



Building on Success

**Status Report and Strategic Plan
Passaic Public Library**

*“Perhaps no place in any community is so totally democratic as the town library.
The only entrance requirement is interest.”
Lady Bird Johnson*

**The Ivy Group, Ltd.
July 2006**

**PASSAIC PUBLIC LIBRARY
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Our Mission...Our Commitment

The Passaic Public Library exists to provide resources and services to fulfill information needs for everyday living and recreation, and for educational and cultural pursuits. The library makes available these resources and services to the citizens of Passaic, to surrounding communities, and to New Jersey and the United States at large. The library subscribes to the principle of intellectual freedom and endeavors to provide materials and information that reflect all points of view. The library serves people of all ages, at all levels of comprehension, and at all levels of need. A trained and caring staff provides access to and assistance with its materials, making the most effective use of current technology and providing inviting and functional facilities.

Executive Summary

The public library is essential to the quality of life in a city. A vibrant library has the potential to change lives and revitalize a city. An invigorated Passaic Public Library can play a pivotal role in the City of Passaic. To this end, the Passaic Public Library’s first Strategic Plan represents an ambitious step toward improving the quality of library service for the next three years. This Plan provides a blueprint to guide leadership of the Library and staff as they strive to meet and exceed the expectations of the residents they serve.

An independent library, the Passaic Public Library is a member of the Bergen County Library System and The Highlands Regional Library Cooperative. The Library has two locations—The Julius Forstmann Library (which is the main branch) and the Reid Branch.

The Passaic Public Library by the Numbers

Library staff	17
Circulation	122,243
Annual operating budget	\$1,386,405
Number of public computers	30
Book collection	114,947
Number of periodical subscriptions	283
Spending per capita	\$20.42
Programs offered	283
Visits per capita	1.74
Circulation per capita	1.80
Number of active cardholders	13,000
Local support	\$1,302,076
State aid	\$84,329

These numbers indicate that, even though substantial progress has been made, the Passaic Public Library still lags behind peer libraries when measured against widely accepted professional indicators. The Passaic Public Library Strategic Plan lays the foundation for bringing the Library’s current performance into line with similar public libraries in northern New Jersey and with libraries serving similar populations in other parts of the United States. The plan focuses on building an infrastructure that can achieve the ambitious goals while maintaining the current forward momentum.

The consulting team and the staff are confident that they can offer the quality library services that the residents of Passaic have a right to expect and that the public library can truly become an invaluable resource and asset.

The Transformation Process

In 2004, The Board of Trustees contracted with The Ivy Group to facilitate the Library's first-ever strategic planning process. The consulting team, comprised of Nancy Davis and Cathi Alloway, recommended a phased series of planning activities that included the following:

- Initial planning, on-site visit, consultation and review of key background information that would inform the planning process;
- Internal survey of Trustees and staff at all levels;
- Community leadership interviews;
- On-site interviews with library users'
- Two days of consultation with library director;
- Development of a strategic plan that integrates all information gathered during the strategic planning process and responds to ongoing issues raised by the State report.

As the strategic planning process evolved, The Ivy Group provided on-going consultation to the library director and the members of the Board of Trustees. Specifically, the consulting team collaborated with leadership of the PPL to:

- Recruit and hire a new library director;
- Evaluate options for technical support;
- Facilitate discussions with the New Jersey Library Association and the New Jersey State Library;
- Provide guidance for the revision of library policies and procedures;;
- Manage public relations issues;
- Maximize participation in professional library associations and consortia;
- Facilitate follow-up discussions with librarians who developed the State Report;
- Explore the potential of bringing the "Family Place" library concept to PPL;
- Advise Board of pending that would provide funds for urban libraries.

The Passaic Public Library—A Library in Transition

The Passaic Public Library has a proud tradition of public service that spans more than one hundred and eighteen years. It is one of the oldest public libraries in the State of New Jersey. Over the past five years, the Board of Trustees and staff have been confronted by both internal and external challenges. These challenges have led to substantive changes in library operations and the manner in which services are provided.

