirement.
<b>Service Clubs</b>	Offer help programs to those in need.	Provide venues for events and programs.	Expanded service provision for people and groups with special challenges.
<b>Small Business and Entrepreneurs</b>	Legal, accounting, regulatory, tax and other advice. Help with business planning and other facilitated services, research and workspaces. Advice from someone who has done it before.	Research, incubator space, guidance for start-ups, information about regulations and taxes, one-stop shop.	Grow the economy and jobs.
<b>Soon-to-be Out-of-work Employees</b>	Information about new career opportunities the skills required, and participate in learning activities.	Reach out to employees of industries in transition and offer to provide access to new skills development, and career opportunities. Access to MOOCs	Retraining people for new jobs/careers to make career transitions more successfully.
<b>Taxpayers</b>	Value for the tax dollar	An adequate budget to deliver the wide range of services a diverse community needs to be successful	Receive the benefit of services that are essential for thriving communities
<b>Teens</b>	Fun, personal development, meet socially with peers.	Suitable spaces that allow for teenagers to meet and interact socially. Game nights, teaching internet safety and literacy.	Social development of young people in a safe environment.
<b>Tourists, Visitors from Other Places</b>	Information about city highlights and current events, history of the city and the region.	Kiosks, guided tours, information along trails and at points of interest. Wi-Fi access.	Expanded experience of La Crosse.

<b>Tutors</b>	Need private spaces with no or low charge in order to offer learning support services to students, people in career transition, less well off.	Meeting rooms or spaces, learning materials, on-line access.	Expand learning opportunities for those in need.
<b>Unemployed</b>	Help in getting a job. Access to the now largely on-line employment system.	Provide a safe haven, access to computer and Internet; help using a computer, in preparing a resume, submitting search job listings, a job application or acquiring interview skills.	Reduce unemployment.
<b>University and College Students</b>	Work experience opportunities, or help starting a business.	Support for the delivery of new services especially in the field of their talent, research, business services and civic engagement.	Develop a permanent new role in La Crosse and be part of its resurgence.
<b>Volunteers</b>	Being appreciated for helping others.	Offer a range of tasks at the library including fund raising, book sales, readings etc.	Contribute to the community.
<b>Voters</b>	Be able to register to vote, develop a sound understand of the pros and cons of issues, get people elected who will help the city, county, state or country create a better world for us all.	Voter registration and ID through library registration processes and online assistance. Voter education. Polling booths.	Increased participation in electing political representatives.
<b>Winding Rivers Library System</b>	Provide a broader range of programming and services to patrons	Work with the County Library System to develop and offer an expanded range of services for the region	Broader reach of the library and its collections and programs
<b>Working People</b>	Find time in a busy day to read, go to the library.	Programs before or after Library standard hours.	Adult learning, literacy and entertainment.
<b>Young Parents with Young Children</b>	Information about parenting, learning activities for young children.	Parental guidance Offer programs that help parents make a habit of reading to/with their children. Storytimes.	Improve literacy and life prospects.

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<b>YWCA and YMCA</b>	Help young men and women reach their full potential. Create an inclusive community based on equality, respect and dignity.	Become a resource center for young people. Provide a venue for events.	Expand range of social services to the community.
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## STRATEGIC MEASURES AND TARGETS

The following measures or targets were developed by the staff and board to assess the progress of implementing the strategic plan in the immediate future

Strategy	Target or Measure
Staff and Board to review the strategic plan and priorities	Every six months
Develop sustainable major programs with partners	One a year
Every child in La Crosse will have a library card	December 2017
No child will be blocked from access to the library	December 2017
Staff are familiar with programs, services and collections	100% within six months
Patrons are familiar with programs, services and collections	TBD
Multi-lingual collections developed	TBD
Develop and implement a marketing plan	By August 2017
Target usages of library cards by citizens	At least once a year
Update statistics we collect to represent other forms of use	ASAP
Track participants in programs via their library card	TBD
Track use of learning from programming, follow up	TBD
Measure percentage of circulation paid for by City taxes	Ongoing
Partner with other groups to facilitate citizen engagement	First Quarter 2017
Patrons view the library as an everyday experience	TBD





## ADDITIONAL PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

Over 200 project concepts were generated via the strategic planning workshop process, from the on-line version of the process and from contributions by individual staff and board members and citizens.

### GOAL 1: COLLECTION BUILDING AND SERVICES INNOVATION

*How the library develops and maintains collections, and what new collections it develops in order to deliver an evolving mix of services.*

**Adult Retreat:** Some kind of retreats for adults--not sure what exactly but programs that are a few hours long or on a weekend

**All One Community: Working Together:** This informational talk series features agencies within the community that help us all: food pantries, job assistance offices, parks, and charitable organizations. How can you help La Crosse be a stronger community by being aware of the many ways to participate?

**An Evening at LPL program:** evening events programming to include wine/beer tastings, local chef spotlights, local musicians, (varying music styles), book discussions, new technology review, held at alternating library locations.

**Arts and Fiction Festival:** A two month creative experience for the community would run during October and November to coincide with National Novel Writing Month. This would culminate in a special one night event. There will be programming for all ages to develop and

hone art and writing skills and introduce people to new ideas.

**Be a Pro with Programs:** This series would provide training on a variety of programs (like Word, Excel, Power Point/Key Note, search engines, Map Quest / Google Maps, Adobe, etc.) to more in depth tech training (like writing code and setting up a website).

