The Strategic Plan

Goals, Strategies and Actions
Your Library’s Future!

Emerging technology, shifting demographics and a new cultural landscape have irrevocably steered The Indianapolis Public Library toward a new model of service that will more adeptly meet evolving patron needs and position the Library as an integral community institution.

This presentation of “Yours to Experience,” the Library’s vision for the years 2015 – 2020, represents the culmination of a dynamic process of citizen participation, self-assessment and prioritization that began in July 2013. It reflects our best approach to the difficult challenges of expanding our outreach to serve more and diverse populations and giving the Library the flexibility to serve those areas of greatest need. Above all, its goal is to maximize access to Library services while continuing our commitment to early childhood literacy, lifelong learning and community engagement.

We have been deeply heartened by the sincere outpouring of interest in this process . . . by representatives from over 150 businesses and organizations who volunteered to serve on nine Task Forces formed to generate the basis of our direction, as well as the thousands of citizens who participated in public surveys or offered feedback during 23 community presentations on the proposed Strategic Plan. In addition, the Library did its own homework through local demographic studies, assessments of patron usage, and evaluation of the condition of current facilities. All of these efforts were guided by a citizen-led Steering Committee, co-chaired by Hope Y. Hampton and Carey B. Lykins, whose commitment to this final product cannot be overstated.

Our ability to successfully execute this Plan will depend on various financial factors, such as exploring new revenue sources, reducing reliance on property taxes, and increasing access to other local option tax revenues. The continued support of The Indianapolis Public Library Foundation with the grants and donations it secures will be essential.

We now begin a journey that will guarantee the Library’s relevance in the future by helping our great city of Indianapolis grow and prosper.
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Purpose of this Strategic Plan

This Strategic Plan is the result of a vigorous, analytic, and sometimes passionate series of conversations by community members about the future of The Indianapolis Public Library. The Plan will guide the Library’s efforts over the next five years and is intended to set an ambitious course for the future of the Library.

The Plan will provide vision and direction while staying true to our core principles. These principles reflect the value of the Library to the community. Along with the vision and mission, they provide focus for the development of the goals, strategies and accompanying actions for achieving success.

Additionally, we have included some forecasting for the future of libraries. By anticipating the information and technology needs facing our diverse community, we will prepare ourselves to meet future challenges. IndyPL will adapt to emerging demands thoughtfully and boldly, while seeking opportunities that benefit all patrons.

Major Themes of the Plan

To realize the Library’s vision to be a center of knowledge, community life and innovation in Indianapolis, this Strategic Plan needed to clearly reflect the role that the Library will play as a vibrant partner in the growth and prosperity of Indianapolis. The Library is eager to evolve in ways that optimize its value to the community, and we looked to its citizens to provide us guidance.

Planning Process and Input

‘Community driven’ and ‘community centered’ were watchwords in the formation of the Library’s Strategic Plan. Aligning Library strategy to the goals of other community organizations with a similar focus, such as workforce development and education, was a priority. We sought to use an open, consensus-based process led by committee members. This framework was based on a modified “quality of life model” for driving community sustainability adopted by many U.S. communities. The journey of discovery began with a blank slate and two vital questions: “What kind of city do we want Indianapolis to be?” and “What kind of Library do we
Many individuals and groups within our community shared their ideas, insights and passions as the Plan developed.

The planning process began in July 2013 with a Community Launch and call to action to help shape the future of IndyPL. Many Library users attended, providing input about priorities and new directions that the Library should consider. That evening, Brian Payne, President and CEO of the Central Indiana Community Foundation, challenged the audience to think creatively about the direction of Library services. Throughout the process, a Steering Committee of community leaders directed and supported the Strategic Plan process.

Meanwhile, the Library facilitated nine Task Forces which met to discuss the issues surrounding their assigned theme and identified strategies for the Library to best support community needs. Each Task Force consisted of people from the community who brought a variety of perspectives about Indianapolis, its people and their needs. They represented over 150 community organizations. The Task Forces used over 1,200 community survey responses as they developed their strategies. The result was nine comprehensive reports that pointed the Library toward the future.

In early 2014, public forums were held at every Library location. A preview of the Strategic Plan was available for consideration. Public comment was encouraged on the Library’s website and every opinion was carefully considered as an addition to the Plan. Over 1,000 people participated.

Library staff members have been involved throughout the process. They have provided valuable insight into the evolving usage patterns and preferences of Indianapolis residents. More than half of the Library’s employees shared their ideas though participation in various Task Forces and during public and staff meetings.

Throughout the planning process, the Strategic Planning Team, the Steering Committee and the Library Board of Trustees met regularly to review the results of these various inputs and to delve into the specifics of many topics, including digital media, accessibility challenges and effective partnering. Some of the recommendations continued on page 4
regarding accessibility and subsequent relocation of Library facilities sparked debate by the Library Board of Trustees, whose members are to be commended for their conscientious deliberation of all points of view.

The Steering Committee served as a sounding board and source of inspiration, contributing thought-provoking and ambitious perspectives from academic, business and nonprofit sectors. The Library Board stewarded the Plan, providing input at key junctures and developing the statements of vision and mission and the guiding principles that are a foundation for the Plan.

The Library is committed to reporting back to the Indianapolis community on a regular basis about our progress in implementing this Plan. We encourage Library users to visit our website (www.indypl.org) for ongoing information and to let us know how we are doing as we embark on a new era for The Indianapolis Public Library.
Mission
The Indianapolis Public Library enriches lives and builds communities through lifelong learning.

Vision
To be a center of knowledge, community life and innovation for Indianapolis

organizational principles

Promote Literacy and the Love of Reading
We recognize the importance of reading as a critical tool for successful lives and strive to foster a community of readers.

Support Intellectual Freedom
We enable all individuals in our community to exercise their right to access constitutionally protected information.