Increasing financial pressures have had a significant impact on all aspects of service delivery. A report prepared by the library staff in 2004 highlights the fiscal constraints on library operations. Over the past thirteen years, the funding for the library has either been reduced or remained static in the face of increased costs for staffing, technology, materials acquisitions, and the introduction of more costly non-print formats. In the fiscal year 1993-1994, the Library received \$1,150,000 from the City; in 2001-02, \$950,000; in 2002-03, \$1,050,000; and in 2003-04, \$1,040,000. In fact, continuing financial concerns led the City and the Trustees to consider the possibility of privatizing library services by entering into discussions with Library Systems and Services. News of these discussions propelled the Passaic Public Library into the national news when stories about potential privatization appeared in both newspapers and professional publications.

In response to these events and to gain a better understanding of quality of library services being provided, the Board of Trustees requested the assistance of the State Library. One of the most important aspects of the evaluation of the performance of the Passaic Public Library prepared by the New Jersey State Library is contained in the section on funding and financial support. The report pointed out that the Library is significantly under-funded when compared with its peer libraries in surrounding counties. Today, the Passaic spends approximately \$1.67 per capita for materials compared to the \$6.83 spent per capita on average by public libraries in northern New Jersey. Inadequate funding continues to thwart efforts of the Staff and Board as they work to reconfigure services, streamline operations, and forge a more successful and secure future for the Library.

The leadership of the Passaic Public Library has also gone through a dramatic transition. Following the resignation of its Director, the Board began a nationwide search for a qualified library professional to fill the position. In February 2005 the new director was hired, bringing to the Library substantial experience in public library administration. Under his direction, the staff has been re-energized, new lines of communication have been established with other city agencies and organizations, and numerous other positive changes have been achieved. All phases of library management and operation continue to be transformed.

A second important finding of the state evaluation was the need for the Passaic Public Library to launch its first-ever strategic planning process. In response to this directive, the Board contracted with The Ivy Group in 2004 to design and implement a strategic planning process. The following strategic plan is the result of the collaboration between the consulting team, library staff, and the Board.

Passaic—A City in Transition

The demographics of the City of Passaic have changed over the past ten years. According to the US Census, the population has increased by nearly 10,000 from 58,041 (1990) to 67,861 (2000). In that ten year period, the Hispanic population of Passaic grew from 50% to 62.5%. In 1990, 36% of the City's population was foreign-born; ten years later, that percentage had increased to 45.6%. In 1990, 33,053 Passaic residents reported speaking a language other than English at home. In 2000, 43,466 residents indicated that English was not the language spoken in their families.

According to the 2003 New Jersey State Report Card, 8,862 out of 11,561 students in the Passaic School District spoke a language other than English at home (although English may have been spoken also). Spanish was by far the most common language spoken with 9,366 students; Gujarati, 300; Polish, 28; Arabic, 34; and other languages, 114.

It is also worth noting how Passaic compares to the rest of the State of New Jersey with respect to other demographic indicators. The 2000 Census reports that the per capita income in 1999 was \$12,874 in Passaic and \$27,006 for the rest of the state. Median household income was \$33,594 and \$55,146 respectively. The median age in Passaic is 28.6, but 36.7 for other parts of New Jersey. Over 62% of Passaic's population is of Hispanic or Latino origin compared to 13.3% statewide. Over 45% of Passaic's population is foreign-born compared to 17.5% for New Jersey overall. And finally, among residents age 25 and older, 55% of the Passaic population are high school graduates; for all of New Jersey that percentage is 82%.

In addition to demographics, other trends have an impact on the delivery of Library services. The most important of these trends is the introduction of and access to technology at the public library. The public's expectation is that information be available immediately. There is an ever-growing demand for access to computers for everything from job-hunting, e-mail, and the filing of various applications. On the other hand, many residents, especially senior citizens, are unable to use the online catalog; without training, many are no longer able to use their public library independently.

Growth of other information providers has also affected the library. In many ways, the public library is competing with the super bookstores and video chains as well as with the virtual libraries and other online information providers. In addition to books, patrons expect to have the latest DVD's, books on tape, compact discs and audiocassettes available. They expect to have comfortable surroundings in which to browse, read, and study. In addition, the public expects to have access to the holdings of other libraries, rather than being limited strictly to the holdings of the Passaic Public Library.