**Branching Out - Old and Young:** An intergenerational center for children and seniors to interact and have a positive impact on each other. Ideas include early readers reading to seniors, teens teaching seniors computer skills, great opportunity for volunteering, etc. Could easily be located at South branch utilizing programs and funding already available, could partner with Parks Dept. for activates and utilization of the park located behind the library. Other ideas include knitting, card/game playing

**Civic Life Matters:** Learning by communing with assistance of librarians and others to better perform citizen functions.

**Community Outreach Revitalization and Engagement (CORE):** Work with a variety of local groups, other non-profits, businesses and schools to bring them into the library to help provide relevant content. Make the library an inviting social hub. Your need to entice patrons in and provide value that makes them want to stay and return in the future.

**Crowdsourcing La Crosse's History:** do you have photographs, oral interviews or videos dealing with La Crosse that you want to share freely with the larger world? Upload your material, add some descriptive information and share.

**DIY Demos:** First recruit people who have skills in particular subjects by social media, newsletter and signage. Then host DIY Demos in subjects such as bicycle repair, seed saving, mending clothing, cleaning computer keyboards, how to build a bookshelf or bird house, baking bread, soap making, building a compost, etc.

**Don't Buy it, Borrow it:** The library will partner with local experts and institutions to provide access to specialized equipment and training. One example might be teaming with Western Technical College to provide access to woodworking or metalworking equipment. Another could be teaming with local hobby and art enthusiasts or professionals for makerspace experiences (pottery, sewing, painting, etc.). A third might be working with a professional kitchen to provide access to industrial equipment.

**Embedded Family Literacy:** Meeting young families where they are at in underprivileged communities, in the setting of their preference - home, library and school). Develop a relationship with a family to promote basic

literacy skills for all family members. Inter-generational learning.

**Expert Facilitators to Solve Your Problem:**

Employ or invite expert facilitators to engage diverse audiences who want to solve business, personal and community problems in the spirit of collective problem solving and community support.

**Find Jobs Now!** Expand/enhance current job seeker services to include resume review, practices interviews and job recruitment events at the library.

**Find Jobs Now.** Are you struggling with how to find, how to apply, and how to interview for a job? Job coaching sessions can help you get started.

**Flerspråklig colecciones:** The name says it all – core multilingual collections for languages spoken in La Crosse. Includes multilingual signage, help material and website.

**Food and Fiction Festival:** An exciting, one night event that consists of local fiction writers and community members who will select favorite and memorable material. Also a panel of literary experts from the region, collaborative work, and community engagement. Could result in a group of stories, or short fiction that gets published and held at the library. Also could include catering and beverages from local food establishments.

**Franke Foundation Non-Profit Resource**

**Center:** Following the model of the Alan County (IN) Public Library, and leveraging the existing Foundation Grant collection at LPL, create a non-profit resource center at Main library.

**Get off the junk:** A resource for people addicted to drugs and alcohol

**Global Connections:** Monthly meeting to discuss issues affecting people native to other countries - immigration, practical issues,

connecting them to local resources, educating about laws, customs, etc.

**Guardians of Literacy:** Expansive literacy program for underserved populations. Would include outreach, resources, and programming. Use resources such as literacy council, existing programming, and new channels to reach new populations. Ensure the expansion of literacy across all demographics.

**Health for a Better Life:** Come to the library to participate in exercise classes, healthy diet classes, mental health and addiction workshops, and other programs to inspire better health within our community. The library would offer space to Parks and Recreation to run programs here and also partner with local health resources, such as hospitals and dieticians.

**Improved Base of Knowledge for Community Resources:** Improve the less knowledge-literate to be more resource literate (how to find out what they don't know and where to find that out) i.e. link to Great Rivers 211. Arm people with tools they did not have before

**It's All about Balance:** Continue to aggressively balance traditional library materials (books) with new/expanding formats (digital).

**Key Community Issues:** The library could hosts a series of meetings addressing the most pressing issues the public receives - dealing with many of the topics discussed here including Economic disparity, social changes, adjusting to different demographic makeups of the city, criminal behavior, neighborhood housing. One of the functions of the library is to disperse information to the community.

**La Crosse History Kits:** Kits will be produced that will include artifacts and documents related to La Crosse History geared toward kids, seniors, and adult memory care patients. The contents will address multiple senses, such as items to touch, music CDs, photographs,

clothing, and items to smell. They will cover various topics, such as different decades, cultures, institutions, and industries. They will be portable and used within the community. Kit ideas include: Lumber barons, steamboats, Native Americans, breweries, Oktoberfest, Hmong community, old time transportation, Gundersen, UWL, early settlers, nationalities, trapping/hunting/fishing, dancing, Civil War, entertainment, the river, the bluffs, sports.

**La Crosse Images Collection:** to include visual images of La Crosse.

**La Crosse Living Room:** Interactive family programming that collaborates the library research to interact with the community (like History Hunt, or Pacing through History, or Footsteps of La Crosse but for kids and families). All should be self-guided so that it can be done any time, it can be checked out like a book!

**La Crosse On-line Press:** A place to publish research, writing on local history.

**La Crosse Trivia Bowl:** Create questions for and host a La Crosse-oriented trivia contest. Possibly with both in-person participation as well as radio call-in or online answer participation.

**La Crosse's Historical Living Room:** Join the fun that that provides interactive activities based on La Crosse history for kids and families. All activities are self-guided so that they can be done at any time, and some engaging activities could be done from home. Much of the La Crosse historical material that the LPL Archives has created has focused on adults. Examples of ideas from the initial workshops include a La Crosse Trivia Bowl and Footsteps tours focused on families. The Archives staff lacks the experience of working with children and families on a regular basis and needs guidance from Youth Services staff as well as educators in how to engage younger audiences in La Crosse history beyond the classroom.

