Northern Chaffee County Regional Library District

Also known as

Buena Vista Public Library Board of Trustees

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1. Introduction

It was a pleasure to work with community leadership, stakeholder groups, and other interested parties on the Buena Vista Public Library’s 2018 – 2021 Strategic Plan initiative. Strategic planning is a process rather than a one-time event and is the preferred approach to guiding the Library’s future. This plan consists of five strategic initiatives. It is designed to be achieved in a rolling fashion that allows library staff to accomplish initiatives out of sequence, replace and/or alter initiatives as they are achieved/reviewed, and to add missing elements to any initiative as is beneficial to the organization.

The Library Director, staff, and Board of Trustees employed a comprehensive approach to the strategic planning process. It was structured to include external input and data from a variety of sources, including stakeholder focus groups, an online survey (also made available to non-tech users via paper format), staff meetings, circulation statistics via the library’s Integrated Library System (ILS), technology use statistics via the Marmot Library Network, and programming attendance numbers. This approach provided stakeholders significant opportunities for positive civic engagement and input into the process.

A summary of recurring themes noted by stakeholders via the online survey and focus groups is provided next, followed by the strategic initiatives that are the culmination of this public planning process. The structure of the plan includes a series of 5 strategic initiatives, each with short term and long term goals, value/impact alignments, and steps to accomplish goals. Initiatives were developed by library staff with input from the board in order to respond to public input attained through surveys and focus groups.
2. **Survey & Focus Group Summary**

2.1. **Online Survey Recurring Themes**

The basic demographics of the online survey are as follows: 120 respondents participated in the survey, including 113 community members and seven staff. 94% of respondents reported being card holders. 58% of respondents were age 55 or older, while 42% were between 22 and 55 years old. A brief discussion of select questions follows – these questions from the survey were chosen for inclusion in the strategic plan report because of their impact on how the plan’s initiatives were formulated.

Q1 How would you rate each of the following library services currently provided by the Buena Vista Public Library? Please check one answer for each of the following.

![Bar chart showing service ratings](chart.png)

For question 1, survey respondents were asked to rate currently offered library services. We inquired about this to gain a clearer perspective on services of value to the community as well as how currently offered services were perceived by the community. The answer options included rating each service as excellent, good, fair, poor and “Don’t know”. When translated to numeric values, a score of 4 equates to an excellent rating while a score of 1 equates to a poor rating. The top three rated services included *customer service, library facilities, and hours of operation* (all receiving scores above 3.25). Both *access to materials and computer technology* topics received scores within acceptable ranges, however *adult programming* and *electronic resources (online databases)* scored high in the “Don’t know” rank lowering their score to below fair (>2.0). These scores indicate a need to expand these services, and/or to better inform the community as to what is already available.
For this question in the survey, respondents were provided with the opportunity to comment. Requests that were mentioned less than 3 times are not included in this report. Reoccuring comments for Question #1 were as follows:

Adult programming – 8 respondents requested increases in programming offered to adults. Sunday hours – 13 respondents indicated a desire for adding Sunday hours. Increase collection – 5 respondents requested an increase in the circulating collection without indicating specific materials (i.e., books, audio books, games, puzzles, do-it-yourself materials, etc.)

Q3 Assuming the library will continue to improve services we currently offer the community, and that we will strive to include populations currently underserved, which of the following do you think is the most important for us to focus on? Rank the following items from 1 – 10 with 1 being the top priority. Please use each number only once.

Question #3 was included so that participants could identify what issues the strategic plan could address going forward. Gaging public perception(s) of where to focus tax dollars is a key component of any organizational strategic plan. Participants were asked to rate a prescribed list of challenges already identified by Trustees and staff. Each respondent had to choose which issue was most important to least important. The top three rated areas were parking, outreach services, and interlibrary loan access. Exploration of increasing square-footage of library and increasing items offered for checkout received priority scores as well. Participants were not offered a comments section for this question because a comments section was included as the last question on the survey. In that section, participants included better marketing for
programs, the importance of keeping technology relevant, and increased adult programming. Increasing parking options and collection choices were mentioned more frequently, and positive responses to current youth services programming received 10 individual mentions.