The analysis of statistics for the Passaic Public Library and for other libraries in the region suggests that there is a latent demand for improved library services in the city of Passaic. The fact that almost one quarter of the books that were borrowed at the PPL were obtained through inter-library loan indicates that there are library users who would value access to a more up-to-date and appealing book collection. Discussions with staff

in nearby libraries also indicate that many residents of Passaic are going to other libraries for materials and services in lieu of going to their own library.

The socio economic shifts that have dramatically changed the city of Passaic have also generated significant needs within the community served by the Passaic Public Library. These needs, include, but are not limited to:

- Support for educational achievement;
- Economic development and job creation;
- Access to and support for information technology;
- Support for families with young children and early childhood literacy;
- Community gathering place for the exchange of information and ideas;
- A venue for cultural exchange and the arts.

Highlighting Recent Success

In 2003, the New Jersey State Library asked an independent team of public librarians to conduct an evaluation of the Passaic Public Library. The team, comprised of David Belanger, Elaine McConnell and Janet Wheeler, were asked to determine the extent to which the PPL satisfied the Recommended Standards for Public Libraries established by the New Jersey Library Association.

In addition to the report commissioned by the State Library, the staff of the Passaic Public Library also prepared an analysis of the PPL's problems along with recommendations for addressing them. The findings of the internal and external teams were strikingly similar. Both studies found that the performance of the Library had declined over an extended period of time. Additionally, the Library's effectiveness had been negatively impacted by a lack of leadership, decreased funding and inadequate staffing.

The Library Board of Trustees responded aggressively and expeditiously to the findings of the state and staff reports. In the intervening period, many of the issues raised have been addressed. Additionally, these in-depth assessments of the Library have guided the work of the strategic planning consultants in establishing priorities to eliminate deficiencies in the following areas of public library service:

- Management and administration
- Planning
- Funding
- Marketing and Communications
- Cooperative services
- Information services
- Programming

New leadership has already reconfigured the way in which the Passaic Public Library operates, ensuring that the delivery of public library services is more in line with community needs. Dramatic and far-reaching changes have occurred that should pave the way for a bright and successful future for one of New Jersey's oldest public libraries. These changes have included:

Leadership, Management, and Administration

- Hiring of new library director;
- Improved and proactive financial management systems in place;
- Establishment of staff committees;
- Selection of customer service training model;
- Establishment of new performance appraisal process with support of labor-management committee;
- Completion of new or revised library policies;

- Development of Personnel Manual based on NJLA guidelines;
- Greater staff participation in training programs and workshops including the Library's first staff development day;
- Implementation of staffing needs assessment under way;
- Capes grant secured to assess management of historic materials in the PPL collection.

Planning and Evaluation

- Contract with library consultant to plan and implement a strategic planning process;
- Improved process of gathering and reporting outputs and outcomes;
- Plan created to reorganize the physical plant to ensure maximum use of available space on first and second floors;
- Plans are underway to convert basement into areas for ESL tutoring and after school drop-in program.

Funding

- \$50,000 supplemental funding provided by City Council;
- City funding continues uninterrupted during fiscal year regardless of where the City is in the budget process;
- 4% increase in PPL operating budget for 2006-2007;
- Modern library chart of accounts implemented in 2005.
- Prepared detailed analysis of proposed spending for fiscal 2006/2007 to provide elected officials with reliable information regarding library operations, goals, and needs so they can make sound decisions regarding library funding.
- Incremental revenues raised through first annual giving campaign and sale of surplus furniture and books.

Marketing and Communications

- Installation of multi-language exterior signage;
- Reorganization and more effective display of media collection generating greater use;
- Expansion and more effective promotion of foreign language collection;
- Library "open house" showcased improvements, thanked supporters, and demonstrated that PPL is moving in the right direction;
- Outreach to community organizations and leaders to educate them about library services and to explore potential partnerships;
- Productive dialogue established with local schools;
- Regular communication and reporting to financial supporters.

- PPL website being redeveloped in-house to enhance graphic appeal, attract new users, improve navigation and functionality, and enrich content.
- Developed library card registration campaign in cooperation with public schools aimed at incoming 4th graders.
- Developed a membership-based library card registration campaign for the public during Library Card Registration Month.

