



**DOWNERS GROVE
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**Strategic Plan
2017 – 2020**



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INTRODUCTION

One of the busiest libraries in suburban Chicagoland, the Downers Grove Public Library (DGPL) has over 500,000 visitors who check out more than one million items per year. Celebrating its 125th anniversary year in 2016, DGPL has a long history as a beloved community institution.

The Downers Grove Public Library's Strategic Plan 2012 – 2014 resulted in significant change for the library. Its primary goal, to provide "A library building whose arrangement, condition, and appearance attract public use and support library services," culminated in a 2014 interior renovation. This led to staff reorganization, physical space changes, and expanded services, including:

- a. Single consolidated Adult and Teen Services Department on the second floor
- b. Media Lab
- c. Computer Help Desk
- d. Expanded and enhanced teen space
- e. Additional spaces for small group use
- f. Improved display of library materials throughout the building
- g. Self-checkout capabilities
- h. Automated materials handling equipment
- i. Comfortable seating and gathering spaces

While many of the objectives for the interior and services were met, some items were not addressed due to cost:

- a. Update Kids Room and staff restrooms
- b. Update staff lounge
- c. Improve lighting in the adult nonfiction stacks, second floor core seating area, first floor Service Desk and Café areas, STEM Room, and Training Room
- d. Replace public computer area furnishings

Also not addressed were any mechanical needs. The library building, expanded and renovated in 1999, contains equipment and systems reaching the end of their expected useful life. In 2015, a follow-up project addressed some acoustical and lighting needs identified during and after the 2014 project.

In early 2016, Library Director Rick Ashton, who led the library through the development and execution of Strategic Plan 2012 – 2014, retired. After a national search, the Library Board of Trustees hired Library Director Julie Milavec, who began work on August 1, 2016. The Library Board charged their new director with creation of a Strategic Plan as her top priority. In August and September, a planning process was developed to create not only a Strategic Plan, but to continue with a Facilities Assessment and Sustainability Plan and Long Range Budget. Together, these documents will provide a framework for library service and budgeting needs into the future.

Within this context, the *Strategic Plan 2017 – 2020* was developed.

PROCESS

- I. **Perform internal review and gather documentation**
Library Director reviews prior Strategic Planning documentation and results, disseminates findings to Library Board and staff.
- II. **Perform external review and gather documentation**
Library Director gathers strategic plans and components (definitions/Mission/Vision/Values/Core Services/Action Plans etc) from Downers Grove government entities, partner organizations, libraries, etc., disseminates findings to Library Board and staff.
- III. **Define Values**
Library Board and staff groups review reports from I & II, reviews Mission and Vision, then complete guided Values exercise. Management team uses the results to craft Values statement for Library Board approval.
- IV. **Define Purpose**
Library Board and staff groups review reports from I & II, then complete guided Purpose exercise. Management team uses the results to craft Purpose statement for Library Board approval.
- V. **Identify Core Services**
Library Board and staff groups review reports from I & II, then complete guided Core Services exercise. Management team uses the results to craft Core Services statement for Library Board approval.
- VI. **Gather information on community issues**
Staff Strategic Planning Outreach Committee (SPOC) conduct interview-based inquiry process with community stakeholders. Library Director acts as facilitator of group-based inquiry process for general public input. SPOC members act as facilitators of group-based inquiry process for teen and tween input. SPOC and Library Director compile results, categorizes responses, and prioritizes by frequency of response, disseminating findings to Library Board and staff.
- VII. **Identify Strategic Focus areas**
Management team reviews reports from VI then completes guided Strategic Focus exercise. Management team uses the results to craft Strategic Focus for Library Board approval.
- VIII. **Create Action Plan**
Management team brainstorms goals and objectives that align with Values, Purpose, and Core Services and respond to Strategic Focus areas. Management team shapes results into Action Plan for Library Board approval.

DESCRIPTIVE PLANNING PROCESS

- I. Perform internal review and gather documentation
 - A. Library Director evaluates 2012 – 2014 and January – February 2015 work
 - B. Disseminate findings to Library Board and staff

- II. Perform external review and gather documentation
 - A. Research local news, regional economic reports, etc., to identify issues in the community
 - B. Review strategic, long range, and action plans of other Downers Grove entities for identified community issues
 - C. Gather examples and samples of mission, vision, values, purpose, and core services statements from libraries in other communities
 - D. Disseminate findings to Library Board and staff

- III. Create Values Statement
 - A. Staff reviews information and examples, including Mission and Vision, then brainstorms using flip charts and stickers to identify and prioritize values
 - B. Board reviews information and examples, including Mission and Vision, then brainstorms using flip charts and stickers to identify and prioritize values
 - C. Management team combines staff- and Library Board-prioritized Values and wordsmiths the results into a Values Statement
 - D. Library Board approval of Values statement (One Page Strategic Plan)

- IV. Create Purpose Statement
 - A. Library Board reviews information and examples then brainstorms using flip charts and stickers to identify and prioritize purpose
 - B. Management team wordsmiths the results into a Purpose statement
 - C. Library Board approval of Purpose statement (One Page Strategic Plan)

- V. Identify Core Services
 - A. Staff reviews information and examples then brainstorms using flip charts and stickers to identify and prioritize core services
 - B. Management team wordsmiths the results into a Core Services statement
 - C. Library Board approval of Core Services statement (One Page Strategic Plan)

- VI. Gather information on community issues
 - A. Conduct group-based inquiry process for general public
 1. Create question list, based on ALA-sponsored community engagement initiatives

2. Set and publicize open community forums for strategic planning
 3. Divide into small groups to answer interview questions, if necessary
 4. Compile results, categorizing responses, and prioritizing by frequency of response
- B. Conduct group-based inquiry process for teens and tweens
 1. Modify general public question list for use with teen and tweens
 2. Set dates and times for teen and tween forums with middle and high schools
 3. Conduct focus groups or use paper survey if necessary
 4. Compile results, categorizing responses, and prioritizing by frequency of response
 - C. Create staff Strategic Planning Outreach Committee (SPOC), using interested staff and those with connections to community organizations
 - D. Review/train SPOC members on interview techniques
 - E. Conduct interview-based inquiry process
 1. Identify community leaders and influencers
 2. Divide list among SPOC members for interview
 3. Each SPOC member schedules and conducts assigned interviews
 4. Wordsmith focus group questions for use in interviews
 5. Take notes during or immediately following the interview
 6. Compile answers in Excel spreadsheet or table, separating concepts/ideas into individual cells
 7. Compile results, categorizing responses, and prioritizing by frequency of response
 - F. Interviewers and group facilitators report results
 - G. Compile and summarize results
 - H. Disseminate findings to Library Board and staff

VII. Identify Strategic Focus areas

- A. Management team combines staff, Library Board, and community input and examples
- B. Management team brainstorms using flip charts and stickers to identify and prioritize Strategic Focus areas and wordsmiths the results into a Strategic Focus statement
- C. Board approval of Strategic Focus statement (One Page Strategic Plan)

VIII. Create Action Plan

- A. Management team uses Library Board-approved Values, Purpose, Core Services, and Strategic Focus to brainstorm goals and objectives under each Strategic Focus area, incorporating Core Services, using the flip chart and stickers method
- B. Management team shapes results into a three-year Action Plan with timeline for evaluation and revision and makes recommendation to Library Board

- C. Library Director combines One Page Strategic Plan and Action Plan into full Strategic Plan for the Library Board
- D. Library Board approval of Strategic Plan

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Deliverable</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>	<u>Start Date</u>	<u>Completion</u>
Gather documentation (2012-2014 and January-February 2015 work) and disseminate to Department Managers	Packet for Managers	Director	10/1/2016	10/15/2016
Management team evaluates 2012-2014 and January-February 2015 work, discuss process and deliverables, review key stakeholders list and Strategic Planning Outreach Committee appointments	Report to Board & Staff	Director	10/26/2016	11/2/2016
Gather documentation (Strategic Plan samples, purpose/values/mission, local issues) and disseminate to Department Managers	Packet for Board & Staff	Director	10/1/2016	10/15/2016
Appoint staff Strategic Planning Outreach Committee (SPOC)		Director	10/26/2016	10/26/2016
Discuss and reach consensus on key stakeholders interview process and deliverables, review key stakeholders list	Preliminary List of Key Stakeholders for Interview	Director & SPOC	10/15/2016	11/15/2016
Review/train SPOC members on interview techniques, review and assign key stakeholders list	Final List of Key Stakeholders for Interview	Director & SPOC	11/15/2016	12/31/2016
Conduct interview-based inquiry process - each SPOC member conducts interviews and reports back	Compiled Notes document	Director & SPOC	1/16/2017	2/28/2017
Set and advertise group-based inquiry events	PR pieces	PR Dept	12/1/2016	2/28/2017
Conduct group-based inquiry process - facilitators conduct and report back	Flip charts/stickers	Director & SPOC	2/1/2017	3/24/2017
SPOC reviews interview and group-based results for trends and themes	Summary Results document	Director & SPOC	3/1/2017	4/15/2017
Board participates in Values and Purpose statement exercises	Flip charts/stickers for each	Director & Board	2/22/2017	2/22/2017
Staff participates in Values, Purpose, and Core Services statement exercises	Flip charts/stickers for each	All Staff	1/20/2017	1/20/2017
Board participates in Strategic Focus statement exercises	Flip charts/stickers for each	Director & Board	3/22/2017	3/22/2017
Management team reviews results of Values, Purpose Core Services and Strategic Focus statement exercises for trends and themes to create draft	One Page Strategic Plan	Managers	4/1/2017	5/15/2017

Activity	Deliverable	Responsibility	Start Date	Completion
Board approves, or provides direction for changes to One Page Strategic Plan	One Page Strategic Plan	Board	5/24/2017	5/24/2017
Management team reviews One Page Strategic Plan and brainstorms goals, objectives, and actions to address Strategic Focus Areas	Flip charts/stickers for each	Managers	5/26/2017	6/21/2017
Review goals, objectives and actions	Action Plan	Managers	5/16/2017	6/16/2017
Strategic Plan is compiled and disseminated to Board - including One Page Strategic Plan, Action Plan, Timeline for Evaluation and Revision, and supporting documentation	Strategic Plan	Director	6/16/2017	6/23/2017
Board approves, or provides direction for changes to, Strategic Plan	Strategic Plan	Board	6/28/2017	7/26/2017
Management team reviews directions for changes to Strategic Plan (if necessary)	Strategic Plan	Managers	6/29/2017	7/19/2017
Strategic Plan is compiled and disseminated - Values, Purpose, Core Services and Strategic Focus statements, Action Plan and Timeline for Evaluation and Revision, with background documentation	Strategic Plan	Staff	7/26/2017	9/30/2017

DEFINITIONS FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Definition of Public Library

From **The Public Library Service** by International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO):

“A public library is an organization established, supported and funded by the community, either through local, regional or national government or through some other form of community organization. It provides access to knowledge, information and works of the imagination through a range of resources and services and is equally available to all members of the community regardless of race, nationality, age, gender, religion, language, disability, economic and employment status and educational attainment.”

Mission

A written declaration of an organization's core purpose and focus that normally remains unchanged over time. Properly crafted mission statements (1) serve as filters to separate what is important from what is not, (2) clearly state what will be delivered and how, and (3) communicate a sense of intended direction to the entire organization. It is a statement of how we will work toward achieving the vision.

A mission is different from a vision in that the former is the cause and the latter is the effect; a mission is something to be accomplished whereas a vision is something to be pursued for that accomplishment.

Values

Important and lasting beliefs or ideals shared by the members of a culture about what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable. Values have major influence on a person's behavior and attitude and serve as broad guidelines in all situations. They inform the way in which the organization delivers service. It is a statement of who we are.

Purpose

A statement about an organization, what influences it, its service philosophy, and plan for the future. Purpose and mission statements are often used interchangeably. It is a statement of why we exist.

Core Services

A list or description of services of a public library, including those in the purpose of the organization. It is a statement of what we do, what our main activities are.

Strategic Focus

A statement of the areas to be addressed to achieve the overall aim. It is a statement of the community impact we want to have—how we will apply core services, in keeping with our values and purpose, to meet community needs.

Action Plan

A document, primarily for internal use, that lists the activities, with measurable outcomes and target dates for completion, which address Strategic Focus areas. The purpose of an action plan is to clarify what resources are required to reach the goals contained within the Strategic Plan.

Goal

The benefit the community (or target population within the community) will receive because the library provides a specific Strategic Focus.

Objective

The way in which the library will measure its progress toward reaching a goal.

Action

Activities or steps to make progress toward objective.

ABOUT DOWNERS GROVE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Downers Grove Public Library was founded in 1891. The Ladies Library Association began a small reading room above the Farmers and Merchants Bank on the northeast corner of Main and Curtiss. In 1895, it held 600 – 700 volumes.

Following a successful referendum for a tax-supported library, a small frame building on the southwest corner of Main and Curtiss became the library's second home in 1911. Circulation in November of 1912 was 1,520.

With financial help from the Carnegie Foundation, a new brick building on the corner of Forest and Curtiss opened its doors in 1915, for a total cost of \$11,250.

To accommodate heavy usage by a booming population, a 1956 'wrap-around' addition expanded the Carnegie building. Again, use grew.

Following a 1975 referendum, the old library building was razed and the collection moved to temporary quarters just east of the library. In the fall of 1977, a new 40,000 square foot building opened. In 1983, the second floor was redesigned, and the Reference Department moved upstairs.

