



STRATEGIC PLAN

2014-2019

INTRODUCTION

In 2013, over 2.2 million visitors walked through the doors of a branch of the East Baton Rouge Parish Library. They had access to 1.9 million resources and checked out 2.4 million items. Almost a quarter of a million visitors attended Library programs.

The Library's online presence continued to grow, with over 1.8 million visits to the Library website and over 2.1 million searches of digital resources.

Members of the community experienced the library coming to visit them at day care centers, retirement centers, schools, and special events, with over 1,600 stops by the Library Bookmobile. A total of 885,764 reference questions were answered by library professionals.

Numbers like these are a few of the statistics that resulted in the East Baton Rouge Parish Library selection as a Starred Library by *Library Journal's* "Index of Public Library Service" for two consecutive years.

In 2014, the East Baton Rouge Parish Library celebrates its 75th anniversary, and rededicates itself to build upon those previous accomplishments to reach new heights of service, support, and leadership for the continued growth of the community it serves.

MISSION

The East Baton Rouge Parish Library is a community service organization that connects our citizens with information, resources, materials, technology, and experiences in order to make a positive difference in their lives.

VISION

The East Baton Rouge Parish Library system is an essential partner in the success of the community as a center of learning, knowledge, communication, culture, and enjoyment for all residents.

The Library will:

- Offer programs and services that meet the needs of our diverse neighborhoods
- Provide suitable, welcoming spaces
- Build strong, responsive collections in multiple formats
- Support relevant, needed technology
- Employ well-trained, friendly, and flexible staff

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR EBRPL STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

1. Focus on customer

Demonstrate customer focus through flexibility, respect, inclusiveness, and responsiveness

2. Strive for excellence

Achieve excellence through enthusiasm, expertise, innovation, and evaluation

3. Foster teamwork

Create a team environment through effective leadership practices, respect for staff and their contributions, commitment to staff development, accountability, open communication, informed decision-making, and risk-taking

4. Increase community collaborations

Foster dynamic collaborations with other agencies to offer opportunities for more effective and efficient services

5. Increase outreach

Implement new and improved methods to communicate and promote the services and programming of the Library, with an emphasis on reaching the isolated and underserved populations of our community

6. Develop tomorrow's leaders

Encourage leadership development through partnerships, education, and enlightenment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Library seeks to serve all residents as an educational, informational, recreational, and cultural center through a wide variety of resources, services, and programs. According to surveys and interviews, it has been successful in these efforts, creating satisfied users and loyal supporters. Information on those surveys and interview methods is included in the Background segment of this document.

The mission now is to expand upon this success through concentrated efforts in the areas of customer experience, technology, programming and collections, facility improvements, employee development, and marketing and outreach to the community.

Customer Experience

Surveys noted that the customer experience of the East Baton Rouge Parish Library is a positive one, and respondents' comments helped define specific areas that would increase satisfaction. These needs and priorities can shift, and so the Library's goal will be to create a system to continually assess and respond to the changing needs of those it serves.

The strategic goal identified for customer service improvement is to build upon current practices to create a customer experience that is positive, responsive, and consistent, regardless of the customer's needs, location, or method of access.

The three strategic initiatives that will fulfill this goal are 1) build upon current customer service skills to create a memorable and positive library experience for all customers, 2) improve library policies and processes to create a streamlined and user-friendly experience for all customers, and 3) evaluate and improve Library responsiveness to the changing needs of customers.

Technology & Access

The response to the Library's technological offerings is positive with the primary request being "more." Users would like to see more computers, an increased number of digital resources, faster wireless internet connections, easier access and search functions, and other features that enhance their technology-based experiences.

The strategic goal to answer these needs is to support the evolution of current library technology to answer changing needs, respond to technological advances, and accommodate growing customer usage.

The three specific initiatives that will help fulfill this goal are 1) continually assess and refine digital infrastructure to improve end-user experience 2) create a program of planned expansion and improvement of technology and support systems, and 3) create diverse and multifaceted user and staff training and new tools for digital services.

Program & Collection Development

Attendance and access statistics show that the programming and the collections of the East Baton Rouge Parish Library are well-appreciated and utilized by the community. In surveys, residents identified specific programs and additions to collections that would be useful to them; for example: dedicated rooms for quiet study; drive-up returns; collaborative work spaces; maker technology; more meeting rooms; more computer training. Additionally, Library leaders and patrons alike supported the continued development of programs that identify the Library as a leader in literacy efforts and lifelong learning opportunities for citizens of East Baton Rouge Parish.

The strategic goal that will address these requests is to build upon current programs and collections to address the changing needs and interests of the communities served.

The three initiatives that will answer this goal are 1) develop and expand programs to address the changing needs of audiences in this diverse and dynamic community, 2) build upon current collections to ensure that the needs of various audiences are being addressed, and 3) create and expand upon programs, services, and resources that support life-long learning and success.

