

**Connect. Discover. Create.**



**s t r a t e g i c   p l a n**  
2016-2020



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# introduction

Over thirty years ago, a group of individuals came together and worked to form the Rochester Public Library. Through overwhelming community support, the Rochester Public Library District was created through a referendum, passing with a two-thirds affirmative vote in 1986. In the early days, the library operated in a rented multi-purpose building in a 1,400 square foot space, with two staff operating the library thirty-five hours per week.

By the time the 1989 Long-Range Plan was completed, the library was growing in usage by 30% per year, staff had tripled in size, and the library had already added space to accommodate this growth. With the strong growth in library use, and a robust population growth of 9.1% in 1989, leaders of the library recognized the need to construct a new building. The library's patrons loved its library and the services that it offered.

In 1995, through planning and hard work, a new building for the library was built. The building is a joint-use building shared between the Village of Rochester and the Library, and features a shared community room for public meetings and other gatherings. The library expanded to 7,600 square feet from its starting size of just 1,400 square feet.

Over twenty years after construction of the library building, patron use of the library is as strong as it has ever been. Our collection of materials is diverse and continues to grow; hundreds of patrons participate in the programs the library offers; and the library is a place where people can connect with each other and participate in lifelong learning activities.



This strategic plan, developed with input from members of the community, sets the vision for the library's future. This plan identifies programs and services the library will deliver over the next five years and identifies the challenging space limitations in the library which need to be addressed.

The plan is also a communication tool. It provides the community and library patrons with information about the future of the library. All patrons are encouraged to review and provide feedback on the plan.

# who we are

## *rochester public library district*

The Rochester Public Library District (“the library”) was established in May 1985 and the current library building was constructed in 1995. The library is located at 1 Community Drive in Rochester, Illinois, and is co-located with the offices of the Village of Rochester.

Approximately 8,000 people live within the library’s service area, which covers eastern Sangamon County and a small portion of western Christian County. The Village of Rochester is also within the library’s service area.

The library holds a collection of over 40,000 items including books, magazines, DVDs, CDs, audiobooks, and e-books. As a member of the SHARE (Sharing Heartland’s Available Resources Equally) consortium, library patrons can access more than 10 million additional items. Over 40,000 people entered the library last year to access the collection, attend one or more programs and events, use the Internet, access the free Wi-Fi service, access print and electronic resources, use copying and faxing services, or try out the 3-D printers.

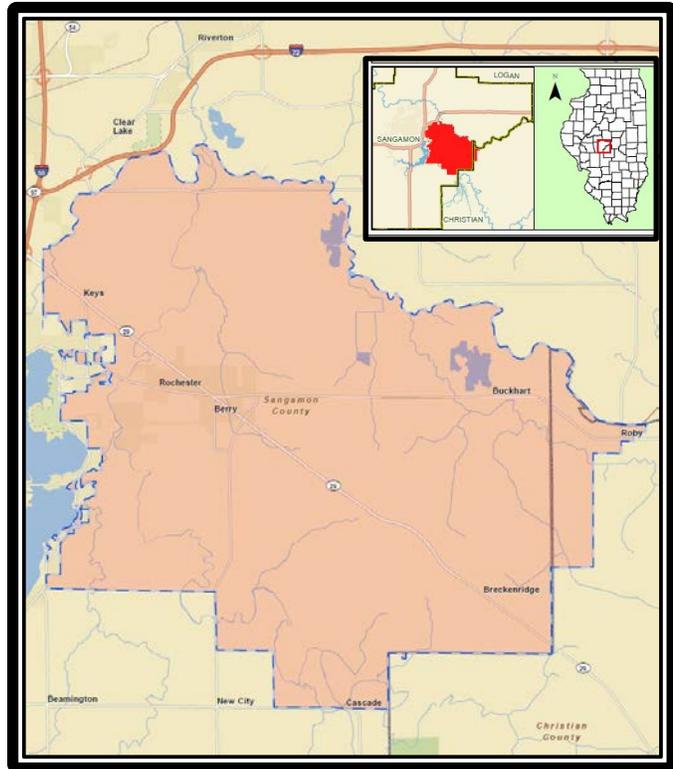
The Library Board of Trustees (“the Board”) and the Library Director administer the operations of the library. The Board establishes library policies and the Library Director implements those policies in the day-to-day operations of the library by working with her staff. We (the Board, the Library Director, and the library staff) work collaboratively to deliver programs and services to the patrons within the library’s service area.