In 1996, residents approved an \$8.2 million referendum to reconstruct and update the library by adding an addition. The new 67,738 square foot building opened in February, 1999.

A Strategic Plan was announced in 2012 that included a building renovation. The \$2.4 million renovation plans, developed in 2013, called for more study spaces, upgraded technology, improved WiFi, enhanced display of items, and a café. The interior renovation was completed in 2014.

In 2016, the library's 125th anniversary year, 542,008 visitors checked out 1,036,494 items, the most checked out for a single year in the library's history.

2016 ANNUAL STATISTICS

Gate Count	2015	2016	Increase (Decrease)	
	510,711	542,008	31,297	6.1%

Circulation	2015	2016		
Adult	520,781	563,452		
Children	372,364	386,321		
Downloads	77,923	86,721		
Self renewal	19,914		Increase (Decrease)	
Total	990,982	1,036,494	45,512	4.6%

Circulation - By Item

	Books		Audio and Video		Misc.	
Adult	312,953	55.5%	224,479	39.8%	26,020	4.6%
Children	298,936	77.4%	75,320	19.5%	12,065	3.1%
Total	611,889	64.4%	299,799	31.6%	38,085	4.0%

Reference Questions

	2015	2016		
Adult	72,004	69,553		
Children	22,110	20,623	Increase (Decrease)	
Total	94,114	90,176	-3,938	-4.2%

Community Use of Meeting, Conference & Study Room (No. of meetings, not attendance)

	2015	2016	Increase (Decrease)	
	9671	12219	2,548	26.3%

Library Programs Offered

	2015	2016
Adult	220	234
Teen	66	99
Children	450	635
Total	736	968

Library Program Attendance

	2015	2016		
Adult	3,755	4,995		
Teen	2,553	2,860		
Children	30,716	34,620	Increase (Decrease)	
Total	37,024	42,475	5,451	14.7%

Computer User Sessions (Patron use for Internet, word processing, etc.)

	2015	2016		
Adult	88,738	52,650	Increase (Decrease)	
Children	21,512	14,270		
Total	110,250	66,920	-43,330	-39.3%

Computer Hours Used (Patron use for Internet, word processing, etc.)

	2015	2016		
Adult	59,181	55,158	Increase (Decrease)	
Children	9,281	6,625		
Total	68,462	61,783	-6,679	-9.8%

Database Usage

	2015	2016	Increase (Decrease)	
Searches	110,064	134,831	24,767	22.5%

Web Pageviews

	2,015	2,016	Increase (Decrease)	
	705,941	637,537	-68,404	-9.7%

Book Collection - Volumes Owned

	2015	2016	Increase (Decrease)	
Adult	144,558	134,813		
Children	83,424	80,223		
Total	227,982	215,036	-12,946	-5.7%

Audio and Video Collection - Volumes Owned

	2015	2016	Increase (Decrease)	
Adult	34,915	34,972		
Children	10,833	10,737		
Total	45,748	45,709	-39	-0.1%

Collection - All Items

	Books		Audio and Video		Misc.		Total
Adult	134,813	75.6%	34,972	19.6%	8,643	4.8%	178,428
Children	80,223	85.5%	10,737	11.4%	2,849	3.0%	93,809
Total	215,036	79.0%	45,709	16.8%	11,492	4.2%	272,237

Totals From Last Fiscal Year

		Increase (Decrease)
Adult	188,862	
Children	97,154	
Total	286,016	-13,779 -4.8%

2017 LIBRARY FUND REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES*						
	FY2015	FY2016	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019
	Actual	Budget	Estimate	Adopted	Projection	Projection
Beginning Fund Balance	1,926,966	2,105,535	2,105,535	2,076,021	677,400	688,513
Revenue						
Local Taxes	4,708,186	4,826,100	4,826,100	5,043,615	5,194,919.95	5,350,765
License & Permit Revenues	-	-	-	-	-	-
Intergovernmental Revenues	59,714	50,000	55,000	55,000	56,100	57,222
Sales	6,000	6,000	8,000	8,000	8,160	8,323
Fees, Charges & Fines	193,522	154,000	165,500	165,000	168,300	171,666
Grants	61,516	60,000	37,936	36,910	37,648	38,401
Interest & Claims	1,486	2,100	2,000	2,000	2,040	2,081
Contributions	66,040	10,000	8,000	5,000	7,500	10,000
Other Financial Resources	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Revenue	5,096,464	5,108,200	5,102,536	5,315,525	5,474,668	5,638,458
Expenses						
Personnel	3,405,809	3,618,952	3,571,951	3,691,920	3,765,758	3,841,073
Supplies	129,602	138,920	139,800	143,400	144,834	146,282
Professional Services	176,586	180,200	184,700	199,200	201,192	203,204
Other Contractual Services	287,168	352,000	317,600	349,425	352,919	356,448
Claims, Grants & Debt	35,370	52,600	43,000	40,500	40,905	41,314
Controlled Assets	62,217	46,000	46,000	63,500	64,135	64,776
Capital Assets	821,142	827,500	829,000	826,200	768,812	776,500
Other Financial Uses	-	-	-	1,400,000	125,000	175,000
Total Expenses	4,917,895	5,216,172	5,132,051	6,714,145	5,463,555	5,604,597
Net Change	178,569	(107,972)	(29,515)	(1,398,620)	11,113	33,861
Ending Fund Balance	2,105,535	1,997,563	2,076,021	677,400	688,513	722,374
<p>* As presented in the Village of Downers Grove 2017 Municipal Budget, including the terminology and format of that document. Projections are supplied by the Village of Downers Grove and do not reflect decisions or plans of the Library Board of Trustees. Other Financial Resources and Other Financial Uses lines shows transfers between funds.</p>						

2017 LIBRARY BUILDING AND EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT FUND						
REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES*						
	FY2015	FY2016	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019
	Actual	Budget	Estimate	Adopted	Projection	Projection
Beginning Fund Balance	-	-	-	-	800,000.00	925,000.00
Revenue						
Local Taxes	-	-	-	-	-	-
License & Permit Revenues	-	-	-	-	-	-
Intergovernmental Revenues	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sales	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fees, Charges & Fines	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grants	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interest & Claims	-	-	-	-	-	-
Contributions	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Financial Resources	-	-	-	1,400,000.00	125,000.00	175,000.00
Total Revenue	-	-	-	1,400,000.00	125,000.00	175,000.00
Expenses						
Personnel	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supplies	-	-	-	-	-	-
Professional Services	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Contractual Services	-	-	-	-	-	-
Claims, Grants & Debt	-	-	-	-	-	-
Controlled Assets	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Assets	-	-	-	600,000.00	-	60,000.00
Other Financial Uses	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Expenses	-	-	-	600,000.00	-	60,000.00
Net Change	-	-	-	800,000.00	125,000.00	115,000.00
Ending Fund Balance	-	-	-	800,000.00	925,000.00	1,040,000.00
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2017 FUND BALANCE SHEET*						
OPERATING FUND BALANCE	FY2015	FY2016	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019
	Actual	Budget	Estimate	Adopted	Projection	Projection
BEGINNING BALANCE	\$ 1,926,967	\$ 2,105,535	\$ 2,105,535	\$ 2,076,021	\$ 677,401	\$ 563,684
REVENUES	\$ 5,104,036	\$ 5,108,200	\$ 5,102,536	\$ 5,315,525	\$ 5,474,668	\$ 5,638,458
EXPENSES	\$ 4,978,268	\$ 5,215,633	\$ 5,132,051	\$ 5,314,145	\$ 5,463,385	\$ 5,604,257
TRANSFER TO LIBRARY BUILDING & EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT FUND	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,400,000	\$ 125,000	\$ 175,000
ENDING BALANCE	\$ 2,105,535	\$ 1,998,102	\$ 2,076,021	\$ 677,401	\$ 563,684	\$ 422,885
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2017 REVENUE SHEET*							
		FY2015	FY2016	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019
	REVENUE BY SOURCE	Actual	Budget	Estimate	Adopted	Projection	Projection
4101	Current Property Tax	4,707,991	4,826,000	4,826,000	5,043,515	5,194,820	5,350,665
4109	Prior Year Property Tax	195	100	100	100	100	100
4313	Personal Property Replacement Tax	59,714	50,000	55,000	55,000	56,100	57,222
4410	Sale of Materials	9,719	6,000	8,000	8,000	8,160	8,323
4502	Charges for Services (copy & printing)	55,289	25,000	45,000	45,000	45,900	46,818
4509	Fees For Non-Residents	18,990	16,000	16,000	16,000	16,320	16,646
4571	Rental Fees	4,355	3,000	4,500	4,000	4,080	4,162
4581	Fines	89,447	82,000	85,000	85,000	86,700	88,434
4590	Cost Recovered for Services	21,722	28,000	15,000	15,000	15,300	15,606
4610	Federal, Operational Grants	-	-	-	-	-	-
4620	State, Operational Grants	61,516	60,000	37,936	36,910	37,648	38,401
4711	Investment Income	1,486	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,040	2,081
4712	Investment Income - Property Taxes	-	100	-	-	-	-
4820	Contributions	66,040	10,000	8,000	5,000	7,500	10,000
	TOTAL 805.90	5,096,464	5,108,200	5,102,536	5,315,525	5,474,668	5,638,458

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2017 BUDGET EXPENDITURE SHEET*							
	TOTAL LIBRARY 805.90.XXX.XXXX	2015	2016	2016	2017	2018	2019
	EXPENDITURES	ACTUAL	BUDGET	ESTIMATE	REVISED	PROJECTION	PROJECTION
5101	Salaries, Exempt	1,502,049.30	1,592,865.00	1,564,225.50	1,461,342.50	1,490,569.35	1,520,380.74
5104	Bonus	2,500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-
5111	Salaries, Non-Exempt	96,027.00	78,660.00	79,400.00	228,985.00	233,564.70	238,235.99
5119	Part-Time Employee Wages	1,115,418.17	1,186,110.00	1,180,045.00	1,174,035.00	1,197,515.70	1,221,466.01
5131	IMRF Pension Contributions	261,453.03	284,625.00	256,590.00	274,700.00	280,194.00	285,797.88
5133	Medicare Contributions	38,835.40	44,505.00	41,280.00	41,533.00	42,363.66	43,210.93
5134	Social Security Contributions	165,409.66	185,782.50	175,945.00	177,590.00	181,141.80	184,764.64
5190	Life Insurance	870.00	2,070.00	945.00	972.00	991.44	1,011.27
5191	Health Insurance	198,401.81	216,700.00	246,510.00	300,900.00	306,918.00	313,056.36
5195	Optical Insurance	2,085.49	3,105.00	1,855.00	1,989.00	2,028.78	2,069.36
5197	Dental Insurance	22,759.34	24,529.50	25,155.00	29,873.00	30,470.46	31,079.87
5210	Supplies	85,509.39	92,920.00	91,600.00	95,400.00	96,354.00	97,317.54
5251	Maintenance Supplies	16,576.21	16,000.00	16,500.00	18,000.00	18,180.00	18,361.80
5280	Small tools & equipment	27,516.63	30,000.00	31,700.00	30,000.00	30,300.00	30,603.00
5302	Dues and Memberships	5,297.50	4,800.00	4,800.00	4,800.00	4,848.00	4,896.48
5303	Seminars, Conferences & Meetings	20,304.53	30,400.00	28,100.00	30,400.00	30,704.00	31,011.04
5308	Recognition Programs-Staff	828.78	4,000.00	2,500.00	4,000.00	4,040.00	4,080.40
5315	Professional Services	42,110.50	40,000.00	52,000.00	62,000.00	62,620.00	63,246.20
5322	Personnel Recruitment	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-
5323	Special Legal	5,033.82	6,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,030.00	3,060.30
5346	Data Processing Services	102,910.97	95,000.00	94,300.00	95,000.00	95,950.00	96,909.50
5380	Printing Services	15,465.35	17,000.00	16,600.00	16,700.00	16,867.00	17,035.67
5391	Telephone	19,244.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,200.00	20,402.00
5392	Postage	18,000.00	26,000.00	26,000.00	26,725.00	26,992.25	27,262.17
5407	Advertising & Public Relations	18,688.14	20,000.00	20,000.00	20,500.00	20,705.00	20,912.05
5420	Insurance - other policies	45,397.00	44,000.00	44,000.00	46,000.00	46,460.00	46,924.60
5430	Building Maintenance Services	78,146.91	94,000.00	90,000.00	94,000.00	94,940.00	95,889.40
5450	Cleaning Services	69,822.00	88,000.00	70,000.00	88,000.00	88,880.00	89,768.80
5461	Utilities	17,102.04	28,000.00	22,000.00	26,000.00	26,260.00	26,522.60
5470	Other Equipment Repair & Maint.	5,302.34	15,000.00	9,000.00	11,500.00	11,615.00	11,731.15
5481	Rentals	27,473.96	15,000.00	20,500.00	20,500.00	20,705.00	20,912.05
5620	Recoverables	1,291.85	3,600.00	2,500.00	3,000.00	3,030.00	3,060.30
5630	Contingency	6,604.47	20,000.00	20,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00
5690	Unemployment Compensation	0.00	14,000.00	0.00	7,000.00	7,000.00	7,000.00
5730	Intangibles & artwork	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-	-
5770	Capital equipment, less than \$20,000	62,217.44	46,000.00	46,000.00	63,500.00	64,135.00	64,776.35
5851	Electronic Resources	206,318.96	213,000.00	215,000.00	220,000.00	222,200.00	224,422.00
5852	Print materials	303,853.93	333,000.00	332,000.00	343,000.00	346,430.00	349,894.30
5853	AV materials	134,353.22	144,000.00	143,000.00	147,000.00	148,470.00	149,954.70
5870	Capital equipment +\$20,000	144,272.29	100,000.00	100,000.00	65,000.00	-	-
5880	Intangible Assets (software)	32,343.30	37,500.00	39,000.00	51,200.00	51,712.00	52,229.12
	Other Financial Uses (Transfer to Library Building and Equipment Replacement Fund)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	125,000.00	175,000.00
	TOTAL 805.90	4,917,894.73	5,216,172.00	5,132,050.50	5,314,144.50	5,463,385.14	5,604,256.57

* As presented in the Village of Downers Grove 2017 Municipal Budget, including the terminology and format of that document. Projections are supplied by the Village of Downers Grove and do not reflect decisions or plans of the Library Board of Trustees. Other Financial Resources and Other Financial Uses lines shows transfers between funds.