**Lecture on Tap:** The Public Library can start a Lecture series and probably extend it to a Lecture on Tap. Topics could include Education, Philosophy, Environment, Technology, etc.

**Libraries for All.** Help for everyone technology training, books, movies, research, community spaces.

**Libraries -- Information without Bias.** With so much animosity between different political factions in this country we need a source available to join people together.

**Library After-Hours:** Potential fundraiser opportunity. Fun events in the library space after the library closes.

**Library-led Art Fair.** Allow submission for local artists, encouraging amateur artists and youth to get involved, include discussions.

**Lifting Little Learners:** A yearly program for school kid to come to the library each year - not just 2nd and 7th - connect each year to the students for a developing use of the library - potentially connecting to the teaching aspect of school

**Mining 2020:** Investigate if the circulation and hold information we collect can be mined to provide guidance on collection weeding and development.

**More than Books:** Did you know you can rent the latest NY Times best seller? OR where you can read the latest NY Times best seller OR meet a local artist (fill the library with CURRENT) art - have POP UP art shows, for example college class mix media - art and meet the artist in the lobby by the parking lot...USE THE SPACE. While picking up the last season of (Name of program) on DVD, AND maybe stop in the children section and check out the Activities you can check out and bring home to play with. Pick up a list of top 10 books on "potty" training or how to teach a kid to drive.

**Murder in the Stack:** (see web link for info)  
<https://tfpl.wordpress.com/cool-ideas/murder-in-the-stacks/>

**Not Too Old to Learn:** Please provide more programming for the Baby Boomer generation. There are many of us and we want information -- on computers, cultural programming and what's going on in the city. The library is such a great, neutral meeting place. Some who wouldn't attend a meeting at City Hall, would attend in the library's basement meeting room

**Open Doors La Crosse:** use the archives to research various downtown historical buildings and then have a tour guide to give the history and access to these rarely opened spaces.

**Open Mic Workshops:** Meet to work on creative writing or songwriting, leading to performances (monthly? quarterly?)

**Our kids are Our Future,** and reading brings choice and opportunity to children's futures. Find a way to bring access to library books to children living in poverty. We live only a few blocks from a library, and I had neighbor kids with nothing to read and no adult willing/able to take them to the library (I took them when I could). They wanted to read but could not get to the library; this was not the kids fault. They were not old enough to go independently, and by the time they were they had lost interest.

**Our library... Not Just About the Books!**  
Expand your mind, learn something new, remember something you were taught years ago but forgot, join us on a local or national trip, while surrounding yourself with your local community. Coffee and lecture on ... by expert... Cultural competence considered, current research, factual information only. Use the library to do more research after the lecture/debate/presentation. Watch a debate between local experts. Learn about what is needed in our community. Join us on our semi-annual trip to visit a "museum city" or local trip

to another culture (Ho-Chunk presentation/Amish/Hmong), etc. etc. etc.

**Parenting Classes Focused on Literacy.** Why reading is so important.

**Piano Recitals?** I think the library could become more influential and valuable if you rented out the basement space for non-library functions....like piano recitals.

**Poetry Writing Series:** I attended the poetry writing series a few years ago and the nano-write month two years ago both awesome. Maybe build out, have group challenges to get people working together on those fronts, or starting help the community ideas.

**Read Well to Live Well:** Being a good reader opens so many doors in life. It makes the day to day things we all do so much easier. It is the key to a good education and success in life. Not everyone needs to go to college, but everyone needs to be able to read. Encourage the love of reading makes that process a joy at any stage of life. But particularly for children...it can be an escape from a challenging situation, beginning a dream or the resolution of a goal.

**Route to Success:** establishment of a literacy lab for all ages. Welcoming and safe environment with appropriate collections and trained teachers/mentors.

**Save Lives:** Save lives by learning how to preserve your story, your family story and to share it.

**Skill Sharing Database:** Compile a list of community members who wish to share their skills free of charge. Range from farming, crafts, arts, writing, mentoring, all free as a resource through the library. Library could also provide meeting space for services.

**Sustainability on the Mississippi:** A long-term series of programs, readings, and activities that would promote wise use and management of

local resources which would promote sustainable practices locally. This could include not only personal choices, but also business and government choices.

**Take the Lead:** Be part of the solution. Join local experts and leaders to help strengthen our community. Learn how you can enrich your life, develop leadership skills, and help your fellow citizens at the same time.

**Talking Together:** A program where people could talk with other people whom they normally wouldn't talk to. People outside our comfort zone -- different cultures, genders (more than two), socioeconomic status, religions, ages, education levels, experiences, arrest records, etc. Once we've had a friendly conversation with people who are different from us, it's harder to make them "Other".

**Teach me. Teach you:** Join us Saturday mornings for mini-sessions by local experts on topics of interest to you. This Saturday Lori Lorisson will present "15 minutes to native prairie plants in your back yard" at 10:00 a.m.; Bob Boberson will present "Sharpening your lawn mower blade" at 10:15 a.m.; Jill Jillerson will present "The five best travel search tools" at 10:30 a.m.; and John Johnson will present "Making your own natural, healthy deodorant" at 10:45 a.m.

**What is Going ON?** Bulletin board for community events.

**Words With Music:** The objective of the library becoming more influential and valuable in the community. Opportunities to introduce members to a music background through reading (lots of music has been written around Shakespeare, for instance). I'd love to see more partnering with the La Crosse Symphony and the Chamber Chorale (words and music).