Cooperative Services

- Maximization of services available through BCCLS including CD circuit collection and downloadable audio books;
- Contacts initiated with PALS, HRLC, BCCLS to identify potential areas of support.

Services

- Developed written collection development policy.
- Increased budget for purchase of foreign language materials;
- More efficient and effective selection of materials for collection with support of recently established Collection Development Committee;
- On-going weeding of PPL collection by staff using professionally established guidelines;
- Efforts under way to increase summer hours to comply with state per capita aid requirement;
- Continuing efforts to address parking requirements for handicapped patrons and others using library facilities.
- Established carpeted Young Adult area “For Teens Only”
- Added 4 Teen-only PC’s
- Proposal for filtering Children’s and Teen PC submitted to Board
- Modern furniture for children included in 2006/2006 budget
- Increased % of materials budget assigned to juvenile materials

Programming

- Volunteer tutors being used to provide Internet training for library customers;
- Plans under way to maximize impact of highly successful children’s story times and summer reading programs.

Staff Training and Development

- Completed plan to realign staff desk assignments with actual library usage.
- Proposal for position reclassifications to utilize existing staff skills submitted to Board of Trustees.
- Proposal to reimburse staff for out-of-pocket professional development expenses submitted to Board of Trustees.

Facilities

- 1st floor of Forstmann library rearranged to increase open space and enable face-out display of materials.
- Forstmann Exhibit Hall refurbished and carpeted.

SWOT Analysis - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Based on the results of the information gathered during the course of the strategic planning process, the consulting team developed the following SWOT analysis for the Passaic Public Library.

Strengths of the Passaic Public Library

Staff

- Long-standing tradition of providing public library services in Passaic
- Dedicated staff that wants to improve library services
- Staff willing and eager to support improved performance
- Significant changes made in past twelve months/momentum
- New director who brings experience and expertise
- Staff reflects community diversity
- Union that has been responsive to and supportive of change

Budget

- Library budget has been stabilized
- Best practices in financial management have been implemented
- Director and board have clearer understanding of financial operations
- Improved purchasing procedures
- Private fund raising initiatives have been launched

Enhanced Governmental Relationships

- Regular lines of communications
- Improved reporting
- Increased involvement on part of elected officials

Facilities

- Library services provided in two significant pieces of real estate
- Facilities have been cleaned and maintenance procedures improved
- Interiors have been cleaned and are visually more appealing
- Successful reallocation of space

Community Partnerships

- Two successful community partnerships provide blueprint for additional collaborative efforts

Technology Enhancements

- Additional PC's have been purchased
- Wireless capabilities introduced
- Computers heavily used

Weaknesses of the Passaic Public Library

Weaknesses identified in the State Report and as a result of the current strategic planning process suggest that PPL'S efforts to achieve continuous improvement may be impeded by several factors. Areas of concern include:

Leadership

- Lack of a cohesive, pro-active board
- Inability of the board to delineate role of trustees with that of library director

Staff

- Mix of staff skills and job titles reflects the past and impedes Library's ability to move forward in critical areas

Budget

- PPL continues to be under-funded by state and local standards
- Current materials budget inadequate for developing a bi-lingual collection
- Some City council members may not be educated about the community benefits of a modern library facility and this information gap is reflected in funding levels
- Board does not have an adequate number of proactive members supporting increased funding
- Limited advocacy/limited number of grassroots supporters/ineffective FOL group

Facilities

- Facilities that cannot be accessed easily by many community residents because of limited hours or inadequate parking
- An aging, inadequate facility at the Reid Branch prevents delivery of necessary library services

Programs and Services

- Key constituencies such as teens, seniors, and adults not adequately served
- Limited support for reading and learning
- A dated, neglected collection that does not reflect diversity of the city
- Ethnic populations have diverse needs for library services
- Library resources are generally underutilized

Marketing, Public Relations and Advocacy

- Low visibility and level of awareness
- Limited and inconsistent marketing efforts
- Negative publicity in local media
- Website that does not market library programs and services
- Large immigrant communities that may not be familiar with availability of free library services

Opportunities for the Passaic Public Library

The Passaic Public Library is well positioned to capitalize on the following opportunities to:

- Leverage recent momentum
- Become the leading advocate for reading and literacy in the City of Passaic
- Orient significant numbers of Passaic residents to the value of quality public library services in their lives
- Provide a “focal point” for the City of Passaic - venue for the arts, exchange of ideas/learning/family gathering place
- Cultivate relationships with organizations that have been contacted during the planning process to establish new win-win partnerships
- Support academic achievement by continuing to strengthen ties to local schools
- Make better use of available space to address identified community needs
- Generate increased demand for library programs and services by responding to the demographic shift to a high percentage of young families with children

Threats to the Passaic Public Library

PPL has been buffeted by recent changes and crises. As the Board and staff look to the future, some serious, unresolved issues may still confront them. These include:

- Inability to overcome PPL'S troubled history
- Impediments to reconfiguring the staff in order to accomplish desired changes
- Inability to offer competitive products and services to city residents who have many options for leisure, information access, and entertainment
- Failure to secure increased funding
- Other serious social and financial problems in the City of Passaic will over ride needs of the PPL
- Lack of Board involvement impedes implementation of necessary library improvements

Criteria for New Strategic Initiatives

A strategic planning process generates many ideas that merit consideration and possible inclusion in the final recommendations. Because financial and staffing resources are limited, the consulting team worked with the Library Director to establish guidelines against which potential strategic initiatives could be evaluated. The following questions were used to evaluate the relative importance and upside potential of possible changes or improvements:

- Does the strategy help staff accomplish more by working in an efficient and cost-effective manner?
- Does it help market and brand the library?
- Is it practical and actionable?
- Does it address multiple goals?
- Does it provide a favorable return on investment?
- Does it offer opportunities for community partnerships?
- Does it satisfy identified community needs?
- Does it align the library with education and life-long learning?
- Does it position the library and library facilities as central to the community?
- Does it address issues raised by the state report?

A full range of possible directions for the Library were considered but only those directions that provided a positive response to one or more of the questions above, and which held the promise of significant impact, were selected.

Strategic Initiative One: Board Development and Training

“The quality of leadership more than any other factor, determines the success or failure of an organization.” Fred Fiedler and Martin Chemers

Increase the likelihood that PPL will have a promising future by increasing the capacity of the Board to plan and implement changes. Specific actions designed to increase the effectiveness of the Board include:

1. Build skill sets of Board members to address long-term library needs.
 - a. Year 1
 - i. The board of Trustees will officially adopt the NLA statement on Trustee Education and Training as Board Policy:

“It is the responsibility of the Public Library Board of Trustees to ensure that each new member attend the Board Orientation session conducted by the New Jersey State Library within the first two years of appointment. It is expected that each Board of Trustee member will be knowledgeable in areas including: Library Laws, Fiscal Responsibilities, Board/Director Relationship, and Library Policy Development. Adopted by the NJLA Executive Board January 2001.”
 - i. Newly appointed Trustees will attend NJ State Library Trustee orientation weekend within two years of their appointment.
 - ii. Newly appointed Trustees unable to attend NJ State Library Trustee Institute will attend the Trustee programs of the NJ Library Association annual conference within 2 years of their appointment.
 - iii. Develop a list of real-life job skills (e.g., human resources experience, construction/architectural knowledge/experience, etc.) that would be useful on the Board of Trustees.
 - b. Year 2
 - i. Work with the Cultural Awareness Advisory Committee to identify members of the community who possess those skills and might be interested in serving on the Board of Trustees.
2. Develop a long-term strategy for increasing the effectiveness of the Board of Trustees.
 - a. Cultivate relationships with key community leaders and showcase the importance of the work that the library board does by establishing a community advisory board and special task forces or committees.

i. Year 1

Establish a Cultural Awareness Advisory Committee to work with the Trustees to provide input into Board policies and Library programming that reflects the diverse population of Passaic.

- Determine duties and charge to Committee
- Solicit nominations for membership from community
- Select committee members
- Hold orientation meeting and quarterly meetings thereafter
- Receive the annual report of the committee at a public trustees' meeting.

3. Satisfy New Jersey State requirements for 3 hours of trustee training per Library per year.

a. Year 1

At least one Trustee, who has already completed Trustee orientation and attended the Trustee Institute, or equivalent will attend the Trustee programs at the NJLA annual conference.