## *our mission*

To strengthen community connections, inspire lifelong learning and discovery, and foster creativity.

## *our vision*

The library will be a welcoming, comfortable place where all people may engage in lifelong learning opportunities and diversity can be explored, celebrated, and experienced.



# planning process

The Illinois Library Association identifies the strategic plan as a core element in developing a foundation for quality library service. Library strategic plans usually have a five-year planning cycle and our plan was last updated in 2010. In the fall of 2015, the Board of Trustees established a committee to update the library's strategic plan.

The committee included community members, library patrons, library staff, and Board Trustees. Committee members were invited to participate based on their ability to reflect a cross-section of the community the library serves. The committee met three times to discuss library strengths and challenges, develop mission and vision statements, identify service priorities, discuss space needs, and evaluate the library's hours of operation.

The committee identified and ranked the service priorities that would best serve the library community. The library staff used this information to develop specific goals, objectives, and activities to address the service priorities the committee identified. This information is included in the "Service Response" section of this plan. We will focus on implementing all of the activities within the first two years of the revised strategic plan.



# strengths

The library is strongly supported and used by its patrons. Over 40% of people within our service area are library card holders, and there has been consistent growth in the use of the library as measured through door counts, attendance of the summer reading programs, and checkout of materials. The staff provides excellent customer service to patrons, delivers a broad range of programs, and continually evaluates the need for new programs.

## *deliver opportunities to discover*

In addition to patron usage, library program offerings grew substantially between 2013 and 2015. Our “door count,” or the number of patrons visiting the library in one year, has increased by over 11,000 (36%). The number of items checked out from the library has increased by nearly 6,000 items (10%) in this same time period.

The library summer reading program for children has grown tremendously. In 2015, the summer reading program had over 600 participants, an increase of 234 participants compared to the previous year.

The library’s collection of materials is diverse and includes books, CDs, audio books, e-books and magazines as well as items that are not commonly found in comparably sized libraries. Graphic novels, classics, parent/teacher books and kits, Maker-kits, and video games have all been added to the library collection in the last three years.



## *deliver opportunities to connect*

We maintain and extend our patron’s connection with the community, region, and world through the Community Donation Center and partnerships with community organizations. The Community Donation Center has received hundreds of donated items, which have been redistributed to local and regional organizations.

We work hard to develop and maintain our partnerships with local and non-profit organizations to strengthen the community. We work closely with the Rochester Community Unit School

District #3A, local pre-schools, home schooling parents, the Boys & Girls Club, Wyndcrest Assisted Living community, and the Rochester Historical Society.

Across the country and the world, people's preferences are trending toward technology and electronic access. We are working to anticipate these changes to meet the needs and expectations of patrons in a more connected world. The library maintains a strong digital presence through its website, which serves as a portal to library programs and services. Additionally, we maintain contact with library patrons through social media and electronic newsletters.

### ***deliver opportunities to create***

We are expanding patron access to technological tools by offering items such as 3-D printers, computer stations, and high-speed internet access including Wi-Fi. Video cameras and video streaming equipment are also available at the library for patrons to check out.

# challenges

The challenges the library faces include space limitations, an aging building and mechanical systems, and a lack of a formal library support group.

## *address space limitations*

The space limitations we need to address include accommodating our growing collection, allotting space to accommodate children’s programs and study rooms for students and tutors, and making improvements to accommodate patrons bringing their own devices, such as laptops, tablets, and cell phones to use in the library.

The library collection included approximately 12,000 volumes when the library was built in 1995. Over the last twenty years, the collection has grown to over 40,000 items. We are currently working to maximize the existing space in the library to continue adding to the collection; however, we anticipate that we will be out of space in the fiction book section within two to three years.

The library is a place where children of all ages come to learn, experience, and study. We offer a wide range of children’s programs that are popular and well attended. We need to address expansion of the children’s area to better accommodate children’s programs and evaluate adding quiet study rooms for student and tutor use. However, the area for children’s programs is modest and often it cannot accommodate all of the participants in our programs. Older children use the library to work on school work with a tutor. The only place students and tutors can study are at three tables in an open area in the middle of the library, which does not provide a distraction-free learning environment.



We need to make the library more “device” friendly by adding convenient locations for patrons to plug in their laptops, tablets, and cell phones. When the library was built in 1995, personal technology was not an integral part of daily life. Today, these devices are widely used and many people bring these devices to the library to work, study, or play. While we improved the Wi-Fi service throughout the library, there is a lack of convenient and ample access for people to plug-in and charge their devices. Charging stations need to be strategically and conveniently located in the library to meet patron’s needs.