Facilities & Operations

Patrons enjoy their visits to the library facilities, according to surveys and comments. The main challenges are individual issues at the branches, primarily related to the age and use of the facilities.

The goal that will address these issues is to continually refresh, repurpose, and renew library facilities to create welcoming, effective spaces that fulfill the changing needs, preferences, and safety of patrons. Additionally, maintaining these spaces and ensuring that their effective operations contribute to the feeling of welcoming spaces was noted as a potential area of growth.

In order to ensure the safe and welcoming nature of the branches, several initiatives were identified. These initiatives are 1) continue and refine an ongoing process of refreshing, repurposing, and renewing Library facilities, and 2) maintain and develop Library maintenance and operations procedures 3) renovate and expand aging facilities to meet emergent community needs and new technologically driven demand, and 4) analyze parish-wide population dynamics and shifting demographic and market trends to determine if additional facilities, or new, different types of service delivery sites are required to fully connect citizens with resources.

Organizational Development

Library employees are dedicated to the continuing improvement of Library processes, services, programs, and collections. Additional resources, communication, and training will help them take this dedication to an ever higher level of excellence.

In order to continue to attract and retain the best of the best, East Baton Rouge Parish Library's goal in this strategic area is to create an experience that engages employees with continuing development, open communication, and opportunities to thrive in the changing library environment; strive for continuous improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of processes and operations; and maintain and enhance routines, procedures, functions, and structural components of the operational infrastructure.

To accomplish this, the Library will 1) develop the skills of Library personnel to benefit both the employees and the customers they serve 2) improve the communication and collaboration of the Library workforce, and 3) use positive performance management processes to encourage employee development and advancement. The Library will also strive to improve pay and total compensation levels to be in closer accordance with demonstrated marketplace benchmarks.

Marketing & Outreach

Current users are positive and engaged in the use of the Library's services. The challenge in this area is to increase awareness of the wide spectrum of services to others in the community. Also, to continue to offer and promote these services, the Library will need to create partnerships in the community that can help provide funding and other means of collaborative support to sustain the current level of offering and to make new opportunities possible.

In order to do this, the Library must implement improved methods to communicate and promote the services and programs so that customers and partners can more fully take advantage of all that the Library has to offer.

Three main initiatives that will fulfill this goal are 1) streamline and target social media activities 2) increase awareness and usage of Library services through targeted marketing and outreach activities, and 3) develop new avenues of funding/support through marketing and promotional initiatives.

SUMMARY

The East Baton Rouge Parish Library currently fulfills many of the needs of the citizens of the City-Parish through excellent service, innovative programming, and a wide selection of resources in various formats. The most important actions it will take now are those that refine the services being offered, assess and expand or eliminate programs as needed, and keep the Library on the leading edge of technology and trends in learning, creative experiences, and accessing information.

In this way, the Library will continue to be an essential force in the educational, developmental, literacy, and work force readiness efforts of the community, the encouragement of new and enlightened leaders, and the shaping of the future of East Baton Rouge Parish.

Looking back at the mission of the Library – to connect our citizens with information, resources, materials, technology, and experiences in order to make a positive difference in their lives – it seems that EBRPL is on the right track to be that force for the years ahead.

BACKGROUND

The East Baton Rouge Parish Library used input from a wide variety of sources to ensure that residents, staff, patrons, Board leadership, and other stakeholders had opportunities to provide input and ideas for the Library of the future.

Among the events that contributed to this fact-finding process were:

Patron Surveys

These surveys included patrons' views of what needs the Library fulfills at this time and what their vision of the Library of the future would be. The surveys asked for specific improvements and additions that patrons would like to see, as well as an opportunity to rate which services are most important to them as library users.

Staff "Storming in the Stacks" Brainstorming Sessions

These sessions were held at each branch of the Library and encouraged staff members to rate Library operations, needs, and opportunities. Flip charts were used to capture ideas for innovations in the areas of facilities and equipment, technology, communications, library services, and employee development.

Workforce Succession Planning Initiative

Representatives of the Library worked with leaders from across the City-Parish to design a system of leadership development. Information gathered from these work sessions served as background information in the strategic initiative of employee development.

Library Board of Control Strategic Planning Sessions

With facilitation assistance from the State Library of Louisiana, Board members used these sessions to review the strategic planning process, review the Library's mission and vision, examine data gathered over the past two years, identify overarching goals, brainstorm strategies to achieve those goals, and to envision the Library of the future.

Board members also provided valuable insights through their in-depth knowledge of the communities served and their understanding of the needs of residents who don't currently use Library services.

"Great Boss" Discussions

Library leaders engaged in online discussions to review successes and share ideas that can help Library personnel meet the varied needs of the East Baton Rouge Parish residents. These discussions identified areas for development, as well as specific actions that could increase the Library's ability to effectively serve this diverse and dynamic community.