Create Welcoming Environments
We strive to meet the needs and expectations of every Library patron to help them feel empowered and enlightened.

Embrace Our Diverse and Global Community
We celebrate Indianapolis’ diversity and are committed to creating shared meaning and intellectual opportunities among people.

Foster Community Dialogue and Engagement
We make effective connections with the entire community by sharing, listening and integrating our efforts to strengthen Indianapolis.

Build a Relevant Collection
We develop a focused and inspiring collection and seek convenient ways to make it accessible to patrons.

Guide the Digital Journey
We see technology as a tool for acquiring knowledge and we take a leading role to ensure the digital needs of our patrons are met.

Adapt and Innovate
We are a learning organization and invest in our staff, technology and infrastructure to improve services.
Goal 1
Enrich Indianapolis’ desire for personal growth and learning

A. Strengthen the Library’s contribution to formal education in Indianapolis

STRATEGY:
Ensure education administrators and faculty, including homeschools, are aware of Library services and see these services as value-added to their efforts

ACTIONS:
1-1 Continue participation as a lead institution in the Marion County Internet Library program by providing online databases for use by Library patrons, faculty and students of Marion County schools
1-2 Target promotional materials for programs and services to educators, parents and students
1-3 Create opportunities to connect with homeschool educators by listening to and meeting their information needs
1-4 Identify opportunities to support schools in their digital journey with student training and compatible digital tools
1-5 Offer demo information for teachers and media specialists to introduce students to online Library services (databases, catalog)

STRATEGY:
Be a strong participant in the movement to provide early learning experiences for Indianapolis’ youngest children

ACTIONS:
1-6 Create opportunities to introduce preschool children to technology and literacy
1-7 Offer convenient, barrier-free access to Library materials for very young readers
1-8 Support the quality improvement efforts of local childcare providers
1-9 Target early learning resources to caregivers and parents

STRATEGY:
Actively join community efforts to close educational achievement gaps at all levels

ACTIONS:
1-10 Promote Library resources that support completion of high school equivalency certification
1-11 Create curriculum-based content for visits by primary and secondary classes to the Library
1-12 Target schools who are underperforming and have the most need and create program partnerships
1-13 Be an active participant in educational enrichment activities at schools in every service area

STRATEGY:
Enhance partnerships with institutions of higher education and provide support to Indiana teachers
ACTIONS:
1-14 Establish partnerships with institutions of higher education with the most need to improve community access to information
1-15 Provide Indianapolis teachers with the resource assistance they need
1-16 Investigate the potential for online skill building and online universities through the Library website
1-17 Work with organizations to direct adult students to formal learning opportunities

B. Be Indianapolis’ source for free informal instruction and programs

STRATEGY:
Embrace the Library’s role as a cultural center in the city of Indianapolis

ACTIONS:
1-18 Serve as a catalyst for coordinating cultural initiatives
1-19 Focus on developing programs that address a variety of literacies
1-20 Offer learning opportunities for seniors
1-21 Partner with churches and other local organizations for program or information services to meet congregation or community needs

www.indypl.org/strategicplan/
STRATEGY:
Be a welcoming, one-stop source for access to online government resources

ACTIONS:
1-26 Provide staff training on new online government sites to be responsive to patron needs
1-27 Require staff to be current and competent on government issues
1-28 Improve communication to the public about government resources in partnership with providers

STRATEGY:
Support the learning efforts of patrons wherever they are on the digital journey

ACTIONS:
1-29 Increase computer classes at branches
1-30 Continue Tinker Station demonstration and assistance with eReader devices
1-31 Collect and analyze available data on adoption rates of new technology

C. Help prepare residents for successful employment

STRATEGY:
Prepare useful resources for the Indianapolis workforce

ACTIONS:
1-32 Build staff capacity to meet the needs of the diverse workforce
1-33 Continue the Library’s commitment to provide resources to support employment
1-34 Provide a job and career database for occupational research and skill development
1-35 Offer skill building tutorials that teach web development and other marketable technology skills

STRATEGY:
Partner with workforce readiness providers to create a strong network of support for workers

ACTIONS:
1-36 Adapt Job Centers in branches to meet changing needs of the community
1-37 Participate in community job fairs to market Library resources
Ensure education administrators and faculty, including homeschools, are aware of Library services and see these services as a value-added to their efforts

As Indianapolis seeks to use every available community resource to focus on closing achievement gaps, the Library will actively offer its services as an important part of the solution. Library staff will collaborate with school librarians, teachers, principals and district administrators to support students and their families. Education is the key to improving the lives of students and families, strengthening neighborhoods and growing Indianapolis.

Be a strong participant in the movement to provide early learning experiences for Indianapolis’ youngest children

The connection between exposure to reading at a very early age and future learning success has been clearly established. The Library imagines a community where every child has 1,000 books read to them before they begin kindergarten. By being exposed to words and stories, children will enter school eager and ready to learn. An economic impact report commissioned by the city of Indianapolis will prove the value of public investment in early childhood education programming. In this study, sponsored by the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce and the United Way of Central Indiana, researchers and local stakeholders will examine the economic impact of investments in early childhood education in the city and the region. The Library will participate and provide any additional information to legislators as they make decisions about funding high quality early childhood education, including all day kindergarten. Early learning experiences for all children are critical to a community’s economic success and vital to improving high school graduation rates.