**You and Your Private Parts:** A program to encourage reproductive health for teens



**Your place for Community Engagement:** The Library would better illuminate what the library can do as a meeting place for people of like or broad-ranging interests; to foster civic engagement through learning more about local

government, community issues, voting, etc.; to help users explore the diversity in the community and to learn more about local history.

## **GOAL 2: CREATIVE SOURCING AND PARTNERING**

*How the library collaborates with stakeholders and services providers to deliver services more efficiently or effectively than either can alone, especially those services which are vital to the success of La Crosse and its' citizens or deal with unmet needs.*

**Author Workshops:** Bring an author and do a week of workshops inviting all in the community to connect in many ways.

**Bicycle Book Mobile:** A bookmobile on a bike for outreach at events like farmer's markets, festivals, etc. Get a local bike shop to sponsor.

**Burnish the Branches:** Explore community collaborations (like Senior Centers to LPL branches). Polish up the branches with expanded programs, making them more viable and attractive to the community.

**Choose Your Partner, Do-See-Do:** Award a \$1000 cash bonus to any staff member who successfully creates a partnership with a new agency/organization and sustains that partnership for 3 years with measurable success as defined by the Library Board and the strategic plan.

**College/LPL Collaboration:** Collaborate with local universities and colleges to promote alternate options for students to use the public library when their academic library is not able to meet their needs. Work with universities to allow checkout with ID Cards. Promote hours of availability, programs and resources to faculty and staff so that they can promote to students and increase LPLs usage by new demographic.

**Come Dance with Us!** Learn country, ball room and traditional dance. Get fit! Lose weight! And meet new friends!

**Community Collaboration Mall:** Library serves Association-profit hub and resource center. Helps refer citizens to agencies/services and educate public on available services

**Coordination with Schools/Daycares:** Create interest among the little minds out there and give them an interest in bringing their families to the library. Whether that be to check out books or attend programs.

**Culture Club:** Connecting people to our diverse communities exp. Hmong and Native American

**Curated Monthly Historical/cultural Fair.** Reach out to historians and cultural leaders in the community and provide space for them to curate exciting and educational experiences on a topic in various fields (Black history, Women's history).

**Dynamite Daycare Days:** Focusing an outreach specific position on reaching local daycares and teaching early literacy skills to both teachers and children.

**Early Childhood Literacy Initiative:** As another attempt to address the poor reading achievement in our community, we will work with area organizations and businesses serving youth to develop a comprehensive outreach program providing early literacy activities and training other adults working with children to do the same. Youth services will collaborate with circulation and the school district to make

this project work. Every child in La Crosse would be "automatically" signed up for a new card (children who already have a card in our system would be given the option to get one as well). This project's success depends on the ability to make items fine free (see my other project proposal tomorrow!) so that we are removing barriers to usage (we have strong anecdotal evidence that families avoid getting cards because of fear of fines).

**Ensuring La Crosse's Past Stays Current:** The La Crosse Public Library Archives is the repository for historical city records. This comprehensive plan will safeguard the community's past by ensuring that records that are "born digital" and created in an electronic environment will be accessible to La Crosse's citizenry through the Archives.

**Exploring Solutions to Community Issues:** Engage our City Council in library based opportunity to exchange views with the community during election cycles and the second would be the issue based Town Hall meetings on a quarterly bases. This would mean participation with the Mayor, City Council members and the library board. We would invite Council members to put forth topics or issues they would want to present to the public. The library would be responsible for promoting these events including identifying the particular issues of interest to Community.

**FILLING NICHES** - You cannot please everyone but there is no reason why you can't try to fill 20-30 niche needs of the community such as genealogy, knitting, gaming, trivia, and local history. Think of the library as a specialist organization that supports other specialist organizations.

**Health for Better Life.** A health literacy program coordinated with the local hospitals/clinics to focus on teaching people

how to care for their bodies and minds for a better quality of life.

**Home to Help:** Program dedicated to provide resources to help the homeless find financial and personal security

**How to:** Work with local employers to include a free library card as part of their welcome/onboarding for new employees. Hospitals, LHI, see list of major employers.

**Introduce a Boy to Nursing:** In cooperation with Viterbo.

**Introduce a Girl to Science, Technology and Math:** Elementary and middle school students will engage in a half-day program of unique 50-minute hands-on workshops in math, science technology and engineering activities, from designing a rubber band powered jeep or water wheel to learning how to code. With the help of volunteers from UWL, nonprofit organizations and community businesses, Girl Day has grown to become the largest of its kind in Wisconsin.

**Kids First La Crosse:** This proposal looks at addressing a number of "problems" for the organization. Increases active cardholders and circulation. Collaborates with the school district and perhaps local businesses. Addresses La Crosse Achievement gap—particularly pronounced with families of color, lower sec, and/ or students receiving free or reduced lunch. Increases access by removing barriers to usage. Increases goodwill/ great marketing opportunity—follows city leaders' desire for more partnering to improve lives of students. Builds community members into lifelong library users. We would collaborate with local schools using Nashville's Limitless Libraries as a jumping off point for coming to an understanding of how to best share information

**La Crosse Library, One Spot to Sign-up for all Government Services:** Use the reference department of the library to provide

information about and to link people electronically to either sign up for services or to be connected to the specific government staff person most knowledgeable of a service the person is seeking. Seek compensation from the other government services to offset your costs. The other government services would need to see the library's service as improving their efficiency in ways that would result in reduction in their operating costs devoted to public outreach which in turn would be able to be used to cover the library expenses. (This could be a wildly crazy thought so feel comfortable to ignore!)