4. Develop a Trustee orientation program and informational orientation package.

a. Year 1

Draft the content for a 1 hour orientation to the Passaic Public Library and the Board of Trustees (1/2 hour each).

a. Year 2

- i. Offer the first orientation session to new trustees .
- ii. Compile a folder of materials, including a New Jersey Trustee Manual about the Library and the Board of Trustees to be distributed at the orientation session

5. Continue to forge positive relationship with elected officials at local and state level.

a. Year 2

At least one Trustee will attend NJLA's Legislative Day at the State Capital.

6. Review Trustee by-laws, procedure, and policies. Revise as necessary.

a. Year 1

Adopt as Board Policy the Code of Ethics for library trustees in the “New Jersey Public Libraries: A Manual for Trustees”, Rev. ed., 2005. p. 105.

Strategic Initiative Two: Staff Training and Development

“Librarians are not just good at Internet searching because we understand how to play word games. We’re good because we know where we need to go and the quickest routes for getting there: we are equipped not just with compasses but with mental maps of the information landscape.” Marylaine Block

Sustaining Momentum

1. Year 1

- Complete an assessment of current staff and staffing to achieve the following goals:
 - Identify training needs of staff around such critical issues as customer service, cultural diversity, technology, etc.
 - Identify existing skills of current staff and identify individuals who have the requisite training to move into other areas of job responsibility.
 - Initiate succession planning to anticipate retirements, attrition, and unmet skill sets.
 - Develop job descriptions for areas of responsibility that cannot be addressed with internal candidates.
- Determine the need for additional staffing
 - Using current and new job titles, complete staffing reallocation plan.
 - Using staff seniority list, identify staff eligible for retirement in the next two years.

1. Leverage the benefits of cross-training employees and library-wide approach to staff scheduling.

a. Year 1

Cross-train circulation and technical services staff on an ad-hoc basis as new material types are purchased, SIRSI upgrades are implemented, etc.

2. Implement employee orientation procedures.

a. Year 1

Expedite development of personnel manual using New Jersey Library Association model

- i. 12 out of approximately 60 sections completed, including a completely revised Performance Appraisal procedure.

- ii. Complete approximately 6 sections of the manual every two weeks for 8 weeks with total manual to be completed by June 1, 2006. Submit sections to Trustees for approval as they are completed.
 - b. Year 2

Develop 1 hour library orientation session based on new personnel manual and to include: health benefit option explanation, explanation of retirement plan.
- 3. “Grow Your Own” Staff Development: support the professional development of current staff to supply future needs of the Library.
 - a. Year 1
 - ix. Investigate internships available from Rutgers and the State Library.
 - x. Foster degree completion by current staff that could advance at PPL if the satisfied educational requirements.
- 4. Build the PPL of the future on the basis of exceptional public service.
 - a. Year 1
 - i. Adopt a customer service model. “Give the customer a pickle” adopted as model by Library’s Customer Service Committee (completed).
 - ii. Plan first ½ day training session for all staff to be held Spring, 2006.
 - xi. Plan quarterly reinforcement training sessions.
 - iv. Integrate training goals into all performance appraisals.
 - a. Year 1 & 2
 - a. Maximize the value of training programs provided by NJLA, the State Library, and HRLC by promoting staff participation in the programs.
 - i. Cultivate participation in library committees.
 - iii. Support employee participation in professional activities of county and state professional organizations.
 - xii. Leverage gains made with staff development day.

- v. Include “basic occupational Spanish” in 2006/2007 staff development budget proposal.

Strategic Initiative Three: Sustainable and Predictable Funding and Financial Management

“Libraries will get you through times of no money better than money will get you through times of no libraries.” Anne Herberts

Sustaining Momentum

1. Continue efforts to secure adequate local financial support that will bring funding for the PPL’s annual operating budget in line with state norms.

- a. Year 1

Compile a report comparing PPL services, usage, and funding with neighboring libraries, especially Clifton.

2. Generate incremental revenues to support special projects, programs, and outreach initiatives.

- a. Year 1

- i. Establish “Passaic Public Library Friends Foundation” to conduct private fund raising
- ii. Create a financial structure that makes it possible for PPL, or its foundation, to solicit financial support from individuals who are involved in estate planning
- iii. Explore other types of funding for which PPL might qualify such as NJ community development funds.

