



Carter Memorial Library Strategic Plan



2020-2024



Introduction & Background

A strategic plan is essential for an organization to understand where they have been, where they are going and what goals they need to accomplish in order to get there. When the Carter Memorial Library staff and Board of Trustees decided to engage in the WiLS strategic planning cohort, the intent was to gain a clear picture of the challenges, successes and future of Omro's most valuable resource: the public library.

In doing this, the carefully chosen strategic planning committee was able to glean essential knowledge and information not only about how the library can improve its overall services, space and function, but also what the community of Omro actually wants. It became clear that a strategic plan was going to be important for the library to move into the 21st century.

Carter Memorial Library Mission Statement

Carter Memorial Library promotes lifelong learning for our Omro community and surrounding areas by connecting people of all ages, providing education, information, and technology in an atmosphere of respect, safety and accessibility.



Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Space

Provide library spaces that meet the desire and demand of our residents for resources, services, and programming to increase their knowledge and expand their skills.

Why?

Built with a massive fundraising effort in the early 1980's, the Carter Memorial Library was built as a separate building from the City Hall in 1986. Modern and spacious, the library was everything Omro needed at the time. Over thirty years later, however, the community has grown by 30% and the little library on the corner is now outdated and crowded. While the staff provide excellent programming for all ages, the space in which they have to invite the public is small and limited. The single community meeting room can hold 46 people comfortably, making it feel crowded and unwelcome if an event draws in much more than that. Individuals hoping for quiet space to read, study or meet a friend will find privacy lacking. The collection is excellent; on par with larger libraries with larger service populations. However, there is no more space to house the books, DVDs and magazines, not to mention areas for staff to process new materials or bring in unique items to lend such as board games and artwork. Additionally, as the general public views libraries as a community gathering space more and more, the idea of a Third Place in Omro is incredibly appealing.

"I wish the Carter Memorial Library would create a little more modern space in which to do the library activities while keeping in line with our quaint, small-town American feel of Omro."

Objectives

1. Increase areas for collaboration and small groups to meet the community's requests for adequate and flexible spaces
 - a. Develop a plan to explore space possibilities, inside and out of the library building
 - b. Create a building improvement and maintenance plan for the existing building
2. Design a library building that integrates with the library service opportunities and possibilities that could exist for the community with a modernized library building
 - a. Develop and implement advocacy and funding strategies needed to realize a relevant and modern library for the community

Measures for Success

1. Work with a consultant on library location and vision.
2. Make initial improvements that can happen before a more modernized library building is complete.

2018 Survey Results: Space

Ideas	# of People
Expand Overall Square Footage	62
Better Indoor and Outdoor Seating Areas	33
Better Teen and Children's Area	27
Coffee Area/Snacks	24
Expand Collection Area	17
More/Larger Meeting Space(s)	10

Goal 2: Improve Services and Access

We will provide a welcoming and accessible space that makes it easy for all patrons to find what they need, in person and online. We will also establish the library as the community hub that connects information, ideas, people and partners to opportunities, resources, services and spaces that are accessible and inclusive.

Why?

Results from the library survey showed people felt Carter Memorial Library could improve their services, including longer hours and more programming for all ages. They also indicated what current services are important to them.

Objectives

1. Examine library open hours and access to library spaces to balance the needs of the community with the resources of the library
 - a. Review the current library budget to increase staff to cover any changes or additions in open hours
 - b. Develop a long-term plan to add new potential collections and vision for programming
 1. Create new and evaluate current collections and programming that can serve our community, within the capacity of the staff
2. Expand our role as an access point in the community to existing and innovative technologies and equipment
 - a. Increase available technology
 - b. Keep current with technology, within the library budget and skills of the staff
3. Increase reach to underserved populations and target audiences
 - a. Continue to develop partnerships with area schools, daycares and homeschoolers and create services tailored to their needs
 - b. Actively explore and develop new and emerging programs for the underserved population

Measures for Success

1. Increase of new patrons
2. Overall program attendance increases
3. Seeing new patrons come within expanded hours of operation
4. Healthy partnership with school district, daycares and underserved population

2018 Survey Results: Services & Access

<i>Ideas</i>	<i># of People</i>
Longer Hours	39
More Teen and Children's Programs	26
Involve the Community/Schools	16
More Adult Programming	9

Goal 3: Marketing and Community Engagement (A Library for Everyone)

Create clear and consistent messaging that conveys the library's vision and goals and promotes library resources, services and programs through communications designed to reach all community members.

Why?

The survey demonstrated that even our most frequent users are not aware of all the services and resources the library provides. Face to face conversations within the Omro community showed that non-library users were even less aware of all the free benefits found within the library.

