The only thing that you absolutely have to know, is the location of the library.

- Albert Einstein

2018-2022 Strategic Plan
Letter from the Director

Hello!
As the Director of the Fairfax County Public Library (FCPL), it is my pleasure to share with you the Library’s new Strategic Plan. I am lucky to work for this fantastic public library system where every day is a pleasure. I can share with you that Fairfax County is served by a library system that focuses on world class facilities, positive and knowledgeable staff, a wide roster of programs, and a collection that suits any reader who walks through the (physical or virtual) door.

FCPL began its journey towards this new plan in 2015 with the Library Board of Trustees Public Engagement Initiative. From the data generated in the Public Engagement Report, released in 2016, a staff planning committee was formed. More than sixty employees were energized about the planning process and volunteered their time and energy to participate! The staff committee took great care to thoroughly review areas including the library mission, vision, values, strengths, weaknesses, goals and objectives, being sure to bring each developed part and piece to the Library Board’s Planning Committee. The base of the document grew over the course of 2017 and the final plan was completed in early 2018.

As you read through FCPL’s plan for the future, know that the Library’s goal is to sustain and grow the great slate of programs, services, spaces, and collections that are offered to the community. To marry the traditional and much-loved services the library provides with the new and emerging that will allow the library to evolve and thrive far into the future. To blend technology with community partnerships, collections with access, and to find the happy medium where every member of the community is able to find what they need at the library.

With our five focus areas of Access, Innovation, Civic Engagement, Technology and Literacy, we will be able to strengthen the Library’s ability to be a positive change agent for individuals and to make lasting impact in our community. Welcome to the Fairfax County Public Library’s 2018-2023 Strategic Plan. It’s been a long road to get here but well worth the wait.

Jessica A. Hudson
Library Director

“Libraries were full of ideas – perhaps the most dangerous and powerful of all weapons.”
- Sarah J. Maas
Throne of Glass

"One can never have too many librarian friends."
- Jennifer Chiaverini
The Wedding Quilt

"When the going gets tough, the tough get a librarian."
- Joan Bauer
Best Foot Forward

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Introduction

About the Fairfax County Public Library (FCPL)
FCPL operates eight regional libraries, fourteen community libraries, and Access Services (offering customized services for residents with visual and physical disabilities) conveniently located to serve all the residents of Fairfax County and the City of Fairfax. Through these twenty-three public service sites and via the library website, residents can access nearly three million items. A sample of the library’s array of materials includes digital and print books, CDs, DVDs, magazines (traditional and online), thermal imaging cameras, nature backpacks, early literacy outreach, and many other information sources and learning opportunities for Fairfax County’s diverse population.

Statistical Snapshot

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<th>METRIC</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
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<tr>
<td>Service Area Population *</td>
<td>1,142,978</td>
<td>1,146,241</td>
<td>1,151,392</td>
<td>1,161,770</td>
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<td>Registered Borrowers</td>
<td>473,411</td>
<td>456,806</td>
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<td>Circulation</td>
<td>12,881,013</td>
<td>12,095,926</td>
<td>12,042,565</td>
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<td>Library Visits</td>
<td>4,990,860</td>
<td>4,814,043</td>
<td>4,727,927</td>
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<td>Programs</td>
<td>7,679</td>
<td>9,276</td>
<td>12,446</td>
<td>12,406</td>
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<td>Program Attendance</td>
<td>208,358</td>
<td>209,489</td>
<td>233,929</td>
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<td>Summer Reading Program Participants</td>
<td>43,349</td>
<td>45,483</td>
<td>42,480</td>
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<td>Internet Usage</td>
<td>524,674</td>
<td>964,820</td>
<td>1,357,717</td>
<td>1,248,766</td>
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<td>WiFi Usage</td>
<td>2,174,371</td>
<td>2,580,551</td>
<td>2,663,414</td>
<td>2,435,809</td>
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<td>Website Visits</td>
<td>4,764,081</td>
<td>4,757,428</td>
<td>4,681,672</td>
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<td>Catalog Logins</td>
<td>10,401,561</td>
<td>9,839,718</td>
<td>9,343,398</td>
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* Includes the City of Fairfax

Purpose of the Plan
The Fairfax County Public Library’s strategic plan for 2018-2022 builds on the findings and recommendations of the library’s recent Public Engagement Initiative. Informed by the initiative, shaped by the priorities of the Library Board of Trustees and strengthened by the vision of the Library Director, this plan will serve as the roadmap to guide the library’s work over the next five years.