- b. Year 1 and 2

- i. Continue to follow LSSI recommendations for fund raising to achieve goal of \$50,000 to \$100,000 (4% to 7% of Library’s annual budget)
- ii. Identify grant opportunities.

- c. Year 2

- i. Solicit corporate underwriting to address specific high-dollar projects or needs.

Strategic Initiative Four: Facilities Planning and Maintenance

“Throughout my formal education, I spent many, many hours in public and school libraries. Libraries became the courts of last resort, as it were. The current definitive answer to almost any question can be found within the four walls of most libraries.”

Arthur Ashe

Sustaining Momentum

1. Year 1

- a. Evaluate both library facilities with regard to meeting the needs of the residents of Passaic for quality library services in easily accessible facilities.
- b. Develop maintenance plan for both facilities to prevent further deferred maintenance.

2. Year 2

Develop a plan for increasing the curb appeal of the Library.

Strategic Initiative Five: Collection Development

*“It does not matter how many books you may have but whether they are good or not.”
Lucius Annaeus Seneca*

Sustaining Momentum

1. Year 1 & 2

Redeploy funds saved by reducing the cost of library operations into collection development.

2. Develop a three-year plan for strategically rebuilding the PPL collection of print and non-print materials.

a. Year 1

Compare subject areas of collection, especially reference, to collections in similar cities.

b. Year 1 and 2

Selectively purchase and discard materials to rebuild collection.

3. Address the need for materials that reflect the cultural diversity of Passaic’s population.

a. Year 1

i. Assign a specific dollar amount for African-American and Jewish interest materials to ensure adequate purchasing power for needed materials

ii. Conduct survey of reading interests and needs of Spanish, Gujarati, Tagalog, Russian, Ukrainian, and Polish speaking Passaic residents.

b. Year 1 and 2

i. Increase the percentage of the materials budget (currently 11%) with an emphasis on materials for English learners, Spanish language books, bilingual editions, and titles by Latino authors for adults and children.

c. Year 2

i. Selectively purchase and discard materials based on survey findings.

4. Collaborate with local schools to develop a collection that supports academic achievement by augmenting what is available in school libraries and media centers.

a. Year 1

Implement 8 traveling collections based on needs of individual public schools.

b. Year 2

Extend traveling collections to private schools.

Strategic Initiative Six: Marketing and Public Relations

“The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so that the product or service fits him and suits him.” Peter Drucker

Sustaining Momentum

1. Create a strategic branding, marketing and public relations plan that will support new long-range plan and increase visibility and use of the Passaic Public Library.
 - a. Year 1
Budget and acquire necessary staff skills to support quality marketing and public relations programs.
 - b. Year 2
Develop a logo, tagline, and design system that will be used consistently across all print and electronic marketing communications
2. Develop means of communication with the Passaic community.
 - a. Year 1
 - i. Develop a family of library publications that will support the long-range plan.
 - ii. Institute the use of nametags for staff with special designations for Spanish speakers.
3. Identify opportunities to cross-market library programs and services by using the distribution channels of other organizations and agencies.
 - a. Year 1
 - i. Contact community groups to explore opportunities for cross marketing including displays in the Library, books talks for groups, etc.
 - ii. Identify publications of community groups such as Hispanic Information Center, Passaic County NAACP, etc.
 - b. Year 2
Develop cross-marketing strategies with community groups.

Strategic Initiative Seven: Programs and Services for Children and Teens

“When I got my library card, that was when my life began.” Rita Mae Brown

Sustaining Momentum

1. Build change at the Passaic Public Library around programs and services for children.
 - a. Year 1 and 2
 - i. Focus attention on collection development, programming, and outreach services to families with young children.
 - b. Year 2
 - i. Acquire dynamic leadership to champion library services to children and families.
 - ii. Pursue efforts to open a Family Place Library in Passaic.
2. Build coalitions with local schools, literacy programs, and other community agencies that serve similar populations.
 - a. Year 1 and 2
 - i. Identify and contact other agencies to explore opportunities for cooperation.
3. Improve service to teens.
 - a. Year 1

Investigate possible service models for teens that have been successful in other libraries and determine their applicability for transfer to PPL.
 - b. Year 2

Implement identified improvements.