**LAX Health and Wellness Initiative.** The library would partner with the local health care providers, local shelters, and colleges to develop an ongoing series of programming that focuses on health care. This would include preventive health classes, how to navigate the insurance marketplace, basic first aid, healthy diet classes, weight loss and exercise programs (partner with the Y). Provide space for health care providers to offer more screening services in the library.

**Let's get REAL (Reading - Everyone At grade Level):** A collaborative effort among health care providers, the library, schools, the school district and volunteers committed to helping every student read at or above grade level within five years.

**Library Café:** Whether you have an adventurous palate or stick to "the usual," the library cafe offers the sort of flavors of books and stories anyone can love. Enjoy a sampling of genres through live readings and discuss your favorites with fellow story-lovers.

**Library of the Boy and Girls Club!** Bringing books and ball together.

**LPL Books By Bike:** Summer months program partner with BBBB and local bike shops & Friends of the Library to create a Bike Mobile

that could visit neighborhoods and community events to promote library services and programs, give out free books, bookmarks, and promotional materials.

**LPL Books by Bike:** Bring public awareness of library to people in non-traditional settings such as festivals, the farmer's markets, etc., via bike. Go where the people are. An exhibit at the farmer's market might specialize in food preparation and include cookbooks or promote food preparation programming such as a cooking class which would get people in the library's doors. Partnering bike organizations (BBBB, Bike Coalition) could provide bike staff as volunteers.

**Making Connections that Count:** Use the space that use to house the museum to work as an "outpost" to various organizations e.g., Coulee-Cap, Salvation Army, The Job Center, La Crosse County Health and Human Services, Veteran Affairs, just to name a few. Maybe one day a week a different organization would have a representative that would be available to answer questions and provide assistance to those who visit the library. The library could act as a connecting point.

**Partnership with Job Center:** I also like the fact that the library is offering courses in computer knowledge with working with the Job enter.

**Pulp Produce:** Collaborate with UW-LAX or WTC to develop a product made from recycled, unsalable print materials—maybe cartons/trays for garden seedlings. This could be a small, light manufacturing operation—green jobs.

**Reading Together:** Link the public library with the local school libraries by linking catalogs and inter-building logistics. Allow seamless searching and borrowing

**Ready for Work:** A series of events to assist people in preparing for the workplace. This could include resume help, interview prep,

collaboration with the job center, a job fair, and working with other organizations that promote workplace readiness (such as WTC's business clothing drive, free haircuts or dry cleaning, etc.).

**Stability for Homeless Children:** Homeless population needs some kind of stable environment during a vulnerable time, being both very transitional and transitory. Children need to feel safe and supported while learning. Every other week or so at the library for help?

### GOAL 3: COMMUNITY ACCESS

*How the library can co-locate with stakeholders and service providers with synergistic interests to improve the breadth and convenience of new or existing service delivery.*

**Artist Space:** Provide space where artist(s) could set up and do their work for a couple of weeks, people could watch, perhaps participate.

**Downtown Community Meeting Space.** Closing off our basement meeting rooms, lowering the museum ceiling, installing a sound system, add dividing walls, use external doors allowing access before/after library hours.

**A children's lending library at a partner organization.**

**Food and Drink at the Library:** Work with local hospitality resource to develop food/drink options as part of the library experience.

**Hobbyists Space:** Establish a dedicated hobbyist's space, place for active hobbyists to demonstrate or display their things.

**Job Fair:** Provide space for Job Center and employers to connect with prospective employees.

**La Crosse Public Garden:** Growing stronger bodies and minds. Partners: City of La Crosse, Hunger Task Force, School District and seed

**Teen Time After School:** A space for those who do not have a safe environment at home to come for free and just be. They can decide on their own programming in collaboration with youth centers. It would be a space that is secular. Cooperate with Boys and Girls Club or YMCA, The Center.

**Year-Round Tax Refund:** Tax preparation services for citizens in addition to AARP members.

library. Where: Park behind South Branch. Why: Promote healthy eating and growing local. How: Use seed library to start garden. Encourage neighbors, school classes and library staff to care for garden. People caring for garden could take some home, but a percentage would be donated.

**Lunch and a Story** - partner with organizations providing lunch to school children during the summer.

**New Business Co-op Space:** in the museum for an inexpensive rent for library revenue

**Park Libraries!** Bringing nature, sports and libraries together. Summer camps, Adult events (hikes/nature readings)

**Park Partnership:** Build out into the park across the street with city partnership to be a visible community library focused attraction.

**Social Services Partnership:** The Library would partner with Social Services. Person works in tandem with security, educates staff, works with patrons, network with other community orgs to provide resources. Goal to have a

regular presence to create a safer space for staff, patrons, and the person in need.

**StarBooks and More:** Dedicated space for technology offering time for teens, literacy fests,

computer literacy classes for all, enhanced by a funky coffee shop atmosphere. Computing, Conversation and Coffee.

## **GOAL 4: MARKETING, PROMOTION AND ADVOCACY**

*How the library informs citizens, community groups and others in the community of the value of its service offerings, both offered directly and with partners.*

### **A 6-12 Month Multi-media Public Relations**

**Campaign:** Advertise the value that is available at the public library by tax dollars. Highlight services, collections, technology, staff expertise and materials. Tools used: value calculator, date due receipts with value of checked items; an in-house PR coordinator and professional PR firm.

**Added Value Card Discounts:** Offered to local businesses, free bus pass, admission to events.

**Create On-line Image:** Library becomes a destination that includes effective program descriptions and Facebook storytelling, with graphics and words, kept up to date, and enticing to draw in current and potential audience groups. A fulltime task to build community engagement and awareness.