Research and Review of Best Practices

In all of these information-gathering sessions, as well as individual research opportunities, the Library has had the benefit of knowledge gathered from networking and sharing best practices with other libraries throughout the nation.

Summary

With an understanding of the national climate for libraries, general knowledge was collected that addressed trends, technology, economics, and the changing structures of library systems.

The specifics of continually connecting with community needs and keeping open communication allowed Library representatives to develop a better understanding of the specific needs of the individual communities served by the Library branches.

The synthesis of this big-picture thinking combined with attention to detailed needs allowed the Library to create a plan that is forward thinking and based on universal concepts, while simultaneously remaining focused on the needs of the communities and individuals it serves.

STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Customer Experience

Create a customer service experience that is positive, responsive, and consistent, regardless of the customer's needs, location, or method of access; continually seek to improve processes and procedures that support public service; and create the types of experiences that foster customer engagement with the services and resources offered

2. Technology & Access

Provide access and support for current and evolving technology to answer changing needs, respond to technological advances, and accommodate growing customer usage

3. Program & Collection Development

Provide programs and collections to address the changing needs and interests of the communities served

4. Facilities & Operations

Create welcoming, supportive, and stimulating spaces that fulfill the changing needs, preferences, and safety of patrons, by refreshing, repurposing, and renovating library facilities. Provide new facilities and different types of service delivery sites to meet the changing needs of the Parish.

5. Organizational Development

Provide efficient and effective work processes. Foster employee engagement with continuing development, open communication, and opportunities to thrive in the changing library environment, all within the context of a customer-centered culture. Maintain sound financial planning and prudent fiscal practices in order to be good stewards of the taxpayer's money.

6. Marketing & Outreach

Communicate and promote services and programs through a wide variety of methods and channels so customers and partners take advantage of all the Library offers, with emphasis on reaching new and underserved segments of the population.

GOAL AREA 1

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Create a customer service experience that is positive, responsive, and consistent, regardless of the customer's needs, location, or method of access; continually seek to improve processes and procedures that support public service; and create the types of experiences that foster customer engagement with the services and resources offered

GOAL 1.1

Create a memorable and positive library experience for all customers

ACTION

- Continuously improve the delivery of courteous and professional service through staff training
- Survey customers to determine “skills gaps” that can be met by the Library
- Foster a customer-centered environment and culture
- Assess and implement methods to bridge gaps in customer service
- Design employee training and tools to standardize methods of dealing with customer challenges
- Create coaching and mentoring opportunities for staff to improve customer service skills
- Implement ongoing methods to evaluate service and customer satisfaction
- Revise practices and policies as needed in order to improve users’ experiences including a thorough review of existing policy language to soften restrictive tone and work toward accenting the positive
- Create programs to recognize outstanding customer service skills and delivery

OUTCOME

- Increase in customer satisfaction
- Increase in return users due to positive library experiences
- Increased customer loyalty; improved “top box” levels of interaction
- A more positive and friendly library atmosphere for staff and customers
- Improved Library reputation for customer service
- Begin to create a marketplace advantage based on the point of difference between a search engine and the friendly assistance of an experienced library specialist
- Greater customer engagement increases customer relationships and encourages more extensive use of resources, services, and programs

GOAL 1.2

Improve Library processes to create a streamlined and user-friendly experience for all customers

ACTION

- Review the processes of the customer experience (search functions, reference desk systems, checkout processes, hold systems, printing procedures, telephone processes, online communication systems, and other operational procedures); study customer service improvements in other libraries, service agencies, and the private sector; anticipate new ways to meet customer needs
- Continually solicit and analyze input from customers through surveys, informal discussions, focus groups, and user statistics
- Encourage a focus on proactive problem-solving at the point of service delivery
- Use input to determine which policies and processes would benefit from updating and revisions
- Prioritize and schedule improvements based upon need and level of importance to end-users
- Continue ongoing evaluation of processes and implement adjustments as needed; actively seek out information on Best Practices to serve as benchmarks and inspiration

OUTCOME

- Easier access to information and resources that support patrons' educational, recreational, and cultural interests
- Expedited checkout of library materials
- More frequent access to underutilized library features and services
- Reduced frustration due to confusing or outdated processes
- Increased use of all library resources due to updated processes
- Improved satisfaction ratings by customers; more opportunities to delight and excite customers
- Ability of library personnel to focus efforts on creating more personalized user experiences due to improved processes for routine and repetitive tasks
- Enhanced delivery of positive, concrete results with all customer experiences
- Stronger perception of the Library as the easiest and fastest way to locate current and reliable information