Actively join community efforts to close educational achievement gaps at all levels

Indianapolis continues to encourage innovative school models and replicate existing high-performing schools to ensure all students have access to high quality schools. These schools keep residents in Indianapolis longer and contribute to the broader economic and social vitality of the city. Underperforming schools will become a target for Library support with science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) activities, as well as literature.
Enhance partnerships with institutions of higher education and provide support to Indiana teachers

It is a priority in Indianapolis to seamlessly transition students from high school and postsecondary education to high wage, high demand careers. The Library will partner with model schools, such as the new polytechnic high school serving grades 9 through 14, to blur the lines between high school and higher education. The depth of higher education and corporate sponsorship will ensure the curriculum matches the needs of local employers. Indiana is transitioning from an industrial economy to one that is knowledge-based. Of the nearly 30,000 job openings in Central Indiana, 75% require some sort of postsecondary education (Hire Up Indy, 2012). STEM fields are growing and students need earlier access to these concepts in order to get them interested and on the path to pursuing a degree and jobs in these areas. The Library will partner with groups such as the VEX Robotics Championship in an effort to promote STEM principles.

Embrace the Library’s role as a cultural center in the city of Indianapolis

It is the primary belief of The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis that 95% of all learning for adults and children happens outside the classroom. Therefore, institutions like museums and libraries play a critical role for informal learners of all ages.

Patrons want their experiences to connect learning and sensing. The Library wants to play a central role as a cultural center by coordinating community cultural initiatives and developing programs that will appeal to all generations and populations.

Develop a community of readers

There are two ways to make sure that people are literate: teach them to read and show them that reading is a pleasurable activity. That means, at its simplest, finding enjoyable books, providing access to these books, and creating opportunities to read them. The Library wants to give everyone an equal chance in life to become confident and enthusiastic readers. Reading can connect people who might otherwise never realize their common interests. We will work over the next five years to spark interactions around books in new ways that motivate people to read and that bring the community together in conversation. The Library will offer more author readings and book discussion groups, in person and online.
Be a welcoming, one-stop source for access to online government resources

Many people use the Library more regularly than they do any other government agency. As a trusted information resource, The Indianapolis Public Library can help connect residents to our sister government agencies for purely practical matters. Library staff members can help figure out how to register a child for school, get on a waiting list for public housing, file for unemployment, or file a petition to run for City-County Council. This personalized service will continue to be a priority for the Library as we hire and train staff members to be current and competent on government issues and new government sites.

Support the learning efforts of patrons wherever they are on the digital journey

Libraries are also places where people who may not have computers or Internet connections can go online without paying anything. This is hugely important when job searches, resume submissions and benefits applications are increasingly migrating exclusively online. Librarians help these people navigate that world. IndyPL is committed to providing up-to-date technology as part of its improved facilities and services. Increasingly, people will bring their own personal devices (tablets, laptops, smartphones, etc.) which require more space, connectivity and electrical outlets. In the future, the Library may make electronic devices available to the public while they are in Library buildings. Technology will be an integral part of Library design and cost.

Prepare useful resources for the Indianapolis workforce and partner with workforce readiness providers to create a strong network of support for workers

The recession that began in 2009 brought record numbers of job seekers to libraries looking for help. IndyPL responded by bolstering its resources to help people revamp their resumes and reassess the job market. Job Centers were created in collaboration with EmployIndy and WorkOne and placed in branches around the city. This model for employment support will be expanded to include opportunities to build technology skills to help the underemployed and unemployed to find better jobs.
Goal 2
Strengthen Indianapolis neighborhoods and businesses

A. Establish the Library as a civic focal point and resource center

STRATEGY:
Create opportunities for people to become informed and engaged on important issues

ACTIONS:
2-1  Be the best one-stop source for people to find quality information about commonly shared life challenges
2-2  Create online community conversations on important issues
2-3  Host Library forums to engage the community in timely issues
2-4  Stay current by using social media trends to ensure the Library is connecting to new audiences
2-5  Gather and display collection materials on issues as news stories are released, including the celebration of the Indiana Bicentennial
2-6  Develop multi-layered global programs on diversity issues and cultures

STRATEGY:
Engage new audiences to participate in the Library experience and use Library resources

ACTIONS:
2-7  Harness social media to create interactive dialogue about the Library and neighborhood services
2-8  Train staff in techniques for social media content creation to strengthen community connections and build audiences

B. Adopt spaces and services that strengthen Indianapolis neighborhoods

STRATEGY:
Employ creative space planning to make Library buildings flexible and responsive to our diverse community as service priorities change
ACTIONS:

2-12 Use the Facilities Assessment Plan as a road map to plan spaces that are highly functional, convenient to use and have adequate Wi-Fi access
2-13 Increase the available study and tutoring spaces available in branches

STRATEGY:

Develop programs, services and spaces targeted for teens

ACTIONS:

2-14 Engage teens in planning services and spaces
2-15 Create spaces to support teen activities

STRATEGY:

Meet the information needs of the economically and socially disadvantaged

ACTIONS:

2-16 Work with area shelters to provide support to the homeless
2-17 Use the Diversity Plan to design initiatives that strengthen the Library's outreach in the community
2-18 Partner with social service agencies, community leaders and organizations to understand and support the disadvantaged

STRATEGY:

Welcome immigrants with relevant services and resources

ACTIONS:

2-19 Invest in a website translated into the languages of area residents
2-20 Keep current and responsive to the information needs of the immigrant community as it changes
2-21 Use icon driven promotional materials about programs and services for universal understanding

STRATEGY:

Provide full access to Library experiences for people with different abilities

ACTIONS:

2-22 Connect with adaptive technology audiences to meet their needs
2-23 Evaluate and upgrade adaptive technology regularly and offer at all branches

STRATEGY:

Ensure that the community's diverse populations have their special needs met and have positive user experiences
Goal 2

C. Support business development in Indianapolis

STRATEGY:
Educate the business community about the rich resources of the Library

ACTIONS:
2-28 Build relationships with local businesses and community organizations in each Library service area
2-29 Seek opportunities to promote Library business resources with organizations where business people attend or belong

D. Nurture healthy and vibrant communities

STRATEGY:
Create robust collaborations with neighborhood organizations and cross promote activities

