5-Year Strategic Plan
2020-2024

Adopted — December 2019

Library Board of Directors
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A library in the middle of a community is a cross between an emergency exit, a life raft, and a festival. They are cathedrals of the mind; hospitals of the soul; theme parks of the imagination. On a cold, rainy island, they are the only sheltered public spaces where you are not a consumer, but a citizen, instead. A human with a brain and a heart and a desire to be uplifted, rather than a customer with a credit card and an inchoate “need” for “stuff.” A mall—the shops—are places where your money makes the wealthy wealthier. But a library is where the wealthy’s taxes pay for you to become a little more extraordinary, instead. A satisfying reversal.

— Caitlin Moran from The Times of London, 2013
1. LIBRARY MISSION

Curry Public Library provides the public with access to quality materials and services to meet recreational, informational, and educational needs, and to promote reading and lifelong learning for all.

2. LIBRARY HISTORY

For nearly 100 years, citizens in central Curry County have supported libraries. In 1922, the Gold Beach Community Club opened the town's first lending library and in 1933 the administration of the library was reorganized under the auspices of the Gold Beach Library Association. During the period from 1922 to 1953 the library was only accessible through paid memberships. In 1953 the library moved to a donated building and garnered the sanction of the commissioners of Curry County as a "county library" with free borrowing for its citizens. County government support, however, was short-lived; in 1955 the county backed away from its belief in the need of a county-supported library and withdrew financial support. In 1960 the library re-formed as a non-profit corporation to accept tax-free donations and grants. A year later, community supporters of the library were able to raise enough money for a new library building, which was opened on October 15, 1961.

From 1960 to 1983 the non-profit library received periodic special appropriations for library operations from both the city of Gold Beach and Curry County, but still found itself in need of a consistent source of revenue. On November 2, 1982, after twenty years of financial ups and downs, voters in Gold Beach approved the formation of a special library taxing district in central Curry County. Ten years later the library successfully petitioned its voters to adopt a new permanent property tax levy of $0.6609 per thousand of assessed property value. This levy was approved, and in the intervening years the library has honored this public trust by establishing itself as an integral community institution and a leader among peer libraries.

By the 1990s it was clear that the library’s facility was too small to meet the steady demand for new books and literacy-based programming. In 2003, the library acquired a piece of property on 3rd Street in Gold Beach, and embarked on a plan to break ground on a new library building. Curry Public Library was challenged with imagining how to best serve its patrons in a rapidly changing marketplace for books, readers, and library services. The facility that was constructed in 2008 provided spaces for traditional library services like access to books (today the library houses approximately 40,000 books, DVDs, and audiobooks), as well as free programs for both children and adults. The facility also focused on communications and technology services like publicly accessible computer workstations and Wi-Fi. Using this new facility as a platform, the library began working with other regional libraries to form a network for sharing a catalog, library materials, and a courier service.

Although the new facility was a great accomplishment, the library was forced to cut public meeting spaces out of its plans make budget. As technologies for communications, reading, and learning continued to evolve at a rapid pace, by 2014 the library saw a need to further expand its facility and services. These plans, as adopted in the library’s 2014 strategic plan included: expanding the library facility to include meeting spaces to accommodate at least 100 people; expanding access to advanced technologies (tablets, scanners, 3D printing/scanning, laser cutter, presentation tools, video teleconferencing); and expanding free educational and cultural programming to better meet community needs, including support for after school learning programs.

Curry Public Library holds over 30,000 books, 2,000 audio books, and 3,400 videos.

The library’s 2019 gingerbread building contest was one of our successful family programs designed to encourage healthy family activities.
3. THE LIBRARY TODAY

By the end of 2019 the library had realized the major benchmarks in its 5-year plan. Today a person can walk into our buzzing 14,500 square foot facility and have numerous options for learning and civic engagement. A starting place for many people is getting a cup of coffee at the library’s First Chapter Coffee House from a barista developing critical job skills. Parents can bring children to a story time designed to encourage a love for reading while providing adults with an opportunity to socialize. In the late afternoons middle school children participate in the library’s ASCEND after school program, which provides valuable tutoring and opportunities to learn things like dance, robotics, surfing, cooking, healthy habits, wellness strategies, and more not included in the regular school day education. Adults and children alike can visit the library’s tech lab and makerspace to design and fabricate using our computers, design software, and equipment. The lab is also used for alternative education and GED testing. The library’s gallery space hosts quarterly exhibits by accomplished artists. Many visitors come to attend meetings and programs like forums focused on solving our housing shortage, open mic nights, author talks, symphony performances, and movies. Traditional library users can take advantage of the Coastline library system, a network including all five Curry County libraries, eight public libraries in Coos County, Southwestern Oregon Community College, the Myrtle Point Public School District, the Port Orford Public School District, and the Coos County Extended Services Offices. The Coastline catalog includes more than 668,000 items and circulates 1 million items per year. Curry Public Library also provides access for its card holders to over 30,000 free ebooks through Library2Go, and access to subscription research databases allowing access to millions of articles, newspapers, databases, and learning tools for all ages.