GOAL 1.3

Evaluate and improve Library responsiveness to the changing needs of customers

ACTION

- Review the variety of uses of the Library, such as employment needs, informational, social, developmental, personal fulfillment, creative, cultural, enlightenment, and entertainment
- Review use of services by different audiences of the Library, including youth, parents, students, senior citizens, employers and employees, community organizations, and government agencies, including subgroups and specialized niches
- Maintain ongoing survey practices as analytical tools that reach both Library users and non-users
- Analyze survey results to assess whether adjustments must be made to meet the needs of underserved customers
- Research and assess other libraries' methods of addressing changing customer needs

OUTCOME

- Library locations (both physical and virtual) continue to adapt to respond to changing user needs and emerging technology
- Users find the Library to be a more effective and authoritative solution than relying on unverified and conflicting sources of information.
- The Library builds upon its tradition as a resource for new and emerging trends
- Library builds a stronger position as the premier informational resource for the broadest possible audience, regardless of the users' socio-economical status

MID-RANGE OBJECTIVES FOR GOAL AREA 1

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

- Staff training
- Improve internal communications regarding service goals and enhanced customer engagement techniques
- Review policy language and actual procedures to transition to a more customer-welcoming approach, and to reduce barriers to use of service
- Utilize transactional data and supplemental information to improve the customer experience

GOAL AREA 2

TECHNOLOGY & ACCESS

Provide access and support for current and evolving technology to answer changing needs, respond to technological advances, and accommodate growing customer usage

GOAL 2.1

Continually assess and refine digital infrastructure to improve upon end-user experience

ACTION

- Review statistics on digital services and internet usage
- Analyze comments from surveys, interviews, and customer input cards
- Determine digital infrastructure improvements needed to maintain a quality level of service for end-users
- Scour the information marketplace seeking new technologies, applications, and opportunities
- Create a plan to continually assess and build upon the current digital infrastructure
- Invest, on a regular, reasonable schedule in upgraded equipment, capabilities, and capacities

OUTCOME

- Improved wireless connectivity, and expanded availability and increased reliability of Library technology
- Increased user satisfaction and access
- Improved confidence in accessing new library offerings and decreased user frustration
- Library is recognized as consistently providing and maintaining reliable digital resources for East Baton Rouge Parish residents

GOAL 2.2

Create a program of planned expansion and improvement of technology and support systems

ACTION

- Evaluate new and emerging technologies to assess those most beneficial to the Library's collection, services, and programs
- Review usage data from vendor resources to maintain a high-demand collection
- Roll out staff training before the release of any new technology or process
- Use test groups to assess emerging formats of digital services
- Establish a formal process for assessing success level of expansion efforts

OUTCOME

- User-friendly search features and navigation improvements increase traffic to the Library website
- User-friendly catalog searches, check out procedures, and printing processes increase satisfaction of onsite visitors to the Library
- Increased technology and availability of equipment, e-readers, tablets, and laptops develop the skills of patrons and staff and increase their ability to independently access information and entertainment
- Expanded digital services and collections meet a wider variety of user needs, building upon the Library's role as an essential resource for the community
- Staff understanding of digital services aids in the public adoption and use of these services
- Recognized expertise in the latest technological advances

GOAL 2.3

Create user training and user tools for digital services

ACTION

- Determine which services should be addressed through analysis of use statistics, interviews, and surveys
- Create instructional materials, demonstrations, tools, and classes on new technology and digital resources
- Test different methods and approaches to determine optimal instructional plans to teach technology to end-users
- Evaluate instructional methods and revise as needed
- Schedule continuing education to expand use of digital resources
- Continually assess responses from participants on digital resources
- Implement changes as needed

OUTCOME

- Increased use of digital materials and resources by individuals who might have been intimidated by the technology involved
- Increased awareness of digital offerings through promotion of classes and training
- Additional input from users on ways to educate others about these offerings
- Acknowledged as an organization that seeks to be on the “cutting edge” of emerging technology

MID-RANGE OBJECTIVES FOR GOAL AREA 2

TECHNOLOGY AND ACCESS

- Restructure RFID Plan, issue new bid, implement RFID, self-service check-out units, and sorting system
- Implement credit and debit card payment systems
- Implement Talking Tech (automated telecommunications messaging system)
- Continue to invest in products that can deliver enhanced services and provide access with developing marketplace techniques and applications, such as streaming digital content and cloud-based services;
- Develop Maker Spots, including 3D printing, laser technology, and providing Arduino boards; plan for larger sized maker spaces to meet demand
- Strengthen and expand the scope of user training
- Invest in more technology that provides immediate user support and feedback, such as smart boards and tables, interactive wall boards, laptop bars, and even simple, but effective solutions such as whiteboards
- Maintain upgrade and replacement rotation for computers, peripherals, applications, and other service equipment

GOAL AREA 3

PROGRAMMING & COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

Provide programs and collections to address the changing needs and interests of the communities served

GOAL 3.1

Develop and expand programs to address the changing needs of audiences in this diverse and dynamic community