ACTIONS:
2-34 Create “pop-up” activities in collaboration with neighborhood groups to encourage the use of the Library as a “third place”
2-35 Increase neighborhood organizations hosting their meetings in Library branches
2-36 Increase the number of elected officials who hold office hours or town hall meetings at Library branches
2-37 Create awareness of health and wellness resources
STRATEGY:  
Charge staff to more fully participate in the life of the community and neighborhoods served

ACTIONS:  
2-38 Branch staff will be engaged and support their neighborhood activities  
2-39 Increase efforts to hire staff who enjoy taking an active role in the neighborhood community  
2-40 Managers will strive to be recognized as leaders in their communities by being involved in community-based projects and serving on boards or other neighborhood organizations  
2-41 Promote Library services and be part of the community life by participating in community events, such as fairs and festivals

STRATEGY:  
Be a free Internet access point for Indianapolis neighborhoods

ACTIONS:  
2-42 Increase deployment of mobile hotspots  
2-43 Maintain strong bandwidth by continually monitoring and assessing demand  
2-44 Provide optimum public accessibility to digital information by offering the right devices, in the right quantities, at the right locations

Create opportunities for people to become informed and engaged on important issues

Libraries are rare locales where people from all walks of life regularly share a space and an experience. The Library provides a safe place that welcomes all people and encourages exploration. We will take our commitment to democracy in Indianapolis neighborhoods further. The Library aims to provide opportunities online and across the city for people to actively engage in civic life. With information as the starting point, our Libraries can be the venues for neighbors to consider issues of local and national importance in a neutral setting that encourages dialogue. Imagine branches hosting candidate forums for local elections, or Central Library offering programs that explore issues of human trafficking from a local and global perspective.

Engage new audiences to participate in the Library experience and use Library resources

Over the next few years, the Library will take a more intentional approach to developing a strategy of community engagement; one that matches each neighborhood to its individual community interest. We can, and must, develop
deep knowledge of Indianapolis residents and use that knowledge to transform our Libraries into practical and creative anchors for community life.

**Develop an increased audio-visual capacity in Library locations to highlight community activities**

Signage can be a great tool to connect patrons to Library services, but studies show that only 12% of visiting patrons view these way finders. The younger the visitor, the less likely they are to use them. To create easily changed, attractive and highly visible signage, the Library will invest in digital signage positioned for optimal visibility. Envision entering a Library building and immediately seeing a digital monitor that will provide a comprehensive view of Library services and even promote activities by other organizations within the community.

**Employ creative space planning to make Library buildings flexible and responsive to our diverse community as service priorities change**

Instead of trying to change people’s behavior, we will identify the need that the behavior represents and design for it. We will think outside the box for every service and building design decision. The overarching vision of the Facilities Plan is the creation of the “third place,” where the community can gather outside of work and home. Patrons will be encouraged to stay and enjoy the services offered by the Library. Every Library location will be highly functional and convenient to use. Buildings will be adaptable and easily reconfigured as Library services change in the future. Areas zoned for services to adults, teens, children and early literacy will be offered. Spaces will be designed for increased individual and collaborative work. The improvement of Library facilities will result in increased use of the Library.

**Develop programs, services and spaces targeted for teens**

Only about 20% of a teen’s waking hours are spent in school, so out-of-school time is a key part of the achievement equation. The Library will be part of a community web of social, cultural, educational and economic resources to encourage “wrap around” learning for teens, especially those that are headed off-track. We will create personalized learning communities and out-of-school opportunities in our branches. The Library will double its efforts to foster a love of reading and create places in which reading can occur. A student who can’t read by 3rd grade is four times less likely to graduate from high school and has a one in ten chance of serving jail time. Teens are some of our most active and savvy users. It is important to give them a say in shaping the programming and services available for them at the Library.
Meet the information needs of the economically and socially disadvantaged

One of the most powerful and life-changing things we can do is to connect a person in need with a resource that can help. The challenges of parenting, managing personal finances, making health care decisions, and keeping pace with technology are commonly shared life experiences. The Library is committed to supporting all people facing such challenges, no matter their education or socioeconomic background. Library staff members will have up-to-date and accurate referral information. We will assemble and highlight topical information and use experts to facilitate conversations about key issues and provide helpful information.

Welcome immigrants with relevant services and resources

Every day the Library connects learners to ideas and expands their skills. The Library will continue to guide immigrants through the steps to become citizens and tap volunteers to engage in conversations with English language learners. The Library will strive to fully realize the goal of engaging immigrants with relevant collections, services and connections.

Provide full access to Library experiences for people with different abilities

For people in our community who have disabilities, the Library is a crucial link to information and ideas. We need to recognize that blind and low-vision people still lack access to a majority of books published in the United States, and more than half of Americans with disabilities have no broadband access at home for downloading accessible electronic books. The Library will conduct frequent community needs assessments of technology resources for people with disabilities and strive to meet their needs.

Ensure that the community’s diverse populations have their special needs met and have positive user experiences

For our community, the Library is a comfort zone, offering an intellectual sanctuary which is non-commercial and non-judgmental. We will build on this reality with environments that are welcoming and comfortable for all populations. Materials and programs will focus on our diversity and our commonality and celebrate the differences.
Educate the business community about the rich resources of the Library and facilitate the success of small and community-based organizations

To be successful in the next decade, businesses as well as small and community-based organizations need to demonstrate foresight to navigate a rapidly shifting landscape. They will increasingly be called upon to continually reassess their needs and quickly put together the right resources to develop and update themselves. In the future, business owners and organizational leaders will need to be adaptable lifelong learners. The Library can help support them with materials and information. We will develop business incubators to foster conversation to help them learn best practices from each other.

Create robust collaborations with neighborhood organizations and cross promote activities

There are increasing opportunities for the development of partnerships. Public libraries can rightly portray themselves as key parts of the community network. They already play an important role in helping people to develop their personal skills for the knowledge economy, but this could be developed further. Libraries are well placed to help partners who have other social and political agendas by cross promoting activities.