STANDARDS REVIEW

Serving Our Public: Standards for Illinois Public Libraries 3.0 provides four benchmark levels for public libraries, with standards banded by population size. The benchmarks are: Minimum, Growing, Established, and Advanced. The Downers Grove Public Library falls on the cusp of the population bands: 25,000 to 49,999 and 50,000 to 74,999. Population projects for Downers Grove all project increases, though the amount of that growth varies by source. The official census population is 49,213. Quantifiable standards are: Hours of Operation, Staffing Levels, and Collection Size.

In Hours of Operation, the standards are:

		Minimum	Growing	Established	Advanced
Current	49,213	64	68	72	72
Projected	50,000	72	72	72	75
25-49K Minimum and Growing include Sundays Sept-May.					
All other levels include Sundays year round.					

The Downers Grove Public Library is open 72 hours per week, including Sundays year round.

For Staffing Levels, the standards calculations are:

		Minimum	Growing	Established	Advanced
Current	49,213	30.3	42.6	54.9	67.2
Projected	50,000	42.5	55.0	67.5	80.0

The Downers Grove Public Library currently has 62.6 FTE.

For Collection Size, the standards calculations are:

		Minimum	Growing	Established	Advanced
Current	49,213	94,607	168,426	205,336	328,368
Projected	50,000	135,000	210,000	235,000	347,500

At the end of 2016, the Downers Grove Public Library had 272,237 items in its collection.

The Downers Grove Public Library meets the Established level for libraries 50,000 – 74,999 in Hours of Operation and exceeds Established level for Collection Size, but falls between Growing and Established for Staffing Levels.

COMMUNITY INPUT

The library employed both individual and group-based inquiry methods to gather community input. Compilations of the input that was received appear in the appendices to this report.

Library Director Julie Milavec facilitated six open, public focus group sessions. Sessions were advertised in the library's *Discoveries* newsletter, on social media, and in press releases to the local news media. Using six questions derived from two recent American Library Association community engagement initiatives, the Aspen Institute's Re-Envisioning Your Public Library and the Harwood Institute's Libraries Transforming Communities, attendees provided input on the needs of the Downers Grove community. In addition to the points recorded by the facilitator at each focus group, a staff member was present to take notes on the discussion.

An online survey version of the focus group questions was available on the library website for six weeks, coinciding with the focus group schedule. All publicity for the public focus groups included the link to the online survey. The online survey remained "live" for an additional two weeks due to coverage from a local online newspaper, which included the link to the survey.

The Strategic Plan Outreach Committee (SPOC) consisted of 12 staff members who volunteered to conduct interviews of key stakeholders representing groups and organizations throughout the Downers Grove Community. Beginning with a list of community contacts developed in 2015, the committee updated and expanded the list, then winnowed it back down to just over 60 key stakeholders to be interviewed. The list was divided among the committee members. The committee modified the focus group questions to fit the interview setting. Each conducted interviews with their assigned stakeholders and reported back. After all interviews were completed, committee members worked in pairs to compile and summarize the responses to interview questions.

Strategic Plan Outreach Committee members noticed that kids were conspicuously absent from the focus groups and interviews, while target populations such as parents, business people, seniors, immigrants etc. were represented. To ensure inclusion of teens and tweens in the community input process, two facilitators from SPOC, who worked closely with the middle and high schools, volunteered to conduct targeted focus groups. They reworded public focus group questions to become more 'teen friendly' and reduced the total number of questions to four, due to time constraints. The focus groups were held at Herrick Middle School, O'Neill Middle School, Downers Grove North High School, and Downers Grove South High School. The format was similar to the public focus groups for middle schools and pen-and-paper surveys for the high schools. Facilitators condensed responses to identify overall themes.

COMMUNITY INPUT OVERVIEW

The Downers Grove Public Library's Strategic Planning process included four types of opportunities for community input: public focus groups, online survey, key stakeholder interviews, and targeted focus groups for teens and tweens. This is an overview of the themes that emerged in the responses received, followed by summaries of input from each type of community opportunity. Community input focused on community needs, allowing library staff and Library Board of Trustees to determine how to meet those needs with library services.

Each group provided input in the areas of:

1. Positive impressions of the community
2. Issues or concerns facing the community
3. What could be done to make a difference in the community on those issues and concerns?

1. Positive impressions of the community

Residents of Downers Grove take pride in their community and really enjoy living here. They describe the community as friendly, unpretentious, well-educated, having a sense of community pride, and a small-town feel despite its larger population. People are engaged and get involved in the community. While similar to other suburbs, what sets Downers Grove apart is its transportation options, historic character, and vibrant walkable downtown. Its family-friendly, safe, hometown feel draw those who grew up here back to raise their kids, contributing to the sense of history. Comments noted the great public services available to them. With some rivalry between North and South High Schools as well as the train tracks dividing the town, it sometimes lacks a cohesive identity. Overall, Downers Grove is a friendly and caring community.

2. Issues or concerns facing the community

Five major themes stood out in response to this question (listed in order from most responses to least):

Infrastructure and the Village: Concerns over the effects of real estate development decisions and treatment of local businesses in the downtown area by the Village were expressed. One concern is that businesses are struggling to abide by Village rules and, as a result, will leave Downers Grove, leaving vacant storefronts behind (downtown as well as retail corridors of Downers Grove). Balance came up repeatedly, especially in connection to downtown, local businesses and residential development: old vs. new, economic growth vs. community needs, preservation vs. progress, and property rights vs. neighborhood concerns. Infrastructure needs included public parking in downtown, stormwater management, sewers, and sidewalks. The lack of parking in the downtown area with residents, commuters, and businesses competing for parking space is a great concern. Many believe the issue is exacerbated by the condominium construction and will continue to worsen once new residents start moving into the condominiums.

Further, there is concern that the cost of living is too high and prohibitive to fostering socio-economic diversity as discussed in a later point.

Social Services: A sizeable amount of responses related to the need for, access to, and awareness of services for underserved and marginalized populations, including (but not limited to) the elderly, homeless, developmentally disabled, those suffering from mental illnesses, low-income households, and those seeking to escape domestic violence. Individuals tend to be unaware services exist and do not have the skills or equipment needed to seek them out. Increases in both the senior population and the number of individuals with mental health issues particularly highlighted the need for social services, as well as concern over the future of funding for relevant programs. There is a dichotomy in the way in which the homeless (or those perceived as homeless) are received in public spaces: some support their rights to be there and others complain about their presence in parks, pavilions, library, etc.

Education and Lifelong Learning: Challenges related to education and lifelong learning for both student and adult populations, including the need for a well-supported school district and a more thorough understanding of the curriculum and curriculum changes by parents. Students need help navigating college prep and balancing extracurricular activities, as the college application process is more competitive. There is also a feeling that students and families need opportunities outside of school for learning in the areas of science, technology, engineering, art, music, and mathematics. Special education students are in need of opportunities to feel included in the community outside of school and after they graduate. For adults (including seniors) and families, interviewees commented on the lack of opportunities in arts and music, or at least at a lack of funding or support for it. Adult education is also needed in technology and information literacy, particularly for seniors and groups with limited access to technology.

Need for Diversity: The need for both cultural and socioeconomic diversity within Downers Grove was recognized, along with acknowledgement that saying you want diversity is easier than actively incorporating it into your community. Some perceive a feeling of superiority over more diverse neighboring communities, such as Bolingbrook and Woodridge, which potentially creates a sense of exclusion. Within Downers Grove, there is a sense of a division between the north and south sides of town. As a result, there is concern that underserved populations on the south side of town do not have access to as many services or resources as the more privileged north side. Supporting and welcoming diverse populations (racial, economic, cultural, etc.) is necessary. Lack of affordable housing is an ongoing concern.

Connectivity: Organizations and community members both desire to be more connected within their communities. For organizations, there is a desire for better communication between different groups and/or village agencies. Organizations would like to be more aware of what services fellow organizations are offering in order to form partnerships and avoid duplication. Community members are also interested in being more connected and involved in their community. There is a desire to give and

volunteer, but also a lack of knowledge about various organizations or opportunities. Some citizens also now want to be more involved in their communities in an activist capacity, but are not sure how or where they can do this. Many Downers Grove organizations are struggling to find more people, especially younger people, to volunteer and eventually take over leadership of the group. At the same time, community members, especially families with children, expressed feelings of being overscheduled, preferring one-time group volunteer opportunities. A strong sentiment was voiced that a community-wide information clearinghouse and/or unified marketing and promotion efforts for events, programs, and local organizations is needed.

Though not as frequently expressed as the topics above, taxes were noted as concerns by each group, including the new federal administration; uncertainty in Springfield / lack of state budget; possibility of tax freezes; and school funding under the uncertainty in the State of Illinois.

3. What could be done to make a difference in the community on those issues and concerns?

Responses to what would make a difference centered on partnerships and civic engagement, especially in the areas of marketing, communications, and programming. A vibrant downtown with a variety of arts and cultural events, supported by integrated public relations, promotion, and marketing to help get the word out about what's available would benefit all community partners. Partnerships among governments and non-profits already making a difference in Downers Grove could extend their reach. Program suggestions included support of diversity and inclusion through civil discourse and community conversations with opportunities to learn from one another. Parking improvements were also mentioned as a possible partnership opportunity. Improved bicycle access and local public transportation could help alleviate the parking problem. Specific library programming suggestions included green initiatives and sustainability, content creation including the arts, STEM, global experiences including travel and language learning, and opportunities to display talents such as open mic nights and gallery exhibitions for art created at the Library.



**DOWNERS GROVE
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

Values

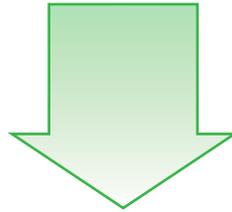
What we believe in

- Lifelong learning
- Equal access for all
- Fostering relationships
- Responsibility
- Freedom to seek, receive, and share information

Purpose

Why we are here

The Downers Grove Public Library is a place for everyone to discover, grow, play, and learn.



Core Services

What we do

- Develop and maintain an up-to-date collection
- Provide instruction, guidance, and access to digital and physical sources
- Present a variety of programs for all ages
- Deliver stellar customer service
- Offer spaces for meeting, studying, creativity, and fun



Strategic Focus

How we focus our values and purpose to deliver core services

EXCEL

in delivering service and managing community resources

ENGAGE

with our community and the world

EMPOWER

individuals at all ages and stages of life

EVOLVE

with our changing community

ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan lists the goals, objectives, and actions, with measurable outcomes and target dates for completion, which address Strategic Focus areas. It clarifies what resources are required to reach the goals of the Strategic Plan. The Action Plan is primarily an internal document to guide the library's planning, budgeting, and delivery of services and resources.

Strategic Focus: Excel in delivering service and managing resources

Goal: We deliver stellar service guided by our Customer Service Promise.

Objective: To provide library-wide customer service excellence

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Each staff member attends one customer service training session (other than In-Service Day)	Management Team	Annual
Create a Service Excellence Team to support and improve upon our stellar service	Circulation Manager	December 2017
Provide In-Service Day customer service training on working with diverse populations	Assistant Library Director	January 2018

Goal: We cultivate dynamic and diverse collections.

Objective: To utilize best practices in collection development and management

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Investigate tools available to ensure most up-to-date are being used	Adult and Teen Services Manager	Annual
Utilize SWAN reports to inform decision making	Assistant Library Director	Annual

Objective: To provide a robust array of resources and services available 24/7

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Evaluate current digital resources	Adult and Teen Services Manager	Annual
Evaluate website content and effectiveness	Public Relations Manager	Annual
Explore use of online tutorials about how to use resources and services	Information Technology Manager and Adult and Teen Service Manager	December 2018

Objective: To provide special collections that reflect the diverse needs and interests of the Downers Grove community

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Continue developing, digitizing, and preserving Local History collection	Adult and Teen Services Manager	Annual
Explore and offer technology equipment for check out	Information Technology Manager	Annual
Create a circulating collection of STEM materials	Children's Services Manager	December 2018
Explore creating a "Rack at the Tracks" for commuters	Circulation Manager	December 2018
Explore Human Library concept including different topics and community members	Circulation Manager	December 2019

Goal: We provide value to the community for the funds entrusted to us.