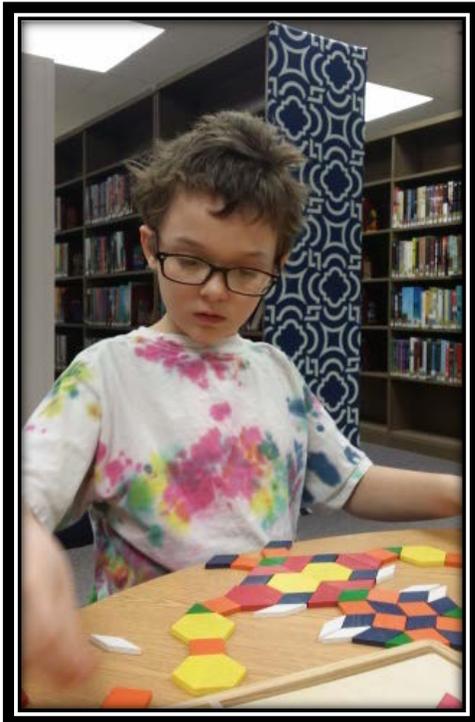
### *address replacement of aging mechanical systems*

Because the library building was built in 1995, many of the mechanical systems that are in place have reached, or will soon reach, the end of their useful life. At the end of 2015, we replaced its two heating and air conditioning units. The parking lot was last resurfaced in 2004 and will likely need to be redone within the next two to three years.

Appendix A contains a list of many of the major capital expenditures that we expect to incur over the next twenty years. Because the library shares a building with the Village of Rochester, with common areas of responsibility such as the community room, entrance way, and the parking lot, some of the items are a shared financial responsibility between the library and the Village of Rochester.

### *create a formal library support group*

The library receives private financial donations in support of the library programs and volunteers provide assistance when needed; however, the library does not have an organized library support group. An organized library support group would provide a structured approach to fundraising assistance and volunteer support.



# service priorities

## *goal*

Create a comfortable and welcoming space for our patrons that enhances their experience when visiting the library.

## *objectives*

- Evaluate our physical space and hours of operation to meet community needs.
- Expand upon our virtual space to make our programs and services more widely available.



## *activities*

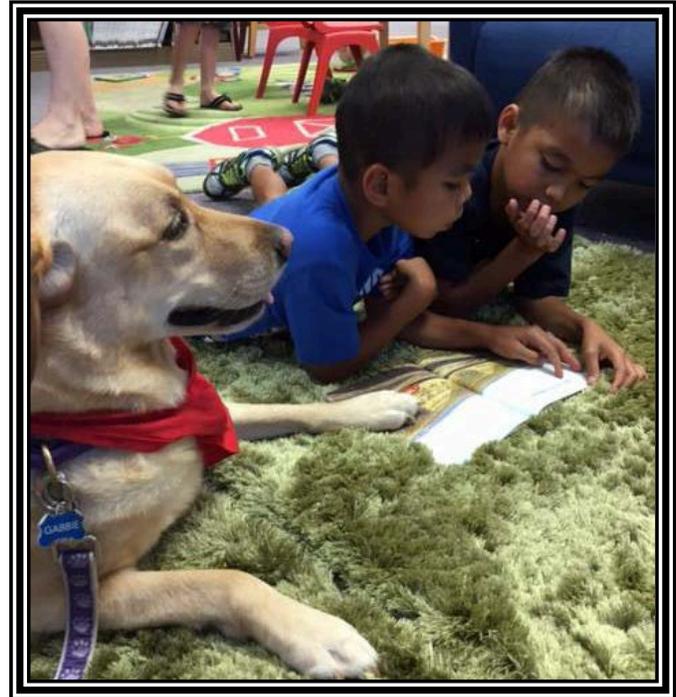
- Evaluate the library's current space, analyze future space needs, and develop a plan of action to address space needs for the future. This analysis will consider adding study rooms for students and tutors, seating for patrons, space for children and youth programs, a Maker space, and space to accommodate our collection for the next 20 years.
- Purchase up-to-date computer equipment for youth, with an emphasis on touchscreen technology such as tablets, iPads, and computers. We will evaluate expanding the library's technology station furniture to accommodate older children.
- Make spaces mobile-friendly with an emphasis on convenient and plentiful access to charging options for mobile devices.