ACTION

- Monitor attendance at library programs to build upon those that are well-received
- Review attendance statistics of current programs and adjust focus as needed
- Evaluate and analyze shared traits of successful programs to expand on these offerings
- Periodically survey users and non-users to determine needs that are not being met
- Collaborate with educational agencies for input on additional materials that would help students of all ages
- Develop large-scale special events to focus on different aspects of library services and offerings; system-wide programmatic efforts can reinforce reading and informational skills for children and teens in particular
- Expand on programs and resources for career studies, job searches, and development of essential workplace skills; develop and reinforce programs promoting personal development, intellectual curiosity, cultural experiences, and recreational value
- Provide consistent support and encouragement for the business community and all types of enterprises, with a special emphasis on small businesses and entrepreneurs
- Survey employers, associations, and governmental agencies to determine special professional needs that could be answered through Library initiatives

OUTCOME

- Planned system of programming expansion meets the needs of audiences through all ages and stages of the work-life experience
- Increased numbers of users discover materials that meet their specific needs
- Recognized as a resource for providing educational, professional, cultural, and recreational programs that respond to the needs of the Parish

GOAL 3.2

Build upon current collections to ensure that the needs of various audiences are being addressed

ACTION

- Review and update Collection Development Policy
- Review and assess usage statistics of current collections, utilizing tools such as Collection HQ
- Accumulate data on users by age groups, leisure interests, and personal development needs; gather input from business and governmental agencies to determine acquisitions that will contribute to the economic success of East Baton Rouge Parish
- Monitor access to Library collections to build upon those that are well-used
- Determine collections that should transition to digital resources
- Institute improved merchandising techniques for on-floor and virtual stock; deploy technology and social media to connect people with resources
- Increase locally created content for digital collection
- Remove outdated or obsolete materials from current collections; archive low-demand items, freeing display and browsing space for higher turnover materials
- Make investments as needed to ensure diverse and balanced collections
- Continually monitor patron requests to ensure that collections reflect current needs
- Provide enhanced services and resources for small business
- Evaluate resources at all locations to establish quality collections that meet the current needs of East Baton Rouge Parish residents

OUTCOME

- A well-formulated collection development plan to include flexibility to encompass new and emerging formats
- Up-to-date and useful resources on a wide variety of topics and interest areas
- Increased public awareness that the Library listens to customers and answers specific needs of the individual, as well as the business community
- Customers become more aware of the full range of available resources

GOAL 3.3

Create and expand upon programs, services, and resources that support life-long learning and success

ACTION

- Continue to target specific services, programs, and resources to children (0-12) and their parents/caregivers; generate excitement and engagement for all types of programs and services; develop new approaches to enhance early literacy and reading/vocabulary skills
- Create a new focus on services that appeal to the demographic group of middle childhood
- Work in partnership with a variety of individuals and organizations to provide programs and experiences for patrons of all ages
- Work in partnership with local organizations to better utilize space for learning community activities such as ESL, GED, HiSET, and citizenship classes
- Develop a system-wide plan that targets and increases participation of young adults/teens in programs and the utilization of library services, including creative programs, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) resources, tutoring, and other educational support systems
- Expand adult educational offerings, such as computer-based training, in convenient locations (both within and outside of library facilities)
- Expand program offerings to seniors, together with introductory sessions that increase their comfort level in attending these programs
- Participate directly in the literacy coalition efforts in the City-Parish by providing resources and meeting places for literacy training
- Continue to stimulate the learning community and promote literacy by spearheading the “One Book – One Community” program with local partners such as the Baton Rouge Area Chamber, LSU, SU, BRCC, public school system, private and parochial schools, home-schoolers, and faith-based organizations

OUTCOME

- The Library adopts a leadership role in the early development of children in East Baton Rouge Parish
- The Library is a trusted partner with local educational systems in continuing development of the youth of East Baton Rouge Parish
- Literacy support and adult education programs encourage the continuation of learning at all stages of life
- A higher profile as a leader in literacy, learning, and life-long development

MID-RANGE OBJECTIVES FOR GOAL AREA 3

PROGRAMMING & COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

- Devise a strong and focused merchandising approach for current collections; include a staff training support component, encourage innovation from staff
- Refine collection development plans for high demand items; begin to develop enhanced customization strategy for various facilities, focusing on providing appropriate levels of proven high demand content
- Continue to analyze and adjust programming for each facility, and for varying age ranges
- Work on an approach for large-scale events, and reinvigorating existing programs of this type, such as the Author-Illustrator Series
- Utilize Collection HQ to analyze collection effectiveness; maintain improved refreshment, redeployment, and weeding initiatives; obtain archival storage space for housing of useful, but less intensely demanded items
- Increase locally created content for digital collection
- Promote those programs that assist with career development and life-long learning, including those web-based resources that offer MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses) types of experiences
- Introduce specific new programs for different age groups, such as a Thousand Books Before Kindergarten, a companion program for school age clusters; and, new initiatives to serve older adults
- Introduce floating collections

GOAL AREA 4

FACILITIES & OPERATIONS

Create welcoming, supportive, and stimulating spaces that fulfill the changing needs, preferences, and safety of patrons, by refreshing, repurposing and renovating library facilities. Provide new facilities and different types of service delivery sites to meet the changing needs of the Parish.