Q4 How often do you visit our library?

Question #4 was included in the survey to provide an understanding of what services current customers utilized most. The survey indicates that materials in the collection are still a top priority for patrons. Program offerings have slightly out-paced computer use in the library and access to person-to-person assistance remains a priority. There was no separate comments section associated with this question.

2.2 Focus Group Recurring Themes

In June the library hosted 5 focus groups according the following categories: young adult, parents, community leaders/advocates, educators and interested stakeholders, and staff. In total, 61 community members participated in focus groups, not including library staff. A number of common themes were spread across focus group discussions in terms of library successes and challenges, as well as requests for additional library services. These common themes are listed below, with the number of focus group participants mentioning each theme shown in parentheses after each.
**Successes**

- Youth programming (15)
- Youth services collection (7)
- Children's computers/manipulatives (3)
- Community connection/socialization (5)
- Customer service (3)
- Technology (Wi-Fi, electronic books) (5)
- Art displays (1)
- Meeting space (1)

**Challenges**

- Parking (30)
- How to communicate what we do (15)
- Providing broader services such as outreach (7)
- Inclusion of disenfranchised groups (LGBTQ, Spanish speakers, homeless, at-risk youth) (4)
- Explosive community growth (9)
- Space limitations (12)

**Requested services**

- Library outreach
- Farmer's market booth
- Block party
- Concise brochure at local businesses
- Library column in Chaffee County Times
- Newsletter sent to patron list
- Participate in centralized information source (buenaivistarec.com)
- Attendance at local festivals
- Home-bound services to those who can't drive
- Hire a high school intern to connect with teens
- Senior programming – tech training, book clubs, author series
- Join Prospector Inter-library Loan (ILL) union catalog of over forty academic, public and special libraries in Colorado and Wyoming (30 million items)
- Use community center for outreach
- Glass off the leisure reading area (by the fireplace)
- Install a resource wall
- Host evening programming
- Establish an emergency service information page on website
- Offer English as a second language (ESL) services
3. Strategic plan

Mission Statement: The Buena Vista Public Library connects people, information and ideas to assure the best quality of life and to promote lifelong learning for our community.

Vision Statement: The Buena Vista Public Library will be a welcoming gateway, both physically and virtually, for accessing information and sharing diverse ideas. Services will foster community, literacy and cultural growth for all library patrons.

3.1 Strategic Initiative 1: Access & Space Use

Initiative Objective - Library facilities should be safe, secure, comfortable, engaging, efficient and inviting to allow for flexibility of service, growth and changes in community priorities. -- Colorado Public Library Standards, p. 11

Short Term Goal – Develop a useable outdoor space along the creek, with a sensory garden to expand services, create flexible space for community growth, and engage patrons with comfortable outdoor space.

Long Term Goal – Complete a comprehensive audit of library facilities with the goal of determining best and highest use for the physical spaces. Create a plan for maximizing space use, increasing under-roof square footage, and/or both so the library is positioned to provide access to all programs, tools, and activities of interest to the community.

Value/Impact

1. Fulfill present demand for space use.
3. Attain new users.
4. Increase library value in the community.
5. Ease access for book returns.