**Fine Free Amnesty:** A period of time when patrons can return any library materials they may have and not accrue any fines. This is important for patrons who may be afraid to come back to the library because of their high fines Combined with a fine limit for each card or a smaller fine rate for items. A fresh start.

**Hometown Tourist:** An engaging learning experience involving collaboration with many other tourist-based interests in the city. Resident would be invited to participate

in/attend/visit a number of area attractions to complete a "passport" including visits to all three library locations.

**Life Without Libraries:** A writing program for a targeted grade school segment. The children would be asked to write a short piece on what life would look like without libraries, or what makes a good library. The pieces would be compiled into a "book" and sold as a fundraiser.

**LPL - the Door to the World:** adventure, tech, learning, travel, come through our doors and we will be the resource for where you want to go. "Go" could represent local, digital, travel, collaboration, education, self-determined growth, activism, etc.

**No, Seriously, It's Really Free:** no fines on any child/teen materials. Remove the economic barrier for families who cannot afford fines and therefore do not use the library.

**Same Time Next Year:** An annual event/campaign to get everyone to visit the library at least once a year. Make it on a Sunday with big door prizes, live music, etc. You must check out one item to be eligible to win. Collaborate with the Community Theater to perform scenes from the play as a lead-up.



## GOAL 5: LEADERSHIP, STAFFING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*How the library recruits and develops staff and other talent in order to adapt to changing patterns of service demand and delivery.*

**But They Get More At Google!** An initiative that examines current PTO policies for management level employees at private sector employers, compares them to what the library currently offers and brings the library into alignment to better improve recruitment and retention.

**Connection & Hot Topics:** Integrate city and library services and knowledge. Use the La Crosse Public Library space to bring community members, public officials, and library staff together for discussion of community issues.

**Get Certified!** A staff development program where staff acquire “points” for various activities designed to improve their job performance and open the door for promotions, bonuses and salary increases.

**Pausarius:** Internal online newsletter setting the beat of change for the library by publishing

stories of successful innovation by the library staff.

**Super Staff!** A regular in-service day for staff to better train and communicate within the organization. Close for a whole day or half-day and sit down as co-workers to collaborate and discuss what is going on in the library and within each department. Getting outside speaker and trainers---new perspectives and ideas.

**Third Space/Place:** An umbrella program for facilitating civic engagement. This would include some of the things we are already doing - AARP tax prep, candidate forums, etc. - and adding in new like-things. The idea is that the library acts as the space, but community members/groups would "run" the events with less staff involvement.

## GOAL 6: RESOURCES, BUILDINGS, TECHNOLOGY AND SYSTEMS

*How the library makes use of the physical infrastructure, including buildings and technologies as well as the supporting systems, methods, processes and systems necessary to enable the library to function and deliver the services at current and future locations.*

**\$ Money Badger \$** : Assist local entrepreneurs by providing office space, assist with paperwork and Tax ID info, provide email, domain, website, fax machine, tax assistance and loan information by utilizing local accounts and banks through library staff's existing relationships with business that have chosen to partner with community involvement and progress.

**A La Crosse Area Kiosk-'Did You Know?'** Our concept is an area & community services, having one place to check the most commonly asked questions instead of going to multiple departments.

**All on the Same Side:** A building redesign project to put library users and the staff on the same side of the table by eliminating the desks that divide them today.

**Behind Closed Doors & In Plain View:** Re-invent the public and closed stack area of the Archives. The public reading room has seating capacity for 16 at tables and the Archives often has groups of 25 plus a need for a few seats for drop-in customers. The closed stack area was not designed to hold archival material but books and other Published materials - because it is moveable shelving, many archival boxes hang over the edge and bang against each other as the stacks are moved thus creating a preservation concern.

**'BOOK' A ROOM:** Come join us to "Build out Our Knowledge" by holding one of your general meetings at the Main Branch Library within the next six months. The cost to reserve the room is a commitment of \$1 per participant. These funds will be used throughout the year to support identified interests within the community.

**Bookmobile/Bike-Mobile concept:** Library on Wheels, traveling to area locations to provide book, technology access, education to use.

**Bookmobile:** combine a book mobile with the summer lunch program (rotation of books with the lunch program) that could include staff from B and G club or Y to assist with social services or health services

**Branches on Purpose:** A study of how to give each branch a distinctive mission rather than being a weak imitation of the main library that happens to be in a different place. Death to the "north" and "south" branches.

**Can You Hear Me Now?** Invest in a new more flexible phone system or collaborate with the city to join theirs.

**Collaborative City Wi-Fi:** Local businesses, organizations and government coming together to offer free city Wi-Fi - this will help the library help others and help reduce duplication and costs

**Community Innovation and Technology Share Space:** A collaborative community space where the community can share resources in cutting edge technology and innovation. This is a maker space, a media center, a production studio, a small and medium group open concept meeting spaces.

**Community Pre-Literacy Center:** Re-model and re-purpose the south branch library to serve as a pre-literacy learning center in collaboration with the Clara Fields Pre-K Reading Program.

**COMPREHENSIVE LEARNING SPACE:** A community location where there is technology, tools, resources, and creation tools of all kind (analog and digital) to make things that will improve the lives of community members.

**Computer Kiosks.** These would be computers at strategic places in the city (such as the La Crosse Center lobby) where people could use their library card to access for up to 10 or 20 minutes at a time. This would be a benefit to people who do not have Wi-Fi at home and need access to the internet to do things like weekly unemployment claims even when the library is closed.