GOAL 4.1

Implement an ongoing plan of refreshing, re-purposing, renewing, and expanding Library facilities

ACTION

- Review and assess current patron use of Library spaces; study and analyze the need for any additional standard facilities, and for new types of service delivery sites
- Systematically review and analyze data from building maintenance reports to determine branches and spaces that need repair or refurbishment, and possible expansion
- Create a plan that addresses these needed repairs as well as incremental refreshment and repurposing of Library spaces
- Repurpose building spaces to serve as designated areas for collaborative, small group interactions
- Ensure availability of quiet spaces for individual study, computer use, and reading
- Explore modifications of current space to answer specific needs of patrons and employees in individual branches
- Improve signage and visibility in Library facilities
- Explore amenities such as coffee service, social networking areas, and areas designed for older patrons' needs; provide access to meeting/instructional/event space
- Assess and make use of green technology and sustainable features whenever feasible
- Complete current capital construction projects: Final phase of Main; River Center Branch; South Branch

OUTCOME

- Patrons have access to a variety of comfortable seating and work space options that serve their specific needs
- Repurposing of current facility areas utilizes space more effectively; expanded spaces accommodate new programs and evolving service needs
- Better meet the diverse needs of patrons through quiet areas, small group areas, meeting spaces, interactive areas, computer stations, and creative spaces

GOAL 4.2

Continue improvement of facilities maintenance and operations procedures

ACTION

- Analyze data from building maintenance reports to determine branches and spaces that need expanded maintenance services
- Update ongoing schedule of maintenance services for all branches
- Review and update system of handling maintenance emergencies to ensure safety and comfort of patrons
- Assess Library hours of operation to create consistent schedule that meets public needs
- Develop staffing model to support any changes in Library hours and new or emergent service demands
- Maintain strong financial practices; expand financial reporting to include additional detail concerning reserve funds
- Review safety concerns and records of any unsafe incidents at branches
- Consult with law enforcement agencies to enhance safety and security practices
- Conduct staff training on safety and security practices

OUTCOME

- Effective maintenance plan make libraries more inviting for patrons and employees
- Standardized hours of operation increases access and reputation of reliability
- Safety procedures and improved understanding of how to handle emergencies improve staff confidence and ensure patron safety
- Reputation of the Library as a welcoming, comfortable, and consistently positive experience

MID-RANGE OBJECTIVES FOR GOAL AREA 4

FACILITIES & OPERATIONS

- Conduct thorough review and analysis of current facilities, with projected needs for major renovations and any expansions to update service spaces and provide equitable customer support throughout the system; survey and analysis to be provided by a professional architectural firm retained as a consultant
- Develop a plan for flexible outreach service delivery points, ranging from kiosks and materials vending devices to small-scale buildings (4,000 to 6,500 sf), to be designated as START (Strategically Targeted Access, Resources, Technology) Points; placement and design features to be included as part of the consultant study
- Acquire new bookmobile and needed support vehicles for Outreach Services; continue a varied mix of bookmobile outreach programs and service opportunities; seek new and different ways to utilize the bookmobile to connect with underserved audiences
- Obtain specialized maintenance contract for bookmobiles and other mobile units
- Review the need for any new or additional standard facilities
- Complete the Outreach Services building project
- Complete the South Branch Library Project
- Complete the River Center Project
- Complete the final phases of the Main Library Project
- Continue schedule of maintenance for all buildings, replacing and repairing systems, infrastructure, and features to preserve optimal performance and keep public spaces inviting, high-functioning, and welcoming

GOAL AREA 5

Organizational Development

Provide efficient and effective work processes. Foster employee engagement with continuing development, open communication, and opportunities to thrive in the changing library environment, all within the context of a customer-centered culture. Maintain sound financial planning and prudent fiscal practices in order to be good stewards of the taxpayer's money.

GOAL 5.1

Develop the skills of Library personnel to benefit both the employees and the customers they serve

ACTION

- Institutionalize a culture of staff providing feedback to management
- Recognize and encourage opportunities for individual development of Library staff
- Create and advertise classes available to employees
- Create clearinghouse of approved professional development activities
- Create a plan to ensure opportunities for attending outside classes and conferences
- Create job aids and practices that encourage the continuing education of staff
- Develop methods and training for staff to learn positive instructional methods to assist users
- Formalize opportunities for staff
- Implement programs that prepare staff for leadership and administrative roles
- Develop and implement staff mentoring, job shadowing, cross-training, and other means of providing staff with development opportunities
- Develop a recognition system to reward employees who demonstrate commitment to ongoing professional development