Charge staff to fully participate in the life of the neighborhoods served

Library services will be tailored at each location to meet the needs of that neighborhood. System-wide staff levels will be maintained, but staff may be redistributed. Library branches should embody what makes Indianapolis communities so vibrant. Library staff members will strive to be present in the community. They will be recognizable and knowledgeable about community life.

Be a free Internet access point for Indianapolis neighborhoods

The Pew Internet and American Life Project reports that people who own digital devices support libraries more than people who are not technologically savvy. They use libraries as one of their channels of content and expect from their public library adequate bandwidth within library buildings and increased public mobile hotspots to stay connected. Providing Internet access to those without this service will continue to be a priority as well. IndyPL is committed to providing optimum public accessibility to all its patrons by offering the right devices in the right quantities at the right locations.
Goal 3
Act as agents of innovation in the Indianapolis community

A. Embrace a Library culture of creativity and change

STRATEGY:
Build Library staff and institutional capacity to innovate

ACTIONS:
3-1 Create a system for encouraging creative ideas and rewarding them
3-2 Use a consistent cultural message embraced by all staff
3-4 Develop programs worthy of national recognition
3-5 Work to develop the language and opportunities to educate the community about the Library’s vision of service
3-6 Establish competency standards and training in technology skills for all staff

STRATEGY:
Ensure staff are competent Library ambassadors who effectively make connections in the community

ACTIONS:
3-7 Train staff to make effective presentations
3-8 Leverage opportunities for staff to share expertise
3-9 Develop staff decision-making capabilities and versatility for using community data to shape services and manage agencies

STRATEGY:
Keep pace with advances in the world of information services

ACTIONS:
3-10 Seek best information dissemination practices within the information marketplace, not just libraries
3-11 Develop ways to connect patrons with skilled staff at any time, in any place and with any technology
3-12 Offer in-house opportunities for staff to hear speakers discuss issues and trends
3-13 Continue to offer international staff exchanges focused on Indianapolis’ Sister Cities

STRATEGY:
Ensure that the Library is consistently providing positive user experiences

ACTIONS:
3-14 Use consistent and rigorous analysis of all services and programs
3-15 Bravely eliminate dated services and programs to make room for new initiatives
3-16 Improve channels for staff and the public to communicate insights for service improvements
3-17 Communicate and celebrate progress routinely with staff and the public through a Community Impact Dashboard and frequent media stories
3-18 Ensure that the user has a reliable and beneficial digital experience, including equipment and staff support

B. Be a place of discovery where innovation is shared and experienced

STRATEGY:
Partner with community innovators to coalesce around new ideas

ACTIONS:
3-19 Seek community groups and individuals willing to share their knowledge
3-20 Create a method for connecting innovators and target audiences

STRATEGY:
Position the Library as a learning lab for creativity

ACTIONS:
3-21 Redefine spaces for community innovators to showcase their products for public experimentation and learning
3-22 Create places to incubate new ideas and allow for creativity by the public
3-23 Create dialogue in the community about the role of the Library as a location where everyone can experiment with new technologies for free

STRATEGY:
Pilot new methods to harness volunteer expertise

ACTIONS:
3-23 Serve the homebound community with mobile services
3-24 Use volunteers as Library advocates
3-25 Use volunteers as technology tutors
3-26 Create learning opportunities for interns
C. Deliver a collection that is valued by our diverse public and is convenient to access

**STRATEGY:**
Pilot new methods to showcase, organize, deliver and evaluate the collection

**ACTIONS:**
3-27 Deliver a targeted collection through strong analysis and evaluation of collection usage through the use of tools like the Collection HQ system
3-28 Assess a Radio Frequency Identification/Automated Materials Handling system for the access and retrieval of Library materials with measurable increased efficiency
3-29 Develop in-house and community based “pop-up” collections
3-30 Designate marketplace areas in every Library location to promote Library materials, programs and services
3-31 Increase use of the database collection through a robust marketing action plan and staff expertise
3-32 Increase access points to the collection through mobile vending machines
3-33 Provide access enhancements which expand the ability for staff and the public to discover materials in the Library catalog

**STRATEGY:**
Lead efforts to preserve community collections available in older formats

**ACTIONS:**
3-34 Lead the formation of a community digitization partnership for preserving, storing and providing ready access to older format materials
3-35 Increase our internal capacity to participate in digitization efforts

**STRATEGY:**
Build a comprehensive digital collection

**ACTIONS:**
3-36 Offer more digital content to engage young readers
3-37 Offer streaming video to expand our popular movie offerings
3-38 Explore additional platforms for E-content
3-39 Offer a job and career database for developing skills and resumes
D. Be accountable to community stakeholders by communicating relevancy and impact of services

**STRATEGY:**
Establish rigorous institutional performance assessment practices

**ACTIONS:**
3-40 Conduct community scans to assess impact on a regular basis
3-41 Measure impact of Library service by using outcomes and community indicators
3-42 Provide an Impact Dashboard to Library stakeholders to measure success

**STRATEGY:**
Provide assessments of community technology

**ACTIONS:**
3-43 Assess community technology needs
3-44 Measure outcomes and impact of Library technology efforts
3-45 Evaluate effectiveness of workforce, e-Government, education and health and wellness technology

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**Build a Library staff and institutional capacity to innovate and ensure staff competency as Library ambassadors who effectively make connections with the community**

Action, resources, innovation and training are urgently needed if the Library is to survive and be relevant in 2015 and beyond. Public libraries need to embrace a culture of change, to recruit more people skilled in creative thinking, and to nurture those skills. An environment committed to innovation requires information professionals with creative qualities who can thrive in an environment that encourages experimentation and research. Innovators can come from all levels in an organization, so paths must be developed and maintained to encourage bright ideas to bubble to the surface. We will expand staff talents by leveraging Library expertise to businesses and community organizations. IndyPL is making a commitment to its staff members to help prepare them for the challenges of using community data to make skilled decisions and give public speeches.

