

Highwood Public Library and Community Center Strategic Plan 2021-2024

Building Community Through Library Service



Executive Summary

The Highwood Public Library and Community Center (HPLCC) embarked upon its first formal strategic plan at a critical juncture in the library's story. The library was built in 1976 by the community, for the community, "the Highwood Way." The community has changed since that time, becoming a vibrant multi-cultural and culinary destination. The community's base is turning over to welcome new families who seek a walkable, transit-oriented community with a forward-thinking school district offering a dual-language approach to education--as well as a desirable place to live and visit.

What it means to be a library has also changed since 1976, with an increased focus on serving the community's unique education, information and aspirational needs. This plan is focused on creating a library that serves as a cornerstone of the community, with relevant programs and services that empower Highwood families to build a future and realize their dreams.

The goal of this plan is to honor the past, support the current members of the community and ensure the success of future taxpayers. The plan allows the library to redefine "the Highwood

Way” by engaging the community in the process of creating a library that is transformational for those it serves.

Since its initial adoption in 2018, this plan was reviewed and updated in June 2021.

Plan Recommendations

Focus on the unique needs of Highwood residents through the mission and vision articulated in this strategic planning cycle.

Through the community ambassadors program, continuously gather information in order to create programming and resources that are relevant in addressing community needs.

Meet the library’s goals to:

- Create the library as a social asset/place
- Engage the entire community in the process of change
- Create programming around community needs
- Create and manage new revenue sources



Vision

The vision of the Highwood Public Library and Community Center is to uplift, inform and grow the community through the library's collections, programming and engagement strategies.

Mission

The Highwood Public Library and Community Center is an innovative anchor that enriches, empowers, educates, and embraces the community it serves. The focus is to provide engaging services and programming, community collaboration opportunities, and traditional library resources.

Values

Creativity – The HPLCC will use creativity and ingenuity to fulfill and sustain our mission.

Collaboration – The HPLCC will create partnerships with school districts, government agencies, social services, local businesses and philanthropic organizations to understand the challenges facing the community and to determine the best resources, services and programs to offer.

Communication – The HPLCC will focus on engaging the entire community and will continuously evolve to remain a community anchor as resource and asset.

Community – The HPLCC will be a welcoming and inclusive environment that focuses on social justice, equity, free access to information, and serving all.

Strategic Priorities

The Board of Trustees has adopted the following priorities for this three-year cycle that makes the library a social asset connecting the community:

- Library as Community
- Library as Place
- Library as Platform
- Library as Literacy

Library as Community

The focus is on community building, partnerships, and the HPLCC becoming an active member of the community. The Board and staff will collaborate, engage, and communicate to ensure the library is a social asset that is culturally relevant and sustainable.



Libraries store the energy that fuels the imagination. They open up windows to the world and inspire us to explore and achieve, and contribute to improving our quality of life. —Sidney Sheldon

Strategies

- Retain the hiring strategy for the Executive Director whose skill set includes community engagement, partnerships, fundraising and program development.
- Develop a new staffing model for succession planning and programmatic growth.
- In partnership with the Friends of the Highwood Public Library, develop a Capital Campaign for Sustainability to support the new staffing model. Work with the city to incorporate the sustainability plan as part of our future tax levy requests.
- Maintain current level of staff strengths and collective skills to support the library's services. Continue to ensure bilingual staff is part of the team.
- Continue implementing a communications strategy that focuses on word-of-mouth methods and social media, utilizes partnerships, and creates key messaging to ensure all community members understand and trust the outcomes.

Library as Place

Today's library is both a physical and virtual location where community members have access to resources and feel welcome and safe both in the building and online.

Without libraries what have we? We have no past and no future. —Ray Bradbury



Strategies

- Complete the building renovation project and rebrand the building as the Highwood Public Library and Community Center to reflect the new services and programming that have been under development since 2019.
- The strength of the library is its location and its small-town feeling. Use these concepts when creating a design that propels the library into the 21st century. Make it the “third space” of the community. Add exterior signage to increase visibility and create a facility that is accessible to all.

Library as Platform

Support the community’s ever-changing digital needs and provide access and training for all forms of technology.

A platform provides resources that lets other people build things. —David Weinberger

Strategies

- Develop the library’s technology strategic plan.
- Support the learning goals of the school districts by providing the technology tools and resources for students to be successful outside of the classroom.
- Provide the technology and tools needed within the library that meet the current and future needs of the community.



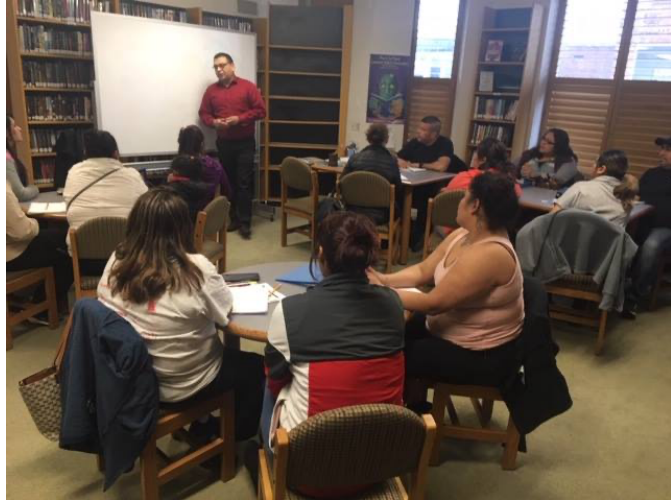
Library as Literacy

Create relevant language, health, financial, multicultural, and civic programs and services. The library will evaluate our programming using an outcome-based approach.

The 21st-Century library is the champion of the literacies needed to navigate information abundance, create knowledge, bolster economic opportunity and make democracy dynamic. —Action Guide for Re-Envisioning Your Public Library

Strategies

- Continue to build strong partnerships with school districts, social services, businesses, and community leaders to build programs to support the literacy needs of the community.
- Become the community's early learning and resource center for both children and families.
- Partner with the school district to ensure the children of the community are supported after school and during the summer months.
- Support adult literacy in all aspects: language and reading; health and wellness; digital; cultural and multicultural; STEM; and any other gaps in literacy identified through community engagement.
- Finalize collection strategy.



Since the implementation of our last strategic plan in 2018, the Highwood Public Library has seen tremendous success, culminating in being recognized as an Institute for Museum and Library Services' National Medal winner. This is the nation's highest honor given to museums and libraries that make significant and exceptional contributions to their communities, and it solidifies our position as a community anchor for Highwood. The next chapter in our strategic planning cycle will continue our focus on empowering and embracing all members of the Highwood community through dynamic programming, relevant services, and coordinated community engagement.

Approved by the Highwood Library Board of Trustees June 28, 2021