

# NEW BRITAIN PUBLIC LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN



2014 - 2019

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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Strategic Planning Committee of the New Britain Public Library Board of Trustees led the effort to gather a deep base of information to support the development of the Library's strategic plan for the next five years. The Committee felt strongly about the incorporation of significant community input into the process. We would like to thank the more than 460 individuals, including patrons, community members, staff, Trustees, community partners, funders and city officials, who contributed their ideas and suggestions to the planning effort<sup>1</sup>.

With the explosion of the digital age, the role of libraries in supporting communities and individuals is shifting. Each library has the opportunity to shift its focus to truly meet the needs of the community it serves. In New Britain, the community is racially and economically diverse, with a high percentage of the population living in challenging conditions.

Our Library has an opportunity to expand the positive impact on the individuals that we serve and the broader New Britain community. Over the next five years, we will focus on helping the members of our community improve their lives through education and enrichment opportunities, while celebrating the cultural diversity of our community. We will expand our collection, services, and experiences to best meet the needs of our community and our patrons. We will also reconfigure our facilities to provide more opportunities and spaces for our community to gather.

We look forward to partnering with you to make our vision a reality.

Sincerely,

Francis J. Volz,

President of the Board of Trustees

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<sup>1</sup> Our process is described in more detail in Appendix A.

## OUR MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

### OUR MISSION

The New Britain Public Library ensures that every resident has the opportunity to become successful and well-informed by offering resources, services and experiences that build skills and provide enrichment.

### OUR VISION

- As a **hub of our community**, our resources, services and experiences will have a positive impact on people's lives.
- Through our efforts, we will celebrate and highlight the **cultural diversity** of New Britain.
- Our collection, consisting of materials both physical and digital, will **expand and evolve** to meet the needs of our community.
- Our experiences will contribute to helping each individual learn new **skills and knowledge**, and will provide opportunities to bring community members together.
- We will explore **new library services and technologies** that will enhance our ability to achieve our mission.
- Our facilities will be assessed and reconfigured to **provide new spaces** for our community to gather, to improve access to our resources, and to ensure a welcoming environment for our users.
- The Library will **foster a strong sense of community** through its resources, services, experiences, and facilities.
- We will provide a **positive working environment** for our staff, one of our strongest assets.
- Our Board of Trustees will be a **committed, engaged group**, representative of our diverse community.

### OUR VALUES

- **Access to All:** We provide equal access to our resources, services, experiences and facilities.
- **Evolution:** We embrace change and adapt our resources, services, experiences and facilities to meet the needs of our community in a fast-changing technology-driven world.
- **Respect:** We believe in showing regard and appreciation for the uniqueness of every person, family and culture.
- **Professionalism:** We maintain high standards of customer service and strive for excellence in the services and resources we provide.
- **Collaboration:** We seek out opportunities to partner with other groups and organizations to improve the community.



Goal 1: Our efforts, expressed through our resources, services and experiences, will evolve to meet the needs of our diverse community.

### Strategy #1: Expand our collection in specific segments

- Expand e-book and digital materials collection
- Increase collection of books and other materials in languages represented in our community
- Continue investment in the children and young adult collections
- Explore opportunity to invest in and allow patrons to borrow technology devices as well as non-traditional materials

### Strategy #2: Expand and improve our programs and experiences

- Develop an organization-wide cohesive framework for programming by constituency group
  - Expand programs that meet the needs of the international community (cultural, informational, and educational)
  - Continue investment in young adult programming; consider focus on skill building for employment and educational support
  - Continue investment in children's programming; continue focus on early literacy and on learning loss in the summer
- Expand collaborative programming with the New Britain Institute and other organizations, and explore the opportunity for the cross promotion of programs
- Expand technology programming to include a wider range of classes and levels of expertise

### Strategy #3: Explore the addition of new services

- Assess capacity for shifting or increasing hours of service
- Explore development of additional new services for the international community
- Explore development of a coffee shop or other micro enterprises within the Library
- Continue to explore additional services to support the business community
- Improve access to main branch services at Jefferson Branch
- Ensure that technology access (computers, Wi-Fi access) continues to evolve and meets the needs of patrons



Goal 2: Our Board of Trustees and Library staff will cultivate a broad range of relationships to help the Library enact its vision.