4. THE PATH FORWARD

Curry Public Library’s transformation into a rich, multi-faceted space with 150,000 visitors per year happened relatively quickly. We are proud of our accomplishments and plan to build on our success, remaining innovative and vital to the citizens we serve. We also know that the dramatic changes of the past five years have stretched our capacity and require us to focus on shoring up new operations, which we are still learning to manage.

With this in mind, the library board of directors is pleased to share this new set of library goals and strategies to guide our next five years of operations. The two broad goals are:

- Reaching the maximum number of people in our community with library programs and services.
- Ensuring long-term sustainability for library programs and services.

Both of these goals are outgrowths of community input, our strong belief in accountability to local taxpayers, our commitment to equity, and our hope that the library will continue to be a cornerstone of our community long after we are gone. Big picture, we believe that our goals for the next five years will lead to a healthier Gold Beach, and as a result of this success the library will be recognized both regionally and nationally for its accomplishments.

In 2019 the library was recognized by Central Curry School District as a valued community partner for our ASCEND after school program, literacy support, and overall collaboration.

Opened to the public in August 2018, the library’s learning center addition was the central part of the library’s previous strategic plan, and its ongoing success.
5. GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal 1: Reach the maximum number of people in our community with library programs and services.

Develop a plan for equitable services that will remove barriers to library access.

- Adopt an equity plan that will identify under-served groups and how they can better be served. Groups we expect to be included in this plan are: home-bound seniors and nursing homes; people with disabilities living in group homes; people with physical disabilities; youth disengaged from the school system seeking opportunities for alternative education, vocational education, and GED services; people whose primary language is not English; older individuals needing help accessing technology based resources; individuals with needs for social services like Oregon Health Plan support, housing services, jobs, etc.; parents in need of parenting training, childcare, peer support, healthcare, and other social services; children with no after school care; and foster children and parents. We anticipate other groups being a part of this plan, but these were the ones identified during the strategic planning process. We also anticipate that the Coastline system will eliminate overdue fines, which fits nicely with the library’s equity strategy.

- Evaluate community demographics on an annual basis and adjust services accordingly. For example, develop collections for under-served groups that meet a minimum statistical threshold.

Address library parking problem to ensure maximum usage of library.

- Investigate options for a shuttle vehicle or contracted shuttle service.
- Implement 4th Street parking area on library property with an ADA accessible lit pathway.
- Mark parking spots on the library driveway.
- Investigate adding more spots to the main parking lot.

Provide library services to people who have never used the library.

- Explore library district boundary expansion to align with Central Curry School District.
- Explore the feasibility of moving collections throughout our service area via bookmobile.
- Expand library services for the tourist population (e.g. short-term access to Lib2Go).
- Host special annual events like concerts, open houses, tour opportunities, and animal-based programs.
- Create welcome packets to new home-owners via real estate agents.

Enhance public awareness of library programs.

- Leverage and develop tortoise social media presence.
- Develop library email list server.
- Explore expansion of advertising in seasonal tourist materials and newspapers.
- Create Hwy. 101 and 3rd St. signage.

Expand the population served by promoting literacy.

- Train literacy instructors and provide regular youth and adult literacy programs.
- Provide reading enrichment support to the schools.
- Develop mobile youth book collections in the schools with library cards for all children.
- Create a quiet reading space in the library.
- Support the distribution of books to children through the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, summer reading, baby bags, youth book “recycle” days.

The Coastline courier van, shared by the Curry County libraries, provides library users with access to over 600,000 physical library items from libraries in Coos and Curry counties.

Above: Artwork by Clares Henriques in the library lobby café shop area and a banner recognizing Jeremy Skinner’s award from the Oregon Library Association as Librarian of the Year.

Right: Janee Lensing, the library’s children librarian, provides two weekly story times and regular outreach programs to local preschools, head start, and elementary school classrooms.
Goal 2: Ensure long-term sustainability for library programs and services.

Strengthen existing programs and work flows,
- Create written operating procedures for all job functions.
- Work with Coastline libraries to improve core functions, strengthen the network, and expand collaboration.
- Develop working plans (with dedicated budgets) for all core library functions including technology, collection development, adult programs, youth programs, and staff/patron safety.
- Continue to evaluate and refine library policy at the board level on a monthly basis.
- Encourage library board to attend special district and library trainings.
- Strengthen volunteer recruitment and training.

Ensure high quality staffing and employee retention,
- Investigate the expansion of benefits like family healthcare, childcare, housing, etc.
- Investigate fringe benefits for permanent PT staff.
- Review compensation with respect to comparables on an annual basis, and be prepared to allocate further financial resources to compensation.
- Strengthen and enhance all-staff communication and training.
- Foster community within staff.

Build partnerships that enhance library services and sustainability,
- Build partnerships with organizations like the City of Gold Beach, the hospital, the senior/community center, SWOCC, Meals on Wheels, Early Learning Hub, and SW Oregon Workforce Investment Board.
- Participate in efforts to address issues impacting staff, including affordable housing and childcare.
- Work with SDAO to provide positive and informative messaging about local library governance.
- Continue to engage with library activities at a statewide level.
- Build on successes for local, statewide, and national library recognition.
- Work with the Library Foundation (to establish an endowment fund and possibly a housing program for library staff) and the Friends of the Library (for community relations and program support).
- Work with all partners including foundations to secure long-term funding for ASCEND.