Steps 2018 – 2021 (not listed in order of timetable)

1. Employ statistics that indicate usage to define capacity needs (both virtual & physical) for people, programs, technology, and the collection. (Value statement 1)
2. Use Traf-System to track 12 months of door count statistics to indicate popular programs, high traffic seasons and weekly traffic flow patterns. (Value statement 1)
3. Re-allocate space based on usage percentages – i.e., dedicate square footage for programming and collections based on circulation and program attendance numbers per type (youth and adult). (Value statement 1)
4. Use OverDrive statistics, Marmot computer use statistics, website statistics and computer training requests to track electronic use of materials and technology. (Value statement 2)
5. Research and establish possible avenues for increasing designated patron parking spaces. (Value statement 3 and 5)
6. Organize a meet and greet for all business owners/managers with parking lots on Linderman Avenue. (Value statement 3)
7. Discuss with Town planner the possibility of installing a cross walk on the North end of Linderman Avenue. (Value statement 3)
8. Research removing sheds and landscaping on South side of building and installing additional parking. (Value statement 3)
9. Research alternative location(s) for book drop return(s). (Value statement 5)
10. Determine who will serve on team that will analyze usage statistics and identify potential projects for growth/change. (Value statement 4)
11. Prioritize identified projects. (Value statement 1 and 2)
12. Research estimated budget for projects – determine funding for project. (Value statement 2)
13. Finalize budget and timeline for projects. (Value statement 2)
14. Research potential impacts to personnel budget for increasing usable space under-roof and/or increasing service hours for entire library. (Value statement 2)
15. Estimate increases to utilities costs for both increased hours and under-roof square footage. (Value statement 2)
16. Continue to track usage statistics for new spaces and begin evaluation process again. (Value statement 1 and 2)
17. Maintain and further develop the library’s website as a continuous access point for users. (Value statement 3 and 4)
18. Establish a monthly website maintenance meeting to discuss updates/issues. (Value statement 3 and 4)
19. Identify two staff members who will have website maintenance responsibilities added to their job descriptions. (Value statement 3 and 4)

3.2 Strategic Initiative 2: Community Awareness

Initiative Objective - Community members are aware of the library’s activities. They value, actively support, and engage in library initiatives. -- Colorado Public Library Standards, p. 21

Short Term Goal – Establish new/additional pathways for communicating library services to the public.
Long Term Goal – Increase library visibility to local elected officials, local schools, and the general public.

Value/Impact

1. Connect people, information and ideas by increasing awareness of services offered.
2. Offer services that are closely aligned with the community’s needs by creating multiple pathways for communication between agencies.
3. Maintain community support of library funding by establishing relevance to all stakeholders.

Steps 2018 – 2021 (not listed in order of timetable)

1. Explore establishing partnership with BV Rec Department. (Value statement 1 and 2)
2. Start posting library events/news to buenavistarec.com. (Value statement 1)
3. Design and plan for library outreach booth for area events. (Value statement 1 and 3)
4. Identify outreach opportunities for all departments. (Value statement 1 and 3)
5. Hold an open house and/or block party annually. (Value statement 1 and 3)
6. Sponsor tables at Community Strong Dinner. (Value statement 3)
7. Ask Chaffee County Times about a monthly article on library happenings. (Value statement 1)
8. Establish a yearly marketing plan and budget. (Value statement 1 and 3)
9. Send out monthly newsletter to patron email list. (Value statement 1 and 3)
10. Install an outside marquee. (Value statement 1)
11. Host Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours event annually. (Value statement 3)
12. Cultivate two new community partnerships per year. (Value statement 2)
13. Design and implement monthly marketing materials that highlight the library’s electronic resources. (Value statement 1)

3.3 **Strategic Initiative 3: Lifelong Learning**

**Initiative Objective** - The community is enriched by programs and services that offer formal, informal, and self-directed learning opportunities for all ages and abilities. -- Colorado Public Library Standards, p. 27

**Short Term Goal** – Enhance lifelong learning for all ages and abilities through a variety of experiences.

**Long Term Goals** – Expand youth and adult program offerings to match community requests, interests and needs, and develop outreach services that provide remote access to materials and programming for underserved populations.

**Value/Impact**

1. Align library program expenditures with the Mission and Vision statements.
2. Expand early literacy opportunities in the community.
3. Increase senior use of library services.
4. Increase tween and young adult use of library services.