Objective: To be financially responsible and resourceful in purchasing decisions

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Actively seek opportunities for group purchasing, new tools, lower-cost vendors, etc.	Management Team	Annual
Solicit local vendors to respond to bids and request for proposals, as practical	Facilities Manager	Annual

Objective: To seek out alternate funding sources

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Regularly investigate grant opportunities available	Management Team	Annual
Support the Friends of the Library and Foundation in their fundraising activities	Library Director	Annual

Goal: We remove barriers to service.

Objective: To improve physical access to services

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Explore alternatives to make entrances accessible from handicap parking spaces in snow	Facilities Manager	December 2018
Review ADA accessibility of Forest Avenue parking lot	Facilities Manager	June 2018
Request that the Village designate additional handicap parking spaces on Curtiss Street	Library Director	December 2018
Consider moving or removing security gates	Circulation Manager	December 2018
Work with stakeholder organizations to identify potential solutions to parking issues and advocate for implementation	Library Director	December 2019

Objective: To adjust policies and procedures to improve access to services

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Review effects of online booking of meeting spaces	Public Relations Manager	Annual
Investigate the effects of eliminating fines	Circulation Manager	December 2019
Create policy and procedures for shelter resident cards	Circulation Manager	September 2017
Work with SWAN to implement an online library card application process	Circulation Manager	December 2019
Update Policy Manual	Library Director	December 2018
Create a process for teens to get a library card without a parent present	Circulation Manager	June 2018

Strategic Focus: Engage with our community and the world

Goal: We partner with local organizations and government entities.

Objective: To coordinate efforts that support each organization's programs and services

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Begin Downers Grove organizations roundtable to make connections and share information	Public Relations Manager	December 2018
Investigate allocation of outreach tasks and duties	Assistant Library Director	December 2018
Support community organizations in finding volunteers	Public Relations Manager	Annual
Investigate a Village-wide information clearinghouse for volunteer opportunities and assistance needs	Public Relations Manager	December 2019

Goal: We encourage civic engagement.

Objective: To support community connections through programming

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Partner with local organizations to offer four additional civic engagement programs per year	Adult Program Coordinator	October 2018
Create a series of programs for residents to discuss local issues, including a mechanism to identify topics	Public Relations Manager	June 2019

Goal: We communicate the library's value to the community.

Objective: To raise awareness of the library

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Create and implement a Communications Plan, concentrated on strategic focus areas	Public Relations Manager	December 2018

Goal: Staff actively seek opportunities to share knowledge and expertise.

Objective: To support staff in becoming leaders in the library profession

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Submit at least one conference program proposal or have at least one staff member included in a conference proposal per year	Management Team	Annual
Actively participate in RAILS, SWAN, and other local professional organizations' committees and advisory groups	Management Team	Annual
Support participation in professional committees on the state and national level	Management Team and Administration	Annual

Strategic Focus: Empower individuals at all ages and stages of life

Goal: The library is the center of lifelong learning in Downers Grove.

Objective: To provide high-impact learning resources, technologies, and services for all ages

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Support small business-focused learning opportunities	Adult and Teen Services Manager	Annual
Connect people to resources that develop job skills	Adult and Teen Services Manager	Annual
Provide support for book clubs through book club kits	Adult and Teen Services Manager	June 2018
Expand services to seniors and senior centers to address their unmet needs	Adult and Teen Services Manager	June 2019
Create opportunities to connect homeschool families to resources	Children's Services Manager	December 2019
Partner with other organizations on their lifelong learning initiatives	Public Relations Manager	December 2020

Goal: We support the literacies needed to navigate today's world.

Objective: To offer digital literacy learning opportunities

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Explore dedicated staffing for the Media Lab	Information Technology Manager	June 2018
Create a Media Lab service plan	Information Technology Manager	December 2018
Develop an array of digital literacy classes and curricula	Information Technology Manager	December 2019

Objective: To support adult literacy

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Coordinate ESL and adult literacy services with local agencies	Adult and Teen Services Manager	Annual
Explore programs and resources to support literacy in areas such as health, finance, and life skills	Programming Team	Annual

Objective: To prepare the children of Downers Grove with the skills needed for school readiness

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Train all Children's Services staff on Every Child Ready to Read and early literacy research	Children's Services Manager	June 2019
Partner with local hospitals to provide early literacy information to parents of new babies	Children's Services Manager	December 2019
Implement a 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten initiative	Children's Services Manager	January 2018
Update established early childhood programming to more visibly incorporate early literacy skills development	Children's Services Manager	December 2019
Offer early literacy education for parents	Children's Services Manager	June 2020

Goal: We connect people to the arts and cultural experiences.

Objective: To enrich the library experience through art displays and collections

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Offer tours of the library art collection, virtually and in-person	Public Relations Manager	March 2019
Provide gallery space and performance opportunities to showcase artistic and cultural creations	Public Relations Manager	Annual
Preserve and protect the art collection	Library Director	December 2020

Objective: To support cultural programs that embrace equity, diversity, and inclusion

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Explore programs to connect residents to diverse cultures and languages	Programming Team	Annual
Develop relationships with key partners to support arts and culture	Public Relations Manager and Programming Team	June 2019

Objective: To respond to pop culture trends

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Offer timely programs, resources, and services	Management Team and Programming Team	Annual

Goal: We provide staff with opportunities to learn and grow.

Objective: To invest in staff training and professional development

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Offer continuing education opportunities for all staff	Management Team	Annual
Expand use of staff expertise for in-house training	Management Team	Annual
Expand professional skills using cross-departmental teams	Management Team	Annual
Create library-wide training program for supervisors	Assistant Library Director	December 2018
Cross-train staff to maximize staffing resources	Management Team	December 2018

Strategic Focus: Evolve with our changing community

Goal: We maintain an accessible and welcoming building.

Objective: To provide equipment and furnishings that support the library's goals and activities

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Provide comfortable, durable, and functional furniture that supports use of technology	Facilities Manager	Annual
Complete updating restrooms	Facilities Manager	December 2018
Upgrade lighting in public areas	Facilities Manager	December 2020
Provide additional outdoor seating	Facilities Manager	December 2019
Investigate noise abatement solutions for Circulation Services workroom and Teen Central	Facilities Manager	June 2018
Evaluate ADA accessibility throughout the building	Facilities Manager	Annual

Objective: To proactively plan for the library's future

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Develop and maintain a Long-Range Budget Plan	Library Director	Annual
Implement the recommendations of the Facilities Assessment	Library Director	Annual
Assess and address staffing needs	Library Director	June 2018

Goal: We seek and respond to community feedback.

Objective: To provide opportunities for residents and library users to give feedback

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Continue to use and report on How Did We Do? forms	Assistant Library Director	Annual
Use surveys to gather feedback	Management Team	Annual
Record issues to identify focus areas for Service Excellence Team	Management Team	Annual
Seek feedback from target populations	Management Team	Annual

Goal: Staff actively seek innovative ideas for library services and resources.

Objective: To allow staff time and resources to generate and investigate ideas

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Conduct management team brainstorming sessions	Library Director	Annual
Create cross-departmental Innovation Team	Assistant Library Director	June 2018

Goal: We reflect the diversity of our community.

Objective: To be inclusive in providing service to the community

Action	Point Person (Department)	Target Date
Provide regular patron service training for all staff in equity, diversity, and inclusion	Management Team	Annual
Incorporate inclusive practices into library services	Management Team	Annual
Create a diversity strategy for recruiting that reflects the community	Library Director	December 2019

TIMELINE FOR EVALUATION AND REVISION

Regular evaluation of progress and updates to this Strategic Plan are essential to providing responsive service that continues to meet the needs of the community, as the library's environment changes. This Strategic Plan, along with the Facilities Assessment and Sustainability Plan and Long Range Budget, provide a framework for library service and budgeting needs. Therefore, the timeline for evaluation and revision is tied to the annual budgeting process.

Date	Task	Person(s) Responsible
June	Review of objectives for current year and prepare report for Board of Trustees, brainstorm Actions, and/or changes for next year	Management Team
July, prior to Board Meeting	Provide written report to the Board of Trustees on Actions, progress toward strategic plan goals, and recommend Actions and/or changes for next year	Library Director
July Board Meeting	Request clarifications, additional information or changes	Board of Trustees
August, prior to Board Meeting	Provide clarifications, additional information, and/or changes for inclusion in budget	Management Team and Library Director
August/September	Approve budget and any Strategic Plan Action updates for upcoming year	Board of Trustees

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to all individuals and organizations that participated in the strategic planning process, especially participants in the community input process. This planning process relied on your help to ensure it reflects the needs of the Downers Grove community.

Thank you also to the Board of Trustees, Library Management Team, and Strategic Plan Outreach Committee.

Downers Grove Public Library Board of Trustees

Wendee Greene, President
David Humphreys, Secretary
Edward Earl
Susan Eblen
Jonathan Graber
Arthur Jaros

Downers Grove Public Library Management Team

Julie Milavec, Library Director
Sue O'Brien, Assistant Director for Support Services
Bonnie Reid, Assistant Director for Public Services
Melissa Fischer, Public Relations Manager
Jen Fredericks, Technical Services Manager
Christine Lees, Circulation Services Manager
Paul Regis, Information Technology Manager
Allyson Renell, Children's Services Manager
Nicole Wilhelms, Adult and Teen Services Manager
Katelyn Vabalaitis, Executive Assistant

Strategic Plan Outreach Committee

Julie Milavec, Library Director
Sue O'Brien, Assistant Director for Support Services
Bonnie Reid, Assistant Director for Public Services
Melissa Fischer, Public Relations Manager
Allyson Renell, Children's Services Manager
Nicole Wilhelms, Adult and Teen Services Manager
Mieko Fujiura-Landers, Adult and Teen Services Librarian
Fred LeBaron, Adult and Teen Services Librarian
Erin Linsenmeyer, Children's Services Librarian
Joy Matteson, Adult and Teen Services Librarian
Karen Neal, Adult and Teen Services Librarian
Lynette Pitrak, Teen Services Coordinator

APPENDIX A

PUBLIC FOCUS GROUPS

When you think about our community, what are your most positive and powerful impressions?

Friendly, unpretentious, well-educated, and with a sense of community pride, the people of Downers Grove enjoy a wide variety of interests and events. While similar to other suburbs, what sets Downers Grove apart is its transportation options and vibrant walkable downtown. Its family-friendly, safe, hometown feel draw those who grew up here back to raise their kids, contributing to the sense of history. With some rivalry between North and South high schools as well as the train tracks dividing the town, it sometimes lacks a cohesive identity.

- Downtown, 3 – 4 square mile area (2)
 - Meeting area, shopping, some schools, events
 - Definitely activity in some other areas too, but this is more of the "town"
 - The library geographically is smack dab in the center of that
 - Walkable
 - Manageable
 - Vibrant
- Train
 - Three stops nearby, and geographically, the library is right there
 - Then you have to get across the tracks! Sometimes, you want to avoid that
 - Also a stopper for traffic
 - Three stations to get to Chicago, expressways
 - Love being able to take train into Chicago
- Commuters
 - Availability of transportation options
 - Train is downtown and well-located.
- Downers Grove doesn't stand apart from other towns/communities compared to other areas
- Suburban location
 - Diversity of real estate options
 - Starter homes to expensive options
 - Unlike surrounding communities
- Three main areas/communities within
 - Not much interaction between the three, what you feel about DG may be affected by where you live
 - Southern part (those think more of 75th as the main DG area)
 - Northern part (those think more of Butterfield as the main DG area)
 - Central part (those think of downtown as the main DG area)
 - I end up doing some things in surrounding communities because those are closer, more convenient
 - Sometimes divisive

- North/South – some rivalry among areas
- Community feeling beyond the North/South
- Not as diverse – more homogenous – than we thought
- Organizations/groups
 - Many clubs and service organizations
- Safe, stable
- Friendly (3)
- Library
 - His introduction to the downtown area
 - Operates as leader in region/system
 - Central/vital to this community
 - Dependent on library; touched that you are serving “have nots” with hot spots
 - Vibrancy
- Schools, very good (2)
 - They are why people move here!
- Family friendly
- Families (2)
- Sense of community, focus on community
- Community pride, Main street, community feeling as draw to live here
- Hometown feel, calm
- Love being able to drive down the street and smell grass and find parking
- Home: neighborhood and schools
- Seniors
- Variety among residents
 - Long term (2)
 - Returning after growing up here to raise their families (2)
 - New
 - Place where people stay
- Old and new side-by-side
 - Mixed ages in residential/retail, etc
 - Adds to vibrancy
 - Lamborghini dealership next to failing strip mall example
- Long history as a community (3)
- Established – big trees, etc.
- Understated place, unpretentious (though this may be changing)
 - Not a glitzy town
 - Not looking to move ahead
- Events that bring folks to the downtown
 - DG isn’t pigeonholed into one annual event (example given: Sycamore Scarecrow Festival)
 - Seasonal events held year-round
 - Love Tivoli After Hours Film Society

- Park District
- Intellectual vibe, well-educated
- Wide variety of interests/issues
- Moved here in 2013, things are different here than in DC (where lived before)
- Regulations that safeguard rights and property of all

What are the most important issues in our community today?

Parking and traffic are the most frequently discussed issues. Balance came up repeatedly, especially in connection to downtown, local businesses, and residential development: old vs. new, economic growth vs. community needs, preservation vs. progress, property rights vs. neighborhood concerns. A strong sentiment was voiced that a community-wide information clearinghouse and/or unified marketing and promotion efforts for events, services, and local organizations is needed. Taxes are of concern, particularly for the schools with the uncertainty in the State of Illinois.