This plan features a new vision statement, a new mission statement, a list of new values with accompanying statements, as well as new goals and objectives. The plan will be dynamic, evolving as the library adjusts to challenges and opportunities. Regular review and evaluation by library staff, management and the Library Board will enable the library to gauge its progress toward achieving the plan’s stated goals and objectives as well as manage change with flexibility and adjust to emerging trends.

This plan seeks to foster a culture of creativity and forward momentum, felt by library staff, library partners, and library users.
Strategic Direction

The Library Board of Trustees, using the findings and recommendations from the Public Engagement Initiative and in consultation with the Library Director, developed the following priorities for the system:

Library Board Service Priorities

Age Appropriate Programming - Localized programming supported by demographic data as well as community interest.

Collection Development - Develop relevant and inspiring collections with a focus on both print and digital materials.

Technology - Improve information availability and delivery by focusing on access and innovation.

Strategic Alignment

The library occupies a unique position focusing outward to the community, inward to library staff and upward within Fairfax County. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has articulated eight priorities, three of which apply directly to the library: A Quality Education System; Living, Caring and Affordable Communities; and Recreation and Cultural Opportunities. The county also has seven vision elements which the library helps to achieve. In addition, there is a Strategic Plan to Facilitate the Economic Success of Fairfax County with its own corresponding goals and vision for achieving them. Each of these upward oriented factors impacts the way the library provides resources and services to the community.

As an important community hub, the library provides the bridge whereby county vision meets community reality. Working to ensure needs are met, priorities addressed, and vision realized, the library strives to align its work with that of the larger mission of Fairfax County. Alignment ensures that common beliefs meet concerted action in the collective pursuit of a clear result.
The Planning Process

Public Engagement Initiative
To ensure that every voice was heard in the process of developing the library’s strategic plan, CIVIC Technologies (CIVIC), in association with The Ivy Group, was retained in August 2015 to undertake a community engagement initiative to identify future library services in Fairfax County. Under the direction of the Library Board of Trustees, the Board’s Planning Committee exercised direct oversight and project management. Over the next thirteen months, CIVIC conducted an extensive process that reached thousands of residents and worked with library staff to align library service strategies with community needs.

Several methods were used to gather stakeholder and staff input. These methods included three surveys:

1. **Online Survey of Community Residents**
   - 8,215 Responses

2. **Random Telephone Survey of Community Residents**
   - 1,109 Interviews

3. **Online Survey of Library Trustees and Staff**
   - 291 Responses

In all, nearly 10,000 people contributed to this process. CIVIC presented their findings and recommendations to the Library Board of Trustees September 8, 2016. All documents from the Public Engagement Initiative were made available to public on the library’s website. This initiative allowed the library to take advantage of new technologies for gathering community input and to use up-to-date demographic information in conjunction with library usage data. Most importantly, the process allowed community stakeholders, members of the Board, and library staff to think about the future of the library collaboratively.

Staff Strategic Planning Committee
Library staff members were recruited to serve on a Staff Strategic Planning Committee responsible for crafting the plan. Nearly one hundred staff members were nominated by peers or volunteered to participate and as a result a primary and secondary committee were created. The primary committee consisted of nineteen staff members from all levels of the organization and included Branch Managers, Youth Service Managers, Page Managers, Outreach Managers, Circulation Managers, Library Aides, Administrators, Library IT, and others. The Library Director and Deputy Director served in an ad hoc capacity and a representative from the County’s Office of Organizational Development and Training was brought in to facilitate the process. A secondary committee included thirty-seven additional staff members.
Guiding Statements

Vision – FCPL is the essential (re)source to inform, engage, and inspire our community.

Mission – We build community and promote literacies through programming, community spaces, technologies, and collections of educational and recreational resources.

What We Value – We are anchored by the following values which guide us in our vision and the fulfillment of our mission:

- We build meaningful relationships.
  We maximize our impact through dynamic partnerships with individuals, public and nonprofit agencies, library support groups, educators, and businesses.

- We reflect and celebrate our community.
  We partner with our community and work to ensure that all our resources and services are available to all members of the community. Our people, collection, events, and services are a reflection of the community.

- We provide excellent service in every transaction.
  We believe in intellectual freedom and fairness. We adhere to professional ethics and treat our customers and our community with respect. We provide fair and equitable access to information, materials, services, and resources.

