



# **Marion Public Library**

## **Strategic Plan 2018-2021**

Finalized June 2018

Dear Marion Public Library Community:

Crafting this plan with library leadership and staff has been an absolute joy, and I am honored to share our vision with the community. While taking time to reflect on our agency vision, set goals, and evaluate our progress is part of our regular practice, collaborating on a focused, future-facing plan provided an opportunity to grow as a team, reengage with our vision of what function the library plays in the community, and leverage our past successes and failures into forward momentum. In our group work, five concepts surfaced consistently, and you will see evidence of these themes in both the framework we have designed and the specific tactics we will employ to reach our goals. These themes include the importance of maintaining exceptional core services, our commitment to engage our community, our passion for approaching library work creatively and stewardship of community resources carefully, our belief that trained and empowered library staff are a critical tool for success, and our excitement around building a new library for Marion.

Our core services are the most visible library work that we do. We celebrate opportunities to provide the traditional library programs, collections, and spaces the community values, and work hard to balance these offerings with the new and different services we are developing. We evaluate, assess, and develop ideas and services using evidence-based strategies. We search actively for new ways to encourage the community to champion the library. We work to strengthen our current outreach initiatives and to develop additional strategies for connecting with people, places, and agencies throughout our community. We are committed to finding new ways to take our services into the community both physically and virtually.

We stay flexible in our thinking about the future of libraries and library services and put concentrated effort into discerning how to protect and advance the ways we steward the community's resources. This includes active participation in Metro Library Network (MLN) projects and a desire to centralize and share services for maximum benefit to all. We are excited to take risks and try new things with our consortium partners.

We believe our staff is our greatest resource, and we are committed to dedicating resources to recruiting and hiring the best candidate for each position. We never assume that a vacancy should be filled "as is," but rather will reassess position descriptions at each opportunity based on the library's needs. As we grow and change with Marion, we continue to professionalize and take risks in how we get the work of the library done. We hold library staff to a high standard of excellence and offer a comprehensive orientation and ongoing training to support its development. We encourage and take pride in staff participation in conferences, publishing, and other activities in the field.

We are pleased to be working toward a new library for Marion! After many years of conversation and concept exploration, we are developing a capital campaign framework and a building plan to expand our services and spaces in ways that will accommodate current and future library uses.

Thank you for being part of the Marion Public Library community. You are why we're here, and we are authentically thankful to have the opportunity to serve you.

In appreciation,

Elsworth Carman  
Director, Marion Public Library

**Vision**

We will provide an unparalleled patron experience. We facilitate access to the resources our patrons want when they want them. We are where our community chooses to gather and connect. We are the friendliest public library in the world.

**Mission**

We enhance lives through radical hospitality, service curation, and shared joy in the Marion community.

**Values***Hospitality*

- We are always friendly, welcoming, and approachable
- We show respect, compassion, and kindness in our interactions, communications, decisions, and services
- We actively seek ways to surprise and delight
- We provide the highest level of personal attention and broadest range of resources available

*Stewardship*

- We courageously and creatively allocate resources in ways that support and strengthen the Marion community
- We are conscientious managers of all library resources
- Every decision we make contributes to the success of the Marion community
- We respect the right to privacy
- We champion curiosity and intellectual freedom

*Community-Focus*

- We use community feedback, locally collected data, and evaluative tools to guide our exploration of community needs
- We boldly try new things, take risks, and learn from our collective experience to discern the needs of Marion
- We treasure opportunities for fun and celebration

## **Strategic Objectives**

Our shared goals reflect our vision, mission, and values and provide a template for how we use our resources. The work of all library staff and volunteers is guided by these goals.

### **Strengthen the library's patron-driven service model**

1. Continue to develop a patron-driven acquisition model inclusive of "convenience services" for accessing and engaging with materials
2. Standardize maintenance of collections, search for creative and engaging ways to showcase the collections to spark curiosity, and increase navigability of collections
3. Showcase Children's collection to spark curiosity via displays, including online and featured material displays
4. Develop program for training all metro area schools and home school assistance programs about online resources that are available to them
5. With the Metro Library Network (MLN), develop a cohesive plan for circulation and processing workflows to minimize materials' issues
6. Expand the Grow-on-the-Go concept to include Marion home school and senior residents
7. Establish a customer service training program by October 2018 for all employees to complete
8. Meet patrons where they are; integrate outreach services into the community and be flexible in thinking about where we can serve, rather than just how we can serve

### **Establish a standard of excellence in service provision through talent development**

1. Integrate assessment and evaluation practices into program design; assure programming at all levels supports the library's strategic goals and initiatives
2. Establish and implement an employee evaluation and goal-setting program to complement the existing City of Marion evaluation process and allow the library to focus on strategic goals and initiatives
3. Continue to evaluate and strengthen the library staffing model
4. Design and implement a training program to bring all staff to required level of skill and expertise in service- and task-related areas
5. Establish expectation that staff proactively seek training opportunities and take initiatives to learn and grow from our community and our profession
6. Standardize strategic annual plans for all departments; assure that these plans are integrated into Pay for Performance goals for each Coordinator
7. Foster opportunities for more impactful collaboration among Marion Public Library (MPL) staff and Friends members

### **Prioritize risk taking and maximize flexibility**

1. Actively participate in MLN decision-making and action; step up to be the lead library on projects when possible – implement new metro-wide patron-driven service models

2. Strategically, proactively, and publicly identify and respond to changing community wants and needs: tell the world
3. Approach our work with open minds and creative thinking, unencumbered by fear of failure or nontraditional services; be nimble and flexible about finding positive lessons in failures
4. Seek input from staff at all levels about ideas for new service models
5. Demonstrate compassion in our community partnerships, projects, and connections
6. Actively work to integrate library services into city management; focus efforts on making the library more vital to city operations
7. Work to create more collaborative partnerships with local school districts (e.g., Marion Independent, Xavier, Linn Mar; possibly expand to Cedar Rapids Community)

### **Professionalize internal and external marketing communications**

1. Enhance MPL message delivery to position MPL staff as the community's go-to experts in providing desired resources and information
2. "Surprise and delight" MPL patrons
3. Represent city branding efforts
4. Communicate with staff
5. Extend MPL staff and volunteer relationships to the Corridor community
6. Build positive MPL relationship with area media representatives (e.g., *The Gazette*, KCRG TV9, KGAN2, *Corridor Business Journal*, KWWL) to ensure accurate and balanced coverage of MPL news events
7. Develop MPL Speaker's Bureau that houses three presentations with targeted messages ready to be quickly updated and presented at any time
8. Ensure that all staff members are familiar with MPL messages and understand the need for message alignment
9. Work with the MPL's advocacy groups (Friends, Foundation) to enhance their relationship with the MPL brand (materials, access, and customer service)

### **Design and implement a successful, multi-year library building project campaign**

1. Establish a framework that is ready to implement once the library building project is defined
2. Develop and implement campaign strategies
3. With City of Marion communications staff, develop and implement marketing communications plan around the Marion Mixed-Use (MMU) building, including new library building
4. Launch and implement campaign strategies
5. Communicate regularly with stakeholders
6. Celebrate successes
7. Raise (amount to be determined) in two- to three-year period