**Courtyard Space:** Open up to the public for rent or even use for Storytime's/programs.

**Create an Attraction** - soccer hall of fame, or other thing - that can serve as a destination that draws people.

**Creation of Computer Lab Mobile:** similar to the bookmobile, the lab mobile would visit and park in neighborhoods to provide computer and Internet access. This would improve accessibility to populations that may not visit the library.

**Development of the Outdoor Plaza:** Landscape as an architecturally engaging and inspiring space for community congregation and

invitation to come in and be inspired. A central inspirational space for the community.

**Enhance the Outdoor Library Space:** To be welcoming.

**Finals and Food.** Provide food for students to keep studying for their finals.

**Get Informed at Your Library.** Having an information station/ office, that has updated information on all Library class, programs and hours. Also has community events, activities, classes. Would have information on housing, job services and health care.

**Global Connection La Crosse!** A partnership between La Crosse Public Library, City of La Crosse, local businesses and organizations to provide free Wi-Fi hubs to all La Crosse residents in need that are available 24/7

**History Fringe Festival:** Use the non-occupied spaces in downtown La Crosse to bring history to life through historical reenactments of the spaces and short plays.

**Ice Cream Truck for Books!** Mobile library with a flavor for everyone. Mobile collection of books and other resources that meets people where they are--schools, YMCA, Boy and Girls Club, nursing homes, parks, etc. Does not have to be a physical "truck" but a moving, traveling collection that spends time (one week?) in a location, provides staff and programming for on-site audience. Could provide classes, instruction, activities, or collaborative work on-site. Teach about other library/community resources.

**Incorporate Valley View Mall Space into a Variety of Library-related Programs:** bookmobile, story times, Adult Basic Education, Bible Studies/Book Clubs. Mall could offer coupons for literacy participation.

**Joint Facility:** Explore a joint library/fire station facility on the extreme south side of the city.

**Libraries Everywhere:** Available help everywhere/for every age or synchronizing public spaces and technology access.

**LIBRARY GATHERING PLACE:** Transition former historical society space into a multi-purpose gathering space for meetings, speakers, tax prep, game nights, movies, lectures, etc.

**Maker Lab:** provides space for making things in collaboration with others. This may include such things as a tool library, educational workshops, DIY demonstrations, and collaborations with food co-op, universities and other organizations. NOT place-specific (could be an opportunity for South branch). Other potential uses - music, gardening, photography.

**Makerspace and Tool Library:** A place where you can bring your ideas to life without investing thousands in equipment

**Makerspace:** a space within the library for creation/play/learning/failing for all ages, possibly the old museum space. Would include high tech (computers, 3-D printer, movie making software, etc.) and low tech (crafting, knitting, art, music, etc.). Could also be used for collaborations with the seed library as well as a demo space for local experts to share their knowledge.

**Making Connections:** Take the lead in an initiative for city-wide Wi-Fi. Compiling and connecting human talents/abilities with citizen needs.

**Non-Profit Resource Center:** Locate the Resource Center at the Library that will help non-profits with grant writing, finding funding sources, be a clearinghouse for local non-profit agencies.

**Our Information Powerhouse:** Who comes to the La Crosse Public Library? Pretty much everyone! Of course book club members and avid readers are here regularly, but we also

cater to those who like to watch movies, listen to music or read a magazine. We have research information for governments, non-profits and students. We are a place for children to stretch their imagination and young adults to find their place in the world. We help seniors expand their learning and the homeless apply for jobs. We even have areas where you don't have to be whisper quiet anymore!

**Preschool through 5th Grade Literacy for Children.** We will rearrange the way the current library functions by sharing space to teach children literacy Pre -K thru 5th Grade. We want to improve upon the existing Pre-K program thru 5th grade by moving it to this space.

**Proposal to Enhance South Community Library:** South Community Library would make an ideal children's programming center; it is open, bright, hospitable, and is on the same piece of property as a park with playground equipment where additional family activities can occur.

**Putting the Reach in Outreach--With our New Bookmobile!** Getting out into the community and becoming more prevalent in library-starved areas. Go into nursing homes, outskirts of town, visiting child care centers and homeless shelter. We will bring the library to them!

**Re-invent La Crosse History Unbound:** Re-invent La Crosse History Unbound (<http://lacrossehistory.org>), a guided portal to local history digital content into a more sustainable website and enhance the user experience. The site, created in 2003 by the La Crosse Public Library in cooperation with the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse's Murphy Library, is outdated and very labor intensive to maintain. It was hoped that with the start of 2016 and the portal Recollection Wisconsin now acting as a hub to the Digital Library of America that the La Crosse History Unbound site could be sun-setted. However, the Archives staff has

heard from heaviest users who have been informally identified as those UWL faculty who work with college students all the way down to middle school students on a variety of La Crosse history related projects. Other users have provided feedback (La Crosse County Historical Society, middle school teachers, UWL Murphy Library Special. Collections staff, and "regular" users not associated with an institution) feel strongly that they appreciate the curated and guided feel of the site. The only way the site can be maintained is to move it to a new platform, have professional computer programming assistance to make this sustainable and devise a method to maintain the links automatically rather than manually. Both the La Crosse Public Library and UWL Murphy Library are using the same open source product to manage their digital assets.

**Rotary Plaza:** Remodel the north entrance to Main in collaboration with the downtown Rotary Club to celebrate their upcoming milestone anniversary.

**SNAP Books:** Youth today are moving away from paper books or even e-reading. They SNAPCHAT stream books to the phone via an App that allows and encourages youth to read in a medium that they are embracing.