OUTCOME

- More engaged staff due to development opportunities, classes, and conferences
- Staff members understand their roles in the Library organizational structure and are motivated to learn and grow into expanded roles
- Improved skills allow more positive and comfortable interactions with customers and other staff; easier for staff to take on diverse and expanded responsibilities
- Staff have access to independent methods of professional development based upon their needs
- Library is seen as an exceptional employer that encourages and facilitates employee growth

GOAL 5.2

Improve the communication and collaboration of the Library workforce

ACTION

- Formalize a comprehensive staff communication plan
- Promote the goals of the strategic plan through presentations and discussions with Library staff
- Increase opportunities for interaction between administration and front line staff
- Offer new methods to encourage ongoing two-way communication
- Solicit, value, and reward versatility and innovation to answer challenges
- Plan training and professional development programs that allow learning and sharing of ideas
- Create systems to recognize and value employee contributions
- Update and maintain staff website resources to allow for improved communications
- Form innovation teams to identify and plan improvements to library processes and procedures
- Expand the recruitment and use of skilled volunteers to assist staff in a variety of activities

OUTCOME

- Increased employee job satisfaction and retention
- A feeling of empowerment by staff
- Communication and teamwork practices create a more positive and effective workplace
- Reduction of duplication of efforts eliminates frustration and wasted work
- An engaged workforce that uses open communication and teamwork to address all challenges

GOAL 5.3

Use performance management processes to encourage employee development and advancement

ACTION

- Schedule performance assessment training for managers to build upon current coaching skills; staff accountability for performance is reinforced
- Train supervisory staff in assessing risk in decision-making and problem-solving
- Review and update job titles, job descriptions, roles, and responsibilities; utilize salary survey and supporting data to plan for improved, more appropriate compensation
- Review organizational structure and determine potential changes
- Review and address current staffing deployment patterns
- Include discussion on individual goals in performance assessment sessions
- Assess skill gaps and identify development activities to address those gaps
- Create cross-training opportunities to enhance employee skills and address staffing shortfalls
- Explore formal mentor programs to enhance training
- Develop and implement annual training plans

OUTCOME

- More positive and satisfied workforce that understands opportunities for improved performance and advancement
- Constructive performance assessment sessions
- Improved staffing plans based on skill gaps and enhanced deployment
- Improved staff scheduling based on analysis
- Positive performance management that encourages employees to learn, improve, and perfect their professional skills
- Greater job satisfaction and better retention rates realized with improved compensation plan

GOAL 5.4

Utilize data and employ a variety of practices and approaches to improve the operational effectiveness of the Library.

ACTION

- Study and analyze processes and work routines, seeking new and improved ways to make operations more robust, responsive, and effective
- Draw from marketing data and analysis of customer communications to shape processes that deliver services and to improve interactions with customers
- Explore using contractor services to review inter-governmental and internal processes, routines, and tasks
- Review existing financial reports and create additional descriptive features that designate functional utility of reserve funds; refine budgeting process to clarify proposed expenditures
- Study staffing models and work flow; consider adjustments in staffing that may be needed to respond to changes in automation support and emergent customer needs
- Review safety and security systems and measures; track needs to determine if any increases are needed in monitoring, detection systems, or guard services
- Analyze extended and after-hours use of even/meeting/instructional space; devise cost recovery and rental fee model; review support and amenity services needed to increase attractiveness of meeting facilities (technology, food, beverages, etc.)

OUTCOME

- Evidence-based data is used to make decisions to improve efficiency and organizational performance
- Routines and processes are streamlined and services are delivered with increased speed, convenience, and transparency to customers
- Interactions by the public with the necessary bureaucratic and accountability structures of a government agency are made more convenient and easier to understand
- Public understands Library's financial picture more clearly
- Meeting Room rentals create a new revenue stream for the library that helps support the maintenance of these high-use spaces

MID-RANGE OBJECTIVES FOR GOAL AREA 5

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

- Formalize a staff communications plan
- Create new cross-training and rotational assignment plans to increase staff knowledge and skills base, and to provide enhanced organizational flexibility
- Analyze most recent salary survey and devise a strategy to address compensation issues
- Increase focus on constructive performance reviews buttressed by a greater emphasis on problem-solving, customer service and engagement, and responsibility for actions and service outcome
- Introduce training elements, particularly with training already designated for other goal areas, to emphasize and reinforce the notion of professional investment and ownership of our processes, services, and sites
- Review existing financial reports and create additional reporting features that designate functional utility of reserve funds; refine budgeting process to clarify proposed expenditures
- Study staffing models and work flow; consider adjustments in staffing that may be needed to respond to changes in automation support
- Review safety and security systems and measures; track needs to determine if any increases are needed in monitoring, detection systems, or guard services
- Analyze extended and after-hours use of event/meeting/instructional space; devise cost recovery and rental fee model; review support and amenity services needed to increase attractiveness of meeting facilities (technology, food, beverages, etc.)