**Steps** 2018 – 2021 (not listed in order of timetable)

1. Plan and implement a minimum of one adult (16+) program per month. (Value Statement 3)
2. Plan and implement an annual author’s series. (Value statement 3)
3. Continue to host monthly artist exhibits. (Value statement 3 and 4)
4. Explore hosting a community read event. (Value statement 1, 3 and 4)
5. Explore after hours programming. (Value statement 1, 3 and 4)
6. Provide staff with early literacy training. (Value statement 2)
7. Separate story time into “lap time” (birth to 2) & “toddler time” (3 to 5). (Value statement 2)
8. Explore “Life Skills” programming for tweens & teens. (Value statement 4)
9. Explore quality cultural programming for teens. (Value statement 4)
10. Plan and implement a variety of technology training for adults. (Value statement 3)

**Strategic Initiative 4: Responsive Collection**

**Initiative Objective** - Collections need to be current, representative of all perspectives, dynamic, and data-driven. -- Colorado Public Library Standards, p. 5
**Short Term Goal** – Develop and acquire relevant collections in formats that meet patrons’ needs and expectations.

**Long Term Goals** – Review circulation statistics for current youth services collection to develop a best practices weeding plan, and create and implement policies and procedures related to collection development library wide.

**Value/Impact**

1. Align materials expenditures with an approved collection development policy.
2. Increase circulation.
3. Provide materials that promote lifelong learning.

**Steps** 2018 – 2021 (not listed in order of timetable)

1. Create and implement plan to review policies and procedures related to collection development. (Value statement 1, 2, and 3)
2. Utilize displays to alert patrons to relevant, new and timely materials. (Value statement 2)
3. Provide access to digital materials by purchasing titles through OverDrive. (Value statement 1, 2 and 3)
4. Establish budget allocation for Advantage Plus OverDrive purchases. (Value statement 2 and 3)
5. Explore adding Zinio and/or Recorded Books Digital to the library’s electronic resources. (Value statement 1, 2 and 3)

**Strategic Initiative 5: Strong Organization**

**Initiative Objective** – The Buena Vista Public Library consistently fosters a healthy and effective work environment, ultimately better serving their community and ensuring a positive patron experience. – Colorado Public Library Standards, p. 19

**Short Term Goal** – Evaluate workflow, staffing levels and budget allocation to maximize patron satisfaction with resources and staff interaction.

**Long Term Goal** – Develop detailed job descriptions and annual plans for all employee positions, with annual plans to be reviewed with employees annually, and to include: action plan for achieving individual & department goal(s), training agreement, job satisfaction evaluation, and work/life balance assessment.

**Value/Impact**

1. Organization retains high quality personnel.
2. Staff participate in ongoing professional development.
3. Organization experiences high return on investment with regard to personnel expenditures.
4. Brand the Buena Vista Public Library as an employer of choice in Chaffee County.

**Steps**

1. Ensure all staff receive a copy of position description. (Value statement 1 and 3)
2. Ensure all staff are fully conversant with BVPL policies and procedures including Employee Handbook. (Value statement 1 and 3)
3. Ensure all staff receive yearly plan and review session with Director and/or Supervisor. (Value statement 1, 2, 3 and 4)
4. Explore self-service checkout options to increase staff flexibility. (Value statement 3)
5. Establish staff representative to report to Board of Trustees on staff satisfaction. (Value statement 1, 3 and 4)
6. Utilize local economic indicators, revenue projections, library comparisons, Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) indicators, and annual action plans to determine yearly salary/benefit compensation levels for each position. (Value statement 1, 2 and 3)
7. Review annually employee benefits program. (Value statement 1 and 4)

4. Resources

2. Colorado State Libraries resources accessed at https://www.cde.state.co.us
3. Demographic data from:
   - https://www.lrs.org
   - http://www.buenavistacolorado.org/statistics/
   - https://datausa.io/profile/geo/buena-vista-co/#demographics
4. Salida Regional Library community survey (March 2018)