**Tech Free Zone:** Expand the second floor at Main to include a tech-free quiet study room.

**The Gathering Place:** Expand and remodel the old museum space to serve as a multi-functional community space providing everything from income tax service to hobbyist space to occasional artists-in-residence activities.

**Tool Library for Building a Better La Crosse:** I propose that the library develop a tool lending library in cooperation with other organizations in the La Crosse area. With the purpose of providing the public with appropriate tools to repair and maintain and improve their homes.

Of course people would have to be trained in the use of the tools before we could lend them out. This work training could be certified so that it would help individuals get jobs in the building trades. Using the know-how of the librarians to set up a lending library.

**Transitioning Collaborative Space:** Use existing technology to aid entrepreneurs moving from one career to another. Entrepreneurs would pay to rent library technology and work collaboratively.

## **GOAL 7: GOVERNANCE, FUNDING AND MANAGING CHANGE**

*How the library funds, governs, prioritizes and makes decisions about the organization as a whole, taking into account the evolving needs and interests of citizens and other stakeholders and the needs, interests and capacities of staff and service providers.*

**And On the 7th Day, God Rested:** Allow public service departments to “shut down” one day a quarter to strategize and discuss issues.

**Bonds for the Future:** A project that will ensure plentiful financial resources to accomplish strategies aims like securing the future of the branches and to keep the library relevant.

**Build It & They Will Come:** Establish a major modern library capital campaign to provide funding for the emerging remodeling/space re-purposing needs.

**Cards for Kids!!** Provide a library card for anyone over the age of 8. Lifting the requirement for a parent signature will provide access for children whose parents are not able to come to the library. By offering a limited card (3-5 times) children will learn responsibility and be able to access all of the library's resources.

**Fair Funding:** Continue to work on a more equitable funding mechanism for unreimbursed service to county residents.

**Free for all—Your La Crosse Library:** The La Crosse Public Library will transition to a fine free library in 2017. Evidence shows that fines do nothing to encourage prompt return (libraries see the same return rates with or without fines) and that they act as punitive barriers almost exclusively to the community members who are

able to least afford to go without library services. In order to improve access for our entire community and increase library usage and circulation, we will eliminate late fines on all items. This proposal will work in tandem with the school collaboration as support from the school relies upon making the program accessible to all students. It also eliminates many concerns surrounding who is signing for the card and taking financial responsibility. Fine free access will open our collection and resources to those who have previously been unable to use the library—often the same people with a higher need for library services.

**La Crosse Regional Library System.** Funded by County tax base, all residents of the county pay tax to support all the libraries in the county.

**Modern Library Capital Campaign:** Solicit donations for a capital campaign to help make new capital investments in the physical environment of the libraries.

**More Bang for Books:** When materials are weeded, move them into “available for purchase” status.

**No – Really. There’s No Fine:** Pursue the elimination of fines on teen and children’s materials to alleviate financial barriers to use.



**Purposeful Help for Patrons:** Have staff focus on things we can get rid of so that we can focus our time on these bigger community projects. Cut the amount of desk time to work on more innovative programming and computer classes?

**The World is Your Oyster with a Library Card!**

Work with the school districts to coordinate data collection to provide every child in La Crosse with a Library Card. Options include easy access card, no fines, no signature needed. The card application is automatic unless parents

opt out. Birth-in care packages a library card for your baby! Renewal of your driver's license also gets you a library card.

**Video of Life in La Crosse:** Free flowing production of a video that captures life in La Crosse. This could also be part of the programming and it would provide a historical archive of La Crosse.

**Who Gave What?** Develop and implement a comprehensive donor database.



## **PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROCESS**

The following people participated in the strategic planning workshops:

### **Patrons, Stakeholders and Citizens**

Robert Abraham, Assistant Chief of Police  
 Cecil Adams, African American Mutual Assistance Network  
 Valjean Adams, Clara Fields Pre-K Reading Program  
 Toni Asher, Pumphouse Regional Arts Center  
 Susan Austin, Friends of the Library  
 Sherry Beames  
 Ariel Beaujot, UW-La Crosse  
 Harley Beck  
 Paul Beck, La Crosse County Historical Society  
 Jane Bessler, Washburn Board Member  
 Kris Betz  
 Willie Bittner, WisCorps  
 Pat Brunett  
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 Greg Cleveland, Fire Chief  
 Bobbi Cowgill  
 Les Crocker  
 Lorainne Decker  
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 Richard Frost  
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 Jan Gallagher  
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 Tom Hench  
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 CJ Hoffman, Franke Foundation  
 Mel Hoffman, Franke Foundation

Major Jack Holloway, Salvation Army  
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 Peg Jerome, County Board Member  
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 Betty Kendricks, Friends of the Library  
 Tim Kabat, Mayor of La Crosse  
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Ryan Soberg, Regional Arts Center, President  
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Mary Ellen Stolder, Friend's of the Library  
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Ardelle Tuxen  
Terry Visger, Regional Storytelling Organization  
Chuck Welch  
Jodi Widuch, Director, Parenting Place  
Bob Wingate  
Mary Kay Wolf, Director, United Way

### **Interviewees**

Interviews were conducted with 18 staff, board and stakeholders (most of whom also participated in the workshops), as well as Dave Skogen, Founder, Festival Foods; Tara Johnson, Chairman of the La Crosse County Board; and Sheila Garrity, Executive Director, La Crosse Community Foundation

### **Library Board**

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Jodi Ehrenberger  
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Russ McClintock  
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Helen Muetze  
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