- Parking in downtown area
 - Keep increasing demand for more parking with residential development
 - Busy library impacts ability to park
- Parking (3)
 - Hand-in-hand with traffic
 - Especially affects library
 - Not keeping up with events/growth in demand
 - Restrictions limit when people can come/how often they want to come
 - Village needs to help
- Traffic
 - One way streets are confusing
 - People avoid downtown due to this
 - Added congestion due to development
 - Especially with new construction of condos/residential
- Definition of what downtown is
 - new construction of condos
 - business turnover for downtown
 - Is it supposed to be walkable shopping? Is it a destination?
- Have a lot of restaurants
 - one person felt too many
 - another felt like not enough variety
 - lack of quick food in downtown area for people who want something fast
- Anchor for the downtown is library
 - Used to be Walgreens when on Curtiss/Main
 - Library should be better supported by infrastructure and local government
 - Should be looking for additional parking not taking away parking by building on it
- Balance in downtown

- o Parking
 - o Residential
 - o Retail
 - o Restaurants
- Downtown area
 - o Vacancies
 - o Lack of growth compared to other communities
 - o Keep downtown alive; love the developments
 - o Lack of access to grocery/food
- Limited space in downtown
 - o Not a lot of space for retail
 - o Not a lot of space for extra restaurants
 - o Some community members might want a different feel
- Aesthetics of downtown
 - o Some ugly buildings downtown
 - o Impacts choice to live here
 - o Trees/environment
- Will residential development change the character of downtown?
- Can we have a retail base (anchor stores in the downtown area) given the space/geographic footprint?
 - o Don't want to move away from the hometown feel
 - o Push to become more like other communities (ie Naperville, Hinsdale) with big-name retail downtown
- Don't turn into massive developments like Naperville or Elmhurst
- Residential/condo development concern (2)
 - o Not all existing are occupied and already building more
 - o Setting up for failure?
 - o makes the traffic and the parking problematic
- Residential/condo development could be good for the area (2)
 - o Brings in different people
 - o Variety of housing stock
 - o Attracts new restaurants/retail
- Streets
 - o They seem in bad shape, patches over patches
 - o Near South High School particularly bad
- Balance of economic growth vs. community needs
 - o All branches of government working together on their focuses
 - o Majority of budget by sales tax vs. increase in taxes
 - o Subdivision increases before, but now that's not the case
- Balancing historic preservation with progress
- Built-out community
 - o Stability in size but challenge of growth
- Competition among retail areas within Downers Grove

- Location as a draw
 - Close to 355/88/55/etc.
 - Easy to get to/from. That would be a good reason to locate here vs. other places.
- Disconnect between north and south
 - Downtown brings all together
 - Library as downtown meeting place
 - North/South high schools fuels competition
 - High schools draw from different communities than Downers Grove, adds to lack of feeling of a cohesive community
- New homes going up in existing neighborhoods can cause tension with long-term residents
- Older, smaller homes/historic buildings are being torn down to make way for larger homes
- Older citizens are staying in their homes because it's a comfortable community to live in for seniors with the train, etc.
- Tension between property rights vs. neighborhood concerns
 - Balance between individual rights and community good
- No big draw to come to DG
 - If someone is in Glen Ellyn, there is no big reason for anyone to come here instead.
 - Need something to put DG on the map (a theatre, a stadium, etc.)
 - Turning on La Grange Rd. from 55 - I don't see similar routes for turning off major highways to come to DG.
 - We have Midwestern University and Good Samaritan Hospital. Not exactly Elmhurst College or other big draw - but it's a start.
- Lack of promotion of events – perceived as less than was once done
 - Community events are not listed through the library
 - People don't know what is going on in the community or what to do with their time
 - No central place for people to know what goes on in town
 - Learn a lot of what is going on from Village's Facebook posts
- People don't have access to resources and information
- Library needs
 - More places in library for sitting/discussing/browsing
 - Publicizing what libraries/librarians can do
 - Balancing technology in the library with customer service
 - Very few noncommercial places for tweens and teens other than library
 - Stay open until 10 p.m. on Friday and Saturday nights
 - Filmmaking workshops for adults
 - Drop in sessions in Media Lab for kids to make things like music videos
- Homeless population

- o Driven by the PADS shelters, the train routes, and places like the library being located where it is (personal observations)
 - o Do we know if DG has significantly more or less than other nearby communities?
 - o We do not actually know numbers or comparisons from DG to other communities.
 - o PADS has made significant strides at getting people into homes.
 - o Now we are seeing chronic homelessness - medical, mental health, substance abuse. Some other factor impeding the ability to find permanent housing through social service programs.
 - o Some people don't want to find housing. So how do we work with those people?
- Lack of sidewalks / walkability
- State budget and potential impact on schools/libraries
 - o LRC directors fading out
 - o How can the library fit in the gap
 - o Schools are making a choice of technology versus librarians versus reading/traditional print
- Schools
 - o Tradition of quality
 - o Maintaining excellence
 - o Impact of homeschooling and private schools
 - o Impact on property values
 - o Impact of more children/families in Downers Grove
 - o How to address growth / change
 - o How schools teach reading and impart learning and a love of reading to students
 - o Stress between D58 board and community
- Police Department
 - o Can they keep up with growth?
 - o Do they they have the knowledge and equipment to keep us safe?
 - o Concerned about police presence in downtown last Friday
- Fees for Park District services/programs too high
- State of Illinois
 - o Gridlock
 - o Negative impact on all
 - o Dampens/overshadows all positives
 - o Can't understand why citizens aren't revolting against the state government not having a budget
 - o State's reputation is a casualty of political issues
- Resistance to change
 - o Desire to mitigate change rather than stop it
- Village revenues – where will they come from?
- Maintaining diverse property tax base

- High taxes (2)
 - Keep my taxes low by allowing developments such as on Ogden Avenue
- Untapped immigrant community
 - Many women in particular stay at home and don't know what to do with their time, don't know about the library
- Lack of diversity

What is your vision for Downers Grove?

A vibrant and welcoming community with services to support people at all ages and stages of life centers around a beautiful downtown. Diversity in all aspects, from housing stock to race to economic status, contributes to the community feeling and supports the programs and cultural events that draw people to Downers Grove, making it a destination.

- Beautiful town - aesthetics
- We want it to be one community, not 3 separate communities.
- Higher profile in the Chicago area
 - More of a destination, rather than a point along the way to somewhere else
- More accessible to new buyers + seniors + families in between
 - You want to cover everyone, so it's attractive to multiple kinds of people
 - Do seniors have somewhere to move? Note: retirement used to trigger selling a home; now it is the death of a spouse. Causing some residents to leave DG
- Affordable housing
 - variety of options
 - especially in the downtown area
 - For singles, young couples, etc.
- Vibrant community
 - Something new and exciting
 - Not just the same thing year after year
- What is our "thing" - something big enough that draws people in
 - Parks? Bicycle paths? Water area? Bustling downtown? Heritage Fest? Lombard's Lilac Fest? Music and arts? Not sure what it would be...
 - Do we need a good meeting space? Convention center type place? Less than 1,000 people at the Tivoli but more than 100 at the Masonic Temple. A recent study showed that nearby areas did it and couldn't fill them.
 - Do artists live here? More of a focus on galleries and entertainment.
 - Programs/cultural events for people/group events
- Downtown as self-sustaining, walkable area
 - Groceries
 - Carry out food
 - Hardware
 - If you don't have car, you can live here
- Get formula right in downtown – residential/retail/events/restaurants

- o Condos fully occupied
 - o Events
 - o Retail like mom-and-pop grocer, pharmacy
 - o All ages and stages
- No overdevelopment
- Multi -generational community – should have services to deal with all of those needs
 - o Difficult to know about the services that already exist
 - o For all ages
- More people aging in place
 - o Need to remember these long-time residents
 - o Support/services they need
- Attractive to diverse audience
- Diversity – increased overall aspects (5)
 - o Racial
 - o Ages
 - o Economic (2)
 - o People
 - o Housing options / housing stock (3)
 - o Intellectually
 - o Economically
 - o Welcoming for all
- With the condo construction around downtown, a more cosmopolitan element may be coming to DG
- Community resources for all ages and stages
- Overpass/underpass for either Main or Washington.
 - o Would help would traffic back up.
 - o Better traffic flow
 - o Car show impeded traffic on Fridays or with any kind of program
- A place that relies more on alternative forms of transportation (bikes instead of cars)
- DG parks being utilized with facilities that are accessible to the elderly and handicapped
- More outdoor space with opportunities for people to interact and spend time together (2)
 - o Downtown area
 - o Library
- Opportunities for people to gather, to meet, to talk, to break down barriers, to meet face to face and share, opportunities for people who are different to be able to talk and share
- A sense of belonging, a sense of community
- Friendly

- Neighborhood connections, opportunities to be social
- Well-maintained infrastructure that cuts out the politics

What services are most needed in the community? Who needs them most?

Services desired included cultural and arts programming and civic engagement opportunities around topics of general community interest. Participants stated the need for a place to make social connections and have face-to-face interactions. Information about how to access supportive services as well as the services themselves is needed.

- Wi-Fi & computer access & printing
- Computer help
- School programs and extracurricular activities
- Access to literacy/lifelong learning (2)
 - Increased awareness of programs available (ie GED etc)
 - Volunteer opportunities
- People to have a place to share knowledge about the community/ways to benefit each other (ie Maker-fairs)
- More homeschool support programs
- Mentoring programs
 - Intergenerational
 - Use community talent and resources
 - Docents? Human library?
- Partnerships with artists/galleries - like the quilt display up right now!
- DG needs to have a "Cinearts theater of the southern suburbs" that show films such as "I am not your Negro"
- Bookstore with author speakers that appeal to me and better emails about books
- Core Village services - streets, police, etc. - they just work!
- Concerned about how budget problems are affecting services
- Park District - kids programs, preschool, Lincoln Center activities, sports
 - Lots of parks - you don't have to drive too far to get to one
- Parking (2)
- Public forums / Civic engagement
 - Might be one of the reasons it feels like there are three separate communities. Where / when do we interact with each other?
 - A role some libraries have taken on
 - Ongoing series of community dialogues
 - Various topics: Who's hurting? Who's doing what? What can we do?
- Bring together entire community – move beyond neighborhood segmentation
- Opportunities to connect
 - Communitywide
 - Civic engagement
 - Social, face-to-face
 - Human element
- Events draw folks to the downtown – concerts in the park, car shows, etc.
- Retail anchor in downtown
- Need a reason to shop here on regular days

- Need to know what's available – don't know what's available unless you already use it
- County-based services
 - Individual communities can't compete
- Knowledge about volunteering opportunities
 - For families / with kids
- Community center
 - Library used to be more of a gathering place
 - Homeless monopolize seating areas for long periods of time
- Get the word out about library services
- Can't get affordable dental care
- Live on Social Security Disability and Food Stamps—afraid of what will happen with these in current Administration

What do you think is keeping Downers Grove from making progress as a community?

Again, parking, traffic, and taxes were repeated by participants. Participants identified a lack of big ideas, a vision of how to overcome challenges. It was noted that people are overscheduled and don't volunteer like previous generations, which is affecting many community organizations. There is a perceived lack of connection and social interaction as technology becomes more pervasive. Keeping local businesses competitive is important. The library's role as a sanctuary is important.

- Proximity
 - How do we make Downers Grove stand out from the surrounding suburbs?
 - What would entice people to come live here?
- Parking (3)
- Traffic
- Public transportation
 - Local and affordable
 - Timely
 - Increasing shuttle bus access or some sort of public transportation access
- Funding / taxes
 - Nobody wants to pay more, but everyone wants everything.
 - Cuts to balance budgets
 - Storm water referenda as example
 - Poor quality of construction in projects due to low bidder restrictions, street paving example given
- Intergovernmental cooperation – making progress
- Big ideas – vision of how to overcome challenges
 - Has anyone proposed anything big? What do we think we should do and want to fund?