### Strategy #1: Expand fund development efforts through a variety of methods

- Develop a written development plan with prioritized strategies and key targets by segment
  - Strengthen the organization's ability to raise funds from private donors through donor cultivation, specifically leveraging annual fund and major donor activities

- Provide menu of donor options/levels
- Increase personalization of donor materials
- Ensure contributions are recognized in a strategic, appropriate manner by giving level
  - Clarify the role of the Friends of the Library in fund development efforts
- Develop strategies to support planned giving as well as specific gifts for the endowment of the Library
- Develop additional donor cultivation materials, outside of the annual giving campaign, which will identify ways to help and support the Library
- Explore the use of state funds, specifically bonding for nonprofits and libraries, to support capital improvements
- Expand grant writing efforts
- Assess current signature special event and determine opportunities to increase funds raised and/or resources to support event
  - Clarify objectives for event and develop a target fundraising goal
  - Explore and expand corporate sponsorship opportunities
- Assess feasibility of partnering with other New Britain Institute organizations for a major joint fundraiser or fundraising effort
- Maintain currency of management information system to support expanded development efforts
- Explore the creation of revenue-generating micro enterprises within the Library or the broader New Britain Institute

### Strategy #2: Improve marketing efforts

- Develop an organization-wide marketing plan with approaches for different community segments
  - Develop a profile of each segment, identifying their potential uses of the Library, needs, attributes, challenges, and languages
  - Develop appropriate messaging and select distribution channels (print, online, social media) targeted at different community segments
- Strengthen and expand use of key distribution channels (print, online, social media)
  - Develop a content calendar to support use of the print and email newsletters and monitor number of email newsletter subscribers
  - Enhance and expand presence across social media channels to extend the reach of the Library's programs and resources
- Assess and redesign the Library's branding strategy including logo, tagline, and promotional and collateral materials; consider redesign of the Library website
- Assess current and future marketing efforts for accessibility in different languages
- Ensure the accessibility of the website through a variety of devices and languages
- Ensure Library signage and promotional materials are accessible in a variety of languages
- Identify opportunities for collaborative marketing efforts with other members of the New Britain Institute

### Strategy #3: Increase community outreach

- Create a venue to garner community leader feedback on a regular basis to monitor trends and changes in the community
- Invite city leadership and state representatives to visit the Library on a regular basis and learn more about Library services and programs
- Host other community groups at the Library, including the Chamber of Commerce and other community coalitions (nonprofit leaders, school principals, media specialists, etc.), to keep them abreast of Library offerings
- Conduct community outreach, sharing information about the Library with others groups in the community, such as churches and nonprofit organization clients (food banks, pantries)

### Strategy #4: Continue to create collaborative partnerships and support with agreements

- Continue to cultivate collaborative relationships with community partners to support programs and community outreach efforts
- Assess collaborative relationships and partnerships on a periodic basis; develop criteria for evaluation of partnerships to ensure fit with mission and vision
- Utilize legal agreements to codify agreed-upon decisions, as necessary, for joint collaborative efforts where funding and other resources are being exchanged



**Goal 3: We will reconfigure and improve our facilities and continue to improve the management infrastructure of the Library.**

### Strategy #1: Assess and reconfigure facilities

- Continuously assess size and scope of the physical collection
- Develop a long-term facilities plan including the reconfiguration of the facilities in a way that reflects and preserves the architectural integrity of the property; may include the following features:
  - Expanded, more visible, computer area(s)
  - Additional small meeting rooms
  - Improved entry ways
  - Improved handicapped access
  - Refurbished furnishings, rugs, and décor in the Children's area
  - Renovated and updated bathroom facilities
  - Expanded space available to the Literacy Volunteers of Central Connecticut
  - Expanded space or change in location of Local History Room
  - Improved external and internal signage
- Undertake a security assessment for the facilities and identify short- and long-term strategies to improve safety measures
- Resume discussions with neighboring organizations and with the City of New Britain to assess the feasibility of creating a joint, larger parking area

### Strategy #2: Strengthen human resources processes and monitor organizational climate

- Engage Board of Trustees in creating overall strategy for staff compensation and benefits
  - Conduct a review of compensation and benefits, including comparisons to similar libraries, every two years
  - Monitor and adjust staff compensation to improve recruitment and retention as well as to remain competitive in the market
  - Undertake contract negotiations with Union, utilizing overall strategy to inform and guide decision-making (may include creation of thresholds or specific criteria) to achieve desired outcomes
- Review policies and procedures and ensure relevancy and accuracy with current practices
- Conduct a staff climate survey on an annual basis
- Strengthen performance management processes and supports for staff
  - Assess current performance appraisal process for ease of use
  - Increase accountability for implementation of performance appraisal process with supervisors
  - Link performance management process to annual goal setting and to professional development opportunities
- Create a professional development program, leveraging both internal and external resources, to ensure all staff have opportunities for continuous learning and to meet the competencies associated with their position, including opportunities for staff knowledge sharing
- Implement additional strategies to continue to improve internal communication and to enhance morale; may include staff mentoring programs, consistent staff meetings, opportunities for full-staff events/in-service trainings