Strategic Initiative Eight: Services to a Diverse Community

“My mother and father were illiterate immigrants from Russia. When I was a child, they were constantly amazed that I could go to a building and take a book on any subject. They couldn’t believe that access to knowledge we have here in America. They couldn’t believe that it was free.” Kirk Douglas

Sustaining Momentum

1. Establish ongoing contacts with the Hispanic community.
 - a. Conduct informal meetings with agencies serving ethnic populations to identify needs that PPL is well positioned to address.
 - b. Establish an advisory council composed of individuals who have connections to the Hispanic community.
 - c. Forge partnerships with other community organizations that also want to serve the Hispanic community and collaborate on programs, collection development, and marketing initiative.
2. Provide more materials and information in World Languages.
 - a. Increase the percentage of the materials budget each year until it reaches 15% (11% in 2004/2005) with an emphasis on materials for English learners, Spanish language books, bilingual editions, and titles by Latino authors for adults and children.
 - b. Introduce Spanish language content to the PPL website.
 - c. Identify print and electronic marketing communications and signage that should be available in World Languages.
3. Provide more services to the Spanish speaking community.
 - a. Institute Spanish and bilingual story times, readers’ advisory services, book discussion groups.
 - b. Establish conversation clubs for individuals learning English, and for Spanish as a second language, and host them at the Library.
4. Develop core staff with skills required to provide services to diverse ethnic groups.
 - a. Provide front line staff and other interested personnel with training in Spanish for librarians.

Strategic Initiative Nine: Program Development

“Without libraries what have we? We have no past and no future.”

Ray Bradbury

1. Assess impact of current adult programs to determine if they deliver a favorable ROI (Return on Investment) with regard to attendance, audience characteristics, support of other objectives etc.
 - a. 2nd Sunday concert series
 - b. Tuesday noon film series
2. Develop an annual program schedule that supports goals of the long-range plan—particularly with regard to upgraded services to families of young children.
 - a. Year 1
 - i. Annual visit to schools by library staff
 - ii. Classic Game nights
 - b. Year 2
 - i. Annual visit to schools by library staff
 - ii. Family Nights during school year
 - iii. National Library Week programming
3. Maximize programming resources by co-sponsoring programs with other community organizations and with other area libraries.

Year 1 - Identify and contact potential co-sponsors.

Year 2 - Develop cooperative programming.

4. Diversify programming to reflect community.

Year 1. - Add performers to 2nd Sunday concerts with appeal to younger audiences.

Year 2. - Add programs related to books and reading in English and Spanish.

Strategic Initiative Ten: Advocacy and Government Relations

*“A organization’s real power and energy is generated through relationships.”
Margaret Wheatley*

Sustaining Momentum

1. Participate in advocacy programs and activities at the state level.
 - a. Year 1
 - i. Library director to attend NJLA legislative day.
2. Sustain improved relations between PPL and elected officials by continuing to provide financial supporters with relevant information that informs them about the positive return on tax dollars allocated for public library service.
 - a. Year 1
 - a. Publish an annual report and present to City Council at scheduled Council meeting.
 - ii. Obtain PPL’s HAPLER public service score and provide it to City Council with appropriate explanations and comparisons to similar cities.
3. Use the new Evaluating the Economic Impact of Public Library Services program recently introduced in NJ to determine the economic impact of the PPL.

Year 1 - Perform evaluation.

Year 2 - Present results to City Council.

Strategic Initiative Eleven: Administrative and Management Initiatives

Accomplishments to Date

- Redesigned monthly internal statistics with an emphasis on information needed for State Aid report and using MS Office.
- Developed new performance appraisal instrument and procedure.

Sustaining Momentum

1. Refine PPL process for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data and outcome and output measures.

Year 1 - Develop effective method for communication human impact (“telling the story”) of the library on the residents of Passaic.

2. Institute business best practices with regard to discount purchases similar to those available through HRLC (Year 1).
3. Develop an administrative and supervisory structure that supports new performance appraisal process (Year 2).