Establish an effective Tech Lab/Makerspace operation,
- Create plans for maintenance, equipment acquisition, furnishings, and facility upgrades (e.g. ventilation).
- Establish regular hours.
- Create user guides and tools.
- Schedule regular training/education opportunities.
- Utilize the lab for other purposes including alternative education and as a certified testing center (GED).

Ensure the viability and longevity of the library facility,
- Create a facility manual and maintenance schedule.
- Build a maintenance fund with a balance of $250,000.
- Complete learning center construction project including donor plaques, bathroom signage, book drop signage, a bicycle rack, solar power, and a flat panel for library events in the main corridor.
- Enhance learning center functionality including: mg. hall entryway blackout curtain, 2nd floor acoustics, a 1st floor men’s room urinal, 2nd floor bathroom drain, and solar battery storage.
- Enhance the main library space by establishing a quiet area, acoustic treatment of atrium, bookcase safety retrofit, a better touchscreen catalog system, RFID security, self checkout, and display cases.
- Complete grounds work including: better irrigation, an osprey cam, and landscaping to visible public areas.
- Evaluate the need for the coffee shop v. kitchen space, and consider looking into dividing kitchen.

6. MEASURING SUCCESS
Curry Public Library’s financials are independently audited every year. During its annual budget process, the library director informs its budget committee of its progress toward its strategic goals and creates budget plans accordingly. The library also tracks statistics for its operations, which are reported to its board of directors and the state of Oregon. Both financial and statistical markers will be used to measure our success, as will public feedback and recognition for our work.

7. LIBRARY STATISTICAL SUMMARY FOR FY 2018-2019

Population Served: 4,948
Cardholders (including paid out-of-district accounts): 5,131
Staff: 8.5 FTE
Weekly Hours Open to Public: 54
Number of Visitors per Year: 146,241
Books: 32,039
Audio Materials: 1,898
Videos: 3,456
Print Serial Subscriptions: 81
E-books: 47,875
Downloadable audio books: 27,802
Licensed research databases: 25
Yearly Circulation: 59,312
Permanent Tax Rate Levy: $206,341

8. LIBRARY BUDGET SUMMARY FOR FY 2018-2019

Revenue
General Fund Property Tax Revenue: $424,556
General Fund Other Revenue: $72,120
Restricted Grant and Gifts: $352,828
Beginning Fund Balance/Net Working Capital: $727,828

Expenses
Personnel Services: $343,400
Materials and Services: $315,613
Capital Outlay (Building Construction): $392,990
Debt Service: $39,000
Contingencies: $35,000
Special Payments: $24,997
Reserved for Future Expenditure: $206,341
6. THE STORIES BEHIND OUR GOALS

In addition to the information gathered from community surveys, two public planning meetings, and individual stakeholder meetings, the following information informed the creation of our two goals. It will continue to inform our strategies as we implement this plan.

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<td>Food insecurity</td>
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<td>Child poverty*</td>
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<td>Child abuse (per 1,000 pop)</td>
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<td>Index crime (per 1,000 pop)</td>
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<td>Voter participation</td>
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<th>EDUCATION</th>
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<td>4-year degree or greater</td>
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<td>2-year degree</td>
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<td>Graduation rate</td>
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<td>Higher education enrollment (per 1,000 pop)</td>
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<td>Kinder Readiness: Letter Sounds (out of 26)</td>
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<td>Unemployment rate</td>
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<td>Labor force participation rate</td>
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<td>Job growth (per 1,000 pop)</td>
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<td>Property tax (per person)</td>
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<td>Housing cost burden</td>
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<td>Adult smoking</td>
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<td>Healthy diet</td>
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<td>Vaccination, 2 year old</td>
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<td>Low weight births</td>
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<th>INFRASTRUCTURE</th>
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<td>Broadband access</td>
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<td>Transit service</td>
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<td>Vehicle miles traveled (in millions)</td>
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<td>Developed or cultivated land</td>
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* Interpret with caution for small counties (population under 10,000).

In July 2018 Curry Public Library received a 5-year 21st Century Community Learning Center grant in the amount of $1,157,616 from the Oregon Department of Education to provide safe, structured, and supervised quality after school programming for students in 6-8 grade. Curry Public Library was the only library to receive one of these grants, and was one of only 24 programs in the state to receive funding.

The After School Commitment to Education and Development (ASCEND) Program is a collaboration between Curry Public Library and Central Curry School District. The ASCEND program operates five days a week, is free, and provides bussing and snacks. The program offers enrichment and tutoring activities to broaden horizons and promote exploratory learning; help navigating the transition from middle to high schools; and meaningful dialogue with students’ families.

Successful youth are imperative for a healthy library. We are committed to the long-term success and sustainability of ASCEND, and this commitment is central to Goal 2 of our strategic plan.