### Strategy #3: Strengthen financial management through enhanced budgeting process

- Develop a multi-year capital budget informed by the identification of physical plant needs, including purchase and repair
- Develop a multi-year operating budget incorporating anticipated investments in staff and library materials
- Develop comparable historical financial statistics of similarly- sized association libraries
- Develop an investment strategy for cash reserves (short-term cash utilization)
- Increase knowledge and skill of Financial Committee members in financial management analysis

### Strategy #4: Review and adjust information management efforts

- Assess donor information system and determine feasibility of a new system that would allow linkages to Library communication channels and more efficient donor reporting
- Stay current with technology applications that support collection management, programs, and services
- Establish comprehensive systems to capture, document, and disseminate knowledge internally

### Strategy #5: Strengthen risk management efforts

- Review personnel policies and procedures from liability prevention perspective
- Ensure safe environment for staff and patrons
- Review backup and recovery supports for all systems; adjust as needed



### Goal 4: We are committed to quality assurance and organizational learning and will implement strategies to evaluate the success of our work.

- Create a plan and corresponding tools for measuring impact of the Library (collection, programs, and services) on a regular basis
- Capture anecdotes and qualitative feedback more regularly; integrate feedback into marketing and fund development efforts
- Create methods of sharing feedback and knowledge within the staff to build understanding of Library-wide challenges and increase engagement of staff in addressing challenges



### Goal 5: Our Board of Trustees will be a committed, engaged group, representative of our diverse community, and able to fulfill their roles as ambassadors for the Library.

### Strategy #1: Improve planning efforts and clarify decision making processes

- Develop annual goals for the Trustees in conjunction with the strategic plan and in coordination with the goals of the Library Director
  - Assign annual goals to Board-level committees to oversee accomplishment of goals
- Clarify responsibilities for each committee, including better defining the span of decision making at the committee level
  - Create criteria for decisions that require full Board of Trustee discussion and approval
- Conduct a Board self-assessment every two years to assess Board functioning

### Strategy #2: Recruit additional Trustees from a wide array of community sectors

- Strengthen recruitment and nominating efforts by creating a Board matrix, identifying gaps, and recruiting candidates to address gaps (financial experience, legal experience, etc.)
- Strengthen orientation for new Trustees, including providing a historical perspective of the Library's evolution and relationship with The New Britain Institute
  - Periodically review supports for Trustee recruitment including Trustee role description and orientation materials and ensure clarity in regard to financial expectations
- Improve social cohesion through the sharing of biographical information and creation of events and opportunities for Trustees to build relationships with each other

### Strategy #3: Increase Trustee learning opportunities

- Conduct periodic trainings for Trustees on issues impacting the work of the Library and on skill building for fund development efforts
- Create guides for fund development conversations, including talking points



Goal 6: We will monitor our progress by tracking the implementation of the strategic plan as well as a selected set of key results over time.

- Create reporting tool for the Board of Trustees to monitor key results on an on-going basis

With the implementation of the strategic plan, the New Britain Public Library will strive for increases in the following measurable key results:

- Program attendance
  - Satisfaction with programming metrics
  - Impact of programming metrics
- Circulation of specific borrowable materials and in use of technology resources (computers, Wi-Fi)
- Number of library card holders
- Website usage (views, online databases)
- Financial support from a variety of new sources
- Contributions to the endowment
- Number of individual donors
- Cultural diversity of the Board of Trustees
- Cultural diversity of the staff
- Employee satisfaction

## Appendix A: Our Planning Process

The Strategic Planning Committee was established in April of 2013 and included:

- Pat McCurdy-Crescimanno, Vice President of the Board of Trustees, Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee
- Pat Rutkowski, Library Director
- Ashwinee Sadanand, Trustee and immediate Past President of the Board of Trustees
- Francis J. Volz, President of the Board of Trustees
- Richard M. Harris, Treasurer of the Board of Trustees
- Ken Carifa, ex officio Trustee and President of the New Britain Institute

The strategic planning process began with the design of the information base for planning. The design included a variety of opportunities for community members and users of the Library to provide feedback. Fio Partners, LLC, a consulting firm that works with libraries and nonprofit organizations, supported the strategic planning process and helped to collect the information base for planning. The Committee is grateful to Anne Yurasek of Fio Partners for her facilitation of this process.