**Keep pace with advances in the world of information services**

To thrive today and tomorrow, the Library must help people to access information in new ways. The challenge for libraries in this age of information is to seek the best practices for
dissemination of information, even if the best is outside the library industry. We have made a commitment to develop the best methods for connecting with our patrons at any time, in any place and with any technology. This promise will require Library staff to be in touch with the latest trends locally, nationally and globally.

**Ensure that the Library is consistently providing positive user experiences**

The most pointed lessons we learn from retail come from examining our staff behavior, updating our marketing practices, and offering patron-oriented services. With the demonstrated dedication of Library staff to meet patrons’ wants and needs, a customer-focused Library is achievable. The dividends of a personal and positive user experience are satisfied patrons who return for additional services. Library staff members will spend more time “on the floor” as do staff in the retail sector, thereby encouraging interaction with patrons.

**Partner with community innovators to coalesce around new ideas**

The Library has created strategies for strengthening existing partnerships and developing new relationships that advance digital inclusion and technology innovation. We will identify the models that work best and target new ones that enhance our strategic goals.

**Position the Library as a learning lab for creativity**

Libraries are becoming creative centers for the public to use as digital media labs, for group craft projects, music editing centers and other creative endeavors. The Library will expand its spaces for editing and developing audio, video and text for multimedia projects using state-of-the-art technology. We see the future Library as a learning lab where people can experiment with a variety of tools to help turn their ideas into reality.

**Pilot new methods to harness volunteer expertise**

Expanded opportunities for the Library to use volunteer expertise will be explored. Volunteers can provide invaluable service as advocates, tutors and contributors of their time and talents.
Goal 3

Pilot new methods to showcase, organize, deliver and evaluate the collection

The adoption of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) by libraries has the potential to revolutionize the allocation of staff time through automation of checkouts and returns, which would make inventory both rapid and painless. IndyPL will evaluate the efficiencies of this system for future implementation. One of the key jobs the Library must do well is to select materials that meet the diverse needs and desires of our patrons. It must remain a top priority to analyze what the community borrows and anticipate emerging demands. The Indianapolis Public Library will keep the use of our collection continually under review to ensure it is relevant, accessible and fit for its purpose.

Lead efforts to preserve community collections in older formats

There are rich resources in our community that few people can access because they are not organized, in good condition or otherwise available. These local and unique materials would be useful to researchers, students and the general public if digitized and made available online. The Library will explore opportunities to develop projects and collaborations that expand access to original, non-published material of local interest.

Build a comprehensive digital collection

If you imagine a library, normally the picture that comes to mind is one of books on shelves. Yet any active library user knows that this image is incomplete. The very definition of ‘book’ is becoming fluid, encompassing formats that may reshape the concepts of the author and reader overtime. The Indianapolis Public Library must meet the needs of children born today who will learn about and invent new forms of information delivery. They will expect widespread and immediate access to information. But we must still meet the needs of their parents and grandparents who enjoy a traditional book. During this time of transition, we must maintain an excellent physical collection and embrace the shift to digital formats. The collection must also serve patrons of different economic, educational and cultural backgrounds. The total size of the print book collection will remain stable for the short term. The digital collection will grow as materials are increasingly available in different formats. The Library will continue to have a floating collection to maximize the use of its resources for the benefit of its users. The Library’s collection will be relevant to meet community needs. As a result, total circulation materials in all formats will increase.
Goal 4
Maximize accessibility to the Library and its services

A. Create a network of Library services in convenient and accessible locations

STRATEGY:
Design a strategic and sustainable geographical distribution of Library branches to maximize the public’s access to Library services

ACTIONS:
4-1 Realign branch locations with particular attention to improving geographic access in Pike, Perry and Lawrence Townships that are presently inadequately served by current locations and resources
4-2 Relocate the Eagle Branch to a new location to provide ADA access and improve service in the West 38th/Lafayette Road redevelopment area
4-3 Evaluate the current Southport location to fill a service gap in Perry Township, which will improve access and services
4-4 Move the branch resources currently in the Flanner House Community Center to an expanded location farther north on Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive or Michigan Road to improve services in the large gap in southeastern Pike and southwestern Washington Townships along the Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive/ Michigan Road corridor
4-5 Move the branch resources currently located in the Fountain Square Branch to an expanded location in Perry Township in the area north of I-465 to fill the large service gap between the Garfield Park and Southport branches
4-6 Relocate Brightwood and Glendale branches to Library-owned facilities in current vicinities to improve access and services and to eliminate leased facilities
4-7 Add a location in Lawrence Township to reduce a service gap
4-8 Remodel and expand the East Washington Branch to provide ADA access and improve services
4-9 Identify future locations for maximum access and visibility, including proximity to transit lines
4-10 Strengthen collaboration with the Beech Grove Public Library and assess the benefits of a merger
4-11 Evaluate hours of service to achieve maximum accessibility
Goal 4A
Branch Locations

