

Washington County Library Strategic Planning Process PROCESS, STRUCTURE AND ROLES

Introduction

Washington County is developing a cohesive, long-term, organization-wide planning approach to position itself for a successful future. At the core of this effort is the Washington County (WC) Strategic Plan¹ that was developed to assure all aspects of the organization's work are fully aligned with its adopted vision, mission, values, goals and strategies. This Plan focuses efforts on six areas: public service, workforce and employees, communication, technology, infrastructure, and finances. The county's recently completed Economic Development Strategic Plan² evolved from these efforts as an identified action under the Finances area of the WC Strategic Plan. Now the county is preparing to actively focus on its library system, a topic identified in the public services and infrastructure areas of the WC Strategic Plan. The County Board is asking for a review of the county's model for providing library services to assure it is meeting the needs and expectations of the changing community and is effectively positioned for the challenges and opportunities of the future.

Library Strategic Planning Process

The Library Strategic Planning Process will provide a cohesive vision and direction for the county's library system. The process will adopt a whole systems approach that explores how effectively the library system interfaces with other organizations and initiatives in the county, such as schools, colleges, workforce development and early education, to optimize our collective and individual potential. The resulting Strategic Plan will ultimately frame and articulate strategies to guide the county toward continuous improvement in customer-focused service delivery, functional facilities, and the use of enhanced technologies to better serve the Washington County community. The process will also elevate the discussion to a broad level of community engagement, assuring participation by all those who care about the future of the Washington County Library system.

Structure and Roles

The structure established to guide this process forward includes an Administrative Team, Stakeholder Committee, the Library Board and Library Staff. The composition and roles of each are as follows:

Administrative Team

The Administrative Team consists of county and library staff, including the County Administrator and Library Director. It proposes an overall structure and team to work on this process. This team will engage the Stakeholder Committee, Library Board, County staff and other stakeholders to help assure participation is diverse enough for whole system insight and influence. Additionally this team will:

- Develop project structure, process and timeline
- Guide development of meeting agendas
- Draft the Request for Proposals (RFP) for consultant services
- Facilitate implementation of the RFP and hiring process

Stakeholder Committee

The Library Strategic Planning Stakeholder Committee will consist of individuals knowledgeable about communities and libraries. The Stakeholder Committee will work with county staff to design a planning process that reviews the current environment and system, considers future demographic changes, explores various

scenarios for the future library system, seeks expertise where emerging topics are identified, generates ideas for optimal use of resources, and engages county residents and their support for a final plan. The Stakeholder Committee will also provide feedback on materials, reports, and recommendations being developed for the County Board's consideration. Additionally, the Stakeholder Committee will have the following roles and responsibilities:

- Attend 4-6 meetings over the next 12 months
- Assist staff in designing a county-wide strategic planning process for Washington County library services that is exploratory and comprehensive
- Identify, review and apply data to the planning process
- Contribute ideas and advice throughout the process
- Review and comment on a RFP for consulting services to assist in the implementation of the strategic planning process
- Review RFP responses and provide feedback on potential consultants
- Assist in identifying, designing, and monitoring public engagement activities to assure underrepresented voices are actively sought out and all members of the public have an opportunity to participate
- Help facilitate and take part in various discussions, meetings, and focus groups that will be part of this planning process
- Review and provide feedback to staff and consultants on planning documents, communications, draft reports and recommendations and the County Board's consideration

Library Board

The Washington County Library Board will work as an active partner in this process. It was assigned the task of commenting on plans as one of its duties by a County Board resolution in 2005 and will continue with that role as part of this strategic planning process. Members of the Library Board will be appointed to the Stakeholder Committee to assure coordination and integration of efforts. The Library Board will be asked to review and provide feedback to staff and consultants on various aspects of the planning process including surveys, development of public engagement strategies and location of community meetings. The Library Board may host some, if not all, of the public gatherings.

Library Staff

The library staff will also work as an active partner in this process. They will help inform the process about the current condition and functions of our library system. As key implementers of the library system's vision, mission goals and strategies, they will be asked to engage throughout the planning process.

County Board

The Washington County Board of Commissioners sets the direction and adopts the policy for all county services and functions. The County Board will be an active partner in the process through County Board workshops, board agenda items and reviewing documents created throughout the planning process. The County Board will review and be asked to consider approval of the project recommendations.

¹ Washington County Strategic Plan, Completed December 2013 www.co.washington.mn.us/DocumentCenter/View/6034

² Washington County Economic Development Plan, May 2014 www.co.washington.mn.us/DocumentCenter/View/6033