Objectives

1. Increase library presence at strategic locations and events in the community, townships and outside the physical library.
2. Identify opportunities to strengthen and enhance partnerships within the community.
3. Improve existing communication the library provides regarding community service, events, and opportunities.
4. Better utilize marketing and graphic design.
 - a. Capitalize on word of mouth and face to face discussions
 - b. Develop creative and unique marketing
 - c. Investigate how similar libraries accomplish marketing

"There were so many things that our little library offered which I had no idea! It's like a one-stop-shop for the Omro area."

Measures for Success

1. Increase in foot traffic
2. Increase in partnerships
3. Increase reach and community engagement with library communications



Goal 4: Building the Future of the Library

Ensure short and long-term sustainability through continuous exploration of funding opportunities and sources to meet and support the ever-evolving service needs of our community.

Why?

The library is an important asset in the Omro community and too few people know or understand the value it brings. By spreading awareness through personal relationships, partnerships and dedicated giving, more people will benefit from the amazing resources and in turn, the library will be in a strong position to fulfill its need to expand and meet the needs of the very community that loves it.

Objectives

1. Align the goals of the Library Board of Trustees and the Friends of the Library Board
 - a. Share minutes taken at Friends' and the Board of Trustees meetings with each group
 - b. Create a sub-committee for fundraising that includes both Friends and Board members
 - c. Revitalize the Friends group with a membership drive
2. Increase existing efforts to identify new opportunities for other funding sources, including grants, to support programming, innovative service development and purchasing needed resources
3. Establish fundraising initiatives to support higher-cost investments into the library and provide long-term funding support to allow the library to meet its mission and reach its vision
 - a. Structure investments that will support the libraries present and future needs

Measures for Success

1. Increase in active members of the Friends of the Library group
2. Increase in funding
3. Established endowments

2018 Survey Results: Important Library Services

Type of Service	# of People
Wide variety of materials to check out	213
Community meeting space	85
Free WiFi	82
Programs for children	80
Free downloadable content	68
Computer and internet access	61
Programs for adults	51
Classes	51
Place to read	51
Help with research and questions	47
Reading & watching suggestions	35
Kid storytime	33
Programs for families	31
Programs for teens	30

Ongoing Planning

The Strategic Plan was created by the strategic planning committee and will serve as an implementation guide during its lifetime. The ongoing process for the library will include project management, assessment, communication and prioritization of activities to ensure the goals of the Strategic Plan are realized, with flexibility to adapt as needed.

The library will follow the annual process and schedule to implement the Strategic Plan as follows:

The Library Director and staff will work in conjunction with the Library Board of Trustees to prioritize and coordinate activities from this plan. The library will consider available resources, including funding and staff time; changing conditions locally, regionally and statewide; and opportunities that arise to innovate during the implementation of the plan.

Strategic Planning Process

The Carter Memorial Library formed a Strategic Planning Committee composed of library staff, a Library Board trustee and community members. Under the direction and guidance of WiLS strategic planning consultants, the following sources of data and information were gathered and analyzed:

- Annual library operations and service data submitted to the Wisconsin State Department of Public Instruction (DPI) for the years 2007-2018.
- Gaining and Maintaining Young People in Wisconsin Communities 2017 Case Study, facilitated by Sheamus Johnson and University of Wisconsin-Extension Winnebago County educator Allyson Watson.
- Results of a community survey conducted between March 2018 and April 2018 garnering a total of 535 responses.
- Results of an Issues and Needs Questionnaire completed by the home school community.
- Results of a Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results (SOAR) analysis with staff and Library Board groups.
- Demographic and economic data from the American Community Survey and the U.S. Census.
- Assessment of the library related to the Department of Public Instruction's Wisconsin Public Library Standards.

"The people at a public library might be the only interaction someone has with another human being all day. Its presence in a community is vitally important."

Acknowledgements

We want to thank the more than 600 community members who responded to our community survey. The focus of our strategic planning process has been to engage residents to ensure our services, programs, and resources align with the needs of those we serve. The information we gathered from the community has been invaluable.

The library staff played an essential role in our strategic planning process and we thankfully acknowledge their efforts.

The library director is grateful for the time and passion of the Strategic Planning Committee. Their commitment and thoughtfulness were instrumental in the development of this plan.

The library would like to thank Mark Arend, Assistant Winnefox Director and Joy Schwarz, Winnefox Continuing Education/Training Librarian for their help and guidance in pulling this all together. The library would also like to thank Melissa McLimans and Bruce Smith from WiLS (Wisconsin Library Services) for providing planning process management and facilitation services to develop our strategic plan.

Strategic Planning Committee

- Julie Stobbe, Library Director
- Marge Franzke, Library Board President
- Becky Sell, PR Coordinator
- Sheri Getchel, Community member

Library Board of Trustees

- Marge Franzke, President
- Tom Ellis, Winnebago County Representative
- James Braasch, City Council Representative
- Stacey Wright, Omro School Representative
- Nicole Bahn
- Barbara Hodgen
- Ann Reise
- Lisa Sharkey