Current

Future
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY:</th>
<th>ACTIONS:</th>
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| Establish a public library presence at strategic access points throughout the community to maximize accessibility to computers, the collection and other services. | 4-12 Develop a long term plan for mobile services, including an evaluation of current outreach services.  
4-13 Create a new model of service for the Flanner House Community Center, in collaboration with the Center as part of the Community Quality of Life Plan.  
4-14 Identify opportunities for Library access and service in the Fountain Square area in collaboration with Southeast Neighborhood Development, Inc. and other community partners.  
4-15 Identify additional community centers or social service agencies where the successful partnerships with the Forest Manor, Mary Rigg and Boner Centers could be replicated or expanded.  
4-16 Explore potential co-locations with schools, universities, city agencies or in other public buildings where Library access and visibility can be achieved. | 4-17 Pursue Shared System expansion to increase access to public library resources by students, faculty, employees and visitors of partner institutions.  
4-18 Develop the policies and staffing models required to facilitate entire school systems joining the Shared System.  
4-19 Coordinate collection development of physical and digital formats to support and complement the Shared System collections where possible. |
| STRATEGY: | ACTIONS: |
| Explore the “pop-up” concept where portable Library services are offered in convenient locations. | 4-20 Develop a pop-up Library presence at community events or activities with information and materials geared to audiences or to Gen-Xers, millennials and seniors.  
4-21 Mobilize and introduce new technology at locations outside of Library buildings to provide a service to the community for free learning opportunities, such as Tinker Stations. |
STRATEGY:
Seek new Library users with Library card campaigns and grassroots community engagement

ACTIONS:
4-27 Target new residents to Indianapolis, including new immigrants
4-28 Conduct a market analysis of the branch Library service areas and use the information to target card campaigns to non-user groups
4-29 Target loyal cardholders to help spread the word through social media
4-30 Explore a partnership with cultural organizations to transform the Library card into a cultural pass to local events at discounted prices
4-31 Investigate online Library card registration resolving address verification issues

STRATEGY:
Increase Library use by cardholders through effective marketing of programs and services

ACTIONS:
4-32 Create a positive ongoing relationship with Library cardholders with targeted communications
4-33 Develop methods of tracking cardholder data of program participants

B. Ensure Indianapolis residents and their families have valid Library cards

STRATEGY:
Offer improved models for Library card debt reduction

ACTIONS:
4-24 Improve communication and offer assistance to adults on the Library payment plan
4-25 Explore opportunities to re-engage adult patrons who have Library debt
4-26 Continue the Earn and Learn program for children with aggressive marketing and evaluate success and consider additional debt reduction opportunities for youth

www.indyppl.org/strategicplan/
C. Deliver a rich and vibrant virtual Library presence

STRATEGY:
Implement continued improvements for a user-friendly website and catalog

ACTIONS:
4-34 Assess the feasibility of migration to a new Integrated Library System for improved user experience
4-35 Integrate reviews and tags into the current online catalog
4-36 Create a personalized, convenient and interactive experience for the catalog user
4-37 Integrate database content as part of the user search to create a more complete and richer information experience

STRATEGY:
Utilize the Library website as a source of community awareness about Library programs and services

ACTIONS:
4-38 Create web pages for targeted audiences to attract new users
4-39 Evaluate Chat reference services
4-40 Offer email alerts about Library programs and services

D. Demonstrate excellent stewardship of Library resources

STRATEGY:
Explore a variety of new revenue sources to increase the Library’s ability to meet community needs

ACTIONS:
4-41 Implement online registration for programs, allowing digital notification reminders of events
4-42 Implement online registration for the Summer Reading Program
4-43 Reduce reliance on property taxes for Library operations by increasing access to income tax revenue (Local Option Income Tax/County Option Income Tax)
4-44 Assess current practices to save money and redirect those funds to strategic projects
4-45 Reduce or eliminate leased facilities and redirect those funds to services
4-46 Maintain or increase profit centers where income generating services are possible
4-47 Support The Indianapolis Public Library Foundation in its mission to attract grants, gifts and donations for Library services
Design a strategic and sustainable geographical distribution of Library branches to maximize the public’s access to Library services

IndyPL’s Strategic Plan defines the services, collection and technology standards that the Library will strive to deliver over the next five years. As part of that plan, the buildings that house these operations must be up-to-date for the Plan to succeed. Extensive research by consultants about current Library facilities, patron usage, demographics and trends have been synthesized and analyzed. Understanding how the community uses Library locations currently, and anticipating how Library buildings will be used in the future, resulted in a 20-Year Long-Range Facilities Improvement and Growth Plan. It is a guide that will be used to update and expand Library branches. We know that branches primarily serve people in their immediate neighborhood, but have crossover use by people from outside the neighborhood services areas. The Library will strive to create a balanced geographic distribution of facilities by strategically relocating some branches to eliminate overlaps and fill gaps in service.

Establish a public library presence at strategic access points throughout the community to maximize accessibility to computers, the collection and other services

When appropriate, the Library will co-locate and partner with other community institutions or organizations. Libraries are about freedom: freedom to read, freedom of ideas, and freedom of communication. They are about education, entertainment, making safe spaces, and access to information. The Library will conduct market research about priority services that are required by each community. IndyPL will provide an analysis of possibilities for collaboration, which may enable services to be delivered in non-traditional and, perhaps, unconventional ways.

Expand the Shared System model for the convenience of learners and their families

Studies prove that student achievement improves if they attend a school that provides library services. Despite this body of research, not all schools have libraries with adequate
collections, technology, staffing or space. However, in Marion County, schools have the opportunity to partner with The Indianapolis Public Library to expand their collections and to help deepen student learning. This Shared System allows students access to the school and public library collections simultaneously through one online catalog. Today, IndyPL serves 21 schools and over 10,000 students within Marion County. This successful model will be expanded over the next five years to help extend school library shelves beyond school walls by providing students access to the vast collection of The Indianapolis Public Library.

**Explore the “pop-up” concept where portable Library services are offered in convenient locations**

Indianapolis continues to invest in and support cultural and small business districts. People want access to unique places and spaces that inspire creativity and camaraderie. IndyPL will increase its visibility in the community by placing collections, offering programs, and being present in places residents go to relax and spend time. We see neighborhood spots such as coffee shops and other cultural and business venues offering library services as part of the cultural experience. Making connections and increasing visibility is a priority for the Library.
Encourage school readiness through outreach services and partnerships with organizations invested in this effort

Professional development programs and training for early learning providers help to ensure that those caring for our youngest children have the resources and skills to instill a love of learning. The Library is committed to leveraging partnerships for early literacy programs with educational, cultural and community service organizations. The goal is to advance child care providers through the levels of Paths to Quality, a statewide quality rating and improvement system, by offering professional development to teachers, materials for participating child care providers’ classrooms, and instruction for using literature with those in their care.