The information base, which was gathered from August – December 2013, included:

### **External Information Gathering**

- A print and online community survey which received three hundred and thirty-seven responses
- Interviews with nineteen stakeholders including funders, partners, city officials, community leaders, and leaders of nonprofit organizations
- Focus groups with patrons, parents, youth, community leaders, Latino community members, and Friends of the Library
- Comparable library information
- Research on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Library and on trends in digital media
- Demographic information

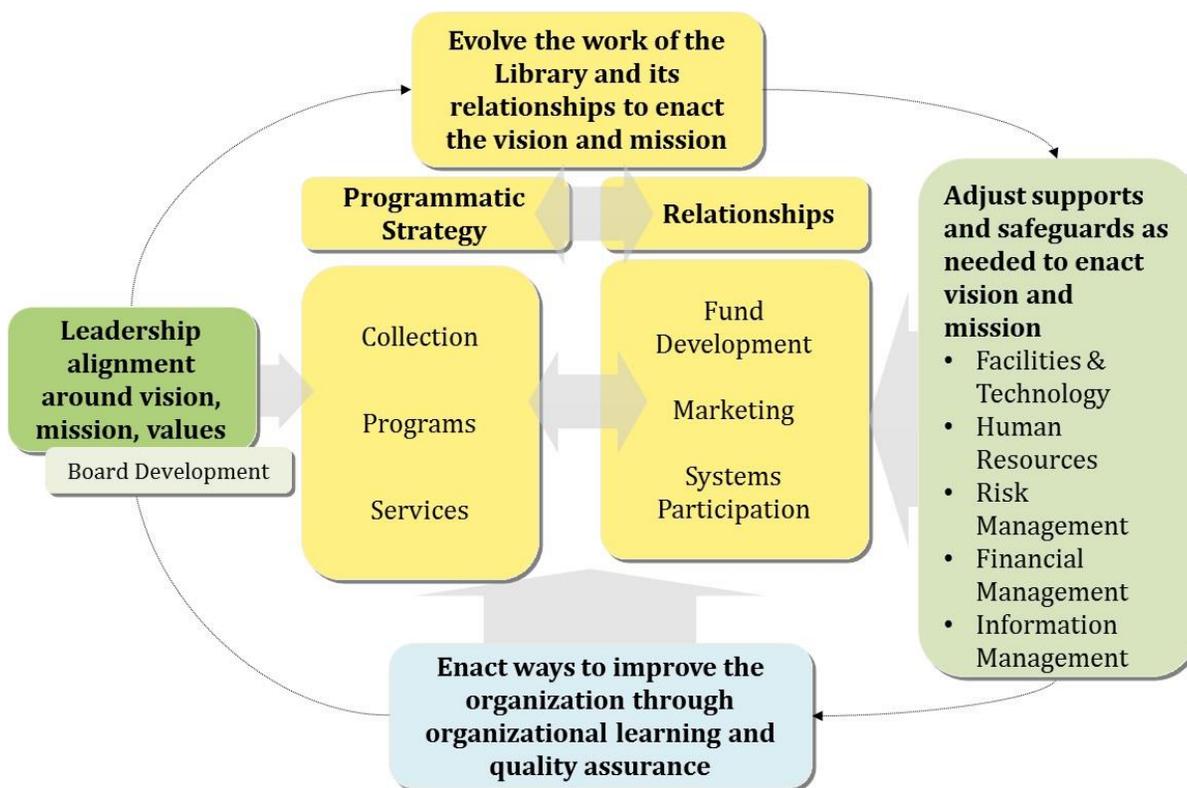
### **Internal Analysis and Information Gathering**

- Usage data
- Collection statistics
- Organizational climate survey of the staff
- Focus groups with staff
- Board of Trustees survey

The plan was developed using the framework on the following page, which is based upon Fio Partners' approach to nonprofit strategic management.

The foundation of the strategic plan is the updated mission, vision, and values of the organization. The leadership of the Library then created strategic goals and selected supporting strategies for five key areas:

- **Programmatic Strategy/ “Our Work”:** Resources, Experiences, & Services
- **Relationships:** Fund Development, Marketing, Systems Participation
- **Supports & Safeguards:**
  - Physical Plant/Facilities and Technology
  - Human Resources/Organizational Climate
  - Other internal supports: Financial Management, Information Management, Risk Management
- **Improving the Organization:** Organizational Learning, Quality Assurance
- **Board Development**



The Plan will be utilized to create annual goals for the Library Director and for the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will track implementation progress by monitoring the plan’s agreed-upon key results over time.

The information was presented to the Strategic Planning Committee as it was gathered. The Board of Trustees held a retreat in mid-January 2014 to review the information and develop the plan, which was adopted in March 2014.

To learn more about the New Britain Public Library, visit us on the web at [www.nbpl.info](http://www.nbpl.info) or visit our main branch located at 20 High St. New Britain, CT 06051.