- o Do you think anyone would back a big idea though?
- NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard)
- Non-residents sometimes the most vocal. May have restricted access to some services but vocal about what they want.
- Lack of volunteers
 - o People are working, commuting, and raising families. Busy! Takes a lot to do all of that.
 - o Nature of volunteers has changed - what they are willing/able to do is not necessarily what organizations are looking for or need.
 - o Is inertia the problem? Getting people motivated?
 - o Friends of the Library volunteers are elderly and seem anxious to pass the baton, don't see their [baby boomer] generation and younger involved
 - o Overscheduled lifestyles - time
- Walkability / physical connectedness
 - o Unincorporated, quiet areas but make walking harder.
 - o Initiative to put sidewalks on at least one side of every street. Some people don't want that though. Multiple points of view.
 - o More than just sidewalks - bike trails, connecting neighborhoods, gutter/curb system, etc.
- Real estate in downtown - doesn't have much space to expand.
 - o Opportunities to expand near industrial park at Belmont
 - o Redevelopment of existing parcels
 - o Think past downtown
 - o Town feels too cramped
- The library 20 years ago was not necessarily a place I would leave my kids alone
- Library used to have more events, programs, speakers
 - o Spring Gala, WGN radio DJ, Christmas decorating examples of programs no longer offered
 - o Wider range for adults needed
 - o Daytime programming suggested
 - o Not aware of computer classes (discussion among participants about what's available)
- Lack of homeschool support in this area
- Lack of promotion of services and events
 - o Definitely not as much as they used to be
 - o Welcome Wagon example of service no longer available
 - o Computer classes no longer promoted by Worknet
 - o "People can't ask what they don't know about."
- Connecting to organizations/businesses/local events calendars
- Where do you find information and resources on community opportunities?
 - o Social
 - o Programs
 - o Events
- Lack of face-to-face, social interaction

- o Divides people
 - o Diminishes feeling of community
- Getting people out of their comfort zone
- Not a lot going on
 - o Increase opportunities
 - o Need to pique people's interest to get them there
- Competition with other communities – not as many interesting opportunities locally
- Park District - beautiful building on Belmont, but programs and services are cost-prohibitive
- Change
 - o Construction
 - o Retail turnover
- Downtown retail isn't open on Sundays
 - o Little incentive for people to come downtown
 - o Balance between working people who want to come downtown and the challenges of a small business.
- Downtown businesses compete with the Ogden and 63rd street businesses, feeling of competition among DG businesses in different areas
- Change in the education system
 - o How kids use the library is changing because so much of their materials are online
- Tech divide between parents and kids, especially as tech is pushed in the school
 - o Supporting parents in knowledge/use of tech for school etc.
- Changes to the school system as politics change
 - o Education climate nationwide
- Technology as a social outlet for kids and seniors
- Support individualism by connecting parents to help each other
- Homeless
 - o At a certain point, can't stay in area with homeless because of the smell and large number of bags
 - o Homeless don't bother me at all; I'm not offended by smell
 - o The library is a sanctuary
 - o Kids in youth area aren't comfortable with homeless, they keep their distance or move away from homeless
 - o Homeless like the library because it is a better environment than a shelter
 - o Touched to witness a staff member listening to and talking with a homeless person about what they are working on with their piles of papers
- Library staff is incredible

What are the kinds of things that could be done that might make a difference?

Improved bicycle access and local public transportation could help alleviate the parking problem. A vibrant downtown with a variety of arts and cultural events, supported by

integrated public relations, promotion, and marketing to help get the word out about what's available. Civil discourse and community conversation occurs with opportunities to learn from one another.

- More/Better parking (2)
 - Especially north side of the tracks.
- Better bike access could alleviate traffic and parking concerns
- Unifying community through public transportation access
 - Accommodate people where they are
 - Needs to be visible and convenient.
- Alleviate congestion
 - Close Main Street to vehicle traffic
- Knowing more about what's going on around town – example of street fests shutting down areas
- Better communication! How do people want to receive their information?
 - Currently using NextDoor website for news and alerts.
 - Separate enews or source for every organization
 - Unaware that the Village has an eBlast, and downtown management, and the library.
 - Underutilized events calendars
 - Usually it's accidentally heard about - or mentioned from a friend.
- One community theme – One stop shop for all details.
 - Website? App? Enews?
 - Services, events, emergency alerts
 - It is definitely a challenge. How do you make it findable? Usable?
- Village could do better job of promoting the library
- Library needs to promote itself better
- Lots of social media Downers Grove pages, all separate
 - Look for ways for library to contribute more to them
- Work with partners to promote ourselves better
- Let community know what's available
 - “Community organizations fair”
 - Help get the word out to all
- Increased cultural events/knowledge of cultural events
- Getting the word out about what's available – people get too many emails/mailings
- Civic engagement
 - Line item groups on real estate taxes - I don't know much about them or what they're doing
 - Community focus groups on topics of local interest
 - Opportunities for civic engagement
 - Former business association in town did this for local businesses, not sure what's available now

- (Disagreement during above conversation about homeless) This is an example of the level of dialogue that is getting worse in our community
 - Hostility is going up during civil discourse; library could do something about that
- More opportunities for people to share what they have/know/can do
- Community center – one central place online and in-person to connect to the community
- More events to draw people in
 - Variety of things to do
 - Support for new or different
 - Broad appeal
 - Willingness and means to try new things
- Food festival
- Openness to new ideas
- Library
 - Staff are an asset – kind, informative, patient, helpful
 - Become a more comfortable gathering place
 - Less self-service in the library.
 - Having a sense of welcoming/belonging in the library (Chatting too long with staff at desk gets cut off by supervisor even when no one is waiting)
 - Library is a way to feel connected in the community
 - Give tweens and teens alternative activities that are not commercial
 - Every time I ask for a book, you get it for me
 - I couldn't live without the library
 - Troubles me that I can't access the full text New York Times or other primary sources
 - The younger generation does not understand media literacy and should work with the school system to augment their media literacy lessons
 - Show films that teens might not see otherwise
- Downtown
 - Infrastructure improvements
 - Enticing a “draw” retail store to downtown
 - Spread out the downtown area past the tracks
 - Downtown events should be a draw, not something you avoid due to traffic, parking, etc.
 - Downtown as destination with more street art/scenic walk areas
 - Cultural events
- Village not listening to local businesses, making rules that are not business-friendly
 - Sign ordinance example – expensive to comply and makes businesses harder to find

- o Licensing requirements/fees to generate income for Village drive businesses out
- Long-time residents may need support/assistance on upkeep of older homes
- Importance of supporting local businesses
- How do you increase awareness of local businesses and make them more visible?
- Incentives for energy efficiency
 - o Are public buildings working to become more energy efficient? They should.
 - o Individuals too. What could we be doing and be rewarded for?
 - o Fragmented DG - different areas want different things. There is no unifying vision.
- Diversity of DG can be intimidating to some, making one vision difficult to achieve
 - o So how do you get a unifying village-wide vision when we all have such different backgrounds and ideas?

Participants' Final Thoughts

Just before leaving, the couple who had attended together stopped the facilitator to comment that they should have added homeless people in the Library to their concerns. They felt that finding ways to connect those people to services would make a difference. One stated, "Library is a draw - find ways to improve upon that."

Other Feedback

Prior to starting, a man came in, asking what the Community Focus Group was. After hearing the description, he said, "I can't stay, but this Library is the best. I always find what I need. Keep doing what you're doing!"

After the session ended, a woman came in, apologizing that she had missed the session. She had a few comments:

- The Teen area should be open to adults during the day, with some way of letting people know that.
- The lighting upstairs is terrible in most of the seating areas upstairs (underlying basis for wanting to use the Teen area during the day – better light).
- Classes for adults about Google Cardboard or other virtual reality would be great.

The facilitator directed both to dglibrary.org/plan for the online survey version of the questions.

APPENDIX B

ONLINE SURVEY RESPONSES

When you think about our community, what are your most positive and powerful impressions?

Downers Grove is a friendly, family-oriented, safe town with good schools. Residents like the downtown and transportation options provided by its location and rail access. It maintains its historic character, provides good services, and offers events/entertainment.

- I love our community in Downers Grove. I especially love the quaint downtown area and having 3 train stations is a plus.
- Family oriented town completely walkable.
- Good shopping choices, good schools, clean streets, low crime rate, close to expressways, good public transportation. Plus the library provides reading for pleasure and excellent research resources.
- The vibrant downtown with the summer car shows, live entertainment and crowds of happy visitors and residents. The access to the train and the effort of the city to create a place where people want to live. I love the Starbucks and the Movie theatre and the trains.
- I think we need to focus on the youth and parenting groups of this community. DG is a town for families and has an excellent school system
- Proactive management driven by residents' commitment to. Balancing the maintenance in the clear presence of its history with the investment its future. That takes people capable of making difficult decisions and then following through on over long periods of time.
- Parks, schools, downtown and library.
- My positive experience always includes the library (except when someone is trying to petition me outside its doors for something partisan). The librarians know our family well and my kids know to ask what they need when maybe they can't ask us, their parents. I've even sent my mother-in-law, from Burr Ridge, to our library for technology help when she needed to print important documents. She returned overjoyed, remarking how patient and savvy The Technology Woman was, someone her own age. Our library is inclusive, and not once have I felt judged being there for whatever I needed. Negatively, about judgement and partisan positions, I seek our library as a sanctuary from it. I feel sometimes our community is far too divided, by design, into Us. v. Them. At the library, I don't feel that way at all. And I greatly appreciate it's the last stronghold of what community is and should be, in my opinion.
- Educated, friendly, welcoming, homey, somewhat walkable
- The reason we wanted to live in Downers Grove when we moved here back in the 90's was because of the neighborhood feel of the community. We wanted a mature community with full grown trees and a town with a main street (versus a Woodridge for example which has no downtown). The charm of walking to town and parks was important to us. Of course great schools was a requirement.

- Well-planned, low apparent crime, sense of history. Most conveniences are available. There's a wide selection of restaurants and stores. Its Library is quite good.
- I just moved here and people are extremely warm and welcoming, whether they are people I have met on my street, at the park, or at local businesses.
- Family, historic, inviting and vibrant community.
- That it is a safe and fun place to raise our family. There are always low or no cost activities we can participate in and that is great since we have young kids. I love that we have an active downtown area and many family friendly events.
- DG is a very child friendly community with great services. The library is the center of it all.
- Historic homes and train station, good schools, dog-friendly, the Tivoli.

What are the most important issues in our community today?

Infrastructure needs include public parking in downtown, stormwater, sewers, and sidewalks. It is important to keep the town clean and safe while maintaining its historic character. Homelessness and lack of affordable housing are ongoing concerns. Taxes are viewed as both an investment and concern. Supporting and welcoming diverse populations (racial, economic, cultural, etc.) is necessary.

- Keep the village clean. More and more I see trash on the easements, parking lots, parks, streets & sidewalks. Maybe we can get community service from convicted people to pick up the trash? Adding signs for people to pick up after their dog's mess in the parks and forest preserves would also be nice. This is such a beautiful town and the garbage is detracting from its beauty.
- All kids need an affordable place to go after school
- There are not any problems that keep me up at night. However, attention needs to be given to providing more public parking on both the north and south side of the RR tracks. The funds available for replacement of streets, water mains, sewers, and sidewalks should be checked to insure that they are adequate for the long term (25-50 yrs.)
- Homelessness. Rising costs of housing for families.
- Besides the drain water issue? I think income tax and property taxes going up and how that is going to effect families.
- Respecting our history while investing in its future. No matter the topic. This balancing act is a fundamental theme across them all.
- We are getting more culturally diverse community I see that as a plus, but there may be things to address along the way.
- Diversity, access to resources, and kindness. There are some who might say lower taxes, but those who are first to say it are usually those who don't know or use the library as much as our family. And if they did, they might realize just how much our taxes greatly contribute to the kind of community they would seek if they didn't already take this one for granted ... friends who live in communities hyper focused on taxes don't have a library and now gladly pay membership fees because short-sided decisions then continually return a negative impact now, especially when new families equate the strength of a library with the strength of a community, and its schools.

- Herion addiction, computer/screen addiction, flooding/stormwater, walkability/need more sidewalks everywhere.
- Explosion of massive homes being built, continued destruction of absorbable land/trees that pull water from the ground, flooding creating chaos/upset/cost to residents, mature trees being felled due to the large homes, the charm of our town being impacted. A simple example; one of the delights of our neighborhood was the ice pond at Hummer. Our son played hockey and one of his winter joys was to skate there. That has been ruined due to massive home builds and the change in water routes. Additionally too many condo buildings, with more coming, that alter everything about our downtown. Historic buildings being pulled down and replaced with a massive condo building. Retailers being pushed out to fell buildings that will turn into more condos. Unfavorable tax issues locally and by the state that push retail out of our downtown.
- Destruction of older, historically significant houses and other buildings. Deteriorating streets and lack of sidewalks. Flooding issues, compounded by inadequate storm sewerage. Noise problems from trucks and autos without mufflers, causing sleep disturbances and stress. Increased population density and resultant stress and crime. Although the situation is better now than 10 years ago, homelessness is still a problem.
- Since I'm still learning about the major issues in our local community, I'm not entirely sure, but I do know DuPage and Will counties relatively well. Generally, as parts of the community seem to be growing more affluent, I think we need to remember that there are still significant populations that need our attention, whether they are more middle class or even homeless. Remember that there is a surprising number of homeless families in our community.
- Making sure EVERYONE feels welcome and included. Not alienating groups of individuals. Removing/replacing the blight on Ogden Avenue, and bringing more business back to fill vacancies in the downtown area.
- access & acceptance for all. regardless of ability, age, income or other typically thought of category. I also think that it is so important to support the local organizations like the library and local non-profits that are the back bone of help our community. I do worry about the new and drugs in the community. i have young kids and i don't want them to be effected by that as they get older i want them to have positive influences that help keep them away from the bad stuff.
- Lack of diversity, Car dependency, Housing becoming unaffordable to middle class, leading to even less diversity, Not very progressive in terms of sustainability
- Need for historic preservation. I'd like to see the library take a strong position in support of preserving the history of the town. Also, we need more low-income housing options and support for the homeless and those living in poverty in DG.

What is your vision for Downers Grove?

Downers Grove would ideally be a diverse, safe, and inclusive community where all are welcomed and help one another. Its neighborly feel makes it “the town” in which people want to live and raise families. Our diverse residents enjoy a variety of educational and

recreational opportunities. The thriving local business community attracts both businesses and residents to the community for its walkable downtown, historic charm, and vibrant retail areas.