- We promote educational and personal growth.
  We are a skilled professional staff who believe that powerful results are possible when individuals exercise their right to learn and to grow. We endeavor to inspire a culture of continuous learning for personal, intellectual, and cultural growth. We champion information literacy for all, leading to an informed community.

- We embrace and encourage innovation and creativity.
  We adapt and introduce new tools and techniques to meet community needs. We are innovative and creative in our pursuit of excellence.

- We anticipate and embrace change.
  We anticipate and embrace the changing needs of our environment and act to meet those needs. We change, overcome challenges, grow and adapt to our community and the demands of the information age.

- We express a genuine attitude of enthusiasm.
  We take pride in doing an excellent job in every interaction we have. We strive to be courteous and welcoming and to provide a quality experience every time. We start every interaction from a position of finding the YES.
System Goals and Objectives

Goal: Expand access to library services.
Strategic Focus: Access

Objective 1 – Explore alternative venues and seek creative opportunities to bring the library to the community.

Objective 2 – Diversify and enhance collections.

Objective 3 – Identify and eliminate barriers to access.

Goal: Foster an environment of innovation.
Strategic Focus: Innovation

Objective 1 – Encourage critical thinking, creativity, and thoughtful risk taking within the library community.

Objective 2 – Develop and implement new methods of marketing library services to expand use.

Goal: Design events and services that engage our diverse and dynamic community.
Strategic Focus: Civic Engagement

Objective 1 – Ensure a welcoming and positive experience.

Objective 2 – Provide engaging programs, events, and services that encourage learning and development.

Objective 3 – Promote and develop strategies for lifelong learning.

Objective 4 – Explore, create, and maintain partnerships with community organizations / agencies.

Goal: Integrate technology that will enhance and expand the library experience.
Strategic Focus: Technology

Objective 1 – Provide technology training to ensure traditional and evolving library services.

Objective 2 – Research and implement technology based on community needs.

Goal: Provide literacy services and materials across age ranges.
Strategic Focus: Literacy

Objective 1 – Grow library services around early or youth literacy.

Objective 2 – Provide English as a Second Language services in communities of need.

Objective 3 – Support literacy through collections, technology, and partnerships.
Next Steps

Branch and Department Goals and Initiatives
The planning process will next localize the focus at the micro-community level. Staff at individual library branches and within each library department will develop their own goals and objectives utilizing demographic data, usage analytics, and public input to customize offerings to better serve each neighborhood. These goals will be aligned with the library’s system-wide goals and match library resources to community needs. Goals and initiatives will be tracked and evaluated regularly for measureable success. These goals will be aligned with the library’s system-wide goals and match library resources to community needs. Goals and initiatives will be tracked and evaluated for measureable success.

The library extends appreciation and thanks to the library support groups, stakeholders, Staff Strategic Planning Committee, and the many individual library staff members from all levels of the organization who, through their survey responses, discussion board postings, emails, comments, conversations, editorial review and helpful advice, have contributed to the development of the Fairfax County Public Library strategic plan.

To provide comments, feedback or suggestions contact:

Douglas R. Miller
Strategic Planner and Customer Research Manager
Fairfax County Public Library Administration
douglas.miller@fairfaxcounty.gov
## Acknowledgements

### Library Board of Trustees
(as of October 2017)

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<tr>
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<td>Charles Fegan</td>
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<td>Dranesville District</td>
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<td>Miriam Smolen</td>
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### Library Director

Jessica Hudson

### Deputy Library Director

Christine Jones

### Library Foundation

Susan Harman, Director

### Staff Strategic Planning Committee

#### Primary Committee

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<td>Kim Appich</td>
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<td>Jennifer Dickinson</td>
<td>Azar Momeni</td>
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<td>Renee Edwards</td>
<td>Steve Okrend</td>
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<td>Ivelisse Figueroa-Gonzalez</td>
<td>Ken Plummer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sophia Garzan</td>
<td>Bethany Richardson</td>
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#### Secondary Committee

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<td>Erin Chernisky</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Mary Fox</td>
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Nancy Ryan
Linda Schlekaull
Sarah Souther
Keisha Strand
Steve Walker

Allison Mulligan
Organizational Development and Training Facilitator

Linda Schlekaull
Sarah Souther
Keisha Strand
Steve Walker

America Reichel
Emily Riley
Ghazala Shah
Rabinder Singh
Deborah Smith-Cohen