GOAL AREA 6**MARKETING & OUTREACH**

Communicate and promote services and programs through a wide variety of methods and channels so customers and partners take advantage of all the Library offers, with emphasis on reaching new and underserved segments of the population

GOAL 6.1

Optimize and target social media activities

ACTION

- Increase engagement of social media audience by creating conversations
- Enhance social media activities by employing a unifying message
- Review and determine rate of return of current social media activities
- Use tools such as Facebook Insights to analyze interest in topics and programs
- Investigate new social media outlets
- Analyze actions that will build upon current successful strategies
- Promote social media in all Library marketing
- Eliminate social networking that is not effective for target audiences
- Use patron input to improve the Library online presence

OUTCOME

- Consistent, positive image for the Library and its diverse activities in a variety of social networks
- Engagement of audiences that have not been previously involved in Library social networking
- More widespread visibility and increased perception that the East Baton Rouge Parish Library always has “something going on”

GOAL 6.2

Increase awareness and usage of Library services through targeted marketing and outreach activities

ACTION

- Aggressively bring library services to under-served population through bookmobile services and associated mobile outreach efforts
- Introduce new Library services to the public through a wide variety of outreach programs and promotional methods, including various community events, expositions, bookmobile appearances, etc.
- Maintain and expand the brand identity of the Library using consistent logo, tagline, and designs
- Develop a marketing and public relations plan that supports the Library's goals as outlined in this strategic plan
- Identify specific groups in the Library's marketing plan (i.e., children, teens, parents, seniors, businesses, non-users) so that each group's needs are addressed in promotional activities
- Create individual campaigns to promote success of select services
- Promote underutilized services using specific campaigns
- Brand and market online resources and services as the "Digital Branch" of the Library
- Continually evaluate the results of marketing campaigns to expand on promising programs and eliminate outdated services

OUTCOME

- Marketing and outreach activities, as well as improved merchandising efforts, increase usage of Library resources and services by both current and new audiences
- Additional attention to these services result in increased Library recognition as a valuable and continually growing resource
- Statistics create a realistic assessment of which Library activities should be continued and identify those services which are no longer worthwhile
- Reputation of East Baton Rouge Parish Library as a one-stop gateway to reliable resources and answers

GOAL 6.3

Develop new avenues of funding
through marketing and promotional initiatives

ACTION:

- Review and analyze current and potential funding sources
- Encourage partnerships and sponsorships to fulfill specific funding needs
- Develop ongoing collaborative agreements and partnerships with organizations, schools, and businesses
- Research and evaluate grant funding and gifts to support current Library programs and future initiatives
- Develop a program of formalized donation levels and rewards
- Report regularly on the progress toward Library goals and initiatives
- Designate Library representative to manage partnership agreements
- Establish a Library Foundation

OUTCOME

- Marketing initiatives creates a consistent, positive image for the Library
- The Library continues to grow due to new alliances and becomes an even more valuable resource for East Baton Rouge Parish
- Marketing and promotion creates interest in partnerships from businesses and organizations
- A wide variety of promotions and partnerships reach audiences who have not previously engaged in Library activities and its social networking
- Community leaders begin to identify the Library as a resource that can strengthen the community and its residents in a cost-effective manner
- Reputation of East Baton Rouge Parish Library as a valued and able partner in the development of the community and its future leaders

MID-RANGE OBJECTIVES FOR GOAL AREA 6

MARKETING & OUTREACH

- Dedicate additional resources to identifying and meeting the needs of underserved populations (many initiatives in this area may be realized in Goal Area 3's program development objectives)
- Create new marketing database, utilizing dashboard analytics provided by vendor subscription to identify customer needs and utilization trends on a continuing basis
- Institute annual action plan for social media activities; set specific operational parameters for means of maintaining a presence, and the level of planned interactivity, for each media platform; deploy skilled staffing resources at sufficient levels to meet performance goals
- Design specific campaigns on an annual basis to highlight and persistently push select services or to appeal to specifically targeted groups – these should supplement generalized communication and promotional plans, not supplant them
- Select, on a quarterly basis, a single product or content set to consistently highlight, promote, demonstrate, and provide vigorous informational/educational options to increase awareness of the product and its attributes
- Identify underutilized services and products and provide additional promotional support
- Develop a more comprehensive and consistent plan for merchandising collections and products (see Goal Area 3)
- Continue to work on a branding approach that while not excluding books, assists the public in perceiving the library as encompassing a wider range of services and creative opportunities
- Establish a Library Foundation
- Extend the scope and level of partnerships with various governmental and nonprofit agencies, as well as with select private sector organizations
- Find innovative ways to provide library card registration to a under-served populations; include online pre-registrations, virtual card access, and special limited use cards for populations with special circumstances
- Implement Library Lagniappe Culture Card campaign