Offer improved models for Library card debt reduction

Almost 50% of all Indianapolis residents have a Library card. Because of card debt, many people, including children, cannot check out materials. Earn and Learn initiatives have been developed to provide a framework for lowering debt by reading books and learning how to remain debt free. This program is currently for children and is being beta tested. The Library has made a commitment to continue to test new options for debt reduction so every Library cardholder can enjoy all of our services.

Seek new Library users with Library card campaigns and grassroots community engagement

Increasing the Library user base requires creative thinking and new initiatives. We will conduct a market analysis of each service area and use the results to target card campaigns to non-user groups. Loyal cardholders are great champions of our services. Through social media, they can help us spread the word. Educational and cultural institutions throughout the city share a similar need to attract new visitors, so partnering with them could provide incentives to use local cultural centers.

Increase Library use by cardholders through effective marketing of programs and services

Beyond creating new ways to delight and serve the public, the Library will step up to the challenge of communicating what is available for everyone at The Indianapolis Public Library. We know that many Indianapolis residents – both non-users and active Library users – are not aware of Library resources. Our staff members are in constant contact with patrons and partners, and are in the perfect position to be ambassadors of Library services. The Library will train staff to integrate targeted marketing strategies into each interaction.
Implement continued improvements for a user-friendly website and catalog

We know that patrons prefer to help themselves to information, so it’s important for the Library catalog and website to be nimble tools. The Library will provide strategic links to the online catalog and use catalog tools to lead users to additional items. We will integrate tags and reviews into the search experience. Over the next five years, the online user experience will be more personalized and interactive. Imagine receiving personalized new release updates from the Library on your personal devices. You might also organize a reading profile that tracks what you have read and want to read.

Utilize the Library website as a source of community awareness about Library programs and services

We know that personalizing our services is the key to future success. We will strive to capitalize on the potential of the Library website to reach people throughout the community who would value the opportunity to use the Library from a remote location. We can provide convenience to our patrons by offering personalized email alerts and digital notifications about IndyPL programs and key events.

Explore a variety of new revenue sources to increase the Library’s ability to meet community needs

The Library does not anticipate receiving a significant increase in operating revenues over the next five years. Flat property tax revenues and declining income tax revenues have negatively affected the city’s available fiscal resources. While recent property tax caps have provided increased property tax confidence to our citizens, these declining resources have not kept pace with citizens’ needs and aspirations. The Library will vigilantly look for ways to be good stewards of our funds. For example, owning, instead of leasing, branch Libraries is preferred and will have a positive impact on the operational budget. Also, Library debt will be structured to minimize the burden to the taxpayer. Without an increase in operating revenue, private funding and partnership will be critical. The Indianapolis Public Library is fortunate to have a dynamic Foundation dedicated to raising funds for worthy Library projects through community contributions.
STRATEGY:
The Library will establish rigorous institutional performance assessment practices and provide assessments of community technology

To be successful, the Library knows it must remain flexible, maintain a strong connection to our patrons, be innovative about improving Library services, and continually critique progress. We are committed to producing rich and vibrant outcomes which address key local issues and create Library services with proven community impact.

In order to get a true sense of the Library’s place in the future, IndyPL will manage the information gathering process and place it in the context of what is happening in the Indianapolis community as a whole. We will create community-level outcomes, which are measurable indicators depicting progress toward our desired results. These internal outputs and short-term outcomes will be compared to external community data to articulate the Library’s input on the community as a whole.

An ambitious set of actions has been developed for each strategy in this Plan. They are the key indicators that define trends, targets and thresholds for our work over the next five years. They describe the range of decisions and investments that the Library will make. Annually, all staff will be asked to submit Service Plans for the next year which outline the tactics that will be executed to accomplish these actions. These Service Plans will provide a needs assessment to identify target audiences, address fiscal implications, outline an evaluation process, and assess its relevance to the Strategic Plan. Approved Service Plans will be compiled into an annual tactical plan.

Senior managers will meet quarterly to assess the progress of each action. An analysis will be made of the measurable indicators to monitor the resources and investments being made against the benefits of the actions. After determining which have demonstrated the greatest community impact, we will celebrate the stories that illustrate institutional relevance and the role the Library has in changing community-scale efforts. These stories will be shared with stakeholders throughout the community, including the media. A Strategic Plan Dashboard will be made available periodically to the Library Board of Trustees and the community.

The Library is committed to strengthening its public access technology and contributing to community goals. We will conduct a community needs assessment for technology resources in English and other languages. We will survey patrons annually about public technology use and outcomes in the following purpose areas: health and wellness, workforce development, e-Government and education.
The following groups and individuals contributed to the development of The Indianapolis Public Library’s Strategic Plan:

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- Jim Lingenfelter, President (through December, 2013)
- Kostas A. Poulakidas, Vice President
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References

Numerous sources were consulted throughout the creation and deliberation of this Plan. Ruprecht and Hoke Consulting, LLC and IndyPL personnel developed baseline data sets of sources pertinent to the scope and topics of the nine Task Forces, with links to sources and information about current services offered by community agencies and organizations locally. Those bibliographies are not repeated here.

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Primary sources commissioned for this project:
Indiana University Public Policy Institute (2013). An Analysis of Indianapolis Public Library Patrons’ Geographic, Facility and Technological Patterns. Authors Dr. Laura Littlepage, Elsa Kramer, assisted by John Patten. Funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. and the IUPUI Solution Center Venture Fund.


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Urban Libraries Council (2014). Edge Assessment Initiative. Assessment tool for use by public libraries to align technology assets and needs in their communities.