- Free wireless for all residents, like the larger cities in the Western US.
- Safe neighborhoods drug free old school values be able to lend a helping hand to your neighbors
- the goal should be to maintain the village as a good place to live that is affordable for middle income families. The management of commercial streets like Ogden, 63rd, 75th, and similar streets need to be continually monitored to maintain a modern, clean image. Efforts to attract business enterprises should be given proper funding and employ pros that have a proven track record.
- A culturally diverse and supportive city.
- More community events, more work with the schools, more outreach
- More than an investment. An extension of ourselves. A place where families grow and call home for a lifetime.
- We are already pretty great. We come through for neighbors in crisis, I just question whether we will continue that with neighbors who are not white, non-christian. We should aspire to embracing the diversity.
- I'd love less if people noted I live in 630 because of its money and partisan position, and more if people noted 630 for its welcome and long reach into neighborhoods, schools, and working with each other to network and educate better things. I'd like to think of Downers Grove as a place where people want to move because it supports access to education and resource.
- A walkable friendly community where drugs are less available. Where the library and elementary schools encourage reading instead of iPad/computer/video games. The library should be a place where those who enjoy reading are welcomed and encouraged. It's hard to raise a family of readers when people are always sticking electronics in your kids faces. It would be wonderful if the library ditched the video game systems, iPads where kids can make a silly beard and computer games. I've stopped bringing my kids in even though they love to read because they are always tempted by the array of electronic diversions front and center in the children's department. It would be wonderful to have a library that focuses on reading and research and doesn't feel the need to push electronics for fun. The kids need a safe zones like libraries and schools that encourage thinking. Put sidewalks on every side of every street in Downers Grove to make it fully walkable. Heavily fund stormwater improvements and change regs for new construction so they stop negatively affecting stormwater. They aren't strong enough.
- Enhanced management and consideration of future builds. Is it really necessary to add yet another condo building on Maple? Are 100% of the condos already downtown (with the addition of yet another building in the former bank building lot) at full occupancy? The increase in traffic from the condo at the tracks is already concerning as I am a frequent visitor to the library. When I have retailers tell me that they type of crowd they see during vintage car night is so very different than when they first opened their store and that it causes them to not want to be open on those nights that doesn't sound like a Village headed in the

right direction. We already lack diversity here - continuing to behave like we're a budding Hinsdale is not helpful.

- I'd like to see more money thrown into the school system, stressing STEM and foreign languages. Increased train traffic is causing pollution, traffic and noise problems on the east side, and thought needs to be given to grade separation on Fairview and on Maple. We need more sidewalks, bike trails off arterial streets, and a public swimming pool. Aging shopping centers need to be either restored (although this has failed in Westmont) or demolished. Any tax breaks for businesses should be more carefully considered: many have failed in the last 3 years despite a robust economy.
- I hope that in 20 years, Downers Grove will be more diverse than it is today with residents from a broad spectrum of racial, religious, socio-economic and even national backgrounds. I hope that Downers Grove will have places for all of these people to live, shop, socialize and generally thrive.
- Continue to be a family centered, vibrant community with a thriving downtown area, and blight-free Ogden Avenue corridor.
- the baby/infant library programs are well know in my mommy circles as the BEST and most developmentally appropriate in the area for non-walkers. I want Downers grove to be the place that surrounds our kids with fun, affordable positive activities, and influences to help them play and grow and help our kids be they best they can be. I want DG to be "the town" to raise kids and the place to visit. I grew up in darien and went to dgs and i love Downers grove i hope my kids will do the same. I'd love to see growth in the park district programs for little ones and more a splash pad but we do visit near by lisle & bolingbrook for that.
- I envision a DG that is more inclusive and more sustainable. DG has a lot of green space that is under-utilized and could be transformed to grow food for the vulnerable or create habitat for pollinators. The wonderful parks we have with playgrounds could become the center of different community programs such as community gardens, coops, gathering place for neighbors to share resources. Public buildings would be powered with renewable energy.
- In 20 years, I'd like to be able to still see the historic qualities of the village. I'd like to see a more diverse community.

What services are most needed in the community? Who needs them most?

Supportive services for seniors, day services for people who are homeless, and public transportation options are needed. People need help identifying and connecting to the services they need, as well as for volunteering with those organizations. Cultural and educational programs, specifically for seniors and teens, offer opportunities to bring people together.

- Services like meals-on-wheels. Also, I love innovative programs where college students mentor teens, teens help kids with homework, seniors help homeless people, etc. And anything that brings people together to volunteer in a meaningful way. And please make it accessible, make it inclusive in everything you do. Ableism is everywhere I look these days.
- Non-faith based programs that support idea exchange or services exchange. For example, there are many non-profit groups in DG. We need some place to

promote them, help them grow. Services that promote diversity (cultural and generational) and cultural exposure. Also, alternative transportation options are needed. Needed for everyone, to foster acceptance.

- I'm most shocked to learn about those transitioning from homeless or domestic violence and having to sleep on floors but i'm also VERY VERY concerned due to the new administration/government views that those with disabilities are at a very real risk of losing support in the community and in schools. We also need to consider our environment impact with recycling, water use, and composting!
- Public education and support for children and families in the community. Creating a safer community, helping many of the homeless in the town.
- I think that more temporary shelter as well as transitional housing for at-risk populations, battered women or homeless for example, would be useful.
- The Library could use more money for materials, and some sort of social network for day shelter for the homeless needs to be devised. The Library should not have to serve this purpose. Funding could come from a small liquor and tobacco tax. Similarly, although DG is better than many suburbs, there need to be places for teens to congregate and have fun together. As people age, more public transit is needed. This would decrease the need for parking downtown. There also need to be more services such as arranging home health care and co-housing. With the uncertainty of healthcare and insurance, perhaps a low-cost clinic will be needed to help provide immunizations, well-baby checkups, and basic health services.
- The library is a wonderful resource and community center. Capitalizing on the space, wonderful staff, and resources is paramount. What about a remedial reading program that is offered through the library? We know that reading is an indicator of future success - are we addressing this problem through community outreach - if not we should be. What about a program to teach reading to the refugee or minority community? How about the ability for people to register for needs programs through library outreach - our neighbors that are experiencing hunger etc.? How about a focus on volunteerism built through the library? There are so many in our community with so much to give and finding a way to connect with one another creates bridges - time, money, resources - the library can be a conduit for much in our community. The library can be a builder of relationships in our community.
- Readers need a safe place to be readers not to be tempted by yet another person putting electronics in their face. Kids need a space to be creative and thoughtful. You are the logical place for readers to turn, but you are so focused on electronics that you are hurting your primary market.
- That's a good question. My first inclination is to say seniors need resources most—access to technology know-how, resource, and getting to know community beyond just family. Both my parents use the library; other than church, it's their community too. Also, in my community there are homeless and low-income families. If you ask around, in schools, it's more prevalent than I think most want to believe. The library is one of the only places, really, where there's equal footing for resource and access to education beyond just the classroom. I grew up with parents who worked two jobs. We never took vacation. The library

gave me a place to be and learn without feeling less of a person because I don't have money to afford those things outside of school.

- Kids/families and the elderly.
- Events and venues that appeal across the age, ethnic and lifestyle spectrum and bring these demographics together. People not only celebrate but solve problems when you offer them opportunities to engage each other face to face.
- I think having programs on the weekends help the working. I don't want to go out after a hard days work. Also, the giving back to the community through service is needed.
- Support services for the underpaid and underprivileged.
- Senior citizens living in town should continue to get reduced cab fares to help with shopping and medical trips. The town should develop a directory of firms from gutter cleaners, and runner/drivers, to home repair pros that have passed a criminal background check, charge fair rates for services, and start and complete work on a timely basis.
- Transparent political actions
- I can't think of any

What do you think is keeping Downers Grove from making progress as a community?

Us versus them mentality is a challenge—from partisan politics to embracing diversity. Balancing community needs like addressing blighted commercial areas, providing affordable housing, and supporting services for homeless and struggling families while stretching tax dollars and not raising taxes makes the balance.

- I'm not sure
- DG is a wonderful town that needs to go with in it's leaders to find a solution to be on the same page to advance us into the future. Kids always have been and will be the future more needs to be done to support and advance them.
- My opinion is the village is making acceptable progress. Inflation is an ongoing problem that needs constant attention to stretching tax dollars as far as possible.
- Lack of empathy and social responsibility in society for the less fortunate.
- Individual people that are loud and abrasive.
- Isolation. The Us versus Them tact. There are groups and forums that celebrate their membership as a badge of achievement in and of itself. They often respond to external influence, differences or even cooperation with "others" as a threat.
- I think we aren't challenged with the perspectives of people who haven't traditionally been part of the community.
- Partisan positions rooted in partisan ideas ... without context or understanding of what happens in the community outside tight circles that often echo national sentiments and attempt to apply those notions, locally. How people in my community are appointed by the Mayor for their partisan loyalty—not always with regard to experience and reach into the community—is a disconcerting example. And it doesn't matter from which party.
- Face facts - we are not Naperville. We have only a couple of streets for restaurants and retail. Community strategists are trying to force a personality and structure on DG that we simply don't have physical space to handle - nor the

parking to accommodate. As a resident I find it inconvenient to go downtown and support the businesses that are there because parking and traffic is a mess. People that work in the service and retail industry downtown have no where to park or have to move their cars frequently. What a gross oversight in planning by the Village. A select few (either on the council or influencers) making decisions about downtown development that benefit construction companies not the esthetic of the village overall.

- Population density is a huge issue. High rise housing is not helping, because the population increases faster than property tax revenue. Something needs to be done about traffic on Ogden Avenue. It's nearly gridlock from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.: Maple Ave. is nearly as bad. It affects deliveries along with commutes. A quality bus system is also needed. Deteriorating shopping centers are an issue, especially the aging one on 63rd near Belmont. The center NW of Main and 75th St. is also on the cusp of becoming a blight. Commercial rents are too high. Small business is driven away by the poor value of neglected properties. Too much emphasis is given to cosmetics, such as business signage ordinances and the superfluous lit street signage, rather than environmental issues.
- An unwillingness to pass tax levies. I went to the February 14, 2017 village council meeting, and they mentioned the fact that taxes have been flat for the past six years (I think that is what they said). This is not comforting to me. I value services such as those provided by the public library and good public schools. I want elected officials and appointed trustees to be brave enough to push citizens to fulfill their responsibility to make sure Downers Grove continues to be a place people want to live and raise their children. One of the reasons we left Indiana is that frankly, the public schools stunk. I'm quite certain that was in part a result of our taxes being so low.
- Blight and vacant buildings, homeless population, making sure struggling families have services they need.
- I think it's the normal things: money and politics and ourselves
- Lack of affordable housing resulting in even less diversity, Lack of community engagement (although this is changing)

It seems like the village keeps building more and more condos for a community that can't afford to buy them. Also, budget problems have led to fewer events in the town over the years. In general, there's not much to do in DG for a 20-something like myself who isn't at all interested in hanging out at Another Round.

When you think about what we've talked about, what are the kinds of things that could be done that might make a difference?

Supporting diversity and inclusion through library services and programs would make a difference. Green/sustainability, civic engagement opportunities, and arts and cultural programs were suggested, as well as improved communication of these services.

Partnerships among governments and nonprofits already making a difference in Downers Grove could extend their reach. Parking is again mentioned.

- First, STEM is great, but please don't forget importance of the humanities and liberal arts. Also, there are a lot of library programs for kids to learn to code, but few for adults. I personally would be interested in a novice coders group. Second,

more parking. Third, archival preservation projects, like collecting oral histories, advocating for town signage in front of historic places around town, highlighting local history collections, etc. Fourth, keep your focus on helping the marginalized. Design for all users instead of the average user. Illinois is cutting important social services. The library is so important. Thank you for all you do!

- I would love to see a lecture series offered at the DG library to promote sustainability in our Village. We are part of a group "Go Green DG" that is trying to develop different ideas geared towards making DG more sustainable. One of the ideas we came up with is promoting education on topics such as community gardening, global warming, how to grow habitat for pollinators in your backyard, how to grow food in your backyard, etc. DG library could plan a lecture series and we could help fill the slots with topics related to sustainability. Please feel free to email me if that's something you would like to pursue [email address removed]
- I think we need to find a way to work together and help those that are making a difference. we also need to help bring people together in positive ways like the concerts in the parks and programs that are offered. as individuals we need to motivate our selves to volunteer or help others as much as we can.
- Offer more community supports, focus on education, keep the diverse families in mind, remove blighted/vacant buildings on Ogden, lower rent downtown to allow for more small business.
- Spend money appropriately, and don't misuse funds meant for other purposes. Increase programming to reach a more diverse audience. I love the Spanish and French story times at the Westmont Library. I have a 17-month-old, and I have found the programming for toddlers at the Downers Grove Library difficult to navigate and not worth the trouble. That's why we pretty much only go to the Westmont Library these days. Parking is also a real pain at the library. Are people parking there to go shopping or take the train?
- 1) Newcomers, especially minorities, need to be welcomed in and encouraged to contribute their skills. A central community center would be quite helpful.
2) Especially in older, historic neighborhoods, teardowns, McMansions, and high density housing construction needs to be stopped. Downers is lovable because it's not dense. There are generous lawns.
3) Long empty buildings and land on Ogden Avenue needs to be utilized. Some type of business, besides automotive, needs encouragement.
4) Green space to help mitigate climate change should be provided. For example, the parking lots of the aforementioned shopping centers could be halved, and the rest planted in native landscaping. Hiring the underemployed to improve the environment, clean stream beds, plant diverse native trees, and keep up with litter and trash would make a pretty village beautiful.
- I decided to read 100 books last year. I hit 96 and all but a handful of those books came from our library. I am in and out of the library parking lot at least a couple times a week. Parking is a joke. If I could park for a longer period of time I would linger at the library, or pop into the shops on Main Street. Now there is additional construction for another condo building that isn't needed and it is difficult to maneuver around the construction site. Capitalize on what our

downtown can offer with the current town layout as the consideration. Keep in mind that as a resident if I can't easily park and get to retailers I will not be able to support the important retail structure. I can't waste time or deal with unnecessary stress because I'm crossing the tracks, and stuck in traffic, and not find anywhere to park because of poor planning and vision and frankly - greed to build more/bigger. It might sound like a small thing but if you think it's not impacting growth you are wrong. This is not a time when our library should be looking to do less. We have no state budget, people are stressed about property taxes. Consider a fund raiser, or planned outreach to corporations that could make bequests, with specifics around where the money would go - the types of programs that would be built with money received. If the library needs a new roof stop thinking you can misappropriate funds from the Foundation to fund that. Know that there is a groundswell effort to be more watchful of our local resources and government. We will be watching what takes place from now on.