## *goal*

Offer patrons of all ages opportunities that stimulate the imagination, satisfy curiosity, encourage lifelong learning, and maintain free access to a diverse selection of reading, audio, visual, and other materials.

## *objectives*

- Emphasize the journey, not the result, in youth programming by discovering new ways to encourage curiosity through play and hands on programming.
- Establish physical and virtual spaces for patrons to express their creativity.
- Offer lifelong learning services and programs to support patron's interests and ambitions.



## *activities*

- Promote Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (S.T.E.M.) based programming as an important component of youth development, with emphasis on coding, robotics, and programming.
- Expand the arts and humanities programs we offer.
- Offer classes to design web sites that allow users to create and share their own content and provide a space for patrons to share their work with others.
- Create a “Little Free Library” program which will add structures known as “Little Free Libraries” to areas in the community where people will be walking and riding their bikes.
- Offer lifelong learning classes for patrons regarding seed propagation, gardening, and indigenous plants and trees, and create a “seed library” where seeds will be available for patrons to use and to donate.
- Partner with organizations to offer group field trips to local areas of interest.

## *goal*

Offer programs and services designed to enhance school readiness for children, emphasizing reading and listening skills.

## *objectives*

- Emphasize sensory, tactile, visual, and auditory learning in all children’s programming.
- Design and offer programs and services for children to enhance school readiness.



## *activities*

- Foster early childhood literacy with weekly story-time programs for children from birth to school age.
- Offer programming that meets the needs of children with autism.
- Prioritize collection development throughout the year that reflects the Illinois School Library Media Association (ISLMA) “kid’s choice” awards lists such as Monarch, Bluestem, Rebecca Caudill, and Abraham Lincoln.
- Become a location where home-schooled children can participate in voting for ISLMA “kid’s choice” awards for outstanding children’s books.
- Initiate the “1,000 Books Before Kindergarten” program for families and caregivers.
- Incorporate the use of sign language in baby lapsit programming.

## *goal*

Provide our patrons with the tools and resources to understand how to find, evaluate, and use information.

## *objective*

- Increase personalized services to meet individual needs for research, information, and technology assistance.
- Train our staff to meet the technology needs of patrons.



## *activities*

- Work with the Rochester School District and non-profits to host library field trips with an emphasis on learning how the library works.
- Add an electronic reference feature to the library's website to allow users to get reference assistance from library staff whenever or wherever they may need it.
- Create "reference guides" for different subjects to help patrons locate quality resources and information that may be useful to them.
- Expand the library's technology devices for check out.

## *goal*

Offer programs and services that promote an appreciation and understanding of our community's heritage and celebrate diversity.

## *objectives*

- Promote an appreciation of our community's local history.
- Promote diversity and cultural awareness.



## *activities*

- Create a monthly feature, where each month a different member of the community can make a short video telling his or her “story” or describe an aspect of local history that is important to them.
- Partner with the Rochester Historical Society to continue adding images and facts to the library's history pin project.
- Digitize the collection of local history items to make them available electronically.
- Offer story-times, special youth programming, and multicultural displays that highlight various cultural celebrations.

# acknowledgements

Rochester Public Library District thanks the following Strategic Planning Committee members who devoted their time, energy, and provided invaluable feedback about the library and its services to create this plan for the future.

## *community representatives*

Dave Armstrong  
Rachel Fuller  
Beth Haupt  
Krista Jiroutek  
Jim Rominger  
Carole Strick  
Bob Tepatti

## *library staff*

Janet McAllister, Director

## *library trustees*

Matt Fuller  
Dave Hicks  
Fred Roese

## Appendix A: Glossary

**3-D printing** - also known as additive manufacturing (AM), refers to various processes used to synthesize a three-dimensional object. In 3D printing, successive layers of material are formed under computer control to create an object.

**Abraham Lincoln Award: Illinois' Grades 9-12 Readers' Choice Award** - This program is designed to encourage high school students to read for pleasure and to become lifelong readers. The award is named after former President Abraham Lincoln, an avid reader and noted author, and is sponsored by ISLMA.

**audio book** - an audiocassette or CD recording of a reading of a book, typically a novel.

**auditory learning** - a learning style in which a person learns through listening. An auditory learner depends on hearing and speaking as a main way of learning.

**Bluestem Award** - The ISLMA award is designed for students in grades 3-5 who are ready for longer titles than found on the Monarch list, but not quite ready for the sophistication of some of the Rebecca Caudill titles.