- Ditch the video game systems in the children and teen sections. Drop the iPads and computers with preloaded games even the "educational ones". Read the research they are bad in the longterm for children's brains. Stick to electronics for research and give the kids chance to grow their minds instead of dumbing it down like everyone else.
- Sending messages, with programming and maybe even physical reminders in the library, that the library is an open and inclusive environment that provides resources (and education) to all people, not just some. Quality programming—and an intense effort to community programming, otherwise it doesn't matter—is something I'd appreciate. And I've seen a trend in that direction; it's noted.
- Cultural diversity programs library and museum. Maybe even hiring a few people of color as librarians. That daily interaction can be very helpful.
- Continue to recognize our differences and that their labels don't define us. Overcoming them consistently produces positive results for everyone.
- I think that you addressed a lot of issues in the community. I would have liked questions about what the library is or is not doing as well. This community is great and is far from needing a change so small changes and being kind to one another are always the first step. I think more community partnerships and working together would help both the library and the community.
- I have no idea.
- Children of Downers Grove residents should be encouraged to buy homes in the village when they grow up. Thought should be given to how they can be helped to stay here. Could low cost loans be arranged through local banks, a civic group? What are other villages around the country doing?
- Education for all

APPENDIX C

KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

What are the issues in our community that your organization is seeking to address?

Issues are grouped in six major themes: Education, Government, Social Issues, Business, Diversity, and the Arts. In addition, responses that weren't categorizable under specific concerns, but related to general issues of broad concern, are captured under the more general theme "Community." The following lists how many concerns related to each theme, and identifies some general issues that emerged under each of them.

Themes (in order of most mentioned to least mentioned, numbers indicate total responses)

- **Community:** Providing space for recreation and socializing, enhancing the general quality of life in the community, economic issues, and maintaining the Village's appeal as a good place to live and have a family. (16)
- **Education:** Access to technology, providing support for Downers Grove educational institutions. (15)
- **Social Issues:** Creating awareness and providing support to marginalized communities in DG, including the homeless, the aged, and the disabled. (12)
- **Diversity:** Economic diversity, inclusion, and support of aging community members, while welcoming newcomers into an expensive housing stock. (9)
- **Government:** Safety, planning, and provision of core government services (fire, police, urban planning). (8)
- **Business:** Responding to outside competition (e-commerce and neighboring towns), encouraging local business. (5)
- **The Arts:** Maintaining and renewing the current platforms for artistic endeavor in DG for adults and children. (3)

What challenges are your organization facing?

Five challenges dominated the conversations with key stakeholders. Many were concerned with their organization's finances or funding. Many had facility needs—some needed a facility, some needed to upgrade, repair or add to their facility, and some had parking issues. Many stakeholders saw promotion or marketing as a challenge, wanting to improve their promotion or marketing endeavors. Membership—getting new members, attracting younger members, difficulties in relying on aging members—was a common theme. Volunteerism was also important, especially to those who depend on volunteers to staff their organizations and are worried about attracting new volunteers.

Themes (in order of most mentioned to least mentioned, numbers indicate total responses)

- Finances/Funding (19)
- Facilities (upgrade, repairs, additional space, parking) (14)
- Promotion/Marketing (13)
- Membership (aging membership, few new members, younger members) (12)
- Volunteerism (11)

- Community partnerships (5)
- Change (4)
- Social Issues (4)
- Staffing (3)
- State of IL issues (3)
- Time (lack of) (3)
- Unfunded mandates (3)
- Diversity (2)
- Transportation (2)
- Communication (1)
- Lifelong Learning (1)
- Objective Information (1)
- Programming (1)
- Research Help (1)
- Stormwater Issues (1)

When you think about our community, what are your most positive and powerful impressions?

Residents of Downers Grove take pride in their community and really enjoy living here. A safe, clean, and nice community, it has a small town feel despite its larger population. People are engaged and get involved in the community. Highlights include a walkable and vibrant downtown with many fun activities to take part in for all ages. Several comments noted the great public services available to them. Overall, Downers Grove is a friendly and caring community.

Themes (in order of most mentioned to least mentioned, numbers indicate total responses)

- Great schools, parks, library, police and fire, village services (14)
- Friendly (9)
- Caring and generous spirit (8)
- Family-friendly, oriented (7)
- Vibrant downtown (7)
- Strong sense of community (7)
- Community activities (educational and entertainment) (6)
- People who grew up here return to raise their families (generational) (6)
- Location and ease of access to public transportation (6)
- Strong local business presence (4)
- Restaurants (3)
- Local history (3)
- Diverse (3)
- Progressive (3)

What other issues or concerns do you see for our community?

Five major themes stood out in response to this question: concern over decisions by the Village and Downers Grove's infrastructure, access and awareness of social services, a need for education and lifelong learning, a need for diversity, and connectivity issues for organizations and community members.

Themes (in order of most mentioned to least mentioned)

- **Infrastructure and the Village:** A major theme that emerged under community concerns deals with decisions made by the Village and its infrastructure. Interviewees are concerned about the effects of real estate development decisions and treatment of local businesses in the downtown area. Businesses are struggling to abide by Village rules and there is concern that, as a result, businesses will leave Downers Grove and we won't be able to attract new ones (also applies to other retail corridors of Downers Grove, not just the downtown area). Lack of a thriving downtown will make the new condo developments less appealing to new residents. Also, a repeated concern by interviewees is the lack of parking in the downtown area with residents, commuters, and businesses competing for parking space; the issue has been exacerbated by the condominium construction. Interviewees do not think that the downtown area will be able to support more demand for parking once new residents start moving into the condos. Further, there is concern that the cost of living is too high and prohibitive to fostering the socio-economic diversity as discussed in a later point.
- **Social Services:** A sizeable amount of responses related to the need for, access to, and awareness of services for underserved and marginalized populations, including (but not limited to) the elderly, homeless, developmentally disabled, those suffering from mental illnesses, low-income households, and those seeking to escape domestic violence. Individuals tend to be unaware services exist and do not have the skills or equipment needed (computer, internet access) to seek them out. Increases in both the senior population and the number of individuals with mental health issues particularly highlighted the need for social services, and there is concern over the future of funding for relevant programs. There is a lack of public space where the homeless population is welcome to spend the day; residents will complain about the presence of the homeless in parks, pavilions, etc., even if they are not causing problems.
- **Education and Lifelong Learning:** Many interviewees made comments on challenges related to education and lifelong learning for both students and adult populations. Interviewees commented on the need for a well-supported school district, as well as a more thorough understanding of the curriculum and curriculum changes by parents. Students need help navigating college prep and balancing extracurricular activities, as the college application process is more competitive. There is also a feeling that students and families need opportunities outside of school for learning in the areas of technology, STEM, art, and music. Special education students are in need of opportunities to feel included in the community outside of school and after they graduate. For adults (including seniors) and families, interviewees commented on the lack of opportunities in arts and music, or at least at a lack of funding or support for it. Adult education is

also needed in technology and information literacy, particularly for seniors and groups with limited access.

- **Need for Diversity:** The interviewees commented on a need for both cultural and socioeconomic diversity within Downers Grove. However, they also recognize that saying you want diversity is easier than actively incorporating it into your community. Some perceive a feeling of superiority over more diverse neighboring communities, such as Bolingbrook and Woodridge, that potentially creates a sense of unwelcomeness. Within Downers Grove, there is a sense of a division between the north and south side of town. As a result, there is concern that underserved populations on the south side of town do not have access to as many services or resources as the more privileged north side.
- **Connectivity:** According to some interview responses, organizations and community members both desire to be more connected within their communities. For organizations, there is a desire for better communication between different groups and/or village agencies. Organizations would like to be more aware of what services fellow organizations are offering in order to form partnerships and avoid duplication. Community members are also interested in being more connected and involved in their community. There is a desire to give and volunteer, but also a lack of knowledge about various organizations or opportunities. Some citizens also now want to be more involved in their communities in an activist capacity, but are not sure how or where they can do this. Both organizations and community members face the problem of there just being ‘too many things to do.’ Organizations are competing for attention and funding, while community members, families, and children may already be involved in too many activities.
- **Miscellaneous:** There were also responses on single topics or without enough context to categorize. These included:
 - Government worries—new federal administration, uncertainty in Springfield, possibility of tax freezes.
 - Lack of public pool or aquatic facility in Downers Grove
 - Unwillingness to challenge ‘status quo’
 - Change is coming, how do we adapt?

When you think about what we’ve talked about, what are the kinds of things that could be done that would make a difference?

Responses to what would make a difference centered around partnerships and civic engagement, especially in the areas of marketing/communications and programming. Responses included suggestions and ideas for library programs as well as partnerships for programming. Working together to connect people to services and local organizations through referral or cooperative marketing efforts was mentioned repeatedly. Support of diversity and inclusion through civic engagement and programming would make a difference. Parking improvements were also mentioned, as a possible partnership opportunity.

Themes (in order of most mentioned to least mentioned, numbers indicate total responses)

- Civic engagement (identifying and addressing issues) (23)

- Pooling collective talent
- Listening
- Finding answers together
- Community forum
- Educating others on available resources
- Diverse dialogue among individuals, organizations, government
- Programming/services (22)
 - Supporting others programs/services
 - Working together on new ones
 - Offering our own "traditional" services like meeting/study space
 - Educational & entertainment programs
- Partnerships (18)
 - Usually in the form of conversations, programming ideas, pooling resources, sharing space
- Communication (15)
 - Getting the word out
 - Knowing about and sharing resources
 - One place to look for information
- Diversity (4)
 - Language, age
 - Variety of people/organizations/government at the table together
- Parking (3)

APPENDIX D

TEEN AND TWEEN FOCUS GROUPS

What are you worried about?

The top worries from four different schools could be summed up into the following:

- Issues surrounding school (grades, tests, college acceptance, and how to pay for college)
- Personal relationships (bullying and relationships with friends, family, and significant other)
- The future (global events, the environment, politics, what the economy will look like when it's time for them to get a job)
- Feeling overwhelmed (schoolwork, extracurriculars, personal obligations)

Overall, concern surrounding school issues was overwhelmingly the top response.

Teenagers in Downers Grove want to achieve academically, and they are worried about the number of “things” they have to take on in order to succeed or stand out.

What would help solve your worries?

Taking into consideration the four main worries expressed by teenagers, what could help alleviate their worries fits into four categories.

- To combat worries with school, students expressed interest in an extra time and place to be able to work collaboratively on projects/homework, or seek out extra assistance on schoolwork.
- To help with their personal relationships, students voiced hopes for peers to intercede when they see bullying either face-to-face or on social media platforms. They also hoped to see a greater focus on fostering a spirit of empathy in their schools, to make the schools a safer place for all.
- To help set up their community for sustainability in the future, students wanted to be able to volunteer, or to have service projects they could participate in. Students were especially concerned about the environment and wanted ways they could directly help.
- For their feeling of being overwhelmed, students wanted a space where they could step away from the school environment and have a break. They expressed the desire for longer passing periods in school and extra opportunities for de-stressing and unwinding.

If anything were possible, what would you want to do/be/learn?

What Downers Grove teens wanted to do/be/learn fell into three main categories:

- Content creation (including art, creative writing, and the music and movie making process)

- Science/technology (coding/computer hacking, engineering, medical fields)
- Global experiences (traveling, learning new languages)

Downers Grove teens also expressed an avenue to demonstrate their talents, especially when it comes to artistic talents. They wanted a place that they could have an open mic night, or a gallery showing, or public art that they could contribute to.

What do you like the most about living in Downers Grove? If you could change anything, what would you change?

What teenagers like/do not like/would change or improve upon in Downers Grove mirrors how adults feel as well. They mostly felt very positive about Downers Grove and are happy to grow up here. They felt very positive about the following characteristics of Downers Grove:

- It is very safe, peaceful, calm, and friendly.
- A few teens specifically mentioned the [Forbes article](#), which names Downers Grove as one of the top friendliest towns in America.

The following are things that teenagers stated they dislike about Downers Grove:

- It is very difficult to find places to go/things to do without being able to drive or access to a car.
- There are not enough classes for students outside of school that are focused on learning new creative skills (art, cooking, writing, learning foreign languages).
- The downtown shops are either too expensive, geared at people much older than them, or uninteresting chains. The teenagers mentioned hating seeing so many empty storefronts (which was something the adults felt as well). They feel like they have to go to Yorktown Mall for any good shopping opportunities.