**CDs** - a compact disc used as a read-only optical memory device for a computer system. CDs are used to store information for computers or to replay music.

**coding** – is telling a computer what you want it to do, which involves typing in step-by-step commands for the computer to follow. There are many different coding languages, each one designed with certain things in mind.

**DVDs** - a DVD used as a read-only optical memory device for a computer system. DVDs are used to store information and have much larger capacity for information compared to CDs. DVDs are commonly used to store movies.

**e-books** - an electronic version of a printed book that can be read on a computer or handheld device designed specifically for this purpose.

**Illinois School Library Association (ISLMA)** – ISLMA provides leadership and support for the development, promotion, and improvement of the school library media profession and programs in Illinois.

**lapsit programming** - Lapsit storytime is essentially a baby storytime for 0-23 month olds and their caregivers that lasts 15-20 minutes. Lapsit helps parents/caregivers understand the importance of teaching their child early literacy skills beginning at birth. Early exposure to language helps them become successful readers and writers.

**lifelong learning** - the provision or use of both formal and informal learning opportunities throughout people's lives in order to foster the continuous development and improvement of the knowledge and skills needed for employment and personal fulfilment.

**maker-kits** – creative, do-it-yourself kits for people to create, invent, and learn.

**makerspace** - Makerspaces are creative, do-it-yourself spaces where people can gather to create, invent, and learn. In libraries they often have 3D printers, software, electronics, craft and hardware supplies and tools, and more.

**mobile device** - a portable computing device such as a smartphone or tablet computer.

**Monarch Award** - In April 2003, ISLMA approved the establishment and support of The Monarch Award: Illinois' K-3 Readers' Choice Award. The Monarch is designed to encourage children to read critically and become familiar with children's books, authors and illustrators.

**Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award** – The ISLMA Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award is an annual award given to the author of the book voted most outstanding by students in grades four through eight in participating Illinois schools. The award is named in honor of Rebecca Caudill who lived and wrote in Urbana, Illinois, for nearly 50 years. The award is given in recognition for her literary talent and the universal appeal of her books which have touched the hearts of many children and young adults.

**sensory learning** – a learning style in which a person likes to learn, don't take easily to surprises and would rather solve a problem by following methodical procedures that are established. They do well with memorization and hands-on work. They tend to be more practical and careful. They dislike courses that do not have connections to the real-world.

**service area** – the service area is the geographic area that provides funding for the library and people living within this service are the library's primary customers.

**service priority** – a type of program or service that the library will provide to the community because it has been identified as important to the community the library serves.

**S.T.E.M.** - STEM is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math education. We focus on these areas together not only because the skills and knowledge in each discipline are essential for student success, but also because these fields are deeply intertwined in the real world and in how students learn most effectively.

**Tactile learning** - is a learning style in which learning takes place by the students carrying out physical activities, rather than listening to a lecture or watching demonstrations.

**touchscreen technology** - an input device normally layered on the top of an electronic visual display of an information processing system. A user can give input or control the information processing system through simple or multi-touch gestures by touching the screen with a special stylus and/or one or more fingers.

**video streaming equipment** – a device capable of receiving compressed video over the internet and display it to the view in real time. With streaming video or streaming media, a Web user does not have to wait to download a file to play it. Instead, the media is sent in a continuous stream of data and is played as it arrives.

**virtual space** – computer tools that bring people together to interact and learn, such as interactive websites, blogs, social media, etc.

**visual learning** - is a teaching and learning style in which ideas, concepts, data, and other information are associated with images and techniques.

**Wi-Fi** - a facility allowing computers, smartphones, or other devices to connect to the Internet or communicate with one another wirelessly within a particular area.

## Appendix B: Major Capital Expenditures

<b>Library Responsibilities</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Replacement Frequency</b>	<b>Estimated Cost (in 2015 dollars)</b>
HVAC System	25 years (2035)	\$25,000
Carpet	10 years (2020)	\$30,000
Furniture	15 years (2023)	\$24,000
Paint	8 years (2023)	\$10,000

<b>Library &amp; Village Joint Responsibilities</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Replacement Frequency</b>	<b>Estimated Total Cost (in 2015 dollars)</b>
Parking Lot (Resurfacing)	10 years (2018)	\$70,000
HVAC System	25 years (2018)	\$12,500
Shingles	35 years (2043)	\$110,000
Carpet	10 years (2018)	\$8,000
Paint	8 years (2023)	\$9,000